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ELECTRONIC GAMES

THE MAGAZINE OF INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 7

JAMMIN' WITH SIR CHARLES

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SPRING & SUMMER GAMING PREVIEW

THE HOTTEST PLAYS FOR THE HOTTEST DAYS!

THE VEGAS ARCADE EXPLOSION!



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- **Punch and Punt on Interactive TV**
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- **Players' Guide to Spring and Summer Gaming**
  This is our mammoth, semi-annual preview of what's coming in video, computer, multimedia, and portable games, covering a variety of platforms. With these exciting titles debuting in the next few months, gamers can expect plenty of fun and action to light up their console screens into the wee hours of those long summer nights. **26**





- **Arcades Over Las Vegas!**
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- **EG's Spring Sports Special**
  The super sports games and simulators just keep coming. We have all the latest computer and video sports games for your competitive side. Check out the titles in each section, including basketball, golf, hockey, and baseball. Suit up for some serious sporting fun as we give you the lowdown on the latest releases from the heavy hitters. **42**

About the art—We at EG would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:
All of the various game companies for their game screen shots.
Cliff Spohn—EG Interview

It has come to our attention that some of our readers have not been spending enough time playing games. Electronic gaming is more than just a hobby, it's a way of life. How do you think it makes us feel, sweating away, making sure that you know everything there is to know about games, only to see you turning on the basketball game instead. Come on guys! We think you can do a little better. Play games and help us keep our jobs.

JAM





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"HE'S ON FIRE!"



"BOOMSHAKALAKA!"



"REJECTED!"



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POWER ON!

An Untold Tale of CES: Close Encounter of the Gaming Kind

It was the last thing I expected at the world's largest gaming industry exhibition. Yet it happened. I could write it up for *EG Hotline*, but that doesn't come up for several pages yet, and I can't wait to tell you about it.

For this, fellow gamers, is a story That Must Be Told.

I'll never forget that Wednesday morning in January. It was the day before the official opening of the 1994 Winter Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. Glitter City is my home, and I'd decided to take advantage of that with some pre-show reconnaissance.

South Hall was locked tight. I suppose other editors from other gaming magazines might've pulled their logo jackets tight around them and slunk back to their hotels.

Not me. I had to satisfy my curiosity, which demanded a first look at this year's exhibits. So I didn't go home. Using techniques learned from **Prince of Persia**, I blended into the chaos of crates that lined the perimeter of the convention center. I was searching for the soft underbelly of CES.

I found it. Pavilion A. A little work at a little used service door and I was stalking the aisles! Nearly 100,000 people would be doing the same after 10 a.m. the next morning, but I was there now, a full day ahead of my less intrepid journalistic colleagues.

The sound cut through the deserted tent. Footsteps!

It must be the Convention Security Force! They were widely known to be as relentless as the Canadian Mounties, as friendly as the Gestapo. The crunch of their hobnailed boots on freshly spread carpet was unmistakable. With sudden fear, I realized that they'd see that I didn't have my badge yet. Even I, a veteran of 24 CESes, trembled at the thought of the terrible vengeance they would exact on someone caught badge-less.

I don't know what you would have done in my spot, probably something extremely clever. I ran. I ran hard. I ran far. I ran from Pavilion to Pavilion with my arms and legs churning like an Olympic runner. I was glad I put in those hours on the game-playing exercise bike.

I ran through Pavilion A, and then through Pavilions B, C, and too many others to recall. Whenever I thought about stopping, I'd look back and see the lights glint off my pursuers' truncheons and face shields.

I kept running until I couldn't hear those boots thundering behind me. Dizzy with exertion, I collapsed in the middle of an aisle.

When I woke, I was not alone. At first, I was so relieved that it wasn't the Security Troopers that I hardly noticed the large gray, hairless heads, the big pupil-less black eyes, the slash of mouth.

Then the truth hit me. My headlong flight had brought me to an Alien CES Pavilion. Is this the part where they'd put me on an examining table, shove an invisible pod up my nose, and give me the material for a whole new writing career? No. Instead, they helped me to my feet, put an Apple Newton in my hand and turned me toward the Mammoth TV that was the focus of their extraterrestrial booth.

The screen lit. A beam shot out and the character on the screen stood in front of me in a nimbus of radiance. The giant naked purple humanoid snarled at me. His eyes glowed red. His open mouth showed rows of huge yellow fangs. He pointed one clawed finger at me and said,

"April Fool!"

-- Arnie Katz

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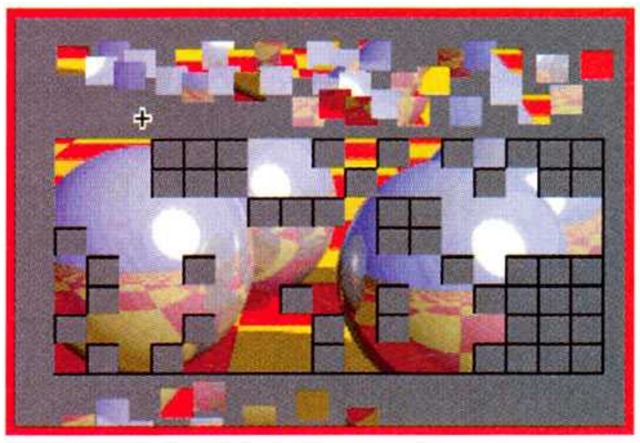
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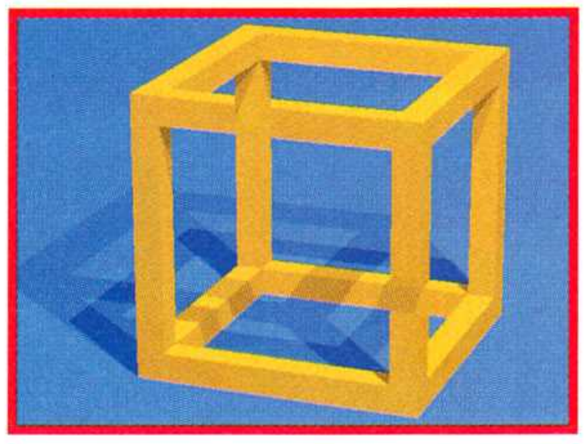
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ISSUE OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

FEEDBACK

THE FIRST STEPS FOR GETTING INVOLVED IN THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY

I would like to know how to get involved in the video game industry. I've been playing for over 10 years now, since the introduction of the Atari 2600 and the Intellivision Master Component. My system of choice is the Super NES, mainly because I love role-playing games. Last summer I grew tired of the ordinary, so I decided to learn how to read and write Japanese. I am 18 and a freshman at the College of Staten Island, majoring in Computer Science with a minor in English. My brother Sal has been writing for *P.C. Magazine* for several years. I also know people at Enix America and Square Soft who I speak with regularly. Basically, what I need to know is exactly how one can become involved in the industry and what it takes to achieve this goal.

John Ricciardi
Staten Island, NY

You already have many of the qualifications and intros you need to get involved, John, including evident dedication and smarts—learning Japanese is not easy for the Westerner. Once you have your degree, talk to your acquaintances about it; they might help you apply for an entry position at a company that appeals to you. Don't be afraid to start at the bottom—that's how you'll learn many nuances of the business no one picks up in college.

Multimedia Muddle

For Christmas Santa brought us an IBM compatible PC. It's set up for multimedia, so now you have become our favorite magazine, because only you pay attention to "us" PC gamers! Thank you! Now, my question... In your list of favorite multimedia games you included **Night Trap** by Sega. Does this mean I can run Sega CDs in my PC with a CD-ROM player? Can I run Amiga or any other CDs, or do I have to stick with my local PC software store? Lastly, I am excited about the new "MPEG video." Could you do an article on what we need to add to our PC to run these programs?

Kevin C. King
Redford, MI

Welcome, Kevin and family. Neither Sega nor Amiga CDs will run in your PC system—at least, not yet. There are some CD-ROMs that will run on both PCs and Macintosh, but as far as we know these are the only multi-platform formats currently available. As for MPEG, check that local PC store for plug-in cards (if you have slots left in your PC) that will let you run the appropriate multimedia software.

How's the Arcade Business?

The home arcade is moving faster than NASA—does this mean the corner video arcade is going or gone? My reason for asking is that I have thought about opening a family amusement center in my area, and I don't know if it's such a smart idea.

Guy Lontrato
Schenectady, NY

It's as smart as you can make it be, Guy. We talked with industry insider Roger Sharpe (Williams Electronics), who said the family amusement center is not at all dying out. On the contrary, it is flourishing more than ever, though perhaps now catering more to the young adult crowd than the pre-teen. But it's not just a matter of opening a store-front, dotting it with a bunch of coin-ops and sitting back. That kind of corner arcade is on its way out. Recognize that you're retailing amusement as a product, like shoes or hardware or fast foods. Study the location carefully, invest in promotion and offer personalized service and attention. Successful arcades are frequently opened in conjunction with other operations where people congregate and have time on their hands, like theatres, restaurants and even laundromats! Good luck!



Family arcades are far from a thing of the past, but opening a new one is a project for the dedicated.

Coded Censorship

I thought it was interesting why Nintendo game passwords of late haven't been using vowels [*Kunkel Report*, **EG** Feb. 94]. I had suspected that [avoiding vulgar or profane words] was the cause before, but wasn't sure. Did you know that Atari did something similar in the arcade version of **Hard Driving**? If you did well enough playing to get your name up and tried to enter a profanity, the game would erase it from the entry.

Reynard Moore
Duluth, MN

*Yes, Reynard, **Hard Driving**, which has been out about four years now, was one of the first coin-ops from Atari that allowed players to enter comments and challenges to other players. Their software incorporates a prohibited words list and a routine that will automatically delete such words from the entries. Actually, we were told by an Atari spokesperson that there is a strict list and a permissive one that allows some milder terms, selectable in the arcade by the operator. We've also been told that some companies' coin-op vanity boards also screen out "bad" sets of initials.*

Hint to the Wise

I hope in the future you will have more codes and passwords for Sega Genesis or anything else. I also am slightly disappointed about the lack of PC or CD-ROM hints and articles.

Tony Rodriguez
Stratford, CT

Articles you'll get, Tony, but as we've said before, we don't run hints, codes and passwords on games, in part because they're available from many other sources; partly because most of us here feel that discovering these is part of the fun of playing.

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HOTLINE

Compiled by Joyce Worley and Ross Chamberlain

Electronic Arts, Broderbund Announce Merger

Electronic Arts and Broderbund Software signed a letter of agreement to merge, in a transaction valued at $400 million. The merger, now pending stockholders' approval, is expected to be complete before June, and Broderbund will continue operations as a wholly-owned subsidiary of EA.

Larry Probst, president of EA, explained, "Broderbund's strengths in the education and personal productivity markets complement EA's established leadership position in the entertainment software category."

Doug Carlston, CEO of Broderbund, will remain active in the new organization. He expressed pleasure at the partnership, and said, "This merger unifies two of the best names in consumer software and paves the way for many exciting opportunities."

Broderbund was founded in 1980 by Doug, Gary and Cathy Carlston.

U.S. Gold Wins '96 Olympics

U.S. Gold signed an exclusive licensing agreement with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to create a line of video games based on the 1996 Olympic Summer



U.S. Gold, following on the heels of the Winter Olympics, looks ahead to '96.

Games. "We are now hard at work developing a line of games on the Summer Olympics," said Robert Botch, president of U.S. Gold, "including one based on the 1996 mascot Izzy."

This is the company's third such license, and its fourth international sports license in less than two years, starting with the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Summer Games, which was followed up with a video game version of the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Winter Games.

The fourth license is its **World Cup USA '94** soccer title, scheduled for release this spring.

Micrografx Opens Crayola Box

Micrografx, Inc., best known for business graphics application programs, and Hallmark Cards, the greeting cards manufacturer, announced they'll jointly develop and market home computer software. The newly created Micrografx At-Home Products Division will work with Binney & Smith, a Hallmark subsidiary, whose Crayola brand name will aim products at children as young as three years old. They'll include drawing and painting programs.

"Crayola has unsurpassed experience in developing kids' creativity products," said David Williams, category general manager for Micrografx's new division. "Together we are developing quality products that nourish children's creative instincts and provide hours of fun."

AOL Rations New Memberships

There's so many people signing onto America On-Line that the company has started rationing access time during peak hours. The company also is reported to have stopped distribution of membership packets to retailers, to temporarily halt growth.

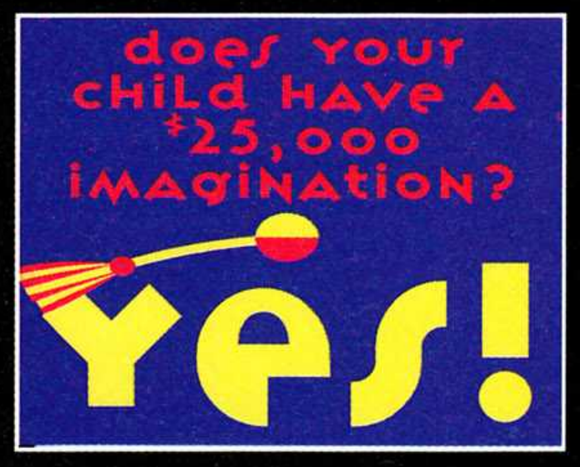
Membership currently stands at 600,000 subscribers (it has been growing at better than 50,000 new users per month), straining hardware capability and resulting in clogs in the system and occasional difficulties when trying to access information.

AoL has purchased new hardware and added personnel to expand the capacity. Meanwhile, the company offered fee adjustments for users who've been inconvenienced by the problems.



You Can Be A Winner

T•HQ is offering players of its **Sports Illustrated for Kids: The Ultimate Triple Dare!** (Game Boy/under the Malibu Games label) a chance to go snowboarding in the French Alps, skateboarding in Hawaii or mountain biking in Australia, or take $50,000 for their own sports fantasy. The game is scheduled for spring release, and contest details are on and in the package.



Your child can win valuable prizes, including a scholarship, from EA.

Five EA companies, EA*Kids, MindPlay, Morgan Interactive, FutureKids and Sanctuary Woods are sponsoring the "Does Your Child Have a $25,000 Imagination?" contest from now through June 30. The awarded prizes include two $25,000 college scholarships, one each in age groups 3-7 and 8-14, for the best game design.

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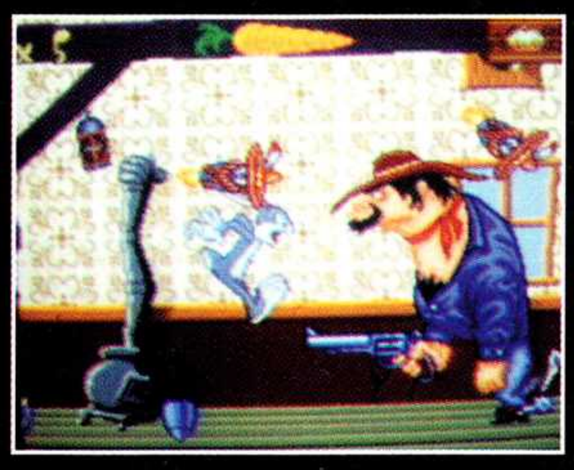
The Gadgeteers

Every game store has a shelf of gadgets to keep video game consoles clean, in good repair, well-lit, speaker-enhanced and mobile, as well as add-ons to provide everything from wheels to a built-in kitchen sink. (OK, I lied about the sink.) But it wasn't always that way. Don Reisinger, Guru of Gadgets and President of Doc's HiTech, recalls that "in the Atari Era there were no accessories except for joysticks. There were no cleaning kits."

Don introduced the first one, for the NES in January of 1989. "At that time even Nintendo hadn't released a cleaning kit. We heard they had some kind of system in Japan. The following CES, in June of 1989, they had one line in their catalog that said 'cleaning kit', but there was no price nor availability date."

Don's history in gadgetry goes back to the Amiga company, long before the computer was introduced. Their first product, introduced at ToyFair in 1983, was the Amiga joystick, a palm-sized red controller. They also created a ramped-up 16K game for the Atari 2600 at a time when all other games were 4K. "We built a custom chip that would hold four games (it looked like a cart with a thyroid problem)." But the Atari era screeched to a halt, and that game never appeared.

Currently, the accessories market is a multi-billion dollar industry. Leading the sales are replacement or enhancement controllers. After that, cleaning kits are the top sellers.



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Kellogg's Raisin Bran Goes Looney Tunes

Sunsoft of America and Kellogg U.S.A. are running a joint promotion through April that gives dollars off on games. The back panel of boxes of Kellogg's Raisin Bran contain coupons for Sunsoft's Looney Tunes video games worth $5 off SNES titles and $3 off those for GameBoy.

Kellogg's featured game action from Sunsoft's **Taz-Mania** for SNES in its Raisin Bran commercials, while a .50¢ coupon for Kellogg's Raisin Bran is packed in boxes of **Bugs Bunny–Rabbit Rampage**.

Ex-Spy Takes Game Mission

William Colby, former Director of the CIA, is working with Activision to develop espionage thrillers. The first will be published under the Infocom banner in early 1995 for PC CD-ROM, and later for the Macintosh.

"The William Colby line will have all the elements of a major motion picture release: High quality Hollywood production values, recognized talent, feature-film quality sound effects and music, plus an intriguing script by a well-known screenwriter," says Bobby Kotick, Activision's CEO.

Sega Drops CES Bombshell

In a surprise announcement, Sega revealed that it will not have its usual 50,000 sq. ft. exhibit at SCES in June. According to company spokesman Richard Breudvik-Lindner, Sega will have only a limited presence at the Chicago show.

Instead, Sega will invite all licensees and key buyers to Orlando, FL, May 23-27, for a week of meetings and presentations. "The June show is too late this year," explained Lindner. "Our retailers would like it even earlier, instead of delayed as it is. By the time of this year's show [June 22-26] they've already made their Christmas orders. So we decided to build on our heritage of successful meetings in Florida that we've had lately."

Cynthia Upson, Staff V.P. of Communications for the Electronic Industries Association (host group for the Consumer Electronics Show), expressed disappointment at Sega's decision. "We feel that it is a good opportunity for any of the video game people to be at our show because it is the place where the industry gathers. But, they have to make their own business decisions. We hope to see them back in the show next year."

Sega Salutes Soldier of Fortune

Sega's choice for Best Product of the Year, and for Best Action Product of the Year, announced at SoA's Third Party Seal Of Quality award ceremony, was **Soldier of Fortune**. The game was developed by the Bitmap Brothers for Spectrum Holobyte, and is available for play on Genesis and SNES.

Sharp-eyed shoppers noticed dramatic differences between the illustration on the front of the SNES box and the original on the Genesis box. A Spectrum Holobyte spokesman said the changes were made at Nintendo's request.



Soldiers of Fortune has some cover differences. How many can you see?



AFTRA, EA Ink Talent Contract

The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) worked with Electronic Arts to hammer out a contract for performers in interactive programs, the first such agreement in the game industry.

It covers all talent, on- and off-camera roles (including singing, dancing and voice-overs) on all interactive media platforms, and sets the minimum salary for day players at $485.

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Troll

That's DARK LEGIONS™ from SSI. It's got the maneuvering, trickery, and deception of the best strategy games. Plus blazing combat so realistic it rivals the hottest arcade mega-hits!

Create an army of up to 50 beings from the realm of dark fantasy. Choose from 16 different characters, such as the six we took right from the game to show you here! Each character comes with unique powers and abilities. Then, let the mayhem begin! Your goal: seek out and destroy the opposing legion's master — *and wrest ultimate power for yourself!*


Wraith

Think you can cut it? You'll need brains *and* brawn to survive in this alternate dimension, where hidden traps and lurking creatures make every move unpredictable and hazardous!


Wizard



IBM 256-color VGA Displays

A Templar faces three deadly opponents on the main strategy screen.



Scratch one Troll – it's about to be roasted by a Fire Elemental!



Stay away from a Troll's huge club! This Wizard's learning the hard way.

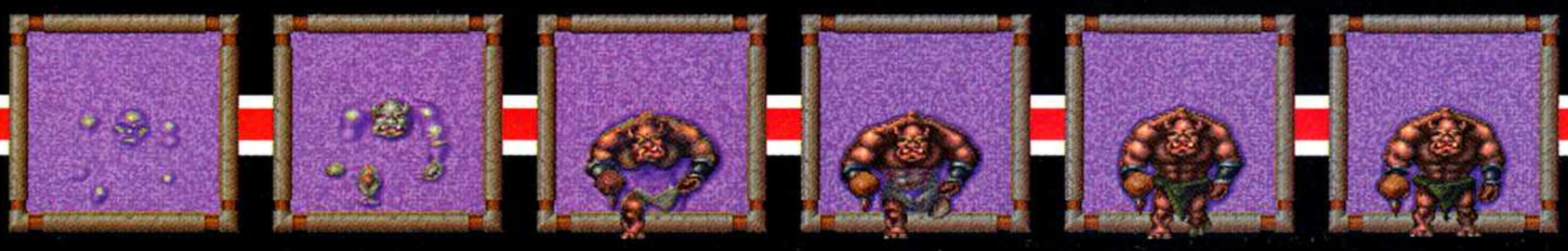

Orc


Conjurer

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Crystal Dynamics Gets Magic Partner

Crystal Dynamics signed PF. Magic to its publishing partner program under which Crystal Dynamics provides publishing, sales and distribution as well as other services.

The first titles under the agreement will be **PaTaank** (3DO), a first-person point-of-view pinball game that sends up to four gamers on a five level ride through tunnels and chutes, with bumpers, drop targets, ramps and all the fixtures of pinball.

Trek Gamers Hear Authentic Voices

Two gaming variations on the Star Trek theme were enhanced with speech from original performers. Interplay made a special effort to make fans of the original series happy with its **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Enhanced CD-ROM**. Based on the DOS version, it now has the recorded voices of William Shatner (Kirk), Leonard Nimoy (Spock) and DeForest Kelley (McCoy). An authentic musical score and sound effects from the series were also added, plus a new final mission and ending for the game. "The CD-ROM format gives us much more latitude in game design," explained Brian Fargo, Interplay president.



Williams' latest pinball, **Star Trek: The Next Generation**, boasts the most custom-recorded speech in any pinball to date. The voices of Patrick Stewart (Picard), Jonathan Frakes (Riker), Brent Spiner (Data), LaVarr Burton (LaForge), Gates McFadden (Dr. Crusher), Michael Dorn (Worf), Marina Sirtis (Counselor Troi) and John DeLancie (Q) are heard, along with musical score and sound effects, in the seven-mission adventure that faces the player off against Romulans, Ferengi and Cardassians.

Interplay & Intel Form Chess Ties

Interplay Productions, maker of the **Battle Chess** series, and sponsor of the United States Chess Federation's annual US Invitational Chess Championship, will join forces with the USCF to create **USCF CheckMate Pro**, a new chess program which will be able to rate players using the USCS standards. According to Al Lawrence, executive director of the US Chess Federation, this "will, for the very first time, enable a player to obtain an officially sanctioned USCF rating from a home computer program."

Meanwhile, Intel Corporation became the sole title sponsor for Professional Chess Association events. These include four Intel World Chess Grand Prix Tournaments and two qualifying tournaments to find a challenger for the 1995 World Chess Championship match against reigning champion Garry Kasparov. In addition, Intel will sponsor a school chess program with the American Chess Foundation (ACF), which is trying to improve academic performance of underprivileged students through chess instruction.

Mega Man Hits the Air

An animated TV series based on Mega Man, Capcom's original video game superhero, is slated to begin this fall. The syndicated children's program pits the hero of a dozen Nintendo games against several of his most notorious game antagonists and teams him with his favorite allies. Mega Man's most recent video game, **Mega Man X** (SNES), was released in January.

This is Capcom's second venture in the film industry; work is still proceeding on its live action feature based on **Street Fighter II**.

Top Software January 1993

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

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *Microsoft Flight Simulator*, Microsoft
2. *X-Wing Mission Disk 2, B-Wing*, LucasArts
3. *Aces Over Europe*, Sierra
4. *Star Wars Rebel Assault*, LucasArts
5. *Links–Pebble Beach*, Access
6. *Leisure Suit Larry VI*, Sierra
7. *7th Guest*, Virgin
8. *Privateer*, Origin
9. *Front Page Sports: Football Pro*, Sierra
10. *X-Wing*, LucasArts

Top CD-ROM Titles

1. *Star Wars Rebel Assault*, LucasArts
2. *7th Guest*, Virgin
3. *Microsoft Encarta*, Microsoft
4. *Iron Helix*, Spectrum Holobyte
5. *King's Quest VI*, Sierra
6. *Return to Zork*, Activision
7. *Dracula Unleashed*, Viacom
8. *Romaterial*, Moon Valley
9. *MPC Wizard*, Aris
10. *Mad Dog McCree*, American Laser Games

Earn a Ninja Arts Degree

Players who master **Revenge of the Ninja**, Renovation's Sega CD title, may obtain a special *Master of the Ninja Arts Degree* certificate. Those who bring the hero through the game's 18 levels in hard mode will get a special, on-screen certificate to fill in



with the player's name. The player can then send a picture of this screen to Renovation for the hard copy certificate. The game was developed by Wolf Team (**Road Avenger**, **Time Gal**), the software development division of Telenet Japan Co., Ltd.

Meet Our Soul Survivor.



THIS GAME NOT ONLY LOOKS GOOD, IT SOUNDS GOOD.
Call (310)326-8880 on Saturday 4/2/94 or Sunday 4/3/94.
If under 18, obtain parental permission before calling.





Our guy looks like he made it through **MANSION OF HIDDEN SOULS** with hardly a scratch. His wired jaw works pretty well and his new dentures are shiny white. The large bald spot on the back of his head doesn't seem to bother him. All of his organs, as far as we know, are original and still in the same places. And we don't hear him complain about the hair that won't stay down or the hands that won't close. Of course, we don't know anything about his mental state.



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EG Readers' Popularity Poll

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. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *Street Fighter 2 Turbo*, Capcom
3. *NHL '94*, EA

Favorite Computer Games
1. *X-Wing*, LucasArts
2. *7th Guest*, Virgin
3. *Indiana Jones & the Fate of Atlantis*, LucasArts

Favorite Multimedia Games
1. *Total Eclipse*, Crystal Dynamics

Favorite Coin-Op
1. *Mortal Kombat II*, Midway

Bad Year For Pirates

Based on leads called into the Software Publishers Association's anti-piracy hotline at an average of 30 a day, the SPA took action against 577 organizations in 1993. This included 245 audits and lawsuits (which resulted in some $3.6 million in fines and penalties) and 332 cease and desist letters.

Most were corporate cases, but some five percent involved BBSs, training facilities and schools.

Top Video Games January 14, 1994

The following figures are provided to **EG** courtesy of Babbages.

Super NES
1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *NHL Hockey '94*, EA Sports
3. *Madden NFL '94*, EA Sports
4. *Tecmo Super Bowl*, Tecmo
5. *Lufia: Fortress of Doom*, Taito

Sega Genesis
1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *NFL Football 94–Joe Montana*, Sega
3. *Madden NFL '94*, EA Sports
4. *NHL Hockey '94*, EA Sports
5. *Eternal Champions*, Sega

Game Boy
1. *Tetris 2*, Nintendo
2. *Super Mario Land 2*, Nintendo
3. *Kirby's Pinball Land*, Nintendo
4. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
5. *Super Mario Land*, Nintendo

NES
1. *Tetris 2*, Nintendo
2. *Kirby's Adventure*, Nintendo
3. *Contra Force*, Konami
4. *Championship Pool*, Mindscape
5. *Alien 3*, Acclaim

Sega Game Gear
1. *Sonic Chaos*, Sega
2. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
3. *Winter Olympics*, U.S. Gold
4. *Star Wars*, U.S. Gold
5. *Road Runner Desert Speedtrap*, Sega

Sega CD
1. *Ground Zero, Texas*, Sony
2. *Jurassic Park*, Sega
3. *Microcosm*, Sony
4. *Lethal Enforcers*, Konami
5. *Bill Walsh College, Football*, EA

MCA Gets Part In Interplay

MCA, Inc. purchased a minority interest in Interplay Productions, in a move that furthers the Hollywood company's role in interactive gaming.

"We have spent the last few years studying the interactive software industry," said Sid Sheinberg, President of MCA. "We looked at a number of opportunities in this area, but early on identified Brian Fargo's Interplay as the ideal next step ... Brian Fargo is a top executive uniquely in touch with the creative process..."

Fargo explained why he had agreed to let MCA become Interplay's sole outside investor: "This transaction offered us the opportunity to bring together everything MCA has to offer—books, movies, records, licensing and theme parks—with our expertise in interactive entertainment."

Future plans, according to Skip Paul, MCA Executive VP, include, "... working through our newly formed Universal Interactive Studios unit to develop MCA properties with Interplay." He also pointed out that MCA will provide access for Interplay to Matsushita's technology.

Mallard Debuts Quackers Line

Mallard Software introduced Quackers, a new line of games separate from its Flight Simulator associated products. The first, **Fast Action Paq: The First Challenge**, is a set of four arcade-type games for Windows, developed by Dreamer's Guild. *Flak Attack* is set in a military outpost with a single flak cannon to defend against robot invaders in planes and helicopters; *Bubble Trouble* pits the player's space ship against aliens in a torrent of subspace vortices; *Mole's Quest* features Monty the Mole, who must escape the intrusion of uranium miners; and *Bot* makes the player infiltrate and disable a factory manufacturing military robots programmed to conquer the world.

Mallard also signed with Red Sword Software to publish **Warpoint**, a space war simulation set 45 years in the future. The game uses 32-Bit SVGA, 3-D texture-mapped polygon graphics with gouroud-shading and brilliant sound.

Behind the Headlines
by Joyce Worley

Playing On The Highway

The Digital Highway changes everything. Tomorrow, we'll get games over a wire, not from a retail store or mail order outlet. Most cartridge rental departments will close. The high cost of chips puts the cartridge on the endangered list. Direct download is the essence of the Digital Highway.

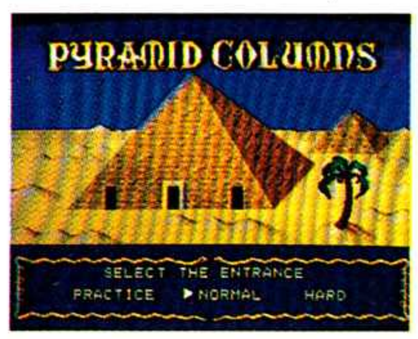
Designers will look at games in a new way. They'll go for the masses, not the savvy few. Interfaces will get even more intuitive to quickly pull the user into the experience. Expect multi-player formats to gain popularity. There'll be more quick-play (10 minutes or less) contests for those who want short, intense bursts of gaming. There'll finally be a place for so-called "women's games," if anyone figures out what they are. Cards, chess, checkers and other games will also be big draws.

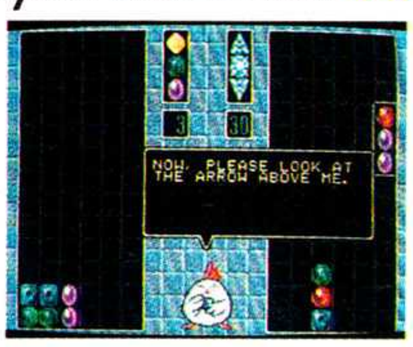
The hundred-hour solo adventures may take a back seat, but they'll go along for the ride. Once you're paying a monthly fee, play-time is almost unlimited.When you play in digital traffic, be sure to tune both ways!

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NOW FIVE OF YOU CAN PLAY COLUMNS.

If you've ever played **Columns,** then you know it's as hard to put down as a box of chocolates. But up until now it's been a fairly private habit. Not anymore. We've made **Columns** a free-for-all for you and four of your closest friends. Of course, if you prefer those private moments, you can still go solo. In the meantime, we'll tell your buddies that **Columns III** plays for five.









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TV GOES INTERACTIVE

by Marc Camron

There's not a more popular hobby in the United States today than sitting in front of the TV like a couch potato watching various programming. Television was thoroughly integrated into our society in less than 50 years. With this penetration into daily life also came a new cultural trait of passiveness. Americans like to be entertained. More and more, people went from participating in their extracurricular activities, to watching others from the comfort of their favorite armchair.

More recently the advent of electronic games gave people a reason to do more than just sit in front of their televisions and observe others enjoying life. It is now possible to plug in a cartridge and journey into strange and wonderful worlds. Electronic games represent the first way people could actually interact with their televisions. The games don't have much to do with the other programs on the TV, but at least they make people participate in their recreational activities once more. Although video games do not replace reading a book or joining the pick-up basketball game at the local playground, they are a great way to spend some time and undoubtedly require more activity than watching TV.

Now there is a new network which gives all living room vegetables the opportunity to watch some of their favorite TV programming and play along at the same time. The Interactive Network is a revolutionary service that has gamers across the country competing with each other for fun and prizes.

WHAT IS THE INTERACTIVE NETWORK?

The Interactive Network is a subscription service much the same as cable TV. Subscribers must first purchase a control unit to play with, an



ergonomically designed hand-held unit with a skinny, rectangular, black and white dot-matrix screen. The quality of the screen is about the same as Nintendo's Game Boy system. However, it includes one feature that the Game Boy is sorely lacking: The control unit has a button on the side that activates a back-light when there is not enough natural light to play by.

On each side of the screen are four buttons to activate the various options during the games. Across the bottom of the screen is a touch strip that lets the player choose from several more options. Under this touch strip is a release button that releases a slide-back panel to reveal a keyboard for inputting names. It will enable even more options to interact with the network in the future. There's also a directional pad similar to those found on a video game joypad.

The top of the unit sports an antenna to receive the signal (see "How it Works"). On the rear of the unit are outlets to connect a phone line, a computer expansion of some sort, and the AC power supply. Inside the machine is a rechargeable battery and a back-up battery to save high scores and other information.

The unit itself is very well made and feels quite sturdy. The suggested retail price is about $199.95, and can be purchased in many department and specialty electronic stores. But before you run out looking for the unit, be warned that it's only available in a few test markets, like Los Angeles and Chicago. The network is scheduled to go national sometime in 1994.

Once players purchase the control unit, they must subscribe to the network. For a basic fee of $14.95 per month, subscribers receive all of the programming and can participate in some of the special contests. Additionally, players who wish can spend a little extra and compete for prizes. There are two categories of competing players. Basic customers buy "tokens" to compete on an occasional basis. Deluxe membership entitles players to compete in as many events as they want each month. The deluxe membership is $24.95 per month; not bad considering there are several contests to compete in every day.

HOW IT WORKS

When customers get their control unit home, the first thing to do is initialize the unit. To do this, connect



the unit to a telephone line and call in all the subscription information to the network. Registered subscribers receive a monthly schedule of events. These fall into two categories: television events and Interactive Network games. Television events include game shows, sporting events, news programs, and even television detective shows like *Murder She Wrote* and *L.A. Law*.

The most popular events are game shows and sporting events. The Interactive Network allows players to compete with others and play along in games like *Jeopardy*, *Wheel of Fortune*, and *Family Feud*. This is the first time that the general public has had the opportunity to go head to head against the actual show contestants.

Sporting events give armchair sports fans even more expanded opportunities. Now players can anticipate the football play before the ball is snapped. They can make predictions on the outcome of a boxing match or play along with a basketball or baseball game. They can even participate in the Olympics!

There are also a number of dedicated Interactive Network games available, such as trivia games (a different subject every day), poker, a dice game, and two graphically oriented games, Submarine and Maze Hunter. Each is offered several times during the day and many are played for prizes based on score.

The network broadcasts via FM radio frequencies (thus the purpose for the antenna on the top). Players can download their scores to the Network, whether they are playing for prizes, or just want to be figured into the average.

While it was obvious by first glance that the Interactive Network was well thought through, I wanted to see how it performed in a real life test. I decided to compete with other Interactive players during a couple of major events: The Grand Slam of Boxing and the Superbowl. The results were interesting, and I was surprised at how much fun playing along with these sports events really was.

THE BOXING GRAND SLAM

There were five great boxing matches in one night. Four were title fights, all under the glitz of the new MGM Grand hotel in beautiful Las Vegas. Everyone was in a competitive sports mood, since this was the night before the Superbowl. The Interactive Network control unit was set up, and I settled myself down in front of the TV. This was my first opportunity to score a fight from ringside. I had often done it in my mind, but have never been given the opportunity to match myself against the other judges at the event. In fact, this was my big chance to match myself against other fans all over the country.

Before the first fight, I reviewed the handy instruction card for boxing that came with the control unit. I discovered that there was more to the game than just scoring the rounds. Before a fight starts, the player can choose the winner of the match, which round he will win in, if he will win by KO or TKO, or if the fight will be decided by a decision. Once the first round starts, these predictions cannot be changed.

To aid in making all of the pertinent decisions, players view information on the fighters. This includes height, weight, reach, and win/loss records. Everything is available at the touch of a button and can be recalled at any time.

Once the fight starts, the majority of the interactive play occurs before each round starts. Players choose whether or not the upcoming round will be the final round of the fight, or if the fight will continue. If the round is chosen as the final one, a winner must be picked as well as whether the fight will be won by KO or TKO. Players also choose which fighter, if either, will be knocked down during the round. After the first round, players can also take the time to score the round. The scoring is on a must 10 basis, meaning that one of the fighters must be given 10 points for the round. The other fighter can be given 7, 8, 9, or 10 points.

Each correct choice adds to the player's overall score. Scoring the fight is important because if the bout goes the distance, players compare their scorecards with the ring-side judges, also for points.

The only activity for the player during the round is the knockdown button. Players can call a knockdown during a match (one per round). If it appears that a fighter is about to hit the canvas, push that fighter's button and the machine counts down from ten. If the fighter falls within that 10 count, points are scored.

The level of activity and interactivity during the boxing program is just right. The choices don't hinder the enjoyment of the match, and every aspect of the fight is covered. It is a lot of fun to score the match with the judges, and the choices made during the fight add to the level of excitement felt while cheering on your choice to win.

The only desirable addition I'd like to see in the program involves penalties. With the must 10 system of scoring, it is impossible to remove a point from a player who goes on to win the round. There should be some sort of function to make it possible to remove these points since this affects how the scorecard will compare to the judges' cards at the end of the fight.

The Interactive Network Boxing program is excellent, though it could

become expensive since most of the really good fights are on pay-per-view now. For fight fans, the program will allow players to feel closer to the action and maybe even win some cool prizes.

THE SUBERBOWL

It is without a doubt the most popular and arguably the most important sporting event of the year. The Superbowl is the highlight of the football season when the top NFC team meets the top AFC team for the final showdown of the year. All Buffalo jokes aside, the Superbowl is traditionally the football game of the year to watch. Throw a party, invite all of your friends, and watch the AFC look silly (sorry, couldn't resist).

The Interactive Network football program is very different from the boxing one. Here, players match wits with the quarterback. Before the snap of the ball, each play must be called. Players choose from both running and passing plays. If a pass is chosen, players can then pick the type of pass —short, deep, or back—as well as the direction of the play—right, left, or center. The other option here is the play-action play. If a running play is chosen, players can also guess on the direction of the run—right, left, or center—as well as the draw option.

Points are scored for each correct guess and taken away for each incorrect one. The player is not required to make choices for every option on the screen. If he is fairly sure that the play is going to be a pass, but doesn't feel comfortable with guessing which side the pass is going to, or what distance is going to be tried for, it's possible to just call a simple pass play. However, for each additional correct choice, players win more points.

There is also a button called the "Gamebuster" play. This doubles the points possible for one play per set of downs—it also doubles the possible penalty.

The Interactive Network football program is good but not as notable as the boxing program. It is certainly enjoyable matching wits with a quarterback, but there are many options that could be worked into the program, which have not.

Like the boxing match, it would have been nice to predict the outcome of the game and the final score, before the game started. Along the same theory, players could choose the points scored and method of scoring for each team prior to the start of



each quarter. Predictions could become even more complex by guessing the number of turnovers and sacks in each quarter.

As each team's possession begins, a prediction could be made as to whether or not they'll score in the overall possession as well as a button to push before the snap of the ball if the player thinks that the team will score on a particular play. Points would be taken off for incorrect predictions.

Lastly, there should be some sort of interactivity for fourth down kicking options. The current program does not take any kicking into account, and during fourth downs players must just sit and watch the action. There should at least be an option to predict if a field goal will be kicked and whether or not it will score.

When asked if they have plans to update the program for the next football season, a representative from the Interactive Network stated that they are always working to improve their programming.

The Interactive Network also has something special planned for the Superbowl. They sponsored one of their players against the pros' specials. It works like this—for a big sporting event, network subscribers have the opportunity to test their mettle against a professional from that sport. In this case the professional was Sam Wythe, coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Anyone who managed to outscore the coach won a special commemorative T-shirt. All players were eligible for the shirt, even those who don't normally play for prizes. Coach Wythe came in about the middle of the pack, and about half of the IN Superbowl players walked away with a shirt.

It should be remembered that playing along with a football game takes a lot of time and attention. This program is not for everyone. If your idea of having fun during a football game is sitting around with a group of friends, laughing, talking, and not always paying attention, chances are that playing along with the Interactive Network Football will require more thought and time than you're willing to give.

MORE TO COME

In the future, we will take a look at baseball, basketball, and possibly even special events like the Olympics when played through the Interactive Network. The network has been progressing steadily throughout the end of 1993 and into the beginning of 1994, striking up deals with such supporters as the NFL and the SEGA Channel. When the network goes national in the summer of '94, interest is sure to reach an all-time high. And if the Interactive Network executives have their way, we will never again look at television the same way.

Spar With The Gods,

Not The Game Manual.



Prove your vikinghood by wrestling wild boars and rescuing feisty barmaids.



Innovative "point-and-click" interface gives you total character control.



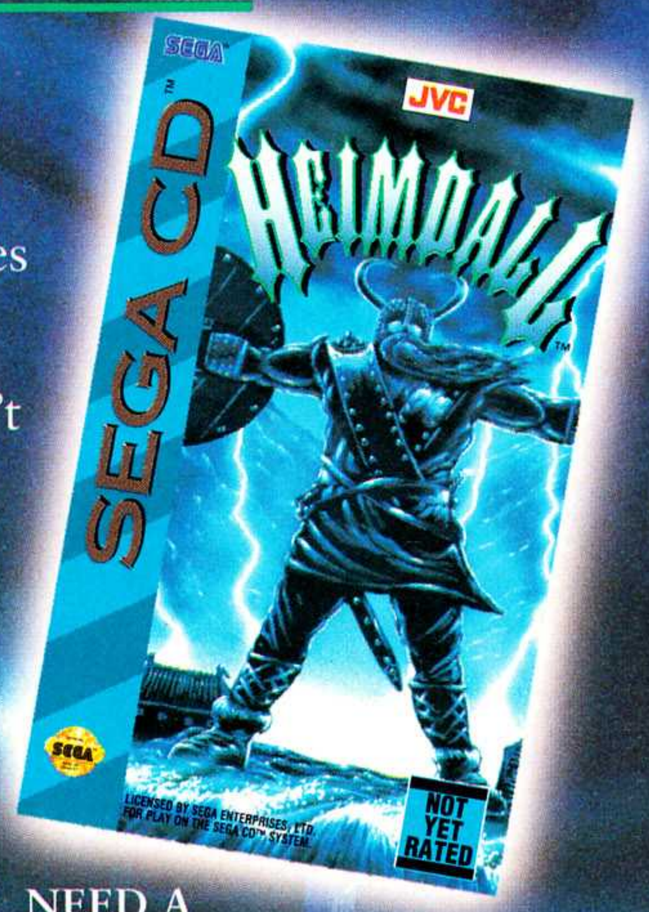
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Thanks to an intuitive game design, you don't need to know how to read the runes on a wizard's staff to indulge in the legend of Heimdall. Pillaging, plundering and battling sword-wielding hordes is as simple as "point-and-click."

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INSERT COIN HERE

Trend Spotting: From the Arena To the Court & the Stadium

by Jay Carter

One of the biggest legacies of the mega-hit **NBA Jam** was the reinvigoration of the entire category of sports themed games. Although sports has always been an integral part of the product mix, much of the design focus in the past couple of years has been directed at creating next generation fighting games.



Basket Bull provides a game of shooting skill, using plungers and a spinning disk to score more points.

Just like books, the music business, television, radio and the movie industry, the amusement game industry has always been marked by trends and cycles. Successes tend to breed other efforts that capitalize on the same massively popular subjects. Coin-op is really no different.

When the public shows a desire to experience more of the same, it gets more of the same. If a company is willing to break from the ranks and take a risk which deviates from the norm, and the result is successful, we witness the beginning of a new trend that will help propel more derivative efforts.

This is the underlying reason why we find so many similar themes pervading the medium at specific points in time. And it is a cycle that replenishes itself on a regular basis.

For coin-op this doesn't mean that fighting games have left us, but sports have definitely made a strong comeback, as evidenced by the emergence of some of the machines we'll be looking at this month. Leading the way is Konami's **Run and Gun**, a dual-monitor basketball shoot-out for one to four players.

Despite the fact that there isn't a licensed tie-in to the NBA or even the CBA for that matter, what we have is the Eastern Conference against the Western Conference in a five-on-five match-up.

Different than **NBA Jam** with a long eye view of the court, players have a joystick and three action buttons to master, including the "C" button which allows quick change of player control to any two of the five athletes on screen.

The action is fast and furious. A host of button combinations provides the means to launch some impressive dunks and up-tempo passes, along with punishing defensive moves. And if **Run and Gun** was begat by **NBA Jam**, then the battle lines should prove interesting when Midway's all-new **NBA Jam Tournament Edition** begins to hit the streets.

From the folks that brought us **Full Court Frenzy**, which was a successful variation on the Pop-A-Shot machines, Innovative Concepts in Entertainment (ICE) is back with a downsized **1/2 Pint Frenzy**. Although designed for the younger set, this mini-basketball shooter is fun for players of all ages with its non-stop action and automatic moving hoop, whether it's set for ticket redemption or straight novelty play.

Jaleco's **Basket Bull** in a video-style upright cabinet is another addition to the hoop du jour offerings. The objective here is to pull back a pinball-type plunger to launch a little basketball into play around a giant loop, through the hoop and then, with luck, into one of six different scoring holes on a spinning disk. Adept players can earn significant jackpots on this redemption ticket spitter.

Lest anyone fear that only basketball is getting the attention of coin-op manufacturers, football has also re-entered the arena with not one, but two NFL licensed games. **2 Minute Drill** from Taito is an interesting adaptation that combines much of the gridiron strategy and action into a Pop-A-Shot type of game design. Instead of hitting baskets, however, the main objective is to complete passes by drilling a football past the moving arm of a defensive lineman target.

There are four different skill levels to select from and a video monitor at the front of the cabinet displays



actual NFL footage as you attempt to move the ball downfield, completing passes and scoring touchdowns with an accurate, yet powerful, touch as the clock counts down. Full stat summaries finish off the package for any budding Troy Aikmans or Steve Youngs.

For more conventional video football action, Strata's **NFL Hard Yardage** is an outstanding simulation featuring all of the 28 NFL teams and the end zone to end zone play that has become a favorite vantage point for so many of the home system efforts.

Using digitized graphics, embellished with well-crafted animations and the inclusion of actual film footage, **Hard Yardage** also features Chicago Bears announcer Wayne Larrivee. For anywhere from one to four players, the joystick and button controls provide special combinations with over 90 offensive and defensive plays to select from that take you from the ranks of coach on down to the field of battle.

Taking a page out of the **Track and Field** and **Hyper Olympics** playbook, Namco has served up the mutant-based competitions of **Numan Athletics** for up to four players. With three action buttons to furiously pound on or to expertly manipulate, depending upon the event, **Numan Athletics** allows you to choose from either Sharon, France's star Numan; Harry from the USA; Masaemon of Japan or Bongo from Kenya.

There are eight different events, beginning with the 1000 meter dash and including such interesting events as the Scud Toss, which is javelin throwing with a major difference, or sniper-firing at some extraordinary targets.

Not only is the competition fierce between players, but there are also world records to beat in a game that should test almost anyone's physical endurance, not to mention wrist strength and finger dexterity.

With the season about to begin, America's pastime endures in the world of coin-op thanks to Sportech and the introduction of **A Pitcher's Dream**. A pitching cage with a difference, the game play here for one or two players is to accurately hit the horizontal target while also putting some 'mustard' on the ball.

You get a maximum of six pitches to prove your stuff as you attempt to hit various zones for optimum scoring, with points also added according to the speed of each pitch. Throw three strikes or four balls, however, and you're out, in what is really any pitcher's dream.



Sticks fanatics will thrill to the enhanced graphics developed by Bundra Games for Shootout.

For something less physically taxing, Bundra Games recently introduced **Shootout!**, a video pool simulation developed by Supervision. Using a joystick and buttons, there's head-to-head action or one-player against an interesting assortment of 12 computer opponents (including Trixie Shotz or Jumpin' Johnny Joe) in either a game of 9 Ball, 8 Ball or a match of Straight Pool.

The 3-D animations and rotating views of the table are truly eye-catching, and the player has the ability to control bank shots, combinations and even cueball spin.

Rounding out the sports offerings this month is Premier Technology's Gottlieb pinball called **Wipe Out**. Hit the ski slopes with a game that features some fancy hotdoggin', snow boarding events and an innovative chair lift that transports the ball to a controllable mini-field slalom. Experience the adrenaline thrill of downhill skiing without risking serious bodily injury (this depends, of course, on how hard you usually play pinball games!)

Building off of the same premise as all modern era pinball designs, **Wipe Out** is a mode-based machine that incorporates its own unique timed down sequences for increased scoring values, multi-ball play and Jackpots. One mode gives the players the opportunity to double their scores.

Obviously, coin-op entertainment continues to deliver a rich diversity of options for players everywhere and as the warmer weather approaches, much of the heat is going to be generated at the local game rooms.

So keep on playing, have some fun and we'll look at the latest and greatest next time around.

GAME DOCTOR

CAN 3DO BE BOARD? TUNE IN AS THE DOC REVEALS ALL

Now that the Game Nurse and I have finished packing up Shane Shaffer's Prize Packet (earned through his bulldog tenacity in documenting the existence of the Atari 2600 game **WaterWorld**), we realized that we've actually got a pretty large stock of game-related goodies, so we will be returning to the practice of awarding a Game Doctor Prize Packet to a reader once every issue. Speaking of such things, the winner of this month's prize is...

Q: I'm basically a computer gamer, Doc, but I'm very interested in the possibility of the 3DO standard. In fact, in the entire history of computing, it seems like MS-DOS was the only time the idea of standardization across a wide range of manufacturers was ever attempted. And, despite the fact that the PC world's so-called compatibility is frequently a joke, look at how successful that idea has been.

It seems to me that Trip Hawkins has the right idea and I'm just wondering if it would be possible to buy a 3DO board which would run off my DX? I think it might be a big seller; You've certainly got at least one early adopter here in Memphis salivating at the prospect.

Stevie Brown
Memphis, TN

A: *Stevie, it's readers like you who have made this column such a pleasure to write over these last dozen-plus years. There's no*





ACCESS Brings You a Virtual World Interactive Movie!

What Reviewers Are Saying:

"Lots of games push the envelope—Under a Killing Moon blows it to smithereens!"
—William Trotter, PC Entertainment

"A ground breaking CD adventure!"
—Joyce Worley, Electronic Games

"Under a Killing Moon combines the best elements of movies and computer games... It literally pulls you into the screen."
—Denny Atkin, Entertainment Editor, Compute Magazine

This category-creating Interactive Movie from ACCESS Software goes light years beyond any other product labeled "interactive." *Under a Killing Moon* takes you to the streets of post World War III San Francisco and casts you into the role of Tex Murphy, Private Investigator, who first appeared in *Mean Streets*, then *Martian Memorandum*. *Under a Killing Moon* is a Virtual World full of people and places so richly detailed, you'll feel like you're actually there.

question that the industry craves a standard; it was, in fact, the single unifying issue at an electronic gaming workshop hosted by ***EG****'s editor at the last CES.*

I can also report that a PC-compatible 3DO board is already in the planning stages. We may even see computer manufacturers begin to actually integrate the system's audio-visual power into their entire system structure. It's true that 3DO systems didn't set the world on fire on the initial rollout, but with several major players waiting in the wings (along with tons of software) and a rapidly-falling price-point, theconcept of an industry standard has plenty of allure left in it.

Q: I've got a 486 20 2MB RAM w/107MB hard drive. Here's the problem: When my hard drive is almost half full, I get the message "Error Reading Drive C:" when I boot a game. I can delete other programs, re-install the same game and no problems. Is something wrong with my hard drive, or controller card? I bought Norton Disk Doc, ran it and found no problems except sometimes I get lost clusters after installing games I had trouble loading.

S. Carl
Marion, IN

A: *There are several possibilities here, S. old boy. It sounds like it might be an overwrite problem—which is to say the game is attempting to overwrite information that already exists on the hard drive. A memory manager probably won't help much with this sort of problem, nor will using a boot disk—and those are usually my two best diagnostic suggestions in cases like this. The best bet is to create a separate partition for just that game, then install it directly into that drive.*

Q: About two years ago (or was it a year ago? This industry moves so fast, I can't keep track!), after Sega had introduced its CD-ROM platform, Nintendo answered quickly with its own version of a CD-ROM platform. With the CD-ROM, Nintendo added a system cartridge which housed the CD-ROM's brains, or microprocessor.

Then, a couple of months ago, Camerica introduced Aladdin for the NES; a unit which housed the redundant parts of all cartridge games. This sparked my question: If Nintendo can make a system cartridge that houses its CD-ROM's brains, then why can't Sega use a similar principle to upgrade the color and sound deficiencies that plague the otherwise excellent Genesis games?

Joe R. Town
Moorhead, MN

A: *Actually, Joe, that Nintendo CD-ROM thing was several plans ago, but I get your point, and it's a good one. Camerica's Aladdin system was a brilliant product, conceptually. Unfortunately, the NES was dying and no other software publishers supported the effort. But there is no reason I know of why a similar cartridge could not be produced for the Genesis. With the Sega Channel starting to pick up speed, by the way, Sega will soon be selling subscribers a special cartridge which will take a coaxial cable feed.*

Send Q's to:
The Game Doctor
(EG)
330 S. Decatur,
Suite 152
Las Vegas,
NV
89107

UNDER A
Killing Moon









Q: What do film stars *Brian Keith*, *Margot Kidder*, & *Russell Means* all have in common?

A: They all star in ACCESS Software's new CD thriller *Under a Killing Moon!*

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Players' Guide to Spring and Summer Games

When the Weather Gets Warm, the Play Gets Hot!

by Arnie Katz & and EG Staff

A hundred articles have proclaimed the similarities between the film and gaming industries. Here's something you never see mentioned: Both unveil their blockbusters in the fourth quarter. The reasons behind their strategies differ, but the result is the same. The movies most likely to win Oscars and the games with the best chance to cop an Electronic Gaming Award debut during the holiday season.

Another similarity: The second-most-important period for releasing movies and games is late spring, early summer. Game publishers know that students have more free time, competition from television is at its weakest and people feel more like having a good time when the weather is pleasant and warm.

Our second annual Players' Guide to Spring/Summer Gaming has the latest word on all major announced cartridge, computer, and multimedia entertainment products. Read now, so you can play later.



Gamers must help Uncle Fester seek out and find the newest member of everyone's favorite family.

The Spring and Summer Video Games Ready for Action!

Addams Family Values (Ocean/SNES). The 1993 smash movie comedy has a sequel and, as of May, so does the popular video game. Guide Uncle Fester in his search for the newest member of this eldritch clan. The graphics are crisp, and the multi-perspective play is reminiscent of **Zelda**.

Beauty & The Beast (Hudson Soft/SNES). This detailed puzzle/platform game has fabulous graphics. Puzzles include a maze of floating staircases. Typical of the attention to detail and nuance is the way it marks the passage of time with a rose that loses its petals. When the last one drops, it's over. There are clever animations, including a brilliant use of Luminere. When Beast is close to Luminere, the view is very bright, but it darkens when they are separated.

Bubba and Stix (Core Designs/Genesis, Sega CD). This witty side-scroller casts the player as Bubba, a trucker kidnapped by aliens for an intergalactic zoo. Bubba uses Stix, a friendly critter from the same zoo, as a baseball bat, pool cue, lever, javelin and many more as he battles through hostile worlds that incorporate more than 300 frames of animation. The one- or two-player contest will be out for Genesis this spring, with the CD edition shortly thereafter.

Final Option (TecMagik/SNES, Genesis). This is a 2.5D game with the look and feel of 3-D. It's the first product of what is expected to be a long-term relationship between TecMagik and film fighting star Steven Seagal. An adventure plot gives extra meaning to the individual martial arts matches.

G2 (Kemco/SNES). This 15-level side scroller takes the idea of a villainous boss very literally. The main bad guy is an evil CEO (chief executive officer). The graphics, especially the multi-layered backgrounds, are a bragging point.

Interplanetary Lizards (Tengen/Genesis). This goofy shoot-'em-up works well due to its Western theme and fluidity of movement. Appropriate sound and music complete the picture of a game that breaks little new ground, but does a great job re-presenting the familiar style of shooters.



Pirates of Dark Water (Sunsoft/SNES, Genesis). Simultaneous two-player movement is the major feature of this eight-level side-scroller with a pirate theme. Three heroes search for 13 treasures needed to destroy the



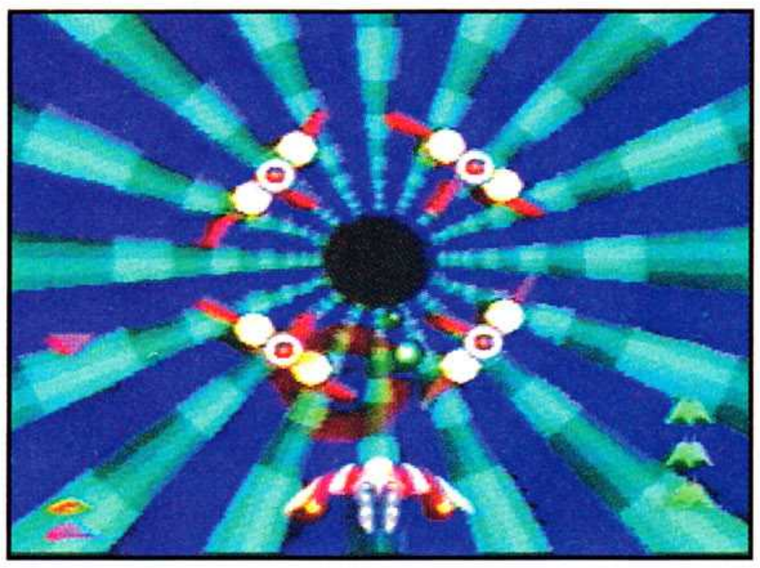
Pirates of Dark Water takes you through eight levels of rampaging swashbucklers out for blood.

deadly substance known as "Dark Water." The Genesis version is a one-player, platform fighting game.

Joe & Mac 2 (Data East/SNES). Those zany characters are back again, but the setting is the tropics this time. The huge character sprites go through their platform game paces against absolutely gorgeous, vividly colorful backgrounds. Looks like a lightweight good time.

Juggernauts (Accolade/Genesis). Fully rendered artwork of the four heroes and like number of villains is this fighting game's main recommendation. The animations are exceptionally fluid in this action-intensive game. The spring release's pounding music drives the on-screen brawling.

Knights of the Round (Capcom/SNES). The publisher, seeking another home hit to go with its strong **Street Fighter II** franchise, again turns to the arcades for inspiration. Capcom has done a great job porting the coin-op to the SNES with most of its graphics and all of its fun intact. Like the arcade machine, the cartridge features furious, nonstop action.



Like, wow, dude! The movie's influence is clearly evident in the adaption of The Lawnmower Man.

Lawnmower Man (Tengen/Genesis). The trippy, '60s graphics are the main innovation in this action contest, due in late spring. There's a rudimentary story which is presented as a series of action modules.

Packy & Marlon (Raya Systems/SNES). This edutainment title on diabetes, still far from completion, involves two young elephants who go to a summer camp that caters to children with diabetes. When marauding mice steal the supplies and kidnap the camp directors, Packy and Marlon must get them back. It's a side-scroller with 22 levels that represent seven areas of the camp. Fun for kids.

Ren & Stimpy Show: Time Warp (THQ/SNES). Tune in this spring for Sculptured Software's four-level game for one or two fans of the Nickelodeon cartoon series. The large sprites capture Ren and Stimpy's personalities.

Radical Rex (Activision/SNES). Radical Rex, a skateboarding, fire-breathing T-rex, is "too hip to be extinct." The player guides Rex through five side-scrolling worlds, with 10 levels each, in this colorful, interactive cartoon. After defeating Sethron, the final big boss, the player turns around and goes back through all 50 levels with new terrain, traps, and enemies. **Radical Rex** stomps onto the SNES this summer, and a Genesis edition is in the works.

Rocko's Modern Life (Viacom Interactive/SNES). The publisher used its Nickelodeon connection to snag this license, which is based on the cable service's stylish new cartoon show. The second quarter release, done with help from the people who did the TV version, should appeal to a broad spectrum of players, including women as well as men.

The Simpsons: Virtual Bart (Acclaim/SNES, Genesis). In the 16-Meg title, Millhouse straps Bart into his virtual reality machine. Bart's travels take him into seven areas, including Jurassic Bart and Doomsday Bart. Each area has a slightly different play-mechanic. For example, Tomato Bart is a shooting gallery. In each scenario, Bart must accomplish a goal or be trapped in VR Limbo.

Space Ace (Absolute Entertainment/SNES). Although the voices will be familiar to those who've played the original arcade machine, this is a platform design, not an animated adventure. The new graphics are superb, though not as slick as the coin-op. Dexter still transforms into Space Ace in this challenging, enjoyable licensed entry.

Speedy Gonzales (Sunsoft/SNES). Speedy races through outer space, castles, deserts, and a pirate's ship, collecting cheese to rescue his friends in this 12-Meg side-scroller. **Speedy Gonzales** has superior animated graphics, and playability also merits high marks.

Speaking of Sports (Games)

Barkley: Shut Up and Jam (Accolade/SNES). This is two-on-two street hoops with the Sir Charles spin on the ball. The characters are very large and look realistic in motion. The signature dunk moves and streetwise music are other big pluses.



Sir Charles hits the backyard blacktop to challenge you to a number of two-on-two b-ball contests.

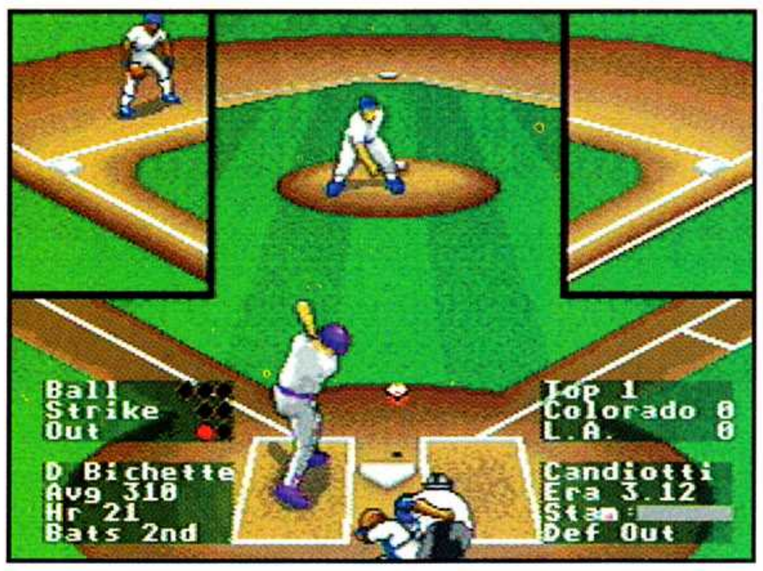
ImagineerZoo Baseball (Imagineer/SNES). Soft-looking sprites with cute animations make this baseball variant visually unusual. This cart has seven different diamonds and has windows that show the statistics as well as the base-running situation. All players have special powers, like the ability to give the ball wings.

Ken Griffey, Jr. Baseball (Nintendo/SNES) His dad had a long and distinguished career without ever getting a game of his own, but Ken Jr. blasts homers and achieves that honor with this substantial action simulation. The developer did a lot of work on the stadiums. Besides the regulation ones, armchair managers can build their own to their own specifications. Unusual touches include different stances for each batter, which allows students of the national pastime to explore the intricacies of the science of putting bat to horsehide.

Mega Man's Soccer (Capcom/SNES). The wild concept may be the best aspect of this unexpected marriage between Capcom's popular hero and the world's most widely played sport. The idea sounds goofy, but the game is cute. It should be in stores by next month.

Players' Guide to Spring and Summer Games

RBI Baseball '94 (Tengen/ Genesis). Another year, another baseball season, another version of one of the most popular sports video games of all time. The game, which employs real players and the actual stadiums, features better graphics with larger sprites than in previous years. Digitized art and sound enhance the realism.



Tengen, makers of the original RBI for the NES, makes a great play on the Genesis with RBI '94.

Slam Masters (Capcom/SNES) With an assist from the designer of **Street Fighter II**, this pro wrestling four-player simulates the grunts and groans of the sports entertainment attraction. The animation is smooth, and there's a good variety of holds, but how well it evokes professional wrestling can't be ascertained until **Slam Masters** emerges from the development cycle next month.

Soccer Shootout (Capcom/SNES). Simple operation is the attraction in the latest of many new soccer cartridges hoping to exploit interest generated by the World Cup. The soccer pitch is particularly well-done.

Mind-Testing Cartridges

Air Strike Patrol (Seta/SNES). This 8-Meg action-adventure-battle game is based on Desert Storm. Highlights include its excellent maps and large number of decision-making opportunities. The angled-overhead graphics with 360° scrolling, score very high. (GNN). **Battletech** (Extreme Entertainment/Genesis). Control a six-story battle mech in the 26th century in a competition against other battle mechs for control of remote worlds. In One-player Mode, the gamer is a rookie mercenary and must defeat five enemy clans in 25 missions over five different terrains. Players can test their battle skills against another human in the Two-player Mode.



Fireteam: Rogue (Accolade/ Genesis/ SNES). Jon Skeel's next big project combines puzzle, RPG, fighting, combat, strategy, adventure, and action elements in one exciting package. The hero-team and back-story will be introduced to the public through a four-issue limited run comic book series this summer. The game, still in the formative stage of development, is ticketed for September.

Rex Ronan, Experimental Surgeon (Raya Systems/SNES) The theme of this edutainment cartridge is tobacco. Rex shrinks to microscopic size and enters a smoker's body to repair internal damage and prevent a heart attack. This is a side-scroller with parallax backgrounds. Correct responses to questions reward players with the tools needed to win.

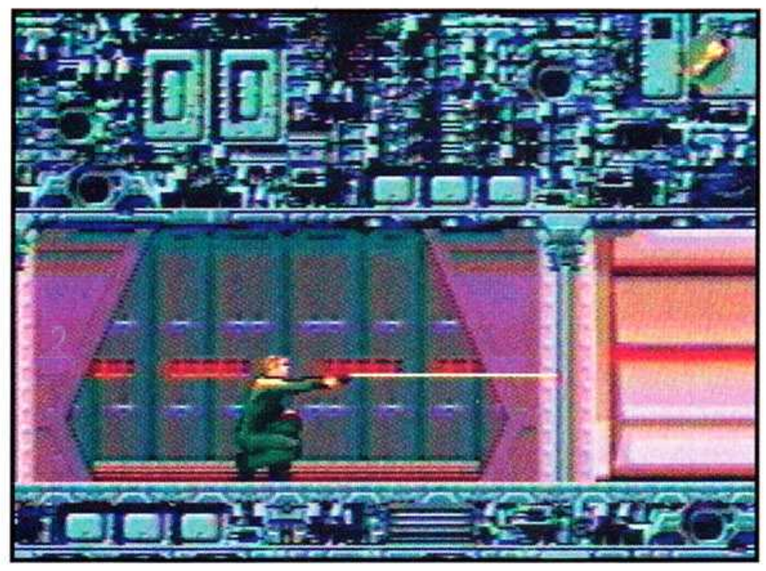
Operation Europe: Path to Victory 1939-1945 (Koei/SNES, Genesis:). May is the estimated time of arrival for this extension of the **PTO** game-system to the Western front. Six scenarios challenge one or two players.

Liberty or Death (Koei/SNES, Genesis). The American Revolution invades the family room in this platform contest. Relive the rally cry of Patrick Hale as you try to defeat the British forces bent on keeping the colonies under sovereign rule. It's an historical look at warfare with three levels of difficulty. Battles take place on a traditional hexgrid map. The SNES cart hits stores first, followed by the Genesis edition a month later in June.



"The shot heard 'round the world" can be heard again on your Super NES with Liberty or Death.

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (Playmates/SNES, Genesis). This 8-Meg platform game is under development by Novotrade International. Players explore DS9 station, the starship *U.S.S. Saratoga*, the planet Bajor, and a Cardassian flagship. Commander Sisko must rescue his son Jake. Later, players take on the roles of Odo, Kira, O'Brien or Dax, each with individualized capabilities. The game play of the late-summer title emphasizes logic and puzzles over action.



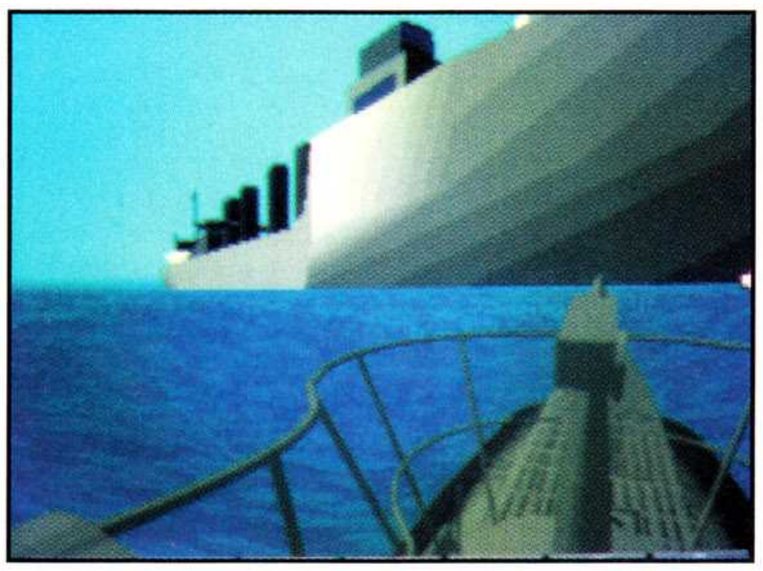
Star Trek: Deep Space Nine puts you in the roles of the characters from the actual television series.

Uncharted Waters: New Horizons (Koei/SNES, Genesis). This sequel, due this summer, takes place 25 years after the first title. The player returns to the scene of former glory to map out the lands. Winning involves the collection of up to 100 special items.

The Spring-Summer Computer Games

Best of the Braingames

Aces of the Deep (Dynamix/MS-DOS). The popular Aces series gets wet in this simulation of undersea warfare. Due in mid-summer, this exacting simulation is embellished with excellent sound and graphics that make combat more than an abstraction to players. The interface is based on the proven Aces control scheme, so expect a lot of flexibility. Dynamix is also working on a multimedia version for PCs.



Become the captain of the sea serpents of steel when you run deathly silent with Aces of the Deep.

Across the Rhine (MicroProse/MS-DOS). This is **Armored Fist** in WWII. The player takes a first-hand role on either side. Armchair strategists can command a single tank as part of a huge operation or lead at the divisional level. Weather is realistically portrayed, and the rolling European countryside is accurate enough to affect tactics. This will be a hot one.

Aerobiz: Super Sonic (Koei/MS-DOS). The publisher promises this high-flying enhancement of its airline business simulation by mid-summer. As CEO of an airline, the gamer negotiates for holding slots, buys planes and establishes routes. Obstacles include aggressive competition, hijackings, and strikes.

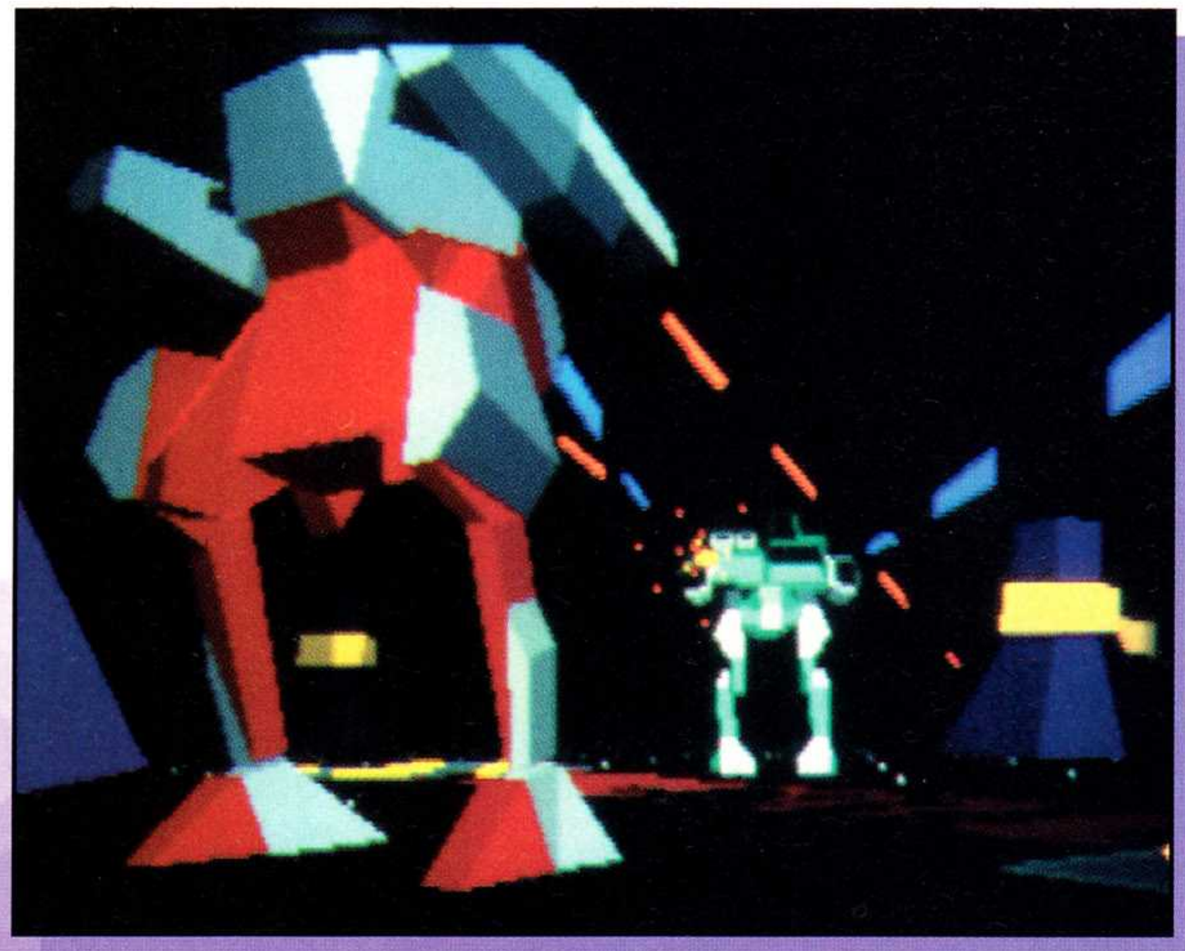
Battledrome (Dynamix/PC). This modem-capable mechanized combat game uses the MetalTech universe. Two things raise it above the earlier title: It supports the Thrustmaster controller and modem play. It's a strong amalgam of strategy and action on tomorrow's battlefield.

D-DAY: Operation Overlord (Virgin/PC). Fittingly enough, this Normandy Invasion flight simulator will debut on the anniversary of the World War II campaign. Players can pilot a Spitfire, Mustang or Typhoon. Missions include: bomber escort, fighter sweeps and ground attack. The game has a lot of graphic detail, down to appropriate camouflage and squadron markings.

Detroit (Impressions/MS-DOS). You design, test market and sell a car in your choice of time periods from 1908 to 2008 in this business strategy program. The turn-based design utilizes fairly ordinary sound and graphics, but the compelling play-mechanics will win many hearts.

H.A.W.C.: Helicopter Aquatic Warfare Command (Virgin/MS-DOS). Piracy is common in the waters around Singapore and the Straights of Malacca. As the commander of a six helicopter squadron of Mercenaries, you must eliminate the menace posed by the Pirates. The helicopters are accurately portrayed, so this will be a demanding game for players.

MetalTech (Dynamix/MS-DOS). The publisher brings its special touch to fighting robots. For example, gamers can position observation cam-





eras anywhere and follow the action in cinematic or first-person perspective. Custom-equipped robots battle to the finish in a polygon arena. This two-player shooter is also earmarked for the Imagination Network.

Zephyr (New World Computing/MS-DOS). Zephyr is the code name for futuristic hover tanks Mega-corporations use to settle their disputes. Up to six players compete against one another over a network or modem line. Success in the arena and acquisition of corporate sponsors allows pilots to improve their craft for future matches. Combat is purely arcade. Graphics and sound are average but the play value is noteworthy.

Time for Adventure

Bio Forge (Origin/MS-DOS). The player awakens with a cyborg body and no memory of prior existence. It soon becomes apparent that the Cyborg is intended to be the ultimate assassin for a villain known as Mondite. Plot twists follow as the player explores the environment which add a sense of great storytelling to the entire adventure. This is a high-end game that will require a DX II or Pentium for good performance.

Celtic Tales: Balor of the Evil Eye (Koei/MS-DOS). As leader of a small nomadic tribe on a mythical island, the gamer develops the group's resources to destroy the Fomorians, a strong clan-seeking island domination. The publisher wants gamers to come away with a knowledge of Celtic culture, including the religious philosophy of the Druids, the Celtic belief in the powers of nature; the process of managing resources; and diplomatic processes. Fortunately for die-hard adventure gamers who love a good challenge, it also looks like a whole lot of fun that will last awhile.

Players' Guide to Spring and Summer Games

Corridor 7 (Capstone/MS-DOS). Based on the **Wolfenstein 3-D** engine, this first-person science fiction adventure has very good graphics, especially the coloring and shading effects. The music is gripping, and the sound effects somehow make events seem more realistic.

CyberSpace (Empire/MS-DOS, Amiga). Based on the board game, this cyberpunk opus takes place in a city/world with 100,000 people. This vast play-area has up to one million rooms that can be explored. Game play is on two levels, real world and cyber space. Action is full-screen in first-person perspective with a HUD display to provide needed information.



Unlike many standard adventure games on the PC platform, Dragon Sphere has many plot twists.

Dragon Sphere (Microprose/MS-DOS). This multi-level role-playing adventure has a complex storyline that blends true and romanticized mythology. The plot twists with each decision, and the designer promises at least one major swerve that will surprise even most veteran questers.

DreamWeb (Empire/MS-DOS, Amiga). In this highly stylized, future-fantasy adventure, dream worlds are connected by a web; with seven nodes, controlled by seven real-world individuals. When these all-important people are captured by the dark side, the hero must destroy them. There are 4000 frames of animation for the main character, and the overhead perspective graphics are surprisingly effective.

The Elder Scrolls: Arena (Bethesda Softworks/MS-DOS). This is a huge adventure with a streamlined, yet flexible interface, and outstanding visuals. The world consists of nine provinces with a total area of over 10 million square kilometers. There are 400 towns, villages and cities, each of which is complete with people, politics, and weather. The unique magic system gives the player 80 different effects which can be combined for truly personalized spell casting.



The Superhero League of Hoboken is out to put a stop to the unlawful actions of the evil Dr. Entropy.

Superhero League of Hoboken (Legend/MS-DOS) Steve Meretzky's humor is at its best in this tongue-in-cheek comic book adventure. Mutant superheroes battle a bunch of weirdos like Steroid Man and ultimately face off against Dr. Entropy. The interface combines elements of the **Companions of Xanth** system with combat and RPG control schemes.

Sports on Disk

Front-Page Baseball Pro (Dynamix/MS-DOS). The team that did **Football Pro** hits a homer with this great-looking action-strategy diamond disk. Nine cameras display unfolding action from many different vantage points. The players are large, and the publisher plans to acquire the license to give them authentic names and corresponding attributes.

Real-Time Thrills

Mortal Kombat (Ultra-Tech/MS-DOS). The fantasy-tinged fighting game finally gets a computer edition—and it's a very good one. Hi-Tech Expressions kicks off its new label with an **MK** version that has all the blood and violence you loved in the amusement centers. In fact, it has more of the original art than the Genesis cartridge did. Fighting games haven't worked too well on computer thus far, but this has a chance to be an exception.



Yes, the famous fighting game of 1993 is also ready for your PC. Can you become the MK champion?

Spring-Summer Multimedia Games

Multimedia Mayhem

Battle Fantasy (Absolute Entertainment/Sega CD). Martial arts combat in a fantasy context is what this title offers fighting game fans. Strange sound effects and goofy animations make this more fun than the average fighting cartridge, but the basic game is fast and very well-implemented.

Brutal (Gametek/Sega CD, Genesis). This game uses humanized animals for martial arts combat. The non-interactive sequences are excellent ent, but the mechanics were undergoing some fine-tuning as we went to press. The Sega CD will be out first, followed by the Genesis cart in June.

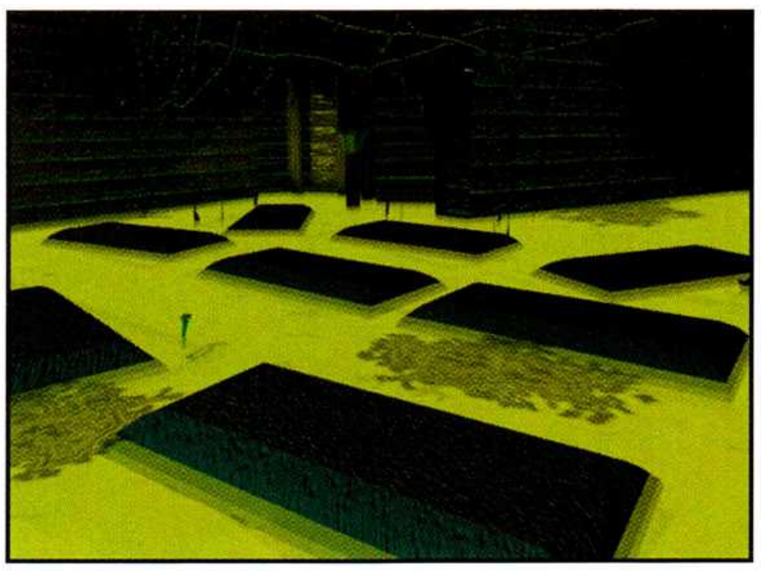


Revenge of the Ninja (Renovation/Sega CD). Fight the evil kidnapper through 18 exciting levels 16 of which are random. Variable difficulty provides on-screen clues for novices, but forces hot shots to battle ninjas and monsters without any helpful hints. Conquering the game in anything but easy mode entitles the player to fill out a Master of the Ninja Arts degree on-screen. A photo of this screen earns a hard copy version of the certificate.

Soul Star (Core Designs/Sega CD). This mission-based science fiction game may remind some of **Rebel Assault** with its digitized graphics range of shoot-em-up action. The vehicles are minutely detailed, and the overall game-speed is quite outstanding in this May introduction.

Space Ace (Readysoft/Sega CD, PC CD-ROM, 3DO). Using a variation of the system employed in **Dragon's Lair**, **Space Ace**'s mixture of video and artwork provides a powerful visual experience. The multimedia version for the home has most of the virtues of the play-for-pay machine.

Passport to Adventure



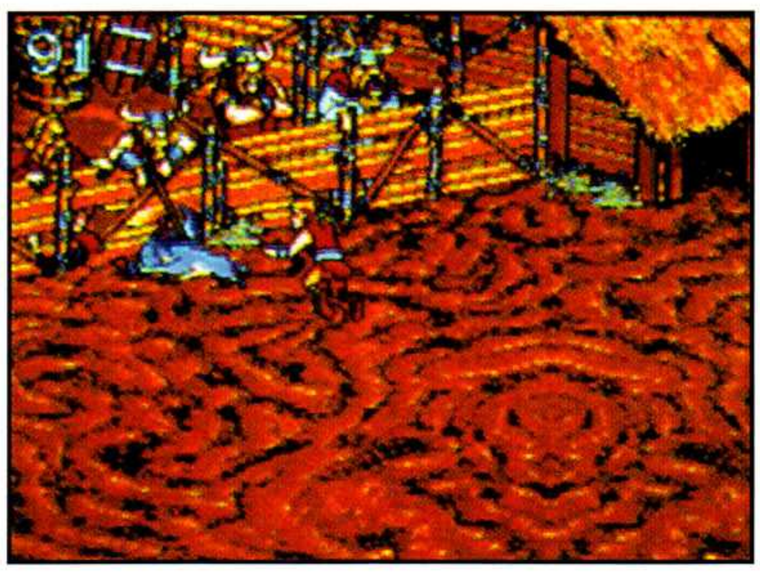
The sequel to The Seventh Guest, 11th Hour offers even more fiendishly clever and scary puzzles.

11th Hour (Trilobyte-Virgin/PC CD-ROM). The long-awaited sequel to **The 7th Guest** is larger and is set 50 years later. Graphics are incredibly realistic, especially the fingers under the cheese grater, and the puzzles are totally fresh.

Heimdall (JVC/Sega CD). This Viking RPG by Core Designs has action and adventure elements. There are three worlds with hundreds of rooms to explore. A point and click interface keeps things moving in the May release. **Heimdall** shows fighting froma first-person perspective, but uses other viewing angles during the adventure-oriented portion of the game.

Phantasmagoria (Sierra On-Line/PC CD-ROM). Roberta Williams, author of countless adventures including the **King's Quest** series, turns to the macabre in her next creation. A house drives a man crazy in beautiful Silicon Graphics scenes. The late summer entry looks like another triumph for the Queen of Adventure Gaming.

Wrath of the Gods (Luminaria/PC CD-ROM). This game may be a



Heimdall features multiple viewing angles when adventuring and fighting in the Viking world.

cultural shock for those not familiar with British-designed adventures. The graphics, despite some choppy animation, are good, but the characterizations are so shallow that few gamers will take the mythological figures who parade through the game very seriously.

Disks for Thinkers

Buccaneers (Software Sorcery/PC CD-ROM). This sailing game turns any landlubber into the Lord of the High Seas. The cyber-buccaneer chooses one of six geographic regions, and then outfits and crews one of 11 types of ships. Riches and titles come to the valiant in battle, and the savviest seaman can ascend to the lofty rank of King's Commissioner. Look for more details about this summer title in an upcoming **EG**.

Fast Attack (Software Sorcery/PC CD-ROM). The company that's wowing wargamers with **Aegis** takes a similar tack with submarine operations. Under an agreement with the NSB, this game is purportedly as realistic as it can be. An edition for Macintosh is under consideration.

Operation Airstorm Power Modeller (Revell Monogram/PC CD-ROM). Build and fly the F-15E Strike Eagle, AH-64 Apache, F-117A Stealth or the F-14A Tomcat. The gamer can assemble the plane as fast or slowly as desired. Various paint schemes are available, including camouflage. The graphics are clear and crisp. The icon-driven game includes missions for all the planes. This phrase is no afterthought; the graphics and simulation are very good.

Third World War (Absolute Entertainment/Sega CD). A broad-strokes strategy contest with world domination as the ultimate prize. It is somewhat similar to the board game Risk, but it has a lot more options.

Whispers from Pavillion X

He's everywhere! JJ BARREL puts his eyes and spies into every corner of electronic gaming. He writes the truth that others dare not utter.

On-Line just went big-time. Suddenly the major services are paying serious money for electronic rights to intellectual properties. ESPN's deal with Prodigy is reportedly worth at least 10 times what anyone had paid until now. Haven't heard of any pro athletes switching to telecommunications yet, though...

You could paper Activision's office with the premature obituaries for this old-line company. Flushed with success over the enthusiasm for **Return to Zork**, ACTV has Eddie Dombrower working the same magic with an adventure/RPG taken from Infocom's **Planetfall**. Even with the brilliant Donmbrower pulling the strings, **Planetfall/Stationfall** starts with less momentum than **Zork**, so it won't be easy to crank out another hit...

No more software for ASCIIware. The company will concentrate on controllers. **Spellcraft** was too much game for the audience. **Dominion** and **Ardy Lightfoot** are up for grabs. Someone could make a bucketful of cash with those two...

Add "Sliced Bread" to the list of game-industry codenames. It's the best-kept secret since early 3DO, a new game system with a cyber-helmet....

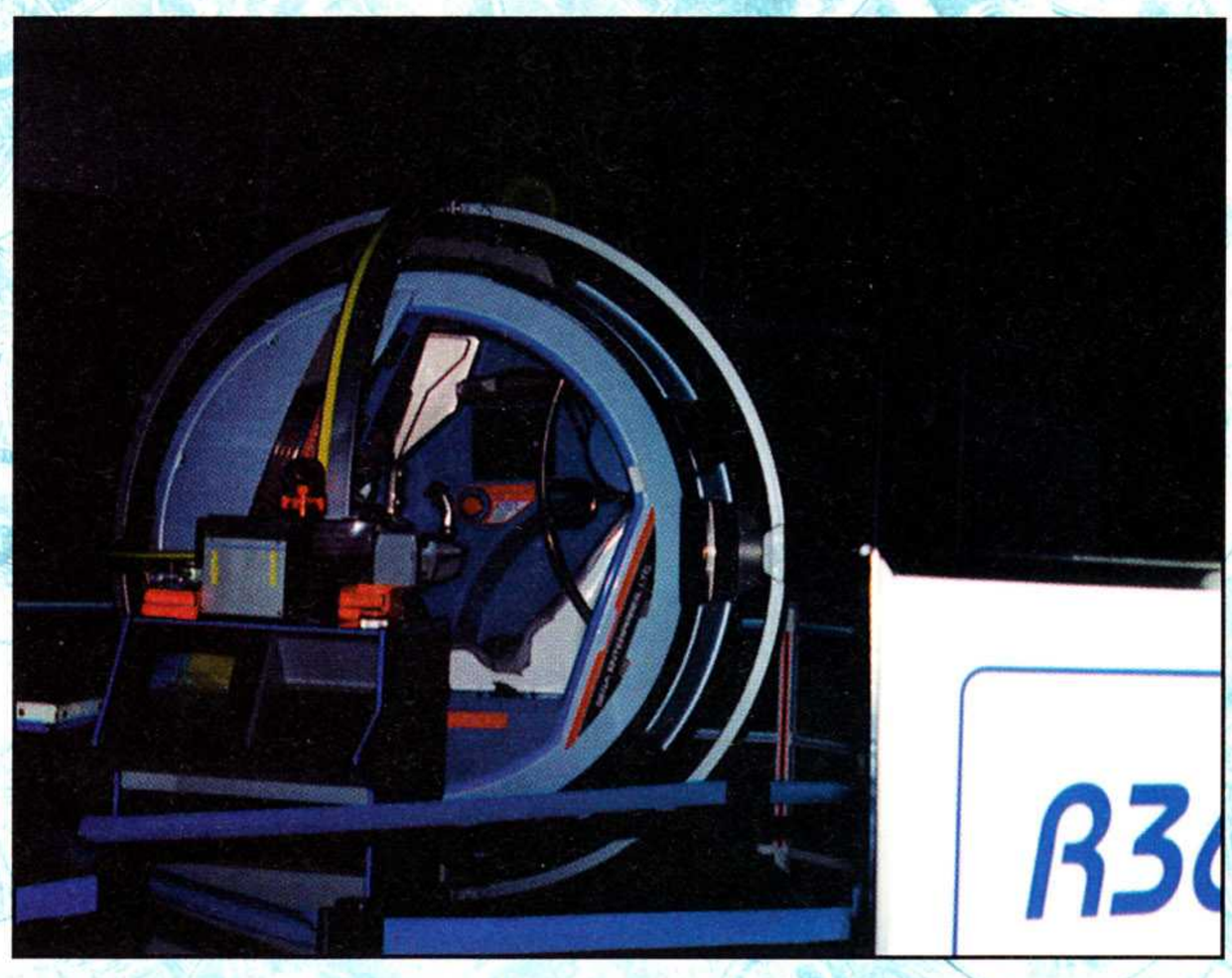
Park Place, which did all those football games, has had a major shake-up. Troy Lyndon is gone, and so are quite a few other employees. Mike Knox remains in the top spot, with a big rebuilding job ahead of him....

ARCADES OVER LAS VEGAS

TOMORROW'S GAMES LIGHT UP GLITTER CITY

by John Hardin

Advanced technology and innovative approaches to amusement center design are already entertaining thousands of Vegas visitors, and these cutting edge complexes will soon be collecting gamers' coins throughout North America. Already, Sega has announced plans to build a chain of Virtualands. A trip to Las Vegas is a journey into electronic gaming's tomorrow.



For years, Las Vegas has been an adults-only oasis of show girls, gambling and 24-hour thrills, but it boasted few attractions that would prompt people to bring their families here. The advent of river boat gambling, state lotteries and tribal-owned casinos in many states forced Las Vegas' gambling interests to focus on attracting budget-conscious families. Consequently, there's a boom in adventure resorts, theme parks and arcades. **EG** checked out two of these cutting-edge arcades to get a look at the state of the art.

The casino experts went to the game experts for their top flight arcades. Circus Circus Enterprises, owners and operators of the Circus Circus and Luxor hotels, turned to the gaming savvy of the innovators at Sega. Steve Wynn, owner of the Mirage and Treasure Island hotels, struck an alliance with the marketing and arcade know-how of the experts at Namco.

Virtualand at Luxor

Sega's Virtualand is located in the heart of the Luxor hotel and casino, a towering, 30-story, black glass pyramid built around the world's largest atrium, a full-size replica of King Tut's tomb and a 100,000 sq. ft. casino. Virtualand itself has over 200 machines in 20,000 sq. ft. of black-walled, futuristic-themed space. The games range from air hockey tables, complete with sound effects, to two attractions that arcade nuts will find nowhere else in the United States.

The first level contains three Genesis stations where gamers play new Sega Genesis titles for free. Beyond these is the bulk of the first level. The redemption area has over 30 all-new machines and a large redemption booth with interesting and varied prizes. Across the way five mini Neo•Geo machines, none taller than 4 ft., line one wall, so that even the smallest gamers can get in on the action.

An eight-station **Virtua Formula** dominates the room, taking up the full length of one wall. For $4, players pit their Formula racing skills against seven other people. First Place winners take home a picture of the moment of victory, automatically snapped by cameras mounted at each Virtua Racer station. **Virtua Formula**



uses huge TV screens, which gives people something to watch while waiting on the long lines leading to the only setup of its type in the U.S.

The arcade is packed on Saturday night, as swarms of arcade lovers of all ages fill Virtualand. The exultant shouts of the victorious punctuate the din of electronic sound effects. The Theater of Time, one of Luxor's three science-fantasy themed, motion simulator rides, exits into the arcade. Every 10 minutes, 200 people pour out of the theater and cascade into the second level of the sprawling center.

Other visitors may climb the stairs or take the escalator up to the second floor and step into a forest of the



hottest new games. Pinball machines line the far wall near the railing that allows spectators a balcony view of the Virtua Formula action down on the first level. A bank of five **Super Street Fighter 2** machines with Q-Sound and a side by side sit-down **Virtual Fighters** with a large monitor are stuck in with the cabinets.

Right outside the doors to the room with the futuristic hockey tables are the premier attractions; two **R-360** units side by side, ready to dazzle players with full-motion video aerial combat. The sit-in gyroscopic device twists the pilot via the joystick direction. This lets players experience how it feels to execute a tough snap roll at

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SEGA GENESIS

Mach 2 or jump to avoid an incoming missile.

Next to these are the stars of Virtualand, two **AS-1** motion simulators. The only ones in the United States, these minivan-size units take eight people on a seven minute ride to outer space. An unseen "captain" gives orders over a p.a. system and players fire missiles or laser beams on his orders. Each passenger has a joystick and everyone must participate for the mission to be a success. The player with the highest score in combat is charged with successfully landing the ship. The **AS-1** runs off a laser disk, so new adventures are a simple disk change away. At least three different programs are available but only one is being used now. Michael Jackson starred in the original game, but the recent controversy surrounding the pop star led to his removal from the storyline.

Wayne Rankin is the General Manager of Virtualand and Sega's man on the spot. **EG** asked him what age group Sega was targeting with this arcade. "We're trying for all age groups and we've just completed our first survey of players in the arcade and are waiting for the results." When asked about what machines players could expect to find here in the future, Wayne replied, "Virtualand is Sega's flagship store; as new machines come out they will be showcased here at the Luxor. We plan to keep the latest, most up to date machines here."

Wayne enjoyed working closely with the Circus Circus people and lauded their cooperativeness. Sega now manages all the Circus Circus arcades in Las Vegas. Players can look forward to a lot of new games in the venerable Circus Circus midway where, Wayne says, Sega will field test its developers' latest machines.



Mutiny Bay

Nightly pirate battles take place in the man-made harbor of the recently opened Treasure Island hotel and casino, a few miles down the Strip from the Luxor. Inside, in the Mutiny Bay Adventure Center, the action may not be as dramatic, but it is still hopping. This split-level, 18,500-sq.-ft. area is divided into an arcade with 130 video and redemption games and a midway area with 17 traditional midway games.

The pirate themed arcade resembles an open-air market, with change machines incorporated into large tree trunks that go up to a leaf covered ceiling. At the entrance, two animatronic pirates trade insults back and forth. There's the usual assortment of coin-ops, but the centerpiece is something very special, one of only two **Ridge Racer Full Scale** units in the world.

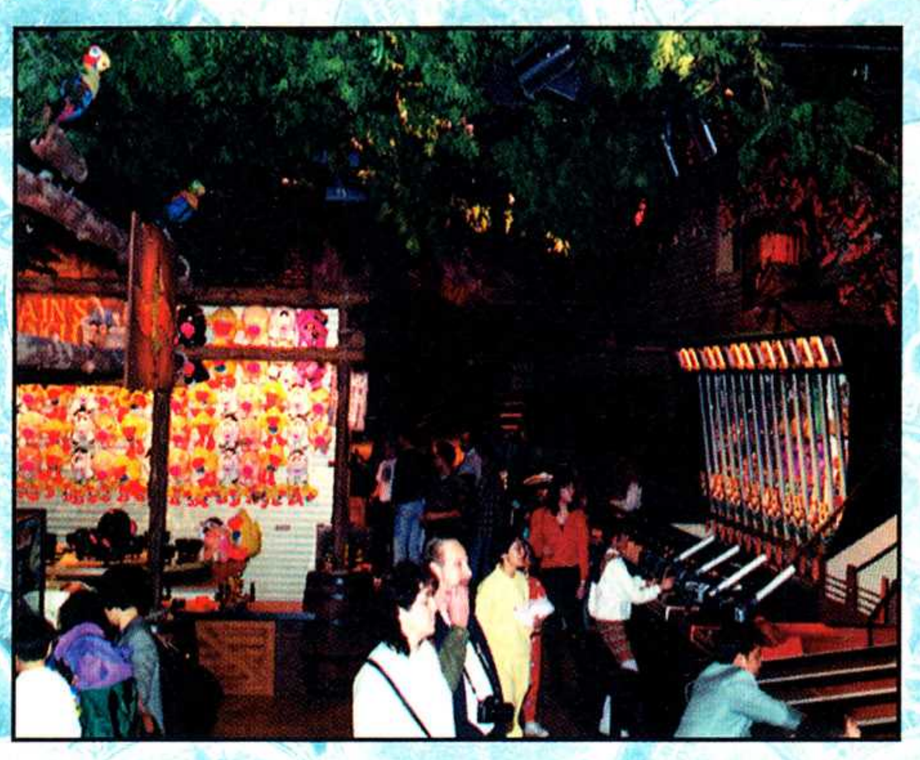
The **Ridge Racer Full Scale** is the original **Ridge Racer** game in a full size Mazda Miata from which the engine has been ripped out and replaced with the electronics that run the game. The car sits in front of an almost theater-sized screen which fills the driver's whole field of view, giving a very realistic look and feel to the fast-paced driving game. For $4, players can take the only one in the Western Hemisphere for a test drive.

"We have a better variety of games than many arcades and there are people here every day to fix machines. Right now we only have one machine down in the entire arcade," boasted Jeremy Larson, one of two Namco managers on site. Namco is contracted to operate the arcades on all of Steve Wynn's properties in Las Vegas as well as the Cyberstation arcade in the upscale Forum shopping mall in Caesar's Palace. "The flagship role is divided between Mutiny Bay and the Cyberstation," Jeremy tells us. "As new games come out, some of them will be traded back and forth between here and there."

Namco operates the nationwide chain of Aladdin's Castle arcades in addition to the Cyberstations. Namco's spokesman David Bishop balked at any comparison of Namco and Sega. "We're two very different companies." David said, "Namco is much stronger in coin-ops. Over 50 percent of our worldwide revenues come from operating small amusement parks and arcades."

As for the future, Namco plans to build at least two 30,000-sq.-ft. Super Centers. They will resemble a department store of games, David told us. "If you want to play fighting games, you go to the fighting game area.

Las Vegas will always be an adult-oriented town at heart, but as interactive entertainment turns into a multi-billion dollar juggernaut, it's becoming a capital city of high-tech gaming. The future looks as bright as the strip on any given night!



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Sizzling Software on Today s Cutting Edge

by the Editors of Electronic Games

Eras in computer entertainment history are generally marked by the introduction of new hardware. When system capabilities grow, new games that take advantage of the enhanced environment seldom lag far behind. Technological superiority doesn't insure a good game, but it gives designers and developers more tools to create the interactive experience.

The 386/33 mHz platform made possible envelope-pushers like **Wing Commander** (Origin Systems) and **Wolfenstein 3-D** (Apogee-Id Software). These games sucked up more memory and required more speed than the 286 could muster.

The 486 CPU didn't represent quite as big an improvement, but its greater memory and faster execution speed still made a significant impact. These factors made SVGA graphics practical for many games, offered more opportunity to use speech, and upgraded the performance of real-time games. Right now, most publishers claim their programs run adequately on a 386, but "adequate" is definitely in the eye of the beholder. A lot of them don't look right on anything older than a 486 DX2.

Now, computing is poised to adopt a new standard, the 586-Pentium. So far no games require all that power, but it's only a matter of time. Designers and developers can no more stay away from the latest platform than the Highlander can stop sword fighting.

Multimedia dwarfs the potential effect of the Pentium on gaming. Games on compact CD disks will be discussed in **EG**'s June State-of-the-Art Report.

Best Computer Games

Scaling the Software summit

Lemmings 2 (Psygnosis)

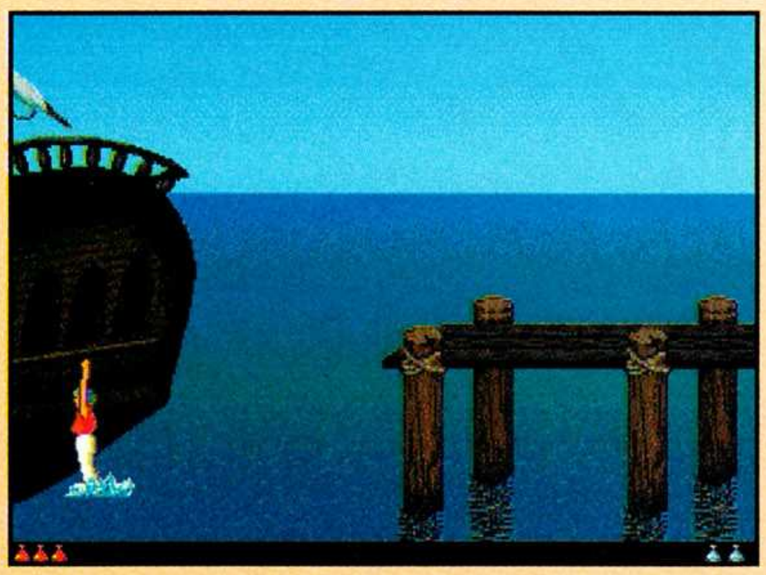
The first game introduced one of the most fascinating, addictive play-mechanics ever to flash across the home computer screen. Semi-sequels explored the original concept thoroughly, but it took **Lemmings 2** to push the idea out of its rut.

The core premise is the same. The critters move across the screen as the gamer assigns special attributes that will help as many as possible make it safely to the exit. The latest title adds the concept of tribes: Bands of lemmings which have group characteristics apart from the abilities doled out by the gamer using the icon-based control setup.

Prince of Persia 2 (Broderbund)

Impatient players sometimes ridicule Broderbund for falling away from its game publishing origin. The quantity of Broderbund games has declined steeply in the 90s, but no one can deny that what they do produce usually hits the bullseye.

Jordan Mechner, the designer of **Prince of Persia 2**, outdid himself with this lovingly crafted action adventure with an Oriental fantasy motif. The graphics are more varied than the original, and the game world is several times larger. This permits much more plot variation than games which limit the action to corridors and dungeon chambers.



Jordan Mechner's Prince of Persia 2 challenges players to an even more extensive scrolling quest.

SimCity 2000 (Maxis)

This is another case of a publisher taking a rock-solid concept and boosting it to a new level with superior implementation and some judicious reworking of game play. Maxis has learned a lot about what to do, and not do, in developing deep, yet playable strategy simulations, and all that expertise is evident in this remarkable program.

The player's goal is to build, expand, and manage a metropolis of the future. The best Maxis graphics yet make this more than a dry number-juggling act. **SimCity** proved that publishers had under-estimated the appeal of highly complex strategy games playable over an extended period of time. **SimCity 2000** may be the first game in the category with true mass market potential.

Walker (Psygnosis)

This slam-bang shooter is the chief exception to the software publishing maxim: Any game that takes more than two years to develop will flop. Circumstances kept this Amiga piece off the market much longer than expected, but the development team did more than wait around for good news; they refined, added, and expanded every aspect. So while **Walker** would've been even more startling had it stomped into the stores as planned, it's still a landmark in sophisticated boom-boom.

X-Wing/B-Wing (LucasArts)

LucasArts made a conceptual breakthrough in **X-Wing** that opened a universe of new possibilities. For the first time, a game used the *Star Wars* background without imitating the trilogy's actual plot. A simple idea, yes, but one which freed designers to produce the wide variety of exciting missions included in **X-Wing** and the **B-Wing** add-on disk, and the upcoming **TIE Fighter** will just enhance the legendary storyline.

Computer Gaming: State of the Art
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Best Computer Action Games

Kinetic Excitement on the Computer Screen

Doom (FormGen)

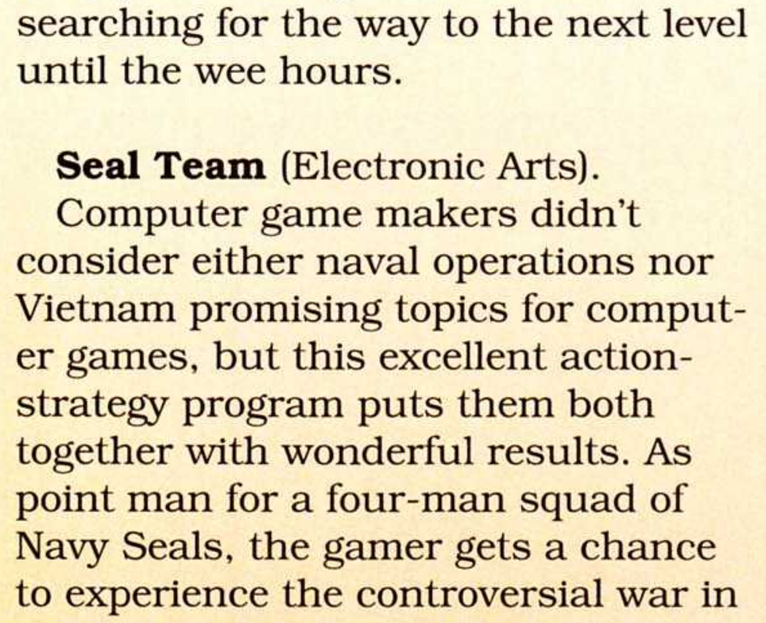
This isn't a sequel to **Wolfenstein 3-D** and **Spear of Destiny**, but it is their lineal descendant. Id Software developed the original first-person adventure engine, and added nuances like lighting effects while improving the graphics and even squeezing out a little extra speed.

The ingenious plot sends space marines into the depths of hell to fight the nightmarish denizens of the netherworld. The further you penetrate, the more monstrous the foes become. Like its predecessors, this is a violent, combat-heavy experience, with just enough tactical challenge to keep you blasting baddies and searching for the way to the next level until the wee hours.

Seal Team (Electronic Arts).

Computer game makers didn't consider either naval operations nor Vietnam promising topics for computer games, but this excellent action-strategy program puts them both together with wonderful results. As point man for a four-man squad of Navy Seals, the gamer gets a chance to experience the controversial war in a more personal way than with conventional hexgrid war games.

There are 80 missions, including: reconnaissance, ambush, rescue, and demolition assignments. The use of hand signals is an authentic touch that also keeps directing the squad from becoming a ho-hum, cut-and-dried proposition. **Seal Team** is strategy and action in one highly playable and action-filled package.



Seal Team, from Electronic Arts, puts you into the deep jungles of Vietnam to test your fighting skills.

Space Hulk (Electronic Arts)

When the Commander of the Elite Terminator Marine Unit briefs the would-be hero at the start of the game, he paints a horrifying picture of the onrushing invaders. The mission: Transport to a mammoth derelict and explore its danger-filled corridors, where the implacable Genestealers do their evil work.



Space Hulk's special five-way view screen lets players view the action from many angles.

Space Hulk is based on the Games Workshop board game, though the basic scenario can be found in other books and films, including *Alien*. No game on the subject does a better job of communicating the claustrophobic pressure of the big ship nor maintaining the sense of urgency which keeps the player pounding along in a state of high anxiety. Whether you brave a single mission or embark on the extensive Darkwind campaign, **Space Hulk** is an irresistible blend of on-the-fly strategy and futuristic combat.

The Terminator Rampage (Bethesda)

The small Maryland-based publisher has done several good games, but the release of this compelling action game vaulted Bethesda into the front rank. When Skynet manages to send a modified T-800 Terminator to take over Cyberdyne Systems, the Resistance sends your man back in time to stop the plan. Important milestones, such as items that must be found to successfully complete the mission, make the mayhem seem a little less random than in the usual dungeon crawl.



Battle the evil, mechanical forces of Skynet as you try to spur a revolt for the freedom of humanity.

Despite a high degree of difficulty, even at the easiest skill setting, **The Terminator: Rampage** keeps the computerist caught up in the action with excellent graphics and fast animation. Texture mapped walls and object detail are a refreshing change from the "floating furniture" of many games of this type.

UltraBots (Novalogic-Electronic Arts)

Getting this action-strategy classic to market proved more difficult than demolishing one of the game's warrior robots. A change in direction at the original publisher left **Ultrabots** in software limbo, but EA performed a timely rescue. In order to defend against alien invasion, players train with humanoid, scout, or scorpion robots and then tackle the hot spots as they erupt on the situation map.

The action during combat can be a little confusing at times, since alien robots look like the ones Earth is using, but the tremendous variety of situations encountered during a campaign makes **Ultrabots** one flashy graphics fest that doesn't punk out after a couple of rounds.

Computer Gaming: State of the Art
Computer Gaming: State of the Art
Computer Gaming: State of the Art

The Best Adventure/RPG Games

Sign Up Here for the Ultimate Quests

Alone in the Dark (I*Motion)

This supernatural thriller pushed polygon animation to new levels, and set new graphic standards for disk games. Full-screen, three-dimensional rooms with multi-angle views make the game seem movie-like as the player explores a horrific haunted house.

The gamer has a choice of roles, as a private detective hired to inventory the estate of a deceased artist or as the niece who doubts that her uncle died by suicide. The interface is a jewel of simplicity, pared to the minimum: cursor arrows and three keys control all actions.



Betrayal at Krondor relies heavily on a completely new magic system when engaging in combat.

Betrayal at Krondor (Dynamix)

The designers approached Raymond Feist's *Riftwar Saga* with a sense of reverence and allegiance to the original work, then built on it and expanded segments of the story to create an extension that's faithful to the Feist world.

The complex land is dangerous, yet easy to manipulate with the point-and-click interface. Indoor and outdoor confrontations are influenced by conversations that the player directs through the option menu, and combat phases are keyed to character speed. An entirely new magic system, created to be consistent with the Feist world, is intuitive, with helpful descriptions and a choice of strengths of every spell. It's a grand romp through a detailed and intriguing world.

Day of the Tentacle (LucasArts)

The sequel to **Maniac Mansion** won its place on this list because of great plotting and humorous situations. **Day of the Tentacle** outshines the original in graphics, sound, plot, and humor, as it sends the player on a time-hopping spree to save the world.

The goal is to stop the Purple Tentacle from drinking toxic waste that transforms it into a world dominating Super Tentacle. This requires travel through time via Chrono-O-Johns, devices constructed from port-o-potties. The fun quotient was pushed to the max, the graphics are top-notch, and there's plenty to see and do. The player switches between Bernard the Nerd, Hogie the Roadie, and medical student Laverne to complete tasks, and the hilarious confrontations with the many characters keep the action lively.

Lands of Lore (Westwood)

Striking graphic detail created by artist Rick Parks is augmented with a good story, depthy characterizations, and spectacular sound to create an epic.

Lands of Lore is a grandiose medieval world of romance and magic, peopled by wizards, witches, dragons and monsters, made more manage-



Lands of Lore contains spectacular graphics and some of the most advanced sound ever heard.

able by an automatic mapping system that even labels locations, secret doors, and other details. The player has a stable of six adventurers and can use any three at one time.

The three-dimensional environment is interspersed with two-dimensional scenes of character interaction. Combat is also in first-person perspective, coupled with appropriate music that changes according to the context of the game. **Lands of Lore** is intricate, with believable violence and ease of use that puts it among the best adventures ever programmed.

Ultima VIII (Origin Systems)

Mature themes, depth of characterizations, and a new attempt to foster true role-playing for computer gamers make **Ultima VIII** a state-of-the-art adventure. Based on the long-running series of the land of Britannia, this time the Avatar is alone, dropped by the Guardian into a world dominated by four giants representing the elements Earth, Water, Air, and Fire.

A new engine lets the player control the Avatar through a wide range of scrupulously animated movements, seen from a point of view that's dropped lower for added realism. The detail of design, that makes



Origin's Ultima 8 promotes a strong role playing style with a deep plot and longer gaming time.

everything and every motion look exactly right, fits perfectly with an improved system of object manipulation and an enhanced story timeline that continues to move at a normal pace even when the Avatar is elsewhere. The result is an urgent and compelling gaming experience.

Best Simulators

Fly High in the Digital Sky

Aces Over Europe (Dynamix)

Graphics were noticeably improved over **Aces of the Pacific** to give the missions above Europe a new level of realism and beauty. The curve of wings, canopies and even the horizon are smoother. Historically accurate color schemes and insignia were added, and gun rounds show up as a spray of lead against enemy aircraft.



Take to the skies to rid the world of the Axis air forces when playing Dynamix's Aces Over Europe.

Flight Simulator (MicroSoft)

The latest version of the world's best-selling flight simulator introduced new capabilities, including worldwide travel with appropriate scenery and time changes, and new latitude and longitude systems for locating destinations or finding where you are. There's a new weather system, other air traffic, sound effects for instruments, approaching objects, and (alas!) crashes. There's also an automatic pilot to land the craft so inexperienced pilots can fly the skies and still avoid that crash.

Improved graphics and realistic cockpit controls, along with the new detailed scenery make this new version of the classic a sure bet to continue to dominate the skies.

MIG 29 (Spectrum Holobyte)

Originally designed as an add-on for **Falcon 3.0**, the stand-alone version of **MIG 29** puts pilots in the cockpit of Russia's most famous fighter jet, known for its superb weaponry and maneuverability, the MIG is equipped with a variety of missiles, rockets, a cannon, and bombs, for air-to-air and air-to-surface combat. Campaigns in Kuwait, Panama and Israel, over land and sea, include support forces such as Sukhoi fighters, helicopters, and other aircraft.

The game is compatible with **Falcon 3.0, Operation: Fighting Tiger** and **Hornet: Naval Strike Fighter**, and supports solitaire, head-to-head, or network play.

Best Audio-Visual

Stop, Look and Listen to These High Impact Games

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands (SSI)

SSI's redesigned AD&D engine permits **Dark Sun** to take full advantage of the current 16-Bit computer capability, especially its graphics. The desert landscape is realistically rendered. Full-screen graphics, which are a new aspect, permit changes from combat to movement to non-player character interaction to occur naturally. Virtually everything that is visible on-screen is usable, or at least movable. On-screen NPCs are occupied with blocking, attacking or talking to the gamer.

SSI changed the interface to a point-and-click full graphic display. The character inventory is simple, easy, and graphically depicted. Moving items from character to character simply involves clicking on the owner, the item, and the recipient.

In establishing new standards of graphic excellence, SSI's **Dark Sun** is a grand beginning.

El Fish (Maxis)

El Fish provides the esthetic beauty of an aquarium without the mess. A library of virtual aquarium accessories—buildings, plants, reefs, rocks, shells, tank objects, and animated objects—allow players to create an ideal environment. The 256 sequential pictures that make up the fish animations are evenly and rapidly timed. Colors, from the bright reds, greens, and yellows of the tropical fish to the whitewashed bones of the skeleton pirate, are vividly rendered.

The animations are complemented by music scores of midi-quality. **El Fish** is truly as mesmerizing and entertaining as a real aquarium.

Return to Zork (Activision)

Return to Zork (**RTZ**) combines the best video, graphics, and sound techniques with the solid storytelling that Infocom made famous in the '80s. **RTZ** attempts to give photographic quality to every scene in the game by using actual photographs as well as video clips. The addition of actors and actresses give the familiar cast of characters a new life, as well as smoother animations.

Wing Commander Privateer (Origin)

Privateer remains in the Wing Commander universe, but the underlying scenario is trade and money instead of military action.

The soundtrack is invigoratingly dynamic and keeps the gamer's blood pounding. **Privateer**'s speech pack lets digitized voices of rival and friendly pilots respond to the gamer's actions. The added personalities that the speech pack provides makes it well worth the price. **Privateer**'s explosions are disturbingly and realistically loud.



Scour the universe as a space pirate to gain wealth and glory in Origin's awesome Privateer.

Computer Gaming: State of the Art
Computer Gaming: State of the Art
Computer Gaming: State of the Art

Best Computer Sports Games

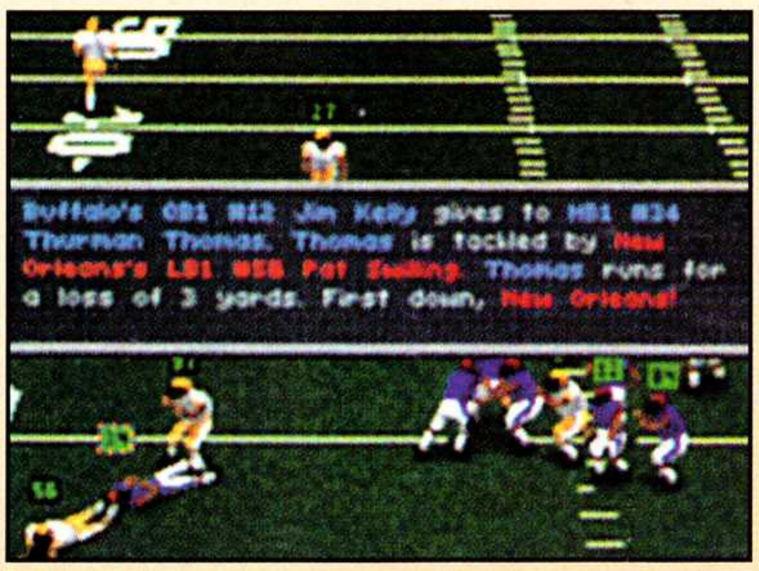
Exciting Titles to Turn on the Adrenaline

Front Page Football Pro (Dynamix)

Like most complex organisms, software publishers tend to specialize. They learn to do one category really well and stick to it. Once a company becomes established, though, the marketing department starts agitating to broaden the product line.

Pat Cook led Dynamix into the compu-sports field with **Front Page Football**, but the critics' verdicts were mixed. The strengths were obvious, but so were weaknesses in graphics, game play, and realism. Pat and his crew didn't give up. They went back to the design spec and revamped the game as **Front Page Football Pro**.

Now incorporating real player names, **Football Pro** has modes for real-time and all-statistical game play. The multi-perspective gridiron views, combined with more elaborate play-animations give this gridiron classic lots of eye-appeal, too.



Front Page Sports: Football Pro uses roto-scoping techniques to make the players twist and turn.

Indy Car Racing (Papyrus)

This game drives everyone to play! It takes the concept behind **Indy 500**, a state-of-the-art racing game in its day, and extends it to the limits of the 486 processor. It combines a valid model of automotive performance with graphics as good as any recent pure arcade driving contest.

The cars are texture-mapped polygons, and it's hard to see how a technique could produce any better results than this. Customizing is a big part of the strategy, and the module in this game is detailed enough to please the most ardent fans of the real-world sport. The 15 frame-per-second animation is unsurpassed for this game-format.

NHL '94 (Electronic Arts)

Nobody does hockey better than EA, which also publishes the leading hockey video game. With the exception of Intellivision's **NHL Hockey**, early efforts to render this sport in game terms failed dismally. They couldn't capture the coordinated motion of a well-coordinated offense or defense.

The rotoscoped graphics are among the best in any sports program. The players move with a natural grace that must enthrall any puckster.

Technology solved that problem, and EA Canada, the developer, licked the rest. This statistically-influenced action contest is great for a short series or exhibition, and the integrated stat compiler makes seasonal play more fun.

Links 386 Pro (Access Software)

Despite serious competition, Access has kept its multi-player gold simulation at the top of the leaderboard for the last several years. Just when the rest of the field looks like it's about to catch up, designers Vance Cook, Kevin Homer, and Roger Carver unveil their latest upgrade edition.

The improvement in the already fine graphics is the most notable enhancement in **Links 386 Pro**, The faithful rendering of the fairways and roughs is what fans expect from this series, and the SVGA graphics are barely distinguishable from the real thing. The windows which present multiple views of the court are a particular triumph.

If Access sticks with its usual policy, a still newer edition will soon redefine state of the art, but until that time **Links 386 Pro** reigns supreme.



Links 386 Pro continues to be a favorite among duffers, with new course add-ons available.

Tony LaRussa II (Strategic Simulations)

Most think of the publisher as a maker of in-depth military simulations and fantasy RPG/adventures. Though SSI has stressed those two types of games in recent years, the company had baseball and football games in the early 1980s. Yet it was quite a surprise to everyone, even Electronic Arts (which distributes the SSI line), when **Tony LaRussa Baseball** upstaged the **Earl Weaver** series.



Can you manage major leaguers to a pennant and World Championship? Tony LaRussa lets you try!

Tony LaRussa Baseball II is a thoroughly improved sequel. The game has a powerful statistical model supported by a number-crunching module that is equally suitable for a single game, series, or season.

Like most contemporary statistical sports simulations, **Tony LaRussa II** is much more than a mathematical abstract. Excellent graphics round out this fantastic rendition of Aerica's favorite pastime.

Computer Gaming: State of the Art
Computer Gaming: State of the Art
Computer Gaming: State of the Art

The Best Strategy Games

These Brain Games Make all the Right Moves

D&D Stronghold (SSI)

Stronghold may disappoint the more orthodox lovers of AD&D, since there are only three alignments (lawful, neutral, and chaotic) and the characters have attribute limitations. However, a fantasy game without damsels in distress or malevolent wizards is a refreshing change.

Stronghold combines aspects of **SimCity** (Maxis) and **Castles 2** (Interplay) giving gamers a primary objective: to increase their minuscule holdings into a proper empire. Not only must the denizens be kept happy and healthy, but the borders must be protected from the malevolent creatures residing in the mountains.



Stronghold creates a fantasy world for adventure gamers, but adds a mind-testing building sequence.

The 3-D graphics, while simplistic, are nicely rendered. One of SSI's graphic additions is the animations of workers constructing new buildings and making improvements.

This is not a frenetic game, but does require careful strategic planning.

Dune 2 (Virgin/Westwood)

In a return trip to Arrakis, gamers assume control of one of three houses engaged in an economic and military struggle for Dune and its Spice.

Dune 2 provides a nine-battle campaign, with variable terrain to traverse, and structures to be built, defended and destroyed, and real-time combat. Each house has different abilities: Atreides relies on diplomacy and scientific weaponry; Ordos uses guile, wit, and deception; while Harkonen thrive on sheer power and ruthlessness. The sharply and colorfully rendered graphics, and crisp, clear, digital audio provide cues to the battlefield action.

Dune 2 is a quality, fast action game for war gamers, strategy gamers, and fans of Frank L. Herbert's world.

FlixMix 1.5 (Celeris)

FlixMix's innovative animated puzzle game should sate the thirst of jigsaw lovers. Celeris' beautiful animations, esthetically pleasing music, and variable difficulty levels make this game shine.

Players must hone their observational instincts to assemble the nine straight-edged, non-interlocking puzzles, only mastered by carefully watching shadows and sprite movement. The add-on disk (Version 1.5) not only gives the player nine additional puzzles, each with three animation options, but maintains the standards of the original game.

This puzzle contest retains its freshness by permitting the number of pieces and the rate of animation to grow with the gamer's ability. The graphics experiment with a variety of technological modes, including ray-tracing and sine wave functions. **FlixMix**' unique approach will keep puzzlers on the edge of their seats.

Sid & Al's Incredible Toons (Dynamix)

The Incredible Machine and **The Even More Incredible Machine** have gone to the 'toons. In the newest version of Rube Goldberg-type contraption puzzles, gamers encounter Sid V. Mouse and Al E. Cat. The 100-plus puzzles provide ample opportunity for the duo to inflict cartoon violence. With over 75 "parts" available, players may explore the nuances of crashing anvils and flattening hammers.

The four levels, ranging from "Cake Walk" to "Loony Bin," provide some flexibility. The easier levels start the gamer with more preset parts, fewer red herring pieces, and a more generous time allotment. A full editor permits players to design and save their own puzzles for disk swapping or BBS uploading. While **Incredible Toons** provides a great deal of humor, it's still a mechanical puzzler's dream.

Syndicate (Electronic Arts/ Bullfrog)

Despite its deceptively simple initial appearance, **Syndicate** builds to a strategic frenzy. The world has been sectioned into 50 territories, and the populace's perception of reality altered. The gamer's goal is to take over each territory and stay informed of the world situation. Missions occur in a 3-D layout and the player soon discovers that each of the four cyborg agents has mini-goals to complete.



Embark on dangerous missions of might and intrigue as you guide your forces in Syndicate.

The graphics, sound, and special effects, while tense and exciting, are well-balanced and do not distract the player from this high-tech *Risk*-oriented game. While the combat/action phase is strong, **Syndicate**'s strategy component is even more outstanding. To be successful, players must note the direct correlation between strategical decisions and the action performance of their agents.

This is solid strategy at its best, well-deserving of the accolades it has received in the gaming community.

EG Sporting Special

Catch the Season's Latest Disks and Carts

Sports games now account for more than 40 percent of the video game market and a similar percentage of the computer software business. Multimedia doesn't have many sports games yet, but **EG**'s canvas of development activity shows that sports games will soon be every bit as important on CD as they are on floppy and cartridge.

This magazine has devoted plenty of pages to sports games in the last year, but now we plan to do even more. Watch for "The **EG** Sports Section" on a regular basis in upcoming months, and receive the latest news about the updates to the classic programs and games as well as the newest releases that will be hitting stores throughout the year.

This time, we've got a quartet of basketball cartridges for the Genesis, and an equal number of electronic baseball titles in time to start the new season off right. We've also got a profile of the first multimedia hockey disk and, just for a break from team sports, the latest in golf simulations.

Play ball! The **EG** Sports Section is open.

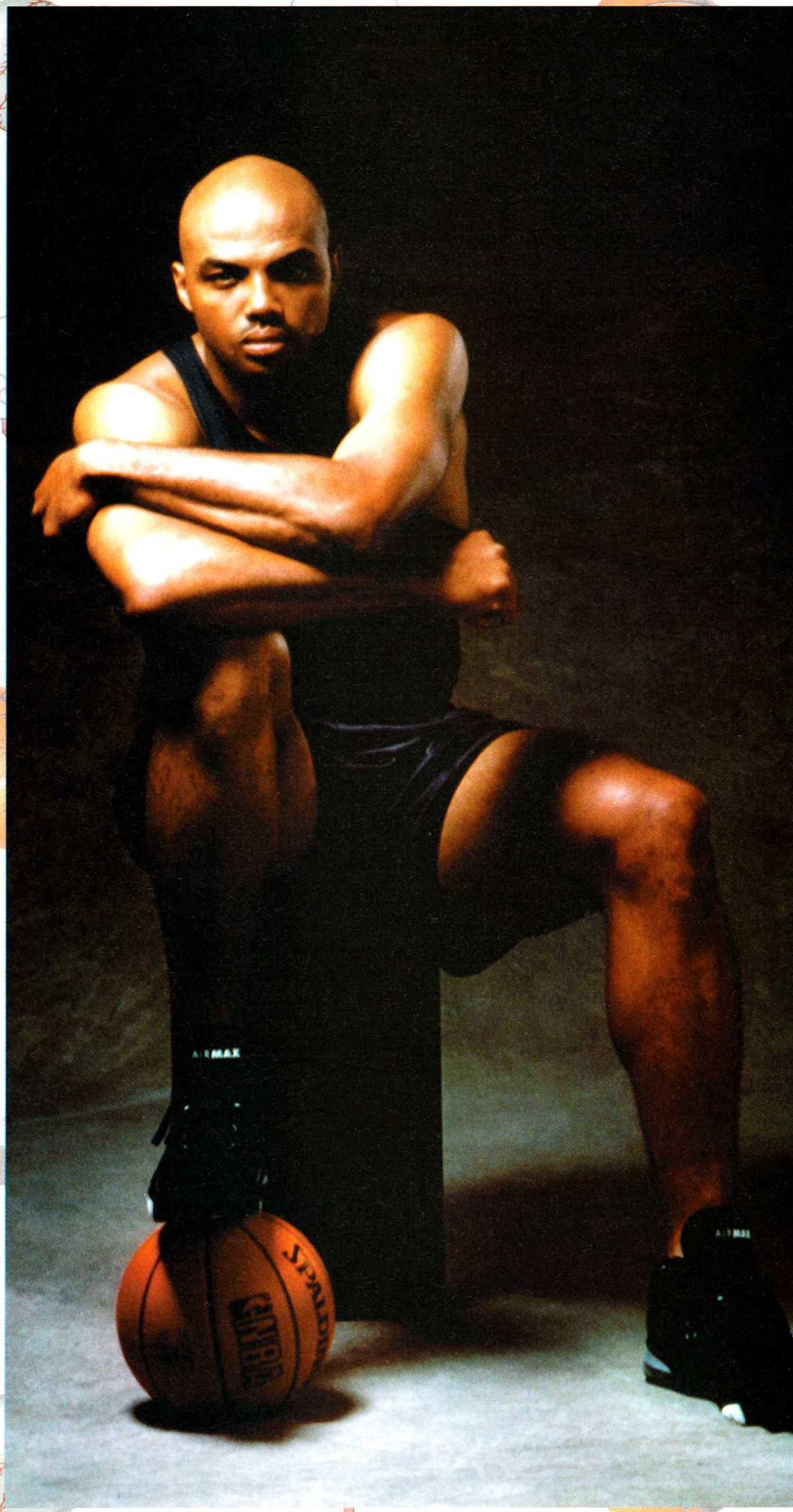


Photo Credit: Accokade

Hockey Goes Multimedia

by Bill Kunkel

Go tell it on the mountain: one of the greatest sports series in the history of electronic gaming has arrived on CD-ROM. EA Sports' release of **NHL '94** for the Sega CD marks a milestone in sports simulation, offering all the latest frills and special features found in other editions, while also boasting hot, full-motion video sequences and digitized sound effects.



The familiar look of the previous NHL games returns for the enhanced multimedia edition.

From the opening of the game, players will realize that this edition is above and beyond anything yet released. The CD enhancements are apparent from the start: The game begins with the familiar "EA Sports: It's in the game" voice-over, and launches into a lengthy introduction. This intro features full-motion video clips of players from various teams in the NHL preparing for a typical night of cold steel on ice. This feature really acts to draw the player into the game—it is almost like watching a pregame show on television, complete with the roaring crowds and the teams bursting from the tunnel to perform the pregame skate around. Without a doubt, the CD edition makes gamers aware in no uncertain terms that this game is meant to be enjoyed on a higher level than ever before.

Obviously, the game strongly resembles the Genesis version of **NHL '94**, with four-way play (courtesy the EA adapter), optional goalie control, a flip shot for clearing the puck up-ice, new animations, penalty shots, and a reverse angle option on replays, as well as a shootout mode. There are also additional stats/ratings, player records, profiles, and on-ice logos.

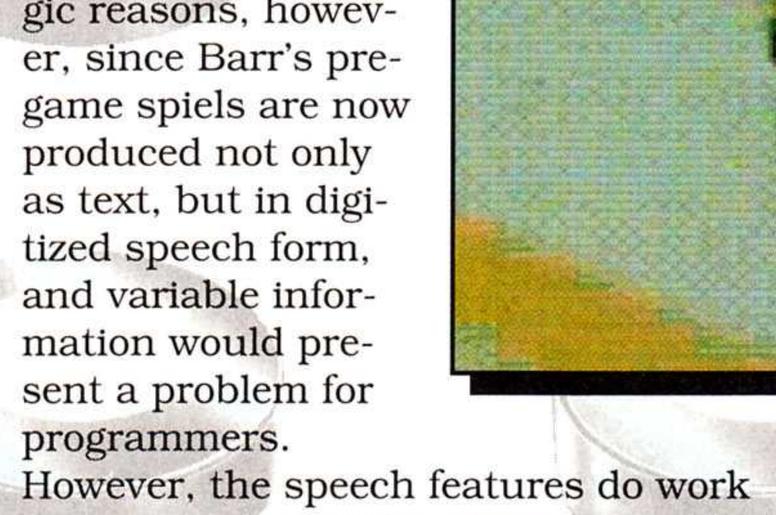


One-timers—those fantastic pass-and-shoot plays which smoothly blend the two maneuvers into a fluid, synchronized movement—made the transition perfectly to this new version, but hot and cold streaks, which appeared as part of Ron Barr's pre-game briefing, seem to have been cut. Its absence was probably due to technical, rather than strategic reasons, however, since Barr's pregame spiels are now produced not only as text, but in digitized speech form, and variable information would present a problem for programmers.



However, the speech features do work quite well, and, if the player can hold his excitement, he or she can actually benefit from Barr's overviews of the contest.

Other special features are not only present and accounted for, but are significantly enhanced. The Crowd Meter, which allows the user to manipulate crowd response, produces an incredibly dramatic effect thanks to the game's spectacular digitized sound. The sound samples—pucks hitting stick blades, or the rubber disc thudding off the boards—have a slightly more ragged audio quality than the crisp SNES samples, but the game's use of ambient noise is the finest ever achieved in a sports sim on *any* platform. As a result, the Crowd Meter (which can be used to enhance overall team play speed by as much as ten percent) really has tremendous dramatic impact in simulating the realism of ice hockey. Similarly, the digitized organ music (as played by San Jose Sharks' keyboardist, Dieter Ruehle) is fantastic, often accompanied by a rattling snare drum and other fan-generated sound fx.



Enhanced sounds and updated graphics make the CD edition of NHL '94 quite impressive to play.

With 50 Megs of digitized sound and over 100 video clips interspersed throughout the game, **NHL '94** for the Sega CD is a hockey fan's dream, and will undoubtedly be on the cutting edge of sports simulations for some time.

—Bill Kunkel

Special Sports Spring

The Electronic Caddy: Pebble Beach Comes to the Genesis

by Bill Kunkel

Golfers are perhaps the most dedicated of amateur athletes. They rise hours ahead of the sun, then drive miles through predawn fog and dampness in order to wait in line to play 18 holes in wet grass. Then without delay, they begin to chase a little, white, dimpled ball across the landscape, hoping to club it into a small cup set into the ground over 200 yards away in the middle of a lake. Talk about stamina and determination!

Surely, there must be something to this golf business.

Fortunately, virtual duffers can enjoy much of the fun, while enduring none of the discomforts associated with actual golfing. And now, thanks to the folks at Sega Sports, Genesis owners can chop, hack, slice, and otherwise assault the well-manicured greens at the most famous golf course in the world.

Pebble Beach Golf Links is the first entry in the True Golf Classics series, and it offers a compelling combination of realistic-looking play, multiple strategic options, and even a dash of video game challenge. Developed by T&ESoft, **Pebble Beach** is crammed with delightful features, including Tournament, Skins, Match and Practice



The drive is a very important part of the game. Pebble Beach Golf Links lets you try your skill.

Modes, with regular updates in all competitive formats. The game also offers a staggered fly-by before each hole, weather effects, putting grids and topographical maps, and multiple windows containing everything from an overview of the entire hole to wind speed/direction indicators.

On each shot, the program has the golfer make a series of decisions beginning with a location indicator, which allows the player to change the direction their surrogate is facing.



Talk about a water hazard! Many of the holes in Pebble Beach are just as hard as the real thing!

Next up is club selection, stance, and finally, the swing mechanism. The two-stage technique may seem familiar at first, but it contains a novel twist. The player first determines the force of the swing via a traditional circular meter, but next must determine the spot on the ball where the clubhead will strike. This is done by tracking a cursor which moves, in serpentine fashion, from the top of the ball to the bottom. When the spot reaches the desired point, the player hits an action button. This mechanic is elimi-



Nice putt! The array of informative windows on the screen makes tough shots a little easier to handle.

nated in putting, however, where an optional grid is provided, as well as a side view of the green.

Pebble Beach Golf Links looks impressive, offers spectacular music and sound effects, and boasts great play value. So forget slogging through dew-soaked, unmowed grass in the dead of night; join the video game revolution and play the world's ritziest course high and dry with no fear from the weather. Besides, you won't have to tip any caddies!

PGA Goes On the Road

EA Sports' PGA Tour Golf, one of the oldest and most popular electronic golfing simulations, is going Continental. PGA European Tour, a new 8-Meg entry for the Genesis, not only offers five new transatlantic courses—Wentworth Club (England), Forest of Arden (England), Valderama (Spain), National Golf Club of Paris (France) and Crans-Sui-Siere (Switzerland)—but five European tours. Compete against 50 touring pros in the Volvo PGA Championship, the English Open, Volvo Masters, French Open and the Canon European Masters.

The game also offers four-way play (with the EA Adapter), more realistic wind and weather conditions, and improved sound and graphics. Finally, there are two new play formats: Match play, an eight-player elimination tourney and Canon Shootout, a four-player, sudden death contest.

—Bill Kunkel



PGA Tour Golf lends a touch of realism to video golfers with a worldwide selection of courses.

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Special Sports Spring

Final Four!

A Quartet of new Basketball Games for the Genesis

by Arnie Katz

NBA teams are jockeying for play-off spots, college squads are making the big drive for the NCAA championship, and draftniks are hard at work figuring out who will go where in the post-season talent grab bag. As the entire nation surrenders to basketball fever, four publishers are ready to feed the mania with new court titles for the Genesis.

If sports games really run in cycles, as many analysts claim, then this is definitely the Year of the Roundball. Hoops Heaven-on-Earth has arrived. **EG** has covered a stack of new cartridges and disks since the first jump ball in October. Now the season is finishing in championship form with four more new titles. They were worth the wait, too.

Publishers know competition for the loyalty of basketball gamers is fierce, and they've tried to deepen game play while pushing sound and graphics up another notch. This final four doesn't automatically obsolete the games that premiered earlier in the season, but every single one of them is a serious candidate for sales success and hit status.

NBA Action (Sega) is



Just because it's a game doesn't mean fouls don't matter! The charity stripe will be a strong factor.

full court, five-on-five professional basketball with the authentic team names, logos, and players. Suitable for solitaire, head-to-head and multi-player competition, **NBA Action** can be enjoyed as a full season, playoff ladder, or exhibition game. The play-offs can be regulation best-of-five and best-of-seven, or a streamlined single-elimination format.

Seasons are 82, 40 or 20 games long, and a season or playoff in progress can be continued between play-sessions, thanks to the battery on board. A quarter can be four, eight or 12 minutes.

One to five players can cooperate against a computerized coach, and up to four can compete against a human adversary. A session in which each on-screen man is guided by a gamer is one of the most exciting sports gaming experiences you can find.

The unusual court geometry is the thing gamers will notice the instant the on-screen athletes hit the hardwood. It's an imaginative solution to a problem that always dogs basketball titles: The side line vantage point often reduces under-the-basket action to a tangle of overlapping arms and legs.

NBA Action shifts the graphic viewpoint as teams dribble up and down the court. The area around the center jump circle is a conventional angled side perspective; both the areas around the basket are diagonal. This preserves the feeling of full-court play while presenting the action nearly as well as the views from the top of the key or behind the backboard introduced by other hoopware.

The players are large, colorful, and well-animated. At the gamer's option, ball and pad indicators appear on screen to make it a little easier to track the action. When either team scores, the player is credited for the bucket at the bottom of the screen.

Like most entries in this category, **NBA Action** has a color commentator who points out the significant plays. The phrase book is limited to quips like "That's off the mark!" and "He draws the foul!" but the energetic delivery makes up for the lack of variety. Announcers in these games speak so infrequently that their verbalization often serves to underline the already obvious. The digital commentator in **NBA Action**, on the other hand, packs so much emotion that it makes the on-screen action seem that much more thrilling.



Get out of my house! Fantastic defensive blocks are a small part of the intense game play of NBA Action.

There are four musical sections, mostly audible during the pre-game phase and the usual crowd and court noises. If the Foul Option is on, you'll hear that shrill whistle fairly often until you learn not to walk and shoot at the same time.

The direction button moves the player under the gamer's direct control around the court, and pressing the appropriate button triggers the various moves. An offense man can pass, pump fake, accelerate, or shoot. The defender can switch direct control to a different team member, steal, block, or get a burst of speed like the ballhandler.

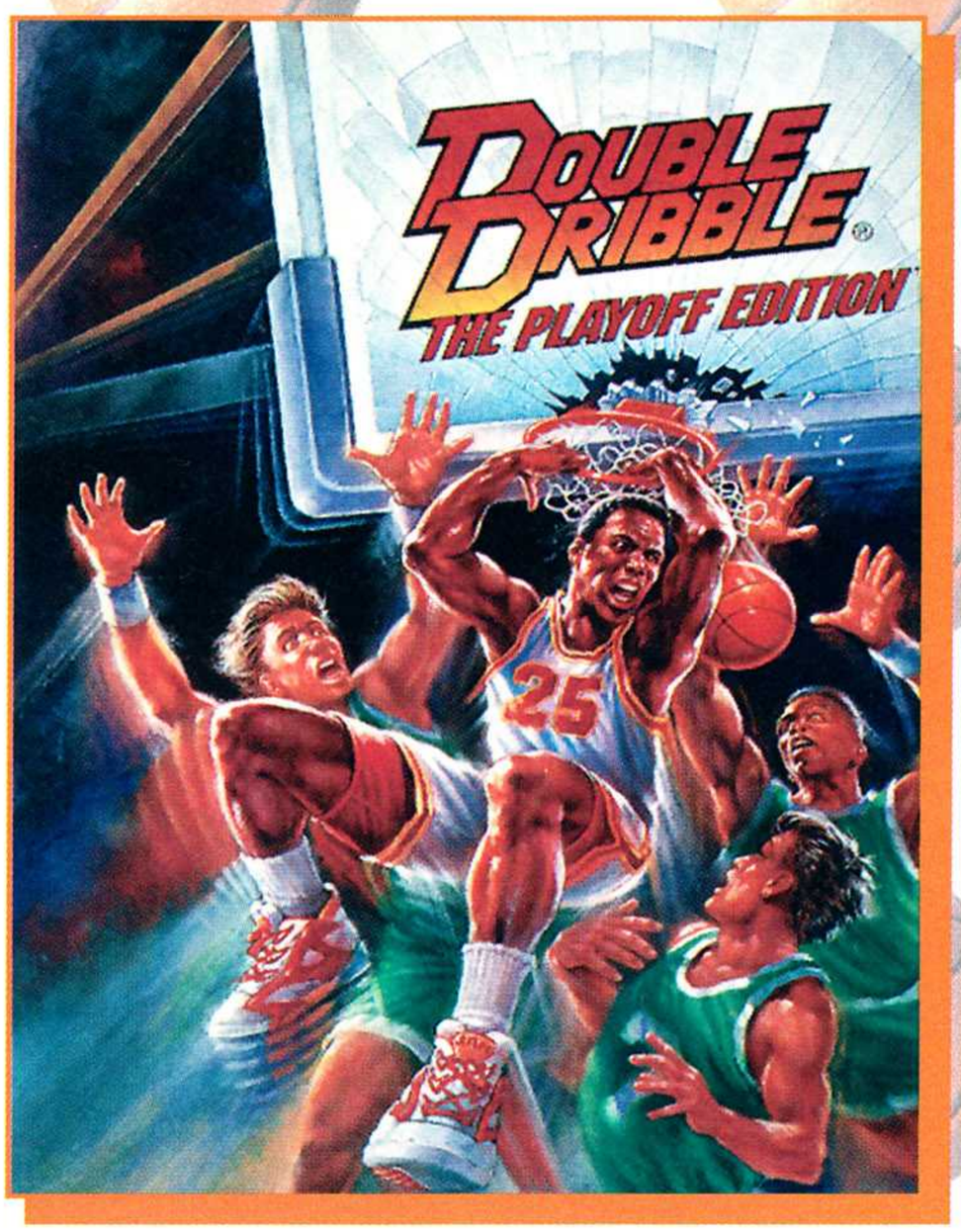
Hyperdunk (Konami) is neither as realistic nor as serious in intent as most other basketball cartridges, but who cares? This is basketball with an



A unique game perspective lets players view the action of their favorite players from all sides.

attitude. Its rough-and-tumble approach to Dr. Naismith's sport is great for those who want a hot gaming experience more than an authentic simulation.

At one time, Konami planned to call this cartridge **Double Dribble: The Playoff Edition**, but switched to the present name. One look at the thundering, in-your-face animated slam-dunk that precedes the game should convince any gamer that they made the right decision.



Konami didn't license professional teams or players, so **Hyperdunk** supplies players with 16 teams. That might be a critical flaw in a game that was attempting to present authentic professional play, but this is more like an interactive sports cartoon.

The team selection screen offers 16 cities. Each franchise is rated in seven areas: height, shot, steal, speed, jump, power and strength. The use of the terms "power" and "strength" is confusing, especially since the latter means stamina and could have been called that to avoid misinterpretation.

The game displays these ratings as a simple bar graph rather than exact numbers. When an individual team's roster appears, identical graphs show each man's talents. With fictitious teams and players, anything more exact would be overkill.

In-game stats are a different matter. **Hyperdunk** accumulates stats and presents them at the end of each quarter. The stat summary screen shows: score, rebounds, blocks, field goals made, field goal percentage, dunks, three-pointers, three-point shot percentage, free throws, free throw percentage, and steals.

Hyperdunk has two major play modes: Exhibition and Playoff. For a single game, a human can compete against the CPU or another human. The playoff choices are more elaborate. After structuring the tiers as desired, up to eight coaches can participate using the Sega tap, available separately.

The controls are a little tricky. On offense, the direction disk moves and dribbles. Holding down the B button fixes the ballhandler's movement direction. The direction button can then determine where the ball is passed when the gamer releases the B button.

The A button launches a shot. It's a dunk if the shooter is close enough to the hoop. Tapping the A button produces a windmill or double-clutch that may fake a defender out of position.

The defensive system is more straightforward. A orders a block or an attempt to intercept a pass, B changes the man under direct control and C triggers a steal.

The angled overhead view of the scrolling court sticks close to the action. The screen has the usual scoreboard running along the top edge, with the current ballhandler's shot rating in the lower corner. The players are large and drawn to look a bit more muscular and brutish than the genuine article. Each figure is outlined in black to make them pop against the background illustrations. Animation is also good, and the jockeying for position around the low post has more punches and pushes than the average barroom brawl.

As befits the style of play in **Hyperdunk**, the music is hard rockin', in-your-face stuff. You can hear the tunes or realistic sound effects during play.

NBA Showdown '94 (EA Sports) is the latest in the publisher's annual series of playoff-oriented action basketball simulations which includes **Bulls vs. Blazers** and **Lakers vs.**



Hyperdunk has some tricky controls, but the non-stop action will enhance the learning curve!

Celtics. **NBA Showdown '94** avoids the confusion of all those pairs of team names in the title and is also more descriptive of current content.

All 27 franchises, each with a complete roster, are represented. Gamers can draft their own Dream Teams and stage their own invitational tournaments.

Besides playoffs and exhibitions, a season campaign is now available. One team can play an 82- or 26-game season, followed by a custom designed playoff ladder. Two or more humans can participate in a season campaign only by cooperating on one squad, since there's no Versus



NBA Showdown features your favorite teams, including the almighty World Champion Bulls.

Option. A battery saves everything, including standings and league leaders, between sessions.

NBA Showdown '94 is playable at three skill levels. At the easiest (Rookie) setting, the defense is looser, the referee doesn't call many fouls, and the other team loafs a little when it has the ball. The toughest (All Star) setting turns the other squad into gunners on offense and ball hawks on defense.

An agreement with trading card maker Topps Chewing Gum Co. provides 4,000 player ratings in 14 categories. The simulation scores the following abilities on a 1-10 scale: OFR (offense rating), DFR (defense rating),

Sports Spectacular

FGR (field goals), FT (free throws), 3P (three-point shooting), REB (rebounds), ST (steals), BL (blocked shots), BH (ball handling), QCK (quickness), AGL (agility), AWR (court awareness). Although shooting percentages and measures of rebounds-, steals- and blocks-per-minute are better measures of basketball skill than abstract ratings, the Topps system is certainly easy to understand and does the job of differentiating among players.

A new engine produces faster on-court action than previous cartridges in this series. Harder to observe, yet perhaps more important, is that the artificial intelligence of players not under direct control is much better. This really heightens the challenge for solo gamers. The play-calling system, including shifting coverage, enhances **NBA Showdown '94**'s strategic phase.

Making three consecutive shots is a hot streak. Men marked with the red hot streak indicator shoot 15 percent more accurately. This rule may not be very realistic, but it is mighty satisfying when your star is on a scoring rampage.

The D pad controls movement, and the ball handler dribbles in the selected direction as long as it is pressed. The B button passes the ball to the teammate closest to the basket, unless the gamer uses the D-pad to indicate a different recipient. Holding the A button launches the appropriate shot for the man and floor position, while tapping A produces a nifty fake. On defense, the B button switches control to the defender closest to the ball. A makes the player jump for a rebound or block, and C causes a steal attempt.

The graphics are what fans of EA's basketball titles have come to expect. The angled side-perspective court looks better for a graphic clean-up, and the slightly elongated players dribble, pass and shoot like their flesh-and-blood counterparts. Signature slams for the league's stars are new this time. Also welcome is visual feedback during multi-play with the 4-Way. Geometric markers under each player cut through control mix-ups.

Barkley: Shut Up and Jam (Accolade) is two-on-two street basketball featuring Charles Barkley. It's a great example of how an intelligent design team created an entertaining game by staying true to the spirit of its license. If the name on the box is Michael Jordan, then the cartridge better have aerial fireworks. But a game featuring the Round Mound of Rebound had better take a physical approach to the sport.

Sure enough, **Barkley: Shut Up and Jam** is about hard contact and intimidation, finesse shooting and ballhandling. The refs stay home, so play is wide-open.

There's an arena for the final test against Barkley's own team, but the real show takes place on the seven funky-looking street courts. The local color scenery sets the stage for all that hardnosed b-ball gamers could possibly want.

The sideline perspective puts the observation point very close to the large rotoscoped athletes. Although the moves, including the spectacular dunks, are derived from actual playground superstars, the animation is cartoonish and exaggerated. The powerful, eccentric and colorful characters from among whom the gamer picks a squad also accentuate this



The former "Round Mound of Rebound" can still throw his weight around to get a loose ball.

larger-than-life approach.

The jazzy, syncopated music is understated compared to the bruising action. Barkley's commentary sounds like he's trying to audition to become the next Perry "Mr. Relaxation" Como. All this coolness feeds the street ball atmosphere, but a little more electricity wouldn't have hurt.

Each of the 16 available players is rated in six areas: field goal shooting, three-point shooting, dunks, rebounds, steals, and speed. Each man's basketball profile appears as a chart. One to eight bars beside each category indicate the degree of prowess. No one man, not even Sir Charles, is outstanding in every respect, so choosing the right pair is the game's crucial decision.

Even those who already own a satisfactory NBA simulation should check out this one.

The Final Score

Mick Jagger said, "You can't always get what you want," but he probably wasn't thinking about fans of video basketball games when he wrote that song. This year's Final Four, plus the other excellent titles released since last Labor Day, mean there's a strong, playable game to suit any basketball nut's taste in the fabulous and fantastic sport of hoops.

	Action	Hyperdunk	Showdown	Barkley
No. of Players	1-4	1-8	1-5	1-2
Teams	Full NBA	16 Imaginary	NBA	16 Players
Extended Play	Season Playoffs	Playoffs	Season Playoffs	Tournament
Back-Up	Battery	Password	Battery	Password
Graphics	89	88	84	90
Sound	85	90	82	86
Playability	94	89	92	99
Replay Value	95	92	94	90
Overall	86	83	87	85

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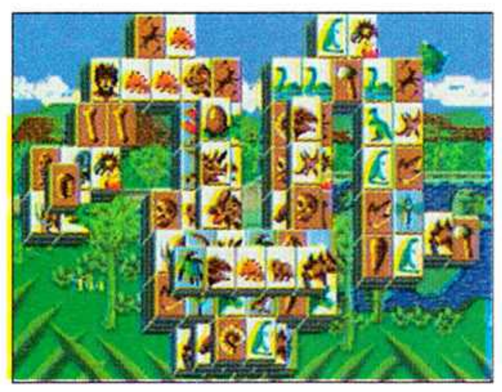
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Special Sports Spring

Baseball '94: First Look

It is the time when a winter-weary nation begins to put away its snow shovels, ground salt, and thermal underwear; when the sound of early-arriving birds can be heard chirping happily in nearby trees. Sometimes, if the wind is blowing correctly, there's even a hint of summer breeze, and the smell of resin and pine tar.

That's right—it's Spring Training time! And as baseball players the world over, from little leaguers to the men of the Major Leagues, begin to work out a winter's worth of kinks and cramps, electronic game makers are also stretching long-unused muscles. New editions of baseball video game classics begin to appear on store shelves, along with the usual crop of rookies. Some are heading to the gaming hall of fame, and others are doomed to become answers to a trivia question in a Game Doctor column a few years down the road.

Since there are several new baseball games headed to your nearest Genesis and SNES systems, let's get a look at the early scouting reports.

Playing Hardball

Baseball-oriented video games spring from several sources, just as some of today's baseball stars came up through the minor leagues, others through college sports, and even a few through free agency. Some games are created specifically for home systems, others come from the arcades, and a few, such as Accolade's **Hardball** series, made their bones in the computer software arena.

The original **HardBall** was predominantly focused on the hitter *vs.* pitcher confrontation, with an umpire's eye view of the action, no real players, and a minimum of defensive simulation. In its latest incarnation, however, **HardBall III** for the SNES, the players are real, the action emphasizes batsmanship, pitching, and fielding, and there are dozens of cool special features (including full 1993 stats) to make this the finest **HardBall** edition yet.

HardBall III maintains its classic ground level, behind-the-plate perspective, while adding such options as a Password Game Save, variable perspectives, and even a highlight film.

As with almost all the newer baseball simulations, however, no deal was cut with Major League Baseball—so don't expect team names, recognizable uniforms, and logos. Instead, Accolade went directly to the Player's Association (the MLBPA) and snatched the rights to use over 650 real players. And since the names of cities can't be copyrighted, expect to find them in an appropriate geographic locale.

HardBall III even provides high-quality digitized "baseball card" snapshots of each player when they step up to the plate, or when accessed through the Player Editor. That's right, you Figure Philberts, gamers can dig inside the game's structure to manipulate player stats and ratings, transforming even veteran scrubs into Barry Bondsian superstars.



HardBall III also reproduces all 28 big league ball parks in which to stage everything from exhibition contests to a World Series—called the "World Championships" here because the Series name is owned by Major League Baseball. Teams can play an entire season or limit action to fewer games, with the ability to save all seasons in progress. There's also an Instant Replay feature and even a Home Run Derby Option, which can also be used for straight batting practice.

From the strategic side, **HB III** offers a Field Position Editor which allows the gamer to fine-tune the defense for such situations as guarding the line, playing against the bunt, etc.

There's also an innovative feature dubbed "Team Effort Play." In most baseball video games, if a ball is hit on the ground up the middle, either the shortstop or second baseman is placed under the gamer's control, while the rest of the team stands around impotently. Here, if the player is controlling the second sacker and can't get to a ground ball, the computer-manipulated shortstop may very well come up with it.

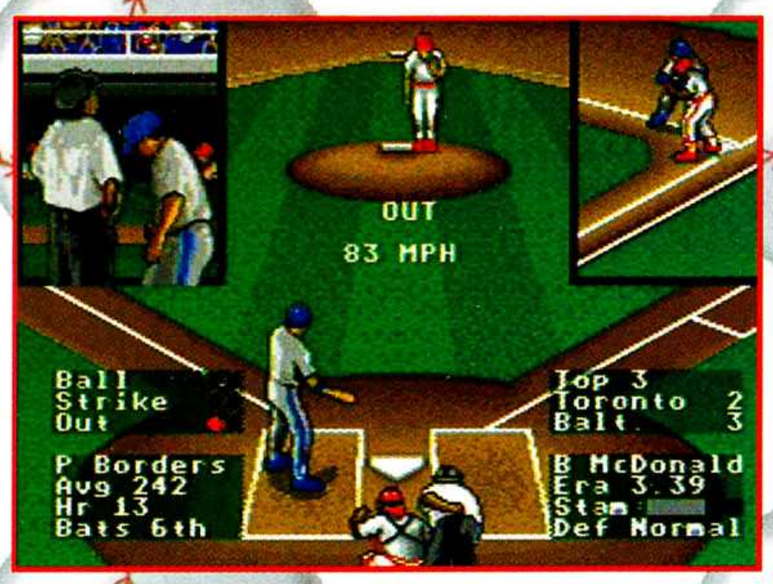


Fans of the original HardBall games are sure to flock to the SNES version's familiar layout.

Ribbies Are the Name of the Game

Tengen's baseball pedigree extends far back into the history of video game baseball. Its **R.B.I.** series is among the most popular and durable engines around.

Fans of previous editions certainly won't be disappointed with **R.B.I. Baseball '94** for the Genesis. The sound and graphics, for example, have been spruced up big time, with an increased number of animation frames depicting rotoscoped images of real players. Both batter and pitcher visuals are much smoother, owing to the increased frame rate, and provide greater distinction among players—this time out, for example, sidearm hurlers will pitch true to form. And, while the overall look and feel of the game will bring back warm, fuzzy memories to **R.B.I.** veterans, almost every visual element in the game was redrawn. Also, the outfields were recalibrated, making them almost twice as large as those seen in **R.B.I. '93**, with new cut scenes and special player portraits.



The familiar look of the RBI game screen is enhanced with better graphics and statistics.

Tengen also spent time fiddling with the game's audio, offering twice as many tunes, digitized and FM-generated sound effects, a new umpire voice, and even limited play-by-play from veteran announcer Jack Buck. There are also so-called "Crazyball" sounds, for the delectation of younger gamers.

From a game play point of view, **R.B.I. '94** is twice as fast as its previous incarnation, with enhanced realism in trajectory and ball flight, improved AI on the computer-controlled team, and defensive positioning. The Infield Fly Rule has also been implemented, the final box scores were enhanced and the divisions realigned in accordance with Major League Baseball—which, once again, was ignored by the publisher in lieu of signing the MLBPA players themselves.

There are also several valuable play modes, including Home Run Derby, defensive practice, Gamebreakers and a new Pickles game to help players hone their infield abilities.



It's a play at the hot corner! Smooth, fluid motion of each player really adds to the realism of the game.

New Kids on the Block

The nice thing about sports series, such as **HardBall** and **R.B.I.**, is that gamers have some standards with which to judge the product. Already familiar with the existing versions, they can simply read over the checklist of new features and decide whether to extend their contract.

This season, however, several new players have moved onto the turf (and grass) long held by the series stars. Sony/Imagesoft, for example, is hard at work on **ESPN Baseball**, while both EA Sports and Sega—two of the most feared power hitters in the league—have major new entries ready to take the field.

EA Sports has held a death-grip on football and hockey games thanks to its long-running **John Madden** and **NHLPA** series. EA also owns a fairly good-sized share of the electronic basketball universe. But with the exception of last year's Genesis translation of Stormfront's **Tony LaRussa Baseball** (originally published for the computer by SSI), it hasn't made much of a dent in the hardball sector.

Now, with the arrival of **MLBPA Baseball**, EA Sports is looking to change all that. As part of the trend discussed earlier, **MLBPA** disdained an agreement with Major League Baseball itself in favor of getting the players on board. Every player in the Bigs is on hand, with full '93 stats, in this 8-Meg SNES contest.

From a visual perspective, **MLBPA** looks like a cross between **LaRussa** on the Genesis, and that venerable Sega classic, **Tommy Lasorda Baseball**. The point of view is fairly close to the ground, but higher than that used in **HardBall III**. A radar map of the field appears in the lower left corner of the screen. This feature, in conjunction with a cursor which indicates the point on the field where the ball will land, allows gamers to skillfully guide outfielders.



Game options include One Game, League Playoffs, the "Series," Full Season, and the ability to restore a season-in-progress. Players can also opt to play with or without a Designated Hitter, and choose grass or turf. In fact, the scheduling is among the most flexible available in any baseball video game. Digitized sound effects, realistic stadium music (including the beloved "Chop") and sound samples all add to the realism. The player-characters are fairly large, and smoothly animated due to the use of rotoscoping, i.e., tracing and duplicating the movements of real athletes to formulate great graphics.

And, of course, Ron Barr is on hand to make everyone feel at home.



ESPN Baseball features authentic teams and voice from the man himself, Chris "Beast of" Berman.

Special Sports Section

The Sega Series

Even with all these exciting new products, however, there is one new entry which seems likely to plug most directly into the collective Baseball Brain—Blue Sky's **World Series Baseball** from Sega.

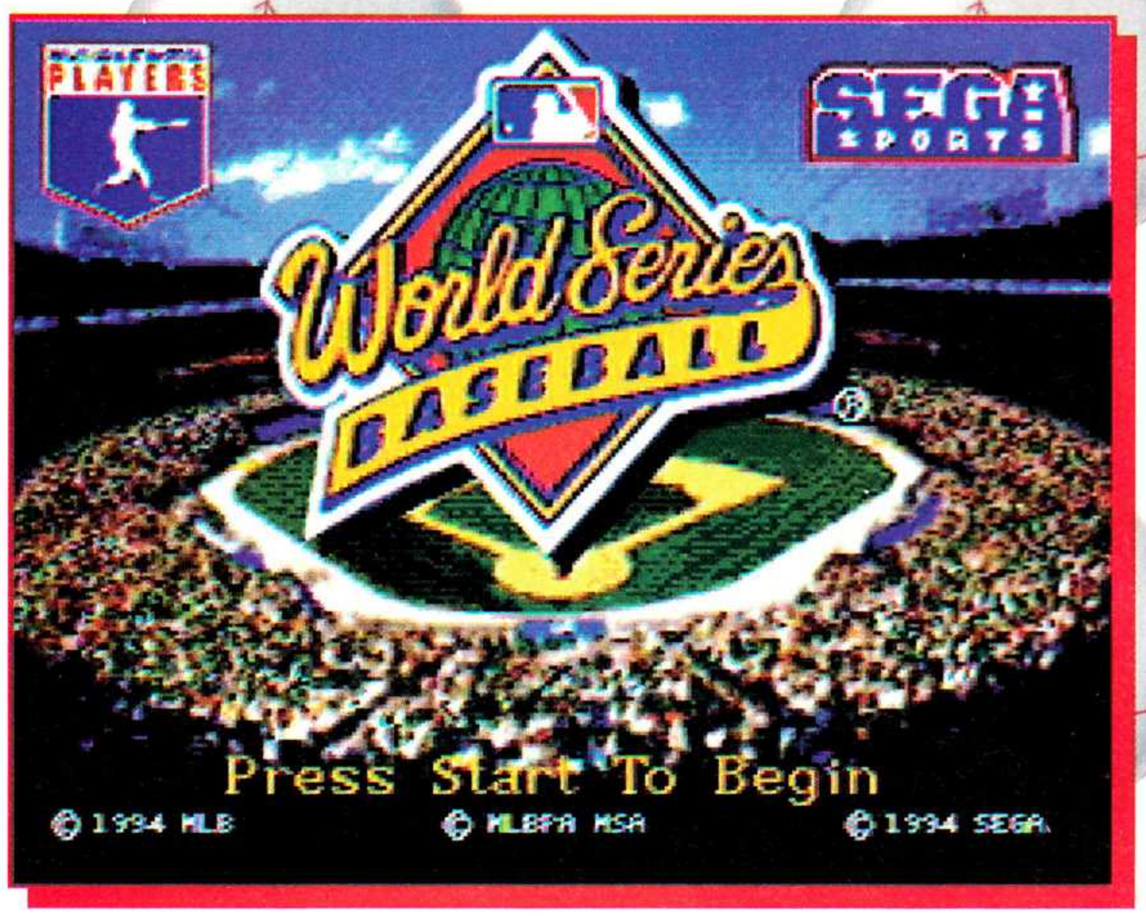
As readers who've been following this have already guessed from the title, this game does have the sanction of Major League Baseball. This means the uniforms, logos, team names, etc. are all available as are the players themselves since Sega also signed on the dotted line with the MLBPA.

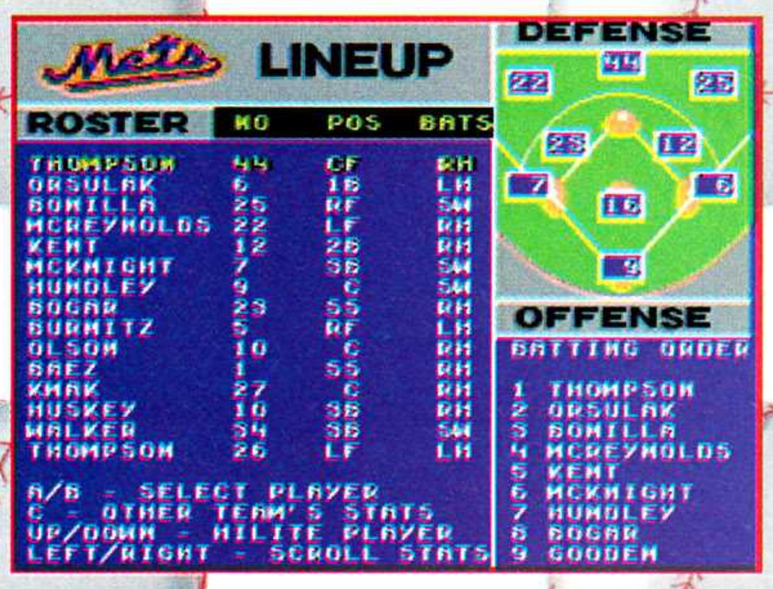
World Series Baseball is guaranteed to rewire the circuits of any players who've become cynical about sports games. For the first time ever, a baseball game is portrayed from the catcher's POV. The batter is represented by a huge sprite, partially visible on either side of the screen (depending on whether the batter is a righty or lefty), with the pitcher, the outfield and the bleachers full of screaming fans all portrayed with eye-popping realism.

A squared area, representing the strike zone, appears in the center of the screen. If the ball passes through that zone, the pitch is a strike. The batter first selects the type of swing to be used: contact, normal, or power. Thereafter, the C button is used to swing and the A button to bunt. After each pitch, a register appears indicating its speed.

The image of a pitched ball heading directly toward the screen is among the most thrilling visions in gaming history. In the field, the gamer takes the role of the pitcher, selecting pitch type (determined by the pitches that player actually uses) and speed via menus, and finally, direction via the control pad.

Special options include Home Run Derby, full access to the bullpen, bench, scoreboard, and of course, replays. The game also uses a radar display in the lower right corner of the screen. Once the ball is put in play, the graphics are reminiscent of those seen in Sega's earlier **Sports Talk Baseball**, complete with obligatory clean-ups on the player animations. The sprites are smaller than those seen in **MLBPA Baseball**, for example, but they are superbly animated.





The complete lineups of your favorite teams are here, from the pennant winners to the cellar guys.

For a game with such a strong emphasis on pitching and hitting, it's only appropriate that **World Series Baseball** boasts the most extensive range of batting practice options ever seen in a hardball sim. When the player takes BP, there are no fielders—only a pitcher, throwing from behind a protective fence, and play-by-play on each swing. However, BP can be taken by either a right or left-handed batter, against a left or right handed pitcher. The gamer even sets the type of pitch they want to practice swinging at, and the speed range at which it will be thrown. Finally, BP can be taken in any existing major league stadium.

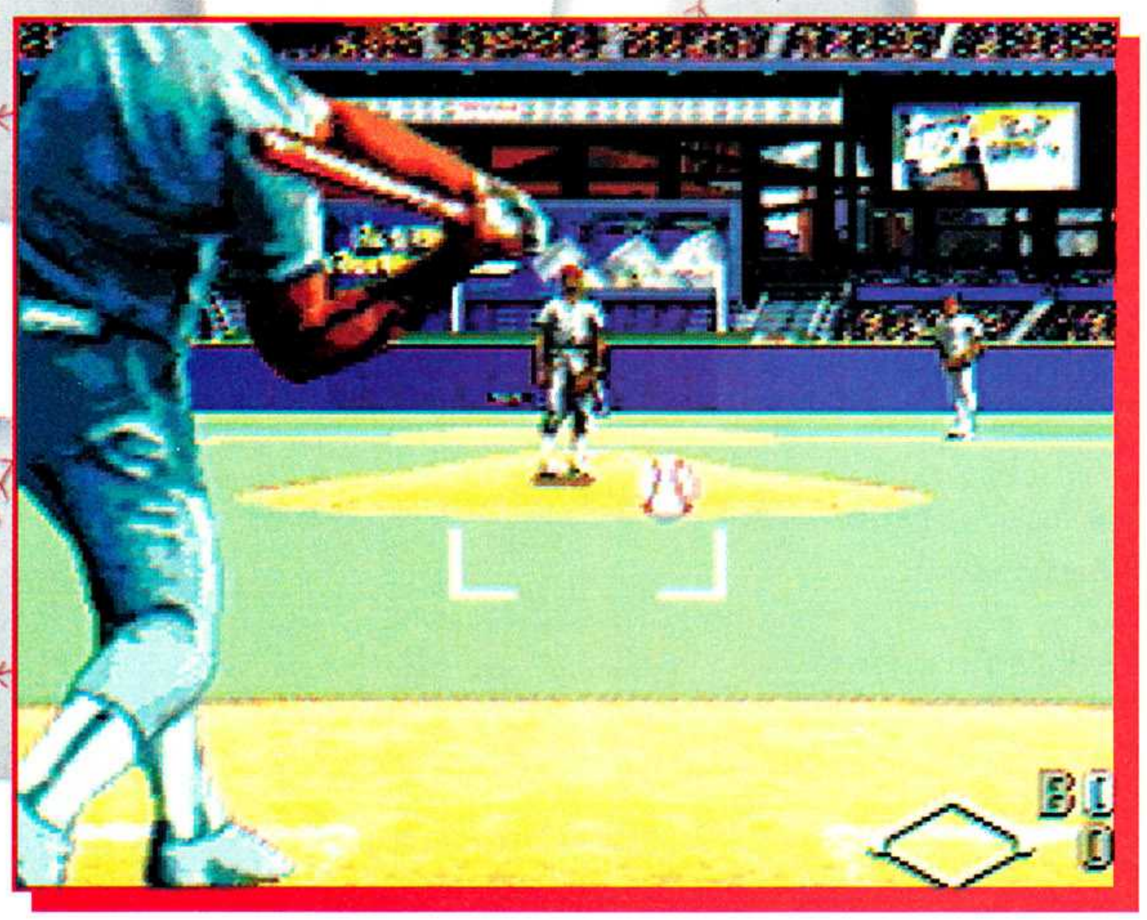
The Box Score

Baseball remains among the most popular subjects for electronic simulation, and this spring's crop has an especially rewarding blend of seasoned veterans and rookie phenoms. With Michael Jordan's recent foray into the sport, one can see the popularity of America's favorite pastime swelling with each new, exciting player to come out. Which games will grab the pennant, and which will have to wait until next year?

Only the gamers are the ultimate judges of that. Until then, enjoy comparing these excellent products, try not to overswing and remember: Play the ball, don't let the ball play you.

Peanuts? Popcorn? Hot dogs?

— Bill Kunkel



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VIDEO GAME GALLERY



PUBLISHER: NAMCO
SYSTEM: SNES
THEME: MOTORCYCLE RACE
MEGABITS: 8
PLAYERS: 1-2
LEVELS: 5
COMPLEXITY: AVERAGE

Motorcycle games have been popular subjects since the early days when Hang-On was included with the Sega Master System. But while video games like Road Rash (EA) and its sequel often dominate the attention of gamers, computers have also seen their share of hog heaven. Back when Test Drive was all the rage, Accolade produced The Cycles: International Grand Prix Racing, a first-person sim featuring 15 real Grand Prix courses. Konami/Gremlin's Team Suzuki, meanwhile is a multiple POV first-person sim.

SUZUKA 8 HOURS

IF YOU'VE GOT 8 HOURS, WE'VE GOT THE RACE

Namco, the company which originally created **Pole Position**, the **Final Lap** games, **Driver's Eyes** and, most recently, the eye-popping coin-op **Ridge Racer**, has once again contracted white line fever. Unfortunately, **Suzuka 8 Hours**, a motorcycle simulation for the SNES, doesn't quite bring enough of the audio-graphic sophistication necessary to establish it among the very best video game cycle sims.



Suzuka offers five tracks and six different bikes, each containing variable ratings in top speed, engine size, mobility and automatic or manual transmission. The selection screens are fairly straightforward and there's practice, tournament and head-to-head two-player options, all with an emphasis on endurance racing.

Namco Hometek's design attempts to duplicate **Suzuka**'s arcade appeal by maxxing out the Mode 7 features, but the result looks pretty much like all the other SNES racing games; road edges are a mish-mash of blurred, almost psychedelic color arrays. The backgrounds, meanwhile, consist either of faraway mountains or squared-off cityscapes. In fact, when compared to another recent SNES motorcycle sim, **GP-1** (Atlus), the off-track scenery looks positively drab. **Suzuka** does not employ a first-person point of view. Instead, the bike and the player character are seen in the immediate foreground, making this an arcade-style racer rather than a true simulation.

One thing **Suzuka** does deliver, however, is speed, as well as solid play mechanics. The top left and right buttons on the SNES controller are used in conjunction with the left and right direction controls on the keypad to produce various degrees of tilt and steering to either the left or right. In other words, instead of merely steering to the right or leaning to the right, it is now possible to do both.



Unfortunately, the instructions do almost nothing to actually explain the system and how it works. Neither do they explain other significant options, such as game time vs. real time, and an on/off "Hit" feature. (The Hit feature does *not* bring chains and clubs into play; it merely determines whether cyclists will knock one another over upon contact, or whether they will glide through one another, like ghosts.) Of course, the idea that such an option even exists seems a little silly; is this a simulation or is it **MarioCycle**?

As for the game time vs. real time question; anyone who opts to run an eight hour video game motorcycle race in real time is probably going to have to be carried away from the game on a gurney.



Suzuka 8 Hrs. is a workmanlike program, but it lacks the audio-visual enhancements and visceral kick required to lift it beyond the status of solid generic material.

—Bill Kunkel

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
80%	74%	84%	86%	82%

SUPER SOLITAIRE

YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, HERE



Solitaire is the game that epitomizes the one-player contest. In all its many forms and variations, including some aberrations which actually involve two players, it remains the quintessential solitary amusement. It's a good idea, therefore, for an electronic version of the game to offer something more than can be experienced with a deck of Bicycle cards.

Super Solitaire presents 12 of the most popular solitaire formats, most with play variations, aka cheats. Games which require the player to build up four foundation piles by suit, from ace to king, include *Klondike*, *Free Cell*, *Cruel* and *Stonewell*. *Golf* requires the gamer to move all of the cards from the tableau to the discard pile, while *Pyramid* clears the



tableau by matching up cards to equal 13. *Dozen't Matter* builds up each of the 12 base piles to the number of its corresponding position in the row. *Aces Up* deals the player four cards at a time from the stock pile, eliminating cards of a lower rank so the player ends up with all four aces alone. *Florentine* and *Canfield* build four foundation piles by suit in ascending order, but start from a random card. *Scorpion* requires the player to arrange all the cards by suit in descending order, while *Poker* has the gamer fashion five poker hands to achieve the highest score possible with the cards provided.

Super Solitaire also offers the opportunity for a tournament session, with three available options. Standard Mode challenges the player to beat the preset time before continuing to the next game. Championship play preselects the games so that the gamer replays the same setup and improvement is determined based on the time. Custom Mode allows the player to select both the games and the order.



The player has several play options that can be set at the start of the game. Five language settings are available: English (default), French, German, Italian and Spanish.

The cursor speed is adjustable while the password screen permits the gamer to return to a previous game. There are also three music selections, none of which will stroke your ears: elevator, funky and jazz. Fortunately, no music is also an option.

Super Solitaire has several serious drawbacks, including presentation and interface. No one expects a card game to look like **Mortal Kombat**, but compare **Super Solitaire** with Activision's years old SNES version of **Shanghai II**, a game consisting of tiles stacked on a flat surface. In **Shanghai**, lulled into a Zen-like trance by the game's delicate, beautiful presentation, one can almost feel the texture of the ceramic tiles. **Super Solitaire**, on the other hand, is bare bones programming.



While lack of memory (this game is a mere 4 Megs) can excuse weak sound and graphics, it won't take the rap for poor interface design. The menu-driven interface uses either the standard controller or the SNES mouse, and the controls are relatively straightforward, as are the deal options.

But the hint option doesn't always suggest the best move, often encouraging the player to shuffle cards endlessly from one stack to another instead of conceding that the game is a loss. Even the simple process of restarting when a game has been lost is transformed into a major interaction.

If playing solitaire on a video game system is a must, then this program pretty much has the field to itself. Otherwise, stick with the playing cards.

—Laurie Yates

PUBLISHER: EXTREME ENTERTAINMENT
SYSTEM: SNES
THEME: CARDS
MEGABITS: 4
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: N/A
COMPLEXITY: AVERAGE

While a plethora of card games are available on all systems, solitaire can most frequently be found on the PC. Solitaire's Journey (QQP/PC) presents the same game options as Super Solitaire and many more besides.

Other Solitaire simulations can be found on A Collection of Classic Games (Star Graphics/PC), Getaway (Epyx/Windows), and Hoyle's Book of Games Volume 1 (Sierra/PC).

Hoyle's offers Klondike Solitaire, Classic Games has a version dubbed Beleaguered Castle, and Getaway contains both Klondike and Las Vegas variations.

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
72%	71%	77%	78%	74%

SKITCHIN'

ROLLER BLADIN' TO THE RHYTHM OF THE ROAD



PUBLISHER:
ELECTRONIC ARTS
SYSTEM: GENESIS
THEME: ARCADE/ACTION
MEGABITS: 16
PLAYERS: 1-2
LEVELS: 12
COMPLEXITY: AVERAGE

Skitchin' contains all of the fast-paced competition of Road Rash, including the employment of an assortment of weapons against one's opponents, but it also incorporates elements of style as well. Skaters execute special stunts and tricks for additional cash prizes, such as backflips, the McTwist and the Moebius. To gather enough speed to pull off these maneuvers, one has to hitch rides from passing vehicles. Go for the rare air at too slow a speed and the asphalt will become your closest friend. One other caveat: When Skitchin', the rear bumper is much preferred over the front one.

Heard of the latest craze among daredevil roller blade enthusiasts? It's called Skitchin', which stands for hitching a ride on skates. In the real world, it's dangerous and potentially deadly. In this version of the "sport," it's even more dangerous, but much less deadly. As in **Road Rash**, which is the obvious parent of this title, it's nice to see one's character jump up from a particularly nasty crash and hit the asphalt again.



Skitchers race on 12 different city tracks, each of which has special sections of jump ramps that allow players to execute some acrobatics. Performing tricks is critical to long term cash flow, and cash is necessary to keep one's equipment in top condition. Pads, skates and wheels are examined between each outing, and two of the three ways which players are precluded from finishing any given race involve poor equipment. Players who go down with bad pads are reduced to road kill. Those who attempt to attain high speeds on shaky skates or wheels might suffer a blowout. Finally, crash at the wrong spot in the road and get busted, with all the lack of glory and loss of cash one became accustomed to in **Road Rash**.

Skitchin' offers several different play modes in addition to the standard solitaire skater versus the world. For players with only one control pad, one option alternates turns with a friend. A second is a Split Screen Mode with each player competing against one another and the standard field of opponents. To continue to the next track in this mode, one of the two players must finish within the top five contestants. Finally, two players may elect to skitch head to head without computer opponents on the track.

Mastering how to latch onto passing vehicles, then release them to slingshot ahead of opponents is not too difficult; it simply requires proper timing. Watch the rear mirror view and stay slightly to the right or left of the overtaking vehicle. Just as it fills the small screen, move in the appropriate direction with the "A" button depressed. To slingshot off the vehicle, move to the corner of the bumper and hit the "B" button. Be alert to other traffic, however, before doing so.



Combat is also mainly a matter of timing. One begins without weapons, but may pick up any of the following at different times: nunchakus, chains, pipes, crowbars, whips and baseball bats. The easiest way to acquire these items is to punch an opponent at the same time they are swinging it, again just as in **Road Rash**. There are also two special items to be found, Nitro Bursts and Stun Rods. The former provide a one time blast of speed, the latter can be used to send a little high voltage through one's beloved bumper-mates.



Fortunately for the dexterously challenged, executing the various skating tricks doesn't require multiple button combinations or a programmable controller either. The secret is timing and velocity. Push the appropriate trick button just before the skater leaves the top of the ramp and it should be executed naturally, with the figure landing on his feet and continuing on. When this doesn't happen, it is because the skater was going too slow to pull it off. Karate kicks and Spread Eagles are the easiest to execute, but don't garnish many points. Flips and their variations are more profitable, but they take a lot of speed to execute. Skitch early and often if these moves are contemplated.

On a positive note, **Skitchin'** allows players to select from several soundtracks, all of which are jazzy and fit the mood of the game. Despite the similarities to **Road Rash**, **Skitchin'** is fresh enough to skate on its own merit. Though most would cringe at actually strapping on a pair of skates to act out this demented fantasy, **Skitchin'** provides enough vicarious thrills to wear out hundreds of silicon wheels. Just be sure not to exceed the speed limit in your neighborhood.

— Ed Dille

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
85%	90%	88%	80%	86%

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TIME TRAX

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE



PUBLISHER: T•HQ
SYSTEM: SNES
THEME: ACTION
MEGABITS: 8
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: 8
COMPLEXITY: AVERAGE

Time Trax Meets Genesis

Time Trax fans of the Genesis persuasion need not weep in their tea leaves over the lack of their own version of the Prime Time Network's sf series. Darien Lambert, Mordicai Sahmbi, Sepp Dietrich, and the rest of the gang will also be saving history on the Genesis, courtesy of developer Black Pearl, with the levels, meg count, and storyline duplicating the SNES version. While the limited color palette on the Genesis is a slight drawback to the overall enjoyment of the game, users will find the game almost a duplicate of the SNES edition.

Time Trax places the gamer in the side-scrolling shooter world of TV's Captain Darien Lambert. A law enforcement specialist, ca. 2193, Lambert pursues the nefarious Mordicai Sahmbi, who has used his knowledge of particle mass teleportation to create the T.R.A.X. (Trans Time Research and Experimental) time machine.

Why? He's sending criminals back 200 years into the past, of course. Sahmbi's goal: his minions alter history while on their crime-time jaunts in order to help Sahmbi control the future (well, it's his present, but never mind...). Lambert must capture mastermind Sahmbi, assassin Sepp Dietrich and a gallery of futuristic lowlives and transport them back to 2193.

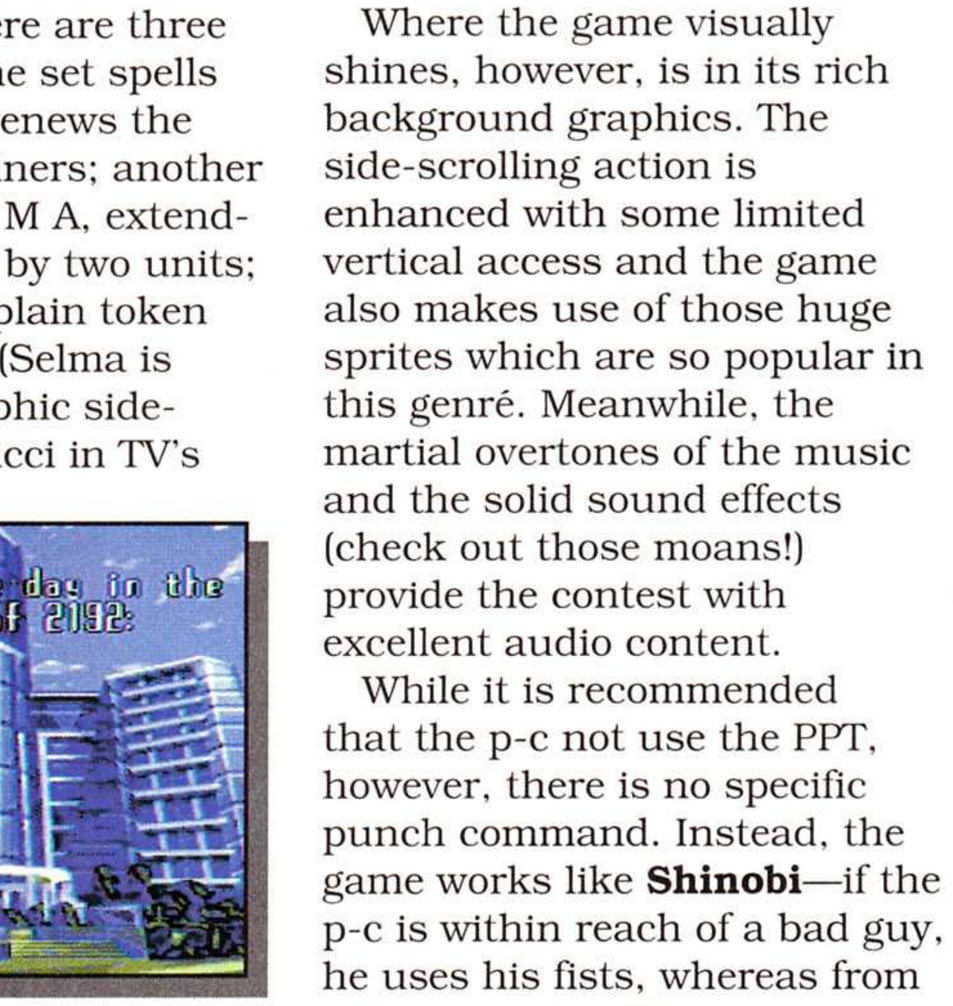
Lambert not only leaps, jumps, and ducks, but also practices Mash-Ti. If an enemy is subdued, a token is earned. If the player-character uses the Pellet Projection Tube (PPT), the enemy will be temporarily stunned, but Lambert does not obtain the token. He can also Time Stall by slowing reality down while his own actions remain normal, but this tactic expends considerable energy.

Lambert pursues Sahmbi and his henchmen through eight levels. The first two set up the storyline in 2193 by taking Lambert through the Smithsonian's passageways and into the villain's secret laboratory. Level three brings Lambert to the Smithsonian in 1993, and level four takes him on to the mean streets of Washington, D.C.

Next, Lambert must deal with a skyscraper, whose skeletal frame houses not only bomb bad guys, but also hostages.

Hawaii is the setting for the final three levels. Level six places Lambert on jet-skis, seven moves him to the Hawaiian rain forest and the final conflict occurs beside a waterfall, as Lambert faces Dietrich in a fight for the future.

Three main categories of collectibles are: power-ups, tokens and a semi-smart bomb. The individual power-ups either increase Lambert's energy, combat skills, or health, or they affect the PPT. There are three types of tokens: one set spells E X T R A, which renews the p-c's energy containers; another series spells S E L M A, extending the energy bar by two units; and the third is a plain token worth 100 points. (Selma is Lambert's holographic sidekick—ala Al Calavicci in TV's





Quantum Leap—providing information and advice between missions.) The bomb, Mega Crush, weakens all the enemies on screen, and eliminates the weaker ones.

A status bar provides the p-c with immediate feedback, including lives, energy level, special object, mental power meter and a boss meter. Lambert begins with three lives, each with four energy units. Energy loss occurs when Lambert takes hits, but can be regained by collecting tokens. The mental power meter tracks the amount of energy available for Time Stalling.

While the character animations in **Time Trax** won't be confused with, say, **Flashback**, they are serviceable and respond perfectly to controller commands.

Where the game visually shines, however, is in its rich background graphics. The side-scrolling action is enhanced with some limited vertical access and the game also makes use of those huge sprites which are so popular in this genré. Meanwhile, the martial overtones of the music and the solid sound effects (check out those moans!) provide the contest with excellent audio content.

While it is recommended that the p-c not use the PPT, however, there is no specific punch command. Instead, the game works like **Shinobi**—if the p-c is within reach of a bad guy, he uses his fists, whereas from a distance the PPT is automatically engaged. Surely, with all its extra action buttons, developer Malibu could have assigned both punch *and* fire commands.

Time Trax's major weakness is a lack of passcodes. Forced replay works with some games, but here the action grows tedious when players are forced to start from scratch every time they boot up the game. After all, that's just a waste of Time.

—Laurie Yates

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
80%	82%	85%	80%	82%

EVOLUTION: DINO DUDES

EVOLUTION HAPPENS WHEN IT'S LEAST EXPECTED



Evolution: Dino Dudes places a titular tribe of hairy Cro-Morons on the road toward a kinder, gentler level of human development. The gamer takes a god-like role similar to that employed in **Lemmings** (Psygnosis), prodding the Dudes into position and manipulating them as they learn new skills.

Individual Dino Dudes can be selected by the player one at a time, then positioned in order to solve a series of puzzles. The evolutionary wannabes perform two basic actions: picking up objects and forming human ladders, which are represented by icons on the action bar.

After a Dude picks up an object, additional action icons appear, reflecting the ability to vault, throw, brandish and burn. Other information on the action bar includes the timer and extra Dino Dudes indicator.

Dudes have a variety of tools available to accomplish each level's goal. The spear is the first object the Dudes encounter. If they practice the multiple uses for this instrument, the next tool encountered is a burning torch. Assuming they aren't toasted by the experience, the evolutionally challenged players will next learn the mysteries of the rope.

After mastering this skill, the neo-Neanderthal is ready to rock and roll, locating a stone wheel, which he rides with uncanny, and almost unrealistic, ease.

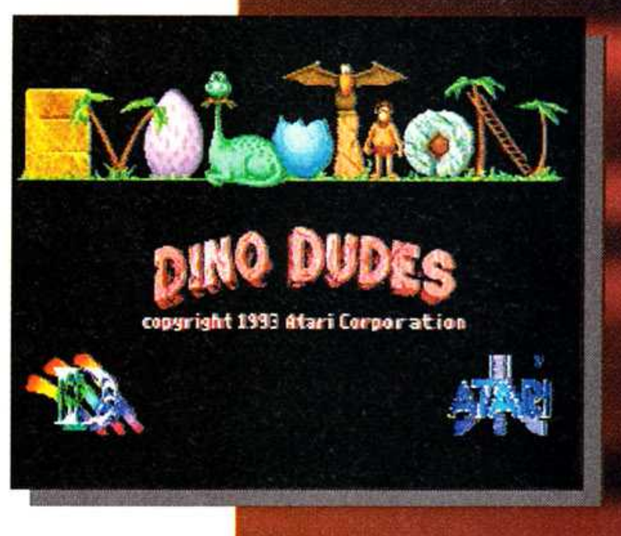
However, evolution isn't always a smoothly paved road. At various points, the tribe finds stacks of stone blocks which prevent progress. At this point, one of the Dudes needs to seek a shallow depression, which is connected to the block stacks. If enough weight is applied to the switch, the stones disappear.



Voodoo eventually infiltrates the tribe in the form of a witchdoctor. While he blends in with the tribe, and can do everything our heroes do, he's unwilling to expend energy on normal tasks. The good doctor is, however, willing to cast spells and conjure objects using magic for a price: one Dino Dude per favor.



E:DD has three difficulty levels: easy, normal and hard. Easy gives the gamer 12 characters and plenty of time. Normal decreases the number of dudes to 10 as well as reducing the time available, while the most challenging scenario eliminates two more cave-dwellers and further tightens the time frame. The end-of-level points are skewed accordingly.



Evolution: Dino Dudes effectively utilizes the Jag's graphic abilities. The texturing provides a 3-D effect that is phenomenal, and the color saturation is a real treat for the eyes. The sound is also first-rate quality, and sets the mood accordingly.

The game plays great, once the player learns the lay of the prehistoric landscape. Determining how far a Dude should be from the edge before spear vaulting or throwing can become a fine art.

The ability to skip over previously conquered levels via passcodes to access new challenges is also a plus. With three settings from which to choose, as well as levels containing multiple tasks, **E:DD** offers strong replay value.

Lemmings, which has reigned supreme over this genre for many years, finally has a serious challenger in the form of hip cavemen.

—Laurie Yates

PUBLISHER: ATARI
SYSTEM: JAGUAR
THEME: PUZZLE
MEGABITS: 16
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: 80
COMPLEXITY: AVERAGE

Dino Deja Vu

If Evolution: Dino Dudes seems familiar, it isn't because of some ancient racial memory. It's actually a further evolution of the game Humans, which initially made the scene in a computer version from Gametek.

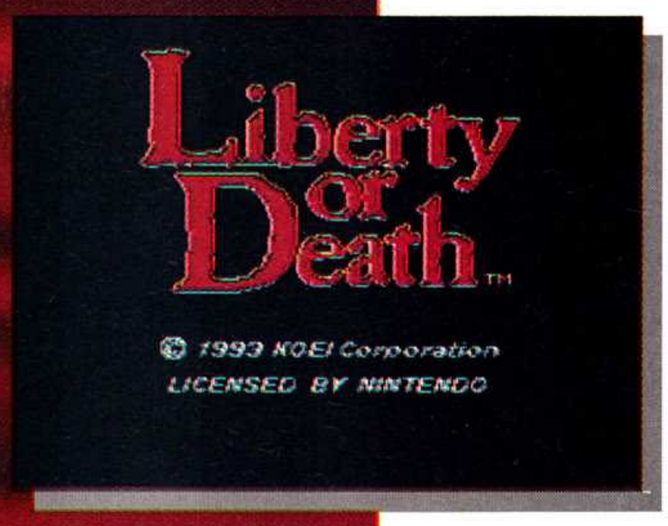
The Jaguar version, developed by Imagitec, makes obligatory use of the Atari system's superior graphic and sound capabilities, while remaining remarkably faithful to the original.

Dino Dudes is also the first Jaguar game to make use of the telephone-style keypad which is included as part of the system controller, and it does this very well.

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
89%	88%	90%	92%	90%

Liberty or Death

Revolution is never a cakewalk



Publisher: Koei
System: SNES
Theme: War simulation
Megabits: 12
Players: 1-2
Difficulty settings: 3
Complexity: Intricate

David Johnson and Julie Carlson of Koei's design team improved the music, graphics and interface for SNES over the PC version, and say they've also improved the balance to better reflect the period. Parades weigh less heavily on the regiments, and it is less difficult to get gold. Their advice to beginners: Don't let initial impressions daunt you. Focus on the officers, soldiers and powder supplies. Later, as you get more familiar with the game and better acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of different officers, branch out. Try to balance domestic policies and keep the people happy.

Koei's take on the American Revolution is an interesting variation on the war games usually laid out on a hex grid. It is thoroughly icon-driven and amazingly complex for what seems at first like a fairly simple territorial strategy game.

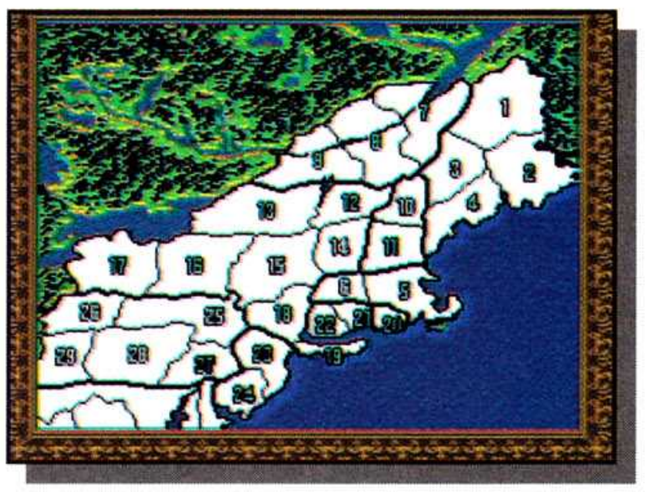
Its complexity is appropriate for the subject, and for a computer-based game, as it was originally released by Koei (see review in **EG**, July '93). Even though the game has been condensed to fit, it may still be a bit much for the video game console. The meticulous preparations required for practically every move are a far cry from the twitch reactions usually associated with console play.

Most of the game play involves menu selections adapted to the buttons on the SNES controller. When it is necessary to enter figures, Koei's designers opted to use the directional pad: Right and left chooses a digit (if more than one) while pressing up and down cycles the digit through 0-9. It takes a little time to learn to handle it intuitively, but there will be plenty of opportunity to practice.

For that matter there's precious little else that will come intuitively to the player unfamiliar with the business behind the scenes of war. In addition to many other factors, the player must make economic decisions requiring money and military decisions concerning troops, which involves allocating specific quantities from a total budget or the enlistment rolls. Every officer in command of a district must be given orders concerning deployment of available regiments, acquiring and allocating provisions, and even currying popular support. This means going down through the roster of officers for each area and making these command decisions for each one—a process involving several selection screens. Advice is available on some of these decisions (not all), and there is no budget screen for totals and balances. The player might have to pick up a ledger book at the local office supply store and discover the joys of accounting.

The fact of the matter is that the player, in taking on the role of Commander in Chief (either George Washington, leading the rebellious American forces or Thomas Gage, who was in reality only the first of several British commanders during the revolution), must also accept responsibility for many elements of command that the real generals had aides and advisors for. As a result, sometimes it





seems a long time between battles. Viewing battles is an option, by the way—they are handled as fairly abstract encounters between icons, though the sound effects aren't bad.

The hex-grid war gamer who revels in working out all the details, preparing the strategies and tactical elements of a campaign, may well be in his element with **Liberty or Death**. It would seem, however, that this game might be most at home in a classroom setting. Students of the American Revolution could get a real feel for many of the elements that contributed to how both sides fared.

This doesn't just include the practical and economic side of what the combatants faced. There were epidemics of fever and small pox; northern winters and southern summers brought morale-debilitating conditions. Other historical events, such as French and Spanish alliances with the rebels, are also developed. The manual includes some essays on actual events, such as the Battle of Breed's Hill and the invasion of Canada.

The close adherence to historical accuracy supports other educational aspects to the game. For example, a map in the manual accurately names as part of Massachusetts the state we know as Maine. For purposes of game play, Koei divided the colonies, including upper Florida and a portion of Canada around and between Montreal and Quebec City, into 53 districts. These are numbered on screen but generally referred to by the name of the principal city or town, such as Boston, Springfield or Pittsburgh. There's one called Wyoming as well! Surprising, but all it takes is a check of the atlas to discover that there are a county and a forest in middle Pennsylvania by that name.

Students can have a ball with seeing how different decisions might have altered the course of our country's storied history. But, of course, that is what war gamers have known all along.

— Ross Chamberlain

Graphics	Sound	Playability	Replay Value	Overall
84%	81%	79%	76%	80%

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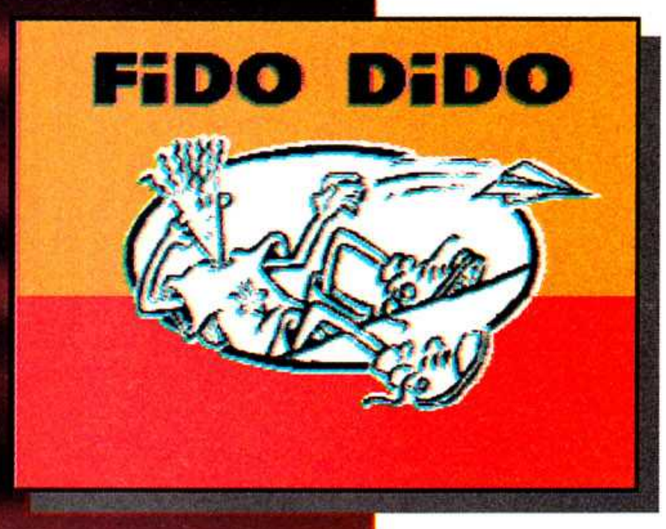
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FIDO DIDO

ADVENTURES WITH A COOL CARTOON BUMPER



PUBLISHER: KANEKO
SYSTEM: GENESIS
THEME: PUZZLES
MEGABITS: 8
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: 7
COMPLEXITY: INTRICATE

Comments from the Teeny Weeny Games designers: "Fido Dido is a black and white character which all races and sexes can relate to. He's a good guy with his heart in the right place. He is non-violent, non-stressed, cool, laid back, weird and happy—sort of a pre-Oliver Hardy Stan Laurel as a 1990's teenager. He is resourceful and never does mundane tasks the same way as anyone else or the same way twice. Our task was to create an unconventional game and remain true to Fido. Problems: He has no enemies and he would not run anywhere, which was likely to make the game slow." They solved them ...

Afficionados of Saturday morning's CBS cartoon lineup will recognize a sometimes hapless, always cool, line-drawn character, always in black-and-white, wearing shorts, sneakers (with dangerously trailing laces), flaring T-shirt and a permanently startled hairdo, around whom weird things happen between the cartoons.

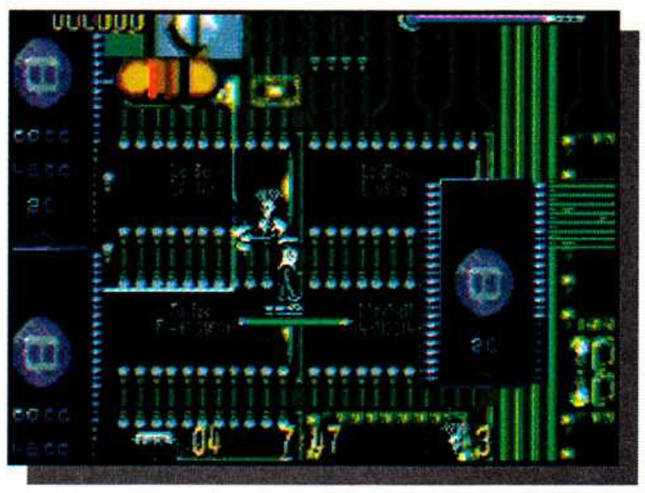
Some of us will remember the series of Slice commercials he starred in; others, hailing from Canada or Europe, may associate him with 7Up. Few beyond his creators have known his name, but now you may join the cognoscenti, and get to meet him as well.

Fido Dido (*Fydo Deedo*) represents proof that a character can be cheerful and carefree and ready for anything, plus still be cool. For the Genesis version (the SNES game will be different), the folks at Teeny Weeny Games put him into a variety of strange environments to solve some equally strange puzzles. Fido goes where the gamer takes him with a jaunty gate, and jumps, bounces, slips, slides, glides and rides with an astonishingly insouciant air.

Indeed, Fido Dido is so blasé that rather than identifying with him, a player may tend to feel guilty about repeatedly failing to get this guy to where he needs to go. This will happen to even the best player without a cheat sheet, because the puzzles will not yield to persistence without imagination.

There is no Demo Mode or introductory story if the controller's left alone after turning the game on. The screen will cycle through amusingly animated titles, a vanity board and a selection screen. From that, the player may start the game, go to a sound-check (which cycles through 47 sound effects or 11 musical entries ranging from neat soundtrack tunes to short bridges), select difficulty (medium, hard or easy), or enter a password to get directly into levels 2 to 6. The 7th is a three-part bonus level which is reached from within the others. There is no battery backup, hence the passwords, available at the end of each level. And of course any competition on the vanity board is within the session; most any player at all will score over the quintet (presumably apocryphal) on the list when the game's turned on.

At the beginning of each primary level, Fido falls into the photographic image of an artist's table (where the artist has fallen asleep), and into one

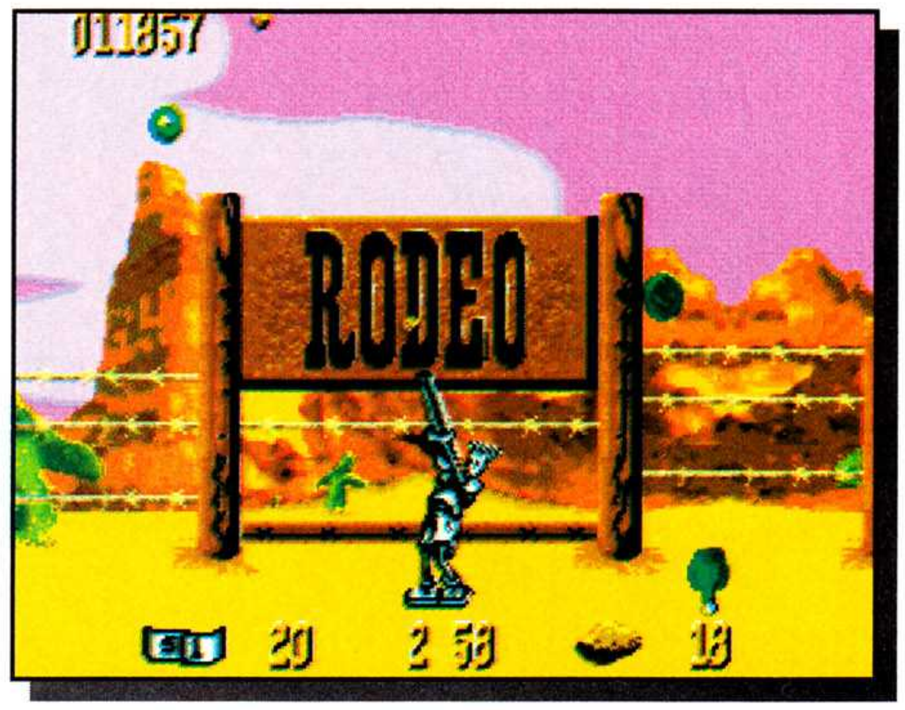


of the items on the table—including the artist's ear.

The entrance to level 1 is a pencil box. As the game begins, Fido must find his way around the world of the artist's table itself, now strangely vertical. He has a friend who is dangling from the pull-chain of a lamp, whom he must rescue. But the challenge is to find his way to the lamp, by means of anything from walking on floating clouds to riding an air scooter.

In level 2, he falls through a postcard into a colorless fun fair which Fido needs to brighten up by collecting drops of color. As he does this, some color is restored to the foreground graphics. But meanwhile, he can check out some of the attractions, including a roller coaster from hell, and avoid a flock of rampaging bumper cars.

In other levels, he must make his way around a dinosaur world in what may be the most



tropical jungle environment in gaming; scramble through the guts of a Genesis machine (the complexity of which would put Intel Inside commercials to shame), or escape the artist's dream of being marooned on a desert island. In one, he has fallen off the artist's table and must get back up. (Please, no old lady jokes here.)

The bonus level has Fido riding a bucking bronco to collect money and potatoes; the potatoes will be used to shoot at bottles in part 2. All this is done to collect money for part 3, which is a simplified game of black jack. Its interface is odd enough to fit the rest of the play (a button called "flip" requests a hit, one marked "fold" means to hold), but players familiar with 21 will have no trouble.

Fido Dido is fun, but no picnic. There are hints (in the manual and within the game) but as is often the case, their meaning becomes clear more or less after the fact. There will be times when a leap of the imagination will be required, and frustration will be a part of the player's experience. Go for it!

— Ross Chamberlain

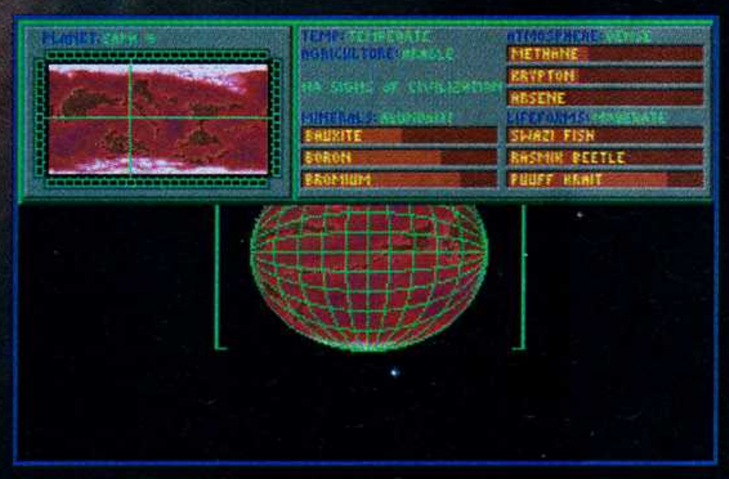
GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
86%	87%	82%	72%	85%

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RAIDEN
BLAST AWAY SPACE PIRATES ON THE JAGUAR



PUBLISHER: ATARI
SYSTEM: JAGUAR
THEME: SCI-FI SHOOTER
MEGABITS: 16
PLAYERS: 1-2
LEVELS: 8
COMPLEXITY: INTRICATE

Raiden: The Next Generation—Fans of this Jaguar shooter will want to check out Fabtek's new coin-op sequel, Raiden II. The difficulty level for top players will be quite high, but even digital duffers will stand a chance because of Fabtek's self-diagnostic difficulty feature. After a few sorties, the system evaluates and ranks the player, then establishes the skill setting. As in the original, there are 8 extended levels with a big mecha-boss waiting at the end of each lengthy round. It's also two-player co-operative, like Raiden, but offers enhanced colors, better sound, and some nice polygon cut scenes.

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
81%	73%	93%	92%	86%

There has never exactly been a shortage of scrolling sci-fi twitch games, but there have never been so many at any given time that a good solid effort didn't draw attention. So it was with Fabtek's coin-op, **Raiden**, a vertical scrolling blastathon with limited lateral scroll, a nice variety of enemies and obstacle, and an invigorating gallery of power-ups that has been earning quarters for Fabtek since 1990.



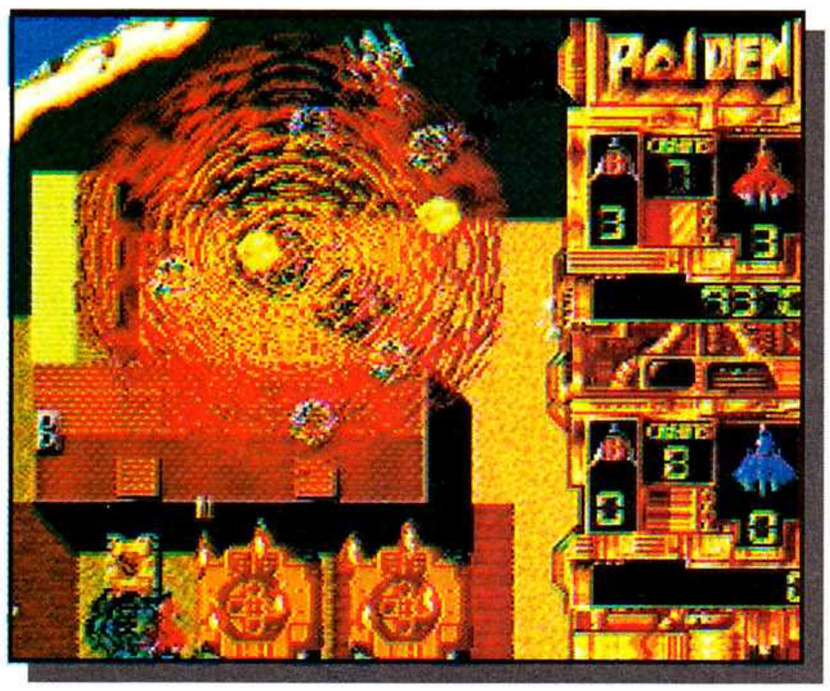
Raiden represents a genré with strict conventions that vary only in quantity and quality. Some, like the classic side-scroller **R-Type**, toss out so many power-ups that by the time a player identifies an icon, they've acquired four more. These contests force players to learn the significance of dozens of different icons; to know when to grab those suckers and when to fly away. Then there are the ground target-oriented vertical shooters such as **Xevious**, where the player's fighter craft flies closer to the landscape, taking out enemy installations as well as aircraft.

Raiden, on the other hand, is more in the tradition of **Truxton** (a Toaplan Ltd. arcade contest best known in its Genesis incarnation). The power-ups are tough to come by, but they're worth waiting for—especially the maxed-out super weapon power-up which releases vertical strips of laser light that obliterate any object they encounter. There is also a pleasing blend of deep space shoot-outs and air-to-ground encounters, as the gamer's Raiden Supersonic Attack Fighter passes over stretches of ruined Earth and sprawling alien base ships.

According to the minimalist storyline, our beloved homeworld has been invaded by space pirates and it's up to the player to save us from their merciless dominion. Hmmm, that does sound vaguely familiar. Not that the familiarity is a burden; fans of this type of game don't need no stinkin' plot, just action, of which **Raiden** has an abundance.

The game features both bombs (which are collected as power-ups, with three awarded at the start of each life) and a frontal cannon. The cannon's impact is determined by which power-up the player last scored. There are lasers, machine guns, direct fire missiles, homing missiles, and that super power-up. **Raiden** also offers a Two-player Cooperative Mode with a dual ship power-up: The two ships line up and the rear ship fires into the other Raiden's exhaust stream, producing a wide dispersal beam.





The graphic display occupies approximately 75percent of the screen space, with a vertical data plate filling the far right side, in the style of 10-year-old British software. The graphics are nice-looking, but never eye-popping, while the sound effects are downright disappointing.

On a certain level, seeing the awesome audio-graphic capabilities of the Jaguar used to produce even a superior generic product like **Raiden** seems like underachievement. Still, good shooters are required materials in every basic game library, and this Jaguar version is fully as impressive as the coin-op original.

Problem: This is *such* a slavish reproduction of the coin-op that passcodes weren't even added! While the docs boast that the system's non-volatile vanity board can record up to 100,000 changes, gamers must still battle all eight levels on every play.

Raiden will not even receive an honorable mention on anyone's Most Innovative List, but Imagitec Design's Jaguar edition represents a solid, if unremarkable audio-graphics effort, with a remarkable amount of play value. The new system's capabilities really shine through. If only it had been punched up a little more, it might have been a great game.

—Bill Kunkel

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Fire Striker

Role-players follow the bouncing ball



Publisher: DTMC
System: SNES
Theme: Arcade
Megabits: 1
Players: 1-4
Levels: 14
Complexity: Intermediate

STRATEGY TIPS:
Avoid bombs if at all possible; they take away hearts and you can't destroy them. For the quickest completion of a screen, try to place yourself (and the Sorcerer in two-player games) so that the Trialight gets stuck in a cul-de-sac with enemies and bricks at the other end. Quickly move the Sorcerer in one-player games to cover any holes the Trialight makes in the bricks at the bottom of the screen. Until you know the right sequence of map locations to visit, expect the game to send you back to the start of certain levels if you don't have the right FireStriker in your team.

Most video games follow an established style of game play. Fans of role-playing games can be sure that similar types of game functions and commands will be in other RPGs. When designers combine styles, the result can be a really bad game or a winner.

Fire Striker is the latter. It has an adventure game story and goals, but uses pinball and **Breakout**-like game play. Even if players are not familiar with the game play, they will like **Fire Striker** because it's addictive and replayable.

There are four countries in the distant world of **Fire Striker**. Humans live in the Wind Country. Griffins rule the Fire Country. Mermaids spend their time in the Water Country. Gnomes hold reign over the Earth Country. These countries had constant battles for superiority until the Arch-Mage Wylde stepped in. He proposed that the person who could control the fireball-like light weapon known as the Trialight from each Country would be called Fire Striker for that country. The Fire Strikers would battle until three of them met defeat. The land of the Fire Striker left standing would rule the world.

A human named Slader won the battle for the Wind Country. Wylde had other intentions and took over the three defeated Countries. It is up to the player to control Slader and the Fire Strikers of the other countries to defeat Wylde and restore peace to the world.

From one to four players can play Fire Striker, but they all control their characters in the same way. The control pad moves their character around the screen. The A and B buttons strike the Trialight and send it in a new direction. When the Trialight hits blocks or enemies, it does one unit of damage. The X and Y buttons move the Trialight with a smashing strike that sends it through any blocks on the game board in its path and, in many cases, defeats enemies in one blow.

The object of **Fire Striker** is to eliminate as many enemies or destroy as many blocks as are necessary to open a door at the top of the screen to the next room. Some blocks and enemies may only require one hit with the Trialight, but most need more. The catch is that the Trialight must not pass through the bricks at the bottom of the screen. DTMC refers to Fire Striker's game play style as pinball, but it's closer to **Breakout** because you must destroy bricks and prevent the Trialight from going off the bottom of the screen.



In a one-player game, the player must choose which Fire Striker he plans to use at the start of each level. He selects levels on an overhead map screen by moving a cursor over the paths to the next desired battle site. Initially, only Slader will be available. Later in the game, the player will free the other countries' Fire Strikers who will then join the team.

Also in the one-player game, a Sorcerer at the bottom of the screen protects the bricks. He can be moved back and forth with the L and R buttons. In two-player games, one player controls a Fire Striker and the other controls the Sorcerer. In this game version, the Sorcerer is not confined to the bottom of the screen.

Four-player game play is completely different. The contestants may play a soccer-like



game two to a team with the Trialight as the ball or a survival game in which they each try to knock the other Fire Strikers off a small platform with the Trialight.

Fire Striker's game variety and constantly new challenges will excite players up to the end. The 14 levels will keep one or two players busy for a while. It takes some time to learn which Fire Strikers are necessary for which level, but eventually players will find the right path through the game. Boss monsters on certain levels give gamers a sense of accomplishment and add one of the few standard video game features. Destruction of some enemies and blocks will reveal helpful POWs for smashing strikes and hearts for health boosts.

Graphics are clean and colorful, but the catchy music and sound effects leave a much longer-lasting impression. **Fire Striker**'s game play is its selling point and should please players of all interests, especially those who recognize the origins of ball-and-brick games.

— Russ Ceccola

Graphics	Sound	Playability	Replay Value	Overall
80%	80%	85%	85%	85%

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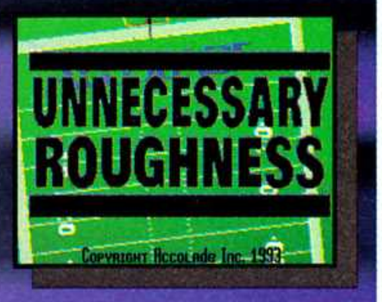
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SOFTWARE GALLERY

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS

GREAT GRIDIRON GRAPHICS; GAME PLAY GRIM



PUBLISHER: ACCOLADE
PRODUCER: DANNY PISANO
SYSTEM: MS-DOS
THEME: SPORT SIMULATION
HD SPACE REQ.: 8 MB
RAM REQ.: 4 MB
PLAYERS: 1
COMPLEXITY: SIMPLE

Great Audibles

Accolade has signed Emmy award winning announcer Al Michaels to do the soundtracks for many of their sports games. In Unnecessary Roughness his play-by-play calls lend an incredible amount of realism to the game. Michaels' voice comes through loud and clear, calling off player numbers and play details. His commentary and analysis is spiced up with digitized photographs of the important players. This, along with great graphics, makes it seem like a real game.

As the newest expansion team in the football simulation league, Accolade's **Unnecessary Roughness** (**UR**) boasts a solid lineup and gains quick yardage in the opening seconds via its SVGA engine. Player graphics have been rotoscoped, providing realistic onfield motion. Additionally, the Infinity Cam instant replay option hammers home the stunning visuals, providing a second look from any angle and distance, from the blimp view down to in-your-face realism.

UR also scores with its NFL Players Association license, which has been sorely missed in the past. In addition to proper stat handling of the real pros, the program also displays the photographs of key players after each down. This feature makes the players seem real, as opposed to just computer icons running around the screen.

A highly detailed playbook gives **UR** an easy first down. Almost every conceivable play, from the shotgun bomb to the quick toss left are already incorporated, but demanding coaches can also select from a full pallet of play building options. The playbooks can also be customized by team, such that one may provide San Francisco more passing options, or give Detroit a stronger running game, for example. More importantly, after a new play is developed, it can be tested using any two teams in the league. This makes critical fine tuning before important playoffs a lot easier than trying to digest a bunch of game films.

The statistic utilities are equally formidable, permitting everything up to the creation of a "dream team." Another feature allows the creation or importation of a new team logo, which is displayed not only on the team helmets, but also on the home field, a nice touch in these days of expansion.

Despite the yardage gained



thus far, **UR** suffers some major penalties once the teams hit the field. Mouse control is awarded offsides, because it is impossible to stop a player controlled in this fashion once he is in motion. This poses a major problem, particularly with receivers overshooting pass zones. **UR** does allow joystick control, but the selection of plays becomes clunky because players must decipher a joystick position icon beside the play name, an annoying task even if the clock were not ticking away.

Pass control is good, with four separate modes of pass reception, from the computer almost entirely controlling the receiver in Stopped-Time Mode, to real time player control of the entire process.

The AI for the opposing teams gets an unsportsmanlike conduct flag for being far too weak. Team matchups just don't play realistically. After a couple of practice games, it's possible to kick around everyone else in the league, no matter which team one chooses to play. To illustrate, during over 30 games of testing, the human player only had to punt twice.

The problem is even more obvious in season play. Playing the '93 season, it was no challenge to take New England to the Super Bowl (in deference to Patriot fans, you may substitute the team of your choice with no loss in meaning). Further, the accuracy of the same season's replay is even more suspect when neither Dallas or the Bills were even close to playoff slots.

Finally, with a name like **Unnecessary Roughness**, one expects some graphics of extreme pain. The tackles and hits in **UR**, which can be viewed in great detail, are actually quite tame. No helmets are lost or players maimed. Players can be injured, but you are simply informed of this and not shown the damage. Not that fans are a sadistic lot, but who doesn't stop and watch the replay of a particularly punishing hit?

Despite a fine soundtrack and strong graphics, which lend **UR** a great "at the game" feel, inaccuracies in the season simulation and the weak AI will probably keep **Unnecessary Roughness** off most coach's rosters.

— Ed Dille

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
92%	84%	90%	70%	81%

SimCity 2000

Build the metropolis of the future now

It's unfair to review a sequel to a game by comparing it to its predecessor. Those that played the first game don't need a lengthy recap, and those that missed the initial title have no frame of reference. Besides, sequels are often disappointing. The good news is, if **SimCity 2000** (**SC2**) were a brand new release, and not the follow-up to one of the hottest selling games of all time, it would still be deserving of a review all its own, loaded with the accolades which herald a classic in the making. (Check out the sidebar for a quick rundown of new features.)

SimCity 2000 is a "resource management simulation." With an icon bar of tools, a bird's eye view of the territory and a small bankroll, the player is given the ability to build and manage a virtual metropolis of millions. Operation is an easy point and click affair, using buttons and drop down menus. Keeping all those millions of virtual citizens happy isn't as easy.

Players begin by laying out zoning: Industrial, Residential and Commercial. The next step is placement of basic infrastructure, including roads, power lines and a power plant. The type of power plant available is limited to the time frame in which such technology would



be available. Start in 1900, for example, and the player will need to keep the city growing for 50 "years" or so before nuclear power becomes available.

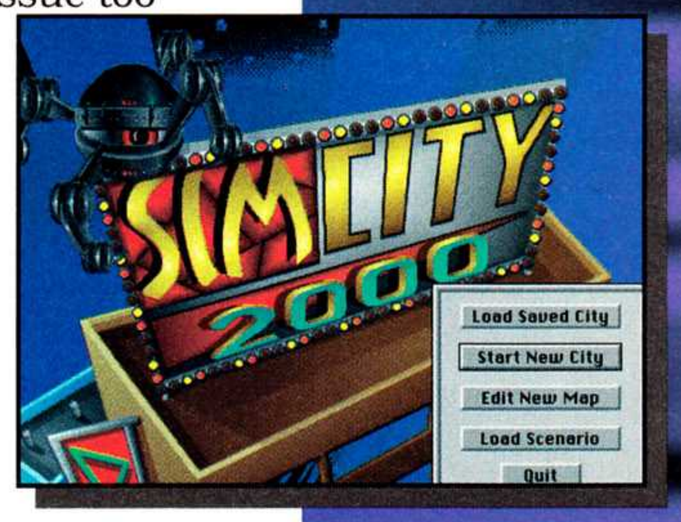
With the right balance of zoning and services, simulated inhabitants ("Sims") start moving in. They build homes, set up shop, go to work ... leading little sim-lives. From then on the player's job becomes balancing the reality of a limited city budget against the ever increasing needs of these constituents. The inhabitants will demand police and fire stations, schools, recreational facilities and a host of other wants, and if their demands aren't met, will move to one of the four neighboring cities (off screen) which



are competing for the same population of residents. Players keep abreast of the wants of their growing citizenry by the on-screen headlines of the city's newspaper.

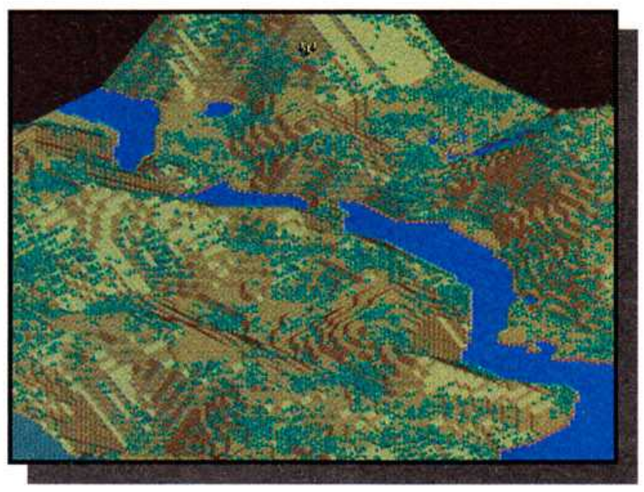
The view of the city is from a top-down, isometric vantage point of a large "tile" of land. There are three levels of magnification and the view can also rotate 360 degrees to see the action from any angle. The attention to detail in the Super VGA graphics is amazing. Buildings don't simply appear out of thin air, but are preceded by tiny construction sites. Digitized sounds accompany much of the action, though players will likely tire of the musical soundtrack and switch it off.

SC2 is not as easy to succeed at as it might sound. All of the elements a player needs cost money to supply, which is in short supply. Revenue is created by a growing tax base, but you can't grow the tax base without attracting residents. It's a classic catch-22 conundrum which requires just the right blend of aggressiveness and caution. Issue too many municipal bonds to pay for the services and when the interest payments inevitably outpace revenue, the player may learn to feel a bit of sympathy for the folks in Washington.



The game has far too many levels of detail to address here. In fact, some players may find the attention to detail so thorough that it becomes more work than play to succeed. Also, on an older 386 machine the game can be annoyingly unresponsive to simple button clicks and screen updates can be sluggish.

Overall, **SC2** is a thoroughly addictive pastime, the kind that will devour entire weekends. The open-ended nature means a player never "wins" in a traditional sense, because the city simulation runs indefinitely. This is precisely what makes it so hard to stop playing.



If you already own **SimCity**, **SC2** is a must buy; if not, run out now and get it. You're in for a treat.

— *David Gerding*

Publisher: Maxis
Designer: Will Wright
System: MS-DOS
Theme: Strategy
Min. HD Req.: 5 MB
Players: 1
Complexity: Intricate

Will Wright, designer and "mayor" of SimCity, turned to customer response when it came time to overhaul one of the most popular titles ever. "Our main goal in designing SimCity 2000 was adding new features while keeping the game as easy to learn as the original." There is now an online help system, the new 3-D view of the city and an enhanced tool bar with expanded features. A new underground level supports water systems and subways. Hospitals, prisons, schools, colleges, libraries and recreation areas debut as well, making SimCity 2000 a much more hospitable place to live and govern.

Graphics	Sound	Playability	Replay Value	Overall
93%	91%	95%	98%	95%

POLICE QUEST: OPEN SEASON
TRACK DOWN A SERIAL KILLER IN L.A.



PUBLISHER: SIERRA
SYSTEM: MS-DOS
THEME: ADVENTURE/RPG
MIN. HD REQ.: 15 MB
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: 1
COMPLEXITY: INTERMEDIATE

WHEN IS L.A. NOT L.A.?

Movie companies often film a location and pass it off as another place due to costs, access and other considerations. Sierra pulled the same tricks for Open Season. Here are some significant scenes and their true origins:

***Morgue*: Fresno County morgue**

***Theater*: Roxy Theater in San Francisco**

***City Hall*: LA City Hall**

***Parker Center*: LA's police HQ, dubbed Parker Center**

***Opening scene in South Central L.A. alley*: alley in Fresno**

***Bar*: The Shortstop, a real L.A. cop bar**

***Detective office*: real Major Crimes/ Homicide office in Parker Center.**

It would be nearly impossible for most Americans to not recognize the name Daryl F. Gates. He was the Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department (L.A.P.D.) for 15 of his 40 years as a police officer, and a central figure and scapegoat for the lack of strong police presence in the L.A. riots a few years ago. Ken Williams of Sierra On-Line approached Gates soon after his retirement from the police force and suggested that he design the next **Police Quest** game. Initially reticent because of his lack of computer experience, Gates was fascinated by Sierra's adventure games and decided to give it a try.

Game fans should be happy that he did. Gates's involvement with the **Police Quest** series was initially regarded as a gimmick, but **Police Quest: Open Season** is undeniably stronger because of the realism, experience and procedures that Gates contributed to the project.

The player controls Detective John Carey of the L.A.P.D. in **Open Season**. When the game starts, a brutal murder has just occurred in an alley in L.A.'s South Central region. From this opening scene to the game's conclusion, Gates and **Open Season** producer Tammy Dargan (an ex-*America's Most Wanted* producer) bombard the player with facts, red herrings, situations requiring correct police procedure and, yes, more murders. The game will test the resolve of any gamer. Frustration is as much a part of police life as the proverbial coffee and doughnuts.

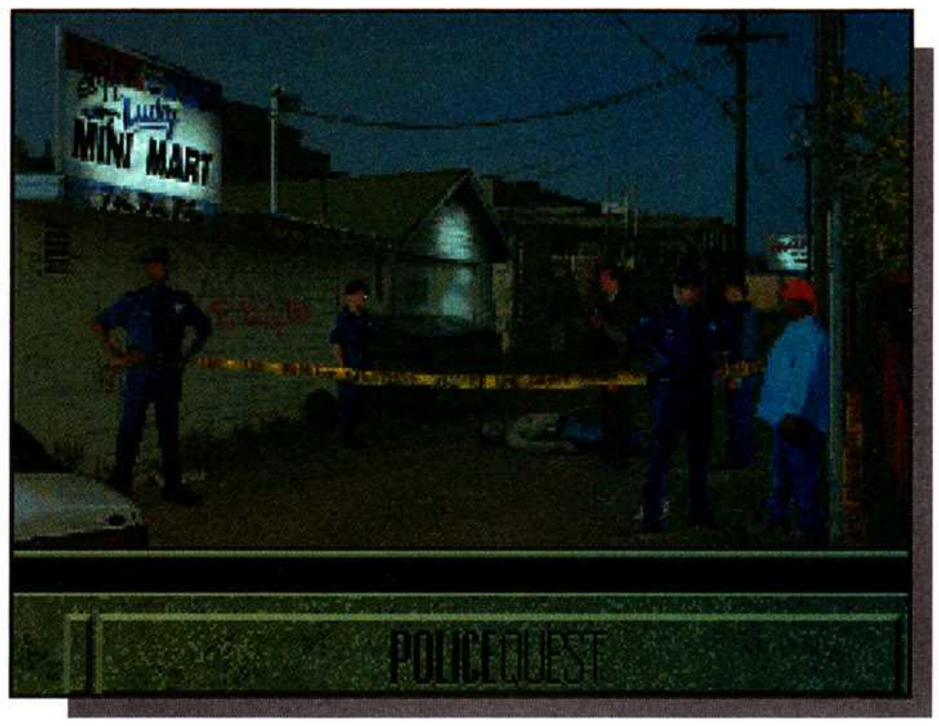
The open-ended design of **Open Season** separates it from the other **Police Quest** games. Real police work often seemingly leaves detectives with no leads, witnesses or plans. Players will eventually discover that a serial killer is responsible for the game's murders, but the criminal is unpredictable.

Open Season uses the standard Sierra interface. Most scenes use a third-person perspective, but occasionally some take a first-person viewpoint. Click on the screen to move Carey from point to point. Icons for talking, picking up items, examining objects and accessing an inventory are on an icon bar on the screen. Click on an icon and the cursor will change to that icon (it defaults to walking) or use the right mouse button to scroll through the basic icons. In order to perform a game function, switch the cursor to the correct icon and click on the target of that command (person or object). In addition to



the standard interface, there are parts of **Open Season** in which players must fire a gun (in street attacks and at the shooting range). The scene shifts to a first-person perspective and an aiming cursor helps to guide shots. Unfortunately, the game does not provide an aiming cursor for the shootouts in the course of the game, so all that target practice goes to waste. This is **Open Season**'s only serious flaw.

The first element of **Open Season** players will notice and the game's most impressive feature is the use of digitized backgrounds and characters. The Sierra crew went to a number of locations with a digital camera and filmed scenery for the game. The result is a game that looks as real as possible. Players will remember details of the



case because of the digitized graphics. **Open Season** makes it much easier for a skeptic to suspend reality for a little while and "become" a police detective. Gates himself makes a cameo appearance as Carey's Chief!

Many players will complain that the little nudges and hints that most adventure games use to point the player in the right direction are few and far between in **Open Season**. This aspect not only ensures that the game is challenging, but also helps it reach a higher degree of realism. It's not too demanding to ask players to use their heads more than in other games. Police detectives across America confront baffling cases like **Open Season**'s crimes every day.

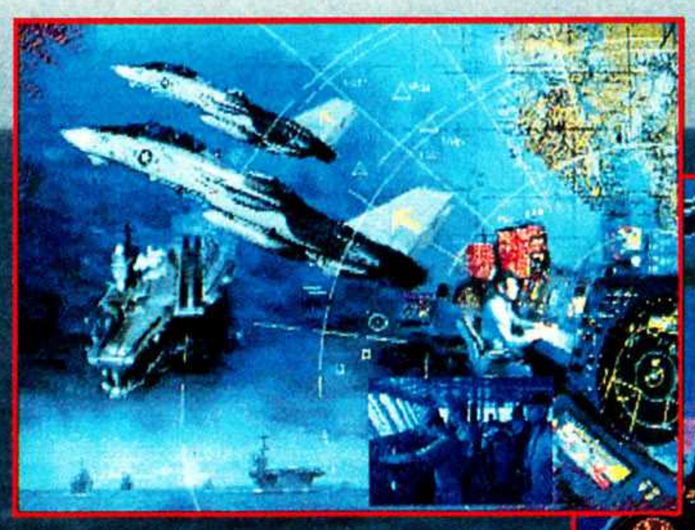
An abridged version of the L.A.P.D. police manual comes in the game's package. Procedures are just as important as creative thinking in this game.

Open Season proves that Gates and Dargan make a great design duo and that Gates's 40 years of experience can help entertain computer game fans—an aspect of his job he probably never realized when he was collaring drunks and prostitutes in L.A. in the '60s.

— Russ Ceccola

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
95%	85%	85%	75%	85%

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Actual screens may vary.

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TAD

Fables & Fiends: The Hand of Fate

She must keep things from falling apart



Publisher: Westwood/Virgin
Designer: Rick Gush
System: MS-DOS
Theme: Adventure
HD Space Req.: 17 MB
Players: 1
Complexity: Average

Rick "Coco" Gush, the designer and director, laments the constraints of silicon storytelling, rather than the passive medium of plays, movies or TV. He wanted to develop a love interest between Zanthia and Marco, but felt that the player would not tolerate more than six forced meetings between the two. As the story developed, Rick found he could not control Zanthia's interest in Marko, since her response was left up to the player. In 18 lines of dialogue, Marko moves from the role of a fool to that of an acceptable, if over forward, lovemate, which was much less than Rick originally intended.

The heir to the Kyrandian throne, Brandon, with the help of the alchemist Zanthia, has defeated Malcolm, the evil jester from Westood's first animated graphic adventure. Just as peace is restored to Kyrandia, pieces of the island kingdom begin to disappear, and if something is not done soon the island will disappear altogether.



In a less spectacular introduction than in **Lands of Lore**, the council of Kyrandian mystics puzzle over a solution to this new threat to Kyrandia. Marko, a newly admitted member of the mystics, appears with a new valet named The Hand, a living, man-sized, animated, left-handed white glove. The Hand quickly convinces the mystics to send Zanthia on a quest to retrieve the Anchor stone from the center of the world in order to prevent Kyrandia from disappearing.

Zanthia is a heroine in a vast sea of male dominated adventures, set on a courageous and dangerous quest to determine the fates of both Westwood and Kyrandia. Zanthia travels a linear plot line of 77 locations divided into seven chapters, from her ransacked cottage (where her spell book, cauldron and ingredients were stolen) through a mail flight and a sea voyage to an enchanted island, a ski resort, a magic forest and lastly, the wheels of fate.



Throughout her spectacular journey Zanthia has six encounters with the new mystic Marko, who tries to help her in her quest. The encounters comprise a total of 18 lines spoken to each other, which form the basis of a developing relationship between the two, at least within Marko's mind.

Zanthia must solve treasure hunt puzzles with found items and cauldron-produced items to progress to the next level. When first found, an item has an implied use which turns out to be a red herring, while the real use of the item requires further thought, providing a twist on the normal adventure game. All puzzles logically and satisfyingly relate to clues and events in the game.

Zanthia does not continue to accumulate useless items, since some disaster occurs at the beginning of each chapter to empty her 20-item inventory of all but her spell book and cauldron. Each chapter contains all the items the player will need to complete that chapter, so no one has to worry about holding on to items to use later.



The highly detailed, clear and vivid art of Rick "Picasso" Parks, deservedly known as the best in gaming, stunningly portrays the story in 256 colors, and with the 320x200 VGA resolution, the game is accessible to most systems. Westwood craftsmen composed and produced the entertaining music and impressive sound effects. Game options include infinite save games, walk and text speed control and separate sound and music volumes.

While Westwood could improve the game with a **King's Quest VI**-like magic map and a longer plot, the game appeals to a wide audience of players.

Rick Gush writes for all ages, parents and children, and both new and experienced gamers, and shows his talent as a playwright, his profession prior to joining Westwood. One of the funniest scenes in the game involves a Poetry Night at the Pirate's Den bar, where Zanthia must recite a poem in order to leave, causing a barroom brawl where the pirates debate the quality of her work. This scene and others like it make **The Hand of Fate** a real grabber!

— Al Giovetti

Graphics	Sound	Playability	Replay Value	Overall
95%	89%	95%	75%	89%

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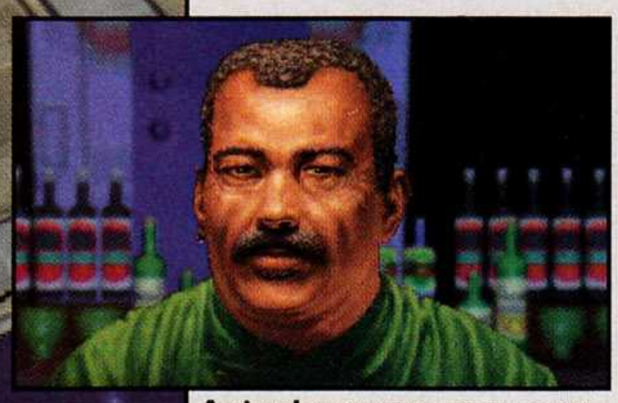
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3DO

DOOM
SAVE PHOBOS FROM THE DEMONS OF HELL



PUBLISHER: ID SOFTWARE
SYSTEM: MS-DOS
THEME: ACTION
MIN. HD REQ.: 12 MB
PLAYERS: 1-4
LEVELS: 24
COMPLEXITY: AVERAGE

Jay Wilbur, President, id Software

"Doom took one and a half years to complete and was really a collaborative effort from start to finish. John Carmack developed the engine for Wolfenstein 3-D and Doom and is already at work on the next incarnation of id's version of 3-D technology.

The current version of Doom supports network play. Future versions will also support modem play and the TCP/IP communications protocol. Doom will also come out for the Jaguar in the summer or fall and have a special boxed sequel called Hell on Earth by Christmas."

Wolfenstein 3-D redefined first-person perspective, 3-D views in computer gaming. For the first time, players could run and walk through realistic dungeon-like areas at incredible speeds because the programmers behind the game developed their own 3-D tools and techniques. The same talented group of individuals at id Software recently released **Doom** to hungry fans. **Doom** expands greatly on the **Wolfenstein** engine and proves why id captured the attention of bulletin board users and game fans everywhere.

The gruesome box art represents the game perfectly. Like **Wolfenstein 3-D**, **Doom** is a shoot 'em up of the highest degree of mayhem. The enemies are monsters in and on the verge of hell instead of brutal soldiers in Nazi Germany.

In **Doom**, the player is a space marine sent to the moon Phobos to discover why there are so many soldiers missing. The military had been conducting experiments with dimensional gateways and recently experienced malfunctions with the equipment. Objects that they sent through the gateways emerged in mutated form. People were transformed into crazed monsters. As the player descends into the deeper levels of **Doom**, he discovers that the gateways have somehow disrupted doorways into hell and all the denizens of hell have come forth. The object of **Doom** is to rid Phobos of all the monsters and escape.

Players can control **Doom** in a variety of ways. Mouse, joystick and keyboard all work well, but the keyboard will still be the input device of choice for many people, especially fans of **Wolfenstein 3-D**.

Doom does not confine people to a claustrophobic dungeon view on one plane. Instead, there are open areas, staircases, platforms and a number of locations where players can see other parts of the level from afar. The interface is very simple. The first-person perspective game requires nothing more than moving, shooting and switching weapons. Many layout subtleties, locked doors, special objects and secret areas make the game play much deeper, although intuitive to control.



Doom's graphics and animation are excellent. As fluid as **Wolfenstein 3-D** was for its time, **Doom** makes it look ancient by comparison. Both the interior and exterior walls of the locations in **Doom** are decorated with company logos,



warning signs and other suitable scenery. The further into the game, the more gruesome the sights will be. Pentagrams, demons, snakes, hanging bodies and other horrific sights decorate hell. **Doom**'s artists were very creative; each level looks somewhat different and fits the theme of its location on Phobos. More importantly, all of this artwork does not slow down the speed of the game. **Doom** is a visual barrage as potent and exciting as its combat. The tense, entrancing music, digitized screams, gunfire, moans and other sound effects further establish the game as an exciting, unsettling experience.

Doom has three episodes, each of which consists of eight levels. The episodes are: Knee Deep in the Dead, The Shores of Hell and Inferno. The eighth level of each episode is an especially difficult final confrontation with a super-beast. The episodes are not connected, so that as players finish one, they must start the next one as a new game, losing all their weapons in the transition. Unfortunately, **Doom** does not keep score, so it's difficult for buddies to compare their success. **Doom** does tally the number of items found, enemies killed and secret areas discovered after each round. It also reveals the time spent on the level and a par time for completion, but the par times are ridiculously low.

Doom is a constant search for the level exits, additional ammo and health boosters. Monsters can be anywhere in the game. Six weapons (from pistol to rocket launchers) and the p-c's fists are the only protection. A helpful automap is invaluable in the levels with the most monsters. Various special items like radiation suits and night vision goggles come in handy in certain areas.

Doom will challenge players and captivate them until they defeat the giant metallic monster in the explosive finale.

—Russ Ceccola

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
90%	85%	90%	85%	85%

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MERCHANT PRINCE
MEET RENAISSANCE ITALY FIRST HAND



PUBLISHER: QQP
DESIGNER: SEVERAL DUDES HOLISTIC GAMING
PLATFORM: MS-DOS
THEME: STRATEGY
HD SPACE REQ.: 4 MB
PLAYERS: 1-4
COMPLEXITY: AVERAGE

Bruce Williams Zaccgnino:

"Merchant Prince is involved with capitalism. Traders got rich during this period. And what happened then is happening now in our society: People are getting wealthy in this economic system. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The accumulation of wealth allows for the advancement of cultural exploits, such as good games!

"...This is our philosophy: we put the emphasis on creating a good game, with the exploitation of technology secondary. We insure that the game is something you will want to play ten years from now."

While the rest of Europe did a lot of wallowing in the 14th and 15th centuries, things were really swinging in the city of Venice. The Venetians, you see, were well ahead of their time. Their economic ventures lead not only to great parties but allowed for some of the greatest artistic and cultural advances of history to take place. It was a happening town.

The gamer is placed in the role of a Venetian merchant prince during this time. At the outset, the death of the player-character's uncle has conveniently left him with a number of ships and donkeys used to transport commodities, along with some cash and a yearly stipend. The goal is to be the richest man in Venice at the end of the game.



The hero has three primary concerns. First and foremost is trading. The player can purchase ships and animals of various sizes to transport goods bought in one city to another, where they will be sold (hopefully at a large profit). Roads can be built to make land travel easier. And guards can be purchased to fend off pirates or brigands when they appear.

The second concern is politics. This is divided between control of the Venetian senate—the head of which can appoint the prince or one of his competitors to high-paying government jobs—and control of the Roman Catholic Church (this is probably the first game in computer history which offers the opportunity to become Pope.) Venice is a swinging town, and to get ahead you have to lead the swing. Throwing parties increases the player's popularity with the high-society of Venice, giving him more leeway in political concerns.

Third are militaristic concerns. The prince can hire a number of different mercenary groups to wreak havoc on 1) other players' trade units, 2) cities which refuse to open their gates to the player or 3) the pirates/brigands which wreak havoc on all the players. The prince can also attack with his trade units' guards, although that's usually a losing proposition.

There's also a certain amount of exploration involved. When the game begins, most of the world is represented by a murky map of questionable accuracy. It can be very exciting to push back the unknown, especially when a randomly-generated map is selected.

Merchant Prince is definitely out of its league when compared to the latest audio-visual masterpieces from the top development teams. While a few beautiful paintings were digitized, the majority of the graphics are merely adequate; in a couple of cases, they're downright bad. Same for the sound: It's adequate, with some nice digitized bits, but it's certainly not ground-breaking.

What saves **Merchant Prince** from the budget section of the local software store is its combination of complexity and ease-of-use. While it may not take "a minute to learn," the basic game mechanics are quite intuitive, and the game is complex enough to keep the player coming back again and again.



The documentation is somewhat lacking. Full explanations of the three primary aspects are noticeably absent, as is an index. However, an interesting historical glossary somewhat makes up for this.

Modem options, including an intriguing play-by-E-mail option, are included. Adding additional human players could only make this game more enjoyable.

While a bit more flexibility in game setup would have been nice, it's hard to find many faults with this excellent program.



Several Dudes has created a challenging, addictive game. **Merchant Prince** may not blow the gamer away with flashing lights and pulsing sounds, but it's fabulously entertaining and should provide hours of fun.

— Ed Finkler

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
78%	82%	91%	94%	88%

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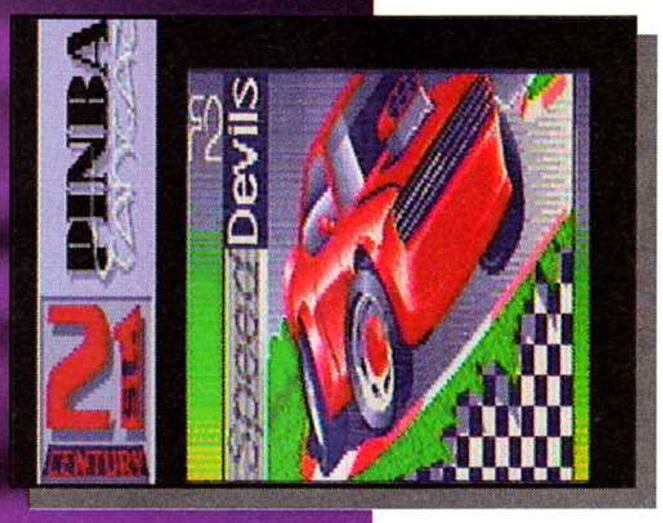
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Pinball Fantasies

Even better than last year's dreams...



Publisher: 21st Century Entertainment
Design: Digital Illusions
System: MS-DOS
Theme: Pinball Sim
HD Space Req.: 4MB
Players: 1-8
Complexity: Average

Digital Illusions, the designers of the Amiga Pinball Dreams and Pinball Fantasies found themselves in need of capable coders for the PC conversions. How fortuitous that Johan Lundmark, Daniel Forsgren and Gabriel Bergquist, the three university students who make up Frontline Design, should run into the DI team at a computer game exhibition in Stockholm. Working closely with Digital Illusions, Frontline has managed to produce an IBM conversion that actually surpasses the Amiga original. (Try typing TECH before starting a game for some rather interesting statistics.)

Every now and then a game comes along that has been so well designed and executed that the review practically writes itself. **Pinball Fantasies**, the smashing sequel to last year's **Pinball Dreams**, is just such a game. Although many fine pinball simulations have appeared recently, most notably Amtex's **Eight Ball Deluxe** and MicroLeague's **Silverball**, none are so purely enjoyable as the ones from 21st Century Entertainment. Its designers seem to understand the crucial balance of accuracy and fun just a bit better than the others.



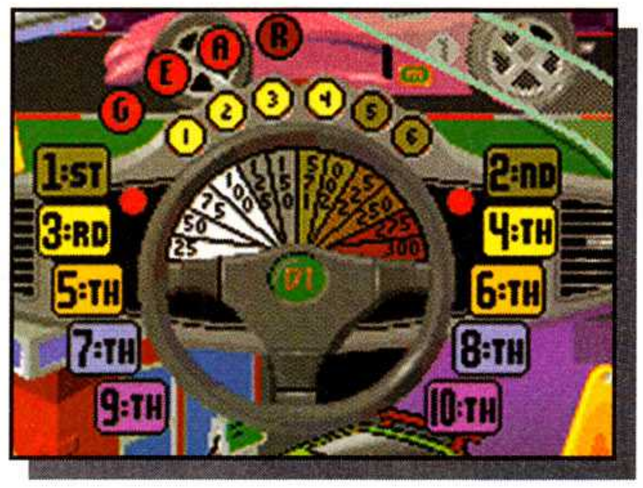
Pinball Fantasies presents four tables based on common flights of fancy: Partyland is a carefree day at the amusement park; Speed Devils, a four-wheeling joyride in the hottest machine around; Billion Dollar Game Show, a chance to win the dream prize of a lifetime; and Stones 'n' Bones, the collection's requisite creepfest. Each table has its own unique musical score, outstanding digital sound effects and rules which are easy to follow, even without reading the documentation.



Fantasies is an improvement over **Pinball Dreams** in almost every way—the tables are more colorful and complex and yet the ball never gets lost in the playfield graphics; the physics have been tweaked so that the laws of gravity no longer rewrite themselves on the fly; the music on/off toggle actually works from within the game and the flippers may now be controlled with any combination of the Shift, Control or Alternate keys.

A new Options Menu is available between games which offers a choice of three or five balls; high or low table angle; soft, medium or hard scrolling; monochrome or color display; and normal 320 x 240 resolution or a special high-res 360 x 350 (both in 256 colors) which reveals more of the table and minimizes scrolling.

The LED score display from **Pinball Dreams** has been replaced with a dot-matrix panel capable of the same sophisticated message animations found on today's coin-op tables. Of course the dilemma of whether to watch the display or the playfield remains—either way you're going to miss something. The post-game Match feature offers the chance of a final extra ball, and this time around high score initials can be entered directly from the keyboard instead of cycling backward through the alphabet with the cursor keys.



Pinball Fantasies' tables all have plenty of long, winding ramps and a ball-saving up-post between the flippers, a feature purists dismiss as unnecessary in a well designed table, but which is a welcome courtesy. And unlike almost every other computer pinball simulator, **Pinball Fantasies** does *not* have maddeningly hypersensitive bumpers and that weird magnetic ray that seems to draw the ball down the outlanes at every available opportunity.

On the other hand, three things **Pinball Fantasies** *should* have, but doesn't, are a manual scroll to check out the upper portion of the playfield for skill shots, genuine multi-ball play and a rebate coupon for keyboard repair from all of the abuse the flipper and nudge keys get. If you play pinball at the arcades and use a little extra punch on the flipper buttons, imagine what it can do to the keyboard! Perhaps ThrustMaster can be persuaded to add a Flipper Control System to their line of products.

— Scott Wolf



Graphics	Sound	Playability	Replay Value	Overall
89%	89%	91%	90%	90%

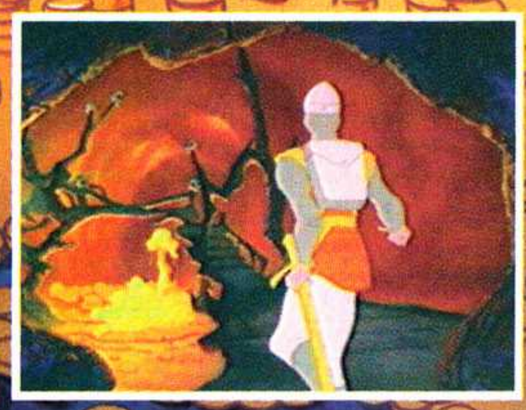
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MULTIMEDIA GALLERY

ESCAPE FROM MONSTER MANOR
FRIGHTENING ARCADE ACTION ON 3DO



PUBLISHER:
ELECTRONIC ARTS
SYSTEM: 3DO
THEME: ACTION
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: 12
COMPLEXITY: SIMPLE

Monster Manor Survival Tips:

To discover the correct path in each level, try the keys in the nearby doors in order. Eventually, the right path will be obvious, and discovered caches of health and ammo boosters might help players increase their score.

Use the sidestep buttons to make fine movement adjustments. With practice, a player should be able to combine actions to strafe a large group of monsters without losing health points. You can discover the exit before you find the talisman piece.

Electronic Arts is as close as any company can be to the genesis of the 3DO technology. It is very satisfying that their first 3DO title dabbles in all of the audio and visual effects that the Panasonic 3DO machine can produce. The game especially shows off the hardware in the lengthy introduction.

Escape from Monster Manor is simple enough so any player new to electronic gaming can enjoy it. But it also satisfies the more demanding gamers who want a familiar game interface in a new environment.

Monster Manor is a fast-paced arcade adventure that will remind many players of a dungeon-view game, but the spooky sound effects, music and settings lean the game toward the horror genré.

Game controls for **Monster Manor** are uncomplicated. The player sees the action from a 3-D first-person perspective. As the control pad moves the game character around, the view in the window scrolls smoothly.

The A button fires the ghost gun, the only protection against the ghouls, spiders, and other monsters within the titular mansion's confines. The B button opens doors and the C button brings up the Status Screen. From the Status Screen, players can access the automap, a very useful tool that may be the only way to find out how to reach each level's exit.

There are 12 levels in **Monster Manor**, each of which goes deeper into the house. A piece of a talisman that formerly protected the house from evil is found on each level. After the player finds the talisman piece, he exits to the next level via the portal with the screaming faces.



It is easy to lose health points and gun ammo as players confront the monsters.

Fortunately, there are a number of health and ammo boosters around the game's levels. Just move over the boosters, keys, treasures and extra life hearts to pick them up. Consult the automap frequently to discover the probable location of the portal and talisman piece.

Monster Manor's game play is at first sluggish until players get used to the 3DO control pad. The first few levels are simple enough so that there is some natural learning period in the game. After these, the game play is a constant search for more keys and health/ammo boosters. A boss creature near the end of each level requires more shots than the standard monsters, so players might want to save some of the ammo for later.

The special effects hint at what players will see from 3DO developers in the future. Some monsters are transparent. Others spit fire or acid and chase after the player at incredible speeds. The detailed walls of the various levels scroll by quickly—one of the hardware's many capabilities. The graphic variety of the levels, from the attic to the graveyard, will keep players' attention. **Monster Manor**'s design team provided a sufficiently spooky-looking house for horror fans and gamers of all interests to enjoy.

Monster Manor also makes waves in the audio department. The music alone would be enough to maintain the urgency and the unsettling edge a horror game requires. But the sound effects make **Monster Manor** that much more disturbing. A constant barrage of screams, moans, clangs and bumps emit from the speaker. Some players may become so nervous that they turn off the sounds. Nobody can complain that the design team skimped on the game's audio!

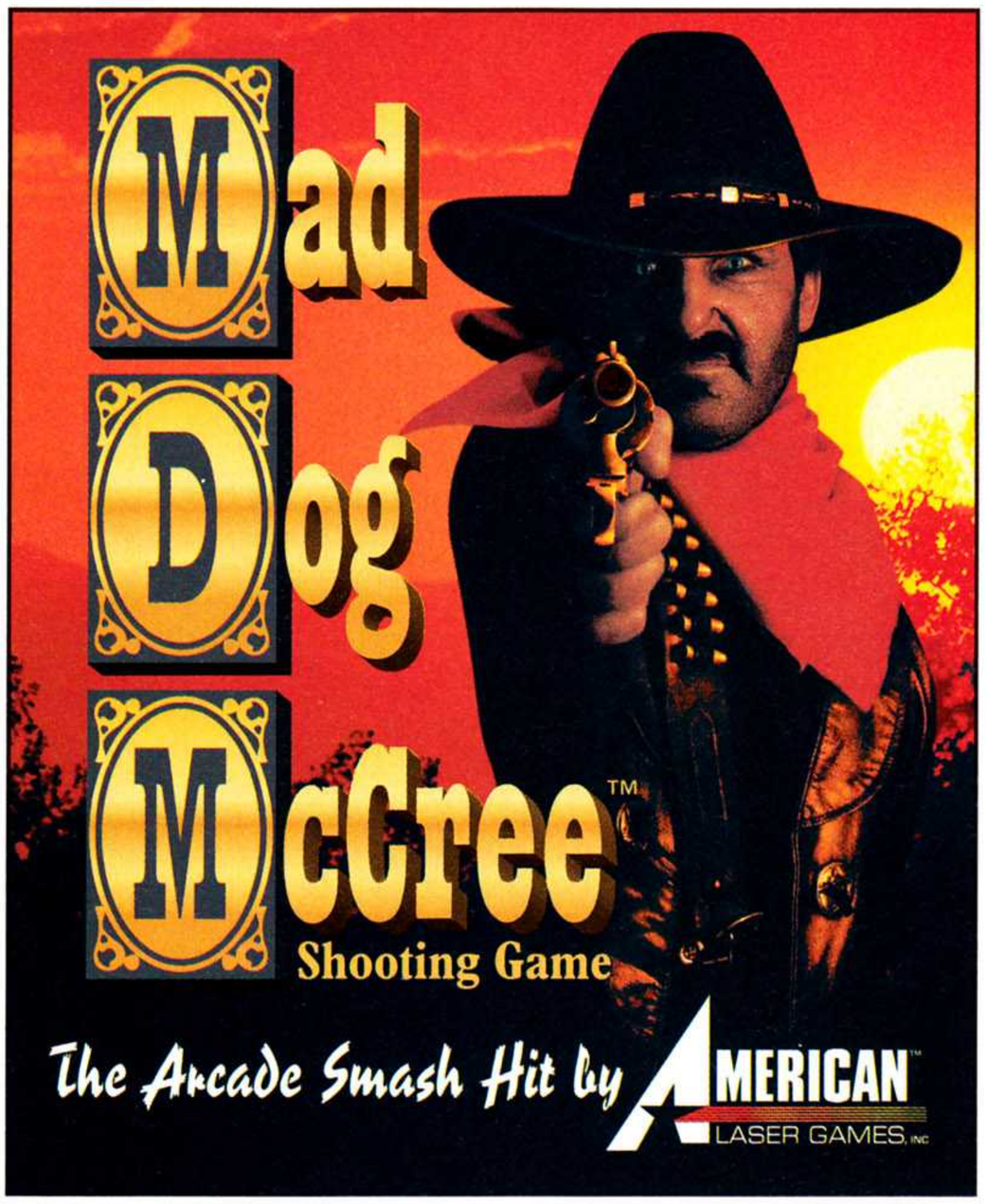
Monster Manor takes a long time to finish. Fortunately, there are five save game slots so players can take a break from the action and take up their game after they recuperate from the eerieness. Action fans will like **Monster Manor** for the heavy emphasis on combat, and adventure game fans will enjoy the exploration aspects of the game.

Pop in the CD and see if you can withstand the barrage of demons and evil beings!

— Russ Ceccola

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
85%	85%	90%	80%	85%

LIVE MOTION PICTURE ACTION



Outlaw Mad Dog McCree and his henchmen have taken over a wild west frontier town, locked the sheriff in his own jail, and kidnapped the mayor and his daughter. Sharp shooting is a must in this arcade classic where the player must save the town, rescue the mayor and his daughter, and triumph in a final showdown against Mad Dog himself.









It's the Rollicking '30s and someone has killed popular singer Johnny Rock in this action-packed gangster whodunit. The player will need to navigate the back streets, gaming halls, funeral parlors and the dirty sections of this city to get at the clues held by a number of shady characters and solve this murder mystery. Bad guys with machine guns provide a high level of challenge.







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MULTIMEDIA GALLERY

COMANCHE CD

FLY MISSIONS OVER DIGITAL TERRAIN



PUBLISHER: NOVALOGIC
DESIGNERS: KYLE FREEMAN, JOHN GARCIA
SYSTEM: PC CD-ROM
THEME: FLIGHT SIMULATOR
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: 100 MISSIONS/ 10 CAMPAIGNS
COMPLEXITY: INTRICATE

Comanche uses a revolutionary graphics 3-D imaging system known as Voxel Space, capable of performing up to one million 3-D calculations per second. This allows the generation of incredibly realistic terrain models that incorporate directional light sourcing, reflective bodies of water, haze, snow and other weather conditions. Amazingly, Novalogic has also perfected compression routines to where only a megabyte of hard disk space is required for the utility and rate files.

When **Comanche: Maximum Overkill** first appeared a year ago, ***EG*** hailed it as "a watershed program in terms of graphic excellence." Further, we contended that "**Comanche** should put the final nail in the coffin on flight simulators that employ polygon or pyramid based terrain...regardless of the realism of their flight models or other features."

Although the latter has yet to occur, Novalogic easily could have ridden high on this and similar praise, or the numerous awards that the original title garnered, but they did not. They realized that, no matter how good **Maximum Overkill** was, they could continue to do it bigger and better. What followed in quick succession to the first release were two mission disks. The second, **Comanche Over the Edge**, included refinements to the base program as well.

This latest offering, **Comanche CD**, takes players another step further. The single CD contains 10 complete campaigns, which translates into hundreds upon hundreds of hours of play value.

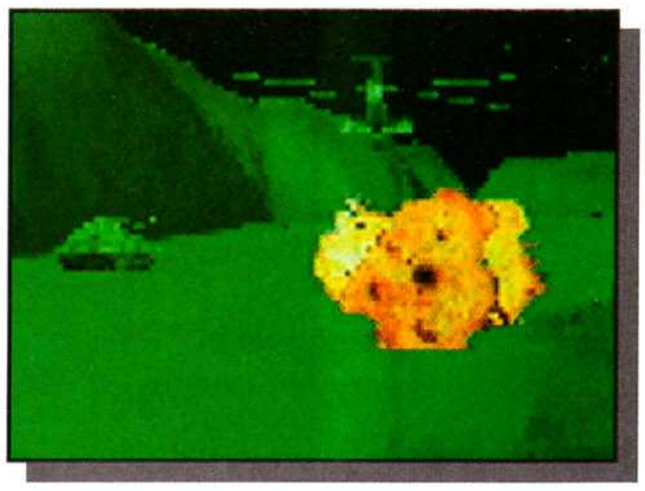
For those who are completely unfamiliar with the other titles, **Comanche CD** places players in the cockpit of the RAH-66 Comanche multipurpose helicopter, also referred to as the LHX prototype during development. The Comanche carries an impressive array of weaponry to accomplish its scout/attack air cavalry role. Hellfire air to ground missiles can take out hardened targets, like Main Battle Tanks. Stinger missiles are used in their first air to air configuration, and a point of look/point of aim 20mm Vulcan cannon (i.e., the gun swivels with the pilot's head for immediate target acquisition) rounds out the armory.

In addition to these indigenous weapons, pilots have the option of calling in artillery support against targets they are laser designating, and assigning other objectives to the wingman for accomplishment. This



makes **Comanche CD** more than a stand alone, single vehicle simulator; it is a tactical representation of the modern combined arms concept as well. This puts **Comanche** in the same category as classics of the genre like **Gunship 2000** and **M-1 Tank Platoon**, but it exceeds even these in sheer presentation power. Further, because of **Comanche**'s more refined contour model, important tactics like terrain masking are executed with more realism than any simulation has achieved up to this point.

Unlike other simulators, **Comanche CD** does not require the player to complete missions in any given order. There's unlimited freedom to tackle any objective they wish from the outset, regardless of the foolhardiness of that decision. The reasoning behind that note of warning involves the flight modeling of **Comanche**, which may prove more realistic than most players expect, even from the best PC simulators.



In fact, playing with a tricked out Thrustmaster system with rudder pedals is about as close as you can get to the real thing without actually leaving the ground. Lacking that level of investment, the next best controller for this game is the CH Flightstick Pro. Managing the collective and cyclic with the precision coordination to execute combat maneuvers takes a lot of practice, but responsive controllers aid the process immeasurably. Further, players will not master these skills without raising their estimation of helicopter pilots.

Comanche CD deserves attention not only from dedicated armchair aviators, but also from anyone who is looking for a title that will show off their system's capabilities.

— Ed Dille

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
96%	95%	96%	98%	96%

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C.I.T.Y 2000

City In Trouble Year 2000



Publisher: Aditus, Inc.
Designer: John Stewart
System: PC CD-ROM
Theme:
Adventure/Mystery
HD Req: 15 MB
Players: 1
Complexity: Average

The animated sequences contain most of the clues necessary to solve the mystery. Watch each one several times before moving on to ensure that as much information is gleaned as is readily available.

Occasionally, it is also necessary to stray off the beaten path to find objects which prove useful later on. Often these minor detours pay off. The only exception to this is when you have been given explicit instructions to go somewhere or perform a certain action. In this instance, do these items first, then return to the area in question, or else face the rather uncertain results.

It's a travelogue! No, it's a game! It's a travelogue! OK, it's a travelogue and a game, though the latter is less than inspired. The events that set the stage for this mystery include the arrest of an infamous drug dealer and the outbreak of a mysterious new disease throughout London.



The former is one Roberto Scala, whose connection with the Venezuelan Freedom Army had allowed him to escape capture until just recently, when he was caught smuggling 60 million dollars worth of EXC, a synthetic drug, into JFK.

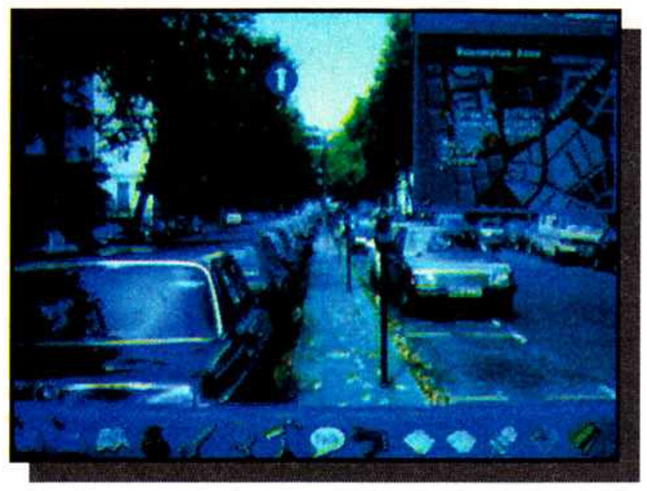
The latter is more ominous. 23 Londoners have died from a disease which has been labeled, "Harper's Syndrome," after its first victim. The cause of this malady has yet to be identified, as there appears to be no linkage between the victims other than the obsessive-compulsive behavior and abnormalities of the brain and central nervous system they exhibit after contracting the disease.

Enter the player, adopting the guise of Jon Daring, super sleuth from the West who is imported to aid the efforts of the British Secret Service. They are desperately trying to link events to one S. Rooter, Scala's British counterpart in the sleazy world of drug dealing.

Sounds intriguing enough, right? The problem is, it doesn't hold up over the long haul. It appears that Aditus wanted to capitalize on the success of interactive titles like Icom's Sherlock series (see interview with Ken Tarolla in this issue) or **Dracula Unleashed**, but lacked the technical expertise to pull off an equally smooth production.

The first point of contention involves the method of traveling from one location to another. Locations are presented as photographs, though some also have accompanying video clips. Rather than all of these photographs having significance, the player will find that most of them are nothing more than travel brochure window dressing that must be navigated to get from one important place to another. The process is repetitious, time consuming and unnecessary to the game proper. The packaging contends that "you'll actually learn your way around the town..." and this is painfully true. Though some players may derive a sense of accomplishment from this, the more likely scenario is that most would have preferred a method where travel involved nothing more than clicking on a destination and suffering a penalty of game time.

The adventure icons are overlaid on the bottom of the screen for simple point and click operation. Standard commands like get, use, examine, talk and inventory are present, as well as one that hasn't appeared before, mix. Although there are no spells to be conjured, clicking on this button will cause the character to try to combine two objects in some fashion. Another innovative approach



involves the program's response to inputs which are not possible. It provides a short message stating that the action the player has attempted cannot be done. If the voice is male, the action is way off. But if it is female, the player is on the right track and needs to explore the possible alternatives in this area.

Some users may experience difficulty loading and configuring the game. **C.I.T.Y. 2000** occasionally causes VESA conflicts and some memory related problems. Aditus has a fix for this and registered users can obtain the upgrade free by calling the company directly.

Persistent players will find that S. Rooter's plans don't stop with control of London. He suffers from the megalomania of the average James Bond villain; he wants the world at his feet. Unfortunately, **C.I.T.Y. 2000** never rises to the level of excitement and suspense generated by genre masters like Ian Fleming, and the player is left with an appalling apath. It's a pity that the fate of the world could be so casually tossed aside. Perhaps we can hope for more empathy and motivation in the sequel, **C.I.T.Y. 2000 Paris**.

—Ed Dille



Graphics	Sound	Playability	Replay Value	Overall
82%	88%	80%	65%	78%

THE VIEW IS SPECTACULAR.
THE ACTION IS ON THE EDGE.

THE THRILL IS REAL.
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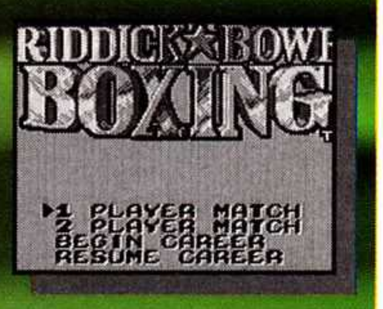




Actual screen images.

NOVA LOGIC™

PORTABLE PLAYTIME



PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
SYSTEM: GAME BOY
THEME: SPORTS
MEGABITS: 1
PLAYERS: 1
LEVELS: N/A
COMPLEXITY: AVERAGE

Designer Denny Thorley:

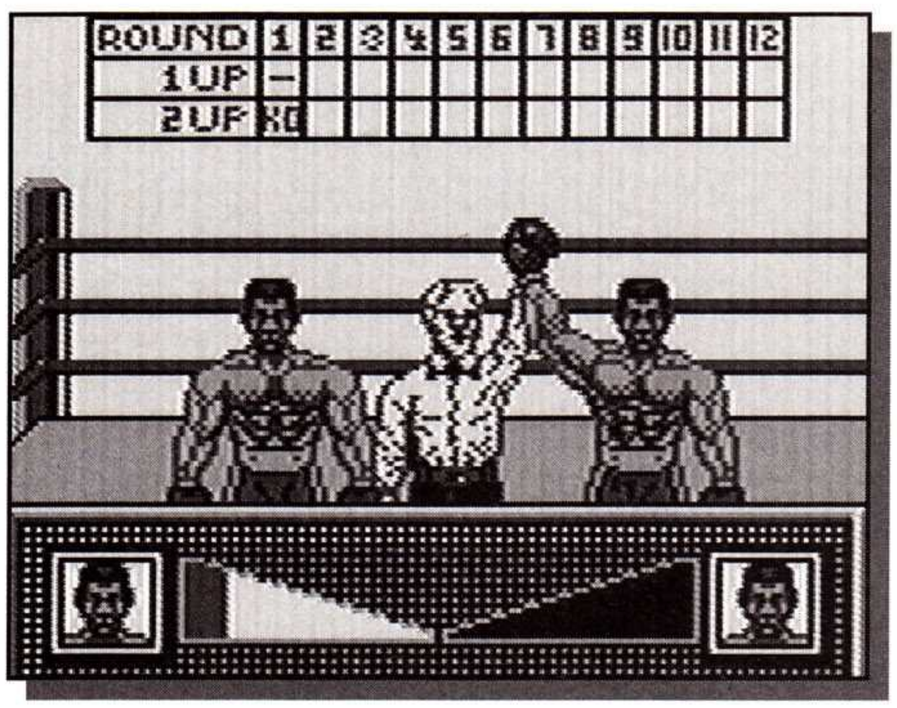
"When we interviewed Riddick Bowe for the SNES version, he was very concerned about how he was to be portrayed in the game. We talked about how he would adapt his fighting style on a round by round basis based on input he got from his trainer. We patterned the AI along those same lines. Playing at the higher levels, you'll notice that the boxers change their pattern or methodology, particularly if you're beating them with a pattern. The Game Boy logic is similar."

RIDDICK BOWE BOXING

BOWE'S BOXING BEATS ALL COMERS

It's always good news for gamers when a quality cart comes out, and portable punchers should regard **Riddick Bowe Boxing (RBB)** as welcome news indeed. Absolute did an excellent job of bringing the console game to the Game Boy.

In **RBB**, players create a fighter, then guide the career of their young, up-and-coming boxer. Only the gamers' skill and training savvy can determine if their protégé succeeds. For those days when players just don't want a career in the ring, they can get a quick slugfest fix with the Match option where the player picks a fighter to box any one of 25 opponents, including themselves. The top



test of any players' skills comes when Riddick Bowe fights against Riddick Bowe.

The first steps in creating a new fighter are choosing a name, face and skin color. Then the fighter is rated in three abilities; power, speed and stamina. As he progresses, these abilities improve. By the time the player challenges Mr. Bowe, the skill ratings among fighters are more or less equal, and only playmanship can determine the outcome.

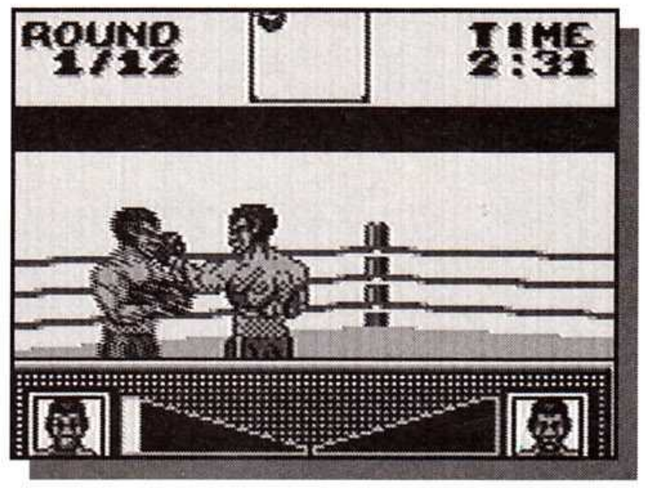
The new boxer starts at 25th place and must fight his way up to the top rank, where Riddick Bowe waits to pulverize uppity young fighters. A full bout consists of 12 three-minute rounds. Players view the action from a side perspective, with the player-controlled boxer on the left-hand side of the screen. Displays at the top show how many rounds remain in the fight and how many minutes remain in the round. There is also a small, overhead view of the ring, useful for telling when the player is against, or has the other fighter on, the ropes.

By skillfully using the D-pad and the buttons, the player has a palette of punches, jabs, uppercuts and roundhouses with which to devastate his opponent. While the actual range of moves is limited, players won't notice amidst all of the flying fists.

Stats are shown after each round, displaying the number of punches thrown by each boxer, the number landed, what percentage of hits landed and the judges' scores for the round.

Below the playfield are pictures of the fighters and graphs showing their relative strengths. Every time a boxer gets hit or takes a swing and misses, his strength goes down and when it gets to zero, the boxer is knocked down. Depending on his stamina, the boxer gets up or stays down for the count.

At the end of each bout gamers determine what training the boxer should undertake. Among the available routines are free weights, the speed bag, jump-rope, the heavy bag and others. These are not interactive, just a picture of the weights or the punching bag or whatever, a brief description of the effects and a graph showing how much the exercise will improve the boxer's abilities.



Graphically, **Riddick Bowe Boxing** pushes the Game Boy as far as it can go. The talented designers at Extreme overcame the limitations of the small screen to give players a good looking game. Animations are smooth, and the boxers move realistically.

Overall, **RBB** is a good listen. Nothing too fancy, but players will have no problem telling missed punches from hits. When a boxer deals out a punishing series of blows, or knocks his opponent down, we hear the roar of the crowd. A nice touch.

To this point boxing fans have been somewhat neglected on portable platforms. **Riddick Bowe Boxing** remedies this by bringing a very playable boxing sim to gamers. Fans should return the favor by making it a hit for the Game Boy.

—John Wesley Hardin

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	REPLAY VALUE	OVERALL
85%	78%	86%	85%	89%

NBA Jam

Arcade basketball on the small screen

Look out, Acclaim is on fire! The turbo is on and **NBA Jam** is an arcade phenomenon. Home versions weren't out 'til Jam Day, March 4, but the game got rave reviews and a lot



of press before hand. Acclaim has scored a repeat, with a hot new portable version for the Game Gear.

Fans of the play-for-pay title already know that **NBA Jam** is the hottest basketball sim in the arcade. The home and portable versions promise to be just as big. The player chooses two superstars from any of the NBA's 27 teams and goes head to head with basketball's biggest names. The familiar names hoops fans know from the arcade are here: Charles Barkley, Scotty Pippen, Dave Laimbeer, David Robinson, Karl Malone, Patrick Ewing and all the rest. Each player is rated in four abilities: speed, three-point ability, dunks and defense. These skills are displayed under a picture of the player in the team selection screen. The contest begins after the gamer chooses a favorite team.

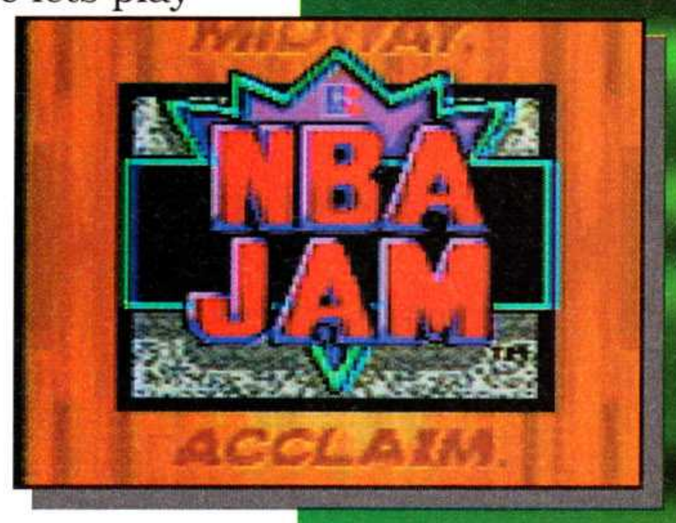


Players view the action from an angled side perspective of the court that scrolls to follow the ball. The playfield takes up the entire screen, unblemished save by the Turbo indicator in the upper left-hand corner. When someone makes a basket, a display comes up at the bottom of the screen to show the score. In the last minute of a quarter a timer appears, counting down the final seconds.

Playing tips come up on the screen between quarters, offering useful advice to the player. A halftime report is introduced with some really popping digitized graphics. During halftime, gamers can view game stats to see how their performance shapes up against the competition in field goals, three-point shots, rebounds and more.

Game play is very much like the arcade title. The wild dunks, quick passes and unbelievable three-point shots are here intact. The three pointers are sometimes a little too unbelievable. Players can make spectacular three point baskets from the other end of the court with surprising regularity. The Turbo feature is intact as well. By holding down the turbo button, players make their hoopster run faster, jump higher and just generally play harder. Turbo is in limited supply, but any athlete who scores three baskets in a row is On Fire and has unlimited turbo until the other team scores.

The action is fast and furious, but the player can use options to customize the game to taste. Timer speed is adjustable, from very slow to very fast, so games last as long as the player wants. Drone difficulty dictates how smart and aggressive the computer controlled athletes are. Tag Mode 'on' automatically puts the player with the ball under the gamer's control. CPU Assistance lets players choose how much help they get from the computer. With the option toggled on, the computer controlled athletes perform better when their team starts to lose by any significant number of points. This keeps scores close, providing more drama in the game.



Vanity hasn't been ignored; players can enter their initials for record keeping, just like in the arcade. Passwords allow players to come back to a tournament in progress. The game displays stats for the 'season' so players can keep track of their progress as they battle the 26 other teams in the NBA.

Graphically, **NBA Jam** is as good as it gets on the Game Gear. There are digitized photos of all the athletes, and, again, the half-time animation is breathtaking. The on-screen sprites move fluidly, and the electronic basketball generally behaves like the real thing. Once in a while it's hard to make out the ball among all the quick moving sprites on screen, but this doesn't happen often. From the Title Screen to the Display Mode, **NBA Jam** pops.

The music and sound effects are good, but players of the arcade or home console versions will sorely miss the digitized voice-overs and color commentary. Many gamers will find themselves saying "boomshaka-laka!" to themselves at every particularly impressive dunk.

The designers at Iguana Entertainment have created a great game for the Game Gear. **NBA Jam**, the most-played arcade game ever, could deservedly become the most-played portable game.

— John Wesley Hardin

Publisher: Acclaim
System: Game Gear
Theme: Sports/Action
Megabits: 4
Players: 1
Levels: N/A
Complexity: Average

Some of the 70,000 basketball fans attending February's NBA All-Star game in Minneapolis got an early look at Acclaim's NBA Jam for the home. As the exclusive video game sponsor of the four day event, Acclaim hosted an NBA Jam video game competition where players, 64 at a time, competed on 16 Super-NES and 16 Genesis machines. The player with the highest score after five minutes won a pack of three games for their favorite system plus an NBA Jam duffel bag, T-shirt and other assorted NBA Jam paraphernalia. Acclaim spokesman Dan Harnett said the public greatly enjoyed the sneak preview.

Graphics	Sound	Playability	Replay Value	Overall
88%	80%	90%	90%	93%

THE KUNKEL REPORT

AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

by Bill Kunkel

Imagine the following scenario: You've just dropped in on your favorite music store and made a beeline for the New Releases section. Oh, and what an interesting collection we have this week! There's a new record from Atlantic—it's called "Powerhouse" and it looks like it might be speed metal or maybe classic rock. Anyhow, the cover is dynamite. And what's this? Cool! A new Warners record! It's called "MaxMuzik" and it has a kind of cyberpunk look to it; maybe it's like Warners' last release, "MaxOund"?

Okay, now it's on to the book store, where there's a new Bantam mystery, a Simon & Schuster thriller, and a Doubleday true crime adventure. And we've got to hurry—there's a new Paramount film opening tonight!

I trust we've now flogged this metaphor enough? Obviously, no one would watch a TV show, read a book, go to a movie or buy a new record album based exclusively on the producer, publisher, studio or music company. With the exception of the most generic product—Harlequin Romances, for example—consumers demand to know the creative personnel involved in these products before shelling out hard-earned money for them.

Yet for some enigmatic reason, consumers of electronic games have been doing just that for the better part of two decades.

It started with Atari. Greedy Atari. So afraid it would lose its programmers if their names were revealed, it jealously hoarded any knowledge of its creative staff. The idea was that the name Atari alone could sell the software. And it did, for much longer than it should have. But once a visionary fellow named Jim Levy got together a quartet of Atari's best people and started Activision, it was all over. Within two years, Atari was virtually devoid of talent. And, as often happens in such fiascos, once the barn door was open and the horses had all run off, Atari belatedly agreed to put up velvet curtains and gold-trim fixtures for the few burros who stayed behind; the same crew who destroyed the company with nightmarish versions of **Pac-Man**, **E.T.** and **Raiders of the Lost Ark**.



How many of us can remember the name of the man that made the classic Super Mario Brothers?

A company that had considerable success marketing its creative people was Electronic Arts. The computer software business has always been less reticent about crediting developers, and EA did a first-rate job of promoting people like Bill Budge and the Buntens back in the early '80s.

The question remains, however: It's a decade later and it's still almost unheard of for an author or development house to have its name prominently featured on the front of a game box. Oh sure, once you boot the game, a long list of credits may roll down the screen, but by this point one has already purchased the product. So, as either a marketing tool or a consumer guideline, the information is useless.

I used to write comic books for companies like DC, Marvel and Harvey in the '70s, when credits had just become standard issue. Well into the '60s, comics were ground out like sausage by anonymous bullpens full of scripters, pencillers, inkers, colorists and letterers. Then, Stan Lee realized that you could promote the creators and a revolution was born.

Today, somewhere in the world, a comic book convention is taking place almost every week. And the guests of honor at these events are not the corporate suits and bean counters, but those once-unknown writers and artists who make the products so special.

Do you want to know how truly stupid the electronic gaming business is? When was the last time you saw the tag-line: "from the creator of [fill in name of hit product]" on a game box? This is the most basic type of marketing for creative product, and it's unheard of in this business.

How many gamers know the names of the men who created **Tetris**? Who designed **Donkey Kong**, **Super Mario Bros.** *and* **StarFox**? Who created the musical score for **Toejam & Earl**? Who is the genius who created **Stellar 7**, **Nova 9** and **Aces of the Pacific**? There is something extremely unique about the man who brought the world **Shanghai**—who is he and why is he so extraordinary? If more than a handful of game fans know the answers to these questions, I would be shocked. Delighted, but shocked.

We here at **EG** do what we can to let our readers meet the creative people behind the games we all love, but it's a tough job when the publishers, who should be the prime movers in the dissemination of such information, seem perfectly content with the status quo.

As for me, I don't buy Atlantic records; I don't read Bantam books; and I don't go to see Paramount movies. I buy the work of artists, not their corporate packagers—and so does the rest of the world. And it's past high time the electronic gaming business woke up and smelled the coffee.

Correction: Speaking of author credits, EG would like to apologize for misspelling the name of **Toejam & Earl** co-creator Mark Voorsanger in our February '94 issue.

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FANDOM CENTRAL

The Latest Fanzines Show Fandom's Growth In Numbers & Style

by Joyce Worley

Editor Arnie Katz is busy this month with other duties, so the honor of eyeballing the latest crop of zines is mine. And, it is an honor. I'll bow to no fan in my love for fanzines. Like my partners Katz and Kunkel, I'm a long-time veteran of fan publishing, and have produced over 500 zines of my own. In fact, I'd definitely use the term love to describe the motivation for fan publishers: Love of the games the zines salute, love of the pleasures of self-expression and soon, love for the fanzine medium itself. Eventually, in most fandoms, this becomes love of the other fan pubbers who inevitably become friends and acquaintances. Game fanzine editors haven't yet reached that last point; currently there's a lot of sparring as pubbers express strong opinions.

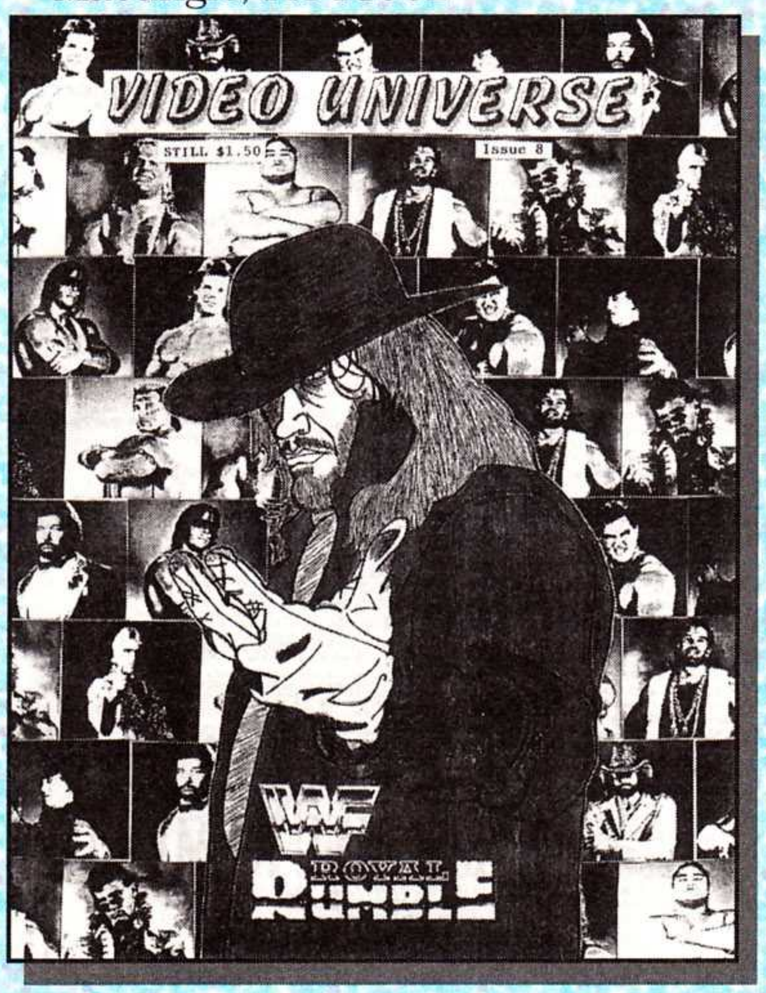


Digital Press' Classic Videogames Collector's Guide (2nd Edition)
Edited by Joe Santulli
44 Hunter Pl.
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442
Special issue, $9, 64 pages

Joe got together with Kevin Oleniacz and over a dozen other avid gamers to produce a must-have compilation for classic game collectors. It has 64 beautifully reproduced pages, an attractive color cover and handsome spiral binding. Inside are essays on the venerable antiques of our hobby: The Arcadia, Astrocade, Atari 2600, 5200 and 7800; ColecoVision, Fairchild, Intellivision, Odyssey and Vectrex. Game listings of all the carts available show their manufacturer, any special accessories required and the price collectors can expect to pay. There's also a listing of classic game collectors' names, addresses and phones, plus separate list of dealers.

This is a class act. Joe and crew put real effort into the project, and it shows. The essays are intensely interesting and make excellent reading. No one who enjoys the history of gaming should miss this; it's a winner!

Video Universe #8
Edited by Chad Laubach & George Wilson
7840 Woodbine Road
Macungie, PA 18062



Frequent, $1.50, 44 pages

Formerly monthly, the editors warn they may slow down to quarterly. The attractively desk-topped zine contains a selection of articles and reviews by the two editors and a group of other writers. This issue features a cover by Chad Laubach saluting the WWF Royal Rumble, the magazine's own list of top 10 video and top 10 arcade games, and results from their Street Fighter 2 survey. Chad has a list of his own award picks; there are a number of well-written reviews, two history articles, fanzine reviews, game tips, cartoons, screen shots, personal views, and lots more. It's a fun read.

Master Minds #14
Edited by Todd Lintner
6406 Jacobs Way
Madison, WI 53711
Frequent, $1.50 per issue, 30 pages



No pretenses at professionalism mar this extremely fannish zine that is characterized by hot-hot opinions blurted out in various stages of rage, sometimes tempered with humor. Todd himself is a firebrand who interjects his opinions throughout the zine. His colorful arguments are accentuated by Jess Ragan's, a columnist-contributor who prides himself on being the *enfant terrible* of fandom. There's an interesting letter column (but I don't like seeing the editor's comments interjected into mid-letter. It's more polite to hold comments until the end and give the writers their say), numerous of editorial opinionizing, a couple of dozen game reviews, news, fanzine reviews, classified ads and lots of innuendo.

The flavor of the zine is all gall and bitters, but I can't help liking it, despite the feud-ac and teenage mouthings. It's fun to read, just as long as you keep your tongue firmly implanted in cheek. Next issue, the editor promises all-out attacks on **EG** and **EGM**; and (I predict) more attacks on Arnie Katz. Personally, I wouldn't miss it.

Send the zines for review to: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

OTHER GAMES MAY TALK.
THIS ONE HAS A VOICE.

Star Trek: The Next Generation's

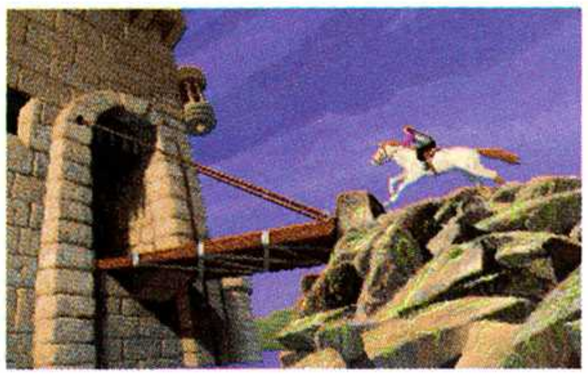
PATRICK STEWART

in

LANDS OF LORE: *The Throne of Chaos*

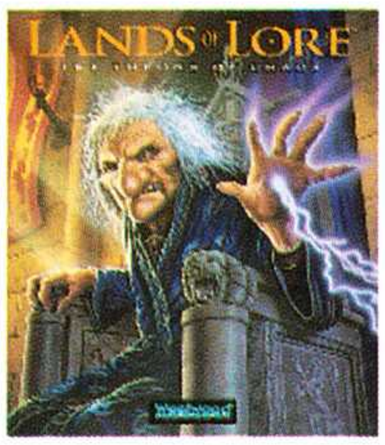
With Patrick Stewart as the voice of King Richard, *Lands of Lore* has a royal advantage over other fantasy games: An actor of real authority in a role of authority, at the head of a huge cast of heroes and villains who speak, rant and roar their way through the most vocally interactive role-playing adventure yet devised. (A mammoth 130 MB of digitized speech makes it possible.)





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PLAYING IT SMART



Does this guy ever take a rest? Putt-Putt Goes to the Moon begins an educational and fun adventure.

PINT-SIZED ADVENTURES FOR KIDS TAKE THE 3DO SPOTLIGHT

by Joyce Worley

The great appeal of 3DO technology is its ease of use. It's a marvel of simplicity: Just push the access button and the CD tray slides out. Put on the disk, press the access button again, and the tray closes, the program boots, and there's nothing left to do but man the game-style controller.

The simplicity of operation is what makes 3DO hardware so appropriate for the home market. Computer operation requires some degree of competency in the user. The blackbox systems were designed to avoid any complexities that require special knowledge on the part of the operator. The 3DO system has only two buttons. One opens and closes the CD tray, and the other controls the power.

Although it's doubtful anyone would purchase a 3DO system just for child's play, it's ideal for the junior set. And, although kideo ware isn't the biggest category of entertainment on 3DO, there are a significant number of child pleasers already available.

Shelley Duvall's It's A Bird's Life (Sanctuary Woods) is designed for kids ages three and over (although the control system, which uses all five buttons and the direction rosette, may be too complex for the youngest players). The user joins a group of parrots, then flies south with them.

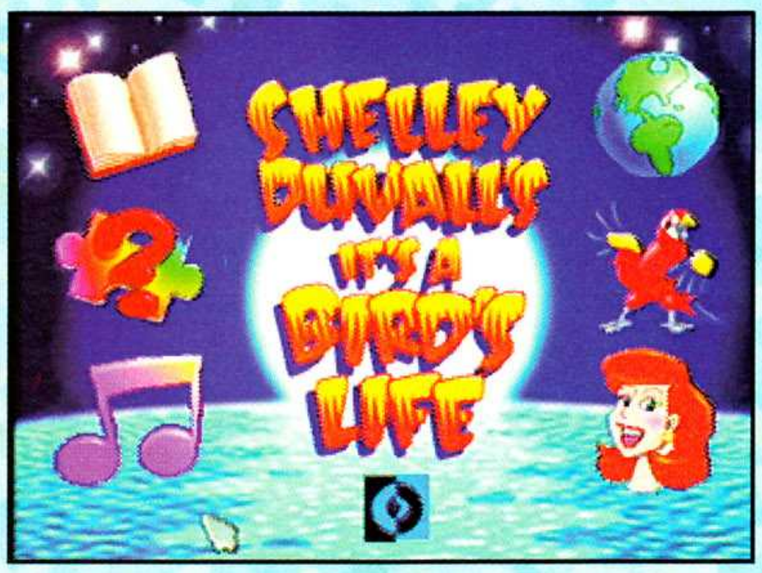
It's a multi-activity program. There's a story book of scenes, plus games and puzzles, sing-alongs and a finger painting set. The child can even x-ray the birds to see their skeletons.

The whole thing is narrated by Shelley Duvall. It's a delightful adventure for the youngsters, and even manages to teach them a bit about geography, the Amazon rain forest and about the birds themselves.

Putt-Putt Goes To The Moon (Humongous Entertainment) is the latest in the Putt-Putt saga. In this one, the lovable car visits a fireworks factory, then an accident sends him rocketing off to the moon. There he meets up with Rover, a lunar terrain vehicle left behind by the astronauts. The pair must explore the moon, rebuild a rocket, find the Moon People, and eventually meet the Man in the Moon. Dozens of clickable items contain humorous animations; many have multiple animations that come to life on repeat clicks.

Educational content isn't really **Putt-Putt**'s thing; the line is mostly just for fun. But, it does teach the child to experiment in order to solve problems, and to cooperate with friends to get things done.

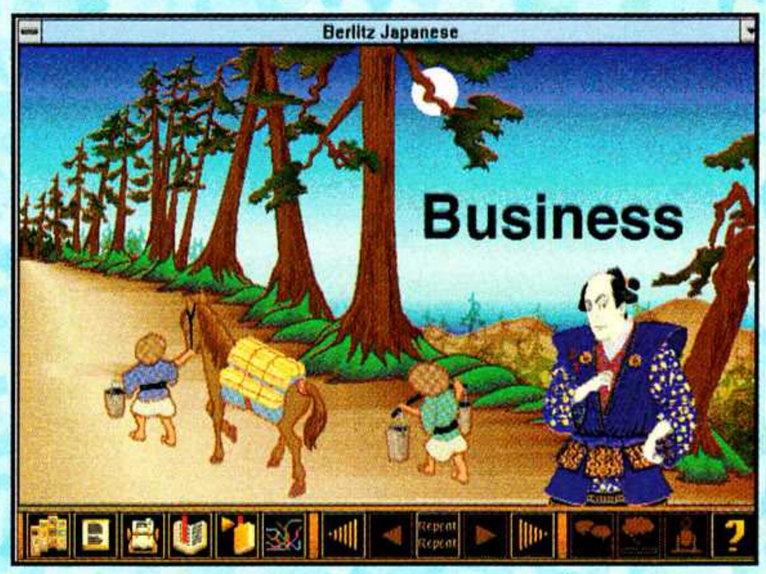
The other **Putt Putt** adventures are equally enticing. **Putt Putt Joins the Parade** sends the little car to the annual Cartown Pet Parade. It starts at his house, then rolls down the road to the town, where there's a car wash, toy store and lots of other things for the child to explore. **Putt-Putt's Fun Pack** contains checkers, Tic-Tac-Toe, Pinball, jigsaw puzzles, and a memory game. All the Putt Putt programs are beautifully illustrated and animated, and certain to charm the lucky kids who play with them.



It's a Bird's Life features a read-along interactive story, along with puzzles and a finger-painting kit.

Adults Only: Turning Japanese

Bright Star can help bridge the cultural gap for Americans in the Island Nation. **Berlitz for Business: Japanese** (MS-DOS CD) bills itself as Survival Software for the Business Traveler. Not a language tutorial, though it does teach a few basic phrases, its specialty is the nuances of good manners and accepted protocol when visiting Japan. It teaches the etiquette of phone contact, the significance of the business card exchange, how to shop or get hotel services, tips on dining and entertaining, money, geography, history and much more. The program, enhanced by Japanese-style artwork, works with point-and-click interfaces, and provides practice and training in business and social encounters.



For those of you who do a lot of business with our friends in the Orient, this social tutor will help.

There's even a game on board. The Tokyo Subway Game sends Harry to different city sites, as he learns how to navigate the city. It's not the most amusing game we've seen, but it is instructive for the travelling American. This can really help if you're doing business in Japan.

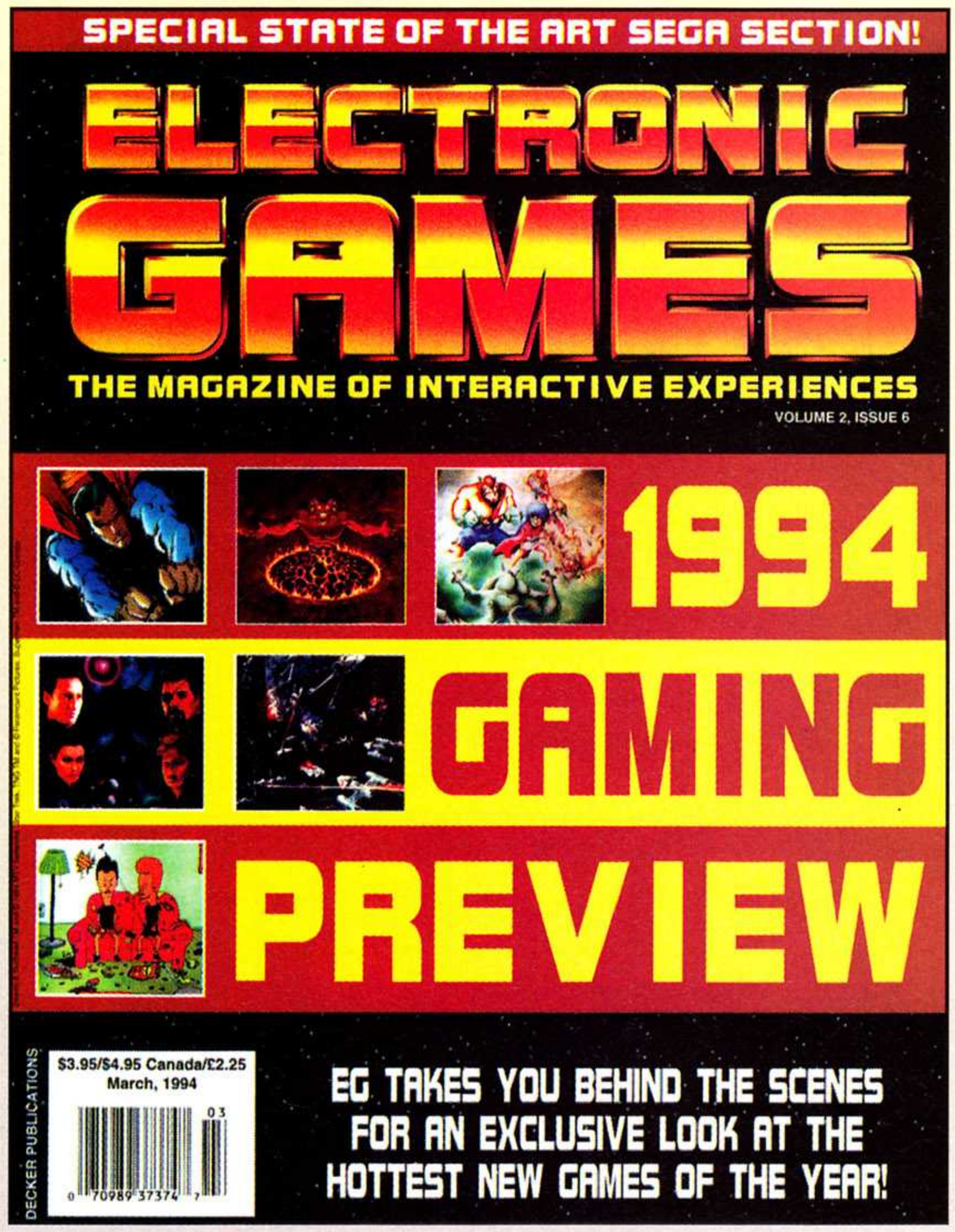
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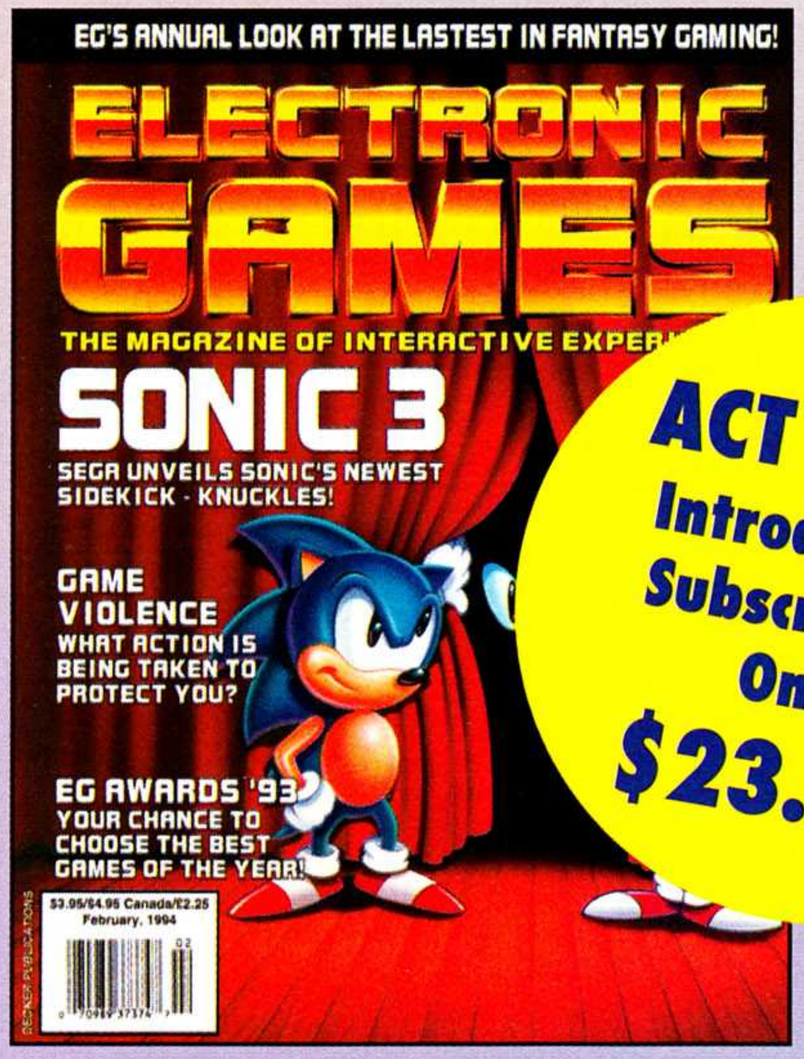
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TEST LAB

Philips CD-i Player

Philips Media
$399.00
FMV Cartridge (optional)
$249.00
Software: $15-$70 (varies by title)

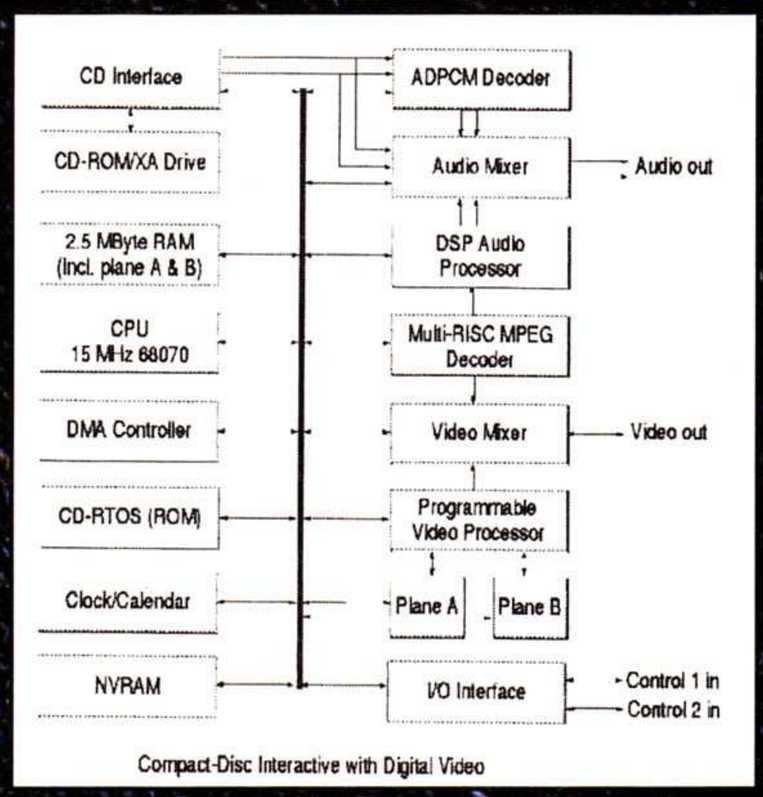
Despite a rather lengthy backlist of titles, the Philips CD-i multimedia player has received little recognition from the dedicated gaming press up to this point. The reasoning behind that media void is simple to understand. Most of the Philips offerings were not very sprite intensive and came off flat against similar titles on other platforms. Consequently, most professionals, including a lot of software developers, viewed CD-i as a "non-player."

Because developers saw no profit potential in converting their existing titles to CD-i or designing new titles specifically for that format, Philips was put in the unenviable position of having to subsidize development of any games for their player. It was a painful lesson for them, but one that they have apparently learned very well.

With the release of the industry's first full-motion video (FMV) add-on cartridge, Philips has scooped 3DO, Commodore and Atari, all of whom have a similar peripheral in development for their respective players. The impact of the FMV cartridge on the Philips' design is significant. Not only will users witness a dramatic performance improvement in their existing players, they will also enjoy a flood of newer game titles that are specifically engineered to capitalize on the improvement. Further, Philips has impressed the software publishers collectively to the point that old subsidized relationships are dissolving, and developers are soliciting new projects with their own funding. This is a strong indicator that Philips has turned the corner, and is well on the way to greener pastures.

To understand the sudden resurgence of interest, it is necessary to examine the augmented CD-i architecture from the perspective of a potential developer. The Philips player uses a fast and lean real time multi-tasking operating system (CDR-TOS) which is based on OS-9, by Microware. OS-9 is also used in the Patriot Missile system and as the basis for linking set-top boxes in Bell-Atlantic's Information Superhighway project. Through OS-9, the system can deliver video, audio and program data to various parts of memory without CPU involvement. This minimizes the loading delays that are associated with other CD based platforms, and is the major reason that Philips can get away with using a single speed CD drive (170 kb/sec throughput), while 3DO and others have already moved to double speed drives.

The base CD-i player has a programmable video CPU that can perform various tasks at the start of each scanline. This allows programming of visual effects in one video plane and the mixing of two video planes. With the FMV add-on, the unit can flawlessly manipulate three high quality video planes simultaneously. Developers can use this flexibility in several ways, but one of the most common applications would be an FMV background and two very large "sprites" of photographic quality in the foreground. Further, these MPEG quality sprites are rendered at a processing rate that allows seamless jumps from one segment of video to another without visible or audible discontinuity. What does this make possible? Think of Mortal Kombat with the visual quality of a Bruce Lee/Stephen Seagal film and no sacrifice in the amount of character control the player retains.



The schematic shown above shows the routing sequences for the Philips CD-i with Digital Video.

With the release of the industry's first FMV add-on cartridge, Philips has quickly scooped 3DO, Commodore and Atari.

Are we at that point yet? No, but it is coming. In the interim, what users will see is a much more realistic arcade experience in the home than has occurred thus far on any platform. For example, **Mad Dog McCree** for CD-i (American LaserGames) out performs all other conversions of this arcade hit. Packaged with a quality light gun, the CD-i version allows faster aiming, immediate response to player input, and virtually instantaneous cuts to the appropriate video segment after each scene. By contrast, the 3DO version requires the player to aim with a pad controlled cross hair (which moves too slowly to allow accuracy) and the delays between player input and video response run as high as six seconds.



Voyeur is a complicated adult adventure that deals with mystery, intrigue, seduction and secrets.

rendering the game virtually unplayable. Because the augmented CD-i system has a transition time that is even faster when you "shoot" than laserdisk, more conversions of these types of titles are logical. Later this year, Philips owners can expect to enjoy **Dragon's Lair I** & **II** and **Space Ace** (original designs of Don Bluth Studios).

The extra memory of the FMV add-on allows traditional video game designs to be much more sprite intensive as well. Examples of soon to be released products in this category include **Zelda's Adventure** and **Hotel Mario**, both of which made impressive showings at the recent Consumer Electronics Show. Computer players will be suitably awed by the CD-i version of **7th Guest** as well. Expect the success of this title to throw open the door for many more first person perspective games for CD-i, not only because of the current popularity of this method of presentation, but also because the CD-i system is particularly well suited to showcase this type of game. Additionally, in late '94, **Rebel Assault** (LucasArts) will be appearing for CD-i. Although unconfirmed by **EG**, rumor has it that this version will simply blow the others right out of the stars.

All of this may sound sexy and provocative to players who haven't taken the multimedia leap and are watching the competition closely, but what about the existing Philips consumer base who may not be willing to expand their investment with an FMV cartridge yet? Wisely, Philips will not abandon these loyal customers entirely. In addition to the deep back catalog of titles, several new products will be developed each year for the base CD-i player in addition to the FMV specific ones. The latter will look and play better, naturally, and Philips hopes the difference in quality will persuade the fence sitters to go ahead and upgrade. This is a much more reasonable and palatable marketing step than Nintendo's now classic abandonment of the 8-Bit NES format when the SNES was introduced.

Undoubtedly, the FMV cartridge has breathed new life into CD-i. Further, Philips has recognized its prior deficiencies in games coverage and is taking every possible step to rectify its standing with this market, from active pursuit of fresh top developers to the manufacture of a game specific controller for the system, which retails for under $30.00. Philips also plans to be more aggressive and evolve as a software publisher in its own right.

All of these are positive indicators that Philips has not only refused to die, it is a Phoenix emerging from the ashes. Within that analogy, however, its luminescence may be bright and blinding at the moment, but it is subject to fade over time as well.





Fans of the arcade classic Space Ace can now bring it home to help Dexter defeat the evil Borf.

In the accompanying comparison chart of current contenders for multimedia dominance, the CD-i + DV is the only one rated with the benefit of an MPEG FMV peripheral, and when one views the stats for the unaugmented CD-i machine, the performance impact of the peripheral is evident. The point is this: when all of the other contenders (excluding Sega CD) come out with their own FMV cartridges, they can also expect to enjoy marked improvements, the full extent of which cannot be evaluated at this stage. Technical one upmanship is occurring at a more furious pace than any of us have ever seen before. The result will be a vastly improved playing experience for everyone, but the real show is going to be watching who gets to take us there. Rest assured that *Test Lab* will continue to monitor the "race for cyberspace" with the same jaundiced eye that you have become accustomed to.

— Ed Dille

Performance Specification Comparison Chart

	CDi	CD-i+ DV	Jaguar	3DO	Amiga CD 32	Sega CD
CPU Speed	15 Mhz	15 Mhz	13.3 Mhz	12 Mhz	14 Mhz	12 Mhz
Architecture	16-Bit	2 parallel 16-Bit buses	64-Bit	32-Bit	32-Bit	16-Bit
Bus Bandwidth	45 Megabytes/sec	45 Megabytes/sec per bus	106.4 Megabytes/sec	50 Megabytes/sec	50 Megabytes/sec	<2 Megabytes/sec
MIPS	1 Mips	>400 Mips	55 Mips	6 Mips	3.5 Mips	0.3 Mips
Memory	1 MB	2.5 MB	2 MB	3 MB	2 MB	128k
Animation Speed	11 Million pixels/sec	13.5 Million pixels/sec	850 Million pixels/sec	64 Million pixels/sec	7 Million pixels/sec	1 Million pixels/sec
Resolution	768 x 560	768 x 560	720 x 576	320 x 200, hardware interpolation up to 640 x 400	1280 x 400	320 x 200

LORE

Might and Magic Compendium: The Authorized Strategy Guide to Games I-V
Caroline Spector, Prima Publishing, 387 pages (softbound, $19.95)

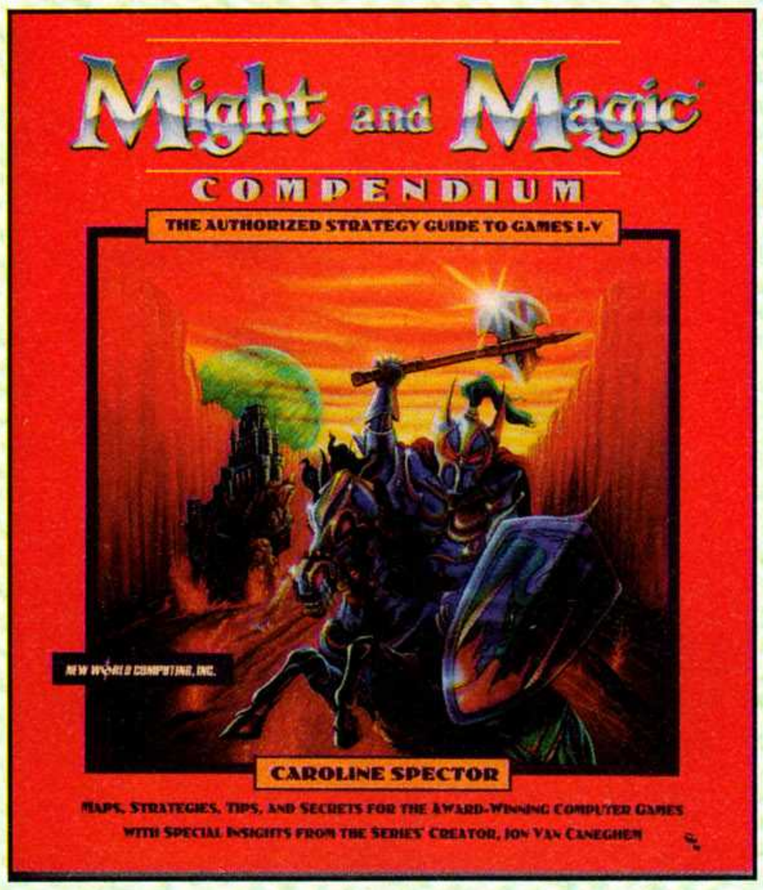
Aside from the title, which is slightly misleading (implying that equal treatment will be given to all the games in the series), this is a very solid hint book in the classic form, with little extraneous or background text and a lot of meat. **Might & Magic I** and **II** are given a two-page narrative recap at the beginning, with a brief disclaimer in the introduction.

The treatment of the latter three titles in the series leaves little room for criticism. Each is addressed in roughly the same format: a short overview and a quick start section, to guide novice characters through the optimum path to reaching a survivable skill level. For those unfamiliar with the **Might & Magic** series, the gaming environment is decidedly non-linear. Although the player character must eventually achieve certain quests to reach the end game, no one is in any way driven to explore the world of Xeen in any order. The upside of this is a lot of freedom and flexibility. The downside is that, when characters are first starting out, they often die quickly. Ms. Spector solves this problem neatly and succinctly, then steps back to allow players the freedom to explore as they see fit.

The remainder of each segment is compartmentalized for easy reference: awards (what characters can expect to receive for completion of the various quests), geographical (detailed maps of each type of area with annotated listings of special locations and events noted by their x,y position), an alphabetically organized bestiary, denoting each creature's statistics and special abilities, and spell effects tables. An items section reduces the complicated object modifiers of the system into a series of easily discernable charts and tables. Armor, weapons and accessories can be modified according to Elements, Metals, Attributes and Special Abilities. By referencing this section, players will no longer have to agonize over decisions or play the deadly game of trial and error each time a new item is found. Each game segment ends with a list of passwords to rapidly move from one location to another.

Ms. Spector has organized a tremendous amount of detail expertly, and with an eye toward player convenience. No player will read the tome from cover to cover, but countless **Might & Magic** enthusiasts will be found bending the corners of pages they need frequently, or cracking the bindings by inserting too many paper clips for quick access. Such is the mark of any good reference work.

— *Ed Dille*



High Tech Joke Book
Oak Ridge Public Relations, 212 pages (softbound, $14.95)

The complete title of this labor of love for computer-nerds and techies is: *The First, Advanced, State-of-the-Art, High Performance, Totally Integrated, Revolutionary, Leading Edge, High Tech Joke Book*, which is much too long to stick up there in the headline. It's real, not an April Fool's joke perpetrated by EG's editors: It's just that this is the month to review it. And, as noted on the back cover, "If you don't see anything funny about computers, software, science or mathematics—put this book down right now!" However, some younger video gamers who are not into math and physics and all that stuff, might have some difficulty with much of it. Besides, it isn't all G-rated.

Mathematically-themed jokes, riddles, puns and poems have been around for many years, enjoying much the same sort of generation-to-generation sub-rosa circulation among their in-groups as dirty jokes among pre-adolescents, and office memo satires among the clerical staff of every business. They surface among science students in college and are pinned on cork boards in research labs and programmers' dens worldwide. They also appear as fillers or quotes in the less staid journals, science columns and collections like Martin Gardner's wonderful series on mathematical puzzles and diversions.

Included are variations on Murphy's Law, classroom anecdotes, deft and daffy definitions, riddles (all types, including banana jokes), parodies ("Hubble, Hubble, toil and trouble...") and sick jokes (*The Quantum Leap Virus*: One day your PC is a laptop, the next day it is a Macintosh, then a Nintendo). Many will be familiar to the experienced reader, many will be new.

The Oak Ridge P.R. organization, a Silicon Valley firm which specializes in technologically oriented clients, began the project of collecting these jokes in April, 1992. (It was undoubtedly unofficially started earlier, as members of the staff shared their discoveries with one another.) They sent out a news release requesting everybody to send in anything qualifying as high tech humor they could find—if it wasn't copyrighted.

They were inundated with more than they could use, so they jammed as much as they could fit into 200 or so pages. The funny stuff begins almost as soon as possible (the title, right?), through the roman-numeraled pages at the beginning, and continues right up until the last few pages, where it turns into a commercial. But it's worth it. Recommended for the savvy reader.

— *Ross Chamberlain*

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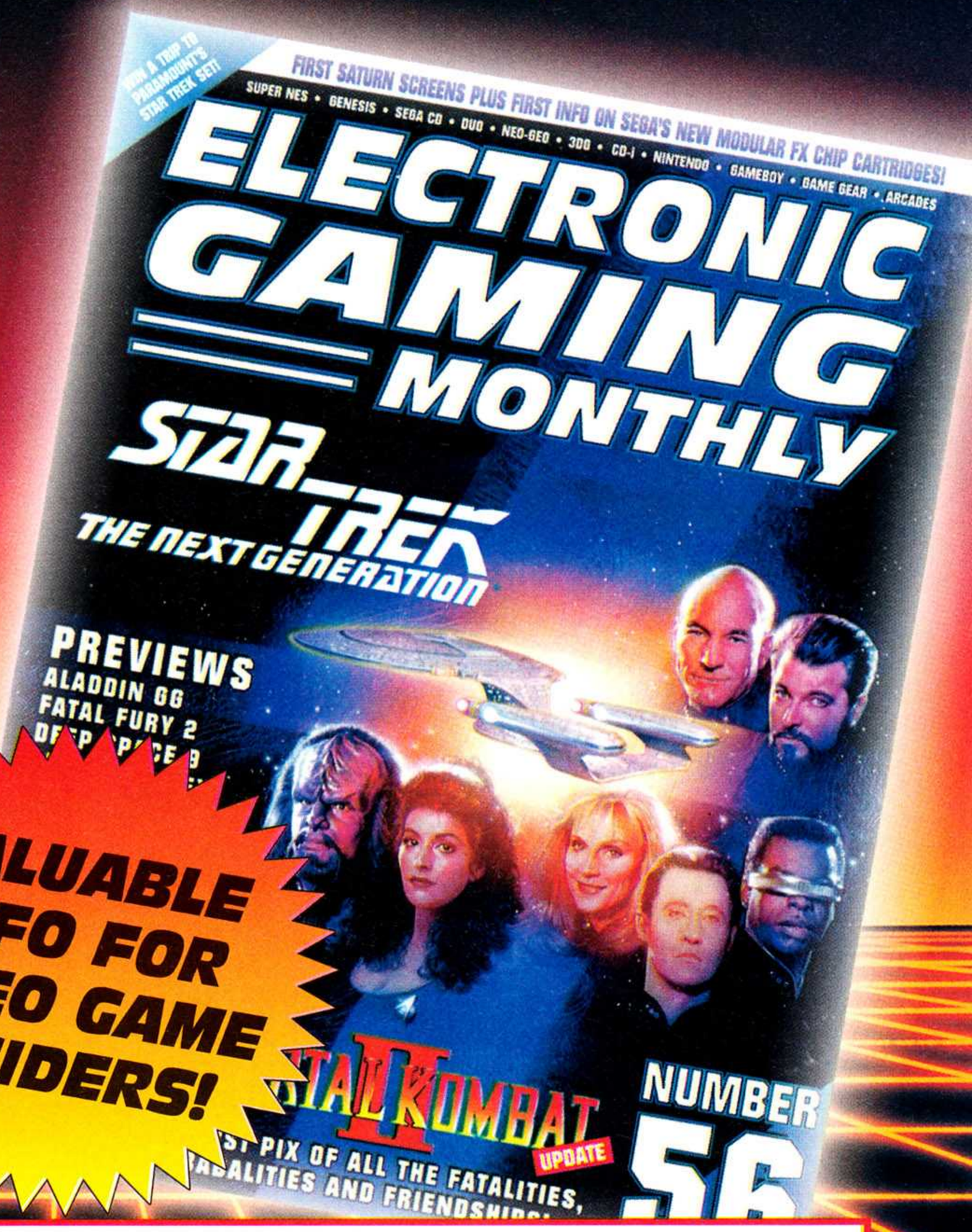
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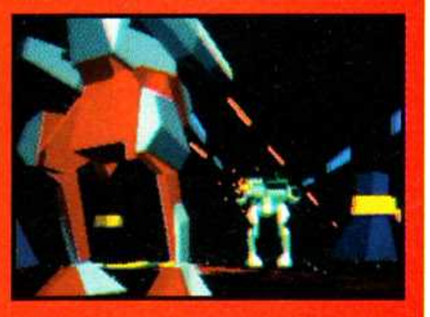




THINGS TO COME



State of the Art: SNES



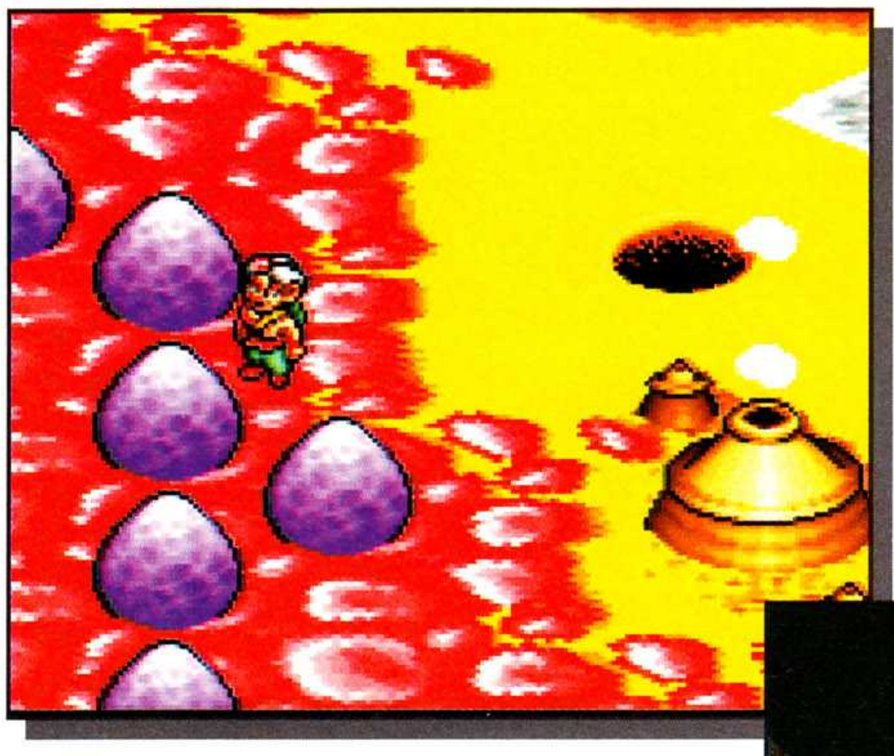








"The Best Play Here," says Nintendo, but which cartridges are *really* the best play on the 16-Bit console? **EG's** monthly report on cutting edge software pinpoints the titles that belong in every-one's SNES collection.



Gaming's New Look

Forget those polygon-filled landscapes, there's a graphics revolution under way. See what tomorrow's games will look like today, and find out what's happening with all those super-hyped new systems.





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