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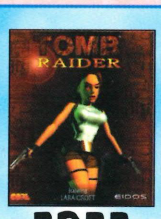
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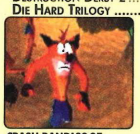


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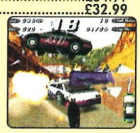


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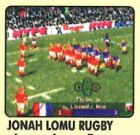
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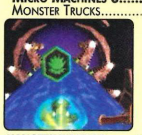


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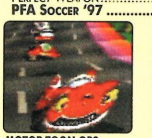


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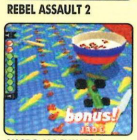
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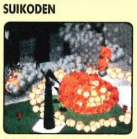
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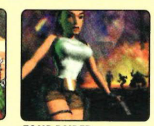


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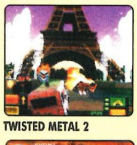


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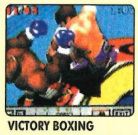
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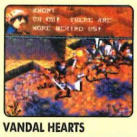
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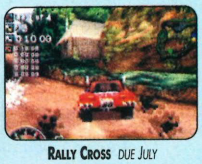
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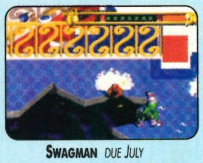
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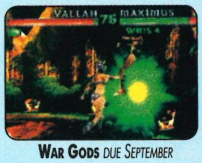
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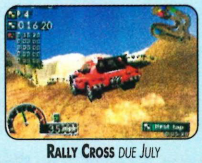
SWAGMAN DUE JULY



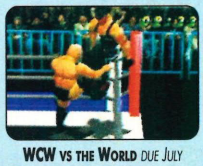
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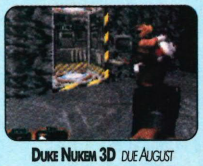
RALLY CROSS DUE JULY



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BATTLE SPORT	16TH JULY
BEDLAM	3RD JULY
BUBBLE BOBBLE 2	1ST AUGUST
BUBSY 3D	18TH JULY
CASTLEVANIA	SEPTEMBER
CAESARS WORLD OF GAMBLING	END JULY
CONQUEST EARTH	11TH JULY
DEATHTRAP DUNGEON	SEPTEMBER
HEAVEN'S GATE	AUGUST
HERC'S ADVENTURE	AUGUST
INDEPENDANCE DAY	4TH JULY
KILLING TIME	END JULY
LETHAL ENFORCERS 1 & 2	AUGUST
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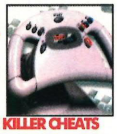


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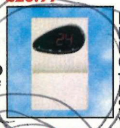


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PLAYSTATION PRO SEPTEMBER 1997

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50 You Looking At My Bra?
Brahma Force: Assault On Beltlogger 9 wins our award for ridiculous title of the year, but the game is far from comical. Check out this exclusive first look!

52 The Return Of Cone Head
Interplay is busy preparing for the launch of one of the most eagerly anticipated titles of the year and we've got the pictures to prove it. Grab an oversized Cornetto, strap it to your face and get ready for MDK

54 Messin' About On The River
Sony's forthcoming racing treat, Rapid Racer, sure looks the business and if you try and imagine wipEout2097 on a raging overflowing river, you're kinda halfway there. This baby rocks!

56 Buoy O' Buoy
As well as MDK, Interplay has numerous other scorching PSX titles in the pipeline for later this year. So just sit back and relax as we go messing about at high speed in the funky looking Power Boat

58 The Time Of Our Lives
Namco. Namco, Namco, Namco. Forget Virtua Cop, Crypt Killer and even the shooty section of Die Hard Trilogy, as Time Crisis, the arcade corker, finally gets an official UK release. With a great big plastic gun too!

60 The EX Files
Capcom remixes the SF2 series just one more time with this amazing polygon 3-D fighting spectacular. Street Fighter EX Plus was one of the big hits at the E3 show last month and we're putting money on this one being massive



62 Skating On Thin Ice
Virgin are dragging back Powerplay Hockey for a 97 remix this month. Wether or not it's any different than the last is revealed inside

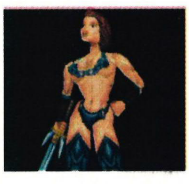
64 Mr Motor-vator
Eutechnyx is responsible for the forthcoming Total Drivin', but before that baby arrives we can all enjoy skidding around town in its Micro Machines-influenced and very entertaining, Motor Mash.

66 Back With A Bang
Kick Off 97 has nothing to do with starting fights in pub carparks, but is in fact a fantastic little football game from the chaps at Anco. So put down that barstool, grab your sports kit and let's play ball



68 Hopping Mad
Remember Frogger? On the Atari VCS? We do and it was absolutely bloody brilliant. Well I can now rejoice as the good old boys at Hasbro have remixed the old "run across the road" formula and brought it kicking and screaming into the '90s. We can't wait!

70 Fanatst Fantastic
Ian Livingston made his name with the hugely popular Dungeons & Dragons books. Now he's a head honcho at Eidos Interactive and his vision of goblins, big swords and giant dragons is about to be converted to the PSX under the guise of Deathtrap Dungeon. And guess what? Yep, it's bloody superb



72 'Saur Losers
Electronic Arts was bigging up its chest with glee last month in Atlanta, as it has secured the biggest movie licence this year. Namely, The Lost World: Jurassic Park 2. And it rocks!

74 Kill 'Em All
Chase criminals around a futuristic city with the aid of either a bike, car or helicopter in Interplay's frantic and in-every-way-chaotic racing shoot 'em up, Crime Killer. You are the law

76 Strike Up The Band
Soviet Strike. What a game. Well now EA has pulled up its socks and developed an even bigger butt-kicking beast than before with the awesome and blood-thirsty Nuclear Strike



78 All Greek To Me
Virgin's favourite affiliate label, LucasArts has pipped Disney to the post with the comedy take on the Hercules legend, Herc's Adventures

80 The Real Sequel
Alex Lee went behind the scenes at Gremlin HQ before he left, and managed to scoop this exclusive interviews with the creators of Actua Soccer 2



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06 News
Scoops, exclusives, gossip and banter can easily be found lurking around our highly informative news pages. This month we feature Gremlin's latest signings, plus the excellent Nightmare Creatures, Hybrid, Spawn, Formula One 97, Jersey Devil, The Blockbuster challenge and lots lots more. Turn the page now!

38 Cover Story: Fighting Force
This month we go behind-the-scenes at Core Design and find out what's hot down in Derby – apart from Lara Croft's gusset. Prepare to be stunned into submission as we big up our chests and do damage with one of the biggest games this year; Fighting Force.



42 Work In Progress: Colony Wars
Psygnosis, as you know, has numerous classy titles all geared up for a Christmas onslaught. This month, we concentrate on just one of them: Colony Wars.

46 Work In Progress: Apocalypse
Activision, the old dog of the gaming industry, has recently signed up Hollywood's Bruce Willis to star in its latest PSX outing. Apocalypse is its name, and we've got all the information you need on it right here, right now. D'ya know what I mean?

88 Back Issues
Lost last month's issue? Forgot to buy issue four? Or has your mate simply stolen several of your prized copies of the best PlayStation magazine around? If so, worry not, you can pump up your collection by sending off a simple form on page 88. So do it

89 Subscriptions
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90 Reader Reviews
This is your chance to showcase your reviewing skills in the best PlayStation mag on the planet. You write the review, we print it, you get famous. It's that simple! So get reviewing

94 Letters
Moans, groans, gripes, comments, general chit-chat and queries should be directed towards our letters page. Now sit up straight and listen to the voice of wisdom, and then act accordingly

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

IDG MEDIA

Playstation Pro was brought to you by: **Editor:** Jay Sharples (jasons@idg.co.uk) **Art Editor:** Jim Eagers **Art Assistant:** Gaz Adams **Reviews Editors:** Steve McNally, Andy Sharp, Dan Whitehead **Contributors:** Hugh Poynton, Duncan Evans, Daz Allen **Production Editor:** Justine Bowden **Managing Director:** Ian Bloomfield **Publisher:** Robin Wilkinson **Circulation Director:** David Wren **Sales Director:** Carol Ann Barrett **Ad Manager:** Lisa Jo Oliver **Ad Executive:** Mark Osborn **Marketing Manager:** Steve Tagger **Scanning:** Mark Forbes **Production Controller:** Barbara Newall **Production Manager:** Alan Capper **Systems:** Nic Moran **PSPro's @ IDG Media** Freepost (SK3038) Macclesfield SK10 4YE **Tel:** 01625 878888 **Fax:** 01625 879967 **October on sale 4th September.**

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16 Vandal Hearts
Hold onto your hats as Konami's most excellent RPG-based strategy battle simulator storms your console, offering loads of swinging swords, magic and other crazy RPG gubbings



20 Test Drive Off Road
Eidos has kept a bit quiet about this one, which, in industry terms, basically means it can't be up to much. However, we'll give it an unbiased review inside nevertheless

24 All Star Soccer
Now we're talking! Strap on your studs and prepare to get dirty with this comedy footballing extravaganza from Eidos. Will it knock Soccer 97 off the top of the league? Find out inside

28 Ball Blazer Champions
Allegedly, it's time to rumble as LucasArts "blast you into a fiery future where the stakes are high and the competition fierce". What are we on about? All is revealed on page 28



30 MegaMan X
The old 16bit blue-suited gimp is back – again! Yes dear old 'Meggas' is here to attempt to thrill the pants off platform game junkies nation-wide. Whether he will or not remains to be seen



32 Xevious 3D/G+
Crazy name, crazy game. Sony unearths another arcade beast from yesteryear, gives it the 3-D treatment and bundles it all up with the original version too. why? God only knows...



34 Ray Storm
It's slightly more impressive than the quirky shoot 'em-up above, but Ray Storm is still yet another coin-guzzler, or indeed an "arcade smash", to be converted to the PSX. Where's the new stuff?



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82 Cheat, Drink & Be Merry
Tune in this month for piping hot portions of Nanotek Warrior, Space Jam, Ball Blazer, VR Baseball and Firo & Klawd, plus there's a sizeable slice of Broken Sword Complete Guide Pie to dig into too

LETHAL TOMB RAIDER & IRRESISTIBLE LARA CROFT



CORE

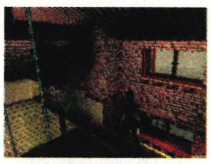
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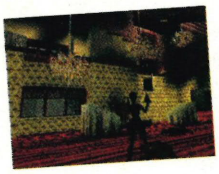
TOMB RAIDER II COMING SOON ON: PlayStation PC CD-ROM

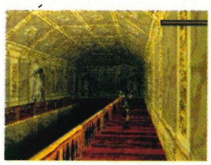
EIDOS INTERACTIVE

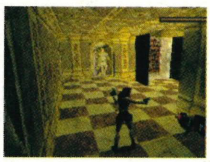
Tomb Raider 2 Update

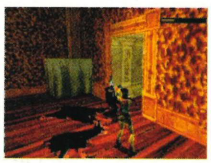














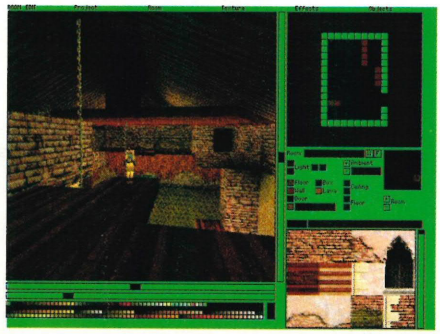
It's been another busy month for our favourite hot-pant wearing goddess. We travelled down to Core Design's Derby-based headquarters to check out the stunning Fighting Force (more details on page 38). We also managed to get the latest on the much-awaited Tomb Raider 2 while we were there.



Lara now has three different costume changes during the course of the new game – from her standard hotpant/rucksack combination, through to the wetsuit section and finally, when the locations start to get a bit colder, she'll pull on a nifty fur-lined flying jacket, as you can see from the pictures that we scooped.

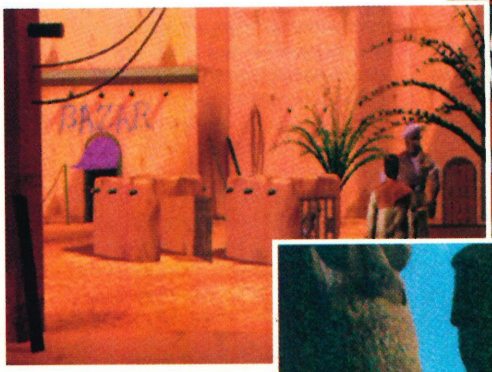
The level editor has come on leaps and bounds, giving the small development team the ability to create new levels and rooms almost instantly. Each level of the game is basically made up of tiny rooms, pieced together and stacked on top of each other.

Background graphics, wall colourings, light positioning and numerous other complex programming devices can now be implemented within minutes, giving the team more time to concentrate on the most important aspect – gameplay. The new locations are looking really nice, with the outdoor Venice levels looking

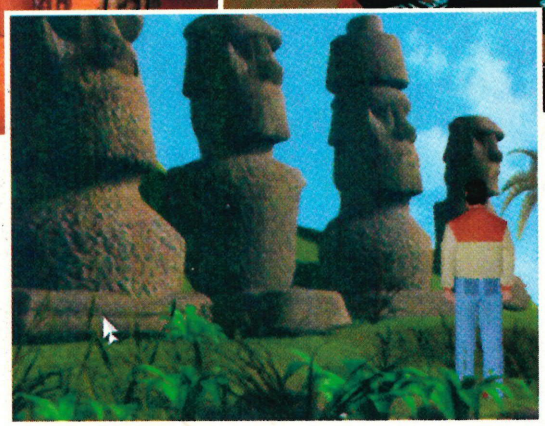


the most impressive at present. Mind you, the underwater sunken ocean liner level that we were "escorted" around was one of the biggest we've ever witnessed and is guaranteed to confuse, annoy and frustrate millions when the game finally gets released this winter. More news on Lara's exploits next issue...

New horizons







From the land of funny fags, tulips and large windmills comes its first games publisher, who is set to release a plethora of PlayStation titles in the latter part of this year and into 1998.

Previously seen by Project 2 Interactive was the visual feast of Strikepoint which was reviewed in the first ever issue of PlayStation Pro. Since then it has been busy snapping up the rights for many other releases and is set to return with at least three more titles before the end of the year.

First up is Ark Of Time, which should hopefully make the shops in September. This is an adventure in every sense of the word revolving around the mysteries of ancient civilisations. You play journalist Richard Kendall and travel to the Rum Cay Islands to search for a missing professor. From here on in you will travel the globe to more than 60 locations.

Next in line is its graphic adventure, Sign Of The Sun, where the future of the world is in your hands. Beamed into the sun's core on your mission, you must prevent the Firons destroying the universe and the human race. The world is fully rendered 3-D and allows full 360 degree character movement. There are over 150 different scenes and, with over three hours of speech included not to mention the specially composed audio soundtrack, it certainly means business.

Initially penned in for a release towards Christmas, Dodgem Arena is the latest in a long line of futuristic sports games. Details are sketchy for this one at present but it seems to involve hovering over an arena in your dodgem trying to score goals against the other three players. Pick up power-ups and be the first to reach the loose puck and get those goals in 10 levels set around the world and cosmos.

With development teams like Ice involved the expertise involved isn't in question. So look out for more on these exciting alternatives from Project 2 Interactive over the coming months.

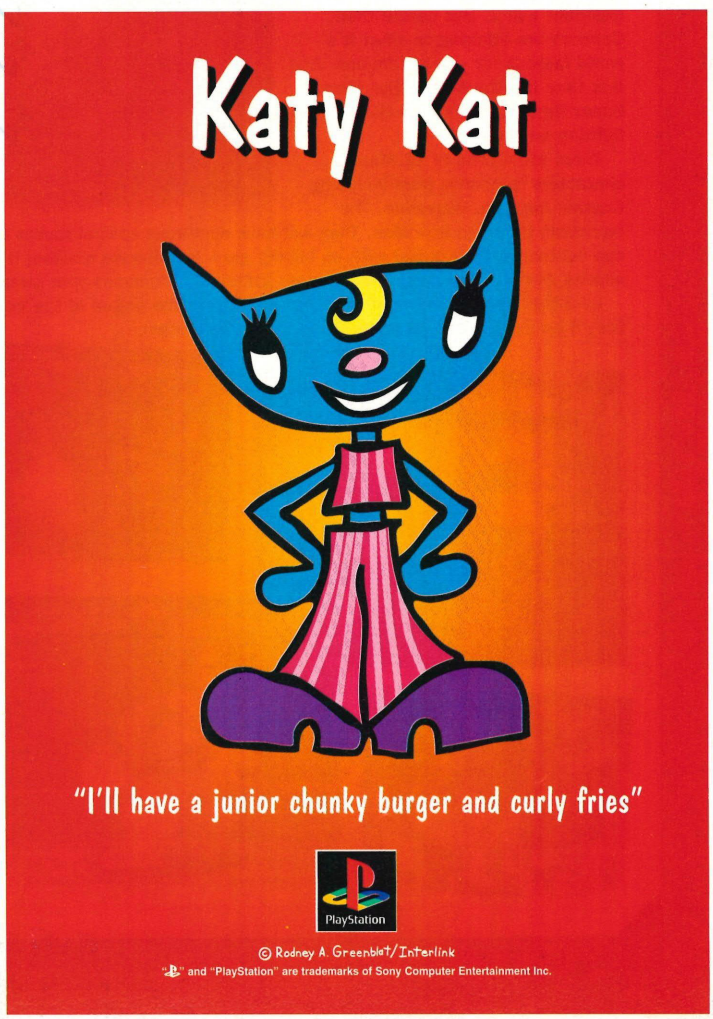
F1 '97 Update



Still warming up for a release in late September, F1 '97 is undoubtedly going to be one which people are falling over themselves to buy. With all the original shortcomings removed and plenty of new features such as cars spinning in the air and variable weather conditions, it has been improved no end.

The attention to detail hasn't been skirted over and all the current drivers have their own crash helmets, as in real life. All changes to the circuits have also been included so it looks like being a must for any racing fanatic. We should be seeing some preview copies in the next month or so, so get ready for the F1 hype to start rolling once again.

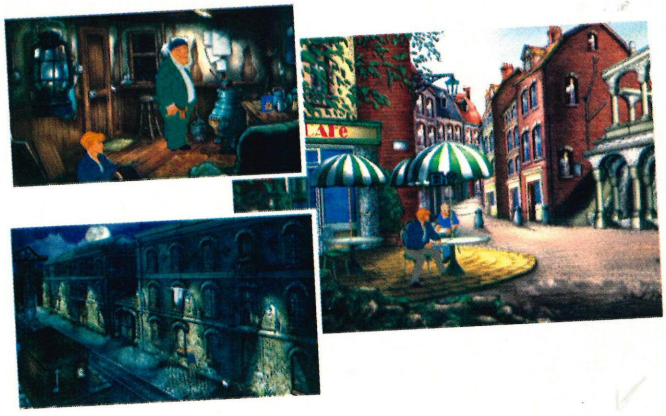




Oh, Georgey!

Yes, George Stobbard is returning to the PlayStation, so all you fans of Broken Sword can now click your heels together with glee. The sequel – surprisingly titled Broken Sword 2: The Smnoking Mirror – sees our chum George hot on the trail of the aforementioned mirror which is alleged to hold the demented spirit of some demon or other who wishes to bring the world to its knees come the turn of the century.

Rest assured the old Broken Sword style of play and graphics will remain the same, but the gameplay has apparently been increased, offering more puzzles and a whole lot more head scratching than the original. Fingers crossed, the adventure bonanza should be with us by Christmas.



Marvellous, just Marvellous

Capcom is set to return in the autumn with an all out gore fest, the sequel to one of the best received games of recent times: Resident Evil 2. But before then, Capcom are sticking to what it's world famous for – beat 'em-ups. And this time it's the turn of the Marvel Super Heroes to practice their street fighting on the PSX.



There are a total of 12 Marvel characters to choose from including Captain America, Wolverine, The Incredible Hulk and Iron Man. They will have numerous special moves and can customise their power with an Infinity gem. You choose whether it's a healing gem, or one which grants super attacks or increases your strength.

Looking like they've leapt to life straight from the pages of the comic, they'll be demanding your attention around November.









Stand Up, If You Hate Man U!

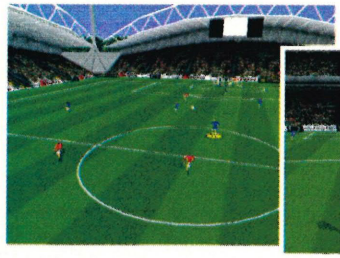


As one of the many big name football stars to have snubbed the sprawling business empire that is Manchester United Football Club Alan Shearer (or Big Al as he's affectionately known around the office) is alright by us.

Imagine our excitement then when we heard that Britain's most expensive footballer has signed an exclusive deal with Gremlin, not only to take on motion capture duties for Actua Soccer 2, but also to take on the role of Football Consultant within the company! Well okay, maybe excitement's the wrong word, mild interest is probably nearer the mark. So you should swap the two phrases for a more accurate picture.

Anyway, this Football Consultant thing will see the boy Shearer ensuring that Gremlin doesn't cock things up on the tactics and realism front, as well as having his own section within the game where he'll give advice on set-pieces, special moves, formation and strategy. He's also picking his own Select XI side which will appear in the game, for you to either play as or against! Oh and he'll also be getting involved in Premier Manager stuff but that probably won't come out on the PlayStation so who cares eh?

This is undoubtedly a major coup for Gremlin. After all, Shearer's far and away the biggest name in the British game today. The Actua brand just keeps on getting more and more impressive. The question now is how long until Gremlin Interactive take over the world?





I'm a Cult Hero



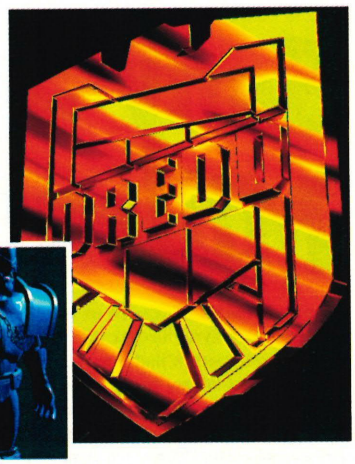


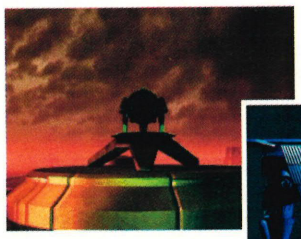
Cult Status is not necessarily the best title to give a game, but if 3-D comabt racing is your thing then this religious (?) battler gives you the chance to enact revenge on those responsible for killing your wife.

The Disciples of Lazarus are wreaking havoc on city dwellers all over the globe with their terrorist attacks. You work for an organisation who set out to put an end to these attacks by completing your missions. Some involve destroying other vehicles, being a taxi and taking a passenger to their destination in the given time, others involve escorting targets and protecting it from attack. On top of this you may race against an enemy on a fixed course and reach the finish line first by any means you can.

Building your ammunition supplies, filling your car with fuel and avoiding all traffic gives you some kind of idea that a little strategy will come in handy. Pencilled in for an October release, Cult Status strives to obtain the exact opposite.

Simply Dredd-ful







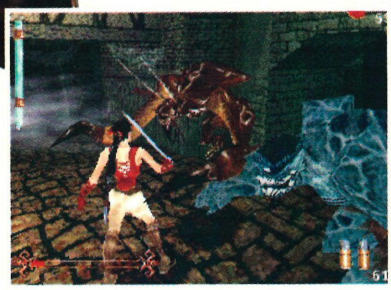
This is not of course how we'd describe Judge Dredd, also from the software colossus known only as Gremlin. At least not unless we want them to never speak to us again that is.

It's a 3-D shoot 'em-up (no surprise there then) set in Mega City One with you taking on the role of Dredd himself. The action is fast paced and varied as you are constantly driven on from level to level. Impressive features include fully rendered environments throughout a charcter driven adventure, fully motion captured characters, 17 extensive levels and even the ability to use a light gun!

Judge Dredd is actually looking like it a grade A title so maybe we should file away our trepidation towards all film licenses in a draw marked "unwanted feelings" and look forward to this with wholehearted excitement. It'll be released in the last quarter of this year, but tune in next month when we'll have the exclusive first look for you to drool over!



Creature Feature

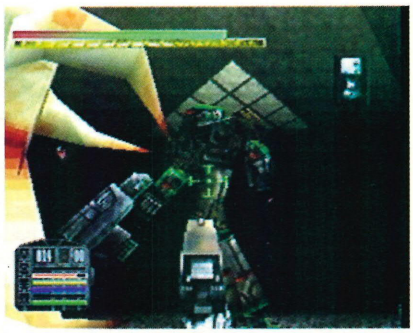


One of the most eagerly awaited games at the moment has to be Nightmare Creatures which is being published by Sony but developed by new boys Kalisto Entertainment. As you may already know, it's a third person action/combat game viewed in real time 3-D. **Besides a complex combat system with combos, special moves and bonuses, Nightmare Creatures also features intelligent monsters with their own combat strategies.**

And on top of that, as you can see from the screenshots, it looks simply stunning. The unusual location for a video game (it takes place in a nightmare world throughout 16 London districts full of monsters, including sewers, cemeteries, Westminster and the Docks) should ensure that Nightmare Creatures is interesting if nothing else.

Watch out for a more in depth preview in PlayStation Pro over the next couple of issues, in preparation for the game's launch just before Christmas.

Discreet Elite



Not heard much from the boys and girls down at Elite recently, so we were pleased to dicover that they have been busy beavering away on a couple of promising little titles.

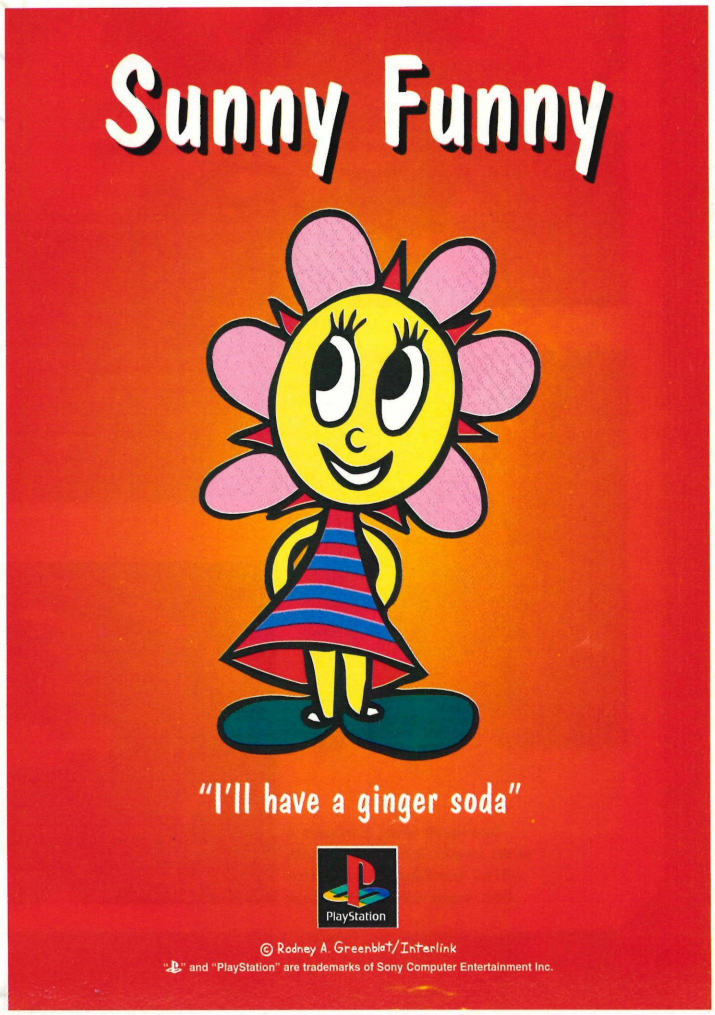
First up is Hybrid, which is a corridor based 3-D shoot 'em-up due for release in the early part of next month.

You can apparently choose from four different characters and 24 different weapons in an attempt to overcome the endless array of enemies and levels. Each level in the game is controlled by a complex event system allowing for the development of complex puzzles and effects.

Secondly there's KPH. This is a light hearted but challenging 3-D driving game which is obviously inspired by old favourites such as Chase HQ and Mario Kart (no bad thing), where the emphasis is squarely placed on fun rather than realism.



KPH looks quite promising, and you can expect to see it appear in the shops some time around Christmas.



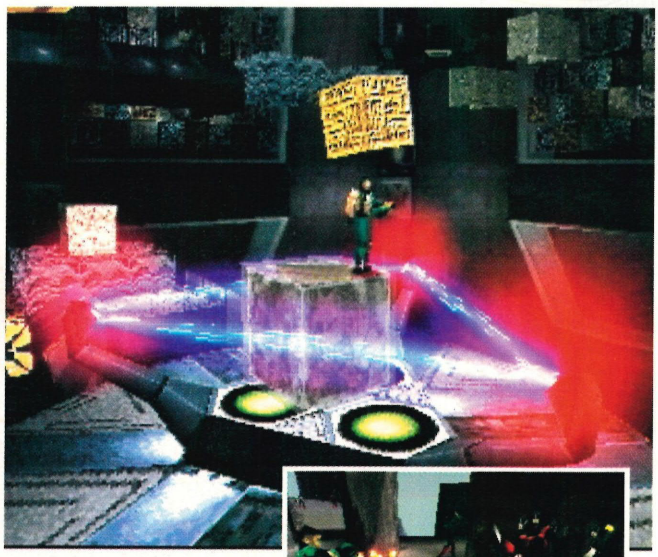
Sony Snaffles Millenium

Sony, blessed fathers to us all, have expanded their empire of goodness even further this month. They've acquired Cambridge based developers Millenium, who are currently writing 3D spook-romp Medievil exclusively for the PlayStation. Millenium are best known for their smash hit titles for the Amiga and Atari ST, including fishy spy James Pond and the ahead-of-it's-time Rome 92AD in which you played a slave in a city filled with virtual people. The graphics were dinky, but the game was fab. Anyway, Sony aim to use this base to create a plush Sony studio in Cambridge, expanding the existing Millenium staff and even getting involved with the brainboxes at the famous posh-nob University. The move also means that Millenium co-founder Michael Hayward will be working exclusively on the PlayStation with his Cyberlife Technology company. Pioneers in the realms of artificial intelligence, their expertise should pave the way for some of the most involving and realistic characters in games ever. Just more evidence that all the best games are made in the UK, we reckon.

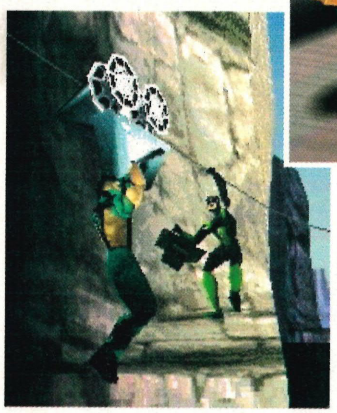


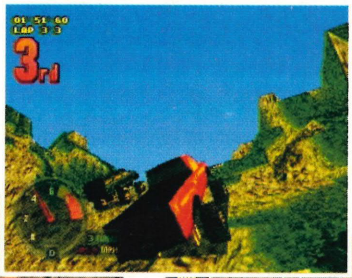
Princely Bargain

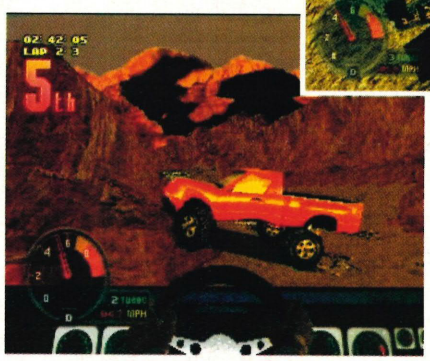
No doubt you've seen the 'comedy' adverts featuring blistered thumbs. Well, this is what it's all about. The Princes Trust are to benefit from Power Source, a unique charity demo disc in the shops now. Retailing at a pocket-friendly £4.99, the disc features demos of Porsche Challenge, Monster Trucks, Destruction Derby 2, Excalibur 2555AD, Riot, Robotron X, Spider and Exhumed. There's also a classic Tomb Raider level, previously unreleased in demo form. And that's not all. There's also Snave, an example of what can be done with the Net Yaroze home development kit, some FMV of upcoming titles and the chance to create your own game in an exclusive competition. All that, and you can still buy a penny chew with your change from a fiver. We reckon that makes it the best demo disc in the world, and at least with this one you don't get a magazine full of junk mail and you know the proceeds are going to a good cause. So buy it!













One looks tasty, Hardcore 2 looks alright, but no doubt both will be knocking our collective PSX socks off later this year

One: One To Watch

ASC Games, them what did Hardcore 4x4 and Perfect Weapon, have produced a sequel to the first and a sort of rewrite of the latter. Hardcore 2 seems to err more in the direction of Monster Trucks than it's rather bland predecessor, and we'll be covering it in more depth as soon as we can muster up some enthusiasm for yet another off-road game. One, on the other hand, we are enthusiastic about. Taking the basic idea of Perfect Weapon (part exploration, part massive beat-em-up with multiple foes), it bolts them onto something actually resembling a game this time. You play John Cain, a mystery man who has no memory of his past and a bionic arm where he used to have flesh. He's pissed off, and this is the driving force behind the game. Rather than normal power ups, Cain gains strength or becomes weak depending on how angry he is. Just like The Incredible Hulk. With weapons, physical attacks and combos and an array of acrobatic moves that put Lara to shame, the sprawling five levels should tax and arouse most hardcore gamers. It'll be out in November, in case you want to start rubbing yourself now.

Spawny Get

The PlayStation version of grim comic Spawn is still approaching at speed, but via some bizarre mailing list mix-up, we've been sent sneak preview copies of the movie soundtrack album as well. It follows the example set by the criminally overlooked Judgment Night, by matching grizzly rawk stars with rap and dance stars. The theme here seems to be British dance music meets American 'alternative' music, with such scary collaborations as Henry Rollins and Goldie, Rage Against The Machine and Prodigy, and sadly enough, Marilyn 'Ooh we're evil' Manson and Sneaker Pimps. As you can guess, some of the 'experiments' result in the sort of grinding dirge that only Andy could like, but some are genuinely stonking. The album should be in the shops now, the film hits the screens on September 19th and the game should be here come Christmas time.











As you can see from these excellent film stills, the Spawn movie is looking mighty cool and fans of the original comic surely won't be disappointed

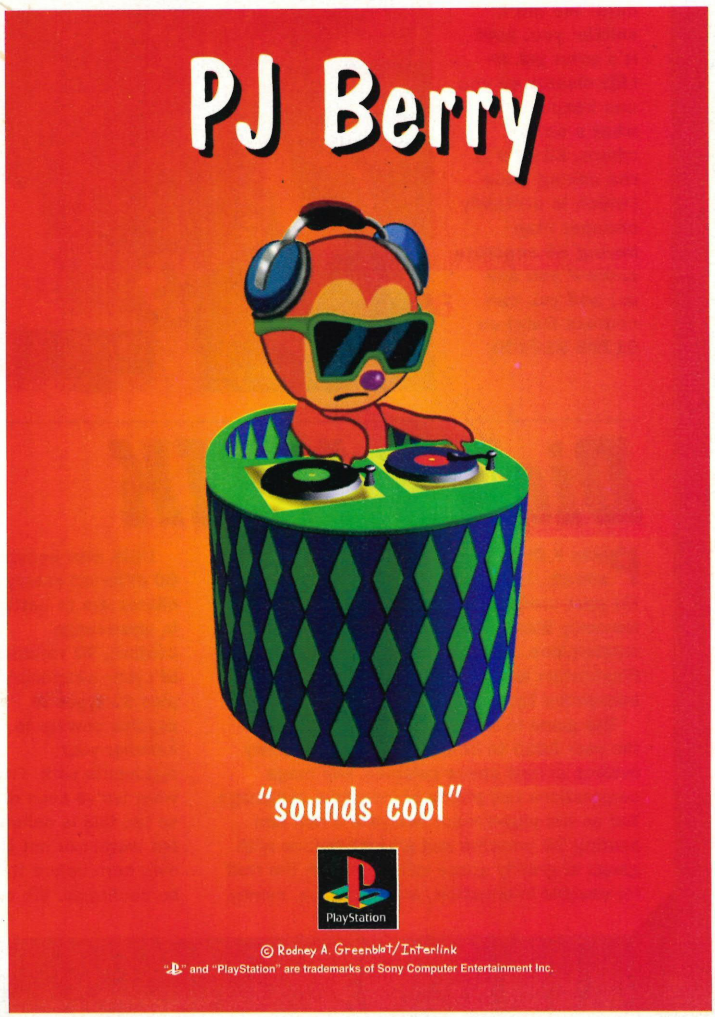
More Platinum Titles on Way!

Everyone loves getting hold of cheap software, and the buzz is always a greater one if the games you actually get hold of are halfway decent. Sony's Platinum Range offers such a service and for the past few months you gamers have been snapping up these cut-price beauties at a staggering pace. The good news now is that there are even more top PSX games lined-up for release later this year. First off the blocks are True Pinball and the best four-player game ever to grace a console, Worms, from Ocean Software. Along with those two, expect to see Acclaim's BustaMove 2 and the spooky xenomorph Doom-clone Alien Trilogy hitting the shelves anyday now for the low low price of £20. Join us next month when we'll have news on the rest of the year's Platinum Range releases, so you can start saving in advance.

Football Crazy! Football Mad! Etc!

Sony have admitted extravagant hoarding. Advertising hoardings, that is. At football matches, of all places. It's cost them a cool million quid, but adverts for our grey gamey chum will now appear around all Premier League club pitches, and at all the matches from the FA Carling Premiership. Needless to say, we're expecting lot's of footy-related freebies and hopefully a chance to chill out in one of those luxurious boxes, rather than on the terraces with you scruffy lot. Apparently 74% of PlayStation owners play or watch football, and the likes of Redknapp, Ince and Wright are all avid PlayStation players, so the link betwixt footy and joypads is a solid one. The announcement comes after Sony also announced that they'll be sponsoring the UEFA Champions League for the next three years.





You're too late... for Blockbuster!

If you want to get involved with the Blockbuster PlayStation UK Games Tournament, then you've missed the boat. The preliminary heats finished on 3rd August, and the 26 semi-finalists were announced on the 11th of this month. The final takes place at the Sports Cafe in London on 27th of August, presented by the world's 'favourite' short, balding Scottish games programme presenter, Dominik Diamond. The contestants will battle it out on a top secret new game, never before seen by the public. We reckon it might be Mouse Trap or Operation, but Sony told us to grow up and stop messing about when we rang up and asked them. First prize is a trip to San Francisco to visit Sony HQ, where they'll be put in a specially designed game, just like in Tron. More news next month, if we remember.

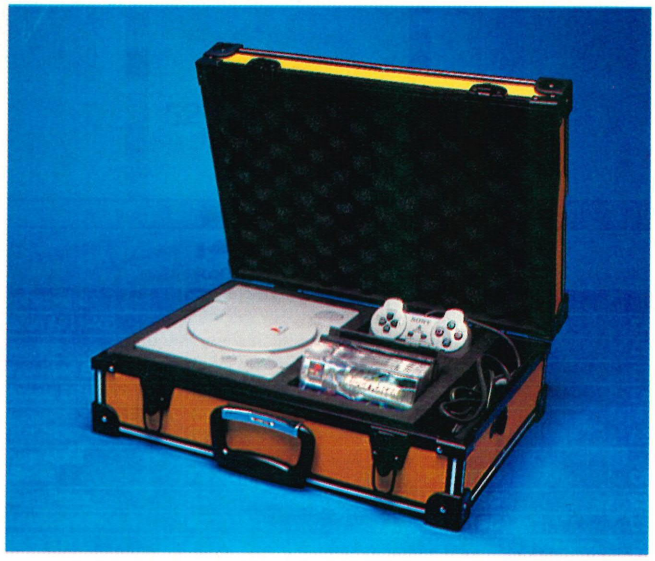
Thanks for the memory

If you're the sort of player who prefers gigantic RPGs and adventures to the latest punchy-face game, then you've probably already invested in about a million memory cards to save your progress through umpteen games. But when you can only fit about three saves on each card, it's enough to make you pull your hair out. With your teeth. Datel have a solution to this problem, in the shape of a 48Meg Memory Card. That's 48 times bigger than yer average card. Using high speed data compression you can now cram a whopping 720 saves onto one card! We ain't shittin' you, boy! It's even got an LED display so you can keep track of what's saved where. £39.99 is the asking price (which is certainly cheaper than buying 48 separate cards if you ask us) and you can contact Datel on 01785 810800.



On the case

Where do you keep your PlayStation? Under the bed? In a basket? Or, like us, do you keep them in the pouches of stunned kangaroos? If not, fear no more. Wave goodbye to coffee-spill blues! Say Sayonara to cat-vomit traumas! Your little gaming buddy can now be kept safe as proverbial houses in the impressively named Ultimate Case Protection System, from the Ultimate Case Company. Made from wood panels, covered in heavy duty PVC, and reinforced with two lockable clasps, the case contains moulded impact-resistant foam with spaces for your PlayStation and all it's attendant leads. You can also fit two joypads, two memory cards and five double or ten single CD cases into it's cosy interior. It even comes in a choice of colours. And it's a 'snip' at £49.99 including postage and packing. If this tickles your fancy then write to the Ultimate Case Company at Unit 1, Churchfields, St Stephens Green, Audenshaw, Manchester, M34 5HZ or give 'em a ring on 0161 339 8846 and tell them the boys at PlayStation Pro sent you.

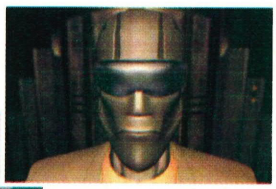


Dick's UBIK

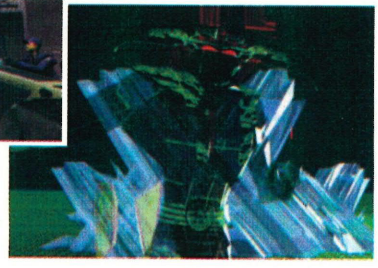
Philip K Dick, in case you didn't know already, is a top best selling sci-fi author. His past credits include Total Recall and most famously Blade Runner, and now his latest masterpiece, UBIK, is being transfromed into a PlayStation adventure by the guys at Cryo Interactive Entertainment.

The game is set in a futuristic New York – the year 2019 to be precise – and the story evolves around space colonies, evil mega corporations and plenty of industrial espionage. You as the player must navigate a rich and hauting 3D universe and go face-to-face with gangs of greedy space villians hot on the trail for vauable information, and of course, money.

UBIK also boasts 60 different enemy characters to battle in close-range combat, 30 variations of cyber weaponary, plus 60 types of psychic powers to hammer your opponents with. From what we've seen of it so far, this is definately one to watch out for, but wether or not UBIK will see the light of day over here before the end of the year has yet to be confirmed. We can but hope.



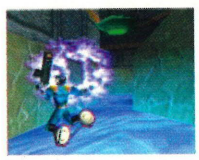




Stop Press...



Games to look out for over the coming months include... **ALIEN VERSUS PREDATOR** from Fox Interactive. Yes, the old Atari Jaguar Doom-clone makes its way onto the PlayStation later this year offering players the choice to run sround dank dark corridors under the guise of either a Marine, Predator or the evil acid-ozzing Aliens. We played this at the E3 show in June and it rocks. • Electronic Arts have snapped up the licence for the computer-animated cartoon show, **REBOOT** and are busily converting its lush hi-res graphics over to the PlayStation. • Sony are due to release the old 2D beat 'em up, **REAL BOUT FATAL FURY** next month, although they've been a bit quiet on the old 'handing out review copies' front. Is it a dog? Find next month. • Dreamworks, who are the blokes responsible for The Lost World: Jurassic Park 2 for the PSX, have another wacky platform title in the pipeline. **SKULLMONKEYS** looks quite bizarre to say the least and is the second clay animation game from chaps who also made the PC hit Neverhood. Expect a UK release early next year. • BMG Interactive's controversial cop-killing, car-theiving outing **GRAND THEFT AUTO** is alledgedly still on the cards and we should have some kind of finished version in the office anyday now. So watch out for that. • Another one of BMG's PSX new breed is the hilariously titled **MONKEY HERO**, where you dive into the aforementioned Monkey's pants and trawl off through 2500 screens of Japanese madness on a mission to locate the missing eight chapters of some weird magic story book. Sounds mad, we know. • Sounding equally as bonkers, is another one of BMG's 97 line-up, namely **COURIER CRISIS**, where the aim of the game is to complete over 200 delivery missions on your real-life **GT BMX** or Mountain bike. Basically, this sounds like a rehashed version of Paperboy to us, but it's looking nice so we'll reserve judgement until we get hold of a playable version. • Gasp – another one of BMG's forthcoming treats is the NMS developed Mass Destruction, which has you tearing up cities in oversized tanks, causing mass destruction. Hence the name.

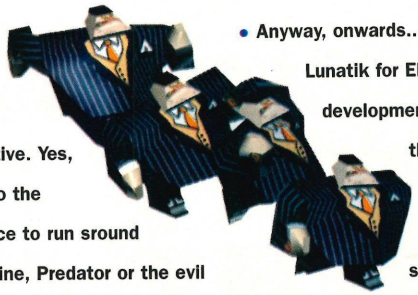












• Anyway, onwards... Pure (currently working on Lunatik for EIDOS) have a new game in development called **RESPECT INC.** Now this has nothing to do with 'the hood' or Normski, but is, in fact, a quirky mafia-esque adventure title set in complete Bugsy Malone settings. It looks crazy, but it's miles from being finished anyway, so we'll move on... • And finally, as Sony put the finishing touches on **CRASH BANDICOOT 2**, we've discovered a rival to his platform hero crown. Quebec-based dudes Malofilm have an excellent 3D platformer waiting for a UK distributor that goes by the name of **JERSEY DEVIL**. Believe me, this game is cool. Way cool. In fact I was really surprised to see that hardly any of the other UK PlayStation magazines haven't gone overboard on this baby already. Watch out for this one, and remember where you heard it first! Anyway, that's enough news, gossip, chat and complete crap for one month. See you next time.









Prince Fleaswallow



"The skunk over here will bring you luck"

PlayStation

© Rodney A. Greenblat/Interlink

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UK PSX TOP 40

ChartTrack

ELSPA

Yes, we're officially the only mag on earth to give you the month's complete top 40 rundown on the best selling PSX titles around, so check out this month's listing and get yourself down the shops sharpish!

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WEEKS ON CHART
1	1	VRALLY	OCEAN	3
2	3	ISS PRO	KONAMI	6
3	2	SYDICATE WARS	BULLFROG	3
4	5	RAGE RACER	NAMCO	6
5	4	ALIEN TRILOGY	ACCLAIM	43
6	7	WORMS	OCEAN	65
7	6	TOMB RAIDER	EIDOS	35
8	-	PRINCE'S TRUST POWER SOURCE	SONY	1
9	9	FADE TO BLACK	ELECTRONIC ARTS	32
10	8	SOUL BLADE	NAMCO	11
11	17	PGA TOUR GOLF 96	ELECTRONIC ARTS	48
12	15	RAYMAN	UBISOFT	39
13	11	BUSTAMOVE 2	ACCLAIM	28
14	13	MICRO MACHINES V3	CODEMASTERS	18
15	14	ROAD RASH	ELECTRONIC ARTS	30
16	10	FORMULA ONE	PSYGNOSIS	45
17	16	RIDGE RACER	NAMCO	61
18	12	INDEPENDANCE DAY	FOX INT.	3
19	18	TEKKEN	NAMCO	79
20	22	SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER TURBO	VIRGIN	2
21	21	CRASH BANDICOOT	SONY	37
22	19	DESTRUCTION DERBY	PSYGNOSIS	60
23	24	SOVIET STRIKE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	37
24	23	FIFA SOCCER 97	ELECTRONIC ARTS	34
25	25	WIPEOUT	PSYGNOSIS	60
26	27	TEKKEN 2	NAMCO	42
27	39	PGA TOUR GOLF 97	ELECTRONIC ARTS	24
28	26	DIE HARD TRILOGY	FOX INT.	34
29	29	AIR COMBAT	NAMCO	38
30	30	TRUE PINBALL	OCEAN	15
31	28	RESIDENT EVIL	VIRGIN	49
32	32	PORSCHE CHALLENGE	SONY	15
33	40	JONAH LOMU RUGBY	CODEMASTERS	13
34	36	REBEL ASSAULT 2	VIRGIN	12
35	34	PLAYER MANAGER	ANCO	17
36	-	COMPLETE ONSIDE SOCCER	TELSTAR	8
37	35	LIFEFORCE TENKA	PSYGNOSIS	2
38	37	FIFA SOCCER 96	ELECTRONIC ARTS	55
39	20	WING COMMANDER 4	ELECTRONIC ARTS	3
40	31	DESTRUCTION DERBY 2	PSYGNOSIS	27



V-Rally



ISS Pro



Alien Trilogy



Rage Racer



Syndicate Wars

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BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Vandal Hearts

Big eyes, huge swords, silly monsters and more bonkers spells than you could shake David Copperfield at. This'll be an RPG then

You know what the trouble is with RPGs? They've got bloody big storylines that take ages to explain. Especially one like this, where the background story is actually relevant to the action in the game. So here, for the sake of clarity, is the Vandal Hearts story.

The Holy Ashah Dynasty rules over the land of Sostegaria. They're descendants of Toroah the Messiah, but over the centuries the royal dynasty forgets its noble roots and becomes bloated and corrupt. The people, tired of being exploited to feed the Kingdom's excesses, rise up in revolution behind Arris the Sage, a master tactician and great thinker.

The Royals are defeated and driven into exile, thus paving the way for the new democratic state of Ishtaria, but Arris mysteriously vanishes and is never seen again. For 15 years, the citizens enjoyed the fruits of democracy, until corruption rears its ugly head once again. Will another civil war tear Ishtaria apart?

Not if Ash Lambert has anything to do with it. He's our hero, and a member of the Ishtarian Security Forces. He's noticed that the elite guards, in the employ of dodgy politician Hel Spites, are starting to cross the line between law enforcement and outright thuggery. The guards are led by Spites' son, Kane, and the dubious connections don't stop there.



As the story unfolds you'll be taken through a pretty tangled web of conspiracy, double dealing and skulduggery. Its effectiveness is all the more surprising considering it's part of a video game. I won't spoil the story, there are enough clues and teasers in the character box, but suffice to say that it's not a bad yarn.

After the obligatory story scenes, the first thing you'll notice about Vandal Hearts is its 3-D battle scenes. Lovingly polygonned up, each battle takes place in a fixed arena complete with hills, stairs and buildings. You can rotate the scene and tilt your view up and down, with the shoulder buttons and



Diego the archer gets it in the neck and legs it. Bizarrely, a couple of elastoplast will sort him out straight away



Take one cartoon-style RPG, add colourful battle scenes. Now add massive gouts of blood for no reason. Fantastic



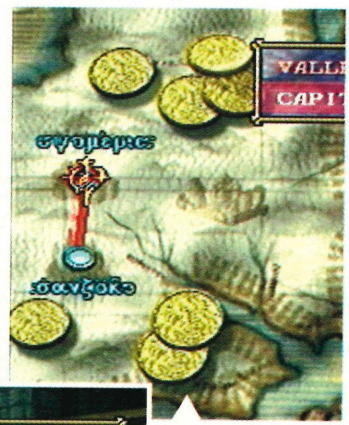
Two archers face off, but the one on higher ground will do more damage, due to his height advantage



These scenes are the closest the game comes to non-battle interaction, but there's not that much to do apart from buy supplies



You earn gold for each enemy killed, and can then stock up on bigger and better weapons for your team



Your progress through the game is shown on a series of linear maps

GENRE COMPARISON

Game *Suikoden*
Software House *Konami*

Another Konami RPG, and another quality slice of whimsical adventuring. Andy woefully under marked it when he reviewed it, but as the first PlayStation game of the genre it deserves some respect. Vandal Hearts beats it in terms of graphics and atmosphere, but it's lack of real role playing features makes Suikoden the better bet for hardcore genre fans.

a menu allows you to pick one of three zoom levels. You can, in short, look at the action in any way you choose.

Before battle commences, you'll be given the battle conditions. This spells out what you need to do to win, and what the enemy need to do to secure your defeat. Their objective is usually to kill Ash (or maybe another character who is essential to the scene), your objective can vary from killing all the enemy to freeing possessed villagers from the influence of demonic statues. Once the rules are clear, you can start moving your troops, one at a time into strategic positions.

A simple menu system makes control a cinch, and you can experiment with different moves before confirming your tactics. End your turn and the enemy do the same. So, yes, it's turn based which can seem a tad stilted, but it also allows you to take plenty of time over your choices and adds tension when you have to step back and let the baddies do their worst.

Attacks take place either when you're next to an enemy (preferably behind or to the side – makes it harder for them to put up a defence, you see) or when someone is in range of your magic or archers. Depending on various factors (location, number of other characters providing back-up, weapon skill) you'll either knock a chunk out of their energy or they'll block your assault. Provided the blow wasn't fatal, the victim can then return the favour in kind. And that's basically the combat system. I've simplified it loads, as you have to consider all sorts of variables before steaming in, but all the tedious calculating is done by the PlayStation, so you can concentrate on pure strategy.

The graphics make a world of difference, as ▶



Initially, the amusingly named Zoot is just a scally robber, but he'll return later, much nastier





You can zoom right out, and alter the angle, for a better view of the battlefield. There's a 2-D map, too

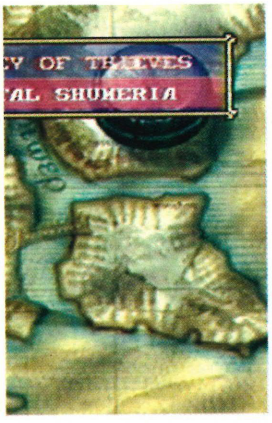
Not got quite the same ring as "Bond, James Bond", but it's a start



There's no speech I'm afraid, but the scrolling text isn't as cumbersome as it could be. It's just not very exciting, that's all



Now this may not mean much right now, but trust me when I say that it's a pivotal event in the Vandal Hearts world







As you earn experience, you can advance to better "classes" of warriors



At the start, the game gives you several prods in the right direction to get the story moving



It's the mysterious intro, Mr Soldier, but it all makes sense later in the game

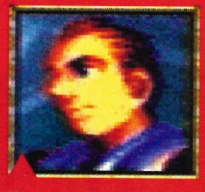
Vandal Hearts

each foe and ally has a recognisable personality and even though things get blocky at maximum zoom, the swirling cameras are a treat for the eye. It's slightly in the manga style, but not tediously so. What is shocking is the gore. The rest of the game has a cartoony feel, but when someone is dealt a killing blow, geysers of blood spray all over the place. It's really pretty gruesome, calling to mind the excesses of Legacy Of Kain, but it's hard not to feel a guilty twinge of satisfaction when the last enemy falls screaming to their knees.

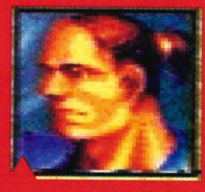
Even more bizarre, given the blood letting, is the fact that it's actually impossible for your characters (not including Ash) to die. If they run out of energy in battle, they vanish with a stock phrase, usually something like "Ooh, you buggers, I'll be back". After the battle, providing you win, they're all back again to continue the tale. Very odd. I think the idea is that their wounds are so bad that they have to retreat, but it has the unfortunate side effect of making each battle seem like a one off affair. You don't have to worry about protecting the team, as long as Ash survives, so you tend to send the others off on suicide runs to mow down as many enemy as they can before their legs drop off. Well, I did at least.

It's also a pity the game is incredibly linear. You don't get to do any exploring, or even make decisions during the numerous story scenes, so it really just boils down to moving from one battle to the next. It's not a tragic flaw, as the

Those Vandal Hearts in full



Name: Ash Lambert
Class: Hero
The centre point of our tale, and member of the Ishtarian police force. His father was accused of betraying the Revolution, and the shame of this makes him twice as determined to do the right thing



Name: Clint Picard
Class: Soldier
The second most important member of Ash's Three Musketeers outfit. We meet Clint at the start of the game as Ash's confidant and best friend. He's also one of the best swordsmen in the land



Name: Diego Renault
Class: Archer
The third member of Ash's squad and another character we meet right from the start. A bit of a joker, but he's got his heartaches just like the rest of them. He's lethal with his bow and arrows as well



Name: Eleni Dunbar
Class: Mage
When Ash and friends are sent to investigate the disappearance of General Magnus Dunbar on a remote island, they run into his daughter and her impressive, if dangerous, magical skills



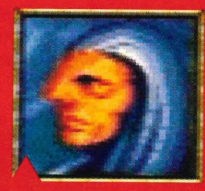
Name: Huxley Hobbes
Class: Healer
This short, fat fella is Eleni's servant and guardian and wherever she goes, he follows. He's a solid sort, always handy for patching up wounds and even dishing out a bit of punishment with his staff



Name: Kira Wulfstan
Class: Archer
A mysterious, beautiful sharp shooter who appears just when you need her most. She'll fight alongside you, but you can never be sure where her real loyalties lie. Clint fancies the arse off her



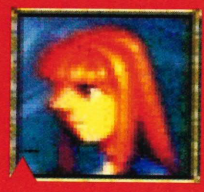
Name: Grog Drinkwater
Class: Soldier
A right sad old boozer, this salty sea dog soon sorts his act out when Ash calls on his services to face up to an evil pirate. But for Grog, the battle is personal. Once sober, he's a handy ally



Name: Dolan
Class: Soldier
One of General Magnus Dunbar's men, and the only man who can solve the mystery of the General's fate. He's a tough nut, but is in desperate need of help when you first find him, under attack from baddies



Name: Amon
Class: Archer
Another of Magnus' men, reporting to Dolan. He's a tad spineless, but considering what he's seen you can't blame him. Even so, his aim is true and he's got spunk where it counts



Name: Sara
Class: Healer
The final member of Dolan's lost patrol, and her healing skills are essential right from the first moment she appears. Protect her from enemy arrows, you'll need her in fierce battles



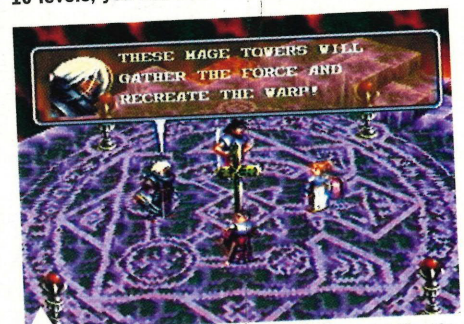
Name: Zohar
Class: Mage
A very bizarre wandering sorcerer, this guy is fantastic when you want to unleash some gob-smacking magic, like the Phase Shift. And you meet him in a parallel dimension. Which is nice



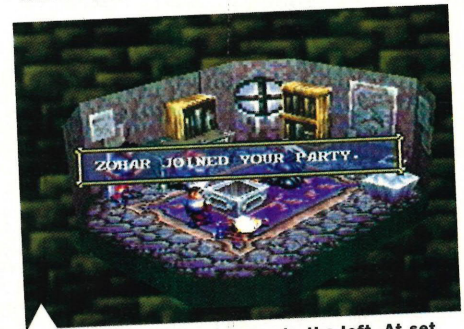
Name: Darius
Class: Archer
Not unlike Donald Pleasance, Clint meets this short-sighted guy when he's locked up in the nick. During the inevitable epic escape our speccy pal joins in with his long range arrow fun



Each character earns experience points, and here we see Ash moving up an experience level. Every 10 levels, you can advance to a higher class



Despite the fun and addictiveness, Vandal Hearts isn't immune to the condition known only as "Role Playing Bollocks"



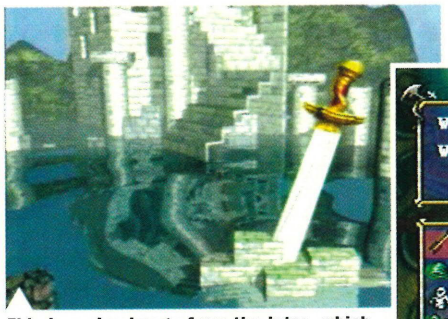
The cast of goodies is there, to the left. At set points in the game you'll meet and recruit them. Again, a bit too linear for my liking

battles themselves are varied and offer everything from all out blood-feasts to tricky problem solving, but it does mean that the game isn't really a true RPG. I'd say it was more of a strategy game, dressed up in RPG clothing.

So for those who live and breathe role playing games, Vandal Hearts might be a bit of a lightweight experience. If that doesn't apply to you, or if you quite like the idea of RPGs but aren't sure if you'd enjoy them, I'd say this is the perfect introduction to the conventions of the genre. I certainly found it to be engrossing and absorbing, to the extent that I kept wandering away from writing the review to have another bash. In many ways, the concentration on battles makes it a more immediate and accesible title.



Trial and error means that no level is completely unbeatable, which is a plus for novice players, but also means that you'll finish the game without too many nightmares. Mind you, there's still a shortage of RPGs for the PlayStation, and this one has a great story that unfolds in a way that keeps you interested and, coupled with cute graphics and dynamic battles, makes Vandal Hearts a little stonker of a game that comes highly recommended.



This is a nice image from the intro, which doesn't really need much explaining. So let's just look at it together, eh?

It doesn't matter much at the start, but as things get tougher, you'll need the right equipment. Oh, and get rid of the bandana you sad nibber

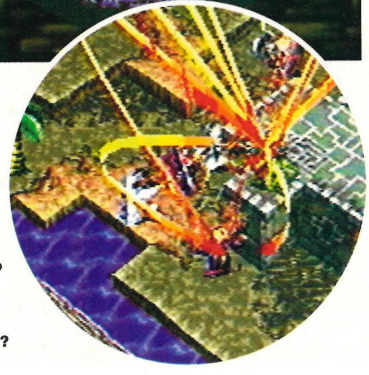




One of the more impressive spells, this one has the added advatage of being named after a top John Carpenter flick







Well what do you expect from someone called Dolan?

PRO SCORE

GAME **Vandal Hearts**
GENRE **RPG**
SOFTWARE HOUSE **Konami**
CONTACT **01895 853 3000**
RELEASE DATE **Out Now**
PRICE **£44.99**

RPG fans are still waiting for a decent choice of titles, but with this and Suikoden on the shelves it's a good start. It avoids the obsessive number crunching that makes real life role playing a turn off for all but the smelliest of Hobbits, but compensates for its occasional shallowness with a superb fighting engine and some highly imaginative spells. The characterisation deserves credit as well for finally giving us a game where a story is told via a believable, if clichéd, cast of warriors and sorcerers. With the wonderful Final Fantasy VII on the way I've avoided marking this too high, but if you simply can't wait for a riveting RPG style experience, this will tide you over perfectly

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

8

ANDY **I dislike RPGs as a rule, but as far as the blighters go this is way ahead of the admittedly limited number already available. It's an improvement on Suikoden and for this reason it probably deserves its high mark**

STEVE **Don't know what Andy's on about because the only disappointment for me was that Vandal Hearts is not actually an RPG, more a sort of battle strategy game. And a damn fine one it is too!**

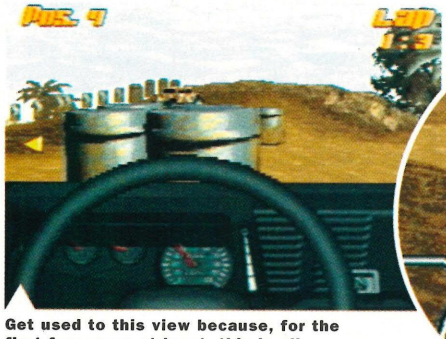
JAY **Not my cup of tea this one. I was never too keen on these Japanese battle games and whereas Vandal Hearts is the best of the currently available bunch, it still hasn't managed to convert me**

ALEX **This is possibly the most correct mark I've ever seen, and that's just because Dan wrote it. He's always right, and I bow down before his infinitely superior judgement. I'm just a mortal, and he is a God**

BY HUGH POYNTON

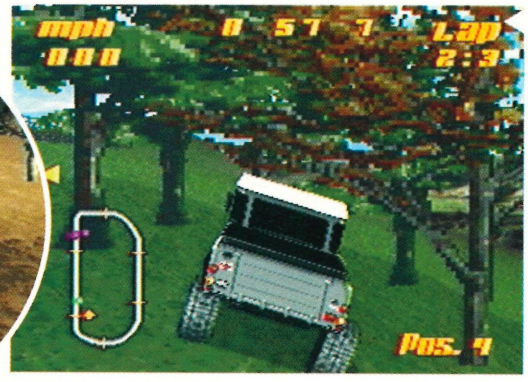
Test Drive Off Road

Do you think 4x4s are the sole preserve of the Cheshire Set and rich blondes? Well read on...



Get used to this view because, for the first few races at least, this is all you're going to see





Also be prepared for long treks through the forest. Overshoot a turn and you could be in here for weeks

Tracks 'n' Trucks



This is the Land Rover Defender, available in grey...



..and green. Looks a bit cheap though



The Chevie – a good old boys truck



The HUMMER. Hard as nails but fast as a Lada



The Jeep – fast and stylish but easily squashed



Track one looks like an oval in some mud – don't be deceived



Track Two: Loads of sheer drops to fall off



Track Three: This one is Cactus central



Track Four: Loads of shortcuts on this one



Track Five: Use railway track shortcuts to win



Kinks and bends a gogo – too much



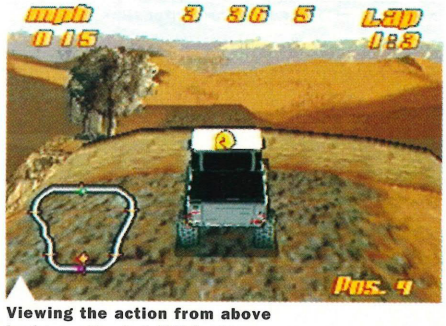
Didn't get this far unfortunately

How's this for a unique game concept – instead of throwing your expensive Lamborgini Diablo around the hairpin bends and furiously fast straights of a picturesque Alpine circuit, you get to chug along in the sort of truck you normally see covered in manure with a farmer and his border collie inside.

It may sound weird, but with the profusion of racing games available on the PlayStation, any new titles need to have a certain originality to them. Test Drive Off Road is certainly something a little different – have you ever played a racing game where none of the vehicles on offer go faster than you grandad's Allegro?

Test Drive Off Road offers you the chance to race one of three different 4x4s around 12 treacherous tracks. Choose one of three trucks to destroy the countryside with. Race a Hummer (the huge army vehicles favoured by the rich, famous and violent – Arnie Schwarzeneger and Chris Eubank both own them), a huge Chevie 4x4 pick up like the one Lee Majors drove in the Fall Guy or the farmer's favourite, the LandRover Defender.

Now pick the venue. You've a selection of messed up and muddied tracks on which to drive these monster trucks, each varying in difficulty and design. Staying on the road isn't an absolute necessity but you must pass each and every way point, if only to stop the



Viewing the action from above looks pretty, but it'll bugger up your driving.





You can view the action from any angle in Test Drive – pretty but not very useful

commentator nagging on like an old fishwife.

There are some excellent touches included. Any game that enables you to indulge your Dick Dastardly passion for cheating like buggery gets the thumbs up from me and Test Drive gives you ample opportunity to get one over on your opponents.

There are a huge number of shortcuts and hidden routes you can use; on some circuits you can actually race a circuit about a two thirds the size of your opponent's. Just so long as you pass each and every checkpoint, you won't be penalised. There are also bonus tracks and vehicles if you manage to complete the various competitions. Needless to say, I'm too crap at the game to actually have done this yet but, according to the nice big manual, you can get your grubby mitts on a BigFoot style monster truck, a Stock Car, a 4x4 Dune Buggy or a Hot Rod.

The graphics aren't bad either. View the trucks from above and behind and you'll see the wheels turning and the suspension bouncing about. All the standard camera viewpoints are there: In-vehicle, low behind and high behind, as well as the Micro Machines style, very high behind.

Also counting in the game's favour is the fact that it can be linked and is multiplayer. Split the screen and two people can drive head to head, add a PlayStation link cable and you can have a four person race.

It's not all happy, happy, joy, joy though. One thing guaranteed to naff you off to some degree is the simple fact that it is, as the name suggests, off road. The reason clever people invented roads was so that you could see where your going and I think you'd have to admit they've done a good job on the whole. If I want to drive to London, I'll follow a big strip of tarmac that, lo and behold, takes me to London. All in all roads are simple, effective and easy to use.

Well, Test Drive is sadly lacking in these ever helpful tarmac strips. Following a grimy mottled brown skiddy mark can be a superhuman task. You start a race, bomb along at your monster truck's top speed and then you're confronted with the terrifying "where the bloody hell do I go now" quandary that normally starts big rows between married couples on busy city centre roundabouts. Unless you're very practised, you're going to spend a hell of a lot of time over-shooting turns and trundling around in circles in a field scaring the sheep.

Once you've got off the track, it can be total sod trying to find a way past the trees and back on course. The dirt tracks you're supposed to drive on are a complete git to spot – looking as they do like a 12 year-old's skid patch. In some ▶



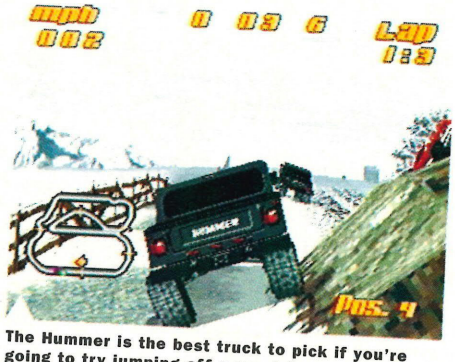
Passing your opponents can be very tricky. The best thing to do is wait until you can find a good embankement and steam past the pack



Luckily you can turn the damage off – an absolute essential if you're going to nudge trucks out







The Hummer is the best truck to pick if you're going to try jumping off a precipice. It's slow but extremely hard

Test Drive Off Road

areas, the edge of the track is marked by old oil barrels, but mostly it isn't.

Another thing that detracts from the game is the interminable ranting of the games brain-dead commentator. I hate people slagging off my driving in the best of circumstances, but when the insults are being administered by somebody who sounds like Casey Casem, it really is too much. You slide into a tree and he gleefully remarks, "Looks like it's going to hurt" – cheers mate, very constructive.

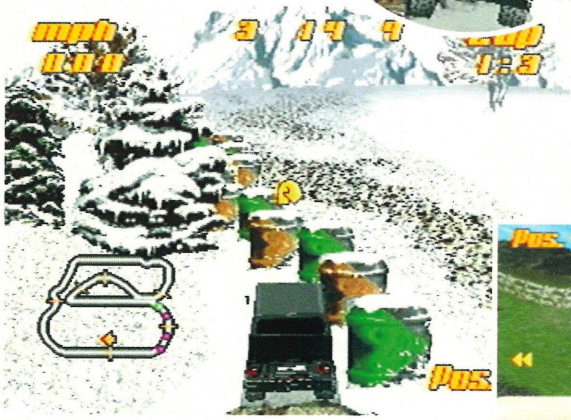
I think that you'll either love Test Drive or hate it. Personally, I just don't feel that a 4x4 racing game could ever be as totally exhilarating as a "proper" racing game. A high speed crash in Need For Speed for example will literally make you jump. In my opinion, arsing about in trucks at 50 mph just isn't the same.

If, however, you were one of those kids that liked to ride their BMX Mongoose around suicidal dirt tracks on building sites many years ago, you'll find this game suits you down to the ground. It's definitely a little different passing the opposition while driving on a sloping embankment or rocky gully. Confusing and frustrating though the races can be, get practised, learn the track and it can be a good a laugh.

All in all Test Drive Off Road is a decent game – as far as it goes. Everything is done competently and proficiently but there seems to be a lack of choice and adaptability in the game. A wider choice of trucks (tanks even) would have added to the game, as would a few more interesting tracks. A few arena or stadium tracks would have made an interesting addition, or maybe a couple of half on, half off road races would have added a bit of variety.

If you want speed and sports cars, stick to Need For Speed or Porsche Challenge but if you have a secret hankering to tear about in a dirty great behemoth spraying dirt all over the place, give Test Drive a look.





These helpful barrels are meant to stop you straying off the road – all too often they stop you getting back on it...



The action is best viewed from the inside. It's less cluttered and lots more spectacular



Get out of my way. Shove him into the barrels and waste him some time



Racing off from the grid always causes a few decent crashes

PRO SCORE

GAME Test Drive Off Road
GENRE Driving
SOFTWARE HOUSE Eidos
CONTACT 0181 700 2222
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

This is a brave attempt at something a little different. Treading a fine line between being utterly frustrating and totally addictive, it is the sort of game you will either love or hate. On the down side, the tracks can be pretty confusing and you've only got a choice of four trucks to choose from. A few more tracks and maybe some more trucks would have added to the game's long term appeal but, for all its drawbacks, Test Drive is still pretty enjoyable. Although not a classic, it makes an interesting change from the old "exotic fast cars in glamorous locations" formula. It's a decent enough game and probably worth a try if this sort of thing appeals to you.

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 6

6½

DAN This has more variety and oomph than Gremlin's Hardcore 4x4, but even so it still lacks the edge to make it a "must have". Pleasant, but ultimately just another driving game. With a bit of mud

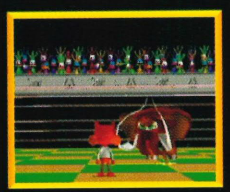
JAY As I am an arcade racer fan, this had to have the ability to stun me into submission before I started screaming its name from the rooftops. As it stands, well I'm afraid I'll be sticking to the likes of Rage Racer

STEVE I'm not a great fan of racing games at the best of times and this really didn't appeal to me at all unfortunately. It's not terrible, but it certainly isn't something I will be desperate to play

ANDY With the likes of Hardcore already available it's difficult to see why anybody would want to give this the time of day. It's functional rather than exceptional in every department

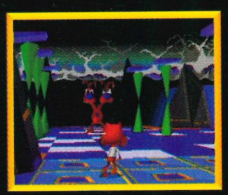
"...classic gaming action...an absolute riot!" Total PlayStation





BUBSY 3D





"...a truly inter-dimensional affair"

PLAY MAGAZINE



ACCOLADE

PlayStation

Publisher: Telstar Fun & Games
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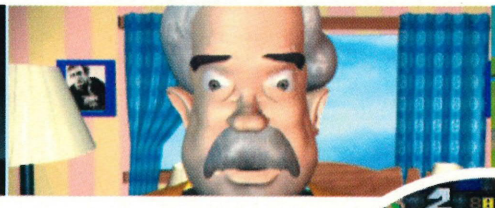
Telstar F&G fun & games

BY STEVE MCNALLY

All Star Soccer

If Soccer 97 is the serious, Alan Shearer-like face of PlayStation football games, this latest effort from Eidos is more of a Gazza. Without the weight/intelligence problem of course







It has to be said, All Star Soccer's tongue is stuck firmly in its cheek. There's none of the po-faced attitude of the likes of ISS Pro in here, just a firm commitment to ensure the game is enjoyed by all who play it. This hasn't stopped it being a damn fine recreation though, leading me to make the bold claim that I'd personally load this up in preference to all other PlayStation footy games (with the possible exception of Eidos' other effort, Soccer '97), with barely a moments hesitation.

However, I know how seriously some people take their football and I doubt whether some of you budding Stattos out there would see the funny side. Being a Man City fan myself, I can't afford to get too serious about the intricate nuances the real game has to offer so I'm quids in with this.

The humour is provided two ways: In the graphical style (sprite based comedy style players) and the commentary (all provided by impressionist Alistair Magowan, in various guises), all of which I'll go into in more detail later on. I must stress, however, that this doesn't happen at the expense of a good game of footy.

It would be all too easy to dismiss All Star Soccer as a mere gimmick title but it isn't. In truth it has more depth than most, thanks to the opportunity to take control of the entire team and design it yourself. Anything from the name of your team, through to individual player attributes and even the look of each player (hair colour, physical build, skin colour and kit details are all fully definable) help give you a real feel of involvement. This spices up the leagues and such no end and makes both the single and two player experiences all the more enjoyable.



Of course you don't have to design a team if you don't wish, there are plenty of pre-defined ones to select and I should imagine this is where most people will choose as a starting point. One of the only real criticisms I could make though is about the front end menu system. It all looks nice enough admittedly but whoever designed the workings of it had obviously never come across the term "user friendly" before. I won't bother with a specific example but suffice to say there's all manner of up and down to move left and right shenanigans going on all over the place. And that's not good. It's confusing at first but you do get the hang of it in time and I did come to forgive it this one flaw by the time I'd played a few games.

Anyway, apart from the customising teams part there are plenty of other options to wade your way through. There are the usual gameplay options to contend with, although there are a few new additions that you don't see very often. For example, in a game when you're defending a quick tap of one of the shoulder buttons will see the player you're in control of attempt some sort of unusually violent manoeuvre, be it a flying kick or rabbit punch to the back of the head.

The purists have an option to turn this sort of filthy behaviour off but I prefer to leave it on because it does happen occasionally in the real game, and you do get punished for it. Being the vindictive sort I like to note any players who've committed a particularly nasty foul on one of my players and reap my revenge later in the game with such a move, pleading, "He started it ref" when a yellow card is brandished in my direction!

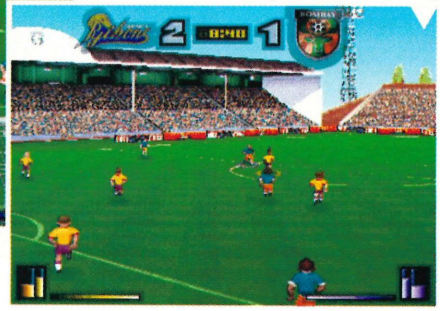
The use of sprites for players makes this possible. Imagine trying to do the same in Soccer '97 or ISS Pro. You couldn't unless you also noted down their position on the field. The vastly different looking players give the game a much more real feeling in



Giving the players their own individual look really helps you to feel like you're part of the team



It's nice to see someone pack all this motion capture, polygon nonsense in and use good old straight forward sprites for a change I reckon



The cartoony feel of All Star Soccer my put some people off but it shouldn't. The players move just as realistically

GENRE COMPARISON

Game Soccer '97
Software House Eidos

The undisputed PlayStation Pro football champion. That's not having a go at All Star Soccer, just to say that they are two very different games, and two that can (and should) sit nicely together in anyone's software collection. If you have to choose one though, and realism and ease of play are important to you, then I've got to say go for this one

my book, not just for the sake of vengeance, but also the ease of picking out the star players in a team and marking them that little bit more closely.

Another option (which I must admit I don't use) is the one that allows you to control roughly how much the referee will punish the players for foul play and how much he will turn a blind eye to. This gives you the chance to turn the game into a real free-for-all, and while this isn't for me, I can see where the appeal lies, especially if you are playing when you've had a few!

Numerous game styles are available. You can play friendlies, leagues and cups, although the latter are far more satisfying once you've designed your own team. First you give your squad a name, then lovingly create each team member from scratch (although thankfully there is a randomise option allowing you just to create the odd star/favourite player here and there)

Make me a star!



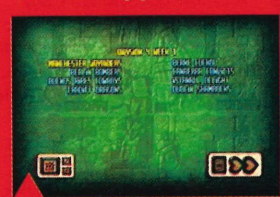
First step to creating a championship winning squad is, er, well, creating your squad. Anything from physical build, to hair colour, head shape and hair style is determined by you



Your chance to be a budding Gianni Versace. Or maybe that's not such a good thing given recent events. See your team "step out in style" with the latest in summer footballing fashion



There they are, The Boys. The Manchester Joyriders are primed and ready for their inaugural season in the All Star Soccer league. Can they create a real impression or are they doomed to face mid table mediocrity?



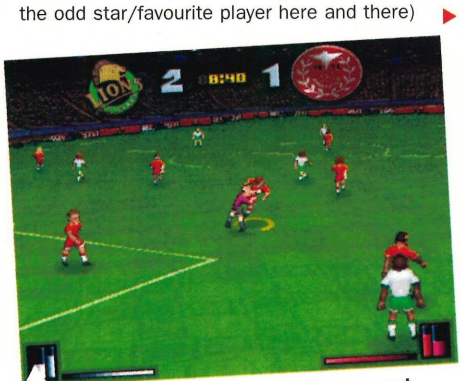
The tension is almost unbearable as my squad prepare for their first ever competitive game. Talk about butterflies in the stomach, it feels more like there's a bloody sparrow in there at the moment



The time for talk is over. It's time to prove ourselves on the pitch where it counts. I'm not that worried really. I've got full confidence in my lads and at the end of the day we'll just take each game as it comes



Well, looks like all that pre season hard work is paying off. Second in the league with a 100 per cent recent and a game against the league leaders up next. Looks like we're in for a very good season indeed



You never know what's going to happen next in All Star Soccer! A most unusual incident!



A lenient ref will turn a blind eye to most things, leading to incredibly violent games



A spectacular overhead kick attempt. You'll find the game's control system most intuitive

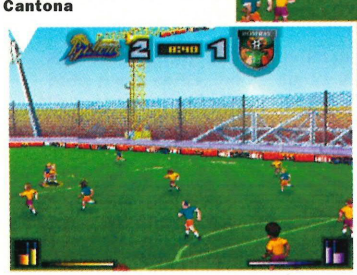
In no time at all you'll be pulling off some pretty spectacular footballing moves



The keepers behave realistically, and there's certainly no obvious angle where a shot will go in every time



The charicature players include the likes of Gullit and Cantona



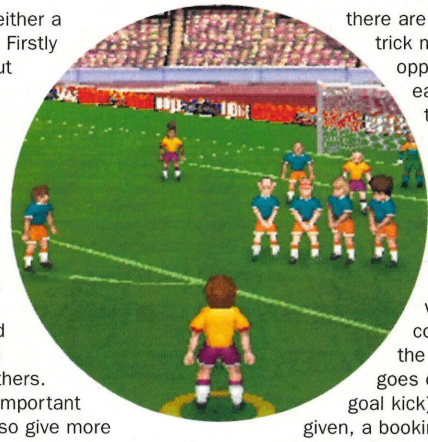


There are a wide variety of camera angles from which thee action can be viewed

All Star Soccer

▶and then enter them in either a league or cup competition. Firstly though you need to sort out their attributes and decide who's going to be best at what.

This is done using a system of stars. Each player has six attributes and individuals can be assigned up to five stars. So, as the most important attribute for a defender is probably tackling, you need to make sure that you give that preference over the others. For an attacker it is more important they are able to kick well, so give more stars to his kicking ability.



You're given a pool of 300 stars with which to build your squad and these must be divided up between your 16 squad members. Obviously you can make your subs significantly weaker than your starting line up, giving you more to play about with for your better players. In my squad I made most players fairly equal, but designed my star striker with maximum speed, strength, stamina and kicking capabilities. This paid off, with him repaying my confidence with six goals in my first four league games!

The game itself, well, I think it plays as well as any other football game out there at the moment which surprised me. The control system is intuitive with headers, volleys, passing, shooting and even controlling the ball on your chest becoming second nature in next to no time. There's a clever system of controlling your shot height (triangle button for a high shot, X button for low, with back and forward on the d pad controlling lift and dip for both options) and there are even little "Kinkladze style" trick moves to dazzle your opponents with, which are easily accessible with a quick tap of one of the shoulder buttons when in possession.

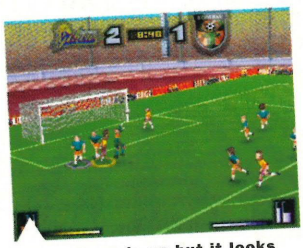
Oh yeah, I forgot to mention the commentary didn't I? Well, actually commentary is probably the wrong word because on very few occasions is any comment actually passed on the game, except when the ball goes out of play (corner, throw in, goal kick) or when there's a free kick given, a booking made or a goal scored.

The vast majority of the commentary consists of impressions of various footy pundits and famous players talking drivel in their usual styles. Some of it is genuinely funny stuff and thankfully it in no way detracts from the on screen action, other than to occasionally distract you as you laugh at something that's just been said.

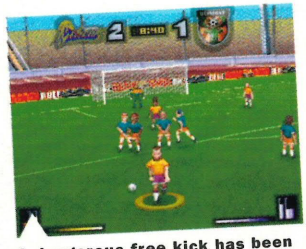
This could have gone spectacularly wrong had it not been done well, but it really is a major plus and is one of the few rare occasions in a long time playing hundreds of games that one has actually made me smile.

I'll be honest, my initial thoughts before I'd played it were laced with great trepidation at the thought of a "comedy" football game, but these fears were pretty much dispelled immediately and I went on to enjoy the game more and more each time I played, and I still do!

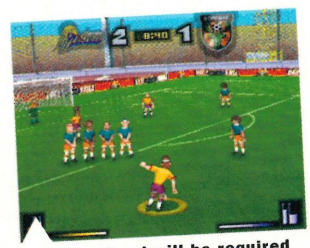
All Star Soccer is a real surprise package right out of the blue. Forget any unease you may feel about the idea and kick back and enjoy one of the best all round footy games on any system!



The pressure's on but it looks like, on this occasion, the keeper's up to the task

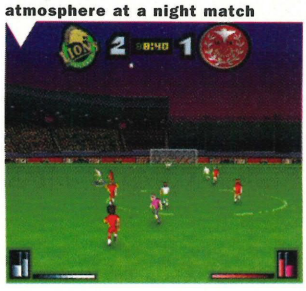


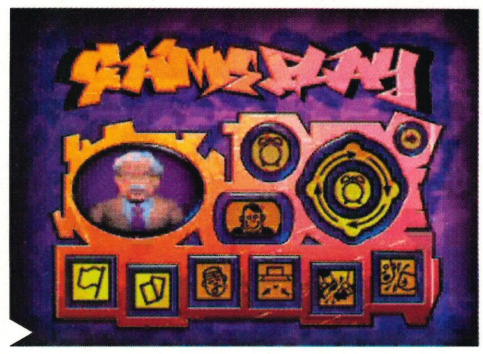
A dangerous free kick has been conceded right on the edge of the area. Top corner perhaps?



A vicious bend will be required if this is to go goalwards! Looks like a touch of Cole syndrome

Don't know about you, but I always feel there's more atmosphere at a night match





This will go down in history as the worst front end menu system in gaming history I reckon!

PRO SCORE

GAME All Star Soccer
GENRE Sports
SOFTWARE HOUSE Eidos
CONTACT 0171 636 3000
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £44.99

If you had said to me a couple of weeks ago that I would have given this such a high score, I'd have laughed in your face. It is impossible, however, not to be charmed by All Star Soccer's determination to ensure you enjoy yourself. It has a very laddish attitude, but then that's something that a footy game can't really avoid I suppose. Bundle in plenty of laughs, some quality graphics and a top notch game of soccer and Eidos has got yet another roaring success on its hands. I don't care if you've already got a favourite, this is well worth having as well! Save Soccer '97 for when you're feeling a bit serious and have a crack at this when you want a bit of a laugh. You can't lose! And neither can Eidos.

GRAPHICS 8
SOUND 9
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 8

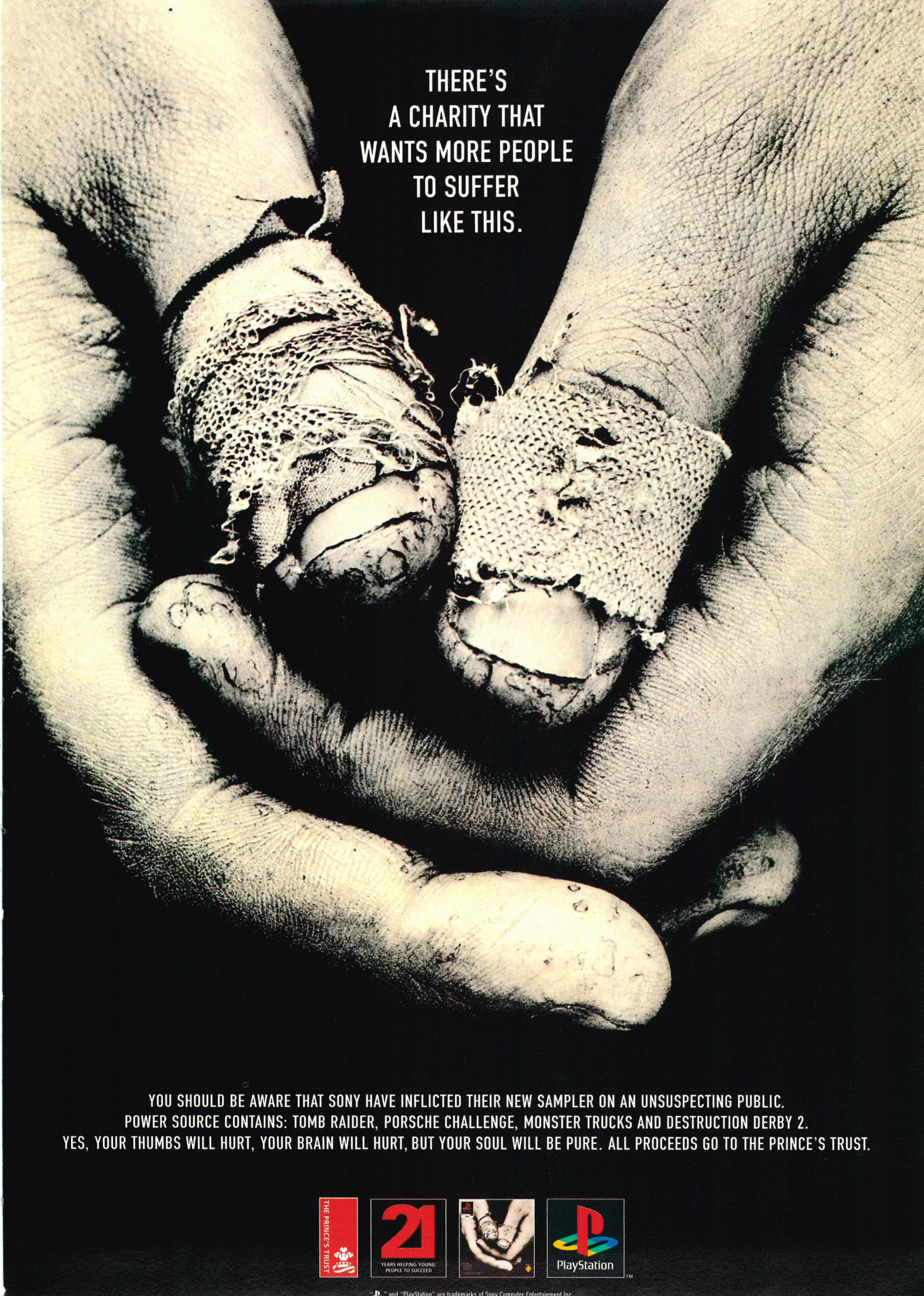
8½

DAN Extremely silly, which probably explains why a footy-philistine like myself can enjoy it. Even if you don't quite understand the off-side rule, you can raise a smile at the comedy commentary

JAY Not as complex as some of the other PSX football outings by some score, and although the comedy adds another "new" element to the game, I'll still be wasting my time playing on Soccer 97

ALEX Anything and everything to do with football is alright by me. Eidos has a good reputation as far as PlayStation soccer sims go and this new slant on an old tried and tested genre works beautifully. It's ream

ANDY If you fancy a bit of a laugh as you try to learn the intricacies, the commentary is guaranteed to keep you you amused. The game itself is tricky to get to grips with but is worth the effort in the long run



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BY ANDY SHARP

Ball Blazer Champions

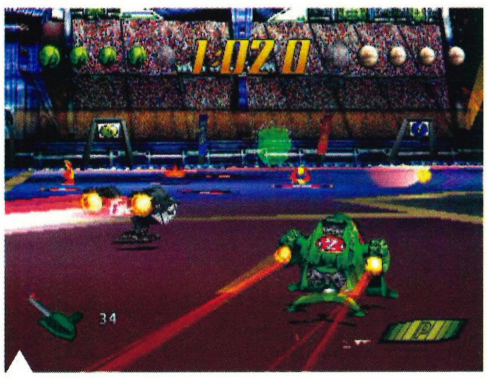
Yet another oldie is revamped for the modern game slayer. This time around it's the old Commodore 64 "classic" Ball Blazer. Does it hold its own against the plethora of modern releases? Well...



All of the racers look like extras from a Manga movie which gives you a good idea that we're in te future here



In the thick of the action, with only a little time left to get that elusive winner



The race is on to get the ball. Who has the most turbo boost or weapons to blow the other aside?





Each of the vehicles has a turbo ability to reach that ball before an opponent snatches it away





The split screen option offers a limited view but works well and the game loses very little



Your weapons can be picked up as you go. Use them wisely and you can gain total control of the contest

After the visual feasts of Dark Forces and Rebel Assault II, Lucas Arts must have fancied a break from all things Star Wars and wondered what, if anything, it could come up with. What it seems to have come up with is quite a shocker. Not because it's in any way cutting edge or visually astounding, but because it's a real stinker.

Any shred of credibility previously gained has to now be doubted. Ball Blazer is one of the greatest disappointments in recent times; a cross between Slamscape and Riot in many respects and both of those titles hardly set the world on fire, let alone sparked any interest.

The basic idea in the game is that you are a participant in a futuristic sport, not unlike the old Rollerball movie where there is a single ball you must fire into the opponent's goal using whatever means you can find. Dirty play and considerable cunning are all necessary – after all, your opponent will be using his own set of tactics and firing his arsenal solely at your machine.

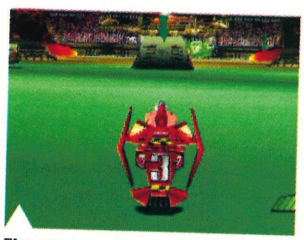
Your trusty machine for the battle is the Rotofoil which is an ultra quick and manoeuvrable beast, more than ready for the job at hand. If you don't feel it's up to the job in the long run, however, you can upgrade it as you go along with the credits you gain.

The rounds themselves are four minute affairs in which time you must either be the first to score five goals or have the lead at the end of time to continue. To progress through the rounds you need to win two of the three bouts per round.

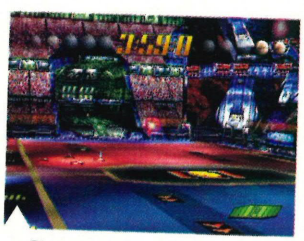
Each battle takes place in one of several arenas which are strewn with ammunition and power-ups, along with the all important ball. Fighting for the ball is half the battle, while the other half is made up of attempting to avoid the hail of bullets and missiles being fired at you and scoring the goal. As soon as you are hit by an enemy attack, the ball is blasted from your grasp and you must try to retrieve it before your opponent.

The Blazers themselves all control their own Rotofoils which vary greatly in speed, strength and size. The beings that inhabit them are some of the strangest, mean and downright freaky fellas you've ever seen. They'll stop at no lengths to prevent you from scoring that winning goal.

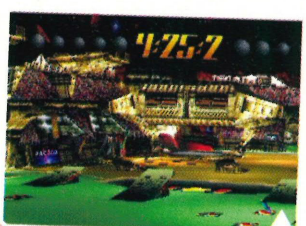
The action comes thick and fast with little



The arenas all vary in colour and set up, some offering platforms and ramps for you to use



The games get underway when the ball is fired out randomly into the arena



If you've set your Rotofoil up correctly, this area shouldn't hold too many obstructions



Speed freaks



ZUURA



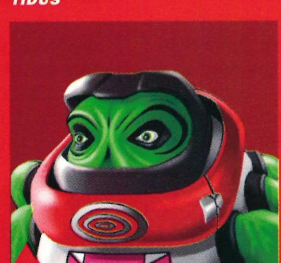
SREE



TIDUS



BORGUS



GRUMLI



ZACK



K'KRIX



TORQUE

time available to get your bearings. All you need to know is where you are in relation to the ball and a quick rotation towards the arrow to either the left or right of the screen shows you where the blighter is in respect of you.

One of Ball Blazer's few redeeming factors is that it really is a fast paced contest with little margin for error. One single mistake could result in a goal being lost or more importantly, instant defeat.

Since things progress at such a staggering pace, locating the ball and the goal does become a little confusing, but this has been countered by hitting the snap button which swings the front of your ship around to the ball if it's not in your possession. Once you've gathered the ball, hitting the button again swings it around so you know where the goal is situated.

Unfortunately for Ball Blazer, its best point is also part of its downfall. It's so fast that to keep in control of exactly what's going on lessens the enjoyment considerably. As your Rotofoil spins so regularly it's very simple to become totally disorientated.

While going hell for leather around the arenas you will be able to pick up extra weapons to use and thankfully replenish your energy after some missile punishment. The strips for this are green but you must try to avoid the red strips as these will have the opposite effect.

The 3-D arenas all vary – some have ramps or hills while others are just plain and flat. The more you play, the more you will get to know which strategies will work the best on the, admittedly rather, impressive stages and there are numerous options which can build up your ship into a far superior battler. It's just a shame the rest of the game doesn't live up to these standards.

As a two player split screen game it just doesn't gel together very well. Sure, there are practice modes as well as different tournament modes but unfortunately none of this makes the game any more enjoyable at the end of the day.

PRO SCORE

GAME Ball Blazer Champions
GENRE Futuristic sports
SOFTWARE HOUSE Virgin
CONTACT 0171 368 2255
RELEASE DATE Tba
PRICE £44.99

After seeing some favourable reviews for this release I was looking forward to reviewing it myself. Unfortunately, my optimism was soon quashed and it quickly became apparent that I was looking at a poor man's Rollerball. Futuristic sports games have never been as big a buzz as you'd expect and Ball Blazer Champions doesn't break the trend. Visually it has plenty to recommend it, but the gameplay is far too dizzying to make it any way enjoyable. It has some nice touches such as the snap button which rotates you towards the ball but doing this a few times confuses the matter as you become completely disorientated. It's a bold attempt and is better than the likes of Riot but lacks any kind of lasting appeal

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 6
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 6

6½

DAN The concept is fairly appealing, and the game almost lives up to the original idea. However, there's absolutely nothing here that'll draw you back time after time. Just another OKish future sports game

JAY Not another! Every month some wacky spacey sporty thing turns up offering loads of hyperfast laser action, and everytime they're a complete waste of time and money. This ain't terrible, but it's far from being great

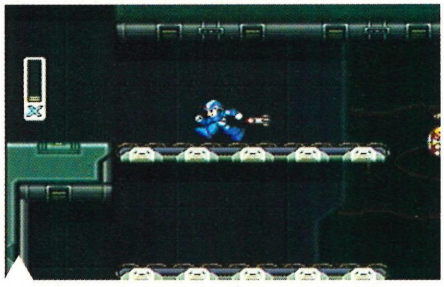
ALEX Futuristic sports thing which, like Psygnosis' genre counterpart Riot, looks quite ream but doesn't play at all well. A bit too "spinny" for my liking, there's so much turning around going on you can get dizzy

STEVE I can't be arsed with all these future sporty type games and Ballblazer Champions appeals to me about as much as Andy does. It has a certain charm as a retro update, but that's about all it has going for it...

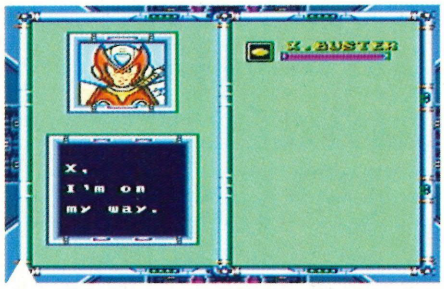
BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Megaman X3

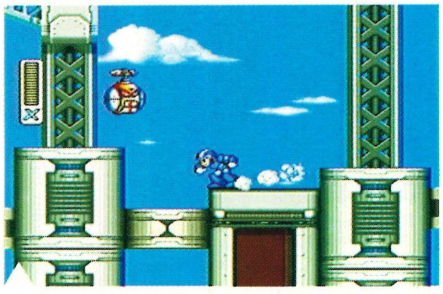
It's OK, you can breathe out at last, the eighty-seventh Megaman game is finally here. How we've missed him



Thanks to his speed-boost, Megaman is able to avoid an imminent arse/missile collision



If you get stuck, you can swap characters and hope that Zero can get you out of the fix



Just before that all-important leap, Megaman's Air Jordans spring a leak

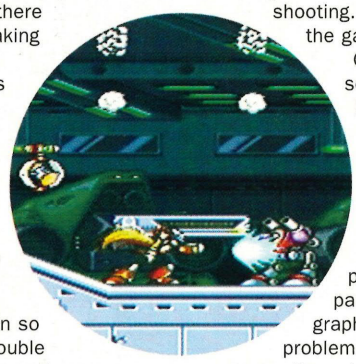
Capcom is a company with two very distinct game types. On one hand you've got firm and fruity original titles like Resident Evil, Puzzle Fighter and Star Gladiator. On the other hand, you've got roughly 300 Street Fighter and Megaman games; a seemingly endless stream of sequels and warmed-over tripe.

Unfortunately, Resident Evils and Star Gladiators come along once in a blue moon, while the rest of the year is crammed with barely disguised 16bit games. I suppose that makes Capcom a bit like REM. They have both been around for years, and when they're good, they're very very good. But when they're bad, they're just sort of, well, just there really. Hanging around, not making a fuss, just doing what they always do for the die-hard fans – more of the same.



The eight evil robots await your challenge at the level select screen

The Americans go a bundle on the little blue chap's adventures, as do the Japanese, but as these are nations that hold up Hanson and Shampoo as cultural icons, I don't think we should rely too heavily on their judgement.



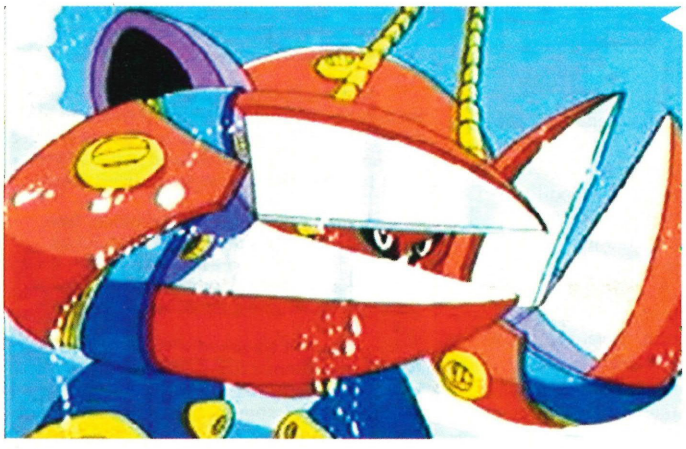
Megaman's been released in so many versions that I've had trouble working out just how many games there have been. I reckon this about number eight, which puts it on a par, sequel-wise, with Police Academy and Nightmare on Elm Street. And there's a clue right there.

I'm also presuming there's some sort of storyline, given the amount of nonsensical Manga FMV on show, but it seems to be the same as all the other Megaman outings: Mad robots go bonkers, stop them by leaping and shooting. So it's just as well we've got the gameplay to fall back on then.

Oh. Bugger. The gameplay seems to have wandered off. Maybe it fell out of the padded envelope in the post. But when I look at this, all I see is a SNES game directed by John Woo. In slow motion, that is. The flat, cartoony look isn't such a massive problem, I'm actually quite partial to games that avoid graphical gimmicks, but what is a problem is the sluggish nature of the game. I'm not just talking about the physical speed (although that leaves a lot to be desired) but the sloppy pacing.

Enemies appear in the same place every time and are stupidly easy to kill. If you're lucky you'll get maybe two enemies on screen at once, which is about as exciting as this gets. You're in more danger from the countless sudden death obstacles, which slay you without a moments pause. The dreary pace isn't helped by the frequent "story scenes" which are told via unskippable, scrolling text boxes. Which, again, unveil the text at an agonising trudge.

Now correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't the PlayStation a 32bit console? And isn't this a game that could easily fit into a 16bit console?



Being a giant robot-crab, Dennis often failed dismally in games of peek-a-boo



Just look at that story-moving text box. No speech, just text. Colour me excited, daddio

Megaman's "Crew"

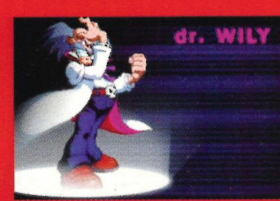














Halfway through the first level, and Megaman has been knocked out and captured. Ooh well done



Zero dodges spiky balls and retaliates with his super powered "glow-sword"



With Megaman strung from the ceiling, it's up to Zero to save the day

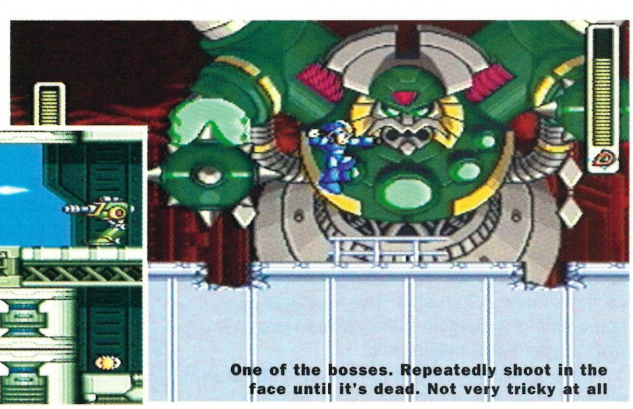
And if you're not going to use 3-D polygons and all that rubbish, surely you'd have gallons of space to expand the game, make it fast, swanky and basically the ultimate 2-D platformer on Earth? In other words, this is a massive missed opportunity.

Maybe if I hadn't just seen Pandemonium 2, I wouldn't be so non-plussed about this offering. I suppose I could wear some blinkers and give this a high mark just on the strength of the innocent fun it could offer. It is, if you want to be forgiving, a sturdy enough platformer that could have been written any time in the past 10 years.

There's absolutely nothing original here. Anything that hasn't been nicked from other games has been re-used from previous Megaman games, but it pulls off the old tricks reasonably well if you ignore the many design irritations. But, let's be honest, if you reach the eighth game in a series and you're still basically remaking the first, it might just be time to put down the whip and leave the dead horse unflogged.

Pleasant enough to look at, but it's hardly making the most of the power Of the PlayStation, is it?





One of the bosses. Repeatedly shoot in the face until it's dead. Not very tricky at all

PRO SCORE

GAME Megaman X3
GENRE Platform
SOFTWARE HOUSE Virgin
CONTACT 0171 368 2255
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £35.99

Megaman might still be fairly new to the 32bit world, but that's really no excuse for serving up a rehashed 16bit Nintendo game. There is fun to be had here, but it's a slight affair. The many weapons are diverting, if predictable, but in the long run they add nothing new to a 10 year old formula. This is an OK game, but there's nothing to it. You certainly didn't buy a PlayStation for games like this. If it helps, picture a glass of water. It's bland and basic, but it quenches your thirst in an effective but dull manner. Now picture a lovely chilled vodka and tonic with a slice of lemon. It still refreshes you, but adds a kick and gives the taste buds something to do at the same time. I know which one I'd pick.

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 5
GAMEPLAY 6
LASTABILITY 5

5

STEVE **Good old Megaman! Ooh it's the best! To be honest I could never really see the point myself, and this latest incarnation has done absolutely nothing to alter my totally negative viewpoint**

JAY **No sir, I don't like it. It looks and plays far too much like a six year old SNES title to me and if I *had* to purchase a platform-type adventure for my PSX, then I'm afraid this would not be on my shopping list**

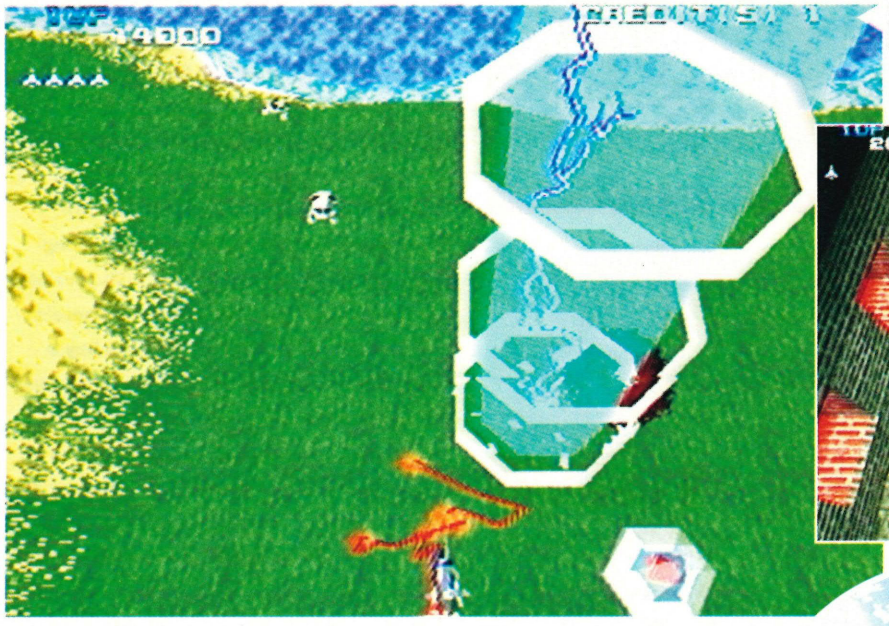
ALEX **It's already been said (by Jay above), but this looks more like a SNES game than a PlayStation one. To have made it worthwhile buying there should have been at least one other title stuck on the disc**

ANDY **Mega Man has been out and about for donkeys now on many other formats and, in all honesty, they're all much the same. This throws nothing new into the pot and as a result it's not going to impress anyone**

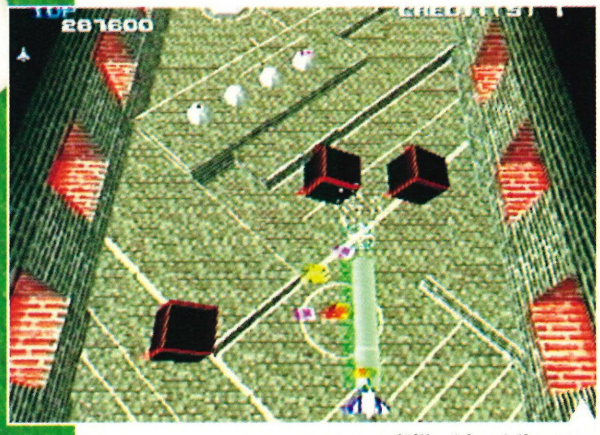
BY DAN WHITEHEAD

Xevious 3D/G+

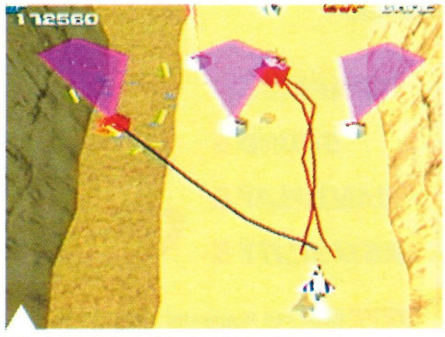
It's 3-D all right, but there's a dazzling prize awaiting the reader who can explain just what G+ means



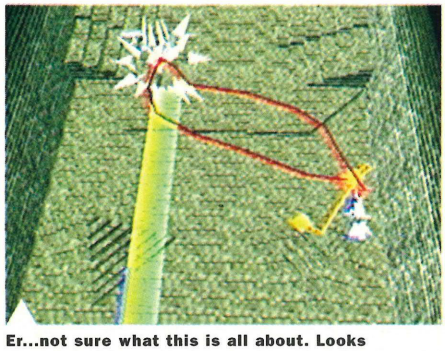
Looks like somebody's been getting ideas from Independence Day



Still, at least the game doesn't look like a confusing mish mash of little sprites



This long stringy homing laser is very handy. Hold down fire and it'll pretty much clear the screen



Er...not sure what this is all about. Looks like something spiky has just burst, with a long green thing coming out. Hmm...



What a bizarre month. After last month's massive splurge of exciting new titles from E3, looking a lot like a veritable fountain of creamy games spurting into the air from where we were standing, this month seems to be spring cleaning time over in Software House City.

All the games that slipped behind the desk and got covered in dust and muck are being brushed down and released back into the community to fill the slow summer months before the build-up to the more profitable Christmas market. Although by the looks of them, some of these games have been wandering around lost for a few years too many.

Megaman X3 and Raystorm both look like they could have been released any time in the past five years, and Xevious, despite its 3-D efforts, doesn't fare much better. But it's not just Xevious 3D you get in this package. Heck no. This is The Greatest Hits Of Xevious. You get the original game, then Super Xevious, followed by something called Xevious Arrangement as well as the all new 3-D version. This would be something of a bargain if the games were in any way different, but they're not.

The original, which caused a bit of a storm in the mid '80s, broke new ground by allowing you to drop bombs as well as shooting down air menaces. And, in its own little way, it's quite a laugh. Space Invaders with silly knobs on, but mildly amusing. So it comes as a bit of a shock to find that the brand new 3-D version is exactly the same.

Oh sure, it's got some nice hi-res graphics and some actually rather impressive 3-D moments when level bosses rear up at you, but it's exactly the same. The tinny sound effects are the same. The level geography is the same. Even the enemies appear in the same place for God's sake! So if you've played through the original, you've seen the 3-D version and vice versa. The Super and Arrangement versions are hardly breathtaking leaps of originality either.

Now I suppose, if you wanted to be generous, you could say that this is just because Namco is dedicated to producing an exact copy of the "classic" arcade machine. Remember, these are the people responsible, if not downright guilty, for the horrors of five volumes of Namco Museum drivel. So, the shocking similarities are merely to placate tedious arcade purists. A crap excuse, but we'll let it pass for now.

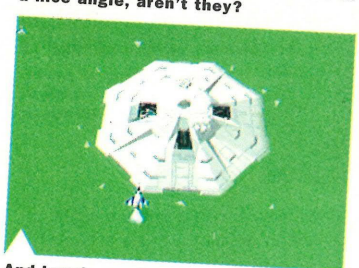
This still leaves several irritating features



One of the more impressive end of level bad guys. A nice cyber-spider. Blow its spindly legs off for a laugh

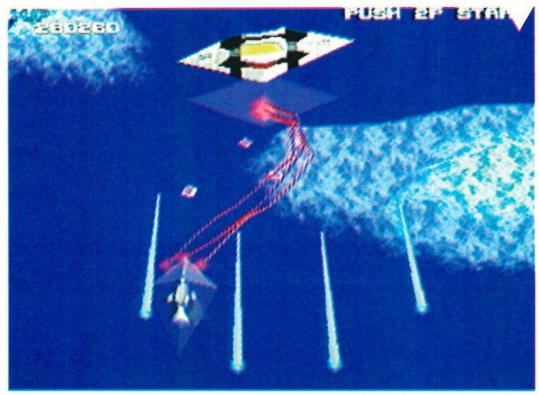


And, oh, here it is again for some reason. Still, these screenshots are at a nice angle, aren't they?



And here's a rather crap end of level bad guy. A poxy UFO thing. Shoot its funnel and stand well back

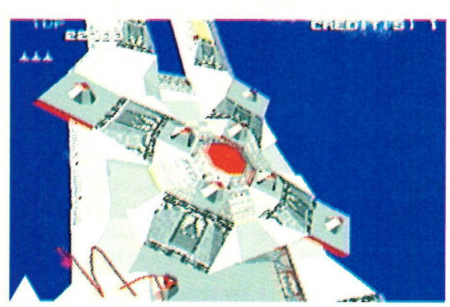
A not very scary parallelogram pops through the clouds, but a quick laser in the mush sorts it out



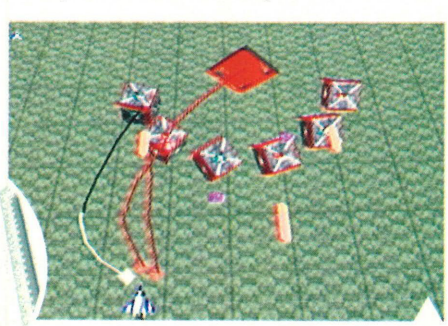


Toppling pillars add to the danger in this tunnel based level





When this massive gunship swoops up beneath you, it's quite a shock. Pity it's a piece of cake to destroy



If you're going to use polygon graphics, you might as well have some bouncy cubes as enemies

which really should have been ironed out after 10 years. The difficulty level, for instance. To start with, it's horribly difficult, even on the easy level. You'll be lucky to reach the end of the first level without using up your stingy lives. But then, for no apparent reason, you'll breeze through to the third level. Try again and you'll be smashed to bits on the first level. There's no consistency, and no learning curve.

Even though the enemies appear in the same place each time, they spew so many little pink bullets at you that there are times when it's literally impossible to survive. The bullets are often lost among the mish mash of colours and teeny sprites, making surprise death a common end to the game. Chuck in the fact that you can have a maximum of five lives and only two continues, and the struggle to progress via skill rather than luck takes on Olympian proportions.

If the game was exciting and new, maybe I'd persevere. But it's not. It's Xevious, a game I tired of at the age of 15. "Going 3-D" is usually most game's last ditch attempts to remain relevant in a games scene that's promising to move in innovative new directions. It rarely works. This is a 10 year old shoot 'em-up with all the pitfalls and pleasures that this suggests, and that's as far as it goes. Pointless.

PRO SCORE

GAME Xevious 3D/G+
GENRE Shoot 'Em-up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony
CONTACT 0171 447 1600
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £35.99

Is this the same Namco who produced Soul Blade and Rage Racer? Or are there two companies with the same name, one producing polished hits, the other producing backwards-looking toss? This is one of those games that entertains for 10 minutes, simply on the strength of nostalgia. Once that wears off, you're left with a carbon copy of a decade old game which will cost you 359,000 times more than a go on the original arcade machine. Doesn't seem like such a bargain now, does it? The inclusion of four versions might look like a good deal, but four versions of old-hat rubbish is still old-hat rubbish. As with every other "retro" game release, let it rot in peace and let's move on. Please?

GRAPHICS 6
SOUND 2
GAMEPLAY 4
LASTABILITY 4

4

STEVE **Four's a bit generous if you ask me. Xevious 3D looks appalling, plays almost as badly, has one of the worst names in history (/G+ anyone?) and quite where the 3-D bit comes from is beyond me**

JAY **A bizarre little title accompanied by an even more bizarre game. But if you fancy some okay-ish laser pumping action that looks out of date compared to the more recent offerings, then buy it. But I wouldn't**

ANDY **Many years ago this would have been hailed as the way forward for the gaming world. Nowadays it's just bland drivel which entertains for the duration of one game only. Dated and dull in all departments**

ALEX **I like these sort of pseudo retro shoot 'em-ups, but this simply hasn't got that "one more go" addictiveness needed in a game of its genre. I'd say you're better off with one of the earlier Namco Museum pieces myself**

BY STEVE MCNALLY

Raystorm

After the travesty that was Xevious, can Sony get back on track with Raystorm, another shoot 'em-up? Well, it sort of can...



Raystorm looks sort of dated but I wouldn't worry too much. After all, it's just a shoot'em-up at the end of the day



There're plenty of big, booming explosions to satisfy fans of the gratuitously shallow



There's a story of sorts, but it really is breathtakingly pointless

Funny thing about me and shoot 'em-ups, (well, not strictly funny, more sort of quirky I suppose) is that I couldn't actually tell you whether I like the buggers or not. No matter how many I play, my feelings towards them don't seem to change and I never really lean either way.

I am, of course, talking about your traditional brand of shoot 'em-ups, of which Raystorm is most definitely one. You know the sort. You fly a lone spaceship battling against ludicrous odds in a battle in which you must stand or fall, depending solely on how good your reflexes are. Oh, and maybe a more than healthy dollop on luck on the top.

Doesn't exactly sound like the recipe for success to me but somehow the genre, one of the first styles of video games ever, has survived almost unchanged in anything but graphics terms. Raystorm doesn't exactly stretch the boundaries of originality either, being nothing more than a game we've seen dozens of times before with rehashed (and improved) graphics.

For some reason, however, I don't hate it. Apparently it's a perfect recreation of a popular arcade game and I have no reason to doubt that. It doesn't exactly stun you with its looks or anything but it does have a distinctly arcadey feel to it so this certainly not a wild claim.

I'm sure you can guess how it plays but I'll go into it anyway because the chances of me writing enough for these two pages without doing so is slim to say the least. Okay, here's the deal, you're flying along in this space ship right? You're minding your own business, out on a little jaunt round the skies when, all of a sudden, you're jumped by thousands of aliens, all intent on seeing your insides scattered around the atmosphere.

You have two distinctly different types of weapon. One is your traditional, power upable, fire out of the front of your ship laser type effort, the other is a slower but much more accurate lock-on style affair which, when it has a target in its sights, is guaranteed to blast it to oblivion. The drawback is that it takes a while to achieve a lock, and in Raystorm if you stay still for too long you'll be picked off in no time.

Powering up your weapon is the key to doing well in this game, as indeed it is in many shoot 'em-ups, and you can really beef up your fire power significantly should you manage to last a while without losing a life. Your guns are powered up by collecting little pods that are left behind occasionally when you destroy an enemy. Each one boosts it that little bit further, but if you get very lucky you occasionally come across one that sends your power ups rocketing.

Unfortunately, when you die it all disappears which can be an absolute nightmare. But don't panic, if you're quick witted enough you can snaffle most of them back because they remain floating around for a few seconds, giving you another chance when your ship materialises



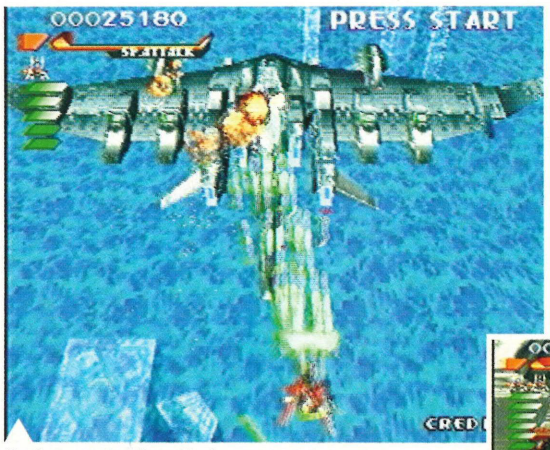
As you can see, Raystorm is set in the early 22nd Century, a time which, to be honest, looks far too violent!



Power up your weapons and you're capable of wreaking detruction on a massive scale!



This waterfall drop looks as though it may be exciting doesn't it? Well, sadly it's not



You're constantly called upon to take on enemies much bigger than yourself. Ooh it's a fair fight!



Reminds me of classic shooter UN Squadron this bit for some reason. Can't think why that could be!



You really already know what you're getting if you buy Raystorm, so no complaints!

again. Be careful though, it's all too easy to go chasing after them and smack straight into another ship or stray bullet that, in your haste, you fail to spot.

There are two different types of ship to choose from, but the only real difference is in the weapons they fire. One fires more traditional bullet type stuff, whereas the second is more of a laser which grows in intensity with each power up. I go for the first ship every time, simply because when the weapon gets more powerful the area your fire covers increases dramatically along, in my case, with the chances of survive as a result of the odd lucky shot here and there.

Anyway, there is the usual array of bad guy ships, along with some pretty nasty end of level big bosses to contend with. To be honest though, I really struggled to get excited because Raystorm offers absolutely nothing in the way of originality, and anyone who has played the odd shoot 'em-up in their time will have seen pretty much everything before.

Having said that, there has been a distinct lack of decent shooters on the PlayStation so that should guarantee this pretty healthy sales. And I'm not saying they'd be undeserved at all, merely that it's just a shame that one of the oldest genres around is still firmly stuck in the past while the others move on apace around it.



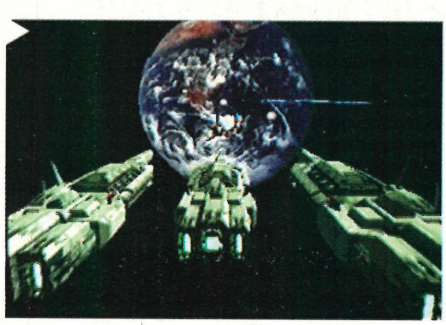
The levels are nice and varied, but you can't escape a feeling of gameplay samey-ness



It's difficult to criticise this too much, but then it's equally tricky to praise it



The smart bomb is highly effective, unfortunately you only get one for each life you lose



As with all space based games, the Star Wars/ Battlestar Galactica influences are there for all to see!

PRO SCORE

GAME Raystorm
GENRE Shoot 'Em-up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony
CONTACT 0171 447 1600
RELEASE DATE Out Now
PRICE £39.99

Raystorm or Xevious 3D/G+? Which one should you buy? No contest mate, it has simply got to be Raystorm. But only if you're absolutely gagging for a new PlayStation shoot 'em-up or are a fan of the arcade version. If not then I'd think seriously, long and hard about whether you're going to get your money's worth out of something like this, because this isn't all that impressive either. It's pretty much totally devoid of originality and, barring a not exactly stunning update in the graphical quality this could have been released just about any time over the last decade or so. Not a bad game by any means, but I'm not sure I'd have felt quite so charitable towards it had it cost me 40 quid to have a go!

GRAPHICS 7
SOUND 5
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 6

6½

DAN **Certainly better than the ropey Xevious 3D, but this is still a game that looks five years out of date. Still, "proper" shoot 'em-ups are scarce on the PlayStation and this pulls off the old tricks with some style**

JAY **Better than your average arcade space shoot 'em-up, but by no means a ground breaker. Personally I prefer this to Xevious, but at the end of the day it's Ocean's classy Raiden Project that floats my 3-D space boat**

ALEX **Just a usual style shoot 'em-up, really. No great attempts made to revolutionise the genre here and, as a result, Raystorm doesn't get bogged down with sacrificing gameplay for unconvincing efforts at 3-D**

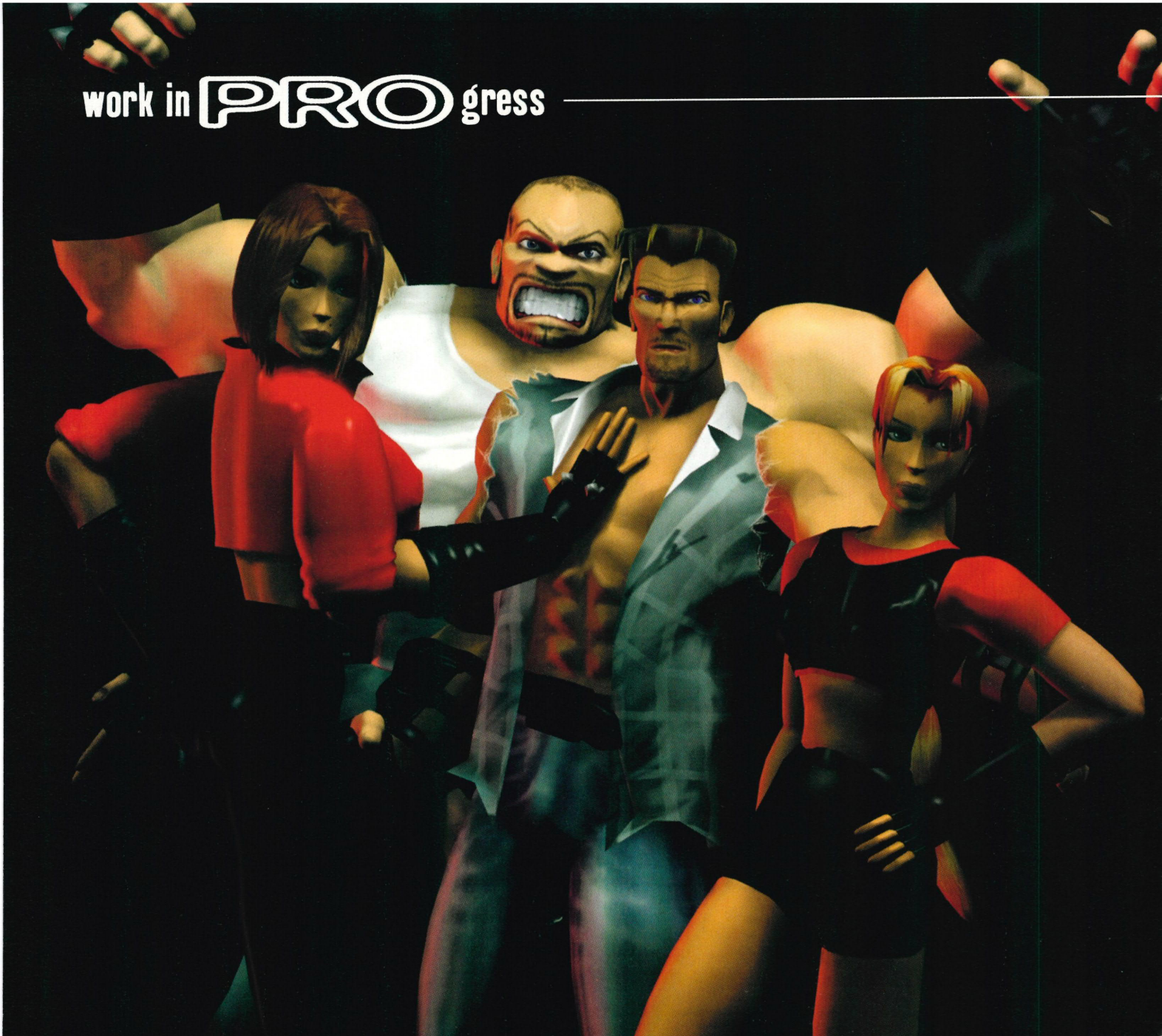
ANDY **With Xevious also appearing in this issue, you should take a good look at the two and note the difference. Raystorm knocks the wind out of Xevious and shows how this sort of thing should be done**


RESCUE



Colony Wars by Psygnosis

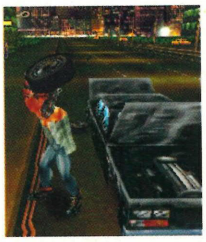
With the future of the League at stake, two League Eclipse Stealth fighters are about to destroy a navy ship. Unfortunately for them, a navy frigate emerging from a nearby warp hole has other ideas...



It's The End Of The World As We Know it...

Drawing inspiration from such bygone classics as Double Dragon and Streets Of Rage, Core Design is getting ready to rock your wee grey box with the stunning Fighting Force. Join us as we go backstage to get the full low-down on this sure-fire beat 'em-up beast...



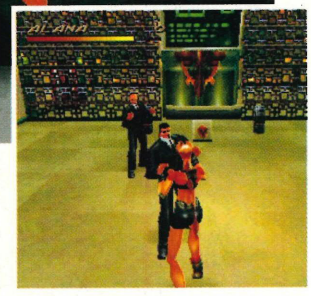












Above: Players get the chance to test their skills in the fabulous Arena Mode

The end of the world is nigh. Well, according to Core Design it is anyway. You see, its latest PSX outing tells the tale of the evil (hey, aren't they always?) Dr Zeng and his devious plans to take over the world. His initial theory was that the world would implode with badness come the year 2000. So he organised a big bash to celebrate this momentous occasion, but then disaster struck – come January 1, 2000 the world was still in one piece. "Arse" thought the Doc.

After a brief swearing session, our hapless Dr Zeng got it into his head that if the world wasn't going to burst when it was supposed to, he'd have to hurry the process along. And so off he went, gathering together a band of merry men to help him with his self-destructive plan. This, as is the norm in games such as this, is the point where you swagger in, grab the joypad and start giving Dr Zeng a spot of his own medicine.

As mentioned above, the game borrows strongly from the old Mega Drive titles Streets Of Rage and Double Dragon. You select a character from the line-up of four and romp your way through a vast expanding network of fully 3-D levels and locations pummelling the enemy until your fists start to bleed. And when they do, simply pick up one of the many available items of mayhem on route and continue with your trail of destruction. Guns, knives, flame throwers, crates, phone booths, crow bars – the list of collective weaponry is endless, with each one adding to the mayhem onscreen.

Complete freedom of movement is the key with Fighting Force. The pumping action never lets up and the swaying camera angles up the adrenaline factor as massive hordes of geeks and gangsters come at you, fists raised, ready for rucking. And, as far as plot lines go, that's basically it. The idea is that you wade through level upon level of psychotic madmen in order to reach Zeng and, believe me, it's action all the way baby.

Each location is fully interactive. Cars swerve to avoid you, hit other vehicles and plough into the shop fronts causing customers to spill out onto the street. Phone booths, mail boxes and numerous other items of scenery can be smashed, picked up and used against your attackers during the game, with one of the most impressive touches being the ability to destroy the passing traffic. And it's easy too! Simply walk up to a car and give it a punch. Instantly the alarm will sound. Give it a few more digs and windows break, the car rocks, doors begin to dent and if you carry on slapping hell out of it, eventually the thing will fall to pieces and explode. Not necessarily a vital part of the game, but impressive and very entertaining nevertheless.

Fighting Force looks set to be one of the smash hits of the year, with its reworked variation on a tried and tested genre. It's the first of its kind on the PlayStation and our humble opinion is that while everyone may be saving their winter cash for Core Design's other forthcoming treat, Tomb Raider 2, it'd be a wise move to start putting away some coinage for this one. It's gonna be massive.

While drooling over a virtually complete version down at Core Design's lush Derby headquarters, we took time out to give Fighting Force's Producer, Ken Lockley, a quick grilling on his latest project...

PRO: Firstly, who came up with the idea behind Fighting Force, and what's it all about?

KL: The original idea for producing a fighting game came from our lead artist, Roberto Cirillo and the game's lead programmer, Mac Avory. Basically, you've got one main objective in the game and that's to get to, and defeat, the crazy Dr Zeng. Your only other objective is to stay alive long enough to do so.



PRO: Tell us more about the four main characters.

KL: Well Mace, Alana, Smasher and Hawk all have their own special movements as well as the generic punches and kicks. They don't have "special powers" as such, but they do have devastating special moves which are specific to each individual character. Each fighter has about 40 or 50 moves, but they differ greatly from character to character.

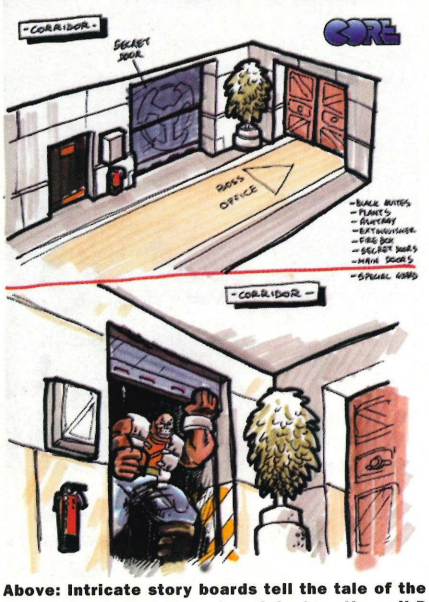
PRO: How realistic is the movement of the players? Do you get full 360 degree movement or have you designed your own 3-D engine to handle it all?

KL: The movement of the players is as realistic as the team are able to get without using motion capture. It would have been nice to use the motion capture, but with the number of enemies and characters in the game it would have used up way too much memory – plus it would have been much more time consuming. You do get full 360 degree movement however, and yes, the engine is a completely new design and I'm sure you'll notice big differences between this engine and some of our previous ones.

PRO: We've heard the tales of how big the playing area is, but how big is it in terms of screens, or even compared to another game?

KL: The locations around the game are as big as we could get them, what with the full 360 degree movement and the fact that there are lots of things going on onscreen. We did have to cut the number of polygons down several times during development in order to keep the game working and running at a decent speed. Couple this with the fact we have up to six characters onscreen at any time, along with all the special effects going on and lots of fully moving backgrounds and ▶





Above: Intricate story boards tell the tale of the FF crew's mission to seek and destroy the evil Dr Zeng. Attention to detail is superb throughout

▶vehicles too. So yes, we think the levels are fairly big.

PRO: The initial rumours about the game were that it has been described as a cross between Tekken 2, Tomb Raider and Die Hard Arcade. Is this true, and if so, does this compromise fighting or even action or do we get an even better game on both counts?



KL: We think we're getting an even better game on all counts. It certainly doesn't hamper the action as there is a great deal more going on in Fighting Force than in Tekken or Die Hard. The fighting is probably not as clean as Tekken, but it still has an edge with its varied array of moves. We have also added the extra battle arena mode which includes the added bonus of being able to pick up and use objects around you. The game is really influenced by arcade classics such as Double Dragon and Streets Of Rage.

PRO: Die Hard Arcade was very frantic without any real learning curve. Does Fighting Force allow the player more time to familiarise himself with what's going on?

KL: You can always go into the Battle Mode first to try and learn your moves, but as with any game of this genre, you're thrown straight into the game and you must fight and learn at the same time. The better and wiser you become, the further and more experienced you get. So the learning curve is fairly straight forward. You learn as you go, but let's hope you're not a slow learner!

PRO: When you fight, are you confined within a limited play area or can you run off and move freely around?

KL: You can run and roam around as freely as a bird, but the camera has a fixed limit. You will be able to run far into the distance although you may find it hard to control your character from such a distance.

PRO: With up to 40 or 50 movements per character, how hard is it to learn them?

KL: It will be fairly straightforward to learn the movements, none of them are overly complicated. Each of the movements are based around single and multiple taps of the pad, so if you press a button once you get one move. Press it twice and you may get two moves the same, or two different ones. It's just a case of trial and error, as with any fighting game at first. We have tried not to make it as complicated as some of the other fighting titles on the market, because there is so much going on in Fighting Force, people may get confused if the moves are too difficult to perform.

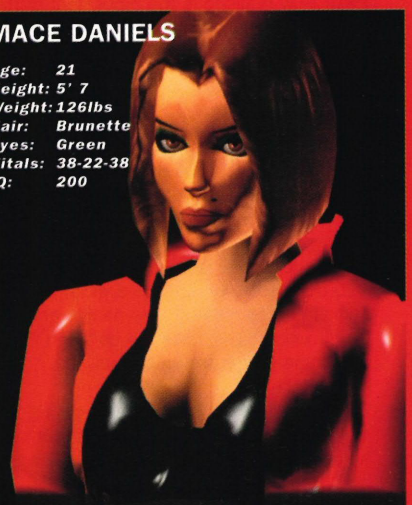
PRO: Does the artificial intelligence within the game detect how good the player is and adjust the level or even change tactics as you keep using certain moves?

KL: The A.I. is very clever and the baddies certainly react to the moves you perform on

Feel The Force...

The game gives you the choice to select from a range of four beefy characters in order to stop the impending global annihilation. Here we detail each of the Fighting Force posse to help you with your selection...

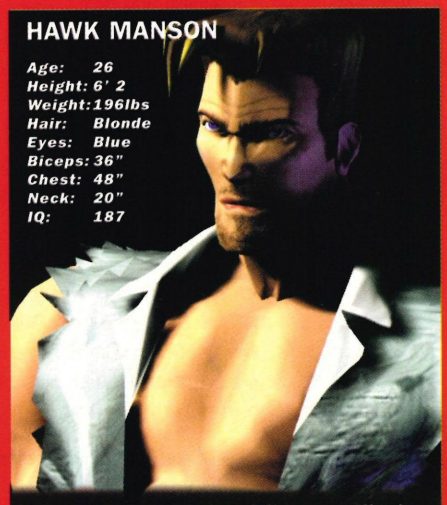
MACE DANIELS



Age: 21
Height: 5' 7
Weight: 126lbs
Hair: Brunette
Eyes: Green
Vitals: 38-22-38
IQ: 200

Mace is one hot woman with a taste for blood as well as desire and she'll tease and taunt you just before she finally knocks you out. She heard of Dr Zeng through a friend and sees this manic mission as a brilliant opportunity to get some of the things she loves most in life; namely danger, fame and lots and lots of cash. Mace isn't brash or loud, in fact she'll purr at an opponent as opposed to shouting abuse. She has many fans, as she's the kind of woman that men and women envy with a passion

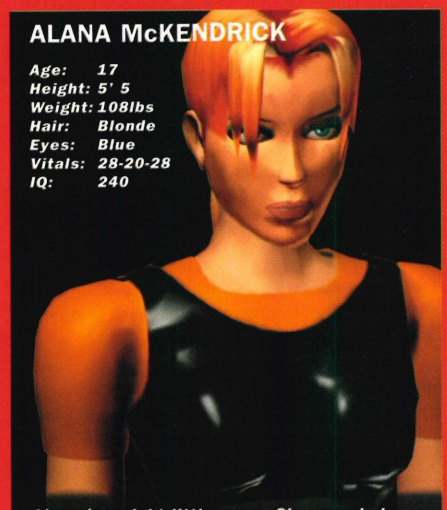
HAWK MANSON



Age: 26
Height: 6' 2
Weight: 196lbs
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Blue
Biceps: 36"
Chest: 48"
Neck: 20"
IQ: 187

Currently a hard hitting vigilante, our Hawky was once a freedom fighter for all the social wrongs in the world. He saw Mace fight once and she blew his mind with her beauty and aggression. When she finally approached Hawk for the Dr Zeng job – by pinning him to the ground, smiling sweetly and telling him that she needed his help, Hawk was instantly hooked and accepted almost immediately. There's some underlying sexual chemistry going on between him and Mace, although it's unlikely they'll ever get it together.

ALANA McKENDRICK



Age: 17
Height: 5' 5
Weight: 108lbs
Hair: Blonde
Eyes: Blue
Vitals: 28-20-28
IQ: 240

Alana is a right little raver. She spends her nights dancing away and most of her days with little sleep – and still manages to go to school. She's been planning on getting revenge on Dr Zeng, who tried to experiment on her with drugs a while back. Not only that, but it transpires that Alana is actually Dr. Zeng's illegitimate daughter and not out of vengeance, but responsibility, does she decide she must find some way to stop her stepfather messing people's heads up with his wacky mind-altering drugs

them. Some of the enemies have better A.I. than others and will adapt to your attacks. The A.I. does allow the baddies to change tactics if you keep using the same move over and over again.

PRO: Each character in the game can interact with the scenery. Is this essential for gameplay or is it in there purely for cosmetic purposes?





KL: It's not essential to find things within the scenery, but in certain areas finding items will help you a great deal. You could be stuck in one place for five minutes, but if you had found the rocket launcher or some other device earlier on it would only take you a minute. We think it is an essential part of the game though, to be able to use the things that you may find around you – you like in real life.

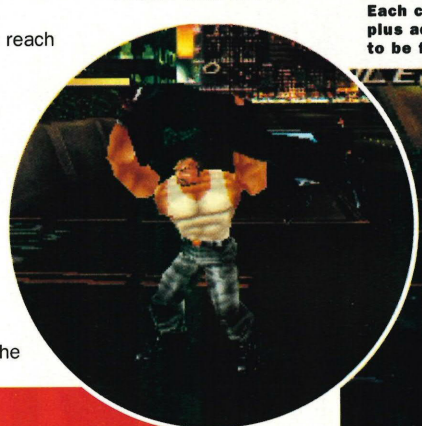
PRO: If you die, is your game saved when reach certain stages?

KL: You will be able to save your game at certain points throughout the game.

PRO: Finally, what type of interaction is there within the game and how do you find out what's required?

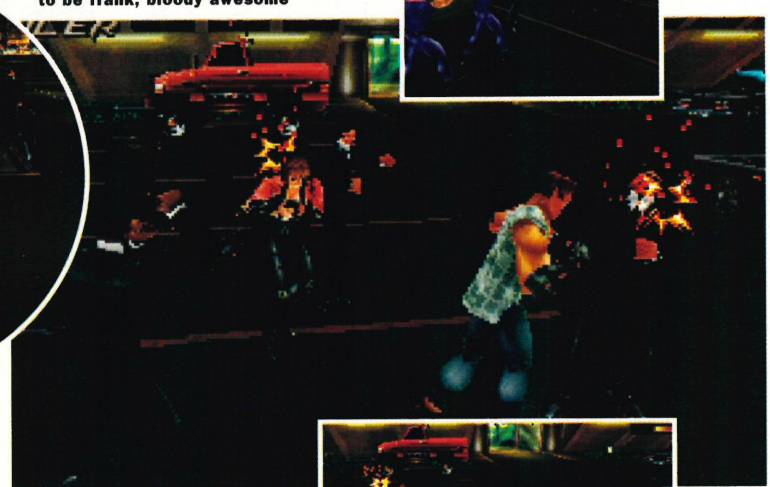
KL: We are trying to make the interaction as seamless as possible. There will be pointers along the way to help you, and there will also be parts of the game where the computer will take over and move you into another area. We don't really want to give too much away about the secret areas, but if you watch the game closely you'll find them eventually!

...More next month





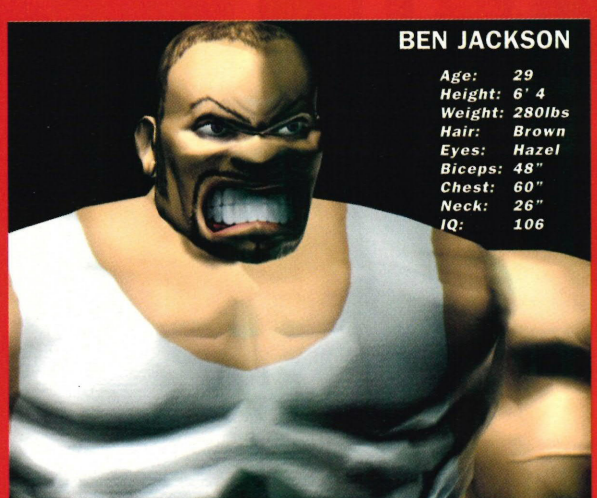
Each character has a set list of moves, plus added speciality attacks that are, to be frank, bloody awesome





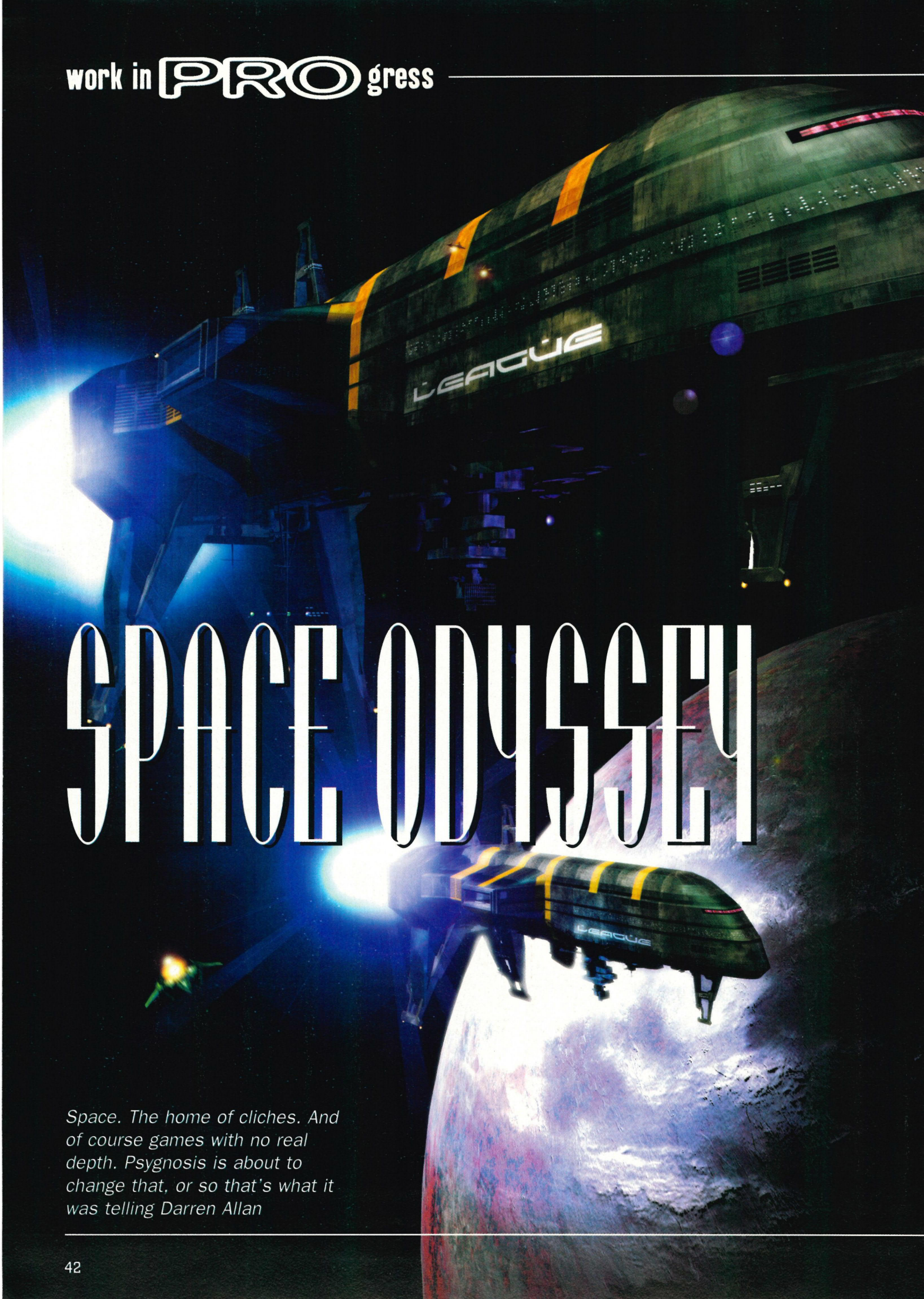
Trashing the scenery will allow you to discover numerous collectable items, such as knives, guns and power ups

BEN JACKSON



Age:	29
Height:	6' 4
Weight:	280lbs
Hair:	Brown
Eyes:	Hazel
Biceps:	48"
Chest:	60"
Neck:	26"
IQ:	106

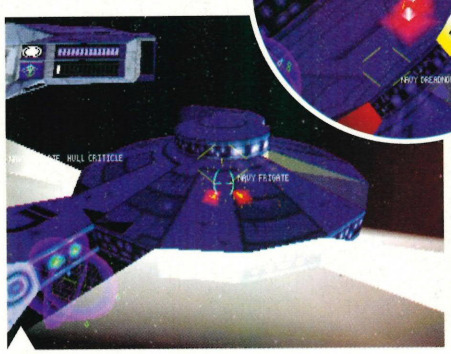
After Mace blagged Hawk into taking the job, he quickly headed off down to one of the world's most dangerous prisons to find Ben 'Smasher' Jackson. Ben is currently serving a multiple life sentence and the prison is very fond of him. Unbeknown to the public, the prison hire Ben in order to stop inmate trouble and they get paid too, so he's very popular. He's also a handy guy to have around, but like his name suggests, he smashes everything in sight and can power his strength to destroy almost anything. His wild temper is immeasurable too, and during heated times the other members of the Fighting Force team never really know if or when he'll turn on them next. A definite loose cannon



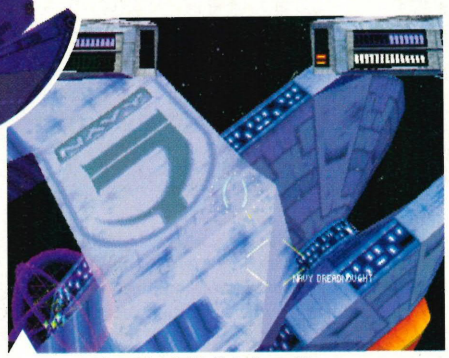
SPACE ODYSSEY

Space. The home of cliches. And of course games with no real depth. Psygnosis is about to change that, or so that's what it was telling Darren Allan





Closing in! Stay on target, stay on target etc



You want big ships? Well Colony Wars has 'em by the dozen

It has to be said that there aren't a fantastic amount of high quality space operas out for the PlayStation. You know the ones, not just your piddly little 3-D shooters, but a huge game that contrives to be an experience rather than just a blast. Of the games that qualify for this category, Wing Commander was certainly something of a disappointment.

I guess recently we've had the DarkLight Conflict from EA which was kinda cool – but definitely not for the novice, and the mission objectives felt a bit samey after a while. Not perfection for sure – so Psygnosis obviously thought it that would have a bit of a dabble at the genre.

And what have the cheeky chaps come up with? Well, it's called Colony Wars, and it involves a huge storyline, mucho lasers, ripping explosions, psychotic idiots in sleek star fighters who think it's cool to be have handles like "Gold 5" and "Azure 7", and no doubt some alien creatures who are seven foot tall and hairier than Geoff Capes. Well actually I lied about the last bit, because Colony Wars doesn't feature the traditional mankind versus the green geezers with antennae scenario.

Nope, we'll have none of that cliched rubbish here – instead man has found a much better enemy to fight. Himself. Now why doesn't that surprise you? The root of all the trouble was when some bright spark went ahead and cured the age old problem of, erm, aging. Yup, in this future there can be only everyone.

Which, as you can probably imagine, leads to more than a few problems. Undertakers get a pretty raw deal for starters. And what with no-one passing over, the Earth starts to get a bit crowded. Now I bet you can't guess which direction the plot's headed given the game title.

Correct. Lots of planets are colonised across five solar systems, and the Earth rules over them with an iron rod in dictatorial fashion. They get a wee bit pissed off with this, form an alliance called the League of Free Worlds and stand up for their own rights.

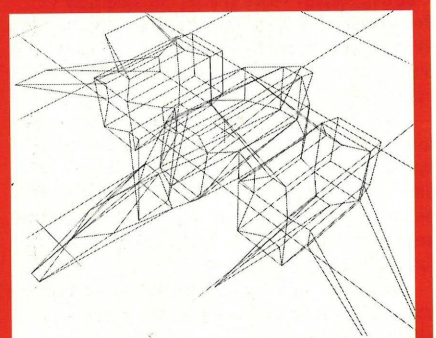
The Emperor back on Earth is naturally not pleased with this turn of events, and gets together an ass kicking squad of to go sort them out. It turns out however, that the butt kicking boot wearers are the League, and spurred on by this initial victory they prepare to take the fight to Earth. You (yes that's you, even you whimpering at the back laddie) play the part of a new recruit to the League's legion of fearless pilots.

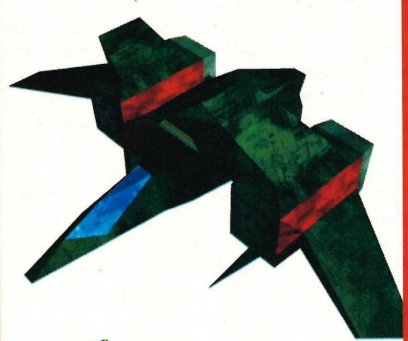
The designers of Colony Wars have out a great deal of emphasis on the plot. Smoothing the path of the detailed narrative along is 15 minutes of rendered sequences, which apparently are of "cinematic quality" – sounds good.

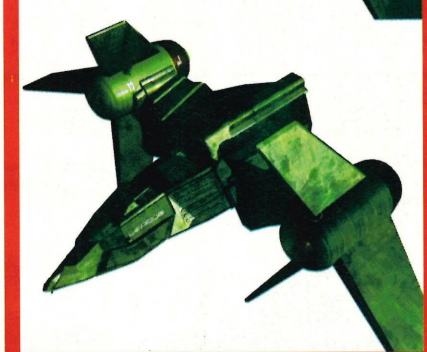
But then you'd expect these cut-scenes. What's above and beyond the ordinary space based blaster is the way they've put the ▶

Here's one I made earlier

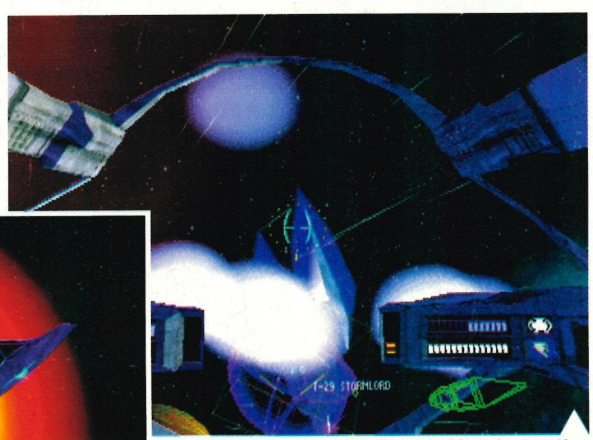
And how did the graphics for Colony Wars start out? Well, wireframes of course – and what did they look like? Something like this – Blue Peter eat your heart out



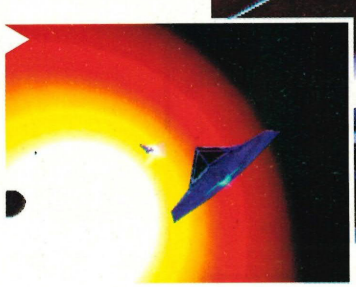




A ship design blossoming from bland old lines to the fully fledged article



Colony Wars will feature a range of both internal and external views – use whichever you find easiest to zap those Earth based tyrants with. There will be a virtual cockpit with the internal views (i.e. you'll be able to look all the way round to see those critters coming)



Or if you prefer there are a range of external views, although these are set, you can't crane your neck around virtual cockpit style

Inside the cockpit, wreaking destruction on all and sundry that dares to move



missions together. The two key words here are non-linearity, and what fantastic words they are too. Well, linearity has always been a favourite of mine.

Every time you play the game it will be different, because the mission you get to tackle next all depends on how well you finish the one you're currently enagaged in (if indeed you finish it at all). Replay value will be considerably boosted by this, and Psygnosis reckons that the mission determining process is hidden from the player, so it should make a pretty seamless and impressive experience.

Some 70 missions are planned, and they are to be divided into 18 acts spanning five solar systems, with six training missions to get you eased into the game. It's not something that'll be easily completed, plus the fact that there six separate endings, ranging from abject failure (oops) to triumphant victory.

Masses of ships are promised too – there are some 56 different enemy and ally vessels, all with different capabilities. The player which actually be able to fly six of these ships, all with different cockpit graphics, weapon systems and handling characteristics. You'll be able to take to the skies – well the vacuum – in a scout ship, fighter, stealth fighter, bomber, interceptor and heavy assault ship.

Strong artificial intelligence will be implemented too, with pilots that react to various battle situations so there'll be no shooting fish in barrels type action. Control-wise, an intuitive system has been developed based on arcade style action to maximise playability. All in all the gameplay seems pretty promising.

It doesn't look like the aesthetics are going to let the side down either. Graphically we're talking detailed high res, that's 512X240, running at 30 frames per second, with even more detailed stills of the ships and various menus.

As far as the visuals and buzz-words go, try these for the size: Fully textured, light sourced 3-D environment, complete with planets and moons, not to mention asteroids (handy for hiding in), stars and nebulae. In short, it's gonna look good, you can bet your bottom dollar on it. And the rest of your dollars for that matter.

The sound track is going to be of the orchestral variety for that real space epic feel – eat your heart out Stanley Kubrick type stuff – with an individual theme that will suit each mission. Loads of speech is promised too, from your ship's computer, wingmen and home base.

So there you have it. Colony Wars threatens to be a darn good looking space game with genuine depth in a replay factor that should take it head and shoulders above the likes of the DarkLight Conflict. Look out for the review later this year to find out if it fulfils its lofty ambitions.

You can expect plenty of meaty explosions, much like this one

Crafty Business

There are six different ships you'll get a chance to fly, each with different handling characteristics, weaponry and a different coloured set of fluffy dice
There are your standard fellows:



The Scout ship, a predictably nippy little fella'

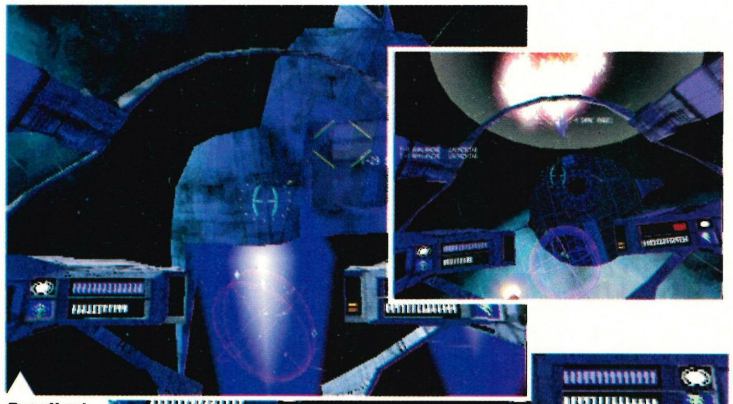


The Fighter, your stock combat affair, but not to be messed with





And then there are the big boys, forget about your turning circle when behind the controls here



Excellent effects on that huge ships thrusters, don't ya reckon?



Check out the smart lighting effects – cool or what?

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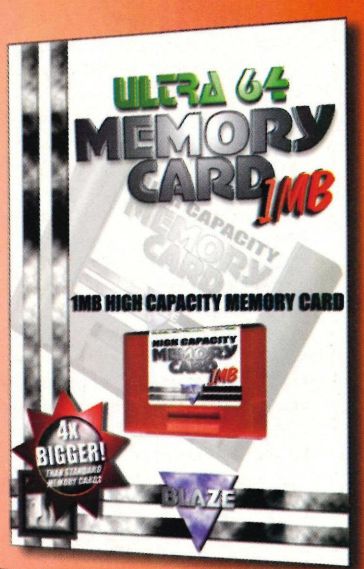


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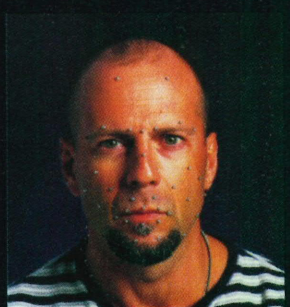
The end is

According to that dodgy bloke who's always standing outside the train station, smelling of urine, waving a placard saying repent your sins, and Activision, purveyors of fine software and not know for placard waving, the Apocalypse is on its way



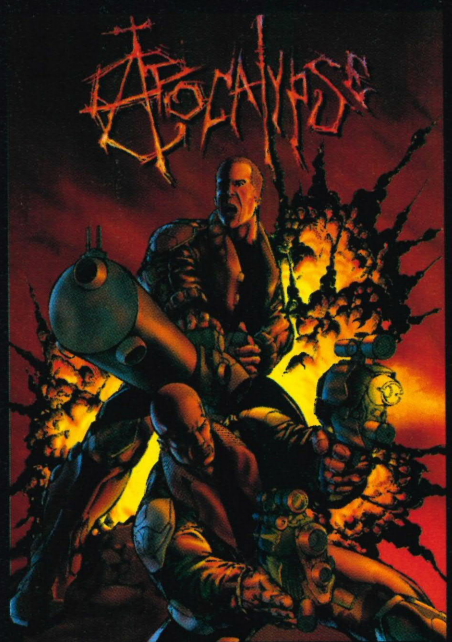
nigh

By Duncan Evans





Look for this artwork on the cover of the box



You liked Tomb Raider didn't you? It's not so hard to admit, it was a splendid game. That Lara Croft, waving her girly ass all over the shop simply added to the fun. But what was wrong with it? Yes, you heard me, wrong with it – as in not very good when you really think about it. It wasn't visceral enough was it? It wasn't in your face with loud explosions, people dying like a summer fete hosted by the Khymer Rouge, big sloppy fleshy bits splattering all over your face as you went on mad killing spree. That's what was wrong with it. And that's where Activisions forthcoming 3-D shooter, Apocalypse, comes in.

Marrying a grim neo-cyberpunk urbanscape to buddy-movie style partner collaboration and Tomb Raider style camera trickery, the producers reckon they're on to a winner. And who can blame them now that the buddy character in the game, your right hand man, is none other than leering, wise cracking, almost-but-not-quite slaphead, Bruce Willis?

That's right, Brucey has had his body mapped, his voice digitised and his head scanned in order to become the ultimate partner in your quest to rid the world of evil. Ah yes, evil, back again for another world tour, this time in the form of the shadowy Reverend, who has combined science with religion and summoned the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse to await his signal and then ride the earth bringing death and destruction. I suggest they start with Milton Keynes.

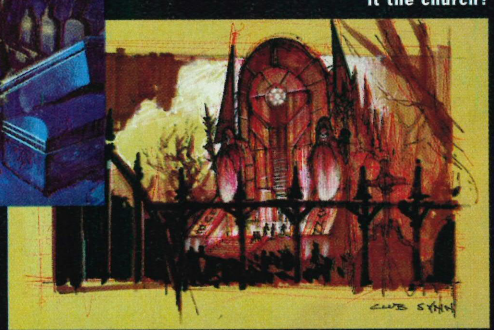
Your job then is to set of with nanotechnologist Bruce's, alter ego, Trey Kincaid, through a series of sprawling urban landscapes, including city rooftops, a cemetery, warehouse and sewers. They will undoubtedly be more – up to 12 different regions according to Activision, and all of them pretty big. Deal justice to the forces of evil with a handsome supply of weapons that includes your regular Uzi, the well impressive flame thrower, some freaky kind of energy weapon and what looked like a pineapple or giant shredded wheat launcher. It blows stuff up anyway, and that's what matters. So there's regular evil scattered along the way, and then there's your top of the range evil, as evidenced by your Four Horsemen – take these johnnies down and make a date with the Revered for a serious end of game type bout of fisticuffs.

The scene is initially set with an animated FMV sequence – as in not a proper, "we filmed it at the cost of $20million FMV sequence", but a "we could afford him for two days and even that cost us half the company" so it's bitmapped



And here's how the designers envisaged the characters tackling the graveyard

An original sketch for the nightclub or was it the church?



Brucey's big bag of cash

So how much did old Brucey get paid to star in this slaughterfest? Well a lot less than the reputed $40 million bucks he's getting for Die Hard 4 and a lot more than a handshake and a quiet word of thanks from the producer. Big bags of cash, all the spare cash Activision could find in fact, and that still wasn't enough because Bruce is a big star you know. So Activision had to not only give him a royalty slice of any profits from the game, but also a handsome slab of shares in the company itself. Bruce himself was over the moon and bragged, "All other games immediately become obsolete. I'm proud to be working with Activision on our new game Apocalypse." Of course you are Brucey.



An early level design, used to show how the two characters act in tandem



Tooling around the cemetery level looking for creatures of the night



Take that you infernal cross of Satan. Lots of work still to do on these pics



Many of the weapons have special effects – nice bit of glowing on this one



Expect to see the crude polygons here polished up for the final release

The end is nigh

Bruce on a polygon frame type animation. You get it between some, though not all, of the levels as well. Then it's rock and roll time with you and Bruce on screen, kicking butt and cracking jokes. Well, he's cracking jokes and smart ass remarks, what you say in the privacy of your own lounge is your business. The good news is that several hours worth of commentary were recorded from a 100 page script, with alterations and suggestions from the star himself. The most common phrases were recorded with several variations in order for it not to sound samey.

The phrases are also keyed into what's going on on screen too, so if you waltz across in front of Bruce while he's toasting someone you'll get chewed out. Or if you're hogging all the action he'll comment, "Hey kid, leave some for me." The bad news is that he calls you kid all the way through the game. Big star or not, he said it once too often and I turned the flame thrower on him. Unfortunately you can't kill him, and vice versa.

The AI for Kincaid is supposed to be one of the big deals about Apocalypse, as the intention is to deliver an interactive buddy movie type experience. To start with he'll hang back and let you get plenty of action, but if you start to hog like some kind of killing machine pig, he'll move up and get some himself. Equally, when you take on someone who's a bit on the hard side expect to see him try and take them down from the opposite side. And if you stop for a leak you won't see Kincaid disappearing off into the distance.

What it makes for is very fluid combat, especially considering that not only can you plaster everything in front of you, but there's buttons to swivel and nail stuff on either side. Bruce does the same, so even when you aren't sending evil to an early grave the game looks good because Bruce is doing it as well. It explains why he was strapped into a sensor filled suit and told to throw himself all over a studio floor for a couple of days too. That rolling dive you see on screen, well he did that for real. Though I dare say it wasn't on the top floor of a skyscraper with some nutter shooting at him at the time.

Now one of the slighty iffy things about Tomb Raider was the camera work. It was like the cameraman couldn't work out which way to point it, or he was constantly distracted by Lara's pertly polygonic posterior. In Apocalypse it's context based so if you're running along killing things the camera will be behind, looking over your shoulder. If you

How do they do that?

In order to faithfully reproduce Bruce in the game, Activision needed to perform two digital operations on the star. The first involved scanning his head to produce a spookily realistic likeness bitmap, which was then overlayed onto a polygon model of his head. The only problem with the technique is that hair doesn't reflect the light back properly – good job Bruce doesn't have much. Except for that daft tuft on his chin. When making the model, hair was actually painted on afterwards.



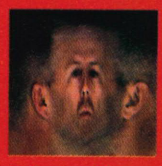
First his face is scanned to produce a flat skin like texture, menwhile someone else builds a polygon model based on the size of his head. The skin then is overlayed on the model and retouched to remove odd looking bits, and to add hair



The original scan of his head – note how the bits of hair distort the process



The low resolution polygon model of Bruce's head



Take one flat bitmap face texture and add it to the polygon...



...to produce a disturbingly realistic image of Bruce Willis' head

The second part of the digital Bruce process involved constructing a wireframe model and rendering the body. In order to animate it, and for the head to be just like the real thing, he was strapped into a rubber playsuit covered with sensors and told to roll around the studio floor for a couple of days. The sensors transmitted the movements back into the computers and were used for Kincaid's movements in the game.

In order to really freak you out, Activision also stuck sensors to Bruce's face and made him go through his usual range of expressions – leer, leer a lot, leer while killing someone – you get the idea. These were then programmed into Kincaid's facial expressions to give you the most true to life Bruce Willis experience you can get without being there.



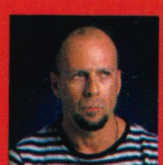
The wireframe model of Trey Kincaid...



...is rendered into a greyscale model



Not a bad case of acne, but the sensors required to map his expressions



Bruce goes through the full dramatic range of his acting repertoire

While obviously being comic book artwork – these bikes are actually in the game





Metropolis anyone? The idea for the Apocalypse city was dark and gothic

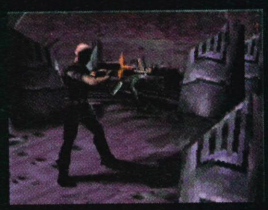




Travelators link the rooftops together – for god's sake don't fall off



Expect to see some interactive scenery – like this video advertising board



Strike a pose and then blow the muther away with your big boy gun



Steady on there strange metallic beast – we've only just met



You go on ahead – I'll cover you. No, really, it's just a bit warm that's all

swivel to fire at something alongside the camera pans sideways to catch the action. When you come to a precarious ledge – of which there are many, it's suddenly Captain Birdseye view – which is excellent for when you miss the jumps because you can see the ground coming well before it turns you into hero jelly.

With very large levels you might be thinking tedious loading times – because the scenery is impressively gothic – but here to the rescue is another proprietary technology invention that Activision likes to think it thought of first – loading the scenery as you go. I hate to say this, but that technique was first seen about eight or nine years ago. Anyway, who am I to complain if it sustains the atmosphere and keeps the game rolling along?

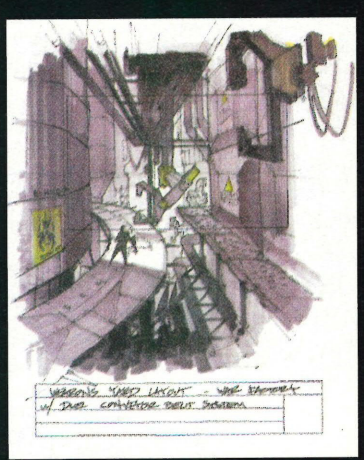
One final interesting fact-ette about Apocalyspe is that one of the Four Horsemen is actually played by a woman, who is the lead singer of an American rock and schlock band called Poe. And, er that's her name too. Now whether the Activision PR bloke was taking the liquid waste by-product or not I don't know because there's been no sight of this, allegedly attractive piece of female flesh in any of the game or screenshots that we've seen so far. "Oh yeah, she's really big in the States, but no-one over here has heard of her," said PR bloke. "Really," we said, looking extremely dubious and thinking that maybe he'd had too much horse medicine the night before. Anyway, whether Poe is, or is not, in the game, the number one action hero with a non-Austrian accent and not so much hair these days, Bruce Willis most certainly is, and you can enjoy his inane jibes when Apocalypse hits the streets in November.

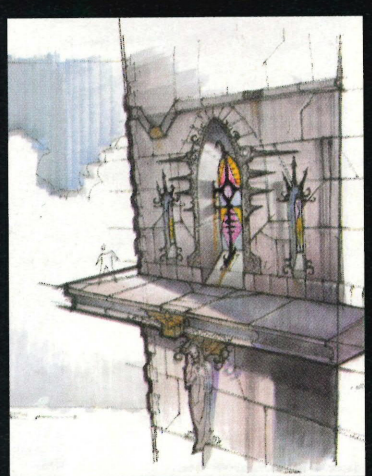
Why might Apocalypse do the business?

1. *Well it's got Bruce Willis in it*
2. *No, really, it's him – smug leer, constant wisecracks, very little hair*
3. *First truly clever buddy character to help out*
4. *Lots of evil things to kill*
5. *Impressive gothic landscapes*
6. *Big boy weapons – except for the Shreddies launcher which is crap*
7. *Excellent animation, thanks to motion capture and inverse kinematics*
8. *No tedious waiting for the next level to load*
9. *Varied levels with different challenges on each*
10. *Top notch camera work keeps you in the midst of the action*

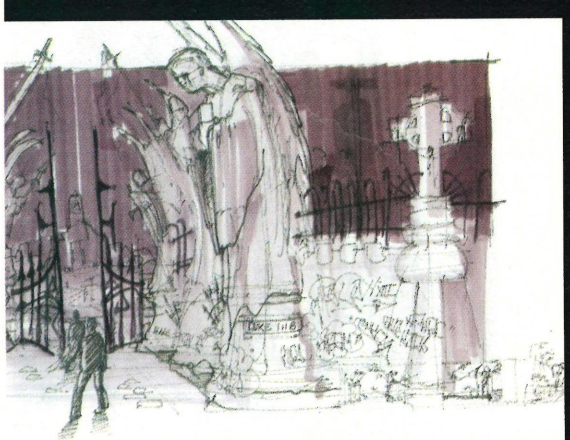
Why might Apocalypse be a load of old toss?

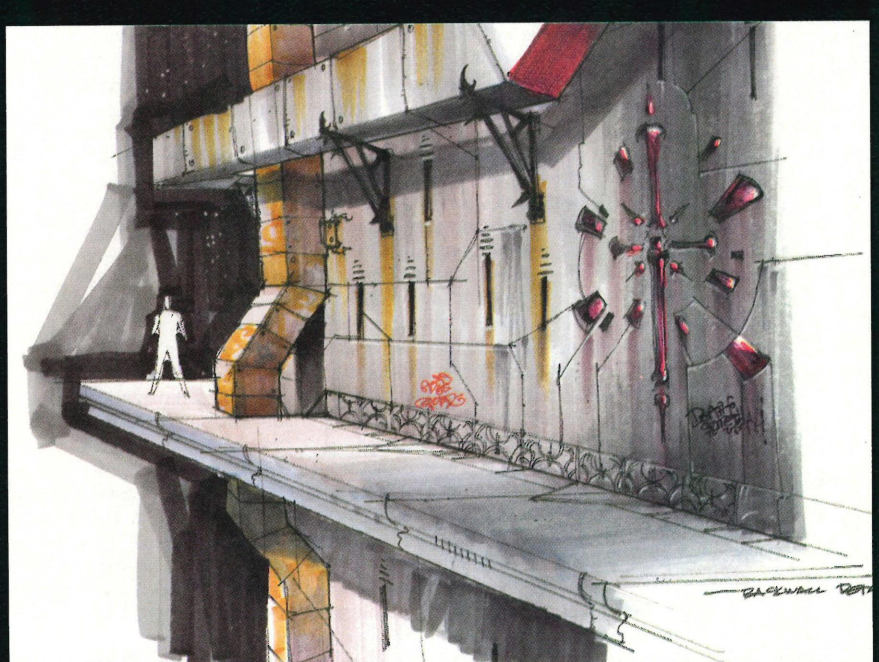
1. *It's got Bruce Willis in it – no sorry, only joking, we think Bruce is ace*
1. *Therefore, the real first reason is that, er, it could be too easy*
2. *That was a cobblers reason wasn't it. Um, Bruce could annoy you to death*
3. *Waltzing across in front of you, stealing your kills, making smug remarks, just who does he bloody well think he is...oh yes, big bucks Hollywood star. Sorry, forgot*
4. *From what we've seen so far the programmers could forget to speed it up a bit, and forget about fixing all the stuff that doesn't work. In which case it would be pants*
5. *But that's not really going to happen is it? I hope*





Some of the early design sketches for the levels and scenery

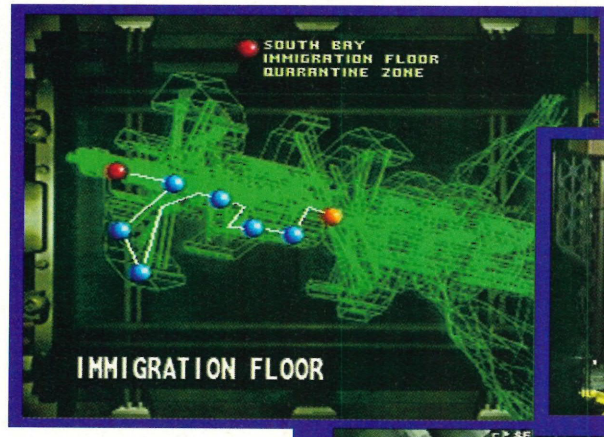


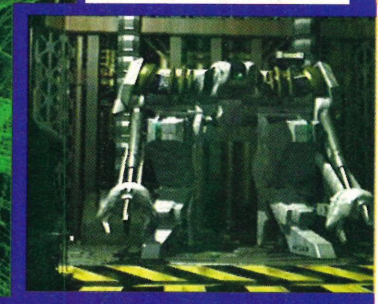


Game Title **BRAHMA Force**
Software House **Jaleco** *Don't be fooled by the graphics, there's more to this Doom-a-like*

You Lookin' At My

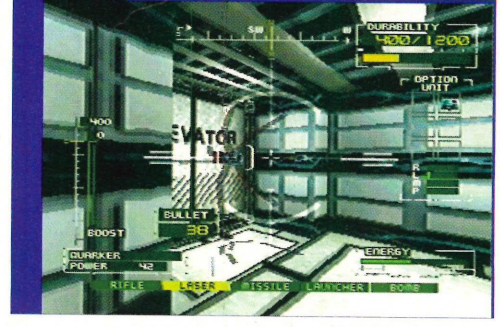
If you run into BRAHMA Force headlong and treat it like another blaster, you'll fail dismally. There are loads of objects and power ups to be collected, and once you've got them they have to fit into your suit for you to get the most from them. I, for instance, blasted away for a few levels before getting leathered. It was only then that I realised I had pockets full of items that would increase my armour and give me new weapons. Once I'd sorted them out, I still got leathered but it looked more impressive











By Dan Whitehead

Deep space, eh? Nobody ever has an uneventful trip do they? It's never a case of free peanuts and booze, crap film and bumpy landing is it? No, when things go wrong on spaceships, they go wrong big time. And, blimey, this is also the case with the excavation colony Beltlogger 9. Following garbled distress signals, all contact is lost and so, as is the routine in situations like this, a troop of grizzly space marines are sent to investigate.

These are no ordinary marines. They are kitted out in BRAHMAs (or Bipedal Robotic Assault Heavy Mechanised Armour) which are essentially big mech-style robot suits. They're obviously not that fantastic though, as the entire platoon is wiped out by automatic defences on the way in, leaving just one bloke in a Bra left. And that's you.

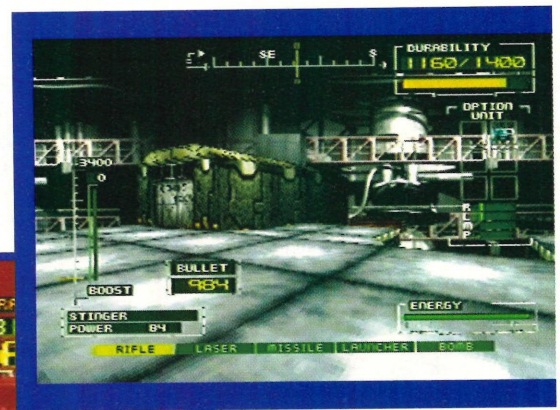
So far, so predictable. What makes BRAHMA Force different though, is the addition of platform and even simulation aspects to the tried and trusted Doom framework. So while the game undeniably involves shooting and dodging in a first-person perspective, it also requires you to master a mechanical suit with more attachments and weapons than yer average stealth bomber, as well as making daring leaps from rooftop to rooftop. And it might be nice if you could discover just what's happened on the mysterious Beltlogger colony, and what the connection is with the disappearance of the Probe Ship Mina 3 a decade earlier and a virus called Pickman's Syndrome.

With full freedom of movement, including a powerful jumping action, more weapons than is strictly necessary and some story-enhancing rendered sequences, BRAHMA Force should add something fresh to the frankly crap Doom genre.

Release Date: August

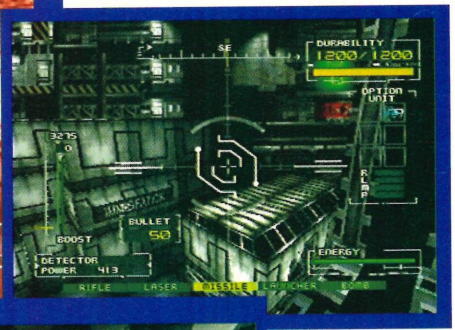
than meets the eye

Bra?

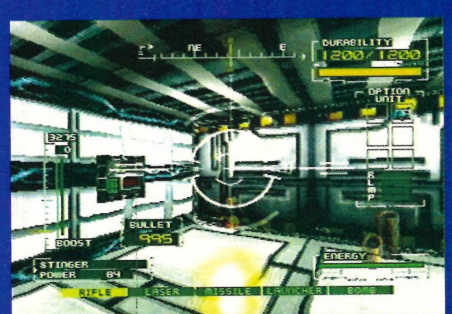


There are four weapons classes in the game. Rifle is a rather bland name for projectile bullet-type weapons like machine and chain guns. Lasers are fairly self explanatory, as are Missiles. Launcher is the name given to a mortar attachment which can be used to lob grenades at a targeted area, allowing you to hide on top of structures and strafe the ground below. There are also bombs, which require care if you're to avoid killing yourself, and an array of shields, flares and remote explosives all of which make mincemeat of your mechanised foes









The ability to jump is taken for granted in a lot of games, but here it really opens out the game. Others in the genre have tended to get bogged down in corridors, and when they have allowed you to jump it's only been a feeble skip rather than the mammoth ker-boing you get here from your robo-legs. Jumping Flash is the nearest frame of reference, but Jumping Flash directed by James Cameron rather than Disney. And it means that the levels are truly 3-D, allowing you to scurry wherever you like in your quest to survive







Despite its Doomy looks, BRAHMA Force is a true mish-mash of game styles that never loses sight of its goals. With diverse elements from such sources as Mechwarrior 2, Tenka, Jumping Flash and Sentient it genuinely tries to push back the boundaries of the 3-D shooting game. And, having played the preview version, I can tell you that it pretty much succeeds. Definitely one to watch. Oh yes

Game Title **MDK**
Software House **Interplay** *It has taken long enough, but a playable PlayStation version*

The Return Of Cone head

By Dan Whitehead

IT'S 1994 AND DOCTOR FLUKE Hawkins is a mad scientist, but with a name like that he'd have to be. In a traditional 'mad scientist' moment, he blasts himself into space along with a genetically engineered dog called Max and his assistant Kurt Hectic. And there they stay, trapped in orbit for five years. Until, in 1999, Earth receives a visitor. Gunter Glut arrives on Earth through some sort of bizarre space-stream and brings with him a slavering army ready to enslave the human race. Those who escape the onslaught run off and hide, shaking and gibbering. Fortunately, Earth's plight is spotted from the skies by the Doc and friends and, even more fortunately, Doc has been spending the last five years creating a super-powered bullet proof suit and various other goodies. Kurt hunches up as he feels the fate of the world settle on his shoulders...

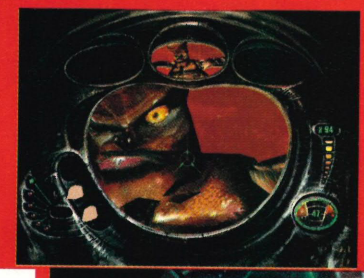
That's the story behind MDK, the rather splendid PC hit that pretty much redefined the 3-D shoot 'em-up genre for our bearded pals. And now it's headed our way, hopefully with all its quirks and sexy bits intact. As it relies on a fast 3-D engine, and that's something that the PlayStation is rather good at, it should convert well.

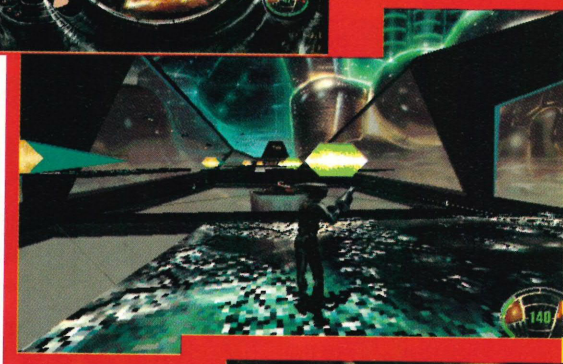
Viewing the action from over Kurt's shoulder, you sprint around vast 3-D city environments blowing away the baddies with your arm mounted chain gun. What sets MDK apart from other shooters though is the realism. Rather than just killing the enemy stone dead, you can wound them or knock them over. If this happens their comrades will rush in to help them and you can pick them all off with a grenade. The enemy will duck behind cover and hide in buildings, so you can never be sure how they'll react to each assault. These elements were the reason the PC version was so lovely and, thankfully, they're all present in the PSX conversion as well.

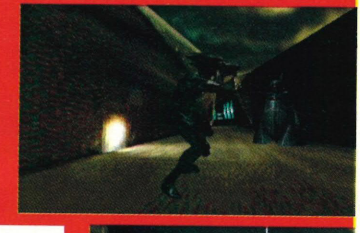
Also present is the splendid sniper mode. Kurt's ludicrous cone helmet doubles as a telescopic sight and, by prodding Select, you call up a cross hair and can zoom your view for miles across the level. Get a baddie in your aim and you can take them out without even getting your hands dirty. The level of detail on the zoom is impressive and once again you can go for a clean kill between the eyes or kneecap the buggers just for a laugh. If they spot you, they'll even taunt you from afar until you "pop" a "cap" in their "ass".

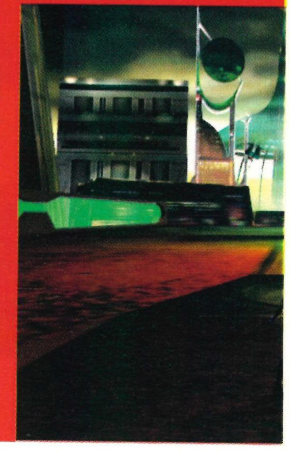
There's loads more to the game, including air strikes from Max the dog and a very strange parachute. Throw in some stupid power ups such as the World's Smallest Nuclear Explosion and a very unconvincing inflatable decoy, and you've got an original twist on the shooty genre, with a warped sense of humour and some lovely 3-D graphics. At least, that's what we're hoping.

Release Date: September





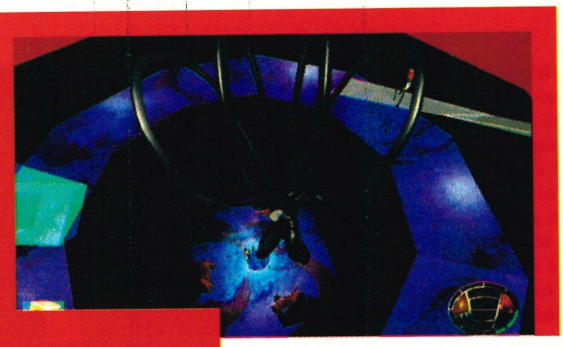




So what does MDK stand for? Well, the genetic dog is called Max, the hero is called Kurt and if we presume that Fluke Hawkins' nickname is Doc, then we've got M, D and K. However, the game's working title was Murder Death Kill, which was the phrase used in Demolition Man for a homicide. I'm rather embarrassed to remember that actually. Oh dear. So there are two possibilities, if you can think of any more, put them on a postcard and chuck 'em in the bin

of the PC smash is finally in our sweaty palms





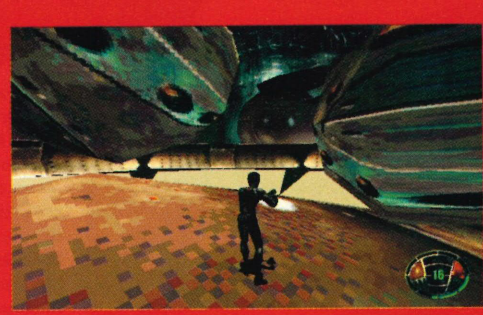




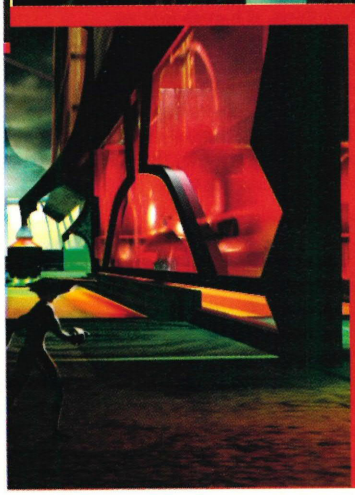
There were eight levels in the PC version, but how many of those survive the conversion depends on how much space on the CD there is to play with. Certainly the version we've seen contains every gameplay element apart from the actual levels. We're confident that the open plan layout and ingenious designs should make it through intact. And if we're wrong, you can come round and pluck our chest hairs one by one. Except Andy who, despite being 37 years old, is as bald as a coot











The chaps (and quite possibly ladies too) responsible for the basket of gamey-eggs that is MDK are Shiny Entertainment. Officially the most ker-azy and bonkers people in the whole of Game Land, they famously created "comedy" platform hero Earthworm Jim and are also working on Wild9, the first game to let you torture your enemies to death. We suspect they spent their early years saying things like "Buy a Rag Mag or I'll hit you with my amusing banana stick", but they do write ace games

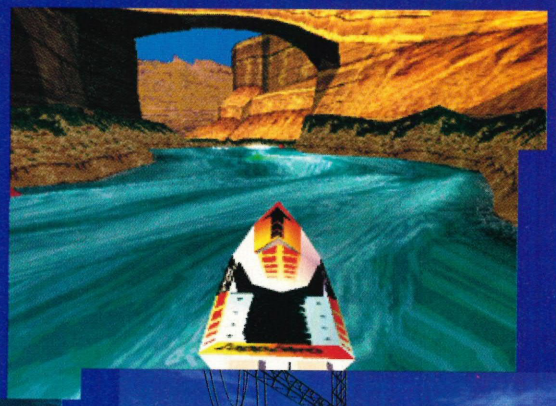
Game Title **Rapid Racer**
Software House **Sony** *As software companies claw for new angles on the increasingly*

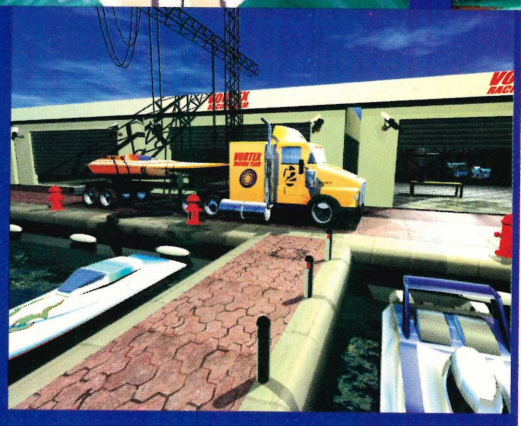
Mess



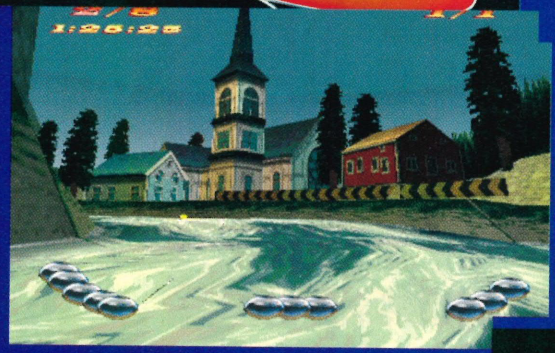
In another Wipeout similarity, Rapid Racer boasts a dancey soundtrack the like of which your average clubber would happily wet his shiny trousers to get hold of. It's provided by cutting edge dance innovators Apollo 440, who've kindly knocked up a whole hours worth of funky dance tunes which apparently are perfectly tailored to each of the game's varied levels







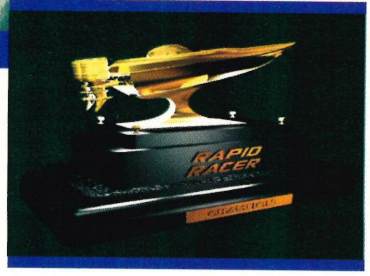
The realistic water gives Rapid Racer an extra dimension that most racers haven't had. Tactics come to the fore much more as you battle for position and you have to really pick your moment to attack and overtake. Get caught up in the wash and the moment is well and truly lost



The graphical style of Rapid Racer is very similar to Wipeout, which I'm sure you'll agree is not a bad thing. It moves just as well too, with the boats chopping their way along the rivers at terrific speeds. They certainly bear no resemblance to those rickety old wooden things you hired out on the family holiday to Lake Windermere as a kid, and it's a bloody good job too! Would've finished my gran off and no mistake



Realistic handling dynamics and accurate water behaviour simulation means that players can smash through waves and get caught up in the turbulence of another boat's wake in a fashion not seen before. At least not this side of the N64's truly excellent Wave Racer anyway



tired racing genre, how long can it be before we see International Tricycle Rally Pro?

in' About on the River



By Steve McNally

BLOODY POWERBOAT GAMES EH? You don't see one for years and then all of a sudden two come along at once and you simply don't know which one to get on for the best! The source of much confusion within the office this month (not to mention amusement when we noticed that Andy had managed to misspell the word "buoy" twice in massive letters in his Powerboat preview heading!), we haven't known whether we've been coming or going as a result!

Rapid Racer then isn't Powerboat from Interplay, as I initially thought, it is in fact Rapid Racer from none other than Sony itself! And very good it looks too. I've heard the phrase Wipeout in a boat being bandied around the office recently and that's not a million miles away from the truth, certainly in terms of graphics of at least.

The finished game will feature 18 increasingly challenging courses and then, once you've beaten them, you must face the incredible challenge of the Fractal mode. "What's that?" you cry. Well, in this mode players must battle it out over 256,000 randomly generated courses, which will basically mean that only the blandest person in the world will ever see everything that this game has to offer! Impressed? You should be!

Just in case you're still unconvinced, how would you fancy two player split screen action with the screen split either vertically or horizontally depending on your own particular preference? It's yours. As is an array of exciting and challenging gameplay modes including Sudden Death, Winner Stays On and a full blown Championship. And as the game progresses the players can also upgrade their boats and discover an assortment of new craft as the game progresses.

Sony has obviously had lasting appeal and value for money at the top of their list when developing this one. You have to wonder if they've made a mistake though. I mean, if Rapid Racer turns out to be as good as it sounds, surely we need to ever buy another game again. Then again, I'm sure that won't turn out to be the case. It never does, does it?

Release Date: Autumn

Game Title Powerboat
Software House Interplay *Prepare yourself for some catamaran chaos with Interplay's*

Buoy O'



There are numerous circuits in locations around the globe, from rainy Britain to the hi-tech nation of Japan. Other tracks are located in places like Moscow, New York and the Amazon, and all contain a living environment where just about everything is animated so there's plenty going on

By Andy Sharp



Each circuit also contains special events where your actions will have a great effect on the goings on around the track, such as hitting a green buoy which moves a crane to lift a steel girder from your path. If you then hit the red buoy it lowers it into the path of your opponent

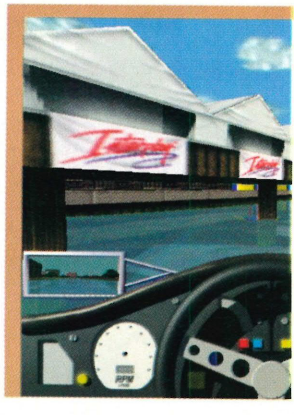
MORE TERRIFYING THAN Formula One driving, Powerboat racing is fraught with danger. One wrong move and it could be the end of your day, if not your life. The profile for this sport is still very low so it may not get the attention it deserves but if you think of this as F1 in boats, you're pretty close to the mark.

There are two types of boat included – a monohull and a catamaran. Each has three different classes which relate to the engine size and your choice of boat has a huge influence on your performance. For example, a monohull is a sure winner on the straights but must take corners wide, while the catamaran is good on tight turns.

As in F1 racing, where the weather affects the race itself, Powerboat racing is affected if the water is particularly choppy. One false move could land you in considerable trouble causing flips and a total loss of control. Powerboats themselves are much quicker off the mark than Formula One cars, accelerating from 0-60 in under three seconds. The G Force must be quite staggering. Interplay has attempted to keep all these elements within the game as well as offering some unique features such as underwater racing where the nose dips below the surface after a leap into the air.

Powerboat is not all out and out racing, it also contains hazards, short cuts and a host of other obstacles and hidden features for you to overcome in your quest for victory.

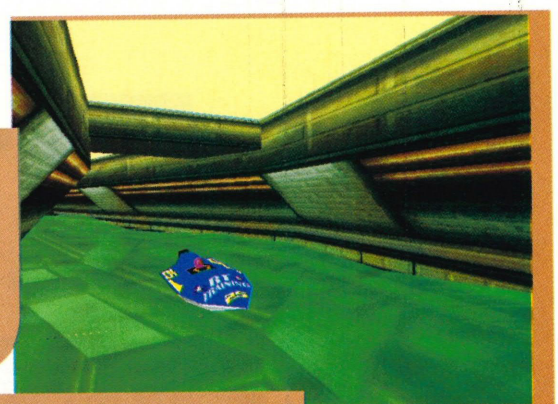
Release date: Tba

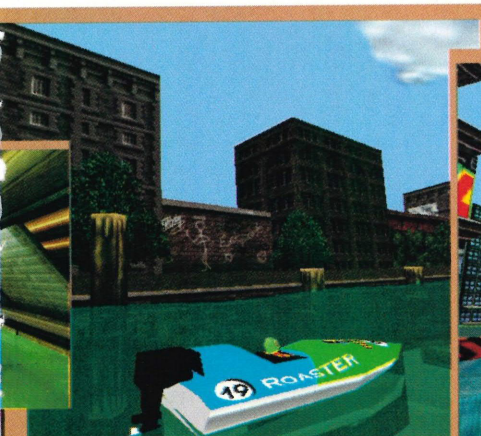


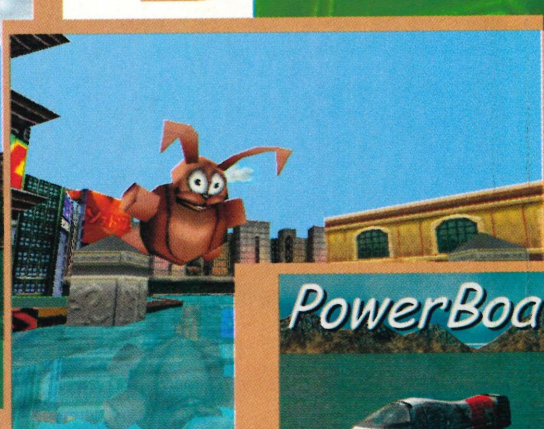
As well as the conventional racing there are some crafty short cuts to gain you valuable time. Another thing to look out for as you power across the waves are obstacles such as logs or, more importantly, ferries which pay no attention to the fact that boats are racing at speeds exceeding 140 miles per hour across their path

latest racer

Buoy

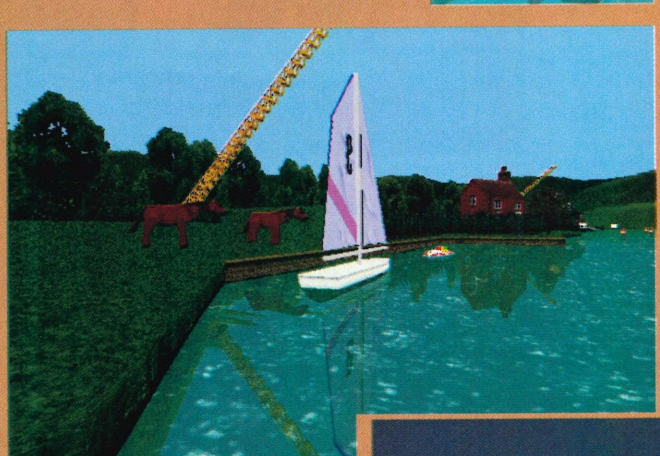




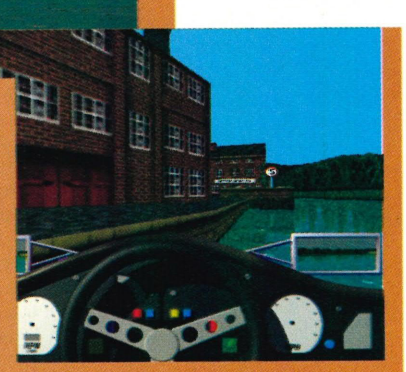


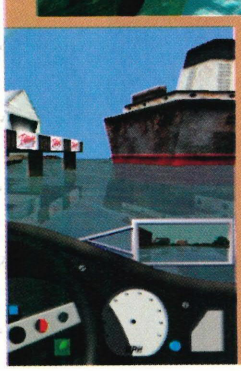
The engine sizes increase from an 850 to 1000, and then 2000 where things become incredibly dicey as you attempt to safely navigate the courses. Steering is done by altering the angle of the prop shaft which increase or decreases your steering ability

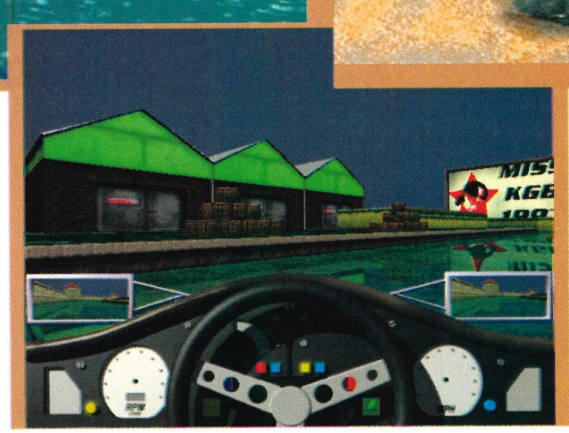












Due to cut up the waves sometime in September, Powerboat could and should turn a few heads with its blend of high speed thrills and unique scenarios. There's so much going on it's going to take a true champion to stay the course. Whether viewed from inside the cockpit or from the outside camera, it looks pretty damn spectacular. We can hardly wait to get behind the wheel for the full review

Game Title **Time Crisis**
Software House **Namco** *With the Pro team braced for a flood of angry complaints from*

The Time of



By Steve McNally

LOOK, DON'T BLAME US IF you bought one of those light guns that came out with Die Hard trilogy, but when Time Crisis hits the streets every self respecting PlayStation owner is going to need a new one. You see, although this is only a preview, we've played the finish import version and it's absolutely stunning and you're all going to be absolutely desperate to play it pretty soon. Unfortunately it's not compatible with any of the guns that are already on the market, be they Predator or whatever, and attempting to play this without one is the act only of the clinically insane.

There are plans afoot to bundle Namco's own mightily impressive J-Com 45 gun with the game but, brace yourselves, that's likely to make the game weigh in at a hefty, Nintendo-esque 60 quid! Is it going to be worth it? Well, depends how much £60 is to you really, but if you've got it burning a hole in your pocket when this hits the shelves, I know what I'd recommend you do!

For those that don't know, Time Crisis is Namco's answer to Sega's Virtua Cop and House of the Dead, and in the arcades has performed stupendously well. The main difference between this and Sega's efforts though, comes in the ability to hide behind objects to reload, or just hide if things start to get a bit too hot.

In the arcades, ducking was done by pressing a foot pedal (a feat which apparently can be recreated on the PlayStation version by plugging a Mad Katz steering wheel into port two and using one of its pedals), but in this case it's achieved with a button cunningly placed on the side of the gun. Hence the need for new hardware, which admittedly is a shame, but as soon as you've played it you realise just how important it actually is.

Release Date: Tba

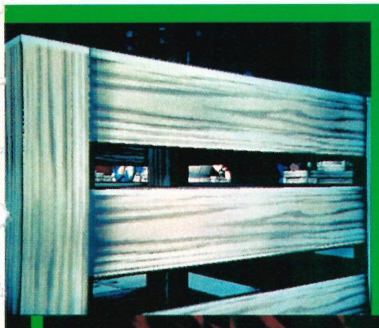
Time Crisis on the PlayStation is not just an arcade perfect recreation of the original, but also expands on it with the incorporation of a PlayStation mode. With the need to get you to die as swiftly as possible to get you shovelling more coins into an arcade machine removed, Namco has been able to tailor the new mode more towards giving the player full enjoyment and away from a cynical ploy to wrench as much money out of your pocket as possible





light gun owners, Namco and Sony are preparing to roll out one of the games of the

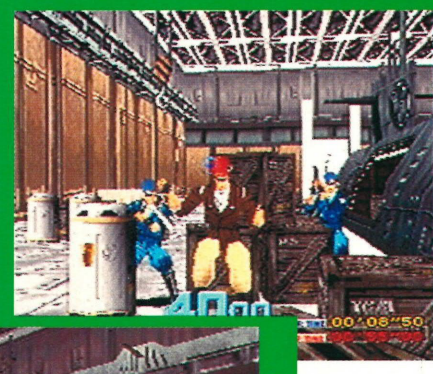
Our Lives





The polygon characters in this game are some of the best yet seen. No pointy heads in here, I can tell you! Perhaps more impressive though is the realistic way they react when shot, er, I suppose! Shoot a bad guy in the arm and he'll slump to the ground clutching the injured area. Shoot him in the leg and he'll fall to the floor, in the chest and he'll fall backwards, and so on





OK, so it might be a bit upsetting to know you've essentially wasted your money on a light gun (many people undoubtedly bought one when Die Hard Trilogy came out), but I'll stick my neck on the line and say that, in future, all such peripherals will be made the Namco way, giving this a very long shelf life indeed. Buy this and you'll be using it for many, many games to come. Guaranteed. Well, hopefully



Interacting with the scenery can be just as useful as having a deadly aim when it comes to blowing away the bad guys. In certain situations you'll be massively outnumbered, and while you can get out of it through some sharp shooting isn't it much easier to wipe them all out by blowing up a crate of explosives or some such object? Believe me, it is



Only a fool would doubt that Time Crisis is going to be one of the biggest names ever in PlayStation gaming – and deservedly so. The ducking takes the already excellent Virtua Cop concept a step further and makes this a game PlayStation owners really can use to show off just what their machine can do. It's already graphically stunning and fully engrossing so, barring any cock-up in the PAL conversion, this really can't fail

Game Title **Street Fighter EX Plus**
Software House **Virgin** *From rumour to arcade fact, the daddy of beat 'em-ups has*

The EX

By Dan Whitehead

DESPITE DOZENS OF HALF HEARTED sequels and rewrites, the Street Fighter series still manages to attract a rabidly loyal fan base. Maybe it's the intuitive combat system, maybe it's the impressive moves list or maybe it's the ever-expanding cast of chop-socky characters. Whatever the reason, there are hordes of SF aficionados out there, and they've been baying for a polygon version of their favourite 2-D fighting game. Capcom finally relented and put Street Fighter EX into the arcades. Everyone sort of shrugged and said "Ooh, it's not as good as we thought it'd be, let's play Virtua Fighter 3 instead." Oh dear.

So Capcom scratched its head and tried to do a 3-D fighter on a home system, just to see what it could do on a smaller scale. Star Gladiator was the rather fine result. PlayStation was the rather fine home system. Finally, Capcom was convinced that Street Fighter could go 3-D on a console without losing out on quality. And here, to the relief of SF goons the world over, it is.

Bizarrely, it doesn't utilise all the tricks perfected on Star Gladiator. Most notably, the game doesn't take place in a true 3-D arena. Whereas Gladiator allowed you to side-step and dodge behind your opponent, SF EX takes place on "rails" so to speak. You can't move in or out of the screen, restricting the action to a 2-D field. The graphics are a gorgeous example of what's possible with a bag full of polygons though. All your favourite characters are present, in lovely modelled 3-D versions, and the animation is as smooth and lifelike as you could wish for.

And, to counter any criticism that was levelled at the poorly received arcade machine, the moves and characters from Street Fighter 2 Alpha have also been included for the home version. This brings the total up to 18 selectable characters, with an additional three hidden characters and the arcade boss fighters. Quite a bundle then. With the ever-popular Street Fighter cast, some bizarre new boys and girls, and a baffling collection of moves, combos and specials, it is almost a dead cert that this'll go down well with the fans, old and new.

Relase Date: October

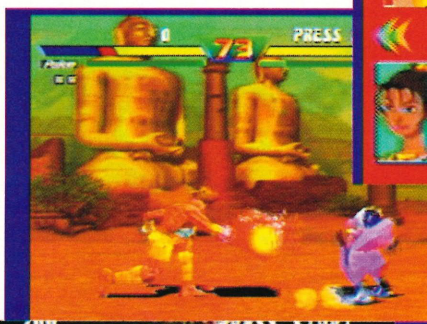


If you're a Street Fighter buffoon, you'll probably be gagging to hear all about the new characters, all of who apparently have a "unique link" to the previous games. They have scary names like Skullomania, Pullum Purna, Hokotu, Garuda and, not so scary, Crackerjack. Hopefully it won't be Stu Francis. Skullomania is especially weird, all dressed up in a skeleton body-suit, and could quite easily be the strangest character yet to grace the Street Fighter universe





Obsessive beat 'em-up fans will be shocked by the cheekiness of one of the new characters. Doctrine Dark is the name, and not only does he wear a face mask over his mouth and nose, he also has a harpoon move that lashes out, catches the enemy and then electrocutes them. Anyone who mentions Sub Zero or Mortal Kombat is in big trouble, OK?

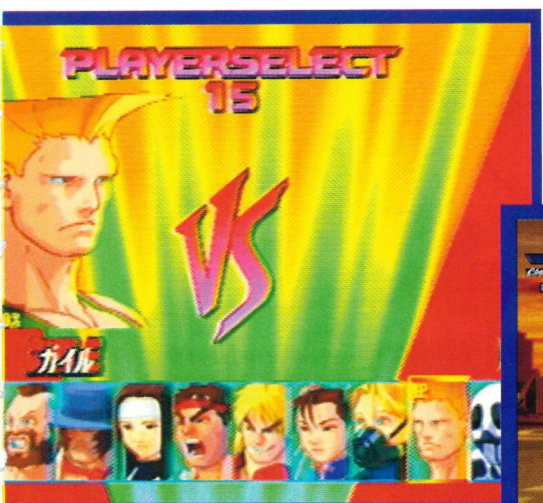




finally gone 3-D in style









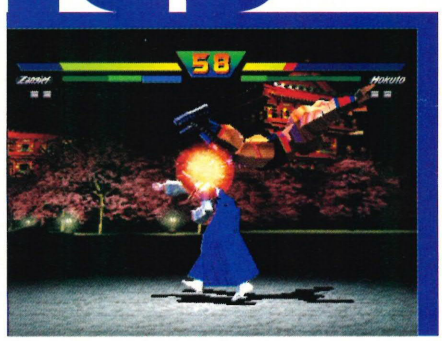






As with any game of this genre, there are umpteen modes of play to plough through. Arcade is the usual you-against-the world scenario, Versus allows you to take on a friend while Team Battle lets you pick your five favourite street fighters for a tournament style bash. Also available, Time Attack is fisty-fun against the clock, Survival is that old standby where you have to take on one fighter after another until you finally run out of energy and then there are two practice modes just to make sure you can handle the rest of the modes. For the armchair thumper, there's even a spectator mode where you choose two fighters and watch them "do it", like some dirty pervert

Files





Game Title **NHL Powerplay Hockey**
Software House **Virgin** *The first Powerplay, when it was finally released over a year*

Skating on Thin Ice







Ice Hockey is enjoying something of a popularity boom in this country at the moment, thanks to the introduction of the all new Super League concept. Very much in the way interest in basketball has surged, this is more down to marketing than actual quality of play. I'm not knocking it though, if people enjoy it then I'm all for it, and of course it serves a purpose for publishers such as Virgin who can milk it furiously for all it's worth

By Steve McNally

I LIKE AMERICAN SPORTS GAMES but just recently I've begun to get frustrated by the sheer number that get released over here. After all, Britain is a country that, in general, couldn't really give a toss about the real thing. When our own popular pastimes continually get overlooked it makes you wonder whether these programmers are just out for an easy life, determined to do little more than rehash the same old game engine and shy away from doing any of that real game designing stuff.

We've seen only one rugby game and not a single attempt at cricket, yet both are crying out for decent simulations. However, there's no denying that the games that do come out are massively successful, so until the developers get their fingers out we'll have to make do. Thankfully, NHL Powerplay '98 looks like it should more than nicely fill the gap.

Much tweaking and twiddling has gone on since the last edition and it looks like Virgin could at last have something that will equal EA's excellent hockey game (even if it does look unlikely that it'll managed to topple it from its position as best). The graphics have been significantly vamped up, the players now wear the correct uniforms and even have their numbers and names mapped on their backs. The animation has improved too. Admittedly, around 99 per cent of the players still use the default motion capture, but in the case of certain star players it has been modified to make their on screen representatives look even more like the real thing. For example, a goaltender, Hasek (means nothing to me), will charge out of his goal in ultra realistic fashion should the opposing team get clean through. Top!

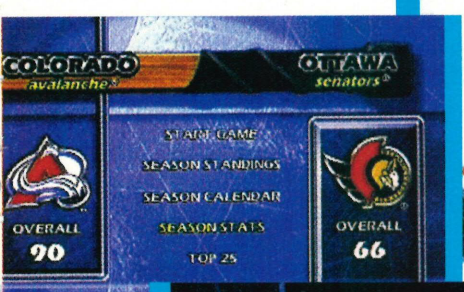
Perhaps the best news, at least for our more violent readers, is that the fights are now second to none. The brawlers are able to rip off their gloves and tough it out like real men. Various fighting moves will be available along with shirt grabs and other such dirty tactics. At this moment it remains unclear whether ear biting will be put in, but given recent events we wouldn't be surprised.

Relaese Date: September

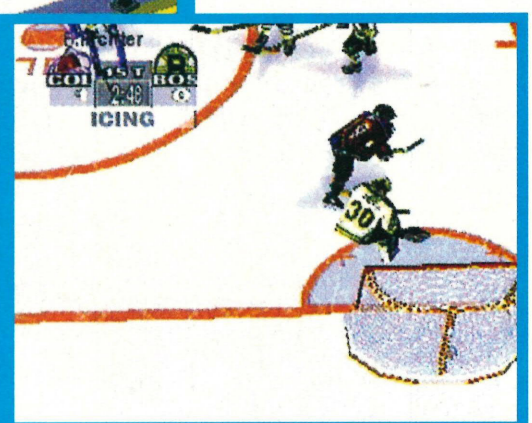
late, was a bit of a disappointment. The '98 edition is looking far more promising



This not only gives you the chance to see the sport played to a half decent level by washed up American stars and second raters who never quite made it "in the majors", but also allows normally level headed adults to make complete fools of themselves proudly prancing around to that music from the Guinness advert. All in the effort to get on a big video screen which may as well have "everyone look at that tosser" flashing on it intermittently. They really should know better...







I won't hide the fact that I didn't like the first Powerplay all that much but I'm trying not to let it put me off this next edition. There's no doubting it's looking highly promising, I just wonder whether it's going to bring anything new to the party that EA's NHL Hockey hasn't already given us. Having said that, I'm already pleasantly surprised and, with the game on the run in, it can only get better from here on in

All the pro players and teams are going to be included along with a host of new moves like fake shots, stumble passes and size based hooking. What this means essentially is that should you try and foul a hulking great six foot forward with a dwarf then it's more than likely to backfire on you. OK, so I exaggerated (I doubt there are many dwarves playing professional ice hockey), but I couldn't think of a better way to illustrate the point



One of my main gripes with the original came from the artificial intelligence of the computer players (especially the goal tenders) being a touch on the low side. Virgin swears that this won't be the case this time and I'm pleased to say our pre-release version bears this out. As a result of these efforts, the players behave more realistically and the "sure thing" shot seems have been completely eliminated – with the emphasis on "seems" as these things only tend to come out with extended play



Game Title **Motor Mash**

Software House **Eutechnyx** *While the rest of the world wear out their copies of Micro*

There are 12 crazy vehicles you can choose from which all look like extras from the Wacky Races – there's the mad abbie and the ultra tough tank of the Soldja. The range of drivers and vehicles is pretty extensive so you shouldn't lose interest very quickly and there are more tiny details here than you first notice









Obstructions come in many forms. The Arctic stages have an enormous snowman leaping around the circuit and the nightmare stage has a huge spider which makes life very tricky. Other stages have express trains cutting across the road, and a whole host of other nasties are included to make your already difficult task that bit tougher









There are well over 40 circuits situated in a variety of environments. Each environment has a number of circuits which gradually become more and more difficult with added hazards and twists and turns

Machines, developer Eutechnyx aims to take the idea one step further

Mr Motor-vator



Viewed from above in much the same way as micro Machines, Motor Mash has many elements from the much loved racer, with more attention to detail and a far greater interactive environment, in an attempt to surpass the mighty MM. And it just might succeed. It's looking pretty impressive and should make it into the shops in early autumn



There are a number of modes you can use to race in. Whether you want a two player contest or one of three championship modes, it has all been catered for. Up to four players may race at any one time with the use of a multi-tap, or you may race against three other computer drivers

By Andy Sharp

MICRO MACHINES HAS always been in a league of its own, purely because nobody attempts to take it further. Well, Eutechnyx has developed a rival to everyone's favourite mini racer.

While PlayStation owners everywhere were falling over themselves to own a copy of Codemasters' finest, Eutechnyx set about trying to create the sheer enjoyment which MM offered. It will have to live with the comparisons whether it likes it or not since the two games are terribly similar. This may be because the programmer of the SNES game, Micro Machines II, is also behind the PlayStation development.

Viewed in much the same way as Micro Machines, the environments are in full 3-D with multi-layered tracks containing bridges, fly-overs and much more.

The hazards you must overcome aren't restricted to the odd drop and craftily placed wall, there are many other obstructions, and to make any progress you will have to tackle many more situations, not to mention avoiding the numerous driver hazards.

There's more – you've still got to dodge the odd missile, oil patch, smoke screen and a host of other weapons which both you and your opponents may pick up throughout the race. So there's plenty to be done if you're to be the first over the line and collect the rewards.

Release Date: Tba

Game Title **Kick Off '97**
Software House **Maxis** *Kick Off 2 is legendary. Recently, though its history has been*

Back With a Bang



Control of the players is second to none. Just some of the things you can do on the pitch are shoot, pass, chip, back heel, knock the ball ahead and chase it, overhead kick, diving header, after touch, volley, power header, sliding tackle, dirty tackle and defensive sprint. Phew! That's not all though, there are all manner of intricacies that'll take you an age to master, including an excellent one-two give and go move

The season should just be getting into full swing when this gets released and that should mean that soccer fever guarantees at least reasonably good sales for any game even remotely connected to the sport. However, I expect this game to fully justify any success it may have because, even at this early stage, the potential is there for all to see

Kick Off '97 is a real feature fest with the motion capture duties being ably performed by three of the Premier League's "top" stars, namely Arsenal's Ian Wright, Patrick Vieira and keeper David Seaman. So presumably we can expect reckless challenges on the goalie (courtesy of Mr Wright) and freakishly tall players (thanks to the exceptionally tall Vieira). Apparently though, rumours of an extra shipment of those reflective balls they use being ordered for motion capturing David Seaman's huge moustache were unfounded. Damn!

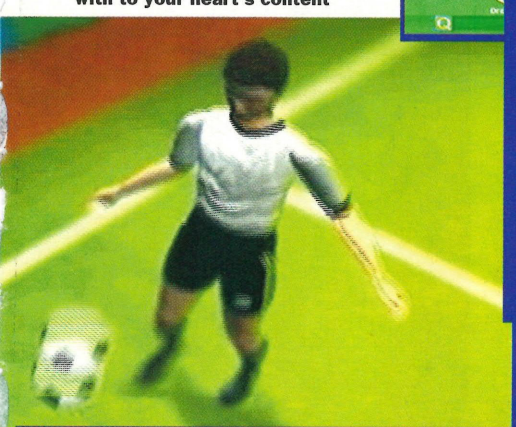
somewhat ropey. With the '97 edition though it looks like the boy's back on form!

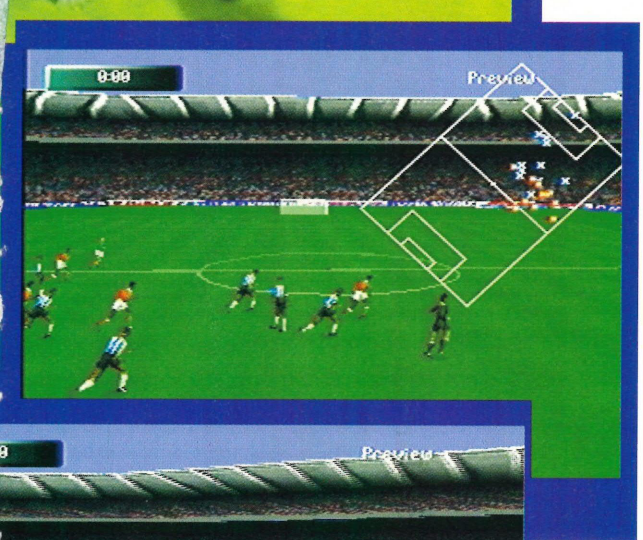
Players will be able to tailor the game to suit their exact needs. There's a choice of International teams and Premier League clubs plus 14 different European Championships, 15 European Leagues, the option to create your own league and a whole host of other things to twiddle with to your heart's content

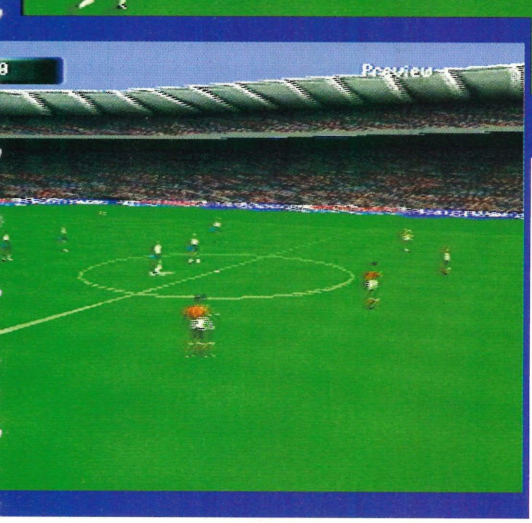




Maxis is understandably reasonably excited about this one, shouting from the rooftops that Kick Off '97 will offer the player the chance to experience football in a way they have never done before. It goes on to say how the game delivers a breathtaking 3-D environment and an artificial intelligence that football enthusiasts have only been able to dream about. Thing is, I should imagine a lot of football enthusiasts have only dreamt about any kind of intelligence, artificial or otherwise!







By Steve McNally

The Kick Off 2 name stretches back some six years or so, when the Amiga was the machine to own and a little known company named Anco made a name for itself thanks to what, at the time, was a groundbreaking simulation of the beautiful game.

In many people's eyes it was surpassed by the equally legendary Sensible Soccer, but enthusiasts caused one of the fiercest debates within the games industry ever by disputing that fact. Even to this day, there are still people that argue the Amiga version of Kick Off 2 has yet to be bettered. I'm not one of them.

The game's history since those glory days has been patchy to say the least. Dino Dini, genius behind the original, left the company to work on his own projects, leaving lead programmer Steve Screech to pick up the pieces and attempt to take up the reigns.

And it has to be said it's taken him quite a while to hit his stride. The versions in between have been, on the whole, tragic, and will be consigned forever to the bin full of dire software. Kick Off '97 looks destined for a somewhat more successful future, although I'd doubt whether it will be glorious.

It's on a head-on collision course with Gremlin's eagerly anticipated Actua Soccer 2 (Maxis is hoping to get the jump on Actua's August 1 release date by at least two weeks) but my fear is it may get overshadowed in the hype frenzy that will undoubtedly be whipped up by Gremlin's well oiled marketing machine.

That would be a shame because I've played both games at a similarly early stage in their development and there's very little to choose between them in terms of quality. Obviously there are many features to be squeezed into both games before their release, and a clear winner may yet emerge in the time that remains. One thing's for certain though, there are at least two top notch footy games about to show their faces not too far into the new season.

Release Date: September

Game Title **Frogger**
Software House **Hasbro Interactive** *This is a company you may not be familiar with*

Hopping mad

By Andy Sharp





As well as the old classic stages, there are a number of new and improved levels involving a few stages in many differing scenarios. The pumping music changes from level to level to fit in with the scenes. With 35 stages and five hidden stages, there is more than enough included for the discerning gameplayer

THE '80S WERE A TIME for dodgy haircuts, crap bands and the birth of some great computer games. Frogger was, and still is, one of the best games of all time and it therefore seemed inevitable it would be updated at some stage.

Unlike many revamped retro games which add an element of 3-D but otherwise keep the games the same, Hasbro has added so much more to bring Frogger well and truly into the '90s.

Instead of it being a hop across the road using logs and turtles to reach the other side affair, the levels have been expanded making it less linear with more exploration involved. The environments for the levels are now much more varied, taking you from the city roads to deserts, industrial facilities and even high in the clouds.

One of the best things about many old games was the simplicity in gameplay, and Frogger was no exception. Thankfully, at this stage, it looks as if the gameplay has played as important a role, as have the graphics. So, hopefully, none of the original qualities have been lost.

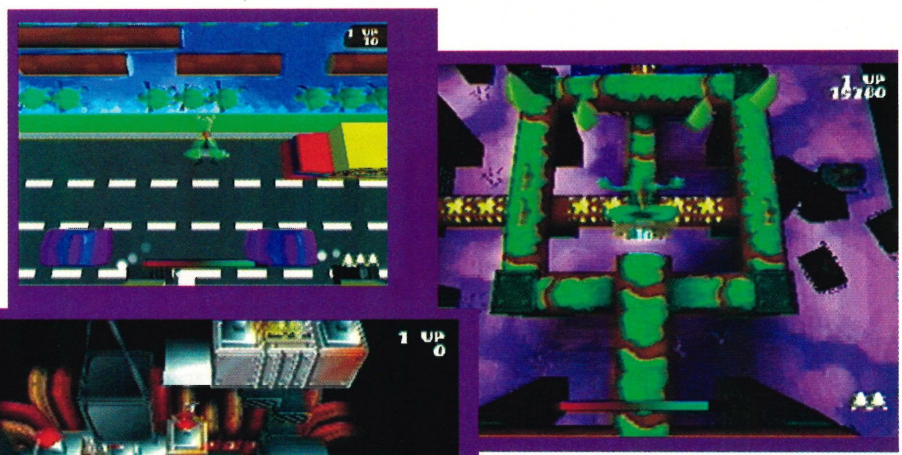
While the original game was limited to single leaps, there's been plenty more added for this new version. There are super jumps for extra length, a power croak which lights darkened areas and the all important heat seeking tongue which grabs helpless flies to give you more time for the levels. Time flies in fact, which is quite possibly the worst pun ever.

With all the new features and more involved stages, Frogger has been brought bang up-to-date in what should be one of the greatest surprises of the year.

Release Date: Autumn

but, if this totally revitalised classic is anything to go by, we're in for a treat

President of Hasbro Interactive, Tom Dusenberry, says, "We are extremely excited to be bringing the beloved Frogger game back to life. Frogger has a special place in my heart ever since I launched it 15 years ago as part of the Parker Brothers Arcade Action Series. When we first started Hasbro Interactive I definitely had Frogger in mind as a premier, all-family entertainment title for the '90s." And sure enough, he seems to be right



Frogger can use a host of new animals and objects to make his way around the levels, ranging from logs to aircraft. Don't forget about collecting the time flies as these play a major part in many of the stages



Unlike the original release, Frogger in the '90s uses many elements of other classic games of the time, including one of the desert stages incorporating a Donkey Kong style section where you must ascend a hill avoiding rocks until you reach the summit



Hasbro has linked up with Konami for this release and is hoping the finished package will be ready in the autumn as it's already well on the way to completion. This is one retro release which has already surpassed all expectations

Game Title **Deathtrap Dungeon**
Software House **Eidos** *Eidos enters the magical world of fantasy adventure with its adaptation*

Fantasy Fanta



By Hugh Poynton

Back in the days when I had scabby knees and wore shorts, an author called Ian Livingston was making a fortune writing the first proper "interactive" books. In these cunningly designed adventure stories you'd be referred from page to page so that, depending on your decisions, every game was different.

Well it's decade and a half later and the 15 million people who purchased Ian's book Deathtrap Dungeon have grown up, stopped wearing charcoal grey short trousers, got a job and have some spending money. What better idea then than to re-release the Ian Livingston classic Deathtrap Dungeon as a 3-D action adventure game for the PlayStation?

The game certainly looks better than the books. Rather than black and white ink pictures you can now experience Ian Livingston's fantasy world in luxuriant 3-D graphics. This includes a "dynamic dungeon lighting system" – a fascinating little widget that ensures candles and so on cast realistic lighting effects in the dingy depths of the dungeons.

Presented from a Tomb Raider floating-camera-on-invisible-leash perspective, you'll be able to follow your character's progress through the dungeons from the most attractive and dramatic angle. Like Tomb Raider, your character can run, jump, clamber and swing swords. There are also a few special moves incorporated so you can dispatch goblins and elves with great efficiency.

Although much of the onus is on action and fighting, there'll also be quite a bit of puzzle solving involved. Eidos has hired the help of Jamie Thompson (former editor of White Dwarf magazine and goblin and orc expert) to think up devilishly devious puzzles and generally plot your downfall.

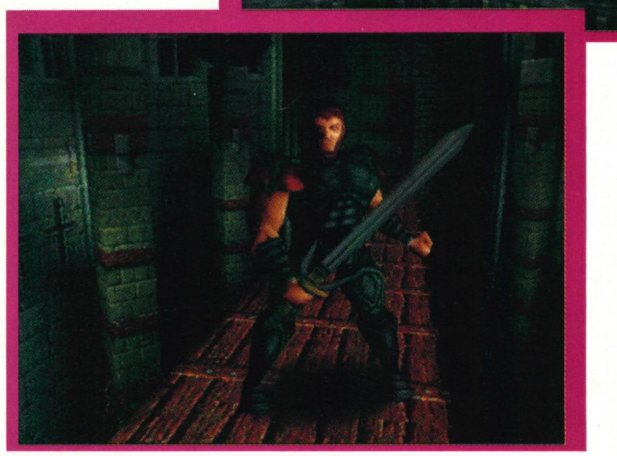
There is a very "Dungeons and Dragons" feel about the whole thing, from the way your hero or heroine is tarted up in half the contents of a Soho sex shop, to the profusion of evil priestesses, ugly orcs and huge dragons.

Eidos has included a fantastic and, as far as I know, unique feature into the game. To avoid the old "lost in Doom" frustration, Deathtrap Dungeon will allow you to mark out your route in chalk as you go along. People have been playing 3-D labyrinth type games since Wolfenstein six years ago so how come nobody thought of it sooner?

Deathtrap Dungeon will be hitting the shops in a couple of months and looks like being a worthy addition to the fantasy games genre. It'll do well, mark my words, or may I be struck down by a skeletal necromancer.

Release Date: September





According to Eidos, Deathtrap Dungeon utilises what is called the "intelligent camera" system. The camera will follow your character, zoom in and out and generally pan about like "This Life" on drugs. Fights, falls, explosions and the like will all be captured from the most dramatic angle so you don't have to miss a thing

of Ian Livingston's Fighting Fantasy adventures. Will it be as good as the book?

Dragon Slayers never seem to wear very practical clothes, do they? Your hero (or heroine) takes on fearsome monsters and dragons wearing little other than some strategically placed tin foil. Still, this does eliminate the likelihood of unsightly sweat patches or grass stains...



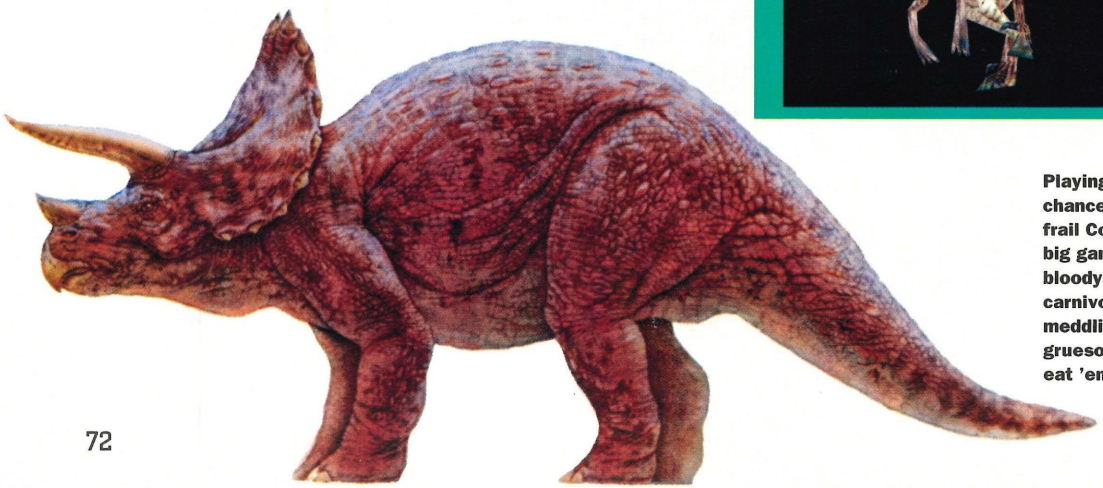
With so many fearsome beasties to dice, you're going to need some help. The weapons in Deathtrap Dungeons fall into three categories. For close combat you'll need a sword, these have typical poncey sounding fantasy names like SpiritSword and WarHammer. To tackle bigger foes try a ranged weapon such as a Blunderbuss or a Fire thrower. For the particularly skilled, there is spell casting and playing about with magical potions to bring down your enemies

A la Tomb Raider, Deathtrap Dungeons includes loads of dirty rotten booby traps. Tread carefully or you'll end up kebabbed on hidden spikes that emerge from walls and ceilings, or plummeting headlong down concealed pits. Hidden corridors and false floors also conspire to put a downer on your day. Blame former White Dwarf editor Jamie Thompson – Eidos got him to design all the fiendishly difficult traps and dungeons

Game Title **Jurassic Park: The Lost World**
Software House **Electronic Arts** *Prepare yourself to step into a Raptor's shoes when*

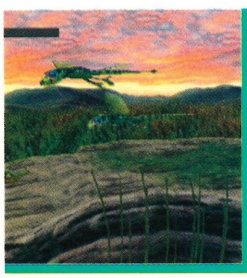
The programmers have steered away from the full freedom of 3-D movement so popular at the moment, and tried to create a 3-D version of the classic scrolling arcade game. They reckon too much freedom makes it easy for players to miss out on important game points, hence the "on rails" approach here. You can, however, take several different paths through the levels. This way they can guide the player through their favourite camera tricks and special effects, as well as giving the game more structure. And there's nothing wrong with that in my book





Playing as various dinosaurs, you get the chance to hunt as well as be hunted. From the frail Compsognathus you move on to a human big game hunter before really getting your claws bloody as a Raptor and T-Rex. It's as these carnivores that you get to reek revenge on the meddling humans by gobbling them up in a gruesome manner. Could this be the first ever eat 'em-up? Let's hope so

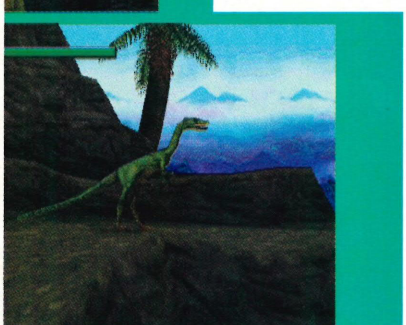
Spielberg's monster sequel thunders onto the PlayStation

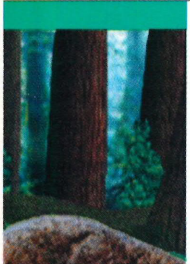


'Saur Losers

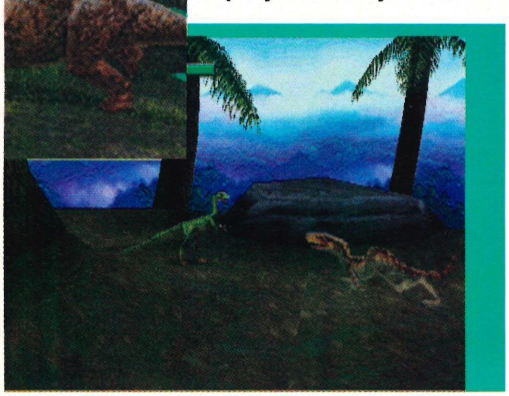
By Dan Whitehead

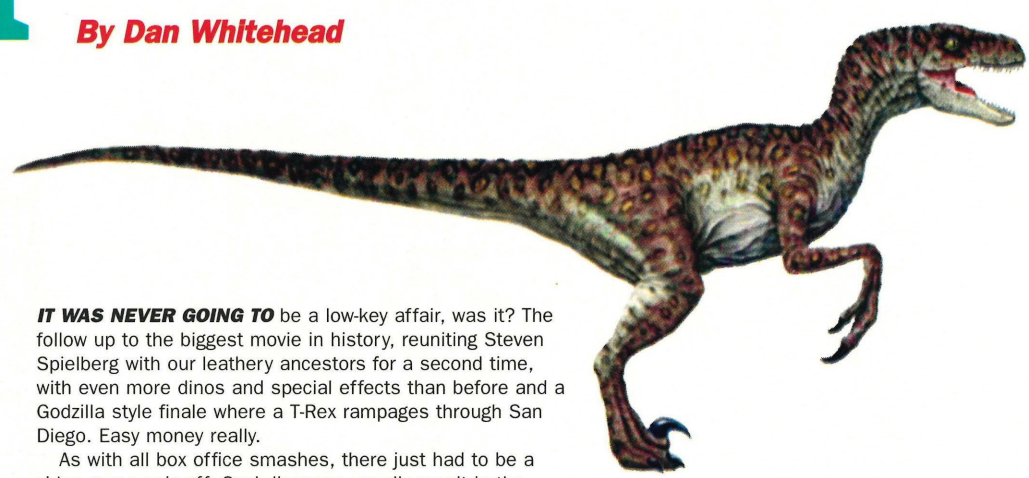






Not only is the game looking like a savage and entertaining romp through the world of the film, the game comes with added comedy value in the shape of an animation boffin called Sunil Thankamushy. Which is, frankly, the best name in the entire world and I'll slap anyone who says different





IT WAS NEVER GOING TO be a low-key affair, was it? The follow up to the biggest movie in history, reuniting Steven Spielberg with our leathery ancestors for a second time, with even more dinos and special effects than before and a Godzilla style finale where a T-Rex rampages through San Diego. Easy money really.

As with all box office smashes, there just had to be a video game spin-off. Such licences usually result in the equivalent of a turd on a CD, like Independence Day, but with Spielberg's own Dreamworks team working on this conversion it looks like the cycle might be broken.

The game is inspired by the concept of the film (secret breeding island still has dinosaurs until big game hunters and evil scientists arrive) but instead of following the plot religiously, the game branches off into the realms of "what if...". So what you see in the game represents what might be happening in the background of the movie, away from the camera.

Rather than playing one of the lead characters from the film, you'll take control of both humans and dinosaurs in an attempt to survive. Starting out as a titchy Compsognathus, you'll have minimum attack capability and survival relies on your agility. As you progress through the game, you control progressively bigger and meaner beasts, with a brief diversion as a human hunter, until you finish the game as a gigantic T-Rex. There's also a secret dinosaur to control, but only the programmers know what it is. The secretive scamps.

Using a new techy thing called Morph-X to animate over 20 species of dinosaur in a 3-D environment, and with special computer-skin stretched over anatomically correct skeletons, the creatures look incredibly realistic. As well they should. The programmers have had unprecedented access to the models and sketches used for the movie, and impromptu play testing was carried out by none other than Steven Spielberg himself. And if he likes it, we'll probably follow suit.

Release Date: September

Game Title **Crime Killer**
Software House **Interplay** *Policing the streets has never been so much fun. Or so*

Kill 'em all

By Andy Sharp

THE STREETS ARE AWASH WITH crazed lunatics, and organised crime has reached an unprecedented level. Not too many changes in the future then if we're to believe what we see in Interplay's Crime Killer.

To combat these groups the police seem to have employed a fight fire with fire policy which means you can destroy any vehicle with as much firepower as you wish. Things aren't going to be that simple however, as all vehicles – not to mention the good citizens of the city – are armed with a host of weapons.

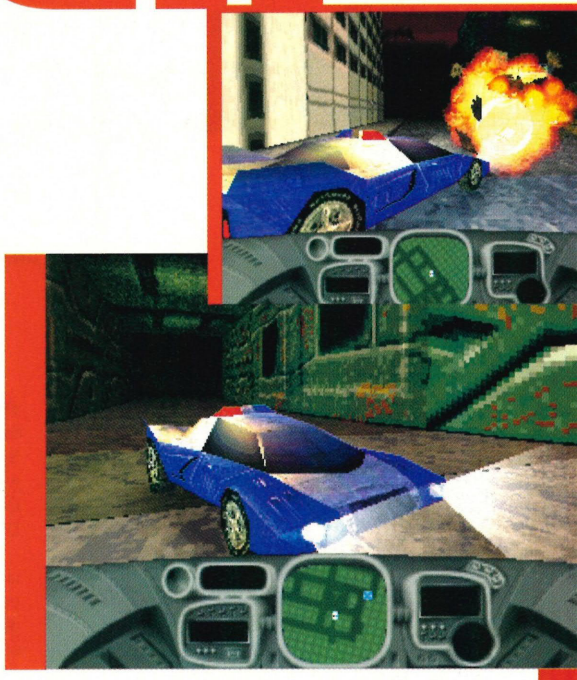
Your Police unit can use one of three vehicles, each with its own handling characteristics. Whether you're flying high in your wing, driving all out in your car or giving it some on your bike, the mission briefs remain the same: Kill the enemy at all costs. Nothing more, nothing less.

For your missions you have a number of either lethal or non lethal weapons to do away with the host of drivers and clean the streets. Controlling the vehicles themselves isn't too complicated, in fact it's as simple as can be. One button accelerates, another brakes, one does a U-turn and the other fires a special weapon.

Road surfaces also vary from mission to mission just to keep things a little varied so you don't become too complacent. Add to this the threat of natural disasters such as earthquakes, and you have an ultra quick Twisted Metal-esque smash 'em-up.

You can view the action in a first or third person perspective which doesn't really add or detract anything from the fast paced blasting action going on all around, so it makes no odds on your overall enjoyment. We look forward to seeing more in the near future.

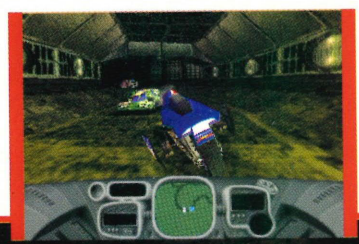
Release Date: Early '98



Crime Killer will be released early 1998 if all goes to plan, so it's a little while off yet, but don't expect it to fade away as it's got more thrills and spills than you could imagine. Playing the good guy for once doesn't mean the law can't be bent to serve your purpose, because in this game, you are the law

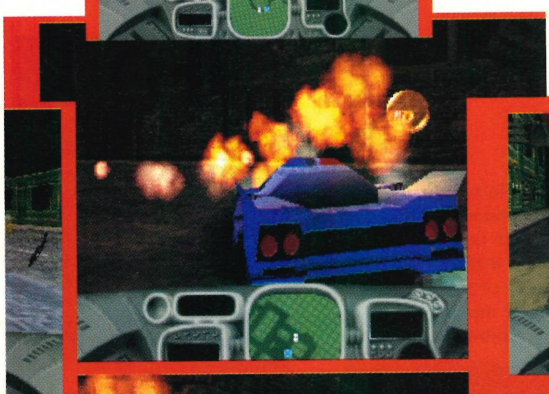


Interplay would have us believe as Crime Killer revs up for its release



As you blast and battle your way through the crime scenes your on board camera will be filming the proceedings to use as evidence and also make a damn impressive action film showing all of the stunts from the vehicles involved





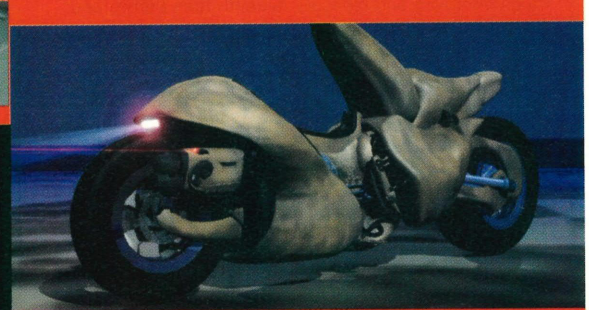




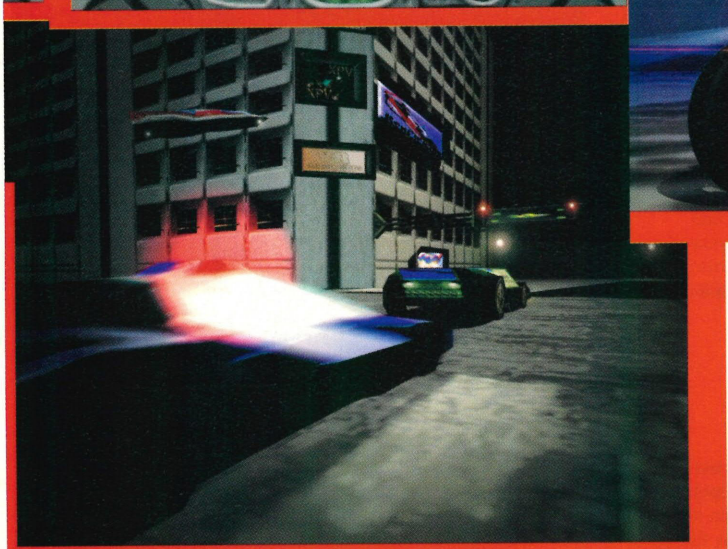




Each vehicle has its own unique secret move which shows that there's more to this than may meet the eye. Also included is a full-on pumping soundtrack to accompany the fast paced action perfectly



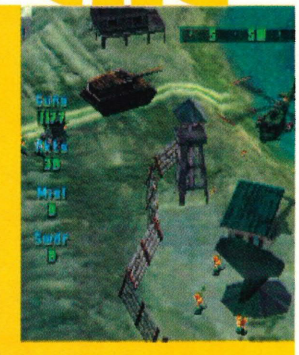
While it's still being finely tuned for its release, there's no reason why fans of the Twisted Metal style won't be impressed with this and save their pennies until it hits the shelves. Crime killer could be an unexpected surprise if the early impressions are anything to go by



Each city varies as you complete the missions, and to guide you around there is a radar screen on your dash so you don't get too disorientated on the winding streets

Game Title Nuclear Stike
Software House Electronic Arts *Palms will be pleased and that trigger finger will never*

Strike up the



Penned in for a release towards Christmas, Nuclear Strike is set to be on many a wish list if the hype and interest (not to mention the sales of the original) is anything to go by

By Andy Sharp



THE SKIES HAVE BEEN PRETTY QUIET since the world was cleared of the Soviet threat in the helicopter epic Soviet Strike. This time around the threat has taken a more sinister twist; arch villain Henri LeMonde stealing a nuclear weapon and hatching a sinister plan which holds the world to ransom.

Whereas the previous release was limited to helicopter only, this time your missions are more dynamic and involved featuring a host of new vehicles including tanks, planes, boats as well as helicopters. The action is much improved and far more in-depth than before and therefore the longevity is increased considerably.

The running speed has also been improved to make the action quicker with less time for thinking and more time for blasting. Add to this the hectic battles and you will get some idea of all that's involved. Strategy is still prominent, however, and you will now have to think doubly quick to come up with your plan.

The 3-D terrain gives a more realistic look to every part of the scenery. Even the weather conditions have been altered, as have the lighting effects so it really does look the part.

At the end of the day, Nuclear Strike takes the initial idea a few steps further. The variation in both missions and vehicles provides much more enjoyment in every department. The skies will be awash with flames once more.

Release Date: Christmas



Included in the graphical improvements are the explosions which are far more impressive, as is all the flaming debris which flies away from explosions. Whether battling in the air or on the ground, the whole thing is now much improved and looks a treat. Even more so than its predecessor

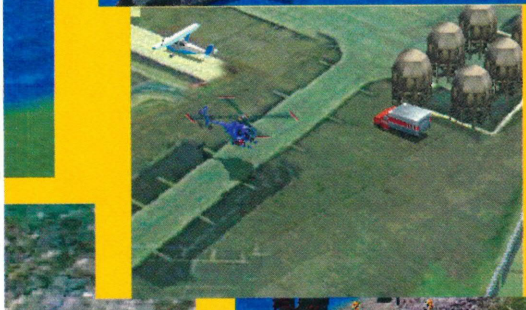
have been so happy when the sequel to everyone's favourite helicopter blaster returns

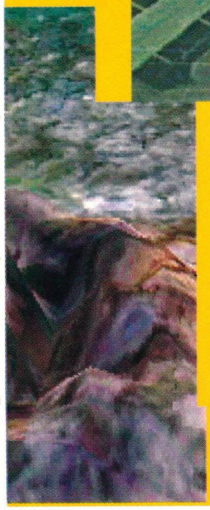
band



The weather conditions and lighting effects bring a totally realistic battleground to the fore. Even now it looks like it's going to be an improvement on the already rather fantastic Soviet Strike

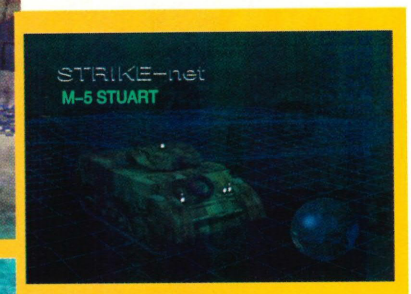












The general strategies and lengthy missions won't be lost in this sequel. Anybody with an eye for a winner will want to prepare themselves for what will more than likely be one of the biggest hits of the year









The computer AI is much improved for both civilian and military installations and they will react according to your actions rather than following a set attack pattern. This adds a little more pressure on the player as he tries to find a successful strategy

Game Title **Herc's Adventures**
Software House **Virgin** *How to annoy Disney in one easy step, courtesy of those scamps*

All Greek To Me

By Dan Whitehead

AS DISNEY GEARS up for the release of its animated Hercules opus (yet another example of its capitalistic plundering of global culture and regurgitating it in Americanised chunks for the multiplex crowd), those saucy types over at George Lucas' ranch have beaten them to it. At least as far as PlayStation versions go. So while Sony waits for the official "game of the film", Virgin has snaffled LucasArts' anarchic take on Greek mythology.

Herc's Adventures is a tongue in cheek exploration game which, despite its comic approach, manages to stay fairly true to the original legend – unlike the Disney version, which will probably include dancing statues and crap songs.

The story starts when Hades (that's Satan to you and me) kidnaps Persephone, Goddess of Fertility. He fancies making her Queen of the un-dead, with nookie on the side no doubt. Clearly unhappy with this turn of events but unable to do anything about it, despite being a Goddess, Persephone is trapped in the Underworld and can't bring spring to Greece. Flowers will wilt, soil will crack and everything in the garden will not be rosy. Top beardy boss bloke Zeus decides to get some mortals to sort it all out, as he's just catching up on the Hollyoaks omnibus and can't be arsed lifting a Godly finger.

Thankfully, Ancient Greece wasn't short of heroes (and heroines) all ready to toddle off on some quest or other at a moments notice. So, you've got three characters to choose from to complete the monumental task of saving Persephone from the claws of Hell. There's Hercules, obviously. The strongest man in the world, and if the awful TV series is anything to go by, a dead ringer for Michael Bolton on horse steroids. Then there's Atlanta, a speedy minx, who recently hosted the Olympics in her bra. And finally there's Jason, on his first solo outing since his split with The Argonauts (musical differences apparently). He's a brainbox and a dab hand with swords and slingshots.

Two players can join in the fun and the action follows the tried and tested formula of looking for vital objects while beating off the advancing enemy. Think Legacy Of Kain with laughs, sandals and a two player mode and you might be barking in the general direction of the right tree.

Release Date: September

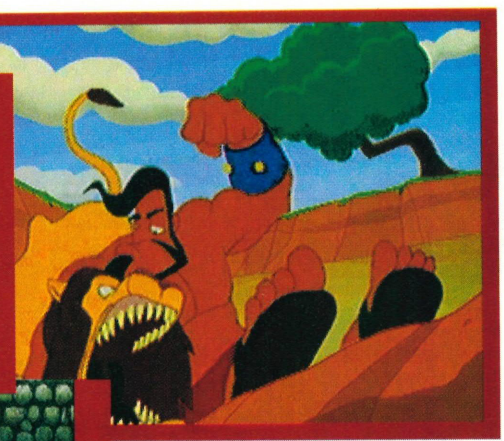
Some liberties have been taken with the legend in the interests of a more varied game. For instance, the game features a toga-full of monsters from all over Greek mythology. The bull-headed Minotaur, the seven-faced Hydra and the mono-visioned Cyclops will all get in your way and do their best to scupper your plans. Hopefully, their method of defeat will stay true to legend though, so we can have some messy gouging and slashing fun



at LucasArts





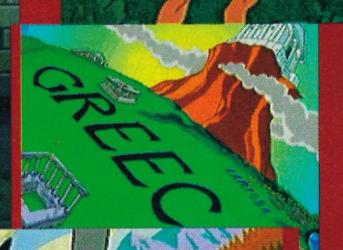


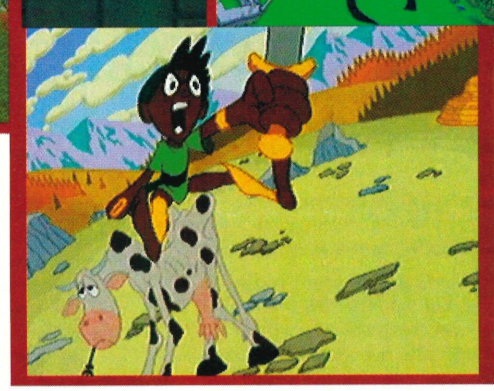


To complement the comic style, there are numerous animated sequences. Filling in the blanks in the story, and offering an opportunity for childish gags, the art seems to be of a high quality. Yet another short, stabby sword in the eye for the evil Empire Of The Mouse. I don't like Disney much. Can you tell?

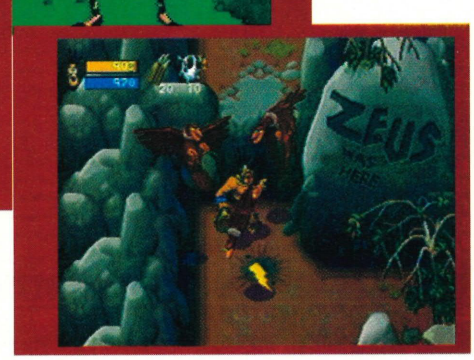








The game, viewed from above, is vast but certain areas will be restricted at the start. At regular intervals you'll meet one of 'The Gods' and they'll set you a task to prove your worth. Complete the task, either by retrieving a sacred object or killing a specific foe, and you'll be allowed to continue into the sealed areas. A tad linear, but it prevents you from wandering around with no idea what to do



Hercules was the last mortal son of Zeus, and the most powerful man alive. He's most famous for his 12 Tasks, where he was given a dozen challenges to perform. He probably won a badge if he did them or something. One of the tasks required him to clean out a massive stable full of shite. Can't wait to see what that looks like in the Disney version...

Game Title **Actua Soccer**
Software House **Gremlin** *A slight departure from the normal preview format here – an*

The Real Sequel

By Alex Lee

Q *Have you taken into account the players' individual skills?*
A We're basically just collecting all the information we can find from all 92 teams in the Premier league; first, second and third division

Q *How many stadiums are there?*
A All the Premier league ones, about six from division one including a generic division one ground, a generic second division ground, a generic third division ground and Wembley. Middlesborough is not going to be one of the first division grounds

Q *How many players are going to be in each squad?*
A There's a huge pool of about 2,000 players. Wigan, for example, may have about 15, whereas the Man Utd squad might have as many as 30

Q *Is there going to be a management option?*
A There won't be any management as such, but you will be able to trade players during the season and build up an all-star team, but we haven't decided exactly how this is going to work as yet

Q *If you wanted to play an entire season, would you have complete control over which 11 players you picked?*
A Yes, and there'll be a very simple transfer system

Q *Are the goalkeepers going to be CPU controlled?*
A Yes, apart from when they kick the ball out and face a penalty. You can still rotate the keeper (like in Actua Soccer and Actua Soccer Premier Edition). You can now control the strength of the kicks. We may do some more captures for throws – it just depends on whether we remember! Even if we remember, we may not be able to fit all the captures in because of the PlayStation's memory restrictions

Q *What types of weather and pitch conditions are you going to have?*
A We're going to have day matches, night matches, fog/mist, rain, snow and wind which will all slightly affect the play. On a wet surface, for example, the ball will bounce less and less as the pitch deteriorates and long passes will hold up in the mud. In wet conditions, sliding tackles make skid marks. Up to 140 can be on the pitch at any one time. If it so happens that you make more sliding tackles than that during the game, the first one will disappear

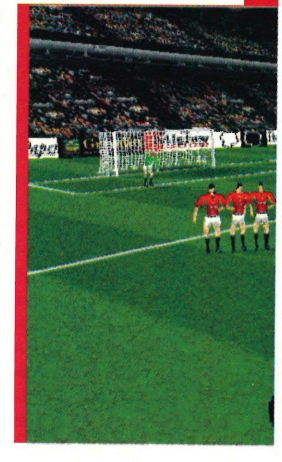
Q *What will the view perspective be for penalty kicks?*
A At the moment, it's from an angle behind the kicker similar to Virtua Striker, but we haven't finalised exactly how it's going to work

Q *How are you going to handle action replays?*
A There are going to be several options, but that's for the front-end. The guys at our office in Dewsbury will sort those out. You'll be able to select instant replays after goals and after events, such as bad tackles. You've seen the way Sky does its action replays – we may do a similar thing, with stats on screen

Not only does Actua Soccer 2 feature over 20 real football grounds, there's also an outdoor training ground surrounded by trees where you can practice your techniques such as dribbling, heading, throw-ins, passing and free kicks. The players wear tracksuits rather than full kit

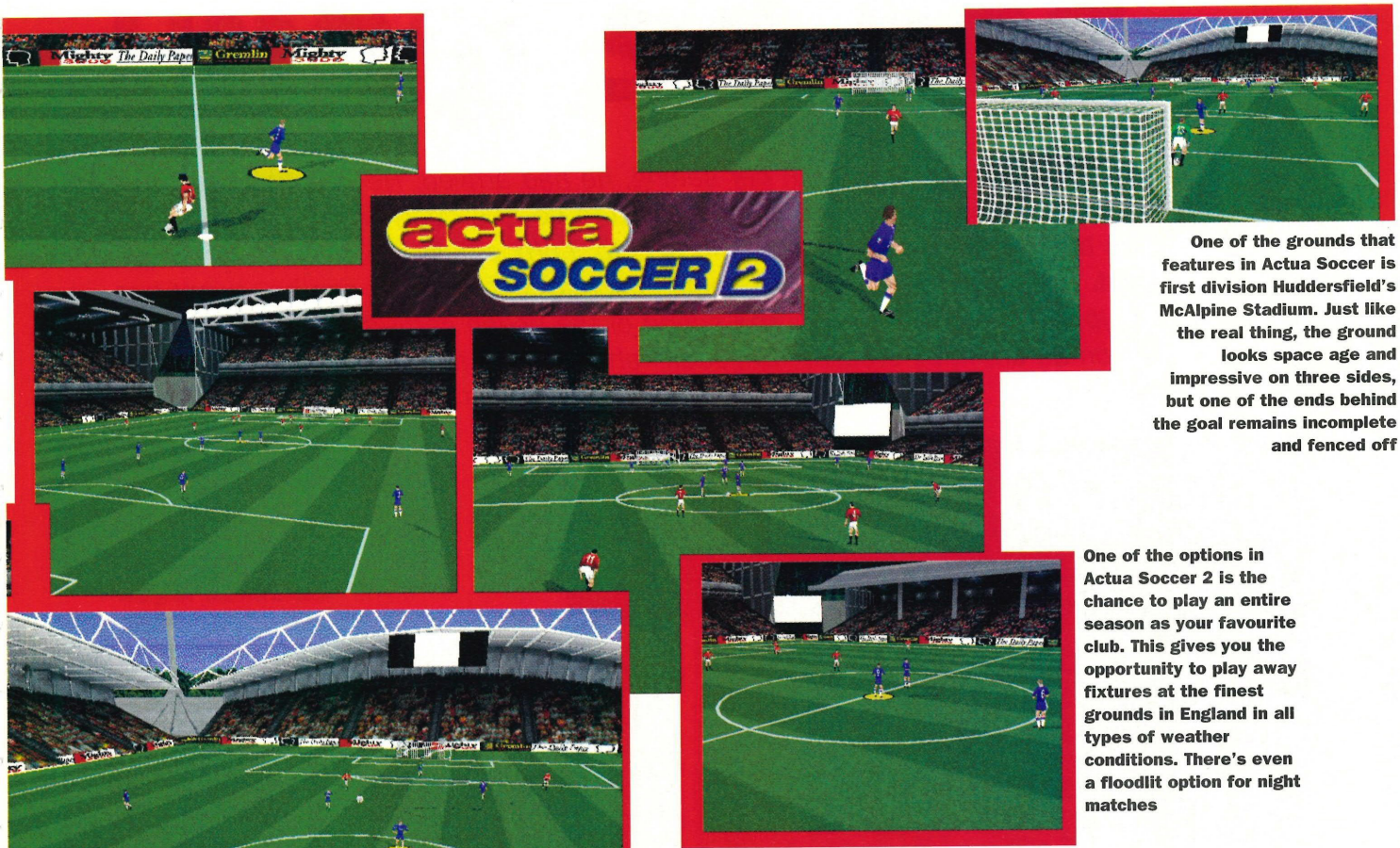


At the time of writing, Everton's strip is causing Gremlin consternation because it hasn't yet got a sponsor to go on its shirts. The other teams have fairly accurate sponsorships on their tops, but not exact replicas of the logos because of complicated legal reasons



Additional motion captures are being done to make the players' movements even more realistic than they were in the original version. This time, however, Gremlin is saving money by using some of its own staff members rather than shelling out cash on Premier League players like before

interview with Phil Rankin, lead programmer of Actua Soccer 2



One of the grounds that features in Actua Soccer is first division Huddersfield's McAlpine Stadium. Just like the real thing, the ground looks space age and impressive on three sides, but one of the ends behind the goal remains incomplete and fenced off

One of the options in Actua Soccer 2 is the chance to play an entire season as your favourite club. This gives you the opportunity to play away fixtures at the finest grounds in England in all types of weather conditions. There's even a floodlit option for night matches

Q *Have you decided on what the default view angle is going to be?*
A We'll probably ask the testers which angle they prefer. The only problem with asking them is that they'll probably go for the overhead view

Q *Which multiplayer options will be available?*
A You'll be able to set up your own leagues with teams from whichever division you like

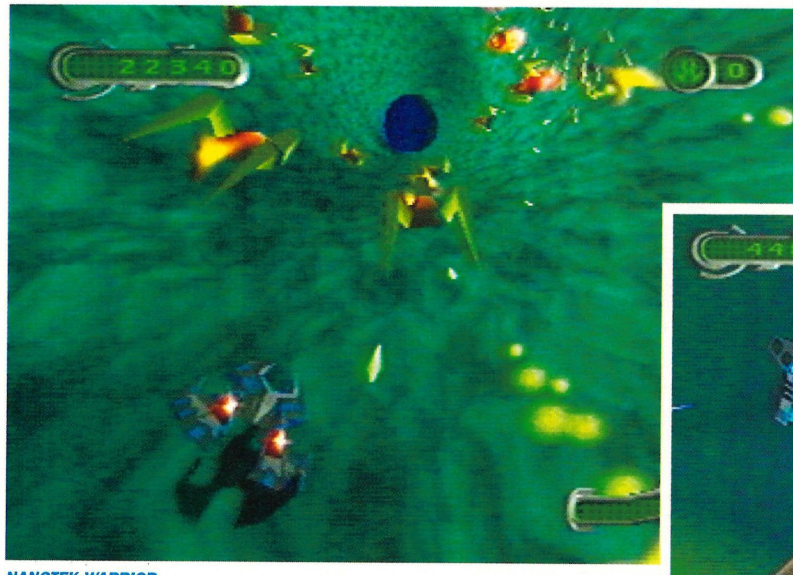
Q *Will there be an option whereby you can pick your own favourite teams in a friendly so they're evenly matched, regardless of what division they're in, so you can't make any excuse if you lose?*
A We weren't going to, but we might do it now. It's easy to do

Q *How will the difficulty settings work?*
A The goalkeepers will all be given different skill settings – some keepers will be very hard to beat and will catch the ball nearly every time. The further you go down the scale, the fewer catches the keeper will make and he'll tip the ball over the bar, round the post or spill it. As far as attacking goes, there will be like a "pub league" setting (we haven't decided what we're going to call all the settings yet) where every shot you have will hit the target, up to an international setting where you need to be far more precise

Q *How have you configured the refs in terms of strictness?*
A We've done it by vision and strictness. So if you foul in front of a disciplinarian ref, he'll send you off, but if he's short sighted he may not see you commit the foul. Whereas a soft ref may see everything but just let you off

Cheat, Drink and be merry

In the moonlight, without her seeing, he had arrived. He was as broad and masculine as she'd remembered him to be. His dusty shirt stretched over his bulging torso, as her hands longed to. Purposefully, he strode over to her and, wordless as only a mute Spanish construction worker can be, swept her up in his powerful arms. The sound of the ocean carried up to the veranda on an aromatic breeze. "Oh, Juan" she sighed as paradise sounded in her veins, "Cheat me till I scream, big boy.."



NANOTEK WARRIOR
Lightning guns and cockpit views aplenty in the ultimate space-sausage shooting game



NANOTEK WARRIOR
John Noakes publicity stunt scandal revealed, along with some exciting cheats

NANOTEK WARRIOR

Pelting around the outside of a vast space sausage has never been so much fun! That's how they should've advertised this game, in my opinion. They didn't, of course. They got John Noakes to write "Nanotek Warrior! It ain't 'alf hot, Shep!" in the sky with smoke from his stunt plane. Which was quite impressive, actually.

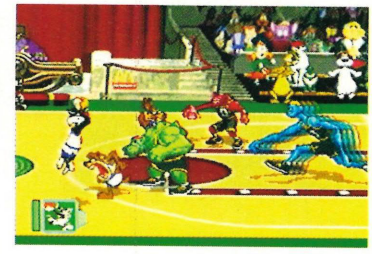
Anyway, if you were sucked in by this skydiving event and bought the game, you'll quite probably piss with glee when you see these cheats. By the way, if you've got access to a PC, you can find these cheats by inserting your PSX CD into the PC and opening the README file. If you haven't got access to a PC, simply break into a High Street electrical retailers and use one of theirs. Or to avoid lengthy prison sentences and shower encounters with large convicts called Bubba, read them from this page...

For a pseudo-cockpit viewpoint, pause the game and let the following combination dance across the joypad: **T, O, S, S, T, T, Select, Start.**

For the ultra-sexy Lightning Bolt gun, go to the password screen and then enter the button code as follows: **X, S, T, C, S, C, X, T, X.** You'll be taken to Level 1 and your ship will be loaded with spread lasers. Hitting the Circle button will then unleash the Lightning Bolt.

SPACE JAM

It's a blando-basketball festival, stuffed with flat renditions of popular cartoon characters. And Michael Jordan. To spice things up, highlight the Game Options and, while highlighted, hold **L1, R1, L2, R2, U** and **X**. Hold all these buttons down until the next screen appears.



Now enter the options menu. Look! You can change the gravity, alter the size of characters and so much more! Aaaaaah Bisto!

THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS

Oooooh! This game is such utter filth that it's not even worth wasting two pages on. Those pages could be put to better use by filling them with pictures of half naked models and Alex's 'funny' captions. Maybe.

If you've found a copy of this, maybe in a bin while rummaging for food and blankets, you can now skip all the levels and arse about with the graphics. Which is actually proves to be more fun than playing the game.

Pier: T X T T O S X O
Boat: X X X X T S X O
Tomb: T O T O S T T O X O
Grave: X T X T S X X T S O
Church: T T T T O S T S S O
Day Of The Dead: X T X T S O O X S O
Club: T O T O O T X O S O
Tower: X X O X S S X T O
Borderland: T X X X O S T S
Finale: X X X O S S X X T O

Stick Man Mode: At the main menu highlight the continue option, enter this password:
T T X S O O S X T T
Giraffe Neck Mode: At the main menu highlight the continue option, and enter this password:
X O T O S S T O X O

BALLBLAZER CHAMPIONS

Should you want a Shrinking Rotofoil, which I presume must make sense if you're "into" the game then, on the password screen, enter the following codes:

X O X X O X
X X X X X X
X X T T X X
S X X X X S
X S S S S X

It looks a bit like a face, doesn't it? Not here, obviously, but when you put it on screen it does. Honest. Also, to jump to the Master Dome stadium in the tournament, with the difficulty on Easy, and with 1 previous loss on your record, enter these...



O L1 L1 R1 R2 L2
X S S R1 R2 R1
R2 T L2 R1 L2 O
L2 R2 R1 X L1 R2
S L2 R1 X R1 R1

Vinnie's Scrap Yard: SOUP DRAGON
Vinnie's Scrap Yard B: SUPER DRAGON

FIRO AND KLAWD

You can't beat a comedy chimp/cat double act can you? Unless you use a big, spiky stick and crush their skulls into the dirt. Then you can beat them quite convincingly. Or, and here comes the great link, you can beat them with these lovely level codes:

Back Alleys: MOOMIN
Back Street: MOONPIG
Back Street B: MOONPIGEON
Back Roofs: SNUFFKIN
Main Street: LITTLE MI
Main Street B: LITTLE MO

VR BASEBALL

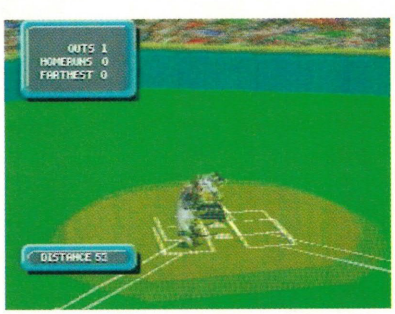
Kevin Costner, the inexplicably popular movie dullard, once built a baseball pitch in a cornfield to raise the ghost of a dead sports bloke. What a spanner. But it's obviously the inspiration behind this wacky cheat.

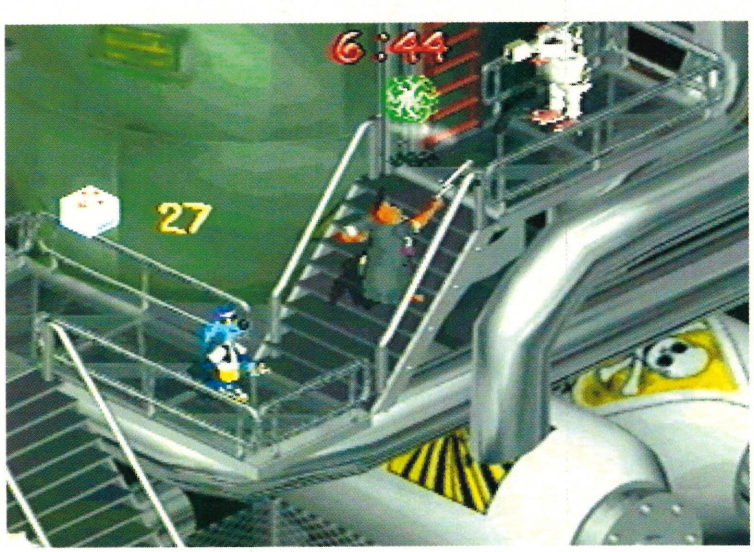
Highlight Credits and press **S, C, S, C, T**. You should end up back at the previous menu and the stadium name will be in green. Start the game and you'll be playing in a field of corn. Just like bland old Kev. Tune in next month for more hot tip pie. See ya!

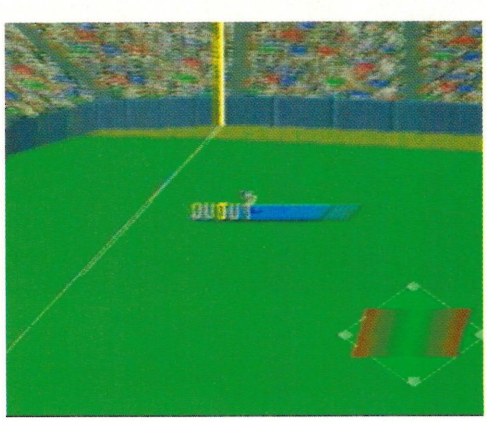


FIRO AND KLAWD **Level codes for the timeless cat and monkey isometric runny shoot game**

VR BASEBALL **Kevin Costner-style cornfield/baseball interface cheat**





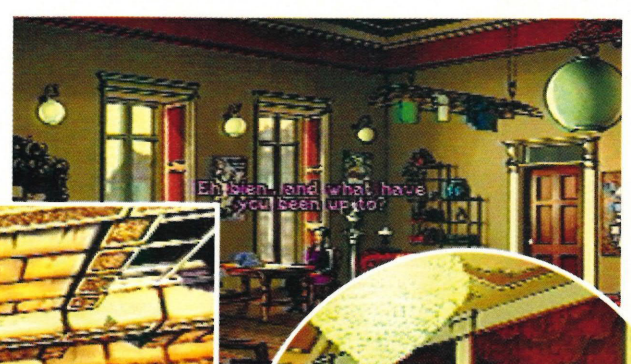


How to beat Broken Sword... At last

Do any of you lot buy new games? Or are you all still struggling to finish the ones you bought last year? If our mailbag is anything to go by, it's the latter. Last month we appeased the Discworld crowd and here, in our inimitable style, is the complete solution to Sony's superb conspiracy adventure. Read it, learn it, finish it and then find something else to harass us about. You know we love it

Take sometime to familiarise yourself with the locations in each section. That way our guide will make more sense





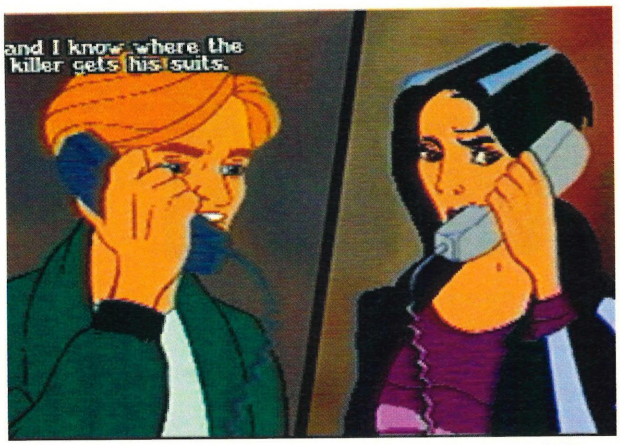


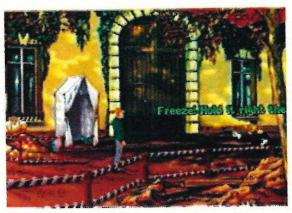


Don't attempt Broken Sword if you're averse to all kinds of acts of unnerving bravery!

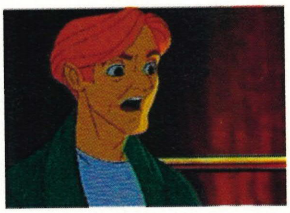
ACT 1: PARIS

1. Pick up the newspaper.
2. Walk to the road works.
3. After Rosso's interview in the cafe, talk to Nico the photographer.
4. Ask Nico about the clown and Plantard (the clown's victim) until she has told you all she knows and gives you her phone number.
5. Walk to the road works and give the newspaper to the workman.
6. Get the tool from the toolbox inside the tent.
7. Walk to the alley on the right hand side of the cafe square.
8. Use the tool on the manhole cover.
9. Get the clown's nose from the first sewer.
10. Get the tissue and the scrap of material from the second sewer.
11. Climb the ladder to the courtyard above.
12. Show Rosso's card to the concierge.
13. Show the material to the concierge.
14. Ask concierge about the jacket.
15. Say goodbye to the concierge and return to the road works.
16. Telephone Nico and get her address.
17. Exit the road works to the right, to the Paris map.
18. Go to Rue Jarry.
19. Talk to the flower seller to identify Nico's address.
20. Try the door (it's stuck),





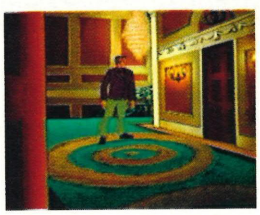
Broken Sword is blessed with one of the best adventure stories ever



Hiding in wardrobes is all part of a day's work for a budding detective!

You never know quite who you can trust as you play through this game

Danger lurks around every single corner. Watch your back at all times!



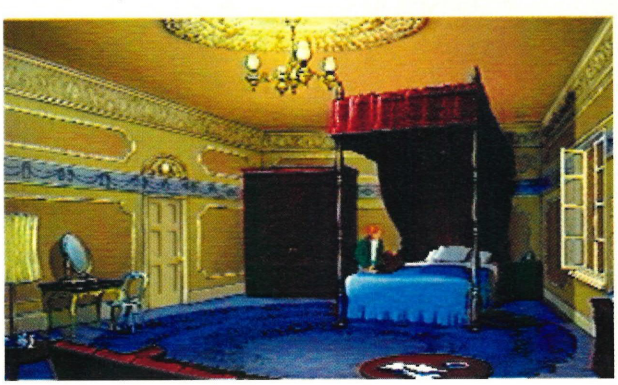
then ask the flower seller about Nico again.
21. Go to Nico's apartment.
22. Show the material to Nico and take the photograph.
23. Show her the nose.
24. Go to the Risee du Monde and show the photograph to the customier.
25. Ask him about the clown.
26. Leave the costumier (taking the buzzer).
27. Telephone Todryk the tailor and ask him about Khan (use photo icon).
28. Go to the hotel Ubu.
29. Speak to Piermount about herself and show photo.
30. Try to get key.
31. Ask Piermount about key.
32. Walk to Piermount about the key and the assassin.
33. When the receptionist has left, take the key.
34. Go upstairs. Use key on first door on the right.
35. Open window and climb out.
36. Enter window to the right.
37. Try leaving the room via the door.
38. Once assassin has been and gone, search the trousers he left on the bed, to get the id-card and match-book.
39. Leave room through the door.
40. Ask receptionist about safe then show him ID card.
41. Show Piermount the ID card, so she helps you retrieve manuscript from safe.
42. Go back to first room, stand on ledge, and drop manuscript to the ground.
43. Leave hotel (to be searched by Flap and Guido).
44. Go to alley behind hotel and collect manuscript.
45. Talk to Nico about Manuscript.
46. Exit to map and go to Museum.
47. Examine tripod in the centre of the room.
48. Go back to Nico's apartment and tell her you're going to Ireland.
49. Go to Airport, go to Ireland.

ACT 2: IRELAND

1. Talk to Maguire about Peagram and the dig.
2. Go to MacDevitts.
3. Talk to Ron the poacher then say goodbye.
4. Wail until Ron leaves a snare on the table, then take the snare when he sneezes – you have to be quick.
5. Ask Sean Fitzgerald about the dig.
6. Ask Doyle about Peagram, the dig, and Fitzgerald and then if he wants a beer.
7. Ask him again about Fitzgerald.
8. While Doyle is drinking, take the towel from under his elbow.
9. Ask Fitzgerald about the dig (again).
10. Go outside and ask Maguire about Fitzgerald (again).
11. Go back inside and ask Fitzgerald about the dig, Peagram, and the gem.
12. Ask about the package.
13. When Fitzgerald has left and Maguire has burst in, go back outside.
14. Turn off the beer pumps by throwing the exposed switch beside the pub door.
15. Go back into the bark and ask Mick Leary for a drink - you will need to finish off anything left in your glass if you ordered one earlier.
16. Show him the ID card.
17. Use the snare on the glass-washer's plug.
18. Go to the cellar and undo the bolt holding the trapdoor.
19. Go back to the street and upon the trapdoor.
20. Return to the cellar and collect the gem.
21. Turn on the tap and use it to wet the towel.
22. Leave the pub and take the path to the castle gate.
23. Tell the farmer about Fitzgerald's abduction.
24. Climb the haystack.
25. Insert manhole tool into wall, then click on gap at top to climb over.
26. Approach the goat to the right of the trough (by clicking on the ladder).
27. As soon as the goat knocks you over, click on the plowshare on the far left.
28. When the goat is trapped, go to the ladder and enter the excavation.
29. Get some plaster from the sack.
30. Move the stone idol so it falls on the sand, then raise it to expose the holes.
31. Use the plaster on the holes in the sand.
32. Use the wet towel on the plaster in the sand (if the towel has dried, return to the cellar and wet it again).
33. Pick up the plaster replica and use it on the holes in the wall.
34. Enter the secret room.

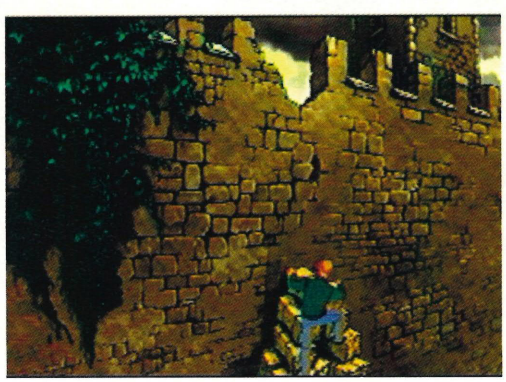
ACT 3: PARIS

1. Show Nico the gem.
2. Leave and go to Police Station.
3. Ask Moue about Marquet.
4. Leave and go to Hospital.
5. Ask receptionist about Marquet.
6. Show her your ID



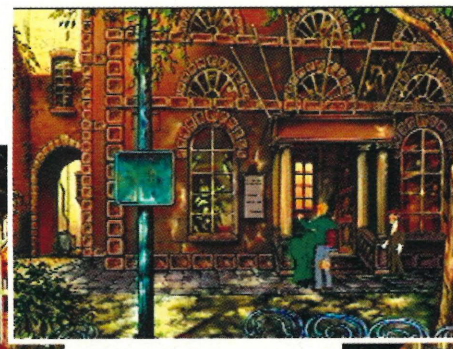
Don't be afraid to perform the odd act of breaking and entering. Sometimes it's the only way to progress

If clambering up this wall is posing you problems, our full guide is guaranteed to sort you out

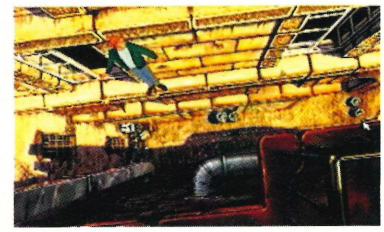


Don't irritate the mob or you could end up wearing a very heavy, not very stylish, concrete overcoat!





The bomb has caused extensive damage. You'd better finish this quickly or more people could die





The costumier definitely knows something. He's not implicated in the crime but a bit of careful cajoling will get you the info you need

7. Talk about Nurse Grendel until she gives you directions.
8. Go down corridor.
9. Speak to Sam the cleaner then unplug the cleaning machine.
10. When Sam leaves, go to the closet and get the Doctor's coat.
11. Return to reception and talk to the guy in the doorway.
12. Go back up the corridor to the ward.
13. Attempt to walk thorough the ward.
14. After the patient has stopped you, speak to Benoir.
15. Give him the pressure cuff, talk to him about it, and tell him to use it on Eric Sopmash (the right hand icon).
16. Walk into Marquet's room and talk to him about everything.
17. Go to the museum and speak to Lobineau about the manuscript and the night until he tells you about Spain.
18. When the guard is not looking, open the window, then when he goes to close it hide in the sarcophagus.
19. When the raid starts, push on the totem pole.

ACT 4: MOUNTFACUON CATACOMBS

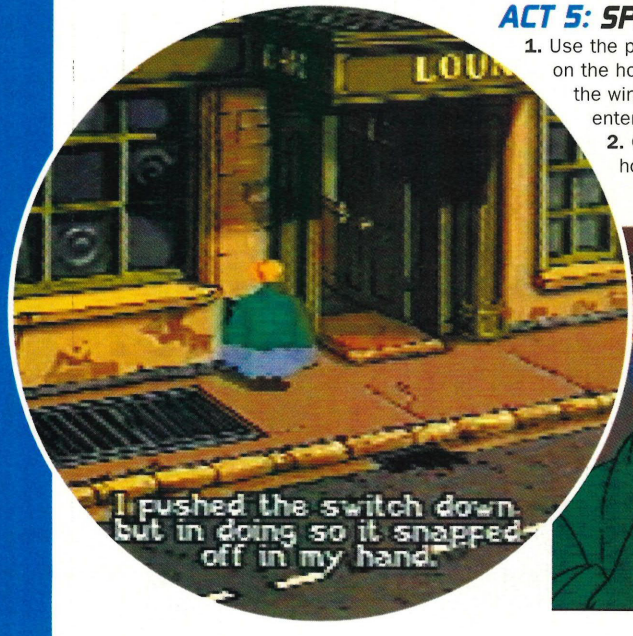
1. Talk to the juggler and attempt to juggle.
2. Talk to the gendarme, show him the red nose.
3. Talk to the juggler and attempt juggling again.
4. When the juggler and gendarme leave, use the sewer key to lift the manhole cover and descend beneath the streets.
5. Examine the rightmost arch.
6. Use the sewer key to break a hole in the plaster.
7. Pull level.
8. Examine mechanism.
9. Board boat and move the boom over the right-hand path.
10. Lower chain.
11. Take the chain hook and attach it to the exposed cog.
12. Board the boat and turn the winch.
13. Enter next room.
14. Look through hole in the wall to see Templars' meeting.
15. Look through hole again to see them leave.
16. Go down the steps.
17. Put the tripod on the stand in the middle of the circle.
18. Put the gem on the tripod.

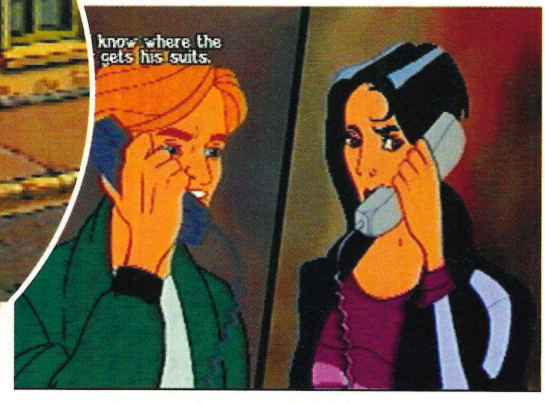
ACT 5: SPAIN

1. Use the pressure cuff on the hose pipe near the window where it enters the house
2. Go into the house.
3. Go down the passage to the rear of the house.
4. When the dogs scare George back into the hallway, left-click on the armoire.
5. Go upstairs.
6. Talk to the Countess about everything.
7. Pick up the Bible on the lectern.
8. Examine the chequered pattern on the lectern. Talk to the countess about it.
9. Talk to the Countess while Lopes fetches the pieces.
10. The chess puzzle: The white pieces can only be placed on the middle column.
11. Place the black king in checkmate
12. Bishop at top, Knight in the middle, King below Knight.

ACT 6: SYRIA

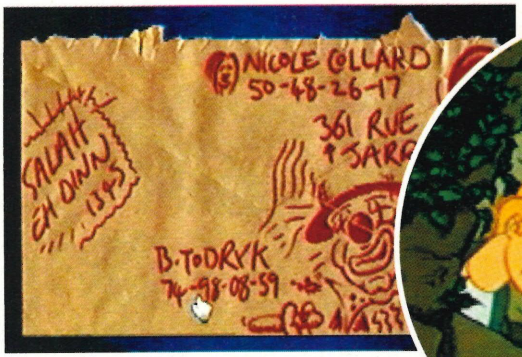
1. Go up the steps at the far right.
2. Show the matchbook to the carpet seller.
3. Left-click on the steps to go up to the club.
4. Try to go into the Club Alamut's toilet.
5. Read the sign.
6. Ask Ultar about the sign.
7. Return to the main street again.
8. Look at and talk to Arto - the kebab stall holder near the steps to the carpet seller.
9. Talk to Nejo about Arto.
10. Offer Nejo the red ball and select YES when he asks if you mean it.
11. Use the phrase on Arto.
12. Go back and talk to Nejo.
13. Go back to the club and give the toilet brush to the club manager.
14. Go into toilet, unblock the roller towel and take the towel.
15. Go back to Nejo's stall – Nejo should now be playing with the ball.
16. Stroke the cat and then ring the desk bell on the stall's counter.
17. Pick up the broken statuette
18. Use the tissue on the statuette.
19. Talk to Duane and sell him the statuette in exchange for $50 bill.
20. Go back to club and show Ultar the photograph.
21. Talk to Ultar until he offers to take George to the Bull's Head hill, then give him the $50 bill.
22. Meet Ultar at the truck and give him the roller towel.
23. Use the stick/towel on the crack at the cliff edge and climb down.
24. Examine the niche in the rock until the ring is found and pull it.
25. Search Klausner's body, look at Baphomet and read the inscription.
26. Don't lie to Khan.
27. Say you want to die like a man.
28. When he offers to shake your hand, agree, but select the buzzer in the grace period.
29. While he's down, jump off the cliff.





ACT 7: MONTFAUCON CHURCH

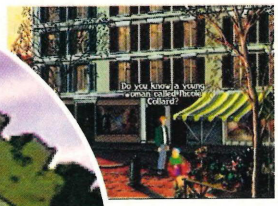
1. Show tarnished chalice to priest. Let him clean it.
2. Examine right hand tomb against the rear wall.
3. Examine scroll in the statue's hand.
4. Use the lens with the scroll.
5. Talk to priest again to recover chalice.
6. Go to museum again and talk to Lobineau about Baphomet.



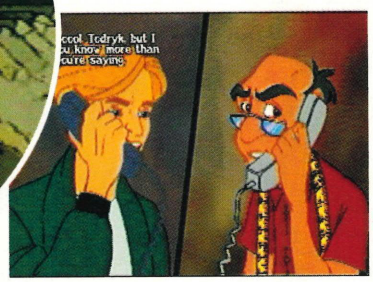
George is definitely a subscriber to the Columbo style of detection!



A suspicious mind, a keen eye for detail and our handy, complete walk through guide should see you through to success



Ah Nico! Thankfully there's no Papa around her apartment to get it the way though! Will George and the saucy French temptress ever manage to get it together?



7. Go to the Baphomet site from the Paris Map.

ACT 8: THE EXCAVATION AT THE INSTITUT NERVAL

1. Go down steps to lobby.
2. Click on the right hand door (toilet).
3. Ask Guard for the keys.
4. Use keys on toilet door.
5. Pick up soap from the sink.
6. Use the keys on the soap to make an imprint of the excavation room key.
7. Use the plaster on the soap.
8. Use soap on water tap to wet the plaster and copy the excavation key.
9. Go back to lobby and give keys back to guard.
10. Go outside and try to use plaster key on the painter's pot.
11. Go back down to the lobby and phone Nico.
12. Go back and talk to painter about phone.
13. Dip plaster key in paint pot to make it look real.
14. Go back down to the lobby and examine the thermostat on the left wall.
15. Ask guard about the thermostat.
16. Click on the thermostat, turning it to cold. The guard then puts on his gloves.
17. Get the keys from the guard.
18. Use the painted key on the keys to swap it for the "real" excavation room key.
19. Give keys back to Guard (he can't feel the fake key with his gloves on)
20. Try the key on the left door.
21. Phone Nico again and wait around
22. Go back to the lobby and use Excavation key on the left door to enter the excavation room.
23. Use the polished chalice on the patch on the lower floor to see anatomorphic projection.
24. This automatically sends you back to Nico's apartment.
25. Now you have access to Spain again on the Europe map; go there.

ACT 9: SPAIN

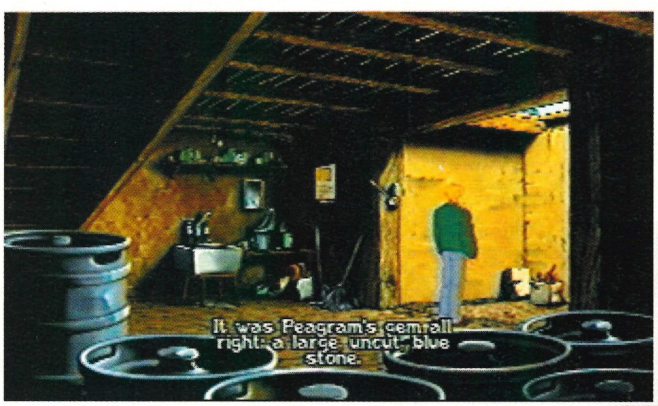
1. Take the mirror from the utility room.
2. Talk to the countess.
3. Go to the mausoleum and examine the candle.
4. Use the window hook to close the window.
5. Use the tissue on the hook and then ignite it with the candles by the lectern (the left candle, click on it's bottom half).
6. Light the big candle with the burning tissue to receive the stone key.
7. Take the Bible.
8. Give the Bible to the Countess and get her to look up the references.
9. Talk to Lopez about wells and how to find them.
10. Take hazel twig from the tree by the utility room window and show it to Lopez.
11. Examine the Lions head and pull the tooth.
12. IMMEDIATELY MOVE AWAY. (click on left side of screen).
13. Examine the exposed wall.
14. Use the mirror on the shaft of sunlight coming down from the well to illuminate the keyhole in the wall.
15. Locate the keyhole by touching the secret door again, and then use the stone key on the door.
16. After returning to Nico's, George can go to the Airport, and off to Bannockburn.

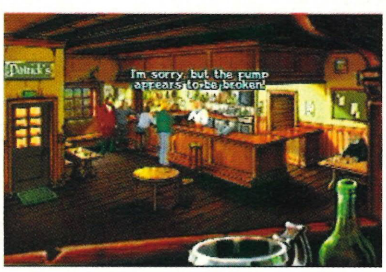
ACT 10: TRAIN

1. Try to leave the compartment to trigger the guard's visit.
2. Leave the compartment and head left down the corridor.
3. After confronting Guido, go as far left as you can.
4. After George realises Eklund is on the train, go back to your compartment.
5. Go to the second compartment and talk to Geordie on the left.
6. Open the window and climb up.
7. Head to the RIGHT along the roof.
8. Enter the baggage car.
9. When Guido is thrown off the train, pull the brake cord (on left wall).
10. Attempt to leave carriage.
11. After talking to Nico, leave the carriage.

ACT 11: SCOTLAND

1. In the church tower, turn the handle on the wheel mechanism to break it off.
2. Take the cog and spindle.
3. Examine the rubble until you find a second cog.
4. Use both of the cogs, then the handle on the demon.
5. Enter the crypt and walk through to the far exit.
6. To foil the grand master's plans, grab the torch QUICKLY and throw it on the gunpowder.





Poking around in cellars and mine shafts will become second nature in no time whatsoever!



Well, you've finished Broken Sword at last! All you have to do now is wait for the sequel!

BACK ISSUES...





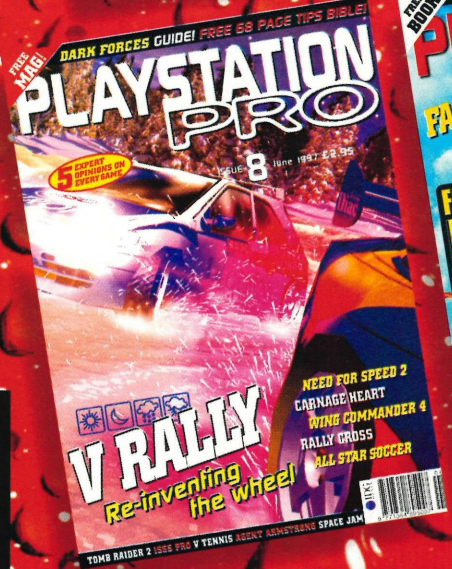
















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COVER: Perfect Assassin
INSIDE: Free Command & Conquer tactics booklet Pandemonium, Cool Boarders, Star Gladiator players' guide plus a massive complete guide to Tomb Raider

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COVER: Total NBA '97
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Misplaced one of your old issues of the mag? Lent a copy to your mate and he won't give it back? Mmm, it's a familiar tale, but thankfully help is at hand. For just £3.00 per issue you can obtain a brand spanking new one almost immediately. Perhaps you've only just joined our ever-growing army of PlayStation Pros and fancy beefing up your mag collection so you've got the full set? If that's the case, go ahead and take advantage of this incredible offer! The mags are limited in numbers, so it's a first-come first-served basis and, unfortunately, issues 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 are sold out. So, to avoid missing out, send off the form on the left straight away.

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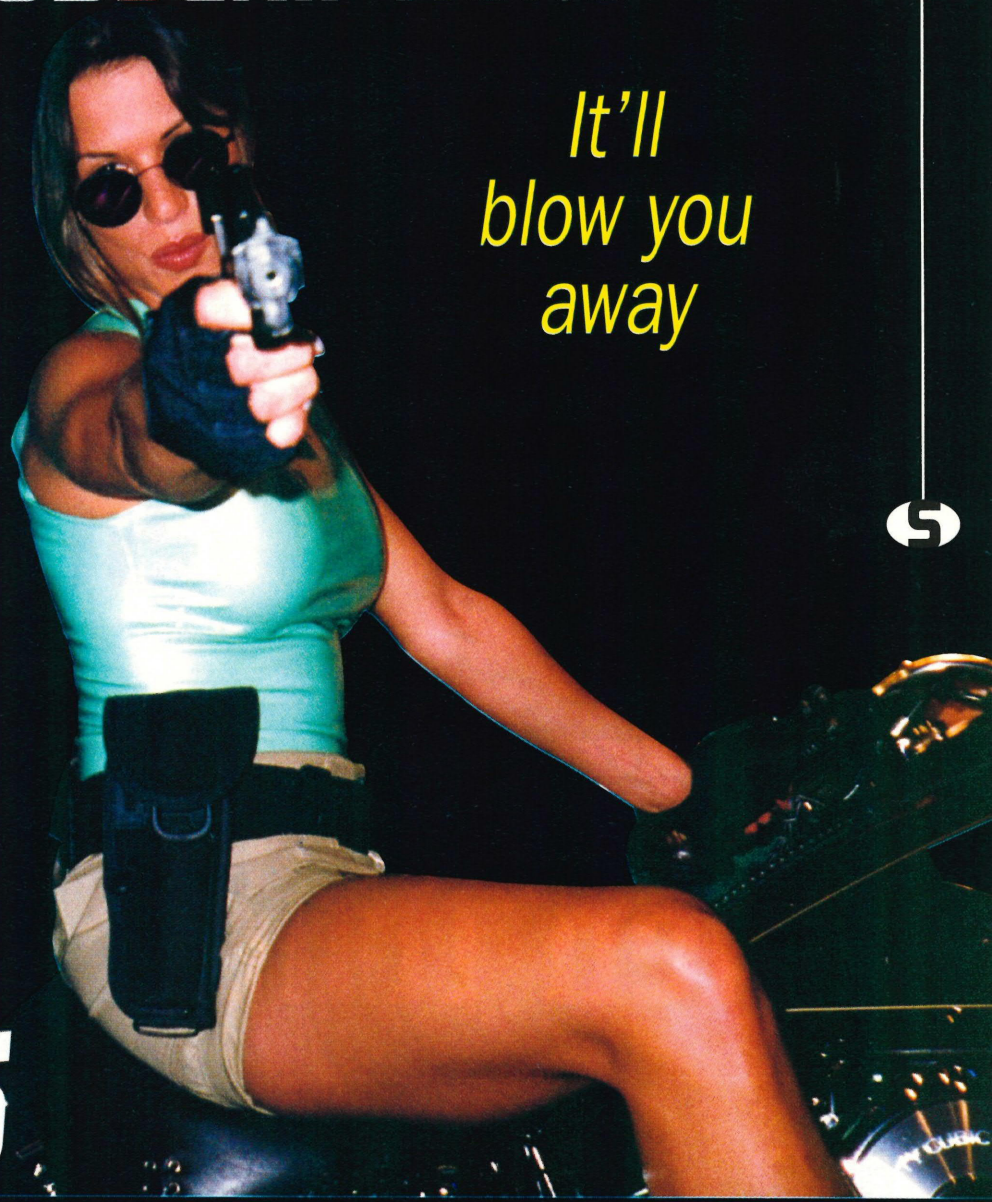
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Very occassionally we get letters disagreeing with our scores for some of the PlayStation releases. If you think you know better than us, write in and tell us what fools we've been. We are just going to have to agree to disagree

International Super Star Soccer Pro

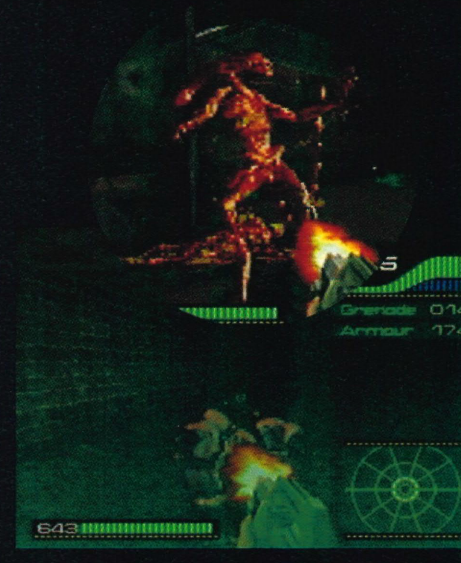
By Craig Earl, Sevenoaks

Football and the Sony PlayStation. It sounds like a match made in console heaven. But, in an age where Virtual Stadia, Silicon Graphics and motion blending are par for the course, why is it that all efforts so far have fallen short of the

Alien Trilogy

By Charles J Robson





Alien Trilogy is all three alien movies in one (as you've probably guessed by the title). It has more than 30 levels, so it will take you a good six months to complete.

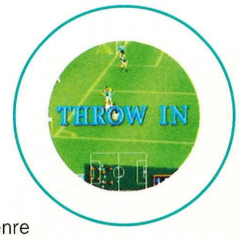
There are three sections of the game: The Colony Complex, The Prison and the Derelict spaceship. At the end of each section there is a Queen Alien to contend with. She is about three times bigger than you and is attached to long pipe. Shoot her and she will get off the pipe and attack. It takes about half an hour to kill her if she doesn't kill you first.

You're probably wondering what weapons you've got against these Aliens. Well, to start off you've got a completely useless handgun. On level one you will find a shotgun which is a lot better. Then you will progress to a pulse rifle (a rifle which fires grenades), a flame thrower and a smart gun. The smart gun is the best weapon of the game. It can fire in multiple directions and is extremely powerful. There are other pickups such as body armour and medi kits. Passwords are required for each level (thank goodness) and you can save games on a memory card and that's about it. In a word, Alien Trilogy is absolutely flipping brilliant! (well three words actually).

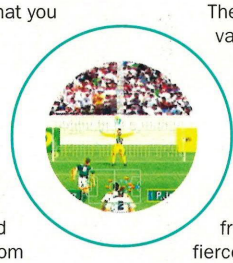




***GRAPHICS:* 9** (Fantastic)
***MUSIC:* 9.5** (Very spooky)
***LASTABILITY:* 10** (Big levels)
***OVERALL:* 9.5** FAB!!







mark? Konami has tried to redress the balance with an offering of obvious quality.

ISS Pro bursts into the arena with an air of authority that puts others of its genre to shame. There are so many advantages over its competitors that it has to be seen to be believed, but here are the main plus points.

Game Speed

ISS Pro gets it just right – not dazzlingly fast – but a major step forward from the dawdling FIFA '97.

Graphics

Superb. Although the real names are not used, footy fans will be able to pick out their favourite player. Each one looks different from the next. The kits are absolutely spot on – real works of art (apart from maybe the grey England away kit!!).

ISS Pro bursts into the arena with an air of authority that puts others in the genre to shame

Animation

Smooth and fluid with players moving as they should. The replays will make you think that you are watching a video of great goals.

Goalkeepers

This is the stumbling block of most PSX soccer games. ISS Pro keepers are vastly superior. They come out of their area to clear balls if necessary and also cut off the shooting angle for advancing Alan Shearer wannabes. David James would do well to get some tips from these boys!

Variety of moves

With choice of headers, through passes, one-twos and centre driven balls, the movement is varied and the playing options are many. There is also a strategy option which can be turned on or off in the midst of a game by pressing the select button. This cuts out the stop-start annoyance of other games and means that suddenly your players can press forward, move deeper in defence or attack through the wing channels. These options make you feel as though you are totally in control, rather than just playing a bit-part in the overall game. The CPU players react intelligently with varied moves to keep you on your toes. A fair amount of concentration is needed to keep a clean sheet but there is a great sense of achievement when you hit the back of the net. The variety of goals is also something to marvel at. Some will be clinical finishes from set plays, others will come from fiercely driven headers and, very occassionally, a 25 yard shot will nestle in the top corner.



ISS Pro endorses fluidity but it will be a while before you are scoring three or four goals against teams ion the hardest level. It's almost as if the computer judges your performance (if you are playing well) and gives its team a stronger desire to win!

Well, whatever the merits of play against the CPU, the game is at best in the 2 player option. The disappointment of conceding a goal to your mate is surpassed by the sheer delight of scoring one yourself. It can be extremely frustrating if your opponent is sitting on a 1-0 lead with five minutes to go because trying to win the ball back can be very difficult. This adds to the realism, however, and makes your achievement all the greater when you find the elusive equaliser in injury time!



ISS Pro deserves a very healthy 9/10 rating and makes us realise that maybe Actua Soccer wasn't quite as great as it first looked. Unfortunately, very few diamonds are perfect and Konami's baby has a couple of minor niggles that lose it half point.

The commentary is abysmal with poor streaming and often incorrect dialogue. Why does the man with the mike say that there are 30 seconds left when you have just started the second half? Another point is that only one player can enter the Cup or League modes. Even the much maligned FIFA gave us an eight player option. It is also a shame that replays are only available after a goal has been scored – it would have been nice to see those shots hit bar.

All in all, ISS Pro stands alone at the summit of Mount PlayStation as the true benchmark by which to judge others. It is a shining example of great gameplay and top-notch graphics rolled into one. Even if you possess another soccer game, ISS Pro is an essential purchase.

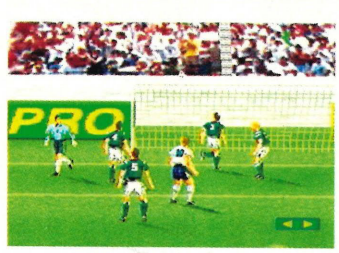


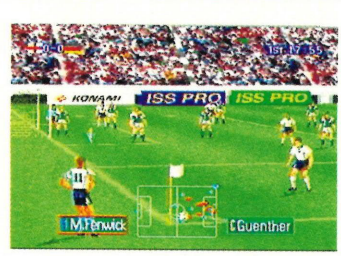


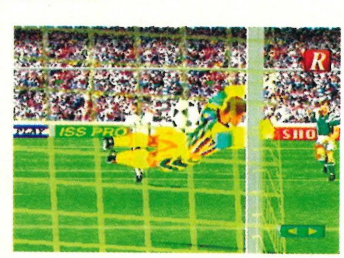


GAMEPLAY: 9
GRAPHICS: 9
SOUND 6
LASTABILITY: 9
OVERALL: 9









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'Enjoyable rather than 'An openly accessible



Dear PlayStation Pro,
Having only bought a PlayStation in May, I floundered around in the newsagent to find an openly accessible magazine for a naive novice like myself.

After recovering from shock at the baffling and huge range in a certain well known newsagents chain, the tips bible and the merest mention of Tomb Raider 2 in issue eight made me succumb to temptation (what with Tomb Raider being the game that convinced me to finally buy a PSX). I found all your reviews interesting and in-depth, and I think that the lastability rating is a really nice addition. Also, most of the reviews seemed to have a wit and sarcasm that made them enjoyable rather than merely informative.

But enough blatant praise, let's cut to the chase... In the back of issue eight, hidden among the small ads, I noticed a company offering a MTV Aeon Flux PlayStation game. Being a huge fan of this warped futuristic animation I'm tempted, but I've never heard of there being a PlayStation game of the animation series. I've asked a few of my PlayStation owning friends and received only blank looks. Have you reviewed this game in a previous issue or can you perhaps give me any idea of the games' content/quality? If you could give me any information, oh oracle of oracles, I would sincerely appreciate it.

Debs S Hockey, Norfolk

I'm glad you enjoyed issue eight, Debs, and hope you continue to be amused, informed and advised by our humble opinions. As far as the MTV's Aeon Flux goes, well, the game was due for release this summer by Viacom but no firm UK date was set. It is currently available over in America – where the animation series is a lot more popular – and you should be able to get hold of a copy via your local import dealer, or by the ad you saw in issue eight. The only problem is that it will be an NTSC version and therefore won't work on your UK PAL machine. As far as its content and quality goes... well by all accounts it's a right pile of poop. Wait for Tomb Raider 2 Debs, you won't be disappointed.

Dear PlayStation Pro,
I have tried to find some cheats for Mortal Kombat Trilogy, but can't. Could you please help me? Also, do you have any tips for Die Hard Trilogy and is there a tips book free on the next issue of the mag?

D. Lewis, Pontefract

Personally, I can't see the attraction of MKT and I'm certainly not re-printing an entire guide for it. What I will do is give you this tip: Buy Tekken 2 and Soul Blade! Ahem, we printed all the tips you could ever dream of for Die Hard Trilogy in issue six and you can buy that very issue by turning to page 88 now.

If, on the other hand, you can't be bothered, here's a brief tip for the first section of the game: Press pause and hold down the R2 shoulder button. With that still held firm, press Right, Up, Down and then hit the Square button. If you've done it correctly, you should now be invincible.

Next month's free gift could well be a tips book of some description, but I can't reveal its nature at this moment in time as our competitors will no doubt copy it word for word and claim it as their own creation. All I can say is that you won't be disappointed with it. And that's a fact.

Dear PlayStation Pro,
Hi. My name's Steven and I think your magazine is great. I've been reading PlayStation Pro ages before I got my PlayStation (which I eventually purchased with my birthday money a few days ago). I've had a bit of trouble at school with my friends, which has meant I've been playing on my PlayStation quite a lot, with your magazine to comfort me. But what a birthday, huh?

I do have a mate who also owns a PlayStation, but he always shows off and says he has the better games. At the moment I can't afford any new games to top my mate's collection though. In fact I'll never afford a new game and now I'm begging you for help! Could I pretty please have a free game? Something like Destruction Derby or Soviet Strike? This would really cheer me up.

Steven, Nottingham

Sorry to hear about your woes Steven, but we can't send games out to people who beg. If we did we'd soon go bust. Why not try renting some software if you can't afford to buy?

Other than that, our advice is for you to try and sort out your troubles with your friends at school and you'll soon find out that there's more to life than having the best PlayStation games on the block. Honest.

Dear PlayStation Pro,
I am an avid reader of PlayStation Pro. I especially enjoyed issue nine and I am now intent on purchasing Syndicate Wars and Rally Cross. I love the way the reviews are set out, with plenty of screenshots and five different people giving their views, which give different opinions of the game. You are the only magazine to do it. I wonder if you could spare a couple of minutes to answer my questions?

1) Which driving games support the Gamester steering wheel, (which I am currently undecided about buying)?
2) Are X-Com Enemy Unknown and Lone Soldier worth 20 quid each?
3) Which is best, Actua Golf or Actua Golf 2? Are they significantly different?

Keep up the excellent work and I love the free tips books!

David Hood, Flamborough

Thanks for your comments. Here are your answers...

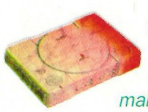
1) Most of the PlayStation driving games are compatible with the Gamester, but you'll get the best results playing Hardcore 4x4, Rage Racer, Burning Road and the forthcoming, and very excellent, Total Drivin'.
2) X-Com Enemy Unknown is a bargain for £20, but give Lone Soldier a very wide berth.
3) Actua Golf 2 is marginally better, although

merely informative' magazine'

Actua Golf is now available for £20. I'm sure you'll be happy with either version as they're both excellent in every way.

Dear PlayStation Pro,
I have noticed that you have dropped the price of your mag, why is this (not that I'm complaining)? Even though your mag is great I have some ideas that might improve it: Why don't you offer a prize for a letter – a game perhaps? Also, how about a swap shop section where people can sell or swap their games. Are these good ideas or what? I also have some questions for you:
1) Is Samurai Showdown '97 any good?
2) Have you any information about the next Mortal Kombat game?
3) Are there any cheats for SF Alpha 2?
4) What new strategy games are due soon?
5) Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
6) If you do decide to give away games for star letters (such as mine) how about sending me a copy of Little Big Adventure?

Andrew Fretter, Middlesborough



We only dropped the price in certain areas of the country to see if knocking a pound off would make a major difference to our sales figures. It was a little test of ours; nothing more, nothing less.

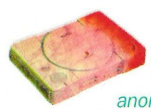
We don't offer prizes for letters, because if we did we'd get letters sent to us for the sole reason of trying to win a prize, which isn't really why you should write in. Enough people send letters in without us having to use any incentives, although I am pondering over the idea of giving away a free game if a letter arrives that strays away from the usual "your mag is great/when's this coming out" mould and actually says something of interest or perhaps raises new questions about the PlayStation market. We'll see how it goes.

Swap shops, although being a good idea, need dedicated staff to deal with it – we publish mags, we don't run games exchanges. Besides, there are plenty advertised elsewhere in the mag. We get enough phone calls as it is without dealing with people who want to use us to help them get rid of their old games. The fewer distractions we have, the better the mag is. It's as simple as that. But thanks for your ideas anyway.

Here are those answers you're after...
1) Samurai Showdown '97 is very popular in Japan but as the PlayStation beat 'em-up genre over here is more than adequately stocked at present, releasing a 2-D fighter may not be all that financially wise. If you're that desperate for it though, go see your local import dealer. I'm sure he'll sort you out with a copy and charge you the earth for the privilege.
2) There will be another Mortal Kombat game, in fact there's gonna be two – MK4 with new 3-D characters, loads of new special moves, fatalities and a brand new game engine to boot. The other title is Mortal Kombat Mythologies, in which you control Sub Zero. MKM has been described as more of a role playing game than just another standard MK beat 'em-up, and from what we saw of it in Atlanta last month, it looks set to kick ass later this year. Watch this space!
3) Here are a couple. To Select AKUMA or M. BISON, simply get to the Random Select question mark on your side. Now press and hold L2 before performing the following sequence.
If you are Player One: Akuma – Left, Left, Down, Down, Down. Bison – Left, Left, Down, Down, Left, Down, Down, then press triangle and square or X and circle. If you are Player Two: Akuma – Right, Right, Down, Down, Right, Down, Down. Bison – Right, Right, Down, Down, Right, Down, Down, then press triangle and square or X and circle. Happy now?
4) Command & Conquer: Red Alert is a definite, there are rumours flying of a third Warhammer instalment for the PlayStation, plus there's a slight possibility that Eidos Interactive's alien invasion title, Conquest Earth, might well be converted from its PC origins later this year.
5) The chicken. Actuality precedes potentiality.
6) As I've mentioned in one of this month's earlier letters, we don't give away games for letters – yet. But doesn't seeing your name in the number one unofficial PlayStation mag do enough for you Andrew?

Dear PlayStation Pro,
Could you please send me some cheats for Command & Conquer? But not level codes. Thank you.

Someone from Desford



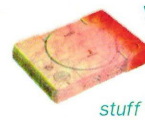
I don't know where you got the notion that we're running some kind of tips distribution service for anonymous readers from, but we ain't!

Tactical advice for the excellent Command & Conquer was given away in the form of a nifty CD-sized booklet which was itself given away free with issue three of this very publication. If you haven't got that issue, more fool you. But help is at hand as you can still order it from our back issues section on page 88. So do it.

Why doesn't anyone bother reading the back issues bit of the mag? I know it's not the most simulating section, but at least it bloody well tells you what the contents were in each of the separate issues. This is done so you can order the exact issue you desire with relative ease. Now will everyone please stop hassling me for stuff we've already published months and months and months ago. Buy the back issues! Jeez...

Dear PlayStation Pro,
Since my mother was taken ill I have had to sell all my possessions including all of my treasured PlayStation games...

Tony Parker, Portsmouth

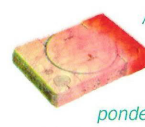


Yeah, yeah, yeah. Chinny-rec-on. Listen mate, begging letters for cost-free software won't work with us. If you want to get hold of free stuff via PlayStation Pro, enter our competitions. Sending in badly written bullshit in red ink isn't the way.

Dear PlayStation Pro,
I'm not sure how long Dan Whitehead has been playing games for, but I was amazed while reading his Overblood review when he said that it took him only "a few days of solid playing to complete". I am 12 years old and I managed to finish it in four and a half hours and, like Dan, at no point was I seriously stuck.

Now I don't know if Dan underestimates us gamers, or it's just that he's not a particularly good gamer himself, but personally I feel that the lastability rating given to Overblood should have been a good deal lower. Has anyone else bought Overblood and completed it in a few hours? I'd be interested to find out.

Luke Kavanagh, Surrey



Admittedly, Overblood was a tad simplistic, but the reason Dan spent so long on it was: A) He likes to take his time over reviews and ponder over the pros and cons before passing judgement, B) While reviewing Overblood he was also compiling the players guide which appeared last issue and, finally C) He wasn't under the impression he had a time limit in which to complete the game.

What's the problem Luke? The guy said the game was very easy and you agree with him. Are you enraged because he said it was "very easy" instead of "very very easy"? Obviously you're a good little games player who can trot through to the end of a game with ease, but not everyone is. Dan may share the same views as you, but when you're reviewing a product you have to consider the mass audience before putting a score on it. Overblood is rather easy to complete and Dan has said just that, but I'm sure you know a few gamers who would struggle while playing it, and therefore regard it as being slightly tougher than yourself.

We have to find the balance between the two you see. What's easy to you may be someone else's nightmare and we have to take that into account when reviewing a product. Not everybody who owns a PlayStation is a games animal Luke, but from the sounds of it you're not far off. Easy tiger.

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



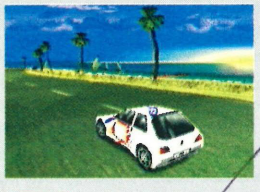
MICRO MACHINES V3
Miniature car fun from the boys at Codemasters offers gamers probably the best multi-player racing experience to date, plus there's around 40 tracks to master too. A classic.



F1
Although this is as realistic as they come, the attraction's fading. Hence the slip in chart position. A sequel is on the way soon, so expect a high entry for that beauty.



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!



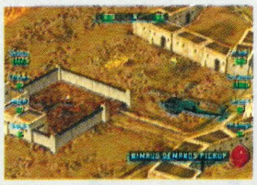
V RALLY
Ocean's off road racer offers gamers some serious rallying fun and has a lot more to offer than Sony's effort below. Not too technical, but a good solid title all the same. Buy it.



RALLY CROSS
Sony stray away from the old arcade racing mould and give us some excellent off-road driving mayhem. Extremely playable in single player mode, and the best rally title around.

Also recommended:
DESTRUCTION DERBY 2
WIPEOUT 2097
PORSCHE CHALLENGE
MONSTER TRUCKS
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.



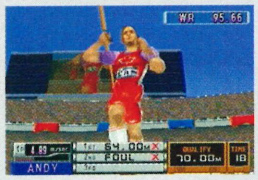
TEKKEN
Tekken 2's slightly uglier younger brother was the game that got us all excited about the PSX in the first place and is now available as part of the Platinum range for just £19.99.



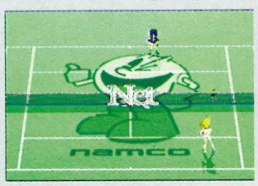
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2
Capcom extend their Street Fighter family tree again as the world holds it breath for SF3. As 2D fighting goes, Capcom know their onions and this is solid evidence of the fact.

Also recommended:
MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY
TOSHINDEN 2
VICTORY BOXING
DARKSTALKERS
ZERO DIVIDE
CRITICOM

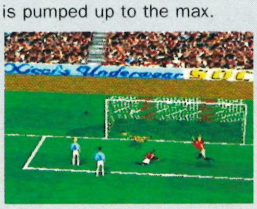
SPORTS



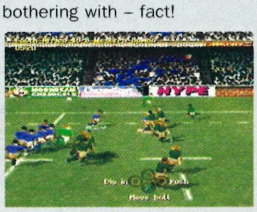
INT. TRACK & FIELD
Konami's finger-bruising Olympic multi-player is *the* sports game to own in our humble opinion, and it will give you and your chums hours of competitive fun – guaranteed.



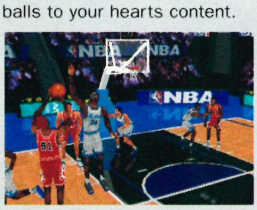
SMASH COURT TENNIS
Namco's PlayStation twist on the old SNES classic is certainly the best tennis game around at present. It may look quite basic, but the gameplay is pumped up to the max.



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:
ACTUA GOLF 2
ISS PRO
MADDEN 97
WCW Vs THE WORLD
STRIKER 96
VR BASEBALL

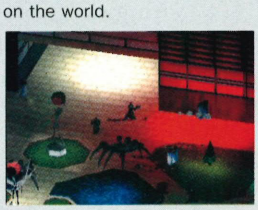
STRATEGY



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.



SYDICATE WARS
Bullfrog's long-awaited cyber punk epic finally surfaces! And what a treat it is too, offering gamers some classy futuristic adventures, boasting plenty of violent blood letting.



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!



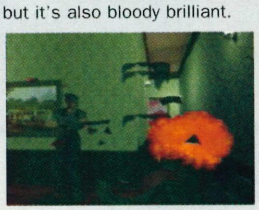
WARCRAFT 2
Basically C&C with added D&D extras. Such as having the ability to wipe out hordes of misfit orcs with a wave of your staff and give cheeky elves a bloody good thrashing.

Also recommended:
X COM: T.F.T.D.
SIM CITY
THEME PARK
SPACE HULK
WARHAMMER
X COM: ENEMY UNKNOWN

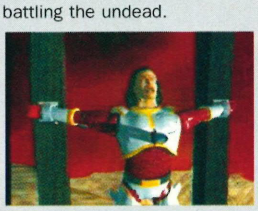
ADVENTURE



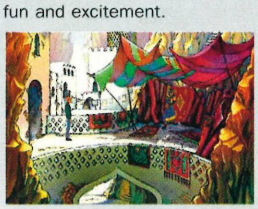
TOMB RAIDER
Indiana Jones-esque mission starring the wonderful Lara Croft and her multi-directional talents. It's huge, it's tasking and it's a bugger to complete, but it's also bloody brilliant.



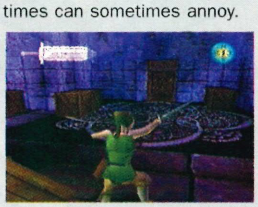
RESIDENT EVIL
Zombie-squashing horror quest from Capcom that started a videogaming revolution. Choose between two heroes as you wander a huge mansion battling the undead.



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:
OVERBLOOD
FADE TO BLACK
SWAGMAN
DISCWORLD
KING'S FIELD
TIME COMMANDO

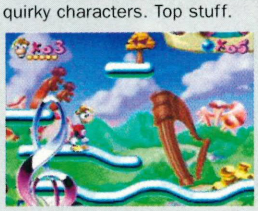
PLATFORM



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.



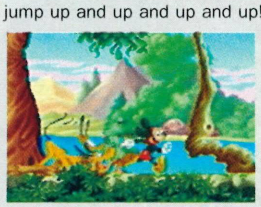
PANDEMONIUM
Pseudo 3-D run and jump affair from the blokes at BMG, which takes the two dimensional platform game one step further with its gorgeous graphics and quirky characters. Top stuff.



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



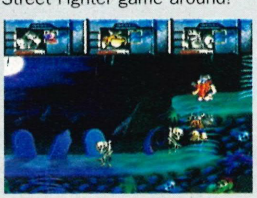
FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2
Revamped 16bit chopper chaos from Core Design.

Also recommended:
BLACK DAWN
GUNSHIP 2000
AGILE WARRIOR

PUZZLE



SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2
Officially the best block moving Street Fighter 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.

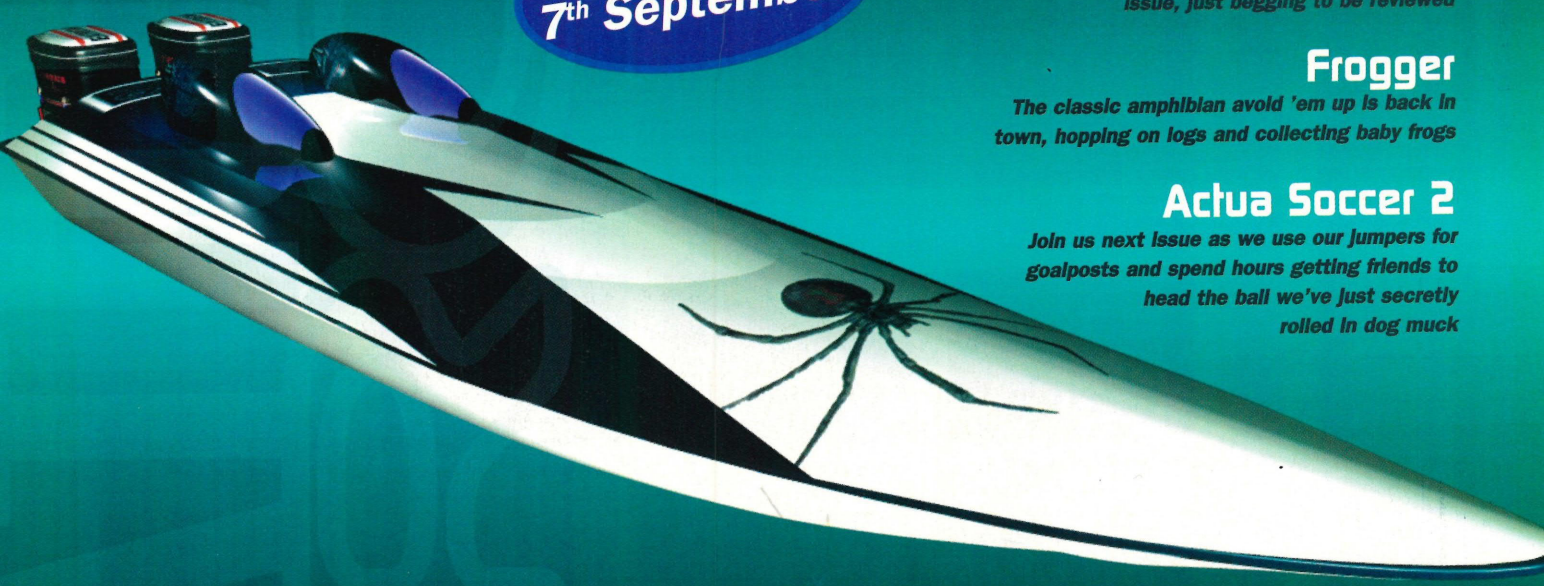
PRO PINBALL: THE WEB
Interactive pinball for those who can't play it in real life.

Also recommended:
NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 1
WILLIAMS GREATEST HITS

GAMES TO AVOID

AQUANAUT'S HOLIDAY
INDEPENDENCE DAY
PENNY RACERS
BATMAN FOREVER
CRYPT KILLER
SLAMSCAPE
2XTREME
CHESSMASTER 3D
ROAD RAGE

Issue 12 out 7th September



Next Month

Rapid Racer

Sony's boating beast will be in the house next issue, just begging to be reviewed

Frogger

The classic amphibian avoid 'em up is back in town, hopping on logs and collecting baby frogs

Actua Soccer 2

Join us next issue as we use our jumpers for goalposts and spend hours getting friends to head the ball we've just secretly rolled in dog muck



Formula One 97

Psygnosis wheel out the sequel everyone's been waiting for and we get our backside track-side to scoop the news on this hit rod of a game

Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha

Capcom bring the Street fighter crew into the 90s with this cracking 3D version of our favourite fighting family

Deathtrap Dungeon

Eidos Interactive's hack n' slash adventure bonanza will be here next issue. Honestly. No, it really will!

Special Reserve

Live @ http://special.reserve.co.uk

Over 300,000 people have joined Special Reserve. The biggest games club in the World.

Established 10 years, Special Reserve is the market leader in mail order home computing with a staff of 80



SAVE £6



SAVE £10



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SAVE £10



SAVE £8



SAVE £10



SAVE £20

SPECIAL RESERVE SALES 01279 600204	V-RALLY	ISS PRO	RAGE RACER	SYNDICATE WARS	TOMB RAIDER	DUNGEON KEEPER	RESIDENT EVIL
	38.99	34.99	34.99	34.99	36.99	34.99	29.99

PLAYSTATION GAMES

• = NEW ITEM, xx% = REVIEW SCORE
(TAP) = MULTIPLAYER VIA MULTITAP
(LINK) = MULTIPLAYER VIA LINK CABLE,
(ANL) = FEATURES ANALOGUE CONTROL

10 PIN ALLEY 32.99
2 EXTREME 30.99
4-4-2 ....31.99
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ACTUA GOLF 2 ....31.99
ACTUA GOLF 94% 35.99
ACTUA SOCCER CLUB EDITION 29.99
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AIR COMBAT 88% (ANL) 18.99
ALIEN TRILOGY 94% 19.99
AREA 51 (PLG) 32.99
ATARI GREATEST HITS 27.99
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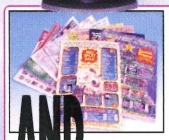
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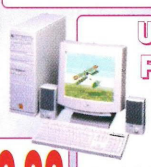
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