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DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

REVIEWED!

CRUISIN' USA & KILLER INSTINCT



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SUPER NES



GAME BOY



NES

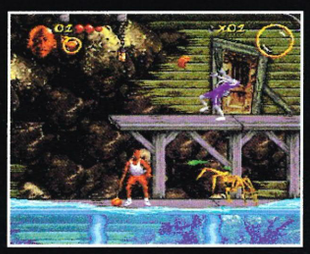
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SUPER GAMER DECEMBER '94

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY ● LION KING ● STREET RACER ● FX FIGHTER ● VORTEX ● ULTRA 64

don't



flunk

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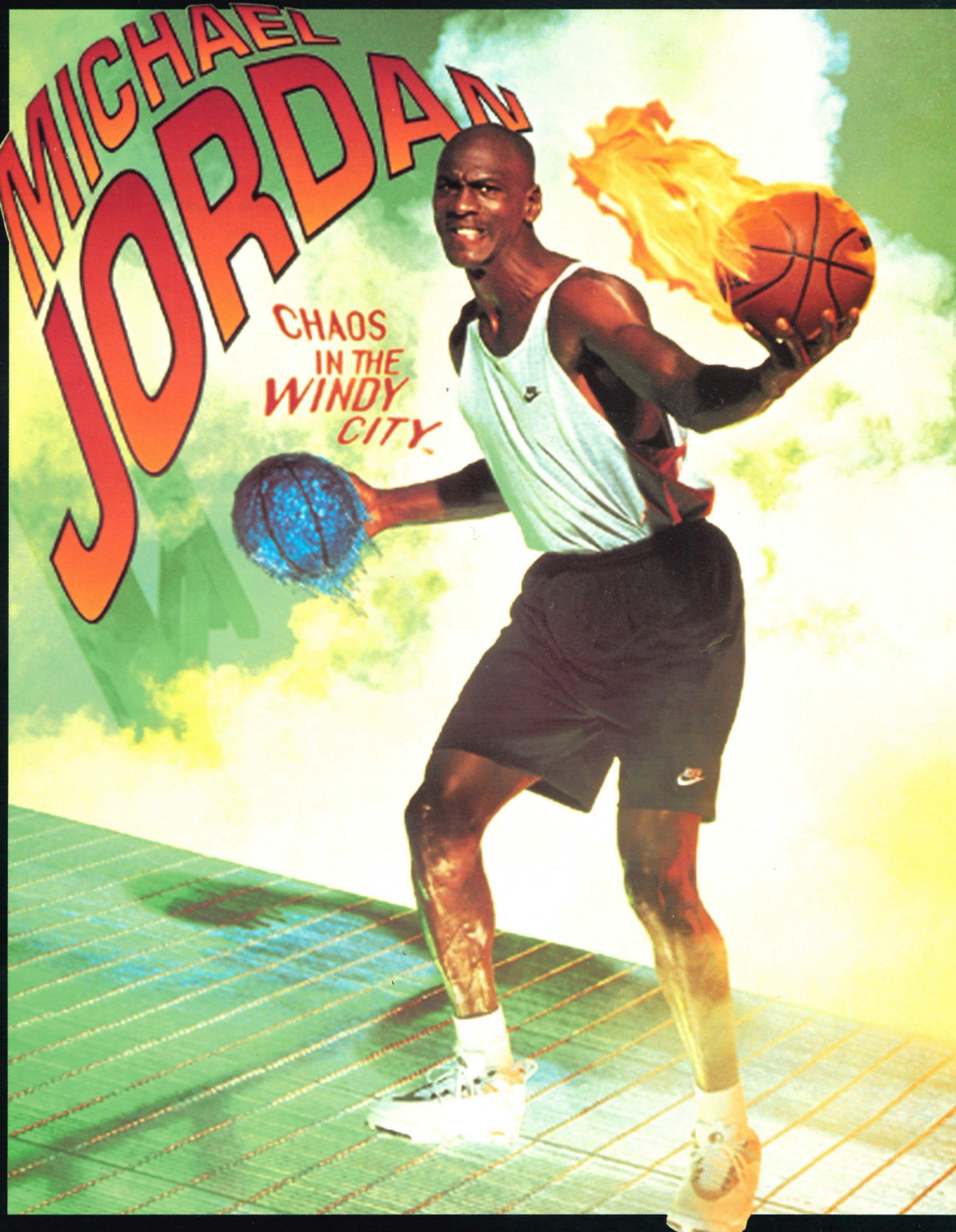
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ocean

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ISSUE 9
DECEMBER 1994

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PREVIEWS

CANNON FODDER 18
STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY 20
TRUE LIES 21
C2: JUDGEMENT CLAY 22
FIFA (GB) 23
BRUTAL 24
SUPERSTAR SOCCER 25
WOLVERINE 26
THE PAGEMASTER 27
BIKER MICE FROM MARS 28
THE FLINTSTONES 29

HAVE THE 'RAPTORS LOST THEIR BITE? P44

JURASSIC PARK
THE CHAOS CONTINUES



ULTRA 64 LATEST! P8



FEATURES

THE NINDEPENDENT 6
CENTRAL NINTELLIGENCE 8
ELSPA CHARTS 11
MINI PREVIEWS 12
FX FIGHTER WIP 14
THEME PARK WIP 16
SONY COMPO 30
SUPER SAVERS 55
EARTHWORM JIM PLAYER'S GUIDE 86
MONSTER MAX SOLUTION 88
MORTAL KOMBAT II (GB) PLAYER'S GUIDE 92
THE WRITE STUFF 94
GALLERY 97
NEXT MONTH 98

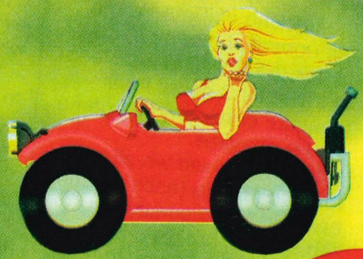
DONKEY KONG COUNTRY



P32

STREET RACER



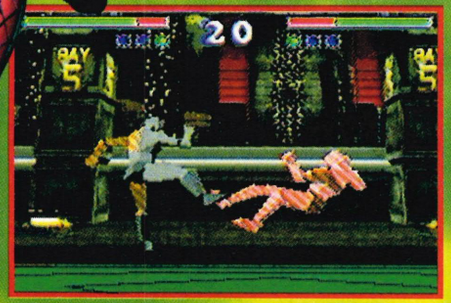


BETTER THAN MARIO KART?
FIND OUT ON PAGE 36!



FX FIGHTERS P14

EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK AT ARGONAUT'S LATEST SUPER FX GAME!





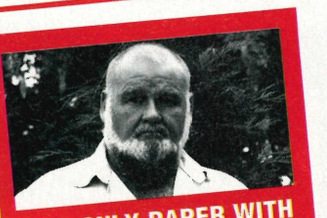


REVIEWS

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY	32
STREET RACER	36
LION KING	40
JURASSIC PARK II	44
NBA JAM (GB)	46
DINO DINI'S SOCCER	48
SUPER DROPZONE	50
PITFALL	52
DUCK TALES 2 (GB)	54
VORTEX	56
MADDEN '95	58
BRAIN LORD	59
PAC IN TIME	61
INDIANA JONES	62
SAMURAI SPIRITS	64
BUBSY II	65
NIGEL MANSELL'S INDYCAR	67
MICKEY MANIA	69
DAFFY DUCK (GB)	70
FULL THROTTLE RACING	71
NHL '95	72
TARZAN (GB)	74
ILLUSION OF GAIA	76
CHOPLIFTER III (GB)	78
GHOUL PATROL	80
LORD OF THE RINGS	82
SYNDICATE	84

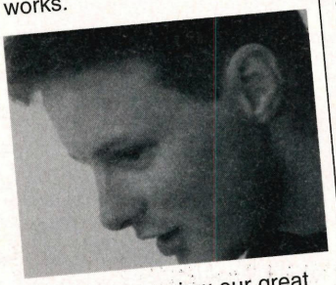
The Nindependent

TAKING THE RISE!



THE ONLY PAPER WITH BIG RON POWER!

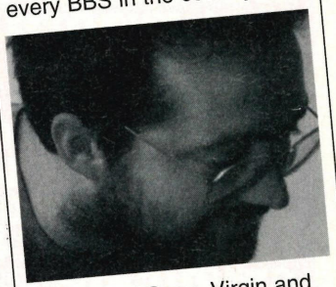
A funny thing happened on the way to the *Rise of the Robots* review. There we were all set to tease our joypads with the first Super NES game to have fully rendered graphics, and see if the game really does live up to all the hype, when all of a sudden Mirage rang and threw the proverbial spanner in the works.



"You can review our great game, but only if you come up to Mirage to do it, under supervision you understand." What! Okay so you may have the backing of Time Warner, but nobody, I mean nobody, forces the SUPER GAMER team to travel for 2 hours for the pleasure of reviewing a game on the deadline.

Not only would we all have to go to Mirage (each person has to do their comments, remember), but we'd be forced to sit and play the game and objectively review it with all the programmers and Mirage staff peering over our shoulders and suggesting that *Rise of the Robots* is such a good game it really should get 98% or we'll kick your heads in. Guess what – not happening.

And so, instead of the review for *Rise of the Robots*, as promised last issue, we have, er nothing, except 27 other game reviews from companies who *could* be bothered to send them, and trusted us not to sell them to every BBS in the country. If

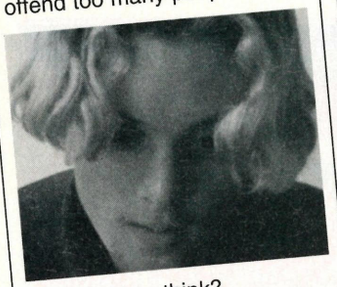


the likes of Sony, Virgin and Ocean can do it, Mirage, even for their biggest games, why can't you?

I'd also like to take the time to apologise for the lack of new tips this issue. Don't worry, it's not a new SG policy, but an oversight due to the fact that a 68-page tips book was supposed to be on the cover of this issue (which I worked night and day to complete), thereby covering all the latest cheats. At the last minute, this book was dropped until next issue (so you won't lose out), and is our Christmas present to you.

Also, I hope you enjoy our exclusive *Lion King* '95 calendar bundled with this issue. Please send in your comments on our promotions to the Write Stuff.

Actually, talking about the book. We thought it would be a great idea to do a "Dead Celebs" tips book, with top tips from Elvis, Jim Morrison, Marilyn Monroe, JFK, John Belushi etc. But our publisher seemed to think this would offend too many people.



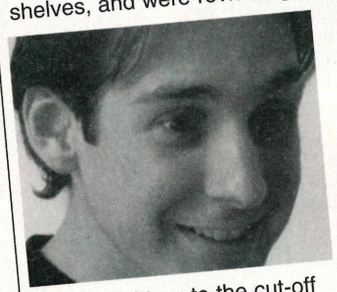
What do you think?

Would it be the work of sick minds who should all go to hell for eternity if not longer, or would your ribs ache from laughing too much? Letters to the editor please.

Well, this issue is suffering from Christmas over-indulgence. All the software companies are madly releasing everything they have in time for the silly season and as a result SUPER GAMER #9 has 27 reviews! More than any other issue.

Waiting for you within these pages are seven Gamer Golds including *Donkey Kong Country* (we've got it, we've got it!), *Street Racer*, *Lion King* and *Super Dropzone*. An unprecedented amount of top quality goods for Crimbo, plus there are the hordes of games that just missed out on the Gamer Gold status, including *Jurassic Park II*, *Duck Tales 2* (GB), *Indiana Jones*, *Mickey Mania* and *Syndicate*. All good games and worth a look. Never before has SG been so packed.

Finally, a word of praise. I'm damn proud of my team – they worked all hours to get this corpulent issue on the shelves, and were reviewing

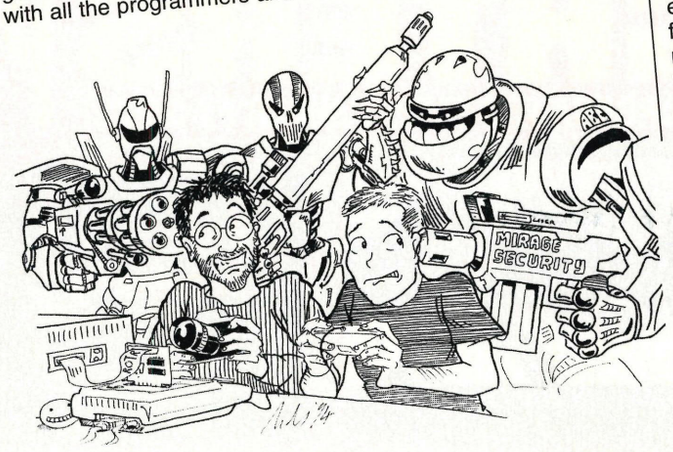


games right up to the cut-off point. Well done.

I think you'll be impressed with the coverage this month, and I haven't even mentioned our feature on Super NES *Theme Park* and our totally exclusive feature on Argonaut's latest FX game – *FX Fighter* on page 14.

Hope you enjoy the mag, see you next month.

Damian Butt



A PROLIFERATION OF PARAGON PUBLICATIONS!

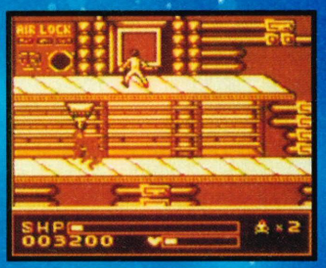
Look. It's deadline day (well, it was yesterday, anyway). I've been here all night. The coffee machine is out of coffee, which sort of negates its reason for existing. Steve bleedin' Wright and his posse of crawling sycophants are giggling inanely at a 'joke' song that wasn't actually funny the first time he played it, never mind the fifteenth. And Take That are number one. With all this weighing down on me, do you seriously expect me to come up with a new headline for this bit, which nobody reads anyway? Plebs. Anyway, here are the other magazines produced in this very house of fun. SEGAPRO, SEGA XS, MEGA POWER, PC POWER, CD-32 GAMER, GAMES WORLD, CD-ROM USER, INTERNET & COMMS TODAY and us. Bye.

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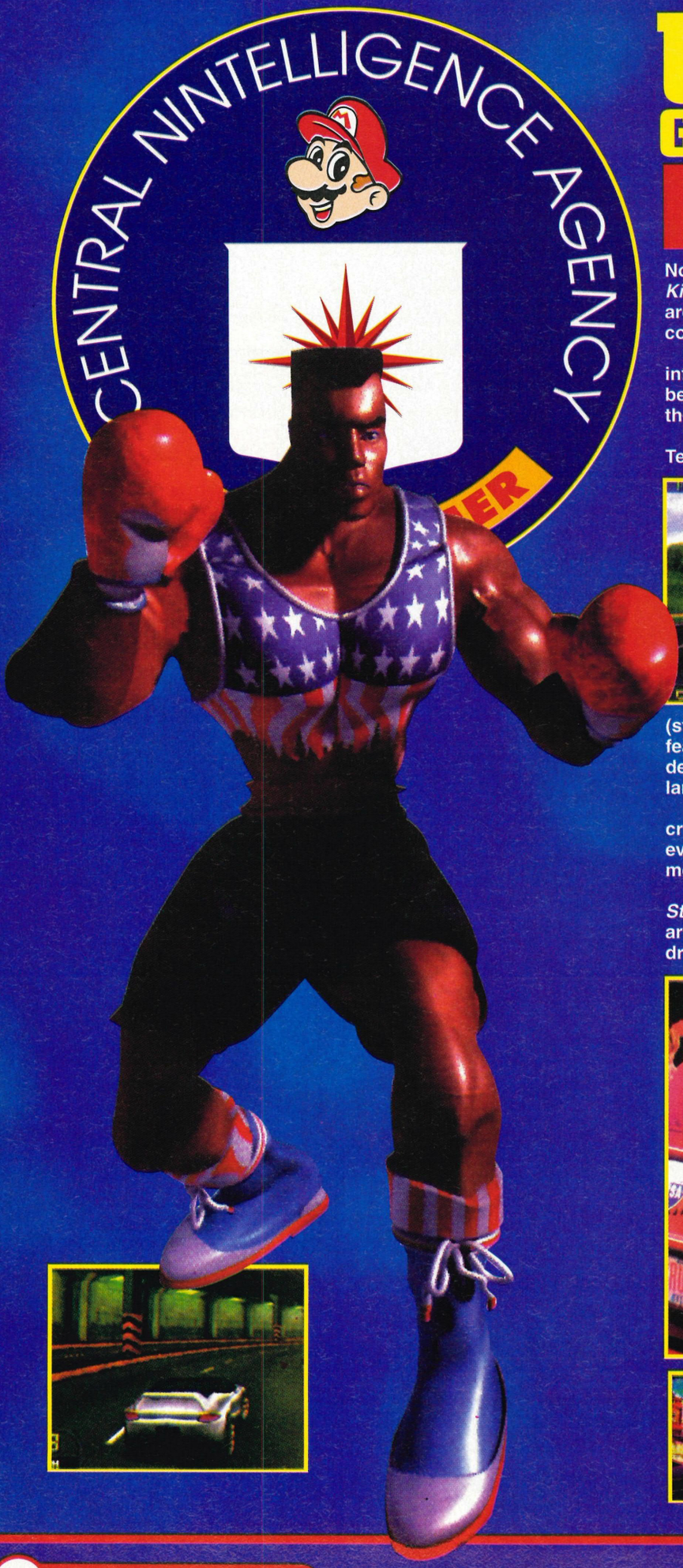
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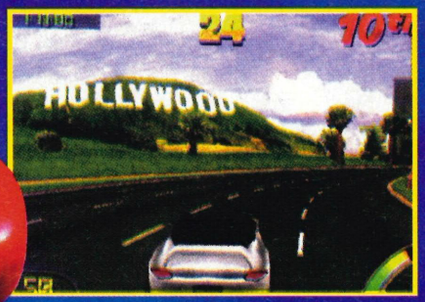
ULTRA 64 GAMES ARE HERE!

FIRST LOOK AT CRUISN' USA & KILLER INSTINCT!

Nothing can prepare you for the first shots of *Cruisn' USA* and *Killer Instinct*, the two Williams coin-ops that will be hitting UK arcades later this year, and are then set for pixel perfect conversions to the Ultra 64!

It took a fair amount of doing, but we've secured all the information on Ultra 64's first two games. *Cruisin' USA* has just been finished and it is basically a road race set across 14 tracks in the States.

You can choose either the Italia PC4 (looks like a Ferrari Testarossa to me), La Bamba (large *ZZ Top*-style jalopy), a '69 Muscle Car (speaks for itself really) and finally an experimental Devastator V1 – guaranteed soiled pants in just three seconds!



Once you've selected your car, choose manual or automatic and then hit the tarmac for some of the most realistic races of your life. Forget *Ridge Racer*, *Daytona* and *NASCAR*, *Cruisin' USA* (still a crap name, though) uses actual American landmarks and features to create the roadside obstacles. Believe it or not, the development team went out with a camcorder and filmed various landscapes and items of interest and included them in the game.

Cruisin' USA also includes loads of different vehicles to avoid or crash into (if you're feeling sadistic), and the programmers have even included some gruesome moments, so that this game is the most realistic you've ever played.

Headed up by Eugene Jarvis (yes, the guy behind *Defender*, *Stargate* and *Robotron*), the *Cruisin' USA* coin-op itself is modelled around a Ferrari-type sports car so that you are sitting in the drivers' seat in front of a 25" screen. The finished game also











boasts an amazing 16 million colours (although not on-screen at once, obviously) and takes up a huge 18 megabytes of information! *Cruisin' USA* will also be available in a single stand-alone cabinet, plus a head-to-head machine.

From the shots we've seen, this look like being one hit coin-op, but we will still have to wait a year to see how it transfers to the Ultra 64.

Also hot off the Williams press is *Killer Instinct*, of course, the 3-D entirely rendered beat-'em-up which was the first game to be announced for Ultra 64. The game features ten characters, all vaguely humanoid, and each one has an impressive 50 moves and combinations. Eight hit combos? Not on your life, because now you can pummel your opponent to death with 15, count 'em 15 hit combos! Now that's what I call overkill!

The characters are: Werewolf (self-explanatory), Thunder (Apache Indian), Fulgore (cyborg with glowing red eyes, as they all seem to have), Spinal (skeletal warrior), Jago (the obligatory ninja), Glacius (ice man), B Orchid (hot pants girl from hell), Riptor (a 'raptor, basically) and finally TJ Combo (a boxer with the good 'ol Stars and Stripes on his chest).

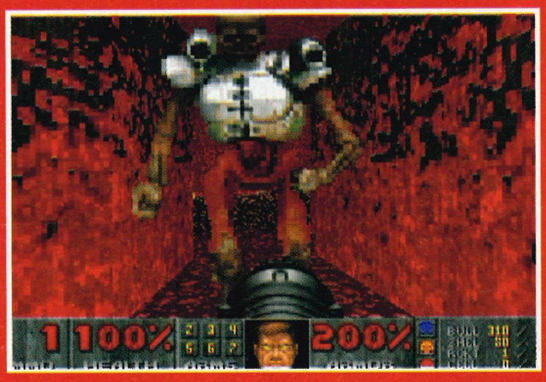
Every character has his/her quota of special moves including Laser Sword, Endokuken and rollercoaster, although most have moves like claw slashes, and one can even transform into an evil black version of their opponent!]

Although the superb rendered character intros are very impressive, the game seems to be just a standard horizontal beat-'em-up with better graphics and more moves. It will of course be fast, but there doesn't seem to be the full 3-D wrap-around camera angles of *Virtua Fighter* or *FX Fighter*. *Killer Instinct* will be over here soon (hopefully before Xmas), but we'll give you a full play report as soon as we can blag a copy.



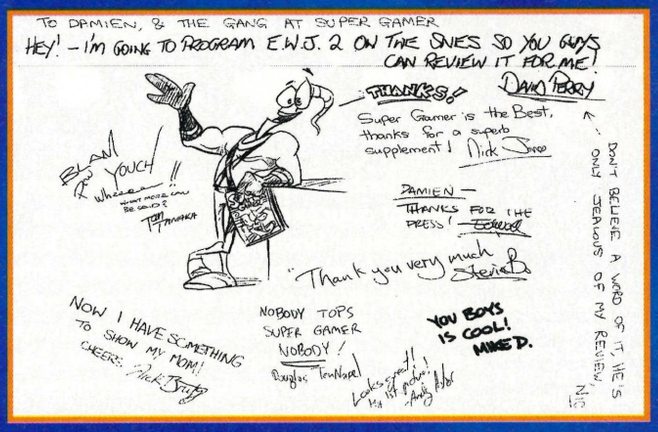
ULTRA 64 IS DOOMED!

Shock news just in as SUPER GAMER reveals that Williams is developing a version of '*Super Doom*' for the Ultra 64. Williams will be working closely with id Software (the creators of the original *Doom*) and hope that this game will give the nancy-named Ultra 64 some credibility. Presumably Nintendo will waive the blood 'n guts rules then?





Byron Cook, President of Williams said "We are excited to bring this incredibly popular computer game to the Nintendo Ultra 64. The new *Doom* will contain many unique features including new gameplay levels, additional characters and enhanced graphics." But does this mean the Ultra 64 will feature link-up facilities so that *Doom* can be fully exploited? More news as we get it.



SUPER GAMER GETS WHAT IT DESERVES!

After the massive *Earthworm Jim* extravaganza last issue, and the resulting 16-page FREE supplement (please tell us what you thought by the way), Shiny Entertainment sent us a fax proclaiming their devotion to SUPER GAMER. Many thanks Shiny.

URGENT MAYAN WARNING!



An urgent word of warning to all SUPER GAMER readers. With the press campaign for *Pitfall: the Mayan Adventure*, Activision was dishing out copious amounts of Green & Black's Maya Gold chocolate. Having tasted this 'chocolate', we can only say – DO NOT TOUCH IT! It you see a bar, walk away slowly and find a policeman. Any sudden movement will enrage the bar and it will attack. Made with the help of cocoa beans and natural spice and fruit extracts, this dark chocolate should be avoided at all costs. You have been warned.

MORTAL KOMBAT II BREAKS ALL RECORDS!

Acclaim have recently announced that *MKII* achieved £30 million sales in its first week! That makes it officially the biggest selling video game of all time and sent it straight to number one in the charts. Acclaim reported that *MKII* out-sold its nearest rival, *Jungle Book*, by seven to one. But that is unconfirmed.

More than two and a half million carts were shipped into the UK for Mortal Friday (9 September), apparently if all the carts were laid end to end, they would stretch from London to Edinburgh. What, exactly? Where in Edinburgh? What if they took the bypass and then got the motorway? Sales of the original *Mortal Kombat* have now hit six million in the UK alone – that's a tenth of the population for gawd's sake!



MANGA APPLESEED

The biggest Manga video this month is *Appleseed*, a rollercoaster of a film which centres on the peaceful city of Olympus which was artificially created after WWIII. Despite the sublime atmosphere, controlled by half human, half robots called Biodroids, some of the remaining all-humans rebel and resort to terrorist activities. Created by the same guy who did *Dominion Tank Police* (Masamune Shirow), this is a corker of a vid and out now priced £11.99.

ACCLAIM RISE TO THE OCCASION

News has just reached us that Acclaim will be distributing the Mirage mega-game *Rise of the Robots* for the Super NES. Although there was no review this issue (see Nindependent), *Rise* should be in the pages of SUPER GAMER soon. Regular readers will recall our first look at the game in issue #5, which is the very first to use completely rendered sprites and backgrounds.

This basically means that every single sprite in the game was first rendered using 3D Studio on the PC, so that complex shapes and joints could be joined together to create more lifelike characters. The difference between computer sprites and rendered ones is quite phenomenal, and so anyone who wants to see just what the Super NES can do, should get down to the shops in November and get a glimpse of *Rise of the Robots* in action.

FROGS BUY UP OCEAN

Last month, French conglomerate Chargeurs bought approximately a 24% stake in Manchester based software giant, Ocean. Ocean, who have recently excelled with *Jurassic Park* and the EA titles on Super NES will use the vast amount of money to expand its sales departments in Europe and America and to launch a plethora of new titles for the up-and-coming year.

Chargeurs, who already own media interests such as film production, a stake in BSkyB, as well as various television and film companies would seem to be consolidating their entertainment arm with perhaps some interactive movies or game licences in the offing?

ELSPA RELEASE GAMES CHARTER

The European Software Publisher Association (ELSPA) has just launched a gamesplayers charter which it hopes will offer comments and guidelines for parents with console obsessive kids.

According to Mark Strachan, Chairman of ELSPA, the charter will help parents who "tend to find computer and video games complex and inaccessible." Presumably these are the same parents who burn witches and send their kids up chimneys for the local squire.

Having read the charter I can strongly advise SUPER GAMER readers (many of whom are parents, believe it or not Mr Strachan) not to pick one up, lest you feel patronised beyond belief.

The charter *does* however dispel any myths about epilepsy and video games, but the "What are the benefits of Video Games" section is so condescending it's cringeworthy, and the "Will Video Games Make My Children Violent?" is worth a read just for a laugh. After all, they're not going to say, "yep, playing Mario will turn your child into a glue-sniffing axe murderer", especially when the charter is sponsored by Sega and Nintendo.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...

Nintendo®

By the time you read this, say Nintendo, the Nintendo hotline which was set up in 1991 will have received its millionth tips caller. Although the big N say that the call should arrive at the end of October, there is still a chance that it may not arrive until the middle of November, meaning that a SUPER GAMER reader could be the lucky winner!

The winner gets a day out at the Nintendo hotline, a T-shirt and their height in Super NES games (wander if Michael Jordan ever rings up?). Remember, if you have a problem on any of Nintendo's games, call (0703) 652222 between 12 and 8pm. Who knows, you may be the millionth caller if you pick up the phone now...

ELSPA CHARTS

Special thanks to Dorien Block.

It's all change this month on all three aspects of the Nintendo spectrum. Making its UK debut this month and promptly knocking *Mortal Kombat II* off the coveted numero uno spot, is Nintendo's fabulous racing game, *Stunt Race FX*. The cheapies are also launching an all-out attack for the top with *Lemmings*, *Taz-Mania*, *Batman Returns*, *Wolfenstein* and *Super Strike Gunner* making their mark, and not for the first time either.

Tetris is back with a vengeance on the Game Boy with its impressive sequel snatching the crown from *Donkey Kong '94* which has slid considerably down the ladder in the last four weeks. Mario is also proving to be more popular than ever with all three of his adventures sneaking up the charts.

The worm has well and truly turned on the NES, with a straight flush of new entries including such timeless classics as *Darkwing Duck*, *Alien 3*, and *Pac-Man* (!). Who can argue with public opinion?



COMPILED BY GALLUP

THIS MONTH'S CHARTS

▲: Hot **▼: Not**

NE: New Entry **–: Same**

SUPER NES

1	NE	Stunt Race FX	Nintendo
2	▼	Mortal Kombat II	Acclaim
3	–	Super Mario World	Nintendo
4	–	Starwing	Nintendo
5	▲	Jurassic Park	Ocean
6	▼	FIFA	Ocean
7	▼	Mortal Kombat	Acclaim
8	NE	Lemmings	Marubeni
9	▲	Aladdin	Capcom
10	▼	Super Mario Kart	Nintendo
11	NE	Striker	Elite
12	NE	Taz-Mania	THQ
13	▼	Street Fighter II: Turbo	Capcom
14	NE	Cool Spot	Virgin
15	NE	World Cup Striker	Elite
16	▼	Mario All-Stars	Nintendo
17	NE	Batman Returns	Konami
18	▼	Jungle Book	Virgin
19	NE	Wolfenstein 3-D	Imagineer
20	NE	Super Strike Gunner	Activision

GAME BOY

1	▲	Tetris 2	Nintendo
2	▲	Jurassic Park	Nintendo
3	NE	Super Mario Land 3	Nintendo
4	▼	Donkey Kong '94	Nintendo
5	NE	Road Rash	Ocean
6	NE	Cool Spot	Virgin
7	NE	Super Mario Land 2	Nintendo
8	NE	Super Mario Land	Nintendo
9	▼	Mortal Kombat II	Acclaim
10	NE	Kirby's Pinball Land	Nintendo

NES

1	NE	Spider-Man	Acclaim
2	NE	Darkwing Duck	Capcom
3	NE	Alien 3	Acclaim
4	NE	Jurassic Park	Ocean
5	NE	Ultimate Air Combat	Activision
6	NE	Swordmaster	Activision
7	NE	Pac-Man	Nintendo
8	NE	Galaxy 5000	Activision
9	NE	Adventure Island Classic	Nintendo
10	NE	Tetris 2	Nintendo

MINI PREVIEWS

ANIMANIACS



Based on the Spielberg cartoon series, the Animaniacs are a trio of dog-like kids who wreak havoc in the Warner Bros studios. The puzzle-based game features loads of levels and retain much of the humour from the show. Konami: December.

BLACK HAWKE



This *Flashback*-style platform adventure puts you in the shoes of the keeper of the universe as you battle to keep a sacred stone out of enemy hands. Retitled after sounding like a popular alcoholic beverage (Blackthorne). Interplay: January.

BREATH OF FIRE II



The original was a huge success in the SUPER GAMER office, and the sequel looks set to be even better. With improved graphics, greater depth and a variety of interesting characters in tow, this promises to be the RPG to end all others. Capcom: TBA

CARRIER ACES



Tally-ho chaps! This World War II air-simulation shoot-'em-up puts you in the cock pit of an assortment of fighter planes as you lock horns with the bosche in a series of death-defying campaigns. Gametek: December.

DRAGON BALL Z3



How can they possibly churn out another instalment of this beat-'em-up? This third edition features even more characters and moves whilst retaining the trademark split-screen battles. Expect a full review next month (if we can be bothered!). Bandai: TBA.

HEBEREKE'S PAPOON



You choose a character from an assorted choice of colourful creatures and your aim is to pummel three other creatures into jelly tots! Odd? You better believe it! Contender for the strangest name in gaming history. Marubeni: TBA.

JON RITMAN'S SOCCER



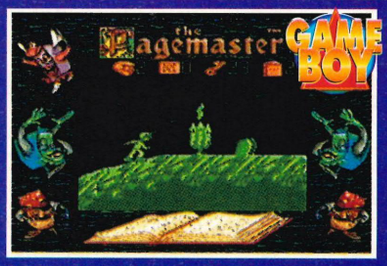
The crazed Rasputin look-alike who produced the stunning *Match Day 2* way back in the Spectrum hay-day turns his hand to the Super NES for his latest footie sim. After the stunning *Monster Max*, does *FIFA* have cause for concern? Domark: April.

LION KING



We loved the Super NES adaptation, but with considerably less memory to play around with, how well will the cuddly kitten take to the hand-held? All levels have been included and the animation is superb, but will it play as well? Virgin: November.

THE PAGEMASTER



The Never Ending Story meets *Home Alone* – Bleugh! Based on the forthcoming Macaulay Culkin flick, you play the unfortunate brat who is turned into a toon and zapped inside a book. Includes its own pretty Super Game Boy border. Virgin: December.

PINBALL FANTASIES



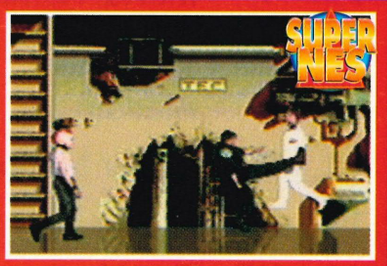
Based on the Amiga favourite, this follows on from *Pinball Dreams* with a greater assortment of tables to choose from and loads of extra features besides. It'll only cost a fraction of a real table as well, flippin' marvellous. Gametek: December.

SUPER PUNCH-OUT



Super Punch-Out features boxing action at its unbeatable best. You must train your fighter to beat the world's top opponents and work your way up through the likes of Gabby Jay and Bear Hugger. Nintendo: March.

TIME COP



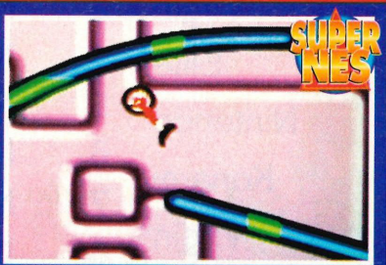
It's the Van Damme event of the year! *Time Cop* is based on the big-budget action movie in which a dedicated cop ventures through time to track down and apprehend dangerous criminals. Unsurprisingly, the game is a platform shoot-'em-up! JVC: December.

TIN STAR



You take to the saddle as the mechanical sheriff who must blast robot villains intent on taking over the futuristic wild west. The game offers a choice of three different methods of control, including the mouse and Super Scope as you attempt to blast the wrong-doers into oblivion. Nintendo: March.

UNIRACERS



Odd to say the least, Nintendo have once again turned to Silicon Graphics workstations to produce these stunningly animated unicycles that race against each other in comical fashion. There are 16 cycles in all, each boasting over 6,000 frames of animation apparently. Nintendo: March

ZERO THE KAMIKAZE SQUIRREL



Originally a bad guy from *Aero the Acro-bat*, Zero is the latest in a long line of fluffy heroes to star in their own platform adventure. You must stop the evil lumberjack, Jacques LeSheets, from destroying your homeland in this 16Mbit rollercoaster ride through huge and colourful terrains. Marubeni: TBA.

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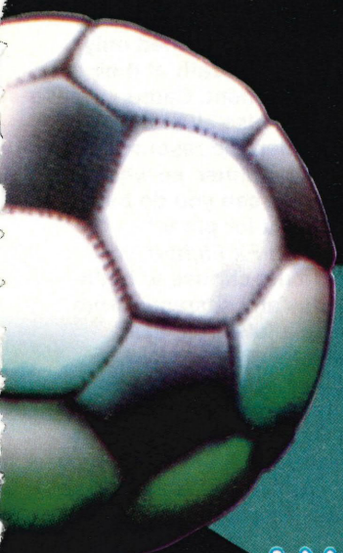
Only ONE winner!

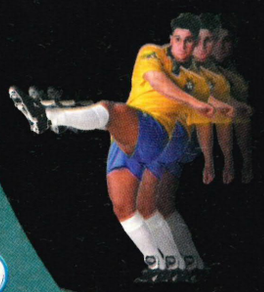
It scored 96% in CVG - you know it's kickin'!

MEGA DRIVE

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

SCORE





ANCO

VIC TOKAI

Published by Vic Tokai Europe Ltd. Tokai House, 9 Duncan Close, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 6WL. Tel: 0604 671415 Fax: 0604 670864

Screen Shots are illustrative of gameplay and may vary from format to format

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who needs a SATURN?

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EXCLUSIVE LOOK AT *FX FIGHTERS*!

Always thirsting for a story, and never missing a chance to provoke those Sega types, SUPER GAMER ace reporters Ryan and Keith ventured to Argonaut for an EXCLUSIVE look at the latest Super FX game *FX Fighter*. What they saw proves that the humble Super NES can take on Sega's 64-bit monster any day!



No strangers to the glare of the media's eye, Argonaut Software has in the past lead the field of Super FX games, after all, they designed the Super FX chip which enables the Super NES to manipulate complex polygons in real time. *Starwing* was the first Super FX game, with stunning graphics and sound – all portrayed in an ultra-realistic 3-D environment.

Starwing was limited in that you couldn't escape from the narrow confines of the screen, and the game took you more or less where it wanted. The public wanted freedom, Argonaut replied with *Vortex*, a go-anywhere, kill-anything monster mash in true Gunhead style.



Super FX has of course spawned many other games including *Stunt Race FX* from Nintendo, *PowerSlide* from Elite, and there are rumours that *Super Elite* uses it as well (who knows, we've never seen it), and then of course there's *Starwing 2*, but nobody's allowed to see that yet either.

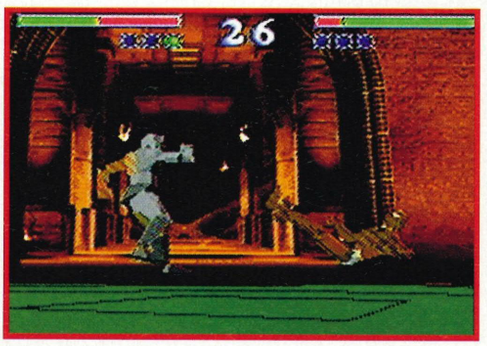
Now, it seems Argonaut are going to really flex their FX muscles and prove to the world that the Super NES is more than capable of producing a real time, fully rotating, 3-D polygon beat-'em-up in the style of *Virtua Fighters*. And remember, Sega need a Saturn to run that.

At this early stage the press have dubbed the game *FX Fighter*, but this will more than likely not be the final title. *Centurion* and *Absolute Power* have been discussed, but nothing as yet has been decided.

We've played the game, and to be honest it does look very similar to *VF*, but Nick Halstead, the game's producer assures us that "The onus is on realism. Our game contains more elaborate moves and a greater attention to detail. All of the moves you see have been painstakingly captured in the States using the Motion Capture process, where actors are filmed performing the actions and their bone movements are captured to create a realistic fluid effect. We've also incorporated non-human characters to add a bit of excitement."

Even at this early stage (the game is no more than 80% complete) it still plays well (if a little slow) and you can really appreciate the realism that the Motion Capture process has brought to the game. As you punch or kick someone for example, they recoil just as in real life; doubling up or jerking their neck back from the point of impact.

The non-human element is also obvious as your humanoid ninja gets attacked by a giant ant, fire creature, or a lizardman. We're told that by the time the game hits the streets (next year by the way), each of the 13 characters will have special moves that will reflect their personalities.



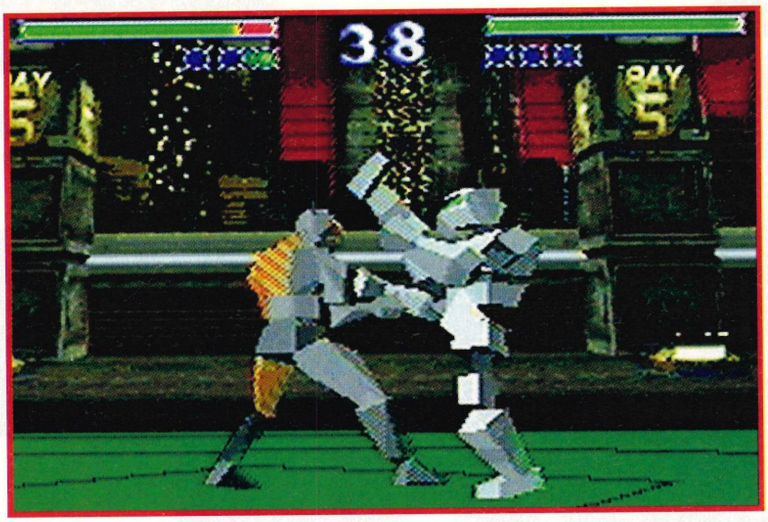
Before we go deeper into the game, it's a good idea to know the plot and the explanations for why all these exotic creatures decided to have a scrap.

The place is the Aycul System, a distant sector of the universe where 13 planets exist side by side, each with their own dominant lifeform. When man arrived and introduced inter-planetary travel, the different races didn't mix well. As tensions were reaching breaking point, a special organisational known as Accord was set up to promote peace and unison.

But instead of repairing interplanetary relations, the races constantly pushed for some sort of contest to determine who was the superior species, and resorted to going behind the back of Accord to devise a blood match to prove who was the mightiest race.

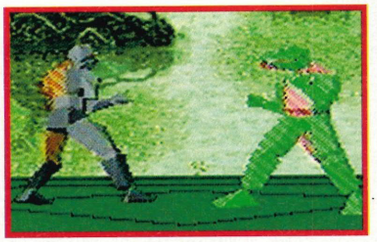
The annual contest was successful until a band of renegade scientists known as the Cadre arrived from nowhere to win the contest with their Mk0 cyborg warrior. From then on the contest was held on their home planet of Anarchis, where the rules went out of the window and the winner of each bout was determined only by the death of their opponent. Cadre promise all of their scientific resources to the winner, so what else can you do but fight for glory?

In *FX Fighter*, you must choose to battle as any character from 12 Aycul planets. You have approximately 24 standard kicking and punching moves at your disposal, along with several throws and a truck-load of specials. You'll then visit each planet in turn; battling it out with the native 'ard man, before

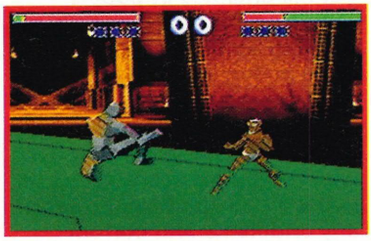


venturing to Anarchis for the final showdown.

When we infiltrated Argonaut's offices, the lads were hard at working beavering away on the Super NES and PC



versions of the game, although perhaps the hardest task of all has been dreaming up catchy and imaginative names for the fighters. The game is being written for GTE Imagetrek in the US, but an official release is inevitable.



As one of the first UK mags to see *FX Fighter*, we are sure that it will give *VF* a run for its money. The graphics, although in their earliest stage, are still eye-catching, and when the fighters have all been given their own moves and surroundings to interact with, it should be an awesome game. Proof, if ever it was needed, that the Super NES is still alive and kicking!



WHO'S A PRETTY BOY, THEN?

Although these are subject to change before the game hits the streets early next year, here are the current line-up of fighters and their home planets.

Magnon – a fire-breathing silicon-based life form from the planet Inferno.
Krag – a Troglodyte crime lord from the planet Harkis.
Sheba – a fast cat-like creature from the planet Rhomb.
Jerzan – a powerful human from the planet Abaran.
Venam – a cold-blooded insectoid predator from the planet Peres.
Jake – an human ex-bodyguard from the planet Sentral.
Terak – a primitive lizard man from the planet Dhotis.
Kiko – a patriotic human lass from the planet Tropis.
Siran – an evil hypnotic water spirit from the planet Ursae.
Ashraf – a spiritual monk from the planet Karlak.
Aula – a rage-filled human from the planet Lusk.
Cyben 30 – the ultimate cyborg warrior from the planet Axone.
Kwondo – the ultimate warrior from Anarchis.

SUPER GAMER TALKS TO IAN CROWTHER

Although we knew nothing about the game before the visit, luckily the leader of Argonaut's project support group, Ian Crowther, was at hand to speak to us frankly about what we can expect from *FX Fighter*.

SG: With Virtua Fighter coming soon on the Saturn, is FX Fighter an attempt to create a similar game for the Super NES?

IC: It is going to be a similar game, but we're not just thinking "hmm, *VF* is a good game, let's rip it off!" because what would be the point? Apart from anything else, *FX Fighter* was in development before we heard about *VF*, which is something we're still muttering about!

SG: Is FX Fighter a statement to say you don't need superior machines to produce a 3-D fighting game?

IC: You don't need the computing power of a *VF* arcade machine, the version on the Saturn will prove that. The Super FX chip does add considerably to a raw Super NES. I think eventually we could do it without the Super FX, but it would be dog slow. We like to stretch our wings occasionally and prove that we can do something that people think is a bit tricky!

SG: How complete is the game at the moment?

IC: The PC version is about 90% complete, with the Super NES a little bit behind. The models for the fighters are being tweaked and rebuilt slightly to include as much detail as we can manage to keep going at a reasonable frame rate.

SG: Is the FX chip used a new and improved version?

IC: It is new and improved over *Starwing*, it's the full 21 MHz version as opposed to the 10 1/2MHz. I'm not sure if we're going to include any extra modelling RAM in that, we would like to, but that would probably involve producing a special version of the chip.

SG: Can you give us a step by step account of how the game was produced?

IC: My goodness! The game engine was created way back at the dawn of time, even before the FX Chip... hell, even before the Super NES was invented, we were creating 3-D systems on the original Nintendo machine, albeit somewhat slow!

GTE Imagetrek (an American-based software company) wanted a fighting game, and we wanted to do it with real Motion Captured stuff, so it got organised and Gary O'Connell went out there to supervise some people leaping around at high speed being Motion Captured. This information was brought back to us in the form of DAT tapes containing Silicon Graphics animation files. Those were ported onto workstations, and we tweaked around with them until everything matched up very neatly, so that if you do a punch or kick you go back to the same position, it doesn't suddenly glitch, as we've noticed occasionally in other games.

The equipment is almost entirely stuff we've designed ourselves, things we've produced in-house to allow us to develop on the SFX chip. The current device we're using is called the Super Child II, which involves three circuit boards which allow you to write the code on a PC, send it down to the Super NES with the SFX chip onboard.

SG: What is the future for Super NES games?

IC: That's a tricky one. Either they're going to get damn good and the machine is going to stick around, or it is just going to fade away and become obsolete, which would be a pity as it is such a nice machine inside.

SG: Are Argonaut going to continue to produce Super NES games?

IC: We don't really know. If someone comes to us with a contract that we like the look of, then we're not going to object. But ordinarily I would say that it is very unlikely. We've got *FX Fighter* in production; if that isn't the last one, then I would be reasonably surprised.

SG: Thanks.

walk in the P



After last issue's nail-biting tour around Jurassic Park, we venture into a slightly different kind of park this month. Instead of T-rex, it's tea breaks, we have the 'raptors close cousins (fairground ride owners), and not forgetting the life blood of any fun-fair – lashings of candy floss and hot-dogs.

This is a day in the life of *Theme Park*, the latest sim game from Bullfrog. SUPER GAMER got the inside story on when the fair is coming to town.

The most remarkable fact about *Theme Park* on the Super NES is that it promises to contain all the features of the home computer versions... and then some! The basic game is a simulation of the rise and fall of a large American entertainment park, like Coney Island, and it teaches you all about the day-to-day running of the park and the economics of it all. You can alter everything, from the type of rides, to the caffeine content of the coffee and the salt in the popcorn.

But just because there's plenty of educational tools in the game, don't think it's an 'edutainment' title like *Mario is Missing*, because it's not. *Theme Park* is all about fun – you have it and (hopefully) so do the people in the park.

Initially you must choose a location for your park. It can be anywhere in the world, but it's always best to set up near large town. Once you've purchased the land you must set up a few rides with the small amount of money your bank manager has loaned you. Anyone who has played *Sim City* will be on familiar ground here.



It's tough at first and you'll find that major attractions such as rollercoasters are far too expensive – bumper cars and candy floss stalls are more realistic.

If everything goes well, punters will begin trickling in and bringing much needed revenue.

As the head honcho you must keep an eye on the bank balance, but constantly look out for ways to expand and improve popularity. You must also make sure the staff are kept happy, and that the public get what they want (more food, toilets etc).

Realism is a key factor in *Theme Park*, and so rides that are neglected or have no staff will gradually fall part – leaving a big wheel with nobody watching it is a prime recipe for disaster...

But rides are not the only way to earn money in *Theme Park*, just think of all that merchandising and edibles. A sure fire way of selling tons of Cola is to put more salt in the food, for example, and if you put the chances of people winning on the slot machines down to 10%, they'll pump in more money in the hope of getting three cherries.

At any time you can see what the public think of your park by clicking on them, and if necessary you can note down any criticisms and correct them. One good tip is not to put food too near a gut-wrenching ride, or the people will come off and copiously throw up everywhere. True to life, you see?

Theme Park is the perfect game for *Sim City* fans, and even arcadesters will stop and look at the millions of possibilities.

SUPER GAMER will be investigating the game even further next issue, but until then, have a look at the screen shots and read what the programmers have to say. This game is gonna be big.








PARK

SUPER GAMER TALKS TO PETER MOLYNEUX & MARK WEBLEY

A lot of teeth clenching research goes into writing a game revolving around the day to day running of a *Theme Park*, so SUPER GAMER went on a rollercoaster ride through the minds of Managing Director of Bullfrog, Peter Molyneux, and Producer, Mark Webley, to discover what the game is all about.

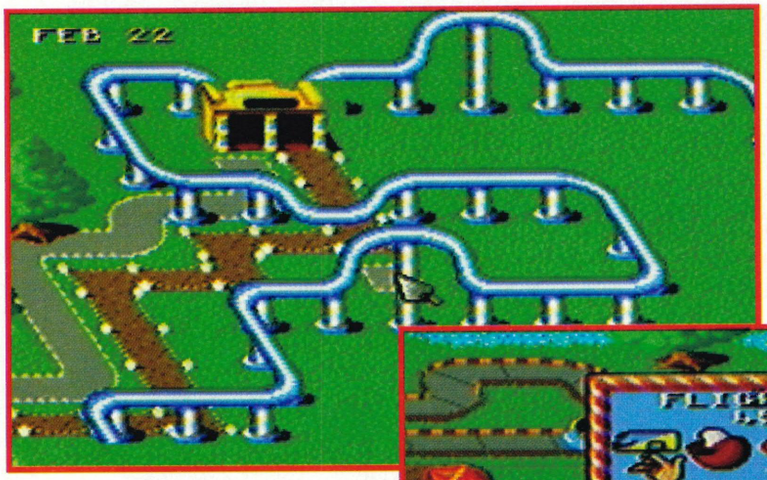
SG: How do you research a game like Theme Park, does it involve an intensive tour of major theme parks of the world, eating tons of hot-dogs and candy floss?

PM: The initial idea for *Theme Park* came to me whilst walking around Euro Disney. It was a cold October morning and it occurred to me that there must be more staff keeping the place clean, tidy and running, than there were customers. I thought this would be a great idea for a simulation. Developing *TP* also gave me the chance to go around loads of real life parks throughout the world, in the name of research.

SG: What sort of game would you class TP as?

PM: Humorous and strategy.

SG: How was the idea conceived?







PM: Although it was my idea originally, like all Bullfrog's games, they are a product of everybody's contributions here.

SG. Was it is easy to program the Super NES version, compared to the home computer versions?

MW: The Super NES version had to be squeezed into an 8Mbit cart with only 128k of RAM. A lot of reorganisation had to be done. We also did not have the luxury of a C compiler available to us.

SG: Is there still copious amounts of vomiting in the Super NES version, or have Nintendo put their foot down?

MW: Yes, there is rather a lot of vomiting if your park is not very well designed – I guess we better check to see if Nintendo will reject.

SG: How many hours of gameplay would you say TP contains? There must come a point when you've done everything you possibly can?

MW: It is difficult to say how many hours of gameplay there are in the game – every time you play, it will be different, and unlike the PC, until you have played most of the countries you will not have seen all of the rides that are available. You could be very old before you've seen all there is to see and tried all the strategies in building the world's best Theme Park.

SG: There must be a lot of humorous situations crammed into the game, what is your favourite part?

MW: Some of the graphics really crack me up – I can't help laughing at what some of the little people get up to.

SG: Are there any other 'sims' that you have in mind to be converted to the Super NES?

MW: We are doing a number of other games in the designer series range and hope we will be able to with them what we have done to *Theme Park*.

SG. Finally, what is your current favourite game. The trend is Doom, do you have a different one?

MW. Favourite games at the moment are *Magic Carpet* and *Colonisation*.

SG: Thanks.



△ An enemy soldier is about to be totalled by an exploding door.

▷ Watch out for enemy soldiers hiding out in native villages.



CANNON FODDER



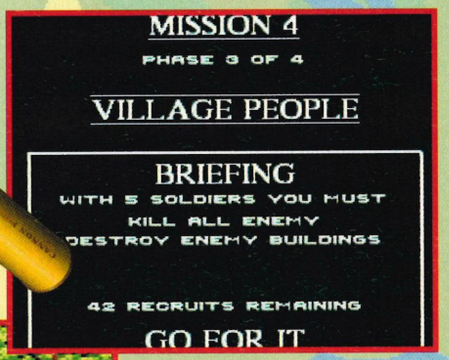
△ Most programmers find it necasery to while away their time by dressing up in strange clothes, at least there's no sign of suspenders or black lace underwear.





△ Never lend your garden shed to men in uniforms carrying large guns.









◁ One stray bullet and the whole lot could go up, taking you with it!



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Pure action, pure violence, big guns and bigger bazookas. That's what *Cannon Fodder* is all about! Developed by Sensible Software (*Sensible Soccer, Mega-lo-mania*) and already established as one of the best games of 1993 on the Amiga and PC, this *Commando*-esque shoot-'em-up should explode onto your Super NES in time for Christmas.

The game is split into a series of 24 missions set in the jungle, mountains and desert, with each mission containing1-4 levels. You'll experience everything from Vietnam to World War II, and the aim of each mission? Destroy the enemy, it couldn't be simpler!

The main characters follow the usual Sensible trend of being barely visible to the human eye, but just because they're small it doesn't mean they can't dish it out! Each soldier (and there can be anything up to five of them simultaneously) carries a high powered machine gun.

Grenades and rocket launchers can usually be found in crates next to enemy huts and you can even climb into armoured rotating turrets and blow anything animal, mineral or vegetable to kingdom come.

There are even vehicles to help you succeed. Sliding around on the skidoo during the ice levels normally leads to a few enemy soldiers being sliced to death under its lethal runners! You can even take a small trip in a helicopter and deal out death from the air during the later levels.

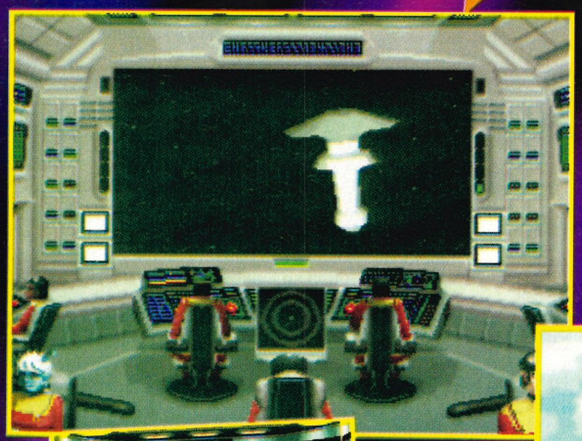
One of the novelties of *Cannon Fodder* is the way that you can take a certain character through dozens of levels to build up his rank from lowly Private to heroic Major. The higher the rank the more accurate his shooting and the longer the range, so it's worth protecting your superiors, hence the name *Cannon Fodder*.

With a Super NES mouse option included, make sure you save some cash for this beauty it's going to be a killer!



△ A Klingon K'tinga bears down on the cadets at Space Academy. You never know, they might pass the test if they face the right way.

STAR TREK STARFLEET ACADEMY

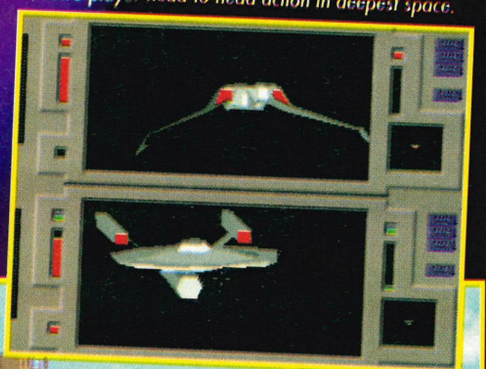


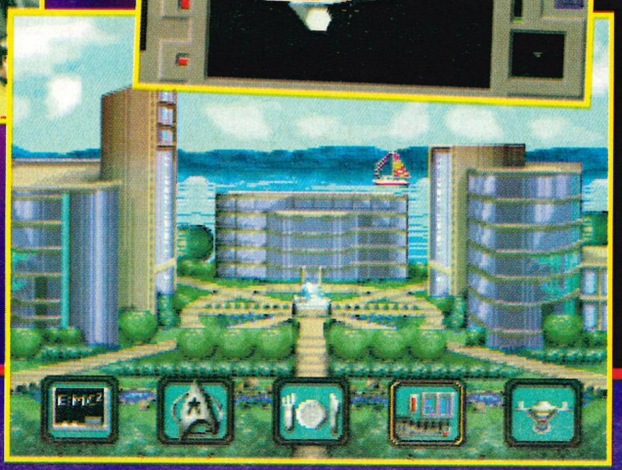


◁ Navigate your ship to various stars and planets.

▷ The sprawling Starfleet Academy contains all mod-cons.

▽ Two player head-to-head action in deepest space.





PRODUCER
INTERPLAY
(0835) 390029

PRICE
£TBA

CART SIZE
8MBits

After a deluge of fairly sub-standard *Star Trek* games, this looks like the one that every Trekkie has been waiting for. The difference with *Starfleet Academy* is that the whole game takes place in a simulator at the training centre on Earth.

At first you are eased into what will be a gruelling few month's intensive training with a few basic missions, such as moving from buoy to buoy in space. This is followed by a quick warp to a nearby system to become familiar with the handling of the Enterprise.

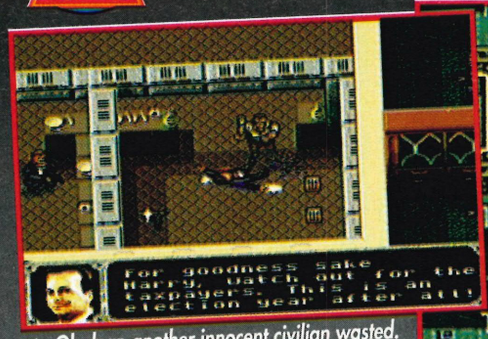
Once you're happy with how your starship moves, it's time to meet your tutor who will introduce you to the real missions. One involves snaring a derelict spacecraft that has turned radioactive in your tractor beam, and towing it into deep space where you can safely blow it away with your phasers or torpedoes.

Not all missions involve destroying spaceships though. Some require you to think more carefully about a certain situation, and you'll need advice from your crew to complete them successfully.

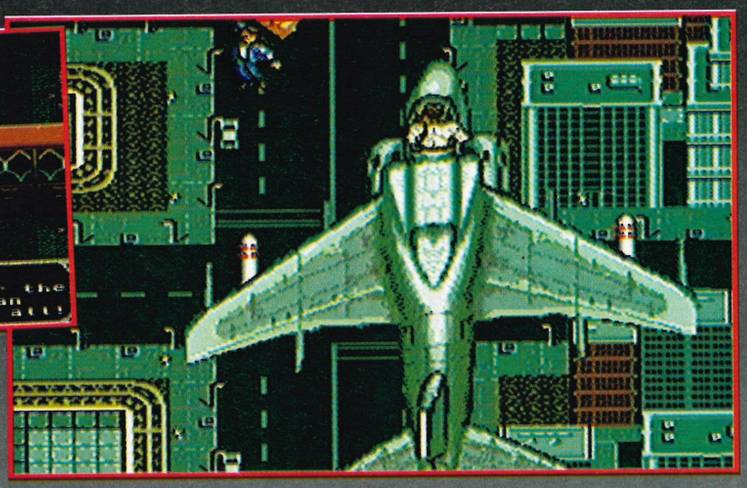
If gadgets are your thing then you'll love all the scanning screens, galactic charts, massive computer files full of interesting snippets of information on races, spaceships, planets and more. A Trekkie's delight, no less!

Also, if earning your wings becomes too much for you, then grab a friend and have a bash at the head-to-head dogfight option, or even try your hand at some of the famous situations encountered by legendary captains of yester-year, like Kirk's raging battle against Khan from the film *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn.*

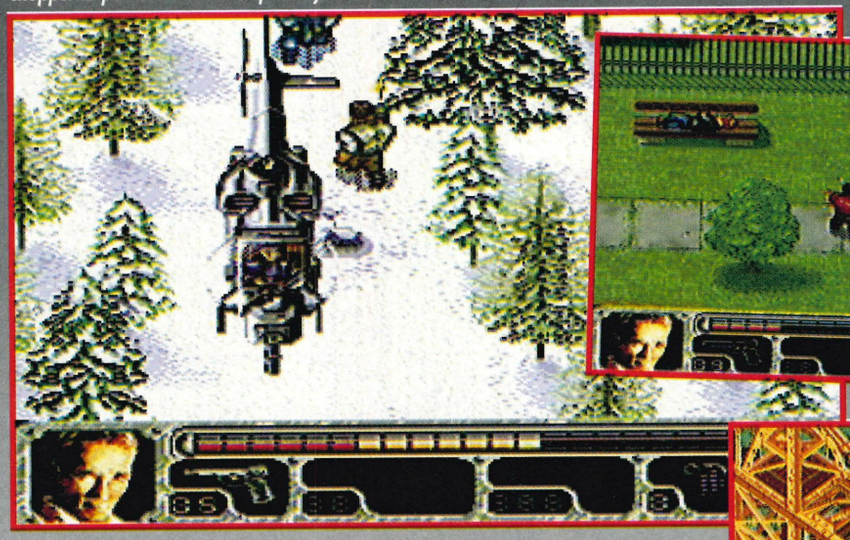
Star Trek: Starfleet Academy could be the game to fulfil the incredible potential of the licence at last. Watch out for the review not a million light years from now...

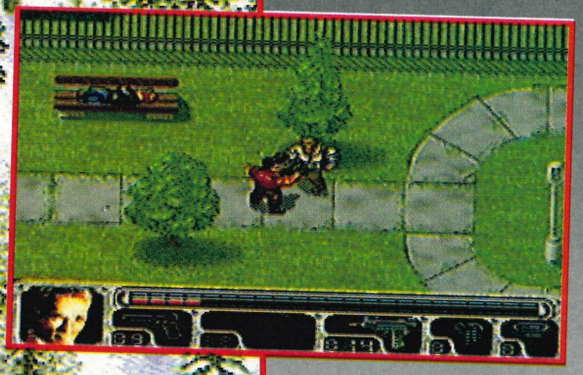


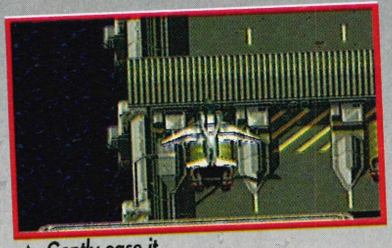
△ Oh dear, another innocent civilian wasted. The chief ain't gonna like this, Harry!



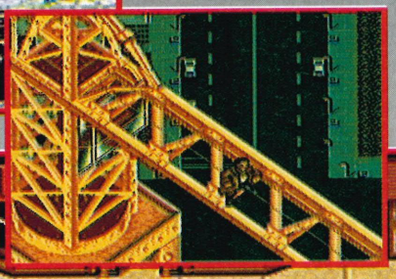
▽ Harry slips and slides down a snowy slope with an army of heavily armed soldiers and a chopper in pursuit. Beam me up Scotty!

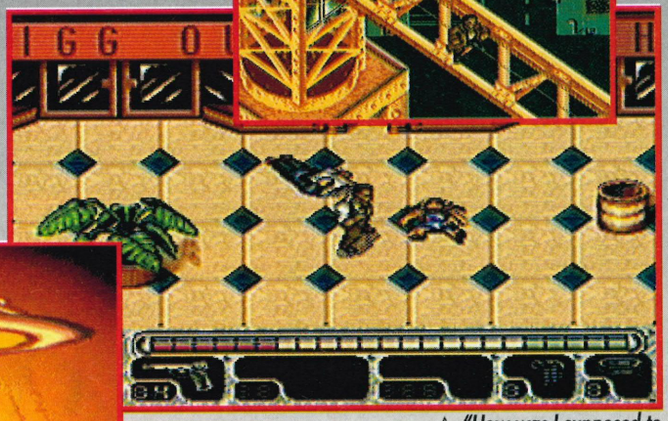






△ Gently ease it up overhead, open the hatches and then bomb the b*****ds!





△ "How was I supposed to know, in the shadows she looked exactly like a armed Crimson Jihad terrorist!"



▷ Let off some steam, Bennet!

True Lies

PRODUCER
ACCLAIM
(071) 344 5000

PRICE
£TBA

CART SIZE
16MBits

"You want to be a farmer?" (swift kick to the happy sacks) Whack! "Here's a couple of acres!" Sound familiar? Well this humorous gag was in fact the best bit from *Last Action Hero*, Arnie's big budget flop of '93. The game was utter crap and everyone forgot about it. The fact of the matter is that the 'Austrian Oak' is back on form in his summer smash, *True Lies*. And the game is looking pretty smart as well!

True Lies on the Super NES, released in December, puts you in the shoes of secret agent Harry Tasker, as you live out a week in his adventurous life battling against the Crimson Jihad terrorist group.

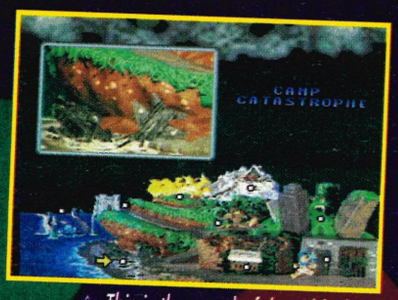
There are 15 missions to complete, which vary between *Chaos Engine* style shoot-'em-up sections, frantic chase sequences on skis, horses, and in cars, and then there is the excellent Harrier level where you fly along and bomb everything in sight!

On foot, Harry has a vast array of high powered weaponry to collect, including pistols, shotguns, machine guns and of course the famous Uzi 9mm which Arnie is seldom seen without.

With this devilish firepower, Harry must venture through angled overhead perspective buildings, killing terrorists and fulfilling his mission objectives. A novel feature of these levels is the way you can waste civilians such as children, tourists, commuters, and down-and-outs amidst a torrent of blood, although if you do this your partner will pop up and penalise you. Three dead civvies and you must restart the mission.

The levels are interspersed with fancy film stills to keep you up-to-date with how the plot is progressing (with the added bonus of seeing Tia in a sumptuous dress – swoon!). We didn't think this was going to be much cop, but it is, and we'll be back next issue to review it. Auf weidersein!

C2 JUDGEMENT CLAY



△ This is the wonderful world of the clayfighters. It's weird, wacky and full of giant babies.

▽ A flying kick from Hoppy, the crazy bunny, sends Frosty into the air.











▽ This guy looks familiar! If only Arnie was as 'ard as this bunny. Those ears are deadly at ten paces.



PRODUCER
INTERPLAY
(0235) 821666

PRICE
£TBA

CART SIZE
24MBits

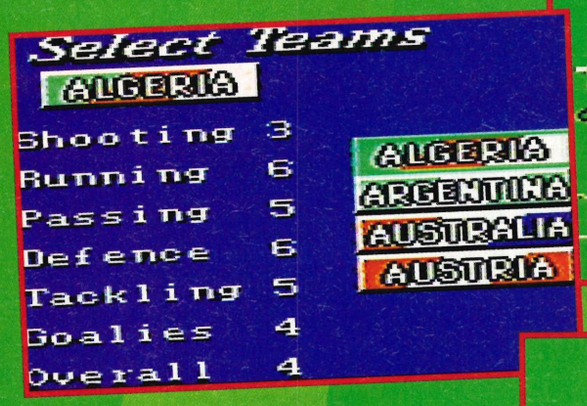
It's time to stop playing in the mud, because *C2 – Judgement Clay* is here! Yes, the flashy claymation technique that was used to such great effect in *Clayfighter* and *Claymates* should be plopping onto the shelves this side of Christmas, but there's no sign of Blue Suede Goo – shock, horror!

Don't worry though, because other favourite characters such as Frosty, Blob and Tiny(?!) are back, along with five new clay faces: Nana, Octo, Goo Goo, Hoppy and Kangoo. They may have stupid names and all look like a bowl of solidified porridge, but these amorphous blobs can pack a punch. In fact whirlwind punches, spiked rattles and sliced bananas are just some of the moves that can be used to pacify your opponent on the road to becoming King of the clay.

The graphics are suitably madcap and if you thought the original backgrounds were weird, have a look at some of these. As for the sound, well there's no catchy title tune at this stage, but a fair chunk of the 24Mbits has been taken up up loads of long sound samples, and making the characters even larger.

Where the first game faltered in the challenge stakes, *C2* includes not only a one and two player versus, but also a no-rules tournament mode where you can pitch all eight players against each other, as well as sudden death and elimination battles. You won't even need a multi-tap!

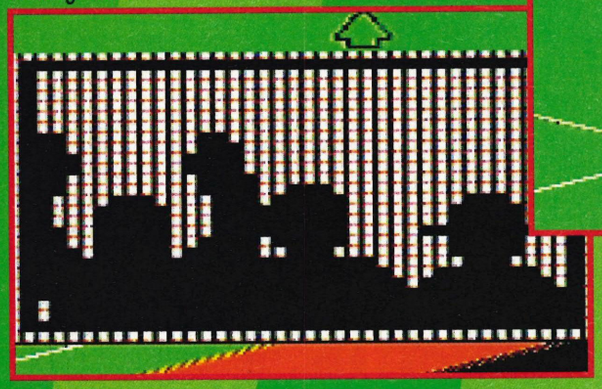
The whopping great 24Mbit cart is packed full of wicked tongue-in-cheek humour that has a go at everything from the film *T2*, to virtually every beat-'em-up on the market. If you enjoyed *Clayfighters* then this is a beat-'em-up that will interest you greatly. *C2* will be judged soon.

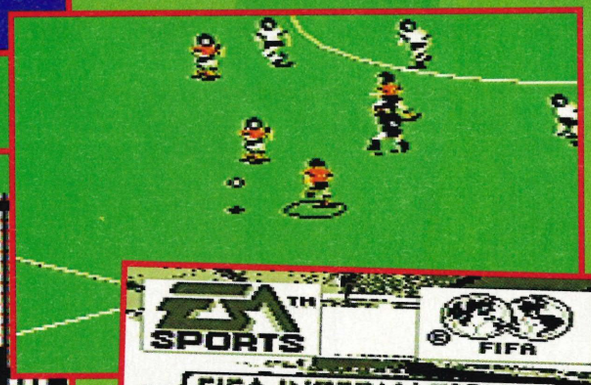


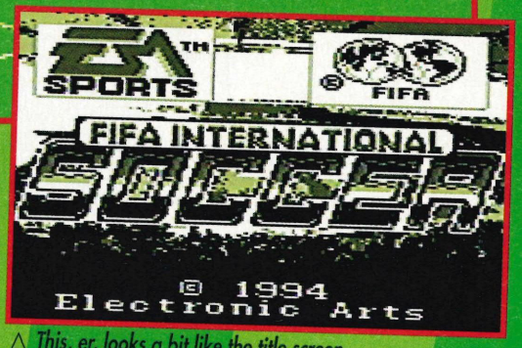


△ A tense goal scramble, apparently.

▽ Yeah – it's a goal, innit. The crowd go wild!

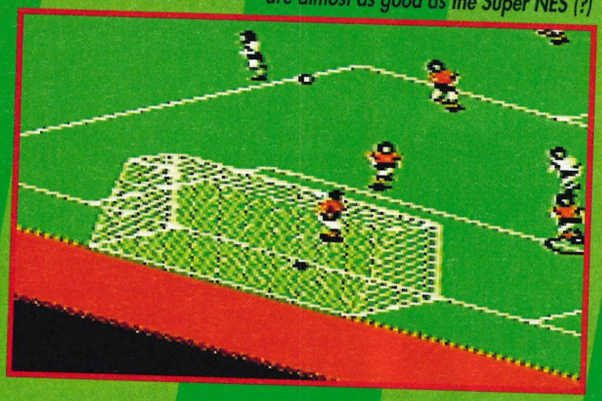






△ This, er, looks a bit like the title screen.

▽ As you can see, the graphics are almost as good as the Super NES (?)





FIFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

PRODUCER
THQ
(071) 935 8954

PRICE
£29.99

CART SIZE
1MBits

Soon there will be no escape, everywhere you go, every place you turn, indeed every breath you take, IT will be there, sucking the very life force from your body and melting your brain! What are we on about you ask? Brace yourself, because the greatest football game ever devised is about to be beamed onto the Game Boy.

We thought it couldn't be done, but THQ have gone against the odds and converted *FIFA International Soccer* onto the Game Boy, and the amazing thing is that it plays more or less exactly like the Super NES version!

This 4Mbit cart features all of the top International sides and includes many of the aspects that launched the original to mythical status, such as the same slanted perspective, all the fancy kicks, headers, and even those annoying scoreboard sequences that flash on-screen in the highly unlikely (!!) event of a goal being scored.

One thing that does cause concern though, and that is how on earth are they going to keep the same control method with only two buttons?

Although the game is far from finished, it is certainly shaping up to be one of this year's major Game Boy releases, especially when viewed through the Super Game Boy as our exclusive screenshots suggest. In fact, if you squint, it could nearly be the Super NES version, almost (well not really).

With THQ releasing this along with a portable *Madden '95*, does this mean that other EA Sports greats will be appearing on the hand-held?

Imagine, *NHL '95* and *NBA Live* on the small screen! Well it's true, because THQ ARE releasing *PGA Tour 3*, *NHL '95* and *Urban Strike* next year. Reviews soon.

BRUTAL

PRODUCER
GAMETEK
(0753) 553445

PRICE
£TBA

CART SIZE
16MBits

Welcome young disciples. Prepare yourselves for battle, because the time has come once again for the Dali Lama to scour the lands in search of warriors "brutal" enough to join him on his exotic island where combat will commence to determine the ultimate fighter of the animal kingdom.

Yes indeed, Gametek's intriguing new beat-'em-up does away with electrifying mutants, fan-swishing babes and the usual stereotyped weapon-weilding heroes, and instead plucks its combatants from the zoo.

In *Brutal* you get to pummel unfortunate beasts such as Kung-Fu Bunny, Kendo Coyote, Foxy Roxy and Ivan the Bear.

"Not another *SFII* clone" you sigh, but *Brutal* does have something original up its sleave. For a start the eight fighters on offer start the game with only punches and kicks. No fancy stuff. The special moves are only accessible when your fighter is doing particularly well in battle. Win two matches in a row and the Dali himself will instruct you on how to master a new ability.

Another new feature is the novel belt system. With every win your fighter notches up another place on the belt ladder, beginning on white and then brawling their way up to win the much coveted "Belt of Heaven".

Also, after each round has been won, there is an instant replay feature which allows you to view the fabulous win or shameful loss (in case you missed it!).

Each cartoon animal fighter consists of 200 frames of animation, and every one has a multitude of wacky moves to attack you with. For example, Prince Leon the lion causes damage by strumming a duff note on his electric guitar, then as his unfortunate opponent muffles their ears, he swiftly jumps in with a flurry of crafty blows.

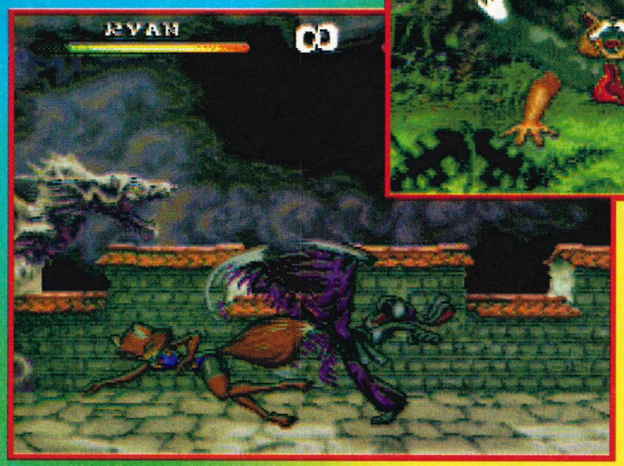
Brutal will be entering the SUPER GAMER dojo next month for the full review.



△ *"I said taunt me not torch me, you cloth-eared old trout!"*

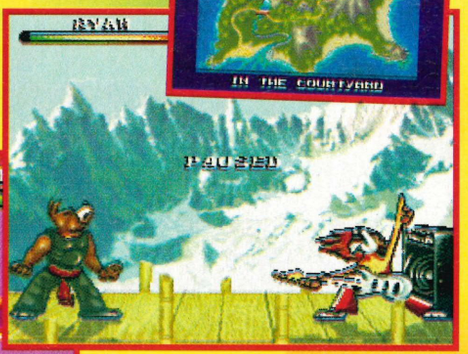


△ *Mr Motivator says balance on your hands and look stupid... two, three, four!*



▽ *This guy can turn into smoke and buzz around the screen like a demented bee!*

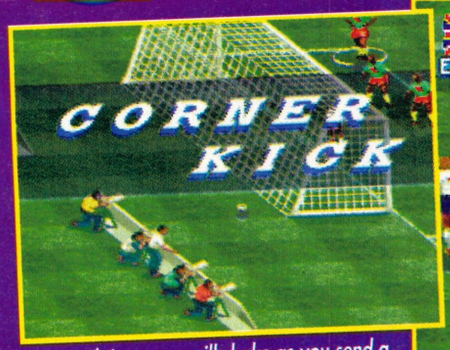








△ *Here you are taught a new special move.*



△ Laugh into your milkshake as you send a photographer flying with a stray ball!



△ Cor! What a fabulous save, the ball was narrowly tipped past the post.





◁ The referee reveals his strange mystic birth sign for all to marvel at... I think.

▽ "Aw ref, you cannot be serious man!"



SUPERSTAR SOCCER





△ Wurflegums? On the options screen? Only in Japan!

PRODUCER
KONAMI
(0895) 853000

PRICE
£49.99

CART SIZE
8MBits

Forget *FIFA*, forget *Striker*, in fact forget every single football game you've ever played and grown accustomed to, because Konami have got an absolutely stunning footie game in the pipeline, and SUPER GAMER has seen it!

International Superstar Soccer may only be 8Mbits in size, but it packs a severe punch that could wipe out all of the competition. So what has this unknown game got that the countless droves of other football sims in the past haven't?

Sit yourself down with a strong coffee and get this. For a start it features the biggest names in international football today. For example, if you pick a team with a renowned character such as Italy, then on close examination you'll notice a certain Roberto Baggio strutting around, complete with his trademark pony-tail, or perhaps the Columbian haystack-head, Valderama. There's even Alexi Lalas for gawd's sake!

Of course this is by no means the only interesting feature of the game, merely the tip of the iceberg. As well as the usual World Cup features, *Superstar Soccer* also contains an Asian league (?), truck-loads of tournaments, and a super-duper training section, featuring cones and moving targets to hit.

The game itself is so realistic, you'll feel as if you're actually there in the stalls. Crowd chants echo around the rafters, and each team has their own personalised following, like Brazil's Samba drumbeat!

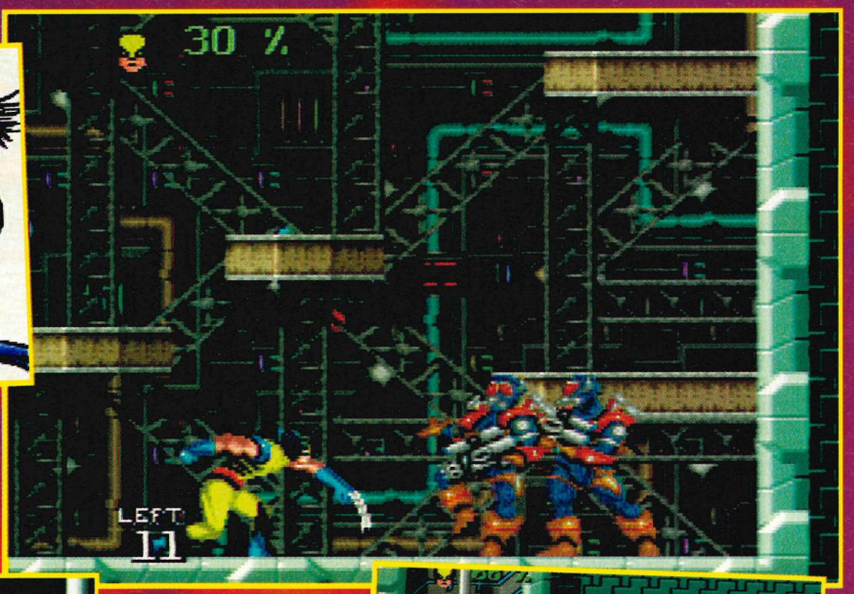
The version of *Superstar Soccer* that we played was Japanese, and had non-stop speaking commentary, courtesy of some over-enthusiastic Japanese equivalent of Brian Moore. On its official release, the game will feature proper English speech, albeit not as much.

All this coupled with the most realistic football graphics seen on the Super NES make *Superstar Soccer* one hot title to look out for. Expect a January release and a sizzling review soon.

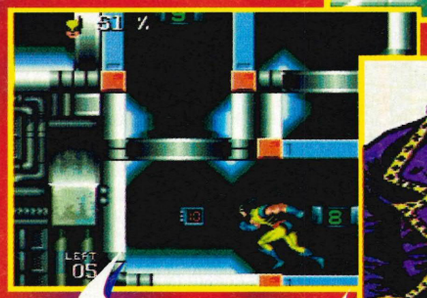
WOLVERINE



△ This is Black Queen, just one of the many villains you'll encounter.



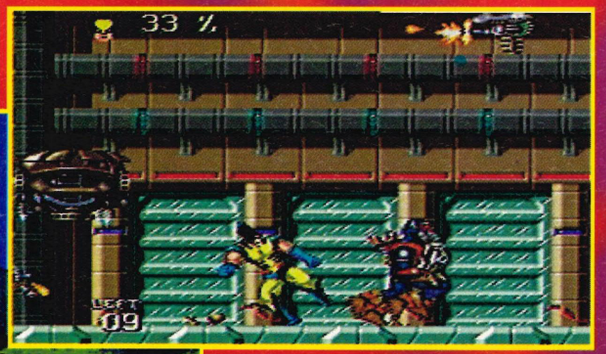
▷ Use your talons to take out the hordes of robot foot soldiers.







△ Your spiked fists come in especially handy for scaling things. Maybe someone should manufacture them.



△ Like many Marvel heroes in the past, you have loads of moves at your disposal.





PRODUCER
ACCLAIM
(071) 344 5000

PRICE
£TBA

CART SIZE
16MBits

When Acclaim announced that they were featuring Wolverine as the subject of their next Marvel licence, we naturally gurgled with anticipation at the thought of clawing hordes of deadbeats to death!

If you don't already know (what, don't you guys watch *Live and Kicking?*), Wolverine is a mutant with remarkable powers and a skeleton laced with the hardest metal known to man – admatium.

That means he's practically invulnerable to all kinds of attack, plus he has an incredibly quick healing ability and, the piece de resistance – a set of razor-sharp retractable admantium claws on each hand. Handy for slicing vegetables, pruning roses, oh and disposing of countless bad guys.

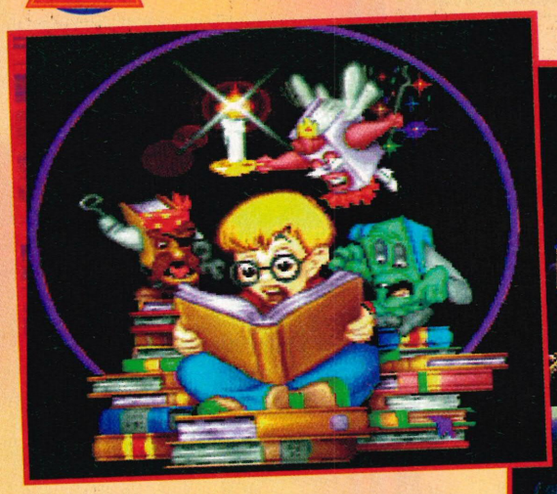
The game is a scrolling platform beat-'em-up adventure which pits our sabre-clawed hero against some of his deadliest adversaries, including Shinobi and Bloodscream (who?).

At his disposal are a multitude of conventional and special moves, which, along with his incredible gymnastics skills, make this chap one awesome force to overcome. Wolverine's healing powers also means you don't have to worry about collecting energy power-ups.

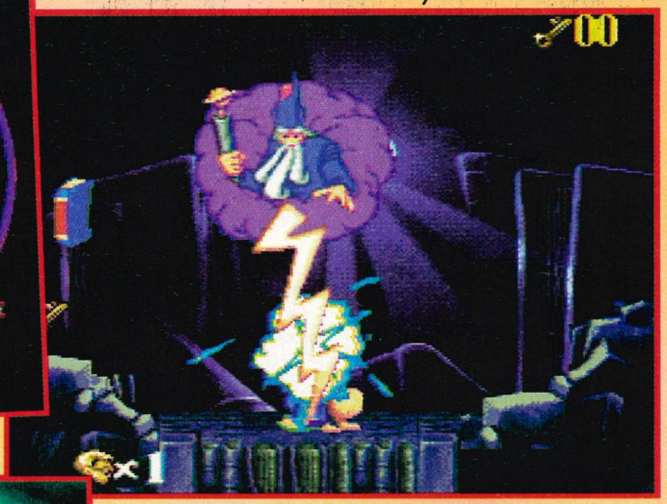
There are six huge levels to rampage through, each has certain tasks which must be completed in order for you to progress, and these usually consist of taking out a certain amount of enemies.

To prevent too many tears being shed, the game is fully accessible via passwords and comes equipped with plenty of X-Men paraphernalia, such as computer files on all the villains and loads of comic-style interludes.

How will *Wolverine* shape up against the likes of *Spider-Man* and *Hulk*? Find out next month when we pit him against our 'ard-as-nails review team!



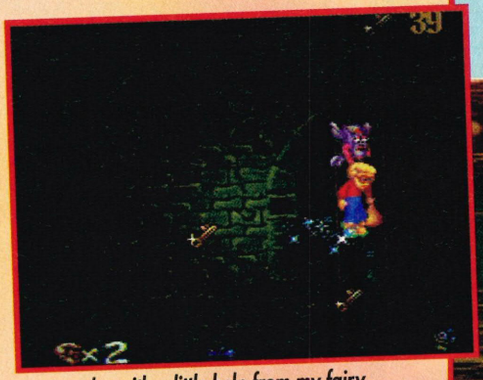
▽ That's no way to treat a Culkin... or is it?



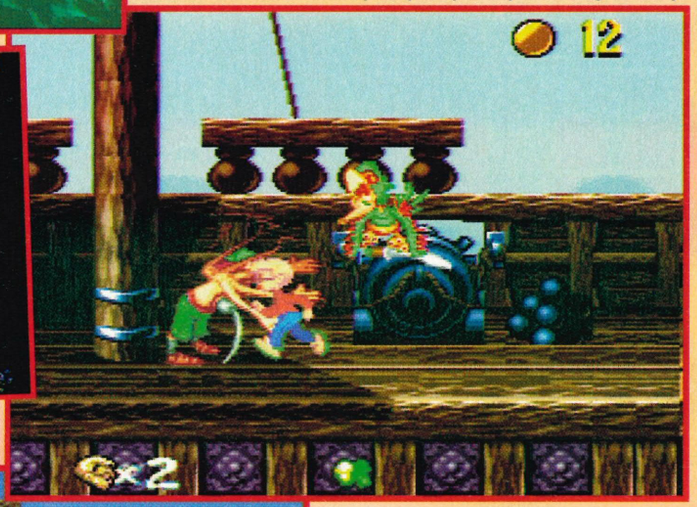
The PAGE MASTER



▽ Slap, slap, slap. Pull yourself together boy.



△ I get by with a little help from my fairy.







◁ Using a book as a means of transatlantic transport is fraught with dangers.

PRODUCER
VIRGIN
(081) 960 2255
PRICE
£TBA
CART SIZE
16MBits

The pre-pubescent presence of Macauley Culkin is once again about to take over the cinemas this Christmas as he stars in the bookworm blockbuster – *The Pagemaster*.

The game follows the plot of the film closely and features a little bast... er boy, who's rather shy and retiring and not yer normal tear-away ten year old. During a heavy rainstorm the little fella decides to take cover in a spooky old library, unfortunately he takes a tumble down some stairs and ends up banging his head and waking up inside a book.

Wondering around the pages of this story, Culkin comes across all sorts of characters, some of them are less than friendly such as the reapers and devils on the first level. Others, like the over-friendly hunchback teach him about life, the universe and everything (to coin a phrase). The aim of the game is to make friends with everyone (excitement overload) and escape back into the real world a changed and better person.

Incredibly, like most side scrolling platform games at the moment, *The Pagemaster* looks very good. The animation is of a quality that's going to strengthen its claims of standing with the big boys such as *DKC* and *Earthworm Jim*, and in terms of size it's a sprawling maze of secret rooms, bonus levels and sub-games, such as the excellent mode 7 sections where you fly around various landscapes sat on an open book! These sections are very similar to the forthcoming *Magic Carpet* on the PC – and the industry's going ga ga over that one!

With the experienced Probe software at the helm, hopes are high that there will actually be some gameplay as well as pretty visuals, but only time will tell. To catch the full review, climb into the pages of SUPER GAMER next month and be absorbed!



BIKER MICE FROM MARS

PRODUCER
KONAMI
(0895) 853000

PRICE
£49.99

CART SIZE
8MBits

Biker what, from where? Mice... from Mars, surely not? It would appear that Konami have obtained the rights to release a Super NES cart based on what are hotly rumoured to be the next big thing (didn't someone say that about Power Rangers?). *Biker Mice from Mars* is based on a new action cartoon series similar to the decrepit old *TMNT*, but the less said about that the better.

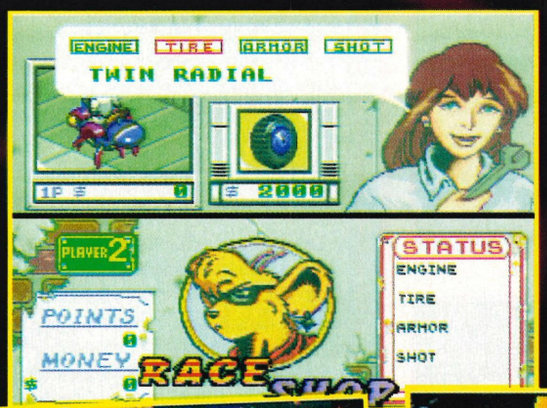
The game is a stunning blend of *Rock 'n Roll Racing* coupled with *Road Rash* and the result is a highly playable tongue-in-cheek racing game set over some of the dingiest streets and sewers imaginable.

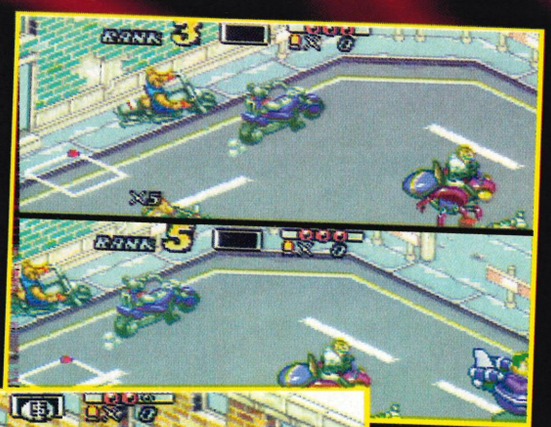
You can opt to race as any one of the mice (Throttle, Nodo, or Vinnie), or one of their enemies: Grease Pit, Limburger or Karbunkle. Each character has their own mode of transport, ranging from beefed-up Harleys to odd-looking hovercrafts, and also their own individual special weapons which include turbo boosts, oil slicks, rockets and grappling hooks to grab onto lamp posts and swing round corners *Batman*-style.

Biker Mice From Mars features three different racing categories (easy, normal and hard) and each group contains four different tracks. If you accumulate the most points after you've completed them all you'll automatically qualify for the next set of four which get a lot harder!. The game contains 30 different tracks, and looks like it will be very tough to complete.

To help you along, you will be awarded hard cash for your efforts in each race, which can be converted at a shop for bigger engines, better tyres, armour and weapons.

As you can see from the screenshots, *Biker Mice From Mars* is one heck of a nice looking game. And it is all presented exceptionally, with loads of speech and oodles of colour. Can you afford to miss our in-depth review coming soon in SUPER GAMER?









Race head to head with a friend for extra laffs.

There are ramps aplenty on BMFM. I just hope your suspension is up to it!

▷ "Ain't you kids a little young for dating?"

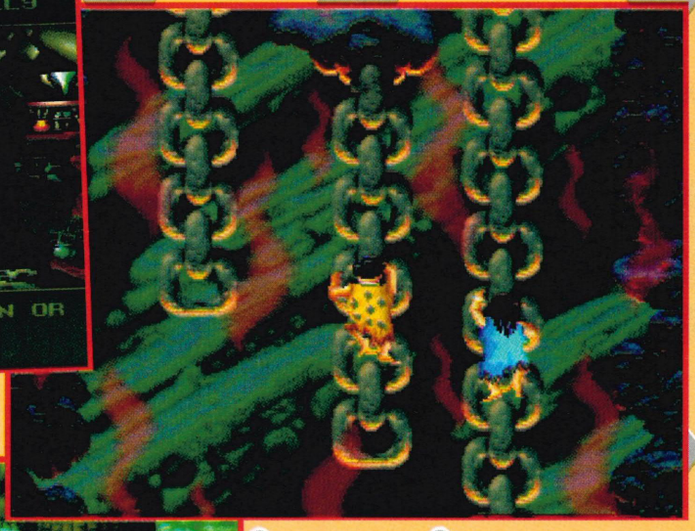




▽ Judging by the curtains, bad taste existed as far back as the stone age.



▽ "Lordy! What's this smooth shiny stuff we're climbing?"



▽ Ssstrike! What's the ape worth?





The FLINTSTONES

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PRICE
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CART SIZE
8MBits

The film may have been and gone, but the bandwagon of hype hasn't disappeared over the horizon just yet, because in case you had forgotten... the game is yet to come!

The Flintstones is platform adventure set in Bedrock and beyond. The conniving fraudster Cliff Vandercave has kidnapped many of the film's main characters, including Wilma, Barney, Betty, and Pebbles. You, as Fred (obviously), must pelt through 16 levels of prehistoric mayhem and no doubt save the dimwitted Neanderthal neighbours from the attentions of Halle Berry (oh no, what torture!)

Although the plot link with the film may be as thin as Fred's jokes, the programmers have focused heavily on the dazzling special effects that played such an important part in making the big screen adaptation of the classic cartoon series such a success.

The end result is a very slick-looking affair, with digitised characters from the film, the funniest being Fred himself (featuring John Goodman's famed features plonked on the shoulders of a cartoon sprite). And either John's gone on a hunger-strike diet or the programmers have been very kind indeed.

Many of the Jim Henson catalogue of bizarre creatures have also made it in the game at various points, although I haven't seen the piggy waste disposal or Dino yet.

The game features six different graphical locations in all, including Bedrock itself, perilously hot volcanoes, and a sinister looking forest, all brimming with the artistic licence to create suitably devilish foes and make things a bit more exciting.

The Flintstones is scheduled for a November release, so tune in next month for the full review, but until then, have a yabba-dabba-do time (don't you ever say that again, Ryan – Ed).

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REVIEW INTRO

The main reviewer. The final ratings are awarded by him, although other reviewers may have different opinions. The main review tells you what the game is about, how it is played, and whether it has any special features that help it stand out above other games of its type.

Despite the fact that SUPER GAMER's review system is the most accurate, comprehensive and accessible in the world (not that we like to hype ourselves up or anything), some odd-bods have still written to us complaining that they can't understand it. So that no more people will waste valuable stamps telling us they don't know who wrote the main review (hint: it's the guy whose head is at the start of the text), here is the complete guide to our reviews!

The other reviewers get to offer their opinions in these comment boxes. They may agree with the main reviewer, or violently disagree! It's up to you to decide which reviewer's opinion you most agree with – after all, it's you who buys the games!

We use lots of pictures to help you get a look at the game. Remember, though, graphics are only a small part of any game – the important thing is always how well it plays, and to find that out you'll have to read the review!



Tells you who produces the game, and their phone number. If the game is an import, we also tell you who supplied it to us.

Pretty obvious, really. In the case of import games, prices may vary, so shop around!

When will the game be on sale? Find out here! (NB: release dates are always subject to change.)

A quick summary of, well, the type of game.

The memory size of the game in megabits (8 megabits equals 1 megabyte)

Does the game have any special features, such as a battery save or Multi-tap compatibility?

The game's controls!

Do the game's visuals knock your eyes into your head, or are they as inspiring as a bowl of cold porridge?

Heavenly symphonies – or karaoke classics? Music and sound effects get the once-over.

First of the two most important ratings. Does the game grab you from the start? Is the main character easy to control? Do you die unfairly, or far too frequently?

The second of the 'biggies'. Once you've played the game, is there enough there to keep you coming back for more, or will you complete it in a day? Is it really worth £50?

The final rating! Not an average of the others, as a game can have terrible graphics but amazing playability, this is a game's ultimate rating. Games scoring 90%+ get the coveted Gamer Gold award; these are a must!

THE OVERALL RATING

0-29%
Can any game stoop so low? Yes, they certainly can. In fact, we've got two sad examples this issue. Any game scoring this low should be burnt and have its ashes mixed with salt.

30-49%
Ugh. This band is the wasteland for mis-conceived, ill-executed or just plain rubbish games. If you get one of these as a present, strike the giver from your Christmas card list immediately.

50-69%
The average zone. Games lurking in here might be well-executed, but totally lacking in originality or vitality, or may have playability defects that render them too flawed to be enjoyable.

70-89%
This is more like it! Unlike other mags, who award 75% to an 'average' game, SUPER GAMER scores in this range mean a game worth investigating, especially if you're a fan of the genre.

90%+
Gamer Gold territory! Any game that we award a gong is one which by all rights belongs in your Nintendo's cart slot. Only the best get this award, so you're sure of a great game.

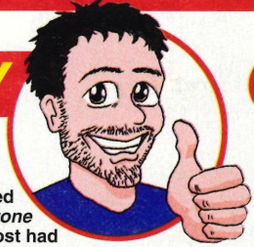
THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

DAMIAN



This month will go down in the annals of history as "the one Damian had a holiday in." Yes, that's right, the pink-cheeked one actually took a whole week off – but unfortunately he took a modem and er, did some work... damn!

ANDY



Giving out *two* Gamer Golds? In one issue? What's happened to Andy? *Dropzone* and *Vortex* almost had him smiling! Fortunately, he kept up his miserable games-hating image by giving a righteous slagging to *Samurai Spirits*. Nyaah ha hahhh!

RYAN



Although suspected of being on hard drugs (Ajax, actually), Ryan was just preparing to bring the SUPER GAMER readers an exclusive of magnificent proportions. That's right, Ryan travelled to Argonaut for the full story on *FX Fighter* this month. Wow!

KEITH

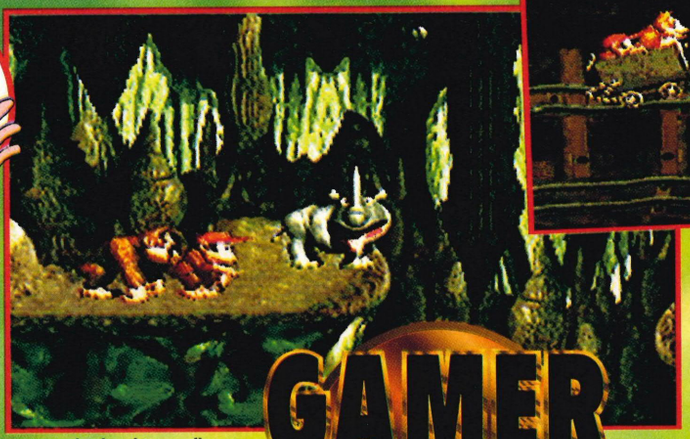


With the new pub, the Jug of Ale, opening, Keith saw the opportunity to chat up an entirely new selection of barmaids. Oh dear. Keith has also been busy playing *Illusion of Gaia* and *Syndicate* almost non-stop.

RYAN



Aaargh! Armageddon is here, the end of Super NES gaming as we know it has arrived, and the once solid temple cemented with the likes of *Super Mario World*, *Starwing*, and more recently *Earthworm Jim*, is rapidly crumbling to dust. A major earthquake is occurring all right, and you don't have to be Miss Marple to deduce what is causing it; Nintendo's latest show-stopper has finally arrived, so drop everything and get a load of *Donkey Kong Country*. It could change the way you view Super NES games forever!



△ *Rambi the rhino will occasionally offer his services as a taxi.*

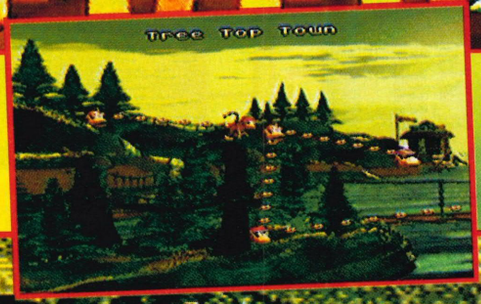


GAMER GOLD DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

Hey hey, we're the monkeys!



△ *Ahoy there! Evil Kremling King directly to starboard! Stand by to repel boarders!*



▽ *Funky Kong is the island's own Richard Branson. He can jet you to any level of the game.*





The tale begins on a remote tropical island not marked on any chart, which is inhabited by the world famous Kong clan. Obviously the Kongs have caught a touch of the Marlon Brando syndrome and shied away from fame to live a reclusive lifestyle away from the hustle and bustle of super-stardom on an island populated only by family, friends, a huge stash of bananas and a

Donkey Kong Country is by far the most amazing piece of 16-bit software I've ever seen! In all honesty it makes every other Super NES game seem dated and dull in comparison, so prepare to be amazed!



legion of hungry natives known as the Kremlings.

Kong was extremely proud of his nana pile, it was the biggest in the world and the result of years of hording. But one dark and stormy night, Donkey Kong entrusted his huge heap to a young chimp named Diddy Kong, as part of some kind of initiation test to allow Diddy the opportunity to prove has worth as a hero. "I'll relieve you at midnight" called Donkey Kong over his shoulder as he slumped off to enjoy a quiet kip. Famous last words.

KONG TRY



△ *Diddy Kong finds himself lost in... The Fog. What's that one-chord synth music? No! It's John Carpenter!*







△ *In this stage, you have to stay ahead of the whirling octopi as they pursue you through the underwater tunnels!*



△ *Techno techno techno techno! Get that boombox blasting, Kong!*

During the night, Diddy was attacked by the evil Kremlings and the bananas were stolen and scattered all over the island (why do they always do that?). Now Donkey Kong and Diddy must team up and recover all the bananas and fight the Kremlings along the way.

Donkey Kong Country is this year's most eagerly anticipated game and boasts over 100 levels of platform related fun and frolics, courtesy of Nintendo's newest mascots – the Kong family. It certainly looks like Mario has had his day!

The whole game is arranged like a kind of supremely updated version of *Super Mario World*, only with two players and more novelty stuff to do. The basic idea is to dash through the levels collecting bananas for points and other assorted pick-up letters (spell KONG for an extra life), balloons (an instant extra life), and animal tokens.

If you collect a set of three tokens you'll be transported to a great bonus game which involves dashing around landscapes collecting masses of bonus points as the animal corresponding to the token. These include Winky the frog, Expresso the ostrich, Enguarde the swordfish, and Rambi the rhino. These animals can also be mounted by the Kongs during the normal levels, as a means of easily vanquishing enemies. The rhino for example is

DAMIAN



Plugging *DKC* into your Super NES turns it into an SGI workstation (well, almost). The graphics are... fabulous, definitely the best yet seen on the Super NES and almost reason enough to buy the game. But what makes this game so jaw-dropping to play is the instant way you can pick it up and play for hours. The difficulty level is set just perfect, and the two player option is an excellent idea; doubling the longevity in my opinion. Every level, from water, to ice, to caverns is beautifully rendered and filled with fiendish traps and puzzles to constantly test your skills. The mine car for example is a great sequence and it really gets hairy when you must jump Kremlings and gaps in the track at the same time! Games this good are few and far between and I have no hesitation in urging every SUPER GAMER reader to buy it, now.



◁ *If Kong is hit, Diddy takes over instantly. Handy if you're being hassled by giant wasps!*

perfect for crashing through stones walls and finding secret rooms.

Also dotted around the levels are barrels with special functions, such as exposing secret areas, releasing objects, saving your position and even catapulting you around the level – human cannonball style!

In the standard one player mode, you essentially control both characters, although only one at a time. A swift press of the Select button sees the duo slap hands tag-team style and swap places. Donkey and Diddy both have their own strengths and weaknesses, Diddy being very agile and fast, but not very strong, whereas Donkey is sturdier and a lot stronger, but suffers in the high jumping stakes.

If either character gets hit by a Kremling, they'll vanish and the other will go on alone until the missing party is brought back into play via one of the DK barrels. Also included in the game is a two player contest and team modes in which you and a friend can compete against each other to complete the most levels, or work as a team.

One of the best aspects of *Donkey Kong Country* is the way the action constantly changes. One minute you could be running through familiar platform territory, the next you are racing through a condemned mine in a very unstable cart, or swimming underwater with a bog-eyed shark snapping at your toes.

Of course you can't help but marvel at the truly amazing graphics. The main sprites are superbly animated with hilarious little mannerisms which, coupled with the breathtaking 3-D effect,

KEITH

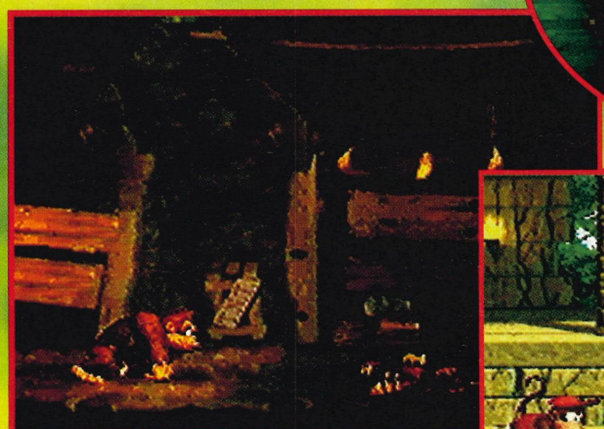


I have waited a long time for Nintendo to bring out a platform game that is worthy of following the brilliance of *Super Mario World* and for me *DKC* delivers the goods. The graphics stand out of course, but you can't ignore the gameplay that has all the hidden extras, bonuses and addictive qualities that ensured you didn't put *Super Mario World* down without finding all 96 levels. *DKC* has that same kind of feeling, and with over 100 levels to explore, it will soon lull you into that middle-of-the-night gaming session that sees you finally climb into bed as the sun rises into the sky. An astonishing feat for a platform game and a must for this Christmas, along with *Earthworm Jim.*



△ *Cranky is the original Kong from the arcades. He likes to moan about how games used to be better (a bit like Andy!).*









make you actually believe you'll looking at an actual living life-form – bizarre as it may sound!

The Kremling sprites are just as impressive, especially the big bosses that crop up from time to time. The full effect is finished off nicely with layer upon layer of immensely detailed parallax. The forests and mountains in particular look so realistic you almost bang your head on the screen trying to peer through the foliage. All this is of course created using SGI workstations and rendering the sprites and backgrounds. Truly revolutionary stuff that pays dividends for the atmosphere of the game.

Of course the picture wouldn't be quite complete with an equally stunning soundtrack, and *DKC* wins hands down in that department. As well as the funky tunes, there are loads of rip-roaring effects which are brimming with humour, especially the chimp-cackle rap effect and the distant monkey calls in the jungle.



△ *What's today's letter, Big Bird?*

Not many people in the SG office were impressed when *DKC* was brought down a while ago, but now we've had time to play it properly, the playability really shines through. Take *Super Mario World* and *Super Mario All-Stars* and double the challenge and fun factor and you've got a good idea of what playing *DKC* is like.



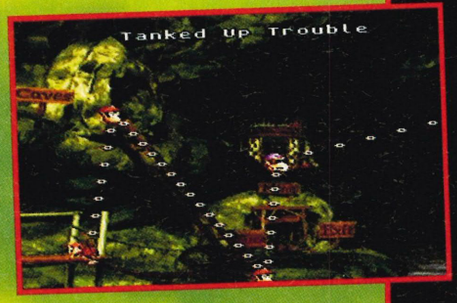
There is just so much to do and find, and the overall style and humour is very sophisticated and will appeal to people of all ages – not just kids. I throw down the gauntlet to anyone who thinks they have found all the secret rooms and bonuses, because you could play this for years and still not see them all – it's *that* big! Plus you've got all the different landscapes and neat features like Funky Kong's airlines, which can transport you all over the island.

However, it was Cranky Kong (Donkey's decrepit ol' pa!) that made the game for me, with his endless ramblings and senile wit! The fact is, even if you take away the fancy visuals, you've still got an ultra smooth, and highly compelling game which you'll want to play to death.

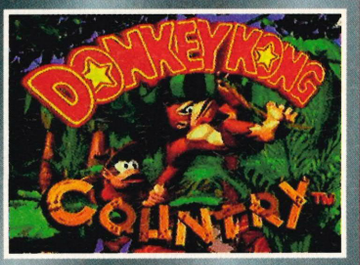


△ *The simian adventurers charge through the jungle in search of bananas.*

DKC takes all of the best parts from *Super Mario World* such as the vast array of levels and battery back-up option, and gives them an ultra-modern feel. *DKC* is without a doubt the best platform, nay Super NES game I have ever seen. And now that Nintendo have knocked a tenner off the price, you'd be mad not to get it this Christmas. Highly recommended.









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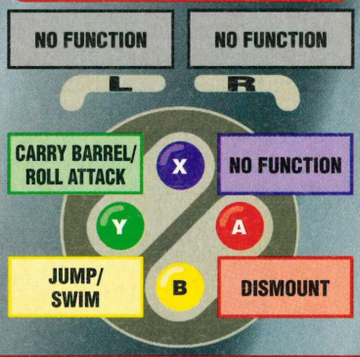
RELEASED
18 NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
32MBit

FEATURES
BATTERY BACK-UP

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	98
SOUND	98
GAMEPLAY	95
LONGEVITY	94

OVERALL

96

STREET RACER

Death Race 1995!



DAMIAN

I've been in a Lamborghini Diablo, smoothed the curves of a Maclaren F1 and gone hell for leather in a Ferrari GTO, but nothing prepared me for *Street Racer* from UBI Soft. It's so... so... so f****** fast!

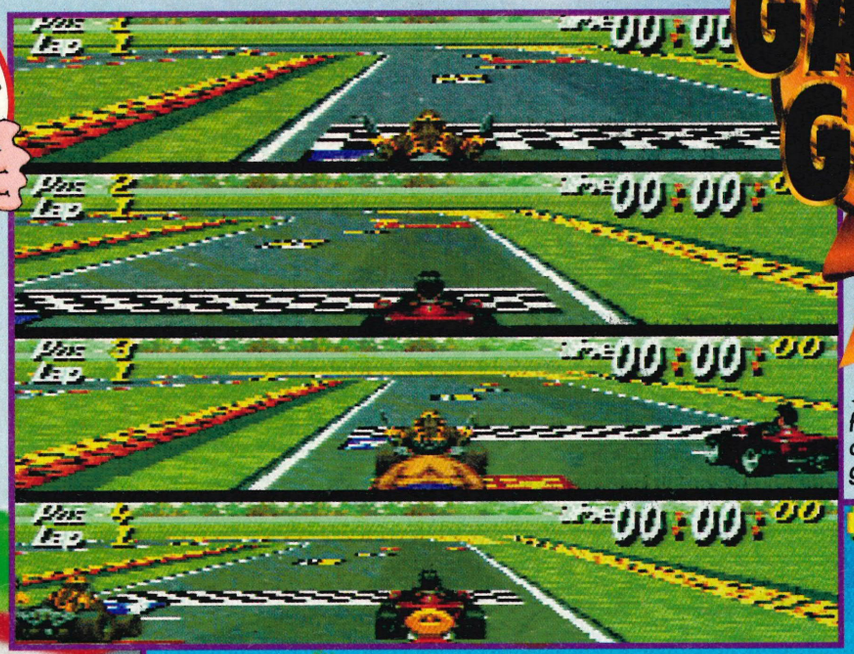
Anyone who knows me will acknowledge that I don't get excited about many games, but *Street Racer* is reason enough to dust off those eyeballs, stick a recaro in the front room and burn some rubber.

First let me say that *Super Mario Kart* takes some beating. It is my all time favourite race game; beating *Test Drive II* and *Indy Car Racing* on the PC hands down, and we've crowned it the SUPER GAMER office fave. Any game entering this arena of perfection must be good.

Street Racer immediately impressed me because with all its options (24 Mode 7 tracks, a soccer and sumo-type mini game, full replays for all games, eight well animated racers, superb music... the list is endless!), the game is only on an 8Mbit cart – and that means it's dirt cheap. Certainly worth considering when *Donkey Kong Country* is looking like the thick end of £50!

But back to the game. It's clear to me that this was programmed by *SMK* enthusiasts who wanted something more. For a start, it's got a unique (until *Top Gear 3000* anyway) four player simultaneous race mode, where the screen is split horizontally into quarters. It sounds unworkable, but vivid Image have done it – and it really works.

Some might say that the four player mode is far too confusing, but because the screen is divided lengthways, it just looks like an extended



GAMER GOLD

◁ *This is Street Racer's terrific four player mode. It may look confusing, but you'll instantly get the hang of it.*



horizon and so your eyes concentrate on a thin band and don't wander all over the screen.

The only criticism that can be leveled at this ingenious mode is that the cars are viewed close up and so you cannot see whether you are using turbos or special moves.

Street Racer is viewed from the same perspective as *SMK*, but each of the eight maniac combatants (Suzulu is my choice) are incredibly well animated and each has a set of brutal attacks such as electricity, a club, blaring horns, spiked tyres (*Goldfinger*-style), whipping towel (?), magic carpet and Helmut, the jaded Nazi WW1 pilot, even transforms his car into a Fokker DR1 tri-plane to leap gaps and pools of water!







△ *The object of the rumble is to ram all the other players off the platform.*

△ *Scores a cracking goal in the soccer sub-game.*



ANDY



If *Mario Kart* didn't exist, UBI Soft would be laughing hysterically all the way to the bank, casually tossing bundles of tenners into the scabby hands of scrounging tramps en route. They've produced an extremely playable and finely honed racing frenzy with *Street Racer*. The various tracks are carefully designed to keep you coming back for more, as you know that *next* time, you'll take that corner just a little bit faster. The Rumble and Soccer modes are also great fun, especially in multi-player mode. Unfortunately, it's just pipped by *Mario Kart* for playability, as the comparative weakness of *Street Racer*'s weapons means there's no equivalent of the sheer joy of blowing Damian away with a precision-timed red shell (snigger). But it's very, very close overall, and if you've got a Multi-Tap, I'd highly recommend it. Just be damn careful that you don't confuse it with *Speed Racer*!

Every Nintendo magazine has raved about these comical and frankly unbelievably car transformations, but you really have to play the game to appreciate the smooth animation and how well they work when you're screaming through a turn; trying desperate to unhinge your arch-rival.

The Mode 7 graphics on all the colourful and varied courses are faultless, and you can be burning off Surf Sister on an autobahn one minute, then banging down a flagstone corridor in Frank's Transylvanian castle the next.

They've even included a unique function whereby you can pan and zoom



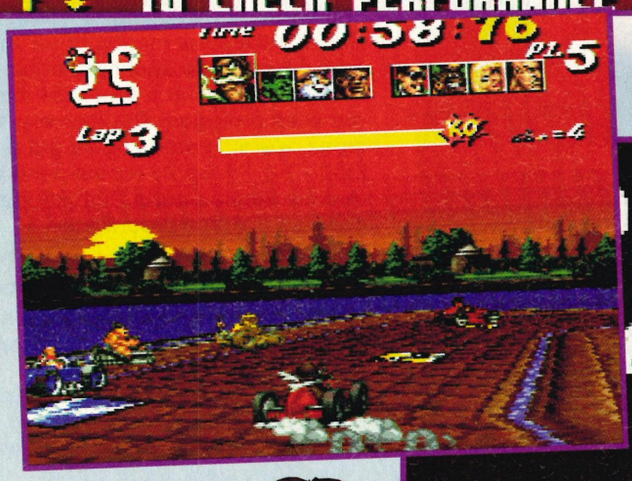
in on the course before a race and check out any short cuts (there are loads) or particularly hairy turns. Such attention to detail is typical of the whole game.

The races themselves are as exciting as you could want. You tear away from the line with smoke pouring from the tyres (unless you get one of the ten – count 'em – ten speed starts!) and are immediately engulfed by the rest of the drivers who all have their own grudges, skills and egos to consider.

The Mode 7 tracks shoot past at break-neck speeds with no slow down, and the amount of detail, both on the course and the well drawn backgrounds, is considerably more than *SMK*, and I liked the lightning effect on Frank's home turf and the impressive landscape of Sydney Harbour for Surf.

I have said before how the other racers are considerably more animated than any other racing game, but it is the artificial intelligence that really brings them alive. Unlike most drones, who simply potter around the course like chauffeurs, these guys slide off the racing line, crash, make mistakes, nick your power-ups and of course attack you with a fanatic zeal I've not encountered since *Road Rash*! They really play for keeps!

You must finish in the top three to qualify for the next race and there are icons such as turbos, points stars and tool kits (to repair you) to collect along the way. Using the special weapons is fun initially, although I did find most of them useless; preferring to whip or punch the opponents.



▽ *Screaching around the Franky course as the tyres smoke under pressure.*

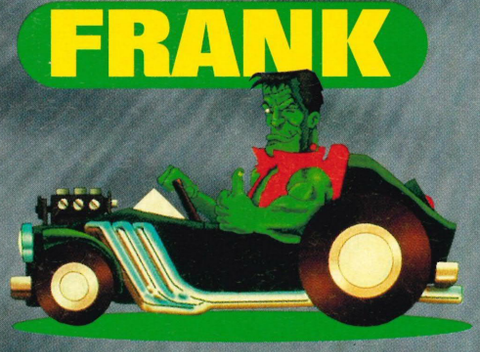


KEITH



Wow, this is something else! I thought the four player game would slow down to something close to a stoned snail's pace. But no, it hurtles along at the same speed as the two player and even the one player mode. The cars handle like a dream and perform all sorts of deadly special moves. The many tracks kept me glued to the Super NES for hours and while winning a season on easy or medium settings is a piece of cake, winning on hard or crazy mode is another story. I also love the way you get points for fastest lap and aggressiveness, it means that all is not lost if you come second or third. The Rumble and Soccer sub-games are quite weak, but personally I would be happier checking out its many racing options. I still think *SMK* is better, but this is without a doubt my favourite four player game. Superb!







The cars also handles just like real life, so taking a 90° corner at 100MPH will result in you instantly spinning off. The idea is to enter the corner at the apex, ease off the throttle, flip out the back end, then power out of the corner in a smooth racing line. It takes time to perfect, but you'll lap like Damon Hill when you do.

As the sweat cools after an intense LeMans session (options allow you to choose up to 32 laps per race and three difficulty levels, and you can also replay the whole race or zoom around the track and view it from any angle!) you can always reset and try one of the intriguing Soccer or Rumble games.

Soccer is a goal frenzy, as all the characters speed around the pitch; desperately trying to grab the ball and then punt it goalwards. A great idea, but it is sometimes confusing. An arrow pointing to the ball would give you more of a chance to score.

Rumble is a free-for-all barging session where eight demented and legless drivers all converge with the sole intention of ramming each other off the track. Last one in the ring wins and this is one of the most addictive parts of the game, bringing out the blood lust in everyone who had a go.

The racing is enough to make *Street Racer* one of the best games on the Super NES, but add all the extra features and you've got a potential classic. But what about humble old *SMK*? Well, to be fair, *Street Racer* has more options and looks far better, but the Shigeru Miyamoto playability of the Nintendo racer just pips the UBI Soft upstart. It is certainly the best racing game to appear on the Super NES in years.

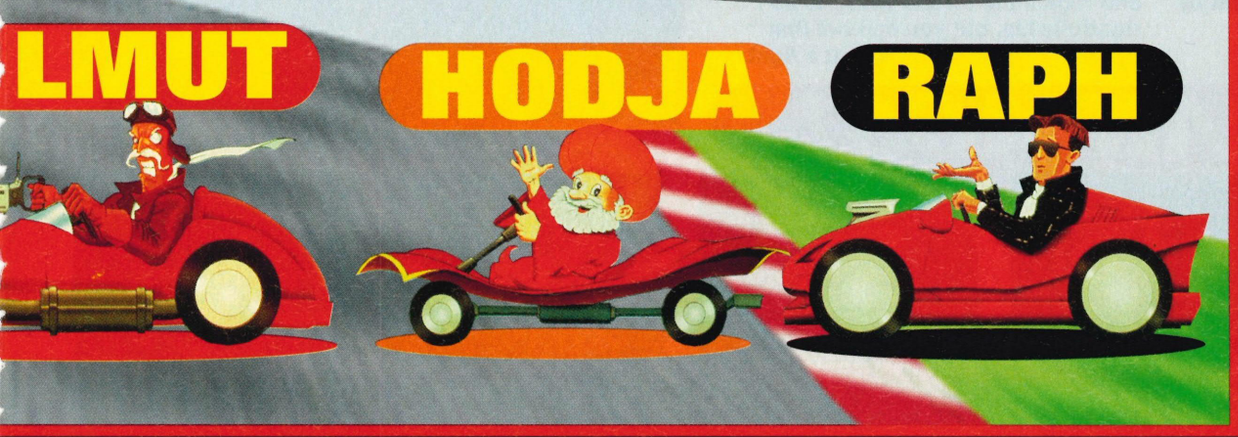
In fact the only downer I can see with this game is the rather easy difficulty level on the racing sections and rumble, and the fact that there are so many menus to get through, it takes an irritating amount of time to rejoin a race. When a game's this good, you want to get straight back to the action instantly, not wait for ages trying to get through all the race result screens.

Undoubtedly, what makes *Street Racer* such a winner is the fact that you get a fast multi-player racing game that impresses everyone who sets eyes on it, more options than Ford, and a dose of challenge and excitement that will entice all petrolheads. Bottom line – it's fun and an essential purchase.



△ *Surf's course is set in Australia and looks nothing at all like the beach level in Mario Kart.*







PRODUCER
UBI SOFT
(081) 343 9055

PRICE
£44.99

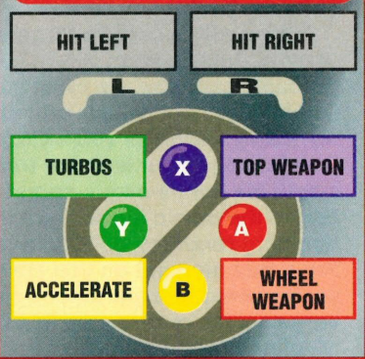
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
8MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	94
SOUND	88
GAMEPLAY	91
LONGEVITY	86

OVERALL

91

LION

Bound to be a "roaring" success!



RYAN

Believe it or not, *Lion King* is in fact Disney's first ever ORIGINAL feature length cartoon. By original I mean that it isn't based on a ye olde fairytale. Hot on the heels of their spectacular *Jungle Book*, Virgin have acquired the rights to the console adaptation – and by crikey what a truly stunning piece of software it is!

Armed with a cool 24 Megs of sheer unadulterated power, Virgin have probably captured the most authentic film licence ever, which is blatantly obvious as soon as you switch the game on and your ears are treated to a delicate jungle-esque sound score before the music lunges into a booming rendition of "Circle of Life." From that moment on you know that you're going to experience something very special (or throw up in a bucket, whichever comes first).

The game chronicles the coming of age saga of a young lion cub named Simba, in the African plains. Simba is next in line to take the throne from his father, King Mufasa, much to the dissatisfaction of Mufasa's evil brother, Scar. One day, Scar, along with his twisted henchmen, (a group of wheezy hyenas) hatch a plan to bump off the father and son combo by luring them into the path of stampeding wildebeests.



△ *The wheezy old hyenas are no match for the pace of nimble young Simba.*

Mufasa dies and Simba is promptly exiled from the kingdom as Scar settles comfortably on the throne. Now Simba must overcome the odds and regain the throne which is so rightfully his, but you can bet that Scar won't give it up without a fight.



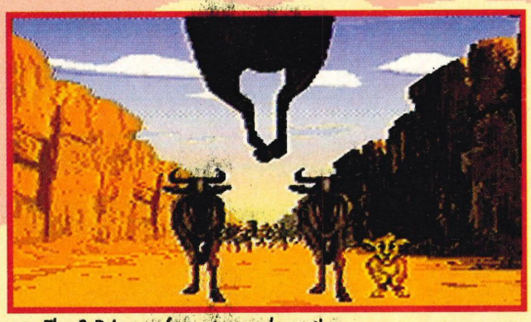
ANIMANIACS!







KING



△ *The 3-D in-yer-face stampede section is stunning!*



△ *Simba attempts to out-scramble the raging waters.*

You, as Simba, begin the game as a dainty little cub whose naive innocence launches him to all time high character cuteness. You only have to let go of the controls and watch him gleefully smile as a butterfly flutters around his head to know what I mean.

The first level, set on a hillside, eases you nicely into the epic journey and is a relatively straightforward platform affair requiring accurate jumps.

Later, you must swing on elephants' tails, bounce on giraffes, and even dodge obstacles on an ostrich! The only possible escape route is as the clue at the start of the level indicates, you must roar at selected monkeys to arrange them in a set order before allowing them to throw you to safety – bizarre, but true!



From the moment you begin however, you'll have to double check that you aren't watching the film – I kid you not, the animation is breath-taking and far better than *Jungle Book* (which was a tough cookie to beat).

As Simba is a four legged creature, he bounds around like no sprite you've ever controlled before. I especially liked the way you jump for a rock, only to narrowly miss it and grab on with your front paws; leaving your hind legs scrabbling madly at thin air to gain a foothold – marvellous stuff!

Lion King is essentially a platform game (no surprises there), but it is extremely playable due to the fact that the style of levels are constantly changing. This means that you never tire of repeating the same old processes.

The game continues to simmer away with more platform sections set against

KEITH



If you can work through the early levels which I can only describe as being so cute you'll lose your senses, you'll discover a seriously addictive platformer. The aspect that impressed me more than anything else was the amount of moves old Simba can perform and all of them animated with such style. If you're expecting a flimsy, cutesy, platform game then think again. *Lion King* has so many different types of level, that you'll be left rubbing your hands with anticiptaion, wondering what this dramatic jungle is going to throw at you next. It's all played at such speed as well, a masterpiece of platform entertainment, it gets better and better the more you play and is beaten by only one other – *EWJ.*







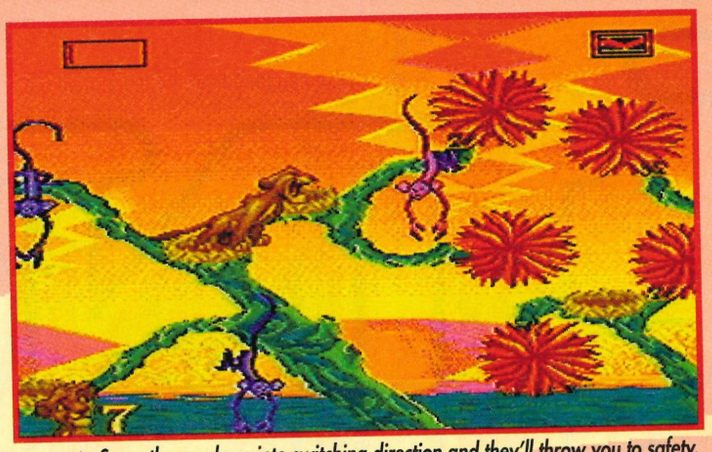




beautiful backdrops and extremely sinister baddies, before it notches up another gear and you're treated to the visually spectacular 3-D stampede level.

This really has to be seen to be believed. Simba runs frantically towards the screen, hotly pursued by a crazed herd which he must weave in and out of in order to survive. Although a similar effect has recently cropped up in Sony's *Mickey Mania*, this scene steals the crown hands down for sheer adrenaline-rushing atmosphere.

Eventually, as you progress through the game, Simba develops into a fully fledged lion and his pathetic tom-cat squeak is replaced by a hearty roar, and he also comes equipped with more animations and a hefty arsenal of attack moves to duff up the onslaught of leopards, monkeys and hyenas.



△ Scare the monkeys into switching direction and they'll throw you to safety.



△ Now a fully fledged lion, Simba prepares to regain his throne.



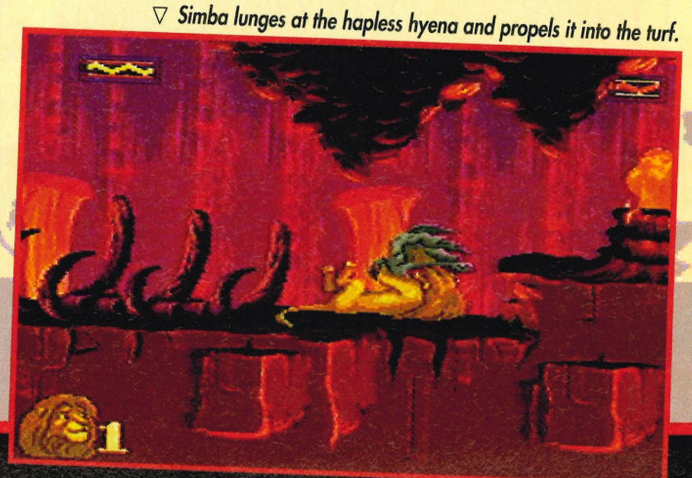
This is where the gameplay once again takes a turn for the better. Instead of just platform action, you've now got scrolling beat-'em-up, as Simba prepares for the final showdown with Scar.

The Lion King possesses all of the little traits that make a good platformer, such as plenty of collectables, hidden sections and a great bug-catching bonus game featuring Simba's best buddies, Timba and Timon.

Another feature which in my mind seals *Lion King* as perhaps the greatest platform game from the Disney stable, is the challenge. Whatever difficulty setting you have it on, you don't stand a bat in hells chance of completing it for ages. And whereas *Jungle Book* became slightly repetitive after prolonged play, *Lion King* offers so much variety and depth that you'll never miss an opportunity to pick it up again.

Virgin could have quite easily rushed this and made a total balls-up, but thankfully they've produced an absolute corker of a game which even gives the film a run for it money in the entertainment stakes. Super NES owners have never had it so good.

▽ Simba lunges at the hapless hyena and propels it into the turf.



DAMIAN



Two cracking platform games in two months – it's just too much! First, honesty time. I thought *Lion King* would be a pile of feline faeces, because a) it's a film licence, and b) everyone said it was going to be the best thing ever (a sure sign of a BAD game). Well hush my mouth! *Lion King* is in fact extremely good in a sort of sugery-sweet-really-well-programmed-instanty-playable kind of way. The animation on Simba is delicious. The way he bounds around with his big padded paws, scrabbling for grip on cliff ledges and tumbling down piles of bones in true Disney fashion. The sound is also truly inspirational, with Simba's cute half-roar being my favourite. Personally, Elton can stick his vomit-making commercial soundtrack, but the game I'll keep playing again and again. Merry Christmas, Virgin!



PRODUCER
VIRGIN
(081) 960 2255

PRICE
£TBA

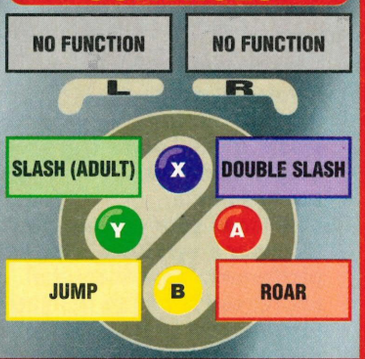
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
24MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	97
SOUND	95
GAMEPLAY	94
LONGEVITY	91

OVERALL

94



SYNDICATE™

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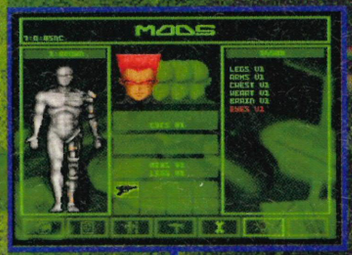
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△ *Parp! "Hey Jake I, I think I've soiled ma pants!"*

RYAN



Everyone knows *Jurassic Park*: the highest grossing film of all time. After Ocean's faithful, but oh-so slow first game of the film, Sony have jumped the gun somewhat with this sequel before the film has even been green lighted.

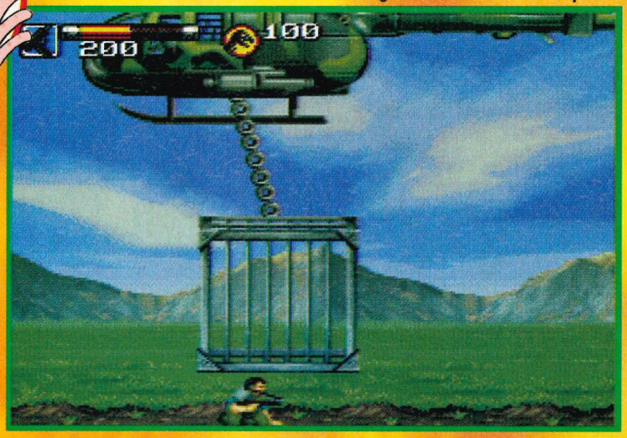
Supposedly taken from the actual film script, *Jurassic Park II: The Chaos Continues* is all about greed. John Hammond (the owner of JP) has decided to go back and recreate his scaly wunderpark. But first he must recapture the dinosaurs and repair everything destroyed by them.

Unfortunately, BioSyn (the company who hired Dennis Nedry to steal the DNA samples in the first film) are still anxious to nick Hammond's secrets, and so send in a crack team of wise-cracking marines to take over the island and begin shifting live samples to their laboratories on the mainland.

Obviously the dinosaurs are still the main attraction of *JPII*, but now you have to fight the BioSyns with your own squad of InGen warriors, and in many cases, protect the reptiles from the human enemy. The game is divided rigidly into six missions, but there are also five emergencies to tackle along the way, and three final missions at the end.

Now to the game you've all been waiting for (haven't you?). The

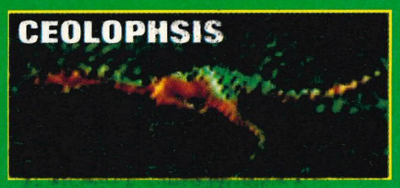
▽ *One of your mission objectives is to stop this helicopter from air-lifting Gallimimus out of the park.*

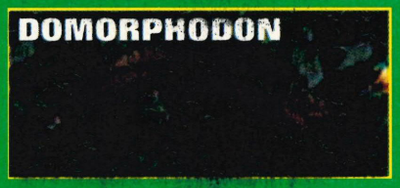


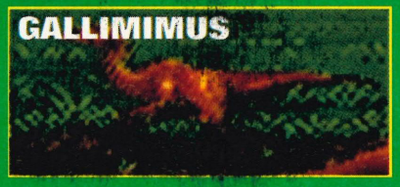
The bitch is back!

JURASSIC PARK
THE CHAOS CONTINUES

DINO DUDES





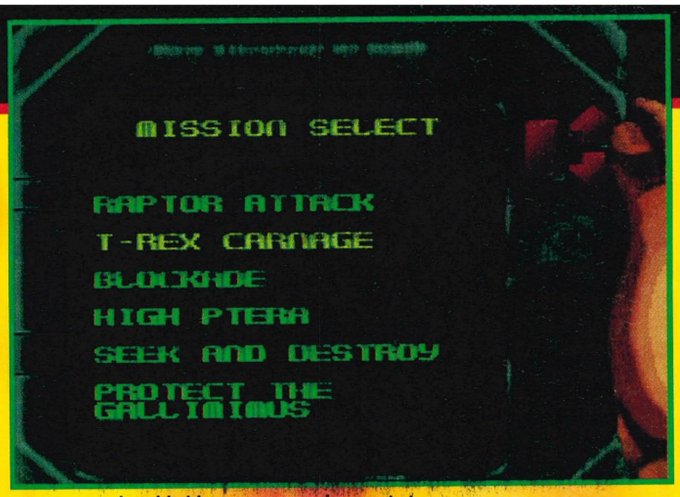












△ *Use your hand-held computer to select a mission.*

missions vary from protecting the Gallimimus from BioSyn guards, to finding and trying to capture a T-Rex (not surprisingly you fail, but as long as you survive, the mission is over).

The graphics are, for the most part, jungle, but you can also explore mountain tops, a volcano and the buildings of the park itself. From looking at the screen shots in this review, you probably won't be impressed, but I the backgrounds on some stages are excellent, with up to five layers of parallax that all give the impression of depth.

As reported in our WIP last issue, *JPII* has some excellent dinosaur sprites such as the 'raptors and pterodactyls, but the star of the show is of course the T-Rex. Thundering along; snapping at the bumper of the jeep, you can appreciate the many hours it took to get the animation and smooth movement of limbs just right. Very impressive, but couldn't we have seen more of him?



△ *An InGen fighter is jumped by a randy 'raptor as a spitter looks on and laughs!*

The InGen sprites are very good, looking purposeful and mean, but I did notice some severe slowdown when both were pumping away with their guns. This is simply unacceptable, especially when *Super Probotector* did away with this bug years ago.

And yes, I *did* say more than one sprite, because of course *JPII* can be played by two InGen's simultaneously! This means that one can watch the other's back, or team up to defeat a rampaging 'raptor or spitter (as it's technically called). Without doubt this is the saving grace of *JPII*, because doubling up with a friend is much more fun, if only because you can laugh at the other player as they are mauled by a 'raptor.

JP II is a fun game, but like the original, it can get a wee bit boring as you endlessly wander similar looking jungles. However, like *Alien 3* (which it does resemble in places), the eerie music and dark graphics create a menacing atmosphere which goes someway to reviving the tension of the film. A good conversion, but there are many lost opportunities and it lacks that vital spark of originality to catapult it into the big leagues.

ANDY



For all its faults (such as general sluggishness and an infuriating lack of a save game function) I enjoyed the original *Jurassic Park* game, as it possessed plenty of atmosphere and, almost uniquely for a movie licence, dared to be different with its 3-D exploration sections. *Jurassic Park II*, on the other hand, reverts to the well-worn platform shoot-'em-up format, and ends up as *Super Probotector* with 'raptors. It's a classic case of playing it safe to produce a film licence by-the-numbers, and as a result isn't particularly exciting or different. It's not *bad*, and the two player mode adds some life, but it's not *brilliant* either.

DAMIAN



Many mags thought this game was going to be massive, but as soon as a horizontal platform format was announced my heart sank. The original was good because of the overhead view, the Mode 7, and the way the game followed the film's basic concept, but *JPII* does away with realism in favour of arcade action. Not a bad thing, but not earth-shattering either. The graphics are good and the much-talked about T-Rex is superbly animated, but under-used. I thought the two player was a great idea and it does work well, but the slowdown is also a bit of a downer. A decent enough platform game which deserves to do well.







PRODUCER
SONY
(071) 911 8700

PRICE
£54.99

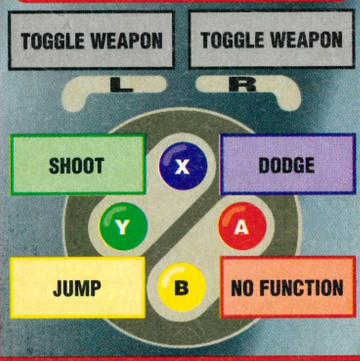
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
SHOOT-'EM-UP

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS

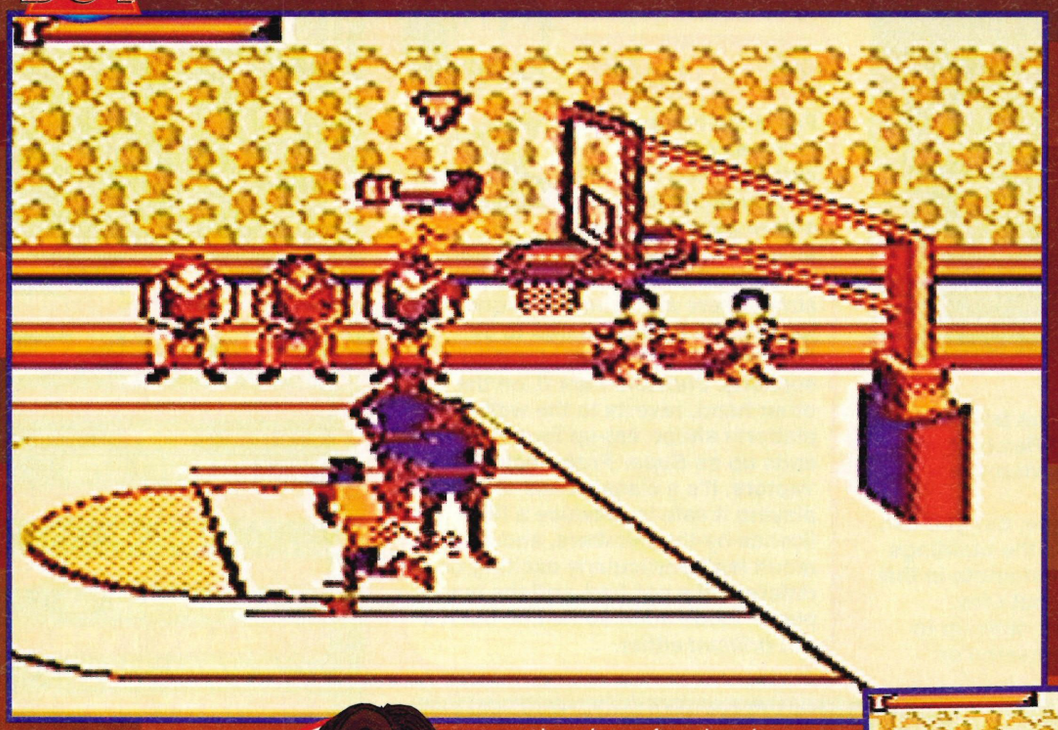


RATINGS

GRAPHICS	90
SOUND	89
GAMEPLAY	83
LONGEVITY	81

OVERALL

88



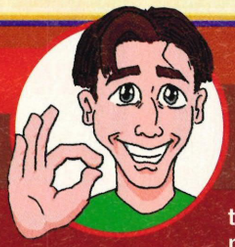
DAMIAN



I hate basketball, but I loved *NBA Jam* on the Super NES, so it just goes to prove that a good game can eliminate any prejudices. The Game Boy version however, is less impressive. For a start, trying to play this on the Game Boy is very difficult. The ball is black, and so are the players *and* the basket. This makes it difficult to see what the hell is going on during a jam session. Also, the screen suffers from horrendous speed blur. On the Super Game Boy, things look better, but the collision detection is horrendous and it moves a bit too fast to follow. Not a good conversion.

△ *Oh my, he's on fire, what a beauty, alley oop, nick his stilts and other assorted cries of awe.*

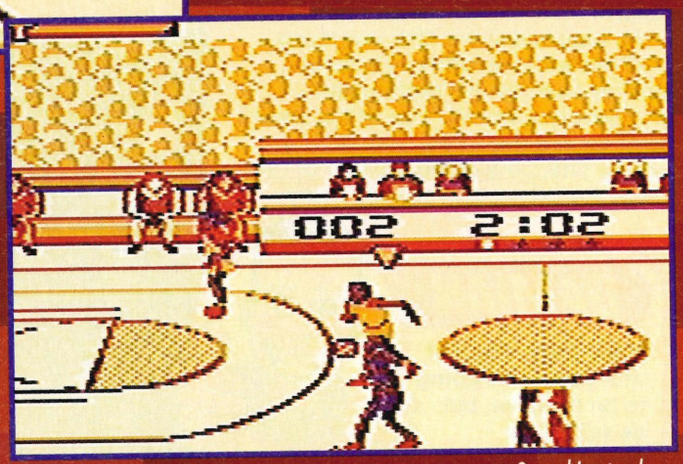
KEITH



I can never find the time to jam much on the Super NES, and so the prospect of some Reebok-squeaking quality time on the Game Boy was gratefully received. But how does *NBA Jam* on the Game Boy fare, and does it satisfy all my needs?

If you're not familiar with the format of *NBA Jam*, then picture (with the help of these screen shots) two seven foot bean poles sprinting from one end of a court to the other, trying to slam a ball through a small hoop. And at the same time avoiding the opposing two players who are trying to steal the ball and stick it through their hoop. Not a full team game, but the objective is still the same. Whoever scores the most baskets is the winner.

In most respects *NBA Jam* is virtually identicalto the Super NES game. It still has the entire East and West divisions containing 27 teams. The graphics are well animated with nearly all the moves from the Super NES version, including somersault dunks, spinning dunks and the famous "on fire" scenario (without the sampled speech). You can also still choose whether to have a computer operated team mate or a manual one, and all this with five difficulty levels.



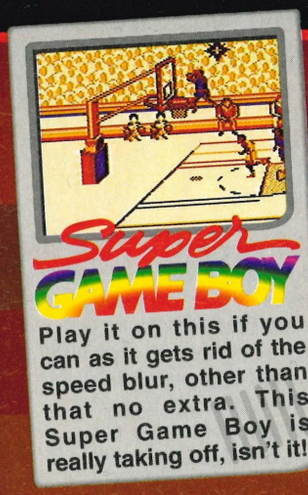
△ *Squeaking to glory, the sky high monster of the court, Michael Jordan, is determined to add another.*

As Jammy as the Super NES?

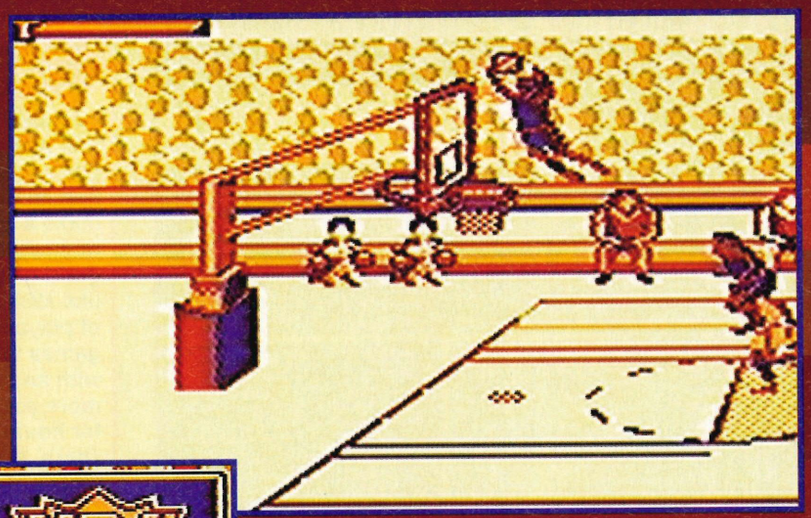
NBA JAM

▽ *Each of the 27 teams has their share of stars, Charlotte have one of the best, Chicago are good too.*

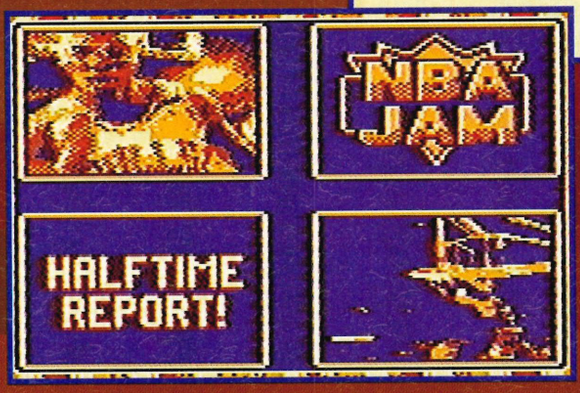




Play it on this if you can as it gets rid of the speed blur, other than that no extra. This Super Game Boy is really taking off, isn't it!



△ *Just how high can these basketball players go?*





NBA Jam is fast and frantic, but totally unsuited to the Game Boy. Blurring is not strong enough a word! The game is not too bad if you actually have the ball and are flying head-long towards the basket with a special dunk at the ready, but the real problem occurs when you're playing catch-up with the computer players.

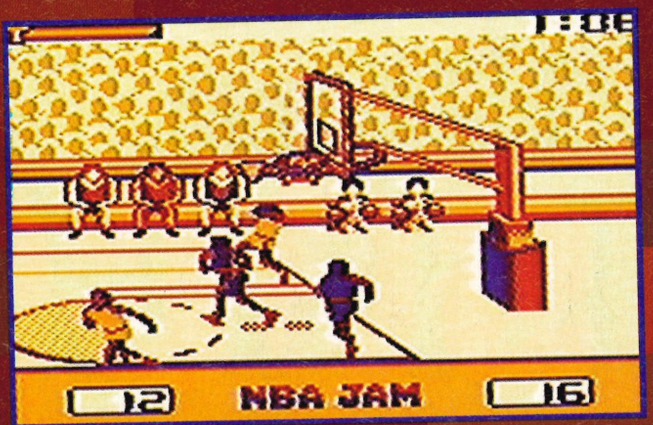
The problem appears when you're chasing the ball, as trying to get it back is about as easy chasing shadows in a dark room! As soon as the race is on, the screen blurs incredibly; splurging into one big black mess. Not a good thing when hand-to-eye coordination is a vital aspect of the game.

All this disappears when played through a Super Game Boy of course, but seeing as the bulk of buyers will only have the hand-held and only want a quick fix, it is besides the point. Playing *NBA Jam* on the move is guaranteed to give you a headache.

One of the major gameplay attractions of the Super NES version is the excitement generated by the multi-player option – not just a two player option, but three or four people can join in and dunk a few. Unfortunately, there's no such option here, but what the hell is wrong with using the four player adapter or at least a two player link-up cable? Dumb move.

Ultimately, what we have is a basketball game that lacks depth. The one player option won't keep you hooked for long without any play-offs or other competitions, but at least there's a password system which means you can carry on plodding your way through the list of teams at your own leisure.

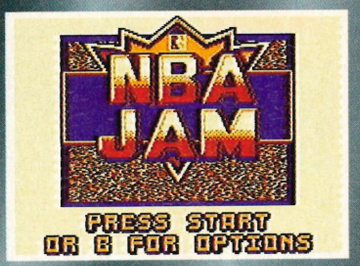
NBA Jam is still the King on 16-bit, but up until now Game Boy owners have only had *In Yer face!* and *NBA All-Star Challenge*. Now you've got *NBA Jam*, but I'm afraid you still have to wait for a truly great basketball game.



RYAN



NBA Jam without a multi-player option is like eating a Pop Tart without scolding your face – it's all part of the fun! Okay so I wasn't expecting four or even three players, but two would have been nice. Anyway, moving on, *NBA Jam* manages to retain most of the hype and razzmatazz of its big brother. All the teams are here, with the big names slamming in their own individual dunks. I was also happy to see that the "on fire" feature is still present and intact, although it isn't quite as explosive as on the Super NES which is understandable. At times this is a little too fast for the small screen, but slam it on the Super Game Boy and you're laughing. A great buy for a top game.





PRODUCER
ACCLAIM
(071) 344 5000

PRICE
RETAILER'S CHOICE

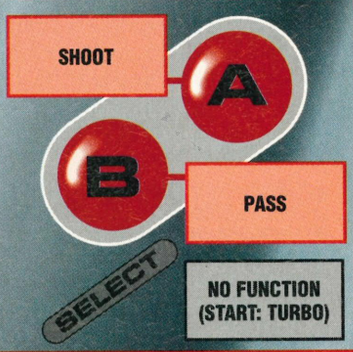
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
SPORTS SIM

CART SIZE
2MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORD

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	79
GAMEPLAY	75
LONGEVITY	74

OVERALL

76

▽ *The spanish keeper proves his worth with a dive that makes you think a bull's steaming his way.*



RYAN



I actually thought that this game was very good to start with. It had all the elements that make a good footie game, numerous options (not too heavy!), good graphics albeit a bit too much like *Kick Off 3* for my liking, and lots of playability. However, most football games take a while to get to grips with and then become easier the more you play, but despite playing it for hours I just could grasp *Dino Dini's*. No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't seem to pass the ball and set up constructive plays, which had me gnawing the joypad lead savagely (much to the concern of my colleagues). I also found the camera effect annoying, and the predictable scoring methods make this a rank outsider for the cup.

KEITH



I'm not quite sure what happened to *Dino Dini's Soccer* between the time I saw an unfinished version in April on the Mega Drive, and this month, when I played the finished version on the Super NES. Well, that isn't entirely true. I know what has happened to it; Eurocom happened to it. Let me explain...





The Mega Drive version which Dino programmed himself was shaping up to be one of the most original footy conversions ever. Among its long list of features was a stadium full of player statistics and some ingenious artificial intelligence routines, including an option where the player you're controlling automatically shoots when he gets anywhere near the penalty spot. Features, that I'm told, remain to this day on the Sega.

Where did all these options go on the Super NES version? Put simply, they were omitted, which leaves us with an average overhead football game. *Dino Dini's Soccer* has its novelties, like the way the camera

Dino just isn't 'Sensible' enough!

Dino Dini's SOCCER



switches from close up, to wide angle for set pieces. And you can rotate the pitch through 90° so that you can play either vertically or horizontally. But do these features really make it outstanding?

What really drags the game down is the base playability. The ball ricochets around the pitch at light speed and so your tactics revolve around booting the ball up field; giving chase with a player who you can just about pick out on the radar, then smacking the ball goalwards from the corner of the penalty box with a bit of swerve. That's right, set position, set goal – every single time. But it will take a while to get used to pressing the R button before you shoot, as this is the only way to get any power.

Tackling is out. Any attempt at getting the ball back without running around the player and picking it up from right under their nose is met with yellow card. If you're lucky, you'll be able to witness the trainer bounding onto the pitch faster than any of the top strikers and administering aid.

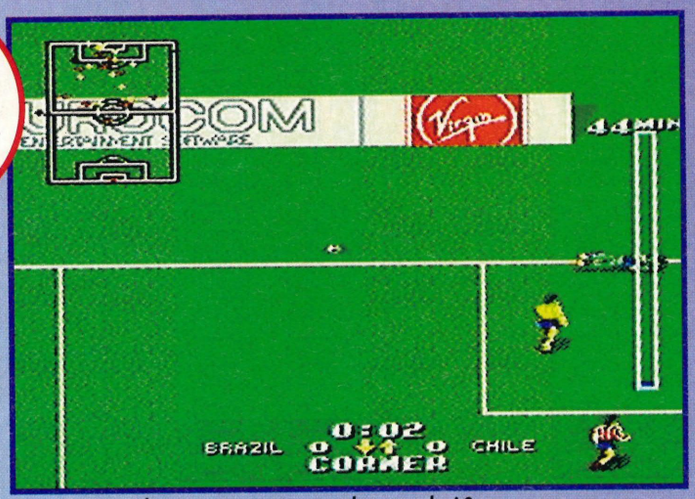
The list of tournaments is impressive. You can play in the World Cup Finals or Qualifiers which are spread all over the world, including Asia and Oceania. There's a custom knock-out and a league, and so what *Dino Dini's* lacks in gameplay is more than made up for in longevity.

As U2 might say "I still haven't found what I'm looking for", and for me it's a footy game that's going to challenge *Sensible Soccer* for the title of most playable football game on the Super NES. *Dino Dini's* is yet another contender; knocked out of the cup in the first round by Portsmouth FC. Not fit to shine *Sensible*'s boots, I'm afraid.

DAMIAN



One word okay, *Sensible*. I wanna be able to play a football ggame that actually lets you run with the ball and not get hacked down every five minutes, okay? I want lots of options, loads of goals and some decent leagues and cups. Is that too much to ask? I wanna be able to smoke a Cuban cigar the size of Cincinatti, rub jello on my body and run naked through the streets – why? Because may I feel the need to, okay? Here's another word about football – control. *Dino Dini's* doesn't have any. It looks good, plays fairly well, but you don't get any satisfaction from playing it. When you score, the screen quickly flips to a replay which stops just as the ball hits the goal line. I think you here me knocking...



△ *It's a corner, but can anyone get over there to take it?*











PRODUCER
VIRGIN
(081) 960 2255

PRICE
£TBA

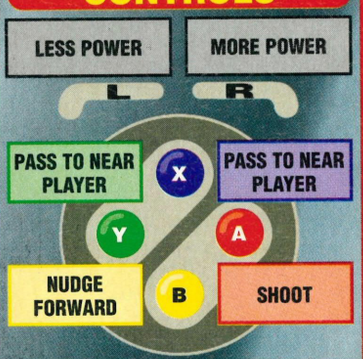
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
SPORTS SIM

CART SIZE
8MBit

FEATURES
BATTERY SAVE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	71
SOUND	72
GAMEPLAY	75
LONGEVITY	84

OVERALL

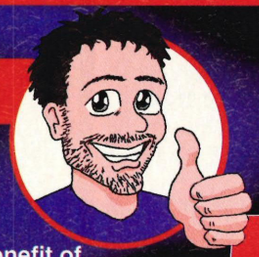
72

SUPER DROPZONE

Die! Die! Die!

GAMER GOLD

ANDY

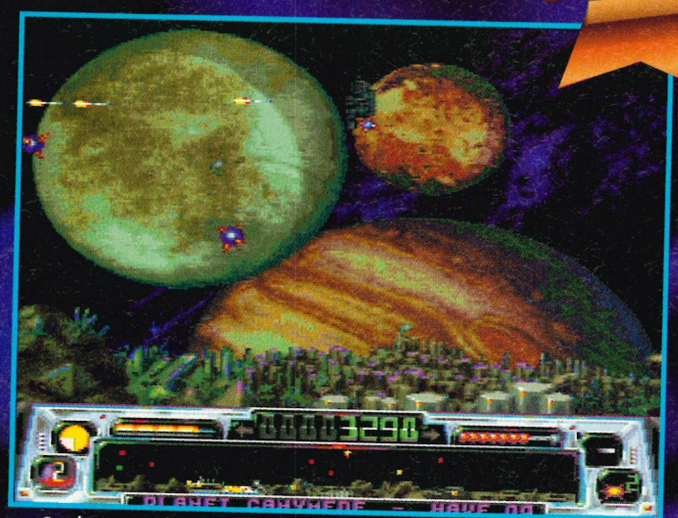


Super Dropzone is *Dropzone*^{2}. There. Easiest review I've ever done.

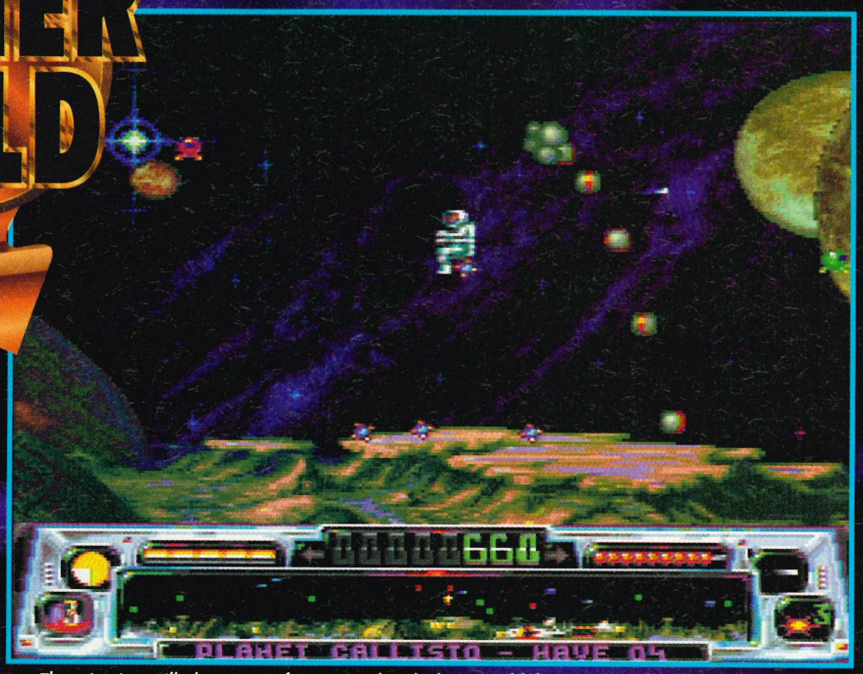
Okay, okay. For the benefit of anybody over a decade younger than me (that's most of the population, then – Ed) who might not have seen the original, *Dropzone* was a *Defender*-type shoot-'em-up set on the moons of Jupiter, where a bunch of rotund scientists were being hassled by aliens. As a top jet-packing spaceman, your job was to kill the aliens, save the scientists, and in all probability get the girl.

Archer Maclean's *Super Dropzone* (actually programmed by EuroCom) doesn't mess about with this brain-achingly complex plot and, to its credit, doesn't mess with the original gameplay either.

The graphics and sound have been treated to a Nineties remix. Some new faces have been added to the rogues' gallery, and Mr Spaceman now has access to the inevitable power-ups, but at heart it's the same game... only better!



△ *Our hero goes for a bit of the old Phantom of the Opera – he puts on the cloak! Oh-ho!*



△ *The scientists mill about in confusion as a bomb-dropping blob passes overhead.*

First-time players expecting the usual console shoot-'em-up stuff, where everything arrives as if on rails and you just have to memorise their positions, are going to be left crying into their Pepsi Max by *Super Dropzone*.

Memory won't help you here – instead, you need to crank your reflexes up to their fullest and get ready for non-stop dodging, weaving, shooting and – inevitably – bursting into pieces and dying.

The inertial control system, where you have to build up speed to manoeuvre, takes time to use to its full potential, so the first few games generally see you flying inexorably into the nearest Planter and blowing up.

However, like all the best control systems, a little practice pays out like the National Lottery. Once you've got the hang of the hero's thrust controls and the handy reverse shooting trick, the ETs will have to phone home... for extra bodybags!

THE STORY SO FAR...



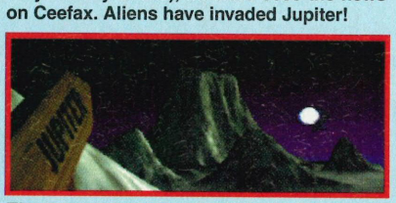
Arizona desert, November 2061. Strange things are afoot at the cunningly concealed secret base.



Already in his space suit (his flatmate has very cheesy socks), Mr Hero sees the news on Ceefax. Aliens have invaded Jupiter!



"They get everywhere, don't they?" he yawns as yet another Silicon Graphics intro sequence brings him to the surface.



The war zone is on Jupiter. Sensibly, our fearless hero takes off in the opposite direction. "Barbados, here I come!"

DAMIAN



You've just warped to Callisto, your jet-pac and suit still have the price tags on them and everything within a thousand light years wants you dead. Think you can handle it? *Super Dropzone* is all about speed and reactions. You are the suicial Sid with a penchant for mass destruction, and boy does this game give you plenty of that. Eurocom have done a good job of converting this C64 classic to the Super NES. Now you've got better graphics, some truly awesome sound (including speech), and the same old playability... thank goodness! For mindless, points-accumilating, shrapnel flying, brain exploding fun, accept no substitute. There's nothing like having a whole race of aliens after your blood, and insane shoot-'em-up addicts will love it.



△ *If that's the Rolex, I'd hate to see the size of the bottle of black hair dye.*



Gameplay changes come in the form of power-ups (rapid fire, homing missiles, etc) and, less welcomely, bosses. The addition of bosses is my only real complaint – do we really need one after *every* level? I found that it disrupted the flow of the game (he said, poncily), and I can't help wondering if their inclusion is due to some suit at Sony saying "But it's a console game – you *have* to have bosses!"

Apart from these, the changes are cosmetic. There are now a variety of moons to defend, some new enemies (like the Dairylea Triangles From Hell), and Voyager-derived Jovian backgrounds which tend to obscure some of the smaller enemies if you don't watch the scanner.

What's important here, however, is the game under the gloss. The various minor tweaks and tucks have made what was already a good blast better than ever.

Some will whinge about it being old-fashioned, but... ah, to hell with them. *Super Dropzone* is a no-bull adrenaline pumper, a game to seperate the men from the mincers. I loved it, and if you like putting your hand-to-eye co-ordination to the test, so will you. Now, Archer, about that blast in your GTO...



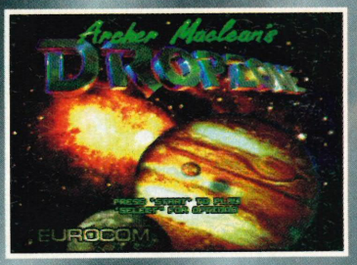
RYAN



It's all very well reminiscing about what a great game *Dropzone* WAS in its time, but is there really a place for something as repetitive and dull as this in today's console market? When I fork out hard-earned cash for a game (which believe it or not I do – sometimes), I expect to be bowled over with every aspect. Okay so *Super Dropzone* plays quite well for a short while, but it looks absolutely dire, the smooth scrolling graphics are totally devoid of any life whatsoever. The sound isn't much better, either. I strongly think that *Dropzone's* time has been and gone, and it is time to move on.



△ *The first boss is blown to bits by a fusilade of laser fire.*





PRODUCER
PSYGNOSIS
(051) 709 5755

PRICE
£TBA

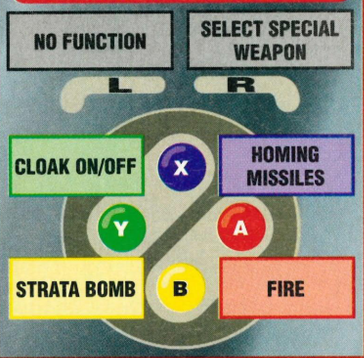
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
SHOOT-'EM-UP

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORDS

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	72
SOUND	80
GAMEPLAY	93
LONGEVITY	90

OVERALL

91

PITFALL
THE MAYAN ADVENTURE

KEITH



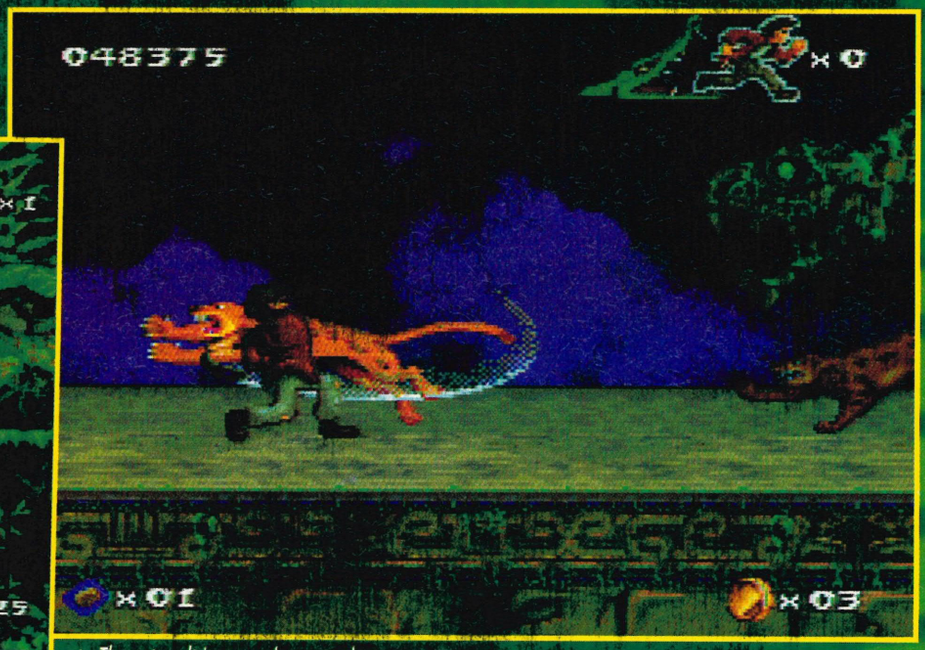
It's going to be a seriously difficult choice when it comes to choosing a new platform game this Christmas. *Pitfall – The Mayan adventure* is about to add to your Yuletide ponderings.

Commodore 64, Atari 2600, Apple 2, PC, NES and now Super NES, this game has well and truly seen out its tour of duty. It's now the turn of Harry Jnr (son of the original Harry)

A pit that's a pleasure to be stuck in!



△ *Deathslides are a quick way to traverse a level, but landing can be a headache.*



△ *The catapult is a good way to destroy these magical jaguar statues that come to life.*

to wax his boomerang, loosen up his whip and find his warrior spirit in preparation for the rain forests, temples, ruins and mines that make up the mystical land of the Mayans (and where his father is trapped).

There are 11 levels in total for Harry Jnr to work his way through, all of them absolutely massive and full of deadly spike pits, barrels of dynamite and exploding bags of needles. Classic Indiana Jones territory.

The local jungle dwellers don't do you any favours either, as wild porcupines do their impressions of double decker buses, monkeys stone you from above, and somewhere a jaguar lurks...

Pitfall is bursting with action and the hero's rope swinging, death-sliding, bungee jumping and other wild exertions not only leave you panting with sympathy pains, but gasping in awe at the way all these lifelike antics have been animated.

Kroyer films, best known for their animation in the film *FernGully*, are the team responsible for this outstanding



▽ *Everybody's at it, even Harry's game for a spot of bungee jumping.*



RYAN

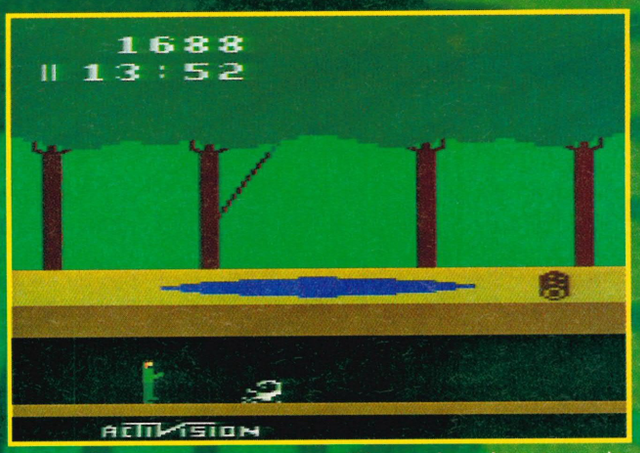


Wow, what a looker! *Pitfall* has some of the smoothest graphics I've seen since *Earthworm Jim*. Although this game doesn't really boast much in the originality stakes, it basically takes the best bits from a thousand other platform games and combines them all to great effect. It's pretty damn challenging as well, especially as the 11 levels on offer are huge and brimming with hazards for Harry Jnr to overcome. Even I was struggling to progress! It was a good idea to include the original *Pitfall* game for the sheer hell of it because it just goes to show how addictive a painfully simple 8k game can be (Keith probably played that more than the actual game!). Make the leap and buy it.

feat. The company also participated in the breakthrough film project, *Tron*. It just goes to show that even big film industry veterans are keen to get into video games.

But it's the all-round quality of *Pitfall* that impresses me more than anything. Take the sound effects for example. Academy award winners Soundelux Media Labs (who brought you the sound effects for films such as *True Lies, Cliffhanger* and *In the Line of Fire*) have honoured the Super NES with everything from heart-stopping jaguar roars, to one of the nastiest sounding whips since a Spielberg film.

The biggest shock of all, is that *Pitfall* actually plays well, and thankfully it's not just a case of run, jump and kill. The addictive mixture of monster-mashing, mine car surfing, and puzzle solving means you're forever on the lookout for bonus rooms and secret passages that could even take you to, of all things, the original Atari 2600 version of *Pitfall* – all 8k of it!



△ *Incredible gameplay and stunning graphics are what the old version was famous for.*



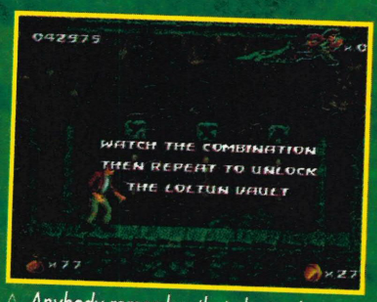
You'll also discover power-up rooms by crawling through narrow passageways, and memory-testing sub-games by moving aside concrete slabs. The difficulty level is perfect and three continues is more than enough for a challenging time. Thank goodness Activision didn't keep in the original infinite continues.

DAMIAN



I don't believe it. This is the sixth Gamer Gold this month! How on earth will the SUPER GAMER readers be able to buy them all? *Pitfall* is a highly playable platform game and in many respects is what *Indiana jones' Greatest Adventures* should have been. Everything an explorer desires is just waiting in this cart. You can crawl through ancient temples on your elbows, swing across great chasms and uncover the secrets of the Mayans, all with the panache of a chisel-chinned frontiersman. Animation is great, not quite up to *Lion King* standards, but still life-like and convincing. The boomerang is also an excellent weapon, but without doubt the best part of this game is the originality of the traps, and the dark atmosphere of the unknown. *Pitfall* is a great game, but you're going to have to choose well this Christmas.





△ *Anybody remember that electronic game called Simon? Well, this sub-game is it!*

Playing *Pitfall* is like watching an old episode of *The mysterious Cities of Gold*. The traps, ancient civilisations, hidden treasures are all there. The only thing that isn't is a title tune you can sing-a-long with, but who cares. This is the platformer of the month for me.





PRODUCER
ACTIVISION
(081) 742 9400

PRICE
£59.99

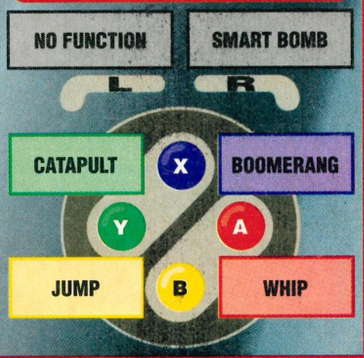
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	94
SOUND	93
GAMEPLAY	93
LONGEVITY	89

OVERALL

90

Duck Tales 2

Ducking good!



KEITH

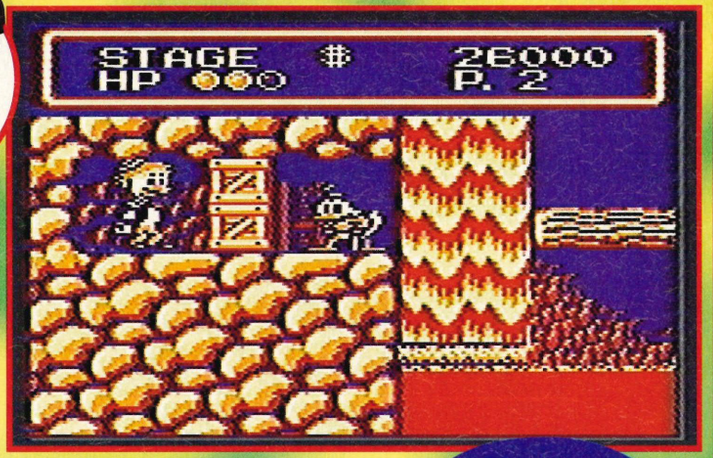
You must have seen the Disney cartoon with Uncle Scrooge and his mischievous nephews: Huey, Dewey and Louie, as they search to recover the dosh that the miserly McDuck is always losing.

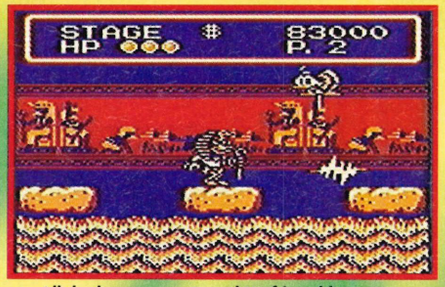
Duck Tales 2 is the sequel to *Duck Tales* [no kiddin' – Ed] which was released about two years ago, and stars all the above, along with special appearances by Launchpad, Gyro, Webby and the evil pirate, Flintheart Groomgold.

Uncle Scrooge must travel the world in search of five ancient treasures that can be found in Niagara falls, a Scottish castle, an Egyptian pyramid, Mu (think of KLF!) and Flintheart's galleon. The only weapon he has to defend himself with is a trusty pogo stick, so there's plenty of head popping to be done!

Even though *Duck Tales 2* is a straightforward multi-directional platform game, I found there were certain elements to the gameplay that made it a little bit different – dare I say even enjoyable. Apart from being supermly playable (in the Mario sense), the pogo stick has many adaptors and gadgets that can be bolted on to break certain blocks and create special effects.

▽ *Take a swipe at those boxes with your pogo stick to release the trapped gyro!*





△ *All the bosses require a bit of head bouncing to beat.*

Aside from the platform action, levers can be pulled to fire cannon balls into walls, switches thrown to operate conveyor belts, and pressure pads can make hidden waterfalls appear. This can help uncover a stack-load of traditional Nintendo secret rooms. And if you search hard enough you'll even discover the five parts of Scrooge's treasure map that can be put together to view the proper game completion sequence.



A serious problem that does blight the gameplay somewhat is the horrendous slowdown that reduces the screen to a flickering flurry of movement, and it's also annoying the way you lose all your money when Scrooge loses a life.

Duck Tales 2 took me just over half a day to complete on normal setting, so you could say it's a bit on the easy side. But there are three difficulty levels to contend with, and the hard level should be challenging enough for anyone. Definitely one of the better Game Boy platformers and one for small children and ducks to happily quack about. Worth consideration.

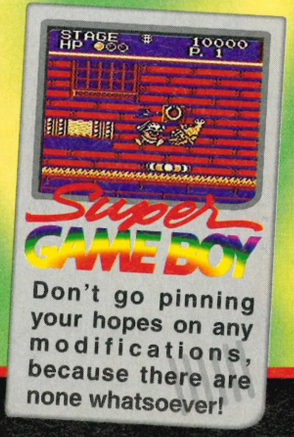


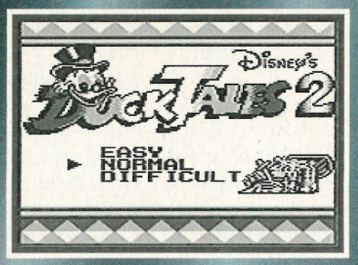
△ *Ride the boulder to reach a short cut.*



RYAN

I usually like my ducks marinated in a succulent sauce and served with rice at the local take-away, and so being my usual pessimistic self I had serious doubts that *DT2* would end up as anything other than my dinner! However, after a few minutes play my ravenous gob began to smile sweetly as the harsh reality dawned on me that this is a very good game. It offers everything a decent platform game should; huge multi-directional levels filled with demonic creatures to kill, loads of secret rooms, and of course ultra smooth, well defined visuals. It's a cinch to get into as well. Usually games like this take some getting used to before the enjoyment starts to surface, but *DT2* had me fully transfixed from square one. Looks like the duck's off the menu, eh Fawlty!







PRODUCER
NINTENDO
(0703) 651010

PRICE
£29.99

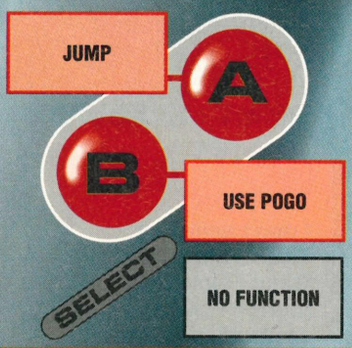
RELEASED
OUT NOW

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
2MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS

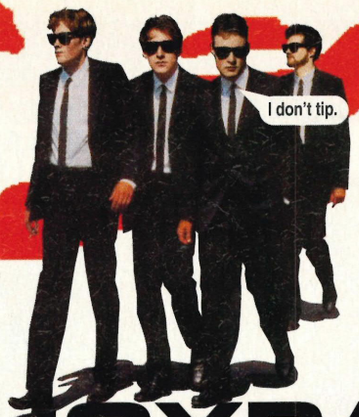


RATINGS

GRAPHICS	87
SOUND	81
GAMEPLAY	84
LONGEVITY	75

OVERALL

81



super savers

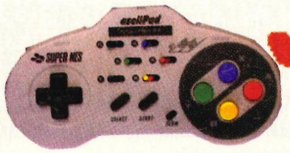
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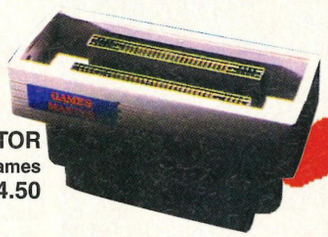
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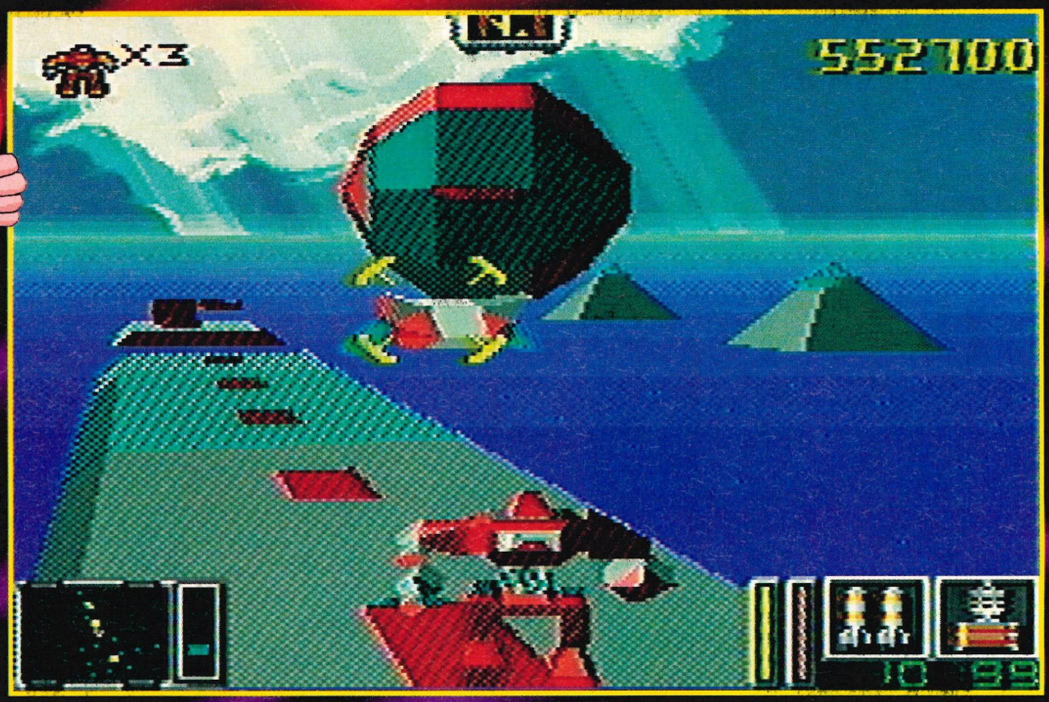
ANDY



Humanity's in trouble (again). Bad guys whose names are made up of the high-scoring letters in Scrabble have attacked and half-inched the all-powerful AI core, the only thing standing between us and a major clock-cleaning scenario.

The only way to retrieve it is to send in the Morphing Battle System, a giant transforming robot with the firepower to knock the rivets out of anything the bad guys can throw at it. Hooray for our side!

Vortex is only the third Super FX game to appear, and at first glance you'd be forgiven for thinking that things haven't advanced much in the polygon department since *Starwing* (first released over 18 months ago). However, while *Vortex* may look similar to its science fiction predecessor, it plays very differently.



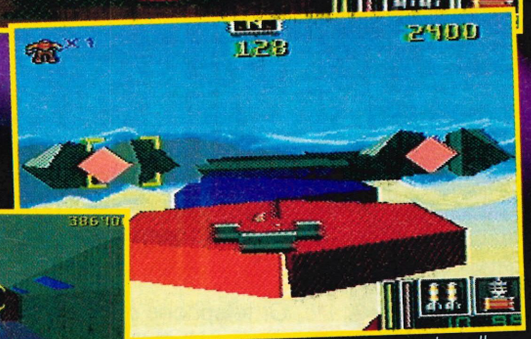
VORTEX

Polygon perfection!

GAMER GOLD



△ *Caterpillar attack! Magmeno is rife with unpleasant wildlife.*





△ *The skyway on Voltair is not only well defended, but tends to collapse under you!*

The first level is actually a bit disappointing, as it's just a *Starwing*-style space battle – fly along a preset course, blast some enemies and take out a boss at the end. If you saw this level being played in a shop, you'd probably wonder what all the fuss was about and look at *Bubsy 2* instead.

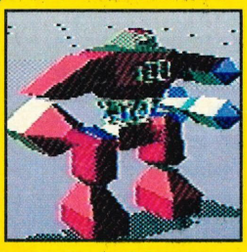
It'd be your mistake, though. *Vortex* is a game for people who actually like to *play* their games, as opposed to just walking through them and gawping at the graphics.

Once the first level is completed, the action switches to the ground, where the fun really begins. The MBS has four modes – the anthropomorphic Walker, the airborne Sonic Jet, the nippy Land Burner and the tank-like Hard Shell.

Each mode has its advantages and disadvantages. The Walker, for example, is heavily armed, but slow and cumbersome, while the Sonic Jet is fast, but has limited fuel.

Knowing when and where to switch to each vehicle is vital if you are to get anywhere in one piece, giving the game a tactical depth lacking in most shoot-'em-ups. It takes time to get used to the controls, but once you've done it you'll have the MBS carving through the bad guys like a chainsaw through hot lard!

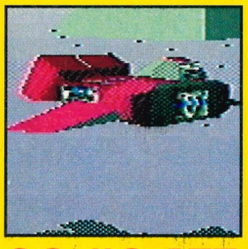
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SONIC JET

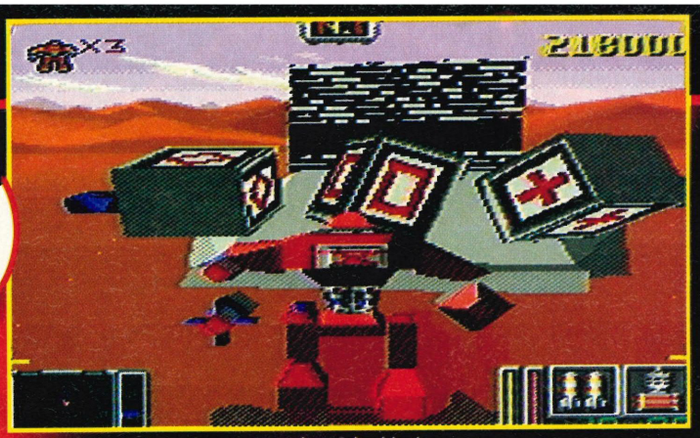


HARD SHELL

KEITH

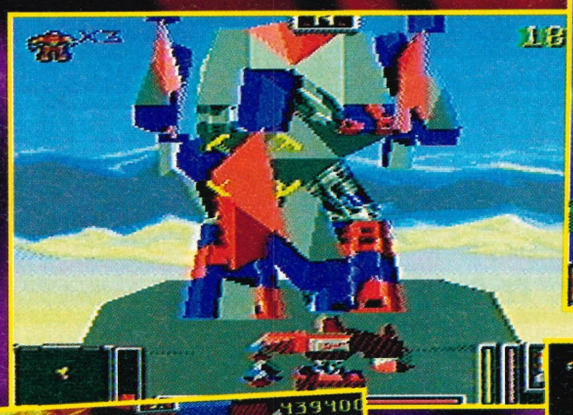


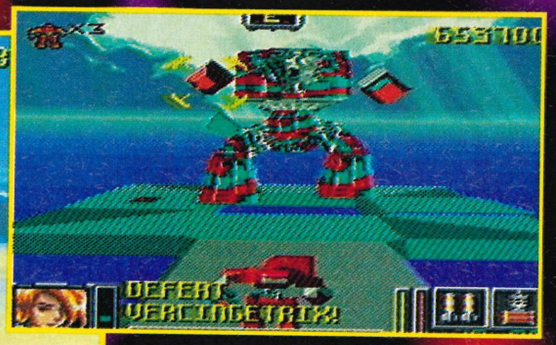
Witness the coming to life of the FX chip in all its glory! At last, a game where you can really explore. There are no confines here. No restrictive linear gameplay, just you, a few worlds and all the time you want to explore them. If you want a game that delivers devious puzzles, raw explosive action, unforgettable bosses and gritty challenge, then you can't get any better than *Vortex*. Proof that the FX chip isn't all hype and no gameplay, this game is a truly memorable piece of software and one I would go on hunger strike to have in my collection!

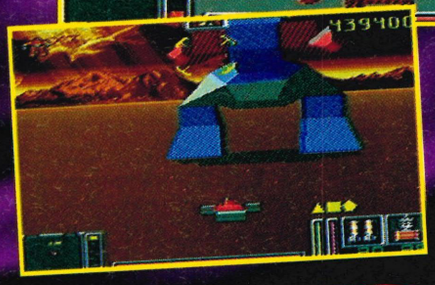


△ *Shoot the locks in the correct order to disable the reactor.*

Similarly, each of the seven levels offers a different challenge. Cryston, the first planet you visit, is riddled with underground tunnel systems hiding vital pass keys. Voltair, the third level, sees you racing the Land Burner along a twisting mid-air roadway, and Trantor (someone at Argonaut's an Isaac Asimov fan), the final challenge, requires you to pick your way along treacherous narrow pathways above an ocean, with gun emplacements, bombers and giant blimps conspiring to tip you into the drink.







△ *Just one of the many oversized bosses in Vortex!*



▷ *The MBS pursues the evil Aki-Do forces through the Vortex to their lair.*

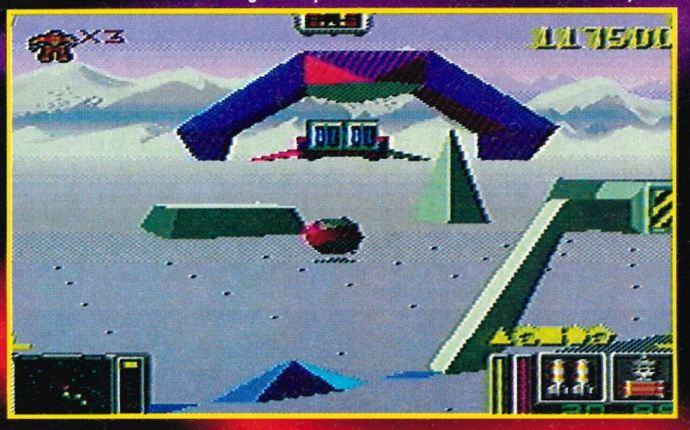
Vortex offers what most games today lack – playability, variety, depth and, most importantly, challenge. Sony and Argonaut have produced that rare thing, a console game that doesn't assume all game players are shell-suited braindeads with stupid hats on backwards. There's hope for the future yet!

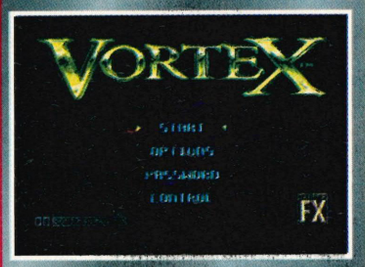
RYAN



They say that the best things in life are free – cobblers! If they were then Sony would be dishing out copies of *Vortex* to every household in the country! Although at first this game looks a little too much like *Starwing*, things soon heat up as you get blasting with a wide selection of beefy guns. And of course you can go anywhere in *Vortex*, unlike the first FX game. The sound is a little sparse, but you can't deny the sheer class of the visual effects. Unlike *Starwing*, *Vortex* will have you riveted to your Super NES for ages. And even then there is still plenty to keep you coming back for more. Another FX winner from the Argonaut stable, and I for one can't wait for *FX Fighter*.

▽ *A recogniser rip off homes in on the Sonic Jet over Cryston.*







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SONY/ARGONAUT
(071) 911 8700

PRICE
£XX.XX

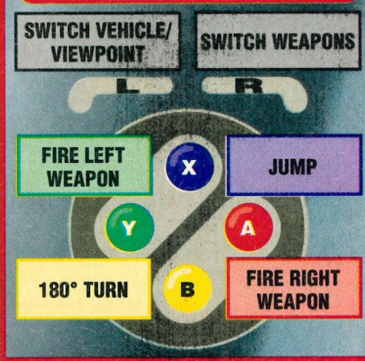
RELEASED
OUT NOW

GAME TYPE
SHOOT-'EM-UP

CART SIZE
4MBit

FEATURES
SUPER FX CHIP
PASSWORDS

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	85
SOUND	72
GAMEPLAY	94
LONGEVITY	92

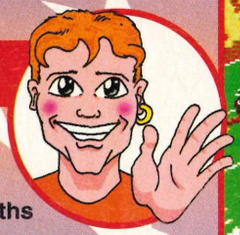
OVERALL

92



△ As the receivers break free in the end zone, the SF Quarterback winds up a pass.

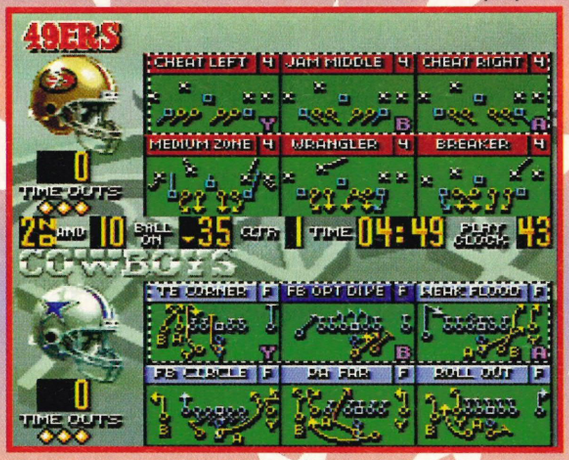
RYAN



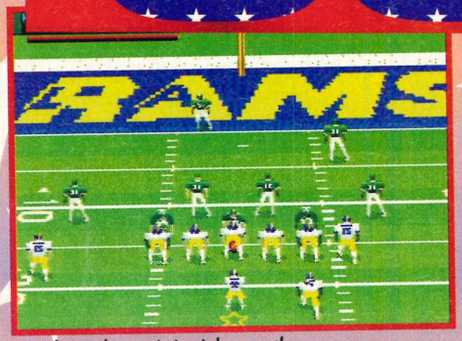
Although the *Street Fighter II* concept has taken its fair share of stick over recent months it's time to turn our attentions to another game that has, and will probably continue to, feature heavily in the "takin' the p***" top ten!

Madden '95 is yet another upgraded American football sim, developed once again by Visual Concepts, the team behind such stunning greats as *Clay Fighter*. *Madden '95* has been given a totally new front end to keep up with the lesser gridiron games that are constantly trying to muscle in on the fat man's territory.

▷ Once again the hefty playbooks are open for business.



MADDEN '95



△ The end zone is in sight, can the Rams hit it?

Fat boy's back in town!

Strangely though, the graphics seem to have deteriorated. In *Madden '94* they were touching on perfection, but now they've been totally reworked to resemble what I can only describe as naff-looking *Power Rangers*, who all move like they're clenching eggs between their buttocks!

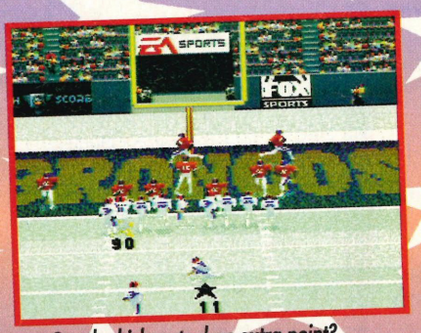
I can see what the programmers have tried to do in making the sprites look more shapely, but the end result is sadly disappointing. The tunes are also worthy of the sin bin as they wouldn't sound out of place in a Forties war film.

Predictably, the Mode 7 swirly bits that debuted in the *'94* version are back in full effect every time the ball is turned-over to the opposing team or an instant replay is used.

Once you get into the full swing of a match, *Madden '95* plays much like the others. Of course, there are more plays to choose from and they can now be selected without a huddle to save time. A great touch.

Another aspect which irritated me was simply the throwing the ball. Before, you could happily snap the ball and then bring up windows to see which receiver was free before passing. But now you have no such guidance and must wait for precious seconds, looking for a free receiver. Why fix something which isn't broken?

Being a huge fan of the series, *Madden '95* is a major let-down which lacks innovative ideas and pales into insignificance when compared to the mighty *Madden '94*. Have EA Sports reached the end of the road? We'll tell you next year!

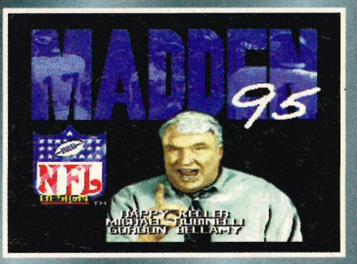


△ Can the kicker steal an extra point?

KEITH



When American Football games are drop-kicked into the office they tend not to turn my head. When one arrives in front of me for the fourth time it makes me turn my head rapidly... in the other direction. The players seem to have been drawn on a pick 'n mix your own appendage basis, and the action is agonisingly slow. There are also no windows to show you who you can pass to which makes it totally unplayable in my book. Why ruin the reputation of a once credible game by slowly killing it with sub-standard updates? It's time to call it a day.





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OCEAN
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PRICE
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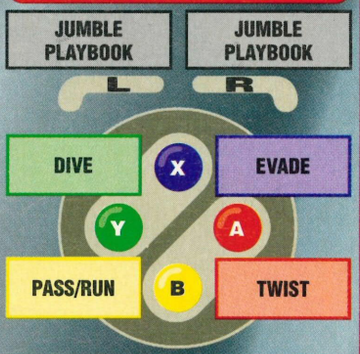
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
SPORTS SIM

CART SIZE
8MBit

FEATURES
BATTERY BACKUP
FIVE PLAYER MODE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	78
SOUND	75
GAMEPLAY	81
LONGEVITY	84

OVERALL

79

BRAIN LORD

KEITH



Bit of a brain drain!

Brain Lord?! What sort of a name is that? I can't wait for the sequel called *Lung Lord* or maybe even *Kidney King*! Anyway, *Brain Lord* is the new RPG from Enix and to tell you the truth, it's a bit of a disappointment. Hold onto your cash and I'll tell you why.

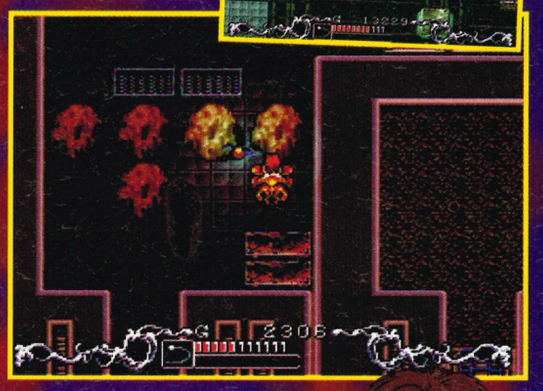
RPGs are all about willing suspension of disbelief, right? But when you are entwined in a mythical world created by the mind of some mad programmer, it has to be believable, or you must at least be following a crusade which spurs you on. Unfortunately, *Brain Lord*'s plot is about as convincing as an episode of *Home & Away*!



△ *You don't mind if I just bury my hatchet in your bar, I'll try and make it a clean cut!*



▽ *Yep, time to push the boulders out of the way to reach the other side.*



The sole reason for you entering Dragon World is to seek out the last dragon and presumably then a big battle occurs between ol' scaly and some ancient evil. There is a game history mentioning a demon, but who knows when he'll arrive.

No explorer can venture into the wild blue yonder without the obligatory supply of weapons and magic spells though, can they? And if there's one thing *Brain Lord does* have, it's one hell of a good chain of weapons shops. Woolworths with chain mail!

There's a Lightning bow, Fire sword, Platinum sword and a nice line in protective clothing such as helmets, shields and shiny armour. All of these are needed to survive the combat, which is played in real time, so there's no choosing the right icon or flipping to a separate fight screen. You see the enemy and you attack it.

Enix have included a wallchart with all the weapons and keys and an offer of a strategy guide if you get stuck, but you shouldn't need it because *Brain Lord* is a tad easy. The programmers have disguised the lack of imagination in the rest of the game by turning every location into a mini *Zelda*-esque puzzle requiring you to push the right switches and find objects. The problem-solving is the only reason for the 'Brain' in the title.

I did enjoy my time with *Brain Lord*, but despite the excellent graphics (viewed from above) and interactivity, it is too much like every other RPG, and I'm a bit worried that the same thing that happened with Jap beat-'em-ups is about to occur with RPGs. After the excellent *Soul Blazer*, *Actraiser* and *Secret of Mana*, this game seems flat and unoriginal.



DAMIAN



Call me a sentimental old git with the ramlbing senile mind of a WW1 veteran (actually don't), but *Zelda III* is still my all-time favourite overhead RPG, although *Illusion of Gaia* (also reviewed this issue) got pretty close. *Brain Lord* (dumb name) is about as exciting as the Tory party conference. The graphics are good, but no effort has been made to enhance the basic wandering around and killing things gameplay. *Gaia* has a superb storyline and you really feel empathy for the central character, but *Brain Lord* is just a brain drain – unoriginal, uninteresting, underdeveloped, and unlikey to end up in my collection.





PRODUCER
ENIX
SUPPLIED BY: TORC SOFTWARE
(081) 893 2100

PRICE
£59.99

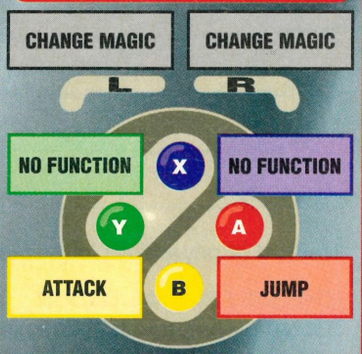
RELEASED
US IMPORT

GAME TYPE
RPG

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
BATTERY SAVE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	75
SOUND	68
GAMEPLAY	72
LONGEVITY	75

OVERALL

71

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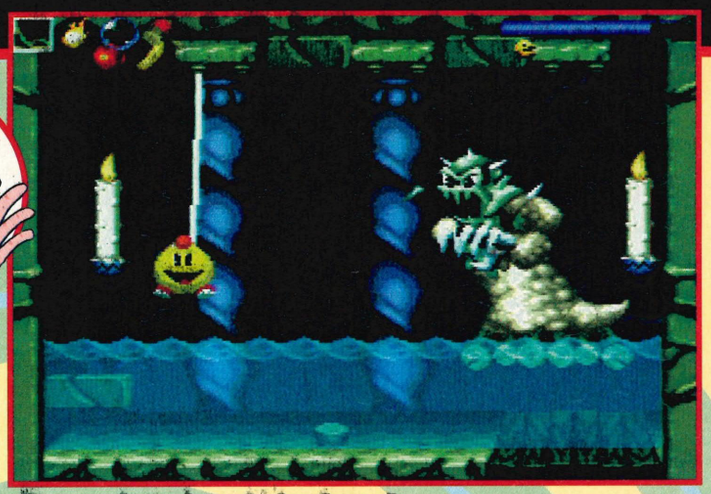
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Pac-ked with fun!

PAC IN TIME



RYAN



Just what has happened to Pac-Man? I demand to know. There was a time when he was just a ball with a big gob who preyed on vulnerable spooks, but now he's become a personality with eyes, arms, legs... and, well more besides!

Snatched from the bosom of his family and transported back to the year 1975 by an evil witch with nothing better to do, Pac finds himself snared in a hostile world consisting of flying sheep and strange mutated plants who are all unaware of Pac's fame (probably because he hasn't actually been invented yet!).

Based on the Amiga game *Furry of the Furries*, *Pac-In-Time* features five different locations bursting with over ten taxing levels. You must collect a certain amount of pills dotted around each level and then find the exit to the next.

It sounds easy, but in actual fact all this unfolds into quite a difficult platform/puzzle adventure.

As you charge up the Super NES, Pac-Man bounds onto the screen as he has done hundreds of times before over the years, but this time he has good reason to hold his head up high and smirk knowingly because *Pac-In-Time* is one of the most compellingly addictive games I've played in a long time.

The game starts off with just a few pills dotted around a straightforward platform level, but in no time at all the challenge is heightened with more pills and levels so big you could lose an articulated lorry in them!

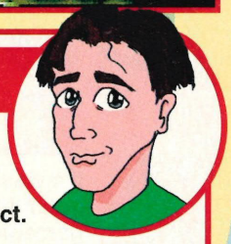
The way in which you can only do the simplest of things like dive underwater with the aid of a collectable item ensures that there is plenty of explorational enjoyment as you scour every nook and cranny for the desirable object. This also makes it perfect for younger players who are looking for an introduction to the big leagues.

Although *Pac-In-Time* features fabulous graphics and sound effects, it is really the addictive gameplay that steals the show, and I guarantee that as soon as you start playing, not even tidal waves, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions will tear you away from it.



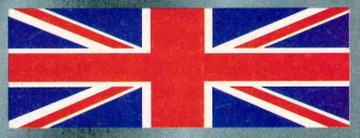
▷ *Surely this is no pad for a dip Pac? Still stuck in limbo land with a mutated piranha snapping at your toes, things are looking bleak!*

KEITH



I found *Pac-In-Time* unremarkable in almost every aspect. The gameplay is simplistic to say the least and involves collecting all the dots on the level, but then that's what he's best at, isn't it? But it doesn't really make a good platform game and I soon became bored wandering around levels that graphically remain pretty much the same. The way you can swing around is a novel twist and reminded me of *Bionic Commando* on the NES, but that's no reason for buying a game and I would certainly recommend *EWJ* over this for sheer playability and enjoyment. Very average.





PRODUCER
MINDSCAPE
(0444) 246333

PRICE
£TBA

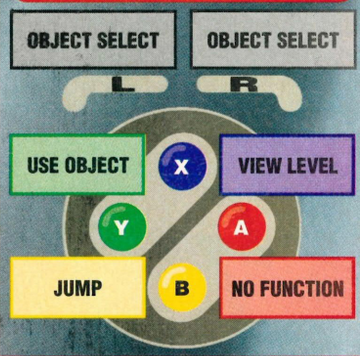
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM/PUZZLE

CART SIZE
8MBit

FEATURES
SUPER FX CHIP
SUPERSCOPE SUPPORT

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	81
SOUND	80
GAMEPLAY	85
LONGEVITY	87

OVERALL

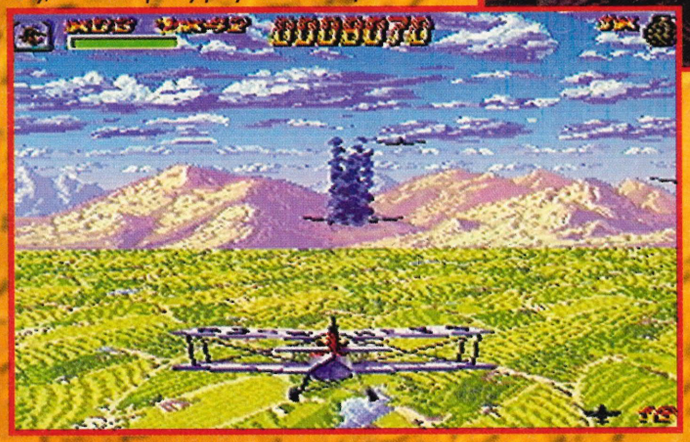
84

INDIANA JONES' Greatest Adventures

Snakes, why did it have to be snakes?



△ *Clamp yer tackle in an inner tube and dive off a mountain!*





△ *Indy dashes for the cart in Raiders, only to find a huge muscled bloke waiting. Doh!*

DAMIAN



What makes the Indiana Jones films so exciting to watch is undoubtedly a combination of humour and all-action Thirties adventure. Every scene is littered with original situations, daring escapes and bad guys who you love to hate. Perfect fodder for a game you might think, and you'd be right.

Kalani Striecher is the man behind JVC's hugely successful *Star Wars* games, and now he tries his hand at bringing the archaeologist played by Harrison Ford to the Super NES.

▽ *Is this the deeply thrilling Mode 7 plane chase? No, sorry, it's the completely jerky and rubbish plane chase.*

The game is divided up into the three films, played in the order they were filmed and not set. At the end of each movie you get a brief introduction and then are thrust into the relevant time zone without so much as a TARDIS.

Raiders of the Lost Ark is an excellent start to the game, and to be fair, the high quality of graphics and sound is consistent throughout. The first level is the Hovitos' temple, where you dodge spike traps, angry natives, tarantulas, poison darts and of course the huge rolling boulder at the end, which you must stay ahead of or be flattened.

All this is classic Indy. Even down to the shafts of light occasionally breaking through the canopy, and leaves being blown off platforms as you land on them. You could not hope for a better start.

KEITH



It's wasn't so much the gameplay that kept me hooked to *Indiana Jones*, it was more a curiousity to see what parts from the three films they had decided to include. I was disappointed to discover the choice of action is mainly confined to the type that can be easily converted to platform related japes. There isn't even a driving section. What is there is good fun though. Running away from boulders, leaping across icy mountains and getting steamed up in burning inns takes some serious button pushing to come through unscathed, and it's certainly one for good gamesplayers. Some of the speech is awful though, and if that's Sean Connery's voice at the start of each level, then I'm Dr Schneider!

Next it's onto the Marion's pub in Nepal (avoid the rising flames and Nazis) and then swiftly onto Cairo, the dig for the Ark, and of course the climatic scene featuring the opening of the Ark itself. You then play *Temple of Doom* and *Last Crusade* in rapid succession.

The sprite of Indy is unshaven and unkempt, but characteristically resplendent in Thirties-style chinos, tattered jacket, bullwhip and

▽ *The inevitable whip swinging shot.*



trademark hat. Gameplay is simple, but you can't get rid of the *Star Wars* déja vu.

Indy feels the same when he jumps, the enemies move and attack similarly to the Stormtroopers; even the graphics (especially in the cavern levels, of which there are a lot) are subtle rip-offs. I get the feeling that the programmer could rattle off endless platform games like this, now that he has perfected the art.

Playing the game is very simple. You leg it around various levels collecting pouches containing power-ups such as the whip, gun and life heart.

The quality of graphics and sound are the same in all three games (although the tunes are constantly regurgitated), but because *Raiders* is so good, the others seem dowdy, bland and repetitive, especially by the time you reach the palace in Punket and the resulting fight through the slave mines.



△ *It's just like watching the Spielberg film – honest.*



△ *Indy dodges the wrath of God from the Ark. Surely this was the bit where the Nazis all melted like candles and then got chucked into the blender?*

RYAN



What a bargain. This is essentially three separate games on one cart, featuring one of the greatest action heroes ever. *Greatest Adventures* plays just like the *Star Wars* games in the sense that you run through the familiar scenarios collecting bonuses and power-ups before confronting a big boss. The attention to detail is stunning, and I especially liked the way the famous street thug scene from *Raiders* has been recreated. There's no artistic licence involved in prolonging the scene, you just spot him wielding his sword, blow him away and then continue on your merry way! Some sections are a bit on the lame side, but generally speaking this is a great game.

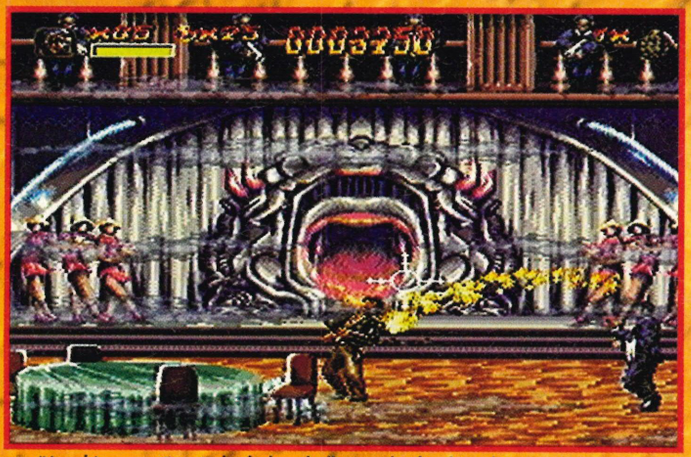
All the key scenes are here... or are they? You do get the Mode 7 mine car and bi-plane chases, the fights with the Thugee guards in the mine, a tense gunfight in the Obi-Wan night club in Shanghai, Venice sewers, the escape from the Well of Souls, and even the brilliant horse and cart sequence from *Raiders*. But they seemed to have dropped as many key scenes just to include the ones that fitted the platform format.



No fight on the plane with the bald guy who gets diced in the rotors. No truck or motorcycle chase, or boat fight in Venice. Also, although the game is lavishly littered with perfect film stills, they don't go halfway to bring any kind of continuity to the game. The stills are from the film, but half the levels are fillers which were never in the celluoid originals.

And how come you're dodging flames in the sewers *before* you find the knight's coffin? And for that matter, what happened to the entire 'Young Indiana' flashback at the beginning of *Last Crusade*? In sacrificing large parts of the films, the programmer has split the audience – some will like what they get, but others, like me, will feel deeply disappointed at the omission of some of the best bits.

Indiana Jones' Greatest Adventures is the best Indy game since the old coin-op, and delivers some rip-roaring action and more than a few heart-in-mouth moments. But although you get three games on one cart, I think it would have been better to have created three film-perfect games, rather than one mish-mash adventure.



△ *"Anything goes" as Indy dodges bullets and a fire-breathing waiter.*





PRODUCER
JVC
(071) 240 3121

PRICE
£TBA

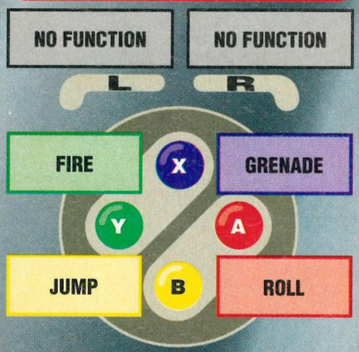
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORD

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	88
SOUND	84
GAMEPLAY	80
LONGEVITY	90

OVERALL

82



ANDY

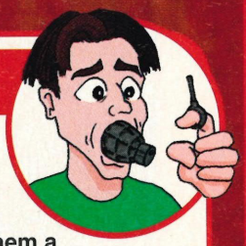


There are those people who greet the arrival of a new Takara beat-'em-up with the excitement normally reserved for a million pound pools cheque. Then there are people, like me, who greet the arrival of a new Takara beat-'em-up with rusty razor blades and a nice hot bath.

SAMURAI SPIRITS

More like potato vodka than vintage malt!

KEITH



I'm not into encouraging the development of utterly unoriginal games by giving them a totally unjustifiable mark. I'm certainly not into brainwashing the general gamesplaying public into thinking that cloned beat-'em-ups are somehow hip and trendy and more satisfying than a 12oz Smokey Joe burger. My recent experiences have proved beyond doubt that Takara beat-'em-ups have the long term appeal of a veruca, and as far I'm concerned I've just about had it with them all. I'm after one basic factor – enjoyment, and that's a million miles away from *Samurai Spirits*.



△ *Don't be fooled by the backgrounds – when the fighters move they make the Thunderbirds puppets look like the Bolshoi ballet*



◁ *"Pull my finger, Tam Tam. Uh huh huh. Huh huh. SBD. Huh huh."*

Don't get me wrong, I think Takara are magic – once again, they've magically transformed 32 megabits of silicon into a pile of steaming horse do! All the usual suspects have been rounded up and imprisoned in *Samurai Spirits* – the clunky and inept graphics that make *Way of the Exploding Fist* on the C64 look like *Killer Instinct;* the fingernails-down-a-blackboard sound; the plodding, unresponsive controls; the brain-damaged lack of imagination throughout the whole exercise. The only thing distinguishing *Samurai Spirits* from *Fatal Fury* or *World Heroes*, or any of half a dozen other rubbish games, is the fact that the fighters use swords instead of fists. Well, golly gee.

It's always been a source of constant amazement to me that some people consider these combat cripples to be on a par with *Turbo* or *Mortal Kombat II*. They aren't. In every way, especially the most important – gameplay – they fall several light years short of the standards set by Capcom and Acclaim. If you're gullible enough to buy this game, you'll find that after five minutes of playing with spirits, you'll need to drown your sorrows with them.



△ *The unfairly armoured Charlotte comes from France, that well-known bastion of Samurai values.*



PRODUCER
TAKARA
SUPPLIED BY: VIDEO GAMES CENTRE (0202) 527314

PRICE
£85

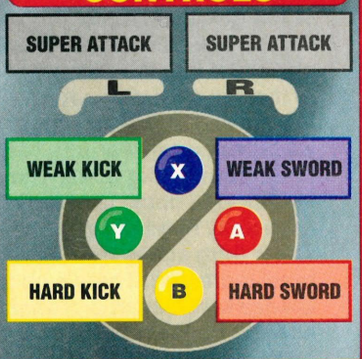
RELEASED
JAP IMPORT

GAME TYPE
BEAT-'EM-UP

CART SIZE
32MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	50
SOUND	42
GAMEPLAY	20
LONGEVITY	15

OVERALL

22

BUBSY 2



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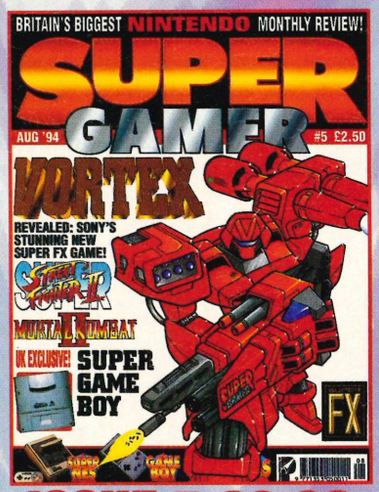
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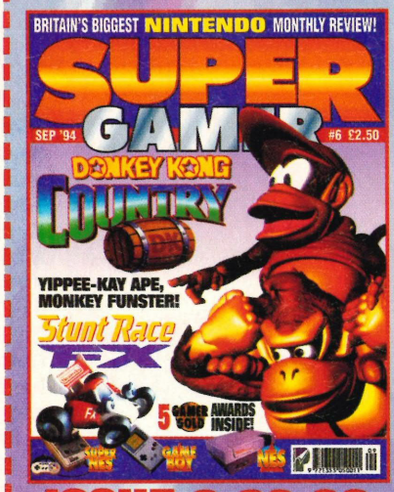
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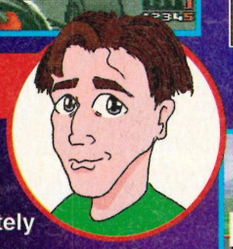
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Nigel Mansell's INDYCAR series

Another Mansell blow-out!



KEITH

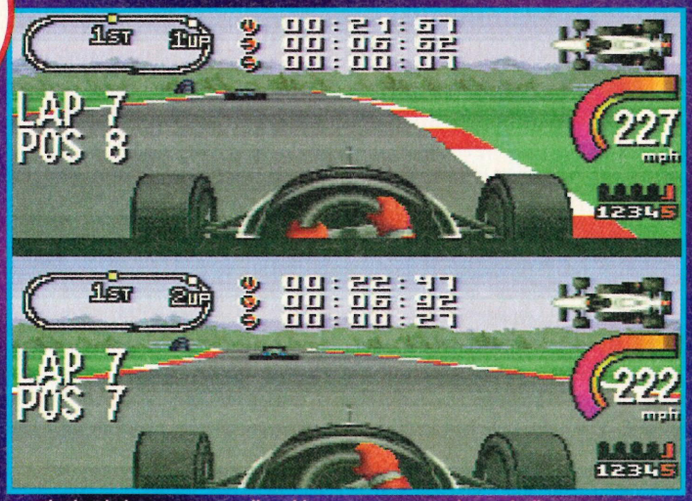
As far as sponsoring video games goes, Mansell has had his fair share. Unfortunately I can't remember one, barring *Nigel Mansell's World Championship*, that has actually been good. Does *NM's Indycar* qualify in pole position, or spin out on the first bend?

Indycar racing is a complex business and to reflect this, Gremlin (the game is only distributed by Acclaim) have included plenty of options. You get the usual one and two player split screen races, plus password saves and the basic game is divided into arcade or simulation mode. The latter allows you to adjust wing and camber settings.

To play *Indycar* you need all the skill of a dodgem driver, rather than the 200 mph reflex driving that keeps Americans endlessly crowing about how much more exciting the Indycar series is compared to Formula one.

You can choose a single race or a whole season, but the mixture of fast ovals and windy street circuits doesn't add as much variation to the championship as I would have hoped. This is mainly due to the fact that the most hairpins can be taken at more than 150 mph!

This means the races are not so much a challenging battle of wits and driving styles, using do-or-die techniques to shave vital seconds off your lap times, but a sprint from start to finish using very little skill.



△ *The battle between Mansell and his team-mate reaches a thrilling anti-climax.*

The only hint of realism I could find was in qualifying, where it's imperative to get a high placing on the grid, as there's no way you'll be able to overtake during the race without being rammed from the side by a car you've just edged half a length ahead of.

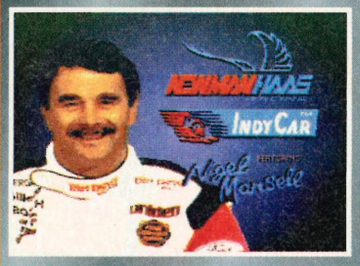
Playing with manual gears is an interesting experience, as every time you change down, the car briefly accelerates by about 40 mph, but still sticks to the track like jam on Mansell's moustache.

If you think this review has been a bit of a whine, then you should hear the sound of the engine. I'm sorry but this isn't a true reflection of the thrill of Indycar racing and is just not a good racing game. Stick to *Street Racer* or *Stunt Race FX*. They're a lot more fun.



RYAN

I'm not the world's biggest Formula 1 fan, but I do know a good racing sim when I see one, and sadly this isn't it. Although it's furiously fast and fairly easy to get into, *Indycar Racing* doesn't really convey any real atmosphere, other than mindlessly whizzing around a track. There's no real skill or tactical play required, which means it gets very boring very quickly. Like Keith said, overtaking is a joke and if there was this much ramming in the Grand Prix I expect there would be a great deal of brawling when the champers is handed out! Maybe this game should have stalled at the grid.



PRODUCER
ACCLAIM
(071) 344 5000

PRICE
SET BY RETAILER

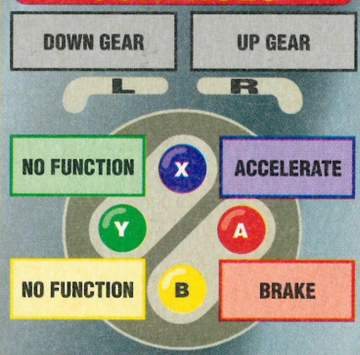
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
RACING SIM

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORD SAVE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	71
SOUND	68
GAMEPLAY	59
LONGEVITY	64

OVERALL

61

MICKEY MANIA



First the Beatles, now comes...



RYAN

Prepare yourselves for a nostalgic trip back through time to an age when Wall Street had just crashed, the great depression had begun to spread through America, and more importantly, Mickey Mouse had just starred in his very first cartoon feature!

The scenario behind *Mickey Mania* is very strange indeed. It all begins when Mickey and all his toonland chums gather for a prestigious awards ceremony in his honour.

All goes well until his arch enemy, Pete, puts a dampener on things by stealing his golden paintbrush award during a fit of rage. However, this is no ordinary paintbrush, as Pete discovers to his dismay when he touches a cinema screen showing Mickey's finest cartoon moments and is promptly warped inside along with Mickey and his friends. Now Mickey must battle his way through seven of his most celebrated cartoons to confront Pete and retrieve his magic brush.

The quest begins in *Steamboat Willie*, Mickey's first ever animated feature in 1929. To capture the authentic feel of the time period, nearly the whole level is played in glorious black and white-o-vision. I say "nearly" because elements of colour start to creep in midway through for no apparent reason.

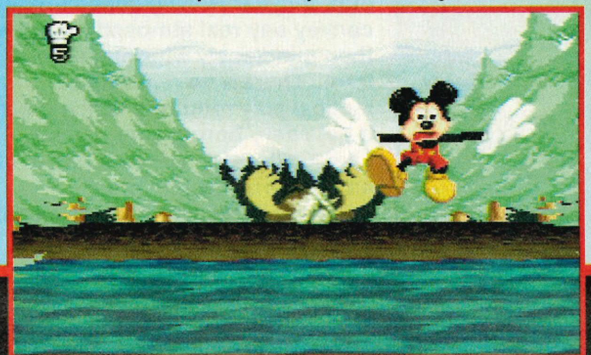




△ *Mickey runs riot in a castle inhabited by stoats.*



▽ *In the 3-D chase sequence, Mickey must evade a giant moose.*





DAMIAN

I am constantly amazed at how good Super NES programmers are getting. *EWJ*, *Lion King* and now *Mickey Mania* – you can't get graphics better than this! The animation on every single character (my faves are the skeletons, but the ghosts are also hilarious) is pure Disney brilliance and what surprised me was the originality of some of the levels. The moose sequence is a laugh, but I particularly liked the chemical experiment in the castle. Ultimately though, despite being graphically perfect, *Mickey Mania* is just too easy, and the levels are incredibly short. For young kids only.

Obviously the first level is designed to get you used to the controls and prepare for the quest ahead, because you don't really do much at all, apart from skip around and jump on a few boxes.

When you first encounter Pete at the end of the level things begin to pick up as you blast him with apples – the animation is simply superb; perfectly recreating the original cartoons.

Moving on to the second level you instantly forget the distinct lack of action in the first. In this scenario, Mickey must rescue his beloved pooch, Pluto, from the clutches of a mad doctor. There are sinister skeleton guards and out of control surgical trolleys to avoid; all are amazing to look at, especially the skeletons who get my vote as the best animated sprite in any video game.



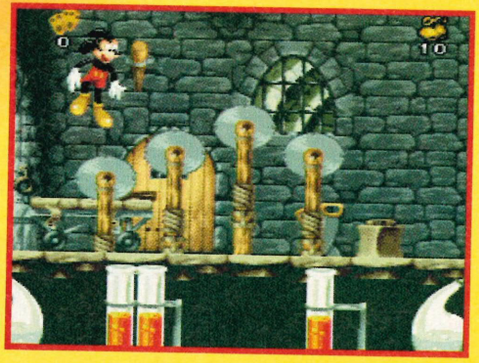
△ *"Quick Pluto, hand me my industrial sized fly-swatter..."*

This level manages to retain a lot more of the classic Disney feel whilst at the same time giving the player plenty to keep them on their toes. The remaining levels just seem to get better and better, with special credit going to the excellent Moose Hunt (with its stunning 3-D chase sequence) and Mickey and the Beanstalk levels for their graphical excellence.





Although I happily breezed through most of the game in no time at all, *Mickey Mania* does actually get more and more challenging as you go through. Like most Disney games though, the graphics are essentially what gives the cart its life. Once you seen and done everything there is to do, there's nothing to keep you coming back for more.



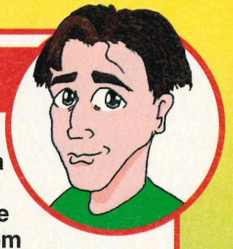
Sadly, *Mickey Mania* is a classic example of this – it's very pretty to look at and cunningly addictive to start with, but once you battle with Pete for the final time, the cart will be relegated to the dusty shelf for good.

Although this is a decent enough platform game and will no doubt be in popular demand with the younger generation, it lacks that certain spark to keep everything flowing along, and ends up playing like a collection of sub-games roughly strung together by a plot designed for a three minute cartoon. Younger players will love it, but it doesn't offer a lot of play for the money.

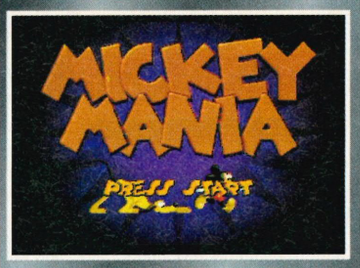
▽ *When bored at home, why not try a spot of lounge boating?*



KEITH



Absolutely no way! I've started to enjoy a few more platform games recently as the general quality of them increases slightly, but *Mickey Mania* seems to be a throwback to the days when simplistic gameplay was all the rage. It's all well and good having incredible cartoon graphics, sure it will probably attract a few Disney-mad young kids, but graphics like that need substantial amounts of gameplay in order to appeal to cynics like me. But no, water levels, ghost levels and forest levels all stand proud as though they are the highlight of a spectacular and original game - I think not!





PRODUCER
SONY
(071) 911 8700

PRICE
£TBA

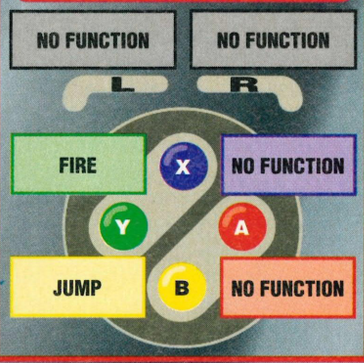
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS



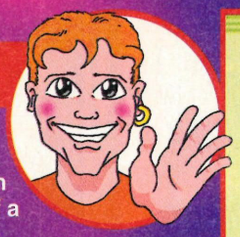
RATINGS

GRAPHICS	87
SOUND	84
GAMEPLAY	83
LONGEVITY	83

OVERALL

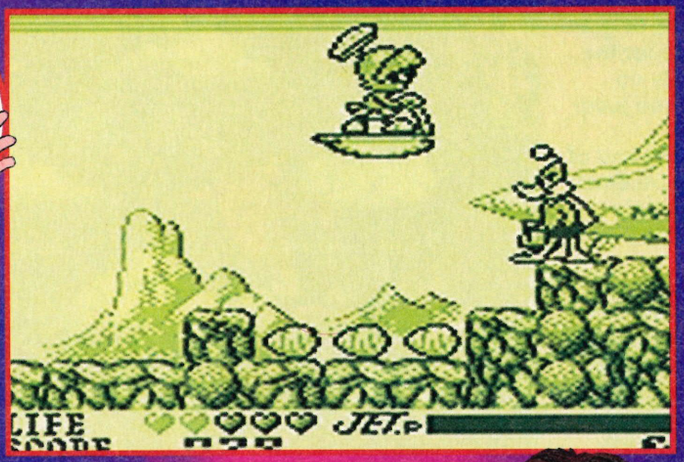
85

DAFFY DUCK
THE MARVIN MISSIONS
Did someone step on a duck?



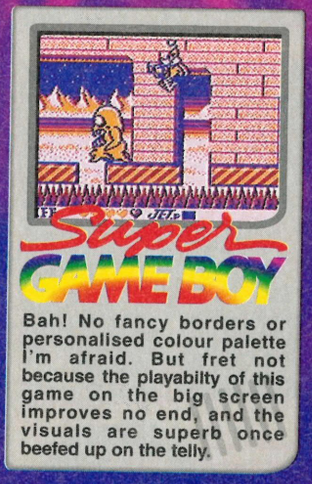
RYAN

In a scenario reminiscent of *Flash Gordon*, the Earth is in the targeting sights of a huge laser from some unknown location in outer space. However, the villainous tyrant intent on blowing us to smithereens isn't the panto-king Ming the Merciless, but Marvin the Martian (not a very scary name is it, Marvin?). Bung in that Queen's Greatest hits tape and let Daffy Duck save the world!



Armed only with a pathetic plasma gun and a temperamental jet pack, Daffy must fight his way through countless levels of platform mayhem. Doing battle with all kinds of extra terrestrial creatures before confronting Marvin himself for the final showdown. Pretty standard stuff, I think you'll agree.

Marvin Missions contains action mainly of the platform variety, but at times this is broken up with flying sections and cunning little puzzles. It's all very easy to get into and looks absolutely fab on both small and big screens.



Bah! No fancy borders or personalised colour palette I'm afraid. But fret not because the playabilty of this game on the big screen improves no end, and the visuals are superb once beefed up on the telly.

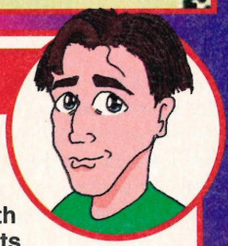
Daffy himself is very well animated and the levels vary quite considerably as you progress. The programmers are obviously as sick of repetitive backgrounds as we are.

One thing that does slightly tarnish the game's otherwise spotless image is the difficulty level. Make no mistake, this game is very hard and rivals *Mega Man* and *Bionic Commandos* for challenge.

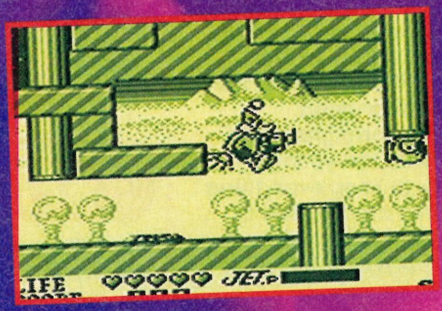
Some consolation comes in the form of the password system, but if you die battling with a boss at the end of a level and have to continue, you'll be zipped straight back to the very beginning and this is intensely irritating and time consuming. Don't people realise you can go blind playing these things for too long?!

If you think you're up to the challenge then *Marvin Missions* is a top quality product that deserves a place in your collection and will keep you both amused and enthralled for days on end.

KEITH

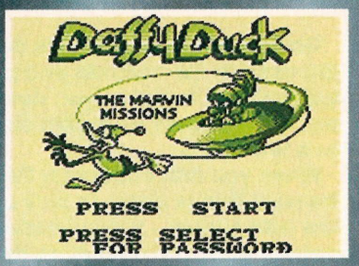


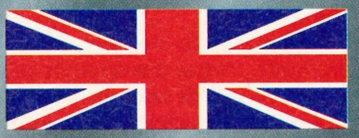
I thought this was so good. I love the way he runs around with a gun and shoots everything, it's sooo original. Wow, you can jump on some enemies' heads too! Absolutely incredible, there's not many games that do that. Oh, how I adore platform games that boast this many unique and exciting features. Next time a game like this comes in, I think I'll jump in the sea with glee, then maybe I'll become inspired to program one just the same. Please, please, please save me. When will it end?





△ *Marvin and Daffy settle their disputes by having a saucer race.*





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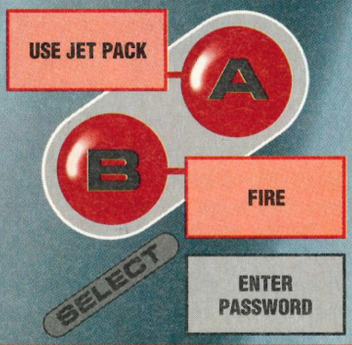
RELEASED
OUT NOW

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
2MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORDS

CONTROLS



RATINGS

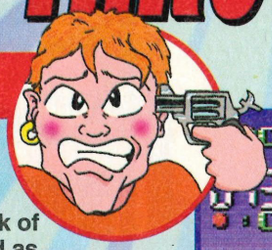
GRAPHICS	82
SOUND	80
GAMEPLAY	83
LONGEVITY	85

OVERALL

83

FULL THROTTLE RACING

Special early warning alert!

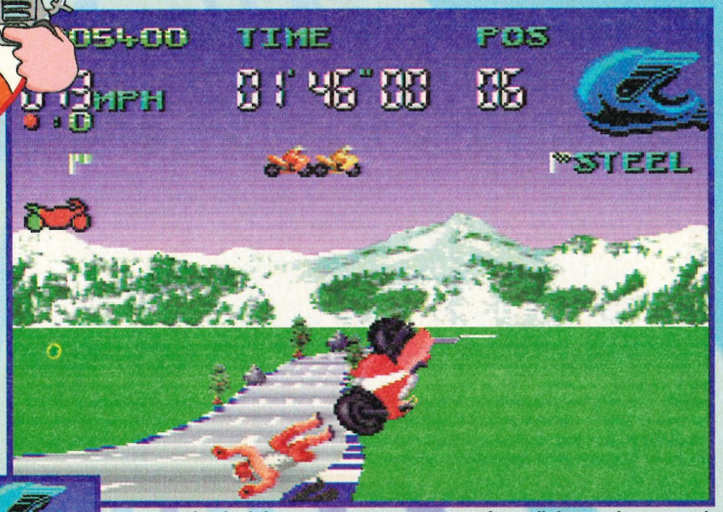


RYAN

Hmmmm... let me think (scratch of the head), nope, sorry I just can't think of a racing game as bad as this, expect *Speed Racer*, and that's no excuse.

Full Throttle Racing is supposed to be a racing sim. In other words, it is meant to convey an element of speed and excitement – ha!

The only thing this game conveyed to me was a sickly, nauseous sensation which was miraculously cured the very second I switched it off. Strange, that!



△ *Aaargh! The biker man comes a cropper after colliding with a tree. Tsk!*



△ *Marvel at the sexy graphics.*

FTR combines motorbikes with jet skis as one or two players compete against a troop of other hopefuls across some of America's most bland landscapes.

For every win you get vast sums of money with which to upgrade your vehicle, or alternatively you can collect cash and other useful objects by running over comically oversized icons during the races.

On the track this game is utterly devoid of any realism whatsoever. The bike handles fairly well, but corners like a shopping trolley and has quite some of the worst collision detection I've ever encountered. You will be constantly hitting telegraph poles that are ten feet away!

Better still is when you attack other riders (elements of *Road Rash*), it looks like you've just unclipped your false leg and are waving it vaguely in the air to intimidate them. Certainly the chances of actually knocking anyone off are... anorexic.

The jet skis are even worse – who ever heard of one that can go at 139mph across the water, as the speedo clearly indicates? On the water your badly animated sprite glides through the water like a hot knife through lead and the scenery is chronic at best.

Whoever programmed this should be totally ashamed. Worst still is Gametek's attempt to foist this on the public. How on earth anyone could have the balls to release this at full price and keep a straight face, I don't know. In short, this game is a total waste of time and space and quite frankly... it stinks!





DAMIAN

Before becoming the editor of SUPER GAMER, amongst other things I worked on a Sega magazine at about the time when the first *Sonic* game came out. Back then expectations of graphics and sound were low because the machines were infantile and nobody knew what they could do. I reviewed a game called *OutRun Europa* on the Master System and although it was good then, now it looks terrible – jerky scrolling, badly flickering sprites, Atari VCS sound, frankly boring to play for longer than three pico-seconds. Why am I telling you this? Well, because bad though *Outrun Europa* is, it is still miles better than *Full Throttle Racing*, which has circa 1982 graphics and gameplay, and it looks like a school project by a particularly inept Computer Studies student. Avoid it like an insurance salesman.





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£49.99!!

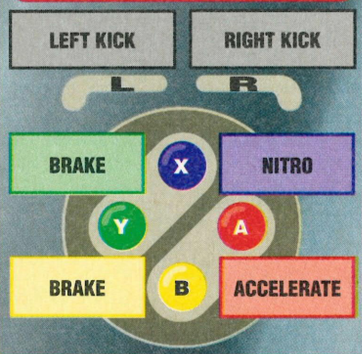
RELEASED
JANUARY '94

GAME TYPE
RACING SIM

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORD SYSTEM

CONTROLS



RATINGS

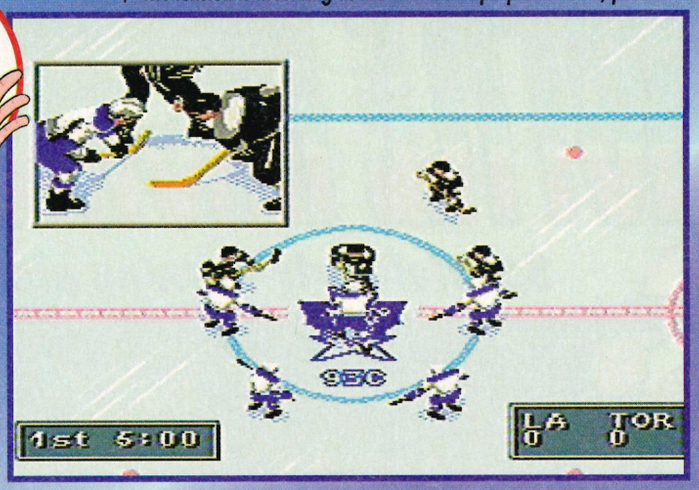
GRAPHICS	30
SOUND	24
GAMEPLAY	17
LONGEVITY	23

OVERALL

21

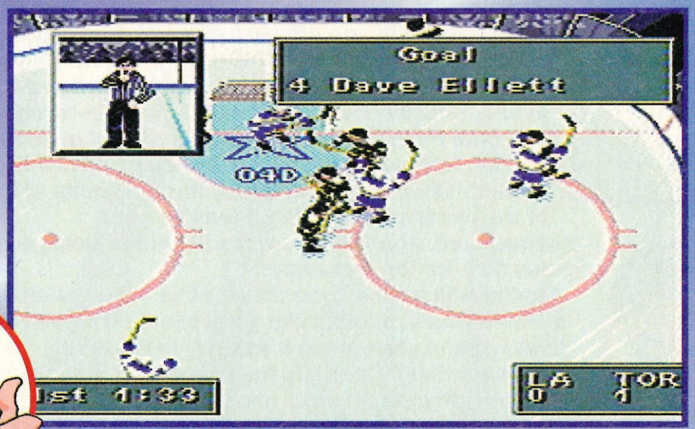
NHL '95

Where's Ron Barr?



▽ *The tension is mounting as the two teams prepare to... er, puck off!*





△ *How small does the goalie feel now? That goal could be costly!*

RYAN



"Hi there sports fans and welcome to another action packed schedule of non-stop ice-maiming action, courtesy of EA Sports!" *NHL '95* is the latest in a long series of ice hockey games which seem to evolve very, very slowly on an annual basis.

So what extras does the *NHL '95* outing have to make avid skaters part with their wonga? One word – playability! Unfortunately, there's also a loss – the omission of your friend and mine, Ron Barr, commentator extraordinaire. Ron is sorely missed because he gave the previous games an added media twist which really made you feel as if you were on TV.

Like *Madden '95*, the front end presentation of *NHL '95* has been upgraded to appear more user-friendly, and there are a couple of new options to fiddle with. Generally though, it's business as usual with EA Sport quality.

But swiftly moving onto the question on everyone's lips. How differently does it play? Surprisingly, it is actually miles better than *NHL '94*.

For starters, the matches have been speeded up to a more frantic and realistic pace. You no longer swagger up-rink with the speed and grace of a woollen-slipper clad geriatric on a Velcro carpet. Now you glide along and can dart in any direction you please at the drop of a hat, which makes for edge-of-the seat matches that leave you sweaty and drained (just like the real thing).

All the player sprites are now bigger and more detailed, but sadly the crowd seem to be made up entirely of expressionless Fred Flintstones!

I must admit to disliking the previous two EA Super NES hockey games quite considerably, but *NHL '95* is heading back to the playability and fun factor of the original Mega Drive game, *EA Hockey*, and that can only be a good thing.

The end result is a highly-paced and easy to grasp hockey sim with oodles of playability. Trade in the second-rate prequels and get this immediately.

DAMIAN



Like Ryan, I was sure this was going to be complete rubbish, after all, *NHL '94* was. But *NHL '95* is significantly faster, it is easier to score, and on the whole a lot more fun to play. *EA Hockey* on the Mega Drive is still the best ice hockey game that has ever been programmed, but this is getting there, and it was certainly a great distraction from the deadline for a few hours. Of course the two player is best, but even the one player tournaments have plenty of challenge. Better graphics and sound – what more could an ice hockey fan want?



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OCEAN
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PRICE
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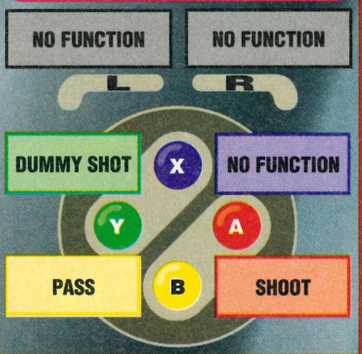
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
SPORTS SIM

CART SIZE
8MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	83
SOUND	79
GAMEPLAY	87
LONGEVITY	89

OVERALL

88



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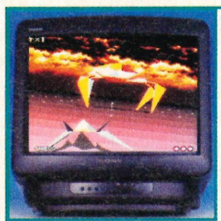
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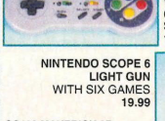
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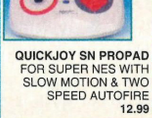
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KEITH

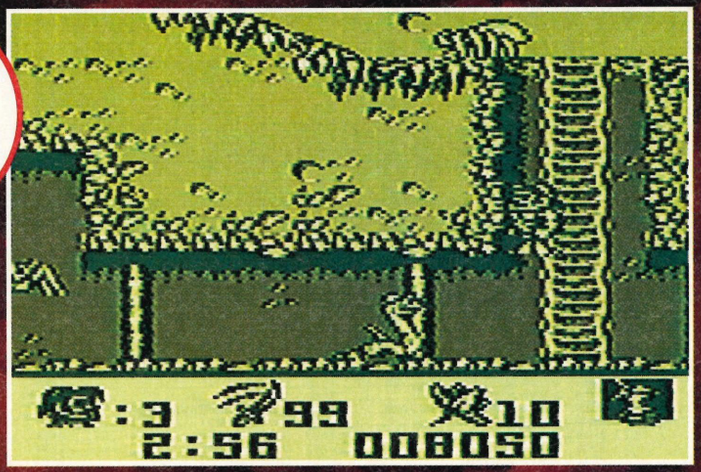


There's been a bit of monkey play down in the jungle. The animals are falling sick and a bunch of evil ivory poachers have turned up. There is of course only one person who can restore normality to the jungle, and his name is Tarzan.

There are six massive levels in the game, each of them a separate adventure in themselves.

The first level sees Tarzan assume a medicine man-type role as he scours the jungle for some flowers that will cure a feverish ape. Later on in the game Tarzan assumes the more familiar role of rescuing his beloved Jane from the poachers, but there are plenty of sub-missions.

Unfortunately, the story is the best part of *Tarzan*, as the game itself slips into a mindless adventure set in an irritatingly cluttered jungle. It wouldn't be so bad if everything didn't take about ten hits to kill. I mean whoever heard of a bat that requires multiple stab wounds before it flops to the ground?!



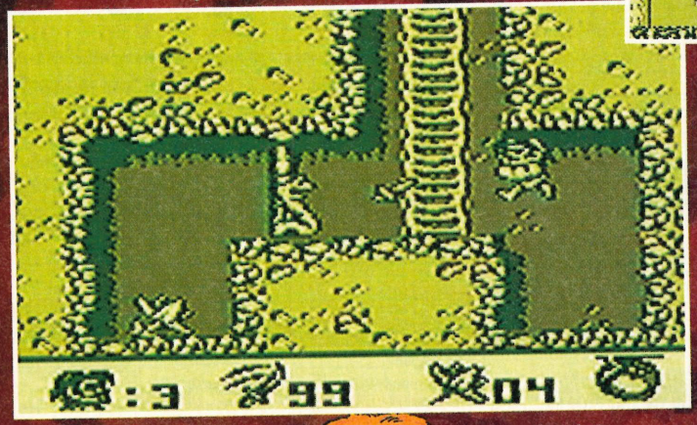
Bungle in the jungle!

TARZAN



◁ *Are you taking the pith out of my helmet? Thtop it at oneth!*

▽ *Shoot the snake to get the flower, high stakes for such poor rewards.*



Tarzan could have been so good with a bit of imagination and originality. Come to think of it, no-one's done a really good conversion of Edgar Rice Burrough's famous loin-clothed hero, and it's about time someone did. Maybe the Super NES version will pay dividends.

I think the main fault with this game is the repetitive nature of the levels. The graphics are good, and Tarzan strides about the place with all the bravado of Johnny Weissmuller, but the playablity suffers because far too much of the game is simply wandering around searching for an object.

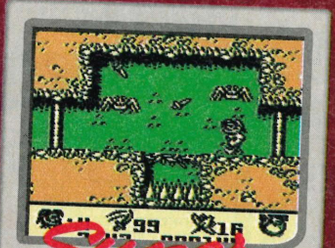
Worst of all, there are no continues or passwords, so once you're dead, you have to do it all over again – arrghhhhhh! Tarzan may be Lord of the apes, but he doesn't hold sway on the Game Boy. A little more thought on things like the level design and user friendliness and it could have been as playable as *Jungle Book*. Very disappointing.



RYAN



What an odd licence to pick up after all this time! *Tarzan* is about as run-of-the-mill as you can get. It's neither good nor bad, it just teeters on the razor's edge, at times swaying in either direction. Bad because of the lame plot, boring graphics and severe lack of originality, and good because the levels are huge and very challenging. Although it loses badly in a straight race with *Wario* and *Jungle Book*, it does offer quite a fun distraction, albeit only for a short while. Definitely not the lord!



Super GAME BOY

The garish green colour suits the jungle well, but if you're looking for brightly coloured jungle fauna, look for the Super NES. Not bad though, adds a little bit more into





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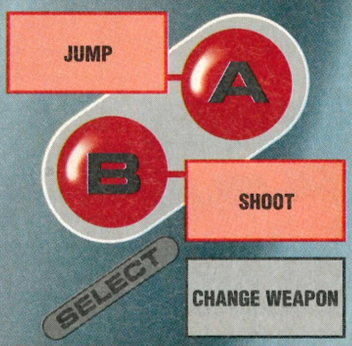
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
PLATFORM

CART SIZE
1MBit

FEATURES
NONE

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	73
SOUND	63
GAMEPLAY	58
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OVERALL

56

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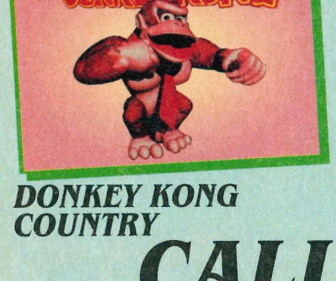
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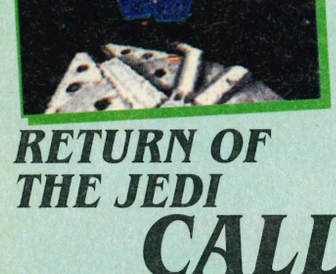
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KEITH



Not the easiest name in the world to pronounce without attracting curious glances, *Illusion of Gaia* (pronounced gay-ah) is the latest RPG from the team behind *Soulblazer*.

After his father went missing in a fateful expedition a year ago, Will leads a normal life with his grandparents in the port of South Cape. Recently though, monsters have started appearing, a strange comet has brightened the sky, and rumours of ancient civilisations such as Incas and Egyptians returning to inherit the world, are rife. Bicycle clips time.

Your adventure begins when the Princess from a nearby castle appears in your house and is then dragged off kicking and screaming by the King's swarthy guards. You are then summoned by the King to bring your lost father's ring (which you don't have) to the castle, but on arrival the curiously vacant monarch slings your ass in jail to rot. Something foul's obviously afoot, but what has happened to the King? Why is the princess held prisoner? And why does your flute keep talking to you?

I'll tip my hand immediately by saying *Illusion of Gaia* is one of the best RPGs I've ever played. The





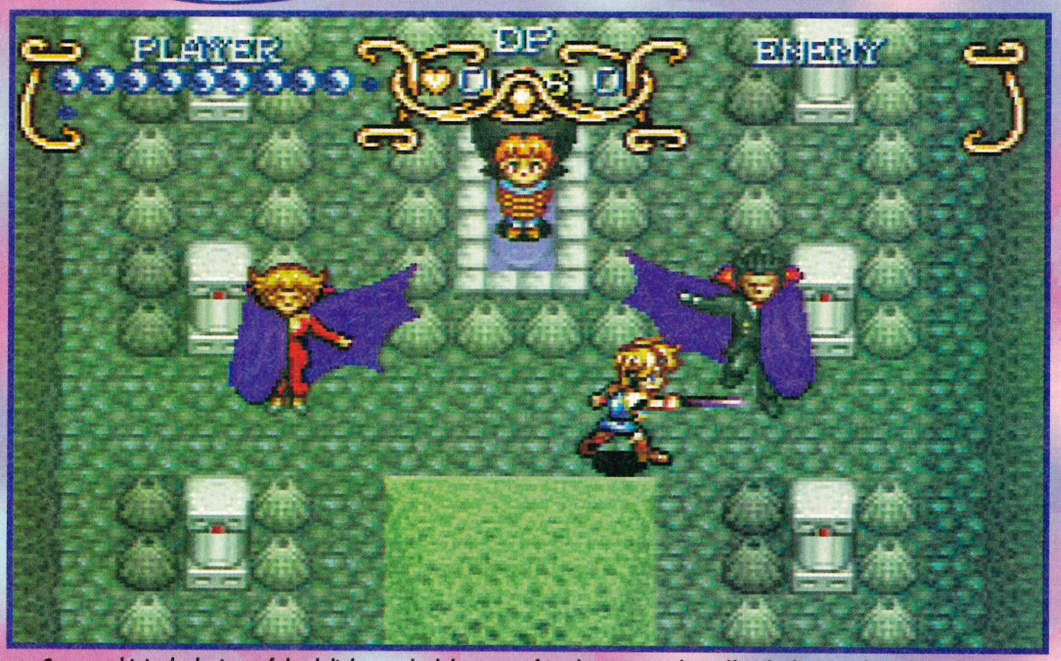
△ *Searching the maze like caves of the ancient Incan temple can lead you dangerously astray.*



Best illusion I've ever seen!

ILLUSION OF GAIA

GAMER GOLD



△ *Come and join the legions of death little one, look how your friend is enjoying himself in the bosom of my domain.*

RYAN



Anyone who read SUPERPRO remembers that I was an immense fan of the original *Soul Blazer* game, and so when this sequel trundled into the office, I was, needless to say, delighted. *Gaia* offers the player so much more than the original and there's loads more to explore. Admittedly, this game is more like *Zelda* than its prequel in terms of depth and gameplay, so don't expect to breeze through it in a week. The graphics have been given a MAJOR refurbishment and are now some of the best seen in any RPG. I just hope this comes out officially quicker than *Mana*!

DAMIAN



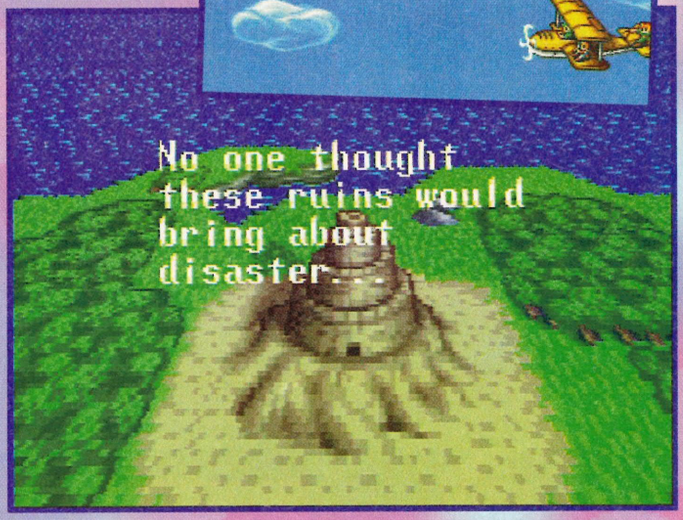
No please, not death by RPG – this can't be happening, man! Same graphics, same lift musak – but wait, it's quite playable. In fact *Gaia* (dodgy name) is second only to *Zelda III* as the best adventure game on the Super NES! And the only reason it's not number one is that it isn't all that different from Nintendo's solid gold elf-o-rama. Right from the dreary school lesson to the exploration of Will's home town, and the discovery of the kid's secret hideout, I was hooked. Add to the heady plot some love interest with Kara and you've got a winner in my books. *Gaia* is one of those games that you can become completely immersed in and forget all your troubles. I lost many days wearing Will's goatskin boots and so will you if you snap up this amazing game while stocks last. Not long for an official release, surely?



△ *The first boss. Hit his hands to make his face vulnerable, then strike!*



▷ *The detailed intro gives you all the info you need to start the quest.*



graphics are all stunning, but a bit too *Zelda*-ish to merit buying the game for that reason only. What really impressed me about this game is that it's just like an interactive movie.

The story unfolds dramatically and whisks you from scene to scene with film-like fluidity, and there are some great ideas thrown in. Like the way you end up shipwrecked; drifting with Kara (the Princess) on a raft for 22 days.

Just when the repetitive overhead exploration begins to grate, a new and exciting plot twist sends you into another bizarre world and you're trapped again.

Enemies can be slain with a swipe of your sword, but you'll tend not to get that far unless you kill all the monsters in an area, as this will cause walls to collapse and hidden doors to appear, allowing you to progress ever onwards. This is like the heart system in *Zelda*, and it makes for even more intense exploring because you want to get all the little extra bonuses, even when you've already completed the game.

You'd expect a game like this to be battery saved – and it is, thank goodness! Also, later on you can select between Will and his Dark Warrior alter-ego: Freedan, who is a much better fighter and can reach switches and ledges that Will cannot. Choosing the right character for each level is essential, as I found out when confronting the two vampires in Mu with Will and getting completely murdered!

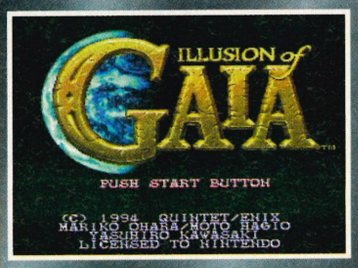
I could go on and on about *Gaia* because there's so much to talk about. The different towns, castles, scenarios, characters and missions are all mind-bogglingly fun to play, and it is quite possible to lose an entire weekend playing this game. Just remember that the human body needs food, water and sleep to survive, so don't get too engrossed.

The worst thing about this game is that the US official magazine, Nintendo Power, have written an instruction manual which not only tells you how to use the controls, but they've included the ENTIRE solution in inscrutable detail. What's the point?

You'd have to be very strong-willed not to peek at least once, and then the whole game's ruined. It's like a bar of Whole Nut; if it's there, you're going to eat it all, aren't you?

My advice is to read the first ten pages of the book so that you know how to play the game, then burn it. No reprieve, no custodial sentence or holidays at CentreParks – instant disintergration. This is the only way to ensure weeks of unadulterated gaming fun. By the way, the box boasts "60 hours of gameplay", that's simply not true, there's half that – maximum.

This is one import game worth the money and I heartily recommend it to fans who are getting sick of samey RPGs. Yes, *Gaia* looks and plays like many others – *Secret of Mana*, *Breath of Fire* – but it's a million times better. Try it and see. I'm off to land of Mu, see you later!





PRODUCER
ENIX
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PRICE
£59.99

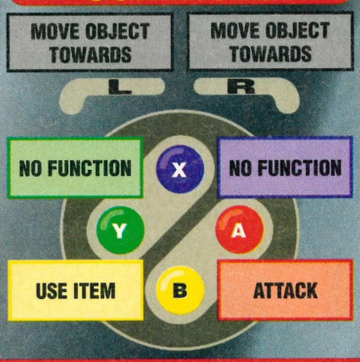
RELEASED
US IMPORT

GAME TYPE
RPG

CART SIZE
16MBit

FEATURES
BATTERY BACK-UP

CONTROLS



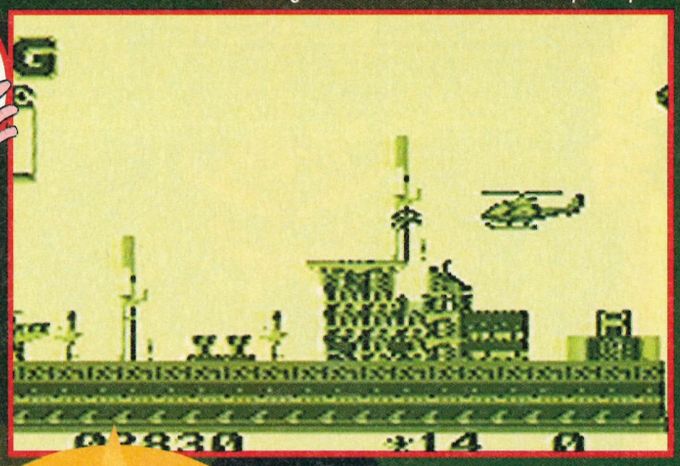
RATINGS

GRAPHICS	94
SOUND	93
GAMEPLAY	95
LONGEVITY	84

OVERALL

90

CHOPLIFTER III



▽ Zooming low over a collection of cube-shaped objects.

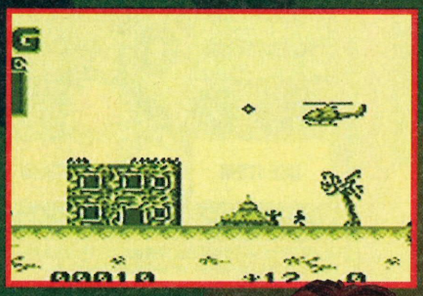
RYAN

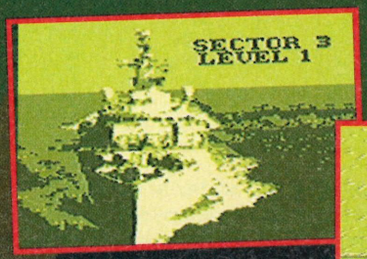


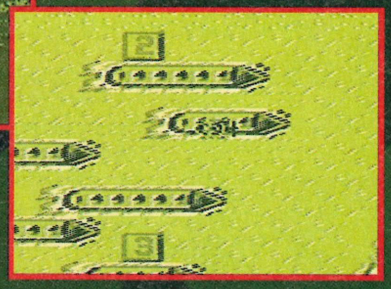
Mr Choppy went to work in a beautiful pee-green gunship, his mission was simple: destroy or be destroyed... oh, and rescue a few captives along the way. So he fired-up the rotors, loaded up the chambers, waved adieu to the missus and like a bat out of hell, sped off into the distance.

The concept behind *Choplifter III* is simple – take out the enemy encampments and rescue your fallen comrades. There are four different battlegrounds to cover, including tank-riddled forests and perilous oceans, each has three levels to complete and a boss to defeat before our gung-ho hero can swoop through to the next level.

There are a certain number of comrades which must be found to complete the levels, unfortunately though, your chopper only has the capacity to carry ten at a time, so several trips are often on the cards. To help you in the fight, power-ups appear when you blast a flock of seagulls (dear RSPCA...), and bonus points are awarded for any extra POWs rescued over the required limit.







Graphically, *Choplifter III* is unremarkable. The sprites are small and often indistinguishable, and the stupid way your bombs evaporate before hitting the ground if you're too high is really annoying.

But once your eyes have adjusted accordingly and you grow accustomed to this silly flaw you begin to appreciate perhaps one of the most addictive and downright enjoyable Game Boy titles to appear in a long while.

This version of *Choplifter* is reminiscent of the ancient arcade original (although you can't blow your pals away any more!), and it plays like a dream, even in this day and age.

The difficulty level is just right as well and you'll be challenged enough to get at least two weeks solid play out of this before all your GI chums are safely out of harm's way, and even then you'll still sneak back to re-enter the carnage zone.

Just the lift we need!

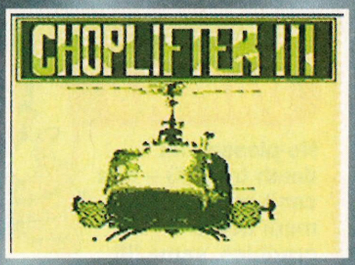
Super GAME BOY

Choplifter III plays somewhat better due to the bigger sprites. You can choose some pretty colours, but there is no special border.

KEITH



Choplifter III is superb for a spot of mindless blasting, but is not really the type of game with lasting appeal or one you're likely to go back to after a month or so. The action is fairly repetitive and will only interest you if you are going for a high score. There's nothing much to see throughout all the levels and so it eventually becomes exceedingly dull. Not bad, but very limited in terms of long term appeal.





PRODUCER
SONY
(071) 911 8700

PRICE
£TBA

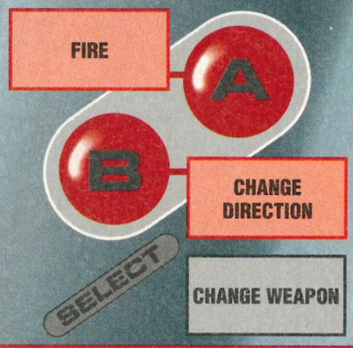
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
SHOOT-'EM-UP

CART SIZE
2MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORD

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	76
SOUND	81
GAMEPLAY	88
LONGEVITY	87

OVERALL

85

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△ *Look what being a used car salesman has done to the guy on the left. After trying to flog cars like that, I'd be happier with one the colour of slimer there!*

GHOUL PATROL

KEITH



Ghosts, demons, devils and all that, yes it's time to bring out the silver bullets and other assorted high velocity weapons to rid the world of the marauding army of monsters that have appeared from an old rusty chest discovered in the library of Zeke and Julie's home town.

Names ring any bells? If they do it's because they were the stars of last year's ectoplasmic hit, *Zombies*. The sequel is more of the same, well actually it's too close for comfort.

Ghoul Patrol is played from the same overhead point of view and the aim of the game is to fight your way through five worlds: Town, Orient, Pirate Ship, Castle and Hell itself, where you will finally meet the instigator of all these demonic occurrences.

Each world is split into separate levels which you must complete by rescuing ten humans and finding the exit. At the end of each world you will come across a massive boss such as the ghost pirate, who takes a few more hits than your average undead minion.

▽ *I'm from the seven circles of hell and my wings are a shield of steel!*



DAMIAN



I don't think I would have been as harsh as Keith, but I agree that *Ghoul Patrol* isn't as good or original as *Zombies*. The graphics are still Fifties B-movie and the sprites are generally good (the surprise walking trees are excellent), but it all looks a bit drab and offers the compulsive gamer nothing new. If they want, LucasArts could churn out this game hundreds of times over, but *Zombies* would still be better in my opinion. *Ghoul Patrol* just didn't excite me at all, and having to find the exit for two hours is not my idea of a fun time. It's a great game if you're a fan of the original, but don't expect anything earth-shatteringly different.

Really frightening!





▷ *Aaaar, Jim lad, and other piratical clichés.*



△ *Erm, hello old chap, I was off crusading the other day and someone seems to have nicked my legs – can I have yours please?*

For me this is all too similar to *Zombies*, after all it's exactly the same game but with different graphics. To be fair, some of the animation *has* been improved, although the sprite of Julie is worse.

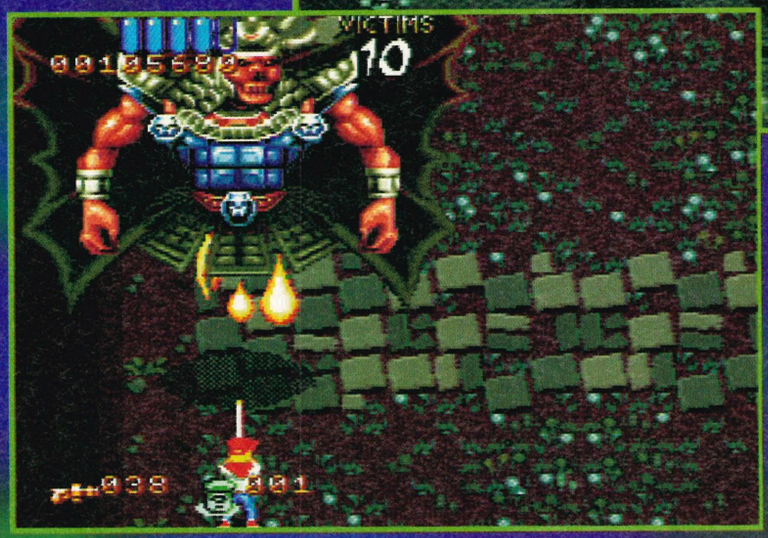
Generally speaking, the graphics are good, but too inconsistent to be outstanding. The castle and its grounds are well drawn, whereas the town level is totally drab. The sound is virtually the same as well and isn't that inspiring in terms of creating an eerie, ghostly atmosphere. Give me a game to design and I could have done a lot more.

Ghoul Patrol is mildly amusing at first, as you wander around blasting possessed grannies with your assortment of rocket launchers, crossbows and guns. It's also quite a laugh trying out all the different potions you find. Some replenish your health, others change you into sickle-wielding reaper. But it starts to become frustrating after you've rescued everybody on the level, only to end up spending longer looking for the exit than you did searching for everyone in the first place!

If you loved *Zombies* (and I did), then *Ghoul Patrol* is the game for you. It's colourful, outlandish, full of surprises, and terrific if you have a friend who can join you in the slime-fest. However, there will be some people who expect sequels to expand on the original and this, doesn't. With better quality games arriving this Christmas, I'd save my cash and pick a Gamer Gold.



△ *Graveyards smell of death, zombies just smell.*



◁ *What's the artist got against legs anyway?*

ANDY



Tonight on "It's the Mind", we investigate the phenomenon of déja vu. Our first subject is *Ghoul Patrol*, a game which bears an uncanny resemblance to *Zombies*. The spooky thing is... it isn't as good! *Zombies* had pin-sharp graphics, a great sense of humour (spoofing Fifties grade-Z horror movies) and excellent "one more go" gameplay. In contrast, *Ghoul Patrol*'s muddy visuals give the impression that someone's smeared Bisto over the TV screen, the original joke is dulled considerably by repetition, and the gameplay is not so much "one more go" as "go away!" There's now far too much wandering around with nothing happening, especially once you've rescued everyone and start hunting fruitlessly for the exit, which invariably appears several time zones away from your position. *Ghoul Patrol* is like *Zombies*' evil twin – you'd be better off teaming up with the good guy.





PRODUCER
JVC
(071) 240 3121

PRICE
£TBA

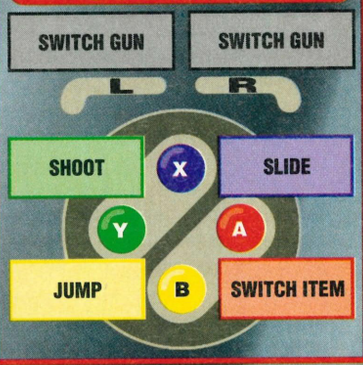
RELEASED
NOVEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
SHOOT-'EM-UP

CART SIZE
8MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORDS

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	82
SOUND	71
GAMEPLAY	76
LONGEVITY	70

OVERALL

67

LORD of the RI

KEITH



As an undeniable fan of JRR Tolkien's legendary literary masterpiece, I would hack my way through forests, climb bitterly cold mountains and brave the dreaded Macwraiths to review this long awaited multi-player RPG. And for what? The only thing magical about this tale of hobbits, elves, orcs and dark powers is the way it puts you to sleep faster than Gandalf on Night Nurse!

You take the part of Frodo as he carries the Ring of Power on a perilous quest through Middle Earth to the safety of Rivendell. This game only covers the first book, ie The Fellowship of the Ring, but it does follow it very closely, except, to spice up the proceedings, a few cave exploring sub-games have been thrown in, such as finding Legolas the elf's bow and Sam Gamgee's glasses.

The underlying problem that *LOTR* suffers from is the severe lack of action. It plays extremely sloowwwwly and is very hard to get into. To make matters worse, you can't begin the quest without completing a plethora of pointless tasks. Why on earth would you want someone in your party who keeps losing his damn glasses anyway?

The sprites themselves are tiny and are hardly animated at all compared to the main sprites in an RPG like *Illusion of Gaia*. Even Middle Earth itself is portrayed as this dull, lifeless place, devoid of sun and languishing in something close to a nuclear winter.

The multi-player idea is a good one, but sadly it doesn't work, as the screen will only follow Frodo, often leaving the other party members stranded off



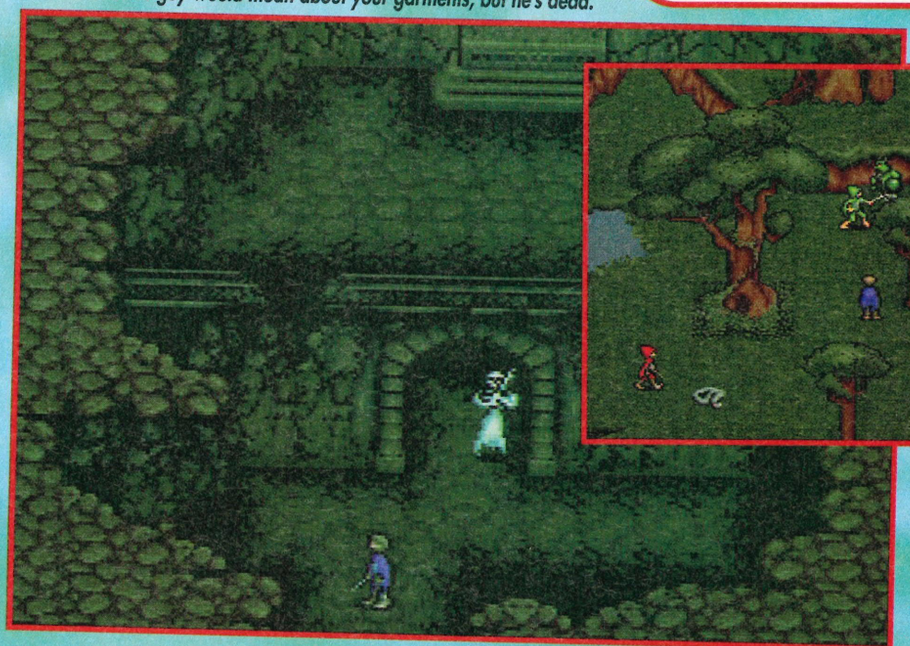
△ *The wise elves don't seem to notice the awful clothes you're wearing.*

ANDY



To paraphrase Lister from *Red Dwarf*, "Why is it always greeeeeeen?" I'd hate to have *LOTR*'s graphic designers as my decorators! I've read the books (of course – I was once a student), and the people and places in the game may share the same names, but beyond that they have as much in common as a Skoda has with the space shuttle! The programmers have taken the easy way out by including lots of moronic 'puzzles' (ie, go to point X and pick up object Y) instead of anything remotely brain-teasing or exciting. By the end of it all, you're frankly rooting for Sauron!

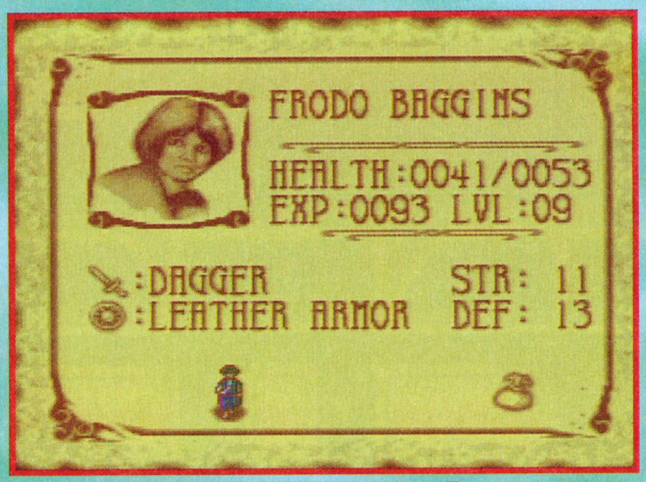
▽ *I'm sure this guy would moan about your garments, but he's dead.*



△ *One day little Red Riding Hood went out into the forest and came across some green monsters and some very blue elves.*

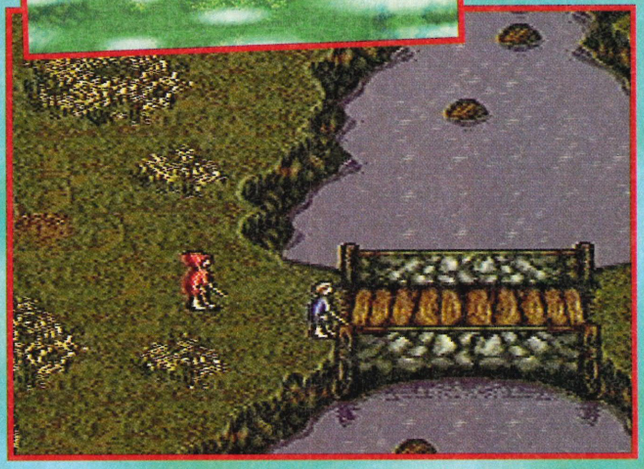
NGS

Bored of the rings!



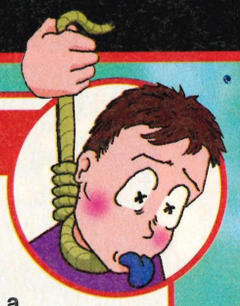


◁ *The fog should take the fashion police off your tail for a while.*



▽ *Little Red Riding Hood ponders whether the bridge will take the weight of her hat.*

DAMIAN



LOTR is immediately consigned to the "cheesy rim" drawer because Interplay are expecting fans to buy a frankly boring game on the basis that it recreates Tolkien's books – and not even all of them mind you. I can see the same thing happening with this game as happened with the film. The first part comes out, it's a bit crap, and so the ending is never made. And here we have a lack-lustre game, drawn in boring green-o-vision graphics. Do they expect people to shell out £45 for this? I've read the books as well, but I was expecting great things. Surely it couldn't have been too hard to create a game based on *Zelda*, but with hobbits and goblins? Especially given the two year gestation period and the considerable hype in the US. Do not buy this game, get the books instead. They'll offer lifetime enjoyment and won't give you suicidal tendencies.

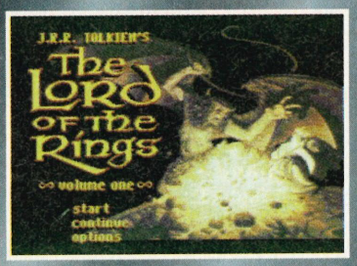
screen. This is particularly annoying when coupled with some truly abysmal collision detection, which transforms walking around a rock into a major pole to pole expedition.

One part of *LOTR* that *is* well done is the Dungeons and Dragons method of awarding experience for killing monsters. At first, levels can be built up quickly, creating a cushion of hit points that means you won't die easily. Unfortunately, as new characters are introduced along the way, it becomes more and more difficult for them to survive due to the fact that every monster at that point in the game is more than capable of killing a hobbit with only eight hit points.

The only reason I persevered for as long as I did with *LOTR* was in the hope that something exciting would happen. I must admit when I reached the Barrow Downs and discovered a new enemy, I felt as though a minor goal had been reached, but I never felt that the books had been done any justice at all.

Anybody who has a similar weakness for Tolkien fantasy will probably try to fool themselves into thinking *LOTR* on the Super NES is "not really as bad as all that", but once you've smashed your rose-tinted specs against the wall in frustration, and then lost the will to live due to the dullness factor, you'll admit, as I did, that this is a nob of a game.

Interplay could have created a *Zelda* game with all the magic of Tolkien's fertile imagination, but instead what we have here is a boring marathon of a game that will have JRR spinning in his grave.





PRODUCER
INTERPLAY
(0235) 821666

PRICE
£44.95

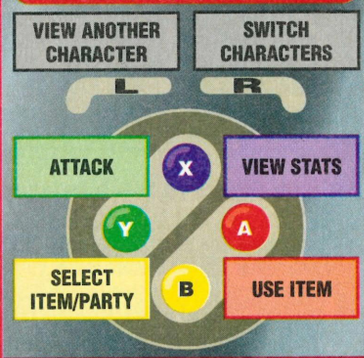
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
RPG

CART SIZE
8MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORD SAVES

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	69
SOUND	74
GAMEPLAY	68
LONGEVITY	69

OVERALL

68

KEITH



Imagine a world with more assassins than civilians. A world where if you go down to the shops, you're more likely to come back in a body bag than a bus. A world where violent syndicates control everything from taxes to train fares.

In this isometric, *Blade Runner*-esque (© cliché corp) vision of the future this is exactly what Earth will become, a merciless free-for-all between rival syndicates for ultimate control of the entire world. And Bullfrog have kindly invited you along for the ride!

You begin the game with nothing. It's up to you to go out and prove that your syndicate means business. In one player mode you take control of up to four badly defined, blocky, trench-coated mercenaries, but there is also a two player option to control a couple of men each. This is a unique feature which was not present in the acclaimed Amiga and PC versions.



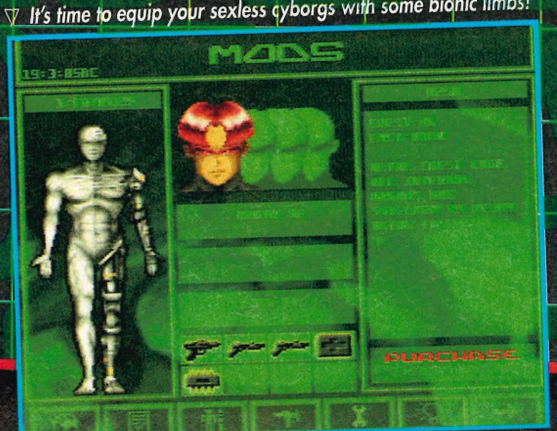
You are the law!

SYNDICATE

Equipping these cyborg thugs with an arsenal of shotguns, Uzis, gauss guns and other assorted goodies, you embark on an a journey of immorality spanning more than 50 missions, in an attempt to kill leaders, bribe judges, recruit new talent, scare people with your fluorescent hair, and take over as many territories as possible. The more land you own, the more you can bleed the population dry with taxes and become incredibly wealthy.

In addition to the well stocked gunnery there is a whole host of research departments that are constantly developing new equipment, like additional body parts that can speed up movement, brains that





▽ *It's time to equip your sexless cyborgs with some bionic limbs!*

DAMIAN



What a great game. I came to *Syndicate* expecting I'd need a Nuclear Physics Degree to get past the title screen, but it is incredibly easy to get into and once you've gone through the rigmarole of equipping your dim looking basin-head cybrogs, the game explodes into a bullet-ridden psycho frenzy, with innocent corpses and thousands of spent bullet casings littering the sidewalks. I like the way you can invest in weapons and then get Uzis, Gauss guns and rocket launchers for even more violence. The missions are varied and fun to complete, but the SGI scenes are terribly blocky, and it is still hard to manouevre inside the buildings. *Syndicate* is a must for all cyberpunks with attitude.

RYAN



Syndicate is one of those games that you absolutely loathe and detest at first, but once you spend time mastering the mechanics behind it, it slowly materialises into a gripping and very enjoyable experience. Okay so the graphics are naff, but some of the best games have been utter pap to look at. This cart is so deep that you have to sink a well to find everything. To say *Syndicate* is atmospheric would be an understatement. Not since *Shadowrun* have I been so captivated by a piece of plastic and a few chips. Buy this, take a couple of weeks out of life and enjoy!



△ That rocket launcher works, now what did I do with my marshmallows?

increase intelligence, and eyes that improve shot accuracy.

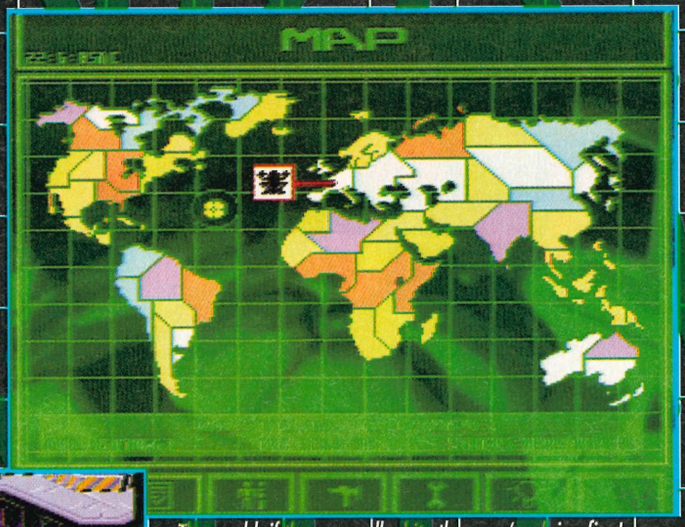
Research costs money though, so it's important to raise the taxes to keep the money rolling in, but without upsetting the civilians so much that rival syndicates edge onto your territory with promises of a better life.

The cyborgs themselves can be male or female, and in order to ensure they operate with the maximum efficiency in hostile situations, they can be pumped full of three different kinds of stimulants that enhance intelligence, perception and adrenaline. The only problem with doing this is that eventually they become so drug dependant, it's not uncommon for a group member to completely lose his marbles and run around shooting indiscriminately into groups of innocent bystanders, leaving a heap of twisted bodies strewn all over the pavement.



△ Future Earth, is this where you'd hang your hat?





The world, if the maps all white then you're doing fine!



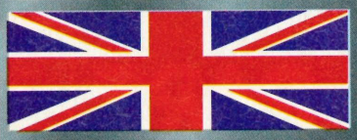
△ Anything that is shot will occasionally leave new weapons, like this Uzi!

Syndicate is escapism at its best. It does take ages to get into (as with any good strategy game), but once you're hooked, you will never want to leave. Frankly, the graphics aren't up to much, and are nothing compared to the other versions, but luckily the core gameplay is identical.

Bullfrog have left nothing out of this version (except all the blood and the wicked flame-thrower – damn it!) and if you've seen the Amiga game then you'll instantly love this (especially without all that disk access!).

The ultimate mix of strategy and futuristic shoot-'em-up on the Super NES. Sheer brilliance.





PRODUCER
BULLFROG
(0483) 579399

PRICE
£TBA

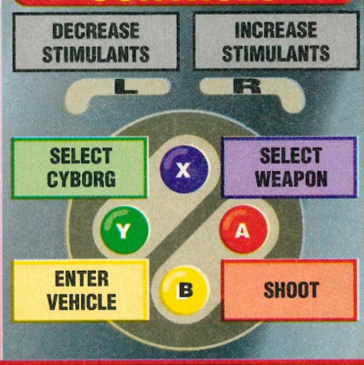
RELEASED
DECEMBER '94

GAME TYPE
STRATEGY

CART SIZE
8MBit

FEATURES
PASSWORDS

CONTROLS



RATINGS

GRAPHICS	73
SOUND	70
GAMEPLAY	88
LONGEVITY	89

OVERALL

89

EARTHWORM JIM

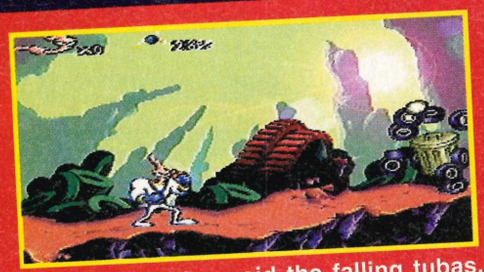
PART ONE

As you fall from the death-slide you can just about whip this moose's antler. After this you can work your way up to the toilet to reach the warp.

Shoot the hanging fridge to launch the cow. Where does she go? Wait and see!

Talk about weird warps! Jump down the toilet to discover a short cut to the end of the level. Only Shiny makes it possible!

Walk right from the start and hang on the chain. Edge forward slowly and then blow away the dog with your blaster, remember to pick up the little star things if you can, as they are energy refills.



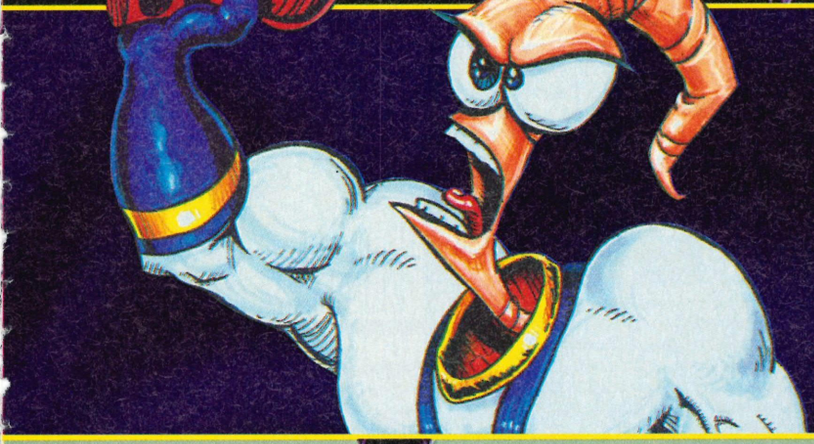
Keep moving to avoid the falling tubas. Blast away at the bin until it starts to fire anvils. If you keep up the assault, it will stop shooting and charge at you. Quickly jump over the bin and shoot it from behind as it passes. Repeat the process until it explodes!

Just below this platform is an ammo top up, collect that and keep heading up and right to fight the mini-boss – a demented dustbin!.

Use your whip to grab hold of the moose's antlers. You will fall down a hole that leads you to a whole host of bonuses, and the final guardian!

Keep weaving left and right to dodge the random objects coming down the conveyor belt. Once you've reached the top, jump right.







Whip the crates onto the spring on the right to hit Chuck. Once you've hit him he will vomit fish. Stand on the right to avoid them, but watch out for the stuff falling from the sky. Six crates will finish him off and if you need help, leap for the sky!



You will need to jump onto this chain to swing across the spikes, but first of all shoot the dogs.

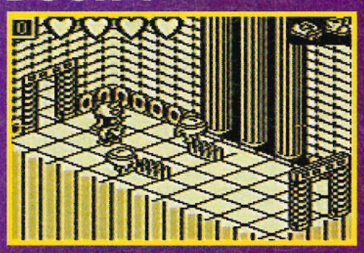
Revel in the rewards you'll get from swinging on the moose's antler. There is also a one way wall to the right.

After you have warped from the toilet you will appear here. Grab the mega blasts and walk right to Chuck!

MONSTER MAX

PART 3

L4 DOOR 1



ROOM 1

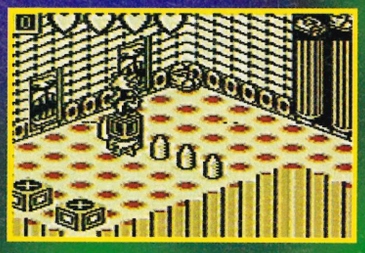
An easy beginning to the fourth level. Simply run straight over to the door on the far left. There are two aliens waiting on either side, but if you keep moving in a straight line they will never touch you.



ROOM 2

The aliens on this level will home in on you, but the way to get past them is to stand still as they approach, then run off in another direction. They will follow, but you will eventually outrun them and escape.

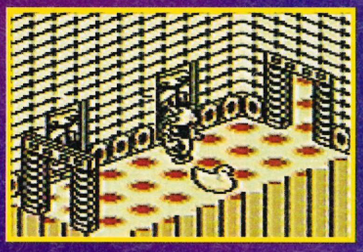
The aliens move in the same way as the skeletons on previous levels. In this room, lure the alien over to the spikes and trap him against them as you get the piece of gold in the bottom left corner. Run for the exit and provided the alien is stuck next to the spikes, he shouldn't reach you.



ROOM 3

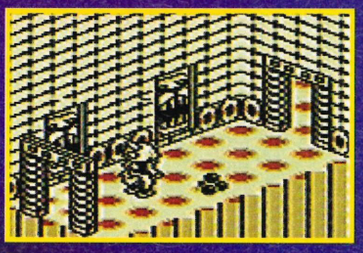
This can be tricky. First, push the block onto the alien's head. Leap onto the block and then quickly jump off onto the block that is keeping it trapped. Keep your finger on the jump button and as soon as you hit the block, bounce back onto the alien's head to free it.

Now, when you press the direction you want to go in, the alien should take you there. If not, rotate Max on the block so that he is right in the centre of it. Now push in the direction and he should move. Use this technique to get around the spikes and over to the door at the top right. Leap off when you get near.



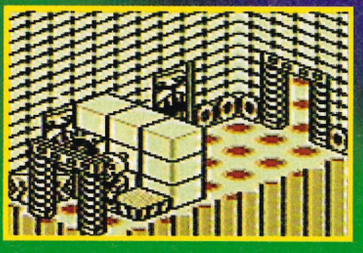
ROOM 4

There are two ways to complete the next few rooms. You can either pick up this duck, or not. The choice is yours, but look at the next room to decide which route you want to take.



ROOM 5

If you have the duck, then swap your other object for the bomb. If not, get the bomb anyway, but swap it for the bag and leave the jumping boots.



ROOM 6

There are two effective ways through this stand-off-ish room. If you have both objects from rooms four and five, climb onto the first two blocks, drop the bomb as far left as you can and then drop down and duck until it goes off. This will destroy the blocks and allow you to cross, but you won't have any jumping boots for the next few rooms.

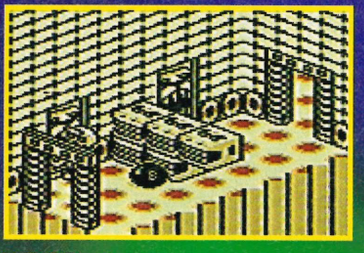
Alternatively, you can drop a bomb in the same place, push it to the left and then quickly run down to the bottom right of the screen. If you have timed it right and the bomb is far enough away, it will explode; leaving you intact. This way means you keep the boots.



ROOM 7

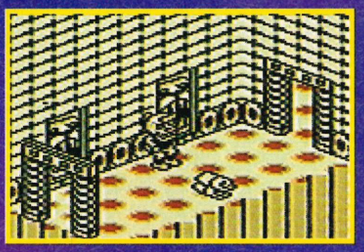
If you still have the bomb in one hand and the duck in the other, get the bag in this room (swap it for the bombs) and push the block over to the right wall and between the paving stone and the wall. Now go around the other side of the stone (see pic) and use it to walk up to the block. Pick up the block with the bag and use it next to the steps.

To use the same block twice, stand half on the block and half on the step and pick it up again. You should retrieve the block, but still be on the step, so now use it for the last step and exit the room.
If you have the bombs and the boots, swap the bombs for the bag, pick up the block and put it onto the second step. Now pick up the bombs (swap for the bag) and bounce up the steps to the next room.



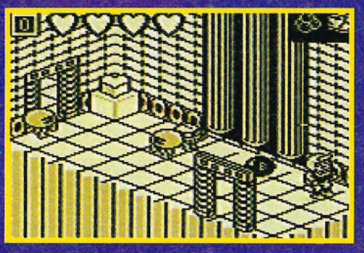
ROOM 8

This just has some killer blocks. If you have the duck, use it to get underneath and exit. Alternatively, use the bombs to blast through the obstacle, but make sure you're three blocks away or you'll get hit.



ROOM 9

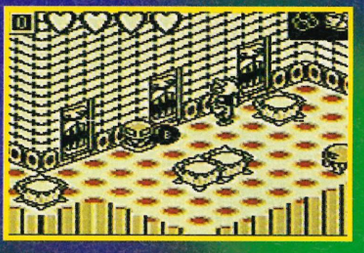
This just has a scroll in it. Swap it for the bombs or the bag. If you used the duck and bombs earlier on, you should now have the scroll in one hand and the duck in the other.



ROOM 10

You can handle this room two ways. Firstly, use the duck and scroll. Duck down and you can shoot all of the enemies with the scroll, but I advise you to use the first "kill everything" shot on the block at the top with the life heart on it.

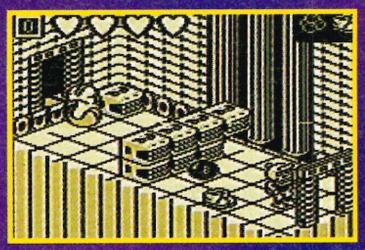
Secondly, use the bombs to take out the aliens, and place the last bomb two and a half squares from the block carrying the life heart. This will ensure the block is destroyed, but the heart remains intact. Clever, eh?



ROOM 11

If you have the bombs or not, walk around the outer edge of this room (ie at the top) and stay there until you reach the door in the bottom left. Behind the mutant plant pots are loads of homing droids who attack only when they are in a straight line to you. If you keep moving around the edge, they should not hit you. But watch out for the rogue alien who goes where he pleases.

Alternatively, if you have the bombs, every time a droid appears, drop a bomb in his path and watch him die!



ROOM 12

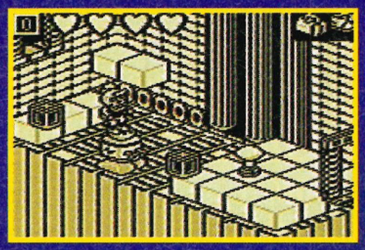
Use the duck (if you have it) to get under these blocks, then jump past the rollerball alien to get through the door. If you don't have the duck, blast everything to hell with your bombs.



ROOM 13

You will need this bag to complete the next room. If you have a duck, climb underneath the white block and jump on the bag using the boots (there is a pair in the previous room if you are missing them).

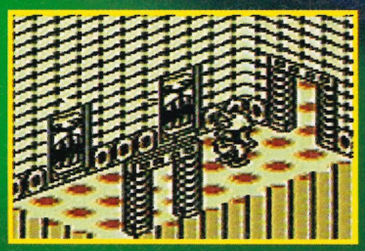
Or you can use the bombs to get through the blocks, but make sure you don't blow up the bag by mistake. Swap the bombs for the bag. Keep the boots.



ROOM 14

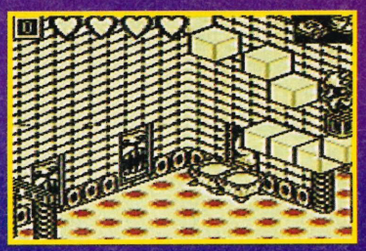
You only need two blocks on the other side of the room, so move the robot down to the bottom of the screen and place him exactly in the middle of the gap (use the squares to get this right). Now drop one block on the edge (to jump from), then get another block and leap across onto the robot and over to the other side.

Drop this block where you land (see pic). Now jump back over using the biggest jumps you can muster and pick up the last block. Repeat the jump and drop the two blocks under the door to escape.



ROOM 15

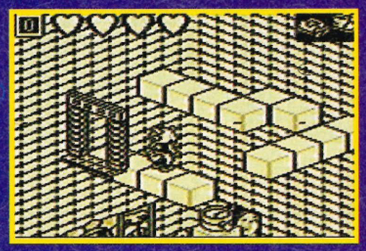
Absolutely nothing in this room.



ROOM 16

This is the penultimate room. Pick up the block and run to the top left of the screen where the white blocks touch the ground. Leap up onto the first white block and keep your finger on the jump button as you turn and bounce up the next two blocks. All will disappear, so keep jumping!

Place the block where you see it in the pic, and then jump up the remaining blocks (the second and third ones will dissolve, but the fourth is a moving block, so stand on it until it passes the door. Jump off through the door to exit the room.



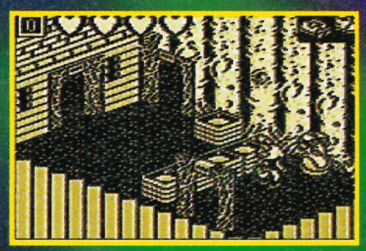
ROOM 17

The key here is to spot where the timepiece is (the objective) and keep jumping because you know that some of those white blocks will disappear on contact.

The four you are standing on are all solid, so use your biggest jump to reach the next set of four, of which the first and last will disappear. Unfortunately, you will need to jump on both of these to complete the room.

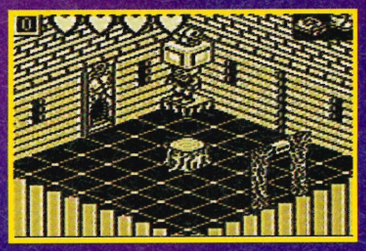
Of the next six blocks, the first three will all disappear, so keep jumping and stand on the second to last white block; directly over the timepiece below. Now push up and drop off the edge to hit the timepiece and open the door. Mission over.

DOOR 2



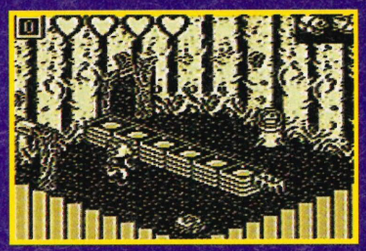
ROOM 1

This first room has an enemy moving between killer blocks. Time your run and dodge in front of him and then run out the other side. This section depends on pure reaction time and luck.



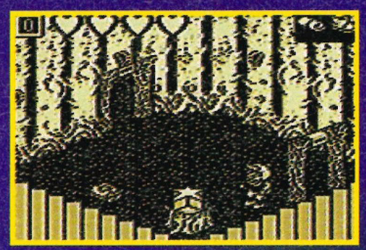
ROOM 2

Climb up underneath the white block with the scroll on top and jump up to get the scroll and all its powers.



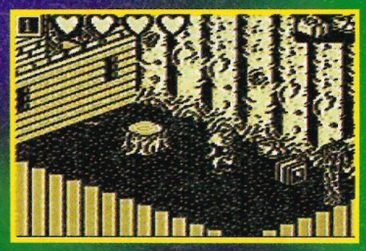
ROOM 3

Monster Max is full of choices and here is another. You can either shoot the robot with the scroll and run under the spikes to exit the room. Or you can save the scroll's lethal first shot and run under the spikes and dodge the unpredictable robot as well. Only the best gamers will be able to do this. Run under the spikes when they are at their highest point.



ROOM 4

If you've still got the scroll with its first shot, shoot the two logs in this room and one will be destroyed; allowing you to get that invincibility star. Otherwise, just get the bag for the next room.



ROOM 5

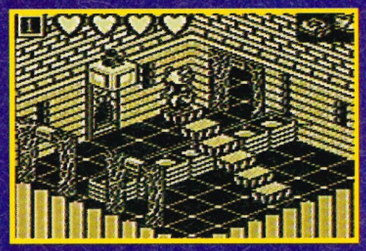
This problem looks simple, but the log in the middle of the two blocks is frictionless and so the moment you touch it, it whizzes off on its own!

First of all, pick up one of the blocks and place it a couple of squares above the log, so that when you push it up, it hits the block and this should leave it positioned so that you can push it left and it will stop underneath the door. Now pick up each block and place them on top of the log to reach the exit.



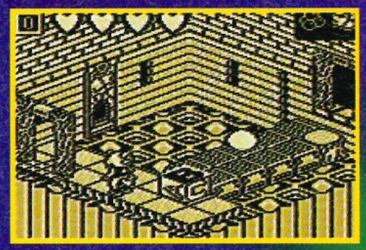
ROOM 6

All you have to do here is avoid the robot and exit through one of the doors, preferably the top one.



ROOM 7

Bounce up and hit the white block to drop the bombs down and swap them for the bag.

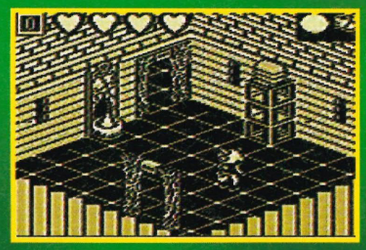


ROOM 8

Hmm, an intriguing room this. Push the ABC block down to the bottom conveyor belt (they kill, by the way). Drop a bomb on the block and quickly push it off onto the conveyor and get the hell outta there! The bomb should travel down the conveyor and explode; sending the force-field crashing down and along the other conveyor to your side.

Swap the force-field for the bombs and jump off onto the bottom conveyor and activate the force-field before you hit it to remain unharmed. Exit through the door using the boots.

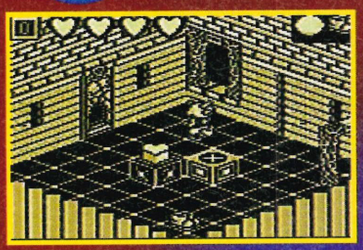
Or, you can keep the bombs and jump across the second conveyor using your invincibility star (remember that?) to get through safely. Why? All will be revealed...



ROOM 9

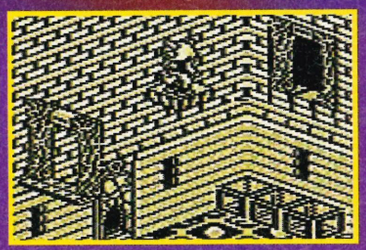
If you kept the bombs in the last room, you can blast the glass blocks here and get the bonus gold. Otherwise, just avoid the robot and exit.

GAME BOY SOLUTION



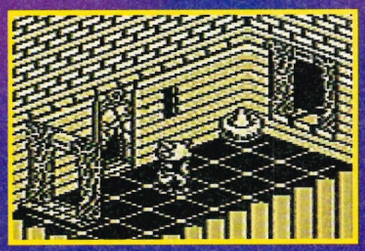
ROOM 10

Here you have a moving block with a life heart on it. If you hit the block, you will die, so the trick is to time your jump and keep your finger on the jump button to bounce off the life heart, but get it at the same time.



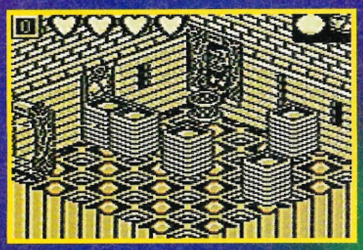
ROOM 11

Another test of your reactions coming up. Drop down from the door and land on the middle block. When the floating block hits the bottom, jump off and land on it. Let it rise up to the very top and then leap off to reach the door at the top of the room. This is very difficult, but if you fall, drop down onto either sets of blocks and try again.



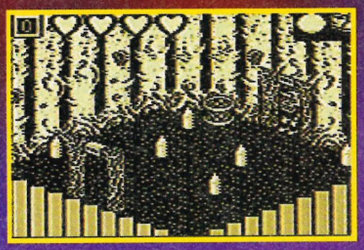
ROOM 12

All you have to do here is avoid the mad spasi robot, but you should still have the force-field (unless you got the gold), so just activate it when the droid gets near.



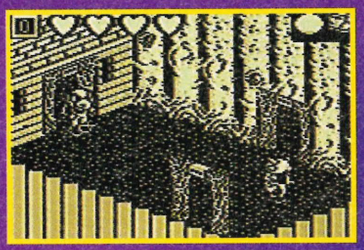
ROOM 13

This is a maze of electric blocks and you must leap on the chequered block and float through the walls to the door. Use your force-field if you have it to prevent hitting the sides. If not, jump up just before you hit and this will stop the moving block dead.



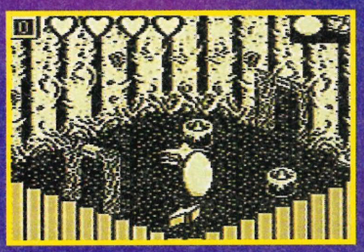
ROOM 14

This is a second chequered block which moves only when you do. The way to get past the spikes is of course to get on the block, but you need to trap in on the top left spike to be able to leap off and exit through the door.



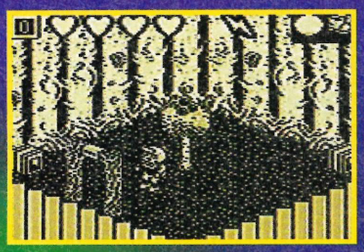
ROOM 15

There is a Napoleon parrot in this room, but you need some bombs to get past him. Exit through the top door.
If you still have the bombs from the conveyor room, then kill Napoleon and enter room 18.



ROOM 16

Watch out for the two deadly fast entities in this room. You must not only avoid both of them, but also get the lightning icon (for double speed) and swap your force-field for the bag. Exit through the top door.



ROOM 17

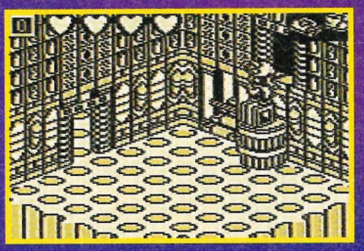
There is a tree in the middle and two blocks. Use the blocks to climb up to the tree and swap the force-field for the bombs. Now head back to room 16 and bomb or dodge the entities before entering room 15 again where you can now use the bombs to kill the Napoleon parrot.



ROOM 18

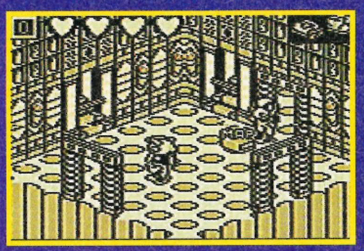
This is the final room. Jump up to the white block and drop the burger, but DON'T TOUCH IT! Instead, drop a bomb to destroy it and complete the mission.

DOOR 3



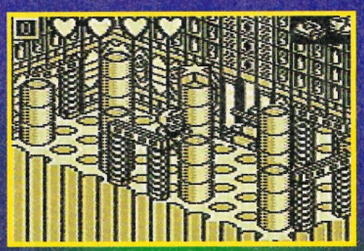
ROOM 1

First let me say that this is the worst door so far – it is a complete b******! First of all, use the bag to pick up the block, then place the block to reach the door. Leap up to the door, but keep jumping because the glass one disappears.



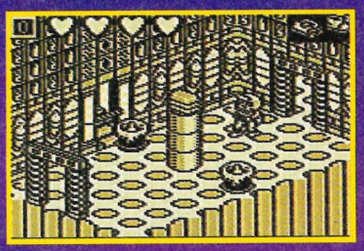
ROOM 2

This has a Napoleon parrot and a map inside. Get the map and exit through the right door. There's nothing else you can do here... yet.



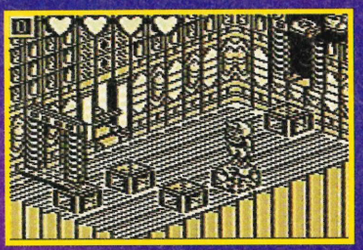
ROOM 3

There are loads of pillars here, one with an invincibility star on top. You cannot get this until you have the bombs, so exit through the bottom door.



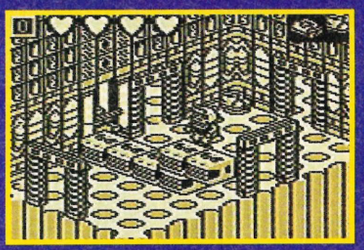
ROOM 4

You will come to hate this room because it has two random entities who kill on contact. You must get past both creatures and exit through the bottom. There is some gold on top of the pillar in this room. Again, you need the bombs first.



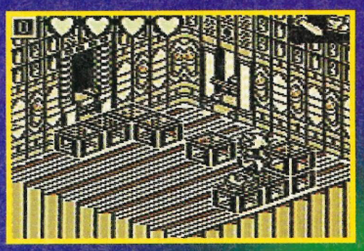
ROOM 5

To get through this peaceful room you must leap on the glass blocks in turn (moving around the bottom of the screen). Keep your finger on the jump button because each block will disappear once you have touched it. Bounce around to the door to escape.



ROOM 6

An interconnecting room. Head through the right door first.

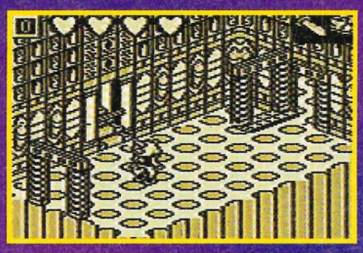


ROOM 7

More glass blocks – damn 'em! Leap across the two glass blocks on the bottom to reach the sword. The platforms with the sword will not disappear by the way. Swap the sword for the bag and then jump up onto the raised block (dissolving) and immediately face left and leap off onto the blocks which lead back to the exit.

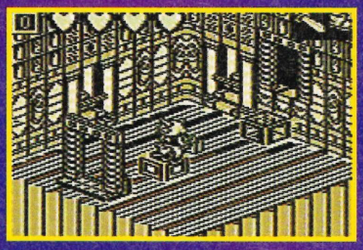
The added height from the raised block will enable you to escape. Now you must go back all the way through rooms six, five, four, and exit through the top door in room three.





ROOM 8

... is an interconnecting room with nothing in it apart from three doors. Exit through the top one.



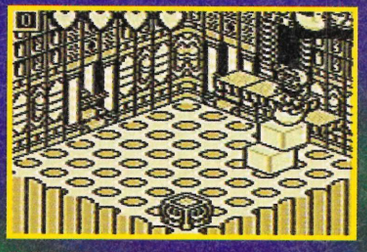
ROOM 9

This can be very difficult. You must walk onto the moving platform and then leap the spikes in the middle, before jumping off and heading through the door. There are no hard and fast rules about how to get through, but wait until you have practically hit the spikes before jumping.



ROOM 10

Now whip out that sword and kill all three skeletons, before swapping the sword for the duck and heading back through rooms nine, eight, three, four, five and underneath the killer blocks in room six. This will take you to...

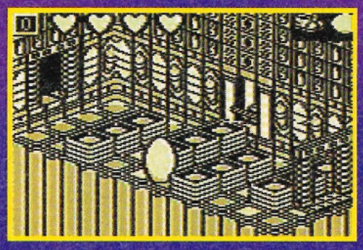


ROOM 11

You are faced with two white blocks piled up, a force-field on top, and some raised platforms next to the door. The killer block is there for you to commit suicide if you mess up the problem in this room.

Drop down and push the white blocks right, and then up to the lower platform. Before you reach it, leap up against the blocks to form two steps up to the force-field; leading to the door. Now jump up and swap the force-field for your boots (not the duck) and then walk out of the room.

Use the duck to get under the killer blocks and then get the boots back from the room on the left. Now head back through rooms five and four, then exit through the bottom right door in room three.



ROOM 12

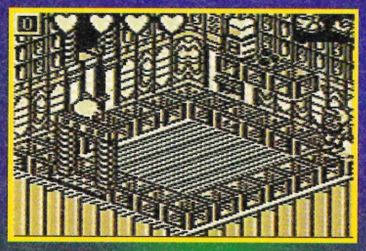
The floor here is electrified, hence the need for the force-field. See, I told you you'd hate this level. Walk around the killer blocks when the floor is static and quickly revert to the force-field as soon as it is about to be electrified. Exit through the door on the right.



ROOM 13

That damn moving chequered block again. What you must do is pile the two blocks on top of the chequered block to reach the door at the top. First of all, push off the blocks and swap the force-field for the bag. For each block, push the chequered block against it and then walk off onto it and pick it up. Use the black platform in the top right corner to walk off and then place the blocks onto the chequered block. Comprendé?

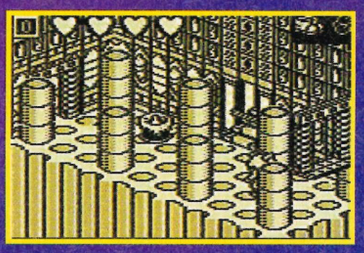
When both are on top of the moving block, leap on top and exit through the door.



ROOM 14

Boy, this is a mega toughie! In this room you have an alien moving clockwise around a track. Immediately run anti-clockwise over to the white square in the top right. This is a trampoline, so bounce up onto the nearest block, but keep jumping because it dissolves. Leap over the bombs and get the life heart.

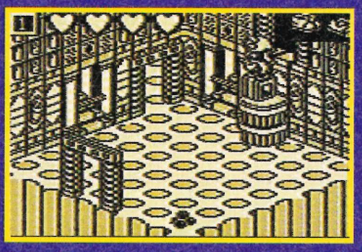
Now push the block off the edge when the alien passes underneath. With luck, the block will land squarely on the alien's head. Now swap the bag for the bombs (bombs – at last!) and drop off onto the alien as it emerges from underneath the platform. Stay on the alien until he gets to the door, then leap off to complete the room.



ROOM 15

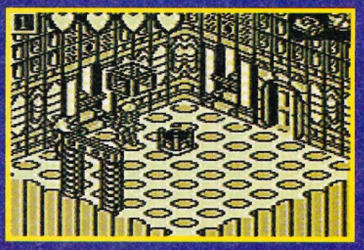
There are loads of pillars in this room; preventing you from getting past the entity. Instead, just blast the crap out of the whole room and take out the enemy. This also shows you that the bombs can destroy pillars. Exit on the left and you will re-appear in room eight.

Go back through room three (blast the pillars and get the invincibility star), then go into room four and kill both enemies before destroying the pillar and getting the gold. Wa-hey! Finally, go to room two and kill the Napoleon parrot.



ROOM 16

A familiar problem this. Swap the bombs for the bag and pick up the block. Place it on top of the two circular plinths. The glass block disappears. Ignore the right room, unless you don't have a pair of boots.



ROOM 171

This is the final room. To get the crown, you don't need the bomb, just cunning. Walk over to the left wall (where the suspended block is) and the skeleton will follow. If you stand still, the skeleton will walk over to you and the crown will be knocked off by the platform. Grab it and exit through the door. And that's another level completed. See ya next month.



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After last month's complete sponditious guide to the best beat-'em-up currently available on the Super NES, we couldn't neglect our loyal following of Game Boy owners. So this month, just for the sake of wasting some more space in a good cause, here is the full run down of Fatalities and Babalities for each of the eight contenders. Please note that the Babality moves can only be accessed when the deciding round of the bout has been won using only kick moves – one punch thrown and you've blown it! Without further ado, here are those disgusting moves...

MORTAL K

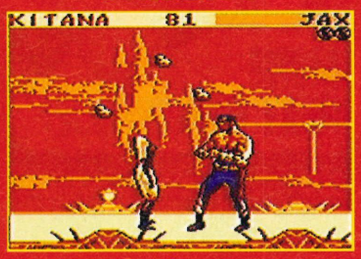
T – TOWARDS
A – AWAY
B – BLOCK

HB – HOLD BLOCK
K – KICK

P – PUNCH
U/D/L/R – DIRECTIONS

JAX

FATALITY



HOLD K, T, T, T, RK

BABALITY

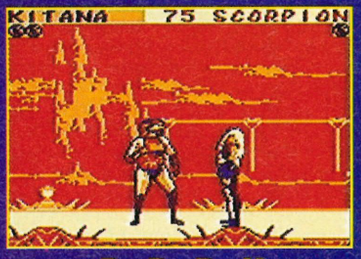


HB, D, U, D, U, K

The ex-wrestler retains most of his Super NES moves, including the ground smash, sonic wave and grab 'n punch attacks. Unfortunately though, his Fatality isn't the vile arm-yanking one which caused us to choke on many a sarnie – damn!

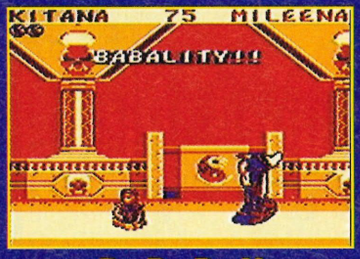
KITANA

FATALITY



B, B, B, K

BABALITY



D, D, D, K

Fnarr, down boy, wahay, etc. This sumptuous siren can certainly do wonders with a steel fan! She can toss it, swipe it, lift you with it, and even chop your block off with it! Although her kiss of death is sadly absent, Kitana is still one wicked lady!

LIU KANG

FATALITY



D, T, A, A, K

BABALITY

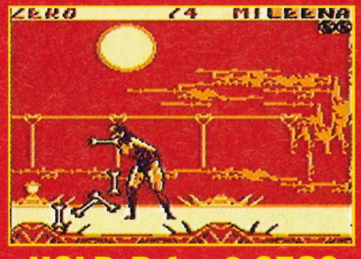


D. D, T, A, K

Kangers is still the best all-round fighter by some stretch, and all of his moves are here and intact... nearly! Unfortunately his awesome Dragon Fatality has been toned down a tad, so he now burns his foes as opposed to biting them in half.

MILEENA

FATALITY



HOLD P for 3 SECS

BABALITY



D, D, D, K

The bird with the colossal jaws takes no prisoners in the petite version of *MKII*. All her moves are here, although the programmers opted to use her boring bone-spitting Fatality as opposed to her wonderfully psychotic Sai Stab routine – bah!

OMBAT

SPIKE FATALITY

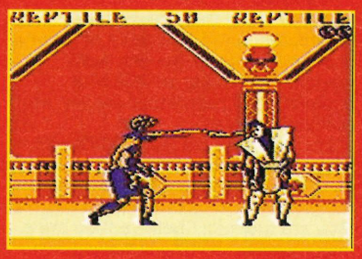


Wot, no Pit II and Dead Pool fatalities? However, there are still the dreaded spikes on which to violently impale your opponent. Here are the moves.

Liu Kang – A, T, T, K
Sub-Zero – D, T, T, K
Kitana – T, D, T, K
Reptile – D, T, T, B
Shang Tsung – HB, D, D, U, P
Mileena – T, D, T, P
Scorpion – D, T, T, B
Jax – HB, U, U, D, K

REPTILE

FATALITY



A, A, D, P

BABALITY



D, A, A, K

Reptile is, as his name suggests, a slimy green toad with a huge tongue and an arsenal of lizard-like abilities such as spitting venom, sliding along the floor, and turning invisible just like a chameleon. His death move is finger-licking good as well!

SCORPION

FATALITY



HB, U, U, P

BABALITY



D, A, A, K

The walking zombie from hell returns for another crack at the title. All his moves are here, including the deadly spear and the foolhardy decoy punch. Be sure not to annoy this guy though, otherwise things will get a little heated!

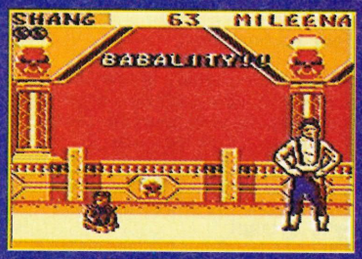
SHANG TSUNG

FATALITY



HB, U, D, P

BABALITY



A, T, D, K

His name sounds more like the sound of a dustbin lid when violently hurled at someone's head, but don't let that fool you, Shang Tsung is 'ard as nails. He can morph into any other fighter you wish and his fatality will leave you a little flaccid.

SUB-ZERO

FATALITY



T, T, D, K+T, D, T, T, P

BABALITY



D, A, A, K

This guy drinks liquid nitrogen to heat up and is in great danger of melting if you so much a breathe on him. Watch out for his long range attacks, and when he squirts on the ground (ooer!), run for cover. His death move is simply shattering!

the write stuff

Enter the seething pit of SUPER GAMER reader opinions. Abandon hope all ye who enter here. This month there's scathing criticism of TV video games shows, more doubts about the Ultra 64 and its games, plus a look at Speccy games from the past – can you remember all the games we mention?

Seriously though, I want to hear what you think about SUPER GAMER's different features. Do you always agree with our reviews? Are the previews early enough for you? Do we give you what you want? All letters to be sent to *Write Stuff, SUPER GAMER, Durham House, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 1NF.*

Dear SG,
I have recently bought *Super Metroid*, and finished it in a couple of days thanks to the tips book. Shortly after, I realised that if it wasn't for that b***** book, I'd still be playing it now!

I think it is wrong to include such an extensive guide with any game. The temptation to have a quick peek when stuck is so strong that even the most iron-willed gamesplayer would give in.

In any case with the game being so good, a complete guide would inevitably appear in most magazines in the course of a couple of months (the idea of printing it in steps is excellent as it increases the lifespan of the game).

I feel it would have been far better to include the power-ups on the in-game screens which are far less detailed.

The book also made killing the bosses too easy. The only one that was tricky was Ridley (and I got that well sussed). The book didn't tell you how to sort out Mother Brain, so I was hoping for a very tough final boss, but the method was blatently obvious and the fight incredibly easy.

In conclusion I think it is a shame that a stupendous game such as this was ruined by the inclusion of such a comprehensive players' guide. The obvious answer is "well, why did you look?", but it is just too tempting. My advice is buy the game, but burn the book.

The satisfaction of completing a game when you have been told how to do it is nothing compared to the thrill of completing one on your own merits.
Robert Heathcote, Biddulph.

Couldn't agree with you more, Robert. I hastily ripped open the impressive-looking *Super Metroid* box only to find the solution book. The temptation was too great, but I actually thought the book wasn't as good as it could have been, as the maps were far too dark and small.

I suppose Nintendo in their infinite wisdom thought "Hey, we've got this great RPG, but I think it is too hard for anyone older than a foetus to complete. Let's patronise everyone who buys the game by including a step by step guide." Brilliant idea Nintendo.

The answer is obvious SUPER GAMER readers. Burn the book as Robert says – do not look at it. Keith completed the game in nine hours before the book was written, and he gave it 95%. Believe me, you shouldn't need a tips guide because the learning curve is set perfectly and it will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.

Dear SG,
I know this will sound a bit like a moan (which it is), but I have to complain about Capcom's latest *Street Fighter II* version – *Super Mega Street Fighter II Championship Turbo Tournament Edition* or whatever it's called.

What do Capcom take us for? Anyone who hasn't bought the original or *Turbo* obviously don't like the *Street Fighter* games, so Capcom are trying to sell *SSFII* to people who have already forked out £60-£150 on one of the games. That is ridiculous.

The only people who can pay this sort of money for similar games are either very rich or fanatics. We all know that Capcom are writing *SSFII: Turbo* for the Super NES – that's four games that are virtually the same. Do they think we are crazy?

Mortal Kombat II is a real sequel – five totally new characters, secret fighters, different all-new stages, improved playability. The list goes on. Come on Capcom, let's have *SFIII* with all new characters and stages, new moves and different gameplay, instead of more and more updates.
Robert Davidson, Glasgow.

Capcom are following the age-old business principle of "if it ain't broken, don't fix it." The original *Street Fighter II* game sold millions of copies and brought Capcom to the forefront of games developers.

Remember, Robert, Capcom haven't really produced any other decent games apart from *SFII*. *Knight's of the Round*, *King of Dragons* and *MegaMan Soccer* are all complete tosh and a far cry from the classic *Area 88* (*UN Squadron*) of the Super NES's early days.

Rumours are abound that *SFIII* is under way, but haven't we got sick of Ryu and his friends by now? Aren't there other gaming styles we should be exploiting instead of flogging this dead Blanka over and over again?

With the "They Should Convert It" campaign (now missing due to page restrictions), we tried to encourage software companies to look to older genres for their new releases.

Of course there will always be the *Judge Dredd* and *Jurassic Park*-types licences, but games like *Metroid*, *Syndicate* and *Theme Park* are the future, and offer many more hours of enjoyment than brainless beat-'em-ups. Like Dinosaurs, *SF II* clones have had their day and should be making way for the new species of game. Discuss.

Dear SG,
I'll omit the usual ass-licking intro and get to the point about people continually beating the dead horse by writing about video game pricing and piracy.

Although they are important issues, don't you think it's time to take a new approach instead of just moaning about it. If you think prices are too high or unreasonable, don't buy the games.

Piracy is a criminal offence, so why don't you just tell the police the people you know who partake in this activity. We all know someone or another who is into data theft.

Anyway, my real point is the need to raise the issue of video game quality. I don't know about you, but I'm sick to death with companies who jump on the bandwagon of current vogues and make no attempt to produce a new slant on the genre.

For example, Data East and their dismal attempt to recreate a *Street Fighter* type game. Inferior graphics, no attempt in changing the control mechanics, the list just goes on... so I won't bore you. I urge companies with similar approaches to get your act together.

But one pleasing story I heard is the attitude of David Perry, President of Shiny Entertainment and the developer of *Earthworm Jim*. After he had seen the amazing graphics of *Donkey Kong Country*, he felt dissatisfied with *EWJ* and decided to add more frames of animation and increase the cart ROM size to accommodate this. For this I would personally like to congratulate Mr Perry and Shiny for taking a commendable competitive approach.

Maybe if other companies followed suit and copied Shiny's approach rather than other company's ideas, then there might be less of this moaning about prices because the actual game warrants the price.
Thanks for reading and keep up the good work.
P Sam, Portsmouth.

Boring old SF clones will continue to be produced, no matter how often we at SUPER GAMER slag them off. Just look at *Fighter's History*, *Art of Fighting*, *Samurai Spirits*, *Fatal Fury Special* and now, worryingly, *Fighter's History Dynamite*. What's the point – they're all crap!

I'm not sure about the David Perry story though, because I don't think he would say *EWJ* was not as good as *DKC*. On the contrary Mr Perry and the crew at Shiny are adamant that their game is far better than Nintendo's effort. I even read a scathing article in one magazine that quoted him as saying that he thinks people shouldn't be conned by *DKC* because he claims it is just a standard platform game with some jazzy graphics.

The cart size of *EWJ* was determined by the huge number of animations and samples, not a feeling of inadequacy compared to *DKC*. David and the Shiny team should still be congratulated though, because by bucking the system and producing a really 'spaced-out' game, they have almost re-invented the platform game overnight.

Dear SG,
I have never written to a mag before, but after reading a letter from Michael Morrison in issue #7, I couldn't agree with him more.

We know the age of electronic entertainment has progressed immensely and the quality of games is almost state-of-the-art, but I wonder how many people like Michael and I remember the classic computer days?

I'm a 22 year old Super NES and Mega Drive owner and was brought up on the Spectrum and C64. Back then the games were ground-breaking, now they are archaic. I believe they are a major part of gaming history (Let's face it, if it wasn't for *TWOTEF* we wouldn't have *SSFII* and *MKII*).

My point is that I think a lot of games nowadays have become total crap. So why don't the powers that be have a go at bringing some of the old classics to our consoles and giving them a Nineties twist, ie, enhanced colour, graphics, animation techniques, sound etc?

It might be a gamble. I know what you're thinking, who wants to live in the past? But I'm sure everyone can live with a little nostalgia, you never know, maybe the old games of yester-year brought to the young players of today may find a new lease of life in an industry starved of originality.

I mean, come on, *SFII* may be a quality game, but what's going to come next, "*SFII xII, Quantum, Hyper, Turbo, Ryu in a matching pink and blue suit, Four extra blades of grass on Sagat's stage, Ken's twin brother Fred edition*?" I hope not.

Anyway, I've enclosed a list of classics to jog people's (and yours) memories. I hope you print them and I hope they bring a smile to the faces of people who remember them.

Everyone's A Wally, Three Weaks in Paradise, Finders Keepers, Spellbound, Knight Tyme, Uridium, Paradroid, Last Ninja, Skool Daze, Green Beret, Rambo 2, West Bank, Kickstart 2, Alien 8, Knight Lore, Gunfright, Entombed, Blackwyche, Jetpac, Jetman, Head over Heels, Batman, Dun Darach, Wanted: Monty Mole, Monty on the Run,

Fairlight, Stainless Steel, Commando, Turbo Esprit, Saboteur, Jack the Nipper, Delta, Quedex, Sanxion, Beach Head, Wizball, Knight Games, Winter and *Summer Games* and *Spy Vs Spy*.

Even if we never convert 'em, at least we have good memories. Thanks for listening.
Dave Enright, Manchester.

Ah, a man after my own heart. I certainly remember just about all of the games you mention, Dave, and it is good to hear a positive response to another person's letter for a change. Michael Morrison has graced our pages many times and his points, like yours, are always well thought-out and welcome.

We are already seeing many older games being converted to the consoles (although still not many of the true classics). *Pitfall* and *Super Dropzone* are prime examples, and look how well they've done this issue. It is not just the improved graphics and effects that made us give both these games over 90%, but the core playability underneath that has stood the test of time.

Many of the companies that produced the hit games of the Eighties are still in business, and so could easily re-invent their games at a relatively low cost compared to starting afresh.

Think about it, Gremlin. *Jack the Nipper* maybe, or *Monty Mole*. Ocean could have *The Great Escape, Land that Time Forgot, Rollercoster* and *Hypersports* to name but a few. The potential is there. Who will exploit it? Let's hear your views.

Dear SUPER GAMER,
Whilst flicking through your letters page (issue #7), I happened to notice half the contents of the Oxford English Dictionary in one letter. I'm referring of course to Matthew Elliot's letter, or should that be Thesaurus?

I was just wondering how on earth this poor soul manages to get from one day to the next with this terrible affliction? I for one cannot stand people who can't get a sentence out without all that pointless jabbering. If he wants to baffle people with words, why doesn't he become a ******* politician?

I have a question for you, Mr Elliot. Don't you think it's time you got off that high horse of yours, stopped reading Nob Jockey Monthly and stopped talking like a poof?!

I only hope that someone in Gravesend carries the same opinion as me and gives you the beating you so richly deserve! Right, now I've finished ranting and raving I'd just like to congratulate you on a very well put together magazine and say keep up the good work.
Colin Rastrick, North Devon.
PS I've just bought *MKII* for my Super NES (perhaps this would account for my apparent lack of self control in this letter?) and it's bloody marvellous!

Ouch! Well I said the SG readers would chastise you, Matthew Elliot and I was right, but as you can see this issue, Colin, Matthew has actually written in with some thought-provoking suggestions and ideas, so maybe the kicking in Gravesend can be suspended? I like the "Nob Jockey" joke, though.
PS Glad you bloody think so!

STAR LETTER

Dear SUPER GAMER,
The gamesplaying world await the arrival of the "new breed" of machines with interest and are promised (and expect) great things. The specification of the new machines and indeed the "here and now" machines (Atari Jaguar, 3DO) are impressive. We are also beginning to see the real potential for software on these machines. The question is, how much can we expect and what will be the cost?

I have already decided to stop purchasing carts for my Super NES. A strange decision you may say, with titles such as *FX Trax* and *Super Return of the Jedi* imminent. However, if I consider my collection to date it consists of 22 titles at a cost of £890! Together with the machine itself and peripherals (Pro Action Replay, joypads, Multi-tap etc) the cost is well in excess of £1,000!

Unlike some people however, I am not rushing out to sell my Super NES. I have selected the software well over the years and the average score for the games, as marked in your magazine, is over 88%. With such titles as *Super Metroid, Super Mario All-Stars, Super Street Fighter II* (yes, the import version) and *Mortal Kombat II*, there is acres of shelf life yet!

I do wonder however at the logic of purchasing a new machine in the future. As far as I'm concerned the Super NES has been a definite progression over the other machines I have bought. From Sinclair ZX81 to Atari 8-bit and and Atari 16-bit (ST) and finally to the Super NES.

I have been able to appreciate the real advance in technology. From black & white to colour, to more colour and enhanced sound. The new machines promise more of the same (much better certainly), but I do not see a massive progression as there has been in the past.

We now hear FMV and Virtual Reality bandied about as if they were an end in themselves. It seems a big selling point of the new machines is the 3-D graphics abilities as amply demonstrated in the flagship driving games (*Ridge Racer, Daytona* et al).

It's interesting to note however that some other game genres (eg fighting games), even at arcade level, have not challenged the 'traditional' format as adopted by the humble 16-bitters of today.

I mean *Virtua Fighters* may be technically impressive, but is it a more playable game than *Mortal Kombat II* or *Super Street Fighter II*? I think not, and apparently the arcades agree.

Though shrouded in mystery, Nintendo's *Killer Instinct* looks impressive but I ask you, 15 hit combos. Does this mean better gameplay? The future as they say is still not clear though its shape is a lot more distinct now. As for jumping off the 16-bit bandwagon, I'd say that although it may appear a smart move to dump your old system now, just think what you're throwing away. Yonks of blistering gameplay versus the promise of an arcade at home. Whether the games of the future match the games of today in terms of playability is still anybody's guess.

And then of course there is price. CD systems promise cheaper software, but what about performance? Cartridge systems adopted by Nintendo are likely to remain profitable for Nintendo. £40 for a cart for such a high spec machine sounds good, but will it happen? For a glimpse of the future, look at what's already happening to the Jaguar. Initial games were released at £40 or so, but now the big hype games are likely to come in at wallet hurting £55 (*Doom* and *AvP*).

At least we have a few years between then and now. In the meantime, I'll return to my Super NES library. Does anyone know how to ensure consistent fatalities on *MKII*? Happy gaming.
David Sandison, Basildon.

A veritable cluster of succinct and succulent points there, David (as Dominik Diamond would say). First of all I think you're wrong to stop buying Super NES games now, just because the 32 and 64-bit machines are knocking on your door.

As this issue of SUPER GAMER proves, games are improving in leaps and bounds and some of the best games I've ever seen are now begging to get into your cart slot. But I agree that if you choose your software wisely, you should never have to buy any new games. My own collection boasts all of the Nintendo greats, but I am extremely sceptical of the new platforms.

Personally I went from Acorn Electron (I'm sorry to say) to Spectrum 48k, Commodore 64 and then straight to consoles. The difference was incredible as each new computer appeared in the Butt household. More colours, better games, bigger games it was all too much. But now we seem to have hit a snag. On the Super NES and Mega Drive, graphics are better than they've ever been, but they cannot improve. Have a look at *Lion King, EWJ* and *Mickey Mania* – they're pure perfection.

The Sony Playstation, 3DO, Atari Jaguar, Ultra 64 and Sega Saturn all promise almost unbelievable things. You want to believe them, but something is sitting at the back of your mind saying "it's just a demo", or "what a lovely intro, but the game will be just like *Speed Racer*."

Nothing I've seen so far has blown me away in the same way as looking at an Atari ST after playing on a Spectrum. The Sony was pretty, but I can't see how those magnificently rendered images could be included in a practical game. And then I see the screen shots of the games in a Jap mag and hey presto – they look like Super NES games, but with better defined graphics – big deal!

I'll admit, Killer Instinct does look good (see news this issue for pics). But underneath it's still going to be *Street Fighter II* – if you're lucky. Worst case scenario – *Fatal Fury* with rendered sprites – yeuch!

Concerning the price, David. Well, who believes software companies when they say the games will be cheaper – not me. Look at the older systems. Spectrum £8.95, Amiga £14.95, NES £25, Super NES £50. Notice a pattern emerging?

The same thing will happen with the super consoles as happened with CDs. They cost less to make, but the manufacturers will charge even more for them; believing that you will have to buy them or risk being outmoded.

Until I see and play some decent games on any new system, I won't be retiring my Super NES in a hurry and neither should you.

Enjoy what you've got, 'cos by the year 2000 it will be all total immersion sex and not a game of *Mario Kart* in sight. For your comments, David you get a SUPER GAMER T-Shirt.

Dear SG,
I think you are dead right about there being room for a more serious games shows on TV. Your letters and the media's interest show there is a lot of nostalgia for games from the Speccy/C64 days (although the bloke touting his Amstrad (#7) either supports Alan Suger's Spurs, or had parents that deprived him in childhood!). This is solid proof that a lot of the first interest in computer gaming has been kept up, but these people are left high and dry on the box.

Bad Influence is often idiotic and the bloke on *Games World* patronises small kids and female gamesplayers when he insists on calling them "girlies." Tongue-in-cheek maybe, but people don't really want to be shown up on TV with their friends watching.

I went from the Atari console to C64 after a minor hiccup (my 3.5k Vic 20!). But I have to watch these programmes and put up with crap because at least seeing the games played on TV gives me some idea of graphics and play in motion (I know I should get down to Rumbelows, but I'm too much of a couch potato, and Boots were always rude when I wanted a C64 game played).

I think it's more than a coincidence that *GamesMaster*'s ratings slumped after Dominik 'Diamond Geezer' left, and that loud-mouthed kids' presenter

took over. Dom's wit and innuendo appeal to older viewers, and I certainly watched it because it was entertaining, not for being about games. Your suggestion of the Pro's format put into a programme sounds like the ingredients for the ideal recipe.

On the topic of super consoles, I will definitely wait to see which one I fancy. I upgraded from a Mega Drive to a Super NES, so I won't necessarily get the Ultra 64 for the sake of it. In fact, the non-Sega/ Nintendo machines should allow the likes of Codemasters to make playable games on a very cheap storage format. Whilst massive outlays on development, actors etc will keep a lot of CDs too pricy, I think the medium can allow the Mastertronics of the industry to step in with cheaper, quality stuff.

The CD32 shows the potential for cheap games, although a lot of CD32 games seem to be port overs. Also, CDs could be put out with some of the golden oldies on a compilation, like the Now Games used to; allowing old 'uns to reminisce, and young 'uns to enjoy.

On CDs, I was very surprised at the mighty T-Force's claim that they're already pirated on the 3DO. Is this true? There isn't a high street way of getting blank CDs, so does it mean copying massive data onto loads of disks? Hopefully, this'll be too cumbersome and very expensive, and so will hinder CD piracy. As indeed the SMS3201 cannot copy chip-carts (or the official *Super Metroid*) at the moment; thereby sticking a big two fingers up to all those would-be pirates. Keep up the good work.
Matthew Elliot, Gravesend.

Welcome back to the real world, Matthew. See, I told you that your own comments on the industry would be far more interesting than the flannel you sent in before.

I must say I am constantly amazed at the number of SG readers who think the same way I do about many different issues. The TV coverage of games is a big problem because they do nothing to get away from the 'speccy, spotty computer geek' image that most console gamers are saddled with.

I've never seen *Bad Influence* because it is on during kiddies' hour, but that in itself gives you an idea of the slot the programme makers see consoles fitting into. The show itself features Andy Crane, the guy who all adults hate because he pretends to like all the things kids are into, and Violet Berlin, who seems to be there for the exotic hair factor. Certainly I've never heard her say anything remotely interesting or knowledgeable about games.

Then there's *Games World*, which comes across as a second rate TISWAS and looks like it's filmed on the same budget. The commentators and 'videators' are a sad to say the least, and this too is aimed at the low teen lobotomy market.

The best out of the lot is still *GamesMaster*, but even that is not perfect. Like you Matthew, I think Dominik is great TV, especially when he gets talking about "old one-eye" or "stroking joysticks." But he seems to have toned down now that he has more creative input with the show.

GamesMaster looks and feels more professional than all the others (the new intro is excellent), but it still tries to fit too much into too little time. Ideally the show should be an hour, so that you can get at least ten games reviewed (where the score actually reflects what the reviewers are saying), a couple of challenges (not too long, though), and loads of new and features to attract older viewers.

Remember, Matthew, *GamesMaster* is trying to cover every format known to man, and like multi-format mags, it must get bigger to do the individual formats justice. If you've got a Super NES or 3DO, how much of *GM* is relevant to you?

Given the chance I would love to create the ultimate "Games TV", but this will not happen because a) TV seems to turn people into insufferable ego freaks and I would be forced to shoot myself, and b) it would require a hell of a lot of money and resources, and nobody (except all the viewers) wants to rock the boat.

Not sure about the copied CDs on the 3DO by the way, Matthew, I think T-Force believes that someone is using a gold master disk to run off illegal copies using a factory. I have not seen any copied 3DO CDs. Many thanks for your views Matthew, keep writing.

Dear SUPER GAMER,
The time has come to put pen to paper and express my views on your magazine. And I only have one thing to say, what has happened?

Being a rather 'mature' gamesplayer I was more than delighted back in March 1993 to see the arrival of your first edition of SUPER XS, a clear, concise, well printed publication consisting of nothing but solutions, each one fully mapped in glorious technicolour; designed for the devoted player who wanted that little bit more. A change from the usual run-of-the-mill junk churned out for the masses by all the other publishers.

The main selling point I felt was the fact that the solutions were in full, not SPREAD out over two or three months. Let's be honest, if a gamesplayer is stuck in one certain area of a game, who wants to wait a few months to complete it?

Your reply at this point could well be "They could ask a friend, phone the hotline, or struggle on." Yes they could, but if they do that and overcome the difficulty of the game, then why bother to print a solution after it's no longer needed? Not exactly providing a service where and when required is it!

Slowly, bit by bit, the solutions made way for reviews, previews etc, but still the standard of quality was keeping the magazine in a league of its own – a good head and shoulders above the rest.

But lo, along came issue #6, with an excellent start to the *Mr Nutz* solution, part one. "Part one?" I thought. Is this the start of the rot? Not to worry, I could wait four weeks until my problem area came up. Out came issue #1 of SUPER GAMER, but where was part two? Nowhere in sight!

Now, I do realise you were going through a wee change at the time; a new magazine; new image, but let's be honest with ourselves, was it all necessary? Did anyone ask? Did anyone check with the consumer? Were the public really getting what they wanted?

Now, a few months down the road, SUPER GAMER is well and truly established and I'm sure it sells well, it must, every month there are always letters of congratulations. But I can't help but feel the once glorious, God-like publication is offering no more than any other standard publication.

I do realise there must have been some considerable amount of time, money and resources put into creating SUPER XS, but surely a console as great as Nintendo's deserved it? After all, Sega owners still relish in SEGA XS. Are Sega systems worth more effort than Nintendo's?

Anyway, I've ranted on enough. I realise this may not make publication, but then it's only intended as an expression of feeling, not a grasp for fame.
K Pickering, Troon.

I understand your distress entirely, Mr Pickering. I too was sorry that SUPER XS went the way of the dodo, but unfortunately despite yours and many others devoted readership, the magazine was not selling as well as the Sega version (that is why it is still going).

SUPER XS was doing well for the type of magazine, and as editor of both magazines, I always felt SUPER XS was far more interesting and better quality. But, when it came to merge both Nintendo titles, SUPER XS did lose its purpose – to be a dedicated tips magazine and not like all the review rags.

In creating SUPER GAMER, we have tried to give the readers a more adult style review magazine, but due to the sheer number of games we must review, the tips section is a great deal smaller than it used to be.

We will endeavour to bring you all the latest solutions in future issues, and there's going to be a 68-page tips and cheats book on the cover of next issue so that you are completely up-to-date with Nintendo tactics.

All we can do with SUPER GAMER is give you the same quality you came to expect in SUPER XS, but widening your vista of the Nintendo world and hopefully giving you a review mag that isn't "just like all the rest."

Dear SG,
I could not agree more with your favourable comments about the ZX Spectrum. As a very recent Super NES owner, I have been very disappointed at the lack of variety and availability of games (not to mention the price, but enough has been said on that subject already).

I still have fond memories of typing in listings from my "Sinclair Programs" mags (remember them?) which taught me to program my own, albeit simplistic, games. This gave me a feeling of satisfaction which I doubt I could ever achieve with a console.

And as for "Fanatical Reader, Wibbleland"'s criticism of the "jerky scrolling, the four colours, the crap sound and the long loading times", well, the machine is over ten years old!!

Admittedly the graphics were abysmal in the olden days, but these improved dramatically over the years, really making the most of the Speccy's capabilities. Compare *Manic Miner* with the Speccy versions of *Savage* or *R-Type* and you'll see what I mean.

And graphics aren't everything. For the price of a Speccy game, I would find it impossible to obtain Super NES games with the originality of *Back 2 Skool*, *Wizball*, or the rubber-keyed bashing of *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*, and the hilarity of the Delta 4 adventures. Incidentally, do text adventures exist for the Super NES, or even icon-based type puzzlers?

Forgive me for being morose, but as a relative "oldie", I can't resist reminiscing on an age long since past. However I am not trying to belittle the excellent capabilities of the Super NES, they just need to be exploited more. And if anything can help me become a dedicated Super NES player, it's your mag.
Sharon Brindle, Fincham
PS Where can I find a copy of *Super Puyo Puyo*, and can you get *Wizball* for the Super NES?

Thanks for your comments on the mag, Sharon. The fact that the graphics were abysmal wasn't the point though, was it? They played so well. In answer to your questions, Sharon, there are no text adventures for the Super NES; after all, where would you plug in the keyboard? Even icon based puzzlers are virtually nonexistent. The closest things I can think of are of course *ShadowRun*, *Theme Park* and *Syndicate* (reviewed this issue). These are all highly original and can be said to be the closest thing to the Delta 4 adventures.

PS Try any importer for *Super Puyo Puyo*, but *Wizball* has never appeared.

Dear SUPER GAMER,
I feel I must write regarding my views on the Ultra 64. Apparently, it will be a machine capable of producing CD quality sound and better than arcade graphics, but the question which needs to be asked is, will the games be any good?

I personally long for the machine which has graphics so good, you can't get any better. Maybe then the programmers will concentrate on gameplay, originality and longevity.

Many games I've played cannot be faulted graphics-wise, but they are just so boring, repetitive, or too easy to sustain interest. *Mortal Kombat* (the original) and *Aladdin* are both good examples of this.
David Westrip, Aylesham

Both *Killer Instinct* and *Cruisn' USA* are tried and tested game formulas. One is a beat-'em-up, the other is a racing game. The only difference is incredibly well defined sprites and speed. For a game that will truly exploit the new machines, you would have to look at VR, or first person perspective games that allow you to visit any planet, or walk around an entire city.

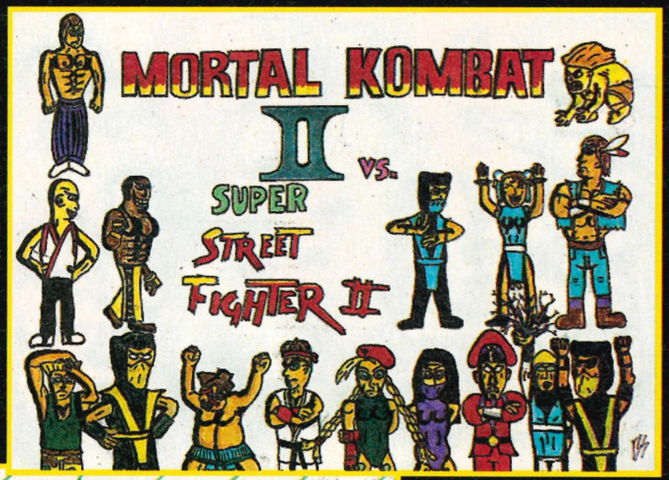
Elite 2: Frontier would be the perfect game for the Ultra 64 because you could have real starfields, perfectly rendered ships, plus you would be able to walk freely around each space station and engage in separate missions and sub-games. The possibilities are endless as long as you don't constrain all the new games to beat-'em-ups and shoot-'em-ups.

Grumpy old sod...

Chah! I'm in a bad mood this month – it's late on a Sunday night just before the deadline, and I've still got over 30 pages of the magazine to design. And you thought that designers have it easy. As a result of this irritating situation, for which I'm missing *Mad Max 2*, I'm going to be very rude about this month's Gallery entries. If you want to send in some artwork for possible display on these pages (if you're lucky enough to catch me in a good mood), despatch them post haste to *Gallery, SUPER GAMER, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 1NF*. And nobody's sent me any *Northern Exposure* tapes yet (see last month). And *Frasier*'s finished. And shops have started putting up their Christmas displays. In October. And the Tory conference just finished without anyone hitting Michael Heseltine with an egg. Life can suck, can't it?



◁ *Did you read the Starfox comic strip in Nintendo's official American mag, Nintendo Power? Yeah. so did I. Some git's pinched all our back issues, though. Moving swiftly and unconnectedly on, Graham Gaskin of Strood, wherever that is, wins this month's T-shirt. But Fox can't be dead! If he is, Argonaut are wasting a lot of time and effort on Starwing 2.*



▷ *Obviously out of their heads on drugs (dilated pupils, strange staring expressions, jerky dancing) are Ben Samworth of somewhere or other's combined combatants. Wibble!*

▽ *Yellow fever for the Gamer crew, thanks to Brendan Lewis from the Emerald Isle. (Poor old Ryan gets the cross-dressing treatment again.) And if you want back issues, order them from our back issues page, you scrounger!*



△ *Chris Hughes of Hitchin, Herts (any relation to Chris Hughes of Wormley, Herts?) sends in this colour photocopy of a sneering T Hawk, who looks suspiciously more realistic than the chap in the game.*



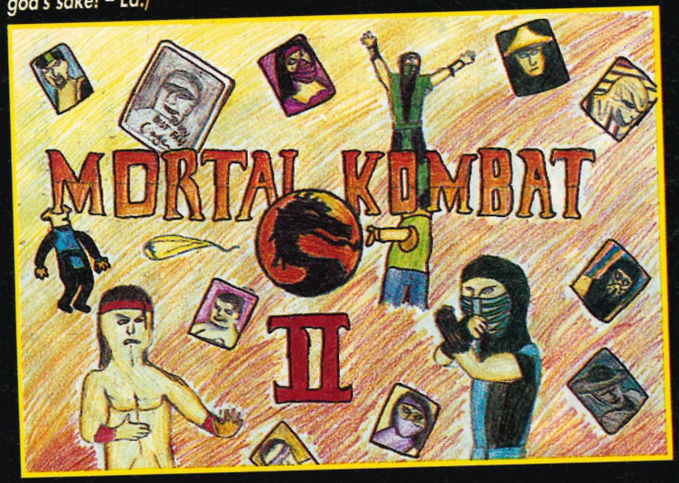
▷ *With this stunning demonstration of how to integrate artwork elements into titles, Kunal Samanta from Great Glen shows that he has the talent and potential to become a magazine designer. On (CUT! – Ed.)*



▽ *A compositional masterpiece from Southminster's own Chris Bird. That's one in the eye for the chap on the left! I think there's a designer's job for you on (CUT! CUT! CUT! Andy, get some sleep, for god's sake! – Ed.)*

▽ *A selection of Super Deformed types parade their way across these hallowed pages, courtesy of Matthew Hogg of Heywood. Cute Cammy, but I'd look peeved too if I had feet like that.*





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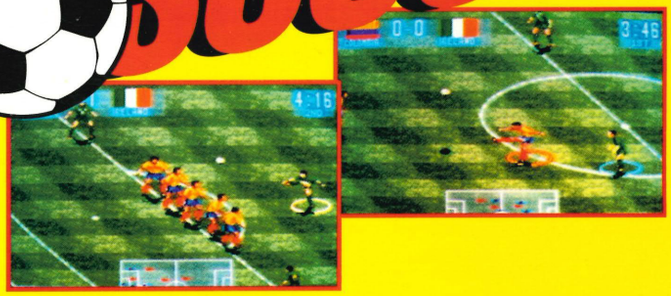


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