formerly SONYPRO

PSX-PRO

not endorsed by Sony but we're not much bothered



FREE Supplement Making of Descent

Reloaded

ISSN 1361-9101

Gex
Lizard lickin' good

Need for Speed
A visit to the race track makes your day

NBA in the Zone
Big boomshakalak with fries and a medium soft drink please

Magic Carpet
Is it a potato waffle? Is it a pizza? No it's a piece of Axminster actually

Toshinden 2
A veritable hot-pot of a 3D beat'em-up sequel thang

No Disc?
Contact your newsagent

PSX

IDG MEDIA
PSX-Pro Issue #5
April 1996 £4.99

ALSO: NAMCO MUSEUM 1 & 2, WING COMMANDER 3, RIDGE REL

PSX-PRO ISSUE #5 APR 1996 'DO' NOT ENDORSED BY SONY



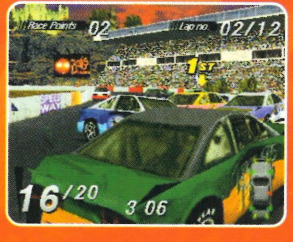
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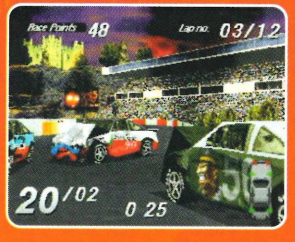
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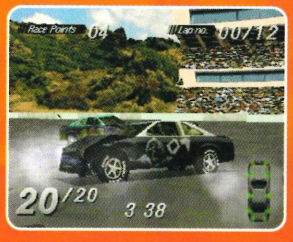
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COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

Destruction derby







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™







PlayStation

Three fully playable dem

PSX-Pro Coverdisc

We've reached Issue Five of PSX-Pro already, and this is the first time we've put a CD on the cover. The reason for this is simple – we want to do it right. Yep, we could've knocked up a disc a while back, but who wants a couple of rolling demos and a three-minute burst on something average for a fiver? You don't want it, and we don't want to embarrass ourselves by supplying it, so we've waited until we could give you your money's worth. Three massive demos of three top games – all playable, all exclusive to PSX-Pro, and each one better than other mags' dreams

PSX-Pro will cost £4.99 only when there's a cover-mounted disc

Loaded

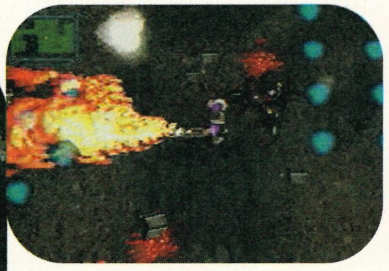
Note: The joypad controls for all three demos are explained in glorious detail on the disc itself...

Easily the PlayStation's finest shoot'em-up, receiving a monstrous eight-and-a-half from PSX-Pro when reviewed, Loaded was one of the first games to fully utilise the power of your machine. This demo – a full and massive level taken from the game – shows off all its best aspects and is an absolute treat to play.

The action takes place outside, and your character is initially armed with nothing but a puny side-cannon. However, pick-ups build it into a fire-spitting killing machine with a blast radius of yards. But before you reach this stage you'll be forced to take out dozens of enemy creatures.

With multi-directional scrolling and the ability to zoom in and out to suit your position, the controls take a little getting used to. But this is what you bought a PlayStation for after all. The basic idea is to kill everything, and pick up anything which doesn't kill you. Try every door, and look out for weak points in walls or scenery which may lead to hidden sections. Even when you know what you're doing, this is one demo which you won't finish in just an hour. Set aside some time – this is hard.



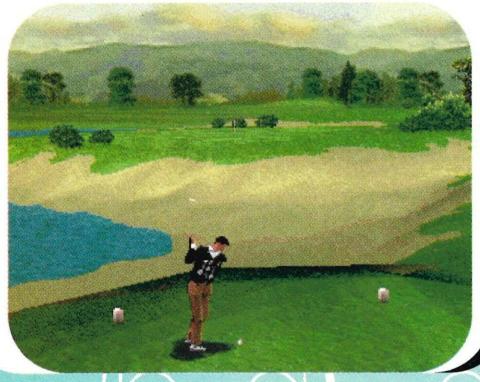


Actua Golf

As well as playing the finest currently available games for free, we thought you'd also like a taste of what's in store in the coming months. So, to this end, we're proud to bring you a fully playable hole of this awesome looking bunker-orama.

Gremlin has gone all out to ensure that its golfing sim is untouchable in terms of both graphics and playability, but you can judge that for yourself as you hack across the fairway and through the rough on your way to a glorious triple bogie.

The amazing motion-captured sprite (created by the same futuristic technique that was used for the Actua Soccer players) can be viewed from one of many angles, as can the whole game. Taking a shot is made easier by the multiplicity of windows which can be opened at any time. Professional hole-by-hole commentary will be in the finished version, but for now just sit back, click away and enjoy the tranquillity. And then curse from within the bunkers.



Actua Soccer





What better way to complement the best shoot'em-up available than with the PSX's premier football game? We don't give scores of nine away lightly here, but the excellent Actua Soccer could expect nothing less, and this demo includes almost every aspect you'd expect to see in the finished article.

The match you're plunged into is a player vs computer edition of the titanic cross border pagga-fest struggle which is England versus Scotland, and a full 45 minutes is yours for the playing.

Either team can be controlled via the joypad – with control touches such as player speed-ups for chasing the ball – and each is represented by the full international squad.

You pick your team from the outset, but if things don't go well, you can make a substitution. If that doesn't work, try altering your formation the next time you play. The graphics and sound FX are the best you'll find, and Barry Davies's commentary tops off yet another fantastic demo.

Reviews 8

Need for Speed is not only an amphetamine addiction, it's a super-fast split-screen racer from massive games publisher Electronic Arts



NEED FOR SPEED p26

Previews 84

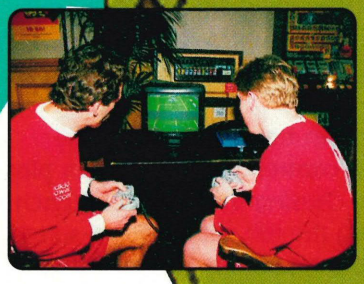
Braindead 13 isn't the nickname of the current Wigan rugby league side, it's a quite remarkable interactive cartoon adventure from Finchley's Empire



BRAINDEAD 13 p66

Features 70

Adidas Power Soccer was recently launched at Anfield, home of Liverpool FC. PSX-Pro was there



POWER SOCCER EXPERIENCE p70

PSX-Pro

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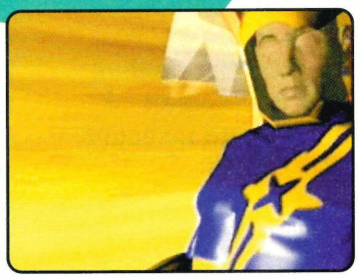
Krazy Ivan leads the way in the guides section this month, strongly backed up by Rayman, SF Zero, Wipeout and more



KRAZY IVAN p75

News 110

Reloaded - the sequel to Loaded - is the hottest piece of news we've got for you this month. Check it out, quick style



THE HIVE p112

Regulars 66

Spread all over, these are the bits - such as the **Tape Debate** and the **Forum** - that you won't find in any other mag





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Shellshock
Similar in look to Thunderhawk 2, but totally different to play. That's because you're driving a tank not flying a helicopter! It's got a ream soundtrack as well

14
Ridge Racer Revolution
No sooner have we all splashed out for the original than the pseudo-sequel appears. Is it worth a second purchase?

18
Toshinden 2
Another sequel, this time to Sony's own contender for the much sought after title of 'King of the Beat'em-ups'

22
Gunbird
Bizarre Manga-esque shoot'em-up which could only have come out of Japan. It really should have stayed there too. Pray this never gets an official release

Revi

A real mixed bag this month, with just about every type of game coming under the **PSX-Pro** review microscope. Will we ever have an issue without a beat'em-up in it? Only time will tell

If you have any suggestions on how to improve the review section, writ

24
Mickey Mania
Disney platform romp gets a PlayStation conversion

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Need For Speed
Electronic Arts' best PlayStation release so far is a potential Ridge Racer beater

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Descent
Doom in a spaceship is one way of describing Interplay's conversion of the highly successful PC shooter

34
Namco Museum Volume 1
The first of two bouts of nostalgia this month. Seven classic arcade games on one CD, courtesy of videogame industry legend, Namco

38
Namco Museum Volume 2
Volume 2 of the Museum series contains six slightly more obscure titles, and is therefore not quite as big a treat for the oldsters as Volume 1. It's still good fun though

42
NBA In the Zone
What would you get if you crossed the best bits of Total NBA with the reamest elements of NBA Jam? Sued probably, because Konami has beaten you to it

ews

46
Magic Carpet
Rug blasting antics aplenty with Bullfrog's much talked about genre-busting shoot'em-up. Far be it from us to stick a fly in the ointment, but we don't think it's all that good. Sorry

50
Wing Commander III
Fantastic storyline, great cast and unbelievable FMV sequences are let down badly by sloppy gameplay. We never thought we'd see a PlayStation game lurch around quite this badly

58
Myst
This is definitely one for the thinkers out there. If you like to spend hours pondering the solution to complex adventuring puzzles, then this is most definitely the game for you

62
Gex
Enjoy wisecracking lizard antics as Gex hammers around standard platform levels engaged in some quest or other. If he says, *Oh yeah, it's tail time!* once more, we're knocking the score down!

e in to PSX-Pro Reviews at the Freepost address at the back of the mag



Below: The main hangar, which you need to explore before each mission

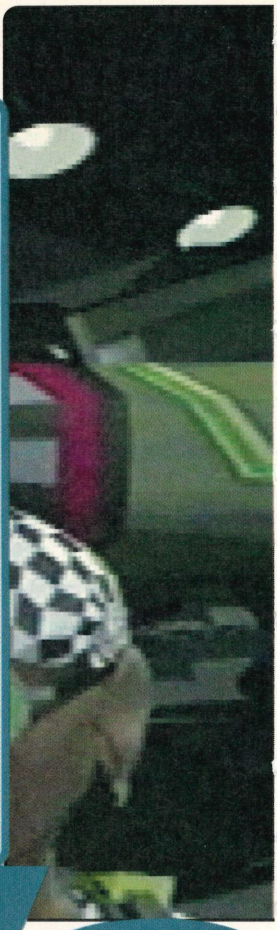


Shellshock looks a fair bit like Operation Firestorm, which isn't all that surprising when you consider that both come courtesy of Derby-based software house, Core Design. But this is no bad thing, because Thunderhawk 2 has to be one of the most impressive PlayStation games to date.

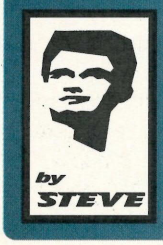
In Shellshock, the helicopters have been replaced by tanks (although helicopters do attack you on later levels), but the gameplay remains essentially the same. You take part in a series of progressively more difficult missions, earning money as you go and arming/rearming your tank as much as you can.

To add some character and life to the game, you control a member of a team of elite tank drivers, 'hiply' entitled *Da Wardenz*. These boys are ultra cool, into all the right things, and they're the very best at what they do – killing people.

Thankfully there's little or no FM. All the scene-setting is done using rendered 3D characters. This works incredibly well and provides an excellent alternative to paying thousands of pounds to a bunch of top class actors or just drafting some tramps in off the street for your intro sequence.



Shells



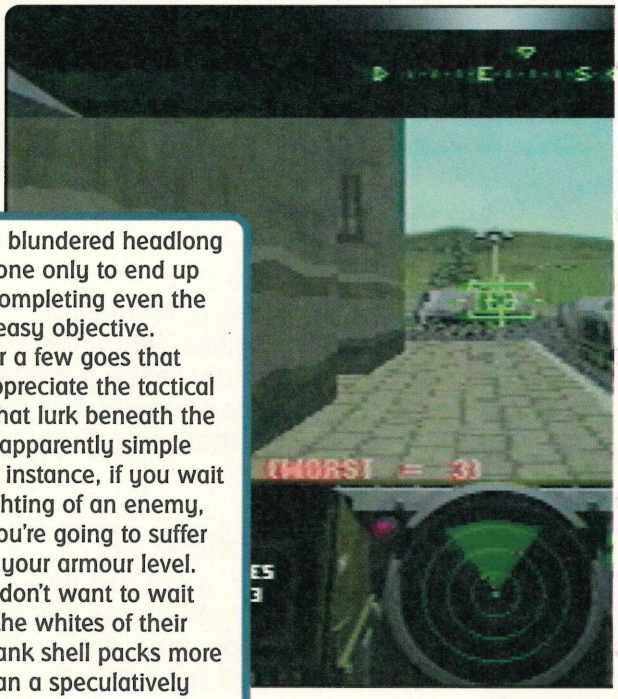
by STEVE

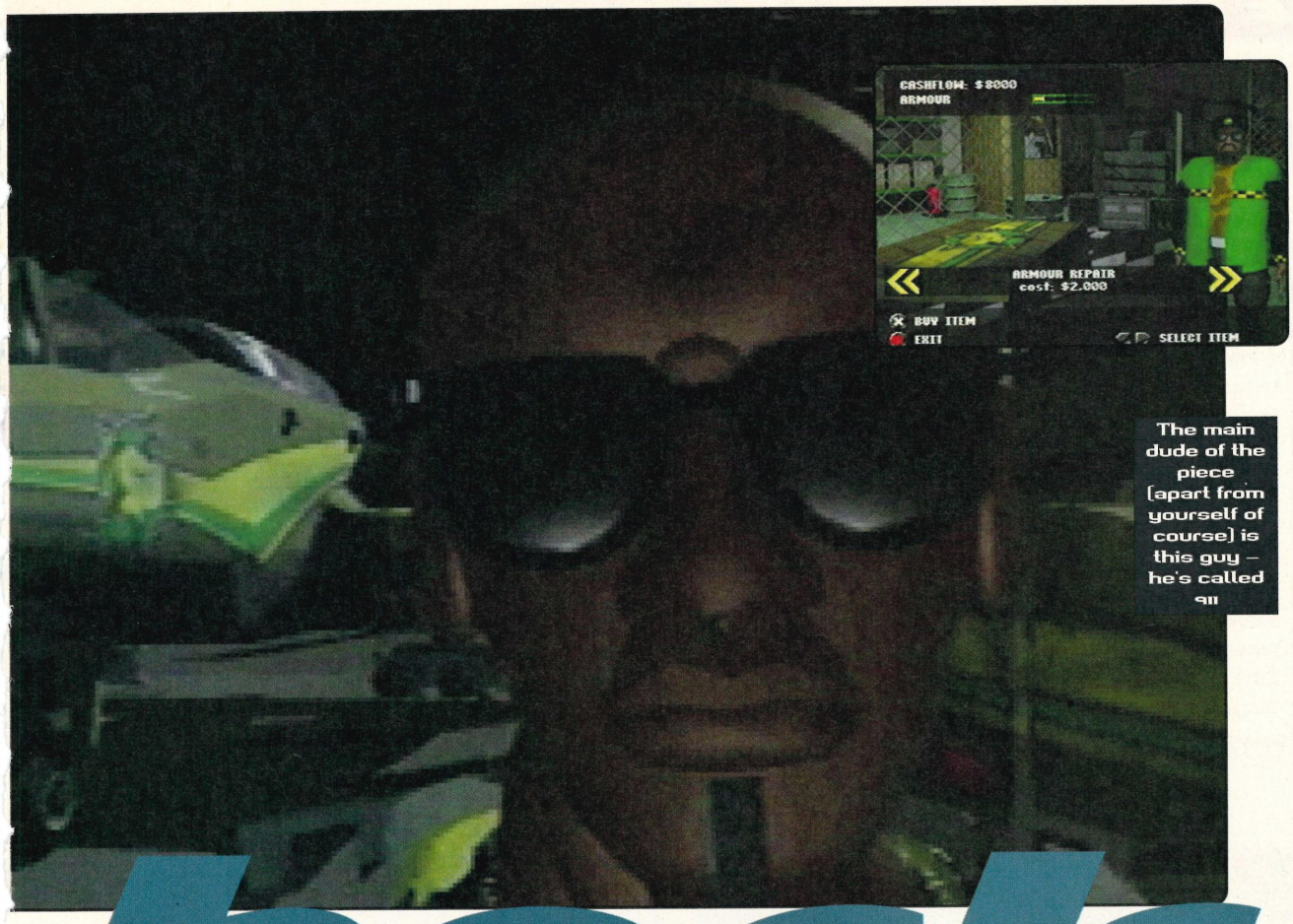
As a rule, tank games are usually pretty bland. Not so when Core and Da Wardenz are on the case



The hub of proceedings is Da Wardenz base camp. From here you can save and load games, alter the options, talk to the fellow members of the squad, arm your tank and view mission briefings for the tasks ahead. Once you're happy with the set-up it's time to trundle off in your armoured vehicle and cause some devastation. At least that's the idea. On my first few attempts I blundered headlong into the war zone only to end up well short of completing even the first mission's easy objective.

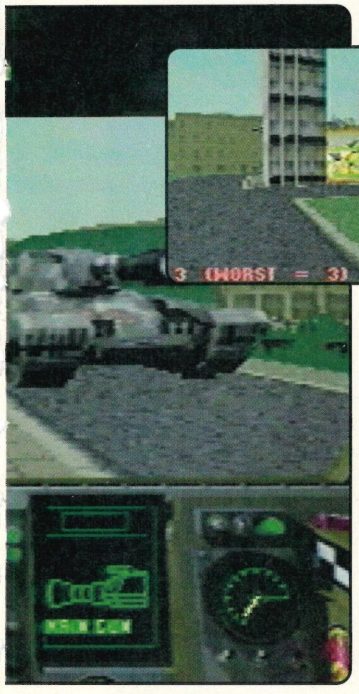
It's only after a few goes that you start to appreciate the tactical complexities that lurk beneath the surface of the apparently simple gameplay. For instance, if you wait for a visual sighting of an enemy, chances are you're going to suffer a reduction in your armour level. You definitely don't want to wait until you see the whites of their eyes here. A tank shell packs more of a wallop than a speculatively thrown spear after all.





The main dude of the piece (apart from yourself of course) is this guy – he's called 911

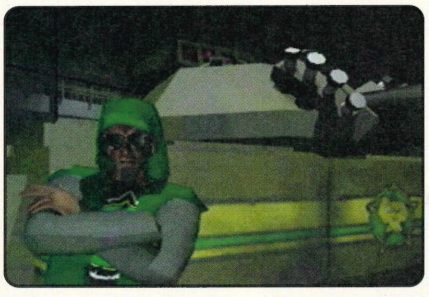
hock





Nearly all the buildings are destroyable





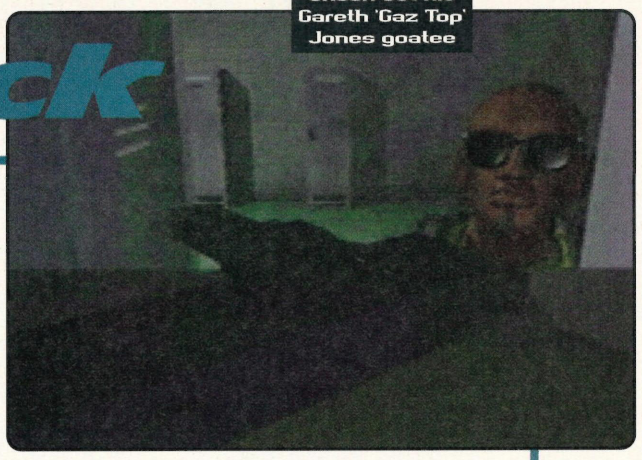


It also took me a while to suss out spinning the gun turret. This comes in especially handy if you find yourself outnumbered and you have to do a runner. It allows you to lay down a line of fire behind you, which will at least give you a fighting chance of escape.

You'll also need to become proficient at stalking your prey. Keep a keen eye on the radar while you do this, and you'll have the upper hand when it comes to sneaky attacks from behind. At least this is the case when you're battling it out in a built-up area. Get caught out in the open, however, and you're just going to have to hope for the best. At such a time a bit of blind, optimistic firing is pretty much your only hope.

Although Shellshock is in essence a shoot'em-up, if you want to be any good at it you're going to have to be prepared to try out some of the varied tactics as well.

Shellshock



911 crops up all over the place. Check out his Gareth 'Gaz Top' Jones goatee

Da Wardenz are committed to combating terrorism, fighting oppression and exposing corruption worldwide. In 1994 a Special Forces Unit was protecting a civilian convoy when it came under heavy artillery fire. All their requests for tactical support from US Intelligence were denied, and the unit was declared expandable. The entire convoy was wiped out with the exception of five men. These survivors went on to form the mercenary unit you are a member of, which now operates out of Jackson Island, New York.

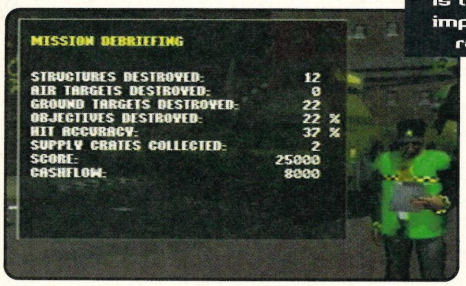
Now I don't know about you, but this all seems a little like The A Team to me. I wonder whether the programmers were - like me - big fans of the series. Come to think of it, even the way some of the characters behave reminds me of some of the exchanges Hannibal and the boys used to have in the back of the van.

Either way, Core Design has come up trumps once again with Shellshock, and on this form can seemingly do no wrong. I just hope that Virtual Golf doesn't let the side down when it makes an appearance.





Right: The central circle is the all-important radar





SUMMARY
GAME Shellshock
GENRE Tank Sim
SOFTWARE HOUSE Core Design
PRICE £44.99

When we saw this game it caused a hurried rethink to our Game of the Month plans. As deadline approached we'd already hedged our bets and given Need for Speed the award, thinking that it was unlikely to be bettered this month. But we were proved totally wrong. Core has not just come up with the best game of this month, it is, in my opinion, the best PlayStation release since the initial flurry of titles. Definitely one to be checked out.

GRAPHICS 8
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 9
OVERALL 9

CRITICOM™

CRITICAL COMBAT



"THE GRAPHICS ARE EXCELLENT, THE ANIMATION GORGEOUS, AND THE PRESENTATION THROUGHOUT QUITE BREATHTAKING... CRITICOM IS A VERY, VERY INTERESTING GAME." PlayStation Plus

"AT LAST, A BEAT 'EM UP WITH A DIFFERENCE... A BLOODY GOOD GAME." Play Magazine

"CRITICOM IS A STUNNER... A CHALLENGING COMBAT GAME THAT ONLY REVEALS ITS DEPTHS WITH TIME." PlayStation Magazine

"VERY SATISFYING INDEED... AN EXCELLENT FIGHTING GAME." PSX-Pro



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- Power-up with awesome new weapons and projectiles as you progress through the ranks.
- Earn additional crunching combo moves as your combat skills develop.
- Spectacular Hollywood style cinematics.



Hits the Streets... Early April Price... £44.99

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PlayStation™











A spot of crossover advertising never goes amiss

Any good game will undoubtedly spawn a sequel, but for that sequel to arrive – albeit in early import form – before we've driven more than a couple laps of its predecessor, is surely the most blatant case of bandwagon jumping we've seen. But wait! Who said anything about a sequel? With talk afoot of Rave Racer, Grunge Racer, Acid Jazz Racer and whatever else the talented lot at Namco might have up their sleeves, Ridge Racer Revolution hits the PlayStation as ostensibly more of the same – though obviously at a new game price.

And the difference is? Well, the load-up screen game of Galaxians has mutated into Galactic Dancing, and comes complete with a brand new tune straight from an Eastern European beer festival. The script remains the same – wipe out every alien for the chance to up your driving options from a paltry four vehicles to every car on the track.

Of course you'll still have to pull your finger out good-style to get your hands on that old favourite the Demon Car, which, to prove just how different this game is, has undergone a respray and forfeited its satanic blackness for pure, virginal white.

And that's why Alex drives it...

Ridge Ra Rev

Stereo on, radar detector set – you are now entering the busiest genre of the PlayStation game...



Different cars, see? Different cars...

A quick glance at Ridge Racer Revolution will alert you to the fact that this is Ridge Racer in a different box. But look more closely and you will see that almost everything has changed, though admittedly in some cases, minutely. The voice-over guy has got new phrases, and after a speedy start will gleefully invite you to, "Now go for the lead!". Very nice. It's a shame he still insists on bellowing it out during the one-car time trials. But what the hell, the boy's keen.

The cars are new too. Sort of. The default four will be familiar, but blast the Galactic Dancers and you'll find yourself with the choice of eight new boys, one of which



With all three races won, a familiar congratulatory sequence is followed by the chance to drive the tracks backwards. Fans of the original may find that this comes around all too quickly, because despite the track being slightly more challenging than that of Ridge Racer, it pulls up a long way short of difficult. One or two bends will provide sticky moments though, but that's more through ill-defined tarmac than their devilish design.

That said, Ridge Racer Revolution is graphically one turn on from its daddy. It boasts more subtlety of detail in the backgrounds, and a greater variation of 'new bits' on the course, almost giving the impression that there really are three tracks to race around.

An added rear view mirror seems, on the face of it, to be an afterthought. But those who remember the agonising frustration of homing in on the finish as The Car From Nowhere arrows past you into first place with, like, 10 metres to go, will instantly recognise its appeal. Couple this with the deranged race commentator advising you that, "It's time to block!", and the mirror becomes a very useful gadget.

cer olution



may be of practical use. Race-wise, there's a brand new track. As with Ridge Racer, appendages have been added to make up the three, three-lap races which the box will undoubtedly advertise. On top of this there is the option to practise against just one other car over five laps, or, if it's perfection you seek, hammer around solo for unlimited laps.

As well as boasting automatic and manual transmissions, each car has up to four different speed options which become available throughout the game as you prove yourself on the track.

Ridge Racer Revolution

YOU SHOULD BUY RIRAREV BECAUSE...

☆ It allows a two-player game to take place through the use of two PlayStations and a link-up cable.

☆ It contains the original Ridge Racer track, which becomes available after you prove your worth by beating the white Angel Car.

☆ You didn't buy Ridge Racer.

☆ You bought Ridge Racer and enjoyed it so much that even this subtly changed extension of the game is worth 60 notes.

☆ It is unlikely you'll find a technically better, easier to play racer on the PlayStation.

☆ You have a great deal of money and will not miss 60 quid.

YOU SHOULDN'T BUY RIRAREV BECAUSE...

☆ It's Ridge Racer, with a different track.

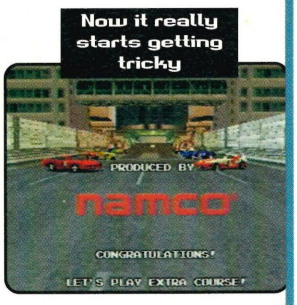
☆ At this price you would want both games to be melded together as one before they became worth considering.

☆ You bought Ridge Racer and liked it, but don't want to buy it again.

☆ A two-player game through two machines and a cable is the lazy way of doing things, and you want a split-screen option!

☆ Supporting such easy sequels is a step towards destroying originality.

☆ You have no money, do not own a

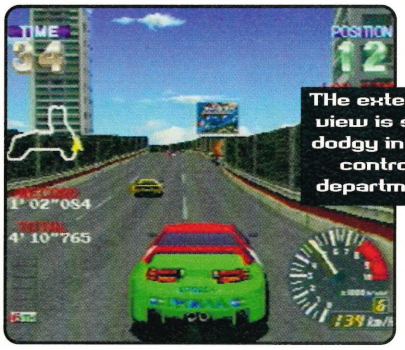


Now it really starts getting tricky



HIT THE BRAKES!

The cars can, with a little practise, be controlled around sharp bends through a skid. However, it's quicker to hit the brakes and stay on the racing line, because the cars' acceleration makes up for your momentary loss of speed.



THe external view is still dodgy in the control department

Good control is more important than ever. Some of the bends are proper tricky





Game supplied by:
OTAKU Publishing Limited
http://www.otaku.com/

SUMMARY

GAME Ridge Racer Revolution
GENRE Racing
SOFTWARE HOUSE Namco
PRICE £Import

We can indeed have too much of a good thing. A point may well have been stretched to breaking point, and yes, it would have been more consumer-minded to give us both these games together for one price. But, Ridge Racer Revolution is a superb game which is easy to play. Those who finish it will not cast it aside. They'll play it again and strive for better times, with different cars, at different speeds. It offers more than Ridge Racer and it looks better too.

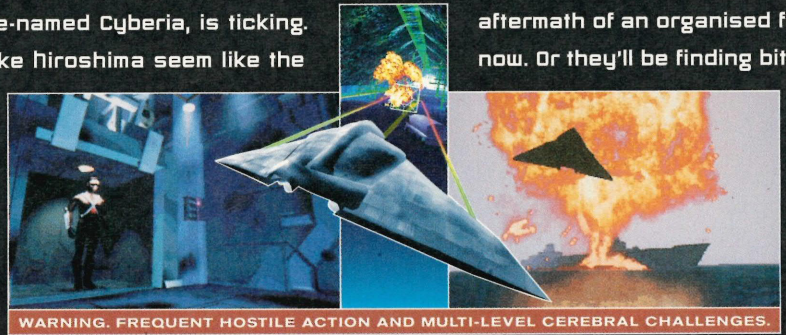
GRAPHICS 9
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 6

OVERALL 8½



MESS UP THIS MISSION AND IT WON'T BE GAME OVER iT'll be WORLD OVER!

an explosive device, code-named Cyberia, is ticking. And if it goes off it will make Hiroshima seem like the aftermath of an organised fireworks display. Diffuse it now. Or they'll be finding bits of you in the next galaxy.



WARNING. FREQUENT HOSTILE ACTION AND MULTI-LEVEL CEREBRAL CHALLENGES.

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CYBERIA™

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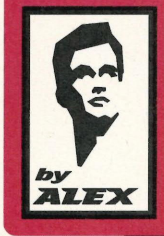


If that intro didn't catch your eye, I don't know what will! That's Chaos's victory cry by the way. The bald, scythe-wielding psycho topples over in mock exhaustion, springs back up, faces his vanquished opponent and does the junior school playground spesh with thumbs on temples and fingers waggling wildly.

In special controvo-style, I'm going to make the claim that Chaos is the best beat'em-up character ever. Taking nutritional tips from Street Fighter II's Dhalsim, Chaos isn't just a skinny baldy who can breathe fire. He's capable of levitation, spitting out venomous green clouds, and cartwheeling across the screen faster than Sonic ever managed on the dead-and-buried Mega Drive.

He's nippy, evil and more manic than any street preacher could claim to be. Loyal readers of PSX-Pro will remember me raving on at length about Duke from the first Battle Arena Toshinden (BAT) in Issue One. Without using the obvious term, which involves yellow fluid and lofty positions, Chaos hammers Duke in every department. And he jogs on the spot in a *couldn't give a monkey's* manner when he loses.

Battle Are Tos



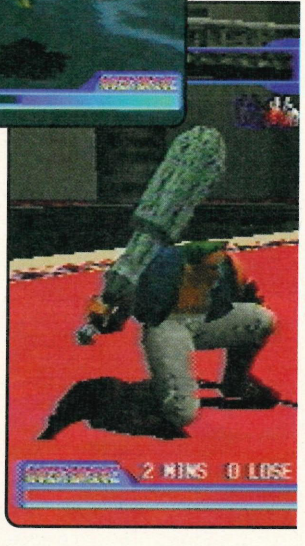
Abidabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi abidabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi dabi mandib dabba wah!



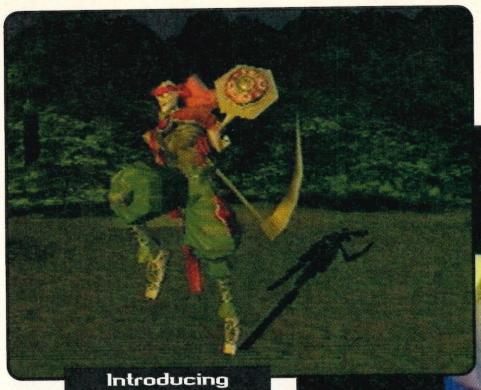


Ellis – star of game, FMV and pre-render









Introducing Chaos, the star of the show



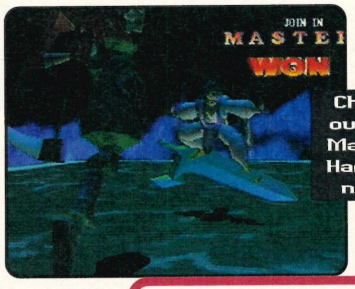
ng hinden 2

So why do a sequel? To cash in on a successful and pretty damn good original of course. It works in much the same way as the movies – the same characters turn up again, along with a few new 'uns, the plot wears a little thin, and if it's not as good as its predecessor, the big names and the reputation of the seminal release will carry it through.

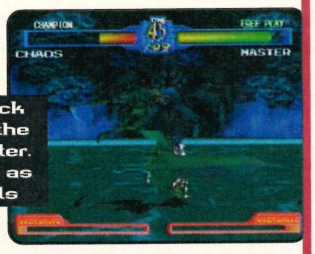
All the aforementioned accusations can be levelled at BAT 2, but BAT is so good that a sequel could never go far wrong. Plenty of attention has been paid to the fighters' animations, there are several subtle background goings-on that aren't immediately noticeable, and the over-importance of the special move buttons has been addressed. They're still there, but they're easier to block and counter – the combo master will win every time.

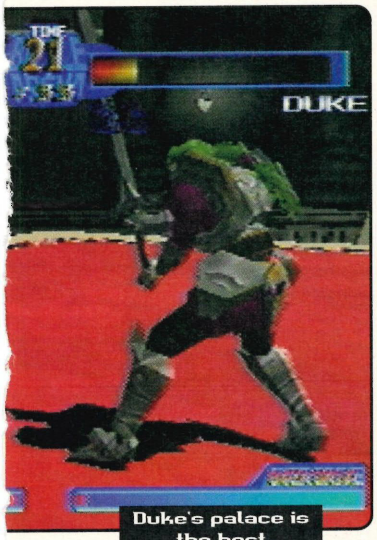
Although Chaos is the (hard as a) diamond geezer of the piece, Tracy is arguably the most accomplished fighter. The reason for this is that she possesses the qualities and fighting styles of Street Fighter II's Ryu and Guile, yet moves in much the same way as Tekken's Law. As a close-in fighter, she's as hard as they come.





Check out the Master. Hard as nails



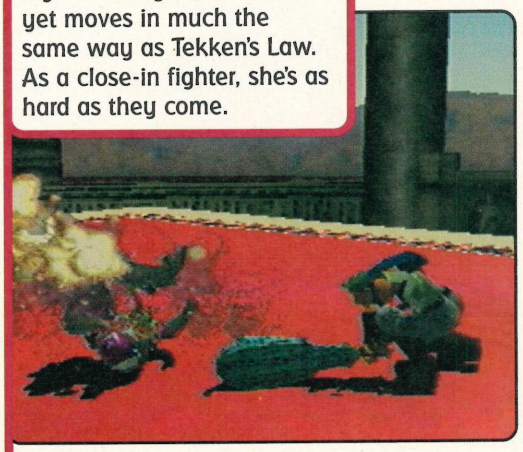


Duke's palace is the best background in terms of lighting effects

On the character front, Master is a tough nut to crack. Possessing the same eerie floating quality as the rank little vampire out of Salem's Lot, he's nimble, has a hideous array of projectile attacks, and can handle himself in hand-to-hand combat if necessary.

Master only appears when the rest of the regular cast has been vanquished. Similarly, Uranus – the white winged wonder – is a final guardian, although it won't be long before someone who's sat in front of their telly playing BAT 2 for days on end, trying out every conceivable joypad combination, will have somehow discovered how to control Master and Uranus. If that person is you, write in and put us all out of our misery.

Four different gameplay options are open to you upon loading. The single-player game, the *full battle*, *vs human* and *vs computer* are all as you'd expect, with a random fruit machinesque window thrown in for good measure Street Fighter Zero-style. By defeating the 10 'regulars' (ie those you can control), in *full battle*, you can then fight Uranus and, ultimately, Master.



Battle Arena Toshinden 2



Sofia's spinning attack is still effective

So, the PlayStation has only been with us a few short months, and already the sequels have started. Ridge Racer Revolution is also reviewed this issue (see page 12), and it won't be long before many more releases follow suit.

One addition to BAT2 is the overdrive power bar. Working in the same way as the max power bar in Street Fighter Zero, pulling off a special move when it's 100% full does big time damage on your opponent if you connect properly.

If Namco had waited for a few months and polished the detail, added further frames of animation and, basically, made the gameplay a bit more like Tekken, then BAT2 would have eclipsed all the beat'em-ups so far seen on the PlayStation.

It's unlikely that BAT2 will prove to be as long-lasting a challenge as Tekken, and it's with the benefit of hindsight that Tekken can be declared the daddy. Uranus, Chaos, Master and co., however, are worthy new characters, and the old cast members have been sufficiently polished to make BAT2 a better bet than the likes of Criticom, Zero Divide and Rise 2.





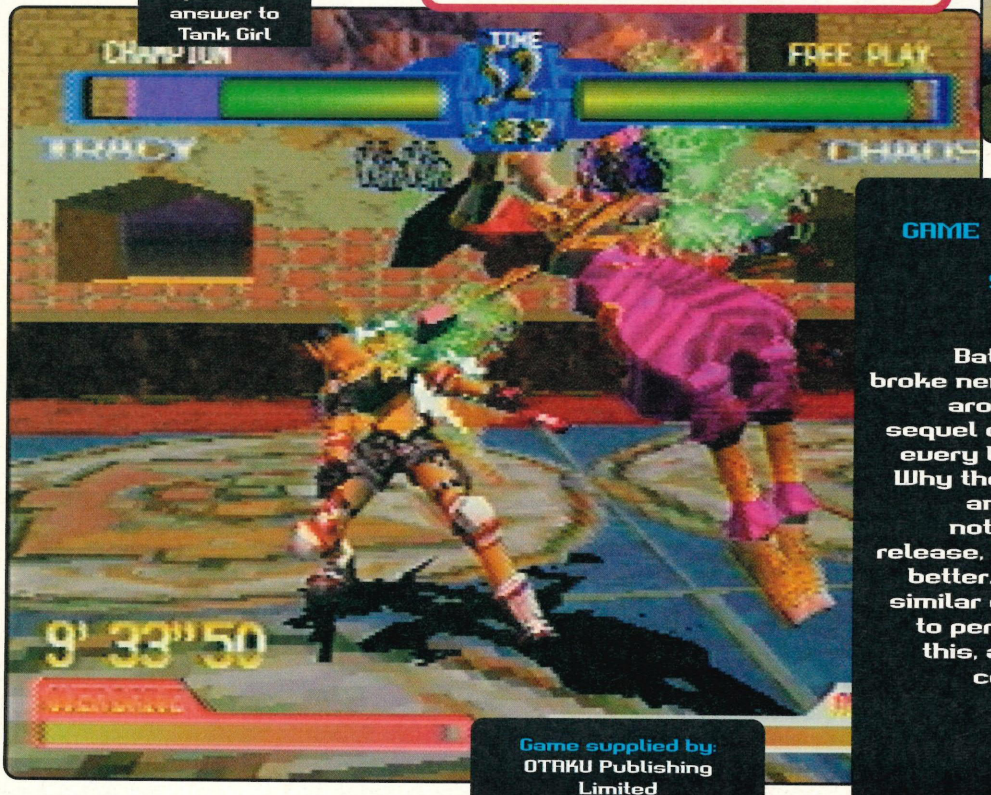
Chaos takes on Tracy – the police's answer to Tank Girl

Tracy – tooled-up with Euro-style police batons





A clip from Chaos's end sequence



Game supplied by:
OTAKU Publishing Limited
http://www.otaku.com/

SUMMARY

GAME Battle Arena Toshinden 2
GENRE 3D Beat'em-up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Namco
PRICE £Import

Battle Arena Toshinden (BAT) broke new ground with its 3D spin-around multi-view angles. Its sequel doesn't, but in isolation it's every bit as good as the original. Why then am I only giving it eight and a half? Because there's nothing new, and since BAT's release, the competition's got a lot better. A few more characters in similar environments aren't going to persuade BAT owners to buy this, although people without it could do worse than BAT 2.

GRAPHICS 9
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 8
OVERALL 8½

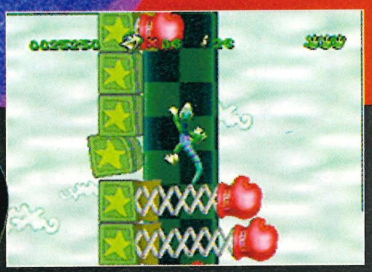
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But it's our special sauce—over 300 hilarious one-liners and sound effects from HBO® comedian Dana Gould—that give GEX major attitude. So forget about good taste. And go with the skanky bug du jour instead.



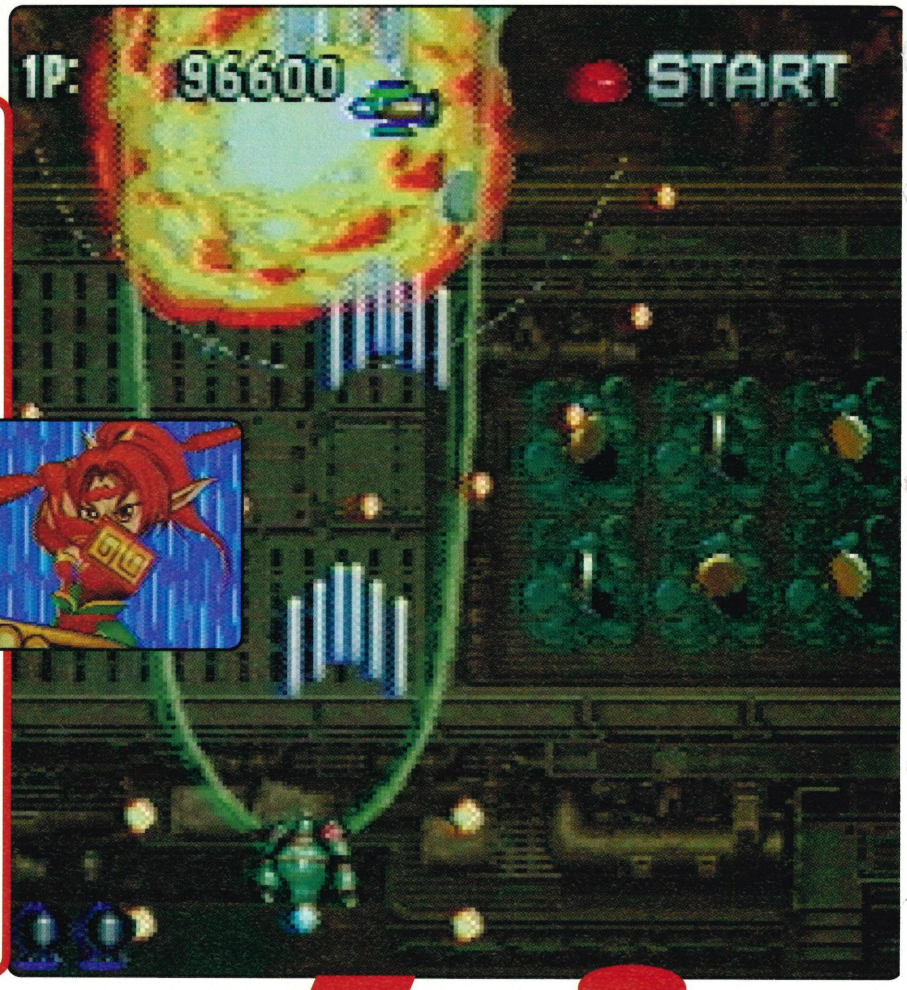
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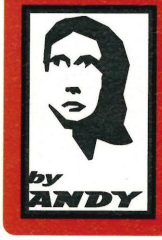
Over the years, shoot'em-ups have - with a few exceptions - appeared and then disappeared without trace. But that isn't to say that this particular game genre is a washed-up concept. If handled correctly, vertically scrolling shooters can be amongst the most rewarding challenges you're ever likely to encounter.

Ocean's Raiden Project, which is an arcade-perfect conversion, is still a truly stunning and mind-frying experience, even after all these years. It hardly pushes back the boundaries, but it proves that quality does indeed hold a classic appeal of its own.



Gunbird, on the other hand, has only limited appeal. This has nothing to do with the gameplay or graphics - it's down to the fact that there are very few levels to trudge through. This wouldn't be a problem if it was possible to progress past the stages after some practice, but the thing is, you will always reach a certain point where a life will be lost. There's no escaping it - it will happen every time, no matter what tactics you use. And all of this is on the Normal skill level. There are numerous difficulty settings, ranging from Monkey to Difficult, but there's no happy medium. It's either too difficult or too simple.

Gunbir



The people behind this blast-fest have obviously got a thing for clichéd vertically scrolling shooters



Below: Complete the window behind for the ultimate challenge







Some enemies take one hell of a pummelling before dying

Before you begin your quest to blast everything in sight, you must choose from one of the six main characters on offer. Each of these differs in looks, but when it comes to individual strengths, they're all virtually identical.

No matter who you decide to start with, you'll begin with a rather pathetic gun. You must collect power-ups to build up the weapon's damage rating. This will make your task much less of a challenge, but is definitely required if progress is to be made.

The power-ups only come in two varieties – a laser, and a bomb which works as a smart weapon. The effect your smart bomb has is graphically different, depending upon which character you are playing as, but the end result is always the same.

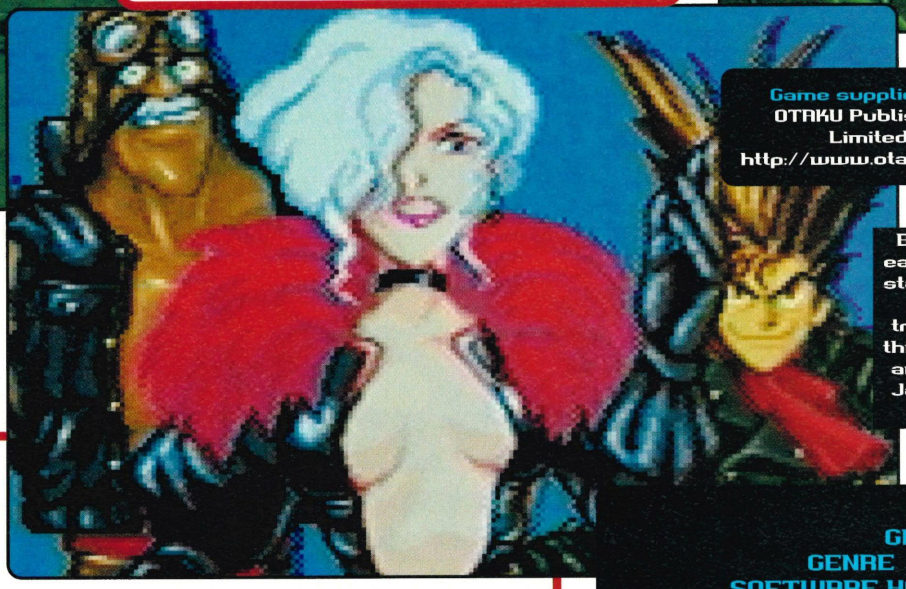
If you fancy watching a Manga-style movie before all of this, you can. But to be honest I couldn't really work out what was going on other than some evil woman and her cronies seemed to be robbing some building or other. You see, it's a little difficult to understand the language, unless of course you're fluent in Japanese.

The smart bomb does its work









Game supplied by:
OTAKU Publishing Limited
http://www.otaku.com/

Between each of the stages you will be treated to this screen and some Japanese jargon



Gunbird suffers from the same flaw as most vertically scrolling shoot'em-ups – at some stages there's so much going on, it becomes almost impossible to keep track of where you are. Occasionally the screen is so crammed with enemy gunfire that you just don't have anywhere to go. This is a pointless annoyance which can only be avoided if you waste a smart bomb.

You must battle through a number of enemy attack waves before reaching the inevitable end-of-level guardian. Each boss differs in appearance, but they're much of a muchness at the end of the day.

The outline of a good game is plain to see, but it seems there has been some slack game testing before its release.

There's no happy medium between the Simple and Normal levels, and likewise between Normal and Difficult.

If it's a vertically scrolling shoot'em-up you're after, maybe it would be a good idea to stick to the aforementioned Raiden Project. There's no substitute for quality, and unfortunately that's just what Gunbird lacks.

SUMMARY
GAME Gunbird
GENRE Shoot'em-Up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Psikyo
PRICE £Import

Initially I tried playing Gunbird on the Normal skill level, but this led to me always dying at the same point of the game, despite the unlimited supply of continues. Attempting to play at Monkey and Child levels saw the game completed from beginning to end in no time, and the Difficult level was clearly impossible. It's a shame really, as the mini cartoon and the adequate if slightly unimpressive graphics made Gunbird initially promise so much more.

GRAPHICS 6
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 4

OVERALL 5

Mickey

Gaming stalwart Mickey brings his rodent-like charms to the 32-bit machines – in glorious 16-bit form

by PAUL

In much the same way that housewives buy Hovis bread because, having been available for many years it *must* be of excellent quality, so Mickey Mouse is currently enjoying his eighth decade of unparalleled cartoon fame.

That the Syd Little of the cartoon world should have attained this cell-animatory god-like status is in itself inexplicable. That he should find further popularity within the hi-tech realms of a computer industry teetering on the precipice of a new century is almost unbelievable. Or maybe not. Mickey makes money, after all.

One man's meat is another man's poison, and irrelevant though this phrase is, it leads nicely into telling you that the PlayStation's Mickey Mania is the SNES's Mickey Mania. Sources confirm that the 32-bit machine displays the affair in more colour than the SNES was able, but everything else is just as the programmers Nintendo'd it to be.

And it didn't even stretch the SNES. Sure, it looked good then, and it looks even better now, but the run-and-jump, throw-and-run method of gameplay, backed up by a simple two-button control method, is still here.



Bats aren't birds you know – they're mammals. Oh yes





Pluto – just as useless here as in the cartoons



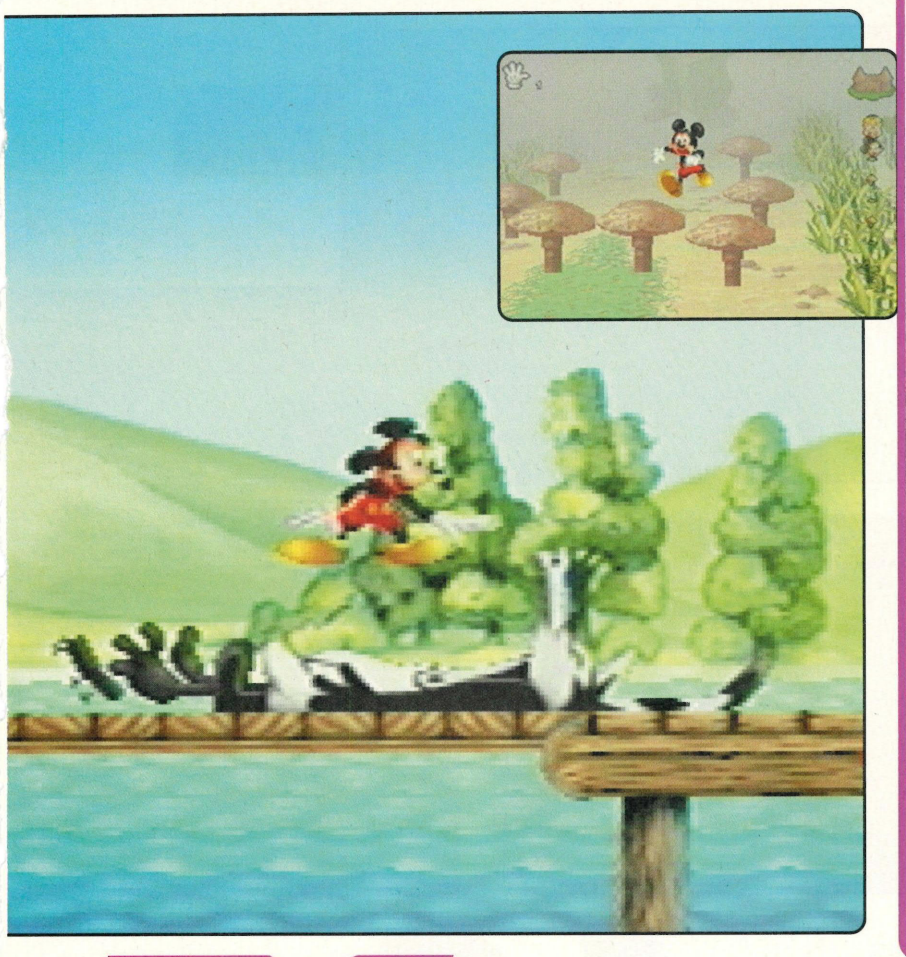


The wild adventure upon which Mickey embarks is that of a memory lane nature. At the outset (in authentic black and white), Mickey pits his wits against baddies to rescue Steamboat Willie from some typically melodramatic platform troubles involving dangerous, damage-inflicting birds and potentially lethal drops.

Mouse-fact fans will know that Steamboat Willie was in fact Mickey's first outing on the big screen back in 1928, and subsequent levels of the game take him back through his life as a cartoon icon in much the same way that Eamon Andrews might have done, if he wasn't dead.

Black and white soon gives way to luscious, garish colour, and Steamboat Willie makes way for the Mad Doctor and a succession of other 'landmark' episodes-turned-videogame levels.

Few surprises are in store for anyone who's experienced even an eight-bit plaformer, and your only two weapons (head jumps and thrown marbles) are the ultimate console staple – stereotypical of the genuinely 'average' platform game.



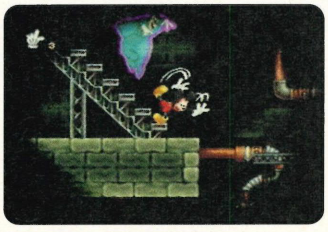
So, as a 16-bit refugee mixing it with the big boys, is Mickey Mania in big trouble in these times of technological impossibility made good? Not necessarily. Make a mental list of your favourite games, and ask yourself why they're great.

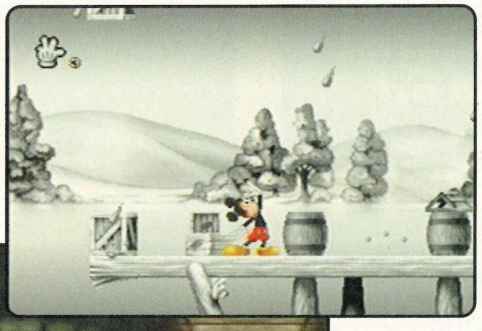
Originality is out of the window here, and the graphics, although undoubtedly very good, are not of a quality which would stick in the mind. But what about the control? It's intuitively simplistic and complements the layout of the levels and the way in which the character moves.

The levels are intelligently structured and excellently detailed, and in the later stages of the game, difficult without being unduly unfair. Brainwise, there's just enough of a puzzle element to test your mettle, but not enough to melt your matter and stunt the fluidity of proceedings. Mickey's sonic soundbites are infrequent and authentic enough to please instead of perplex.

Looked upon alone, MM is an almost flawless, if dated product, which will make few friends amongst the technical gurus.

Mania







What a boy – courageous as a mouse is our Mickey

SUMMARY

GAME Mickey Mania
GENRE Platformer
SOFTWARE HOUSE Psygnosis
PRICE £44.99

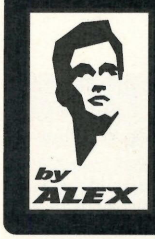
Canny marketing or blatant rip-offery? You decide. But whatever the answer, the fact remains that for all its ancient origins, Mickey Mania is a good game to play. More moves, better sounds, or indeed a whole new game programmed with the PlayStation in mind would likely have pushed the score higher. But we speak as we find on PSX-Pro, and what we find is a high quality effort that is lacking only in depth and originality.

GRAPHICS 7
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 7

OVERALL 7½

Need for

Thank goodness – the first decent split-screen racer for the PlayStation. And about time too



by ALEX

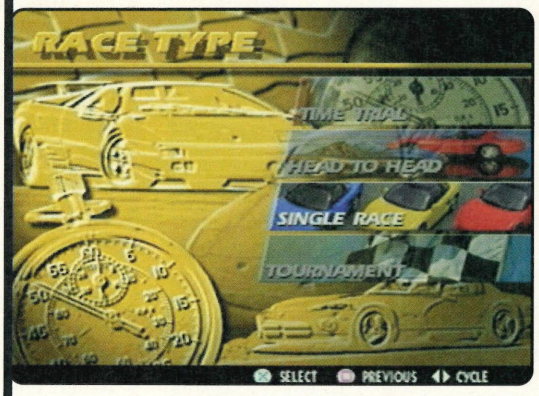
Way back in Issue One, in the heady days when we were known as SonyPro, the first ever game we reviewed was Destruction Derby. It was Game of the Month, and the review began, *Without a shadow of a doubt, Destruction Derby is the most instant race game to appear on the PlayStation.* Need for Speed whips that title away from Psygnosis's bump 'n' crash fest, and if it wasn't for the late arrival of Shellshock, would have been the second racer to claim PSX-Pro's ultimate review accolade.

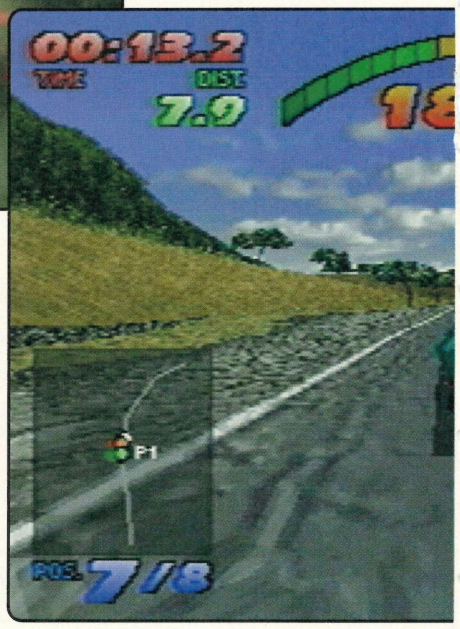
Tearing away with a blistering intro sequence, Need for Speed is a game for car buffs and gamers alike. Ardent viewers of BBC2's Top Gear will appreciate the FMV sequences, which show off each car's capabilities and technical specifications. Gamers, on the other hand will enjoy the easy control system and simplistic gameplay – which, in the context of a breakneck speed race game, is definitely a good thing.

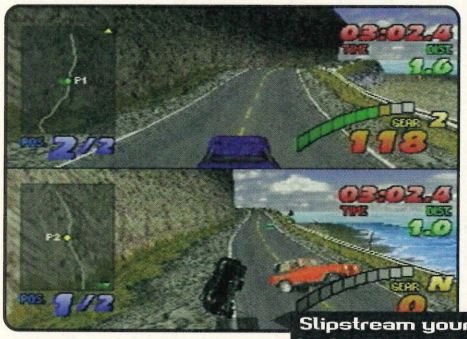
Need for Speed brings back memories of classic Super Nintendo race game, Top Gear, and the Amiga's finest race circuit hour, Lotus 2.



Nearly the end of the impressive intro sequence – almost time to play









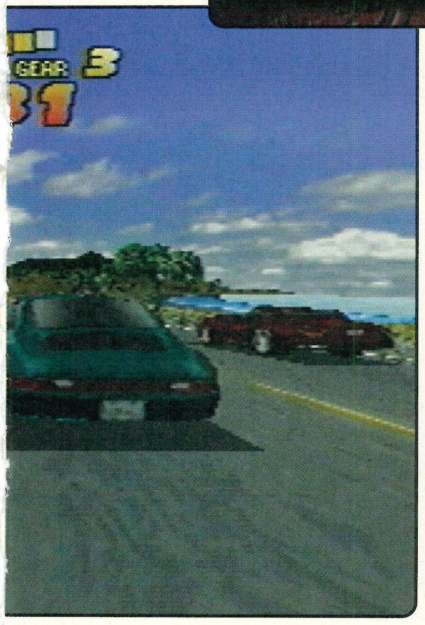
Slipstream your opponent, wait for him to crash into a computer car, then breeze beneath the airborne vehicles

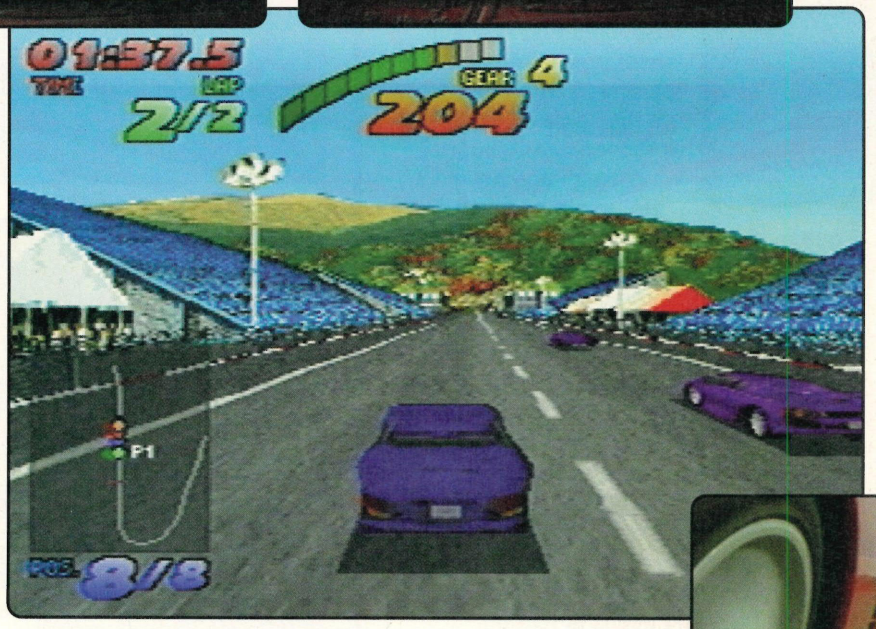


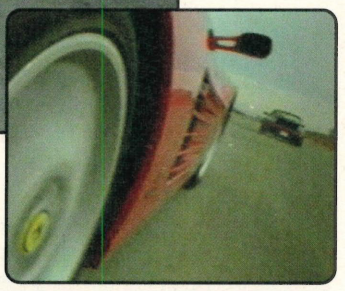




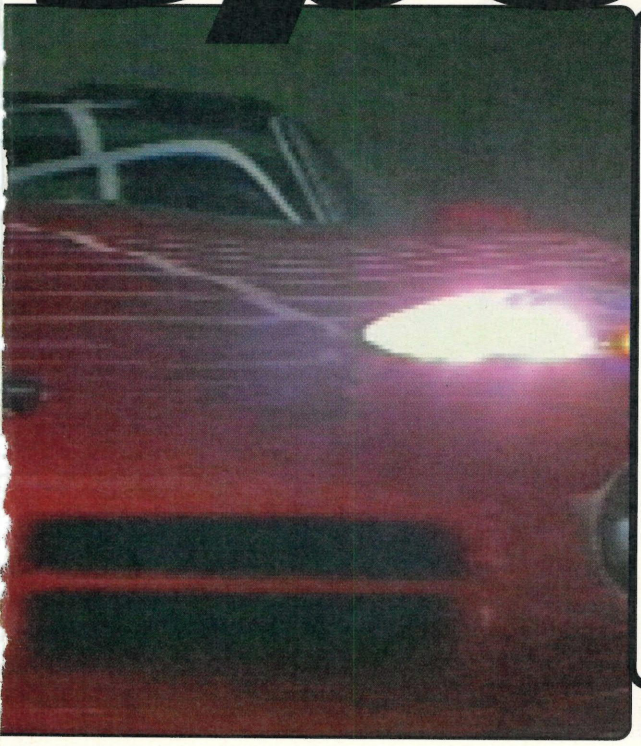
The Dodge Viper. Lovely car – check the curves







Speed



In no way does Need for Speed compete with Ridge Racer or Destruction Derby in terms of next generation graphics. But the gameplay gives them both a race for the laurel wreath and champagne. There's a horizontal split-screen two-player option for starters, something which both the aforementioned top-selling titles overlooked.

The cars featured are *real*, insomuch as they're modelled on the actual blueprints of the wicked Lamborghini Diablo, the posh Porsche 911, and the little red Chevrolet Corvette to mention just three of the eight performance motors available. Road & Track, respected for its knowledge and expertise, supplied all the relevant data.

Each vehicle handles slightly differently to the others. They look sufficiently accurate, and all have their own unique acceleration and top speeds. An added bonus comes in the shape of the Warrior, a fictitious car of Canadian developer Pioneer, which only appears when you beat the computer opponents twice.

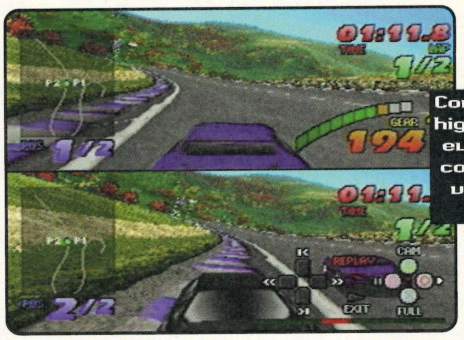
My personal favourite is the Dodge Viper – not because everyone calls me *Untrustworthy Snake*, but because it proper hammers down the straights and takes corners better than Ryan Giggs.

Need for Speed

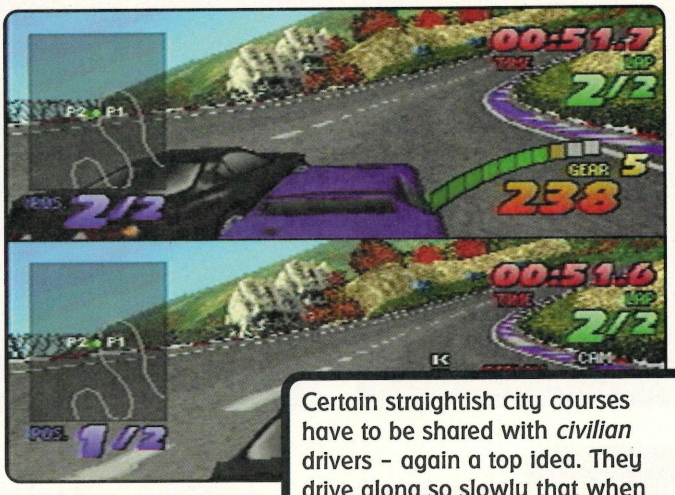
Four viewing angles give the driver enough scope for enjoyment, whatever your preference. The in-car option is only available in single-player mode, however, as the dashboard and steering wheel take up around half the screen. The other three are the same as those seen in Ridge Racer – bonnet, windscreen and heli-cam.

In an old and crowded genre, it's often difficult to come up with new ideas that add to the excitement, rather than *three-minute-hero gimmicks* that wear off after the first go. Need for Speed has the bottle to introduce one or two new and worthwhile features that, surprisingly, no race game to my knowledge has so far attempted.

To get a flier at the starting light, for example, there's no use in just revving for Britain. Your car must be thrown into first gear before it goes anywhere – this applies to automatic transmission too – so the driver at the grid needs to rely on co-ordination, skill and timing rather than just setting off safe in the knowledge that his car has the best acceleration/top speed/handling capability.



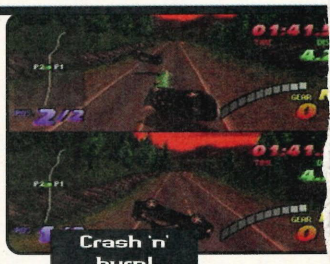
Controllable highlights of every race contest – a very nice touch



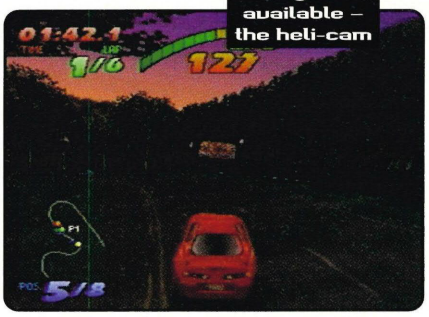
Certain straightish city courses have to be shared with *civilian* drivers – again a top idea. They drive along so slowly that when they appear in front of you, you've only got a split-second to react and swerve out of the way. It's a good idea to bear in mind that Americans drive on the right, so stay in the right-hand lane as much as you can – it's easier to swerve out and nip past a dawdler in your lane than miss a slow, oncoming vehicle.

All the incidental cars are modelled on those owned by members of Need for Speed's





Crash 'n' burn! Wicked collision going on

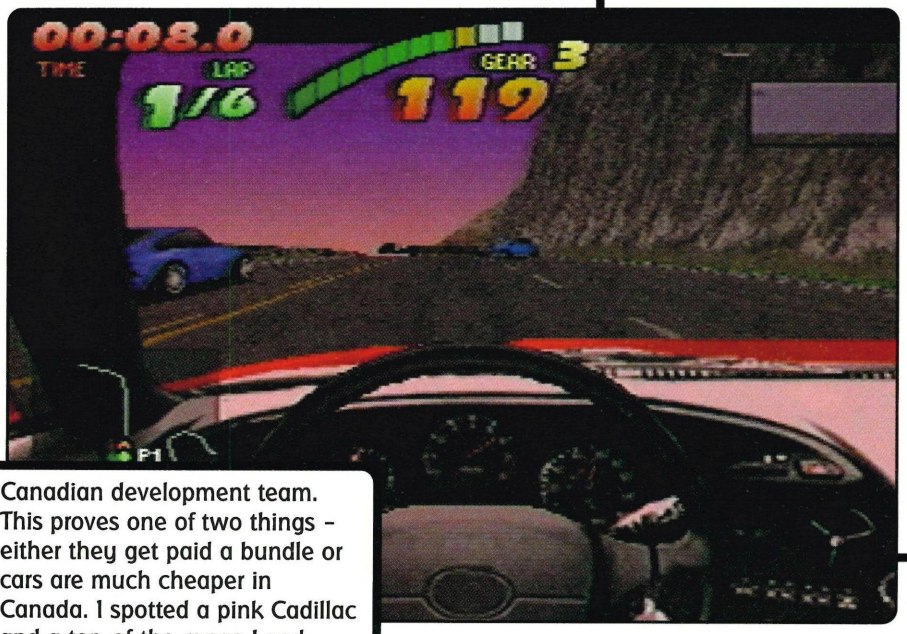


One of the four camera angles available – the heli-cam

Each circuit is split into stages. This is a great idea, as it means you can hurtle around any of two – sometimes three – regions set within seven large courses. This basically makes some of the stages long, straight foot-down fests with the minimum of twists and turns, whereas other sections provide a much sterner test of your all-round driving ability.

All seven tracks are based on real locations and range from dust-encrusted Las Vegas streets through freezing Alpine forests to warmer ocean-side stretches. All the circuits can be played with a morning, noon or night time backdrop too. Although this feature is by no means essential, it adds variety and, like real-life driving, somehow makes the roads feel different when you're bombing along.

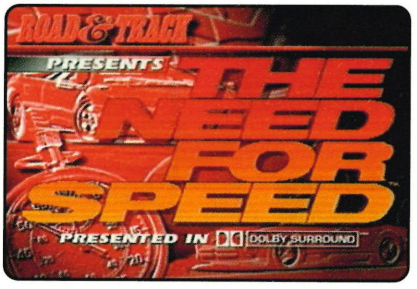
The best original game feature, however, has to be the action replay. Each and every race, whether it be against the clock, the computer or a human opponent, can be replayed in full and viewed from any of the four camera angles. There are fast forward, pause and rewind controls, and best of all, a great *edited highlights* facility.



Canadian development team. This proves one of two things – either they get paid a bundle or cars are much cheaper in Canada. I spotted a pink Cadillac and a top-of-the-range Land Rover-style thang on my travels.

A good tactic in the urban areas is to slipstream your opponent until he unwittingly crashes into the back of an innocent commuter. The two cars in front fly into the air, looking like helpless Matchbox 00-scale toys, thus clearing a route for you to power through, like a cocky stuntman.

THE DODGE VIPER
Horsepower – 400bhp
0-60 – 4.8 seconds
Top speed – 160mph
Lateral acceleration – 0.96g
Price – $59,000





Tricky dark forest stretch alert! Arse. Too late

SUMMARY

GAME Need for Speed
GENRE Racing
SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts
PRICE £44.99

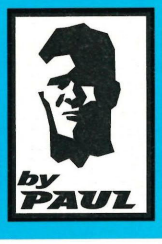
For a little-hyped title and a PC conversion – albeit an enhanced one – Need for Speed is a gem. Electronic Arts has released a ton of software on the PlayStation already, and this is the best so far. The split-screen and link options allow up to four players, and the single-player races are set at just the right difficulty level. The FMV car profiles are an added bonus, as the tracks haven't been skimped on. A little extra polish and it would have scored higher.

GRAPHICS 8
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 8
OVERALL 8½



Destroy the reactor and race to the exit quickly

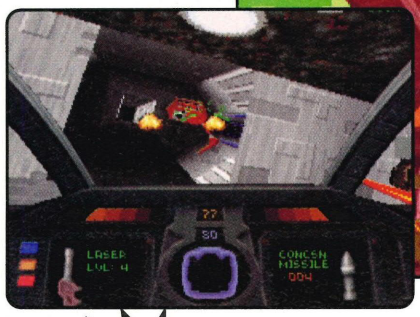
Descent



by PAUL

Descent would be like Doom, if only you weren't upside-down and in a spaceship





It's easy to get disorientated when you begin to play



You're hurtling through an impossibly narrow tunnel at breakneck speed, details merging into nothing more than a blurred line as you burst into a spacious chamber. Banking left, you steer your craft towards one of three identical doors, firing rapidly as you quickly approach the formidable steel portal. Then, at the very last second, your cannon finds its mark. Sparks fly, the door rumbles open in a shower of gold, and your ship slips through. Too late you recognise the passage as a dead end, and valuable seconds are wasted as you wait in screaming frustration for the door to reopen.

Left again, more laser fire - accurate this time - and another open door. Concentrating hard against the backdrop of wailing sirens and failing light, your eyes become slits and you forget to breathe. Where is it!? A right turn and your ship tilts 90 degrees forward and plunges into a vertical mine shaft. Adrenaline floods your system as you twist and turn through the final passage with the goal now plainly in sight. The laser whistles and a gap appears - the sky is visible.

A short passage, then you're streaking straight up into the alien sky as the installation explodes in your wake.

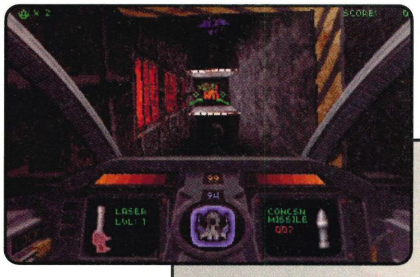


Power-ups are freely available throughout the game

So now you know what a Descent escape is all about. You need to find a route out of the various installations, of which there are 30, and if you play your cards right and take notice of your surroundings, it should prove to be the least involving part of the game. That's how frantic Descent is.

The installations in question are huge underground mining complexes on the planet Pluto. They have been taken over by the inevitable alien race and must be destroyed along with the alien life forms inhabiting and working them. It seems a little harsh to deprive an alien race of what may very well rightfully be theirs – and wipe them out into the bargain – but Descent is much less an exercise in diplomacy than the ultimate test of reactions and nerve.

nt





Various weapons are at your ship's disposal



The map comes in very handy at times



Fly round the mine, rescue the hostages, destroy the reactor and run away!

Descent

Descent, put simply, is Doom in a spaceship. The hostile creatures of Doom are replaced by dozens of patrolling craft, each one armed to the teeth and computer-piloted to varying degrees of intelligence.

The playing view is from inside the cockpit - you aren't offered a choice and neither can you pick your craft, but that's the extent of your limitations.

Since you have to destroy the mines - one of which comprises a level - locating the reactor is of primary importance. Once blasted you are afforded just a few measly seconds to find the exit and do one through it. However, locating it is far from easy, and hordes of aliens lie around every corner.

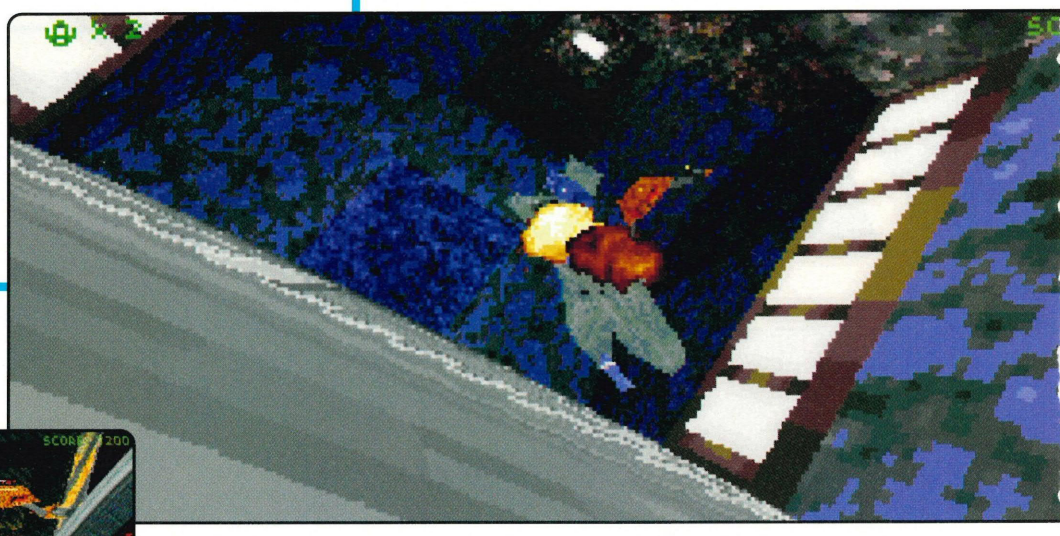
At the outset you have an as-good-as-unlimited laser cannon and a handful of semi-self-targeting missiles at your disposal. In a first for the PlayStation, they're fired using two of the L and R buttons on the joypad.

It's the main J-pad facia which will concern you the most though, because you'll find the ability to shoot at speed through labyrinthine tunnels is equally as important as any amount of accurate marksmanship.





Hordes of enemy ships are constantly coming after you





Danger lurks around every corner and down every shaft



As missions are completed, the twisty tunnels become increasingly more devious. But difficulty is cranked to the max mainly by the harshness of the enemies. By level six or seven you'll be encountering the unforgiving green Grabber Robots, and they'll have all but the most unbelievably skilful cursing away like Roy 'Chubby' Brown with Tourette's Syndrome.

The in-game music is largely understated, twanging away in the background at roughly the same pitch as the graphically generated atmosphere. Genuine heart-stopping moments - those most unusual of videogame feats - are provided on the occasions you edge your ship nervously around an uncharted corner to be met head-on by an alien vessel doing the same!

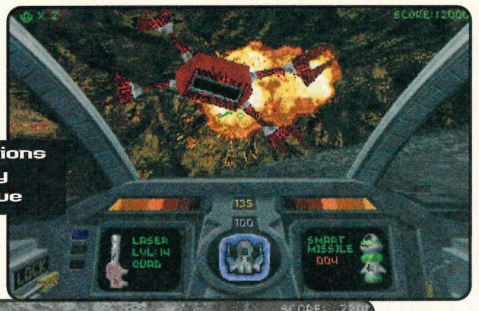
Extra weapons, upgrades and life power are scattered randomly throughout the mines, but the all-important keycards - your ticket to more sinister parts of the complex - are fiercely guarded by a fleet of aliens. Save games are definitely a must in what is surely one of the toughest shooters for the PlayStation.

Claims of three dimensions are commonplace, but Descent is a true 3D experience. The main joypad controls fulfil the role of pointing you up, down, left, right and anywhere in between, while backward and forward thrust, and left and right strafe (horizontal direct-line movement limited only by scenery), are achieved via the symbol buttons.

The remaining L and R buttons bank your craft to either side and will, if you wish, send you into a 360-degree roll. Oh yes – the movement of your ship in Descent is limited only by your own hamfistedness.

This ultra-manoeuvrability is nothing short of essential for survival – each darkly atmospheric corridor is potentially fatal. Doors open on doors, which open on doors, which lead to corridors, which open on massive echo-filled chambers, and the chances are you'll be hopelessly lost within minutes. No worry – there's a map. It's certainly not comprehensive, but it should at least see you in the right direction. As much time is spent flying upwards and downwards as zipping forwards, and the skill with which the levels have been designed is – literally – dizzying.



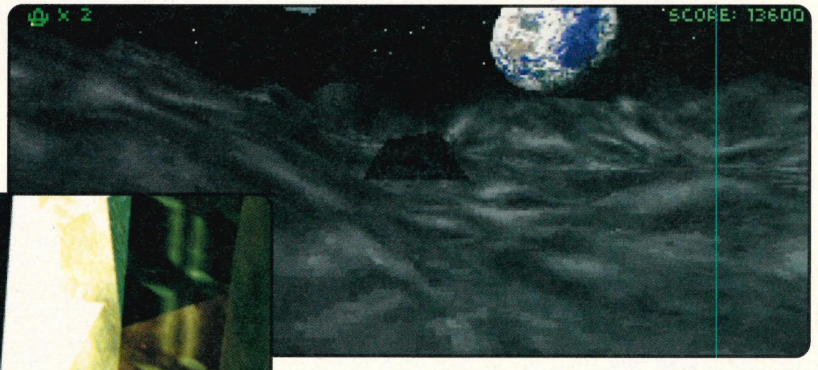


The explosions are very impressive





Descent is basically Doom taken a step further







There's a lot of running away from explosions to be done

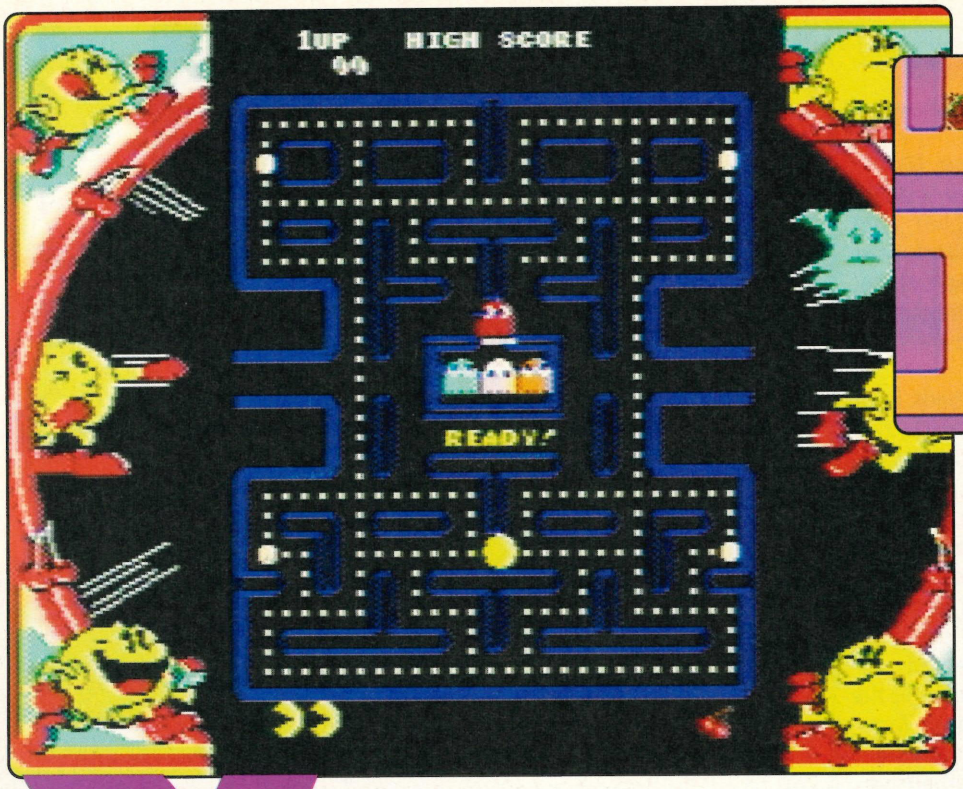


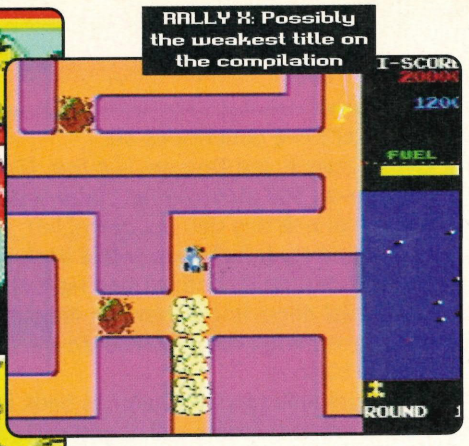
Fortunately your ship is well equipped for the task at hand

SUMMARY
GAME Descent
GENRE Shoot'em-up
SOFTWARE HOUSE Interplay
PRICE £39.99

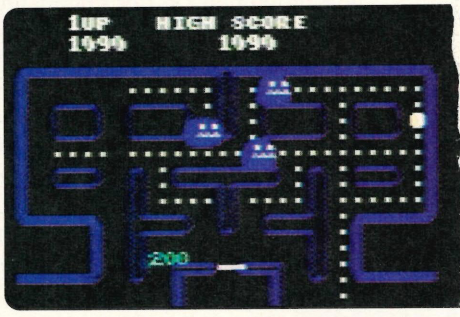
Brilliantly devised and excellently designed, Descent takes the Doom skeleton and twists it into something which is almost more. It's totally frantic without being thoughtless, but it's a shame there's no choice of craft to fly. A game so large might have offered a greater variation in scenery to further increase longevity, but on the whole, Descent is exactly what a videogame should be – bold, brash, loud and fun.

GRAPHICS 7
GAMEPLAY 8
LASTABILITY 8
OVERALL 8½





RALLY X: Possibly the weakest title on the compilation



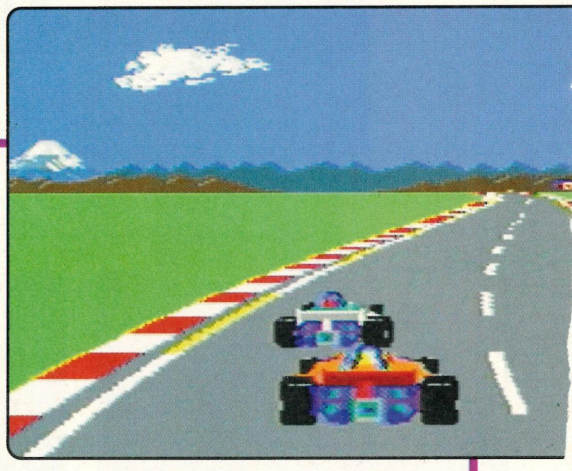
Namco Museum Volume 1



Seems like the new ideas have dried up already. Ah well, time to dig out those rose tinted specs again...

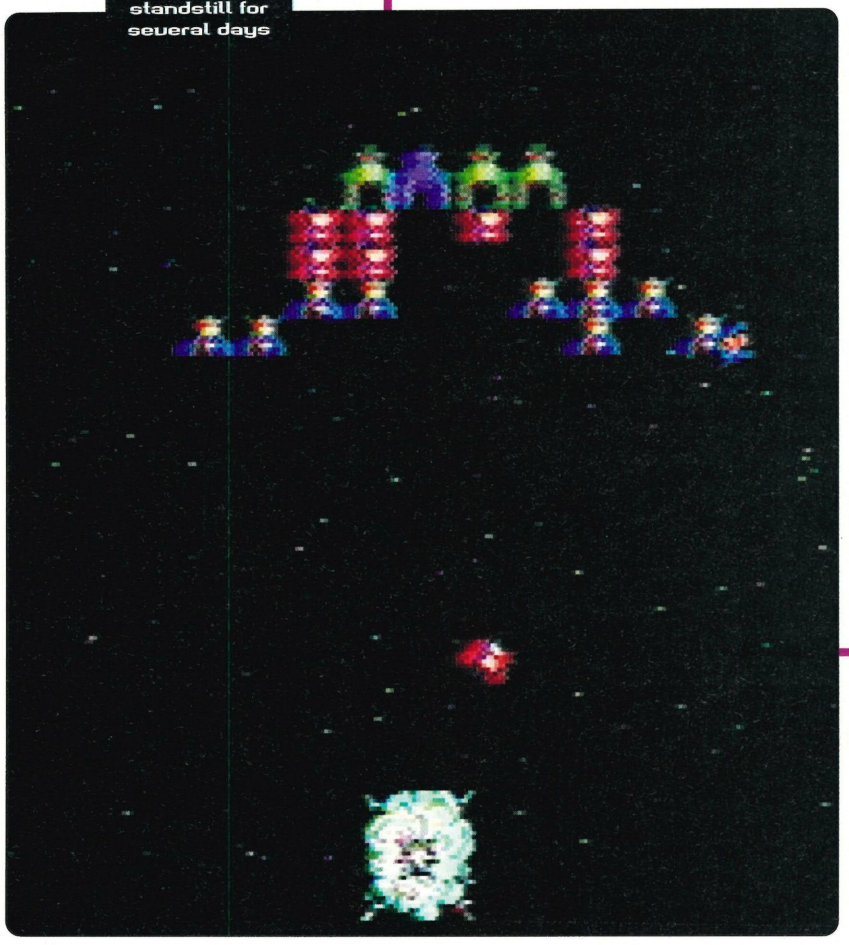
'Surreal' is a word that sums up the first volume of the Namco Museum quite nicely. Join Pacman as he goes for a wander around a virtual reality collection of some of the crowning moments in videogame history. Look at exhibits and memorabilia, read up on the background of some of the most famous arcade games of all time, and even get to play perfect re-creations of seven of the games that shaped the way things are today.

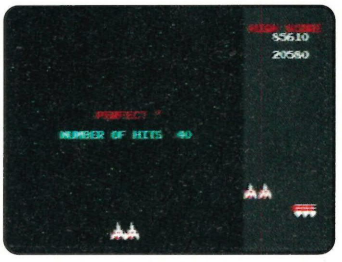
The tour is a bit of a novelty to be honest. It's just a nice way of presenting arcade classics such as Pole Position, Galaga and the legendary Pacman in a suitably next generation fashion. You'll probably use the option a couple of times and then simply load up the games via a handy shortcut menu screen which gives you instant access to all the important things this has to offer.

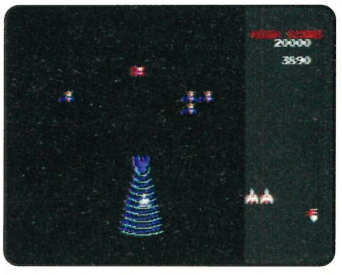


If you spent a lot of your youth in seedy, darkened arcades, you'll be well away with most of these games. If you were old enough to choose where to spend your pocket money 10 years ago, chances are you'll have played at least a couple of these already. And even if you haven't, none of them are particularly complicated anyway.

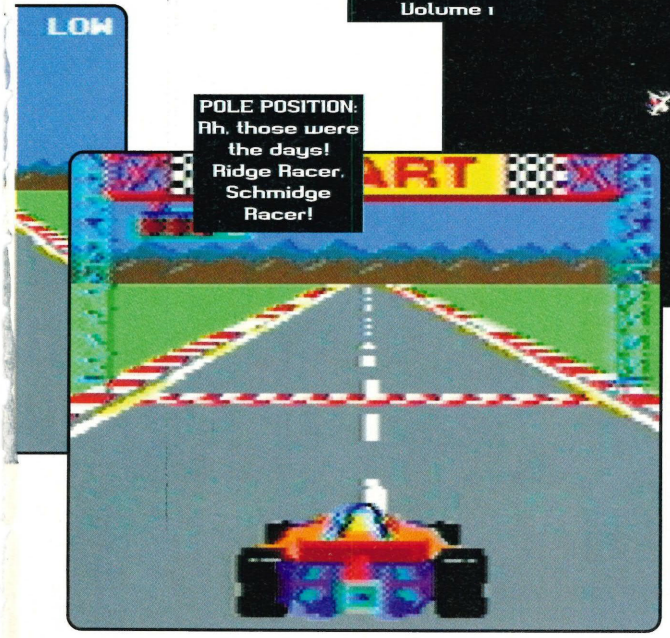
This is what gameplay is all about. None of these classic games rely on anything but the thrill of beating your best score or the chance of getting one stage further than you have before. There are no complex plots with a hundred sub-plots cunningly woven in, and there are no ridiculous control methods that take longer to master than it takes to complete the game. For instance, I spent a good hour continually racing around the same track in Pole Position trying to improve my best time by no more than a hundredth of a second. The controls are simply the X button to accelerate and left and right to steer, but the game presents such a challenge that even though there's only one reasonably straightforward track, you never seem to tire of it. I can't think of a modern example of a game that hasn't seen me bored after retreading the same ground more than a couple of times, and that has a lot to say about what Namco Museum has to offer.

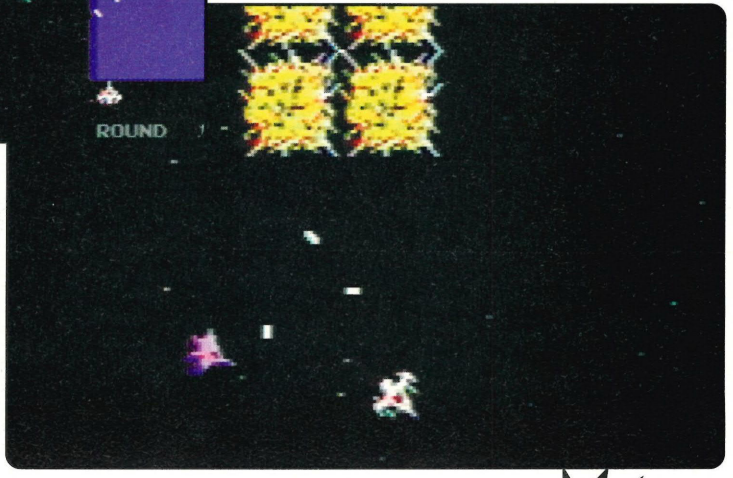




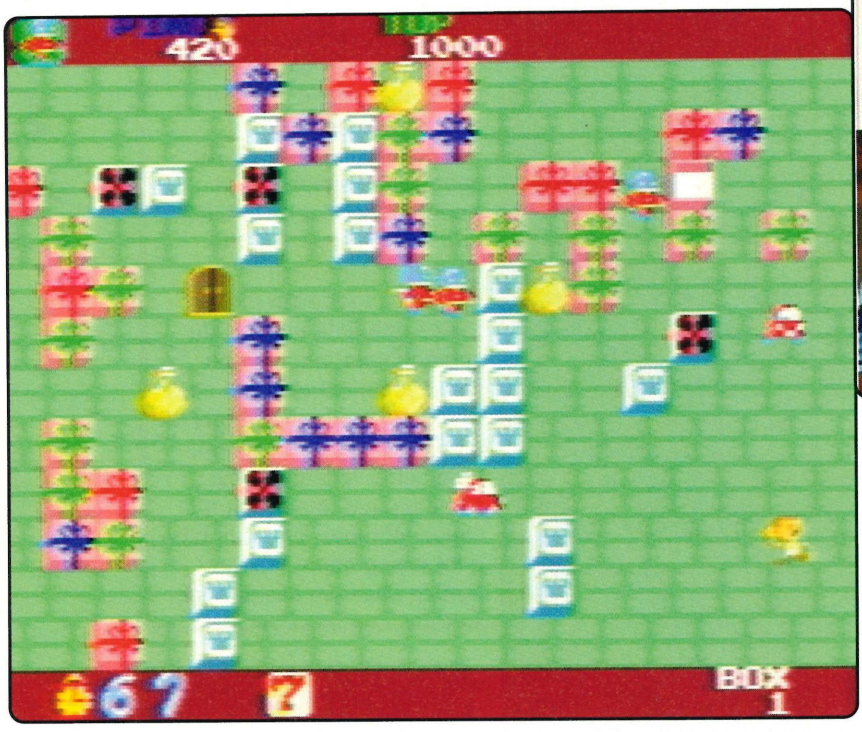


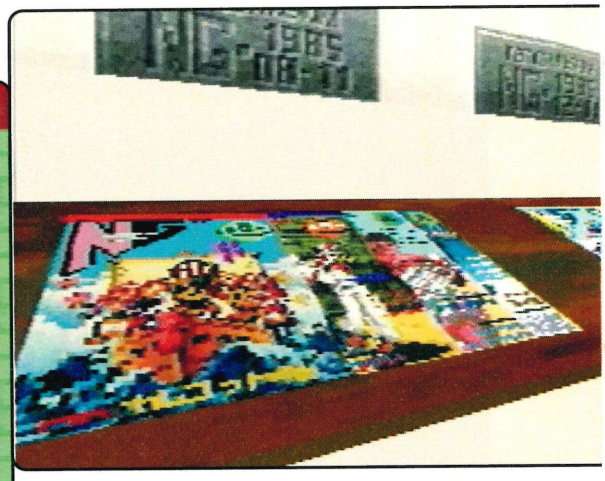


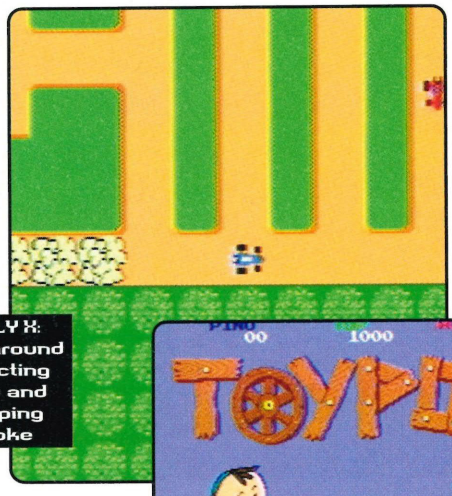




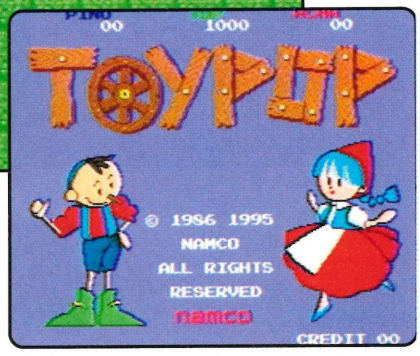
Namco Museum Volume 1







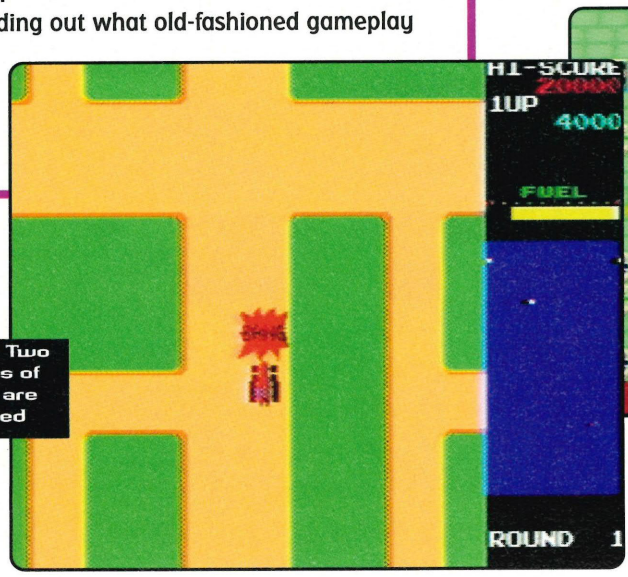
RALLY X: Race around collecting flags and dropping smoke



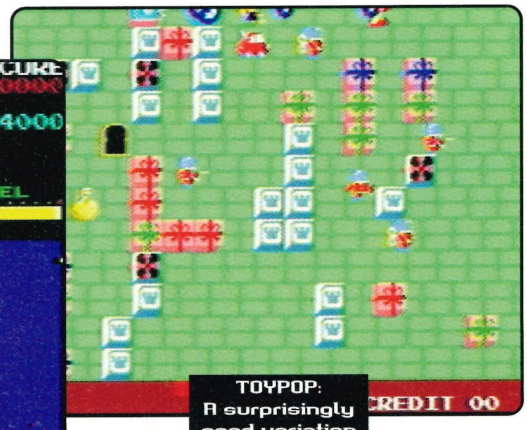
Even if you don't go all misty-eyed at the mere thought of some of the games mentioned earlier, that doesn't mean that Namco Museum (Volume 1) isn't for you. In all honesty, the only games I'd played before were Pole Position and, of course, Pacman, but that didn't spoil my enjoyment of the others one bit.

To give you an idea of the simplicity of all the games involved, I was playing the import version (complete with Japanese manual) of seven games I'd hardly even heard of, let alone played, but I could still jump straight in at the deep end with each and every one of them and feel instantly at home.

If you fancy finding out what old-fashioned gameplay was all about, Namco's 'Museum' series could well be the answer.



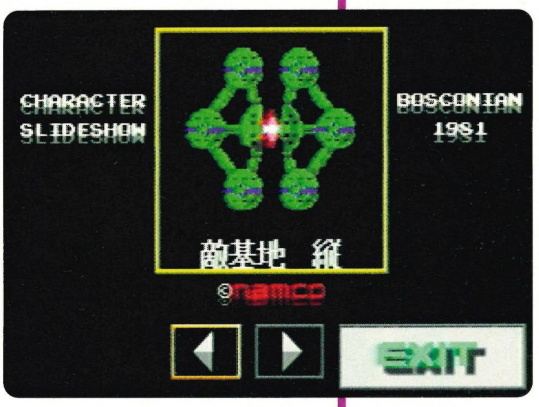
RALLY X: Two versions of Rally X are included

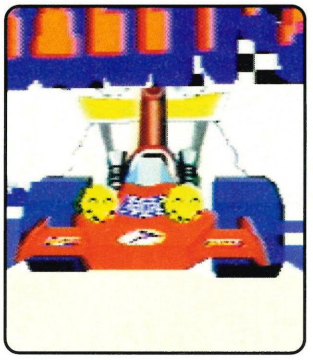


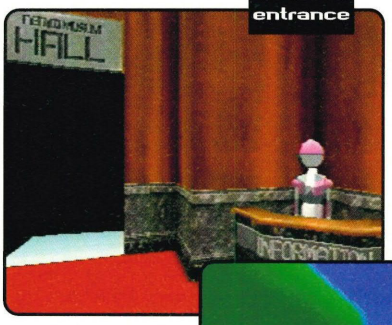
TOYPOP: A surprisingly good variation on the Pacman theme



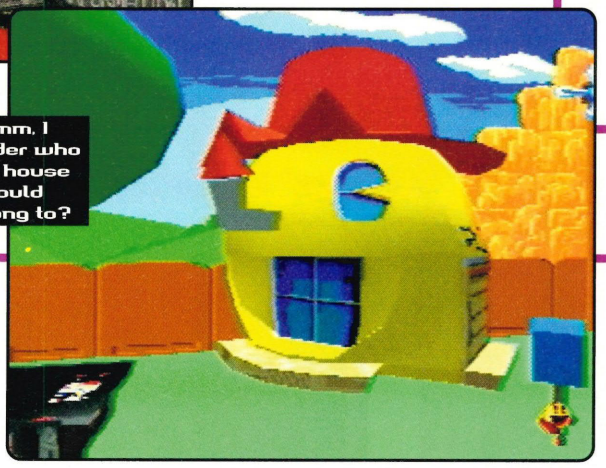
The handy shortcut menu







The museum entrance



Hmm, I wonder who this house could belong to?

If I had to pick a weak spot in Namco Museum Volume 1 then it would have to be Rally X, and unfortunately there are two versions of it on the disc. The game involves racing around a sort of maze in a race car collecting enough flags (usually 10) to allow you to progress onto the next stage. There's nothing fundamentally wrong with this, certainly not in comparison with the other games on here, but I didn't feel the desire for another go to try and beat my previous best score.

My favourites (and this will doubtlessly differ from player to player) are Pole Position (mainly for its nostalgia value), and Bosconian (for its frenetic style of gameplay). For many people, sentimental value will be a good enough reason to buy this collection, and for the others, their curiosity should be strong enough to make them want to check it out.

You'll be playing Namco Museum Vol.1 for a lot longer than many of the flashy next gen import offerings available.

The full list of games included in Volume 1 (there are more to come soon) is Bosconian, Toypop, Rally X, New Rally X, Pole Position, Pacman and Galaga. They're all pretty dated now, but the hours of play that you will get from each game means that you can easily justify the expenditure.

Galaga has virtually brought the office to a standstill over the last couple of days, with crowds of 'Galaga Kings' desperate to show off their talents to an eager audience. I don't mind admitting that I'm rubbish at the game myself - my best score is just under 20 thousand. I'm a little too used to the joys of auto-fire to ever get used to the 'one press, one shot' type of gameplay, but strangely I still found myself enjoying it.

This is where these games score highly. They are so simple in concept that you don't have to spend countless hours playing to get anything out of them. And they are so filled with gameplay and other addictive qualities that you will quite simply be unable to put the joypad down.

Game supplied by:
OTAKU Publishing Limited
http://www.otaku.com/

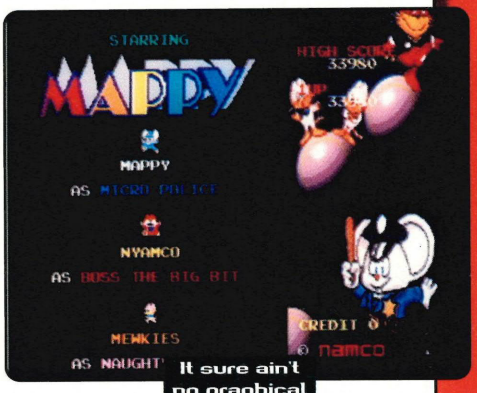
SUMMARY

GAME Namco Museum Volume 1
GENRE Nostalgia Compilation
SOFTWARE HOUSE Namco
PRICE £Import

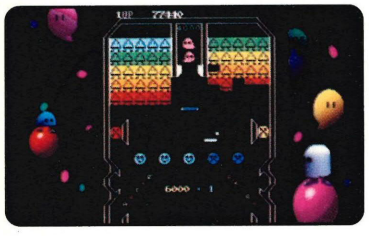
Namco Museum Volume 1 offers excellent value for money. The seven games on here will give you many more hours of play than the vast majority of new releases that hit the shelves these days. Many will be put off initially by the dated look of the actual games themselves (although the museum sequences are quite impressive), but it's the gameplay that has stood up to the test of time remarkably well. Roll on Volume 2.

GRAPHICS 6
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 9

OVERALL 8½

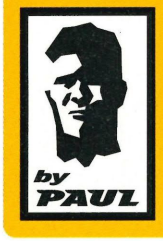


It sure ain't no graphical treat





Namco Museum Volume 2



Here's half a dozen more of Namco's one-bit wonders for nostalgia freaks everywhere

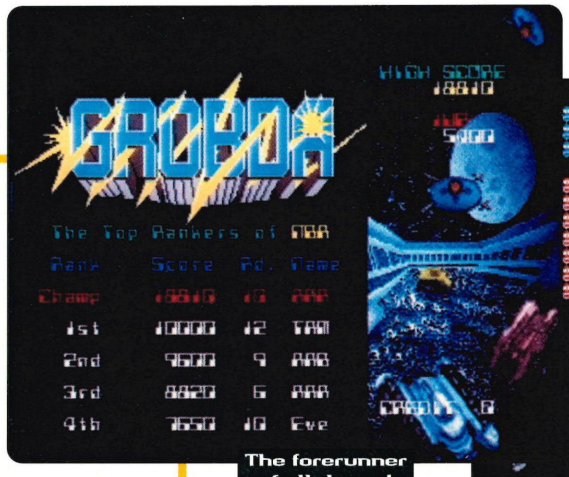
Grobda

No sooner was the review of Namco Museum written and laid out than a similar package of oriental persuasion arrived in the office. Namco appears delighted with its re-release strategy, and no-one here at PSX-Pro is offering odds against the arrival of one or two more of these sterling efforts before the winter's out.

Grobda is a 2D (what else?) tank game, which, in the finest tradition of such arcade oldies, offers a two-player 'do-zies' mode (ie taking turns).

Placed on a near-featureless flat plain with a varying number of enemy tanks, you have at your disposal limited shield power and a gun with which to wipe them out before they do the same to you.

It doesn't take long before you become hopelessly hooked by the tiny levels and ever-increasing challenge. And it's equal fun for one or two.



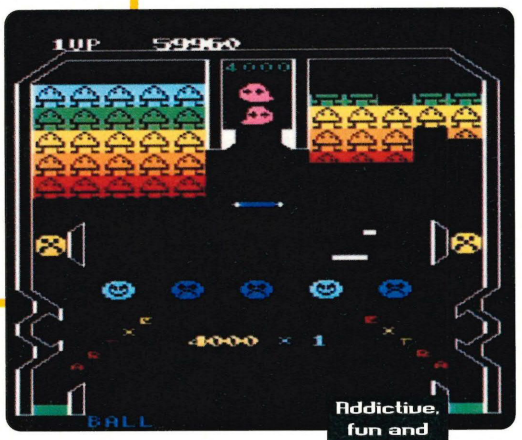
The forerunner of all decent tank games



Dragon Buster

This is where it begins to go pear-shaped. Despite an ambiguous claim from the accompanying press release hailing Dragon Buster as the father of all RPGs, it seems more likely that the relationship would be that of a dribbling, senile grandma. If this effort did indeed take up floor space in the arcades of yesteryear, then respect is certainly due to Namco – as far as gaming time for your money goes, you'd get a good two shillings-worth from DB. Unfortunately, that's where the value ends.

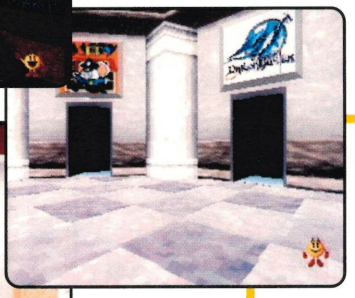
It's more a platform game than an RPG, with the addition of magic spells with which to combat the inevitable flat-looking ranksters. You also wield a standard sword. Age-related bias aside, it is extremely repetitive, utterly dull and almost totally without merit.



Addictive, fun and extremely dodgy looking









Gaplus

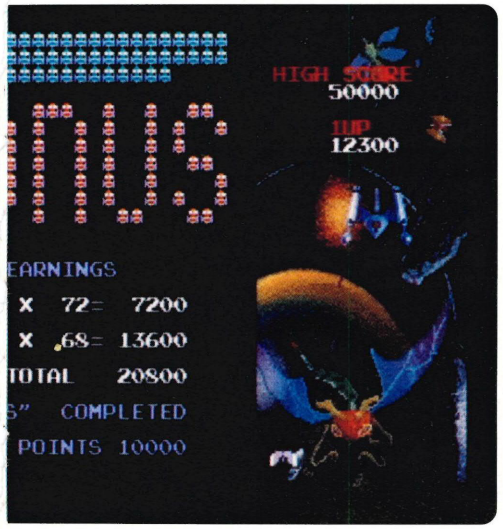
Another effort that us PSX-Pro youngsters fail to remember from the arcades, Gaplus is a frenzied shoot'em-up in the Galaga mould. The puny ship you begin with is manoeuvrable both horizontally and vertically, and the screen itself contains a scrolling starfield of sorts. It's designed to give the impression of warp speed travel, but in actual fact it does no such thing.

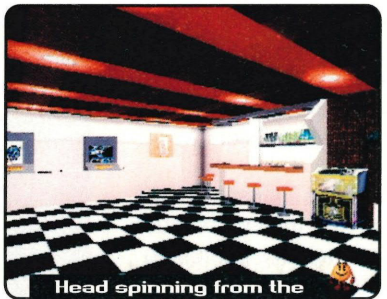
The enemies take the shape of mutant insects, which swirl around on screen threatening you with their pseudo-intelligent flight patterns before settling into a standard space invaders formation. Upgrades come in the form of enemy craft which, during special capture modes, can be lured into a funnel-like appendage and bolted onto your ship.

These alien traitors increase your fire-power and remain effective until they're hit. Get three or four at once and your points tally will rocket.

An overeasy, afterthought bonus stage increases your score further, and you'll certainly need it. Long before the bonus ship arrives (50,000pts), Gaplus adopts an extremely sinister difficulty level.







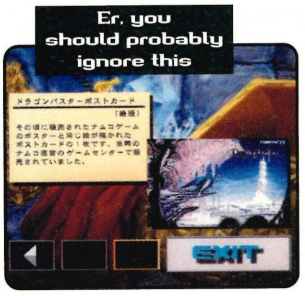
Head spinning from the excitement? Get leathered in the cyberpub

Namco Museum Volume 2

Mappy

Loved by Steve and loathed by the rest of us, the Mappy in question is that most common of creatures, a police mouse. Oh yes, and as a police mouse he must of course thwart the dastardly cat burglars (who, in a hilarious play on words, are of feline descent) intent on stealing the treasures from a number of houses.

These buildings comprise the levels of the game – full-screen, non-scrolling multi-level affairs – and the cats are foiled by Mappy's implementation of his door-swinging skills. Within each level lies a trampoline of sorts, allowing you to gain access to the higher levels. And, by closing all the doors in the faces of the cats, whilst picking up the scattered bonuses, the game progresses. In fairly feeble fashion.



Er, you should probably ignore this



Xevious

The only game in the collection which is remembered by the PSX-Pro team also happens to be the pick of the crop. Xevious puts you in the hotseat of a stereotypical spaceship and pits you against a constant and unrelenting two-pronged attack. Quick-moving, spinning flying saucers are the threat from the air, and despite their total lack of firepower they can quite easily take you out in a direct collision.

Meanwhile, on the ground, trouble looms in the form of slow-moving vehicles and ground installations, all of which are intent on blasting you from the sky. As with Gaplus, the ship can be thrust both horizontally and vertically. Loads of levels combine with the excellent gameplay to make this unashamedly dated blaster a true classic.




Oh my God, it's Star Trek! Run away!



Cutie-Q

Cutie-Q is one of scores of ancient games the titles of which are an absolute mystery to everyone. It is, in short, a crude and simplistic mixture of pinball and Breakout.

A couple of simultaneously controlled Pong-like 'bats' replace the flippers, and the square ball, when released, can be guided into the blocks which sit proudly at either side of the central channel.

Individual blocks disappear on impact with the ball, and the non-sphere speeds up as your ever-diminishing target becomes increasingly difficult to hit.

Extra points are gleaned by bopping the inexplicable ghosts that appear in the central channel and, occasionally, elsewhere on the table.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to work out what the combination of two super-addictive gameplay styles does for the longevity of this quirkily excellent product.

SUMMARY

GAME Namco Museum Vol 2
GENRE Nostalgia Compilation
SOFTWARE HOUSE Namco
PRICE £39.99

Two-player options are always a bonus, and the dual action is plentiful here. Yes, the sound is poor and the graphics are just one stop short of awful, but that isn't what this is all about. However, containing one less game than Volume 1, and two games which are downright poor, this product is of questionable value, and will prove to be money well spent only to absolute nostalgia freaks who already own the other collection.

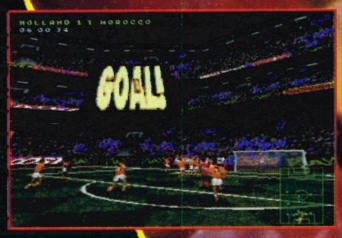
GRAPHICS 3
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 5

OVERALL 6½

actua SOCCER

PlayStation









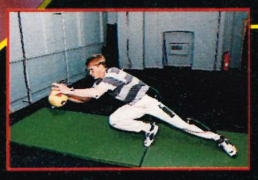
"Actua Soccer is the most playable and realistic footy release on the PlayStation - and therefore the best... makes it's 32 bit peers look amateurish and shoddy"
GAME OF THE MONTH
SONYPRO **9/10**

"Move over Striker '96, farewell FIFA, Actua Soccer is simply the best PlayStation footy game"
HIGHEST AWARD
PLAY **94%**

"This is a perfect blend of superb graphics and involving gameplay. Technically excellent and decidedly playable. Actua Soccer delivers the lot"
OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE **9/10**

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Real motion, captured from international footballers and used in the game

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Gremlin Interactive

there's nothing virtual about actua

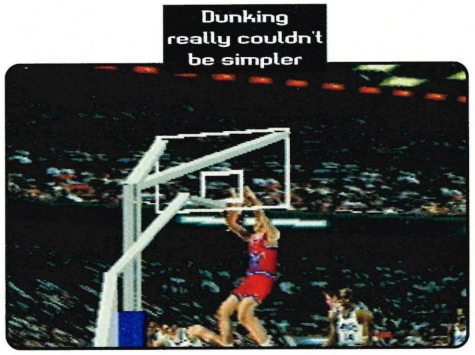
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I should point out right from the off that I was off work on holiday when Total NBA '96 was in for review. As a result I haven't even seen Sony's basketball effort, hence the need to draft in Paul in for the comparison box found elsewhere within this review. I therefore cannot really comment on the merits of one game above the other.

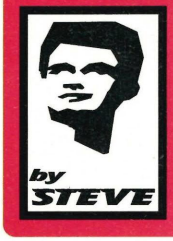
The one PlayStation basketball game I have played previously, namely NBA Jam Tournament Edition, is nothing like In the Zone, so it would be unfair to make a comparison there either.

As I settled down to play In the Zone and other members of the PSX-Pro team peered over my shoulder/joined in for a two-player game, the comment that kept cropping up was that this was something of a cross between NBA Jam and Total NBA. From what I can gather, In the Zone isn't as in-depth a simulation as Sony's effort, and I know for a fact it's more realistic than Acclaim's thang.





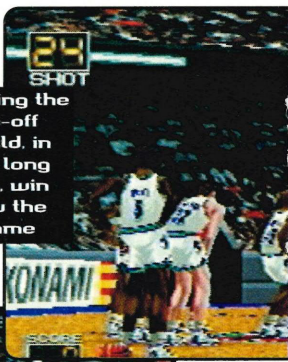
NBA In the



Konami takes its competitors into overtime with a three-pointer at the buzzer



There are three equally playable viewpoints to choose from



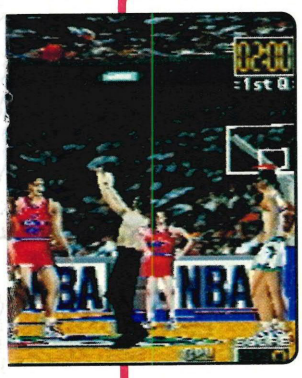
Winning the tip-off could, in the long run, win you the game





A bit of showboating never goes amiss

Zone

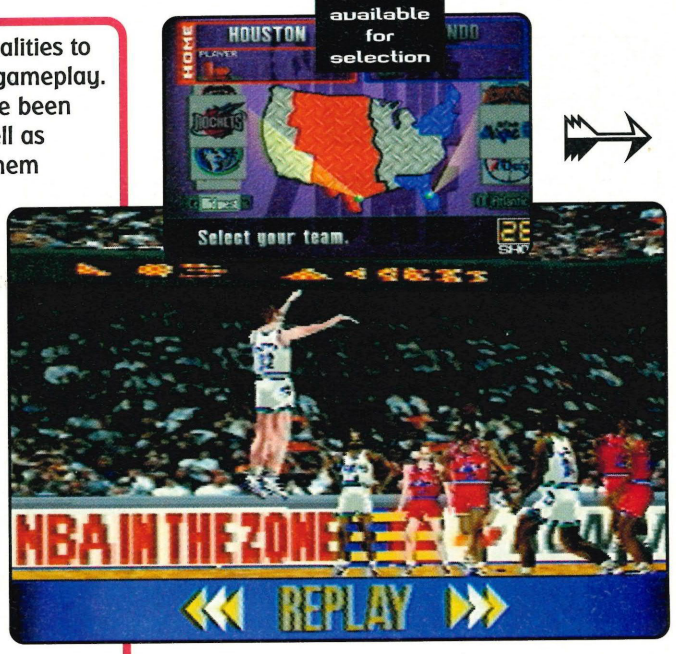


NBA In the Zone has some very impressive qualities to boast about before you even think about the gameplay. For instance, all the players from the NBA have been modelled on their real-life counterparts. As well as having their own facial texture maps to give them distinguishable features (amazing enough in itself), they also have the same height and build, and even wear the same clothes – if he wears a knee support in real life it's in there, as are glasses and dyed hair a la Dennis Rodman.

Admittedly this will excite true NBA die-hards more than your casual 'Sunday afternoon' player, but even they should give an appreciative nod towards the programmers for their efforts.

I can't say for certain, but judging from the realistic movement of the players, I'd say that the increasingly popular motion-capture techniques have been used once again. This, coupled with the players' individual characteristics, goes some way to making In the Zone one of the most realistic sports games I've ever seen.

All the NBA teams are available for selection

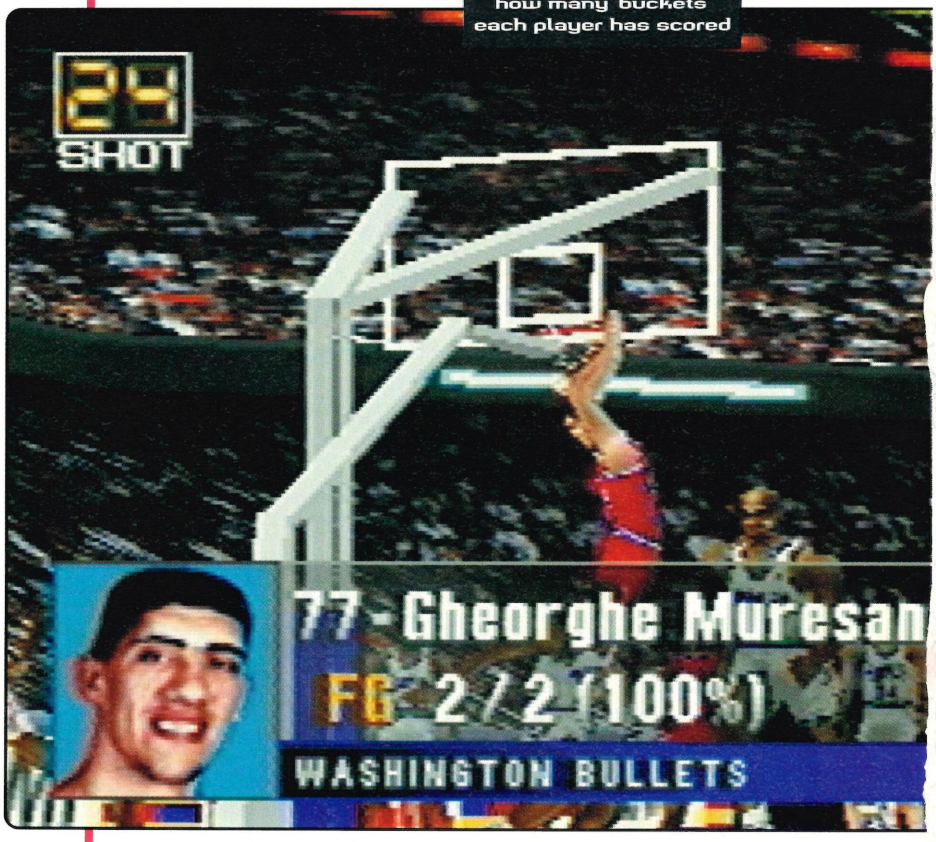


NBA In the Zone

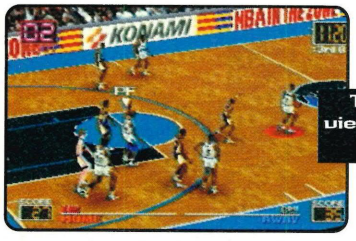
This is one of the best PSX games I've played yet. Surprisingly good in one-player mode and unbelievably tense at times in two, I've rarely come across a sports game that's as complete as this in terms of player appeal. The one-player mode normally lets games of this type down, but I still haven't tired of playing NBA In the Zone on my own.

The basketball market seems to be a little overcrowded at the moment, with three top-quality titles battling it out for supremacy. But, and I never thought I'd hear myself say this, there seems to be a case for owning all three. NBA Jam is straight-up, two-on-two arcade action, Total NBA '96 is a serious basketball simulation, and NBA In the Zone nestles neatly in between the two, offering arcade-style gameplay in a full five-on-five situation.

I have no hesitation in recommending this to everyone, even those who've already spent nearly a hundred quid on this type of game. In its specific arena it's difficult to see how In the Zone can be bettered.



The game keeps track of how many 'buckets' each player has scored

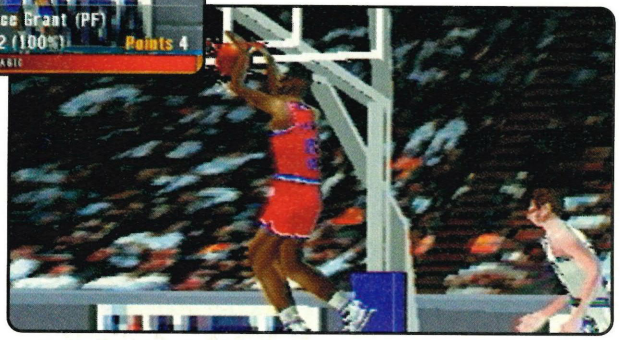


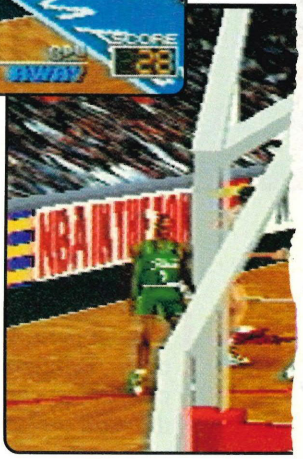
The quarter view is possibly the best

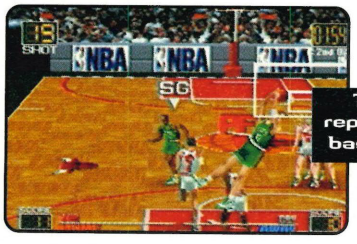




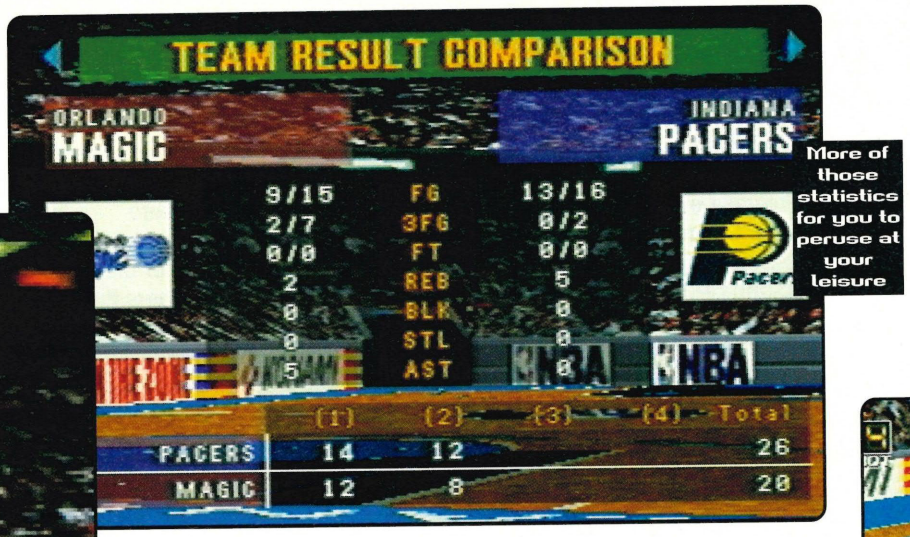








There is a replay of every basket scored



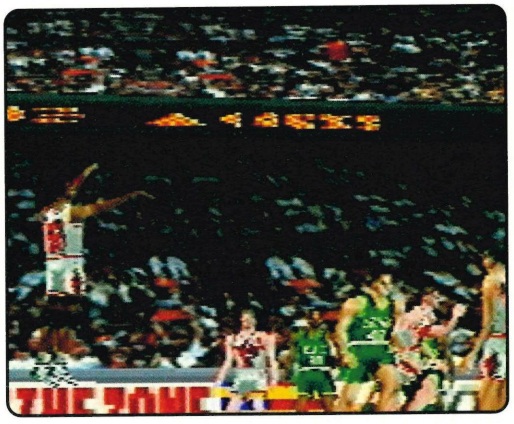
More of those statistics for you to peruse at your leisure





Each court is personalised for the home team



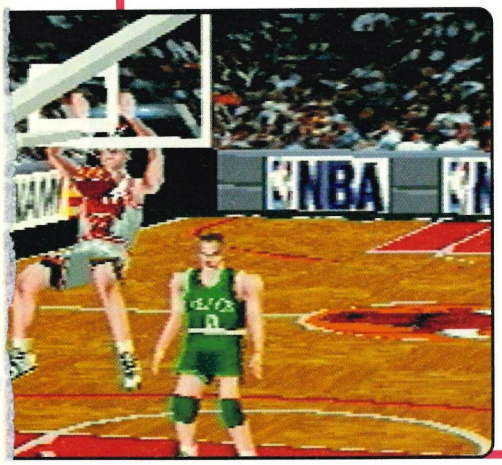


Paul

IN MY EXPERIENCE...
It seems odd that an American sport which has never quite managed to captivate us Brits should prove so popular as a videogame. But even taking this into account, three PlayStation offerings in just a few short months would appear a tad excessive. Or maybe not...

NBA Jam: TE proved itself when the PlayStation was just a glint in Sony's corporate eye, and Total NBA, with its more simulation-like way of approaching the subject, showed there was room in the market for another effort. It would therefore be easy to dismiss this latest offering out of hand on the assumption that you probably couldn't do any better.

That's right, you probably couldn't, but once again we're provided with a basketball game which manages to bring us the sport in its own sweet way. NBA In The Zone is not as frantic as NBA Jam, and not as pretty as Total NBA. But what it does do is combine the styles of both and mould them into a game which is as easy to play as it is to watch. Basketball fans have a real dilemma on their hands, thanks to another great version of the sport.



SUMMARY
GAME NBA In the Zone
GENRE Basketball Sim
SOFTWARE HOUSE Konami
PRICE £39.99

Many people will dismiss NBA In the Zone thinking that it couldn't possibly match those similar games which have gone before. But incredibly it does so easily, and should be given serious consideration by anyone looking for a decent basketball game. Easy to get to grips with but difficult to master, this'll give you hours of play in either one or two-player mode – something which most sports games fail to offer, especially to the single player.

GRAPHICS 9
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 8
OVERALL 8½

Magic C

Populous on a carpet would be one way of describing this PC conversion

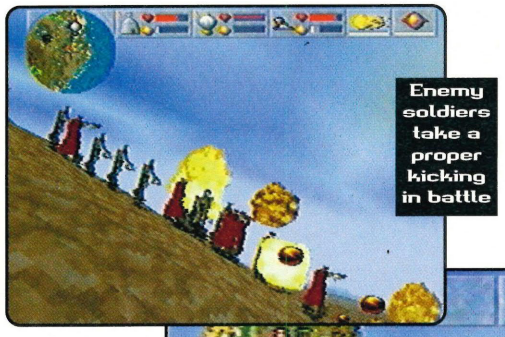
by ANDY

The brains at Bullfrog have been working hard over the past year or so to develop ground-breaking projects such as Theme Park and Syndicate on numerous formats. And after the critically acclaimed release of Magic Carpet on the PC, this monster shooting strategy fest has made it to Sony's PlayStation.

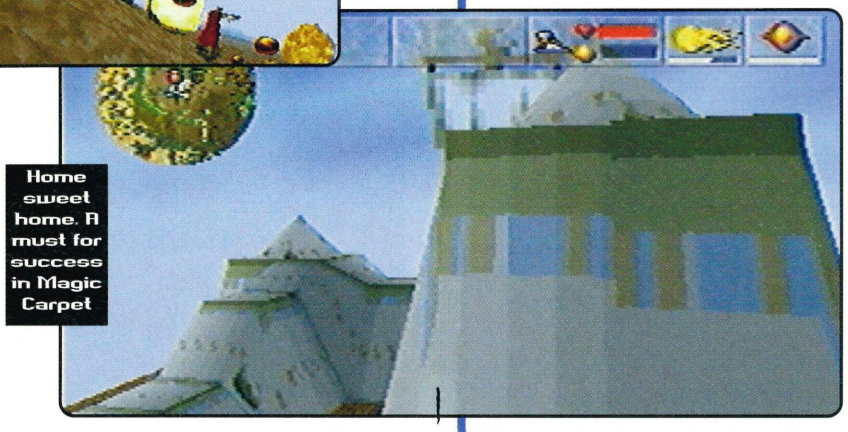
You are a powerful wizard who, as the title suggests, hammers around on a magic carpet in a battle against seven other wizards in a fight to take over the world. Along the way you are guaranteed to hit severe opposition from numerous creatures. Some slither around on the ground, while others fly about in a bid to end your quest for world domination.

To carry out your plans you must collect spells and build your powers to the max. While the spells don't need to be used constantly, they certainly help you out of some tricky situations.

To successfully take control of a specific area of the world you must collect magical energy called manna, and store it within the confines of your fortress - which needs to be built - so it is protected from enemy threat.



Enemy soldiers take a proper kicking in battle



Home sweet home. A must for success in Magic Carpet









Graphically, Magic Carpet is just about as impressive as they come



arpet





For the PlayStation release, Bullfrog has made a few improvements to the original PC version. The extra 25 levels which were available as a data disk are all here, bringing the grand total up to a mind-blowing 75.

There's also an enhanced control method which allows you to change your spells at any time without having to switch away from the action. On top of this there's a new spell in the form of a Homing Meteor.

Graphically, there are a few improvements from the PC version. The skyline is more colourful, but it still looks like it's foggy to me, and objects come into view a little quicker.

Enemies must be blasted to release the manna before it can be transformed to your colour. Your air balloon will then be able to pick it up.

The game as a whole will take a little time to adapt to, but with a little patience all will become apparent.



As a result of the foggy horizon, there's not too much 'scenery building'





Magic Carpet

The control pad is used to the max. Every button is needed at some stage or other, either to bring up and scroll through spell options, change direction, strafe wildly to avoid being shot, or most importantly to cast the corresponding spell. Phew! This is tricky for a little while but soon you'll be whizzing around like a true pro. Sometimes, however, you'll find there's so much going on that it becomes almost impossible to do exactly what you wish.

As is the norm, the opposition does become more intense as the levels progress, and strategies will have to be revised to cope with the added threat.

People without a memory card will find life a little difficult due to the lack of a password option, but flush gamers will be able to save their progress. This is essential, as some stages will take upwards of half an hour to complete. Others won't scrape the 10-minute mark, but having to plough through the same stages again if you fancy playing Magic Carpet another day does become tiresome.



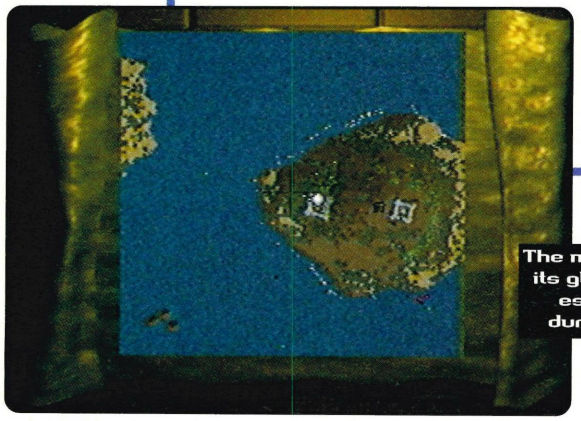
This enemy wizard clearly needs a pummelling. He'll fight like a brave, though



At the end of the day, Magic Carpet is one for the strategy fans. There are plenty of things which need to be done, from erecting a fortress and blasting enemies away, to collecting enough manna to claim the area as your own and rebuilding your castle after an attack.

To keep track of where you are exactly, you can bring up a map which highlights enemies, fortresses and your air balloon. This comes in pretty handy, as it can become confusing flying around the landscapes wondering where exactly you're supposed to be heading. There's also a tiny section of this map shown while you are in full flight. This lessens the confusion a little.

It will come as no surprise to learn that Magic Carpet has its fair share of impressive features - including the spells, which you will watch in awe. The most impressive of these is the castle-building option - you throw a rock to the ground and voila, instant tower. Another is the volcano, which can scupper an army's entire battle plan.



The map option in all its glory. This is an essential help during the game

SUMMARY
GAME Magic Carpet
GENRE Shoot'em-up/Strategy
SOFTWARE HOUSE Bullfrog
PRICE £44.99

I must confess that although this version of Magic Carpet is a vast improvement on the PC effort, it just doesn't float my boat. It looks and plays well enough, but is just a little too samey and uneventful for me. I'm sure there will be many people out there who will look forward to the prospect of plodding through level after level of landscapes, but those who prefer to play games in short dabbles will probably want to give this a miss.

GRAPHICS 8
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 9
OVERALL 7½



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PSX 4



Wing Com I

Can the much converted Wing Commander III succeed on the PlayStation?

by STEVE



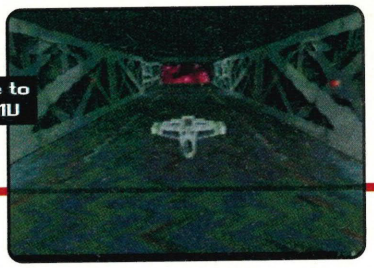
The Wing Commander series suffers from an annoying trait that has followed it throughout its life span. Basically, the games have been nothing short of superb on the PC, but all attempts to convert them to other formats have failed in quite miserable fashion.

Despite this, EA remains unperturbed, and is having another go. This time it's the turn of the PlayStation, with the third game in the series (the fourth is already out on the PC, with a PSX release pencilled in for the third quarter of this year), subtitled The Heart of the Tiger. Does it work any better this time around? Well, in all honesty, no. Despite all my hopes - the PC versions rank highly on my list of all-time favourite games - WCIII does not compare favourably at all when put alongside other recent PSX releases.



The cast of WCIII really is second to none





There's much more to this game than FMV

The first thing that hits you when you play WCIII is the incredible depth of the storyline. An enormous amount of thought has gone into creating a saga that even manages to run the Star Wars series close.

Your character, Christopher Blair (Mark Hamill), has been reposted to the TCS Victory following the destruction of the Tiger's Claw at the conclusion of WCII.

Once again he finds himself embroiled in the desperate battle to save the Confederation from defeat in the long, drawn out war against feline foe, the Kilrathi.

As usual for the games in this series, things start off fairly quietly, but it starts to heat up when your ship jumps into an unexpectedly hostile sector. The story twists and turns as you progress (in different directions depending on how successful you are), and throws up surprises right through to the final battle.

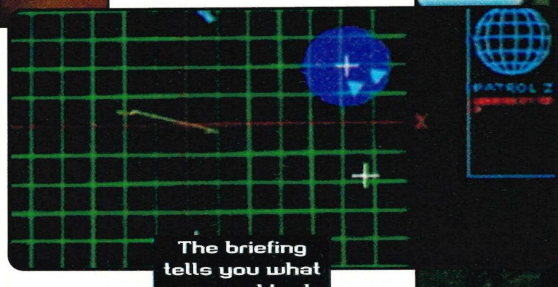


Meet the crew in the Victory's pub

nander III



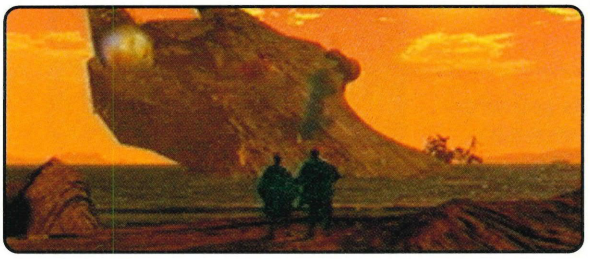


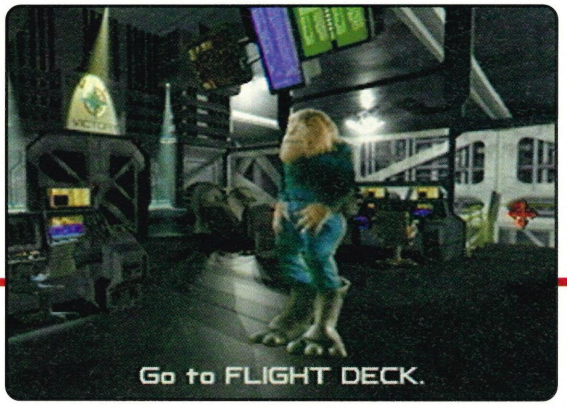


The briefing tells you what you need to do



Wing Commander III





This game cost an absolute fortune to make. We're talking about film-sized budgets here, none of this pay a programmer 150 quid a week and tell him to get the job done in three months nonsense. Millions of dollars went into this project, and it shows. On the presentation side at least.

Much of the money probably went on hiring the cast. You'd be struggling to find any Oscar material here admittedly, but the actors are a cut above the usual software company tea boys we're accustomed to seeing in the now-standard FMV intro sequences.

Mark Hamill, Malcolm McDowell, the fat bloke out of Indiana Jones, and Biff out of Back to the Future add a real air of professionalism to the proceedings, and the quality of the script allows their talents to shine through.

Unfortunately, despite all the game's presentational plus points, you can't disguise the fact that it doesn't play very well. The in-game graphics are a credit to the artists, but the coders of this version really should be shot.



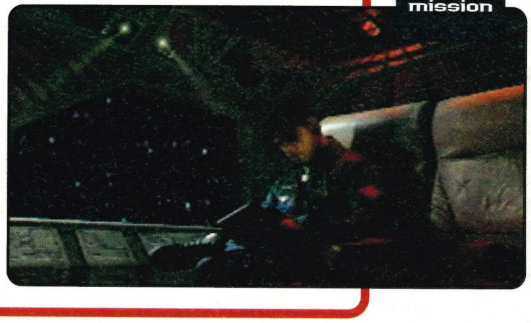


Malcolm McDowell pops up from time to time

Imagine the situation - you're hot on the heels of a Kilrathi fighter, and you've worn down his shields and caused loads of structural damage to his craft. You're lining him up for the final killer shot when all of a sudden your ship stops moving completely. For no reason. This generally only lasts for a couple of seconds, but that's plenty long enough for you to lose your target. Not only is this annoying in the extreme, it also makes the game a lot more difficult than it should be and ensures each mission lasts far longer than is really necessary.

It's a real shame, because some of the tasks you're set are great fun (there's nothing quite like the feeling when your last missile strikes home and a massive capital ship explodes in an enormous fireball), but for me they're ruined completely by this fairly major flaw.

Maybe I've been spoilt by the PC version, and I suppose I shouldn't really let that cloud my judgement on this, but when you know for a fact that the grass in this case is so much greener on the other side of the fence, it's difficult not to feel a little deflated.



Colonel Blair ponders his next mission

SUMMARY

GAME Wing Commander III
GENRE Interactive Movie
SOFTWARE HOUSE Electronic Arts
PRICE £44.99

Being wildly positive, Wing Commander III is an excellent game with a great storyline and a varied number of exciting missions. All that of course is perfectly true – if you can put up with the incredibly irritating flaw that I've pointed out in the main review. I can't, and therefore it would be unfair of me to give this game anything other than a distinctly average score.

GRAPHICS 8
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 8

OVERALL 7

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The shoot'em-up is one of the oldest and most exploited of game genres. **PSX-Pro** takes a look at the all-format shoot'em-up classics that will inspire PlayStation developers for many years to come

Blast from

10 Space Invaders

Arcade

All hail the Daddy! Before many of today's games-crazed teenagers were even born, Space Invaders was infiltrating (erstwhile *penny*) arcades, chip shops and newsagents all over Britain. Yep, people were playing Space Invaders long before the advent of the Walkman, the video and the CD.

Will Sargent, from sister mag GamePro, recently commented, *Imagine if you time travelled back to '79 with a PlayStation and said, here you are kids – stick the CD in and watch it go.* That's how far technology has come in 17 short years. Yet in that time no-one has lost any respect for Space Invaders – the first true 10 pence muncher. And that's when 10 pees were big, and valuable enough to buy a Mars bar – not like the little fiddly ones you get nowadays.

9 Viewpoint

PlayStation

The next generation's answer to classic early-eighties shoot'em-up Zaxxon. Better than the Raiden Project (two arcade shooters on a single PlayStation CD), it's more fun than banging plastic fairground moles on the head, although it can be more frustrating than losing at Frustration.









The 90 Runners-up!

Air Combat
Alcatraz
Alien Breed
Alien 3
Agony
Amnios
Anarchy
Apidya
Asteroids
Astro Battle
Astro Fighter
Astro Wars
Atomic Robo-Kid
Axelay
Battle Squadron
Blood Money
Bonanza Brothers
Centipede
Choplifter III
Cosmo Gang
Cybernator
Darius Twin
Desert Strike
Drop Zone
Empire Strikes Back
The Executioner
The Godfather
Gradius
Gradius 3
Gunfight At The OK Corral
Invader From Space
Killing Game Show
Lethal Enforcers
Llamatron
Mech Warrior
Midnight Resistance
Missile Command
Navy SEALs
Nemesis
Nemesis 2
1942
Operation Thunderbolt
Ork
Parodius
Parodius 2
Pegasus
Phalanx
Pleiads
Pop N Twinbee
Project X
Raiden
Raiden 2
R-Type 2
R-Type 3
Rubicon
Scramble
Shockwave
Silkworm
Simulcra
Smash TV
Space Gun
Star Wing
Stellar 7
Strider 2
Strike Gunner
Super Aleste
Super Pang
Super Star Wars
Super SWIV
Super Turrican
SWIV
Terminator
Terminator 2
Total Carnage
Turrican
Turrican 2
UN Squadron
Under Pressure
Venus
Video Kid
Viewpoint
Warzone
Wing Commander
Wings 2
Wolfchild
X-Out
Xenon 2 - Megablast
Xevious
Z-Out
Zaxxon
Zeitgeist

the past

Top 100 shoot'em-ups of all time

Highly recommended by us all, Viewpoint is a winner in that it brings together all the aspects of classic arcade gameplay and still finds a place for some highly competitive and co-operative two-player action. Mint soundtrack too, with a top tune for each level.

8 Millipede

Arcade

This vertical shoot'em-up's precursor, Centipede, was one of the first arcade games to use a trackball and a fire button – along with the fondly-remembered Missile Command. Millipede took the best elements of the rough and ready Centipede, added graphical polish and an autofire as well, giving the punter a choice of three stages from which to start.

Blowing up DDT icons at the right time caused a cloud which could wipe out an entire Millipede at one go. The most skilful Millipede players, however, would avoid doing this to provide a frantic freak-about amongst the fungus at the foot of the screen.

7 Galaxian

Arcade

This was the next stage in the evolution of shoot'em-ups after Space Invaders. The aliens in Galaxian didn't just jerk from side to side, they split off from their ranks and flew down at you! Appearing at about the time people were getting the hang of Space Invaders, Galaxian proved a roaring success in the arcades and on the Atari VCS. No-one ever called it Galaxian though, it was always Galaxians – a tribute to the game's relentless kamikaze aliens.

6 Gorf

Arcade

A weird conglomeration of Space Invaders (with an added curved forcefield), Galaxian, and various other odd shoot'em-ups, Gorf had the nerve to mock you in an evil robotic voice whenever you lost your last *nudger*. Instead of the usual joystick/fire button arrangement, a chunky silver and red joystick incorporating the fire button was

Blast from the past

The Top 100 Shoot'em-ups Of All Time

set in the centre of the machine's control panel.

A feature of Gorf was a superb firing facility whereby if you let off a blast which you knew was going to miss, you didn't have to wait until it hit the top of the screen before you could shoot again. A big, loud, technicolour spaceship appeared every five sheets as a guardian. It took several hits to destroy, but the explosion which heralded its demise was spectacular and well worth the wait.



5 Loaded

PlayStation

Ignoring the seminal view angles, professional use of gouraud shading and amazing characters created by revered comic book artists, Loaded is simply a blinding blood 'n' bile blast. As violent a videogame as you could dare play, a full level of Loaded is on this month's coverdisc - in case you hadn't already noticed. A worthy number five.

4 Phoenix

Arcade

Playing Phoenix was akin to being hurled head-first into a Harryhausen movie without the crew of the Argo there to bail you out when the going got tough. Where Gorf had a mothership, Phoenix had a *mutha* ship. All the adversaries were birds, so death was hard to stomach - their insistent electronic squawks were more than enough encouragement to punch the screen every time a life was lost.

3 Defender

Arcade

Finding your way around the control deck was bad enough. A hyperspace button, a joystick that only went up and down, a thrust, a reverse and a fire button put off softer gamesplayers. One for the dogged, persistent punter, Defender was the first decent horizontal shooter, and is still by far the best of its genre. Gameplay that didn't just involve shooting - you had to pick up and return small *pieces of earth* too - made matters appallingly tough. Being good at Defender was a true measure of gaming skill - the hand-to-eye co-ordination and manual dexterity required was unbelievable.

2 Robotron

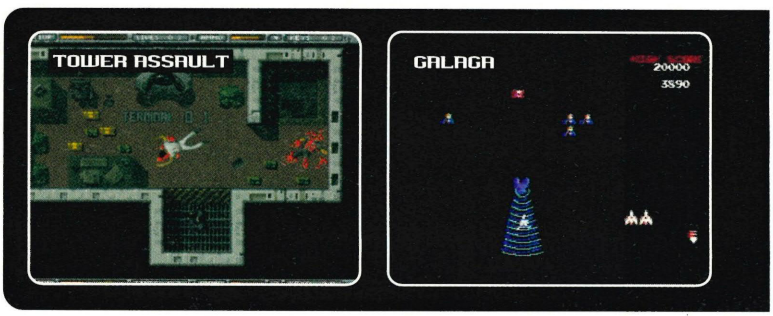
Arcade

As each screen of Robotron materialised, you had to work out an escape route. The play area was so full of adversaries that if you stayed still for as much as a second, you were a goner. Presented with two joysticks, the idea was to run for your life with one while firing eight ways with the other. The *Grunts* that relentlessly pursued you were also capable of turning humans into sinister androids, but not if you got there first. Since paid a tribute by Jeff Minter's Llamatron, in which you had to shoot turds, toilet rolls and coke cans.

1 Galaga

Arcade/PlayStation

Galaga has brought more joy to the world than Noel and Liam could ever dream of. Galaga had a bonus stage every fourth wave, in which you could score a bonus of 10,000 if your shooting was up to scratch. In the days where scores were everything, having a double shooter in time for the bonus stages was an absolute must. It was littered with videogaming highlights and will never be bettered. The memorable heart-in-mouth moment when a laser blast scoots upwards towards the veering alien ship that holds captive your potential co-pilot, is just one of many.



Alex Lee only liked Sigue Sigue Sputnik because Shoot it up was a line from their top 10 hit, Love Missile F1-11

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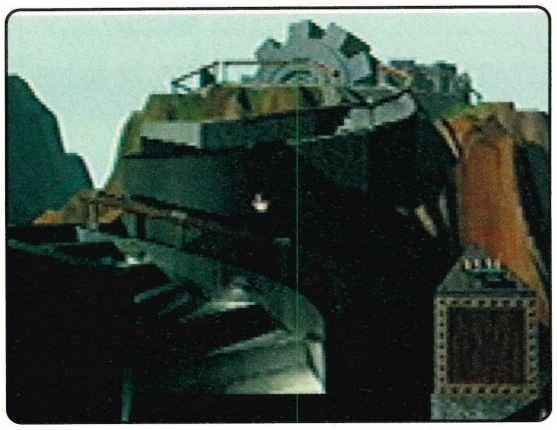
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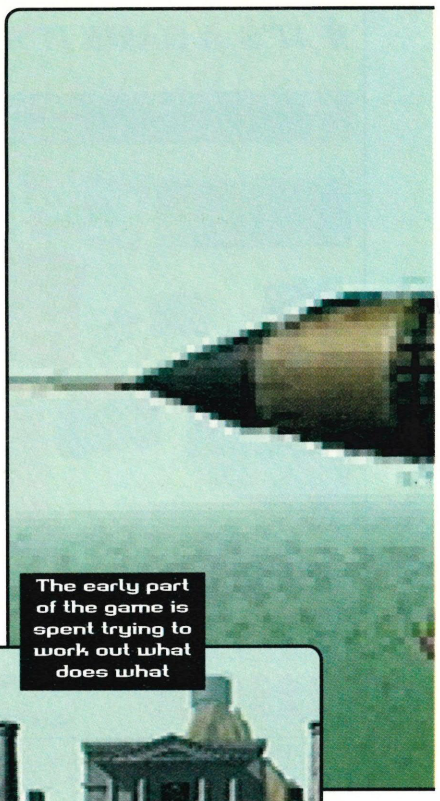
The graphics may look nice, but they don't really move all that much



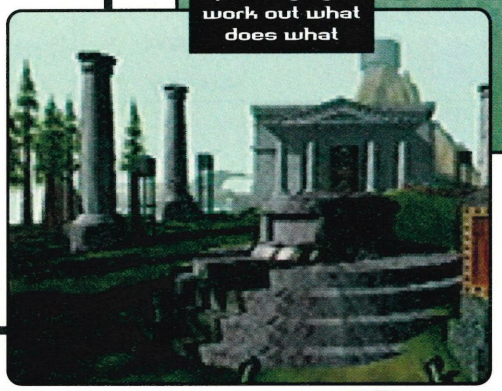
Myst is a real thinker's game. It's an adventure, it looks amazing, and it's very, very difficult. It's also one of the most successful PC games of all time, and has legions of fans (admittedly, mainly across America) who have spent countless hours trying to unravel the mysteries of the island on which you are dumped for the vast majority of the game.

Can't really fail can it? Well, in some areas, yes. I'm more than a little surprised that Sony has chosen to release this on the PlayStation because, let's face it, most console owners don't go in for this type of thing as a rule. Don't get me wrong, I think it's a great idea for Sony to try and appeal to a new audience, but at the moment it's extremely doubtful that there enough PlayStation owners out there who are willing to buy this type of game.

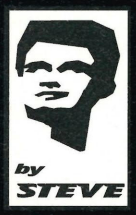
Who knows? Maybe Myst will be a runaway success. I very much doubt it though.



The early part of the game is spent trying to work out what does what



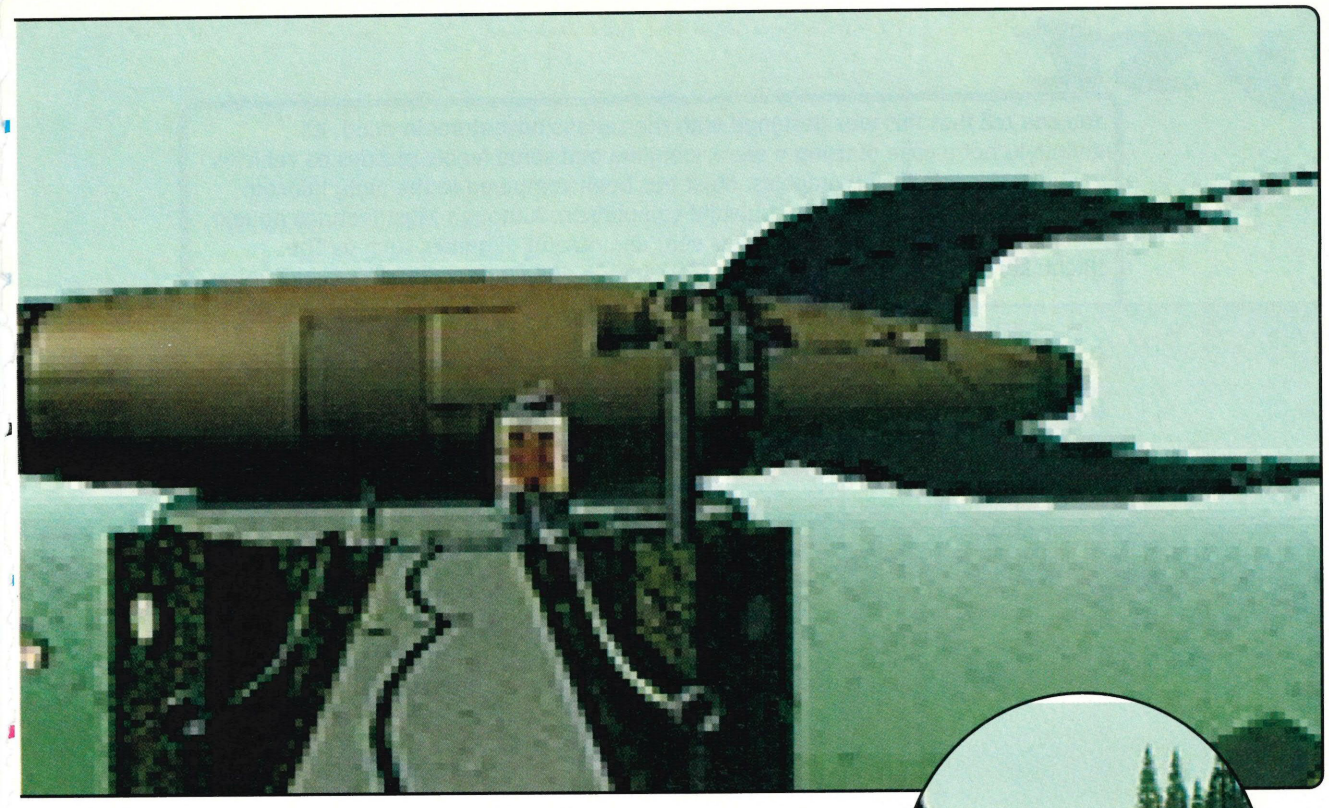
Myst

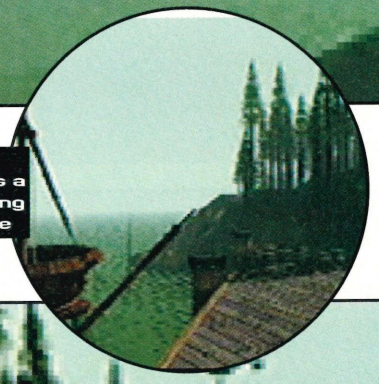


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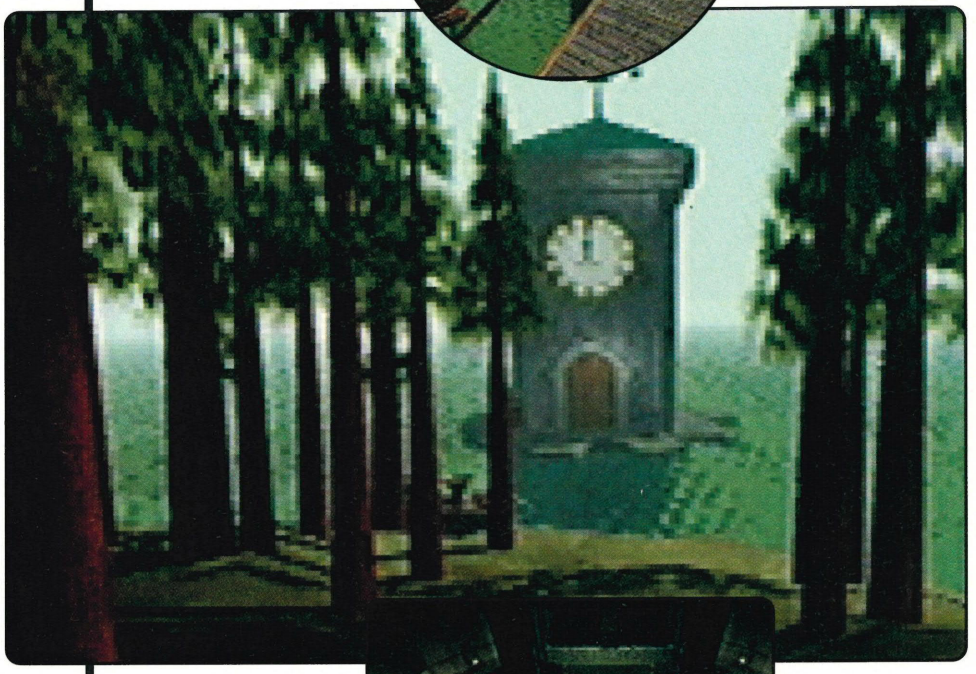
Do Sony's next gen machine and graphic adventures mix, or do they add up to the videogame equivalent of a tuna and jam sandwich? We take a bite...

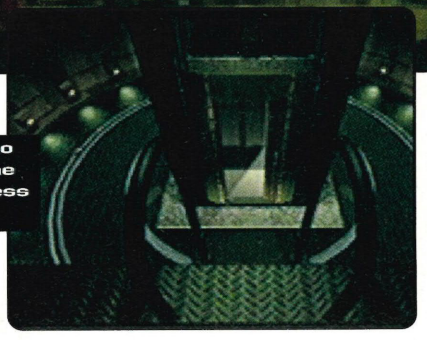






Above: The spaceship plays a key role in getting about the place





Myst manages to portray a genuine feeling of loneliness throughout

Initially you'll probably be put off by one of two things. The first is the use of the static screens which make up the whole game. They do look stunning, but at least 95% of them are totally devoid of animation or even movement. All you're meant to do is move the cursor around the screen and click on the objects you want to manipulate or the door you want to go through. They don't really encourage you to try and progress to see more of the game.

The other thing that'll probably put you off is the almost total lack of help you'll receive from the game.

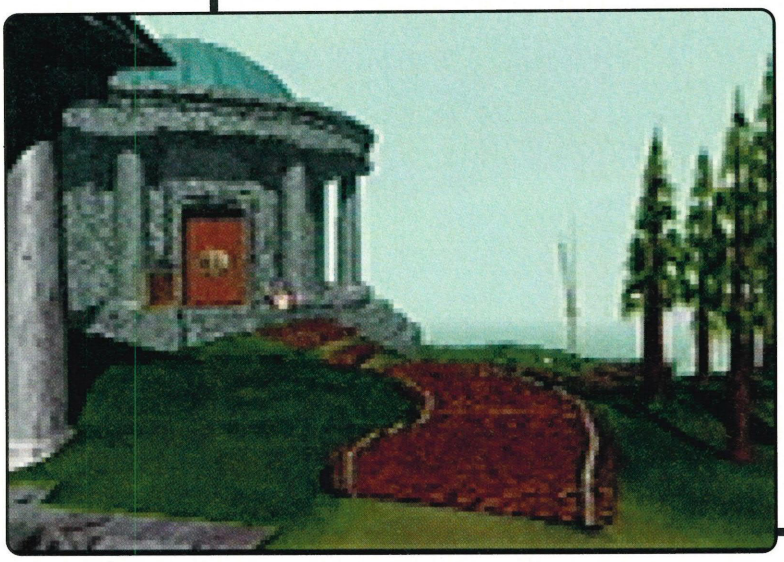
You're just dumped on the island and forced to wander around trying to find what each item does. There are no pointers in the right direction, no informative cut-scenes giving hints as to what you should be doing, nothing.

Imagine if you were actually left alone on a strange island. That's exactly the feeling Myst manages to successfully convey.

If you don't have an inquisitive mind that's keen to explore and discover, the chances are you'll lose interest in Myst very quickly indeed.

Myst

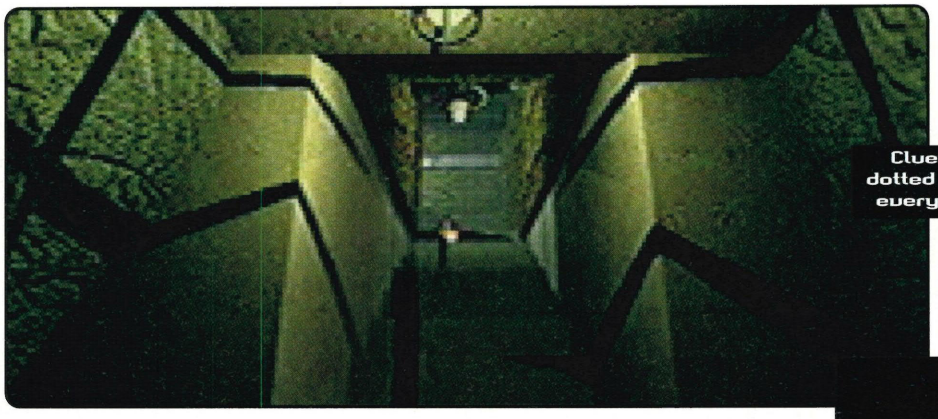
You can tell that this was designed with the serious adventurer in mind. It's definitely not a case of using a weak storyline and some feeble puzzles as vehicles to show off some flashy graphics. Myst has been compared to the early Infocom text adventures, and that's a very valid comparison. Although Myst features no text whatsoever, the style and feel of it is very reminiscent of games such as The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, the Zork trilogy and Leather Goddesses of Phobos.

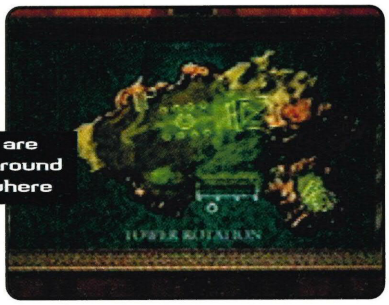


The puzzles are of a similar vein and the exploration element definitely is.

But this is no bad thing. Infocom text adventures may be around a decade old, but for many players they have yet to be bettered.

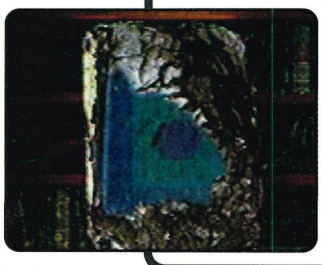
Myst doesn't have the excessive images of mutilation or the fluid rendered animations that Acclaim's D uses to attract players. Instead it chooses to fight its corner using only the quality of its puzzles as a defence. And for my money, Myst just manages to pull it off.





Clues are dotted around everywhere

I really enjoyed playing Myst. You have to put some real time in before you start getting anywhere, but this only serves to make the feeling of achievement that little bit more intense when you do finally piece together the first part of the puzzle. As always though, this can work both ways. In the first couple of hours of play it's very difficult not to give up because it's difficult to see where the feeling of satisfaction is going to come from. If you don't approach the game logically, the only way you're going to progress is if you stumble across the answer by accident rather than working it out for yourself.



As a final point, I'd add an extra £18.50 to the game's asking price if I were you. That's to cover the cost of buying the official Myst hint book, because unless you're prepared to devote a sizeable portion of your life to playing the game, you're going to need the occasional nudge in the right direction.

SUMMARY
GAME Myst
GENRE Adventure
SOFTWARE HOUSE Sony Int. Ent.
PRICE £44.99

I can see why this got the high scores it did on the PC, as it's far more suited to that machine than the PlayStation. Even so, it works well and will tax even the most proficient adventurer. It's moody, enjoyable, and manages to recreate the feeling of being alone better than most other games. £45 (plus £18.50 for the hint book) seems a small price to pay for this epic when you consider some of the short-lived experiences that cost a similar amount.

GRAPHICS 9
GAMEPLAY 7
LASTABILITY 9
OVERALL 7½

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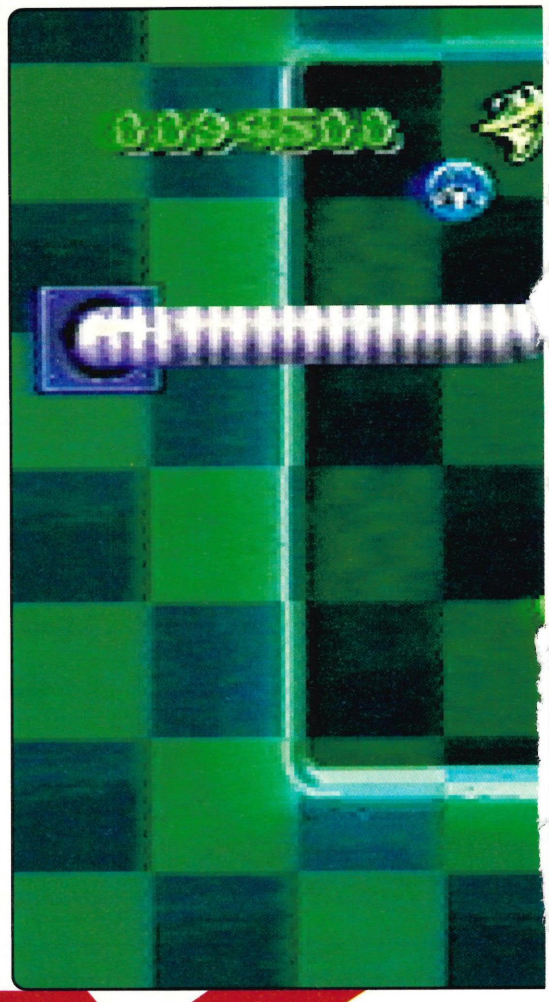


Having a lizard as the central character of a videogame is something which is strange in itself. But, when you think about it, over the years we've seen many an oddity taking centre stage in a plethora of platformers. Look at Zool and Nintendo's Donkey Kong Country for a couple of examples.

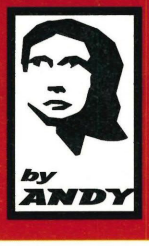
Gex is arriving in the wake of Rayman, the best PlayStation platformer to date, and should fare well, as fans of colourful, bouncy platform fests have been pretty much neglected thus far. Admittedly it's nothing new, but a few neat touches and some fluent gameplay make everything move along nicely.

Things are going fairly well for our lizard-like hero prior to the start of the game. He's sitting back in a comfy chair in his reptilian abode, chomping on flies, watching the telly and generally relaxing – that is until some extremely weird cosmic-type stuff happens, and he ends up trapped in a bizarre TV environment.

Gex must battle through five gigantic worlds – Cemetery, Cartoon World etc – comprised of a number of incredibly large levels. The extent of the challenge varies throughout the proceedings, but you are kept on your toes at all times.

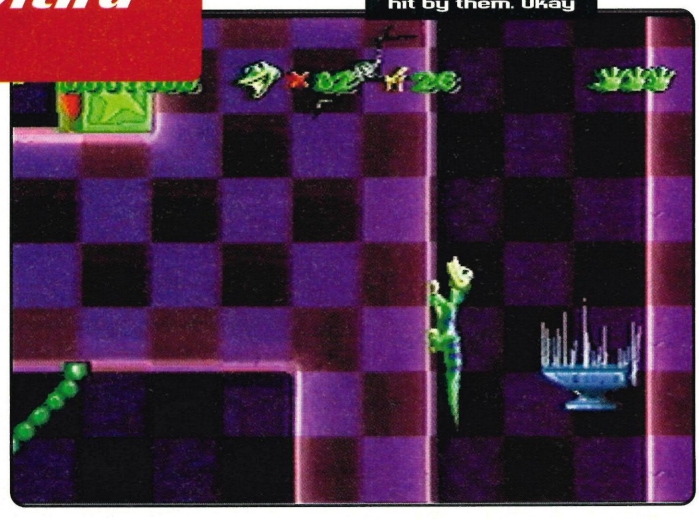


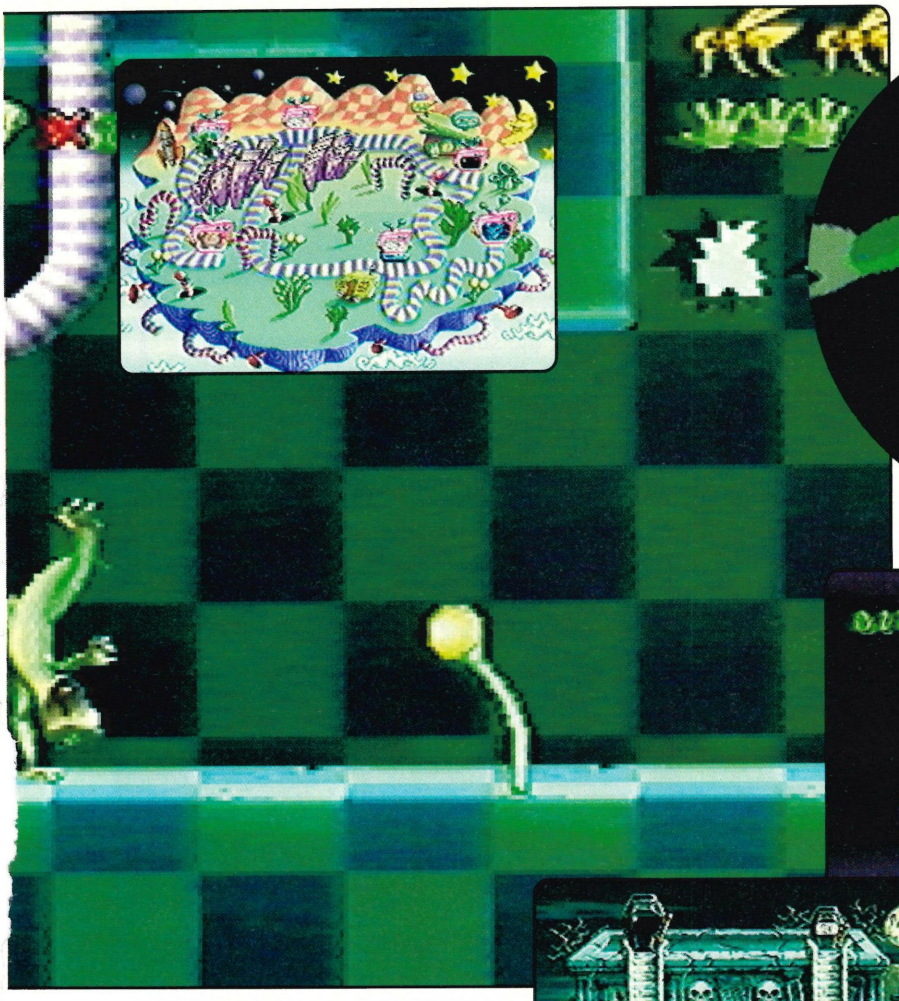
Gex



Warning! Warning! Unashamedly huge yet fairly standard platformer with a lizard alert









Above: Gex loses a life in his struggle for victory





The game begins right here in the cemetery

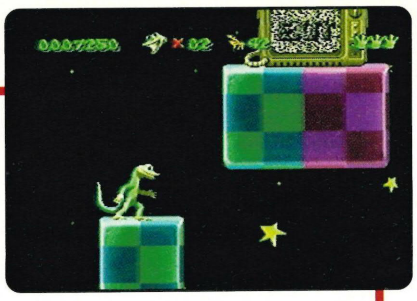
It would be foolish to say that a platform game could be any different from the ones we've seen countless times before, although BMG has managed to add a couple of elements to this which make it rather unusual. Gex can run and jump in platform-standard fashion, but he can walk up walls and cling to ceilings too. He also has a rather long tongue, which he can extend to collect vital weapons or replenish his energy. His tail too is a lethal weapon and can lash out at enemies, swiping them out of the contest.

There are gems to collect throughout, and these work in much the same way as those in Donkey Kong Country – collect a hundred and an extra credit is awarded.

Each level is split into stages which may only be accessed once the remote control for the next TV stage is successfully taken out of the exit.



Gex



Controlling Gex is a breeze, with only a few buttons being needed to jump, tail swipe and eat. Along the way you'll learn what is required to successfully complete each level. Sometimes a little luck is needed, but there's no substitute for quick fingers and all-round skill.

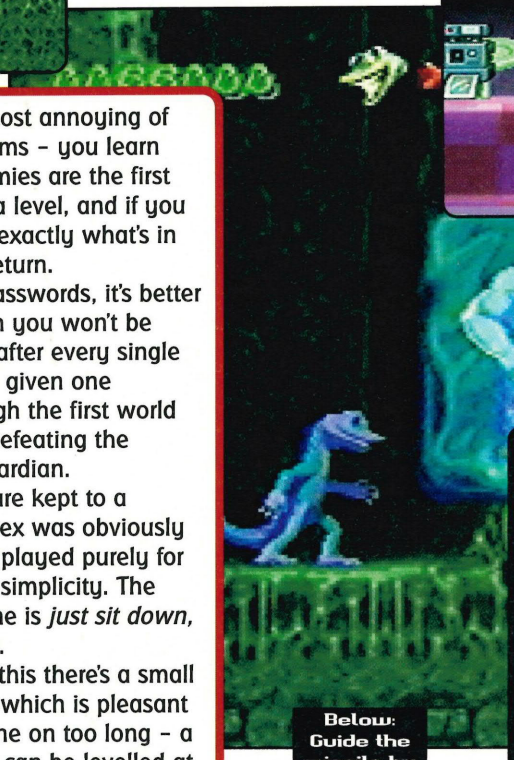
As you progress through the levels it becomes obvious that this is no simple stroll. The stages become bigger and bigger, and include features such as hidden traps, teleporters, bonus stages and dead-ends. The exit can be just about anywhere, and Gex will test even the most proficient platform player. A world is only completed once an end-of-level boss is defeated, and it will come as no jaw-dropping surprise to learn that these are mean muthas which will take some time to suss.

During play, the sound effects are rather standard, but to make things a little more interesting, the 'talents' of US comedian Dana Gould have been employed for the voice of Gex. He tries to wisecrack his way though the stages, but his feeble gags wear very thin, very quickly.



The advantages of having a rather long tongue are second to none





Gex has that most annoying of platform problems – you learn where the enemies are the first time you play a level, and if you fail, you know exactly what's in store on your return.

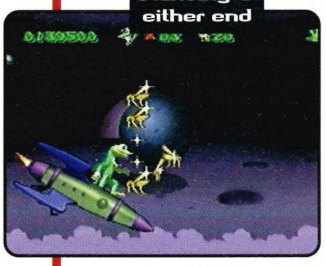
In terms of passwords, it's better news. Although you won't be offered a code after every single stage, you'll be given one half-way through the first world and one after defeating the end-of-level guardian.

The options are kept to a minimum, as Gex was obviously designed to be played purely for its unashamed simplicity. The overriding theme is *just sit down, play and enjoy*.

On top of all this there's a small intro sequence which is pleasant but doesn't drone on too long – a criticism which can be levelled at a lot of other games. The balance is just right.

Although there's not quite as much to Gex as there is to Rayman, you'll still find plenty of enormous stages and involving gameplay. Things are looking pretty good for BMG with this powerful platformer.

Below: Guide the missile by standing at either end



SUMMARY
GAME Gex
GENRE Platformer
SOFTWARE HOUSE BMG
PRICE £44.99

I'm not much of a platform fan, but I must confess that since I haven't played such a game for so long – due to a platform drought on the PlayStation – I quite enjoyed the mindless stupidity of it all. The graphics are top, and with a few neat touches added to make it a little different from other platformers, Gex has a lot going for it. It's hardly the most complex effort you'll ever see, but it has enough gameplay and challenge to keep you happily hopping along.

GRAPHICS 8
GAMEPLAY 9
LASTABILITY 7
OVERALL 8

X marks the Spot!



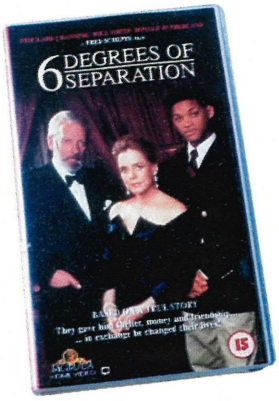
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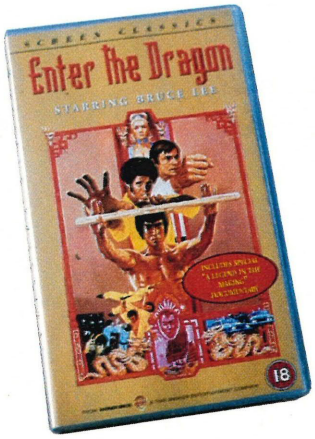
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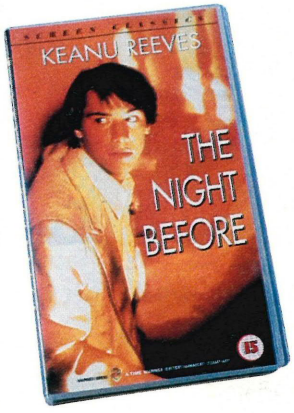
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On a scale of 1-3, how exciting is Keanu Reeves?

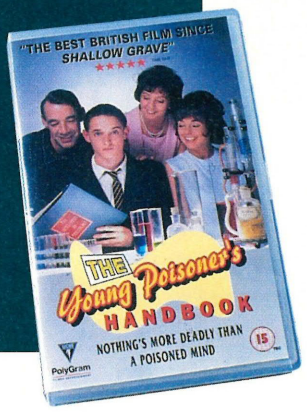
4 Special beat'em-up/vinyl crossover incident! We have 12 Tekken 12-inch singles from JVC that are in desperate need of turntables
How many syllables are there in Tekken?



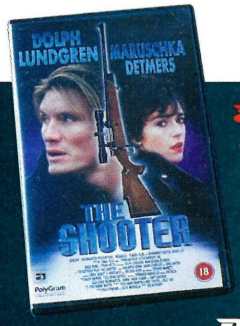
5 Win a pair of Adidas Predator football boots if you can't be bothered to send off the form on page 72
How many Predators would Rolf Harris's humorous character Jake The Peg need to wear?



6 The best British film since Shallow Grave, one of three The Young Poisoner's Handbook videos from Polygram Filmed Entertainment could be yours
How many people shared the flat in Shallow Grave (before and after the new lodger died)?

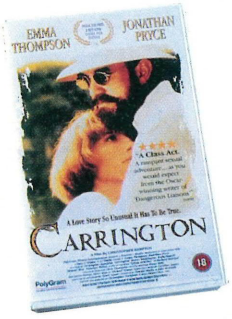


baby 5

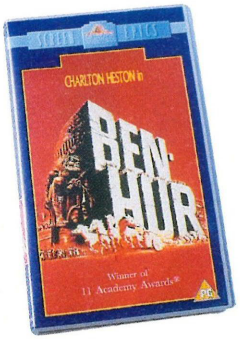


8 The Shooter captures Dolph Lundgren's finest 90 minutes since Rocky IV. One of three copies could be yours, courtesy of Polygram Filmed Entertainment
Which Rocky movie was the best one?

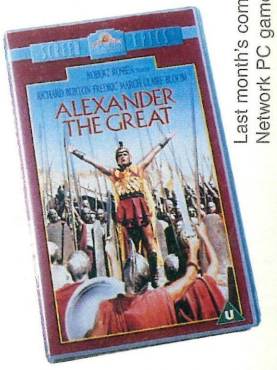
7 Win one of three copies of Polygram Filmed Entertainment's Carrington. For discerning adult readers only. Steamy content apparently
How many people make up a bizarre love triangle?



9 For the epic video fanatic, five copies of Ben Hur, winner of 11 Academy Awards, are easily winnable from MGM/UA
If 10 of Ben Hur's Oscars were taken away, how many would remain?



10 Staying with the cast of thousands theme, how does Alexander The Great grab you? One of five of these MGM/UA vids could be yours, forever!
On a scale of 1-3, how great is Alexander?



Last month's competition pages neglected to tell you what the Infogrames prize was. Soz. It's five Network PC games, five packs of Infogrames playing cards and five Alone In The Dark Guides

PSX

Tick the relevant boxes on the answer form for the competitions you'd like to enter

Name
Address

Age
Telephone no

	One	Two	Three
1	○	○	○
2	○	○	○
3	○	○	○
4	○	○	○
5	○	○	○
6	○	○	○
7	○	○	○
8	○	○	○
9	○	○	○
10	○	○	○

○ Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies

Send your entries to our freepost address below

Everyone's a Winner 5
FREEPOST
PSX-Pro
Media House
Adlington Park
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK10 4YB

PSX-Pro Survey

Cast your mind back – if you will – to the time you filled out the survey form from Issue One. We've read them all, analysed the responses and are proud to present you with the results

Age Profile

The majority of readers are over 16, with almost a third of our survey respondents occupying the 21-25 year-old age bracket

Content

It seems that in terms of content, Issue One's 148 pages had the right mix of reviews, previews, features and guides.

Overall, the readers believe the editorial content is well up to scratch, with only the Internet News section being properly disliked. We've since dropped it.

Reviews

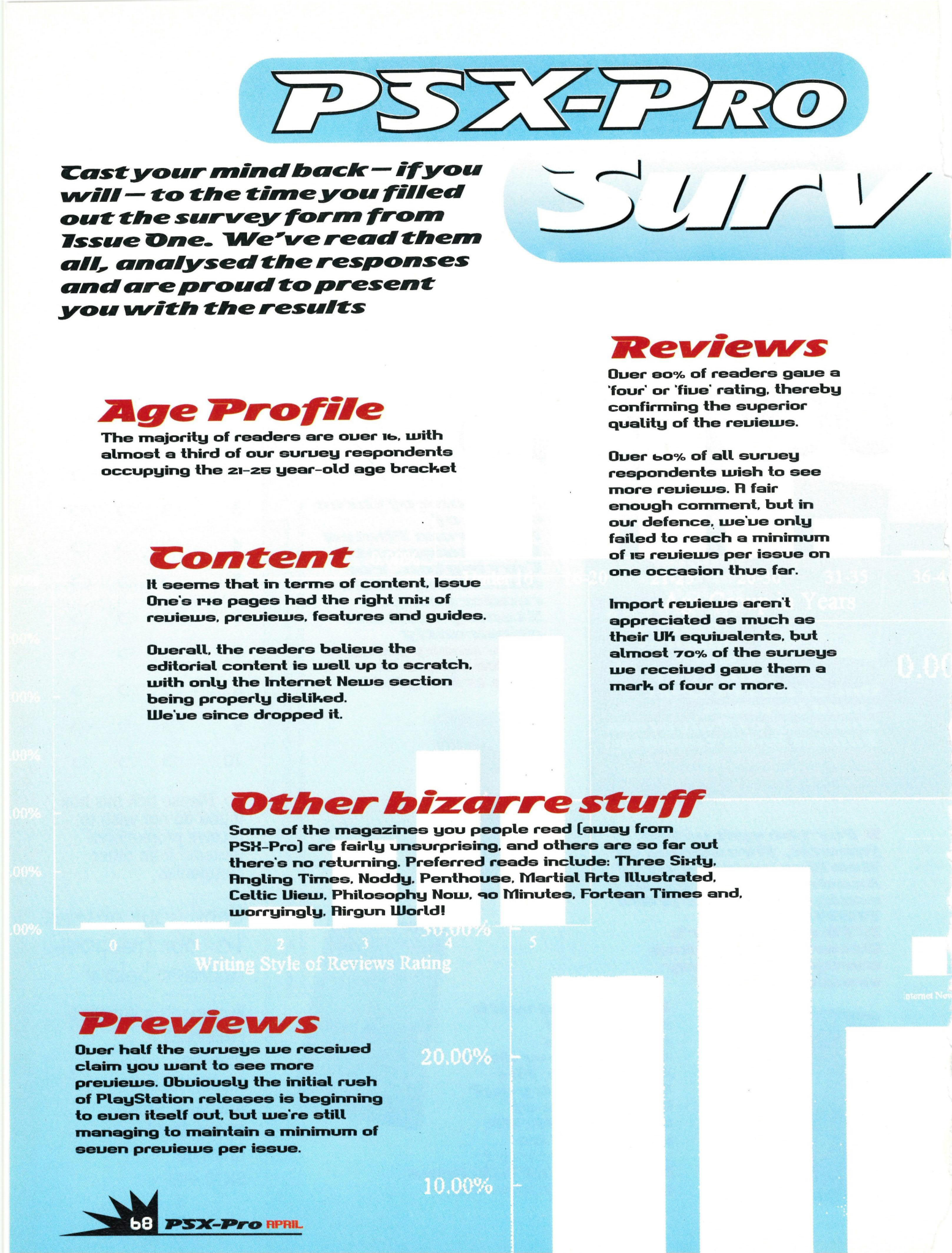
Over 80% of readers gave a 'four' or 'five' rating, thereby confirming the superior quality of the reviews.

Over 60% of all survey respondents wish to see more reviews. A fair enough comment, but in our defence, we've only failed to reach a minimum of 15 reviews per issue on one occasion thus far.

Import reviews aren't appreciated as much as their UK equivalents, but almost 70% of the surveys we received gave them a mark of four or more.

Other bizarre stuff

Some of the magazines you people read (away from PSX-Pro) are fairly unsurprising, and others are so far out there's no returning. Preferred reads include: Three Sixty, Angling Times, Noddy, Penthouse, Martial Arts Illustrated, Celtic View, Philosophy Now, 90 Minutes, Fortean Times and, worryingly, Airgun World!



Previews

Over half the surveys we received claim you want to see more previews. Obviously the initial rush of PlayStation releases is beginning to even itself out, but we're still managing to maintain a minimum of seven previews per issue.

ey results

Style

What is also apparent is that our writing style seems to suit our readership's requirements in every department. The general consensus is that we use exactly the right amount of text for reviews and previews, although more screenshots would be appreciated.

The design style is also rated highly. The overall view is that it looks like no other PlayStation mag and has a character of its own for this reason.

Design

On the design front, once again over 80% were impressed enough to give a four or a five rating. The vast majority of you are keen to keep the current look of the mag.

All sections received strong praise for their design content, with the exception of the Internet News, which has already been sacked.

Quotes

Some corkers here. These are examples of comments and suggestions as to how we can improve the mag...

"Cover more issues" – in a mag for the PlayStation?
"Different text" – what exactly does this mean?
"It's fairly perfect" – could you be more specific?
"Text typed in single sections" – clever.
"Just keep it funny and good" – naturally.
"Layout" – a helpful comment.
"Scrap it and start again" – okay, just for you.

Conclusions

Generally, the improvements people want to see are few and far between, but the one thing which readers believe would improve the mag tenfold, is the inclusion of a demo disc. Hope you enjoy the disc on the front of this issue!

The design of the mag as a whole has been well received, with most people being as impressed with the look as they are with the editorial content.



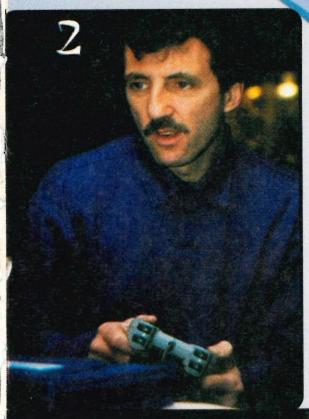


The boys at PSX-Pro did themselves proud at Anfield last month, impressing everyone with their skill on the field and on the PlayStation. Here's a rundown of the day's events

The Anfield power soc

Edited Highlights...

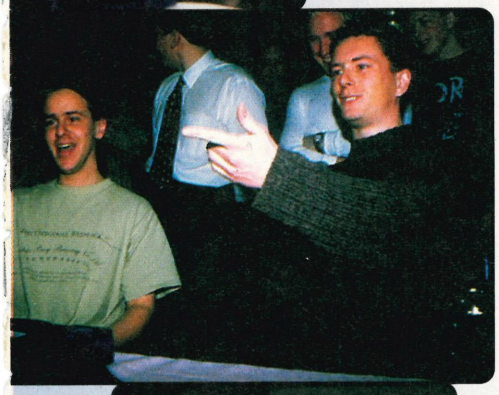
1 The tournament begins in the Anfield Trophy Room with 32 European games journalists vying for the title of *Adidas Power Soccer Champion*



2 Alan Kennedy, ex-Liverpool pro and MC for the day, crashes out in the first round, despite his gritty determination to win

3 After four hard-fought rounds, PSX-Pro's Andy Sharp reaches the final against some bloke called Chris from an Internet magazine

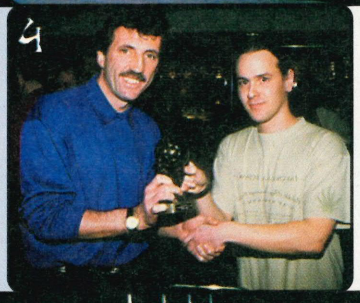
4 Despite going a goal down, Andy fights back in the dying seconds to win 2-1, bringing the trophy to IDG Media and thereby proving PSX-Pro's dominance



5 The pre-match meal. From left - Alex Lee, ad manager Simon Lees, Amiga Computing's Andy Maddock, PC Home's Neil Jones, and Andy Sharp

6 One of ex-England captain Phil Thompson's numerous tussles with the burly Simon Lees

7 A rare occasion - Thompson manages a free shot on goal, evading the attention of the eager PSX-Pro players



8 From left - Neil Jones, Phil Thompson, *supersub* David Fairclough, and the ever-battling Simon Lees

9 One of David Fairclough's many advances on goal - trying to outwit Alex Lee with his tricky footwork

10 Fairclough decides on a side-footer and Alex Lee spreads himself well to snuff out the chance

11 Thompson battles for possession with cheery Andy Maddock. *I'm just pleased to be here,* commented a clearly chuffed Andy later

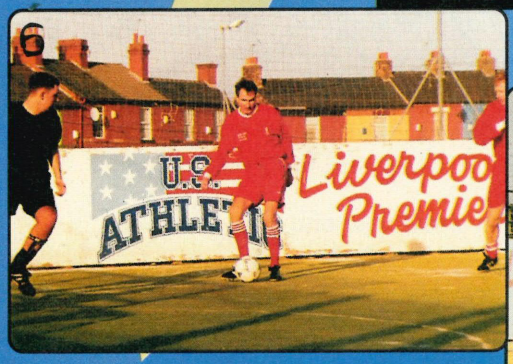


12 Keen to hone their gamesplaying skills, Alan Kennedy and Sammy Lee try to come to grips with Adidas Power Soccer

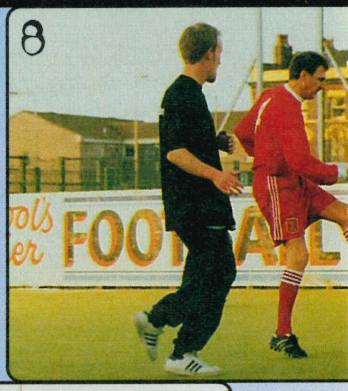
cer experience

The Anfield power soccer



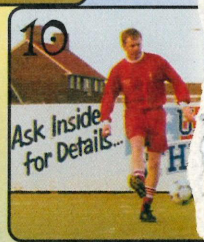












Alex's nightmare
1st round won 4-0
2nd round won 3-0
Quarter-final lost 3-2

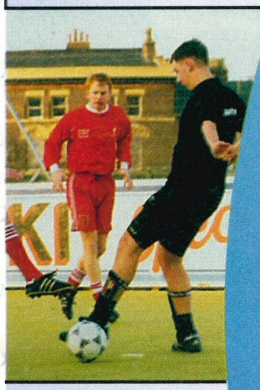
Andy's journey to glory
1st round won 2-0
2nd round won 2-0
Quarter-final won 2-1
Semi-final won 3-0
Final won 2-1

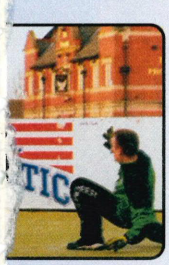
Alex and Andy will take on anyone at Adidas Power Soccer, but they'll leave the real thing to the ex-pros

experience









Win loads of amazing, expensive, limited edition footy stuff

Competition

First prize

Liverpool shirt produced especially for the Adidas Power Soccer tournament. Only seven of these exist in the world! 1970's-style, red, long sleeved top with embroidered badge and lettering
Autographed Adidas Questra leather football
Autographed framed match programme
Pair of Adidas Predator football boots

Three runners-up prizes

Three pairs of Adidas Predator football boots

Questions

1)Which flame-haired ex-Liverpool striker was known as 'supersub'?
a) David Fairclough
b) Len Fairclough
c) Brian Fairclough

2) Which ex-Liverpool player twice scored the winning goal in European Cup Finals?
a) Alan Kennedy
b) Ray Kennedy
c) John F Kennedy

3)Which ex-Liverpool player now regularly appears on Match Of The Day?
a) Pete Best
b) Terry Sullivan
c) Alan Hansen

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Tie-breaker (complete in less than 10 words)
The Predator Shot is harder than...

_____

_____

_____

☐ Tick here if you do not wish to receive promotional material from other companies

Competition

Krazy Ivan

If you 'vant' to be alone then this [illegible] game for you. At least it was until now because with this guide you'll feel as if the entire PSX-Pro staff is looking over your shoulder. Just imagine us rutting [illegible] sniggering at your incompetence before smugly giving you a few little [illegible] you in the right direction.

Game

We're too good to you lot you know. We spend hours slaving over a hot joypad to make things easier for you, but do we get the appreciation we deserve? No! Look at us. We don't go out any more, you never notice when we've been to the hairdresser's...

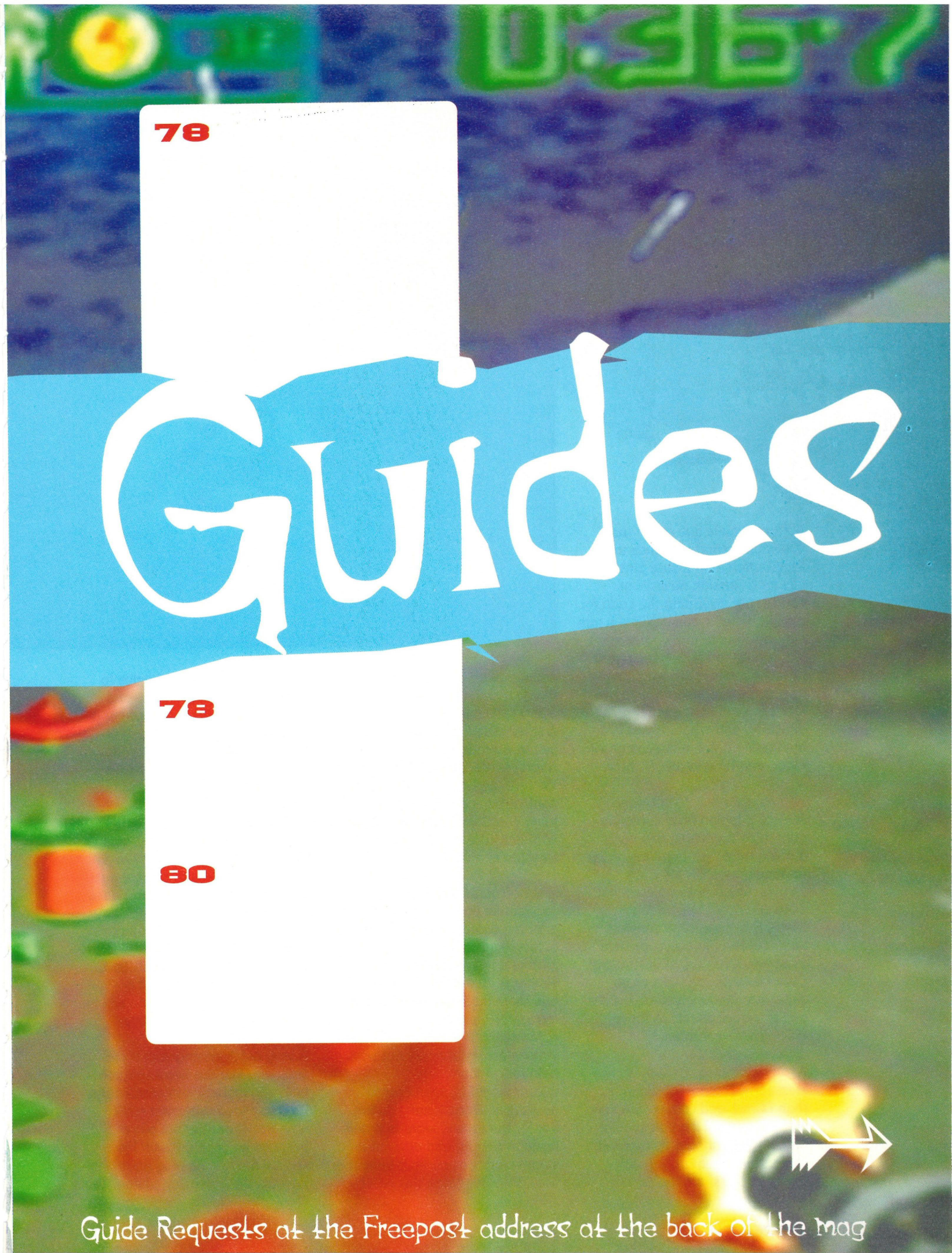
If there's a particular guide you'd like to see in PSX-Pro, write to

78

78

80

Guides



Guide Requests at the Freepost address at the back of the mag

Krazy Ivan

The robotic madness that is Sony's Krazy Ivan - dissected and divulged for your eternal delight and joy



Krazy Ivan is one of the more original efforts to grace the PlayStation, and it sure ain't easy. Life for a Russian never is of course, but swapping the Lada for a great metallic cyber-suit is a rare old transition to make, and that's why you'll no doubt need a little bit of help along the way. It's always best to play through the levels in progressing order of difficulty, and what follows is a brief guide to the ranksters you'll meet, and how to defeat them.

Russia

A small Siberian level containing only three Sentients, this basically forms a training ground on which to hone your skills for what follows. Must be completed first.

Dwarf

Dwarf is a large, slow sentient with low-level intelligence. The most effective way of destroying Dwarf is to use rockets, as its sheer size renders it cumbersome and therefore unable to move quickly to avoid them.

Dedlok

Another big bast, Dedlok is blessed with more intelligence than Dwarf, and comes complete with a powerful leg bolt special attack which should be avoided using the side shunt. As with Dwarf, rockets and the 50mm cannon (with plenty of skilful dodging) will destroy it.

Raptor

A small biped robot with twin cannons mounted on its head, Raptor is the fastest sentient on the level and can be difficult to deal with because of its attack runs. The 50mm cannon coupled with a scythe beam will sort the reptilian er, monkey out.

Middle East

The Middle East should be played after the completion of Russia, and before France. This level takes the form of a desert, and the three sentients it contains are stronger and more intelligent than those found in level one.

Qualm

A slow, powerful opponent with twin rocket launchers accompanied by twin energy projectiles. Occasionally during battle, Qualm will warp to a new location nearby and attempt to surprise-attack you from behind or from the side. When this robot turns transparent and begins to rotate, back away slightly and watch your radar to see where it appears. Because of its lack of speed, Qualm can be taken down with plenty of homing missiles coupled with loads of laser fire.

Sentinel

The Sentinel is the first flying sentient you will come up against. Once again, homing missiles and lasers are the key to putting out the lights on Sentinel, but it does have a special attack which you should be wary of. Basically this consists of falling from the sky and launching mortars towards you, but by simply backing off a distance of 7000 units you will be able to avoid major damage.

Prowl

A very quick enemy which will stalk you like the beast you are before launching into attack runs. It's a bad idea to remain static with Prowl on the um, prowl, because he soon pulls off his special move - namely pouncing towards the powersuit's head. The

If only I'd steered clear of the Russian vodka. Now I don't know where I am or what my name is

side shunt should be used to combat this and its spray fire. Then, by dropping a bomb on its head, followed by a burst of laser fire, the job should be complete.

France

Arachan

The only real threats posed by this sentient are its special homing projectiles. But these only have a limited range, are slow-moving anyway, and are therefore easily avoided. Plasma or laser fire should take care of Arachan in no time at all.

Scorch

Scorch is a snake-like, hit-and-run-type sentient which is capable of burrowing into the ground and resurfacing in a completely different location to ambush you. When fighting Scorch you should keep a careful eye on his radar, as it can still be tracked while underground. Because of their large blast radius, vortex bombs linked with plasma are best used against this particular gadge.

Buzzsaw

Buzzsaw is another flying sentient, but unlike Sentinel is at home either on the ground or in the air. Again, keep an eye on this badster's radar when it's airborne, and be particularly aware of its six-shot special when it's on the ground. Use plasma and special weapons when Buzzsaw is grounded, but for air attacks quick repeat weapons such as the trusty 50mm cannon or homing missiles work a treat.

Carapace

Another big sentient with heavy firepower, Carapace is also very fast. So, once again, quick repeat weapons are the best way to do some damage.

Behemoth

A huge elephantine monsta of a sentient, Behemoth's best weapons are on its sides, and it will try to turn you in order to bring these into play. This monster is susceptible to an attack from the back, where defences are low.

USA

Thunderfoot

A mid-sized biped sentient with a special heavy firepower attack, whereby its chestplates open and a cluster of shots stream out. This and its fast-firing standard shot can make life very difficult for the player who chooses to remain stationary, and a lot of side shunting will be required. Your best bet with Thunderfoot is to hit him from the side as he performs his chest-burst attack, using your heaviest weapon possible.

Reflex

Reflex is the smallest sentient in the game, but one of the most cunning. Reflex floats around attacking you with hit-and-run tactics before using his special hologram attack – creating two holographic reproductions of itself which attack you in wildly 'fair' fashion. Although these repros look just like the original, they have very little energy, and the real Reflex can be determined by watching the enemy energy readout bar.

Granite

Has a special defence mode where it curls up into a ball and launches mortar bomb attacks on you. To damage Granite you must wait for it to come out of defence mode and attack it before it has chance to re-adopt 'The Hedgehog Position'. When the sentient is in defence mode you should back off to around 7000 units and wait for your chance to strike.

Fireball

The non-bijou Fireball is a massive biped with no less than six energy projectile launchers and a special stomp attack which it uses to pound you into dust. You must constantly avoid fire by side shunting, and back away from the stomp attack whilst hitting Fireball with, basically, everything you've got.

Japan

The last level, with the hardest sentients around. Even we struggled to beat these mullers, but this is what you need to know to save the Earth.

Claw

A crab-like giant, Claw mixes heavy firepower with good dodging skills. The best way to beat it is to simply pound away. Er, that's it. Sorry.

Arclight

Benefits from a unique design consisting of an eagle-type head mounted on a bizarre, gliding tripod. If you remain static for too long, Arclight will unleash its special spread shot, which causes massive damage on contact. So, er, move about and that lot.

Flamefront

Flamefront is a mixture of wolf and man, with fast movement, powerful weapons and excellent dodging skills. Your best bet here is to home the monkey as much as possible, and employ hit-and-run tactics.

Colossus

The final, massive, stupidly-hard-to-beat giant, with two massive guns in place of arms, Colossus will use its head as a battering ram if need be. Fire and dodge constantly and be prepared to move fast if it decides to butt you. *We'll bring you more next month.*

Street Fighter Zero

There are so many hidden parts to this beat'em-up that we thought we should do a little research and share our new-found knowledge with you



Rayman

How about some handy cheats and codes that will prolong your game life no end? Don't worry about cheating, Rayman is one of the hardest games around



To Select AKUMA/GOUKI or M. BISON/ VEGA

Get to the Random Select question mark on your side. Now press and hold L2 before performing this 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.

To select Dan:

Move the cursor to the Random Select question mark on your side of the screen. Hold L2 and R2 then press the following buttons quickly: Triangle, Square, X, O, Triangle. This should work in either one or two-player mode.
For the second colour, press Triangle, O, X, Square, Triangle.

To fight Akuma or Dan:

Akuma -Start a one-player game with the goal being to get to the last fight without losing a round. Remember, winning every match isn't enough - you must win every match in two rounds without a loss. Also, try and finish every round with a Super Combo. If you win a total of 10 rounds with Super Combo finishes before you get to the last fight, Akuma will appear in place of the final boss you are supposed to fight.

Dan: Start a one-player game and make sure you don't lose a match. As you win each match, choose the same winning quote. For example, after every match, hold Down, Triangle and Square before the winning quote appears, so that you choose the same one every time. After you win your fifth match you will fight Dan in place of whoever was supposed to be your sixth opponent. After the match against Dan, the game will continue in normal fashion. You should find Dan pretty easy to defeat, unlike Akuma.



99 Lives

This is self-explanatory. Wouldn't you just love to get your hands on almost a hundred lives whenever you fancied it? Well here's how. During gameplay, press start/pause, then press (in order) and hold L2, R1, L1, R2 and release (in order) L1, L2, R2, R1. Press and release Triangle, then press (in order) and hold Right, Circle, Square, Cross. Now release (in order) Right, Cross, Square, Circle. Complicated but definitely worth it.



10 Continues

This is almost as useful as 99 lives. When there are less than three continues remaining on the continue/game over screen, press and release Up, Down, Right and Left in that order. You'll now find your continue limit has been upped to a handy 10.

To see a giant Rayman

Quite why you'd want to is beyond us, but it may amuse you for a while. During the PlayStation logo, press and hold R1, R2 until the animation begins, then release



To see the game on a tiny TV set on your screen while you play

Another strange one you might want to check out. During gameplay, press start/pause, then press and hold R2. Now press and release Circle, Circle, Left, Circle, Circle, and then release R2. Press start/pause.

Hints 'n' Tips

Once again we've given in to reader demand. Take a look at our multi-genre tips, hints & cheats







Doom

JN23KTPMMM - level 30 on Ultimate Doom

M4RN75CFYX - level 54 on Doom II

Pause and press **X**, ▲, **L1**, ⬆, ⬇, **R2**, ⬅, ⬅ for all weapons and ammo

Pause and press ⬇, **L2**, ■, **R1**, ➡, **L1**, ⬅, ● for invincibility - this only works when you've already activated all weapons and ammo, so make sure that's the case before trying to use it

Final level on I am a Wimp - **MWRNDL1VYX**

Club Doom - **Q6TLBSZ3XV** or **Q51GBZXYWV**

The Mansion secret level - **VJX07QCTTR**



FIFA '96

Random oddities!

On options screen at start of match, press:

▲, ▲, ▲, ▲, ▲, **X**, ▲ or
■, ▲, **X**, ■, ▲, ▲, **X**, ■ or
■, ▲, **X**, ■, ▲, ▲, ▲, ▲ or
X, ■, ▲, **X**, **X**, ▲, ■, **X** or
X, **X**, **X**, ▲, ■, ■, ■, ▲ or
■, ▲, ■, **X**, ■, ▲

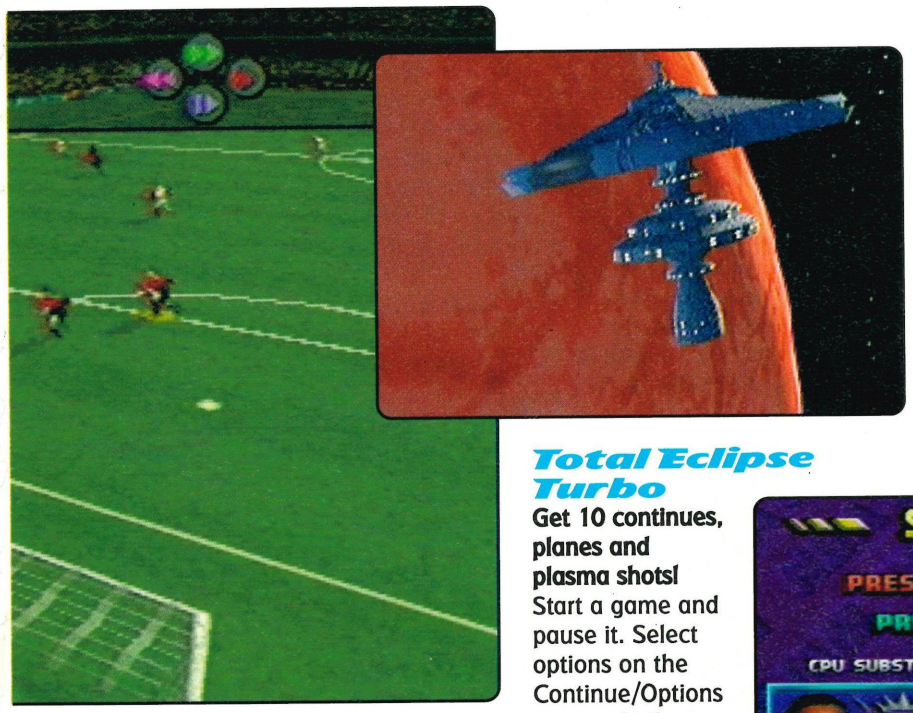
for special treats such as invisible walls, super offence and super defence



Destruction Derby

Here's how to get the Ruined Monastery track:

Pick any option that asks you to enter your name. If you select a multi-player game, only select a single player. Enter your name as **REFLECT!** and choose either race practice for Wreckin' Racing



or Stock Car, or select Time Trials. Now go to the available courses and scroll through until you reach a question mark. The hidden Ruined Monastery track is now yours to play!

To gain immunity from all damage, simply enter **!DAMAGE!** at the password screen. What could be simpler?

Total Eclipse Turbo

Get 10 continues, planes and plasma shots!

Start a game and pause it. Select options on the Continue/Options screen. At the screen with Play Game and other options, press ▲, ■, ●, ■, ▲, ■, **L1**, **L1** & **R1** simultaneously, Select, Select. The picture on the right turns into a skull. Now press ▲, ■, **L1**, **L1**, **L1**, ■, ▲. The game re-starts with 10 continues, planes and plasma shots.

Stage select!

At the title screen, press Start to enter the menu with Play Game and other options. Move cursor to Password and hold down Select. While holding Select, press ▲, **L1**, ■, then release Select, press ▲, **L1**, ■, ▲, **L1**, ■. A circular select will appear. You may now access any stage by pressing Left or Right on the control pad.

NBA Jam

More players!

At the team select screen, hold down the Select button and rotate the directional pad anti-clockwise twice to make the expansion team roster visible. You now have extra players, so both members of your side can be replaced.



Twisted Metal

All the passwords!

Warehouse district -
●, ▲, ■, ●, ●

Freeway free for all -
X, ■, ■, ●, ▲

River Park Rumble -
X, ▲, ■, ●, ■





Hints 'n' Tips



Infinite weapons & invincibility - ●, ●, ●, **SPACE**, **X**, ▲, **X**, **X**
Infinite weapons - ▲, ▲, ●, ▲, ■, ▲, ▲, **X**
Thor mode (9999 flash bombs) - ■, ●, ■, ■, ▲, **X**, ▲, ▲
Kali mode (super swarmers & ultra lock-ons) - **X**, ●, ●, ■, **X**, ▲, ●, ▲

Assault on Cyburbia - **X**, ■, ▲, ▲, ▲
Rooftop combat - ■, ▲, **X**, ●, **X**

Off-World Interceptor Extreme

The Loadsamoney code!
At the mode & options screen, press ■, **X**, ●, ■, **X**, ●, ■, **X**, ●, ■, **X**, ●, ■, **X**, ●, ■, **X**, ●, **L1**. You'll hear an engine revving if you've put the code in correctly. Now your cash will be maxed in Story and Arcade mode.

Warhawk

The passwords for victory!
Enter the following at the Special Access option -

Wipeout

Experience Rapier Class and the Firestar track!
Go to the player select screen, highlight One Player option, then enter the following -

Rapier Class - hold down **R2**, **L2**, ⬅, Start & Select together. While still holding these down, tap one of the remaining ones
Firestar Track - hold down **L1**, **R1**, ➡, **START**, ● & **X** together. While holding, tap ▲



Gex

All sorts of cunning ploys!
For the first two tricks, you must hold down **L1**, call up the item menu by pressing Select, and enter the following:
Stage select - Go to Dome Area and press **X**, ■, **X**, ➡, ⬆, ⬅, ●, ●, ⬇, ⬇
Open all levels - Go to any stage and press ●, **START**, ➡, ⬆, ■, ⬅, ⬅, ⬆, **START**

For special powers, pause, then hold **R1** while entering the following codes:
Super jumps - press **X**, ●, ⬆, ⬆, ⬇, ➡, ➡
Invincibility - press **X**, ■, ⬇, ⬇, ⬆, ⬇, ➡
Electric spit - ➡, ⬅, ➡, ●, ▲, ➡, ■, ⬇, ▲
99 lives - press ⬆, ●, ▲, ⬇, ▲, ■, ⬇
Flame breath - press **X**, ⬆, ➡, ⬆, ➡, ➡
Cold breath - ●, ●, ⬅, ⬇, ●, ⬆, ➡





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86
X-Men: Children of the Atom
The Marvel Comics hype continues with the latest in a long line of licencing coups. Oh yes, it is indeed a beat'em-up - what else?

88
Braindead 13
You've tried your hand at interactive movies, now how about an interactive cartoon? Empire reckons you'll love it!

Prev

90
Pro Pinball
It's a busy month for Empire, and this is its slant on that old pub favourite, getting leathered. No! Pinball

If there's a particular preview you'd like to see in PSX-Pro write to



94
F1
Tired of tawdry future racers? Psygnosis has the answer with its official F1 licence, and it looks no less than ream

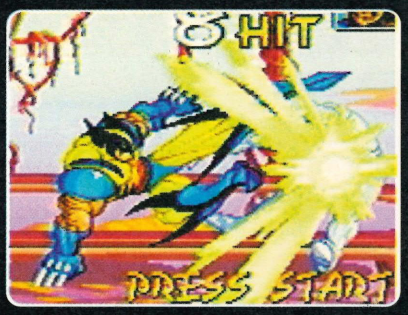
96
Virtual Golf
Core goes a few rounds with Gremlin in the battle of the swingers, and lets you do the same on the fairway

98
Impact Racing
Wipeout, with weapons, no planes, big cars and – incredibly – even more speed. That's what JVC says...

iews

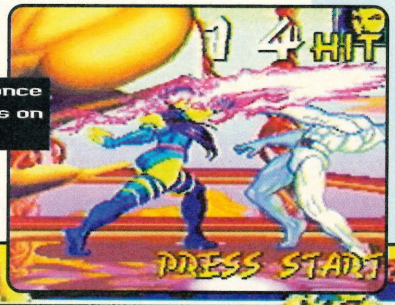
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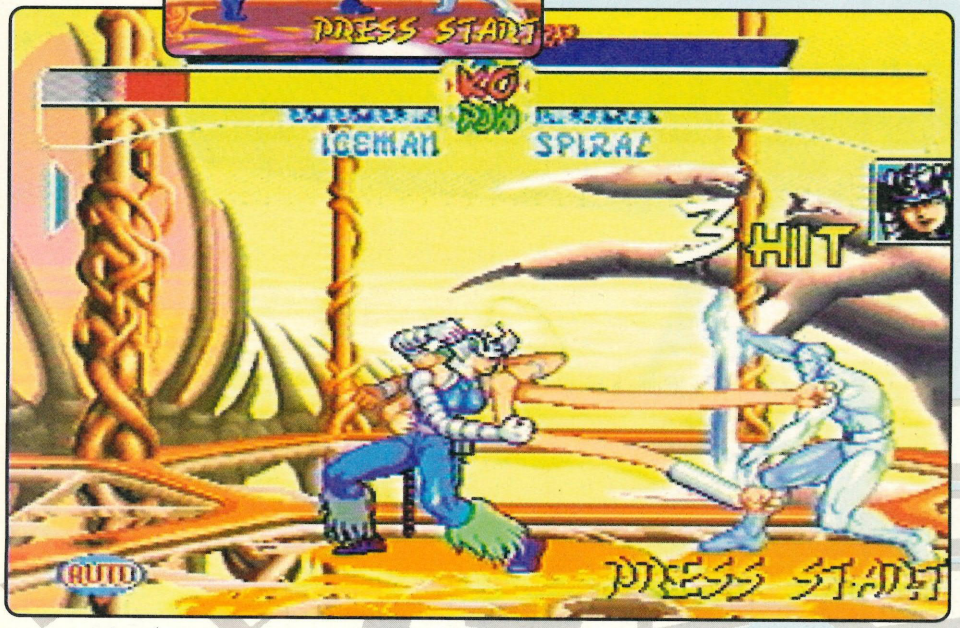


It's a vs beat'em-up frenzy on the PlayStation these days. Acclaim had a 'mare with Street Fighter - The Movie, but intends to rectify things with this potentially lucrative comic book licence

Perishing



Psylocke – once Spiral – takes on Iceman

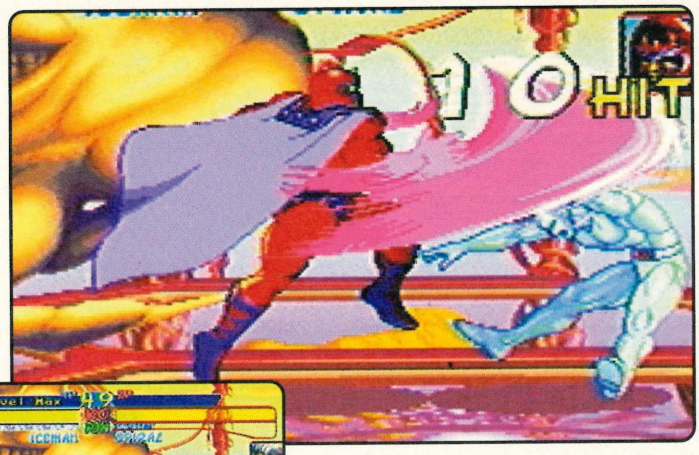


From their comic book origins to Saturday morning kids TV shows, toys, videogames, rompersuits, action figures and now talk of a big Hollywood-style movie – no matter which way you look at it, Marvel Comics' mutant superheroes, The X-Men, are huge.

Children Of The Atom is the latest in a long line of superhero videogames, hurling the comic book mutants into the 2D, one-on-one beat'em-up genre. As you've seen from previous issues of PSX-Pro, this brand of console pagga is very much a standard feature in the world of the PlayStation thanks to the continuation of the Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat series from Virgin and Sony respectively.

Now Acclaim – the company that took the, ahem... acclaim for Mortal Kombat I and II on the 16-bitters, Rise 2 and Street Fighter – The Movie on the PlayStation – is stoking up the vs beat'em-up genre with this potentially awesome fighting spectacular.

Starring a whole host of hardmen from the hugely popular X-Men cast, Acclaim has applied the playability from the Street Fighter series, beefed it up and created a vast array of special moves to produce a totally amazing, finger-bruising, eye-





The punishment continues as Iceman reels back



Iceman takes some 13-hit punishment from Spiral





Kids



Spiral has now morphed into the Silver Samurai

popping, addictive-as-you-like powerhouse of a scrap. In theory, if nothing else.

The rules are simple, even by videogame standards. You pick a character and you attempt to beat your opponent to a pulp. If you do, you win, and if you don't, you lose. Friends can join in at any time, with the end product being a good old-fashioned beat'em-up.

One thing that was noted in sister mag GamePro's office when the Saturn version was being reviewed, was that Capc... seems to have based certain characters' moves around th... particular SF2 fighters. Col... tends to pull off near-perfe... Zangief powerslams, Cy...ops seems to be a mixture of ...oth Guile and Ken, and Iceman's snowballs require the same ju...pu... jiggery-pokery as Ryu's fireball.

SUPERHERO FACT

Batman is harder than Judge Dredd, because he popped him once in a graphic novel

Now, without sounding too much like some pompous know-it-all, I've had the pleasure, over the years, of playing tons of vs beat'em-ups. Some are mint, others average, the rest downright bish. There's not an awful lot to say about any single beat'em-up really. Mention the moves, talk about the combos, describe the characters and maybe chat about the fancy bu...grounds. But it all basically boils ...own to one thing – is it any go... what?

...me great pleasure to de...t X-Men: Children of the Atom shou... be a reamster. It ...eady p...ys well, sounds good, ...'s tr...t – the sprites are ...ass... – and yes, the moves, combos and backgrounds are very satisfying. One-player mode can be incredibly tough – especially when you're up against hidden mutant warriors Juggernaut and Magneto – and the versus, arcade and numerous other modes of play are accomplished enough.

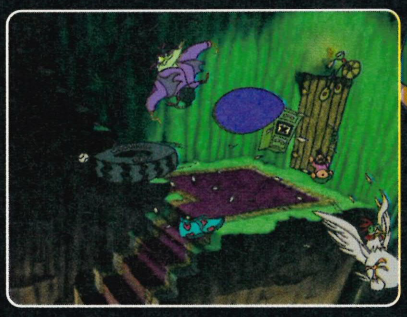
When the review appears next month, you'll see whether it can make any inroads into what's already an overpopulated genre.

It's unlikely that X-Men will break any gaming barriers or set new standards for PlayStation pagga releases, but it already plays like a comic book fan's wildest dream, and it'll doubtless knock more than a few units of sale off the likes of Street Fighter Zero and Rise 2.

Alex Lee ain't no superhero - he's proper soft and stuff

Also released on: Sega Saturn

Street Fighter the Atom





It's an interactive cartoon. Don't groan. You never know, this may be the one that breaks the mould and has a modicum of playability behind the fancy graphics and animation. Don't hold your breath though

Unlucky for



It's all very reminiscent of the ancient, and not very good, Dragon's Lair



DON BLUTH FACT...

Wannabe Walt Disney, Don Bluth, pioneered the interactive cartoon genre with Dragon's Lair. The boy can animate, but he doesn't know the first thing about a good game

Braindead 13 is looking fantastic, of that there can be no doubt. However, in the past, Readysoft (Braindead developer and, in America I believe, publisher) has been responsible for many other fine looking games that have been totally devoid of any form of gameplay (just think of the Dragon's Lair series, Space Ace etc as examples).

I must admit I haven't seen a running version of the game yet - it's still some way from completion in its PlayStation guise - but my worries about a possible lack of gameplay have been eased somewhat. Empire promises it has evolved its previous 'interactive cartoon' efforts and taken them a step further to feature both gameplay and replay value.

In contrast to its older brothers, Braindead 13 does not feature a set pattern of moves and



Good graphics don't always make a great game



Steve McNally was pronounced 'braindead' at birth. We are still awaiting his recovery

some

locations, where the player is merely called upon to press the odd button or push in the right direction every now and again. Apparently, the choice of where to go and what moves to perform are up to the player, thanks to the game's non-linear adventure style. If you make a mistake you can quickly rectify the situation, and Readysoft promises that not only will you be amazed by the quality of the graphics, music and sound effects, you'll be stunned by the quality and depth of the gameplay too. The animations are all hand-drawn and animated in the style of a Disney cartoon, and, as you can see from the screenshots, they are of TV quality and presented in incredibly high definition. The game features stunning sound effects and 'wrapped around' digital music in an all-new 3D stereo sound technology. Quite how this works I don't know, and even if it was explained to me I would still probably struggle to grasp the concept, so I'm not going to push it.



One of the game's most attractive features is the visual humour that lies around every corner. Plenty of gags are thrown in to keep your interest up during the animations where you aren't participating - a feature sadly lacking in the past. The plot is also pseudo-amusing, throwing up a heady mixture of comedy, horror, action and adventure.

The animators at Readysoft have been toiling away to bring the manic characters of Fritz, Lance, Vivi Vampire, Frankenmouse and Dr Nero Neurosis to life in time for a launch later this year.

The story begins at the secluded castle of Dr Neurosis. Lance, a computer repairman, is asked to make a late-night house call to the castle. He is greeted at the door by Fritz, the half-pet, half-human servant of the Doctor, and is shown where the problem lies.

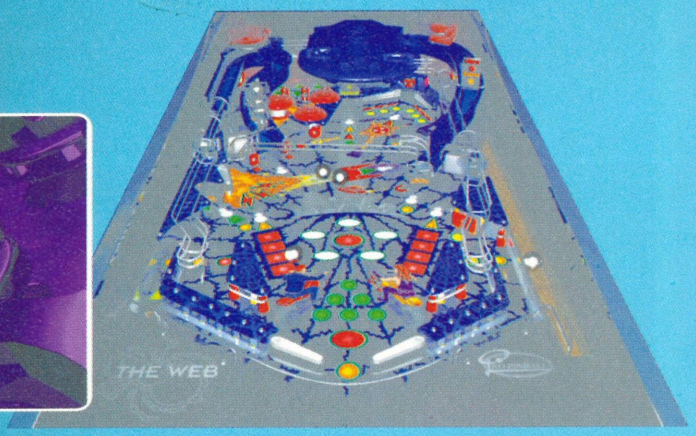
After tinkering around for a while, Lance discovers and solves the computer's fault, but this leads to bigger problems of his own! Because of his new-found knowledge of a sinister plan to take over the world, the evil Brain, Dr Neurosis, orders Fritz to dispose of Lance in any way possible.

Your goal is to dash through the castle destroying all the computer terminals you find. The more you destroy, the closer you come to the final confrontation, where you face Dr Nero in his own laboratory for the ultimate challenge.

That should give you a flavour of what the game's about, but as for how it will play, I'm afraid the jury's out. I'm still having reservations about gameplay, and until I see something that convinces me otherwise (hopefully the review copy), I'll find it very hard to overcome my fears.

Also released on: PC CD-Rom





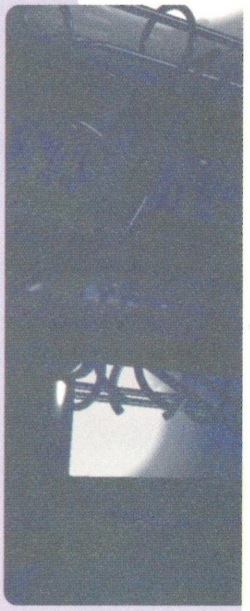
With unbelievable graphics and sound, and the gameplay to match, Empire's Pro Pinball stands a better than average chance of bloodying the noses of its deadly rivals, Virgin's Tilt and Ocean's True Pinball

Arachnoph

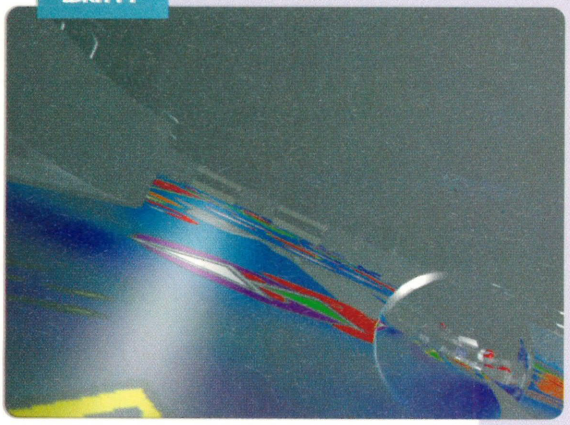
I don't know about just bloodying the noses of Tilt and True Pinball, if Pro Pinball is as good as it looks and sounds, a technical knockout late in the fight is not beyond the realms of possibility. But enough of the weak boxing analogies.

The Web (the table featured) is the first in what Empire hopes will become a Pro Pinball series.

Obviously this depends on how this initial game fares, but when it looks as amazing as this, as difficult to imagine there not

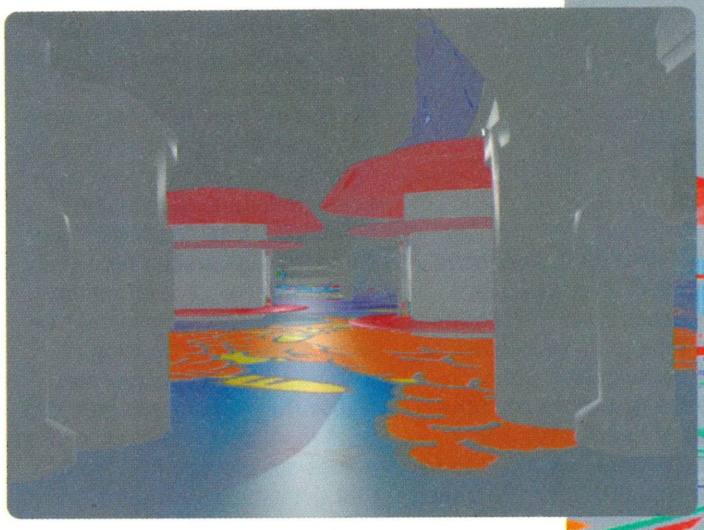


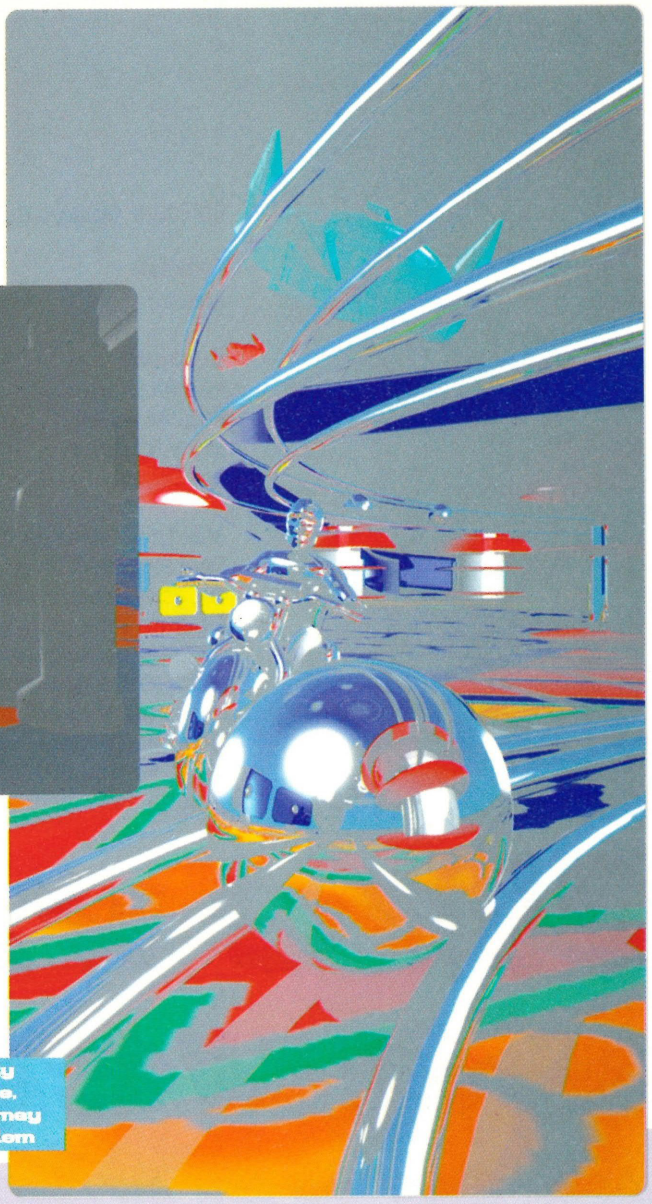
Realism is what Empire is aiming for with PP



Pro

PINBALL FACT...





obiq



With only one table, longevity may be a problem

Steve McNally would just like to point out that, even though Pro Pinball is subtitled 'The Web', it has nothing to do with the Internet. Because it would be incredibly bland if it did, don't you think?

Also released on: PC CD-Rom

Pinball

Are videog sequels any or what?

Every day the staff of PSX-Pro sit down and have a row. But only once a month do we record it on tape. Here's what happened when we asked the question:

Location: Rocky's Boxing Ring

Debator:
Alex Lee

Debatees:
Neil Jackson
Paul Roundell
Steve McNally
Jim Eagers

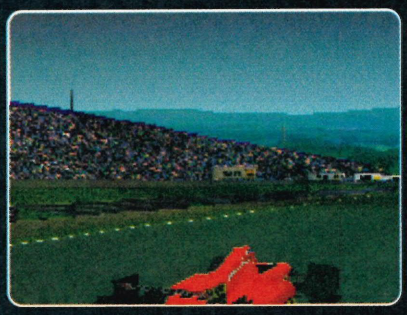
Alex Lee: Are sequels any good?
Paul Roundell: They always set out as an idea just to make money - I don't think you're ever likely to get a sequel to a poor game.
Steve McNally: They're not done just to make money. You know what programmers are like - they think, We can take it further now with the new technology. Like Myst for example. I was reading the back of the box and you could tell they were really getting into doing a sequel. They enjoy doing it. It's not just about money.
Neil Jackson: Sequels never seem to recapture the reamness of the original game.
PR: They might be as good as the original, but too similar. For instance, in the case of Premier Manager, all three releases have been ream games. From a discs point of view, they should have been data discs for five or ten quid, but obviously with consoles you can't do that.
AL: Your argument's coming from the standpoint that you've already bought the first one. If you haven't got the first, then it's better to buy the second one surely.
PR: Then again, you've got to imagine that most of the best ideas would have been used up on the first one.
AL: But with footy management games it's always nice to buy the more recent ones, because they have more up to date players.
PR: What I'm saying is that you should be able to buy data discs.
NJ: Games that tend to spawn sequels are successful games to begin with, hence the sequel when the software companies realise there's money to be made. But I think a lot of the reason why games are successful, is the fact that there's usually a lot of originality in the first place. This makes them stand out from other games and seem special. With a sequel, the game could be just as good, but the originality isn't there any more. Therefore it's not as good. I can't think of any game that's been enhanced by a sequel.
AL: What about Lotus Turbo Challenge on the Amiga?
PR: I'd say Lotus 3 was better than Lotus 2, which was better than Lotus 1. But for the time each one was released and the technology that was available, Lotus 1 would stand above the other two.
AL: How about on the PlayStation, with the likes of Ridge Racer and Toshinden?
PR: You can't say Ridge Racer Rev isn't ream, but it's a disgrace

they're asking another 45 quid for it. My main problem with Ridge Racer was the fact that there was only one track, albeit with a few variations. Rev is much the same, but with variations on a different track and a couple of new cars.
AL: What if all sequels were to have different game engines from the originals?
PR: It's difficult to say, because a different game engine makes for a different game, and that might disappoint the people who really loved the first one.
AL: Do you think, generally speaking, that sequels are a con?
PR: I think sequels sell on the name that the original made, such as Mortal Kombat for example.
AL: How about something like the Wing Commander series?

ame good

SM: Once you get past one and two, three and four have been identical. But because they're more of an interactive film, it's the story that counts.
AL: Would you enjoy playing Wing Commander III more if you'd already played the first two?
SM: Yes. The progressive story works a treat in Wing Commander.
NJ: I'd say most games don't come out with the idea that this is the start of a series. It's more a case of – oh ream, this has done quite well, let's chuck out a sequel.
AL: How about the Mario series? The idea behind each one of them was to make as non-linear a platform game as you could, but with pure levels and characters. The ideas were the same in each, but the gameplay was different.
PR: I've never played a Mario game apart from Mario Kart, but from what I've heard of them, it seems a fair enough point.
AL: So sequels are a valid purchase then, in certain circumstances?
PR: It would be nice for me, as a reviewer, to never see a sequel, but you can't blame a company for producing a follow-up when they know it's going to sell. It's all down to public demand. Therefore they are valid, although not perhaps the best way forward.
AL: Can programmers be blamed for lack of originality?
PR: Most programmers seem to be really into what they do. I think the *boys in suits* who put pressure on them to produce another game are to blame.
Jim Eagers: Sequels are often reamer, but why couldn't they have been ream the first time round? You'd be gutted if you bought the first one and then you ended up getting an inferior version – especially if the sequel came out shortly after.
AL: Street Fighter moved from a horizontally scrolling beat'em-up to a vs beat'em-up.
PR: That's possibly the best example of a game getting better.
JE: Respect for striving for perfection, but software companies are harsh aren't they? Respect for Street Fighter II Turbo, though, because that was significantly better in terms of speed, number of characters and the extra moves.
NJ: When you read a feature about a forthcoming sequel and the programmers go on about how they had all these ideas for the first game, but they couldn't fit them in, so they're putting them in this one, you have to ask yourself, if they had these ideas, why didn't they put them in?
PR: I don't think it's the fault of the programmers. It's the pressure put on them by the suits.
NJ: Or maybe it's time restrictions because the suits want a game out at a certain time. I think that's disgraceful on the part of the software company, because basically they're admitting that they brought out a sub-standard product the first time.
SM: A lot of it's down to deadlines. If they have to get the product out for Christmas, they can't keep on programming forever. If they did that you'd never get a game.
PR: If a company brings out a sequel and says, *It's everything we wanted the first one to be*, it's really a case of, well don't bring out the first one. I think things are rush-released by nature of the deadlines they set themselves, and then they decide that they've got another six months to carry on and make a better one.
AL: Has anyone here ever bought any sequels?
PR: I played PGA Tour Golf on the Mega Drive and bought PGA 2 and PGA European Tour as a result. They all had slight tweaks in gameplay and different courses, but that didn't really justify the extra expense. I was wildly fanatic and I wanted any difference that I could get. So that's me being a stupid consumer.
PR: The demand is created by us. You can't put all the blame on software houses, because people like us will go out and buy sequels whether they're any good or not.
AL: A lot of sequels are worthwhile in that case. If it was proved in any way that they sold worse than the originals, they'd stop doing them.
NJ: I think sequels sell better, because as time goes by more people own computers and consoles. Elite came out beards ago on the BBC, but I'd say Frontier sold more copies.

Tape Debate conclusion #5
Sequels are the finest. We don't have to buy them, but we still do. Who cares if there's no originality when the first version of a game's good enough to warrant a sequel? And if you've missed the initial release, the sequel's probably a better bet anyway.





The guys and gals at Psygnosis have been busy plugging away with the Bizarre Creations team to slipstream the opposition before pulling out to overtake with this ultimate arcade racer

The winning

When the development of F1 initially got underway, nobody could foresee the grind of creating a game which, although detailed in every way possible, retained the feel of an arcade racer. The team of seven programmers, five artists and a researcher from Bizarre Creations have knuckled down though, and the plan is to have F1 released by July. And to date it's looking like being a monster.

Bizarre Creations has been responsible for a number of games on other formats over the years, including The Killing Game Show, Fatal Rewind and Wiz 'n' Liz. Now it's taken up its most ambitious project to date. Formula One is supposed to be the most accurate racing sim in its field, and it's possible it could turn out to be exactly that.

Just one of the many views available to the player during a race

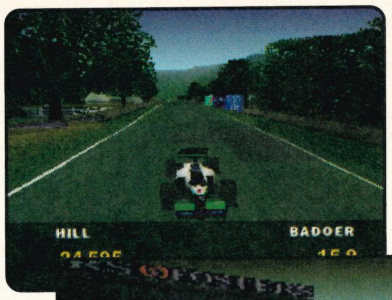


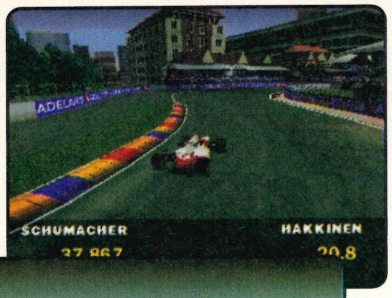
All the teams and drivers from the 1995 season have been included, and the 17 championship circuits have been scrupulously studied so that every bump in the tarmac is there. Over 100 hours of video footage has been watched time and again, so that every building, advertising hoarding and tree is precisely where it is in real life. The only things missing are the cigarette adverts.

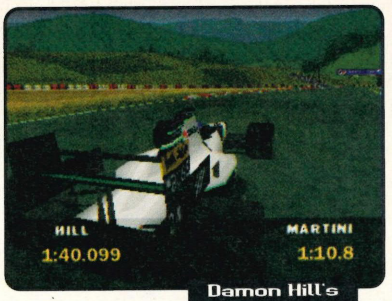
The cars themselves have been developed from team diagrams, photos and video to ensure they are the most life-like vehicles ever seen on any format.

On top of all this there are numerous camera angles to choose from, including an in-car view. And for the completist there's even commentary from the God of Grand Prix coverage, Murray Walker. In all there's over one hour of Walker's ramblings, and there's a great random element to his outbursts to prevent the commentary from becoming stale.

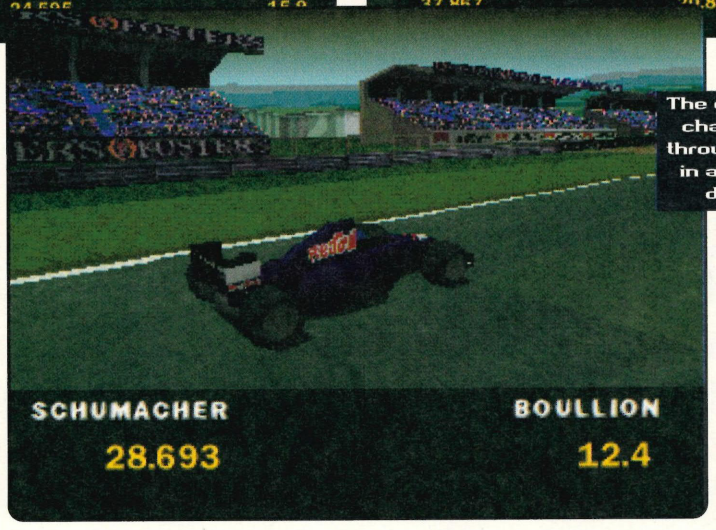
Computer drivers will have their own skill rating. For example, Nakajima isn't the most reliable of drivers, whereas Alesi is much more likely to have his share of high-placed finishes. On the other hand, everybody is capable of slipping up on the odd occasion, and this keeps things interesting.







Damon Hill's Williams car is perfect in every way to last season's real thing

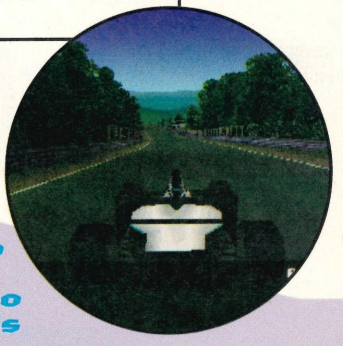


The current world champion goes through his paces in a bid for total dominance

FAST FACT

FIA regulations stress that a Grand Prix car must weigh a minimum of 600kg and may not exceed 200cm in width

Formula



Andy Sharp has gone some way to realising his dream of becoming a Grand Prix driver - he now owns his own pair of driving gloves

The weather will play an important part in the proceedings too, as the relevant climate for each F1 host country has been taken into account.

There are also a couple of skill levels available, depending on whether you wish to spend a little time setting up your car to gain maximum performance, or simply play in arcade mode, which puts you straight into a race.

In-car sound effects have been obtained by physically strapping a tape recorder to a driver's body during testing. The out-of-car effects have also been recorded. The soundtrack features, amongst others, three tunes licensed from guitar poseurs Joe 'Satch' Satriani and Steve Vai. This keeps things very rock orientated.

What is apparent at this stage is that F1 is going to look and sound top-notch. And with a two-player option also being looked into, F1 could quite conceivably become the best Grand Prix racer ever seen. And we're not just talking about on the PlayStation either!



Due to some intense research, the graphics are as accurate as you're likely to see

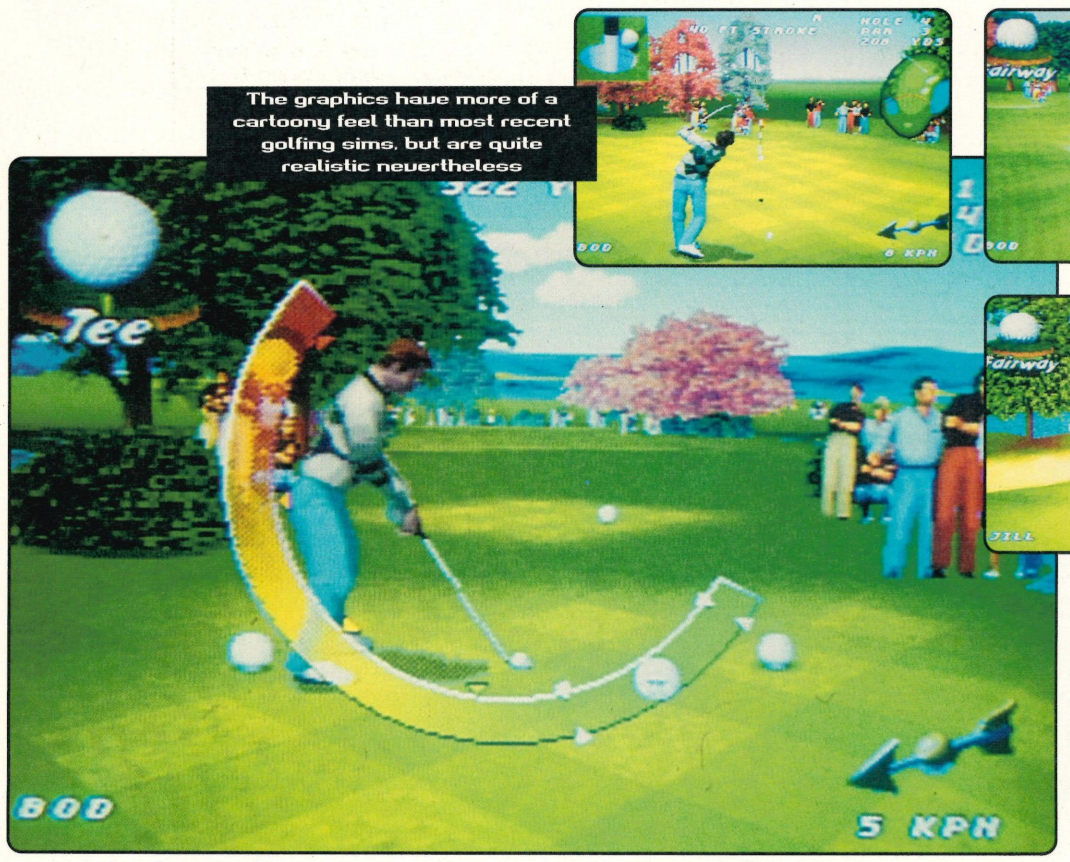




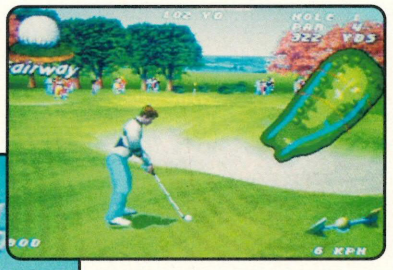


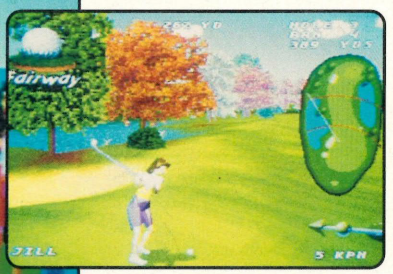
With previous PlayStation golf games proving less than successful, Core Design is hoping to cash in with what it describes as being 'as near as you're going to get to playing a game of golf in virtual reality'

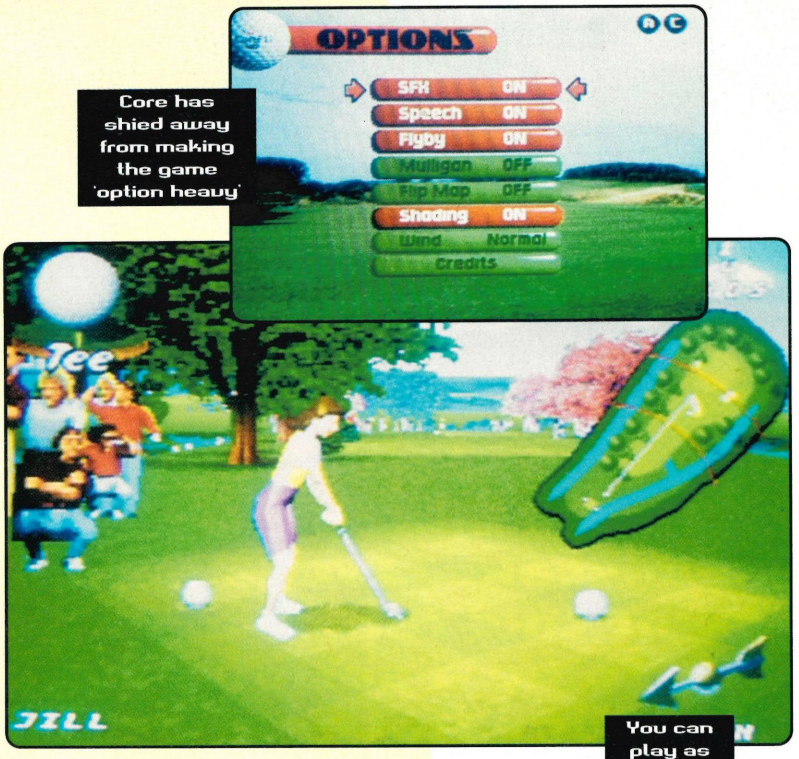
Take your b



The graphics have more of a cartoony feel than most recent golfing sims, but are quite realistic nevertheless







Core has shied away from making the game 'option heavy'

You can play as either a male or female golfer

est shot

Golf games are always popular, but the PlayStation has yet to be graced with one that could even be described as half decent. The games in the first batch, namely PGA Tour Golf '96 from Electronic Arts and World Cup Golf from US Gold, were passable and awful (in that order), and neither did justice to the similar games we have all played in the past on other formats.

But as with most genres, a couple of new games are in development, and they both look like they could well redress the balance. There's the amazing Actua Golf courtesy of Gremlin (which doubtless you've already played thanks to our exclusive demo), and then there's this game, Virtual Golf from Core Design.

Taking a more arcade-like approach to the sport, this is being pushed as the very first golf game to utilise a real-time 3D environment. The programmers have tried to take a step away from the menu-heavy control systems that have become the norm, and plan to give the player something instantly accessible that will take time to master.

There are six play options, ranging from the usual 18-hole practice round and skins challenge for money, right through to an exciting three-hole tournament shoot-out against another team made up of either computer players or a couple of your mates.

There are four courses available to choose from. Two of them use amateur tees (The Bowery and Kilmarney), while the others (Penperro and Glenlochrie) are more difficult. To play the latter two courses you must have attained professional status. This is achieved by obtaining passwords which are given out when you win on either of the two amateur courses. This lends the single-player game more of an element of longevity, as well as giving you a good indication of whether all that practice is paying off or not.

I assume the courses themselves are replicas of real-life equivalents, but not being a big golf fan I can't say for definite one way or the other. Either way, though, they are all challenging and will provide you with a progressively more difficult round.

The graphics aren't exactly photo-realistic, but they are quite pleasing to the eye, and provide a nice change from what we've been forced to get used to.

On the whole, I'd say Virtual Golf is shaping up nicely. Players looking for a realistic yet less fiddly golf game could well find the answer here. Core has got an excellent reputation on other formats, and while this isn't the company's highest profile release, it should provide a platform for bigger and better things.

CORE FACT

In a strange quirk of fate, although Core Design's headquarters is some 50 miles away from the IDG offices, both buildings are on exactly the same road, the seemingly all-encompassing A6. All you have to do to get from one to the other is make one turn then drive straight on until you get there. Amazing!

Steve McNally finds watching golf unbearably tedious, but he does enjoy watching Rugby League and would like to gloat about his favourite team's famous victory over the 'unbeatable' Wigan in the recent Challenge Cup game

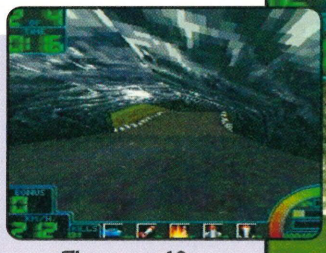
Also released on: Sega Saturn





If you're into speed then this is for you. And no mistake. JVC is handling the release of this rapid racer which could turn out to be a serious alternative to the likes of Ridge Racer and Wipeout

Speed fr





The Guinness must have worked wonders on Dublin-based developer Funcom when work on this project began. Combining the speed of Wipeout with the hard racing elements of Ridge Racer, Impact Racing could well be what the world is waiting for. By no means is any aspect of IR truly original, but the skill and precision of the programming means it all works very nicely.

There's the standard futuristic storyline about a cold, heartless world and TV violence, but to be honest, does anyone really care too much about these stereotypical backgrounds?

Before the race can begin, you must decide which of the six differing cars you will be controlling. Each vehicle has its own specifications in terms of armament, acceleration, handling and armour. Your choice of car can be the difference between winning and losing.

There are 10 circuits in all, with some bonus tracks between the levels. These may only be raced upon when enough cars are wiped out in the main races. New weapons can be collected on the bonus stages, and the relevant power-ups will then appear during the normal racing.

The races themselves are fast – furiously fast – and littered with power-ups which range from lasers to heatseekers and smart bombs. Each joypad button releases a specific weapon. Luckily, the pad functions can be defined to your liking, so the more useful and regularly used weapons can be kept close at hand. You'll be needing them all at some stage, though, so be warned.

The screen display is as uncomplicated as possible, with speed, number of kills, lap counter,



The graphics really are second to none

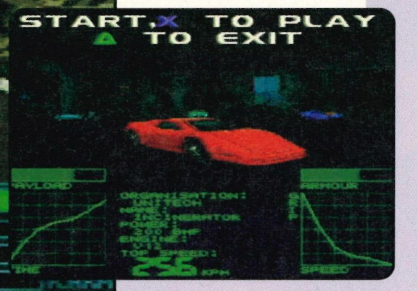
eaks

Road Rage Fact...

If the road system of England was laid end to end, it would stretch around the world twice over. Perhaps



Below: One of the cars available. Choose carefully or you may not live to regret it



armour status and weapon supplies on top of your own energy bar. There's also a radar which shows any opponents who happen to be lurking in the immediate vicinity.

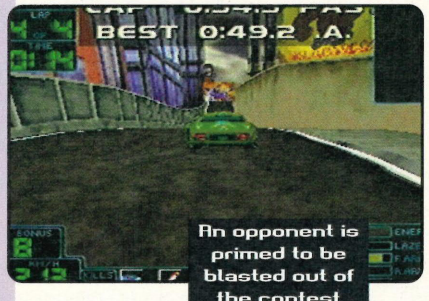
There is an option to save your results after every bonus track, and there's also a password facility for people without a card. Both work well in their own right. The only flaw at this moment in time is the lack of a two-player game. This is an option which always vastly increases the quality of a product.

To make up for this, the cars move at a blistering pace - it's difficult to think of another racing game which comes close in terms of scrolling speed. Even Wipeout struggles to stay the pace.

Graphically, Impact Racing looks impressive in its 3D environment, and there's no noticeable slow-down when the screen becomes a battling mass of twisted metal and explosions.

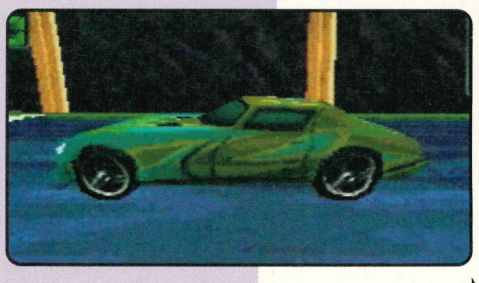
The in-game music is also very Wipeout-esque, with fast, pumping techno beats. The volume of the music can be altered to your preference, so the sound effects can be either at the forefront or sulking behind the soundtrack.

A full review of Impact Racing will be appearing very soon indeed.



An opponent is primed to be blasted out of the contest

Andy Sharp has never been in a car exceeding a lowly 65mph, as he is prone to girl-like 'panic attacks'



Also released on: Sega Saturn

How the hell are we supposed to keep pace with gaming technology when there are so many companies offering so many different and expensive products? Is it some sort of conspiracy?

Let's all play

Paul Roundell calls for unification



Apart from playing videogames, the two most popular pastimes of the late-teens/early 20s male (the typical PSX-Pro reader) are watching videos and listening to music. The three go hand in hand as the major leisure activities of the 90s, and as far as you, the punter are concerned, two of them work in essentially the same way.

When you walk into a video shop, the main thing on your mind is which film to rent. A swift perusal of the shelves keys you in as to which releases are available, and then it's a simple case of parting with a couple of quid and lurching off home. Same with music. Avoid the geeky office workers buying Phil Collins, choose your CDs, pay your whack and the job is a good one.

You certainly don't stand there in the video shop thinking, *Well I really wanted to rent* Die Hard With a Vengeance, *but it isn't available for my Philips video recorder, and I quite fancy* Weekend at Bernie's 2, *but that's only out for the Amstrad double decker.* Similarly, you wouldn't specifically buy a Sony stereo because our friends from Japan had just bought up the Oasis licence, or a Daewoo mini-disc player because this was the only platform on which the latest New Order compilation re-release was due.



Ever since hi-tech home entertainment became big business, dozens of companies have competed for market share, each one developing dozens of different products. The shops are swamped with video recorders and stereos, and every single one claims to be the product that YOU cannot do without.

A decision to buy one video or stereo over another is made entirely without regard for user support. Everything works on everything, and if, in your opinion, a certain machine offers better features, a more attractive price, or is of greater aesthetical value, then you'll take it.

The first record player was sold long before any of us were born, and the video recorder has been around for over two decades. The videogame industry is new, and like any youngster, wants to have its cake and damn well eat it too!

Take Nintendo, Sega and of course Sony. They don't develop consoles to make money, but as a platform on which to make money from the sale of games.

All three companies develop games themselves, sell them at a profit and make a bucketload of money. Good for them – that's what it's all about. But they also cater for third party development (you know, companies like Acclaim and US Gold).

Because of the cost of development and the price that

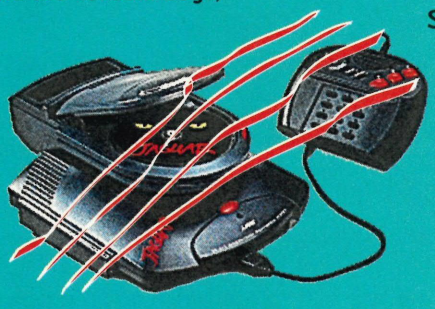
nicely together



needs to be paid before they are simply 'allowed' by the Big Three to release their game on a specific format, third parties will more often than not choose to bring out their product on just one machine.

More recently there's been the arcade conversion boon, with top-class products such as Ridge Racer, NBA Jam, Sega Rally and Virtua Cop finding their way into our homes. One or two make it across all formats, but for the most part it's a lucrative one-machine deal. Lucrative for both the developers and the console boys, who know that a big name game will sell their machines and present them with further opportunities to cash in. If you own a PlayStation, it's unlikely you'll be able to afford a further outlay of several hundred pounds if a tempting Saturn game comes along. You'll opt instead to buy another PSX effort of possibly inferior quality (or vice versa).

It's as if Sega, Nintendo and now Sony are afraid of direct competition, preferring to stay in their corner and cater for a small, lucrative niche, instead of selling their machines on the strength of pricing, build or added features (buy a PSX and play Sega Rally, but enjoy the same game on the Saturn in glorious Dolby Surround Sound, for example). Videogames do not represent bad value for money. Neither do CDs or videos, or the ultra-compatible equipment they serve. And if the console manufacturers would only have sufficient faith in the quality of their machines to sell them in direct competition with one another – with games compatible across all formats – then we'd all be happy and content. Wouldn't we?









'This generation Spectrums

Dear PSX-Pro

I have just read your article on old consoles (issue 3), and I feel you were unacceptable with some of your comments, for example: old games = crap games.

I have a ZX Spectrum and I love most of the games I own, especially Paperboy. This game is far more challenging than any of the latest beat'em-ups, including Tekken. As for the chunky graphics comment, I would like to point out that the most exciting game ever created for any console is Pong – plenty of chunk, plenty of hours of fun. In the late '80s it was much harder to produce a game such as Jet Set Willy, but nowadays a game is mostly paid for by millionaire companies, and is very quickly produced.

I would never buy any of the next generation consoles, because as the name suggests, they are for the next generation – this generation should prefer Spectrums and Amstrads. If I had to choose a console it would be the NES.

I know everyone in your office has at some stage played Chuckie Egg and enjoyed it. Without these classic games you and your stupid CD-driven consoles would never have existed. I think I speak for the whole nation, but they don't have the bottle to say anything. So, Paul Roundell, come round to my house and I'll kick your arse in a game of Arcanoid.

Rick Hibbert, Spectrum Appreciation Society, Manchester

Paul replies:

You ought to go on tour with material like that Rick, because you're obviously a talented comedian. Actually, you are correct – without the early forerunners, games such as Total NBA and Actua Soccer would not have existed. But then, without the bish old bi-planes of the 19th century we wouldn't have Concorde today, and which would you rather travel abroad on?

And one more thing – Pong was NOT exciting, and it did NOT have chunky graphics!

Dear PSX-Pro

I am writing with regard to your reviewing procedure. I know it is the case that individual writers review the games, but are the views of other members of the team taken into consideration? The reason I ask this is that I think it's important to make it known that the word of the reviewer is NOT law.

A case in point is your review of Warhawk. Your reviewer didn't much care for the game, and that's putting it mildly. Another magazine however, did think it was good, and personally I agree more with them on this matter.

It would work for me if the reviews were to include a paragraph/mini-review from other members of the crew. I would then perhaps be able to get away with reading just PSX-Pro – which I subscribe to – instead of coughing up for the official magazine and the publication with the added 'Plus' as well.

Apart from that, keep up the good work. Maybe aim the reviews at a slightly older audience, as not all PSX owners are teenagers. I'm in my mid-20s, as are at least three members of your team and most of the other PSX owners I know.

All the best,

Jason R Burgess, Edmonton, London

PSX-Pro replies

Your comments about the age of our readers have been taken on board Jason. We want to aim the mag at the majority, and early indicators are that we're doing just that. But we're monitoring the situation all the time to stay ahead of the game. As for your opinion regarding the word of the reviewer not being law; well, we believe that our word *is* law – that's what PSX-Pro is all about. We don't just pluck a score out of the air, and in fact we do confer about the marks games receive. And of course, because we're not an 'official' magazine, ie we aren't puppets of Sony, we can give a thoroughly honest opinion of its games (of which Warhawk is one).

Dear PSX-Pro,

You asked for any female PlayStation fans to get in touch, so here I am. I read last issue's Tape Debate regarding sexism in videogames, and in my opinion they *are* sexist compared to the amount of female gamesplayers.

I've been playing videogames since I was eight, and know from experience that the market is male dominated. I also realise that not every game can be full of female characters, as software companies would go broke.

All I would like is an occasional game where the roles are reversed, ie a female character (not a blonde bimbo wearing a skimpy bikini) rescuing a male character from danger. Another idea is to be able to choose a male or female character at the start of a game.

Barbie on the NES, which was a game made specifically for girls, didn't sell because:

1. It was a load of rubbish, and
2. A gameplaying girl was not likely to be interested in Barbie going to the shops or getting ready for a date with Ken.

Girls don't want 'bringing up babies' or 'recipe' programs, and not every girl likes Take That.

Anyway, thanks for reading my letter, especially since it is from a girl as young as me. By the way, hi to everyone who knows me at Banff Academy.
Yours hopefully,
Edith Gray (aged 12), Macduff, Banffshire

Dear PSX-Pro
My boyfriend and I own a PlayStation and we decided to buy your magazine to see what the score was. First off I would like to congratulate you on an excellent publication with realistic reviews.

Unfortunately, as I was reading through the mag, I found the debate on, *Are computer and videogames sexist?* in the Christmas issue. Well, I don't think the games are that sexist, but I do think some of the debatees are. Who does that Neil Jackson think he is? Did you pluck him from the stone age just for this debate? I personally have no inclination to play a game about 'recipes' or 'how to bring up babies and stuff'.

I'll admit I prefer games like Rayman, and I can't wait for Cool Spot 3. I also love Ridge Racer and Wipeout, and MK3 is excellent. So Neil Jackson needs to wake up to the '90s!

You also wanted to hear from 'chick PlayStation fans'. Well I am one (I'm 22, by the way). Thanks for taking the time to listen to my moaning, I'm not usually like this.
Yours,
L A Menzies, Clackmannanshire, Scotland

PSX-Pro replies
Well, it certainly looks as if Neil has upset the lassies north of the border. Actually, it isn't entirely his fault. He comes from one of those bizarre rural communities sandwiched between a couple of demonic hills in Yorkshire where your brother is your uncle, and your father's married to his own mother, who also happens to be his sister, so his views are bound to be a little twisted. Thanks for your other comments on the mag though, and thanks especially for being a couple of ream chicks.

Dear PSX-Pro,
We have come up with some ideas for games consoles that we think would help Sony corner the market:
•Sony PlayPen – for children under 36 months
•Sony PlayBus – for children between three and five. The PlayBus also has an upgrade for older children – the Double Decker PlayBus.
•Sony PlaySchool – for children who have recently started school.
•Sony Play Doctors and Nurses – for 7-13 year olds.
•Sony Play-With-Yourself – for ages 13-16 (also good for those who can't afford the games).
•Sony Play Around With Secretary – for middle-aged people. This too has an upgrade – the Sony Play At Trial Separation From Spouse.
What do you think?
Yours sincerely,
Richard Stammars and Ashley Price, Lewes, East Sussex

PSX-Pro replies
Pretty good, and with the addition of the essential Sony PlayUpThe Blues/Reds/Clarets for the discerning footy fan, the set would be complete.

Nimrod of the Month
Dear PSX-Pro,
Is it possible to clear up the confusion over the ability to play import games on an official UK PlayStation? I understand that at the moment it is possible if you use the 'Pen Trick', but the confusion begins with the quality of the game. You said last issue that the game plays in mono only. Is this using the composite scart output or the RGB scart output? I am led to believe that if you try this trick using RGB scart output on a TV capable of 50/60hz screen you will get full colour. Could you please confirm this?

Also, do problems occur playing US games on a Jap machine and vice-versa? Since all machines are capable of 50/60hz screen, I cannot see why there should be a problem. Finally, how much is a blue PlayStation, and are they available for the general public?
Yours faithfully,
C J Flatt, Heanor, Derbyshire



PSX-Pro replies
Why would you be so desperate to play import games on a UK PlayStation? As a PSX mag with machines capable of running these games, we're still not interested in anything but the finest, most widely available efforts. Mostly they're a pile of poorly constructed toss churned onto larger foreign markets where the chance of sales is greater. We refuse to fill our pages with such crap, unlike other mags.

A blue PlayStation is yours to buy just as soon as you set up a software development company. And congratulations! – you're the first ever PSX-Pro Nimrod of the Month. A container of delicious *Armitage's Nimrod Goldfish Flakes* fish food is on its way to you.

should prefer and Amstrads'

PSX-Pro unveils the full list of PlayStation games that will grace Sony's fantastic next generation console over the next six months



Actua Soccer
Issue Three's Game Of The Month, and deservedly so. A game to warm the cockles of reamsters
Gremlin



Actua Golf course discs - more courses to follow soon after the release of actua golf - Gremlin
Actua Soccer (PSX3, G.O.M. 9/10) - footy game using digitised chris woods and andy sinton - Gremlin
Actua Tennis - betty stove and fred perry are motion-captured, commentary by cholmondley-warner. maybe - Gremlin
Adrenaline Factor - cyber-punk strategy/shoot'em-up
Aeon Flux - action game set in pressurised environment - Viacom
Aftermath - old school platform shoot'em-up complete with action replays - Interplay
Aftershock - strategic helicopter shoot'em-up - Elite
Agile Warrior (PSX3, 8.5/10) - modern military combat simulation - Virgin
Air Combat (PSX3, 7.5/10) - good-looking shoot'em-up - Sony
Alien Alliance - a load of extra-terrestrials get together - Virgin
Alien Trilogy - scary bloke in alien costume - Acclaim
Alien Virus - adventure set in a spacestation
Alone in the Dark 3 - sharp shooting and sharp sleuthing - Infogrames
Alpine Racer - skiing simulation - Namco
Assault Rigs (PSX4, 8/10) - tron with posh graphics - Psygnosis
Ballblazer - sports game on an artificial asteroid - Acclaim
Batman Forever - movie tie-in platformer - Acclaim
Battle Arena Toshinden 2 - sequel to breathtaking original 3d beat'em-up - Takara
Bio Hazard - futuristic germ warfare - Capcom
Blades Of Rage - flight sim/shoot'em-up - Ocean
Blam: Machinehead - using revolutionary nanotechnology, it is possible to program micro machines. oh, ream - Core
Blazing Dragons - fiery, mythological creatures, but no knights - Crystal Dynamics
Casper - ghost film licence - Interplay
Castlevania - The Bloodletting - all-new dracula epic - Konami
Championship Pool II - updated pool game - Mindscape
Chaos Control - get in charge of a mess - Infogrames
Chronicles Of The Sword role player - Sony Interactive
Cool Spot 3 (Spot Goes To Hollywood) - red pill grows arms and legs - Virgin
Cosmic Race - fast but too hard to control - Neorex
Creature Shock - scary monsters and super creeps - (developed by) Interactive Studios
Criticom (PSX4, 7/10) - spin-around 3D fighter - Virgin
Cyberia (PSX4, 8/10) - enhanced version search & destroy set in russia - Interplay
Cybersled (PSX1, 5/10) - battlezone for the nineties - Namco

Battle Arena Toshinden 2
A 3D fest that's full o' thrills, holds plenty o' spills and, funnily enough, involves kills
Takara



CyberSpeed (PSX2, 5/10) - futuristic racing game - Mindscape
D (PSX-Pro4, 8/10) - successful jap horror rpg - Acclaim
D&D Tower Of Doom - translation of fantasy role playing arcader - Capcom
DarkNet - students sucked into the net are transformed into virtual cyber beings - ASC
Dark Seed II - grim graphic rpg/adventure - Cyberdreams
Darkstalkers - tolkien-style versus beat'em-up - Capcom
Defcon 5 (PSX2, 8/10) - staving off a massive attack on a spaceship - Millennium
Destruction Derby (PSX1 G.O.M, 9/10) - driving smash'em-up that plays better than daytona - Psygnosis
Descent - enhanced version of doom-style game - Interplay
Dimm & Witt - butt-kicking action in a 3d cartoon world - PF Magic
Discworld (PSX1, 7/10) - tolkien mickey-taker pratchett gets a psx game - Psygnosis



Doom (PSX3, 9/10) - bloody first- person perspective shooter - GT Interactive
Dragon's Lair II - linear tap-tap-press knightly adventure - Readysoft
Ectosphere - spooky goings-on based on clive barker novel - Virgin
ESPN Extreme Sports (PSX2, 7.5/10) - 'modern' sports racing with roller blades, skateboards etc - Sony
Exector - poor man's loaded - Japan
Extreme Pinball - another piece of wizardry from Electronic Arts
Extreme Power - assault suits and transformer-style planes - Profile
Fantasy Racing - ream racing game that, so far, no-one knows anything about - Gremlin
FIFA Soccer '96 (PSX3, 7.5/10) - updated popular footy game - EA

ESPN Extreme Sports
Be as rad as you like as you breeze around the streets on all modern modes of transport
Sony



Firo & Klawd - hilarious rpg with a cat in it - BMG
4x4 Gear 'n' Guts - off-road racing - ASC
Fox Hunt - interactive movie game - Capcom
Frank Thomas Big Hurt Baseball - baseball sim using real human bone movements - Acclaim
Freelancer 2120 - strategic cyber-punk action in realistic power-packed adventure - ASC
G-Police - 3d futuristic rozzer sim - Psygnosis
Gex - gecko lizard swiping tail to music in platform scenario - Crystal Dynamics
Gears n Guts - a 4wd jeep game that looks very much like all the 3d stuff seen on the playstation so far, but is admittedly early in its production cycle - Gremlin
The Great Game - spy adventures with real actors - Activision
Gunners Heaven - standard platform/shoot'em-up - Sony
Harbinger - action game using live action video - Mindscape
Hard War - done by software refinery in leeds. looks brilliant. it's like elite, with big cities built in craters.reminiscent of inferno, but easier to fly. crafts look as solid as rocks - Gremlin
Heart Of Darkness - one-off adventure with christopher lee's voice - Virgin
Hebereke Popoitto (PSX3, 4.5/10) - bish tetris rip-off - Sunsoft



Johnny [illegible]stone
A brave stab at platform supremacy that somehow misses the mark. Good 'do' though
US Gold

Hermie Hopperhead - mario-type platformer - Japan
Hi-Octane (PSX3, 7/10) - quick-on-the-bandwagon conversion - EA
Hive - bee'em-up - Funsoft
Hunters Of Ralk - rpg with you taking the role of a spirit warrior - Cyberdreams
Hyperblade - futuristic hockey game formerly known as hockeydrome - Activision
I Have No Mouth But I Must Scream- ultra-violent rpg/adventure - Cyberdreams
In The Hunt (PSX4, 5.5/10) - pump shoot'em-up - (surprise) THQ
Incredible Idiots In Space - see morons with weapons and lotsa ugly aliens - ASC
Incredible Toons - just like an interactive warner brothers' cartoon - Virgin
Indycar Racing - less boring than nigel mansell - Virgin
Jack Is Back (PSX3, 8/10) - first alone in the dark for the playstation - Infogrames
Johnny Bazookatone (PSX3, 8/10) - proved to be almost as good as its name - US Gold
Johnny Mnemonic - keanu reeves' movie in a game - Sony
Jumping Flash (PSX1, 7.5/10) - bizarre 3d fly and shoot job, looks like starwing with knobs on - Sony
Kileak The Blood: The DNA Imperative (PSX1, 8/10) - repetitive doom copy - Sony
King's Field 2 - realistic blood 'n' monsters - Sony

Knight's Chase - reincarnation, museums and magic gloves - Infogrames
Krazy Ivan (PSX3, 8.5/10) - mechwarrior with knobs on - Psygnosis
Legacy Of Kain - Old guy leaves something behind him - Crystal Dynamics
Loaded (PSX2, 8.5/10) - overhead view shoot'em-up using gouraud shading effect - Gremlin
Lone Soldier (PSX3, 5.5/10) - hyper-violent action combat - Telstar
Marco Polo - re-live his epic, yet rather cold, adventure - Infogrames
Mazin Mahjong - what's the fascination with tiles? - Sunsoft
Metal Jacket - mechwarrior with buttons on - Sony
Minnesota Fats - poor pool game with added full-motion video - Data East
MLBPA (working title) - baseball with animation modelled on top players - Konami
Monstrous City - large town full of ugly brutes - Virgin



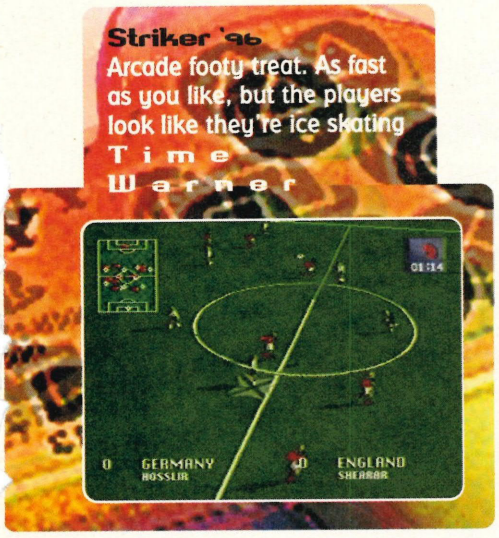
Mortal Kombat III (PSX1, 8.5/10) - bloody beat'em-up goes 32-bit - Sony
Motortoon Grand Prix - next generation micro machines racer - Sony
Ms Metaverse - look for the most desirable being in the universe - Virtual Vegas
Muppet Treasure Island - kiddie interactive entertainment - Activision
Myst - amazing 3d version of pc classic rpg/adventure/ puzzle/ strategy - Sony Interactive Europe
NASCAR Racing - incredibly popular pc game - Virgin
Namco Museum Vol One - some old arcade classics stuck on a playstation disc. Not that bad an idea - Namco
Namco Museum Vol Two - some more old arcade classics stuck on a playstation disc. Not that bad an idea - Namco
NBA In The Zone - 3d polygon basketball sim - Konami
NBA Jam Tournament Edition (PSX2, 8.5/10) - arcade-perfect basketball - Acclaim
Need For Speed - quick as you like split screen racer - Electronic Arts
NFL (Working title) - american footy programmed by original madden programmer - Konami
NFL Quarterback Club '96 - life-like american footy sim - Acclaim
Ninja (working title) - invisible high-kicking jinks and japanese mythological gear - Core
Novastorm (PSX2, 6/10) - 3d shoot'em-up - Sony Interactive Europe
Off-World Interceptor (PSX4, 5.5/10) - stomach-churning jumps over alien landscapes - Crystal Dynamics
Onside - footballing fun for all - Elite
Overkill - gory military isometric view action game - Konami
Panzer General (PSX4, 7.5/10) - ssi war game - Mindscape
Parasite - scary notion of a copper from another planet possessing you - Sony Interactive Europe
Parodius Deluxe (PSX2, 6.5/10) - standard h/scrolling shoot'em-up - Konami
PGA Tour Golf (PSX2, 8/10) - texture-mapped classic golf sim - EA
Philosoma (PSX4, 6.5/10) - many-faceted shoot'em-up - Sony
Power Serve - 3D tennis with agassi & sampras caricatures - Ocean
Power Sports Soccer - footy with players who look like members of kraftwerk - Sony Interactive Europe



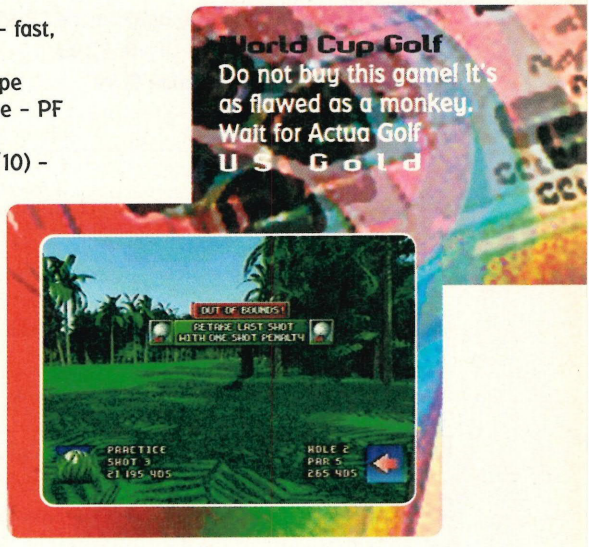
Powerful Pro Baseball '95 & '96 - based on j-league baseball - Konami
Powerful Family - archaic-style scrolling beat'em-up - Sony
Premier Soccer - multi-perspective 3d footy - Konami
Primal Rage - monsters battering each other in 3D - Time Warner
Prime Goal EX (PSX2, 7/10) - exceedingly slow j-league footy - Namco
Prisoner of Ice - beat the nazis (good idea) - Infogrames
Project Morph - 3d flashback sequel - Electronic Arts
Project Overkill - intense military action fare - Konami
Psychic Detective - sherlock holmes goes all cerebral - Electronic Arts
Raiden Project (PSX1, 8/10) - standard v/scrolling shoot'em-up - Ocean



Rapid Reload (PSX1, 7/10) - horizontally scrolling 16-bit-style shooter
The Raven Project - earth has been taken over, you must win it back - Mindscape
Rayman (PSX1, 9/10) - testing platform game with ballz-style sprite - UbiSoft
Ray Tracer - shoot'em-up? - Taito
Razorwing - strategic 3d blaster set in a hover tank - Sony
Reloaded - The sequel to loaded, this time with a puzzle element - Gremlin
Return of the... - tough guy with nunchukas - ASC
Ridge Racer (PSX1, 8/10) - racing conversion - Namco
Rise 2: Resurrection (PSX4, 7.5/10) - this time the robots can jump over each other - Mirage
Road Rash (PSX4, 7/10) - only decent 3do game gets a timely conversion - Electronic Arts
Rugby League - 13 blokes on either side having a row - Alternative Software
Screaming Wheels - super-fast racing simulation - JVC
Sentient - save a space station - Sony Interactive Europe
Shanghai: Great Moments - tile game with knobs on - Activision
Shanghai: Triple Threat - tile game with more knobs on - Activision
Shellshock - serve a tour of duty with some superfly guys, battling your way through a series of missions - Core
Shockwave (PSX3, 8/10) - defend the earth against alien attack forces in 3d - Electronic Arts



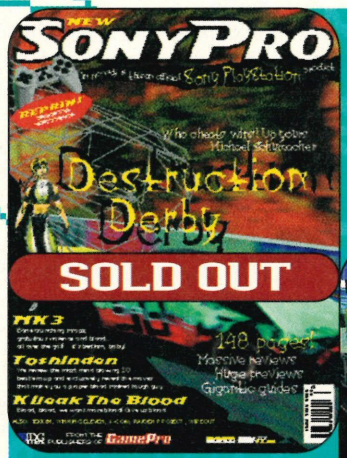
Shredfest - snowboarding featuring video clips of real snowboarders - EA
Silverload - wild west adventure - Vic Tokai
Slayer - ssi first-person perspective adventure - Time Warner
Slipstreem - re-done in manga style (it was once on the pc, but this isn't a port) - Gremlin
Solar Eclipse - combat shooter in 3D texture-mapped universe - Crystal Dynamics
Space Griffon VF-9 - hi-tech doom copy - Panther
Spawn - stop the mad one before the children disappear - Sony
Split Realities - obscure two-faced goings on - JVC
Spud - adventure starring a potato - Alternative Software
Starblade Alpha (PSX2, 5.5/10) - original arcade star wars game gets proper graphics - Namco
S.T.O.R.M. - underwater action in the 22nd century - ASC
Street Fighter Animated - game of the cartoon of the game - Capcom
Street Fighter: The Movie - the game of the movie of the game - Capcom
Street Fighter Zero (PSX4, 8/10) - another Street Fighter game - Capcom
Striker '96 (PSX2, 8.5/10) - footy sim - Warner Int
Suikoden - manga influenced rpg - Konami
Syndicate Wars - arcade action and strategy through 360 degrees - EA
Swagman - a totally immersive gaming experience,apparently, the storyline follows the adventures of zac - Core
Team 47 Goman - action shoot'em-up - 47 Tek
Tekken (PSX1, 9/10) - incredible multi-combo beat'em-up - Sony
Tekken 2 - second in ground - and back - breaking beat-'em-up series - Namco/Sony
Theme Park (PSX2, 7.5/10) -classic strategy fest - Bullfrog
Thunderhawk 2 (PSX 3, 8.5/10) - helicopter reamness with impressive explosions and carnage all over the shop - Core
3D Baseball '95 - play ball in realistic stadia - Crystal Dynamics
3D Golf (working title) - arcade conversion polygon golf - Konami
3D Lemmings (PSX2, 8.5/10) - next generation suicidal rodent-saving extravaganza - Sony Interactive Europe
3D Soccer - polygon based footy game - Konami
Tilt - colourful pinball from all angles- Virgin
Time Commando - animated action adventure - Electronic Arts
TNN outdoors Bass Tournament '96 - catch fish without getting smelly fingers - ASC
Toki Meki Memorial Forever - rpg: a teenage boy looking for the girl of his dreams - Konami
Tomb Raider - state of the art, third-person perspective action adventure with a unique intelligent camera system - Core
Toon Struck - warner bros cartoon licence - Virgin
Top Gun - this will take your breath away - MicroProse
Toshinden (PSX1, 9/10) - multi-view vs beat'em-up - Takara/Sony
Total Eclipse Turbo (PSX2, 7/10) - looks like climactic x-wing scene in star wars - Crystal Dynamics
Total NBA 96 (PSX4 G.O.M. 9/10) - Amazing basketball sim - Sony
True Pinball (PSX3, 9/10) - hi and lo-res pinball fest - Ocean
Twinbee puzzle game - bizarre pop 'n' twinbee caper - Konami
Twisted Metal (PSX2 7/10) - 3d street racer with 12 vehicles and loads of weapons - Sony
V-Max (working title) - fast, futuristic racer with spaceships - Mindscape
Velocity - action game - PF Magic
Viewpoint (PSX3, 8.5/10) - next gen zaxxon - Electronic Arts
Virus - first-person shooter - Sony
Warhammer - official licence of fantasy battle game - Mindscape
Warhawk (PSX2, 6/10) - fly a spaceship through canyons - Sony
Waterworld - film licence - Interplay
Wing Commander 3 - multi-media platformer with mark hamill - EA
Wipeout - superfast racer - Sony
World Cup Golf (PSX4, 5/10) - worst golf game - US Gold
Worms (PSX2 G.O.M. 9/10) - pure strategy, top fun and gameplay - Ocean
WWF Wrestlemania (PSX2, 8.5/10) - top grappling fun - Acclaim
X-Com - ufo, basically - MicroProse
X-Men Children Of The Atom - different to baby ford children of the revolution - Capcom
Zeitgeist - gratuitously blast away hordes of spaceships - Taito
Zero Divide (PSX4, 8/10) - what rise 2 should have looked like - Ocean
Zoop - addictive puzzler - Viacom New Media
Zork: Nemesis - surreal horror story - Activision



PSX-PRO

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November/December 1995
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Cover: Striker '96
Inside: Worms, NBA Jam, PGA Tour Golf '96, Prime Goal, WWF Wrestlemania, Parodius Deluxe, Total Eclipse Turbo





ISSUE THREE
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Cover: Johnny Bazookatone
Inside: Actua Soccer, Agile Warrior, Firestorm, ESPN Extreme Sports, 3D Lemmings, CyberSpeed, Twisted Metal



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The first 10 new subscribers this month will receive a free copy of Actua Soccer

Get ready to reload

Pop Will Eat Itself, the cult band who provided two tracks for Loaded, are currently in negotiation with games publisher Gremlin to record a load of original tunes for the forthcoming sequel, Reloaded.

PSX-Pro can also exclusively reveal that Loaded's Sheffield-based development team is toying with the idea of adding Doom-perspective levels to the second bloody blast-fest.

A new feature to be incorporated in Reloaded is the use of mirror balls. In one location, gun fire must be aimed at moving shiny spheroids in order to deflect the bullets towards their intended target.

Six new characters, including big, gun-toting cyber nun Sister Magpie, are currently being designed.

We'll bring you more information on this exciting project next month.











What's it all about?

We don't really know a lot about Blam: Machinehead yet, but we thought you'd appreciate a couple of early pictures to whet your appetite. Okay, it looks a bit strange, but it's by Core Design, and that's never a valid reason for expecting an inferior product.

Blam: Machinehead features loads of rendered images, FMV and speech, and plenty of action. It should be out sometime around the end of April/beginning of May. There, you know as much as we do now.

STOP PRESS

As well as the impressive looking Gex, Crystal Dynamics is beavering away on a number of other exciting PlayStation projects. First up there's Blazing Dragons, billed as King Arthur meets Monty Python in a 'wacky' graphic adventure created by original Python member Terry Jones.

Also, there's Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain, a dark and brooding adventure where you play a vampire and must feast on the blood of your victims to survive.

On a lighter note, we have 3D Baseball '96, the first in a series titled 'Championship Sports'.

And finally, there's Solar Eclipse, the prequel to Total Eclipse.

Psygnosis's French development team, Virtual Studio Paris, has canned Parasite – previewed in ish three – to work on a top secret games project.

Acclaim, Anglo Corporation, GTi and Pearson are understood to be vying to buy CentreGold, US Gold's parent company. Acclaim would be particularly interested in acquiring US Gold's World Cup and Olympics licences. Apparently, the Olympics licence includes the potentially lucrative rights to the USA's *Dream Team* basketball squad. Furthermore, if the World Cup licence was acquired, the Probe development team that

Loaded with shiny stuff



Vic Tokai, the games division of the massive Japanese corporation that's got its finger in many pies, is having a do on the PlayStation. Silverload is set somewhere in the wild west, deep in a desert of perpetual storms.

Once a booming mining town, Silverload started going downhill when an earthquake came along, closely followed by a drought. An Indian tribe opposed to the building of the mine was then massacred, making the town about as inviting as Bosnia.

You play the part of a bounty hunter who has been hired by settlers to save their kids. A preacher is spreading the evil word, and you must stop him. It's a PC conversion, so don't be surprised if it isn't all that good. However, we'll be keeping an open mind until next month's preview.





Harsh retaliation

Time Warner Interactive, purveyor of the fine Striker and the bound-to-be-not-that-good Primal Rage, is chipping away a niche for itself in the ever-expanding PlayStation software market. Return Fire is out in America this month, and should reach Britain in time for the summer.

A military strategy game, the mission objectives are easy, but reaching them is rock hard. One for paintball fans and TA spods, the enemy's flag must be located, captured and finally returned safely to base. There's a single-player and a two-player option to attempt – in fact all the signs are there for a potential pick-up-and-play combat classic.

Lots of time has been spent on making the control system as simple as the game can allow. There's also some fine graphical detail, with spectacular helicopter splashdowns and crumbling battle-damaged buildings instead of just big explosions masking everything.



Thankfully not just a PC port, the PlayStation version has a classical soundtrack a la Apocalypse Now, a Zoom mode, an improved radar system, and a Full-Screen mode. Previewed in next month's PSX-Pro.

Spectacular helicopter splashdowns and more

created FIFA would be able to get cracking on the World Cup 1998 game for Acclaim. Anglo joint chairman Stuart Tidy commented, *We're basically looking to acquire the company.*

* Acclaim is, as usual, busy acquiring rights all over the place, the latest being for Space Jam. This forthcoming action/animation feature film stars Michael Jordan and the Looney Toon characters. The PSX version is out in December.

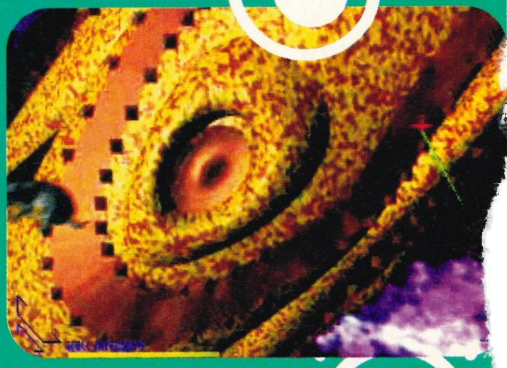
* Sony's target for PlayStation hardware sales for this year is between 300,000 and 375,000 – ambitious considering games *giant* Sega Europe made a massive loss of £100 million between February '93 and '94. Chris Deering, president of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, believes that over a million units will be sold in Europe by June, with two million sold, *by the time the dust settles at Christmas.* Any re-think regarding price or hardware configuration (whatever that is) is unlikely until at least the end of the summer, although Deering added, *We think that the trade in some territories will take the initiative and get more aggressive on pricing.*

* Psygnosis is Psygnosis again after being Sony Interactive for a while. Yep, we're as baffled as you are. So wherever you see Sony Interactive

Bee-have yourselves!

Expect to see lots of weak 'play on words' gags over the next couple of months thanks to The Hive from Trimark Interactive. But as well as providing countless pun opportunities, it looks like creating a real buzz amongst gamers.

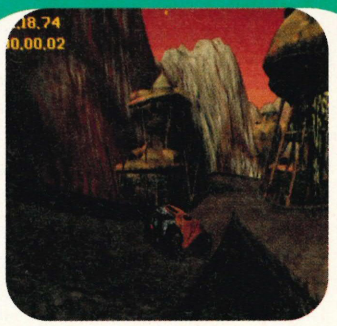
The Hive sounds like a shoot'em-up to us, with the main aim being a quest to save the galaxy from killer mutant bees called Hivasects. Apparently, the honey of these insects can be turned into a potent biological weapon for the interstellar mafia. The game will incorporate a number of different styles of gameplay (presumably in a similar fashion to the distinctly average Philosoma), including 'rail sequences' (auto-piloted travel, allowing gunfire within a fixed screen), and 'panoractive sequences', which are 360-degree, 3D pre-rendered environments that permit the player full rotation and the ability to fire in any direction.







This is a seemingly direct conversion of a spectacularly unsuccessful PC product, so we're keeping our excitement well in check for the time being.



Third time lucky?

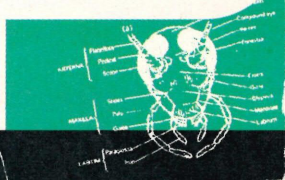
Mindful of the mixed reception for *race game* CyberSpeed, Mindscape is to attempt to make amends with Megarace 2. The first Megarace was one of the company's major PC success stories, and the sequel will hit the PC and the PlayStation this June.

A virtual gameshow provides the backdrop for the action, which features complex multi-laned courses, multi-path track designs, 3D rendered vehicles and obstacles, and a new range of weapons. FMV show presenter Lance Boyle makes an unwelcome return, but this time he's joined by a female assistant – nice to see The Generation Game is still influencing developers.

Mindscape has taken an unusual step for a games publisher by listening to players' criticisms and doing something about them, rather than chucking out a sequel that's similar to a flawed original. This time around, the emphasis is on skilful driving rather than sharp shooting, thus making Megarace 2 a credible racer.

Let's face it, after CyberSpeed and Panzer General, Mindscape desperately needs to make inroads into the PlayStation mass market.

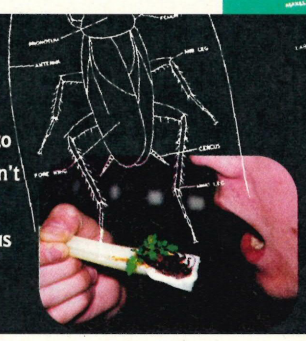
Lance Boyle makes an unwelcome return, but this time he's joined by a female assistant

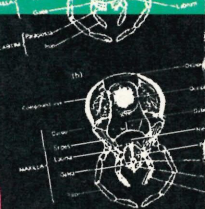


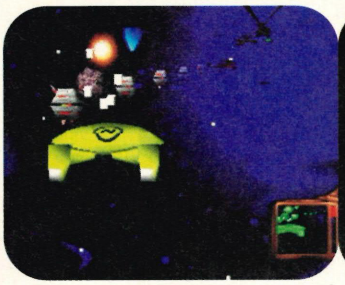
written down in the mag, we mean Psygnosis. And for Psygnosis, read Sony Interactive... whatever. Said Liverpool-based company was recently robbed, but a spokesman was happy to report that no vital game data for latest projects Tenka and Wipeout 2 was half-inched.

Empire has appointed merchandise supplier ISM to enhance the games publisher's retail presence. Market-leader ISM plans to swamp stores with material relating to Pro Pinball.

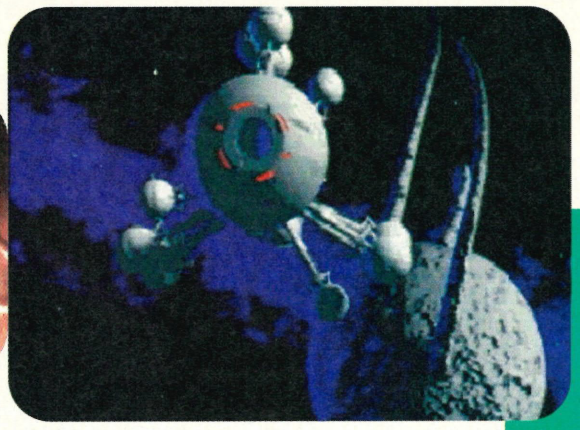
Acclaim – the world's busiest software house? – is sickening us all with cockroaches preserved in jars. Do what? As a curious marketing ploy for new game Bad Mojo, Acclaim sent us a cockroach in a jar and an invite to a day out at London Zoo. We don't agree with the idea of animals being kept in cages, so none of us turned up for the press launch. More insect banter next month.











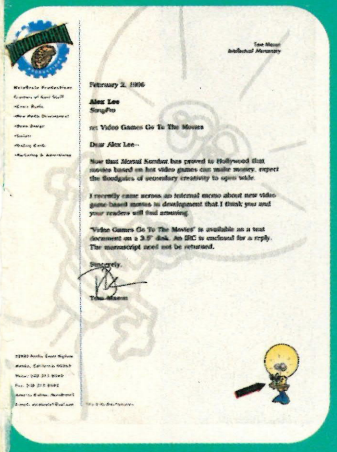
Shock tactics

This isn't the direct port of the PC version some inferior magazines would have you believe. This is Creature Shock: Special Edition, and it takes the game a whole stage further. Darren Drabwell, producer of CS:SE explained, *Argonaut has taken the atmospheric and exciting walkabout sections from the hit PC version and added brand new full-3D flying episodes that utilise the power of the next gen games machines.*

There are whole new levels in there too, and an improved system for playing the game. This should mix in well with what is already an enjoyable and extremely atmospheric adventure.

We're assured that Creature Shock: Special Edition is very close to completion now, and if that turns out to be the case, you could very well see a review in the next issue.

Insane in the mainbrain



February 2, 1996

Alex Lee
SimsPro

re: Video Games Go To The Movies

Dear Alex Lee--

Now that Mortal Kombat has proved to Hollywood that movies based on hot video games can make money, expect the floodgates of secondary creativity to open wide.

I recently came across an internal memo about new video game based movies in development that I think you and your readers will find amusing.

"Video Games Go To The Movies" is available on a text document on a 3.5" disk. An IBC is enclosed for a reply. The manuscript need not be returned.

Sincerely,

Tom Mason

A top secret document regarding videogames and the movies was recently leaked to PSX-Pro, and here are some fascinating extracts:

Johnny – it's happened man! Movies based on videogames have finally hit the big time! Forget the bath everyone took on Super Mario Brothers, Double Dragon and Street Fighter, Mortal Kombat is the way to go for all videogame-based pics. The 'Mortal Movie' – which is nothin' but a half-dozen freaks pounding the crud out of each other – is poised to break that precious $100 million mark worldwide. That's big money and that's respect!

Now the floodgates have been opened, we have to be ready with the follow-up projects before the other imitators get any bright ideas and start muscling in on our direct-to-video turf. But to capture those dollars we need to journey back to a simpler time, a time when the games were easier to play and easier to understand. I've sketched out a few high-concept ideas to better define what I'm talking about.

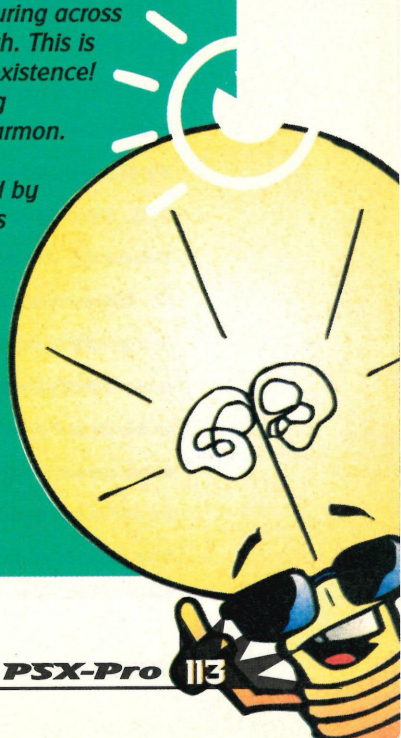
Pong – What life lies beyond the victory slot? What happens when you venture outside the game? I see this as a hi-tech cross between Slap Shot, Tron and Logan's Run. And think of the merchandising possibilities! Casting suggestions – David Schwimmer and Nancy Travis, with James Woods as one of the paddles.

Asteroids – you're alone in the cockpit of a run-down, antiquated space ship, when giant odd-shaped objects suddenly come pouring across your bow, waiting to crush you to death. This is the ultimate metaphor for a boomer's existence! And it's low budget, high profit! Casting suggestions – David Caruso or Mark Harmon.

Missile Command – four techno-kids discover that the Earth is being invaded by beings from another dimension, and it's up to them to save us all. Think Friends *meets* Star Wars *and you've got the idea! Casting suggestions – rustle up all the hot kid actors under 15 years old and weed out the best four.*

And there are plenty more ideas where these came from. You don't have to thank me pal. This is why you pay me the big bucks. See you on the Web site. Best, Sid.

More exclusive revelations next month.



Doom done and dusted

Thanks to all of you who wrote in regarding the *controversial* Doom news piece last month. Christian Conway's letter explained it all: *Code M4RN75CFYX is for the final level of the whole game – after you go through the teleportation chamber you re-materialise in a room inhabited by barons of hell and spider demons. Code JN23KTPMMM is the last code of Ultimate Doom, although there are another 23 levels of Doom 2 left before the end of the game.*

A proper flood of letters came in on the subject, and here are a few selected quotes from the best ones:

You shouldn't have told Gary Shaw to chill his boots, you should have told him to put the number 2 after the word Doom – Matt Whippy

Mr Whippy could try a harder level. I Am A Wimp is not very taxing is it? – Andrew Middlemiss

You might like to try CWDP5J665 as this will give you 600 ammo on your BFG/plasma – Mr M Halls

Pause the game and press Down, L2, Square, R1, Right, L1, Left, Circle. You will be invincible – this one only works when you have already activated all weapons and ammo – Jason Bacon

When you've completed the game, some writing appears saying you can now retire to a lifetime of frivolity – Gary Shaw

Once you have done it you are invited to browse through all the zombies who have had great fun trying to blow your head off. The great thing about this is that they fall down with one hit and you can appreciate the way their heads and bodies come apart – Alan Wishart

Could you please tell me where Club Doom is? – C Slater



Next month

Good issue wasn't it? Forget the unbelievably mint free CD and fantastically well-informed Descent supplement for now, what did you think of the mag itself? Recently, more and more of the letters we've been receiving have concerned hints and tips rather than broader gaming issues. Make the effort, eh? We do, so why don't you? And on the subject of correspondence, don't ring us at work. We don't ring you at your work, do we? Ah yes, next month. Reviews of Deadly Skies, F1, Alien Trilogy, Hockeydrome, Silverload, Braindead 13, The Hive, Pro Pinball, Return Fire, Creature Shock, Primal Rage, The Raven Project, Tekken 2, Chessmaster 3D and Extreme Pinball should be sufficient incentive to hand over your hard-earned cash. Next month's promotional stuff is a secret for the time being, but rest assured that the quality and quantity you've become used to will not wane. Issue six is on sale from April 11. An essential purchase.

ALEX

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May issue of PSX-Pro out April 11

ATTENTION! TRUE OR FALSE?

Please answer the following

	TRUE	FALSE
M2 IS A MOTORWAY!	☐	☐
ULTRA IS A WASHING POWDER!	☐	☐
JAGUAR IS A BIG BLACK PUSSY!	☐	☐
SATURN IS A PLANET!	☐	☐
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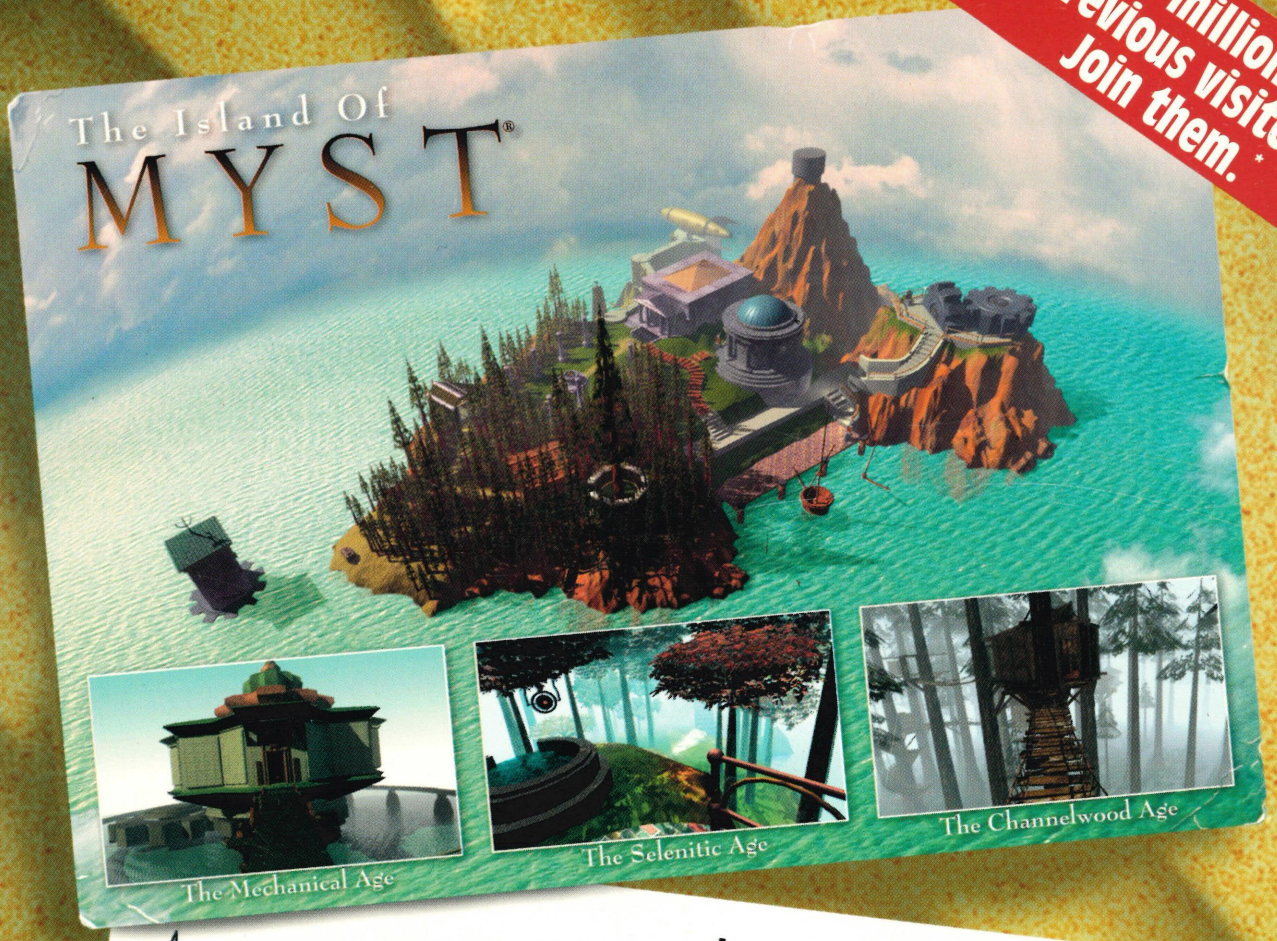
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PlayStation

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The other side of the Ocean
This World
(or another...)

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