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PLAYSTATION PRO

5 EXPERT OPINIONS ON EVERY GAME

ISSUE 8 June 1997 £2.95

V RALLY

Re-inventing the wheel

NEED FOR SPEED 2

CARNAGE HEART

WING COMMANDER 4

RALLY CROSS

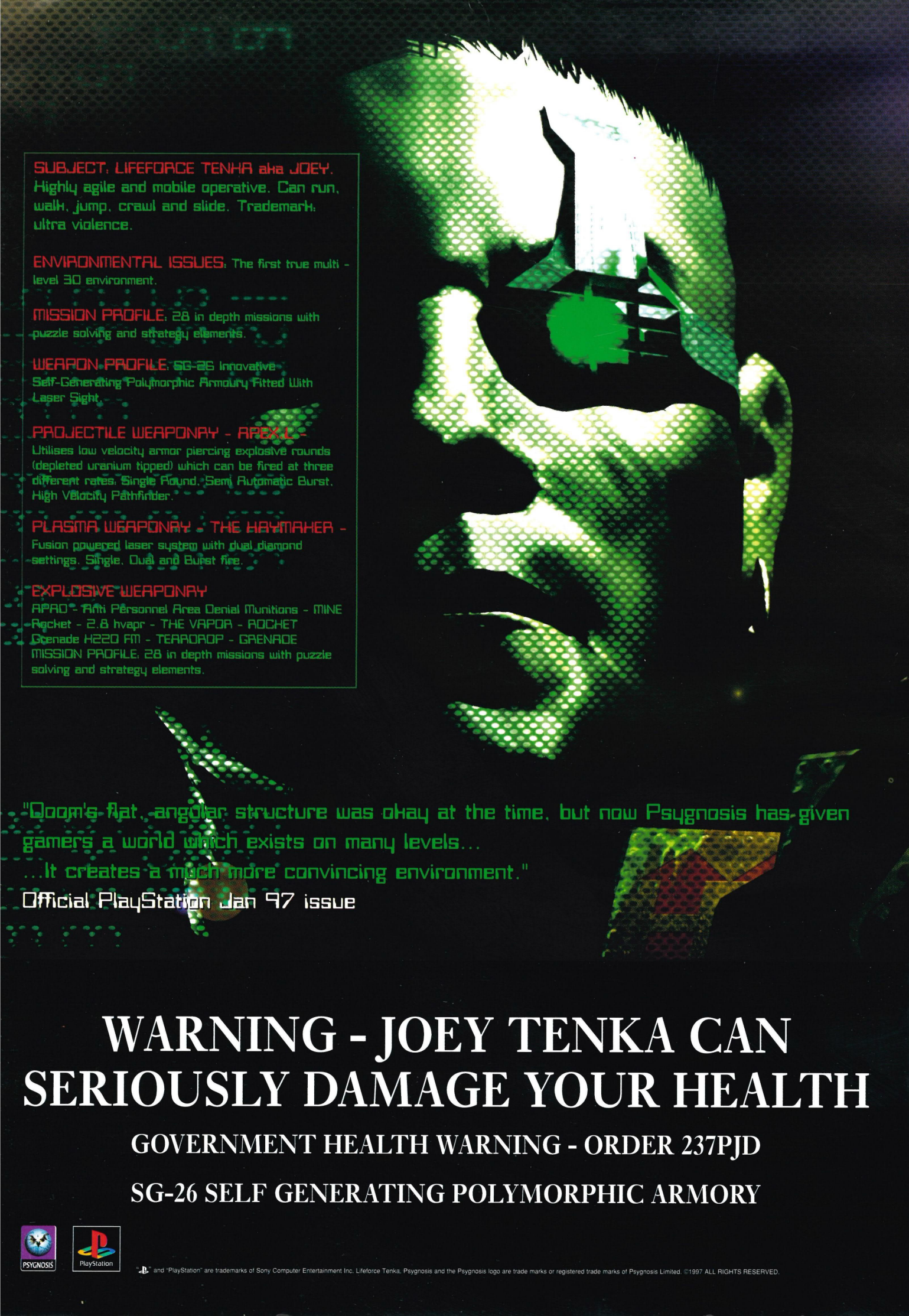
ALL STAR SOCCER

TOMB RAIDER 2 ISSS PRO V TENNIS AGENT ARMSTRONG SPACE JAM

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WARNING - JOEY TENKA CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH

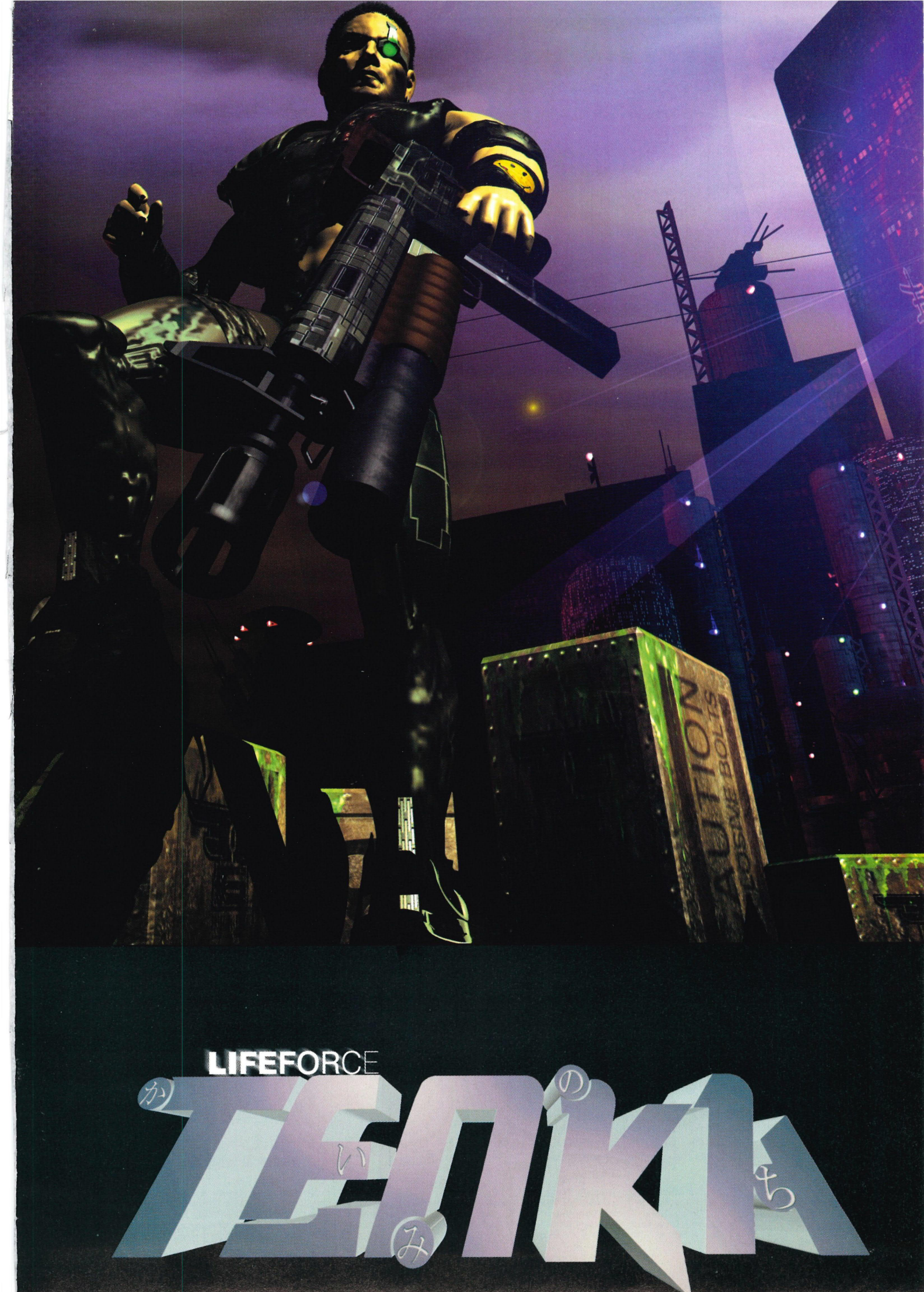
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SG-26 SELF GENERATING POLYMORPHIC ARMORY

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LIFEFORCE
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58 Ocean Drive
Nothing to do with the god-awful Lighthouse Family whatsoever, but is in fact Ocean Software's stunning new racer – and our cover star – V Rally

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Eidos swanned into the office, showered us with boxed copies of Soccer '97 and asked us to preview Machine Hunter and All Star Soccer. So we have

64 Caddyshack!
Gremlin releases Actua Soccer 2 this month and starts work on another load of tip-top Actua sports titles for the future. What's next in line? Actua Golf 2

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It's a weak gag, but try to ignore it as we exclusively reveal Virgin's new fabulous and in-every-way-funky adventure game: Agent Armstrong

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Soul Blade it ain't, but Interplay's laugh-a-minute comedy beat 'em-up, Clay Fighter Extreme, is on its way to your PlayStation soon

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Sony's Rally Cross aims to offer gamers a crazy PlayStation mix of Sega Rally and Ridge Racer. Whether it does or not is revealed on page 70

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Hot on the heels of Micro Machines comes the quirky Motor Mash, courtesy of Ocean Software. Will it be as thrilling as the Codemasters classic? Find out inside...

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In a few months, Sony will release the fourth instalment in the Namco Museum series. To find out what's on there before it arrives, check out our preview



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Soul Blade
All the moves you'll ever need!

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78 Dark Forces Player's Guide: Part Two
You got the first part free with last issue and now we deliver the second instalment of this complete player's guide. It may not be a big free poster this time, but is equally as thrilling. Ooh, it is

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Your regular monthly portion of steaming hints, tantalising tips and huge mouth-watering slices of cheat pie can be found here. Allow us to show you to your usual table sir, dinner is indeed served

86 Soul Blade: A Beginner's Guide
Everything you ever wanted to know about Namco's sword waggling treat is detailed inside. And no doubt loads of special stuff will be revealed too

90 Porsche Challenge Tipping Pitstop
If you want to drive faster, win more races and generally be smart at driving a virtual reality Porsche Boxster, then this is the guide for you! A tyre-squealing tipping bonanza if ever there was one - direct from the creators

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All the hottest PlayStation gossip and exclusive news from around globe can be unearthed in our fabulous news pages. Tune in this month for factual scoops on Conquest Earth, The Tick, ID4, the censored UK Soul Blade, Jurassic Park 2, Mortal Kombat 4 and much much more. Plus you can find out what Electronic Arts has got lined-up for the rest of the year. Curious? Simply turn the page and we'll fact you 'til ya drop

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Get the mag delivered direct to your door days before it goes on sale down the shops – and pay less! Yes, bizarre as it may seem, it's all true, so check out this month's offer and subscribe now. If not sooner

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You keep on sending in piles of reader reviews every month so we thought we'd better start printing a few of them. Just to keep you happy, like

94 Letters
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The games we love and play most often are compiled in our special Recommended section of the mag. One quick look can tell you which ones to invest in and which ones to leave well alone. So don't buy a game before you check out our hot list

READER REVIEWS
TOMB RAIDER
You review your favourite games inside



COVER STORY
Ocean Software unveils its massive racing extravaganza V Rally – exclusively to PlayStation Pro. Put your foot down and handbrake-turn onto page 58, now!



IDG MEDIA

PLAYSTATION PRO was brought to you by: **Ed:** Alex Lee (alexl@idg.co.uk) **Art Ed:** Jim Eagers **Art Assistant:** Gaz Adams **Dep Ed:** Jay Sharples **Reviews Eds:** Steve McNally, Andy Sharp, Dan Whitehead **Production Eds:** Alan Mac & Justine Bowden **Lots of help from:** Stuart Cripps & Mike Bailey **Managing Director:** Ian Bloomfield **Publisher:** Robin Wilkinson **Circulation Director:** David Wren **Sales Director:** Carol Ann Barrett **Ad Manager:** Lisa Jo Oliver **Ad Exec:** Mark Osborn **Marketing Manager:** Steve Tagger **Database Manager:** V Quin-Harkin 0171 8319252 **Scans:** Mark Forbes **Production Controller:** Barbara Newall **Production Manager:** Alan Capper **Systems:** Nic Moran **PSPro's at:** IDG Media Freepost (SK3038) Macclesfield SK10 4YE Tel: 01625 878888 Fax: 01625 879967 July Issue out 19th June. Don't forget!

EVERY GAME RANKED AND RATED BY FIVE EXPERTS!

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Yet another PC conversion, but surely an interactive space adventure starring Luke Skywalker and spread over four CDs must be a bit special. Mustn't it?

20 V Tennis
Smash Court was brilliant and still remains our office favourite as far as tennis games go. But can Acclaim serve an ace with its latest ball basher?

24 Spider
BMG Interactive makes good use of its Pandemonium game engine and offers you the chance to live life as a hairy tarantula. Wacky, eh?

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Konami attempts to stop us playing Soccer '97 all day long with this rather attractive footballing extravaganza. The N64 version is treat, but what about this?



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Carnage Heart
Current going down great guns in Japan, Sony's Mech-maker is on its way to our review zone – right now!

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Acclaim tries to take the beat 'em-up genre to the next level with this bizarre 'floating about whilst spouting plasma' fighting experiment

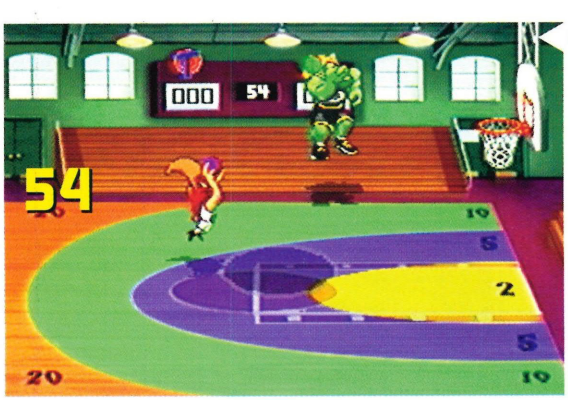
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Technical Mech Warrior-type japes ahoy with this in-depth and highly complex robotic rascal from Sony

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JVC tries to 'out-do' Acclaim this month with this quirky slap spectacular in which you try and have a fight in a box. Find out more inside

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42 Actua Soccer Club Edition
Gremlin follows the current footballing trend and remixes the original for '97, featuring Premiership teams with proper player names and everything

44 NHL Powerplay
Virgin unveils its new ice hockey simulation and hopes it has what it takes to see off the likes of NHL Faceoff and the mighty NHL 97. But has it?



REVIEWED
Space Jam
Join Bugs Bunny and his pals as they attempt to rid the world of evil Monstars in Acclaim's PSX conversion of the 'smash hit' movie

REVIEWED
Need For Speed 2
Get ya motor runnin'

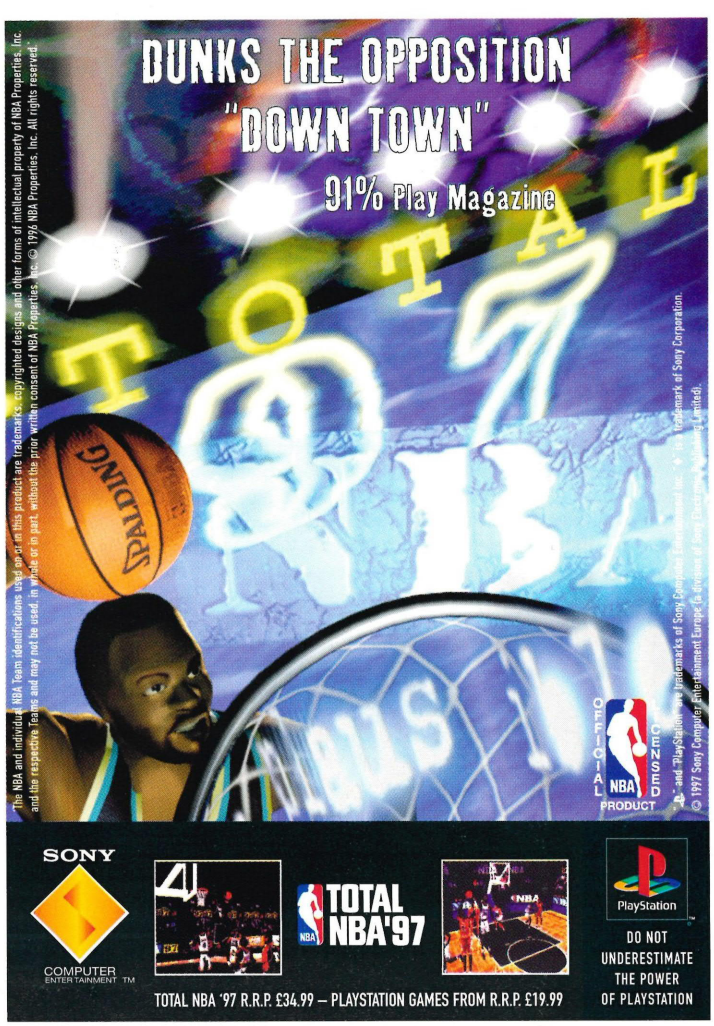




REVIEWED
Super Puzzle Fighter
Capcom kick ass in a mad puzzling formation

52 Super Puzzle Fighter PLAYSTATION APPROVED
Capcom drags out the old Street Fighter branding once more to give us this mad Japanese Tetris type affair. Fire-punch falling coloured shapes for a laugh and poke fun at your friends when they lose. Hurrah!

54 Space Jam
Pretend you're Michael Jordan, slap R Kelly on the stereo and sit around talking to imaginary rabbits. Alternatively, play Acclaim's movie-inspired cartoon basketball beast

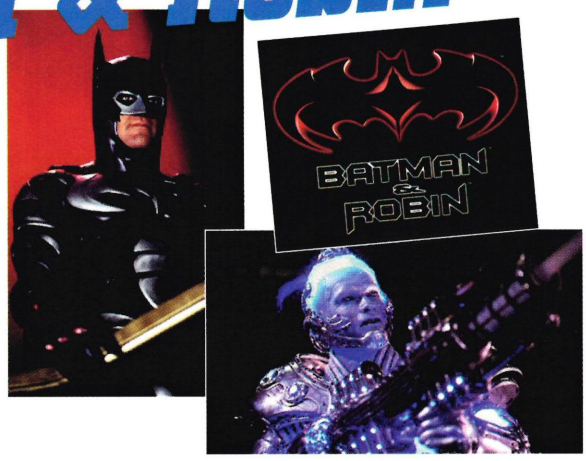


Batman & Robin

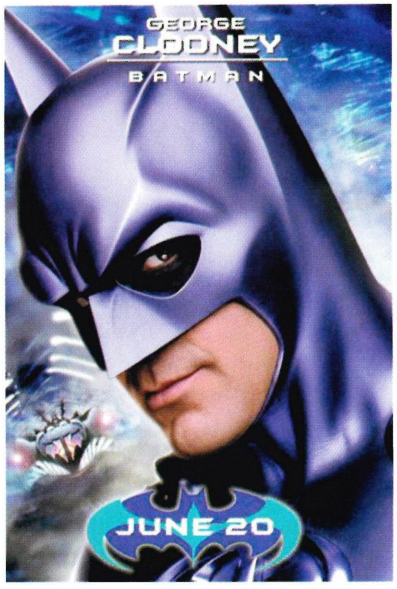
Movie licence lovers, Acclaim Entertainment, has just sealed the deal with Warner Brothers to convert the new Batman movie, Batman & Robin, for the PlayStation.

Details are sketchy at present, but we reckon the guys down at Probe Software are currently working on the title. It's due to surface around November and, just like the movie, will feature the likes of Batman, Robin, Batgirl, Poison Ivy and Mr Freeze.

We'll have confirmation on this story next month, and a whole lot more when we go behind-the-scenes at Acclaim and Probe. So don't miss next issue what ever you you do Bat freaks!



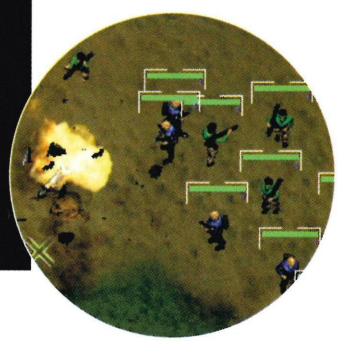
"Chill out, mardarfarcars" Arnie chills his boots and prepares to bring Gotham to its knees...







C&C-type army tomfoolery ahoy in this violent alien release from the boys down at Eidos HQ



The Aliens Are Coming!

The latest forthcoming release from the busy boys at Eidos is the C&C-inspired Conquest Earth. Allegedly a breakthrough in strategy wargaming, Conquest Earth fuses several different gaming genres into one complete gaming experience and has you fighting the alien enemy, the Jupitians.

These freaky beasts are planning to wipe us humans off the face of the Earth and turn our home into their playground. You get the choice to play mankind or the evil outer-space death-bringers. The game also offers a unique interface no matter which team you side with, giving players an authentic insight into their plans and strategies and combines arcade action with strategic undercurrents for added gameplay, appeal, depth, variety and longevity.



According to Eidos, Conquest Earth is more than just a game of strategy and intrigue – it's an experience that crosses the boundaries of real life and a whole new world. Well we'll be the judge of that when it turns up for review in a few issues time. Stay tuned and watch the skies.

What A Scream



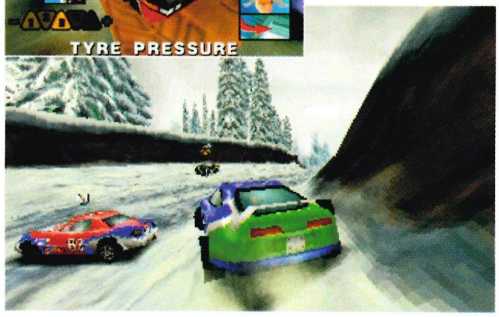
Arcade racing fans take note: Screamer 2 is coming to the PlayStation! Yes, the PC smash hit from Virgin Interactive is all set to roar onto your console come October and it's rumoured this new version has been vastly upgraded from the PC original.

Players get a choice of four different race teams to join, each one boasting four selectable vehicles, plus there's a whole garage full of hidden cars just waiting to be discovered.

A spilt screen two player mode is included, and players can also drive around a multitude of tracks which span the globe and throw various weather conditions into the mix for added excitement. We should have preview material on Screamer 2 for you next month, so keep an eye out.



PC owners fell in love with this and hopefully the PSX conversion will have us doing the same



MK Mythologies Update

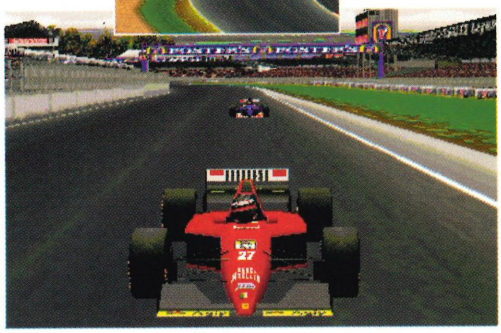
We've scooped even more news on the next MK game starring the cool assassin Sub Zero for you, to update the story we ran last issue. According to our MK insiders, apparently there are now 30 different enemies, eight worlds to explore, digitised actors combined with fully rendered 3-D sprites, real-time 3-D lighting effects and detailed cinematic sequences. We'll give you more info on this much-awaited title when we get it.



Eidos Secures F1 Licence



All the official gubbins and some red hot racing in on its way! Woo hoo!



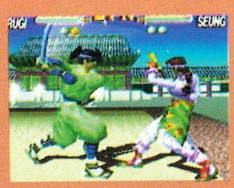
As predicted several issues ago, Eidos has finally acquired the official FIA F1 licence and is going ahead with its Formula One treat under the working title of – surprise, surprise – F1.

The title is set to offer 13 race teams to choose from, 17 different racing venues, sophisticated artificial intelligence on all the CPU drivers, plus various graphical effects such as fog, heat haze and water spray.

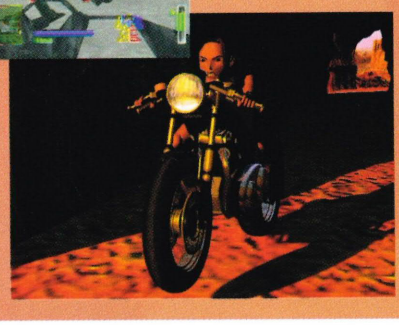
Realism fans will be pleased to know that McLaren is acting as technical advisor for the game, so expect it to be as real as it can get when it hits the stores this summer.



American Top Ten







(Last month's positions in brackets)
1 (3) Tomb Raider
2 (-) Vandal Hearts
3 (-) Buster Bros Collection
4 (-) MechWarrior 2
5 (-) Soul Blade
6 (4) Twisted Metal 2
7 (6) Tekken 2
8 (2) GameDay '97
9 (-) NBA Shoot Out '97
10 (-) Suikoden

Stainless Steelers

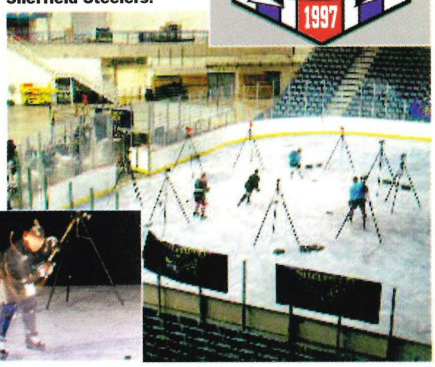
It had to happen I suppose. Actua Ice Hockey is currently in development adding Gremlin to an ever growing list of publishers with at least one skating sim under their belts. It can now only be a matter of time until Actua Basketball puts in an appearance!

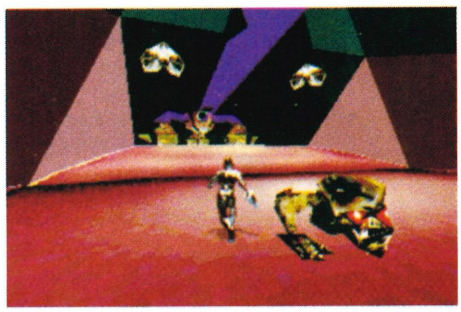
Anyway, Gremlin reckons that its version will be the first PlayStation hockey game to have full motion capture, utilising perhaps the most advanced technique yet seen (something to do with the latest 10 camera motion analysis system which allows a larger capture area and more body mass to be covered by reflective markers).

The outfield movements were provided by Sheffield Steelers 'legend' Chris Kelland, the former England captain. His versatility and ability to play almost anywhere on the ice allowed him to perform all the duties except goaltending, which were performed by Steelers goalie Piero Greco.

These professional hockey players have also been drafted in to provide technical advice as well, and should guarantee that Gremlin's effort will be a contender when it's released later in the Summer.

The actions for Actua Ice Hockey's motion capture were performed by real players from the Sheffield Steelers!



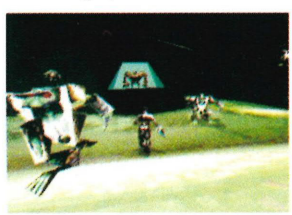


MDK Update

Due out any time now, 'the game that couldn't be done on the PlayStation' is on its way and is looking every bit as stunning as the acclaimed PC original. Interplay's MDK is to include all the weapons, power-ups, enemies, gameplay and levels of the PC predecessor. The version we've seen is incomplete, but already runs fairly smoothly, features beautiful texture maps and minimal polygon pop-up.

Development team Neversoft insists MDK will be almost indistinguishable from the PC version, and there's no reason to disbelieve that confident claim. Rich video game musician Tommy Tallarico is producing an original music score for the PlayStation release so, if nothing else, the in-game sounds should be something special.

MDK stands for Murder, Death, Kill which isn't very pleasant. The game, however, which is a third person shoot 'em-up, could prove to be very pleasant for us gamers



Tomb Raider 2 – Monthly Bulletin

The actual storyboard for Tomb Raider 2 (TR2) is still to be confirmed, but we can tell you for definite that there'll be far more variety in gameplay in the shape of many 'outdoor' (non-tomb) locations. One of these is a huge mansion in Venice and is already nearing completion.

A brand new map editor for the game means that levels can be designed, then walked through immediately, thus speeding up the coding process massively and allowing programmers and designers to spot flaws and bugs straight away.

Core's Heather Gibson, one of TR2's graphic designers, explained that at the moment the 'mythical' plot involves a dead magician Callistro, the Chinese Emperor Qin Shihuang from the Terracotta army, a mysterious cult, a tomb under the Great Wall of China which holds powerful, mystical artefacts and a shipwrecked ocean liner bearing more than a passing resemblance to the Titanic.

Heather commented, "We're doing a link-up with another (as yet unnamed) explorer, although this might change before the game is finalised. Basically, Lara arrives at the Great Wall of China. She believes that the entrance to the tomb is within the Great Wall, so the first level involves going through the wall, out onto precipices and mountain ledges, trying to discover the main door."

"She sees a group of cult members getting into the tomb through the main door, so we're going to go to a cut FMV scene where she's spying on them going through the door. She can't get in so the rest of the wheel revolves around her chasing this cult group to discover how on earth they got the secrets to the tomb. And that leads you to clues about Callistro, the magician who used some of the Chinese Emperor's magical weapons."

"That's why they come onto the Titanic-style level, because he (Callistro) actually drowned when it sank on its maiden voyage, with his collection of magical objects. So you've got that cult then on the ship with Lara in pursuit. Eventually we're going to throw Lara into the mystical floating islands, so the last level will be very similar to the first Tomb Raider – completely weird and very different from anything else."

The Venice level, which is set in Callistro's mansion, is awesome. The house is boarded up and full of magical props that the cult want. The chandeliers which hang down become stepping stones to various locations within the house. Secret passages litter the mansion, with some entrances hidden behind paintings.

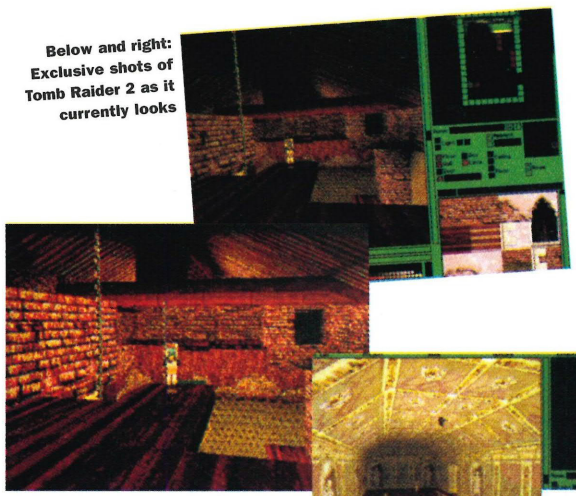
Care is being taken by the programmers to ensure that all the corridors link well and the puzzle element is maintained. You can see some rooms, but the trick is to get inside them. The shipwreck level is highly innovative.

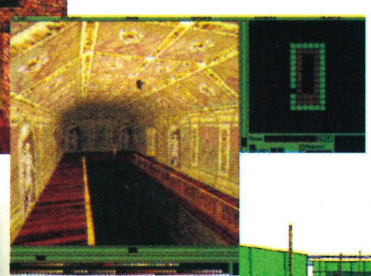
Designer Neal Boyd is in charge of this area of TR2's world, which Lara enters via a mini submarine, (maybe) wearing a wet suit. The sub takes her down to the ship which is lying upside down on the sea bed. In this level, Lara spends most of her time running along ceilings! Lara will have a lot of swimming to do until she reaches the final sub-level which takes her into a large cave area.

In direct response to criticism of the first Tomb Raider, there are to be loads more enemies for Lara to face. The underwater section, for example, is to feature mad cult members as well as hostile marine life. Discussion is still underway as to how easy it'll be to program the movements of a giant squid! In TR2 Lara can fight off underwater foes.

More lighting effects will add polish to the finished product as well as Lara having the new ability to climb up ropes. That's it for this month's TR2 Bulletin – tune in next month for more exclusive news.









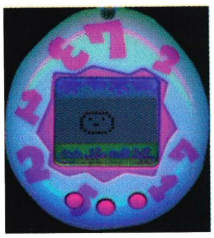
Below and right: Exclusive shots of Tomb Raider 2 as it currently looks



Tamagotchi! What the f...

Known in Japan as the "loveable egg", these plastic eggs are the latest toy to be released by Bandai. Currently selling over three million in Japan, the quirky Tamagotchi is a virtual pet which owners need to 'keep alive'.

Just like the real thing, the cyber-pet requires food throughout the day, sleep at night and plenty of exercise every day to keep his health in check. Clearing up his virtual shite is also one of your many jobs as an owner, as is preparing for his untimely death. The plus point being that if he does die, you can simply reset it and start again with a fresh one. A top quirky treat or crap waste of time? You decide, but surely three million Japanese can't be wrong. Can they?



For more info on the Bandai Tamagotchi, contact The Wright Partnership on 0181 747 8579, who'll point you in the 'wright' direction. Ho ho

UK Blade Gets Censored

Fans of Soul Blade star, Li Long will be disappointed to hear that his nunchaka are no more in the official UK version. They have been replaced by weird jagged stick things, which may work just as well, but simply don't look half as cool. Also removed by censors is Sophitia's 'nude' swim in the intro sequence. Bah humbug, etc.



EA, E3, OK?

Electronic Arts has revealed information as regards its E3 line-up for this June. No sports titles have been announced as yet, but the follow-up to Soviet Strike will make an appearance at the show.

Nuclear Strike sees you trying to stop a psycho in North Korea from using his Nuclear weapons and has you flying all over the globe in a bid to stop the madness. It should be as classy as Soviet Strike and every bit as enthralling.

Other new titles are Reboot which is based on the computer-animated kids cartoon, and follows the role of lead character Bob as you work your way through this quirky platform game of sorts avoiding obstacles and collecting stuff along the way. The game's twist is that it's set from a first-person perspective, allowing you to really experience Bob's viewpoint firsthand. It sounds a tad kiddy at the moment, but let's hope it rocks come summertime.

WarCraft II: The Dark Saga is the next title going to be on show and has players choosing between Orcs or Humans, and basically involves building up various armies and attacking your enemy. A sort of Command & Conquer with goblins. Probably. This PC conversion is alleged to have over 50 missions, so it should satisfy those of you who love D&D and those 'funny' card games.

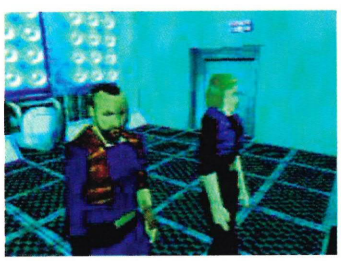
We'll have more news on EA's E3 line-up next month, plus of course, we'll be jetting out to Atlanta this summer to give you plenty of red-hot exclusives on what's funky and what's just plain tripe at this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo.

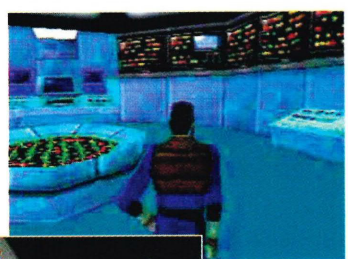
Bloody Sci-Fi!

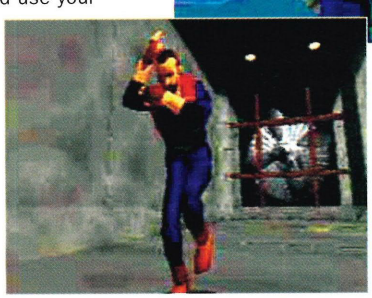
Electronic Arts reckons it is about to release the most intense, fully 3-D Sci-Fi adventure game the PlayStation has ever seen! Far be it from us to say that this claim is a bit hollow because there's not exactly a great deal of competition in this field.

Overblood has the usual Science Fiction cyberpunk story and will allow you to switch between three controllable characters (each with unique abilities) in order to complete a series of quests. You will have full control over the camera movement within a 3-D environment - there's even a first person perspective.

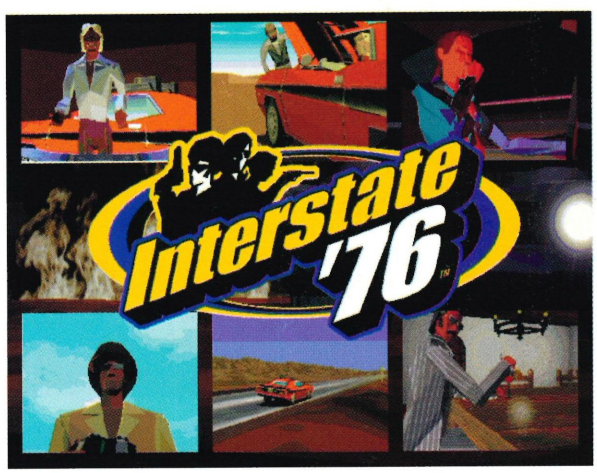
This, together with a "compelling storyline that draws you into the drama" and the need to gather clues, manage resources and use your intuition to stay alive should make this at least appealing to strategy and adventure fans. You can expect to see it on the shelves around the end of May and in PlayStation Pro's next issue!







Overblood is reminiscent of Psygnosis' Sentient, but will hopefully be a good deal better than that turned out to be



Activision Gets Funky

Activision is currently pondering whether or not to bring a version of their '70s cop and robbers PC release, Interstate '76, to the PlayStation.

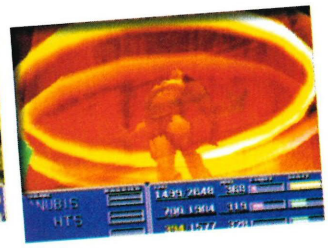
If it all goes ahead, Activision's initial problem will be transferring the game's massive levels to a system known to suffer with them. This might be overcome though by using 'Asynchronous Loading', which is Activision's nifty device that loads data directly from the CD during gameplay to provide those huge sprawling levels in all their glory.

Work is underway with the conversion as we speak, and Activision is getting plenty of practise with the Asynchronous Loading thanks to its forthcoming monster Apocalypse.

The only other reasonable solution is to down-size the environments within the game like they did with the PlayStation version of MechWarrior 2. Hopefully, all these rumours should be confirmed or denied in time for E3 this June.

Capcom and the PS Type C







With Japanese gamers going mental over the release of Final Fantasy VII (over 2 million copies were sold after only two days on the shelves) and the PS Type C just around the corner, the future of Sony's console looks very bright.

Capcom is rumoured to have received PS Type C development boards and is now working on both Street Fighter III (SFIII) and Street Fighter EX2 (SF EX2). SF EX2 will be the second coin-op game to use Type C technology (Tekken 3 was the first) and will appear in arcades later this year, followed by a home console version a year later.

Capcom is also planning to port SFIII – a game using its CPS-3 arcade board – over to Type C. The console version should be with us early next year. The company is set to release the SF2 compilation disc, featuring SF2, SF2 Champion Edition and SF2 Turbo Hyper-fighting, for the PlayStation this autumn. A further compilation disc featuring Super SF2 and Super SF2 Turbo is also scheduled.

The ever-busy Capcom is also planning to send a select group of arcade designers and programmers from Japan to its US offices in Sunnyvale, California. The first game on the drawing board is a vs beat 'em-up featuring some of the Final Fight cast. This will run on Capcom's new CPS-3 hardware and will arrive in arcades next year.

On the 64-bit PlayStation front, Sony is planning for the PS2 to be the hub of family entertainment systems across the globe. As well as being backwards-compatible with PS/PS Type C games, Sony is trying to make the 64-bit system play DVD discs and connect to the Internet as well.

Families could buy, for example, Star Wars on DVD, play the movie on their PS2 then play the Star Wars game on the same DVD against another family across the country that had another copy of the same DVD. The only potential problem of a system with a DVD drive and on-line capabilities could be the (high!) price.

In Sony's favour, however, is the fact that the PlayStation is still going great guns, so the release of the PS2 could be delayed to give the developers time to think of a way of cheaper mass market production.





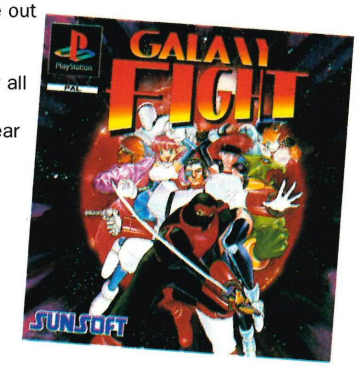
Left and above: Shots of Final Fantasy VII, the release that became a best-seller after only two days on sale in Japan

Chocolate Wars

Galaxy Fight is, not surprisingly, a beat 'em-up. Oh good. But not just any beat 'em-up! Well, okay, it is, but we've got to try and build it up somehow. There's a load of nonsense about an ancient text and a God who takes a physical form every thousand years to terrorise the inhabitants of the Milky Way.

If that doesn't sound run-of-the-mill enough for you then let us take your excitement even higher by telling you that there are special moves, hidden characters and a constantly changing perspective!

If you can stomach another beat 'em-up then keep an eye out for this any time now because, by all accounts, it should appear some time towards the end of May. Can't wait!



Stop Press



• A Japanese company has released a 480-block memory card - the storage equivalent of 32 standard cards. There's no indication as yet of a British release.



• ACT Labs has jumped on the light gun bandwagon. Available only in America so far, this sleek shooter has fewer compatibility problems than others on the market. All it needs now is a few more compatible games.

• Naki has released another cordless PlayStation joypad unit which can work at distances of up to 30 feet away from the console





• Floating Images has invented a special screen overlay that 'floats' 2-D images on multiple layers, so people wanting to play games in 3-D don't need to use special glasses. Hisao Oguchi, Sega's AM3 arcade game development team general manager stated: "The floating image system is an impressive technological offering that could be a very practical and economical method for 3-D imaging." Apparently, the display can be viewed at any angle without image degeneration. PlayStation game developers are already interested in exploiting the technology, which could retail as low as £50.

• Tekken: The movie, which is currently in production, is to feature cameo appearances from characters from Soul Blade.

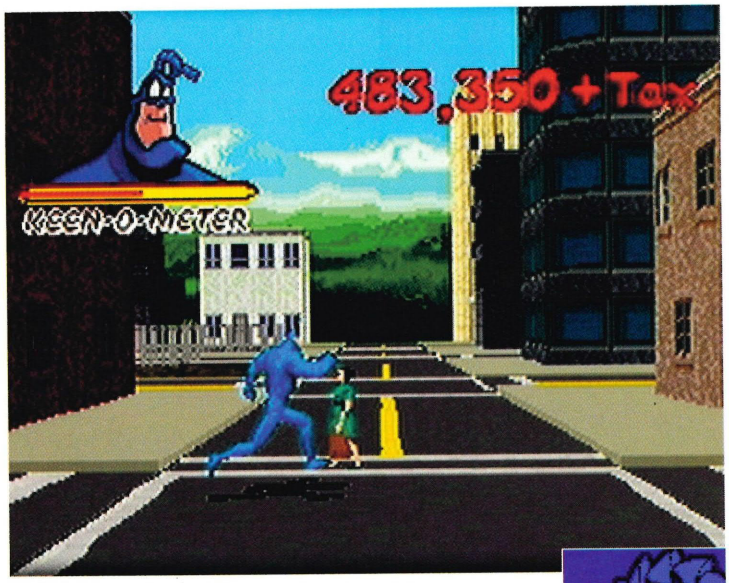
• Psygnosis' futuristic Rollerball-meets-Harlem Heroes effort Riot has been released in America under the name of League Of Pain. Obviously, the citizens of Los Angeles didn't need reminding what they're capable of, although sales over here in Brixton and Toxteth have shown that PlayStation game

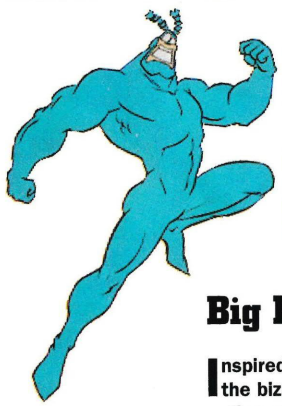


From this issue onward, PlayStation Pro is to be the only PlayStation mag to feature the official British PlayStation Top 40. Compiled by Charttrack, it's the strict copyright of ELSPA. So no copying, okay? This issue's chart is for the week ending April 26 (numbers in brackets are the previous week's positions).

1 (1) Porsche Challenge
2 (3) Tomb Raider
3 (-) Jonah Lomu Rugby
4 (2) Micro Machines V3
5 (4) Destruction Derby
6 (6) Exhumed
7 (8) Formula One
8 (5) Tekken
9 (7) Ridge Racer
10 (9) Total NBA 97
11 (11) Alien Trilogy
12 (13) Die Hard Trilogy
13 (12) Crash Bandicoot
14 (14) Wipeout
15 (29) Player Manager
16 (18) FIFA 97
17 (19) Worms
18 (17) Tekken 2
19 (10) Cool Boarders
20 (15) Command & Conquer
21 (21) Air Combat
22 (16) MechWarrior
23 (25) Destruction Derby 2
24 (20) Soccer 97
25 (22) Resident Evil
26 (27) World Cup Golf – Professional
27 (23) Battle Arena Toshinden
28 (28) Casper
29 (31) Actua Golf
30 (26) Legacy Of Kain
31 (30) Excalibur 2555
32 (32) Street Racer
33 (37) Soviet Strike
34 (39) Mortal Kombat Trilogy
35 (–) Adidas Power Soccer International
36 (40) Wipeout
37 (24) Suikoden
38 (34) Firo & Klawd
39 (33) Adidas Power Soccer
40 (–) Bust A Move 2

ChartTrack







Big Blue Goon

Inspired by the cult comics and classy cartoon series, the bizarre adventures of The Tick has now spawned an action adventure PlayStation title from Fox Interactive. The Tick's main mission in the game is to seek out the Super Villain who has been poisoning the City's much-needed sweet supply.

You control our aforementioned blue-suited hero and spend most of the game battling the Million-Zillion Ninjas in the City or scrapping the insidious El Seed's army of rampaging cornstalks out in the countryside. At a first glance the game seems to take on a 'Streets Of Rage' kinda feel, but hopefully it won't result in another 'Iron Man' affair. It's mad, wacky and certainly will be entertaining so expect the large blue bloke on your PlayStation, shouting "Spooooooon!" around August time.

It's wacky, utterly mad and a right old laugh. We just can't wait for the Tick to arrive. Oh no



titles aren't as socio-politically sensitive as the Yanks reckon.

• Virgin's Red Alert - the sequel to Command & Conquer - is to be mouse compatible, have a two player link-up, be memory card-saveable and will feature all the PC missions, plus a few more.

• Sony Computer Entertainment (SCE) in Tokyo is increasing production of PlayStations. Monthly hardware manufacture is scheduled to go up to 1.35 million by the time this mag reaches you. SCE reckons the total world-wide shipment of PlayStations so far has passed the 13 million mark, over 3.4 million units of which selling through in the USA.

• Codemasters is currently developing a touring car game with a big-name licence. More information next month.

• The Lost World: Jurassic Park is due to arrive with this summer's Spielberg blockbuster stateside, but we're gonna have to wait a while. The game follows the lives of the dinosaurs in a struggle for survival - all in a new 3-D world created with "Morf-X" technology. You play as one of five different characters including humans, a T-Rex and a manic Raptor.

• Last month's ish included a news piece on the Sony analogue joypad, but our daft artist forgot to put a picture of it in the mag. So here it is. What a beauty, eh?



G Police Latest

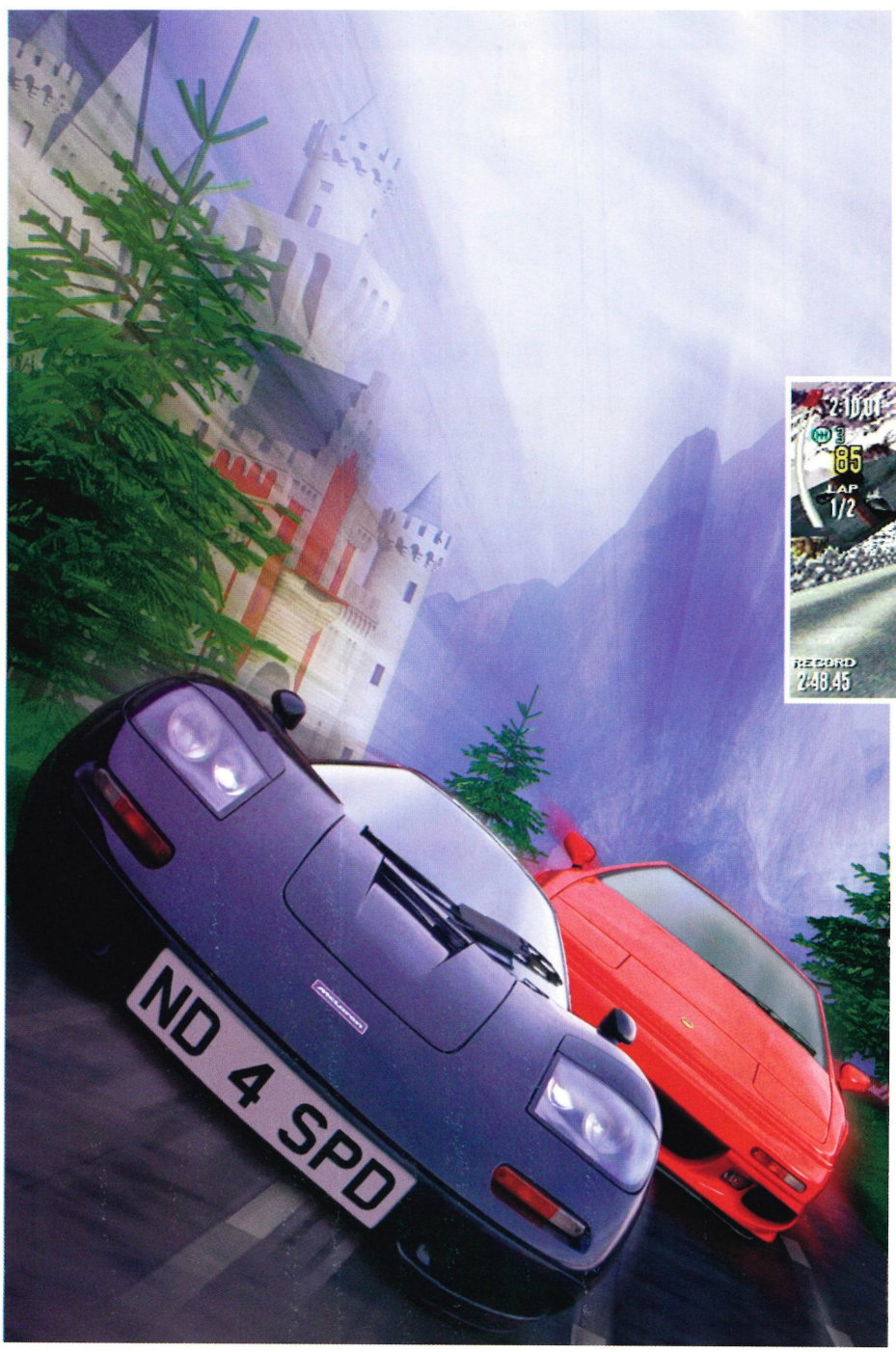
Psygnosis is putting the finishing touches to its long-awaited cyber-epic, G Police, as we speak and we should have some more exclusive pics in time for next month's mag. Watch this space!



BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Need for Speed II

After months of broken promises and false starts, the sequel to everyone's favourite split screen racer is at last sitting in our collective lap. Let's stroke it together...



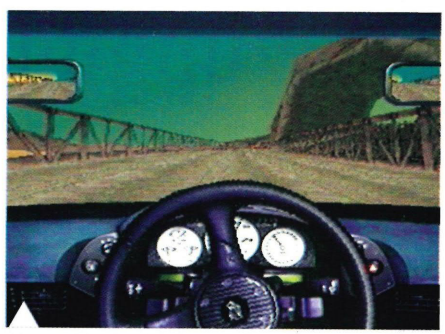
First of all let's have a quiz. Your starter for 10: In '80s chick flick Top Gun, when hamster-faced megastar Tom Cruise turns to that bald bloke from ER and declares ruggedly "I feel the need, the need for speed", is he planning a night out at an illegal warehouse party and desperate to purchase some chemicals to make the night swing (and to make him paranoid and sweaty with a shrunken willy of course)? Or is he uttering one of the most ridiculously cheesy and contrived lines in movie history, in a desperate attempt to look hard and compensate for the fact that he's actually only two feet tall? Or finally, is he having a bizarre premonition concerning the arrival of Electronic



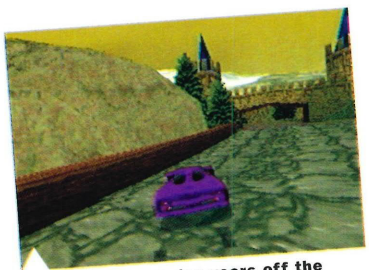
A crashed plane leaves crates all over the road in Nepal. Look! There's a rugby team eating each other!



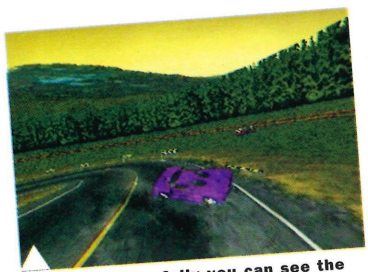
Choose your car (based on speed, handling and pulling power), choose a colour and off you go



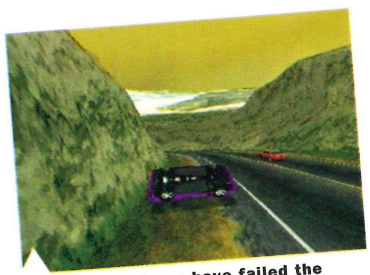
The dashboard view obscures too much of the track, and the wheel is dodgily animated



My purple dreamster veers off the road at the sight of a gorgeous castle



If you look carefully you can see the civilian car I just smashed off the road



I'm afraid that you have failed the parallel parking section of the test...





The mystic caves in Nepal are rife with nasty corners and dips

Arts' popular split screen racing game, many years before it was actually released?

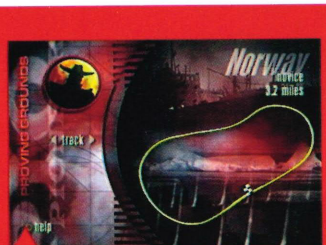
Well, the second answer is probably the correct one, technically speaking. But for our purposes, the third possibility might just be correct as well. But categorically not the first one, in case Mr. Cruise's lawyers are reading. Yes, Teeny Tom managed to predict the arrival of the original, but seemed to miss out on the fact that a sequel was in the works. Rumour has it that halfway through Jerry Maguire he mutters something about it, but there's no evidence to support this. Barry Norman probably made it up.

We, on the other hand, have known for ages that a sequel was on the way. It has become one of the classic delayed titles of recent months. If you read our 'Next Month' page, you'll know that it was supposed to arrive pretty much every month this year. And here, at long last, it is.

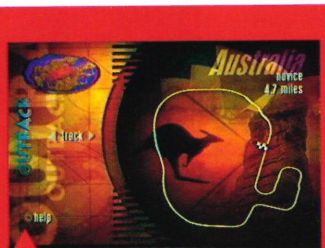
And, not surprisingly after such a tantalising wait, it's a bit of a let down at first. Inevitably, appearing after Sony's double whammy of Rage Racer and Porsche Challenge, any game is going to suffer by comparison. So our first experience with NFS2 was not impressive. The graphics looked rough around the edges, the speed seemed to be below par and the handling of the cars was well ropey. Things did not look good.

It starts off well, with a hilarious FMV intro ▶

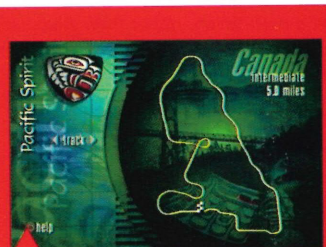
The Joy Of Tracks



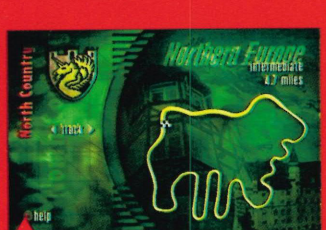
PROVING GROUNDS, NORWAY
A simple bean shaped track to ease you into the game. The track takes you through an abandoned naval shipyard, racing past beached destroyers and through missile silos. Unfortunately, the car with the fastest top speed will always streak ahead and be completely unbeatable from then on. Which kind of spoils the excitement really.



OUTBACK, AUSTRALIA
Another simple track, but with the addition of a twisty detour through the suburbs of Sydney. Some sharp turns and forks in the road spice things up a little but, with the exception of the brief city sections, this is another long, easy track which faster cars will dominate. And the polygon version of the Opera House looks positively weird.



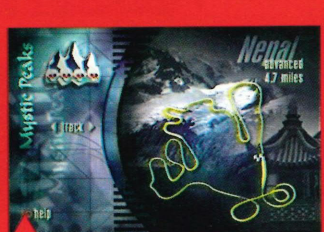
PACIFIC SPIRIT, CANADA
Absolutely nothing to do with Canada really, as it's a generic mountains and forests course which could just as easily have been set in Wales. No stand out features, unless you count some tricky corners and, as such, it's an instantly forgettable course. There is a cunning dirt track hidden behind some trees, but it just rejoins the main track about two seconds later.



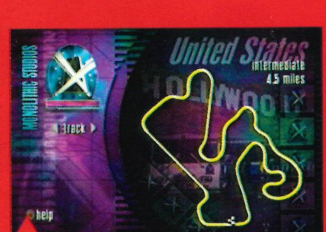
NORTH COUNTRY, NORTHERN EUROPE
It's actually set in Germany, by the way, but was obviously renamed for a US audience who wouldn't know Europe from a ham sandwich. Race through dark forests, ancient castles and bizarre theme parks called Kinder Welt (or Children World, language fans) where huge fluffy things wave at you. Loads of variety and some devilish corners.



MEDITERRANEO, GREECE
One of the most atmospheric and hilly tracks. Up and down and round and round you go, hurtling through quiet towns and villages before heading up the winding mountain roads. Narrow tracks and some stomach churning drops and bends make this one of the most crash prone courses in the game. It's also one of the most fun.



MYSTIC PEAKS, NEPAL
Ooh, it's cosmic man. Picture the tranquil, remote landscapes of Nepal. Snowblown mountains, serene temples, caves untouched for aeons and rope bridges slung across bottomless drops. Now take a high performance sports car and tear through it all. Hurrah for western culture! You'll crash all the time here, but it's a right laugh.



MONOLITHIC STUDIOS, HOLLYWOOD
A secret track that involves racing through various film sets and around some of the most vicious bends and ramps in the game. Spaceships swoop overhead, giant dinosaurs loiter on the track, Jaws pops up beside the road and burning buildings sweep past as you repeatedly crash due to the ludicrous difficulty of the track. Great!

Need for Speed II

▶ which makes Top Gear look sedate. Sleek sports cars pelt round desolate roads at high speed, cutting up the local traffic and going so fast that they eventually turn into fireballs. It's terminally tacky, and the only thing missing is Jeremy Clarkson snarling about 'slamming the bitch into gear and letting rip'.

The options and menu screens maintain this slick start, with some nice crisp graphics and plenty of options to mess about with. Each car has its own info screen where you can browse its capabilities and watch video footage of the real life version in action. It's a boy racers dream.

These sections are narrated by a guy whose tackiness almost matches the intro. He sounds like the guy who used to voice those Disney nature documentaries and I kept expecting him to say something like "Hey there little beaver, have you lost your mommy?" but he never did. He also talks you through each of the tracks, in a similarly cliché ridden manner.

It's once you start the game though that this smooth façade starts to crack. The cars in the game, for a start, just don't look or feel like the supercharged dream machines they're supposed to represent. I think it's something to do with the colours to be honest. They look like they've had a matt finish, rather than gloss, and as such look a bit drab. You can change the colour of your car, but the problem persists.

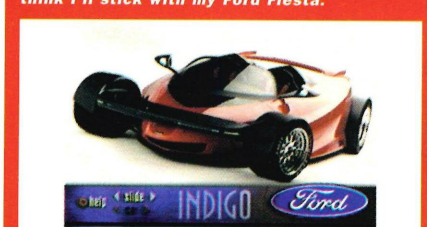
The tracks suffer from this rough look as well. Nobody expects photo-realistic backgrounds, but Rage Racer has shown that you don't need to sacrifice speed to include some gob-smacking scenery. And, sorry to bring this up, the game suffers from some awful pop-up. This is the sort of thing that nerdy mags usually bleat on about, as if it really affects the gameplay, but when whole bridges suddenly appear in front of you it doesn't really create a feel of polished professionalism. Not a tragic flaw, but bad enough for it to be noticeable.

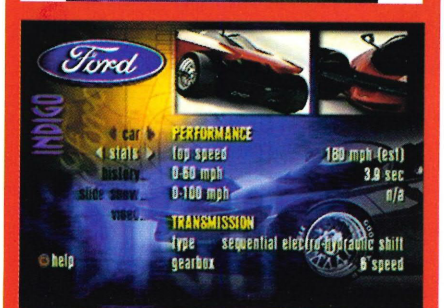
However, after a few days of play, and once I'd sifted through all the options thoroughly, my opinion started to brighten. The poor car handling, it transpired, was merely due to picking the wrong vehicles. Bring up the car statistics and it becomes an easy task to pick the hot rod best suited to your driving style. Each car has a genuinely different set of parameters, so while some might be super fast, they'll steer like bricks at top whack. Others lack the extra 20mph, but are better suited to sharp corners. It's a matter of taste really.

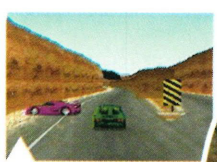
The speed question is harder to answer. It's certainly not an incredibly fast game, and the split screen mode is visibly slower than single player, but once again it all comes down to picking the right cars and options. Switch to one

A Secret Car Too!

Yes there is! And, bizarrely, it's possibly the worst car in the game. The Ford Indigo is its name, and its real life counterpart is still under wraps. But it's crap. It has a stupidly low top speed – a mere 185mph compared to the others average of over 200mph, meaning that you'll be overtaken on every single straight. It does handle marginally better than the others, but is hardly worth putting the code in to unlock it. It even looks stupid. I don't think much of it, to be honest, so I think I'll stick with my Ford Fiesta.





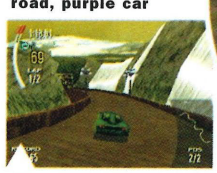


Beware forks in the road, purple car





Two players are, as always, better than one



OK waterfall, but not as good as Rage Racer's

Each race ends with statistics galore





All aboard for the thrills of Kinder Welt!



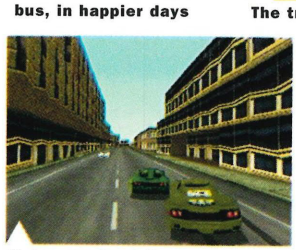
School bus in tunnel death smash horror!



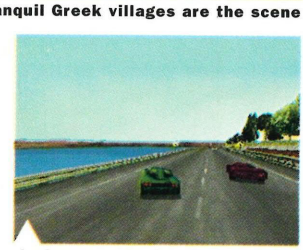
And here's the same bus, in happier days



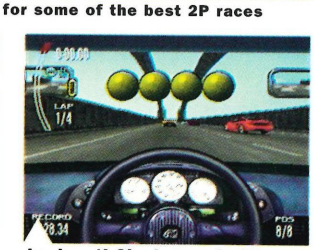
The tranquil Greek villages are the scene for some of the best 2P races



Not sure about the green...



A nice seaside drive?

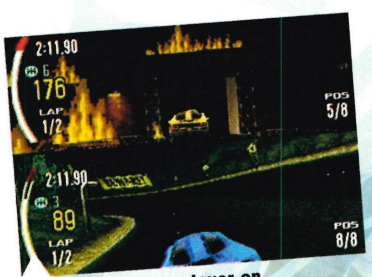


Look out! Giant grapefruit!

of the interior viewpoints and the pace becomes more than acceptable. You can have a standard interior with no frills or you can have one with the dashboard and steering wheel in view. The dashboard view looks more than a little cheesy, and covers at least half the screen, but it does create a certain amount of atmosphere so we'll let it off.

NFS2's biggest problem though is the fact that it's merely a good racing game coming hot on the heels of at least one great racing game. However, as a two player game I found it a lot more fun than Porsche, especially when you get rid of the other racers and let general traffic onto the road. You really can't beat ramming a VW Beetle off the road for a bit of road rage catharsis.

Once you get some cars flying all over the place the game starts to wander more in the direction of flat out arcade giggles in the style of Destruction Derby – and that's when the game's at its best. If you just want a racer that'll while away a few post-pub hours in a simple, old fashioned way then I'd consider this above the others. However, if you want a game with depth, challenge and slick looks then Rage Racer still holds the crown with ease.



More two player palaver on the secret track



Yikes! It's a crap looking T-Rex!

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PRO SCORE

GAME Need For Speed II
GENRE Racing
SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts
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It's a bad time for this much-delayed game to hit the shelves. Graphically, it loses out to both Rage Racer and Porsche, but just manages to retain enough of its predecessors charm to save it from obscurity. It might not look up to much at first play, and a bit more polish before it left the showroom would have worked wonders, but patience is rewarded. Especially good fun for two players, this is one of those games that can genuinely be called a 'grower'. Switch to 2P mode, get rid of the computer cars and turn the traffic option on for maximum laughs. Not as in-depth as Rage Racer or as slick as Porsche, but this still provides enough instant arcade thrills to make it worth a try if neither of the other games appeal.

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 8

8

STEVE Fails miserably as a single player racer and is therefore surely condemned to the realms of obscurity as a result. Fares marginally better in two player mode but is still a long, long way from £45 worth

JAY Not the best driving game out there, but by no means the worst either. Check out Porsche if you want two player fun or Rage Racer if you're a loner. But if you've got both of these already, by all means buy this

ALEX Eight's just about right, although the two player mode is ultimately its saviour. It's neither quicker nor more exciting than any other major race game. Plays as well as expected, but is certainly no 'must have'

ANDY I'm not sure if this is as good as the first one at the end of the day, but if you don't own the original this is well worth a closer look. It's quick and playable but doesn't hold long term appeal

BY DAN WHITEHEAD

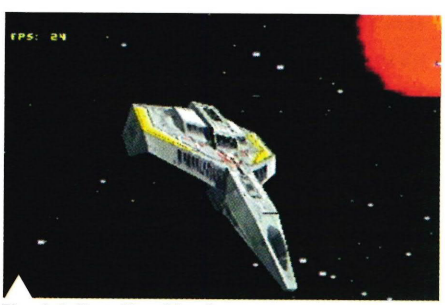
Wing Commander IV

The Price Of Freedom

More deep space shooty action in this, the fourth in a series of which only two have come out on the PlayStation. Mummy, I'm confused



Would you trust your life to this streamlineed piece of space-going luxury? Neither would I



The detail on the ships is commendably high, which probably explains the lack of pace

The Wing Commander series is something of a mystery to me. I know it's massively popular on the PC, inspiring the sort of fervent fanaticism usually associated with dubious religious sects. Popular enough to spawn four WC games, with a fifth on the way, two Privateer spin offs, a cartoon series, a game based on the cartoon series and umpteen mission disks and tie ins. There's no point trying to figure out why it provokes this reaction, as PC owners just go glassy eyed and wet themselves when you mention it.

This just makes the series PSX debut all the more baffling. Wing Commander III was the first to reach our pleasant shores and all we could find to say about it was that it was an OK slice of space shooting with some ropey video thrown in. This is the sort of opinion that could easily lead to a war with the PC tribe, if their arms weren't so withered from years of hiding in dark rooms playing Quake with each other.

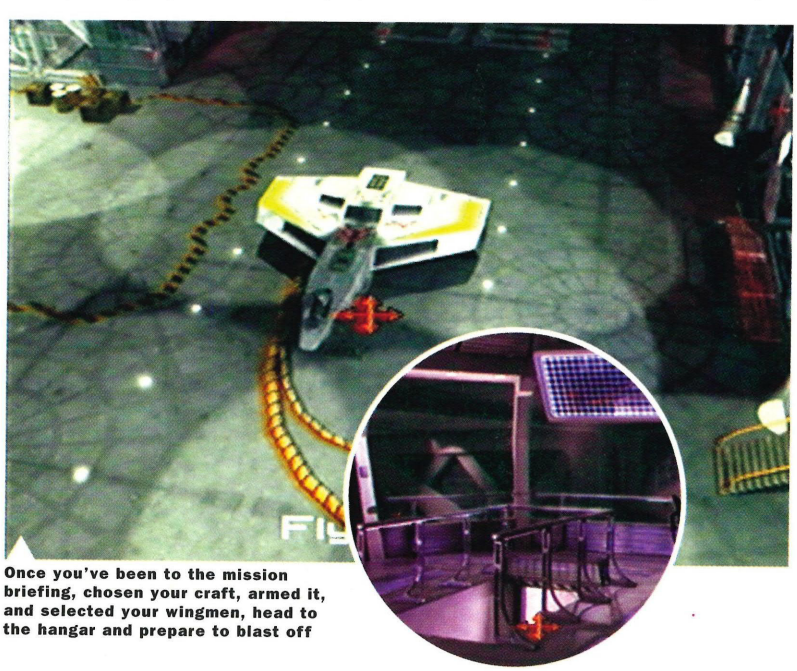
So, no, we weren't impressed with our first taste of Colonel Blair's adventures. We can, however, see that somewhere in the poorly converted WC3 there lurks a good game. And, brave souls that they are, Electronic Arts is having another crack at spreading the Wing Commander gospel to us PlayStation heathens. Will we see the light? Will we join them in a missionary position? Probably not, but first let's see what's gone on since we last visited this peculiar world.

Those of you remotely interested will possibly remember that the third game ended with Blair (played by you) thrashing the Kilrathi with a big bomb and thus winning the Kilrathi War. Realising that he can't really top a party piece like that, he retires from the Terran Confederation and settles down as a farmer. Until, desperate for another profitable sequel, sorry, desperate for great pilots, the Confederation recalls him.

It seems that now the war is over, the frontier worlds of Confed are starting to resent their marginal status. Piracy and terrorism sprout up, and it looks like the latest threat to Galactic peace will come from within.

So our old pal finds himself recalled to active service and thrust into a brewing civil war. Where will his loyalties lie when Confed starts throwing its weight around in a most undemocratic manner? That, dear reader, rather depends on you. As before you'll get to make choices throughout, as well as taking the helm of various armed spacecraft to enforce justice, whichever side of the fence you end up on.

The game follows the same formula that



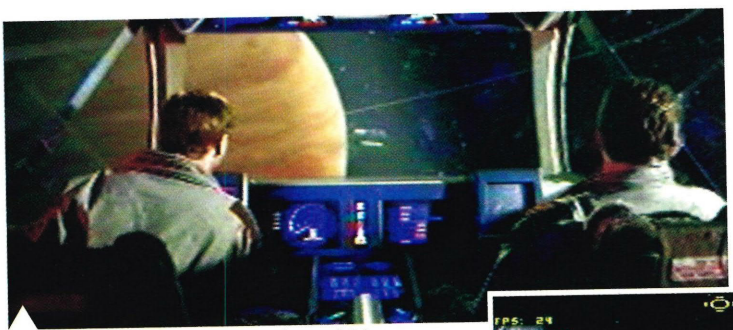
Once you've been to the mission briefing, chosen your craft, armed it, and selected your wingmen, head to the hangar and prepare to blast off



This is the Bluepoint, a Confed station. The blue and white box shows that it's a friendly target. At least, it is for now...



Things improve loads once you can pick what ship you fly and what armaments you carry



'Double cheeseburger, two portions of fries, milkshake and a scalding hot apple pie, please' 'Thank you, please drive to the next window...'

drove the previous effort - a bit of plot-developing FMV leading into a space-based mission leading back into more FMV leading into...well, you get the picture. The video has been smartened up (but with a $12 million budget you'd hope so), and the cast is littered with vaguely familiar C-list movie stars.

It's the actual flying sections we're most interested in though, and they don't look so good. The graphics are rough, the animation suffers from jerkiness and I just got the horrible feeling that the actual game had been crowbarred in as an afterthought.

The missions you fly repeat the 'search and destroy' motif over and over again. At first this is quite exciting, but when you reach halfway through the game and nothing's changed you start to get fidgety. They all take place in the same blank, bland areas of space as well. No planets, no suns, just lots of white dots to represent stars. As such, there's no illusion of movement or inertia or any of those other forces that make a flying game feel 'real'. You might as well just be stuck on a stick in the dark for all the atmosphere this generates. Very poor really.

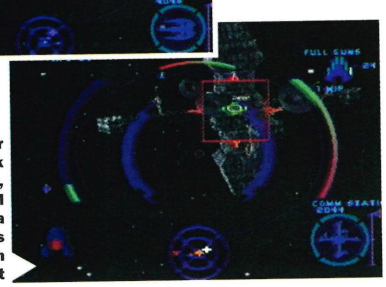
The inclusion of wingmen improves the ▶



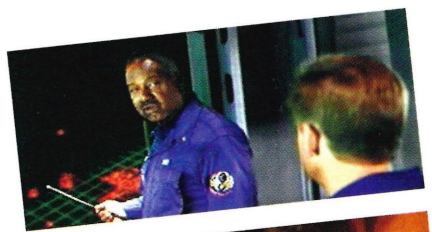
I should really use auto-pilot at this point, as I'm heading straight for that Star Cruiser



Approaching your base ship, you may need to radio ahead for landing clearance



The bigger vessels look suitably hefty, but the small fighters look a little weedy as they lurch past





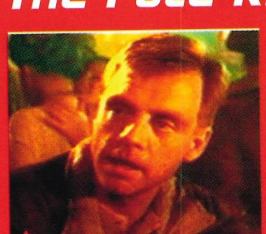




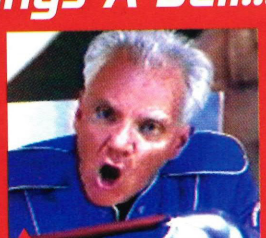


A montage of 'classic' moments from the hotbed of dramatic talent that is WC4. It's more Space Precinct than Indpendence Day, but you can tell a fair bit of money's been spent on it

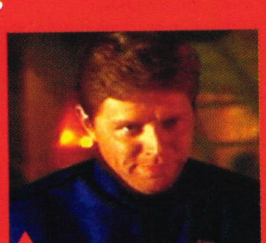
The Face Rings A Bell...



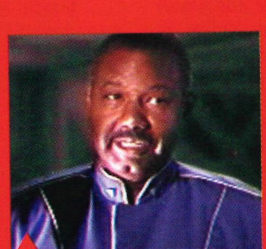
COLONEL BLAIR (MARK HAMILL)
Most famous for having the worst hair of the '70s in Star Wars, Mark has since earned a crust by appearing in low budget monster films like 'Mutronics', 'Body Bags' and 'Sleepwalkers'. He's also the voice of the Joker in the Batman cartoon series and Hobgoblin in the Spiderman cartoon. Harrison Ford must be green with envy



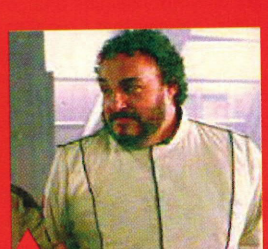
ADMIRAL TOLWYN (MALCOLM MCDOWELL)
Notorious for his portrayal of Alex in 'A Clockwork Orange' and Mick Travis in the classic 'if...', Malcolm has also graced some dubious straight-to-video guff, like 'Moon 44' and 'Class Of 1999'. Recently he cropped up in 'Tank Girl' and earned the love of millions by murdering Captain Kirk in one of those Star Trek films



MAJOR 'MANIAC' MARSHALL (THOMAS WILSON)
Best known for playing various bullies in the 'Back To The Future' trilogy, Tom's done very little since. He does voice overs for loads of cartoons, namely Gargoyles, Back To The Future and the Wing Commander Animated Series. He's done a few flicks with names like 'Bound By Honor', but I'm betting they're crap

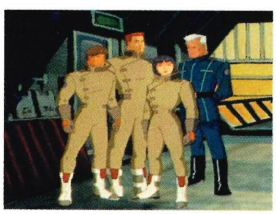


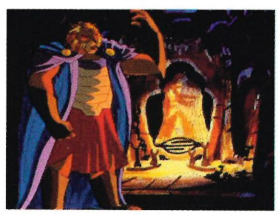
CAPTAIN EISEN (JASON BERNARD)
Jason has one of those classic 'Ooh, what was he in?' faces. You know you've seen him in something, but you can't remember what. Well, he plays a judge in Jim Carrey's 'Liar Liar', he was Sandra Bullock's boss in 'While You Were Sleeping', and he had roles in classic sci fi like 'V', and 'WarGames'. He was in 'Cagney and Lacey' as well.



MAJOR 'PALADIN' TAGGERT (JOHN RHYS DAVIS)
Most will remember this English actor as Sallah, Indy's mate in 'Raiders Of The Lost Ark' and 'The Last Crusade'. He was also one of the stars of the TV show 'Sliders', and is another voice actor for Gargoyles. Trashy video fans might recall his star turns in stuff like 'The Unamable Returns' and 'Cyborg Cop'. But probably won't

Back To School





Evidence that the Wing Commander games are a gen-u-wine phenomena can currently be found on American TV. It's the Wing Commander Academy cartoon series, now keeping Yank kids glued to their TVs every Saturday morning. Returning to the cast, in voice form at least, are Mark Hamill as the young Blair, Tom Wilson as a young Maniac and Malcolm MacDowell as Tolwyn, then a mere Commodore.

Set in the year 2655, the series is a prequel to the games, following the exploits of a bunch of raw space recruits thrown into the Kilrathi War to make up for massive Earth casualties. While continuing their training they have to fly routine patrols and engage the real enemy rather than a simulation.

Don't hold your breath for the series to reach the UK, as there are no plans at present for any channel to buy the rights to it. Apart from Channel 5 possibly. They'll buy any old toss.

Wing Commander IV

▶combat, especially once you reach the stage where you can choose and arm your fighter and select which pilots you want flying alongside you. An in-flight communication system allows you to issue orders to your crew and they'll follow whatever attack pattern you want. You can even hurl abuse at the enemy, which is nice.

This comms system is rather too cumbersome to ever be truly useful though, as it requires finger juggling on the shoulder buttons and d-pad which inevitably interferes with your actual flying. Best to let them get on with it really.



There are all sorts of flight sim trimmings to the action, like the ability to roll your craft, target different enemies and other needlessly complex features that have little or no use in the actual game. One look at the control configuration gives the impression that this is a game of great depth and skill. Maybe it was on the PC, but this incarnation is little more than an over-dressed shoot 'em-up really.

You can also use an analogue joystick, supposedly offering greater control and a more authentic feel, but I just found it more cumbersome, especially when you need to use the shoulder buttons which are all over the place on the Sony stick. It also seemed to crash the game, but don't quote me on that as it may be down to our review copy. Still bloody annoying though.

The game's downfall however, is the routine nature of the fighting. The addition of some land-based missions may have given this more oomph, or even just some missions that require more than just auto-piloting to a way point, shooting all the baddies there and auto-piloting back. Maybe you could fly diplomatic missions or ferry cargo across the galaxy. Maybe if this could be a bit more like the gaming legend that is Elite and less like a 3-D Space Invaders, I could be more enthusiastic.

I also had trouble reconciling the almost-effective drama of the video with the flying. I never once felt like I was taking part in the story. In fact, it felt more like these were bits I had to get out of the way to get on with the film. Which is a pretty sure sign that Wing Commander's second PlayStation effort is no more effective than the first. I still don't see what all the fuss is about.



The briefings are where you'll get detailed instructions on your next mission. They're recapped afterwards, so feel free to skip

GENRE COMPARISON

Game ***Darklight Conflict***
Software House ***Electronic Arts***

Yet more spacey business from the EA monkeys. Posh light sourced graphics mean that this looks nicer than WC4, and hopefully it'll have more to do as well. It won't however, have Mark Hamill, and that's a loss I'm sure we'll all feel deep in our souls

PRO SCORE

GAME **Wing Commander IV**
GENRE **Flight Sim**
SOFTWARE HOUSE **Electronic Arts**
CONTACT **01753 549442**
RELEASE DATE **Out Now**
PRICE **£44.99**

This is similar to WC3 in so many ways, it seems bizarre having to come up with new ways of voicing the same gripes. The game engine doesn't seem to have been polished at all, the combat still judders and crawls at inopportune moments and it's only the inclusion of new video footage that distinguishes this from Wing Commander's last PSX outing. It loiters somewhere just above 'average' on our clap-o-meter, and is mildly engrossing provided you don't have anything else to do. The story is probably the best point, it's clichéd and trite but quite enjoyable and the budget looks worthy of the big screen. It's just a pity that you don't get to interact with this world more. Bearable, but a long way from being essential.

GRAPHICS **7**
SOUND **7**
GAMEPLAY **6**
LASTABILITY **7**

7

STEVE **I've always had a bit of a soft spot for Wing Commander being a long term fan of the PC versions, but this PlayStation conversion of number four just isn't as good for the same reasons its predecessor wasn't**

JAY **A nice idea – as ever – but the finished article failed to stun me into submission, due to the fact that it's identical to all the other inacrnations and equally as dull. At least Rebel Assault 2 had a bit of variety**

ALEX **One for major fans of Star Wars' Mark Hamill (who stars in the video segments), Wing Commander IV is basically Elite (the 20- and 30-somethings will remember it) with knobs on. Not suited to the PlayStation**

ANDY **I've only ever played Wing Commander 3 before and this looks and plays pretty much the same. I'm afraid I just can't get into this sort of thing, it's too samey throughout in all departments**

PORSCHE Challenge™

"9/10"

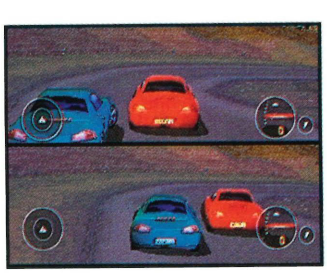
PlayStation Power

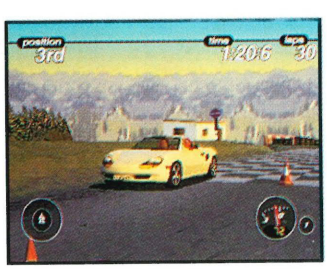
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BY ALEX LEE

V Tennis

If tennis is all about winning rallies, why do you never see any cars on court?



One of the weirdest intro sequences ever – a tennis player whacking the ball around in a storm

The 16bit formats saw some fantastic tennis games. Nintendo's Super Tennis and Virgin's Smash Tennis were two of the finest, combining basic cute Manga-style sprites with unbelievable gameplay. The control systems were excellent, the playability exemplary and the lastability was eons.

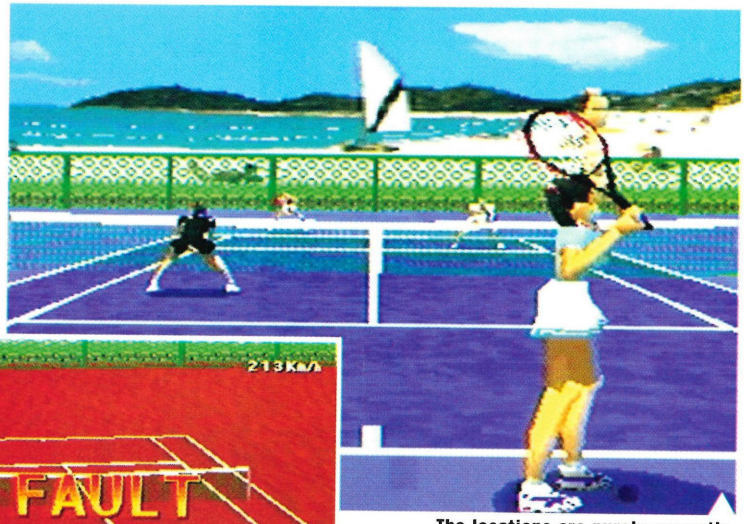
With the PlayStation being a 32bit wonder console capable of astonishing graphic/gameplay fests such as Wipeout, Tekken and Track N Field, it was a mystery to me that a decent tennis game didn't appear until two months ago when the delicious Namco Smash Court Tennis arrived.

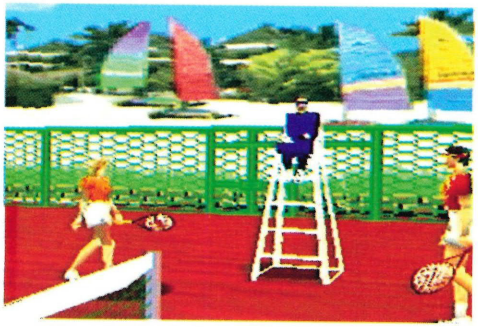
Even that, however, couldn't be credited with 'next generation' looks. If it had, Steve would have struggled to give it less than full marks in his review. Sampras Extreme boasted motion captured players, but none of them were of Sampras himself, rendering it not that good.

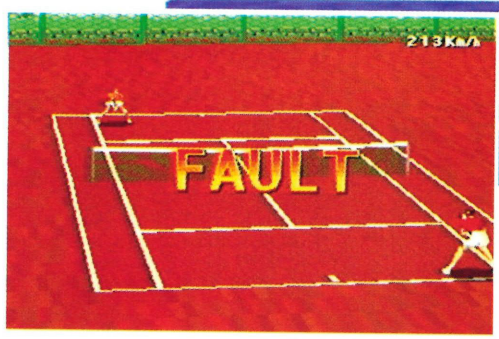
V Tennis, which has presumably gone down pretty well in Japan, is scheduled for a British release any time now. A simple-looking package, V Tennis is easy to get into – there aren't too many options to waste time on. Once you've chosen a player and an opponent from the 16 available, you're faced with a choice of three courts – lawn, indoor and clay – in six different locations although these are strictly for decoration only. You may then select your



To the untrained eye, V Tennis plays like tennis games should. Control over shot power and direction is in your court, as it were, although it's not the most instant tennis game ever







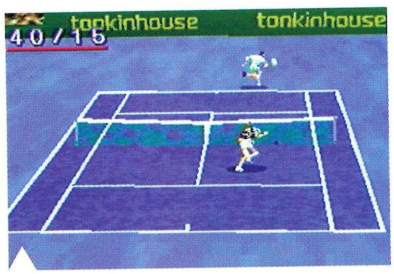
The locations are purely cosmetic. Each court within the five non-stadium areas is surrounded by a distant green fence, with the backgrounds miles away – there's no interaction with the scenery nor do you get any real feel for where you're meant to be playing



Luss proper leathers Archer here in a one-sided match



Tennis in the rain is about as much fun as cricket in the snow



Long rallies are possible as are off-target serves

preferred view angle (the default behind the server view is awful) and choose the colour of your ball.

Each court surface is reasonably accurate in terms of the way it plays – the serve and volley game for instance works best on grass – but it has to be said that the blue indoor surface looks more like a swimming pool cover than anything else.

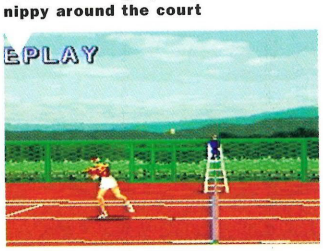
Matches can be played from nine different angles (see 'Angular Depression' box), although it soon becomes apparent that only two of them are satisfactory. Ocean's Power Serve and JVC's Hyper Tennis, which were so bad we declined to review them, suffered from the same problem but V Tennis, thankfully, never trawls the depths that the aforementioned titles did.

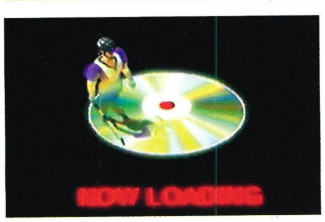
V Tennis shares one of Namco's Smash Court Tennis best features in that it's impossible to predict what serve is coming at you – there is no on-screen cursor. Two different serves are available – a flat, fast serve ideal for the first service and a slower serve, although swerve can be applied by either of the top shoulder buttons. As for the computer opponents, the men are pretty tough, but the women are fairly easy to outwit. Big-hitting ▶



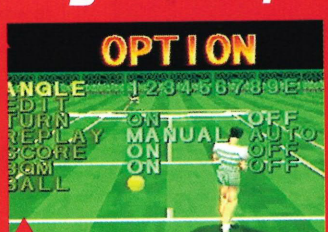
The replay feature is worthy of positive comment. Every game-winning point is replayed from an angle either to the side of the court, following the ball or (left) from behind the server. A couple of quick taps of the circle button stops it if you can't bear to see it again

The abilities of the male and female players are accurate to real life, with the men capable of monster serves and tonking ground strokes and volleys, whereas the women are altogether more sedate although pretty damn nippy around the court





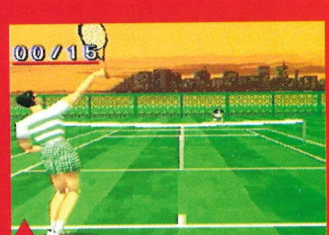
Angular Depression



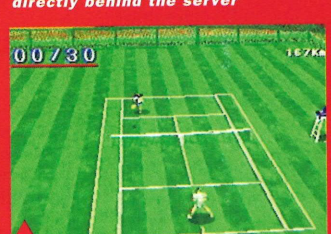
View angle number one is from directly behind the server



View angle two, the most playable one, is a BBC-TV style effort



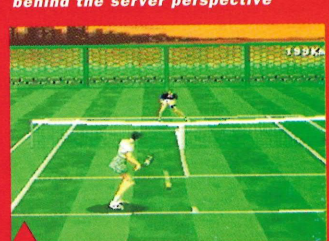
View angle three is a ground-level behind the server perspective



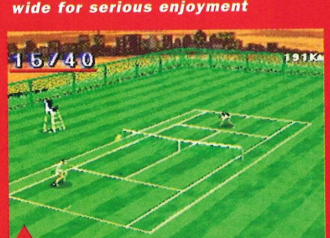
Angle four is a little too high and wide for serious enjoyment



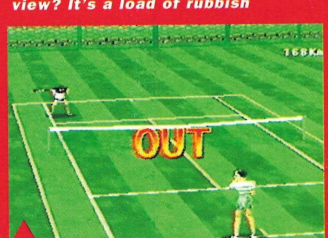
Why did they bother with this view? It's a load of rubbish



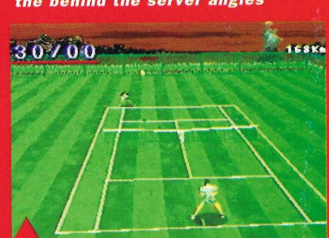
Number six is the most playable of the behind the server angles



View seven is the second most unplayable of them all



Angle number eight is similar to no.2, except the court rotates



The top of the court in view nine is just too small for decent gameplay

V Tennis

▶male Van Bek burps every time he sends a smash past you, whereas baseline queen Von Bue barks.

After several hours of play against computer and human (if you can call Andy and Steve human, that is) opponents, I was still thinking There must be a good game under here somewhere, there's gotta be a good game under here somewhere... Could I find it? To put it bluntly, no. Although the L1 and R1 shoulder buttons affect slice and topspin when serving and during rallies, there still wasn't enough variety and depth to the game to excite me.

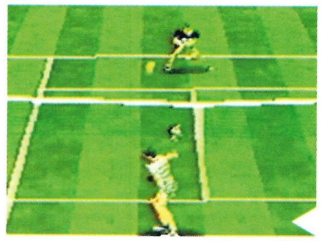
A few years ago I worked on a Game Boy magazine – GB Action. You may remember it. I don't – it's too upsetting. A game came in called Jimmy Connors Tennis from Ubisoft. For the Game Boy, it was superb and when magnified on a Macintosh for taking screenshots, it didn't look that much different from V Tennis. Seriously. So, V Tennis – a 32bit product? Sorry Acclaim, it isn't.

It's playable enough in short spurts, but after you've swung at the ball three times and still managed to hit it, only to completely miss your next shot because regardless of which view angle you use it remains far harder to win a rally at the top of the screen than the bottom, it soon becomes hard not to flinge* the joypad in frustration.

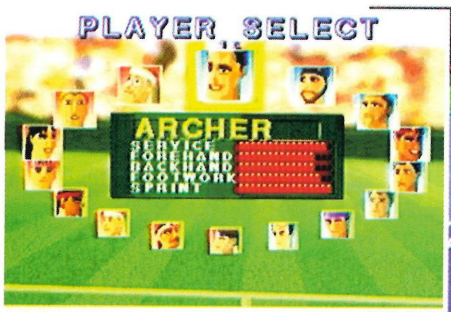
** A particularly hard fling, pronounced flinj*

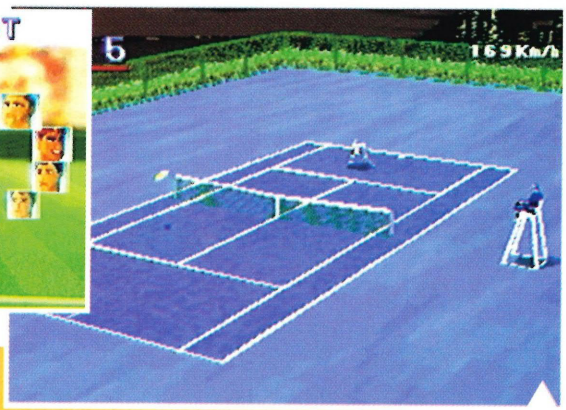


Don't be fooled by this still screenshot. It's part of a jerk-fest replay in real life

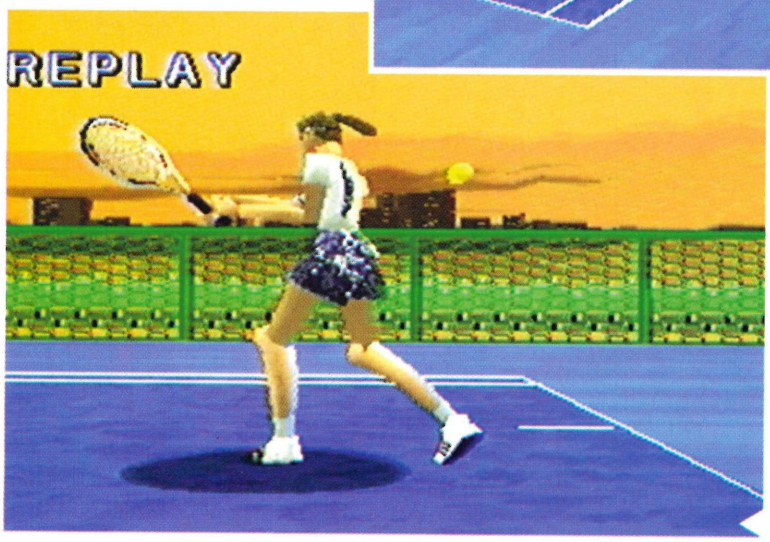


Getting close in to the net is a must if you want to win a match on grass





Look at the speed blur on the ball! And where are the line judges?



V Tennis's net cord (or should that be net industrial tubing?) is far too thick and blocky – just like the one on Break Point

PRO SCORE

GAME V Tennis
GENRE Sports Sim
SOFTWARE HOUSE Acclaim
CONTACT 0171 344 5000
RELEASE DATE June
PRICE £44.99

First things first. It's not in the same league as Namco Smash Court Tennis, so don't even entertain the thought of buying V Tennis ahead of Sony's ace title. Second things second. If a sports game has motion captured players it doesn't necessarily mean it's any good. Although certain gameplay elements such as the R1 and L1 buttons affecting ball spin increase V Tennis' attraction, it doesn't make an impression on the sporting sim league table nor in the tighter genre of the tennis game. The courts are too small to elicit sufficiently varied rallies and you never get the impression that you're completely in control of where the ball's going. It's reasonable fare, but I'd be lying if I were to recommend you to buy it.

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 5
LASTABILITY 5

6

DAN **Three words: Smash, Court and Tennis. That's the tennis game you should be buying, as we told you months ago, and that judgement still stands. This, by comparison, is nigh on unplayable**

JAY **Nothing special going on here I'm afraid. Admittedly it looks the part, but if you're after good solid gameplay, then you really should be looking towards Namco's much loved Smash Court Tennis. Okay?**

STEVE **Even if this was any good there'd be no point in buying it simply because Namco's is just about as good as a tennis game can possibly be. The fact that it's rubbish as well though gives you two reasons not to buy it!**

ANDY **Many attempts have been made to develop a realistic playable tennis game but they've all failed. The best is still a cartoony but fantastically playable effort and we all know which one that is don't we?**

SOULBLADE™

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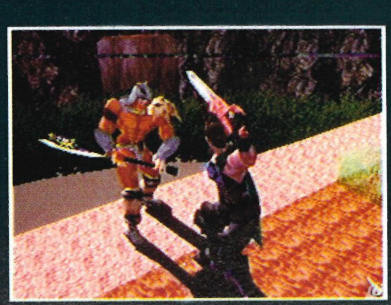
"One of the most deeply rewarding games you'll ever play."

Play Magazine 96%

namco







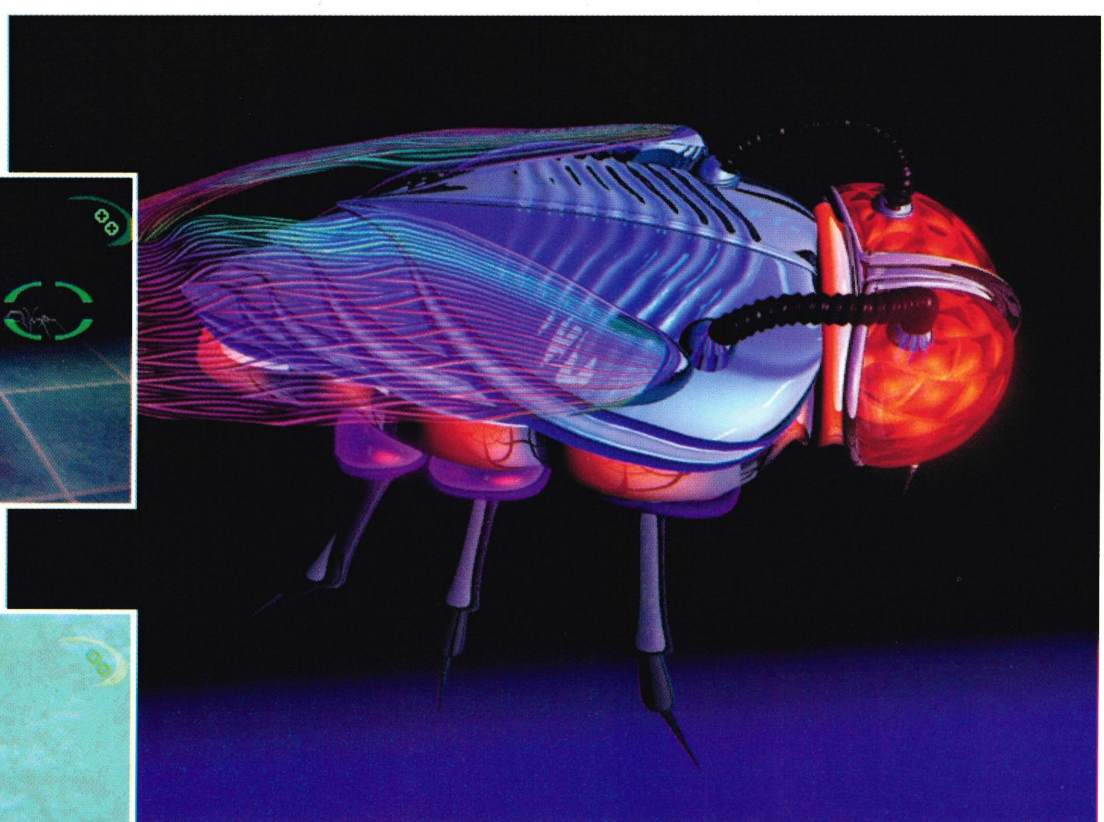
SONY

PlayStation

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

Spider

After the success of Pandemonium, BMG seems to think we want more of the same, but with spiders. And on one count, it's absolutely right

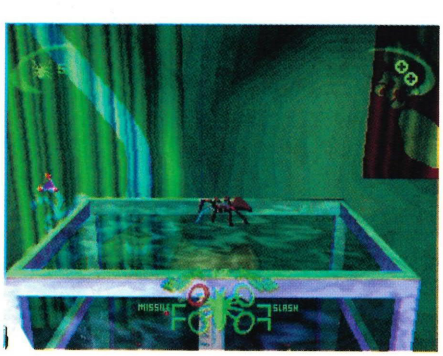




Your spider targets one of its kind with the guided missiles. Like they do



The spider can walk on all surfaces which are solid ground, and at any angle



In the museum it's a good idea to collect all the DNA strands or an extra life

Arachnaphobes need read on no further. The slightest fear of our eight legged fly eating friends will stand you in no stead for any further part in this game. It's crawling with more insects than you could possibly imagine. Not just spiders, there are bats, grasshoppers, wasps and a host of other annoyances to thwart your journey.

Years of nanotechnology have allowed mankind to produce spiders with weapon implants. This allows the tiny blighters to wander around undetected while following the bad guys as they make good their escape from the labs where this particular spider has been developed.

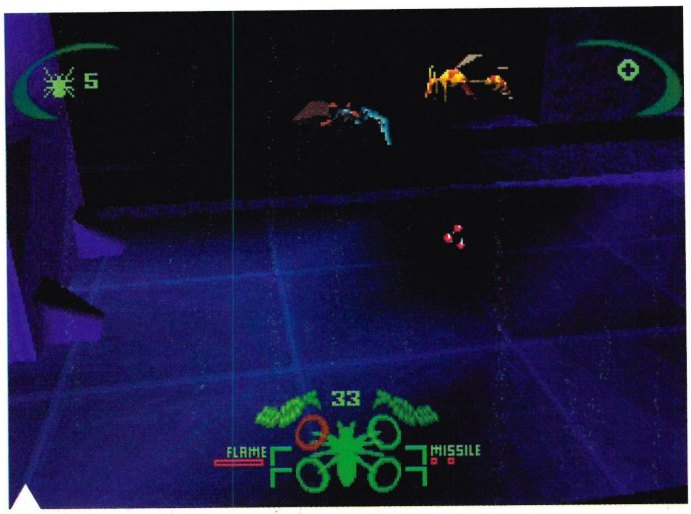
This will take you through streets, labs, museums, sewers and a factory. Each level has sub-stages and you must locate all the microchips which are in effect all exits from the levels. This unlocks other areas in the game and allows you to progress. Otherwise you need to go back on yourself to locate them and clear the way ahead.

The potential for a fully interactive 3-D world is phenomenal but unfortunately we're offered a predetermined path and can't stray from it at any time. This restricts the player enormously and most of the enjoyment factor also.

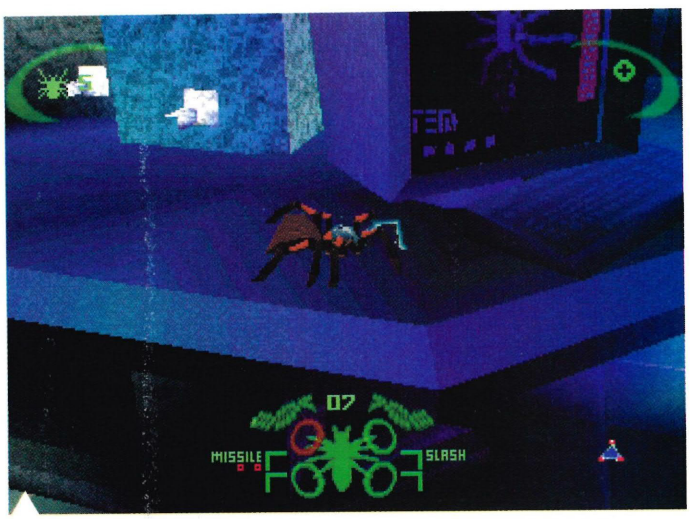
Picture a game similar to Pandemonium in that the path is rigidly preset so that you can only go over obstacles rather than round them. When was the last time you saw a spider run in a set direction without once changing its course to avoid an obstacle? Why go over something when you can go around it, saving time and effort?

Another question which begs to be asked is can you spin a huge web to snare enemies or fire sticky webs onto enemies like Spiderman? And the answer here, once again, is no. You do have the use of a rather tiny strand from which to dangle and collect power-ups or useful items but you are at a disadvantage here as the other spiders can dangle and suspend themselves from unbelievable heights.

As you may have realised, you are in charge of no ordinary spider. This spider can change his weapons, which are extensions to his legs, and are used to progress beyond the numerous



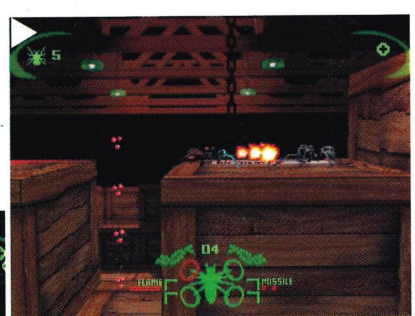
These can be killed, but sometimes it's better to make a run for it

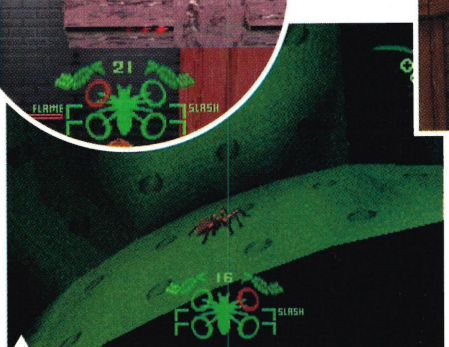


The levels themselves look quite interesting, it's just a shame that nothing much seems to go on



The crates can pose many problems





Some of the areas you walk through are imaginatively thought out



At some stages it becomes incredibly dark so you struggle to see what's going on



Many stages give you chance of going underground to do your battling



This electric charge is the most effective weapon you can use. It doesn't last too long though



Gaps like this can easily be cleared if you jump. Be ready for an insect attack on the other side

enemies. You begin with a mere two pronged leg attack where you flick at a close enemy but as you collect more icons you can exchange these legs for some more deadly weapons such as guided missiles, poison gas attacks or even smart bombs.

All these weapons are limited apart from the standard attack so it's a good idea to suss out which weapons have the most effect on what and when to show some restraint and use a weaker weapon on the lesser enemies.

You need to also adapt to the initially strange spider control as to which direction you are heading. If, for example, you are moving right and then have to move up a wall, you will have to press up to make the spider climb the wall. In other words, every time the spider heads in a new direction you must press the corresponding direction otherwise you'll be left stranded. It sounds simple, and it is, but it does take a little getting used to when you first play.

The actual challenge on offer is rather substandard for the first few levels and things only begin to become heated as you reach the museum stage which is the fourth level. After this there are only two levels so it's safe to say that the life span for Spider is very short and won't keep you occupied for too long.

The spiders themselves do actually move realistically and are as creepy and disgusting as you'd expect. The eight legged furry beasts have never looked so good, or bad depending on your point of view.

You can cling to surfaces anywhere although touching things such as fans or electrical wires can render you an ex-spider. Other than this you can safely wander underneath crates or girders. As stated earlier however, the path is so rigidly set out that you can't really go far wrong. If you can't head in a certain direction the spider simply go.

As is the case with Pandemonium and the like, you can pick up 100 icons for an extra life. These are allegedly DNA strands and are dotted around the levels. Depending on how confident you are, you can either collect these or ignore them and head straight for your mission objectives. If you're in a hurry you may wish to ▶

Spider

▶ ignore them but it's not too difficult to collect them anyway as some are located directly on the path you take. It does become tiresome trying to pick up all the icons you come across as it's a stop/start affair as you jump to collect the higher ones and explore under every block, conveyor belt or ledge.

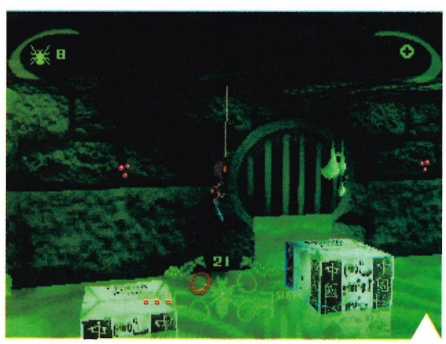
The spider itself is far from being a real tough character; two hits from any foe will prove fatal. To counter this there are health capsules throughout the stages and if you are to survive you must find them wherever they are. Then you can live to fight another battle without too much worrying. On the downside here, you can go back to any level at any time to collect DNA strands and the extra life icons to boost your lives. This dulls the enjoyment. Purists of course will try to battle on without this assistance but nevertheless there are other reasons why this becomes dull.

A glaring fault which will hit is a lack of any sort of sudden shocks or thrills as you're attacked. All the other insects are too simple to destroy. It takes barely two attempts to know their patterns, making them all easy targets. Occasionally you will encounter some kind of end of level nasty but these too are far too simple to suss and punish.

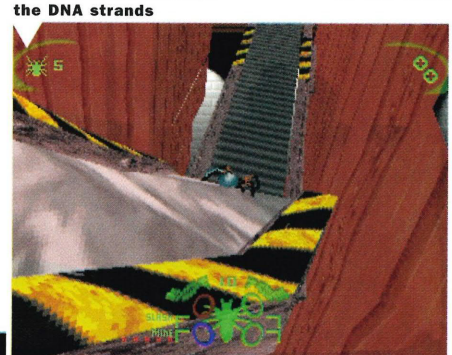
It's a shame Spider doesn't offer much because the potential for this to be a jaw-dropping challenge both in visuals and gameplay is incredible. Unfortunately, somewhere along the way, somebody forgot to use their imagination beyond the initial spider idea.



These conveyor belts can be your undoing if you're not careful



If you go under the street, be prepared for this slime



On these slides, go with the flow and collect all the DNA strands



PRO SCORE

GAME Spider
GENRE Platform
SOFTWARE HOUSE BMG
CONTACT 0171 384 7774
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

I can't stand arachnids at the best of times and wasn't looking forward to this. Surprisingly enough, the spiders didn't send a shiver down my spine despite their realistic motions. The game itself did however bring me out in a cold sweat as it was so unbelievably futile. You simply can't fail to pierce through the levels with ease as they lack any kind of challenge. Only stupid mistakes will hinder your progress. As for the rigid path you follow, this just assists you in your missions and you really can't go far wrong. Spider must have seemed like a good idea at the time of conception, and it is, it has just been poorly translated into an average platformer. It promised so much more and could have been so much better.

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 6

6½

DAN I, personally, loved Pandemonium. Spider, while borrowing its look and feel from this great game, has none of the variety or skill that made Pandemonium a winner. I'd add an extra half mark, but no more

STEVE Andy must have seen some strange spiders if he thinks these move realistically! They, like the rest of this dour platformer, are very poor indeed! Crash, Pandemonium or Spider? I know which I'd go for!

ALEX BMG's the most unpredictable software publisher going. Legacy Of Kain and Pandedmonium are great, but Exhumed and Spider aren't. What can we do? If a game's average, it has to get an average mark

JAY Whereas Pandemonium was bright, colourful and fun to play (despite the fact that you were 'on rails'), Spider is unfortunately a dark, gloomy affair with little or no addictive qualities. Better luck with the sequel, eh?

PlayStation

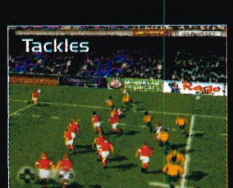
PC CD-ROM

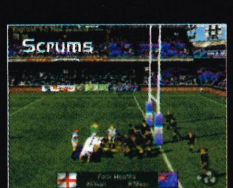
SPORTS MASTER™



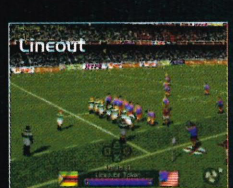
Big Bloke. Big Game.

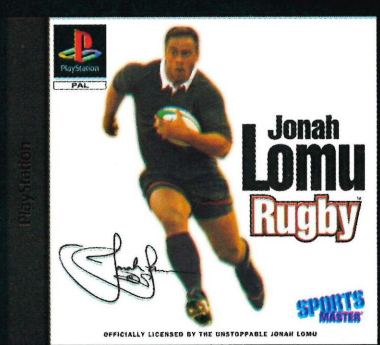
"THE BEST RUGBY GAME I'VE EVER COME ACROSS"
9/10 *PlayStation Pro*











With all the speed of the backs, and the aggressive power of the forwards, comes a multi-player rugby game featuring - tackles, scrums, lineouts, rucks and mauls.

Website: http://www.codemasters.com

Try it once and you're converted

BY ALEX LEE

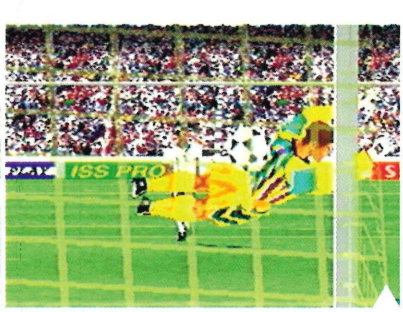
International Super Star Soccer Pro

They think it's all over. No blinking chance – there'll be footy sims being churned out for the PlayStation for ever and a day



Conceding a goal to the Germans never gets any easier. We're still paying for beating them in two World Wars and 1966





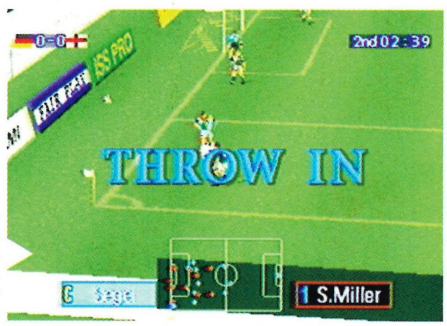
The extreme close-up says it all. Another England keeper diving in vain to stop a goal-bound effort from Germany

International Super Star Soccer Pro (ISSS Pro) is the sequel to last year's 'Deluxe' model. Nothing more than a buffed-up version of the SNES release, Deluxe still fared reasonably well in the media and the charts. ISSS Pro is a serious attempt by Konami to produce a true next generation football game for the PlayStation.

Presentation-wise, ISSS Pro still suffers from Deluxe's strange mish-mash of graphic and typographical styles with all sorts of garish clashes going on. And, like its predecessor, only 32 international teams are available to select – one of my favourite football game gripes. The squad names are daft made up ones too. This riles many enthusiasts as, contrary to what anyone says, you can't have copyright on a person's name. As I've said before, there has to be more than one A. Shearer in the world (although Newcastle's thick fans would have you believe otherwise).

So it's kick-off time and, true to form, the two best teams are Brazil and Germany – a fair enough choice on Konami's part as they're the World and European Champions respectively. It's around this time that you notice the players have been motion captured and move realistically – more so than the limited movements of the much-lauded Actua players – although at a fairly stoic pace. Tapping the R1 button while in possession or when chasing the ball does give your nearest player to the ball a speed burst, but it's hardly Steve McManaman-like. Still, it's better than nothing and can be a good weapon when both attacking and defending desperately.

Short passes, which find their target most of the time, are done by pressing the X button - the ball will usually go to the nearest other player on your side. Long passes are made by



Send your answers on a postcard as to what's about to happen here. Only if you really want to though



Made-up bloke M. Fenwick prepares to take a corner for England. He'll be looking to find one of his fictitious team-mates

hitting the circle – a cross appears on the pitch to signal the ball's destination, so both sides know which area of the pitch to cover to try and control the ball with a last-gasp tap of the square button or to head it on with an earlier push of the square. A through-ball (i.e. hitting a pass ahead of a team-mate to run onto) is done by a single press of the triangle.

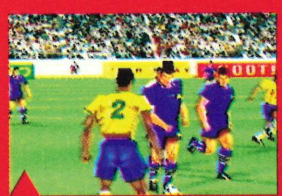
Like most PlayStation footy games, it's initially a struggle trying to score – the after touch doesn't seem to work at all, and it's more or less cut and dried that you won't ever bury it from outside the box. The average shot-count per team is 20, and you're lucky if you score more than one. Holding the square button down determines the power of your shot (displayed on screen by a power bar), and the harder you hit it the more chance you have of booting the ball over the bar, unless you skilfully manipulate the d-pad to cause your shot to dip under the bar.

When you do score, there's a marvellous action replay facility where the action leading up to the goal is re-created using massive International Track & Field-style players. The view angle and replay speed is completely under your control. Gameplay-wise, therefore, there are marked similarities between this and Deluxe, although graphically the game has been enhanced considerably.

For example, the players' strips (both home and away) are spot on in terms of detail, right down to badges and minute trimmings, although the England home number has already been replaced in real life, such is Umbro's insatiable thirst for profit. On a further aesthetic note, some of today's footballing 'personalities' - i.e. those with daft haircuts - have been picked out. There's a Gazza blonde crop and a Seaman moustache in the England team, a Valderrama brown afro in the Columbian side and a



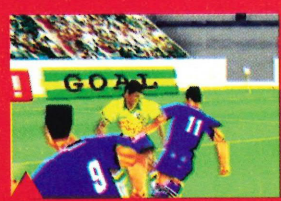
Instant Replay



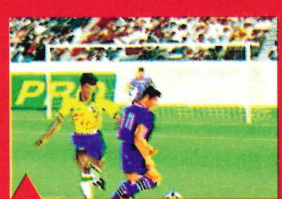
The Argentinian striker confidently steams in



His close control is superb. The ball's glued to his foot



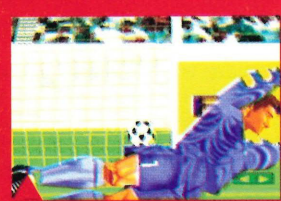
He jinks one way, then the other, losing his marker



He leaves the Brazilian defender for dead



He casually places a side-footed shot goalwards



The keeper's beaten all ends up. Verdict – legs too muscley



The action replay can be advanced frame-by-frame. The still on the left shows the ball floating agonisingly goalward with the keeper stranded



The England keeper tries to make himself look as big (and stupid) as possible as he faces the penalty





A well-struck penalty kick rifles its way goalwards



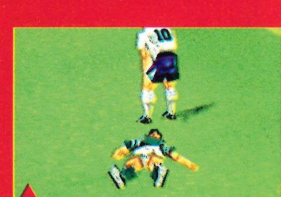
Bash the Bosch!



That's for '66!



That's for 1990!



That's for '96!

International Super Star Soccer Pro

ginger goatee-d Lalas in the USA XI.

With 'personalities' coming back into footy these days, refs need to be on their mettle more than ever before. Thankfully they aren't too strict - in fact they're as wildly inconsistent as real ones. It must be said, however, that refs' decisions are the indirect cause of two of ISSS Pro's major faults.

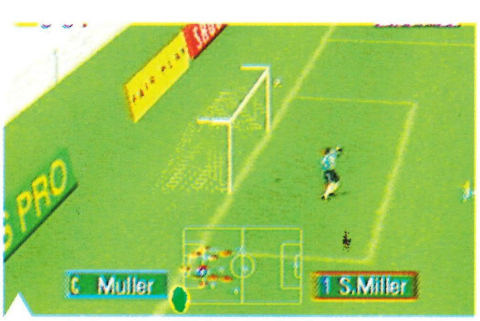
Whenever a foul is committed, and believe me there are more than a few, an instant action replay occurs with an extreme close-up of the incident and the resulting semi-recumbent posture of the victim. If the ref books the offender, the commentator excitedly exclaims, "It's a yellow card. That's an early bath." No it's not mate, a red card means the player has being sent off - an example of appalling play-testing during development.

On a positive note, the goalkeepers' AI is just about right - and is configurable. Now and then they'll make howling handling errors, but more often than not they'll catch crosses, dive bravely at forwards' feet and clear back passes confidently. Every touch of the ball, however, is accompanied by a tinny sound effect - sliding tackles sound like nails being filed and running sounds like horses' hooves on cobbles.

Speaking of cobbles, the set pieces seem to have been cobbled together. You haven't got much of an idea where the ball is going to go as there is no on-screen indicator. For the defending team, therefore, it's nigh on impossible to tell where the ball is going - not an ideal state of affairs, and another of the numerous niggles spoiling what could so easily have been a world-beating footy release.

The half-time stats screen shows that the match has been about as incident-packed as a game of draughts





Did you know that Muller is German for Miller? And that C is German for S?



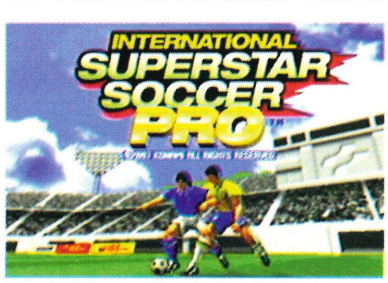
Never before have footballers been such muscle-bound fellahs as these. Even the ref's got pecs like Arnie

GENRE COMPARISON

Game ***Int Superstar Soccer Deluxe***
Software House ***Konami***

Football games need an element of unpredictability to re-create the fickle nature of the real sport. In this respect, International Superstar Soccer Deluxe (ISSSD) hammers aesthetically pleasing footy games such as Actua which suffers from limited gameplay.

With a league set-up option to boot, ISSSD is more of an honest toiler than a talented playmaker but can take pride in the fact that, although its only noticeable enhancement over its 16bit non-deluxe version is a small injection of pace, it still more than holds its own in the PlayStation football league table.



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PRO SCORE

GAME **International Superstar Soccer Pro**
GENRE **Sports sim**
SOFTWARE HOUSE **Konami**
CONTACT **01895 853 000**
RELEASE DATE **Out Now**
PRICE **£44.99**

ISSS Pro is an improvement on its predecessor Deluxe, especially in the visual department, but unfortunately doesn't play that much better. The annoyances that ultimately spoiled Deluxe remain, such as the lack of any real control over shooting and the overall sluggish pace. The speed boost helps marginally, but when in use it's impossible to make the player controlling the ball change direction. It's a staccato sort of game that never really flows and often leaves you frustrated rather than elated. Soccer '97 and Striker '96 remain a much better bet, and unless you're filthy rich and/or can't get enough PlayStation footy games, you're best off plumping for Eidos' and Warner's aforementioned efforts.

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 5
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 7

7½

DAN **With so many other, superior footy titles just out, I can't really see why you'd buy this. It all looks a bit dated, and the slow, trudging players make each match last for hours. Not even worth seven and a half**

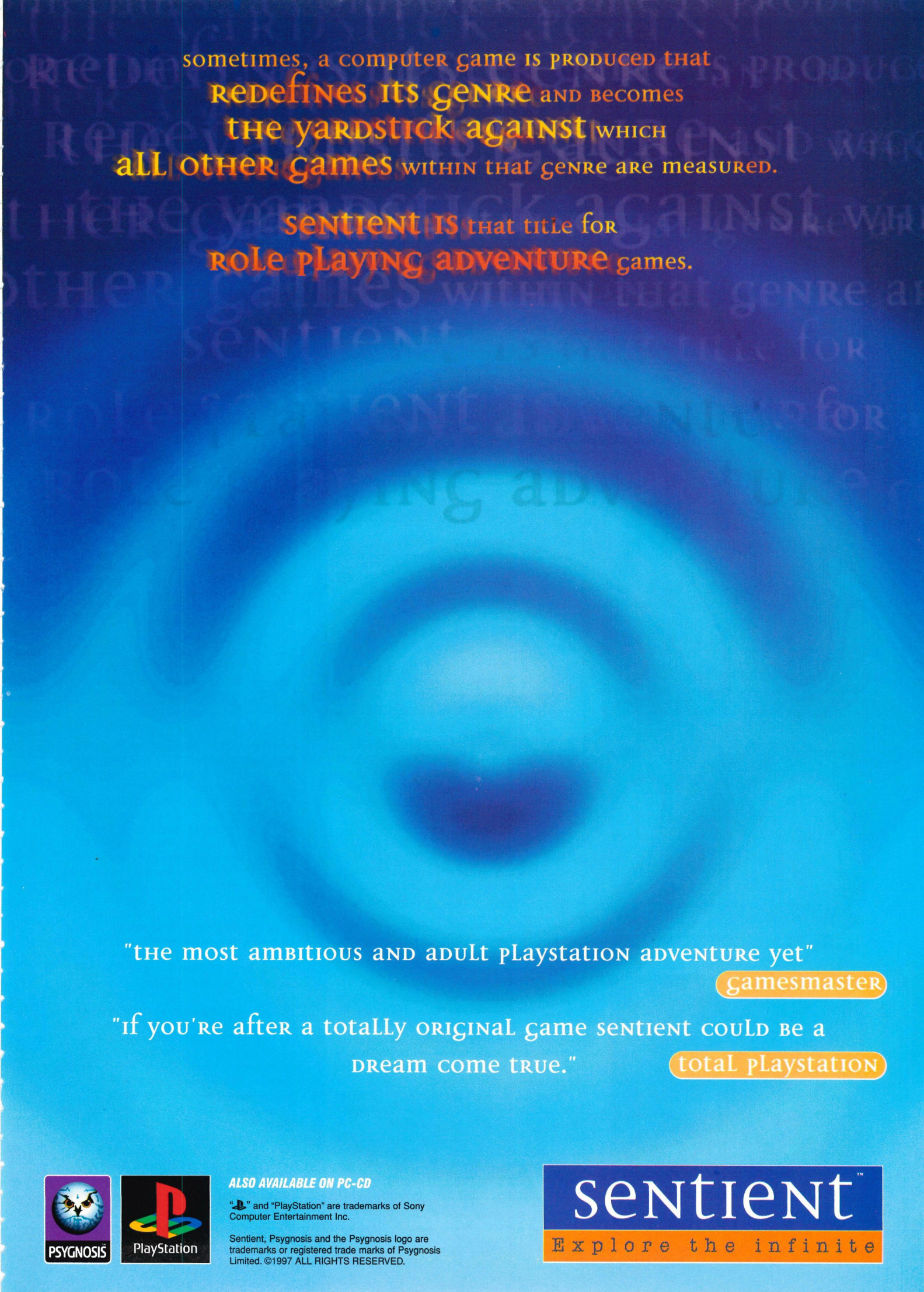
JAY **It all looks impressive and stringing together a series of perfect passes resulting in a tasty shot on goal will send shivers down your spine. Unfortunately, the action tends to take place at a snail's pace, which spoils it**

STEVE **Didn't draw me in at all because of the stilted nature of the gameplay. Looks fine but with the likes of Soccer '97 trouncing it in just about every department you can't help but feel let down by this**

ANDY **It all looks very realistic and with all the different touches you can pull off it's got everything a footy game requires. The only problem is, as everyone has mentioned, it's all a little too slow and cumbersome**

sometimes, a computer game is produced that redefines its genre and becomes the yardstick against which all other games within that genre are measured.

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sentient™

Explore the infinite

BY ANDY SHARP

Psychic Force

Frequent excursions into the world of beat 'em-ups may be joy for some but to others it's comparable to having limbs removed. Acclaim attempts to take it one step further



Would you believe this is the oldest Psyber Warrior you can choose? He's a modest 53 years old. And what's more he's a monk. Oh yes





The training mode is a good way to practice moves without a single punch thrown back at you



The story game is the same as the arcade game only you get these little sequences between fights. And they're rubbish



He's huge, he's tough and he's in your face. Especially after giving you a hiding. Peter Andre would be proud of this six pack display



The action can be seen close up if you move in for a close attack, alternatively the fighters can become tiny blips in the distance

Surely this is a genre which has been saturated with more blood and sweat than most. So why not just pour a drop more into the pool so that it starts to seep over the edges? And that's exactly what's in store when Psychic Force hits the shelves.

Whereas most of the pagga fests we see month in and month out take place on solid ground, Psychic Force sees you floating around in a box which is, in effect, the ring and battling it out in mid air. The reason for this is quite simple – they are all fighters with special psychic powers.

These futuristic Psyber Warriors are fighting it out to protect the future of mankind, apparently. But if the truth be known, they're only too happy to engage in some mindless pummelling for the sake of it. Nothing more.

Anybody reading this will already know whether they are going to like it or not. Beat 'em-ups are, to all intent and purposes, the same. The only difference this time around, as I said before, is that you float through the air. Other than that, it still involves thumping the living daylights out of your opponent any way you can.

To do this you must use your punches, kicks and special (psychic) attacks to the best of your ability. Getting to grips with the basics is simple enough while the psychic attacks may take a bit to get the hang of. It would be terribly boring though if you could become the greatest fighter ever seen at the drop of a hat, wouldn't it?

For any games of this sort it's reasonably important to pick a fighter with some strong attacks that are relatively simple to pull off. When you get better at the general fighting and can use the psychic attacks to their full potential, you're well on the road to success.

All fighters vary in speed, strength and abilities as you would expect, ranging from 14 year old boys to 53 year old monks to 15 year old girls. The players come from all over the globe but as there are no medals awarded for bravery, the nationalities are unimportant.

There are a total of nine characters available for selection and you can only progress when you've clobbered all other opponents. Should you defeat only, say, three of them, your mission will have failed. Tackling the opponents one at a time can only mean we're in true beat 'em-up mode and a best-of-three bouts scrap will ensue.

Manoeuvring around the ring is simple enough just using the direction to move around and tapping a shoulder button to accelerate away from danger or to instigate an attack. If you manage to corner an opponent on the edge of the box, the sides will also add to the damage and momentarily stun them.

In terms of looks Psychic Force isn't going to cause any rubber necking – it's by no means groundbreaking in any department. What it does have in abundance though is playability, and even novices will be able to play without too much trouble. Obviously the special moves aren't going to attract any new players into the





Looks like this bout is almost over and it has only just begun. A special attack has just been unleashed to speed things along



This attack is quite simple to execute: The sword appears and the opponent explodes



Before the blood and bruises the fighters prepare for the fight of a lifetime



Check me out! I'm a helium filled fighter and can dance through the air with the grace of an eagle

arena and veterans will have no trouble picking up them up. For newer players it's always going to pose problems and many blistered fingers when trying to get to grips with the powerful special attacks.

Although this has a slight twist on the usual beat 'em-up formula, it's doubtful it will win over any new fans for the genre. The actual fighting and graphics look much the same as the Tekkens or Star Gladiators of this world and there's only so much you can do with this sort of thing.

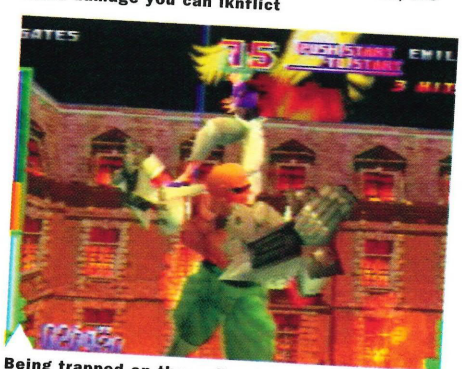
The story game mode features intros, in-game sections and endings for the individual characters but doesn't allow you to include your score or time attack points in the tables. The whole feel and look of the entire game is one of a Manga-esque crazy future world. Which is what it is of course.

On the downside, all the attacks you inflict are executed in the same way for each character. There are four normal combos and a couple of special combos which will inflict more damage. If you fancy some practice you are allowed this luxury in the training mode so you have no excuse for remaining useless at the moves.

Unfortunately for Psychic Force, it's just another game which you will either love if you're into mindless fighting in beat 'em-ups, or will avoid if you're not. And with the shelves already crammed with similar offerings, it's hard to see anyone forking out for this if they've already got a couple of the better ones.



Obviously the more combos you can utilise, the more damage you can iknflict



Being trapped on the walls of the arena is a difficult situation to get out of

PRO SCORE

GAME Psychic Force
GENRE Beat 'Em-up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Acclaim
CONTACT 0171 344 5000
RELEASE DATE Out now
PRICE £44.99

If you are after some fast paced action a little different from your average Soul Blades and Tekkens, you may want to take a closer look at this. It's a take on the beat 'em-up genre with a little something extra flying around. I know it's an age old cliché but it does fit exactly for PF. Fans of the genre will find it enjoyable, although it's a little too simple to defeat the computer characters, even for novices. Others will want to give it a miss. Personally I'm not one for beat 'em-ups but PF is inoffensive and the simplicity in the controls makes it instantly playable. The longevity is far from assured, for the same reason, but it's worth a quick dabble if you've got nothing better to do. And that's doubtful.

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 6

7

DAN **Seven is wildly over generous for a game that really is at the bottom of its genre. None of the depth of Tekken 2, and none of the gorgeousness of Soul Blade. This is just lack lustre**

JAY **Let's face it, if you're after a good beat 'em-up you want to be looking at the likes of Tekken 2 or Soul Blade. Both are far superior to this somewhat entertaining effort from Acclaim on almost every count. So there**

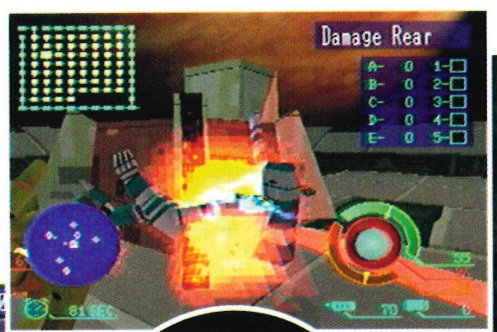
ALEX **If only someone at Acclaim had used his 'psychic force' to predict what a rubbish reception this will inevitably get from mags, retailers and punters alike, we might have been spared it**

STEVE **Seven? You are joking surely Andy? Now, I'm no beat 'em-up aficionado by any means, but even I can see that this is an absolute pile of dirt! Acclaim, you should be ashamed of yourself! Again!**

BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Carnage Heart

A strategy game where you have to learn computer programming and don't get to join in the fighting? Sounds crap, but you might just be surprised...







Visit the shadowy electronics companies and view their death-dealing wares



Pump precious cash into Research and Development and you'll get exclusive rights to the finished weapons



There are six companies in all, and they can offer much, much more than just off-the-shelf robots

One of my disturbingly human-like OKEs gets put through its paces at the Test Ground



It is the year 2031 and the world has, inevitably, gone to the dogs. The Earth's natural resources have been exhausted and the gap between rich and poor has created a violent feudal society. The crumbling governments of the world look to outer space for the answer. Mining operations start on the moon, and soon a new frontier was being forged off-world.

It didn't take long for good old human nature to rear its ugly head though. A land dispute between France and Brazil escalates into a war on the Moon. The war comes to an abrupt halt when France deploy the first massive unmanned robot warriors called OKEs (Over Kill Engines). The World Federation (the space age UN) steps in and sets up guidelines to prevent future skirmishes.

Fast forward to the year 2059 and both the Moon and Mars have been picked clean. Scans reveal that the moons of Jupiter are mineral rich and a new race begins. The World Federation keeps a close eye on corporate behaviour during this scramble and soon realise that one vast corporation is at work behind the scenes, building a monopoly.

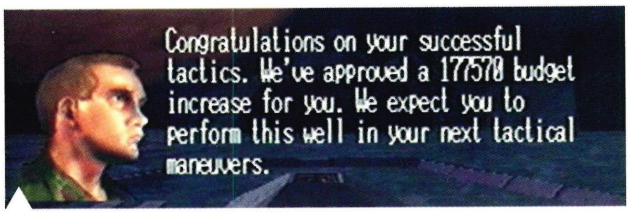
It's the Drakken Conglomerate, made up of over 200 of the world's most powerful companies. With assets in excess of nine trillion dollars and control of the world media, they're bad boys, in every sense of the word.

Needless to say, Drakken doesn't take too kindly to the do-gooder interference and yet another war begins on the moons of Jupiter. This time, you're in command. Thanks to the Over Kill Engines, war on Earth is a thing of the past, as are human casualties. OKEs now take the brunt of the damage, but somebody still needs to be in charge of the construction, programming and deployment of these destructive toys. Guess who that is?

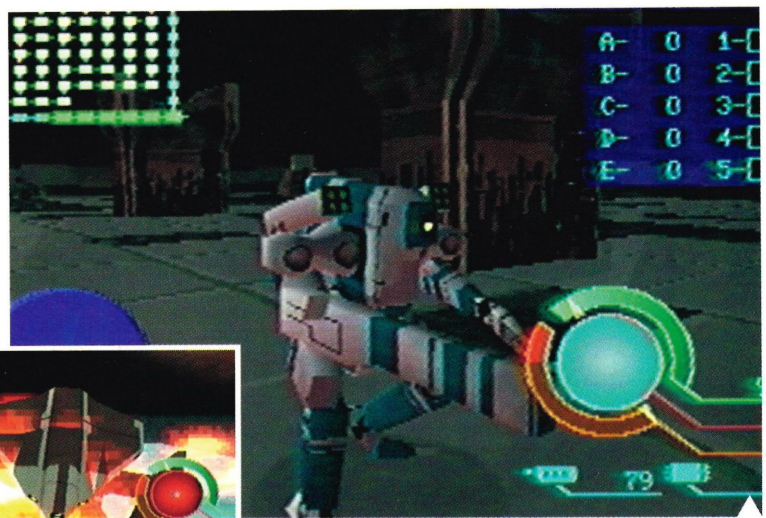
Your mission objective is simple – seize control of Drakken's Jupiter bases and leather any of their OKEs you happen to stumble across. You'll start off with a couple of bases and a few bog-standard OKEs gathering dust in the hangar. But apart from that, you've got nothing to play with. So take a deep breath and jump into those menus.

First of all, you've got a communications link to six research companies. This is where you come to purchase blueprints for new weapons, engines and new OKE chassis. Ply them with cash for their new designs, and you'll reap the rewards of your investments with first refusal on the latest technology. Keep your relationship with these companies sweet and you can also gain inside information on Drakken's latest purchases.

Secondly, you've got a factory at each base with a set number of production lines. You can set these lines to produce more OKEs from a master blueprint (which we'll discuss in a second) or more ammo reserves. You can add new production lines once the action necessitates faster construction, and upgrade the lines to enable them to build the bigger and

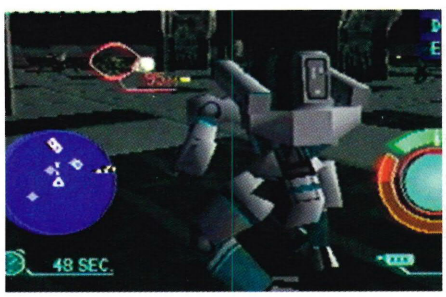


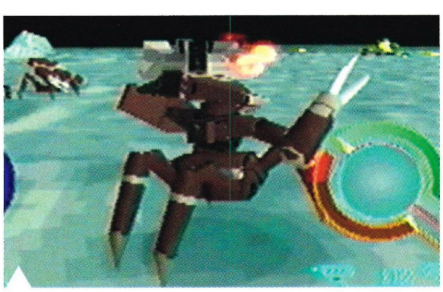
At regular intervals the World Federation pop in to appraise your performance. Cash bonuses are the reward for good strategy





The level of detail in the graphics and animation makes up for the non-interactive battles, by offering Manga-quality robo-action





This is a Manticore, my current fave OKE. It looks like a bizarre spider-cum-mantis and packs a mean punch with its nimble attacks



When they take a hit, each OKE recoils and limps in a convinving manner. The battles really are impressive



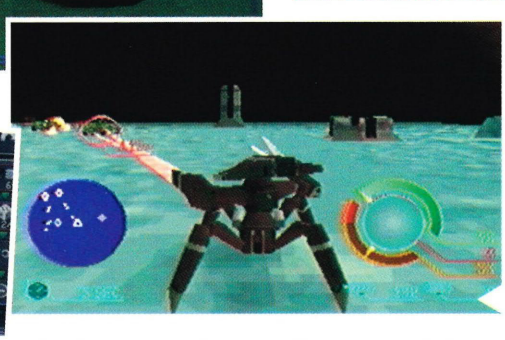
better OKEs. Which leads us quite nicely into construction.

Once you have purchased the blueprints from a company, and you'll need to buy weapons blueprints for the OKE from the same company, you can take them to the Design room. Each OKE has two elements that need to be finished before construction can start – hardware and software.

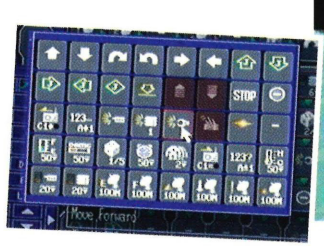
First of all, build the body. You need to cram in an engine, a main weapon, a secondary weapon, a fuel tank, armour plating and a CPU to act as the OKEs brain. You can't leave any of these features out, and it all has to meet a strict weight requirement. Once you've managed that you can choose a paint job and move on to creating the program that controls the OKEs actions, and this is the tough part.

You don't actually need to do this bit, as you can get a programmer to insert a generic set of commands, but these soon show their limitations. So, eventually, you'll have to learn how to program. It's not as bad as it sounds, more a case of placing the right icon in the right place. You've got 40 such icons, giving such orders as 'If enemy is within 100m, use primary weapon', 'Move forward' and 'If projectile is within 40m then jump left'. That sort of thing. Basically it's a flow chart, where you've got to try and cover every eventuality to make your OKE able to survive any situation.

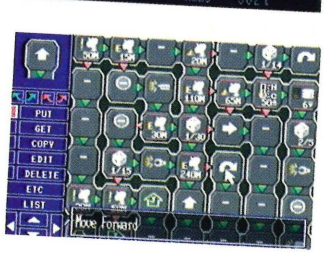
You're restricted by the size of the CPU, but bigger and faster ones can be researched.



Well I never, it's that Manticore again, showing off some fancy shootin' with its super-fast lasers









A completed OKE with – anti-clockwise from top – a CPU brain, rocket launchers, snake rockets, armour plating, an engine, a fuel tank, a laser cannon and a laser generator



A Manticore and a Kouger tank rumble into battle together. Skilful programming will allow them to function as a coherent team





Use the d-pad during battle scenes to rotate and zoom the view





You can zoom virtually right up the OKEs exhaust ports, and the detail level just gets higher

Aha! Sounds like my new OKE blueprint is ready to be picked up



Ply the companies with cash for projects and they'll spill the beans on your enemy's transactions



There are countless OKEs to research and build. Some have legs, some have tank tracks and some can even fly

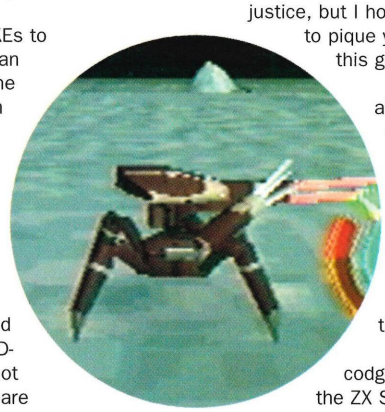


Carnage Heart

▶ Once you reckon you've got a working program and a tough body, you can test it to your heart's content. You've got five pretend battlefields, and can pit your prototype (along with two allies) against up to three mock-enemy OKEs. If you're happy with its performance in practice, you approve the design and a 'master card' is printed from which you can begin mass production.

Use your freshly minted OKEs to form combat units, and you can start sending them out into the field. When they clash with an enemy unit you switch to the battlefield and watch as the carnage unfolds. The only control you have over what happens is via your CPU programs, chattering away in the OKEs brains.

You can view the action from any of your machines and rotate the viewpoint with the D-pad. While it's a bit strange not getting hands on, the battles are lovely and smooth, full of big explosions and blessed with some cracking animation. And it's always exciting to see your commands taking effect, as the OKEs evade and attack almost like living creatures.



I haven't even begun to cover the depth of options available, and the programming section deserves at least another four pages to do it justice, but I hope I've given you enough info to pique your interest. I really enjoyed this game, and that surprised me.

On first impressions, I was absolutely convinced that this would be the most tedious game on Earth, but it's quite the opposite. Admittedly, its charms will be wasted on hard-core action fans, but as a gameplayer who's more than a little partial to some strategic shenanigans this satisfied me thrice over.

It reminded me, sad old codger that I am, of the heyday of the ZX Spectrum, when bedroom

GENRE COMPARISON

Game *Mechwarrior 2*
Software House *Activision*

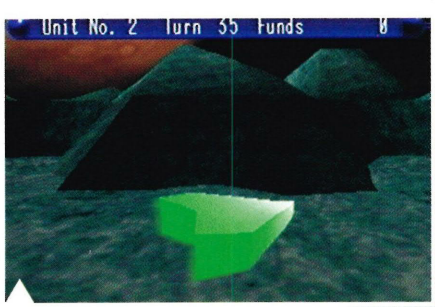
Another game dealing with all things Mech. MW2 is more of a straight simulation-cum-blaster and as such will probably appeal to a broader audience. However, the variety in the Mechs is nowhere near as diverse as Carnage Heart, and I personally prefer this more strategic spin on the same idea. Go on, be daring and give it a try.



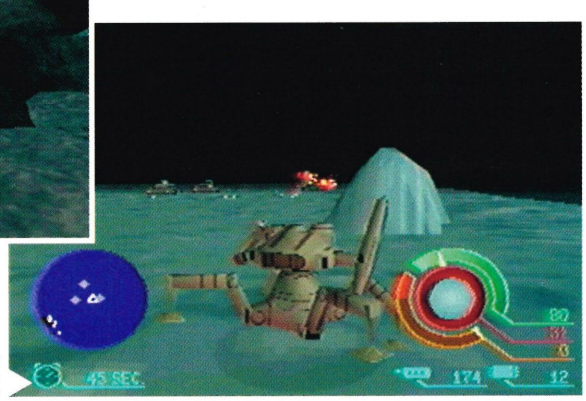
Can you hurry it up a bit please? I need it for the weekend, you know







Tactical unit movements are shown by hovering 3-D arrows. Which is nice



Another many-legged OKE, this one runs about like a robo-crab, nipping at the enemy

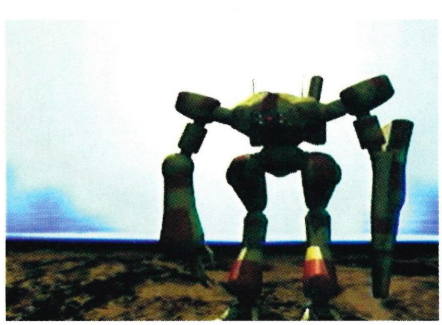
coders would produce frequently bizarre but dazzlingly original games. This wouldn't look out of place amongst those hallowed titles.

It also reminded me, even sadder old codger that I am, of those utterly fantastic toys I used to collect as a child called Zoids. These were robot killing machines that came in kit form, powered by wind-up motors. Half the fun of them was putting them together and the other half was arguing about which Zoid was the toughest. And Carnage Heart let's me return to those happy days, so therefore I'm doubly happy with it. There's even a versus mode where you can take your memory card full of OKEs round to a friend's house for a sort of mechanical cockfight.

I know that this will probably only appeal to a minority, and I know that I'm in danger of appearing a right geek by getting so over enthusiastic, but I'm convinced that those of you who are able to look beyond the next beat 'em-up or driving game will thoroughly enjoy this. It has been in the Top 10 of PSX games in Japan since 1995, and deservedly so. I just hope it manages the same here.



Let's round it off with another shot of the Manticore – the coolest OKE



PRO SCORE

GAME **Carnage Heart**
GENRE **Strategy**
SOFTWARE HOUSE **Sony**
CONTACT **0171 447 1600**
RELEASE DATE **Out Now**
PRICE **£44.99**

PLAYSTATION APPROVED

Coming in a month awash with lazy sequels and half-arsed PC conversions, this really stands out as an original, intriguing and genuinely fascinating game. Yes, it's daunting at first, but a bit of patience is all you need to unearth a real treat of a game. Arcade monkeys probably won't think much of its armchair approach to blasting, but strategy fans will be glued to their pads by a unique blend of espionage, military tactics and financial jiggery pokery. My only real gripe is that the programming section is a great idea, but the implementation is a bit too convoluted and that's what prevents it getting a shiny nine out of 10. Apart from that, highly recommended.

GRAPHICS **7**
SOUND **6**
GAMEPLAY **8**
LASTABILITY **9**

8

STEVE **Since Dan admitted to liking this he has been shunned around the office for fear that he might go into an in-depth explanation of how it all works again. I'm sure it's good once you get into it but it looks so tedious!**

JAY **If you've got loads of free time and fancy life as a Mech mechanic then you'll love this. It can get extremely in-depth though, so casual punters may want to try before they buy**

ALEX **Certainly no visual treat, but Dan assures me that it's a more in-depth challenge than initially meets the eye. The thinking behind the game's a bit too odd for my liking, though**

ANDY **Dan usually knows what he's talking about as far as games go, but this time he's way off the mark. Will appeal to a limited few but the majority will loathe it. It's not a bad game, just tediously slow**

BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Heaven's Gate

I reckon reviewing another 3-D beat 'em-up is like an old friend dropping by, and then vomiting on your face. Read on and see if you agree



A rare blood squirty moment, courtesy of Dulffer's whirling blades



Oi! Springsteen! Get your hands away from there, you dirty monkey!



As with all beat 'em-ups, each contact is accompanied by a burst of magic gas



Since the '80s, Adam Ant sought solace in the local pie shop

-D beat 'em-ups. Good old 3-D beat 'em-ups. The games equivalent of custard cream biscuits – quite nice but predictable and bland. The sort of biscuit you buy if you want to look posh without spending too much money. Or the sort of game you buy to impress non-console owning friends, without having to worry about using your brain.

It's also the gaming equivalent of the Rolling Stones, once revered and ground breaking, now a sad old mess endlessly repeating former glories. It's like finding a severed fish head in your shoe, just because it is. In case you haven't guessed I'm sick to death of the bloody things. Even Soul Blade, the current beater du jour, was little more than a graphically swanky rehash of Tekken 2. In my opinion anyway.

So my enthusiasm for Heaven's Gate was hardly high. Before I played it, like some weird games-playing Paul Daniels, I wrote down what I thought Heaven's Gate would be like and sealed my predictions in an envelope. I played it, then played it some more. And when the lovely Debbie McGee re-opened the envelope, blow me down if I wasn't completely correct. It's a surprise free zone.

Still, in the interests of doing the job properly, I'd better give you a rundown of all the second-hand features you'll find here. There are eight fighters; some are weird, some run-of-the-mill fighting game types. There are combos. There are some fairly unspectacular special moves. There are optional ring outs. There's a power bar that increases with each attack. When it reaches the top, your punches and kicks become more damaging.

So as you can see, there's nothing here we haven't seen a million times before. Maybe if you've just escaped from a barrel, having been trapped inside since the days of pirates, you'd be amazed by this game. You'd probably worship it as a God, actually. But once someone explained that it was actually a lacklustre, formulaic form of entertainment, and not a magic box filled with tiny people, you'd feel a bit cheated and run amok with your cutlass. And who could blame you?

The only feature even vaguely worthy of note is the presence of ceilings in each level. Certain fighters can use this to cling to, swing off or hurl the enemy into. It's a nice enough prospect, and if it were implemented in a game packed with such novelties I'd be a lot more enthusiastic. As it is, it's a vague whiff of



Look, what a shocker! It's a female fighter, and she's revealing ample amounts of thigh and tit!



Two of the heftiest, and therefore slowest, fighters square off against each other

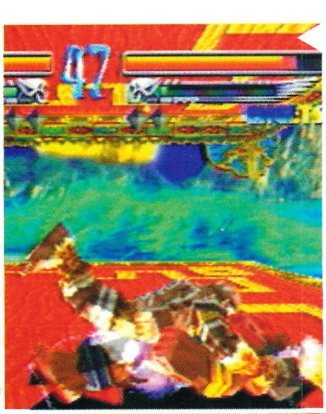
Dulffer is one of those characters who can clamber all over the ceiling

originality that's all but smothered by the horrible stale aroma wafting from the rest of the game. And if the only interesting feature in a game is the addition of bloody ceilings, things have gone hideously wrong.

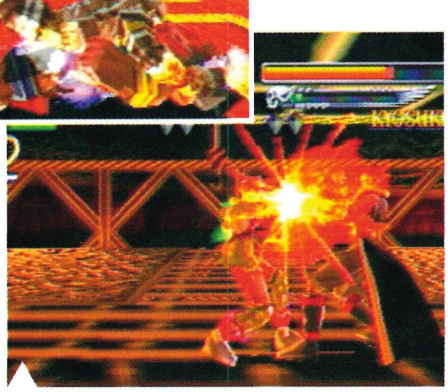
Now this sounds like the build up to mammoth demolition job. It shouldn't be. Heaven's Gate is not, strictly speaking, a bad game. Taken on its own merits, away from the hundreds of other identical games, it's probably quite good. But I can't do that. I can't pretend that for the same money you couldn't buy Soul Blade which, while derivative, is still considerably better than this.

I can't pretend that this represents any sort of leap in game technology, any sort of 'must have' title or any sort of desirable game at all. It's just mundane. And that to me is even more offensive than being crap. Call me a wide eyed idealist, but if you're going to write a game then you should aim to make it the best game in the world ever. You should throw everything you've got into it, put in bizarre ideas, make stuff up if necessary. At least then if it is a disaster, people will remember it. Like Aquanaut's Holiday. Yes it was a crap game, but I'd love to meet the people who came up with the idea of having an ambient 'float around underwater' game and shake them by the hand. People who come up with the 'idea' of doing another beat 'em-up in 3-D, on the other hand, can just piss off.

Phew. OK, rant over. Maybe Heaven's Gate didn't deserve to be the game on the receiving end of such invective. Maybe I could have filled the space with dreary tech-specs, comparing it to Soul Blade on various pertinent points. But why should I bother? And why should you bother having to read it? Anybody can see that this is an average, forgettable rip-off that nobody in their right mind will buy. I'm not going to waste your time or mine by going into it any deeper than that.



A-Hau is a rather over-excitable chap, and will often try and frot his opponent into submission. The mucky pup



More fighting, in a bit of darkness. Look, I'm bored of this now. Can I go home?

It's All In The Name

Heaven's Gate is a rather bland game. It won't be a big success. But is that really the fault of the game? Or the programmers? Or is it the fault of someone rather more sinister? Someone like SATAN? Yes! The evidence is in. Take a look at two previous ventures that used the same fateful name, and look where it got them...

Heaven's Gate – the crap film: A famously disastrous western, made in 1980 by Michael 'The Deer Hunter' Cimino. With a spiralling budget and troubled shoot, this was the Waterworld of its time. Reviewers kicked its pompous teeth in. And three and a half hours of people moping about in dusty clothes didn't quite appeal to the man in the street and audiences stayed away in droves. The director scurried away and hid under a table for ages, crying like a fool. Strike one for the Heavens Gate curse.

Heaven's Gate – the stupid cult: A bunch of addled San Francisco hippies decide to adopt a music teacher who calls himself 'Do' as their leader. They appeal on the Internet for like-minded (see: gullible) New Age friends. He tells them that if they all kill themselves with booze and drugs and lie under purple triangles of cloth, they'll be beamed up to a higher plane of existence on a flying saucer that lives in the tail of comet Hale-Bopp. And they do it. The words 'stupid' and 'tossers' spring to mind.

PRO SCORE

GAME Heaven's Gate
GENRE Surprise!
SOFTWARE HOUSE JVC
CONTACT 0171 240 3121
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

In what is fast becoming the world's most tedious genre, Heaven's Gate has absolutely nothing to offer of any interest. The only thing I can think to say about it is that it's an alright-ish beat 'em-up. And if that isn't damning with faint praise, I don't know what is. Alright-ish. Is that really what you want to spend nearly fifty quid on? Is that really the sort of opinion Sony wants to nurture about the PlayStation? Is that really a fruitful way to spend our time? I hope not. It's not all Heaven's Gate fault, of course, but this sort of half-baked shelf filler is symptomatic of an irritating apathy that currently blights the game scene. Don't be sucked in. Demand original and challenging games. And, needless to say, don't buy this.

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 6
LASTABILITY 4

5

ALEX How Dan can think this is so much worse than other beat 'em-ups in the same genre is beyond me. It's standard enough fare admittedly but doesn't deserve the slating he has given it

JAY It's certainly not the most advanced beat 'em up around, nor is it the worst and I would have marked it slightly higher than five. Although it's not a Tekken 2 beater, it stills offers some fairly solid fighting fun

STEVE Totally agree with what Jay's said, except for the bit about giving it a higher mark. Well below average in the fighting field and therefore a mark around five would seem fair enough to me

ANDY Along with Psychic Force, which is also reviewed this issue, it's another average beat 'em-up. You will already know whether or not you're going to buy it so there's no need for me to continue

BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Descent II

It's mine! All mine I tell you! Quite literally, as it happens, as we head down t'pit with a gas-sensitive canary in one hand and a laser cannon in the other



Ooh, feel the burn from that all too convincing explosion. Certainly pushes the PSX graphics to the edge



The reactor core destroyed, it's time to peg it before everything bursts



Look out! Look out, I say! It's a red and green robot sort of thing! Yikes!



This is what the reactors look like. They shoot back, so use missiles

As we sit here in the dreg ends of the 20th Century, surrounded by urban decay and strife, it's hard to believe that anyone could think going down a mine was fun. After all that miners strike business, with Maggie Thatcher and Arthur Scargill going at it like psychotic robots with bad hair, the whole mine thing fell to pieces.

Pamphlets were distributed to every house in the land ordering people to forget that mines had ever even existed, and Maggie's foot soldiers plugged them all up with magic gum, sending the miners home with slapped wrists. It seemed like 'going down a mine' was a treat we would never again savour. Then along came a little game called Descent, bringing the debate back into the public eye.

OK, so it was set in the future and featured mining robots and hovering spaceships, but the Socialist subtext supporting the miners was pretty evident to anyone. Well, anyone who squinted a bit and had an active imagination. Probably. Hell, maybe it wasn't there after all. But this bloke in the pub was pretty damn positive. He even sold me a nice newspaper full of things about one of the Marx Brothers or something. Lovely bloke.

Then, as if to ram home the 'Up The Workers' message, along comes Descent II. And here it is, rising into the sunlight on one of those rickety lifts, covered in dust and muck. Clean yourself off, get into your civvies and let's review you then.

And, blow me down, if you don't look a lot like your predecessor. Almost identical, in fact. Once again your task is to penetrate hostile mines where bonkers robots have run rampant. Free the miners, blow up the robots and destroy the



That'll be a secret exit then. It'll take you to an all new level. Joy!

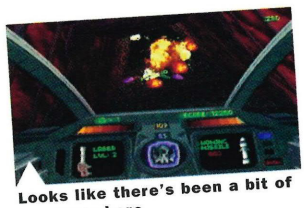




How to lower the forcefield? Maybe that switch next to it...



That tortoise thing is pelting me, hence the redness



Looks like there's been a bit of a rumpus here

reactor cores of each mine. That's all we ask.

To do this, you've got a hovering ship thing that can roll, climb and dive through the sprawling tunnels, armed with lasers and missiles, variations of which are lying about the place ready to be picked up. If you've got the original, or even if you've just played it once or twice, all this will be familiar territory. If you were hoping for a brand new slant on things, you're in for a let down. In fact, you're in for a let down anyway because Descent II is pretty much below par.

Before I get carried away though, there is one new feature which bears mentioning. It's called the Guide-Bot and is a fairly handy addition. On every level, you can find a Guide-Bot trapped behind a grating. Blow away this obstruction and the little bugger pops out and nips off.

You can now access a menu when the game is paused and order the mini-robot to track down certain features. Keys, power-ups, exits – that sort of thing. All you have to do is keep up with it, and it'll guide you to all the important bits of the level. If you do lose it, it'll trundle back to find you. Now this is either a godsend or a ridiculous cheat depending on how much of a tedious games bore you are. It certainly takes away some of the challenge when you finish a level with the minimum of exploring, but you can order it to bugger off should you tire of its help.

Apart from that admittedly novel addition, this is virtually the same game as the original. There's nothing terribly wrong with that, as Descent was a fairly neat game. It was also, unfortunately, a fairly old game and is starting to show its age. The game engine shows no sign of improvement and the graphics look pretty ropey nowadays.

The evil robot adversaries in particular look resolutely un-threatening, more like the latest gizmo from Mr Rubik than deadly technological killing machines. They're hardly difficult to dispatch either, as the game is rather over generous with power-ups and energy refills.

The controls are confusing as well. Not that they're difficult to get to grips with – that bit's easy – it's actually navigating the tunnels that can prove a bit of a nightmare.

As the ship can roll over and flip in any direction, it's not unusual to find yourself upside down, pointing at a dark corner with no idea which way is up or down. Maybe Descent veterans will laugh at me for this admission, but I can't help feeling that some sort of compass or direction finder might have helped. Oh, and the 3-D wireframe map is an utterly useless mish mash of lines. So there.

If you've got the original, I can't see the wisdom in splashing out again, unless you're a weird Descent addict. And if you haven't got the first game, I really can't recommend the sequel either. What was once an OK slice of shoot and explore action now looks frighteningly like yesterdays curry regurgitated for further consumption.

The graphics are violently blocky, there's some terrible slow down when there's loads going on, and the whole thing is a generally dissatisfying and confusing rehash of past not-so-glorious glories. The only saving grace is a marginally amusing two player link-up option which, to be honest, is more trouble than it's worth. Very average indeed.

That there is a key, that'll open red doors. The guide-bot will find them for you





If your energy drops below 100, wait in the golden shower for it to replenish

Another of those awe inspiring pixel explosions



PRO SCORE

GAME Descent II
GENRE Shoot 'Em-Up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Interplay
CONTACT 01628 423666
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.95

There's really no reason for this game to exist. It has nothing the first game hasn't already offered, apart from the guide robot, and as such it offers nothing of interest to gamers used to greater things. I managed to play it for several days without resorting to artificial stimuli, but when it came time to switch off the PlayStation and write this review, I didn't shed a single tear. It kept my attention, but at no point did I really feel like I was enjoying myself. Which, seeing as that's the whole point of paying the best part of £50 for a game, is a bit of a clue as to the game's overall quality. I'm afraid it's yet another lazy PC port to throw on the pile marked 'Nice idea, pity it's two years too late'.

GRAPHICS 6
SOUND 5
GAMEPLAY 5
LASTABILITY 5

6

STEVE You know what I'm going to say by now! This is years old already and, in this case, wasn't even all that impressive originally. This isn't even as good as it was on the PC anyway and deserves about a 4 if you ask me

JAY It's a bit dated, but those of you with an urge to whizz around underground caverns blasting space nibbers like a mad man will be more than pleased with it. It's about time they did something new with the idea though

ANDY The original Descent was a PC hit and then lazily converted onto the PlayStation. The same can be said for its sequel. It's not a bad game, it just doesn't float my boat. I'm sure they could come up something better

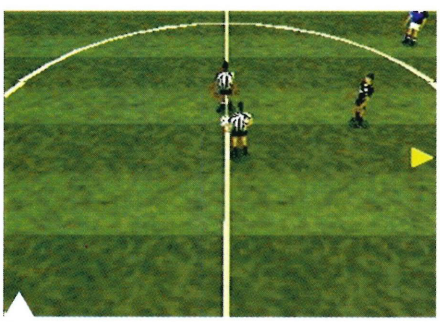
ALEX If I was writing Descent 2's school report I'd say it could do a lot better, rather than messing around in class trying to be big and hard like its older brother. And it shouldn't run in the corridor

BY STEVE MCNALLY

Actua Soccer

Club Edition

With Actua 2 looming large on the horizon, the time has come to squeeze every last penny out of the original with a pointless rehash where only the participants names have been changed



Newcastle, famous for bottling it on the big occasion, hopes to hold its nerve a bit more often in Actua Soccer!

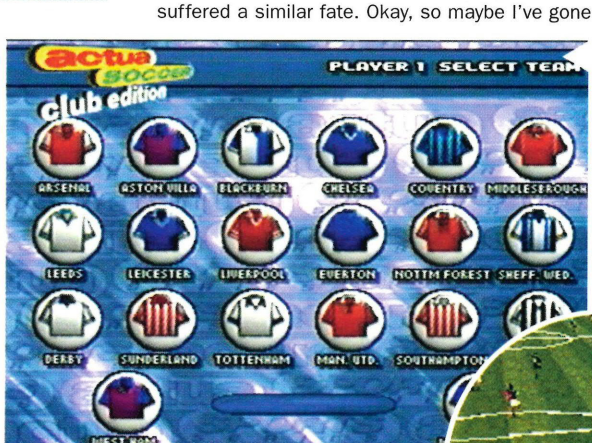
It's funny how quickly things change in the mad and crazy world of PlayStation games. One minute you're top of the heap, a sort of cock of the school and best dressed to boot (you know the type, posh new dazzling white trainers, a crease free pair of 'Chino' trousers and a shirt made of proper material rather than that see through stuff all school shirts are made of). The next, you're nothing but a sad, scruffy tosser who no one wants to sit next to with a knackered pair of Dunlop Green Flash, NHS glasses and a slightly unusual odour.

Sadly for Gremlin, its Actua Soccer game has suffered a similar fate. Okay, so maybe I've gone a little too far for a true comparison (although not that much) but you get the picture.

Perhaps a better school related analogy would have been to say that Actua Soccer was the well built new first year who towered over the other pupils on the first day of term but stopped growing there and then and was, by the start of the third year, a prime target for bullies.

Perhaps it would be even better if I stopped waffling and simply said that Actua Soccer has been left trailing well behind by the competition. Because it has. Yes, that'll do nicely.

Soccer '97 is of course the 'competition' that I am referring to, and its vast superiority was brought home to me because I was involved in one of the almost constant Soccer '97 leagues that go on throughout the day in our office. As a result, I got my first look at Actua Soccer Club Edition during a league game that didn't involve me.



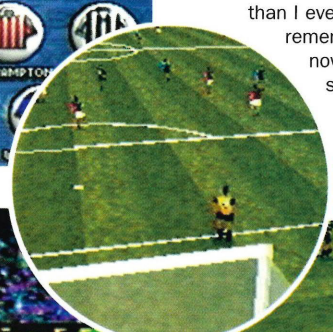
A footy game without Man City is like a week old jam sandwich without the jam – stale and tasteless!

Oh dear is a phrase that sums up my initial reaction quite well, because the chasm, in terms of quality, between the two is far wider than I ever imagined (or indeed remembered) it would be. And even now, following prolonged play it's still a fairly succinct summation of my feelings. So what's gone wrong?

Difficult one to answer that, because this new edition

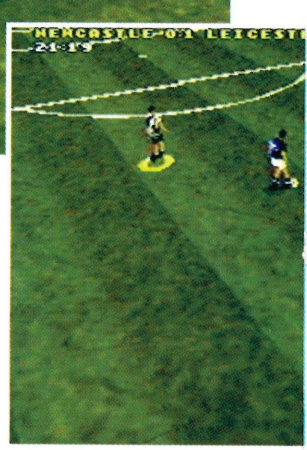


The two teams line up, presumably for the national anthem. Not a common sight at most footy matches these days, but never mind





The animation is certainly impressive thanks to some fine examples of motion capture





Can this year's Coca Cola Cup winners shock pseudo giants Newcastle?

and the original are identical (certainly to the naked, none code reading eye at least), yet when this first appeared it was universally acclaimed. I reckon there are two reasons for the difference. The most important one is, of course, that there is a much better football game currently on the shelves deserving your attention. The other is that you'd have to be mad to buy this if you already own the original because the only real difference is in the kits, teams and squad (although this gripe is much less important because the same criticism could be levelled to a certain degree at Soccer '97, but at least there are a couple of new features in there as well).

It's not that Actua has suddenly become a bad game though, except in comparison. It's still probably the best looking footy game by some way – the players look and move realistically (no pointy heads here folks) thanks to some impressive, but limited, motion capture.

It still has some innovative features such as the symbol under the player denoting what action he can take when releasing the ball (pass or shoot), but even this now doesn't seem particularly impressive, in fact it goes some way to contributing to the game's downfall. Despite everything else I've said, Actua Soccer's greatest fault is that for about 50 per cent of the time you're playing you don't feel fully in control of the players.

It's incredibly difficult to direct passes with any authority as the computer tends to make up its mind where the ball is going and sticks to it, no matter how hard you try. At times you find yourself pushing hard on the d-pad to no avail because the game has taken charge and is moving the player into position to receive a pass (which in my experience tends to hit him on the back half the time and rebound harmlessly to an opposition player). All this contributes to giving the game a really serious problem from which it never really recovers.

Not to worry though. By all accounts Actua Soccer 2 is shaping up very nicely and Gremlin is sure to bounce back from a couple of disappointing sequels. I still reckon it has got an incredibly tough job on its hands to better Eidos' definitive effort though.

I wonder what has just happened here then? A near miss maybe? Or perhaps an injury?



PRO SCORE

GAME Actua Soccer: Club Edition
GENRE Sports
SOFTWARE HOUSE Gremlin
CONTACT 0114 2753423
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £34.99

I was amazed by how badly Actua Soccer has aged in a very short time indeed. In the 18 months or so since it first appeared it has been bettered in just about every department and, as result, this stop gap between original and sequel hasn't gone down at all well here in the PlayStation Pro offices (as I'm sure the opinions below will testify). Fans will undoubtedly like it should they happen to play it, but even they should avoid paying out for it because of a real lack of differences over the original. It may sound harsh, but newcomers should go for Soccer '97, while old hands should stick with what they've got for now and maybe wait for Actua Soccer 2 which isn't a million miles away from being ready.

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 8
GAMEPLAY 5
LASTABILITY 6

6½

DAN **Very lazy and more than a little cheeky really. It must have taken all of five minutes to change the players names, and that hardly justifies another full price release. Naughty old Gremlin. Don't do it again, you scamps**

JAY **The original was well received in the PlayStation's infancy, but I'm afraid this poorly thought out update doesn't make the grade compared to the rest of this year's updated footballing line-up. Soccer '97 rules!**

ALEX **Wait until the original Actua Soccer goes 'Platinum' (i.e. is reduced to £20) rather than buy this. It's exactly the same from what I can see apart from different strips, players' names and commentary**

ANDY **It's always a bit dodgy rehashing old releases unless there's something new and improved included. Actua: CE differs only in team and player names. It doesn't justify any recommendation to owners of the original**

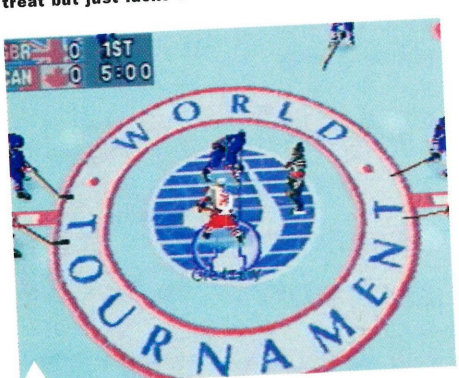
BY STEVE McNALLY

NHL Powerplay Hockey

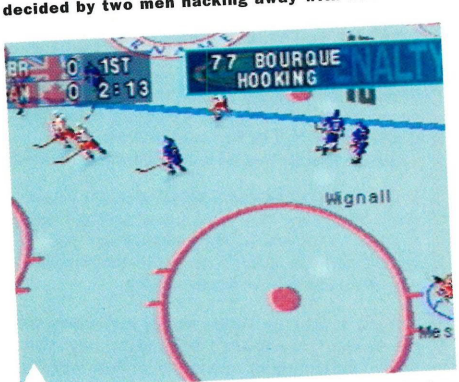
The subject of incredible delays, NHL Powerplay is finally ready to roll. The game faces much stiffer competition than it did previously and Virgin could well have missed the boat on this one



Graphically, Powerplay Hockey is an absolute treat but just lacks a vital edge in gameplay



The face off, where control of the puck is decided by two men hacking away with sticks



You can turn penalties off if you want, but that takes away half the fun if you ask me!

Ice Hockey is big business these days. At least, it is in Manchester. 'The Storm', despite struggling in the top division this year is packing 'em in like they'd been going for years. The glitz and glamour that the event provides is a seemingly irresistible draw for many thousands of Mancunians week in, week out. But not for me for some reason.

Normally I'm a sucker for a big event. Any amount of pre match entertainment is enough to drag me along to most sports if I reckon there's going to be a decent atmosphere (speaking of which, if you're in the Manchester area, check out a Salford Reds Rugby League home game where the pre-match atmosphere is second to none).

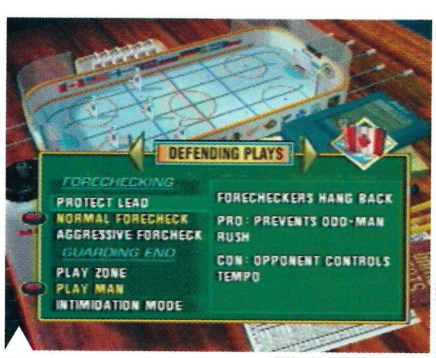
For some reason I just can't get my head around Ice Hockey and the prospect of getting out of my seat and doing some ridiculous dance to that Perez 'Prez' Prado record in the hope of getting on one of the giant video screens (it happens, I kid you not) is not my idea of fun.

The game itself? Well, at the highest level I suppose I don't mind it too much. Especially if there are loads of fights and mindless violence. But it's not exactly at the top of my favourite sports list.

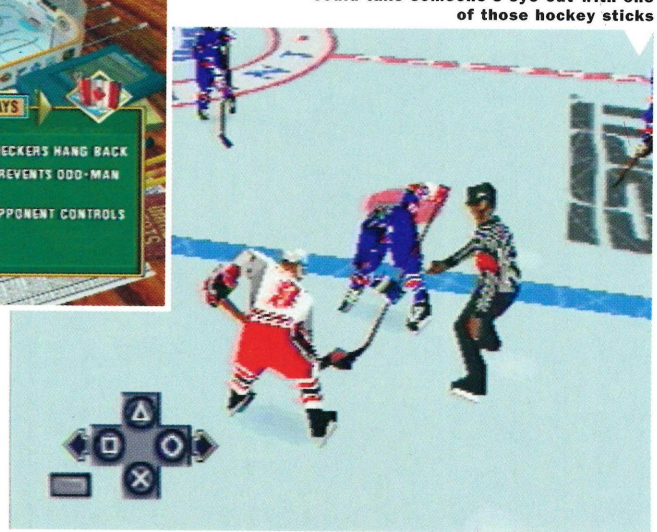
If you're experiencing a strange sense of deja vú at the moment, it's understandable because NHL Powerplay was supposed to come out last summer but for some reason, known only to Virgin, it was decided the game was not to be released. Whether this was just a planned delay or whether there was a change of heart, I don't know, but it seems strange because the game doesn't appear to have changed in the meantime and it certainly is nowhere near bad enough to have warranted being pulled from the schedules.

Anyway, most of you will know the score as to how these games are set up by now, but just in case you don't, all the American (and Canadian) teams that participate in the NHL are represented. And of course, with this being a licensed product, the real players and their stats have been used. As I've said before this means little to people outside America but it's understandable (and creditable) that they're in there for anyone who appreciates that sort of thing.

You can play a full season of varying length (anything from 11 to 80 games, all saveable



There's also a strategic play calling element for anyone who's even slightly that way inclined



Watch your fingers in there mate! You could take someone's eye out with one of those hockey sticks

Presented more like the view from a TV director's box rather than a TV screen, Powerplay has a unique viewpoint



Editing your lines is far from essential but it's nice to have the option should you want to take them up on it



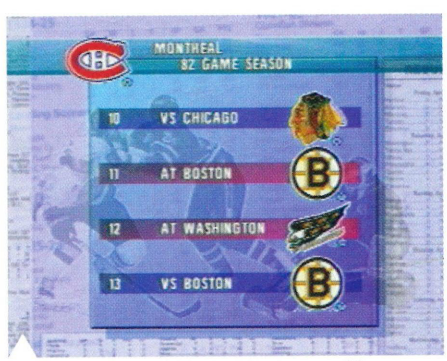
with a memory card) or just take part in an exhibition game or the playoff series. An interesting aspect for the multi player game, or even single player exhibition game, is that a number of All Star teams have been included that contain all the best players. This comes in particularly handy when introducing an inexperienced player to the game because they can play as a team that is wildly better than the one you're using.

As seems to be the case more and more these days, some serious multi player fun can be had using that handy little multi tap attachment. This means that up to six players can be 'on the ice' at any one time and, as you can imagine, the action really starts to hot up when it's your mate's face you're pounding into the glass rather than some computer chip.

However, it seems to be quite difficult to find people who are willing to play this multi player and to be honest, nine times out of 10 we end up loading Soccer '97 or Jonah Lomu instead. I suppose this feature would be quite handy if you belonged to an Ice Hockey club or something, but for everyone else it's little more than a nice addition that you'll probably use ▶

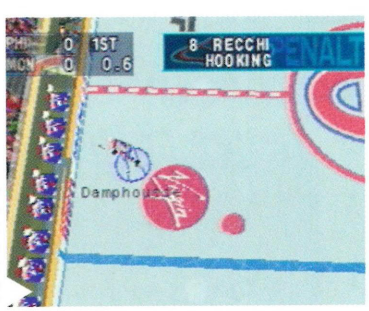
The keeper's got to be disappointed with that! I said it was a bad idea to let David James have a go at Ice Hockey!



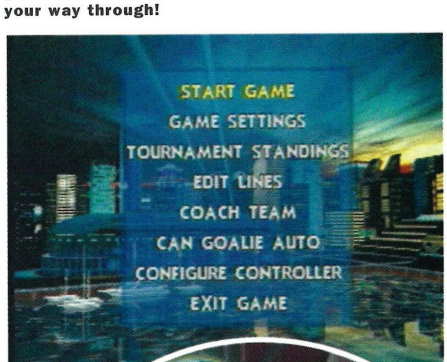


If you can stomach it, there's even an 82 game season option for you to plough your way through!

The penalties are free flowing and each is punished with a visit to the 'sin bin'







Both the NHL teams and the international sides are included. Try playing as Britain against the USA or Canada for a real challenge!



ESPN is a name synonomous with sport in America. Unfortunately it means very little to people over here







NHL Powerplay Hockey

▶ a couple of times at most.

It's a good job then that the one player game should more than satisfy most people – the computer opponents provide a tough, long lasting challenge. It should take even the most skilled player a long time to win through a whole season and a playoff series.

It's tricky to get the hang of at first, and I'm not really sure whether that's a good or bad thing. I was wildly frustrated by my lack of goal scoring in the early games and that's bad, but it makes the rewards and satisfaction gained by perseverance all the sweeter and that's good. It balances itself out nicely in the end though, I'd just say that the learning curve is a little too steep for more impatient players.

Other (small) gripes are when you play away from home and start winning, the home crowd starts to boo you. A nice touch and one that I'm all in favour of but it does sound more like an aircraft taking off than a few thousand people venting their anger.

The other thing was that the rink spins around a lot to follow the play. Very clever technically I'm sure, but it can lead to confusion and even a touch of motion sickness when the action hots up. That aside though, there's little to find fault with - if only we hadn't all played NHL Hockey we'd be saying this was the best thing ever.

NHL Powerplay Hockey is a good looking, competent recreation of the sport in just about every sense. It's fast, it's frantic and there are plenty of bone crunching body checks and people flying into the Plexiglas boards to keep me happy. There's just one negative thought that I can't shake off though, and that's that it just isn't as good as NHL Hockey.

This is a major downer for Virgin because both games are so fundamentally similar that there would be little or no point in buying both, and only an idiot would buy the lesser of the two. Then again, we all know it doesn't work like that. Powerplay is a definite equal in the looks and technical achievement stakes, and if you have never actually played either game, I'll concede that choosing between the two will be difficult if you choose to ignore this review (which of course you won't).

Therefore I suppose that I'd have to conclude that, although I personally would recommend EA's effort over this as a 'must have' Ice Hockey purchase, I fully realise that Virgin will probably do equally well out of this. It probably deserves to because this only just falls short of the line drawn by the sports game giants, and the standards they set were high ones indeed!

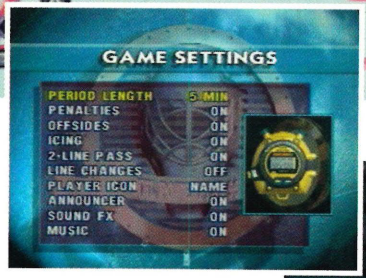


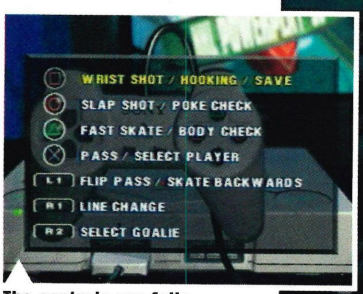
Looks destined for the back of the net! Then again, I wouldn't put my hand in the way

GENRE COMPARISON

Game NHL HOCKEY
Software House EA SPORTS

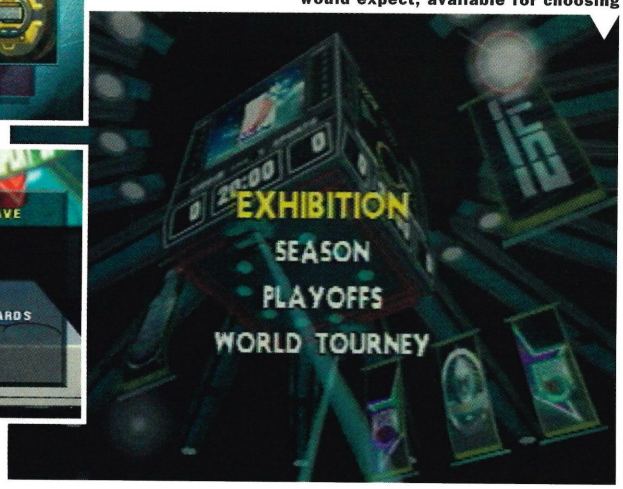
If Powerplay had come out when it was supposed to it would have probably been my favourite Hockey game back then. But now, with EA's amazing effort already well entrenched as the best, it was always going to be hard to knock it off the top spot. And sadly for Virgin it's failed. NHL Hockey is still the best option on the PlayStation in my opinion, and by a reasonable distance at that!





The controls are fully configurable so even players with deformed hands are OK

Numerous playing modes are, as you would expect, available for choosing



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PLAYSTATION APPROVED

Comparisons have got to be drawn with NHL Hockey, the only real competition, and unfortunately NHL Powerplay just about loses out. It looks slick enough, moves incredibly fast (at times) and contains just about everything you could hope to find in a game of this type. But it's already been done better and EA's game has the edge in the gameplay department, and in the end that's the one that makes all the difference. It's more fun to play and will be drawing you back a long time after this has been consigned to the shelf. It has taken an age to come out and I'm afraid it really hasn't been worth the wait if you've been hanging on.

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 8

8

DAN **Everyone hammers on about the number of Doom clones and 3-D beat 'em-ups, but at least 600 ice hockey games have sneaked out in the past few months. And they're all snoozefests, OK?**

JAY **I'm going to have to agree with Dan on this one. Ice hockey simulations – unless you're a massive fan of the 'real thing' – do have a tendancy to be quite mundane at the best of times, and this is no different. Yawn**

ALEX **Don't believe the screenshots. It looks marvellous, with all the accurate kits, players and associated icy razzmatazz going on, but the on-rink action is woefully slow. Surely ice hockey's meant to be fast?**

ANDY **Nothing compares to Face-off I'm afraid. This is slow and terribly dull. It's far too simple to play and scoring goals is also simple – too simple to be a realistic ice hockey game even on tougher skill levels**

PlayStation

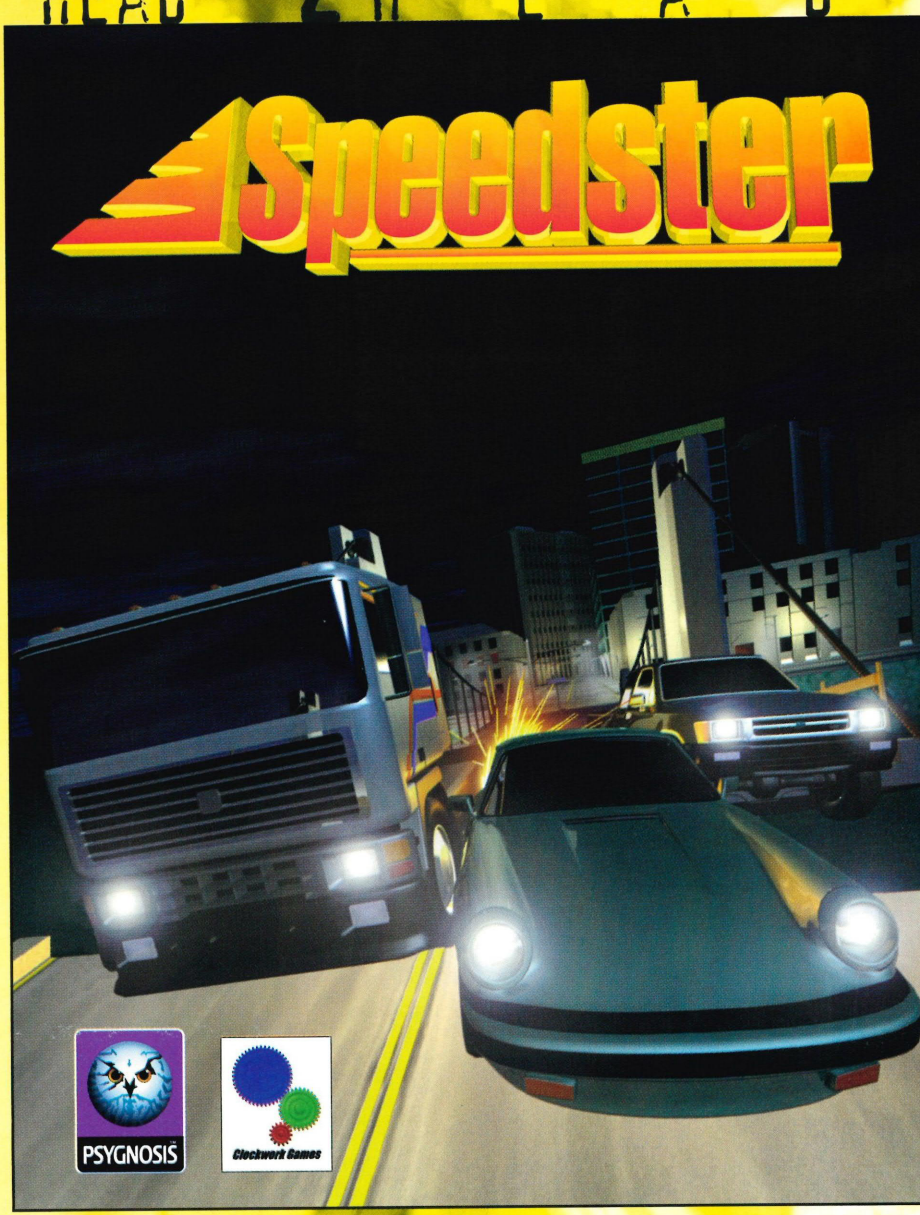
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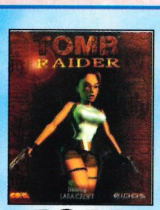
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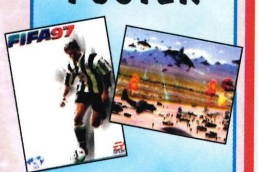
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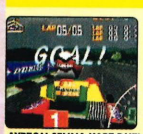
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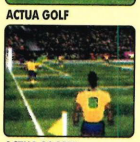
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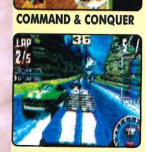
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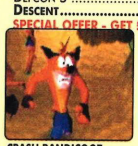


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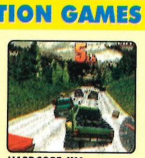


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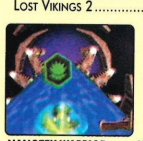


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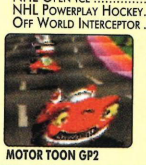


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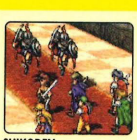
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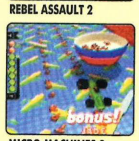
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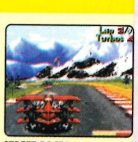


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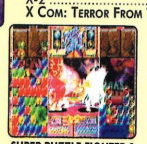


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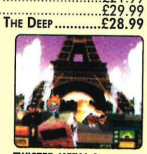


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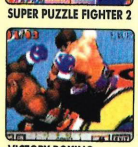
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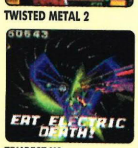
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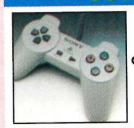
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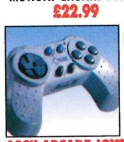
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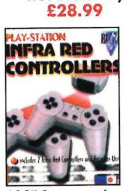
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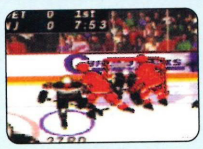
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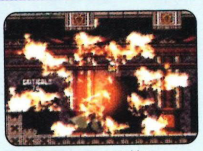
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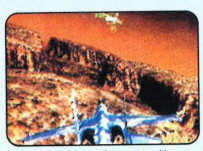
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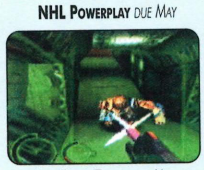
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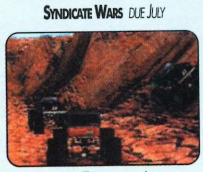
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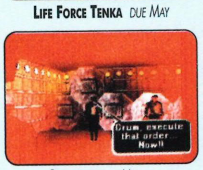
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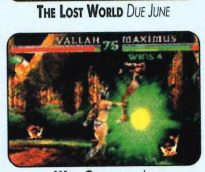
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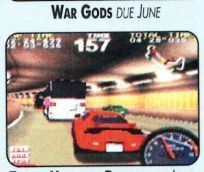
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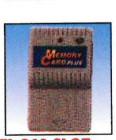
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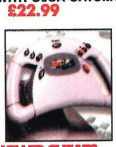
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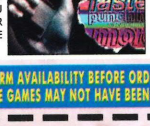
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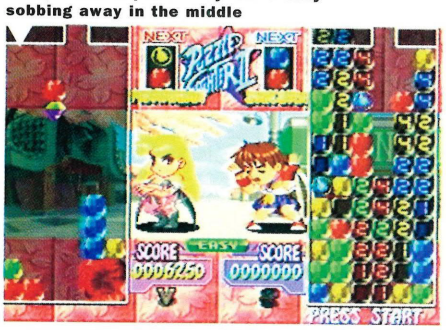
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BY DAN WHITEHEAD

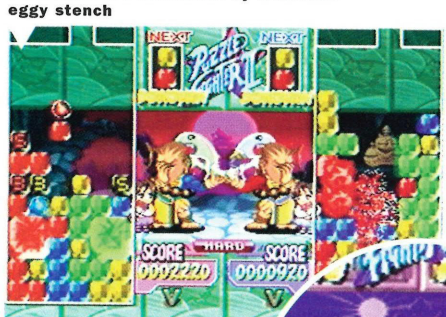
Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo

The Apocalypse must surely be upon us. Capcom has finally produced an original game from the Street Fighter stable and life will never be the same...

Sakura, on the right, is in big trouble here, which explains why she's busy sobbing away in the middle

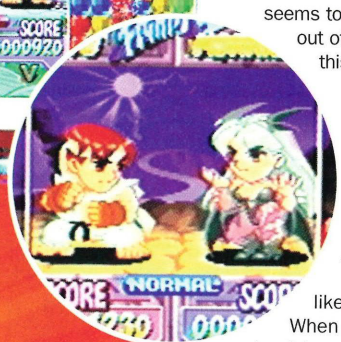


In the middle of fighting himself, both Donovan's are distracted by a sinister eggy stench



Oof! That's a winning move right there! Note how the left hand side is so clogged up that no more gems can fall. A convincing win







When they win, each character has various catchphrases dubiously translated from Japanese



See the Counter Gen diagram at top left? That's the pattern Ryu's countdown blocks will fall in

This is one of those games that I was determined to dislike. "Bloody Street Fighter" I muttered under my meths-sodden breath, "Do something different Capcom". I even added a "Grrr" in a half hearted threatening manner. Not that they could hear me, but it was my token protest.

And then, along comes yet another Street Fighter game with yet another title so lengthy it's bordering on self parody. Except this time it looks more like Tetris than a beat 'em-up. And this time everyone seems to be agreeing it's the best thing to come out of Japan since knicker dispensers. And this time I get to review it.

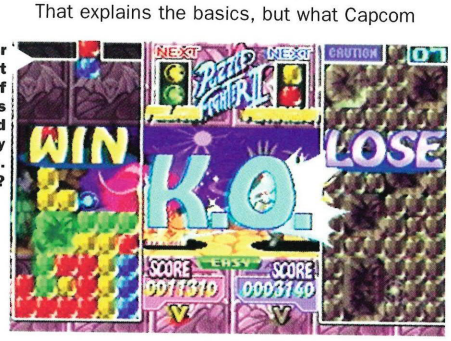
So I grudgingly had a game, not having a clue what was going on. I did quite well. I lost, but I managed to shatter lots of shiny gem things which made me feel happy and content inside for some reason. Intrigued, I had a few more goes. And I haven't stopped since.

The difficulty when reviewing a game like this is how to explain the rules. When you're playing, it's incredibly simple to pick up the game as you go along. But how to describe this just using text? I know, I'll cheat and get Capcom to do it for me.

Here's what it says – "Opponents compete by stacking gem after gem in strategic patterns and colour combinations. When special Crash Gems drop and are positioned to break their matching coloured gems on one side of the screen, more gems are sent to descend on the weary foe. With combination and counter attacks, it's a fast-paced, back and forth contest until one side is overwhelmed in a final KO, when there's no more room on their side of the screen".

That explains the basics, but what Capcom

The player on the left has lot's of lovely chains of gems, and that's why they won. Tactics, see?





Another explosive finishing move from Ken. He's just got a '2 Chain' which means he set off a chain reaction, which is more powerful



hasn't mentioned is that any gems sent over to your opponent's side have a countdown emblazoned on them. Until this reaches zero the Crash Gems will have no effect. An explosion next to these countdown blocks will destroy them, but it's sometimes best to let them reach zero and turn into massive blocks of colour ripe for bursting.

Any square blocks of the same colour turn into huge Super Gems, which can be built up into massive attacks when shattered, and that's the way to win. Set up a combo of three or four Super Blocks and your enemy will be swamped in a deluge of countdown blocks, pretty much scuppering all their plans. Perfect.

Strangely, after being brainwashed by Tetris, I struggled for a while. You see, in this game, clearing your screen isn't the wisest option. You don't get any advantage by doing this, except for giving you more room to manoeuvre if a load of blocks get sent over from the other side. The best tactic is to keep your side half full of big chunks of colour, ready to be shattered if and when a suitable Crash Gem appears. Otherwise you've got no way of fighting back with hefty moves.

Oh yes, I almost forgot. There's that dubious Street Fighter link isn't there? Before each match you pick a character from Street Fighter or its sister title Darkstalkers. Each character has their own unique pattern for dropping blocks on the opponent. Some drop them in handy blocks of the same colour, effectively making life easier for the other side, and others drop them in nasty mish mashes of colour, cluttering up your screen something awful.

While the match goes on the two characters stand in the middle of the screen and each burst of shattering gems is translated into fighting moves. This bit is pretty gimmicky, and as you'll have all your attention on your gems, you won't actually see much of the fighting action. It seems to be more for the benefit of spectators, which is a kind thought.

Well, it looks like I'm already running out of room, so I'd better give you a few good reasons why you should run straight down to the shops and buy this. First of all, it's devilishly addictive, as a good puzzle game should be. A few games is all it takes to get used to it, but true mastery will take weeks of practice.

Secondly, it's got plenty to offer the single player. The arcade mode is suitably tough to crack and it reaches blinding speeds on the highest skill level. But the real bonus is the Street Puzzle mode. Here you've got six 'challenges' for each character. These challenges take the form of intense one round matches where you can earn all manner of treats.

New costumes, soundtracks, game modes, animation and even Japanese pop songs are on offer, along with three secret characters. The secret fighters are tricky to get, but are well worth the effort. You can save your progress to memory card, so your hard work won't be in vain.

Thirdly, and finally, this is the first game since the heady days of Track and Field to unite the Pro team in sobs of happiness. There's not a single person on the team who hasn't enjoyed this nugget of gaming glee, and that's a rare occurrence these days. Even non-PlayStation people have gathered in our corner to gaze in wonder. And that's possibly the highest recommendation a game can get, in my opinion. So what are you still doing here? Go out and buy it right now, you silly fools.







Street Puzzle Mode, where you take part in single round bouts to earn secret goodies

PRO SCORE

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PLAYSTATION APPROVED **Brilliant. Just brilliant. Remember that moment when you held your Game Boy in sweaty hands and looked at the clock to see that four hours had slipped past? Prepare for that level of addiction again, but with one crucial difference – other people. Yep, Puzzle Fighter is a must have for the single player, but two player matches are the stuff that dreams are made of. 'Play the winner' is the common cry around these parts, and it's not unusual for Puzzle Fighter to remain in play all day, with players coming and going at will. Only if you despise the entire puzzle genre will you hate this, everyone else should snap up a copy. Trust me, you won't regret it.**

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 9

9

STEVE **For once Dan's not talking complete and utter drivel. This offers something for everyone, no matter what their genre choice may be, and is one of the safest bets around if you're looking to spend £40**

JAY **'Street Fighter meets Tetris' sounded like a stupid idea at first, but the final incarnation offers hours of top notch enjoyable, block-moving fun. A tad confusing at first, but stick with it and it's ream**

ALEX **This is the only game I can remember that everyone in the office not only likes, but wants to play over and over again, which has to be the ultimate recommendation. It's no better than Tetris, just a whole lot fresher**

ANDY **Tetris was always a little bland but this take has united everyone in the team here. The idea is simple as is the gameplay so even dopey old me could get my head around it. SPF2T really is a joy to behold**

Space Jam

Join Jam Master Jordan and his animated Warner Brother buddies in Acclaim's adaptation of the kiddy-pleasing 'hit' movie



Bugs breaks away from the defence and tries a plucky three-pointer. For a laugh

You know what this is. It's the officially licensed game to tie-in with the current bout of Space Jam movie hype and has therefore been produced with the film's target audience in mind. Unfortunately, that means the game is fairly simplistic in terms of both structure and its graphics. Never mind, let's see how it plays.

The basic idea is that the player selects their team of three from a line-up of various Looney Toons characters and pits their on-court wits against the team of evil alien Monstars. Buttons are reserved for passing, shooting and stealing, you get a temporary speed-up boost via the shoulder buttons and each individual character has its very own variation on the basketball theme known as the slam dunk.

Sound familiar? Yep, the game has a definite NBA Jam feel about it and it's no surprise really, as Acclaim are the ones responsible. As far as gameplay goes, it does have that NBA Jam essence, although things have been toned down for the younger gamers that the title is squarely aimed at. The action moves fast, with points been scored at a dramatic pace but this is all down to the fact that if you manage to shoot for the basket, odds on you're gonna score. That is, unless, you pick the Monstar team.

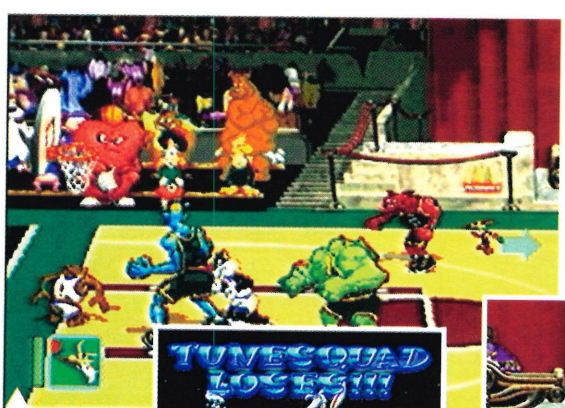
Just like the film, the Monstars are big, nasty and try to foul their opponents as often as possible. When you're in control of them, however, things turn pear-shaped as you attempt feeble shots and hapless steal moves. Of course, having the mighty Mike Jordan and his gang of furry friends running circles around you and whacking in three-pointers doesn't help matters either.

As with the Looney Toons team, each Monstar has various playing skills, so it's important to get the better players on the court when challenging the Toons. The problem lies with the Monstars' ability, in so much as there's not much of it. Sure enough when you're playing against the CPU for the Intergalactic Cup they're all on form, but when you or your pal selects them, they suck.

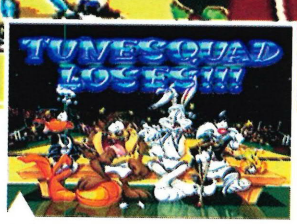
Graphics wise, and as you can see from the screenshots, Space Jam wouldn't look out of place on the SNES. Certain people moaned about the lack of a 3-D polygon characters upon first viewing of this, but you've got take on board the fact that Bugs, Daffy, Porky Pig and the gang are all registered characters and Warner Brothers don't like people messing with their creations will-nilly.

To get everything done in time to tie-in with the film's release and also have Warner Brothers approve every polygonned angle of Daffy duck's arse would have been a nightmare. So they didn't bother. Instead, you get a series of 2-D Looney Toons, plus a Mortal Kombat-style motion captured MJ thrown in for good measure. And that's about it really.

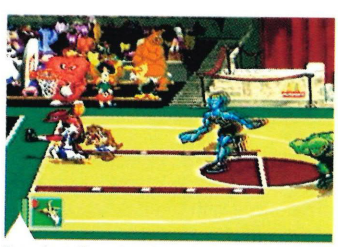
Sure, you can have a two player game with your mate and you can even do the Intergalactic Cup together, and apart from a series of mildly



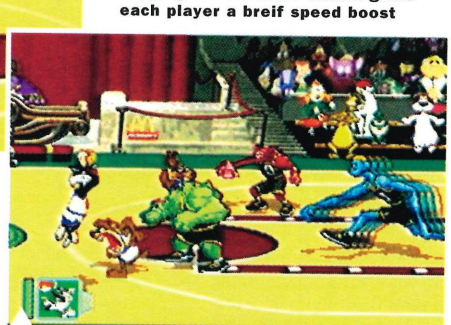
As you can clearly see, the crowd is filled with Looney Toons favourites



Fail in your mission to beat the Monstars and you'll get this



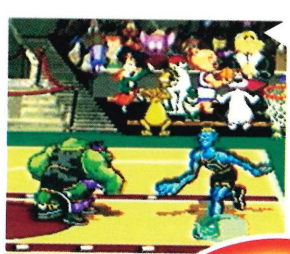
Tapping the shoulder button gives each player a breif speed boost



The Looney Toons team will slam in a three-point shot whenever possible. So be on your guard



Choose which Toon you want to play with and watch as they perform comical ball trickery



The Monstars play a mean game of basketball, despite them all being muscle-bound nibbers from outer space

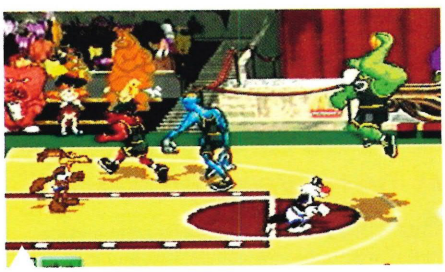


The huge green fickle finger of fate allows you to select from the various playing modes. What fun



Each character in the game is equipped with a slam dunk and a lay-up. Holding the speed boost button when performing one of these changes your standard moves to more stylish ones





The CPU-controlled Monstars are hard to beat, but when you choose them, they're shit

amusing sub-games (see boxout below) which, admittedly, do relieve the blandness of the whole thing, that's all there is to it.

You're gonna know from the instant you clap eyes on this whether you want to buy it or not, and if you wanted a decent basketball game you would have bought Total NBA 97 by now. It's not a case of searching out a quality garment amongst thousands with Space Jam, as you'll be buying it for the label. And you'll get what you pay for.

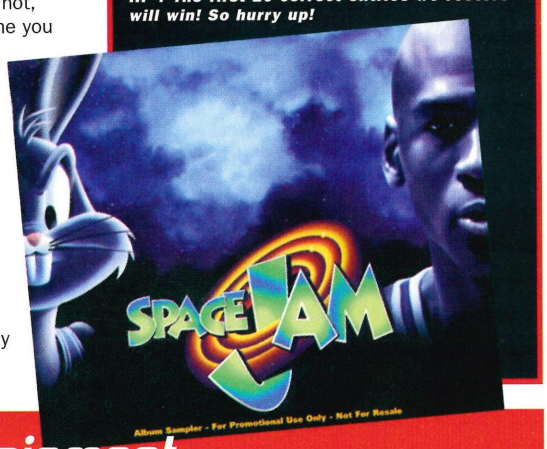
A game of its sort should - on a morality level - be priced lower than the usual new releases, but I'm sure Space Jam won't be. It's a licensed product, it's official and Acclaim paid big money for it. Therefore so will you. A £19.99 tag would make this more accessible to the curious, but as it stands, Space Jam will surely only catch the eye of someone who still goes shopping with their Mum.

Jamtastic Giveaway!

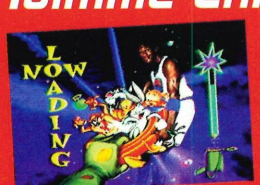
Have you heard R Kelly twittering on about how he thinks he can fly? And what about Seal going on about eagles? Have you heard the pair of them? Have you? Have you? Well worry not if you've missed out because you won't with our top Space Jam competition!

PlayStation Pro and Acclaim are such good buddies, we can now ensure that several of our readers can listen to the soundtrack of the game of the movie whenever they bloody well please. To win one of our many Space Jam soundtrack sampler CDs all you have to do is send off a postcard marked "We're Jammin" to our usual address, and on the reverse, put the correct answer to this tricky pop question

Due to his song, "I Believe I Can Fly", who did R Kelly stop getting to number one with their much-superior single, "Richard III"? The first 20 correct entries we receive will win! So hurry up!



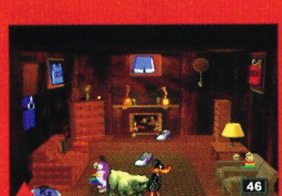
Halftime Entertainment



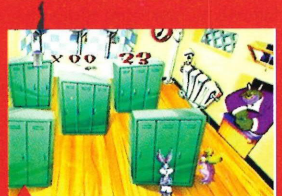
THE MAIN AIM OF THE GAME HERE IS BASKETBALL, WE ALL KNOW THAT. BUT SPACE JAM FEATURES SEVERAL SUBGAMES TO LIVEN UP THE ACTION. THESE SUBGAMES ARE ACCESSIBLE WITH EITHER ONE OR TWO PLAYER MODES, ALTHOUGH THE WHOLE LOGIC BEHIND THEM IS SOMEWHAT BIZARRE. AS YOU CAN SEE...



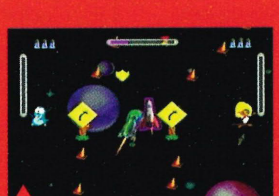
HALL OF HIJINXS
A sort of pop-up duck type thing like you get at the fair. Various characters glide by and you have to guide Lola Bunny about, collect the basketballs and then toss them at the aforementioned targets to score points. Why? If only we knew...



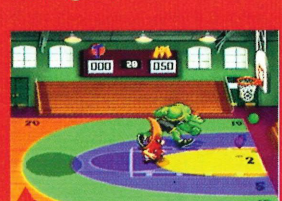
DAFFY'S QUACKED CAPER
For some unexplained reason, Mike Jordan has lost his sports kit. But rather than making him play in his underwear, you've got to get Daffy Duck to gather his garments from somebody's office. A nasty dog needs avoiding too.



LOCKER ROOM RUMPUS
Bugs Bunny hunts for bottles of water in a sweaty locker room whilst avoiding hassles from the Monstars. As with most of the sub-games, a strict time limit means you'll have to get your skates on to clock up those points.



SPACE RACE
A semi-Micro Machines jaunt, in space, with rockets and stuff. Speed-ups, missiles and shield pick-ups help your progress and it's by far the most enjoyable and easiest to understand of all the wacky subgames featured.



SAM'S SHOOTOUT
Try and make Yosemite Sam score as many baskets as possible in the given time and hopefully beat the Monstar's total. You can gain yourself more points by shooting from the higher end of the various scoring zones on court.

PRO SCORE

GAME Space Jam
GENRE Cartoon Basketball
SOFTWARE HOUSE Acclaim
CONTACT 0171 344 5000
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

Keeping in line with its movie counterpart, Space Jam: The Video Game is presented in a format more suited to those members of the game-buying public who have yet to experience the delights of sweat glands, pubic hair and staying up after 9pm. Older gamers who find themselves mysteriously drawn towards the whole Space Jam phenomenon should be warned that they might want to try this interactive incarnation out before they hand over any valuable beer money. It's entertaining enough for the kiddies alright and overall it's not *that* terrible - if taken in small doses - but a long term challenge it ain't, and anyone after a 'grown-up' basketball title might want to look at the one of the more mature offerings currently available

GRAPHICS 6
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 5
LASTABILITY 5

6

DAN If all you expect is NBA Jam for babies then you won't be disappointed. Trouble is, the matches dissolve into to and fro point-fests and the Monstars are stupidly good. Limited, and I can't really say I'm a fan

STEVE It's a good laugh and I'd probably have given it a bit more than Jay, however I haven't exactly played it to death and therefore can't really comment on how quickly I'd have tired of it

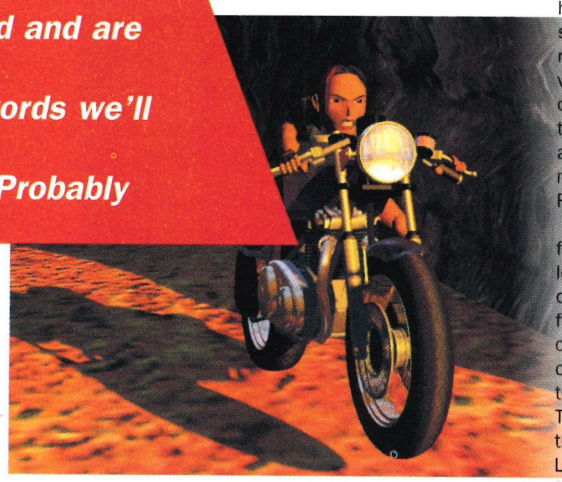
ALEX It's difficult to judge this fairly as I'm a 'twenty-something' and this product obviously isn't aimed at adults. My son's too young to appreciate it (as he's less than six months old) so, basically, I dunno...

ANDY If anybody's ever shown any interset in Space Jam then they should be ashamed of themselves. From the crap movie, to the useless soundtrack and on to the drab game. It's just the worst idea ever

You requested it, now here it is. The reviews page that's written by you. Send your contributions to Reader Reviews at the usual Freepost address. If they're any good and are under 1000 words we'll print them. Probably

Tomb Raider

by Tristan Batey, Blackpool



EVERY NOW AND THEN a game comes along that re-writes the way games look and play. Super Mario took platform gaming to new heights all those years ago, then came the speed and beauty of Sonic, two of the most revolutionary games of all time. The first home versions of Street Fighter and Virtua Racing were on 16bit machines, something most people thought was impossible. Nowadays with the arrival of 32bit super consoles we gawp at the marvels of VF2, Tekken 2, F1, Wipeout 2097, Resident Evil and now Tomb Raider.

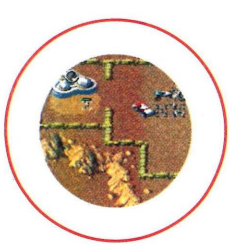
Core Design's latest and greatest offering features Lara Croft, the daughter of an English lord, whose future had been arranged since the day she was born. At the age of 21 Lara was flying home from a skiing trip when her plane crashed deep in the Himalayas. As Lara was the only survivor she learned to depend on her wits to stay alive in the freezing Arctic conditions. Two weeks passed before Lara stumbled across the village of Tokakeriby. Those two weeks of Lara's life were to have a profound effect on her future.

Not being able to stand the aristocratic upper class British life any more, Lara set out to stand on her own two feet. Over the next eight years

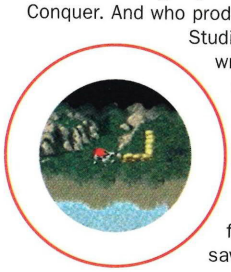
Command & Conquer

by james@casual.demon.co.uk

OK, HANDS UP those of you who remember RebelStar Raiders? Mmmmm... didn't think so. Written back in around 1984 (oh blissful memories) it was a simple BASIC game for the humble speccy which involved selecting a mission and commanding a band of troops to carry out their orders and basically zap things. OK, skipping RebelStar 1 & 2, anybody remember Laser Squad? It hit a few more formats than the aforementioned RebelStar Trilogy – a turn by turn strategy combat simulation where you chose a mission, equipped your guys with the stingy credits you were allowed, then happily ploughed into wherever with your guns blazing to fulfil the humble and often overlooked mission objective (all you had to do to win was blow all the opposition away, heh!).



It's been a long wait for the arrival of C & C. It's good, but not outstanding



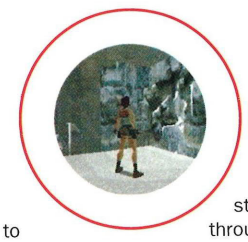
That was all a fair while back when many an afternoon was spent inviting mates over for a 2up Laser Squad – the satisfaction factor of blowing another person's brains out time and again is really rather high. Time passed, I was fortunate enough to stumble across a title called Dune 2 and, after a little peek at the back, I took it home and had a go.

In effect, Dune 2 was real-time Laser Squad – and funkingly good too. There was a dozen or so missions, you select which 'House' you wish to play, build a base, harvest spice, build, build and build and when you are ready, launch an all out assault on the computer controlled dimwit opposition. Ring any bells? Command and Conquer. And who produced it? Westwood Studios, the company that wrote Dune 2. The first moment I saw the game (on a nameless Channel 4 computer game show) I was within one inch of leaping out my seat and joygasming. I fell back to earth when I saw it was PC only and softly sighed the night away with a blankie and my Amiga.

Anyway, here we are, a little while later and lo and behold, Command and Conquer smashes its way onto the PlayStation (did I get my PSX just for this game? Not tellin'). Now, I'm a fussy so and so. I would never buy a game without prior knowledge – unless I just have a gut feeling, that is. After shooting home, powering up my treasured PSX and slipping in one of the two CDs, I waited anxiously to see what there was to see.

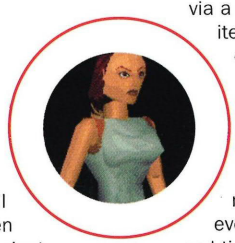
FMV? Yep there is a lot of that. As an introduction, on mission briefings, when you win, when you lose – lots and lots of it. Take it away, in fact, and you have the bare bones game. Am I being fair here? Maybe! Anyway, straight into the game I went. Not even bothering to look at the instruction booklet, I had a muck around on the first few levels.

There are two teams you can choose from and each has its own special CD. To throw comparison to the phrase, 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly', there is the GDI (Global Defence Initiative) who are the goody two shoes and wouldn't harm any innocent bystanders. Then we have the Brotherhood of Nod, the bad guy terrorist dudes who lay the false pretence of



Lara travelled the globe, learning of many ancient civilisations. She had, by now, been disowned by her family and her trips were funded by writing novels of her many dangerous and exciting adventures. Now employed by NATLA Technologies, Lara must leave for Peru to search out the missing segments of a powerful ancient treasure – the SCION.

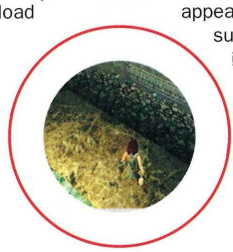
Lara's quest begins in a laid back fashion as you enter the game at its most basic level. With only a handful of enemies to dispose of, this is a great time to get to grips with Lara's vast range of athletic moves. The ability to jump, somersault, climb and swim are all at your disposal as you search the hidden labyrinths, lost cities, Aztec ruins and ancient Greek coliseums that make up the many varied levels of the game.



Tomb Raider includes one of the most intuitive control systems ever, with the action button sensing which moves to perform at the right times. Shooting, searching, pulling switches and vaulting onto higher platforms are amongst the wide variety of moves effortlessly pulled off at the touch of a button.

The first thing that hits you when you load up is the beautifully rendered intro sequence, but it is only when you start playing the game that the true beauty is revealed. Amazing attention to detail has been applied to the design of Tomb Raider's levels. In the Aztec levels Core has covered the walls in hieroglyphics taken from ancient caves and tombs found in real life archaeological digs.

Although each level has its own look and feel, the basic platform style action is pretty much the same throughout



Although each level has its own look and feel, the basic platform style action is pretty much the same throughout, requiring you to find the exit via a series of switches, keys and other items which open up different parts of the level until you find the exit. Saying that, Tomb Raider rarely gets repetitive as you search out three pieces of ancient treasure. The one aspect which lets it down is the often frustrating gameplay. It may not be the most difficult game ever but the positioning of your jumps and timing have to be perfect. All of which is not helped by some extremely annoying camera angles which can confuse you, making Lara fall from ledges to her death many floors below. Get used to these and you will have it cracked in a couple of weeks.

No doubt people will compare Tomb Raider to Resident Evil. Tomb Raider's laid-back approach may not be appealing to all players, but it is a superior title to its rival. Whilst there is not as much action in Tomb Raider, it has that something special that raises it above Capcom's classic. It also has the benefit of not having to load each time you go down a different corridor or into a different level. Something else which lets Resident Evil down is the amount of to-ing and fro-ing – there is very little of this in Tomb Raider. Get used to the intricate, but simple to use controls, suffer the sometimes infuriating difficulty and you will get many hours of superb gameplay.

GRAPHICS 94% Outstanding attention to detail with breathtaking levels and well animated sprites

SOUND 80% Sound 80% – Very little music in the game, when you do get some it rarely lasts longer than 10 seconds

SOUND FX 93% Super SFX – footsteps, gunshots, screams and more often than not Lara's bones breaking as she takes a rather long fall

GAMEPLAY 93% An excellent platform adventure with top class gameplay

LIFE SPAN 90% Life span 90% – Once finished it is hard to see you playing through it again although it will take a while to crack it

OVERALL 94%

Often frustrating but always engrossing, Tomb Raider is an excellent piece of programming that will go down as one of the finest games of all time



being nice people and blaming all bad things on the humble GDI – who said being good was fun? Forget ugly, that's me.

The game runs at a fair old speed, although I have noticed some shaky slowdowns during onslaughts. You start off with basic infantry and some simple building equipment. The organisation you work for often gives you a few thousand to play with at the start. To get more you need to harvest Tiberium. Take this back to the base and you're richer.

It's pretty simple to begin with, just keep your wits about you. If you think it's a smash 'em, bash 'em game with pure mindless violence – you're right. But if you don't have the strategy, you'll come unstuck. It's a strategy thing. Build your base, raise your defences, find the opponents' weak spot and generally thwack them around a bit until they die. Submission isn't implemented in this game, so take plenty of ammo clips with you on your voyage.

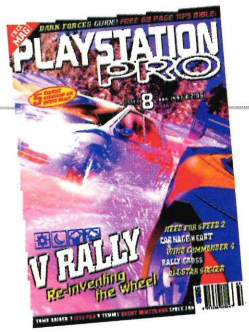
Niggles? Apart from the occasional slowdown, I only have a few gripes regarding C & C. It's one player only. The gaming world is at this very moment turning to the future. 2ups should be the minimum requisite, with Internet-link software and the likes being employed. Lets face it, what is more fun? Heavily nuking a computer, or sneaking up behind and then caning the rear end of the bloke who flushed your head down the loo at school? Other players have that unique 'intelligent aura' about them which makes victory all the more appealing. Can flash graphics, FMV, fairly funky soundtracks and lots of explosions and blood really make up for this? For a while, yeah. It's going to last you a some time, that's for sure. It gets difficult pretty quickly.

It's been a long wait for the arrival of C & C. It's good, but not outstanding. There aren't many strategy combat simulations around, so if you want to slink up a few steps into the world of planned shooting, pop down your local games centre (it's nearer than the out-of-town shop) and exchange 45 of your UK pounds for a copy of C & C. If you're a die-hard pro you may find it better to wait a while. Something better always follows a good release.

Hints: Always watch your units. The slime bags will attack any straying infantry or vehicle given half a chance. Keep your guys with explosive weapons away from the tacky close-quarter attack units. Stray missiles, flames and grenades won't mind if they snip a bit of valuable health off of your own units. If you cannot find a way through a mission, try going back to the previous mission and selecting another route in. You never know! Always keep a good defence. If you can't defend yourself, a visit from the opposing saboteurs could bring an untimely end to your efforts.

SUMMARY

If you like thinking before you shoot, this is probably the game for you. It's not outstanding to the point of excessive dribbling on the carpet, after all, there is little competition for the game. Not one for the clinically insane trigger-happy death freaks. In two words – good, considering.



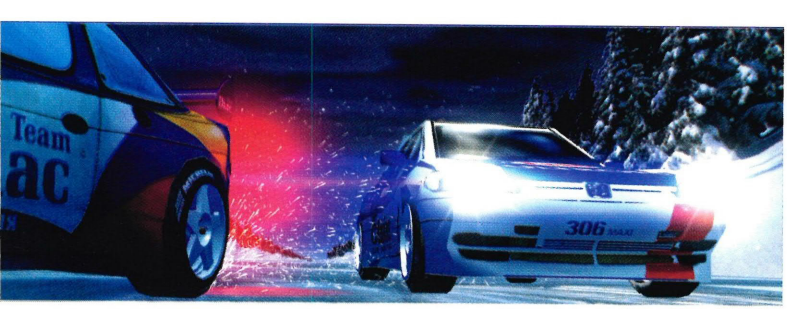
Game Title **V Rally**

Software House **Ocean** *At the risk of this becoming a theme, if V Rally was a song it would*



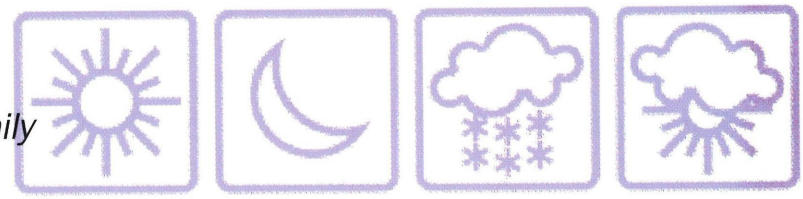
Another result of this co-operation with the car manufacturers is that the game developers have been able to reproduce the real graphical and dynamic aspects of the best of the 1997 rally cars. Each car is represented in its true colour scheme and all technical engine and chassis data has been interpreted to, hopefully, faithfully reproduce its movement on the asphalt, snow or tarmac

The game will also feature an interesting and original soundtrack including the radio communications with the co-driver and the real engine sound of the cars. You won't be able to fully understand until you've actually played it, but the game's atmosphere is pretty much what I'd imagine the real thing to be like and it can get pretty hairy at times!



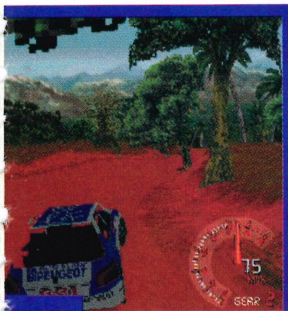
The Track Generator sounds intriguing to say the least, and is apparently at the heart of the V Rally concept. You can't exactly trace out a circuit, deciding exactly where each turn will appear as that would go against the essence of rallying itself, but you can determine how long the track will be, which country it will be in, what the terrain will be like, the weather conditions and so on. Should make for a fairly long lasting challenge to say the least. Nice

be Ocean Drive by The Lighthouse Family

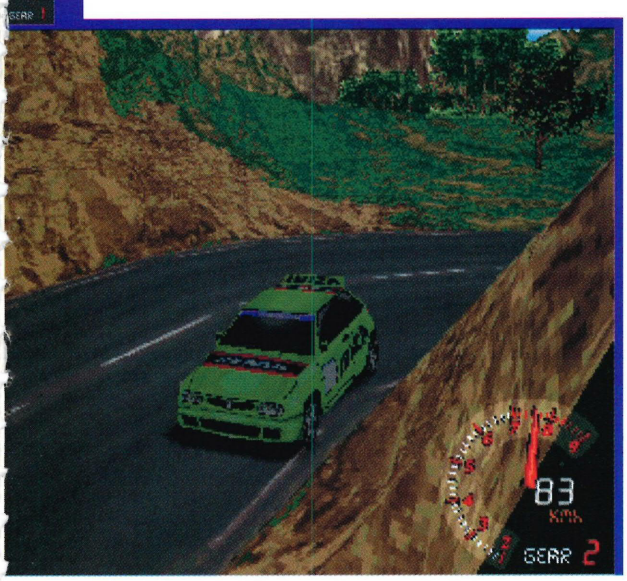


By Steve McNally

Ocean Drive



I don't fully understand one of the claims made about the game but it certainly sounds impressive and perhaps you'll be able to make more sense of it than me. Apparently, all previous car racing games on the PlayStation have been written using the development tools provided by the machine's manufacturers. V Rally, at least according to Infogrames, represents the next step forward as the game directly accesses the machine's GTE and GPU processors and takes full advantage of the PlayStation's capabilities. Fascinating



In association with the research labs at the top rally car constructors, the developers have produced a dynamic engine reproducing faithfully the control of each of the makes of car in the game. The engine will react to all the aspects of rally driving such as road and off road grip, collisions, acceleration, braking, controlled skidding and so on

DO WE REALLY NEED ANOTHER driving game? That was the question I asked myself when a preview version of V Rally came into the office. Out of the current crop everyone will have at least one favourite, and that begs the question of when will people draw the line? Probably after V Rally, if at all, to be honest. If initial impressions are the same for the final version, the racing game genre is far from dead on its feet.

This was designed and programmed by the French Infogrames team who are aiming for this to become at least the PlayStation equivalent of Saturn's Sega Rally. There's a wealth of development experience behind the title, going back around a decade. And we're talking about a quality back catalogue of some 15 or so games so you know that quality of design isn't going to be a problem. And having played the game, it has to be said neither is gameplay.

At the moment only compatible with Namco's twisty NegCon pad, control is tricky to get the hang of at first but you'll be powersliding round the bends in no time. Don't panic though, you won't have to shell out for a new joypad as well to play V Rally, the final version will have provisions for all manner of control methods – from standard joypad to proper steering wheels.

The game, as its name suggests, covers all aspects of world rally racing – anything from Monte Carlo to the gritty realism of the RAC Rally here in England. Perhaps the most exciting part is an uncomplicated track generator that allows you to create your very own custom courses in literally minutes.

Up to four players will be able to take part in a race using a combination of linked up machines and a split screen and this, combined with a number of other exciting features, make this the one future race game that I personally am looking forward to.

Infogrames' name used to be synonymous with top quality games but a lack of products in recent times has led to a situation where a lot of new gamers may never even have heard of the company. All that looks about to change because, along with V Rally, a number of other top secret projects are in progress that should push its name right to the forefront of video gaming once again!

Release Date: August '97

Game Titles **All Star Soccer & Machine Hunter**
Software House **Eidos Interactive** *If this preview was a song, it would be Rage Against*

Something of a Phenomenon... maybe

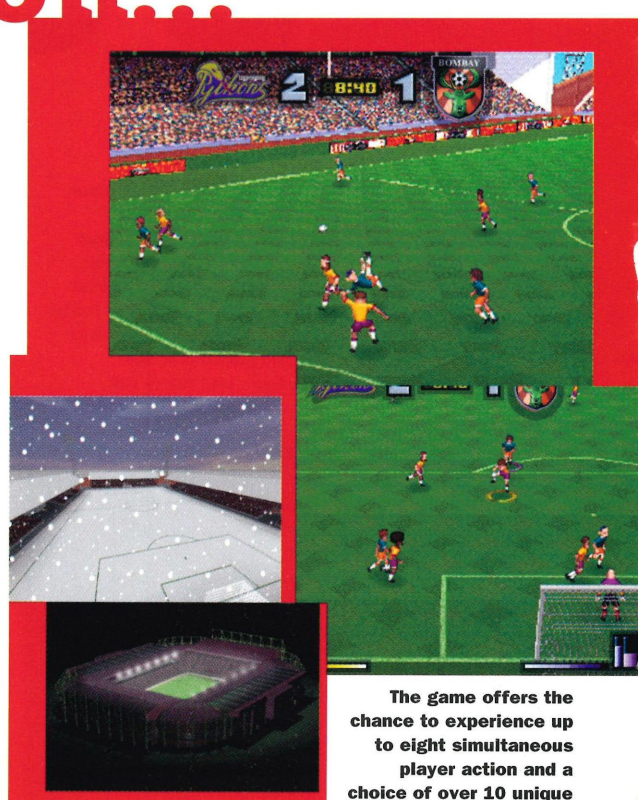
By Jay Sharples

FOR THOSE OF YOU CONFUSED by the inane introduction, Eidos is about to release two new throbbing interactive delights for your PlayStation. One involves racing about the screen hunting out missing droids and is aptly named Machine Hunter, and the other is a laugh-a-minute soccer title called All Star Soccer. I say 'laugh-a-minute' because Eidos is advising all who play their latest football incarnation – formerly known as White Lines & Grass – to do so with their tongues firmly in their cheek.

Not only is the game awash with top-class and highly humorous quips from TV's hilarious sports impersonator Alistar McGowan, but gamers are asked to create their very own super team by altering players' physical appearances and mental attributes. These range from the mild-mannered 'which set-play to use', to the more violent 'shall I stick the boot in?' as you graft comical caricatures of today's top stars onto the shoulders of your hapless centre half.

All the usual football gubbings are in here to be tampered with, plus you'll also get all that Soccer '97 addictive gameplay to lovingly caress. From what we've seen, All Star Soccer looks the business and we await our review version with bated breath.

Release Date: May '97

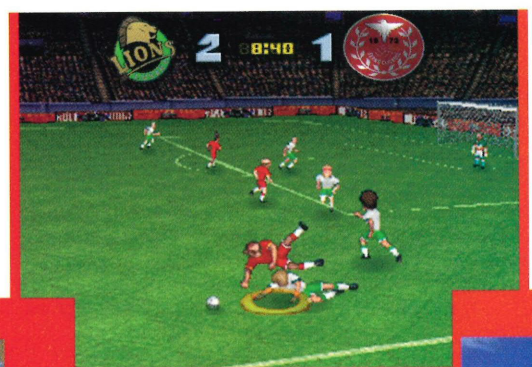


The game offers the chance to experience up to eight simultaneous player action and a choice of over 10 unique soccer stadiums to mess about on. The multi-player options can get a tad frantic yet are immensely enjoyable, but it's in the traditional two-player mode of old that the real footballing action lies



The Machine doing a cover version of 'White Lines'. Why? I have I no idea...

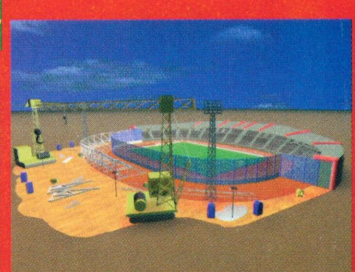
36 fictitious soccer squads are available to choose from, these include the Amsterdam Dykes, the Sofia Wrens and the hilarious Montevideo Pythons. A large majority of the instantly selectable character heads are from fictitious players, although some will remind you of certain members of the Premier League. Expect to see the likes of the attractive Peter Beardsley, mop-topped Ruud Gullit and the big kicking Eric Cantona among the comedy bonces



All the motion capture used in the game's creation has helped the programming team develop a pretty smart intelligence system which determines just how fast an on-screen player should react under differing circumstances. This allows quick and precise movement of all the on-screen characters, as each reaction isn't hindered by the character's animation running too slow











Each of the game's footballing heroes are equipped with a wide variety of 'trick' moves as well as all the usual lobs, kicks and headers. These were introduced to increase longevity of the title and long term interest was also the aim when compiling the competition side of things. All the action can be spread out over several differing modes of play now including Friendly, League, Cup, Combined League And Cup, Mini League and Mini Cup



International Super Star Soccer Pro

▶ginger goatee-d Lalas in the USA XI.

With 'personalities' coming back into footy these days, refs need to be on their mettle more than ever before. Thankfully they aren't too strict - in fact they're as wildly inconsistent as real ones. It must be said, however, that refs' decisions are the indirect cause of two of ISSS Pro's major faults.

Whenever a foul is committed, and believe me there are more than a few, an instant action replay occurs with an extreme close-up of the incident and the resulting semi-recumbent posture of the victim. If the ref books the offender, the commentator excitedly exclaims, "It's a yellow card. That's an early bath." No it's not mate, a red card means the player has being sent off - an example of appalling play-testing during development.

On a positive note, the goalkeepers' AI is just about right - and is configurable. Now and then they'll make howling handling errors, but more often than not they'll catch crosses, dive bravely at forwards' feet and clear back passes confidently. Every touch of the ball, however, is accompanied by a tinny sound effect - sliding tackles sound like nails being filed and running sounds like horses' hooves on cobbles.

Speaking of cobbles, the set pieces seem to have been cobbled together. You haven't got much of an idea where the ball is going to go as there is no on-screen indicator. For the defending team, therefore, it's nigh on impossible to tell where the ball is going - not an ideal state of affairs, and another of the numerous niggles spoiling what could so easily have been a world-beating footy release.

The half-time stats screen shows that the match has been about as incident-packed as a game of draughts





Did you know that Muller is German for Miller? And that C is German for S?



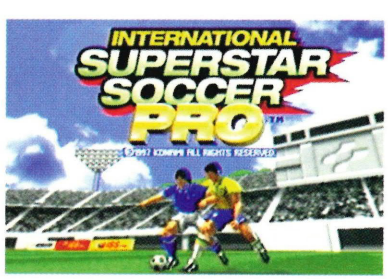
Never before have footballers been such muscle-bound fellahs as these. Even the ref's got pecs like Arnie

GENRE COMPARISON

Game ***Int Superstar Soccer Deluxe***
Software House ***Konami***

Football games need an element of unpredictability to re-create the fickle nature of the real sport. In this respect, International Superstar Soccer Deluxe (ISSSD) hammers aesthetically pleasing footy games such as Actua which suffers from limited gameplay.

With a league set-up option to boot, ISSSD is more of an honest toiler than a talented playmaker but can take pride in the fact that, although its only noticeable enhancement over its 16bit non-deluxe version is a small injection of pace, it still more than holds its own in the PlayStation football league table.



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PRO SCORE

GAME **International Superstar Soccer Pro**
GENRE **Sports sim**
SOFTWARE HOUSE **Konami**
CONTACT **01895 853 000**
RELEASE DATE **Out Now**
PRICE **£44.99**

ISSS Pro is an improvement on its predecessor Deluxe, especially in the visual department, but unfortunately doesn't play that much better. The annoyances that ultimately spoiled Deluxe remain, such as the lack of any real control over shooting and the overall sluggish pace. The speed boost helps marginally, but when in use it's impossible to make the player controlling the ball change direction. It's a staccato sort of game that never really flows and often leaves you frustrated rather than elated. Soccer '97 and Striker '96 remain a much better bet, and unless you're filthy rich and/or can't get enough PlayStation footy games, you're best off plumping for Eidos' and Warner's aforementioned efforts.

GRAPHICS **8**
SOUND **5**
GAMEPLAY **7**
LASTABILITY **7**

7½

DAN **With so many other, superior footy titles just out, I can't really see why you'd buy this. It all looks a bit dated, and the slow, trudging players make each match last for hours. Not even worth seven and a half**

JAY **It all looks impressive and stringing together a series of perfect passes resulting in a tasty shot on goal will send shivers down your spine. Unfortunately, the action tends to take place at a snail's pace, which spoils it**

STEVE **Didn't draw me in at all because of the stilted nature of the gameplay. Looks fine but with the likes of Soccer '97 trouncing it in just about every department you can't help but feel let down by this**

ANDY **It all looks very realistic and with all the different touches you can pull off it's got everything a footy game requires. The only problem is, as everyone has mentioned, it's all a little too slow and cumbersome**

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VISA Access SWITCH

Game Title **Actua Golf '97**
Software House **Gremlin** *As companies gear up to get golfing sensation Tiger Woods to*

Caddy Shack!

By Steve McNally

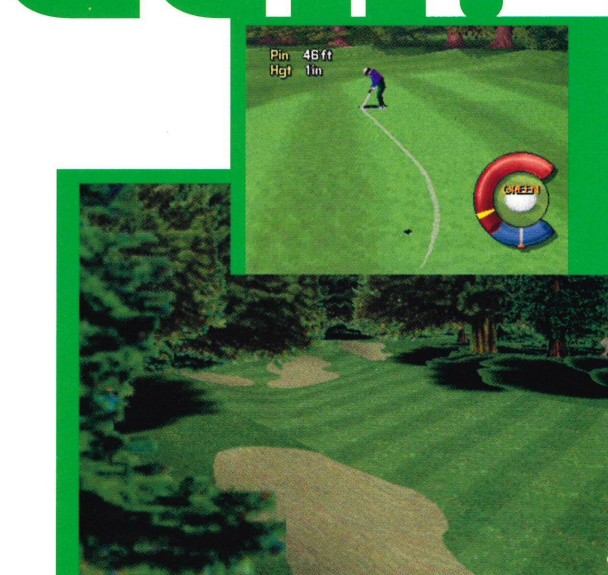
GOOD OLD GOLF. TEDIOUS? NEVER! Well, perhaps sometimes. Oh, alright then, most of the time. But all that's about to change, thanks to the exciting antics of one particular young man who is causing quite a stir. Suddenly it's cool to like watching golf. Nike is pushing it, and all over the country kids are picking up a big metal stick and hitting little balls really hard with it. Thankfully some of the less violent ones are trying their hand at golf too!

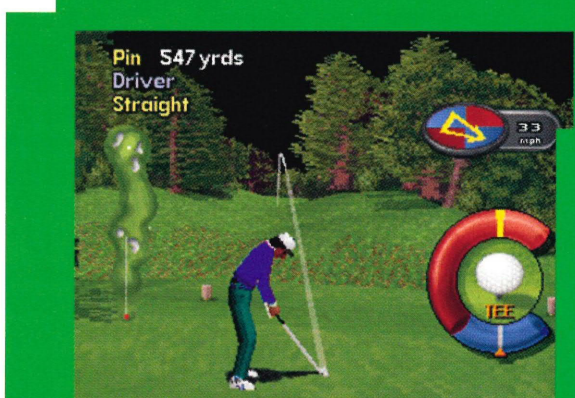
So now that the kids love it, what better than if someone were to bring out the best golf game yet seen on the PlayStation? That'd be just about perfect timing for the publishers in question to clean up wouldn't you say? Well, blow me down if Gremlin hasn't gone and done it! It has you know! In a masterpiece of marketing that can at best be described as spawny, Actua Golf '97 is not only coming out just when real golf looks credible for the first time ever, it's also far and away the finest recreation of the sport on this particular console to date. Talk about a hole in one!

I still hate golf by the way so don't get the idea that I've been caught up in all this pseudo-furore that surrounds it at the moment. Any sport where the top prize in one of the biggest tournaments in the world is a green blazer is going along the wrong lines if you ask me. I want tonnes of cash, or at least an enormous great big gold trophy, before I'll get out of bed at seven in the morning and spend the day walking around in a big field with stupid trousers on, I can tell you!

Why then was Actua Golf the best example of its genre? Well, it just was, can't we leave it at that? No? Okay then, if I must! Firstly it didn't spoon feed you through the early parts by making everything really easy. Play on the default settings and if you got your swing wrong you will slice or hook the ball quite some distance (relative of course to how badly you missed the no hook/slice line thing in the swingometer). Golf '97 will have all these features and more in its corner. Actua Golf '97 forces you to stand on your own two feet and learn to time your swings right from the off. It may seem harsh at first, but once you stop practising and move into the more serious competitions against the computer 'pros' you'll be thankful you're standards are as high as they are, believe me!

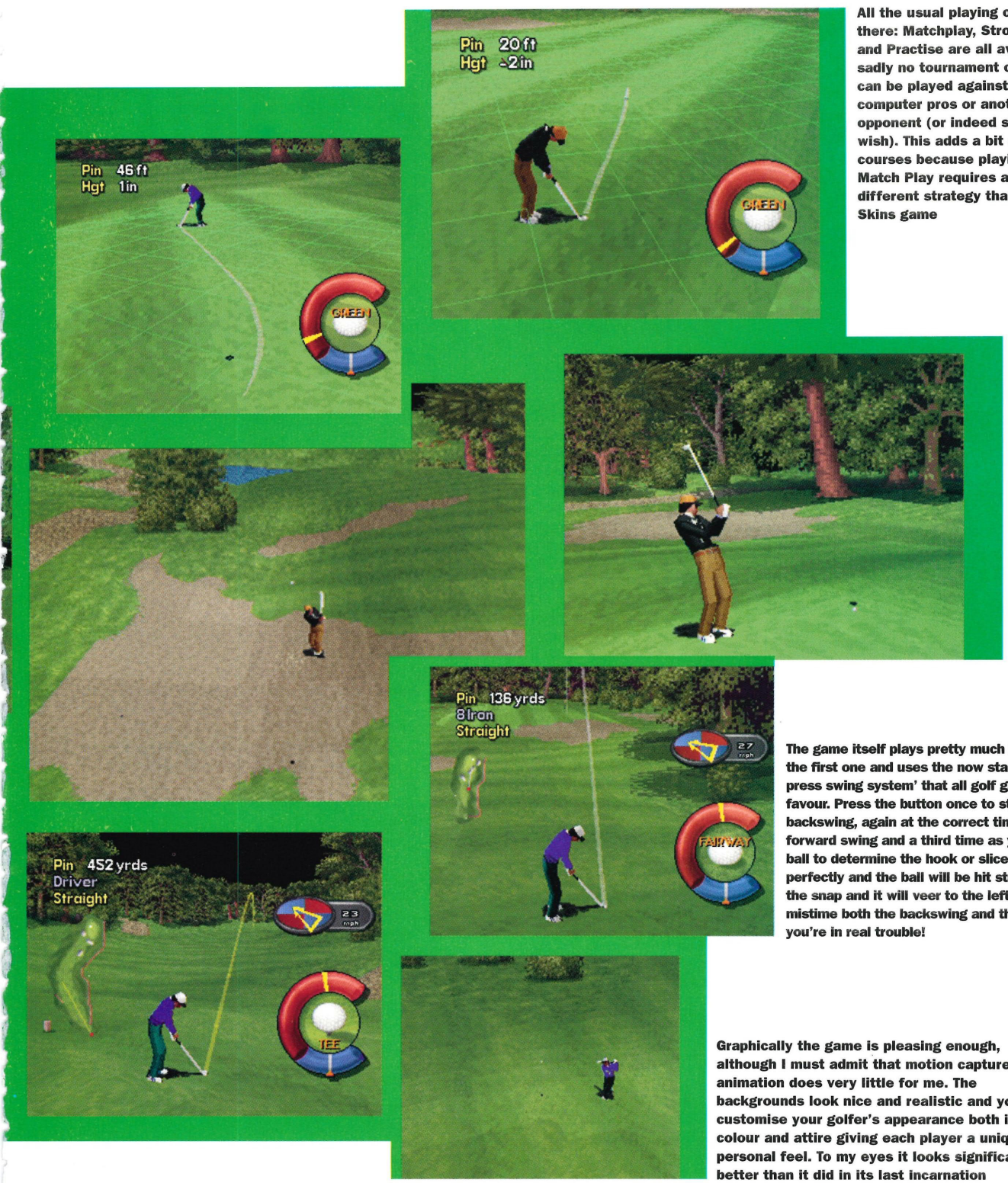
Release Date: July





Unlike the first game, there are plenty of courses for you to negotiate. All are well designed, reasonably realistic (course two perhaps has a touch too much sand for its own good) and fiendishly difficult. Another couple of courses would have made the original perfect and this one has them!

put pen to deal, Gremlin launches a pre-emptive strike with a '97 update of Actua Golf



All the usual playing options are in there: Matchplay, Strokeplay, Skins and Practise are all available (but sadly no tournament option) and all can be played against either computer pros or another human opponent (or indeed several if you wish). This adds a bit of spice to the courses because playing a round in Match Play requires a whole different strategy than playing a Skins game

The game itself plays pretty much identically to the first one and uses the now standard 'three press swing system' that all golf games seem to favour. Press the button once to start the backswing, again at the correct time to start the forward swing and a third time as you strike the ball to determine the hook or slice. Time it all perfectly and the ball will be hit straight, mistime the snap and it will veer to the left or the right, mistime both the backswing and the snap and you're in real trouble!

Graphically the game is pleasing enough, although I must admit that motion captured animation does very little for me. The backgrounds look nice and realistic and you can customise your golfer's appearance both in skin colour and attire giving each player a uniquely personal feel. To my eyes it looks significantly better than it did in its last incarnation

Game Title **Agent Armstrong**
Software House **Virgin Interactive** *I say, a platform chappie who gives evil doers a ruddy*

Kneel Arm

By Dan Whitehead

CONSIDERING ITS STATUS AS THE world's favourite home games system, the chunky grey bag of giggles we call PlayStation has really been neglected in two of the most popular game genres - platformers and side scrolling shooters.

These are classic game styles that have remained linchpins of the games world since time began and yet, when compared to older systems, the PSX can only really boast a handful of such titles. Pandemonium and Crash Bandicoot are about the only platformers worth bothering with and X2 is the only 'classic' style shoot 'em-up I can think of off the top of my head.

Before you start pulling your hair out and wailing like a banshee, take a look over there. Galloping through the mist, astride a noble white steed comes Virgin Interactive. And what's that behind it? A golden cart, with Agent Armstrong sitting majestically inside.

Armstrong is something of a rarity these days. For a start, it's a 100 per cent home-grown title, full of British humour. And secondly, it's a highly promising amalgamation of those two great game styles I was gibbering on about earlier. If these screenshots are anything to go by, it looks not unlike a more shooty version of Donkey Kong Country from those heady SNES days. Which is exciting enough news to make my wrists vibrate at the very thought.

You'll control the square-jawed stiff upper lipped Armstrong as he chases the evil Syndicate, who are involved in all manner of foppery and general cad-like behaviour. Sort of like those wicked terrorist groups that James Bond used to battle against, called things like THRUSH and SMERSH. Hopefully The Syndicate in the game will come complete with a sinister bald Blofeld figurehead.

The action takes place over 30 levels of jumping and bashing, with locations including Chicago's dock area, deep Jungles and old fashioned airfields. There's even, according to Virgin's over excitable press release, an underwater level where Agent A. has to swim for his life.

With some quality comedy FMV promised, as well as 12 separate period music tracks to add atmosphere, this is already looking like a solid and playable little tinker. Hopefully the gameplay won't have to suffer to make room for all the graphical trickery Virgin has planned, but if things stay on course I can see this becoming a firm favourite.

Release date: June 1997



Armstrong's selling point will undoubtedly be its uniquely British style. Expect lots of amusing '30s speech, with lashings of 'What Ho!' and 'Terribly sticky wicket, old chap' gags. The potential is there for a cringingly unfunny Monty Python rehash, but I reckon that Virgin has got enough upstairs to get the balance right. It's quite a brave move I reckon, as I'm not sure how well the Americans, Japanese and even the rest of Europe will react to the distinctly UK humour. Still, it gives me a nice warm glow to see the home market being given priority for a change



good hiding in the 1930s. Top hole work from Branson's bunch, eh?

strong!









Another feature which sounds like it could be a source of smirks and lung-crushing hysteria is the replay mode. The press release is rather vague about when you can use it, but it looks like you'll be able to view action replays of your battles against the end of level baddies. This is a pretty cool idea in itself, but here's the sucker punch. The replays are presented in a realistic '30s style, complete with crackly black and white visuals and a reserved, plummy BBC World Service commentary. Which, let's face facts, looks like it could be a smart laugh











OK, technical stuff now. Virgin reckons that Agent Armstrong will feature 'real 3-D arcade quality action'. Arcade quality action I can believe, but only a booze-addled bat would look at these screenshots and say they were 'real' 3-D. Not that I'm much bothered. As long as it plays well, Virgin can tout it as a cure for the common cold for all I care. And it does look good, doesn't it? It runs at 60 frames per second as well, which, I've been told by our team of captive eggheads who explain the boring techy side of games to us, is very clever

Game Title **Clay Fighter Extreme**
Software House **Interplay** *Hey, wake up Morph! Are you coming out to play? Watch out*

Morph Live

By Alex Lee

THE ONLY FIGHTING GAME THAT combines cartoon-style humour with eccentric, off the wall characters moulded in 3-D 'clay' to produce a comical, yet competitive versus beat 'em-up. This is number three in the Clay Fighter series and there are 10 new characters and 17 new environments to scrap in.

Although the beat 'em-up genre is already massive on the PlayStation - representing over 18 per cent of 32-bit console sales - with many games battling for supremacy (and our money), Interplay is confident that 'breakthroughs', Clay Fighter Extreme (CFE)'s unique selling point, should see the game safely into the upper echelons of the chart.

Breakthroughs, CFE style, are when a fighter is thrown into a building and the fight continues in that area, away from the main pagga arena. Each environment has two or three breakthrough areas, so it's not a case of having to discover hidden codes or anything fiddly like that, just launch into an attack and carry on taking out your aggression on your opponent elsewhere.

As you'd expect from a modern beat 'em-up, each of the 10 all-new characters is capable of awesome combination attacks and finishing moves, known as claytalities (boom boom). A further addition to sate games players' appetites for original features is the 'situation hit'. When Hobocop is kicked up the arse he'll react by pulling a moony. All the characters have 'funny' moments which PS Pro will reveal in the fullness of time. As in Tekken, there's an instant replay of the action preceding the final blow.

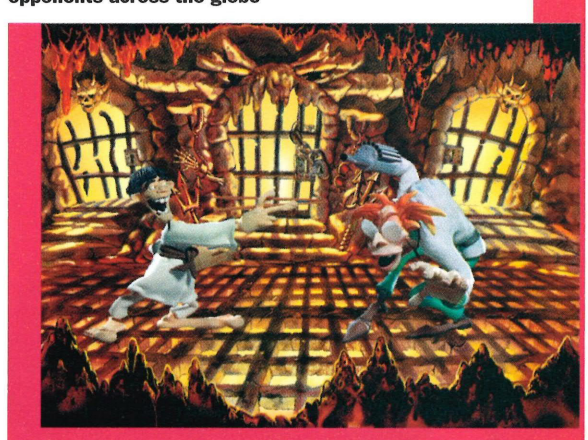
As well as contending with mad mullers made out of clay doing all sorts of 'hilarious' things, various slapstick objects fall from the sky throughout. Don't be surprised to see flying pigs and falling kitchen sinks dropping from above.

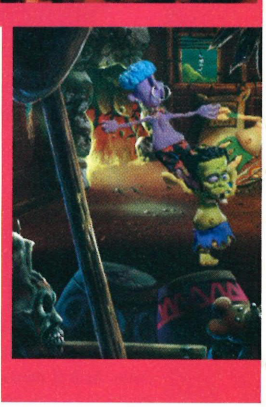
Finally, rather than having blood splattering all over the shop, bits of clay fly off the fighters when they're hit - the harder they're hit, the more clay flies off. From what I remember of the 16bit versions, the sprites were massive and solid-looking - a decent enough foundation upon which to build a 32bit version. Clay Fighter Extreme will be reviewed in PlayStation Pro soon, before any other PlayStation mag gets its hands on it. That goes without saying.

Release date: May



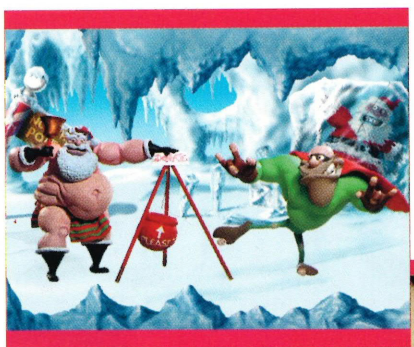
In a brave departure from merely advertising in the 'specialist press', such as PlayStation Pro, Interplay is to put a lot of its advertising budget into buying exposure within DC Comics. People with access to the Internet will be able to play Clay Fighter Extreme against opponents across the globe



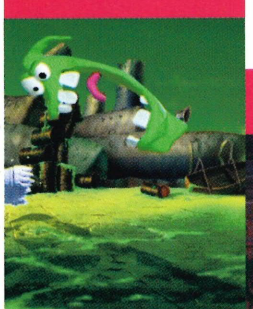


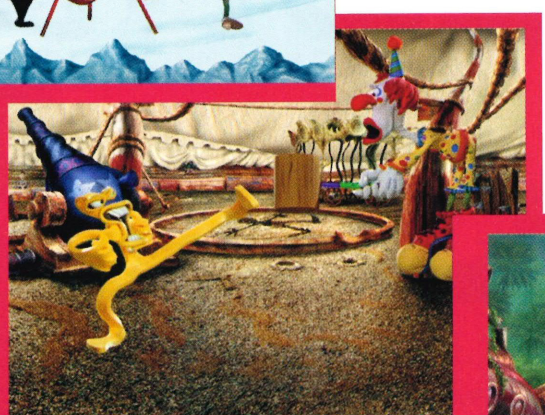
Interplay's successful scrapping series continues with an all-new adventure. Clay Fighter Extreme is the third instalment of the acclaimed line of beat 'em-ups and, given the fact that there'll be six months worth of saturation advertising, it should prove just as popular as its 16-bit incarnations

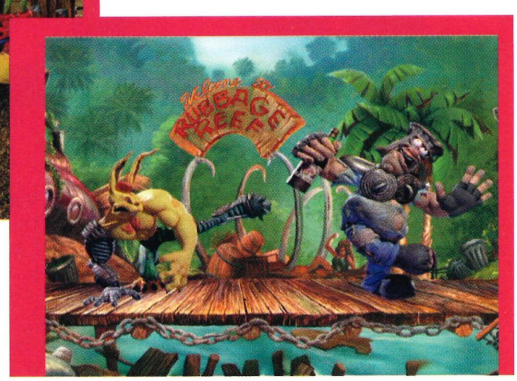
today, Morph is on the loose again



Clay Fighter Extreme promises to be the only fighting game that combines humour with solid, in-depth gameplay, making for a comical and competitive beat 'em-up. With the revolutionary 'breakthroughs' as its unique selling point, Interplay's latest offering should bump up the series' unit sales to over half a million world-wide (sales of the first two instalments currently stand at 360,000)



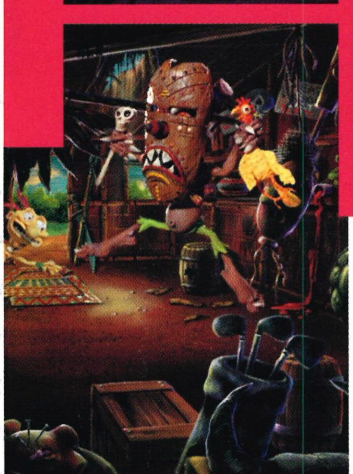








Because CFE is a fighting game with added comedy, it's expected to appeal to a broad range of gamers. Beat 'em-up fans of all ages should see something in CFE that they like. Rather than having blood splattering all over the shop, bits of clay fly from the fighters when they're hit - the harder they're hit, the more clay flies





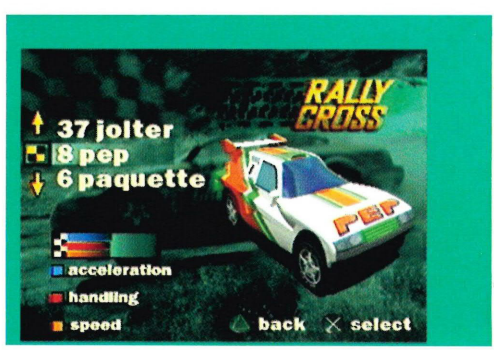
As you'd expect from a PlayStation beat 'em-up, each of the 10 all-new characters is capable of awesome combination attacks and finishing moves, known as claytalities (boom boom). A further addition to sate games players' appetites for original features is the 'situation hit'. When Hobocop is kicked up the arse he'll react by pulling a moony

Game Title **Rally Cross**
Software House **Sony** *Two rally games in one month? Not that unlikely given the lack of*

Dirty Driving



Up to four players can participate with a multi tap but disappointingly, the frame rate drops quite dramatically as the PlayStation creaks and moans under the strain. Even in two player mode this happens but the slowdown will be much less noticeable and indeed only happens when there are other cars on screen. It's no excuse though and more of an effort should really have been made to reduce its effect



By Steve McNally

I THINK EVEN THE MOST loyal PlayStation owner will be forced to admit that Sega Rally on the Saturn is not only the best rallying game on any format, but also one of the greatest racing games ever seen outside of the arcades. The PlayStation has, until now, not even been able to offer a contender, let alone a challenger, but all that is about to change dramatically.

With this Sony effort and Ocean's excellent looking V Rally looming large on the horizon, the PlayStation has not one but two games that are shaping up nicely and both look capable of knocking their competitor from its lofty perch.

Rally Cross is very nearly complete and, even though this is only a preview, I have to say that I've already enjoyed playing this more than any of the big name racers that are already out. It looks absolutely fantastic and the way the cars bounce around the tracks is ultra realistic (it's even possible to drive on two wheels should you hit a ramp side on).

Despite a little tweaking on the handling of the car being required this is already difficult to fault. Once you're used to it, you see that it it's really well done, just a little tricky to get the hang of at first. Maybe some kind of easier difficulty level wouldn't go amiss.

Whether this will happen or not is doubtful because Rally Cross is already out in America and most changes between the PAL and NTSC versions usually only relate to optimising the UK ones in terms of speed and screen borders.

Even with that one tiny flaw, I can't see this favouring any less than very well indeed when it comes in to do the rounds of the magazines (next month with a bit of luck).

From a personal point of view, I'm looking forward to ruining my proud record of never having reviewed a PlayStation racing game.

Release Date: Summer '97

ideas kicking around at the moment, but two potential Sega Rally beaters? We'll see...

The game initially features only three tracks which can be raced in either direction. Complete the pro difficulty level, however, and you'll be rewarded with three completely new courses! Add to that the new shortcuts that open up all the time as you become more experienced, and you've got a game you won't tire of in a hurry!

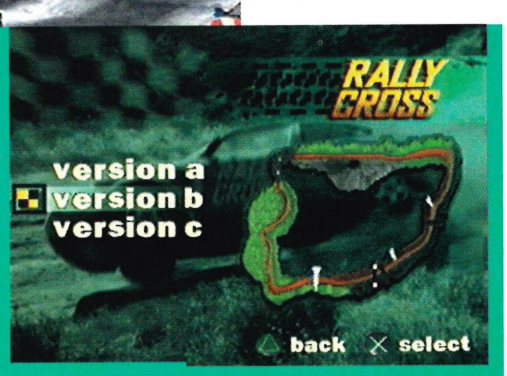






There are a large number of different cars to choose from, each with their own handling and power characteristics, and again, more become available as you get better at the game. To prevent you choosing the best car and roaring through the easier levels, the best vehicles are withheld until you are already pretty good. That way when you step up in quality you won't be completely blasted out of the race!









There are even several different ways to race in single player mode to keep things interesting. Modes include – Unlimited laps (handy for practising your racing technique), Solo (good for learning the circuits with no interference from opponents), Head On (a five lap race against another car on the same track but racing in the opposite direction) and Suicide (same as head on but with three cars racing in the opposite direction!)

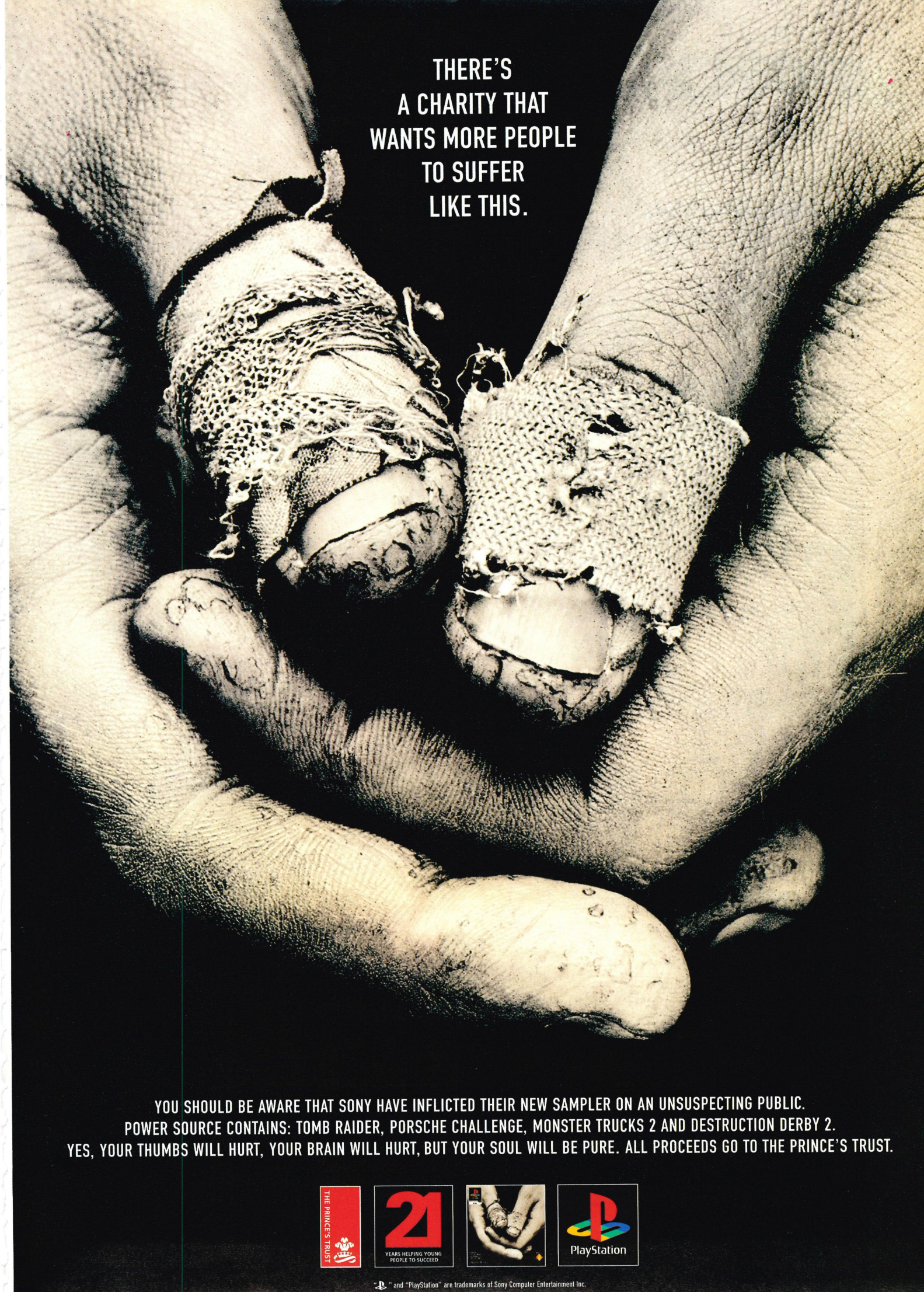


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21
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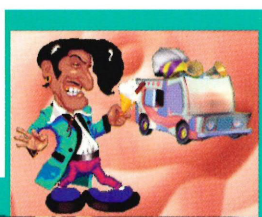
PlayStation

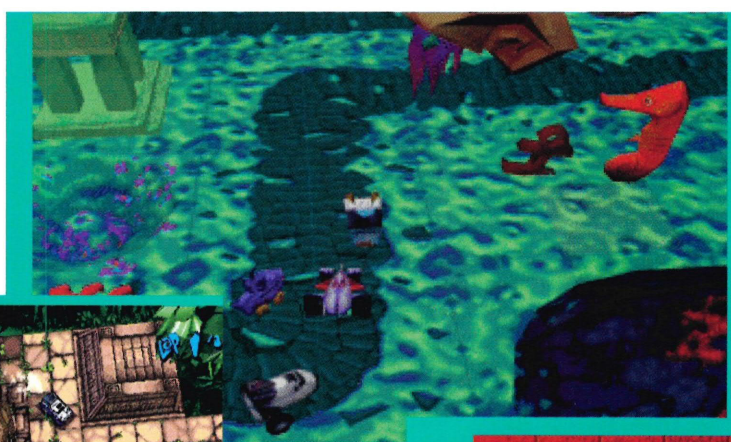
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Game Title **Motor Mash**

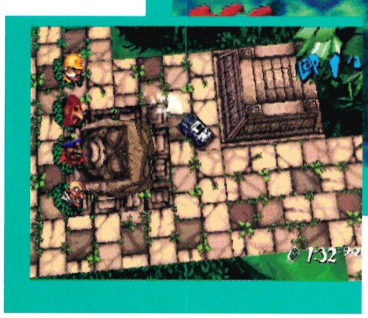
Software House **Ocean** *Motor Toon 2 and Street Racer are soon to have an hilarious ge*

Buck Thruster pilots Thruster 1, a re-modelled space shuttle. Following a software error in his navigation system, Buck is convinced he has landed on another planet and goes around greeting everyone with the message, "I come in peace. Take me to your leader!" His vehicle has good top speed





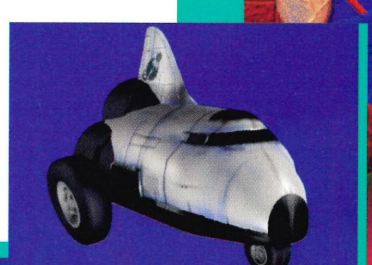




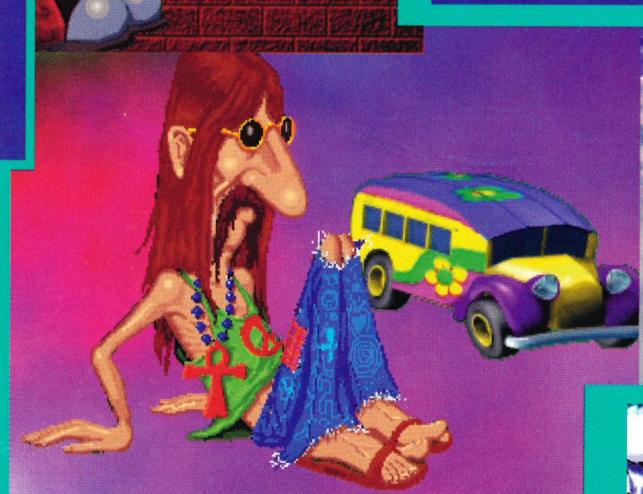
Colonel Smythe-Baggshotte-Smythe, or 'Bunny' as he was known to his friends before he shot them all, enjoys nothing more than visiting exotic locations and single-handedly putting the local wildlife on the Endangered Species list. His monster truck, the Jungle Jalopy, is perfectly suited to off-road driving, but the top speed is nothing to write home about

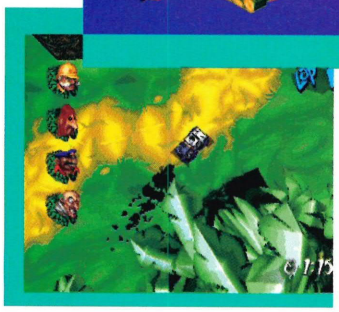










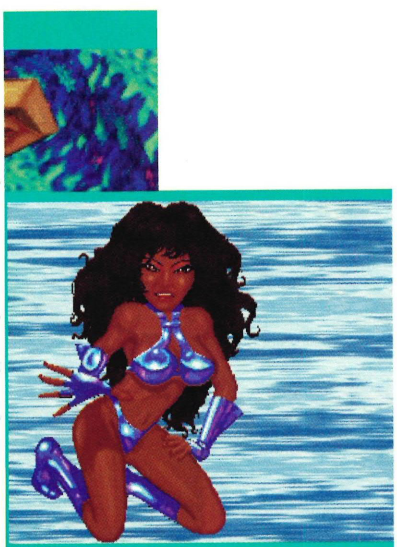


Seamus O'Toole is a self-styled home improvement expert. Driving the Irish Roller (shouldn't that be Rover?), Seamus is unstoppable except when there's a cup of tea on offer. His car has a poor top speed but is very reliable, which for a builder is of utmost importance

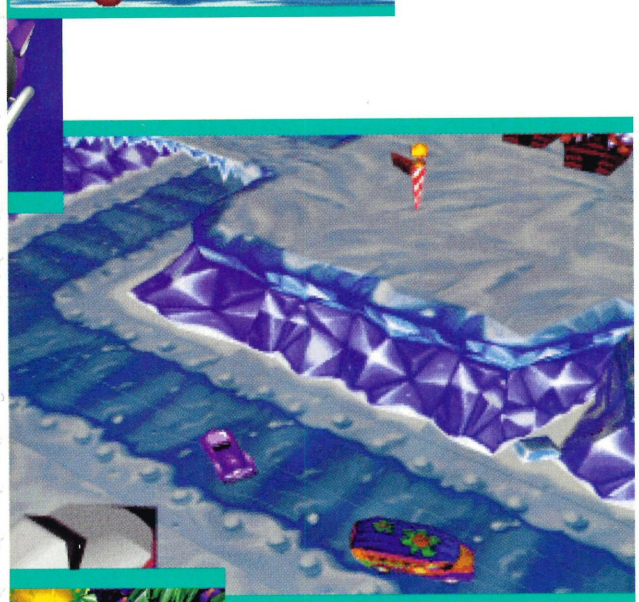


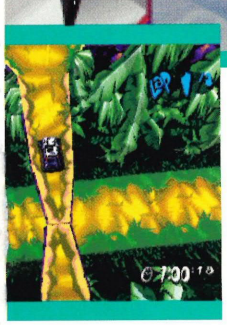
nre rival – introducing Motor Mash from Eutechnyx

Back Seat Potato



Cliché Woman is one of Motor Mash's two birds. She is dedicated to fighting crime, stamping out tyranny and being a pubescent male fantasy. With an hourglass figure and minimalist attire, she drives the Cliché mobile which has the power of invisibility. Her vehicle's main strength is its superb handling capabilities





Donovan Moon is on a mission to promote love, peace and flared trousers. Unfortunately for him, he's stuck in a '60s beatnik timewarp and accidentally entered the race when he mistook his opponents for fellow hippies on their way to Woodstock. His tour bus, the Vibesville Express, has poor top speed but is built to last

By Alex Lee

Motor Mash (programmed by Eutechnyx's Ian Copeland – of Micro Machines 2 SNES fame) is Ocean's new cartoon race game. Dissimilar in almost every way to Ocean's two other forthcoming driving games, Total Drivin' and V-Rally, Motor Mash takes place in ridiculous cartoon worlds inspired by the work of Hanna Barbera cartoonist Tex Avery.

Each racing level is themed, with players battling it out across a diversity of mad terrain such as the jungle, Atlantis and Mars. Although the action is viewed from a bird's eye perspective, the worlds are 'real' 3-D environments, with bridges, fly-overs and multi-layered tracks all making an appearance.

Every bit of scenery is created by polygons, thus making it all proper 3-D. A feeling of depth and solidity is created, giving the game an immediate advantage over obvious competitor title Street Racer which never quite immersed the gamer into its courses.

A lot of the scenery can be wrecked, which adds an extra element to the gameplay. For example, if a bridge's supports take enough punishment, the bridge will eventually collapse, causing mayhem for the cars underneath it and those approaching the newly-fallen debris. Furthermore, on one of the Wild West levels, players have to drive across a rickety railway bridge. Unfortunately, the bridge is still in use and the Iron Horse Express is running late! Players must time their acceleration to avoid being hit or, alternatively, leap over the full-speed train.

All 12 characters have a mad array of weapons at their disposal which can be used to obliterate the opposition and move up through the rankings, an element that adds to the crazy fun of playing Motor Mash. In addition, power-ups can either be bought or collected on the tracks.

On the technical side, the graphics were created by the team responsible for the comedy adventure epic Bud Tucker In Double Trouble on the PC. Using 3-D Studio, the vehicles start off as wire-frame meshes before Warner Bros-style texture maps are added to create Motor Mash's unique '3-D cartoon' look. Stay with PlayStation Pro to see whether this cartoon look is what we really want when we review Eutechnyx's latest next month.

Release Date: June

Game Title **Namco Museum Vol 4**
Software House **Sony** *The Namco Museum series just about outgrows the New Romantic*

Curious Quin

By Alex Lee

THE OTHER MONTH I sussed out just what Namco and Sony are playing at. Each time a Namco Museum compilation is released, the corresponding letter appears on the box. This time around, it's 'C', so once this comes out we'll only have the 'O' to look forward to. But do I hear a collective sigh of relief or a resounding groan of dismay? If you read issue six, or any of the previous PlayStation Pros for that matter, you'll know by now that we aren't wildly keen on compilation titles. It's just a cheap excuse for a game, isn't it? In this instance, however, Namco and Sony may just have a leg to stand on when they say, "No it isn't", and I'm inclined to agree.

Whereas the previous three Namco Museum instalments have failed to cause any real excitement in the office (as have the two Greatest Hits compilations from GT), Namco Vol 4 has had Steve and myself whiling away a good few hours playing it. Or, more precisely, playing Pac-Land. Even the normally silent art assistant Gaz passed comment on how good Pac-Land is. But this is, as you know, a non-value judgement preview, so here's what the other four titles are all about without giving away too much.

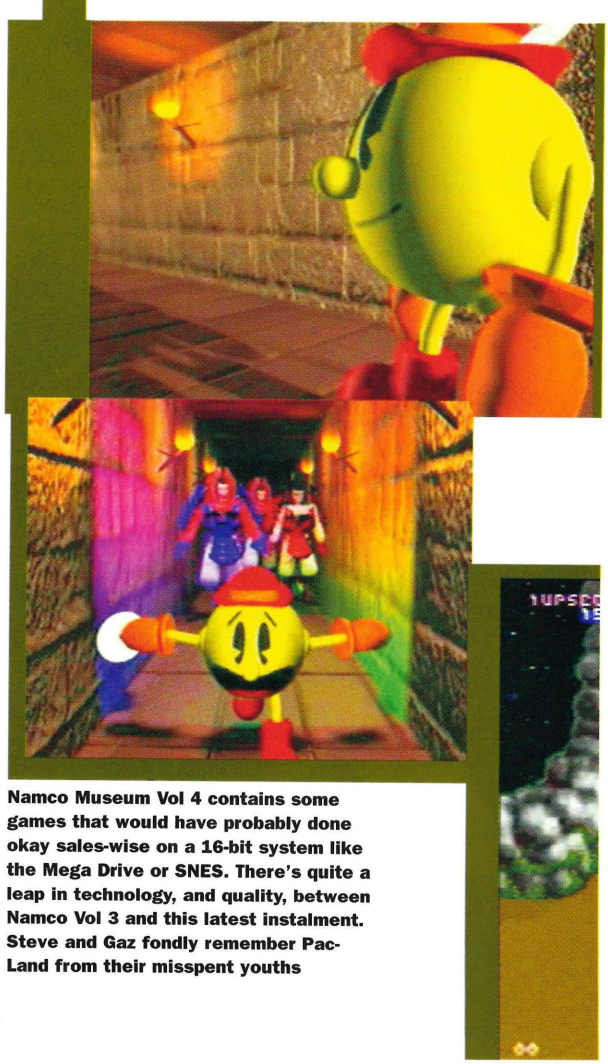
Ordyne is a precursor of the Parodius horizontally scrolling shoot 'em-up series. You know the score, instead of a serious-looking metallic spaceship getting powered up to the max and shooting everything approaching it, it's a daft craft that gets powered up and shoots harmless-looking (though lethal) enemies.

Return Of Ishtar is a mediaeval spell-casting adventure where two of you breeze through a top-down view of the inside of a castle and act all Zelda-like. For those of you who missed the Game Boy, NES and SNES, Zelda was a twee, heavily Japanese-influenced - it was developed over there after all - adventure game that made Nintendo lots of money. Return Of Ishtar probably took plenty of yen in its time as an arcade machine, but none of us can remember seeing it in British arcades. None of us remember playing it, that's for certain.

Assault is a pseudo-update of Battlezone, inasmuch as it's another tank-orientated old arcade game. It's not in 3-D, it's not by Atari (obviously), but does involve controlling a tank in a hostile futuristic setting. The weird thing is the tank can be flipped over but, unlike a woodlouse, doesn't flid about frantically before dying. Instead, it just goes on shooting. Like I said, it's weird.

Genpei, the final title making up the compilation's quintet, has possibly the most potential - for someone who missed out on the arcade game that is. A mystic platform/slash 'em-up, the game switches between three different perspectives as you progress. Of the three, the 'close-up side-on' one looks to be the most fun in a Ghouls N Ghosts/First Samurai (both SNES) sorta way.

Release date: July



Namco Museum Vol 4 contains some games that would have probably done okay sales-wise on a 16-bit system like the Mega Drive or SNES. There's quite a leap in technology, and quality, between Namco Vol 3 and this latest instalment. Steve and Gaz fondly remember Pac-Land from their misspent youths

era with its fourth enthralling instalment

tet

Pac-Land takes the eponymous hero on a journey through an environment that, at first glance, seems as harmless as somewhere the Mr Men would live. Scrape away at the surface, however, and it becomes apparent that things aren't what they seem. There are ghosts everywhere, in cars, buses and on bizarre floaty vessels. And guess what? All they want to do is kill you



Each game is an arcade-perfect simulation, so whatever quirks, bugs and effects the originals boasted, these will too. Distinctly odd, and often a little linear, the challenge of all five titles is not only to amass high scores, but to actually complete the games, which was something of a new concept among mid '80s arcade machines







Although there are only five titles in this compendium of games (recent releases have made us come to expect six), the chances are that Namco Museum Vol 4 will turn out to be the most popular yet. As mentioned before, the quality of the games is higher than on other 'olde', although it must be said that you won't have heard of most of them



Shortly after the five games on this compilation came out in the arcades, British programmers realised that they could do better. The Japanese, us Brits felt, had gone a little mad. The British software industry boomed as a result of the inspiration developers got from Japan's finest arcade machines

Dark Forces

Part 2

You can stay on target for success with this, the second part of Lucas Arts' huge blaster. The challenge is hotting up and only the strongest will live to see tomorrow. Are you tough enough to prevent the Empire from taking over the Universe? You will be if you stick to this guide



MISSION EIGHT

This icy level requires you to locate some ice cleats, otherwise you won't last the course. From the start go to the right. Move slowly or you will slide around too much. Go into the river and downstream.

At the first junction go right. There will be a stormtrooper patrol heading straight for you. Use the wall for protection and blast them like there's no tomorrow. Proceed over the river and past the waterfall on your right.

Go up some stairs and continue to the right until you reach a steep drop. A slide from the edge will result in instant death so stop in plenty of time and blast the trooper in the distance.

Shuffle along the wall to the right and you will see some steps just below you. ❶ One of the steps has the ice cleats just waiting for collection. Go back up the stairs again.

You now have the ice cleats on your feet so your progress is less cumbersome. Go to the left wall and do a huge running jump over to a platform in the distance where the trooper was. Collect his weapon as you make your way around and keep your gun ready to blast other troopers as you round the many corners.

As you progress, you will come across an open window on a higher level. Throw thermal detonators up to clear the resistance you'll meet later on. There are also power-ups dotted around inside the recesses on your level.

Find the river, leap in and up the ledge which appears on your left. Pick up more power-ups and return to the edge of the river where you jumped in. You should now cross the river and head towards the far side of the waterfall on your right. There's a hidden entrance. Go inside and collect yet more power-ups after jumping up... go up some icy stairs. ❷ Go inside the river and flow downstream. Blast the two stormtroopers you come across.

Jump onto the same ledge they are on and once you've disposed of them, collect the blue key. ❸ If you turn around you should see a conveyor belt on the other side of a short gap. Do a running jump and land on the belt. If you fail you need to find the door which will bring you back. In this case you need to go into the river and head downstream.

As you pass under an overhang you'll see a ledge on your right. Jump up and blast any resistance away. In the courtyard you'll see a red door with a staircase leading to it. Go up and through the door. You will now be back at the conveyor belt. Get on the conveyor belt and go with it.

Be careful as you reach the other side as the corridors contain many ceiling turrets. This

in itself isn't too bad, but when troops are firing at you from both sides it's much more dangerous. After a couple of sharp turns on the belt you'll come across a corridor with soldiers in the window to your left and a ceiling turret above. A handy trick here is to run back and place a claymore onto the conveyor belt. If this is done correctly it will go around and explode, taking out the ceiling turret. Go back around and blast the soldiers.

Use this method each time you come across the turrets. Have your gun ready to blast any enemy attacks from the side as you go. You will come across a control room to your right where there is plenty of enemy resistance, and a switch on the far wall. You need to blast it on your way past. If you don't you'll have to run back on the belt and try again. Once the door is open you need to get through as quickly as possible to avoid enemy fire.

When you emerge in another room you'll see a conveyor belt and a bunch of enemy soldiers heading for you. Unleash some shots to brush them aside. Go on the new conveyor belt.

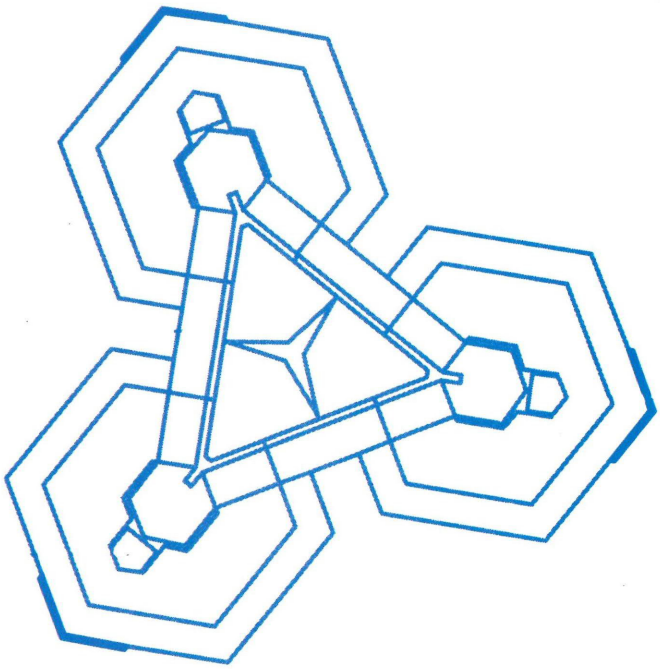
A door will automatically open at the end and you'll need to speed through or you'll be crushed by a compactor above. Jump off the belt as you enter the new room, onto solid ground. ❹ There's a small ledge near the belt that you must go across.

From here you need to go into the slime and run for all you're worth onto the first piston and off again through to a conveyor belt on the other side. Ahead of you there will be another compactor which you can only pass as it is at the top of its movement, otherwise you're in big trouble.

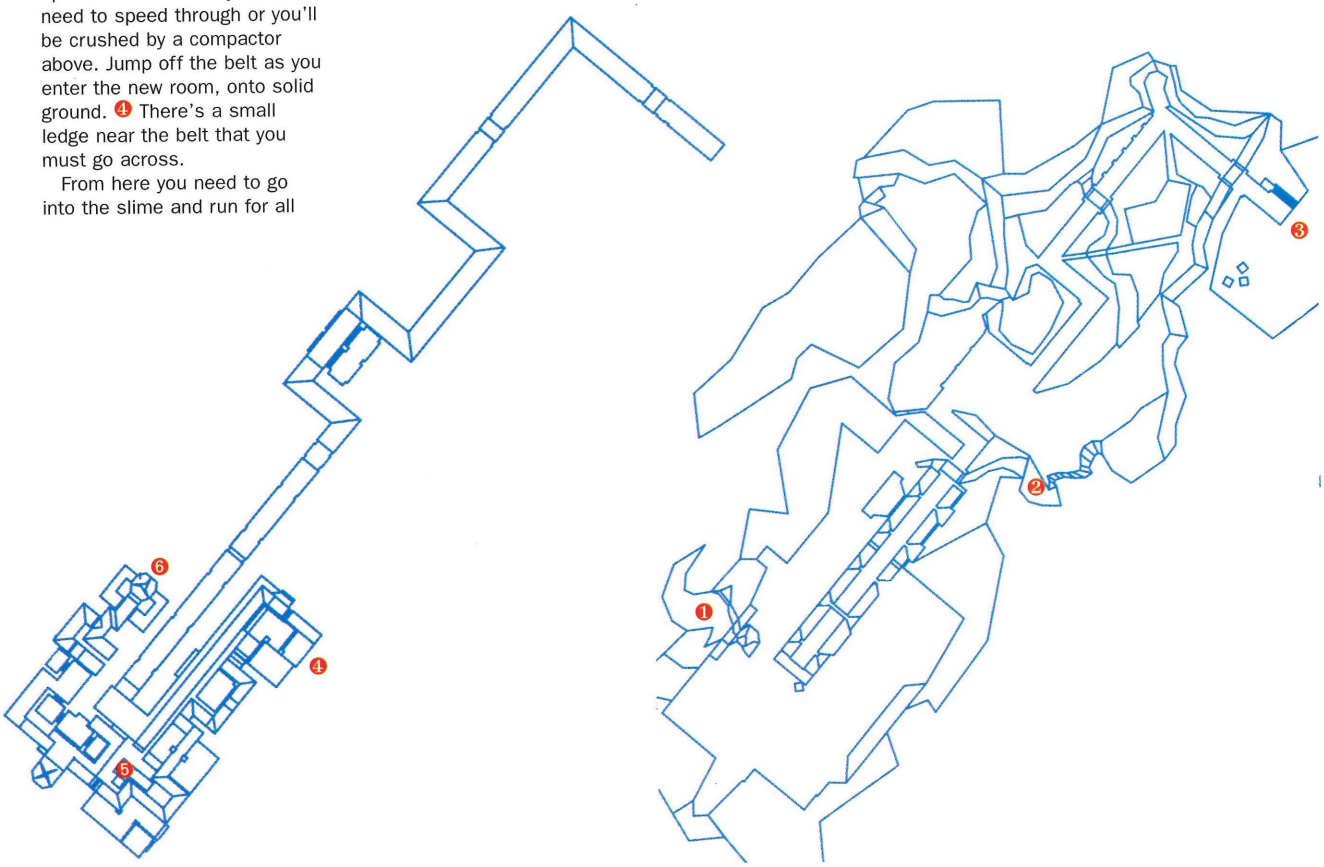
Go around the corner and you'll see another ceiling turret. Run past to avoid unnecessary damage from its shots. You will see soldiers ahead and a great gap you must leap so blast the troopers from a distance then make a running jump to get across the gap.

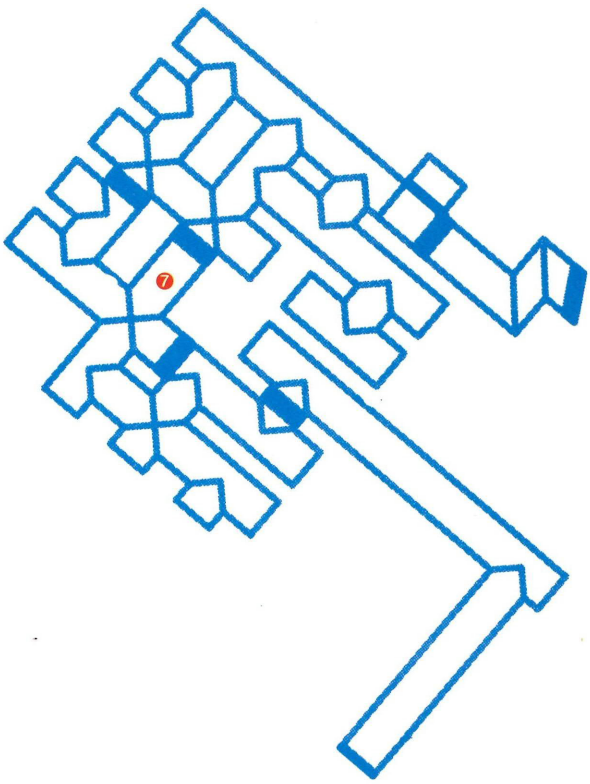
From here, shoot the enemies opposite and flip the red switch. Jump back on the conveyor belt. ❺ Follow the course until you see a hologram. Crouch and jump into the low window and pick up some guns.

As you follow the conveyor belt's path you will see another huge leap you need to make with some enemy soldiers in a room to the right. This is where an officer holds the red key. Either blast them or make the leap across. The other belt is moving in the opposite direction so make sure you use your run option to get through to the room here.



Follow the corridor until you see a door on your right. Go inside and blast the enemies inside. Keep going until you reach the third red door, for which you will require the key. Open it. Collect the extra life inside. Find another switch to turn on a fan - this must be done to allow you to breathe ▶





safely later on when gas fumes escape. Alternatively, you will need to use a gas mask.

A door close by contains an officer and the gas mask. Get the mask. Flick the switch and jump through the panel it opens before it closes again.

You should now be in the corridors which lead to the area you need to be to place your sequencer charges. Go through the doors, using your headlamp if necessary. After going through a few doors you'll come across a spinning blade. To turn this off hit the switch. Another switch on the wall behind also needs activating. 6 This opens two walls so you can drop into the blade shaft. If you didn't switch the fan on earlier you will now need to use the gas mask to breathe.

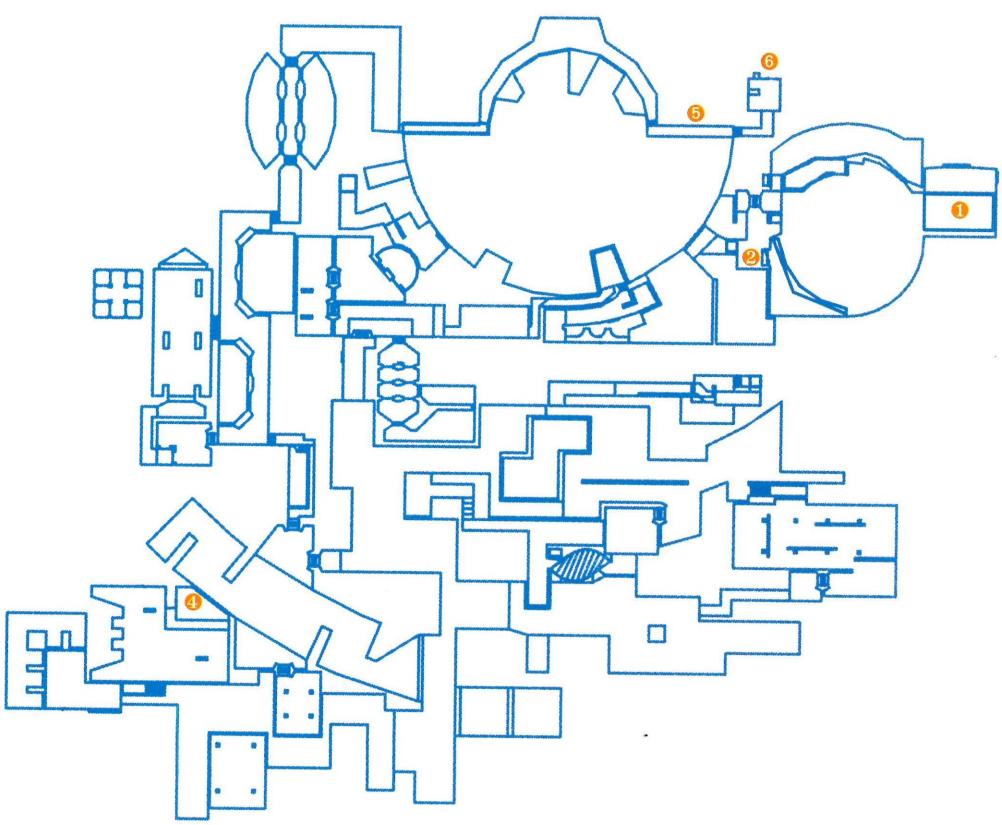
The walkways contain many power-ups so explore and collect as you go. You will see three points on the columns where you need to place your charges.

All is well and good here until you come across a Phase 2 Dark Trooper - much more powerful than the one seen earlier in the game. It's your task to wipe him out before he does the same to you. Use a s much of your arsenal as you can to clear his attack, from claymores to your fusion cutter.

Once the trooper is wasted, a door will appear which you should go through. As you progress through the maze of corridors a Phase 1 Dark Trooper will attack you from behind. Use thermal detonators to take him out. The fusion cutter is useless as the shots bounce off him.

7 Turn left at the first chance you get and be ready to tackle another Phase 1 Dark Trooper. Take him out with claymores or thermal detonators then go through the door.

Proceed through another door and guess what? You'll see yet another Phase 1 Dark Trooper. Blast him the same way as the others. Follow the corridors and find a new door with a switch by it. Flip the switch and you'll see the staircase where you found the ice cleats. Jump across and go left at every turn to locate your ship.



MISSION NINE

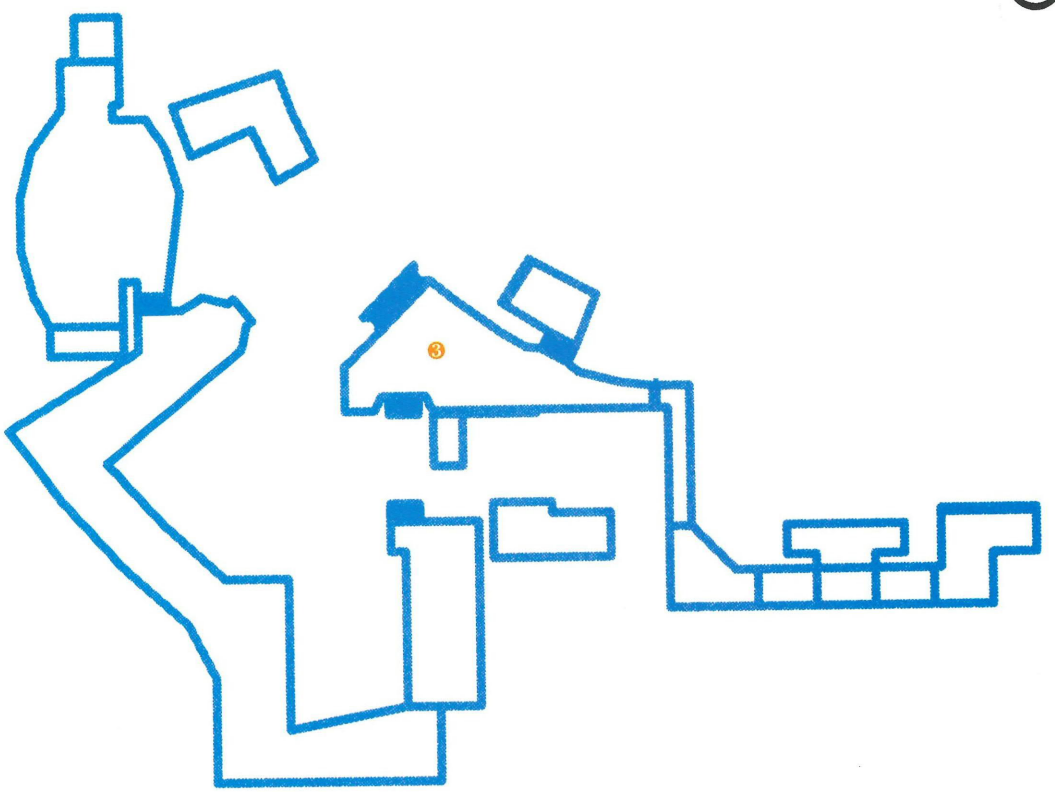
1 From the start you will see a platform moving. It's not essential you go on this. Turn around and head towards an area where you can see the Gamorrean guards. Lob some thermal detonators to flush them out and then wipe them out.

From here, jump to the floor below. A switch controls a moving wall. Flip it, turn around and sprint into its arc. Blast the remote. Look down a small gap between the walls and you will see a switch in the distance. Blast it and the wall will move back so you can make your way past.

On the left is a small crawl space which contains power-ups and a mortar gun. If you haven't flipped the switch, flip it now so that the swinging wall moves to reveal an opening to the left. Crouch and go inside. Blast the Gamorrean guard on the right.

2 Find the yellow key and make your way to the lift at the other end of the room. It rises automatically and the door opens to reveal the room where you may have thrown thermal detonators into earlier to clear Gamorrean guards. Clear any you may have missed.

Beside the lift is a short jump onto a ledge. Make the jump using speed mode onto the moving platform. Inside the dark opening you will see a secret room filled with power-ups. Make a running jump across and then grab the goodies and jump back out to where you were.



You now need to make your way to a ledge where a large jump is needed to make it. Go through the door which uses the yellow key. As you make your way forward, kill the Gamorrean guard and switch to the blaster rifle to take out the Ree-Yees above to the right before they waste you with their grenades.

Once this has been done, turn around and you should see a ledge ahead. Down below are Ree-Yees and Bossks. Lob some thermals down, being careful to not be hit by the ultra-accurate Ree-Yees grenades. Once this is cleared, jump down and pick up a Bossk concussion rifle. There's a room containing power-ups down here. Be warned - there's another Bossk inside!

Your goal for now is a narrow corridor containing tons of Ree-Yees. Blast them away, pick up all their weapons and take a hard right at the end of the corridor. Continue until you see a door which can be opened. You will see a Gamorrean guard inside. Blast him aside and follow the corridors until you see a strange sign on the wall.

In the dark room are numerous Ree-Yees and other enemies. Dodge left and right while taking them out on high and in the distance. Make a dash for the open door on the other side of the room. At the end of this is a red marked door. Blast the guard. Go through the door in here. A Gamorrean guard will attack you from behind so be ready. Kill him and go on the yellow lift on the other side of the room.

As you step off the lift you must shoot some stormtroopers and head down the corridor (killing any opposition as you go) and you'll eventually reach a door. You emerge on a catwalk. Go across to another door. Kill the troopers inside after you've opened it. 3 The dark opening you see on the right is full of danger. Use the right wall for cover and kill the enemy in the distance to stop the hail of grenades coming your way.

Don't move so far that the Bossks in an alcove can see you. Go left and shoot the Bossks from a distance for more safety. Pick up their weapons. Find the red door and open it. Before going in throw in some grenades to clear the claymores and then pick up the power-ups.

The yellow door opens to reveal a Ree-Yees across the way. Blast him. In a corner near the red door is a lone claymore. Lob in a grenade to clear it away and then head down towards it. Open a false panel and go inside the duct after switching on your headlamp.

Shoot enemies and move onwards. You will come across some compactors and see a couple of power-up rooms - one to the left, one straight ahead. Crouch and run into the room on the left first and then do the same for the end room which contains an extra life. Go back to the main room once again.

When you reach the catwalk you came across earlier turn and make a leap for the platform below. Go into the first door on the left. You will be met by a zigzag forcefield. There's a stormtrooper at the end of the room. Go into the left, then cut across to the right and left again. There's a claymore at the end so go close to trigger it and then back up quickly to avoid the blast.

The room you go into has a tough Bossk inside so bung a load of grenades in to do some damage and then crouch as you enter the room with all guns blazing. Collect the infrared goggles and go back past the forcefield and to the platform again after opening a false panel in the room with the forcefield before you leave. Grab the extra life inside after lobbing in a grenade to clear the claymore.

Once back on the platform, go into the other door where you'll emerge in a huge area. There are numerous Bossks here so shoot them from a distance and make a dash for the light coloured wall, turn left and then right to avoid the grenades thrown by the ever accurate Ree-Yees on the balconies.

Continue until you see the last ledge on the right and jump onto it. There's a hidden entrance at the back. Go close in on the Bossks and blast them before entering the door at the other end. Blast the guard across the way and then go back into the other room once again. Go to the far end of the room and into a large room. Before going inside, find a small area where you can blast some defenders away to make the journey much safer.

When you reach the room there are three ways you can go. Don't go down the steps yet. Go down the straight corridor and flip the switch you see. Turn and blast the Bossk ▶



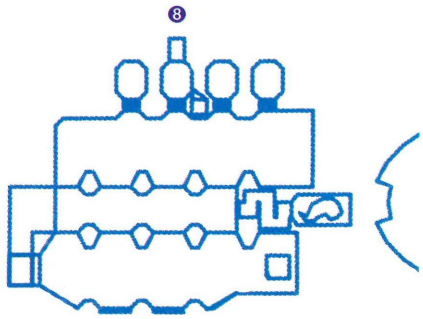
hideout you've just revealed. Pick up the power-ups and make your way downstairs.

Have your fusion cutter ready and crouch to blast the tightly packed enemies in the room. ❹ Once you've cleared the area go behind the bar and pick up the blue key.

Head back up the stairs and to the wall dead ahead, turn right and go on until you reach a similar wall. Then turn left. You should be in the big central area again. Jump off the ledge and go left. Go quickly to avoid enemy fire. When you pass a light concrete wall turn left to see a door ahead. Go through quickly, blasting enemies if you haven't already done so.

You should emerge on a platform with dead Ree-Yees (if you've already killed them from across the way). Collect his goodies and go through the other door. Continue through the corridor until you see a couple of doors. Have your weapon ready and open the door which leads to a room crammed with enemies you should have seen through a window.

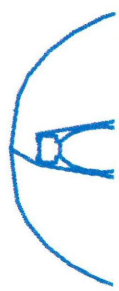
The other door contains a Ree-Yees and a Bossk, so crouch as you enter to blow them away. Turn right ignoring the door opposite for now. When you see a door on your left ignore this and keep going until you come across two red doors. Blast all



enemies as you go, and open the red doors.

The second door opens onto a walkway which leads to yet another red door. Blast Ree-Yees and then open other door. The room contains many claymores and a couple of Ree-Yees. Throw in some grenades to set off the claymores and then blast the Ree-Yees. Continue down the corridors and when it gets dark crouch and move forward, blasting anything which moves. Go through the door at the end onto a catwalk.

❺ Make sure the Ree-Yees doesn't blow you from the platform or you will die, so shuffle out and blast him. Go to the door at the other end of the platform. Be ready for some serious action. Blast the numerous enemies crammed into the corridor. ❻ Continue down until you come across the nava card you require to complete your mission objectives.

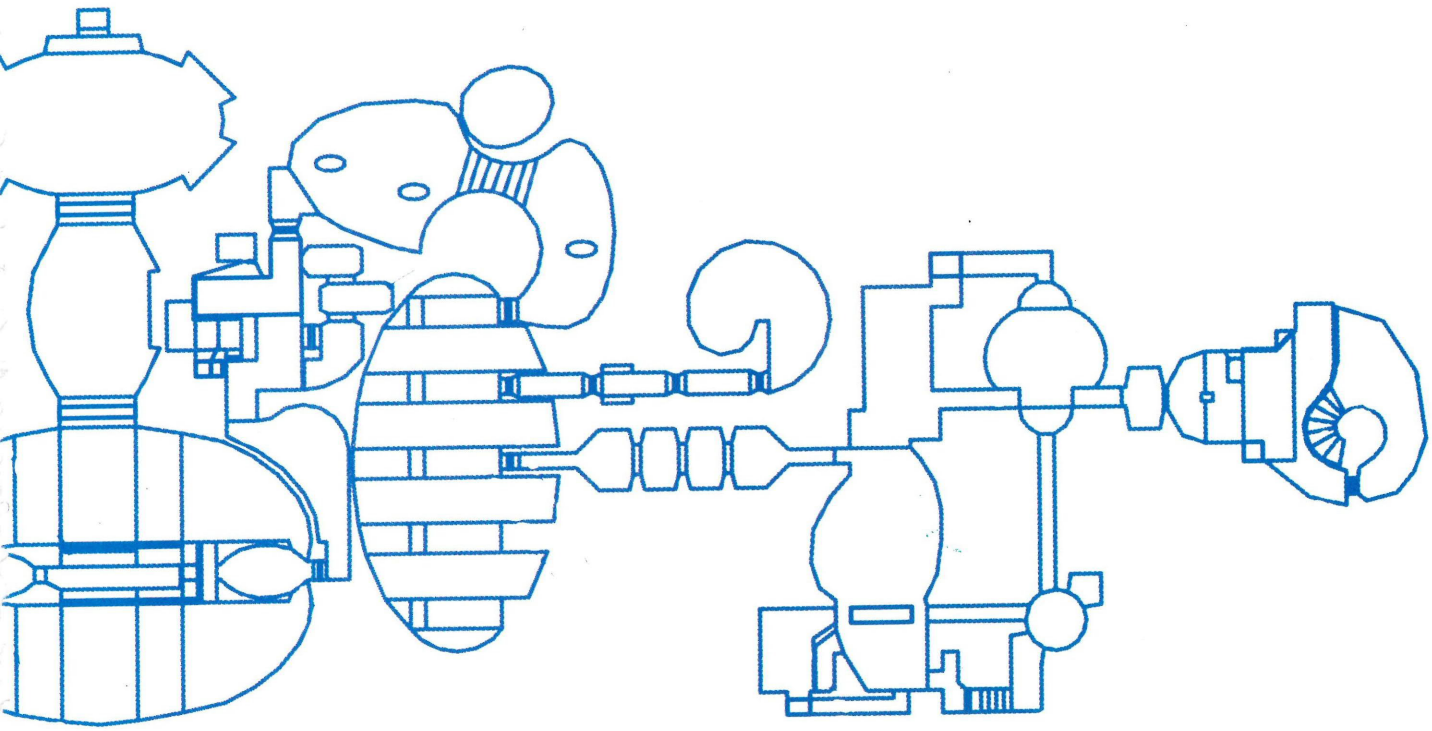


MISSION 10

You've lost all weapons and must battle on severely weakened after being captured by Jabba. The worst of it is that there are Kell dragons around. How can you get past these with your bare hands? Well, you just have to. Use speed mode to battle the beasts and move backwards as soon as you've thrown a punch so you don't get injured by them.

As soon as the first dragon is killed, both large doors open and you are greeted by a couple more of the blighters. Use the same method to dispose of them both.

Once these have been cleared, find the room with a large concrete corridor running through it. Sneak inside from the right as you must dispose of the Ree-Yees as quickly as possible without the use of a single weapon. Punch him out and pick up his thermal detonators for your first choice of



weapon for now.

There's a switch on the wall in this area so flip it. Go out of this corridor and onto the ultra thin ledge on the outside of the corridor and the ledge can now be reached. Jump on and walk around until you reach an opening. Go through to the other side. Be careful not to fall off the ledge and turn right. Go into the room you see and jump across to collect the power-ups and the blue key. Go through the door which requires the blue key.

Take out the Gamorrean guard with your fists to save ammo. Claymores can be used to take the other guards out after you trigger them. Continue down the pathway. Use your grenades to take the Ree-Yees out being careful to use as few as possible and also using the walls for cover. Falling off the platform will leave you in great danger so take care. There's a lift below if you require it, but it's best to take care not to fall.

Once you've taken care of the Ree-Yees across the way you can make a leap across. Pick up the grenades and shield units. You will now see another opening from this ledge. Use a speed jump to clear the gap after throwing over a grenade to clear the claymore. Box the Ree-Yees, collect his grenades and continue until you see the switch on the wall. flip it and go back to the room containing the Gamorrean guards you will have passed.

❷ In the adjacent room you should see your gear which was taken. Collect it after punching out the pig guards. Flick the switch you come across and go back outside. This has raised the floor where you leapt across before and you can get to the other doorway. Go through but be wary of the claymores dotted around and don't get caught out. Either throw valuable grenades at them or trip them and dash away before they explode. Go into the next room and flip a switch. This opens a door to some stairs. Blast the opposition from a distance using the left wall for cover.

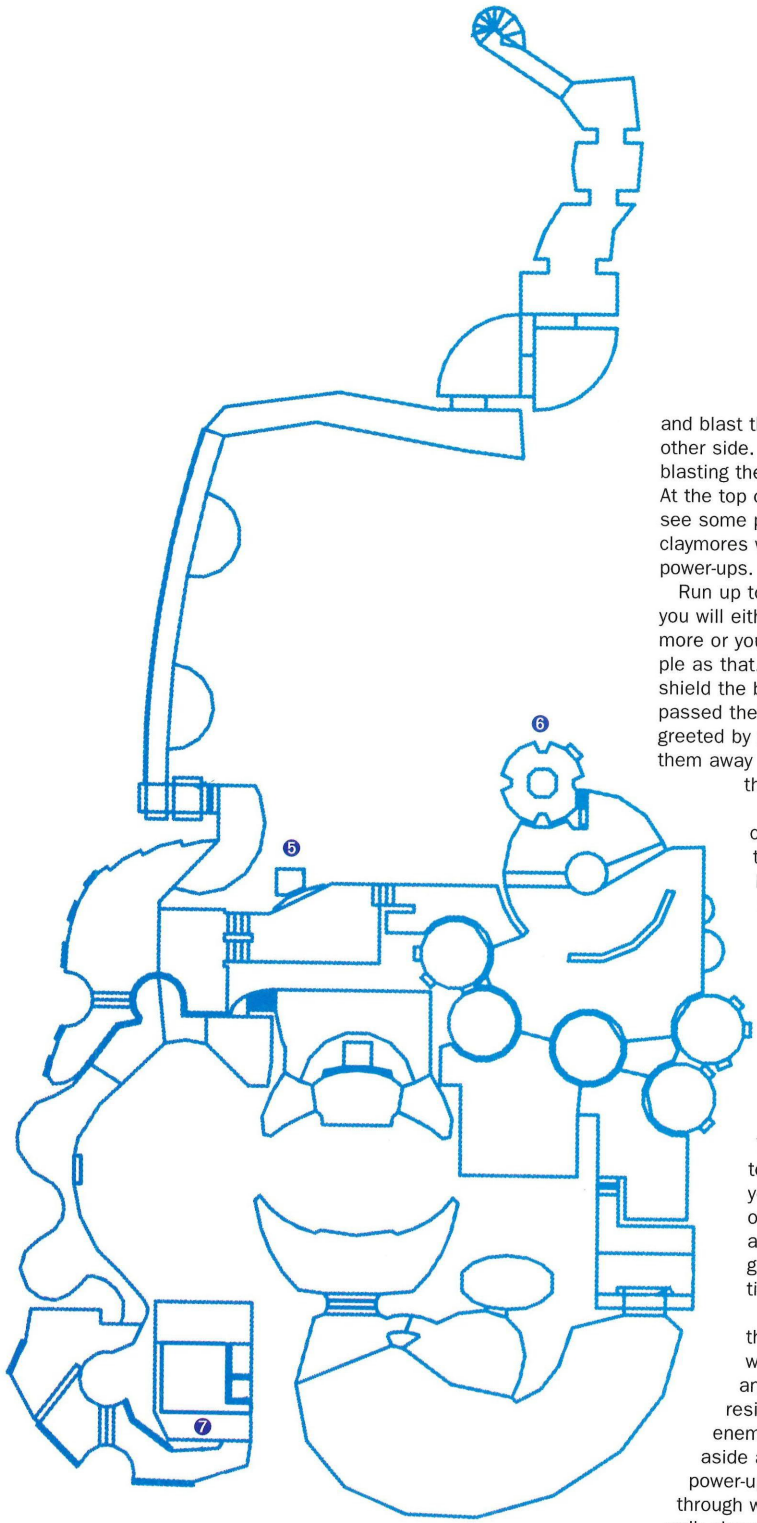
Go up the stairs and through the door at the top. Blast the troops you come across. The first door you come to has claymores blocking the way so trigger them and get out of the way so you aren't injured. Watch for the claymore on the other side of the door. Repeat this process for the other doors.

The final door contains a red key. Open it with all guns blazing to clear opposition and use the left wall to get a jump on a lone soldier. ❸ Collect the key and get out of there. Go to the next door which is the red key door. Blast the Ree-Yees inside before entering. Continue onwards being wary of many claymore traps.

Continue through in speed mode ignoring the grenade throwing enemies and head for the opening at the other end of the room. Trigger the claymore and get out of the way quickly to avoid the blast. Go down the corridor and onto the lift. Be ready to blast the Ree-Yees when you reach the top. In the room upstairs, flip the switch and run across the catwalk which raises over the dragon pit.

The room across is filled with claymores and you can either bung in a grenade or rush across, avoiding the attention of a Ree-Yees as you do. Go left and head for the doorway. Blast the Ree-Yees which blocks your way. ❹ Give it legs through a room with more dragons and a Ree-Yees without shooting them and go to the door on the other side. From here you can blast the blighters from safety. Go onto the lift and take out the Ree-Yees from a distance. Turn left down a corridor before you come ▶

Dark Forces Part 2



across the dragon pit and blast the enemies from a distance.

You will come across a jump which you must make to reach the other side. Make the leap in speed mode and then bear to the right. Find a hole in a corner and drop into some slime. You're after the yellow key. Turn right and jump onto the ledge to acquire it.

Across the way you will see a switch. Go over and flip it so you can get onto the lift to the right. Go to the door which requires your new key. Open it and blast the enemy on the other side. Go up the stairs, blasting the guards as you go. At the top of the stairs you will see some pillars. Some hide claymores while others have power-ups.

Run up to the pillars and you will either trigger a claymore or you won't. It's as simple as that. The pillar will shield the blast. Once you've passed the pillars you will be greeted by more guards. Blow them away and continue down the corridor.

Go past all the cells on the right taking care not to be caught out by attacks from the dark recesses to the left. Go through the door at the end. Blast the guards on the other side and go through the double doors. Turn immediately to your left and you'll see a painting of Jabba. Open it and collect the goodies before continuing.

❺ Continue down the corridor which widens considerably and offers more resistance from many enemies. Blast them aside and collect the power-ups. From the door through which you entered, walk along the wall to the right. Ignore all doors until you come across one leading to the room containing the nava card. There's a window next to the door so you will know which door to enter. ❻ Pick up the nava card and power-ups.

After exiting, go south past the circular rooms and through the door at the far end of the room. Through the door there's another large jump you must make in speed mode. If you fail however, it's not the end of the world as you need to be on the lower level after collecting the goodies anyway.

Blast the guard and a couple of dragons here before making a jump onto a platform where a Ree-Yees awaits you. Blast him before he can get his range, then turn your attention to another one across on a different platform. Now you are free to blast the remaining dragon.

Go through the large door and blast the defender across the way or just flip the switch to raise the floor so you can run across and waste him. Jump onto the stage and head right to reach the doorway. Going right reveals another switch which opens a wall so you can grab some impressive power-ups, while the other direction takes you to some lesser power-ups. Go to the right and open the wall, find some stairs and blast the guard.

At the bottom of the stairs is a pit to the left. Ignore this and go right around the perimeter until you see a sunken room. Dispose of the guards and go onto the lower level. ❼ Find a switch in a far corner which, when activated, raises the entire floor so you can get to the other side without having to shuffle along the left ledge avoiding a claymore. Once on the other side, find a leap you have to make if you're to go any further. Leap over the first compartment to be in the final area of the mission.

Take cover immediately and blast the enemies you come across. Proceed and you will see your ship to the left. Don't be over confident as there are Ree-Yees in alcoves opposite. Switch to the mortar gun and fire a couple over to clear the threat. Grenade the Gamorrean guards below. You must now make one last leap across using speed mode to cross to where the Ree-Yees were. If you fail, find the lift to get you back on this floor.

❽ In this area are four cells. The second from the left holds Jan Ors and two defenders. The first and fourth cells hold enemies only and the third contains power-ups. And that completes this mammoth mission.

Cheat, Drink and Be Merry

Hail good sir, I humbly request that you take these cheats and hints to the Lady Chutney-Ferret at the manor. My heart yearns for her, but past shames prevent me from revealing my love. I implore you, present her with these tips but, I pray, say not who sent them...

BLAST CHAMBER

Level codes for Activision's rotating-cube-based, bomb-strapping, future sports thing? You've come to the right place. Look below and burst with gratitude, fat boy.

NAEMMAAB
MAGDIEAH
NINKPDME
MJKKAMKC
JODPIGEH
ICJPABNA

PRO PINBALL: THE WEB

Pinball games, eh? A bit like sitting in a dark room pretending to be Jeff Banks if you want my opinion. Anyway, if you've got a copy of this knocking about and find it a tad slow, then type PRO as your name in the high score list and the game will go in 'turbo mode'. Which sounds really rather exciting.

EVEN MORE SOVIET STRIKE

Possibly one of the hardest games of all time, this one. So it's no surprise that cheats for its droopy snout have cropped up in nearly every issue since it was released. There are loads of codes floating about for this game – here's a selection of the most popular. All these codes are entered as the password:

davedither - more powerful weapons
mountandew - endless fuel
vulture - fuel lasts twice as long
iamwoman - invincible
strangeluv - infinite ammo
drbenway - double destruction
nosferatu - seven lives
midnigoil - infinite ammo, fuel and armour

These final codes have to be entered on the load/save game screen, which sounds a bit bizarre to us. They're hardly the most useful cheats though, so don't cry too much if they don't have the desired effect.

angrylocal - everyone hates you
ghandi - everyone loves you

DIE HARD TRILOGY

A strange one this. Pause the game, then press ➡ ⬆ ⬇ ■. Press pause again and select the 'Use editor' option. This should bring up a map editor where you can mess about with the entire inner workings of the game to your hearts content. It might be a tad weird at first, as you don't get any instructions, but it's got to be worth a look, just for a laugh.

JET RIDER

A fairly handy cheat here, as it opens up all the tracks, making the game marginally better than the mound of poo it was before. But first a warning, we've had some trouble getting this to work, so be patient and keep trying. Timing is of the essence. Go into the options menu and set the difficulty level to 'amateur'. Then change the trophy presenter to 'male'. Return to the title screen. On the directional pad press ⬆ ➡ ⬇ ⬅ ⬆ ➡ ⬇ ⬅ . Re-enter the options screen. Change the difficulty to 'professional' and the trophy presenter to 'riders choice'. Go back to the title screen. Once here press ⬆ ⬅ ⬇ ➡ ⬆ ⬅ ⬇ ➡ on the pad. You'll hear a sound if it worked and you can now, with fingers crossed, play any track.

REBEL ASSAULT II



If you need help with this ludicrously easy game, I'd suggest taking up knitting. However, if you are having problems (maybe you've got no sensation in your fingers or you're just a mard arse) then use these passwords to open up all the levels at whatever difficulty you desire. And remember, that's no moon. That's a space station.

X,●,X,●,X,▲ - Easy
X,■,▲,▲,X,▲ - Medium
X,●,■,▲,X,▲ - Hard

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: PANTHEON SAGA

Or The Incredible Oh My God What Are We Going To Do With This, Maybe If We Hide Everyone Will Forget About It. As it's probably known at Eidos HQ. It's arse on toast, and we're starting to suspect that this'll be one of those games that mysteriously appears on the shelves without getting our approval first. If you do, by accident, end up with a copy (possibly purchased whilst blinded by extra terrestrial lights and that) then here are the level codes to let you jump straight to the end.

Level 2: 603EE0C530
Level 3: B08E0F0802
Level 4: 000026B698
Level 5: 40074DFF12

Now tie a brick to it and throw it off a pier. After shooting it and burning it with hot acid first. You might like to wee on it as well.

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

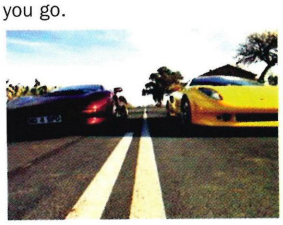
A special request for Andrew Nelson who asked nicely for MK3 cheats last issue. We've rummaged around our cheat basket and found these snippets. Hope they bring you happiness. Blimey, I feel like Jimmy Saville now.

At the 'Prepare For Kombat' screen, insert the following code: ▲, ■, ●, X, L1, L2, R1, R2. Then at the cube press up.

Or, during the opening demo, hit the following buttons: X, ●, ▲, R1, R1, R2, R2, R1, R1. You should hear a voice saying 'You'll Never Win!'. When the stone appears with the word 'Kombat' in red, press up to access a secret cheat menu.

NEED FOR SPEED II

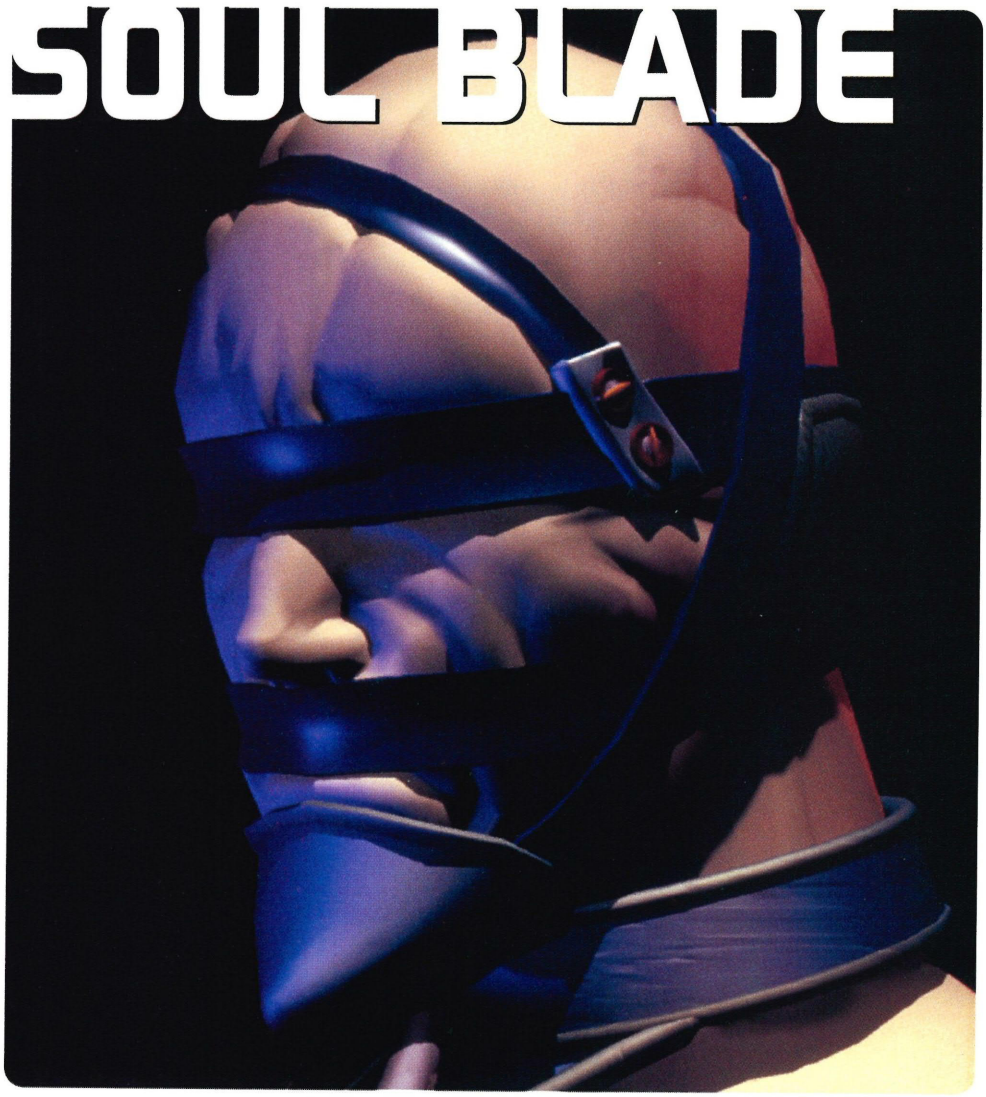
If you've read the review and got all excited about this not half bad racer, you'll probably be gagging to know how to unlock the secret track and car. Here's how. Go to the Password option and enter **LILZIP** for the rather dirt Ford Indigo car, and enter **SHOTME** for the rather fantastic Monolithic Studio track. There you go.



A Beginner's Guide to...

SOUL BLADE

Everything you need to know about hacking your opponent into bite-size pieces and romping your way to victory is detailed below in our handy blade-bucklin' player's guide



KEY

A – Weak Weapon
B – Strong Weapon
G – Guard
K – Kick
All lower-case letters – Tap
All capital letters – Hold Down

PLAYING TIPS:

CRITICAL EDGE

Beat 'em-ups are normally packed to the gills with special moves and Soul Blade is no different. Each character has their very own Critical Edge move which, when done correctly, produces a devastating attack on their opponent. To do this you need to hit **A + B + K** and then hammer in your character's personal combination. Performing a Critical Edge move, however, results in the evaporation of a third of your weapon energy, so use it sparingly.

GROUND ATTACKS

If and when you manage to knock your opponent to the floor, you can carry on the punishment by simply pressing **Up + B**. Handy, eh?

GUARD IMPACT

By pressing **f + G** when your opponent is on the warpath you can block the would-be attacker's blows, stun them and then plough in for a counter attack. Be careful though, the Guard Impact technique doesn't work with kicks.

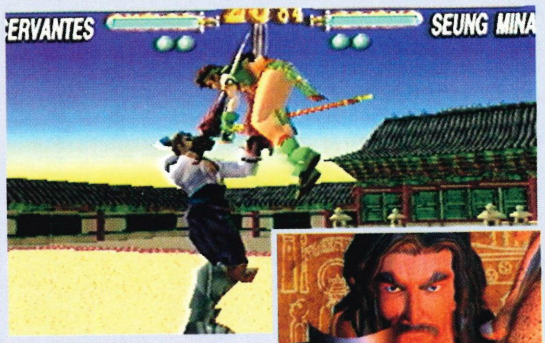
HEISHIRO



Stinger – **B, B, A, B**
Front Kick – **f + K**
Thunder Strike – **f, F + B**
Phoenix – **f, F + A + B**
Jump Kick – **f + K**
Disembowel – **df + A**
Unblockable – **f, df, d, db, b + B**
Critical Edge – **b, db, d, df, f + A + K**
Double Slash – **A, A**
No Mercy – **A, A, A**
Mixer – **A, A, d + A**
Storm – **A, A, B**
Slash Spin – **f + A, d + A**
Slash Uppercut – **f + A, B**
Sword Breaker – **B, B**
Cutter – **B, B, A**
Obliteration – **B, B, A, B**
Silent Attack – **B, B, A, d + A**
The Woodsman – **b + K, B**
Leg Sweep – **d + K, B**
Mitsurugi Swing – **f + A, d + A**









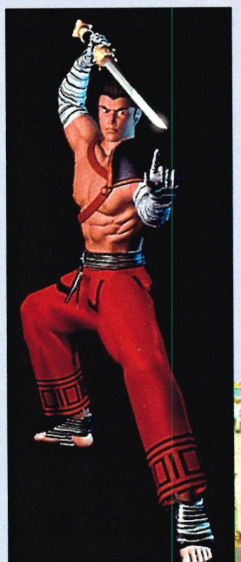
CERVANTES

Bombs Away – **f + A + B**
The Blade – **A, A, d + A**
Blade Sweep – **B, B, d + A**
Divider – **f + B, B, B**
Monkey Magic – **K, df + K**
Pirate Blast – **K, b + K**
Low Blow – **df + A + B**
Sailor Boy – **f + B**
Windy Miller – **b, b + B**
The Boot – **df + K**
Low Strike – **db + A + K**
Drop Down – **f, F + B + K**
Pirate Attack – **f, F + B**
Double Slice – **A + B**
Switchblade – **DF + A**



HWANG SUNG

Phoenix – **f, F + A + B**
Divider – **df + A**
Thunder Strike – **f, F + B**
Lunge – **f + A, B**
Silent Stab – **d, df, f + B**
Kick – **b, f + K**
Unblockable – **b + B + K**
Critical Edge – **f + A + B**
Samurai Fury – **A, A, d + A**
Below The Belt – **df + A, B**
Samurai Slash – **A, A**
No Escape – **A, A, A**
Storm – **A, A, B**
Earth Crusher – **f, F + K, K**
Slice & Dice – **df + A, A**
Triple Death – **df + A, A, B**
Cutter – **B, B**
Triangle Cutter – **B, B, A**
Wipe Out – **B, B, A, B**
Wind Slash – **B, B, A, d + A**
Harpoon Attack – **K, K**
The Snake – **d + K, B**
Star Crusher – **f, F + K, K, K**



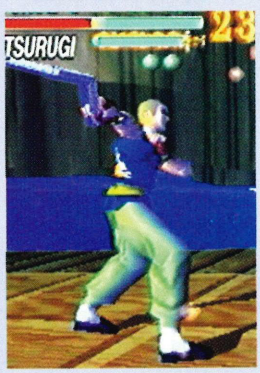






LI LONG

Windmill Swing – **A + B**
Gut Stab – **df + A**
Swing – **db + B**
Foot Sweep – **df + K**
Ankle Nunchaku – **d, df, f + B**
Elbow Thrust – **d, db, b + B**
Unblockable – **db + B + K**
Critical Edge – **f, F + A + B**
Chest Gauge – **f + B, B**
Angel Foot Sweep – **A, A, d + K**
Double Strike – **A, A**
Silent Strike – **A, A, d + A**
Angel Kick – **A, A, K**
Slasher – **B, B**
Flying Strike – **B, B, B**
Dragon Combo – **A, B, K**
Power Strike – **B, B, A, B**
Axe Kick – **K, K**
Orbital – **df + B**
Punt – **B, K**
Drum Roll – **b + B, B**
Drum Finale – **b + B, B, B**
High Strike Fakey – **db + B, A**
Splinter – **K, d + K**
Attack From Below – **K, d + A**
Dragon Tail – **f + A, B**



SOPHITA



Star Finder – **df + B**
Shin Whack – **db + K**
Acrobat Kick – **uf + K**
Cresent Kick – **A + K**
Disembowlment – **d, df, f + B**
Orbital – **f, d, df + A**
Unblockable – **b, bb + A, B**
Critical Edge – **b + A + G**
Triple slash – **A, A**
Buzz Cutter – **A, A, A**
Shadow Blade – **A, A, d + A**
Total Punishment – **A, A, A, K**
Knockdown – **A, A, B**
Head Over Heels – **A, A, K**
Sweeping Combo – **A, A, d + K**
Up & Down – **B, B**
No Mercy – **B, B, B**
Smasher – **B, B, A**
Below The Belt – **B, B, d + A**
Reverse Combo – **B, B, d + K**
Crucial Attack – **B, B, A, B**
Double Side Kick – **K, K**
Triple Kick – **K, K, d + K**
Knockdown – **uf + K, A**
Rough Diver – **uf + K, B**
Double Flip Kick – **uf K, K**





SIEGFRIED

Fancy Footwork – **A + K**
Ankle Slicer – **db + A**
Crosscutter – **B, d + A**
Manslaughter – **db + B**
Jump Kick – **f, F + K**





SEUNG

Total Confusion – **A + B**
Spinning Kick – **B + K**
Retreat Strike – **db + A**
Sky Dance – **U + A + B**
Roundhouse – **df + A**
Hop Kick – **f, F + K**
Unblockable – **u, f + A + B**
Critical Edge – **b, b + A + B**
Sheep Chaser – **B, B**
Triangle Attack – **A, A**
Flying Flip – **A, K**
The Destroyer – **A + B, f + A, B**
Phoenix – **A, A, A, K**
Burning Phoenix – **A, A, A, d + K**
Decapitator – **A, f + A, A**
Dancing Glaive – **A, f + A, A, K**
Dance Smash – **f + A, K**
Slash Fury – **B, B, B**
Triple Shin Slice – **B, B, d + A**
Mixer – **B, d + A**
Stab & Slash – **f + B, B**
360 Spin – **f + B, A**
Ground Phoenix – **b + B, d + A**
Death From Above – **b + B, d + A + B**
Star Crusher – **f, F + K, K**
Orion – **A + B, f + A**
Spinning Confusion – **A + B, A + B**



TAKI

Throat Slice – **f, F + A**
Spinning Bird Kick – **A + K**
Death Roll – **d, df, f + B**
Hop Kick – **f, F + K**
Gut Stab – **f, F + B**
Unblockable – **f, df, d, db, b + B**
Critical Edge – **d, u + B + K**
Manic Stab – **f + A, B, B, B**
Lightning Slash – **B, B, B**
Slice & Dice – **B, B, A**
Total Punishment – **B, B, A, K**
Semi Combo 1 – **B, A, f + K**
Semi Combo 2 – **B, A, d + K**
Kicker – **B, K**
Shadow Slice – **A, A**
Slash Fury – **A, A, A**
Shadow Fury – **A, A, B**
Shadow Kick – **A, A, d + K**
Double Crosser – **A, B**
Spinning Stab – **f + A, B**
Triple Kick – **K, K, K**
Low Triple Kick – **K, K, d + K**
Shadow Combo – **K, K, A**
Ninja – **df + K, K, K**
Orbital – **d, df, f + B, K**











Bully – **f + B + K**
Slice & Dice – **A, A**
Face Buster – **df + K, K, B**
Spinning Spiral – **A, A, B**
Ankle Slicer Combo – **A, d + A**
Moon Slash – **f, F + A + B**
Tomahawk – **B, B**
Knight Smash – **B, B, B**
Downer – **B, B, K**
Crosscut – **B, d + A**
Chop & Spin – **B, K**
Double Headbutt – **b + B, A**
Triple Headbutt – **b + B, A, B**
Total Homicide – **db + B, b + B**
Head Over Heels – **b, b + B, B**
Double Kick Spin – **df + K, K**
Shoulder Rush – **f + B + K**



ROCK

Knee Thrust – **f + K**
Global – **db + A**
Lumberjack – **f, F + A**
Reacher – **df + B**
Hello Mr Axe – **f, F + B**
Headbutt – **f, F + K**
Unblockable – **f + B + K**
Critical Edge – **b + A + G**
Belly Up – **df + K, A**
Jackhammer – **B, B, B**
Double Slash – **A, A**
Hack & Slash – **A, A, A**
Brutal Slash – **A, B**
Axe Kick – **A, K**
Cut To Ribbons – **f + A, A**
Timber – **f + A, A, A**
Chopper – **f + A, A, B**
Tornado Wave – **f, F + A, B**
Rocky River – **B, B**
The Dentist – **B, A**





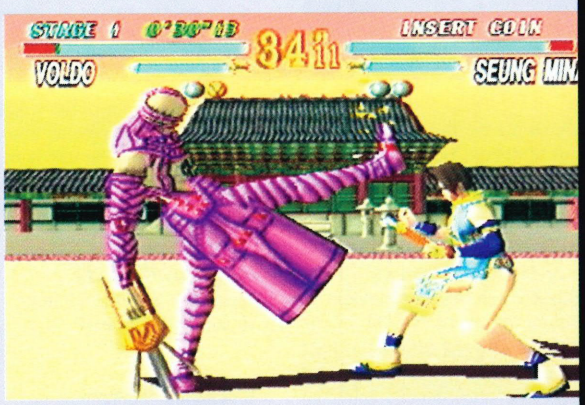




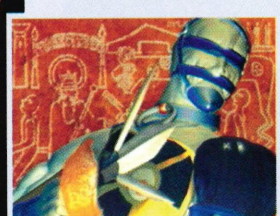


VOLDO

Top To Toe – **df + B**
Roundhouse – **b, f + K**
Berserker – **A + K**
Lunge – **d + A + B**
Slegehammer – **A + B**
Mantis Slammer – **f, F + B**
Unblockable – **d, df, f + A**
Critical Edge – **u, d + A + B**
Driller – **d + A, A**
Slash 'N Kick – **A + K**
Crab Slice – **A, A**
Ally Oop – **d + B, B**
Hacker – **A, A, B**
Fierce Attack – **A, B**
Knockout – **A, B, A**
Gut Stab – **b + A, A**
Manic Driller – **d + A, A, A**
Ring Out – **d + A, A, A, K**
Foot Kisser – **d + A, K**
Double Slice – **B, B**
Triple Slice – **B, B, B**
Quadruple Slice – **B, B, B, B**
Manic Slice – **B, B, B, B, B**







Drive like a Pro with our...
Porsche Challenge Tipping Pitstop!

Racing games always go down a treat, but they're a bugger to master. Below is a series of handy hints and driving tips, plus all the information you could ever need to become the hottest Porsche driver on the grid. Feel free to abuse them at your leisure



MINI REVIEW

- It's by no means the best of the genre, but overall, Porsche Challenge is a nifty little mover that looks absolutely gorgeous and manages to mix a true simulation of sorts with the pulse-quickening thrills of playing a frantic arcade beast.
- It may take some time for you to get to grips with it, but once you have, Porsche Challenge becomes an extremely enjoyable, very playable and highly recommended little gem. One of the best driving titles around.

STUTTGART

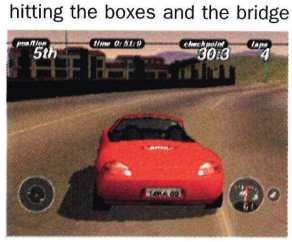
THE BARRIERS

Barriers raise and lower on the Stuttgart track, forcing you down a specific route. The left route is far more demanding than the right... Barrier movements are random so you'll just have to pray that the easier route opens when playing.

USA

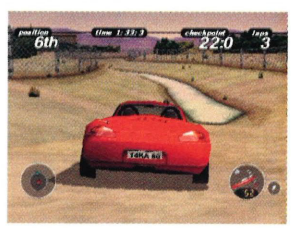
THE BRIDGE

When you reach the quay side, watch out for the bridge that is out of action. However, all is not lost. Look for the boat and if it's not docked, it will be leaving harbour and passing through the bridge. This forms a bridge that your trusty Boxster can drive over! Avoid hitting the boxes and the bridge will stay open for an additional two laps.



If the boat is in harbour, there's no option but to take the long route around the docks. Watch out for the delivery trucks and once they start to move, use your horns to stop them dead in their tracks!

THE DRAIN



Taking the first left hand corner, keep a close eye at the parking lot on the right hand side. Sometimes there will be a vivid white truck. This means the drain shortcut is open. When you are about level with the truck take a sharp left into the storm drain.

Try to stay out of the water as much as possible as this will slow you down. The exit is by the tram station. Driven skillfully, you can aim to save at least two or three seconds here.

THE CHURCH

What is it with the strange music in this place?

JAPAN

HIDDEN TEMPLE

The Temple Gate route is one of the trickiest secrets to uncover in Porsche Challenge.

CHEEKY CHEATS

All the cheats must be entered in the main menu

- **USER CAR JUMPS**

□, ●, □

- **ALL CARS JUMP**

up + □, up + ●, up + □, up + ●, up + □, up + ●, up + □

- **INVISIBLE CAR**

□ + ●, L2 + R2, □ + ●, L1 + R1, □ + ●

- **INTERACTIVE TRACKS**

Left + ●, down + ▲, right + □

- **FISH EYE**

□ + ▲ + ●, L1, L2, R2, R1

- **MAD RACE**

up, left, right + select

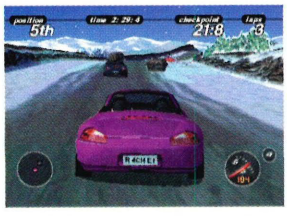


The trick is to hit the first basket on the left hand side of the course. If you look closely you should be able to make out an 'IO' logo. Just past the starting grid on the next lap, you'll notice that the Temple Gate shortcut is now open. It's quite a challenging route, but take it well and you'll shave a couple of seconds off your average lap time.

ALPINE

BOULDERS

Just before the completion of a lap there is a falling boulder hazard to avoid. Each lap means one more boulder, so take care! It's easy to speed around the previous corner and smash straight into a newly fallen rock. Take particular care at the end of a race, or when driving close behind other cars. All it takes is for your or your opponent to smash into a boulder and you will pile up – before you know it you're back in last place.

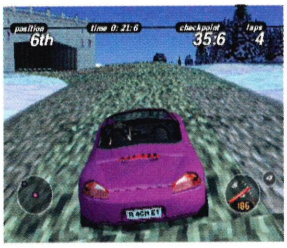


THE CHATEAU

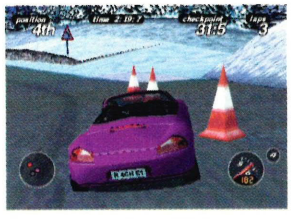


Cutting through the grounds of a chateau, this is one of the biggest shortcuts in the game, allowing you to avoid the difficult twisting road section before the tunnel . The shortcut is triggered randomly and is active when the red flag outside the chateau gates is raised. Now the gates will be open and you can speed through the cobbled pathway, before making a sharp left turn exit back to the tunnel on the main course.

THE VILLAGE



One of the most graphically impressive sections of Porsche Challenge is the 'Village Shortcut'. The first time you pass the entrance to the Village, the huge doors will be shut firmly. When you reach the base of the track during the second lap, a snowplough and cones will appear. The snow drift to the right is the blocked exit from the Village. Knock down the cones and the snowplough will clear the drift and cones. This opens the Village's doors and next lap you'll be able to take the shortcut. Enjoy the scenery and take care of your wheels on those bumpy cobbled streets!



WATER SPORTS

Hitting the water before the tunnel entrance can make the following icy sections more precarious so it's best to avoid it if possible. Note the puddle size increases with each lap, making finding the perfect driving line, and avoiding it, considerably more difficult as the race progresses.



GENERAL PLAYING TIPS

- **In one player mode, to get a turbo start, simply hit the accelerator just as the "GO!" appears on screen**
- **For a two player start, if your revs are too high or too low before the start, you will start badly, revs in the middle and you'll get an OK start. But have the revs between 5000 and 6000 rpm and you'll get a turbo start**
- **On the Japanese track it is quicker for most drivers to take the hard route where the yellow and black barriers are even if the easy route is open. This is most important in Evil mode**
- **In Hard, the characters will mostly use the shortcuts if they are open. In other modes, quite often they do not. The chance is very low in easy mode, for example**
- **The test driver will always take a shortcut, if it is open, in all modes**
- **Dan will sometimes use one if you have, but always will in Evil mode**
- **Rachel will sometimes use one if you have, and up to 90 per cent of the time in Evil mode**
- **Beats will sometimes use a shortcut if it is open, no matter whether the player has or not**
- **Nikita always uses a shortcut if it is open and you have used it, otherwise never**
- **Marco will sometimes use a shortcut if you have used it (20 per cent normally, 100 per cent in Hard)**
- **Takabo will always use a shortcut in Evil, or always if the player has used it in other modes**
- **The guy you start the race with is the one who will apply the most pressure to you in the race. So if you are second, you can bet it is the challenger who was first, particularly the test driver**
- **The test driver never speaks or moves other than when driving**

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'Congratulations on a informative, well p



Dear PlayStation Pro
I am the chap responsible for sending you 12 entries for the 'Free Car Please' compo. It was wrong and I regret it now. It won't happen again. Also, have you any codes or tips for the Special Ops on Command and Conquer? Thanks a lot.

Paul Ellison, Rochdale

PRO *Good to see you have seen the error of your ways Paul, you may still go to Heaven yet. However, by way of punishment, we won't give you any Special Ops advice. Not in this issue anyway.*

Dear PlayStation Pro
Congratulations on a most excellent magazine. It makes the others look like nothing at all, so very well done to you. I would like to know if there are any rally games for the PlayStation out there in the big world of games. If there is, would you recommend any, or should I wait for the Race Of Champions, due for a July release.

I'm also in a bother whether to get Tekken the Platinum Edition or Tekken 2 at the normal selling price. Please could you help in this department as well. I have just purchased Sim City 2000 and am happily building away, but I could do with a cash injection. Have you got a cheat for this or is it not possible? I hope this is not too much to ask and that you keep this great magazine rolling into my local store. Keep it up.

P.S. Could you please send me a copy of PlayStation Pro issue one as that is the only one missing from my collection. Cheers.

Ryan Trowbridge, Dorchester

PRO *The Race Of Champions (ROC) is probably your best bet for the time being, although Codemasters is working on a touring car game and Eutechnyx' superb-looking Total Drivin' should be out around the same time as ROC.*

Tekken-wise, here's what we all reckon - Alex would go for Tekken because it's cheaper, Dan hasn't played either of them, Jay much prefers Tekken 2 and Andy and Steve, who've played them both, aren't big fans of either version.

For a cash injection in Sim City 2000, load or start a city, once you're in the game, access City Info/Budget. At the Budget Screen, press and hold R1. While holding R1, press X, O, Triangle, Square. Release R1, Hold down L1, press X, O, Triangle, Square. Release L1, hold down R2 .Press X, O, Triangle, Square. Release R2. Hold down L2. Now press X, Square, Triangle, O. Release L2. You should now hear a cheer, and your cash will increase to a million bucks.

As for sending you an issue one, there's no chance unfortunately. Issues one and two have both sold out.

Dear Alex
I am writing to you to ask some questions and also to give you loads of cheats. I have been collecting your magazines since issue three and I was very pleased with it. I got my PlayStation in November 1996 and with it, two games -Alien Trilogy and Tunnel B1. While I enjoyed Alien Trilogy, I found Tunnel B1 incredibly boring. I tried to find somewhere that would give me cash or a decent exchange. Everywhere I tried they already had about 10 copies of the game and weren't going to take mine. I tried the market and they said they would give me £13 for it and £28 for exchange. Not bad I thought, but then I looked at their crap collection of games and the best game they had was Nova Storm and I thought 'No way!' To this day I still have Tunnel B1.

So I wondered if you could help me. Every month in your ace magazine there are a small collection of adverts with cheap games and good prices for exchanges and such. I wondered if you could tell if they are safe (you know, don't rip you off).

Soul Blade looks like a great game and everything but so does Tekken 2. While the graphics on Soul Blade are slightly better, I was more worried about the way they fight, even though in issue five Jay mentioned that the swords can actually shatter. Can you still punch and kick? He also mentioned that it was enough to knock Tekken 2 off the beat 'em-up pile, but it didn't. Why not?

Name & address not supplied

PRO *The only real advice we can give you about the small ads is to telephone a few of them and see which you think sounds the most trustworthy. Obviously, it's in their best interests to provide you with a good service, but whichever one you go with you're basically placing your trust in them not to rip you off.*

No-one on the editorial team can vouch for any of them, really, as it's the advertising team's bag. It's best to use a company near to where you live, so in case anything does go wrong you can call in personally and find out what's going on.

On the subject of Soul Blade, Jay prefers it to Tekken 2, as stated in his review, but the team as a whole reckon Tekken 2 shades it. That's

most excellent mag' resented & direct'

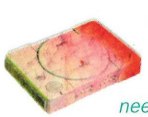
why Tekken 2 is above Soul Blade in the Recommended list. Incidentally, we're using your tips in next month's tips section. Cheers.

Dear PlayStation Pro
First of all I would like to congratulate you on your fifth issue of PlayStation Pro (five-star rated!). This was my first issue and already I'm deeply interested in the mag.

I've had my PlayStation for two months and I'm stuck on most of my games! These include Die Hard Trilogy - I've completed D1, D2 and D3 and all it says is congratulations, you are a great player. The last screen comes up with cheats on the Internet, but I haven't got the Internet! So would you please give me some cheats. Thanks.

Also, I'm having problems with Alien Trilogy, Tekken, Command & Conquer (but I've seen your codes in ish five - great!) and finally Ridge Racer. Please could I have codes, cheats, tips, etc. I appreciate your co-operation and reply. Thanks.

Scott Fraser, Liverpool



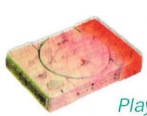
PRO *We can't reply to individual letters Scott, but we can print (some of) the cheats you need. If they're not in this month's issue, you'll be best off filling in the form on the Next Month page and sending it in with a cheque for a back issue or two featuring the tips you need.*

To Alex, Fiona, Gaz, Jay, Steve, Andy and Dan
I have just bought your mag for the first time. I usually buy Official PSM (with disc) and Power Station, but I thought I would write to let you know what a great mag you have here. This is going to be in newsagents for a long time to come. As a 25 year old gamer I look for mags which are informative, nicely presented and direct.

This mag, PlayStation Pro, is it. The reviews were brilliant. I own Tomb Raider, FIFA 97 and Command & Conquer. They were spot on, well written and perfectly scored. Other mags I have purchased are frankly, well, full of bullshit and adverts and the reviews, well I'm sure they're playing a different game.

I purchased your mag (issue three) by chance, the reason being no other mags had the balls, or skill, to do a COMPLETE guide to Tomb Raider (the strategy guide to Command & Conquer was another bonus). I will buy PlayStation Pro every month and tell four other PlayStation owning buddies to buy it too. If you do a feedback page let me know if Cannon Fodder 2 will be out on the PlayStation and print this letter. Forget demo discs and fancy covers. You've got a true winner here. Keep up the superb mag.

M Burton, Bolton



PRO *Cheers for the positive remarks, M. There are no plans for Cannon Fodder 2 for the PlayStation as yet – we've seen the various release schedules up to this September and it's not on any of them.*

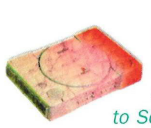
Dear PlayStation Pro,
I must first congratulate you on such a brilliant magazine, I found it to be good value for money. Every issue contains detailed reviews, previews and news. Enough of the butt-licking, I must get on to what I wrote in for.

In the April issue of PlayStation Pro, you printed my name and two of my statements from the 'How Was It For You?' questionnaire I sent in. I must thank you for this as all my friends at school are envious! Cheers!

When I am in the newsagents buying PlayStation Pro I normally flick through other magazines to see if they can compare (as if), and I noticed the PlayStation analogue pad! Is this true? When will it be released? How much will it cost? What game will be able to use the analogue pad?

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter and I hope you will reply. By the way, I don't suppose you have any Command & Conquer maps of the missions for both GDI and NOD?

Christopher Skeggs, Chatteris

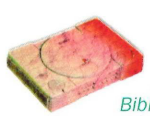


PRO *At the time of writing, there's only a single analogue pad in Britain. According to Sony's Guy Pearce, "It's wicked. If you use it to play Porsche with and drive on the grass, the whole thing vibrates". It was recently on display at the Sony Roadshow (as featured in this month's news section), but no British release date or price has as yet been confirmed.*

Dear PlayStation Pro
I do not yet own a PlayStation but I intend to get one soon, and I am going to buy PlayStation Pro every month. While reading the mail section in issue five, I saw a letter mentioning a PlayStation Pro games guide. Is there any way I could buy a copy of it, or buy a copy of that issue with the guide, and how much would it cost?

I think your magazine is well laid out and is very informative, but are you planning to give a demo CD away with the mag, these have helped me choose what games to buy for my PC whenever I spend £5 on a PC magazine?

Nick Coyle, Kingston



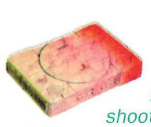
PRO *Issues one and two have now completely sold out, so you can't buy a copy of the Game Bible. If we do stumble across one lying around in the office, however, we'll stick it in the post to you. We are planning to give away a demo CD with the mag, but we won't charge you as much as a fiver for it.*

Dear PlayStation Pro,
Hello, I noticed your mag last month and I think it's cush. The Crash Solution is great as I have just got the game, but the most interesting bit was Tomb Raider. Thank you for the secrets. Very handy for me but I still need help.

I'm so stuck and very pissed at Tomb Raider. Lara has had so much abuse shouted at her lately. I have been stuck for four days, I'm at the sanctuary of the Scion and have collected the Scarab but what now? I don't know and for four days I have been looking, breaking my legs then dying. Please could you help me. I f I have to buy a back issues I don't mind, but please help.

P.S. I have enclosed a card for Alex and his missus. Please could you pass it on?

Joanne Moon, Newcastle



PRO *Okay Joanne, once you've grabbed the Scarab, keep going into the entrance room and shoot the two mummy panthers and the centaur. Now use the Scarab on the lock in the corner to open the gate.*

Enter the gate and grab the large medi pack and the magnum clips. Run down the ramp and climb up through the hole to enter the Scion chamber where Larson will be waiting for you.

Gun him down for good, then leg it up the stairs and grab the Scion in order to complete the level. Alex, his missus (she's called Adele by the way) and his baby son Callum all say, "Thanks very much" for the congratulations card and the quid.

PLAYSTATION PRO

RECOMMENDS

Let's face it, you only buy this magazine because you want our professional opinion of the many and varied pieces of software currently on sale. So with that in mind, we've knocked up a revised edition of our 'Recommended' list, giving you our honest opinion on the top five titles from each genre. They may not be everyone's choice but, as we said earlier, these are *our* favourites and the ones we play the most. And remember, don't buy a game without checking it out in here first!

RACING



F1

The technical Formula 1 japes from Psygnosis just about came out on top of a tough category. This is as realistic as they come, especially with Murray Walker commentating.



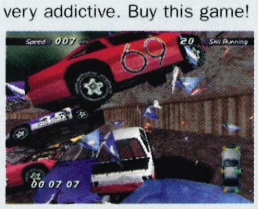
MICRO MACHINES V3

Miniature car fun from the boys at Codemasters offers gamers probably the best multi-player racing experience to date, plus there's around 40 tracks to master too. A classic.



RAGE RACER

The third Ridge Racer game in the series is by far the best and should be experienced by everyone with an interest in the genre. Fast, playable and very addictive. Buy this game!



DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

The stunning stock car extravaganza returns in this vastly-improved remix of the somewhat-slow original. Huge ramps and much faster in-car action makes this a winner.



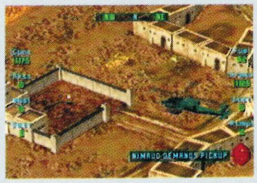
WIPEOUT2097

This futuristic hyper-fast g-force nose-bleeder certainly has the best game soundtrack to date. Take tight bends at high speed with the Prodigy blasting out of the stereo at full volume!

Also recommended:

PORSCHE CHALLENGE
MONSTER TRUCKS
BURNING ROAD
MOTOR TOON GP 2
THE NEED FOR SPEED
RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION

SHOOT 'EM-UP



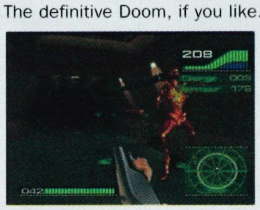
SOVIET STRIKE

Kill Russian terrorists with the aid of a huge chopper in Electronic Arts' excellent update of the old 16bit fave. Plenty of FMV and trigger pounding action guaranteed!



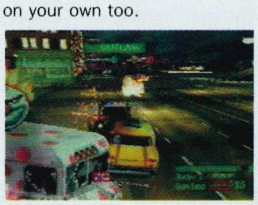
FINAL DOOM

GT Interactive take Doom into the garage for a quick tune up comprimising of bigger levels, extra blood and numerous other tweaks and touch-ups. The definitive Doom, if you like.



ALIEN TRILOGY

Shoot acid-oozing xenomorphs for a daft laugh in this atmospheric adventure from Acclaim. And it's a genuinely spooky experience if playing it on your own too.



TWISTED METAL 2

The original had a few teething problems, but this remix of the two player drive-by shooting wheeze more than makes up for it. Destructive, enjoyable and very very addictive.



DARK FORCES

LucasArts jump on the current Star Wars hype-machine with this, admittedly excellent, Jedi Knight Doom clone. The force could have been stronger with this one, but it'll do for now.

Also recommended:

DISRUPTOR
NANOTEK WARRIOR
SHELLSHOCK
MECH WARRIOR 2
KRAZY IVAN
DOOM

BEAT 'EM-UP



STAR GLADIATOR

Capcom deliver the goods with this stunning butt-kicker, obviously influenced by the likes of Star Wars. Complex combos and hidden features increase the attraction.



TEKKEN 2

Namco's classic face-slapper is still an excellent game, and a worthwhile purchase for anyone with a PlayStation. You simply must own a copy of this game. It's the law.



SOUL BLADE

Namco fill in time between the launch of Tekken 3 with this pant-wettingly-good beat 'em up. It's basically Tekken 2 with sticks, fancy backgrounds and all your usual hidden gubbings.



TEKKEN

Tekken 2's slightly uglier younger brother was the game that got us all excited about the PSX in the first place and is now available as part of the Platinum range for just £19.99.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

Capcom extend their Street Fighter family tree again as the world holds it breath for SF3. As 2D fighting goes, Capcom know their onions and this is solid evidence of the fact.

Also recommended:

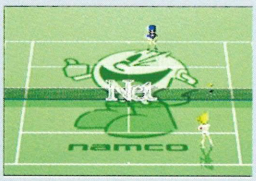
MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY
TOSHINDEN 2
VICTORY BOXING
DARKSTALKERS
ZERO DIVIDE
CRITICOM

SPORTS



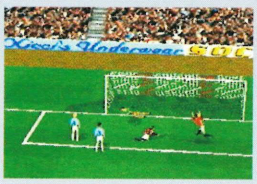
INT. TRACK & FIELD

Konami's finger-bruising Olympic multi-player is *the* sports game to own in our humble opinion, and it will give you and your chums hours of competitive fun – guaranteed.



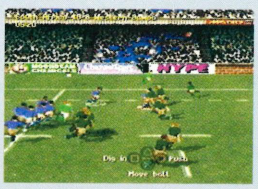
SMASH COURT TENNIS

Namco's PlayStation twist on the old SNES classic is certainly the best tennis game around at present. It may look quite basic, but the gameplay is pumped up to the max.



SOCCER 97

EIDOS improve Olympic Soccer with the inclusion of real UK teams and players, plus a handful of new features too. The only football game worth bothering with – fact!



JONAH LOMU RUGBY

Codemasters come up trumps with an immensely playable bout of hardcore rugger. Join in the rucks, get stuck in in the scrums and whack odd shaped balls to your hearts content.



TOTAL NBA 97

Bigger and better than the original version, this 97 remix plays like a dream and features some of the finest graphics we've seen on a sports sim for yonks.

Also recommended:

NHL FACEOFF
MADDEN 97
ACTUA GOLF
STRIKER 96
NBA JAM EXTREME
ACTUA SOCCER

STRATEGY



WORMS

Basic, simplistic and hellishly addictive, Team 17's PSX debut is the business. Buy this and you and your friends will spend hours in the fabulous multi-player mode.



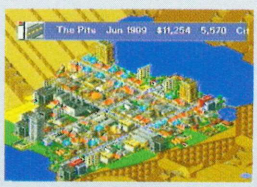
X COM: T.F.T.D.

Hunt aliens under the sea in this, the second enstallment of the strategy-fuelled extra terrestrial adventure from MicroProse. Very technical, but very rewarding too.



COMMAND & CONQUER

A beautiful conversion for the PSX which is presentated in a two CD format, allowing you to choose between the good or the bad guys as you wage war on the world.



SIM CITY 2000

Maxis finally release one of their many *'Sim...'* titles for the PlayStation, and is its everything you could wish for. Build stuff, sell stuff, build more stuff, burn stuff etc.



TRANSPORT TYCOON

Money mangement with a transportation theme. Build railway stations, watch the trains go round and around, and you can even play about with the buses too!

Also recommended:

THEME PARK
SPACE HULK
WARHAMMER
AIV EVOLUTION GLOBAL
PANZER GENERAL
X COM: ENEMY UNKNOWN

ADVENTURE



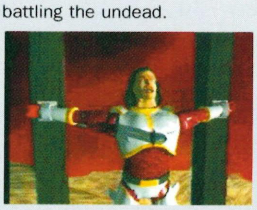
TOMB RAIDER

Indiana Jones-esque mission starring the wonderful Lara Croft and her multi-directional talents. It's huge, it's tasking and it's a bugger to complete, but it's also bloody brilliant.



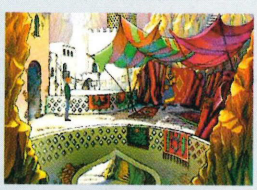
RESIDENT EVIL

Zombie-squashing horror quest from Capcom that started a videogaming revolution. Choose between two heroes as you wander a huge mansion battling the undead.



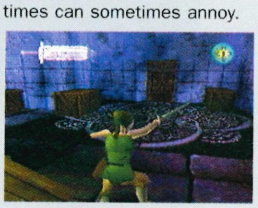
LEGACY OF KAIN

Top class vampire mayhem from BMG Interactive. This game is truely massive, offering gamers hours and hours of mystical blood-letting fun and excitement.



BROKEN SWORD

A very cartoony point-and-click detective adventure which was originally a hit on the PC. This is very addictive to say the least, although its loading times can sometimes annoy.



EXCALIBUR 2555 A.D

Vicky The Viking meets Tomb Raider in Telstar's greatest PSX release to date. The graphics may not be as sharp as Tomb Raiders, but the action is every bit as thrilling.

Also recommended:

FADE TO BLACK
A.I.T.D: JACK'S BACK!
DISCWORLD
KING'S FIELD
TIME COMMANDO
D

PLATFORM



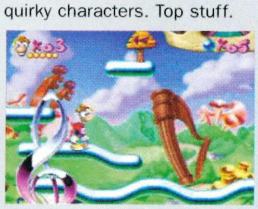
CRASH BANDICOOT

Sony's new hero is a class act in our book, and as far as platform games go, this is the best of the bunch. It's certainly colourful, extremly playable and simply must be bought.



PANDEMONIUM

Pseudo 3-D run and jump affair from the blokes at BMG, which takes the two dimensional platform game one step further with its gorgeous graphics and quirky characters. Top stuff.



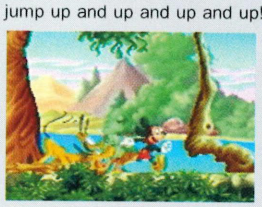
RAYMAN

UBISoft's cute and colourful kiddy-pleaser has been popular with us since the PlayStation's launch, and can still hold its own against most of today's platform offerings.



JUMPING FLASH 2

Polygon bionic bunny action from Sony which gives the genre a novel twist, thanks to its bizarre 3-D viewpoint and its ability to allow the player to jump up and up and up and up!



MICKEY MANIA

This interactive life story of the Disney figurehead is aimed squarely at the younger gamer, although its enjoyable Disney charms will surely entice the odd mature platform fan.

Also recommended:

EARTHWORM JIM 2
JUMPING FLASH
JOHNNY BAZOOKATONE
GEX
FLOATING RUNNER
SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

FLIGHT SIM



FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2

Revamped 16bit chopper chaos from Core Design.

Also recommended:

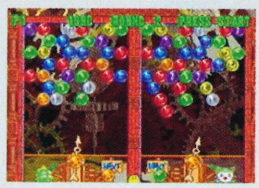
BLACK DAWN
GUNSHIP 2000
AGILE WARRIOR

PUZZLE



LOST VIKINGS 2

An excellent comedy adventure with bags of puzzling mayhem.



BUST A MOVE 2

Balloon-bursting fun that's more addictive than oxygen.

Also recommended...

BLAST CHAMBER
BUBBLE BOBBLE
3D LEMMINGS

MISCELLANEOUS



DIE HARD TRILOGY

Three games, all based on the Bruce Willis movies. Truely excellent in every way.

PRO PINBALL: THE WEB

Interactive pinball for those who can't play it in real life.

Also recommended:

NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 1
WILLIAMS GREATEST HITS

GAMES TO AVOID

AQUANAUT'S HOLIDAY
STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE
PENNY RACERS
BATMAN FOREVER
CRYPT KILLER
SLAMSCAPE
2XTREME
CHESSMASTER 3D
ROAD RAGE

Back Issues...

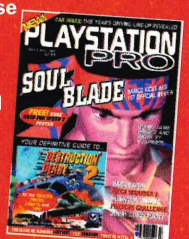
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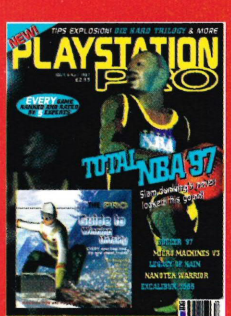
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Cover: Mech Warrior 2
Contents: Free Tips 97 book, complete Crash Bandicoot guide, Reloaded, Tobal No.1, Namco Smash Tennis and those Tomb Raider secrets exposed



ISSUE FIVE *SOLD OUT!*



ISSUE SIX
Cover: Total NBA '97
Contents: Free Guide To Winning Unfairly book, Soccer '97, Micro Machines v3, Legacy Of Kain, Nanotek Warrior, Excalibur 2555, Jet Rider, Adidas Power Soccer '97, King's Field, NHL Faceoff '97, Crypt Killer



ISSUE SEVEN
Cover: Rebel Assault 2
Contents: Free Dark Forces player's guide, free massive Rebel Assault 2 poster, free 32 page Excaliber guide, plus Jonah Lomu Rugby, Transport Tycoon, Lost Vikings 2, Rage Racer, Porsche Challenge, Spider, Total NBA 97, Speedster

Issue No.4 **Mechwarrior 2** .....○
Issue No.6 **Total NBA '97** .....○
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Next Month

Fantastic Four

We go behind the scenes at Probe Software and take an exclusive look at this forthcoming comic book treat, as well as...



Batman & Robin

Yes, we join in on the countdown to the next Batman movie and scoop the exclusive on the PlayStation conversion.

MDK

Interplay's psychotic shoot 'em-up will be storming our office next month and no doubt demanding some kind of top gaming coverage.



Conquest Earth

EIDOS Interactive's alien strategy bonanza is on its way. Next month we'll give you the full lowdown on this potential monster and more.

G Police

We reveal what software hero Psygnosis has up its sleeve for the next few months, including this fantastic Blade Runner-esque adventure.



Also Next Issue

ALSO NEXT MONTH...

All Star Soccer
Rally Cross
Darklight Conflict
Actua Tennis
Wreckin' Crew
VR Baseball
Moto Racer
Part 3 of our massive Dark Forces guide

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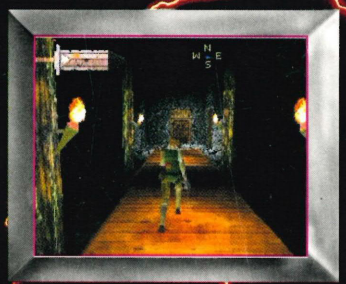
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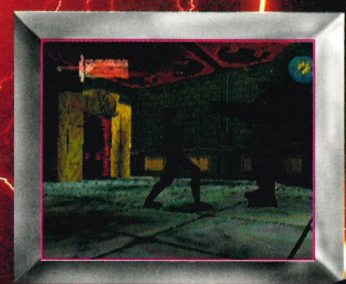
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