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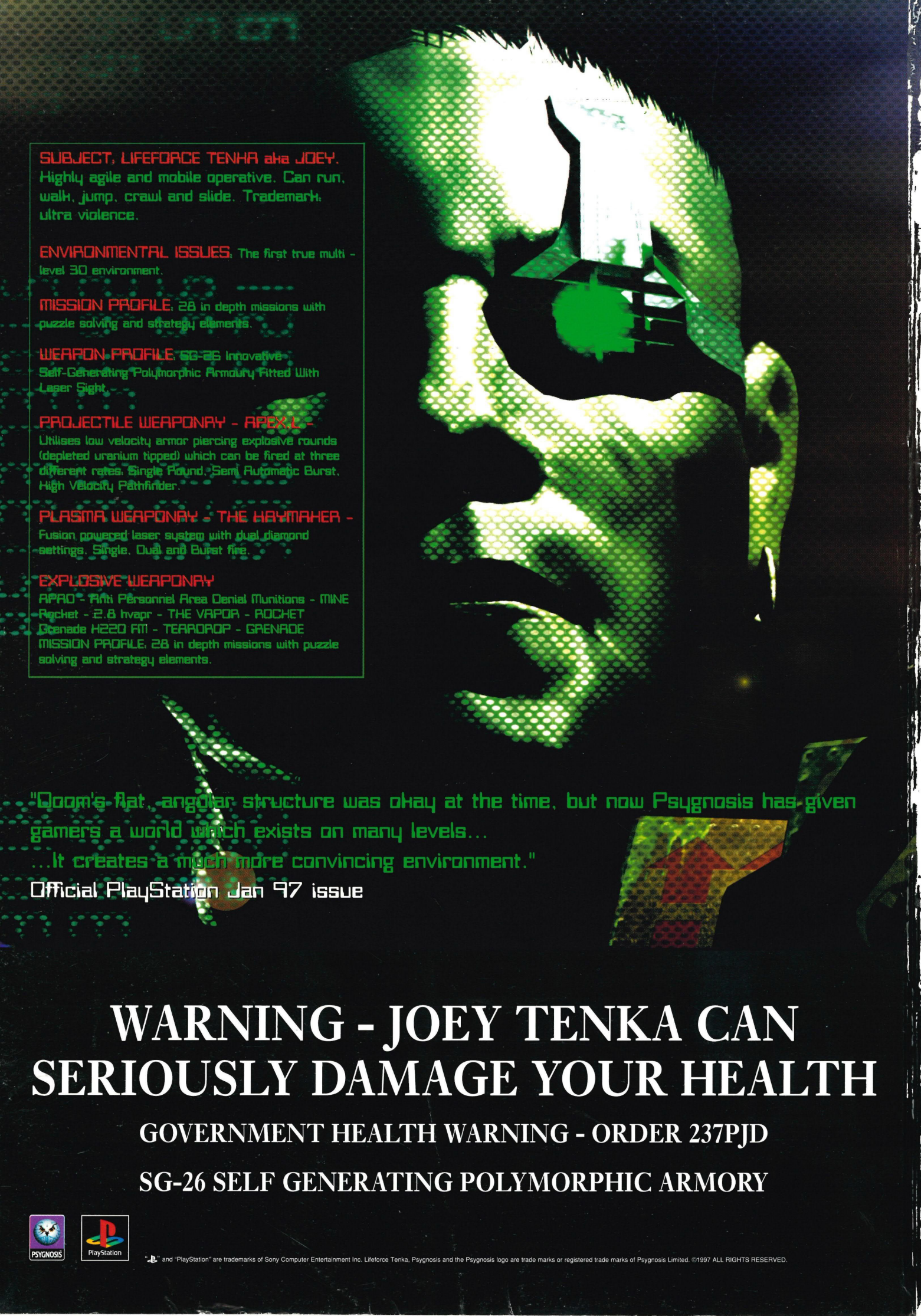
VR BASEBALL

RAY TRACERS MACHINE HUNTER WRECKIN' CREW TOMB RAIDER 2

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PLAYSTATION PRO ISSUE 09 JULY 1997



"Doom's flat, angular structure was okay at the time, but now Psygnosis has given gamers a world which exists on many levels...
...It creates a much more convincing environment."
Official PlayStation Jan 97 issue

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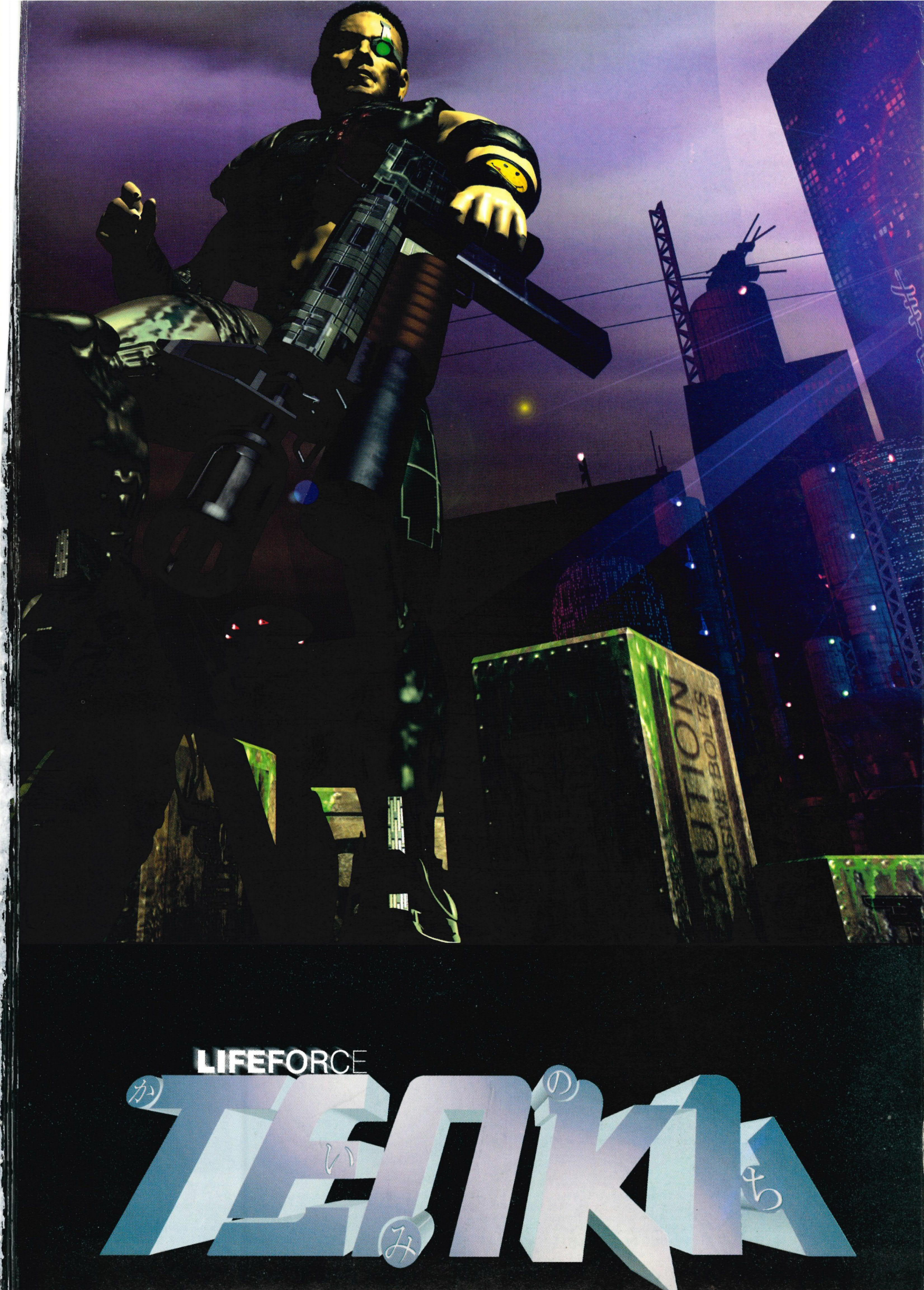
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SG-26 SELF GENERATING POLYMORPHIC ARMORY

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LIFEFORCE
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70 The Art Of Fighting
EA ventures into the realm of goblins, warlocks and other such wizardy goings on with its C&C-inspired WarCraft 2. Enjoy!



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Take the basic concept of Ridge Racer, add a spot of Chase HQ gameplay and the ability to knock your opponents off the road and what do you get? That's right, Sony's wonderful Ray Tracers. No, not Rage Racer, Ray Tracers

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The usual splattering of cheats, tips and general gaming hints are waiting for your drooling tongue on page 80. Lap it up, big boy

82 Dark Forces Player's Guide: The Final Part!
Thank the Lord! Andy has finally finished the bloody guide! Yes, the final part of our seemingly-never ending Dark Forces walkthrough is here for you to enjoy. And what fun it is.

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Our regular Tomb Raider 2 update goes from strength to strength this month, plus we unveil Telstar's forthcoming goodies, Crash Bandicoot 2, EA's Moto Racer, Batman & Robin's PSX plans, Premier Manager '97, the new Platinum Range, Core Design's Fighting Force and Sony's Rosco McQueen. We'll also be showing you what's hot in Japan and the reason why Sony is celebrating this month. All this and more awaits your news hungry eye inside...



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91 Subscriptions
Have the mag in your hands days before it goes on sale down the shops – and pay less! Yes, bizarre as it may seem it's all true, so subscribe today. If not sooner

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The games we love to bits and play most often are compiled in our special Recommended section to the rear of the mag. A quick glance can instantly tell you which games to buy and which ones to avoid like the plague. In brief, don't buy a game before you check its worth in our hot list. Okay?





IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

We go behind-the-scenes at Probe to find out what it has been doing with one of Marvel Comics' greatest creations: The Fantastic Four

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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 **Special thanks to:** Trudy & Sarah **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 August issue out July 10. Don't forget!

EVERY GAME RANKED AND RATED BY FIVE EXPERTS!

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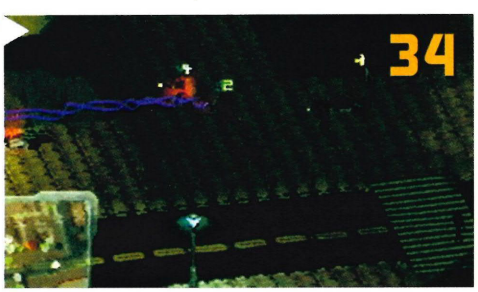
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16 VR Baseball PLAYSTATION APPROVED
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A cyberpunk adventure of epic proportions!



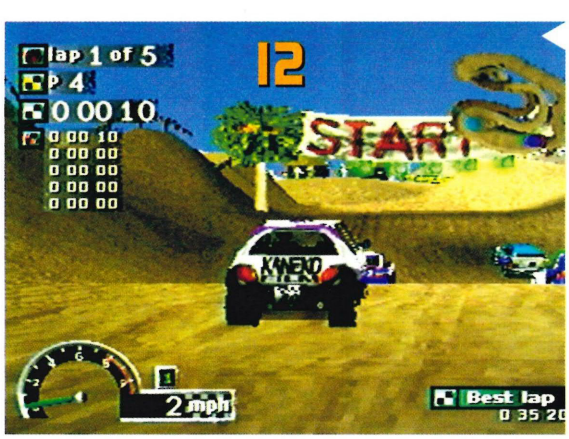
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32 Tokyo Highway Battle
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42 WCW Vs The World PLAYSTATION APPROVED
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REVIEWED
WCW Vs The World
Wear spandex, shout a lot, break bones...



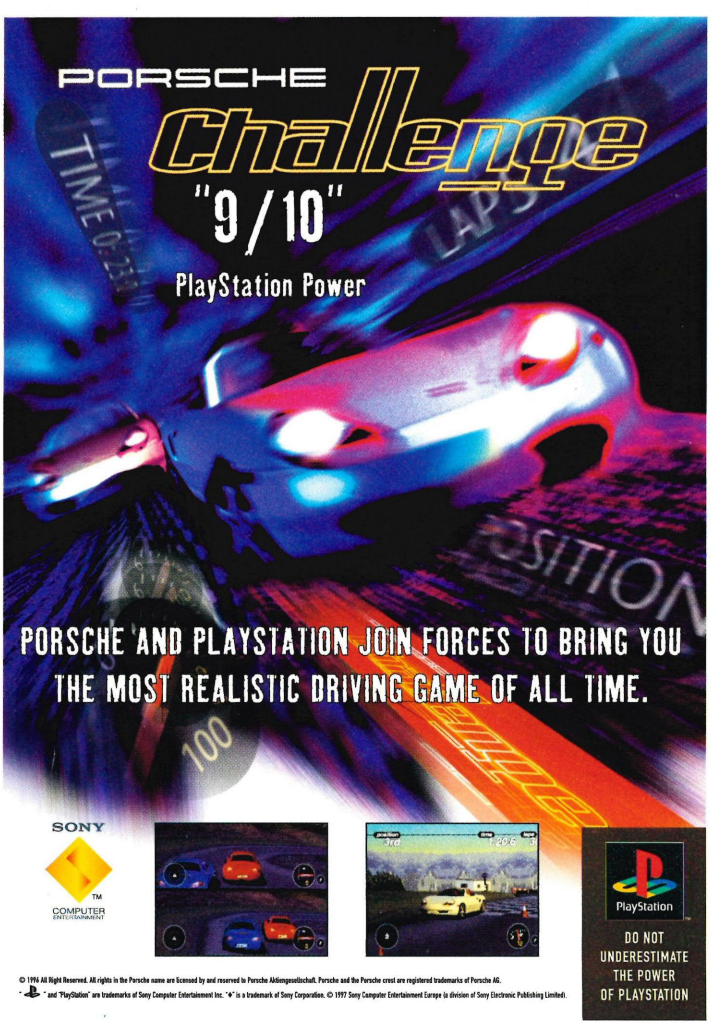
REVIEWED
Overblood
An adventure classic?



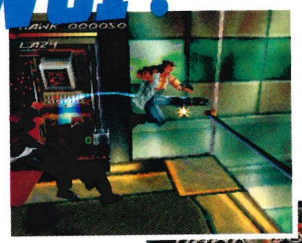
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50 Independence Day
Whoop E.T's ass with all your might in Fox Interactive's officially licenced interactive version of the special effects-heavy blockbuster



Fight The Power!





In-between development for the launch of Tomb Raider 2 and preparing for E3 later this month, Core Design are currently working on an impressive-looking 3-D arcade fighting title going by the name of Fighting Force.

The game is said to be a cross between Tekken 2 and the Saturn title Die Hard Arcade, with players navigating one or two of the game's four main characters throughout a series of 3-D environments, boasting unparalleled freedom of movement.

The old Sega Streets Of Rage series seems to have been a big influence on Fighting Force's development, as the bulk of the game is a scrolling beat 'em-up with collectible weapons on-route to each level's exit point. But let's hope Fighting Force manages to give us all what the aforementioned Sega 'classic' did and more, and from what we've seen of it so far, Core have got another winner on its hands with this baby. More next month!



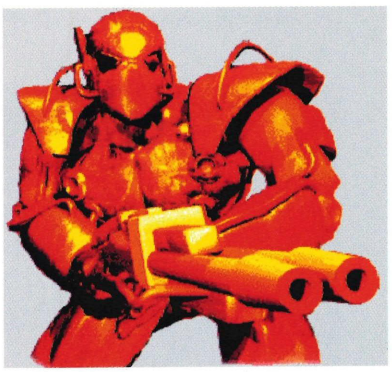


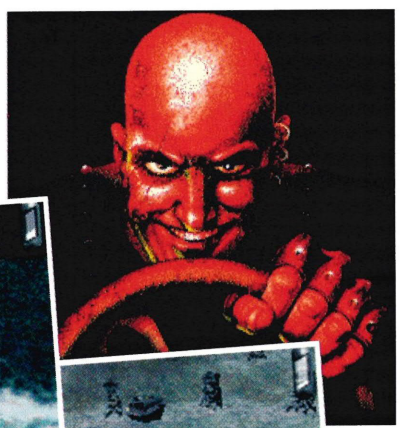
Weird SCIence

Sales Curve Interactive (SCI) has not only put back its release dates for forthcoming PlayStation releases, but it has also re-titled a couple of them.

XS - SCI's first person 'gladiatorial simulator' - is now known as Fatal Domain and will not come out until September. Swiv - the 32bit version of the 16bit classic - has been re-named Dual Force, this also should be released in September.

Full Metal Pigeon - a spoof on all things World War One - is due to hit the shelves the same time as the other two. Carmageddon - the racing title which caused controversy in the PC market this spring when it was accused of glorifying joy/grief riding and road rage - will follow in June 1998.









The successful SWIV series continues into the 32bit era, but is re-named Dual Force and will hit the shelves in September

More Platinum Titles On The Way

The next batch of cut-price titles from the Platinum Range are to be announced anyday now, and they are as follows: PGA 96, FIFA 96, Need For Speed, Road Rash and Fade To Black. As you've probably noticed, all of the above are from Electronic Arts, but there is another title hitting the shelves at £19.99 that isn't from the EA stable; Rayman.

Yes, UBI Soft's colourful platform hero is back, and at a low low price. But is this simply a cunning ploy by UBI Soft in order to stir up some Rayman hype before the sequel arrives? Who knows? Who cares? Just you make sure you get yourself down the shops sharpish and bag up on all these cheap gaming treats from the PlayStation's back catalogue. All the aforementioned titles should be available by the time you've read this.

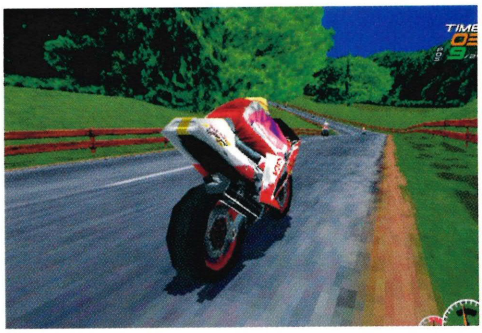
Bandicoot Bounces Back

Sony's furry PlayStation mascot is set to make just as big an impact on this summer's E3 show as he did last year, with the world exclusive unveiling of the sequel everyone's been waiting for: Crash Bandicoot 2!

Yes, our loveable bandicoot is back and this time he's boasting a completely revamped game engine, an increased number of animation frames, enhanced lighting effects, more polygons on-screen and even more detailed textures and rendered graphics than before.

Our inside sources also reveal that the levels in this second Crash game will be at least twice as large as the ones in the original. Blimey! Are you ready for another bout of Bandicoot mayhem? If so, tune in next month when we exclusively reveal the ins and outs of Crash Bandicoot 2, plus everything else the Electronic Entertainment Expo has to offer.









Calling All Speed Freaks!

Electronic Arts Ltd is soon to release Moto Racer – a 3-D arcade perfect motorcycle racing game for the PlayStation. Moto Racer is the latest game to come from French developers, Delphine Software International who is most famous for the award-winning Fade to Black.

Moto Racer is a fast paced, thrill-packed motorbike racing game which offers players the challenges of racing Motor Cross, or Speed bikes. There are nine different tracks which will have the rider screeching around the tarmac, skidding on the dirt, sliding in the snow, fishtailing in the sand and splashing across water!

There are three different gameplay modes - practice, which allows the player to ride around and familiarise themselves with the layout of the track, single Race - a timed race against opponents and the player may choose to race in motocross or speed mode and championship, where the player must be placed in the top three to get to the next track.

Graphically, Moto Racer offers texture mapping and real time lighting in 32,000 colours which combine to create an aesthetically pleasing environment. The multiplayer option allows up to eight players to participate in any one race via split screen. Moto Racer will appear in the shops in July, priced around £39.99.

To support the imminent release of Delphine Software's 3-D, arcade-perfect motorbike racing game Moto Racer, EA is sponsoring a team at the British Production Powerbike Championship Races this year. Team Electronic Arts Suzuki consists of top motorbike racers Jim Moodie and John Crawford - winners of last year's races - on Suzuki GSXR 750s bikes, with both the riders and bikes suitably branded Electronic Arts, Delphine Software and Moto Racer logos.

Team Electronic Arts Suzuki will race in the following events, to be broadcast on satellite and terrestrial TV - 1, 2 and 3 August - FIM Superbike World Championship at Brands Hatch and 15, 16 and 17 August - British Grand Prix at Donington Park.





Last minute preparations for the Team Electronic Arts Bike, before the first warm up

Batman Does A Lara Shocker!



Acclaim's forthcoming PlayStation adaptation of big Summer blockbuster 'Batman and Robin' looks set to break the mould for movie licences, judging by our exclusive sneaky peek while we were supposed to be checking out the Fantastic Four.

You see, following the rather ropey Batman Forever game, developers Probe Software has opted for an all new 3-D game engine to power the latest instalment.

With the ability to switch control between Batman, Robin and Batgirl, your task is to stop the combined forces of Mr. Freeze and Poison Ivy from taking over Gotham City. Viewed in fully rendered polygon 3-D, the game is looking not unlike a superhero version of Tomb Raider. With a vast Gotham map to explore, both on foot and behind the wheel of the Batmobile, the game covers the same relative size as a real city.

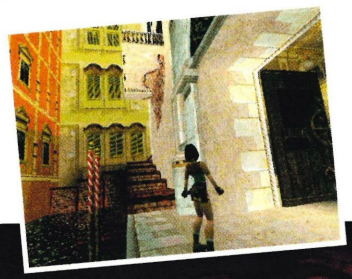
It promises to test your brain power as well as arcade reflexes, as you find clues to the Terrible Twosome's plans. There are loads of locations to explore – including a virtual Bat cave – but you'll have to be in the right place at the right time in order to catch the criminals in the act. Turn up too early and you'll find an empty building, too late and you'll see the devastation caused by their actions.

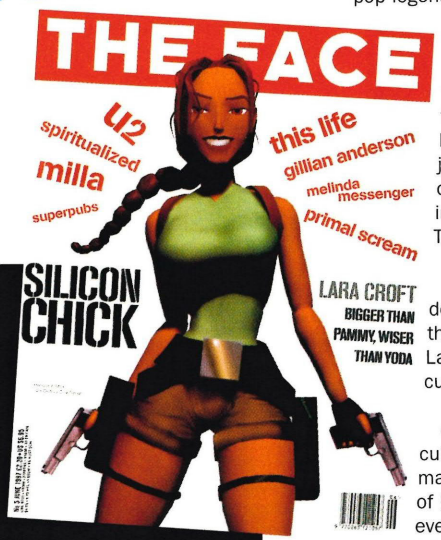
Flawless detective work is essential to progress. Probe is working in close contact with Warner Brothers to get the game as close to the film as possible. All the movie sets are recreated, to scale, in the game and the vital statistics of the actors and actresses are being used to get the characters movements spot on as well. For instance, certain floors will give way under Batman's weight, George Clooney obviously being a fan of pies, but the lighter Batgirl can cross them safely.

Towards the end of the game, if Mr. Freeze succeeds in covering Gotham in ice, you'll even have to skate and slide to your destinations. Using a revolutionary 3-D engine (you really have to see Batman's cape flowing as he runs and jumps to believe it), the game just needs the addition of enemies and other critical game features to be complete. The release date is in Autumn, to coincide with the release of the film on video, to rent or buy.

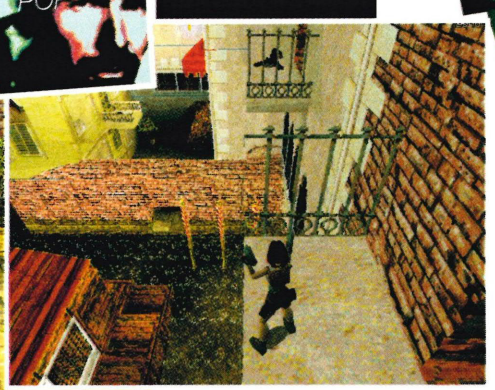


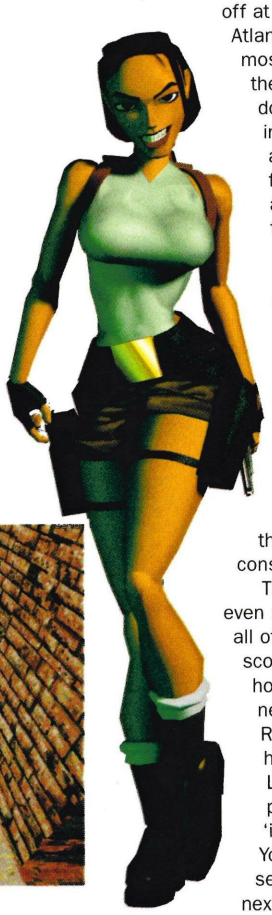
A Month In The Life Of Lara...











Welcome to our monthly round-up of Lara Croft gossip and red hot news on the forthcoming, and eagerly awaited, Tomb Raider 2. Lara has been a busy girl this month, what with making an appearance at the launch party for Naked Records the other week and getting to know top-selling rock gods U2.

Yes, following up on 'her' debut jaunt into the music world, Tomb Raider herself, Miss Lara Croft, is to join pop legends U2 on their PopMart world tour. Strange as it may seem, Bono and the boys commissioned Eidos Interactive to produce some exclusive footage of our Lara doing her thang to display to their millions of tour-going fans. The dazzling show will be shown via the band's 7000 square foot video screen which just-happens-to-be-the-world's-largest. EIDOS, obviously, are chuffed to bits with this latest in a seemingly-never-ending line of on-going Tomb Raider promotions.

Larry Sparks, World-wide Marketing Director for EIDOS, had this to say; "We were delighted when U2 asked if Lara would share the stage with them. It's a great honour for Lara and it establishes her position as a real cult icon". Indeed it does.

Other Lara lovers may have caught a glimpse of the action babe adorning the front cover of cult style mag, The Face this month. Inside the magazine has several specially-designed shots of Miss Croft in numerous poses, including an evening dress, a Gucci bikini and a revealing little number from Alexander McQueen, plus the mag tries to find out what Lara's appeal really is and they've even interviewed Toby Gard, Lara's creator.

So, she has had a top selling game, she's a cover star, an idol to millions and has been spotted hob-nobbing with big famous rock stars. What next? Erm, how about a sequel?

Well the latest news from Core Design is that the development team are currently polishing up everything they have on Tomb Raider 2 in order to show it all off at this month's E3 show in Atlanta. That includes making the most of the new lighting effects they're using on the game, plus doing some final tweaks to the infamous new ponytail animation, allowing Lara's locks to flow freely as she moves instead of appearing to be sellotaped to the back of her neck as before.

Core is taking its time over the level designs in the game and is implementing some impressive looking outdoor levels as well as the awesome sunken ocean liner and underground corridors. This, and the new batch of acrobatic abilities Lara has been given, gives the game a less-claustrophobic feel than that of the original and should therefore offer gamers considerably more play time to boot.

Tune in next month if you want even more info on the game, as we're all off to Atlanta in a few days to scoop the exclusives on those red hot titles coming your way in the next 12 months - including Tomb Raider 2! Plus, we'll have our hands on some exclusive new Lara pics, screenshots and photos of the new and 'improved' real life Lara Croft. You'd be a fool to miss it, so we'll see you here, same time next month.

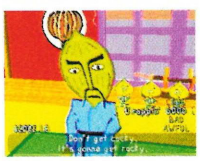
You Gotta Believe!

It's not very often a game arrives in our office that manages to grab the attention of everyone in the building. In fact the phrase 'once every blue moon' springs to mind. This month, however, we were treated with the fabulous Parappa The Rapper from our pals at Sony HQ, and we can safely say that it's officially the puppy's pods.

The game is an excellent, amusing and highly entertaining affair featuring a collection of 2-D paper-thin hip hop-loving characters, including our puppy dog hip hop hero, Parappa. The aim of the game is to get Parappa to rap along with a series of freaky friends in order to win his sweetheart's love, with the whole game presented in cartoon form, spread over several wacky 3-D environments.

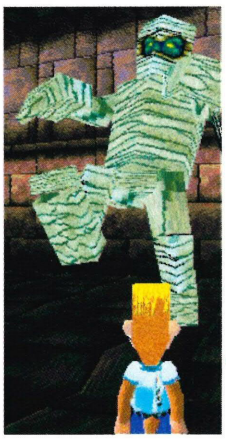
It sounds mad, I know. And it is. In fact it's the maddest thing any of us have ever experienced and we think it's gonna be a big big hit. It's already going down a storm in Japan and that success is sure to repeat itself when Parappa moonwalks onto your console around September time. Ya'll jus' remember where you heard it first, boyeee. Word.







In the rain or in the snow, he's got the funky flow... Parappa gets ready to rock the UK

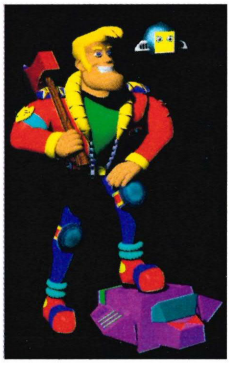


Telstar's Monkey Boy

Joe Blow is the star of Telstar's latest PSX adventure offering and is rumoured to become the PlayStation's answer to Mario64. Wether it will or not has yet to be confirmed by us PSPros, but we'll be having a more in-depth look at it next issue. The reason? Well put plainly, Joe Blow turned up bang on deadline and we simply haven't any space left in this issue to give it any justice, despite him looking like a Bart Simpson monkey hybrid. In order to compensate this, we've agreed to go overboard on Mr Blow next issue, along with Telstar's other titles scheduled for release such as Wrecking Crew and Formula Karts 97. So if you want more Blow, tune in next month!



Twisted Firestarter?



Telford development team Slippery Snake is hardly the best known team around but with Sony pulling the strings it is well on the way to bigger and better things with Rosco McQueen. It is being developed by the core team of 12, and promises to be a PlayStation only release so you are well within your rights to gloat at your mates with other machines.

Hundreds of hours have been spent tuning the gameplay in which time a lot of the original elements have been taken out to make for a fast paced affair with an arcadey feel while keeping things ticking along fluidly. But nevermind all that now, what's it all about?

Rosco McQueen is a do gooder. He just can't help it. His chiselled jaw, rock star quiff and muscular frame mean he just has to be a hero. No other job would be good enough. And so he winds up battling against a vast range of bad guys in the huge tower designed, and now taken over, by the mad Sylvester T. Square.

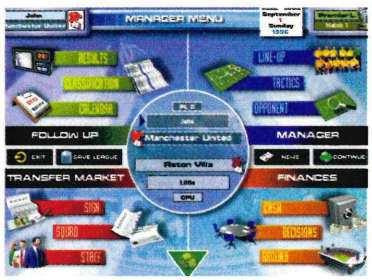
He has taken over Tower X and its main computer, holding hostages with the intent of torching the whole building if his ransom requirements aren't met. Guess who's the only person who can put him bang to rights? Yep, Rosco takes the responsibility of battling his way up the floors of this burning 3-D building, solving a number of simple puzzles, thwarting all attacks and, most importantly, putting out some huge blazes to rescue the hostages before they burn to a crisp. And since Rosco is more than a little dim, he has his robot sidekick DIGIT to help him along, giving warning of any impending danger. Keep your eyes peeled for our full preview on Rosco and the following review before its impending release around September. You'd be a fool to miss it. You really would.

First Time Manager

The first footy management sim of note on the PlayStation is set to arrive even sooner than the new season. Gremlin are gearing up to release Premier Manager 98 inexplicably in mid '97. Taking the million selling series a massive step further thanks to the addition of in game highlights hopes are high for this one. As manager of the team of your choice you'll be able to take charge of as much or as little of the clubs affairs as you fancy.

The in-game options range from simply picking the team and then buying and selling, to full control over all aspects of running a football club, including the ability to hire and fire staff – from groundsman to club psychologist – and you even control the coaching and discipline.

Premier Manager 98 also includes an unrivalled database of all four divisions including accurate histories, honours and the like, plus plenty of detailed statistics for all major European players, clubs and managers. These are all accompanied by photos of every player and squad member, making this not only a top notch and in-depth management game, but a fully fledged multimedia encyclopeadia to boot. Impressive stuff we're sure you'll agree, and from PSPro's point of view we really can't wait for this footballing beauty to arrive from our pals at Gremlin.



Free Telstar CD!

Telstar has loads of Excalibur 2555 demo CDs to give away, or at least for the price of a stamp.

The address to send your stamped, self addressed envelope is Excalibur Demo, Telstar Electronic Studios, 62-64 Bridge Street, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 1AP. Not only will you receive a demo, you'll be put in a draw for the chance to win up to £100 worth of Telstar Electronic Studios PlayStation Software.



Over In Japan...

Here's a brief look at what our oriental chums are currently drooling over in the land of the rising sun.



ROCKMAN BATTLE & CHASE
This features the aforementioned blue-suited imp, Rockman (also known as Megaman in the western world), along with all his pals in a bizarre Mario Kart type scenario. But it doesn't look that hot to be honest.



BUSHIDO BLADE
The early word on this Soul Blade-challenger is extremely favourable, with certain parties calling it the best fighting game ever created. A UK release has yet to be confirmed, but hopefully it'll surface over here before the end of the year.



DRACULA X
Konami's spooky Castlevania vampire adventure is quickly becoming a best seller over in Japan with its blood-thirsty hack and slash action, and an official UK launch is definitely on the cards for later on this year. Judging by the popularity of BMG's Legacy Of Kain, this should go down a storm with the UK crowd.



BASTARD!!
The comical name aside, this RPG is set in a wacky 3-D environment featuring all the usual manga-style characters and surreal storylines. Unfortunately, due to both its complexity and amusing title, it won't be released over here.

SPEED RACER MACH GO!



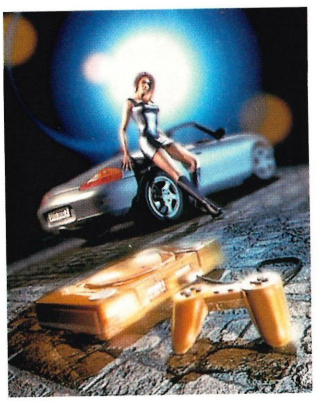
The 1967 cartoon boy racer returns in this 3-D polygon driving spectacular from Tomy. Previous interactive incarnations of Speed Racer have been pretty awful, but this latest one is allegedly a 'bit of alright'.

BRAHMA FORCE:



The Assault On Belt Logger 9
This first-person-perspective blaster looks similar to Sony's Epidemic, and has you infiltrating a space fortress in order to save the globe from certain destruction – as usual. At the time of going to press, the game is certainly pencilled in for launch in both the US and the UK.

One Million UK Owners!



Sony have just announced the great news that they've sold one million units in the UK alone and are celebrating by signing a three-year £10 million sponsorship deal with the UEFA Champions League.

Sales of the PlayStation have been growing steady since its launch in late '95 and now confidently boasts a 80% share of the UK market. Sony Managing Director, Ray Maguire had this to say inbetween the popping of champagne corks... "The millionth sale has been an important target for us, and achieving it at this time puts us ahead of schedule. It took the Sega MegaDrive and Nintendo's SNES two years to acheive what we've done in 18 months."

The sponsorship deal with UEFA starts in September and grants Sony a wide range of advertising and marketing opportunities ranging from pitch-side banners, through merchandising and of course, TV coverage. And as each UEFA match is said to rake in around 170 million viewers worldwide, we're sure it won't be long before Sony are celebrating the sales of another million units.

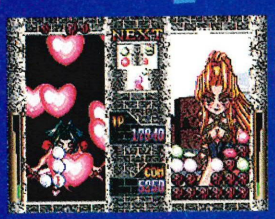
PlayStation Top 20 – Week Ending May 17

ChartTrack

1) Soul Blade
2) Rebel Assault 2
3) Dark Forces
4) Need For Speed
5) FIA Formula 1
6) Tomb Raider
7) Destruction Derby
8) Actua Soccer Club Edition
9) Ridge Racer
10) Porsche Challenge
11) Tekken
12) Micro Machines V3
13) Jonah Lomu Rugby
14) Die Hard Trilogy
15) Crash Bandicoot
16) Worms
17) WipEout
18) Player Manager
19) FIFA 97
20) Command & Conquer

COMPILED BY CHARTTRACK, THIS CHART IS THE STRICT COPYRIGHT OF ELSPA, SO NO COPYING

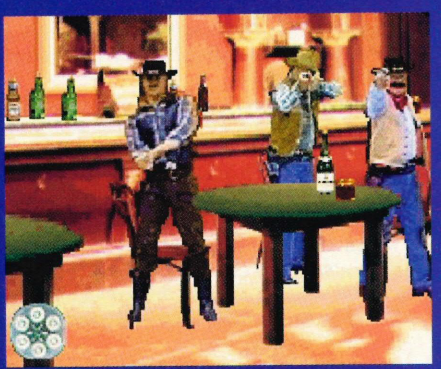
Stop Press



• **Pure Entertainment, the company responsible for Lunatik, is now working on a second title which will be the first console game to use animorphix technology. This unique in-house technology is a real-time character animation system which has been developed by the Pure team to allow the creation and animation of cartoon characters and objects. Rather than rely on the rotation and translation of polygons to produce movement, animorphix uses a morphing system whereby the shape, colour and texture map for each polygon in a model can be modified in real-time. This allows previously unachievable effects such as a character's arm increasing in length, his head and neck deforming when punched, or being squashed flat when a heavy object lands on him. Anything from weapons to explosions as well as characters can be controlled by animorphix, thus enabling the creation of complete 3-D cartoon environments. The game, which to date is being kept secret, is to be published by Psygnosis.**

• **Hasbro, the well-known board game firm, is set to publish games for the PlayStation. Monopoly, Frogger (an updated version of the classic '80s arcade game), Beast Wars featuring Transformers. Ideas for versions of Risk and Battleship are currently being bandied around, too.**

• **Takara is following in the Street Fighter footsteps over in Japan at present with its Puzzle fighter clone, Puzzle Arena Tohshinden. It's virtually identical to Capcom's excellent title, and as yet, no firm UK release date has been set.**



• **Prepare yourself for Broken Helix, apparently a thrilling strategy RPG from Konami involving plenty of Area 51 alien japes. A UK release is pencilled in for late summer and Konami has also signed up Evil Dead star Bruce Campbell to provide the voice of the game's main character. Which can't be bad. Watch out for Konami's arcade shooters, Lethal Enfrocers 1&2 which will hit the PlayStation later this summer – all on one CD! Remember where you heard it first kids!**

RAGE RACER

"A STUNNING GAME"

Play Magazine

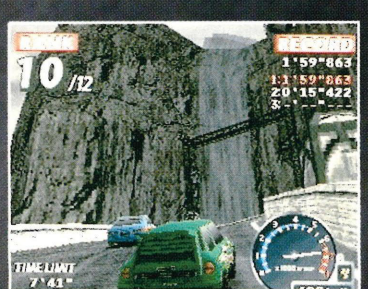
94%

"RAGE RACER BREAKS ALL THE MOULDS, PUSHING EVERYTHING TO THE LIMIT"

PlayStation Plus

93%

namco RAGE RACER £39.99 RRP. PLAYSTATION GAMES FROM £19.99 RRP.







SONY

PlayStation

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

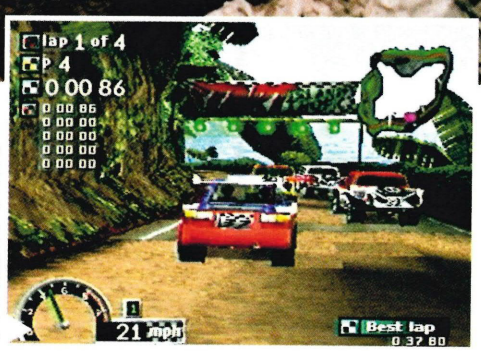
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BY STEVE McNALLY

Rally Cross

Sega Rally? Pah! Who needs it when you've got Sony's great shining beast of a racer?





The graphical detail level is top quality, with everything looking almost photo realistic



I should imagine rally driving is not exactly something that's easy to master. Hurtling down dirt roads barely as wide as your car, sometimes in the pitch dark with only your headlights and the voice of your co-driver to save you from certain disaster.

Well Rally Cross is about as unforgiving as the real thing (without the coma inducing crashes of course). Put a wheel wrong and you're on your roof my son. The slightest deviance in the racing line and you'll find yourself rolling the car uncontrollably. And this is perhaps the single most infuriating part of any game that I have ever played.

When you first start to play, three tracks are available with the promise of more to come should you manage to win the championship. But don't hold your breath because you aren't going to be seeing those for quite some time.

There are several gameplay options, as you'd expect. You can practise on a specific track, race against the clock, take part in a single race against other cars or have a go at a particular level of the rally championship. But the options don't end there.

For example, in championship mode (or single race for that matter) you can race each track in a number of different ways. You can have a straight race or try the more intriguing Head to Head mode where several cars race the same track but some of them set off in one direction while the rest set off in the other and the first one to finish the set number of laps is the winner. As you can imagine, this leads to some hairy moments and spectacular collisions mid-race and if your reactions are a bit slow.

Having said that, you're better off sticking to normal racing mode at first because things are difficult enough without having to fret about head on crashes as well. And practise before



The multi player mode is a bit of a travesty to be brutally honest. Wasted opportunity I'm afraid



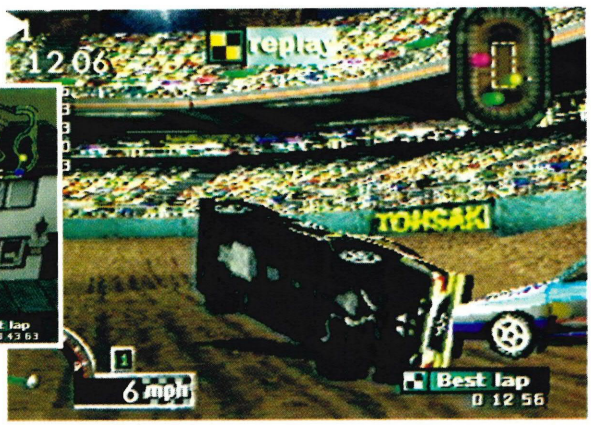
Splashing through the mud is all part of a day's work for a rally driver



Races take place in all sorts of realistic rally tpe locations, like here for instance, in the desert



I'm sure the residents of this particular street are really happy about this situation



The stadium course is my own personal favourite, with loads of bumps and bends

you have a go at the Championship – a lot! You'll still be rubbish at it (in comparison to the computer drivers at least) but there's not really a lot you can do about that.

To win the Championship you have to score more points than everyone else with points being awarded on the basis of where you finish in each particular race. This means you can still win the series if you get off to a bad start but it'll be much more difficult. I'm stating the obvious now aren't I? They'll be calling me Andy next if I'm not careful.

Perseverance generally pays off in video games but my God do you have to persevere with Rally Cross to get anywhere. Thankfully, the rewards are more than worth it. Not only are there extra tracks and better cars available as you progress but also variations on the originals. A new shortcut will open up here, part of the track will be closed there and so on.

All the different variations are selectable so you can either pick a favourite or just go for variety and live for the moment choosing one at random. Okay, so maybe I'm getting carried away with just how exciting these options are but it's rare that you get to review such a comprehensive game and it's nice to cut loose every once in a while and build something.

I'm conscious of this mainly because so far this review may not have come across as being wholly positive, and that's certainly not the impression I want to create. You see, in my opinion, Rally Cross is easily the best PlayStation racer around, beating the likes of Ridge Racer and F1 by a good distance and almost lapping Micro Machines!

I like a bit of realism in my racing games and Rally Cross certainly has plenty of that. As you'd imagine, being Rally courses, they aren't exactly what you'd call flat tracks. There are bumps, hills, slopes, rivers, obstacles and just about anything you can think of will get in your way.

Whereas most games are very forgiving, RC gives you a few feet of rope and then hangs you with it. A true physical model for the car means that should you hit a jump with only two wheels the vehicle will be jolted in that direction, and depending on your speed and angle when you hit it (you can actually drive on two wheels at times), will more than likely roll over onto its roof. Which is fair enough I suppose.

However, where Rally Cross takes the concept one stage further is in cornering. In any other racer going round a corner too fast results at worst in an unrealistic bump against the wall and then continuing as if nothing had happened, and at best spinning off and facing in the wrong direction when you come to a halt. However, in this game, go round a corner too fast and you'll see two wheels begin to struggle for grip on one side of the car and, if you don't take corrective measures (i.e. slam on the brakes) you'll be powerless to stop them lifting off the ground and the car starting to roll.

What makes the game so difficult though is not so much the ease with which you lose control of the car but the fact that the computer controlled cars never seem to make a mistake, or at least not a serious one. Each time you roll the car, which will be often when you first start to play, and indeed for quite some time afterwards, you lose serious amounts of ground on your competitors. And this is distance that is far from easy to claw back. The only way to win a race, even on the default difficulty level, is to complete the race making no mistakes. You'll perhaps get away with one and be in with a chance, but any more and you can forget it.

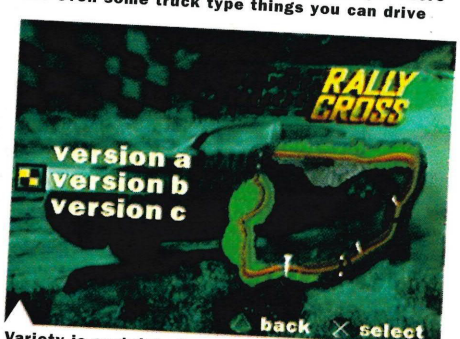
That's not too say you have to master the game before you can progress because you don't. All you have to be able to do is negotiate your way around the tracks without making a ▶



I suppose the two player split screen is just about bearable, any more though and you can forget it!



Tonnes more car become available when you manage to win a couple of championships. There are even some truck type things you can drive



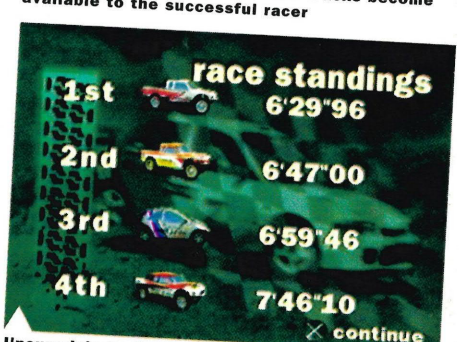
Variety is certainly the spice of life as far as this game goes. Variations of all the tracks become available to the successful racer





At the end of each race the whole thing is replayed for your enjoyment

It's best to take the jumps as straight as you can. For instance, here you'll end up rolling



Unsurprisingly I've finished a good 46 seconds behind my competitors on the toughest difficulty setting the game has to offer

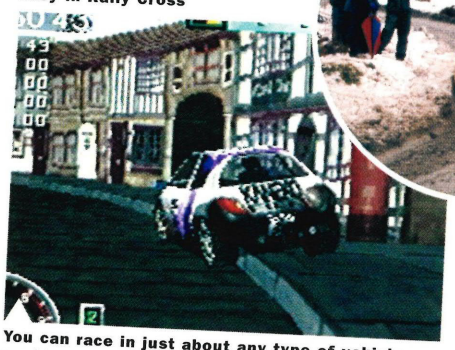
Rally Cross



Rolling the car is exceptionally easy in Rally Cross



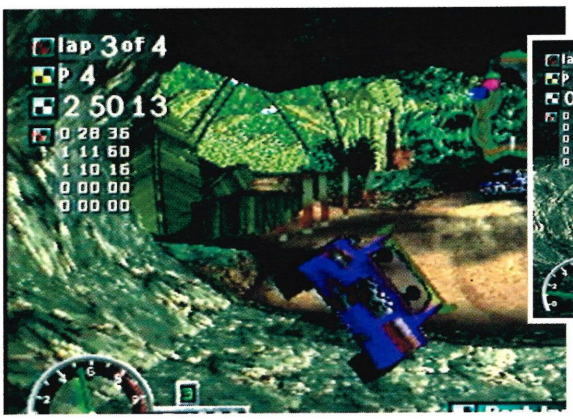
The graphics are mightily impressive, you must agree

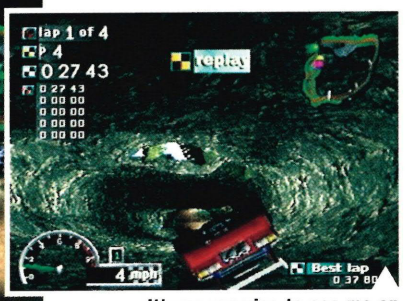


You can race in just about any type of vehicle you'd see on the road today



Racing through murky tunnels is just one of the thrills in the game





It's no surprise to see me on my roof again, this time merely as a result of going too quickly!

A cluttered field is something you won't see all that often, simply because you'll be miles behind



The tranquility of this leafy glade is disturbed by the roaring engines of Rally Cross racers



The stadium course is just an oval at first, but open up the shortcuts and it changes completely



▶mistake as serious as rolling the car. Once you've done that and opened up the other tracks you'll have to go a whole lot quicker than you were doing before, but still not make any mistakes!

I suppose this is why Sony has taken the decision to only allow you to drive the slower cars at first. Once you move up a level you'll see a marked difference in the quality of the cars in terms of top speed, acceleration and handling. This doesn't make the game any easier though, because the opposition also now drives better cars, the circuits are tougher and the lap times quicker. Difficult stuff indeed, but well worth the effort if you like your racing games to be at least somewhere close to realistic.

There have been some concessions made, such as the fact that however many crashes you have in the course of a race your car doesn't noticeably suffer any lack of performance. And of course in a real rally if you ended up on your roof, chances are you wouldn't be finishing the stage. There's even a novel way of righting your car though, and one that you'll have to get good at if you aren't to lose even more ground on your competitors. Those helpful programmers have made it necessary for you to rock the car back on to its wheels by pressing the shoulder buttons to build up momentum. And again it's something that is affected by your individual ability at performing this particular action.

There's method in this madness though. Although at first it may just be another infuriating hindrance to slow you up, with practise you can learn to use it to your advantage. If you feel control slipping away from you, start to prepare yourself for what you'll need to do to get the car the right way up again. And don't make the same mistake I did – assuming you can't even start to rock the car until it has come to a complete stop. In time you'll be rolling with the car right from the start and it's even possible to control it so that you land on your wheels eventually and carry on with nothing more than a dip in speed!

So if you're put off by the knowledge that

Some knob crashed into the back of my car this morning at a roundabout. Ooh well done mate! You're the best!



GENRE COMPARISON

Game **Rage Racer**
Software House **Sony**

Namco attempted to add a bit of depth to the shallow Ridge Racer series, and managed it to a certain degree. Still essentially the same engine though, it was a disappointment to many who were expecting something of an overhaul. However, it's the best arcade style racer around, and now with Rally Cross, Sony has pretty much got the market stitched up.

you're going to have to work hard to reap the plentiful rewards offered by Rally Cross then you can be safe in the knowledge that this isn't for you and you should stick to the more arcadey offerings that you no doubt already own in plentiful numbers. For those of you who relish a challenge you should already be sold. It'll therefore be nothing more than a pleasant bonus to learn that graphically, this is also straight out of the PlayStation's top drawer.

The courses are just about as varied as you could make them and each has its own distinct look and feel. The trackside detail level is fantastic and all the objects are realistic and well drawn. The track surfaces are varied (affecting the handling of the cars as well as in terms of looks) and the opposing cars are of almost photographic quality. The game fair old whips along in single player mode too.

There is one massive problem though, and it's one that should have been a massive selling point for the game, rather than the frankly embarrassing farce it has turned out to be. In Rally Cross up to four players can take part simultaneously using a split screen option. Fantastic!

I roped in Dan for a go on the two player mode (horizontal split screen action aplenty), but hang on, what's this? Why's it running so slowly? Assuming it was merely the PlayStation playing up, we reloaded and geared ourselves up for the ultimate in multiplayer racing. But the same thing happened again. And again on a different PlayStation. Then we found out why.

Apparently, in two player mode, the machine can't shift the graphics around at the same speed and therefore suffers a tremendous amount of slowdown (about 25 per cent of the frame rate). Oh dear. You can imagine then that the four player mode (about 50 per cent of the frame rate this time) is an absolute joke and you can't help but ask why the option wasn't dropped when it was realised that it just wasn't feasible to put it in.

Without the multi player option I would have found it difficult to fault Rally Cross, but with it, the game has one of the most serious flaws I've seen!

But there's no way I'm ending this review on a negative point because Rally Cross really doesn't deserve that. Okay there has been an error of judgement in the multiplayer game but, apart from that, there really is nothing to fault. Some will be put off by the high difficulty level but most people already know whether that's a plus or a minus point for them.

I'll make no attempt to hide the fact I've been critical of most of the popular PlayStation racing games so far, mainly because of a lack of depth and long term appeal. This can't be criticised on either count. It is a game that you'll come back to time and time again – you'll need to if you're to have a hope of ever finishing it!





The true physics model for the car makes playing Rally Cross a hyper realistic experience



All photographs courtesy of our artist, Gaz, taken from the 1996 Network Q Rally.

PRO SCORE

GAME **Rally Cross**
GENRE **Racing**
SOFTWARE HOUSE **Sony**
CONTACT **0171 447 1600**
RELEASE DATE **Out Now**
PRICE **£44.99**

PLAYSTATION APPROVED **This would certainly have got nine if it hadn't been for the error of judgement in including the dreadful multi player option, so if you're happy to play this just on your own then you can say that that's what it got. As a one player game it's the best PlayStation racer so far in my opinion (although I'm sure the shallower team members will disagree), offering up a long term challenge, loads of variety and fantastic visuals. If you're looking for a racing game that you'll still be playing in six months without seeing everything it has to offer, there's only really one option worth considering, and it's another feather in Sony's cap that it just happens to be one of their own.**

GRAPHICS **9**
SOUND **8**
GAMEPLAY **8**
LASTABILITY **8**

8½

DAN **It's certainly great fun, and I'd say Steve has marked it just right. However, as much fun as it is, I really can't see myself returning to it after a few weeks. Amusing, but lacking in variety I reckon**

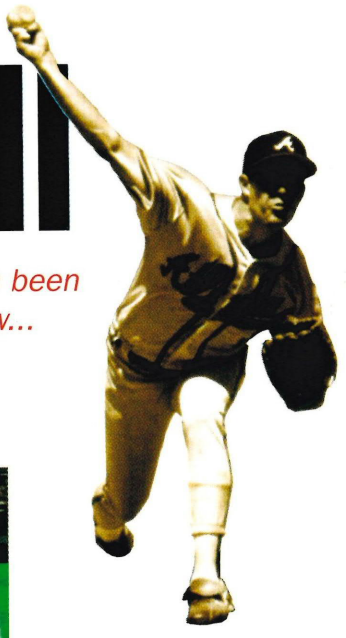
JAY **An entertaining title that bravely strays away from the 'arcade racer' mould and offers some excellent rally action instead. It looks good, plays well and is guaranteed to please – what more do you want? Blood?**

ALEX **More of a rally simulation than an arcade game, Rally Cross is likely to hit the upper echelons of the PlayStation charts because of its in-depth nature. Pretty involved and accurate, I hereby recommend it**

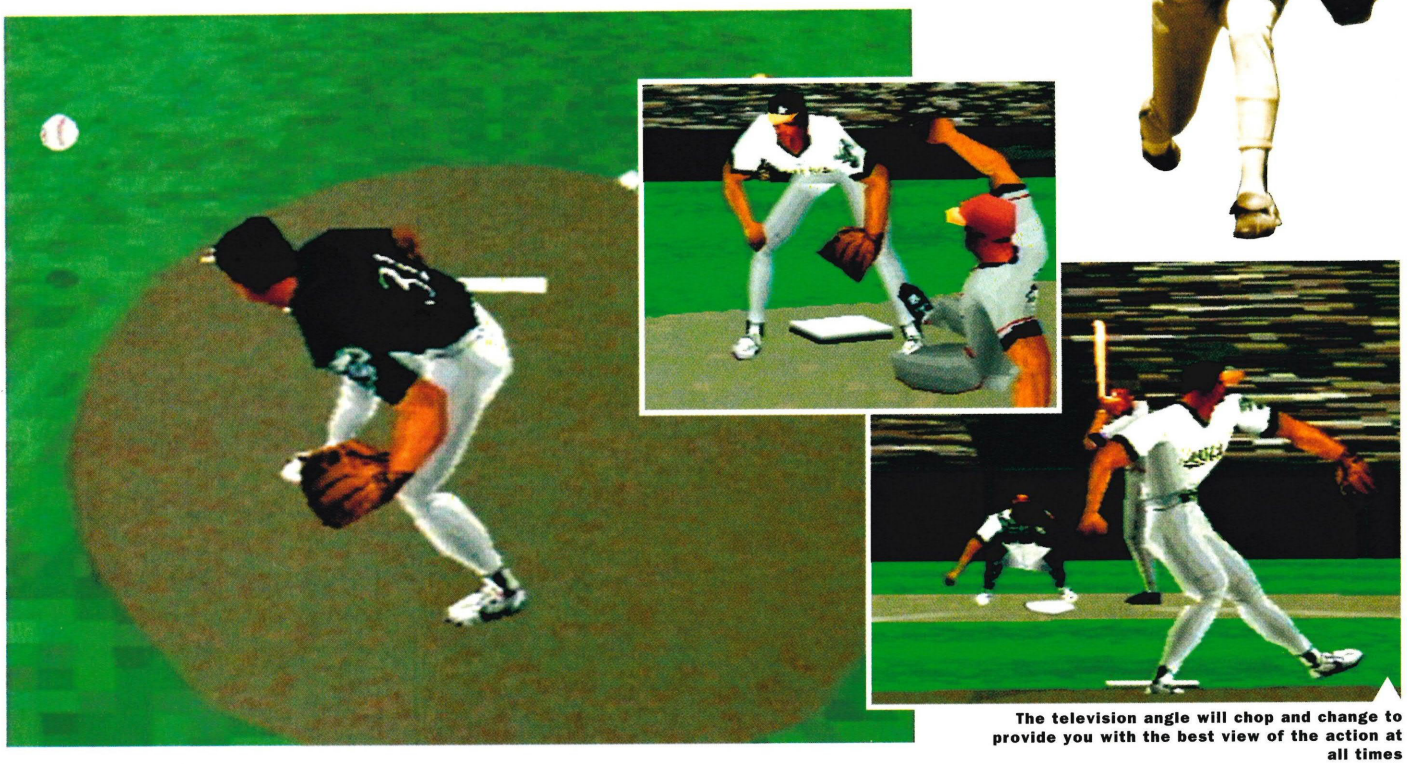
ANDY **It's way up there with the best of its ilk. The challenge is tougher than most so it should last a while as you try to progress. The only downside is that it lacks enough circuits to warrant a nine**

BY STEVE McNALLY

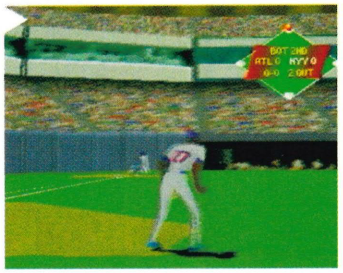
VR Baseball



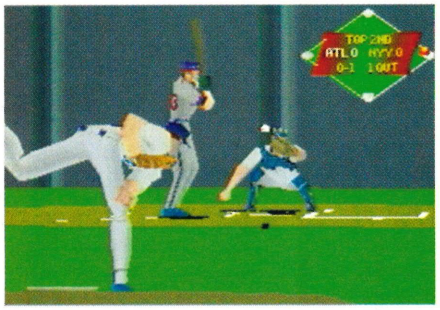
Despite American sports being fashionable PlayStation exports, there has been a surprising lack of games based around America's number one. Until now...



The television angle will chop and change to provide you with the best view of the action at all times



You can literally view the action from any angle that takes your fancy, thanks to Virtual Fieldvision



This is about the time you need to be deciding whether to leave the ball or swing at it

I remember Konami's PR bloke coming in, ooh, must be a year and a half ago now, showing us, among other things, this fantastic looking baseball game (it was so long ago I can't even remember its name). I've looked forward to it ever since. But has it ever appeared? No it hasn't. Well thanks a lot Konami!

They've blown it now though because anyone who's been hanging on for a top class simulation of baseball need wait no longer! Interplay has got the jump on all its competitors with VR Baseball, which is undoubtedly as complete a sporting simulation as you could ever hope for.

Thing is, the real sport is about as dull as watching Manchester United playing a counter attacking game. If Channel 5 has achieved one thing it's to bring that fact home to an unsuspecting British public. For some reason that doesn't put me off video game recreations and I was quite excited at the prospect of getting my teeth into this one. And I wasn't disappointed either!

There are a multitude of options when you first load up the game. So many as to be bewildering to be honest, so I plumped for the reasonably safe looking option of batting practice to help me find my feet. This entails standing there while some bloke hurls a particularly hard ball towards you and you have to try and belt it with your little circular piece of wood. Okay, so that's a very basic insight into baseball, but anybody new to the sport will be much the wiser for it.

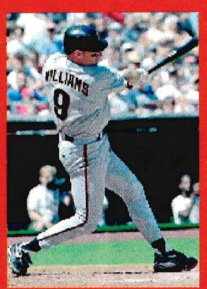
What batting practise does teach you is the timing of the swing and, more importantly, the ability to pick a pitch early enough to decide where to swing, whether to swing and when to swing. At first it feels like you're never going to manage it but with practise it all starts to come surprisingly naturally.

The batting controls are reasonably simple. The X button will give you a normal swing, the circle a power hit (basically the only way to hit a home run) and the triangle will bunt. On top of that you also have to use the D-pad to decide where you're going to swing.

For instance, if you think the pitch is going to whiz straight over the plate then you needn't bother with the D-pad. However if you think it's going low and to the left, you have a choice to make. You can either leave it and hope that it misses the plate and is called a Ball, or you can chance your arm, push the D-pad diagonally

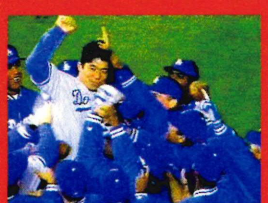
Take Me To The Ballpark

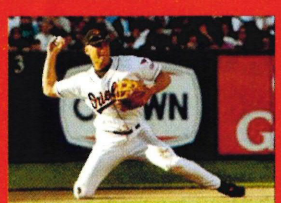




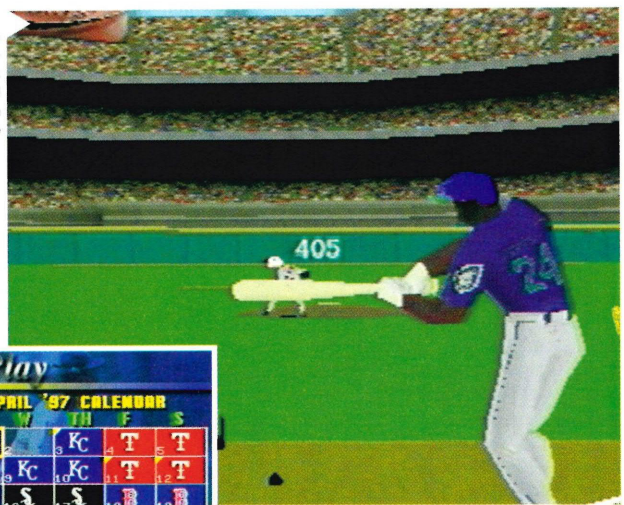


But be prepared for a long wait! Baseball games can go on for several hours and the teams play in excess of 180 games





It'll have to be one hell of a hit to clear the 405 wall, but time it well and it's more than possible



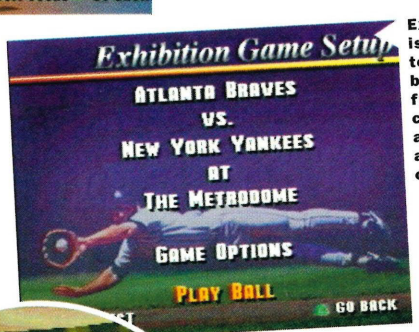
The baseball season is one of the most gruelling in professional sport, with almost 200 games a year





Each player has comprehensive historical or season based stats, indicating vital elements such as homers and RBI's





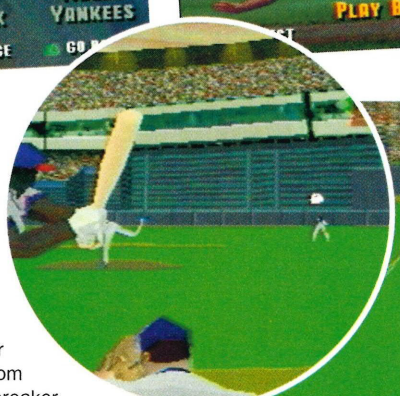
Exhibition mode is the best way to have a quick blast with your friends. You can choose to pit any two teams against each other

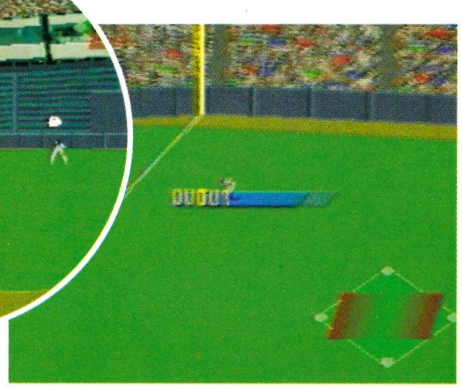
down and to the left and swing for all you're worth.

Spending a bit of time learning to pick the pitches will be invaluable when you come to play a proper game, but if your experience is anything like mine it could be some time before you get to experience the real thing. You see, there's this option called Home Run Derby and it's damned addictive! So much so that my first day's play was taken up solely with batting practice and Home Run derbies.

Eight of the biggest hitters in the Major League slug it out head to head to see who can hit the most 'homers'. Up to eight human players can participate or you can play on your own against seven computer controlled batters (don't worry, you don't have to sit and watch them). Each player has 10 outs (which are technically lives I suppose) with which to score as high as possible. Every time you fail to hit a home run you'll lose one of your outs. If you do manage to clear the fences then your lives will be intact and your score increased by one.

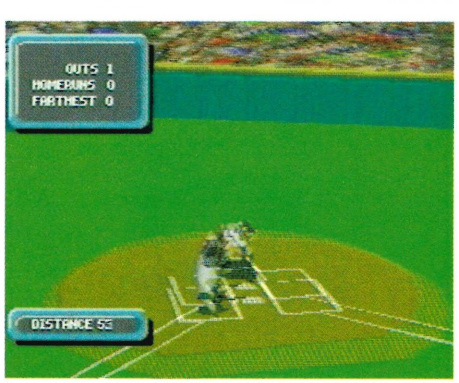
This would be quite difficult if it wasn't for the pitcher chucking each ball directly over the plate meaning that you don't have to worry about the direction, just the timing. And after a while it does become easier and you'll soon find your scores up in double figures. There are three rounds in each Derby with the top four scorers progressing from round one (with a tie breaker round to separate equal scores), then two from round two go into the final with the winner being the player to hit most home runs in the last round rather than an accumulation of scores of the whole competition.





Not only is this great fun but it is actually worthwhile spending as much time as you can practising hitting before you seriously attempt to take on the computer in a full match. You will have to progress eventually though and when you do, chances are you'll feel pretty lost and start yearning for the straight forward style of play that you've become used to. Stick with it though and the rewards are plentiful.

The feeling of striking out the final batter in the ninth innings when you're one run up and his bases are loaded is matched only by the feeling you get when you're in the batter's shoes and



VR Baseball

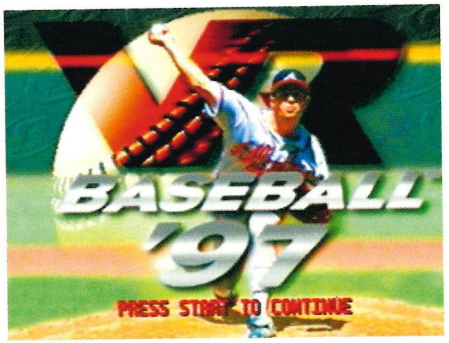
manage to smack a Grand Slam (that's a Home Run when the bases are loaded, in case you were wondering). You really have to work hard to get success though mainly because, unlike most sports games there are three very different gameplay elements that you have to master at the same time.

I've already mentioned hitting, pitching is obviously the second (and perhaps trickiest) element. Before you pitch you can try and pick off any baserunner who's getting cocky and taking a big lead by pressing the D-pad in the direction of the baseman you want to throw to and pressing the triangle button. Once you're confident no one's trying to steal a base you need to decide on your pitch.

The different types of pitch – curve ball, fast ball, the pitcher's speciality ball and pitch out i.e. throw four wide balls to a batter and run him to first base to get him out of the way, usually if he's a big hitter and you've only got a slender lead – are chosen using the main control pad buttons, along with the speed and direction (which is obviously set by, yes you guessed it, the D-pad!).

VR Baseball uses a two press pitching system which seems to work well enough, although a few more pitching options wouldn't have gone amiss. The first press decides on the type of pitch, the second decides the speed. Varying your pitching is the key, because if the batters start to predict what you're going to do then you're going to be collecting the ball from the stands far more regularly than you'd like.

The third thing you need to learn quickly is fielding the ball once it has been hit. A cross on the field will mark roughly where the ball is going to land and you have to move your nearest player into position to collect it. Remember, if



you catch it cleanly before it bounces, the batsman will be out and any runners on bases will have to go back, but if you have to let it bounce then you can still get an out if you throw to a baseman and he gets the ball and touches the plate before the batsman arrives. This all happens so quickly that at first you'll be bewildered beyond belief and just chuck the ball back to a random base in the hope of getting lucky.

In time though, once you're accustomed to the basic controls (which by the way are really quite simple allowing you to jump, dive, switch players, speed burst and run towards the ball with ease), you'll be picking off two base runners with alarming fluidity in no time. As with all things in VR Baseball, you really do need to practise.

Graphically the game is nothing short of astounding, although not necessarily in the conventional way. In this case your jaw drops, not because of the quality of the visuals but, well, the quantity I suppose is the only way to put it. Let me explain. VR Baseball uses what Interplay describes as Virtual FieldVision, an unlimited, real time 360 degree, 3-D world. This lets you view the action from absolutely any angle that takes your fancy! Admittedly most people will stick with the default (and far and away the best) view from behind the batsman but it's a nice option to have for anyone wanting to take advantage of it.

All the players are fully motion captured and move, as you would expect, very realistically. Each team has a choice of four uniforms all with the correct numbers and names on the back for each individual player, a big screen broadcasts the action live in the background for the benefit of people in the stands, you can even watch the seam on the ball to judge which way the ball is going to break for God's sake!

But that's not all. All 28 Major League Stadiums have been faithfully recreated and have their own characteristics (longer distances to the fences, higher fences, different playing surfaces and so on) making the incredibly long season option that little bit more varied.

Oh, did I mention there's an option to play a full season? Well there is. All 180-odd games of it! I'll admit that I haven't played this option to its conclusion yet, but suffice to say you'll need to be a real baseball die-hard to see it through to the end! There are also options for the less committed, such as exhibition games and skipping straight through to the playoffs so there really is something for everyone.

I should mention that in season mode you also take on the role of team manager as well as player, in charge of starting line up selection, trading players between clubs and so on. But then there are all sorts of other things that I should probably mention that I really haven't got room for.

If you've ever played a baseball video game before and even remotely liked it, you're going to enjoy Interplay's VR Baseball. I can't remember playing as complete a simulation of the sport before and even without the addition of the superb multi player Home Run Derby this would be worth a look. With it though, it ranks up amongst the best sports sims around at the moment.

It's just a shame that the sport is far from popular on these shores. It will undoubtedly go down an absolute storm in America but over here, well, I'm not so sure. It'd be nice to see an English sport given the same high quality treatment. VR Cricket would be nice. Surely Codemasters has proved, with Jonah Lomu Rugby, that these types of games can sell well if they're any good, but until other companies start to realise this we'll have to make do with pile after pile of American sports sims. Not that I'm complaining mind you...

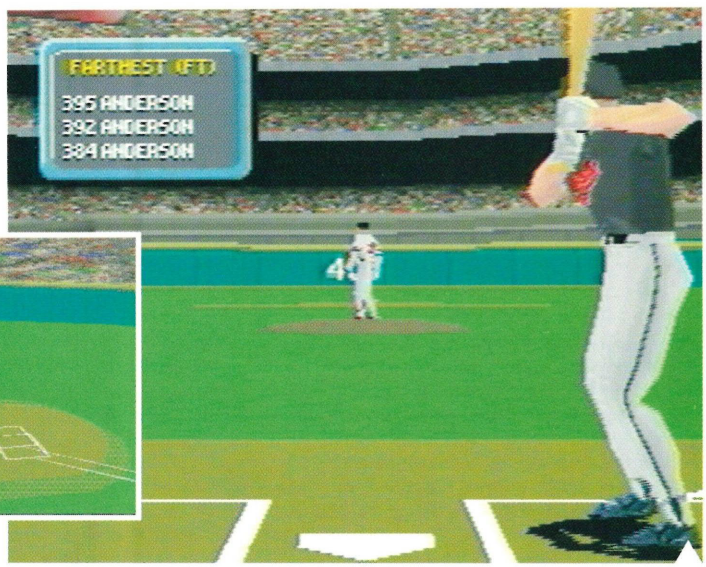




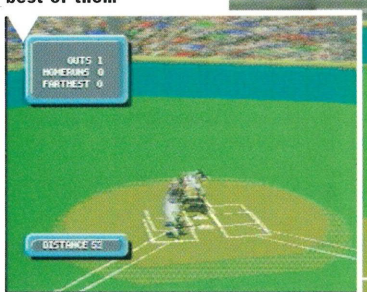
The Home Run Derby proved to be an office revelation with players queueing up to be the HR king



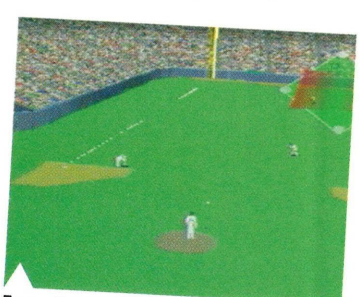
The Bullpen is where you warm up replacement pitchers so they don't enter the game with a cold arm



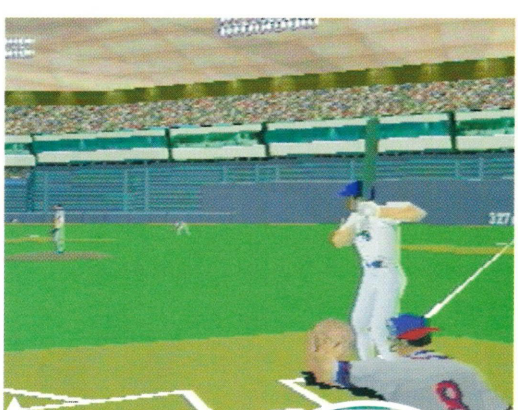
Big hitting Brady Anderson is at the plate in the Home Run Derby. His stats so far are in the top left corner



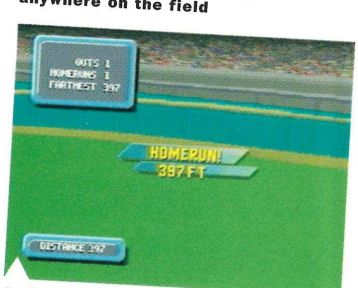
The ball camera allows you to be the ball, so to speak, and get cracked out of the park with the best of them



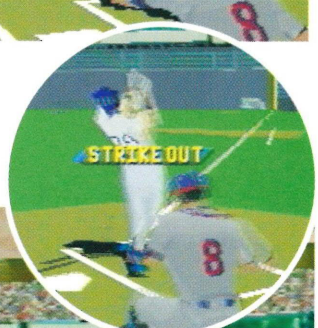
From the high shot you can see just about everything that happens anywhere on the field

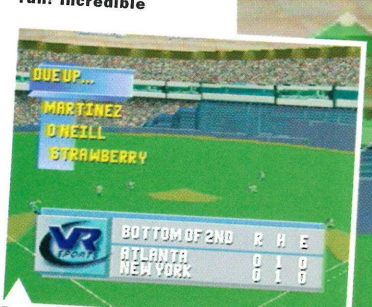


Just another example of how Virtual Fieldvision allows you to wiew the action from any angle that takes your fancy

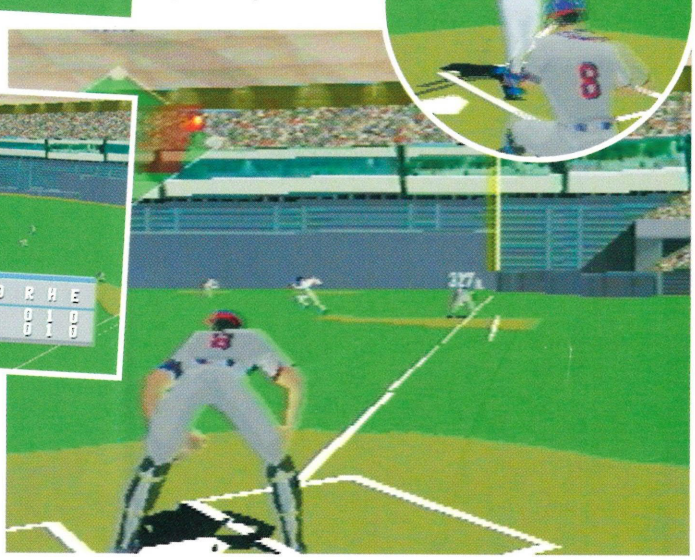


And the crowd goes wild! A 397ft home run! Incredible





Bottom of the 2nd and the scores are tied at 0-0. Yet another thrilling game of baseball



You have full control over the base runners even before the pitch has been thrown

PRO SCORE

GAME VR Baseball '97
GENRE Sports
SOFTWARE HOUSE Interplay
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PLAYSTATION APPROVED

Baseball is far from a national obsession in this country but that shouldn't put anyone off playing what is one of the most complete sporting simulations available on the PlayStation. Challenging, engrossing and intriguing to non fans as well as die-hards, VR Baseball could well open the floodgates for the many Baseball games that get released in other countries to also get an official release over here. And I'm not sure whether that's a good or a bad thing. They'll have their work cut out to equal this though with its full season option providing the long term interest, and the Home Run Derby being great fun if you just fancy a quick blast with your mates.

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 8

8

DAN **Accurate enough in the statistics stakes, but the 'throw and hit' style of the sport doesn't really lend itself to an action packed experience. Fans will enjoy it, but it won't convert anybody new**

JAY **I'm more of a rounders man myself, and don't really pay much interest to this somewhat drab American 'sport'. However, I'm led to believe that this is quite entertaining – if you like this sort of thing**

ALEX **Usually, baseball sims bore me to tears as they're as depressing as the real thing. Perversely, this release is the most accurate yet and I really like it. I'll still hang on for a decent cricket game, however**

ANDY **Whether you're a fan of big boys' rounders or not, there's no disputing this looks the part. Unfortunately it's a little fiddly initially, but the Home Run Derby is instantly playable and great fun**

BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Swagman

"There couldn't be a society of people who didn't dream, they'd be dead in two weeks." That's what William Burroughs reckons. Here's the proof



Don't fall into that vortex, left behind when Swaggers and co broke into the real world

The land of dreams. A bizarre place, I think it's safe to say. Just look at the people who live there. The Sandman, who rubs sand in your eyes to make you dream. Thanks for that. Freddy Krueger, who invades your dreams and hacks you to bits with special finger-knives. Yeah, cheers. Peter Pan, who flies around in green tights and a funny hat. Well, whatever turns you on Pete. There are probably loads more, but I can't think of them right now. Which makes this possibly the weakest introductory paragraph to a review, ever. But wait! Thanks to pert and buxom Core Design, we can now add some new inhabitants to my paltry list.

Like the DreamFlight, a posse of twelve fairy-like ladies who spread nice dreams with their Dream Dew. We like them. It's a pity, then, that they've been imprisoned in jars by the Swagman. He's their direct opposite, a spindly monster bloke in a big hat who spreads nightmares with Dream Ash. With the DreamFlight out of the way, Swaggers can expand his evil territory into the real world, starting with the sleepy town of Paradise Falls.

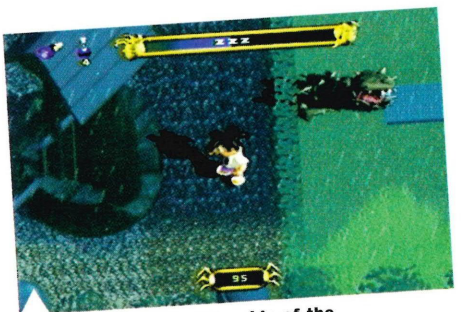
Luckily, while the rest of the town sleep, little Zack and Hannah are reading a book all about Mr. Swagpants. They see his Skallywag cronies start their invasion, and suss out what they're up to. Unfortunately, the Skallywags burst into their house and shrink Hannah, stuffing her in a bird cage. Zack escapes by hiding behind a



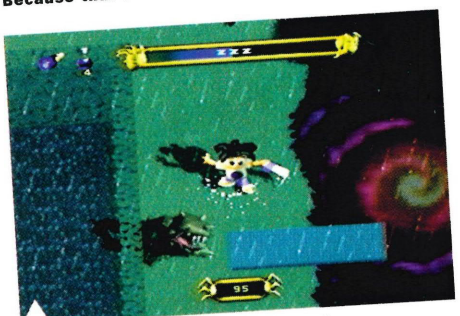
Meet Scarab, Lord Of The Bugs, and a handy ally



Climb down the well in the garden and splosh your way past ghosts and spikes



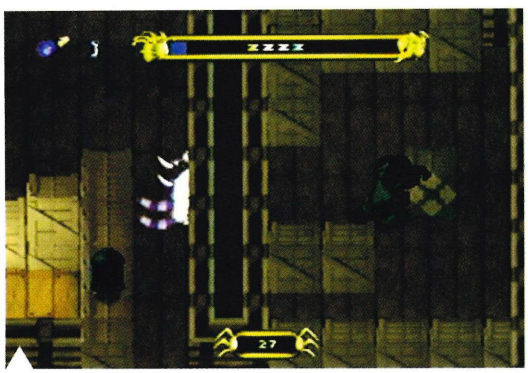
Use a bomb to break the side of the well and you can climb down. Why? Because that's where the level ends



Zack waves his torch in the face of a snapping devil plant from Hell. You can't kill it Zack! Just run away!



Energy comes in the form of 'Zzzz's, like snores you see. Run out and Zack and Hannah tumble into the Swagman's maw



Zack may be weedy but, if you squint a bit here, you can see him pushing crates around



GENRE COMPARISON

Game *Legacy Of Kain*
Software House *BMG*

Admittedly, not the most obvious comparison, but Kain's top-down explore and fight action is remarkably similar to Swagman. A bit more gruesome, yes, but the essence is the same. Kain has the edge in terms of storyline and size, but Swagman isn't too far behind. Concerned parents will probably prefer this to Kain's plentiful gore anyway.

teddy bear, like a wuss. Trouble is, he's now the only person left awake in the whole town, and it's up to him to save the world from an eternal nightmare.

His first task, being a family-oriented kinda kid, is to rescue his sister from the bird cage. But with a house over-run by freaky dreambeasts, it won't be that easy. Rather handily though, his collection of bugs and insects were set free during the Skallywag attack.

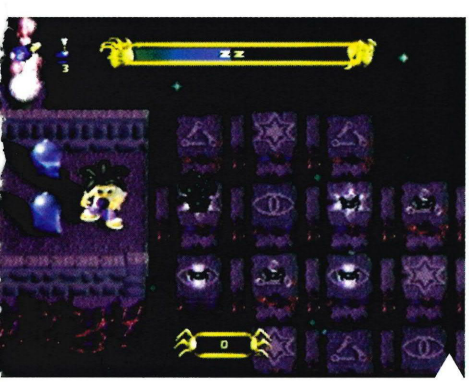
Admittedly, this doesn't sound like great news, but it brings our attention to Scarab, the king of the bugs. He has intimate knowledge of the Swagman's territory and is a sort of creepy-crawly Yoda by all accounts. He also hides in chests, so he can pop up with advice on what to do next. Gather the loose bugs, keep in touch with Scarab and you'll at least stand a fighting chance.

There's your plot, strange though it may be, and spread all over these pages like colourful, square pollen, you can see some screenshots. Looks a bit like Zelda doesn't it? For the benefit of toddlers and people new to this crazy carnival we call 'games', Zelda was a wandering adventure type thing, on the Super Nintendo, viewed from above. And it was, in many ways, the very definition of the word 'fab'.

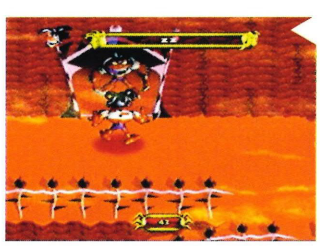
Swagman is close enough in look and style to earn itself similar kudos and respect from us old hands of the gaming world. It's possibly closer to the arcade camp than Zelda's RPG trimmings, but that's certainly no bad thing. You can fend off the swarming spooks with a magic torch, just like Jamie did on '70s kids TV, as well as an arsenal of cherry bombs, frisbees and yo-yos. Keys open locked doors, and the fixtures and fittings of the house and garden act as platforms to access hidden objects.

There are six levels, which doesn't sound like much, but each level is made up of loads of sprawling mini areas so the game fills out considerably. At the end of the first level you free Hannah, and you can then control the twins to solve some of the trickier puzzles that lie ahead.

Swagman looks great, in a slightly old fashioned way. No, that's unfair. It doesn't look 'old fashioned'. Just because it commits the mortal sin of not being a 3-D polygon feast doesn't make Swagman an antique. In fact, there are several 3-D bits, but they're worked into the game rather than over riding it. Like the pool room, where the pool cues rise in the air, out of the screen and then shoot down like arrows at Zack's baby bonce.



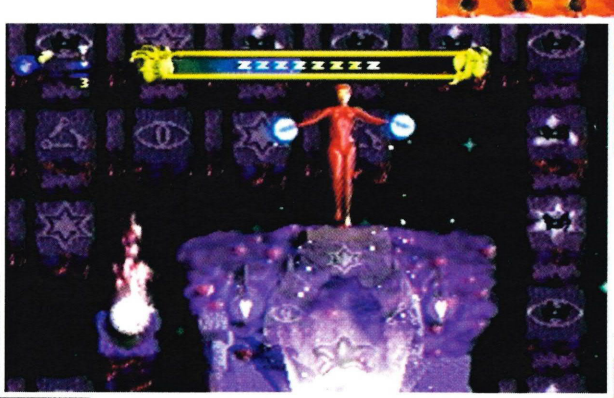
There's only one safe path across those platforms, and the bugs show you the way



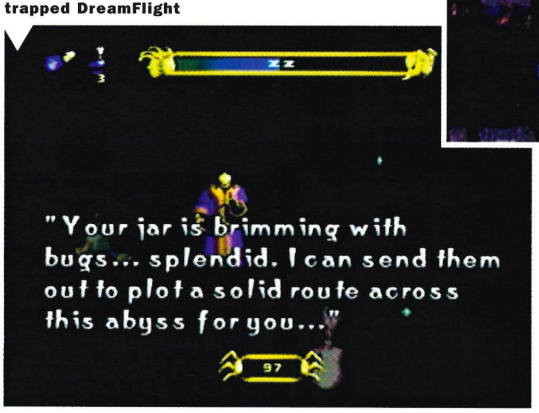
Not the best time to check out your reflection. Get through the mirror and do your job



In the DreamWorld, Zack becomes a fire breathing monster. Which is a bit more handy than a feeble 7-year old



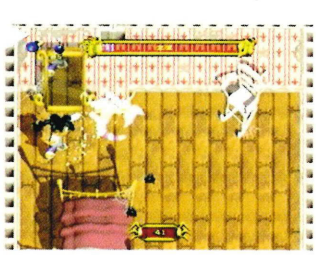
And here's why you need bugs. They guide you through Limbo to free the trapped DreamFlight



Possessed by the malevolent spirit of John Virgo, these cues are hungry for blood. Dodge them and get out quickly!



Here's Zack fending off spirits next to a mirror. Walk into the mirror to enter DreamWorld



Swagman



In the bathroom, you can grab the bugs in the bath and pull the shower curtain aside to find a handy key...





...and here's the key in use. Zack is smart enough to use the right key with the right door every time

The music deserves a bit of a special mention too. When was the last time you actually noticed the music in a game? I mean, really noticed it? Probably never. I noticed the music in Swagman, and so did several other people shuffling about near our Pro dungeon. It's a sort of spooky, orchestral strings affair that sounds awfully like the work of Danny Elfman. You know, the bloke who composes all the music for Tim Burton's films. It really compliments the Goth Junior atmosphere of the game, so here's a big Gold Star winging it's way to the 'Person Who Does Music At Core Design'. Well done.



Most importantly though, Swagman is fun to play. It's undemanding stuff, usually the hardest task is avoiding the baddies while trying to reach the next key. You see, important objects are never hidden out of view, although you may need to use your brain a bit to get to them sometimes.

There's plenty of variety too. From the levels set in the real world, via Limbo (where Scarab uses your collected bugs to reveal a path across treacherous platforms), and through various mirrors into the DreamWorld where Zack and Hannah transform into monsters armed with powerful attacks. There's no repetition here, and once you get out of the house you find yourself exploring the tunnels under the town, as well as dark woods, graveyards and the streets of Paradise Falls. It's a cartoony visual treat really.

My only criticism would be that the game is hardly the most innovative title in the world, and is rather unassuming when it has plenty of reasons to be brash and bold. Even so, it's a cracking little arcade adventure game, packed with enough charm and playability to justify digging into your savings. Kids will love it, which I hate saying but I suspect it's actually true in this case, but more mature players may prefer to look for something with rather more meat on its bones.

Here's 'Mom' and 'Pop', fast asleep. Jump on them to catch their snores for more energy. You can steal the cat's snores too



The cramped and gloomy attic is full of goodies, lurking among the boxes. Just watch out for the ghosts



PRO SCORE

GAME Swagman
GENRE Adventure
SOFTWARE HOUSE Eidos Interactive
CONTACT 0181 636 3000
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED It may not look all that impressive alongside other games, but Swagman earns its crust by adhering to that age old rule about gameplay being more important than graphics. The simple gameplay and linear game path, might make this the ideal choice for a younger, less experienced game player, but that doesn't mean it's exclusively for nippers. Look past the cutesy exterior and you'll find some pretty tricky moments, like the end of level bosses, which should even test proper grown ups. Not the most dazzling game on the shelves at the moment, so don't go running straight out to buy it, but it's a sturdy and rewarding game that deserves a purchase, should it catch your eye while browsing

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 8
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 7

8

STEVE Well, it's alright I suppose, but being a rough and tough Salford lad, I prefer a bit more grit and gruffness in my games. If you forced me to play it, I'd giggle like a tipsy Priest, and then punch you if you told anyone

JAY Core! It's a Swagman! This took me right back to when I used to forage in posh people's bins to earn enough money for a SNES game. So I like it. A bit more flashiness would've been nice, but it's smart enough

ALEX Psuedo 'old skool' in as much as it reminds me of the genre-busting Zombies Ate My Neighbours on the 16-bit formats. Which is certainly no bad thing, particularly when there has been a valid puzzle-solving addition

ANDY It won't win any awards but for what it is, will appeal to many. The gameplay is second to none but the graphics do leave a little to be desired. It won't sell by the truck load but it's a brave move nontheless

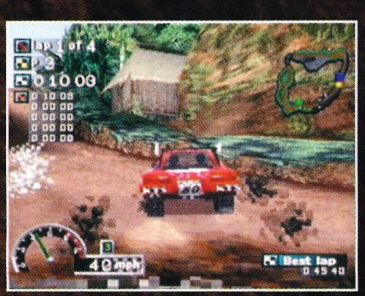
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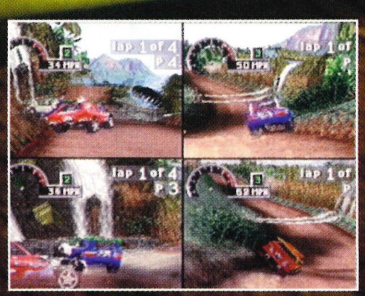
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BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Overblood

You wake up in a freezer, you've got no idea how you got there and there's a weird mutating virus coursing through your veins. Just another Sunday morning then



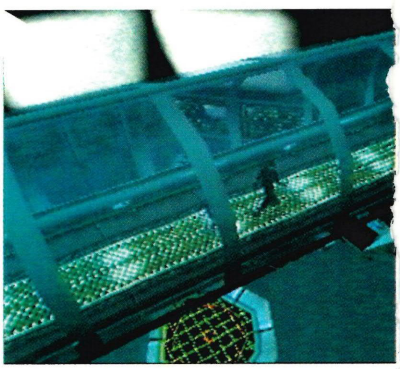
The first symptoms of the strange disease are shocking – big, fat sausage fingers

Raz and his 'special friend' Pipo take a moment to enjoy the lavishly appointed lounges

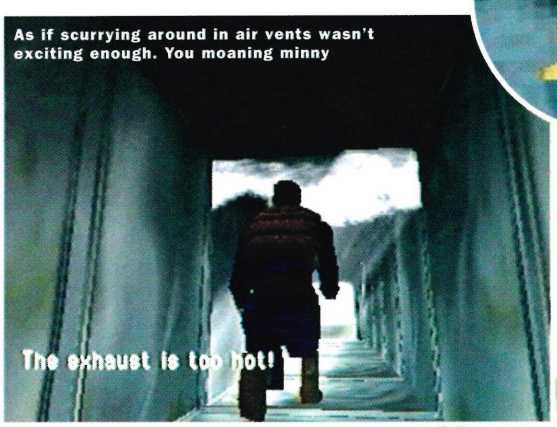


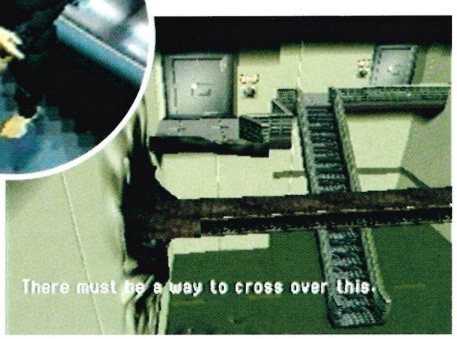


The camera angles look fairly cinematic and improve the mood of the game

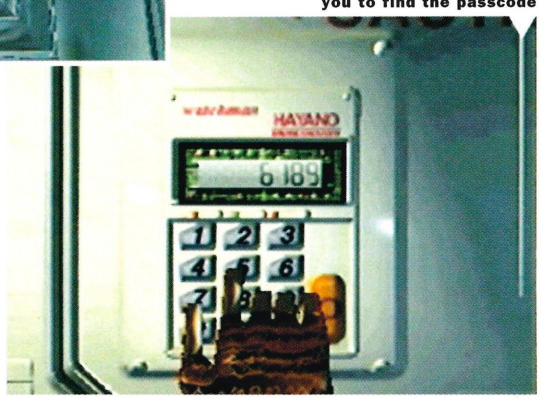


As if scurrying around in air vents wasn't exciting enough. You moaning minny





Some doors are open, some require keycards and some need you to find the passcode



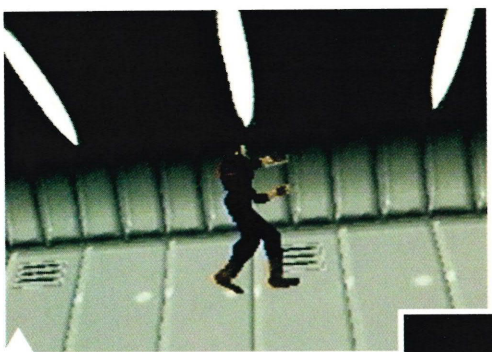
Something has devastated the building. Can you work out what happened before it's too late?



If I were to pretend I was a kestrel, and the PlayStation games market was a field, I could fly right up and hover above it. As I looked down, I could see all the little species of games living in separate areas of the meadow.

There are the driving games, multiplying like rabbits. Over there we can see the beat 'em-ups, a species doomed due to excessive in-breeding. And, hiding under a tree stump, there are the adventure games. The whole family's there, and I can easily trace their evolution from my vantage point. There's Fade To Black, the originator of this game genus. He begat Resident Evil, who begat Tomb Raider, who recently begat Excalibur 2555AD. But, even as I hover in the sky, I can see a new breed emerging. Let's swoop down and see where it fits into the family tree.

Phew. Sorry about that, but there are times when you just have to turn into a kestrel to illustrate a point. And the point in this case is that adventure games have been an integral part of the PlayStation's development, often being

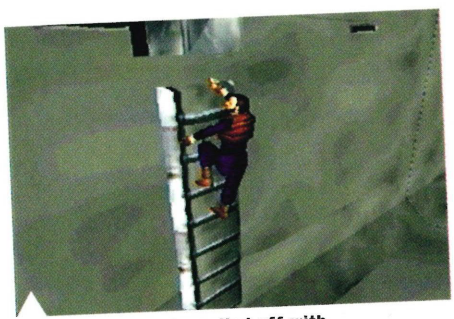


It's David Copperfield! Or is it just Raz, arsing about with an anti-gravity device?

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Resident Evil
Software House Virgin

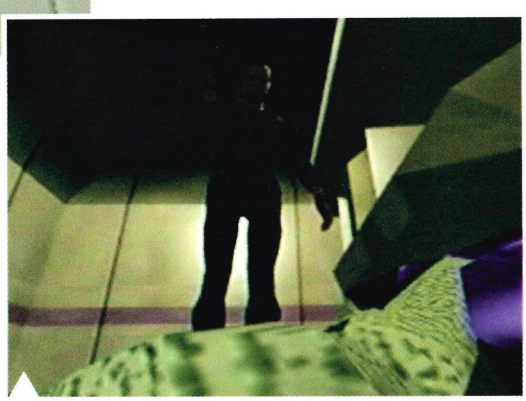
Overblood's most obvious reference point is a bit more action packed, and a lot more gory. If you want a more subtle shade of body horror, then I'd suggest Overblood. Bear in mind though, Resident Evil 2 is on its way, but this should tide you over in the meantime



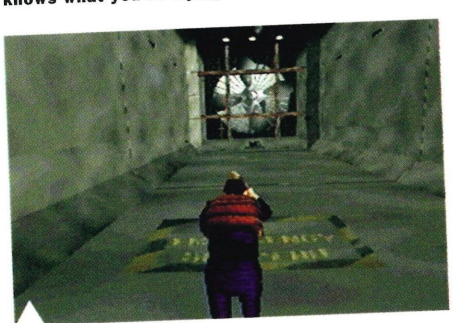
Most actions can be pulled off with the X button. The game instinctively knows what you're trying to do



The discovery of a fungi-ridden corpse is the start of a living nightmare for our beardy hero

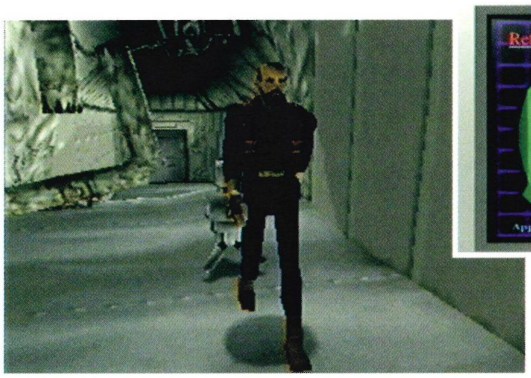


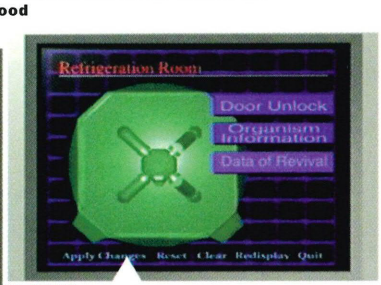
"But she looked like a right little stunner in the club last night!" mutters Raz as he swears off the booze for good



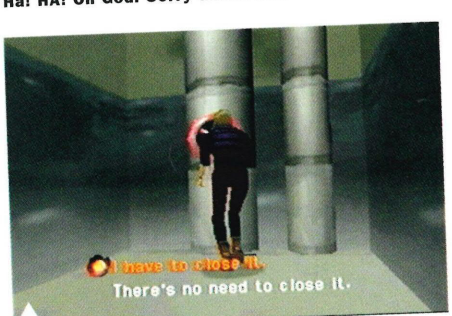
Raz is about to meet one of his biggest fans. Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha! Ha! HA! Oh God. Sorry about that



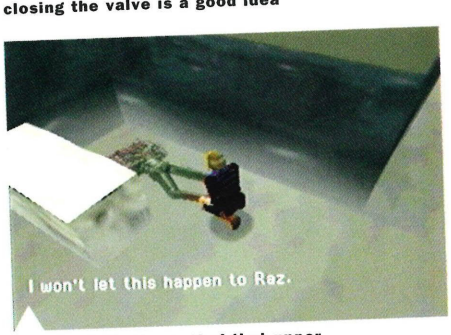




Pipo the robot comes in handy for cracking computers. He won't be around for ever though



Decisions, decisions. As Raz is currently being fried in a vent, I think closing the valve is a good idea



Milly has wisely spotted that upper torso burstage can put a strain on even the healthiest relationship

the source of many groundbreaking techniques, and always doing well with Mr. and Mrs. Punter in the street.

Here's the next step in that evolutionary chain, Overblood. But the question hanging over it, like the Joypad of Damocles, is whether or not it improves the adventure gene pool. Let's have a good old look at it, in a pseudo-Darwin style.

The game begins, after an impressive but unskippable intro, with our hero waking up in a cryogenic freezer. He's got no idea who he is or how he got there, and if you don't do something quickly he'll freeze to death. That minor tribulation out of the way, you'll come across a disabled robot. Reactivate it, and it'll accompany you, helping to solve more technological puzzles where a mere human touch isn't enough. And that's all you know.

You have no idea what function this vast building performs, you have no idea where everybody else is, and you've certainly got no idea what that festering corpse is doing in the elevator. Maybe it's something to do with the fungus slowly covering your arm...

As far as player friendliness goes, Overblood doesn't exactly overload you with information. Not that this is a bad thing. If anything, it adds loads to the atmosphere, as the player is given exactly the same info as the guy they're controlling. We find out his name fairly early on, it's Raz unfortunately, but other clues don't come until much later. So it's a real case of feeling your way around.

Overblood is, as you've seen, a 3-D adventure game. You move through the polygon environment by rotating with left and right and using up and down to move forwards or backwards. Each button has a certain function assigned to it, allowing you to interact with any objects you find. Nothing terribly new there. What is new however, is the way Overblood takes the best features from its ancestors and splices them together to create a game that is, in many ways, one of the most impressive games of its ilk.

Like Resident Evil, you can switch between two characters. At first, it's between Raz and the robot, dubiously dubbed Pipo. Later in the game, a mysterious woman, Milly, replaces the robot and the plot starts to unravel at a much more satisfying pace. So Overblood may have nicked this trick from Resident Evil, but the interaction between the characters is all the more important here, as there's an actual plot to unfold.

Also worthy of mention are the viewpoints. ▶

Overblood



Raz has a rather unatural attachment to his squat robot mate. Here, in an out-take from the game, he actually proposes to his love machine

▶ There are three on offer and each has its uses as well as aesthetic qualities. One is the now traditional 'over the shoulder' view, familiar from Tomb Raider and Excalibur. The other is a more cinematic sweeping view, where the camera tracks the action from a fixed vantage point. The last one is the most special though. It's a first person perspective viewpoint, like Doom. There's not much shooting, so this view might seem a bit incongruous. However, it puts you right in the game, and I personally found it the most atmospheric way of playing. Especially when you have to fight off a mutant with your bare hands and it's snarling three inches from your virtual face.

It's the challenges and puzzles that make or break a game like this though, and it's here Overblood stumbles slightly. It's a bit too easy. Not stupidly so, you won't be able to just walk through it, but anyone with an ounce of common sense will find it a touch too simplistic. Now nobody likes games that trap you for weeks on end with seemingly impossible riddles, but on the other hand nobody likes a game that doesn't strain the grey matter a little. Maybe it's just me being picky.

To put it in perspective, I reached the end of the game after only a few days solid playing and at no point did I become hopelessly stuck. And I'm no genius. I reckon, based on my performance, that an average game player should finish this in about a week of casual play. Not exactly blessed with longevity then. And that's a pity, because in every other department Overblood is a winner. The controls are intuitive, the rooms are varied and graphically rich, and the storyline is moved along by an intelligent mixture of captions, speech and animated cut scenes.

There are a few minor gripes. Some of the objects are hidden in less than obvious places, and as the game progresses and the rooms get bigger and more complex, you really don't want to be examining every single piece of furniture.

More annoying is the inclusion of several

The Bloke



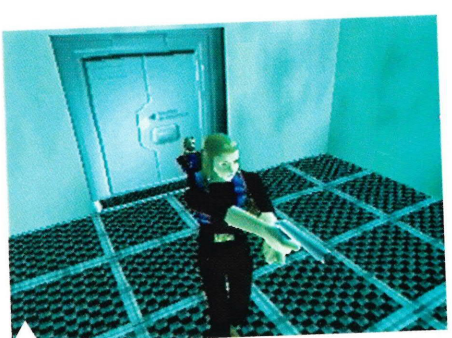
This is Raz, the hero. He's lost his memory and is riddled with some sort of alien fungus disease. So he's not the happiest guy in the world, and his mood isn't helped by his hideous Noel Edmonds beard. He's had a rum deal, poor lad



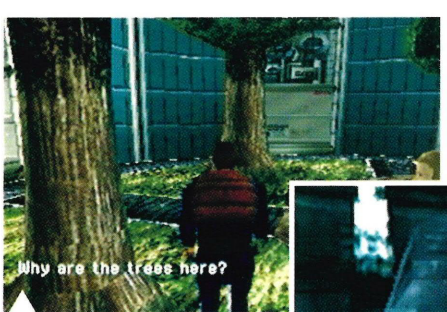
There are loads of objects to find and use, so thankfully Raz and co have bottomless pockets, allowing them to take everything they find



Tabitha knew that chocolate played havoc with her complexion, but she couldn't resist



Milly makes good on her promise to try and win Raz a fluffy hippo at the funfair



A rather stupid Zen-like question. They absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, you gimp



Well why don't you kneel down and have a look instead of standing there, talking to yourself?



The Robot



This is Pipo. He's a cute robot who helps Raz out in the early stages of the game. His mechanical expertise is very handy, but he's not great on conversation. Raz loves him, worryingly, but he may be doomed to heartbreak

The Bird

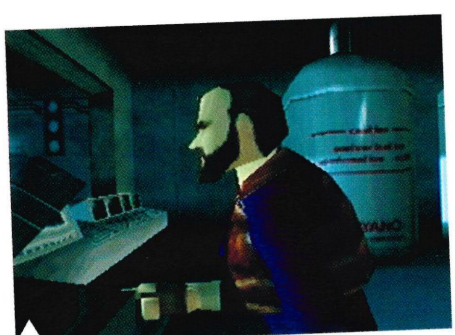


Meet Milly. She meets Raz when he saves her from a bloodthirsty monster, and their sizzling love affair blooms from there. She has lost her memory too, but is she everything she says she is? And more to the point, where's Vanilli?

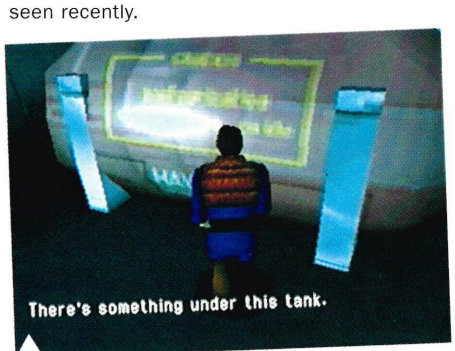
sudden death moments. Not to be confused with some scenes where you have to perform a task within a time limit to survive, these are points in the game where a mis-timed jump or careless step can end the game outright.

Yes, you can save the game (only four saves per card though) but that isn't the point. It's still irritating. Neither of these problems are enough to spoil the game completely, but they were the two things that continually bothered me.

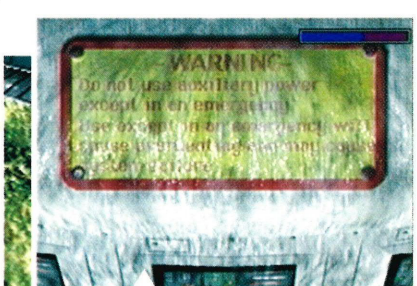
Apart from that, the only other niggle is the rather obvious nature of the puzzles. If that doesn't sound like too much of a problem then you'll find this to be a perfectly engrossing slice of exploring fun. Nothing mind-blowing, you understand, but a darn sight better than some of the other crap we've seen recently.



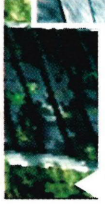
Despite the virus decimating his nervous system, Raz couldn't resist one more go on Frogger



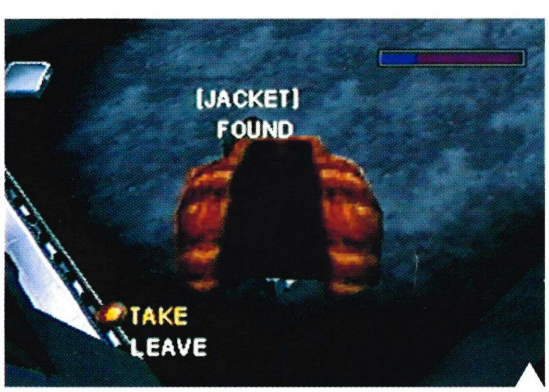
Searching underneath objects is often more fruitful than looking on top



Do Not Use Except In An Emergency? Well who's going to stop me? I'm the only one here!



Even though he has only known her for about two hours at this point, Raz is a right bossy get



Well let's think about this. I'm freezing to death in a cryogenic chamber. You know what, I think I'll leave this lovely warm jacket here

PRO SCORE

GAME **Overblood**
GENRE **Adventure**
SOFTWARE HOUSE **Electronic Arts**
CONTACT **01753 549442**
RELEASE DATE **Out Now**
PRICE **£39.99**

PLAYSTATION APPROVED **Overblood certainly hits all the right buttons to qualify as a quality adventure, but its desirability is hampered by a serious lack of long term challenge. If you're new to this exploration lark, then Overblood should be pitched just about right. However, if you've ever played a similar game you'll probably find this a touch too predictable. The storyline's intriguing, despite some hammy voice-overs, and the limited use of cut scenes and speech means that the game flows more smoothly than other, similar games. A bigger game environment with more testing puzzles would make this a 'must have', but as it's about £10 less than other games I'll forgive it. Give it a go, just don't expect a massive challenge**

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

8

STEVE **This is my kind of adventure. Fade to Black and Resident Evil had far too much shooting and not enough puzzle solving. Overblood addresses this nicely and, barring a question mark over difficulty, is excellent**

JAY **A crazy mix of the aforementioned EA treat and Capcom's gore-fest, plus a sizeable helping of Psygnosis' Sentient, makes this more than accesible and packed full of adventure, excitement and comedy robots**

ALEX **With elements of Resident Evil and Fade To Black in here, Overblood's difficult to criticise too heavily. If it does have a fault, however, it's that it is a little too easy for seasoned gamers**

ANDY **Overblood has some impressive graphics and a proper storyline. It's by no means the best of its type but in terms of what we've been subjected to recently, it's a dream. The lastability isn't assured however**

BY STEVE MCNALLY

Actua Golf 2

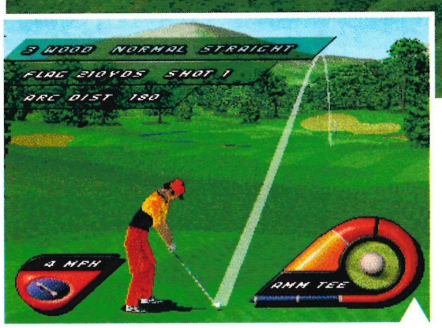
Golf. The sport of Kings or, as a someone once said, the best way to spoil a good walk? Normally I'm a subscriber to the latter viewpoint, but Gremlin's latest effort could just convert me



Golf on television is a bit like snooker, or darts for that matter. You'd never dream of making the effort to watch it, but if you happen to even glance at the screen when it's on you end up becoming hypnotised and find that the next time your eyes leave the screen it's four hours later and usually about two in the morning.

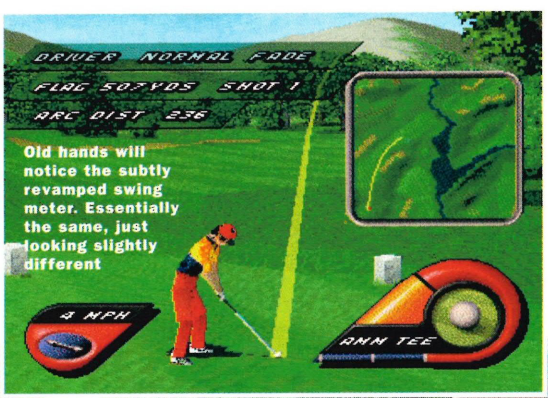
I have mixed feelings on the sport, I'm not actually sure whether I like it or not. I often fancy having a go just to see what it's actually like, but I doubt I'll ever get around to it. As a result I have to base my opinions around video game recreations of the game, and I have to say that if Actua Golf 2 is anything like an accurate representation of the real thing, then I'm the one that's missing out.

The first game is pretty much universally acclaimed as the best version around, but having said that, there isn't exactly a lot of competition. Gremlin's lead in the motion capture field tends to make its sports games the most realistic looking, and while the other companies are busy trying to catch up on that score and neglect the gameplay in their own efforts, Gremlin is able to worry about only tweaking their system and taking the game

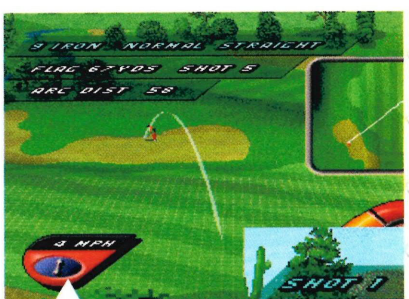


The arc coming from your club is not some bizarre method of cheating, it's merely so you can direct your shot

A delicate little chip onto the green is all that's called for, but beware, it's all too easy to over-hit

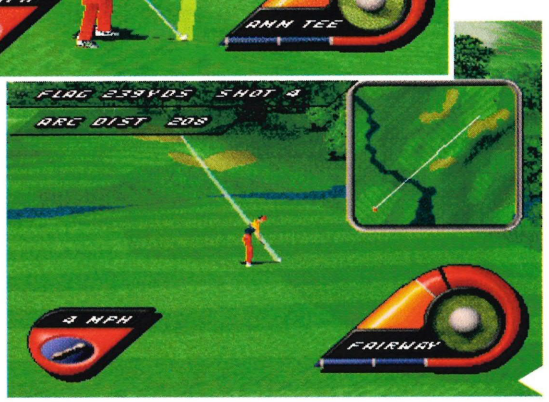


Old hands will notice the subtly revamped swing meter. Essentially the same, just looking slightly different

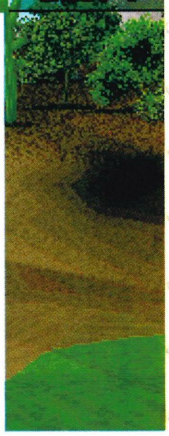


Playing from the bunker is far from easy. It takes a steady hand and a great deal of confidence to do it well



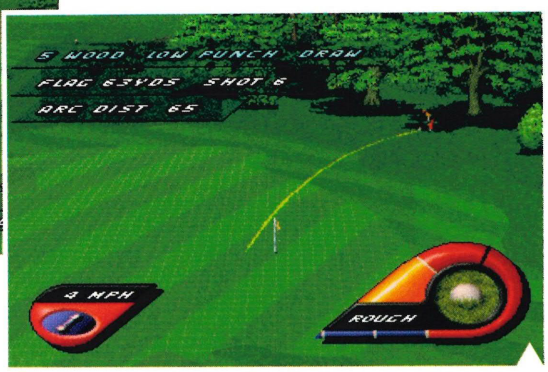


Here you can see the golfer attempting to use the draw option to pull the ball round onto the fairway





Until you familiarise yourself with each course it's probably a good idea to walk each hole



An ambitious shot out of the rough, but if it comes off, it could well turn the game

GENRE COMPARISON

Game PGA Tour Golf
Software House Electronic Arts

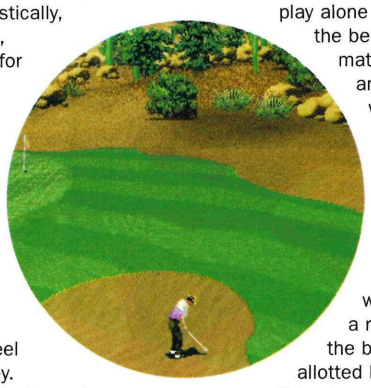
Inferior in every aspect to Actua 2, EA has really got its work cut out if it is to maintain its hold on the sports game market in the face of a strong challenge from Gremlin. PGA was a massive disappointment when it was released last year. Not a patch on previous versions of the classic series and one that's best avoided.

itself on in leaps and bounds.

And that's what has happened with Actua Golf 2. The animation is perhaps the best use of motion capture technology seen so far (in a golf game at least – Total NBA '97's more complex animation probably rule the roost overall). The players swing and celebrate ultra realistically, and with a wide choice of look, dress style and playing styles for your golfer it's difficult to imagine it being done any better in the near future.

The game this time has six brand new courses for you to master, each of varying difficulty. The inclusion of a number of playing modes should ensure Actua Golf 2's life is a long and healthy one, and that no one who invests in it should feel like they've wasted their money.

There are options such as stroke and matchplay, practise, tournament and skins. Most people will already know what each of these involve so, just briefly, strokeplay is when you play alone round the course to see what the best score you can get is, matchplay is played against another golfer and the player with the best score at the end of nine or 18 holes is judged the winner. Practise mode speaks for itself, giving you the chance to brush up your skills on any of the six courses, tournament puts you in a leader board situation where numerous players all play a round on the same course and the best score at the end of the allotted holes wins.



Skins is perhaps the most fun when you've got your mates round though because you play each hole for a cash prize. The player who has won the most money at the end of the round is the overall winner. This adds a little extra spice to just playing for the usual low score, and of course if you're feeling really cocky you could even put a bit of real money on each hole just to make things even more exciting. Er, not that I'm encouraging our readers to gamble, of course.

The shot interface has received a make-over from the first game but essentially remains the same, using the three press system which seems to have become standard for games of this type. One press will set the backswing in motion, the second will end the backswing and start the downswing. The third press dictates the snap which, depending on how well you time it, will decide whether the ball goes straight as a die or veers to the left or right (better known as a hook or a slice).

Personally, I'd like to see some variation in this system, and for someone at least try out something new instead of playing it safe like they do at the moment, but on the other hand if it works is there any point in changing it?

And the shot system in Actua Golf 2 certainly does its job more than adequately. That, coupled with intuitive direction and camera controls, make playing a round a joy rather than a struggle. There's now little or no loading time ▶



There are plenty of different attire options, from sports casual to the Greg Norman look

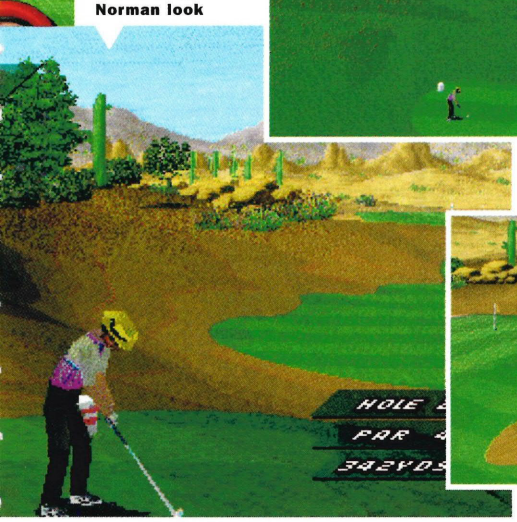


You can zoom in and out as far as you feel comfortable, to make the shot easier

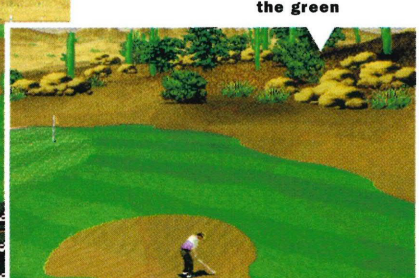


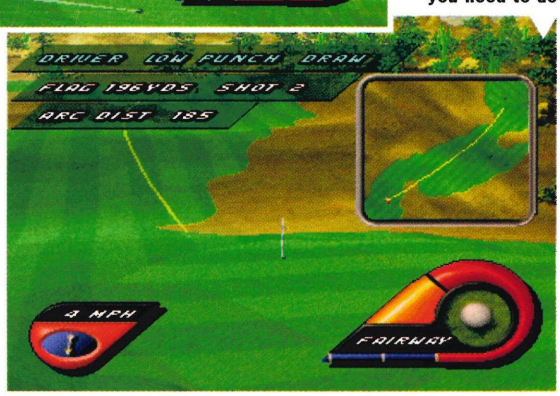
Putting gets much easier with practise, but at first you'll struggle to judge the run of the green

Learning to draw and fade the ball takes a while, but it's something that you need to do



It's not always best to head straight for the heart of the green

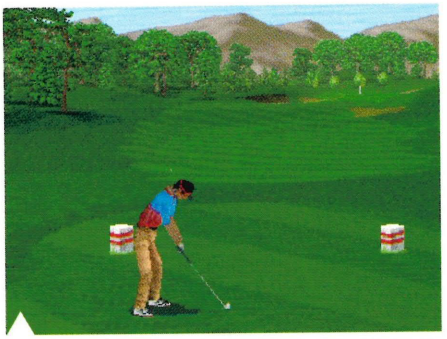




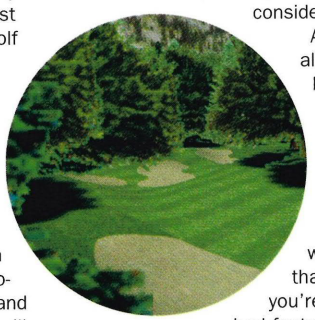
Actua Golf 2

whatsoever between holes (unlike the first game) and the pause between the ball coming to rest and the chance to take your next shot is barely noticeable, and indeed any delay is mostly as a result of the irritating feature of having to press the x button after every shot before you can the next one. Still, it's a small gripe, and one of the few you can level at this sequel which has managed to wrestle the mantle of best golf game from its older brother with surprising ease.

The market for this game is going to be a big one, simply because golf games traditionally sell well considering it's a minority sport, and Gremlin has overcome the most difficult barrier of making this game worth buying even if you splashed out on the last edition. The six new courses, along with overhauled graphics and gameplay engine, make this a must have for any PlayStation owning golf fan, regardless of whether they own the first game or not.



A big, booming drive straight down the middle of the fairway is called for here



Another massive improvement over the original comes thanks to the commentary. Again provided by Peter Alliss, for the most part he witters on while the play is going on with pertinent comments on the action on screen. You can also have a co-operative mode between himself and another commentator where they will analyse what's going on, passing comments (not always complimentary) on your shots. This helps to give the whole game a nice televisual feel, and with a game as sedate as golf presentation really is vitally important.

If this is the commentary system that's going to be used in the forthcoming Actua Series games then the likes of Tennis and Soccer 2 should be worth waiting for. It's by far the most advanced yet seen and another example of Gremlin pushing back the boundaries and waiting for everyone else to catch up.

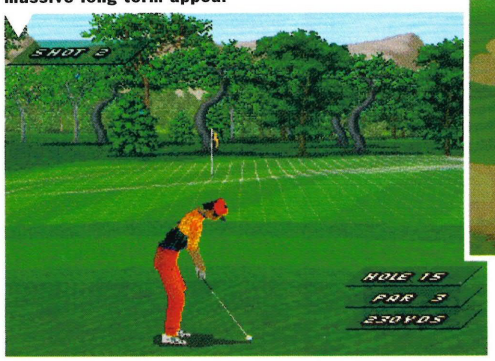
One area however, where I feel things could be touched up is the presentation of the menu screens. A small point, I know, but with a product as classy as this it's a shame the front end is more like an old Amiga game than a cutting edge 32-Bit console product. You shouldn't be put off because it's plain sailing once you get into the proper game, but it's still worth pointing as a consideration for the future.

Anyway, back to the game. I've already been over the swingometer but of course you also have to aim your shots. To get a better idea of what the hole is like you can choose to do either a fly by where you sweep over the top in a helicopter or you can actually take control of the golfer and walk the hole! Personally I feel that's taking things a bit far, but if you're well into your golf then it's not a bad feature at all.

Once you've decided on the best approach, you can change the golfer's viewing angle to the optimum and then use the aiming arc that will decide the ball's trajectory. It's at this point where you decide whether to draw or fade the shot to take it round a dog leg, or just go for a straight blast or a delicate chip on to the green. It's a similar system to that used in the later PGA games where the arc will change colour to indicate how risky the shot is. White's a fairly safe shot unless you mess up the timing, yellow's a bit more risky and so on.

You get the picture. It plays just like all the other golf games but with a bit more spit and polish on the in game sections and an almost infallible grip of what makes a good golf game. Actua Golf 2 is a must buy for anyone who likes a good game of golf, and indeed anyone who just likes a good game.

Mastering all six of the courses will take an age, and gives Actua Golf 2 massive long term appeal





Some of the hazards on the holes are downright nasty, and should you get into trouble on some of them then you can write off the entire round

PRO SCORE

GAME Actua Golf 2
GENRE Sports
SOFTWARE HOUSE Gremlin
CONTACT 0114 2753423
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED

This represents a significant leap forward over the already impressive original version. The six courses will take an age to master and, as a golfing sim, it would be difficult to do it any better. The motion captures are impressive, the game is simplicity itself to play and there are more than enough options to ensure you'll still be loading this up a good few months down the line. Realistic enough to satisfy even the real life players but in no way so complicated as to deter novices, this game heralds a much welcome return to form from one of the PlayStation's leading lights. And that's good news for everyone, especially with the likes of Actua Tennis and Actua Soccer 2 just around the corner

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 9
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 9

8½

DAN While I find it hard to put golf and video games in the same hobby basket, this is an accurate and playable simulation. As with all these minority sports games, fans will love it, the rest of us will be baffled

JAY Golf isn't the most exciting game I know but Gremlin has managed to bring it to life and entice me onto the green with this stunning updated sequel. Personally, I think it's better than the real thing

ALEX Although this is by far the best golf game on the PlayStation it still isn't anywhere near as playable as the PGA series on the 16bit formats. And the backgrounds still look like static oil paintings

ANDY Golf is one of those hit or miss affairs on any format. Although PGA still rates highly on other formats, the PlayStation conversions have been sadly inferior to this great golf sim. It's way ahead of the rest

Break-neck racing for 1-8 addicts. 48 Head-spinning 3D tracks. 32 Vehicles. Loads of weapons.

"THE GREATEST MULTI-PLAYER GAME FOR THE PLAYSTATION"

PlayStation Plus, 94%

Starting's easy. Stopping's the hard part.

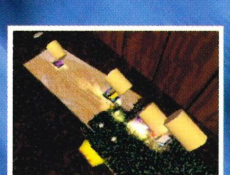


MAXIMUM MULTI-PLAYER RACING

THE ORIGINAL
Micro Machines
SCALE MINIATURES
V3









9/10 Official PlayStation magazine, 9/10 PlayStation Pro, 94% PlayStation Plus, 92% Play magazine, 9/10 PlayStation Power, 91% Gamesmaster, 5/5 C&VG.

PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER

Codemasters pure gameplay

SHARED CONTROLLER OPTION
1 2
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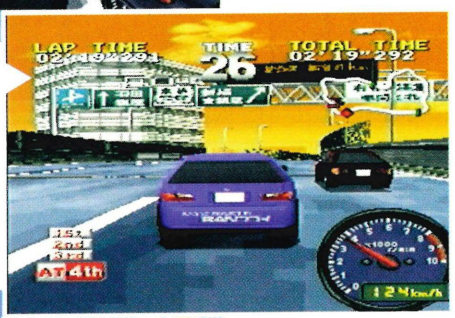
Tokyo Highway Battle

When chaos ensues it all seems to stem from one place – Japan, and more precisely, Tokyo. Surely Tokyo isn't quite as chaotic as we're led to believe?





Touching the walls is always going to slow you considerably, but occassionally it just can't be helped as you try to avoid the traffic on the busy Tokyo streets



The opponent is caught and will soon be passed. Have you got what it takes to stay ahead?

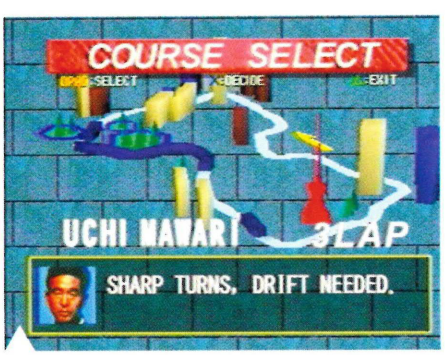




The other view brings you down to street level and adds a little bit more speed into the racing. Definitely not for the faint hearted



The checkpoints can usually be reached without too much trouble. It's keeping a lead that is the tricky part



Just one of the paltry three circuits on which you challenge the other drivers to a duel through what seems to be rush hour traffic

The Japanese are pre occupied with speedy cars, death and hi-tech equipment, along with some dodgy music, if we're to believe everything we see and hear. So comes as no surprise then that some of the greatest games we've seen on the PlayStation have come from the land of the rising sun.

Unfortunately, for every stunning release, we also see numerous import games which can only be described as some of the most pointless, dreadful experiences we've encountered. The only explanation for this is that the Japanese are easily pleased. Luckily most of these games will never see the light of day over here. We, on the other hand, are a far more discerning bunch.

Tokyo Highway Battle (THB) is by no means an instant crazed drive through some Tokyo streets of. In fact it's far from it. This is more of a gradual climb up the ranks of racing vehicles. You start in a standard Toyota or whatever and must buy parts to increase the performance of your car.

Once you've decided on one of three vehicles at the start you must buy your parts from the speed shop and then install them. Some parts will be more effective than others and the price reflects this. There are some parts which can't be fitted to your car so this seems to limit how well you can do and once you've bought all compatible parts how much fun can you squeeze out trying out a number of different combinations?

Once you've run out of credit for car parts you must gain points by your performance on the road. This is done by winning the contest against one other driver or achieving some form of drifting success, which is basically controlling a skid around the corners. Even if you fail to defeat the opponent you will be given credits, although not as many, obviously.

Another factor that works against THB is the distinct lack of circuits. There are a mere three tracks and once you've defeated six drivers, two on each circuit, you have the opportunity to race the 'Drift King' Keiichi Tsuchiya. He's the most difficult of them all to defeat but somehow I don't think people will persevere up to this point. The simple reason being it's a long laborious process to get your car up to scratch but it does actually make a difference. On the plus side you

Coastin'



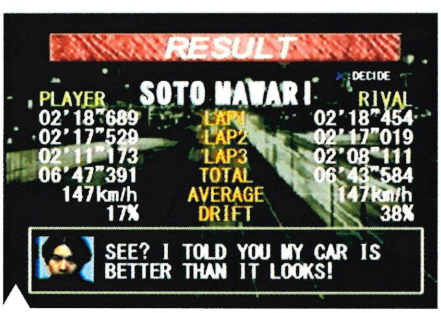
All three cars look a little like they belong in a Honda showroom



The winner of the ugly car contest. Perhaps Volvo should take a closer look



A neat little car for pottering around the city. Good for parking in small spaces



A trip to the Speed Shop is what's required here. Then go back against him on the road to improve your time

Let's face it, if you've seen one circuit, you've seen them all, although that's not much of an achievement in THB

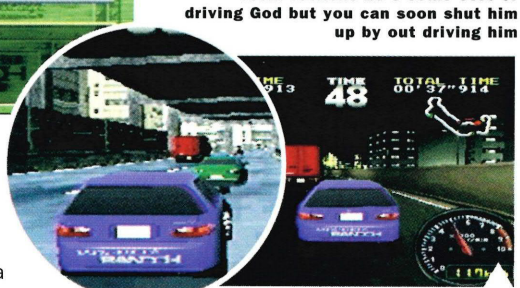




This is the speed shop where you can buy and install modifications to your car to gain that extra second or two



Toshi reckons he's some sort of driving God but you can soon shut him up by out driving him



In true racing game style, you will drive in both day and night around the circuits

can save your progress regularly so you don't have to play it in one sitting.

On the scenario game the roads will be covered in traffic and not only must you find a path through the huge trucks and cars, you must also defeat the other driver. This is a big part of the race and if you can master this you're halfway there.

The first race you enter actually feels like you're on a leisurely drive along the city streets which is actually incredibly dull. As you build your car up it becomes quicker and the handling more responsive. The handling is crucial as it's no good having the quickest car if it can't steer around the corners now is it?

If you play a versus mode against the computer the road is clear so you have only yourself to blame for any failure. The principal is the same, however. On top of this there's a practice mode and an options menu where you can change car names, configure the keys and sound options.

When all is said and done THB is an inoffensive attempt at a realism but just can't compete with the speed and excellence of Rage Racer or the ultra fast Ray Tracer which is on the way from Sony. Because of this it doesn't come highly recommended. There are already better driving games out there and there are more on the way.

It's worth noting at this stage however that THQ is handling the distribution for this and is a definite turn in the right direction. Over the years it has managed to release some shocking games but this is a reversal of fortune and will appeal to driving fanatics if they're blessed with plenty of patience. Against the odds.

PRO SCORE

GAME Tokyo Highway Battle
GENRE Racing
SOFTWARE HOUSE THQ
CONTACT 01372 745222
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

Realism is bypassed in favour of arcade action in most racing games, but Tokyo Highway Battle tries to keep realistic handling in an arcade scenario and, in some ways, it works. You don't drive a Porsche or Ferrari around at speeds, rather you drive what appears to be an everyday vehicle at slow speeds initially and, by trial and error, customise your car until you reach greater speeds to increase your chance of battling against the Drift King. All well and good but it's a little slow to get going and there are better realistic driving games around already. Just take a look at Porsche if you're after realistic handling. And for sheer arcade fun you're best sticking with Ridge Racer

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 6

7

DAN We're not short of driving games for the PlayStation these days, so any new release should at least boast some new features. This, unfortunately, is a poor man's Rage Racer and worth about six, I reckon

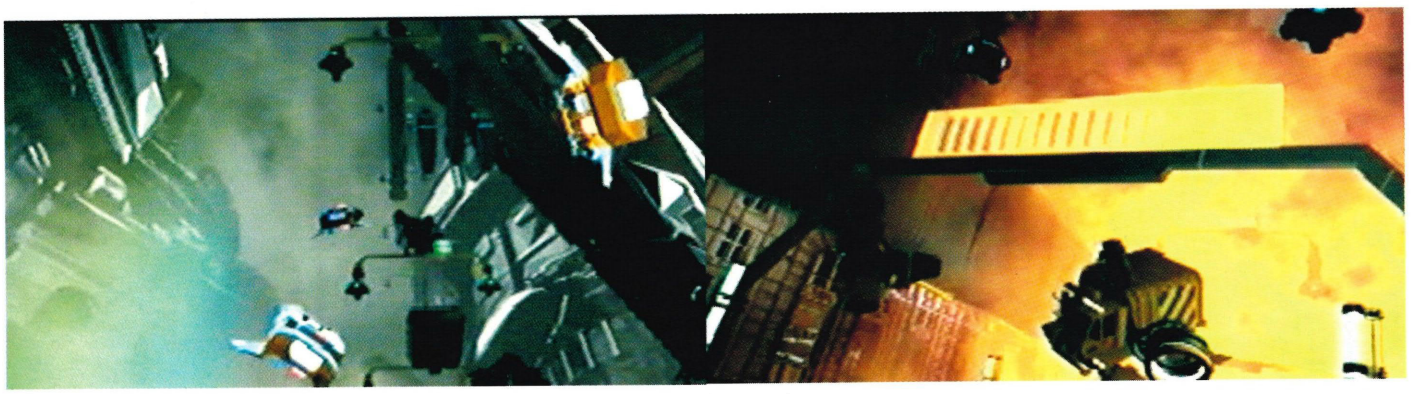
JAY Plus points for the added longevity via the 'build up your car' angle, but when you put it alongside Rage Racer it looks dated. It's an entertaining arcade beast alright, shame it's six months too late

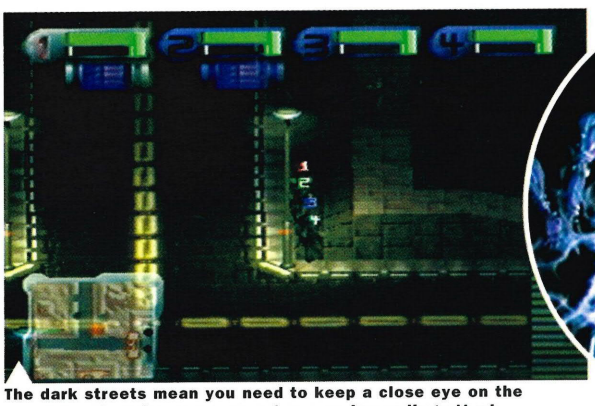
ALEX Don't be put off by the initial slowness. With perseverance you can build up your car's specifications to the point that it's capable of beating anything that at first you'd have struggled to keep up with

STEVE Well, it's alright I suppose but what's the point eh? The idea of racing round crowded streets is pseudo novel but has all been done several times before and this style of racer has just about had its day in my book

Syndicate Wars

Put on your thinking cap and enter this mixed up world where religious cults and gun toting maniacs are set to spoil your day





The dark streets mean you need to keep a close eye on the scanner, otherwise you may not see an impending attack

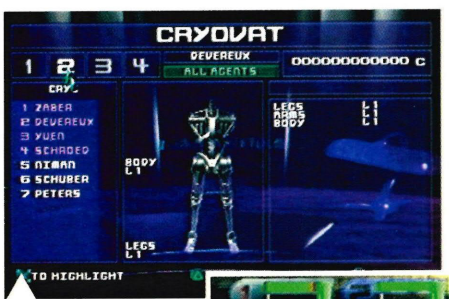




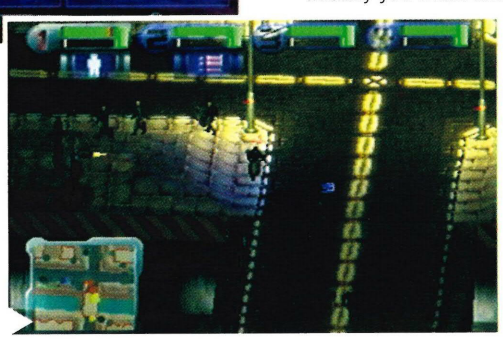
The explosions are really impressive. Just don't get too close or you're in big trouble – as you can see here



It's a good idea to have a look around the area before you set off to plan your route and strategy for the mission ahead



This is where you buy upgrades for all your team



The yellow dots on the scanner are people you've persuaded to join your gang. They can be of great assistance

Beginning a game of Syndicate Wars, you enter something very few will ever leave. It's a world where only the bravest and most cunning survive. Don't think you will start a game and be some sort of Syndicate God within minutes of beginning. It's a tough nut to crack but perseverance will add new tricks and special strategies to your game plan.

Initially you must choose which side you take control of: The Church Of The New Epoch or the EuroCorp Syndicate. All this basically means is that your missions take on slightly different meanings.

If you are new to the Syndicate world, you are undoubtedly going to have teething problems trying to get to grips with exactly what's in store. It's basically a strategy game in which you must quell the opposition and be the all powerful force.

Once you've decided which side you will fight for you take to the streets and set about making them your own. Your mission briefs go into great detail; not only informing you on what your mission involves but also goes on to tell you why it needs to be done.

It's not going to be easy and before you begin you should buy all the equipment you think you'll require on the mission. For instance, your entourage are going to need weapons to blast away attacks and if you need to persuade people to join your sect, you will need a Persuadatron which brainwashes people to join with your party.

It does take a few games to discover some of the intricacies involved, such as

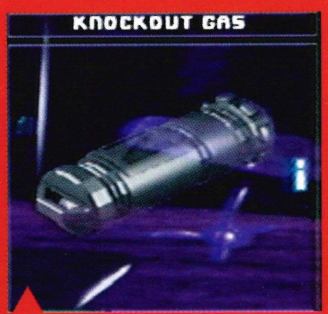
Carnage the easy way



To begin with you have a limited choice of weapons



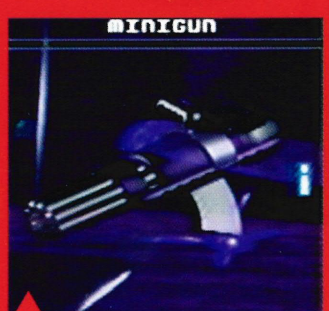
The more you play, the more is on offer



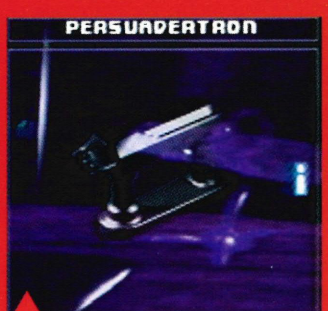
This does what it says and allows some quick progress



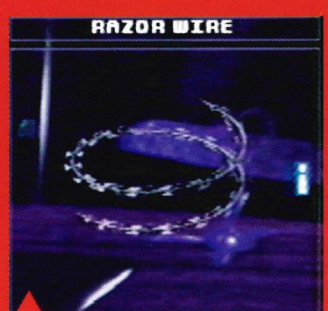
Serious damage can be done to both people and scenery wit this



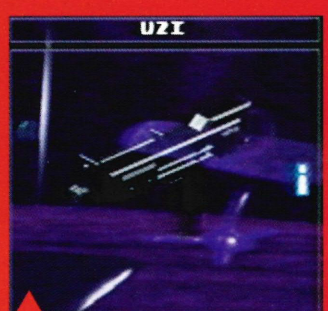
A very effective weapon in the early stages



Essential for persuading your followers



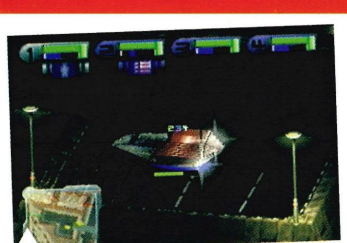
It doesn't matter which weapons you choose if you can do the job



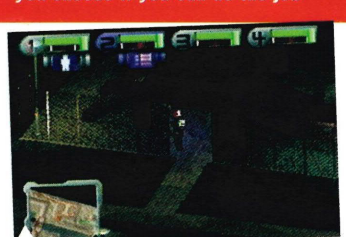
Very cheap, very crude and pretty useless



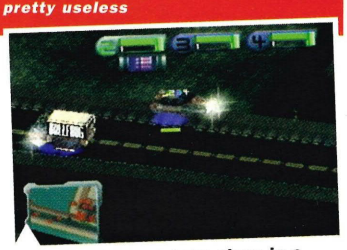
Rotate the views to see exactly where you're going. An obscured view is no good to anyone



Unoccupied vehicles can be used. Some areas can only be accessed using one. Have a good look around



It's possible to break into two teams or use each member individually – it's entirely down to your preference

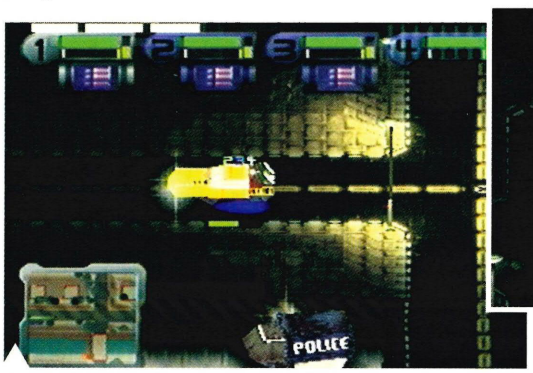


Some battles can take place in a drive-by fashion. This protects your team members from standing battles

collecting dropped weapons and other bonus items. These can be sold in the equipment shop to gain buying power. Obviously the more you can pick up, the better you will be prepared for further missions. There is also an armour shop where you can build your strength up to phenomenal heights to improve your chances against enemy fire.

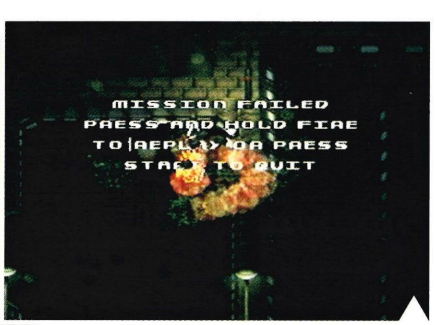
As you play you will have plenty to think about if you are to be successful. The unbelievers are everywhere and you would be wise to persuade them to join your gang. As you become more adept at the ins and outs of the game you will progress with greater ease and as you gain experience a plethora of new and more destructive weapons become available.

The world you play in is as hi-tech as you could imagine with plenty of Back To The Future vehicles floating above the streets. These can be commandeered by your party to get past security doors and travel at faster speeds through danger spots up to the required area. Unfortunately for you, they have to be 'acquired' from car parks while nobody is occupying them.



Quite what the police do in the game is difficult to explain. They seem to either spectate or join in, depending on how they feel

Controlling every aspect of your group is far from easy. The basics are pretty straightforward but some of the lesser options take a little longer to execute quickly and you need to remember exactly what does what for a greater chance of success.



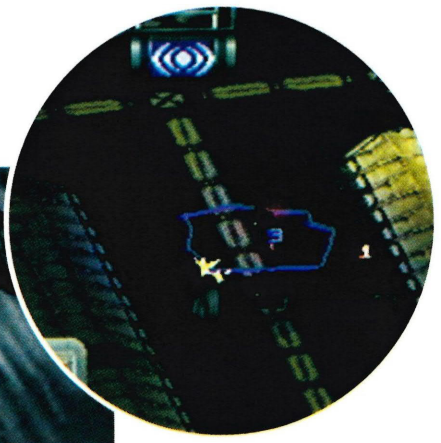
You'd be well advised to familiarise yourself with this screen as things do hot up very quickly indeed

If there is a fault with the whole thing it's the fact that it seems very dark indeed. The whole game appears to take place during the night and some fences are very difficult to see. Not to mention the civilians and enemies.

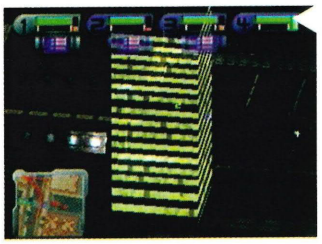
To counter this however, you do have a scanner in the bottom left of the screen which highlights the numerous enemy targets and the people you will need to persuade to

Syndicate Wars

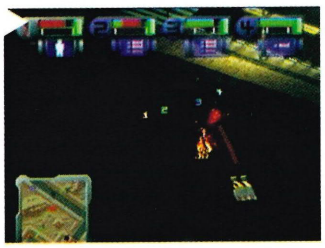




After a successful mission, you'll be shown a firework display in the rain. Just for that authentic Bladerunner feel



Looks like it's time to rotate that view to get a better idea of what's going on



These static laser cannons are a real pain. The simple thing to do is avoid them if at all possible

strengthen your clan. The more civilians you persuade, the more firepower you have to quell an enemy stronghold.

If you find the target you need to reach is a fair distance away you can tap the triangle button, scroll over to where you need to be and then tap the triangle again. The idea is that your team or the individual chosen will make their way at double speed to the area. The reality is that they sometimes become snared on fences and then you need to walk them over manually. It does work well however, if you're in control of a vehicle.

Viewing the area couldn't be simpler with you having the option to spin the whole map through 360 degrees to gain your best views of the surrounding area.

Your team for a mission begins with four and how you use these is down to your chosen strategy. You can leave a couple back at base and use the other two to clear the way or, if you feel like racing through with maximum firepower, you may opt for taking all four with no back up plan. It's entirely down to the individual player as to how to go about tackling the mission ahead. And, more importantly, there's no right or wrong way to go about it.

The mix of both strategy and action has been executed with style and fans of the more straightforward kind of shooting game will love the gunfights which are paramount to your success.

The levels themselves are of a manageable size. They aren't sprawling cities with no boundaries. You are restricted as to where you can go but the entire mission will take place in the grid you are allocated. It's all very futuristic and you'll see many cars floating around above the roads. It all looks like a set from Bladerunner and that's where it sometimes lets itself down. Occasionally it's just too dark and gloomy for its own good and some parts of the levels are too restricting in terms of the views.

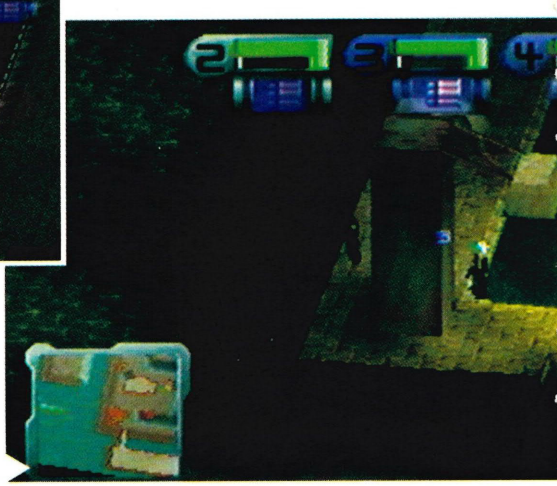
However, if you rotate the view, which

The loading screens change as you progress through the missions so you don't get too familair with them

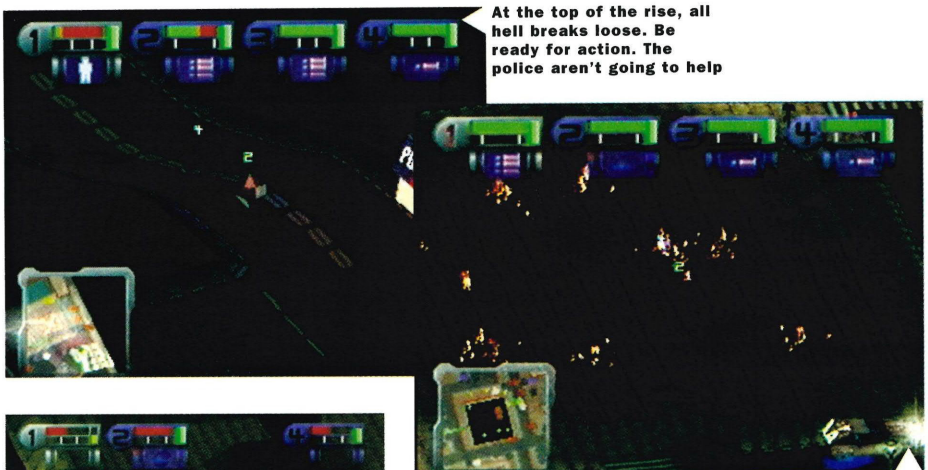




Whatever you do, use the green cross code, or you may not live to regret it



The graphics really are spectacular, even if it is incredibly dark



At the top of the rise, all hell breaks loose. Be ready for action. The police aren't going to help

The entire building has exploded leaving the area charred and burning. Don't get caught up in the explosion



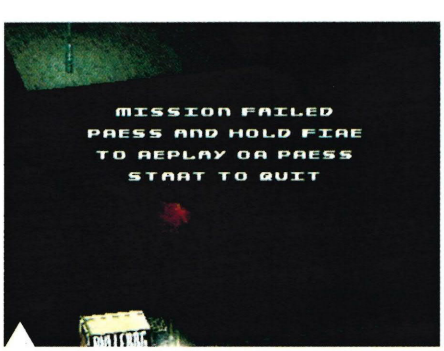
The lightning attacks are a real pain to counter. How on earth will you complete the mission objectives?

in itself does become a little tiring, you can see some parts that little bit clearer. Some thought has obviously gone into and this shows. Each level is well thought out and the graphics are detailed even when viewed from your vantage point in the sky.

Buildings have always been a problem in this type of game as they are very restricting to your view. To get round this problem, whenever you are under or inside a building you are able to see right through it so you can view what's happening inside. This unfortunately isn't always the help it should be and occasionally can be restricting.

If you do persevere, and you'll have to to gain any enjoyment, then you will be handsomely rewarded with one of the toughest and most enjoyable strategy games. The only other games that can come close to Syndicate Wars are the X-Com releases, but other than this Syndicate Wars stands alone and it's going to be difficult to better.

Bullfrog has certainly come up trumps with its latest offering while still managing to aim directly at a certain sector of buyers. It is definitely going to appeal to many strategy fans who will cackle with delight at the sight of civilians running in terror from your entourage. Unfortunately, it won't gain many new fans as you will already know whether or not you're going to buy this monster just waiting to be tamed.



Here it is again. Have you familiarised yourself with it yet? This is your last chance



Tour team members can pick up any weapons lying around after a battle for their own use



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PRO SCORE

GAME Syndicate Wars
GENRE Strategy
SOFTWARE HOUSE Bullfrog
CONTACT 01483 579399
RELEASE DATE July
PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED **Now I'm no fan of strategy games but I can see that this is going to appeal to many people. It has a huge lifespan, graphics which impress and once you've grasped the intricacies it becomes far more enjoyable. Luckily the first few levels ease you gently into this mad world where violence is the norm and you can learn what's involved. The sounds do leave a little to be desired, they're a little thin on the ground, but apart from guns, cars and screams of agony and little else what more could you expect? Planning a mission is very important and you can guarantee Syndicate Wars is going to cause many more headaches before its work is done.**

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 9

8½

DAN **The original was a slinky minx of a game that seduced me into a lurid and torrid affair. This PSX update isn't quite as appealing, as I'm not sure it's ideally suited to a console set-up, but it's still fantastic**

JAY **Cyberpunk lovers have been after a finished copy of this baby for months now, and nothing I say about it is going to make a blind bit of difference. It's big, it's enthralling and most of the population will soon own it**

ALEX **Very, very good but also very, very tricky. More or less lives up to the pre-release hype, which is no mean achievement. Injected with a genuinely malevolent atmosphere, Syn' Wars is eminently buyable**

STEVE **Undoubtedly missing some of the graphical quality of the PC original, this is still an exceptional game. Unbelievably tough and bordering on ultra violent this is certainly not for the squeamish or the easily discouraged**

BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Darklight Conflict

After the rather limp Wing Commander IV, Electronic Arts eats another slice of the cake marked 'space-based destruction'



If you tire of the cockpit view, you can switch to external cameras. They look nice, but are pretty useless in combat

See how my blue plasma bolts are casting a lovely cyan hue over that ship? Isn't it gorgeous?

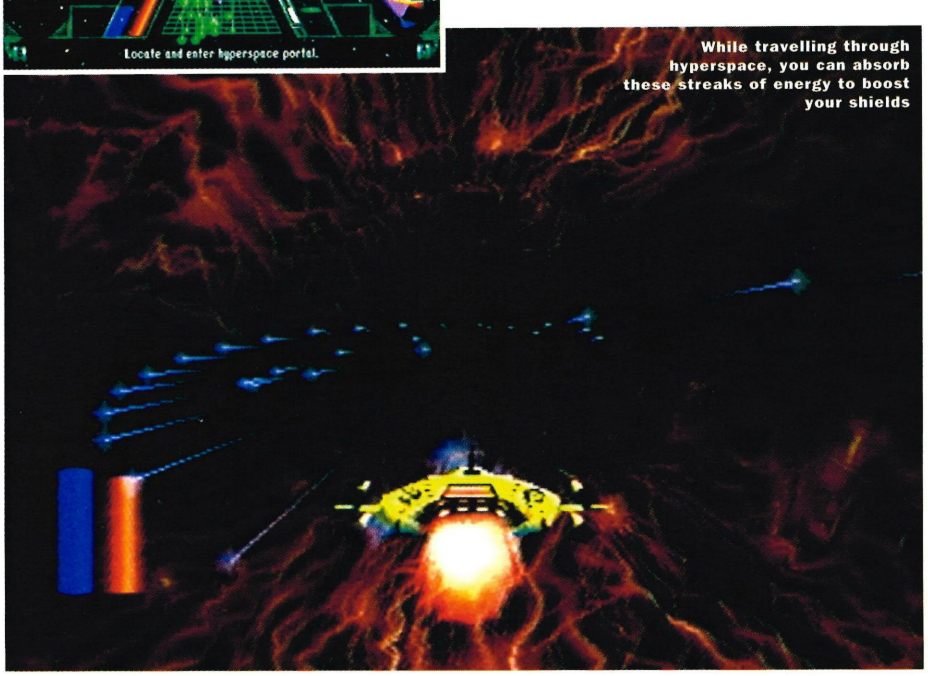


Undercover work. People think that it's so hard. "Ooh, look at me, I'm working undercover", they say as they prance about with fake moustaches on. "I must therefore be one of the hardest people in the whole, wide world". Well I've got news for you, smug pants. You ain't nuttin', as they say in my local hood. You wanna know what real undercover means? More undercover than Undercover Elephant, that popular Hanna Barbera sleuth, that's what I'm talking about. I'm talking about having your DNA scrambled and your genes spin-dried to become a completely new species. That, kids, is undercover.

The species in question is the Reptons. The undercover elephant is your good self. You've volunteered to 'become' a Repton in order to facilitate future communication between the two races. Oh, and if you could come up with an overview of Repton military tactics and comms channels, just in case we ever have to give them a slap, then that'd be nice too. In the meantime, just qualify as a Repton pilot and help them in a bitter galactic war against the Ovons. Cheers.

So it's a space combat shoot 'em-up. And, first impressions first, it looks bloody amazing. Previously I was under the impression that light sourcing was something that people bunged into games to cover up the fact that it was crap. Here, it makes perfect sense.

While travelling through hyperspace, you can absorb these streaks of energy to boost your shields



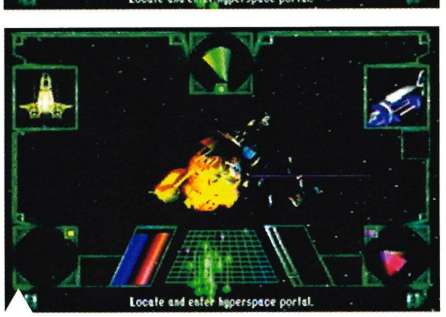
The game takes place in a binary star system, which means it has two suns. And they're there, all the time, huge balls of blazing light casting lens flares all over the place. Adding to the luminescent laughs, each laser blast, plasma bolt, explosion, engine trail and navigation light throws it's light into the equation.

I know it doesn't sound too amazing, but it makes the game look so bloody real. This is helped no end by the smooth polygon spaceships. No chunky, angular cosmic bricks these. They look truly alien, all gentle curves and spindly bits. And they move like a dream. To be blunt, this could be one of the best looking shoot 'em-ups ever. It's a treat for the eyes. You can almost feel your pupils reacting to the brightness around it.

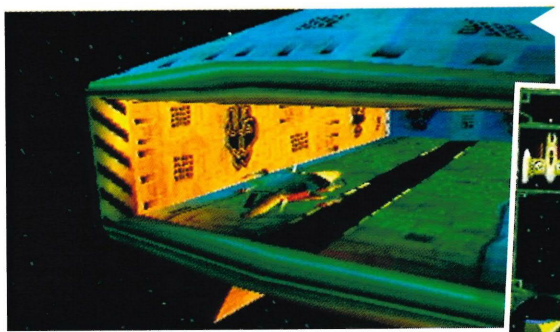
The sound's a bit on the cracking side as well. The lasers sound pretty much as you'd expect - a sort of 'peeee-yow' noise if you must know, but it's the subtle noises that really add to the game. While you're hammering through the void, there's a constant throbbing, speaker-rattling hum from the engines. Nothing overwhelming, but enough to give the impression of massive power at your fingertips. There's some good, growly Repton speech as well.

Now you may have noticed that I haven't

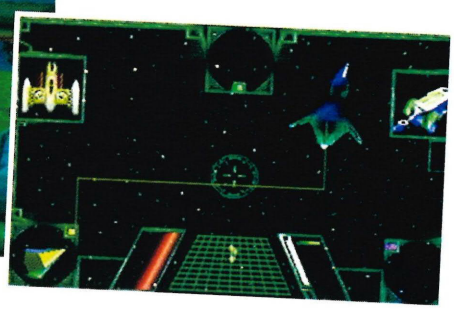




At last! Meaty explosions in a space combat game! Not unlike Die Hard Trilogy's polygon based destruction, come to think of it



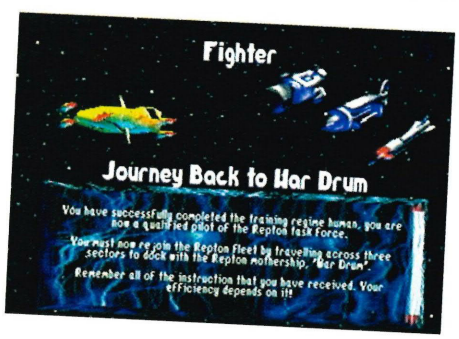
It's to the game's credit that the action and the cut scenes are indistinguishable from one another

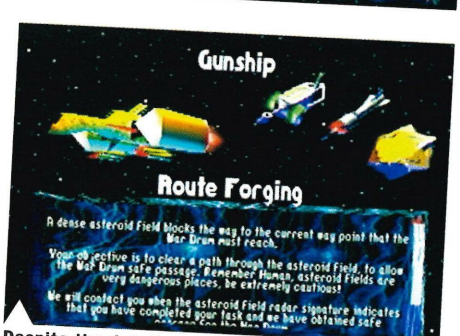


actually mentioned the gameplay yet. That's because I'm having trouble getting to grips with. You see, I think the game is a bit too ferocious. Not that I'm a soft girl or anything, but after the 10 basic training levels you're hurled into a lethal dogfight and die straight away. At least I did. Continually.

You can only take a few hits at most before you die, and your shield is limited and prevents you firing anything other than measly phasers. The upshot of this is a lot of instant death, as evil Ovon's blast you to bits from behind. If you keep moving then you stand a better chance, but one hesitation can mean death. Which is I assume is pretty realistic, not being a space pilot in real life. One thing it's not though, is friendly.

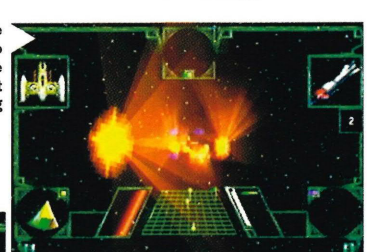
Now I'm perfectly prepared to admit that this might just be my fault. Maybe I'm not cut out for the Repton military. Steve seemed to fair slightly better, so this could well be the case. However, even he struggled after about the fourth mission. And as there are about 50 such missions, I don't think we'll be seeing the end in a hurry. Maybe super-hard gameplayers will waltz through it, but for normal people like me, this is a game that brazenly seduces you with its luscious looks and silky voice, then smashes your teeth out with a claw hammer while dancing on your ribs in hobnailed boots. Which is something I quite enjoy in my private life, but that doesn't mean I want it in my games. Steve will disagree wildly in his comments, as always, but this is just too bloody tough to be any real fun.



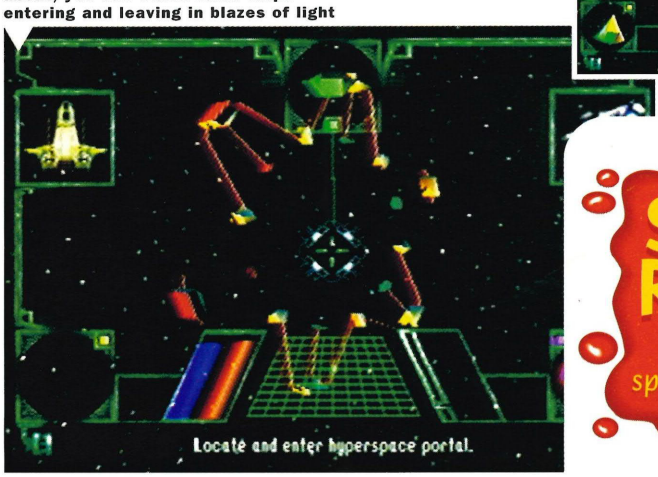


Despite the detailed mission briefings, they don't vary from the 'shoot this, please' formula

Just a shot of me shooting randomly, to demonstrate the wonderful light sourcing



That's a hyperspace portal. If you hang about, you can watch other ships entering and leaving in blazes of light



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PRO SCORE

GAME Darklight Conflict
GENRE Shoot 'Em-Up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts
CONTACT 01753 549442
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £39.99

It looks great, let's make that clear. Next to Wing Commander's stuttering, flaccid battle scenes, Darklight moves like a freshly greased snake down a drainpipe. The light sourcing is a revelation, giving each and every object a rounded, solid feel. The explosions really pack a punch too, as alien fighters come apart in showers of polygons. The only problem, and it's a biggy in my book, is that the game doesn't give you a chance to orientate yourself before squadrons of enemy swoop in and open fire. With a weak shield, and a 'one hit and you're dead' attitude, this makes the game virtually impossible to warm to. Not one for the casual joystick-jockey then, but still recommended for expert blasters

GRAPHICS 9
SOUND 8
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 7

7½

STEVE The only problem, and it's a biggy in my book, is that Dan's undermarked this because he can't do it. He's much happier when he can get right to the end without raising a sweat. It's tough, but it's also top!

JAY As mentioned above, it all looks fine and dandy, but the somewhat tricky missions will have the more feeble gamer stamping their feet with anger. PSX old boys with an eye for action, will, however, love it to bits

ALEX Basically Wing Commander minus the movie trimmings, but with beefed up graphics to compensate. It's fast and frantic, but a bit of leniency at the start of the game would make it easier to get into

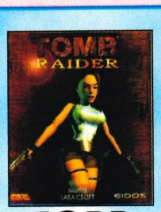
ANDY It's big in every sense of the word but is also bland. The missions are samey and making progress is very slow. If you are one of the many out there who love a challenge and plenty of longevity then this is for you

GAMEplay

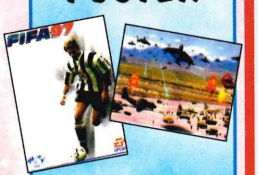
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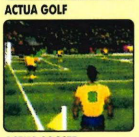
AYRTON SENNA KART DUEL



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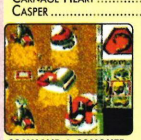


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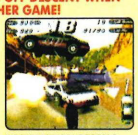


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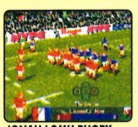
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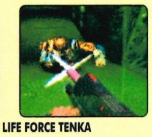


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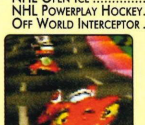


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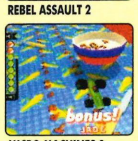
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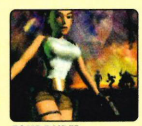


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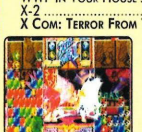


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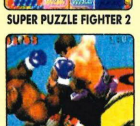
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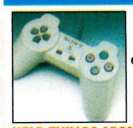
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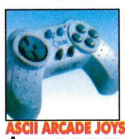
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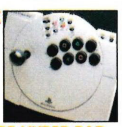
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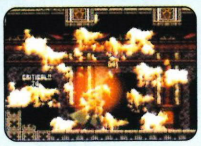
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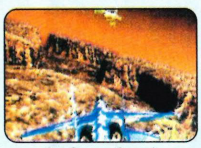
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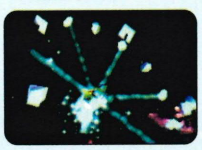

INDEPENDANCE DAY DUE JUNE


NHL POWERPLAY DUE MAY


CASTLEVANIA DUE MAY


SYNDICATE WARS DUE JULY


ACE COMBAT 2 DUE JULY

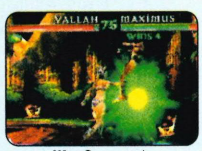

DARKLIGHT CONFLICT DUE JUNE


THE LOST WORLD DUE AUGUST


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TEKKEN 3 DUE AUTUMN

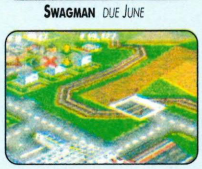

SWAGMAN DUE JUNE

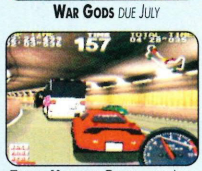


WAR GODS DUE JULY

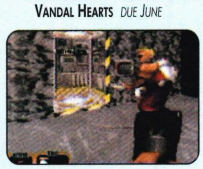

VANDAL HEARTS DUE JUNE


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ATARI GREATEST HITS	15TH MAY
BUBBLE BOBBLE 2	MAY
CASTLEVANIA	MAY/JUNE
CAESARS WORLD OF GAMBLING	EARLY MAY
CONQUEST EARTH	JULY/AUGUST
DARK FORCES	EARLY MAY
DARKLIGHT CONFLICT	13TH JUNE
DEATHTRAP DUNGEON	SEPTEMBER
DESCENT 2	EARLY MAY
INDEPENDANCE DAY	6TH JUNE
INT'L SUPERSTAR SOCCER PRO	MID MAY
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OVERBLOOD	23RD MAY
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SENTIENT	MAY
SOUL BLADE	EARLY MAY
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BY STEVE MCNALLY

WCW vs the World

Steroids and hair dye at the ready for THQ's re-creation of the sport that lets old men prance around in frayed leotards. Marvellous

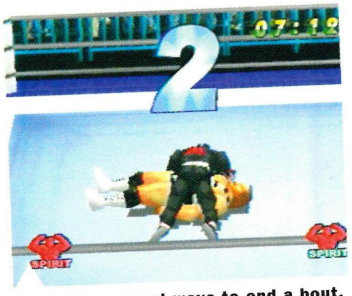


Who would've thought it eh? A wrestling game knocking the likes of Soccer '97 and Lomu off the top of our 'most played games in the office' list. In fact, even now as I start work on writing this review, I'm being pestered by Jay to engage him in just one more Elimination tournament (five a side, winner stays on, first player to defeat all opposing wrestlers wins). But I'll have to be firm because if work continues at the rate it has done since this game came in then this issue will never get finished.

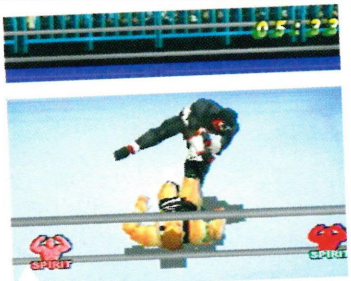
My interest in wrestling ended when I was about 14. Up until then I loved it. WWF ruled the roost in those days (having captured the hearts of a British public raised on Kent Walton's Saturday afternoon 'grapple fans' extravaganza).

Sky TV was a relative newcomer and had brought with it some of the 'many joys' of American culture. Who needed Giant Haystacks, Big Daddy and Mark 'Rollerball' Rocco when you could watch Hulk Hogan take on The Ultimate Warrior? Certainly not us and Kent's show quickly died a death (along with Kent for all I know).

Then I woke up one morning and realised it was all bollocks. And I grew to hate it. Imagine my surprise though when I was told that WCW



There are several ways to end a bout, the pin is just one of them



If that doesn't work though you need to soften your opponent up a bit



As you can imagine, in softening terms, this is quite a good move!



But in WCW it only takes a second for the tables to turn

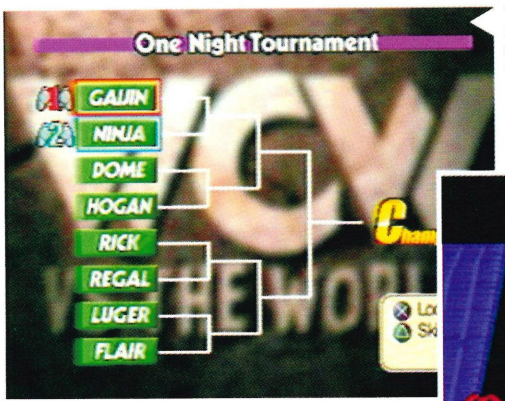
In my day this was called a Boston Crab. Dunno what it is now

The corners are a good weapon against a groggy opponent

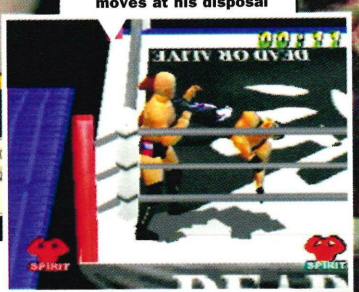




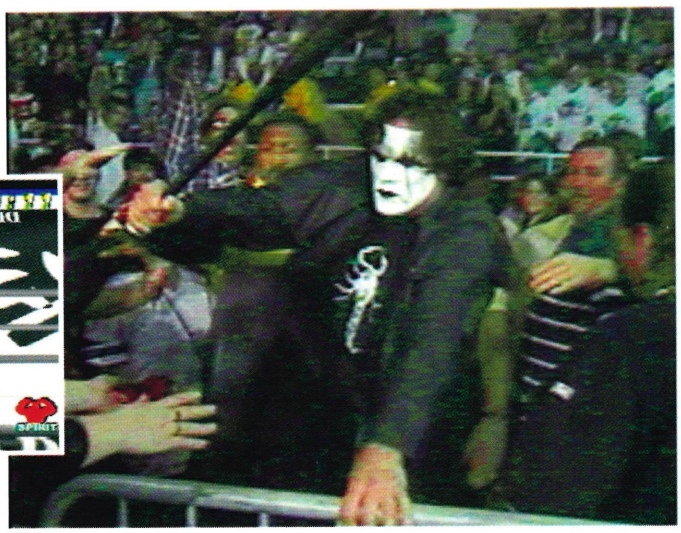
Breaking a back is met by a quite sickening crack



The tournament mode is gruelling to say the least! Only the best survive



Each wrestler has between 30 and 40 moves at his disposal



was now top wrestling dog (back then it was the equivalent to the Beazer Homes football league while WWF was the Premiership) and many of the big stars (including, get this, the Hulkster!) had defected. What's going on here then?

Even more surprising was to learn that this game, a THQ game for God's sake, had become the fastest selling CD game ever when it was released in America! I know that doesn't automatically mean it is going to be good, but you have to admit it's quite an impressive claim.

To be totally honest, I thought this was going to be rubbish. But it's not. Far from it, in fact. I haven't spent a great deal of time with any of the other PlayStation wrestling games, but this seems to be easily the best so far in my opinion. I know Dan disagrees to a certain extent (he's still a fan of that Activision Powermove thing) but then, if you take him at his word you deserve all that's coming to you.

Seriously though, from what he tells me, both games have their own individual merits and while WCW addressed most of the criticisms he levelled at Powermove, it also lacks some of the features that made that game so good (apparently it's not as intuitive, the collision detection isn't as precise, it was easier to pull of the moves and so on).

Whereas Activision's effort only had 12 characters to choose from, WCW has a massive 60. This isn't quite as impressive as it sounds because some of them are almost identical (in terms of moves, not appearance) but even so, it's not a feature to be sneezed at. Only 15 of the wrestlers actually come from the WCW organisation (including such well known WWF defectees as Hulk Hogan, the aged Ric Flair and Lex Luger), with the other 45 coming from less well known organisations around the world such as the Empire Wrestling Federation and Independent Union Wrestling.

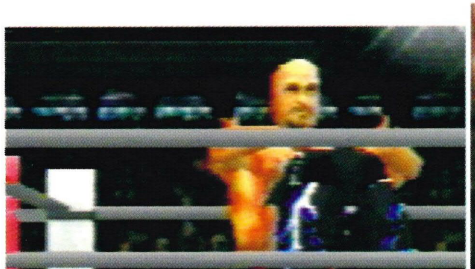
Each wrestler has somewhere between 30 to 40 moves ranging from standard punches and kicks to leg breaking holds, back breaking suplexes and neck breaking choke holds. One interesting feature is that there are a couple of very different ways to win a bout. Obviously you can set up the number of falls required for an absolute victory, but there are several different ways to achieve a fall.

The most well known is perhaps when you manage to pin your opponent's shoulders to the canvas for a count of three. Apart from that you'll lose if you are out of the ring for more than a count of 20, if you get knocked out cold or, most interestingly, if one of the combatants breaks a bone during the course of the fight! This is met with a sickening crack and an instant end to the fight. Nice.

You will only be able to achieve a fall though after a lot of hard work. For instance, if you try and pin your opponent the first time you knock ▶



Now you know the guy in the funny black suit is in big trouble!





Even the ageing Ric Flair puts in an appearance, complete with lashings of hair dye



Thunder Dome (the bald bloke) is perhaps the toughest in the game

One of the most devastating moves involves lifting a dazed opponnent on the ropes and dumping him to the canvas

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Powermove Pro Wrestling
Software House Activision

Different mainly for its no frills approach to wrestling, this is more of a Saturday afternoon World of Sport with Dickie Davies type game than the more glamorous WCW offering. No worse for it though, plenty of moves, atmosphere and a slightly more intuitive control system serve to make a difficult choice between the two. Fortunately you can't really lose out either way.

WCW vs the World

him down you'll be thrown off almost instantly. The same goes for breaking bones, so you have to get to work on softening him up. All the usual moves you'd expect are at your disposal to allow you to do this, both when your opponent is on his feet or prostrate on the floor.

When you're face to face with him on his feet there are several types of move you can pull off. There's stuff like normal punches and kicks, the chance to grab his arm and fling him either rope-wards or towards the corner or the opportunity to try and grab him and execute a hold such as a pile driver or suplex (the longer you press the button the more powerful and damaging the move will be).

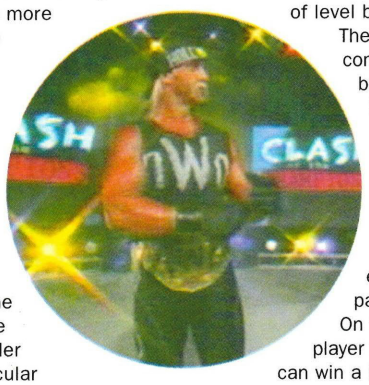
Get your opponent on the canvas and a whole new world of moves opens up. You could just boot him in the head a few times or you could go for something a little more spectacular like an attempt to break his back. Or even his neck! The wrestling world really is your oyster – at least in terms of moves anyway.

There are also plenty of play options (which I really should have mentioned before I got into all the game stuff but I forgot. So sue me).

For instance there's the one player league challenge where you take control of one wrestler and take on five in that particular division and then an end of level boss.



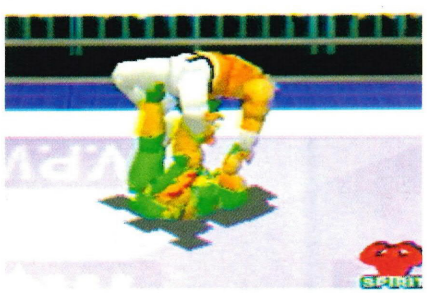
Should be a good one this. The nimble Black Ninja against ferocious Billy Gaijin



There's a Best of Seven competition where you can win a belt (saveable to memory card) by defeating seven randomly chosen opponents, a straightforward exhibition match between you and either a friend or the computer and the Elimination Match which I've already explained in my opening paragraph.

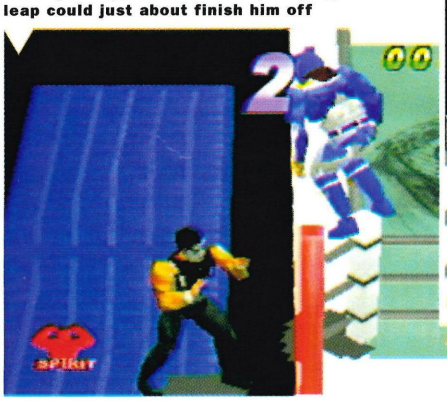
On top of that there's an eight player tournament (again where you can win a belt if you're the overall victor), an eight man round robin style league with two points for a win, one for a draw and none for a loss and even the chance for two human players who've won belts previously to put them on the line in the thrilling Double Title Match.

This plethora of options, along with a surprisingly enjoyable gameplay style, makes this the best wrestling game to my mind. I'm proof that even people who don't like the real thing can enjoy this game, and in a somewhat barren release period (in terms of quality at least) there are few better choices you could make than to buy this.



A clean break is probably the most satisfying method of victory

When your opponent is dazed, a flying leap could just about finish him off





You can, should the urge take you, chuck your troublesome foe out of the ring

PRO SCORE

GAME WCW vs the World
GENRE Sport
SOFTWARE HOUSE THQ
CONTACT 0171 935 8954
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

PLAYSTATION APPROVED **I'm surprised by this game to say the least. Wrestling's far from my favourite sport and no previous PlayStation game of this type has even raised my interest slightly so far. But WCW vs the World's highly impressive blend of action and strategy, along with the see-saw nature of the bouts, plus the massive choice of wrestlers almost makes this an essential purchase. But not quite. My only gripe would be that some of the competitors are massively better than the others so if you want a fair fight you'd better make sure that you pick two evenly matched combatants. Other than that you're guaranteed hours of face smashing, clothes-lining, leg breaking mayhem. And I'm all for a bit of that!**

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 7
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 8

8

DAN **I refuse to believe that people can like this but not Power Move. This has more wrestlers and better graphics, but some dangerously crap collision detection knocks this into second place for me**

JAY **Forget those dodgy WWF efforts, as this offers everything you could ever wish for in a wrestling title. Namely the ability to slap faces, break bones and deliver kicks to the bollocks whilst taunting opponents. Great!**

ALEX **THQ has really turned things around recently and now has the best wrestling game on the PlayStation as a result. This is more enjoyable than most beat 'em-ups so a pat on the back all round to all concerned**

ANDY **I've always disliked WCW. I know it keeps talentless fat blokes in employment but it has never been entertainment and this is no different. These games will have to be better than this for me to change my mind**

PlayStation

PC CD ROM

1 OR 2 PLAYER

1 OR 2 PLAYER

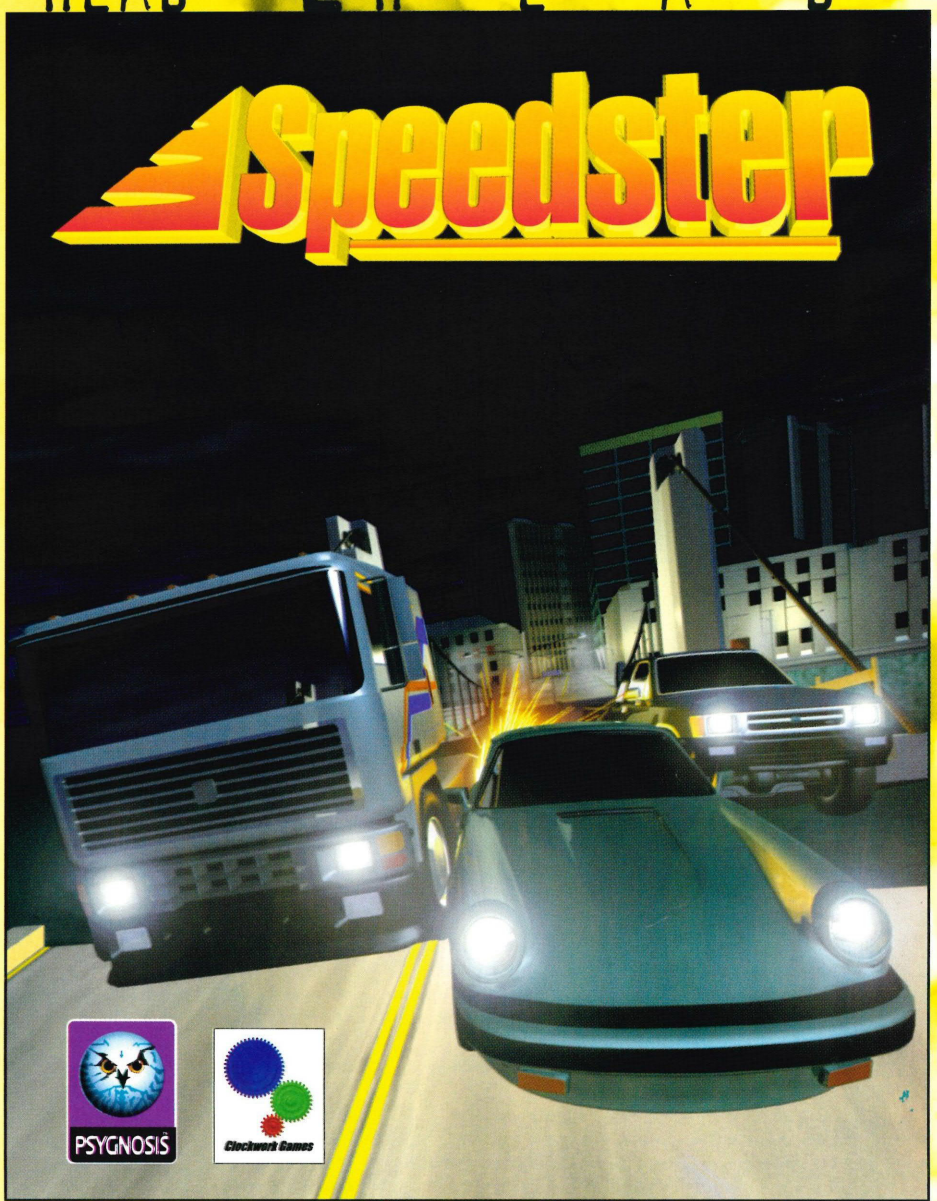
PURELY ABOUT RACING

PURELY ABOUT RACING

HEAD 2 HEAD

HEAD 2 HEAD

Speedster



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BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Namco Museum

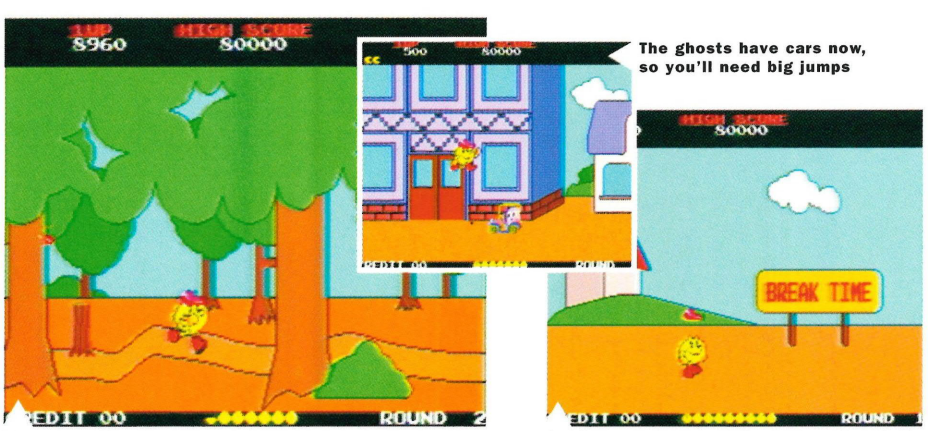
Volume 4

Sshh. Can you hear that scraping noise? Sounds like the bottom of a barrel, doesn't it? But this barrel bottom is almost bearable, believe it or not

Namco has re-animated more corpses than Baron Frankenstein with this Museum rubbish, and many of them should've remained dead and buried. The first three volumes have been mildy entertaining guff, of the sort you would never really pay money for and, with only another two volumes to go before the 'collection' is complete, time's running out to make an impression.

Luckily, we've reached the point in the Namco history when games started to look quite good. Gone are the tiny graphics and shuddering gameplay, and in come slightly bigger graphics and shuddering gameplay. Hurrah. Let's take them outside one at a time and duff their craggy old faces in, like a gang of crazy game-thugs.





The ghosts have cars now, so you'll need big jumps

No mazes this time around, Pac's off for a jog in the forest

A grin spreads across Pac's face, but little does he know, he's forgotten his Kit Kat

Pac-Land

Trivia bores will already know that PacMan is the only character to appear on all the volumes – he crops up on number five as well – so it seems Namco is trying to re-establish him as some sort of gaming icon.

This effort switches from the age-old 'ooh look, a maze' approach and hurls the circular, yellow hero into a side scrolling platform game. It works, in a basic sort of way, and all the classic platform moments are in there. Collapsing bridges, moving platforms, huge leaps across deadly chasms, the lot.

It looks a lot more 'now' than any of the previous PacGames and, if it wasn't for the rough graphics, it could almost pass as a game from this decade at least. The gameplay ain't bad either. It's no Crash Bandicoot, that's for sure, but unlike previous volumes you could while away a couple of hours on this without feeling too stupid. Alex and Steve managed it, whooping themselves up into an orgy of retro-sadness like a pair of dizzy girls.

The weirdest bit about the whole game is the way you use the Circle and Square buttons to move backwards and forwards, with the d-pad acting as a big jump button. Bizarre, and a problem that mars other games as we'll see shortly. On its own, it's hardly worthy of your attention, but in a compilation like this you're more inclined to forgive its occasional lumpiness.

Ironic Retro Equivalent: Toffos
Modern Equivalent: Pandemonium
Overall: 6

Ordyne



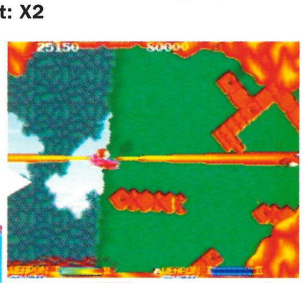
Shoot this spaceship up the exhaust port to send it crashing back to Earth

OK, once you've got past PacMan's return, you're firmly in the land of the obscure. Maybe if you've spent your entire life down the arcade you'll remember this, but I have to admit it is a mystery to me. It's a side scrolling shoot 'em-up of the breed we've seen everywhere since childhood, and within the limits of the genre is really rather pleasant.

It's from the 'cute school' rather than the 'gruff bus', so there's all manner of fluffy things flying at you. You can buy power-ups, using credits collected from burst enemies as currency, by flying into big floating gramophones, obviously. Considering its age, this a pretty tough challenge, and some of the levels and little flourishes are surprisingly, er, surprising.

Two players can play alongside each other, for added laughs, and the whole thing moves along at a diverting pace. It won't blow your mind, but for what it's worth this is my favourite game so far.

Ironic Retro Equivalent: Neon towelling socks
Modern Equivalent: X2
Overall: 7



This big green disc revolves, and you have to slip through the gaps. It's pretty tricky, but also quite groovy



OK, so it's nothing special, but Ordyne is polished enough to keep you playing

GenPei

At first glance this looks like a rather dreary side-scrolling pseudo-beater romp. With only one move. Stick with it for a few minutes though, and you're taken on a strange journey through the land of Different Viewpoints.

Leap and hack your way through the sort of platformy start, and you suddenly switch to a huge(ish) sprite and things become more like a proper fighting game. The animation is awful, and the moves limited, but lingering among the other dinosaurs in the museum it looks like a throbbing digi-god from the 31st Century. And if that isn't enough, a few more leapy, hacky, fighty bits later and the viewpoint switches again, this time to a top-down view and you're off again, in an RPG mode.

I haven't got a clue why this happens, but it keeps your attention. Maybe if you play long enough, the game switches to a view from inside a weasel's eye as he chases grasshoppers through a field. Wouldn't that be cool, man? It never gets too involved, the action remains hack-based all the way through, but the changing style manages to create an illusion of swankiness you never quite shake. Very impressive stuff for its time.

Ironic Retro Equivalent: Jamie And His Magic Torch
Modern Equivalent: Bushido Blade
Overall: 7



An overhead exploring section



Considering the age of the games, this is ground breaking stuff

Return Of Ishtar

Now this is very strange. It's the sequel to Tower Of Druaga from Volume 3, but the control setup makes it worthy of the Krypton Factor. For some reason best known to Namco, there are two characters and in a one player game you control them both. At the same time. The d-pad moves one, the buttons another. So Triangle moves them up, X moves them down. The shoulder buttons make each respective character fire. You need to move them in unison or the scrolling holds up for the lagging player. It's a nightmare!

Imagine trying to pat your head and rub your stomach. While reciting a tongue twister. On a tightrope suspended over the Hoover Dam. Whatever amusement the game might offer, in the Gauntlet-style, is overshadowed by this frankly arse control set-up. It doesn't look that great anyway, so I doubt you'll go to the trouble of roping in a second player to even things up.



Control both characters at the same time, or you'll get stuck



An average game made awful thanks to ludicrous controls.

Ironic Retro Equivalent: Ker-Plunk
Modern Equivalent: Legacy Of Kain
Overall: 4

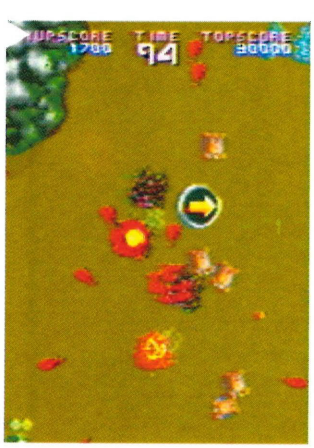
It's almost a good game, but the controls spoil it for me

Assault



Big arrows handily show you the way, but actually turning is the tricky part

If this was simpler to play, it'd be a pretty good shooter



Another OK looking game lumbered with a stupid control set-up. I couldn't even make head nor tail of this, to be honest. It seems to use an illogical mixture of d-pad and buttons to move a little tank around the screen.

However, you can't simply go in a straight line. Pressing Up makes you trundle in a sort of clockwise circle, so you have to counter-balance that by pressing the Triangle button that makes you go counter-clockwise. With me? I think it's supposed to simulate the way real tanks move, with two separate caterpillar tracks used to roll about. But, for god's sake, if I wanted to do that I'd have joined the Army. I wouldn't play an ancient shooter, that really doesn't gain anything from this rigid and misplaced nod to realism.

Apart from that, it's a pretty standard shoot 'em-up, viewed from above. Even without the cack controls I'd be hard pressed to give this more than 5, so it's basically yet another 'make up the numbers' title. Deary me.

Ironic Retro Equivalent: Snoods
Modern Equivalent: Bedlam
Overall: 4

PRO SCORE

GAME **Namco Museum Vol. 4**
GENRE **Retro**
SOFTWARE HOUSE **Sony**
CONTACT **0171 447 1600**
RELEASE DATE **Out Now**
PRICE **£35.99**

I'm no great fan of this retro gaming 'fad'. I can't help feeling that it's essentially a lazy gambit on the part of ancient software houses to fleece Generation X punters for their nostalgic cash. 'Classic' games are never as good as you remember them, and certainly not worth buying again. I can, mind you, see the appeal. I've got a Spectrum emulator on my PC that I tinker with for a laugh, but I downloaded it free from the Web. Pay money for old games? I don't think so. This volume is better than the other ones, simply because the games are a bit more up-to-date, but I still can't recommend it. I wouldn't play this for more than a day, if that, and you wouldn't either. Save your money for a proper game.

GRAPHICS **6**
SOUND **5**
GAMEPLAY **6**
LASTABILITY **5**

6

STEVE **Pacland is the only one worth bothering with. The rest are pretty dire so you have to ask yourself whether it's worth the money for one ancient game. And much as I like Pacland, it really isn't**

JAY **The first few Museum titles were mildly entertaining, but it seems like the more volumes are released, the poorer the games become. As Steve said, Pacland's quite nice, but the rest of the titles are a big let down**

ALEX **Marginally better than the previous three solely because of the excellent Pacland, so Volume Four might tempt a few buyers. I wouldn't recommend it, however, unless it were less than £30**

ANDY **Four volumes of some very dodgy games indeed. The odd gem has turned up from time to time although this one lacks any feeling of fond nostalgia. You're still better off with Volume One**

K-1

The Arena Fighters

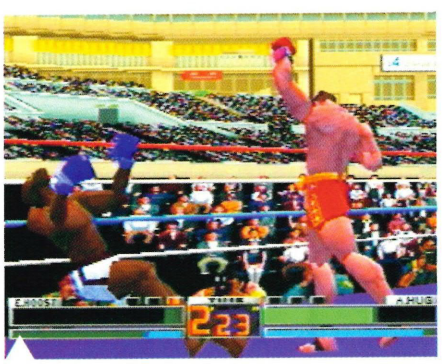
THQ is hardly a name you'd associate with quality, but all that looks about to change thanks to a couple of half decent releases



The motion captured polygon players make K-1 the most realistic looking kick boxing game around. Okay, so it's the only one as well...







Another one bites the dust, as rotting rock star Freddie Mercury once said



Cop for that my son! That's a real clip round the ear hole for nasty old Andy Hug (pronounced Hoog by the way)

Beat 'em-ups really aren't my thing, so you can imagine that a THQ beat 'em-up hardly set my heart fluttering with excitement. The only thing that really interested me was that this was supposedly realistic, with none of the ludicrous special moves or fireballs that spoil all the others.

My best mate at school was a promising kick boxer and I remember going to watch him take part in the UK Under 18s Muay Thai Kick Boxing Championship. So I had some idea of just how tough the sport is and a vague knowledge of some of the tactics that seem to work best, so it seemed logical I'd have a go at reviewing this.

Firstly you need to throw out all the preconceived ideas about how to play a fighting game and start from scratch. Wade in fists flying against a half competent player and chances are you'll have used up all three of your knockdowns within the first 30 seconds of the first round. You have to be prepared to stand back and wait for an opening (usually a missed blow from your opponent) before striking.

K-1 differs from most beat 'em-ups in that no matter how dominant you've been throughout the bout you can still find yourself dumped unceremoniously on your backside thanks to one good clean shot. And it's this realism that finally won me over and convinced me that this wasn't all that bad.

I say that because after an hour or so play, I was all set to savage this with a mark of around three or four. But once I'd got the hang of not flying at my opponent, wildly hammering the buttons, I started to get to grips with the style that's required, and even started to quite like it.

The game allows you to take control of any one of eight real life fighters (who's names will mean nothing to 99 per cent of our readers so I won't bother with them), and guide them through any one of four different fighting modes. These are a single player game where you take on each of the other fighters in turn needing to defeat them to progress to the nest, a two player mode, a full on knock out style tournament and a team battle in which each side has three fighters and the first team to win two bouts is declared the overall winner.

Each bout can be decided in several ways depending on how you've configured the options. Probably the most unlikely way is to win on points at the end of four rounds. I've never had a fight go past the third to be honest, but if you do you'll be judged on how many damaging blows you've landed. Punches and kicks that are blocked don't count so there's no point just

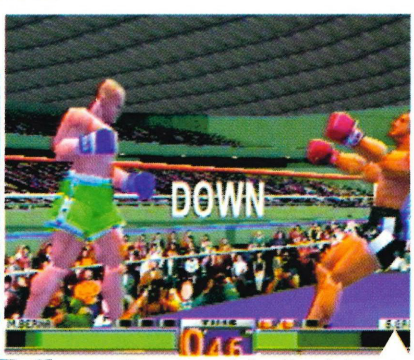


The fights take place in different arenas at different times



The combatants each have varying abilities as you'd expect. Aerts is a competent low kicker for instance





The screen states the obvious as the fighter slumps to the ground

Blocking is vitally important if you're to stay on your feet

This scene is a rarity in most fights, so I thought I'd just let you know what it looks like



throwing endless flurries in the hope of scoring a few cheap points.

The other way to win depends on how you've set up the options. The default is to have three knock downs turned on, meaning that after you or your opponent has hit the canvas three times the ref will stop the fight. This doesn't take as long as you might think though, it is possible to get knocked down by just one blow, especially if your opponent's power bar is at maximum (which I'll come to in a minute).

Apart from the default setup, you can also change things so that knock downs don't count and the only way to win is by a clean knockout. This is perhaps the best way to learn the basics because when you're just starting out the fights can often be over before you know it.

The power bar I mentioned is all important if you want to go for a knockout blow. Each attempted punch or kick decreases it and the bar takes a short time to rebuild. What this means in effect is that the power of any blow you land is directly related to how full the power bar is at the time you strike the blow. A special move that connects cleanly when backed up by a full power bar is almost guaranteed to floor your opponent, whereas one carried out with an empty bar will just glance off his body.

This makes defence far more important and forces you to attack in waves rather than constantly. It's this realism that gives K-1 at least a fighting chance of not getting its head well and truly kicked in by the likes of Tekken 2 and Soul Blade. I'm not saying it's anywhere near as good, because it's not, and seasoned fighters really should steer well clear. I think it will doo well, however, among those, like myself, who like the idea of fighting games but don't enjoy the nonsensical nature of most of the popular ones.

PRO SCORE

GAME K-1 The Arena Fighters
GENRE Beat 'em-up
SOFTWARE HOUSE THQ
CONTACT 0171 935 8954
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £39.99

K-1 provides a healthy dose of realism which is just what the beat 'em-up category needed if you ask me. Two big monsters chucking magic spells at each other from 20 feet apart does nothing for me I'm afraid, and it certainly can't compare with the healthy crack of fist against jaw. So for that reason this might, just might, be worth a brief moments consideration. Far, far from a brilliant game though. In fact, I wouldn't even go as far as to say that it's all that good, but at least it's a bit different from the endless clones that are normally churned out, and therefore deserves some credit. Still nowhere near as good as the classic Panza Kick Boxing which is a shame, because this could have been a contender

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 6

6½

DAN I'd say it was closer to a sports sim than a beat 'em-up, and as such deserves to be taken slightly more seriously. There's not enough to it though, and your attention will wander all too soon

JAY Initially it lacks both appeal and playability, but stick with it for a while and you'll soon get to grips with kicking butt. Unfortunately, it's missing that 'just one more go' factor and as a result scores low

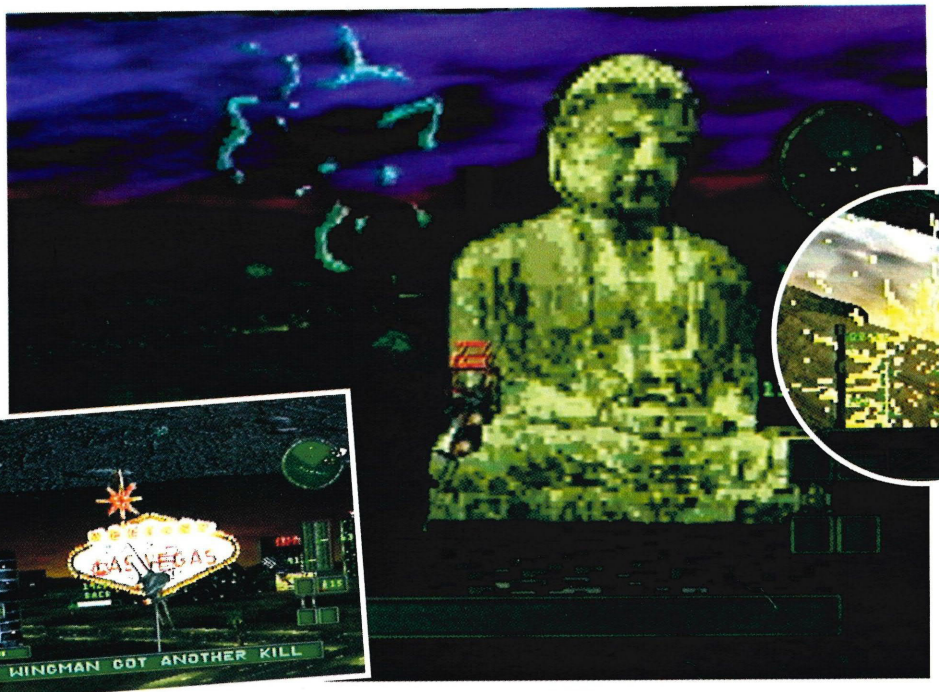
ANDY What a month it has been for substandard beat 'em-ups. I still dislike most fighting games but I'd rather play Psychic Force, or any other fighting game bar Mortal Kombat, than this turgid pile of filth

ALEX Good old Andy. He certainly knows his arse from his elbow! To say Psychic Force is better than this is a travesty! Okay it's not brilliant but in a highly crowded field at least it's trying to be different

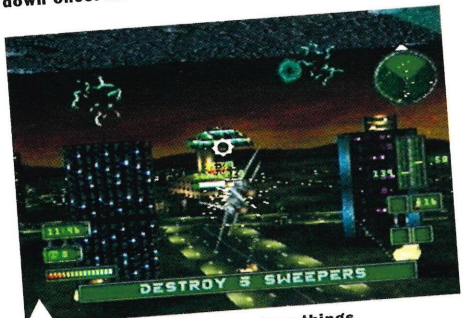
BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Independence Day

We always believed we were rid of crap film licences. After one game of this, you'll wish we were



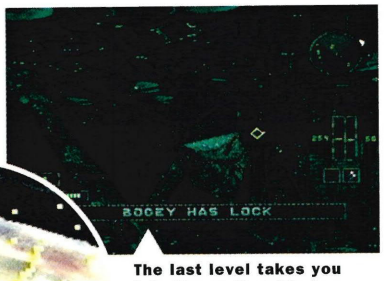
What do you mean 'another kill'? I've only ever seen him shoot anything down once. And that was just now!



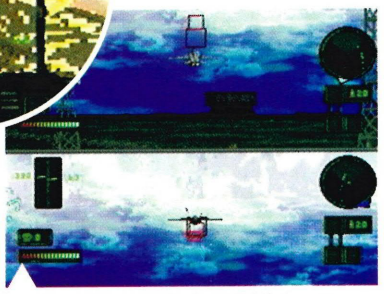
Gosh. My mission is to destroy things. This time it's sweepers, next level it could be rice, for all I care



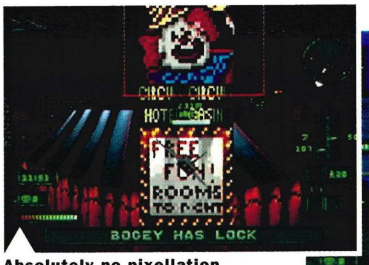
Okay, so I've got rid of two sweepers. Can I really be bothered to find the rest?



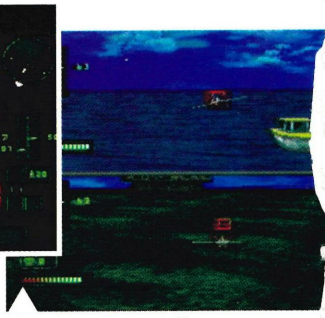
The last level takes you into the mothership in a stolen alien fighter



The two player mode is alright, I suppose, but it's not enough to save the game



Absolutely no pixellation in this multi-million dollar licence. Heck no!



More two player guff, where you have to kill each other, not aliens

Do you want to know what Dean Devlin, producer of the rather popular Independence Day film, has to say about this game? He says "The script for the movie reads almost like a video game with multiple levels of non-stop action. The game is faithful to the movie, letting players fight even more battles while providing the opportunity to experience the adventure first hand by becoming a character in the film".

That is pretty much conclusive proof that he has never even laid eyes on the game and simply made up a quote off the top of his head. Or got his secretary to do it for him. Because, boys and girls, Independence Day: The Game is flaming bilge pie on toast.

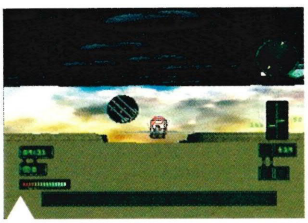
It's a shoot 'em-up, which is a shocker, and requires you to take to the skies in a variety of planes and rid major cities of the alien menace. Each level has an objective, which usually involves blowing things up and extra weapons, missiles and new planes can be scooped up in icon form.

Flying alongside you, quipping and smirking is the Fresh Prince of Bel Air, although a fat lot of good he is. In the film he was a rough and tough fighter pilot who single handedly saved the entire universe with his little toe. In the game he flies about doing absolutely nothing and barking gibberish at you. Thanks for that, Mr. So-Called Fresh Prince.

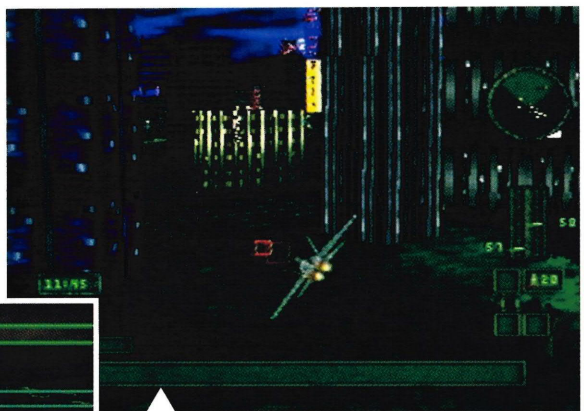
Meanwhile, above you hovers one of those big spaceships. Gun turrets line its belly and alien fighters zip about, spurting out of the destroyer's fighter nozzle to shoot you down. A forcefield surrounds the ship, sealing you underneath it and, rather handily, restricting the play area to an easier-to-render radius. Don't ask how you got under there in the first place.

Beneath you, the city awaits imminent destruction. Which reminds me of something that bothered me about the film. When all the huge spaceships are destroyed by the computer virus, surely they'd cause more than a little damage when they dropped from the sky? Or did they conveniently shift a few miles to the side before plummeting?

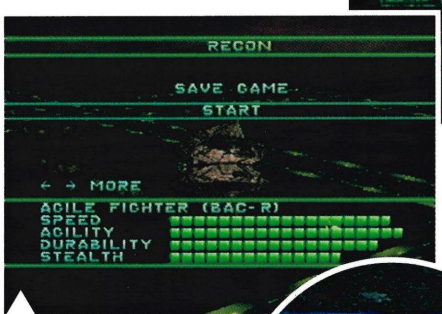
So anyway, there you are, stuck under a vast alien destroyer with orders to bring it down by blasting various tactical targets. And this leads



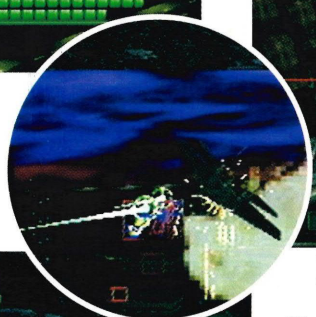
That's a missile bonus. Five extra missiles will be yours if you can hit it



New York is transformed into some big blocks sitting in a mucky field. Impressive, eh?



This is the best view you'll get of the enemy. In the game, they move too fast



So I've got a lock on an alien. Trouble is, it'll now dodge out of my way at light speed

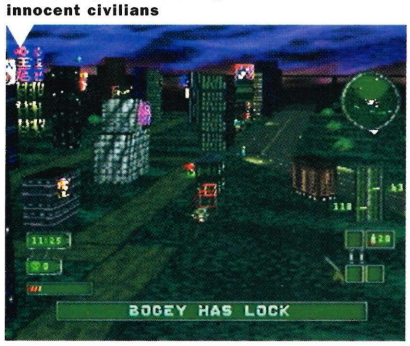


This viewpoint looks impressive, but is even more confusing than the normal one





When you get bored, you can amuse yourself by dive-bombing the innocent civilians



us into the first of the game's many stumbling points. The little radar in the corner of the screen is next to useless, as alien ships, icons and targets are all represented by a single pixel.

They have different colours, but you need bionic eyes to find out whether your bearing down on one of your objectives or just an energy icon. Add the fact that identifying markers don't pop up on objects until you've virtually flown straight past them, and just tracking down and shooting the primary targets becomes a frustrating game of chance. Oops.

If that wasn't bad enough, there's something wrong with the handling of the planes. I can't quite put my finger on it, but none of them respond quickly enough to suit arcade blasting or realistically enough for a sense of simulation. They just sort of, well, flop about the sky. And when you crash into a building at 400mph, you bounce off – just like you would in real life.

The whole game engine just feels loose and droopy when it should have been tight and efficient, and it's this lack of crisp control that really destroys any pleasure the game may have had.

On a non-technical note, but still just as relevant in my opinion, is the massive gap between the film and the game. The film, cheesy though it may have been, was at least a spectacular, polished movie event. Gobs were smacked and jaws dropped as the aliens arrived. The game, by comparison, looks like some ancient blaster like Afterburner, but with a big circular roof on it. Despite gallons of CD wasting FMV from the film, the game is light years away from a valid use of the licence.

After Die Hard Trilogy, hopes were naturally high for the Fox Interactive label. With a wealth of classic films behind it, and an apparent eye for clever adaptations, future titles seemed like something to look forward to. After this feeble translation of the biggest film in the world, my anticipation has dimmed immensely. Shockingly bad, all things considered.

PRO SCORE

GAME Independence Day
GENRE Shoot 'Em-Up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts
CONTACT 01753 549442
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

Despite such a promising licence, this is an example of hideous quality control and blatant exploitation of you, the consumer. Bound to sell more than a few copies thanks to the ID4 name, this poorly thought out slop threatens to undo all the respect that Die Hard Trilogy earned Fox Interactive last year. If it wasn't for an almost OK two player mode and some neat cosmetic touches (the traffic still moving about on the city streets for instance) this would get a much bigger kicking than it's getting. And that's saying something. Don't be fooled by the big name licence and the inevitably carefully chosen screenshots on the box, you'll regret buying this within 10 minutes of loading it up. Not so cheap, but definitely nasty.

GRAPHICS 4
SOUND 5
GAMEPLAY 4
LASTABILITY 2

3½

STEVE A return to the old days when the quality of film licenses was really appalling. Let's hope the gamesplayers have wised up and treat this with the disdain it deserves. And it started so well with Die Hard too

JAY With a big name such as ID4, Fox should have made sure this was on par with the excellent Die Hard Trilogy. Instead we get a sub-standard pile of cack that offers nothing in the way of gameplay or entertainment

ALEX Watch the movie or buy a video of it. Both media are far more entertaining – and more interactive for that matter. The only mag that's given this a good mark is an American one. And we all know why

ANDY Apart from the special effects, what exactly did the Independence Day film offer? Not much in terms of a script and some shoddy acting. There's no shoddy acting here but the entire game is as bad as they come

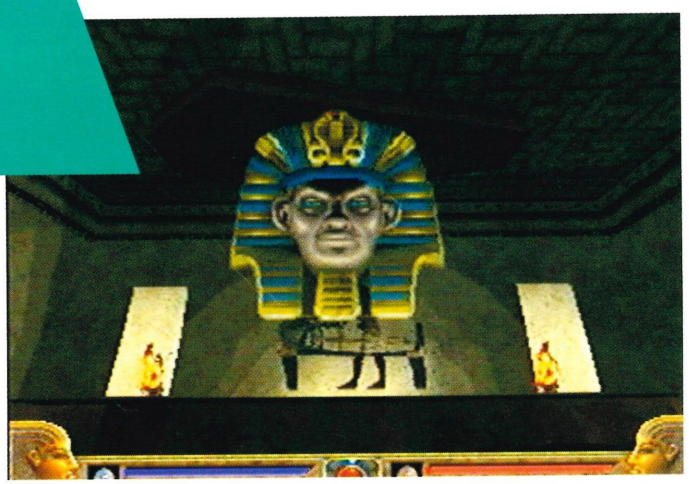
Last month's reader reviews section proved so popular that we've extended it by a page. Keep those reviews flooding in and one day you'll take over the magazine! Maybe

Exhumed

By Daniel Fookes

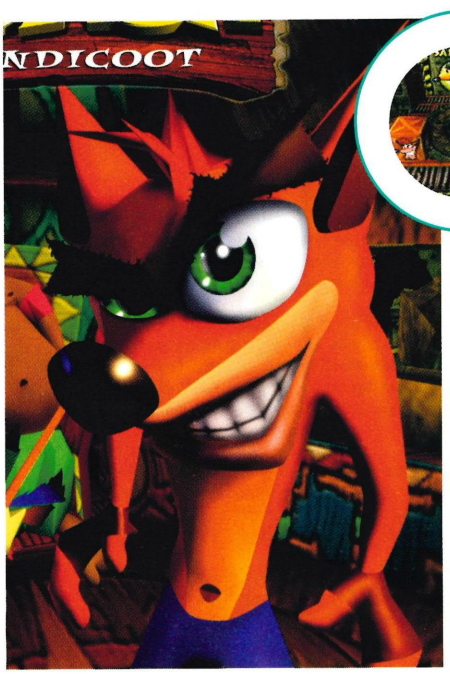
The first thing that strikes you about Exhumed is that, surprise surprise, it's a Doom clone. But don't let that put you off because this is one of the best Doom clones on the PSX ever, if not a Doom-beater itself.

First the background. You get this from the game's intro sequence. However, don't think about fancy FMV graphics that so many present titles have. In Exhumed it's more of a Disney-in-Hell intro, where a man with a husky voice tells you of 'turmoil spreading', while a book with pictures in takes you through it with pages turning by themselves.



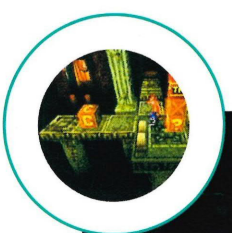
Anyway, the background. In the ancient Egyptian city of Karnak, evil spirits rule and humans are

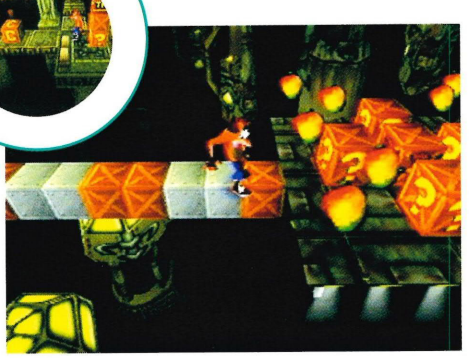
Crash Bandicoot





Nothing on the PSX comes close to Crash Bandicoot in terms of playability





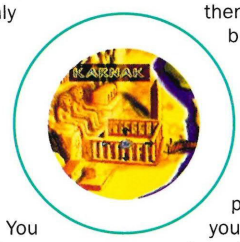
By Alex Gladwin

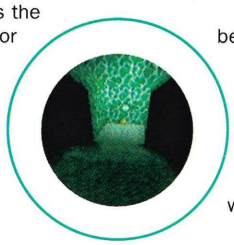
Crash Bandicoot is the best platformer on any system. Simple as that. And it will be till Sonic Jam on the Saturn is released. The graphics in this are brilliant. The surroundings are very well detailed, there are some brilliant fire effects and equally brilliant sand, water and light sourcing. It also has music and sound effects that totally match the game.

The best part is the brilliant gameplay which is only beaten by Sonic on the MD. It plays so well because the difficulty level is just right, there is a vast amount of coolly designed levels and it lasts ages. Overall, as most mags have said, this must be bought as nothing on the PSX comes close in terms of playability.

GRAPHICS 9.5 – **Amazing**
SOUND 9 – **Cool music**
LASTABILITY 9 – **A-G-E-S**
GAMEPLAY 10 – **Amazing**
OVERALL 9.5







enslaved. Many have ventured to Karnak, but none have returned alive. Ooooh! So you and a bunch of pals decide to take a chopper over there and sort them out. But on the way your chopper mysteriously explodes and, hey, what do you know, you are the only survivor. But you decide to continue your task, thinking that just a sword will do to save Egypt from turmoil spreading.

As with all Doom clones, you run your way around a labyrinth of tunnels, blasting everything in sight. And also, as with most games these days, you can jump and swim as well. You start the game off with just a sword, but as you progress you can collect seven more weapons - ranging from the naff-poncy pistol to the look-at-me-I'm-hard flame thrower. You also collect weapons which send fire blobs from your fingertips, which also seem to blow up the monsters.

The monsters vary greatly. At the start you have the blue scorpions which, despite being easy as pie, are nearly impossible to kill with the sword. But as the levels progress you meet Anubis. Now for those of you not knowing what an Anubis is, here's the instruction booklet to explain, 'Guardians of the dead with jackals heads'. Now you know. You also come across mummies which moan a lot and have magic staffs that fire red snakes.

Exhumed is one of the best Doom clones ever to appear on the PlayStation

The other collectibles in the game are the usual strength and health boosters, but also include artefacts to help you on your way. At first, you get 'the sandals of Ikumptet' which help you jump and then 'Sobek's mask' which helps you breathe underwater and so on.

One of the great things about Exhumed is that you can go back to any level whenever you want. The reason for this is that sometimes you can see places you might not be able to get to at present, but this all changes when you get the right artefact. You can then do the same level twice, going two completely different ways. You may wonder 'What's the point?' but if you get to a different finish beacon, it opens up a whole new path for you to go through.

The finish beacons are camels, and it's these which take you to the map where you can move from one level to the next, and where you get to save the game. This is where one of the major flaws of Exhumed occurs. The camels are only found at the start and end of the level. This means that you can spend 15 minutes on one level, kark it in some grisly manner, then you're right back at the start of the level again.

One of the major complaints of the game in most mags is the fact that you can see the pixels clearly when creatures get close. Believe me, this is a petty problem which doesn't affect the great gameplay at all and the graphics only in a minor way. Final conclusion: Apart from the saving problem, this is the most playable shoot 'em-up I've experienced, despite the lack of originality.



Pete Sampras Extreme Tennis

Dave Brown

Pete Sampras Extreme Tennis is Codemasters' first foray into the 32bit market. With so many sports sims on the PlayStation, any new game needs to be of a very high quality if it is to get itself noticed. Tennis games are few and far between at present, but this title looks like setting a hard target for others to match. So has the Codemasters journey from 16bit to 32bit been successful?

Definitely, if this game is anything to go by. The game boots up into a FMV intro, featuring a tongue in cheek match between Pete and an opponent filmed in mono. The action is well edited and sets the scene for the game nicely. After selecting your language, the option screen pops up. Well laid out, it offers the player (among others) a one-off match, a tournament or a knock-out cup. After adjusting the number of sets to play and if it's to be singles or doubles, it's onto the location select screen. To begin with, four court locations are available with more later.

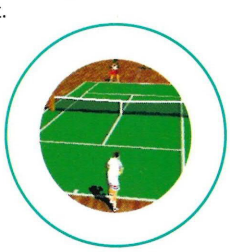
Initially, there are 12 characters available for you to choose from, with a further four silhouetted out for use later on if you're successful. Two of these, one male and one female, can have their playing attributes altered by you. Each character has five categories, including speed, shot strength and serve speed.

The characters are motion captured, moving realistically and smoothly. The camera view can be altered to one of eight camera angles using a first person perspective. This is the toughest angle to play from, but it looks and feels amazing! To serve, press one of three serve buttons. Each moves a circle up the screen at a different serve speed. The aiming circle can be moved into the desired position with a second press of the same button, sending the ball towards your opponent.

Rally shots are taken by pressing one of the three buttons again, each resulting in a different shot being played. Whether you choose a flat, spin, lob or drop shot, aiming is achieved by pressing the d-pad in the direction you want your shot to go at the time the ball is struck. It's a system that works well with a longer press of the d-pad having more of an effect on the angle of your shot.

Various shots are possible and it's that variety that keeps your hopes of winning a point alive. Each court has its own surface to play on resulting in different types of games being played. The sound effects are crisp and clear and the crowd really involved in the matches. The atmosphere they create adds enormously to the tension of each point. Whilst the effects are limited in a game like this, they do add a lot to the overall game. Even the language of the umpire, who calls out the scores, can be changed to one of five different nationalities.

Codemasters has done a terrific job with this game. It's intuitive to play and the graphics and sound are spot on. It's very playable and fun with the computer opponents strong enough to challenge even the best of players. As with most sports games though, it's even better in two player mode and with persistence and skill a good player record can be saved to a memory card. Pete Sampras Extreme Tennis is without doubt the best tennis game on the PlayStation and comes highly recommended.



Codemasters has done a terrific job with this game, it's intuitive with great grahics and sound

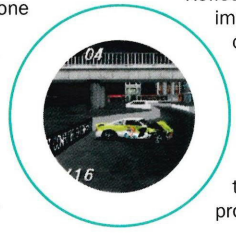


Destruction Derby 2









DD2 is the MacLaren of PlayStation racing games – the genuine article

By Matthew Bullman

If Destruction Derby was the DeLorean of PlayStation racers – good looking but ultimately a poor performer – then DD2 is the MacLaren F1, the genuine article, a dangerously potent two tonnes of power. Where the original bunny hopped and eventually stalled, its sequel powerslides, roars and finally tumbles madly to a spectacular halt.

You see, the most important change isn't the way the cars go, it's the way they crash. When you touch any of the other cars, you can never tell just how it's all going to end up. Thanks to the time and effort Reflections has put into the physics of the game, the cars act like the real thing. They feel like the real thing. They flip, skid, roll and tumble. Each time they do so, the crash sounds different.

Viewed from the driver's seat the game shifts unbelievable numbers of cars ridiculously quickly. It's the frequent pile-ups, with cars jumping over and onto each other while the whole world tumbles crazily past, that really shows off what must be some of the quickest 3-D yet seen on PlayStation.

And this is only one of an array of well-placed improvements that lift DD2 well above the mediocrity of the original. The tracks, those all-important building bricks of any racer, are longer, wider and altogether much better than their predecessors. The bottlenecks that went a long way to scuppering the first game are gone, to be replaced with wide open, 10 car-width swathes of tarmac. The course does still narrow to an uncomfortable degree at some points but the rarity of such metal-cruising funnels adds to the gameplay.

The new venues also take full advantage of the Z-axis movement by including plenty of banking, bumpy sections and, most impressively, jumps. To anyone reared on a mixture of wind-up Evel bikes and the Dukes of Hazzard these huge leaps are a dream come true.

Chalk Canyon, the 'jumpiest' of the courses even contains a banked jump where you can, if you're very good, roll the car Bond-style through 360 degrees and land on your wheels. Thanks to the bumpy tarmac at the bottom though, you'll almost certainly crash at the end. Mind you, if you're in Wreckin' Racing mode, where points are awarded for damaging other cars, this need not necessarily be a bad thing, as you use your considerable momentum to smash an opponent.

Obviously your car can take damage too, but this time you have got pit lanes you can use once a race to increase your chances of finishing (and doing damage to others). When you enter, for your strict one session per race patch-up allowance you get three seconds to select and repair each of the six sections of your car. Now that damage is a more refined element of the game, the car has independent four wheel suspension to tie in with the new handling.

This also means that you can lose one or both of your rear wheels, although you won't then be able to make it up the gentlest of inclines and your race is all but over. The bowls have received a thorough going over too. There are now four new arenas and they also take advantage of the new bouncy quality of the cars. The pit contains, yes, a large pit in the centre. Drive through at enough speed and you'll fly out of the other side. Best of all is the Death Bowl, one side of which is a huge car crusher. Fall in and it's all over.

As if all this wasn't enough to make DD2 everything the first rumble should have been (and it is), the game boasts the best replay mode I've seen in any game. You can't actually control it beyond hitting a button to slow it down, but the sweeping camera angles that have been pre-selected for you and the sheer velocity of the action makes them stunning. You can even save them out. It doesn't sound great, but it is. Honest.

The only let-down is the lack of a link-up. It seems a shame that you can't exploit all this superb playability and beautifully balanced racing destruction to the detriment of a 'pal'. Reflections claims that given the improvements it has made and the lack of people who actually own the mythical cable, there just wasn't the time, power or incentive to make it feasible. To which we say, "We've all got one." Followed by an apologetic, "It's bloody great though." Well done to Psygnosis who we expect to produce the goods.

GAMEPLAY 9 **Brilliant and addictive. You won't be able to put down your control pad**

GRAPHICS 9 **Sheer brilliance, the animation, effects and presentation are good throughout**

SOUND 7 **Not that good – my only minor gripe. The sound is more suited to a football game**

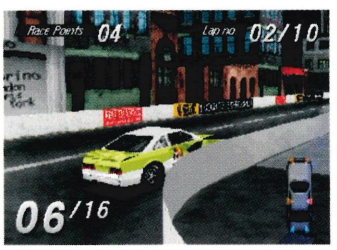
VERDICT **DD2 is a throbbing powerhouse of a game. Its engine boasts lightning quick 3-D and generates more thrills per minute than any other racing game available. Yet another Psygnosis winner**

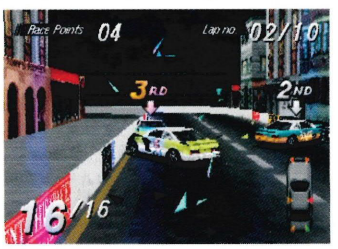
OVERALL 9

A recommendation for everyone!









Reader's Survey

WIN the top five games on the market!!! Or one of 10 subscriptions to PlayStation Pro. Have your say in making the best mag even better!

Six months in and PlayStation Pro is now the hottest unofficial PlayStation magazine around. But being the consummate professionals that we all are at IDG, we're not content to just rest on our laurels, we want to know how we can make the mag even better. Which is why we're turning to you, our readers, because no-one is better equipped to tell us how we can improve PlayStation Pro.

All it takes is a few minutes to complete and you could be on your way to winning THE TOP FIVE PLAYSTATION GAMES around, or one of 10 annual subscriptions. Thanks for your help. It's really appreciated.

Alex

Personal Info

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Male/Female _____

Age _____

PlayStation Stuff

1. How long have you been playing PlayStation games?

Under 3 months	○
3 – 5 months	○
6 – 8 months	○
9 – 11 months	○
1 – 2 years	○
Over 2 years	○

2. Which of the following 32/64 bit games consoles do you already own, and which do you intend to own within the next six months?

	own	*intend to own*
Sony PlayStation	○	○
Sega Saturn	○	○
Nintendo 64	○	○
M2	○	○

3. How long have you owned your PlayStation?

Under 3 months	○
3 – 5 months	○
6 – 8 months	○
9 – 11 months	○
1 – 2 years	○
Since it came out	○

4. Which of the following do you own, and which do you intend to own in the next six months?

	own	*intend to own*
Multi-tap	○	○
Memory card	○	○
Link cable	○	○
Mouse	○	○
Another Sony joypad	○	○
Another Unofficial joypad	○	○
Scart lead	○	○

5. How many games have you bought/had bought for you in the last 12 months?

None	○
1 – 2	○
3 – 5	○
6 – 9	○
10 – 15	○
16 +	○

6. How many games do you intend to buy/be given in the next 12 months?

None	○
1 – 2	○
3 – 5	○
6 – 9	○
10 – 15	○
16 +	○

7. How often do you buy the following games formats?

1 Every 1-2 months 2 Every 2-4 months
3 Every 4-8 months 4 Every 8-12 months

	1	2	3	4
UK games	○	○	○	○
Japanese games	○	○	○	○
US games	○	○	○	○

8. What influences which games you buy?

Demo CD	○
Tips Books	○
Posters	○
Postcards	○
Reviews	○
Previews	○
Adverts	○
Word of mouth	○
Other	○

9. Where do you normally buy your games from?

Mail order	○
Game	○
EB	○
Future Zone	○
HMV	○
Virgin/Our Price	○
Toys R Us	○
Argos	○
Currys/Dixons/Comet	○
Local specialist shop	○
Exhibitions	○

Game Playing

10. What are your favourite games?

First person shoot 'em-up. eg Doom	○
Beat 'em-up. eg Soul Blade	○
Shoot 'em-up. eg Soviet Strike	○
Sports. eg Soccer '97	○
Driving. eg Rage Racer	○
Puzzle. eg Puzzle Fighter	○
Strategy. eg X-Com/Worms	○
Adventure. eg Tomb Raider	○
Flight Sims. eg Top Gun	○
Platform. eg Crash Bandicoot	○
Retro. eg Namco Museum	○

11. How many hours a week do you spend playing PlayStation games?

None	○
1 hour or less	○
1 – 4 hours	○
5 – 8 hours	○
9 – 14 hours	○
15 – 20 hours	○
21 – 30 hours	○
Over 30 hours	○

12. On average how long do you spend playing one game at a time?

Up to half an hour	○
30 minutes – 1 hour	○
1 – 2 hours	○
3 – 4 hours	○
More than 4 hours	○

13. How do you prefer playing your PlayStation?

On your own	○
With friends	○

Magazine Stuff

14. How long have you been reading PlayStation Pro since it launched last November?

Since issue one	○
Issue 2 – 3	○
Issue 4 – 5	○
Issue 6 – 7	○
This is my first issue	○

15. How did you get your copy of PlayStation Pro?

Subscription	○
Delivered by newsagent	○
Bought at major newsagent [WH Smith/Menzies]	○
Bought at small newsagent	○
Bought at high street games retailer	○
Bought at local games retailer	○
Bought at supermarket	○
Given to me by friend/ colleague	○
Other [specify]	○

16. What originally attracted you to the magazine/why did you buy it [please tick only one answer]?

Because it was unofficial	○
Interested in cover feature	○
Interested in reviews	○
Interested in previews	○
Interested in tips/cheats	○
Interested in the tips book	○
Interested in poster	○
Word of mouth	○

Reader's Survey cont.

17. Below is a list of features and main reviews contained in this issue of PlayStation Pro. Please let us know what you thought of each and every one of them using the key? Please tick the relevant boxes:

1 liked a lot 2 liked 3 neither liked nor disliked 4 disliked 5 disliked a lot 6 did not read

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Free tips magazine	○	○	○	○	○	○
Front cover	○	○	○	○	○	○
Contents	○	○	○	○	○	○
News	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Review: Rally Cross	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Review: Overblood	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Review: Syndicate Wars	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Review: Independence Day	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cover Feature: Fantastic Four	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Preview: Perfect Assassin	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Preview: Machine Hunter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Preview: Super Football C	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Preview: Ray Tracers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Solutions: Cheat, Drink...	○	○	○	○	○	○
Solutions: Dark Forces	○	○	○	○	○	○
Letters	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pro Recommended	○	○	○	○	○	○

18. In terms of editorial content of the magazine, which areas would you like to see receive more, less or about the same amount of coverage? Again, please tick the relevant box provided.

	More	Same	Less
News	○	○	○
Large reviews	○	○	○
Small reviews	○	○	○
Previews	○	○	○
Features	○	○	○
Solutions	○	○	○
Letters	○	○	○
Competitions	○	○	○
Interviews	○	○	○
Reader offers	○	○	○

19. Do you consider PlayStation Pro's news section to be up to date or behind the times?

- Right on the cutting edge ○
- Up to date ○
- Average ○
- Behind the times ○
- Way out of touch ○

20. To what extent do you trust PlayStation Pro's reviews?

- Absolute trust ○
- Reasonable trust ○
- Neither trust, nor distrust ○
- Slight distrust ○
- Absolute distrust ○

21. Do you trade in your old games for new?

- All the time ○
- Quite a bit ○
- Occasionally ○
- Never ○

22. How often do you read the following magazines? Again, please use the key below and tick the relevant boxes provided.

1 Every issue [6 out of every 6 issues]
2 Most issues [4-5/6 issues]
3 Occasionally [2-3/6 issues]
4 Rarely [1/6 issues]

	1	2	3	4
C&VG	○	○	○	○
Edge	○	○	○	○
Games Master	○	○	○	○
PlayStation Plus	○	○	○	○
PLAY	○	○	○	○
Total PlayStation	○	○	○	○
Official PS Magazine	○	○	○	○
PlayStation Power	○	○	○	○
PowerStation	○	○	○	○
Essential PlayStation	○	○	○	○
PlayStation Solutions	○	○	○	○
64 Extreme	○	○	○	○
N64	○	○	○	○
Nintendo Magazine	○	○	○	○
64 Magazine	○	○	○	○

Books, Posters & Gifts

22. How important are freebies [not including CDs] when choosing a magazine?

- Very important ○
- Important ○
- Neither important, nor unimportant ○
- Unimportant ○
- Very unimportant ○

23. Which of the following covermounted freebies do you like?

- Fold out maps ○
- Score books ○
- Tips/cheats books ○
- Review books ○
- Demo CDs ○
- Posters ○
- Stickers ○
- Postcards ○
- Key rings ○

24. What kind of tips books do you prefer?

- Walk through guides ○
- Maps ○
- Guides of multiple small tips and cheats ○
- Single game complete guides ○
- Not sure ○

25. What size of tips guides do you prefer?

- CD size ○
- Paper back book size ○
- Hardback book size ○
- Magazine size ○
- Not sure ○

26. What kind of quality of tips book do you prefer?

- Magazine paper ○
- Paperback book paper ○
- Gloss paper ○
- Matt paper ○
- Not sure ○

27. Do you prefer your tips guides to be text heavy or have loads of screen shots?

- Loads of text, limited screen shots ○
- Loads of screen shots, limited text ○
- 50/50 split ○
- Don't know ○

28. What games would you most like PlayStation Pro to provide quick cheats to?

_____

_____

29. What games would you most like PlayStation Pro to provide complete guides to?

_____

_____

30. What was the best free gift you've ever received from a games mag?

_____

30a. Which mag did it appear with?

_____

CD Stuff

31. How many demos do you expect to see on a free PlayStation demo CD?

- 1 ○
- 2 ○
- 3 ○
- 4 ○
- 5 or more ○

32. How many playable demos do you expect to get on a free PS demo CD?

- 1 ○
- 2 ○
- 3 ○
- 4 ○
- 5 or more ○

33. How important is it for the playable games featured not to be on sale yet?

- Very important ○
- Important ○
- Neither important, nor unimportant ○
- Unimportant ○
- Very unimportant ○

34. How important is it for the games not to have been featured on a demo CD before?

- Very important ○
- Important ○
- Neither important, nor unimportant ○
- Unimportant ○
- Very unimportant ○

35. How important is it for the free CD to feature rolling demos/video footage?

- Very important ○
- Important ○
- Neither important, nor unimportant ○
- Unimportant ○
- Very unimportant ○

36. Which games are you eagerly awaiting demos of?

1...
2...
3...
4...
5...

37. Would you pay £3.99 if PlayStation Pro featured a free demo CD?

- Definitely ○
- Maybe ○
- Not bothered ○
- Probably not ○
- Definitely not ○

38. Would you buy a magazine with a CD if all the games came from one software house?

- Definitely ○
- Maybe ○
- Not bothered ○
- Probably not ○
- Definitely not ○

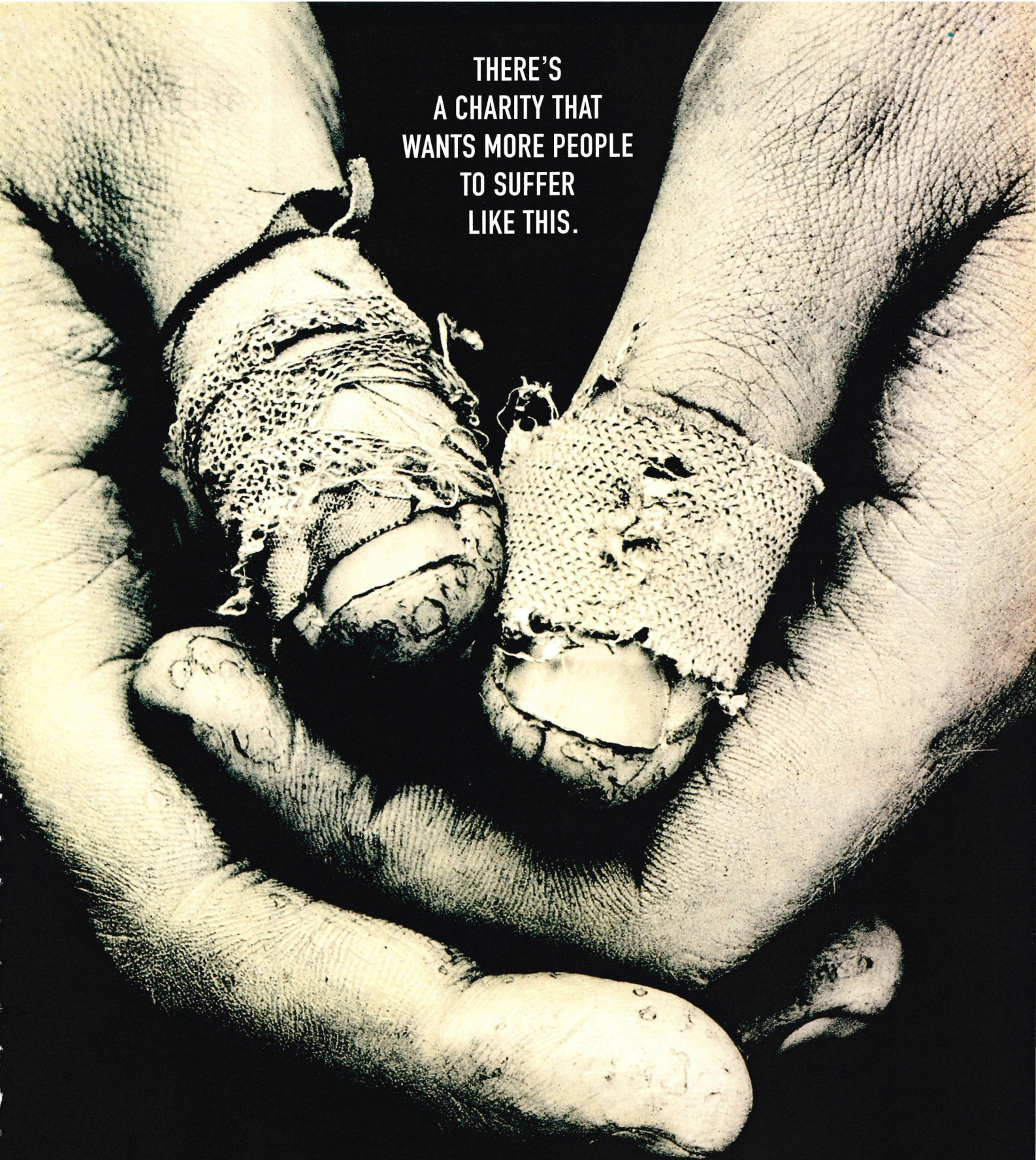
○ please tick if you do not wish to receive any further promotional literature.

Now send your completed questionnaire to

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[no stamp required in UK]
or fax a copy to us on

01625 879966



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PlayStation

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The Fantastic Four are on their way to the PlayStation, courtesy of the uber-talented people behind the Alien and Die Hard Trilogies. Dan Whitehead got so excited that he actually went to glamorous Croydon for an exclusive in-depth first look

Flame

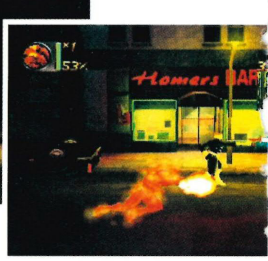
By Dan Whitehead

It's funny. During their 35 year career, the Fantastic Four have travelled all over time and space, battling weird and wonderful foes from their New York headquarters. So the last place you'd expect to find them is Croydon. But that's where they are at the moment, in virtual form at least, as Probe Entertainment puts the finishing touches to the first videogame outing for Marvel's first fighting family.

It's a side scrolling beat 'em-up. And, no, that didn't bode well. As a fan of the comic, and a fan of the PlayStation, I was dreading yet another waste of a great licence. Mind you, things could be different this time. For a start, the game's in the hands of Probe, creator of the scarily successful Alien and Die Hard games. And secondly, as the game doesn't have to be released to coincide with any cinema or video releases, Probe has had plenty of time to get everything just right.

The game sticks closely to the comic, and Marvel has been involved in getting the 'look' spot on. Out of all the sprites and enemies, only two







NAME:
Reed Richards
AKA:
Mr. Fantastic
POWERS:
Incredible stretchiness and a bit of a genius to boot
RELATIONS:
Married to Susan Storm

On!

Fantastic Four: The Origin!

Ironically, the creation of Marvel's most enduring and popular super hero team is largely due to their rivals, DC Comics. DC had banded together its biggest selling heroes as the Justice League, and found renewed success. In 1961, Marvel's head honcho and guiding light, Stan Lee, asked the legendary Jack Kirby to come up with an all-new team of super heroes to compete. Kirby came back with an idea that broke new ground in comics.

Reed Richards is an engineering genius and has built a rocketship to beat the Soviets into space. The government pulls the plug on the project, but Richards is determined to test his creation. At night he steals the ship and, along with his fiancee Susan Storm, her brother Johnny and an argumentative test pilot called Ben Grimm, they set off for the stars.

Once there, they are, naturally, bombarded with 'cosmic rays' and crash back to Earth. Emerging from the wreckage, Richards finds he can stretch his body like elastic. Susan can become invisible at will and project invisible force fields. Johnny Storm ignites into flame, without harm to himself and finds he can fly. But Ben Grimm, having warned Richards about radiation protection, is transformed into a grotesque, rock-like creature. After some confusion and head scratching, the group decide to use their powers for the good of mankind. Ben joins in reluctantly.

Unlike their contemporaries, the Fantastic Four didn't hide behind secret identities or masks. They lived in the real world, based in New York's Baxter Building, and had to deal with personal problems as well as super-villains. Reed and Sue eventually got married, had a son, a miscarriage and even had a trial separation at one point.

This sort of continuity was unheard of in '60s comic books. There was a dark side to this radical approach as well. Ben Grimm, now christened The Thing, was a rogue element. An angry brute with a chip on his shoulder, he posed a genuine threat to the group's harmony, and actually quit the group altogether on several occasions.

Whereas other heroes lived in a world of clear cut right and wrong, the FF would argue, bicker and fight amongst themselves, always in danger of imploding. Alongside the two-dimensional do-gooder exploits of Superman and Batman, the Fantastic Four rapidly became one of the world's most successful comics. And quite right too.

have been designed specifically for the game. The rest have been painstakingly copied from the comic storylines.

The first level sees you taking to the streets of New York to repel Moleman and his minions – a scenario taken from the very first issue of Fantastic Four back in the '60s. The game then unfolds over five vast levels, broken down into 22 sub-sections, pitting you against various classic Marvel foes.

Fans will no doubt recognise characters like Namor the Submariner and Galactus, and you'll be pleased to hear that they actually play out the roles they had in the comic rather than just appearing as token end-of-level bosses.

Less well known baddies like PsychoMan also get to put their tuppence worth in. The big, bad enemy of the game though is the Four's eternal nemesis Doctor Doom. The entire last level takes place in his European castle and the land of Latvia, and boasts some of the best graphical moments in the game. Other stars of the Marvel universe will also be making cameo appearances, but only if you can find them. Wanna know who they are? Well, how about Iceman and The Hulk to be going on with?

It's All In The Four-Play

All manner of ground-breaking graphical trickery is being rolled out for the first time in this title, and it shows. A lot of the tricks you don't even see at first, they look so natural. Polished floors reflect the action above, rolling seas catch the light, mirrors repeat whatever is on-screen into infinity. None of these effects are rammed down your throat, they just kind of sit there and wait for you to spot them in a smug 'no need to blow our own trumpet' kinda way.

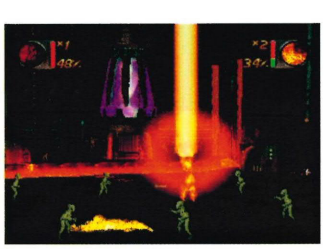
And, unusually for a side scrolling arcade game, all the characters have been meticulously motion captured to give the sprites a life-like feel. They did a proper Hollywood job as well, the poor sod who 'played' the Human Torch had to be suspended from a harness for hours on end to get the flying look just right. So while the sprites may be two dimensional, the light sourcing, interactive polygon backgrounds and roving camera makes them look a lot more fleshed out than previous attempts at the genre.

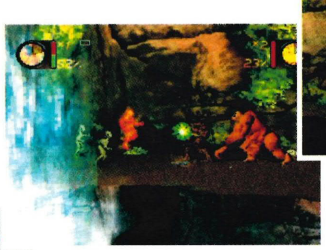
The playing area has been expanded as well, allowing you to explore rooms and buildings away from the main playing area with short cuts and secret routes dotted all over the place. Rather than just being a bland left to right affair, you can move into and out of the scenery at will, with the camera view frequently taking you round corners.

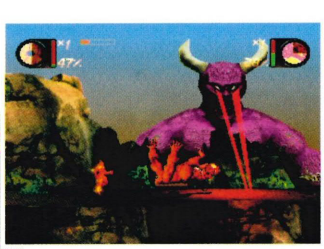
For instance, the first level starts with an oil tanker skidding and exploding on the streets. As you proceed around the level, you'll be able to see the burning wreckage in the background as you go around the block. It gives the impression of a real 3-D environment.

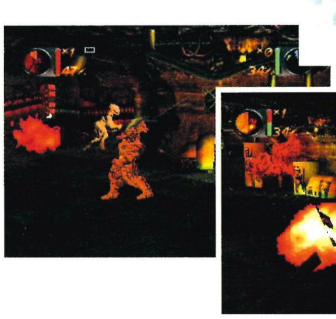
The scenery is interactive too. Police cars screech to a halt, and can be flipped over to crush the enemies. Flip them three times and they explode in style. Try this in the first level's car park and you'll see some real carnage. At certain points in the game, you'll switch to a shooting gallery style ▶











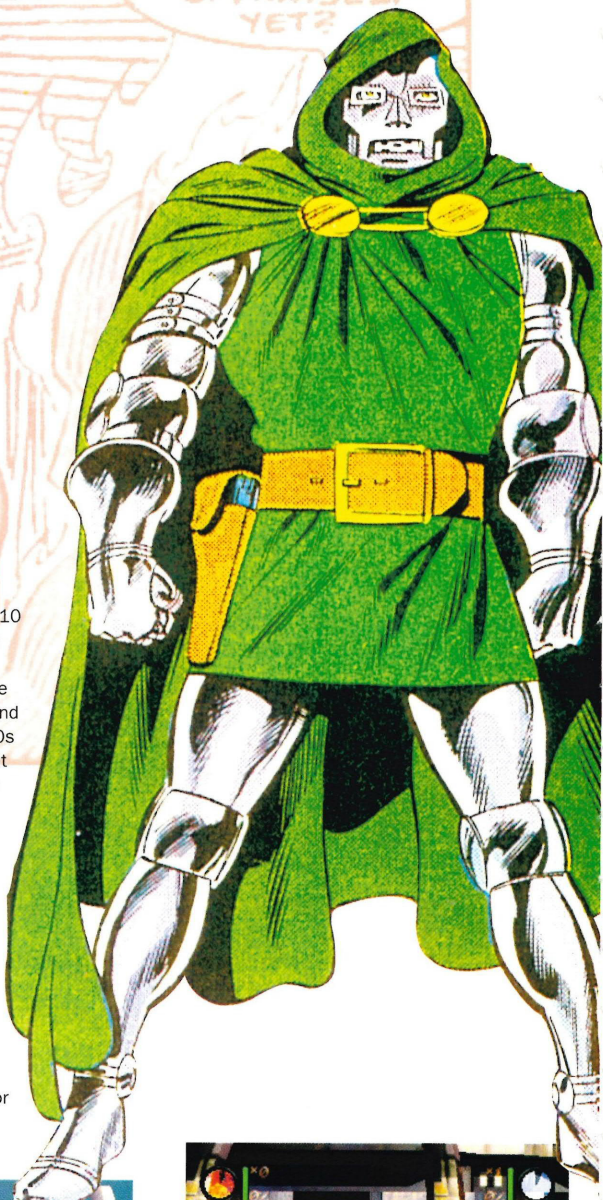


NAME: Susan Storm
AKA: The Invisible Girl
POWERS: Invisibility, plus the ability to project force fields
RELATIONS: Married to Reed Richards, sister to Johnny Storm



Sue Storm, the Invisible Girl, a pen and ink lust object for 1960s adolescents

Flame On!



section where you have to protect innocent civilians from the approaching baddies. This bit really benefits from Probe's Die Hard experience and, with all four super heroes joining in, turns into a real blast-fest.

Probe's aim throughout development has been to stay true to the game's origins. As they're rather well known as the Fantastic Four, rather than the Fantastic One, a simultaneous four player option has been included. You can switch characters at any time, to make best use of each hero's abilities. Even if you play on your own, you can get the rest of the team to play as 'drones'. The PlayStation will then control the other fighters in an intelligent manner, allowing for proper comic style mayhem.

Each one of the four has basic punches, kicks and throws, but to use their unique skills you need to learn the special moves. These specials are, naturally, related to their powers and range from simple but effective attacks to all-out bizarre assaults. Particularly worthy of note is Mr. Fantastic's range of bendy limbed moves, including leaping into the air and returning to earth as a 10 ton weight. The Thing has some pretty amusing moments as well.

The music comes courtesy of the same bloke who gave Alien Trilogy its creepy atmosphere, and this time he's gone for a full album-worth of '70s style funk to match the comic's retro heritage. It works like a treat. And there's some speech as well. On top of the expected "Flame On!" and "It's clobberin' time" each selected option is greeted with a cracking sample booming "You've picked...HUMAN TORCH!" for example. Just little things, but they all complement the cartoon style.

Comic adaptations have always been a source of disappointment in the past, with a record of flops that makes film licences look like a good idea, but Fantastic Four could be the game to change that. It's teetering on the cusp of completeness at this very moment and should hit the mean streets in the next month or so. I'd look forward to it if I were you.

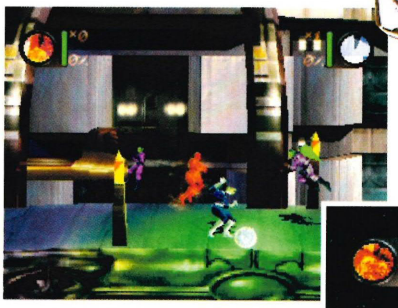




The opening oil tanker explosion borrows heavily from Probe's Die Hard Trilogy expertise



Things may start out in New York but, just like the comic, the Fantastic Four are soon travelling all over the galaxy in their fight against evil







NAME: Johnny Storm
AKA: The Human Torch
POWERS: Bursts into flames and can fly
RELATIONS: Brother to Susan Storm

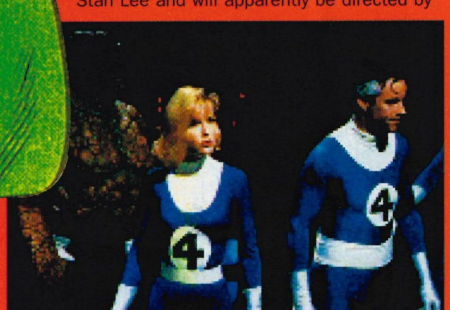


Doctor Victor Von Doom, Reed Richard's old college friend and now arch enemy. Boo. Hiss. Etc...

The Thing, a Bronx born petty criminal, test pilot and now a big orange monster

Fantastic Four: The Movie!

Yes, it's pseudo-official! A big budget cinema version of Marvel's Royal Family is in the pipeline, courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox and Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment. It's produced by Chris Columbus and Stan Lee and will apparently be directed by some bloke called Pete Segal (no relation to that fat kung-fu cook bloke we hope).



The film will focus around the Four's battle against Doctor Doom, and promises some jaw-dropping CGI effects sequences. A script – which may be genuine or fake – has slipped out and Marvel fans are raving about it. It opens with The Thing and Human Torch stopping an armed gang in the middle of New York to rapturous applause, and builds from there, culminating in an effects heavy finale when Doom unleashes his 'Hypercane' to destroy the world. Sounds promising.

So you're probably wondering where these pictures came from. Well, one quick phone call to Stevie (Mr. Speilberg to you plebs) and he couriered over these exclusive pre-production shots. Well, OK, he didn't really. These are taken from a 1992 F4 movie, made by B-movie king Roger Corman.

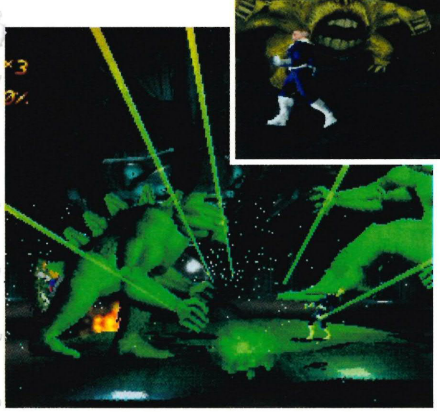
The story goes that the Fantastic Four rights were owned by a small producer, Neue Constantine, but budget restrictions prevented production. Just



before the rights reverted to Marvel, a low budget version was rushed through in the hope of recouping some of the lost cash. It was never released and is now locked in Amblin's vault.

Bootleg copies can be found at comic conventions and, while the SFX and story were a bit ropey, the acting is supposed to be pretty good and the Thing and Doctor Doom costumes look better than the budget would suggest. The 'official' flick has a rumoured budget of $165m so it might look a tad more spectacular when it hits the screen sometime in 1998.









The Human Torch reveals his 'Ring Of Fire' attack, while Mr. Fantastic has to make do with a bog standard laser gun



NAME: Ben Grimm
AKA: The Thing
POWERS: Amazing strength and resilience
RELATIONS: Girlfriend Alicia Masters, a blind sculptress

Game Title **Wreckin' Crew**
Software House **Telstar**

Forget your poncey Rage Racers and the plethora of dodgy

Total Destruction





There are eight cars in total to choose from, but if you're successful, you can gain another two hidden cars that have their own special moves, strengths and weaknesses. So there is no need for complacency if you're to see everything on offer



Since the circuits are in no way realistic, they are filled with secret areas, short cuts and power-ups and it all runs at a fair old pace so your attention is gripped and held firmly around the throat. Whether it lives up to expectations is another matter entirely, but from what we've seen so far, there doesn't seem to be any reason why not

By Andy Sharp

IF YOU'RE FED UP WITH playing Porsche and don't want to try your hand at being Damon Hill but still feel the need to hammer around a circuit like a madman, then Telstar may have just the thing. It has more in common with Street Racer and the cartoon element is sure to appeal to fans of all ages.

After the success of Excalibur, Telstar is now holding the reins on the latest racing game to hit the PlayStation. As you may have gathered, it has got a little more to it than checking your downforce and choosing the right tyres for the job. While you don't actually improve your car, you do have some special moves which can be used to your advantage.

Winning may not be everything, but if you can win unfairly, then all the better. If you think along this train of thought, Wreckin' Crew could be what you're looking for. It's fast, furious and fun. The cheating is just an added bonus and you can use many different tactics to leave the opposition behind. From punches to riddling them with bullets – it's all included. Not to mention special moves that can put an end to even the most stubborn challengers.

Taking elements from some of the greatest racing games – the speed of Rage Racer, the cartoon element of Street Racer and the filthy tactics of Mario Kart – Wreckin' Crew is packed with fun.

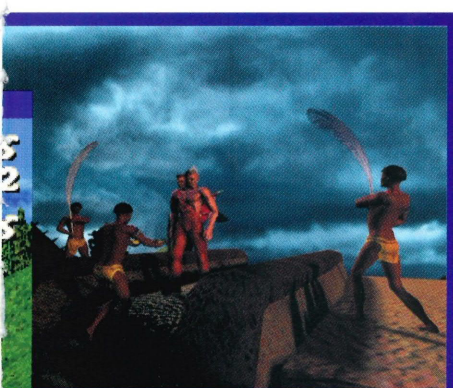
The vehicles themselves are souped up versions of classic cars such as the 57 Chevvy or the old Ford p Pickup with each of the eight cars having unique handling and weapons. One car throws a midget which latches onto the back of the car ahead and momentarily throws it out of control – the others all have their own filthy tactics which all adds to the fun.

Release Date: August

simulations around, Wreckin' Crew adds a fun cartoon element to the starting grid

To pull off your special moves you will have to collect 10 coins which build up your strength to execute the move. An Uzi pointed out of the window at somebody's head also works quite well. So it really does have more in common with Street Racer and Mario Kart than Formula One or Rally Cross







Telstar is planning on an August release for this, so it may be a wise idea to save up your pennies and keep your eyes peeled for something a little bit different. The PlayStation has been crying out for more fun games recently and this looks like the one to break the trend of games which take themselves that little too seriously

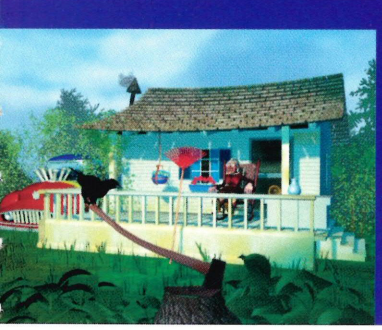












There are many modes of play available – from simple practice modes to cup competitions and head to head modes, not to mention the stunt arenas where you simply go hell for leather. Unlike the PC version, you can have a maximum of two players but here you will need to link. Unfortunately there's no split screen option. Oh well, you can't have everything

Game Title **Medievil**
Software House **Sony** *Paying homage to Tim Burton's eerily brilliant animation, Medie*

Ghouls 'n' Ghosts In 3-D!

By Alex Lee

MEDIEVIL IS A 3-D ACTION adventure game with exploration and puzzle-solving elements. Influenced by the 16bit classic Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, the Addams Family and Nightmare Before Christmas animator Tim Burton, the Cambridge-based Millennium development team started work on the project back in September last year.

At the time of writing, Medievil is no more than 50 per cent finished, but to look at and – in the case of the early levels – to play, it could easily be mistaken for the final product, such is the quality. PlayStation Pro was lucky enough to be invited to a pre-E3 demonstration and explanation of the game that may beat Tomb Raider 2 to the top of the PlayStation charts come Christmas.

Chris Sorrell, Medievil's softly-spoken producer, described the creepy storyline, "A crazed sorceror, Zarok, is spreading evil through a peaceful medieval land. He has cast a spell that has locked the land in night-time, its inhabitants asleep, and has travelled through the towns collecting magical energy from the inhabitants' slumbering minds. The power of this energy is so great that it has left a trail across the countryside. As it seeped into the ground, it touched long-dead bodies and filled them with new life. One such revived skeleton is the game's hero, a decayed Knight named Sir Daniel Fortesque."

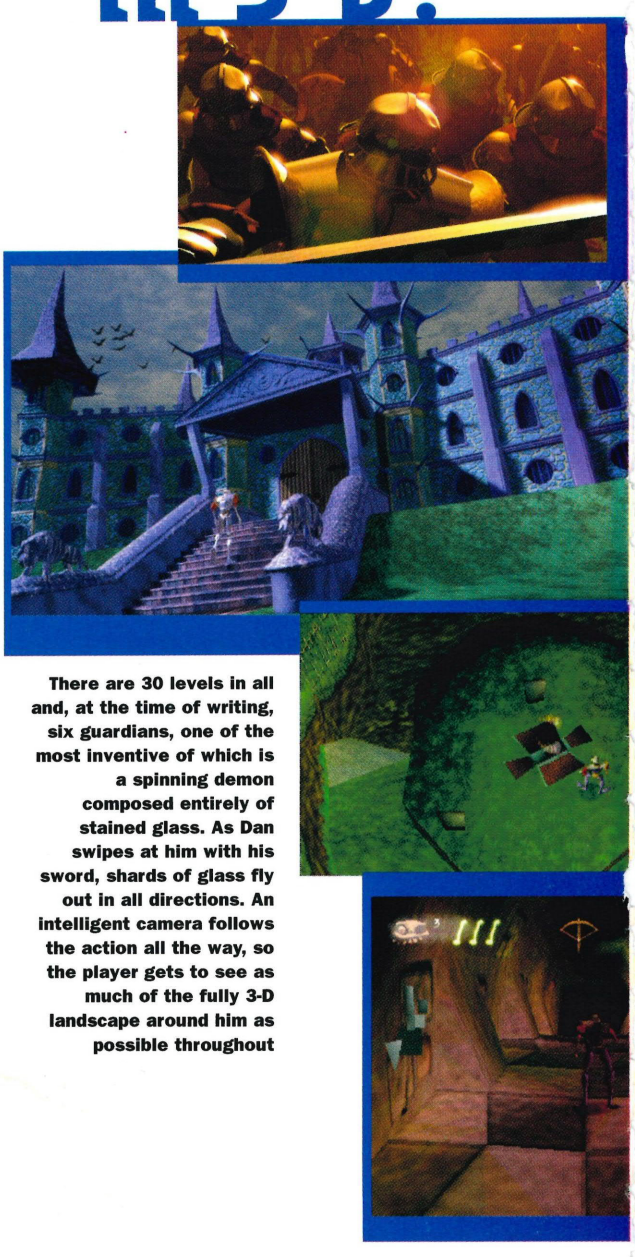
"At the start of the game we see Dan staggering from his crypt and setting forth to track down and defeat Zarok so he can return to his grave in peace. Evil characters fill Dan's world – a mixture of reanimated zombies, the insane victims of Zarok's magic and the shadowy creatures that the sorceror is summoning from another dimension."

He continues, "As the game progresses, Dan's quest leads him through the darkened, warped world that Zarok has created. From his earthly origin, Dan battles through eerie vaults, mutated farmlands, dark caves, a quaint but insanity filled village, an ancient battle ground and the bizarre grounds of a sinister asylum."

"Following a headlong charge into a misty wood, Dan is snatched from the claws of death by a huge bird and dropped high in the clouds onto the deck of a ghostly galleon. When the ship finally docks at the gates of Zarok's mountain-top castle, Dan's pursuit of the sorceror leads him inside and downwards into the heart of the mountain and the demonic city within."

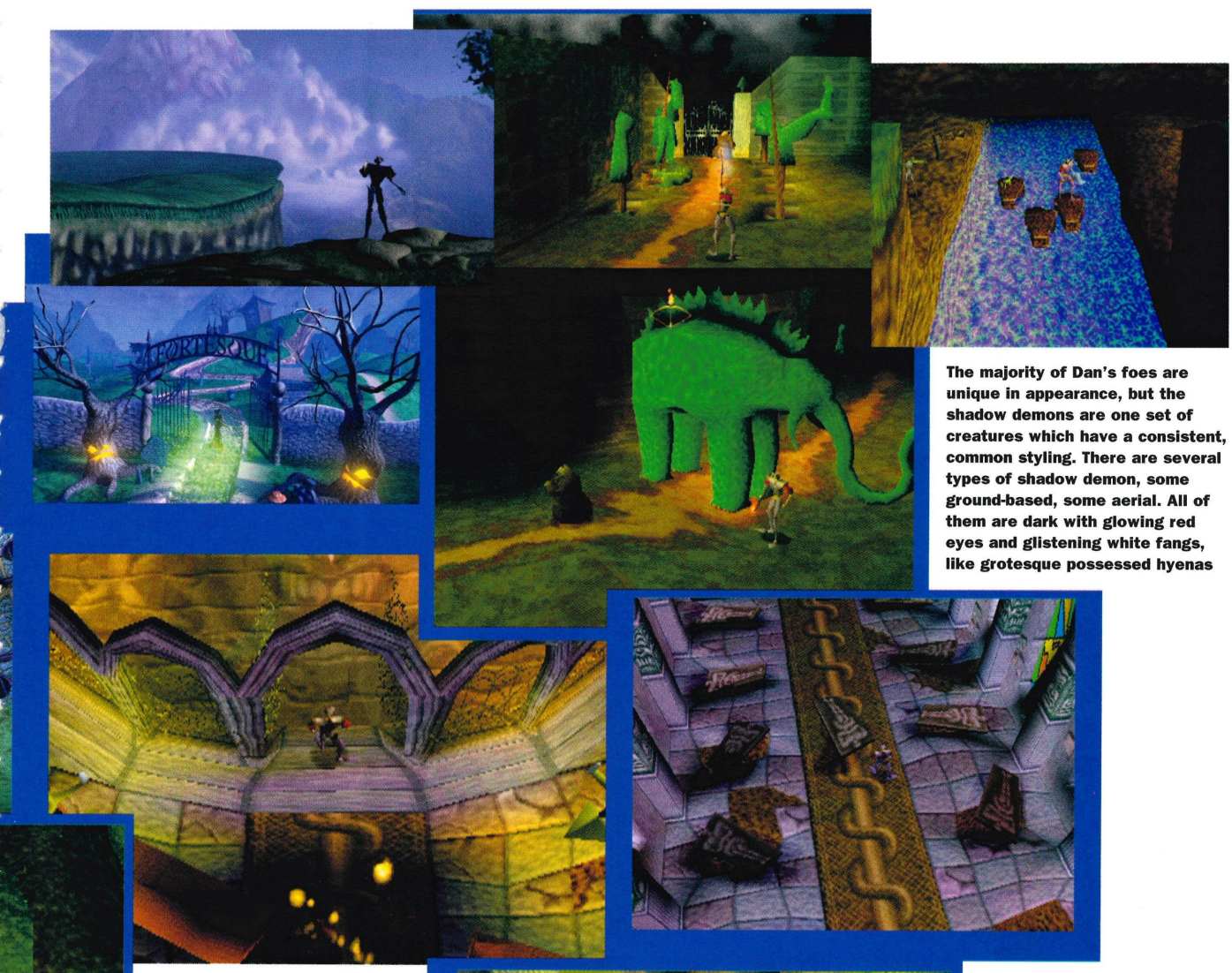
With 30 levels in all, none of which follow the traditional gaming cliches of the snow area, the desert area and the mine cart chase, Medievil looks set to keep PlayStation gamers awake throughout the Christmas period – once you fall asleep, who knows what sort of nightmares you might have?

Release Date: Christmas



There are 30 levels in all and, at the time of writing, six guardians, one of the most inventive of which is a spinning demon composed entirely of stained glass. As Dan swipes at him with his sword, shards of glass fly out in all directions. An intelligent camera follows the action all the way, so the player gets to see as much of the fully 3-D landscape around him as possible throughout

vil is set to cause gameplayers many nightmares before Christmas



The majority of Dan's foes are unique in appearance, but the shadow demons are one set of creatures which have a consistent, common styling. There are several types of shadow demon, some ground-based, some aerial. All of them are dark with glowing red eyes and glistening white fangs, like grotesque possessed hyenas

Each level is sufficiently different in style, size and nature from the previous one to warrant serious addiction. Some areas are of an exploratory nature, whereas others will require you to fend off almost constant enemy attacks. One level involves ascending a steep hill by means of following a spiral path, with another taking place in an underground catacomb lit only by a trail of fireflies





Every section kicks off where the previous one ended i.e. you always complete a level with Dan running through some form of archway, door or portal. Often, an impressive FMV cut scene portrays the action, giving you a brief respite from the frantic hacking, slashing and puzzle-solving. There isn't a cut scene between every level, however, nor are you guaranteed to have to take on a guardian each time

Game Title **Machine Hunter**

Software House **Eidos** *Save mechanical droids using mind power and a big plasma-spouting*

At the start of your mission, you'll be given some basic weaponry. Slowly, as you progress through the game, these will upgrade and you'll come across several power ups to increase your laser-enhanced selection to a massive 40 different items of destruction. Flame throwers, homing missiles, tracking bullets and a wide range of laser spouting sticks all await as the more difficult levels open up



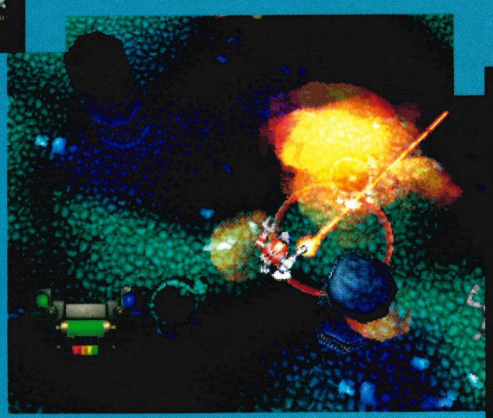
To help you make use of such a large array of weapons, Eidos has developed a unique firing system which borrows much from the old classic Smash TV. Players have the ability to shoot in any direction they desire, not only in the direction they're facing. Each button on the pad represents a varying firing angle, whilst the D-pad controls your movements. Combining the two results in a multi-angled bullet bonanza which will have the droids dropping faster than Sunderland FC

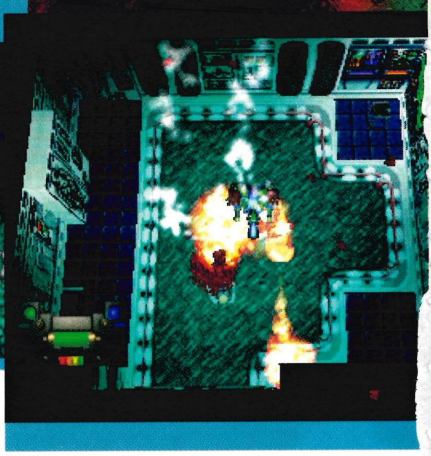






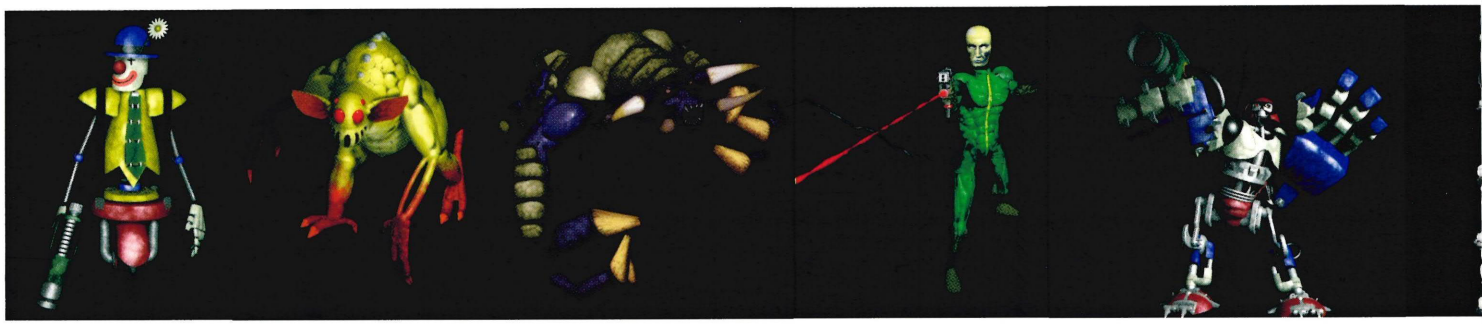








The game also manages to combine both strategy and search-and-rescue elements. These come into play when players need to save certain droids from sections of the game's maps where their character can't reach. By the use of mind control, the on-screen player can transform himself into the body of one of the various robots and hopefully save the hapless droid in distress



pistol, in this latest roam-around-adventure from Eidos

Robotic Rampage

By Jay Sharples



Eidos is going to be a busy bunch over the coming months. Keep an eye out in the next couple of issues for news on forthcoming delights such as Power F1, All Star Soccer, snow boarding title Chill, the much-delayed Test Drive Off Road, Conquest Earth, the stunning-looking Deathtrap Dungeon and they'll no doubt be teaming up with Core Design once again to ram Lara Croft and Tomb Raider 2 down our throats. Stay tuned!



EIDOS' FORTHCOMING PLAYSTATION treat that will coincide with the release of All Star Soccer and should have made an appearance last issue, but didn't (due to a cock-up at the printers), is now here in all its glory. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you – pause for effect – Machine Hunter!

It is based on one of many established space colonies sometime around the 21st Century where technology has advanced so much that semi-intelligent droids (who come equipped with a semi-organic artificial brain) have taken over the day-to-day tasks formerly reserved for us humans.

Everything was going swimmingly with the droids scurrying around picking up empty crisp packets, emptying ashtrays, that sort of thing, until one day the metallic slaves decided to rebel. Almost instantly, things start to look bleak on the colony as the droids began to wipe out their fleshy masters. The threat of the rebellion is sourced to an alien virus infecting the droid's grey matter and, as luck would have it, some scientific blokes have found an antidote sitting on some alien space probe just waiting to be used on a horde of brain dead semi-organic technological space droids. Handy that.

This is where you come in with your 40-plus weapon arsenal and smart special abilities to transfer your energies into hapless droids. Ponce your way through 16 whopping multi-layered levels of robot-pummelling mayhem in either one or two player modes and your onto the traditional big bad bloke, but it's guaranteed you won't experience that little gem for many an hour. This is because of the game's gradually increased complexity which will have you running about all over the place hunting out the missing droids and making use of elevators, bridges, lifts and the likes.

It may resemble Loaded at first glance, but look a little deeper and Machine Hunter makes out like it's a 'Legacy Of Kain/Chaos Engine/SmashTV' kinda thing. But whatever the final outcome, you can rest assured that everything you need to know about it, plus the fabulous All Star Soccer, will be revealed in due course right here in PlayStation Pro.

Release Date: Summer '97

Game Title **Perfect Assassin**
Software House **Grolier Interactive** *Featured as long ago as issue three, Perfect Assas*

KingKiller

By Alex Lee

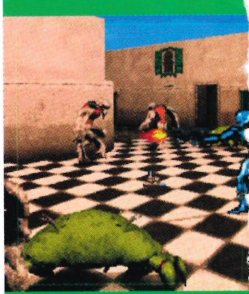
THE PERFECT ASSASSIN PLOT INVOLVES time travel, armed combat and the imminent destruction of the Universe. It features the latest in real-time technology, strange detailed alien worlds to explore in 27 chapters, varied gameplay including character interaction, puzzles and shoot 'em-up sections with the emphasis on strategy and survival. Smoothly animated photorealistic characters and 3-D environments feature alongside thousands of frames of sprite animation, a great soundtrack and full stereo sound effects. The brainchild of leading UK comic book artist Kev Walker (whose credits include 2000AD and Stallone Movie Judge Dredd), Perfect Assassin features a unique AI engine which generates three levels of intelligence among the 200-plus characters you can communicate with. Character intelligence levels range from pushovers with nominal intelligence through suspicious medium intelligence protagonists to the ultra-brainy. The plot is non-linear and evolves quickly. Charon will face all sorts of problems in a world filled with diverse personalities and unpredictable storylines.

The Kobrai are entrusted with the smooth running of reality. In the Citadel the huge Industrial Reality Engines maintain the fabric of the universe. Their creators – a transient, ephemeral race composed of thought alone – are lost in time. Few dare tamper with the Kobrai and they are mostly left alone to tend to the needs of the Universe, constantly monitoring machinery to ensure that existence is maintained.

T'Promiel, Guardian of the Tyros Cantata, is the Champion of the Kobrai, but he has been corrupted. The Pra'min have purloined a Time Slider to enter the Citadel and they've attacked the Kobrai, damaging the systems that have maintained the smooth running of the Universe for eons. As a result of the attack, T'Promiel is exposed to the covet strain, one of the metaphysical viruses the Kobrai (allegedly) release into the universe to maintain an emotional balance in sentient beings. T'Promiel receives an overdose of the virus, transforming him into a megalomaniac.

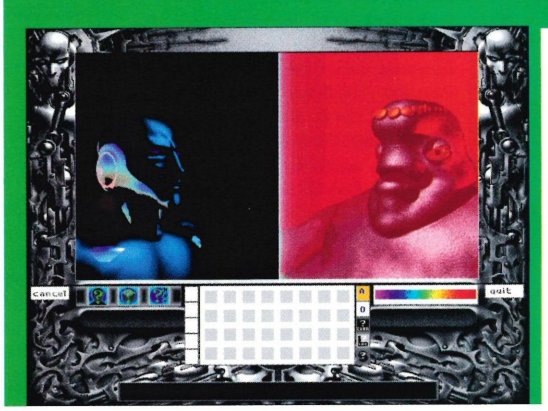
Driven by his fevered mind, T'Promiel leaves the Citadel of the Kobrai, leaving a trail of death and destruction in his wake. He escapes to the protoverse – a prototype Universe that existed before our own as an experimental landscape, a collection of potential Universe designs.

Now T'Promiel also possesses the secret of the tyros cantata, the command which controls the fountainhead, the prime mechanism used by the original beings to create our Universe. Even worse, he knows where to find the fountainhead. After bringing the Universe into being it was hidden by the creator-entities within the protoverse, protected from real space-time by its prototype creations.



The hub is a wet, damp slum. It has none of the amenities of the surface city. No TV, no restaurants. The inhabitants manage quite well, as slum dwellers usually do. Most of the buildings are homes, apart from the bars. The 'factory' sections housing the city rotation mechanisms are built into the walls, out of sight

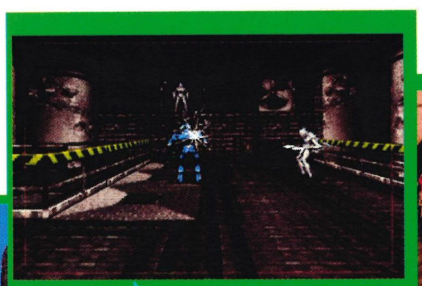


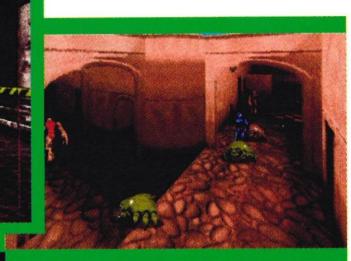


Kev Walker, the game's artist, was banished from art college at 18, he spent four years trying to design confectionery packaging for people with no imagination. After going freelance, he acquired his first professional comic work. His credits include Tharg's Future Shocks, Rogue Trooper and The Harlem Heroes for 2000AD. He then became part of the design team for Judge Dredd – The Movie

sin is shaping up to be a brutally brilliant PlayStation release

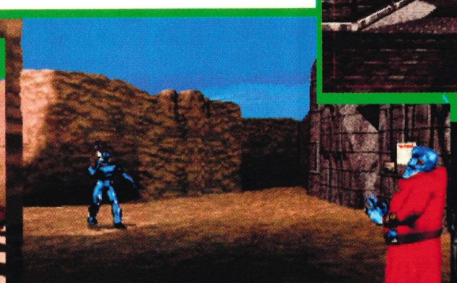
The Kobrai are a race of benevolent aliens, perhaps the oldest race in the galaxy, of which Mei Bloom & T'Promiel are members. The other main Kobrai characters we meet are 'the High Priest' and the other Neophytes (trainee guardians)





The Doolan find all prosthetic legs ugly and will only condescend to have prosthetic feet (see below). If the entire legs have to be removed then the installation of an anti-grav unit is preferred. A Doolan would prefer to have both legs removed rather than suffer the indignity of life as a half-being. There are no one-legged Doolan



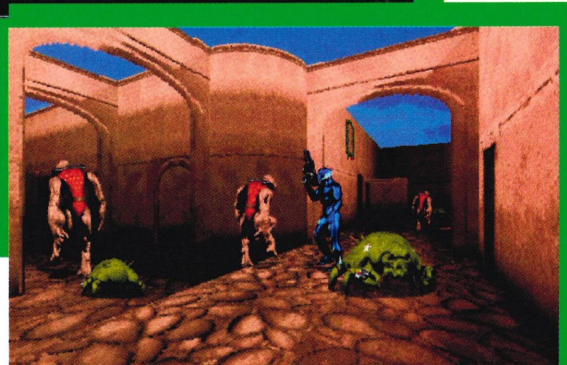




Charon is the Perfect Assassin. Born in the late 21st Century, he's the sole surviving human. Over 10,000 years he has adapted himself with alien bio-tech to become virtually immortal. A member of the elite Guild Of Assassins, his history is shrouded in mystery and drenched in slaughter. He has been a mercenary, hired killer, spy and saviour. Now he has been hired to save the universe from destruction







If T'Promiel gained access to the power of the fountainhead in his current state, the consequences would be too terrible to imagine. The Kobrai can't let this state of affairs go on. They can't stop him directly and call for Charon, the Perfect Assassin.

A Kobrai emissary travels to the barren planet of Kar-Naq. They send a message to Charon, asking him to meet them in the Polar city Kar-Es-Taal. Charon is ordered to stop T'Promiel at all costs. But the risks of having a being as deadly a bloke as Charon at loose in the Protoverse are unknown. The Kobrai are playing a risky game, with existence as the stake.

It's now the player enters a strange new reality to become one with Charon. As the appointment to meet the Kobrai emissary is given to them by their ship's AI, they are tantalised by memory fragments trapped in their ethereal cortex. Waves of deja vue sweep over them whilst strangely realistic images of T'Promiel haunt their waking nightmares.

Will you be able to survive the attempts on your life? Many have good reason for wanting Charon dead. Will they find the Kobrai emissary waiting for them within the massive walls of Kar-Es-Taal – a city overflowing with bizarre alien life? Will they manage to get to the Kobrai Citadel to pick up T'Promiel's trail? If they do, will they be able to destroy him before he reaches the Fountainhead? Only time (or is it space?) will tell.

Release Date: September

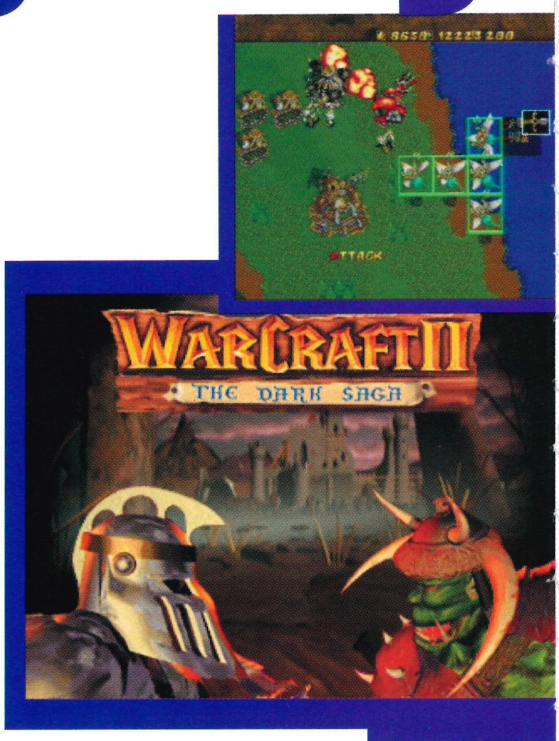


Because of the sensitive nature of Doolan ocular nerves, the need for bionic eyes is rare. They damage very easily. Few Doolan have these, which explains why they are more utilitarian than other prosthesis. Most remain blind and wear simple black spectacles. A vestigial radar sense (an echo of the dolphin-like ancestry) gives a blind Doolan 'shadow' sight – the approximate shape, size & distance of objects without colour, accurate lighting or perspective sense. Doolan are perfectly at home in the dark

Game Title **WarCraft 2**
Software House **Electronic Arts** *WarCraft and WarCraft 2 both went down well on the PC,*

The Art Of Fighting

By Alex Lee



THE ART OF FIGHTING IS a beat 'em-up. WarCraft II: The Dark Saga from EA isn't – it's an extension of Blizzard Entertainment's popular WarCraft PC game series.

After the death of the Orcish Warchief Blackhand, his underling, Orgrim Doomhammer, was quick to seize control over the most powerful of the Orcish forces on Azeroth. Although each day finds other factions growing stronger within the chaotic Horde, it seems certain all the clans will follow Orgrim's plans to hunt down and destroy the renegade Azerothiens wherever they choose to run.

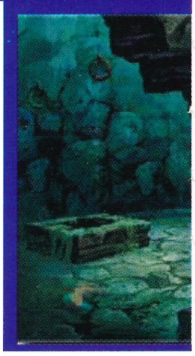
Sir Lothar, in charge of the scattered armies of Azeroth since the death of King Llane, has led his people across the Great Sea to the shores of Lordaeron. By enlisting the armies of Lordaeron – as well as making new allies in the Elves and Dwarves – a mighty force known as the Alliance has been forged. Now, the last of the once great armies of Azeroth seek retribution for the loss of their homeland.

WarCraft II is the continuation of the ruthless clash between the Orc and human civilisations. After the long and bloody war in the kingdom of Azeroth, the humans ventured across the Great Sea to escape the cruelty of the Orcish hordes and rebuild their empire. Eager to engage in combat again, the Orcish army constructed sea vessels and summoned flying creatures to follow the humans and attack their coastal encampment.

As the commander of either the Orc or human forces, players must successfully construct and rule their medieval empire while engaging in real time tactical warfare over land, sea and in a real time action strategy game set in a medieval fantasy world. Over 52 missions are included spread over four complete campaigns and based on over 100 customisable maps. A simple and intuitive interface has been designed specifically for the PlayStation.

This version offers players the chance to learn the art of sorcery as they command multiple characters in a bid to rule the world, including conquering the skies and seas with air and naval fleets. Embellished with six brand new scene-setting FMV clips, WarCraft II should be reviewed next issue. Remember, it ain't no beat 'em-up.

Release Date: July



Warcraft II is a fantasy simulation covering the conflict between the peaceful humans and the bloodthirsty Orcs. Although WarCraft does not have complex 3-D graphics, as is common with the many PlayStation releases, it's more in-depth than the majority of PlayStation games. In fact, WarCraft II could be compared favourably with a game the size and style of Command & Conquer

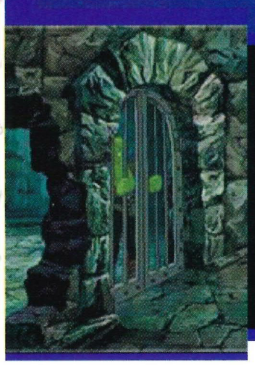
so much so that a bright spark at EA said, "Let's do a PlayStation version"

In WarCraft II, you get to play either the humans or the Orcs. As a human, you have encountered evil times. The kingdom is in turmoil because an evil sorcerer has created a gateway between Azeroth and an unknown world. Through this gateway have come some hideous creatures known as Orcs that have attacked our land. They have killed the King. His son, now King of Azeroth, has left the responsibility of saving the land from these foul beasts to you





As Orcs, we have conquered our enemies but the craving for blood is upon us. So we have turned against ourselves in a battle in which only the strongest shall survive! But one day, the Warlocks brought news that a portal to a new world had been discovered. Now under the fearsome leadership of Blackhand we have united once more to conquer this land and all that shall stand in our way







Initially, you are given easy tasks like building up a settlement (initially a Town Hall), the town centre, and a farm (for feeding the troops and to slaughter any wandering foes). After getting peasants to collect the resources of the land – lumber and gold – you can start to build additional buildings, such as barracks for the training of additional troops



Other buildings you can construct include a lumber mill for upgrading the power of spears, a blacksmiths for upgrading the armour and sword efficiency, stables for breeding horses, churches for training Clerics to heal the wounded (or in the case of the Orcs, to bring the dead back to life in the form of skeletons), and towers to permit mystical warlocks to be trained in the way of calling Daemons and Elementals

Game Title **Super Football Champ**
Software House **Mindscape** *We are the Sunderland boot boys. We are mental and we*

World Class?

By Alex Lee

MINDSCAPE HAS ENLISTED Taito's help to produce a football game for the PlayStation. Very arcadey in nature, Super Football Champ (SFC) is the Sussex-based publisher's first stab at a console sports title. Taito is a known maker of arcade games, Mindscape wanted to produce a footy game with an arcade feel, so the marriage was made in heaven – well somewhere near Brighton and Hove Albion's Goldstone ground actually.

The nearest any British software house has come to a decent arcade-style football game so far is Konami with International Superstar Soccer Pro (ISSSPro). It didn't go down too well in this office, however. We universally agreed that it was too slow and lumbering, regardless of how 'gorgeous' it looked.

At the time of writing, with Super Football Champ at around 85 per cent finished, the criticisms which ultimately blighted ISSSPro equally apply to SFC. It's just too slow to be a contender, but Mindscape assures us that by the time the game's submitted to Sony it'll be a whole lot faster and, as a result, more enjoyable and playable.

Forgetting the snail's pace for now, SFC has some fine points which should attract sports games purists. For example, before each game both players are entitled to pick an 'ace' player if they so desire. Those of you old enough to remember the brilliant card games Top Trumps and Ace Trumps will know just how important having the best player was. The ace works in much the same way while playing SFC. He can also be likened to the big lad in your year at school who had trials for the local team only to end up as a postman or a drug addict. Whenever you passed the ball to him you knew the other team would struggle to dispossess him.

There are a choice of eight aces, all of whom have a unique quality. One of them is a wizard dribbler, another is a top shooter, while a third is a cunning fouler who gets away with all kinds of dirtiness. There isn't another PlayStation football game that includes such a feature, so hats off to Taito for introducing this. Peculiarly, one of the aces is a dead ringer for Italy's 'divine ponytail' Roberto Baggio. It's therefore confusing when you pick him for, say, England and your opponents happen to be Italy. All part of the fun.

Another noteworthy feature is the one-two button. A quick tap of the triangle button will cause your player to perform a neat one-two pass with one of his team-mates, thus losing his marker and enabling you to continue with your attack. The one-two doesn't have a 100 per cent success rate – just as in real-life, both players involved need to be reasonably well-placed for it to come off.

Whether Mindscape's relationship with Taito will come off as spectacularly as some of the game's better moments remains to be seen. Read our review next month to see whether it has come on enough in the final stages of development to warrant a decent mark.

Release Date: September



SFC's modern arcade style is encapsulated in the few seconds immediately following a goal. All manner of mad celebrations ensue, from a Peter Beagrie/Hugo Sanchez-style back flip to a bizarre run-like-an Egyptian. There's also a casual stand-by-the-corner-flag-looking-cocky effort



Crazily, there's no action replay at the moment. Again, we're hoping there'll be one by the time SFC's finished as some of the goals can be pretty spectacular. Direct a corner at your ace player and the chances are he'll send in an unstoppable overhead kick. If you time it right, that is



Although SFC has used motion capture technology, it thankfully doesn't suffer from the sheer stuntedness that afflicted the likes of Actua Soccer and Break Point. The characters are pseudo-cartoony in nature, especially when fouling each other, but move around sufficiently convincingly

are mad. We are the loyalest football supporters the world has ever had



Some of the text, which has been translated from Japanese, isn't quite up to scratch but this is being altered along with the game speed, the commentary (the word 'goal' currently sounds like 'git') and the crowd noise which is a little too restrained for the time being – particularly when a goal flies in

Those of you rich enough to own a multi-tap could be in for a treat by the time SFC hits the shelves as there is a simultaneous four player option available. Team and character names can be edited in case it really upsets you using fictitious player names. All in all, there could be a decent game on its way here

Game Titles **G Police, Formula One 97, Rascal, Psybadek, Overboard, Shadow Master,**
Software House **Psygnosis** *There's a mouth watering clutch of games thundering out*

The Magnificent Seven

G Police

By Dan Whitehead









It's not only the streets that are crawling with activity, both civilian and criminal. The air comes alive too, with later missions filling the sky with police craft and tooled-up gang cruisers dogfighting among the skyscrapers. Thankfully, the controls are intuitive, and the Havoc handles like a dream

THIS FIRST POPPED OUT OF the ideas hat way, way back. At about the same time as Assault Rigs, should you wish to know. Since then it's been pruned, buffed and virtually rewritten to make it the spankiest bloody game on Earth. And by the look of the early version we've seen, it's worth the wait.

In one of those dystopian futures so beloved by games people, the elected governments of the world have been toppled by evil, money grabbing corporations. Reluctantly, they set up a law enforcement force to maintain order on the colonies that have sprung up all over the solar system. They are, would you believe, the G Police. You, on the other hand, are Jeff Slater and you've joined the force to investigate the death of your sister, who died under strange circumstances while serving on the Jupiter moon of Callisto.

Your job, as a fresh graduate, is to patrol the skies of Callisto's domed cities in a Havoc patrol craft. Armed to the teeth with hefty weapons, and powered by ultra-sensitive jets, the Havoc resembles a bizarre cross between a rotor-less helicopter and a fish. 35 missions await you, pitting you against the violent techno-terrorists and street gangs of the colony, if you reckon you can handle it.

It's an arcadey flight sim, in a nutshell, where you have complete freedom of movement around the smoggy air. Nip between skyscrapers, divebomb warehouses, skim along the road sending civilians screaming for cover. You can do all this and more. The city moves and breathes like a real conurbation. Hover cars queue at junctions, people wander the streets, and somewhere in among them lurk your targets – the criminals who threaten the precarious peace of the colonies.

With obvious overtones of Blade Runner and Blue Thunder, this is the first flight sim to allow you complete freedom within a city environment. No area is off limits within the massive domed streets. With an incredibly manoeuvrable craft at your command, and some truly brilliant graphics, this looks like it could be Psygnosis' biggest hit of the year.

Release Date: November



Not only do you control the Havoc fighter, but you can call upon other wingmen and even ground patrols to meet your objectives. Certain missions require you to cover police units on the street while they raid premises, others see you tracking down trucks and scanning them for illegal weapons before blowing them sky high. Considering the 'Find and Shoot' approach of previous sims, this should be a refreshing change



The G Police story is told through some of the best FMV we've seen. Not only is there a dark, gloomy murder mystery woven through the game, there's also some amazing animation. All the rendered characters in the FMV have been motion captured and, as such look incredibly real. Little nuances, like minute head movements, make the characters shockingly lifelike

Colony Wars

of Liverpool this year. And here they are, in all their glory

Formula One 97

THE LONG AWAITED FOLLOW UP to the flawed but impressive F1, this looks set to correct all the faults from the original and add a slew of new features destined to make this the racing game to beat for next year. Less of an update, this is more like a complete rebuild.

Taking on board the comments fired at the first game, F1 97 will improve both the arcade and simulation modes, moving both further away from each other in terms of style. The arcade mode will now feature power slides and other Rage Racer style trickery, while the simulation Grand Prix mode promises even more technical accuracy than ever before.

Using the most up to date season information, and with drivers AI actually based on their real life counterparts, Psygnosis is confident that this'll be the most complete Formula 1 game on the shelves when it goes head to head with Eidos' effort later this year.

A split screen mode is included, in both arcade and sim modes, so at last you can tear around Monaco with a mate. The graphics are hi-res, the only driving game on the PlayStation to use such complex graphics at high speed, and more polygons than you can shake a stick at have been thrown into the mix as well.

Release Date: Summer



Murray Walker returns for more of his unique commentary, with a whole new library of Walkerisms already sampled for your enjoyment. He's joined this time around by Martin Brundle, so there's almost three times as much speech to talk you through the race. They'll even talk about the specific bend you're careering round, rather than falling back on random phrases

Rascal

MARIO BLOODY 64. AREN'T YOU just sick to death of hearing about that? "Oh, it's the best game ever written" squealed over-excitable people, "The PlayStation can't handle that sort of 3-D, so there". Well guess what, fashion victims, good old Psygnosis has gone and bloody done it. A full on, freedom of movement, go anywhere you bloody well like in a giant rendered world, ultimate gaming experience. On the PlayStation.

Rascal is the game, and it looks great. Taking the role of the titular Rascal, you've fallen foul of your scientist father's time machine. Trapped in the time stream, at the mercy of some sinister force, you've got to leap and lunge your way through seven different worlds spread across the past, present and future. These lush 3-D landscapes cover the whole range of popular platform game lands, from the Wild West to the land of the dinosaurs.

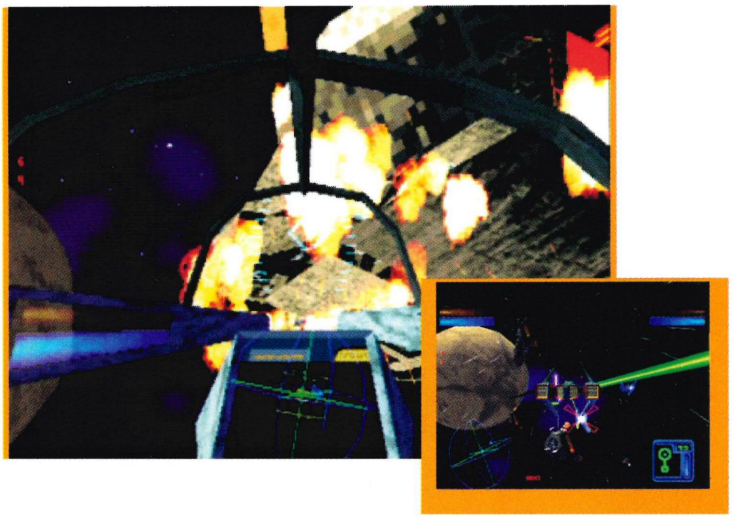
With over 100 enemies to avoid or bash – and the first truly 3-D environment in a PSX platform game (Tomb Raider doesn't count, remember those cardboard cut-out trees?), this looks like the game to stop those Nintendo-ites bleating on about their over-rated flagship title.

Release Date: Christmas



Looks great, yeah? Well, disregard that main character. Cute though he may be, he's not going to stay like that. The design and development of the lead characters is in the hands of no less a talent than Jim Henson's Creature Shop. The Muppets. Fraggle Rock. The Dark Crystal. Ninja Turtles. Need I go on? Thought not. Rest assured that this is going to look spectacular

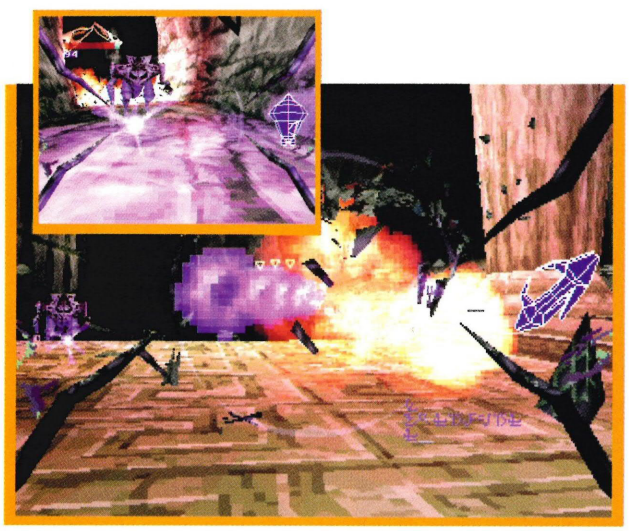
Colony Wars



NOT UNLIKE THIS ISSUE'S DARKLIGHT Conflict in approach and style, Colony Wars is an action-packed space combat shoot 'em-up, crammed to the gills with light sourcing and polygon fanciness. With a non-linear plot, whereby success or failure in any of the 70 missions affects the rest of the game, this looks like it could swipe the Space Shooter crown. But then, there isn't much competition at the moment.

Like F1 97, it uses hi-res graphics to give everything an indecently exciting sheen, and with rendered story scenes spinning a Star Wars style yarn, it should be well worth a look. Psygnosis even boasts that "The FMV sequences have no has-been actors – just quality visuals". Ooh, you cheeky monkeys.

Release Date: November

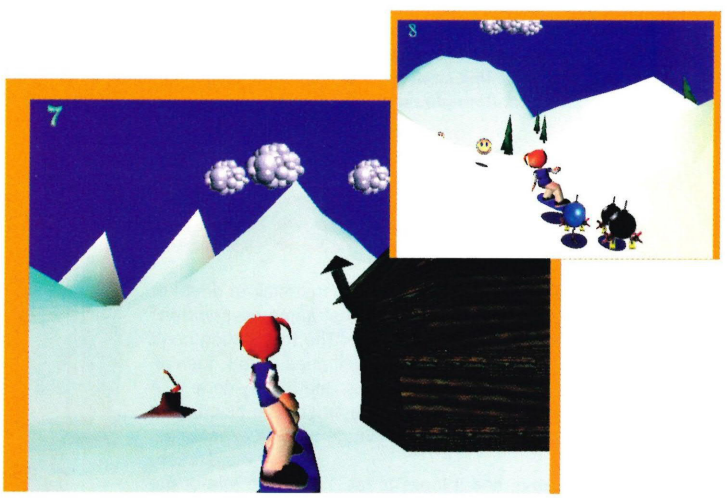


Shadow Master

NO! PLEASE NO! IT'S A first person perspective shoot 'em-up! Except instead of trudging about as a bloke with a gun, you're at the wheel of a tank-buggy thing. The evil Shadow Master has transformed all living creatures into mutated bio-mechanical beasties, and the only way to undo the damage is to shoot everything. To be fair, this is a damn sight better than the usual Doom-clone rubbish, featuring some spooky light effects, undulating landscapes and exterior levels where you're freed at last from those dreary tunnels that blight the genre at the moment. Nothing too amazing ideas-wise, Shadow Master might just find salvation in some nifty technical achievements.

Release Date: Late Summer

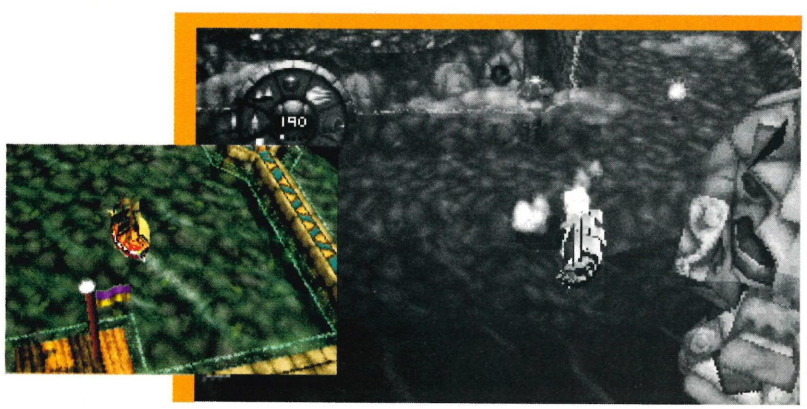
Psybadek



AS IF ONE MARIO 64 beater wasn't enough, Psygnosis has only got the gall to go and make two of the buggers. Choose between Xako or Mia and roam around yet another completely 3-D environment, with full freedom of movement.

It's a platform game, of sorts, but the twist is that you're astride a HoverDek, a futuristic floating skateboard. Use it to jump and twist, pull off stunts and smack baddies in the face with your board for points. With over 50 levels of freaky action, from the mountains pictured here, to jungles and deserts, it looks like yet another of those technically ground breaking titles that Psygnosis seems to squirt out without even breaking a sweat. Call it a genetic mixture of Mario64 and Cool Boarders and let that image stew in your brain until it comes out.

Release Date: Christmas



Overboard

COMPLETELY UNLIKE ANY OTHER game on these pages, in fact unlike any other game ever, this is an action-oriented puzzle game set in the days of pirates and yo-ho-ho. Steer your diddy pirate ship through the massive maze like levels, looking for bits of a treasure map. Piece it together, find the gold and move on to the next challenge. Strange, but weirdly addictive thanks to a simple game style and some bizarre humour.

A two player mode adds the chance to chase your mates and cannon them into the brine, and the presence of sharks, squids, sea monsters and rival pirates makes this the only game to consider for piracy-based, maze puzzle action fun.

Release Date: Summer

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VISA Access SWITCH

Game Title Ray Tracers
Software House Sony *Can you solve the software mix-up calamity before speccy brainbox*

The Case of the Turbo Charged Tong

By Dan Whitehead

IMAGINE THIS ALL TOO plausible situation. Shaggy, too stoned to move, has sent his loyal companion Scooby down to the software shop to buy him a new game. Shaggy's got his heart set on that throbbing beast of a driving game, Rage Racer. However, he's reckoned without Scooby's canine vocal chords, the one's responsible for countless yelps of 'Rrraggy!' at moments of fake-ghost encounter. When Scooby returns a short time later, he drops a CD case from his drooling jaws. It's not Rage Racer. It's Ray Tracers. Scooby's growling inflections have created a rather unfortunate confusion between the two driving games. Shaggy is furious. "Zoiks Scoob! Like, that's not Rage Racer!" he drawls. And in an unusually athletic movement, he throws Scooby out of the Mystery Machine for good.

Now obviously, this is a shocking example of a miscarriage of cartoon justice, but Fred and Daphne are too busy crackling with understated sexual tension to notice. Only dumpy old, orange polo-neck jumper wearing Velma who can save the day.

She soon sorts out the mystery, as she compensates for being an ugly troll by being dead brainy. Her conclusive proof is the discarded Ray Tracers CD inlay, found in the cellar of Old Man Withers software shop.

"The logo in the corner is the same as the one on Rage Racer's packaging", Velma points out to the Sheriff. "Obviously the two games are published by the same company, Sony Interactive, and it would have nothing to gain from deliberately releasing a game that sounds like Rage Racer when spoken by a cartoon dog."

"So Scooby is innocent?" asks the Sheriff, "Then who started this whole crazy mess?". Velma approaches Old Man Withers, the software shop owner, and pulls off his face. It's a rubber mask! "It's Dan Whitehead", she declares, "He was using this trifling coincidence as a way to fill up the word count on yet another driving game preview, and scaring everyone away from the gold under his Mississippi river boat".

The Sheriff slaps on the cuffs, and Scooby causes a wave of hilarity by wearing the rubber mask and scaring Shaggy. And as for me, I'm now rotting in a cartoon prison cell, charged with unnecessary waffling in a preview. I would've got away with it too, if it wasn't for those pesky kids.

Mind you, sitting here in cartoon prison has given me plenty of time to play that fateful Ray Tracers game. And, yes, it is a driving game, but not even Scooby Doo could have mistaken it for Rage Racer. This is a full-on, turbo-charged, manga ram-raider of a game in which power slides and engine tuning takes a back seat to high-octane smash



Each level starts with you haring it off through winding roads against a time limit. Various vehicles and barriers will try and slow you down, but with the aid of your nitro boosters you can slam them out of the way. You'll notice a yellow gauge on the left of some of the screen shots. That's the distance between you and the evil criminal you're chasing. Once you reach them, the gauge is replaced with a damage meter at the top of the screen. Wear this down by repeatedly ramming the law-breakers cyber-getaway and you'll move on to the next mission. Simple, but adrenaline pumping fun

Velma?

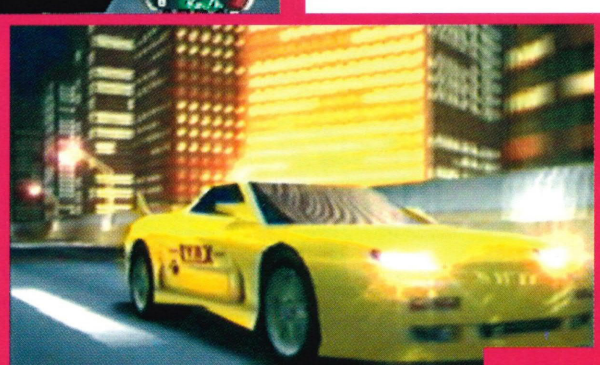
ue Twister



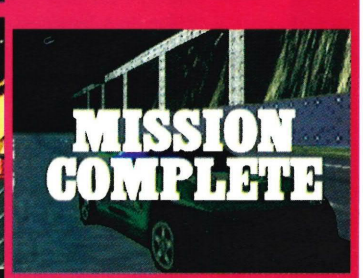


Don't expect the baddies to be making a break for it in a stolen Vauxhall. This is one of those Japanese manga-futures and your quarry is more likely to be driving a huge mechanical death machine, spitting missiles and lasers at you. Other gob-smacking end of level challenges include a giant helicopter that swoops along the road at you, two fast moving tanks attacking at the same time and an absolutely huge gun-thing on wheels. The second to last level requires you to beat them all again, one after another









There are some subtle graphical touches, in among all the metal grinding mayhem. You can't really tell from the shots here, but the windows of your car are mirrored, and actually reflect the buildings and cars as they shoot past. It's not much, but combined with the chunky polygon vehicles and the sheer speed of the game, it's another of those special effects that adds to the overall joy of the game. Not that this is a review in any way. Oh no. Just an impartial report on what the game looks like, that's all

and crash missions.

The game centres around a group of futuristic law enforcement types who drive sleek, armoured sports cars and use them to chase down cyber-criminals and ram them off the road. There are various different cars, with amusingly excitable drivers and the levels take you thundering through cities, mountains and even sewers, shunting all and sundry out of your way in the pursuit of explosive justice.

It's Chase HQ, reborn as the mutant offspring of Akira and Speed Racer. Huge, smooth polygon cars scream along lovingly detailed roads, and explosions and multiple pile-ups follow in their wake. It moves at an uncanny pace, and the tracks are full of stomach-turning jumps and barriers to steam through. Even though this is just a preview, and we're not supposed to express opinions, I can sneakily tell you that this is a stonker. But you'll have to wait for the proper review for us to tell you that officially.

Release: Late Summer

Cheat, Drink and Be Merry

For Christ's sake Tom, I've told you before not to bring that up in front of my mother. You know she'll only tell the whole bloody world. You just don't think, that's your trouble. Go on. Play with your stupid cheats. I'm going to bed, and I'm locking the door behind me, you selfish bastard

SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER

Can't be bothered slogging your way through the Street Puzzle mode to earn the extra characters? Thought not. Here's how to unlock them without breaking a sweat:

Dan: Highlight Morrigan, hold select and press **L, L, L, D, D, D, X.**

Devilot: Highlight Morrigan, hold select and press **L, L, L, D, D, D**, then press **X** button when the timer hits 10 seconds.



Akuma: Highlight Morrigan, hold select and press **D, D, D, L, L, L, X.**

Anita: Highlight Morrigan, hold select and press select, now highlight Donovan and press **X.**

Hsien-Ko's Talisman: Highlight Morrigan, hold select and press select, now highlight Hsien-Ko and press **X.**

For two players, the second player must highlight Felicia instead of Morrigan, all the lefts become rights, and the rights become lefts.



SPIDER

I don't know about you, but I'm literally gagging for some cheats for BMG's arachnid platform disappointment. Luckily, I've just caught some in my Cobweb O' Tricks.

Pause the game and enter **T, X, X, X, O, X, S, T, X, T, O.** If done correctly, you should refill your health and weapons. You can perform this code as often as you want, you crinkly bottoms.

Alternatively, for a brief laugh, pause the game and enter **T, S, O, T.** The spider should then shrink down to the size of a flea. And you can't see him! Ha ha! That's really great!

Oh, and you might as well have these level codes as well. We don't want them.

LABORATORY

Lab Floor:
1FMLC939GPR8F3BF7KT1
Sinks:
CHMLC939GPR8F3LWGTS3
Lab Top:
86MLC939GPR8F3VFQ5S4
70's Room:
FW1MC939GPR8F3BF7KT1

FACTORY

Boxes:
FW1MC939GPR8F336DTTS3
Conveyors:
BSRMC939GPR8F3VTKKT1
Machine Room:
WDRQC939GPR8F3LM8S95
Tubes:
8WV5L939GPR8F36DTTS3
Mechanical Arm Boss:
8WV5L939GPR8F3G1QJB4

CITY

Down The Street:
9WV5L939GPR8F3LRT6S4
Side Of Building:
6SXXS939GPR8F3LRT6S4
Park:
W9PNT839GPR8F3B9LVS3
Under The Street:
N7KB3Y19GPR8F3V95HR5
Along The Street:
N7KB3Y19GPR8F3GGK4T3

MUSEUM

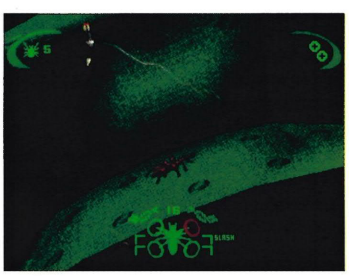
Display Cases:
P7KB3Y19GPR8F3BPFGC3
Volcano:
G7KB3Y11GPR8F3BPFGC3
Dinosaur Bones:
H7KB3Y1QFPR8F3QXSDS4
Model City:
J7KB3Y1GWPR8F31766D1
Temple :
K7KB3Y1B15S8F3QXSDS4
Museum Boss:
K7KB3Y1B15S8F3BTQBB4

SEWER

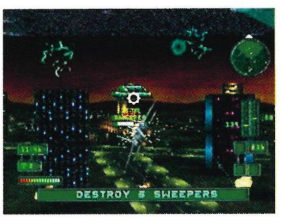
The Wells:
V7KB3Y1B15S8F3QS7QC1
Along The Sewer:
W7KB3Y1VBVP8F3LC1M95
Food Carton:
X7KB3Y1VLN7BF31CH1C3
Up The Well:
Y7KB3Y1VV16QF3QS7QC1
Ryan's World:
Q7KB3Y1LDRTQD3VKCDT1

EVIL LAB:

Circuit Boards:
Q7KB3Y1LDRTQD3LCQSR3
Lab Top:
R7KB3Y118H56T1WTY4R4
Hard Drives:
S7KB3Y118H56T1TCQSR3
Brian's Folly:
T7KB3Y118H56T1FNY4R4
On the Ceiling:
T7KB3Y118H56T1TC4LD1
Kip's Bonus:
68KB3Y118H56T151P6C4
Brain Boss:
68KB3Y118H56T1TMVM35



INDEPENDENCE DAY



I'd rather let ants live in my eyelids than play this again. But if you've bought it under the illusion that it's anything like the film, here's some level codes and an 'amusing' cheat to cheer you up.

Without a memory card in the slot, select the load game option and enter any one of the following codes:

Washington DBKMO
New York GBKMX
Paris LLSMX
Moscow NL9MX
Tokyo R39NF
Oahu T59MX
Las Vegas Z99MZ
Mothership 399MH



To create cheat-based entertainment, go to the options mode and enter the player name **TOURIST**. Exit to the game select screen and quickly enter **L, R, S, O, T, T, D.** You will go to a cheat menu, and you'll be able to switch the CITY, TOURIST, DEMO CAM, and NO TIME modes on. Tourist mode removes all aliens from

the world, so you can just bish about doing nothing. Demo Cam controls the camera with the joypad and No Time removes the time limit. There are some others but I get bored just thinking about them. Let's move on.

EXHUMED

Where would we be without the genre we call 'Good Old Doom Clone'? We'd probably be on Jupiter, having spent our resources on the more pressing needs of world over-population. Anyway, should you require secret areas to prance around in, here's what you need to look out for.
There are 23 'Team Dolls' hidden within the walls of this massive game and if you find 12, you will be given an extra power to find the remaining 11 dolls. Each doll has a picture of a developer pasted onto its flabby face and when all have been collected the secret areas will become available.

RALLY CROSS



Loads of useful and comedy codes for this mud-spattered racer. The codes need to be entered as your name for a season race – you can then quit and access the cheats in all modes:
banzai – No collisions and fast acceleration
noviscous – Sand, mud and water will not slow you down
radbrad – Game speed up
stone – Heavy cars
feather – Light cars
float – Low gravity
spinner – Low tire friction
fat tires – Fat tires, strangely
no wheels – Cars appear to hover



wheels – Cars are invisible except for wheels
vet me – Beat Rookie season
im a pro – Beat Veteran season
weeoo – All cars, trucks and tracks

TWISTED METAL 2

In Hong Kong if you pick up a Remote Bomb, then hop onto the top of the train, you can add four or five bombs to your list. The bomb has to be your selected weapon. After you get as many as possible, exit the subway. In about two minutes you can do it again.

There are various schools of though on how to beat DarkTooth, the game's big, superboss character. The best method we've heard is this:
Wait at a corner with full special attack bar,
When he appears freeze him,
Fire napalm at the head,
Shoot 2 power missiles,
Freeze again and fire more napalm,
Reverse away, firing homing missiles at him.

SKELETON WARRIORS

Press pause during the game then press the following directions and buttons. As you can see, when you abbreviate them, they spell amusing things! Oh, you crazy programmers! You brighten our days immensely with your earthy humour!
Invincible – **D, O, S, S, U, X**
Sword – **O, L, D, T, R, O, U, T**
Stones – **L, U, X, S, U, D, S**

COMMAND & CONQUER

Press and hold **R1 + R2 + L1 + L2 + O + S** then start a new game or select the password option and type in your password. Release the buttons when the game starts. You can now see the whole map at the start of the game. Entering the password while holding the buttons is tricky, but worth the effort.

WCW VS. THE WORLD

Enter League Challenge and defeat each league. At the end of each league there's a boss, defeat him and you'll be able to play as him in most modes.

SOUP OF THE DAY: NEED FOR SPEED 2

Providing you haven't had your memory erased with mind rubbers, you'll know that the secret track and a secret car were revealed on these very pages last issue. Well, as comic Irish bloke Jimmy Cricket used to say, there's more. Let your eyes wander seductively over this mammoth list of cheat codes that'll let you play the game as pretty much any vehicle or track-side novelty in the game. We can heartily recommend the T-Rex for guaranteed side-splittage.



CITME – Old fashioned car
VOVME – Volvo Wagoneer
YJME – Jeep
CRATME – Wooden crate
LCME – Sports utility vehicle
BUSME – Bus
BUGME – Volkswagen Bug
ARMYME – Troop Carrier
JEPME – Jeep Truck
LIMOME – Limo
VANME – Van
WAGOME – Wild West wagon
QUATME – Big American car
OUTHME – Outhouse (more of a cupboard really)
TRAMME – Tram
SEMIME – Semi truck
BNZME – Mercedes Benz
BEETME – Old Saab
MAZME – Mazda Miata
SNOWME – Snow truck
TREXME – T-Rex
LOGME – Log
POWRUP – Improves speed in arcade mode and performance in sim mode



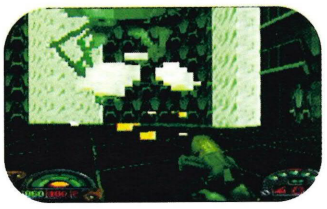
Defeat all the leagues and you'll see a new league appear. Then defeat these new leagues and get two more hidden wrestlers. But don't tell Jay, or he'll get all over excited again



Dark Forces

Part 3

At last! Our epic Dark Forces guide draws to a close, meaning two things. Firstly, you'll now be able to finish the game and secondly, Andy's going to have to find some other way of wasting two weeks of production time each month. We're sure he'll think of something...

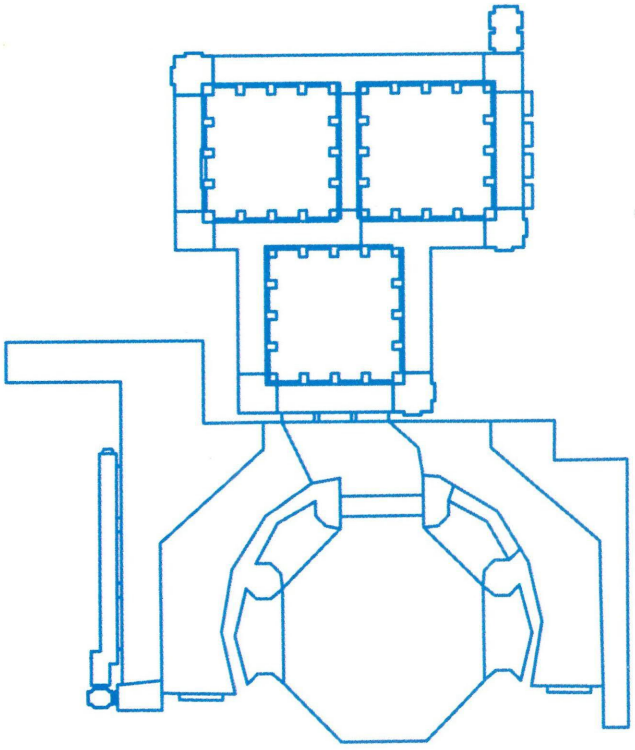


MISSION 11

From the off you can only go straight ahead. As soon as you're through the door, stormtroopers are on your case so either blast them or rush around the first right and circle around until you come across a porch.

Blast any probe droids you come across before swinging around and heading around to the other side of the landing area to another porch. Collect the power-ups, but be wary of enemies. Jump off the ledge to your right to find a secret door. The door opens onto a lift. Step on and be ready to blast some troops as it reaches its destination above.

Run down the corridor blasting everything that moves. Collect medi kits and then go back down on the lift. Go back to the first door by your ship. You'll see three openings in front of the door. It doesn't matter which you go through, but once you're through the doorway you are in a new area. There's a lower level but you don't bother with it as there's nothing of interest down there. Instead, go right as you enter the room and then left at the first corner.

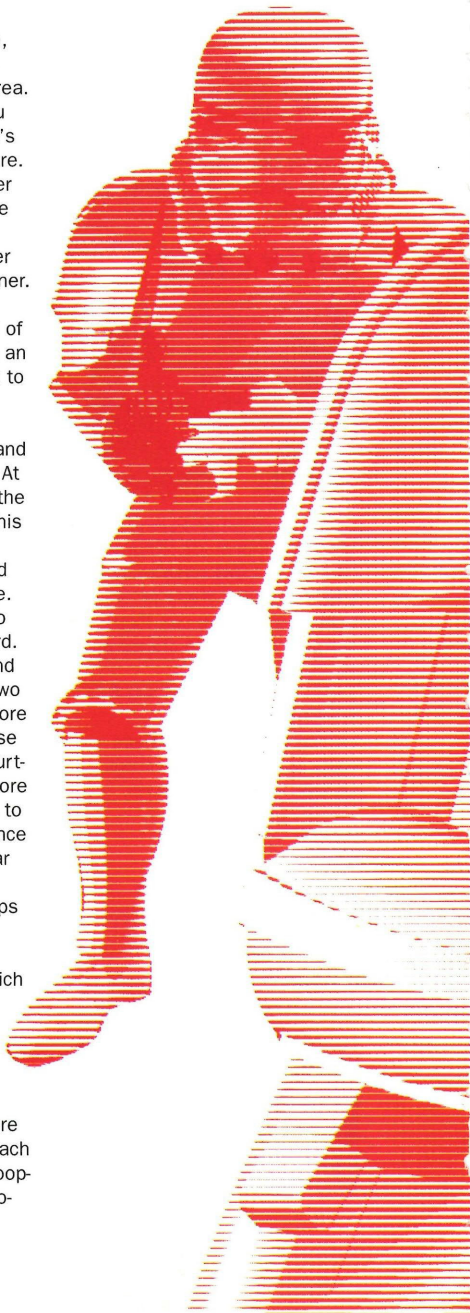


Turn right, blast the officer and proceed to the next corner. Turn left and blast the stormtrooper. Go to the end of the hallway and you'll be on an automatic lift that takes you to a lower level. Be ready for some serious opposition.

Hug the wall to the right and turn right blasting enemies. At the end turn left and shoot the two officers. At the end of this corridor there are a load of power-ups. Pick them up and blast the troops you can see. Then turn to the right and go towards the central courtyard.

Watch for probe droids and blast the stormtroopers in two openings in the distance. More daunting, however, is a Phase One Dark Trooper in this courtyard. It's best if you can ignore it and head for the stairwell to the right of the openings. Once you've reached the top, clear any troops you may have missed. Collect the power-ups and step onto the different coloured floor at the other side. This is in fact a lift which will take you up to another area. Step off at the top and open the doorway down the corridor.

The area you step into is fraught with danger. There are gun turrets and spotlights each side and numerous stormtroopers appear from a door opposite. Blast them and go to the niche just to the left and then inside. Use the wall for cover as there are many more troopers

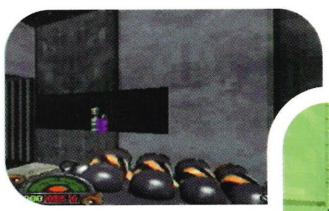


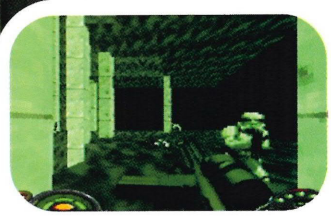
inside. Collect the power-ups and go back outside.

You will see an alcove that contains a blue key across the way. Collect it and make a dash across the courtyard, as this gives you a little advantage over the gun turrets. Use run mode to make a huge leap across a ravine which leads to another door. This is the one which requires the blue key.

As soon as the door opens blast the trooper inside. When you step into the circular room you will discover that it is in fact a lift which goes down another seven levels. Each level is guarded by a stormtrooper who has you set firmly in his sights. You must make it safely to the bottom floor. The lift pauses briefly on each floor allowing you a split second to dispose of the guard and step into his room. From here you can blast other guards you can see. The







switches you see in these rooms bring the lift back up to your level so you can step on and continue down the floors.

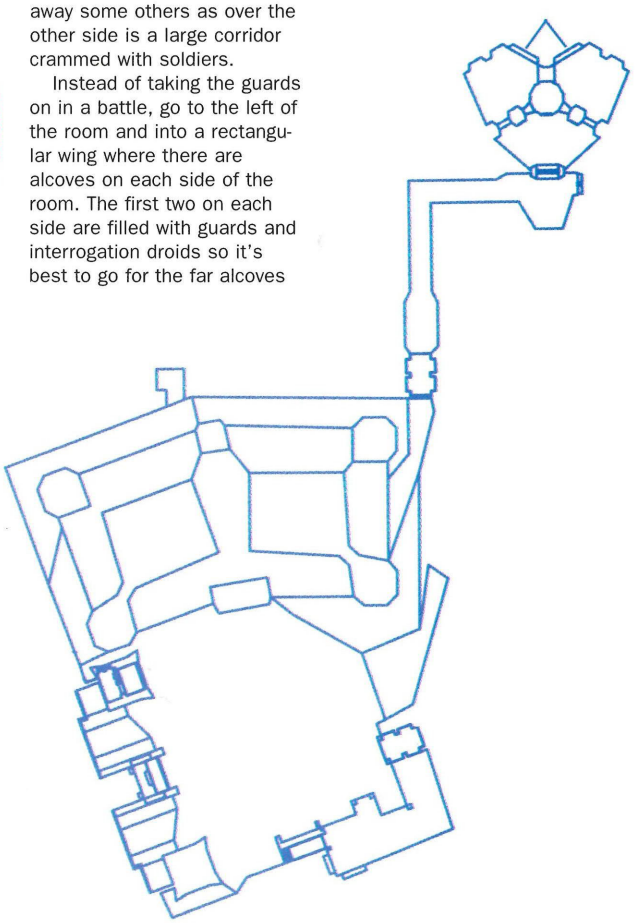
When you've reached the bottom there are guards on both sides, as in every other level. Blast them and go through the door which opens automatically. Get your concussion rifle ready, you're about to meet a Phase Two Dark Trooper. Step backwards through the door which will automatically open again. Blast the DT and wait for the door to close. Open it again and repeat this process until he's disposed of. Blast the probe droids and then rush across to the door opposite which will also open automatically.

Run through and throw a grenade behind the desk. Throw a few more over to clear away some others as over the other side is a large corridor crammed with soldiers.

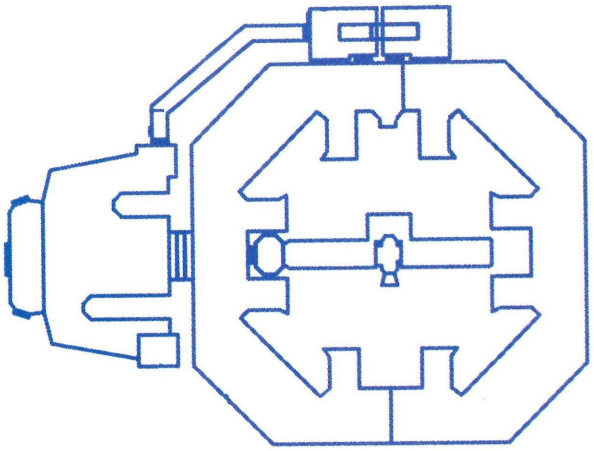
Instead of taking the guards on in a battle, go to the left of the room and into a rectangular wing where there are alcoves on each side of the room. The first two on each side are filled with guards and interrogation droids so it's best to go for the far alcoves first to collect the power-ups. Blast the enemy, if you fancy, and go back to the centre core and find the red door.

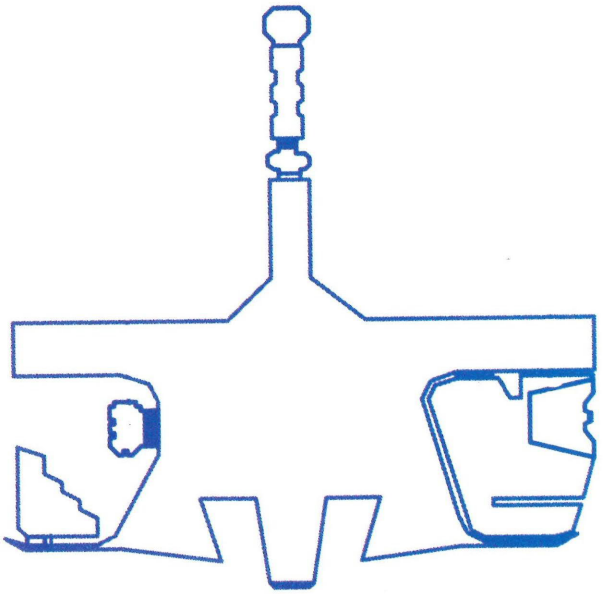
The lift takes you up to another level and ahead of you there will be two doors. Time for more power-ups. Don't go through the doors, explore around the area. Here you'll also see a door which requires a red key. Once you've collected the power-ups go back to the double doors and through the one on the right. Shoot the officer.

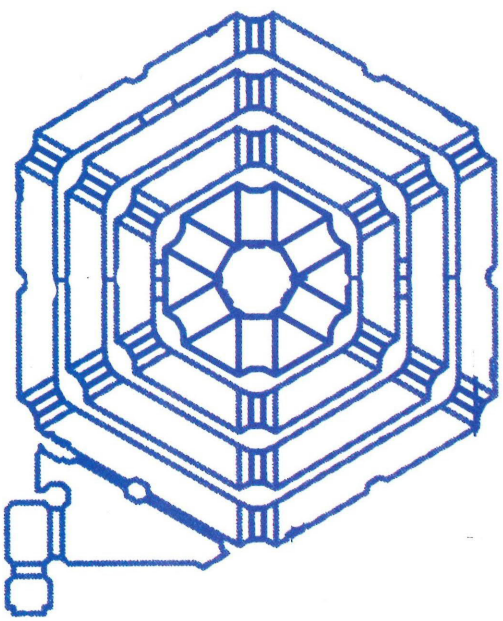
On the other side of the block you see is a switch which you must crouch to reach. It needs to be activated twice and moves the block into the other ▶



Dark Forces *Part 3*







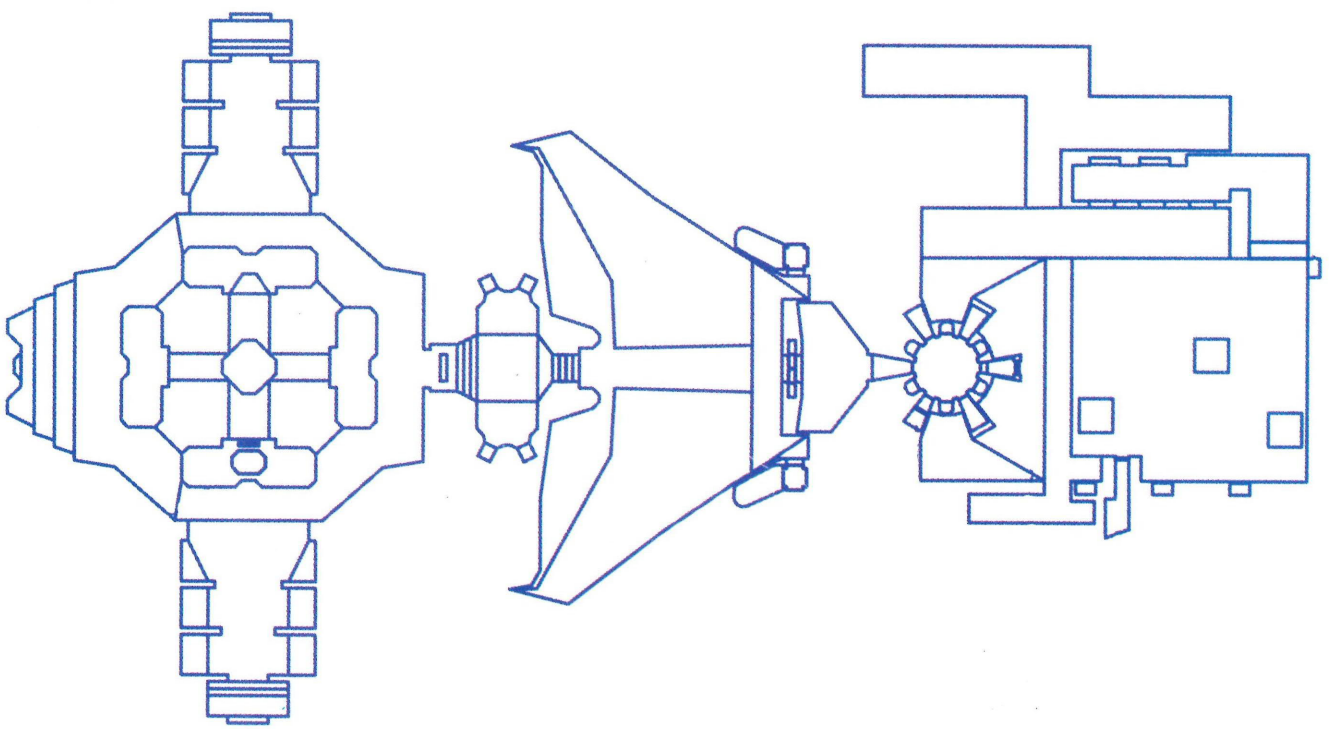
▶ room. Don't forget to pick up the power-ups. Go out and into the other door. Shoot the officer and collect power-ups. Flip the switch in the corner and it will open an air duct above you. Hop onto the block and use speed mode to jump into the duct.

Switch your head lamp on and look around until you find a switch. Flip it and it will open a panel ahead. You can now drop into another room which contains the red key. It also contains the DT weapon. Pick them both up and flip the switch which opens another door that will bring you out just near to the door which requires your new key. Open the door and step onto the lift.

As soon as you step off, blast the probe droid just ahead and walk around the pit from where it emerged. At the other side of this ledge is another lift. This time you will descend. Blast the two droids and continue down the corridor to another lift. Back up you go. You will emerge in a courtyard.

Ignore the droids and troops and make a run for it to the left and you should see another door. Inside the door there are officers and, more disturbing, a Phase Two DT. You must flip the switch at the other side of the room and get out of there after using your defensive skills to blow the DT away. Using the wall near the window gives you some cover.

Turn left as you leave this room and you'll see another red door which has just appeared. Go into the door and the lift will take you down several levels. Shoot the droid you see immediately and then take out the guards in the room. This room contains the nava computer you're looking for. You must now solve the switch puzzle to open up the hexagon



around the data tapes.

First you must find the centre of the hexagon by locating the openings in the corridors. To do this you must first open every door in the outer corridor. The first switch is in a corner. Switch it several times and you'll see the lights on the switch change. Make sure the top position is black and the other two are red.

This opens a door to your right. Shoot the trooper here and go to the switch here. Make the lights match those on the first switch. This opens yet another door to your right. Blast the guards. Use this method for all the switches and then head back to the first switch you configured. Then go back to the sixth switch and make your way back around to the left using these switch settings:

1 Red Red Black
6 Red Red Black
5 Red Red Black
4 Red Black Red
3 Red Black Red
2 Black Red Red

All the switches are now set and you should be at switch 2. Turn right and go back the way you came. The next compartment should have an opening to the right. Go inside but stay alert for enemy soldiers and continue in the same direction. After a couple more compartments you will see another opening on the right. Go down here and continue until you reach a dead end. The opening to your right is where you need to be.

You should emerge in a room containing three switches. Blast the opposition and then flick the switches. The floor should drop and you've cracked the vault. Once the floor has dropped, find an elaborate console and flip the two switches before flipping the centre area also. The nava computer is activated. A door to the left of the left switch opens and reveals the data tapes. Take them and get out of there.

As you take the tapes the door behind you opens and you must blast the two troops you see. Go in and pick up the power-ups. Locate the corridor leading off this room, kill the defenders and step onto the lift at the end.

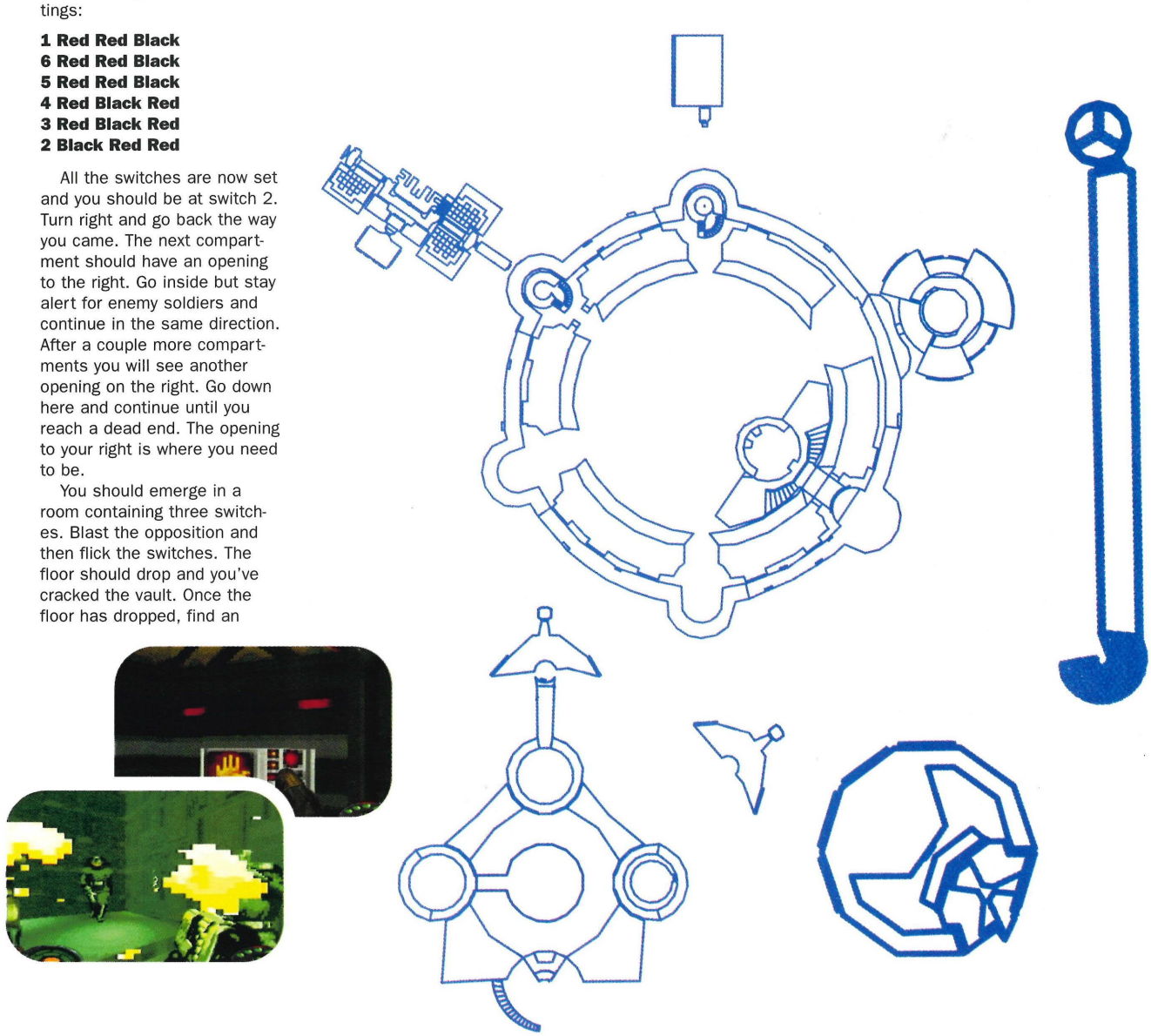
When you step off the lift, take a hard right and continue until you come across the first opening on the wall. Go in the opening onto a lift. At the top go straight ahead and go right at the first wall you hit and then left at the next and then right. You should now go left and up the stairs to find your ship. Unfortunately for you it isn't there... Boba Fett is! The toughest battle of the game will ensue.

He's fast and can also fly around so you must find a way to counter his speed. If you use the auto gun this will stop him in his tracks and then you can use conventional methods afterwards to finish him off. Claymores are also a good idea as you back out of trouble. Boba occasionally stumbles onto them, but don't expect too much. Another handy hint is to get out of the landing bay and use cover for the battle and get some distance between the two of you. These are your best options. Once Boba Fett is dead your ship returns and you can get out of this enormous city level.

MISSION 12

From where you begin there's only one exit so head there. Flip the switch which brings the arm around so you can go onto the fuel station. It also closes a door behind you and opens the one ahead. Go through and open the door at the other side. This leads to a lift. Hop on after blasting the guard and be ready for more action at the top.

Blast the enemies at the summit and collect power-ups before heading downstairs to a lower level. As you reach the bottom of the stairs in the corner there is a weapons supercharge hidden amongst the units. You need to jump over them and then turn around to open the door. As usual there's ▶



Dark Forces *Part 3*



opposition just the other side.

When you enter go right around the corridor and be ready to greet enemies in their canteen. You'll see a doorway on your left and beyond this is a blasting fest inside the canteen. It's crammed with Ree-Yees, Gamorrean Guards and others so consider yourself warned. The first officer you come across has a present for you in the form of a blue key. There are also plenty of power-ups around on ledges and on the corpses of wasted enemies so be sure to pick them up.

Back at the entrance to the cantina you should go left until you see a large door on your right. It opens automatically so be ready to blast the Gamorrean guards and Ree-Yees as it opens. Once these have been cleared take either of the stairways up and blast enemies away.

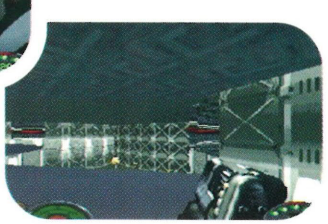
The circular corridor has some opposition for you to tackle as you go around so blast them away and find the switch. Flick the switch. This moves a walkway around so you can make your progress. As you go onto the walkway you should be able to see a red switch beneath a control room and this is your next destination. Go behind the switch you used to bring the walkway round and step into the lift shaft to go down.

Use the lift to go onto the lower level and shoot the opposition you see in the distance. You must now flip the switch under the control room and get back up to the walkway before it moves back around. This means you can get across to the other side and into the control room.

Blast everyone you see, collect the extra life and then flip the switch inside and get back on the walkway. You will end up at a new control room and should blast the guards as you make your journey there. Blast guards, collect power-ups and then flip the switch and get back onto the walkway which will take you to the last control room. Blast the tough guard, wait and see which he is and then go inside and through to the door at the back. You'll now be on a lift so go with it.

At the top is a long corridor, have your weapon ready to blast the lone guard at the end. Go up the stairs and into the room at the top containing two stormtroopers and two officers. Blast them and the blue key opens the large door in the centre. Collect the power-ups and the assault cannon. Exit and go through either of the doors on each side of the large door. These both lead to the main control room.

Kill guards and flip the switch under the map. Turn around and you'll see a rotating arm moving from the docking bay holding your ship to the bay containing the smuggler ship. Head back to the rotating walkway and pass it to the main circular corridor. When you enter the first sliding door of the corridor go right and follow the corridor until you come across another sliding door on your right. Open the door and blast the two commandos inside and go up the stairs.



Blast enemies as you climb.

At the top of the stairs is a lobby, collect power-ups. Because the arm has been moved you can now go through an open door and onto a lift. Flip the switch and you will go down to the docking bay level.

Go down the corridors but be ready for a fierce attack as you open the second door. Cross the corridor and enter the next door. Take a left and then a right down the main corridor of the ship. Get down the corridor as quickly as possible and only blast enemies if you feel you need to.

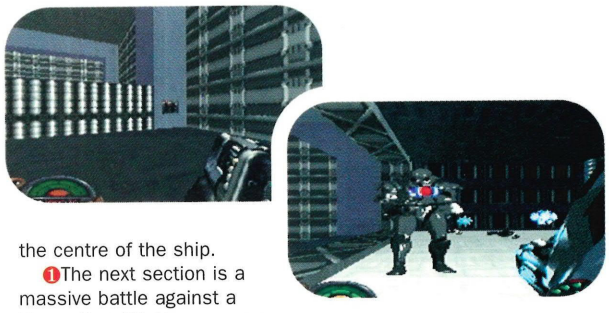
At the other end open the door and blast the officer ahead as he holds the yellow key. Turn around and go back to the first corridor. Go into the opening on the right and find a few stairs leading down. The door at the bottom requires the yellow key. You will emerge in the mission directive room where you need to flick the switch which leads to Kyle switching on your ship's engines.

MISSION 13

The ship you stole in the last level is your starting point for your mission as it lands in a new docking bay. As you try to leave be ready to get away from the door as a claymore will be triggered as you open it. Run through the room you come across and down the stairs.

At the bottom of the stairwell you will come to a lift which takes you into the Executor. Blast the troopers and the officers on a ledge above you and to your left. Leave the switch to your left for now and head to the short tunnel. Blast the officers and whilst still inside the tunnel shoot the stormtroopers on a platform up ahead. Cross the room and flip the switch. Don't yet get on the platform which lowers, instead turn and blast the stormtroopers on another ledge.

Move to a white walled corridor on the right and blast the troopers. Step into the next room. This lowers a platform. Flip the switch on the right first and go into the next room. Go through a short tunnel which brings you out into the next room. Blast all the defenders. Find the switch in a corner and flip it to bring a lift down. Get on the lift, flip the switch and up you go. As soon as you reach the top be ready for some serious blasting. Clear the area and then proceed to the right as you head towards



the centre of the ship.

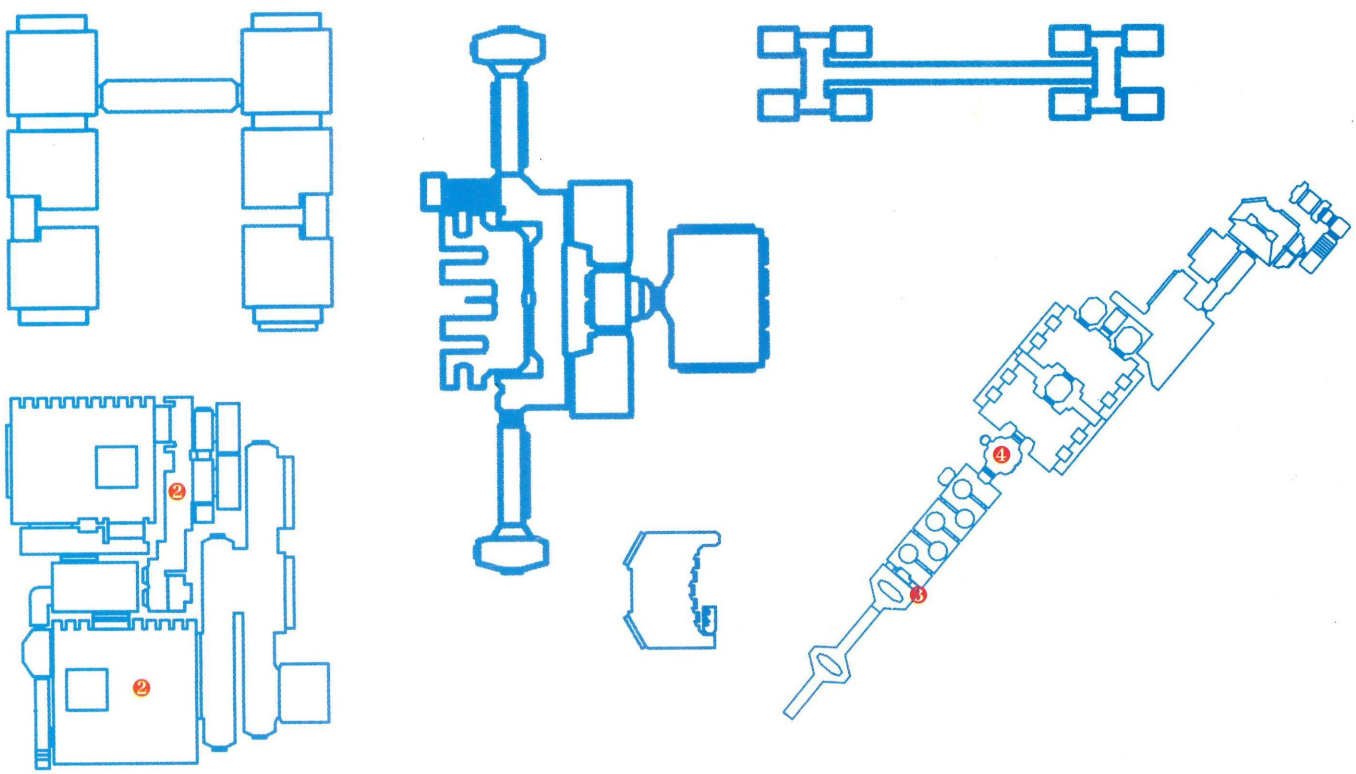
❶The next section is a massive battle against a Phase Two DT. Use your arsenal to take him out of the contest. Along the walls of the large room are some power-ups so stock up for the battles ahead. Open the door to the left of the pit and step inside to take more power-ups and an extra life. Go out again and open the large door you can see above you. Get onto the lift to the left of the switch and rise to the open door. Waste the troopers and go left.

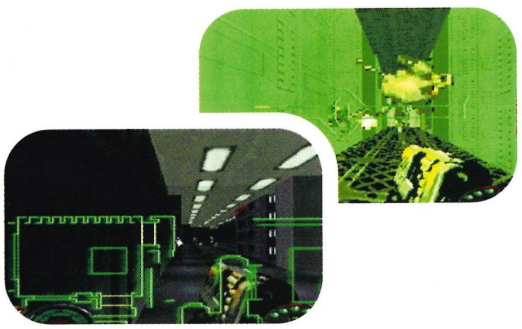
Find a door and enter the room. Flip the switch next to the window and this opens the large door which you just came through if you fancy going back down to the dark trooper room. Go back out into the other room and open the large door. Shoot the officer, go to the window on your left. Throw some grenades down to damage the resistance as this is where you're going to be heading. On the other side of the balcony hop onto the lift.

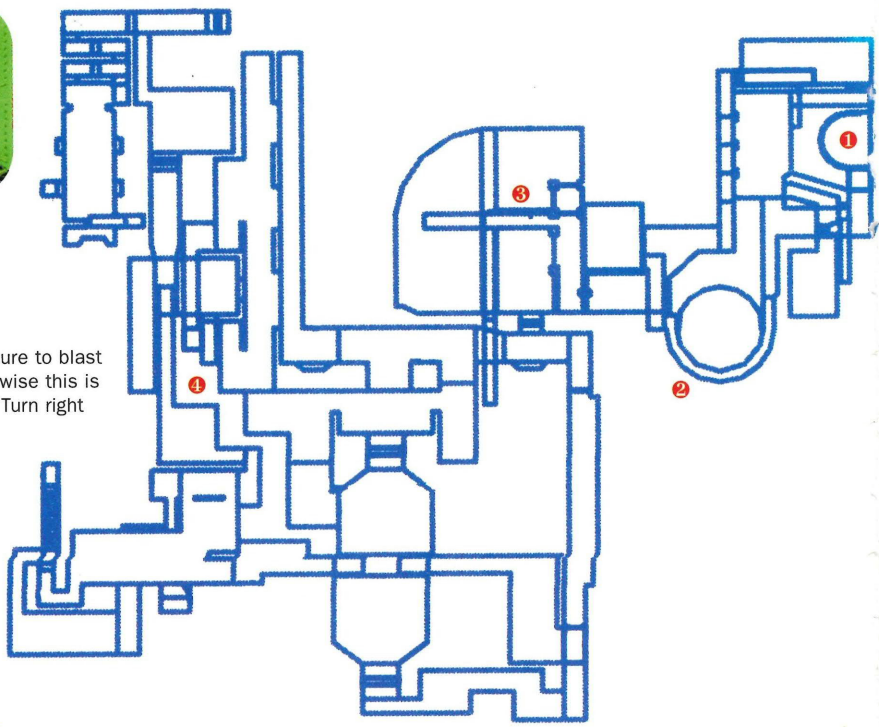
Clear any stragglers from the bottom and collect the power-ups. On the right hand side of the room is another lift. Get onto it. Be ready for the greatest resistance you'll encounter at any stage in the game as it reaches the top.

❷Down the far end of the corridor you'll see the opposition so head into the area on the right and use this for cover as you blast the enemies aside.

Once you've cleared them head down the corridor and turn left to collect the power-ups from the three rooms. At the end of the corridor where the stormtroopers were is another lift. Ride the lift to the next floor. The long metallic walkway at the top is where you should be heading but be ready for probe droids attacking ▶







from the side and the commandos ahead.

As you move around the tank you'll end up on another walkway. Use the walls for cover and blast the probe droids. Run down the walkway and around yet another tank. You should come across a lift on the right as you pass the last tank. Shoot the defenders as you reach the opening and don't get on the lift just yet. Head to the left and through another opening. ❸ Once you've cleared the defenders head for the lift and up you go. You now need to do running jumps across five islands without falling. It's not too tricky.

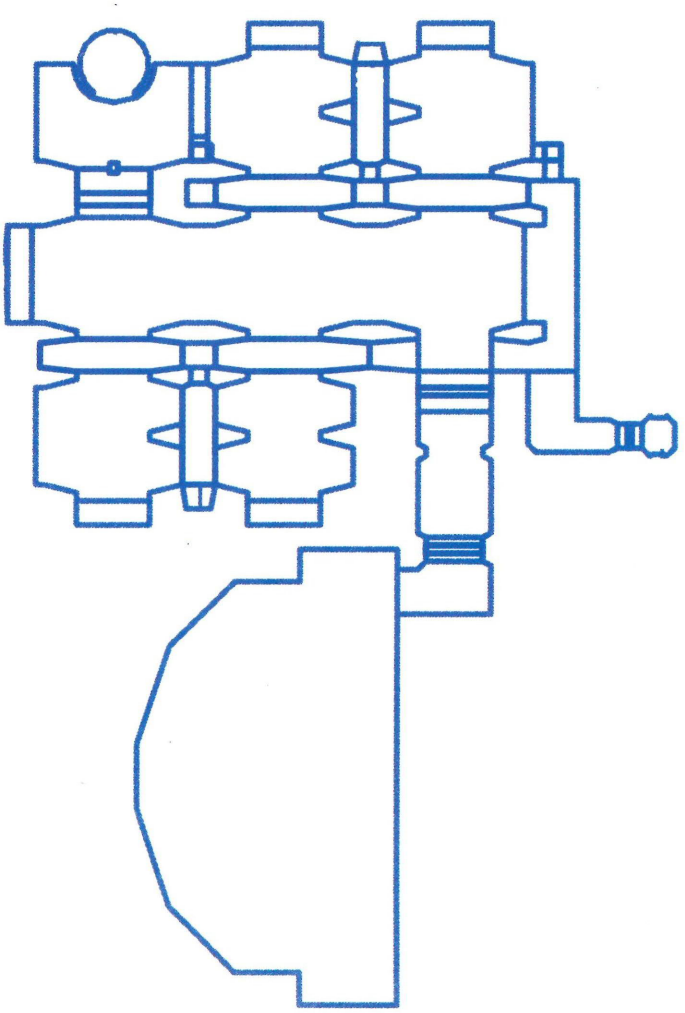
There's a switch on the last column which opens a panel to the left. Power-ups ahoy! Once you've collected them jump back onto the platform and onto another platform. ❹ The room behind the door contains a few troops to take care of. If you feel like taking a left before the door at the other end you can go down on a lift and blast the officers. Go across the room and into the opening to collect yet more power-ups.

❺ Then head back to the lift and up to the door you ignored before. The area contains three more doors with a Phase Two DT behind each one. You should know how to cope by now. After you've killed the first one you'll emerge in another room which has two doors and has the other two DTs inside. Once these are wasted a door between the lairs opens. You will now enter the shuttle bay.

Blast the troopers and interrogation droids. Go across the room to flip a switch in the corner. Find the exit and go through to another room with more enemies to blast away. Flip another switch here and the shipping container will move into the launch bay. Exit this room and you'll emerge in a room containing two switches. Flip the left one first and then the right. be sure to blast enemies first otherwise this is a bit of a problem. Turn right from the switches and to the launch bay door.

Blast the interrogation droid and head down the steps to another door. Waste the guards outside and go through the door to complete the mission.

MISSION 14



❶ From the start make a jump onto the ledge in front of you. Get ready to blast the enemy as you open the door. There's only one opening here so go for this. You will be able to see a red door and this is where you need to be going, but first, you must create a ledge to get to it.

Jump off the ledge to your right and kill the commandos. Go through the red door in the corner. When you return later these soldiers will have regenerated so be warned.

Find a small doorway as you wander the corridors, blast the guards in the room and go ahead as far as possible. ❷ As you sneak around a corner you'll see a thin walkway guarded by stormtroopers. Jump on them and thwart their plans. The arm in the centre of the room can also zap you so it's best to take it out with the plasma cannon.

Once you've cleared the resistance go across the walkway into a corridor and into a room. Shoot the defenders and flip the switch in the corner. This brings up the ledge to the red door. On the way back go onto a lift to your right and you will be taken back upstairs. As you exit the lift you should blast the troops across the way to save time and effort later.

Cross over the walkway

you've raised to the red door. Enter the door with all guns blazing. ❸Continue through until pass through some double doors. In the room below you disturb two Phase One DT and a Phase Two DT. You will come across a dark corridor with a dark room at the end which houses some power-ups. There are three ceiling turrets inside, which if you run into without switching your lights on won't react to your presence until it's too late.

Once you've taken care of the Dark Troopers a door opens automatically. Go through and turn right. Watch for an attack from behind as up ahead you are about to meet another Phase Two DT. The door behind the DT is your next destination but for now you must dispose of the attacking DT. Before flipping the next switch go down the corridor after jumping up to a different level near to the switch.

At the end of the corridor is a large jump you need to make once the switch is activated. Flip the switch which opens the door where the DT was and run and jump over the gap and through before the door closes. If you fancy taking the Phase Two trooper out before jumping over, you can do so by crouching before jumping and it makes things much simpler.

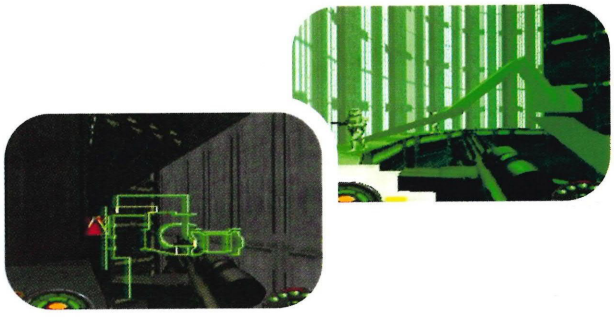
After the DT has been disposed of it opens another door which allows you to exit. ❹On the other side of the exit are some corridors you must wander down before you come across another lift. Step on and up you go. You will pass through a darkened room onto a walkway. Cross it and enter the next room. At the end of this room there's an opening to a stairwell down a corridor. Shoot the commando and the officer and go up the stairs. At the top of the stairs is a switch which you need to activate. Quickly turn and go up the stairs which rise before they drop again.

Follow the corridor, blasting the opposition along the way. In the dark room at the top, lob a grenade in to clear the opposition before jumping up. Switch your lamp on and make a running jump onto the opposite ledge. When you reach the ledge walk along into a small room. From this room you can see a switch to your right (this opens a secret door near where you killed the last DT – it contains plenty of power-ups) and another ledge across on the left. You need to make a huge jump to this ledge. Throw over a detonator before you go to kill a commando across the way. If you don't feel confident, you can land on a tiny ledge to the right before leaping across to the opposite ledge.

Next, make a small jump down into a darkened room and shoot defenders. Go into the lightened area after sniping guards from a distance. As you continue head past the two dark doorways on your left. Blast the guards ahead on the other side of the room and go through into another corridor.

The red door ahead is your next destination, but you must find a way to open it. Turn around and there will be a small area you can crouch to go into. Go in and follow the winding corridor. As you reach the end there's a room with ceiling turrets in so blast these before you jump down. In the room blast the switch and it clears the way so you can set the first charge. Two to go.

Turn around and get on the lift and head back through the corridors and to the red door which will now be open. Kill the defenders and get on the lift. When it reaches the bottom go



through the room filled with commandos and an interrogation droid. Follow the room round, take a left and then take another left.

You emerge in a darkened room with pistons moving, so you need to get on the single block on the left and onto the ledge next to it. Make a running jump onto another block across the way. From this block you can cross over the next three piston blocks onto more solid ground after shooting the defenders.

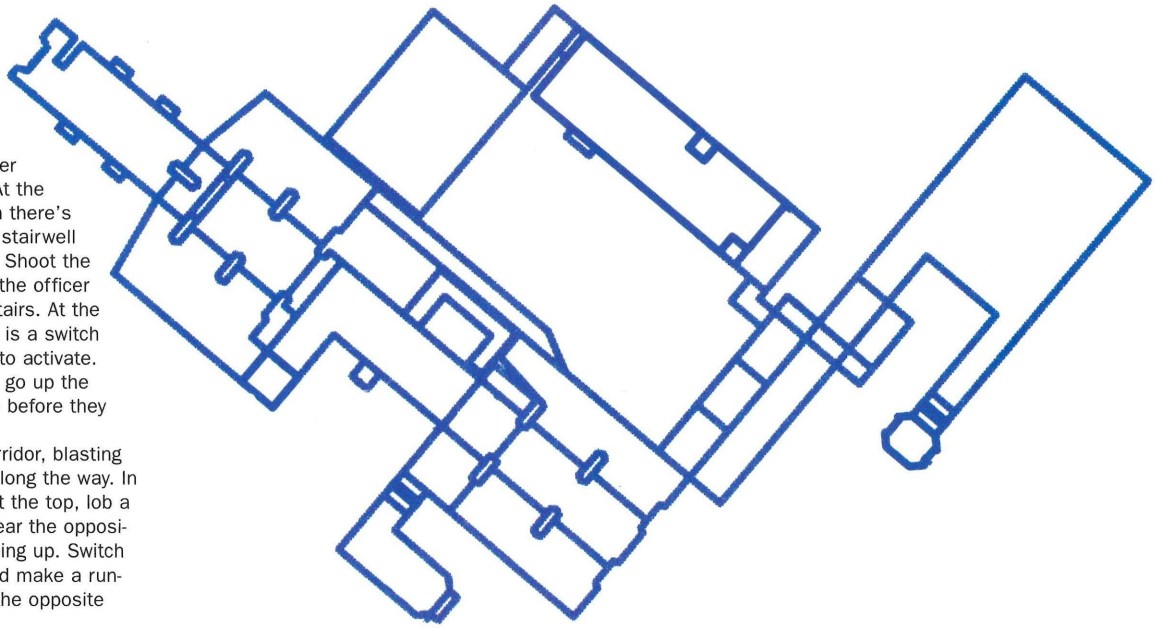
At the end of the platform is another red door. this is locked so you need to turn around and make a running jump to a ledge on the other side. When you are on the ledge turn to the left and open a false wall. Beyond are some power-ups and at the end of this you can see some more goodies ahead. Jump across, then turn and lob a few detonators down to kill some troops before dropping down. Explore the area until you come across a low ledge. Turn left here and find the lift which takes you back upstairs.

As you step off the lift blast the stormtroopers and head over to that end of the platform. Go across the near corner of this opening and into the next room. The next room has two Phase One DT, so blast them away as you have plenty of times before and place your second sequencer charge.

As you get back to the opening, go left this time and onto the conveyor belt. You will be taken back to the platform near the piston blocks. Jump across the gap to the platform and head back to the red door which will be open since you've placed the second charge. Battle your way through the room and get ono the lift to take it downstairs.

It opens in a huge room crammed with defenders which you need to take out of the proceedings. Blast the barrels to find the next door. Go through the door and to the right to a conveyor belt at the end of the platform.

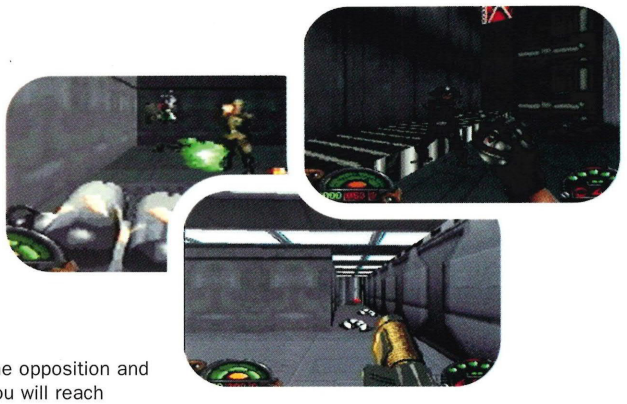
Jump onto the conveyor belt ▶

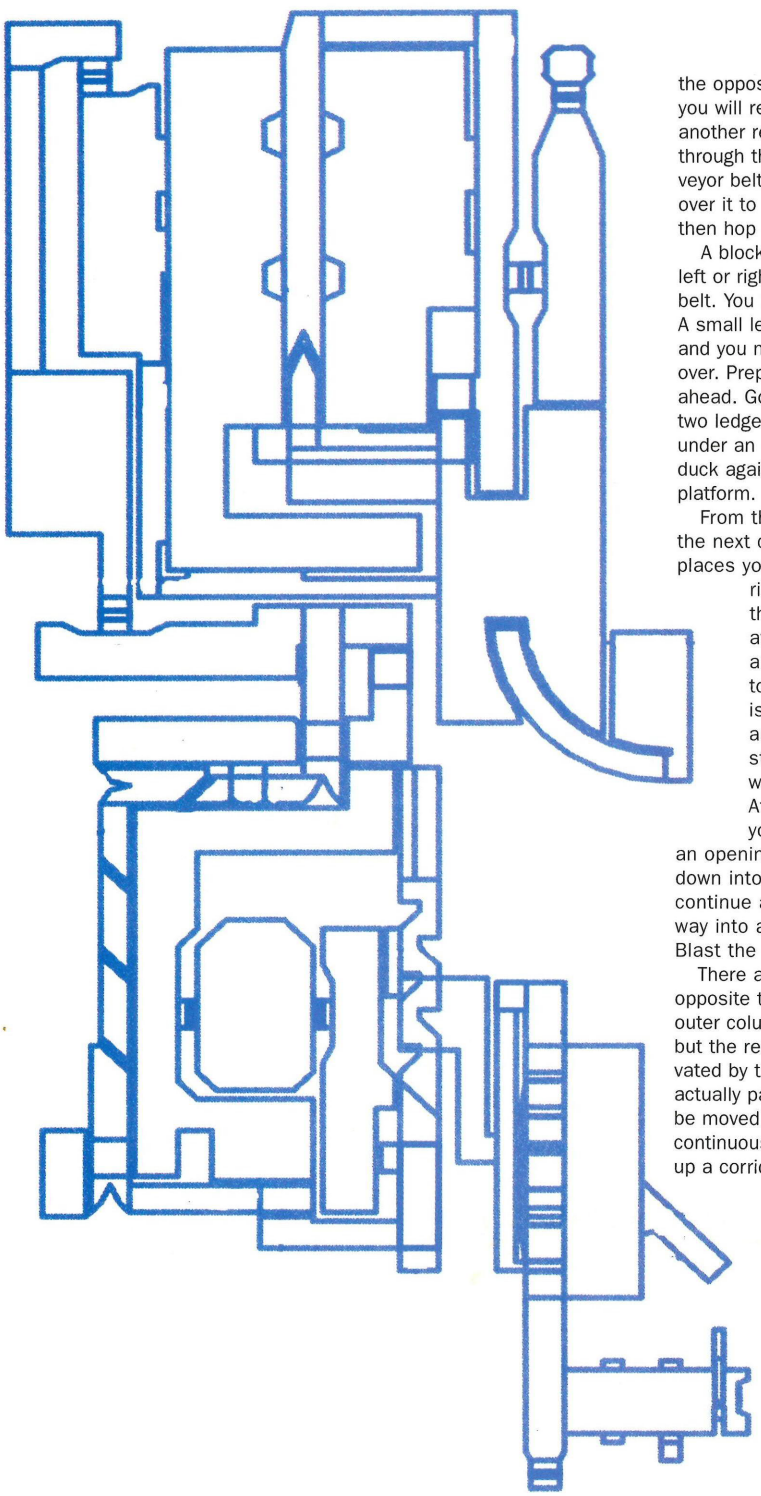


Dark Forces Part 3

and crouch immediately as it turns left or you'll be swept off course by the hood. Run also so you have less chance of being sniped at. In the room you reach blast the stormtroopers and find the door which leads to the next conveyor belt. When you get onto the belt, shoot the red switch to your right. you must hit it or you're dumped downstairs onto a waiting claymore. If you're successful a door around the next corner opens.

You will emerge in another room with commandos inside to greet you. Inside is a red door. Go through and pass through the next room blasting the opposition and you will reach another red door. Go through this also. Find the conveyor belt to the left. Jump over it to collect power-ups and then hop onto the belt.





A block pushes you either left or right when you're on the belt. You must go to the right. A small ledge blocks the way and you must immediately leap over. Prepare for a tricky path ahead. Go left and jump over two ledges, crouch to duck under an overpass. Go left and duck again to reach a small platform.

From the platform go onto the next conveyor belt which places you onto a lift which rises. as it reaches the top crouch to avoid an overhang and go with the belt to the end. At the end is a switch. Activate it and the belt is stopped. Turn and walk back up the belt. After a short distance you will come across an opening on the right. Go down into the corridor and continue as you make your way into a switching room. Blast the defenders.

There are seven columns opposite the switches. The outer columns can't be moved but the remaining five are activated by the switches, and are actually panels which need to be moved until they form a continuous line which opens up a corridor upstairs. Leave the switch room the way you entered and continue until you come across a wall. Go right and down the corridor into a lift which takes you up.

At the other end of the corridor in the distance are some commandos who are followed by a couple Phase One DTs. Either blast your way through or dodge like you never have before. You need to open the red door by setting your third charge. to do this you need to blast the switch which is partially blocked behind the second piston on the right.

You can now set the charge and go back to the red door, blast the interrogation droids and step onto the lift. Activate the hand switch and the lift will drop into the final area where the final battle will take place.

Across the way are two Phase Two DT. Blast these and down below are six doors. Four of the doors have switches on them and will open to reveal more Dark Troopers. The last door on the right is the door which leads to the final confrontation – with General Mohc. This door opens automatically after you've dealt with the other Dark Troopers.

You need to lure General Mohc in his Phase Three trooper suit into the large centre area where he becomes an easier target. Try to find cover and blast him from a distance. Distance is your greatest chance against this tough foe, so when he fires his rockets you have time to blast them. They're relatively slow so you get a good chance. if one connects however you're in big trouble.

Once he's been disposed of, an exit door will open automatically and you must go through. Kill the officer and your escape vehicle awaits. Congratulations, the Alliance have been saved. Until the next time of course.

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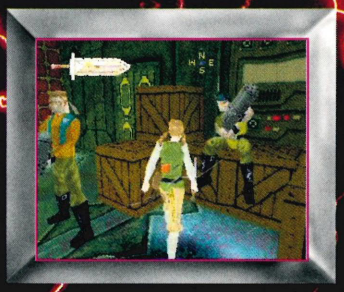
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Dear PlayStation Pro

I am writing to regarding David Murdoch of Clydebank's letter as to whether Datel's Action Replay is worth the money. I say yes for one good reason; because it gives you a cheat for infinite money for the GDI missions.

Just enter 8011BA10 2000 and to see all the maps without exploring, press and hold these buttons on the title screen at the same time – L1, L2, R1, R2, square, circle. Press start and choose either password or new game. Don't release any of the buttons until the level has loaded up or you have to do it all again. For powerful weapons on Soviet Strike enter DAVEDITHER on the password screen.

P.S. Any cheats for Olympic Soccer?

Stewart McSorley, Glasgow

PRO *Thanks for the codes, Stewart. If more of you are interested in the Datel Action Replay, write in and we might just be able to feature a regular listing service of the latest codes. There aren't any 'cheats' as such for Olympic Soccer, but the guide we published in last month's free supplement for Soccer '97 applies equally to Olympic Soccer.*

Dear PlayStation Pro

I love your mag and have every issue apart from issue two. I was wondering if you could give me the addresses of the popular software companies (Psygnosis, Sony, Namco, Interplay, Lucasarts, Electronic Arts and Codemasters). The reason I am asking is because I have an idea for a game which could put the PlayStation crash bang at the top of the gaming charts. I have a game designer but I need to find out how much copyrighting costs, and if I will need a software house to create a game.

If anyone wants to know this idea you will probably find out in a couple of years. But until that time, later!

Gregory Kodikara, London

PRO *We'll gladly supply you with the addresses you require so long as you tell us what your idea for the game is. Until that time, later!*

Dear Alex Lee

Now that the PlayStation price has crashed down as low as £114 (Enfield Discount Centre), I am now about to purchase one, so your two pages of Recommends is most appreciated. At the same time as this price crash, the N64 is launched and although you seem to have given this new console a wide berth, the O******I PlayStation magazine has devoted editorial comment to it.

What I find ironic is that before the PlayStation was introduced 18 months ago, we already had a superb 64bit console. No loading, no CDs – cartridge games, same price as PlayStation CDs – the Atari Jaguar, with games like Doom, Alien Vs Predator, Hoverstrike, Wolfenstein etc. We saw the same scenario in the old Betamax days. VHS tape recorders came in and Betamax produce a superior video system. VHS is without doubt inferior, but what do we all end up with? VHS!

The same thing has happened with the Jaguar 64bit console and this has been won over by the 32bit console – the PlayStation. Now we have the launch of the Nintendo N64 as if we never had a 64bit console before! What is the difference between the N64 and the Atari Jaguar? Please enlighten me!

My brother bought an Atari Jaguar when it first came out and then shortly after bought a PC, selling his immaculate Virago motorcycle to pay for it! The redundant Atari Jaguar and cartridges then came in my direction. I must admit I was slightly puzzled to find only 24 levels of Doom on the Jaguar version when my brother had 1000 levels on his PC!

Which brings me onto the subject of Atari's Greatest Hits (just reviewed by you). How on earth can they justify calling this a 'collection' when just a paltry six (48K) games are included? Sixty-six games would be more like it!

M.J. Brown, Surrey

PRO *A letter packed full of valid points, M.J. Most unusual...Let me (this is Alex by the way) address them one-by-one. Although I fondly remember watching the likes of The Burning, Night Of The Demon and Friday The 13th on my mate's Betamax system, I can't remember it being any cop. Especially after my Mam rented a VHS system for the first time – having said that, it was a good three years later.*

Moving swiftly onto the Jaguar vs. N64 debate. Although this is a fiercely dedicated PlayStation mag, it has to be said that the N64's miles better. Look at the hardware – the Jag looks like a Martian commode, whereas the N64 looks to have been manufactured in console heaven.

And the software – like you said, the Jag only had a 24-level Doom to offer. Compare that with the mighty Turok and you'll agree there's no

ouse to create a game'
re vacancy?'

contest. Wolfenstein was no better than the (16bit) SNES version. No console will ever survive if it looks rubbish, has average games and isn't supported by a decent marketing campaign and by the specialist press, regardless of the number of bits. The same thing happened to the 3DO.

You're right, GT can't really justify calling Atari's Greatest Hits a 'collection', although it's unfair for you to say that the games are 48K because they aren't. With hindsight, GT could have concentrated on squeezing more games in rather than take up valuable disc space with FMV interviews of the developers.

Dear PlayStation Pro

My Mam and Dad bought me a PlayStation after seeing your magazine. They bought me Mickey's Wild Adventure and Ridge Racer Revolution. I thought Mickey's Wild Adventure was for kids, but I can't get a game for the grown-ups. My favourite part is Moose Hunters.

My cousin Stephen (another grown-up) borrowed Ridge Racer Revolution two days after Christmas. It must be good, as I haven't seen it since. Can you tell me of any games that the grown-ups won't take off me?

Simon Jobson, Houghton-Le-Spring

PRO *Firstly, well done on being our youngest ever reader (age 7) and secondly, thanks for using a wordprocessor to produce your letter. You wouldn't believe how bad some people's hand writing is. In reply to your query, the only games that the grown-ups won't take from you are rubbish ones such as Extreme Pinball and Street Fighter – The Movie but obviously as they're no good, you wouldn't want them yourself anyway. Next time a grown-up wants to buy you something, ask for a lock and use it to keep your games safe. Remember to hide the key, though. Grown-ups can be ever so devious.*

Dear PlayStation Pro

Your magazine is better than the other PlayStation mags I get. For instance, you have more competitions, more reviews, experienced reviewers and you always call a crap game crap. Could you please answer my questions?

1) What is the worst game out for the PlayStation yet?

2) Which racing game should I get out of these? Porsche Challenge, Rage Racer, Destruction Derby 2 and Wipeout 2097?

3) Who is your favourite Spice Girl? Mine is Mel B, because she has a cute face.

4) I recently sent my CV to you. Are you going to phone me back? Do you have a spare vacancy, because I'm desperate to be in your mag and I know a lot about games!

5) How many magazines are there at IDG Media and will there be one to rival PlayStation Pro e.g. like Saturn Pro or N64 Pro?

Keep up the superb work, and congratulations to Macclesfield for reaching the 3rd division. Great performance by them!

Matthew Bulman, Castleford

PRO *Here are your answers -*

1) The worst game out for the PlayStation has to be BattleStations, closely followed by Street Fighter – The Movie, Penny Racers, Batman Forever and Slamscape.

2) Rage Racer, but the other three are all superb as well.

3) Geri by a mile.

4) We're going to advertise for vacancies at IDG in the national press soon. The number of CVs we receive makes it impossible for us to personally reply to all of them.

5) The mags at IDG Media are – PlayStation Pro (obviously), Parents & Computers, Acorn User, Amiga Computing, PC Home and PC Powerplay. We won't be doing a Saturn mag but we will be doing an N64 title.

By the way Matthew, none of us support Macclesfield. And although Andy lives there, he's a Man United fan (surprise surprise).

Dear PlayStation Pro

I'm a great fan of your mag but, thanks to my stupid local newsagent, I missed issues two, three and four. You see, that's what this letter is all about (well sorta). You see, I was looking through your back issues section when I saw issue three with the cover of Perfect Assassin. I have absolutely no idea what this game is about and I was wondering if you could write back and tell me.

I have also finished the excellent Broken Sword and was thinking of sending it to one of those swap shop places that I've heard of but I don't know of any and was wondering if you could help me out. I was also wondering if I sent you Broken Sword would you send me back one of your games?

I have heard that Andy has a strange haircut and a crap taste in music. Is this true? I want to know because Andy is one of my favourite reviewers. Thanks for reading this (I hope) your most loyal reader.

John Savage, Tipperary

PRO *Perfect Assassin is in the preview section of this very issue. You've probably already read it. If you haven't, what are you waiting for? There are plenty of swap shops advertised in the mag – why not try one of them? Unfortunately we can't swap you any games ourselves – the games we review are on gold discs which are only compatible with blue PlayStations.*

Andy has got a strange haircut and a crap taste in music, but don't let that upset you. He's chuffed that you like his reviewing style, because we were on the verge of sacking him until your letter arrived, giving him an 11th hour reprieve from the dole queue.

Dear PlayStation Pro

I am writing with reference to Sean O'Kane's letter in the May issue. In it he asks about football management games and you reply by saying Championship Manager 97 from Eidos is next due for release which brings me to my query. If you have any information on CM97 can you tell me

a) When, roughly, it will be released?

b) Will it be similar to the PC version (will there be anything missing or added)?

If you do not have any info, can you tell me how I can find out (Eidos' phone number for instance). I look forward to your reply.

Paul Reed, Southampton

PRO *Having just spoken to Eidos' premier PR gadgie Steve Starvis, we can officially report the following. There won't be a version of Champ Manager '97 for the PlayStation, but there will be a version of Championship Manager All Stars. Due out early next year, you can pick players from any time in recent history, as far back as the '50s, and do battle under the name of any recognised footballing country in a superleague. So you can look forward to picking an England side including, say, Seaman, Keegan and Charlton.*

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.



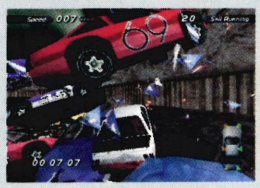
MICRO MACHINES V3

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.



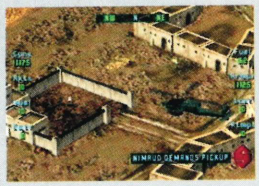
WIPEOUT2097

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 2
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!



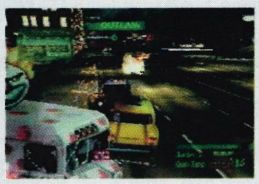
FINAL DOOM

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.



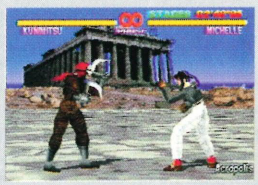
TEKKEN 2

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.



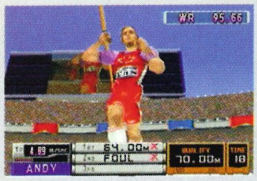
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

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.



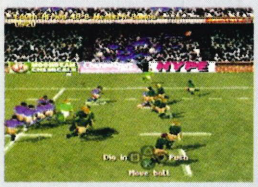
SMASH COURT TENNIS

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.



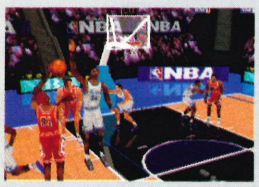
SOCCER 97

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:

ISS PRO
MADDEN 97
ACTUA GOLF
STRIKER 96
NBA JAM EXTREME
NHL POWERPLAY

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.



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.



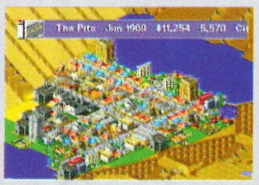
CARNAGE HEART

Mech making made easy! Or something like that, as Sony take you on a top secret technical mission in order to build the best robot death bringer on the block! It's mad!



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.



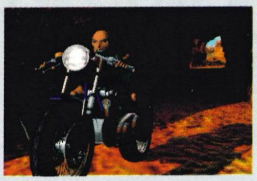
SIM CITY 2000

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

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.



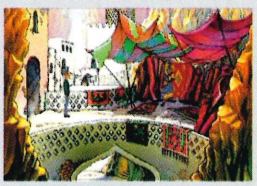
RESIDENT EVIL

Zombie-squashing horror quest from Capcom that started a videogaming revolution. Choose between two heroes as you wander a huge mansion battling the undead.



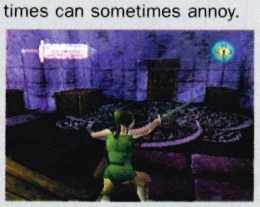
LEGACY OF KAIN

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.



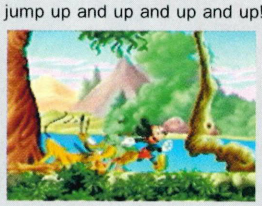
RAYMAN

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:

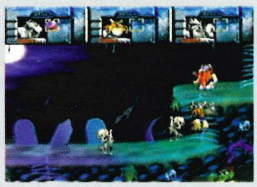
BLACK DAWN
GUNSHIP 2000
AGILE WARRIOR

PUZZLE



SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2

Officially the best puzzling block moving game around!



LOST VIKINGS 2

An excellent comedy adventure with bags of puzzling mayhem.

Also recommended...

BLAST CHAMBER
BUBBLE BOBBLE
BUST A MOVE 2

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

Next Month



Enormous E3 Report

We bring you the entire Christmas PlayStation line-up, direct from the Electronic Entertainment Expo at Atlanta, Georgia

Fantastic Four

We claim the rights to the exclusive review of Marvel Comics' most marvellous quartet in fearsome pseudo-beat 'em-up

Batman & Robin

Yes, we join in on the countdown to the next Batman movie and bring you an exclusive preview on the PlayStation conversion

Wreckin' Crew

Finally Telstar's long awaited 'daft laugh' racing game will be with us for the full PlayStation Pro review treatment



MDK

Interplay's psychotic shoot 'em-up will be storming our office next month and no doubt demanding some kind of top gaming coverage

Deathtrap Dungeon

Eidos Interactive is in the running to become one of the leading PlayStation software distributors. Find out why when you read this review next month

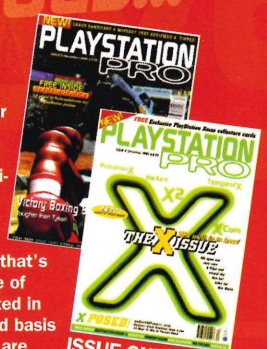
Also Next Issue

- All Star Soccer
- G-Police
- Formula One – Part 2
- Medievil
- Roscoe McQueen
- Depth
- Parappa The Rapper
- Final Fantasy VII
- Air Combat 2
- Super Football Champ

And another fantastic free gift!

Issue 10 out 10th July

Back Issues...



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Issue No.4 **Mechwarrior 2** .....○
Issue No.6 **Total NBA '97** .....○
Issue No.7 **Rebel Assault 2** .....○
Issue No.8 **V Rally** .....○

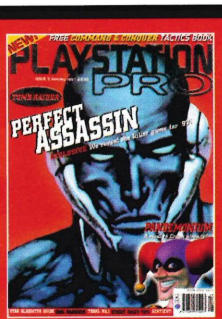
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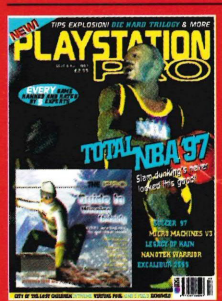
ISSUE THREE
Cover: Perfect Assassin
Contents: Free Command & Conquer tips booklet Pandemonium, Cool Borders, Star Gladiator players guide and a massive complete guide to Tomb Raider



ISSUE FOUR
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!

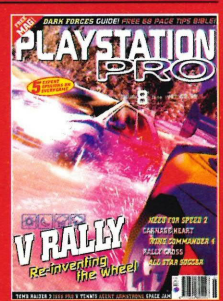




ISSUE SIX
Cover: Total NBA '97
Contents: Free Guide to Winning Unfairly book, Soccer '97, Micro Machines V3, Legacy of Kain, Nanotek Warrior, Excalibur 2555, Jet Rider, Crypt Killer



ISSUE SEVEN
Cover: Rebel Assault 2
Contents: Free Dark Forces players guide, free massive Rebel Assault 2 poster, free 32 page Excalibur 2555 guide, plus Jonah Lomu Rugby, Transport Tycoon



ISSUE EIGHT
Cover: V-Rally
Contents: Free 68-page tips magazine, Need For Speed 2, Carnage Heart, Wing Commander 4, Rally Cross, All Star Soccer, Tomb Raider 2, ISSS Pro, V Tennis

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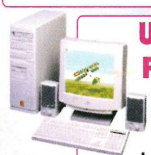
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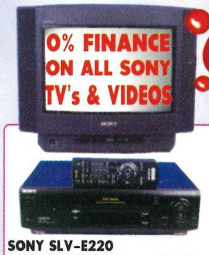
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