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issue twenty seven December '97

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PLAY

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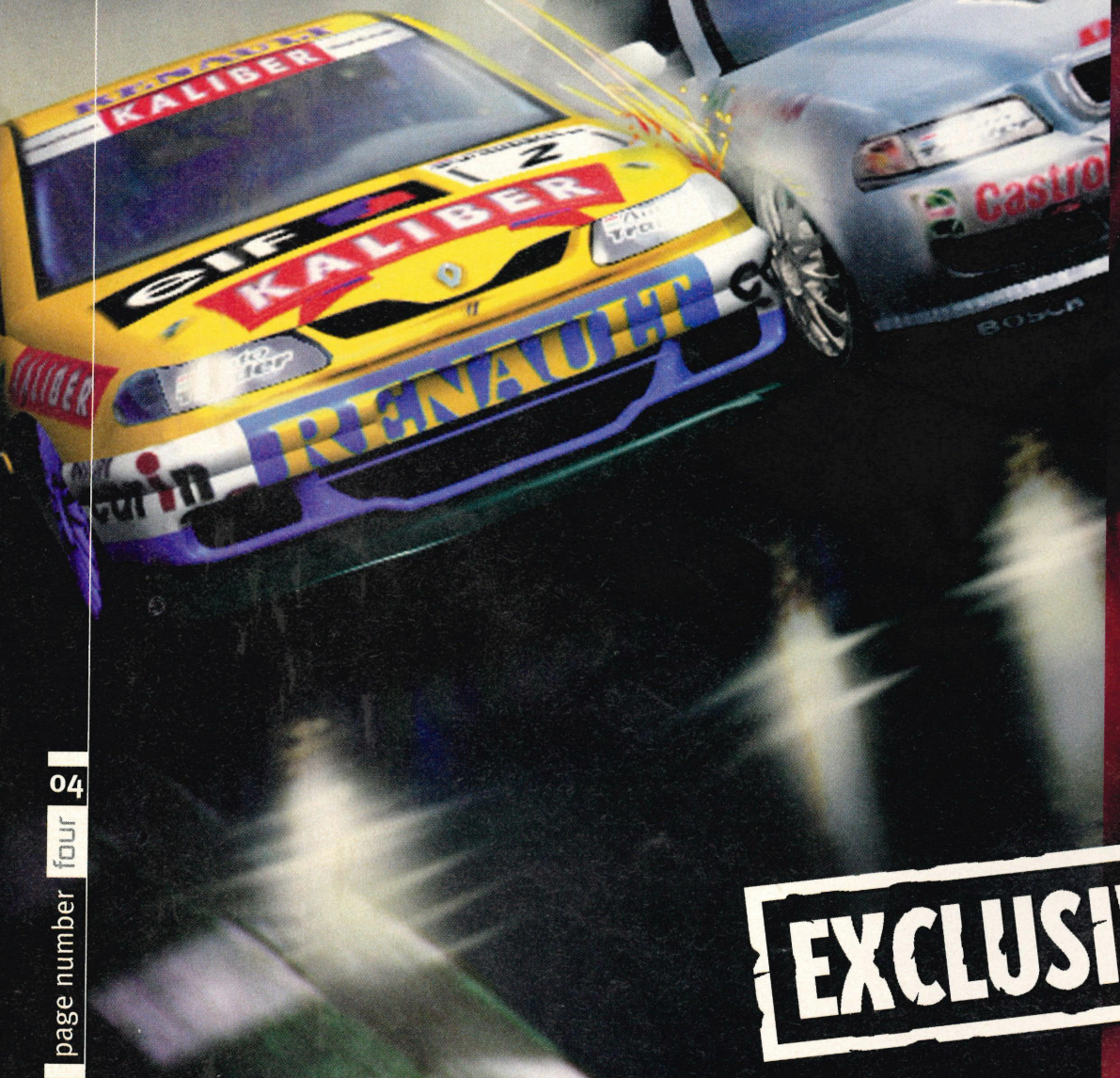
It's hot. It's treacherous. It's a disco inferno.



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TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

48 CODEMASTERS SCREECH AROUND A RAIN-SOAKED HAIR-PIN WITH ONE OF THE HOTTEST RACING GAMES THIS YEAR. EXPERIENCE ALL THE THRILLS, SPILLS AND CRASHES OF THE TOCA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP!



EXCLUSIVE!

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

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[THE PLAYLIST]

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issue twenty seven
The UK's Best Unofficial PLAYSTATION Magazine!



プレイステーション

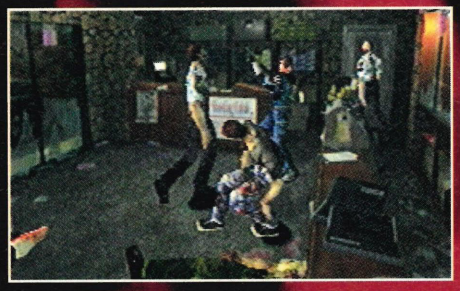
FINAL FANTASY VII

20 PLAY arrives with the FIRST review of this giant beanstalk of an adventure. It's been a long time coming, but is it any good?



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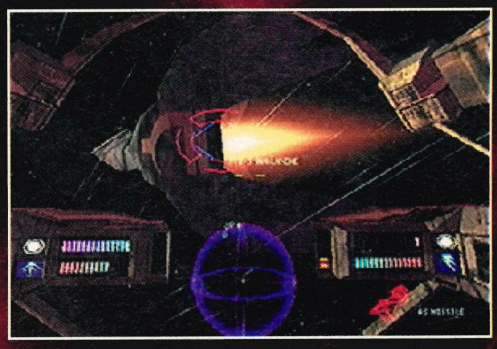


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THE WEATHER may be getting colder, but the PlayStation scene is hotter than a botty after a particularly spicy curry! This would explain why this very issue of PLAY is crammed with 17 full reviews of games that should (touch wood) appear on the shelves of your local games emporium in the run-up to Christmas.

What with this being a traditionally competitive time of year, it would appear that several companies are already copping-out of releasing their games to go head-to-head with the mighty *Tomb Raider II* – which, we were supposed to review this issue. However, Core felt it necessary to tweak the game still further before letting the pack of savage wolves (collectively known is the specialist press) get their talons into it. Instead they issued us with a four-level playable demo, which was all well and good, but isn't the game a bit slow, Core?

In this issue of PLAY, you'll find the first review of *Final Fantasy VII*, which was superb, and an exclusive review of *Touring Car Championship* which came like a shot out of the blue! Then there's the mighty *Colony Wars* (which we can't help but feel wasn't hyped enough by Psygnosis, considering how brilliant it really is), *Fighting Force*, *Nightmare Creatures* (a victim of the aforementioned *Tomb Raider II* assault!), and *Resident Evil: The Director's Cut* – which we decide whether or not is worth buying.

One of the most interesting stories to come to light this month is whether third-party peripherals could be a thing of the past. You see, rumours are rife that instead of a much-speculated price drop at Christmas, Sony is instead going to bundle an extra pad and memory card with the standard package at the same price. Obviously, this will stop gamers hunting around for alternative second controllers! Enjoy the mag!

Ryan Butt
Editor

all things p

PLAYSTA WIRE

news • snippets • rumours • h

FORMULA 1 '97 – STORMS AHEAD!

WE ALL KNEW *Formula 1 '97* would be a success, but no-one envisioned what a collosal sales story it would be!

As soon as the Psygnosis games was released on 1 October, PlayStation owners bought it in their droves; knocking up an impressive first day tally of 40,000 copies. This makes it the fastest selling PlayStation game in history! The previous holder of the title being the first Formula 1 game last year.

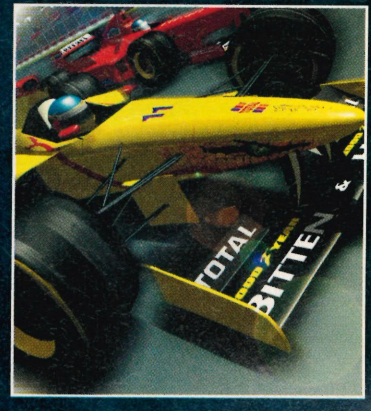
Formula 1 '97 smashed this record by some 25% and almost became the fastest selling CD game of all time (The PC version of *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* just managed to hold onto the top slot). Chart information supplied by ChartTrack indicated that *F1 '97* outsold the number two game, GT's *Abe's Oddysee* by 5:1.

Once again this proves the amazing appeal of the PlayStation, even in the face of stiffer competition from the N64, and Sony compared the sales to mass market products such as the movie, *Men in Black* (which made £2 million in its first day) and also some top charted music CDs.

Formula 1 '97 marks the first real 'biggie' in the run-up to Christmas, with other heavyweights including *Tomb Raider 2*, *Final Fantasy VII* and *Crash Bandicoot 2*. Sony is spending over £15 million promoting these and its winter releases before Christmas, but the hardware's starting to pick up too.

"*Formula 1 '97*, whilst setting records in its own right, has significantly increased the sales of the PlayStation on its first day of release. The PlayStation currently takes 71% of the next generation console market and 82% of the console games market." commented Ray Maguire, MD of Sony Computer Entertainment.

A rosy future for the PlayStation then? Certainly, and although we said it of last year, this Christmas is going to be the best yet, with a plethora of varied and quality titles in the immediate future. Just look at the games reviewed this issue if you want proof of the PlayStation's health.





[ABOVE] **The many enhancements increased the appeal of *F1 '97*, and then of course there's all those new PlayStation owners...**

INTERNATIONAL PLAY BOYS

WHO TO CONTACT AT PLAY MAGAZINE...



RYAN BUTT
Killing monsters was the theme of the month for editor Ryan. Not only did he sever heads and kick wolfy-ass in *Nightmare Creatures*, but loved every minute!
play@paragon.co.uk.



GRAEME NICHOLSON
Graeme was in his element after bravely volunteering (or was that ordered?) to fight his way through *FFVII*. Once that flower-girl gave him the wink though, he cheered-up!
silencio@paragon.co.uk



TOM SARGENT
Tom had the pleasure of playing MDK, *Fighting Force* and *G-Police*, although this joyful experience was soon marred by the misery of *Air Race* and *WingOver*. Shame.
tomsargent@paragon.co.uk

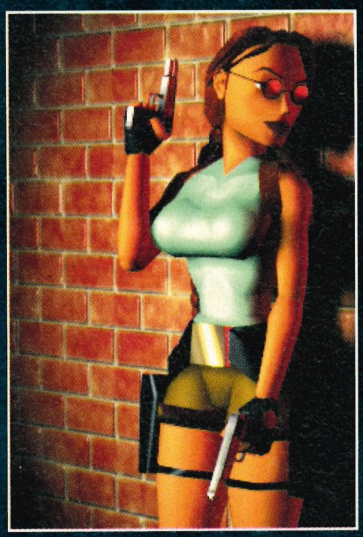
BUT IS HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF?

JUDGING by the deluge of letters and e-mails streaming into the PLAY offices, it would seem that many people are unhappy with Psygnosis' *Formula 1 '97*. The common problems appear to arise in the steer assist function not allowing you to turn into the pits. But perhaps the biggest blunder, according to Robert Browne from Northam, is when you're racing on a dry surface and it starts to rain. You go into the pits to change to wet tyres, but as soon as you drive off back into the race, the tyres switch back to slicks; making you slide uncontrollably all over the place with no method of rectifying it. Is this just the first of many problems, we hope not.

TOMB RAIDER WILL NEVER APPEAR ON N64!

BOOM! And in an instant all the hopes of Nintendo 64 owners are dashed as Sony secures yet another exclusive deal. Yes it's true, after lengthy negotiations it seems that Core Design has signed a deal with Sony to make the *Tomb Raider* franchise unique to the PlayStation.

There was considerable speculation that an N64 version of the hit game(s) would appear suddenly, but that rumour has now been revealed as smoke with no fire. We now know that *Tomb Raider 2* will definitely not appear on any other console, just a PC version. More good news for us smug PSX owners then, and a clear indication that *Tomb Raider 3 & 4* must on the cards. Cor.



NOZIN' AROUND

NOZIN' AROUND

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

We've heard rumours that instead of a price drop for the PlayStation this Christmas (£99 please) Sony will just change the basic £129.99 package to include an extra joypad and memory card. Big wow.

It has now been confirmed that *Tobal 2* will never be converted for PAL machines and it's all allegedly because developers Square want to teach the west a lesson for not buying enough copies of *Tobal No. 1*. Instead Square is concentrating on *Bushido Blade* and the *Final Fantasy* series. Arse!

Sony in Japan is stopping production of the first generation of the Dual Analogue pad (with vibration) and creating a new pad with more sensitive and different kinds of vibrations. This is thought to give a subtler feel in preparation for a new line of analogue games.

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FINAL FANTASY VII SELLS WELL IN USA

ANOTHER continent succumbs to *Final Fantasy VII* fever. We have just heard that the Square RPG has sold over 500,000 copies in America in just three weeks; making it one of the most popular adventure games of all time.

The initial ship-out of copies was thought to be 750,000, and although this heady figure is eclipsed by the 2.5 million copies sold in the first three days in Japan, it is still mightily impressive for a game which is totally different from everything else on the PlayStation. As you will no doubt read in our review of *Final Fantasy VII* this issue (see page 20) we believe it deserves to do well, although fans of *Tomb Raider* expecting a similar 'action' experience will be shocked with its heavy Japanese style and linear plotline. Those of you wanting a deep adventure with people you care about won't be disappointed.



[ABOVE] *Final Fantasy VII* – selling shed-loads and generally doing very well, thank you!

THINK BIG

ARE YOU sick to stomach of your mates rambling onendlessly about how many inches they've got? TV inches that is! Well now you can do one better by investing in a Sharp XV-C1E! This is basically a compact projection system that enables you to transform your gamesplaying domain into a vast cinematic wonderland!

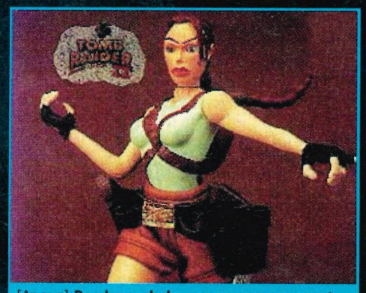
We've tried one of these machines here at the PLAY offices and it did wonders to enhance *Colony Wars!* Roche Visual Communication are handling the distribution of this futuristic device, and if you want to know more, see the mail order advert on page 29. We now have one for long term test, so stay tuned for a report.



[ABOVE] **The Sharp XV-C1E projection system – play *Colony Wars* on your bedroom wall, or even the side of your house (just like Jean Michel Jarre!).**

DON'T TOY WITH LARA...

JUST REVEALED in the USA is this Lara Croft toy action figure created to coincide with the release of the game in November. Standing 12" high and featuring quite the most hideous lips since Tattoo from *Fantasy Island*, we think it's pretty sad, but sources say there could be more characters in the new year.

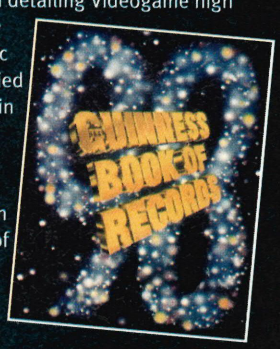


[ABOVE] **Bend me, shake me, anyway you want me... not with that face deary!**

RECORD BREAKERS!

GRAB YOURSELF a copy of the 1998 edition of the Guinness Book of Records and you'll be amazed to see a new section detailing Videogame high scores. If you're a bit of an ace on the likes of *Rage Racer* and *Soul Blade* you can send in photographic proof of your best times on certain courses (specified in the latest edition) and next year it could be you in the Guinness Book of Records – imagine that?

It certainly is a bit of a strange category to include because the above mentioned games will be completely out-of-date by the time the 1999 edition arrives. However it does reflect the changing face of the book, which has just gone through a re-design as an update for the new millenium.





CHARTS

In association with ChartTrack

POS	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	PLAY SCORE
1.	FORMULA 1 '97	BIZARRE CR	PSYGNOSIS	90%
2.	ABE'S ODDYSEE	GT	GT	90%
3.	NUCLEAR STRIKE	EA	EA	88%
4.	V-RALLY	INFOGRAMES	OCEAN	87%
5.	LOST WORLD	DREAMWORKS	EA	79%
6.	INT TRACK & FIELD	KONAMI	PLATINUM	(OLD)
7.	ACTUA GOLF 2	GREMLIN	GREMLIN	80%
8.	PARAPPA THE RAPPER	SONY	SONY	82%
9.	WORMS	TEAM 17	PLATINUM	92% (OLD)
10.	RAYMAN	UBI SOFT	PLATINUM	87% (OLD)

READERS' MOST WANTED

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

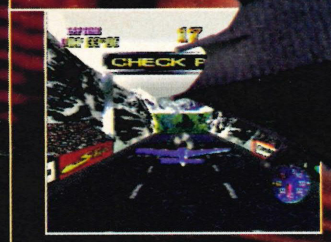
POS	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER
1.	BUSHIDO BLADE	SQUARE	SONY
2.	FINAL FANTASY VII	SQUARE	SONY
3.	CRASH BANDICOOT 2	NAUGHTY DOG	SONY
4.	GRAN TOURISMO	SONY	SONY
5.	ROAD TO WORLD CUP	EA	EA

STIMULATION

NOT SIMULATION











"leaves conventional race games standing"

High speed, gravity defying action

-

11 authentic planes to race

-

Split-screen two player mode

-

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-

Stunningly rendered 3D courses

-

No parachute provided

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THE SKY REALLY IS THE LIMIT

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RESIDENT EVIL 2 DEMO – THE VERDICT



WE WERE lucky enough to get hold of one of the very first American import copies of *Resident Evil: The Director's Cut* this month, and having tossed aside the re-hashed original version, we got to grips with the incredible playable demo of *Resident Evil 2* that comes bundled with it.

This is undoubtedly the main selling point of the whole *Director's Cut* package, and gamesplayers eager to get a taster of the next instalment of the Umbrella sage won't be disappointed.

The demo starts with you, as Leon Scott Kennedy, patrolling the war-torn streets of Racoon City where the inhabitants are being mysteriously transformed into savage zombies. With just a knife or a pistol for cover, you must instantly wade into a pack of hungry undead who refuse to stay down. Once a round of bullets have been dispatched into their decaying torsos, you can then opt to slash them on the ground using the knife – although whereas before this killed them straight out, now it just seems to anger them more and encourages them to rise once more for another bite.

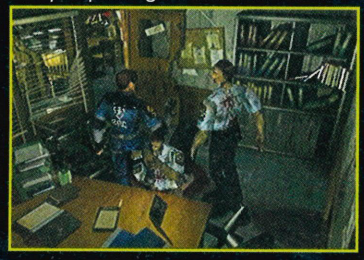
It's worth mentioning that any wounds you sustain are kept until a first aid spray is found, so if a zombie chews on your arm or leg, the limp limb will be left trailing behind as you stagger forward.

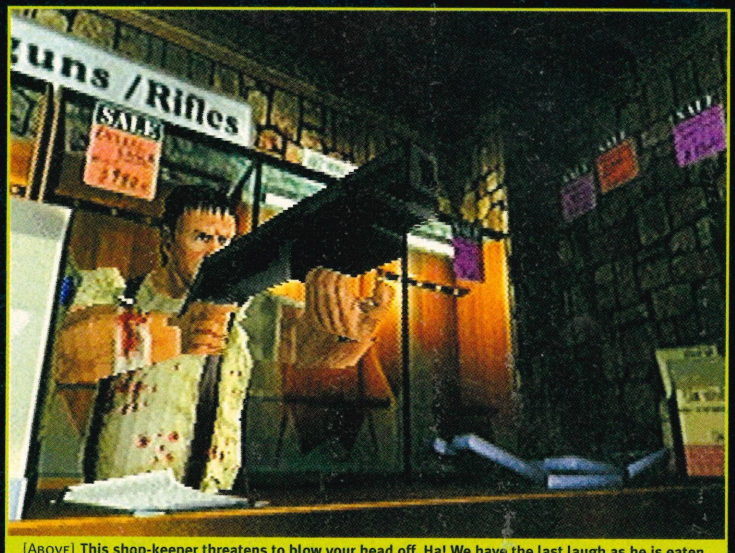
This demo basically takes you on a pre-set tour of a few of the game's streets, shops and ultimately the RCPD. The most notable point at the start of the demo is when you enter a gun shop, and after narrowly avoiding getting your head blown off by the petrified keeper, the place is plagued by zombies who then proceed to group-tear the porky elder apart in graphic fashion. From beside his well-chewed corpse, you pick-up a pump-action shotgun, which is when the real fun starts!

With this high-powered weapon, you can shoot zombie's heads off, blow them in twain – leaving their upper-torso still thirsty for more – or even just pick off an arm or a leg for sheer comic value.

Upon passing a massacred bus and several dismembered cops, you'll enter the police department whereby several new rooms and puzzles await. Apart from cops to kill and desks to search, this new area offers a range of new camera angles and dramatic effects – most notable the dripping pool of blood that you encounter just before a hideous new beast drops down from above to devour you.

As we said, there are a couple of puzzles to solve, but these prove to be a waste of time because the demo expires before you have a chance to use the new objects (two red jewels) that you earn. If you are a major-league *Resident Evil* fan, then this demo provides just enough action and intrigue to set your mouth drooling intensely for the long-awaited follow-up.

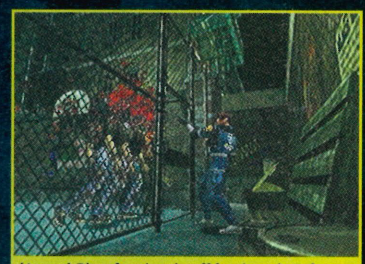




[ABOVE] **This shop-keeper threatens to blow your head off. Ha! We have the last laugh as he is eaten alive by a pack of ram-raiding zombies!**



[ABOVE] **Strange monsters to spray over four walls? Yep, they're in there!**



[ABOVE] **Blow four heads-off for the price of one. Hitting those zombies in a group saves bullets!**

THOSE RELEASE DATES IN FULL

THE MERRY MONTH OF OCTOBER

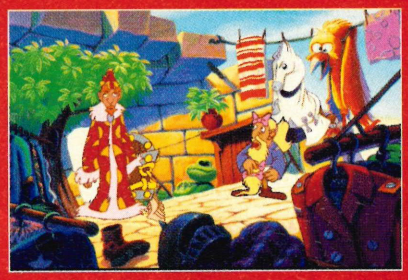
Agent Armstrong (VIE)
Castlevania X (Konami)
Croc (EA)
Fighting Force (Eidos)
G-Police (Psygnosis)
MDK (Interplay)
Moto Racer (EA)
NASCAR '98 (EA)
Nuclear Strike (EA)
Overboard! (Psygnosis)
PGA Tour '98 (EA)
Powerplay Hockey (VIE)
Ridge Racer Revolution (Platinum)
Rapid Racer (Sony)
RE: Directors' Cut (VIE)
Rosco McQueen (Sony)
Street Fighter EX Plus (VIE)
Toshinden 3 (Sony)
Total Drivin' (Ocean)
Wargods (GT)
Wing Over (JVC)

AND THE SLIPPERS...

GAME (PUBLISHER)	WAS	NOW
Blasto	This year	Next year
Clock Tower	November '97	January '98
Nightmare Creatures	31 October '97	January '98



THE TROUBLE WITH A VACATION IS...



LOCAL MARKETS CAN BE CONFUSING.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT PRIMITIVE.



AND THE NATIVES HANG OUT IN THE WEIRDEST PLACES.



WHERE THE COCKTAILS ARE LETHAL.



AND THE FOOD SUCKS.



THEN YOU MEET A GORGEOUS BABE.



WHO FALLS UNDER YOUR SPELL.



AND THINGS ARE LOOKING GOOD.

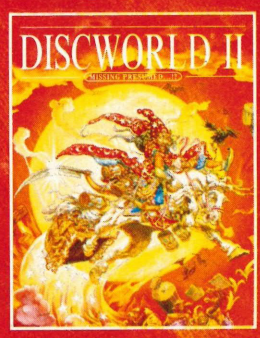


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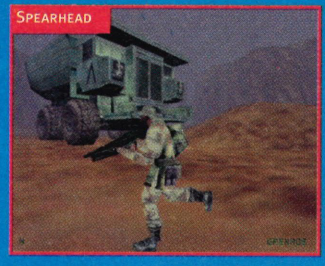
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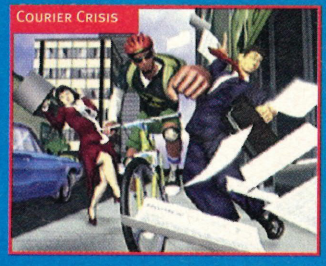


CAT BUCANNON brings you all the news on what's hot in the land of 15% gratuities and swimming pools.

BMG has recently announced plans to publish *Spearhead* on PlayStation. The game, originally developed by US programmers, Zombie on PC CD-ROM, promises to be one of the most realistic, in-yer-face networkable games ever created, although the expected release date is some way off yet.



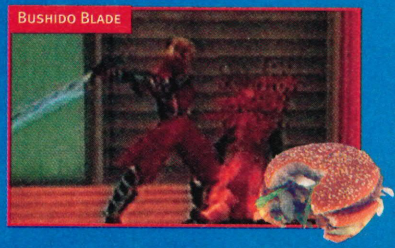
Speaking of BMG, I mentioned its forthcoming *Courier Crisis* (*Paperboy* for the Nineties, if you please) before, but I have now discovered that the game is being officially endorsed by GT Cycles. This basically means that you'll be able to upgrade your bike through the entire new GT range through the game.



Konami has just released *Poypoy*, a multi-player battle game reminiscent of the *Bomberman* series. The idea being that four players fight it out over various terrains, with the prime goal of being the last one standing. There are many different weapons to use from the surroundings including rocks, logs and bombs, plus numerous monsters to fight in the one player game. I believe the game will arrive on your fair shores early next year.



Big news in America this month is the release of *Bushido Blade!* Square's massively popular Samurai simulator has finally undergone the necessary translations and is now ready to rock and roll. Perhaps now we'll be able to understand what all those mystery options were!





[ABOVE] **Cat Bucannon – is busy this month preparing for her date with Datel's Mark Wallace...**

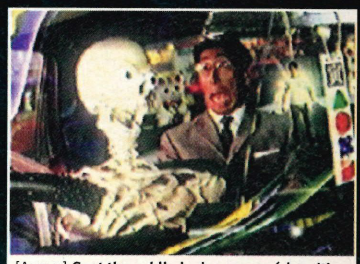


THE FORMERLY KNOWN AS PLAYSTATION

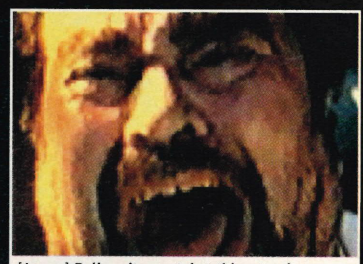
SONY IS taking no prisoners this Christmas, with a £15 million advertising and sponsorship campaign with which they aim to get a PlayStation into every home!

With sales having already hit the 1.1 million mark in the UK, Sony now plans to up the public's awareness of the PlayStation by making the logo and button symbols universally recognised. In fact you may have noticed this already. So far the campaign has kicked off with the subliminal 'Eskimo' TV ad, and the sponsorship of the Champions League football matches with the square, triangle, circle and cross symbols making an appearance on commercial breaks and pitch-side boards.

The idea is to make the symbols synonymous with the PlayStation, and Sony is going to plug them to the hilt with a new PlayStation chocolate bar which is soon to be launched. This product won't be named as such, it will simply have the symbols displayed on the packaging, so hungry punters will know exactly where the snack is coming from.



[ABOVE] **Spot the subliminal message (clue: It's hanging from the rear-view mirror!).**



[ABOVE] **Believe it or not, but this rotund Mexican is being chased by a kebab!**

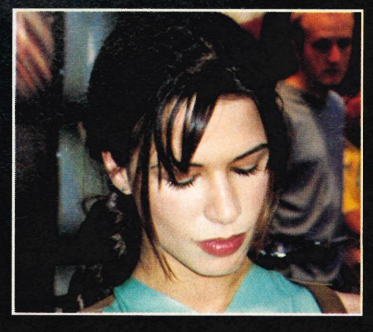
LARA CROFT – SACKED!

RHONA MITRA, the model who has given real life meaning to the curvy charms of Lara Croft in recent months has been unexpectedly sacked by Eidos, just as the *Tomb Raider II* hype machine reached fever pitch.

Rhona first shot to fame in the TV adaptation of Jilly Cooper's steamy novel, *The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous*, and was involved in a blaze of publicity surrounding her recent boob-job, and the fact that it was her father who performed the op. Since she took over as the real-life Lara, Rhona has done the rounds at the various trade shows (most recently the ECTS in London's Olympia), appeared in lifestyle magazines, and recorded a single.

However, just as PLAY was going to press, news reached us that Rhona had been sacked in the role "due to a number of different reasons" claimed a spokesperson at Core Design – the developers of the game.

PLAY is awaiting a statement outlining the exact reasons for her departure, and indeed the fate surrounding the music single, which we were all waiting to rush out and buy (yeah, right).



SHORT, SHARP, SHOCK

PSYGNOSIS has got together with Casio to produce a special edition of the fashionable G-Shock watch to tie in with the game, *G-Police*. The G-Shock is built to withstand tough conditions, such as being pitched off the top of a multi-storey car park, and apparently adorns the wrists of such pop icons as Bono from U2, Damon Albarn from Blur and those publicity-shy Spice Girls. The *G-Police* branding is subtle but you can bet that every one of the 400 special watches will be snapped up by eager gamesplayers.



THE NIGHTMARE NEVER ENDS...

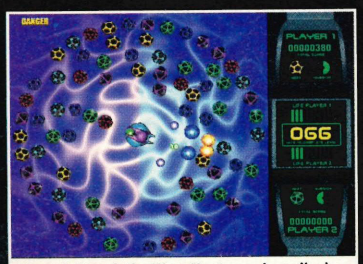
BUGGER! Just as this issue was going to press we heard from Sony that it is delaying the release of Kalisto's *Nightmare Creatures* until January. A spokesperson at Kalisto revealed that due to the huge number of PlayStation games being submitted in time for Christmas, Sony felt that the title deserves more of a push once things have calmed down a bit.



[ABOVE] ***Nightmare Creatures*** **– now delayed until January – arse!**

DAFT NAME, GREAT GAME?

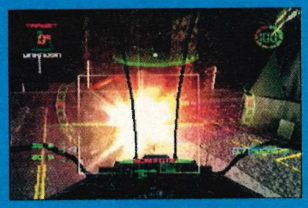
SYYRAH *the Warp Hunter*, due for an early 1998 release from Sunsoft is essentially a puzzle/arcade game. You're stuck in the centre of a space minefield which you must destroy in order to take out the next one. But the problem is, they constantly advance and so your playing area gets smaller every second. *Syyrah the Warp Hunter* features 120 levels of reflex action and looks very similar to the PC game, *Zoop*. Puzzle fans should be elated.



[ABOVE] ***Syyrah the Warp Hunter*** **– who spiked my Fanta?**

TOP FIVE...

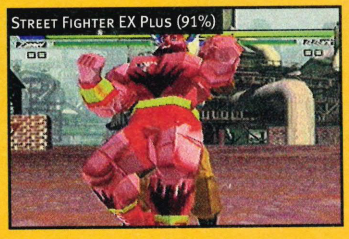
VIDEO GAME DELAYS

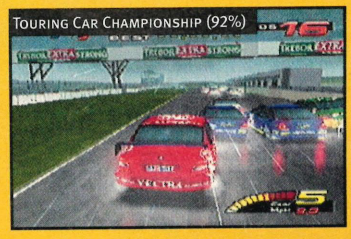


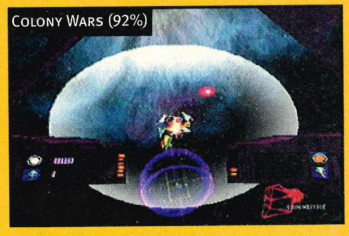
WAITING for games to arrive is like waiting for a bus. You wait for ages and when they appear they're often vandalised beyond belief and smell of pee. The same sad ethics can be applied to video games, observe...

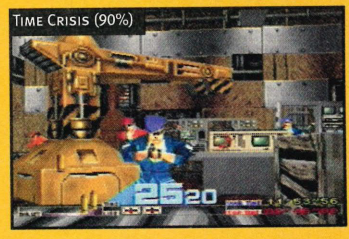
1. Heart of Darkness(canned!)
2. G-Police (two years coming)
3. Resident Evil 2 (partly here!)
4. Syndicate Wars (worth it?)
5. Nightmare Creatures (nearly)

PLAY RECOMMENDS...













POWER CHEATS

BEAT EM UPs ☎0891 424117
Including Soul Blade, Mortal Kombat Trilogy and many more...

RACING GAMES ☎0891 424119
Including Micro Machines V3, Rage Racer, Porsche Challenge and many more...

SHOOT EM UPs ☎0891 424118
Including Mech Warrior 2, Doom and many more...

PLATFORM GAMES ☎0891 424120
Including Pandemonium, Crash Bandicoot and many more...

REGULAR UPDATES OF THE LATEST CHEATS

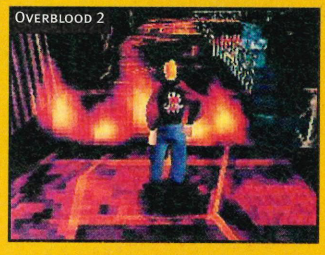
Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Please seek permission from the bill payer before making the call. This may be a long call.

Ais, Cambs CB2 5LR

JAPS EYE

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

Those of you eagerly awaiting the next chapter in the *Resident Evil* saga no doubt rushed out to buy the enthralling substitute, *Overblood*, to get your horror adventure fix. The good news now is that *Overblood 2* is nearing completion and will probably be out before Capcom's sequel! The early screenshots show that many of the *RE* graphical effects have been emulated for this sequel, such as the use of painted backgrounds and texture-mapped environments. As a result, the game looks far more advanced and graphically enthralling. However, the main problem that many eager import buyers experience with the first game will still be present – the reams of Japanese text that preludes tricky situations and confrontations. Still, you can always wait for an American version, can't you!





Just released in Japan is *Marvel Super Heroes*, Capcom's brilliantly OTT beat-'em-up featuring many of the comic-book favourites including Wolverine and The Incredible Hulk. The game uses an updated game engine over the one used for the now-shelved *Children of the Atom*, and the result is explosive. PLAY will feature a full review next issue.



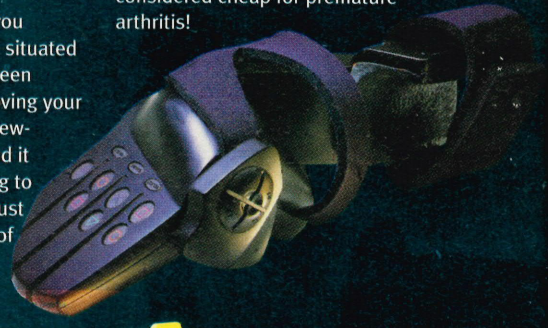
PLAYSTATION PLUGGABLES

THE GLOVE IS MY MASTER

ARE YOU a one-armed gamesplayer in search of a gimmicky, expensive way of playing your favourite PlayStation games? If so then The Glove, by Reality Quest is a sure fire way of emptying your wallet and leaving you with a strained wrist for your troubles!

The Glove is a joypad that you actually wear. The buttons are situated on finger pads, and the on-screen movement is controlled by moving your wrist around. We tested this new-fangled device on *Tekken 2* and it certainly brought new meaning to the phrase 'no pain no gain'. Just imagine trying to pull-off one of standard quarter-circle punching combos by twisting your wrist, and you'll get the picture as to how naff this contraption really is.

Also, if it were to ever be released over here (Gamester LMP were rumoured to pick-up the rights, but luckily they've seen the light), it would cost you about 70 quid. Which could be considered cheap for premature arthritis!



TOP GEAR!

Logic 3 extend its range of PlayStation peripherals by releasing the long-awaited Top Gear steering wheel, Protector light gun, and Challenger Pro multi-format joypad. The wheel comes complete with foot pedals and gear stick for that authentic racing experience, and will retail at £69.99. The Protector light gun is basically a cheapo alternative to their best-selling Predator gun, which, although comes in a sickly yellow colour, is surprisingly comfortable to hold and not as beefy as big brother. The Challenger Pro pad is compatible with Saturn, N64 and PlayStation, and comes with dual analogue sticks, LCD display panels and will be compatible with Datel's rumble pack, so you'll be able to get vibrations in your PlayStation games yet!



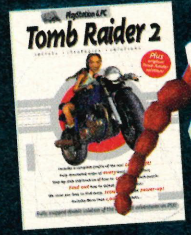


DISCO MONDO CRAZY

Fire International continue to expand the realms of colour co-ordinated joypads with the release of its shiny metallic pads. Best suited if you fancy taking your PlayStation down the local disco for a Seventies night, they come in two colours at the moment (silver and gold) and retail at £19.99, the same as the other Blaze pads. If these jazzy designs don't tickle your fancy though, you can opt for more far-out colours such as metallic red and blue soon.

BE THE *FIRST* TO OWN TOMB RAIDER 2!

NOVEMBER will see the biggest and most eagerly awaited software launch of 1997 – *Tomb Raider 2*. Lara's back! And to celebrate the release of the game, we've put together a sensational offer. For just £40 you get a copy of *TR2* (RRP £44.99) and a copy of TOMB RAIDER 2: SECRETS, STRATEGIES, SOLUTIONS (RRP £9.95) – a 200 page guide featuring complete maps if you get stuck*. To order this exclusive deal with PLAY magazine, either wait for the coupon next month, or call (01202) 200200 with your credit card details. Fax on (01202) 299955. Or e-mail subs@paragon.co.uk.

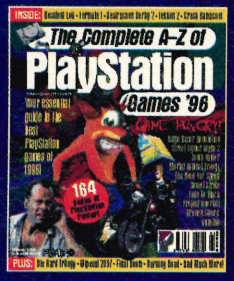


* The solutions book will be delivered just after the game to save you ruining the secrets too soon!

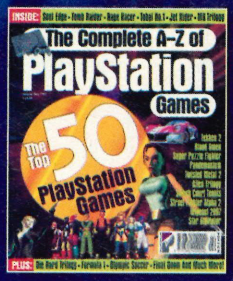




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A-Z VOL 1
A huge 162 page A-Z of PlayStation games taken from the pages of PLAY! £5.50



A-Z VOL 2
The top 50 PlayStation games (taken from reviews in PLAY magazine.) £5.50



ISSUE [4]
Magic Carpet first look, *Resident Evil*, *Ridge Racer Rev*, *Wing IV*!



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



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



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

BACK ISSUES

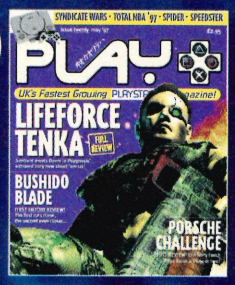
MISSED A MAGAZINE OR BOOK? SNAP IT UP NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!



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

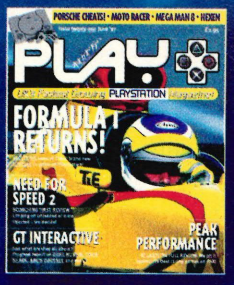


ISSUE [19]
LBA exclusive review, plus *Rally Cross*, and *Micro Machines V3*!

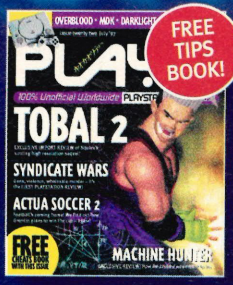


ISSUE [20]
Full review of *Tenka*, massive *Syndicate Wars* preview, plus *Porsche* and *Bushido Blade!*

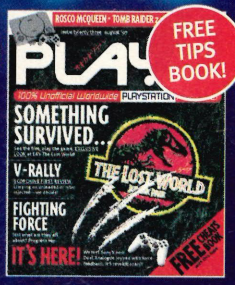




ISSUE [21]
Exclusive look at *Eidos F1*, preview of *Tobal 2*, and hot reviews of *NFS2* and *Peak Performance*.



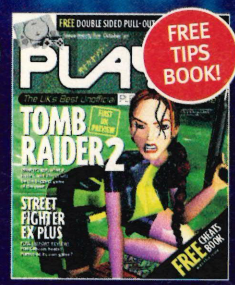
ISSUE [22]
First import review of *Tobal 2*! *Syndicate Wars*, *Actua Soccer 2*, *Overblood* and *MDK!*



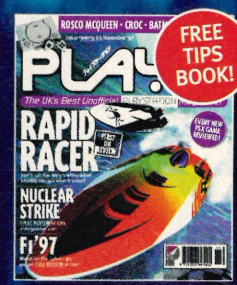
ISSUE [23]
Lost World exclusive, *V-Rally* review, *Rosco McQueen*, *Fighting Force* and *F1 '97!*



ISSUE [24]
Massive *Time Crisis* review, *E3* show report, *Colony Wars*, *Deathtrap Dungeon* and *G-Police!*



ISSUE [25]
First UK preview of *Tomb Raider 2*, *Rapid Racer*, *Nuclear Strike*, *Street Fighter EX Plus!*



ISSUE [26]
First UK review of *Rapid Racer*, plus *F1 '97*, *Abe's Oddysee* and *Batman & Robin!*

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ACE COMBAT 2

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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 Visit the magical new lands of the world's most wanted role-playing game, *Final Fantasy VII!* Those delays and disappointments are long forgotten as we've finally got our hands on it, and you'll find the beans well and truly spilled on page 20. Unbeatable strategy and adventure with some absolutely spectacular graphics have produced a true classic, even before it has gone on sale here. Get the scoop!



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.

76-84 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.

51-75 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!

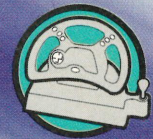
PLAY PUTRID

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

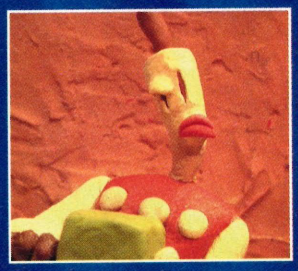
The GAMES that Time Forgot

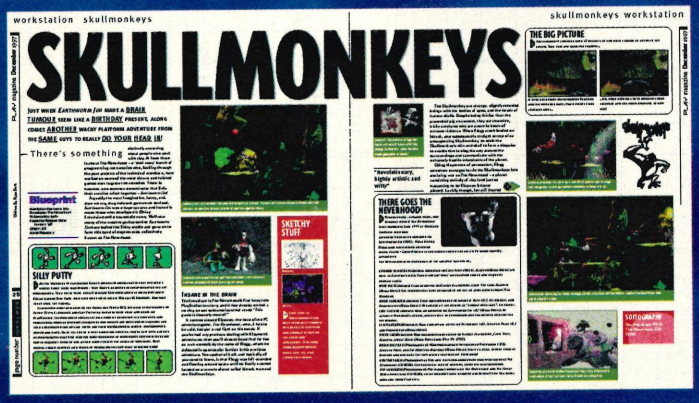
You'll see this ominous logo every time a games publisher tries to sneak a game out onto the streets without us seeing it first. This is often a deliberate move and one that occasionally means the game is rushed or of poor quality.

WORKSTATIONS

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

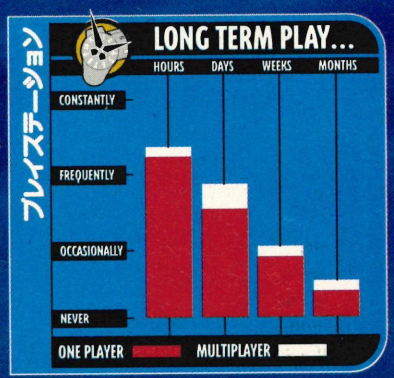
SKULLMONKEYS 28





CHALLENGE BOX

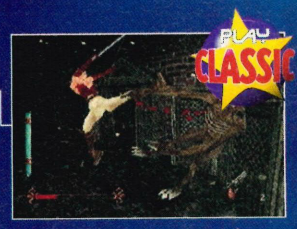
This clever little box is designed to show you instantly how long a game will last (in our opinion) based on the review. The one player game (in red) will more often than not be lower than multiple players because it's more fun playing a friend than the computer. Although it is entirely subjective, we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

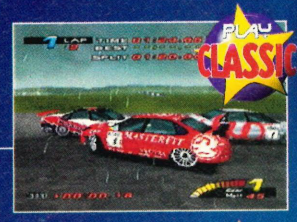


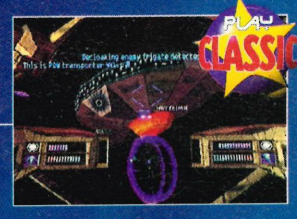
PLAY REVIEWS

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.

FINAL FANTASY VII 20
RE:DIRECTORS' CUT 34
G-POLICE 36
AIR RACE 38
MADDEN '98 39
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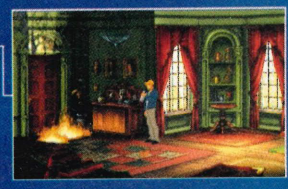




WIRED UP

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

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VS 87





Written By Graeme Nicholson



[Above] After taking too many hits, your warriors' limit gauge hits the top and you can perform a pre-set Limit Move.

FINAL FA

PLAY CLASSIC

1.5 million Japanese

ATTENTION! BY LOADING *FINAL FANTASY VII* YOU ARE ENTERING A WORLD SO VAST YOU MAY NEVER BE RETRIEVED. IN EXTREME CASES, YOU MAY NOT EVEN WISH TO BE RETRIEVED. PROCEED WITH CAUTION, PLAYER DISCRETION ADVISED.

PlayStation owners pre-ordered this game to get it on the first possible day of release. Very soon, you are going to be able to buy a copy for yourself, with English dialogue and manuals, and with three black CDs absolutely crammed with adventure. This is why you should...

Undoubtedly a deep social comment on civilisation as we know it in over-developed cities like London, New York and Tokyo, *Final Fantasy VII* is set in the two-level city of Midgar. This unthinkably large circular metropolis has two distinct types of people co-existing in it, essentially the rich and the poor. On the top level the bigwigs enjoy clean air, beautifully maintained neighbourhoods and the freedom to do pretty much what they want.

RAZOR WEED

Directly beneath this luxury is the town constructed to elevate the top floor into the sky and down here things are not quite so pleasant. Its position under the giant supportive plates of the city above has caused the trapped air to become thick with pollution. Every inch of the sub-city is also completely blocked out from the sunlight, so there is no naturally occurring day or night – just the constant flickering electric glow of artificial fluorescent light. It's industrial, it's steamy, it's gritty. And it's exactly the kind of place you will just love to explore. The

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: SCEA
Supplier: The Video Game Centre on 01202 527314
Price: £59.99
Release date: Out Now (import)

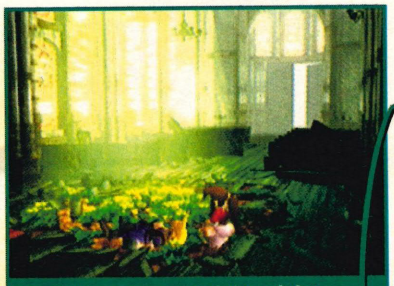
ONE PLAYER MEMORY CARD



[Above] Awww, your first encounter with Aeris the flower girl. Choose whether to warn her of the imminent explosion or chat her up.

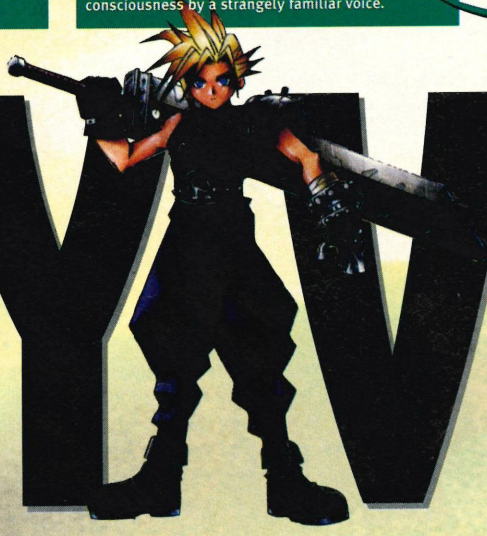


[Above] A completely bonkers monster-possessed house blocks your path and sprays fire at your party. He'll have to go.



[Above] After crashing through the roof of an unused church, you are coaxed back to consciousness by a strangely familiar voice.

NTASY VII



"You can't ever imagine visiting every area of the game..."

size is something that really comes across when you play, as you can't ever imagine visiting every area of the game never mind every room. It seems you could stay here forever.

This is one game where the story is actually important. After all, what is an RPG but one big story with some fight scenes in between? Most of the enchanting tale unfolds via the simple text boxes which appear when you talk to people you find. It's not very interactive with only the odd choice to make in how you reply, but you just won't notice because it's so totally engrossing. There is a real sense of adventure and urgency, especially when you get to one of the many FMV sequences that blend with the game engine perfectly.

HELL RIDER

The most important character, the lead role in this epic, is Cloud Strife. He has a huge sword, even bigger spiky yellow hair and a considerably long and interesting history for someone who looks like he's yet to start shaving. When only a tiny lad he decided to leave

FLASHBACK

CLOUD'S TOUGH SHELL BEGINS TO CRACK WHEN CHILDHOOD SWEETHEART TIFA REMINDS HIM OF A PROMISE HE MADE WHEN THEY WERE VERY YOUNG. THE SCENE GOES INTO SCOOBY DOO FLASHBACK MODE AND YOU SEE A PRE-TEENS, ABSOLUTELY TINY VERSION OF BOTH CHARACTERS IN THEIR HOME TOWN OF NIBELHEIM. ONE LOOK AND YOU'LL JUST WANT TO PICK THEM UP AND TAKE THEM HOME WITH YOU. BE CAREFULL THOUGH – THEY'RE STRONG LITTLE BUGGERS!





WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW THE GUN CLUB'S CLOSED?..

SONY
PlayStation
TIME CRISIS
namco

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"PS" and "PlayStation" are trademarks of Sony Computer Inc. Price £59.99

BRIDGE THE GAP

Upon destroying a huge robot sent to ambush you by President Shinra, the resulting explosion blows a hole in the bridge between you (Cloud) and your friends (Barret and Tifa). Cutting to another FMV sequence, Cloud loses his grip and falls hundreds of feet into the smog. It's a real nail-biter when you haven't saved your game.















his small hometown of Nibelheim and become a member of Soldier – an elite super-efficient army under the control of the corrupt reigning President Shinra.

Years later Cloud has left Soldier under circumstances that slowly become revealed during the game, and as your adventure begins he has agreed to put his skills into action for an underground rebel force determined to bring down the establishment. This is where you join the story when you fire up your PlayStation.

This handful of dropouts call themselves Avalanche, and they are a bomb squad like no other. Possessed by the belief that President Shinra's Mako Reactors which run directly into the ground are literally sucking the life out of the planet to provide electricity, the members of Avalanche embark on a righteous quest to destroy the eight main reactors.

This requires timed explosives to be set individually on each one, so there is a great amount of travelling to be done across town to each target. Knowing your enemy is a formidable asset, and so Avalanche is quite willing to pay you handsomely for your expertise and knowledge of Soldier. Although your character starts out as a tough nut who doesn't believe in the cause of the group and is helping only for the cash, rest assured that he will become emotionally involved long before you get to the second CD.

MASTER TONBERRY

Upon meeting each character who will join your little death squad, you have the chance to rename them whatever you like. For the few days before you realise that *Final Fantasy VII* and the fate of its people is more important to you than anything else in life, comedy names are recommended here. Consider "Spanky" as a good alias for Cloud, or "Pink Spice" as an equally appropriate pseudonym for Aeris, the flower girl you befriend. Everyone else you ever meet will refer to your characters using these names, so choose wisely.

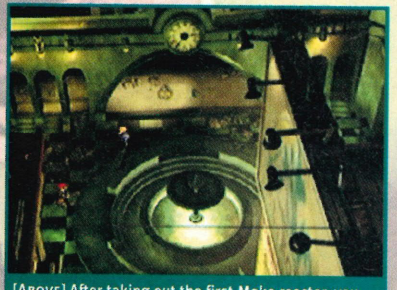
You shouldn't need to hear the Japanese sales figures to work out that *Final Fantasy VII* is not in any way a normal role-playing game. The flat and boring interface that almost every other RPG uses to travel from fight to fight has been completely avoided in *FFVII*. No, you are instead constantly surrounded by beautiful computer-rendered artwork with a solid and wonderfully magical appearance. The heavenly scenery is often one huge piece of art that is several screens wide or tall; forcing the camera to pan across it. And an embedded 3-D plane of movement makes for great presentation.

KING BEHEMOTH

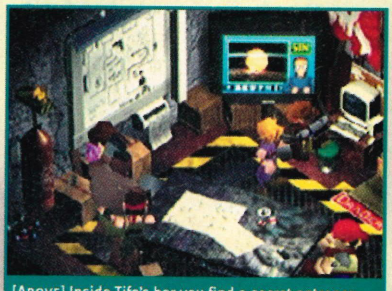
Each new room, village or sector reinforces the idea that these are easily the most tasteful and dramatic scenes of any adventure title you can think of. In this mode you talk to anyone who looks interesting, wander into stores to buy or



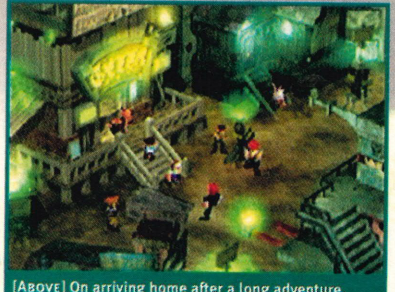
[Above] There are few fates more horrible than being on the receiving end of a Hell Bomb from a peeved enemy in battle.



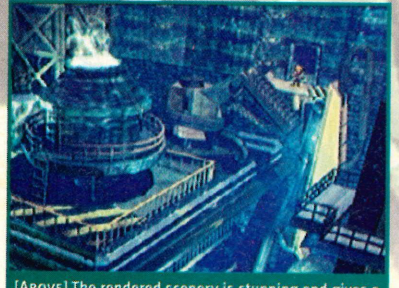
[Above] After taking out the first Mako reactor, you come through here and get chased my the Military Police – where will you go?



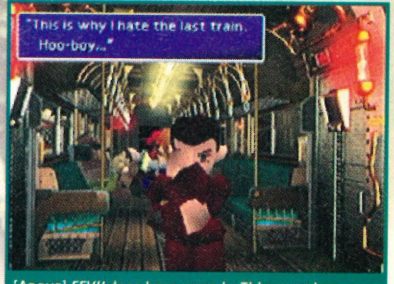
[Above] Inside Tifa's bar you find a secret entrance down to the basement, which is no less than Avalanche Head Quarters.



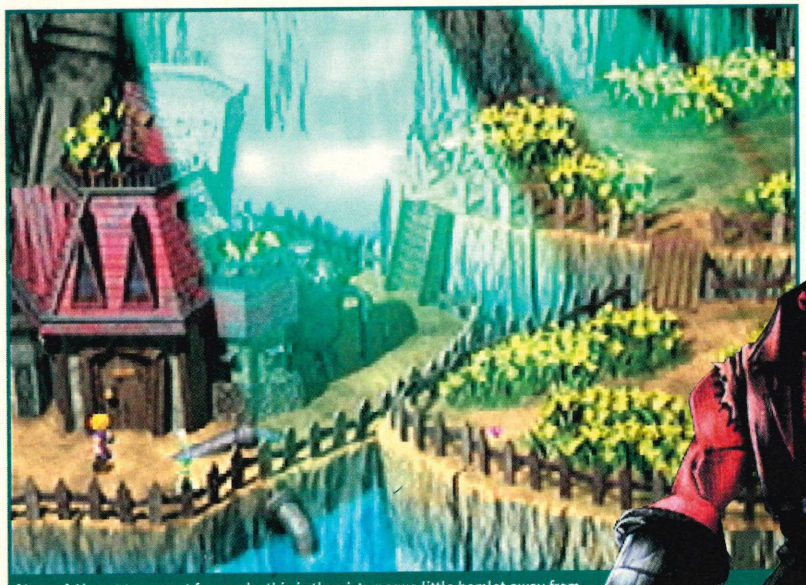
[Above] On arriving home after a long adventure, Barret strolls into the bar. Immediately, everyone else comes tumbling out!



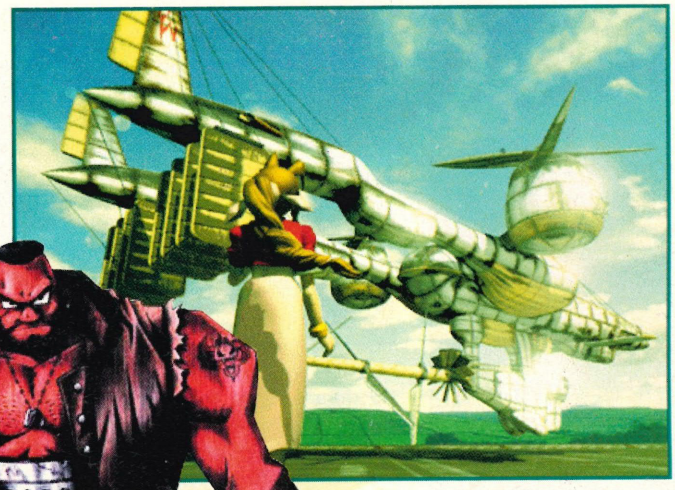
[Above] The rendered scenery is stunning and gives a good idea of scale to make the reactors really seem massive.



[Above] *FFVII* does have comedy. This scared commuter explains to the camera "This is why I hate the last train" when your crew arrives.



[Above] Almost too sweet for words, this is the picturesque little hamlet away from the city noise and junk where Aeris lives.





[Above] Watch your step in the industrial areas where you're not meant to be, danger lurks around every corner.

sell armour, weapons and "Materia" magic, find healing potions in the streets and run from various hazards like exploding reactors that you may or may not be responsible for.

In bizarre contrast to this splendour, the actual people who wander around these astonishing vistas, from Cloud himself, to the kids in the street, have almost nothing in the way of detail. Some scenes let you walk fairly close to the camera, *Resident Evil*-style, so you can really get a good look at what's missing. For example, characters don't have any hands, which is odd. Or mouths, which is just plain weird. A strange decision you might think for a cutting edge game of this calibre, but it means everyone looks unbearably cute with only masses of hair and large glassy eyes. And when they get in a fight, everything changes!

FLAPBEAT

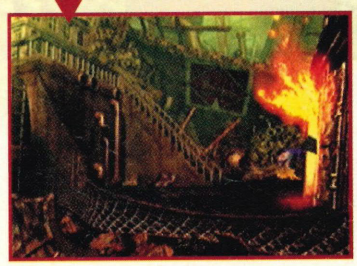
The combat has to be the biggest pull of *FFVII*. For this, the entire game moves up a gear and pulls out all the stops. You are whisked from your walkabout adventure to a full 3-D texture-mapped environment with rapidly switching camera angles, blazing magic attacks and so many crazy monsters even all the wacky Japanese

BURNOUT

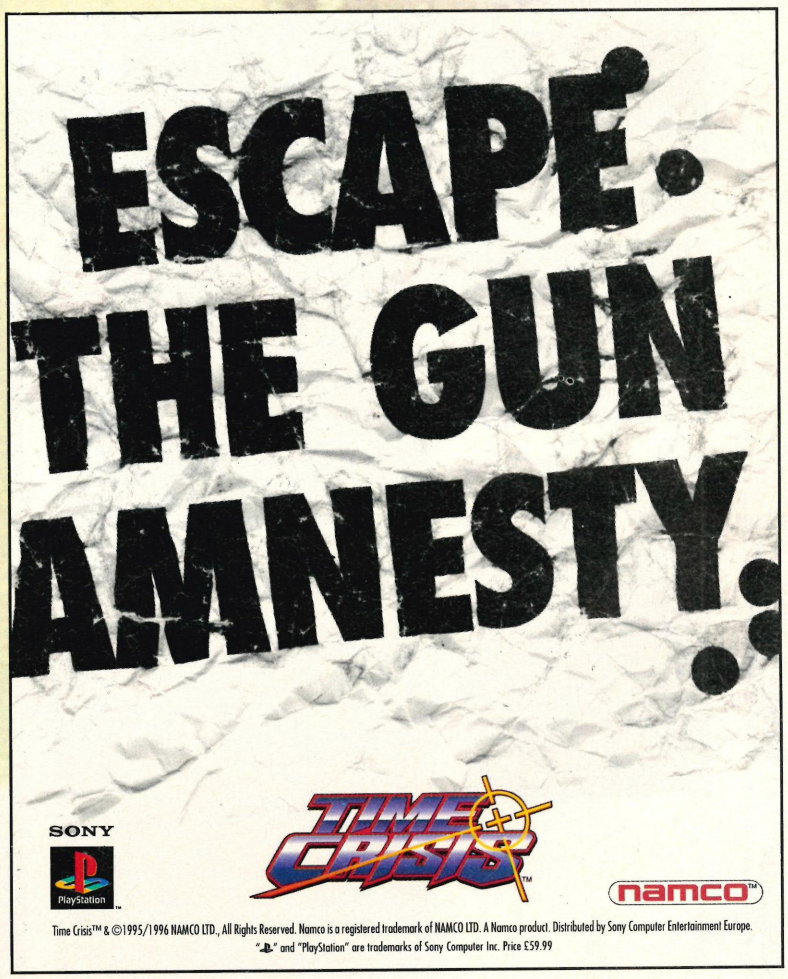
Here's is an example of one of the clever techniques used very well in *Final Fantasy VII*. Beginning with one of the gorgeous rendered scenes, the game switches to FMV of the same scene to animate a massive explosion and then back to the game seamlessly. Applause, I think, is in order.





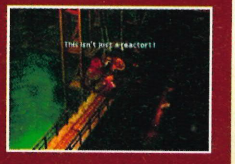


"Easily the most tasteful, dramatic scenes of any adventure title!"



DEJA VU

WATCH OUT FOR CLOUD HAVING HIS PREMONITIONS. HE USUALLY FALLS TO THE FLOOR BEFORE HAVING ONE, SO YOU KNOW TO PAY ATTENTION. THEY ALWAYS PROVIDE VITAL CLUES TO THE STORY.





"Finally, a game of strategy and wits that looks fantastic!"

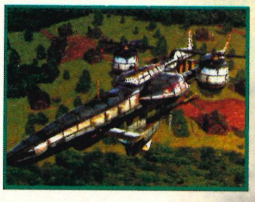
programmers stuffed into Square's Meguro building must have been running out of ideas towards the end. Your guys suddenly get noses, mouths and hands, and expand to normal human proportions. Finally, a game of strategy and wits that looks fantastic!

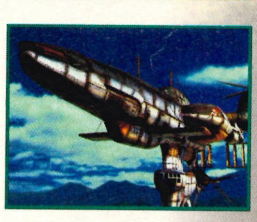
Besides the high quality visuals, real time battle is the key element that is arousing unashamed geeks around the planet for *Final Fantasy VII*. As you will know, most RPGs (including *Suikoden* and *Vandal-Hearts* on the PSX) force a turn-based, board game-like fight that tends to offend action fans with its non-reflex-intensive gameplay, but *Final Fantasy VII* sorts that out. Each person in your party has a time bar, and they have to wait until it reaches the top before you can give them a command. As the team gains members time really becomes a factor, so you keep some people from attacking right away to make them available at more strategic

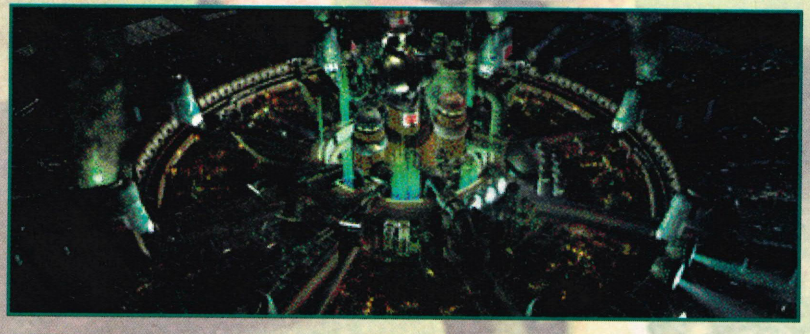


[ABOVE] You could be discovered any second, but still you have to press a switch at exactly the same time as two team mates to open the door. Argh!

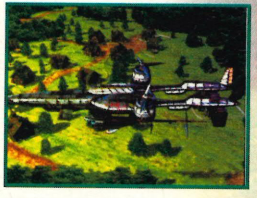




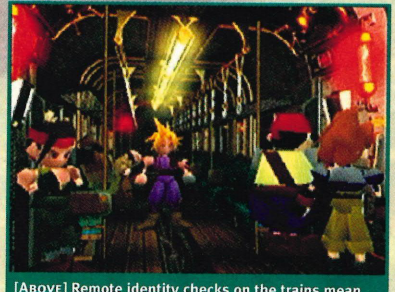




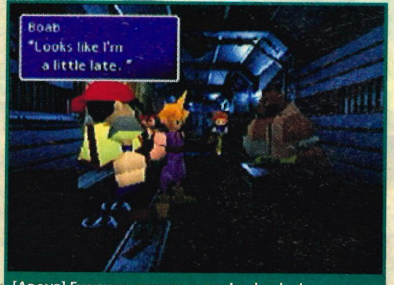








[ABOVE] Remote identity checks on the trains mean you can never relax, as the risk of being caught is very real.



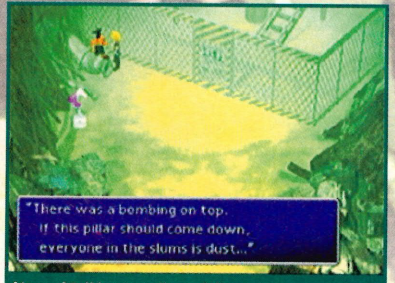
[ABOVE] Everyone presumes you're dead when you miss the rendezvous after the first mission, so they rejoice when you finally make it.



[ABOVE] Travelling through the slums, we found an entrance to the home of this man who seems to live in a pipe. Nobody knows what he's there for.



[ABOVE] As if you didn't have enough romantic interests already, you can get Tifa in the mood with a bunch of flowers.



[ABOVE] Talking to ordinary folks on your travels is good way to find out what they think of your rebel Avalanche team. Many are frightened.

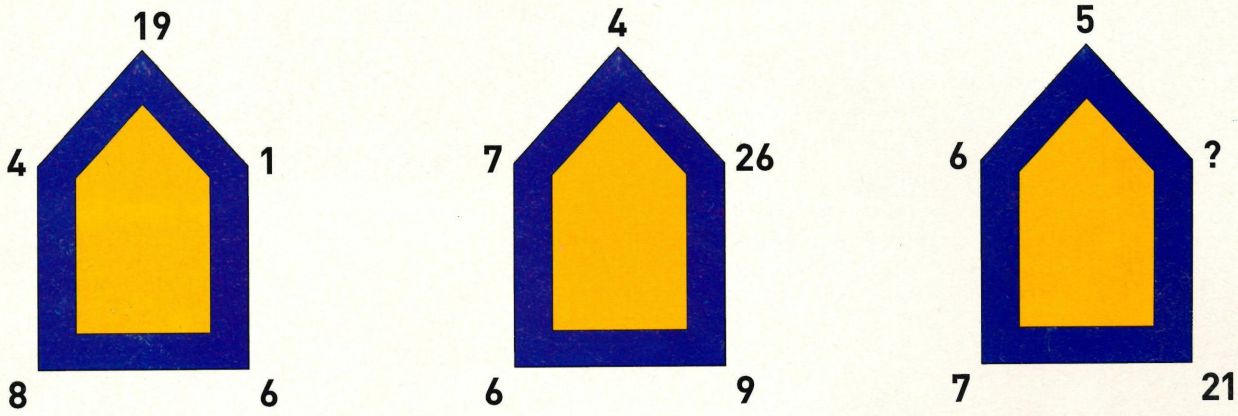


[ABOVE] Jessie cleans the radioactive soot off your face after a heavy job. Thought the relationship was purely professional? Think again.

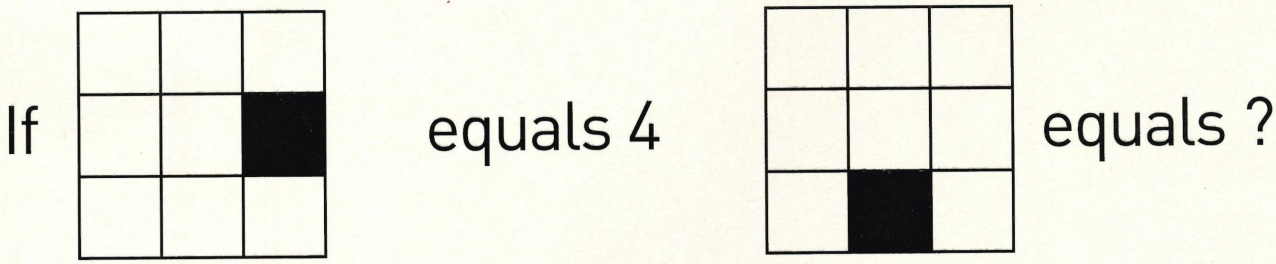
The question mark should be replaced by what number?



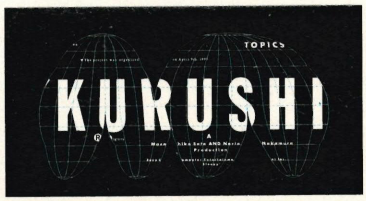
What is the missing value?



Complete the equation



IF YOU CAN SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS, YOU'RE HALFWAY TO SOLVING



It's what your IQ's been asking for

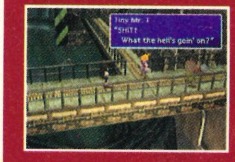


SONY PlayStation™

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RATED M

IT MIGHT HAVE SMALL, CHUBBY, CUTE CHARACTERS, BUT *FINAL FANTASY VII* HAS A FEW ADULT THEMES. BARRET HAS LOTS OF ATTITUDE AND IS RATHER PRONE TO SWEARING, WHICH WE ALL FOUND CHILDISHLY AMUSING. A COUPLE AT THE TRAIN STATION COMMIT A MODERN JAPANESE-STYLE DUO SUICIDE IN FRONT OF YOU TOO, AND THERE'S MORE TO COME.





[ABOVE] Sick of the annoying little Smogger being, Barret whips out his favourite Fire spell to finish it off.



[ABOVE] A typical weapon store in Midgar. This one gets such a little amount of business that he's desperate for your custom.

points. Another example of the real time system is when one level boss, the Guard Scorpion fights you and raises his pointed tail – if you just go ahead and use the same attack pattern on him he'll counter with the deadly Laser Tail, but wait a bit and move in when the tail is down and he's history.

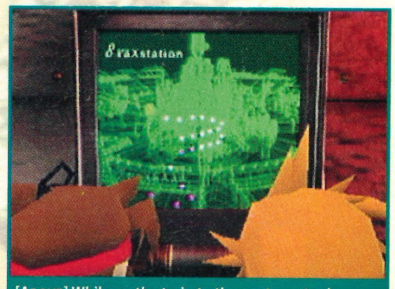
MONO DRIVE

Placement in the pack is taken into account, so weaker fighters should be equipped with long range weapons or serious magical power and arranged behind the harder blokes with better protection. Anyone can be ordered to defend and you can even try your luck by holding R1 and L1 to make your whole mob run away, but this won't always work out. Spells and sorcery play a large part too, but the system of upgrading, enhancing and combining lumps of magic-enriched Materia gets so brain-twistingly complicated that, last time we checked, Stephen Hawking was "having a bit of bother" with it.

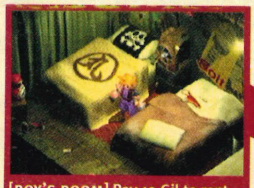
After buying this game, you honestly need look no further for your adventuring needs. There cannot possibly be a most accomplished role-playing game until they better develop those virtual reality goggles and rubber bodysuits in preparation for the release of *Final Fantasy: Tia Carrere*. If action is your bag normally then make the effort to try before you buy, but it would be difficult to be disappointed unless you didn't know what you were doing.



[ABOVE] The dastardly Guard Scorpion gets a bit out of order with your mate Barret. Are you going to stand for that?

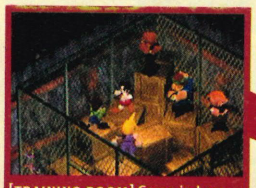


[ABOVE] While on the train to the next reactor in Midgar, take some time out to use the public access computer with Tifa to learn more about the city.



[BOY'S ROOM] Pay 10 Gil to rent the room for one night and have a rest.





[TRAINING ROOM] Come in here for an extensive training session on magic and battle.



[WEAPONS SHOP] Buy shiny new iron bangles here, sell the bronze ones.

FINAL FANTASY VII™

PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●●●●○
SOUNDS	●●●●●●○○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●●●●○
VALUE	●●●●●●●●○○
MIDGETS	●●●●●●●●●○

PLAYED 93%

The final word in adventure!

ALTERNATIVELY:
VANDAL-HEARTS (81%)
SUIKODEN (80%)

SO FAST IT'LL MAKE YOU SICK.

Incredible effects. Non-stop turbulence. Surging waves. And that's just your stomach.



RAPID RACER

THE ULTIMATE POWER BOAT RACE

SOUNDTRACK BY APOLLO FOUR FORTY.

SONY

PlayStation

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SKULLMON

JUST WHEN *EARTHWORM JIM* MADE A BRAIN TUMOUR SEEM LIKE A BIRTHDAY PRESENT, ALONG COMES ANOTHER WACKY PLATFORM ADVENTURE FROM THE SAME GUYS TO REALLY DO YOUR HEAD IN!

Written By Ryan Butt

There's something distinctly unnerving about people who work with clay. At least there is about The Neverhood – a 'shot away' bunch of programming mercenaries who, looking through the past projects of the individual members, have worked on some of the most bizarre and twisted games ever to grace the consoles. There is, however, one common denominator that links their creative talent together – *Earthworm Jim*!

Arguably the most imaginative, funny, and, dare we say, drug-induced, game ever devised, *Earthworm Jim* was a huge success and instantly made those who developed it (Shiny Entertainment) a household name. Well now many of the creative genius behind *Earthworm Jim* have bolted the Shiny stable and gone on to form this band of degenerates, collectively known as The Neverhood.

Blueprint

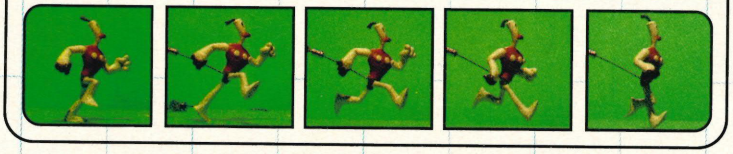
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: The Neverhood
% Complete: 60%
Expected Release Date: January '98
Origin: US
No of Players: 1



SILLY PUTTY

Ah the wonders of claymation (that's animation using clay in case you didn't know). First there was Morph – Tony Hart's annoying desktop buddy on his art programmes. Then there were those Creature Comforts adverts created by multi-Oscar winner Nick Park, who then went on to create Wallace & Grommit. And then there were the games...

Claymation first appeared on the Amiga and Super NES. Utilised by such games as *Super Putty*, *Claymates* and *Clay Fighters*, which is soon to be appearing on PlayStation. The process of using clay as a form of animation is a very long and painstaking process whereby characters and objects are sketched in sequence and then constructed out of clay, these are then photographed, moved, photographed, moved and so on. So at the end of a very gruelling process, you're left with a series of photographs that plot even the most minuscule of movements and then these are run in sequence (kind of like a flick-book) to give the image of movement. Next month, finger-painting as a means of producing the new wave of racing sims!





[Above] Just like women, the Skullmonkeys that inhabit Idznak can't stand noxious fumes from the bottom, so use this natural chemical warfare against them.



[Above] Even superheroes get the munchies. Here Klaymen and his retarded sidekick stock-up on cakes.

INSANE IN THE BRAIN

Skullmonkeys is The Neverhood's first foray into PlayStation territory, and it has already etched a carving on our subconscious that reads "This game is insanely mental!"

It centres around Klaymen, the hero of the PC adventure game, *The Neverhood*, who, it has to be said, has got a real fight on his hands. If you've had any previous dealing with Klaymen's adventures, then you'll already know that he has an arch nemesis by the name of Klogg, whom he defeated in spectacular fashion in his previous adventure. The upshot of it all, and basically all you need to know, is that Klogg was left stranded and floating around space until he finally crashed landed on a remote planet called Idznak, home of the Skullmonkeys.

SKETCHY STUFF



Before



After

Each level in *Skullmonkeys* has been intricately planned by a series of sketches and doodles to outline the shape and appearance. It is from these scrappy bits of paper that the final levels are formed.

IKEYS



[Above] The sinister Klogg earbends all who'll listen with his dodgy battleplan. Does he plan mass genocide or what?

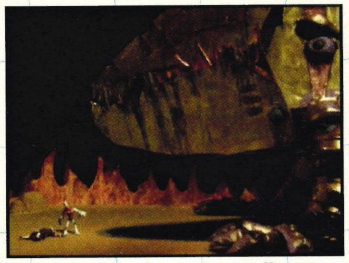
"Revolutionary, highly artistic and witty"

The Skullmonkey are strange, slightly retarded beings with the bodies of apes, and the heads of human skulls. Despite being thicker than the proverbial pig excrement, they are inventive, tricky creatures who are prone to bouts of extreme violence. When Klogg crash landed on Idznak, and subsequently straight on top of an unsuspecting Skullmonkey, he stole the Skullmonkey's skin and skull to form a disguise to enable him to blag his way around the surroundings and communicate with the extremely hostile inhabitants of the planet.

Using his powers of persuasion, Klogg somehow manages to rile the Skullmonkeys into declaring war on The Neverhood – a planet consisting entirely of clay (and just so happening to be Klaymen's home planet). Luckily though, Jerry-O (touted

THE BIG PICTURE

Skullmonkeys contains over 12 minutes of cinematic footage in-between the levels. Take this epic saga for example...



A huge battleship overshadows Klaymen and his wounded mate, you'd think it was curtains until...



...Er, some goofball with unsightly bum-cleavage appears from nowhere to save him!



[Above] Klaymen can pick-up a wealth of power-ups throughout the game, including anabolic steroids to beef him up.



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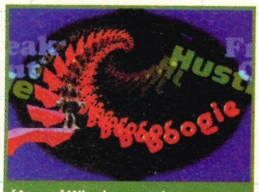


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[Above] Who knows what goes on in the mind of those strange blokes at The Neverhood? This disco scene is a prime example of their deranged sense of humour.

the Neverhood

SOFTOGRAPHY

Skullmonkeys (PSX)
The Neverhood (CD-ROM)

as being the last good Skullmonkey) was hiding in bushes when the fraudster drew up his battle plan, and so he promptly sent out a shuttle to The Neverhood to bring back a Klay brave enough to take on the entire Skullmonkey army and foil Klogg – well guess who is dispatched!

And so arrives Klaymen, fit, lean and eager for action in a game that makes *Earthworm Jim* look like a right square!

Putty Squad

Skullmonkeys is a standard platform game (which, amazingly, there aren't very many of on PlayStation) that features over 100 levels of madcap humour and mayhem in which Klaymen, aided by his guide, Willie Trombone must battle against the Skullmonkeys and wipe them out before they can do unto him.

The brunt of the action consists of running, jumping and butt-bouncing on enemies to kill them, but Klaymen can also pick up and use a whole host of trippy weaponry to make life a little less hectic when the going gets tough. For example, the Fart-head will dispel foes with a nasty niff, and the Hamster-shield (what is it with hamsters, first *Earthworm Jim* threatened with being crushed by one of huge proportions, and now this!) will fend off any unwanted advances from over-angry Skullmonkeys.



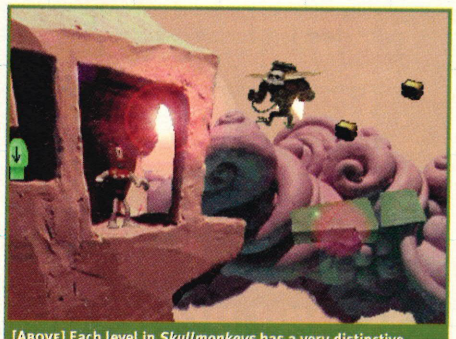
[Above] By bouncing on these strange plants, Klaymen will be able to restart the level from this point should he die.

As you would expect from a game that utilises clay as a means of crisp, precise and comical animation, *Skullmonkeys* looks very sharp and colourful, and is packed with sophisticated as well as toilet humour that will no doubt go straight over the heads of the young gamers. Such is the after-pub appeal of this game.

Apart from the forthcoming *Clay Fighters* game from Interplay, there is nothing to rival the vibrant appearance of this on PlayStation at the moment, which is why it stands out so much. It includes over 20,000 frames of animation and 12 minutes of cinematic, feature-quality puppet animation between the levels.

The fact that times, and gaming styles have changed significantly since the glory days of the 16-bit consoles when simplistic platform nonsense like this was in abundance seems to hold no grounds with the crazy guys at The Neverhood. With 3-D technology flying around the shop floor like confetti, and even Earthworm Jim about to make a rekindled 3-D appearance, has the era of the conventional 2-D platformer really died? Not if Klaymen has got anything to do with it!





[Above] Each level in *Skullmonkeys* has a very distinctive look about it that can only be achieved by using clay.

THERE GOES THE NEVERHOOD!



Strange game, strange name, and strange people! The Neverhood was founded in June 1995 by Douglas TenNapel who was animator/character designer on *Earthworm Jim* (SNES, Mega-Drive). Doug also has his own animated show, *Project Geeker* which is the highest rated children's TV show for CBS, apparently.

The Neverhood also comprises of the artistic talents of...

Edward Schofield (Artist): Animator on *Cool Spot* (SNES), *Aladdin* (Mega-Drive) as well as *Earthworm Jim*. Famed for his 'cool' background design and exquisite musical taste.

Mike Dietz (Artist): Lead animator on *Global Gladiators*, *Cool Spot* and *Aladdin* (Mega-Drive). The indisputable best animator in the biz, he also likes to raise Sea Monkeys.

Mark Lorenzen (Artist): Chief backgrounder on *Jurassic Park 1&2*, *Vectorman*, and *Roadrunner* (Mega-Drive). Described by the others as "a brain with legs", go figure.

Eric Ciccone (Artist): Was an animator on *Earthworm Jim 1&2* (Mega-Drive). Is actually Madonna's cousin, and he likes to snowboard and pen artistic designs for his boards.

Ellis Goodson (Artist): Was conceptual artist on *Vectorman 1&2*, *Jurassic Park 1&2* and *Shadowrun* (Mega-Drive).

Steve Crow (Artist): Was background designer on *Global Gladiators*, *Cool Spot*, *Aladdin*, *Jungle Book* (Mega-Drive) and *Wild 9's* (PSX).

Brian Belfield (Programmer): Was programmer/designer on *Spiderman* (32X), *Jurassic Park*, and *Joe Montana Football* (Mega-Drive). Likes to walk, is very good at Descent and applauds the two people that bought Spiderman!

Kenton Leach (Programmer): His only previous assignment *was programming The Neverhood* (CD-ROM). International man of mystery, or so his colleagues say.

Tim Lorenzen (Programmer): Previously worked on *The Neverhood* and *The Great Word Adventure* (CD-ROM), so we wouldn't have heard of him before! Like Ska music and came from 7th Level.

MONKEY MAGIC

There are three main characters in *Skullmonkeys*, so here are the formal introductions...



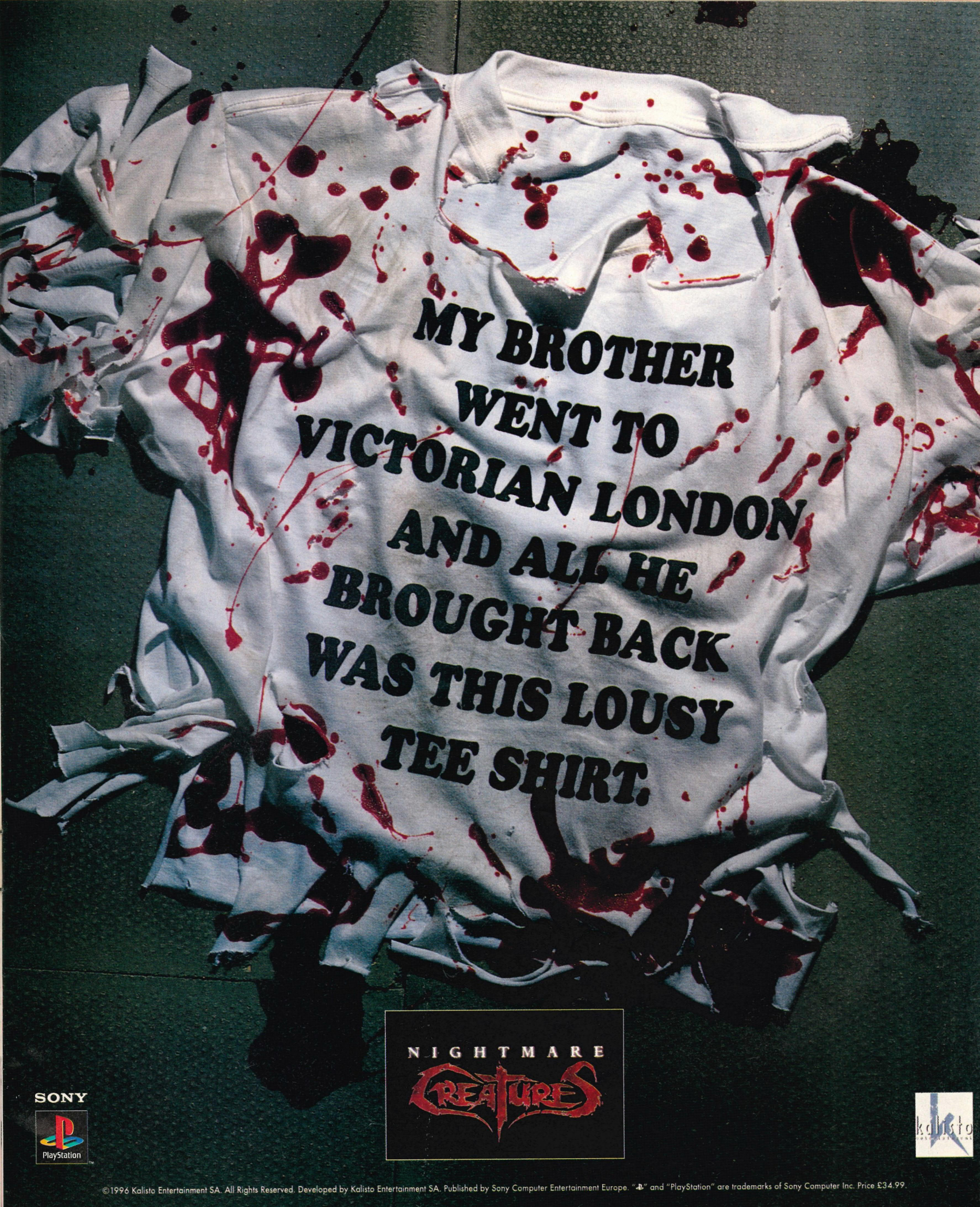
Klaymen – The hero of the adventure. Although he looks like a duck, Klaymen is nothing more than a crude-looking blob of lanky clay that can run, jump, swing, fart and sing!



Klogg – This is Klaymen's arch enemy, and the one to blame for this whole war-thing with the Skullmonkeys. Bung him in the kiln, we say!



Willie – This goofy twerp is Klaymen's backwards assistant and guide. He'll help you through the complex levels, believe it or not!

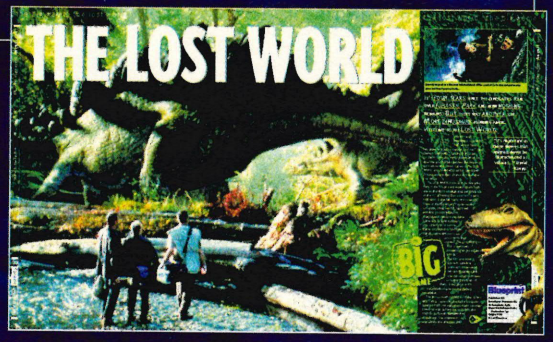


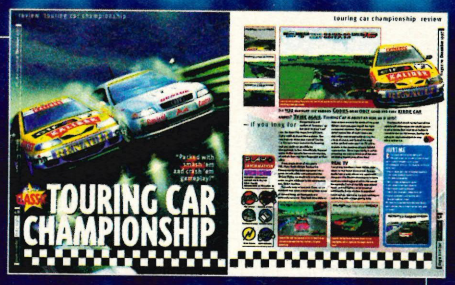
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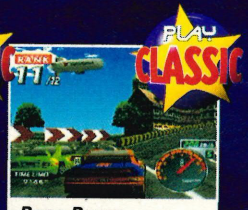
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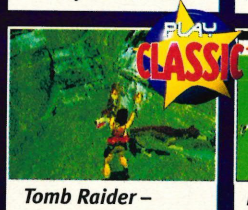
Soul Blade – rated 96% in PLAY!



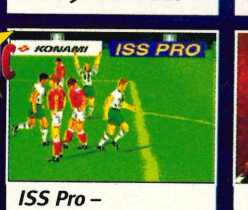
Micro Machines V3 – rated 92% in PLAY!



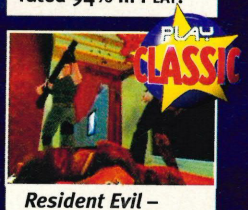
Rage Racer – rated 94% in PLAY!



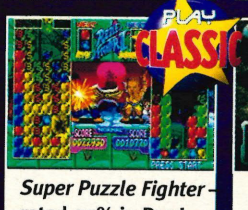
Tomb Raider – rated 94% in PLAY!



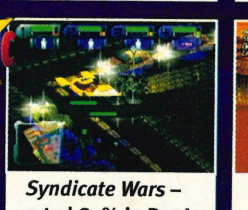
ISS Pro – rated 84% in PLAY!



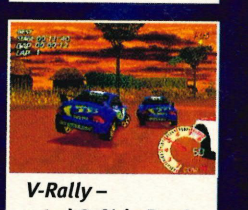
Resident Evil – rated 95% in PLAY!



Super Puzzle Fighter – rated 90% in PLAY!



Syndicate Wars – rated 85% in PLAY!



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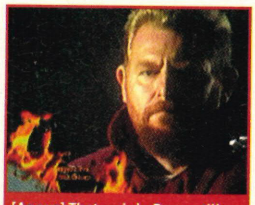
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RESIDENT EVIL: DIRECTOR'S CUT

AS *RESIDENT EVIL 2* IS STILL SOME WAY OFF IN THE DISTANCE, WILL THIS RE-HASHED ORIGINAL KEEP YOU HAPPY IN THE MEANTIME?

Written By Graeme Nicholson

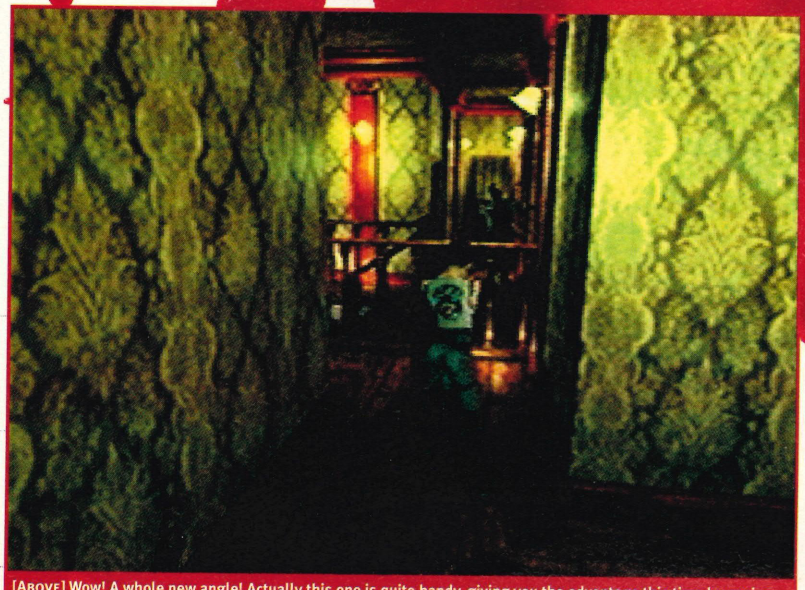
It happens often these days. You faithfully buy the video of a favourite film the very second it comes out on video like a real fan, and what happens? You see it re-released only months later, with two minutes of footage from the editing suite floor, no doubt digitally remastered and in the original movie theatre widescreen ratio. And with a cooler box. This is the deal with *Resident Evil: Director's Cut*.



[Above] That weirdo Barry still looks like he glues a false beard to his ugly mug for the part.

The entire game is almost exactly the same as the *Resident Evil* you most likely have already, but like the director's cut videos, a few little elements have been stuck in to make pots more cash selling the same product to the same audience. Will you be missing out if you don't buy into this cold-hearted business move? No, you will not.

Even before the game begins, it is obvious Capcom wasn't serious about releasing something truly collectable. That terrible FMV sequence where the STARS team get abandoned out in the fields by the mansion is exactly the same as the sanitised Western version we got last time! Something calling itself the "Director's Cut" should at least have the original, uncut Japanese intro from *BioHazard*. Not a good start.



[Above] Wow! A whole new angle! Actually this one is quite handy, giving you the advantage this time by seeing the zombie before you meet it.

BLOOD LUST

Then we come to the game itself. Choosing the advanced mode is the way to see the game with all its alleged changes, so make that your first choice. The characters all have new clothes with a little bit more detail than before, and Jill was clearly experimenting with her hairstyle before she was called onto the set. The models look more rounded too, but it doesn't take long before you see that the same flawed motions (such as hovering when you draw the gun and turn) and everything they do is merely taken directly from the ageing original and applied to the slightly updated bodies.

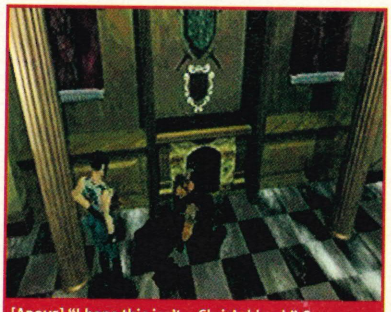
The unrealistic postures and gestures that were forgivable last time as *Resident Evil* was making a new genre for the PlayStation are here, as is the same diabolically wooden "acting" which sounds like it was recorded by a bunch of high



[Above] One of the better new bits, a zombie ambles up behind you in the bathroom, only visible at first in the mirror. Scary.



[Above] Obtain poor Forest's bazooka early on and you get to wander through the first areas with some substantial firepower.



[Above] "I hope this isn't... Chris's blood." Capcom still won't be making an appearance at next year's Emmys.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Capcom
Supplier: The Video Game Centre on 01202 527314
Price: £59.99
Release date: Out Now (import)

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RESIDENT EVIL 2

As veterans of the original *Resident Evil*, by far the most fun we had was with the RE2 preview disc. It will only give you about 10 to 15 minutes of gameplay from beginning to end if you don't stand around gawping at the new scenery, but there is a surprising amount crammed into this short spree.

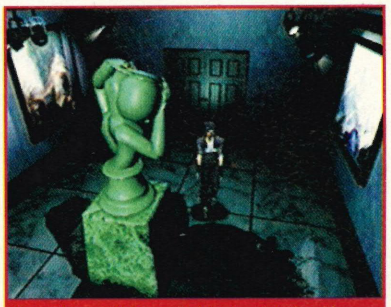
Leon is the only character you can use here, and the demo begins with you controlling him out in the streets of Racoon City next to a massive accident scene of some kind. Two zombies stomp towards you from the 30-foot flames and as they emerge you see they're actually on fire themselves! From there you make your way round to the local gun store and then into the zombie-cop infested Racoon Police Station. Control is very similar, but the new scenery is fantastic and Leon does some great arm clutching and dragging of his lame leg when he suffers a big multi-zombie attack. The demo ends when a mysterious woman who's face you only see for a split second fires a shot at you in the offices of the police station. Very promising.



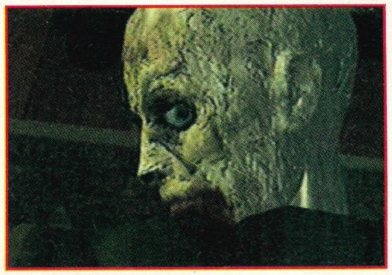


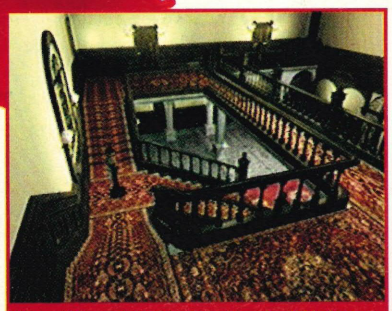




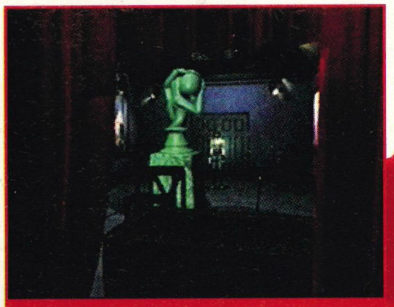


[Above] The training mode lets you play the old version of the game with better armour on Jill.

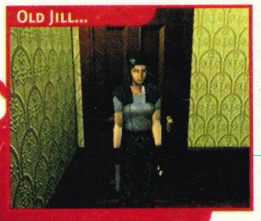




[Above] The main hall looks quite splendid in its new perspective, even though the awful "travelling up the stairs" cut scene is still there.



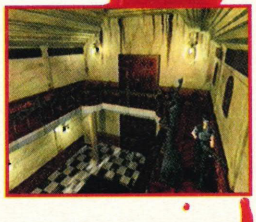
[Above] The room of the first puzzle has all new views, but they are neither better or worse than before.

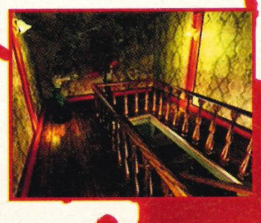


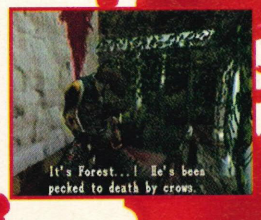
Old Jill...



New Jill!







school students in drama class.

What you'll notice most if you spent some heavy playing time with the first *Resident Evil* is that every now and then a room you walk into has a new set of camera angles. Not new graphics, not new rooms, but just the old set re-rendered from a couple of new perspectives. Often where there was one zombie before, there'll be two in this new version, and sometimes you'll find yourself under a surprise attack like the dogs smashing through a couple of windows where they didn't appear before.

FRESH MEAT

But there is absolutely nothing here to warrant buying the game if you already have the original, especially with all the old problems like overly long cut scenes which remain unstoppable (big mistake) and those hideous door-opening shots that allow the next background to load (bigger mistake).

So why is anybody buying it? Well, this US version comes with a free playable demo disc of *Resident Evil 2*! As delicious as that might sound, (see the boxout) it is simply not worth the price of the whole *Director's Cut* game just to have a quick burst on the coveted *RE2*. If you are perhaps a new PlayStation owner and haven't yet bought the old *Resident Evil* then it is probable you'll get a kick out of this release, as it really isn't a bad game to play on its own and everyone loved it when it came out. It's just a bit slow by today's standards and players of the first game will likely be more annoyed about what they've left in than pleased about the few morsels they've added.



"A bit slow by today's standards!"

PLAY

If you own *Resident Evil:*

Looks	7
Sounds	8
Gameplay	7
Value	1
Haemoglobin	8

PLAYED 40%

If you don't own *Resident Evil:*

Looks	7
Sounds	8
Gameplay	6
Value	7
Haemoglobin	6

PLAYED 83%

Only for Playstation newcomers.

Alternatively:
Resident Evil 2 (March '98)
Resident Evil (95%)

Written By Tom Sargent

BOMB THE BASE!

G-Police isn't shy in the weapons department. Progress through the levels and more are made available. Here are some that you'll be trying out.



THE 30MM CANNON is a standard fixed placement for the HAVOC's gun housing. It fires 30mm shells at a very high rate, but overheats with continual use.



THE BEACON is a device which fires out flares that can be homed-in on. This is especially useful when chasing a potential felon who keeps stopping at certain pick-up points and then moves somewhere else.



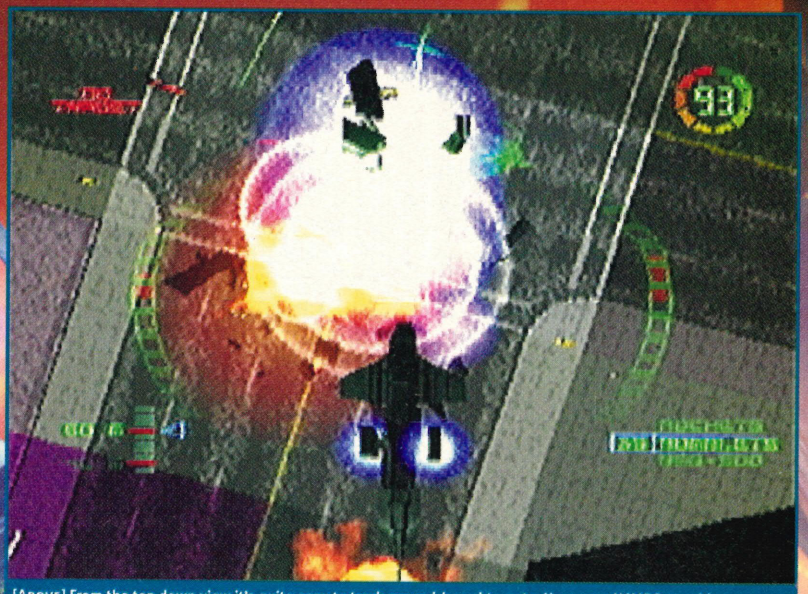
THE MATRA is a medium range, unguided rocket. Each ammo pack will fire three warheads and the standard payload is usually quite high as the warhead is light.



MISSILE IR. Works by following the current locked target from the HUD system. It will follow until it looses lock or exceeds maximum range.



THE FIRE-STREAK MISSILE is highly manoeuvrable with an extremely high rate of turn. Although much more agile than the IR missile it supersedes, it has a less powerful warhead.



[Above] From the top down view it's quite easy to track ground-based targets. Here your HAVOC gunship unleashes a streak of 30mm cannon shells to rip open the hull of a criminal on the run.

G-POLICE

Murder, MAYHEM and corruption. Psygnosis extends the LONG ARM of the LAW in its arcade GUNSHIP simulator.

Big brother is watching you... First came the mega cities of *Judge Dredd*, then Ridley Scott's awe-inspiring *Blade Runner* backdrops, and now the future is even grimmer thanks to Psygnosis' moody 'dome'-based *G-Police*.

The year is 2079 and after inter-colony skirmishes, governments have been unceremoniously replaced by huge corporations, which reluctantly agree to fund an independent force to police their territories. You are a member of this elite band, known as the G-Police.

Based on one of Jupiter's moons, Callisto, and spanning 35 missions, this is all an excuse for some serious argy-bargy in a highly populated true 3-D cityscape. The action is extremely biased towards shoot-'em-up air/ground combat as you take control of a highly-manoeuvrable and heavily armed HAVOC close air support gunship (a bit like the vector thrust Apache gunships).

G-Police really is quite a surprise package for two reasons. First, the game has finally arrived after being in development for nearly two years (see our November '95 preview in issue one if you don't believe us!). And second, at first glance you put your head in your hands in total disbelief at the graphics. They're extremely disappointing – especially the pixellation and texture warping when you get up close to buildings.

PERPS

You can lengthen the horizon though, albeit at the expense of a few frames of animation, and when you get to grips with the excellent control of the HAVOC gunship things really do improve. This is no *Colony Wars*, however, as visually the two games are worlds apart. What *G-Police* does excel in is the mission structure and overall presentation, including some of the best cut-scenes on PSX.

From the very first mission briefing you're hooked. The storyline is extremely believable, slickly presented and kept simple. Even when a mission gets going, a guiding voice and a handy map option always keep you abreast of any developments and new way points.

Before long you're sweating like mad to reach the level goals, most of which involve following, eliminating and protecting individuals or various craft. It's gripping stuff which somehow manages to spur the player on through each unfolding level. Rogue droids go on the rampage, shuttles need protecting, suspicious packages and vehicles must be scanned and you even have to foil assassination attempts to try and maintain the fragile alliance between the rival corporations.



[Above] After scanning this truck, you're informatively told that it's hostile. Oh really, whatever gave us that impression?

DROKK!

The further you get through *G-Police* the harder it becomes. One minute you're tracking a suspect when all of a sudden

PLAY INFORMATION



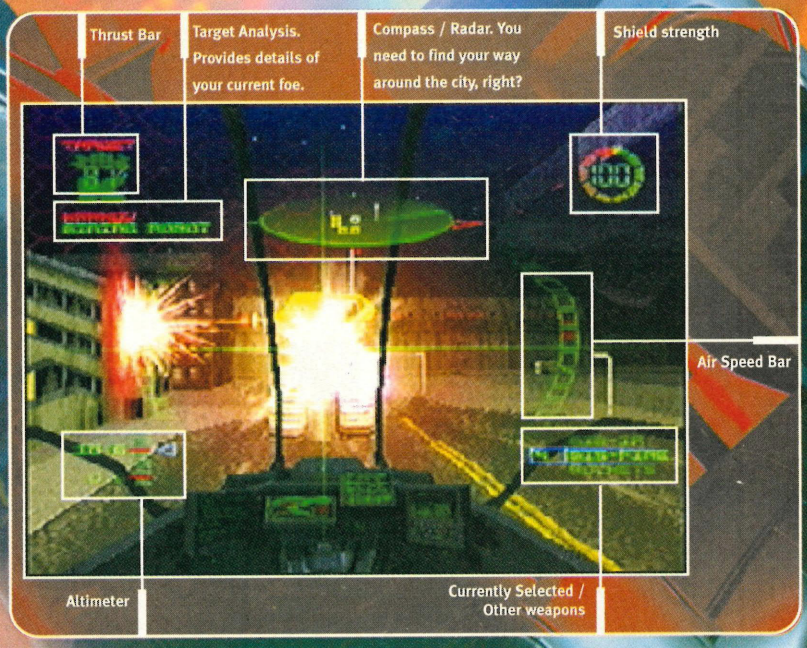
Publisher: Psygnosis
Customer support: 0151 2823000
Price: £44.99
Release date: 24 October '97



ONE PLAYER DUAL ANALOGUE



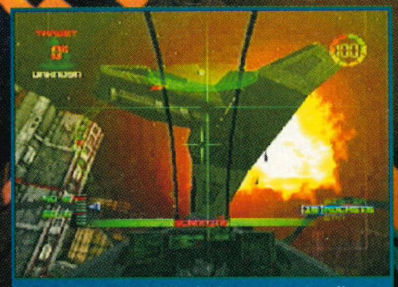
MEMORY CARD



"Action-packed strategy and hi-octane destruction await any would-be Rick Deckards..."



[Above] More often than not, you must escort your ground-based buddies to the scene of a crime, or give them cover from the air.



[Above] The pyrotechnics in the game are excellent. Just look at this crippled enemy streak by. One more hit should finish him off...



[Above] Clear this roadblock with a liberal dose of Missile IRs. It's the only way that the president's limo can make it through. All in day's work, mam.

two enemy craft appear from nowhere. What do you do? Risk breaking off the pursuit in order to deal with the felon? Or quickly take out the two ships, thus attaining a secondary objective.

The in-game lighting effects and pyrotechnics are well realised and you can see hundreds of civilian vehicles milling around doing their own thing, while you decide whether to torch them all just for the fun of it, or resume the current mission. You really feel as though you're immersed in a city, but this is marred by an awfully short horizon (especially if your craft is high up) resulting in confusion at times.

At first you can't actually destroy any scenery with your cache of kick ass weapons, but later levels introduce you to such delights as the Vulcan cannon, Plasma launcher and a devastating 1000KG bomb!

G-Police is a thoroughly entertaining product that admittedly lacks the visual polish of it's cousin *Colony Wars*, but after you get to grips with the tricky handling of the HAVOC gunship (learn the 'double tap' school of flying), you can sit back and throw yourself into the thriving cities beneath the domes, where 35 levels of action-packed strategy and hi-octane destruction await any would-be Rick Deckards.

CAM SHOTS

As we are all aware, every programmer and his mother likes to show off the versatility of his/her 3-D game engine, and *G-Police* is no different. Oh no. There are five different camera angles you know.



Cockpit. One of the most practical views and the easiest to play the game with.



Full Screen. The same as the cockpit, and easily the best way to take out enemies.



Drop Cam. Serves no purpose other than watching your ship fly by from an external angle.



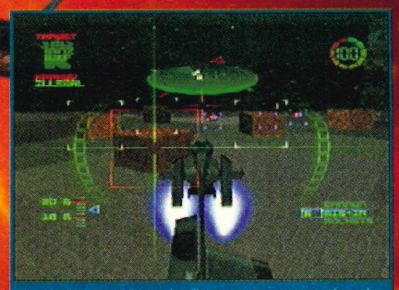
Top down. Useful for bombing runs and chasing ground based vehicles.



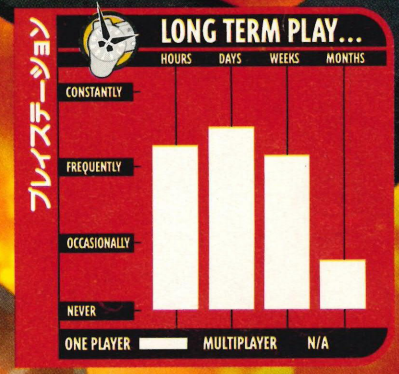
Follow Cam. Quite a handy third-person view, which provides some exciting moments.



[Above] While escorting the shuttle containing an important politician, you must foil any assassination attempts from gun-toting trucks below.



[Above] Viewed from the first-person perspective, the HAVOC gunship's scanners indicate an illegal shipment in the crate with a red square around it.



PLAY

Looks	8
Sounds	8
Gameplay	8
Value	8
Tension	8

PLAYED 84%

Atmospheric, pulse-raising 3-D arcade shooter

Alternatively:
Tunnel B1 (87%)
Warhawk (68%)

AIR RACE

CAN T-HQ'S NEW AIRBORNE ARCADE RACER BLAZE A TRAIL THROUGH THE HEAVENS, OR DOES IT CRASH AND BURN DURING TAKE-OFF?

You'd have to be out of your tree to try this for real. Flying propeller-driven planes through tunnels, cities and waterfall-covered tunnels is for crazies or people with a death wish. You need only have seen the recent Stealth Fighter crash at an American air show to realise how dangerous flying can be, even without doing stunts.

Air Race is fundamentally a bog standard racing game that attempts to add impetus to the genre by forcing the player to go up and down as opposed to just left and right. This works to a certain extent. It's fast and furious and you really get the feeling of exhilaration as you surge through narrow mountain passes and built-up areas.

But after a few hours play you realise that there's not quite enough to it to keep you coming back for more. The most memorable car games, such as *Rage Racer* and *Formula 1 '97* keep you coming back again and again because they make you feel more involved with the environment.

BLACK BOX

Perhaps it's the fact that you're on solid ground and can feel the cars squealing around a corner, but the underlying feeling you'll get from playing this is one of boredom, especially when you realise there are only four tracks in total.

Initially, there are 11 planes to choose from and two hidden extras to discover when you've won all of the courses, and they all handle differently. To help beginners get to grips with the control, there's auto-pilot assistance and a course guide represented by a stream of balls to follow, but this soon gets annoying as you must turn it off each time you race.

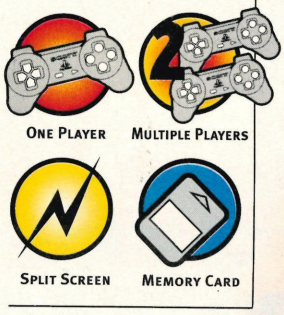
Options include a Time Attack and Competition mode, with various pick-ups to provide racers with an advantage littered around each level. The downsides include the exclusion of Dual Analogue control, no way of shooting other planes out of the sky, and no damage inflicted on planes during mid-air collisions. There is a two player split-screen option with minimal slow-down, but *Air Race* is never more than average.

"*Air Race* is fundamentally a bog standard racing game..."

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: T-HQ
Customer support: 01372 745222
Price: £39.99
Release date: November '97

ONE PLAYER · MULTIPLE PLAYERS · SPLIT SCREEN · MEMORY CARD





[ABOVE] The only contact you have with rival planes is the occasional lifeless mid-air collision, unfortunately there's no shooting.



[ABOVE] Each course is reasonably well rendered, but there is quite a lot of graphical pop-up.



[ABOVE] Two player split-screen option is a welcome inclusion and there's hardly any slowdown at all.

FOUR COURSE DEAL

There are only four courses available in *Air Race*. Two hard, one medium and an easy. It's a shame that a couple of bonus levels weren't included.



CANYON (MEDIUM)



MOUNTAIN (EASY)

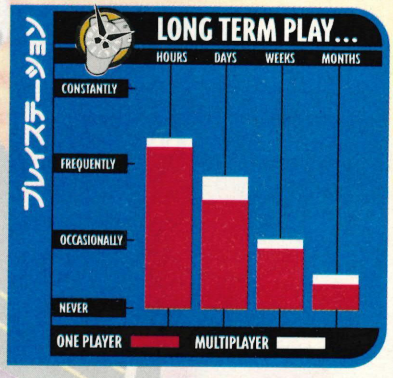


SNOW LAND (HARD)



SOUTH CITY (HARD)





PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●○○○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●○○○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●○○○○
VALUE	●●●●●○○○○○
CRASH	●●●●●●○○○○

PLAYED 68%

Humdrum racer offering short-term appeal...

ALTERNATIVELY:
RAGE RACER (94%)
RAY TRACERS (74%)

Written By Tom Sargent

MADDEN '98

"Madden '98 still looks like the attack of the Lego-men..."

THE AGEING BLOBBY-MAN IS BACK WITH MORE FRAMES, MORE PLAYS AND MORE AMUSING QUIPS THAN EVER BEFORE. ER, GREAT!

Written By Ryan Butt

What has happened to American football?



It used to be so cool. You couldn't walk down the street without some pillock wearing a huge oversized Dolphins jacket (actually, that was me!), or ridiculous duck-style Giants cap. Hell, it's not even cool for gangsta rappers to prance around looking mean in LA Raiders gear anymore. But most of all, the C4 coverage has been shifted around the late night schedules more times than that awful Nightshift program with Mr Bennet from *Take Heart*!

Whatever happens to the appeal and coverage of America's most flamboyant sport, you can always bet that big Madden will be back with the definitive game. *Madden '98* continues the annual trend of bumping-up the team stats with up-to-date player rosters, adding new strategic plays to make the ground with, and polishing up the front end with new play-by-play analysis and brilliant commentary.

The Games That Time Forgot



[Above] To assist you in precision passing, the button corresponding to each receiver is positioned boldly above their head. All you have to do is push that specific button and pray!

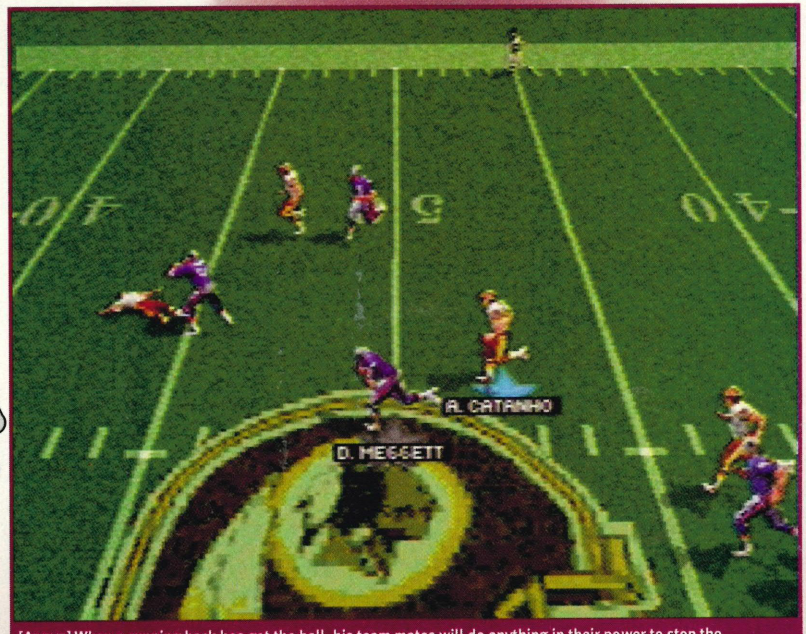
The Fridge

On the graphical side, it has to be said that *Madden '98* still looks like the attack of the Lego-men, but what we have got is an improved frame rate that enables more characters to move as precisely and smoothly as possible without slowdown, and this actually looks rather good. The AI of the computer-controlled players has also been improved, so now you really have to use cunning and strategy, as well as timing, to gain ground and ultimately score the touchdowns.

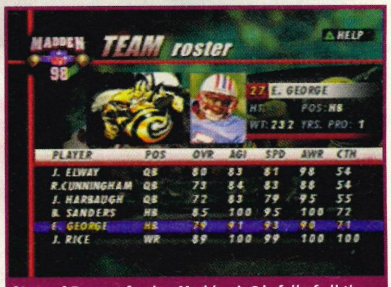
The amount of teams you can choose from is immense. Not only are there the current NFL teams, but past ones also – which consist of the season winners from a particular year (who could forget the Bears team of '85 which thrashed the Patriots in Superbowl XX!), although the names have sadly been omitted.

Madden '98 certainly has the gameplay, but it just doesn't have that definitive look about it. After the memorable 3DO version, nothing else in Gridiron simulation seems to come close. Apart from the dodgy graphics, the sound is also rather suspect, what you've got is a series of pre-recorded sentences recorded by the commentary team, and then the development in play that is crudely inserted into the middle. Example: "The Packers run for a SIX yard gain."

Everything else is in place – numerous stadiums with varying weather conditions, amusing injuries to players which sometimes even result in a motorised stretcher coming on to wheel them off,



[Above] When a running back has got the ball, his team mates will do anything in their power to stop the opposition from getting to him. See how the block in the distance shoves the unfortunate linebacker out of the way.



[Above] For stat freaks, *Madden '98* is full of all the up-to-date team rosters and player info, all lavishly presented in sports-channel style.

and witty, motion-captured touchdown celebrations. There are also options to create your own players, buy and sell big names, and devise you own custom tournaments. In our opinion, this is definitely the best American football simulation on the PlayStation, but there is enough room for improvement to guarantee another Madden outing next year!



PLAY Information



Publisher: EA
Customer support: 01753 549 442
Price: £39.99
Release date: Out now!



ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS



MEMORY CARD MULTI-TAP

PLAY

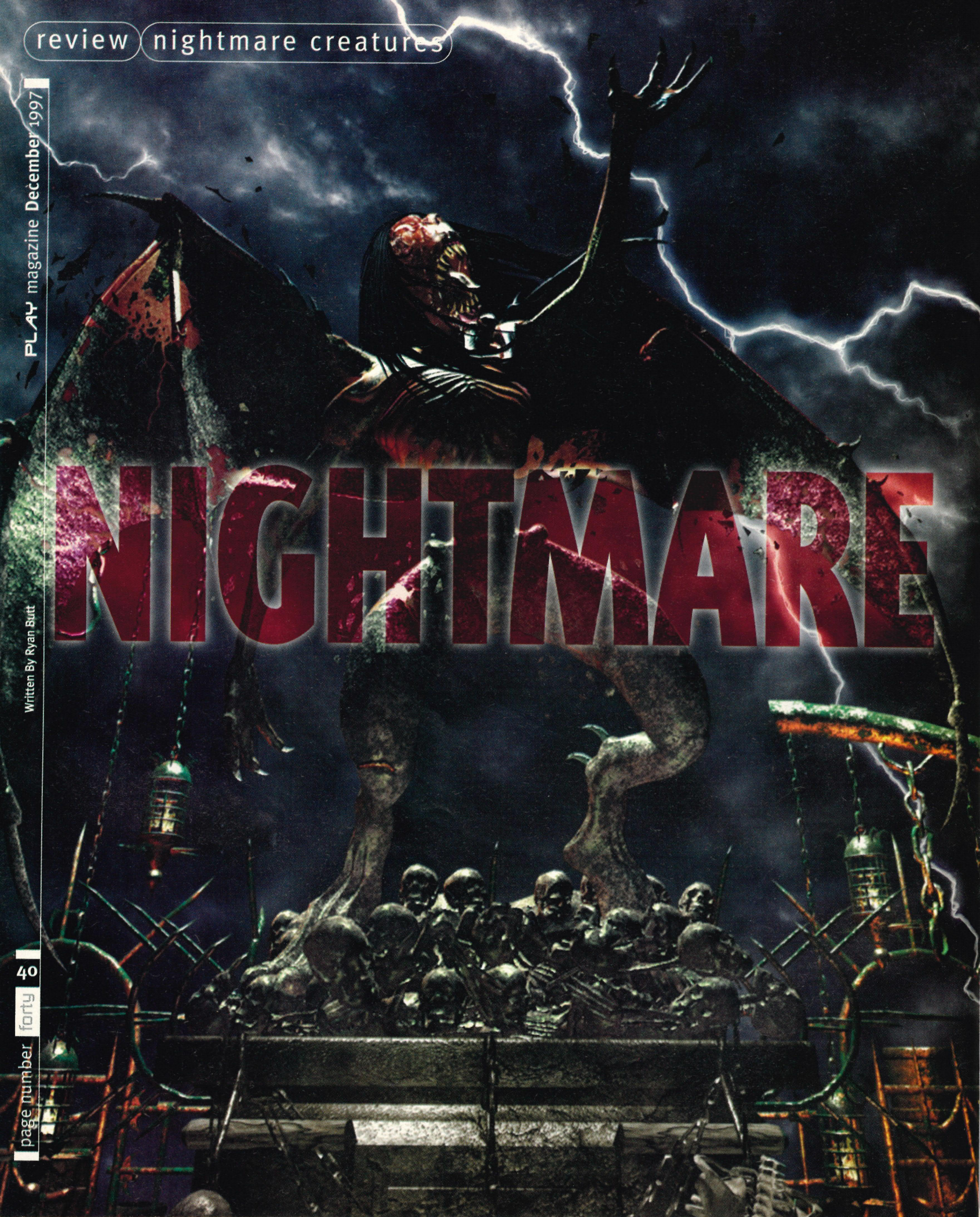
LOOKS	6/10
SOUNDS	7/10
GAMEPLAY	8/10
VALUE	8/10
FAT BLOKES	8/10

PLAYED 82%

A fine, albeit rough-looking American footie game.

ALTERNATIVELY:
MADDEN '97 (81%)
NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '96 (80%)

PLAY magazine December 1997



NIGHTMARE

Written By Ryan Butt

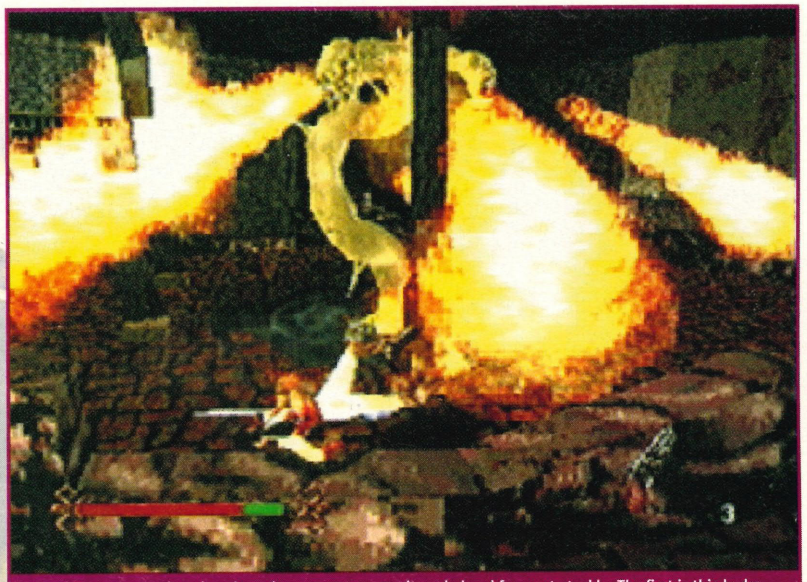


WINDOW SHOPPING

IF, DURING ANY TIME ON YOUR ADVENTURES, YOU SEE ANYTHING YOU LIKE IN THE LAVISH VICTORIAN WINDOW DISPLAYS THAT TAKES YOUR FANCY, SIMPLY PUT THE WINDOW THROUGH TO GAIN IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO IT!



"Demonic monsters walk straight into your hefty broadsword..."



[ABOVE] Every now and again, a huge boss monster rears its ugly head for you to tackle. The first is this hydra that breathes a torrent of fire. You must bring down the roof if you are to defeat it.

PLAY CLASSIC

CREATURES

THEY SAY YOU SHOULD NEVER WALK AROUND LONDON ALONE AFTER DARK, WELL HERE'S SEVERAL MORE NASTY REASONS NOT TO!

Taste my blade

'o' savage creature of the night... slash! Spurt! It sounds absurd, but after waltzing through the picturesque Chelsea streets by night in Kalisto's gripping new *Nightmare Creatures* game, you'll find yourself proclaiming such witty one liners as the onslaught of demonic monsters continue to walk straight into your hefty broadsword. This is classic monster-maiming stuff!

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Sony
Customer support: 0881 505505
Price: £34.99
Release date: 31 October '97



ONE PLAYER DUAL ANALOGUE



MEMORY CARD

RE-ANIMATOR

Nightmare Creatures is a tragic tale whereby the hero becomes the villain, and then must become the hero once more by righting the wrong he has done to save Victorian London town, nay the world, from the rapidly-increasing forces for evil.

This hero is Ignatius Blackwood, a religious nut and crusader against evil, who has unwittingly spawned the beginning of the end of the world by translating some ancient manuscripts belonging to the evil Brotherhood of Hecate. This record of a dark underworld cult outlines how to animate lifeless matter. The translated documents were promptly thieved by a light-fingered scientist, Adam Crowley, and with the detailed procedures they reveal, he has constructed an army of mutants to take out the world.

CHELSEA SMILE

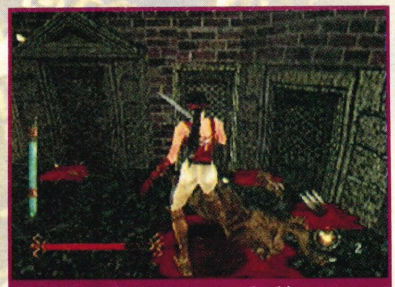
You can opt to play the game as either Ignatius or Nadia, the well-endowed daughter of Ignatius' American collaborator, Dr Jean . – who is brutally murdered by Crowley before the documents go missing.

Confused? Don't worry because this intense storyline bears no significance to the brunt of the game, which involves little more than the mindless slaying of multi-armed beasts that scatter the seedy London streets. Each character is significantly different to use. Ignatius is slow, yet strong and wields a hefty staff, and Nadia is nimble and swift and uses a sword to cleave skulls in twain.

Although *NC* is predominantly a beat-'em-up, there are also certain puzzle aspects to unfathom and objects to find. Each level represents a new twist in the tail as you battle to track down Crawley before he can expand his empire of doom still further.



[ABOVE] You battle with creatures of all shapes and sizes, included this unsavoury fellow. Who said two heads were better than one?

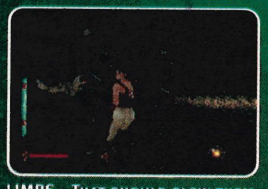


[ABOVE] A quick glance over your shoulder ensures that the RSPCA weren't around when this poor wolf met its maker!



IT'S JUST A FLESH WOUND

Render an attacker completely useless by the swift removal of their limbs. Great for Monty Python type comedy moments!



LIMBS – That should slow them down a bit.



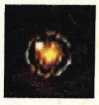
HEAD – See no evil, hear no evil!



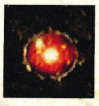
TORSO – Lights-out, forever!

ANTI-CHRIST ARSENAL

Seek and you will find many additional pick-ups to help restore London to normality (which is debatable!)



HEALTH SPHERE – Rejuvenates a quarter of your energy bar.



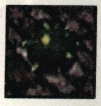
FULL HEALTH SPHERE – Rejuvenates all of your energy bar.



SINGLE-BARRELLED GUN – Gives you one shot at a baddie.



DOUBLE-BARRELLED GUN – Wipes out all enemies in one!



PROXIMITY MINES – Throw near a monster to cause serious damage.



GRIZZLY HEART – Awards you an extra life.



DYNAMITE – Throw at an enemy to weaken them.



TORCH – Throw at an enemy to char them for life!

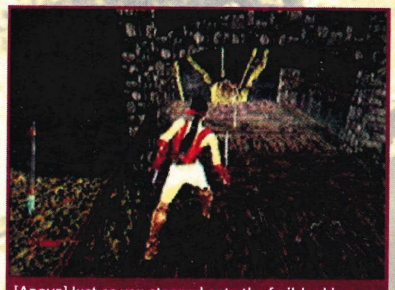


LIGHTNING – Temporarily stuns the monsters.



LAMP – Creates a smoke-screen for you to escape.

"You just can't prevent yourself from wanting another slash!"



[Above] Just as you stepped onto the frail-looking footbridge, a huge, grappling sea monster rips through it and knocks you for six.



[Above] Shooting the special gunpowder barrels with the gun will trigger an explosion that will rip through anything.

The many levels which start off in Chelsea and expand through to the mist-flanked docks and ultimately to Westminster where the final confrontation takes place, are huge affairs comprising of many twists, turns and hidden backstreet alleys. But ultimately can only be ventured via a single-route to the end.

Exploring is often the key to success though, because concealed in certain crates, shop windows and hidden rooms is a vast wealth of pick-ups which help dismembering the re-animated corpses and mutant masses that much easier.

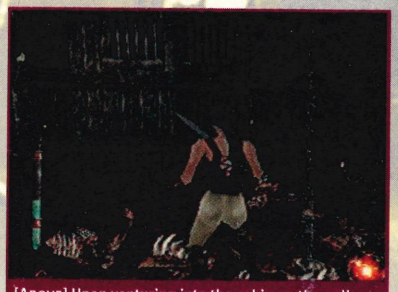
For example, you can blast the savage beasts away using pistols, or proximity mines, or even torch them with fire! It's worth mentioning at this point the puke-factor one, full throttle gore effect that makes *NC* so compelling to play...

Picture the scene, a zombie staggers up to you with the full intention of feasting on your jugular. What happens next? Well, using your impressive array of fighting moves, you can first hack off his arms and legs to slow him down, then slice off his head to put the mockers on any chance of him biting you, before ultimately hammering the final nail in the coffin by sawing his torso clean in half, amidst of torrent of red stuff. Highly satisfying!

The same dismembering techniques can be applied to almost all of the 20-strong ensemble of nightmarish ghouls that roam the areas. With this blood-thirsty content, plus the multiple, intelligent camera angles that decide which perspective the action is viewed from, the whole game is very reminiscent of *Resident Evil* (not surprising considering the subject matter), but much simpler due to the hack as you go nature, as opposed to complex problem solving.

A sense of urgency is added to the proceedings by the inclusion of a special timer that depletes as a soon as a monster is met and killed. Your object being to find another before the time runs out and starts eating into your life meter. This can be a pain in the arse if you want to take time out to explore the highly attractive levels in depth, as the game is hard enough already.

You only get two lives to begin with, and in the event of you dying (a nice hazy effect is added here!), you have to carry what little energy and few lives you have over to the next level. This led to some problems later on, when we had to tackle some of the complex harder levels with only half an energy bar left.



[Above] Upon venturing into the cabin on the galleon ship, a vile sight greets your wall-to-wall dismemberment.



[Above] Hack like crazy and watch those limbs go flying in all directions. You have to master the special combo moves to achieve this though.

Demon seed

As well as a hefty assortment of monsters that increases the further you get into the game, there are also some big boss creatures you encounter periodically at certain points – oh great, another excuse to lose lives by the truckload!

Nightmare Creatures is a very impressive game. It retains just the right balance of challenge and addictiveness to keep drawing you back time and time again. The way the game is designed also, with the lose-lives-early-and-you're-buggered-later factor, you'll often find yourself starting again and re-trying the early stages just to find more power-ups and retaining more health and attempts



A BRIEF NIGHTMARE MOMENT WITH KALISTO

During the boozed-up hustle and bustle of this year's ECTS show in London, we nabbed a brief moment to speak to French coders, Kalisto, about this scary game...

Play: What inspired Nightmare Creatures then?

Kalisto: "Double Dragon!"

Play: You what?

Kalisto: "We were always big fans of the Double Dragon coin-op (ancient two-player scrolling beat-'em-up that launched a thousand replicas and single-handedly created a genre – clued-up Ed). The way you just roamed around beating people up was a stroke of genius. We took this basic game element and built a whole new 3-D concept around it. We also looked very closely at *Resident Evil* and *Toshinden*."

Play: What aspect of the game are you most proud of?

Kalisto: "We were especially pleased with the stretching technique used on the polygon characters. This gave them a more realistic look, and also enabled them to move and fight more convincingly."

Play: Great! Um, the game has been in development for ages now, what new stuff has been added, if any, since we first saw it last year?

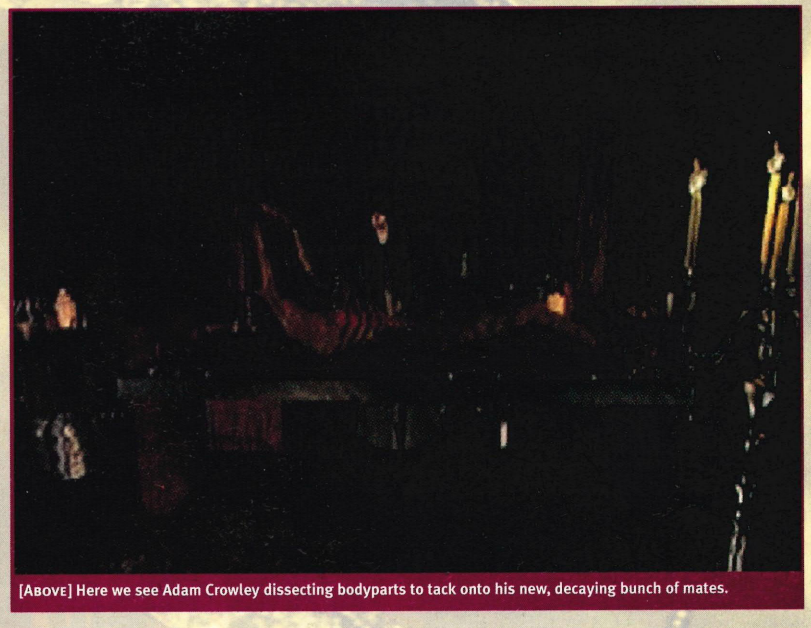
Kalisto: "We've put in more cinematics, allowed a greater freedom of moves and combos, added more levels (there are now 20), and inserted many more enemies."

Play: You've already started work on the sequel, what are you going to put in there that perhaps you couldn't in this one, for whatever reason?

Kalisto: "For a start we are going to get a decent two player option running, and then just standard stuff such as more moves, bosses, that sort of thing."

Play: Job's a good un!

Kalisto: "Erm, yes."



[Above] Here we see Adam Crowley dissecting bodyparts to tack onto his new, decaying bunch of mates.



"Puke-factor one, full throttle gore effect!"

[Above] This big beast won't be back to trouble you in a hurry. Get that grill warmed up!

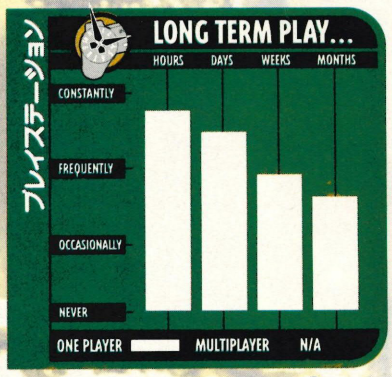






[Above] Search everything you come across, no matter how grizzly, as you never know what goodies may lay obscured.





PLAY

Looks	9
Sounds	7
Gameplay	8
Value	9
Decapitations	9

PLAYED 90%

A fantastic, full-on splatter flick!

ALTERNATIVELY:
Resident Evil (95%)
Fighting Force (this issue)

for later. But you certainly won't mind doing so because the game is just so enjoyable. You want to persevere and keep battling against the creatures of the night, just to see what the later levels are like, and what devilish incarnations will attack you next.

All this mindless slashing fun is coupled with stunning graphics that feature some dazzlingly atmospheric effects, plus a sinister period sound score that only helps to build the immense sense of urgency that this game generates.

The icing on the cake is the release date – Halloween, what can be more fitting? Buy *Nightmare Creatures* and you won't regret it. It's like leaving the pub on a Friday, you just can't prevent yourself from wanting another slash, time and time again!

KURUSHI

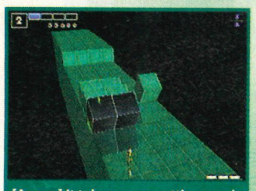
"*Kurushi's* extreme playability comes from the pleasure of using logic..."

TAKE A BREAK FROM THE BARRAGE OF WEAPONS AND CARS, AND GET THAT SOFT GREY THING INSIDE YOUR HEAD WORKING FOR ONCE!

Puzzle-mania!

Help! You know you've found a game which is far too addictive when you still see it in your sleep. This will happen with *Kurushi*. At some point in the early evening you'll load it up, and the next thing you will notice is a cold untouched dinner by your side, a steadily congealing mug of tea not far from a sleeping spouse, and all the clocks appear to indicate 2.30 in the morning. Don't be alarmed, this is normal.

Who would have thought it could be so utterly compelling? Being a great puzzle game, the idea is in theory very simple. You control a little man on a platform that floats motionless in never-ending black space, with wave after wave of rolling blocks mechanically making their way towards you from the distance. Your task is to get rid of every block in each wave except the black ones – what could be easier?



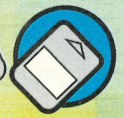
[Above] It takes some getting used to, but before long you'll be planning ahead with total efficiency.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Sony
Customer support: 0881 505 505
Price: £29.99
Release date: 24 October '97



ONE PLAYER



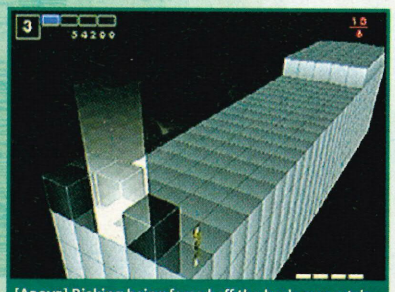
MEMORY CARD

BLOCK HEAD

As you run frantically around, constantly nipping in and out of the cube formations to avoid being squashed to death under their crushing weight, you activate patches on the ground. When the block you're after rolls on top of the said patch, you deactivate it; vapourising the block completely. Do this to a green block and you have an area six to nine blocks wide which you can remotely detonate at any time, but be careful – this is usually where you catch a black one and thus shorten your lovely linoleum platform.



[Above] It is probable that you'll get far too cocky after a good run and end up flat as a pancake under a sturdy block.



[Above] Risking being forced off the back, you catch the last coloured block at the last possible second – yay!

It may look only functional at best, but *Kurushi*'s extreme playability comes from the pleasure of using logic and forethought that you never knew you had! Each wave also has a set minimum number of moves that you should be able to beat them in, and you can't help but feel like some strategical heavyweight when you pull it off "on par" or even one under.

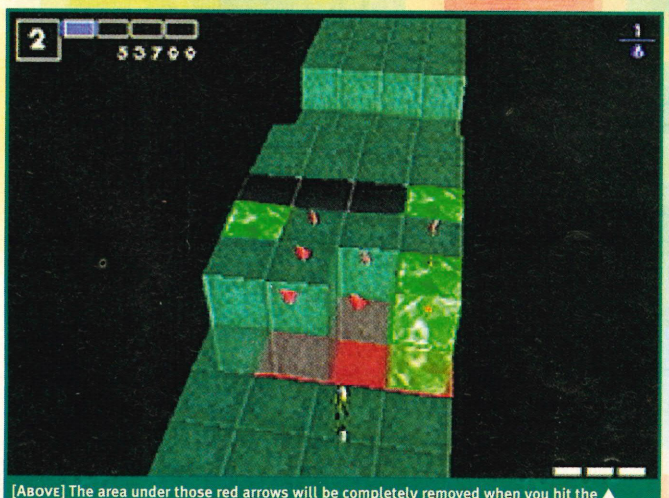
Although lacking a simultaneous two player mode, *Kurushi* is instantly in the same league as the narcotically addictive *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*. Especially suited to the adult mind, buy this before they sell out.



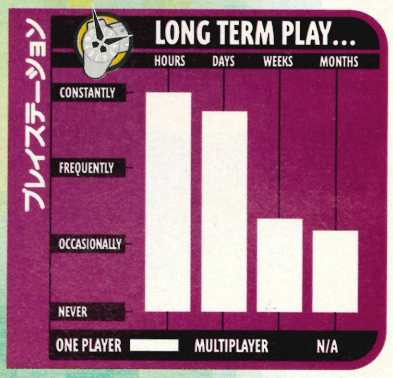
[Above] Keep hitting those black cubes and you will eventually run out of platform!



[Above] Excellent. Getting those five at once means you have a good head start to keep your average up.



[Above] The area under those red arrows will be completely removed when you hit the ▲ button – is now the best time?



PLAY

LOOKS	6
SOUNDS	8
GAMEPLAY	9
VALUE	8
BRAIN STRAIN	8

PLAYED 88%

Ultra high quality puzzler.

ALTERNATIVELY:
SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II TURBO (90%)
KLAX (ARCADE)

Written By Graeme Nicholson

NHL '98

YOU COULD GO THROUGH YOUR ENTIRE LIFE AND NEVER MEET ANYONE WHO HAS BOUGHT A HOCKEY GAME, BUT STILL THEY COME.

Written By Graeme Nicholson

Hockey games, like their unfortunate brothers, American football games, seem to just crop up all the time and never make any impact on us Brits. The never-ending demand for these titles in the US where fans of the glitzy contact sports still get rabidly excited at the mention of another clone in the series, indistinguishable from the others, means that we will have to put up with them for the foreseeable future.

NHL '98 does however bring some new features to the saturated market, and some of the best presentation in a sports game yet. The main selling point is the quick-change strategies that let you alter the team formation without pausing the game in the blink of an eye. Both top shoulder buttons activate small menus in the corners of the screen, one for offensive strategies and one for defensive set-ups. From there, it's only one more click to put that formation into effect and once you get used to the system you can change to exactly what you want so fast that the other player doesn't have a clue what you selected. It can turn a game around with surprising speed.

PURE BALTIC

NHL '98 may be missing the *Total NBA*-style reflections of the players in the ice, but otherwise these notoriously violent sportsmen are recreated in great detail. When the camera moves in close after a goal, you can see how sharply they are being drawn. As they victoriously punch their hands in air you will have no trouble reading the individual surnames printed across the back of the shirts, and even their mean faces are eerily realistic too. However, all faces are identical copies of one another, which is more than a little weird.

Speed is slightly lacking for a sport which is based on split second timing, and you will find your guys fairly unresponsive to the usual pass/shoot/body check moves when there is a flurry of action around the goal. More importantly to anyone who has played Wayne Gretzky's hockey game on the Nintendo 64, there is no analogue pad support in *NHL '98*, and that is a BIG mistake. Gliding on ice and making everything from tight twists to long sweeping arcs is so well suited to the precise graduated control possible with analogue technology – why not use it? Even the comical fighting scenes where two grown men paste each other across the ice over a mistakenly placed hockey stick don't make up for this fault.

The option to play with a friend on the same team through a league is where any longevity comes from, but to be honest this particular ice hockey game leaves you a bit... cold.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Customer support: 01753 549 442
Price: £39.99
Release date: November '97

ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS

MEMORY CARD

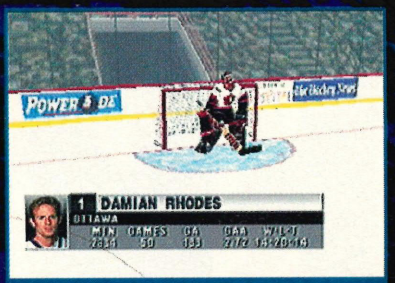


[ABOVE] As if the non-changing expressions of the photo realistic faces wasn't enough, they are all identical! Let me out of here!

"Even their mean faces are eerily realistic..."



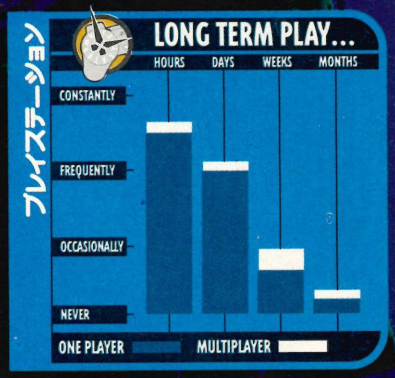
[ABOVE] The notes of the national anthem can still be heard reverberating around the stadium before each game. Just like TV.



[ABOVE] If you're a real glutton for punishment, you can opt to control your own goalie when the puck is fired at him – no thanks!



[ABOVE] It is at times like this when the control gets a bit mushy and you can't see what's happening. Shame.



PLAY

LOOKS	●●
SOUNDS	●●●●
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●
VALUE	●●●●
PENGUINS	●●●●●

PLAYED 71%

Cool graphics, slushy gameplay.

ALTERNATIVELY:
NHL '97 (86%)
NHL FACE OFF (78%)

FROGGER

THERE ONCE WAS A FROG WHO WAS SILLY, AND SPENT ALL HIS TIME ON A LILY. ALONG CAME A FLY, WHO WAS TERRIBLY SLY, AND STUNG HIM ON THE END OF HIS [ENOUGH!-ED]. FROGGER'S BACK THEN.

Written By Tom Sargent

We thought he'd retired!

Vanished. Gone to the big lily pond in the sky. But like a plague of, er, frogs, the little amphibian has turned up out of the blue to harass motor cars, turtles and a host of weird and wonderful adversaries once more.



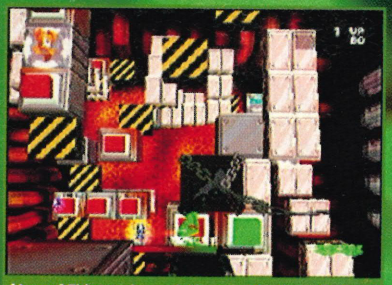
All-new *Frogger* has been given a colourful lick of PlayStation paint, but whether his console debut has been worth the effort is dubious. It's a painful admission to make, as the happy hopper has been held close to the hearts of many an older gamer (myself included). It all begins well enough on the first world – it's essentially the old game, but with chunkier and more colourful graphics. It's a real memory jolter dodging the cars and negotiating logs and turtles, but one niggle that we can't quite work out is why you seem to die when you try to hop onto the outer edges of a log or turtle. Unless you hit them plumb in the middle, you slip off, making the game extremely difficult and this just backs up another moan about the difficulty level . It's way too high. After level two of the first world, things become ridiculously difficult by far.



[Above] Ah, this is more like it. The retro game is still the best regardless of all the fancy 3-D trimmings.



[Above] The difficulty level by the time you reach this stage is very high. You'll be peeling your skin off in frustration.



[Above] This top down platform section is really tricky. Look out for the swaying crates and disappearing floors.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Hasbro
Customer support: 0181 5691234
Price: £39.99
Release date: December '97



ONE PLAYER



MULTIPLE PLAYERS



MEMORY CARD



MULTI-TAP

TURTLES HEAD

The 'proper' game is set over seven themed worlds, where Frogger can put some of his new abilities to the test. The gaming environment now sports a forced perspective 3-D look, as seen in *Micro Machines V3*, where the little geezer has to survive the onslaught of obstacles in a whole new dimension. This, unfortunately, is where the problems start. The new look is pretty sexy. You can hop and hitch a ride on birds, planes and barrels in glorious 3-D, but most of the time the intelligent camera insists on staying zoomed-in around your frog so you can't see as much of your surroundings as you'd like to. This is so damn frustrating. The beauty of the old game lay in its simplicity – you knew where you were at all times and could see your goal. No such luck here though.

TONGUE-TIED

Frogger now has three new abilities other than moving in the usual compass directions (there's no diagonal movement by the way).The Power Croak, when

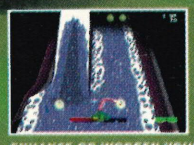
LIGHTING THE WAY

FROGGER'S POWER CROAK NOT ONLY CALLS HIS KIDS, BUT IT CAN ACTIVATE OTHER ABILITIES THROUGHOUT THE GAME. HERE HE CAN MOMENTARILY LIGHT UP THE IMMEDIATE AREA BEFORE IT GOES DARK AGAIN.



LET'S GO DO THE HOP

While Frogger's been away, he's managed to learn a few new skills for his new 3-D adventures.



HEAT SEEKING TONGUE. You can catch flies and butterflies to enhance or worsen your condition. Some speed you up, others make you lose points.



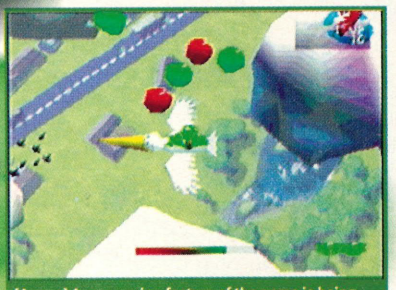
POWER CROAK. Allows you to call baby frogs. It may have special uses when combined with certain power-ups, for example lighting up darkened areas.



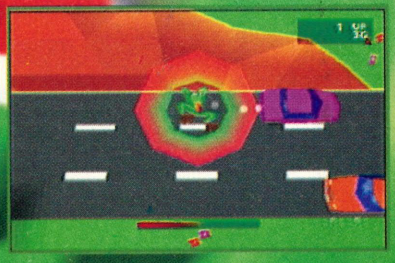
SUPER HOP. Allows you to hop extra high. At some stages, the only way to get ahead or avoid obstacles and enemies is to leap over them.

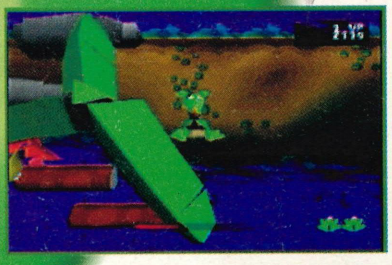


[Above] On the Airshow Antics level, Frogger seems quite at home hitching a ride on a Red Arrow. He's even got time to pick up a fly.



[Above] A reoccurring feature of the game is being carried around by birds. It looks pretty, but doesn't add to the gameplay really.







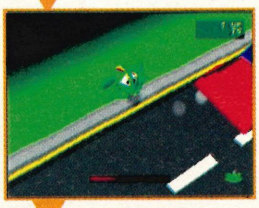
[Above] This fun level sees the green hero knee deep in it, as he tries to avoid a herd of stampeding buffalo.

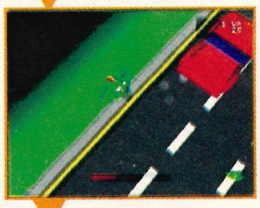


[Above] You've got to be quick to avoid these swarms of bees. Grab the speed-up flies and hop the heck outta there.

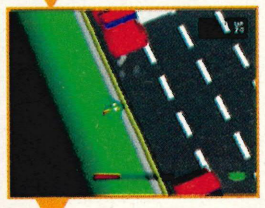
YOU SPIN ME RIGHT 'ROUND

Thanks to the wonders of 3-D, Frogger can now be rotated to make life easier in this new environment. It takes a little getting used to, but can make life easier.



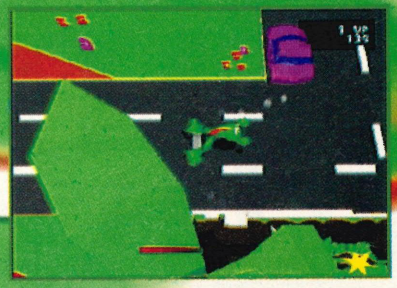












combined with certain power-ups helps him through certain levels. For example, on the Dark, Dark Cavern level, activating the croak lights up the surrounding gloom – a nice touch.

The Super Hop does what it says on the tin, and The Heat Seeking Tongue homes in on pick-ups (see Boxout). As you complete each level; saving the baby frogs, the next one in the zone is automatically opened up. This way you can build up some pretty high scores and, more importantly, save your progress so that you can start there next time you play.

For owners of two controllers or a multi-Tap, there are five special race sections, which are fun for a while, but still don't save the game. The levels themselves are superbly designed and aesthetically they're really eye-catching, it's just that the jump detection, high difficulty level and disorientation hamper what could have been a frog-tastic laugh.



"The little geezer has survived the onslaught of obstacles in a whole new dimension..."



PLAY

Looks	7/10
Sounds	7/10
Gameplay	6/10
Value	7/10
Tongues	7/10

PLAYED 69%

Genuinely disappointing frog-'em-up.

ALTERNATIVELY:
Micro Machines V3 (92%)
Namco Museum 4 (79%)

PLAY magazine December 1997

"Packed with smash 'em and crash 'em gameplay!"

PLAY CLASSIC

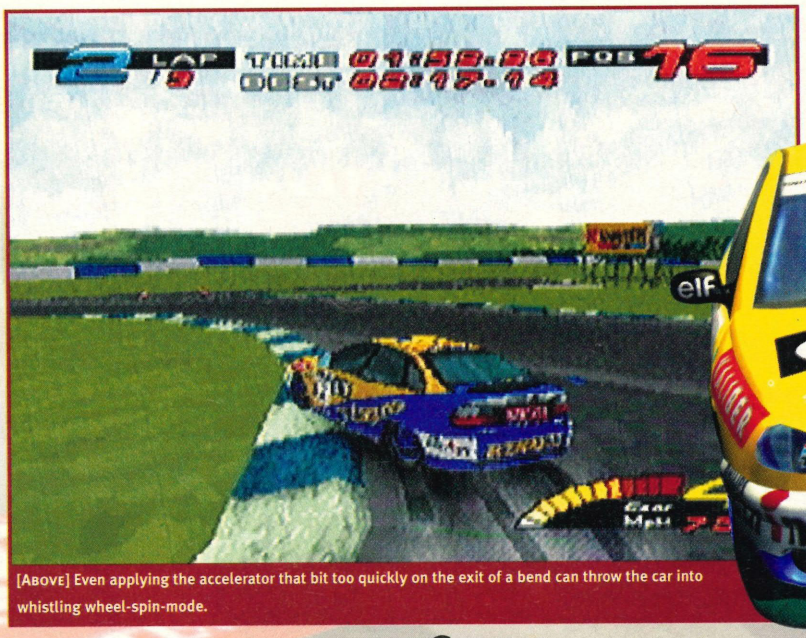
TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Written By Graeme Nicholson









[Above] Even applying the accelerator that bit too quickly on the exit of a bend can throw the car into whistling wheel-spin-mode.



So YOU thought the famous CODIES were ONLY good for cute KIDDIE CAR games? THINK AGAIN. *Touring Car* is about as real as it gets!

If you long for the gameplay and realism of *Formula 1 '97* but want to drive "real" cars, lay down this magazine right now, find a credit card and then a phone. You may now pre-order your copy of *Touring Car Championship* immediately, knowing that you could not possibly be disappointed. In fact, this officially licenced motor thriller actually has more in the way of realistic features than Psygnosis' brilliant effort.

Every single detail of this year's RAC/Auto Trader British Touring Car Championship has been squeezed into a game so unfeasibly comprehensive that Murray Walker no doubt refers to his copy when he gets confused in the commentary box. Which is often.

You only have to look at it. Every car on the track was constructed using laser scans of the real thing, so the models are extremely accurate. They look incredible as they scream around the bends of the great British raceways, sporting all the right curves and contours. Such unmatched detail means that all eight teams are distinctive and recognisable during the chaos of a race, and fans of the most action-packed motorsport on TV will be ecstatic in the presence of such faithful reproduction. More importantly, it makes smashing the cars to bits one of the most satisfying experiences of our time!

REAL TV

Everything breaks on these things, right down to the tiniest component. You can easily lose a wing mirror in a tussle with the guy in the Nissan who objects to being used as a moving guard rail on the corner for example. Each of the fully operational head- and tail-lights can be smashed individually. Every window is capable of breaking too, beginning by just cracking up and ending with a huge gaping hole.

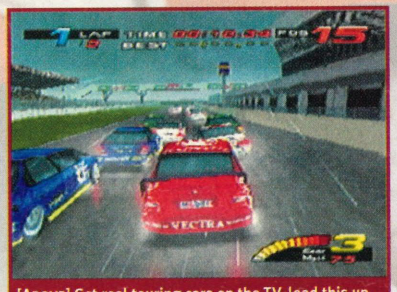
A substantial smack to the front of the vehicle will often cause the whole bonnet to ping twenty feet into the air before it comes to rest on the tarmac, leaving the ugly grey engine exposed on your ailing saloon car.

PLAY INFORMATION

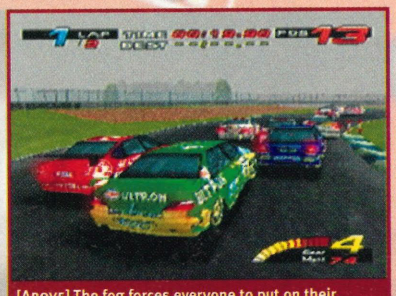


Publisher: Codemasters
Contact: 01926 814 132
Price: £44.99
Release date: 21 November '97





[Above] Get real touring cars on the TV, load this up and switch between the two channels. It's quite something.



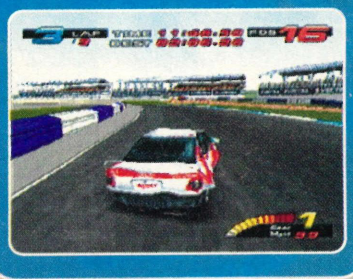
[Above] The fog forces everyone to put on their headlights and tail lights for that super-realistic touch.

HURT ME

The dark, destructive impulses present in all of us can be kept at bay with a good thrashing of a high performance vehicle. The Audi A4 pictured here has:

- Front, rear and side windows smashed
- Left wing mirror snapped off
- The bonnet missing
- Both front wings long gone
- Left front headlight broken
- Both brake lights broken
- Front and rear skirtings torn off
- Buckled warped and dented body
- Almost concave roof

We pray for a secret Destruction Derby mode where you get points for this kind of thing!



PLAY CAM

THE FOUR PERSPECTIVES IN *TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP* ARE ALL WELL PLAYABLE, BUT THEY HAVE DIFFERENT USES. THE EXTERNAL VIEWS HAVE PROPERLY ADJUSTED CONTROLS TO MAKE THEM MUCH MORE USEABLE THAN SAY THE TERRIBLE EXTERNAL VIEWS OF THE *RIDGE RACER* SERIES.



CHASE CAM 1

THE FURTHEST CAMERA FROM YOUR CAR. THE HEIGHT LESSENS THE SENSATION OF SPEED AND LETS YOU SEE FAR INTO THE DISTANCE. MAINLY FOR LEARNERS.



CHASE CAM 2

THE DEFAULT VIEW. FEELS FASTER THAN CHASE CAMERA 1 AND GETS YOU CLOSER TO SEE MORE DETAIL ON YOUR CAR, THE SUSPENSION WORKING AND MOST DAMAGE.



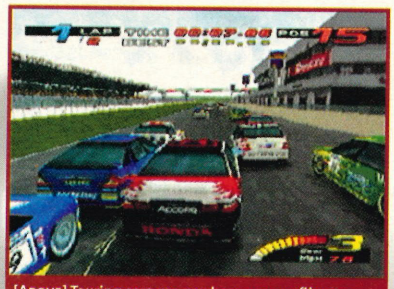
HOOD CAM

HAVING A BONNET-MOUNTED CAMERA BRINGS YOU DOWN INTO THE ACTION AND LETS YOU SEE BY FAR THE MOST DETAIL ON OTHER CARS, BUT NONE OF YOUR OWN.

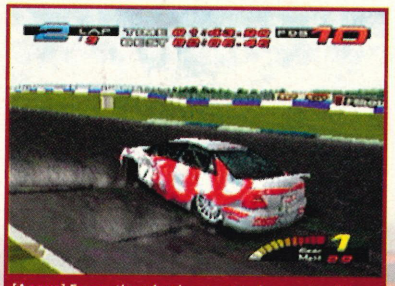


HEAD CAM

NAMED HEAD CAM BECAUSE YOU SEE THE RACE THROUGH THE DRIVER'S EYES, THE DASH, STEERING WHEEL AND HANDS ADD REALISM BUT RESTRICT VISIBILITY. PRO'S ONLY.



[ABOVE] Touring cars are nowhere near as flimsy as those F1 weaklings, so don't be afraid of some argy bargy!



[ABOVE] Er, are the wheels meant to be recessed that far into the body? The wife isn't going to be too pleased when you get back to the house in this mess.



[ABOVE] That first corner is always teaming with angry motorists. Use one to lean on and guide you through.

Still more mistreatment gets rid of the front wings and eventually bursts, bends and rips off the front and rear plastic skirtings. Everything that doesn't physically come off, including the doors and roof, takes impressive real time damage the whole way through the race.

POLICE STOP!

With those perfect car models, suspension that reacts accurately to all bumps and rumble strips, and limitless crashes as you can see from the screenshots, *Touring Car Championship* is the most realistic-looking racing game ever to be made for the PlayStation? Racing in the rain with *TCC* is almost disturbing it seems so real, with a fine spray behind each speeding tyre and live reflections in the water from every tail light. Use the internal "Headcam" view and you'll see the windscreen wipers going too.

Unfortunately, the only missing element of realism is weather that changes during a race, but they've made up for that with the variation in weather you can change yourself. Pick beaming sunshine, a more British cloudy day, a heavily overcast sky with miserable rain, thick fog, snow or a marvellously real thunder storm complete with sheet lightning. Alternatively you can leave this option set to Default, where each course uses pre-set conditions.

CAR WARS 3

Especially with some form of analogue device, the handling of the cars is absolutely beautiful. It's not just a case of holding the throttle on full tilt while pressing left and right either – every nuance of your control has an effect similar to the real thing. The intricate system does have the side effect of spinning the car more than you'd like for the first couple of hours, but after you have tamed it you won't look back. Graduated accelerating, braking and steering are hugely important for getting the most out of the game, and essential to compete against the other drivers.

The artificial intelligence driving each of those opponents is also strangely authentic. They have so many human qualities that you feel as though you really are up against conscious people instead of lines of computer code. Parameters for aggression, proficiency and overtaking ability exist for each man, so you certainly don't have a row of idiots stuck like trams to the racing line.

An aggressive guy might slowly sandwich you into the wall if he's doing well and you try to pass him, and they all seem aware of your position so they don't hit you accidentally on the bends. The best way to demonstrate this profound AI is to turn around and head directly into the oncoming traffic. The frightened drivers will bundle hastily onto the grass to pass safely, swerve out of control from fear or cause a separate accident. Incredible.



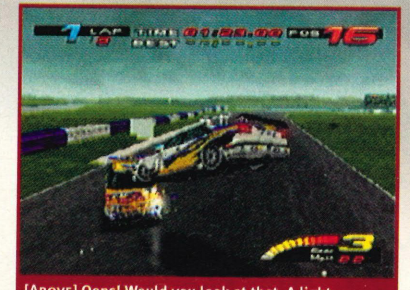
[ABOVE] The front mounted camera gets you right down into the action without constricting your view like the cockpit mode.



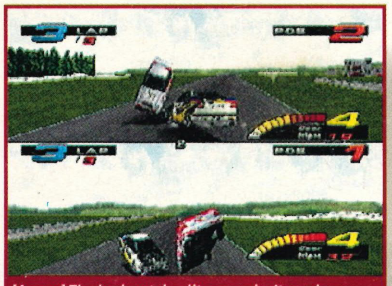
[ABOVE] If you end up with the wheels in the air, *TCC* has an in-built recovery that turns the car back over for you.

WORLD'S WORST CHASES

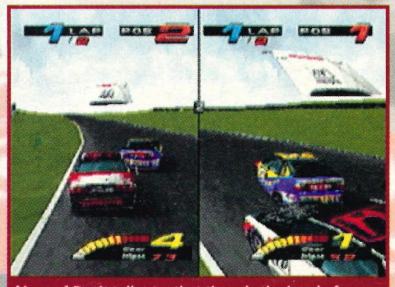
If the depth of the realism sounds too involved, don't let it put you off.



[ABOVE] Oops! Would you look at that. A light smattering of snow and you seem to have ended up facing directly into the pack.



[Above] The horizontal split screen isn't as nice as the vertical one, but the two player action is intense either way.



[Above] Don't tailgate: that there is the hood of my Honda Accord heading skyward thanks to a painfully slow second player.

Touring Car Championship is packed with plenty of the smash 'em and crash 'em gameplay you would expect from a console game, and it has the frame rate to match.

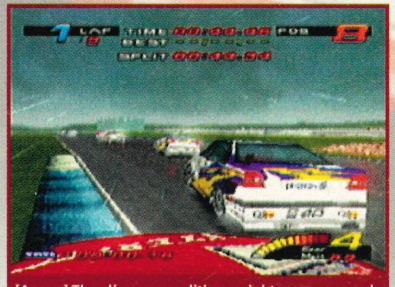
A one-on-one split screen game gives you the chance to really fly off the handle and whiz around any track with a friend, leaving broken signs, car parts and traffic cones strewn in your wake. Switch the catch-up on or off and just drive like an idiot for three laps. It's very healthy.

There is no separate "arcade" mode, but the standard three levels of difficulty let you be competitive from an early point in your virtual racing career on Easy – and demand professional driving on Hard. Automatic gears and a distant third-person-perspective should help you get a grip on the game too, until you're ready for the full cockpit view, steering wheel attachment and sequential gears experience!

And while you are free to drive into the pit lane, Codemasters made the decision that pitting plays such a small part in the sport that it has no effect in the game. No damage mending, no refuelling, just fun.

Even more advanced than *Formula 1 '97* and every bit as playable, *Touring Car Championship* deserves to sell by the truckload.

"Even more advanced than *Formula 1 '97*..."



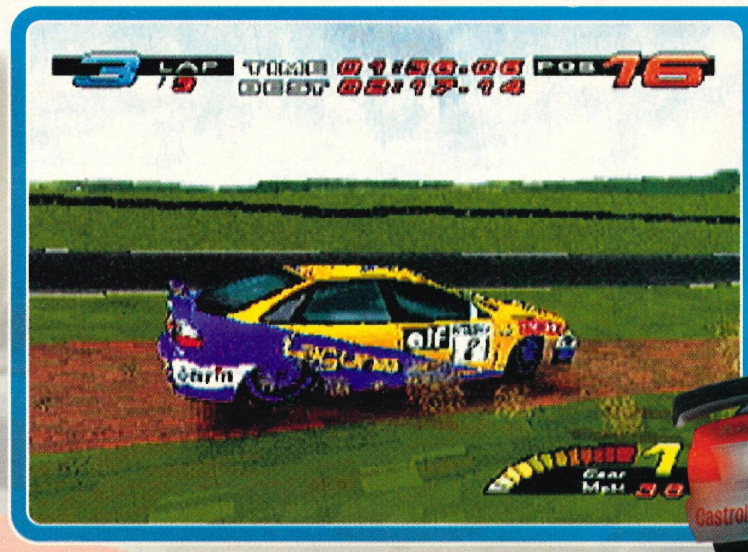
[Above] The slippery conditions might mean you end up riding the rumble strip quite often, but be patient and you will be triumphant!



[Above] A-ha! Complex intelligence routines didn't save Radisich here in the Mondeo from serious injury!

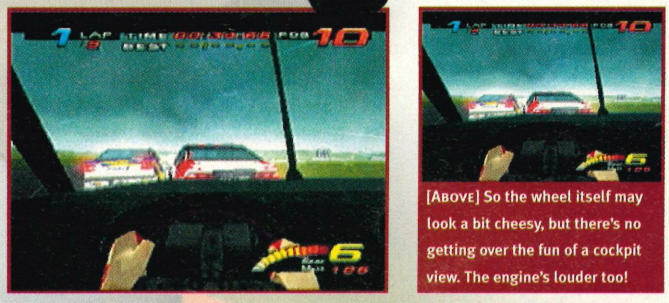


[Above] No matter how good you get, there is always the chance that you'll make an error and slide out dangerously like the real sport.

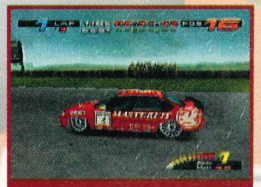


FEELING CHEATED

THE OLD *FORMULA 1* TRICK OF PILING ACROSS AREAS OF GRASS OR GRAVEL FOR ALL YOU'RE WORTH AT DIFFICULT POINTS LIKE CHICANES WON'T WORK HERE. THE GRAVEL TRAPS ARE VERY EFFECTIVE, LIKE THE REAL THING, AND BRING YOUR SPEEDING CAR TO A SUBDUED CRAWL IN SECONDS. YOU'LL HAVE TO EARN THAT FIRST PLACE!

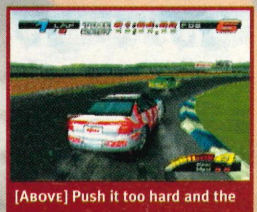


[Above] So the wheel itself may look a bit cheesy, but there's no getting over the fun of a cockpit view. The engine's louder too!

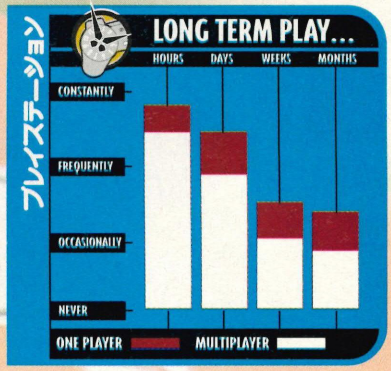


[Above] All the ads in their place, laser-scanned dimensions and those excellent multi-spoked alloys – this sets the new standard.





[Above] Push it too hard and the car will lose traction, but a skillful driver will just manage to hold the car on the road.



PLAY

LOOKS	9
SOUNDS	8
GAMEPLAY	9
VALUE	8
SPIN-OUTS	8

PLAYED **92%**

Really fast, really fun, really racing.

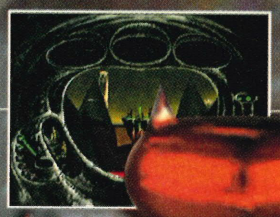
ALTERNATIVELY:
V-RALLY (87%)
FORMULA 1 '97 (90%)

MDK

SWITCH YOUR WEIRD-O-METER TO TEN AND PREPARE YOURSELVES FOR A SUBLIME AND SURREAL CHALLENGE. MDK'S ARRIVED AND IT'S A KILLER.

ZOOM LENS

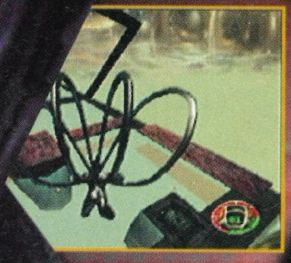
THE SNIPER GUN IS A FABULOUS WEAPON, WHICH WHEN MASTERED PROVIDES HOURS OF LONG RANGED 'HO HO, HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW I CAN SEE HIM' KILLING FUN. THIS SEQUENCE DEMONSTRATES THE PRACTICE ARENA WITH TARGETS TO HIT.



PLAY CLASSIC

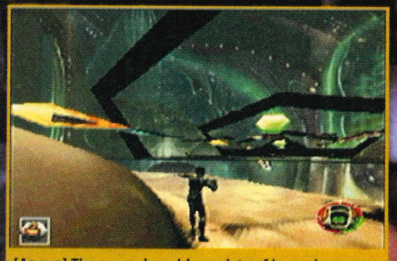


"At its heart, *MDK* is a vicious 3-D shoot-'em-up..."





[ABOVE] Some of the adversaries are utterly huge. Just look at these transparency and smoke effects as you try to take him down.



[ABOVE] The second world consists of huge domes with amazing reflective surfaces. The effect is quite stunning.

Written By Tom Sargent

MDK. What does it stand for? Originally penned as Murder Death Kill, Interplay had to change the name for some tedious reason which we haven't the space nor inclination to explain. We've been waiting an awfully long time for this PC-inspired gem, and other than some tiny, weenie criticisms, it's everything we could have expected.



Sometimes a game comes along which literally leaves you lost for words. MDK is such a title. For once it's the whole concept that grabs the attention and not the graphics.

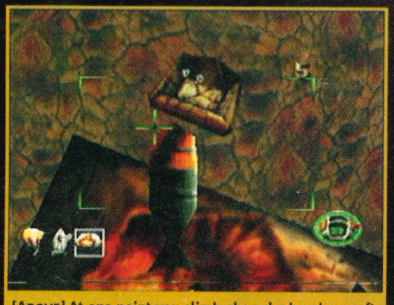
MDK is unlike any game we've played before. Set on Earth in the future, a phenomena (not John Travolta) is discovered called 'Streams.' Earth decides to tap into these tubes of pure energy found throughout the galaxy until an alien stream rider arrives sat atop a huge rumbling city which destroys everything in its path. Only you (playing as Kurt), Max the dog and Dr Fluke Hawkins can save the day.

Developers Shiny Entertainment must be commended on the sheer number of gameplay styles within *MDK*. At its heart, this game is a vicious 3-D shoot-'em-up, but at the start of each of the eight enormous worlds, you freefall to earth collecting as many pick-ups as possible, while avoiding deadly homing missiles and radar tracking beams. A totally new game style.

MORE DONER KEBABS?

After this short, exhilarating taster, you barely have time to draw breath before you're running through enormous futuristic arenas and engaging hostile metallic robots in mortal combat. Your default weapon is a machine pistol, which never runs out of ammo, but either by collecting add-ons in freefall, or scouring the surface of each city trawler, you can acquire heaps of amusingly-named devices.

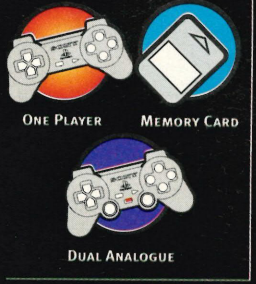
By far the tastiest weapon power-up is your head-mounted sniper gun which can zoom in for ridiculous levels of accuracy and take out enemies who are totally unaware of your deadly intentions. When you learn to use this weapon quickly, the satisfaction of making a kill from long range is unparalleled. Even if the tiniest section of the body or weapon is sticking out, you can reduce their visible power bar until they blow apart spectacularly. This is



[ABOVE] At one point you climb aboard a bomber craft and as you can see, demolish as much as you can within the time limit.

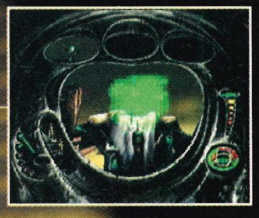
PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Interplay
Customer support: 01628 423666
Price: £44.99
Release date: November '97



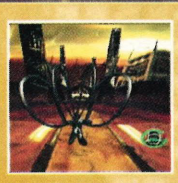






LEAP OF FAITH

There are so many excellent ideas in *MDK*, including the fact that you can slide down huge pipes, surf long winding half-pipes and bomb targets from airborne craft. Here are a few others, which you'll need to familiarise yourself with.



The ribbon chute is a visually stunning means of avoiding enemies and floating up and down pockets of air. It works a treat.



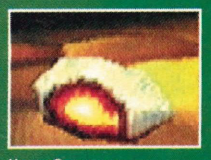
At the start of every level you freefall to the city trawler collecting as many pick-ups as possible while avoiding incoming fire.



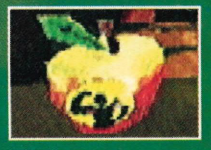
The sniper is easily the best piece of hardware. An absolute dream to use, as you can take out enemies with pin-point accuracy.

SMASH AND GRAB

Pick up all kinds of objects and weapons throughout each arena. If you need a specific weapon to achieve a goal but run out of ammo, some more always crops up sooner or later.



Hand Grenade



10% Health



Full Energy – 150%



Sniper Grenade



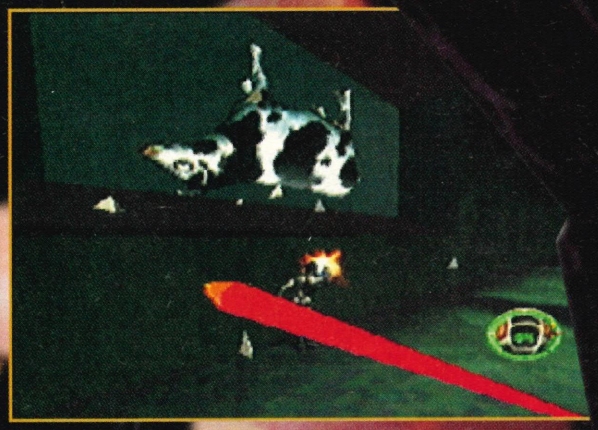
World's Smallest Nuke



Dummy Decoy



100% Health

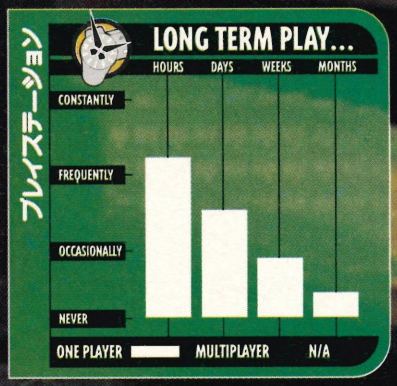




[Above] Take too many shots from this enormous battle tank and it's goodnight Vienna! Check out the life bar – it's nearly dead.



[Above] These mechanical monstrosities help each other out when one of them get attacked. The AI routines are excellent.



very clever programming, and you soon learn that if a baddie is taking pot-shots at you, all you need to do is strafe left or right until he can't see or shoot you, but you can just see a bit of him. Inspired.

My Drowned Kitten

MDK rarely let's the player get bogged-down with overly complicated puzzles which tend to piss people off either. Sometimes your objectives are quite obvious. For example, at one point you must aim mortar shells (via your sniper gun) into oddly-shaped chimneys to kill the occupants who wave smugly behind unbreakable red glass. This seems easy at first until you realise that you have to position yourself on different pedestals to achieve it.

Another beautifully-designed idea is the ribbon chute; allowing Kurt to float on pockets of air or briefly along the ground after jumping. It looks stunning and added to the beautifully designed backgrounds (which vary from rusting futuristic cities to visually stunning reflective domes) amounts to a truly original game in every sense of the word.

The only criticisms are that the graphics are a little grainy and Kurt's animation isn't as smooth as the PC version, but you can easily forgive this once you get enthralled by the absorbing gameplay. Don't forget to buy an Analogue controller too, as it adds to the experience immeasurably. Players can also relish in the fact that thanks to Shiny, some extra PlayStation-only levels have been added where you can really let rip with all those meaty weapons. A must buy.

PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●●●○○
Sounds	●●●●●●●●●●●
Gameplay	●●●●●●●●●●○
Value	●●●●●●●●●●○
Kills	●●●●●●●●●●●

PLAYED 90%

Brilliantly conceived 3-D shooter.

ALTERNATIVELY:
This game is unique!

WING OVER

WAVE YOUR WINGS IN THE AIR LIKE YOU JUST DON'T CARE WITH JVC'S BELATED AIRBORNE SHOOT-'EM-UP.

Written By Tom Sargent

Holy late entrances!

We previewed this over half a year ago and it looked pretty complete even then. So why the unfeasibly long gestation period before release? As far as we can see, hardly anything substantial has changed other than a translation from Japanese to English.

Six months is a long time in the games industry and since we last had a peek, *Wing Over* hasn't aged well at all. The game is basically an arcade fighter plane simulation where you get to fly 28 historically accurate 'magnificent flying machines' over several real time scenarios. These range from the baking deserts of Egypt to the ball-numbing Antarctic.

There are four modes of play, including Tournament, Free Play, Survival and Vs Mode. The tournament is set over eight games – each one set in a different geographical location to add a little much needed variety, and makes up the main slice of the gaming cake. Sadists among you may want to try out the Survival mode, which pits you against a never-ending onslaught of enemies (a kind of fight 'till you drop type event), and there's the inclusion of a link-up option, which adds slightly to the overall longevity of the game.

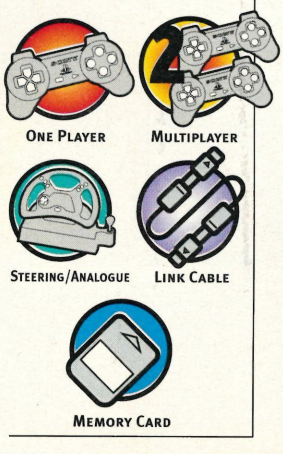






PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: JVC
Customer support: 0171 240 3121
Price: £39.99
Release date: September '97

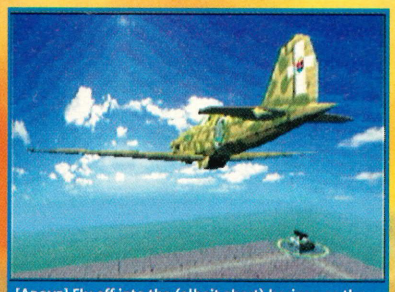


EJECT!

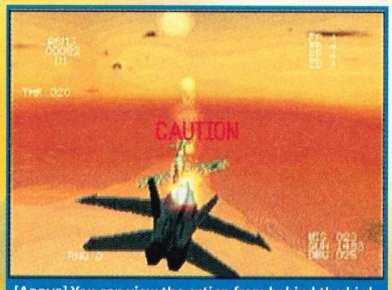
From the moment you take to skies, however, the unsightly scenery does little for the overall atmosphere, and the horrendous pop-up ensures that any low-flying antics are even hairier than they should be. The awful fogging effect that tries to compensate for a lack of horizon makes a real mess of things too, which ruins an otherwise competent flying model. Dog-fighting is fun for a while and you can customise planes via a simplistic yet functional upgrade hanger, where onboard computers, night vision, advanced radar, long range heat-seeking missiles and modified body kits, to name but a few, can be clamped to urge you on.

Wing Over is fairly enjoyable, although it does become boring after a few plays due to the highly repetitive gameplay elements. There's no real variety to keep you coming back for more; it's always just a matter of keeping you and your wing men alive until the next encounter. Average.

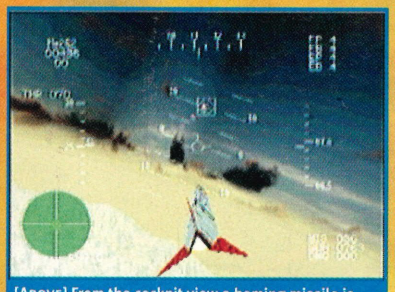
"Horrendous pop-up ensures that any low-flying antics are even hairier than they should be..."



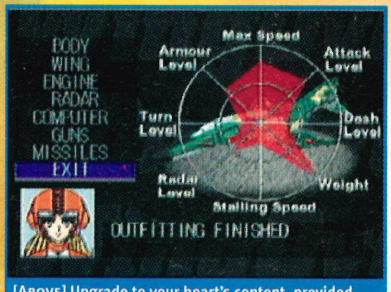
[ABOVE] Fly off into the (albeit short) horizon as the camera pans around your plane.



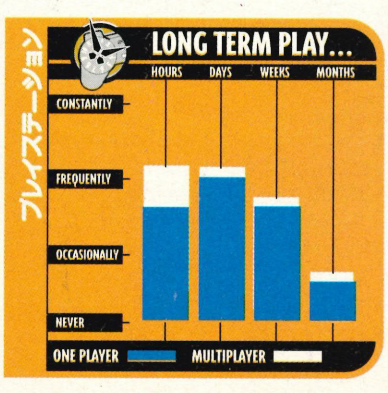
[ABOVE] You can view the action from behind the bird or from inside the cockpit.



[ABOVE] From the cockpit view a homing missile is launched. You'll be using these a lot to begin with.



[ABOVE] Upgrade to your heart's content, provided you've got the cash to do it with.



PLAY

LOOKS	●●●○○○○○○○
SOUNDS	●●●○○○○○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●○○○○○
VALUE	●●●●●●○○○○
KAMIKAZE	●●●●○○○○○○

PLAYED 50%

Dated airborne shoot-'em-up.

ALTERNATIVELY:
ACE COMBAT 2 (84%)
RAGING SKIES (73%)

YOU CAN BEAT THE SYSTEM!

HYPER CONTROLLER



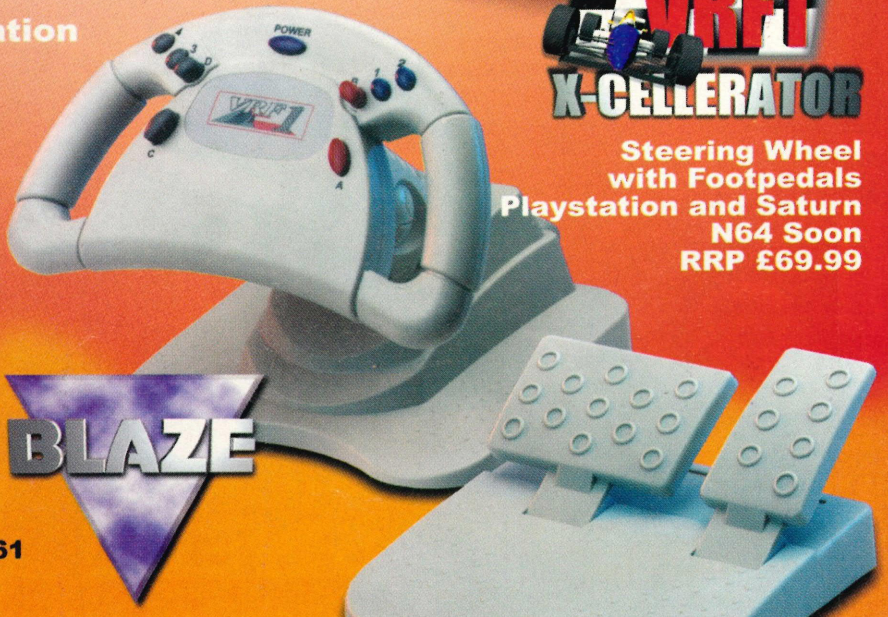
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ANOTHER FANTASTIC GAME COMING YOUR WAY

Written By Graeme Nicholson

COLONY

As if Formula 1 '97 isn't already going to make them all multi-millionaires, Psygnosis has another fantastic game coming your way...

PLAY Information

Publisher: Psygnosis
Customer support: 0151 282 3000
Price: £44.99
Release date: 14 November '97



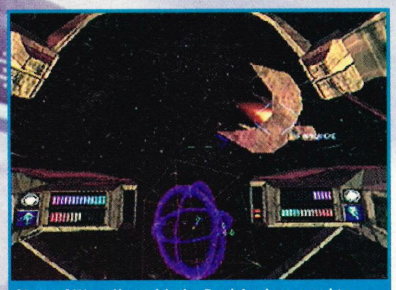
One Player | Dual Analogue



Memory Card



[Above] The internal view was messed up in earlier versions of *Colony Wars*, but now it looks great and is the best way to play the game.



[Above] Wrestling with the Dual Analogue pad to keep a bad guy in your sights is worthwhile just to see the ship up close.



[Above] This is the kind of thing we are talking about. You've never seen anything this sexy before!

"Nothing looks as good as Colony Wars on the PlayStation!"

WARS

PLAY CLASSIC

Months of top quality coverage in your favourite magazine should hopefully have prepared you for a fine moment in videogame history. Get one thing straight before we continue: nothing looks as good as *Colony Wars* on the PlayStation. Well, perhaps *Tobal 2*, but most of you won't ever see that thanks to Squaresoft cancelling the UK version.

There is absolutely nobody who has been lucky enough to catch a glimpse of *Colony Wars* running who hasn't stopped in their tracks and just marvelled at the sight, whether at trade shows or in the office. A common response is to peer under the table on which the PlayStation is sitting, fully expecting to locate the 64-bit console or £5,000 muscle PC that is really responsible for the visual delicacies confronting you. It is honestly amazing to watch.

SPACE RACE

These breakthrough graphics also add to the enjoyment of the *Colony Wars* experience in terms of gameplay, because the stunning attention to detail throws you into the battle like you wouldn't believe.

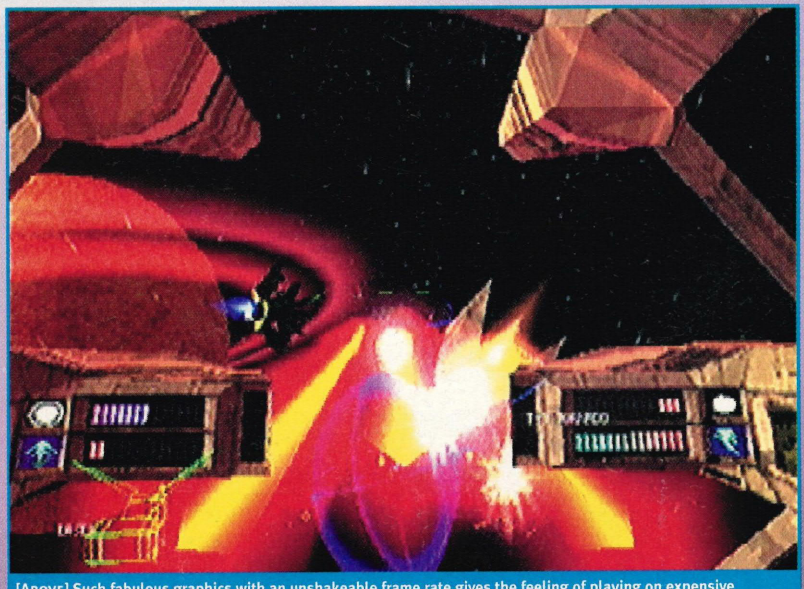
Take an ordinary dog-fight as an example. As you are launched out into space from your station, the entirely three-dimensional cockpit swings and locks in place in front of you; sporting an array of glowing coloured bars and a small fighter jet-style digital overlay. As you see a glint of light way out in space (all enemy ships reflect light to make them easier to pinpoint in the distance) you give chase.

Instead of solid black space with bright white dots sprinkled around, you see something altogether more believable. Softly-coloured pink gas formations, solid textured planets that actually rotate, dazzling suns and stars rushing past as you home in on your target.

The menacing Thunderchild craft comes into view, with the detail just improving the closer you get. Smooth contours, steel panels and even the Navy logo can be seen stencilled on the hull as you approach. The absence of any warping, clipping or other erratic behaviour that PSX games often exhibit means that your alternate reality remains undisturbed – and dangerously immersive.

MISSION CONTROL

A pounding with the pure energy anti-shield lasers soon gets the devious little tyke moving, and after a chase around a large ally transporter you begin to see sparks showering into space with each hit. You know



[Above] Such fabulous graphics with an unshakeable frame rate gives the feeling of playing on expensive arcade hardware.



[Above] Large scale battles with many enemy fighters all around mean you end up flying through explosions as they happen!



[Above] Every little helps. Having a mean-looking attack ship may not sound like an advantage, but it affects the minds of the enemy.

BEAUTY CONTEST

FACT. THERE ARE ONLY THREE THINGS IN THE WORLD AS BEAUTIFUL AS *COLONY WARS*. HERE THEY ARE.



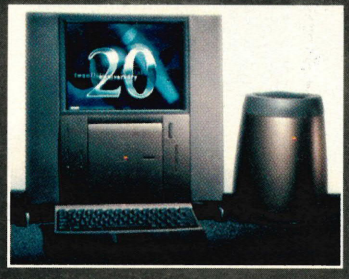
LAMBORGHINI DIABLO

SCULPTED RATHER THAN DESIGNED, FLOWN RATHER THAN DRIVEN, AND NINE MILES PER GALLON OF FUEL IN CITY TRAFFIC. NICE.



SALMA HAYEK

AS SEEN IN THE FILMS, *FROM DUSK 'TIL DAWN* AND *DESPERADO*, SALMA HAYEK IS THE MOST ATTRACTIVE WOMAN OF ALL TIME. CURVY.



20TH ANNIVERSARY MAC

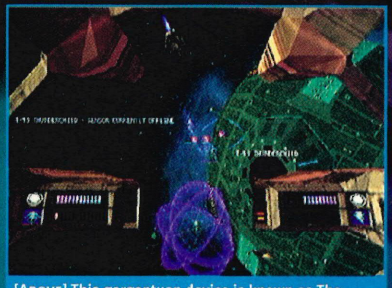
TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF PRODUCING THE WORLD'S FINEST AND FRIENDLIEST COMPUTERS, APPLE CRAFTED THIS 250MHZ, £4,700 WORK OF ART. HMM.



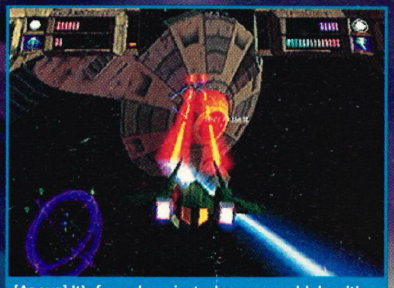
[Above] This is the kind of thing that happens when your own team decide to take you out. Basically, you're dead.



[Above] The blinding shockwave radiates out from a recently departed foe, leaving only a small burning mass.



[Above] This gargantuan device is known as The Platform. You must destroy its shields but leave it unharmed for your own men to take control.



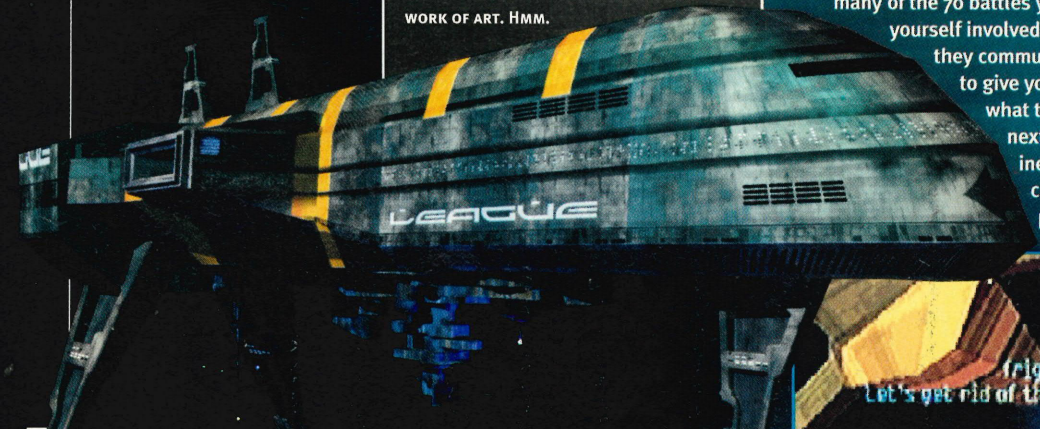
[Above] It's funny how, just when you could do with a little help from your space mates, they all seem otherwise engaged.

the shield is down and it's time to bring in the heavy artillery. Fiery red laser bolts tear through the burning ship and it erupts with a brilliantly bright shockwave soaring away in all directions, followed by the fragments of the vehicle drifting apart.

The people you are fighting for, the League of Free Worlds have other pilots in many of the 70 battles you find yourself involved in. Sometimes they communicate by radio to give you a clue as to what they might do next, but inevitably you'll catch some poor bugger in the crossfire. After a warning from your onboard computer, a few more misplaced shots is all it takes before every "friendly" ship in the vicinity is ordered to treat you as an enemy and blast you to kingdom come! This can be difficult to avoid at first, as the crafty enemy regularly attempt to draw your fire towards your own ships, especially on missions with giant groaning vessels which you are there to protect.

COLONISATION

Although there is little restriction in how you choose to fly a mission, most of *Colony Wars* is made up of thrilling special effects sequences that look like they were commissioned for the next generation of *Star Wars* movies.



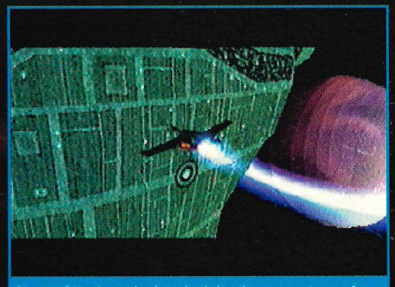


[Above] The colossal warp hole is a silent spinning entity in space that looks impressive. We're all too scared to see what happens close up though.

"STUNNING ATTENTION TO DETAIL THROWS YOU INTO THE BATTLE LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE!"



[Above] It's a bit harder to figure out what's going on with the external camera, but it looks cool when you get shot.



[Above] You're asked to dock by the computer and then it switches to a cut scene to show an auto-docking procedure. Pah!



[Above] Planets are massive 3-D objects in this game, but it just makes us want to fly down to the surface...



[Above] When things get hectic on the ship you are attacking, the crew launch escape vehicles. Track them down and kill them.





In fact, if George would just get up from his electronically cooled sofa in Skywalker ranch, quit watching his THX-equipped LaserDisc home cinema for five minutes and make a call to Psygnosis, then *Colony Wars 2*, using the *Star Wars* universe, would be the best game of all time. Either that, or an official *Elite* licence with all the cargo trading, tricky docking and galaxy hopping would be just as good. Probably.

Much of the *Star Wars* mood is already in place. It will take quite a few of the well-produced video sequences between levels before you realise that the dramatic bassy narration is not being given by Darth Vader himself, James Earl Jones.

When questioned about the remarkable similarity, *Colony Wars* game designer Mike Ellis bashfully looked down at his feet and claimed it was coincidence. "He's a Shakespearean actor," he said of the sound-alike, "we auditioned lots of people, but we wanted a kind of strong, professional sound."

MARS ATTACKS

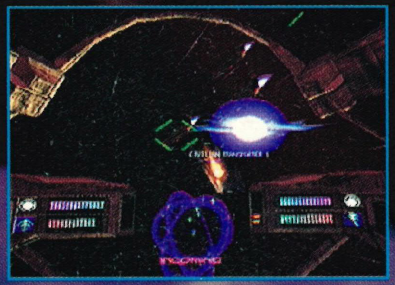
Music is another area where *Colony Wars* excels. A film score soundtrack accompanies the space flight, which is scenario-sensitive and brings a sense of urgency to the proceedings, with the dynamics changing during key moments in the mission. An orchestral crescendo as you ease over the top of your base ship to catch sight of an unfathomably large moving vortex known as a warp hole is stirring experience. Although it's something we always promote, *Colony Wars* benefits more than most from being hooked up to a quality stereo system.

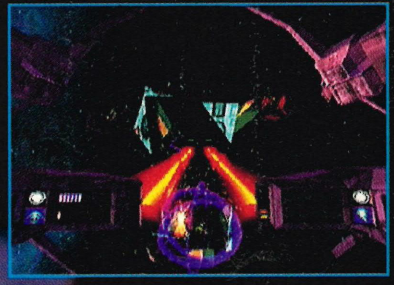
So much game they had to put it on two CDs, *Colony Wars* is easily one of the most impressive titles we have seen for a long time. The only thing missing is manual docking with your base after completing a mission, and the loading times are quite intrusive at the beginning of each level. But nothing is perfect. The technical expertise shown in what the developers managed to get out of the Sony hardware is amazing, but building in an extremely playable game as well deserves the PLAY Classic award.



[Above] Large scale battles with many enemy fighters all around mean you end up flying through explosions as they happen!









INTRICATE SHIP MODELS MADE OUT OF AN UNTHINKABLE NUMBER OF POLYGONS MEAN THAT BIG VESSELS LIKE THIS CAN BREAK REALISTICALLY INTO MANY CHUNKS INSTEAD OF DISAPPEARING INTO DUST. SEE THE TRANSPORTER BREAK UP UNDER FIRE!





PLAY

LOOKS	10
SOUNDS	9
GAMEPLAY	9
VALUE	9
MONOLITHS	9

PLAYED 92%

Utterly gorgeous, totally playable space blasting.

ALTERNATIVELY:
DARKLIGHT CONFLICT (79%)
WING COMMANDER IV (67%)

CLOCK TOWER

ANOTHER TALE OF HORROR AND INTRIGUE, BUT IS IT ALL JUST A WARM UP FOR *RESIDENT EVIL 2*? NOT IF SCISSORMAN HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT!

Written By Ryan Butt

There's been a murder!

Several of them in fact, and the problem here is not who did it, but how the hell are you going to stop the petrified cast of this adventure game from being next on the stiff list?



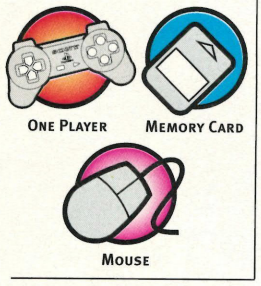
The tight-knit community of a small suburb of Oslo, Norway are being terrorised by a mass murderer who has risen from being a mere figure of old folklore to commit a series of gruesome killings in the area. Known only as Scissorman, rumour has it that he was one of two identical sons born of English heritage who went on a mass killing spree several centuries before. Only now he is back and doing what he does best!

In this point 'n' click adventure, you can take control of several key figures in the case as the plot unfolds and explore detailed locations both in Norway and England.

Initially, it starts off at a fairly slow pace as you roam around gathering clues and talking to witnesses and colleagues, but before too long the dastardly incarnation of evil makes his presence felt and you find yourself fleeing for your life!

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: ASCII Entertainment
Customer support: 01923 202097
Price: £44.99
Release date: December '97

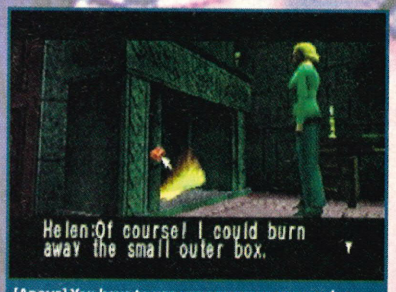


TICK, TOCK

The game is designed so that you can choose where you would like to go, and with each new room that is uncovered, a cursor arrow can be moved around and clicked on certain objects which beg for attention. These can either be mere objects of interest, or vital clues or weapons needed to plot and use in Scissorman's downfall.

The main pulling factor here is the graphics which are very well done and are viewed by a series of intelligent camera angles that switch depending on whereabouts in the room you are stood. No stone has been left unturned with the actual subject matter either, and you're certainly not spared the chilling and gut-wrenching experience of seeing characters get skewered by oversized shears, decapitated by clock hands, and even puking their guts up when a maimed corpse is discovered. In fact the whole game has a very stark, dark atmosphere about it that makes digging further into the complex plot that much more fascinating in the long term.

The fantastically frightening music score also heightens the chill factor as the music switches in eeriness and urgency the moment Scissorman cases your destination and starts limping after you, the grinding snap of his instrument of torture accompanying every step.



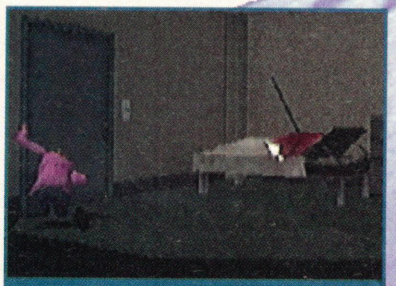
[ABOVE] You have to use your common sense when tackling some problems, failing that, the are several clues scattered around the game that will assist you.

NO SLEEP 'TIL BE(HEA)D TIME!

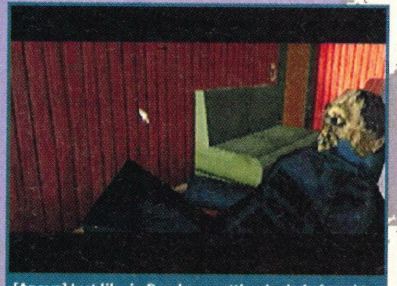
Clock Tower seems a very shallow and run-of-the-mill game at first, as to begin with you're very restricted in what you do and where you go. But the more you play,



[ABOVE] The shear-wielding serial killer pops up at multiple points during this adventure, each time you must find some way of stopping him before he closes in for the kill.



[ABOVE] A video game first! After discovering a badly mutilated corpse, this poor lass just couldn't contain herself. Ralph!



[ABOVE] Just like in Psycho, a rotting body is found to be inhabiting the upstairs rocking chair.

FOLKLORE UNTO THEMSELVES

THE CENTRAL CHARACTER IN *CLOCK TOWER* IS SCISSORMAN, A CHILLING SPECTRE THAT CAUSES MASS HYSTERIA FOR FUN, HOWEVER, HE IS NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH...



CANDYMAN
AS HORROR CHARACTERS GO, THIS BLOKE IS THE BEEsiness!



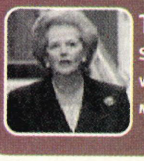
FREDDY KRUGER
KID'S FAVOURITE, WHO SHARES A SIMILAR TASTE IN MURDER WEAPONS.



MICHAEL MYERS
PASTY-FACED BUTCHER KNIFE-WIELDING SILENT NUTTER. IT'S HELLOWEEN!



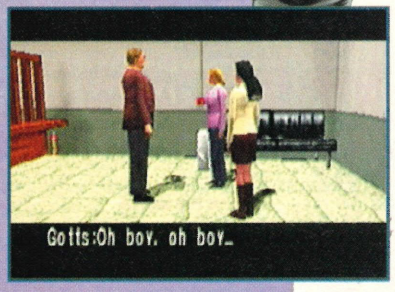
JASON VORHEES –
HOCKEY MASK WEARING KITCHEN UTENSIL-WIELDING NUTTER. IT'S SUMMERTIME!



THATCHER –
SEE YOUR PARENTS TURN WHITE AT THE MERE MENTION OF HER NAME!

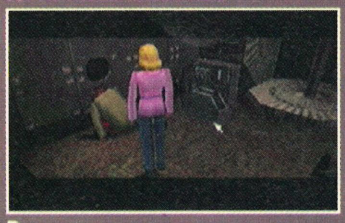
"No stone has been left unturned with the actual subject matter..."





MURDER MOST HORRID!

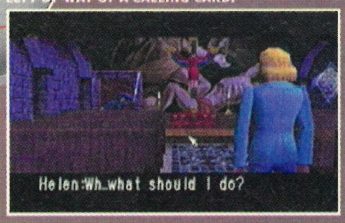
PLAYING THROUGH *CLOCK TOWER*, ONE OF THE THINGS THAT STRIKES YOU MOST IS THE AMOUNT OF GRUESOME, AND JUST OUTRIGHT HORRIFIC WAYS SOME OF THE CHARACTERS CROAK-IT. HERE ARE SOME OF OUR PARTICULAR FAVOURITES...



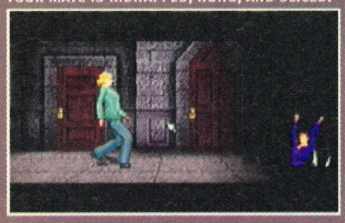
DECAPITATION –
AFTER FOOLISHLY POKING HIS FAT HEAD THROUGH A HOLE ON THE CLOCK FACE, SULLIVAN, NEEDLESS TO SAY, LOSES IT.



CORPSE –
WHEN SCISSORMAN GOES CUTTING IN THE UNIVERSITY, HIS UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS ARE LEFT BY WAY OF A CALLING CARD.



HUNG 'N' BUTCHERED –
DURING THE EXCURSION TO BORROWS CASTLE, YOUR MATE IS KIDNAPPED, HUNG, AND SLICED.



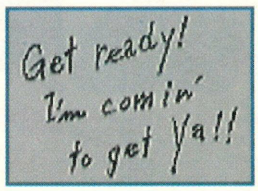
FLOORED –
WHEN TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM THE SCISSORMAN, ANOTHER MATE OF YOURS IS SUCKED INTO THE GROUND AND OPERATED ON!



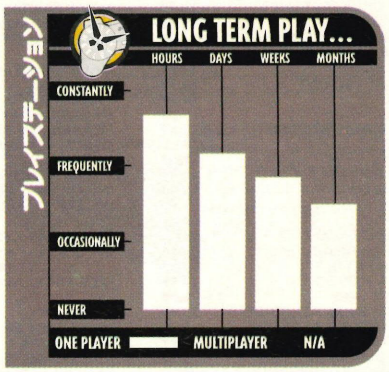
(ABOVE) You will encounter many characters throughout the game, all of which needed to be interacted with gain snippets of useful info and clues.

















PLAY

LOOKS	8
SOUNDS	8
GAMEPLAY	8
VALUE	8
SCISSORS	9

PLAYED 83%

Stylish, and utterly chilling murder mystery!

ALTERNATIVELY:
BROKEN SWORD (84%)
RESIDENT EVIL (95%)

the better it gets as more characters and locations are revealed.

Your playing pleasure is heightened by the fact that there are ten different endings to find, and the behavioural patterns of all the key players is entirely random, so you never actually play the same game twice – or so you're led to believe.

As point 'n' click adventures go, this isn't quite up to the all-round standard of *Broken Sword*, but it has enough action, intrigue and suspense to make it a very playable gaming experience in which you'll find yourself immersed, and even laying awake at night trying to fathom out any vital clues and turning points you may have missed first, second, or even third time round.

Don't be turned-off by the obscure origins of this game, fewer titles will keep the old grey matter pulsating away for as long as this!

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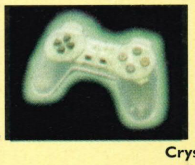


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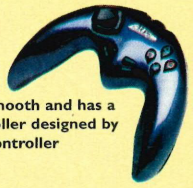
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PLAY

BOMBED OUT

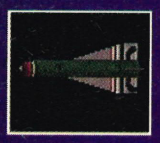
There's weapons-a-plenty in *Treasures of the Deep*. You start with a predictably conservative selection to begin with, but before you know it, GreenPeace are chasing you. Here's the full selection to drool over.



Net. Captures target and sends it to the surface.
Weight: 3 lbs
Gold: 500



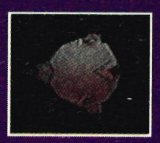
Torch. Charges for underwater welding torch.
Weight: 15 lbs
Gold: 20,000



Missile. Underwater smart missiles.
Weight: 50 lbs
Gold: 10,000



Plasma Bomb. Fires, er bits of plasma...
Weight: 200 lbs
Gold: 100,000



Mine. Contact mine. Plant this, get big bangs.
Weight: 25 lbs
Gold: 5000



Shockwave Torpedo. Target from long range.
Weight: 100 lbs
Gold: 50,000



Sonar guided Torpedo. Tracks even further.
Weight: 30 lbs
Gold: 3000



Magnetic homing mine. Will follow the enemy.
Weight: 35 lbs
Gold: 16,000



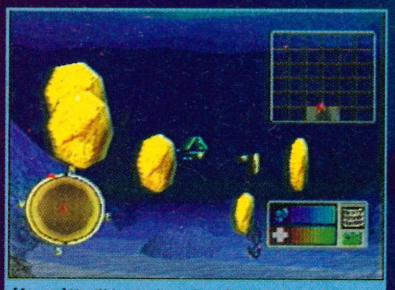
[Above] Shooting wrecks produces bonuses, usually in the form of nets and gold.



[Above] Shoot nets not spear-guns at dolphins! Just look at the juicy bonus you get for capturing instead of killing.



[Above] Blast an enemy sub and watch as it spectacularly spills its cargo and explode into a thousand pieces.



[Above] You'll be seeing a lot of this. Gold, gold, gold!!! So much I can almost smell it! Er, anyway, take time to suck up as much up as possible.

TREASURES OF T

PLUNDER THE DEEP AND SLAUGHTER ENDANGERED SPECIES IN NAMCO'S UNDERWATER ADVENTURE WITH A DIFFERENCE.

Written By Tom Sargent

There's a Seventies

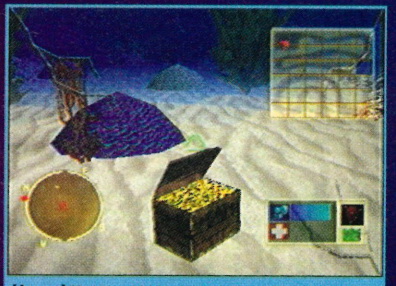
film called *The Deep* which starred the gorgeous buxom brunette, Raquel Welsh (most of you won't even remember her, but she looked fantastic bursting out of a wet-suit!). Unfortunately, there are no scantily-clad diving babes in Namco's diving fest, but this is small potatoes when you take your first plunge into the big blue and use the Dual Analogue controller to explore the colourful surroundings.

As an ex-Navy Seal, you can explore over ten levels of underwater treasure hunting/mission-oriented scenarios around the world. The game itself is viewed from either a first person (most practical) or third person (looks cool) perspective, and allows the player almost total freedom to trawl the depths looking for gold and other artefacts while fending off rival pirate divers and an assortment of progressively dangerous submersibles and marine life.

So that you don't become completely lost you are kept on course thanks to a radar, which can be upgraded to give more accurate details of the kind of enemies you encounter.



[Above] Down boy. This huge shark won't think twice about taking a chunk out of you. Shoot a net at him.



[Above] There's gold in them thar depths. Collect as much of the shiny stuff as possible.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Namco
SupplierThe Video Games Centre on 01202 527314
Price: £59.99
Release date: Out Now



One Player



Dual Analogue



Memory Card

You must be Codding

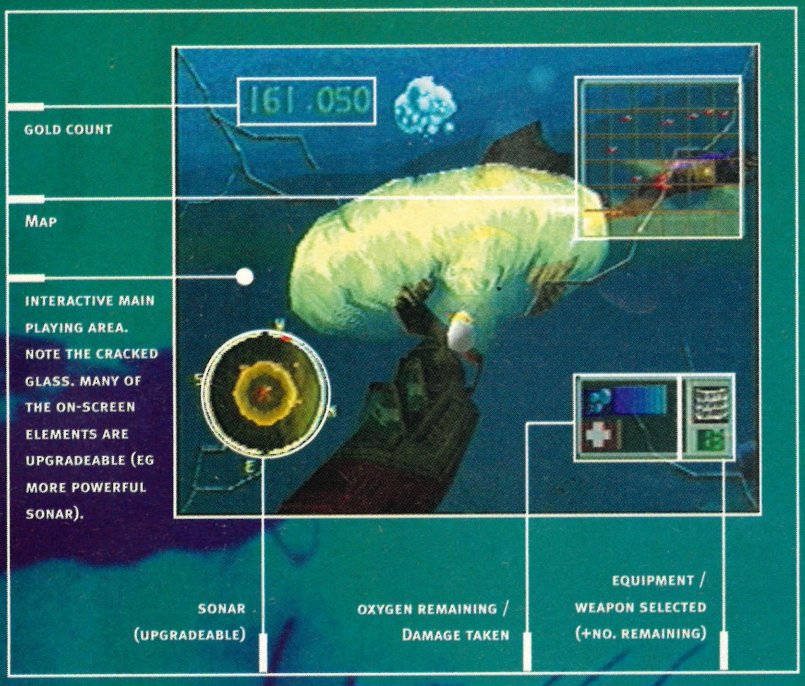
It's the control system which really makes *Treasures of the Deep* such fun to play and it works beautifully thanks to the clever use of the shoulder buttons. Before long, manoeuvring around both animate and inanimate objects becomes second nature and you learn the best tactics to muster against each enemy after a few plays.

For example, it's tempting to use the rapid (but weak) default harpoon gun on absolutely everything you come across, until you realise that capturing many creatures with nets and sending them to the surface adds to your gold tally, as opposed to mindlessly shooting dolphins through the head (which admittedly is more fun) and getting penalised.

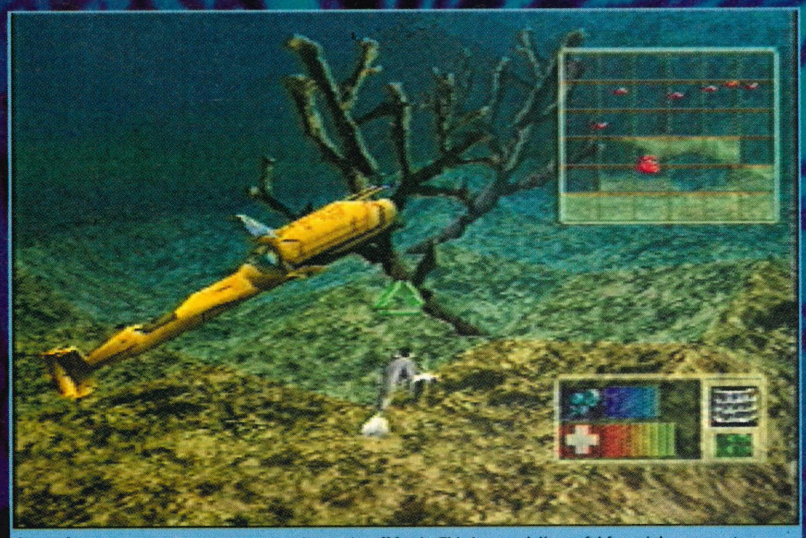
By following the radar, you can always see which direction to go in and where you're primary goal is, but there's no way you can take a shortcut to get there, which is bloody annoying. The game won't allow you to go up to the surface or up and over reef edges, which means that it's also a tad linear in places. The learning curve, however, is gentle and lets you become master of your surroundings and equipment before bringing on the nasty surprises in the form of killer subs and frenzied shark attacks.

My Plaice or Yours

Sharks are the most common foes and tend to rush at you out of the gloom, so keep an eye on your radar! Subs come in various shapes and forms and are best dealt with by homing mines or torpedoes. Rival divers



THE DEEP



[ABOVE] At any time you can leave your sub to swim off freely. This is especially useful for gaining access to small entrances.

can be a nuisance too, but get one shot on target and they begin to vent blood, which attracts nearby sharks. Just watch them glide in to feed, it's quite scary!

Amidst the inevitable carnage and treasure hunting, wonderfully-animated shoals of fish, turtles, stingrays and various crustaceans go about their fishy business, and amazingly react to your behaviour too.

Along the way you can upgrade your submersible, weapons and equipment to cope with later missions, including retrieving ancient artefacts, welding hulls, delivering time bombs and many more. The action does become repetitive after a while, but it feels good to play and you're kept on your toes throughout every level. The underwater scenery is excellent and the suitably ambient music compliments the atmosphere perfectly.

A fun alternative to the dearth of *Doom* clones currently available.

EVERYTHING BUT THE KITCHEN SUNK

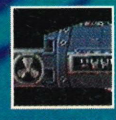
WEAPONS ASIDE, THERE'S QUITE A STACK OF GADGETS AND ADD-ONS TO MAKE EVEN THE MOST HARDENED DIVER HAPPY. TAKE A GANDER AT WHAT'S ON OFFER (IF YOU'RE RICH ENOUGH!).


WET SUIT. STEEL MESH SHARK-SUIT PROVIDES ADDITIONAL ARMOUR FOR DIVER WHEN OUT OF SUB.
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WEIGHT: N/A


AIR PONY. EMERGENCY AIR TANK.
COST: 10,000 WEIGHT: 15 LBS


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COST: 50,000
WEIGHT: 2 LBS


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WEIGHT: 2 LBS

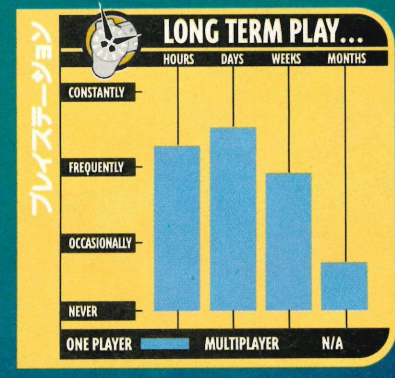

ROV. REMOTE-OPERATED VEHICLE
COST: 5,000
WEIGHT: 175 LBS



[ABOVE] Not giant haddock, beautifully smooth moving fish which react to you as you swim right up to them.



"The control system makes the game such fun to play..."



PLAY

LOOKS	9
SOUNDS	8
GAMEPLAY	9
VALUE	8
JAWS	9

PLAYED **83%**

Atmospheric underwater adventure.

ALTERNATIVELY:
CRITICAL DEPTH (DECEMBER '97)
TIGER SHARK (62%)

OVERBOARD!

HOIST THE MAINSAIL AND SHIVER YER COLLECTIVE TIMBERS FOR PSYGONSIS' HIGH SEAS ARCADE BOAT-'EM-UP.

Written By Tom Sargent

Ah, the open sea, wind in your hair and big chests full of doubloons. There are the downsides of course – nothing but salted meat and weevil-infested biscuits to munch on, not to mention the dog-sized rats, cabin fever and scurvy.



[Above] The smoke, lighting and flame effects work extremely well, especially viewed from above.

Thankfully, you're in for a relatively disease-free ride in Psygnosis' charming little shoot-'em-up set across five regions throughout the world. As we mentioned in our preview last month, *Overboard!* looks uncannily like one of those PC *Colonisation*-type epics that usually take about two years to complete. But breathe easy because it's nothing more than a miniaturised fun blaster with knobs on.

Overboard! places you in control of a galleon which is initially laden with forward firing and broadside (simultaneous four blasts from either side of the vessel) cannons, later on some quite bizarre weapons and refits can be picked up to counter the increased aggressiveness of the level inhabitants.

The core of the game revolves around negotiating your tiny ship past enemy boats and land-based installations, weird sea creatures and various natural elements in order to attain the final goal of ridding the seas of Blowfleet, a notorious pirate.

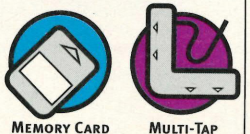


PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Psygnosis
Customer support: 0151 282 3000
Price: £44.99
Release date: 24 October '97



ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS



MEMORY CARD MULTI-TAP

PIECES OF EIGHT

Simplicity rules and from the start the emphasis is placed entirely on uncomplicated fun. *Overboard!* consists of five individually-styled regions: Caribbean, Inca, Arctic, Industrial and Middle East wherein there are three levels for each region. After completing each one, you'll be confronted by one of five end-of-level bosses: Giant Lobster, Inca Statue, Diplodocus, Floating city and finally Genie and Lamp.

Within each level, there are a number of enemy towns to conquer and when you manage to raise the Jolly Roger, you restart at that point if you happen to loose a life and it provides and extremely useful focal point for topping up on weapon and energy pods whenever your supplies become depleted.



[Above] Natural phenomena come along to thwart your progress in the form of huge tornadoes. Er, keep away from them.



[Above] The Giant Lobster found at the end of the Caribbean level is a piece of cake. First shoot of it's claws, and then finish it off.



[Above] The industrial level is dark and moody, but there are still flame-throwing enemies to brighten things up.

At any time during each level you can bring up a map to plot your progress, and new sections of the level can be revealed by picking up bottles found floating in the sea. Although the control of your ship is excellent with an ultra-tight turning circle and useful burst of speed, you realise by about the third stage that the proceedings soon become quite repetitive.

The diversity of enemies and power-ups is impressive. You can accumulate mines, rockets, depth charges, oil slicks and the fantastic auto-targeting lightning. As well as temporarily transforming your humble galleon into a steam-powered speedboat or a fan-powered blimp. But this is a bit of a smoke screen, which attempts to disguise the rather limited gameplay elements of going around and shooting things.

SHRUNKEN HEAD

The programmers are obviously aware that the unchanging gameplay needed spicing up somewhat and to add extra interest, some levels entrust the player to undertake 'smuggle Runs', where you must pick up and return an item for power-up bonuses.

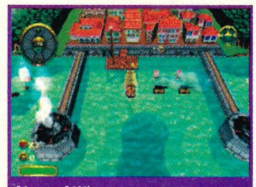
Again, this is welcome relief, but at the end of the day doesn't make up for the obvious shortcomings. One of the best elements included in *Overboard!* is the five-player, ten level-specific deathmatch. Players must make a mad dash for the best power-ups to stand any chance of winning, but due to the fact that the matches take place on one screen at a time, it is not as



[Above] The towns in the Caribbean level look gorgeous, but alas you can't land and explore them. Interaction here ends with you hoisting the Jolly Roger.



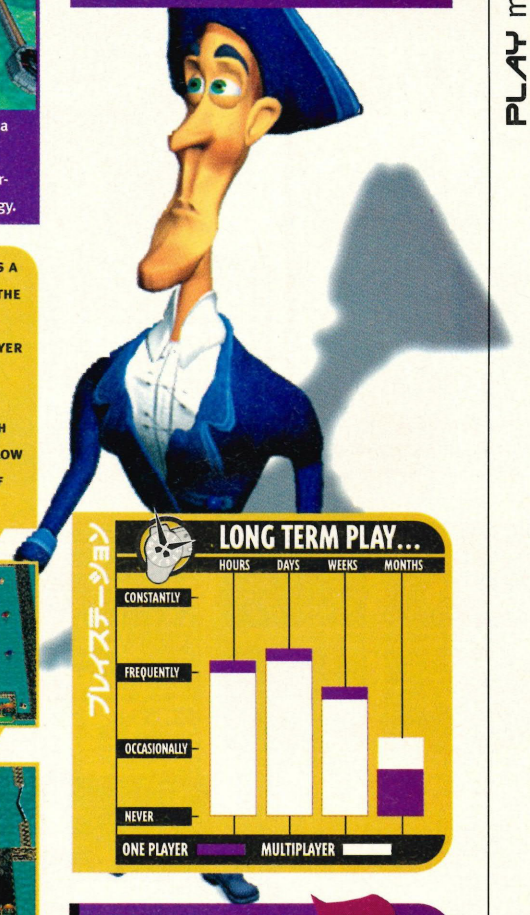
[Above] The Arctic stage is replete with icebergs, submarines and flying enemies.



[Above] When you overcome a small town, you're always rewarded with weapon power-ups and usually a bit of energy.



[Above] When you take loads of damage, your ship catches fire and your men start to jump overboard. Chase and collect them to regain lost energy.



"A limited blaster that's fun for a while..."



[Above] To open gateways to new areas, sometimes you have to shoot rockets at these aerial balloons. Hurry though you only have limited time.

fun as the one player game.

Overboard! is great fun for a while, and the five player deathmatch option is a laugh too. The miniature graphics are well detailed and the animations of the ships are beautifully executed. But an unfortunate downside is the game's recurrent nature, which really hits home by the time you reach the third stage. *Overboard!* is worth checking out.

DEATHMATCH MODE IS A FUN ALTERNATIVE TO THE ONE PLAYER QUEST AND A REAL LAUGH IN MULTI-PLAYER MODE. THERE ARE TEN ARENAS IN TOTAL, WHERE YOU ALL MAKE A MAD DASH FOR THE WEAPONS AND BLOW TEN BELLS OF CRAP OUT OF EACH OTHER.



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PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●●○○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●●●○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●●○○○
VALUE	●●●●●●●○○○
SEASICK	●●●●●●●○○○

PLAYED **75%**

Fun, repetitive and simple boat-'em-up.

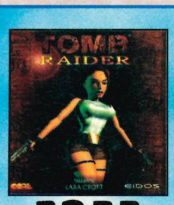
ALTERNATIVELY:
LOADED (85%)
MICRO MACHINES V3 (92%)

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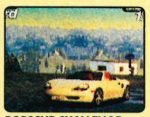
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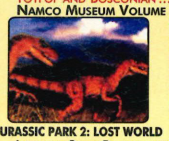


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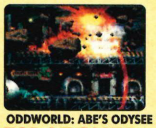


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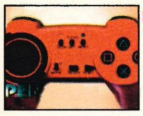
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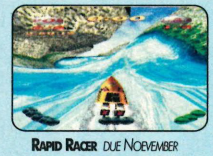
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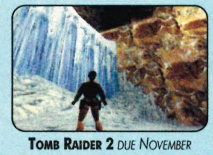
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WAR GODS DUE OCTOBER



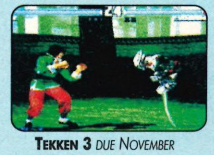
FINAL FANTASY 7 DUE DECEMBER



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ACE COMBAT 2	NOVEMBER
ACTUA SOCCER 2	OCTOBER
ACTUA TENNIS	OCTOBER
APACHE LONGBOW	DECEMBER
CASTLEVANIA	OCTOBER
CLAYFIGHTER EXTREME	DECEMBER
CRASH BANDICOOT 2	DECEMBER
DISCWORLD 2	NOVEMBER
FANTASTIC 4	5TH AUGUST
FIGHTING FORCE	30TH OCTOBER
G POLICE	END OCTOBER
HERC'S ADVENTURE	OCTOBER
KILLING TIME	NOVEMBER
KURUSHI	OCTOBER
LETHAL ENFORCERS 1 & 2	OCT/NOV
MAGIC THE GATHERING	NOVEMBER
MOTO RACER	24TH OCTOBER
NASCAR '98	24TH OCTOBER
NUCLEAR STRIKE	3RD OCTOBER
PREMIER MANAGER '98	OCTOBER
SCREAMER 2	END NOVEMBER
TIME CRISIS	NOVEMBER
TOTAL DRIVIN'	END OCTOBER
WAR GODS	OCTOBER
WING OVER	MID OCTOBER

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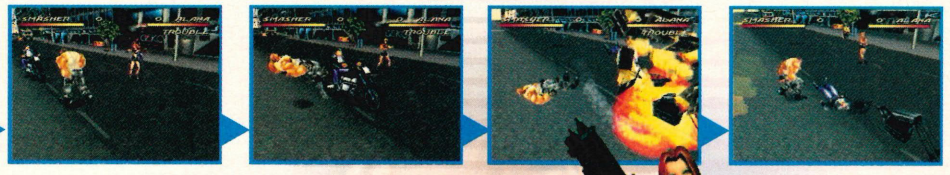
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PL2(12)

GET YER MOTOR RUNNING

NOT EVEN 'THING' LOOK-ALIKE SMASHER CAN PREVENT THE KAMIKAZE BIKER FROM CHARGING DOWN THE STREET AND TURNING HIS BIKE INTO NAPALM FIREWORK.



FIGHTING FO



EVER WANTED TO PLAY *STREETS OF RAGE* IN 3-D? YOU CAN NOW THANKS TO CORE'S ULTRA-VIOLENT TWO PLAYER BEAT-'EM-UP.

Fighting Force is a dream come true for addicts of the old 16, and even 8-bit horizontal beat-'em-ups, *Double Dragon*, *Renegade* and *Streets of Rage*. What it has successfully managed to do is take the essential ingredients of all those addictive two-player games and put them through the 3-D mixer.

What Core Design has ended up with is a fully-immersive 3-D slaughter-fest that allows two players to work in tandem against an army of dark-suited *Men In Black* types, street punks and other assorted weirdoes in an attempt to defeat the infamous megalomaniac Dr Zeng.

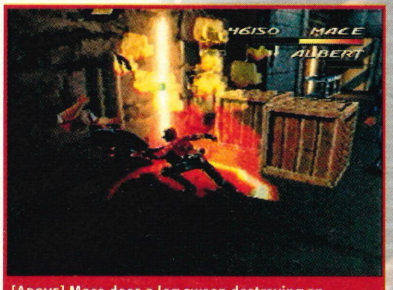
The game ethic is frighteningly simple – choose one or two of the four main characters: Mace Daniels, Hawk Manson, Ben 'Smasher' Jackson and Alana McKendrick (each of which has their own strengths and weaknesses, depicted by size and agility), and kick the crap out of literally everything and anything you come across. This includes the unbridled satisfaction of destroying parked vehicles, building contents and virtually anything else which looks moveable.



[ABOVE] Smasher gives Driver, the end of level boss 'the good news'. Blood spurts, intestines spill.



[ABOVE] Nice backflip, but he won't want to pick up the tab for his burning wreck of a bike.



[ABOVE] Mace does a leg sweep destroying an explosive crate and a baddy in one go.

VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN

After smashing a car to pieces you can then use tyres and engine parts to knock out swarming enemies. Throw something accurately enough and you can take out two or three at a time! One of the most impressive aspects (and satisfying) is the manner by which enemies can be dealt with in the two player mode. One player can grab hold of a floundering goon while the other gives him or her a real going over – excellent stuff.

The sheer freedom that players are allowed is admirable too. Suppose one player needs to go in an opposite direction to the other in order to grab a weapon, you can zoom the view out by pressing one of the shoulder buttons so that both players remain on-screen at the same time. It would have been better if the CPU compensated for this automatically, but it isn't too intrusive on the gameplay. Often the computer will automatically move the player(s) on to the next section if everything has been completed and at certain points in the game. You come to a junction (usually after a skirmish with one of the six main bosses) and must choose which level to go to next. This increases the replay value and means that on any subsequent games you can try a different direction. In total there are eight action-packed levels broken down into 25 stages. Each one is relatively short, but quite tough (even on the medium level), especially in the single player mode.

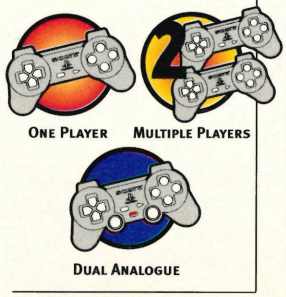
"Each character has more slick moves than John Travolta..."

IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

Although each character has more slick moves than John Travolta, they're very easy to pull off, and are more suited to the four-on-one attacks that regularly occur. Who wants to attempt a 25-button combo when enemies are coming at you

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Eidos
Customer support: 0181 636 3000
Price: £44.99
Release date: Late October



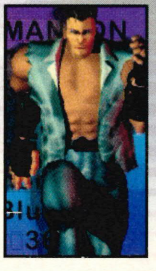
ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS DUAL ANALOGUE

FIERCE CREATURES

FROM THIS HARDY BUNCH THERE ARE A NUMBER OF (NOT THE MOST OBVIOUS) VITAL STATISTICS TO BEAR IN MIND BEFORE CHOOSING YOUR CHARACTER, DEPENDING ON WHETHER YOU WANT STRENGTH OR AGILITY.



NAME: ALANA MCKENDRICK
AGE: 17
HEIGHT: 5' 5
WEIGHT: 108 LBS
HAIR: BLONDE
EYES: BLUE
VITALS: 38 - 20 - 28
IQ: 240



NAME: HAWK MANSON
AGE: 26
HEIGHT: 6' 2
WEIGHT: 195 LBS
HAIR: BLONDE
EYES: BLUE
BICEPS: 36"
CHEST: 48"
NEK: 20"
IQ: 187





RCE

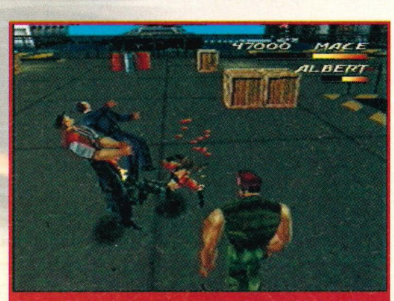




[Above] Mace perfects the sweep to fell yet another foe. Be careful though as your energy goes down each time you pull this move off.



[Above] You've got to watch out for some enemies harbouring weapons of their own. They shoot first and ask questions later.



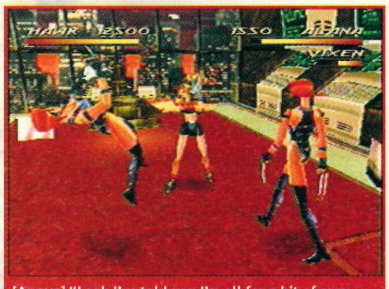
[Above] Mace takes out two patrolmen with a well-timed slide. There are tons of easy-to-execute moves up all the characters' sleeves.



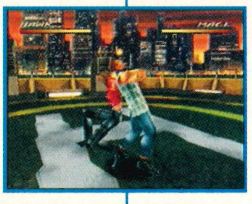
MEAN ARENAS

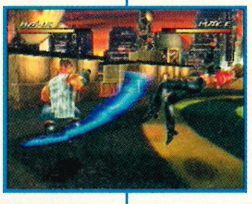
After every level, you get the opportunity to fight it out with each other (if you're playing in two-player mode) in one of eight specially enclosed arenas. You still have full freedom to move around in the 3-D environment too.

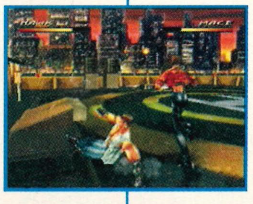


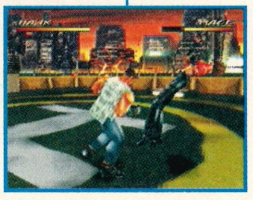


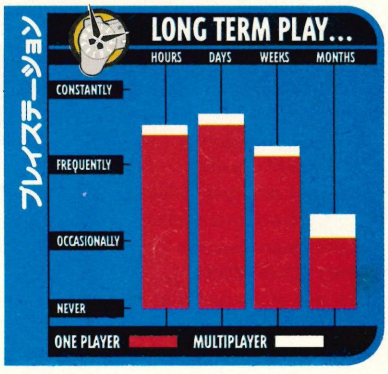
[Above] "Look I've told you I'm all for a bit of argy-bargy, but I'm not wearing leather."











thick and fast from every angle anyway?

Weapons are liberally scattered around each level, but if you look carefully enough, you'll come across more impressive pick-ups, including shot-guns and rocket launchers to name but a few. If you fancy a bit of one-on-one, there are eight special *Tekken*-style arenas which pop-up as bonuses after every completed level, which is a fun alternative to the endless slaughter!

Some people will undoubtedly claim that *Fighting Force* is too simplistic and repetitive, but they're missing the point. It's a well-crafted translation of the highly addictive originals mentioned earlier, and plays extremely smoothly. The conversion to 3-D has been as seamless as is possible and more importantly, works well. After a while, it does become repetitive, but you still keep coming back for more – it just feels so right and the learning curve (thanks to good AI) is spot on. All in all a great game.



NAME: Mace Daniels
AGE: 21
HEIGHT: 5' 7
WEIGHT: 126 lbs
HAIR: brunette
EYES: green
VITALS: 38 - 22 - 30
IQ: 200



NAME: Smasher
AGE: 29
HEIGHT: 6'
WEIGHT: 280 lbs
HAIR: brown
EYES: hazel
BICEPS: 48"
CHEST: 60"
NECK: 26"
IQ: 106

PLAY

Looks	8/10
Sounds	8/10
Gameplay	8/10
Value	8/10
Fists	8/10

PLAYED 89%

Brutally destructive two player action!

Alternatively:
Die Hard Trilogy (92%)
Lone Soldier (92%)

STATION M

CHEATS ▸ TIPS ▸ LETTERS

THE MASTER OF THE STATION RETURNS LIKE THE PRODIGAL SON TO FILL YET ANOTHER SPREAD OF PLAYSTATION HINTS, TIPS AND CHEATS. FEAST YOUR EYES ON THESE *MOTO RACER* CODES FOR STARTERS. KEEP YOUR LATEST CHEATS POURING IN TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS AND WE'LL PRINT 'EM: *STATION MASTER, PLAY MAGAZINE, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET, BH1 2JS. OR E-MAIL PLAY@PARAGON.CO.UK*

THE LOST WORLD

60 LIVES

Press ▲, ✕, ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ■, ●, ■, ▲, ✕, ● when the text 'Press Start' appears on the opening screen. Note: Activating this code will disable sound effects.

CHEAT MODE

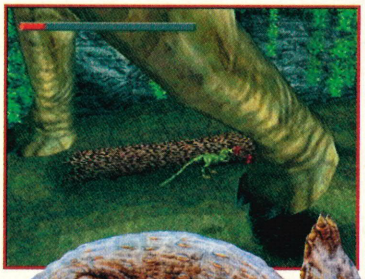
Enter one of the following passwords to activate the corresponding cheat function. Note: Activating some of these codes will disable sound effects.

Effect	Password
Hunter	■, ✕, ●, ▲, ✕, ●, ■, ▲, ■, ✕, ●, ✕
Human prey	▲, ✕, ▲, ✕, ●, ✕, ■, ▲, ▲, ■, ●, ✕
Velociraptor	■, ✕, ●, ▲, ✕, ●, ■, ▲, ✕, ■, ●, ✕
Tyrannosaurus Rex	▲, ■, ●, ■, ✕, ▲, ▲, ●, ■, ▲, ▲, ✕
Display Compy gallery	✕, ▲, ▲, ■, ✕, ●, ▲, ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ●
Display hunter gallery	▲, ✕, ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ■, ●, ▲, ■, ✕, ✕
Display human prey gallery	▲, ■, ●, ■, ✕, ▲, ▲, ●, ✕, ■, ▲, ▲
Display Velociraptor gallery	●, ■, ▲, ✕, ●, ▲, ■, ✕, ●, ■, ✕, ▲
Display Tyrannosaurus Rex gallery	▲, ▲, ●, ■, ▲, ✕, ▲, ■, ■, ✕, ▲, ●

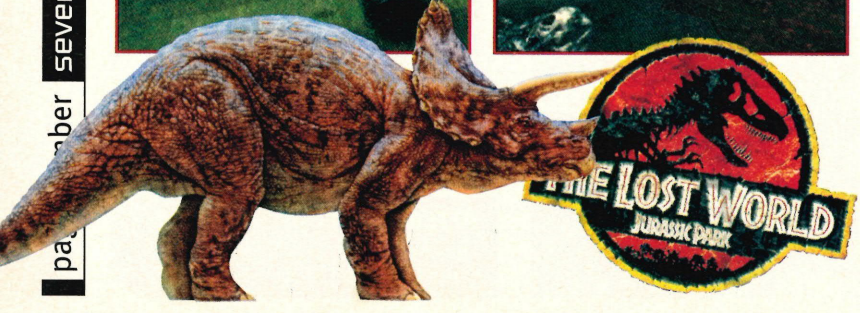
LEVEL PASSWORDS

Enter one of the following passwords to begin game play at the corresponding level with seven lives.

Level	Password
Hunter	●, ●, ✕, ✕, ▲, ■, ■, ■, ●, ●, ■, ▲
Raptor	●, ●, ✕, ✕, ▲, ■, ▲, ■, ▲, ●, ▲, ✕
T-Rex	■, ■, ▲, ▲, ✕, ▲, ▲, ●, ●, ■, ✕, ▲
Prey	▲, ▲, ■, ■, ●, ■, ▲, ✕, ■, ▲, ●, ■







V-RALLY

CHEAT MODE

Quickly press ⇧, ⇩, ▲ + ● when the Infogrames logo appears. The phrase 'Lock Off' will appear to confirm correct code entry. Then, press one of the following controller actions to activate the corresponding cheat function.

UNLIMITED TIME

Press ⇦ + L1. The race continues in arcade mode even if the checkpoints are not crossed before time expires.

NARROW TRACKS

Press ⇦ + L2. 18 narrow tracks may now be selected. These tracks are usually earned by completing the arcade hard course under the Ace difficulty level.



JEEP

Press ⇦ + R1. A small Jeep will replace the Peugeot 106 Maxi.

RESTART RACE

Press ⇦ + R2. Allows an arcade mode race to be restarted.

DEBUG MODE

Press ⇦, ⇨. Game debug information will be displayed. Press Start to access a 'Memory' option that displays more information.

MOTO RACER

CODES

Pocket bike mode:
⇧, ⇩, R2, L2, ⇩, ⇧, L1, ✕

Reverse mode:
⇦, ⇨, ⇦, ⇨, ■, ●, R1, L1, ▲, ✕

Activate the 10 tracks:
⇧, ⇧, ⇦, ⇨, ⇩, ⇩, ■, R2, ▲, ✕

Activate the 10 tracks, reverse mode:
⇩, ⇩, ⇨, ⇦, ⇧, ⇧, ●, L2, ▲, ✕

Victory movie:
■, ▲, ●, ▲, ■, ▲, L1, ⇧, R2, ✕

Credits movie:
●, ▲, ■, ●, ▲, ■, ⇧, ⇨, ⇦, ✕

Night tracks mode:
⇧, ●, L1, ⇩, ▲, L2, ■, ⇦, R1, ✕

50 Km/h AI bikes:
⇩, ⇩, ⇩, ●, L1, ■, L2, ⇩, ⇩, ✕

Ultra boosted bike:
⇧, ⇧, ⇧, ▲, R1, ▲, R2, ⇧, ⇧, ✕

Enter these codes on the title screen (Start, Options) by using the player 1 controller.



WARCRAFT 2

CHEAT CODES:

Enter these codes as passwords to cheat your way to victory.

NTTCNLS – Auto win level
YPTSLWRM – Auto lose level
TSGDDYTD – God Mode
GLTTRNG – More oil, timber and gold
MKTS – Four times normal build speed
NSCRN – Map expose
DCKMT – Extra unit build options

ASTER

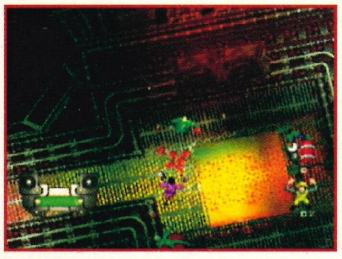
MACHINE HUNTER

Cheat Mode

Enter '???HOST???' as a password. A cheat option will now be accessible from the menu.

Level Password

1	(none)
2	HIABY_EUHQ
3	FQAJA*EQPR
4	CYQJQIDMQQ
5	BEBBQQAYRQ
6	ZNBRRHAQNQ
7	AQRDYOGA!B
8	A!RIIYCAWQ
9	AECDYDDQTB
10	QMSKQMDQ_B
11	AWCLI*HAMA
12	A?CMQXEA#R
13	IBTLIJEACB
14	QMDEIVFMRR
15	QQDNIDEAIQ
16	I?DVK?HQWB
17	ACE!KYDYLR
End	AMUIIFC!EQ



AIR RACE

Hidden Cheats

To access the two hidden planes – the F16 and the Stealth Fighter, hold the R1 and R2 buttons on Controller 2 and press the Select button 20 times on the title screen. You must do this quickly, otherwise the ranking will begin. You should hear an electronic sound and the two planes should be available in the Select screen.

During the 'Now Loading...' screen, three small aeroplanes (GeeBee) are flying from right to left. Press × constantly and rapidly – they ascend and fly a little bit faster. When you successfully make them reach the top, 'Good!!!' will appear and the data of the GeeBee will be changed.



F1 '97 – THE FIRST CHEATS EVER!

Enter these words in place of the driver's name on the front screens for an array of never-before-seen cheats!

BILLY BONUS – Four new tracks
VIRTUALLY VIRTUAL – VR graphics
SWAP SHOP – New sounds
LITTLE WEELZ – Over-inflated tyres
PI MAN – Wipeout 2097 mode
ZOOM LENSE – Helicopter view
BOX CHATTER – Murray/ Martin sprites
CATS DOGS – Frog rain

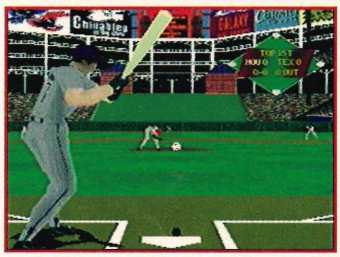
Also, if you change the first letter of Jean Alesi's name to either O, P, Q, or N then you will go straight to round 16 of the championship.

If you have discovered any new cheats not listed above then please get them to us immediately – do not pass go, do not collect £200.

VR BASEBALL '97

All-Star Players:

Highlight the designated hitter selection on the options menu and press ■, ●, ■, ●. The AL and NL All-Star players will be available after exiting the menu.



PLAY Q&A

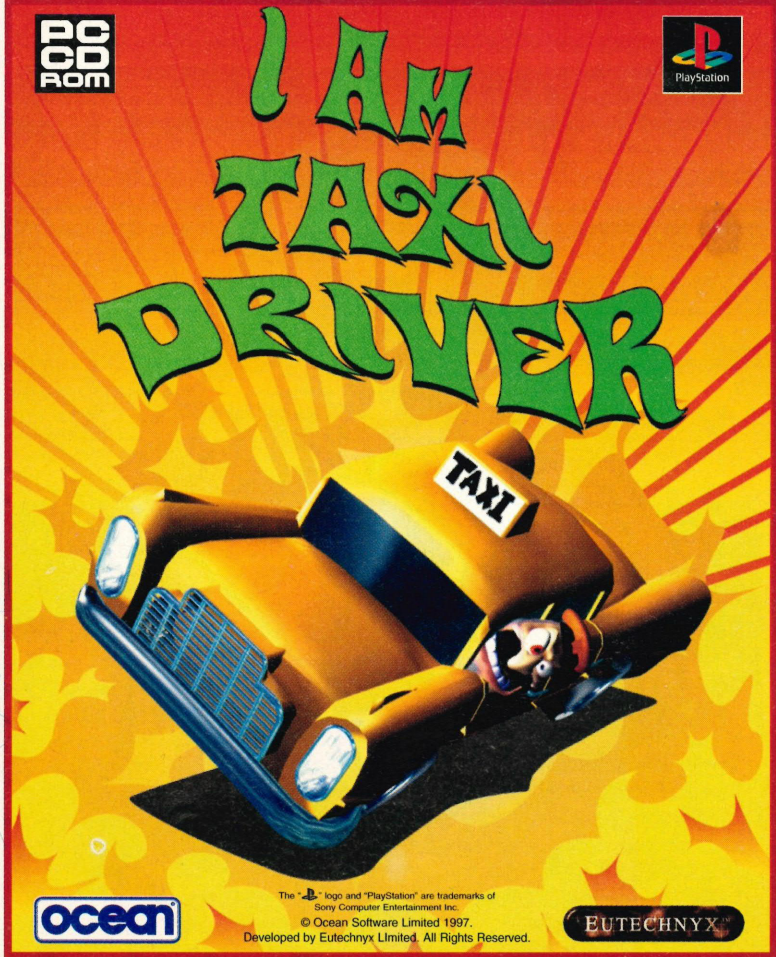
If there's a specific point in a game that's bugging the hell out of you, fret not and contact us at the usual address: *Q&A, Play Magazine, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 2JS.*

Dear PLAY,
I'm stuck on the 6th level of *Tomb Raider*. I've got to the temple, but I can't open the iron grill. I climbed the temple and found the crocodile pit, but can't get out the other end. Please could you help me.
Confused: Seamus Enright, Ireland

After jumping across to the rocks leading to the croc pit, grab the ledge on the north side and climb along to the right to find a secret area containing shotgun shells. Keep climbing right to drop onto the other side of the pit.

Dear PLAY,
I am completely stuck on *Wild Arms*. I'm stuck on the Pleasing Gardens. I've been everywhere there is to go, but just seem to go round in circles with the teleport pads. Please help me.
M. Thornton, West Yorkshire.

Use a bomb to bring the Gigamantis out of the sand. Now fight the Gigmantis (Zero Armour Attack, Thunderbolt, Mantis Fist) HINT: Try Valkyrie. Next, throw its head at the crystal. Get the Grapple tool and then use the transporters (right, left then centre) to get the Bracelet and the Flash Rune. Now head back to Ship's Graveyard. Items to collect at this location include: 2 Crest Graphs, 1 Duplicator, Bracelet, Flash Rune and the Grapple tool.



NUCLEAR STRIKE

NUCLEAR STRIKE RECEIVED A WHOPPING 88% IN LAST MONTH'S ISSUE, AND HAS CERTAINLY EARNED ITS STRIPES AS FAR AS COMPREHENSIVE TACTICAL ADVISE IS CONCERNED. THIS MONTH WE KICK OFF (OR SHOULD THAT BE TAKE OFF) WITH THE FIRST OF A THREE PART SOLUTION TO THE LATEST AND GREATEST STRIKE-'EM-UP.

GENERAL HINTS

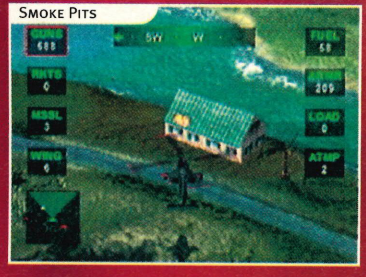
- Try to finish each mission in the correct order. Skipping ahead may seriously endanger your chopper and your operation.
- When picking up items such as the quick ladder, bear in mind that you may change helicopters halfway through the campaign, and it may best acquired in another vehicle to the one you are currently in.
- Use the L and R buttons to strafe, thus making it easier to tackle large targets without sustaining as much damage.

CAMPAIGN 1: DELTA STRIKE

Password: N/A
Setting: A simmering jungle kingdom somewhere along the river delta

MISSION 1: SMOKE PITS

There are three pits to obliterate, so pick the nearest one and approach with caution. The area will be surrounded by tanks, foot soldiers , boats and sometimes watchtowers, so eradicate every danger object before you turn your attentions to the actual bonfire.



MISSION 2: RESCUE NICK

This is a double-barrelled mission, as you are required to undertake two objectives to succeed. First, approach the area where Nick is being held and take out the numerous huts and bushes surrounding his cage. This is where the enemy is hiding and hoping to ambush you, so destroy them before winching him up. Now take his cage to the spot situated next to the nearby LZ.



Due to Nick's apparent death, you must recruit another agent, Naja.

Go to the allied camp and start picking off the surrounding tanks, soldiers and towers. Naja will then make a break for it on a motorbike. You must now guide her safely through to the neighbouring camp. Shoot on ahead and take out every nearby red target on the radar, especially those next to the bridge, because she needs to get across. Don't damage the bridge itself though! Once Naja is inside the camp, winch her up and your mission is completed.

MISSION 3: LIBERATE TOWN

Straight after the last mission, winch up the weapon crates that Naja uncovers and then take them to the site situated next to the town in the south. You need to supply the awaiting



troops with arms to secure the town and take it back from the enemy. So drop off the weapons at the designated spot and then go into the town and assist the troops by picking off the various tanks – they're all clearly marked in blue on the radar.

MISSION 4: RIVER FORT

After sustaining damage on your last mission, you must fly to the southern



LZ and switch choppers. Then prepare to storm the river fort! You must destroy every structure including the nearby bridge to prevent enemy reinforcements from arriving. This is just a case of destroying everything in sight.

MISSION 5: EXTRACT ELITES

Approach each hill outpost with caution and use your rockets to take out the surrounding tanks. Repeat this for all three posts and then transport the elites to the nearby airfield where they can reclaim their Huey choppers.

MISSION 6: CAPTURE GENERALS

Don't wait for the troops, just storm in and vaporise the area ASAP! There are stacks of loads, troop, and gun turrets to destroy, so proceed with caution in the danger areas. Once the generals



are exposed, execute them.

MISSION 7: JUNGLE FORTRESS

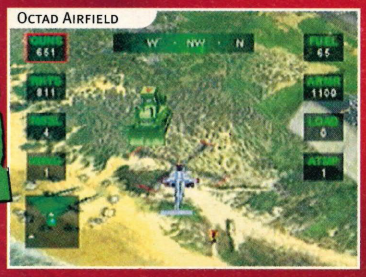
Go to the fortress and take out the surrounding tanks. When you drop off Nag, troops will approach from all angles so pick them off before they can chase her inside. Once she is safely inside and all immediate danger has been eradicated, your mission is complete.

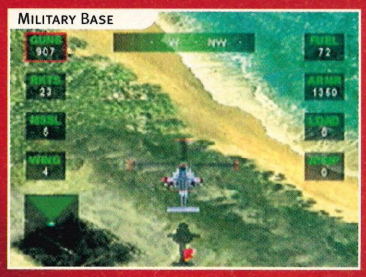
MISSION 8: HUNT LEMONDE

Chase the convoy west and then attack from behind. This is more mindless killing so there isn't much else to it. Work your way forward; taking out the enemy vehicles and then finally eliminate Lemonde who is in the tank at the front. Once the convey is no more, go back to the fortress and pick up Naja. Your work is complete so head so proceed back to home base.



SOLVED







CAMPAIGN 2: ISLAND STRIKE

Password: CUTTHROATS
Setting: Lavu Royale, a mall island chain somewhere in the South China sea.

MISSION 1: CONTACT CASH

Situated next to the home base is a small boat with crate on the deck. Pick it up and carry it to Cash's island in the north. All you have to do to complete the mission is drop it off at the designated spot and then winch up cash who appears in front of the house when the goods have been deposited.

MISSION 2: ASAT LAUNCH

There are three ASATs to destroy: two are in the water and one is on the mainland. For the missile next to the shipwreck, take out the small patrol boat first and then use missiles to destroy the missile before it launches. Now go to the submarine launch and again take out the small boats first. We recommend using a wingtip rocket to obliterate the whole sub in one. For the final ASAT, go to the island indicated on the map and then destroy the various tanks and gun turrets that surround the silo.

Then drop Cash off at the makeshift LZ and wait until the missile is uncovered. Wait for it to launch and then take it out in one fell swoop with a missile. Pick up Cash and that's it.

MISSION 3: OCTAD AIRFIELD

Circle the airport and take out the gun turrets and missile launchers, then drop Cash off at the makeshift LZ and watch him climb into the bulldozer to cause some serious damage to the airfield. Now monitor your map for the locations of the enemy gunships and take each one out with missiles and wingtips. When the airfield is completely cleared, go to the blue hanger at the end and shoot it to reveal the hidden Harrier and use this for the following missions.

MISSION 4: JUNK FLEET

The captives freed on Prison Island to the east can assist you, but it's far more effective to just go storming into the harbour where the fleet is moored and shower them in a hail of missiles and wingtips. Check your map to make sure that none are escaping – they move quickly, and if one or two get going it can be difficult to catch them before they disappear off to the south. Once the fleet have been destroyed, go to the prison camp, destroy the watch towers and then either drop Cash off to free the prisoners, or shoot the huts to do the job yourself.

MISSION 5: SINK LST FLEET

Approach the island with caution from the north and then take out the missile launchers and gun turrets that guard the fleet. Now it's just a case of giving the fleet everything you've got to prevent them from leaving the port.

MISSION 6: SINK DESTROYERS

Approach the island with extreme caution and concentrate first on taking out the various defences and the altering power plant. When all the dangers have been eradicated, go slightly go slightly north to the tiny islands (just next to where your home base was originally docked) and take the two sea mines and deposit them in circles at the mouth of the dock where the missile boats are moored. Now take out the boats.

MISSION 7: DESTROY BARRACKS

First circle the surrounding waters and take out the radar boat that alerts the barracks. Hover into the centre of the barracks and then take out the foot soldiers. Then go and land at the nearby LZ and drop off Cash. He'll storm the barracks and blow up each tower, finally pick him up and you're done.

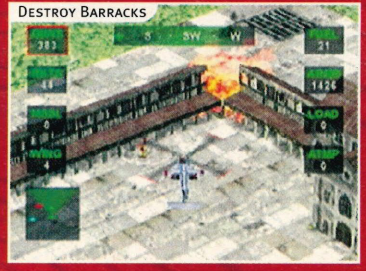
MISSION 8: MILITARY BASE

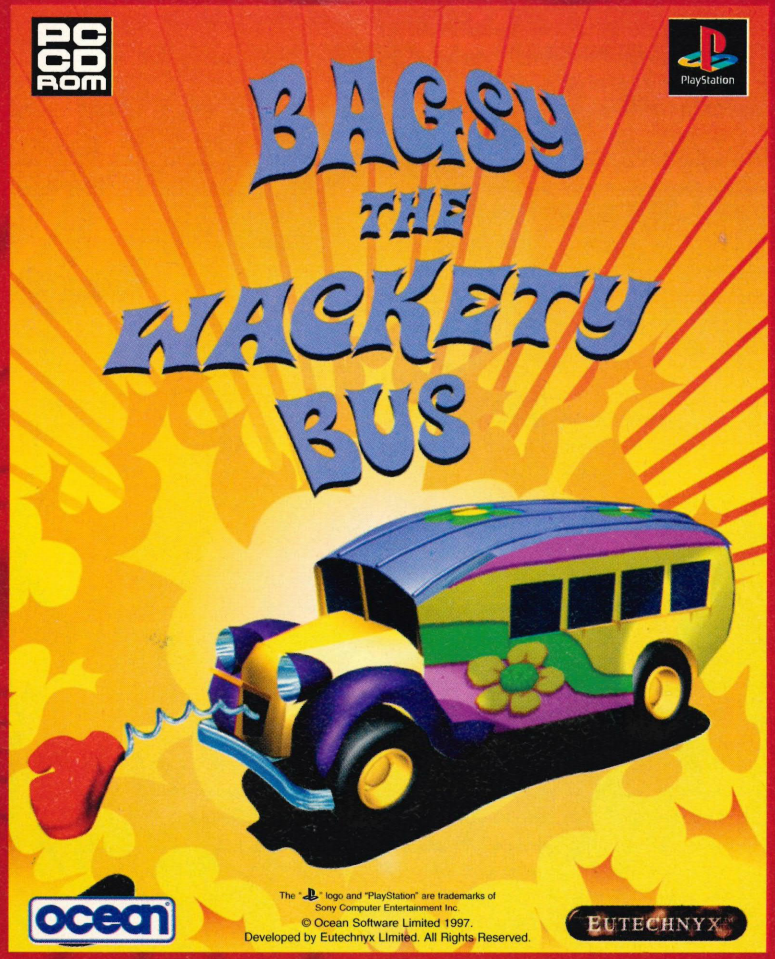
Crush the nearby radar and then drop off Cash at the LZ. He'll climb into a tank and destroy the parked fleets – leaving you free to destroy the metal hideout on the right and capture Hwong's brother. When all tanks have been destroyed, winch up Cash.

MISSION 9: HWONG

Go to Nitro Island in the top left corner and transport both canisters of nitro-glycerine to the designated spots. Now pick up the resulting mix and take it to the oil rig. Drop the load on top and start picking off he gun towers. When every section of the oil rig has been destroyed, Hwong will make a break for his boat, aided by gunships. Take them out first, then concentrate on the boat. Repeated fire will make it crash at the island at the bottom-right corner. Now Hwong is vulnerable, so winch him up and then the campaign is complete.







DYNASTY

IN THE BEST PLAY TRADITION, WE BRING TO YOU THE FULL LOW-DOWN ON ONE OF THE YEAR'S BEST LOOKING BEAT-'EM-UPS. *STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS ALPHA* MAY BE HOGGING THE LIMELIGHT, BUT *DYNASTY WARRIORS* STILL MANAGES TO SHINE LIKE ONE OF ITS LETHAL BLADES. FOR EVERYTHING YOU COULD POSSIBLY WANT TO KNOW, IN THE FIRST OF OUR TWO PART ANALYSIS. READ ON...

RULER: ZHUGE LIANG

Weapon of Choice: Spirit Of Thunder
Kingdom Of Shu
High, mid stab – ▲▲
Double slash (L) – ■■
High, mid slash – ■ ⇨ + ■
Double slash, then stab – ■■▲
Side Step (S) – ⇦ (hold) + ■
Rotorblade killer (also from L) – ⇨ (hold) + ■■■■
Two mid salshes – (ws) + ■■
Triple slash (I) – ⇨ (tap) + ■■■■
High magic beam – ⇩ ⇨ + ▲
Low magic beam – ⇩ ⇦ + ▲
Uppercut – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ▲
Double swing – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ■■
Three-level spinning fan – ⇦ ⇙ ⇩ ⇘ ⇨ + ■
Reverse three-level spinning fan – ⇨ ⇘ ⇩ ⇙ ⇦ + ■



Immediately after autoblock:
Teleport – ● + ×
Moves from side step:
Uppercut – ■
Low stab – ▲



WARRIOR: ZHAO YUN

Weapon of Choice: Spear Of Shadow
Kingdom Of Shu
High then mid stab, overhead hit – ▲▲■
Slash, high then mid stab, overhead hit – ■▲▲■
Twist step stab, spin slash, overhead hit and stab – ⇘ (hold) + ▲■■▲
Stab, twist step stab, spin slash, overhead stab – ▲▲ ⇩ + ■■▲
Slash, stab, twist step stab, spin slash, overhead, stab – ■▲▲ ⇩ + ■■▲
Uppercut slash – (ws) + ■
Low stab, uppercut – ⇩ + ▲■
Stab, hit down – (ws) + ▲■
Double spinning slashes and stab – ⇙ (hold) ■■▲
Side step double slashes – ⇩ ⇦ + ■■
Huge swing slash – ⇨ ⇨ + ■■
Huge swing and stab ⇨ ⇨ + ■▲▲



Double stab (I) – ⇨ ⇨ + ▲▲
Interrrupt stab (I) and drilling stab – ⇨ ⇨ + ▲ ⇩ ⇨ + ▲
Uppercut – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ■
Double spin and thrust – ⇦ ⇙ ⇩ ⇘ ⇨ + ■■■■▲
Mosou extensions:
Drilling stab extension – Stab musou ⇩ ⇨ + ▲



WARRIOR: GUAN YU

Weapon of choice: Crescent Glaive
Kingdom of Shu
Stab, overhead hit – ▲■
Two side swings – ■■
Two side swings, spear stance (S) – ■ ⇦ + ■
Giant swings, spear stance (momentarily) – ■ ⇩ + ■■■
Giant swings, spear stance (S) – ■ ⇩ + ■■ ⇦ (hold) + ■
Side slash (I) return slash – ⇨ + ■■
Overhead chop – ⇩ ⇨ + ■
Low sweep slash – ⇩ ⇦ + ■
Uppercut – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ▲
Uppercut slash – (ws) + ■
Mid stab – (ws) + ▲
Spear stance (S) – ✳ (hold) + ■
Moves from spear stance: Uppercut slash, side slash, stab, strong side slash – ■■▲■
Multiple slashes (6 hits) – ⇙ (hold) ■ ■■■■■





KEY

HORIZONTAL SLASH – ■
VERTICAL SLASH – ▲
BLOCK AGAINST SLASH – ●
BLOCK AGAINST THRUST – ×
WHILE STANDING (WS) – START BY CROUCHING, THEN RELEASE E AND PRESS THE RELEVANT BUTTON.

MOVES

INTERUPT MOVES (I) CAN BE INITIATED FROM THE MAJORITY OF STANDARD ATTACKS; PLUS A FEW SPECIALS TOO. IT INTERUPTS THE MOVE YOU ARE DOING AND STARTS THIS MOVE. IF TIMED WELL, YOU CAN INITIATE THIS MOVE TO COMBO WITH ANY ATTACK THAT IS INTERUPTED. HOWEVER, UNLESS THE HEALTH BAR IS IN THE RED, OR THE RAGE METER IS LIT, THIS MOVE WILL WORK LIKE ANY OTHER. Link Moves (L) LINK SOME SPECIAL MOVES AFTER COMBOS TO PROVIDE AN EXTRA SPECIAL BEATING.
Stances (S). SOME OF THE CHARACTERS HAVE SPECIAL STANCES. FROM EACH, THEY CAN PERFORM ONE OR TWO COMBOS.

BASIC MOVES

SIDE STEP – × + ●
THROW – ■ + ▲ (CLOSE)
JUMP ATTACK – ⇧ ⇗ + ■ OR ▲ (CAN ALSO BE USED AS A POUNCING MOVE ON FLOORED OPPONENTS)
Standing Up
Note: ALL THESE MOVES CAN BE COMBINED WITH ATTACK BUTTONS WHILE STANDING UP.
ROLL BACK – ⇦ REPEATEDLY
ROLL FORWARD – ⇨ REPEATEDLY
ROLL SIDEWAYS – ● + × REPEATEDLY
STAND UP – ⇧ REPEATEDLY
Desperation/Rage Moves
Note: THESE MOVES CAN BE PERFORMED WHEN EITHER THE HEALTHBAR IS IN THE RED, OR WHEN THE RAGE METER IS LIT.

WARRIORS

Warrior: Zhang Fei

Weapon of Choice: Cobra
Kingdom of Shu
Spinning slashes with a final low slash: ■ ■ ■
Two spinning slashes and a thrust – ■ ■ ▲
Shoulder charge (l) – ⇨ ⇨ + ▲
Uppercut, overheadchop, stab – (ws) + ■ ■ ▲
Mid thrust – (ws) + ▲
Overhead hit – ⇩ ⇨ + ■
Power stab – ⇩ ⇨ + ▲
Uppercut – ⇩ ⇦ + ▲
Double overhead chop – ⇩ ⇦ + ■ ■
Quadruple spins & delayed stab – ⇨ ⇨ + ■ ■ ■ ■ ▲ ▲



Ground shaker – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ▲
Throw:
Spinning strangulation – ⇨ ⇘ ⇩ ⇙ ⇦ + ■

Warrior: Xiahou Dun

Weapon of Choice: Sword Of Spectrum
Kingdom Of Wei
Slah, stab – ■ ▲
Stab, double uppercut slashes – ▲ ■ ■
Four slashes - ■ ■ ■ ■
Deceptive low stab and slash – ⇘ (hold) ▲ ■
Two right hand slashes – ⇨ + ■ ■
Double circle swings – (ws) + ■ ■
Mid stab – (ws) + ▲
Whirling low slash – ⇙ + ■
Low stab, fling up, jump and cut down – ⇩ ⇨ + ▲ ■ + ▲ ⇧ + ■
Triple circular slashes – ⇩ ⇨ + ■ ■ ■
Hitting out wide – ⇩ ⇦ + ■



Overhead chop (l) – ⇨ ⇨ + ■
Mid hit, overhead chop – ⇨ ⇨ + ▲ ■
Mid hit, stab and large swing – ⇨ ⇨ + ▲ ▲ ■

Ruler: Cao Cao

Weapon of Choice: Sword of Oracle
Kingdom of Wei
Slash, then sweep slash – ■ ⇩ + ■
Slash, stab – ⇨ + ■ ▲
Two slash, then sweep slash – ⇨ + ■ ■ ⇩ + ■
Two slashes, uppercut slash, leg hit (mid) – ■ ■ ■ ■
Two slashes, stab, two low slashes – ■ ■ ▲ ⇩ + ■ ■
slash, leg hit (mid) – (ws) + ■ ■
Elbow, overhead slash – (ws) + ⇨ + ▲ ■
Stab, elbow, overhead slash – (ws) + ▲ ▲ ■
Low slash double combo –



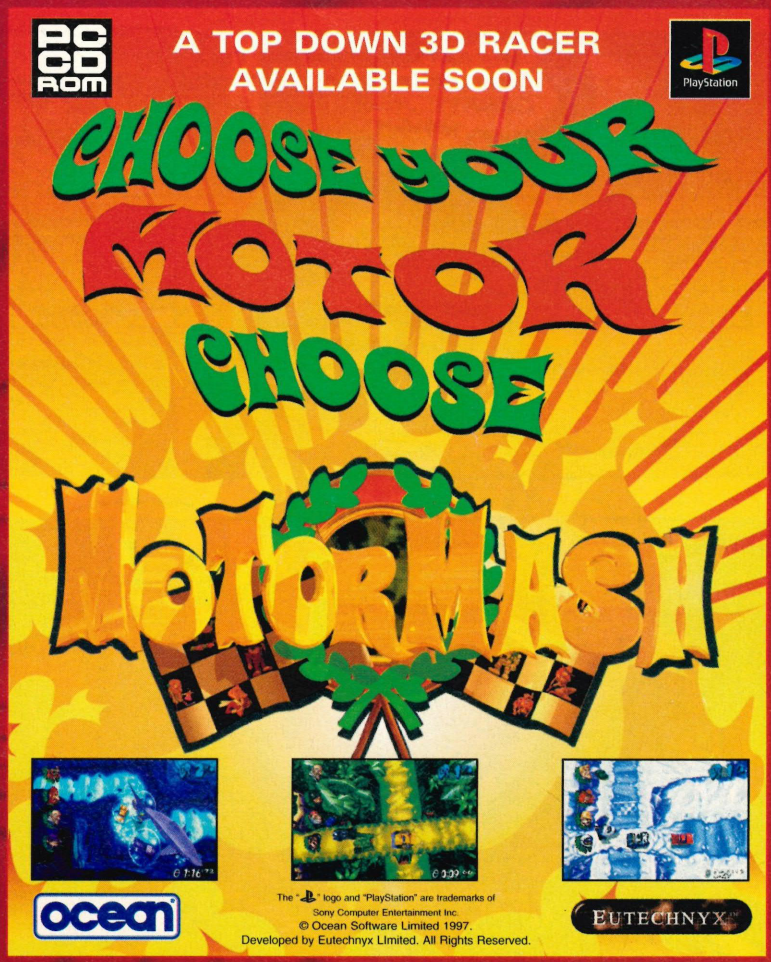
⇩ ⇘ (hold) + ■ ■
Mid slash – ⇩ ⇨ + ■
Side slash – ⇩ ⇦ + ■
Impaling stab (l) – ⇨ ⇨ + ▲
Sword dance – ⇦ ⇙ ⇩ ⇘ ⇨ + ■ (close)
Charged power uppercut – ⇨ ⇘ ⇩ ⇙ ⇦ + ■

Warrior: Dian Wei

Weapon of choice: Battle Ax
Kingdom Of Wei
Horizontal – (ws) + ■
Punch, horizontal chop – (ws) + ▲ ■
Hit low, mid slash – ⇩ (hold) ▲ (ws) + ■
Hit low, slash – ⇩ (hold) ▲ ■
Turn around low slash, punch – ⇙ + ■ ▲
Elbow, hammer – ⇨ ⇨ + ▲ ▲
Shielded stab (l) and slash – ⇦ + ▲ ■
Double head charge – ⇩ ⇨ + ▲ ▲



Power punch – ⇩ ⇦ + ▲
Low giant swing – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ■
Uppercut – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ▲
Axe swinging combo – ⇨ ⇘ ⇩ ⇙ ⇦ + ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



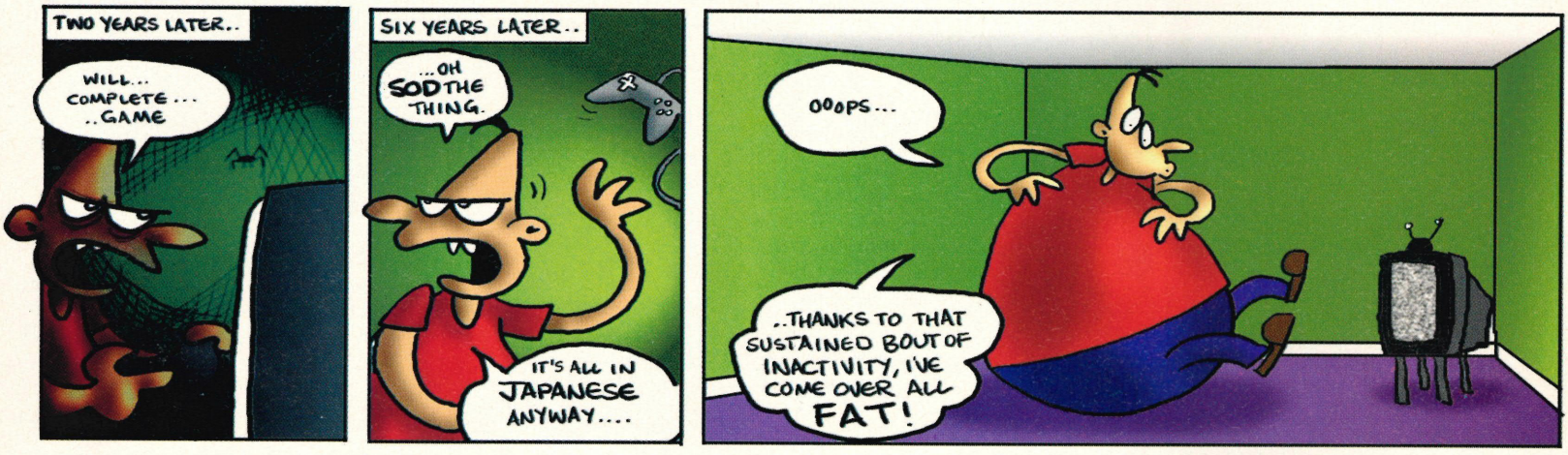
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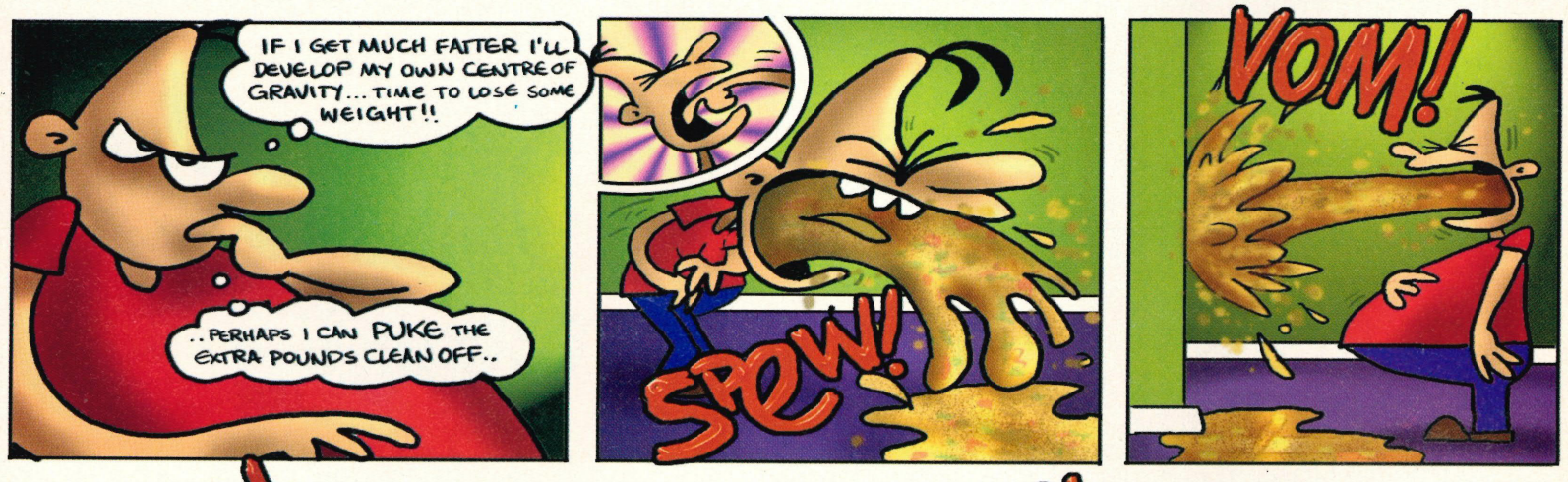
Presents...

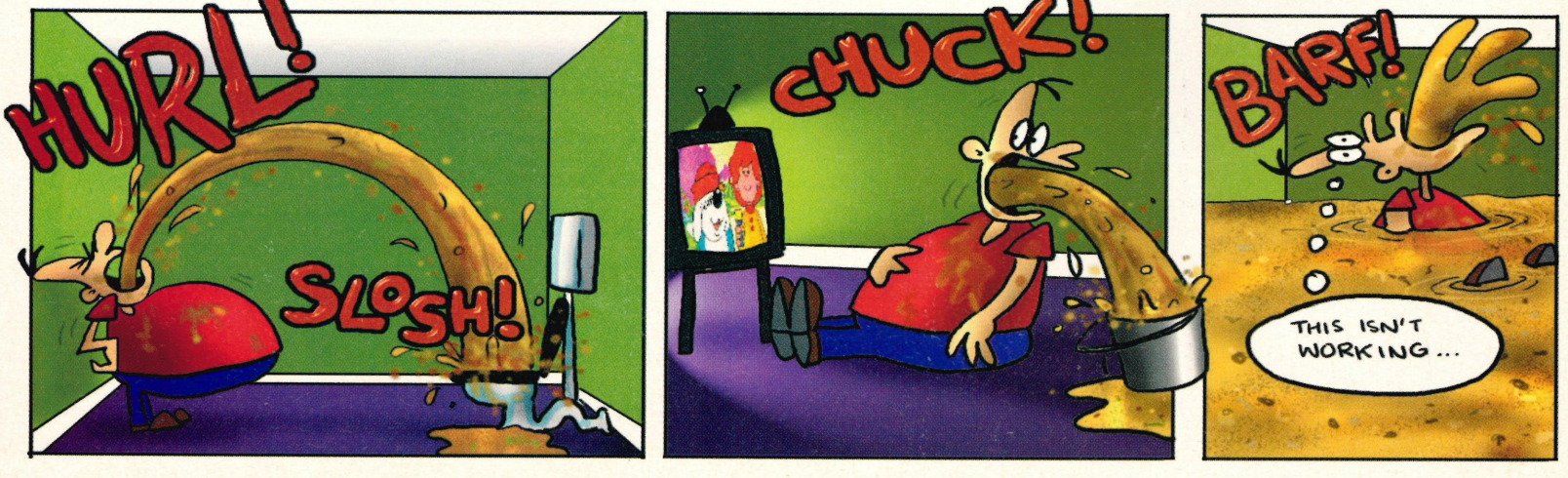
Here's TOBY

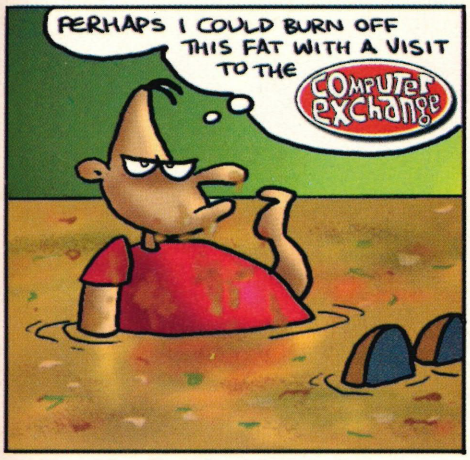
CHARLIE BROOKER...













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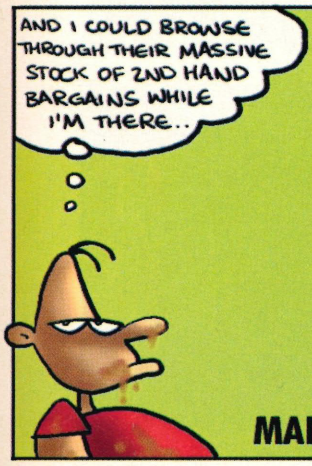
Samurai Spirits with Cart	JAP	£69.99
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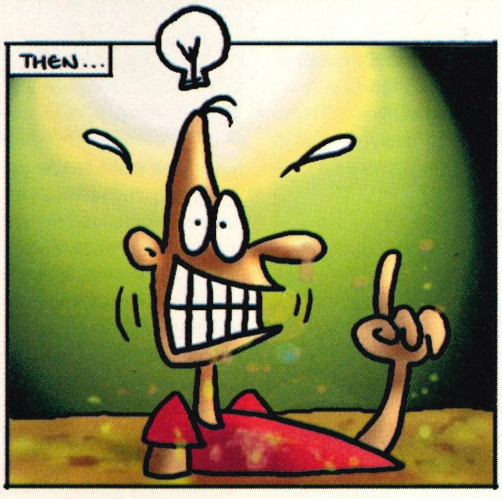
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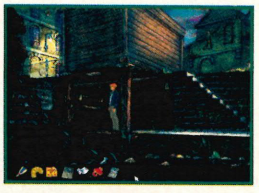
SCHEMING

BROKEN SWORD II: THE SMOKING MIRROR

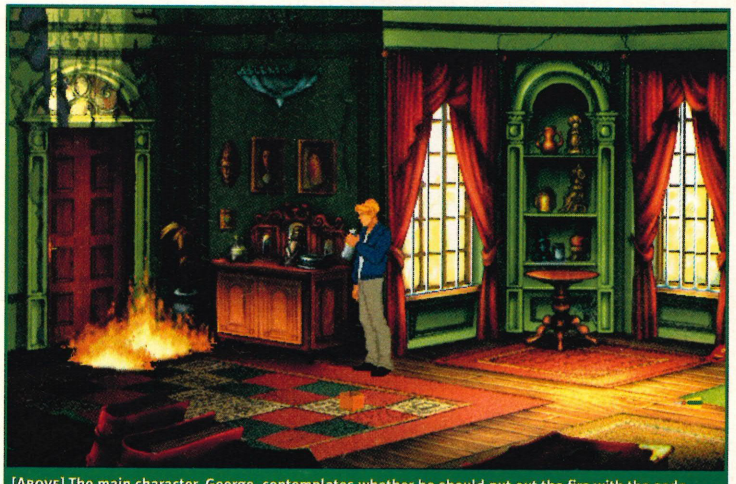
Broken Sword was a phenomenal success on all formats; selling in excess of 35,000 copies and scooped numerous industry awards besides. Melding beautifully-rendered backgrounds with super-smooth cell animation, it contained a strong historical aspect, culminating in a compelling *Indiana Jones*-style plot.

Well, George Stobbart's back for an all-new adventure that involves ancient Mayan prophecies and legends. Since his previous escapades in the neo-Templar conspiracy, the main protagonist, has returned to meet his girlfriend Nico in Paris.

She's investigating a cocaine smuggling ring headed by the evil Karzac, who has managed to manipulate an eminent Mayan archaeologist called Oublier. He is addicted to Karzac's cocaine and has promised to give him one of three stones, which belong to the legend of Tezcatlipoca (an apocalyptic tale involving eclipses and the end of the world).







[Above] The main character, George, contemplates whether he should put out the fire with the soda bottle or just spray it into his mouth for a laugh. Suggestions?

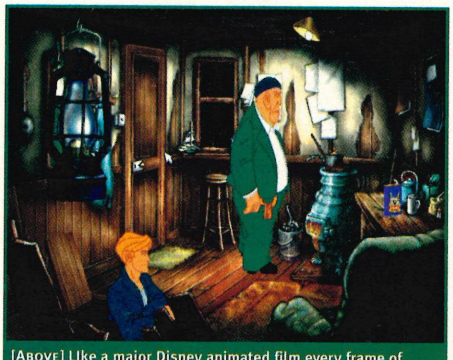
Cloak and Dagger

Karzac believes that with these three stone shields he has a calling card to meet Tezcatlipoca at some point and work with him to bring about the final apocalypse. Nico suspects that a high class Mayan art supplier is the main supplier and after following a lead she discovers a package, which to her amazement contains one of the stone shields that Oublier has managed to lose.

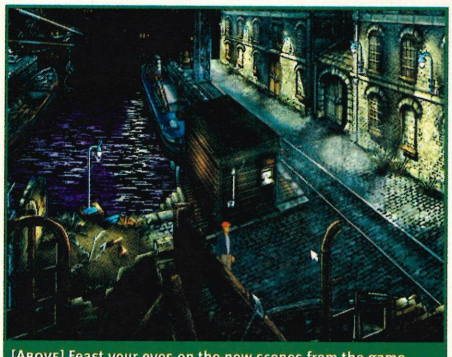
And so begins a story with more intrigue and mystery than an episode of *Cadfael*. If you've played the first enthralling game (or even if you haven't), you'll want to know what enhancements have been made to the gameplay and graphics?

Visually, the resolution has been upped to 640x240 pixels and the sequences seen throughout are now displayed in 16-bit (rather than 256 colours). Technically, transparencies will make their debut – characters will be effected by walking behind smoke, glass and other translucent materials. We've tested the preview version already and the hand drawn backgrounds look fabulous – there's even four layer parallax scrolling, faster loading between screens and continual orchestrated music. Revolution has certainly given the only areas that really needed looking at a touch of polish and we'll be reviewing the game soon.





[Above] Like a major Disney animated film every frame of animation is hand drawn and then scanned in for the game.



[Above] Feast your eyes on the new scenes from the game. They're absolutely gorgeous to say the very least.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Broken Sword II: The Smoking Mirror
Publisher: Sony
% Complete: 80%
Release Date: December '97

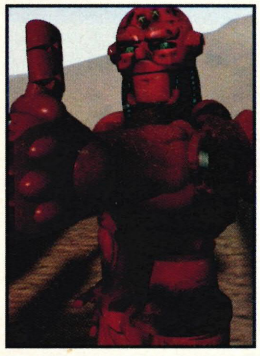
AUTOMATED

It's a robot revolution!

The strategy game *Z*, which was at first to be published by *Duke Nukem* and *Quake* team GT Interactive is now in the sinister megacorporation hands of Sony. The main advantage of this to you is that *Z* can now be released at the Sony-standard £34.99, thus saving you a tenner when you sprint down to the shops upon its release.

Developed by the once great but now reclusive Bitmap Brothers, who brought you *SpeedBall 2*, *Magic Pockets* and *Chaos Engine* all those years ago, *Z* is like a technology packed *Command & Conquer*. Chunky hydraulically assisted droids replace the little gunners and grenadiers of *C&C*, but their jobs are basically the same.

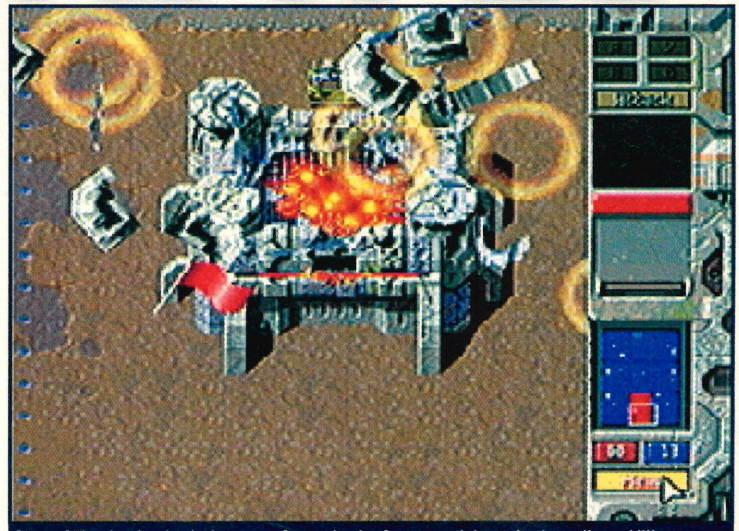




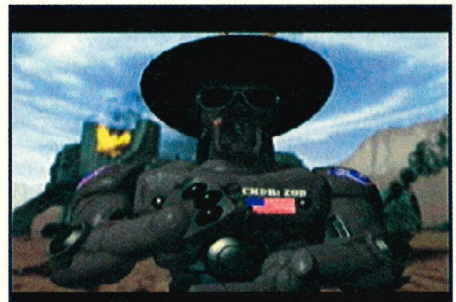
Z BUFFER

For an overhead game like this which originates from the PC, control is something that often presents problems on a home console. The biggest selling point which the PlayStation mouse could have had was *Command & Conquer* – but to vicious disapproval, the programmers forgot to implement it. *Z will* be mouse compatible, but a happy medium between the mouse (which nobody owns) and the standard pad (which everybody owns but isn't suited to these games) has become available thanks to Sony's analogue pad (which everyone really should own). The L3 and R3 buttons, which are embedded in the pad underneath the sticks have not yet been assigned to functions in this preview version of *Z*, but we think they'd be best used as the equivalent of mouse clicks.

The best news has to be that the five worlds of *Z* should also be open to a two player link-up mode, making *Command & Conquer* almost obsolete as soon as this comes out! Take a squad of cyborgs each and battle away for hours on opposite-facing TV screens; fighting for control of the resources and territory of the planets. With the speed and playability of the game, this sounds like a recipe for many a night's entertainment. Stay tuned for the full review.



[Above] The classic mistake is to manufacture loads of troops and then take them all on a killing spree while your base suffers alone!



[Above] The FMV scenes total more than 30 minutes of footage in Z. A waste of time and money perhaps?



[Above] Undoubtedly one of the coolest features, you can have your robots climb in and drive vehicles – even if they're not yours.



[Above] Courage is speeding into an enemy-infested area with a single jeep and mounted machine gun. Or is that stupidity?

THEY TALK!

After 36 hours of dangling a KitKat by the front door of the dark Bitmap Brothers mansion on a fishing rod, the timid two were finally coaxed out and a quote quickly extracted from them: "We are very glad to be on PlayStation for the first time and hope that many more game players will now be able to enjoy Z." They immediately returned.

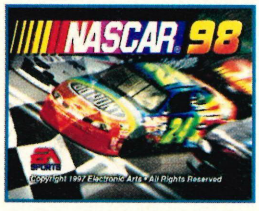


PLAY INFORMATION

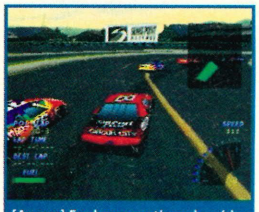
Name: Z
Publisher: Sony
% Complete: 80%
Release Date: November '97

ROCKING NASCAR '98

If you are a fan of the high speed, high risk world of NASCAR which often creeps its way onto our shores by way of cable and satellite television, now is the time to get excited. Electronic Arts has teamed up with NASCAR (the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) to bring you the full line up of 11 real tracks from the season and six fictional fantasy courses for good measure. However, keep in mind that eight of these circuits are mild variations on the traditional ovals, which as we all know are about as competitive as thumb wrestling.



Being faithful to the sport has been the main aim of *NASCAR '98* though, with extensive set-up options being available for you to get your hands dirty and tune your beloved road-hugger for maximum performance. Mess with the downforce, or perhaps the tyre pressure which has to be different on each side for those oval courses with the embankments.



[Above] For learners there is a big black racing line to help you through the course.

SEQUENTIAL

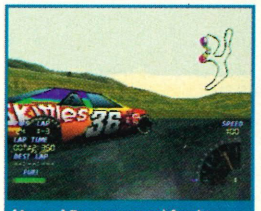
Also, what would an American sport be without advertising? Every sponsor seen on the real cars is present on the models in the game, so your favourite driver's motor looks exactly how it should. The crew developing the game even went to the Atlanta Motor Speedway and Darlington Raceway with a stack of digital recording equipment and took samples of the engine, pit and crowd sounds for aural authenticity.



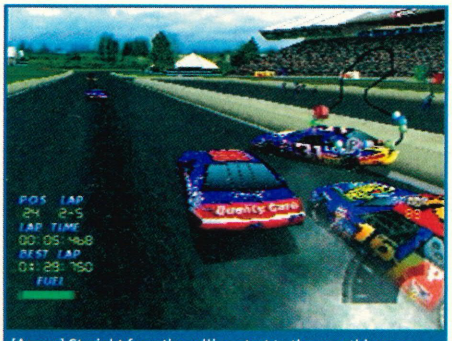
[Above] In Simulation mode real time car damage affects handling drastically, so you really shouldn't be doing this kind of thing.

Although we are happy about getting a proper cockpit view along with the usual external perspectives and the effort which has gone into reproducing the environment of the sport, right at this moment it looks as though CodeMasters' Touring Car game is way out in front, technically at least.

NASCAR '98 is a bit jerky and messy to look at (at this preview stage), and most worryingly it controls suspiciously like EA's own *Andretti Racing* of over a year ago. With the potential of a definitive touring/saloon/NASCAR licence in its sights, we hope EA doesn't mess this one up.



[Above] For true speed freaks there is no beating the traditional nose camera for an accelerated illusion of motion.



[Above] Straight from the rolling start to the race things can get dangerous, but your car will hold together unless you just go nuts.

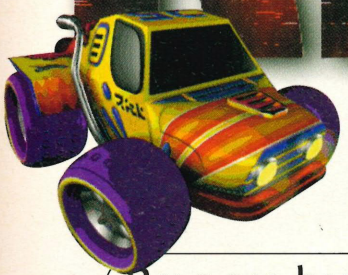


[Above] The way to our hearts is to give us a cockpit view like this one. The little right hand even reaches down to shift through the gears!

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: NASCAR '98
Publisher: Electronic Arts
% Complete: 80%
Release Date: 31 October '97

REMOTE BUGGY

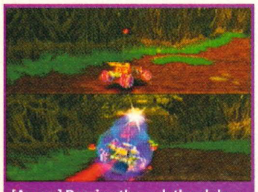


Buggy by name, buggy by nature. Gremlin's foray into the already swollen annals of PlayStation racers actually looks like being a positive change of direction for the Sheffield coders.

We were half expecting it to be called *Actua Buggy*, but that's pretty cynical as it's turning out to be quite a unique little title. There aren't going to be 20 different views from 'intelligent' floating cameras, nor will you be able to view the dirt-spraying action from inside each car. No, no, no. From the moment you see the tiny metal aerial flicking around in real-time to the wayward physics on the buggies themselves, you know that the single camera angle is going to work perfectly as it stands – after all it wouldn't be authentic otherwise.

The game will sport 16 super-compact, radio-controlled vehicles, each possessing a distinctive paint job and unique handling capabilities. Some will respond sluggishly, while others will skit around like a flea with a fire cracker up its jaxy!





[Above] Passing through the slalom gates in various combinations, produces a different-coloured vapour trail and some surprising bonuses.

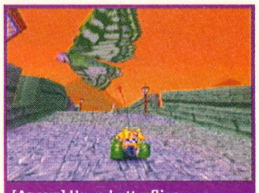
Buggy Nights

Many of the 15 outlandish circuits, from Japanese Gardens to beaches and grottoes are still unfinished, but already the feel of the game is right. The way they skip around avoiding scattered obstacles and fly off giant ramps is heaps of fun and far less frustrating than annoying a petrified cat in real life. You'll also be able to pull off mid-air stunts and gain bonus from driving through slalom gates, which have been cunningly arranged so that the player can reap the rewards if he or she is adept enough. Hitting these coloured gates in certain sequences results in a variety of power-ups, so experimentation's the name of the game. Some combinations will allow you access to hidden areas, although they'll only last for a finite amount of time.

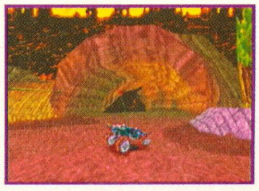
Expect four modes of play, including: Single Race, Championship, Head-to-Head over a split screen and Time Attack. With *Buggy*, the emphasis is purely on fun and thanks to some real-time light-sourcing and cool 3-D modelling it should look the ticket too.



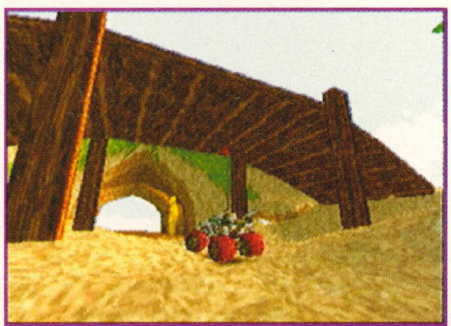
[Above] The AI of the other buggies hasn't been implemented yet, but the screen will be teeming with intelligent opponents darting around.



[Above] Huge butterflies gracefully flutter around this Great Wall of China-type level.







[Above] There will be various ways to get around each course. If you take a separate route, the bridge can be crossed.



[Above] As you drive beneath these pincers they try to grab at your buggy. Interactive scenery is going to play a big part of the game.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Buggy
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
% Complete: 50%
Release Date: January '98

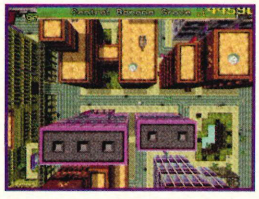
CRIMINAL

GRAND THEFT AUTO

Car crime, crack, murder! just what sort of game have we got on our hands here?

It's a shocker, that's for sure and it's also coming to PlayStation. In *Grand Theft Auto*, you enter the crazed persona of a cold-hearted mercenary who's blatant disregard for human life is the main selling point of the game.

GTA is a top-down driving game and you must choose to undergo hundreds of missions ranging from smuggling cases of cocaine out of the fuzz-riddled cities, to 'smacking' rival gang bosses who get too big for their boots. Of course, doing this involves hijacking any passing vehicle that takes your fancy – from school buses to yuppie porsches – mowing down any unfortunate pedestrians dim enough to get in your path (from troops of singing Hari Krishna's to flocks of nuns), and out-smarting, out-running, or out-shooting any cops that cotton-on to your antics.





[Above] Cop Killer – On the brink of getting busted? No problem, simply gun-down the police and nick their panda car!

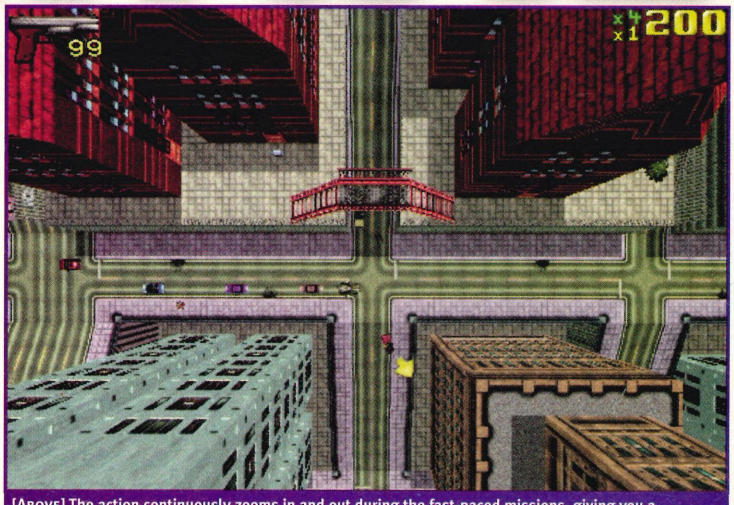
Spread 'em

GTA offers you complete freedom to do and go where you want within the three perfectly scaled cities. Along the way you can pick up different weapons, or failing that you can simply punch anybody that even looks at you in a funny way.

The initial idea is to pick up your orders from a phone box, and then complete the missions as quickly and as effectively as you can. The game is packed with dark humour, and every vehicle you hot-wire has its own radio station tuned in on the dial, so the soundtrack is constantly changing.

PLAY INFORMATION

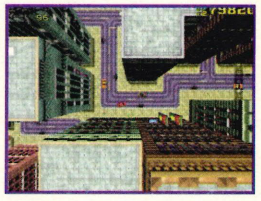
Name: Grand Theft Auto
Publisher: BMG
% Complete: 80%
Release Date: November '97



[Above] The action continuously zooms in and out during the fast-paced missions, giving you a greater view of the surrounding ghettos.

Of course, if you don't fancy arousing suspicion by steaming across town in a hot vehicle with half the local constabulary in tow, you can always resort to public transport and catch a train, bus or tram – all of which are fully working and run to strict schedules. *GTA* features over 200 missions and 20 different cars which can all be stolen at gunpoint as a means of getting to your destination. And if time is of the essence, you can even drive straight through parks and malls to save vital seconds!

We've never seen anything like *GTA* before, and it will be a miracle if it makes it onto the shelves uncut, but seeing as you're unlikely to find a more stark, fitting game for the Nineties, we sincerely hope it does!

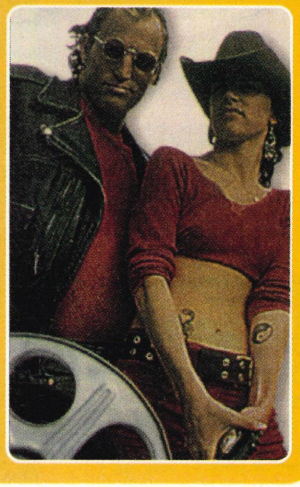




[Above] A Police bust! If you are getting pursued by the heat, to avoid being hunted and shot like an animal (which you are), you can pay to get your car re-sprayed and the plates changed.

NATURAL BORN KILLER

IN *GRAND THEFT AUTO*, THE BUZZ WORDS ARE CORRUPT, STEAL AND KILL, WHAT MORE COULD YOU ASK OF A GAME? THE FACT THAT YOU'RE LET LOOSE ON HECTIC CITY STREETS PROVIDES ENORMOUS SCOPE FOR YOU TO RUN RIOT AND EMULATE MICKEY AND MALLORY'S IMMENSE DEATH-TOLL IN THE CONTROVERSIAL FILM *NATURAL BORN KILLERS*, BY MOWING CIVILIANS DOWN IN MOTORS, GETTING HAPPY SHOPPERS CAUGHT IN POLICE CROSS-FIRE, OR SIMPLY FILLING THEM FULL OF LEAD YOURSELF. A POINT TO REMEMBER FOR ALL YOU DERANGED NUT-CASES ON THE BRINK OF TOPPLING OVER THE EDGE IS THAT THIS ISN'T REAL THOUGH, OK!



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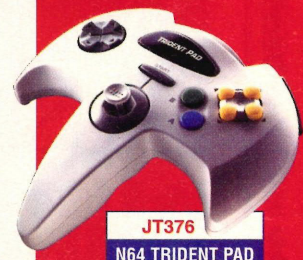
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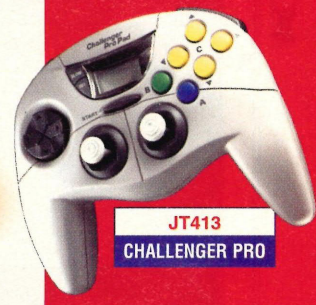
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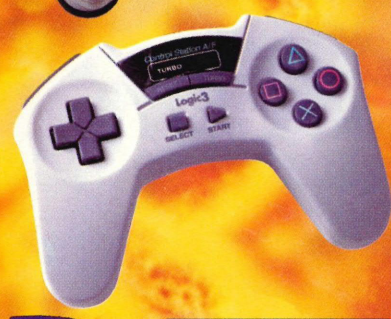
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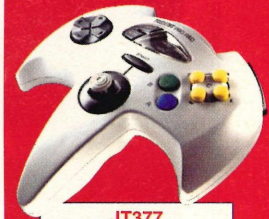
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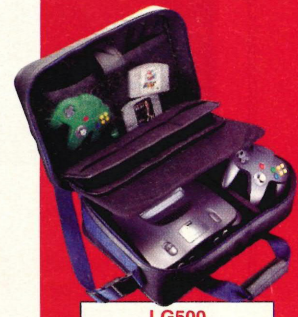
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Logic 3

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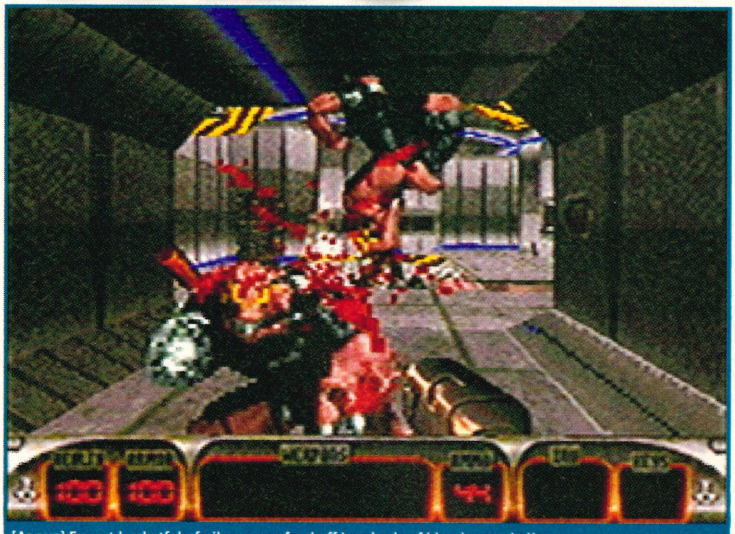


DUKE NUKEM 3D

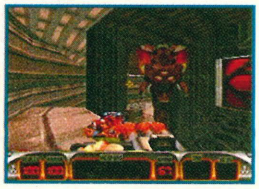
"Gonna rip 'em a new one!" Finally we're about to savour the biting humour of the PC's favourite son, *Duke Nukem*. Before long you'll be chuckling out loud aS he nonchalantly cuts a swathe through some of the worst extraterrestrial scum in the universe.

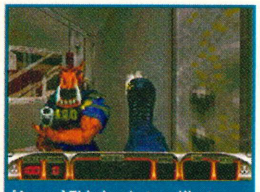
Although the game is nearly two years old on the PC, the version that we've seen up and running is quicker and will offer stacks more levels, as GT attempts to offer the best possible deal for the world's best selling console. *Duke Nukem* is essentially a *Doom* clone, but one that surpasses it on a number of different counts: better graphics, quicker 3-D engine, better pyrotechnics, and a totally evil sense of humour.

Murderous aliens have landed in futuristic Los Angeles, and mankind has found out to their horror that they're next on the menu if these alien goons get their own way. As you can imagine, Duke ain't gonna take this lying down.



[Above] Expect bucketful of gibs as you fend off hundreds of blood-crazed aliens.





[Above] This is what we like to see. Kick that pig in the face, then blow his brains out with the shot-gun!

Shake it Baby!

The odds are a million to one, but the truth is, Duke just can't wait to give the aliens a universal greeting thanks to a huge array of torso-shredding weapons. These include rocket-propelled grenades, Shrinker Ray, limpet mines, a three barrelled machine gun, and of course a trusty shot-gun. Dive into realistic 3-D scenarios, including Downtown LA, Orbiting Space Station and some PlayStation-specific levels featuring the well-known environments of *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil*.

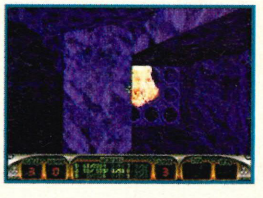
There will be some spectacular special effects too, where you'll be able to witness entire buildings crumble, level altering earthquakes, and fully functioning subways. In total there will be 30 standard levels plus an evolutionary 'Bot' mode, where up to eight AI enhanced Dukes hunt you down in a multi-player massacre, and also two player link cable support for head-to-head matches. *Duke Nukem 3D* is shaping up nicely, but whether they manage to put in a hi-res mode is doubtful. Look out for the definitive review next month.





[Above] It's up to you to save or murder the stranded space babes as they groan away in their shackles.







[Above] One of the special sections contains scenery that will be familiar to *Tomb Raider* fans.



[Above] After clearing the pub of gun-toting aliens, you can actually play pool. Excellent – Rack 'em.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Duke Nukem 3D
Publisher: GT Interactive
% Complete: 80%
Release Date: November '97

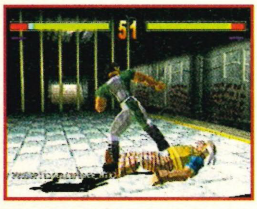
VIOLENT VS

Gang warfare is rife in the America, and not a week goes by without a solemn-faced Trevor McDonald announcing that some street punks have been mercilessly slain over a row about territory, crack, or record labels. Well now you can indulge in the great battle for ghetto supremacy, but not with uzis, just your fists.

Vs from THQ is a rather decent-looking beat-'em-up that features 16 immediately playable characters who are divided up into four different gangs (Street, Campus, Beach and Hood). You must pick a yob from your desired domain and then bitch-slap the pulp out of your rivals.

Running at a standard 60 frames per second, *Vs* incorporates a hefty array of fancy moves belonging to some of the most bizarre characters we've seen in a game of this type. For example, one member of the Campus crew is a balding, Einstein lookalike lecturer, who prances around in a tasteless shirt and stripy flares, complete with 'kick me' note taped to his backside. There is also a women who struts around in baggy jeans which are several sizes too big, and thus droop around the crotch; revealing a fetching pair of skimpy panties!







Rumble in the Bronx

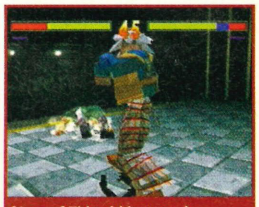
The actual fighting takes place around several themed locations – playgrounds, the underground, rooftops, alleyways, in fact any place you would normally imagine a skirmish to break out – the terraces excluded!

First impressions of this bare-knuckle fight-fest are favourable. It has a distinctly Sega look about it, which isn't a bad thing, especially when you see some of the backdrops complete with individual animations such as planes flying overhead, tube trains rattling past, and tweet lickle birdies fluttering by. The characters pack a mighty punch, with moves devised from recognised forms of martial arts. There are also the token bosses to find.

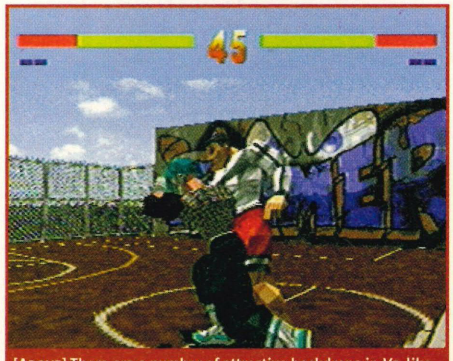
But perhaps the best aspect so far of this game is the rip-roaring soundtrack that features a whole host of obscure, underground rock bands. We'll have the full review soon, but a huge sigh of relief is breathed at this stage just to learn that THQ is releasing a game without any wrestlers in it, we hope!



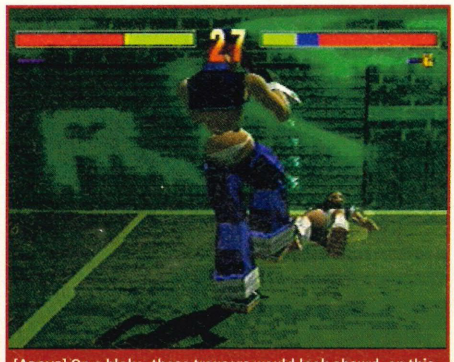
[Above] Behold, the bitch fight! Never underestimate the power of a woman though, see how the girl in the fetching sneakers punches her opponent clean into the air!



[Above] This old lecturer is obviously from the Timothy Leary school of thought. Check out his flower-power clothes and general alarming appearance.



[Above] There are a number of attractive backdrops in *Vs*, like this vandalised basketball court for instance.



[Above] On a bloke, these trousers would look absurd, on this funky chick though, you can see why we don't disapprove.



PLAY Information

Name: Vs
Publisher: THQ
% Complete: 70%
Release Date: January '98

arena

views · questions · criticisms · ideas

VIEWS · QUESTIONS · CRITICISMS · IDEAS

SO WHO EXACTLY WAS TO BLAME FOR THE INFAMOUS V-RALLY DUAL ANALOGUE COCK-UP? WAS IT US FOR REPORTING THE CORRECT FACTS AT THE TIME, OR WAS IT THE DEVELOPERS FOR OMITTING THE FEATURE AND KEEPING QUIET ABOUT IT? GO FIGURE. ALSO, WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO LINK-UP GAMES? ARE THEY REALLY A THING OF THE PAST, IF SO, IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT?

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.

DEAR PLAY

I purchased my PlayStation last year because I enjoy 3-D games (ie flight sims, driving games) more than any other type, and I read in various magazines that the PlayStation can handle 3-D graphics better than any other console at the time.

I was very happy with Sony's machine until *Exhumed* and *Hexen* came along. I've had the opportunity to compare the games on both the PlayStation and Saturn and have come to the conclusion that the Saturn versions are far smoother and have a better screen update. Now this wouldn't normally bother me as I am not a huge fan of 3-D maze shoot-'em-ups, but there is an exception – *Quake*.

This is one of the best games on the PC and now that production is nearing completion on the Saturn, we would apparently be very lucky to see this game on our machine. Why? Simply because nobody can get a worthy game engine running properly.

My first question is what makes the Saturn able to run these 3-D engines better than the PlayStation?

I've heard that the Saturn is being given more RAM than the standard two Meg that it has internally by way of a cartridge add-on. This would bring it to a total of four or six Meg. If this is true then it would make things better for the Saturn owners because the general speed would be upped for many of the games. Is Sony planning on releasing an upgrade of memory?

I think that the PlayStation only has two Meg, and as far as I can see, the Serial I/o port on the back is doing nothing but gathering dust. A memory boost would hopefully put an end to the appaling clipping that the PlayStation suffers from.

Also, I am trying to decide whether or not to buy Sony's European Dual Analogue Pad or the Japanese version. Since Sony made the disgraceful decision to drop the force feedback facility, will this mean that European games companies will make games excluding the feedback? Incidentally, will the Japanese Duel Analogue Pad work on a PAL machine?

I have one more point to make. When you print screenshots of games in your Wired and WorkStation sections, could you please make it clear which system the shots are taken from? I'm convinced that most of them are from a powerful PC.

Lee Walker, Wrexham



Quake – **Will this game ever arrive on the PlayStation? More to the point, will it be any good? Lee Walker from Wrexham is dubious.**

The Saturn actually has considerably more memory than the PlayStation, about 4.5MB compared to the PlayStation's 3.5MB, as well as loads more custom hardware. For this reason, a few dedicated developers are of the opinion that the Saturn is the superior machine for developers eager to go direct 'to the metal', using machine code rather than optimised C routines. The Saturn's potential is, as you say, being ably demonstrated on games such *Exhumed* and *Hexen*, which use the extra memory and possibly some of the Saturn's 2-D scaling facilities to impressive effect. If this sounds uncommonly gracious to a rival machine, the explanation is simple enough: the Saturn has lost. For all its potential, the Saturn's architecture is an ugly hotch-botch of hardware, its initial design having been hastily uprated in a panic over the PlayStation's superlative 3-D capabilities.

Despite having less custom hardware, and a single CPU rather than the Saturn's two, the PlayStation's elegant design has proven far superior for 3-D (compare Saturn *Tomb Raider* to the PlayStation version) and much easier to program. The Saturn's strengths – a good range of RPGs, some exceptional first-person shoot-'em-ups – are minor consolation prizes. It's difficult to imagine a bigger humiliation that old Sega favourites Core Design abandoning the Saturn format with *Tomb Raider 2*.

The memory add-on is mainly aimed at making it easier for the Saturn to cope with arcade beat-'em-up conversions, particularly from the Neo Geo, and is unlikely to be supported by mainstream Saturn releases. Plans for a *Virtua Fighter 3* custom hardware add-on have apparently been abandoned, as Sega concentrates on retaining its appeal to niche markets and developing its 128bit machine. As Sega's 32X proved, add-on hardware rarely achieves sufficiently market penetration for developers to support it – so don't expect a PlayStation upgrade. The base PlayStation is such a huge hit, Sony are deliberately playing down talk of any upgrades or replacement. Why risk discouraging all those developers producing so much more software than Sega could dream of?

Dear Play

I am writing to you about the subject of software. We all know that the PlayStation is the best console, with the most software – a lot of which is excellent. Take *Tomb Raider*, *Rage Racer*, *ISS Pro*, *Doom*, and *Fade to Black* (a bargain at £20.00) for example. But why do Sony let poor titles through the net (which in the end will only go on to harm the Sony name). For example, *Revolution X*, *The Crow: City of Angels*, *King of Fighter's '96* and *Test Drive Off-road* (which you guys spent £35 on because the publishers were too ashamed to let it be reviewed – cheers for that!). Most of us wouldn't mind paying the £45 for a game as long as it is good value. So surly we would all be better off in the end if Sony put a stop to the release of poor quality software now before it gets any worse.

Now for some questions:

1. Should I buy *Resident Evil* or *Resident Evil: The Director's Cut* (when is this coming out anyway?)?
2. Which is the best steering wheel, and will I be able to use it with *Rage Racer* and *V-Rally*?
3. When is *Bushido Blade* out, and should I consider buying it?

Neil Pinkney, Worsley

Contrary to popular belief, Sony doesn't actually control the quality of games, only that the required guidelines have been met in terms of copyright warnings and suchlike. Therefore, duff games will continue to be released for as long as software companies continue to employ play-testers who evidently don't know what makes a game tick. Now, your answers...

1. We would wait for *The Director's Cut*, especially seeing as this (supposedly) includes the original uncut version of the game as well as many new enhancements that will boost the challenge and overall appeal of the game still further.

2. The current leader amongst steering wheels is the PSX Steering Wheel by Gamester LMP as it feels and handles better than the others on the market. Logic 3 is about to release their wheel though, so it might be worth waiting just a little bit longer just to see what that is like.

3. *Bushido Blade* is definitely worth buying, but don't mistake it for just another beat-'em-up though because there is a lot more strategy involved and the fights tend to last only a matter of seconds.

Dear Play

I have not written to any magazine before, but your article on *V-Rally* has outraged me enough to put ink to paper.

The reason that I am so outraged is that in your article about *V-Rally*, you clearly stated that the game worked with the Sony Dual Analogue Pad.

After reading your review, I picked up the phone and ordered a Dual Analogue Pad, safe in the knowledge (or so I thought), that it would work with *V-Rally*. Well imagine my outrage when I discovered that it did not and that I had just spent £40 on a joypad that is basically useless (I already had two pads), and will not work with any games (except for *Rally Cross* perhaps) for at least two months. Had I known that it did not work, then I would have definitely not purchased it, and I would have probably waited for the official controller to be released.

"Sony made a disgraceful decision to drop the force feedback facility..."



***V-Rally* & Dual Controller – Who could ever have believed that this pair would have caused so much strife to so many people, most of all us!**

Also concerning your review of *V-Rally* a) there is a rev limiter light in two player mode that changes from green to red when you need to change up a gear, and b) you don't need an overhead course display as you are given the amount of time you are behind the car in front and if you did have a course layout then surely this would not be rallying, now would it? It is most disconcerting that a magazine of your reputation and quality could make such a major mistake and cost myself and probably other people money that they need not have spent, and from now on, I will have to think twice before purchasing your magazine again.

Carl Thomas, Aberaeron

This is beginning to grate deeper than a Chumbawumba record now! We apologise for any inconvenience caused to our readers, but we were genuinely mislead at the time of the review by developers, Infogrammes. We were sent a full reviewable copy that was analogue compatible. We were not informed that the option to use the pad would be removed at the last moment, and when we did find out, we broke the news at the earliest possible opportunity (i.e. the following issue). Naturally, this would have angered readers who immediately splashed out on an pad such as yourself, Carl, but there was nothing we could do. It was our job to report the facts, and the main one being that the game was compatible at the time of going to press. There are plenty of good Dual Analogue games on the way though, Carl, such as *Colony Wars* and *Touring Car*. You pad is certainly not a wasted purchase and it is far better than a normal pad.

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Dear Play

In issue 23, someone by the name of Drak wrote to you about his chipped PlayStation. I too own a chipped PlayStation and think that the games are well worth ten pounds. The graphics are just as good and I haven't come across any jumping or jerking yet. I own 20 games and only one of them isn't up to scratch. The only problem I have is the console gets hot quicker than normal and I can only play on it for no longer than 45 minutes. Could you also shed some light on the following points for me?
1. You say it is illegal to buy import games, and it is hurting the developers, so why are there so many advertisements for importers? Are they also breaking the law?
2. You printed a picture of a gold disc, but my discs don't look anything like it.
Matt, Hull

You can only run your PlayStation for 45 minutes! If that isn't a major reason not to get your PlayStation chipped then what is? The fact remains that illegal copies of discs are not up to scratch and often contain unfinished code that means the player will never get to see the whole of the game, or may be subjected to the game constantly crashing at crucial points. We have never said that it is illegal to buy import games – after all, many of our reviews come from import games that are released in foreign countries months before they reach these shores. It is, however, illegal to buy pirated games (gold discs, silver discs, blue discs... anything that isn't black on the underside).

Dear Play

I am 35 years old, and own a PlayStation and a Sega Saturn. The reason for buying a PlayStation was simple, *Wipeout 2097*! The reason for buying a Saturn was the fact that Sega make very good, and long lasting games.

I know that lots of readers want you to slag off the Saturn, but that's just not fair! Have any of them ever played *Sega Rally*, *Panzer Dragoon 2* or *Virtua Fighter 2* for a long period of time?

What I'm trying to say is that the PlayStation is not the only machine out there on which you can play ace games. It's time to treat the Saturn and the N64 with the respect they deserve, especially the heavily underrated Saturn! We should be games enthusiasts, not PlayStation, Saturn or N64 enthusiasts. Now go on and make me look silly.
Gerard Blom, The Netherlands

Brave words, especially seeing as this is a magazine consisting entirely of PlayStation enthusiasts. But seriously, the Saturn is indeed a viable games machine, although we wouldn't say that the games available offer significant long-term challenge over the PlayStation titles, but still.

Dear Play

I have been reading your magazine for a while now and I think it is the best PlayStation magazine around.

I was wondering what type of qualifications you would need to be a reviewer on a magazine such as yours. At the moment I am studying at college and I need to know what courses to enroll for. I am currently studying GNVQ advanced IT and I have just achieved a B grade at GCSE English language and I would like to know if I would have to study A-level English. I would be very pleased if you could get back to me on this, as being a computer games reviewer has been a long-time ambition of mine (even since I had a Commodore 64)
Phill Walsh, email

English A-level is a standard requirement for working as a writer on Play, Phil. Apart from this, the only other necessity is a wide knowledge and enthusiastic approach to video games. If you've got a system at home, we would suggest that you accumulate a portfolio of reviews for games that you own. Jobs in this field only occur once in a blue moon however, so be prepared for a long wait.

Dear Play

I am a 31-year old games player and have enjoyed owning a PlayStation since April of last year. With releases like *Command & Conquer*, *Soul Blade* and *Tomb Raider*, who wouldn't?

But *Doom* is still the definitive PlayStation game in my opinion. Why? Deathmatch, that's why. This is still the PlayStation's finest hour, and yes, this is a link-up letter!

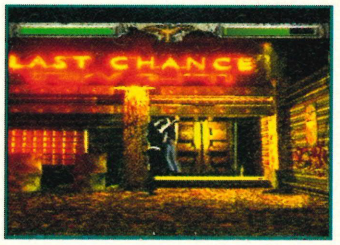
As we draw to the end of the year, it is becoming plain to see that everything is not as it should be in the land of PlayStation. I'll get straight to the point, Ocean or Sony's decision that *V-Rally* was not to support the link-up feature was, in my opinion, unforgivable. Especially after all the advertising. *Warcraft II* was mentioned as having link-up planned, but at least Electronic Arts announced before the release that it wouldn't have it.

In issue 25 (thanks for that Lara poster), you mentioned that *Test Drive 4* and *Warhammer 2* might end up with link-up. The developers of *Test Drive 4* said that the final decision was up to Sony. What the hell is going on?

The thought of *Warhammer* in link-up is utterly fantastic, but it will not happen – will it? If it is Sony's decision that a game should not be link-up compatible, then it has no doubt started to get complacent due to their market share. Further disappointments will no doubt follow – like the new analogue pad for example.

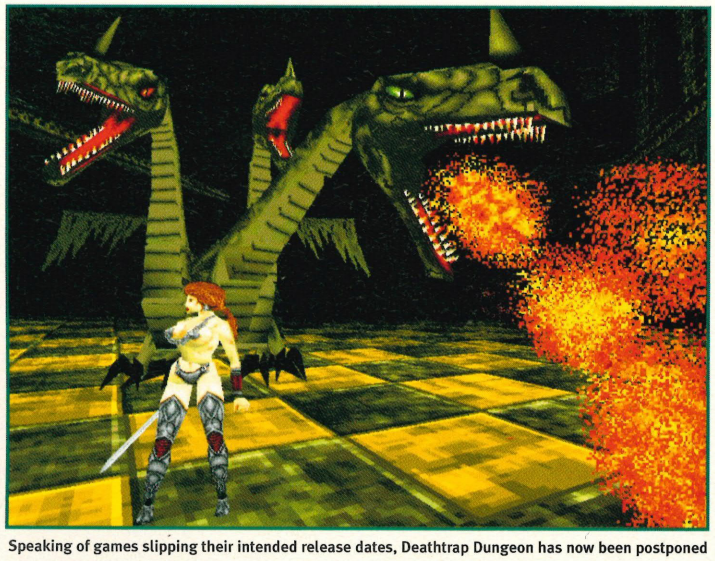
Looking to the future, if *Formula 1 '97* and *Rapid Racer* are released without link-up, Psygnosis and Sony have, in my opinion, thrown away two great opportunities.

PlayStation games are expensive enough and therefore should offer everything to increase their lifespan. I did not buy a PlayStation just for link-up, but I do think that it was designed for greater things than split-screen. As for me, I am a Sony customer who is becoming increasingly frustrated.
Mark Davis, Epsom



***The Crow: City of Angels*, just one of the many duff games floating around for the PlayStation. Should games like this be aborted at birth, Neil Pinkney from Worsley thinks so.**

We feel for you, Mark, and many more like you. We have greatly enjoyed the link-up mode in games such as *Need for Speed*, but it would appear that Sony is treating this cult feature as nothing more than a flash in the pan. The fact is, that after careful market research, figures revealed that only something like 2% of PlayStation users actually utilise the link-up feature, and so Sony didn't see fit to support it. Another theory lies with the developers themselves. After plugging away for months on a game, claiming that it will include link-up, they suddenly reach deadline and realise that they haven't actually put the feature in, so what do they do? Attempt to shove it crudely in at the end at the expense of graphics and speed, or remove all trace of the feature? On a final note, we included questions relating to the link-up feature in last month's survey, so if the figures come back to show the link-up mode a favourable light, we'll be able to hit back at Sony.
***F1 '97* is probably the biggest shame because the link-up in the original game was awesome. When will software companies realise that we mark games higher if they have the link-up mode?**



Speaking of games slipping their intended release dates, Deathtrap Dungeon has now been postponed until January, the reason, Eidos feel that they have enough quality product coming out in the run-up to Christmas as it is.

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

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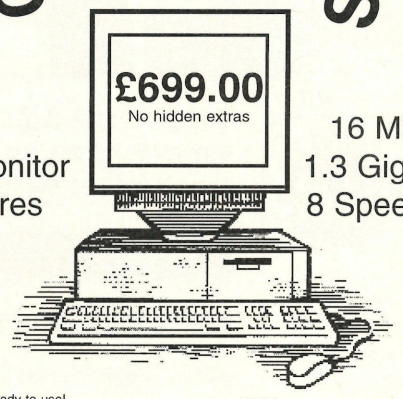
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PLAYLIST

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. SF EX Plus	91%
5. Tobal 2	92%
6. SF Zero 2	94%
7. Tobal No.1	94%
8. Tekken	95%
9. SF Alpha	93%
10. MK Trilogy	92%

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...
4-4-2	1-2	57%	Dated and disappointing sunDay league stuff.
2Xtreme	1-2	52%	Tedious multi sports effort – fading fast.
3D Lemmings	1	69%	Famous puzzle game, now in 3D! Average.
Abe's Oddysee	1	90%	The most addictive platform game on the PSX!
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!
Battle Stations	1-2	51%	Flat and unconvincing naval strategy...
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.

GAME									SCORE	WE SAY...
Contra: Legacy of War	1-2	●							62%	Scappy arcade shoot-'em-up from Konami.
Coolboarders	1	●							82%	High speed stunts on a snowboard.
Coolboarders 2*	1-2	●		●	●				81%	The definitive snowboarding game.
Crash Bandicoot	1	●							84%	Technically brilliant platformer.
Criticom	1-2	●							87%	Early average beat-'em-up. Now forgotten.
Croc: Legend of the Gobbos	1	●							78%	It's intellectual theft, but fun nonetheless!
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.
Dynasty Warriors*	1-2	●							71%	Restrictive and bizarre beat-'em-up, but pretty.
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.
Explosive Racing	1	●		●			●		82%	Quick and playable racing, but not all new.
Extreme Pinball	1-2	●							54%	Miserable pinball sim with bad physics.
Fade To Black	1	●							90%	Gripping sci-fi alien adventure!
Fantastic Four	1-4	●	●						69%	Hardly fantastic, but playable.
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!
Formula 1 '97	1-2	●			●		●		90%	Well upgraded and stuffed with excitement!
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.
Gun Bullet*	1-2	●						●	85%	A real blast for one or two players...
Gunship	1	●							90%	Has not stood the test of time...
Hard Boiled	1	●							29%	A disasterously wasted licence...
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?
Herc's Adventures*	1-2	●							70%	Cute-looking run-of-the-mill adventure.
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.

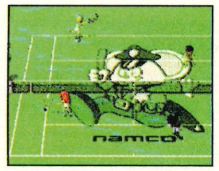
playback

ARCADE-STYLE SHOOT-'EM-UPS



1. Time Crisis 90%
2. Die Hard Trilogy 93%
3. Twisted Metal 2 88%
4. Syndicate Wars 85%
5. Nuclear Strike 88%
6. Tempest X3 86%
7. Gun Bullet 85%
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



1. Rage Racer 94%

2. Micro Machines 91%
3. Rally Cross 89%
4. Rapid Racer 87%
5. Need for Speed 2 90%
6. Wipeout 2097 93%
7. Formula 1 '97 90%
8. V-Rally 87%
9. Moto Racer 86%
10. DD2 82%

Platformers



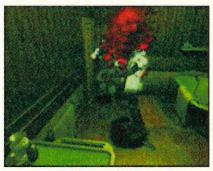
1. Abe's Oddysee 90%

2. Pandemonium 90%
3. Crash Bandicoot 84%
4. Mega Man 8 82%
5. Dracula X 84%
6. Rayman 87%
7. The Lost World 79%
8. Jumping Flash 2 86%
9. Jumping Flash 87%
10. J Bazookatone 85%

GAME								SCORE	WE SAY...
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).
Kick Off '97	1-2	●						68%	Doesn't do the name justice!
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.
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.
Lost World, The	1	●						79%	Stunning-looking platformer, but shallow.
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.
Metal Slug*	1-2	●						74%	Top maiming action, but not enough of it.
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.
Moto Racer	1-2	●						86%	A seat-of-the-pants roller coaster ride.
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!
Need For Speed 2, The	1-2	●			●		●	90%	Rough looking, but actually more fun – long term.
NFL Game Day	1-2	●						73%	American football – who cares?
NHL '97	1-8	●	●					86%	Intense ice hockey action – smooth and fast.
NHL Face Off	1-2	●						78%	Admirable attempt, but a bit cumbersome.
Novastorm	1	●						38%	Contemptable FMV-spooled shoot-'em-up arse!
Nuclear Strike	1	●						88%	Better looking and bigger than *Soviet Strike*.
Off World Interceptor	1-2	●			●			77%	Jerky 3-D buggy battling disgrace. Avoid.
Olympic Games	1-8	●	●					89%	Utterly fantastic multi-player event.
Olympic Soccer	1-2	●						84%	Highly playable footy game, basic graphics.
Onside Soccer	1-2	●						76%	Uninspiring footy with management aspects.
Overblood	1	●						86%	Atmospheric, innovative 3-D space adventure.
Pandemonium	1							90%	Enjoyable platform game, but too restrictive.
Panzer General	1-2	●				●		73%	Strategy war game for dedicated anoraks.
PaRappa the Rapper	1	●						82%	Tap the buttons, sing the rhyme. Brilliant!
Peak Performance*	1-2	●			●		●	85%	Blistering 28-car joyriding – a great laugh!
Perfect Weapon	1	●						65%	Slothful 3-D adventure, lacking visual flair.
PGA Tour '96	1-8	●						86%	Well, it's golf innit. Buy the updated version.
PGA Tour '97	1-4	●						81%	Extremely able golfing sim. It's got the lot.
Philosoma	1	●						85%	Great looking shoot-'em-up, but badly dated.
Pitball	1-4	●	●					66%	Rough and confusing futuristic sports.
Player Manager	1-2	●				●		74%	Banal management game. No frills and slow.
PO'ed	1							87%	Scrappy *Doom* clone, meant to be humerous.

GAME								SCORE	WE SAY...
Porsche Challenge	1-2	●			●		●	82%	Superb looking, technically brilliant. Too slow.
Power Instinct 2*	1-2	●						52%	Cheap and nasty beat-'em-up – stay well clear.
Powermove Pro Wrestling	1-2	●						51%	Men, in tights, absolutely awful game.
Powerplay Hockey '97	1-4	●	●					82%	Yet another hockey game, actually quite good.
Primal Rage	1-2	●						85%	Claymation-based beat-'em-up. Piss poor now.
Prime Goal EX*	1-2	●						62%	Very average sprite based footy. Worse than *FIFA*.
Pro Pinball: The Web	1-2	●						90%	Definitely the best pinball game on the PSX!
Project Overkill	1	●						89%	Violent, bloody, but repetitive and no two player!
Psychic Detective	1	●						75%	Wholly FMV erotic fantasy. Utter tosh.
Psychic Force	1-2							73%	Unusual floating beat-'em-up. Nothing special.
Quarterback Club '96	1-8	●	●					80%	Yet again, who cares?
Raiden Project, The	1-2	●						68%	Dazzling, but ultimately weak shoot-'em-up.
Rage Racer	1	●					●	94%	Super fast, varied, playable racer. Get it now!
Raging Skies	1-2	●		●			●	73%	Adequate flight shoot-'em-up, but linkable!
Rally Cross*	1-4	●	●		●		●	89%	First class off-road antics. Two and four player!
Rapid Racer	1-2	●			●		●	87%	Powerful and glossy, but repetitive...
Rapid Reload	1	●						71%	Cutesy side-on cartoon shoot-'em-up. Dated.
Rayman	1	●						87%	Colourful platform game, now looking tired.
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.
Rosco McQueen	1	●						88%	You play with fire, you get this sizzling game!
Runabout*	1	●						77%	Highly playable racer, but way too short.
Salamander Deluxe Pack	1-2							74%	Aged, but enjoyable Eighties shoot-'em-up.
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 Ex Plus	1-2	●						91%	It's absolutely EXcellent!
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.

LONG TERM TEST



NAME: RESIDENT EVIL
LENGTH OF TEST: 14 MONTHS
REPLAY VALUE: 2/5

WHAT WITH *RESIDENT EVIL 2* DELAYED UNTIL SPRING '98, AND THE STOP-GAP PEACE OFFERING OF *RESIDENT EVIL: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT* ARRIVING ON IMPORT THIS MONTH, WHERE DOES IT LEAVE THE ORIGINAL HORROR ADVENTURE THAT BLEW US ALL AWAY LAST YEAR? IF THE TRUTH BE TOLD, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON AT ALL NOW TO BUY THIS GAME, NOT WITH *THE DIRECTOR'S CUT* NOW AVAILABLE WHICH FEATURES THREE DIFFERENT MODES (INCLUDING THE ORIGINAL GAME). THERE WASN'T A GREAT DEAL TO KEEP YOU COMING BACK TO *RESIDENT EVIL* ANYWAY, ONCE THE GAME HAD BEEN COMPLETED WITH BOTH CHARACTERS AND EVERY SCENE HAD BE VIEWED, THE APPEAL STARTED TO WILT DRASTICALLY. IT WAS ALSO ANNOYING HOW LONG IT ACTUALLY TOOK YOU TO GET AROUND THE GAME WITH THE RATHER SLOW DOOR-OPENING LOADING TIMES BETWEEN ROOMS, AND THE WAY YOU COULDN'T SPEED THROUGH THE CHARACTER CONFRONTATIONS AFTER YOU'D ALREADY SAT THROUGH THE AWFUL DIALOGUE MANY TIMES BEFORE. THIS GAME WOULD OBVIOUSLY BENEFIT A GREAT DEAL FROM A PLATINUM RELEASE, BUT SEEING AS YOU COULD SNAP IT UP FOR A VERY REASONABLE SECOND-HAND PRICE, IT SEEMS THAT THE MOMENT HAS PASSED. *RESIDENT EVIL* WAS A CLASSIC GAME THAT REVOLUTIONISED PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THE PLAYSTATION, BUT THERE SURELY ISN'T MUCH TO DRAW YOU BACK TO IT.

LONG TERM TEST



NAME: FELONY 11-79
LENGTH OF TEST: 4 MONTHS
REPLAY VALUE: 3/5

FELONY 11-79 IS THE WESTERN NAME FOR THE ARCADE-STYLE GAME OF DRIVING AND DESTRUCTION KNOWN ORIGINALLY AS *RUNABOUT* IN JAPAN. WHEN WE REVIEWED THE JAPANESE RELEASE IN ISSUE 23 IT SCORED 77%, NOT BECAUSE IT WAS A BAD GAME BUT BECAUSE WE FINISHED IT ON THE FIRST DAY AND, BEING AN IMPORT, IT WAS PRICED AT A TERRIFYINGLY STEEP £74.99. THE GAME ITSELF WAS EXTREMELY ENJOYABLE, AND NOW FOUR MONTHS LATER IN ITS OFFICIAL BRITISH INCARNATION IT STILL GETS THE ODD HALF HOUR WHEN WE FEEL AT OUR MOST VIOLENT. THE BEST PART IS THAT THE VIDEO STORY SEQUENCE AT THE THE BEGINNING NOW HAS AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE NARRATOR (SOUNDING CURIOUSLY LIKE TIM WHITE FROM SIGHTINGS) SO YOU HAVE A BETTER IDEA WHY YOU'RE RALLYING AROUND THE CITY IN A BLAZING BMW CRASHING INTO CRATES, TABLES, CHAIRS, SHOPS, BUSES – WELL, EVERYTHING! THE BONUS CARS THAT ADD SOME LIFE TO THE TITLE CAN NOW BE SEEN SILHOUETTED ON THE VEHICLE SELECTION SCREEN, SO YOU KNOW HOW MANY THERE. WE COUNTED ABOUT 18, AND THAT HAS GOT TO GET YOU COMING BACK UNTIL YOU EARN THEM ALL. THE BAD NEWS? THE BIGGEST BORDERS YOU'RE EVER LIKELY TO SEE (HUH! TYPICAL PAL VERSION!) – WHICH MAKE THE PICTURE EMBARRASSINGLY SMALL. IF THIS MAJOR FRUSTRATION IS LIKELY TO BOTHER YOU, WAIT FOR THE US VERSION TO EMERGE SOON.

GAME		SCORE	WE SAY...
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.
Toshinden 3	1-2	78%	An average beat-'em-up. Nothing more.
Total Drivin'	1-4	84%	Thrilling racing with excellent variation.
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!
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.

WHAT'S THE STORY... WITH LINK-UP GAMES?

THE RECENT DIP IN LINK-UP COMPATIBLE PLAYSTATION TITLES BEING RELEASED HAS ANGERED A LOT OF PLAY READERS. THE EXACT REASON FOR THIS OCCURRENCE IS UNCERTAIN, BUT WE PERSONALLY PUT IT DOWN TO DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES. WHAT BASICALLY OCCURS IS THIS: DEVELOPMENT ON A GAME IS BEGUN, EVERYTHING THAT WILL GO INTO THE GAME IS CLEARLY OUTLINED (A LINK-UP OPTION IS OFTEN INCLUDED) AND EVERYTHING IS JUST DANDY. THEN, AS TIME GOES BY, THE PROGRAMMERS ARE PRESSURED TO MEET A DEADLINE AND GET THE GAME OFF TO SONY FOR APPROVAL. HOWEVER, AT THIS LATE STAGE, THEY REALISE THAT THE LINK-UP OPTION ISN'T FULLY OPERATIONAL (IT MAY SLOW THE GAME DOWN DRAMATICALLY OR CAUSE GLITCHING), OR SOMETIMES EVEN NOT THERE AT ALL. SO TO MEET THE DEADLINE ON TIME, THEY SIMPLY REMOVE ALL TRACE OF A LINK-UP OPTION (AND NEGLECT TO TELL THE PRESS) WITHOUT A PLAUSIBLE EXCUSE AS TO WHY. SONY THEMSELVES HAS DONE MARKET RESEARCH INTO HOW POPULAR THIS OPTION IS, AND FOUND IT TO BE FAIRLY INSIGNIFICANT, HOPEFULLY, THE OFFICIAL PLAY 1997 READER'S SURVEY (PRINTED LAST ISSUE), AND THE QUESTIONS RELATING TO LINK-UP GAMES SHOULD PROVE OTHERWISE. THEN WE HIT BACK!

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ABC 36,925
Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation

PLAY

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The makers of PLAY also produce: 64 Magazine, PowerStation, Practical Internet, Uri Geller's Encounters and Net Gamer.

Printed by
Duncan Web Offset, Passmore Plant, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6XA.

Distributed by
Seymour Ltd
Distributors, Windsor House, 1270 London Road, Norbury, London, SW16 4DH. Tel: (0181) 6791899

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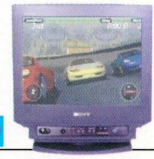
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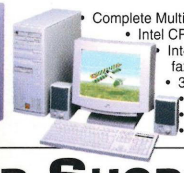
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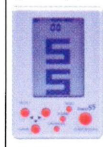


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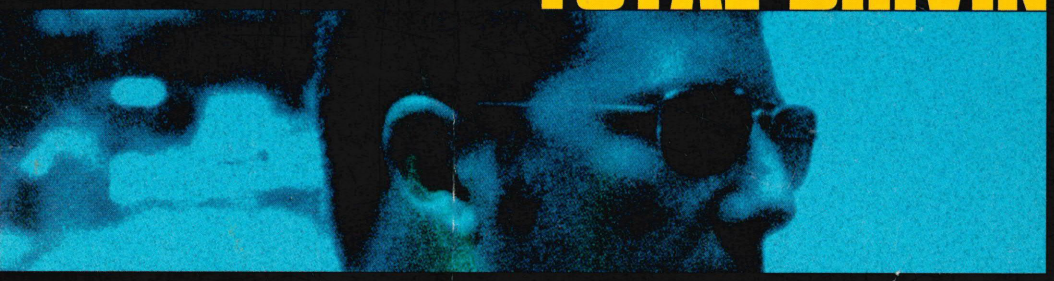
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