SPECIAL REPORT ON CENSORSHIP: FREEDOM VS. RESPONSIBILITY!

A DECKER PUBLICATIONS PERIODICAL

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

ELECTRONIC GAMES

THE MAGAZINE OF INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES



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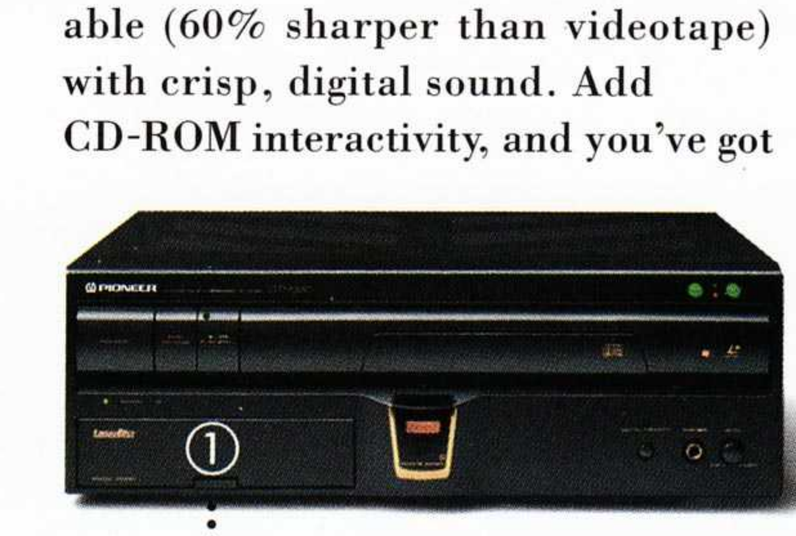
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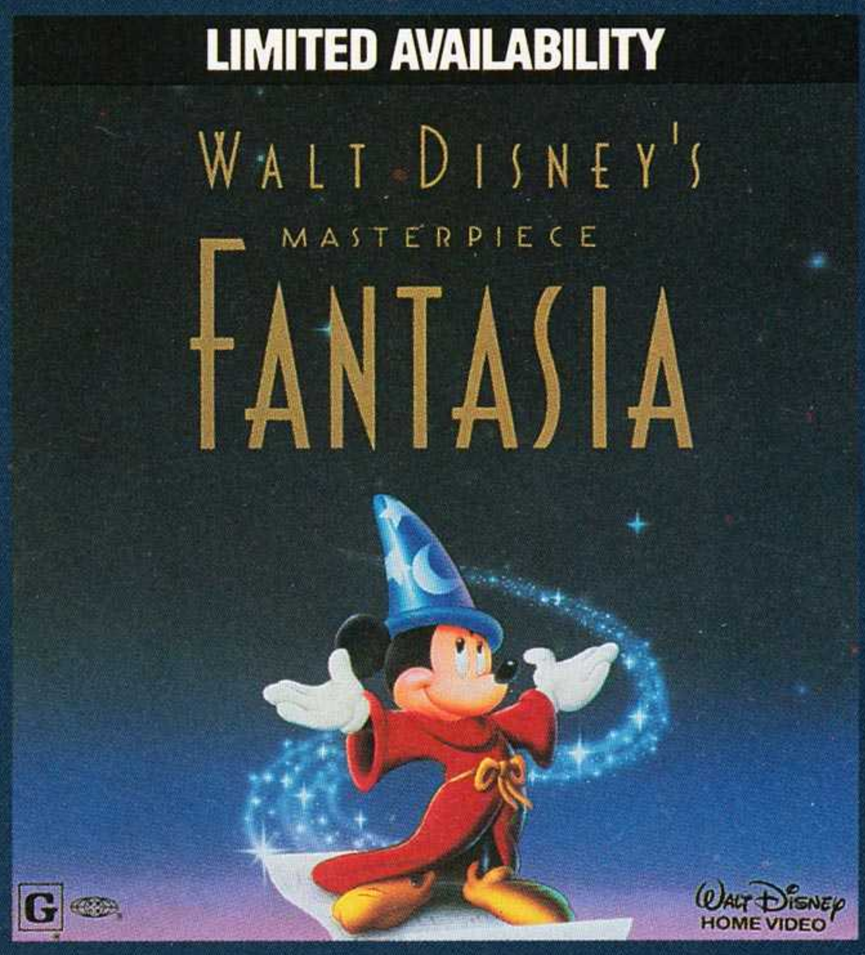


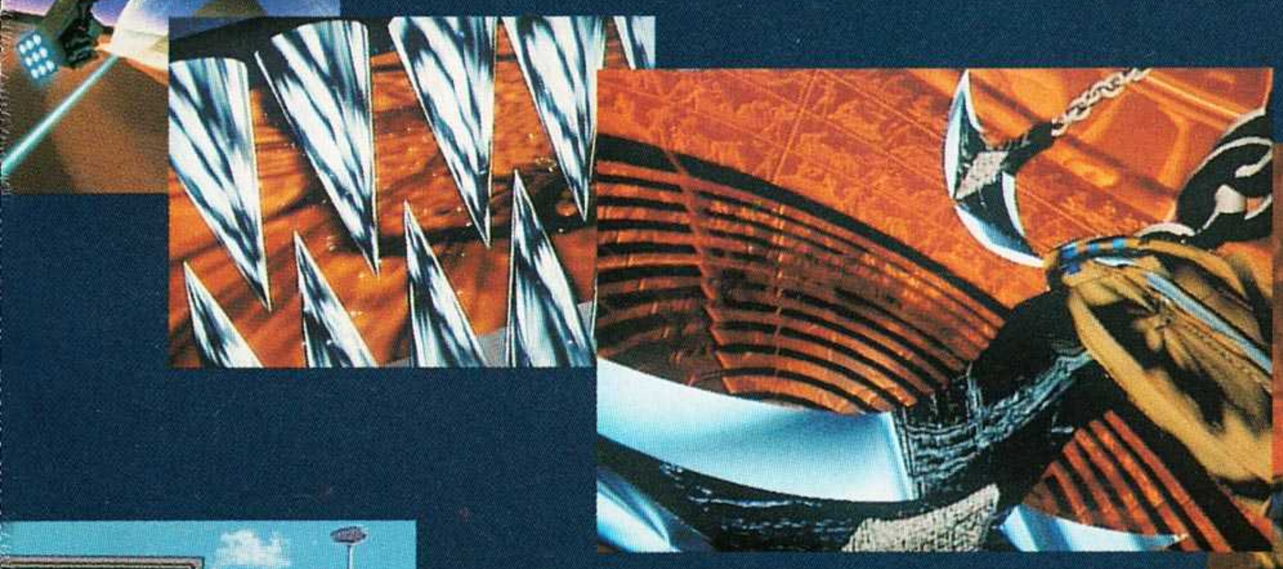
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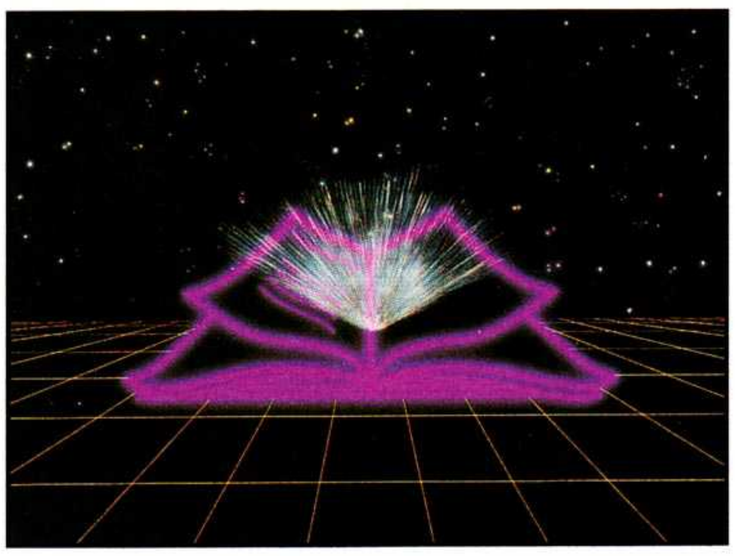


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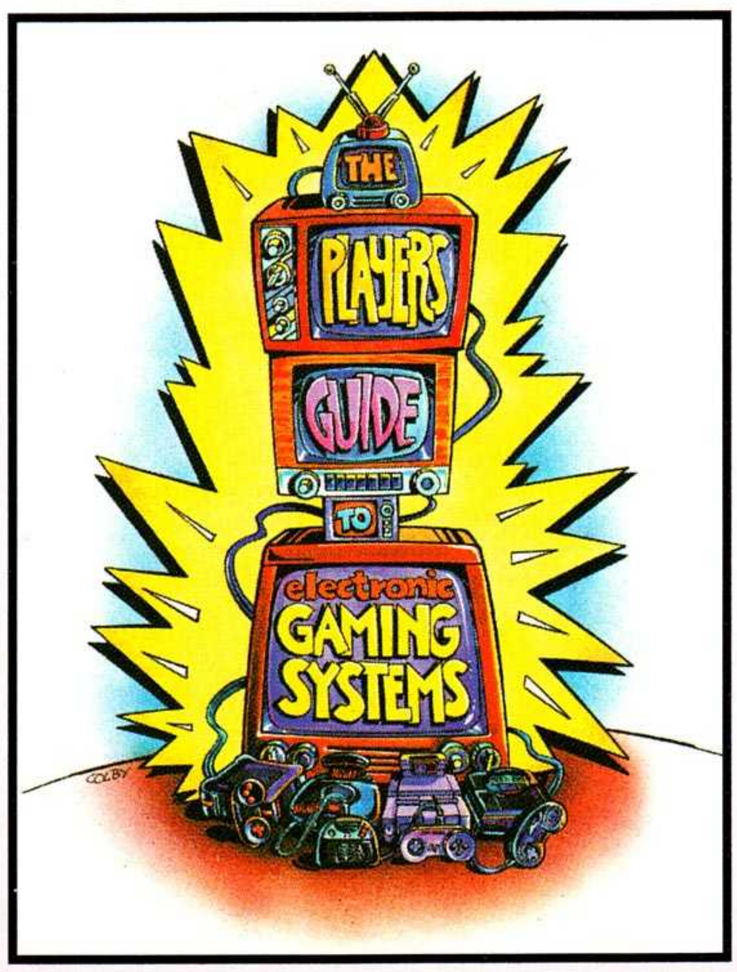
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  The holidays are here, and our editors have searched Santa's workshop for the latest products that will bring a smile to the gamer on your list. **78**

- **Players' Guide to Electronic Gaming Systems**
  The **EG** staff puts all the state-of-the-art systems under the microscope to reveal the faults and virtues of each. **77**

About the art— We at EG would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:

Bill Vann — Cover
Gary Colby — Players' Guide to Electronic Gaming Systems
Eric Curry — All department logos, and various photography
Jeff Mangiat — All I Want For Christmas...
Cliff Spohn — EG Interview
Mark Watts — Pinball Feature
Hey kids, do ya know what time it is? It's Howdy Doody time! It's Howdy Doody time! Bob Smith and Howdy too, say Howdy do to you! Let's give a rousing cheer, 'cause Howdy Doody's here! Come on let's start the show — now here we go!... This has been a paid announcement.

MEATY • EVIL

Sure you've played action/adventure games before, and you're sitting there thinking "Been there, done that", there's not a game made you can't beat the crap out of— big yawn right!

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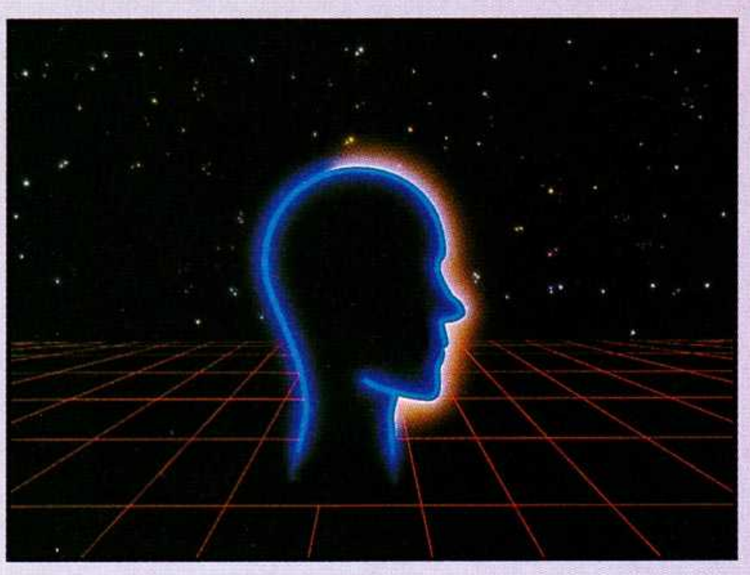


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POWER ON!

The Magazine of Interactive Experiences

Have you noticed something different about the covers lately? We've scrapped the old sub-line beneath the logo. **Electronic Games** has become "The Magazine of Interactive Experiences."

Naturally, we're hoping this will bring us new readers. When I came up with it about a month ago, I imagined potential readers, gamers of impeccable taste and vast knowledge every one, searching the newsstands for that one indispensible publication of their dreams.

Time after time, week after week, they scan the display, but always in vain. No gaming magazine that goes beyond the narrow limitations of news, previews and reviews gladdens their eyes.

Then they see it: **Electronic Games**, "The Magazine of Interactive Experiences." Their acute senses, honed by a hundred RPGs, instantly perceive that this is the periodical for which they have waited since they took controller in hand and entered the digital universe of their first electronic game.

A magazine that understands! They have long known that electronic gaming is a hobby, and that it is not about cartridges and disks. The power of electronic gaming is the intense involvement between player and game. And now, finally, it has come: "The Magazine of Interactive Experiences"!

The rest of the world fades.

The musical score of **Mortal Kombat** pounds in their ears.

With the reflexes that blasted a thousand Bosses, they reach out and grasp the last available copy of **Electronic Games**, The Magazine of Interactive Experiences.

They want it.

They need it.

They must have it.

Pausing only to once more admire the ingenuity of the editor who conceived the Sublime Sub-line, they pay the cashier and rush home to read every single word. The copy occupies a place of honor, perhaps on the night stand beside the bed or, more likely, in the reading receptacle in the bathroom.

Well, that's what I put in my letter to Santa Claus this year. I'll be satisfied if the cover represents the contents of the magazine more faithfully, making it easier for sophisticated gamers to find us amid the clutter of newsstand titles competing for attention.

We've made a few interior adjustments, too. It's impossible to stay on top of electronic gaming without constant fine-tuning. We've upgraded the visuals, added more sidebars and "instant interviews", and increased the page-count substantially.

The new review format debuts this issue. I never got comfortable with the last one. This one is designed to give more pertinent data in less space to leave room for more analysis, larger photos, and behind-the-screens conversations with game-makers.

"You know, Arnie, when we do this redesign, we could give you more room for your editorial," Art Director Juli McMeekin said to me on the phone. I was momentarily dazzled by this shameless attempt to curry favor, but I quickly recovered my equilibrium.

"No, I don't think so," I told her, admittedly with a trace of reluctance. "I already talk too much. More space would just encourage me."

Due to this decision, I can't reveal the Secrets of the Universe until some future issue when I'm not running out of space. I only have enough space to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Chanukah!

— Arnie Katz

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DECEMBER, 1993

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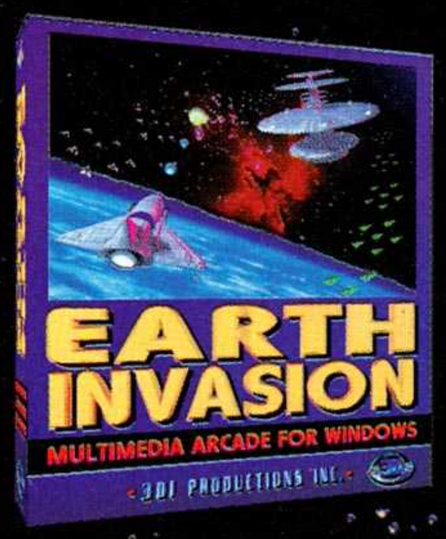






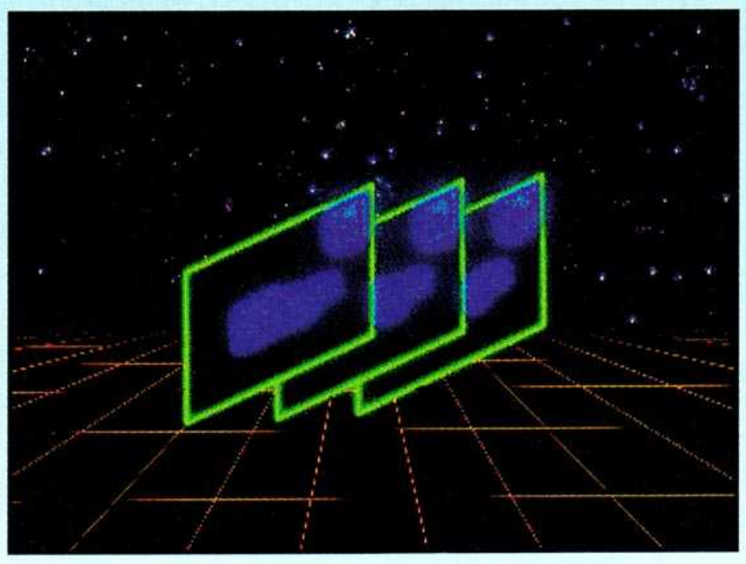
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FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

Game Over?

My appetite whetted by Bill Kunkel's glowing review, I rushed out and purchased a copy of David Sheff's *Game Over*, the detailed account of the meteoric rise and cutthroat dominance of Nintendo. Though I think it lagged near the end, I found it fascinating, even slightly scary in the closing pages, when we come to realize how seriously Nintendo plans to continue and expand its empire.

Perhaps it was particularly frightful to me because I am a devoted Sega supporter. Sheff's book does mention Sega as Nintendo's first *valid* competition, though we don't get much insight into Sega's present and future. It leads me to wonder if Sega is only worth an amusing footnote in history, or will it be a driving force in the industry as our present technology evolves?

Michael N. Hidalgo
New York, NY

Check the Kunkel Report *again this month, Michael. Bill offers the latest in his observations of the continuing Nintendo-Sega competition saga.*

The Gaming of America

Your editorial in the September **EG** caught my interest. I am 56 and female, my kids are out of the house (and college), and I have reached a point where I feel I deserve to indulge myself.

I lust for fantasy and fun horror games (I adore vampires) as well as WWII strategy simulations, flight simulations and anything *Star Trek*. I have no interest in hack-slash-ninja-arcade games, but don't mind if others do. I'd love to own a small neat unit like a Genesis to carry with me on trips, but they mostly do not play the game categories I love, and it would be absurd to buy duplicates of my favorite programs to fit different equipment.

When will the industry invent a converter pack of some kind that will enable all types of games to be interchangeable? Is "standardization" a dirty word? My dream-fantasy computer is a multimedia laptop complete with speakers, sound-card, CD-ROM, at least a 340-Meg hard drive, sold at a price comparable to desktops, or separate components that would add [these] to existing laptops, so that our game addiction can travel.

I do believe the industry is missing out on a valuable market by overlooking senior citizens. I have heard of senior citizens' computer clubs, an idea which is in its infancy. In ten years or less, a lot of computer-literate business execs will be retiring and will need to exercise their brains as well as their bodies. Computer gaming is a natural.

Harriet Birzon
Buffalo, NY

Sociologists have acknowledged the "graying of the nation" for a while, now, and politicos listen well to the AARP, but it does seem that the marketing mavens for this industry have yet to be convinced that the game-playing numbers of the over-50 crowd are significant. Perhaps with the development of the digital highway, more seniors will take to the road...

A converter pack allowing play of all kinds of games would require computing power at least equivalent to your super laptop, probably cost more—and would get a pretty jaundiced eye from the game machine makers as well. As it happens, some game publishers are bringing out classic titles as shovelware for multimedia systems, so something like your dream machine might do the job. Let us know if you find one in desktop price range, though, Harriet! (By the way, check out our holiday guide in this issue for a laptop game port...)

Something Old, Something New

I think **EG** is one of the better magazines on the market for video game players. Your poll shows a desire to set aside the myth that all gamers are teenage boys. I am 44 years old and have been gaming since **Pong** was first introduced. One fault I have with your poll is that older gaming systems—Atari, ColecoVision, Intellivision and NES (I own one of each)—were not included. I have 80 games for these systems, and my children and I get many hours of enjoyment from playing them. My son, 15, and daughter, 8, both get a real kick out of playing some of the old classics.

I realize that **EG** couldn't possibly cover all the new systems and the old ones too, but please, if you ask what people are playing you should allow for all systems, old and new.

James V. D'Anna
Pensacola, FL

*Acknowledged, James, that you're a fan of the older systems, as are we—but with the exception of the NES there is nothing new coming out for the systems you list, and **EG**'s mandate is to keep the gaming world abreast of the latest events and products in the field.*

Down in the Grumps

Please print surveys on the back of advertisements, not on the back of articles. In the past, this has almost always been the reason I haven't responded. Because of your plea, I made an exception and went out of my way to photocopy your survey (adding an additional 10¢ to the 29¢ stamp mentioned), fill out the poor result, put a stamp on it and send it in, hoping you can read my answers to your questions. I don't intend to sound grumpy, but this has been a sore point with me for quite a while now.

Shirley Cline
Hyattsville, MD

Things have to go where they fit, Shirley. We're familiar with the problem, of course—we've filled out a few surveys, coupons, etc., in our time—and are happy to pass on your request to our production department. But you'd be surprised how many considerations go into the placement of all the elements in a magazine, and that one, unfortunately, tends to be low in the priority list.

Keep your letters coming, folks, to:

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GEAR WORKS!

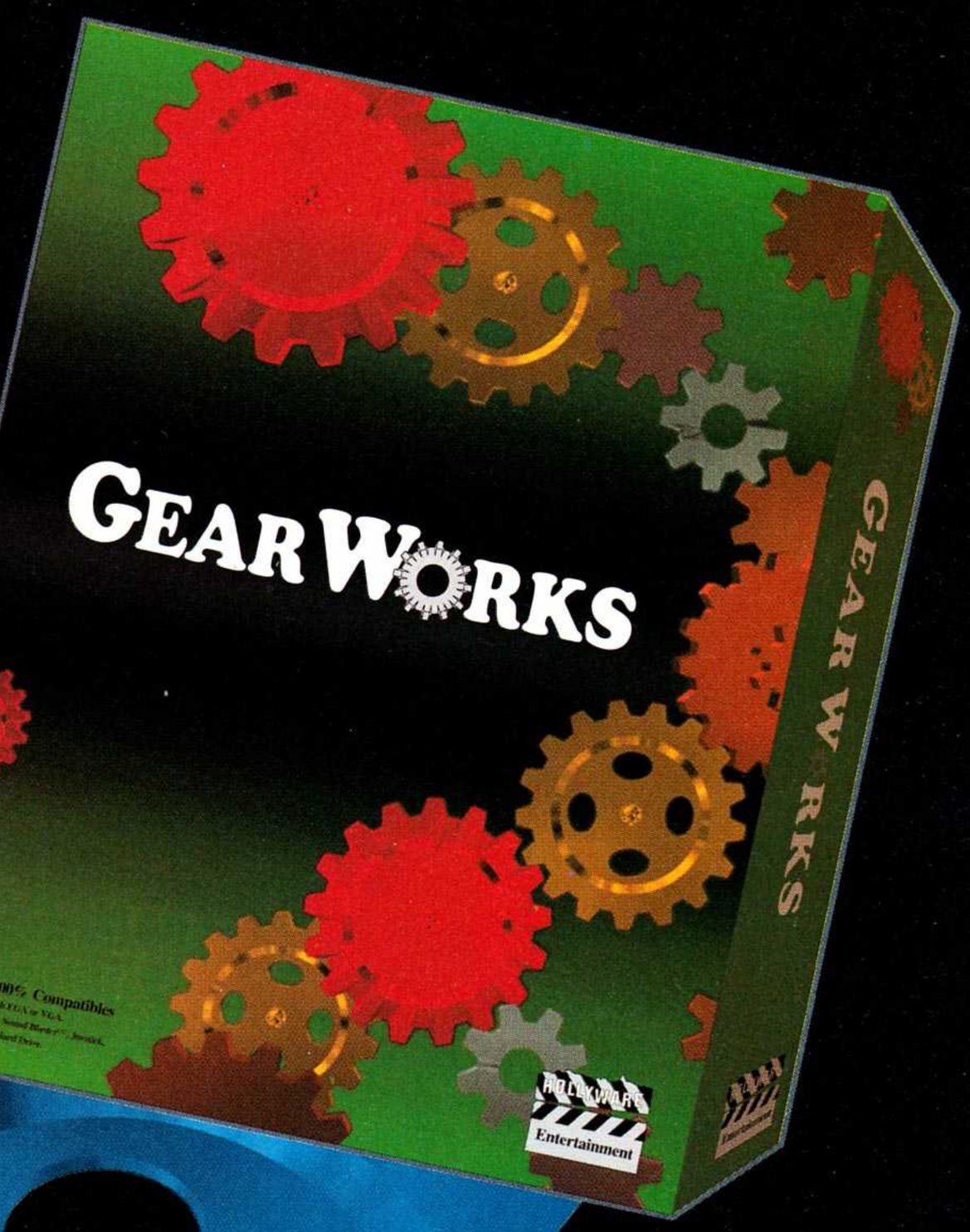
This puzzle game will keep your gears spinning!

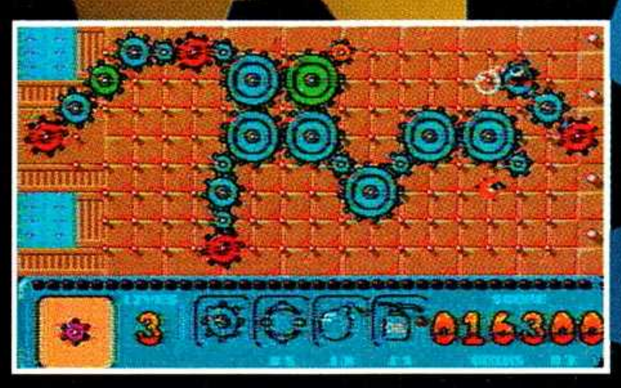
Gear Works is the most unique puzzle game to hit the market in years. In Gear Works you will connect gears of various sizes and colors together in order to transform Twelve Wonders of the Ancient and Modern world into time pieces, while racing against time and friction. Watch out for the Pottins, two gremlin like creatures, that will torment you by rusting the gears and breaking off the mounting pegs.

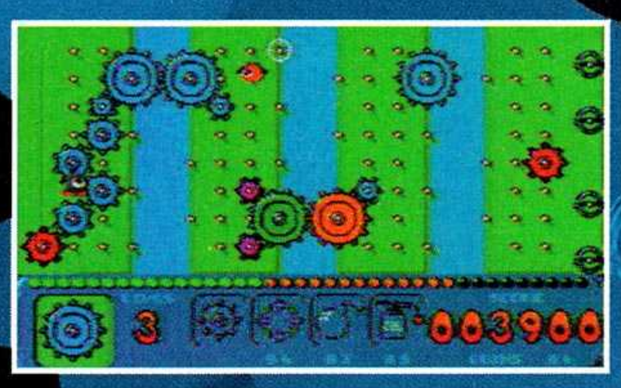
Game features: Various gear types, over one hundred puzzles to solve, bombs to blow up incorrectly placed gears and a gun to shoot those pesky Pottins off the play area.

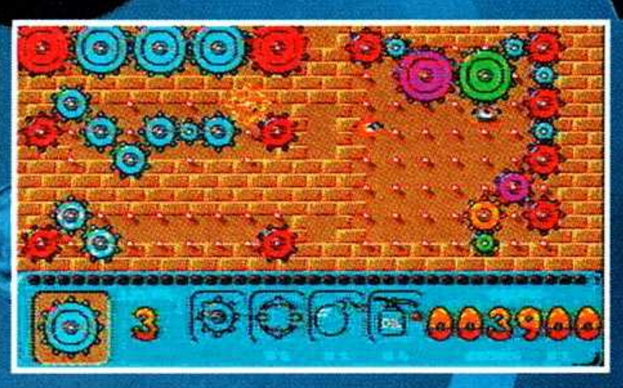
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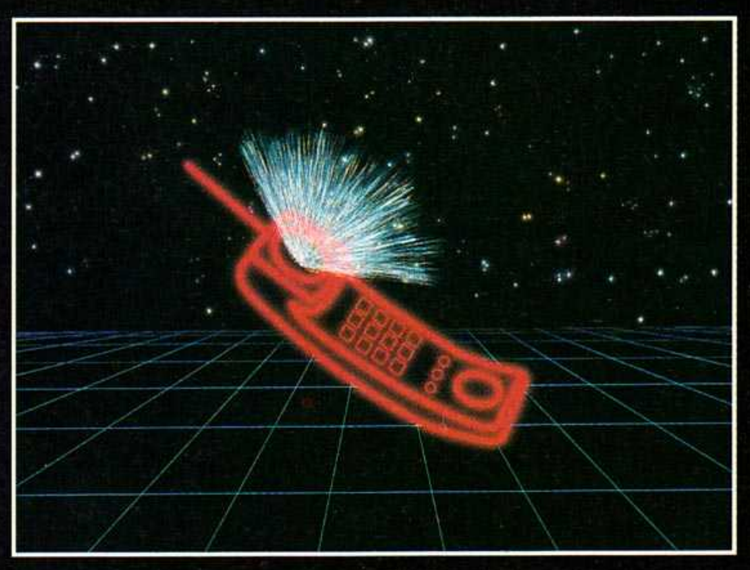




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EG HOTLINE

Compiled by Joyce Worley & Ross Chamberlain

Virgin Signs Clive Barker

Virgin Games, which will change its name to Virgin Interactive Entertainment this fall, signed a major deal with leading British horror author/filmmaker Clive Barker.

Barker, whose short stories have already inspired several films including the *Hellraiser* series, will create a pair of original scenarios for Virgin.



Ms. California World Stars in Date Sim

Tonia Keyser, Ms. California World, is the ultimate dream date, in **Man Enough**, a dating simulator (Tsunami/CD-ROM). Billed as entertainment that doubles as a social trainer, **Man Enough** uses digitized voices and an hour of video, as the user tries to successfully negotiate dates with five women before the encounter with Ms. Keyser.

Media Vision Plants CD-ROM Garden

The Forever Growing Garden (Media Vision/IBM and Macintosh CD-ROM) is just what armchair gardeners need. Players shop for seeds in a hardware store, check the calendar, plant, then defend the crop from gophers and other predators, and eventually sell their produce in a Farmers Market or Flower Shop. Created by C-Wave, it's botanically correct, including 300 screens of animation, insects, and tools. The company is also readying **Critical Path**, a CD-ROM product developed by Mechadeus that combines motion picture, video game and computer generated animations in the adventures of a renegade helicopter pilot who moves through 15 levels of life-or-death confrontations. The heroine, played by Eileen Weisinger, uses artificial intelligence to develop a relationship with the player as she travels through a post-apocalyptic setting studded with live actors and extensive special effects.

Quantum Gate, by HyperBole Studios, uses live actors, text, and video to take the player through a mixed media experience set amid an intergalactic struggle that combines experiences of theatre, cinema and the novel.

Capcom, TSR To Make Coin-Op

TSR and Capcom stunned attendees of the GenCon Game Fair with a sneak preview of the world's first coin-op Dungeons & Dragons role-playing game. The two companies are working together to create **D&D: Tower of Doom**, a 134-Meg extravaganza set to debut in arcades in February of 1994.

The gamer chooses from four character types, fighter, cleric, dwarf or elf (uses both weapons and magic), outfits the party with supplies and information, then proceeds into the adventure armed with over two dozen attack maneuvers.



TSR's D&D: Tower of Doom will hit the arcades soon.



Critical Path sends players through harrowing levels.

Pink Goes To Starlight

TecMagik, publisher of **Pink Goes to Hollywood**, took the game to Starlight Foundation's day-long event, Celebrate Starlight, so kids could meet the Pink Panther (Starlight's official mascot). Co-Founder Emma Samms and actors Mel Gibson and Gil Gerard were on hand at the fund raiser.

Behind the Headlines

by Joyce Worley

Highway Under Construction

The so-called digital highway, the flow of electronic information into American homes, gets closer to completion each month. The headlines are full of reports of companies jockeying for position, as they get ready to ride the roads.

The recently announced acquisition by Bell Atlantic of TCI, and the agreement for BellSouth to buy stock in Prime Management, underscore the coming changes. In both cases, the phone companies are strengthening their positions in interactive video by tying up with cable operations companies.

A vast amount of interactive TV and phone services are being readied for home delivery, to increase our entertainment and educational options exponentially. Speaking as a gamer, I can hardly wait.

Schwarzenegger Stars In Pinball

Arnold Schwarzenegger stars in **Last Action Hero**, Data East's latest feature-laden pinball machine. Among the special trimmings are a Ruger Blackhawk .45 Caliber Pistol that propels the ball onto the field, music from AC/DC, Queensryche and MegaDeth, and a Super Crane that moves the ball from ramp to ramp.



The Last Action Hero is Arnie's latest pinball venture.

Linksters Meet In Las Vegas

In one of the first formal get-togethers arranged by gamers, fans of the Access golf simulation **Links** got together this August in Las Vegas at the Flamingo Hilton Hotel. More than two dozen computer duffers, most of whom communicate regularly over Delphi, met one another face to face for the first time.

A lavish spread was also provided by Access, which sent their top **Links** tech support people to help out with the event. Access also contributed T-shirts and other **Links**-related paraphernalia.

Fujifilm Sponsors Swimming, Tennis

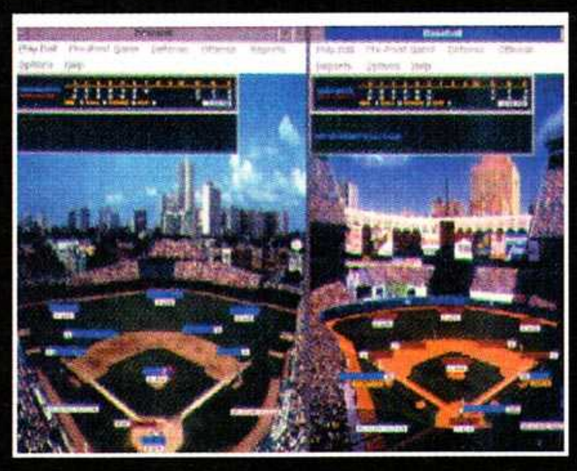
Computer media maker Fuji Photo Film U.S.A. sponsored the mixed doubles championship of the 1993 U.S. Open Tennis Championships in Flushing Meadows at the end of August and beginning of September, for the third consecutive year. Fuji also sponsors tennis stars Stefan Edberg and Gabriela Sabatini.

The company also entered into its third multiyear sponsorship for United States Swimming, Inc., which conducts U.S. and Junior National Swimming Championships and selects and manages the U.S. National Team. As "Official Sponsor" and "Official Supplier," Fuji's sponsorship will extend beyond the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Other major sports sponsorships by Fujifilm include product sponsorships for World Cup Soccer USA 1994, U.S. Track and Field Team and the National Football League.

APBA Baseball Gets Maxis Distribution

Baseball for Windows (Miller Associates/MS-DOS) will be easier to find, thanks to Miller's agreement with Maxis. Under the new arrangement, Maxis will take over sales and distribution of the program, which contains APBA Baseball, League Manager, Advanced Draft and StatMaster.



The split-screen view gives the user even more control.

CD Takes A Coffee Break

The Coffee Break CD Collection (Villa Crespo/MS-DOS CD-ROM) contains the first 21 Coffee Break titles. Company president Daniel Sejzer says they shoveled them all into one package that "won't take up a lot of space on your shelves and won't bust your bank account."

The collection holds such diverse games as **Rodeo Games, 3-D Pinball, Turn N Burn, Canyon Capers**, casino games **Amarillo Slim's 7 Card Stud, Dr. Wong's Jacks+ Video Poker, Casino Craps** and **Rukus Roulette.**

ATTENTION:

TEMPORAL PROTECTORATE

Mars shuttle boarding in 15 minutes.
Mission objective TBA en route.



21 May 2318, 065IZ

A rip has been detected in the fabric of time. Only moments remain until all that mankind has accomplished is laid waste. Your objective: Journey through time—from prehistoric lands to the distant future—to prevent any compromise in the established continuum. But before the game is over, you must discover who… or what…is the source of this mayhem, and bring it to a halt!

THE JOURNEYMAN PROJECT

Take a ride through time on the CD Adventure that will alter history!

Available on MPC and Macintosh CD

PRESTO STUDIOS

QUADRA INTERACTIVE

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MPC version by Quadra Interactive, Inc.
Available at retailers throughout the continuum, or by contacting
Quadra Interactive, P.O. Box 188033, Carlsbad, CA 92009-9793

Sonic Is Top Hit Says Q Survey

Sonic is as familiar to boys ages 6-11 as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Michael Jordan, according to the influential Carton "Q" Study. The demographically-based survey



surveys the recognition factor, and therefore the marketability, of celebrities, characters, movies, theme parks, toys and video games, among other things.

Sonic hit number one in the video games/video game character category, with his partner Tails coming in fourth. Sonic's familiarity further increased this fall following the debut of his Saturday morning ABC show and a weekday syndicated series.

FlightLink Goes South

South American air travelers will be able to play games and phone home using FlightLink's seatback monitors and handsets provided by In-Flight Phone Brazil Corp., a joint venture between Oakbrook Terrace, IL-based Inflight Phone International and ARBI Participações S.A. of Rio de Janeiro.

Daniel B. Birmann, ARBI chairman, said, "With South American air traffic projected to grow 50 percent by the end of the decade, we believe there is substantial demand in the region for FlightLink's high quality passenger communications services."

In-Flight has established affiliations in Canada and Europe, including Russia, and has obtained licenses from Greenland, Iceland, Puerto Rico and the United Arab Emirates.

EG Readers' Popularity Poll

October 1993

These games were voted the favorites in EG's monthly poll (see last page in this issue). Duplicate numbers represent ties.

Favorite Video Games

1. *Street Fighter II Championship Edition*, Capcom
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
3. *Ecco the Dolphin*, Sega

Favorite Computer Games

1. *X-Wing*, LucasArts
2. *Eye of the Beholder*, SSI
3. *HardBall III*, Accolade
3. *Indiana Jones & the Fate of Atlantis*, LucasArts

Favorite Multimedia Games

1. *Sherlock Holmes, Consult ing Detective*, ICOM
2. *Time Gal*, Renovation
2. *Sewer Shark*, Sony Imagesoft
2. *The 7th Guest*, Virgin
3. *King's Quest 6*, Sierra Online

Favorite Coin-Op

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Midway
2. *Street Fighter II Turbo*, Capcom
3. *Virtua Racing*, Sega
3. *NBA Jam*, Williams

Interplay Gets Sega License



It's official now. Interplay has received a license to develop and market products for the Sega Genesis and Sega CD.

The first product to be released under the licensing arrangement will be **The Lost Vikings** for the Genesis, which will be ready for Christmas shoppers, to be followed by **Rock 'N'Roll Racing** and **Clay Fighter** for the Genesis early in 1994.

TDK Disk Packs Add MicroLeague Football

Computer gamers buying blank disks should check out TDK this fall. TDK Electronics is bundling **MicroLeague Football, The Coach's Challenge** with 100,000 packs.

The PC/MS-DOS game lets players coach their own pro football teams with real players and statistics.

Capcom, Data East Fight Over Coin-Ops

Capcom filed a suit against Data East in September, alleging that Data East's coin-op game **Fighter's History** infringes on Capcom's own **Street Fighter**. The company felt that the similarities are too close.

David Patterson, Director of Sales and Marketing for Data East, USA, said the company has no comment at this time.

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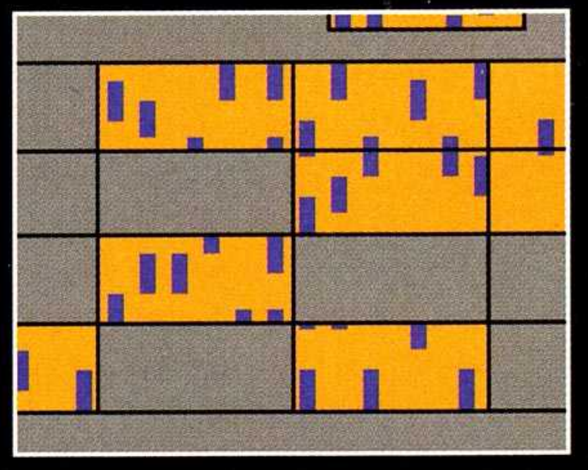
Holobyte Launches Air Combat Bundle

Spectrum Holobyte launched an ambitious multimedia package, *Art of the Kill*, a guide to modern air combat. It includes Pete Bonanni's book, *Art of the Kill*, a videotape *Fighter Air Combat Trainer*, and a playable demo of **Falcon 3.0**, the company's F-16 simulation.

The package is available at software stores, for about $35.

Celeris Offers Free Puzzles

Celeris is sending out an upgrade disk for **Flix Mix** (see review this issue) to everyone who returns the registration card from the original product.



New FlixMix puzzles will tease you with their trickery.

The new disk contains four more puzzles with even more sophisticated graphics, some of which use fractals.

Jaguar Names Developers

Atari announced that 20 companies have become licensed developers for the Atari Jaguar, and some have already started work on Atari projects scheduled for release during the first half of 1994. Several additional companies are currently in negotiation and expected to develop games for the Jag.

Companies currently licensed are Anco, Dimensions Technologies, Eurosoft, High Voltage, Krisalis, Loriciel, Maxis, Microids, Midnight, Ocean, Rebellion, Retour 2048, Silmarils, Titus, Tiertex, Tradewest, Trimark and U.S. Gold. Telegames is working on versions of **Ultimate Brain Games** and **European Soccer Challenge**. Beyond Games will release **Battlewheels**.



Around here nice guys don't finish last - they don't even finish. Better know how to drive or Catfish Louie and company will take turns making your Backroad Racer a pile of twisted, burning wreckage. Then taunt you as you watch instant replays of your wipeouts. Video clips give hints and make threats while you try to outrun cops and race on four different tracks. Use 3-D animated instructions to build a model of your car so it's easier to identify the torched remains. Available for IBM on CD-ROM.



The model makes the game better. The game makes the model better.™

After you build your car you can follow all traffic laws and be a safe & courteous driver.

{Of course, you could also go play an action-packed game of hopscotch with your sister.}

Video clips just like this one make the game extra bad. But in a good way.



BACKROAD RACERS™

AYE·CARUMBA!

HUT!

SUGAR...

WOW!

COOL

RAD

WILD

ZOOM

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THE HOTTEST TITLES. STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY. GAME SAMPLING. CAN YOU HANDLE IT?

























SM

Dig Gets Deeper In Development

LucasArts' deep space adventure, **The Dig**, co-created by Steven Spielberg and Brian (**Loom**) Moriarty, has moved into its next phase of development. Brian completed his work on the project, and Hal



The Dig is hoping to be a big hit with hard-core PC gamers.

Barwood (creator of **Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis**) and Dave (**Day of the Tentacle**) Grossman will finish the game.



The game's movie-like scenes grab the player's attention.

The Dig explores the ruins of a lost civilization, as a team stranded on a hostile planet tries to understand alien technology that can return them to Earth. **The Dig** is scheduled for release in 1994.

In other space news, LucasArts announced a *Star Wars* screen saver for Windows and Macintosh to ship



The point-and-click interface makes exploring more fun.



Your journey will take you to deep space mining sites.

this winter. The disk will hold 10 modules of images and trivia from the movies.

EA Forms Sound Group

Electronic Arts established a special group to pioneer sound techniques for new computer and CD platforms. A seven-man staff is headed by Murray Allen, veteran performer, session musician, Emmy-winner, designer of audio technology and former president of Universal Sound Studios.

EA will use the new G-MIDI (General-Musical Instrument Digital Interface), a standard now supported by top-drawer 16-Bit sound cards for home PCs.

The first product to use the new sound standard is **Seawolf**, which features over 100 sound samples (torpedoes loading and firing, sonar, waterfall, whale songs and many others).

Top Selling Software September 1993

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Research of Washington, DC., based on units sold by 10 retail chains, representing over 1300 stores.

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *X-Wing Mis.#1, Imperial Pursuit*, LucasArts
2. *X-Wing*, LucasArts
3. *Betrayal at Krondor*, Sierra
4. *Pirates! Gold*, MicroProse
5. *Syndicate*, Electronic Arts
6. *Tornado*, Spectrum Holobyte
7. *Seventh Guest*, Virgin
8. *Links - 386 Pro*, Access
9. *HardBall III*, Accolade
10. *Might & Magic: Dark Side of Xeen*, New World

Top CD-ROM Titles

1. *Seventh Guest*, Virgin
2. *Romaterial*, Moon Valley
3. *MPC Wizard*, Aris
4. *King's Quest VI*, Sierra
5. *Ind. Jones & The Fate of Atlantis*, LucasArts
6. *Corel Art Show*, Corel
7. *Compton's Encyclopedia Upgrade*, Compton's
8. *Cinemania*, Microsoft
9. *Street Atlas USA*, Delorme
10. *Lightening*, Lucid

Colorado Kids Win American Tail Trip

Capstone Software treated Michael Milroy, 8, of Colorado Springs, CO, and his family to a day at Universal Studios Florida and lunch with Fievel as the grand prize to the 1992 sweepstakes promotion for its **An American Tail** game.

This year, Capstone is covering several games with its *Reach for the Stars* promotion, with a trip to Hollywood as grand prize. The games are **Surf Ninjas**, **Homey D. Clown**, **The Beverly Hillbillies**, **Terminator 2 Chess Wars** and **Wayne's World.**

Storage System for Compact Discs

SC&T introduced the latest in CD storage, the CD3 Disc Storage System that spaces 40 CDs so nothing touches their surfaces. It's got a carrying handle for portability, and features a retrieval system that lines up the name on the index with the disk, then positions the disk so fingers need not touch it.

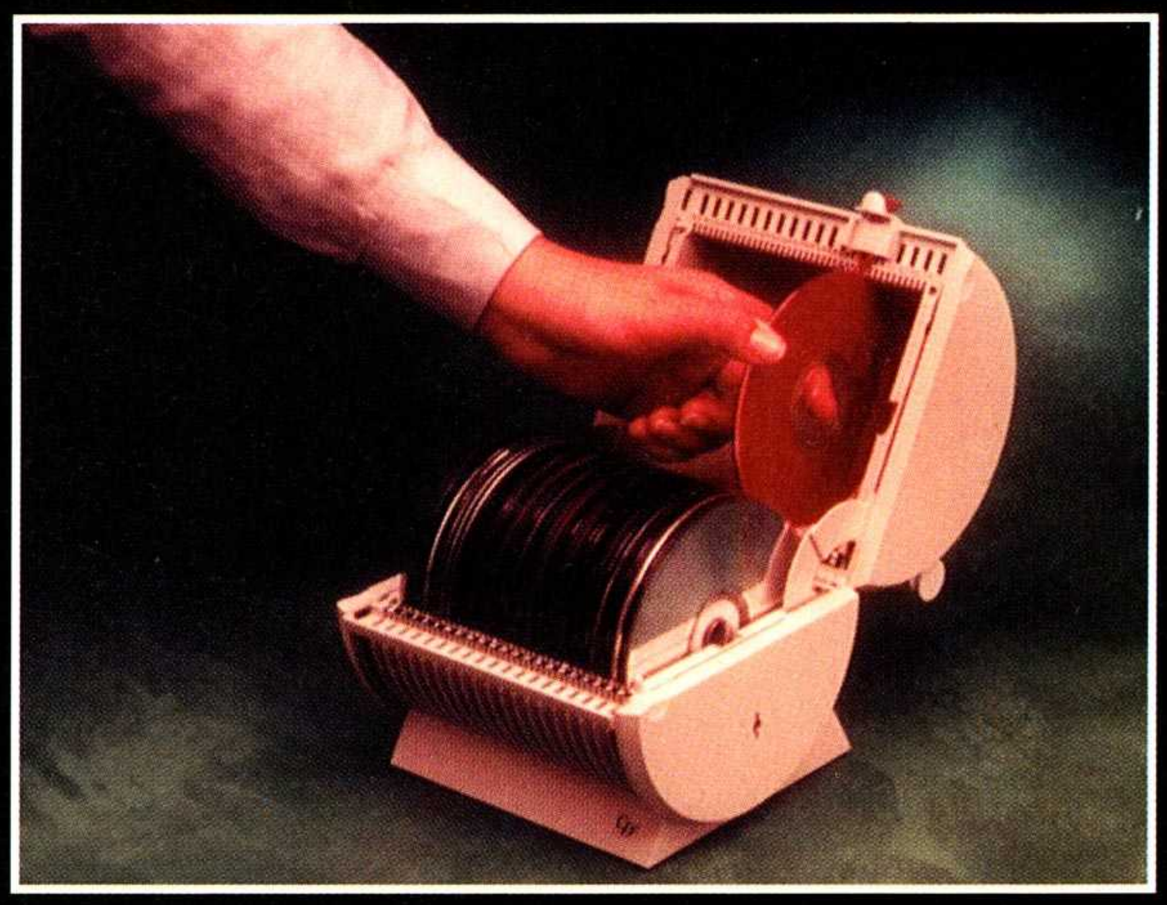
Four Can Brave Gauntlet 4

Tengen's latest Genesis adventure, **Gauntlet IV**, is the first game in the Tengen line to make use of the adapters which allow up to four players to compete or cooperate. The 8-Meg cartridge works either with Sega's Team Player, or with Electronic Arts' 4-Way Play adapter.



Gauntlet 4, a conversion from the original arcade game, contains over 90 labyrinths, with Demons, Lobbers, dragons and other monsters, and dozens of magical codes.





Top Coin-Ops October 1993

Figures courtesy of Replay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

1. *NBA Jam*, Williams
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Midway
3. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami
4. *Title Fight*, Sega
5. *Streetfighter II:CE*, Capcom
6. *The Punisher*, Capcom
7. *Super Chase*, Taito
8. *Tourn. Slam Masters*, Capcom

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Suzuka 8 Hours*, Namco
2. *Virtua Racing*, Sega
3. *Lucky & Wild*, Namco
4. *Outrunners*, Sega
5. *Stadium Cross*, Sega
6. *Crime Patrol*, ALG
7. *Mad Dog II*, ALG
8. *Final Lap II*, Namco

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Samurai Shodown*, SNK
2. *World Rally*, Atari
3. *SF2:CE Turbo*, Capcom
4. *World Heroes 2*, SNK
5. *Neck N' Neck*, Bundra
6. *Dajoh*, Amer. Sammy
7. *Fighter & Attacker*, Namco
8. *In The Hunt*, Irem

Best Pinball Machines

1. *Jurassic Park*, Data East
2. *Indiana Jones*, Williams
3. *Twilight Zone*, Midway
4. *Addams Family*, Midway
5. *Tee'd Off*, Gott./Prem.
6. *White Water*, Williams
7. *Dracula*, Williams
8. *Creature/Lagoon*, Midway

Top Video Games September 1993

The following figures are provided courtesy of Babbages.

Super NES

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *SF2 Turbo*, Capcom
3. *Super Mario All-Stars*, Nintendo
4. *NFL Football*, Konami
5. *StarFox*, Nintendo
6. *Bubsy*, Accolade
7. *Tuff E Nuff*, Jaleco
8. *Mario is Missing*, Software Toolworks

Sega Genesis

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *Street Fighter II*, Capcom
3. *Bill Walsh College Football*, Electronic Arts
4. *Jurassic Park*, Sega
5. *Shining Force*, Sega
6. *Shinobi III*, Sega
7. *Spider-man-X-Men*, Acclaim
8. *Sorcerer's Kingdom*, American Sammy

Game Boy

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening*, Nintendo
3. *Final Fantasy Legend III*, Square Soft
4. *Super Mario Land 2*, Nintendo
5. *Jurassic Park*, Ocean
6. *Super Mario Land*, Nintendo
7. *Kirby's Dream Land*, Nintendo
8. *Star Trek: TNG*, Absolute

NES

1. *Jurassic Park*, Ocean
2. *Tecmo Super Bowl*, Tecmo
3. *Tecmo NBA Basketball*, Tecmo
4. *Dragon Warrior IV*, Enix
5. *Kirby's Adventure*, Nintendo
6. *Super Mario Bros. 3*, Nintendo
7. *Joe and Mac*, Data East
8. *Tetris*, Nintendo

Sega Game Gear

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *Jurassic Park*, Sega
3. *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, Sega
4. *World Series Baseball*, Sega
5. *Columns*, Sega
6. *T2-The Arcade Game*, Acclaim
7. *Tom & Jerry*, Sega
8. *The Majors: Pro Baseball*, Sega

Sega CD

1. *Batman Returns*, Sega
2. *Ecco the Dolphin*, Sega
3. *Road Avenger*, Renovation
4. *Night Trap*, Sega
5. *After Burner III*, Sega
6. *Final Fight*, Sega
7. *Jaguar XJ220*, JVC
8. *Robo Aleste*, Tengen



The Good Housekeeping seal insures a quality video game.

Fun 'N' Games Gets Good Housekeeping Seal

Here's a first! Tradewest's **Fun 'N' Games** (Genesis and SNES) now bears the Good Housekeeping Seal. The Seal was granted for outstanding video game software for children ages five to 11. The software, in light of its easy-to-use interface and expressly non-violent content, is sure to be a successful entry into the educational video game market.

Tradewest's new product is actually more like a multiple entertainment package than a single video game, and this also helps alleviate the "play it, beat it, throw it away" mentality that some games inevitably fall into.

Fun 'N' Games features five modules: Drawing Board (featuring a colorful electronic sketchpad), Magic Music Machine (where kids can sharpen their musical skills), Stylin' Stuff, Mix 'N' Match, and Arcade Avenue which features three mini-games.



Tradewest's Fun 'N' Games has five different modules.

Twin Dolphin Is Building Castles

The newly-formed Twin Dolphin Games should have their first PC product to market before the holiday buying season. **Forgotten Castles** permits 360 degree movement and uses texture-filled polygon technology to create a fantasy role-playing world that includes dungeons, crypts, mines, and even the insides of GhoulFang, a living dragon.

The first-person viewpoint leads the adventurer on a quest to rescue the kidnapped relative, using magical spells, sword or bow. The designers created a fractally generated forest, and also enabled tactile feedback.

It features very fast movement (the on-screen hero can even run), and 3-D monsters created by filming real people and using texture map overlays.

A redone game will be released for CD in the first quarter of 1994.



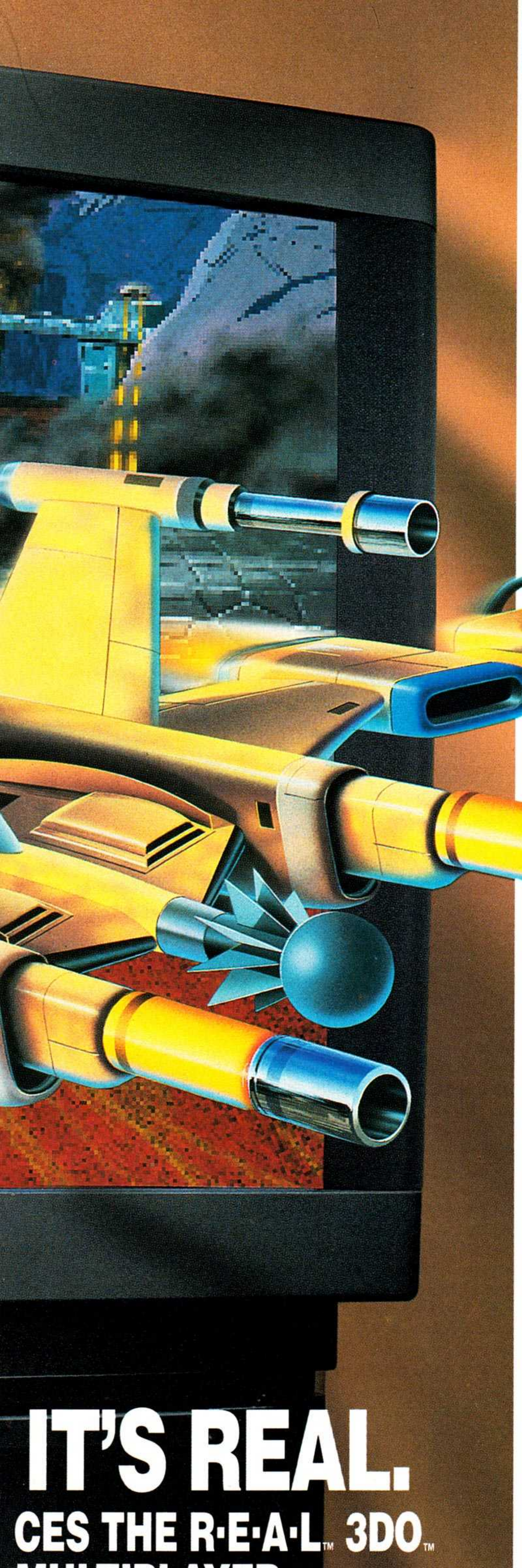
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CRYSTAL DYNAMICS™

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HANG ON!

PANASONIC INTRODU
INTERACTIVE



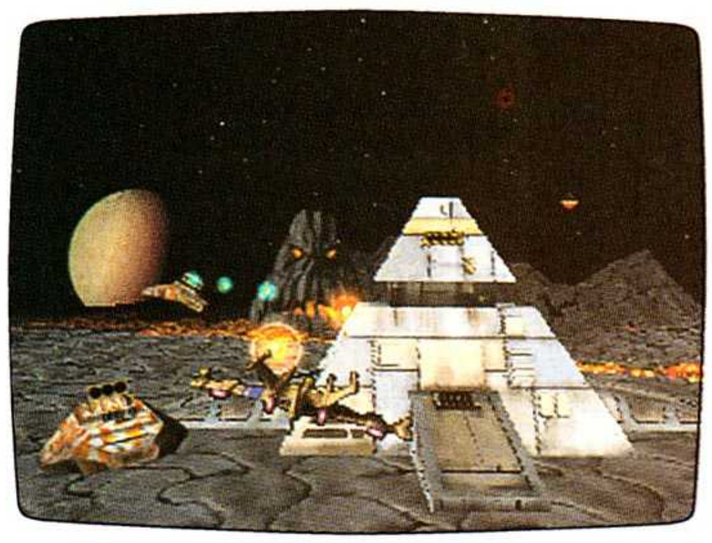
IT'S REAL.
CES THE R·E·A·L™ 3DO™ MULTIPLAYER™.

More responsive, more colorful, and up to 50 times more powerful than ordinary systems. It's 3DO technology and Panasonic makes the only system that has it.

A 3DO EXPERIENCE™

Strap yourself in; this is no armchair flying game.

You plunge into pursuit, barrel-rolling through the atmosphere at Mach speeds. Pulling up to skim the planetary terrain, you lose your horizon and go into a spin. Earth. Sky. Earth. Sky. Earth. And your stomach just can't catch up. This is a video game you can feel. This is R·E·A·L.



Crystal Dynamics' Total Eclipse™ gives you the real feeling of flight.

Introducing the Panasonic R·E·A·L 3DO™ Interactive Multiplayer.™ The most highly evolved integration of audio, video and interactive technology available.

What you're seeing are near 3-D graphics combined with state-of-the-art flight effects. What you're hearing is full, digital CD sound. Definitely cinematic.

Except that you're in control in a world without edges. Fly as far as you want left or right and the program never stops you.

Facts. Up to 50 times more powerful than ordinary PCs and video game systems. With up to 16 million displayable colors for photorealistic picture quality. And a custom multimedia architecture that makes R·E·A·L so responsive it practically redefines interactivity.

There's a range of 3DO software available; from flight simulators to education, information, sports and children's titles. Plus, R·E·A·L also plays audio and photo CDs and soon, with an optional adapter, full-length movies.

Entertainment, music and more interaction than ever—the Panasonic R·E·A·L 3DO Interactive Multiplayer brings you the future in one amazing unit. And, yes, it'll fly.

To speak directly to the dealer nearest you, call **1-800-REAL-3DO.**

3DO



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Panasonic®
just slightly ahead of our time.®

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A LOOK TO THE EAST

by Marc Camron

3DO.

It is a machine that is American in technology, but is being produced (at least the first one out on the market) by Panasonic, a division of Matsushita Electronics, a Japanese giant.

This machine is different than any other "game platform" ever produced. Indeed it is being hyped to be more of a family entertainment product than just a video game machine. But consider these facts:

1) The primary person behind the 3DO project is Trip Hawkins. Formerly with Electronic Arts, Hawkins has a solid background in electronic games.

2) Electronic Arts is one of the primary players in the development and production of the machine.

3) A look at the list of software developers reveals that the majority of them are companies specializing in games.

Still, 3DO wishes the perception of their product to be as a more well rounded entertainment item rather than a toy. After all, what parent wants to pay $700 for a toy? So 3DO continues to draw a line between themselves and their video game competition.

They do this by proclaiming 3DO an open system. Unlike Nintendo or Sega, who charges licensing fees for the privilege of releasing software on their systems and reserves the right to censor the games for violence and other items that may be unsuitable for children, 3DO will allow anyone to make virtually any kind of software for their platform. Only a small royalty is paid for the software.

3DO is also allowing any interested electronics company to make their own version of the hardware. The first out of the gate is the Panasonic R.E.A.L. 3DO interactive multiplayer (model FZ-1). Panasonic has this privilege because Matsushita is one of the 3DO principals. In 1994 however, other companies like Sanyo will begin releasing their versions of the 3DO machine. Like the VCR, one can expect different companies to make slightly different versions of the 3DO; and like the VCR, prices will drop.

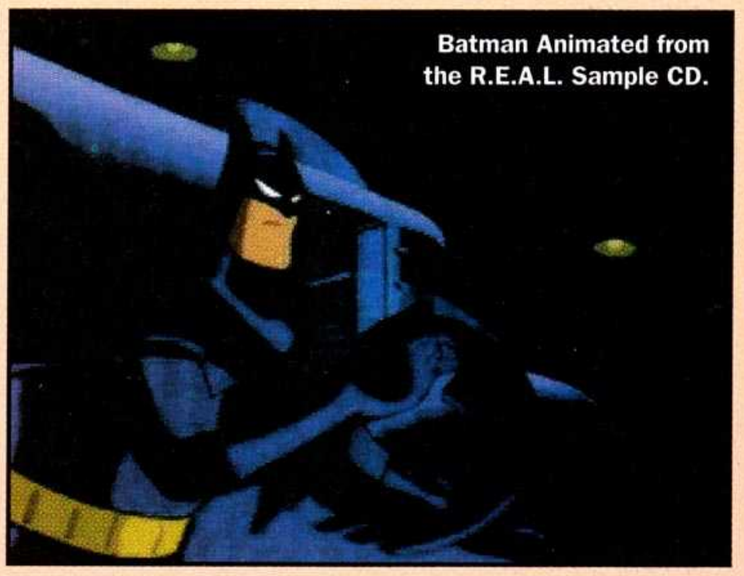
Next year, Panasonic will introduce an expansion card for the R.E.A.L. that will turn the 3DO into a mini-laserdisc player. The module will support MPEG compression standards which allows for up to one hour of VCR quality video to be stored on a standard five-inch CD. The plan is for movies to be released on the MPEG CD format the same way they are on videotape and laserdisc today.

The 3DO also plays Photo CDs, audio CDs and CD+ Graphics. It is all part of 3DO's plan to have one machine in your living room that will do it all.

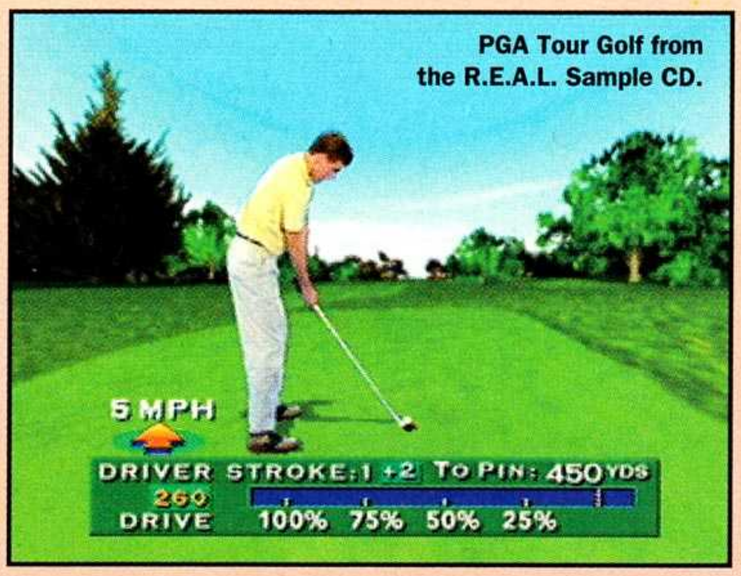
There is even a cable network planned for 1994/1995 that will expand the 3DO's capabilities even more.

Why, you may ask, am I telling you this in a column devoted to Japanese gaming? Because the 3DO also marks one more special point in video game history.

In the '70s and early '80s, video games were dominated by American companies like Atari, Mattel and Coleco. After the crash in 1983, the dominating factor has been the Japanese companies like Nintendo and Sega. This marks the first time that American companies like Electronic Arts and AT&T have come together with Japanese companies like Matsushita to produce a home entertainment product. And while some naysayers criticize the 3DO for being too expensive or not being released with enough software, there remains the underlying fact that it is innovation and forethought like this that will take gaming into the next century.



Batman Animated from the R.E.A.L. Sample CD.



PGA Tour Golf from the R.E.A.L. Sample CD.

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CAPTAIN AMERICA and The AVENGERS



Can You Defeat The Evil Red Skull?



All The Action of The #1 Arcade Game!



You Choose Your Avenger Partner!

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Captain America and the Avengers, the hit arcade game and best-selling Marvel Comic, is now available for your Super NES®. Just like the arcade game, you can choose from any of the four Avengers, each with his own special powers. Your goal is to defeat the diabolical genius Red Skull and his super-evil mind control device. Game features include:

- Normal or extremely radical "Arcade Mode"
- Six levels of play and sounds just like the arcade game.
- Amazing power-ups and action
- Single or two player option with simultaneous cooperative play on the two-player setting.

For the store nearest you or to buy, call

1-800-234-3088

Captain America and the Avengers plays just like the arcade game and sounds just like the arcade game.

What are you waiting for? Get this game! It's up to you and your Avenger to save the world, and maybe even the solar system.



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TIME FOR MORTAL





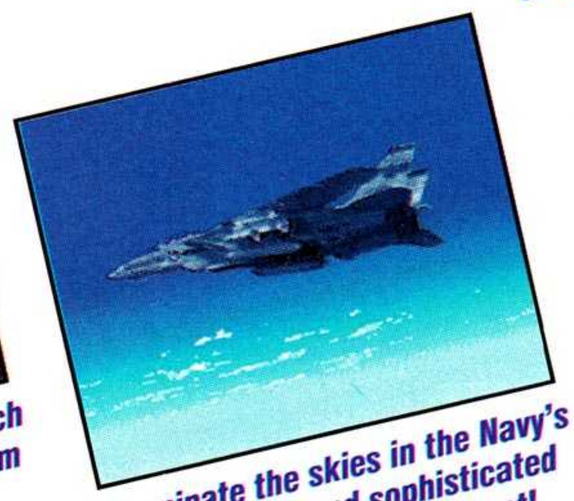


Daring takeoffs and landings on the rolling deck of a seaborne carrier call for nerves of steel!

Flying kicks. Super punches. Fireballs. Death blows. Some people call this type of fighting "combat." But there are others who call it kid stuff. Like anyone who's sat in the cockpit of an M1A2 Abrams battletank, ears ringing with each blast of its 120mm cannon. Or someone who, 30,000 feet above the Mediterranean, banked their F-14 Tomcat at Mach 2 to shake a MiG off their tail. Now we're talking mortal combat!



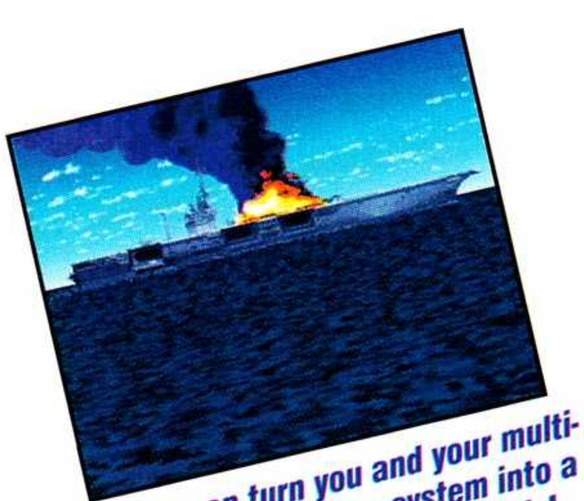
Sight enemy MiGs with the hi-tech Heads-Up Display and blow them out of the sky!



Dominate the skies in the Navy's most lethal and sophisticated weapon, the F-14 Tomcat!

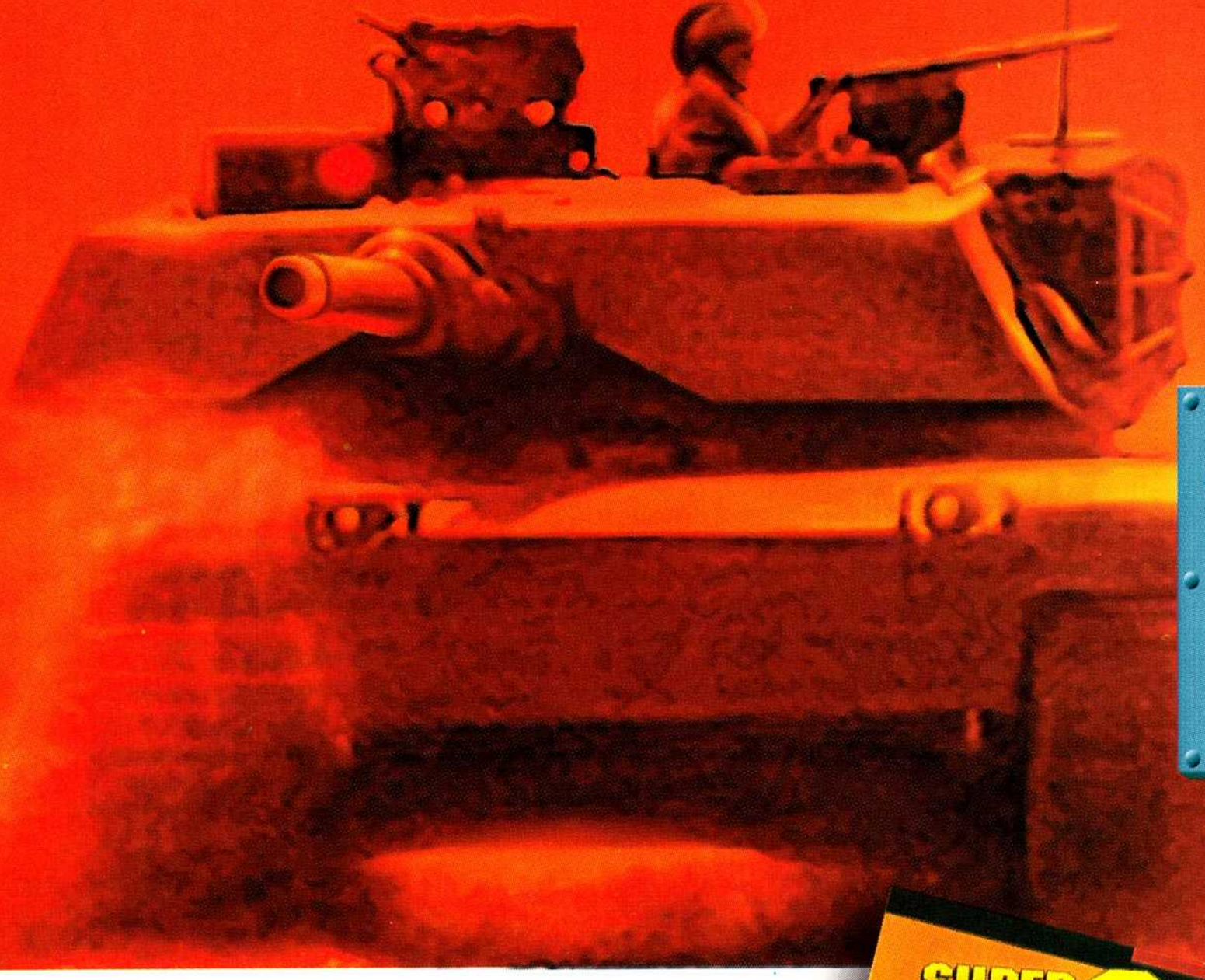


Challenging night operations test the skill of even the most expert pilots!



One slip can turn you and your multi-million-dollar weapon system into a twisted heap of flaming debris!

SOME REAL COMBAT!





And you can too with our spectacular new 16 MEG military simulators, ***SUPER BATTLETANK 2***™ *and* ***TURN AND BURN: NO-FLY ZONE***™*. They're not real life, of course, but their mind-blowing graphics, senses-shattering 16-bit sound, and lifelike animation make for combat action that sure feels that way.*

Forearm jabs? Roundhouses? Come on. Forget the kid stuff. Try fighting like the big boys do.

ABSOLUTE™



Murderous day, dusk, and night duels against a well-armed and numerous foe test your tactical ability!





Go topside to take on attackers with the high-speed Phalanx machine gun!



Call in F-15 air support to swoop down and lay waste to enemy resistance!

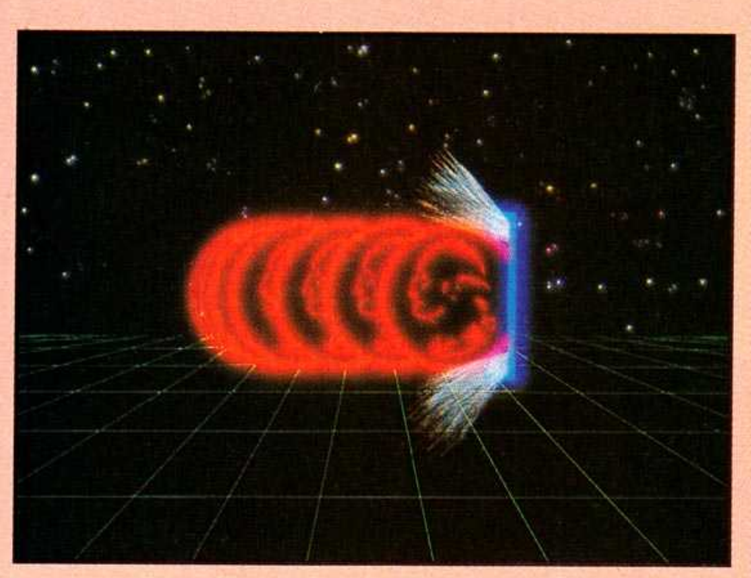


Kill shot! Re-live your victories with full-motion video replays of enemy acquisition and termination!



Ultra-realistic animation includes PATRIOT missile launches!

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INSERT COIN HERE

Seasoned Greetings

by Jay Carter

As the holidays rapidly approach, everyone should be in a festive mood, when it comes to games, because the hits keep coming. However, for those seasoned veterans who have been around the scene for too long to remember, there is a growing restlessness in regard to whether we have reached a point where a very different Christmas carol may be ready to play.

When Exidy introduced a coin-op, **Death Race**, the media and indignant citizenry decried the violence. Little black and white stick figures turned into tombstone markers and laid the foundation for attacks against the evils of this new entertainment medium. The negative backlash was considerable although it did little to temper the impending success of video games.

Move to Christmas present and it appears to be *déjà vu* all over again, but this time there is a significant difference. The issue of violence has become magnified due to improved technology offering more realistic images on screen via the wonders of digitized graphics and CD-quality visuals. Manufacturers and game developers find themselves in the delicate position of wanting to cater to the demands of today's players while also keeping some level of social consciousness, as evidenced by the new ratings system installed by Sega and Nintendo's continued policy of toning down or eliminating specific game sequences and effects.

But the doomsayers will not stop offering opinions on the negative influence of what is arguably only fantasy escape amusement.

The question remains whether we have become unhealthily desensitized to all of the blood and gore not just in video games, but in movies, music, literature and television. It is a dangerous movement where community standards are, at best, an inexact measure of a more vocal, outraged intolerant minority looking to lay blame anywhere else than where it rightfully belongs—back in the home and what was pontificated in the last election as "family values." But even this assessment simplifies a problem endemic to our culture and society's mores around the world.

Move to Christmas future—and it may not be that far away—and we discover that some turning point occurred to change the dynamics of video game entertainment. Maybe a single game emerged that strayed too far over the line, or a ratings system was put in place which set up rigid guidelines for the operation as well as personal consumption of



In F1 Grand Prix*II, the player can see incredible views of those wipe-outs.





Quick reflexes are the key to navigating the quick turns and many opponents.



video games.

Maybe it was a combination of both of these factors. Or, maybe, the smoke clears, the dust settles and everything continues on its destined path to be a footnote as elusive as that of the antiquated **Death Race**.

The reason for this discourse, however, is to acknowledge that, although we may be more concerned about mastering the moves of a new character in **Mortal Kombat II** or how to best blast the Aliens in Sega's gun game, there are forces at work that might well impact what it is we will be playing not just in 1994 but for many years to come.

Anyway, wherever the chips may fall, there are a host of new games that have hit the streets which you might find to be of more immediate interest. Driving games still endure as a major emphasis for coin-op video with variations on some very familiar themes along with updates of previous efforts.

Namco's **Lucky & Wild** is an interesting two-player, side-by-side, driving/shooting sit-down where one player gets to drive and shoot and the other gets to ride shotgun, literally and figuratively. It's two tough cops out to clean up the streets and end the drug trafficking and gun-running while rounding up the key gang leaders. With Lucky being the best driver on the force and Wild his partner with the dead-eye aim, it's a first-person perspective storyline that unfolds down city streets, through shopping malls, out on the highway and even in desert canyons.

There are, of course, the prerequisite obstacles to avoid such as fuel trucks, moving vans and helicopters as well as incoming Molotov cocktails and other firepower that can not only blow out your windshield, but send you reeling out of the action. Survive each of the timed stages and any damage you've sustained will be quickly fixed by the attractive mechanics at Pink Cat's Garage. And, if you find yourself alone at your local game center wanting to take a spin at **Lucky & Wild**, you can still get behind the wheel and have a computer aided Wild at your side to team up with.

Trying to fill in during a lull in its own internal game development, Atari has taken to the road via a licensing arrangement with Gaelco of Barcelona to bring out **World Rally** where a player can compete in one of four different races. Serving up an overhead view, each rally or race has three different stages to navigate within 60 seconds in order to advance to the next track. There are different layouts, with some featuring bridge jumps and puddles, and the road surfaces can be anything from asphalt and dirt to even some inclement snow fall, not to mention SOME hazardous night driving.

A little over a year ago Jaleco introduced a dual seat sit-down driver called **Grand Prix Star** which took players on a Formula One race in Monaco, Japan and Germany. Well, now the company is back with **F1 Grand Prix Star II** that offers up four new tracks and a power booster to get you ahead of the pack. Licensed by FOCA (the Formula One Constructors Association) the sit-down unit can not only be linked for up to eight-player competition, but also gives you a more realistic racing experience with a resistant steering wheel and a seat that vibrates over every bump in the road.

Also reprising an old favorite is Sega with the announcement of **Outrunners**, another dual seat, side-by-side sit-down that can be linked for eight players. It's Grand Prix style racing where you can select from eight different vehicles, each with its own unique transmission, power and maneuverability to accommodate the desires of almost any player and equalize one's chance for success.

In addition, for your driving pleasure, **Outrunners** lets you tune into one of nine different 'radio' channels on your way through 30 racing routes. Another nice touch, borrowed from Sega's **Virtua Racing**, is the ability to choose four different viewing perspectives of the action taking place on screen.

And if driving games are your passion be forewarned that a new generation of exceptional creations are on the fast track, if the Japan coin-op show held the end of August was any indication. On display were a variety of breathtaking endeavors including Namco's System **2000 TWIN Turbo Ridge Racer** and their live action **Street Viper** with Corvettes racing around the countryside; Taito's **Super Ground Effects** deluxe sit-down; Sega's impressive **Virtua Formula Racing** and a new **Daytona** racer that will have you putting the pedal to the metal.

More virtual reality-based entertainment, continued better graphic realism across the board, action, adventure, advanced pinball designs for the wizards in the audience and a vast assortment of challenging novelty games should make this a holiday season to remember and enjoy.

Until next time, as always, just keep on playing and have some fun.



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This is first-person, in-your-face, eyeball-to-eyeball, full-motion 3-D action like you've never experienced before.



JP in 3-D.

If the movie shook you, Jurassic Park for the Super NES will rip you apart.

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ENTURE OF ALL TIME...



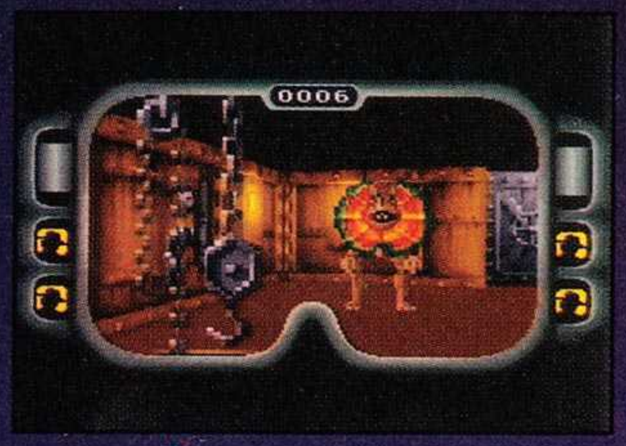
If you thought the movie was hot... Wait until the razor-sharp intensity of full-motion 3-D graphics gets a hold of you!



Hey Dr. Grant! Never underestimate your opponent... Especially when he's 20 feet tall and weighs over seven tons.



Meet your chefs... The Raptor slices and dices you, while the Spitter waits to baste you in his venomous marinade.



No more plain polygons or simple two-dimensional sprites! Ocean's exclusive, technically advanced graphics engines deliver REAL 3-D dinosaurs in a solid, dynamic and fully interactive universe.



Triceratops is heading your way! Restore island security and re-arm the voltage gates. Remember: the only good dinosaur is a fried dinosaur.

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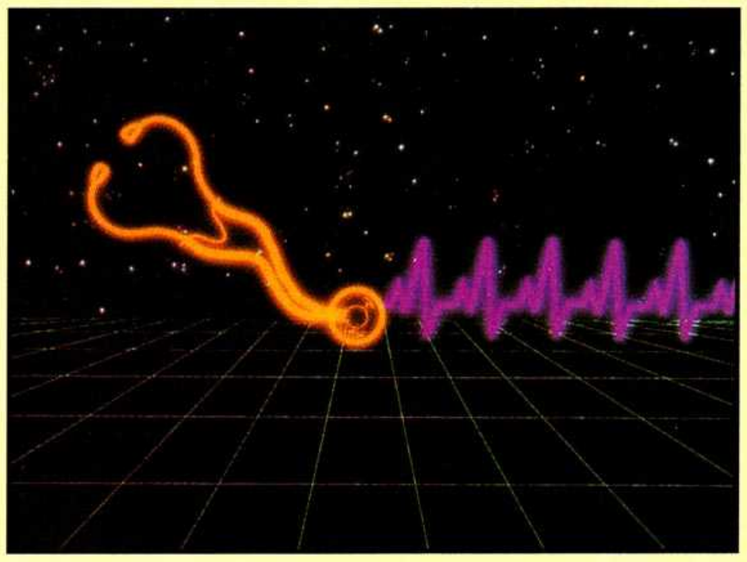
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GAME DOCTOR

Hooked on Phonics Meets SFII!

Hallo, hallo, hallo. Now that we've got the greetings out of the way, let's get down to the business of networking information. Our first question is one of those rare, pristine beauties that make a Game Doctor's month—and also gives him a perfect column sub-heading!

Q: Ever since **Street Fighter II** came out, I've been wondering [about] the correct pronunciations of the names of the characters. Is Ryu "Rie-you" or "Roo"? Is Dhalsim "Dal-sim", "Doll-sim" or "Dale-sim"? Is Zangief "Zang-if", "Zang-eef" or "Zang-ife"? And finally, is Chun Li "Chun-Lee" or "Chun-Lie"?

Please answer my questions, because if you don't, I'll never know.

David Stephens
W.P.B., FL

A: *Okay, David, here we go with the Doc's phonetic guide to the pronunciation of **SF II** character names (hey, this could be a book if I could expand it a little!): Ryu ("Rie'-yu"); Dhalsim ("Dahl'-sim"); Blanka ("Blonk'-a"); Zangief ("Jon'-gee-eff"); Guile ("Gile"); and assuming Chun Li uses the standard Chinese pronunciation, her name is pronounced "Chun-Lee."*

Q: I would like you to tell me a little about **Mortal Kombat**, please; its disadvantages and advantages for the Genesis and SNES. I heard a rumor about a code for death moves and fatalities on the Sega. If this is true, please tell me the code, and how much would an arcade version of **Mortal Kombat** cost?

Gentry Stocks
Fort Smith, AZ

A: *First of all, Gentry, let me say that a complete review of both Genesis and SNES versions of **Mortal Kombat** can be found in the October '93 issue of EG. To give you the short version, however, the graphics are much better on the SNES version, but the blood has been replaced by grey sweat. There is no code that I am aware of which will generate blood in either the SNES or GameBoy versions of the game.*

However, the Genesis and Game Gear games, do offer blood, but only if the player has access to the code. The codes are as follows, for both the Genesis and Game Gear: wait for the final text screen which refers to codes of honor and asks which code the player adheres to. Then, on the Genesis, press A, B, A, C, A, B, B; on the Game Gear, enter 2, 1, 2, Down, Up. A screen will then appear indicating that the player has entered a special Kombat mode.

From an actual game play perspective, all four versions are pretty good, and the Game Gear edition from Probe (which also did the Genesis version) is amazingly true to the coin-op original.

*According to the latest information in the coin-op bible RePlay magazine, a **Mortal Kombat** coin-op would cost somewhere between $1200 and $3000, depending on the format and condition. Now please, all this talk of blood is making the Doctor queasy...*

Q: I have a question about **Mortal Kombat**. There are a lot of rumors going around about another warrior in the arcade version of **MK**. I hear that his name is Reptile and he can do both Scorpion and Sub-Zero's moves. He fights at the Spike Pit board. Is this the **MK** version of the old "Shong Long joke" or is there really another **MK** warrior?

Jay Giacchino
Irving, NY

A: *Actually, Jay, I'm informed by Those Who Know Such Things that there are probably* several *"hidden" warriors in MK, but Reptile is a definite.*

Now what say we turn the page on fighting games for this month and turn to some more ecumenical queries, eh?

Q: How come CD games like **Sewer Shark** and **Sherlock Holmes** don't ever have the amount of Megs printed next to them in any video game magazine? Cartridge games do. All CD games say is "CD-ROM." Is it possible to find out the amount of memory in a CD-ROM game?

Mike Kidd
Baltimore, MD

A: *That's an excellent question, Mike, and I have several points to make in answering it. CDs, unlike ROM carts, have plenty of space, around 500 meg or so of available data space. As a result, very few video game CDs come even close to maxxing out the CD. As a result, most publishers have developed a policy of not releasing Meg counts on CD games. In the first place, they may not know—or at least the P.R. people don't. Since you don't have to keep track of each and every Meg (which you do in carts, where ROM is very expensive), it becomes much less important.*

Then, of course, there's the fact that the Meg count on some of these programs may be embarassingly low, and the publishers would rather not get involved in a whizzing contest over this particular spec.

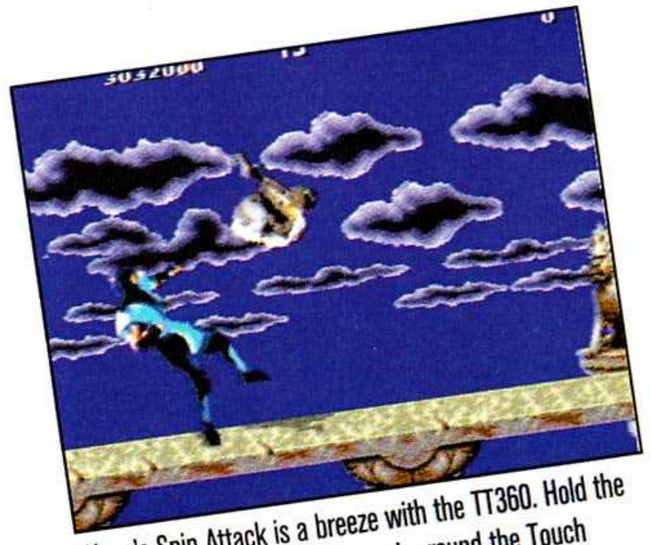
Q: Is it possible to listen to the music tracks of a Sega CD on a standard [audio] CD player, without causing damage to the disk or player?

Eric Meyers
Clarence Cntr., NY

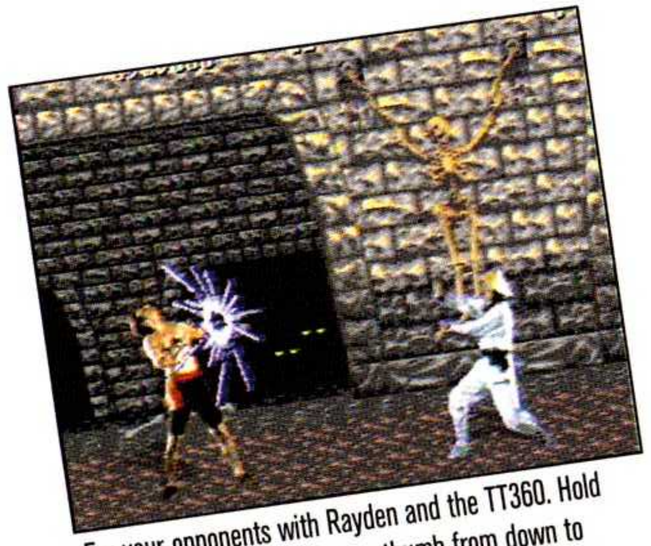
A: *It's not generally recommended, Eric, because while the audio tracks will play just fine, there is also programming data on those CDs, and if you've ever "heard" programming data, you know it's a loud, piercing and extremely unpleasant sound. Most CD game makers are concerned, as a result, that the high pitched sounds might damage speakers —or even listeners' ears. The folks at TTI, who've been in the CD-ROM video game business longer than anyone, have always warned users not to play game disks on audio CDs, and I'd figure TTI has a fairly good grasp of the facts on this one.*



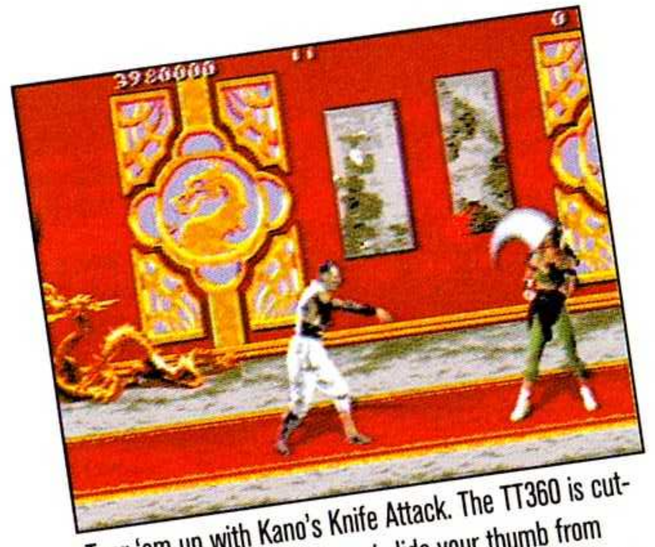
Throw Liu Kang's finishing move with the deadly accuracy of true circular control on the TT360. Hold the Start Button and, starting with your thumb at the bottom of the Touch Sensor, make a full circle towards your opponent.



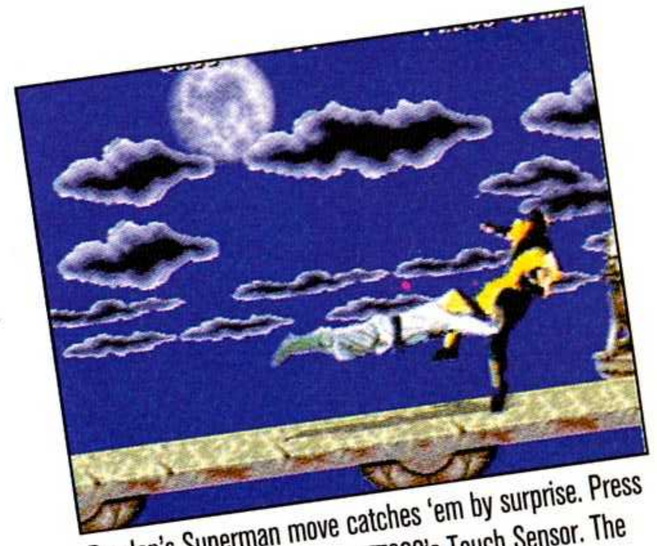
Kano's Spin Attack is a breeze with the TT360. Hold the Start Button and run your thumb around the Touch Sensor toward your opponent. Release the Start Button to unleash the attack!



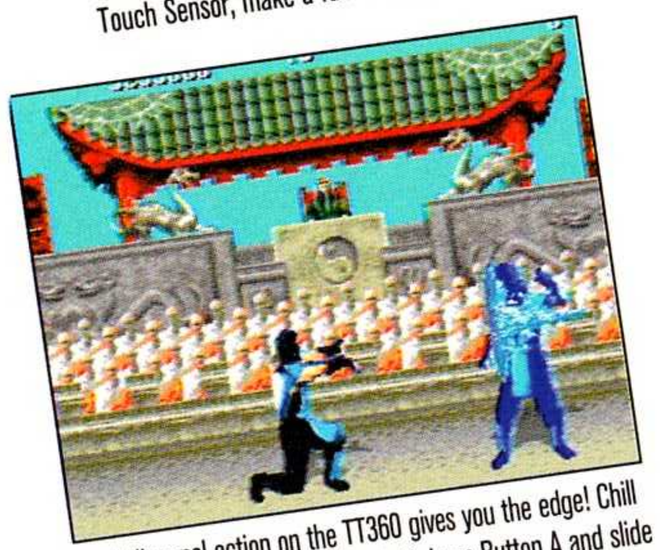
Fry your opponents with Rayden and the TT360. Hold down Button A and slide your thumb from down to toward your enemy.



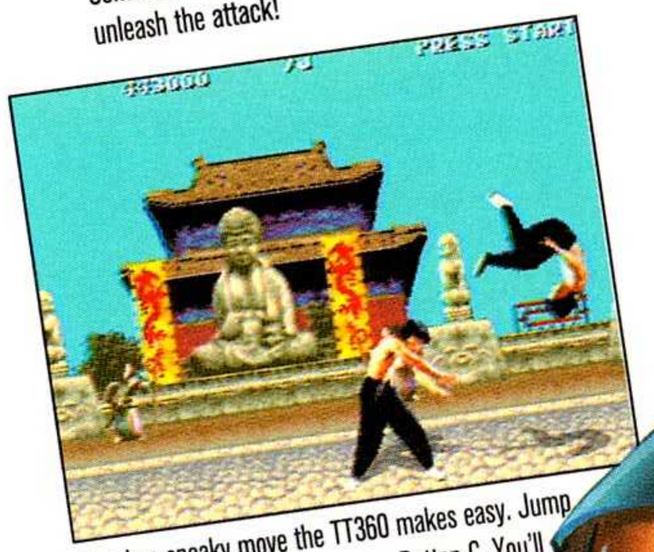
Tear 'em up with Kano's Knife Attack. The TT360 is cutting-edge fast! Hold Start and slide your thumb from away to toward on the Touch Sensor. As fast as you can slide, you can throw.



Rayden's Superman move catches 'em by surprise. Press away-away-toward on your TT360's Touch Sensor. The slide from away to toward gives you the win with split-second speed..without the numb thumb!



Real diagonal action on the TT360 gives you the edge! Chill 'em with the Sub Zero Freeze. Hold down Button A and slide your thumb on the Touch Sensor from down to toward.



Here's a sneaky move the TT360 makes easy. Jump over your enemy, turn and press Button C. You'll make a throw they can't beat!



"Get over here!" The TT360 brings 'em close with Scorpion's Spear. Rapidly press the Touch Sensor away twice and press Button A.



Shred some head on Sub Zero's Finishing Move. Slide your thumb toward-down-toward and hit Button A. This move is much easier than on a old-fashioned control pad.

BATTLE TESTED IN KOMBAT

When you go into Kombat, you need a controller that's fast, that gives you all the action you want – easily and effortlessly, and that destroys your opponent, not your thumb! That's why you should be using the Turbo Touch 360,™ The Ultimate Fighting Machine, for all your favorite games. The Turbo Touch 360 "touch sensor" allows your thumb or index finger to move effortlessly across the sensor plate – you don't have to push down. Objects on the screen move as fast as you move your finger, you've got real diagonal and true circular control, and you really feel like you're in the game. The pay-off is being the ultimate fighting machine and trashing your opponent... you know the guy using the old-fashioned control pad. So, go into Kombat to win – go battle tested with the Turbo Touch 360.

Turbo Touch 360.
The Ultimate Fighting Machine.

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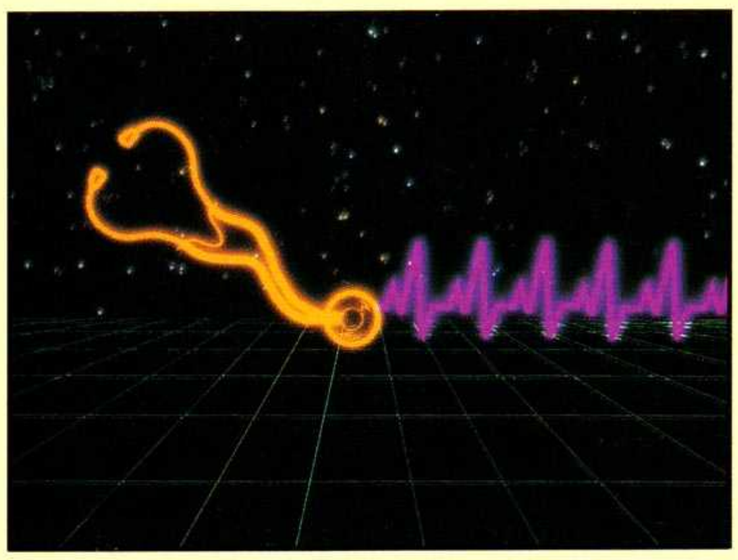
For Genesis, SNES, & Nintendo



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For the name of your nearest Turbo Touch 360 retailer or to place an order, call **1-800-858-7429.**

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Game played on a Genesis® system. © Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. 1993.



GAME DOCTOR

Q: Finally I am writing to the famous Game Doctor. I say finally because even though I am but 17, I have been playing video games for longer than you have been writing about them. The intent of this letter is to, dare I say, correct the Game Doctor and elaborate on some of your [recent] replies. You must have been falling asleep when you wrote your column in the August **EG**, because your replies are not of your typical high quality. The problems begin with your answers to Vic George (a great Atari gamer). First, he asks about the CVC Gameline. While your answer is reasonable, I think you should have elaborated based on the timely subject. If you didn't know, the Gameline "Master Module" cost $50. It cost about $1 per hour to play, and that cost was charged to your credit card bill. Supposedly, it could load an 8K game in 40 seconds. Vic's second question concerned the many planned keyboards for the 2600. You said that they were all scrapped in the Shakeout of '84, but this is not the case, at least for the Atari-produced keyboard. This keyboard, previewed in the May/June 1983 *Atari Age* [magazine] was reported scrapped in the September/October issue of the same year. The main reason was the introduction of Atari's low-priced XL computers. While I'm on keyboards, the Unitronics Expander for the 2600 was also scrapped in Sept. '83 in favor of the Sonic computer.

Those are your minor faults. The major problem comes in the Q&A Quickies, in the form of your statements about the Atari **Swordquest** series. First, you have the games in incorrect order. The proper order is **EarthWorld**, **FireWorld**, **WaterWorld** and **AirWorld**, not the order which you state. You also incorrectly say that only the first two games were released. While I don't know about the fourth game, I do know that the third, **WaterWorld**, was released. I never actually saw the cart. I saw a screen shot in the September *Atari Age* and it was advertised for sale in *Atari Age* at a price of $31.95 for several months. Apparently the game didn't sell very well because in the March/April '84 *Atari Age*, it was written that the entry deadline was extended until April 30. For your information, the $25,000 Talisman from **EarthWorld** was won by Steven Bell from Michigan, and the $25,000 Chalice from **Fireworld** was won by Michael Rideout of South Carolina. I do not know if the Crown from **WaterWorld**, the Philosopher's Stone from **AirWorld**, or the $50,000 sword were awarded.

Shane Shaffer
Taneytown, MD

A: *As a long-time reader of this column I'm sure you're aware that we welcome additions and corrections to our information, but I fail to see where I let you down. You acknowledge that my response to Vic's question on the Gameline was "reasonable," and I simply don't have the space to go into minute detail in each answer. I didn't print the technical specs because the system was buggy as a New York tenement and, frankly, I don't believe a significant portion of our readership cares. On the offchance that they do, you have now enlightened them. As for the 2600* ***SwordQuest*** *series, I didn't say I was naming them in the order of their release, and the fact that a game screen and an order form appeared in an Atari hype sheet does not prove that a game was released. I know we never got a copy, and Atari certainly sent us everything else it produced during that period.*

You must realize, however, that those last days at Atari were not unlike Hitler's last days in that Berlin bunker (not that I'm comparing Atari to Hitler, okay?). Chaos reigned, nobody knew what was coming out and what wasn't, and it would have been very easy for a game to be listed in Atari Age *for a few issues and still never come out. The fact that you obviously continued to read the magazine, yet no mention of a winner ever appeared for the Waterworld prize, tells me a lot more than the fact that a screen shot was printed months earlier.*

Finally, on the issue of keyboards, you yourself mention two examples and then state that they were both scrapped. Isn't that what I said? Or are the Doc's arteries getting hard?

Seriously, Shane, thanks for writing, and thanks for offering to pick up those game rarities for me. Best of luck at MIT and on your future as a game creator.

Q&A Quickies: Curt Schulz of Stratham, NH, is going absolutely crazy trying to decide among the numerous next-generation systems being hyped and wants to know whether the 3DO, Saturn or Jaguar will be "the best future system." Well, Curt, we don't make predictions on hardware success here at the Game Doc's because the one thing we've learned in our dozen-plus years of practice is that software sells hardware, and it will be up to the game makers to determine which of these systems will fly. The 3DO looks to be facing a troubled launch. The October release date for the Matsushita/Panasonic version of 3DO is about a week or so away at press time, but the scutttlebutt is that, aside from Crystal Dynamics' hot **Crash and Burn** (which will reportedly be bundled with the system), there may be fewer than half a dozen games available by rollout, due to delays in getting development tools into the hands of programmers. The system sells for around $700, but expect the price to drop a couple hundred within the first year. Some very impressive games are due in the first quarter of '94, but the high price point is bound to hurt 3DO's short-term chances.

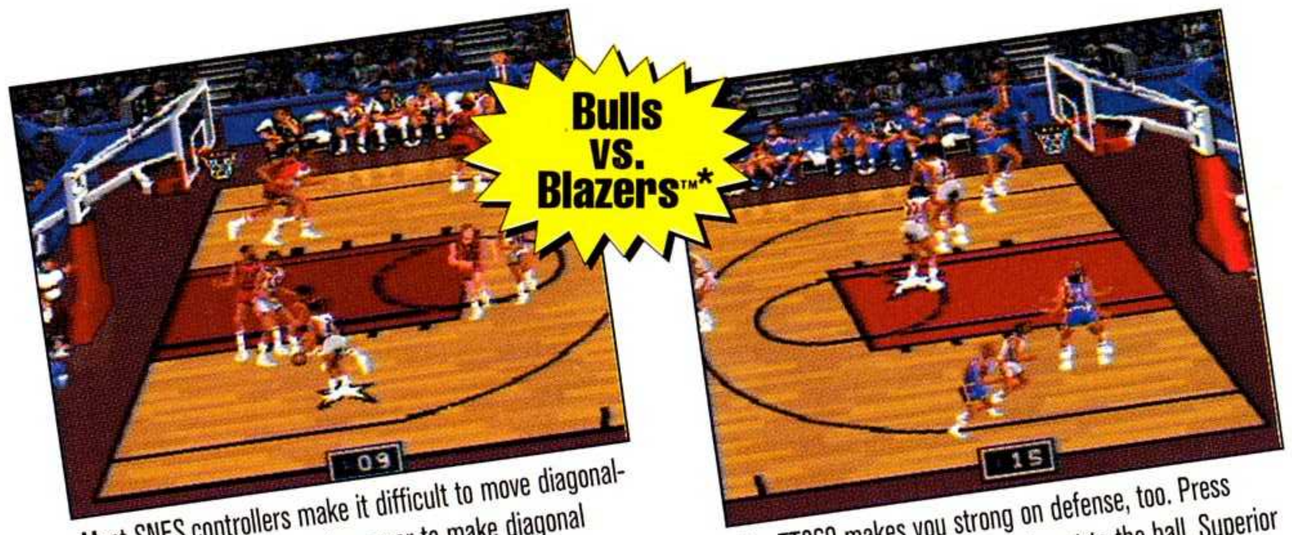
The Saturn is Sega's 32-Bit, Genesis-compatible machine which may never even make it to the States—and if it does, it isn't likely to happen within the next year. This system is primarily targeted at Japan, where the Mega Drive (aka Genesis) flopped. However, the downward compatibility is a great idea, and would allow the system to be released in U.S. and Europe—where Sega is clearly winning the 16-Bit war—without crippling Genesis sales. Price point: $400.

Finally, we have Atari's Jaguar. The price is right (in the $200 range), but there are a couple of problems. For one, Atari needs quality developers desperately (Iguanasoft, Park Place, and Interactive are among the current rumored players) since the software which was shown at the Jaguar press conference was, shall we say, less than ideal? Also, word is leaking out that the Jaguar development tools are not exactly at 3DO level (the 3DO is an easy system to get up and running, despite the lack of tools). Still, the modularity of the 64-Bit Jaguar—a CD drive is an optional add-on, for example—may make it appealing to users who want to build a system rather than slap down all the cash at once...

And I do believe that wraps us up for this month. Remember to send those comments, questions, corrections and compliments to:

The Game Doctor (EG)
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Las Vegas NV 89107

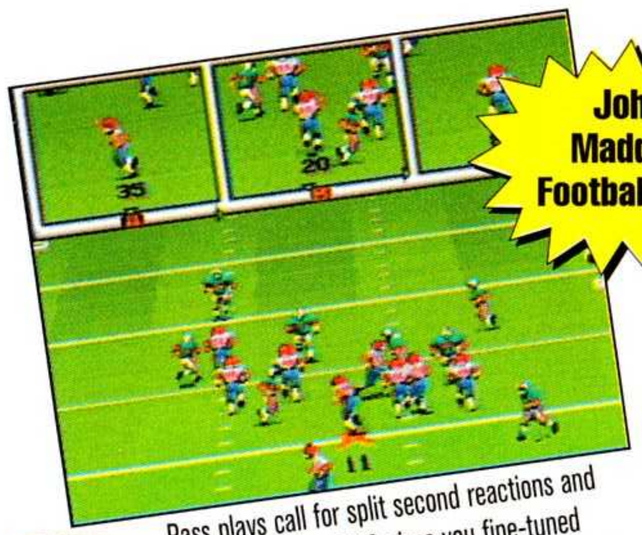
Aloha!



Bulls vs. Blazers™*

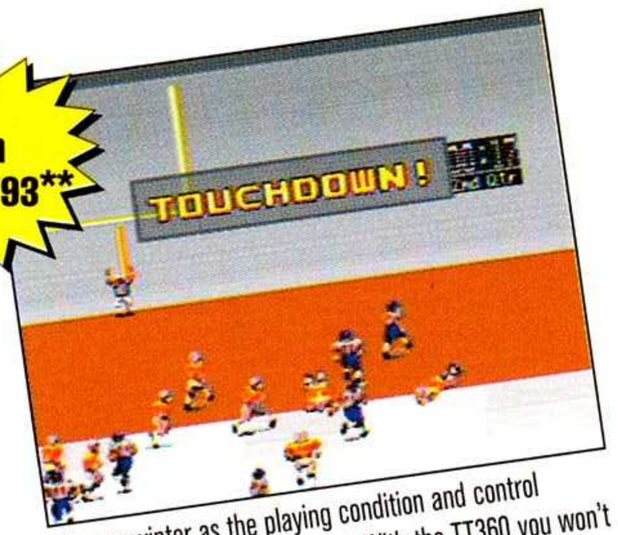
Most SNES controllers make it difficult to move diagonally. The TT360 gives you the power to make diagonal drives on the net with no numb thumb!

The TT360 makes you strong on defense, too. Press Button B to select your man closest to the ball. Superior diagonal control puts you where you need to be, ready to hit Button Y and block the shot.

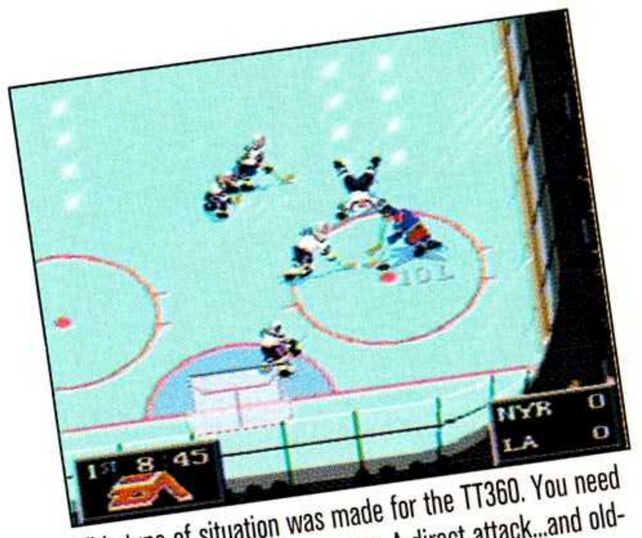


John Madden Football™ '93**

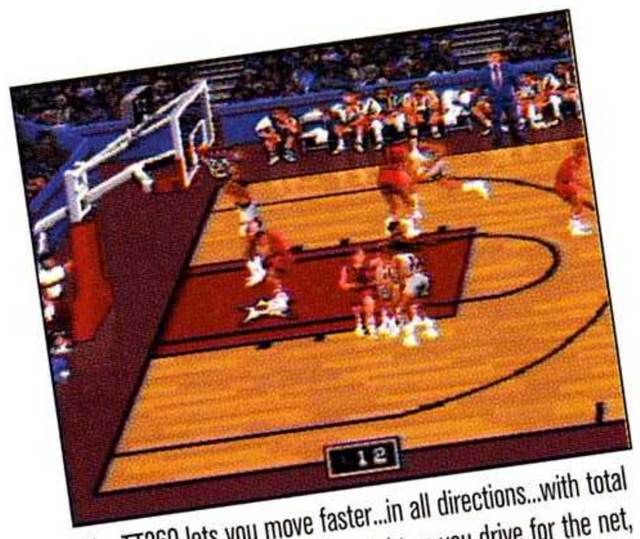
Pass plays call for split second reactions and timing. The TT360 gives you fine-tuned control over all your players, where old-fashioned controllers might only slow you down!



Choose winter as the playing condition and control becomes even more important. With the TT360 you won't slipslide away...or mangle your thumb trying to turn on a dime and make the end zone.

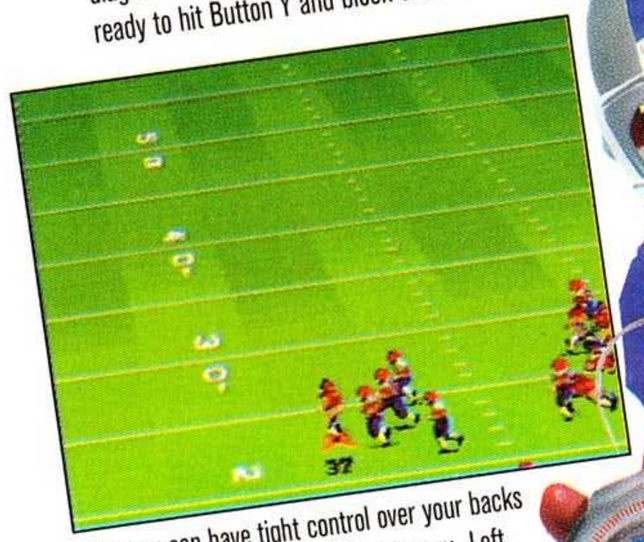


This type of situation was made for the TT360. You need to move fast and tight to score. A direct attack...and old-fashioned controllers...won't make the grade. Head Diagonal behind the net and try to dump it in the corner of the crease.

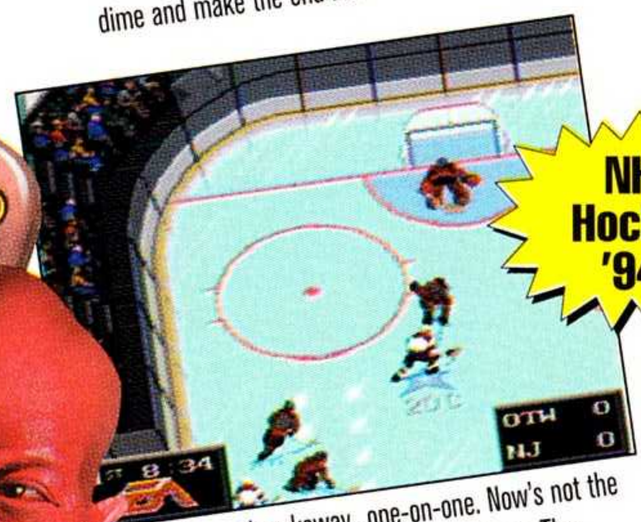


The TT360 lets you move faster...in all directions...with total circular control. Fake left and right as you drive for the net, then Button A for the Jump Shot.

*Shown on SNES **Shown on Genesis

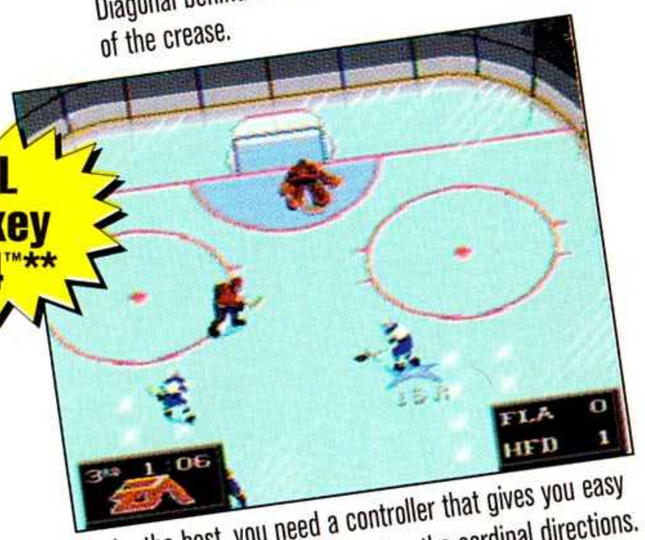


Now you can have tight control over your backs in an end run. The TT360 makes it easy...Left, Diagonal and Up in a simple thumb sweep. The advantage is yours. Drive for the goal posts.



NHL Hockey '94™**

You're on breakaway...one-on-one. Now's not the time for your controller to let you down. The TT360's smooth Touch Pad lets you switch direction fast to fake-out the toughest defense men. Cut to the Left Diagonal and go for the goal.



To be the best, you need a controller that gives you easy access to the diagonals as well as the cardinal directions. Use your right wing to pull your opponents off to the side. Diagonal pass, shoot, and score for victory. The TT360 can make you a winner.



PLAY WITH AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

When you play EA Sports® games, you need a controller that's fast, that gives you all the action you want – easily and effortlessly, and that destroys your opponent, not your thumb! That's why you should be using the Turbo Touch 360,™ The Ultimate Scoring Machine, for all your favorite games. The Turbo Touch 360 "touch sensor" allows your thumb or index finger to move effortlessly across the sensor plate – you don't have to push down. Objects on the screen move as fast as you move your finger, you've got real diagonal and true circular control, and you really feel like you're in the game. The pay-off is being the ultimate scoring machine and trashing your opponent... you know the guy using the old-fashioned control pad. So, play with an unfair advantage. Play with the Turbo Touch 360.

Turbo Touch 360.
The Ultimate Scoring Machine.

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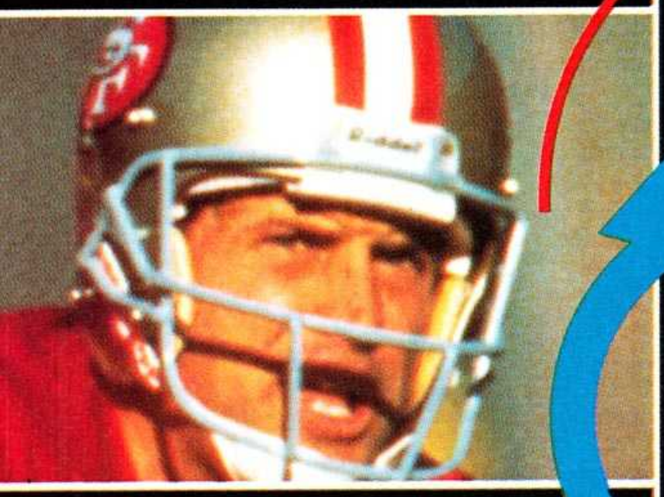
For the name of your nearest Turbo Touch 360 retailer or to place an order, call **1-800-858-7429.**

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THE ONLY WAY TO



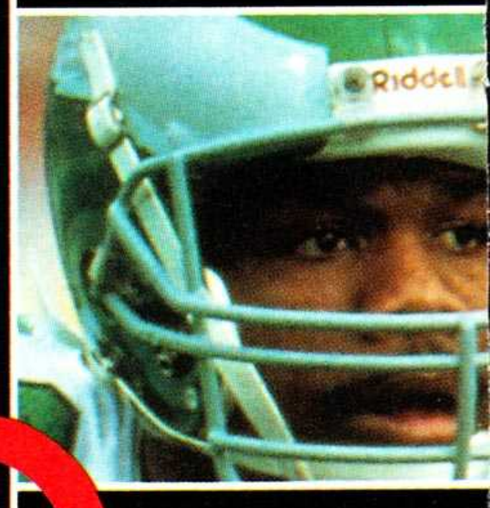


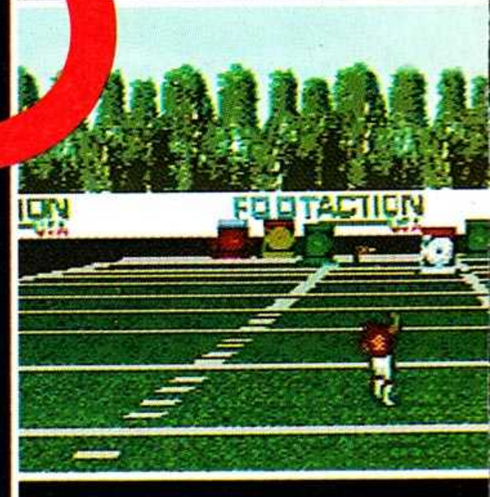




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IT'S GAME TIME! PLAY THROUGH

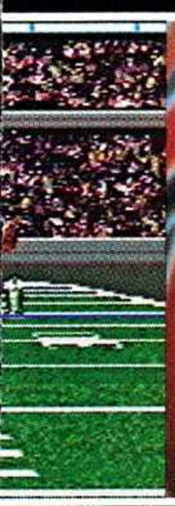
AIKMAN, KELLY, CUNNINGHAM, MOON, ELWAY, SIMMS, KOSAR,

16 MEG ACTION
FEATURING
ALL 28 NFL TEAMS

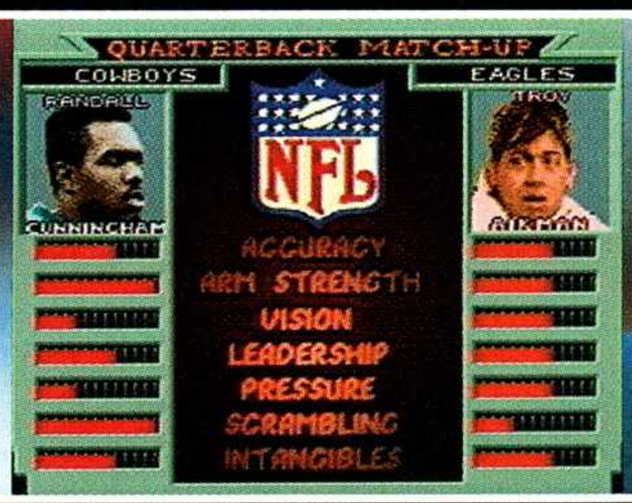
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- Unique Quarterback-view perspective puts you on the field and in control!
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- Exclusive NFL Quarterback Challenge™ mode

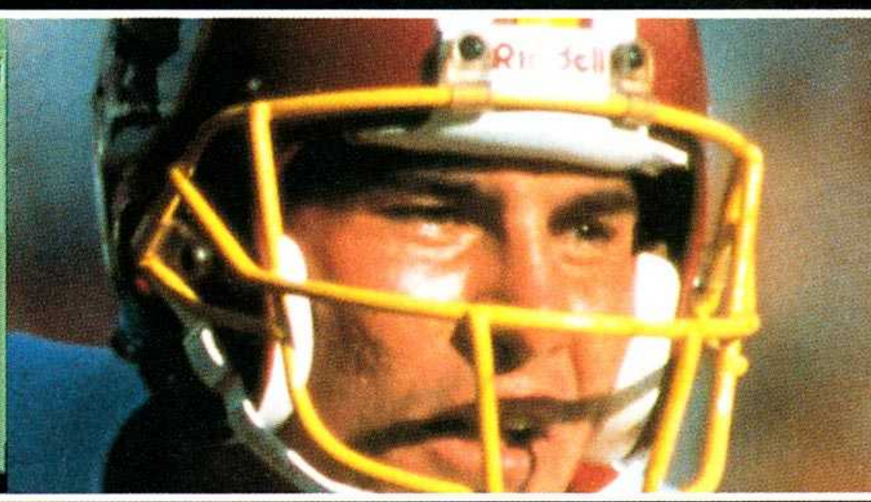
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PLAY THE GAME!









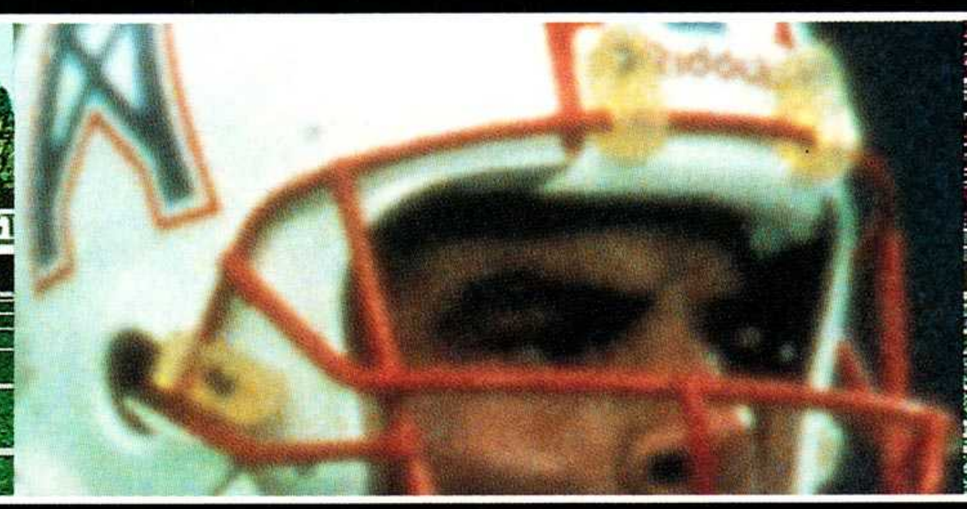




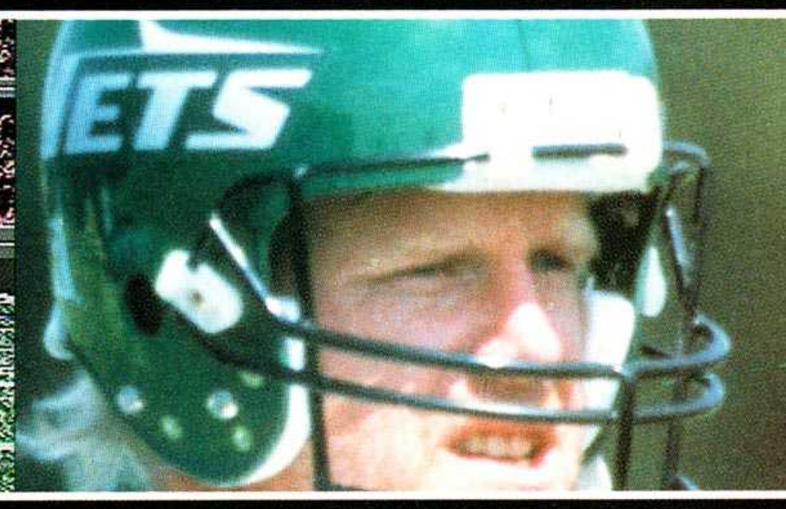


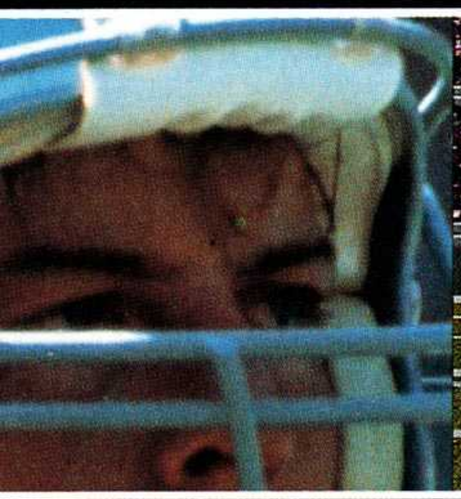




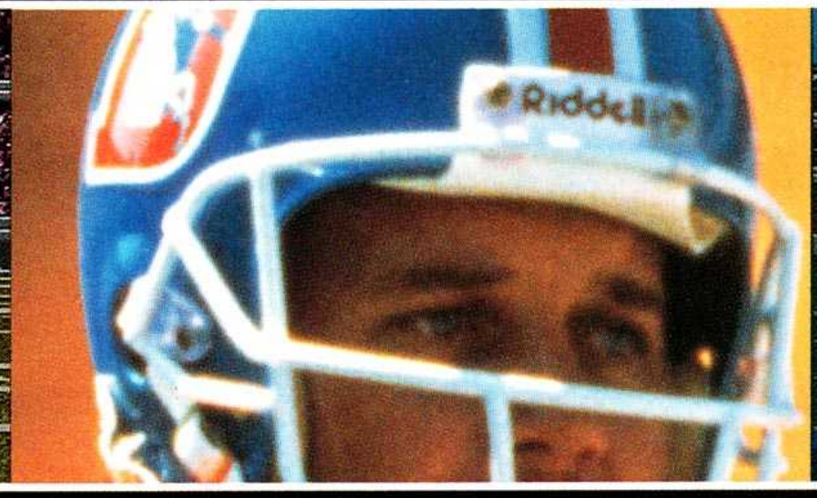














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EG SPECIAL REPORT: CENSORSHIP

Mortal Kontroversy

by Bill Kunkel

"Mortal Kombat!"

When the first of Acclaim's ingenious Mortal Monday TV spots ran this past summer and its young star stood in a downtown metropolitan area crying out the name of the smash Williams' coin-op, he was doing more than heralding its arrival on home gaming systems. It was the call of controversy, and it signaled the advent of what may be an extended period of public scrutiny for video games.

Most non-gamers were frankly astonished by the level of graphic violence in the coin-op version of **Mortal Kombat**. The image of Sub-Zero performing a spinectomy on a defeated opponent



The Genesis version contains a special code which allows players to see red!

seemed especially unsettling, as did the buckets of blood which accompany well-aimed kicks and punches.

Time magazine even assembled a montage of video game characters—including **MK**'s Johnny Cage and Kano—for its 9/27/93 cover story: "Attack of the Video Games." While most of the story was the usual "big bucks are being made by video games" material, a major sidebar asked the musical question: "Too Violent for Kids?" The feature quoted the usual anti-war toy voices, including Parker Page of the Children's Television Resource and Education Center (who felt that violent games make kids "more aggressive or more tolerant of aggression.") and USC professor Marsha Hunt, who observed that video game mayhem is "worse than [violence in] a TV or a movie. It communicates the message that the only way to be empowered is through violence." Uh huh. Unlike the latest Stallone or Segal film, which advocates the importance of rational debate.

The alternate approaches which Sega and Nintendo took to the violence in **Mortal Kombat** are instructive in understanding the philosophies of the two video game titans. Nintendo eliminated the gore altogether in both the SNES and Game Boy versions, with developer Sculptured Software forced to substitute sweat for blood, while eliminating or altering the more outrageous of the deadly moves. The Genesis and Game Gear editions, meanwhile, don't even sweat—unless the player enters in the "secret" blood codes and accesses the none-too-mysterious "Mode A." The codes are not published in the game documentation, but have appeared in every gaming magazine and most of the newspaper accounts of video game violence.

Sega rated the game MA-13 [see sidebar], despite the fact that realistic death sequences theoretically earn any game an automatic MA-17.

Nonetheless, gamers decried the elimination of even the goriest coin-op sequences, claiming the game had been virtually bowdlerized in its SNES incarnation. "The majority of players have wanted to play the arcade game," was the diplomatic way Acclaim's Allyne Mills put it. "We produced slightly different games for different gamers." But whether **Mortal Kombat** is too violent or too tame, sales have been sizzling, and the stormy public reaction certainly hasn't hurt Acclaim—at least not in the short term. **Mortal Kombat** has been seen everywhere, and its high profile, coupled with Capcom's delay in releasing the Genesis version of **Street Fighter II: Championship Edition**, have established it as a certified mega-hit in the home market, while **SF II**'s sales on the Sega system lag far behind.

"It's my understanding that the Genesis version [of **MK**] is selling better than



The SNES version, however, has done away with spurts of blood from attacks.

the SNES, but both are selling extremely well," said Allyne Mills. "The controversy had absolutely no negative effect on consumer interest. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that, given the sales results, no one would ever know there *was* a media controversy. And that's exactly what this was: a media controversy."

If the issue of vid game violence has legs, the next title to step into the media spotlight may well be Konami's Genesis and Sega CD editions of **Lethal Enforcers**. Another ultra-violent arcade game, Konami knew this title would draw heat, even before the spit hit the fan with **Mortal Kombat**. **Lethal Enforcers** is a light gun target game, with the player cast as a law enforcement agent engaged in a series of violent shoot-out scenarios. The game uses digitized images of human beings, just as in **MK**, and, according to Konami's Kay Wolfe Jones, "had Sega not initiated a ratings system, *we* would have put some sort of warning on it."

But Sega *has* introduced a ratings system, and **Lethal Enforcers** has become only the second game ever to be rated MA-17—not recommended for anyone under 17. How does Konami, a company

Bob Grebe

Bob Grebe, of American Laser Games/ICAT, commented: "I don't believe that it is the responsibility of the government to impose censorship, whether it's on magazines, other publications, entertainment, or music, or literature. However, I do believe that there is a need for our Industry to act responsibly."

"It is helpful that films are given ratings, although sometimes the ratings are arbitrary, but I do feel it helps parents evaluate whether a film is appropriate material for what they think their child should see. So I don't think I really have any different feeling about a rating system being applied to games."



Street Fighter II Turbo adds no bloody scenes, but the death-by-flame remains.

that is relatively new to the Genesis market, feel about this rating?

"In this case, we agree," Kay Wolfe Jones attested. "We had some discussions with Sega about it, and it kept coming back to the digitized graphics and extreme realism, plus the fact that the game comes packed with a light gun. We don't think that sell-through will be affected—kids always want what they can't have—but the rating may affect sell-*in*. Some retailers may refuse to carry any MA-17 titles."

Savvy marketing types have long maintained that the media can say whatever it wants about them—as long as it spells their name right. The current firestorm may burn itself out, or it may receive a fresh infusion of oxygen and burn long into the night.

Either way, it's "Kombat" with a "K".

Roger Sharpe

Roger Sharpe, well-known coin-op authority and Director of Marketing Support Services for Williams Bally/Midway: "Speaking from my own experience in the field, it's always easy for people to target adolescent entertainment. There is always some urgency to put restraints on entertainment and how children use their leisure time. We look for a way to lay blame. Now it's video games: 'If video games were outlawed, or if they were toned down, we'd be well as a society.' Society is hunting for scapegoats.

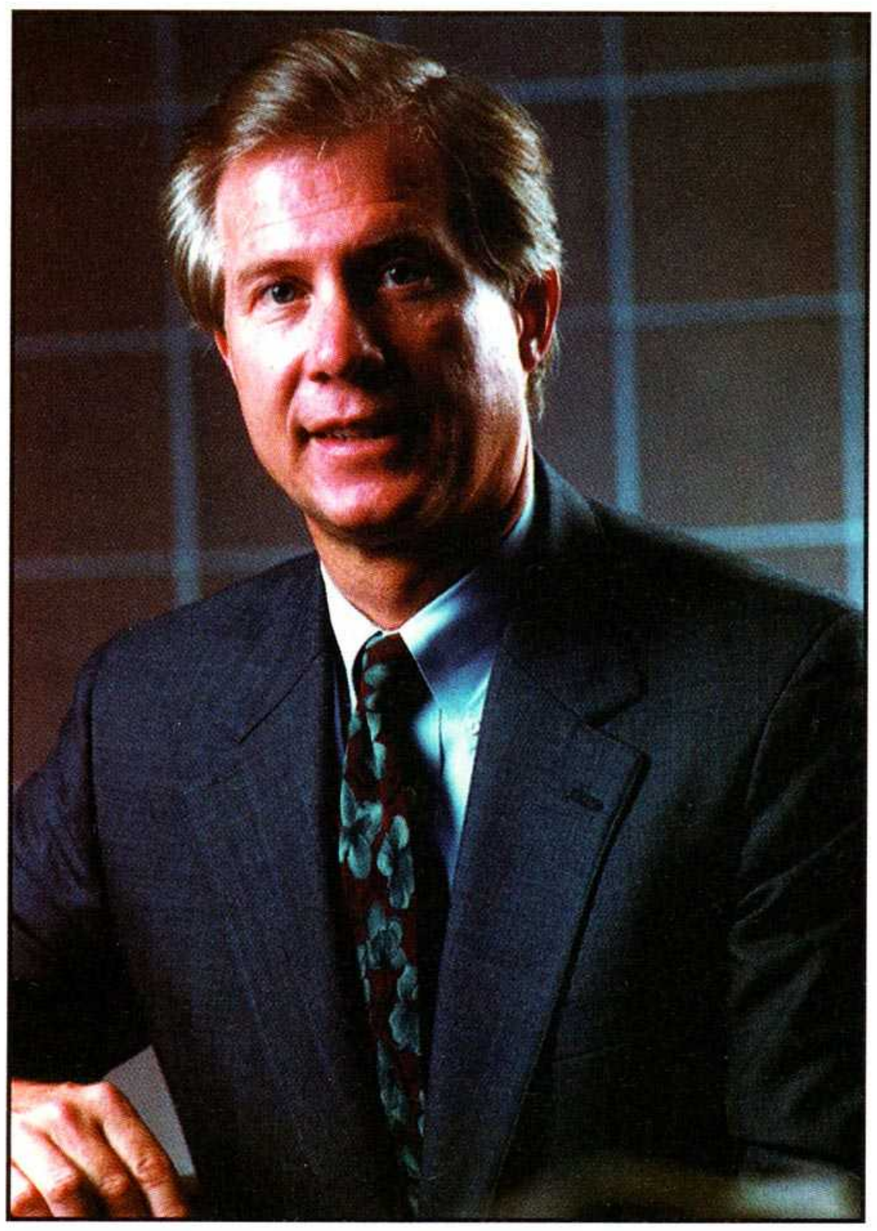
"We are producing fantasy escape entertainment, and whether it's in the home or in the family amusement center, all it is is a brief respite. If we can provide the opportunity [for a person] to get away from reality a bit and lose himself in the fantasy wonderment of a game, I don't think there's anything that wrong about it. If anything, it's a good release."

Tom Kalinske

No one is more closely connected with the effort to provide guidance ratings for electronic games than Tom Kalinske. Sega's president has been working on the project for nearly two years.

"It caught my attention in March or April 1992 that we were getting a lot of consumer calls from parents saying things like: 'Gee, if I had known a particular game contained this sequence, I wouldn't have bought it for my eight-year-old. I wish you had told us that.'"

When the volume of calls rose, Kalinske and his team began discussing the situation internally, and with third-party publishers. "We really didn't reach a great consensus."



A decision couldn't wait. Kalinske feels that technology is increasing realism, and that multimedia is attracting older players who want adult material. "Not reaching consensus with everyone, I felt the best thing to do from Sega's perspective was to take the lead and establish a rating system."

Sega contacted the group that handles the motion picture rating system. They rebuffed the idea of administrating a game code. "In fact, when they heard we were going to do something, they threatened to sue if we used designations that were similar to theirs.

"We've gotten very good response from the third-party community. A lot of those who didn't completely agree initially now seem to be agreeing that it's a good idea," says Kalinske.

"More important is the consumer reaction. It is running 98% favorable. People are saying things like, "Thank you for doing this.'" Grateful parents make most of the calls, but a surprising number come from adults who like the way the rating system flags cartridges with mature elements.

The code, says Kalinske, has also thawed some habitual critics. "A lot of heads of different groups which are usually critical about too much violence in our world have also called and are saying, 'We still think there's too much violence in the world, but at least you're doing something about it.'"

Fears that an MA-13 or MA-17 may be premature, he asserts. "**Night Trap**, which is an MA-17, is sold in all of the toy channels. The retailers are very sophisticated. They're going to look at the games themselves and make the decision whether MA-17 means that it's something that their particular type of outlet doesn't want to handle. After reviewing **Night Trap**, the toy retailers have said, 'This isn't really all that bad. It's MA-17, but it's certainly not overly sexy or violent or full of profanity. Therefore we will carry it.' They might have a totally different reaction to another product rated MA-17."

Kalinske agrees that this vagueness may be symptomatic of the need for some revision in the code. "One part of the consumer reaction is that a number of people have suggested that we include some description as to why a product is labeled MA-13 or MA-17. Was it violence, language, or what?"

The Sega Code may only be the first step toward a more comprehensive rating system. "In some regards, it would be really awful if every single company had its own rating system, and each of them had different wording." Kalinske acknowledges. "It would be confusing."

Kalinske enthusiastically proclaimed his willingness to cooperate on an effort to upgrade the code and establish a fair and independent standard for the whole electronic gaming industry that also wouldn't constrain the programmers. "It seems to me that we have to get corporate ego out of this and do the right thing for the consumer."

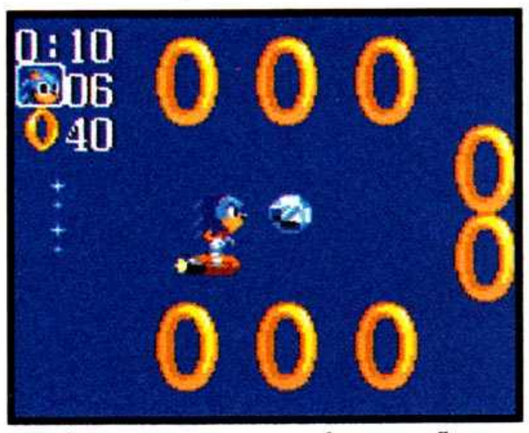
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG CHAOS™



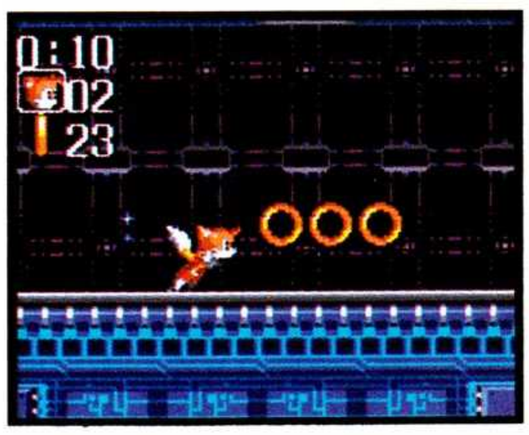
Sonic can explore tunnels and break through walls to find hidden rooms and power ups in the Gigapolis zone.



Tails here, with some serious air time in the Aqua Hill zone, eluding danger, nabbing rings and finding power ups.



Rack up 100 rings and you're flying Air Sonic (strap on the rocket shoes) in the bonus round. The mission: rescue the emeralds.



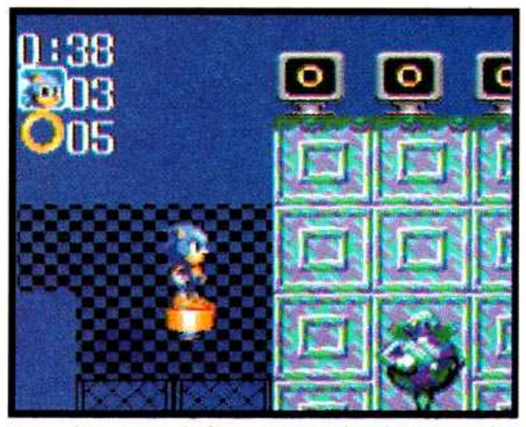
Deep in the Electric Egg zone (no, it's not a rock group), you can take Tails through the tubes to find rings and other bonus items.

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Sega, Game Gear, Welcome to the Next Level, Sonic Chaos, Sonic The Hedgehog and all related characters and indicia are





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Sonic is back as he battles Dr. Robotnik's evil plan (is it the shoes?) to use the Red Chaos emerald in making nuclear lasers. Tails is hangin,' too, and this time you control him. Both are bound for some serious air time (is it the shoes?), grabbing rings (is it the shoes?) and saving the emeralds from falling into the wrong hands (it's got to be the shoes).

Rocket Shoe fits, wear it.



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EG SPECIAL REPORT: CENSORSHIP

The View from Nintendo

Peter Main discusses the ethics of video game content

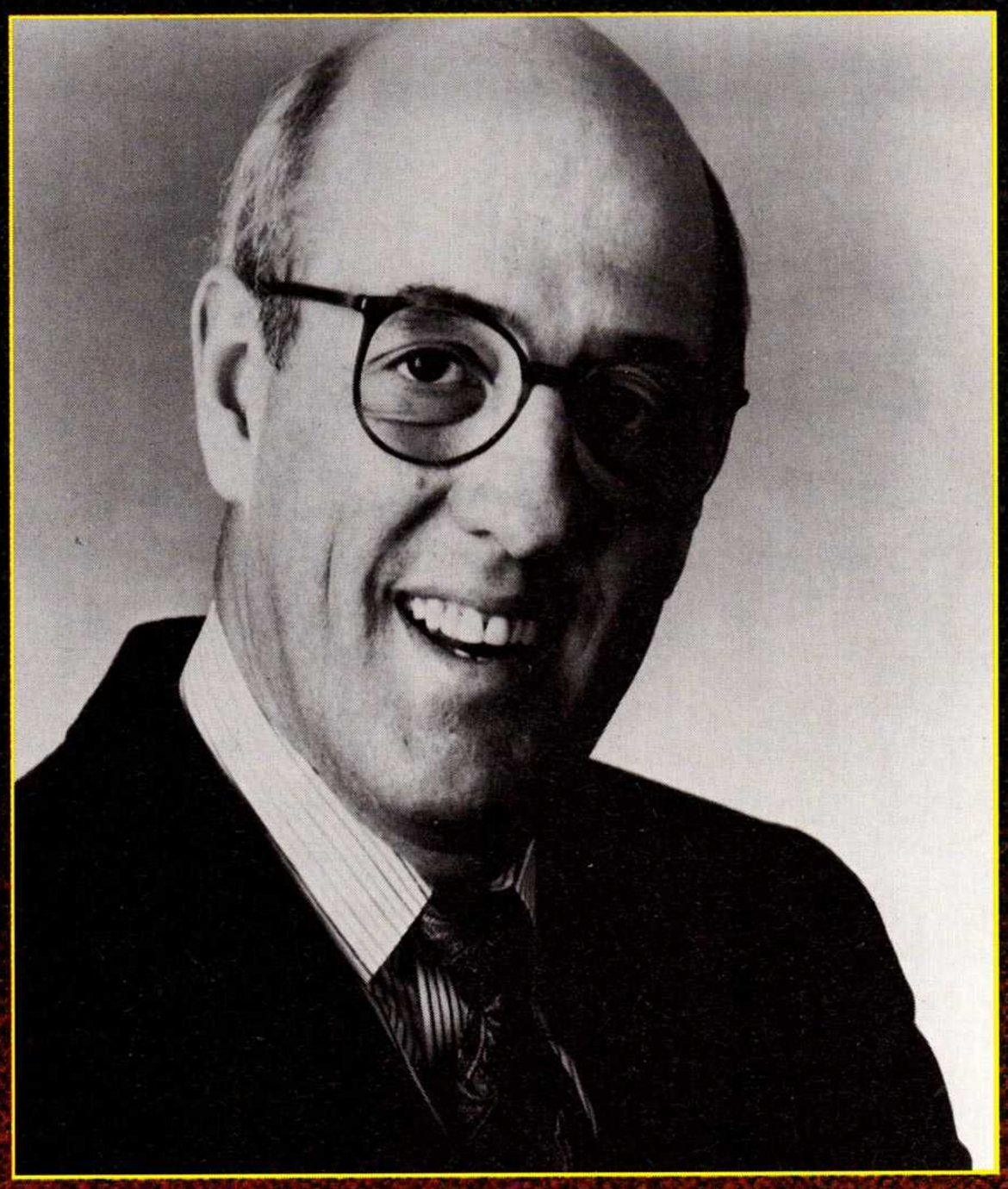
*When **EG** wanted to explore Nintendo's policy on parental guidelines for games, we turned to Peter Main. Nintendo's Vice President of Marketing has long been one of the industry's leading executives. Every gamer will appreciate his insights into this multi-faceted, confusing debate.*

"We believe that a very significant part of the brand equity of the name 'Nintendo' comes from the perception that not only are the games exciting, challenging and entertaining, but they are presented in a format that society at large does not deem offensive," says Peter Main of Nintendo's long-standing commitment to family entertainment.

"We are not anxious to knowingly turn off older age groups, but we are unwilling to walk away from the backbone of the business which continues to be an area in which we have great expertise. Our strength is balancing what this younger group finds exciting, challenging and a heck of a lot of fun while it's still acceptable to those that look over their shoulder as they play. Hopefully, parents of kids 8 to 14 are going to look at this product and say, 'I don't see anything socially unacceptable; I'm not disappointed with this game being in my house'."

"Nintendo adopted this policy after a lot of thought and discussion," Main explains. "Over the past 6 to 8 years, a game carrying the Nintendo logo, we believe, has come to represent some preconceived notions about content."

Though proud of Nintendo's record, Main doesn't soft-pedal the problem. Granted, the Nintendo seal is pretty much a sign of a reasonably "clean" game, but that doesn't come about without a group struggle. "Every year we go through the struggle of re-examining our game content guidelines before sending the update to licensees and developers. We try not to be arbiters of American social standards as opposed to simply trying to serve the heart of our business. And our business is still kids sub 14 years of age. Some players have grown past us and are now 16, 18, or even 20, but they were replaced by another 3 or 4 million kids in the U.S. and 10 or 15 million kids around the world whom we believe are today's and tomorrow's heavy consumers of this kind of product."



"Through the licensing arrangement, we have the opportunity to approve or disapprove of all the games that are produced for the platform. There are essentially 10 points. It's stuff like: No sexually suggestive or sexist language, no random, gratuitous or excessive violence. No graphic illustration of death. We say, 'Please, developers and licensees, when you're developing games don't bring this kind of thing forward, because it is our opinion that this is not acceptable, and we will likely be turning it down.' We might as well get that kind of thing out of the way before you start spending your time and money developing games of that sort."

The Nintendo spokesman is concerned about older players who may have interests beyond the usual Nintendo carts. He even conceives the possibility of addressing this audience directly and specifically. "We believe that the Nintendo label should continue to be this kind of General Audience product. Should the company decide, as many movie studios have, that hey, we really want to be in the blood and guts business or the sex business or some other niche that appears to be a legal legitimate large-sized business in which we should apply our talents, it would seem to me that the better way of doing that would be to tackle it with another label, not some kind of arbitrary system one could not enforce which would be open to all the vagaries that the current proposed system seems to be open to. Namely, if Toys 'R Us says, 'I don't handle any mature audience prerecorded video, and hence if you want your game in here, you better not put an over 18 rating on it.' It's going to have some kind of impact.

Still, Main doesn't rule out Nintendo embracing a parental guidance rating under the proper conditions. The success of such a system is evident in other areas of entertainment, and video games could benefit from such a body. "I think we would take a real hard look at it. The future of video gaming is open at this juncture. With all the concerns about gratuitous violence, we all have a very big stake in coming to grips with that kind of question. We're open and willing to vigorously discuss workable programs of that kind. In the meantime, as the world thrashes around trying to come to grips with it, we believe that the best guidance is to insure that we stay stiff internally and to stay on the right side of that line in the absence of any universally accepted guidance."

Yo-Ho-Ho and a Barrel of Grog.

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EG SPECIAL REPORT: CENSORSHIP

From East to West

by Marc Camron

The children of America need to be protected. They should not be exposed to graphic sex and violence and it is up to someone to watch out for their interests.

Here is where the argument breaks down. The question looms overhead like the Goodyear blimp at the Super Bowl. *Whose* responsibility is it to watch over the youth of America? If you jump up and say the parents, chances are you don't have children. For it seems that the vast majority of parents are tired of taking the responsibility of raising their own kids and are looking to the outside world to lend them a hand.

Far too often do we now hear the cries of "I don't have enough time to monitor the television my child watches" or "I can't look at every game he brings into the house."



It still isn't understood why the cinema scenes were removed from Jelly Bean.

Since companies like Nintendo and Sega rely most often on the parents' money, they have had to resort to self-censorship to assure that their games do not undergo an overt amount of scrutiny from the numerous watchdog groups looking to jump on the latest offender.

Even with the extremely conservative standards, there still seems to be a cry of too much violence, too much nudity, too much of just about anything that may make a game even slightly more mature. This has led to the rating of games by Sega and some calls for a better established, more consistent rating system.

In the search for political correctness, many of the games that have been brought over from Japan have undergone serious face lifts. Has this censorship gotten out of hand? You decide.

Is Juvenile Humor Too Mature?

It would seem that may of the things that are changed from Japanese games deal with bodily functions that are considered unacceptable in polite company.

The popularity of Ren & Stimpy have brought forth a fact many people choose to ignore. Namely, farts are funny. Like the coming out of belly-buttons in the '60s, people are only starting to realize now that while they may not be entirely pleasant, censoring flatulence is just a waste of time. Comedy writers use it for a cheap laugh and the Japanese find it so amusing that various depictions of it have crossed over into may different levels of their culture.

These "rude under-leg noises" can be found in political cartoons, television commercials, and yes, even video games.

For instance, the popular PC Engine game called **Kato and Ken** featured two strange little Japanese characters whose main form of attack was to bend over and let one loose. The characters could also be found relieving themselves behind bushes and the like. While never being explicit, the depiction remained far too graphic for the censors at the American end and the entire game was revamped. Gas turned to an aerosol can



Female enemies were completely removed from the U.S. Final Fight.

and all remaining questionable situations were eliminated. The result was **J.J. and Jeff**, a flat and mediocre game that lost most of its humor in the translation.

Another such game was the Japanese version of **DJ Boy**. Here, the first boss was a large black woman dressed in stereotypical 1920s housekeeper attire. The main focus of her attack was to turn around, lift up her skirt, and... well, you get the idea.

While it is certainly understandable to eliminate the very negative racial stereotyping, the attack was humorous and harmless and while not necessarily pleasant to the sensibilities, certainly nothing that could damage a child.



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From East to West

Not to Offend

The entire basis of the applied censorship is to keep from offending anyone, and while this stance is a noble one, in the long run someone is not going to be happy.

One of Nintendo's strictest rules regards the use of religious symbols. Designers are not even allowed to put crosses on tombstones in a graveyard. While some Japanese games like the original PC Engine version of **Splatter-house** do contain some overt Satanic symbolism, something as basic as the crosses in the opening sequence of the SNES **Castlevania** have been deleted between the Japanese and American versions. Though the intention here is good, the execution is ridiculous. In all Western folklore, heroes have used crosses to vanquish vampires. One would be



As well as being easier, the American Super-Contra is missing the dogs.

hard-pressed to find a vampire novel or movie that does not contain reference to religious symbols like crosses and Holy Water. Still, these objects are removed from the games.

Sex too is removed. In both Japanese and European cultures, the exposure of a woman's breasts is no big deal. But in America it is a sure way to get a PG-13 or R rating on a movie, or draw an angry crowd with a video game. So games that contain nudity of any sort are either edited down for the American public, or not released at all. The Mega-CD game **Switch** contains so many of these types of scenes that Sega of America has declined converting it altogether.

There is also the strange case of taking women out of fighting games. While this has not become a regular habit, there is the notable case of the SNES **Final Fight**. This game was a huge success at the arcades, and when Capcom announced that it was to be one of the first games released on the Super Nintendo, fans rejoiced. The earliest shots in the magazines were of the Japanese version, nearly identical to the arcade game in every way. Then came the American release, and surprise! Capcom, for some reason, decided to change all of the female enemies to male ones. Surely they didn't think that no one would notice. The basic thought behind this was not giving young boys the idea that it is okay to hit a woman. Instead the result is nothing more than a game that fans of the original shunned.

The most confusing thing is that fighting games with female enemies have been released for play on Nintendo systems before, ie: the Lindas in **Double Dragon**.

What Do You Mean, Too Hard?

To make matters more confusing, it seems that American game companies are not only professing to know what is best for the American game player, but also how skilled we are.

Often times, games are made easier for release in the United States. This was the case with **Strider**, the first 8-Meg game released on the Sega Genesis. Granted, this was a difficult game, but it would have been nice to get the chance to play it in its original form, rather than being told that Americans just aren't good enough. The same thing happened with the conversion of the Japanese **Final Fantasy IV** to the American **Final Fantasy II**. This game was not only edited for difficulty, but the size and the scope of it was greatly diminished. Entire sub-quests were removed. In Japan the American version is now available as **Final Fantasy IV-Easy**, and is intended for beginning gamers.

Sometimes games are released differently in the U.S. just because translation is too difficult or there is not enough time to get everything in the game before its scheduled release date.

The Japanese version of **Sonic The Hedgehog** features much more complex graphics than its American counterpart. This is because the programmers fell behind schedule and were unable to finish the game in time for the U.S. release. Rather than postponing the game, the decision was to leave out some of the candy-graphics

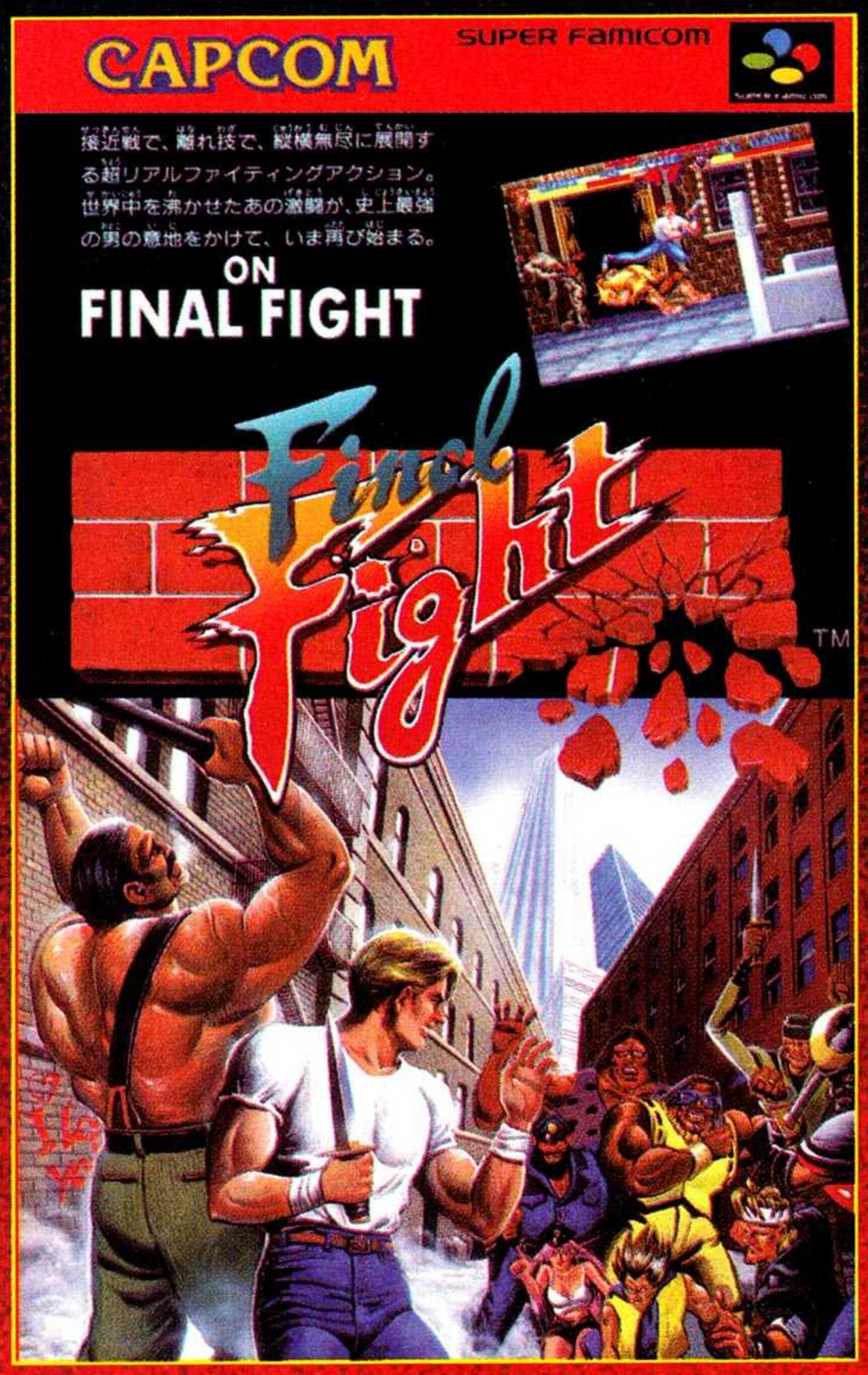


Much of the scrolling wasn't ready in time for the American release of Sonic.

like extra levels of scrolling and added motion in the water sequences. The game was inevitably finished before its release in Japan.

Before releasing the game **Jerry Boy** (**Jelly Bean** here in the U.S.) the decision was made to remove all of the cinematic seqences rather than translate them into English. Though this game is completely inoffensive and almost too cute, it was still the subject of altering.

The question ultimately becomes "Why don't the game companies just inform the public of the content of the games, rather than changing them?" Shouldn't there at least be a choice for video game players, rather than the companies dictating what is, and isn't okay?



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EG SPECIAL REPORT: CENSORSHIP

The Standards

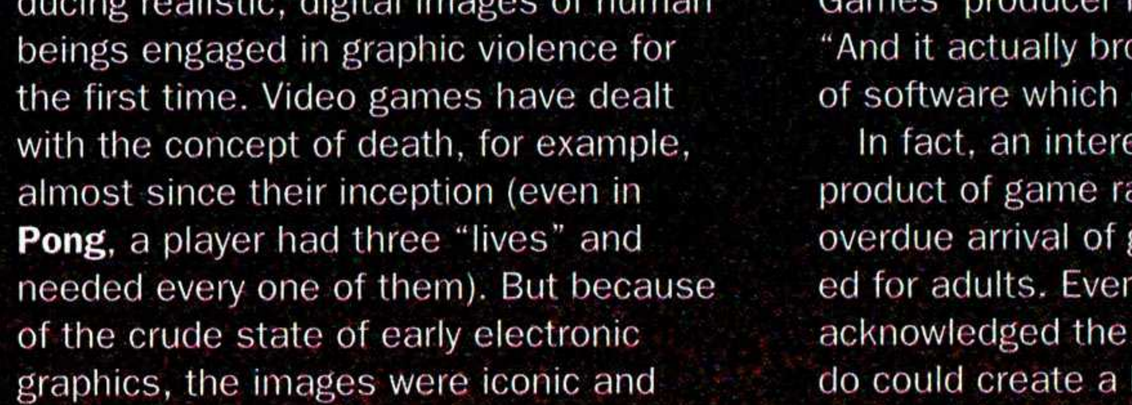
by Bill Kunkel

Ratings have become a fact of life in American pop culture. Comic books are submitted to a Comics Code Authority to assure that the book in question does not violate any of the industry's taboos, whereupon a "seal of approval" is stamped on the cover. A watchdog committee of politicians' wives has demanded that music albums be rated, while rap groups such as 2 Live Crew have even been busted for obscenity. And movies have been rated, if not directly censored, since just after the arrival of talkies.

It was only a matter of time before video games came under the same type of scrutiny. After all, video games are a medium aimed heavily toward children. And if parents have tended to shrug off video game violence in the past, one look at Sub-Zero toting the central nervous system of a defeated rival was all it took to generate a nationwide wake-up call.

Why now? Because today's 16-Bit video game systems are capable of producing realistic, digital images of human beings engaged in graphic violence for the first time. Video games have dealt with the concept of death, for example, almost since their inception (even in **Pong**, a player had three "lives" and needed every one of them). But because of the crude state of early electronic graphics, the images were iconic and symbolic, rather than realistic.

Pac-Man ate ghosts in his 1982 coin-op smash; if that classic gobbler game were released today, would we witness Pac-Man shredding Inky's ectoplasmic body before stuffing it in his mouth?



Tank games were a staple of early electronic arcading, but the "tanks" were rectangles with a vertical line sticking out the front to simulate a cannon. Today's tank games could feature members of the defeated crew bolting from their disabled vehicle, their bodies aflame, screaming in agony as they are machine gunned by the victorious team. The concept is the same, but its "execution" in the second example creates emotional response ripples that the more primitive game never could.

The interesting thing about this sudden concern with the content of home video games is that realistic, graphic violence has been a staple of coin-op games for years. But while the arcades have become virtual freefire zones, with no adult supervision of any kind in most cases, when those same games are brought into the home, even in truncated form, the outcry is deafening.

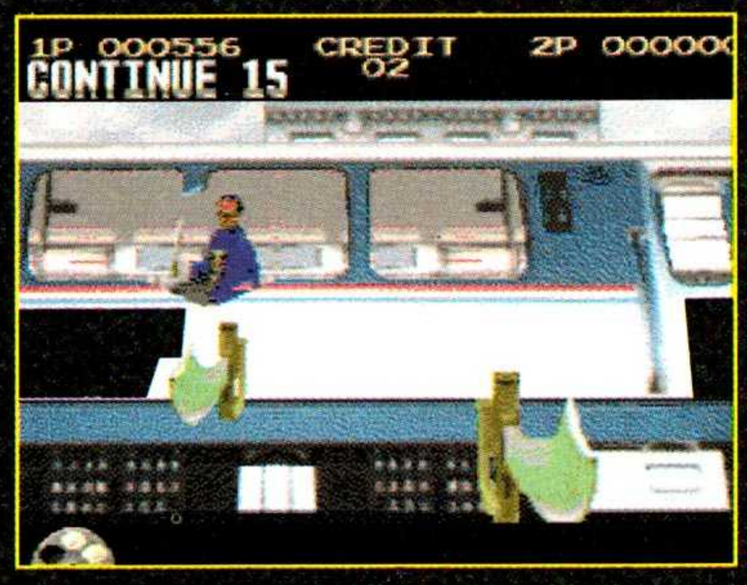
Most industry members, however, feel there is a definite up-side to ratings. "It makes parents more aware," Virgin Games' producer Rob Alvy observed. "And it actually broadens the spectrum of software which can be produced."

In fact, an interesting and ironic by-product of game ratings might be the overdue arrival of games actually intended for adults. Even Peter Main has acknowledged the possibility that Nintendo could create a line of games especially for more mature players [see sidebar].

Moviemakers have long complained that ratings have an insidious and inhibiting effect on the creative process. The difference between a movie being rated "R" and "X" for example, can be tremendous, since many theaters won't carry X-rated films and TV and other media may not allow it to even be advertised.

"We're doing **Dune II** on the Genesis and there's some violence, but I don't see us taking it out to get a GA instead of an MA-13," Alvy contended. "Of course, we still don't know if different ratings will actually mean a difference in sales. But **11th Hour**, for example, the sequel to **7th Guest**, will definitely be an MA-17 type product; it will be aimed at adults."

What about certain games actually *adding* violence to avoid a "kiss of death" GA rating? "That will definitely happen," Alvy believes. "There are certain properties where you just wouldn't want a GA."



Lethal Enforcers lets gamers blast away at baddies in many different sequences.

Many of the complaints about both the Sega and Nintendo guidelines stem from the vagueness of the language. The Sega MA-17 rating, for example, is reserved for games deemed inappropriate for children under 17 because of "titillating interaction" or "realistic death sequences." But isn't a poisoning just as realistic a depiction of death as a decapitation?

Konami's excellent coin-op translation of **Lethal Enforcers** for the Sega CD has just become the second game (the first was **Night Trap**) to receive an MA-17 rating from Sega. It is Konami's understanding that the rating is a result of the game's use of actual digitized human characters as bad guy targets. **Mad Dog McCree**, however, from American Laser Games for the Sega CD, got an MA-13 rating. Both games use light guns to shoot at digitized, on-screen images of human beings; so why is one acceptable for teens while the other isn't? Is it due to the simple facts of time period and/or location?

Nintendo's guidelines, meanwhile, forbid games that "contain language or depictions which specifically denigrates members of either sex." Huh? The guidelines for both companies are rife with



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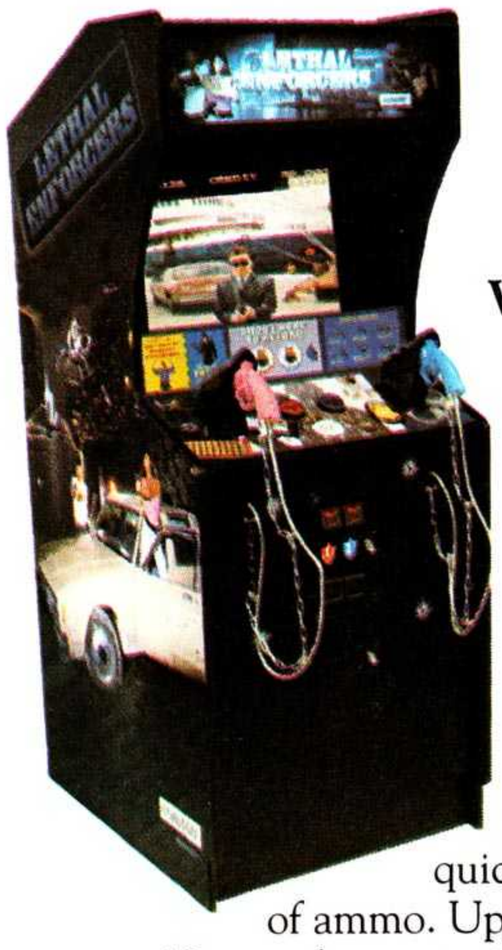
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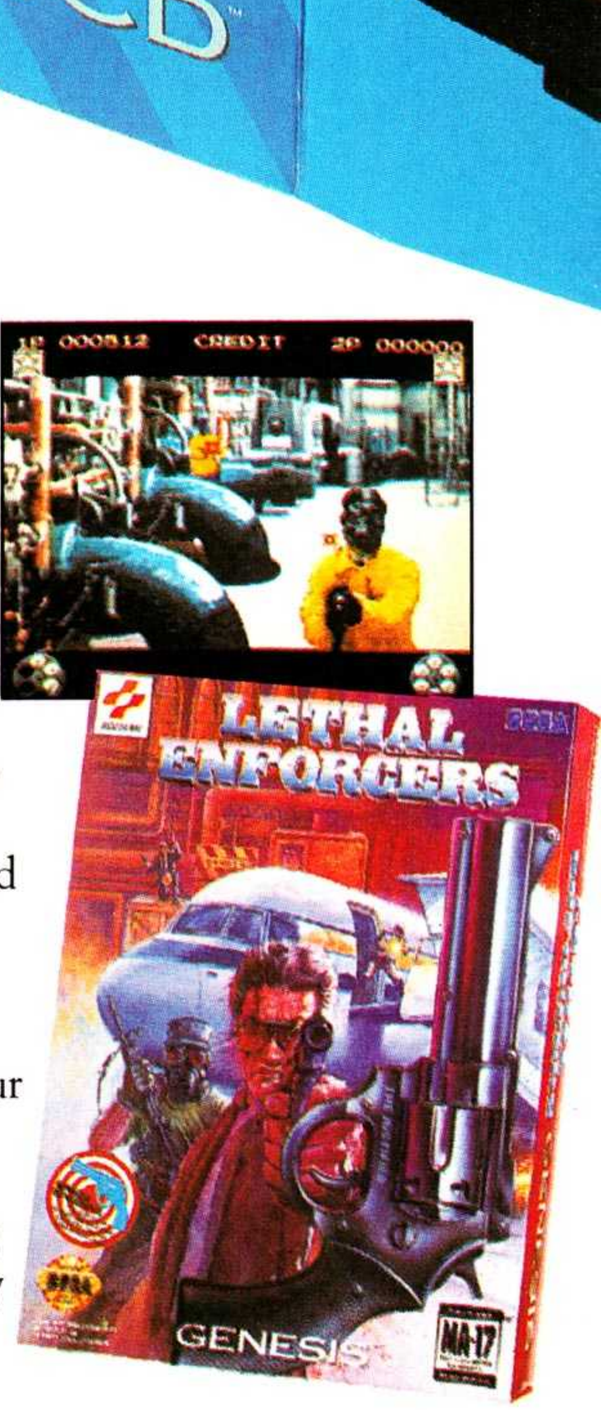




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The Standards

unclear language and generalities [see sidebar].

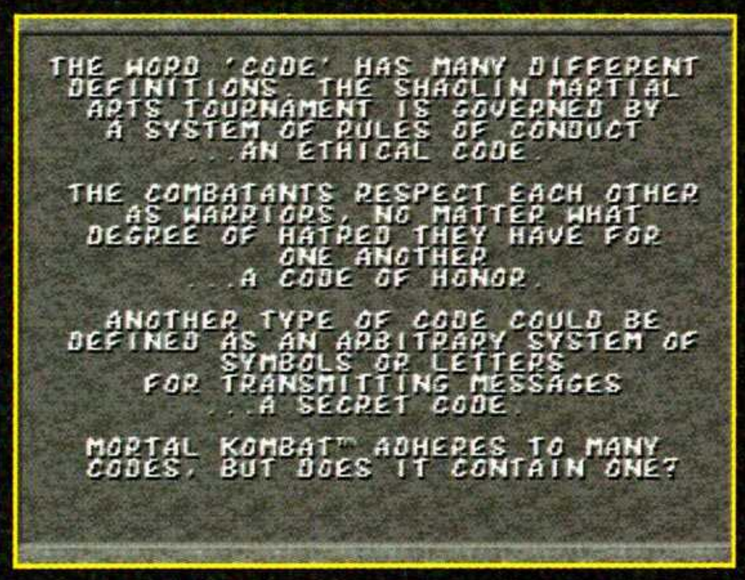
Finally, we come to the issue of special codes. After all the hue and cry concerning **Mortal Kombat**, virtually every magazine in the gaming field (including this one), made the "blood codes" available for the Genesis and Game Gear versions. This practice can't help but reek of hypocrisy. The game publishers, the magazines, and the players have basically entered into a pact whereby a defanged version of a game is presented for public consumption, while the "real" blood 'n' guts edition can be accessed with a few not-so-secret controller commands. If the idea behind ratings is to provide guidance for parents caught up in the mystifying world of video games, why the connivance?

Some members of the electronic gaming community don't feel strongly on the issue either way, such as Louis Castle of Westwood Associates, whose **Young Merlin** is headed for the SNES in January.

"I'm indifferent," he explained. "I think the pros and cons largely negate one another. However, I don't think that ratings do a very good job of targeting an audience. Take movies, for example. The difference between a 'PG' and an 'R' rated movie might be pretty hard to determine, yet there are a lot of people who simply will not see an 'R' movie, but they'd probably enjoy quite a few of them. But if I have to get off the fence a little bit, I think self-imposed standards are preferable to guidelines imposed by a publisher or organization, because I think the creators know the audience they're aiming for better than, for example, Sega or Nintendo."

The ultimate upshot of the ratings controversy is a lot of sound and fury, signifying very little. Parker Page, president of the Children's Television and Resource Center in San Francisco says: "I don't want every parent who sees their kids playing **Mortal Kombat** to think: 'My kid's on the way to Alcatraz!' But I would caution parents to take more responsibility to help their kids select and interpret the sort of games that they're buying."

Inside the game industry, meanwhile, no one seems too concerned at the moment. "It's only an advisory," one industry veteran pointed out. "It isn't like you're going to have to show somebody your driver's license before you can buy a game." If that ever happens, we'll know that the violence issue has gone a bit too far for its own good.



Players with inside information can take advantage of blood codes in games.

The Guidelines

Sega's newly implemented ratings categories are reminiscent of the long-standing Motion Picture Association ratings categories. In fact, the movie people have already voiced complaints about the similarity of the two sets of guidelines.

The Sega ratings categories are: GA, MA-13 and MA-17. GA means a game is suitable for general audiences, while MA-13 indicates that a game may not be appropriate for preteens because of limited profanity or serious combat (where players "fight to win"—as opposed to all those games where they fight to lose?) MA-17 means that the game may be inappropriate for children because of realistic death scenes or sexual content.

Nintendo's guidelines are both more extensive and more specific. Among the elements which Nintendo won't allow are:

- Sexually suggestive or explicit content including rape and/or nudity;
- Random, gratuitous, and/or excessive violence; blood or dismemberment;
- Graphic illustrations of death;
- Language or depictions which specifically denigrate members of either sex;
- Domestic violence or abuse;
- Excessive force in a sports game beyond what is inherent in actual contact sports;
- Ethnic, racial, religious, nationalistic or sexual stereotypes or language;
- Profanity or obscenity;
- Incorporating or encouraging the use of illegal drugs, cigarettes, or alcohol;
- Subliminal political messages or overt political statements.

Obviously, most of these categories are so subjective and vague that they could be extended to cover almost any game in existence. Does **Tetris** contain "nationalistic stereotypes" with its portraits of Russian life? Isn't Mario himself an "ethnic stereotype"? Does **SF II Turbo Edition** feature "excessive violence"? What game with a human villain doesn't "denigrate members of either sex"? Or do all the bad guys have to be turtles?

Finally, we come to the issue of religion. Believe it or not, there's one character who can't be featured in video games, despite having starred in countless literary and cinematic classics—including the Bible. Could it be... Satan? Yup. Lucifer is out, as are "crosses," "pentagrams," use of the words "God," "Gods," "hell," and "Buddha." Jesus Christ isn't mentioned in the guidelines and the Roman gods are given a pass by Nintendo. What about the Greek gods? The Norse deities? Paganism? Shintoism?

As with any set of guidelines, interpretation is far more important than objective content. And in both the Sega and Nintendo lists of standards and practices, there's plenty of room for interpretation.

The fun has only just begun.

—Bill Kunkel

A Fair Standard

A mini-editorial by Arnie Katz

I don't like censorship. The majority taste shouldn't steamroller the wishes of any minority. If enough gamers support the development, marketing, and sale of a particular type of electronic game, then those people should have a right to their preference. The constitution guarantees that freedom, even for publishers of games that are tasteless or repulsive.

At the same time, it is impossible not to sympathize with parents who desire to supervise their kids' gaming habits. If we are going to have guidelines, like those for movies, then let's make them uniform and fair.

I commend companies that already have guidelines. Unfortunately, the result if every company sets up its own standards will be incomprehensible chaos. Instead of helping parents make this important decision, it will be harder.

The answer is an independent body that rates all electronic games based on a printed set of specific guidelines. No system is ideal, but at least an independent board could present unambiguous game-content information untainted by the biases and interests of any individual company.

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3DO Software: Does Anyone See a Sonic in Here?

Can the Software Fulfill the Promise?

It's Opening Night Jitters time in 3DO-land. Panasonic's FZ-1 REAL Interactive 3DO Multiplayer is moving into stores as this is being written, and consumers are putting the first batch of software to the test. After all the hype and drum-beating, their reaction will determine if this mammoth project is a success or failure.

The pre-introductory period has had as many headaches as a Broadway-bound play in an out-of-town tryout. The biggest: no publisher has a complete, working development system. This slowed progress on almost every game. It's highly unlikely that publishers will have anywhere near the predicted 30-40 entertainment titles in stores by January.

Industry insiders say that the 1993 Summer Consumer Electronics Show, held in Chicago last June, nearly caused a panic among 3DO game-makers. Until CES, everyone was confident about their developers' splendid performance on 3DO. They all imagined that their people were way out in front of the pack.

They learned different at sCES. All 3DO software was showcased in the same booth, which made comparisons easy. Suddenly, it was obvious that no company was far in the lead, and that all the products needed fixing before going to market. This revelation touched off widespread redevelopment, and that hasn't helped hit the deadlines, either.



Crash 'n Burn will utilize the special effects that the 3DO system offers.

Is this just the thunderstorm before the rainbow? This isn't the first new system to have a little trouble getting out of the starting gate. There's still plenty of time for 3DO to thunder down the track and grab the lead though, so gamers figure to study the first software offerings to decide whether to buy.

What games are waiting to entice them into 3DO ownership? Here's a rundown of what **EG** saw at a private showing.

The Beauty of Bundling

Finding the right game to pack with a game machine is crucial to getting the unit off to a hot sales start. Consumers judge the system by it. Often, it's the only cartridge they'll have for the first few weeks. Besides, it's only human nature to want to "show off" the new toy to friends and family. That's how "word of mouth" gets started. Sega and Nintendo made wise selections for their initial software bundle. **Sonic the Hedgehog** certainly jet-assisted the Genesis into flight.

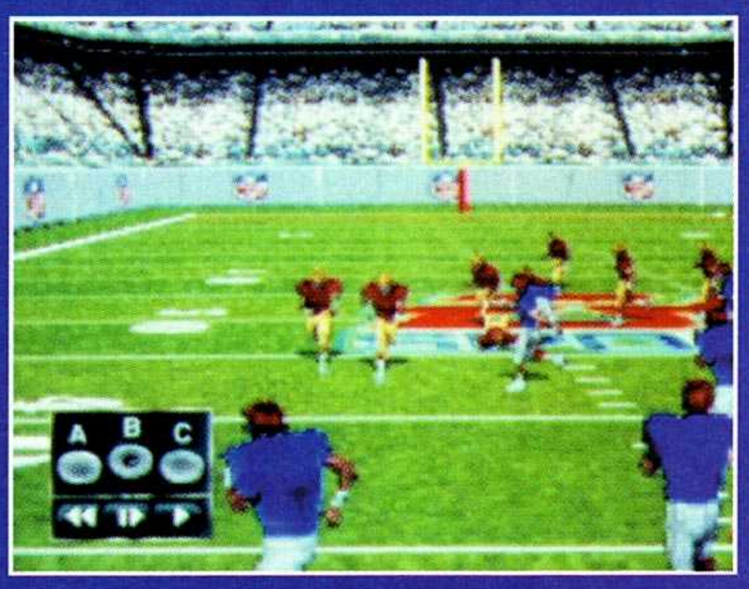
Is **Crash 'n Burn** (Crystal Dynamics), 3DO's bundled game, a wise selection? The idea of automotive combat isn't very original, and the implementation doesn't spotlight the hardware's full capabilities. Some may pigeonhole **Crash 'n Burn** as being too much like an enhanced rendition of the familiar 16-Bit video game, and that could hurt sales. The multiplayer costs about $700, so consumers have high expectations about 3DO gameware.

Yet **Crash 'n Burn** is also rich in things that make games popular. It is exciting, fast, challenging and replayable. System buyers should enjoy the race cartridge a lot, and the demographics of this type of product fit well with the 3DO target audience.

Crash 'n Burn attempts to create gaming excitement by tapping into the graphic power of the architecture to achieve some advanced effects. One of the most striking is the ability to race on a translucent track high above the clouds. Others include cut screens, such as an encounter with a 3-D animated android, who offers black market weapons and accessories to the player.

Finally, the victory sequence is a dark journey into a stadium that appears to have been lifted from a *Bladerunner* landscape. Spotlights throw arcs of light and shadow on the desolate spectacle of future gladiators encased in steel and gunpowder, and the overall affect of this segment is quite striking. The problem, however, is that **Crash 'n Burn** does not maintain this level of visual intensity throughout. If it did, the other points of this article would scarcely be relevant.

As to the play mechanic itself,



John Madden Football, already an immensely popular title, is also on 3DO.

Crash 'n Burn incorporates two elements which may raise the eyebrows of racing game enthusiasts. First, driver skill has been down-played severely in favor of combat. Regardless of speed, it is impossible to spin, crash through a wall or even leave the track. Artificial "bumpers" keep one locked on the roadway and pointed in the right direction. This artificiality is guaranteed to annoy experienced virtual racers, who won't be rewarded for the skills they have painstakingly developed in other products.

Second, the illusion of speed is not maintained. Although the on-screen

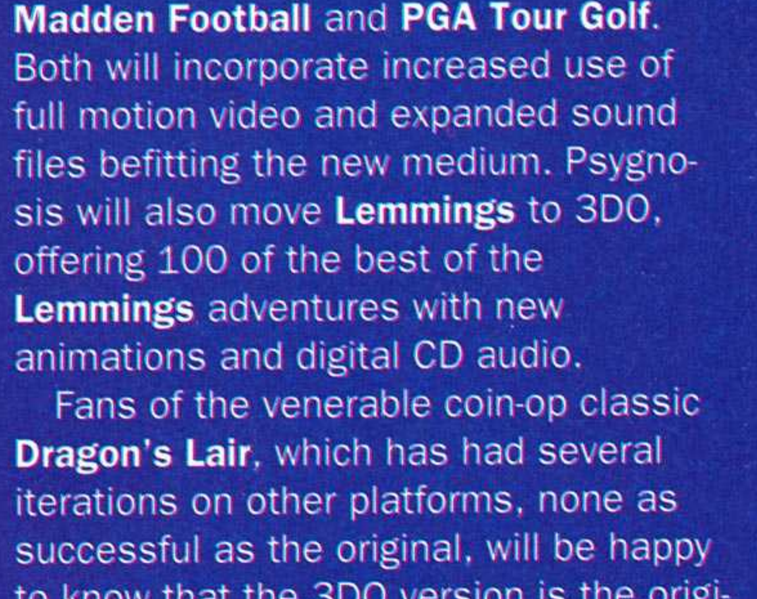
speedometer may register 300mph, visual indicators are not consistent with that blinding pace. Even a closer spacing of the centerline markers would have enhanced this affect, yet it isn't there in the execution.

Given these factors, **Crash 'n Burn** is a decent mid-list game, but definitely not a system seller. Why then, it is reasonable to ask, was it selected from the many titles under development to accompany the first release of the Multiplayer? The answer is probably more closely related to timing than quality. Of all the products slated, **Crash 'n Burn** was the furthest along in development when previewed to the media. In deference to the professionals at Crystal Dynamics, who are working very hard to perfect the new medium, their second release, **Total Eclipse**, promises to be much more graphically intense and engrossing than **Crash 'n Burn**.

Familiarity Doesn't Always Breed Contempt

As might be expected, a number of software companies are re-tooling successful titles for the new format. Electronic Arts will entice players with new and improved versions of **John Madden Football** and **PGA Tour Golf**. Both will incorporate increased use of full motion video and expanded sound files befitting the new medium. Psygnosis will also move **Lemmings** to 3DO, offering 100 of the best of the **Lemmings** adventures with new animations and digital CD audio.

Fans of the venerable coin-op classic **Dragon's Lair**, which has had several iterations on other platforms, none as successful as the original, will be happy to know that the 3DO version is the original game. Complete and uncut, with all of the fluid animation and confounded timing of the first, **Dragon's Lair** for 3DO is sure to be a popular addition to the mix. For the more cerebral, who also



Dragon's Lair will take fans back to the realism and style of the arcade original.



The Lemmings, those furry following friends, are also hitting the 3DO screen.

appreciate outstanding graphics, Interplay is presenting a 3DO version of **Battlechess**.

Finally, one would not expect a cutting edge company like Origin to be absent from any comprehensive list. Their initial contribution to 3DO's software stable will be **Super Wing Commander**. This title contains all of the original **Wing Commander**, plus some additional scenarios, and vastly expanded use of digitized speech. All of these titles are solid offerings for new players, but owners of the original versions will have to determine whether or not to upgrade on a case by case basis.

Learning the Ropes

The expanding field of Edutainment is also well represented in the lineup. Predictably, Software Toolworks is on hand with conventional educational titles that parallel their computer CD-ROM efforts, specifically the **20th Century Video Almanac**, **Oceans Below** and **The San Diego Zoo Presents...The Animals**. Humongous Entertainment is also porting over their popular cartoon character in **Fatty Bear's Birthday Surprise**, an introductory level adventure game that builds analytical skills.

Intelliplay has adopted a unique approach to the development of sports skills for adults and children. Most closely approximated by educational videos like *How to Improve Your Golf Swing*, Intelliplay's three offerings cover Baseball, Football and Golf. Each was developed in conjunction with recognized professional coaches and offers interactive, personalized instruction on fundamentals, coaching tips, drills and more. To understand the true depth of these titles, one need only consider that the golf title, **Lower Your Score With Tom Kite**, even includes segments by sports psychologist Dr. Bob Rotella, covering the mental aspects of the game.

Shelly Duvall's **It's A Bird's Life**, from Sanctuary Woods, is also very noteworthy. Following the adventures of a group of parrots, who migrate from Los Angeles to the Rain Forest and back again, the program is loaded with educational content, presented unobtrusively. Children may read for themselves or have Ms. Duvall narrate. Either way, this product educates the user on such diverse topics as geography, bird anatomy, cloud formations and the biosphere of the rain forest, introducing hundreds of word definitions along the way.

New Horizons

Thus far, the search for a **Sonic** continues. In this segment, we will explore some new game designs that push the envelope of the 3DO architecture. **CPU Bach**, Sid Meier's personal creation, is not a game in the classic sense, but it deserves mention here because of its foresighted application of technology. Using algorithms derived directly from Johann Sebastian Bach's music, the program composes and plays original works in an endless stream. Fugues, dance suites, chorales and concerti are composed and played on a host of instruments including piano, harpsichord and flute. No two compositions are ever the same, providing the listener with an infinite variety.

Among the more graphically appealing titles are **3-D Adventures**, from Park Place Productions, **Shock Wave** and **World Builders Inc.**, sci-fi action adventures from Electronic Arts, and the already mentioned **Total Eclipse**, from Crystal Dynamix. As an aside, **Road Rash: Blood of the Couriers** is less graphically advanced than the other titles in this subdivision, but it offers the play intensity that **Crash 'n Burn** lacks, which makes it noteworthy.

Far and above these titles, however, and potentially worthy of system seller status, is Spectrum Holobyte's **Star Trek: The Next Generation**, for 3DO. **ST:TNG**'s 3-D graphic modeling evokes exclamations and astonishment from its viewers. Further, the program goes far beyond traditional adventure games, in that it also allows users to sit back and simply watch it, as one would the television series. Built around a classic three act dramatic structure, the program will continue to develop story lines ad infinitum, and permits the user to jump in and take control of a favorite character at any point. This is true interactivity.

This is the stuff that dreams are made of...and this is what 3DO is really all about. If there is a moral to the story, it is this: 3DO is worth the wait.

— Ed Dille and Arnie Katz

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TAKE US HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

A Glimpse of Doom

EG previews the Latest From id Software

by Bill Kunkel

Memo to fans of **Wolfenstein 3-D**: if you have saliva, prepare to drool now.

The latest entry from **Wolfenstein**'s creators at id Software, **Doom** is a first-person perspective science fiction shooter that offers all the hot, VR-like action of the original, souped up with higher octane graphics and nerve-shredding audio effects.

The suspenseful plot casts the gamer as a space marine stationed at a high tech research base on the moon, where scientists are investigating unusual readings on their sensors. It sure seems like a soft gig, until (wouldn't you know it?) a seam opens in the fabric of time and space, spewing wave upon wave of demonic marauders into the faces of the startled scientists.

There goes the neighborhood.

By the time the player-character even hears the alarm, everyone else on the base has been either murdered outright or transformed into maniacal mutants. The gamer then proceeds through this deep space slaughterhouse, armed only with a pistol, nerves of silicon, and the knowledge that...it's only a game.

The action in **Doom** is viewed entirely from the player-character's perspective, giving the game a virtual reality ambiance that is powerfully enhanced by id's phenomenal new graphics engine. **Doom**'s texture-mapped visuals are as stunningly realistic as anything ever seen on the PC, with art generated up to five times faster than **Wolfenstein**'s graphics. The trashed research station seems to pulse with (recently deceased) life, every hatch and wall plate reflecting available light, while the background recedes into a soft haze. **Doom**'s remarkable texture-mapping creates a world that is completely credible, making the suspension of disbelief on the part of the user a formality.



The new id technology also eliminates the box-like look of previous first-person dungeon crawl contests by generating walls that join at any angle and comprise a variety of thicknesses. Earlier games rendered wall connections exclusively at 90 degree angles, with all walls being of uniform depth. Moreover, floors and ceilings can now also be set at any height, allowing for a plethora of stairways, vaulted ceilings, sunken rooms and other realistic architectural features. There are also some neat light sourcing features, environment animation, and, of course, the obligatory morphing effects.

One of the coolest things about **Doom** is its capability of being played by up to four gamers simultaneously, via local network; or head-to-head by modem or serial connection. In multi-player mode, each gamer will be able to see the cyber-surrogate(s) representing the other player(s) moving through the entire game environment.

Game commands are entered through the keyboard, with the user able to adjust screen size, adjust the level of graphic detail, or access the automap through simple keystroke commands. Game commands include walk, run, strafe and change weapon. The program can also save PCX or LBM files of the screen in the current directory.

Doom will be marketed, as was **Wolfenstein 3-D**, through shareware channels. The game is being broken up into three episodes. The first episode, which includes nine levels of game play, will be available to anyone, free of cost, via shareware. Then, having sampled the first course, players wishing to obtain the second and third episodes can register directly with id Software (1-800-434-2637), and get the entire package for $40.



As in Wolfenstein 3-D, taking too many hits will cause a rose-colored ending!



The game will also be open to users who wish to develop special utilities. It seems that **Wolfenstein 3-D** generated a flood of map editors, sound editors, trainers, etc. As a result, id will provide file formats, technical notes and examples of **Doom**'s code to anyone who wants it.

Doom looks to be a major new entry on the software horizon, and an absolute must-have for PC action fans.

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A Visit to SimCity 2000

The map area uses an isometric tiling pattern rather than the squared grid, making hills and valleys clearly discernable. Water flows and fills the lower basins up to a predetermined level. The tiles are smaller as well, allowing much finer detail in zoning and topography.

Where **SimCity** allows close-up views of specific sections of the square arena that comprises the SimCity playfield, **SimCity 2000** offers three levels of magnification and views from four directions. The latter is not just so the player can see what's behind that hill or building (though it's helpful in that respect, too), but also to get a real hands-on sense of what's going on in one's creation.

The isometric grid does add one element of unreality: the five-mile-square area now appears diamond-shaped, floating in empty space (there appear to be no compass directions in the game). The near edges clue the viewer in to the elevations (up to 32 levels are possible): dark tiles on the left sides of elevated areas and light tiles on the right provide the modeling.

Despite the isolated effect, there are in fact unseen neighbors and a general economy to be taken into account in the development of one's city. As with the original game, there are three difficulty levels—Easy, Medium or Hard. These reflect both the amount of money one starts with and whether the national model is stable or in a boom or bust.



New features include a City Ordinances menu, which sets up new civic laws.

Also, the city may be founded in 1900, 1950, 2000 or 2050, and the available technology is reflected in this (there's no use trying to build a nuclear reactor power plant in the earlier 1900s, for instance). The time frames also affect the economy, the population levels (and pressures), power consumption, and so on. Like the original game, there are several pre-built scenarios that the players can work with if they don't care to try starting from scratch.



Using colleges and universities to their highest potential will bring success.

City planning was never more fun!

by Ross Chamberlain

SimCity 2000 (Maxis, PCs/Macintosh) provides a new angle on city-building—literally. The viewpoint has changed from the pseudo-angled overhead of the original **SimCity**, to a more realistic one from roughly 60° above the terrain. Combined with the multi-level terrain and 256-color graphics, the three-dimensional effect is impressive. And when the land's developed and buildings are added... wow!

According to co-designer Will Wright (also co-founder of Maxis), "**SimCity 2000** has all the things we wanted to put in **SimCity Classic*** when it came out in 1989, but couldn't because computers weren't sophisticated enough. We also have four years' worth of customer suggestions." Some of the suggestions that have been included are low or high densities in the different zoned areas; and new power sources (from wind to fusion). There are also new structures and city services, like schools, colleges, museums, hospitals, subways—even zoos, marinas and a sports stadium!

Subways and limited-access highways were added to the substantial mass transportation facilities of the original. Tunnels can be built through hills, bridges across water. Bus depots provide another means for a commuting populace.

The terrain editor is included in the game and available on the opening menu. Much can be done in designing features of the landscape before starting the city. It's free, but once the city building has begun, any changes in terrain deplete the city budget.

Realities begin to set in very shortly after the thrill of seeing a city start to take shape. The depth and detail of city planning: taxation, bond floating, municipal and governmental services, safety and health, education and recreation—These, too, have been enhanced in **SimCity 2000**. Even the climate has been factored in. And the newspapers help clue the player in to new inventions, the world situation, and the mood of the populace. Some stories are similar whether reported in 1900 or 2000; others reflect the times—and most are written a bit tongue-in-cheek.

Then there are the disasters—floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and earthquakes. There may be fires, riots, air crashes or the odd nuclear meltdown. **SimCity 2000** has something for everyone who wants to run the future!

*SimCity has now been released as **SimCity Classic—The Original City Simulator**, with the terrain editor included and support for popular sound cards.

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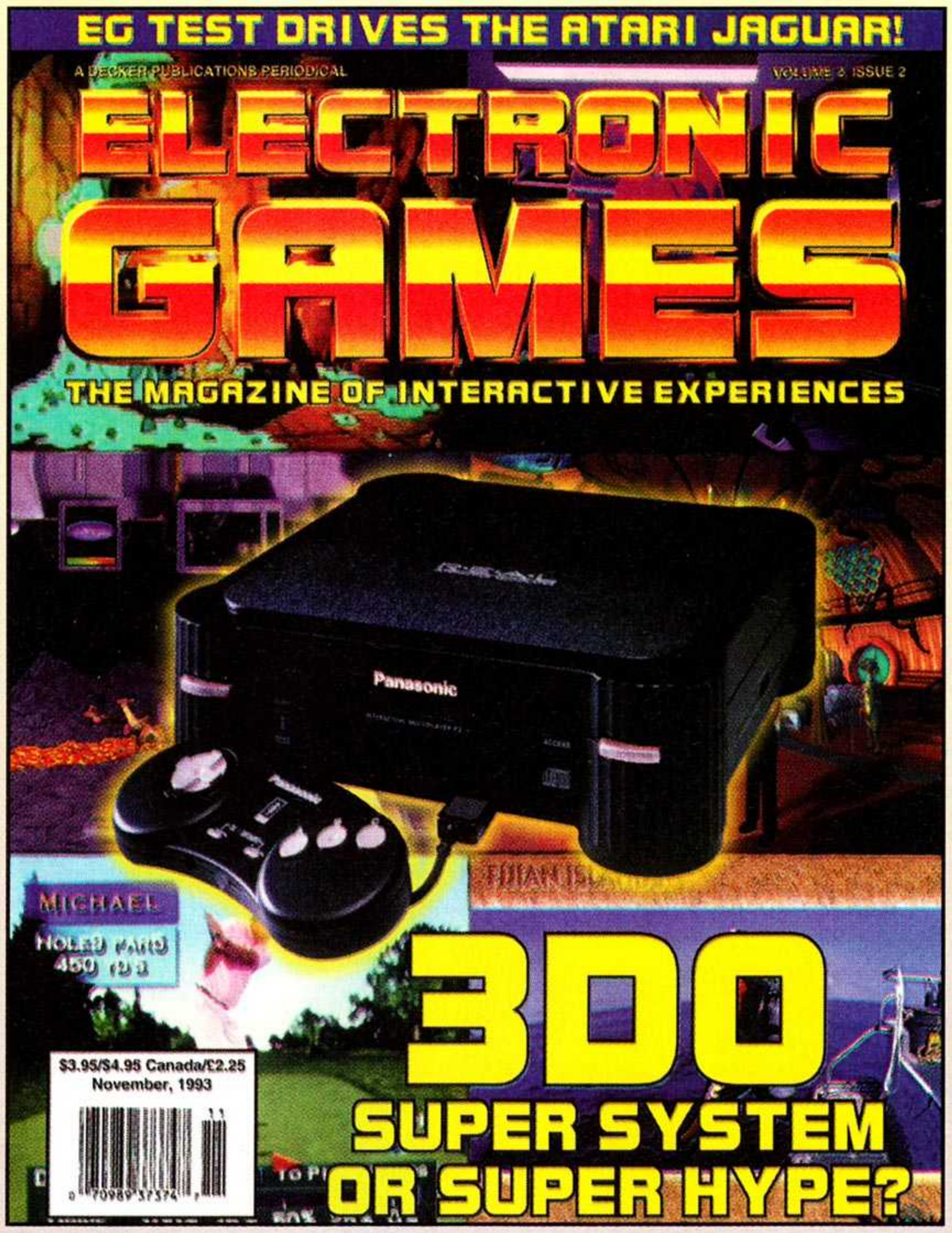
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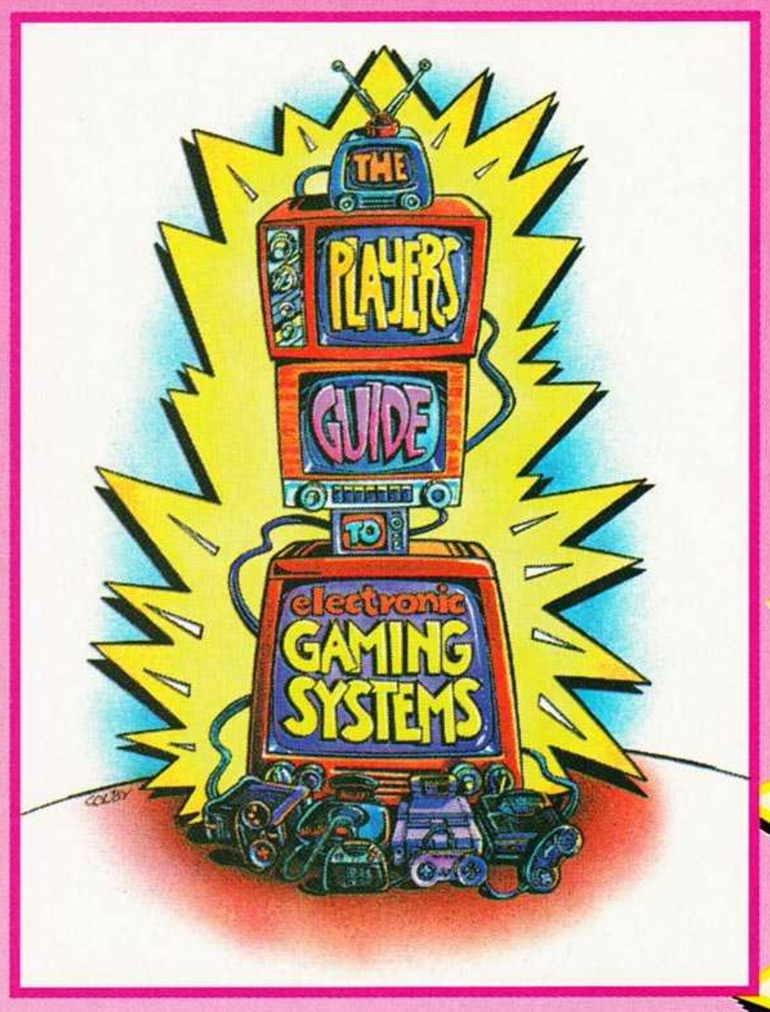
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THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO electronic GAMING SYSTEMS

COLBY



by Bill Kunkel

Back in the mid-80s, before the NES burst on the scene, Sega's rep loomed much larger in the gaming world. True, Nintendo had had its share of coin-op hits (**Donkey Kong**, **Mario Bros.**, **Popeye**, etc.), but it simply did not approach Sega's level of arcade recognition.

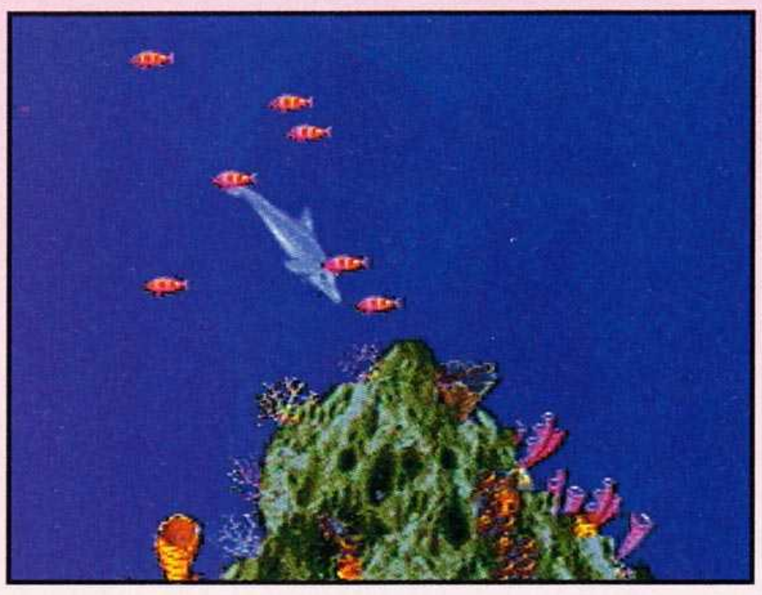
It came as no surprise, therefore, that Sega would use this advantage to market its home video game system, the SMS, to the American market in competition with the NES. While Nintendo produced a variety of rather tame-looking side-scrollers, sports contests and strategy games to support its NES, Sega blasted away with high profile twitch games.

In retrospect, most experts seemed to prefer the SMS over the NES at the time of their launch. Sega's Master System was a hot machine, capable of moving sprites and colors at very high speeds. It was the classic case of the tortoise and the hare, with the same result. Nintendo's methodical takeover of the video game market exploited its wider range of product—games for the entire family, not just 14-year-old boys—and superior marketing skills to all but wipe Sega out of contention.

However, as Atari learned almost a decade earlier, having the dominant system can be a liability when it comes time to upgrade. As the era of 16-Bit technology dawned, Sega found itself in a curiously appealing situation. So few people owned Master Systems—as opposed to the tens of millions of NES owners—that the Genesis was practically created in a virgin market. Sega had no interest in extending the 8-Bit era, and the audience wasn't filled with people who had already invested hundreds, even thousands of dollars on its 8-Bit game library.

The result was a two year head-start for Sega, which launched its Genesis in the summer of '89. The rollout was strong, and with the arrival of Sonic on the scene and a new ad agency at the helm, Sega headed toward Christmas '92 looking like a winner.

Nintendo, meanwhile, had frankly disappointed its audience. After a two year wait, the SNES finally appeared on U.S.



Incredible graphics, like these scenes from Ecco, keep the Genesis evolving.



Street Fighter 2 took the 16 Bit world by storm and never looked back.

The Five Best Genesis Games

Mortal Kombat (Acclaim/Arena) No, it doesn't have the gorgeous backgrounds the SNES version boasts, but it does have blood. Great, heaping gouts of the stuff, available by entering in a simple code [see *Game Doctor*]. But hemoglobin aside, this is a dynamite, fast-action street fighting game.

Toejam & Earl (Sega) One of the most interesting, compelling and off-beat games in the home video game library sends a pair of hip-hop aliens on a quest to regain the missing pieces of their spaceship. Definitely *not* your typical action-adventure, its unique visual perspective, great music and sound effects, and delightful cast of characters guarantee its status for years to come.

Sonic the Hedgehog 2 (Sega) As good as the original was, the sequel is even better, with its blast processing speed, special levels (including the pinball-like Casino Zone), and great new characters. will always be remembered as the game where Sonic met Tails and proceeded to once again take the video game world by storm.

Desert Strike (Electronic Arts) Incredibly innovative combat game has users piloting an Apache gunship over several scenarios taken directly from Operation Desert Storm—including the rescue of a stranded TV crew from a rooftop.

John Madden Football (Electronic Arts) There have been several editions since the first, and each has been a slight improvement over earlier versions, but it was Park Place's original design that made this game great, and forever changed player expectations of gridiron video games.

The 16-Bit Debate:

SNES vs. Genesis

Inside the Genesis

The Genesis is a 16-Bit system driven by a 68,000 and Z80 co-processors. It does not offer "true" 16-Bit graphics, it can handle up to 2,048 sprites, 80 simultaneously. Moreover, the size of the sprites is programmable. Its maximum resolution is 320 x 224 and its primary weakness is its limited color palette: only 64 colors can be displayed simultaneously. The Genesis also features 10-channel stereo 8-Bit sound.

Special features include Parallax Scrolling which highlights the illusion of depth. DPA (Dynamic Play Adjustment) is a form of AI which allows the game to modify its difficulty level depending on the current player's skill, or lack thereof. DPA was first used in **Ecco the Dolphin**. Finally, we have Blast Processing, which concentrates huge amounts of system power to moving a single sprite at high speed.

Peripherals: The Menacer is the Genesis' light gun; the Activator is a special controller which interprets body movements as game commands; the SegaCD allows users to play games, music and video in CD-ROM format; and the upcoming Virtua VR is a low-cost virtual reality headset.

Inside the SNES

The SuperNES is a 16-Bit machine running on a 65C816 processor (a variation on the classic 6502), running at a maximum clock speed of 3.58 MHz. This slow speed has been a major problem for the system since its debut. Fortunately, the SNES can process a greater number of instructions per second than the Genesis.

Memory-wise, the SNES boasts 128K of DRAM (Dynamic RAM) and 64K of VRAM (Video RAM). The SNES is strong in three major areas: generating colors, generating sprites and producing sound. It can display a total of 32,000 colors, 256 simultaneously (using Mode 7) and up to 128 sprites as part of its true 16-Bit graphic display. Maximum resolution is 512 x 448.

Special features include rotation and scaling. These features are built into the hardware and can be easily accessed by programmers. Rotation is exactly what it sounds like: the SNES can rotate, or spin certain images. Scaling is a little more complicated. It has traditionally meant that characters are automatically kept in proportion to their position on the playing area; the closer the character moves to the foreground, the larger he/she/it becomes. However, the SNES doesn't scale sprites, but Mode 7 does allow *backgrounds* to be scaled, which can be used to create the illusion of scaled sprites.

The high quality sound is not 16-Bit, but the Sony sound chip, 8-Bit CPU and DSP (Digital Signal Processor) produce sound clearly superior to the Genesis'. The SNES is a "sampling" monster, with eight PCM (Pulse Code Modulation) stereo channels. Even better, the SNES comes with a cable which allows it to run directly through the TV set, eliminating annoying RF interference.

Peripherals: The Super Scope is a light gun used in several SNES target game's including the recent **Yoshi's Safari**.

shelves in the fall of '91. Expectations were high. Many gamers had deliberately waited for Nintendo's 16-Bit machine to appear before going with the Genesis.

Unfortunately, the SNES was something of a disappointment. While the Japanese rollout had been a phenomenal success (all 400,000 Super Famicoms were sold on the first day; two weeks later another 400K were made available and *they* all sold in a single day), American gamers were not impressed by the system or its bundled game, **Super Mario World**. Nintendo had done such a good job of hyping expectations that this jumped-up 8-Bit contest left a bad taste in many mouths. In fact, of its original releases, only **Pilot Wings** really showed off what the system could do.

Just as it had in the 8-Bit wars, however, Nintendo moved systematically forward, and sales improved. Most of the success was the result of third-party software, with titles such as **Super Star Wars** and **Street Fighter II**.

The Five Best SNES Games

Mario All-Stars (Nintendo) All the Mario you ever wanted and then some in this upgraded-for-16-Bit collection of the NES Mario games, with the addition of the Lost Levels.

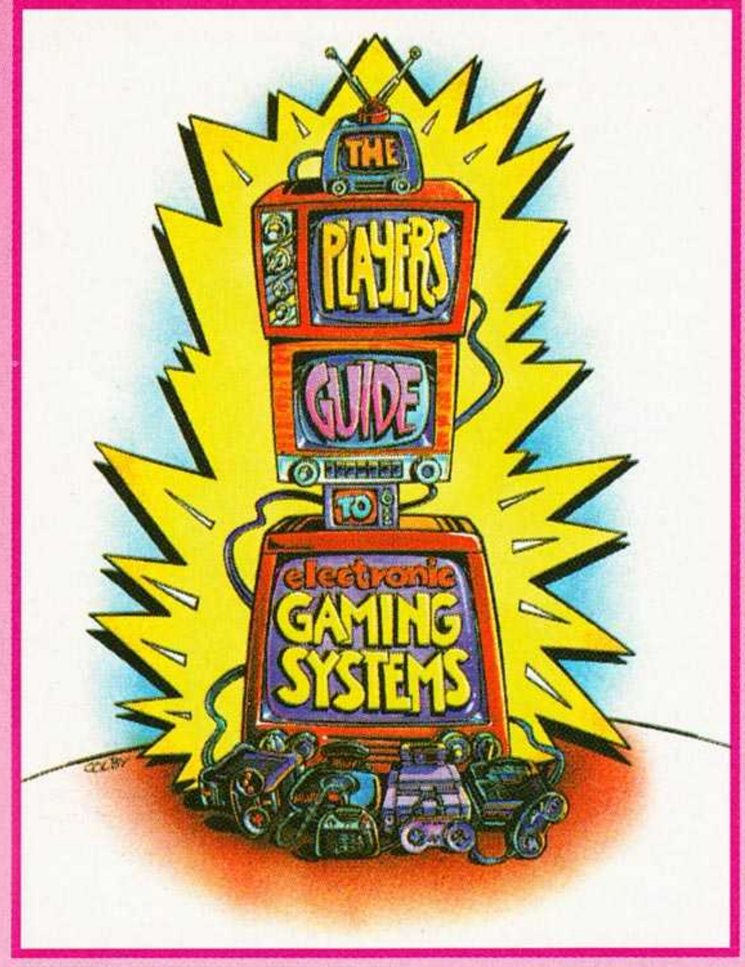
Super Star Wars (LucasArts/JVC) The great scenes, the great music and the great storyline of the original Lucas trilogy are all recreated here in game format. This is the game that convinced players that the SNES might really have potential after all. The Force, Luke, use the Force!

Zelda: A Link to the Past (Nintendo) The Zelda games were among the most enduringly popular NES titles, and this 16-Bit action-adventure shows why. Great game play, attractive graphics and a beautiful mixture of action and adventure gaming.

Bubsy Bobcat (Accolade) The first game to bring Sonic-like speed and thrills to the SNES. Bubsy is an adorable character, the graphics and animation are superb and the game plays like a dream. Other than that...

Street Fighter II—Turbo Edition (Capcom) The ultimate street fighting game, **Turbo Edition** features all the fighters and moves dedicated warriors will want. For mavens of the coin-op, this is the baby you've been waiting for.

Rating the Multi



by Bill Kunkel

Much has been written about the SegaCD, TTI's Duo, the 3DO standard, the Atari Jaguar, Commodore's Amiga CD^{32} and the Pioneer LaserActive multimedia systems.

In order to clarify the issue, and present information in a useful manner, we will be discussing how the various multimedia systems stack up in several important categories, rather than running another system-by-system analysis.



The Amiga CD's large color capacity should give it a competitive edge.

The Hardware

Matching up the hardware specs for these systems is like a trip to hardware hell. As long-time hobbyists know, there's nothing more potentially deceptive than a list of comparative specs. Getting down to basics, how do the systems stack up in terms of CPUs and running speed? The 3DO has an impressive pedigree in this arena, eliminating the problems created by using a single, multi-purpose CPU. The 32-Bit 3DO CPU is an ARM60, a 32-Bit RISC-based processor running at 12mHz, but the system also employs a pair of custom graphics engines to facilitate the presentation of colors, animation and built-in special effects.

The Amiga CD system uses the Motorola 68EC020 processor, running at 14mHz, while our dark horse, the Atari Jaguar, uses five processors—RISC-based GPU and DSP processors, a BLITTER, object processor and a 68000.

However, what all of this means is uncertain. Hardware specs rarely sell hardware; software sells hardware.

Sound and Graphics

The top players in this category are the 3DO and, potentially, the Jaguar. The 3DO's memory management system and 24 DMA channels in conjunction with its processor power enable it to generate up to 16 million colors and 64 million pixels per second! The built-in hardware features—light sourcing, warping, texture mapping, etc.—will certainly appeal to developers and should result in dynamite games.

The Jaguar, however, also boasts 16 million colors, along with 32-Bit color graphics—as opposed to 3DO's 24-Bit technology. It offers a maximum resolution capability of 720x576, in contrast to 3DO's 640x480 max.

In terms of audio, both systems offer 16-Bit, CD-quality sound.

In comparison, the Amiga CD^{32} has a tremendous color capacity, and can generate an incredible 256,000 colors simultaneously from a palette of 16 million-plus. On the downside, the Commodore system offers only 8-Bit stereo, whereas even the Sega CD provides 16-bit stereo.

Value

The biggest bang for your buck is clearly generated by the Jaguar, a modular system which will sell for around $200. It offers 64-Bit architecture and a buy-what-you-want policy. Users who desire a CD drive, for example, can purchase one. Those users can then purchase an MPEG 2 adapter to view films and videos, or even a CD+G format for karaoke. The real question remains whether Atari can generate sufficient software support.



The Panasonic 3DO system integrates incredible CD sound with clear graphics.

The Sega CD format is finally starting to generate some quality software, and this system, along with TTI's Duo, offers some real dollar value for game players.

Up at the higher price points we have the 3DO, Amiga CD and Pioneer LaserActive. All three systems have suggested retail prices in the $700 range, with additional modules jacking up the cost by as much as $300-$500.

Software Support

This is the key area in evaluating these systems. On a theoretical level, 3DO clearly has an edge in software support, but at press time, with the Panasonic REAL 3DO unit already on store shelves, the only actual game available for the system is the pack-in, Crystal Dynamics' **Crash 'n Burn**, a hot racing simulation. There have been several reasons for the late arrival of software, including 3DO's delay in making development tools available, but it looks like 3DO will be deluged with product during the first and second quarters of '94.



The Sega CD, thanks to third-party developers, has many available titles.

Atari, meanwhile, has finally announced its list of supporting developers and publishers for the Jaguar [see *Hotline* for a complete list] and mostly it's a Who Are They, rather than a Who's Who. Several major players, however, including U.S. Gold, Tradewest, Maxis, Beyond and Ocean have signed up, with several more likely to come onboard soon.

The question of software support on the Amiga CD, meanwhile, is problematic. The Amiga itself and the CDTV have been serious flops in the U.S., and it's tough to imagine a lot of serious support or original software being developed on this system. According to Commodore, some 50 games are already in development, from such recognizable houses as Mindscape, Virgin, Psygnosis, Gremlin and Ocean.

Both the Sega CD and TTI's Duo have solid software support. The Duo has been especially well supported, and TTI has shown a true commitment to the system. Finally, the LaserActive system has several original games on the way, but nothing likely to really excite gamers.





Only time will tell if the 3DO system will receive a large gaming software library.

Viability

It's the toughest of all categories to judge. Of the systems being discussed here, the only ones which have already proved their viability are the Sega CD and the Duo, with existing libraries of games.

The 3DO is going to have a difficult rollout, but most experts agree that Panasonic will still be able to sell every unit it can get onto store shelves this Christmas. Given that the system survives into the new year—almost a lock—the software support will pour in and the system will have an excellent shot at surviving and thriving.

Beyond that, it's a crapshoot. Atari scored a major victory by getting the Jaguar into Toys 'R Us, but the question of software support continues to trouble industry insiders. There is probably enough interest in the system that, once Atari works the bugs out of its development technology, it could actually fly. Given Atari's recent track record, that would be quite an accomplishment.

The Pioneer LaserActive probably wouldn't stand a chance on its own, but the system will offer modules to play Sega CD and Duo games. On the other hand, these peripherals are being priced at a point not much different from the cost of the units themselves. In other words, do you really need $1,000 worth of technology to play Sega CD and Duo CD games? Probably not.



The Pioneer LaserActive system can play a variety of video game formats.

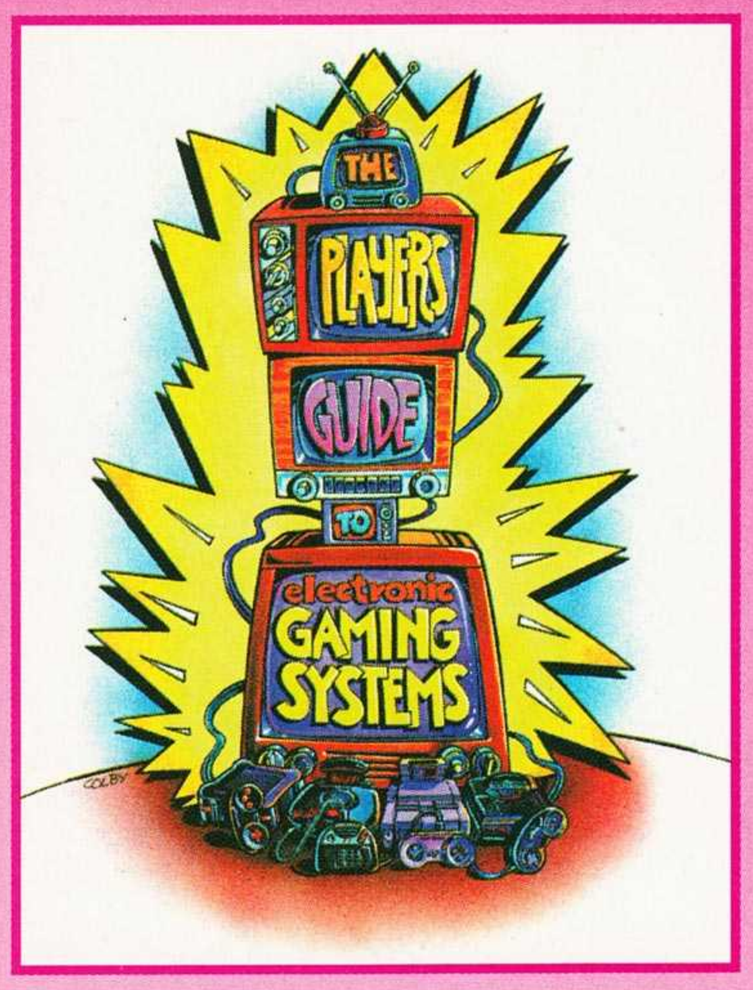
Finally, with Commodore at the wheel, there are bound to be doubters when it comes to the Amiga CD's chances for success. The previous failure of both the Amiga and CDTV would indicate that there just isn't much interest in this technology. Maybe in the next generation...

Summary

Tradition tells us that it's generally wise to avoid the initial rev of any new system, since Trip Hawkin's Early Adapters (the folks who will buy any hot new electronic gizmo the instant it arrives in stores) will probably be doing a lot of free debugging on these systems.

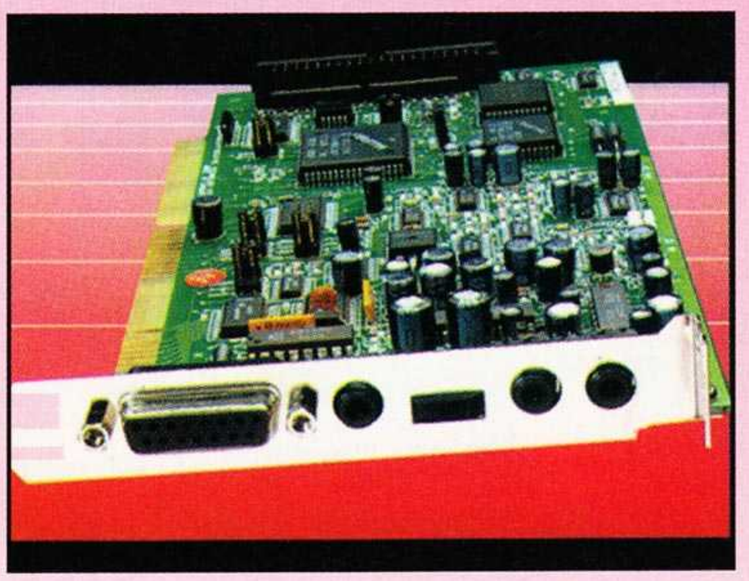
There's no question Sega has established CD on the video game front, and 3DO is likely to bring this technology to the black box marketplace. Atari has a chance of becoming a viable manufacturer, but the Jaguar's competition will be the SNES and Genesis, rather than the 3DO, LaserActive, or Amiga CD[32].

Media Systems



by Bill Kunkel

It wasn't very long ago that electronic gamers were agog over the wonder of 8-Bit FM synthesis sound boards. After all, even your basic **AdLib** audio card represented a quantum leap over the PC's miserable onboard speaker system. Pretty soon, however, music and sound effects weren't enough. Gamers demanded speech, and Creative Lab's **Sound Blaster** appeared to provide it.



The SoundBlaster series is considered by many to be the industry standard.

Since then, however, gamers have experienced the CD revolution, as well as the high quality stereo sound available on 16-Bit video games. Pretty soon, 8-Bit sound just didn't cut it. Computer gamers were soon requesting boards with cutting edge features such as DSP technology, access to three-dimensional audio effects like QSound, and voice recognition—not to mention an SCSI interface so the board will link up with a CD-ROM drive.

Manufacturers have responded to this increasing demand with a virtual flood of state-of-the-art, advanced sound cards—and even, in one case, an impressive audio-video board.

16-Bits and Whattayou Get?

The company that originally upped the ante into 16-Bit sound was Advanced Gravis with its Gravis **UltraSound** card. For a suggested retail price under $200, the **UltraSound** delivers 8- or 16-Bit digital audio, 16 digital stereo channels, 32 voices, and standard MIDI support (while most boards claim MIDI compatibility, it is not always standard format, MP-401 UART MIDI).

Earlier this year, Gravis pushed the envelope a little further and brought forth the **UltraSound MAX** with 3-D, a board capable of CD-quality playback, "imersive 3-D sound" and 16-Bit recording. Instead of ROM-based sound synthesis, the MAX uses a RAM-based wave-table technology that lets the user load alternatives to the board's nearly 200 instruments and onboard sound effects patch kit.

A 386 configuration is required to run the **MAX**, which contains 256K of memory (upgradable to a megabyte), and has a SCSI port for single or double-speed CD-ROM drives. The **MAX**'s 3-D sound system is similar to QSound in that it provides audio cues which the user interprets as directional sound. Imagine, for example, an auto race game in which players can hear cars cruising up behind them, as well as those to either side and in front of them. Imersive 3-D sound will be imperative if virtual reality takes off in the PC market.

The suggested retail price for the **MAX** is $299.95.

Another impressive entry in the low-priced 16-Bit sound board sweepstakes is Aztech Labs' **Sound Galaxy NX PRO 16**. The **NX PRO 16** has several strong features, including compatibility with the **SoundBlaster Pro**, **Microsoft Windows Sound System**, **AdLib**, **Disney Sound Source** and the **Covox Speech Thing**. The **NX PRO 16** can also support AT-bus, non-SCSI CD-ROM drives (Panasonic, Sony, Mitsumi), but an SCSI Extension Board is a required purchase for users who want to hook up with the majority of CD-ROM drives.

The **NX PRO 16** makes use of the hot new YM262 Yamaha synthesizer chip and can be upgraded to support true 16-Bit PCM wave-table synthesis via the **Sound Galaxy Wave Power** add-on. The **NX PRO 16** offers stereo digitized playback and recording features, with the stereo mixer able to simultaneously record from multiple sound sources. The basic card carries a suggested retail price of $269.



Interplay's Lord of the Rings takes advantage of quality sound boards.

With all these newcomers invading its turf, it should come as no surprise that Creative Labs has decided to launch its own 16-Bit card, the **Sound Blaster 16 ASP**. This DSP (Digital Signal Processor) based board offers stereo sound sampling and playback, enhanced 4-operator, 20-voice FM music synthesis, a 10-channel stereo digital mixer and a microphone. The **SB 16 ASP** boasts MIDI compatibility—both Sound Blaster standard and MPU-401 UART. Suggested retail price is $349.95.

Wave Blaster, a MIDI compatible synthesizer add-on daughter board produces 32-voice, wave-table synthesis technology. The **Wave Blaster** has a suggested retail price of $249.

Shhhh, the Computers Are Listening!

One of the most intriguing options opened up by the current passion for souped-up sound boards is speech recognition. When computers can hear and understand what we say, in our own language rather than theirs, the final wall between man and machine may crumble. Speech is the ultimate interface.

More Audio Visual

Speech is very much on the mind of Sierra Semiconductor, creators of the Aria standard. Sierra Semiconductor (no relation to the software publisher) is not a sound card manufacturer. Instead, much like 3DO, Sierra Semiconductor has created a technology which it licenses out to companies such as Computer Peripherals/Viva, makers of the DSP-based **Maestro 16** and **16 VR** boards.

Both cards use the Aria technology, while the **Maestro 16 VR** includes Sierra Semiconductor's voice recognition capability. The **Maestro** has all the standard 16-Bit sound card features, including 32-voice wave-table synthesis, and full Sound Blaster compatibility. Interestingly enough, although Sierra makes chips, it chose to use Texas Instruments' DSP chip in its Aria configuration.

The **Maestro 16 VR** board is also QSound compatible, producing the best 3-D audio we've heard from any sound card. There's even a built-in reverb. effect which developers are sure to make extensive use of down the road. And those developers include ID Software, Bethesda, Twin Dolphins and the clean-up hitter, Interplay, whose **Star Trek: the 25th Anniversary** has been adapted for use with the Aria voice-recognition technology. Impressions is also on board, with the voice activated strategy game, **When Two Worlds War**, while Maxis' **SimCity Classic** will ship in December with Aria support.



When Two Worlds War features voice activation for many parts of the game.

A pair of education-oriented publishers have also sniffed out the potential of the Aria technology. Knowledge Adventure's **Kid's Zoo, A Baby Animal Adventure**, and Davidson & Associates' **Math Blaster: In Search of Spot** will both be Aria compatible.

The user-trainable Aria voice recognition technology tested amazingly well under game conditions, responding crisply to even heavily muffled or accented speech. Best of all, while the price varies from manufacturer to manufacturer, the street price for the basic board, complete with SCSI interface, is well under $200. The combination of price, multiple manufacturers (including Add-Tech Research, Alpha Systems Labs, Diamond Computer, Prometheus, and Zoltrix), and quality features marks the Aria standard as technology to watch.

A veteran of the sound wars, Covox has plugged away with low cost audio and voice recognition peripherals since the dawn of PC audio. The latest wrinkle is Voice Blaster, special voice recognition software for Sound Blaster compatible audio cards. The package includes DOS and Windows 3.1 voice recognition software; an audio toolkit for recording, editing and playback; voice annotation software which allows the user to add pre-recorded sound bites to documents; and the Covox headset with mounted microphone.

Sight + Sound = ReelMagic

The most remarkable of the new generation of upgrade boards for the PC is undoubtedly Sigma System's **ReelMagic.** This combination state-of-the-art sound card and MPEG-based graphics board will sell for approximately $400. Given the technology and that price point, **ReelMagic** is bound to make people sit up and take notice.

Sigma claims that **ReelMagic** is "a breakthrough product that allows ordinary PC systems to playback full-screen, full-motion, full-color video and CD-quality digital stereo sound—all from a standard CD-ROM." It doesn't take long to realize that this isn't hype; **ReelMagic** can do some truly astonishing things.

The audio specs include 8 and 16-bit stereo PCM playback, with DSP capability and a Yamaha OPL2 compatible synthesizer. The video uses the MPEG (Motion Pictures Experts Group) standard for data compression, the same technology used in 3DO systems and Philips' CD-I.

An MPEG encoder, by analyzing



frame-to-frame variations, can shrink the size of the file by as much as 200:1, producing amazing sharp, full-screen FMV that runs at 30 frames-per-second on NTSC systems. And, because MPEG files can be transferred as slowly as 150 kilobytes per second, it can be played back directly via CD-ROM.

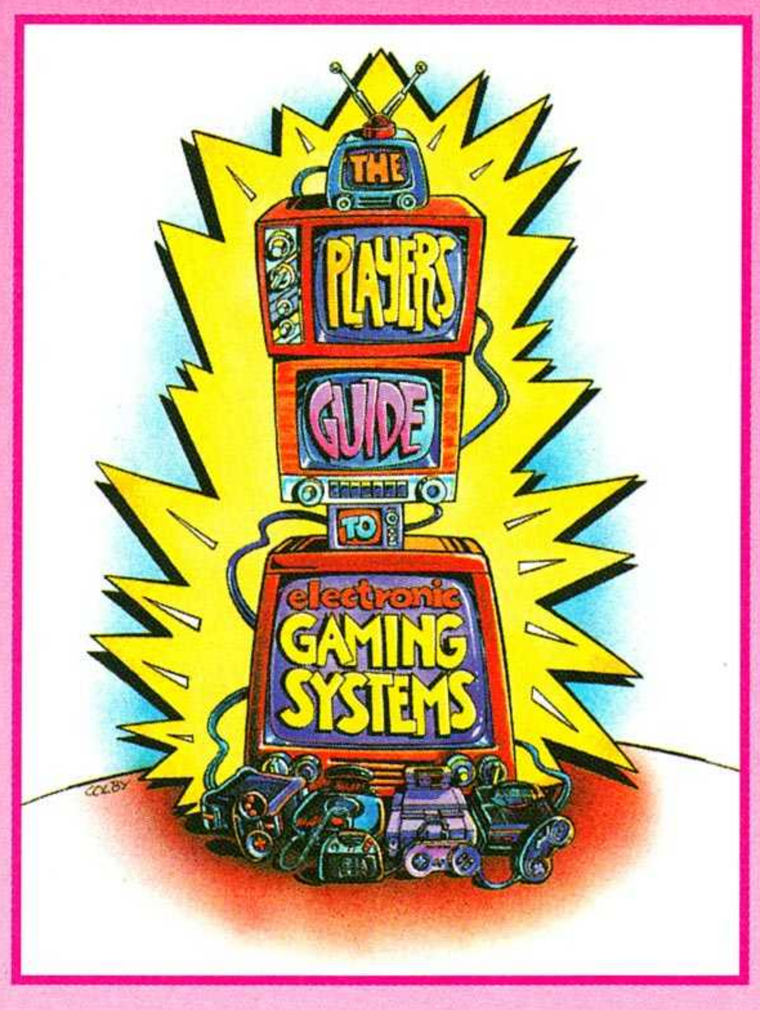
ReelMagic is also capable of supporting the VideoCD standard, which will ultimately make a variety of films, TV shows and other video material available to PCs. The VideoCD standard is supported by 3DO, Philips, Sony, JVC, Goldstar and several other companies, and has already garnered promises of software support from movie studios.

The only way to truly appreciate what **ReelMagic** can do, however, is to experience it. Activision's **Return to Zork** is the showpiece product, and it will be bundled with the audio-video board, but other upcoming projects which will support the technology include a coin-op perfect **Dragon's Lair** from Readysoft, **Lord of the Rings** (Interplay), **Outpost** and **Police Quest 4: Open Season** from Sierra, **Under a Killing Moon** (Access) and Trilobyte's sequel to **7th Guest**, **The Eleventh Hour** (Virgin).

When it gets right down to the nitty-gritty, in fact, it is software support which will make or break all of the items mentioned above. Without hot software to show off its cool features, even cutting edge technology will fail to find an audience.

Obviously, software publishers don't have the unlimited resources to support every board on the market. Issues such as price, power and compatibility loom large when crunch time comes around and publishers must decide which peripherals can make the cut for the audio visual team.

Magic for your PC!



A Look at 24-Bit Games

by Joyce Worley

The Neo•Geo is *the* machine to own for red-hot arcade jockeys. Other game machines may produce something very *like* their arcade counterparts, but the Neo•Geo has the *same* programs as the coin-snatcher versions.

SNK Corporation created SNK Home Entertainment and introduced the Neo•Geo in 1990 with the same hardware features as those found in the SNK pay-for-play machines. When SNK introduces a game into the arcades, a home version follows about three months later.

The Neo•Geo Gold System features a 24-Bit, 330-Meg console, with two 8-directional 4-button joystick controllers. It delivers 380 Sprites and a pallet of 65,536 colors, with 4,096 colors displayed at one time. It has 15-track stereo, with seven channels for speech.



Fatal Fury combines exciting fighting action with an intriguing storyline.

All this power comes with a price tag that puts Neo•Geo owners among the most dedicated players. The system retails for $649, and the suggested retail price for each game is between $169 and $239. A great many players have sampled the Neo•Geo since SNK started its rental program at Blockbusters and other video rental stores.

The games themselves range from 26 to 102 Megs, and the Neo•Geo library currently holds roughly 40 titles, including sports, action, role-playing, shooting and fighting games.



Samurai Shodown continues the tradition of great Neo•Geo games.

Fatal Fury Special is the latest in the **Fatal Fury** story. Sixth in SNK's "100 Mega Shock" series, this 150-Meg game lets the player choose from 15 characters, each with a half dozen special moves, plus kick and punch attacks. The backgrounds have been spruced up from the previous **Fatal Fury** hits, and the fighters have faster speed.

Samurai Shodown is an 118-Meg trip into ancient Japan. The gamer must face 12 warriors, and there are 12 player characters to choose among. Each has special abilities and weapons, and two use animals in their assaults. The playfield zooms through overall view, normal size and close-up shots. It's a colorful battle with a wide array of characters, from female Ninjas to Samurai Knights, culminating with the fight against the sorcerer overlord, Satan's Shogun.





The Samurai warriors each have their own unique moves and special attacks.

Next to come home for the Neo•Geo will be the SNK arcade hit, **Top Hunter**, a side-scrolling platform adventure with an army combat motif. It stars a bionic-armed hero, equipped with guns, missiles and other explosives.

Art of Fighting 2 is a one-on-one fighting game with several characters to choose from. Each has individualized strengths and weaknesses, as well as special magic attacks. **Art of Fighting 2** uses the largest characters ever used in a home video game.

A perusal of the top ten listing of play-for-pay games always holds several SNK titles, so it's a safe bet that the Neo•Geo library will continue to increase as hit games are readied for home play.

Playing on the Neo•Geo

Philips' CD-I is Alive & Kicking

by Ross Chamberlain

The electronics industry was hit by a big promotional blast from Philips Consumer Electronics for its Compact Disc-Interactive (CD-I) system at the Summer CES this year (see **EG**, Sept. '93). This was followed by the release of 14 games (see sidebar), a half-hour infomercial presentation on cable in October, and more games and other titles due in early '94.



With a number of titles available, the CD-I system stretches gaming dollars.

All this was after a year and a half of the doldrums following the system's American release in October, 1991. Despite claims that it is the most widely available of the new multimedia "black box" systems designed for the general consumer, neither it nor its more than 100 titles seem to have made much of a dent in the market. By Philips' policy no sales figures are available on the system or products made for it.

The CD-I system attaches to a standard television. In addition to CD-I interactive discs, it can play audio CDs and Photo CD discs. The current unit's SRP is $495. Available by holiday time, at extra cost, is a plug-in FMV cartridge, using the MPEG digital video standard to allow replay of full-length movies from five-inch CDs. Paramount Pictures made an agreement in June to release movies in the CD-I format at the same time as their videotapes were put in the market. With its additional 1.5 MB of memory, the FMV unit can also enhance games and other interactive products.

The Netherlands-based multinational organization had hoped to create a standard with the CD-I as it had for the audio cassette, audio CD and laser disc video formats. Looking around most record departments today there is no question of the predominance of those standards.

But while the company entered the market early with its CD-I system, the market itself was not yet ready. The closest things to the CD-I and other black boxes were video game systems and computers, each of which not only has a smaller consumer base but a more specialized one. The closest John Public have so far cared to interact with their day-to-day television fare is to talk back to the umpires and zap the commercials.

CD-I is out to change all that by bringing something for everyone out on CD discs, and let everyone know about it.



The Philips Compact Disc Interactive system can also play audio CDs.

Recent CD-I Releases

Titles for the CD-I system released this fall include the much anticipated **Voyeur**, described as an interactive film for adults starring Robert Culp as millionaire Reed Hawke. Somewhat reminiscent of *Rear Window* and *Chinatown*, the game has the player spy on Hawke's mansion from a nearby apartment to solve a mystery and expose a killer.

Thoroughbred horse racing enthusiasts can watch and bet on footage from actual races in **A Great Day at the Races**, called by renowned track announcer Terevor Denman, and neophytes can learn betting basics, with tips from Mickey Rooney.

Gershwin fans can indulge in a jazz-oriented exploration of his music in **Gershwin Connection**, based on the Grammy-winning album by Dave Grusin, with guest artists including Gary Burton and Chick Corea. The title includes liner notes, rare radio broadcasts and a Gershwin piano roll.

The CD-I "Private Lessons Series" now includes **CD-I Music Book: Classical Guitar**, with 10 interactive duets for students of the instrument.

Todd Rundgren fans and would-be composers may find **TR-1: No World Order** interesting to play with. It's an interactive, music-only CD with databases containing over a thousand four second musical sequences, or "bits," that the player can combine, controlling tempo, mood, even form and direction.

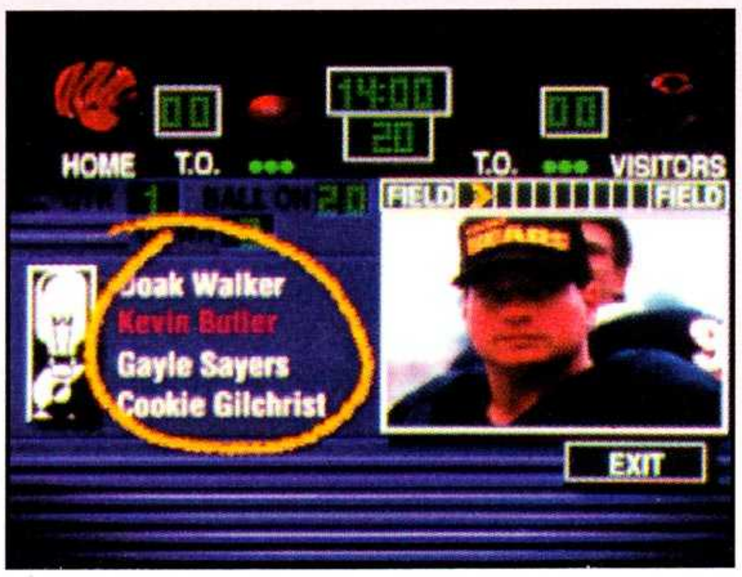
Triviologists with a sports bent might find **NFL Football Trivia Challenge** lives up to its name, with 1,500 questions. Correct answers elicit one of 1,200 images and 300 film clips from the NFL archives. Pat Summerall and Tom Brookshier provide play-by-play analysis.

Still in the realm of sports, but even more trivial, **The Wacky World of Miniature Golf** takes wackiness an extra step as players try to deal with sharks, playful dogs and other unusual hazards on an 18-hole course.

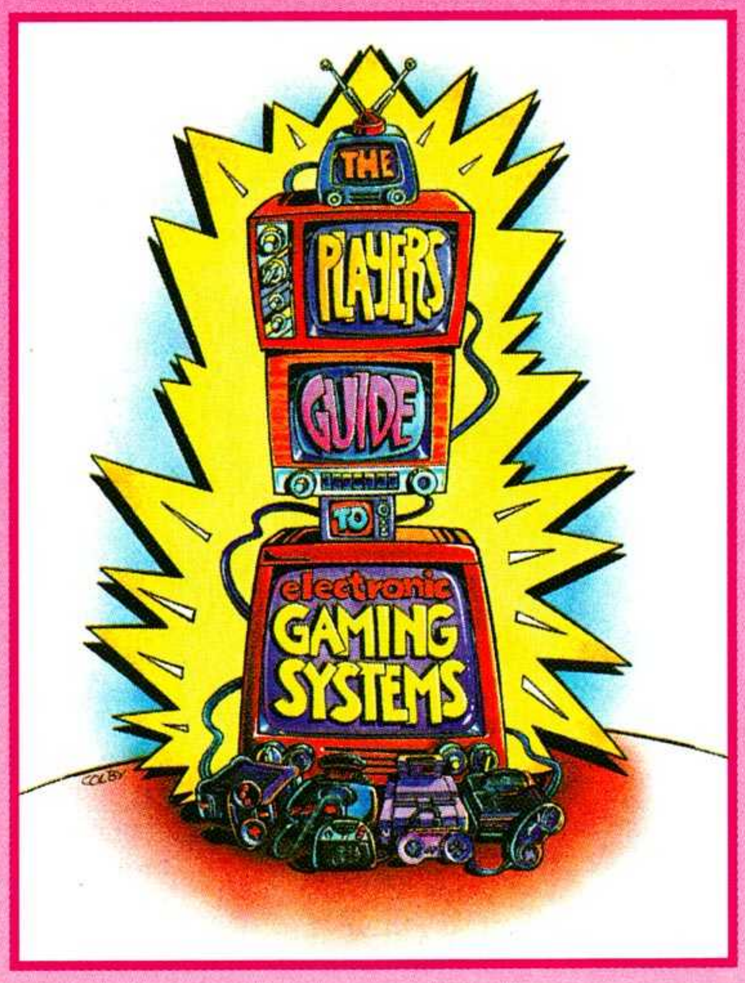
Classic sci-fi heroics are technically updated in **Alien Gate**, a shooter in which the player must violently rebuff the usual hordes of alien invaders from a spaceship.

Nintendo characters show up in **Link: the Faces of Evil**, in which Link helps save an island nation called Koridai, and **Zelda: the Wand of Gamelon**, in which Zelda seeks Link as well as her father, Gamelion.

For younger children, Mercer Mayer's **Little Monster at Schoo**l helps kids learn about counting, table manners and nutrition.



There are many sports games ready to be tackled. How's your NFL knowledge?



Portable System

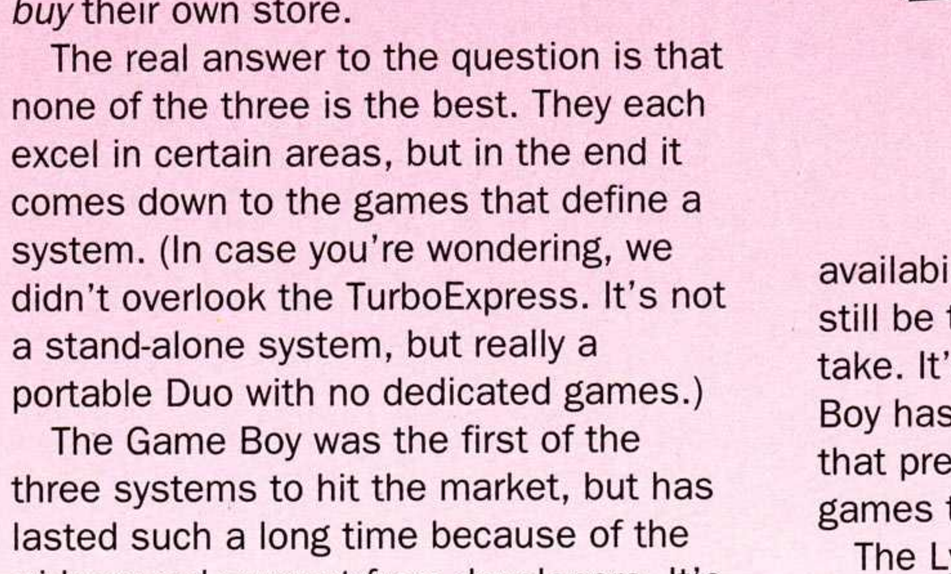
by Russ Ceccola

Just like the arguments over whether the Super NES or the Genesis is the better 16-Bit system, a similar battle rages on in the world of portable games with Game Boy, Lynx and Game Gear. If a game shop employee had that proverbial nickel (which should probably be a dollar in today's economy) every time they heard the question "Which hand-held system is the best?" they would certainly not be employed at that store any more. Instead, they would probably be able to *buy* their own store.

The real answer to the question is that none of the three is the best. They each excel in certain areas, but in the end it comes down to the games that define a system. (In case you're wondering, we didn't overlook the TurboExpress. It's not a stand-alone system, but really a portable Duo with no dedicated games.)

The Game Boy was the first of the three systems to hit the market, but has lasted such a long time because of the widespread support from developers. It's very true that the graphics are sometimes eye-crossing and other times downright intolerable, but Light Boys and other attachments work well to enlarge the play area and provide better light for that yellow LCD screen.

Nintendo has two Game Boy packages available. The more expensive one still ranks as better, because it too contains all of the basic accessories and Tetris. Game Boy easily surpasses the Game Gear and Lynx in number of titles available, continued support from a horde of game companies and availability, but the graphics may still be too much for some players to take. It's amazing how long the Game Boy has lasted. The primary reason for that presence is the large number of games that are fun to play.



The Lynx gave the Game Boy a kick in the pants in the initial months of its release, because it provided color games for the first time on a portable system. A consistent stream of quality games kept the Lynx alive and well, even after the Game Gear appeared. The Lynx's innovative design, large screen and comfortable feel attracted many players who needed an alternative to Game Boy. Most of those same players are intensely loyal to the Lynx and rush to the stores whenever a new game hits the streets.

The major problem with the Lynx is the lack of third-party developers. Texas-based Telegames developed a couple of Lynx titles, but most of the games have come from Atari themselves. Unless Atari convinces game companies to support the Lynx, Game Gear could steal away their market. Until that happens, the Lynx has an excellent catalog of titles and remains this author's favorite portable system.

Game Gear is the newest of the three portable systems and Sega's answer to Nintendo's Game Boy. At first all of the games for the Game Gear were developed by Sega alone until developers



Best Game Gear Games

Columns—This puzzle game came with the earlier Game Gear packages and addicted many who had not seen the original Genesis game that requires Tetris-like strategy and timing.

Sonic the Hedgehog—Sega's mascot really shines on the Game Gear because he acts as sassy and travels through the same lands as he did on the Genesis version.

The Majors—There are many baseball games, but few bring together the game's finest elements as well as this title.

T2: The Arcade Game—The graphics and sound effects are excellent in this tinier version of the arcade hit that redefined digitized pictures and special effects.

Best Lynx Games

Warbirds—This dogfight simulation features some of the system's best graphics and animation that doesn't ruin the illusion of flying a biplane into combat.

Chip's Challenge—Puzzle games may frustrate many players, but this title will addict and convert many types of players because of its arcade feel and variety of puzzles.

Robotron 2084—This is the finest translation of the double-joystick arcade game for any system. The number of characters on screen at any time is simply amazing. **Todd's Adventures in Slime World**—This adventure redefined multi-player games because each player acts independently in the same world instead of limited to a single screen.

Joust—Like **Robotron 2084**, this title reproduces the excitement and action of the hit arcade game, as well as the sound effects and graphics.



Columns on the Game Gear lets players take the puzzler wherever they go.

started to pile up at Sega's door. Now a good network of Game Gear developers provide original titles as well as Game Gear versions of Genesis winners for Sega owners. Game Gear has a comfortable casing and well-lit screen, but many of the early titles had muddy graphics because they had too many elements compressed on the screen. Newer titles are every bit as exciting as their cousins on the Genesis and have established a market second in size to the Game Boy. Game Gear owners also have the added ability to turn their unit into a portable television, a major plus for many owners who ride trains or take their systems on trips or vacations.

You really can't go wrong with any of the three systems. They all have outstanding games and major duds. The best way to make a system purchase is to visit a game store and look through the titles. Someone with his/her heart set on a color system may still like the Game Boy titles better. Another person who wants color might discover that their favorite arcade game is available on the Lynx. For others, the almost automatic production of Game Gear versions of Genesis hits and the TV attachment will win them over. Look at the game selections, try out the systems and, if you're still stuck, send EG's editors a letter with your specific concerns.

No matter how you cut it, portable video games are the best way to satisfy that urge when away from home, and the outlook for software is quite good.



Best Game Boy Games

Tetris—Although it comes packaged with the system, **Tetris** is still the most widely-played Game Boy title and an addictive contest either alone or head-to-head.

Super MarioLand—The variety of levels and number of hidden objects and paths firmly establish Mario's presence in the Game Boy market.

The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening—This recent adventure continues Link's travels and offers a challenging and expansive world to explore as one of the system's largest games.

FaceBall 2000—This very simple game design drops players into a maze in which they must find and overtake other players. It ranks as one of the very best multiplayer games.

A Boy and His Blob: Rescue of Princess Blobette—Veteran video game designer, David Crane, provides players with an innovative game system that allows them to be as creative as they want in the solution of the game's levels and mysteries.

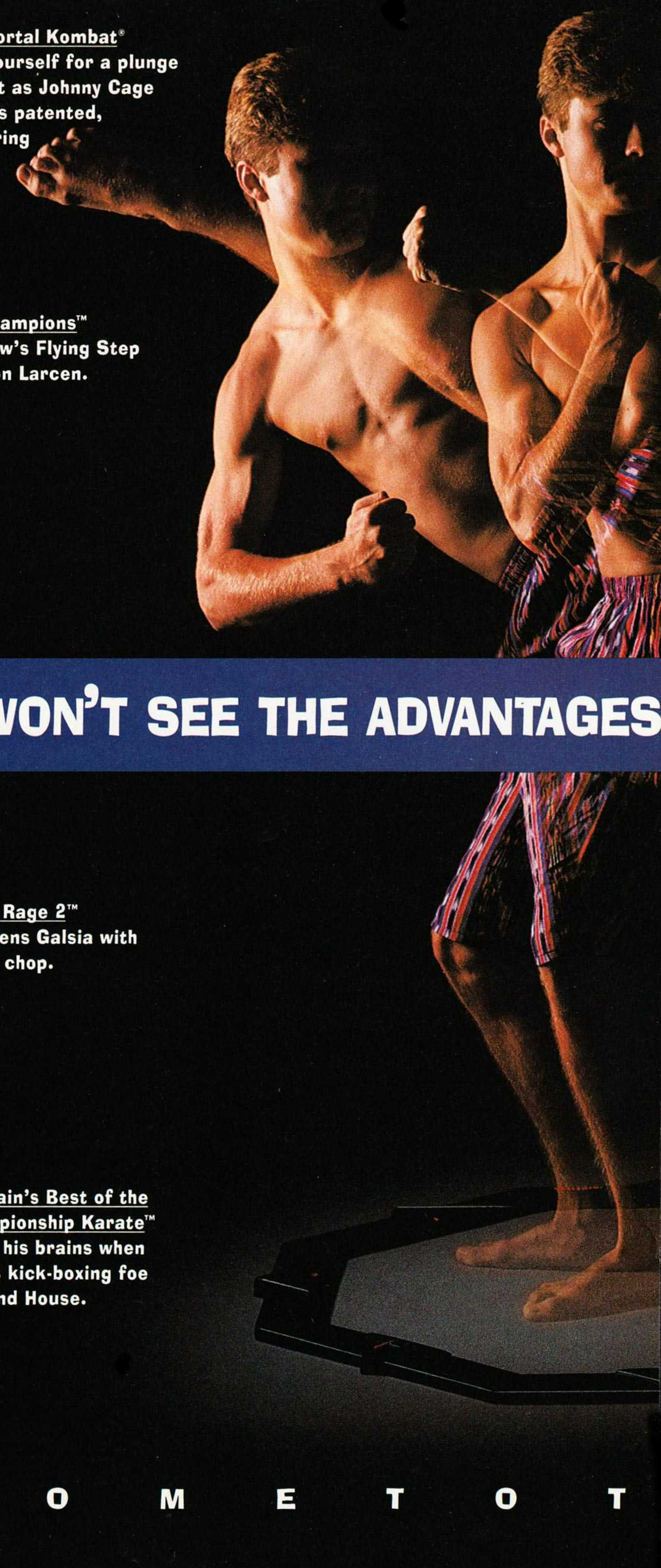
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Arena's Mortal Kombat®
Prepare yourself for a plunge into the pit as Johnny Cage delivers his patented, rib-shattering Shadow Kick.



Eternal Champions™
Use Shadow's Flying Step to stomp on Larcen.



SOME KIDS WON'T SEE THE ADVANTAGES



Streets of Rage 2™
Blaze flattens Galsia with her karate chop.



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Rearrange his brains when you hit this kick-boxing foe with a Round House.

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W E L C O M E T O T

Capcom's Street Fighter II™: Special Champion Edition
Ryu takes a bite out of Sagat when you use his Dragon Punch.



Greatest Heavyweights
This round is over when you left jab the big bruiser.



OF ACTIVATOR.™ THEN IT WILL HIT THEM.

You figured it out. Your opponent didn't. He's sitting over there moving his thumbs. You're in the middle of an infrared ring, punching and kicking. It'll hit him fast. You've got better moves because you're moving your whole body. He only uses two thumbs. With Eternal Champions, for example, you kick left and right and your character kicks left and right. When you punch back, your character punches back. The guy with the regular controller doesn't have a chance, unless you're completely out of shape. It's not exactly a fair fight, but who cares about being fair?

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ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS...
EG's Guide to Holiday Gift Giving



by Ed Dille

With the smell of snow in the air, either in original form or dispensed from an aerosol can, it is natural for the mind to turn to the rituals of gift giving. Whether giving or receiving, retailers around the world are lined up to meet a player's needs. Fortunately for electronic gamers everywhere, this holiday season is ripe with possibilities.

Shoppers looking for the "perfect" purchase should know the interests and habits of their target audience. The saying, "One man's trash is another man's treasure" is completely applicable to electronic gaming, as individual players' tastes usually focus on only a portion of the entire spectrum.

The following list of gifts has been organized by price point, rather than application, and the emphasis is on new products, in lieu of established standards.

Right then, let's go shopping.

Special for Christmas

TDA debuted **Christmas For Windows** in 1992, and this year has new holiday versions, **Christmas For Windows Release 2** and **Christmas For Macintosh,** both published under their "Simple Simon Says" label. The omnibus packages contain special holiday screen savers, Christmas carols, special musical holiday icons, games, an electronic greeting card maker to create disks for your friends, along with holiday-themed fonts, backgrounds and even holiday stationery. At $14.99, it provides lots of seasonal cheer for the price.

Kid Art: Holidays Plus from Imager (Macintosh, $29.95) is a collection of scenes and stamps that works with Broderbund's **Kid Pix** and Davidson's **Kid Works 2**. It's an all-holiday selection, so kids can use it year-round to make posters, invitations, or other decorative items.

Stocking Stuffers

Continuing the list of gifts under $30 is Suncom's innovative offering, **My Joystick**. Keyboards are intimidating to young users of educational and other PC products, so Suncom developed a joystick specifically engineered for preschool and primary age children. **My Joystick** features a down-sized base which can be handheld or used on a desktop. Three over-sized action buttons are easy to find and use, whether right- or left-handed, and the short, wide directional control stick is perfect for small hands to grasp and maneuver. A signal

selector switch also allows kids to switch the functions of the action buttons to suit their preference for the software used. At a suggested retail of $24.99, complete with a full one year warranty, **My Joystick** is a thoughtful addition to any shopping list for junior gamers.

Suncom is also targeting a new product at PC players, the **Gameport 2000**. Billed as the next generation GameCard for joystick to PC connection, this peripheral offers a lot for its small asking price. First, the card is fully responsive in all speed ranges, from low end 286s to Pentium-based 586s running at 80Mhz and beyond. Second, there is a dedicated audio port that improves on base PC speaker sound. Although you can't expect MIDI quality from the add-on, it does represent an inexpensive way to get improved sound from a PC, while still enjoying the benefits of a premium game card. The **Gameport 2000** will retail for $29.99.



Christmas for WIndows gives your screen some joyful holiday cheer!

The **Python 2B**, a joystick designed specifically for the SNES, is out from Quickshot for $17.99. It's designed with a forward A-button trigger for index finger control, and a three-button triangular BXY array on the top of the stick, easily accessed by the thumb. All four action buttons feature selectable turbo and slow motion functions. Also, on the left side of the base, for control by the off hand, are left/right buttons for directional commands that don't lend themselves well to the stick.

Beeshu offers an alternative use of portable systems in the form of the **Game Tunes/Stereo Boy** and **Stereo Gear**. Designed for the Game Boy and Game Gear respectively, these peripherals plug into the base unit's cartridge slot and allow the user to tune in a favorite FM stereo station. Complete with headsets, the Game Boy unit retails for $14.95, the Game Gear add-on for $19.95.

Beeshu's **Jet Fighter** is a controller with a lot of eye appeal, compatible with either the SNES or Sega Genesis. Its casing is modeled after an F-117 Stealth Bomber airframe and the unit features turbo and slow motion control, as well as an extra long cord. Suggested retail: $24.95.

Konami is entering the infrared remote controller race with the **Hyperbeam**. Slated to appear under $30, the unit provides one-player control (as opposed to the Dual Turbo units, manufactured by Acclaim for $59.99, which were covered in the October *Test Lab*.) The receiver of the **Hyperbeam** is a miniature satellite dish, which sits on top of the control deck. The pad is a standard 4 x 2 SNES layout (no Genesis version is offered), with a 6.4 millisecond response time. The unit is powered by 3 AAA batteries *vice* the 4 required for the Dual Turbo.

STD continues its controller expansion with the arrival of the **PC Raider**, an auto-centering two button desk grip stick for the IBM. Three flavors are available: the standard stick comes in at $19.95; for $69.95 buyers get the stick bundled with **F-19 Stealth Fighter** from Microprose, and for $99.95 STD's Game Card is added as well.

STD developed the **Handy Carry**, available for $9.95, for Game Boy addicts that take their act on the road. Unlike leather and vinyl cases, which protect the unit from dust and moisture but offer little buffer against impact damage, the **Handy Carry** is a rugged plastic shell that goes the extra mile. The Game Boy can still be played in the case, and the LCD protector flips up to act as a sun visor for outdoor play.

Also for gamers-on-the go, STD has a dual compatible compact car adapter. The **Handy Plug** includes a dual jack cigarette lighter plug with 10-foot cords for the Game Boy and Game Gear. At $12.95, this is an inexpensive alternative for owners of both game consoles.

Looking for a gift that will pay for itself? Look no further than STD's **Handy Power Kit**, listed at $29.95. This combination battery and charger gets to full power in only 90 minutes, then provides 14 hours of life for the Game Boy or two hours for the Game Gear. More importantly for longer battery life, the charger's design includes a thermo-sensor to prevent overcharging, an LED



STD has added the PC Raider to its line of quality joysticks for home computers.

status indicator, and it automatically powers down when the charge is completed. Also, the battery includes a belt clip for convenient use away from home.

Triax Technologies, manufacturer of unique touch sensitive controllers for video game consoles, are offering a PC version of their **Turbo Touch 360** design for $29.95. In lieu of the traditional rocker arm for directional control, Triax employs a capacitance plate that registers the slightest finger motions of the user.

For those who seek to "pump up the volume" of their favorite games, it is hard to do better for the price than Naki's **Sound Jammer** system. At $29.99 for a pair, these amplified speakers work with all game systems, from the Lynx to a 486 PC, and can also be used with televisions or portable music players. Each speaker has independent volume control, bass and treble booster switches, and offers two watts per channel high fidelity sound.

Electronic Arts' **4-Way Play** is a four-player multitap for the Sega Genesis.



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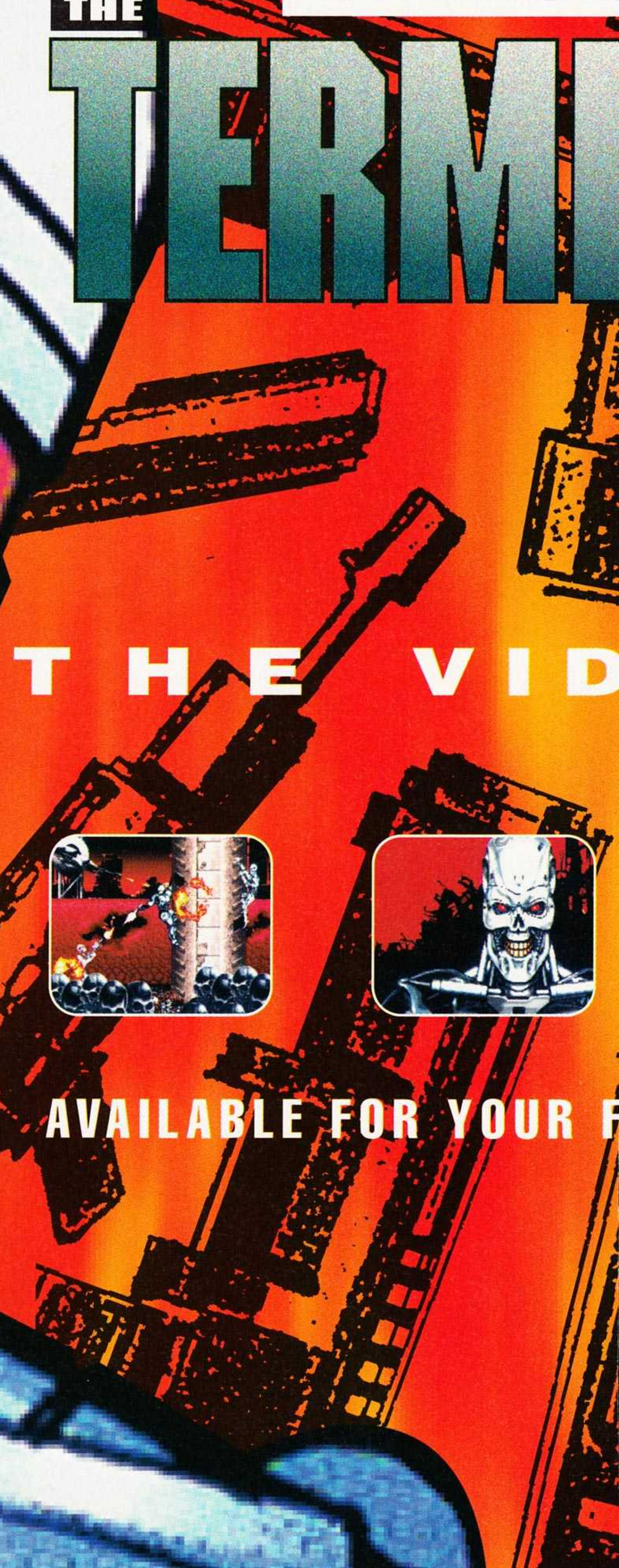
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VORITE GAME SYSTEM.

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The back side of the unit plugs into the existing two controller jacks and blends with the overall unit appearance. If a Mega-CD is also installed, however, it is necessary to remove the multi-tap each time a CD is inserted or extracted.

Currently, **Bill Walsh College Football** and **General Chaos** support four person play, but EA promises that additional multi-player sports titles are under development, including **NHL Hockey**. **Gauntlet 4** from Tengen also supports it, and other multi-play titles will be coming from Tengen. The **4-Way Play** retails for $29.99.



Programming your favorite moves is now easeir with the SN Programmable.

That Special Someone

There will also be a SNES **Multi-tap** appearing, capable of five players. Although no software currently supports five players, the unit is packaged with **Super Bomberman**, which offers simultaneous four-person action. The bundling choice is logical, since Hudson Soft is the manufacturer of both products. The combined package costs $69.95.

Quickshot, a continuing presence in the controller arena, will also spice up its holiday lineup with the arrival of the **Conqueror 2** for the SNES and **Conqueror 3** for the Sega Genesis. These programmable offerings allow players to enter multiple button combinations and save up to four different sequences (for additional information on programmable controllers, see the October *Test Lab*).

Players of martial arts games, such as **Street Fighter II** or **Fatal Fury**, are the target audience for this type of controller. The **Conqueror** series pads are also noteworthy because the button arrays may be rotated up to 270 degrees, so players can easily modify the control surface to suit their tastes, instead of having to search for the buttons used most frequently. The units retail for $35.99 each.

STD's **SN Programmable** joystick for the SNES comes online complete with 29 preprogrammed multi-combination moves from **SF II** and **Fatal Fury**. All of these moves are mirrored so they can be executed from either side of the targeted character. Also, players can program six additional moves for use with other games. The real benefit of STD's offering, however, is the presence of the preprogramming for players who lack the dexterity to execute some of the complicated moves unassisted. The **SN Programmable** also has standard autofire and slow motion features and is available for $59.95.

Multimedia movie buffs may be captured in a Kodak moment opening their copy of Infobusiness' **Mega Movie Guide Multimedia**. The most comprehensive, easy to use source for obtaining data on practically every film ever made, the CD contains 60,000 movie/video reviews for films dating back to the 1920s. Also, there are nearly two hours of live footage, highlighting clips and classic scenes from the most popular films. The information is current as well, as movies like *Jurassic Park*, *The Firm* and *Sleepless in Seattle* are included. A utility allows users to keep notes and record their own reviews and opinions, if desired. It's available for $59.95.



LucasArts' Air Combat Classics will be sure to brighten flight simmer's faces.



Revell-Monogram, a company not normally associated with electronic games and computing, breaks out of its traditional mold this season with some unique bundles. Under the collective heading of the Power Modeler series, four products will appear before Christmas. The first three—European Racers, Backroad Racers and Hi-Tech Aircraft—each feature four cars or planes with animated 3-D assembly instructions on CD-ROM. A complete plastic model kit for one of the four is included and the CD also offers detail tips for gluing, painting and finishing. As a bonus, there is also a driving or flying game included in the mix, where the player can select any of the featured vehicles to compete with. The fourth title, Secret of the Dinosaurs, contains instructions for five dinosaur models and an action game where players step inside any of the creatures and explore a prehistoric world through their eyes. The Power Modeler series retails for $69.95 each.



Revell-Monogram is releasing a Hi-Tech Aircraft Power Modeller CD-ROM game.

Armchair aviators couldn't ask for a better value than a recent bundle offered by LucasArts. **Air Combat Classics**, for IBM and compatibles, contains three venerable titles in a single package for

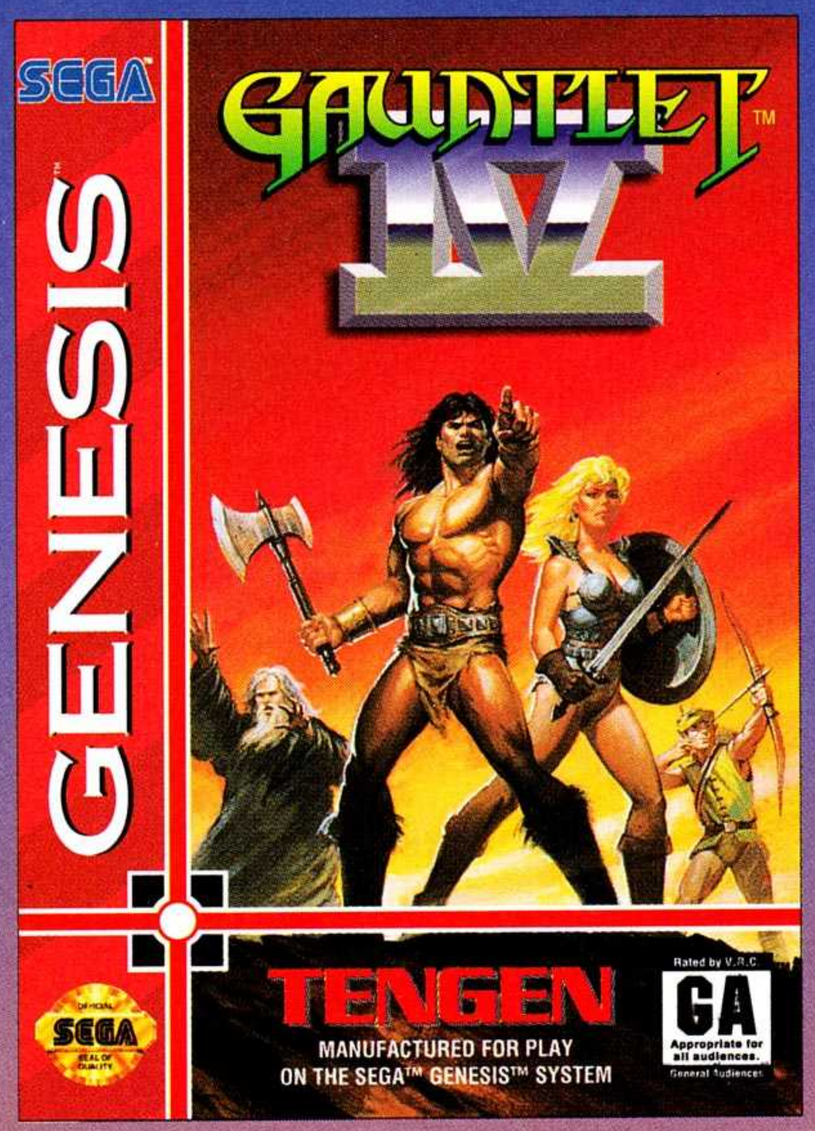
Tap Into a 4-Player Quest

Grab your Sega 4-Player "TAP." Gauntlet™ IV has arrived...and this time, you'd better bring your friends!

The title that defined video-game adventure is now the first to utilize Sega's new 4-Player "TAP."

Just like the arcade classic, Gauntlet™ IV lets you team up with up to three of your buddies as Thor, Thyra, Merlin and Questor—and blast more Grunts, Ghosts, Demons and Lobbers than ever before. There's even a special 4-Player head-to-head mode so you can turn against your friends in a winner-take-all battle royal!

Gauntlet™ IV has arrived. Tap into the 4-player quest...and bring your friends!





Choose your path carefully—that door could be the last you ever open. Boo!



You want the treasure...but is it worth the risk? Too bad you couldn't become invisible!





A fire-breathing dragon can really ruin your day. Next time bring back-ups!

First Game Available for Sega's 4-Player Adapter



Grab four of your buddies and crash a Grunt party. Just watch your back!

GAUNTLET™ IV

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TENGEN VIDEO GAMES

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The Flightstick Pro offers even more precision for die-hard computer pilots.

$69.95: **Battle Hawks 1942**, **Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain**, with extra mission disk, and **Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe**, complete with all four add-on tours of duty.

These same players may want to take to the skies with CH Products **Flightstick Pro** firmly in their grasp. The joystick allows users to view their surroundings, activate radar, arm and disarm weapons without ever having to take their hands off the stick. The unit is shipped with special drivers for Microsoft's **Flight Simulator 4.0**, which provide flaps, gear, brake and trim controls in addition to multiple views via the coolie hat switch. All games may be played using the stick, but some of the special features in each may not be controllable without the special drivers provided by CH Products. The **Flightstick Pro** enters the market at $89.95.

High-tech gamers on the go have long suffered the absence of a game port for notebook computers. Luckily, this dry spell has ended with the release of two separate products. The first, Colorado Spectrum's **Notebook Gameport**, connects to the serial port of the host unit and provides a fully functional game port for joysticks, as well as a pass through serial mouse port. With a list price of $49.95, the unit comes bundled with an update for **F-15 Strike Eagle III**. The second offering, Genovation's **Parallel Game Port**, converts a parallel port to a 15 pin game port for use by a joystick, yoke, weapon systems controller or even flight pedals, for a list price of $45.00. A separate port doubler allows two such devices to be connected if desired. Both of these peripherals also appeal to desktop PC owners who need a gameport but don't want to install a card or lack available slots.

If the extensive list of merchandise presented thus far still hasn't struck a chord, or the player's tastes are a little more extravagant, then read on for gifts that will simply amaze the recipient.

For the Light of Your Life

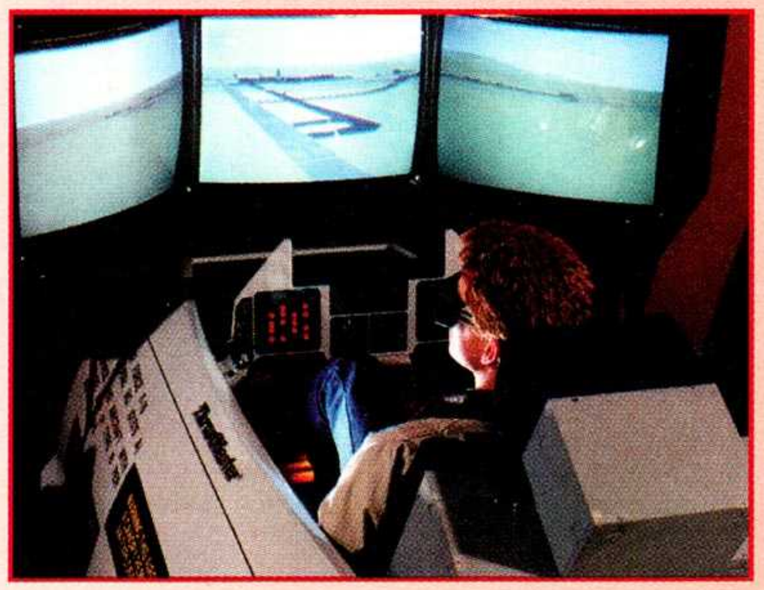
Owners of TTI's Duo game player who also happen to own a PC or Macintosh that isn't currently multimedia capable can find a real bargain in the **Intelligent Link** peripheral. For $129.99, TTI's **Link** allows the Turbo Duo to become a fully functional external CD-ROM drive for either computer. Given the cost of stand-alone CD drives, it is impossible to get into multimedia any cheaper than this.

Sega Genesis players may enjoy a ride in an **S-II Action Chair**, purchasable from Simulator Technology for $149.99. Users sit in a low back seat and place their feet on a forward support. On either side are ski pole type game controls with top mounted buttons. The assembly is semi-free floating, so the player experiences the motions of action-oriented video games, such as driving and flying simulations with a first person or chase view perspective.

Ever play a flight simulator strapped on top of a massive subwoofer that vibrates the entire seat à la engine rumble? That's the idea behind the **ThunderSeat Multimedia Chair**, available for $299.95 from Thunderseat Technologies. The unit may be used in conjunction with existing speakers for enhanced performance and can be hooked to the output of any source, from a sound card or video game console to a VCR. Watching movies like *Top Gun* in the chair is a kick also. Side consoles which make perfect rests for Thrustmaster Flight and Weapons Control systems are also available for $179.99.

The company is also developing a full line of professional quality flight yokes, rudder pedals and even a radio stack for use in conjunction with Microsoft's **Flight Simulator 5.0**. Their end goal is to produce fully functional FAA certified home simulators for under $3000.00. Granted, the pricing means these units aren't for everybody, but in comparison with the next offering, they are cheap!





How about a $20,000 game? The flight sim fan's ultimate gift: The ICE Falcon.

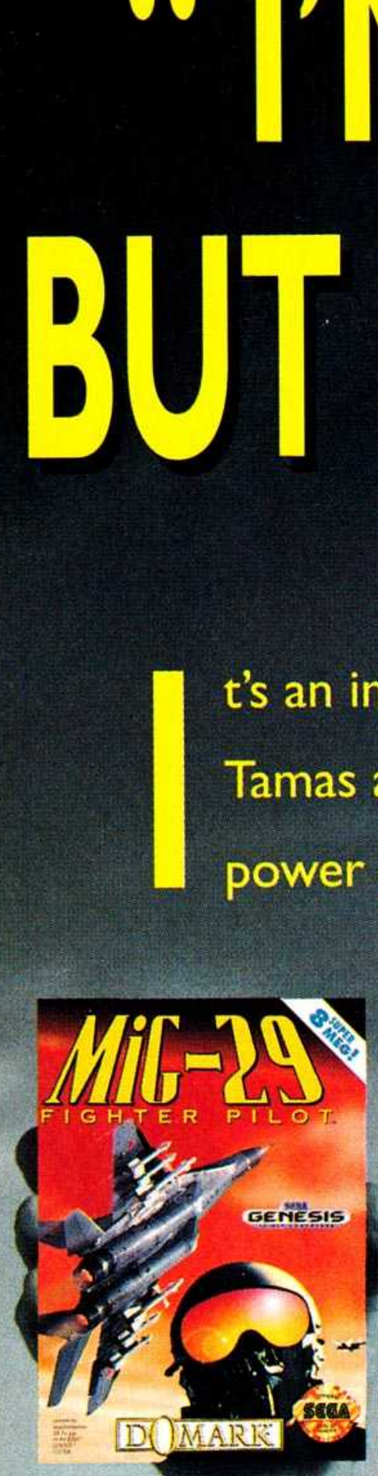
Tellurian and Thrustmaster have joined forces to create the **ICE Falcon** (see photo). A realistic, fully functional professional simulator for the F-16 Falcon that uses real time 3-D computer image generation, this little baby can reside in the family room for a mere $20,000. If that doesn't max out one's buying power, then Santa can't promise any more!



Gamers on-the-go will appreciate a gift like the Notebook Gameport adapter.

"I'M NOT A FIGHTER PILOT, BUT I CAN PLAY ONE ON T.V."

It's an impossible mission: Disable Al Tamas and destroy the Kharham nuclear power plant. Yet somehow, sitting behind the controls of the notorious MiG-29, the odds seem in your favor. Fly to the heavens and raise some hell...in the fastest-scrolling flight sim ever on the Genesis™.





You're in the cockpit with complete instrument panel, featuring radar and eject button...just in case!



Fly six grueling sorties over land and sea. Use your AS-8 guided missile to take out menacing gunboats.



Pull some serious G's and disarm the massive Arzarian arsenal, which boasts over 30 live SCUDS.



These skies are anything but friendly! Don't be surprised if you wind up in a dogfight with an enemy fighter.

MiG-29™
FIGHTER PILOT

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EG INTERVIEW

The Barons of the Brickyard

Papyrus builds IndyCar Racing

by Arnie Katz

"Love of racing was in the genes," says Indiana native Dave Kaemmer, designer of the classic **Indianapolis 500** and the forthcoming **IndyCar Racing**. If Indianapolis is the capital of American auto racing, then Somerville, MA (home of Papyrus) may become the center for the computer version.

IndyCar Racing, to be published under the Virgin banner, is a real-time simulation of the Indy car racing circuit. It has a selection of tunable cars and precisely rendered tracks to challenge an unusually wide spread of ability levels.

"The solitaire title will be available for personal computers late this month," says Dan Scherlis, vice president-marketing of Papyrus and the producer of this impressive racing competition. The exact release date depends on tying up a few remaining loose ends.

Inking all the licenses incorporated into the game has proven the biggest headache, Dan and Dave agree. "We've been working with a lot of people, a lot of groups, to get everything approved for release," says Scherlis. "Our goal is to make the game look like a television show."

"Texture mapping makes this degree of realism possible," amplifies Kaemmer, "but now we have to chase people. We could've gone with generic signs, but we wanted it to be authentic." Players will love the little visual details, such as ad billboards and stickers on the cars.

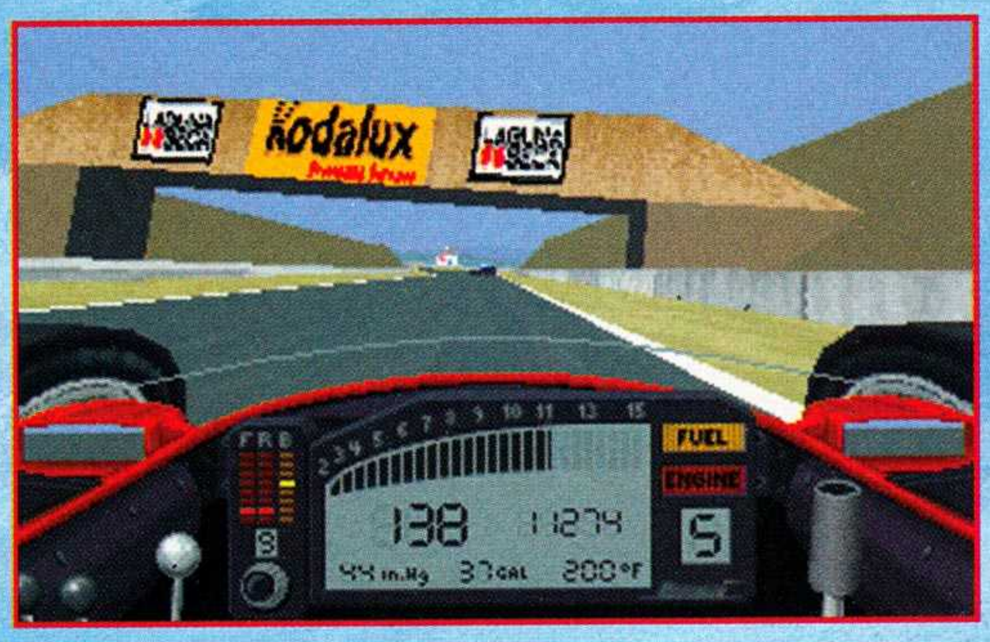
IndyCar Racing is playable on a 386 or 486 computer with 4MB of internal RAM and a Soundblaster-compatible audio board. Those who use a 386 will get high speed operation, but at some graphic cost.



The project took 18 months to bring from concept to completed program. Scherlis led a seven-person development team, backed by a secondary support unit of equal size. He also lauds contributions by a host of specialists who contributed their expertise on a more irregular basis.

Despite his status as the company's co-founder and chief technical guru, Kaemmer was a mainstay of the project. Besides furnishing the design, he served as the main programmer. John Wheeler supplemented the code-crunching effort.

Anyone who sees the stunning, multi-perspective graphics immediately thinks of multimedia. Papyrus is also looking in that direction, evaluating possible target



platforms for a CD edition of **IndyCar Racing**. The Sega CD is leading a closely bunched pack of candidates, but 3DO could be there at the finish, too.

A jump to multimedia is more than a financial bonanza to Dave Kaemmer. While no one expects him to send back the royalty check, Dave's artistic commitment to a multimedia edition clearly dominates economic considerations.

"With multimedia, we can do more fluff!" he exults. He seems to regret the word as soon as it leaves his mouth. He explains that he's using designer jargon for game elements that don't contribute directly to the game-action of driving a car. These aspects do not contribute to the play action, but they can be pivotal in creating player involvement and satisfaction. This is a prime characteristic of the American approach to game design—the desire to enhance the play experience.

One likely addition: wall-to-wall commentary on the races in progress.

The Making of a Car Nut

Although he was always into racing, Kaemmer acknowledges that, "Doing the research for **Indy 500** turned me from an enthusiast into a fanatic about it." His exhaustive research into race car physics distinguished **Indy 500** and is even more accurate in **IndyCar Racing**.

Deciding to do a sequel wasn't a hard decision for Kaemmer and Papyrus. "The subject of **Indy 500** was limited. I wanted to branch out to different tracks. I also wanted to intensify the TV-like look of the game with replays and different camera angles.

"Doing a driving game demands a high frame rate," Kaemmer observed. The man whom Scherlis calls "The Font of 3-D Wisdom," went on to explain that though **IndyCar**, like **Indy 500**, has a rate of 15 fps, it didn't require nearly as many compromises in the graphics to keep everything moving at that speed. "The graphics of **Indy 500** were a little Spartan," Kaemmer comments.

When he thought about doing **IndyCar**, he looked for a technical hook. Kaemmer found it in Super Texture, which he calls the key to the game. This proprietary graphics system uses polygon graphics for top speed animation and overlays them with texture panels to produce the most minute visual details.

"I wanted visuals that looked nice even in close-ups," says Kaemmer. **IndyCar Racing** does a great job of evoking that look and feel, too. From the opening sequences, it comes on like a slick telecast. The constantly shifting video perspectives, coupled with true-to-life sound effects and music, makes **IndyCar Racing** a hot contender for the new state of the art in computer race simulations.

Scherlis explains the power of Super Texture technology: "In most games, every view is a separate animation. We can take one bit mapped image, like a car, that fills 12K of memory, and we can use it to produce all views and angles.

"The cars are made of many more pixels, and we've tried to simulate the details of every track with banks, colors, and features like pedestrian overpasses.

"Even more important than the look is the feel. I wanted to create a product that would let me drive an Indy car," Kaemmer states. "When you crest a hill, the car gets light. And if you have to make a turn at that point, your car has much more trouble holding the road."

Three main advantages of **IndyCar Racing**, according to Scherlis, are: a richer visual experience, real car performance, the use of a professional race caller and the variety of tracks.

A Question of Realism

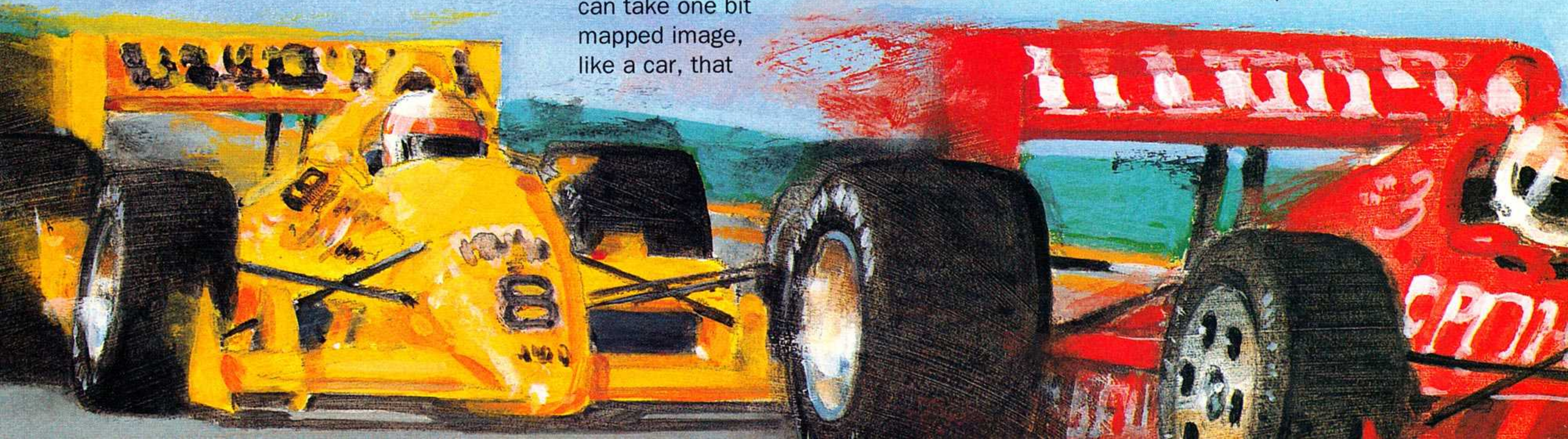
The quest to make **IndyCar** the most realistic simulation of its kind did not blind Scherlis and his team to the need for playability. "I was always conscious of the need to be able to jump in and drive," says the project's producer. "I'm the apostle of playability at Papyrus. When I have to make a decision, I always lean toward playability!"

"There is a limit to realism," concedes Kaemmer. "The fact is, it's still a game. The perils of realism are tedium and too much intricacy," says Scherlis. "We compromised enough on realism to make it fun."

"With the default car settings, you will race with the pack, but you most likely won't win with that setting. After a while, the player can move to the fast car setting and do even better. Players who race for six months or more and learn the game will want to tinker. For them, we have the opportunity to adjust the settings for peak performance."

The Next Race

With **IndyCar Racing** roaring into the stores, Scherlis and Kaemmer are gearing up for the next product. The exact subject matter is still at issue, but Kaemmer gives an indication that the next Papyrus title will simulate another division of motor sports.



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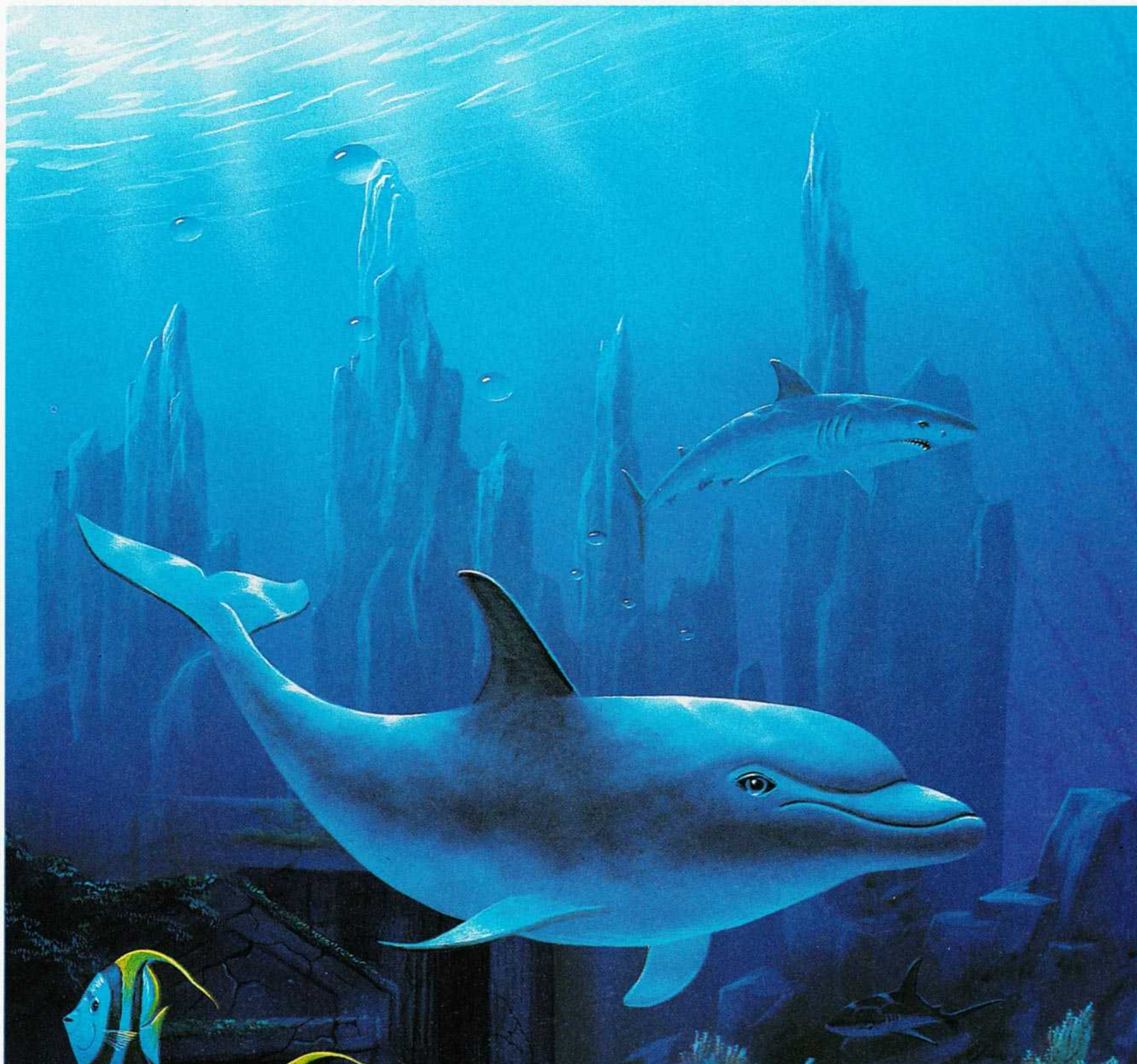
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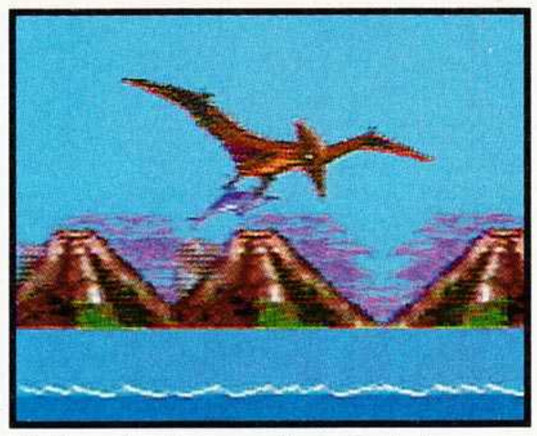


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Ren & Stimpy

Here Come the NikToons!

by Russ Ceccola

Quick! Everybody get off their chairs, bang butts and do the"Happy, Happy! Joy, Joy!" dance! If you don't know what it is, then you haven't been watching Nickelodeon's prized pair of animated characters, Ren & Stimpy.

Ren Hoek, a skinny neurotic chihuahua, and Stimpson J. Cat, his red feline buddy, have created quite a stir in cartoon fandom. There's one Game Boy *Ren & Stimpy* game already available, and T*HQ has a trio of new *Ren & Stimpy* games on the way this fall, one each for the Game Boy, NES and Super NES.

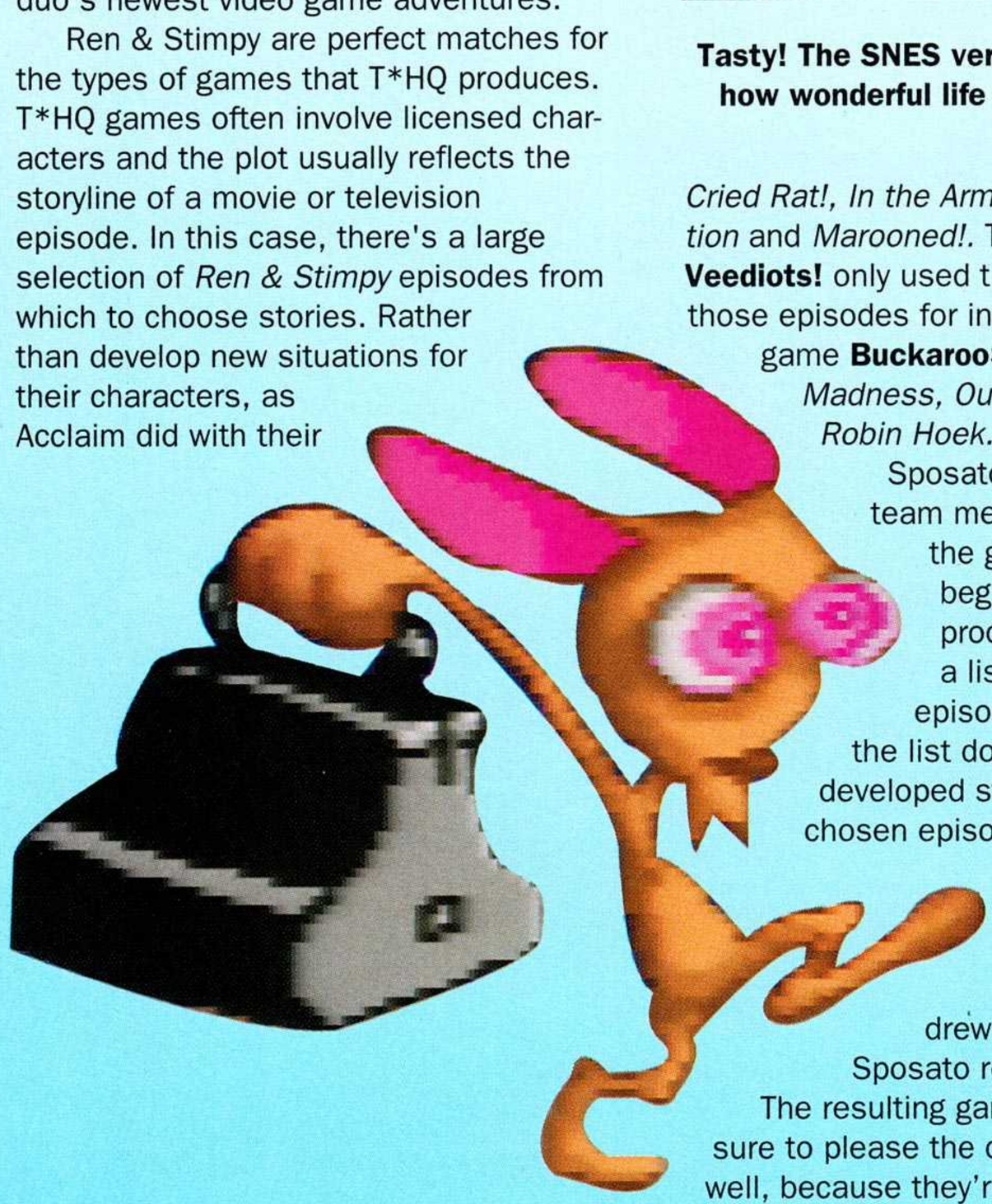
The games' producer, Jonathan Sposato, recently commented on the titles and the development of the wacky duo's newest video game adventures.

Ren & Stimpy are perfect matches for the types of games that T*HQ produces. T*HQ games often involve licensed characters and the plot usually reflects the storyline of a movie or television episode. In this case, there's a large selection of *Ren & Stimpy* episodes from which to choose stories. Rather than develop new situations for their characters, as Acclaim did with their line of *Simpsons* games, Sposato and his design teams used the elements of specific episodes to act as a foundation for the cat and dog video game antics.

Specifically, the SNES version of **Veediots!** features scenes from *The Boy Who Cried Rat!, In the Army, Stimpy's Invention* and *Marooned!.* The Game Boy **Veediots!** only used the first three of those episodes for inspiration. The NES game **Buckaroo$** focuses on *Space Madness, Out West* and *Robin Hoek.*



Tasty! The SNES version shows us just how wonderful life with Ren can be!



Sposato and the design team members discussed the games before they began the design process, came up with a list of their favorite episodes, then narrowed the list down from there. "We developed stories based on the chosen episodes before we began the design. A lot of preproduction occurred before an artist drew a single pixel," Sposato remarked.

The resulting game segments are sure to please the cartoon's fans as well, because they're packed with the



Ren & Stimpy must battle a plethora of beings in order to accomplish their goal.

characters, elements and humor that make *Ren & Stimpy* so popular. Players control the characters alternately to help them survive or solve the problems and jokes of the episodes within the games.

Nickelodeon oversaw the production of the games and offered a lot of valuable advice to the designers, as well as the inevitable, occasionally necessary criticisms. This really helped to create a game that followed the cartoon as closely as possible, while stlll allowing some freedom for the programmers.

For example, most of the episodes used for the games come from the series' second season instead of the first, in order to reflect the new attitude and limits of *Ren & Stimpy* after the



Crazy crows will try to impede the duo's progress when playing the Genesis title.

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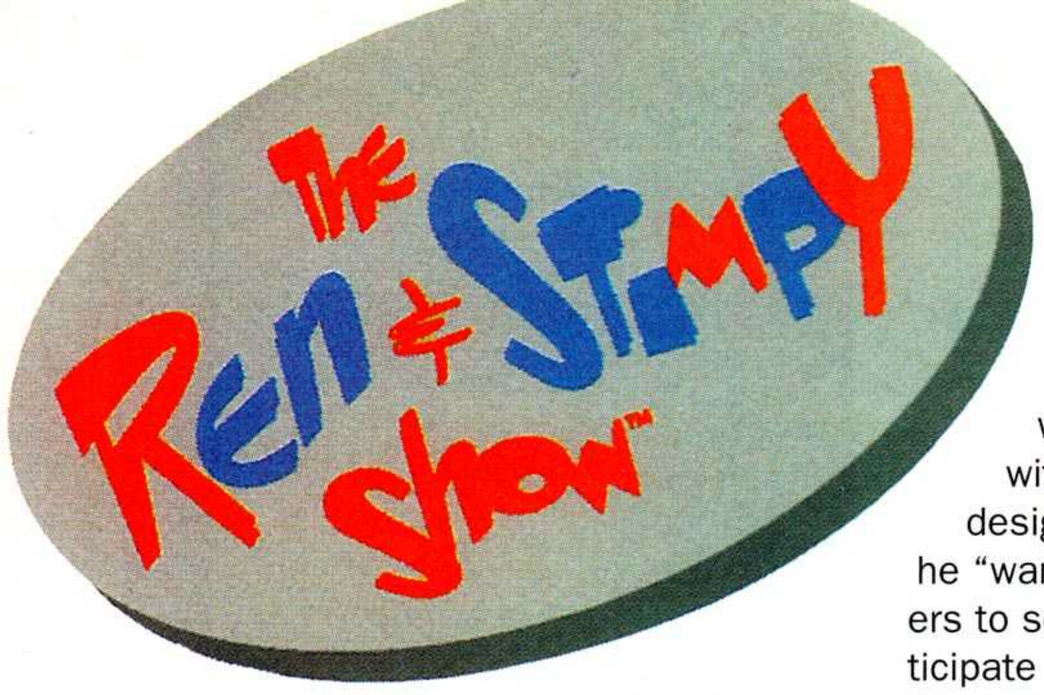
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pair's creator John Kricfalusi left Nickelodeon. Additionally, the cable channel's people noticed an exaggerated red color for Stimpy's fur in the NES game with their watchful eyes. The NES has a limited number of available colors, and the artists needed to remap Stimpy's color to better match the cartoon.

Sposato found Nickelodeon's input helpful. He was delighted that "we had a lot of latitude thematically with the characters, except for how they were drawn." Even the art restrictions proved to be no problem because the games' lead animator, Jamie Oliff, is a veteran animator from the *Ren & Stimpy* cartoons. He led the design team to depict *Ren & Stimpy* to Nickelodeon's specifications and developed a common look and feel to the characters across the three hardware platforms.



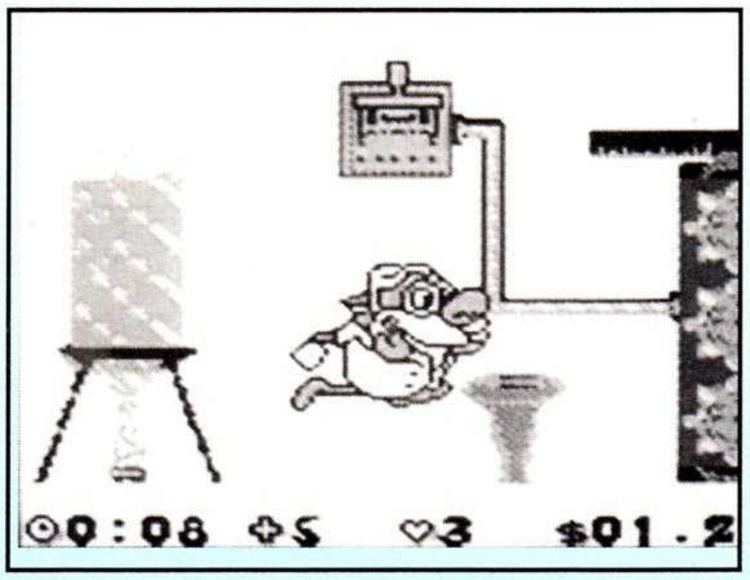
The result is a trio of games that play like controlled cartoons, especially the Super NES game. Sposato was happy with the designs because he "wanted the players to seemingly participate in a *Ren & Stimpy* episode."

The trio of *Ren & Stimpy* titles will certainly please fans of the cartoons, because almost all members of the design teams are fans themselves. Many of the characters and subtleties of *Ren & Stimpy* make their way into the games. Powdered Toast Man, Speed Socks, the Happy Helmet and The Sarge appear in the games, along with dozens of other elements of Ren & Stimpy's world. Sposato explained that "we are all huge fans of *Ren & Stimpy*. We know all the nuances that make *Ren & Stimpy* what it is and wanted to include them in the game."

The games' designers even developed a special plan to incorporate the duo's familiar voices and sayings into the titles. The legalities of voice work did not permit Nickelodeon to give the rights to Ren & Stimpy's voices to T*HQ. The design groups instead conducted contests at their respective companies to pick the people to do the voices for the games. Ultimately, players will hear Ren & Stimpy's most familiar expressions, but the voices will be done by the contest's resultant impersonators!



Ren & Stimpy are not as well-known as other cartoon characters. Their popularity is more of a cult following that steadily grows as the pair becomes more visible on T-shirts, lunch boxes and other licensed merchandise.



Stimpy bounds across the Game Boy screen, hoping to catch a few clues.



The NES version, entitled Buckaroo$, delivers some hilarious 8-Bit action.

Veediots! and **Buckaroo$** bring Nickelodeon's duo to homes everywhere for the kind of offbeat humor and zaniness that only this cat and dog team could inspire.

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★★Knight of the Stars★★

Sierra goes all-out with a superstar cast for Gabriel Knight

by Russ Ceccola

Multimedia is such a new platform for game companies that the unexpected is bound to happen from time to time as the industry develops. **Gabriel Knight**, Sierra On-Line's first gothic mystery game, is sure to turn a few heads. It is quite simply the greatest assembly of actors and actresses brought together so far for a multimedia product.

Originally scheduled for release on floppy disk, **Gabriel Knight** is the first Sierra title produced on CD *first*. Game designer Jane Jensen even beat her **King's Quest VI** co-designer Roberta Williams's CD-only game **Phantasmagoria** to market with it. The mystery adventure is a perfect example of what incredible things can happen when the timing is right.

In the midst of the development of **King's Quest VI**, Jensen planted the seed in her mind for the story that was to become **Gabriel Knight**. She had always wanted to write a series of novels around gothic imagery and mystery targeted for adults. Since she was working at Sierra, she began to develop a story that might be a good basis for a game. The results of her writings are contained in the **Gabriel Knight** plot; its backstory, produced as a graphic novel, hand-painted by Terese Nielsen, is to be included in the game package.



Gabriel starts the day with a cup of hot coffee and an unwanted phone call.

"As I was writing **Gabriel Knight** in November 1992, I knew that the story would have a connection to Gabriel's ancestors," Jensen revealed. "Rather than just use flashbacks, I sat down and wrote out the backstory, which really turned out to be important to the plot of the game. I thought at the time that it would make a great graphic novel."

When Jensen finished her work on **King's Quest VI**, she developed a formal proposal for **Gabriel Knight**. The title character is a New Orleans writer working on a voodoo novel who is plagued by terrifying nightmares that are connected to a 300-year-old family curse. Because Gabriel Knight was a new character for Sierra, some thought that introducing it on CD would be a move that would get it the attention that a sequel in a popular



Interrogating suspects is just a small part of tracking down the murderer.

series would command. Jensen explained that "we came into this wanting to prove that we could do exciting *new* products and still be profitable."

Stuart Rosen acted as voice director for **Gabriel Knight**. He managed to obtain commitments from major stars of television and movies and talented voice-over veterans for a mixture of voices that works wonderfully. In a meeting to discuss possible actors and actresses for **Gabriel Knight**, Rosen, Jensen and producer Robert Holmes threw around a lot of names. Rosen has many connections in Hollywood. To Jensen's delight, Tim Curry was among them. His voice work for the game involves the largest number of lines. Jensen is a fan of Curry's work, which is diverse and includes roles as Dr. Frank N. Furter in *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, Pennywise the Clown in ABC's adaptation of Stephen King's *It* and a pivotal role in *The Hunt for Red October*. Jensen likes that Curry's voice is "real sexy, likable and has a sarcastic edge."

Rosen managed to enlist the talents of other familiar names like Mark Hamill, Michael Dorn, Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. and Rocky Carroll. The finished game sounds perfectly cast and sets a new standard for multimedia productions. In a time when every game company scrambles to generate a CD game and many actors and actresses rush to join the cast of multimedia productions, Gabriel Knight will lead the way with its 7500 lines of spoken dialogue and talented cast. Jensen said the assembly of actors and actresses was "a miraculous thing."

The dark game will also impress its players with its story aimed for adults and a dramatic finale that brings the parallels between Knight's family curse and his present-day adventures into focus. **Gabriel Knight** is sure to pave the way for a future in which games look and sound more like movies and actors and actresses casually cross back and forth between multimedia products and film.



Gabriel must search all over the city. The Voodoo shop holds some secrets.

A Stellar Cast For Gabriel Knight

Gabriel Knight: **Tim Curry**
Detective Mosely: **Mark Hamill**
Dr. John: **Michael Dorn**
Grace Nakimura: **Leah Remini**
Wolfgang: **Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.**
Willy Walker: **Rocky Carroll**
Narrator: **Virginia Capers**
Sam: **Jeff Bennett**
Gerde: **Mary Kay Bergman**
Desk Sergeant: **Jim Cummings**
Grandma Knight: **Linda Gary**
Malia Gedde: **Leilani Jones**
Magentia Moonbeam: **Nancy Lenehan**
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A SNEAK PEEK OF WHAT'S TO COME!



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Under A Killing Moon

Brian Keith's Starpower Brings Access Adventure to Life

by Joyce Worley

Brian Keith is the latest star to join the cast of **Under A Killing Moon**, Access' ground-breaking CD adventure slated for release this winter. The well-known star, whose career encompasses the entertainment industry from silent films to television, is now pioneering interactive multimedia with his role as The Colonel, a successful P.I. who works with Tex Murphy on his most difficult case.

Years ago he invited Tex to join the agency. But the idealistic young Tex disagreed with his practices, and even testified in a suit that stripped the Colonel of his license. The two lost contact for a 15-year period, during which Tex lost much of his idealism. The successful

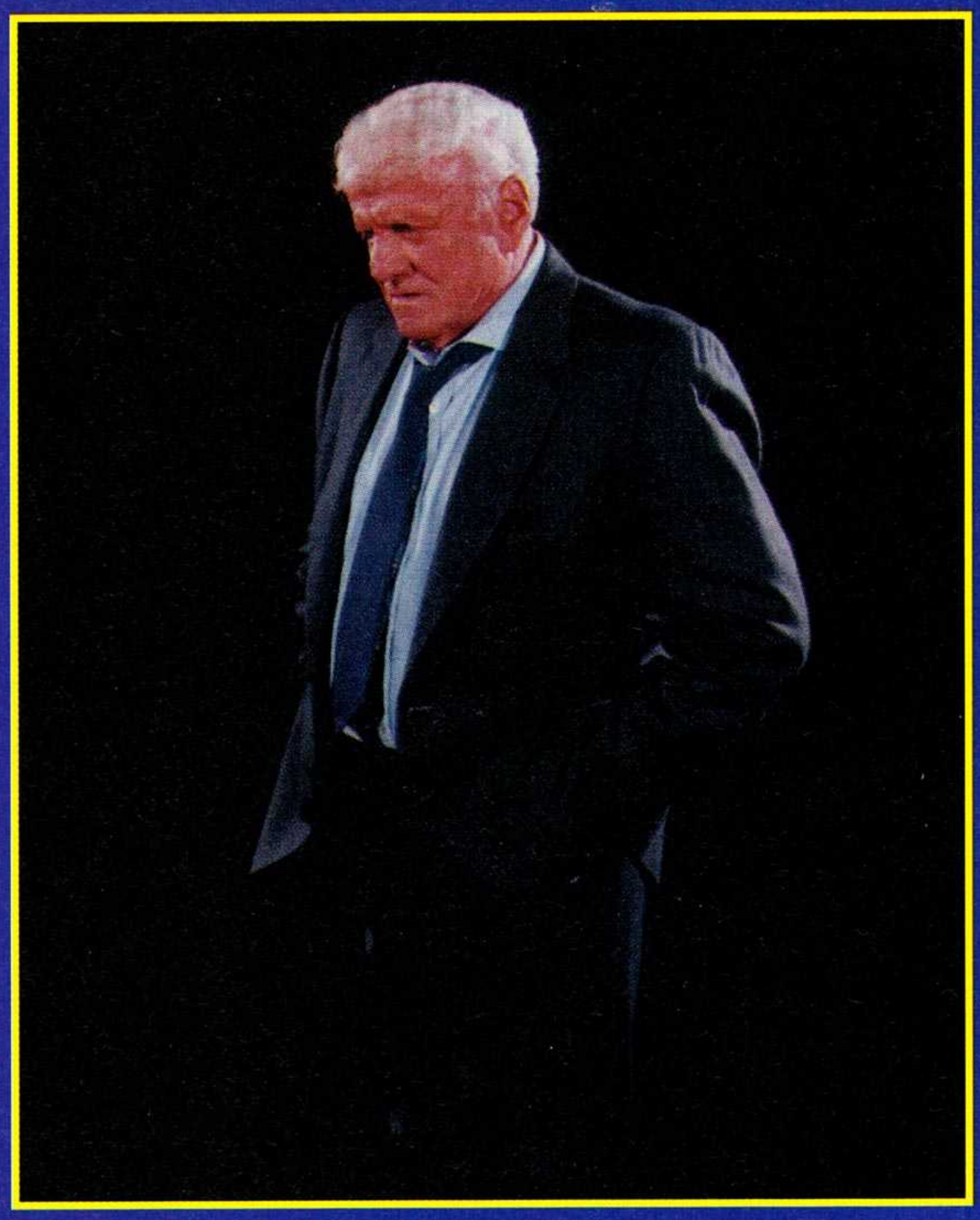


The game will feature photo-realistic graphics with a full musical score.

Colonel, now in a large agency in San Francisco, wants Tex to stay out of his last case before his planned retirement, but the plot thickens with Tex in the middle.

The renowned actor, playing against Access' own Chris Jones as Tex, was surprised at the sophisticated graphics. According to Catrine McGregor, the talent agent working with Access on the project, everyone is skeptical when they start, fearing they'll look blocky and video game-like, then they're awed by the actuality. She went on to say all her clients enjoyed the special attention they received from the software company.

Professional actors make the creative process easier, according to Chris Jones, since they are able to bring the roles to life with fewer retakes. Chris ruefully admits that puts a lot of pressure on the Access crew to get things right. "They don't want to have to read a line over and over, so there's a lot of effort to make things work on the first try."



Filming against a blue backdrop, every character is lit from all sides for extreme clarity. Then the actors are inserted into the backgrounds, and audio is created by feeding it directly into the digital audio tape for improved clarity. Access used a lot of ingenuity to create their stage; they made their track lighting from parts of the first Access tradeshow booth, and created their own teleprompter with a computer and an old monitor.

The production features a full score, with a theme for each character. The extremely rich soundtrack is being created with Master Tracks Pro as the sequencer, and Wave for Windows for digitized sound. Special effects are created much as old radio shows did it. Jon Clark explained that sometimes real things don't sound good enough, so they create it.

The graphics form a virtual reality world, where all objects are three dimensional, and the gamer has completely free 360 degree movement through the fully decorated rooms. "I showed the artists Virgin's **7th Guest**, and told them to make **Killing Moon** look better than that," boasted Chris Jones.

Conversational detail is equally elaborate, with lots of humor and sarcasm, all delivered in full speech. The player chooses sarcastic, friendly, threatening, angry or other appropriate attitudes, and



Taking up two CDs, the game's depth and intricacy will delight mystery fans.

subsequent encounters with each person reflect the mood of previous meetings.

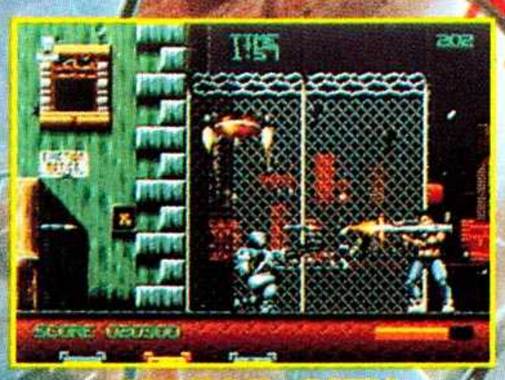
The mystery, written by Aaron Conners, is set in a post holocaust radiation-poisoned world. Normals look down on mutants, and prejudice runs deep. In the course of solving three other cases, Tex, who lives in the poorer, mutant section of town, discovers an ancient cult devoted to racial purity by ridding the earth of its poisoned people.

The mystery, which will occupy at least two CD disks, starts in Frisco, then goes into the wilderness, and finally into outer space in the most elaborate graphic adventure to date.

Under A Killing Moon will be shipped first as a two-CD-ROM product, and a disk version will follow later in 1994.

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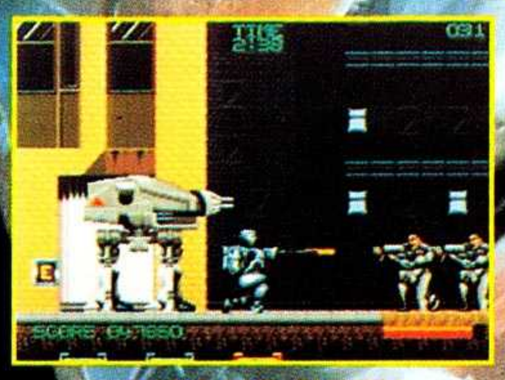
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PINBALL

by Laurie Yates

Pinball, the old standby of arcades and bowling alleys, has headed home. No longer does one need a pile of quarters to enter the world of drop targets, flippers, and illuminated backboards.

The most popular type of electronic pinball game is the straightforward translation of classic coin-op pins. Games like **Crüe Ball: Heavy Metal Pinball** (Electronic Arts/Genesis) and **Dragon's Fury** (Tengen/Genesis), strive to recreate the feel of real pinball with a minimum of video game flourishes. **Dragon's Fury** offers gamers a variety of bonus screens, but maintains the ball-and-flipper play mechanic. Lou Haehn and Mark Sprenger's **Crüe Ball** adopts a heavy metal ambiance amped up by actual music from Motley Crüe. But in their heart of hearts, both games are pinball wannabes.

Fans of **Fury** will be thrilled to know that **Dragon's Revenge** (Tengen/Genesis) will be available this year as a stocking stuffer for electronic pinball fanatics. The visuals depart from the medieval fantasy decor of **Fury** for a more Gothic, even erotic, presentation. This one- or two-player alternating game leans heavily toward scantily clad females, with an impressive variety of moans and sighs



Starball challenges players to beat a quick-moving game scheme with extras.

emanating from the soundtrack. The bonus screens, as in the original, are still mini-pinball games. But the bonus screens on **Revenge** are less forgiving and will not award points unless the bonus screen is completely solved.

Pinball purists may be distressed to learn that **Revenge** departs from true pinball with an unusually light silver gameball. The feathery lightness of the ball can be a disadvantage when using the flippers to aim a shot. The bonus gold ball, however, seems to play more accurately.

Action 52 (Active Enterprises, Ltd./ Genesis), features, among its 52 games, **Star-Ball**. This challenging, four-level pinball game, while not graphically complex, offers frantic ball action. The initial goal of knocking out the coins, letters, and extras may seem easy, but this is actually a monumental task. This is not a game for the purist, as the flipper action is erratic and **Star-Ball** does not have a TILT feature.

This cart, and game, is also available for the SNES, making it the only refuge for the pinballer that can be found on that system.

Inspired by the brief pinball segment ("Casino Night Zone") in **Sonic the Hedgehog 2**, the high-speed hedgehog is reentering the pinball market in **Sonic Spinball** (Sega/Genesis). This wild one-to-four player adventure places our hyper hero in Dr. Robotnik's Veg-O Fortress, a robot factory set within a volcanic island that provides thermal energy to run Robotnik's malicious machinery. A series of traps, called the Pinball Defense System, surrounds the Veg-O-Fortress, keeping thousands of animals prisoner. Tails joins his friend in this newest adventure, as do some new baddies, including Roboctopus.

The game itself finds players manipulating flippers to send Sonic careening through the air, smashing doorways and throwing levers, moving from sector to sector within the macro-table. There are cans of toxic waste to eliminate, monsters to destroy and a ride on an ore cart. The boss rounds send Sonic rebounding off the single-screen walls in hopes of destroying a member of Robotnik's evil mechanical force. A bonus scenario sets up a realistic-looking pinball table seen from first-person perspective, where the player, via Sonic, releases his friends from Robotnik's spell by destroying their drop-target prison cells.

Pinball mavens who want not only to play, but also to design their own game fields, will find an answered prayer in Electronic Arts' **Virtual Pinball** (Genesis). Bill Budge's new construction set includes a number of prefabricated fields, with players able to select such features as backgrounds, parts, skill level, speed and music from a wide range of setups.

Numb Knuckle, for example, uses human skeletal and muscular remains (from the Gore parts set) for its flippers,

cushions and drop targets, set against a bathroom tile floor. Bones outline the game board, stretched muscles act as bumpers (with blood spurts after the ball makes contact), the skull-like pop-up targets shatter and scream when struck. Heavy Hitter has a chalk outline against green felt, with a cue stick tip as the ball launcher. The traditional wood grain coloring highlights the bumpers, and pool balls appear as targets. The sound of a pool break enhances the game.

Other setups include Gray Water, Technophobia, Time Warp and Mandala. On the design side, there are a number of plans (classic, wide, double, joined, quad and blank) that can be overlaid on top of ten backgrounds, including Power Unit, Blue Bevel, Pool Table and Bamboo. The parts come in Droid, Blueprint, Pool, Gore or Classic I or II styles.



Sonic the Hedgehog makes his debut on the pinball scene with Sonic Spinball.

For pinball players on the go, Nintendo is bringing out **Kirby's Pinball Land** for the Game Boy. The popular cloud character from **Kirby's Dreamland** and **Kirby's Adventure** is cast as the ball in this multi-screen pinball simulator. Nintendo promises multiple play levels and bonus stages peopled with characters and foes from the Dreamland game. Players will even be able to save high scores as the cart has a battery back-up.

The Pinball Wizard Returns

Virtual Pinball represents the return of the man who created both the electronic pinball and construction set categories a decade ago. **Bill Budge's Pinball Construction Set** sparked a craze for computer pinball (remember **David's Midnight Magic**?) and roll-your-own software when fledgling publisher Electronic Arts made it one of its first releases and it hit big in 1983.

After his success in the early days of computer software, Bill took some time off to lay on beaches and windsurf. But, the siren song of the electronic game eventually called him back, and "this seemed like a good project to get back in with."

Though one might assume that Budge is a maniac pin player, he is actually a casual enthusiast. "I play some," he conceded, "but I'm not a good player. My two favorite games were the 1960s **Royal Flush** and the 1980s **Firepower** by Williams."

What's the toughest thing about electronically simulating pinball? "Simulation of Newtonian Physics [with regard to] bounce of the ball," he responded without hesitation. "The flippers are incredibly difficult, but they have to be good and they must be interesting. Attention has to be paid to how a ball comes off the flipper, because you can't really aim. There aren't many simulations with good flippers. I worked a month to make one work in **Virtual Pinball**."

Budge also stressed that he's not a designer and that working with EA's design team was very educational for him. "I have the highest respect for designers," he attested. "Designing is definitely an art form."

Given today's technology, does the avatar of pinball sims see any areas where electronic pinball may have an advantage over the real thing? "There are both advantages and disadvantages," Budge decided. "The advantages: the desire to improve the simulation to make it [comparable] to real pinball; the graphics and multiple areas that can only be [realized] in the electronic pinball field. Disadvantages? The tilt is a problem—the player can only use buttons instead of "feeling" the machine. Scrolling also detracts [from the realism] since it's hard to get an overall feel of the board."

Although Bill spoke of several possible future projects, none were confirmed at press time. One thing that is certain, though, is it won't be another decade between visits with pinball's Wizard, and that spells plenty of good times for gamers.

PLUGS IN!

MARK WATTS

"THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT KNOWING THE NAME OF THE GUY TRYING TO RIP YOUR HEAD OFF THAT MAKES IT MORE PERSONAL."

JOE MONTANA

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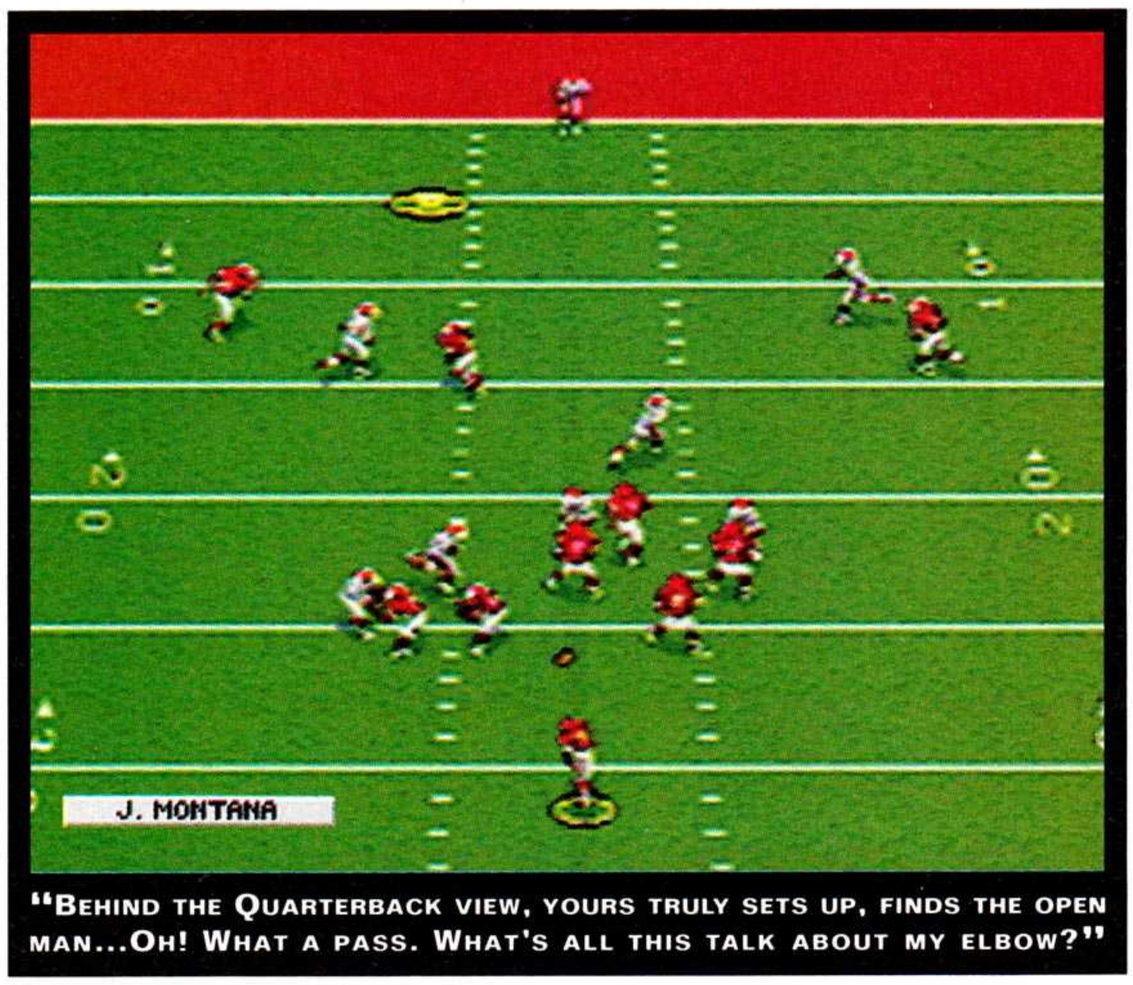


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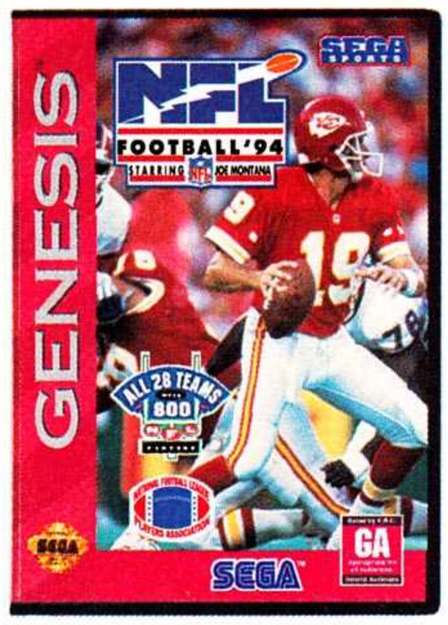
"BARRY SANDERS WITH A 'SPEED BURST' DOWN THE SIDE LINE, ONLY ONE DEFENDER LEFT (TOAST)."

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PINBALL

PINBALL SIMULATIONS AND KNOCK

by Scott Wolf

Every few years arcade pinball experiences another resurgence. The Sunday color supplements feature "The Pinball Craze" as regularly as television offers lame new sitcoms. Computer pinball hasn't caught on to the same extent, but that's likely to change very soon.

"I think it's turning into a phenomenon," says Roger Sharpe, marketing director of Williams Electronics Games, Inc. "There's definitely a market for computer pinball and it was just a matter of time before people realized that pinball was viable in that medium. If you can get the algorithms right, why not?"

Why not, indeed. This winter no fewer than five PC pinball titles should be available. Here's what's in store:

8 Ball Deluxe (Amtex/PC, Macintosh)

The first in Amtex's Collector's Series, this is without a doubt the most accurate translation of pinball ever done. To own a PC or Macintosh copy of **8 Ball Deluxe** is to own the full-sized Bally coin-op. It's faithful right down to the operator's control panel behind the back glass. Every sound effect, from the ball rolling up the chute to the digitized voice ("Stop talking and start chalking") is dead on the money.

Amtex learned a lot since **Tristan**. **8 Ball Deluxe** now offers full-screen action with smooth vertical scrolling, which keeps the ball centered in view. This makes it tough to aim upper playfield shots, but it's a small price to pay for the otherwise amazing fidelity. (The Macintosh edition scrolls down only for the plunger action, then returns and holds steady on the field during play.)



Chalk up! 8 Ball Deluxe, a favorite in the arcades, is now available on the PC.

8 Ball's devotion to detail causes one minor problem in the PC version. In order to simulate "nudging," Amtex configured three separate keys which, combined with the flipper keys, leave the player sitting with his fingers in a delicate home position. This is pinball, not touch typing, and the odd configuration often results in a desperate flailing for the right keys. Still, it's a must-have.

Future releases will include Williams' **Funhouse** and Gottlieb's **Royal Flush**.

Silverball (MicroLeague Interactive Software/PC)

Silverball is a collection of four totally original designs. Each table has all the features of the coin-ops—most notably multi-ball play—but rather than limiting themselves to the laws of real pinball, MicroLeague took full advantage of the computer environment. This means animated graphics on the playfield and some rather unconventional bumpers, targets and lighting effects. The four tables are:

Blood—A Demonic Horror theme with urgent music and flashing lights that look like they could be on either the playfield or in the top glass. It's pretty good.

Fantasy—a Sword & Sorcery theme with grandly heroic music, brilliant flashes of lightning and lots of playfield animations. This and Blood are the collection's showpieces.

Snooker—The ever popular Pool Hall, complete with honkytonk piano and warm wooden trim. It's interesting but no **8 Ball Deluxe**.

Odyssey—Greek Mythology with a pulsing synth-rock score and Pan flutes. Mythological creatures like Pegasus, Cyclops and the Minotaur adorn the playfield of this very odd table.

The only real problem with **Silverball**'s hybrid approach is that it's sometimes hard to distinguish actual targets from the playfield graphics. Ball physics were slightly wonky in the preview version but should be fine tuned by actual release.

Take-a-Break! Pinball (Dynamix/PC)

Designed to run in Windows, **Take-a-Break** is not actually a full-fledged pinball simulator. Rather, it is designed (as the title implies) as a respite from work. What better way to shake off impending brain-lock than with a few quick games of PB?

Take-a-Break features eight different tables based on five classic Sierra and Dynamix titles (**Nova 9**, **Willy Beamish**,

Leisure Suit Larry, **Space Quest IV** and **King's Quest V**). The playfield occupies the left half of the screen while the animated back glass, dot-matrix display and coin door take up the right.

Take-a-Break is loaded with excellent speech and sound effects and the animations are quite clever, but since it runs only in 16 colors, the attractive but overly detailed playfields tend to overpower and obscure the ball. On anything smaller than a 17-inch monitor you'll end up crosseyed trying to find it, let alone follow it.

It's also strange that the eight tables feature only five of the companies' titles. Why *two* **Nova 9** tables and *three* **Space Quest**? What about **Red Baron**, **Aces of the Pacific** and **Rise of the Dragon**?

On the other hand, **Take-a-Break** is the only game covered that lets you "Have another (extra) ball!" any time you like. The game has its flaws but it does the job it was designed for.

Winball (Twin Dolphin/PC)

Winball is a real dark horse here. It, too, is intended to run in Windows. According to Twin Dolphin, the game will run in 256 colors, 640x480 and feature six new and unique full-featured tables—two each in classic 1950's style, contemporary and futuristic designs. Only time will tell.

Pinball Dreams (21st Century Entertainment/PC, Amiga)

When **Pinball Dreams** burst onto the Amiga scene last year it was more than just a breath of fresh air, it was like a blast of nitrous oxide to a supercharged V-8 engine. With its full screen, lightning fast vertical scrolling and near-perfect physics, **Pinball Dreams** set a standard for computer pinball that is only now being matched. The PC version, which was supposed to have been available last January, has finally been released. Did it survive the translation?



Tristan pinball hooked many players with its smooth game play and sounds.

You bet it did! Mostly, anyway. All four tables are here, although three of them have been slightly altered because of their resemblance to existing Williams' Bally/Midway tables. Oddly enough, it wasn't Williams who dictated the change, but Amtex, since they hold the license to Williams and Gottlieb computer conversions (Hey, who's got the Data East license?).

Nightmare suffered the most drastic changes, since it was a dead ringer for Midway's **Terminator 2: Judgement Day**, but it's still the best of the four. **Ignition** is the only table that remains unchanged. Sound effects are all the same but the music is a bit weedy although 21st Century says that's being fixed.

Playing **Pinball Dreams** on the PC so long after playing it on the Amiga is an emotional experience; like seeing an old flame you've never gotten over, and meeting him/her again. **8 Ball Deluxe** may be a more accurate simulation but, to many players, **Pinball Dreams** remains a first love.

Pinball Fantasies, the sequel, should be out in early '94, and will probably be quite attractive.

Once again, Roger Sharpe sums it up quite well: "It's nice that people who wouldn't ordinarily play coin-op pinball have a chance to try it in an environment they're more comfortable with. Perhaps they'll be inspired to go out and try the real thing."



Take-a-Break! Pinball features games containing Sierra On-Line characters.

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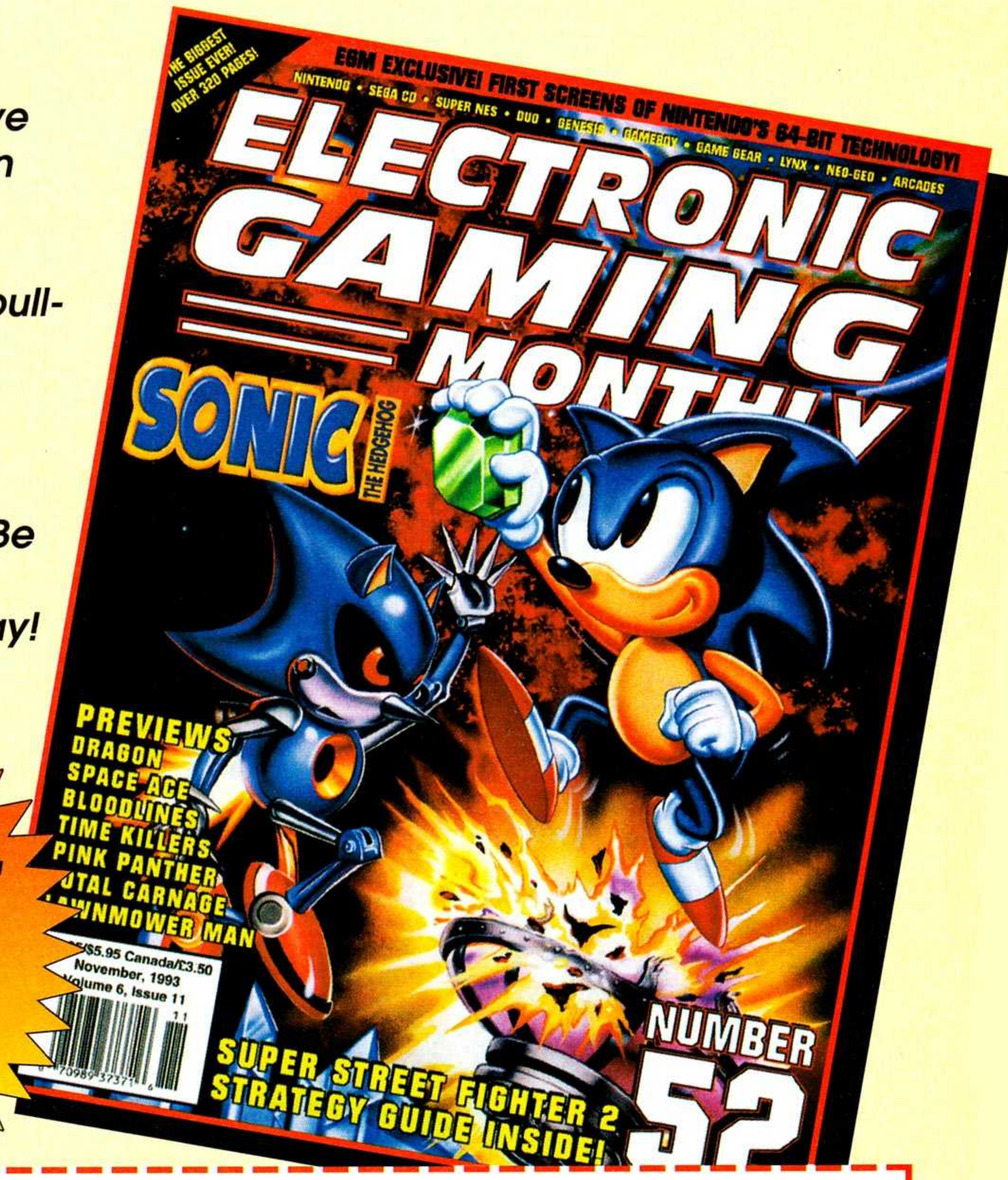
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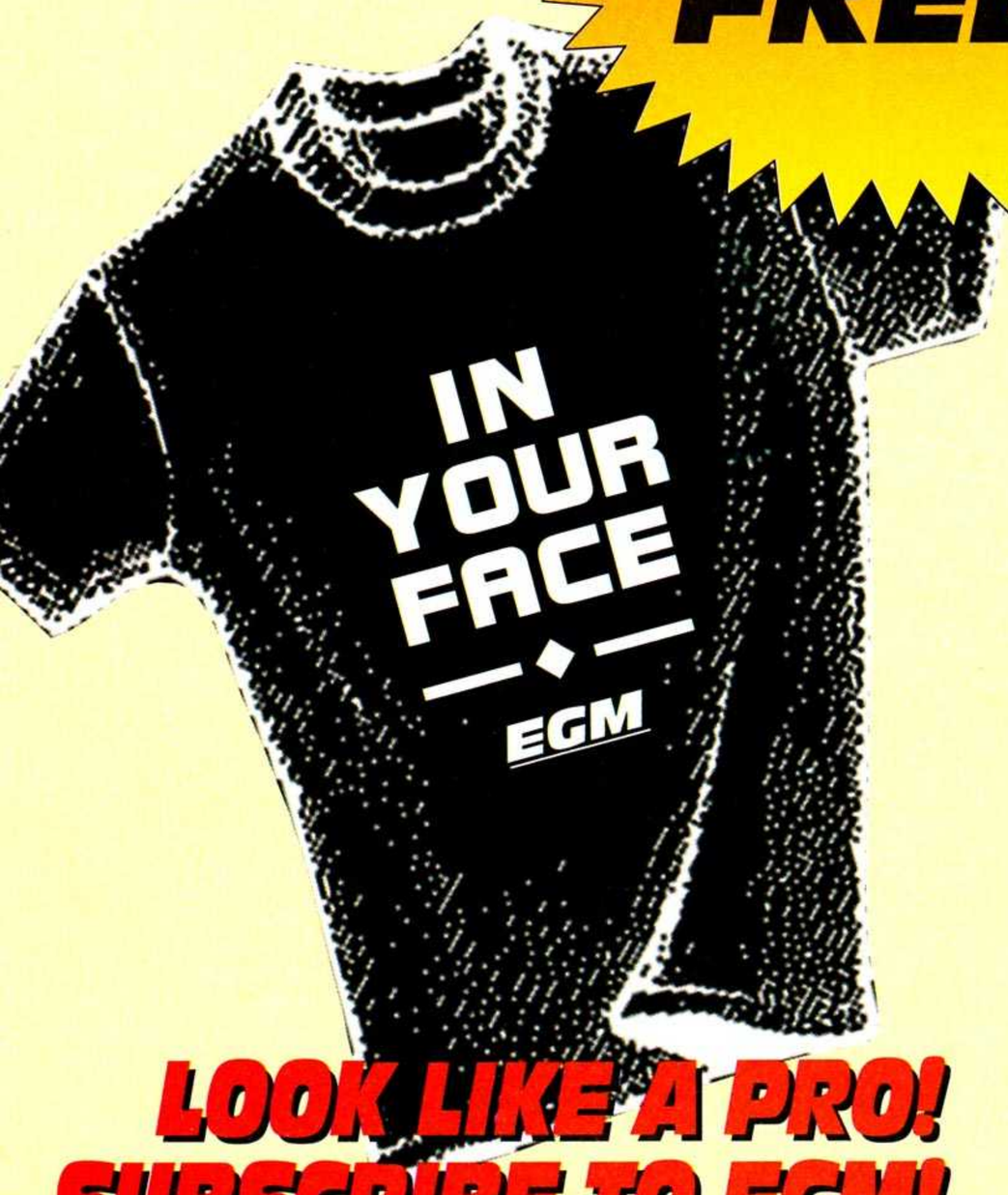
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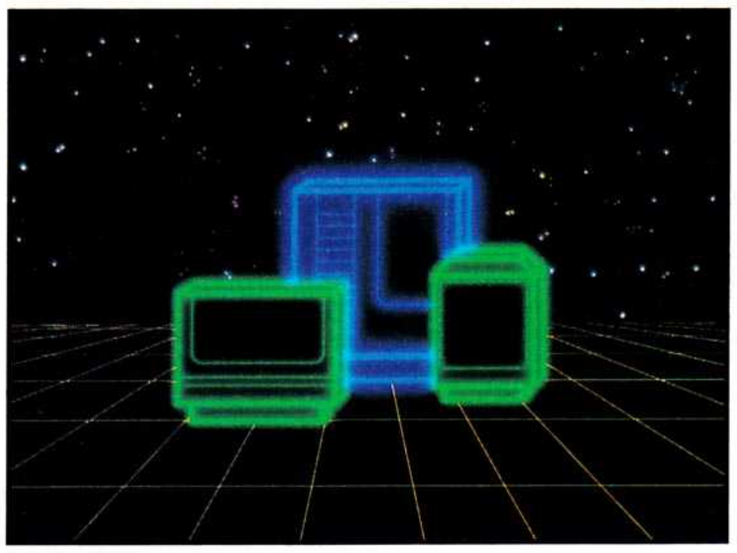
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

The Adventures of Dr. Franken

PUBLISHER	**DTMC Inc.**
SYSTEM	**SNES**

THEME	**Action/ Puzzle**
MEGABITS	**8**
PLAYERS	**1 or 2**
LEVELS	**20**

There's something odd about trying to make a Mario or Bubsy out of Frankenstein's monster, even to one who dug Herman Munster's first TV incarnation.

Dr. Franken's main dude Frankie struts athletically around 20 spooky locations across the world, his cool shades, sandals and annoyingly smug grin barely offsetting the traditional flat-top head, green skin and neck bolts.

It's plain that his titular doctorate was never won by brain power. The plot line hinges on his attempt to get his girlfriend Bitsy past U.S. immigration without a passport (they wanted to vacation in New York) by mailing her there in pieces—only a foul-up in the Transylvanian post office resulted in the packages being scattered all over the world. The next step is for Frankie to find all her pieces-parts and put Bitsy back together.

The story, and the ghoulishly pop-oriented music, are the best parts of this otherwise fairly standard side-scroller. In each of the 16 main levels there are four packages containing bits of Bitsy. The four together compose one parcel, containing a foot, or a head, torso, leg, and so on. Once Frankie collects the complete parcel, he finds the exit and leaves for the next location—all within a time limit. A map provides available routes to a couple of the world's most ghastly vacation spots for him to select from.

In these and four bonus levels, there are other parcels containing items otherwise necessary to complete the mission, in addition to various icons for bonus lives, bonus points, batteries, shields and smart bombs. No matter where Frankie goes, he must kick and punch out ghosts, flying heads, snakes, spacemen and, apparently, some homeless ladies wielding shopping carts.

Some beasties are nastier than others, but there are no bosses, per se. Besides that, there are also a couple of other elements that differentiate this game from the generic side-scroller.

In other games, characters may occasionally disappear behind a rocky outcrop or wall. Frankie's journeys frequently take him on the far side of a wall for substantial areas of the play screen. While one has to assume there aren't going to be any pitfalls or other traps back there, sometimes there is something just at the place he's expected to



Gamers must guide a way-cool monster through many treacherous trappings.

emerge, or a ghostie may appear in a window or broken away area of that wall. Thus his location and the timing of his appropriate action has to be estimated blindly, if not wholly on faith.

One of the ways our hero can move around within the various caves, castles and landscapes is by bouncing on springboards. Repeated jumping on these helps him reach otherwise inaccessible platforms. At least one of these springboards is hidden behind a wall, and the player must judge where Frankie is by following the multi-planar vertical scrolling of the screen. But it's fortunate that this event appears in one of the brief demo sequences, or the player might never have guessed it was there.

Another variation is fairly intriguing, and appropriate to the horror-motif of the game. Frankie lives on electricity. Among the bonus icons he gets to pick up in his journeying are batteries which renew his energy level, and that level is indicated by an energy bar in the status display at the top of the screen. Some of the locations Frankie must visit are very dark, but he's phosphorescent (the manual calls it "the Frankie Glow,") and so provides his own light. But that light is proportional to his energy level, so the player must see to it that Frankie's energy is sufficient to get him through those areas.

The story begins and ends at the Transylvanian castle Von Frankenbone (obviously, Dr. Franken simplified his name for the media). If this is where he grew up—or at least, considering his nature, has spent most of his time—it's no wonder that blowing away nasties is all he really knows how to do. The place is chock full of a never-ending supply of thingies that want to do him in. The place is well furnished, but there's some question as to whether he ever gets to sit down, put his feet up and watch TV.

And of course, things are no different elsewhere, as so many would-be tourists (and the player) discover. There might be different critters and traps, against different settings, but Frankie's main problem is essentially to get past them, find the parcels and get out before the clock ticks away the time. Players who dug the odd combo of Halloween and Christmas in Disney's *Nightmare Before Christmas* may find this a good stocking-stuffer.

— Ross Chamberlain

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**92%**
SOUND	**88%**
PLAYABILITY	**85%**
REPLAYABILITY	**79%**

OVERALL 86%

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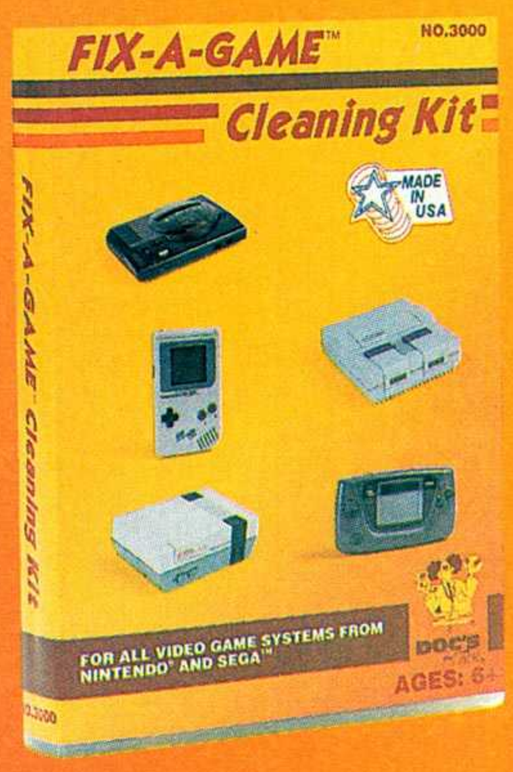
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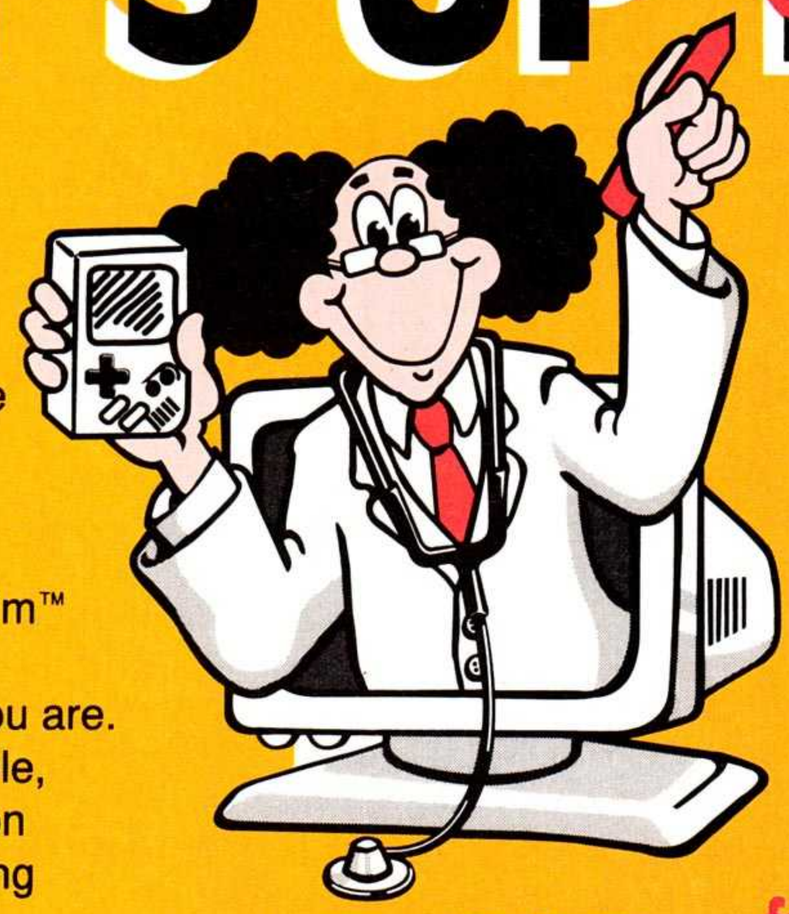
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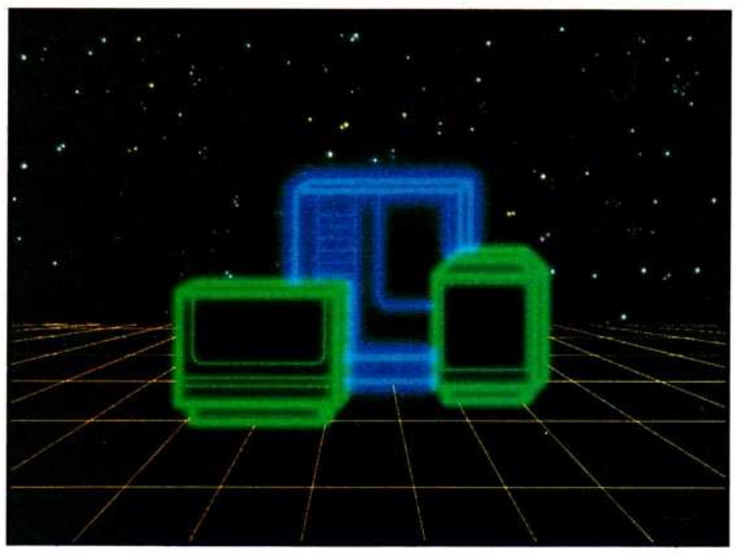
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Super Empire Strikes Back

PUBLISHER	**LucasArts**
SYSTEM	**SNES**

THEME	**Action**
MEGABITS	**12**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**20**

The film which inspired this game was one of the most spectacular achievements in the history of cinema. George Lucas, flush with the success of *Star Wars*, finally had the bucks to bring his eclectic vision of a scuffed up, Flash Gordonesque future to the big screen, without major compromises. Lucas had been forced to cut corners on the first film, but from the instant *The Empire Strikes Back* hit 70mm, Dolby Sound-enhanced screens back in 1980, it was a virtual orgy of spectacular audio-visual effects.

Unfortunately, the game version of this second installment in the *Star Wars* saga creates a somewhat different impression. Sculptured Software's **Super Empire Strikes Back** is largely a cut-and-paste reiteration of **Super Star Wars** with new images superimposed on old engines. While it is obviously a quality game with several spectacular sequences, **Super Empire** comes off way too much like **Super Star Wars** in a clever plastic disguise. Despite an upgrade from 8-Meg to 12-Meg, there isn't really anything new or ambitious about this game.

As in **Super Star Wars**, the storyline is a clever pastiche of its cinematic inspiration. The basic plot of the movie is morphed to create a series of mini-games based on key scenes in the film. All the major locations—Hoth, Dagobah, Bespin, etc.—are featured in one of three game formats: side-scrolling, first-person dogfight and Mode-7 dogfight. In the first-person dogfight seen in the Asteroid Field sequence, the player must pilot the Millennium Falcon through a deadly asteroid swarm, while also engaging Imperial Tie Fighters. The two Mode-7 dogfight sequences are the best games on the cartridge. These mini-games use the same engine as the Pursue the Sandcrawler scenario in **Super Star Wars**, but thankfully, some innovations have been made.

The first Mode-7 sequence sees the player, as Luke, piloting an onscreen snow-speeder into the icy Hoth horizon, battling armed probes, Imperial Walkers, and sled-riding Stormtroopers. The second, and most remarkable segment of the game, pits Luke against Bespin security vehicles as the player attempts to get our hero to the Cloud City for his showdown with Daddy Darthest. This killer scenario involves a dogfight both above and below a flat ridge of clouds positioned horizontally across the screen. The player's craft can dive below the clouds, skim above them, or plow right through the middle of them, scanning the skies for enemy aircraft. As the number of Luke's kills piles up, Bespin looms larger in the distance, much as the Sandcrawler did in the original game.

As the game begins, Luke mounts a taun-taun and begins a side-scrolling search for an imperial probe he saw crash land in the distance. Subsequent platform games include Luke moving over the swampy Dagobah landscape; Han attempting to escape from the carbon freezing chamber; and a bland looking sequence involving Chewbacca on Bespin. These side-scrolling contests are among the most disappointing elements of **Super Empire**, especially since they comprise roughly three-quarters of all the action. The Hoth levels are nicely drawn, for example, and the taun-taun is a nice touch, but it goes on far too long, finally concluding with a side-scrolling vehicular shooter that has Luke zipping over the snow drifts while firing on Imperial attackers. The sprites in this climactic shooter are much too large, however, inhibiting movement and cluttering up the screen.



Players get the chance to fly Han Solo's Millennium Falcon around asteroids.

On the plus side, passwords have been added (hurray!). Luke has a choice of weapons, too, toggling between his light saber and a hand weapon. Plus, there's an extremely cool multi-jump feature with amazing in-the-air maneuvers accompanying it.

Super Empire Strikes Back also contains some of the best use ever of digitized sound samples, from the grunt of the taun-tauns, to the chilling sound of Darth Vader's voice complimenting the player. New power-ups also include a simple but visually effective short-term personal force shield.

Despite the criticism, **Super Empire** is hardly a bad game. The first game revolutionized player expectations in the area of SNES software, however, and it can't help but be somewhat disappointing when the follow-up seems content to walk in the same paths as the original, rather than blazing a trail of its own.

–Bill Kunkel

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**93%**
SOUND	**91%**
PLAYABILITY	**88%**
REPLAYABILITY	**87%**

OVERALL 91%

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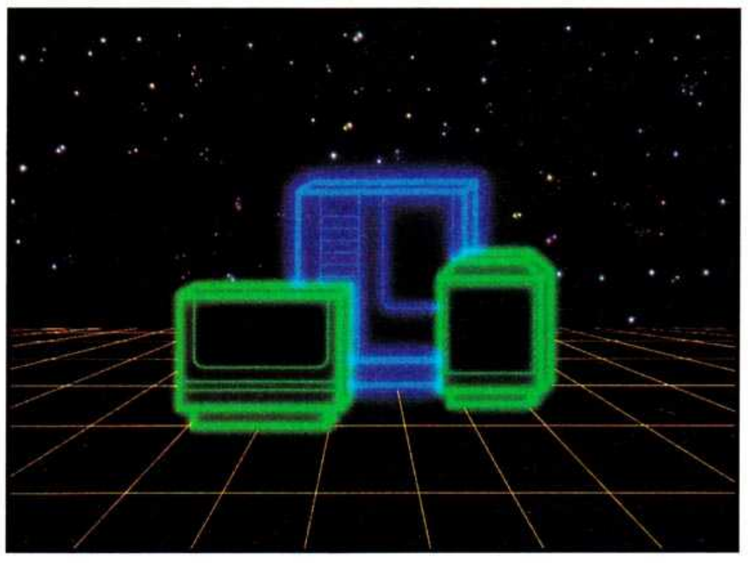


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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Clay Fighter

PUBLISHER	**Interplay**
SYSTEM	**SNES**
THEME	**Fighting**
MEGABITS	**16**
PLAYERS	**1 or 2**
LEVELS	**N/A**

The fighting game genre took off like a jet plane this year and hasn't touched down yet. Game companies rejuvenated the genré by avoiding the expected collection of powerful humanoids, instead designing products with more variety, moves and fresh ideas. **Clay Fighter** is one such title. It has the format and fighting action of the **Mortal Kombat**/**Street Fighter**-type contests, but originality and humor that greatly expand its appeal. The clay animation and cartoon mentality make a session as much fun to watch as it is to play.

Clay Fighter takes place in the same universe as Interplay's other clay animation title, **Claymates**. In fact, the **Claymate** characters run, fly or walk across the screen with a numbered banner at the beginning of each round.

Clay Fighter's characters emerged from the rubble of the Playland amusement park when a giant purple clay meteor crashed into the vacation spot. Playland became Clayland!



Elvis, or a good facsimilie, has been seen throwing his weight around.

It is the goal of each of **Clay Fighter**'s combatants to beat the others and become King of the Circus. Players can challenge **Clay Fighter**'s nine characters in a one-player tournament or a two-player VS. mode. The characters each have personalities, moves and expressions that are noticeably creative. For example, Blue Suede Goo looks like a bad Elvis impersonator, while Helga is the epitome of hefty Swedish opera singers.

Each battle consists of three rounds and the first player to win two rounds wins. This setup gives players a chance to get used to the moves of their opponents in actual combat rather than requiring that they win every round.

The animations and variety of moves in **Clay Fighter** display cartoon physics and humor rather than flesh and blood reality. This greatly expands the possibilities in the game. For example, Bad Mr. Frosty can turn himself into a snowball and hurl himself at his opponent, Blob mutates into a giant shoe to stomp the competition and Blue Suede Goo uses



Squaring off against a carbon-copy opponent can be quite a challenge!

his towering hair as a lethal weapon. These special moves accompany the three power levels (quick, medium and brutal) of kicks and punches for each character. The special moves require some practice but do more damage. You may also discover additional ways to combine moves with throws and holds to develop unique strategies.

It is very easy to get right into a game after a quick review of the basic movements. The tournament mode is challenging, but also fair in that it allows players to continue from a lost battle indefinitely until they reach the 12th and final arena's opponent. The VS. mode is great for players of different skill levels because they can choose a handicap to make the game fair. The default mode for each round includes a timer, but players can disable it if they want to take more time to taunt or tease their opponent. Other options include difficulty settings, speed controls and programmable controller button functions so that players can both extend the playability of **Clay Fighter** and personalize their game setup.



Players can see as well as hear their hits pummeling their twisted foes.

The graphics, animation and sound effects in **Clay Fighter** all rank with the best available for the Super NES. The game designers did not limit color or special effects because of the properties of clay. Pieces go flying, characters get squashed and every fighter mutates in one way or another.

The fighters' personalities and humor are in the spotlight from start to finish in each round. Blue Suede Goo kneels after winning a round and mutters an Elvis-esque "Thank you very much," while Blob transforms into a trophy and grins victoriously. Part of the fun of **Clay Fighter** is the discovery of the characters' moves and expressions.

An announcer's voice calls the shots in each round and other voices are peppered throughout the game. Sadly, **Clay Fighter**'s music is silly and repetitive. **Clay Fighter** started as hundreds of pounds of clay and transformed into an exciting and colorful variation on an established genre. Young and old alike will laugh at the mid-battle antics.

Interplay has mastered the art of clay animation with **ClayFighter, Claymates** and **Battle Chess 4000**. **Clay Fighter** pulls out all the stops and fully entertains both players and onlookers. And you thought Gumby, Mr. Bill and those dancing raisins marked the limits of clay modeling!

— Russ Ceccola

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**90%**
SOUND	**85%**
PLAYABILITY	**90%**
REPLAYABILITY	**95%**

OVERALL 90%

2020 Baseball

PUBLISHER	**Electronic Arts**
SYSTEM	**Genesis**

THEME	**Sports**
MEGABITS	**16**
PLAYERS	**1 or 2**
LEVELS	**N/A**

2020 Baseball is a superb Genesis adaptation of the classic SNK/Neo•Geo arcade sports title, in which men, women and robots play a revised, high-tech version of the national pastime.

According to the storyline, baseball was declining in the 21st century, so a group of bold visionaries stepped in to reinvent the sport. First, robots were allowed to play, as were women, with players able to enhance their natural abilities through the acquisition of exoskeletal armor during a game.

Next, the field itself was redesigned; foul territory was almost eliminated, except for behind the plate, and along the first and third base lines, but only up to the bases themselves.

Huge walls were then placed around the stadiums, with a specific target zone set up in dead center field for home runs. Finally, "crackers" were placed in random positions on the field at rotating intervals. Crackers are like land mines; if a defensive player steps on one during play, the cracker detonates, leaving the player stunned and unable to participate further in that play.

This revamping of the rules revitalized baseball, according to **2020**'s storyline, and after a few games of this simulation, the gamer will begin to understand how that could come to pass. The entire strategy of baseball is given a facelift by the rule changes, and while purists may find the alterations unacceptable, the fact is, they mostly work.

The major differences? A left-handed pitcher has an almost overwhelming advantage over a left-handed hitter, and the same holds true on righty-righty confrontations. In fact, there are certain pitches, such as a slow, arching curve, that are unhittable by computer controlled batters.



Buy yourself an awesome pinch hitter, but make sure he doesn't explode!

Also, non-power hitters can do very well by either pulling the ball or hitting to the opposite field. Since there's no foul territory beyond first and third base, balls can be hit onto a sloping metal wall on either side of the field for guaranteed singles. Also, since only the strongest hitters have home run power, most players shouldn't even attempt to drive the ball to center.

Then, of course, there are the power-ups which can be purchased during the game. Each successful play earns that team an amount of money, to be dispersed through the acquisition of special armor for batters, pitchers and robots. Power-ups come in three strengths, at three different price points.

Even without armor, however, players have rockets of some sort affixed to their legs, enabling them to leap prodigious distances in order to snatch a moving ball. Using this propulsion, sure-fire long balls can be snatched from the jaws of the Home Run Zone, and streaking line drives can be snared before they rocket past the infield.

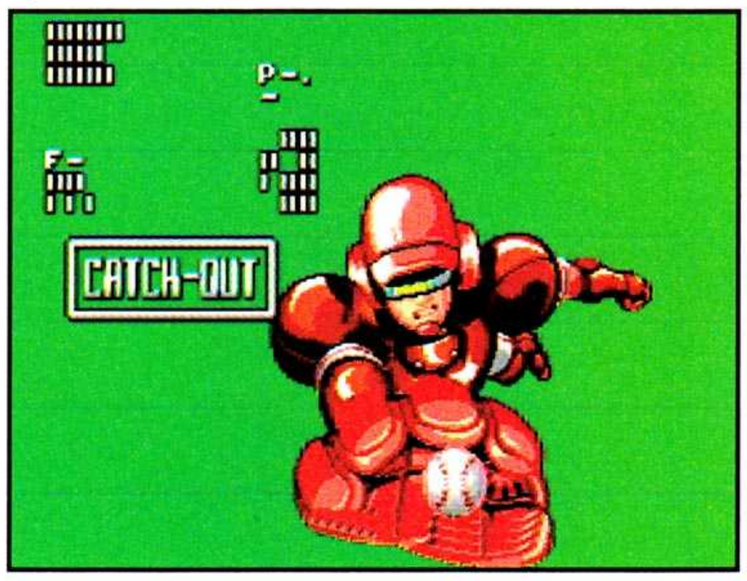
The graphics on **2020 Baseball** are hot, with large sprites, realistic ball movement, and great animations. The batter vs. pitcher confrontations are presented from an umpire's perspective. Once the ball is hit, the camera simply pans back or forward to cover the action. Cut scenes are used for close plays at first base, but otherwise the game doesn't do a lot of camera-switching, and it's doubtful whether anyone will miss it.

There are a few problems, almost all of them involving Artificial Intelligence or pre-fab lineups employed by the computer-managed teams.

The rundown AI, for example, is just plain dumb. With runners at first and third, for example, if the player on third breaks for home, then immediately retreats, the catcher will still insist on chasing him/her/it all the way back to third base—allowing the runner on first to move freely to second.

One must also wonder at the baseball wisdom which has a player hitting .377 (with 37 homers) leading off, while the clean-up hitter is batting a lofty .170, with seven dingers. In fact, the batting orders on some of these teams defy logic, but once the players start powering up, all bets are off.

2020 Baseball is a new and refreshing take on a genré that has been worked to death in recent years, and this new perspective produces largely entertaining results.



Quick reflexes and well-oiled joints are necessary to make those great plays.

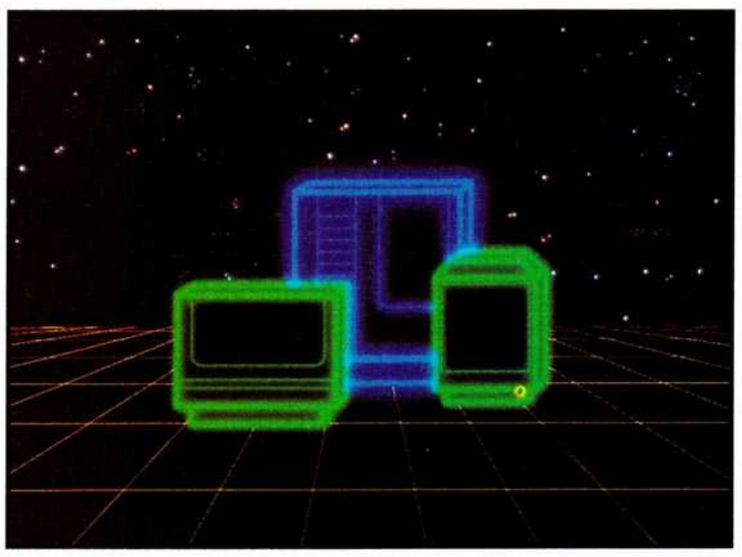
This is baseball as it might be in the future, what with player's salaries going sky high. So put on that armor, wind up your center fielder, and *don't step on the crackers.*

–Bill Kunkel



COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**91%**
SOUND	**92%**
PLAYABILITY	**97%**
REPLAYABILITY	**99%**

OVERALL 95%



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Lufia & the Fortress of Doom

PUBLISHER	**Taito**
SYSTEM	**SNES**
THEME	**RPG**
MEGABITS	**8**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**N/A**

Fans of the **Final Fantasy** series rejoice! There is a new RPG in town, set to fill in the excruciatingly long gaps between other companies' similar role-playing games. No, this game does not come from the experienced RPG producers at either Square Soft. or Enix, but rather from long-time action game maker, Taito. This is Taito's first RPG for the SNES and we are pleased to report that they took to the formidable task as a fish would take to water.

The game starts with a group of characters preparing to fight a group of evil beings known as the Sinistrals. The Sinistrals have taken over a mysterious floating island and are terrorizing the world. It is up to this small group to defeat the Sinistrals. The player takes this group of warriors into the island and prepares to battle the evil beings. They must be faced one at a time by the party of strong and seasoned warriors. They must be defeated if the world is to survive and if the game is to continue. Only after they are defeated does the real game begin.

After the "Battle of Doom Island" the world settled into a time of peace, and for 99 years that peace lasted. Now, nearly 100 years after the fall of the Sinistrals, monsters have once again started to appear. It is up to the player-character to go forth as a knight of Alekia to battle the monsters, recover the Dual Blade and once again defeat the evil beings known as the Sinistrals.

The story of **Lufia** is complex and well written. The game sets itself up well and continues on the same path. The beginning acts as more than just lead-in to the story. The initial battle with the Sinistrals allows players to familiarize themselves with the interface by exploring a small castle and doing battle with four very powerful beings. Here you can test many of the items and some of the spells to see how they work.



After the initial battle, a change in characters takes place as the game advances itself over the period of 100 years. Instead of having four very powerful characters to play with, now players are teamed with their own character, a young knight that the player names. The story builds from here (no more will be said about the particulars so that players may find out for themselves) as the player must find others to join him on his quest for the Dual Blade and to defeat the Sinistrals.



As you explore towns, residents will give you clues to help on your quest.

Mysteriously, the name Lufia refers to a girl in the story when she and the main character are children. Their relationship carries on for nine years to the start of the adventure in which she, of course, plays a very important role.

This game has everything that an RPG fan could ask for. There are hundreds of different items to find and monsters to deal with, as well as tons of spells and dozens of places to visit and explore. The interface is easy to master, with a flashing hand and pointing finger to show show when an item is selected. In battle everything is graphic oriented, making the different commands easy to execute.

Also, the battles are command driven, requiring strategy and thought rather than the dexterity of action.

The graphics in the game are excellent and use a nice array of color to create wonderful depth in the backgrounds and with the monsters. The animation is limited to small wiggles from attacking enemies and the character's motion. The backgrounds do include some nice touches, like clouds moving overhead.

The sound is also appealing, though unspectacular. The music during the fight sequences can become a little repetitious when exploring a large cave with lots of monsters, but overall the music blends in well with the action and remains pleasant.

Game play is simple, and the most major complaint is that while in towns the characters move swiftly, but as soon as they leave, walking from place to place feels very slow.

This game really excels with the execution of its story. The adventure moves swiftly and carries the player through many different places. It does not suffer from the worst and most common RPG ailment—that of having to build the characters before you can do anything. Building levels comes naturally in the course of the game.

Lufia and the Fortress of Doom is the best RPG so far this year and is highly recommended for anyone looking for a diversion during the cold winter months.

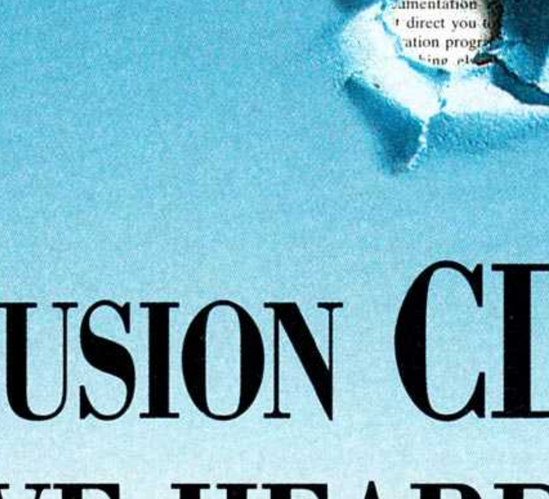
— Marc Camron

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**88%**
SOUND	**86%**
PLAYABILITY	**96%**
REPLAYABILITY	**75%**

OVERALL 93%

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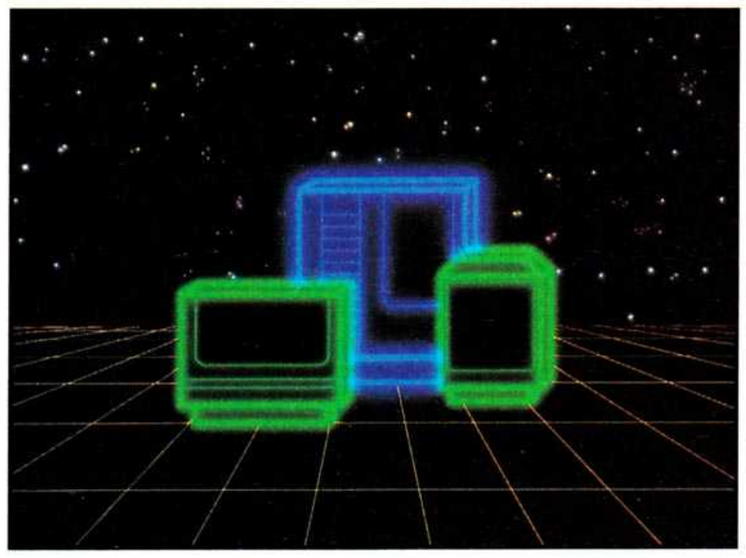
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Secret of Mana

PUBLISHER	**Square Soft**
SYSTEM	**SNES**
THEME	**Action/RPG**
MEGABITS	**16**
PLAYERS	**1-3**
LEVELS	**N/A**

Square Soft is becoming known for their large and complex RPGs. In Japan, they have released three **Final Fantasy** games for the NES, two for the SNES and four for the Game Boy. They have also released a couple of Final Fantasy Adventure games for the Game Boy, which combine action with role-playing in **Zelda**-type adventures. Many of these games have made it to the United States, including **Final Fantasy Mystic Quest**, a game programmed especially for American audiences.

Now, the next generation of RPGs is coming from the folks at Square: **Secret of Mana**. Originally titled **Final Fantasy Adventure II**, Square has pulled the **Final Fantasy** connection and separated it from the Final Fantasy realm.

Secret of Mana is an action oriented role-playing game, with a unique interface, new to this game. The story centers around the hero (named by the player) who must go forth and vanquish the evil from the land... just like every other RPG on the market.

Though the story may not be new, the execution is. As in the **Legend of Zelda** games, the player must journey through the land, fighting beasties of many shapes and sizes, conquering evil wherever it may lay. Unlike the **Zelda** games, there are tons of weapons to choose from, each with their own characteristics. The player must also build up his experience and levels in the same fashion as traditional RPGs, and the hit-point and magic-point system is also very much the same. In other words, it adds much needed complexity to this type of game.

At first, the player's party only consists of one character—the hero. Not too far into the game though, two others are added to raise the party to three strong. The allied characters may either be placed on computer controlled actions (there are numerous settings to choose from, but ultimately the computer does the controlling) or they can be controlled by other players, making this the first action/RPG that allows three-player simultaneous play. In the one-player game, the gamer may switch between any of the characters at any time. It should also be noted that in order for three people to play, a multi-player adapter is necessary.

The game is long and extremely complex. Players must lead characters from place-to-place, exploring castles, forests, and towns in order to locate the eight Mana Seeds. The hero must locate the seeds in order to protect them from evil and add power to his sword, the famed Sword of Mana, which is necessary to complete the game.

There is a walk-through of the *first* part of the game included with the manual. This is to help players get started and to help ease them into the new interface. It should be noted that this preliminary walk-through contains 42 steps, and remains but a preview of the adventure to come.



Be cautious when approaching new monsters, and beware special attacks.

The land is so vast that characters have several choices regarding how to travel across it. There is of course the obligatory method of flying where you need to go, this time via a dragon named Flammie. The new and unusual form of travel in this game is the "Cannon Brothers Travel Service." This is the earliest form of travel, where for a fee, one of the Cannon Brothers will slip you inside of a massive cannon and fire your party wherever they need to go. The effect is both well done graphically and really, really amusing!

While were on the subject of graphics, it needs to be noted that **Secret of Mana** is the most visually appealing action/RPG ever released on the SNES. The characters are large for this type of game, and the game itself is filled with amusing animations. For instance, when the hero goes to open a treasure chest, instead of the chest simply popping open, he lifts it over his head, shakes it and smashes it on the ground. Enemies come in all shapes and sizes and the bosses are large and imposing. All of the characters are very well animated.

The backgrounds are also well done, with good depth while exploring. The game even makes use of Nintendo's Mode-7 scaling and rotation, during the cannon shot and dragon flying sequences.



It is important to study the bosses' movements before attacking them.

The music and sound effects are equally well done, continuing to build on structure started with the graphics.

The game play rounds the package out with almost flawless execution. The only complaint is when a secondary character gets stuck behind an obstacle and must be switched to in order to be moved out. A minor detail that in no way detracts from the game.

Overall, **Secret of Mana** is one of those rare games that really doesn't fit into any one mold. It borrows a lot of ideas from a lot of games, twists them around and makes them their own; unique in execution and style. This is a top-notch game in every respect!

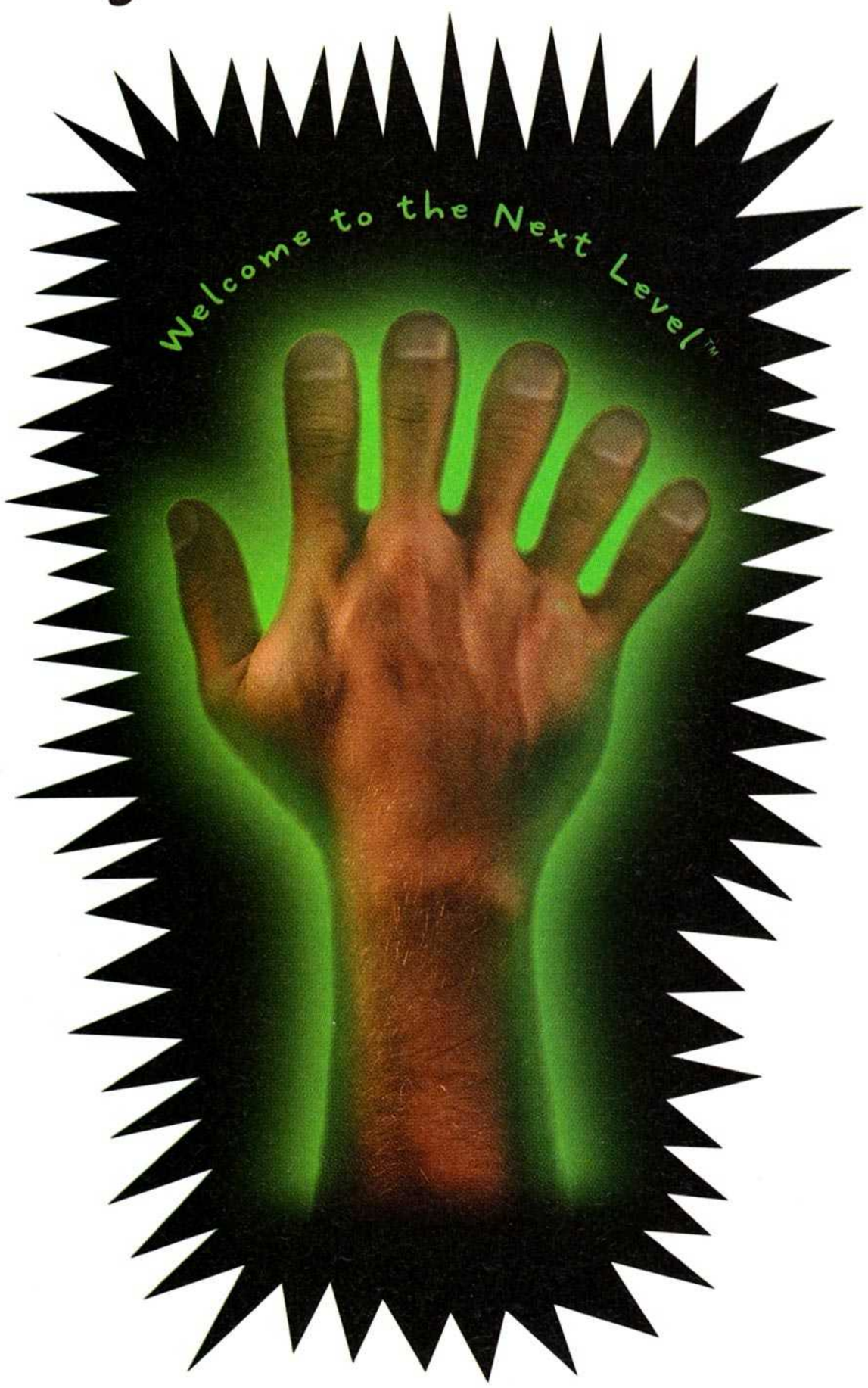
— Marc Camron

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**96%**
SOUND	**94%**
PLAYABILITY	**97%**
REPLAYABILITY	**81%**

OVERALL 96%

If this were a perfect world you'd be all thumbs. That way you'd have more moves, you'd have more control, you'd have more intense combinations. But things aren't perfect. So if you want all that stuff you should either buy one of our new arcade style

Sega™ 6-Button Controllers.



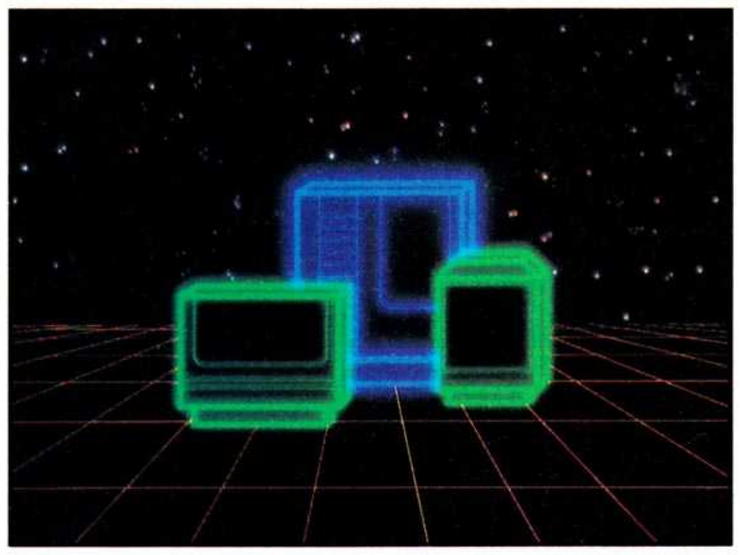
The Next Best Thing To Genetic Mutation.

6-Button controllers or start handling large amounts of nuclear waste and—well, hope for the best. Personally, we'd go for the controllers. They're more reasonably priced and a heck of a lot easier to come by than a chunk of plutonium.

SEGA™ GENESIS & CD



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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Super Battleship

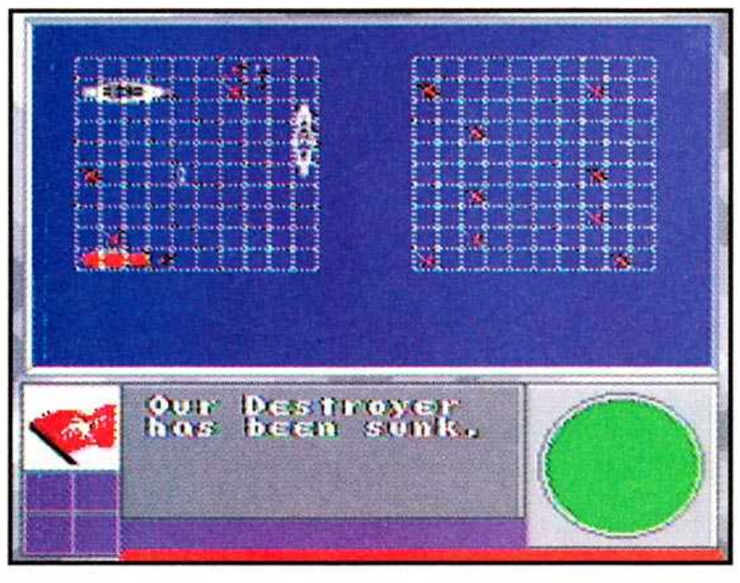
PUBLISHER	**Mindscape**
SYSTEM	**SNES**

THEME	**Strategy**
MEGABITS	**4**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**7**

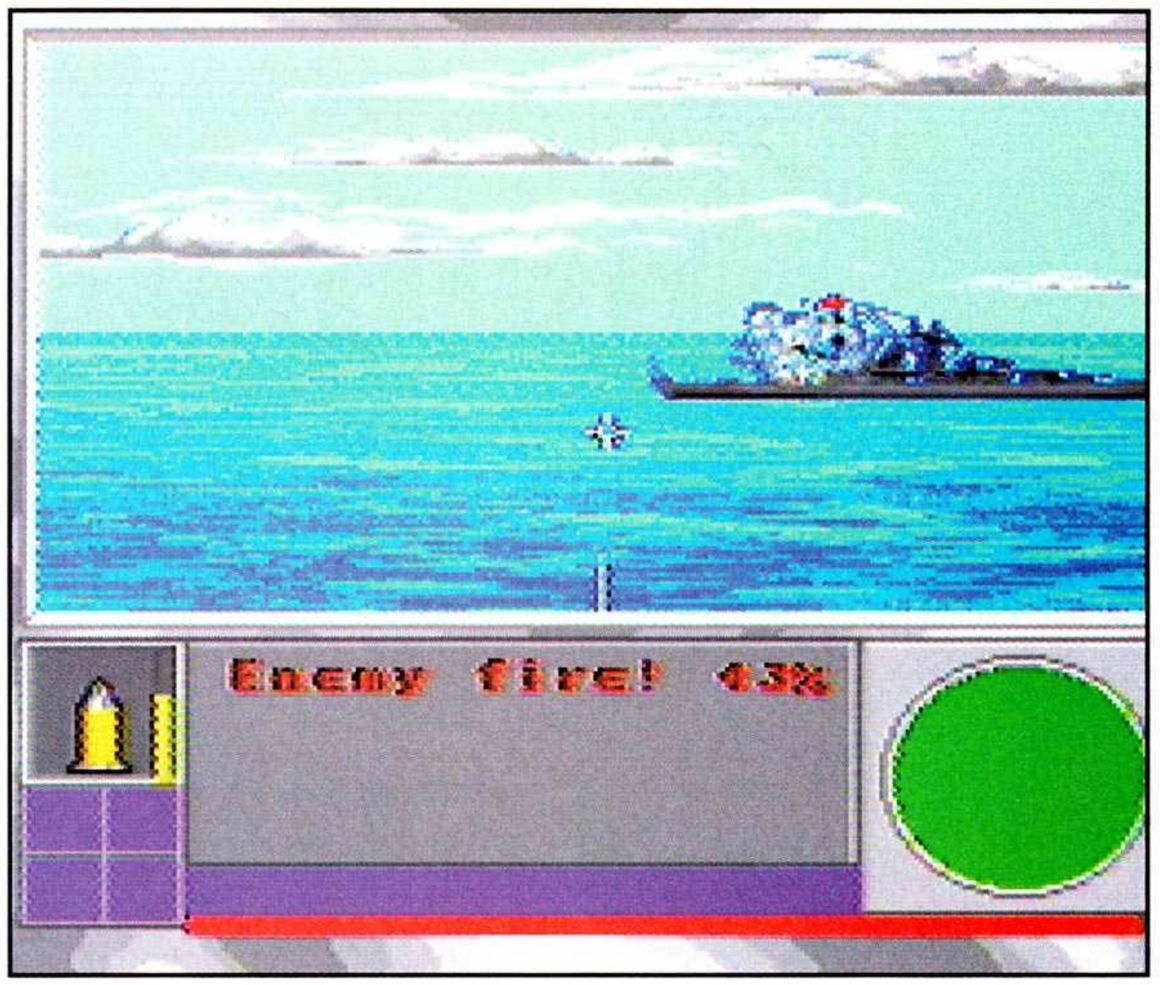
The first thing a lot of gamers will say the first time they see **Super Battleship** is "wow." The game is certainly visually interesting. On the title screen, a battleship sits on the horizon, pennants flying. Suddenly, its guns erupt with gouts of smoke and flame. With a boom, big chunks of the **Super Battleship** logo go flying. This is when that "wow" response goes off.

Players command different sized fleets and task forces through 16 missions ranging from Mosquito Boat Attack to Total War. The missions are arranged campaign style and divided into seven levels. A set of missions does not have to be played in order, but all missions in a set must be completed before moving on to the next level. Each level has a password so that players may resume any campaign in progress.

Other features that could get raves are the satellite imaging, the missile piloting sequence and the depth charge screen. This all sounds great, literally and



Fans of the old Battleship game will find the SNES version just as fun to play.



figuratively, with nice sound effects on top of all the other neat features.

Added together, all of these things should make a pretty good game, right? The answer, unfortunately, is no. The game suffers from not having a two-player option. It would have been nice to play against a human opponent as the game's AI routines consist largely of



The Super Battleship game features exciting strategic battles and options.

seeking out the player's ships and picking fights. Players can also play classic Battleship, which is an electronic recreation of the Milton Bradley game, but this simple game is so easy to beat that there is no reward in victory. Again, a two-player option would have been a great improvement.

Super BattleShip's lack of strategic smarts might be overlooked, but where the game really falters is in trying to simulate ship-to-ship combat. Modern naval warfare mostly involves ships racing through the ocean, miles apart, lobbing shells and missiles at one another. Take away all of the racing, most of the missiles and put the ships within close visual range of each other, and what you have left is ship-to-ship combat in **Super Battleship**. All combat is conducted with ships facing broadside to one another and trading shots back and forth. Once players learn where to aim, it's easy to knock out the other guy's guns. Combat becomes only a matter of pounding on the other ship till it sinks. This is satisfying the first few times, but it still gets old too fast, and boring combat is the kiss of death in a game that emphasizes combat as much as this one does.

Even the simple repetitive combat would be excusable (if uninteresting) if the game purported to simulate naval warfare circa World War II. Instead, the war is fought on a large rectangular ocean whose islands have quasi-west Pacific names like Quemoy and Mindino, against an enemy fleet whose nationality is never established. Any other resemblance to WW II is demolished by equipping a few ships with missiles, which didn't exist on ships at that time. That would be okay, if only more ships in the game had been equipped with missiles. When a missile is launched, the player guides the missile to the target ship in a spectacular first person screen that displays the full graphic power of the SNES. With luck, it lasts perhaps five seconds. But most ships don't have missiles and no ship has more than two, so don't expect to see this great sequence very often.

Super Battleship is a good place to start for gamers who've never before played strategy wargames. It gives a good grasp of the basic concepts of wargames and it leaves the player wanting more. Otherwise, rent it when it comes to the video store.

–John Hardin

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**90%**
SOUND	**80%**
PLAYABILITY	**85%**
REPLAYABILITY	**75%**

OVERALL 79%

Pink Goes to Hollywood

PUBLISHER	**TecMagik**
SYSTEM	**Genesis**

THEME	**Arcade**
MEGABITS	**8**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**14**

TecMagik has returned the Pink Panther to the small screen in the Genesis version of **Pink Goes To Hollywood**. Like its SNES cousin, the Pink's side-scrolling romp through Hollywood mythology maintains a number of surprises for the jaded gamer. Many of the unique components of the SNES version are maintained: the game is less linear than most platform twitch games, with players given surprising flexibility in determining where the Pink roams.

Players control the cartoon star as he travels over a series of movie studio back lots; menaced by a variety of enemies; and aided by a knockout punch, great leaping ability, and a series of offbeat power-ups. Hearts restore vitality; Panther icons tack on an extra life; Shields make the Pink temporarily invincible; the Super Glove extends the range of his punching prowess; Stars add extra points; and tokens generate either special weapons or transportational devices. The six different varieties of tokens are classified as either Tricks or Toll Cards. Tricks produce a stoplight, which stops foes in their tracks, or a jackhammer, which pulverizes the enemies. Toll Cards give the Pink access to bridges, stairs, magic carpets and umbrellas, all of which are necessary to help him complete the Panther's quest for silver screen immortality.

The Pink Panther has arrived in Tinseltown for a screen-test at MGM. After ruining a scene starring the bumbling Inspector Clouseau, the inept Inspector sets out to destroy our hero's chance for stardom.

The back lot pursuit begins on the set of *Honey, I Shrunk the Pink*, a broad parody of the two Disney flicks in which scientific experiments have devastating effects on Rick Moranis' offspring. This initial sequence provides direct access to seven different sets as well as sound stages, which eventually lead to other movie locations. A trip inside the huge refrigerator puts the Pink in conflict with flying asparagus spears and rampaging rogue leftovers. A dehydrated turkey, bouncing onions, airborne capons, and cascading rivers of gravy threaten to send our hero to cartoon valhalla. A dip in a pitcher of pink lemonade, complete with fish and coral mounds, wraps up his combat with cold cuts.

Sherwood Forest is visited by the Pink via the *Pinkinhood* set. Enemy archers and feisty squirrels must be dealt with before Pink Panther can challenge an armor-clad Clouseau. *Cat on a Not Pink Roof*, meanwhile, pits the Pink against biplane ace Charles Lindbergh Clouseau, lightning bolts and spitting cats.

The survival of *Pink Beard* (a play on Blackbeard) tests not only the Panther's swimming ability, but also his climbing prowess. The Pink must ascend the ship's mast to freedom, while eluding Long John Clouseau. *Jungle Pink* deposits our hero in the middle of a rain forest containing powerful waterfalls, hungry piranhas, and deadly spiders.

A three-fold western adventure comprises the *Pink Ranger* segment. After clearing the streets of cowboy boots and tumbleweeds, our tenderpaw protagonist stumbles into a gold mine maze, complete with ore cars, bats and prospectors. The Sarsaparilla Saloon, home of the belching buffalo heads, is the last stop in the Pink's journey through the cinematic Old West.

The Pink Panther's on the run from Frankenstein wannabes and bubbling cauldrons of chemicals in *Pinkenstein*, while an eerie haunted house, complete with menacing trees, ghosts and bats is the setting of *Polter Pink*.

The graphics in the Genesis version of **Pink Goes to Hollywood** are notably improved over the SNES edition. While still presented in the minimalist mode of the Pink Panther cartoons, the characters are vividly rendered and smoothly animated. Regrettably, some of the background images, notably in the refrigerator scenes, suffer from the Genesis' limited color palette.

The multi-stage musical score is both well written and skillfully performed. Each movie scenario features appropriately distinctive theme music, and original Henry Mancini music, taken from the films, graces the non-interactive opening. The music can also be toggled off, leaving only the sound effects.

Playability in the Genesis version is somewhat streamlined over the earlier SNES game. When toll booths appear, for example, the player enters and accesses an on-screen inventory of available toll cards directly, in order to determine the Pink's options. The continue screen is also simplified; the player guides the Pink to either end of a stage, depending on whether they wish to end the game or continue playing.



The Pink Panther must battle pesky tourists on his way to fame and fortune.

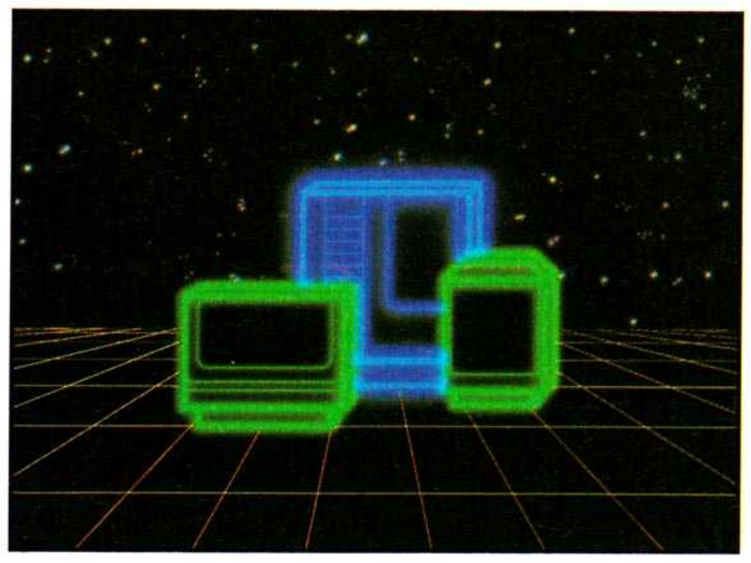
However, while the game is certainly entertaining and replayable, the Genesis version suffers from the same overall problem faced on the SNES: the Pink Panther is a bland, generic, non-entity of a cartoon character, with no compelling personality, motivation, or even trademarked sound bites. In fact, through most of the Panther's career he has been mute. While other animated characters were making their mark with such catchphrases as "What's up, Doc?", "I taut I taw a puddytat!", and even "Beep! Beep!," the Pink has had very little to say for himself, and this can detract from a video game interpretation.

— Laurie Yates



COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**83%**
SOUND	**82%**
PLAYABILITY	**84%**
REPLAYABILITY	**80%**

OVERALL 83%



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

GP-1

PUBLISHER	**Atlus**
SYSTEM	**SNES**
THEME	**Racing**
MEGABITS	**8**
PLAYERS	**1 or 2**
LEVELS	**N/A**

The 13-track Grand Pix motorcycle racing circuit provides high-speed competition for one or two drivers. Cyber-cyclists can practice, race head-to-head against another human, or compete against a field of 15 hard-driving robot adversaries.

GP-1 presents the action from an externalized first-person perspective. The well-drawn bike, with its animated rider, occupies the center of the active display. The cyber cyclist views the action from directly behind the bike and fairly close to the road surface.

As the multi-layered track scenery scrolls into the foreground quickly and smoothly, the cartridge maintains a fairly convincing illusion of speed. The textured surfaces of the grass, grandstands and other course features, plus the inevitable engine whine and screeching brake squeal, evoke the real sport.

Since these two-wheelers rocket around the 13 courses at speeds in excess of 320 kph on long straightaways, rapid movement of on-screen objects had to be the design team's first priority. Despite the excellent backgrounds, complex wrecks and other visual frills, no other racing cart for the SNES moves as fast as this one.

The same viewing angle that accentuates the feeling of speed sharply limits the rider's ability to see the onrushing track. Two systems counteract this: a turn signal appears to warn of an approaching turn or swerve, and an overhead schematic depicts the entire track and the current position of the driver's car.

You won't have to go to driving school to learn to handle these mighty machines. Though the rulebook delves into the subtleties of tuning, **GP-1** is fundamentally a boot-and-race product. Most video gamers will simply pick one of the six starter bikes and head for the GP circuit. (Those who want to start a little slower can choose the practice mode and study the art of racing without the distraction of competition.)



The choppers' handling characteristics are reasonably authentic, but **GP-1** is arcade action, not a simulation. The A button opens the throttle, the B button presses the brake and the control pad makes the cycle turn. Pressing Start after racing begins pauses the action.

The L and R buttons have little function, apart from allowing participants to quit a two-player race, unless the manual gearing options is in force. L and R can then be used to shift up and down through the six gears, which can also be accomplished with an up-down movement of the control pad.

In GP mode, the rider qualifies for each race before gaining one of the 16 coveted starting positions. The one-lap trial also provides a preview of the layout of the day's course.



Players can choose from a variety of machines with varying characteristics.

After qualifying, the screen shows the way cars line up for the race, together with the qualifying times for each. Once the three-phase timing signal triggers the start of the race; a window in the lower right corner shows the rider's current ranking in the three-lap contest.

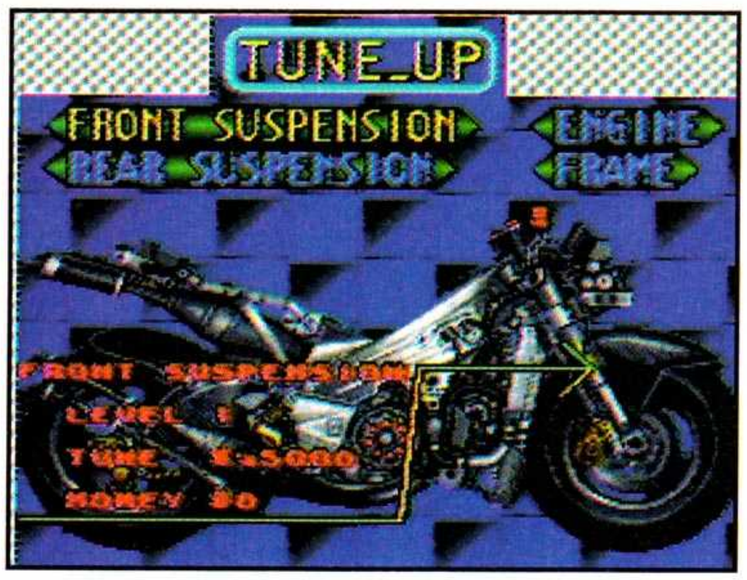
After the face ends, a series of screens give a qualitative rating, shows the rider's finish, presents the current standings on the GP tour, and rings up any money won as a result of good performance.

The ratings might be a bit harsh. Receiving a "Hopeless" verdict eight or nine times in run would test anyone's perseverance. Of course, the thrill is all that much greater when you finally earn a grudging “Not So Bad” score.

The money can be used to improve the bike for future races. The front suspension, rear suspension, frame and engine can each be increased by several levels. It takes money to make the changes, so riders must work their way up to the most powerful cycles.

GP-1 is realistic without being complex, challenging without being hard to learn. The game fills a noticeable weakness in the SNES library, and so it is an enthusiastically welcomed addition.

— Arnie Katz



Tune-ups allow racers to make sure their machines are in top condition.

COMPLEXITY	**Easy**
GRAPHICS	**93%**
SOUND	**87%**
PLAYABILITY	**90%**
REPLAYABILITY	**95%**

OVERALL 92%

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NR-13 This game is not for the faint-hearted. Contains violence and some material inappropriate for minors.

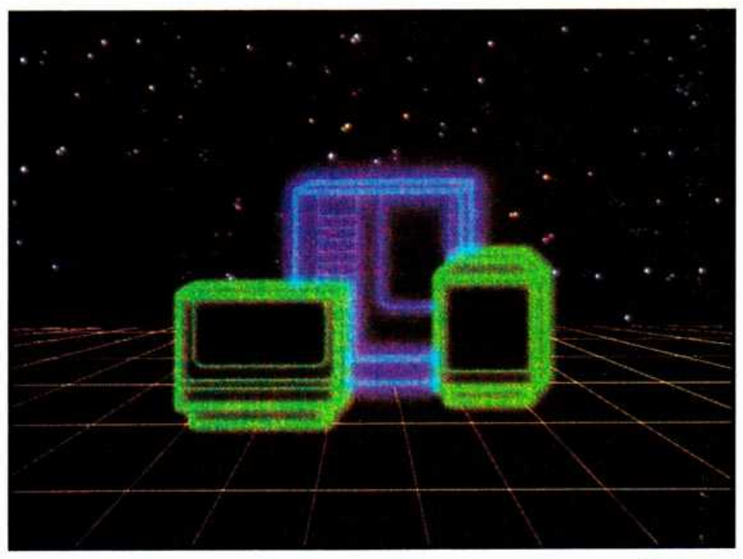
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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Lethal Enforcers

PUBLISHER	**Konami**
SYSTEM	**Genesis**
THEME	**SHooting**
MEGABITS	**8**
PLAYERS	**1 or 2**
LEVELS	**5**

Ultraviolence fans, Konami's gonna make your day.

Lethal Enforcers, the sizzling arcade hit, has turned up on the Genesis, and it's the hottest video game coin-op conversion since **Mortal Kombat**.

Recently released in Sega CD format, the cartridge version of **Lethal Enforcers** is virtually indistinguishable from the earlier edition. The game comes packed with Konami's Justifier, the finest light gun on the market, and plenty of targets, human and otherwise.

This is an extremely violent game which casts the player as a member of an anonymous, high-tech police agency in a series of five multi-stage action scenarios. These scenarios begin with digitized footage of a crime in progress, then move on to a fixed-location shootout, such as a bank robbery in the first installment. There is some panning in these sequences, but the camera is stationary for the actual shootout. The scene then shifts to a second fixed location and on to a moving target sequence, climaxing in a showdown with a boss thug who hurls projectiles (axes, missiles, etc.) at the screen.



The first person perspective adds an exciting dimension to this shooter.

Between rounds, the game reverts to a more traditional police shooting range mode. This format can be accessed exclusively by choosing the Practice option before the shooting starts.

The action begins inside the bank currently under siege. Bad guys pop up or tumble on screen and fire directly at the gamer, who must take them out with the Justifier before they can squeeze off a round. There are also innocent civilians who become involved in the action. Accidentally shooting one of them will pretty much kill any chance of promotion (which is required in order to advance to the next scenario), not to mention the civilian.

Bank robbers appear on screen at several distances, from immediate foreground to far background, and they are not reluctant to use civilians as



shields. The action continues out in the alley, where the robbers attempt to get past your withering hail of gunfire and into their getaway cars. The scene then changes to a side view of a looping city street, where the player must take on a series of moving vehicles and their criminal occupants as they attempt to flee the scene. This sequence may produce a few chuckles when, after a dozen or so bad guys are killed in a single sports car, they keep on coming! This is obviously the bank robbers' version of those Volkswagens the clowns use to drive to the circus.

The getaway sequence ends with the appearance of a white van, carrying the first level boss, who hurls missiles at the gamer while clad in a heavy duty bullet-proof vest.

Next up is the Chinatown Assault,



Gangsters and goons climb out of speeding cars to give you a lead lunch.

followed by the Hijack, Drug Dealer and Chemical Plant scenarios. Both the characters and the locations for each of these scenarios are digitized, creating a grimly realistic atmosphere reminiscent of a gritty cops-and-robbers movie. The challenges also increase with each level; by the Chinatown scenario, there are nasty knife throwers ready to hurl their favorite weapon right down the player's waiting throat.

Obviously, the graphics are not as clean as the coin-op's, and there's also a disturbing lack of breakable glass and other objects vulnerable to gunfire. But the characters are very nicely captured, and although most of the bad guys only appear in two non-animated frames—we see them standing or crouching, gun aimed directly at the screen and, if hit, we see a flickering image of them falling backward—the illusion of reality is very well maintained.

Unlike some other light gun games—Acclaim's **T2**, for example—**Lethal Enforcers** is virtually unplayable without the light gun. The characters appear too quickly and the joypad responds too slowly for even the hottest arcade gunslinger to keep pace.

Lethal Enforcers has earned an "MA-17" rating from Sega, which means it's not recommended for young gamers.

— Bill Kunkel

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**91%**
SOUND	**91%**
PLAYABILITY	**97%**
REPLAYABILITY	**94%**

OVERALL 95%

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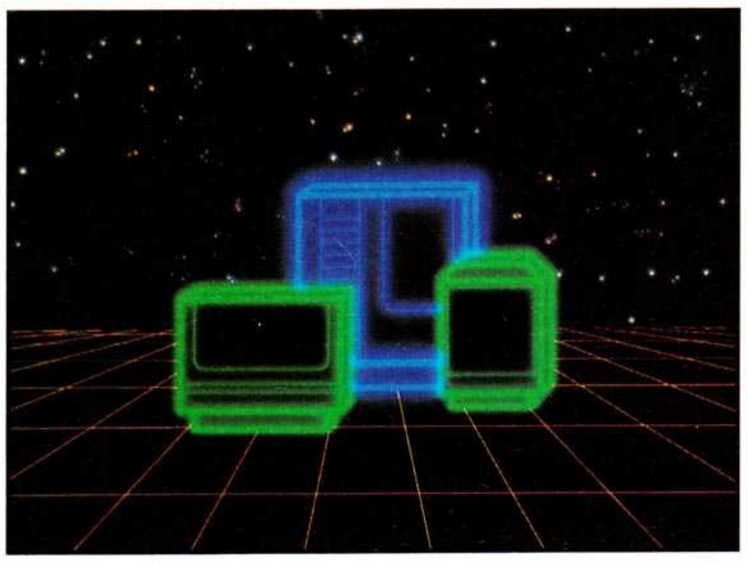




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VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Awesome Possum

PUBLISHER	**Tengen**
SYSTEM	**Genesis**
THEME	**Action**
MEGABITS	**16**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**24**

Who in the world is **Awesome Possum**?

He's a hero for our times, a motor-mouth wiseacre with good intentions fighting a one-marsupial war to save our planet's crumbling environment in the ominous near-future. He's also the star of Richard Seaborne's superb new Genesis entertainment, the first twitch game with a social conscience.

High ideals aside, **Awesome Possum** is the most straight-ahead kinetic experience on the Genesis since the original **Sonic the Hedgehog**. This is one of those rare games that instinctively understands the sheer unfettered joy that comes with moving mindlessly, relentlessly forward. Whether running, jumping



Utilize the possum's powerful speed and jumping abilites to help save the day.

or flying through space, Awesome never stops going.

The game is set two decades in the future, at a point where the evil Dr. Machino has automated the process of environmental destruction. The rain forest, sea caves, the arctic wastes and Machino's own decaying urban headquarters serve as the settings for Awesome's exhilerating adventures. Each of these worlds comprises three regular levels and three bonus levels, with our marsupial protagonist leaping, ricocheting and running across the vertically and horizontally scrolling landscapes. The enemies consist of Machino's robotic army, mechanoids armed with chainsaws and other equipment to defoliate the forests, foul the rivers, and generally muck things up.

There is no shortage of objects for Awesome to bounce from either, including tree branches and trampoline-like drums, and once he gets up a head of steam, this little guy can really move! There are even special power-ups which temporarily increase his speed to an absolutly insane velocity. Along the way,



Recycling is the name of the game, and the player can learn a few lessons!

he must collect recyclables (aluminum cans, newspapers, etc.) and power-ups, bounce on top of Machino's robots in order to take them out, and make his way to the Win Banner, signifying the end of that level. When danger threatens, Awesome can even play possum, hugging the ground and pretending to be dead.

Different worlds have their own special super animals—the Rain Forest Rhino, the sea caverns' Manta Ray and the Great White North's Arctic Bird—which Awesome can mount and ride, clearing the level of every enemy the animal touches along the way.

At the end of each round, the game asks an Environmental Trivia Question for extra points.

The graphics are quite nice, and move like lightning. Awesome himself is a visual delight, constantly in motion, a virtual library of postures and body language from the annals of animation. The background textures are so dense, however, that some of the sequences, especially



The lush backgrounds and smooth sounds will keep the gamer's attention.

in the Rain Forest, have a somewhat muddy look. This problem is eliminated on later lavels. The speech, however, is just perfect. Awesome never shuts up—unless the default for silence is set before the game—and his stream of consciousness chatter keeps the game from ever bogging down. Or, as Awesome puts it, "I'm so HYPER!"

There are some scenes in this game which may prove disturbing to very young children—Awesome is chewed up by a leghold trap in one death sequence—but most of the violence has a strong cartoon-like overtone which makes it easier to swallow.

Tengen made a deal for a tie-in with the folks who make Rain Forest Crunch (Save the Rain Forest by Eating It?), and the docs contain plenty of information on cleaning up the environment. Unfortunately, making robots the villains of the piece seems to be an example of the well-intentioned softheadedness that got our world in trouble in the first place. The "Captain Planet" mentality shows our environment being poisoned by super villians, mutated monsters and other non-traditional humans. Unfortunately, the truth of the matter is that the Amazon Rain Forest is not being destroyed by robots or by mutated sewer rats; it's being burned down by the very people who live there, since charcoal production is one of the few ways of generating a subsistence income.

In any case, **Awesome Possum** certainly has its heart in the right place. There are very few games that can produce this level of headbanging thrills.

— Bill Kunkel

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**92%**
SOUND	**93%**
PLAYABILITY	**96%**
REPLAYABILITY	**92%**

OVERALL 93%

F-1 Pole Position

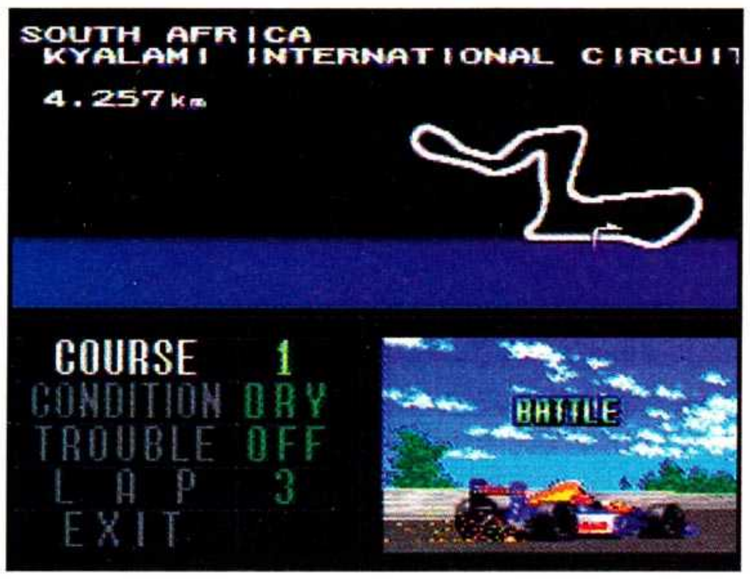
PUBLISHER	**UBI Soft**
SYSTEM	**SNES**

THEME	**Racing**
MEGABITS	**N/A**
PLAYERS	**1 or 2**
LEVELS	**16**

F-1 Pole Position is unquestionably the most realistic Grand Prix racing simulation ever to appear on a home video game screen. The verisimilitude is remarkable, and occasionally daunting. Fortunately, there are default options to send even an automotive know-nothing cruising on down the intercontinental highways.

The game begins with the player offered three racing modes: Battle, World Grand Prix and Test Run. The Battle Mode offers realistic course conditions for one or two players, with competition from as many as 13 computer-controlled vehicles. World Grand Prix mode sees the gamer(s) competing for all the marbles in a full-scale simulation of the GP, while Test Run allows the player access to any course for experimental or practice purposes.

Depending upon the mode selected, the gamer must then make several key choices. In Battle or Test Run mode, the 16 available tracks are displayed, including: Kyalami (South Africa), Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez (Mexico), Adelaide GP Circuit (Australia), Suzuka International Circuit (Japan), Circuit de Monaco, Circuit Gilles Villenueve (Canada), Silverstone (England), Hockenheim Im-Ring (Germany), Circuit De Nevels Magny Course (France), Hungaroring (Hungary), Autodromo De Estoril (Portugal), Autodromo Enzo y Dino Ferrari (San Marino) and the Autodromo Nazionale Di Monza (Italy). In Battle Mode, the player can then set the Conditions (Dry, Wet, or Half-and-Half), the Trouble control (on or off), and the number of laps. In the Test Run scenario, however, the laps are pre-set and Trouble is turned off.



A variety of course options can be selected and changed prior to racing.

Next, a car is chosen from an impressive selection of state-of-the-art racing vehicles, followed by an options screen which allows the user to custom modify their automobiles. This option has got to be a major turn-on for true car buffs and racing afficionados, but newcomers are likely to be better off simply leaving everything on its default setting until they become more familiar with the program.

In Battle Mode, the gamer then selects opponents from a menu of famous Grand Prix teams (Ferrari, Benetton, Footwork, etc.) and is off to the races. When running in full GP mode, the game is set for one or two players who then register, choose and fine tune their vehicles, tour the track and/or take a practice run.

Circuits can even be saved for later play.

Visually, the game looks very nice, with some excellent use of Mode 7. The cars get up to a decent speed, and there's no lack of data feedback: tires, brakes, suspension and wings (a car's downforce is damaged by a collision, retarding maximum speed) are all monitored on-screen. Unfortunately, **F-1** doesn't offer nearly the range in terms of each track's distinctive visual presentation that other Grand Prix simulations—such as Sega's **Super Monaco GP** for the Genesis—have. This is not to say that there aren't variations from track to track—we can see the pretty, white box-like villas dotting the hills of Monaco, for instance—but the background graphics are all presented in such soft focus that the similarities among the tracks tend to dominate the eye, rather than their differences.

A more serious problem, however, is the game's presentation. In two-player contests, the screen is divided in half, horizontally, so each player can follow their vehicles as it zooms along the track. Unfortunately, even in single-player mode, the presentation is limited to that same, small display strip. While the top



of the screen is cluttered with a list of the first 10 cars, the action takes place in a tiny window along the bottom of the screen, occupying less than a third of the available space.

Traditionally, players will make allowances for head-to-head games: the two-player versions of **Road Rash 2** (Electronic Arts) or **Sonic 2** (Sega) on the Genesis are inferior to the single-player



The split-screen view offers players the ability to see their opponent's progress.

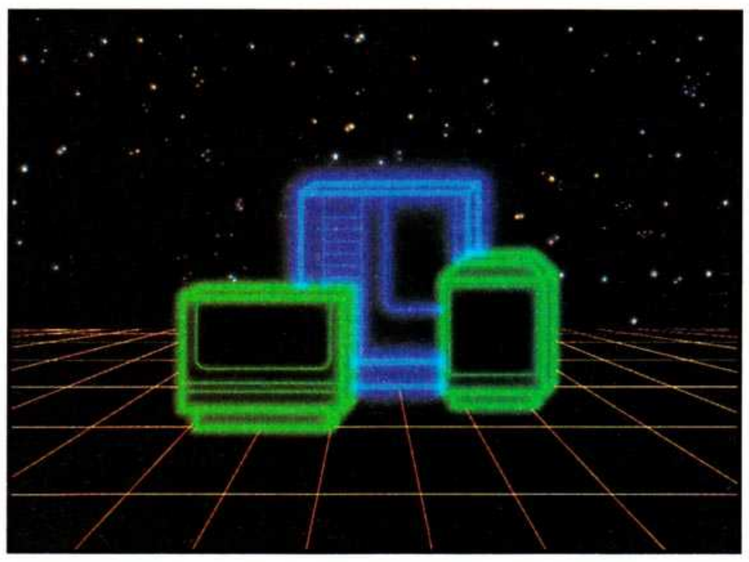
versions, for example. But both those games offer full-screen action to solitaire players, unlike **F-1 Pole Position**.

As a result, while **F-1** earns high points for its two-player mode and attention to detail, as a solo entertainment, it leaves much to be desired.

— Bill Kunkel

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**83%**
SOUND	**85%**
PLAYABILITY	**89%**
REPLAYABILITY	**88%**

OVERALL 84%



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Riddick Bowe Boxing

PUBLISHER	**Extreme**
SYSTEM	**SNES**
THEME	**Sports**
MEGABITS	**16**
PLAYERS	**1 or 2**
LEVELS	**N/A**

Boxing is a difficult sport to simulate, because there are so many behind-the-scenes elements to represent in addition to the actual fights themselves. Some boxing games in the past had excellent career frameworks, but poor fight mechanics and vice versa. **Riddick Bowe Boxing** (**RBB**) stands out in both areas. It has a challenging arcade boxing game and a realistic career foundation.

There are three ways to play **RBB**: a one-player exhibition game, a two-player head-to-head match and a series of bouts over a single fighter's career. The career mode is the most interesting and realistic of the choices, but the others are just as exciting.

RBB is a great two-player game. In one-player games, you can eventually pick apart the strategy of the 25 fighters that come on the cartridge. A few one-player bouts or head-to-head matches make the controls familiar enough to design a boxer and start a career.



Each fight in RBB consists of 12 rounds of three game minutes each. Just as in the real sport, the object is to score a knockout (KO) or technical knockout (TKO) or have the highest accumulated score at the end of 12 rounds. An energy meter for each boxer at the bottom of the screen decreases with successfully landed punches by the opponent. Damage windows for the body and head slowly turn gray as a boxer receives damage that moving away from the opponent or resting between rounds does not heal. If the energy bar drops to zero, the boxer drops to the canvas. Two such KO's in a round ends the match.

The controls for **RBB** are laid out on the controller logically, but players can alter the button definitions if they desire. There are jabs and hooks for each arm. If the fighter is in the crouched position, blows affect the body. Otherwise, the shots go to the head. If the direction pad is in the up position, a hook becomes an uppercut, often the finishing blow in a round.

The key to a successful match is to vary the punches and recognize opportunities to land a good blow. Taunts and blocks require the use of two buttons at once, sometimes an awkward position.

The career mode makes use of three important fighter statistics, power, speed and stamina. **RBB** reflects the levels of these statistics effectively in each fight. It is easier to win bouts if power is high because each punch still does a lot of damage even though a fighter may not land too many shots. Players start off at the bottom of the list of 25 fighters and slowly move their way up the chain. Boxers can work out on various equipment in the gym between matches to raise their statistics so they can fight higher-ranked opponents. Even when the stats are high enough, it may be better to fight low-ranked boxers a few more times in order to get those stats up even more. Otherwise, the more talented fighters will blow you away in a few rounds. Riddick Bowe is the highest-ranked boxer on the cartridge, and it might take 30 fights or more to be able to challenge him.

Aging and retirement fits into a boxer's career, as do challenge matches and occasional losses. A smart player will get at least two of their stats higher than their opponent before a match to make the chances of success greater.



Players can select any boxer they wish, and can take on many opponents.

RBB's graphics and animation make it very clear what happens in the ring. Great punches cause some spit to fly and the responsiveness of the boxer to the controller reflects his speed. Extreme designed the ring so that it rotates around the moving fighters. This effect emphasizes the space available for movement and gives boxers more room to back off and regain energy.

Sound effects include boxers' grunts after punches, verbal taunts and a boxing arena full of frenzied fans. Music is not too important or effective.

RBB captures all of the excitement of first-class boxing. Matches are paced realistically so that boxers come back fresh in a new round full of energy, and the amount of time it takes to wear down a boxer reflects his stamina level.

There is one annoying play element: the combination necessary to get up after a KO requires the player to hit all the buttons quickly to move the boxer! Also, your thumb *will* hurt after a fight or two.

When Riddick Bowe beat Evander Holyfield, he won the right to call himself the best heavyweight fighter in the world. Similarly, **RBB** knocks out its closest competitors as the finest boxing game to come out in a while.

– Russ Ceccola

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**85%**
SOUND	**80%**
PLAYABILITY	**85%**
REPLAYABILITY	**85%**

OVERALL 85%

PARTS IS PARTS



FRANKY AND BITSY ARE TAKING A VACATION FROM THEIR TRANSYLVANIA CASTLE. BUT BITSY FORGOT TO GET A PASSPORT! OUR SPARE PARTS HERO CAME UP WITH A PLAN, THOUGH. HE DISMANTLED BITSY, PACKAGED UP HER PARTS, AND MAILED THEM TO THEIR VACATION DESTINATION - NEW YORK CITY.

THE COMBINATION OF FRANKY'S LACK OF BRAIN CELLS AND THE INCOMPETENCE OF THE TRANSYLVANIAN POSTAL SERVICE HAS SCATTERED BITSY ACROSS THE GLOBE.

FRANKY MUST NOW EMBARK ON A GLOBAL JOURNEY TO RETRIEVE THE MISSING PARCELS AND RESTORE BITSY TO HIS SIDE.



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Street Fighter™ #3 will be at comic shops on November 2, 1993
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(Note: Comic Shops and newsstand copies are printed at the same time, however most comic shops will get their copies via AIR shipment and newsstand and convenience stores ship via TRUCK freight.)

Due to its high level of violence and mature themes, these issues are not recommended for the weak of heart.

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Wing Commander Academy

PUBLISHER	**Origin Systems**
DESIGNER	**Thomas Blom**

PLATFORM	**MS-DOS**
THEME	**Space Combat**
MIN. HD REQ.	**5 MEG**
PLAYERS	**1**

Wing Commander Academy (**WCA**) breathes new life into the popular original, **Wing Commander**. This construction set/mission builder provides all of the elements of **Wing Commander** and its mission disks for inclusion into missions with up to four navigation points. It also introduces a stand-alone arcade game called "The Gauntlet" that sends wave after wave of hostile enemy fighters against players.

WCA is a stylized variation of the tool that Chris Roberts and his design team used to produce the missions for **Wing Commander** and its add-on disks. "Wanna-be" mission builders can produce missions that play just like those from the hit game in a matter of minutes. All of the Terran Confederation Space Navy (TCSN) and Kilrathi ships are available for missions, as are mine fields, asteroid clusters, data pods and stranded pilots. The most important feature of the program is the ability to save the missions to disk in order to trade with friends and upload them to computer networks. This feature should provide an endless supply of fresh missions to resourceful fans with access to computer networks or friends who own **WCA**.

WCA's interface is so intuitive that the manual may not be necessary except for reference. A long-range radar display at the top of the screen centers on the mission player's initial position when game play begins. Four rows of boxes below the radar display contain icons for the various ships and other elements like data pods and asteroid clusters that can make up a mission. Simply click on one of the boxes and then a part of the radar display to place that element into the mission. One special button randomizes elements if you don't want to lay out the pieces. Other buttons control the selection of the player's ship, enemy ship intelligence level, a wingman (if desired) and the number of navigation points for the mission.

It is easy for players to try their created missions directly from the design screen with the Execute button. They can fly them again and again, making modifications in-between tries, until they're just right. The Remove button takes specific elements out of a mission for easier modification.



WCA uses the same ship controls as **Wing Commander** so that those familiar with the original game can jump right into **WCA** and vice versa. However, **Wing Commander** veterans get the chance to experience the flying thrills of two new medium fighters: the TCSN's Wraith and the Kilrathi Jrathek. Both of these new ships are well-armed, fast and maneuverable—perfect choices for The Gauntlet as well as the most challenging player-designed missions.

Although it's only a small part of the overall package, The Gauntlet can stump the best pilots. The mini-game consists of 15 levels with three waves each of progressively more challenging and intelligent enemy crafts. The action gets tough quickly. Many will bow out dishonorably before the 6th or 7th level. Any player who can finish all 15 levels should probably join the US Air Force. The Gauntlet is a different type of game for **WC** fans to play, but it will certainly hone their skills for regular mission play. **Wing Commander Academy** is one of the year's best construction sets. It provides players with a chance to test their skills in the **WC** universe as well as introduce their own creativity into missions.

WCA disappointingly lacks the cinematic elements that made the original game so exciting, even in such situations as tractor beam captures. It would also be nice if players could substitute the original missions with those designed with **WCA**. Still, **WCA** manages to sneak some speech elements into the game (Kilrathi taunts and screams), takes up only 5 MB of space and reproduces the familiar music and graphics of **Wing Commander**. The new missions will be sure to attract many fans.

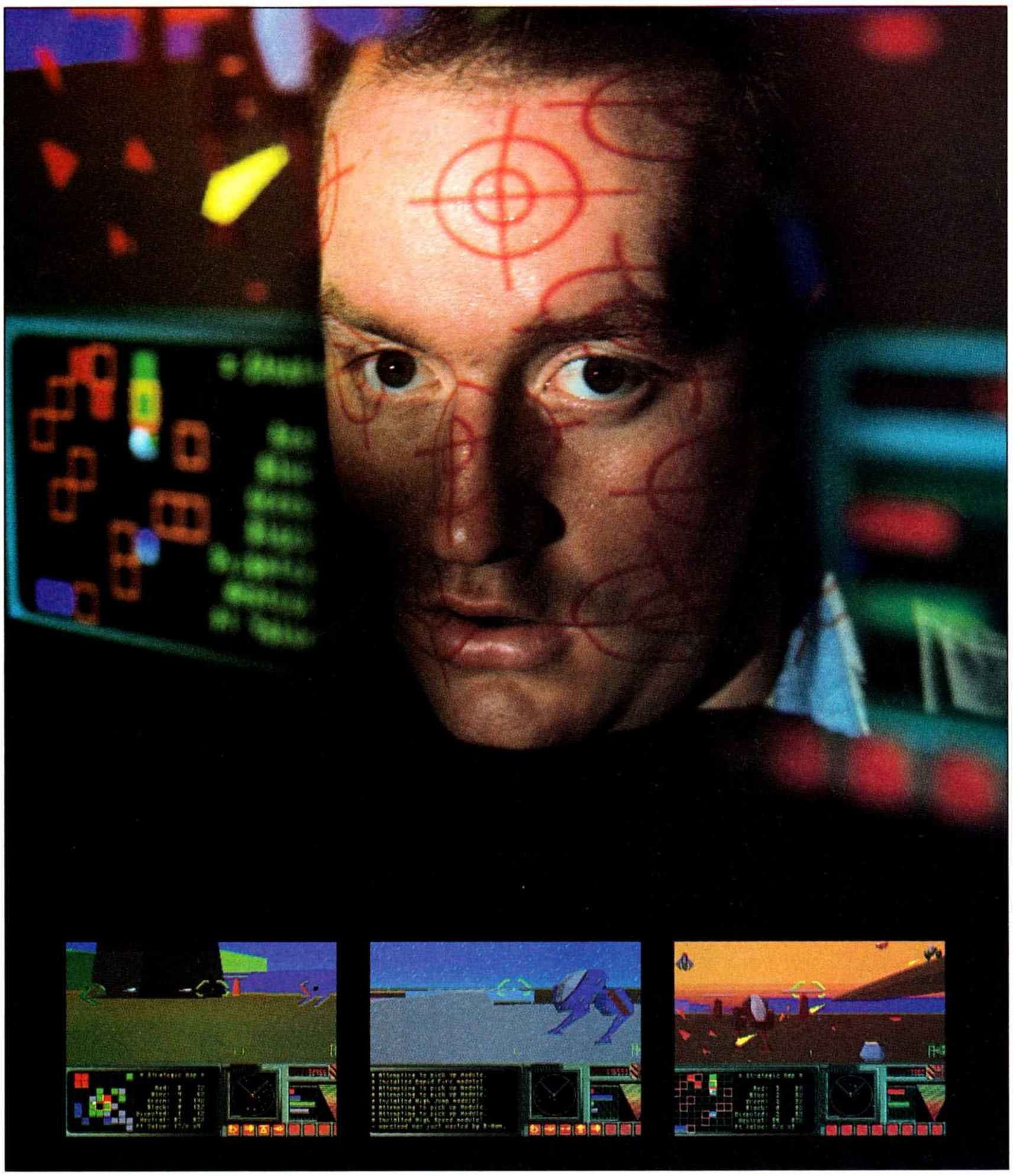
— Russ Ceccola

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**92%**
SOUND	**90%**
PLAYABILITY	**98%**
REPLAYABILITY	**95%**

OVERALL 94%

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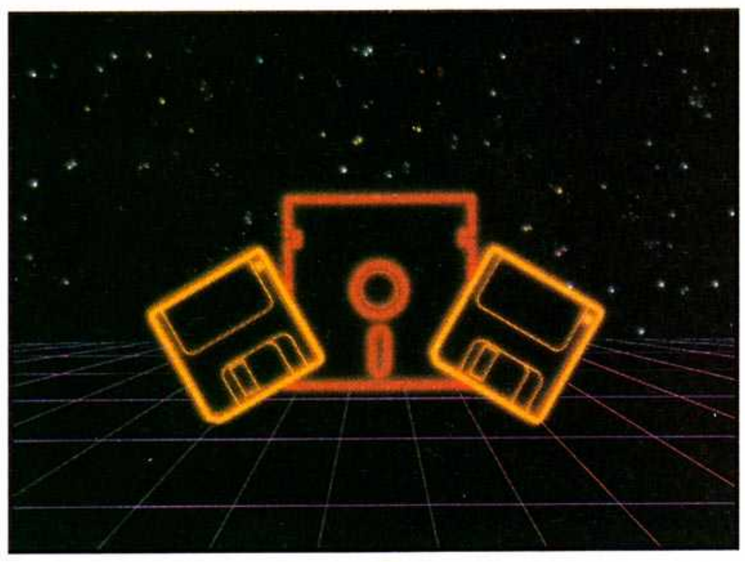


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SOFTWARE GALLERY

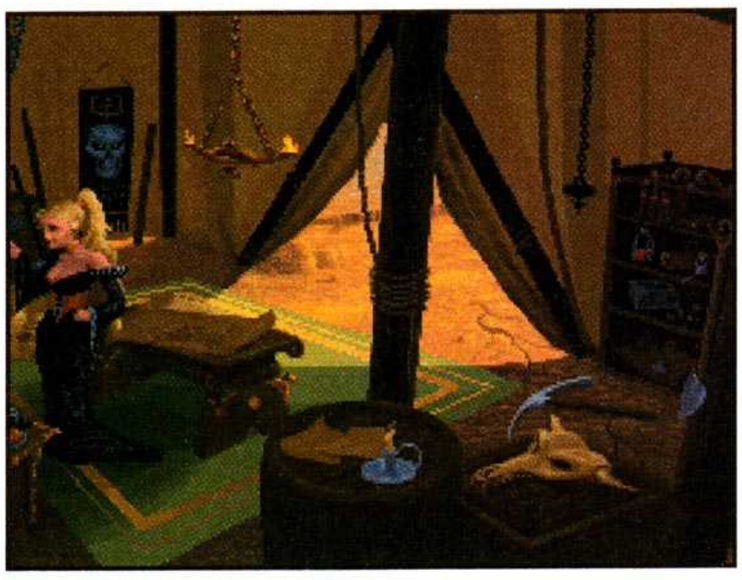
Lands of Lore

PUBLISHER	**Westwood Studios**
DESIGNER	**Crum, Gorrow**
PLATFORM	**MS-DOS**
THEME	**RPG Adventure**
MIN. HD REQ.	**26 MEG**
PLAYERS	**1**

Westwood Studios is emerging as a major player in the game software field. No genre seems too difficult for Westwood to shine as one of the best game producers in the marketplace.

Rick "Picasso" Parks' stunningly beautiful art, complemented by spectacular sound effects, context sensitive music, and the human speech of professional voice actors, makes this third game and third genré a winner for Westwood.

But beyond the visual and aural feast is the solid foundation of a good story, detailed characterization, one of the best automapping systems, a bad but believable bestiary and some really nice artifacts.



Striking graphical detail draws players deep into the Lands of Lore world.

Exploration of 30 maps (encompassing the greenery of the outdoors, crisp castle halls, manor houses, inns, towers and dungeons) is made easy by an automapping system that automatically labels all important locations, including secret doors, hidden buttons, and locks. The savings in time otherwise spent groping for every button and kicking every wall was well received. This thoughtful accessory only lacked the ability to print maps.



Highly satisfying **Dungeon Master**-like character skills and advancement provide each character with three classes of fighter, mage, and thief, with progression intelligently based upon practice and combat.

Real-time combat retains the first-person perspective display seen in the entire game, with combat only changing the context-sensitive music, and the addition of the necessary antagonists. Many will lament the infinite monster generators which have been carefully designed to gradually restock temporarily cleared areas with more beasts.

The point-and-click interface has many hot keys, but will not allow replacement of the mouse with the keyboard. Interface innovations include a special group inventory that allows exchange of characters without the loss of essential artifacts. One should exercise care because only three characters can adventure at any one time from the stable of six, and often characters leave the party without warning—an additional reason to save often in this dangerous world.

The Nether Mask, a magical artifact, allows Rick Parks to show off his animation skills as he morphs the main evil character, Scotia, into giant lizards and other beasts.

Lands is essentially a maze game, since even the outdoor areas have walls that may be impassable. The walls are varied even within the same area, and change from one area to the next. The mists in Yvel City are quite convincing. Rick's artwork is so beautiful that the beasts stand out from the colorful backgrounds.

Interspersed with the three-dimensional environment, where items approach the viewer, are two-dimensional scenes that provide the grist for the non-player character encounters, and the shops that buy and sell within the Lands. Clicking on the characters in these areas initiates conversations, carried on through a menu-driven interface. Items are bought and sold by clicking on artifacts in these segments, so that one beautiful graphic provides interaction and commerce.

The world is immense and the plot so extensive that the designers felt compelled to limit the open-ended nature of the plot, making it impossible to return to some places in the game once left. If the game has a weakness, it is in giving direction to the adventurers who can wander around aimlessly seeking the next step in the quest. Bill Crum and Paul Gorrow saw fit to have several red herrings, one magic mapless room, infinite monster generators, and unre coverable dead ends in the game, so be advised to save often.

Following **Dune II** and **Legends of Kyrandia**, **Lands of Lore** is a strikingly beautiful and complex game which may well win the role-playing game of the year for Westwood Studios. You may well enjoy this strikingly beautiful epic tale in the romantic medieval tradition of wizards, witches and dragons. Be warned that there is enough gratuitous violence and difficulty here that the faint of heart or those not experienced in role-playing will find the game rough going.

Lands of Lore is a beautiful, remarkable achievement, and is sure to delight gamers everywhere.

— Al Giovetti

COMPLEXITY	**Intricate**
GRAPHICS	**97%**
SOUND	**90%**
PLAYABILITY	**88%**
REPLAYABILITY	**70%**

OVERALL 95%

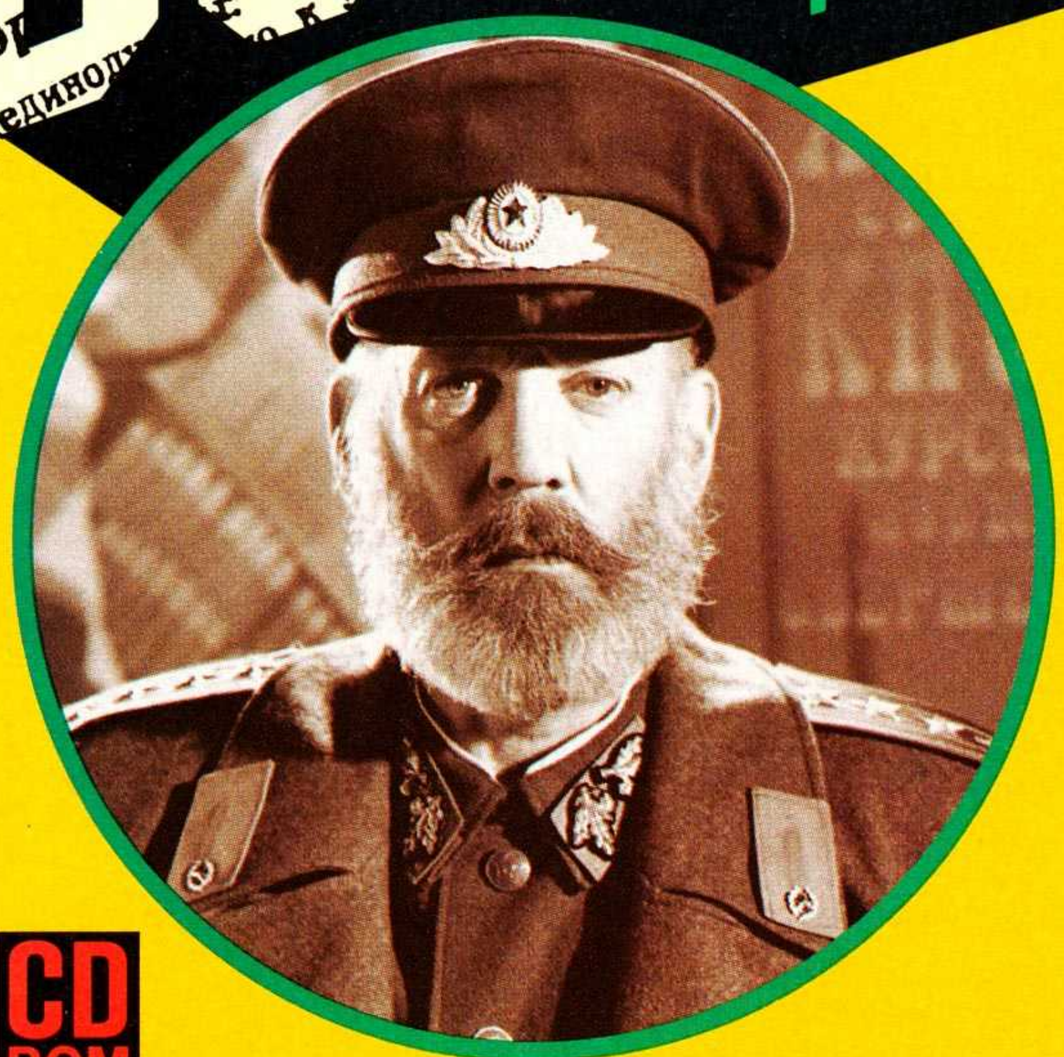




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SOFTWARE GALLERY

SimFarm

PUBLISHER	**Maxis**
DESIGNER	**Eric Albers**

PLATFORM	**MS-DOS**
THEME	**Strategy**
MIN. HD REQ.	**4.7 MEG**
PLAYERS	**1**

Did the rigors of **SimCity** planning seem too stressful, or strike too closely to home? If so, perhaps a trip to the country is in order. Maxis offers therapy in the form of **SimFarm**, billed appropriately as "**SimCity**'s Country Cousin." **SimFarm** allows players to design and manage their own virtual agricultural playgrounds.

As in other Maxis products, the interface for **SimFarm** is easy to learn but difficult to master. A text command bar with pull-down menus runs along the top of the screen, allowing access to various settings, options and save game features. Below this and along the left side of the display are two series of icons, several of which access more icons. There is on-line help for any whose use isn't apparent.



Start your agricultural career in one of many regions from across the country.

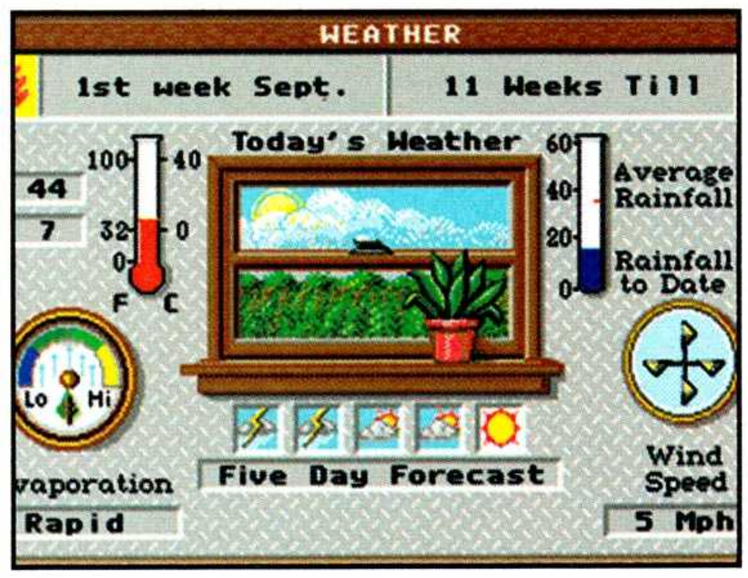
SimFarm's depth of play is equivalent to its contemporaries in the sim line. What makes the game challenging is understanding the relationship of elements that exist in a simulated farm. It is not enough for farmers to plow, plant and harvest, they must also become familiar with more cerebral issues like proper crop rotation, pesticide use and the long-term effects of soil toxicity.

It is impossible to avoid the business side of the simulation. To stay fiscally afloat, farm owners must improve livestock and crop quality to obtain the best market return, and even dabble a bit in the futures market. Playing the market is risky, as one can make a killing or lose the farm. As the farm becomes more profitable, the main house is improved, but the neighboring town begins to grow and encroach on the available land. Striking the right balance of growth is the secret of success.

Animal Husbandry is another method of cash flow, particularly for those whose thumbs are more brown than green. Cows, horses, sheep and pigs are available. The absence of chickens is noteworthy, as they are inexpensive to maintain and a good source of steady revenue. Nevertheless, the other four species provide sufficient variety to allow the player to try different strategies. Sheep eat less than their counterparts, reproduce sooner and more often, thus they are a good choice for a quick start. Pigs are the next best selection for a farmer with room to expand. Horses and cows are more of a long-term investment. A barn in the same fenced area as the livestock reduces their food and water consumption, as well as keeping their health and quality high during the winter months.



As the lay of the land grows familiar, the Crop Schedule window is visited more frequently. Herein, players plan crop planting, maintenance, harvest and rotation, then sit back and watch it all happen automatically. This window also provides a quick reference on maturity, current value and crop quality, all essential factors in determining when to sell. Additionally, dial graphs provide instant



As everyone knows, weather is a prime factor in the success or failure of farms.

indicators of water and soil quality in the fields, as well as the impact of disease, pests and weeds.

Buildings and equipment may be purchased any time; land for as long as it is available. Failure to purchase some necessary equipment does not stop the flow of events. When their services are needed, they are leased from town at an appropriately high cost. With this in mind, players should buy farm machinery as soon as possible. If times are rough, and these pieces have been maintained, they may be sold off to get the farm through another growing season or two. Remember, desperate times require desperate measures.

As in real life, when **SimFarm**ers finally get things going smoothly, the worst disasters will happen. Disasters can be imposed or occur of their own accord, just as in other Maxis titles. But calamities can be fun in virtual worlds.

If you're still uncertain, button up the coveralls, spread some virtual fertilizer and see what comes of trying to run your own farm! Whether one's taste runs toward a small family plot or a burgeoning commercial enterprise, **SimFarm** delivers.

— Ed Dille

COMPLEXITY	**Intricate**
GRAPHICS	**84%**
SOUND	**86%**
PLAYABILITY	**92%**
REPLAYABILITY	**88%**

OVERALL 87%

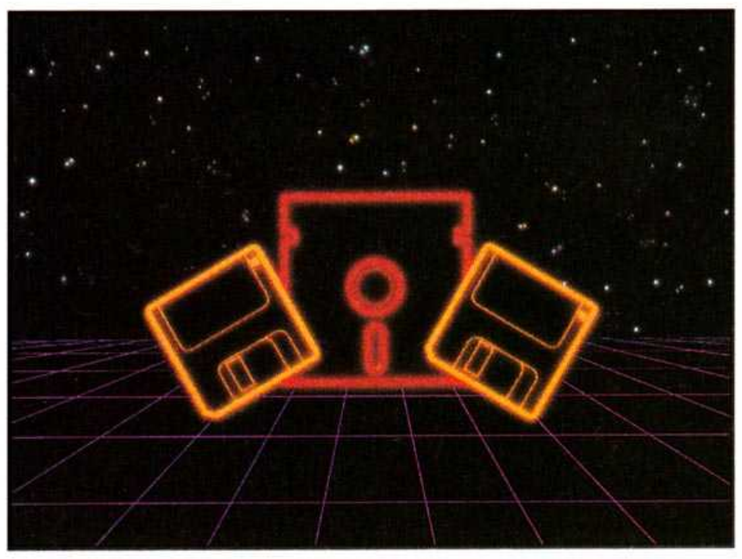
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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands

PUBLISHER	**SSI**
DESIGNER	**Carr, Collver, Isgreen, McClure**
PLATFORM	**MS-DOS**
THEME	**RPG**
MIN. HD REQ.	**26 MEG**
PLAYERS	**1**

The wait is over!

SSI has been advertising (and postponing the release of) **Dark Sun** for almost a year now. A long time in the making, **Dark Sun** is the first of a new generation of role-playing games from SSI. These new games will use an all new, point-and-click graphical interface, and feature a different player perspective and a full-screen playing field.

Appropriately, the first game to take advantage of the new engine is also new to computer scenarios. **Dark Sun** takes place on the world of Athas. Once beautiful, the ruling class of magic users have abused their power and caused the sun to change from its normal yellow glow to



This is the fate that awaits adventurers who are not ready for this harsh world.

one of deep red. The oceans have dried up and the world has become dry and desolate.

The player must create a character to help lead a revolt against the Sorcerer-Kings who still rule the land. At the start of the game, players will find their character locked in the slave pens, with virtually no hope for escape or freedom. Scheduled to fight as a gladiator in the arena, the character must first escape, and then go forth to form a party of strong warriors to complete the quest.

While the story and setting of **Dark Sun** is different than other SSI RPGs, the better part of the game rules remain the same. The way various statistics are handled adhere to the *AD&D 2nd Edition* rules, and the majority of the character races and classes have appeared in previous games.

There are two new races to choose from, Muls and Thri-kreen. Muls are the result of cross-breeding between humans and dwarves. They are always male and have the unique characteristic of being as large as humans with proportional dwarven strength. Thri-kreen are insectoid creatures that are large and possess a good mix of characteristics. Thri-kreen are always female.



There are also several new character classes. Preservers are essentially the wizards of the game. They are strictly magic users who, like wizards, do not possess good weaponry skill and do not wear any armor. Gladiators are strong warriors borne through the slave-pens. They are a fighting class who are not able to use magic.

Also new to the game are the Psionicists. These characters are able to manipulate the world around them with their minds. Very similar to magic users, Psionicists are able to attack, defend and heal with their powers.

It should also be noted that even familiar character types have been modified for this new world, and sometimes may not react exactly the way players are familiar with.

The graphics in **Dark Sun** are excellent. The appearance of the desert world is perfect and truly adds to the overall feel of the game.

The new graphic interface is fairly easy to use, and the use of the entire screen for game play is a much welcomed sight.

Players of the **Ultima** series of games will be immediately comfortable with the perspective of the game, and with the basics of the interface. While bearing some similarity to that series, there are aspects of **Dark Sun**'s interface that are executed better and some that are still a little rough around the edges. Overall though, the interface works well and accomplishes its purpose.

The sound in **Dark Sun** is good but not outstanding. It is apparent that more time was spent on the new engine than on the soundtrack. This is somewhat of a sore point, because of the amount of time it took SSI to get this game out. One would expect all aspects to be equally well done.

As for playability, there are two schools of thought. Those who thought that the old **Gold-Box Adventures** were the end-all, may be a little disappointed. The change in the engine is radical, and though completely new to SSI, in reality it is neither new or revolutionary. Still, gamers who keep an open mind should enjoy the more streamlined adventuring interface, and especially the full-screen graphics.

Dark Sun is a very good game and a worthy introduction of the new engine. It is nice to see SSI exploring some of the other worlds in the AD&D realm and hopefully this will continue.

While there are still some bugs to be worked out in the interface, it is clear that this is a huge step toward a new standard of graphic excellence, and that SSi is still aiming high.

Only one remaining request. From now on, how about bringing the games out a little closer to schedule.

— Marc Camron

COMPLEXITY	**Intricate**
GRAPHICS	**94%**
SOUND	**82%**
PLAYABILITY	**88%**
REPLAYABILITY	**72%**

OVERALL 91%

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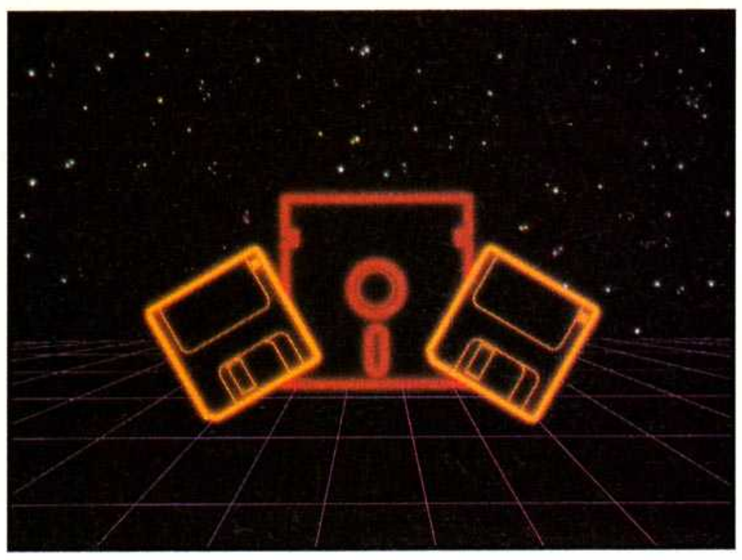
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SOFTWARE GALLERY

FlixMix

PUBLISHER	**Celeris Inc.**
DESIGNER	**Lee Morgenstern**

PLATFORM	**MS-DOS**
THEME	**Puzzle**
MIN. HD REQ.	**1.5 MEG**
PLAYERS	**1-9**

FlixMix, the newest puzzle game on the block, brings a uniqueness to a field dominated by the ubiquitous **Tetris** titles (Spectrum Holobyte), with occasional oddball entries such as **Penthouse Electric Jigsaw** (Merit Software), and **KaleidoKubes** (Artworx). At heart, **FlixMix** is a jigsaw puzzle. What sets it apart, however, is not only the pure aesthetic beauty of the graphics and music, but also the complete reliance on observation required to solve the nine animated puzzle images in four different game modes. The puzzle pieces in this outing have four straight sides with no interlocking features (however, they may be locked in place, or locked together).

The first puzzle is *Spherical Aberration*. In this puzzle, four revolving chrome balls reflect the blue sky and a bright red and yellow checkered surface as they revolve to the beat of Scott Joplin's "Ragtime Dance." The second challenge is the *Quixotic Box Paradox*, which is a rotating M. C. Escher-style yellow box that cannot actually exist as a three dimensional object. This puzzle, accompanied by Aaron Levitz's "Sancho's Dilemma," requires the user to use visual cues, such as shadows and movement, for its completion. *Puddle Muddle* creates two ripples in a pond, then filters them through its mud-colored surface where the concentric waves intersect and form a third pattern. The Zen-like serenity generated by *Puddle Muddle* is enhanced by Bach's Fugue No. 5 in D Major. *Mishmash Mesh*'s wave-like net, accompanied by an original Levitz score, rises, crests and falls in this puzzle where the object is to construct the net.

Felix Mendelssohn's "The Spinning Song" sets the mood for *Reflexion Perplexion*, a brain-teaser involving mirrors and a single spinning ball. *Trig Enigma* involves random waves flowing across the game field to the music of A. D. Chaplin's "Some Kind'a Swing." *Juggle Jumble* has neon green balls streaking across a purple surface, studded with moving dots. *Spiral Beguiler*'s swirling patterns are variable, and the choreography is set to Bach's "Prelude No. 5 in D Major."

The final puzzle type, *Right Angleworms*, is based on Hilbert's space-filling curve, a recursive algorithm where at every stage, each square in the previous stage is divided into four smaller squares. The path is then rerouted to pass through the center of each new square and replicate the pattern in the previous stage, on a smaller scale. The colored worms shimmy to the tune of "Salsa de Acertijo" by Chaplin.

There are four built-in game modes: Single Mingle, Scramblecade, Joint Venture and Mix 'n Match. Single Mingle is for single gaming. This mode allows the player to solve puzzles at leisure, play at a higher difficulty setting, or practice specific puzzles. There is no time limit at this level, but a clock displays elapsed time. The features at this level include piece rows and columns to specify the number of pieces. Set low, the pieces are large, perfect for children and the beginning gamer. Set high, each contest can take much longer to solve. Scramblecade is a timed challenge, with the player facing an increasingly difficult series of puzzles.

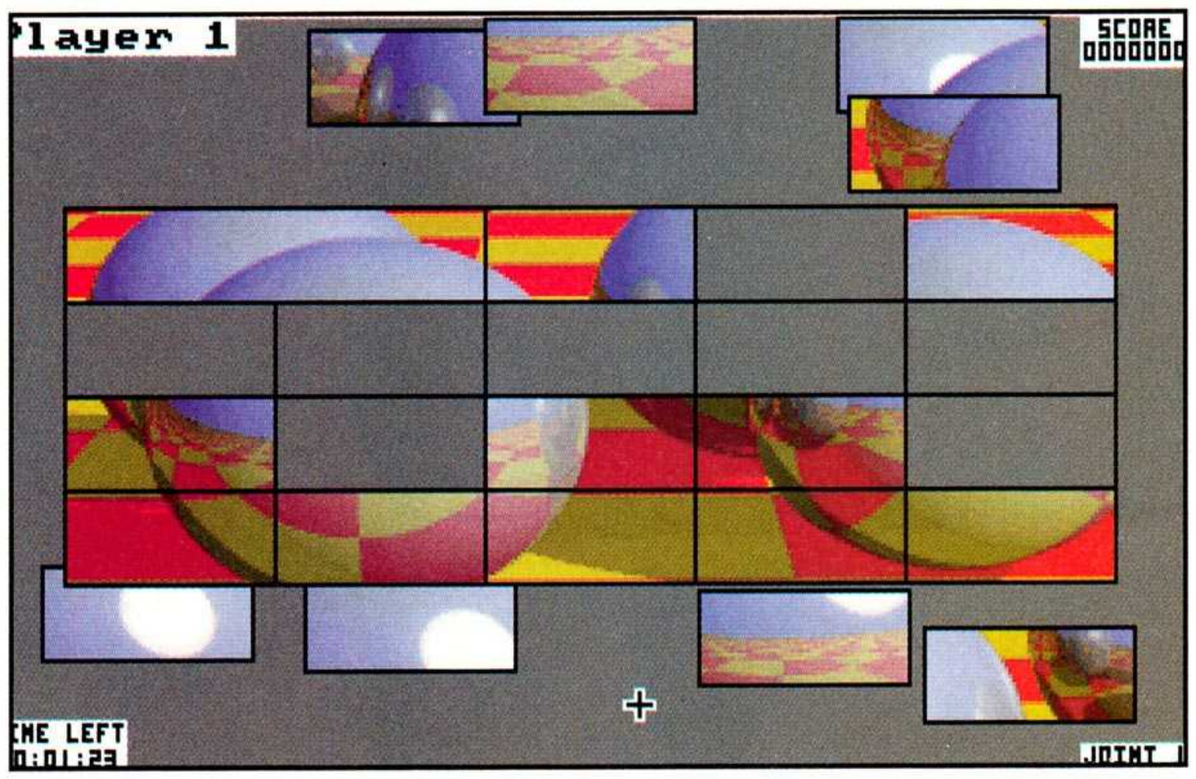
Joint Venture and Mix 'n Match are both multiple player selections for up to nine puzzlers. Joint Ventures is a cooperative competition where multiple players solve a series of puzzles. Mix 'n Match is a head-to-head competition where each puzzle must be solved in turn by the players.

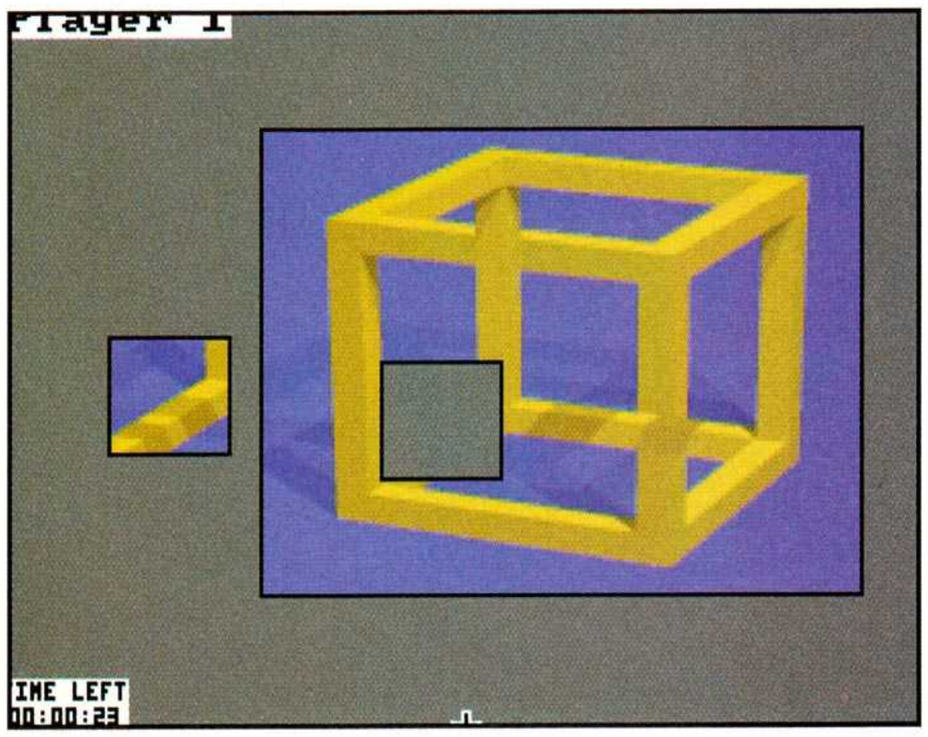
The visuals in **FlixMix** explore a wide range of computer technology. *Spherical Aberration*, *Quixotic Box Paradox* and *Reflexion Perplexion* are all created through the use of ray-tracing. *Puddle Muddle* and *Mishmash Mesh* use the surface plots of radiating sine wave functions. Real-time animations include *Trig Enigma*'s wave modulation imagery, *Spiral Beguiler*'s computer spiral-graphing algorithms, and *Right Angleworms*. The overall colors of the puzzles have the animated features colored a bright neon against a muted background. This not only helps keep the eye focused on the clues, but also helps in tracking the shadows.

The program's playability is very high. Up to nine games can be stored in memory, allowing players to work on them over an extended period of time.

FlixMix is extremely innovative approach to the electronic puzzle genre that will be sure to keep you guessing.

— *Laurie Yates*





COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**85%**
SOUND	**89%**
PLAYABILITY	**95%**
REPLAYABILITY	**90%**

OVERALL 92%

More Vegas Games

PUBLISHER	**New World Computing**
DESIGNER	**Joe Pierce**

PLATFORM	**Windows**
THEME	**Casino Games**
MIN. HD REQ.	**2 MEG**
PLAYERS	**1-4**

When you cannot get away to Vegas or Atlantic City to play high roller craps, video poker, high stakes baccarat, single deck blackjack or mechanical horse racing, you might want to click on over to your Windows highway to gambling adventure in **More Vegas Games**. New World Computing seems committed to offering a wider selection of game genres than the average company, and is doing so in the tried and true manner of buying games developed by smaller game houses. Dreamer's Guild designed the current game to be a simple, uncomplicated game. Like the solitaire game that comes with Windows, and the prior **Vegas Games**, you can get into these games quickly and easily for a short diversion before going back to work.

New World Computing reports that the original **Vegas Games** still sells a few thousand units per month. **Vegas Games for Windows** contains single-player, no-animation, and no-speech poker, blackjack, slots, keno and roulette, based on the concept of quick and easy fun, with no frills or complications. Both Windows entertainment packs are easy-in-easy-out games. Neither product contains a tutorial or complications. **More Vegas Games** is just plain easy fun or a simple absent-minded distraction.

The games are so simple to use that the box does not even come with a manual, just a card to describe how to install and another card to register the product, in addition to the one disk. A pull-down menu, or the F1 key, accesses the help menu to explain the extremely simple rules for each of these classics. The simple nature of the games makes them just right for a little time out.

These new games represent a breakthrough in the marketplace for the new computer user purchasing this product, which was designed for the general consumer and not the hard-core gamer. Contrast **More Vegas Games' Craps** with Spirit of Discovery's **Beat the House Craps**, which is more for the hard-core gamer, with a high level of complexity and more options than anyone could want.



These simple, inexpensive "diversion" games seem to continue selling many months after their release. Simple games on the desktop must be important in the consumer marketplace if Microsoft is getting on the band wagon with their new five-game Arcade product based on the same concept.

More Vegas Games is expanded and enhanced with speech and animation. Up to four players can sit around the computer in true Casino style and play against the "house" dealer. The games would have probably been better if they were supported null modem, phone modem and network play.

New World's Scott McDaniel says the company really had to stretch to come up with five more games for this sequel. He says they were at a loss concerning what games to add to this pack. Who ever thought you would see horse racing on a computer game? So do not expect to see **Even More Vegas Games**, since the company regrettably seems to be stumped at what titles to add to the series.



More Vegas games lets you bet on the ponies without losing your polo shirt.

Vegas Games may represent a new genré of simple Windows desktop-based games that give you a little time out from the regular routine. Light simple games, having more appeal to the broad based consumer market, may be the wave of the future for those who don't want to delve into a huge adventure or simulation while taking a break from those tedious spreadsheets.

In any case, if you are tired of playing the old-fashioned Windows **Solitaire**, here is a good, solid, inexpensive and simple set of five alternatives that are sure to keep you betting against the bank.

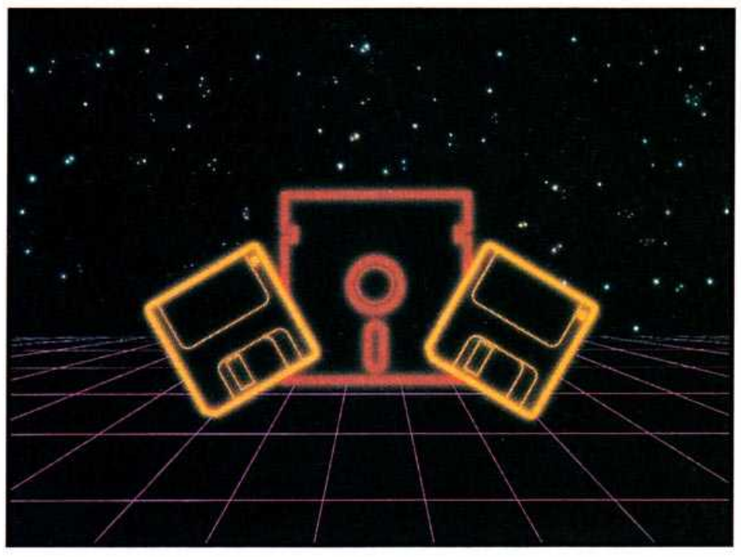
— Alfred C. Giovetti



Try to master the cards and betting when playing high stakes Baccarat.

COMPLEXITY	**Easy**
GRAPHICS	**82%**
SOUND	**83%**
PLAYABILITY	**91%**
REPLAYABILITY	**89%**

OVERALL 85%



SOFTWARE GALLERY

War in Russia

PUBLISHER	**SSI**
DESIGNER	**Gary Grigsby**
PLATFORM	**MS-DOS**
THEME	**Military Simulation**
MIN. HD REQ.	**3 MEG**
PLAYERS	**1-2**

The Eastern Front has long been a favorite among wargamers, chiefly because the Russian winters proved as devastating to the Wermacht as they had to Napoleon's Armies.

War in Russia is but the latest game to taunt players with this challenging campaign. Mr. Grigsby has driven grognards across the steppes of Russia before, most recently in **Second Front**, also from SSI.

War in Russia is a strategic (*vice* tactical) level wargame. Each hex is 20 miles across and the smallest unit icon on the map is a Corps, which may be comprised of 1-8 Divisions. The scale lends itself to major actions but is less successful if the player attempts to recreate specific battles, such as the armor engagement at Kursk. Despite the grand overview perspective, the program does track losses and replacements down to individual tanks, guns and men.

Campaign play may begin in either the 1941, '42 or '43 historical positions. Additionally, there are two specific scenarios: *Typhoon* and *Case Blue*. Typhoon begins with the collapse of the Kiev pocket, as the Axis forces are poised to strike toward Moscow. Case Blue begins with the 1942 summer offensive, and is limited to the area around Stalingrad.

As the Wermacht Commander, one must master the art of Blitzkrieg (Lightning Warfare), gobbling up as much territory as possible and consolidating one's line prior to the onset of winter. To support the offensive, fly maximum air missions to obtain air superiority and interdict the Russian supply lines. Forward momentum should be maintained on all turns except when rain or blizzard conditions persist.

Herein lies the artificiality: Some units start and remain on the front line, in contact with the enemy throughout the campaign. With readiness levels below 20 percent, these units are still capable of shattering and capturing Soviet units of lesser combat value. Thus, ruthless commanders may demand more from their troops than could reasonably be expected in actual combat.

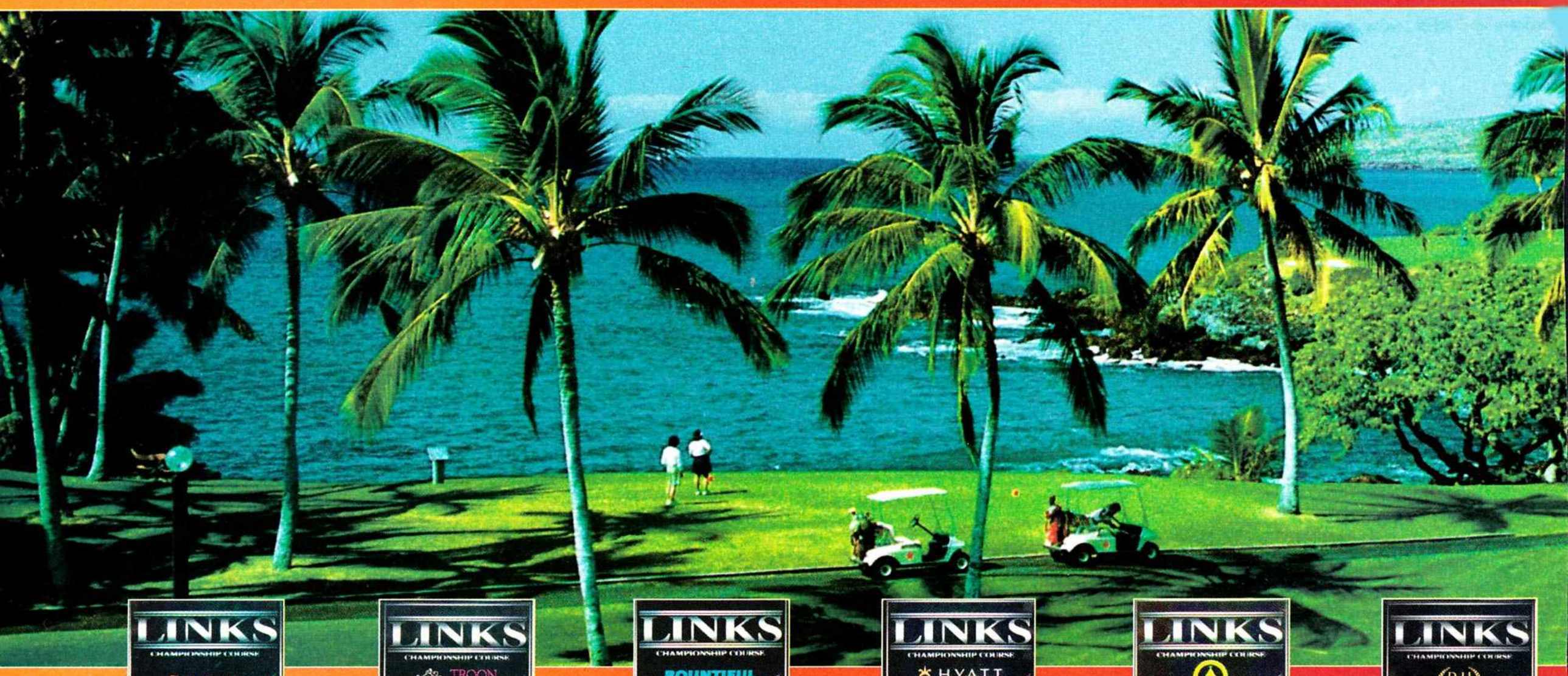
As the Soviet Field Marshall, it is necessary to conduct a fighting retreat



Selecting and implementing the proper air missions are a vital part of victory.

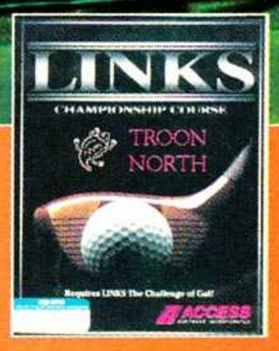
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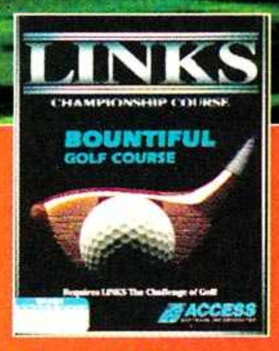




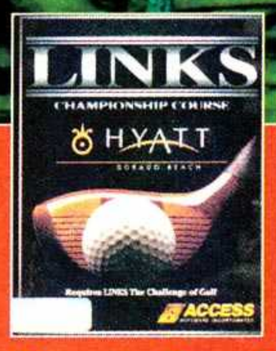
Firestone
Akron, Ohio



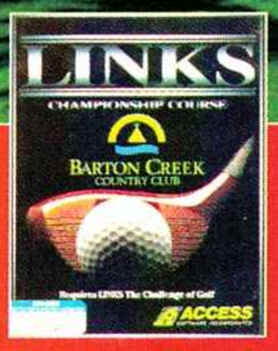
Troon
Scottsdale, AZ



Bountiful
Bountiful, UT



Dorado Beach
Puerto Rico



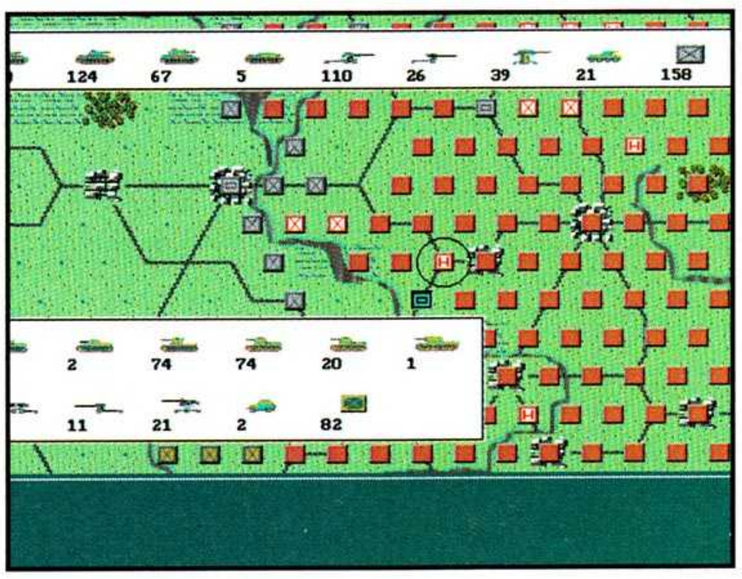
Barton Creek
Austin, Texas

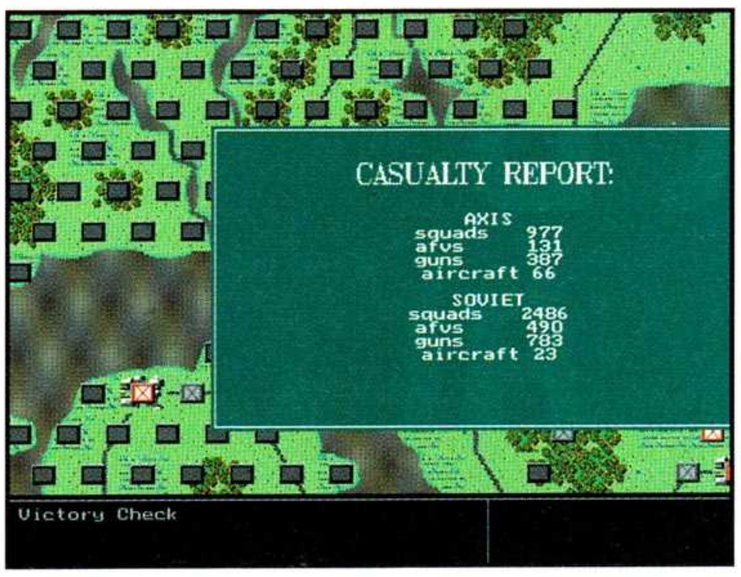


Bayhill
Orlando, FL

during the initial phases of the conflict. Unless the German advance is delayed, insufficient time will exist to dismantle factories and move them to the shelter of the Urals, where they will later support the counteroffensive. A fighting withdrawal is one of the most difficult operations to conduct, and one that is also unfamiliar to most gamers. As such, some general guidance is in order.

After the initial lines are broken, retreat units from contact to the next geographic defense, such as across a river, or for two turns, whichever occurs first. At that point, halt the units to allow entrenchment to build up. German Armor may overrun these tactics, but if the Panzer units penetrate too deeply, with their infantry support hung up by some dug in defenders, it is frequently possible to cut off supply and envelop the overextended armor.





Numerous pop-up windows will keep you quite informed of your current progress.

War in Russia retains **Second Front**'s method of plotting movement and combat, but the logistic model has been improved by the addition of Operations Points (OPs). The total number of OPs available is a factor of the number and quality of resource sites, factories and oil fields under control. Each turn, OPs are meted out to the units, and must be expended for every action from unit transfers to combat. Additionally, they may be spent for special supply, to boost a specific unit's readiness for battle.

Strategic bombing can impact the level of available OPs, but the player does not directly control the strategic bombing campaign. The computer controls these actions directly and the only influence the German player can exert is the transfer of fighter assets from the Eastern Front back to O.K.H., to help counter the threat. Also, the fact that players are not prevented from or punished for moving garrison troops out of France and Italy to support the Eastern Front is a fault.

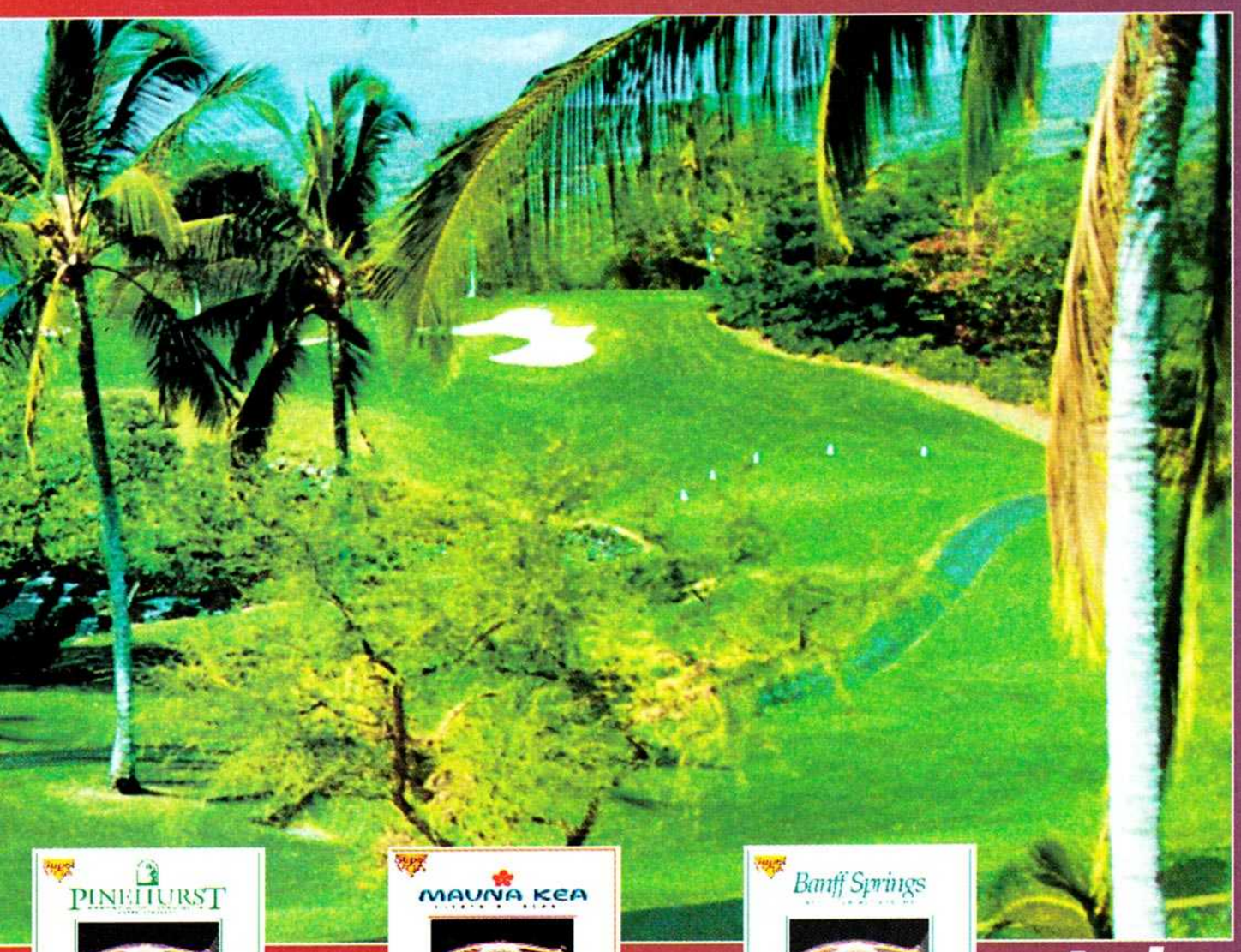
On the positive side, earlier problems with excessive Soviet mobility during Blizzard turns have been corrected. The Russians possess a distinct edge in readiness multipliers during inclement weather, but they should not be expected to drive the Wermacht back to the Rhine in the Winter of '41. Mr. Grigsby's effort to fine tune the AI of the computer opponent is also noteworthy, as veterans can expect a more challenging outing than they may have had in the past.

— Ed Dille

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**72%**
SOUND	**75%**
PLAYABILITY	**86%**
REPLAYABILITY	**78%**

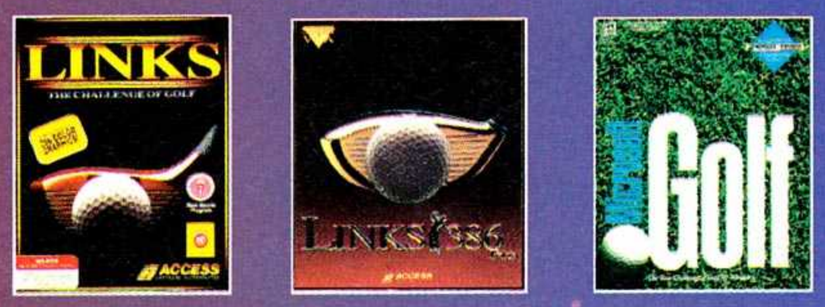
OVERALL 78%

are brings you
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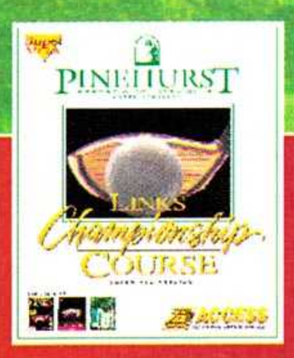


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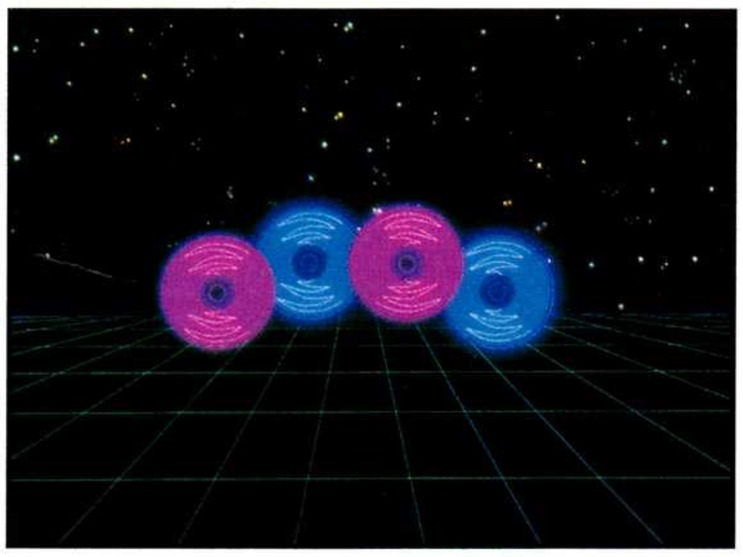


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CD GALLERY

Sonic CD

PUBLISHER	**Sega**
SYSTEM	**Sega CD**
THEME	**Action**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**60+**

Everybody's favorite furry blue streak of lightning is back, and this time he is bigger than ever. Just in time for the holiday season, **Sonic The Hedgehog CD** explodes onto the Sega CD system.

Sega has taken their time in programming **Sonic CD**. Though the old game play remains intact, the game is completely different than any of the previous Sonic releases.

The story tells of Sonic and the gir...er...hedgehog he loves, Princess Sally. One day , they take a trip over to Never Lake to see The Little Planet. On the last month of each year, the Little Planet appears over Never Lake and can be traveled to. It seems that the Little Planet is very special, because it contains special time altering stones. When Sonic and Sally get to the Little Planet, they find it all beat up and anchored to a stone. Before they know what is happening, evil Dr. Robotnik sends his latest creation, a robot "Metal Sonic", to kidnap the Princess Sally and take her to the fortress he is creating with the Little Planet. Now, Sonic must race against time itself to gather the Time Stones before Dr. Robotnik can get them all and take control and conquer the world. Over 60 levels await Sonic on his dangerous journey through time on the Little Planet.

Sonic CD is meant to be a flagship title for the Sega CD player. As such, the creators set out to make sure that the game is as exciting as the previous Sonic games, even though it really doesn't represent a very large departure form the previous formula.

The object is still the same. Defeat Dr. Robotnik and rescue the lovely Princess Sally. The controls are identical to the earlier Sonic games, as are most of the power-ups. It is possible to get Sonic rolling (by holding down on the control pad while standing still) and spin your way through a whole line of enemies; or in the spirit of cartoons, get Sonic's feet rolling and peel out (hold up on the pad). Either technique is a good way to get going up hill or through difficult areas from a standing start. In this game, Sonic can also grab onto poles and hang on. He can maneuver to a better position on the pole before letting go, making sure not to bump into any other nasty objects that may be waiting.



The bosses in Sonic CD are powerful, big and ready to take Sonic out.

All of the items from the original Sonic are also here. There are plenty of rings of course, and monitors holding other items like power sneakers and shields. About 50 rings will again activate the bonus level at the end of the regular levels, and 100 rings will still give players an extra life.

The bonus levels are new, though somewhat similar to the bonus levels in **Sonic 2**. Here Sonic must race around an area similar to **Super Mario Kart** and collect the seven Time Stones. These levels are timed and like the Chaos Emeralds from the first Sonic, all Time Stones must be found to complete the game.

New to **Sonic CD** is the ability to travel forward and backward in time. Players do this by activating a time sign and running at top speed for a few seconds, allowing the time-warp to take effect. Each level has a past and future, and though the layout of the level stays the same, some of the features may change. In the future, the land may either be overrun with Dr. Robotnik's evil robots, or free and peaceful.

The graphics in **Sonic CD** are superb, though it would have been nice to see a little more use of the special features that the Sega CD is capable of doing. Much of the look is a carry-over from the previous games, but that doesn't detract from the quality. There are a few new animations to Sonic himself, and the bosses are large and also well animated.

The music in **Sonic CD** stands out above the crowd. The soundtrack is recorded in "Q-Sound." For those who don't know, Q-Sound is a process where surround sound effects are achieved through the use of two front speakers only. This greatly enhances the depth of the sound and adds a richness to the game.

The game plays as well as the previous Sonic games, and the additions of the different time periods helps add to the replayability. There are still plenty of objects to collect and secret places to find, and the quantity of levels invites hours of exploration. There is also an added option called Time Attack which allows the player to choose a level and race through it for the best time.

Sonic CD is a must-have for any Sega CD owner. It's far and away the best Sega CD game to date.

— Marc Camron

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**92%**
SOUND	**94%**
PLAYABILITY	**94%**
REPLAYABILITY	**88%**

OVERALL 92%

Lord of the Rings

PUBLISHER	**Interplay**
SYSTEM	**PC CD-ROM**
THEME	**Adventure**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**N/A**

Inferior writers have copied the characters and themes of *The Lord of the Rings* so often that they threaten to become clichés. Just as some modern horror fans can't watch Bela Lugosi without laughing, electronic adventurers may have trouble taking the One Ring, elves, dwarves, hobbits and orcs as seriously as the author intended.

Lord of the Rings imitators may detract from our appreciation of Tolkien's



Three rings were forged from a mighty furnace that swelled with magic power.

remarkable creation. Approximately 40 years of Frodo wanna-bes and bogus Gandalfs don't make it easy to develop an interactive version of the well-known work that captures the sense of wonder of this imaginative and richly textured tale.

Interplay's floppy **Lord of the Rings, Volume One**, released in late 1990, set new standards for bringing the saga of The Fellowship to the game screen. The CD-ROM edition lives up to its "enhanced" designation with a comprehensive upgrade and expansion that improves the original and heightens the experience.

The adventure successfully walks the line between slavish devotion to a linear retelling of the story and a game that uses only the background world without Tolkien's characters and story. There's plenty of opportunity to wander through Middle Earth and have exploits outside the scope of the trilogy, but a series of sub-goals serve as bottlenecks to keep the overall game moving along the lines of *The Lord of the Rings*.

The system requirements for the CD are specific, but not unbearably stringent. The user needs a 386SX or better computer with an MPC-compatible CD drive. The machine must have a 16-Bit video card and at least a SoundBlaster audio card. The program requires 530K of low memory and 1 MB of extended memory.

What the computerist gets with this gear is better graphics, smoother animation, more music, extensive audio narration and dramatic speech, a streamlined interface.

The most impressive new visual element is the use of clips from the Ralph Bakshi animated feature film. The full-color, full-screen non-interactive videos make characters come to vibrant life in a way that has so far eluded Tolkien-based games.

Interplay will run out of Bakshi footage somewhere in the middle of **The Two Towers**, but let's enjoy this visual feast while it lasts. (According to Interplay President Brian Fargo, the company has gone to the lengths of trying to find any unused footage, but to no avail.)

The magnificent narration of the history of the One Ring, one of the most compelling sequences in the movie, makes the goal to destroy it in the fiery heat of Mt. Doom feel a lot more important and pressing.

The control system could hardly be easier to use without restricting activity. The gamer points at the on-screen character and then leads him or her in the desired direction with the cursor. Handling objects, talking and similar actions are selected from a bank of large icons in the lower left corner of the screen. Possible activities are: Attack, Get Item,Skill Use, Magic Use, Talk, Options Menu and Exit Menu.

Selecting the Option Menu facilitates



The rings caused jealousy and pride to rage, resulting in a legendary battle.



It is the gamer's quest to find the One Ring that will bind the others together.

quitting, saving and restoring games. This screen also turns music and sound effects off and on. The Option icon also gives access to a welcome new feature, Automapping.

An instruction manual, summary card, and on-line tutorial insure that even novice adventurers can slide the game-world on a reasonably gentle learning



curve.The design quartet (Paul Jacquays, Scott Bennie, Troy Miles and Bruce Schlickbernd) has produced a game capable of testing veteran players, but the difficulty is in the situations.

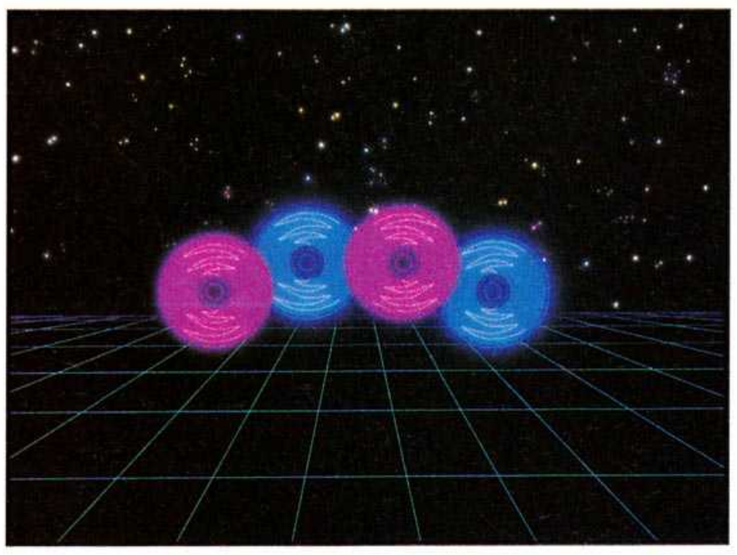
The game plays fluidly with the mouse, but keyboard entry is offered for those who prefer to type single-letter commands instead of pointing and clicking.

Few multimedia editions of existing games merit a recommendation even to those who already own the conventional computer version. This is definitely one of the exceptions.

— *Arnie Katz*

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**87%**
SOUND	**91%**
PLAYABILITY	**90%**
REPLAYABILITY	**80%**

OVERALL 91%



CD GALLERY

The Labyrinth

PUBLISHER	**Electronic Arts**
SYSTEM	**PC CD-ROM**
THEME	**Adventure**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**N/A**

Electronic Arts jumps onboard the CD-ROM bandwagon with the release of Terra Nova Development's original icon-driven adventure game, **The Labyrinth**. Not to be confused with earlier games of the same name, this adventure begins with a bit of Greek mythology superimposed over the mundane reality of the game's city dwelling protagonist.

While on his/her way home from work, the player-character is surprised to encounter the ancient Greek architect Daedalus standing in the middle of a subway car, relating a rather harrowing tale: King Minos, the great-grandson of Zeus, has harnessed the spirit of the designer of the Labyrinth of Knossos. Daedalus' enslaved spectre is now forced to construct another, more grandiose labyrinth, which bridges both space and time, with direct portals into such historical eras as the Middle Ages, pre-Columbian America, the Bronze Age, the Old West and the present.

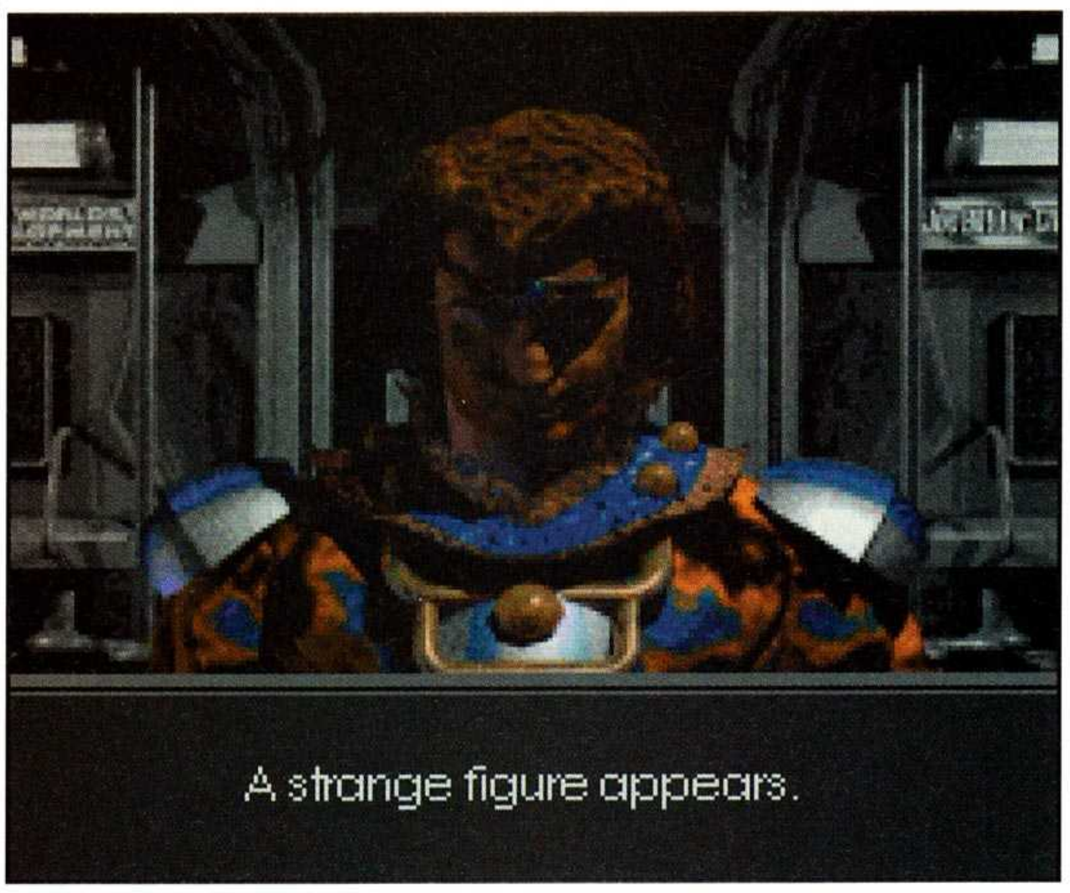
Minos somehow plans to become the ultimate ruler, not just of the current era, but of all history, via this Labyrinth. Daedalus' spirit, however, wants not only his own freedom, but freedom for history. He recruits what he believes to be a technically-advanced future warrior to stop Minos; unfortunately, his "warrior" is actually an innocent bystander bored with late-20th century life.

The game interface is comprised of two sets of on-screen icons. The first icon set includes: take, move, open, close, look, inventory, direction and map commands. When the gamer clicks on the inventory icon, or on the right mouse button, the second icon strip appears. This smaller set features: return to game, save/load, use and look at inventory commands, along with a scroll bar which cycles through the player-character's possessions.

The Labyrinth's graphics are not consistent, ranging from digitized black and white and color photos to superbly animated special effects. The photos aren't badly digitized, although they are somewhat flattened in the conversion to computer graphics, but moving from a photo of a hotel corridor to a bit-mapped image of a room door is both jarring and ruinous to maintaining a suspension of disbelief. The illusion of involvement with the game's reality is shattered by this crude transition. The Maze of Mirrors, for example, is rendered in uninspired bit-mapped graphics, lacking even the player-character's reflection, while the image of Daedalus embraces cutting edge SVGA 3-D-modeling and rendering technology.

The musical score, on the other hand, is delightfully sophisticated, and perfectly reflects the atmosphere and mood of the game. The opening melodies mirror the player-character's frustration with everyday life, while the score immediately launches into heroic fantasy mode once the first portal is spotted.

The game play is generic icon-driven adventure stuff, at best. The puzzles are conditional, and generally require a two- or three-step solution process. And if gamers miss a step in the sequence which results in opening





Just another subway ride? You didn't think it would take you to the Labyrinth!

a door, for example, they are forced to retrace their steps when that door is located. The icon bars, rather than simplifying game play, frequently involve the player in a cart-and-pony routine to accomplish the simplest goals. For example, if the gamer wishes to put a coin in the fortune telling machine, three steps must be followed. First, the gamer must take the coin from inventory, using the second icon bar. The gamer clicks on the action icon, and then on the coin slot. The more advanced adventurer is going to find the inability to skip that second step—by simply picking up the coin and dragging it to the coin slot—rather frustrating.

That's not the only drawback, either. The p-c's movements are also guided by the icons. The sense of being in the game cannot be maintained if the player cannot click on an open doorway to move through it. Instead, the adventurer must use the directional arrows. Worse still, when moving down a hotel corridor, the gamer is frequently moved to positions where no options are available. Traditionally in such a situation, the player-character would only be stopped if there were a door or adjacent corridor to the left or right. This kind of clunky interface bogs down what is already a far from streamlined game process.

The Labyrinth is a generally disappointing outing. It frequently attempts to echo much better games—such as **7th Guest**—and only embarrasses itself in the process. Unfortunately, this CD adventure is lost in its own maze of what it wants to be versus what it is.

— Laurie Yates

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**81%**
SOUND	**94%**
PLAYABILITY	**77%**
REPLAYABILITY	**74%**

OVERALL 81%

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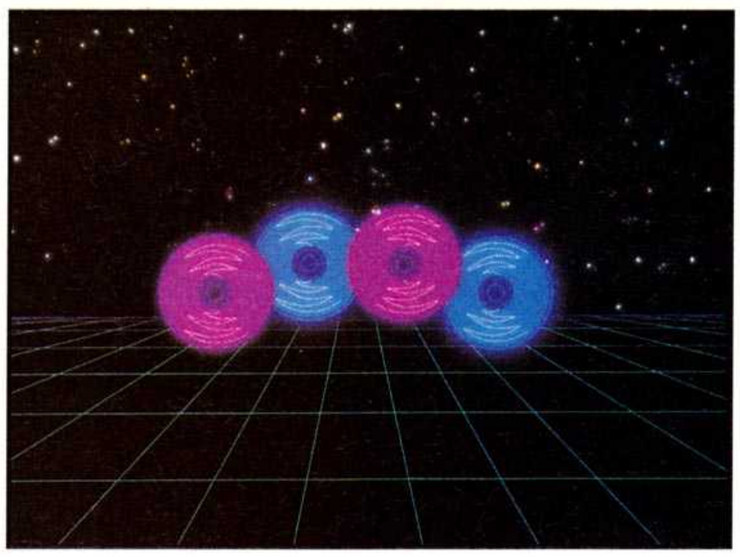




Mad Dog McCree is known worldwide as one of the highest rated arcade games and is the first interactive shooting game with real live motion picture action. Mad Dog and his men have kidnapped the town's mayor and his daughter. To save the town, you will be challenged by a saloon full of outlaws, a hair-raising bank robbery, gunfighters, a slew of Old West ambushes, and Mad Dog himself.

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CD GALLERY

Mega Rock, Rap 'n Roll

PUBLISHER	**Paramount Interactive**
SYSTEM	**Macintosh CD**

THEME	**Music**
MEGABITS	**N/A**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**N/A**

"Do You Wanna Be a Rock 'n' Roll star?" asks one of the classic songs of the 1960s. The idea has as much appeal for most of us now as it did then.

Mega Rock, Rap, 'n Roll won't turn anyone into a guitar hero, or even a studio wizard. It lacks the features necessary for professional composition and performance, most notably multi-track recording.



Be your own mix-master and throw some crazy bass lines to your crew.

What it *does* do, and very well, is provide a set of easy-to-manipulate tools for those who want to make music, but lack any sort of formal training in the field. It may be possible to put together terrible-sounding songs with this program, but you'd have to really work at it.

By streamlining and modularizing song elements, **Mega Rock, Rap 'n Roll** achieves an elegant simplicity that will enthrall Macintosh owners. It is the best musical doodling program available on this platform.

Learning to use **Mega Rock, Rap 'n Roll** won't strain anyone's IQ. It is so straightforward that Paramount doesn't even bother with a printed instruction booklet.

Instead, the program presents a choice of two on-line tutorials. A rapper teaches the system in a brief QuickTime movie, but if the jargon sounds foreign to your ears, a second tutorial fully describes each aspect of the program. One time through will be enough to get most users into the rhythm of putting together pop music compositions.

The Main Menu lists 10 major music styles: African, Big Band, Blues, Latin, Rap, Reggae, Rock Sampler, Soulful Sampler, Street Jazz and Techno Pop. After the user chooses one of the 10 types, the program loads the appropriate menu screen.

Along the left edge of the screen is the menu of song loops. Each one is a short selection, and they can be mixed. There's good stuff in every category. Unfortunately, only machines with at least 5MB of RAM have access to the full 10 loops for each type of music.

The user can test a loop by clicking on its title. Dragging a loop into the Song-a-Lizer at the bottom of the screen puts the riff into the composition. The Song-a-Lizer transmutes any batch of song loops into a complete song.

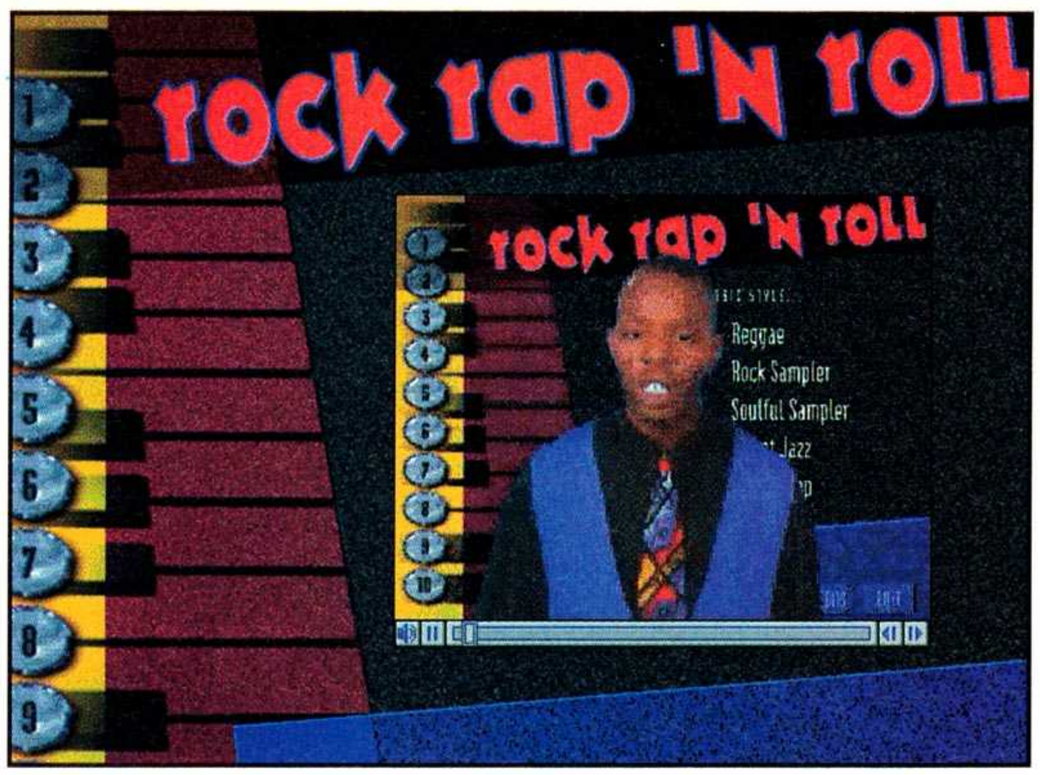
When the user fires up the Song-a-Lizer, it decides the optimal order in which to run the selected loops. It runs them in their order, over and over, until the composer activates the stop button by clicking on it.

The mouse kickers, two circular knobs, can each be programmed with one of several sounds. Clicking on the knob initiates the sound. For variety, each selection has an associated secondary sound. Moving the cursor over the mouse-kicker shifts between them.

The Vib-A-Tron and Bop-O-Rama deliver pre-programmed sounds, too. Each is separately programmable through attached menus.

The Voc-O-Lizer is an eight-button rectangle with digitized sounds. This is perfect for adding shouts, yips and miscellaneous exclamations of musical ecstasy. If you have a microphone for your Macintosh, **Mega Rock, Rap 'n Roll** supports entry of customized sounds and voices.

The keyboard adds even more possibilities. The top two key rows vary the pitch of two designated sounds, while the bottom two rows let the user play about two-dozen more into the work-in-progress. Owners of the IILC and IIsi don't have quite as much control, due to hardware limitations. The built-in tape recorder preserves jams for posterity. Unfortunately, there's no way to add elements to a





Smooth out the funky hometown blues with your own samples and strings.

recorded piece. The graphics are quite respectable for a program that is built on sound. Each of the 10 control boards is decorated to harmonize with the type of music created through it.

Mega Rock, Rap 'n Roll is the very model of a mass market musical entertainment. Even if you don't know a G-string from an F-sharp, this program is almost irresistible. It won't make you a rock 'n' roll star, of course, but it's a lot of fun to dream.

— Frank Laney, Jr.

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**85%**
SOUND	**95%**
PLAYABILITY	**95%**
REPLAYABILITY	**95%**

OVERALL 93%

TRAVEL TO EXOTIC LANDS, MEET STRANGE CREATURES AND BLOW THEM AWAY!



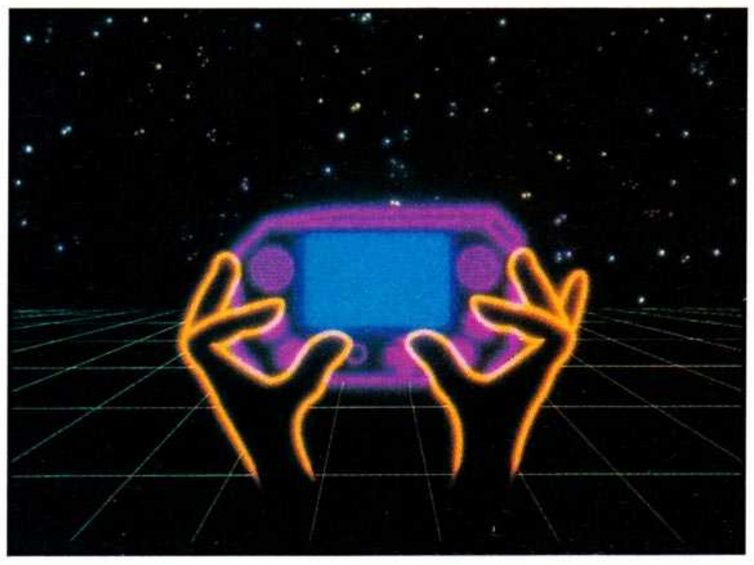
You've always considered yourself a soldier of fortune with a knack for survival and a thirst for green. Your mission? Anything for a price. But this time it's different. The stakes are a little bit greater and the danger is all too real. You and your team are on a desolate moon, surrounded by less than friendlies, with only one goal besides the mission itself; stay alive long enough to enjoy your newfound wealth.

Hired Guns is an adventure that can accommodate up to four players simultaneously. It features furious non-stop action, first person 3-D view and auto-mapping of the 1.7 million cubic meters of play area. Choose from 12 different richly developed characters to suit your needs for the mission at hand. Journey through this desolate land, all the while testing your survival skills. And remember; TAKE NO PRISONERS!



Hired Guns is available on IBM compatible and Amiga formats.

Psygnosis
675 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 497-7794



PORTABLE PLAYTIME

Panel Action Bingo

PUBLISHER	**FCI/LOCUS**
SYSTEM	**Game Boy**

THEME	**Puzzle Chase**
MEGABITS	**1**
PLAYERS	**1 or 2**
LEVELS	**60**

At first glance, **Panel Action Bingo** is a dismayingly simple game. The title screen has a smiling cat next to a cute bird and one's immediate reaction is "kids' game." The first game screen only supports this impression. After the player chooses numbers or alphabet, the game begins on a board of randomly placed numbers or letters, exactly like a bingo card. The player, represented by a bird in one-player mode, starts at the upper left-hand corner of the board and the opponent, a cat controlled by the computer, begins in the lower right hand corner of the board.

The game is essentially a race between the player and the computer, the goal being to cover the squares sequentially from 1 to 25 or from A to Z. (Two copies of Panel Action Bingo and two Game Boys are required for the two-player game.) The player moves the bird to the desired square before the opponent does, and presses the A button. When one player has covered five squares in a row, he has bingo and the round ends. If neither player scores a bingo, the most squares wins that round.

It sounds easy, and it is. The first 12 or so levels reinforce the kids' game image and make a good tool for teaching number or letter recognition skills, but pose no challenge to those who already have a firm grasp of their ABCs or 123s.

However, the opposition grows steadily stronger as the computer's cat gets swifter and shrewder. Add the fact that **PAB** has 60 levels, each with three rounds plus a bonus round for a total of



240 rounds(!) By level 20, the cat is *quick* and every screen is a frantic race against the computer.

Two randomly placed special characters complicate the 2nd and 3rd round of each level. The first is a star that cannot be landed on or passed through by either character. The second is a black hole that instantaneously kills the player's bird, although it's a non-fatal obstacle to the cat.

At level 31, the action reverses and the players must count down from 25 to 1 or Z to A.

Still too simple? At the beginning of each game the player may select from one to four options, each of which makes the game more difficult. These options range from not allowing any character to remain on a square for more than three seconds to hiding the entire board so that the player may only see the square he stands upon. Each option toggles independently, so the gamer may choose any combination desired, thus making each game potentially unique.

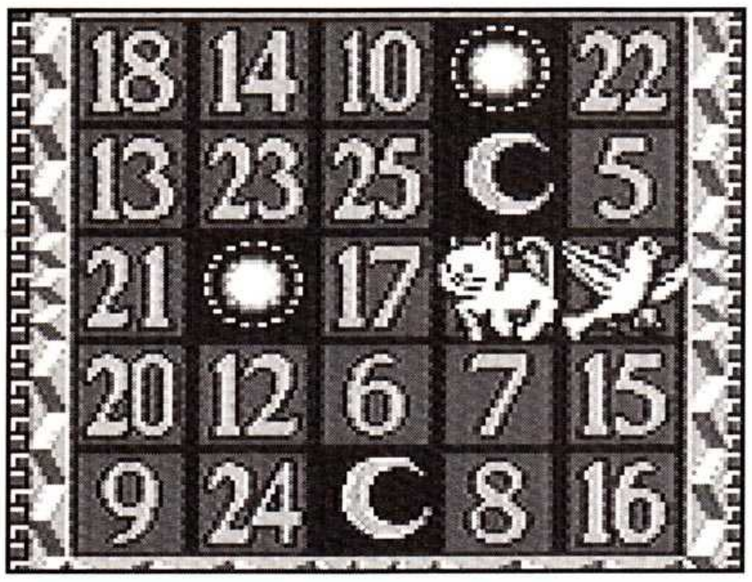
The player begins with three continues. More are awarded every time the player scores a double bingo, that is, makes two bingos at once. This is not uncommon in the early levels, but as the difficulty increases, players will win fewer and fewer continues. Not to worry though; every level has its own password.

PAB's graphics are satisfactory. Interspersed among the game screens are periodic views of an obscured Japanimation type character whose features are revealed as the game progresses. The music is unobtrusive, which is fortunate as there's no way to shut it off except to turn the volume all the way down.

Panel Action Bingo may not be the most exciting game, but its mix of education and challenging play make it worthwhile entertainment with broad appeal.

— John Hardin

COMPLEXITY	**Easy**
GRAPHICS	**78%**
SOUND	**75%**
PLAYABILITY	**80%**
REPLAYABILITY	**81%**
OVERALL 79%	



The old-time favorite, Bingo, is given a new electronic twist in this version.

Chuck Rock II: Son of Chuck

PUBLISHER	**Tengen**
SYSTEM	**Game Gear**

THEME	**Action**
MEGABITS	**2**
PLAYERS	**1**
LEVELS	**4**

It seems like games for the Game Gear just keep getting better. Oh, sure, **Chuck Rock II** doesn't break any new ground with its side-scrolling, platform-jumping game play, but with some of the lushest graphics yet seen on the Game Gear, who cares?



Chuck Rock II, starring a mini version of the famous caveman, has lots of action.

Chuck Rock Senior, caveman star of the first **Chuck Rock** game, is enjoying the fruits of being a successful video game star when he is kidnapped by the nefarious Brick Jagger. Chuck Jr. leaves the safety of crib and home to search for his nabbed dad. The gamer guides little Chuck through four levels of two zones each. The first level puts Junior on the relatively tame turf near home. Armed with his trusty club he dodges runaway boulders while he bashes killer birds and Brick Jagger's bumbling but lethal henchmen. The occasional pit full of spikes gives young Chuck the chance to do his Tarzan routine as he swings across them on handy hanging vines.



Gamers are sure to be impressed with Son of Chuck's lush, colorful graphics.

After the gamer clears both zones in a level, Chuck goes head to head with the end boss. Level one's boss is a hungry dinosaur with a bad disposition. At the end of Level 2, after Chuck negotiates all the lava pools, erupting volcanoes and Brick Jagger's flame thrower-wielding stooges, he encounters the end boss, a baby bird of Unusual Proportions. Level 3 finds Chuckie deep in the technicolor jungle, climbing trees and battling maniacal monkeys while he picks his way through near impassable thickets of spiky plants. The end boss is Ozric, a large nasty squid-thing who wants to get all of his tentacles on Chuck Jr.

At last it all comes down to the sewers on Level 4 where the player guides our intrepid infant past hissing steam lines, dripping sewage, and pools of toxic waste before facing Brick Jagger himself in the final battle for Chuck Senior's freedom.



No matter how skilled the player, Chuckie will take some hard shots in the last few zones, so make sure his health is way up before braving these hazardous areas. Power-ups shaped like baby bottles raise Chuck's vitality, indicated by the level of milk in a baby bottle in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. Below the bottle a number tells how many lives are left. There are no passwords or codes but players are given one continue per game.

The levels seem quite large, with multiple paths through some zones. It's possible to barrel right through to the end of a section but as there are no time limits, players should explore these large levels. It's fun and, with bonus point items and extra lives hidden all around, rewarding.

If the game play is good, the graphics are great. **Chuck Rock II** may have more of the feel of an interactive cartoon than any other game available on a portable system. Despite the explosion of colors,



The capricious caveboy uses his club nearly as well as his paunchy pop.

Little Chuckie is never hard to pick out of the background, even in the dense colors of the jungle screens. He's an ugly little sucker, but Ren & Stimpy and Beavis & Butthead have proven that animated characters don't have to be cute to be popular. Besides, who expects a baby neanderthal to be cute anyway?

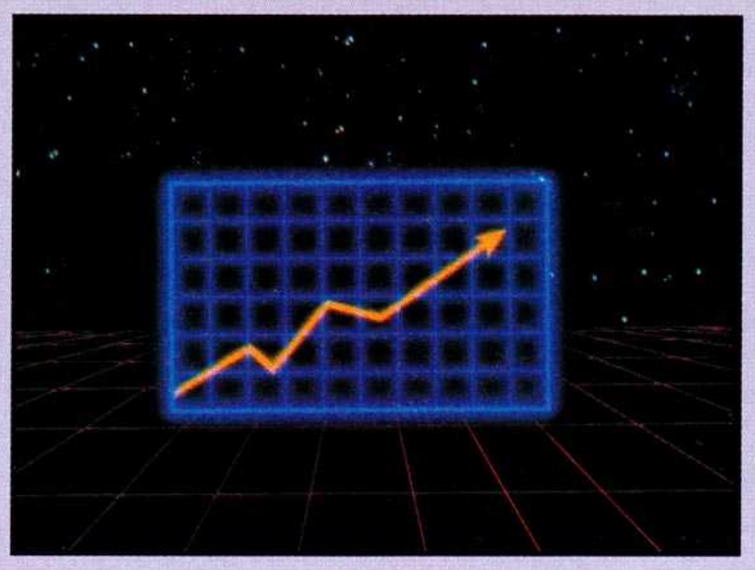
The sound effects are a little on the slim side and the music a trifle repetitious, but in no way detract or distract from the game.

With three very different levels of difficulty, **Chuck Rock II: Son of Chuck** is challenging enough for gamers of all ages. The sequel to the famous **Chuck Rock** would probably do well on its own, but the lineage certainly doesn't hurt it. Don't be surprised if this deserving game becomes a big hit on the Game Gear.

–John Hardin

COMPLEXITY	**Average**
GRAPHICS	**93%**
SOUND	**78%**
PLAYABILITY	**85%**
REPLAYABILITY	**80%**

OVERALL 88%



KUNKEL REPORT

Who's Winning This War?

by Bill Kunkel

Last June, this column was devoted to an analysis of the Nintendo-Sega War which concluded that, for the first time in this epic struggle for domination of the world video game market, Sega appeared to be winning.

The two-year head start which Nintendo conceded to Sega in the 16-Bit campaign had given developers time to disguise the primary weaknesses of the Mega Drive/Genesis technology (insufficient color palette, no rotation and scaling, etc.) while exploiting its power areas (speed, speed, speed). Sega had also changed advertising agencies, and the "Welcome to the Next Level" commercials the new group produced were the strongest TV ads in the market.

So now, six months later, where do we stand?

A trip to the front produced the mortal conviction that Sega has extended its margin of victory here in the states, while pounding the silicon out of Nintendo in Europe. Sega looks to have almost 60 percent of the 16-Bit market in the U.S., and is even more dominant in Great Britain, France and Germany. Only in Japan has the Super Famicom outslugged the Mega Drive, and there the margin of defeat was so great that Sega is about to launch a Genesis-compatible 32-Bit system, the Saturn, in hopes of conquering its home shores.

Here in America, it seems, everything's coming up Sega. Sonic is an established video game superstar, while the recent ratings controversies and, in particular, the release of the Sega version of **Mortal Kombat** with a "blood" code, has helped establish Sega as the "cool" video game system. Nintendo, meanwhile, is seen by many younger users as a priggish spinster, using its multi-national muscle to demand sanitized SNES versions of violent coin-ops.

The trendy, ultra-hip TV ads are still helping hype Sega to the skies. The latest series—with their hilarious "Say-Gah!" exit lines—are among the most entertaining commercials on the tube. It would be nice to see an occasional spot aimed at someone older than 16, but what the heck, that's where most of the games are aimed.

How hot is Sega? Even its clunky, underpowered Mega/Sega CD peripheral, which languished in the marketplace for months with a software selection that would have embarrassed Atari, has not only sold well, it has validated Sega's contention that the video game market is ready for CD-ROM—something Nintendo has yet to acknowledge.

Of course, in a war that never ends, victory is always a temporary condition. How well is Say-Gah! suited for the long haul? At the moment, the product line is strong, and we're even beginning to see signs of software life on the Sega CD. The success of the Genesis has also helped goose Game Gear sales, since the hit titles can be ported down to the GG at moderate development cost.

It also doesn't look as if Nintendo is going to offer much of a challenge on the CD front. Nintendo's recent betrothal to Silicon Graphics to produce a CD-based super-peripheral hasn't exactly ignited interest in the SNES. In the first place, Nintendo is on its way to becoming the Zsa Zsa Gabor of game companies, as Sony and Philips can certainly attest. In the second place, even if it comes out on schedule, "Project Reality" isn't due until Christmas '95. Get real!

On the Nintendo side, the SNES software product line is starting to look very good. It was, in fact, shocking to compare the latest versions of EA's **NHL Hockey** on the Genesis and SNES. The Genesis edition has a couple of nice new touches, but it's essentially the same product we've seen for a few years now. The SNES version, on the other hand, is a revelation. The game play, graphics and great digitized sound effects absolutely blow away its Genesis cousin.

Sega extended its margin of victory here, while pounding the silicon out of Nintendo in Europe.

Then there's the loss of key Sega player Al Nilsen. Al is one of the most accessible and sympatico people in the industry, and Viacom's gain is definitely Sega's loss. So far, the new PR crew at Sega hasn't shown a lot of sensitivity to the needs of the press—ignoring phone calls, requests for eproms, photos, etc.

Then there's Sega's Virtual Reality peripheral. Unless this product is amped up about 500 percent from the quality shown at the Summer CES, not even mega-def TV ads and the hottest buzzword this side of the Cyber Pass (Say "VR" and the doors shall open unto you!) will make this puppy bark. Sega got by with gas and vapor for almost a year with its CD peripheral, but smoke and mirrors marketing isn't really a sound long-term strategy.

Nonetheless, Sega has momentum, and it's difficult to imagine its execs losing much sleep over, say, the Jaguar or even 3DO. Atari is hardly a terrifying opponent, and how scary is a $700 system with a software library so small it makes Philips' CD-I look well-stocked?

Sega has also been making some impressive noises in the coin-op end of the business, creating several state-of-the-art arcade attractions, including the Luxor's VirtuaLand in Las Vegas, a spectacular hybrid between BattleTech and Virtuality with some Disneyland tossed in.

And finally, the news of the forthcoming Sega Channel might prove the ultimate loss of face for Nintendo, which has smashed its corporate head against a wall for years in futile attempts to exploit its vast NES user-base in some form of telecommunications network.

It's often tough to see through the haze of battle, but when the dust settles after the upcoming holiday season, it's my bet that the big winner is...

Say-Gah!

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Video Game Contest. Play any 16-bit game you want with this line-up: Neo Geo Gold, Super NES with Super Scope, Sega Genesis with CD-ROM and Menacer and Panasonic 3DO (not shown). Get all four or trade the ones you don't want for CA$H! Bonus options include: Sega Virtual Reality Helmet, 33″ monitor, $1,000 in games, cash, accessories and more!

Media Rig Contest. The Ultimate Gaming Environment, 40 inch monitor, 130 watt receiver w/ Dolby Pro Logic Surround Sound, Infinity speakers, subwoofer, CD player, graphic EQ, dual cassette and laser disc. This rig will blow you away (literally!)!! You'll not only see but feel it too!

We're talkin' GAMING HEAVEN!

Directions. Fill in the Mystery Word Grid with words going across that spell out the Mystery Word down the side. Hint: use the Mystery Word Clue.

In the future. There will be four more puzzles at $2.00 each and one tie-breaker at $1.00 which will be sent to you by mail. You will have 3 weeks to solve each puzzle. We don't know how many will play but typically 61% will have the highest score possible score to Phase I, 43% to Phase II, 36% to Phase III, and 32% to Phase IV. The tie-breaker determines the winner. If players are still tied they will each receive the grand prize they are playing for.

Mystery Word Grid

				S	
		E			
E	N	T	R	Y	W
	T				
				M	

MYSTERY WORD

WORD LIST and LETTER CODE chart

ENTRY .....W	CHASE.....G	WINGS .....P	STORM .....E
MAJOR ....H	MICRO.....M	DREAM.....R	NINJA.....B
METER .....F	QUEST.....O	TURBO .....T	RULER.....S
RANGE ....A	TOWER .....J	FLINT.....U	HEAVY.....Z

MYSTERY WORD CLUE: WORLD RULERS HAVE IT, IT COMES OUT OF AN OUTLET AND IN THIS CONTEST YOU HAVE IT!

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- ☐ ($3.00) Media Rig Contest
- ☐ ($5.00) SPECIAL! Enter Both (SAVE $1.00)

Name _____

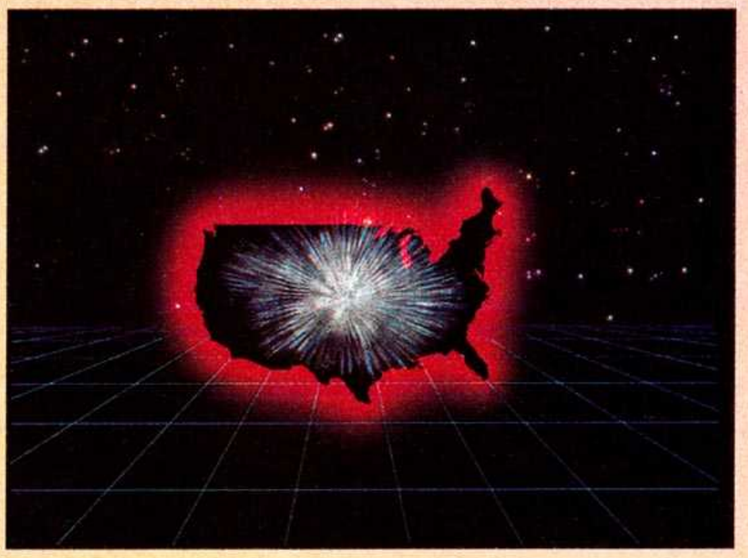
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FANDOM CENTRAL

Those First Steps Are the Hardest

by Arnie Katz

No question, the first fanzine is the toughest one to produce. Doing all those unfamiliar things, like writing and editing, for the first time usually generates enough neofannish mistakes to blight any premiere effort.

Fortunately, time cures most first issue woes. The faned learns from mistakes, gets helpful feedback from readers, and gains mastery over the physical and mental tasks associated with publishing a fanzine.

Gamers love shortcuts so much, it amazes me that beginners so often start from Ground Zero. Many first issues betray no evidence that their editors have ever looked at another fanzine.

No one expects a new fanzine to hit the bullseye the first time, but it seems silly to make mistakes that can be avoided so easily. The five most common:

1. Print a colophon. If you don't put your name, address, frequency of publication and price in an easy-to-find-location, forget about response. And from now on, also forget about a review in "Fandom Central." There are too many fanzines to waste space on those which don't provide this necessary information.

2. Put text on both sides of the page, single spaced, no skipped lines between paragraphs.

3. Describe yourself somewhere in your first fanzine. A fanzine is an extension of its editor, so the person behind the printed page is very interesting to the readers.

4. Don't pose. Everyone knows it's a hobby, not a conglomerate.

5. Edit the writing! Don't write that you're about to give us your opinions. Fanzines are pure opinion. Just start with what you want to say.

Those hints don't guarantee a perfect fanzine. No one has yet captured that elusive beast. Heeding them does make it more likely that you'll be happy with your fanzine, and that others will give it the attention it deserves.

Meanwhile, a lot of fanzines are doing just fine, thank you, without my guidance. These are some of the most interesting to arrive this month.

2600 Connection #18
Edited by Tim Duarte
P.O. Box N664, Westport, MA 02790
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue, 8 pages

These days, my old Atari 2600 only comes out on rare, state occasions, but that doesn't keep this superbly produced and written fanzine from being one of my favorites. From the editorial on collecting to the checklist of TigerVision cartridges to the article about video game commercials to the Nolan Bushnell history, this is just one wonderful fanzine.

Buying **2600 Connection** is a no-brainer for anyone with a serious interest in Atari's venerable console. Yet it's also a good bet for those who simply enjoy reading about vintage games.

The Obsessed Game Fan #1
Edited by Jeffrey Lee
69 Renton Ct.,
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
Frequent, $1 per issue, 8 pages

Jeff reviews four games, two Genesis and two SNES, in the first issue of his slim, but personable, fanzine. There's also an anti-censorship article, an overview of current prozines, and an introductory editorial.

My Five Hints would've helped, but he's made a nice start. I'm looking forward to seeing what this enthusiastic and intelligent young fan will do with the next **Obsessed Game Fan**.

SNES Gaming #4
Edited by Rich Wigstone
770 Concord Lane,
Hoffman Estates, IL 60195-1835
Frequent, $1.50 per issue, 8 pages

This saddle–folded fanzine adopts an ultra-neat newsletter format. It's well-suited to the content, primarily reviews for SNES carts. My top choice for the issue, however, is Rich's editorial investigation of why Sega resurged so strongly in the 16-Bit era. His remedies aren't practical, but such articles are infinitely preferable to corporate butt-kissing.

SNES Gaming definitely shows promise. Try a sample and see.

Uproar #6
Edited by Michael Pittaro
18 Old Coach Rd., Hudson, NH 03051
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue, 17 pages

Michael, half of the famous fannish Pittaro Brothers, continues to improve the art, layout, and graphic design of his spiral-bound video gaming fanzine. This is certainly the best-looking **Uproar** yet.

The articles and reviews are lively, to say the least. The editor maintains a skeptical view of electronic gaming, which makes his opinions provocative and entertaining. Too much of the writing is under-edited and careless, and this undercuts the content. When Michael tightens up the copy, **Uproar** could become a major zine.

Video Game Review #6
Edited by Travis Scott
8 Peppertree, Anderson, SC 29621
Bi-monthly, $1.50 per issue, 16 pages

As the title implies, short reviews of new and classic cartridges are the main attraction. There is also an annotated list of new games unveiled at winter CES, a remembrance of the RCA Studio II, and a think piece about the value of a game rating systems.

Travis celebrates his first year of fan publishing with this issue, and he's improved the appearance to mark the event. Since the writing is already good, and improving steadily, that earns **Video Game Review** a solid recommendation.

Attention fanzine editors: If you'd like your fanzine reviewed in a future issue, send it to: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

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"Arguably the best race game ever written"
Neil West, 92%
Mega magazine

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VideoGames magazine

"Edge of your seat, blistering micro car action!"
GamePlayers magazine

93 PERCENT

"Probably the most playable game I've ever seen on the [Genesis]"
Games Master magazine

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PLAYING IT SMART

Smart Play Is Fun Play

by Joyce Worley

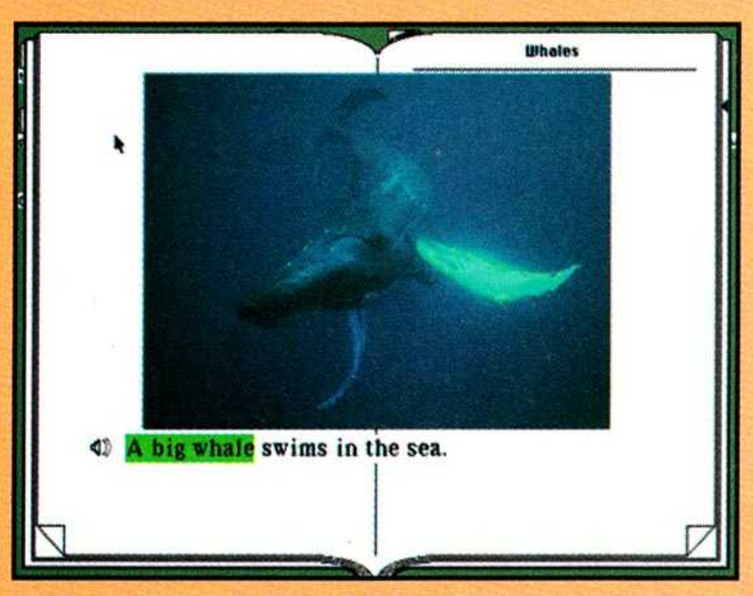
Learning can be fun, especially for kids lucky enough to study with top-of-the-line teaching software. During 1993, there's been a plethora of fine programs for youngsters (and for oldsters, too!) that cloak serious study in pleasant experience. This month we'll give you a thumbnail guide to some of these charmers.

Animal Hows

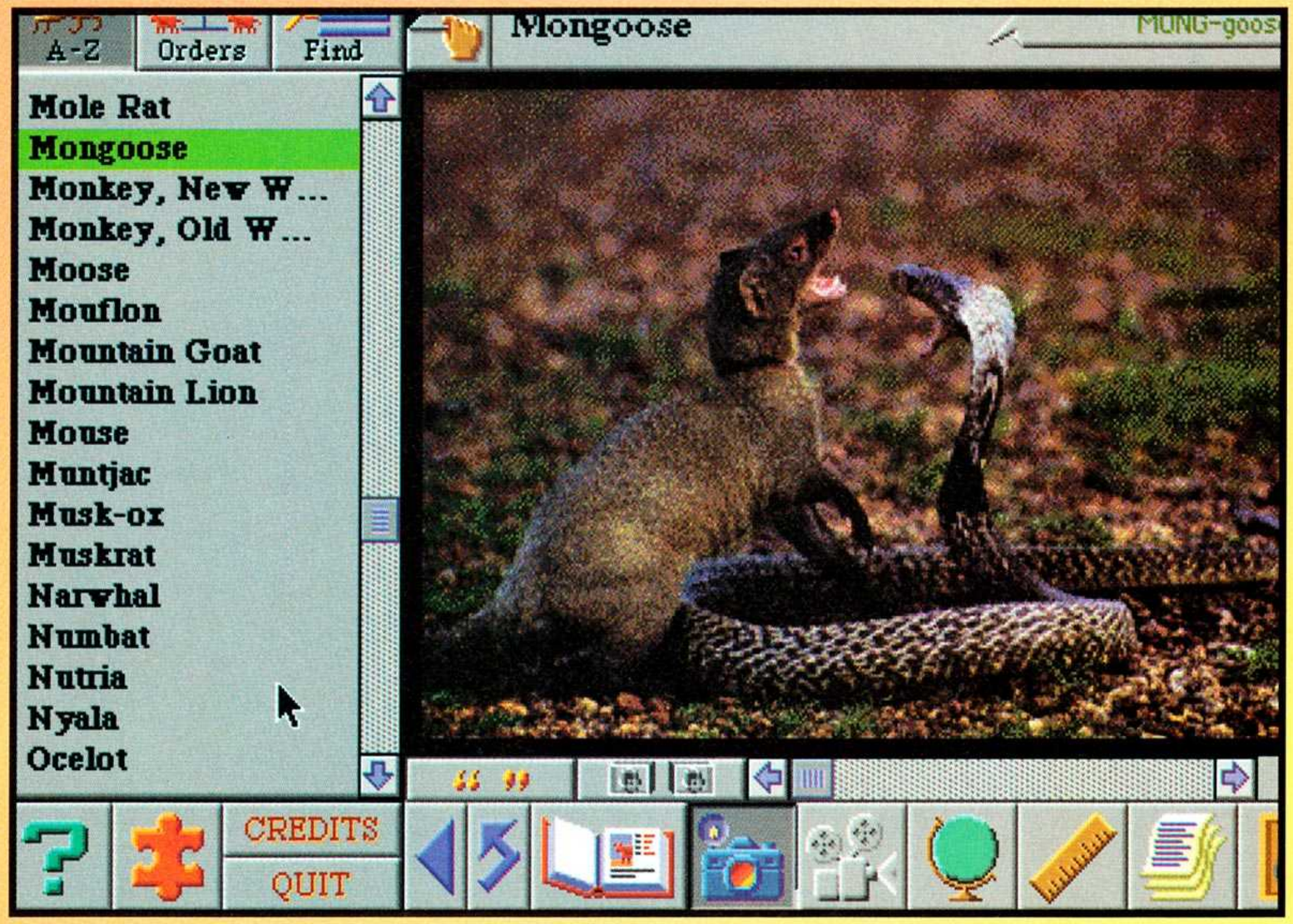
Nothing beats having your own zoo to learn the "hows" and "whys" of the animal kingdom, and the next best thing is owning a zoo on disk. It's a great way to teach kids about animals and promote reading skills, and it's fun for parents too.

A World Of Animals (National Geographic/Macintosh CD-ROM) helps kids ages 4-7 learn about spiders, butterflies, farm animals, whales and dinosaurs, in English or Spanish. It's divided into five books, with over 100 photographs, narrations and sound effects.

The program can be customized to suit the reading skill of the child. For prereaders, the narrator reads the books with music and effects. For more advanced learners, the type size is larger, and pauses between phrases are lengthened. One of the settings pronounces words in both English and Spanish.



A World of Animals features a read-along story that includes voice.



It's a little like a petting zoo. The animals are shown in natural environments, with stories and a soundtrack to enhance the experience. The pictures themselves are somewhat interactive, in that clicks on different spots produce labels, names of body parts and sound effects.

Kid's Zoo: A Baby Animal Adventure (Knowledge Adventure/MS-DOS and Windows) is a remarkable interactive book for kids from 3 to 12 that teaches animal names and sounds, geography (where the animals come from), lifespan, speed and many more facts.

The 5-disk program is CD-like in its approach to teaching. Moving a pointer over the screen makes note balloons appear; different buttons produce close-ups, brief movies, sound effects and narration. Categories of animals included are mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates, and kids can explore using simple guessing games, or just browse to learn information about each animal included. It's a delightful learning experience starring the cutest group of creatures on disk today.

National Geographic's **Mammals: A Multimedia Encyclopedia** is for older students or adults, on Macintosh CD-ROM. Over 200 mammals are included, with over 700 photographs.

Maps show the distribution of each species, and essays provide in-depth information. Sound clips provide each ani-mal's vocalization, and there are even a few full-motion clips along with the information. It's a great all-family reference program.

More Dinos

It's possible that there are more dinosaurs on disk than ever actually roamed the earth. The behemoths fascinate us, so software about them continues to proliferate. Here's a trio of programs to bring back the beasts.

Dinosaur Adventure (Knowledge Adventure/PC) uses CD-like programming techniques to produce an outstanding collection. Users (age 5 through adult) can search by time, length or weight of dinosaur, area of the world, or category of knowledge: time, length, weight,

location or topic. The categories covered are Earth, Early Life, Herbivores, Carnivores, Mammals, Fossils and History.



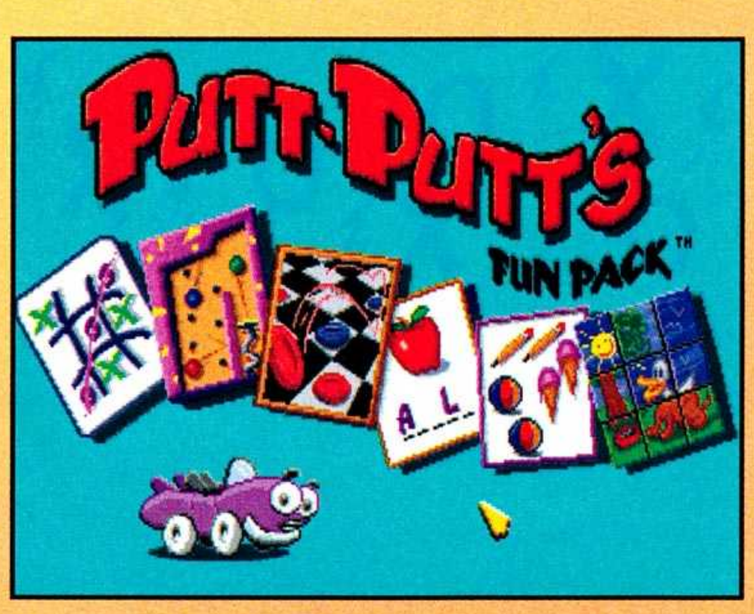
Dyno-Quest brings kids to the age of the dinosaurs in a fun quest for knowledge.

Graphics are superb. The main display is dominated by a picture, with text window of information, map of the world, and various icons. A slider bar sends the user through time, and full-motion video simulations make the experience more real. Over 40 dinos are included.

MECC takes a light-hearted approach with **Dino Park Tycoon** (MS-DOS, for ages 8 to adult), a fun-filled simulation that lets the user operate a business. The gamer buys land, fences it, hires workers for the park, then stocks the park, provides appropriate food, and sets the ticket price for the attraction. The bank starts you off with a loan, and dinos can be bought or sold at auction.

It's a charming simulation with a lot of educational content. Players not only learn some facts about the big beasts, they also gain some insight into just what is required to run a business. The whole family will get a kick out of this.

Dyno-Quest (MindPlay/MS-DOS, for ages 8-12) uses a game format to teach the names and characteristics of 22 dinos, as an on-screen time-machine takes kids through 15 regions. The user is assigned a target dinosaur, and must collect information about it, while conserving fuel and gathering the appropriate food. The time machine breaks down and must be repaired; non-dinosaurs help by collecting food, and information is gathered by feeding dinos the food they like. It's easy to play, and teaches children facts about the creatures and geography of the earth in the Jurassic and Cretaceous Eras.



Putt-Putt will challenge children with educational puzzles and learning games.

Here Comes Putt-Putt

Putt-Putt's Fun Pack (Humongous Entertainment/Macintosh, MS-DOS, Mac CD, CD-ROM) features a lovable cartoon car that acts as the on-screen companion and playmate through six games for kids 3-8. Putt-Putt, who's even able to talk, guides the pre-reader through the entertainments, while helping them learn patterns and gain matching skills. At higher levels, Putt-Putt helps letter recognition and even spelling skills.

The games are classics. There is a colorful game of Checkers, a gallows-less Hangman in which the child must spell the word suggested by a picture, Tic-Tac-Toe, a make-it-yourself pinball, six jigsaw puzzles with circus themes, and a memory game similar to Concentration. They all feature the little car, as opponent or coach or participant depending on the game, and simple yet appealing graphics with bright colors and cute animations. There's a lot of entertainment on disk, and thanks to the four skill levels, it will provide fun for a very long time.

Putt-Putt Joins The Parade (MS-DOS, Macintosh CD-ROM) is an adventure for kids 3-7, requiring no reading skills at all. The gamer has to guide the little car around Cartown, using simple point and click commands, to get him from his home, through the carwash and toy store, to find a lost dog, get a balloon, and solve simple puzzles.

The animations are wonderful, the sounds are bright and lively, all the characters talk, and there are useful objects to be found along the way. Putt-Putt has a glovebox of handy items, a dashboard with radio and horn, and just in case things get tough, Smokey the Fire Engine acts as helper and hint-giver.

It's not easy to create a fully functional adventure for non-readers, but Humongous did a good job on this one. Kids can explore at their own pace, gradually solving the puzzles and obstacles, and have fun clicking on the hundreds of hot spots throughout Cartown.

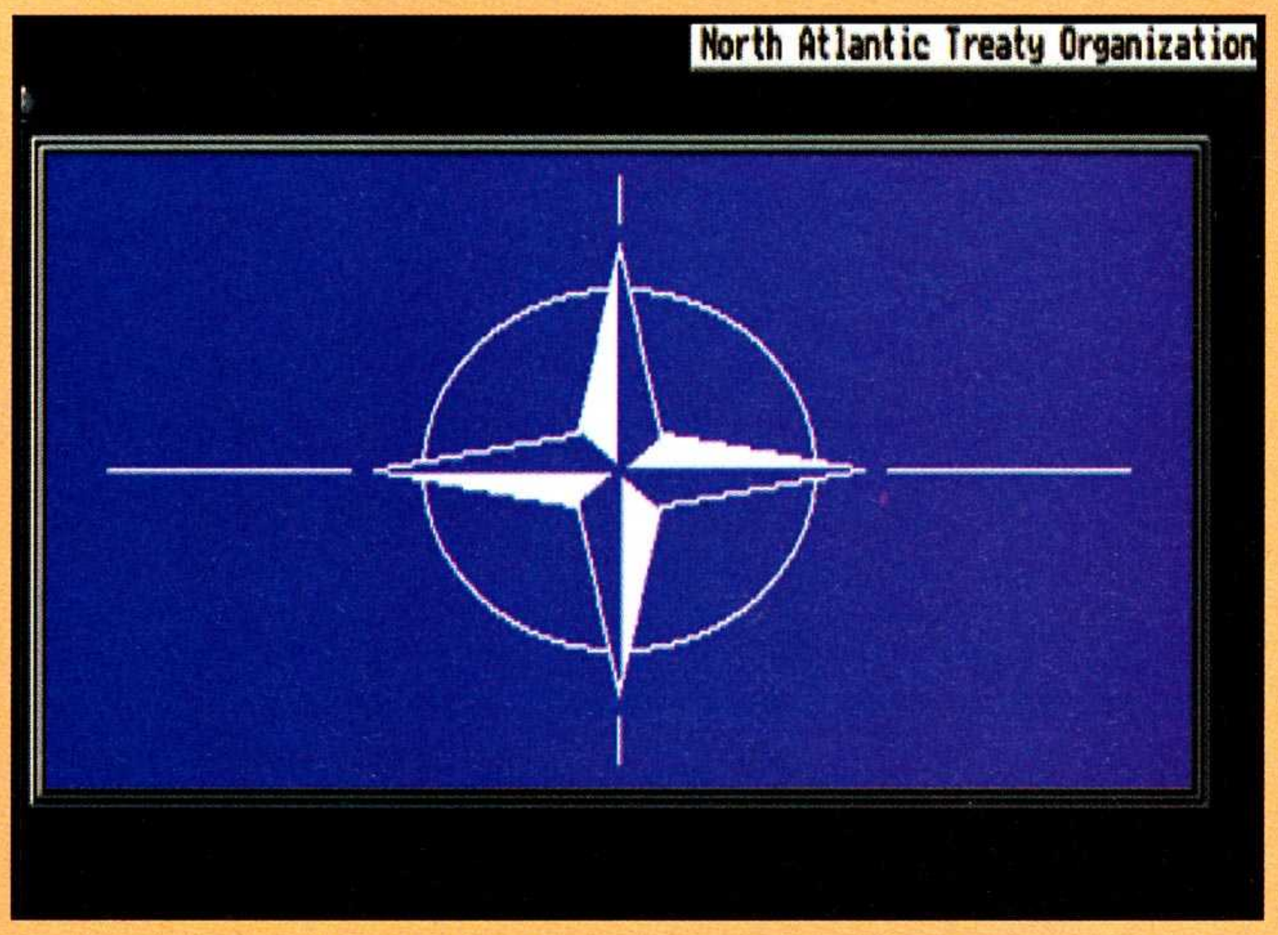
Waving the Flag

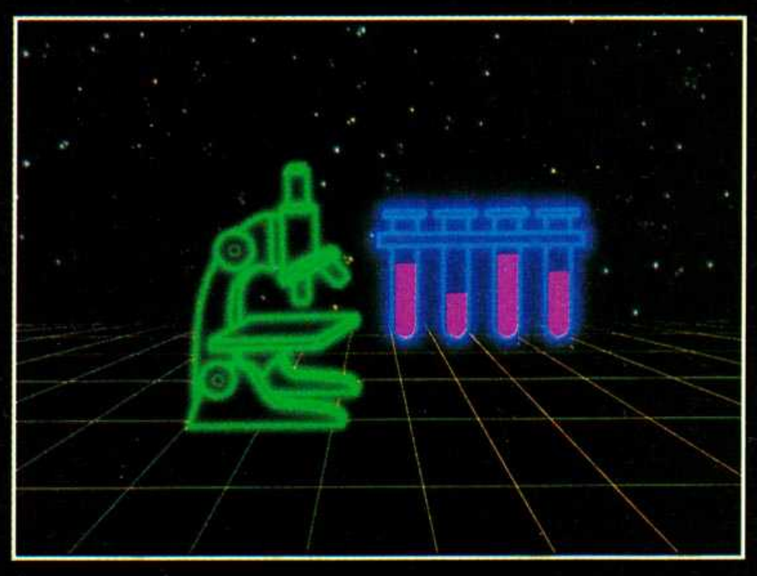
Not every program is big and expensive; some are just pleasant and helpful. Villa Crespo's **Flags of Every Nation** (MS-DOS) is a simple yet delightful compendium of over 200 national flags, plus all of the State flags in the USA, and 400 special flags. And there's more. It includes information about each country's geography and people, with population statistics and income figures.



Flags of Every Nation helps kids to learn facts about each country represented.

Kids can experiment by changing colors of flags, to see what they'd look like in new shades, and there's even a trivia game on board. This is part of the company's "Cookie Break Series," and a nice collection that really hones the user's knowledge of each country and its emblem.





TEST LAB

The Virtual Reality Stuntmaster

VictorMaxx
SNES & SEGA Compatible
$249.99

Has the world of Virtual Reality that we have all been dreaming about arrived?

Well, no...but we are moving in the right direction. As the first generation of mass market VR peripherals arrives, their acceptance or rejection will depend largely on the expectations of the purchaser. A buyer who anticipates total immersion in an alien, silicon based 3-D environment, such as depicted on a recent Phil Donahue show, will be sorely disappointed. That demonstration was provided by the Virtuality Corporation, manufacturers of a commercial VR unit that pushes the limits of current technology—but at a corresponding price point, roughly $60,000 a copy.

VictorMaxx's **Virtual Reality Stuntmaster** hasn't the capacity of that unit, but it is well within the normal price range for mass market penetration—and just such early market penetration is critical for any emerging technology.

A vanguard product must be capable of catalyzing the market for growth. R&D funds have to be recouped before industry analysts can support further expansion. Once that magical make-or-break point is crossed, funds may be allocated to further the technology and build even more capable units for the public.

Cutting to the heart of what is claimed to be the world's first mass market VR helmet, the important thing to understand is that the **Stuntmaster** is not a stand-alone control system. Rather, it is a supplement to existing control systems. Players still have to use a conventional pad or stick for all game functions other than horizontal movement.



Among EG's test group, children occasionally lost their way on the pads and had to have help reorienting. On smaller heads, the helmet blocks peripheral vision, so they have no visual reference to the control pad. Adult wearers, on the other hand, have greater eye-to-screen separation, such that it is still possible to glance down and see the control pad. Regardless, it takes time to become accustomed to playing this way, so expect scores and skill to drop considerably while becoming acquainted with the new perspective.

The manner in which the **Stuntmaster** converts head movement into left/right directional commands is rather simplistic. After the helmet is fitted and centered, with the user facing forward, a tube is clipped to the player's clothing on the right shoulder. The upper end of the tube runs through a potentiometer ring mounted on the headset. As the player looks right or left, the tube slides up or down respectively. The sensor picks up the direction of the motion and translates it to right or left onscreen movement.

The CyberMaxx, a second generation helmet for IBM computers as well as the Genesis and SNES, will no longer be limited to horizontal control when it appears next year, in the first quarter. The CyberMaxx will add vertical control.

Although the Stuntmaster is not limited to specially designed software (see sidebar for a complete list of compatible titles at the time of this writing), certain games benefit more from its alternative control than others. In general, the types

The unit can and does cause disorientation and frequent breaks are necessary. As such, parental supervision is advised.

of games that are ideal for display on this system include racing, flight and tank simulators with a first person or rear view perspective, and games with an eye level perspective, such as **Drakken** or **Faceball 2000**.

At least one company, Runandgun, is developing software specifically designed for the unit. This fledgling software house, based in the Chicago area, eschews traditional video game designs in favor of computer interactive "sensory sequences." Undoubtedly inspired by some of the idea content developed in the film *Brainstorm*, the first program to appear will allow players to vicariously experience the thrill of bungee jumping. No dilapidated crane for this crowd either—the Grand Canyon, Golden Gate Bridge and World Trade Center are the backdrops for virtual thrill seekers. Further, users will specify the time of day for the jump (twilight, night, dawn, high noon) and may experience other unexpected action as they go over the edge. Another World Trade Center explosion is just one of the ideas under discussion.

Using a combination of digitized video and computer generated 360-degree environments, the animations will be rendered in 256 colors and 640 x 480 resolution. No release date for this title has been announced.

Donning the unit is not difficult, but it is easier with assistance. It is important to fit the head straps correctly, so that the weight of the unit (which is almost all in the forward section) is not borne exclusively by the bridge of the nose. Once in place, the wearer finds a stereo speaker over each ear and a backlit LCD display in front of each eye. When properly positioned, the two video displays are oriented to be seen as one image.

Underneath the forward hemisphere are controls for display tint, brightness, sound volume and tracking sensitivity. The latter is a critical adjustment which varies for each game and wearer. It should be set such that the full range of onscreen movement may be accomplished with simple side to side neck movements, as opposed to having to jerk the head in either direction. Finally, there is a three-position dip switch, which must be properly positioned according to whether the unit is being used with a SNES or Genesis.

Because of the proximity of the video displays to the eyes, there are some health warnings noted in the documentation. As they are not also printed on the exterior packaging, but are of critical importance to some potential buyers, they are reprinted in full herein:

> "A few people experience epileptic seizures when viewing flashing lights or patterns. These people may experience such seizures when playing certain video games. Although you may not have previously experienced these seizures, you may have an undetected epileptic condition. Also, people with heart conditions should refrain from using the Stuntmaster, due to the level of excitement that is generated by the VR experience. When playing, take small breaks every 15 minutes. Consult your physician before playing video games if you experience any of the following symptoms while playing video games: altered vision, muscle twitching, other involuntary movements, loss of awareness of your surroundings, mental confusion and/or convulsions. After using the Stuntmaster, wait 10 minutes to reorient yourself before beginning any other activities."

Although some of the rather ominous elements in this warning are attributable to the fact that we live in a very litigious society, some of it is applicable to all users. The unit can and does cause disorientation and frequent breaks are necessary. As such, parental supervision is advised.

Other responses from the test group were mixed. Generally, the screen resolution was considered superior to most LCD displays, but the sound quality was rated as poor, tending to become scratchy and distorted at the upper volume range. Also, several members commented that the addition of foam coverings for the headphones would have been appreciated.

Adult wearers complained that the dial controls on the bottom of the unit were recessed too far into the case and too stiff as well. This resulted in most having difficulty making adjustments with the unit in place. The chief complaint among the children, who were very skilled players as a whole, was that control with the **Stuntmaster** was "frustrating." Several lacked the patience to experiment and overcome the initial learning curve.

On the whole, the unit received a 70 percent acceptance rate, despite some grumbling over the already mentioned design problems. This figure represents an audience which has become more sophisticated than many of the current video game offerings, whose members are looking for new ways to interact with their hobby.

The Virtual Reality **Stuntmaster** may not offer the best of all possible worlds, but it is an innovative and foresighted look at things to come. As such, expect virtual dreamers to embrace its arrival and look forward to its future.

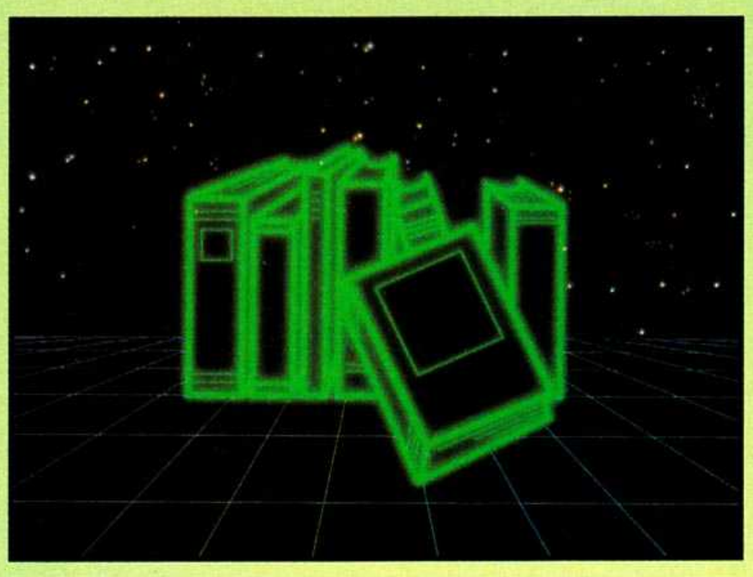
— Ed Dille

SNES Compatible

Arcana, HAL America
Axelay, Konami
Battle Cars, Namco
Drakken, Keimco Seika
Dungeon Master, JVC
F-1 ROC 2, Seta
Faceball 2000, Bullet Proof Software
F-Zero, Nintendo
George Forman's KO Boxing, Acclaim
Hyperzone, HAL America
Jurassic Park, Ocean
Mechwarrior, Activision
Nigel Mansell's Championship Racing, Gametek
Pilot Wings, Nintendo
Race Drivin', THQ
StarFox, Nintendo
Super Battle Tank, Absolute Entertainment
Super Mario Kart, Nintendo
Super Soccer, Nintendo
Super Strike Eagle, Microprose
Test Drive 2, Accolade
Top Gear, Kemco
Warpspeed, Accolade
Wing Commander, Mindscape
Wings 2, Aces High, Namco

Sega Genesis Compatible

Abrams Battletank, Electronic Arts
Afterburner, Sega
Air Driver, Seismic
Bimini Run, Nu Vision
Burning Force, Namco
Chase HQ, Taito
Cyber Cop, Virgin
Death Duel, Razorsoft
Dynamite Duke, Sega
F-15 Strike Eagle, Microprose
F-22 Interceptor, Electronic Arts
Ferrari Grand Prix, Flying Edge
Galaxy Force II, Sega
G-LOC, Sega
LHX Attack Chopper, Electronic Arts
Lotus Turbo Challenge, Electronic Arts
Mig-29 Fighter Pilot, Domark
Out Run, Sega
Outlander, Mindscape
Race Drivin', Tengen
Road Avenger, Rennovation
Road Blasters, Tengen
Road Rash, Electronic Arts
Shining in the Darkness, Sega
Silpheed, Game Arts
Space Harrier II, Sega
Star Control, Salustic
Steel Talons, Tengen
Stellar Fire, Dynamix
Super Battle Tank, Absolute Entertainment
Super Hang On, Sega
Super Monaco GP, Sega
Thunderhawk, JVC



LORE

Super Star Wars Official Game Secrets

Rusel DeMaria, Prima Publishing, 220 pages (softbound, $12.95)

One of the delightful things about this hintbook is that owners of LucasArts' **Super Star Wars** will learn more about the background universe in which the story takes place. DeMaria, now probably the foremost scholar of the *Star Wars* universe in the gaming field, has illustrated the book with scenes from the movies and points out elements in the game that differ from events in *Star Wars: A New Hope*. For instance, in the movie, Luke's uncle purchased R2-D2 and C-3PO from the Jawas, but in the game Luke must find and rescue them from the giant sandcrawler.

For obstacles appearing in the initial events on the planet Tatooine, the game has drawn a little on beasts from the later movies—mynocks and Sarlacc pit monsters for example—but mostly there are fresh creatures, like giant scorpions and Jawenko lava beasts, beasts referred to but unmet in the films (like WompRats) and some hi-tech antagonists, like eyeball droids in the sandcrawler. As events continue in Mos Eisley and the Death Star, many more of the latter type oppose Luke's efforts.

Many illustrations (all black & white) appear on almost every page. These are largely screen shots, including strategy map sequences for different levels. Cut shots of the specific enemies found on a particular level appear at the beginning of each chapter, and there are also profiles of Luke, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Princess Leia plus many other characters and creatures, including a few whose names some may be learning here for the first time. When it comes time to fly an X-wing against the Death Star and the final trench battle, full specs are provided for both the X-wings and TIE Starfighters (though of course not to the detail DeMaria offers in the other title reviewed on this page).

DeMaria chaperons the reader through each level with advice for every danger point, and frequent notes on where to find hearts, extra lives and power-ups. Finally, a set of secret codes is provided for extra continues, weapons and credits, and what is called "God Power." The latter brings the player into the programmers' and testers' Debug menu, where one may take extensive control over where one can go and what one can do there. In other words (DeMaria's in fact), "some of these codes can ruin the challenge of the game, and should only be



used if you are desperate, or if you've already beaten the game." For a most satisfying experience, let the rest of the book explain how to enjoy getting through the game; then try out the special codes for dessert.

— *Ross Chamberlain*

X-Wing: The Official Strategy Guide

Rusel DeMaria, Prima Publishing, 418 pages (softbound, $19.95)

If ever a game needed a strategy guide, **X-Wing** is it. Whenever a product extends an existing fictional setting, it is critical that the creator remain faithful to all the nuances of the original. There are a myriad of technical and character details over which Mr. DeMaria could stumble, to the glee of malicious fans everywhere. Happily, he has not done so, and this work may join an already extensive list of Star Wars collectibles.

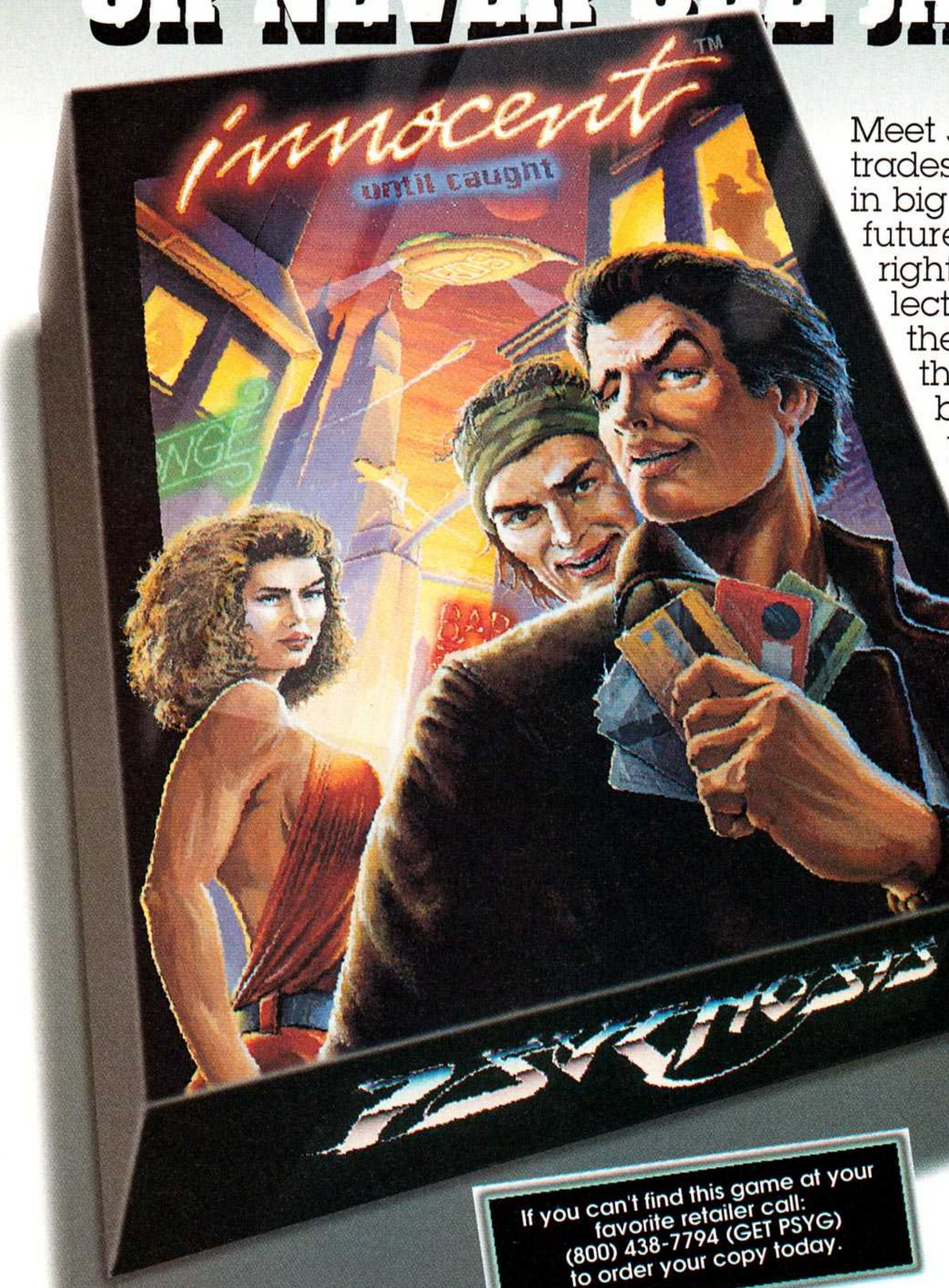
The first two sections of the work provide background on Farlander's story, which is essential for later purchasers of the game who did not receive the special supplement, and an introduction to the Alliance Fleet and Pilot Proving Ground. The third segment addresses all of the historical missions, which players may access without fear of impacting campaign results. A fourth section covers all three tours of duty necessary to complete the game.

Each mission within the groupings is treated as follows: First, briefing and objective paragraphs summarize and clarify the on-screen overviews. Second, a tactical summary concisely guides readers through the actions required at the various stages of the mission, as well as the order of engagement for specific enemy flight groups. The latter is critical to eventual success, as it identifies which groups most jeopardize mission accomplishment. A final sentence or two, under the heading of "Win Conditions," ties up loose ends, such as which units must escape to hyperspace and other similar considerations.

The Mission debriefs are frequently separated by lively narrative, written in the first-person perspective of a Rebel Alliance pilot. Also, tactical hints which are applicable to many missions are offset in shaded boxes, such that readers who wish guidance without initially compromising the detail of the missions may receive it painlessly. Skipping through the text may suit the needs of some players, but it would be a mistake not to come back and read in detail at a later date.

— *Ed Dille*

SEE JACK RUN.
SEE JACK PLAY.
SEE JACK WHEEL.
SEE JACK DEAL.
SEE JACK STEAL.
SEE JACK PAY TAXES.
OR NEVER SEE JACK AGAIN.



Meet Jack Ladd, a jack of all trades, most of them illegal. Jack's in big trouble. You see this is the future and now the IRS has the right to use deadly force to collect taxes. Guess what Jack, the tax man commeth, and they're looking for the gazillion bucks you owe them. Now you have only 28 days to get them the money, how you do it is up to you.

Join Jack as he cons and coerces his way through the backstreets and alleys on the seedy side of the galaxy. Eight-way scrolling, full perspective scaling and Hypertext-style interaction give this game a colorful and realistic edge. This unusual adventure captures your imagination and thrusts you right into the heart of Jack Ladd's bizarre world.

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Gaming On-Line

Price War On Line

EG is happy to report that a full-scale rate war is currently raging amongst the various online services. This is not a bid to drive each other out of business, as is the case in other industries. Rather, the services are finally discovering that lowering rates will increase volume, bringing new players into the fold and making it more palatable for existing players to pursue some of the newer, more time consuming multi-player games (MPGs).

The second major development is less concrete at this stage, but its potential impact warrants some speculation. It seems that software developers are beginning to recognize the potential long term profit in MPG design. Until recently, online services who wanted new games had to put up $50 to $100 thousand dollars to the software houses for development costs, a figure that was prohibitive for most. Now, however, some software publishers are beginning to approach the online services with design concepts and are offering to pay the development costs up front, in return for a percentage of the proceeds when the games go online. If this trend matures to its logical conclusion, it will be a win-win-win situation and players can expect a lot of new and exciting MPGs over the next two to threeyears.

GEnie

Air Warrior enthusiasts will be happy to discover that the system is finally coming of age. Instead of simply going online and blasting other players out of the sky, exclusive of more lofty goals or objectives, a module is being added in November which will allow teams of players to design their own events. This will allow recreation of historical engagements, if desired, or fantasy battles with specific objectives and targets. Further, the system is being implemented simultaneously on the GE information services in Japan and the UK. A real-time team competition between players from all three nations is already in the works so, if you want to be a part of it, get online on GEnie as soon as possible and make your interest known. It seems the world really is getting smaller.



Results of the recent **Hundred Years War** Heresy weekend celebration are in (it turned out to be a free weekend as so many of these special events do at the last minute), and it isn't pretty. It seems the nobility of Europe included some good litigators who did their research well. At the end of the weekend a trial was held and the Pope was convicted of Heresy and burned at the stake (whew, rough crowd). HYW also has a new option for alternate history buffs titled "Bedlam." The scenario presupposes that the Moors invaded Europe instead of the other way around. Also, GEnie is trying to get HYW online on France's Mini-Tel network such that French and U.S. players could co-participate in the same games. The hang-up to this development is that Mini-Tel is subsidized by the French government, which adds to the amount of hurdles which must be jumped before this project reaches fruition.

IBM players can enjoy a new graphic front end for **Dragons Gate II**, and Windows users will be happy to know that their front end is nearing completion. Finally, high level **Federation** players have been given a new option, that of designing their own planets to appear in the game for eight weeks. Very few limitations are placed on these designs and, thus far, players are coming up with some novel concepts, including a Hockey planet and a Religious Mecca. Look for a Thanksgiving planet as well when the holiday season approaches.

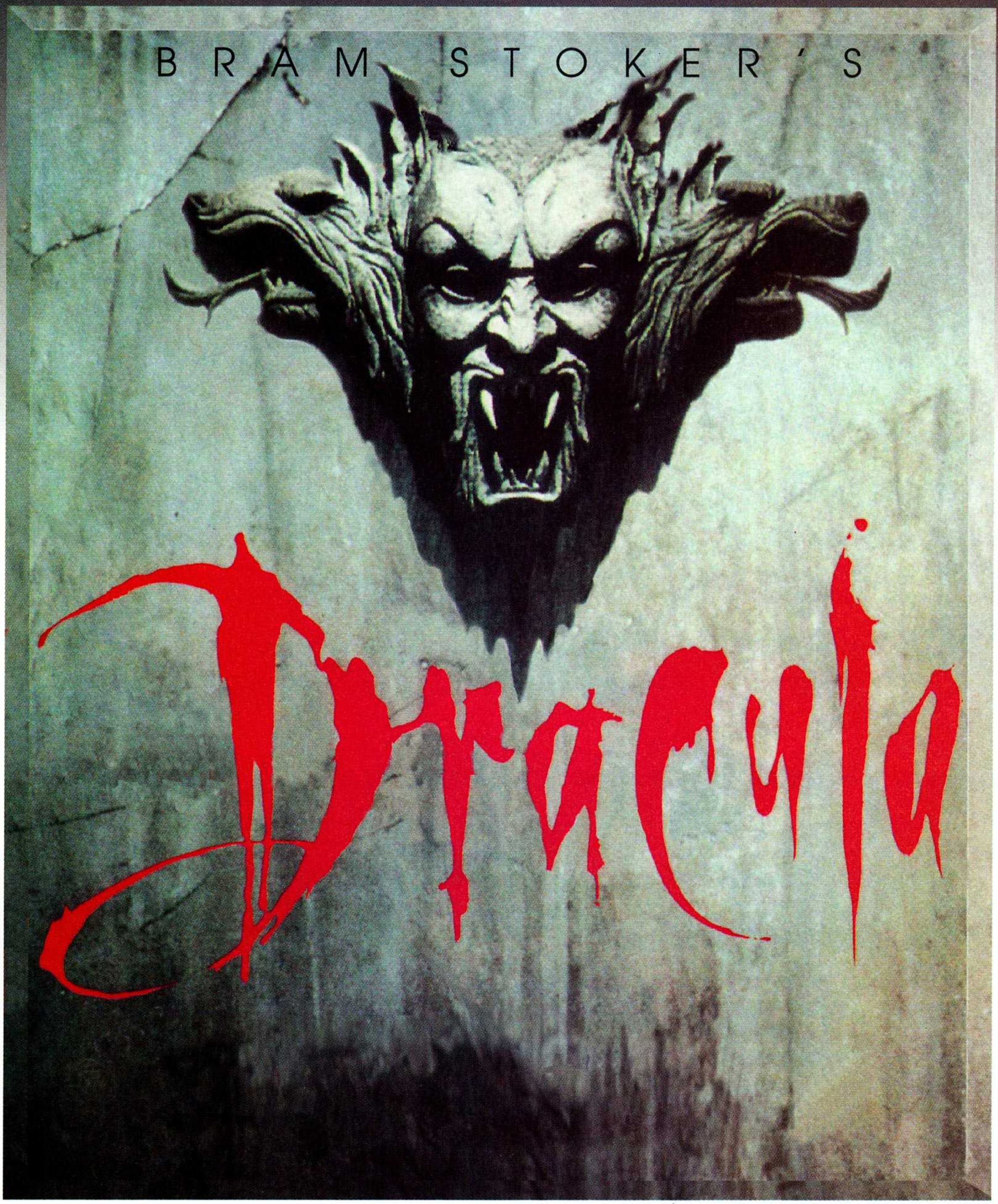
National VideoTex Network

The latest to announce their bid in the current rate war, NVN is dropping its non-prime time rates from $5.00 to $3.00 per hour. MPG Net's **Kingdom of Drakkhar** is now live on NVN and its other new fantasy product, **MUD II**, is breaking its internal access records. Another fantasy title, called **Aradath**, is currently in beta test. It is being produced by Marc Jacobs and some of the other people who worked on the **Dragons Gate** game for GEnie.

Star Cruiser, an arcade space combat game, has also just gone online at NVN. **The Hundred Years War** also went live this month and a Windows interface is under development. Finally, due to the message base in their Games Round Table reaching 2000 posts a day, NVN has split this area into five separate forums. There is a dedicated **Star Trek** gaming area, a haven for live RPG players, a flight simulator forum, a wargamer's war room and a generic meeting place known only as Game Room One.

— *Ed Dille*

BEWARE,
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Coming Attractions...

In the January Edition of Electronic Games

The Computer Super Bowl!

There are a lot of computer football games on the market. **EG** tosses them all into the arena and tells you which ones score a touchdown and which get sacked for a big loss.

The Best of 1993

Our editors present their choices for the outstanding video, computer, multimedia, portable and coin-op games—and then it's up to the readers to pick the ultimate winners!

Mortal Kombat II

It isn't in the arcades yet, but we've got an exclusive story about the hot sequel to the mega-hit. Meet the characters and the real-life fighters behind them!

And Be Sure to Look For the Very Latest in High-End Gaming, Including:

- **Power On!**
- **Feedback**
- **A Look to the East**
- **Insert Coin**
- **The Game Doctor**
- **Fandom Central**
- **Kunkel Report**
- **Test Lab**
- **Video Game Gallery**
- **Software Gallery**
- **CD Gallery**
- **Portable Playtime**
- **The Jury**
- **Playing It Smart**
- **Gaming On-LIne**
- **Lore**

And don't forget all the latest news and previews in **EG's Hotline!**

Look For All This and Much More At Newsstands December 21, 1993!

The Electronic Games Reader Poll

The editors of **Electronic Games** want to know about you, the reader, so that we can tailor the magazine to meet your particular needs. The monthly Reader Poll will let us know what aspects of the electronic gaming hobby are most interesting to you. We also want to know what you're playing, and to receive your vote for the most popular game programs each month.

Just circle your choices below, then send your poll sheet (or a photocopy if you prefer) to: **Electronic Games Reader Poll, 330 S. Decatur, Ste. 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.**

Sex: Male Female

Age: Under 16 17-23 24-30 31-40 Over 40

Family Income: Under $20,000 $21,000-$35,000 $36,000-$40,000 Over $41,000

I regularly play: Video Games Computer Games Both

How many of the following did you buy (or receive from others) in the last 12 months:

Video Game Cartridges _____
Portable Game Cartridges _____
Computer Games _____
Multimedia Games _____

Please check all hardware you own or plan to buy in the next 12 months:

	OWN	PLAN TO BUY
Super NES	____	____
Genesis	____	____
Sega CD	____	____
Neo*Geo	____	____
Duo	____	____
Game Boy	____	____
Game Gear	____	____
Lynx	____	____
Amiga	____	____
Macintosh	____	____
MS-DOS Computer	____	____
CD-ROM Drive	____	____
Other computer (write in name)_____	____	____

LET EG KNOW WHO YOU ARE! RETURN POLL TODAY!

I will____ will not___ buy a Multimedia gaming system in the next 12 months.

Please rate the following game subjects from 1 (no interest to me) to 10 (very interesting to me):

Science Fiction _____
Fantasy _____
Arcade _____
Sports _____
Martial Arts _____
Mystery _____
Military _____
Flight _____
Other (please write in category) _____

Please rate your interest in these types of electronic games from 1 (not interesting) to 10 (very interesting):

Video Games _____
Computer Games _____
Coin-Ops Games _____
MultiMedia Games _____

My favorite video games are:

1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite computer games are:

1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite multimedia game is:

1._____

My favorite coin-op game is:

1._____



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KISS CONVENTIONAL LOGIC GOODBYE

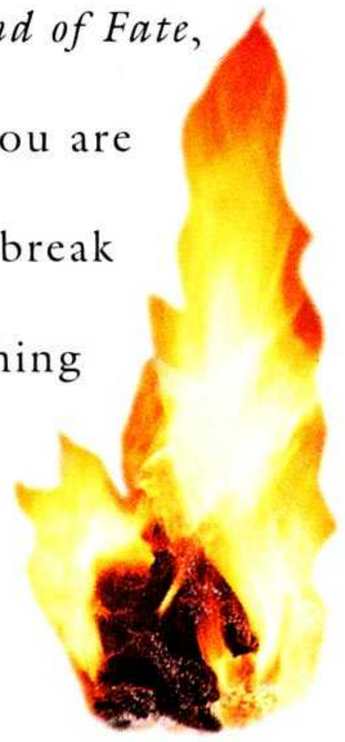
Now you see it. Now you don't. The land of Kyrandia is disappearing piece by piece and all the evidence points

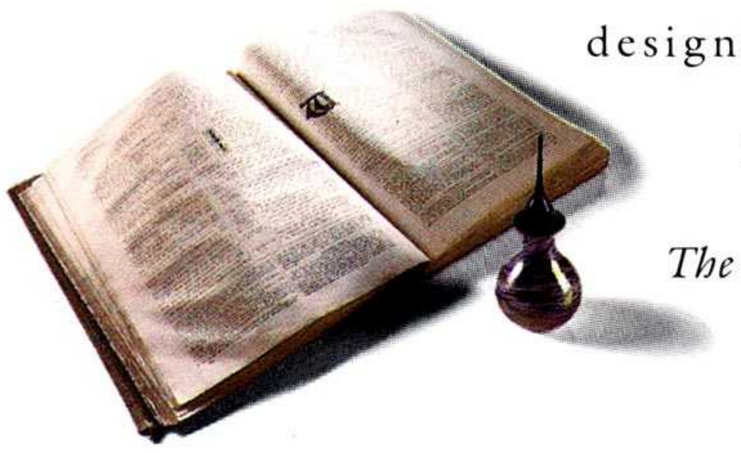


toward one perilous conclusion: a curse. Thus begins *The Hand of Fate*, second in the *Fables & Fiends*™ series, where you are the offbeat, young mystic who must voyage to the center of the world to break the spell. Out of sync and out on foot, your aberrant journey reveals nothing is what it isn't. And seems. Everything is what it

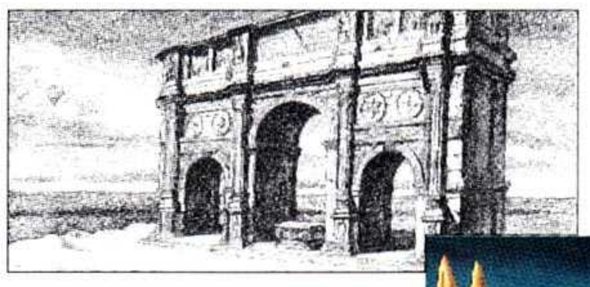


you can count your friends on one hand. Literally. Conspiring to push the twisted edge of cinemagraphic entertainment, Westwood Studios has designed more puzzles and gameplay in the first few chapters of





The Hand of Fate than in all of *The Legend of Kyrandia*™. The most advanced graphics





on the market are first pencil tested, then painted on-screen to surrealistic perfection. Breakthrough *Trulight* technology illuminates each scene more cinematically for a fuller, fourth dimensional picture. The new *State of Mind System*, along with superior intuitive interfacing, enables you and over 50 characters to change your mind, mood and mayhem based on preceding events. Don't just play with your mind. Change the way your mind plays.



Shadow



Sunlight



Grasp *The Hand of Fate* and kiss conventional logic goodbye.

THE HAND OF FATE™

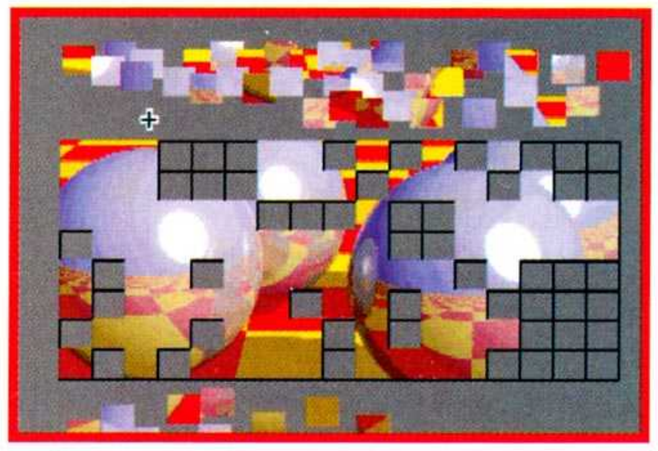
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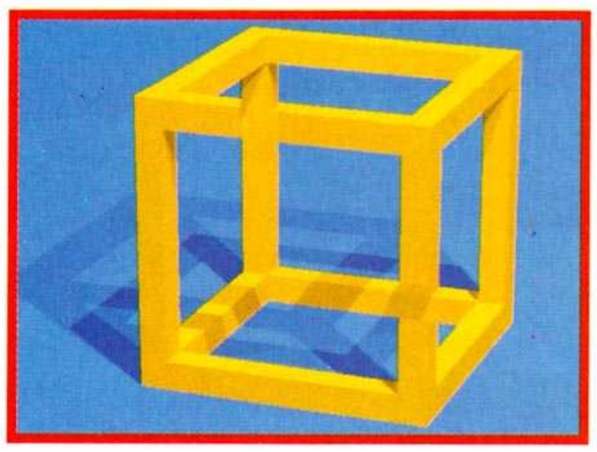
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