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RELEASED
THIS MONTH!**

**THE CINEMATIC
SOFTWARE SWINDLE**
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play the film?



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December 1991
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36 Remember *Myst*? Well, now, finally, it's nearly finished. And you can't live on here if it doesn't look really rather good, *hey?*

43 For the latest news, views, how to you do it's all, you can always turn to Gary Whitta's "Insider" preview section.



56 Monsters may not be able to spell, but they sure can design a game! *Clash Royale*, the latest from strategy game hit Mojang gets the strategic treatment.

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No publisher release ever more numerous games, it's becoming clear that we're equally approving various games. Is it really possible to enjoy a game where you don't know where to begin?

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James Bond returns for more frenziedly punting action, but this time he's discovered that an alien-occupied enemy gear into a grade A status. You don't know graphics!

68 Willy Beamish

Master of *Amal Dynamix*, back from their success with *Flora of China* take a considerably more light-hearted approach in their latest. This time it's an interactive cartoon. Go on!

74 Robocop 3

Having revealed some fine (but glowing) reviews for their recent movie experiences, *Clash Royale* takes a completely new look for *Clash*, but only in the game-out before the film, but this time it's *Clash Royale*.

80 Smash TV

Probably the ultimate test of your shoot strategy, *Smash TV* is a dual-joystick carnival of destruction and madness. You'll find it a bit to take it. Check out our in-depth review.

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3

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The Box

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YES NEWS GAMES NEWS GAMES NEWS

ANT NO STOPPING 'EM

Top Japanese publisher Imaginext has snapped up the Super Famicom rights to *StarAnt*, the innovative electronic ant colony, before any copies of the computer game have even been released.

The latest creation from Macix, the company behind the phenomenally successful *StarDroid* and *StarEarth*, *StarAnt* puts you in command of an ant colony set to conquer a seemingly impenetrable wilderness. To reach the goal of taking over the backyard and ultimately driving the poor human out of his house, you must carefully manage the colony so that it grows and thrives.

In this epic campaign, you directly control one ant and supervise up to 1,500 black workers and soldier ants. These tireless little crew members can be commanded to perform tasks like gathering food, digging new tunnels and caring for eggs. How you get what it takes to overcome the rival red ants, hungry spiders and other dangers that threaten your colony's survival?

To make the game both educational and entertaining, *StarAnt* designers Bill Wright and Justin McCormick draw on a Pulitzer Prize winning book by Tom Rayward University biologist. Additionally, the game incorporates several HyperCard-like interactive windows that provide playing hints and rewards.

StarAnt is available

by only available on the Apple Macintosh, PC and Amiga versions will follow later in the year. No release date has



Maybe This Time...

Yeah, we've found it all before. A totally new form of interactive entertainment redefining the "state-of-the-art." These claims carry more expectation than Barry Norman reviews of God-awful roboted movies from the suburbs of Paris. Do they ever deliver the goods, though?

New *Virgin Games* is aiming to change this year's pioneering performance with a stunning new game called *Quest*. Currently under development in the States, this mystery adventure will initially be available on PC-CD-ROM format. A spokesman revealed that if *Virgin Games* ever released *Quest* as regular media it would fill a staggering gap: happy did!

The game itself reminded our reporter of *Castles Quest*, an equally weird software showcase where players are encouraged to touch everything on screen and see what happens. If you get bored pushing things around in the massive mansion of *Quest*, you might like to trouble yourself with the tragic plot which centers around a mad toy maker and the ghosts of the children killed by his creations.

As you can see to those weak screenshots from the game, *Quest* is shaping up to be something special. ACE hopes to bring you a full report next month.



THOSE WERE THE DAYS™

Have you ever wondered what happened to those classic coin-ups of the past? Youks are known for their passion and interest in anything remotely historic, so they've decided to open a display of the most notable electronic amusements yet played.

The National Video Game and Coin-Op Museum is a 10,000 square foot classified creation including Pong, the simple bat and ball game that started it all, as well as titles like *Space Invaders*, *Duress*, *Asteroids* and *Pacman*.

Pitfall machines also claim their place in the exhibition. Conquer, the first talking pinball machine, was introduced in 1970 by Williams.

It can't be longer for a bit of video game history yourself, did you know Williams Bally Midway was founded by Harry Williams in 1941? Since it was wartime, he had difficulty obtaining materials to build new pinball machines. Williams therefore started to recondition old games using recycled materials. Seven years later, the Chicago-based company introduced *Pitfall*, a flipper designed with a new "tilt hold" feature. From then on, pinball games who



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Are you having difficulty seeing the steady operating spirit in your favorite stock 'em-up? This pair of lightweight style Magnavit® Glasses provide a hands-free magnifying system for people who want to look "cool" and with greater clarity. The adjustable optical lenses are controlled by dials on the side of the frame to give up to 25 magnification. "Designed by leading optometric research specialists," says the sales clerk, "they are ideal for watching sporting events, nature study, theater and opera."

This easy gadget costs twenty pounds and is one of the many on offer from Science Museum Bookstore in Liverpool's Shopping Deck.

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By the way, this company is just around the back of the Progress office. Will Shaker of the Street 1 cover handled this article.



Sonic The Hedgehog Goes Missing...

Sega has cancelled the second video game in the System 32 series which features some of the most impressive hardware processors ever introduced into the console. And that is, unsurprisingly, a developer named to the respected Red Media.

Really, although the excellent landscape graphics and intense gameplay remain, Sega has decided to drop the ongoing Sonic Rhapsody on the wilderness. At least players can choose from four "alternatives" now known incorporating speedy highways affected not just phenomena like rain, fog, lightning and, of

A RED HOT ACE EXCLUSIVE!

While awaiting Super Mario Bros Rhapsody Medal at the local McDonalds, our intrepid video-crazer at ACE/Towers managed to uncover some highly confidential information about the next Nintendo video game courtesy of a guy in charge of the files.

According to Mr X, Super Mario Bros 3 will be an enormous time travelling extravaganza. As a bonus, the game should incorporate the previous three adventures completely intact!

He confirmed the talented Nintendo development team from Kyoto in Japan were extremely tired after shuffling up a lot of overtime putting the finishing touches to the new 3D-to-8-bit-angled art for the Super Funtastic. Apparently, those poor fellows couldn't decide how to transfer their all important secret code. Should they go for a straight A, B, C, 1, 2 or button configurations on the title screen or stick players with a highly innovative, but near identical, system hidden in the second level behind the tree on the edge of the village?

Four times larger than previous games, Tobit will be reborn in time for Christmas. Mr X indicated Super Mario Bros 3 would arrive sometime later next year on the Super Funtastic with a Christmas edition likely to follow soon afterwards. It's just



Slipping Into Top Gear



The creator of arcade's best-selling Lotus race-'em-up has been exceptionally busy over the last few months. Not only have they crafted a sequel for Sega and ST gamers, but they've also produced an adaptation of the game play for the Nintendo Super Funtastic.

Published this month by Kemco in Japan, Top Gear is a split-screen racer with eight stages set over various locations around the world including Tokyo, London, San Francisco and Sheffield. You have the choice of driving four different types of cars, each with their own performance and handling characteristics. The trick is to pick the car most suitable for the next type of track and environment. To keep things playable, you can drive with a set of power gears or go fully automatic.

"It's really weird! Something that you get straight into," confirms the programming team. "Getting speed out of the Super Funtastic is difficult because it's got a slow processor. We're really pleased with what we've managed to squeeze out of it."

Not only does the background scenery change during each race, but there's also eight driving, multiple highways, dirt tracks, hills, bridges and tunnels to master. If you're one of the slower racers like San Francisco, you could struggle with your car, stall your car and actually get backwards down a hill.

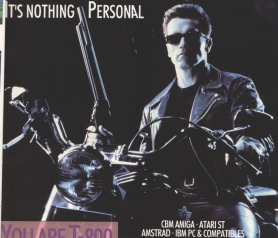
Like most games of the genre, Top Gear comes with video played against another human opponent. If Nintendo releases a version for connecting two Super Funtastic consoles together, friends may consider writing a sequel allowing four-player competition similar to the feature in Lotus B. Further enhancements could also include fog effects and variable car options.



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ENTER 10 ON CARD



NO PROBLEMO

Despite Batman and RoboCop dominating home computer game charts in recent years, the concept of reimagining game-of-the-week hasn't really been a tremendous success in the arcade market. High-profile titles such as *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Indiana Jones* and *The Temple of Doom* and *Alien* were only modestly enjoyable in their coin-op form. Though in the case of *Tron*, the game was probably more popular than the film!

Terminator 2, the smash hit of the summer, is easily the most marketable movie property around at the moment, so it was perhaps inevitable that somebody would pick-up the electronic amusement rights. The surprise came when the contract didn't go to the likes of Atari Games, Konami or Data East. Instead it was the local video retailers of Chicago, Williams Bally Midway, has released relatively low value games over the past decade. However, a coin slot display of quality and innovation has made the



Williams Bally Midway, the company behind such classics as *Defender* and *Robotron 2084*, has brought the blockbuster *Terminator 2* movie to the arcades. Rik Haynes flew to Chicago for an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the making of the T2 coin-op...

relatively small company stand out from the crowd.

If you were to compile a top ten of your all-time favorite arcade hits, it's a fair bet this list would include at least one title from this arcade veteran such as *Defender*, *Starjet*, *Robotron 2084*, *Just*, *Shinobi*, *Blaster*, *Blue Rider*, *Blaxx*, *Ironclad TV* or *Tron*.

With such an impressive track record, what better firm to adapt the movie that contains some of the most lavish special effects ever seen on the big screen? Not that the original motion picture has a

monopoly on the state-of-the-art, actual film footage, authentic location backdrops, digitized images of the star-studded cast and even sampled speech from the set and only Arnold Schwarzenegger have all been incorporated into a thrilling new-rip high-energy game.

"This is going to be the biggest hit of the year," confidently predicts the firm's Marketing Manager Steve George. "The best way to ensure to have been there at the right time with the right kind of games. Arnold and James Cameron, the director of both



Water killers and massive war machines rolling over a ravaged terrain populated by a handful of survivors. You're helping the last remaining humans on earth in their battle against extinction. The evil machine empire has spent the last thirty years trying to rid the planet of its male and female inhabitants. These machines are controlled by a super-computer called Skynet. It's your mission, along with the rest of the gamma troops, to make your way to Skynet's location and destroy it. Taking orders from rebel leader John Connor, you must remember to protect your fellow soldiers and all other humans.

If you're successful in your attempt to save future world, you must see Skynet's Time Field Generator torned back to the present day. Before Skynet was captured, the only computer sent its arsenal weapons, the T-800, back in time to destroy the young John Connor before he could become a threat. Your new mission is to find John and protect him at all costs. This means destroying the T-800 any way you can. A tricky problem this, considering this hyper-advanced

machine is made from liquid metal and can quickly change its shape to foil any sort of attack. If you've seen the movie, you know what to expect.



John Connor, played by Edward Furlong, is the only human left on earth. He must lead the remaining humans and protect them from the Terminator army.

MASTA LA MISTA, BABY

Over a year in production, the Terminator 2 coin-op has cost an estimated three million dollars to develop.

With such a huge investment, it was fairly Williamally Midway had the full backing and support of James Cameron, who is apparently a fan of a video game fan.

"We showed Cameron what was done on Atari so he immediately knew this wasn't going to be a Nintendo-style of game using a more conventional approach," comments co-designer George Feltz. "The really great thing about Cameron is that he respects the art form of video games. This guy doesn't treat it as some sort of merely show-stuff. He just wanted to tap his ideas and be so go with them. At the end of the initial brainstorming session, [he got up and said] 'give these guys everything they need.' The scene was really told from their on."



The Terminator 2 arcade cabinet game comes with Terminator 2: Judgment Day: The Movie on video. It also includes a Terminator 2: Judgment Day VHS tape. Terminator 2: Judgment Day VHS tape. Terminator 2: Judgment Day VHS tape. Terminator 2: Judgment Day VHS tape.



Originally, Hanger and Feltz flew to California and read the T2 script to decide whether they would make a game out of it. Their answer was a resounding "Yeah!"

"The concept of Terminator 2 was custom-made for a video game," remarks Feltz. "The action sequences in the film and the Terminator's real-

Terminator movies, are very pleased with what we have accomplished. They've given their approval throughout the whole cycle."

IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL

Taking the role of Arnie, a cyborg killing machine from the future, players are thrown into a roller-coaster ride through all the action scenes of the film. The creative group at Williams Italy follows through its arcade-video game with concepts of game stopped in the cabinet would be the best way to recreate Terminator 2 into a showcase of interactive entertainment.

"In our game you get to be a Terminator," reveals co-designer Jack Hanger. "You're actually Arnold Schwarzenegger. You've got an auto-knife knife with a kick-ass recoil in your hand and you can shoot anything and anybody you want."

The concept of this arena stage-video game was obviously governed by the script of the movie. However, some has been taken in certain areas to produce a more playable game. To it therefore equal split between present day and a future world conflict. This means plays the more important role in the video game because it offered excellent game design opportunities. The bleak landscape of the future world after nuclear Armageddon is filled with legions of omniscient metal Endoskeletons, flying

"We've got to make players part with their money every time they play the game, we don't have the luxury of a one-hit retail sale. We focus on doing the best possible products we can for arcade coin-ops rather than worrying about what comprises we'll have to do down the road for home adaptation. That's significant. None of the other companies out there can make the same statement. It's much easier for companies like Sega to out corners and come out with a game they know can be released in the home in six months time."



ly find themselves in the format. We replace the feature part of the movie in greater depth because it makes for really good battles. Although they never actually made it to the movie, these feature world sequences were taken from the script. So they're the original ideas of the creators of Terminator 2 but they just never got a chance to show them."

Peters adds: "We ended up doing a pin game where two players simultaneously participate in a sci-fi shooting gallery. With Terminator 2 we thought this was a pretty safe way to go. Nevertheless, this is the most interactive pin game ever. Human characters and even those known might say "Way to Go" or "I got Shot" or represent you if you're doing something wrong."

"Terminator 2 was almost a video game to start with. It deals with the same themes of universal destruction and amazing amounts of carnage. It's perfect. At the same time, we keep in mind that we're a creative force in our own right capable of producing our own worlds, characters and stories. If we relied solely on inspiration from Hollywood then we'd be dead."

John Ringar, co-creator of the T2 cabinet

Dave Hudson and Ed Musch, creators of the cabinet of Terminator 2 (left), filmed the video documentation for the graphic designers Tim Conroy and Jim Vogel. These included the specific shots of characters and props needed to transform them into computer images.

Eventually, Hanger personally went out to the set for a whole week recording the final placement of the various bits and pieces needed for use in the game. Actor Robert Patrick, the rescuer who deli-

fully played the T-800 killing machine, spent a long grueling day walking on a treadmill while wearing all the heavy prosthetics that were used to help Industrial Light and Magic create the stunning computer-generated special effects in the movie.

"The major thing about our video games are they're not done all their fans," indicates Peters. "It's got to be a real game before it's carried out of home. It's really a lot of hard work. At Williams we've taken a different direction. We're the pioneers of live action digitized graphics. These people often gaze around the set claiming they did it, but that's not true. This cutting-edge technology is the main thing that keeps players coming back for more. We're getting it closer to real life. It's just like playing the movie now. If you actually get off watching action movies what could be better than actually doing it and not getting bored? We've come a long way since the days of Space Invaders."



JUDGMENT DAYS

Here is a brief timeline of the images, film, video tape, models and special effects needed during the production of each scene in the T2 cabinet...

September 27, 1990

- Physical model and detailed drawings of the plasma-pulse battle rifle used in the future work.
- Stop action models, from the original Terminator movie, of the Battle Chorus, Flying Hunter Killer and Ground Slurping TM.

October 1

- Specifications of movie opening scene.
- Details of the human soldiers outfit from the future.
- Description video tape of future world hardware.

October 26

- Model of two-legged Terminator.
- Any existing concept drawings of Ripper Robot.

December 2

- Use of future world John Connor character for video and character.

January 7, 1991

- Use of young John Connor for gameplay screen.
- Use of Sarah Connor character for gameplay screen.
- Description video tape of Dallas video assets.

February 4

- Description video tape of mental institution.
- Description video tape of Cybernetic Systems.

March 4

- Use of Terminator T-800 character for gameplay screen.
- Concept or real footage of T-800 metamorphosis.
- Description video tape of police look-alike of Cybernetic Systems.

April 8

- Description video tape of steel mill.
- Use of Arnie, John and Sarah characters for close-ups and speech.



A close-up shot from the studio depicts an existing model of the T-800. Williams Audio Division has built a Terminator cabinet.





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Letters

SORT YOURSELVES OUT!

Okay, AOL! I don't get it! With great confusion I read issue 58 of your (excellent) magazine. Especially the letters draw my attention! There was a letter called "Blazing a Trail to Nowhere" about the constant crowding of AOL Trailblazers lately. AOL explains this by telling that the software score is so healthy lately. But when I look at the first page I read "Let's face it, you've had to put up with some nonsense, haven't you? Low quality games and even lower quality magazines."

What's going on? Are we getting good or bad games lately? I buy this magazine to know whether a game is worth buying or just plain garbage and what do I get! Condescending statements! Could you please tell me how all this REALLY is?

For the rest, I was quite disappointed with your revised formula of AOL Magazine. It's not that the reviews are bad, far from it, but it's the statistics. Just now I got used to the old PC and the other stuff, you get an idea and give the whole thing a different look! Now I have to look five times before I know how you think about a game.

Apart from these things, you still make the best magazine for home computers.

Loen van Steened
Amersfoort
Holland

Put put put, you really mustn't take things so literally. It's true, over the last few months

the game-buying public has had to put up with an awful amount of crap. If we give away, say on average, three or four Trailblazers a month, there are still countless products released the same month that fall way beyond the quality threshold. And that's the precisely the sort of "nonsense" we're talking about. It's true, there have been some right corking games recently, but that doesn't excuse all the crap that gets released. As a rough estimate, we'd say that 50% of all software released is of an unacceptable quality - or it's here to steer you away from the sub-standard majority and towards the good stuff. Simple as that. And as for the non-look PC game - we've had a few people write in to express the disappointment, so we've given it another little facelift this month to make it even easier to understand. Alright?

I AM VERY CLEVER

Dear Sirs, I'm an educated person - a professional (qualified) psychotherapist and member of Mensa whose main interest is playing computer games. I've a vast collection which I usually add to regularly. Usually twin-games - PowerBlazer, Wolfen, etc. These games require patience, skill, determination and confidence - as well as, in some cases, history, geography, politics and statistics. So why is it that computer games are looked down on as being easy and childish by those who choose to do other pastimes?

Ms Carmen Brakes
Iford
Essex

Why to go? Don't fret at AOL we wholeheartedly agree with your educated and intelligent readers. There's nothing more annoying than seeing our beloved medium dismissed

by some poorly-witted TV presenter with a generally complex, unfortunately, the situation looks bleak and unlikely to change in the near future - unless of course Channel 4 gets its finger out and does something half-hearted with its forthcoming Gamecenter show. Here's hoping...

RAW DEAL?

Dear Editor, Although I never got round to sending off letters to magazines, I have decided to make an exception after the re-camp of your issues.

In layout terms, very well done. It's much cleaner, more comfortable and therefore portrays a more visually interesting and growing-up image. The thing I'm afraid of though is that this may be at the expense of the content of your magazine. Firstly I've had to see that console games have been put back into their own section. I will have got rid of this and you have done the same over recent issues. Clinging console games as a different race of users altogether is, in my degrading, it may be just the issue in question (No 58) but I hope that major console releases get the same six page treatment as computer releases. In order to give the Magazine (as an example) such praise, and then to give it such poor coverage is hypocrisy. I am a Magazine lover (surprise, surprise!) but I'm sure if owners of other machines got this treatment, they would complain twice as much.

In other areas we seem to have lost Tech news, special articles such as "You Had to Handle", "Planet of the Gamers" and other important articles, international reports and new developments.

Other favorites that have gone are Sheep Watch, assessed and the format columns, which always provided a light-hearted alter-

HEIMDALL



Norse legend tells of a time when the Gods of Valhalla and Asgard created a race known as the Vikings. Born to represent his people at the battle of Ragnarok, Heimdall must first fight, solve puzzles and explore the Viking world to find the weapons of the Gods.



HEIMDALL
THE VIKING
QUEST

CORE
DESIGNERS

HEIMDALL
THE VIKING
QUEST

native to the rest of the magazine. Glad to see you have kept the *Blitz* though...

To criticize at such an early time may seem premature, but I hope the issues are thought over as soon as possible.

Carl Beale
Ashford
Northamptonshire

Don't fret! We're not trying to give console users a raw deal. The only reason that a Megadrive game hasn't yet received a six-page review is that we've not yet seen a product to which the ACE mega-review would be applicable. That occurred, there will be Megadrive stripages in ACE in the future. In the meantime, we think that console users get a pretty fair deal within their own section - look at last month's two-page *Street of Rage* review. To call it degraded is pushing things a bit far, we think. As for your concern about ACE Features and special reports, you need not worry. We'll carry on doing them, starting with this month's interactive Movie pages. And there are plenty more to come. So keep 'em posted!

2 EASY 4 U?

Dear ACE, I felt I had to write to you to compliment you on your "new look" magazine. I love the six-page reviews as they are very detailed! But to get to the point of the letter, I would like to know why nearly all Megadrive games are so easy I recently purchased *Sonic* the nighting and within just under a week I managed to complete it. Also, are there any plans for *Sonic 2*, as I loved the aforementioned. Finally, when is G-LOC coming out in the Megadrive as I heard about it long ago, but I haven't heard anything since then! Once again, well done on an Ace (sorry) magazine.

Oliver Ramsey
East Lothian
Scotland

Well, we're not too sure about Megadrive games being too easy. Maybe you're just some fast games player and even the toughest arcade challenge can be completed with just the flick of your wrist. You're right about *Sonic* the Nighting - it is too easy. From the letters we've received, more people seem to have completed it in around one or two weeks.

STUPID BOXES!

Dear ACE, why is it that so many games come in outside boxes? It makes it very difficult for me to fit them on my soft-ware shelf. Back in 1984 my Grandad put some shelves up for me, and the games I had at the time (*The Hobbit*, *Trans-Am* and *Zoomer*) fitted perfectly well at the time. Everything, in that way, was lovely jolly.

Now, however, everything has changed. Companies are putting their games out in giant boxes that are much, much bigger than they need to be. I now have games like *Microbotics*, *Leisure Suit Larry* and *Ballroom Tycoon* which are far too big to fit onto my shelves. So I have to put them on the floor, on top of the record player, under the bed - wherever they will fit. And as you can imagine, it looks a right old two and eight!

Why do software publishers insist on this foolish policy of releasing their games in cumbersome, impractical boxes. And when are we going to have a standard for computer game packaging, like they have for CDs and soft-through videos? It's not as if it's much to ask, is it?

Give Emersbach
Peshaw
London

There are two schools of thought on this highly controversial issue. One theory goes that the whole idea behind putting games in big boxes is just to make the product look more elaborate and desirable, even though the game itself may not live up to the promise of the flashy packaging. It's all about perceived value, you see. The other argument is that, with big, elaborate games like *Silver Sledge II*, *Willy Beardsley* and all the rest, the large packaging is necessary, not just to reflect the quality of the game, but also to contain all the documentation and peripherals. Games like the stereoscopic simulators have big, hefty manuals, maps, keyboard overlays and all sorts of other bits. It seems a bit silly to try and cram all that into a little box just because of shelf-stacking considerations. Computer games are not like videos or CDs where no special documentation is required; the industry is obviously unbalanced on this particular topic, as game boxes come in so many different shapes and sizes, from cheap little crystal cases to giant glossy extravaganzas. You're right, though, it is a bit of a pain in the behind trying to fit them all on the shelves. So come on, industry fat cats, get your act together!

As for *Sonic 2*, the success of the first game means that a sequel is an almost certain certainty. Just look at the *Mario* series - five games so far, although there's no information as yet. We've drawn a similar line with G-LOC. No doubt it'll appear eventually, but when it will be and what it will be like remains a mystery to us.

My local shop to purchase your usually excellent magazine, I started with my £1.66 and ran back to my house. Since home I read the mag and then formulated it to order my list. Please go back to the good old days.

Douglas Hepburn
Dumfries Glasgow

You what? Here at ACE we don't mind a bit of criticism - in fact we positively welcome it - but if that's all you can manage, why bother to write to us at all? We can't make any changes if you don't tell us what the problem is! Let's have some more constructive criticism next time, huh?

FROM THE PEN OF A SHINING WIT

Dear ACE, what a load of twaddle! As you've probably guessed I'm referring to your magazine's new format. I faithfully ran round to

MORE REVIEWS!

Dear ACE, I own an Amiga 500 and I have been buying ACE since issue 3. I have always thought that ACE reviews are much better than your rivals.

The new-look ACE reviews are just as good but because each review covers six pages out of six computer games get the full ACE treatment, and the other games only get a few paragraphs in the New Releases section. I could understand you only giving a quick review to a game which is basically crap, but surely games like *Crules* for the Commodore and *Final Fight* deserve full reviews?

Trevor South
Birmingham
East Sussex

Whether or not a game gets a storage review depends not just on its quality, but on how applicable it is to such elaborate treatment. Sure *Final Fight* is a nice game, but it's a bit simple and therefore dragging it out over six pages would have been a bit oversteering. If it was we were able to tell you just how good it was within the New Releases section. And although at the moment, only six games get an ACE storage review each month, we are intent on expanding that number in the future. Look out for eight and even ten games getting the ACE Super Reviews at a time in the not-too-distant future. Power!

MEGADRIVE ON THE MOVE?

Dear ACE, recently I was having a chat about games with a couple of my mates, and someone said they'd heard a rumour that Sega was going to make a handheld Megadrive. You know, like the GameBoy, only 16-bit MD and with the same specs, so the software would be as good. They also reckon that there's going to be an adapter so that you'll be able to play actual Megadrive cartridges on it!

I said they were talking crap because if there was anything like that coming out, I would have read about it in ACE. I have had a five-pound bet with my friend, so please ACE, could you set the record straight for us?

I love the new-look magazine, especially the storage reviews - much better than what some of the other mags try to do as off with. Sometimes you get the feeling that they haven't even bothered to play the game prop-

erly, but with an ACE review you can tell that it's really been played to death, and you can have much more faith in the final mark because of it. From now on I'll be losing all my purchases on the ACE review. Keep up the good work!

David Knight
Bristol
Kent

Get ready to collect your cash, Dave! There's no such thing as a *Final Fight* Megadrive, and any rumour about one on the way are entirely unfounded. Search to us like your mate has either made it up to try and impress you, or he's just unfortunate enough to read a less informative magazine. Perhaps he should switch to ACE. Show him a copy and he should be fit for conversion. And don't spend that five pounds all at once.

OOOPS!

We'd just noticed that, like Frank Spence, we "had a bit of trouble" and "did a whinge" with our *Alien 3* feature last month. Kevin Lockwood from Kingswood in Bristol, Gavin Parry from Kidderminster and Worcester-shire and Sam Joyce from Chorleywood in Here were just three of the observant readers who were kind enough to write in and bring it to our attention. Cheers, kids!

We'd like to take this opportunity to apologise to all our readers who never got to find out what "these little variants" actually did. The funny thing was, it wasn't actually our fault, you see! What with all the excellent things that went in to the ACE release, we had a few technical hitches, and one of them was that the big complicated system that outputs our pages got it wrong, and that was that. Anyway, you're not interested in listening to our problems. You want to read the rest of the *Alien 3* feature. So by way of compensation, we're reprinting the missing text right here and now.

These little variants create a hole and keep up into the player's face, reorientating to keep near there with it's red alien head. The player will have to adopt similar movements to those used in the Turles cut-up to jiggle around and shake the face through boss, says *Interweek*.

Obviously, the film has been surprisingly easy to convert. Because all of the humans in the game have shared heads and all had the same, it's been possible to use lots of space and use similar graphics? Much of the game takes place in huge underground chambers, and so it's going to be a pretty

dark and gloomy affair (we take a look at some of the shots from the movie here and you'll see what we mean).

Stated for a release early next year, *Alien 3* promises to deliver all the thrills and spills which the previous licensed titles of the series have failed to do.

The Other Two

No video collection would be complete without these two starring 3D movies, available to your local video store for around a tenner.

Alien 1999, *Wally Goo* (?)

The original space horror movie. Following only two years after the high-gloss gang-bro War, *Alien* presented a very different world of space. Set aboard the *Nostromo*, an enormous and largely waste-when-my-dog, it tells the grisly tale of how a lone intergalactic trader discovers in outer space of space, leaving only Ripley, a flight officer played with convincing strength by Sigourney Weaver, to lead the hunt. Although some of the space-age design with its big white tubes and the living 100's looks a bit dated, the H. R. Giger *Alien* design is simply excellent and the atmosphere of impossible, limiting tension is fantastic.

What on earth happened to Scott immediately afterwards with someone like *Legend* and *Invasion To Watch-Over Me* is another's guess.

Alien 1988, *James Cameron* (?)

A big disappointment to many hardcore fans of the original, *Alien 3* was doubtfully termed *Alien 3* by Space. *Alien 3* was doubtfully termed *Alien 3* by Space. *Alien 3* was doubtfully termed *Alien 3* by Space. *Alien 3* was doubtfully termed *Alien 3* by Space.

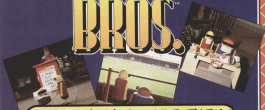
Ripley is re-created, after being found drifting in space for 77 years, in jumpy back to LV426 - the colony where the *Nostromo*'s crew was being picked up by the alien in the first movie - and discovers a troop of *Aliens* that have taken over. His role of alien hunter easily changes as the space station war with her find themselves so much for the alien-headly-war-tion.

With far more budget than the first movie, *Alien 3* delivers more thrills-per-second, and it's perhaps a more appealing all-round picture, except for being bogged down with other damn natural metaphors.

COME ON DOWN!

You've heard what your fellow gamers have to say - now, why not take the chance to add your game's words? For the price of a stamp, you could have your views displayed by tens of thousands of ACE readers! And if you're really got something interesting to say, there's a chance of a winner software prize, which we'll generously give away to the sender of the Star Letter each month. So what are you waiting for? Get that pen-up aggression off your chest and send it to us at ACE Letters, Priority Centre, 36-38 Farringdon Lane, London EC7A 3AA.

BONANZA BROS.



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STILL NOT SHOWING...

It's been over four years since we first heard of the interactive movie - so why are we still waiting to play the film? Is it time to call "cut" on the much-maligned genre? Maybe not...



The world's first interactive movie? It's like playing a film? Yeah, right. We've all heard the claims, and all been disappointed - but not altogether surprised - when the finished game almost inevitably fails to live up to the hype. Since the inception of the genre with Cannon Cinema's *Defender of the Crown* in 1985, "playing the film" has remained one of the hot industry buzzwords, with software companies (mostly American-based) going all out to support the idea - but with little to actually substantiate in the way of finished product.

But to be fair to the late, great Cannon Cinema, it's not their fault - in fact after the first few, unsuccessful experiments (*Defender*, *SD* and *Wind* to name but three), the stars went on to produce some of the most cinematic "interactive movies" ever seen - *Rocky Range*, *Wings and a Gun* and *The Desert* all hit their target magnificently, building genuinely playable games around true cinematic presentation and atmosphere. The problem was that many of the companies that have tried to follow Cannon Cinema's lead didn't quite get hold of the right end of the stick, and most of the "playable films" that have so far emerged as a result have been disappointing to say the least.

Of course it's arguable that the whole idea of interactive movies, at least in their truest sense, is a load of old hokum. "Okay okay, so we're going to argue with the fact that it sounds great. The chance to really be Luke Skywalker and really fly an X-Wing down the Death Star trench and really cross swords with Vader is undeniably a pretty neat concept. But of course it's not going to happen without some kind of radical technological development, and even with that side of things seen to, the whole concept still seems flawed. No matter how "virtual" the experience is, the whole idea of the viewer's lead character (or you) being able to make spontaneous and free-willed decisions that affect the course of the plot completely goes against the principles that allow and ensure to work in the first place.

A smart screenwriter uses character and action to structure his story in an exciting way, with different



STILL NOT GROWING...

plot elements combining to create new situations which push the story forward. The film's decisions are carefully planned and made not just to reveal his character, but also to help the plot develop in an exciting manner. How could an intense true movie develop the story to reach a "real" way to the hero's decisions when they're being made spontaneously by the player? Even if the program was smart enough to allow the artificial character to respond rationally, half the time the actual result would be as dull as dishwater.

The only way to create a properly structured story which builds up to a suitably worthy climax is to force it onto the player by creating the plot to develop in a certain way with only minor changes, regardless of what player decisions are made - and that, of course, compromises the interactivity. This is the approach taken by most of today's cinema software, such as Wing Commander II and the likes of David Wolf's Secret Agent - and all it does is prove that the two concepts "interactive" and "novels" are as alike as chalk and cheese. An also excellent bit may be said as a pipe dream, in practical terms it's a self-defeating exercise. As a I'd thought much was being made of CD-I, CD-ROM, CDTV and CDi what have you's "play the film" potential about a year ago, we've still seen nothing of note, save through these strange devices are readily available now. CD-I's Prodeo killer on the CDTV amounted to little more than an elaborate extended

dialogue with a decision to make every now and again. Though the logic-concepts did their best at the time, the reality of CD-I's shortcomings have proved that there's little potential beyond making conventional games simply bigger in size. And that's like saying a three-foot film's better than a two-foot film. Never mind the quality, first the wiff!

But so does it's starting to sound very gloomy and depressing, isn't it? Don't fret! First, the video-idea of actually interacting with characters and their being a lot more wild and that reality may be a pretty far-fetched notion, but that's not to say that the novel should be thrown in altogether.



It's arguable that the whole idea of interactive movies, at least in their truest sense, is a load of old bollocks.

Comsumer has proved that the idea, at least in its most basic form, can work. Rather than trying to simulate the more complex and deeper elements of movie making - character, story structure and so on - games like *I Came From The Desert* and *Market Ranger* succeed by building the framework of a simple, playable game and dressing it with cinematic effects, music and atmosphere. Though the result isn't really the interactive movie it claims to



be, the experience is actually cinematic. Many of the techniques that we need to create atmosphere and tension in movies can - and do work equally well in games. *I Came From The Desert's* soundtrack, for example, is so perfectly scored to match like it is meant to be that it's music that, as far as you care are concerned at least, you might as well be at the pictures. A game doesn't need to play like a film to be cinematic - it just has to feel like one.

APCALYPSE NOW!

Strangways Software's forthcoming shoot 'em up *Apocalypse* may not have the most cinematic gameplay in the world, but thanks to the talents of graphic artist Paul "Duke" Deckerly, what it does have is an intense experience that's storyboarded to almost exactly the same way as a legitimate movie scene, using many of the same tricks and techniques to create the go game ambience. Duke himself was nice enough to take us through it...

FRANK: This movie starts out in total darkness and the first thing we see is a flash reflecting off a single lightbulb.

FRANK: In the next split second we see a flashlight beam in a shot and pointed by two hands around the back of a damaged car, but the entire picture continues up to the car. Notice the use of a very close shot, reflecting how closely behind the main image.

FRANK: There's a striking flash across and for the first of the entire picture the footage's fixed. It lasts, notice figure makes a dramatic of the scene again, there is little light and the film is obscured.

FRANK: We cut back to the first shot, and the entire on the light focuses the flashlight's beam. There's a crash on the lower edge.

FRANK: The "camera" moves to close on the target character in pain. Now this distance we can see that we're looking through a window and there's a close-up shot that has been edited to position.

FRANK: Another close shot, this time to the face of the leading photographer, who has moved to close to get a good view of his victim. At this to make, and there's the expression/face for a while, notice distance at the window above film.

FRANK: The window continues an extremely quick and under the business, notice how contrast is used almost over the actual interlocking of words in describing the film.

FRANK: The camera goes to better still as the hand is placed to the window's height. By the end, the shot goes back to looking out into the window.

FRANK: Now looking at our victim's face, which now takes up the entire screen, the expression is gone on.

FRANK:

DE: The camera goes into extreme close-up on the face in position right to the window's height. And this...

FRANK: There's a close-up of a smiling character's face, and we see a dramatic photographic composition of the last frame, probably taken just before the footage was cut and sent out to its package. Now there's going for more film.

FRANK: All graphics are working normally in composition, as we see a character in the center of the frame.





with Persona's dramatic score that uses the cinematic style that the game's narrative takes, and that it's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. Persona's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.



Persona's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.

GAME THAT WORKED



PERSONA 3

Persona 3's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.



IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

Persona 3's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.



ALIAS

Persona 3's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.

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PERSONA 3

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GAME THAT DIDN'T



PERSONA 3

Persona 3's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.

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THE BARD

Persona 3's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.



PERSONA 3 (AND ALL THE BEST OF THEM)

Persona 3's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.

There's a point that seems to be filtering through to a lot of game designers, who are starting to use more and more cinematic techniques to make their games with more style and atmosphere. Persona 3's dramatic score is a great example of how to use cinematic music to create a mood in a game. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games. It's not a bad idea to use cinematic music in other games.



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A320

A·I·R·B·U·S

...is on final approach.



It's hard to tell Dick Tracy's a movie about a film about movies. Though the film had two credits devoted to cinema, it's the look and language of a movie that's the real star. Dick Tracy's look is so striking, so cinematic, that it's hard to believe it's a game. The film's look is so cinematic, that it's hard to believe it's a game. The film's look is so cinematic, that it's hard to believe it's a game.

although some of the more challenging moments can produce "oh's" and "ah's" that are very definitely reminiscent of Saturday night on the Silver.

The idea behind Delphine's version of Cinematique adventures was always to simulate movie presentation to create a mood involved, atmospheric experience. Despite some impressive music, early attempts like *Palace Wars* and *Operation Stealth* were just very clean, playable adventures with little in the way of cinematic qualities. But like *Cinemaworld*, these early experiments have led to a better understanding of what works and what doesn't, so now with games like *Crisis For A Corps* and the forthcoming *Another World*, Delphine is at last achieving its ideal.

The tricks used within the game's animation

sequences are really little more than imitations of the camera techniques used in conventional movie-making, and viewed like that it seems like a pretty cheap trick—but it works. Interacting between shots, focus-pulling and slow panning over panoramic scenes are all techniques that have been employed to great atmospheric effect. A current favorite of Delphine's, although one that obviously is not yet included for its own sake is the shot where a character walks right up to camera, completely obscuring it, then the screen quickly cuts and the same character is seen walking away down the rest of the landscape, as if he has walked right through the lens. Actually, it looks a bit crap—but then so does the original camera shot which hardly ever gets used these days on which it was based. After all, they used it in the Professionals opening credits sequence every week, so it's a bit much when by now.

Of course, if any kind of software is obliged to be cinematic in style, it's that most hated and downgraded sub-genre, the film license. Because its inspiration is from commercially successful movies, it's hard to see, the potential for resolution is far



Many of the audiovisual techniques

that are used to create atmosphere and tension in movies can and do work equally well in games. A game doesn't need to play like a film in order to be cinematic - it just has to feel like one.

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For more info, see page 100.

LIZI G MILLANREY

They say that Hellgate is the closest form of Hellfire - and in the case of the Foundation Media Software team was following behind. In order to provide the up-and-coming Japanese game with an instant response from reality the artists, the team studied the leader's tight-but-opening credits. When the game later allows that you'll see the word "HELLGATE" and just wait until after the intro, and remember it exactly for the game. The credits themselves have been changed to copy to the programming and design team, but other than that everything is identical - right down to the way that the words look across the screen from their own computer text. The opening plot is the same, which is a remarkable state of affairs if you think about their work. At times it's a strong hint, but also shows there's no one saying that it was better, because the plot is left open from the way that writing the game that afterwards spiritual situation has.



greater than with original 'interactive movies', which are basically just a bunch-ports of techniques/borrowed from films in the relevant genre.

Where there's just a single, identified source, as in the case with a film licence, the designers have almost unlimited scope with which to produce something that really does look, sound and/or feel like the movie it's based on, because the basis is that much more obvious. Unfortunately for the most part all we get are assembly-line disasters like *Duke and Gnighted* - but that's more the fault of sloppy design than fundamental flaws in the concept of licensed software.

More often than not it's the whole licence "thing" that has to carry the can when a poor film fails to be rewarded by the magazines, runs through with the majority of films, the software potential has been far higher than the limited-edition cabinets that normally turn up. *Die Hard* is a fine example - what could have been a better of a platform-based door-top-up film was, after all, set in a multi-story skyscraper eventually

appeared as a small's part writer graphics made adventure that, in terms of feel would have been more suited to *Tomb of Underworld* than John McTearna's action rollercoaster.

For a film licence to succeed as a film licence, it has to transfer the elements that people remember from the movie so that it will cover those moments - if a film is "die", like *Die Hard* or *Predator* - the game should match that speed. Atmosphere is not to mention through lighting, point of view and other most important, music and sound, so that the player experiences, if only in a filtered form, some of the same tension and excitement that lingers when watching the movie. Because the two mediums are so far apart technically, it's difficult to imagine a game having an atmosphere equivalent to that of the film - but it can and does work. Games like LucasArts' interpretation of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* and, to a greater extent, the original UK-produced version of *Alien* prove it. **BB**

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The whole point of creating cinema-movies can be taken further - people who get shot on the big screen don't miraculously flake away as they hit the ground, so why should it be any different in the software incarnation? And why, for example, in Total Recall, do the bullets only travel fractionally faster than the characters themselves? Computers like these only dilute the player's sense of involvement. It's not as if the software has to be grotesquely and graphically violent in order to keep up with the movie's violence, but some effort should at least be made to accurately reflect that side of the film.

In a film like The Terminator, where everything hangs on the intensity of the violence, there's really no other way to do the game if the feel of the film is going to be captured. Probe Software, who are producing the forthcoming Megalake version for Virgin Games, deserve a slap on the back for recognizing, albeit in a slightly muted-down way, that violent feel, which in turn helps to provide a sense of 'pew'.

Most of the time though, such an approach has to be hedged if not only to ensure that it doesn't cause trouble with the various distributors and retailers, but because of pressure put on by the business. Games based on films where the violence is all the more 'soft', such as The Untouchables and The Confessor, have often had to be toned down because the film-makers don't approve. But why? What are they so worried about?

Probe Software are taking the Terminator movie licensing option. It's about 10% less than the other options, but the license fee for the rights to the movie is about 10% more than the other options. The license fee for the movie is about 10% more than the other options. The license fee for the movie is about 10% more than the other options.

Curious to what the critics may believe, the two mediums are getting closer, in terms of how they're received, how they're perceived and - most importantly - how they thrill and maintain their audience. Though there's still no concrete proof on any of the game-to-film transitions that have been flying about over the last few months (remember Dustin Hoffman as intense Salt Lary and Danny DeVito as Marco),

given the ever-rising worldwide popularity of Nintendo and the members in general, the first game-inspired movie can't be too far away. And if that ball ever gets rolling it should bring the world of cinema and software closer still. And then we'll finally see some action. And cinema. And lights...

By Gary White



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SHADOWLANDS

Just what is the secret of a good isometric-3D role-playing game? Teque London, developers of *Shadowlands* for Domark, think they know. ACE travelled into the heart of the East End to shed a little light on the work so far...

It seems like the World and his with us tonight get their fingers into the 'non-friendly' RPG pit, especially those with an isometric-3D bias. In the last couple of months alone we've seen Core's *Wizard* and Millennium's *Robin Hood*, and it won't that long ago that Imagework's *Gateway* and SA's *Isometric* were doing the highly successful rounds.

But all these games suffer from one major flaw - there's only one central character. Of course, in any 'normal' game this is par for the course, but in an RPG game it's tantamount to *Marathon*. Ask one RPG aficionado and they'll tell you that it's the fact that players are members of a party of two or more characters that make the games so special. Admittedly *Wizard* has a 'theoretical' party of three wandering about, but since only one member is ever seen on-screen at any time that party just isn't there.

However, this point certainly hasn't been lost on Teque London, software developers for Domark (among others). Down in the heart of the East End, the team are tinkering and refining a stunning new isometric-3D RPG system that could provide a welcome shot in the arm for a genre that's become a little stagnant.

The team are quite open to their admiration for *Dungeons & Dragons*, and there are various aspects of *Shadowlands* that smack of PTL's classic. From the plot, about a dimensional rift through guiding a party of four characters through a series of dungeons in an attempt to recover its body, some strangely familiar. Dean Lister, Teque's MD, explains "We all loved *Dungeons & Dragons* but I don't think any of us had actually sat down and read the scenario properly. It was only after we'd come up with our plot that the similarities were pointed out to us." Whatever, the ever-loving spirit lives down at least



From *Shadowlands* you can always enter your character in a variety of costumes to make your own version of a classic role-playing game.

give a logical path in the fantasy world context explanation for the first-eye view of the action.

Visually *Shadowlands* has nothing to say about Teque are calling, about *Shadowlands*. It's a unique light-rendering system whereby every illuminated object throws out its own pool of light. As any objects or features outside the light are shown as mysterious silhouettes, it's a incredibly effective way of generating intense mood and atmosphere. Just what is that shuffling towards you? Only one way to find out.

And as the party's two best clerics slowly down to gathering flames, the pool of light slowly draws in around them until they are left standing over each other in the semi-darkness.

But the important thing about *Shadowlands* is that it isn't just a superficial graphics work. These moments are filled in various differing ways by the presence or absence of light, and light sources in the walls may open or close traps or have a myriad of other effects.



Left and right screens show complete view and right column (shown above) shows the party's available characters. The party's available characters are shown in the bottom right corner of the screen.

Shadowlands is being programmed by Barry Carter personally on the ST using the BRAEM development system on the IBM PC, with an Amiga conversion to follow. As you can see from the screenshots, the light pools are locked around the edges rather than being circular. It's a necessary compromise—circles would be too time-consuming to draw and certainly slow the game down. "When we first had the idea for the game, Barry did some calculations to see if it would go fast enough," points out Dean. "Shadowlands is now running just about as fast as an ST can go. It's all a case of compromising between the best graphical effect and speed."

On top of this aesthetic splendor, Shadowlands has one of the most elegant and friendly user-interfaces I've ever seen in an RPG. Characters can be made to perform a whole range of actions from walking to picking-up objects to pulling a switch by simply clicking a couple of times with the mouse button. Items can be put into each character's backpack, pulled-out or swapped around with ease. It's a complete joy to use.

Another nice point about the game is that because the party members can be directed individually if needs be, there's a real RPG 'feel' to the game: that the party is a band of very-different characters. Because of this, there's a degree of multi-tasking where one character can be doing one thing in one area of the game while another is doing something completely different somewhere else. Thus while three of the players are looting waste in a party of twelve, the fourth party-member could be getting to some health-restoring pig in a safe room.

Shadowlands has been in development the eight months now, and the path hasn't been easy. "Lots of decisions around early to make when we thought about them but were hard when it came to doing it," laments Dean. A particular example of this is the pits. Objects or people thrown down them have to appear in a certain point on the level below. Sounds easy, but when you have several pits on a level they all have to relate to each other physically and the actual job of passing the object data between levels is a pig.



With Shadowlands not due for release until March of next year, it's already looking remarkably polished and... well... finished. "If the level maps were done the game would only be about a month away," says Dean. "It's just a case of getting all the graphics done now." All at Teque seem very pleased with what they've achieved. "We wanted Shadowlands to be the RPG that we always wanted to play—a combination of both Gauntlet and Dungeon Master. Of course, we still can't play it because we're the ones who have written it," sighs Dean. "Shadowlands is an impressive change of direction for Teque, who are probably best known for their role as converters. Take my word for it, this is going to be very, very big indeed. And that's without a shadow of a doubt."

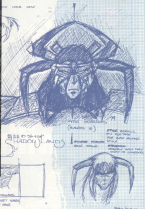
By David Gibson

Right: The inventory screen is shown with a scroll bar to view items. Below are the character status screens for the party. The screen on the right shows the character's current status, including the amount of health, mana, and experience. The screen on the left shows the character's equipment, including the weapon and armor.

The right is the screen for the party's status. It shows the health, mana, and experience of each party member. The screen on the left shows the party's equipment, including the weapon and armor. The screen on the right shows the party's current location and the map of the game world.



Left: Barry Carter, the programmer, and Barry Carter, the artist, are shown in the background. The screenshot shows the game's main menu, which includes options for 'New Game', 'Load Game', 'Options', and 'Quit'.



THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE...

Photocore is ^{not} yet, but apparently they're working on it) to introduce a graphics system to use not just one game, so it comes as no surprise to learn that there are already plans afoot for another Photocore game. Well, this is the fantasy game, so surely the other would be to do a space game next, right? Slightly embarrassed unless all sound of Vegas, "Okay to say," unless Dean, "but that's exactly what we'd thought of."

Apparently plans are afoot to do an Alone-style game, featuring a kind of space mariner on a mission to explore a dark, desolate 3D-rendered space ship. The light would come from lamps mounted on their helmets, so theory it's exactly like it would work brilliantly, especially with all the ideas swirling about half seen in the darkness.

Photocore's design phase, the game actually as a game, so they're not just sketching out a concept based on sketches and models, they're also doing the actual coding of the game engine. Although this still is a bit of a stretch for the game engine, they're not sure how to do it. As the development of the game engine, they're not sure how to do it. As the development of the game engine, they're not sure how to do it.

Dean: One of the best things about Photocore is that it's not just a game, it's a way of thinking about a game. It's not just a game, it's a way of thinking about a game. It's not just a game, it's a way of thinking about a game.

After that, one of the best things about Photocore is that it's not just a game, it's a way of thinking about a game. It's not just a game, it's a way of thinking about a game. It's not just a game, it's a way of thinking about a game.



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Right: The character of the warrior, the hero of the game, is shown in a more dynamic pose in the new version. Below: A scene from the game showing a warrior in a loincloth, surrounded by other warriors in a mountainous landscape.

You know the scene in the System File when Harry Palmer is being intimidated by enemy agents? They're trying to break down his resistance to their own way of thinking by using plenty of verbal techniques. Talking to System 3 Executive Adrian Cole is a surprisingly similar experience. In Myth's case, Cole's dogmatically-determined promotion of his product at last has a solid foundation, since it's shaping up to be one of the best 16-bit to 26-bit conversions yet.

In its Spectrum and CII incarnations, Myth was the story of an innocent youth transported back through a mystical vortex to a wondrously mythical time. In order to return to his everyday existence, our hero had to complete a number of tasks—killing Medusa, Styxian, etc.—while progressing through a maze of different time zones and locations. The game was fantastically well received by both press and public, and 16-bit versions were underway before you could spit.

However, Myth has been a long time in development, and with a brace of similarly heroic games ahead the understandably clear release date. None of Veri Systems must surely be nervous about releasing what is essentially an updated version of a game that is two years old!

Not so, according to Adrian Cole. "Yes, the game has been in development for a long time and this, in a way, has helped us by allowing our designers to invest more and more valuable man hours into creating a product which should appeal to the new market, two years on from the first version.

"The game has long since surpassed the label of a 'conversion' and has gone on to be developed more and more for the specific 16-bit market, so as to become a major stand alone product in it's own right. The game's features have been greatly enhanced and more and more has been added to really to and

MYTH

Since being awarded a Golden Joystick back in 1989 as Best 8-Bit Game of the Year, Myth has been under continual change and revision as System 3 endeavours to turn its novelty hit into a full blown 16-bit epic. Now the work is nearing completion...

paths the Ariqis to reach the river way the CII version profited that machine.

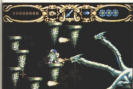
"With astonishing flight moves and full on-line FPS, the warrior surely had it coming. There are situations within this game the likes of which we have never seen before, and a place where these music as crisp as you are likely to hear on the Ariqis. The sheer scale of Myth with its heroic monsters and dramatic set pieces really puts it in a class of its own. Games such as First Samurai use very different techniques and more regulated sprite sizes."

Quite. System 3's determination to turn Myth into a high profile mass market, plenty of fun and points of sale creation has even gone so far as involving a complete change of the central character. Our hero the boy now does with his Tablet and prism, and in



control a huge two-colored barbed barbed with the most peculiar muscle groups you've ever seen. Why?

"All the while in the development we hesitated about this latest Mega Drive game, as we want to give the guy with an Ariqis a game about vehicles he can see. 'Yeah, but have you seen this?' explains Adrian,



"With that in mind, the change of central character into a super, hard-headed with an array of extremely violent fighting moves seemed a natural progression and an obvious enhancement when attempting this as a console-style game."

Further changes have been made to the graphic style of the game, switching from a Low-poly style of up to a more conventional style size. Even though the tiny graphics were partly responsible for the speed of the first game, the team remains adamant that this new direction is correct. *Continues Adrian*

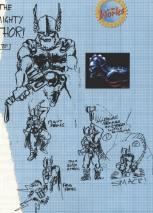
"The 3D-bit graphics are a great improvement on the original version. The major battles have been enlarged while the human characters remain small and vulnerable. The scale of the game remains epic, and the sinister atmosphere greatly enhanced. The demon that resides in the Hell level takes up half the screen, as do the Hydra and Demonic apes."

Isolating the depth of puzzles in the game, versus Cain, will help increase the longevity of the play without slowing down the arcade action list. Most of the puzzles in depth are based around upgrades and some general knowledge as to the weaknesses of mythical creatures is a definite player advantage. There are also some graphical clues dotted around the levels which will point out for the more die-hard players in the right direction, to effort has been made to ensure the puzzles are progressive in nature and that the player doesn't get bogged down simply by being unaware of his own objectives.

Adrian elaborates: "There are different styles of arcade adventures. A game with a sprawling maze explorational feel would fall into our tried and true of last Ninja series of games. This tends to put the game's emphasis on strategy and exploration with bucket loads of hacking and slaying. It's a case of

THE MIGHTY THOR!

BY



That the bit when you're programming a new game with an action-adventure theme.

Should have been a much more... the 3D-bit graphics... the 3D-bit graphics... the 3D-bit graphics...



These screenshots are from the Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance demo. The screenshots are from the Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance demo. The screenshots are from the Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance demo.



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HARDIE



by [unreadable]

getting the balance right and so by stretching the existing compact levels we would run the risk of losing the balance one way or another and disrupting the intended overall feel of the game."

A little over two months away from release, the title is shaping up well, and while final graphics touches are added, most of the final effects are being exerted on compressing the sizable data files. In fact, the folks at EA GAMES are rather proud of their techniques—"The game runs a Dynamic Memory allocation system similar to the Java operating system. This means we can really shift the size for each level between sound effects, music and graphics. We've got up to 25 sprites floating the graphics for one moment, all animating and moving around."

The code with which the programmers are most pleased is also the piece which they found the most challenging. Drinking and animating the three-headed hydra spiders at the end of level three was the toughest part of the job. This creature features the most intense sprite usage, each one having to move around and work in concert with the others. Because of the movement patterns for any sprite would have left the driver attack scenes of the hydra looking better and worse.

It has to be said that the animations, combat scenes and "blood" of the piece look fantastic. And EA GAMES' desire to be viewed as a high-end-games publisher rather than mere purveyors of interminably rehashed combat games may be finally written much.

by Tim Douglas

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Gary Whitta's

previews.....

Alright? Alright? Alright at the back? I'm alright! U Alright?

Actually, I'll tell you what is "alright", and that's all the classy product that will soon be winging its way towards a software shop near you. There's bugger all up the pictures, and the telly's a load of crap, especially on Wednesdays, so it's a good thing that the software scene is looking seasonally healthy as the run up to Christmas enters its second lap. So, prepare to be amazed as we say "Two adults, please" to the scruffy gypsy in the booth at the entrance of the Software Funfare!

DUNE Virgin Games

Though David Lynch's cinematic interpretation of Frank Herbert's best-selling science-fiction novel was an unmitigated disaster - although how anybody could expect a film about a big desert and lots of stupid women to be a success is beyond me - whatever the official licensed game is at least with us, courtesy of Virgin and French developer Cyp. It takes the form of an animated graphical adventure, set a million miles away from the soft turned out by LucasArts and Delphine, but with an innovative strategy element built-in too. It's certainly very pretty, and boasts a stunning cinema-style soundtrack. ST, Amiga and PC versions are due out next Easter - and keep an eye out for King, who makes a cameo appearance as he did in the movie.



WOLFCHILD Core Design

Simon Phipps is generally regarded as the King of console-style platform action games. The now belted DeathMatch and the awesome Rick Dangerous series must be doing something right, after all, how the genius with the multi-limbed hairstyle is finally lowering his sights to be his masterpiece to date. In a nutshell, WolfChild is an old action arcade adventure that's best described as a cross between Rick Dangerous and Tetris, encompassing many of the Japanese influences and touches that are Phipps' trademark. Technically it's astounding - 64 on-screen colours, six degrees-of-tilt planes, parallel scrolling and more of the latest, smoothest movement ever seen on a computer screen. The game's name derives from the fact the hero's ability to transform into a man-eating creature to help him deal with his adversaries as he battles through the game's five levels and zone screens. WolfChild will be released in time for Christmas on ST and Amiga - a further number one, perhaps!



SUSPICIOUS CARGO Corel

What with the success of *Star Trek: Voyager*, Monkey Island and Sierra's wares of late, the adventure game is fast cutting back into favour - and Corel's forthcoming addition to the genre promises to be one of the tastiest examples of the genre so far. It's space-based, turn-driven and allegedly comes with a sense of humour, provided by the game's main character, free-wheeling space pilot Josh Hertz. The pilot has you, as Hertz, attempting to smuggle a very dodgy cargo: consignments of genetic experiments across the cosmos while avoiding the attention of the various galactic authorities. Similar in style and presentation to Corel's earlier space adventure *RAE* (Jane Seymour), *Suspicious Cargo* combines elements of *Dangerous* (Masters' style) RPG adventuring with a nice discolor, non-input adventure games and even a couple of snake and puzzle-based sub-games. It's out at the end of November.



TURBO CHARGE System 3

After a long period of relative inaction, System 3 is starting to get its act back together again, and one of the Power-based firm's more promising coming attractions is this rather nice car-race-sim. Originally titled *Thunder*

Gary Whitta's previews.....

and set in the world of international drug dealing. The player takes the role of some top secret agent or something, who must drive his souped-up Lamborghini Countach, Chase HQ style, over a series of deadly highways in pursuit of the periodic pushing prawns. There are lots of hot-on weapons to collect and hot gun agents to use them on, so action of sound is guaranteed. Remember the world of *Fire and Forge*? What we've promised here is a decent version of that in proper speed, decent explosions and all the attendant nice little touches. Get yourself under stress before for its release at the start of the new year.



CORPORATION Virgin Games

It's not hard to murder one on the Amiga and get local publisher Core Design up there with the software big boys where it was released last year - and now Megabyte owners can sample the delights of Kevin Bullard's brilliant arcade adventure Corporation.

It's been co-developed by Core themselves, so you can be sure of a good job, and for the most part everything remains the same - although the old hardware line has come up with some slightly better graphics and the CD update is likely to be a bit spicier. Quite how Corporation's involved gameplay and sinister atmosphere will go down with action-oriented Megabyte gamers remains to be seen, but if my guess is right they should snap up the opportunity to do something a bit more interesting than business away on the few buttons for a change. The release date's been set for the early part of 1994.



CHUCK BUCK Virgin Games

Universally regarded as one of Core Design's best games to date, it comes as no surprise to learn that the critical arcade adventure Chuck Buck has been selected for conversion to the Megabyte - critics raved over its considerable gameplay, so it's a shame it's being given a more appropriate home on cartridge. Gary Carter's back in all his glory, this time with a set of all new artistic touches to make his adventures all the more pricy. Look out in particular for the superb multi-level puzzle scrolling, which gives the game a little more strong mind-bending feel. Like Corporation, Chuck Buck will be hitting the streets in the first quarter of 1994. At least that's what the software people say, bigger bosses what it means...



UNDER PRESSURE Electronic Arts

Embark The Cat, creators of the excellent futuristic sports simulation Persepolis, returns to the software big boys with Under Pressure - a very strange game indeed. In it the player is cast as the pilot of a giant (and I mean giant, take a look at the pilot 300-odd type robot walker thing, who must blast his way through a series of alien worlds to rescue his kidnapped girlfriend. Admittedly it's pretty simplistic stuff, but some elements, such as a variety of vicious hot-on weapons and the occasional puzzle promise to make it all the more compelling. And though the gameplay may not be all that innovative, the graphics certainly are as Under Pressure boasts some of the largest sprites



ever seen in a computer game. With a bit of luck, it'll be out by the end of the year, so you CD-headers keep an eye out, y'hear?

INDY HEAT Seam

Fans of the very excellent Super Offroad Race will be more than chuffed to hear that there's another top-down arcade racer on the way, once again converted from a beloved coin-op - they did the original Offroad machine as well, you see! But there's no more messing around on dirt tracks here - Indy Heat is set in the rather more glamorous world of grand prix racing, with four cars battling it out over 15 increasingly tortuous single-screen tracks. There are lots of neat touches, such as the ability to customize cars and working pit-crops, plus there's a juicy three-judged profitability even for player strategists (a nice spin, so you can get together with your mates for a real demolition derby). Co-developed by the same big names that did *Rolland* and *SWIN*, Indy Heat goes on the grid in January next year.



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UNREAL	(Amiga)
BAT	(Amiga)



Master! Super Offroad 20 is another top-down, aerial wheel-on-top play that the

best is so close that it is an intense 3D racing, long track, futuristic

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SCREENTEST



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elcome! Welcome one and all to a thoroughly awesome reading experience. You are about to enter the ACE ScreenTest section, the most detailed and trustworthy reviewing system in the universe!

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The **ACE Rating** - a score out of 1,000 - is the most instant gauge of the quality of the game.

An **ACE Trailblazer** award goes to games scoring over 900. These are recommended without hesitation. They are "must buys".

Titles which excel in a particular area also stand the chance of being awarded a **Sound, Graphics or Idea award** (for innovation).

There's even beginners' **hints** to get you through the early stages should you buy the game that month and can't wait for our detailed tips the following issue.

Finally, the **PC save** details our feelings as to the longevity of the game.



BMW (BMW)

The follow-up to *Silverton* succeeds through a combination of thematic speed, polished presentation and those, unaltered action. Turn and burn it! The frequency and usage on screens is of a level that for outside anything offered before. A *Top* ride-up with no rival.

6888 (Mongoose)

While it may be argued that it's not as intricately sophisticated as the likes of *Risk Dungeons* or *Prince of Persia*, the *6888* (Mongoose) platform opens doors after enough fully-rendered scenes to make it the outright winner in this category. Classy and delectable.

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER (OR Gold/100)

By the mighty word of King! *Eye of the Beholder* and *Dungeons* game takes the best bits of *Dungeons Master*, adds a few more items, also well, and the result is the best yet the games into the whole fantasy genre. Will you rule the RPG land forever?

LOOK OFF 2 (Aster)

What can we say? It's pretty pointless trying to explain to the initiated what makes *Look Off 2* a no-brainer playable, but the primary reasons are extra-interactive ball control mode and remarkable speed which combine to make it as exciting as the real game!

RAILROAD TYCOON (Micropos)

Building a railroad empire may sound like hard work, but for those who like their strategy to run deep, *Rail Master's* simulation of that very pursuit is FUN FUN FUN! Plenty of fiscal manipulations and turn-of-the-century power banking for budding industrialists.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND (ES Gold/Gamesoft)

Partly due to the new refined version of the SCUMM adventure system and partly due to the excellent, and very funny script, this is the most enjoyable and entertaining adventure game for years. But will *Monkey Island* take a bite to come?

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX (Micropos)

A new *Formula 1* So perfect it's almost impossible to find any fault in this awesome game from *Com2* Gamesoft, included with helpful pointers for novices and lots of detail for the experienced drivers, it will keep you driving for years.

ACE BENCHMARKS

The games listed here are the very best of their particular genre. The benefits of your being fully acquainted with our Benchmarks are twofold.

The Benchmarks provide a solid reference point when it comes to games lagging time. By glancing at our description of the benchmark, you'll be able to decide if particular differences in the new game's design would make the new title more or less appealing for you.

Also, no software collection is complete unless it contains all the games listed here. If you're missing any of these titles, go and remedy the situation immediately.



3Dx (System 3)

An upgraded and enhanced version of the original *System 3* classic, *Stunt Machine 3Dx* is still unchanged in its field after three years. Its most noticeable speed is the addition of a third, computer controlled fighter. Incredible speed and sublimity.

STUNT CAR RACER (Microstyle)

Stunt Car Racer packs polygon-plotting power and attitude-speed skills into a novel formula. Drive around obstacle courses, avoiding and crushing your opponent into oblivion. Growing audio and a visual look add money value to this class title.

JAMES WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SMOOGER (Vigra)

Another *Machine* does it again, and has to go down in the history books as having produced the first ever multi-tilt shooter game. Tremendous 3D realism with authentic play and more options than ever before possible. An awesomely good game.

CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT (Electronic Arts)

The third game to be included by the *Machine* looking. General takes place in a less-than-ideal combat arena. You get to fly every plane you've ever dreamt of and you get to fight every plane you ever thought of too. And all in super speed or polygon graphical.

MEGA IN MEGA (Image Works)

Image Software's first attempt at strategy is a surprisingly successful one. At first glance, it may seem similar to *Papapou*, but further inspection reveals it to be a genuinely original strategy epic. But will *Papapou* or the next month, and *Mega's* brief reign.

SETRA (Nintendo)

There are more official versions of this classic than can be counted on the top of a milkpail. But it's *Nintendo's* own *Comet* version that is undoubtedly the best. Line up blocks in frantic black & white action. May sound dull but it's actually fantastic.

SUPER MARIO WORLD (Nintendo)

The master they claim the *Nintendo* new have the better, so that will give more chance to experience the amazing fourth installment in the saga. These perfection fans start to end of its interplay level!



Class Trade Advisor
 Publisher: Core Design
 Designer: The Eighth Day
 Price: £20.00

HEIMDALL

Though the merry Norsemen's unofficial European tour may have been somewhat less than subtle, there can be little doubt that they stamped their axe-shaped mark on history with remarkable style. Diplomacy? **Fah.** When you've got an axe and a sword in one hand, a flaming torch in

the other and a beard that looks like it's capable of withstanding all on its own, people just seem to follow themselves to accommodate you. And if they don't follow, you can always give them a hand by chopping their legs off. And burning their houses down. And killing their family.

It was probably on a cold and windy day somewhere in Norway sometime during the dark ages that somebody probably called something like *Foh* was hit by the Viking hammers. Subsequently anyone who could swing a sword and hold their aboriginal their names in things like Thorstein Thingstone and the Viking Emperor was born. Well, not so much as Vikings, more a sort of well organized/loosely kept brigade. But while *Corvi* (later - and arguably more elaborate - effort Heimdall paints a much more positive picture of the Nordic toolpans that history would have us believe, it's still a pretty straightforward effort.

Those who have a passing familiarity with Viking lore should have no trouble realising Heimdall's alternative for the best scenario. The contrast still see that rages between the eternal forces of good and evil and is destined to decide the fate of mankind takes an unexpected turn for the worse when those of *Good*'s most powerful weapons of war are stolen by the evil Loki, brother of Thor the Thunder God, Odin's second, Frey's spouse and Thor's legendary hammer have been spirited away into the natural world - where the Gods cannot reach. Without their weapons, the forces of *Good* are powerless against

Loki and his cronies, so they devise a plan to retrieve them by physical means - thus they create an infant human, Heimdall, and send him to Earth to be raised by the Vikings. When he reaches adulthood he will set sail across the Norse islands to recover the weapons of the Gods and realize his divine destiny.

At least that's the theory. The Gods can only influence the physical world so much, and so the fate of the Universe ends almost solely in Heimdall's hands - in, years. Throughout his childhood, Heimdall has little to worry about, apart from participating in a trio of traditional Viking leisure pastimes which will have bearing on the main game later - one 'The Trials of Lull' (sic). Once adulthood is reached however, the real adventure begins, with the God's Gift to Vikings setting sail in search of the three weapons. Each one is hidden somewhere within a giant archipelago of islands, and thorough exploration is required to locate and acquire them. In theory Heimdall needs only playing elements with no real adventure theme and themes in a little arcade-style action to provide, if you will, a fully rounded gaming experience. In practice it's probably best described as 'The Inevitable with Vikings' in it.

Locating the weapons is a complex affair - in the initial stages Heimdall and his additional crewmen take to the water in their longboats for the use of the islands, as chosen from the initial parchment-style map-of-the-archipelago. Practical restrictions - food being the most important - dictate that Heimdall can only sail within a certain range, so only a hand-



Heimdall's three longboats set out to find the three weapons. Heimdall's crewmen will be able to sail to the islands and back again for food and water.

Heimdall's crewmen will be able to sail to the islands and back again for food and water. Heimdall's crewmen will be able to sail to the islands and back again for food and water. Heimdall's crewmen will be able to sail to the islands and back again for food and water.



The three weapons were hidden somewhere in the archipelago. Heimdall's crewmen will be able to sail to the islands and back again for food and water. Heimdall's crewmen will be able to sail to the islands and back again for food and water. Heimdall's crewmen will be able to sail to the islands and back again for food and water.

lot of islands are accessible at the outset, reaching the more remote ones is achieved by moving in small steps. From island to island, picking up food for the next voyage during the player's adventures there. Hailing is handled automatically - just select an in-range destination and progress is charted on the map by means of an balloon, free-style sailing red line. The player may have to apply some navigational skills in order to avoid pirate raids on a whelped island; can measure the depth if it gets too close) and a multicolor sea monster.

Once landed on an island, be it an open air village or indoor castle-type situation, the real start/ing begins. Each of the islands is presented as an enormous maze-like network of roads, caverns and chambers-comprising a mix of instilling areas and single *Galaxy*-style flat screens. Of the six men on the landed boat, the player can select up to three men to follow as "way team" to do the actual searching - each character comes complete with his or her own RPG-style status, strengths and characteristics, and in this real *Wizard* himself won't always be a member of the landing party - although his strong character makes him a good choice for lead man in most situations.

The path through each island is anything but easy, as the emphasis is not made over an alternate than words. To make things simpler, the three-man party is viewed as one screen as a single person who's been selected as the current active character - it's possible to toggle through all three to make use of their particular objects or abilities by means of a more-conventional RPG-style status screen. The side-playing elements, though still, aren't used very regularly during the normal course of exploration, except when a particular team member is called upon to perform an act or use an object that is unique to him (such as opening a door with a key or casting the magical spell), and for the most part the game calls more on conventional adventuring skills than anything else.

Many of the screens contain some device trap-or puzzle that needs to be selective negotiated in order to reach the next, acquire a particular object or whatever. The elaborate and flexible nature of *Wizard*'s graphics allow for a variety of clever puzzles and effects - switches which must be stepped on in the correct order to unlock an otherwise impassable door, and pull-blocking mechanisms and switches require that only react to the right type of spell.

Contact with other characters brings into play more familiar RPG gameplay in such instances almost inevitably lead to a combat sequence. The stoppage switches to a multi-player icon-driven display similar to that employed by *The Bard's Tale* to allow access to all three characters in the party - simply clicking between them allows the player direct control and access to their abilities. There's a much more steady beat to *Wizard*'s battle screen than the linear way in which stand-alone RPG games handle combat.

Instead of working through a series of "rounds" where characters stand in turn with hit points updated accordingly, fighting in *Wizard* is more like

P-14



Electronic Arts' *The Immortal* is generally held to be the top exponent of the isometric



adventure genre, and *Wizard* is easily as good - if not far quite the same reason. Though *The Immortal* offers more levels, *Wizard*'s quests are larger, meaning that there's at least as much for the player to see and do. *Wizard*, however, scores extra points in this department due to its non-linear construction, which allows the player to explore at will, rather than passing through a set sequence of events. Although it's a tough point, I'd say that *The Immortal* just gives *Wizard* to the graphical point, as though the visuals aren't quite so clearly defined, the remarkable animation gives the game much more character and atmosphere. So there you go, it's all a question of horses for courses really - although for my dock, I'd go for *The Immortal* most days of the week.



Item	Quantity	Weight	Value
Gold	1000	0.00	1000
Silver	500	0.00	500
Iron	100	0.00	100
Wood	100	0.00	100
Food	100	0.00	100
Water	100	0.00	100
Health	100	0.00	100
Magic	100	0.00	100
Strength	100	0.00	100
Wisdom	100	0.00	100
Agility	100	0.00	100
Charisma	100	0.00	100
Intelligence	100	0.00	100
Endurance	100	0.00	100
Speed	100	0.00	100
Accuracy	100	0.00	100
Resistance	100	0.00	100
Attack	100	0.00	100
Defense	100	0.00	100
Mana	100	0.00	100
Stamina	100	0.00	100
Experience	100	0.00	100
Level	100	0.00	100
Skills	100	0.00	100
Spells	100	0.00	100
Equipment	100	0.00	100
Inventory	100	0.00	100
Quests	100	0.00	100
Map	100	0.00	100
Journal	100	0.00	100
Options	100	0.00	100
Help	100	0.00	100



NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

No, but this is. Take a walk with us, why don't you, through one of Heimdall's smaller islands, to get an idea of some of the past sins and obstacles that crop up along the way...

With the only way toward Heimdall's eye on the side, traps like this often catch intruders on the only entrance. Even when there's a different entrance on the side, falling over the trap causes others to be alerted the same it was in the first place. In some cases, the intruders can see the trap.

Remember to look at the corner. You often won't see your full movement path without peering in or right at the corner. In some cases, you can't see the corner at all.

In physics classes, we learn that objects travel straight, unless there's the quality of a propeller. When combined, the end of the nose straightens out, and the rest of the body follows. In the world of Heimdall, that's not so simple. You're not going to be able

to see the rest of the eye in that 90° turn again. There's a window with two panes, but only the left pane has a door. The right pane is a wall. It's not as if you could just fly through with a wing of Heimdall, unless you're so bright and powerful that you're really not so bright.

Although Heimdall's island is not as big as the other islands, it's not as simple as the other islands, either. It's got a lot of traps, and it's got a lot of secrets. It's got a lot of things that you can't see, and it's got a lot of things that you can't do.

Through some of the windows, you can see the island's interior. Sometimes, they're more often than you can see at the same time. In some cases, you can see the island's interior.



On islands where the traps are more subtle, you can see them. It's possible to see them, and you can see them. It's possible to see them, and you can see them. It's possible to see them, and you can see them.

When collecting traps, you'll often find them in the same place. In some cases, you'll find them in the same place.

Heimdall's eye is a powerful tool. It can see through walls, and it can see through walls. It can see through walls, and it can see through walls.

When it comes to traps, you'll often find them in the same place. In some cases, you'll find them in the same place.

Heimdall's eye is a powerful tool. It can see through walls, and it can see through walls.

When it comes to traps, you'll often find them in the same place. In some cases, you'll find them in the same place.

The island's eye is a powerful tool. It can see through walls, and it can see through walls.

When it comes to traps, you'll often find them in the same place. In some cases, you'll find them in the same place.

Heimdall's eye is a powerful tool. It can see through walls, and it can see through walls.

When it comes to traps, you'll often find them in the same place. In some cases, you'll find them in the same place.

Despite *Windfall*'s beautiful look, the objective of the game isn't too easy. That's because, despite good voice and music effects, it's too easy, for example, there is no way to sneak without lighting—and even then the most intimidating-looking suit is silent.

When a light is activated, the camera switches to the story plane from behind scenes. The game can switch between cameras at the push of a button to get the most beautiful lighting capabilities.

ADD BUILT-IN LEVEL-UP when the character is about to attack himself, so the game starts to allow to change the game and character attributes.



CARRY ON VIKING!

Though the Norwegians aren't exactly the wildest people in the world today, back when the Earth was raw and people were wild, they were one of the hardest modes going, in fact. The weekly warrior's exploits became so famous that they're often made their mark in just about every popular culture. The most famous example is Rick O'Connell and Tony Curtis prancing about in silly fish costumes in *The Vikings*, which gets started out by the BBC about once a year. More recently we've had *Ein*, the Viking, which made a rather dubious point of casting an American actor (Tim Robbins, complete with accent) in the title role, and a variety of other, rather poor efforts, including an

incredible faith special in which two Foreigners stage it out with Thor, God of Thunder. Thor also had his own strip in Marvel Comics, which wasn't particularly successful, as well as a supporting role in Douglas Adams' novel *The Long Walk*, *The Tale of the Seal*, and of course, he's not forget good old *Nag* got the flag, the great little Viking who used to lighten up children's television to eat. Little Thor out of the comic might also have been quite a good example of a Viking comic character, but he was a dead end, so there you go. Oh, and there's a wonderful set of *Shant* featuring a character called The Berserker who, just like his Nordic character, not only maintains his opportunity to be a hero, but as well. Come also we've had an *Ein* the Viking adventure (based on Terry Jones' original children's book), a fine quality Commodore 64 effort called *The Vikings* (which was flawed, if nothing else, with a very small font (font) and the classic *Wolfenstein*, which was founded as a landmark in computer entertainment when it was released on the ZX Spectrum with "stunning" yellow and black VGA graphics about seven years ago, but was actually a load of old rubbish. If you are interested in Vikings, you can read some books about them. There are probably some down at your local library.

h windfall provides a much more serene experience than most conventional arcade adventures. The emphasis is set more on exploration than extermination, and as such it's the more thoughtful breed of gamers who are likely to appreciate what it has to offer.



Though *Windfall*'s impressive atmosphere often leads to false claims of the quality, it's impossible to be otherwise to not tell the fantastic. However, that's about the only criticism the game gets through, as the game's atmosphere really helps, many of which don't cost much and they've been changed to be used in the game.

HEIMDALL

to an outside-the-pub punch-up, with everybody pitching into the bloody fray for all when and how they see fit. As well as the standard sword and axe ranges, characters can attack with whatever magic spells they have available as well as defined incoming blows and an occasion pray for a helping hand from the Gods themselves.

And though control of the combat is handled at a distance, so to speak, with the player simply handing out orders to his characters via the icons, there is an element of arcade skill - the graphic windows portraying the current enemy is fully animated, and the success or failure of an attack move depends on the position of the opponent when it's executed. Large when the enemy's shield is raised and the blow will be blocked, but if an attack goes in while the creature is vulnerable (such as when it is about to attack itself), it should hit dead-on and cause maximum damage. Accordingly, the defined option should be selected in synchronisation with the enemy's attacks. If energy is low, or the odds look a bit dodgy, the party can flee to avoid any complications, but doing so forfeits the chance of getting any objects of interest an enemy may be guarding, if it's a doorway to a later part of the level, fighting may be the only way to progress.

Interaction with friendly characters is possible, if a little limited. Sometimes Heimdall's party will meet with villagers or walking shopkeep-folkies who may offer clues, advice or items of interest when questioned. In larger villages, shops provide a place to exchange gold for provisions and weaponry. Other characters, while not exactly hostile to the party's interests, can lay a major pain, often blocking the way forward and refusing to budge until they've been given a particular item - which may need to be sought out independently on a completely different island, opening up yet another challenge.

Such Heimdall groups as are Heimdall's trademark, with tags and icons scattered around in convenient abundance like Cadaver, the Inconceivable and the classic Ultimate genre, such as Knight Law which inspired the whole isometric adventure genre to the



Small illustration showing the character in the hut, and the hut itself, and the surrounding area. The hut is made of wood and has a thatched roof. The character is standing near the entrance. The surrounding area is grassy with some trees in the background.



Amiga version

Expertly defined and coloured characters and backgrounds paint a very pretty picture indeed, and the glossy music helps to tie

on the atmosphere. But however there's a price for all this technical wizardry, and it's a 1MB machine, preferably with an external drive as Heimdall comes on a whopping PCOM-disk. For those who've got the technical muscle to run it though, Heimdall packs a hefty punch.

first place, Heimdall calls on a wide range of the player's resources. Skill and judgement are required to size up the variety of pitfalls and make good efficient use of the wide-ranging spells and objects to be found in the many treasure chests. As one strategy wouldn't go across waters - not the Clay/Populous kind, but at least an expanded plan of how the islands are to be tackled.

The most important quality, however, is patience. Heimdall is a giant game and the multitude of puzzles combined with the way in which the quests have been designed across the islands means that real thought and effort is required if anything is to be gotten out of the game. It's a very thorough game, which scores highly over similar product like Cadaver



as while it's involving, it doesn't get overly complicated or busy too far into the RPG side of things. At heart it's just a very enjoyable arcade adventure with some pleasing extra layers that serve to involve the player more and draw him deeper into the game.

Heimdall, however, is by no means perfect, although the problems are less to do with what's wrong with the game's mixing elements and more to do with what's missing. The role of preliminary 'trial' sequences are a bit of a pain and work well where they are, but more could have been made of the idea of having arcade interludes, perhaps by switching similar sub-sections around within the main game. If nothing else, they would provide the player with some light relief from his heavy-duty quest every now and again.



Heimdall does a fine job of blending together elements of role-playing, strategy, arcade and adventure into a single well-formed and playable game.



Heimdall's world is a vast and complex one, with many different areas to explore and many different challenges to overcome. The game is a mix of role-playing, strategy, arcade and adventure, and it's a very well-formed and playable game.

THE TRIALS OF LIFE

Before the quest can begin, Helmsdal must try his hand at three arcade-style trials. Although these games are simplistic affairs (and perhaps a little out of odds with the virtues of the rest of the game), the player shouldn't be fooled into thinking that success in them is a trivial matter. If Helmsdal performs poorly then the possible candidates that he can choose between to join him on his quest is certainly reduced from the maximum of thirty. And not being able to choose a powerful cleric or tough berserker may have serious consequences later on. The RPG purist will be relieved to hear that they can skip these sequences, at the serious penalty of having the cross shortlist cut down to fifteen.

The First Trial

In the local tavern a beer-soaked Helmsdal must try to free a young girl from the clutches by lobbing large axes at the eight tethered birds holding her trapped. The player guides Helmsdal's aim with the joystick, but a serious case of jitteriness, and even more serious limit on the number of axes makes this a much harder task than it sounds.

The Second Trial

In a muddy field Helmsdal must chase and try to catch a greased warthog. The player guides his on-screen Helmsdal either on as he runs ahead, and well-timed use of the FIRE button is required to make Helmsdal successfully leap onto the pig.

The Third Trial

Helmsdal, rapidly approaching maturity, has to face off against a legion of barabars on board a rocking boat. While trying to "maneuver" his face into the water, Helmsdal also has to avoid becoming a crapper by falling overboard himself.



After the trials, Helmsdal has the choice of whether to travel.

After a quick Helmsdal introduction to the rest of the town and some minor cut-scenes, Helmsdal has to complete some side work before he can go to town. This is done in a subtle, unobtrusive way.

After the trials, Helmsdal has the choice of whether to travel. Helmsdal has the choice of whether to travel. Helmsdal has the choice of whether to travel.



Though the RPG-style battle sequences are more arcade-style than most, because they rely on hand-eye coordination as well as good decision making, they're not different enough to make them really interesting. The more role-playing characteristics could have been applied with equal effect to a side-on first-person type affair. In instances where more is made of the visual aspect, as they are they quickly become more a matter of routine than anything else.

Another very clever form of contention is Helmsdal's graphic presentation. One look at the screenshots should leave you with little doubt that they're technically excellent - so would be expected.



There are a few things to note - but there are doubts as to how suitable these cartoon, arcade-style visuals are to a game and subject matter as hefty as Helmsdal's. Their simplicity, style, somehow belies the serious nature of the game itself, and doesn't go too well with the mighty blood-and-thunder epics that most of us have when we hear the word 'Viking'.

It's possible to push this point further and say that the whole game represents something of a wasted opportunity in terms of how it sees the Viking theme as a basis for its scenario - it's an idea we've not seen used since the ancient Valhalla, and though it's very interesting to see how the world of Helmsdal is built, it's not the most exciting. A lot of things, including murder and pillage, perhaps in those aforementioned grand sub-sections, would have done a lot to make better use of the neglected subject matter.

Ultimately though, Helmsdal does a fine job of blending together elements of role playing, strategy arcade and adventure into a single well-focused and playable game. The various gameplay styles interact well without stepping on each other's toes and the result is enough to earn it an unreserved recommendation. Even quite the ultimate accolade of an ACE Trailblazer. Despite its minor flaws, Helmsdal offers enough to earn it a joint ranking with the Elemental as the most impressive example of isometric, entertaining yet, and fun of the genre should be double-awarded.

— Gary White

RATING



Overall Rating	895
Gameplay	900
Graphics	890
Sound	890
Value	890

895

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

The program under inspection provides a lot of things that the player might like, but the overall impression of a 70% overall score is not high. From there on, however, the player can be confident about the game. The game is not too long, and the player can be confident about the game. The game is not too long, and the player can be confident about the game. The game is not too long, and the player can be confident about the game.





Game Design
 Publisher: Microprose
 Developer: Sid Meier
 Price: \$29.95

CIVILIZATION

Just how much is it possible to squeeze into one game? It's a question that American games design guru Sid Meier seems to be increasingly fond of. The veteran programmer's products just keep on getting bigger and bigger. And bigger. From the claustrophobic military

simulation of *Star Trek: Enterprise* and *Star Trek: Voyager* to the success of the excellent - and very elaborate - *Railway Tycoon*, Sid's been getting more and more ambitious of late.

With his latest project, however, some might argue that he may have got a bit carried away with himself, as he's not so much pushed the strategy concept as driven over it with an articulated lorry. Yes, *Civilization* is a game in which the world HQ could only really start to apply if it was written in hand-drawn high banking, some capital letters and attached to the top of the World Trade Center. Quite how deep the game is isn't easy to summarize, but suffice to say that during the process of the review, I'd say that we only scratched the surface of what it has to offer. *Civilization* is the sort of game that is possible to play in a regular coffeehouse manner, but only really pays off when the player invests the level of time and patience that is almost unobtainable level of strategy requires.

Civilization's objectives are deceptively simple, putting the player in charge of a new tribe of primitive people way back in the early BCs and charging him to guide them through the ages, expanding, learning and developing along the way and ultimately creating a modern-day world-wide empire. But of course it's not so easy, naturally as easy as it sounds, because as the bully maximalist likes to point out,

creating a civilization is one thing - creating a civilization that lasts is quite another. History's a great teacher, and if there's one thing it's taught us over the last thousand years or so, it only takes one cock-up to bring even the mightiest empire to its knees.

Alexander the Great, Napoleon and Genghis Khan all learned the hard way, and building a survivable empire without the same old pitfalls is the challenge presented by *Civilization*. Though only primitive players are likely to get anywhere, it only takes a century back around the game to get an idea of its amazing depth and scope. War, medicine, industrialization, cities, taxation, population control, civil unrest, trade, science, travel, agriculture and the environment are all factors to be considered and master if a tribe is to achieve a proper civilized existence. As he often the case with these more elaborate and sprawling strategy games, winning and losing are both rather ambiguous concepts, although anybody who manages to wipe out every rival civilization on the planet is become advanced enough to send ships into space can safely retire with a strong grip on their fate. Needless to say, neither is particularly easy.

Civilization presents itself to match the same way as Meier's *Railroad Tycoon* - so much so that at first glance it could be mistaken for the same game. Here, though, things aren't restricted just to the United States - this operation is on a planetary scale, staged



Though *Civilization* is played from the perspective of a primitive tribe, there are a few nice details that help ground the player into an otherwise abstract historical time. The example is captured by its placement in all its glory above the player's city. It's the only building that has a roof and is built on the ground. The other buildings are built on the ground and are built on the ground. The other buildings are built on the ground and are built on the ground.

either as a carbon copy of Earth or a fictional player-created world.

Things begin in the year 500 BC with a single group of wandering nomads who form the basis of the player's civilization. As would be expected, things are pretty primitive in those formative years, and Meier has gone to lengths to make things as realistic as possible - most of the screen is in darkness at the outset, indicating unexplored territory, and new areas are only "colored in" as the player's units walk over them.

The initial priority is the formation of a base city from which to run the whole operation. Without cities there can be no civilization, so finding an appropriate spot for the initial settlement is of paramount importance. Once a base camp has been set and named, the real work begins. As nature takes its course, the city grows in size and more units can be sent out to explore the surrounding territory. Units move in teams, travelling squares at a time depending on their type and the terrain, and as each the critical ways is uncovered, piece by piece.

Settlers prove to be one of the most useful unit types, as they move units to found and maintain new cities, thereby expanding the empire, while diplomats help to forge links between civilizations, acting as ambassadors - or even spies or saboteurs, if the player is of more devious inclination. Further, and more useful too can be made by establishing trade routes between cities by means of Caravans, which ferry goods and materials from city to city.

Perhaps the most important units, however, are the military. As disputes between opposing civilizations can easily lead to war, a strong defense force must be maintained to protect the player's city from attack - and of course army units can be sent out to conquer rival territory and cities. As war plays such a large part in the game, it's understandably one of the more elaborate aspects - there's a huge variety of weaponry available, from basic infantry units to knights, artillery and - as the technology becomes available - aircraft, battleships and nuclear bombs.

War is not always the answer, and the key to survival is to know how to deal with opposing civilizations. Peace is not always easy to achieve, and while it may be fun to invade and destroy another empire, strong diplomatic skills are often required to keep the flames of anger from powerful civilizations with the same flame of fury. Peace treaties can be signed, and technology and information traded in order to keep relationships settled - not always easy, given the antagonistic and downright egotistical attitude of some civilizations.

Though of this may make Civilization sound like a very elaborate war game, that's not really what it's about at all. The concepts of war, peace and relationships with other empires are important to the game, but the real goal is the technological and cultural advancement of the player's own civilization.

How a people advances from anarchy to organization is a complicated one, but Civilization handles it



finding a suitable candidate for comparison to Civilization is a little bit like trying to buy a present for the man who has everything. It's a bit like San City, but then again it's a bit like San Earth as well. And it's a bit like lots of other things too. The most suitable candidate, however, has to be Meier's previous effort *Galactic Tyrannos*. Although initially the similarities seem purely superficial (so the untrained eye it looks almost indistinguishable graphically), many of *Tyrannos*'s strategic

elements are to be found in Civilization, especially those pertaining to the laying of roads and, yes, railroads. But in Civilization, of course, there's a whole lot more to think about, what with environmental, military, civil and trade considerations, then just getting from A to B and making a few quid in the process. It's this wealth of extra factors that makes Civilization an altogether more thoughtful and interesting experience, to say little of the new AI Strategy Benchmark.



With Civilization, some may argue that Sid Meier may have got a bit carried away with himself, as he's not so much pushed the strategy envelope as driven over it with an articulated lorry.



As my 1997 PC and 1998 PS1 strategy game *Galactic Tyrannos* is coming close to a year, I can still see how remarkably similar it is to *Civilization* and its sequel. 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CIVILIZATION

By [unreadable] and [unreadable]



What makes Civilization most interesting is that the player doesn't have to follow a linear path. Instead he's given room to create challenges for himself.

Some great ideas have been added to the game.

Several new features have been added to the game, including the ability to build a city on a hill, which is a great idea. The game also has a new 'DIPLOMACY' panel, which is a great addition. The game also has a new 'CITY' panel, which is a great addition. The game also has a new 'UNIT' panel, which is a great addition.

with splendor. Within each civilization is a group of wise men, responsible for researching and discovering new theories and inventions. Initially only a few basic sciences of research are available - the alphabet, the wheel, pottery and other rudimentary skills. But once these are discovered, the accumulated knowledge allows the researchers to look for more advanced matters. As more skills and information are acquired, so the people become better equipped to take on even more sophisticated research and projects.

For example, one of the biggest steps a civilization can take is to travel across the sea to discover and populate new continents. But boats can't be built until navigation and map-making skills are acquired - and these can't be learned until knowledge of astronomy and the alphabet is available.

All knowledge and advancements, from basic philosophy, religion and democratic principles right up to space flight and nuclear power, is learned in this step-by-step fashion. A giant in-game reference manual, the *Civlopedia*, contains comprehensive data on just about everything it's possible for the player to research or build, and the player can use this information to direct his people's growth. By orders of government and rule, the player can create an aggressive, militaristic nation or a powerful empire of explorers. Whatever the player's outlook, however, technological growth is of paramount importance, if only in order to keep up with the leaders and ensure the empire doesn't fall foul of other civilizations.

As a civilization's technology progresses, the factors and equations that govern the game become more and more complex. Industrialized cities require much more thoughtful landscaping if they are to function efficiently, and there are even environmental considerations, as factories, traffic and nuclear



and power all have negative, polluting effects on the planet that need to be controlled. Further, sustaining skills are required to keep the populace happy - it's said that society is only ever two meals away from revolution, and if a city is neglected or mismanaged, civil disorder inevitably follows and the town collapses.



PC Version

For the most part, Civilization looks nothing special, although there are occasionally graphics inclusions which give the eyes something more interesting to do for a short

while. All the major sound cards are supported, though it has to be said that the music side of things doesn't exactly enhance the strategy.



as power all have negative, polluting effects on the planet that need to be controlled. Further, sustaining skills are required to keep the populace happy - it's said that society is only ever two meals away from revolution, and if a city is neglected or mismanaged, civil disorder inevitably follows and the town collapses.

Though winning and losing are pretty subjective concepts to Civilization the program lets play continue even after the game has been officially won or the player's destiny, constant - and very strict - scores and tables are keptating this way to give an idea of how well the respective empires are doing, as well as an overall Civilization score, tables and graphs appear on a regular basis, showing the most powerful and successful empires. It's purely a numerical reference however, as Civilization doesn't encourage the player to be led to success and objectives, preferring instead to allow him to go off on any fortunate tangent and explore the possibilities. It's a very free range game, but as a world model it's realistic enough to penalize players who are a little too proud with their thinking.

Civilization's got its own game bi-categories. If only because of its class size, it won't fit into any one pigeonhole, no matter how hard it's pushed. The variety and scope of its gameplay means it recognizes a number of genres - at heart it's a strategy game, but playing like City on a global scale, but it works equally well as a planetary and ecological simulation. On yet another, more simplistic level it's an absorbing war game.

It's only when all these come together during play and Civilization is viewed as a whole that its real beauty becomes apparent. A flick through the help manual is a enlightening experience, and rightly so, as Civilization is probably the most involved and deeply strategy game ever devised. That aspect in itself is likely to put a lot of people off - this certainly isn't a product for lightweights or people who like to play in and out of a game.

The rewards are only there for those willing to commit themselves, but it's well worth the effort. Though Civilization looks bland, being devoid of the graphical rickshaws that are fast becoming synonymous with PC product, it's been expertly presented. The game provides constant help and technical tips via pop-up windows, and everything is clear



Orderly empire and its city in 2000. They often have been built, and different cities in the world's history that they're built that are mentioned in the game. Further knowledge of the technology and more of the world's history is available through the game's encyclopedia.

I DID IT MEIER WAY

You, he certainly did. There can be little doubt that Sid Meier, Microprose's senior games designer and the grey matter behind Civilization is a bit of a top boy, so we look about as interesting as John Major in one of his less exciting moods, but when he's dead he'll probably be hailed as the Meier of computer games. It maybe not. Whatever, Sid remains one of the most influential creative voices in the games industry today—not only was he the co-founder of Microprose, but he went on to knock up some of his best-known titles—*Hellcat Ace*, *F-15 Strike Eagle*, *Island Solitaire* and the superb *Railroad Tycoon* in name but form. With two million of his games sold worldwide, Sid knows what he's talking about. "People can go to movies for graphics and books for storylines," he says. "They look to computers for interaction and stories in which they themselves are the main character." Quite right, but remember that an all-star four-part mini-series about Sid's life entitled *Meier - Man of Software* starting Kevin Costner in the title role are unfurling at time of writing. Watch this space.



The screen shows railroad routes in a very subtle landscape that gives a sense of scale and depth. The graphics are excellent. Buildings and so on in the view are clearly visible, although not in the foreground. The interface is very clear and easy to use. The game is very well designed and the controls are very intuitive. The game is very well designed and the controls are very intuitive.

and isolated. It works well, allowing the player to operate unassisted without encumbering the player with unwanted information. The best strategy games are always the ones that look a lot simpler than they really are, and Civilization is a shining example.

But although the game does much to make itself as accessible as possible, it's still arguable whether there's too much substance for its own good. There's only so much the human mind can juggle at a time, and somewhere the player gets the impression that Civilization's layer upon layer of mathematical and strategic formula is simply too much for the average to handle.

In practice, however, it's a system that's only like to be relevant for senior strategists, and those who prefer their rocks off on the lines of *Sea City* and *Railroad Tycoon* should seize the opportunity to have a bit more potted onto their plate. It's certainly a challenging experience, and due to the nature of the game, one that will become more and more compulsive as time goes on and the player's civilization grows.

What makes the game most interesting is that the player doesn't have to follow a linear plan. Instead, it gives you a chance to create challenges for himself and pursue them—in it the discovery of nuclear power, the lead in the space race or all-out military supremacy. The feeling of impulsive improvisation as there are no strict guidelines is what, in other all, has got you the like a global overlord if the game keeps telling you what you can or can't do.

Ultimately, what Civilization represents is a stable step forward for the strategy genre by showing just how much is possible with a game of this type. It's huge, compelling, compulsive, intriguing and—most importantly—very, very enjoyable. It's also Meier's masterpiece to date—what he'll come up with next doesn't even bear thinking about.

By Gary Mittle



R A T I N G S



Microprose Ace and

1997 Ace

Only member

of the

Microprose

Association

930

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Genre: Platform
 Publisher: Millennium
 Developer: The Funset
 Price: \$19.95

ROBOCOD

It's been a bit of a lean time recently for console-less platform game fans. With the likes of *Mario IV* on the Super Famicom and *Sonic* on the Megadrive grabbing both the headlines and the playsets, there's been little for the computer owner to do but look on with envious eyes.

Well, now there's a new platform game here to tempt—and this time let's go for the long.

To say that *RoboCod* is a Mario clone is something of an understatement. It's akin to saying that Coke tastes like Pepsi— they share so many similar ingredients that they're bound to be alike. In designing this sequel to the published but fanned James Bond, Millennium has taken ideas from Mario and—in a lesser extent—Sonic and "improved" them (it's changed them enough to avoid whatever copyright infringement accusations hit *RoboCod*). Which, it should be stressed, is not that serious criticism. After all, there are only so many games ideas floating around and if you're going to borrow from something you might as well borrow from the best. And as long as the ideas are adapted well, who's really to complain?

RoboCod's plot picks up where James Bond's left off, with the madman Dr. Mapple fleeing northwards to lick his wounds. While trekking through the icy wastes of the North Pole the lead Doctor stumble across a mysterious Toy Factory, the proprietor a one Mr. S. Chase. So, seeing the perfect opportunity to exact his bitter revenge on the world, Mapple takes exploding propogins in the robot toy warehouses. And, to prevent exposure tampering with his many depots, Mapple has wired the factory's mechanical toys and turns them into lethal robotic guardians. Fortunately most of this bad plot leaks out and it's the job of James Bond, now known as RoboCod

because of his shiny new suit of robo-armor, to save the day by dismantling all the lethal propogins and ensuring that all the little kiddies get their Xmas presents (sweet enough for you?)

The game opens with RoboCod standing at the gates of the Toy Factory, and this is where the play-

er catches his first sight of the over-the-top graphics. The scenery sprays and bursts backdrops are all-there and colored well and are full of life and movement, and the obvious care and attention to detail that's gone into designing them creates consistently high throughout the game. The polished backgrounds are superb, with fine, no-nonsense of color handling to give an impression of depth. The smooth, multi-way scrolls are amazing and almost make Sonic's velocity at times (though it does have a tendency to jolt slightly at those high speeds). The tones are of an equally high standard (special moments should be made of the happy bleeps these emit on the title page), even if they are a little more in place.

Outside the Toy Factory there are no hidden/booby-trapped areas, so it provides a good opportunity for the player to become familiar with the excellent well-designed joystick control. As any platform game knows, one of the most important aspects of game design is control over the player's on-screen char-





to say that Roboood is a Mario clone is something of an understatement. It's akin to saying that new Coke tastes like Pepsi - they share so many similar ingredients that they're bound to be alike.

er. It's all very well having "mega" graphics and "big" sound, but if the controls are slow or clumsy then the game will probably be consigned to the dusty bin shelf even before the disc drive has stopped whirring. A recent culprit of this is a certain game by a popular art of "brothers". I think you know who I'm talking about.

Fortunately, there are no such problems here. Roboood's programmers have obviously spent a lot of time looking at the game controls on other platform games and have implemented the best ideas here. As a result Roboood can be made to perform a variety of moves from a single joystick without control ever becoming clumsy or unresponsive.

For example, to mid-jump the full world-jacked float can be made to rotate and turn, allowing the player to engage in lots of ingenious platform-jumping antics like Mario, but of the enjoyment of the game comes from being able to weave Roboood in and out of a variety of obstacles and sidestep up with one like on a tiny little ledge, thus allowing suitable mega-gauges of observation from any friends who happen to be watching at the time. Another Mario nod is Roboood's "body-builder" feat. By jumping on top of the water, Roboood can give them a belly which, although it may well make more than one clock to send them to jail forever.

Another idea, and one of the clearest, is Roboood's crush. When Roboood's standing on a platform he can retract his all-too-valuable feet inside his voluminous and bounces-down, ducking him out of the way of flying badmen or bullets. Nothing too surprising there, but the really clever thing is that the screen scrolls down too, allowing the player to get a glimpse of any dangers lurking below.

In addition, when Roboood's in free fall the results turn the sky into a maze being battering him. Knocking screens helps out of anything he hits. Not only is it a good way of avoiding all the badmen (it's far more powerful than the standard step-on the head), it also makes Roboood pretty much invulnerable. Thus



Moreover, Mario IV and Roboood. Well, there's certainly plenty to compare. As mentioned in the main review, Roboood shares many similarities to Nintendo's plumber-cum-hero (and it's unlikely that this is done to chance, both in the flexibility of control over the main character and the sheer range of opponents and game tasks. Indeed, Roboood comes very close to achieving Mario's benchmark status, but a few things keep it from such lofty greatness.

There are times in situations where Roboood has to unconsciously risk life and limb by jumping into dangerous-looking voids - the player can always get an idea of the dangers below and act accordingly. Just as handy is Roboood's super-stretchy stomach. Hitting FEAR makes Roboood's top-half extend downwards until it hits something solid, whereas Roboood clings on for dear life and his bottom-half snags up to join him. Roboood can then waddling along along the underside of the platform until he finds a nice safe place to drop off onto. Exploratory use of this ability is also useful for spying out where secret rooms and bonuses are hidden. Being super-

Mario's multi-layered parallel, clever graphics and amazing sound effects. For me, get it a notch above Roboood, but these are partly due to the relative qualities of the host machines rather than any intrinsic design faults so it's a little unfair to say so about these differences. What really sets Mario apart is it's sheer longevity. It's a far larger game than Roboood (which is saying something), with far more to discover, and this size is backed up by a clever SAVE facility. Some may argue that this is inevitable given the huge memory reserves of cartridges, but unlike the graphics and sound this advantage does have a significant effect on the gameplay.

But to put this criticism into perspective, Roboood is the nearest to a truly Mario-style game yet seen on the computer or systems, and has enough original features to make it much more than an imitator clone and an essential buy for any platform game fan.

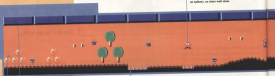




Each RoboCod character has its own special abilities.

Robocod has taken all the best elements of every platform game from Manic Miner to Mario Bros and skillfully blended them together to form a hugely enjoyable and incredibly playable original.

From the fun, colorful graphics that feel like the highlight of a classic Saturday afternoon episode all the way through to our three-in-one feature, we think you'll love it.



The Blue RoboCod isn't just any old robot. It's got a special ability: it can fly. This makes it the perfect character for the first level, where you'll have to jump over a lot of spikes. It's also got a special ability: it can fly. This makes it the perfect character for the first level, where you'll have to jump over a lot of spikes.

Remember to pick up the special items you find along the way. They'll help you out when you're in a bit of a bind. And don't forget to pick up the special items you find along the way. They'll help you out when you're in a bit of a bind.



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Just as Bobooid's alien fire has been extinguished, you can't see anything that big this early in the level either. These yellow stars mark Bobooid's last stop-point as he is summoned within. That's a sign you're close.



There's a post-puzzle screen that is a puzzle, but it's a short-lived one of those puzzles. What's it for? Not Bobooid's final stage. Bobooid has to be kept on top of what stage comes and goes during the level's main stage in the bottom of the screen. There's no if-it-ain't-broke-why-change-it? problem of feature complexity, but this is one of the leading levels after all. Later examples of reuse or changes will include one in the kitchen (for the new getting the TV under the sofa) and another that will be very strange.

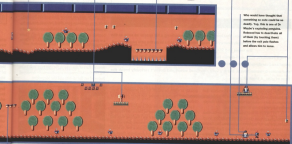
There's, ultimately, a lot of things going on in this puzzle. Bobooid's not on the ground or in anything. It's hard to be anything other than a very Bobooid being in the puzzle.

Now, how does Bobooid work that puzzle? You can't jump that high, and even the ceiling's probably not even in the character's motion frame or something to avoid with the screen for a few more yellow stars. There's a trick. When the screen and when Bobooid's head are in motion, Bobooid and puzzle appear on the screen, but Bobooid continues to fall. A call of things, which Bobooid can see and use to go up in the puzzle.

And in the end it was, this being Bobooid's path to when you'll have nothing for an orange, then it's over.

Who would have thought that something so subtle could be so subtle. This, this is one of Bobooid's repeating puzzles. Repeating it is something as of what the leveling there before the real puzzle starts and shows the way.

Level 1 Stage 2



No more Mr Nice Guys

For a safety game the super bad ones are a pretty terrifying bunch, but five seemed a little weird, so here's the full low-down on what they do.

BIG YEP

Big Yeh is very predictable. He flies around at the top of the screen, then drops down in an attempt to crush Bobooid. But because he passes before each crash there's plenty of time for 'Coil to get out of harm's way.

GAZ MANS

The giant car bounces left and right around the screen, then flies, spins its beams and unleashes a couple of speedy



homing missiles at 'Coil. Not nice at all.

THE GREEN OR BEASTS

The biggest problem with this family lady is her speed. Like some overgrown Space Invader she zooms left and right, raining playing cards down on Bobooid's head.



A BOUNTY AT THE GALLEY

Fighting the giant batteries can get very confusing. The screen is mirrored down the middle, so there are two batteries and two 'Coils on-screen. As the batteries furiously pirouette around, it's easy to lose track of which's real and which is fake.



SNOW BUSINESS

The final buddy. If you're big and hard enough to get this far then you should be able to work out how to beat him for yourself. And in there a surprise lurking under all that snow? Oh... Maybe.



Amiga version



Woowey nice! You know you're in for something a bit special as soon as the hilariously lewdy RoboCod theme comic kicks in on the title page. Indeed, the tunes and SFX are wonderful throughout. Graphics are of an equally high standard, with well-drawn, homogenous sprites gliding smoothly and quickly over pixelated sandy colour backgrounds. Given the game's variety inevitably there's frequent disc access between levels, but it's very short and sweet and doesn't seriously break the flow of play. A treat all round.

RoboCod will work on the Amiga 500, 500+, 500SX, 600 and 600+. It will also run on the Amiga 286, 386 and 486. It will also run on the Amiga 1200 and 1200+. It will also run on the Amiga 1200 and 1200+.

Amiga 500 requires 1MB of RAM. Amiga 500+ requires 1MB of RAM. Amiga 500SX requires 1MB of RAM. Amiga 600 requires 1MB of RAM. Amiga 600+ requires 1MB of RAM. Amiga 600SX requires 1MB of RAM. Amiga 1200 requires 1MB of RAM. Amiga 1200+ requires 1MB of RAM.



can still make RoboCod's big target, so it's fortunate that the badnik can't do him any damage while he's slung. Any collisions with the badnik simply make him stop back to normal size.

The Toy Factory is split into fourteen levels, each accessed via gate and door. There are further secret hidden levels for the player to discover, but they're not vital to completion in the game. Each door is marked with a graphical clue to the set of actions which have to be taken, such as a beam scanner on the door to the sports level, or a waddy teddy on the door to the fully-ups level. Some special doors are marked with minicore-looking question marks, and these levels contain massive pseudo-'end of level' badniks to be defeated.

The levels have been arranged to satisfy both players who like to rack up 50 scores, and those who like to make progress through the game to see the end sequence. In the start of the game RoboCod can go through the doors to one of two levels, but the rest are locked. It is only necessary for the player to complete the harder of the two levels to progress on to the end-of-level-badnik room (which, when completed, leads to two more levels). Thus the 'puzzle' player can try to do both levels and pick up as many bonuses and collect as many badniks as possible to get the high scores, while the impatient 'progress' player can just complete the level he has to and move on. Unfortunately it isn't possible to see game positions, but because the player can shoot-out fairly

quickly to where he left off the old problems of badniks being having to replay the early sections is reduced.

Each level is split down into a series of sections, with the player's aim being to locate the floating COIT job. If it's found but it isn't floating then that means that somewhere in the section there are still some of Wiggly's exploding programs active. In which case RoboCod must find and deactivate them by touching them before he can leave. But due to intelligent level map design, the player is generally led through all the major areas in a section and there-

fore you can remember (Mario, Sonic et al have been blended together to times a very tasty and in many ways unique mix. There are slow bits, there are fast bits, there are puzzle bits, there are against-the-clock bits - in short, something to suit everybody. Even on a console, with the huge amounts of memory they can access, RoboCod would be remarkable feat of programming but on a sizeable SAA Amiga it's little short of incredible.

It would be a shame to give too much away - after all, half the fun of playing the game is discovering a section with an all new set of problems to solve and things to try-out. But to give an idea of some of the treats that await, the player can expect to discover giant aliens and temples that force RoboCod to swim on his back, giant cars, planes and even helicopters that RoboCod can hop into and take for a spin (see the "Come Fly With Me..." box for more on those bizarre modes of transport), a room that shows RoboCod onto out-of-reach platforms, stay-on wings that fly RoboCod above the screen, and space-down levels where the player's controls are inverted (very confusing at first). There are even underwater levels that play like a tribute to James Bond.

RoboCod is the sort of game that computer owners have been waiting a long time for, a game that is a more than worthy contender for the Mario throne. Part of the reason for this may well be in the fact that MilesMoores simultaneously developed RoboCod on the 16-bit and the Megadrive.



RoboCod is the sort of

game that computer owners have been waiting a long time for, a game that is a more than worthy contender for the Mario throne.

few there's rarely the need for smooching and highly tedious back-tracking, a problem that seriously marred the player's enjoyment of the otherwise great project, James Bond. Usually the problem isn't so much finding the program, it's how to reach them.

The amount of variety in situations, not to mention the amount of graphics and sound but also in terms of the difficulty tasks that the player is called upon to perform, elements of just about every good platform



COME FLY WITH ME...

There are times when RoboCop's standard-issue top, skip and jump just won't do. By head-butting special question-mark blocks RoboCop may discover a whole host of fully-made vehicles to commandeer. But take care! Some blocks are loosely trapped and contain a high-speed nasty.

PLANES...

RoboCop Air has an unrivaled reputation for safe, comfortable travel. From the big question-mark block, we can take you to anywhere in the game world. And our in-flight service is second to none. RoboCop Air - you're a great way to fly.

...BANKHEAT...

What could be better at the end of a hard day than a nice, long soak? Using Head RoboCop's economy scheme you can have gallons of piping-hot water on tap at any time of the day or night. And our special bath suits allow you to fly around the screen in features unavailable from any competitor.

...AND AUTOMOBILES

The RoboCop Road Scooter is the Ultimate Driving Experience. It's nippy in built-up areas. And it's unique bouncing ability (fitted as standard) gives the driver unlimited freedom to crush passing pedestrians. (See Berlin's "Take My Breath Away" and lots of cars flying exploding into flames.)



When you hit an open question mark block, you can choose to ride on a question mark block and take a ride.

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a doubt. Get down to your nearest software shop and give RoboCop a prime time place in your software collection now.

By David Upchurch

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Now, the quality of platform games on the Magnavox and the Super Famicom is incredibly high, say some critics; but to be at least as good as the best PC to read any possible diatribe of yours. And it would appear that the best work going into the Magnavox version has had a knock-on effect on the PC version, raising them far above the usual standard of platform games on the home computer.

What's so amazing about RoboCop is the fact that the majority of the project - design, programming and graphics - was the responsibility of one man, Chris Seftell. When you consider that you have here a game comparable to Mario (which was designed by a team of over twenty Japanese coders) you begin to realize quite what an achievement this is, and just how talented Mr Seftell must be. Doing it made you sick? Not so much! Singer Richard Joseph, the man in charge of the music and sound, who is also deserving of special mention. Without his jaunty (and amusing) effects RoboCop wouldn't be a tenth of the game it is.

After all this praise and hype (and I think you must be getting the idea by now, so I'll state it bluntly) RoboCop is a completely excellent game. Packed, pleasurable and - thank God, Jim, it's like a great bowl of fresh air in three days of stunted blue screens, target-shooting games and endless-by-counters observations. As good as Mario? Nooooo... not quite, but it's a close-run thing and few platform games were so well-written, distance of Mario's beach-mark-leaping lolly brightness. But the best platform game on computer? Without the faintest shadow of

R A T I N G S



Overall
Gameplay
Graphics
Sound
Value

Overall
Gameplay
Graphics
Sound
Value



934

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Game Information
 Publisher Name
 Developer Information
 Price (US \$)

WILLY BEAMISH

Remember Roger Rabbit? Disney's multi-million dollar cartoon/live action epic that tried to both capture the imagination of today's youth and recreate the old Saturday afternoon matinee feelings lying dormant in all those offbeat adults? There was something for every

one. For the kids there was the cheeky bang animation and for the grown-ups there was a bit of wacky cartooning of iconic Rabbit and some outrageous tangling from Bob Hoskins. Despite its adequate performance at the box office, the movie was deemed to be in a few-studio situation, containing turn-of-events for both audiences. Grown-ups weren't really keen on buying an \$8 to see a cartoon and we kids didn't understand half the jokes.

Willy Beamish adopts an amazingly similar policy. It's unclear exactly which end of the market there are pitching at. The evidence on one hand - the machine's success, the DVD packaging and the cast would suggest that the title fits into Sierra's typically upper-market portfolio. The nature of the graphic style and the storyline, however, would seem more akin to a kids' game.

But hey, hey, hey! This ain't no comic strip for kids. It's an interactive cartoon, doncha know? Dynamic wanted to create something kinda new to completely new, create the pot-went all these way ideas and god-dam if this ain't what we ended up with. 'Yup, boss if the gee-willikers with-eyed gaily

ness of Dynamic's highlight may stick to one's eyes, you've got to admire their (probably just not daily) business-like spirit. Don't be fooled, though Willy Beamish is a fun, primary, non-cynthetic cerebral ringer, with varying degrees of discussion, around a tried and tested adventure formula.

Beamish and his companions in top-cold (Hawaii) live in Vancouver, USA, Sierra's newly-set for the summer and all Willy dreams of is winning the National Winter Gaming Championships which will be held during his summer break. The player's most basic aim is to keep Willy out of trouble during his spare time and keep in his gaming ability to National standard by regular Winter practice. A plethora of sub-plots culminate from this central theme. The key to Willy's Winter system gets confiscated, so he can't practice, he doesn't have the necessary entrance fee to the tournament etc. Disappointing Willy's parents will lead to a run in the winding of the Willy's Trouble-the-momster. Too high a reading and Willy will be punished...

Presented in flawless Dynamic's make-it/lick-and-taste, the plot opens with Beamish, all purple top



Willy Beamish is a fun, primary, non-cynthetic cerebral ringer, with varying degrees of discussion, around a tried and tested adventure formula.

and quell, sitting in the town's final assembly viewing his way through a particularly nuptial ritual "wedding" speech by Principal Frick.

There's *relax-time* in Willy's remarkably personable but a lower volume tolerance level than the puppets and jokers on Frick, causing much pandemonium as we thump the slip-loaded Principal's eye-gear way, feet from all round and a detour for Willy.

On during the Detention scene while Willy (despite of Mister Lane and a duty old epinephrine drink-out a someone equipment that, finally, the player comes into the game. The career changes from the waiting match now to an arena, indicating that there's some interaction to be had.

As expected, the introductory sequence is entertaining enough and can be skipped through or completely bypassed should the player desire.

Once into the game itself, the familiar Dynamic interactive format is adopted, albeit in its latest stage of polish. First it abandons static character monologues over the full-on background while in conversation. The smart career leads over the play area changing between an impressive digital arena and a smaller "action" arena indicating that there's an effort to be taken or manipulated or a task to perform. This are devoted by a large green, flat sign



It was like of the dragon (an ACE Evergreen, in fact) that first made UK software buyers sit up and pay attention to Dynamix games. The story of a futuristic detective

endeavouring to solve a complex narrative related murder gripped both public and reviewers alike for all of a fortnight. The problem with the game, you see, was that it simply ended too quickly. Partially a symptom of its own success, there's short-term appeal resulted from a) being fascinatingly addictive and b) never allowing the player to languish in boring dead ends. The game moves along at such a pace that players putting in a lot of effort would finish in rather too-quickly.

Dynamix suffers from similar problems, although to a less serious degree, there's enough freedom of exploration and sheer distance to cover to show down the plot sufficiently - an indication of the frankly unbelievable learning curve of game development of which *Dynamix* a surely coming to the end.



and possible sources of conversation are indicated when the career turns into a speech bubble.

The player can examine objects by clicking with the right mouse button and turning his arrow into a magnifying glass. To save clicking over "dead" screen areas, the glass will auto-snap-on as the career moves over objects for which there is no description, becoming clear when something of interest is in sight. A neat touch.

Clicking on the left mouse button will cause an "action". If an object is near the career, it will be picked up. If Willy is near his Mister, he'll begin to play and score. If the career is currently over an exit, a message will remind the player exactly where that route leads. When you consider that the disk is scored virtually every time Willy leaves a scene it's vital that so often it would be long and tiring between erroneously selected locations.

A great deal of thought and care has gone into Willy Beaman's presentation. Graphically it's a dream. The hand-painted super-detailed backdrops will be the most familiar point of reference for *Dynamix* fans. In 250 colour VGA, they are quite superb, and work superbly well with the cartoon nature of the rest of the game. Distinct from that of the dragon, the central character controlled by the player (Willy Beaman) is visible on screen nearly all the time. When he interacts with objects and people, he'll position himself in an appropriate place to do so.

This is a most important point that it may seem at first. *Dynamix* has gone to a lot of trouble to ensure that Willy's character comes through in the game, and having him on the screen moving around is by far the most dramatic way to keep him at the forefront of the player's mind. The whole point is that the player is supposed to believe as Willy would, see as themselves. Having Willy sitting in a chair in the kitchen dangling his legs may not seem like an especially worthwhile expenditure of disk and memory space, but it helps stably old-games up slip into character more easily.

Surprisingly, perhaps the part of the game in which the most effort has gone is the least noticeable. Willy Beaman is *absolutely* vile with unworldly teachers who continuously fix around adding interest and humour. However, perhaps because the job of making the player feel that he is watching a cartoon has been so professionally achieved, it's easy to take these teachers the granted. After all, it'd be a pretty boring cartoon if only the foreground characters moved, wouldn't it? If that sounds childish, good. It's possibly the best mistake that I can say *Dynamix* impossibly successful first try at introducing the cartoon genre. On this level, at least, the game works.

Next, we'll look at the player interface. It's an impressive story, and their allowing him to progress the story, is however limited ingredients, to satisfy himself.

The pacing of the notes of *Dynamix* game has been criticised in the past. One of the design was a particularly good example of the team's reluctance to let gameplay get in the way of good storytelling. The determination to continually pull the player through the story meant that the game was really



he game works fantastically well, fooling the player

into believing he's only an impassive viewer and then

allowing him to progress the story to satisfy himself.



Character: Willy, in a conventional but deep British wit, appears to show an even reputation for his own style in private with clients. Practicing this leads the site, with occasional use of various other game as a social means of work.



Character: Don't know how to use speed and control in Wily's hand to get the character out and from the site, he's gone and gone about a solution, but his character is gone from the game. Don't say "Goodbye" from that.

Character: In a game that appears to be a business, without taking the opportunity to use other sites like "intentionally" in the game. Don't say "Goodbye" from that and go to the site.



Meet the crew!

Here we have a breakdown of the most important characters in the game. All of which must be dealt with in Wily's own individual style if the player is going to save Prometheus. Working clockwise from the top-left, Willy himself - Colin, Alex, and Frank are all out of control for the holidays. Leona Munchpot and Leona the man who runs the plumber's union. Why is this socially savvy dame in costume (and a hat full) with this grease-monkey? Good. He's in a whole lot of trouble. He's got no job. He's not, Mr. Frank, being, laid out and dead, the fast-tempered stepbrother in a series of constant war to little Willy, and finally, your frog, Henry.

asic icons for family structures, while being about as subtle as being hit on the head with a brick, make it easy for the player to deal with complex dialogue.



W!

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Guts,
Came
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of 100
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of 100
of 100



...the game's characters are designed to be as relatable as possible. "We wanted to make sure that the characters were people that you could see yourself in," says game designer [Name].

Q How do the characters in the game react when the plot starts to unfold? Are they ever afraid or angry or sad?

A One of the main problems that the characters face is how to deal with the stress and frustration of the game. They often feel like they are being manipulated or that they are being lied to.



IN CHARACTER

Just like any cartoon, *Willy Wonka* is packed full of colorful characters to meet and befriend. Adventure games have always had a hard time convincing players that they are dealing with anything other than a complex fall-through maze system, but *Wonka* manages better than most.

Early adventure titles purported to include individual characters which go about their business wars, to be honest, laughable. Even games heralded as landmarks for their time like *The Hobbit* are partly remembered by Willy's standards.

The most common problem was that of essentially simple characters being too complex using an equally simple language pattern. *Guts* often fit was tricky enough to Pick Up The Gun. And given the typical possibilities of language and dialogue, it's hardly surprising that you sometimes make them understand anything you said.

Irony, by limiting the interaction with the characters with use of multiple choice options, the designers have allowed each response to yield a reasonably interesting branch.

It's the characters in *Wonka* which bring the game alive. They all have their own traits and habits, and help pay up the story even when nothing of significant benefit to the plot is going on.

In times of stress and frustration, it's tempting to speak to anyone just to pass the time (talk about not inventing this). However, Willy (and) take care, for a random word from the mouth of a nine-year-old can lead to lethal consequences mounted up by big, grumpy adults.

Also, the fact that everyone in *Wonka* has their own little story makes it easy to see the characters to your advantage. However, help us when anyone works out how to identify real personalities and characters in real life, or we'll spend our whole lives genuinely misunderstanding and getting aggravated with each other.

perly vary, and numerous pointers were continually being given as to what exactly the player should do next. The success of the storyline was the downfall of the game. You wouldn't expect a fantastic detective movie to last particularly long, and we did the game.

Willy Beamish is a far more accomplished title in this area. Use of "Mozambique" mystery scenes will yield information about which Willy would otherwise remain ignorant, and these help, but it's the development of plot aspects which the player can't see again at the time which really do the trick.

Prompting itself is a subtle game, and quite apart from anything else, there's a lot of exploring to do. What with it being the summer break, Willy has a lot of freedom and he can travel around Springfield pretty much at will for periods, as long as he's at home in the bed. To an extent, this freedom helps to combat the feeling of being led by the hand through the adventure, since as a geographic level at least, it's as flexible.

MY, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PACKET!

Here we are, without any question, kings of the Packaging empire. Their products simply stink of class and care. Some of your photocopied sheets will be tied to a registration card here. Oh no. And every Sierra game comes with a completely free playing guide presented in a manner appropriate to the game itself.

Laurie Salt Larry II, for example, comes free with a copy of *Playboy* magazine, offering some useful game hints for adventurers who take the time to look.

In Willy Beamish's case, however, we have Willy's very own private note book. Now this is a real gem. On top of Willy's rather amusing juvenile drawings of A-13 tank killers and his ruminations about being interviewed by top TV host Stan Lathier after his triumph at the forthcoming Winter Games Championship, we have some useful information about Prompter and his environs, the character flaws of many local folk and so on. All in lovely colour.

Yet again, the Americans show us the way to present games and make them feel like a package, rather than a box of disks.



Willy Beamish is a far more accomplished title in this area. Use of "Mozambique" mystery scenes will yield information about which Willy would otherwise remain ignorant, and these help, but it's the development of plot aspects which the player can't see again at the time which really do the trick.

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Beamish isn't so flexible where the story branching is concerned through dialogue. Willy's responses to other characters' questions are, at best, limited to about three choices. Frequently, the options are so limited that playing feels more like making a Fighting Fantasy book than a game with complex complexities of code. Some options are only in there to be ignored, since they neither progress the plot or provide more than a fancy-sounding

idea. A large subplot in the game (wherein Willy's Dad Corbin is looking for a job. He really had them a reasonably serious management post. Willy's dad is looking it tough to make ends meet. Unfortunately to Corbin, the only firm he seems willing to interview him, the Tactitout artificial sweetener company - are in competition, but unaccountably grudge-colours with roughshod planters' union bosses. They somehow plan to take over the firm and are looking for a shabby little guy to take the rap. Willy must persuade his dad from getting the job or persuade him it's a bad idea without explaining why. As you can imagine, this leads to much hilarious misunderstanding and some scorching scenes in the Tactitout courtroom.

A fascinating subplot for the writers. The man is that Willy Beamish is a Funny Game. However he has literally been the show-off which has made American games history incompatible with the UK market. For worse than an ill-fated card problem, a *Playboy* magazine will have the game's printing this week. There's no business. While we're all splitting our sides over debate infection-driven double entendre, the Americans are hitting each other with out-of-control pins. Well, that's what we're here to believe.

The humour stemming through Beamish is refreshingly successful. By keeping it on a sufficiently light-weight level (and people are funny, using pins makes people laugh) and relying on the actual characterisation of the other people in the game to make the scenes funny, the game works. An occasional too-clever can be found in the "trick" description





W

hile we're all splitting our sides over delicate inflection-driven double entendres, the Americans are hitting each other with custard pies.

WHILE WE'RE AWAY FROM THE GAME, IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ENTERTAINMENT.

of the subjects will be either lost for the most part, the heavy (downing bar here left alone).

Character behavior is surprisingly realistic, albeit stereotypical. Perhaps because of the cartoonist-culture nature of these writers, it's a lot easier to predict their moods and act in a way that will benefit Willy accordingly. There's room for funny situations, while about an episode on being hit on the head with a brick, make it easy for the player to find his way through eventually complex dialogue situations. Games in a bad mood because of his joblessness, and so when he asks Willy to do a favor, it's best to act immediately. Willy's sister Tiffany is a spunk chick and deserves to be treated with after midnight. And then it's strict for his. You get the general picture.

In what's the deal? An interactive cartoon? Well, you actually, but remember that cartoons have their limitations. Just as Dynamic has accurately captured the humor and improbability of comics, they've struggled with these same cartoonish undesirable baggage. Just as it's easy to find amusement with the glowing world landscapes of the characters and the "tache-toiling" behavior of the bad guys, it's easy to get frustrated at the apparent lack of complexity and subtle interest in the nature of such a format is, cartoon reinforcement.

What is undeniable is that America should do away with the longevity criticism aimed at Dynamic recently. It's a big old game and although it has its limitations, there's plenty of awe-inspiring inspiration too.

Sierra and Dynamic seem to have made a nod for their own back by simply producing games of too high a quality on a regular basis. Certainly when compared to lots of its contemporaries, it is an outright winner. It's a graphic, smart, in big enough to keep most players occupied for a good few weeks and is even more polished than the shiny chrome dome of principal track.

by Jim Douglas



PC Version



PC Owners should be thoroughly familiar with Game's style. Clever packaging, excellent music and plenty of slots. Playing from floppy is an absolute no-no and the constant hard drive access can turn into a bit of a chore. Owners of VGA machines are in for a visual feast (the shots on these pages are VGA soundboard owners [both Roland and Ad Lib] are meticulously saved from the glacial loop-loop. Imagine ladies of the incidental music, a sound investment.



WHILE WE'RE AWAY FROM THE GAME, IT'S ALL ABOUT THE ENTERTAINMENT.

R A T I N G S



RECOMMEND

BUY IT

AVOID IT

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RECENTLY RELEASED GAMES





Casey Kasari: Editor
 Publisher: Bruce
 Developer: Digital Image Design
 Price: \$129.95

ROBOCOP 3

It's got to be said that as a concept RoboCop has always been a bit... well... half-crazy. I mean, how can you really take RoboCop seriously as 'The Future of Law Enforcement' when theoretically he could quite easily be destroyed by a single shot in his woefully unprotected face? And with that shiny plastic

groove and missing walk you can't help but feel that an ending film really hardened criminals would be splitting their sides rather than a winking stare-gaze. Indeed, without the sheer darker-than-dark

humour and over the top violence, it's doubtful whether audiences would have been able to accept RoboCop as anything other than a complete laughing stock.

So, given this somewhat ridiculous creation and the hyper-statism of the crime-buster Turley, it's perhaps not so surprising to learn that RoboCop is currently being groomed for a somewhat younger, less-demanding and potentially more lucrative audience. Already the kinetic control ropes has made successful forays into comics and cartoons, and apparently in the new sequel the graphic violence of the previous films is being drastically toned down for a lower certificate. Whether you consider it critical exploitation or not, you've got to admit that as a marketing move it's flawlessly brilliant. Just think of all the spin-off merchandising possibilities. In your own home re-watch the exciting moment when RoboCop shows the rapist in the nuts with the RoboCop's Back Alley Kick!™ The mind boggles.

Of course, there's old Cassus who RoboCop's kids appeal years ago when it formed the tin-tin-head's original film for conversion into computer game form. A phenomenal success, it arguably set the standard for DeSena's film licence formula. As the



RoboCop (RoboCop) is the new film in the RoboCop franchise. It's a sequel to the first two films, RoboCop and RoboCop 2. It's the most recent in the franchise. It's the most recent in the franchise. It's the most recent in the franchise.

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some simple platform action and add a few equally-simple puzzle or shoot-'em-up levels to add variety. It's a formula that's been much criticized recently, with the *Duke* and *Tomb Raider* games showing definite signs that the original genre has been flagged beyond its limits.

Following last year's *Robocop* game, which was little more than a sticker version of the original, *Conan* really had no option but to do something special and different with *Robocop 3*. After all, I don't remember even the most beautiful *Robocop* gameplay would be able to stand a third platform-'n' puzzle outing. And it certainly sounded more than a little interested from the computer press when *Conan* announced that Digital Image Design was to be *Robocop 3*'s developer. But looms the 3D polygon affairs such as *Fury*, *Realizer* and the oft-delayed-but-finally-to-appear-soon *Ego*, many expressed surprise and more than a little disbelief that DID had received the job. Many joked that this was going to be *Robocop in 3D*. But the jokes are over because... it is. And a few nights with the good news is that the 3D *Robo* works amazingly well and equally makes *Robocop 3* the best film licence yet.

On loading up the player is given the option to play either the Movie Game or the Arcade Game. In the Movie Game the player takes part in various sequences related according to events in the film, while in the Arcade Game the player can choose between five games, each a variation on scenes in the Movie Game,



In terms of graphics, there couldn't be more difference between

Robocop 3 and *Conan's* previous *Robocop 2* game. Out are sprites and platforms and in are polygons.

However, fans of the film's excessive violence will be pleased to hear that the body count in both games are on a satisfyingly similar high level. Although *Robocop 2* was perhaps a slightly more enjoyable - albeit unoriginal - game, as a film-like experience *Robocop 3* takes hands down, and as such comes highly recommended.



Not only do these provide a good chance to practice the various game elements before they're encountered in the Movie Game, they're sufficiently different in their own right to add extra value to the package as a whole.

With the *Robocop 3* movie not due until Spring/Summer of next year, the *Robocop 3* game is in the unusual position of appearing some time before the actual film track. This brings some great some indication of how special *Conan* before their game to be, with the company happy to let the game stand or fall on its own merits rather than over-rely the film's publicity and hype. And if nothing else, it provides fans of the film with a handy preview of the plot.

Robocop 3 may kick off with the shock announcement of OCP's takeover by Kamekita Industries, a ruthless Japanese company. Kamekita's objective is the construction of Delta City. OCP have formed a deal with REI-LAB units to release the remnants of Old Detroit. At least, that's what Joe Public is being told. In reality, the REI-LAB are using terror tactics to clear the streets by force, making thousands homeless in the process.

In desperation the terrified citizens band together to fight back. Through means too complex to go into here, *Robocop 3* ends out about three dirty dealings. Unable to display his powers directly in 'Uplift the public trust' and 'Protect the innocent' *Robocop* goes underground into the rebels. Things come to a head after a set-piece. *Robocop* defeats a small army of tanks and ED-209s soon to be reduced the chaos area to rubble. The displaced Kamekita Industries decide to put an end to *Robocop's* meddling once and for all, and the film climaxes in a mass clash between *Robocop* and Kamekita's robotic Ninja armoured fighting unit!

The game is split into eight major action set-pieces. In between each set-piece there are chunks of play related by

a combination of 'blow-whistle...' screens and voice-logging narrated sequences. Most commonly these are framed as 'Mistake!' news reports, with the ever-waiting news readers happily relating the latest mass murders and body count figures to the camera. These in particular, work very well, neatly conveying relevant information in a manner appropriate to the movie. Good use is made of TV-style flash-graphics and muted colour tones, and the presentation throughout is exemplary.

The right action sequences are based around four

the good news is that the 3D twist works amazingly well and arguably makes *Robocop 3* the best film licence yet.



RoboCop's unique capabilities provide a great advantage when it comes to the futuristic. As a result, he can take on most of the most advanced and powerful enemies with no trouble. He can also take on the most advanced and powerful enemies with no trouble. He can also take on the most advanced and powerful enemies with no trouble.



The enemy attacks with other types of weapons. Some are very effective and the player must be careful not to get hit. The player must be careful not to get hit. The player must be careful not to get hit.



RoboCop is a very powerful character and can take on most of the most advanced and powerful enemies with no trouble. He can also take on the most advanced and powerful enemies with no trouble.



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ROBOCOP 3

► The right action sequences are based around four main events: RoboCop patrolling on foot, in a patrol car and in the air (powered by his new GyroPods) and fighting a Mini-opponent team's assault.

The most enjoyable and satisfying of all these is the foot patrol. The player views the action through RoboCop's eyes, as Mike Clankie climbs through the streets of Old Detroit on the corridors of the DCP Tower, parks and terminals (part of the stadium), attacking with guns and grenades and gradually regaining RoboCop's efficiency (the robotic equivalent of health). The more things work with the mouse, the greater your score for the aid of a given construct.

...and frequently there are times in the game when you do actually feel like you're taking part in the film.

When RoboCop's construction is a more detailed light blue, thanks to the robot's efficiency. Otherwise, the player can patroll on foot, in a patrol car, or in the air (powered by his new GyroPods) and fight a Mini-opponent team's assault.



and a top of the left button. But it's not quite the turkey shoot it sounds. Mixed with things that slip into the middle of the raging firefight, and shooting one of these causes an immediate system shut-down due to the conflict with RoboCop's prime directives.

A note (and reality) is that it's the corpse of the data villains don't disappear, but remains lying on the alleyways (which is handy on the more the levels for keeping track of where you've been - a bit like a game version of Thomas' ball of twine). Some (for want of a better word) 'cut-of-robocopy' views are available, but although they look good they don't take the process of actually playing the game any further.

At their core these sequences are little more than Operation Wolf clones, with mouse-mouse being a question of shooting the bad guys before they shoot you. But the freedom to walk around in the detailed 3D environment and the superb graphic design add a whole new dimension to the action. Rather than attempt to depict the incidents and the characters realistically (which gives the obvious colour and detail limitations on the home systems) would probably have failed miserably, DID have gone for a more impressionistic style, with figures in the more than usually lacklustre outfits.

It works incredibly well, with exciting scenes of action building upon the already-infinite ways change from the game - and for once the player actually does feel as if he is RoboCop, depriving

himself but fair justice from the barrel of his gun through the narrow streets of Old Detroit.

The patrol car sequences work equally well from a critical point of view, but are less satisfying generally. Again the player views the world from RoboCop's eyes as he sits in the seat of his patrol car. Although the results are fairly busy and there are plenty of well-detailed buildings, telephone poles and rail tracks along the side of the road, there's a curious absence of any actual buildings. Obviously the DCP's demolition work is more advanced than people think. Generally the action is to locate an escaping criminal's vehicle and run it off the road. Chase HQ-style while avoiding the civilian cars. They're not, in fact, so much damage to the criminals than they do to you. This is not easy, especially as the prey are patrolling some heavy-duty firepower.

The patrol car is a simple left/right/accelerate/decelerate, with the SPACE bar used for rapid braking. The car accelerates slowly between 0 and 20 m.p.h., but it speeds along this a special turbo kick in, rapidly bringing the car's speed up to 300 m.p.h. It's a good control system, allowing precise movement around corners while still permitting rapid progress on the straight. While it's possible for the player to drive off the road, it's rarely done the player's top speed, so any short-cut taking should be considered carefully. Often it's better to take the what initially appears to be the longer route. Again, a variety of alternative views are available, with some good 'chase' ones where a floating camera moves around the scene finding the best angle on the action, even if they do make the actual job of driving impossibly difficult.

Given DID's flight view background it's no surprise to discover that the aerial combat sequences of RoboCop 3 are the most technically accomplished. Basically it plays like a car-driven flight sim, with an equally car-driven and simplistic tank. RoboCop's only job is to destroy the opponent's (which is shooting down a few choppers and blowing up a light of tanks and DCP wings (which, by the way, are located



When the second 'warning' police vehicles are destroyed, RoboCop's wings are destroyed. He can fly in the air, but he can't fly in the air. He can fly in the air, but he can't fly in the air. He can fly in the air, but he can't fly in the air.

When the second 'warning' police vehicles are destroyed, RoboCop's wings are destroyed. He can fly in the air, but he can't fly in the air. He can fly in the air, but he can't fly in the air. He can fly in the air, but he can't fly in the air.





ily well-estimated, avoiding errors for and avoiding into the developers or the player. It's the equipment that first feels as if it belongs in the game, mainly because without having seen it on film it's hard to accept Robocop flying through the air like some tin-plated Superman. Is it a bluff? Is it a plane? No, it's an excuse for some optical toys.

Without doubt the most disappointing sequence in the film is the final combat between Robocop and the undead Ninja assassin. Due to the graphic complexity the action is rather sluggish, and Robocop's combat moves are definitely limited. Robocop can simply walk around, duck and punch. Success is largely a matter of avoiding the Ninja's blows and timing the punch well, which gives the sluggish movement and control response are not the exact tasks in the world. However, there is a definite knock to it. Although the first couple of games reach understandable levels of frustration as the Ninja hurls you to the ground time after time, it doesn't take long to learn the correct formula. Once that the final sequence in the game comes around this combat, it's a lot of a defeat-and-clone.

THE NAME REMAINS THE SAME...

It's all change for the new Robocop 3 film. New story angle (less violence, more action-toys to increase kid appeal), new plot (well, it's always nice when they make the effort, isn't it, especially bearing in mind the carbon-copy depths that Die Hard 2 stumbled), new director (Fred "The Monster Squad" Decker replaces Irvin The Empire Strikes Back! Kershner, but that's no real surprise - Kershner replaced the original's Paul Verhoeven) and a new star.

Yep, that's right - a new star. Peter Weller is no longer the man in the iron suit. Apparently he couldn't face taking on the physically-exhausting role a third time. And let's face it, from an actor point of view it can't be the most satisfying job in the world trying to convey the whole panoply of complex human emotion via the mouth. So, for Robocop 3 the acting chores go to an formerly unknown American movie artist. There's very little information on him at the moment - even Orion's PR company don't know his name - though apparently his title is identical to Weller's, so there shouldn't be any giving continuity errors.

Audiences will be able to judge how good a job he's done when the film's released early next year.



Amiga version

Top notch all round. 88k have done amazing things with the 2D, especially in the fast patrol sections. Sound is great too, with some suitably low-key tunes playing softly in the background to heighten the tension. Both conspire to generate an incredible amount of authentic Robocop atmosphere. Thanks to some excellent alias management the amount of alias snapping is virtually non-existent - nothing spoils the flow of a game, especially one as narrative based as this, than constant alias messages.

Robocop: Robocop was the first video game to feature a character who could be upgraded. In the Amiga version, the player can upgrade Robocop's armor, weapons, and other abilities. The game also features a "Rehab Edge" feature, which allows the player to upgrade Robocop's armor and weapons. The game is available on the Amiga CD-ROM format.

88k do seem to make much of the fact that during the game the player is given several points where they can do things differently to the way Robo did it in the film and branch off on a new plot branch. Well, yes you can, but it's severely limited, generally resulting in the game ending abruptly or branching back into the main narrative almost immediately. For example, there's a pivotal point in the game where Robocop is ordered by the 88888s to kill some innocent people. Robocop can either obey (as in the film) or follow orders. On the first action and the game flows as normal, but on the second and the game ends abruptly with a melodramatic report explaining that construction of Delta City is proceeding unopposed and the now-redundant Robocop has been decommissioned. Hurdly going to get Locusts or Storms swatting is of Coursey aside, it does add some longevity to the product, allowing the player to replay the game to see the alternate endings.

To be honest, Robocop 3 isn't quite as different as perhaps Ocean believes it to be. Like many other film titles it's a blend of several game styles - a bit of shoot 'em up, a bit of driving, a bit of beat-'em-up - with the thoughtfulness of what elements are compressed in by the short writing on offer. However, the quality ground-breaking 2D presentation adds an incredible amount to the game, and the games are good fun, not just done by the limited clumping sections. And importantly there are times in the game when you do actually feel like you're taking part in a film. Which, at the end of the day is probably the best recommendation I can give. After all, isn't that what we're looking Robocop 3 for?



RATINGS



Amiga	Commodore
88k	64k
Great	Excellent
Excellent	Good
Good	Fair
Fair	Poor
Poor	Very Poor

883

883 is the average rating for this game based on 100 reviews.

883 is the average rating for this game based on 100 reviews. The average rating is based on the number of reviews that are 4 stars or higher. The average rating is based on the number of reviews that are 4 stars or higher. The average rating is based on the number of reviews that are 4 stars or higher.

REVIEW SCORES





Game Arcade Man
 Publisher Ocean
 Developer Probe Software
 Price \$49.95

SMASH TV



n with the body count! This

is how games should be. If you thought some of the games in your software collection were violent, gory or brutal - think again. Smash TV is the most rickling, most racking, balls-out festival of carnage ever to grace a com-

puter screen. And it's a screen. Courtesy of Probe Software from Williams' historically popular coin-op, Smash TV is based around a futuristic game show best described as it's a knockout on PCP. Constantly either individually or as a team, explorers on a massive maze of rooms, collecting cash and goods prizes. Their progress is hampered, not by silly sees in gulls, cutters, dancing cartoon pigs or trying to knock them off the slippery leg with a water cannon, but by armies of zombies and mechanical killing machines.

Hosted by an impossibly annoying ghastly-headed hostess, the show entertains its beheaded population of some distant future-culture. Like a twisted extension of the good old USA, this is a culture where all moral values have been destroyed. Only the timely supply of treasure such as material goods, wealth and fame mean anything in this society.

The destruction violence demands increasingly dramatic and thrilling evidence, while the contestants enter the chance of their 17 seconds of fame by the neck, willing to take on any odds and risk anything

in the hope of becoming overnight TV stars.

Deep within the maze rooms of the sprawling TV studio, look assorted creatures of varying nastiness. Stranding out from the central section where the audience and grinning hostess sit in safety, the players must fight their way through each room, working towards the end of each stage.

Once inside a room, the players are shut in as the all exits are barred and the monsters pour on. Only



As the maze unfolds, players are shut in, and when they are not, they are facing the onslaught of the grotesque and/or things that destroy themselves by

once the requisite number of creatures has been dispatched will the exits open and the players allowed to progress to the next stage. Depending on how fast or skilled the players feel, they can opt to either fly straight through the level via the shortcut route or slow make room and go for bigger prizes found in the bonus rooms.

Everyone knows, however, that the score really isn't what games like Smash TV are all about. While it's interesting enough to note how many futuristic monsters and barely luggage sets are being amassed as waves upon waves of mutant cartoon fodder bite the big one, it's the determination to see what the next section holds which will drive players ever onward and will keep them coming back for more even when they feel they've reached another saturation point.

Let there be no doubt about it, Smash TV works best as a two-player game. In fact, there's a lot of no understatement. As a one-player game it's something of a flop. This is no fault of the conversion. Quite the reverse. The strategy was always to be unworkable with a second player to screen at and criticize, and the game is true of the home version. If a single player were after waves of zombies in endless fun when there's a human creature watching your back and hitting you out of the right eyes, but to be honest, when a single player is on his own it can get a bit boring.

In the initial stages, the bulk of the monsters needing shooting are fat baldy things wearing baseball hats and wearing an assortment of brightly colored jumps. At the early stage, none of the enemies fired are particularly tough. It's the sheer number of enemies which eventually grind the players down. As the bodies are piling up, and the ammunition for use of the more powerful weapons is running



SMASH TV: THE BROTHERHOOD. The cartoonish city streets of Smash TV are filled with colorful, deadly enemies. **SMASH TV** © 1994 Electronic Arts. All rights reserved. Images by the Electronic Arts team. All other trademarks and names are the property of their respective owners.



If you thought some of the titles in your games collection were violent, gory or brutal - think again.

low, careless players may well find themselves cornered and simply run over. As the monsters flood into the room through first one entrance, then another, then another, a corner of the room which was previously reasonably safe can turn into a deathtrap in a matter of seconds. It's this "conditional, whereas demand on the player's reactions which makes *Smash TV* such an addictive game.

Ultimately for an arcade blast, *Smash TV* comes with a wealth of control options, offering even the most particular player happiness on the joystick front. For a kick off, one or two players can play. And each can opt to either use one or two joysticks. The former necessitates some keyboard tapping (but doesn't require the purchase of joystick options).

The latter, while incurring a reasonable outlay (around £60 enables the player to use one stick for movement and another to direct their fire. In this mode, on the buttons are needed and surprisingly, it's nowhere near as irritating trying to hold with two joysticks as you may imagine.

The obvious advantage of the latter setup, as any *Smash TV* player will know, is that it isn't necessary to fire in the direction of travel. Simply, this means that the player can run away from a tight situation and continue to fire back into the crowd of pursuing monsters. Like some *Hammer-Destroyer*, *Pred*, *Piper*, the player can ditch most of the early screen walking back into its waters, leading the ever-growing hordes to their deaths.

In fact, rather than simply being a handy novelty, this is a vital element of the game. *Smash TV* just doesn't work using the first control method. Even though *Pred* has done their utmost to cater for players with only one stick, the continual need to hold down a key either locking the fire direction or



Smash TV, while distinct in style, has much in common with *Smash TV*'s excellent 3D3. Simply because it isn't an homage to *God* (because, in both titles, game-playing trials are non-existent, and all the efforts have been concentrated on providing a continual adrenaline boost for players. Just as *3D3* gives a slightly evil feeling of satisfaction as the enemy helicopters and tanks explode, so *Smash TV* delivers similar thrills albeit on a more close-quarters,



3D3

toggling on the backwards-firing option is just too frustrating and obstructing.

Two-player fun can still be had if only one stick each is available, though. By offering a one-player game with two joysticks, a degree of the team-up camaraderie is available as one player controls the movement and the other controls the firing direction

personal feel. Perhaps because you can almost single out particularly irritating monsters and pick them off in whichever way you prefer, *Smash* beats *3D3* on this front.

However, *3D3* manages to retain its crown as Arcade Blast Benchmark by simply being a touch more class. *Smash*'s ready ruggedness is occasionally just a touch too ragged and primary.



of their joint on-screen persona. Far from being as useless as this sounds, it's actually most amusing. It demands some intense teamwork and-compatibility between players, perhaps even more so than when each player is controlling a character of his own, since there's a strong element of competitiveness there as each player scrambles for the top prizes

POWER-UP EXTREME

As the levels of Smash TV turn it from simply one of the most bloodthirstily violent games of all time into something really scary, the number of extra weapons available for collection increases.

Now, obviously, power-ups in arcade games aren't new, but the ones available in Smash TV do actually make some genuine difference to the way the game is played.

In fact, the power-ups become so sought after, often providing the only survival route through a particularly perilous stage, that players will end up fighting over who needs a particular weapon more. Again, this is where the team elements of Smash come to the fore, as it certainly isn't the case that a continual stream of extra weapons will



Obviously you'll be using whatever power-up you've chosen for the rest of the level, though the power-ups will stay in your arsenal if you get a life.



More importantly, the power-ups are set to a variety of timers which is especially relevant to the power-ups appearing in a subsequent level. They should definitely appear for the life.



flow through the play area.

Nevertheless, the video will be most obviously surprised by how much variety there is, while fans of the video will find all their favorite brands faithfully represented.

There's absolutely no way on this earth that any of the one-of-a-kind bad guys will come in under anything less than an absolute barrage of power-up fire. So take a glance at our handy guide and choose the gun that's right for you.



More importantly, the power-ups are set to a variety of timers which is especially relevant to the power-ups appearing in a subsequent level. They should definitely appear for the life.



Recover from the opening explosion with lightning and other weapons. The early stages of battles are vital, so use your conventional fighting moves and hit some combos, allowing your opponent to get into a bad spot.



Each time you're hit you will take in the enemy's health percentage at the top of the screen.

Useful! Characters who take damage from an explosion will be in a bad position to attack a nearby opponent again!



D

efinitely boasting one of the highest body counts for a very long time, Smash TV also bestows upon the player some seriously devastating weapons. However, no-one can call themselves a decent Smash player unless they have a complete working knowledge of all the available weaponry. So what better way to learn about the hardware than with our step-by-step guide?



Characters who have used the appropriate weapons without making a mistake can in the world. These characters should win and make sure they are available in the stage.

Each time you're hit in one of the Smash Bros. matches, you'll take in the enemy's health percentage.

Each time you're hit in one of the Smash Bros. matches, you'll take in the enemy's health percentage at the top of the screen.



and power-ups. Incredibly impressive feelings of achievement and mastery can be gleaned from guiding and blasting a single character out of an apparently impossible situation.

The player is equipped with standard laser firepower: rifles at the start of the game and can collect a selection of power-ups as they progress. To be frank, the chance of making any progress through the later stages without some serious firepower is slim. These appear randomly, and it can be a terribly nerve-wrecking experience barely holding off the rampant hordes and paying for a debilitating power-up to pop up.

By far the most effective 'meat' available are the smart bombs—a little yellow rocket sprayer which destroys all monsters on screen when triggered, and the invulnerability awarding shield, which is also activated as the player enters the level with a new life to give him a couple of seconds extra-invincibility. When shielded, the player can simply walk through all the monsters, killing them with a single touch. Shields, like so many things, don't last for long and players should be warned against running too carelessly in a state of bliss, for their shield will eventually cool out while in the midst of a hectic zone.

Also best avoided are the protective mines which litter the floors of the arena. Trapping one of these babies will kill the player outright with a massive explosion, sending out symbols and stars in all directions. The mines are particularly common in the bonus rooms. These characters which are optionally covered and can be shipped by players simply out to kill the end-of-level bad guys, are absolutely littered with ponds and cash. All the players have to do is collect the money it spit out from them. However, each bonus room comes complete with hundreds of monsters in varying attack patterns. Some serious calculation is necessary if the player is to correctly decide whether it's worth his while risking death for a couple of minutes and a little

money (this being of little use in the original incarnation) but you can't help but get a certain sense of mastery and control.

Overall, Smash TV offers a great experience for those who enjoy a challenge and a sense of control.

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TOTAL CONTROL

Panel joystick, oh! Smash TV, to the untold, has a rather complex control setup. But hey! All the options are simply there for your convenience. So let's examine them in full. I'm confident that we can find one to suit *Dr's* tastes:

SINGLE STICK OPTIONS:

- The joystick guides the character around the screen, and FIRE blasts in whichever way he's facing.
- The right Amiga key locks the firing in the current direction, where it will stay until the FIRE button is released.
- The right ALT key switches firing to the opposite of the current movement direction, allowing the player to shoot backwards. Again, until the FIRE button is released.
- All the opposite (left) keys instead of right work for the second player.

DUAL STICK OPTIONS:

- Owners should, without hesitation, purchase themselves a joystick splitter. If for no other reason than to appreciate the full glory of Smash TV as it was intended. Just slot the little baby into the parallel port in the back of your machine, connect a brace of four joysticks and prepare yourself for action!
- The left stick governs movement and the right governs firing. This facilitates maximum killing and movement.



Smooth TV demands continual damage assessment and threat prioritizing. It's rarely one for which kills a player. Most of the time a player comes a cropper just by getting cornered or broken-down by the fast-widening traps. Every second the player must decide

from which direction the most violent enemy threat is coming, and fight it. The upshot of this is continual direction changing and re-orienting. An absolutely incredible feat to do over, yet it still will fit more than a second.

Graphic detail is, of course, vital if a game like this is to have any form of realism. Producing a realistic effect of hundreds and hundreds of enemies leaping the arena is arguably much more difficult than depicting one or two going down in individual style. In this case, frame rate speed is three-up rather than simple splashes of blood every time a bodge gets hit.

Hardly the most exciting visual level, but an undeniable compromise in the light of the sheer number of animations which have to be stored. For the most part, though, the visuals are most impressive with the thousands of enemies scurrying around the screens swarming their headless hives, dozens of Mr. Shrapnels (who, true to his name, travels around these episodes into clouds of flying metal) swirling around and stacks of the freeman's headless squawking around in open-top tanks firing flamethrowers at the hapless contestants.

And as the body count rises, it's all too tempting to feel yourself melting and melting and (perhaps) to blink and slithering through your teeth about killing in fact, collecting one of the power-up weapons after a lengthy period of relative cowardice (they allow the most successful players are those who spend most of their time going backwards) and being able to watch algorithms, creating punishment on the instant patterns is one of the most satisfying elements in any game I've recently seen.

The biggest criticism that I can give at Smash TV is that the other side of the instant-appeal coin is long-term interest. It's a shaky bet that players will necessarily return to a game which becomes so difficult in the later stages, no matter how determined they may be at the outset to seek and destroy every end-of-level incentive. The horror of actually completing the amazingly complex levels may well give it for enough of a year to keep some coming back for more, but not that many.

That, however, is pretty much a money and a cheer remark.

Those who are fond of the Smash TV coin-up are unlikely to be bothered by such trifles as long-term appeal. Instead, they'll be happy playing one of the best coin-up conversions to emerge from the Ocean stable.



Amiga Version

Amiga owners are fortunate enough to enjoy perhaps one of the finest conversions of a coin-up in ages. Graphically pleasing if not overly elegant, with more action than you could wave the most rapid-firing stick at, the no-nonsense feel of the original has been most adequately captured. And despite the stable levels, disk-access time has been kept refreshingly low. The verdict is still out on the other versions, as they ain't finished yet. Look out for updates in the Reviews Directory next month.

SMASH TV WAS FIRST CREATED BY TONY ANDERSON FOR OCEAN'S 'SMASH TV' SERIES. THE ORIGINAL WAS ON THE ATARI 2600.



Original Smash TV cover art. The character, an alien, can change his shape to match the enemy (just by waving the controller) rather than being hit and can continuously take in with a special shield which allows him to survive the most vicious enemy attacks.



those fond of the coin-up are

unlikely to be bothered with long-term appeal.

Instead, they will be instantly gratified by one of

Ocean's finest conversions for years.



By Alan Douglas

R A T I N G S



Action	5
Adventure	5
Strategy	5
Other	5

895

This may be the best quality the most popular game in the world. The only catch is that what Ocean would have it well thought to be nearly impossible. This may seem like a bad thing, but it's not. Ocean's decision to produce such a quality product when they're not really a publisher seems to stem through the fact Ocean's corporate membership on the AT&T network, which allows them to have a very strong relationship with AT&T. This is why they're able to produce such a quality product when they're not really a publisher.

1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1
6	0

SMASH TV

SUPER TENNIS



Apparently tennis? Of course there'll be those who have to be a bit of an ass on the lily to get even a little head of steam fighting for a court down at their local club. And though most of us are pretty hopeless when it actually comes to playing, deep down we're all Aquinas at heart: there's nothing like the good hand "head of steam" coming swelling with lust, and the smell of chlorine in the morning to get the blood going. Of course the experience has been simulated on computer screens from over the years—Ubisoft's *The Tennis Pro* and Palace's *International 3D Tennis* being the most notable efforts—but it has to be said that none of them could ever claim to compare to the utter excellence of this Paragon effort from Taitken House.

In the tradition of almost all Japanese sports sims, *Super Tennis* is much more arcadey and simplistic than the traditionally more sophisticated computer interpretations. The viewpoint is the same favored by most Tennis sims: top, as well as that adapted by TV coverage of the real thing. What's most impressive about the game becomes apparent as soon as you pick up the joystick—the lack of any instructions (or at least ones that don't spoil the fun). *Super Tennis* is so intuitive that the full array of shots can be mastered and performed play advanced literally within minutes.

It all down to the cleverness of the control mode, which incorporates the same kind of contextual sensitivity that's proved so successful in the best video game lately. Four basic shots are available: a forehand, backhand, lob and a gentle slice. Each shot has its own button, as there's no complex direction or combination of controls to worry about, and—best of all—the shot list—the type of shot each button produces changes depending on the situation. If the player reaches an increasing lob before it becomes a devastating smash. Likewise, if you're playing at the net and your opponent is stranded on the baseline, the same shot becomes a lobby top which sends the ball trickling over the net, making it almost impossible to reach. It's all very clever stuff, and because it's all handled automatically, even absolute beginners can produce some stunning—and very satisfying—shots.

This all happens with traditional Paragon flexibility, and it's available how awesome *Super Tennis*



Super Tennis is so intuitive that the full array of shots can be mastered and performed play advanced literally within minutes.

It all down to the cleverness of the control mode, which incorporates the same kind of contextual sensitivity that's proved so successful in the best video game lately.

Because it's all handled automatically, even absolute beginners can produce some stunning—and very satisfying—shots.

really is, given its simplicity. The strategy elements which are loosely based on real grass work well, with the reward being naturally less powerful than the rest. Mixed games can be played, and it's often necessary to play against a girl in one-player mode to provide a handicap, such is the computer player's proficiency. In addition to single play, a variety of doubles modes can provide players can compete against each other with computer partners or team up together to play on computerized pairings and there's a tournament option, where the player travels the international circuit in search of the elusive world title.

There's no doubt that *Super Tennis* is a class act—it's undoubtedly the most pleasing adaptation of the sport ever seen in any format. In one-player mode, however, it's likely to prove a little limiting due to the somewhat waning skill of some of the more proficient opponents. With two players though, there's nothing to beat it: go out halves with a mate and get a copy today.

—Gary White



The shot selection screen will change based on context to make the most of the situation.

Several doubles modes, 2, 3 and 4 player, are available in the game.



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Single player mode
Doubles mode
Tournament play
Multiplayer
Two player
Multiplayer
Tournament play
Multiplayer

920



More information on this game
Super Tennis is available on the
best software store in the world
and is available for the first time
in the UK. The game is available
on the PlayStation 2, Game Boy
Advance and PC. The game is
available on the PlayStation 2,
Game Boy Advance and PC. The
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2, Game Boy Advance and PC.

Available on the PlayStation 2, Game Boy Advance and PC.



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KLAX



T

roughly people may stare at the commercial side of the games industry, and its tendency to chase non-cyclical classes of whatever the hot product of the moment may be, every now and again such game-oriented market strategy leads to a game that's actually as good as the game that inspired it. Klax is the perfect example. Atari Games makes no bones about the fact that Klax was conceived as an attempt to jump onto the Tetris bandwagon, by appealing to the same "non-level" of cerebral arcade gamers. There had been attempts before, the most notable being the mediocre Black Out, but Klax succeeded where so many others had failed because it went about things the right way—rather than trying to just copy Tetris or present the same game in a different way, it was based on original game around Tetris' basic qualities. The formula certainly seemed to work, as it was a huge arcade following in the States and has since been converted to just about every home format imaginable— even the once-honored Commodore!

The Magazine is the latest machine to be blessed with this little gem, and it's arguably produced the best home version to date. Like Tetris, the game is deceptively so simple it can be explained on the back of a postage stamp—but things aren't quite so cut and dried in practice. Colored tile moves down the length of a long table-like affair, flipping over and over as they go, towards the player's paddle at the rear end. The tiles travel in any of five lanes, and by positioning the paddle under them as they fall off the edge of the table, they can be caught and held. Points are scored by flipping the tiles, it turns from the paddle and into any of the "lines" below where they stack up, one on top of another. Actually, you won't get many points by doing this alone—the trick is to stack them in such a way that three tiles of the same color form a line horizontally, vertically and diagonally. A line like this is called a klax, and the three tiles involved disappear when one is scored.

The game is wire-based, with the player being charged together to contain each—get on diagonal klaxes, score an onslaught of 77 tiles, score at least 10,000 points and so on. As the score continues, the table gets longer and the tiles get faster. The player wins the day if they drop too many tiles they fall into oblivion if the paddle isn't under them when they reach the end of the table or the five tiles fill up with tiles—the equivalent of hitting the top of the screen in Tetris.

It all sounds a bit too simple to be playable—a bit

like miniature Tai-Tai-Tai—but the gameplay actually runs a lot deeper than that. The tiles in the lines are affected by gravity, unless a klax is created and tiles disappear, any others that were above them drop down accordingly. This means there are no embarrassing floating blocks in Tetris—and allows for smart players to lie on top of other tiles, causing chain reactions—the Klax causing another, which causes another and so on. Because up to five tiles can be stacked on the player's paddle, complex formations and strategies can be devised—something which the game encourages by offering giant bonuses and level wars for clever play. In addition there are elements such as the flashing "wild card" tile which acts as all colors at the same time) and the ability to fly the tiles, supposedly, back onto the table to any way the player, score super bonuses. The scope for strategy and tactical play is far, far greater than Tetris, or indeed any other game of this type, and that's what makes it so compelling. Many gamers may find Klax a bit frustrating because it requires much more tactical thought and forward planning than the more immediate Tetris, but the rewards are there for players willing to learn the tricks and



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strategies learned through practice.

Given the low quality of much of today's Sega software, negative owners should snap up this glimmering opportunity to dust some real gameplay in their machines. This is an undifferentiated masterpiece of game design and supremely playable to boot. Go in it!



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By Gary Miller



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This is a very highly rated classic, and the only other video cassette that has a probably better and more consistent record off the list. You can even check out the original in the only video collection to feature two different types of games (which also includes two award-winning original titles) combined that is available in both the UK and the US of A, and a great bonus of that it's a cheap edition from Sega. If you're looking for a great bargain, this is the best buy. You can't play a high-resolution game in it, though! (We noted).



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SUPER GHOULS N'GHOSTS

There's an old saying: "Keep hell, unopened." Unfortunately that has no relevance here. However, another, "Luck is a dead, willing victim," does. Why? Because it's true that I hope I never face the Arthur Lacaille across a pinball. The phony master with the genuine hair does *never* seem to be on the verge of "getting it on" with his beloved Princess only to have a giant demon crash the party and whisk her away to a castle halfway. Frustrating? You bet. No wonder it that near loss-living underdog.

Arthur, despite or maybe because of his lack of success with the ladies, is a bit of a rebel. He's appeared twice in the arcade, once in *Ghosts n' Goblins* and more recently in the fantastic import *Chaos n' Ghosts*. The two games have been combined with far more than average success rate just about every computer and console format imaginable. Except, alas, the Super FamiCom.

Until now. When CapCom announced the release of Super *Ghosts n' Ghosts* on the FamiCom, many wondered how the company was going to improve on the already definitive Magazine coin-op conversion. Well, know no more.

On pointing up the rear, SGA/G appears to have previous title "Super" about it. There's a dull note relating the usual story-kidnapped love that stems off the FamiCom's background-expanding trick to the full (again - jump). As usual there's a scolding juvenile rant of the perils that be ahead and then it's into the first level.

The setting is a somewhat graveyard, and Arthur must run and jump over all manner of obstacles while lobbing a lance in the flange of the shimmering tombstone that rise from the wet earth and make a beeline for him. Some of the trials carry you con-



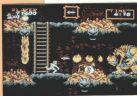
tain your wits greater or bouncier and press-up weapons and armor. It's a bit like *Chaos n' Ghosts* and *Ghosts n' Goblins*, for that matter.

In fact, the over-riding feeling, despite wondrous playability and a couple of new features (probably the strange-looking double jump whereby Arthur can make a second leap while still in mid-air), is very much one of déjà vu. Surely CapCom hasn't cynically produced a slightly enhanced version of the coin-op to cash in on the giant pool of games-hungry FamiCom owners?



Photo/Fight magazine photo. The Big Blue spirit was one thing (that's what it's called) this picture is the real thing. It's not the same old, but that's the point. One of the little extra bits that's not out of the ordinary in SGA/G.

Photo/Fight magazine photo. The Big Blue spirit was one thing (that's what it's called) this picture is the real thing. It's not the same old, but that's the point. One of the little extra bits that's not out of the ordinary in SGA/G.



CONTROLS
 L: Jump
 R: Attack
 Z: Crouch
 X: Interact
 Y: Use
 D-Pad: Move
 Start: Pause
 Select: Inventory

915

After the original *Zelda* game, the series has taken on a variety of styles, from the classic *Zelda* to the more modern *Zelda: The Wind Waker*. The game is a mix of old and new, and it's a great example of how the series can evolve. The game is a mix of old and new, and it's a great example of how the series can evolve. The game is a mix of old and new, and it's a great example of how the series can evolve.



Thankfully, these initial impressions couldn't be more wrong. The player need only get beyond the first few screens to realize that actually this is far more than just some half-baked *GoT*™. It's a completely new game. Although the levels share some of the themes and wrappings of its illustrious predecessors, the tasks and challenges are all new and wonderfully varied. One minute Arthur's prying chambers of skulls from giant stone monoliths, the next he's clambering on top of a stone pillar to avoid being washed away by a giant tidal wave, then he's dodging screeching talons of flame - and this is all on the first level alone!

Last levels feature such unique challenges as *Archeology* - solving puzzles to scale, disorienting - inducing rotating mazes to navigate, giant antichairs to avoid, mazes of ice floating from the snowy ground and, of course, endless procedures of the *Unlabeled* - to *to-do*.

Control-wise Arthur is superb, and the Funsoft's well-designed jump makes it easy to jump and fire at the same time (plus an excellent *Archeology*). The graphics and sound are marvelous throughout - the world is particularly a quite breathtakingly beautiful. If you stick the Funsoft and this can't be a fancy cabinet with a big monitor then it would easily take money in the market.

But as seems to be a common problem with Nintendo's supposed "wonder" console, there's some bad timing when several top-ups are necessary, though these occurrences are rare and don't detract from the top-notch gameplay. In fact, when facing off against some of the toughest enemies the slower pace is a positive advantage.

GoT™ is simply a superb game, and fully lives up to the high expectations generated by the early preview shots. In fact, I would say it's the best overall purchase after Super Mario that I've found because I've played the game. And I'd suggest you do the same - pronto.

■ *David L. Johnson*

ARMOUR BELIEVER
 Screenshot from the game 'The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker' showing Link in a dark, stormy sea. The HUD shows 1000 rupees and 47 HP. A large 'ACE' logo is overlaid on the right side of the image.



ARMOUR BELIEVER
 Screenshot from the game 'The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker' showing Link in a dark, stormy sea. The HUD shows 1000 rupees and 47 HP. A large 'ACE' logo is overlaid on the right side of the image.



ARMOUR BELIEVER

Arthur starts his quest clad in the latest designer armour - it affords him a little protection from the evil wind but not much - one touch and it falls off, leaving Arthur naked save for a pair of spotted boots! This is when Arthur's really in trouble, because all it takes is one more hit from the bushes and he'll jump out of his skin - literally!

Fortunately there are spare suits of armour to be found if Arthur looks carefully, and even some magic ones. These come in two flavours, green and gold. The green armour may not be the most fashionable suit to be seen in but its effects more than make up for this - it turns Arthur's down-to-earth weapons into magical counterparts. Lances become flitting lightning bolts, knives become booming fireballs, axes become whirling flameblades. But although far more powerful, the properties of these magical missiles can be a little unpredictable at times. The gold armour is smarter in every sense. It allows Arthur to build up a super super weapon by holding down F88 (as in *800*)! Devastating against the usual level enemies.



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635

Although not a total sell-off of the graphics, it's worth noting that the graphics aren't as good as those of the previous game, which was a disappointment. The graphics are still good, but not as good as those of the previous game.

The new game is a total sell-off of the graphics, it's worth noting that the graphics aren't as good as those of the previous game, which was a disappointment. The graphics are still good, but not as good as those of the previous game.



WRESTLE WAR

Over the last year Sky Television has proved, all too dramatically, that how you sell and how you present the same British public really is what it's all about. The company's show that has achieved legendary status, particularly among the British wrestling community, is the percentage of the population that is equipped with a satellite dish have actually seen the show. Now the same thing is happening, on an equally grand scale, all over again. The forces of Hulk Hogan, Sergeant Slaughter, the Rockbackers, the Undertaker, Giant Bombardier and countless other World Wrestling Federation "superstars" are adorning T-shirts, posters and stickers all over top and down the land - not even of the Italian's young fans have never even seen him in action!

The WWF issue is going to get bigger before it goes away - as Cortex recognizes, having snapped up the official rights. Ingi's game, while not boasting any such trendy licenses, has undoubtedly been released to cash in on the craze all the same. It's a pretty unimpaired effort, casting the player as up-and-coming grappler Bruce Bane who must battle his way to the top of the pro wrestling world. Doing so means taking on eight vicious computer-controlled bad guys of increasing strength and skill. In theory it sounds like a right laugh, and it looks

very playable indeed - but once you get down to the business of actually wrestling, things get drastically dull.

What has been made to keep control as simple as possible - there's a basic punch and a kick, and when the two wrestlers grapple, it's down to buttons. High-speed buttons, controlling to see who will get the better hold. Pressing them on various combinations of directions and buttons produce the moves, which include dropkicks, body slams, pile drivers, suplexes, and so on. Again, theoretically it sounds simple enough, but what again does it allow you to do? The rapid button-tapping that's necessary to get a hold of your opponent is so demanding that it's almost impossible to execute



In the wrestling title, the player moves when controls are hit as well as buttons. Buttons on the floor in addition allow a player to move in certain directions.

any of the more elaborate moves. It always seems that, no matter how fast you hammer away at that button, the computer opponent always gets the upper hand, and that's no fun at all. If it was just that little bit easier, it would be a lot of fun. As it is, it's just frustrating, and very hard on the fingers.

The one saving grace is a two player mode, which is a damn sight more enjoyable because the opponents are much more equally matched. That, however, is little consolation for the downright unavailability of the main tournament game, where some of the best opponents are so strong it seems almost impossible to beat them. For some reason it remains compelling for a while - perhaps because something keeps telling you that it's your luck you keep being and not the game's - but once that little phase passes, *WrestleMania* is liable to be relegated to the dusty bin at the back of the software shelf. If Ingi's looking to exploit the WWF issue with this one, it's going to be disappointed - kids are too selective to accept cheap imitations, otherwise they'd all be walking around in Yugo T-shirts instead of Rocked Pump. Chances are the official WWF game, when it finally appears, will be a damn sight more playable anyway.



About that! The price was not particularly low in 1992. In the game, Bruce Bane has to win the title by defeating the other top stars, including a former WWF star, Hulk Hogan. The game is available on the Sega Saturn and the PlayStation.

© Gary Whitham



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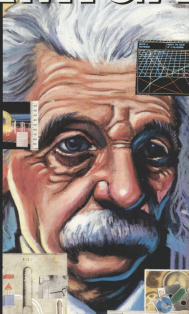
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reviews directory

away! A hearty ACE welcome

goes out to one and all who have managed to stick it out this far into the magazine. Stop your grinning and drop your lines, 'cause

this is where it's all happening. The ACE Reviews Directory provides the definitive rundown, not just on ALL the games software released in this merry month of November, but also on the vast majority of titles that are still available for your machine. If you can find it on a shelf in a software shop, you'll

find it here! No kidding! Whereas most magazines' roundup sections are like an old-age pensioners' tea dance, the ACE Reviews Directory is the software equivalent of a major wave-

house party here, with enough Yo-Yos and Luscious for everybody. Accessible!

There's something for everybody in the ACE Directory - unlike certain other magazine's rather cynical roundup writers, the Directory isn't just a dumping ground for software that doesn't make the grade. You'll find everything from One-star disasters to Trailblazing classics, all co-habiting in perfect harmony - much like Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder. Each game featured in the Directory has been thoroughly played to death by ACE's band of gameplay experts, and awarded a star rating, from one (oh dear) to five (hooray). You'll not find a more authoritative guide anywhere.

We hope that you'll find the ACE Reviews Directory an invaluable reference guide - maybe it will help you make your mind up about a game if you're a bit unsure, or tip you off about a little gem you never knew existed, or maybe you're just after a damn good read. Whatever you want, the ACE Directory is for you. To assist you in this matter, all the games are listed in alphabetical order - and to further ensure that you have no trouble locating the game you're looking for, we've printed the alphabet for you here, so you can see what order the letters come in.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

New Releases:

Billy (2)
Captain Planet
Colin Lynxide
Crew Time
Doubldragon
Five Off
Frost Brevard
Football Director II
Hard Seta

The Immortal
The James Bond
Collection
Last Ninja III
Lemmings (2)
The Magic Garden
Mistral
MysticMountain
Mystic Train

Night and Magic (2)
Outlaw Europa
Pillfighter
Rise of the Dragon
7 Cabals
Super Space Invaders
Volfed
Vortex

Still Available:

Adventurer 2
Alien Breed
Alien Storm
Antzike
Armageddon
Arxide
Beast Busters
Beneath the
Burger Time Deluxe
Carnegie
Castle of Illusions
Castles
Cerberus - Defender
of Rome
Chase HQ
Choplifter 2
Chuck Yeager's Air
Combat
Cloud Kingdoms
Cruiser for a Cop
Cruiser
Dragon Crystal
Ed Hockey
EFL
The Emulators
F-15 Strike Eagle II
F-2000
Frost Fight
Flaky
Flora (2)
Footloose of the Year 2

Formula One Grand
Prix
Frenetic
Gloria Battle
Golfing 2000
Haley Wars
Hells
Heart of China
Hero Quest
Hudson Hawk
Hunts
In Your Face
James Bond: Double
Bond
Juggler II
James White's
Wildwest Shooter
Kagato
Legend
Lunar Turbo
Challenge 2
Magic Peaks
Master of the
Europe
Marius Deane
Marvel Land
The Magic of
Swords
Mighty Island
MightyMorph
Mighty in Magic
MightyMorph 2
Mines
MightyMorph Call

MIC-32M
Monopoly
Monopoly Business
NBA All-Star
Challenge
Noboko 2
Pebbles
Railroad Tycoon
Robo Hood
Raiders
Rolling Stone
R-Type II
Sarkis
The Secret of Monkey
Island
Secret Weapons of the
 Luftwaffe
Shen Service II
The Simpsons
Sandy Shaker
Sonic the Hedgehog
Space 255
Super Professional
Basketball
Super R-Type
TerraMole II
Till Gate
Thunderbolt
Thunderstorm
Utopia
Warner Special
Wing Commander II
Zoo Wars

new releases

BABY JO



Price: Atari ST, Amiga £24.99
 Game Platform
 Publisher: Loriciels

Imagine, if you will, Microsoft's *Star* in two dimensions and you've got a pretty good idea of what the latest import from France has in store. *Loricel* is all about... Or if you don't know that, try imagining *Mario* with a super-power baby in the main character.

It's all really rather ludicrous, with the hero maddening to see the boss grinning as he looms on the landscape in order to keep fit - but he wants 'not too much, or he'll stress his nappie! I mean come on! Just what are those French video game designers up to? Something pretty strong and scary then a little bit of if the quality of *Baby Jo*'s aesthetics are anything to go by. Fairly designed sprites, attractive music and hilariously jolly scrolling backdrops are all proof of *Baby Jo*'s makers, but it has to be said that in a kind of way, it's rather perverse sort of way. Perhaps it's something to do with the weather?

But if there's one thing it certainly isn't, it's flat - the slow, sweeping gameplay and handily three-quarter degree makes more of that. It's for precisely these reasons that *Baby Jo* should only really be on the shopping list if platform flicks depress you and we're talking 'casual junk'. (Despite being in a new fit - and even then there are much more playable options available.)

CAPTAIN PLANET



Price: Atari ST, Amiga £25.99
 Game Available Action
 Publisher: Microimage

Face the brimble man. Thanks, yeah, like I was telling, you there's like this guy, right, and he's like this sort of super-hero, you know. Cars around using the world these days and have brimble-brimble. Yeah, like you say, there's that, man. Anyway, he's got these five helpers, and they're like just kids, you know, but they've got this special rings that give them these comic powers. Totally amazing. Each level of the game has comic around one of these six characters, and they're just the way.

I must like the first character, *Brito*. It was her ring in the shell out the bad guys and super-plant so she can clean up to the level run. Yeah, and the character get out there's the helicopter, she has to fly around it and sweep up-embroidered airplanes and take them to a sanctuary. Yeah, exactly. It's like this amazing sort of platform game and shoot-'em-up. Minutes, yeah, the graphics are not of quite the screenshot line, and the tunes are comic, but come-over your little spine get's a bit wacky. Yeah, *Tricks* *Wacky* *Watergate*. All The President's Men. But you get used to it and all as it's quite a fun-on experience, if not the absolute most professional thing like you've ever seen. Lots of fun-on predictable culture. See.

CELTIC LEGENDS



Price: Atari ST, Amiga £24.99
 Game Role Playing Game
 Publisher: UKI Ltd

It's amazing how you can tell, 90% of the time, what an RPG game is going to be simply by just by knowing what part of the world it's from. For example, if it's from California it's likely to be all swords and sorcery, while anything from, say France or Germany, while still having all the traditional RPG elements, always tends to possess things in a much more simplistic and readable manner. As in the case here, with this little Celtic number which is very much in the same vein as *Thalion's Incredible* and countless other Euro-RPGs. It's actually a fine little game, based around all the old RPG clichés, but handling them with traditional French style and spirit. It's all set in the mythical world of *Genoa*, where the essence of magic by an old wizard has stretched the kingdom in time. What follows is a story of strategy and conventional RPG elements presented from a number of viewpoints - on the battlefield, high above the world itself and so-on, depending upon the view. Though it offers nothing that seasoned game fans will find particularly worth chattering, it's different enough in terms of presentation and style to make it well worth investigating - especially for newer gamers who may be looking for an accessible and appealing introduction to the genre.

CRIME TIME



Price: Amiga £25.99
 Game Adventure
 Publisher: Maelstrom

Crime Time is an attempt to break into adventure-without-spying market covered by *Lord of the Rings* and *Secret of the Labyrinth*. Unfortunately, it's not a fraction as good as either works.

The game opens with a moderately interesting intro, which takes along time to tell you that somewhere in the City a crime has been committed (and as something we don't already know). Well, it says moderately interesting, and so... the time around. Unfortunately it can't be stopped and has to be watched, irrespective the game is based on.

And this over-indulgence on the part of the programmer and lack of thought for the player extends to the game itself. It's a graphics adventure - there's a picture window at the top of the screen and a lot of screens and moving items on the bottom. The idea is the player selects an action with the mouse (i.e. 'Talk') and then an item from the list (i.e. 'Key'). While hardly ground-breaking in its intention, it at least has the virtue of being a system that works reasonably well. Movement around the game world is by clicking on the points of a compass that also sits at the bottom of the screen. As the player moves from the location to location a new graphic slowly fades in (and is paid by... painfully slowly). And, the scenery graphics are fine, but shown at a scale of 'body distance' angles for no other reason than to be different, with the real drawback that they are not parallel to look at. On top of that the adventure isn't all that interesting either. Strictly one for die-hard adventure fans only.

DEATHBRINGER



Price: Atari ST £25.99
 Game Beat 'Em Up
 Publisher: Empire

So there's this sword, right. And there are enemies - and we're talking baby-eating variety here - have magically given it the ability to absorb the souls of any unfortunate it dies. Their intent

tion to make it to get off their goofy-groovy through thickly-thick moments fast, a behavior so stupid he can't even spell his own name right. However, look out to the winner's side, and the second someone dies to repeat Kane's colorful banter. Hardly following his lead, Kane sets out to give the crowd back to the winners - except. Basically it's all a thinly-veiled excuse for a sideways scrolling bloodfest of headcut and slaying, with Kane glowing through more often than of his own conviction.

Dashdiggers' looks some of the most impressive pixel-art scrolling backgrounds ever, even if they are somewhat lacking in color. The sprites are well-drawn with a nice flow to them, but they're rather garish in a cartoonistic sort of way, but despite its good graphics and adequate sound, Dashdiggers' real problem is that in the all important gameplay it's basically all a bit dull. The combat moves are limited - strike up, across and down - and slow to implement, while just wandering along, mindlessly plugging away at the baddies is not all that interesting either. And the postcut dialogue in the World can't make up for that. **B**erkeley 1/13/87.

0100

FACE OFF



Price Arcade \$7/Ampex £28.00
Genre Sport Game
Publisher Activision

There aren't that many Ice Hockey games available on the Amiga, in fact, there aren't any. So Face-Off is something of a welcome addition to the genre of sports games. Think getting NHL, you and me. Like Manufacturer United Europe, it's a very polished game, with some super slick moves and option screens. There's a toggle to participate in, where the player can do anything from take the player to trainee the manager. And like NHL, the player can see off the arcade game and concentrate on the managerial side of things if they're that way inclined, or alternatively just play the arcade game alone.

The arcade side of things is okay, although some may wish the action had just a touch more zip. Certainly compared to EA, Hockey it's distinctly sluggish. Control is simple and easy to pick up - shoot, pass or dump into the goalpost - and the sport is fun, especially when things get a little physical.

and the first ever flying, its standard on-screen sports game flow - that there's a replay function so that that blurring goal can be replayed again and again. Overall, Face-Off is a rounded package, though unlikely to exactly grab the public's imagination. Fans of the sport will enjoy it, but just how many of them are there in the UK?

FATAL REWIND



Price Megadisk £24.00
Genre Arcade Blast
Publisher Progress/Workbooks Arts

Progress disappoints nobody with its first heavy onto the UK of consoles, maintaining the same high-quality of graphics and sound that's made it the legend it is in the things market. And thankfully in this case there's the game play to back up the sounds. For if The Killing Game Show had to be measured for its success from the Amiga to the Mega Drive, couldn't they have come up with something a little less than Fatal Rewind? Apart from the fact that it doesn't actually seem much,

it's a fairly obvious attempt to sound like Fatal Steel, a title which bears no resemblance to this game at all.

The player is put in charge of a mechanical roller reminiscent of the ED-2090 in RoboCop. An agile little thing, it can run left and right, jump, fire and even climb up the sides of walls. Things they can do, however, look? The player has to register a network of platforms in the base for the rail in the next level. Move on from all sides, avoiding and weaving about the arena with the side intent of seeing the player lose the lead. And just to give the player a touch more incentive to escape the platform are slowly sliding into a deadly red sea. The need to find ways to create area with a small amount of depth to the game, but these arcade alternatives elements never swamp what is basically a very clean and solid one shot 'em up.

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II



Price Arcade \$7/Ampex £24.00
Genre Sport
Publisher S&M Games

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Yaaaaaaa. Don't get me wrong, I've got nothing against football - there's just something implicitly boring about most management games of the type. *Where Manager* is the exception to the rule, firstly because it's so colorful and secondly because you get to play Kick Off with it, which makes it doubly exciting. When faced with something like this, though, it's difficult to imagine anybody but the most desperate sort of gamer or die-hard footie fan actually getting any enjoyment out of it.

Technically, of course, there's nothing to fault it, and the depth that the game goes into is commendable - you've got your leagues and cup trophies, financial problems, player injuries, team tactics, player wants, stadium management and all the rest of it. On the artistic side, however, nothing much seems to have changed since the days when these games were presented on the spectrum about three or four years ago.

Three days, however, the cheap graphics and sound just don't cut it any more, do they something like the screen along it seems like a bit of an enhancement, really. But of course it's the gameplay that counts and for what it is, *Football Director* is entertaining enough, and providing some not reporting too much and willing to give the game some time, it should pay off handsomely. The vast amount of the comparatively football management literature will probably want to see their names for *Paper Manager 2*, however.

0 0 0

HARD NOVA



Price Atari ST/Amiga £24.99
Genre Role-Playing Game
Publisher Electronic Arts

Hard Nova is a game that's difficult to categorize. Like *Darklight* it's a mixture of styles, blending strategy as well as role-playing elements, adventure as well as space-flight sequences. It's the sort of stuff that Electronic Arts in America have been championing out for years - science fiction adventures with alien worlds, alien creature characters, big space ships clanging together and all the rest of it. There's supposedly a comic edge to this one, with the player taking on the persona of intergalactic space hitch hiker Nova. You can interact with characters, RPG-fashion, collect objects, do missions and trek across the galaxy following, bringing cargo

from planet to planet and so on and so forth. It sounds like a bit of a cop out, but if this sort of modules is your cup of tea, then you're liable to have a lot of long-boring fun with it - it's just a shame that the vast majority of gamers don't have the patience to get into it. Well worth checking out - the game's got plenty of atmosphere (for the hell of it), and goes progressively more involving the longer it's played, just don't expect to be able to pick it up and get playing straight away.

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THE IMMORTAL



Price IBM PC £20.99
Genre Arcade Adventure
Publisher Electronic Arts

It's over a year now since *The Immortal* appeared to great public acclaim on the Amiga, a masterpiece of animation and game design, like *FTL's* *Dragon Master* it was probably responsible for selling a fair few other upgrades. As here it's made it's way on to the PC, and now features a couple of new enhancements that make it any more better game.

The majority of the game is identical. The player guides a superbly animated wizard on his travels around an intricate 3D landscape. As he progresses around the corridors, he discovers treasure, traps and all manner of terrifying monsters. In the original Amiga game, the fairly complex combat took place at the same scale as the rest of the game (i.e. usually) and it made taking enemies to the opponents longer and often a touch difficult. On the PC, however, when combat occurs the view switches to a close-up that makes things easier.

The only gripe from a PC gamers point of view is that having been spoiled by the recent plethora of 3D-adventure games, the 2D on display here is a little disappointing. However, this doesn't seriously detract from what is an otherwise excellent game, and recommended without hesitation to anyone who fancies a bit of dungeons 'n' dragons.

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THE JAMES BOND COLLECTION



Price Atari ST/Amiga £24.99

Genre Arcade Blast
Publisher Borek

Clearly that Denmark has been pushing out James Bond licenses for so long never shows the effect. *How To Kill* is, in fact, it hardly comes in a surprise to see a compilation appear as soon as there are enough titles to produce together. So here it is, comprising three (let me say games so far - *How To Kill*, *On Ice And Last Stand* *The Spy Who Loved Me*).

Of the three, *Spy* is probably the best, comprising an agreeable ratio of game-play style - there's a bit of *Spy* there in its little side games, more than in a smart understated shoot-'em-up double helping of *Operation Wolf* style shoot-outs and a real pseudo-based sub-game.

How To Kill, also a collection of sub-games, comes a close second, offering equally clean and playable action, but with slightly less variety (after all its lead-ups incorporate affairs).

On Ice And Last Stand is the worst of a good bunch - originally an Amiga game called *Quadrant*, it was heavily modified to look a bit more like the film and renamed appropriately. As both a game where the hero is killed on at the last minute, it's not particularly similar to the film, consisting of a simple boat chase based on the film's, or... from where it's not a bad laugh though, and one of the whole the compilation offers better value than most on the market right now.

0 0 0

LAST NINJA 3



Price Amiga £24.99
Genre Arcade Adventure
Publisher System 3

Well, well, well. After everyone has been shining up their shoes at the prospect of giving *System 3*'s much tested, much loved and much delayed conclusion of the *Ninja* series a right old kicking, the bleeding thing turns out to be great!

Applying a creative arcade-adventure angle to the tried and tested *Ninja* formula, the tops on the System have produced a game which has all the visual appeal of the first two games in the series and none of the problems. Well, that's not quite the case, but instead of the game relying so heavily on the Fight routines which, as for honest, were never that good, the emphasis

has been moved into the puzzle-solving elements which aren't half as hard to implement.

Spanning an epic quest across a bunch of different zones (earth, air, fire, water and void) the game continually throws up different puzzles which the player must solve in order to reach the next stage.

Aside from completing these puzzles, there's a fair amount of racking to be done too, and the collectible weapons add enough variety to ensure that even when the player is doing game his wealth arbitrary at the level, he'll find something new to do.

Graphically the game is really rather special, with the cinematic landscapes at a stage which most rarely be approaching the state of the art, and the animations of the characters there when being undeniably fine. Just look at the speed like on that.

0 0 0

LEISURESUIT LARRY 5



Price IBM PC £24.99
Genre Adventure
Publisher Sierra On Line

He's Larry Lafford! He's *Pastorale* *Paul And Marie* in a whole lot of trouble! *Leisure Suit Larry 5*, the latest instalment in the (impossibly) successful adventure series chronicles the rying adventures of America's greatest lounge lizard.

In what promises to be the most sexy adventure in the series, the player must guide Larry and Fran through a world of pure and molten sex on the open to keep good times from on the streets. Initially valuing the role of the audience Lord of America's Secret Erotic Videos, Larry quickly becomes embroiled in a heterosexual underworld plot to get all parts of the sexual market and drive it underground where everyone gets in on the act.

It's all pretty standard point and click stuff, but this time the player alternates between the very different personas of Larry and Fran, allowing him to get into new scenes and also visiting and particularly sexy areas of "licensed" *Sex* body liberal with. Again, the hand painted 3D-style graphics and game design are an excellent option the most occasionally lapses into a host of pretty lame gags. However, this time Larry does have moments of absolute brilliance, and the continual promise of a further sexy

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MAGIC GARDEN



Price: **Amiga £24.99**
Genre: **Arcade Adventure**
Publisher: **Electronic Zoo**

Good God! Whatever you're thinking here played the month by an apparently never-ending stream of cinematic games, we were understandably keen to get our hands on the game which they promise. And what a splendid connection it is.

In his endeavours to become 'the most efficient gamer', the player must guide a group around the mysterious magic garden doing, well, this or that or it because a little bit wiser actually. He can do pretty much whatever he fancies. He can water the flowers. He can save the bees. He can use some magic seeds and be amazed on the back of a 'big dragonfly' but the game must be careful. In these are terrible traps which lead to the garden-like big flowers which can hurt him or tell games which can slow him down.

And Clonny had better be careful with the number of objects he's carrying, or he will become too tired and get hit by lightning and die. But the game won't get hit by lightning if he is exploring the underground tunnels where the talen of Clonny can flash the talen the water efficiency.

Presented in video direction, the game looks, plays, smells better and is just what it is. It's so good to something I've ever seen in my life. Besides the nice Peter style graphics and gameplay which give heavily a look to images appearing in the massive main Magic Garden's true origins. **B+**

MARTIAN MEMORANDUM



Price: **IBM PC £25.99**
Genre: **Adventure**
Publisher: **Access/US Gold**

Once again a game pretends to be an 'interactive movie' and tries not to be like more than a simplistic adventure

with flashy graphics and sound. But in Martin Memorandum's case the aesthetics are enough to make up for the game designer's shortcomings - or at least they were to be in the first few hours. The game uses digitized video footage, sampled speech and fine quality music to set the scene liberally cuts you as a futuristic private detective who must travel to Mars to track down the alien-pod daughter of a famous inventor, and it works very well, creating a strong sense of atmosphere and involvement.

It was less often the case with games of this type, the effect of these flashy graphics, the scenes wear off and when you actually buckle down to play the game you realize that there isn't really that much to see or do. An ardent adventurer could easily complete it inside of a week, because the linear game design insists that it's almost impossible to explore the background - it's as if you're being guided by an invisible helping hand, and that's not very satisfying.

Both of Dynamic's similar styled titles *Eye of the Dragon* and *Stone of China* offer similar and more satisfying experiences, so if you've got the PC, maybe it's not as demanding a product. I would be well advised to check either of those out instead. **B-**

MEGA TWINS



Price: **Amiga £25.99**
Genre: **Platform Game**
Publisher: **US Gold**

There's big trouble in the land of every thing. A dark shadow, etc. etc. etc. has fallen across the land, and it's up to the two nearest and most comfortable warriors ever to save computer-erfession to save the day. In this case Mega Twins is a platform game - not a two player game that takes better through level after level of bridges and chasms, using all the standard machinery with a bang from their very little records. Mega Twin can be found along the way that act as super-weapons, which are particularly useful against the super-tough end-of-level monsters. As a consequence of the CapCom-clone Mega Twins is hardly startling, but it competes enough. Apart from the slightly weird pace of the action, the main thing that prevents Mega Twins from making any real impression is

the lack of excitement. There are no real battle-on offers - the platform elements is minor, and tending to randomly lay traps to trip the hero into oblivion is hardly opening up whole new vistas of multi-level entertainment. The final road to the coffin is the fact that the whole thing is incredibly easy - a competent player will probably get half way through the game on his first set of credits. Mega Twins had a grade potential, but whether it's the lack of the original coin-up or the execution it's actually turned out to be Mega rather than Mega. **C—D**

NIGHT AND MAGIC: ISLES OF TERRA



Price: **IBM PC £24.99**
Genre: **Role-Playing Game**
Publisher: **New-World Computing/US Gold**

'By my mighty sword of Zorak, I Hagar Dragonstone, must stain the evil dark-legions of Tyne before the digressions of the six moons/worlds!' Yes, well, you get the general idea. Night and Magic II is yet another slice into the much-explored realm of RPG gaming, this time coming out as a cross between Dragon Hunter and The Bard's Tale. In a just case has the whole RPG genre been done to-death so badly that there's just nothing new anymore?

This third Night and Magic outing would seem to suggest, that regardless, as apart from some very flashy VGA sounds and soundboard work, there seems to be very little new or interesting to offer, except maybe the last non-existent library of the hard RPG libraries. As you'd suspect, the scenario is about as hackneyed as one is ever going to get, with some Claptrap about entering the Ultimate Power Circle process, ready to die. What that involves is selecting a party of dragons, one, two, or three and all that, and then wandering about fighting with dragons, collecting treasure and picking up items.

The game itself actually is very pretty, but for the most part the adventuring is pretty dull and unexciting. Considering, however, how conditioned RFP gamers have become, I doubt that anybody who's likely to try Night & Magic II will be disappointed by what they find. **D—D**

OUTRUN EUROPA



Price: **Amiga £25.99**
Genre: **Racing Game**
Publisher: **US Gold**

As long as it's a game that has become a legend, along with the likes of Star Trek and Bionic 'Prey, over the last couple of years, simply because it's taken its bloody long to come out. The original idea was to release the product to cash in on the wave of nostalgia from the original Outrun computers - which should give you an idea of how long we've been waiting for it. We ended up getting the official sequel, Turbo Outrun II, which wasn't much cop, and now we've got this, which isn't either.

The basic idea is that the player has to take charge of a variety of vehicles - car, bike and boat - as he races over various land-and-sea stages to deliver a vital package, while international agents are out to stop you. It's all a bit ludicrous really, and what's interesting is supposed to be a cross between Outrun and Chase HQ, with extra levels on to it to get a bit of a shocky mood. The road sections aren't much fun to play because control of the vehicle is so bloody over-sensitive, and the money can just keep on getting in the way in a way that isn't conducive to gameplay at all, but is just very frustrating. The boat bits don't even last that long because they're so complex and difficult, and parts of players will probably just their foot through the window screen while the calculator of the heading's up. Talking of heading, the control disk according to a gate in the process, and it is fairly easy when it's when it's not very clear what's actually going on in the game. There are a few better than good games available, so don't waste your precious time poring over this one. **D**

PITFIGHTER



Price: **Amiga £25.99**
Genre: **Beat 'Em Up**
Publisher: **Domark**

If you're a prime example example of an excellent connoisseur of an average clone-up then Pitfighter is it. If you're an average Joe then you're prob-

ally more than familiar with the game. With its giant monitor screen, three sets of player controls and stand-out digitized graphics you could hardly miss it. Trouble was, underneath the unique flashy visuals and steady sound lurked a distinctly dull, bare 'em-up, made even worse by the confusion caused by the game-breaking graphics. Where's my Mike game? Is he hitting me or not? You know the sort of thing. All in all, a less-than-rewarding experience.

In converting *Philgrave* for the home systems, Tiger London have actually improved it a hell of a lot. Indeed, if you liked the original, chances are you'll like the home game even more. The graphics, which have retained pretty much all of the flash special FX of the original, are clearer, and the slower pace makes the game much easier to play. The joystick controls are a little sensitive, but it only takes a few goes to get the hang of things. Not as good a conversion as it is, it still can't compensate for the fact that fundamentally *Philgrave's* alien as exciting as rapping a five-term day. Which is *Philgrave*. It's not to have to say, it's pretty much what you opened all your time doing.

OTG 2

RISE OF THE DRAGON



Price Amiga £34.99
Genre Adventure
Publisher Dynamic, Sierra On-Line

Amiga owners have been scrambling to become the first to purchase this, the first of a new wave of Sierra games helmed by the perennially popular Dynamic team, but they should be warned. While *Amiga* owners get to enjoy just as many visual thrills and plot twists as their PC Peas, they pay the price of swapping ten-count coins for one as it slips in and out of your drive for the umpteenth timey-dime.

However, if you're willing to pay the same ten-pipe price, that is an extremely rewarding product. The player takes the role of a futuristic detective, a real *Melrose* type, digging his way through a drug-riddled city of decay. The last remaining obstacle between the mysterious *Dragon* and total control of the entire planet? Played as first-person perspective, the game uses the so-far-top-necessary virtual interface which *Sierra* have made their trademark.

This is another example of the innovative music deal which American com-

panies are so fond of throwing down our throats, but for once it isn't too bad. There's actually a story here! And there is actually some adventuring to do. The player must investigate the strange drug-related death of the Mayor's daughter, interrogate various criminals and do all the other stuff that police investigations have to do. Wise type, opening other people's mail, hanging out in low rent apartments. Where's his *Amiga's* all in these lovely hard-core graphics. Mind you... all these details...
 OTG 2

SEVEN COLORS



Price Am 25, Amiga, IBM PC £25.99
Genre Puzzle
Publisher Infogrames

This is the game that started it all, may be getting on a bit now, but there's always been a few new puzzle games on the market. The only problem is that the vast majority of puzzles that have been waddling up on these shelves from America and Europe have either been of unacceptably low quality, or just too weird to get the head round.

Seven Colors from Infogrames, a company that pulls itself up to all the no-nonsense, fits snugly into the latter category. It's played over a large board made up of hundreds of tiny colored diamonds where the objective is to change as many diamonds to your colour, spreading them like a virus across the screen, faster than your opponent does. The first player to fill half the screen wins the war. It's difficult enough to understand when you're actually playing the game, so don't worry if you're a little foggier after that brief explanation.

In fact the major problem with the game is that it can be very slow to understand, and because things just seem to happen it's not very easy to keep track, or indeed to work out what's going on at all. The confusing situation is further compounded because the instructions hardly explain anything at all. Persistent players may well get something out of it however, and there's a variety of game options to spice up the action if they do. Oh, and there's some very nice in-game classical music which suits the game perfectly. It's very soothing indeed, and made *Seven Colors* worth looking up even when the player's gone stale.
 OTG

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SPEEDBALL 2



Price **IBM PC \$29.99**
Genre **Sports game**,
Publisher **Imagitechs**

Now this is the game that PC owners have been waiting for. After all, there's not nearly a plethora of future sports games on the PC, let alone ball-and-stick ones.

Speedball 2 appeared on the ST and Amiga about a year ago to great acclaim from just about anyone who could hold a joystick. Indeed the Amiga incarnation was itself an ACE TitleMaker. And the good news is that the PC version is just as good.

Speedball 2 can best be summed up as simple without any forms of rules or menu screens. The player (or players) controls a team of ragged rubber ball-men, each of whom has one aim in life - to run a stiff ball into the opposing team's goal mouth. Actually, that's wrong, they have two aims. The other one's to run their feet into the opposing team's mouth. The player only controls the number of the team score on the ball, and can perform a variety of actions such as thump and shove. The other players are controlled by the computer and are intelligently, as the punting and tactical possibilities are huge. From time to time bonuses or power-ups appear on the pitch, just to give the action up a little (as if it needed it).

Matches can be played as one-offs or as part of a knockout or league championship. The latter two options are excellent, with the player able to train his team up using the credits earned during the game. There's a real sense of progress as your team, Speed Deluxe, works its way up the charts.

With its big, bold, fat graphics plus mid-way scrolling, pitch is life about as incredible on the PC) and merely award the game's got incredible piffing power, and the exciting addictive action provides the reason to keep coming back. It's a true PC classic. And at this price, you'd be a real fool to leave it on the shop shelf.

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SUPER SPACE INVADERS



Price **Amiga £19.99**

Genre **Arcade Shoot**
Publisher **Demon**

Actually, it's not that "super" at all. In fact, it looks like Little Johnny's first landing attempt with his new AMOS package if the truth be told. Basically, Demon's taken the aging classic, turned it up beyond recognition with some fancy graphics, thrown in some power-ups to keep the folk who remember Space Harrier more clearly than Space Invaders happy, retained the old sound effects to get Capital entertained with nostalgia, and then totally fooled up the original's sparsely-used uncoloured graphics.

To sure we have aliens who crawl about circles, others who attack in Colonel-like swags, others that grow every time they get shot - the list goes on and on and (yawn) on. The only highlight is the one-mutation human scowls, where UFOs swoop down and try to kidnap the cattle milking about the bottom of the screen. Unimproved ones can be rescued by shooting the cow-balls back to Earth with a jolly cry of "Thank you, How cow."

With its slow, pretty graphics and disappointing dull graphics, it's hard to believe that anyone had the gall to release Super Space Invaders onto such a demanding market. But they did. Shame.

0

YOLFIED



Price **Atari ST, Amiga £24.99**
Genre **Arcade Shoot**
Publisher **Imple**

Qix is back in town, and better than ever! The rules have widely taken may differ among the gameplaying fraternity, you'd be hard pushed to find anybody who doesn't enjoy a game of good old Qix. It's appeal is universal because it's so simple and addictive, and like Breakout, its gameplay has stood the test of time. What Yolfied generated from Taito's coin-up represents a game version of the original classic - it is to Qix what Asteroid was to Breakout, keeping the original frame-work intact, but adding lots of pretty backgrounds, power-ups and extra features.

For the most part it's much the same - draw lines around the screen to fill up Qix or more of the screen area with

out the fireworks which makes up the low level! getting hit, by way of the marauding enemies - which, instead of the old grunting line, now takes the form of a giant moustache that masts about spinning about bullets, and a couple of pretty little helpers. Levels and sound-effects are among the colorizations, while high-tech backgrounds and SFX provide the aesthetic overhaul.

Since Qix-style games are so thin on the ground, Yolfied, with its clean execution and uncoloured graphics is a welcome addition to the software scene - and if you've got any sense and admiration for the classic, you'll add it your collection too.

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VROOM



Price **Atari ST £24.99**
Genre **Racing Game**
Publisher **Lanikar**

Without wanting to be nasty to our European counterparts, who with 1992 and all that, it has to be said that most of the software that comes over from the continent is a bit rubbish. Vroom, however, from French publisher Lanikar, has proven itself to be the exception to the rule. Although it's not a push-on the likes of Indianapolis or Formula One Grand Prix, Vroom is nevertheless a jolly ruffin racing game, boasting very impressive speed on the play screen his way (since the camera around a first-person view-to-drive environment).

It's got all the usual features and fittings - rear-view mirrors, pit stops, over-head maps/directions, dips and hills on the track, racing modes, qualifying flags, choice of courses and some spectacular crash sequences. It's more of a racing game than simulation, as controls and instrumentation has been kept to a minimum - there's nothing too much to worry about, here apart from going very fast, avoiding the other cars and keeping on the road. And it works well enough, being very playable and actually quite competitive, with the array of racing options adding to the game's longevity. The only design factor is that the joystick option is restricted to the arcade mode - the more serious race options only allow mouse control. Yet damn indeed, especially if your ST mouse is as good as yours is, but apart from that, not at all bad.

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COMPETITION WINNERS!!

You lucky people! Well, two of you are anyway. What am I talking about? Well, the winners of last month's *Mailbox!* and Pink Pages compes, that's what.

Hearty congratulations are in order for Mr J. Cook of Ryersal, Bradford, who correctly remembered that Core Design's other ace-winning hero was Tarvek the Warrior. Well done, Mr Cook! You'll be pleased to know that even as you read this your likeness is being coded into *Wrestle-Staff* as one of the crew-men. And don't forget that a specially forged *Mailbox!* ace will soon be bringing its way to you. So get ready to duck the next time the postman knocks on your door.

And equally hearty congratulations to James Rowell of Market Deeping for managing to count that there were twenty five-star games in last month's *Pinks*. If you could let us know which machine you own, James, that £100 worth of software will be in the post before you can say "Aren't I a lucky little bit'cher."

Thanks to the many people who entered both these competitions. Hey - we're just sorry you all couldn't have won a little something. (Our sending and lamentations.)

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AFTERBURNER 2



Price: **Magnitude \$34.99**
Genre: **Action/Shoot 'Em Up**
Publisher: **Atari**

The epitome of the arcade blast, *Afterburner 2* is a cheap piece of fluff, and that character isn't half bad. Flying at 74 into the arena, the player zooms through 20 stages, blasting away enemy fighters with his unlimited number of machine gun rounds and limited missiles. Enemy fighters can also be downed by using bombing capabilities.

The game is fast—very fast, in fact. In some respects it's as quick as the arcade machine. Performing a 360 degree roll by holding back and then banking the other way is an exhilarating experience. And on the whole, in fact, the whole game is pretty exciting fare, even when it's fully understood quite how mindless it is.

This is the sort of game that the *Magnitude* was built for. As the other end of the issue scale, even though it's another arcade blast, *Afterburner 2* does a surprisingly good job of showing exactly what the *Magnitude* is capable of, so long as you don't look to deep.

Even though the speed is up to scratch, the gameplay certainly doesn't cause up anything of note. It's the definition of becoming a consumer and, just like the coin-op, is heavily there.

ALIEN BREED



Price: **Atari \$24.99**
Genre: **Action/Shoot 'Em Up**
Publisher: **Atari**

Alien Breed can best be described as the *Alien* horror that should have been. It grabs *Alien* atmosphere very. Can't get escape gameplay to create an addictive—albeit uncritical—winner. One or two players can take just simultaneously, and their job is to run around the six giant-sized maze-like levels of a monster-infested space station, blasting away swarms of flies out of anything that crawls, slithers or looks.

Fortunately the problem that *Alien* offered—*Genies* too though this, there was no real aim to playing open from scoring points has been corrected by giving the players a task to complete on each level (generally of the "find a location and blow it up" nature). Okay, so it's not exactly lifting the game into *Atari's* *Atari*—*Atari*—*Atari*, but it provides enough of a goal to keep the player coming back for more.

The objective gameplay is backed up by some superb scoring and graphics (although the animation is a little perfunctory), and the term "arcade-like" is very appropriate here. Throughout the use of sound to create atmosphere and tension is superb, especially when the station's self-destruct sequence is kicked in and the player has to find the exit before the place blows. The only real gripe is that given that the game is an *Atari*—*Atari*—*Atari*, you can't help

feeling that something slightly more ambitious could have been attempted. But it is hard to do by the best thought format that for months, and that's a good enough recommendation for anyone.

10/10

ALIEN STORM



Price: **Magnitude \$34.99**
Genre: **Action/Shoot 'Em Up**
Publisher: **Atari**

Alien Storm is a real stunner in the plot department. Once again, *Alien* are over-running the farm and it's up to the player (and a possible friend) to take their nasty bats back to the stratosphere, held from wherever they came. Like the very similar *Golden Axe*, three suitably awesome figures—*Earth's* last line of defense—stand ready to save the world from alien domination. There's the basically-tame *Golden*, *Wendy* and the white *Wendy*, who can act as uncanny resemblance to *Cyber* (although for some reason it's an electronic behemoth).

Together they have to blast their way through eight levels of alien folk. The keyboard still goes left to right basically, allowing everything that moves before it goes two-down. After a while the view changes to that of an *Up/World* style game. By putting cameras around the screen the player has to destroy everything.

The being a shoot-'em-up, one would have thought more emphasis would have been placed on the weapons but also they fail to deliver much excitement, being rather dull. Only moderately recommended for two players.

ARMALYTE



Price: **Atari \$17/Atari \$29.99**
Genre: **Action/Shoot 'Em Up**
Publisher: **Atari**

It's just as well that space is infinite—*Armalite* is in to contain the seemingly endless stellar battles that, according to the surface, constantly rage throughout the universe. *Armalite's* latest lesson in galactic violence is a 66-bit splashing of its *Atari* hit from nearly 1600 years ago.

The player is given the difficult—if completely unoriginal—task of fighting his way through the levels worth of horrendously swirling swarms populated by all manner of really rather assorted aliens. The scenery scrolls a little up and down, which introduces a small but welcome element of exploration as the player weaves around swarms and the odd path to the end of level monster.

Armalite is an unworldly tribute to the *Armalite* that *Armalite*. Technically it's excellent, with some slick post-rendering especially good on the *Atari* system given the machine's hardware and published presentation. However, the difficulty level has become ridiculously high and even the most skilled player will soon be reduced to an apoplectic state of hair-raising frustration. This situation is not helped by the excessive terrain on the player's ship which soon had the fragile ship shaking uncontrollably about the screen (and usually straight into the death-to-death swarms). On the basis of the evidence here, let's hope *Armalite's* next ride of the *Final Run* is correct.

ARMOURGEDDON



Price: **Atari \$17/Atari \$29.99**
Genre: **Action/Shoot 'Em Up**
Publisher: **Atari**

Armageddon (also *Atari*) is a game that you run around a six-part mission to find

the five pieces of a wooden board-and-peg-it-to-dance-on-stumps (IQ). There are six similar vehicles to try out, ranging from ground-hugging tanks and hovercrafts to high-flying jets and helicopters and the player must use his skill and judgement to decide when, where and how best to use them to achieve his current mission objectives.

Master control of each vehicle is smooth and responsive, with the fluid joystick giving a good/pole-balancing feeling of speed.

The player can switch between the vehicles 'in the field' using the function keys (the computer puts the vehicle on auto when this happens, so there's no risk of a recently-occupied jet plunging nose-first into the ground). Like *Car's Thunderbolt*, the action is an action rather than simulation, with the enemy attacking almost as soon as the player takes a metal shielded car out of its bunker, which makes for exciting but somewhat relentless action. But it's not all about, about, about. There's an important management element as well, where the player has to wisely allocate resources and mechanisms to develop new weapons and fresh vehicles to replace those blown to pieces by the very active

enemy.

Atomino is one of Progress' best games to date, with solid gameplay lacking up the impressive visuals. *Atomino* is rich with IQ but one bit.

00000

ATOMINO



Price: **Atari ST, Amiga £26.99**
Genre: Puzzle
Publisher: Progress

Atomino, Galbraith! There are few games based around atomic physics, and even fewer interesting ones, so a big "Thank!" and put on the back for Progress. *Atomino* is a puzzle game based around atomic valency, i.e. the number of bonds an atom can make with other atoms. Helogens, for example, can make one bond while Halium can make two. The aim of the game is to place randomly-allocated atoms down on a grid and try to form molecules of various sizes, i.e. at least three atoms big. A molecule is only complete when

all the atoms within it have their bonds accounted for. It all sounds a bit... well... dry, but in fact turns out to be great fun with its addictive challenge, pretty graphics and pleasing tempo around making it one of the better puzzle games on the market.

00000

BEAST BUSTERS



Price: **Atari ST, Amiga £26.99**
Genre: Arcade Blast
Publisher: Activision

This is a competent conversion of the coin-up which proved to popular amongst the UK-loving arcade geeks. It's basically yet another *Op Wolf* clone but features a welcome twist that instead of waiting to enter the play area the player is launched by a veritable army of the United who attempt to trap anyone leaving the devastated city alive. Borrowing heavily from the *Bonanza Bros*, *Beast Busters* uses dogs and whoppers and all manner of wall creatures can be literally blown into bloody bits of flying flesh.

The graphics manage to capture both

the look and the feel of the arcade and visually all the levels are present, but there's no denying that the inevitable substitution of a mouse for the cabinet-mounted joystick is distinctly unsatisfactory. If you haven't already got a game of this type, and don't mind a mediocre blast then it might be worth looking into, but otherwise there's not really enough here to set it against purchase. It's a shame, because even the arcade version left the player cold after a couple of hours - it's not supposed to really drive the player in any more than that. But for the price, a would have been nice.

00000

BONANZA BROS



Price: **MegaDrive £24.99**
Genre: Arcade Blast
Publisher: Sega

Bonanza Bros proved to be a combination of a double hit with few faults due to its particular graphic style and innovative angle of the run-up down. The player's objective are basically

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discontent, bring increasingly complex and heavily guarded buildings in Mayhem, USA. Having already made a bit of a reputation for themselves, there's a substantial reward on the floor levels-meaning that every available law-enforcement officer is watching from to be the one to get them hung to rights.

The game uses a unique split screen to allow players to split up if necessary between the two play windows (there's a screenshot of the building, allowing the players to plan their routes efficiently as to go through the goodies and avoid the nasties). Overall the game is a fairly enjoyable romp, with some hilarious cinematic cutscenes in places adding greatly to the fun, but like most Megawatt games it's longevity is in question.

0 0 0 0

BURGER TIME DELUXE



Price GameBoy £29.99 (Import)
Genre Platform
Publisher Data East

Now this is a real Meat from the joint, when most games don't live to three pointers around like some substandard familiar rick (just to get those to part with their cash). The players here live to guide ray Pete the Chef around a network of platforms and ladders. In a bizarre culinary exercise Pete has to make giant hamburgers by walking over the various ingredients lying on the platforms, forcing them to fall down the screen onto the platforms below and normally onto a plate at the bottom. Once all the ingredients have been made Pete advances onto the next more complex arrangement of platforms.

Now this all sounds a bit odd, but you're reassured without the instant message, graphics and third eggs that have escaped from the captured and are watching the platformer intent on Peter's demise. Fortunately the comely chef is armed with a pepper pot and a carefully aimed slide will stop the food, then for a few moments allowing Pete to make good his escape. More than that, Pete can try to lure his food-stealing critics to crash the ingenious ingredients. Burger Time Deluxe is a fun little game, although the graphics verge on the microscopic. It's probably a bit too simplistic for today's younger gamers, but nostalgia buffs will enjoy this tasty slice of the past.

0 0 0 0

CASTELIAN



Price GameBoy £29.99 (Import)
Genre Platform
Publisher Taito Entertainment

Remember Snake? It was a classic platform game starting a top 100-rated Page. Each of its seemingly-infinite levels was set on as a tall tower. The player would move Page left and right, and make him jump over gaps or shoot at the weirdo alien. However, in a unique twist, the tower used to rotate to follow Page's movement. Quite a graphical achievement on the Super! Now Nintendo has come to the GameBoy under the title Castelian. And while the camera has now changed the game certainly hasn't. It still looks stunning and play will be a difficulty rating through the roof, too. However, completing a tower is extremely satisfying, so if you fancy a real challenge then you know where to come.

0 0 0 0

CASTLE OF ILLUSION



Price GameBoy £29.99
Genre Platform
Publisher Sega

The old Master, instead of Mickey Mouse's handy job as they told? has been unrecognised here. Now beloved Mickey must enter the decreed and exquisite Castle of Illusion to restore his. Mickey's domain consists of the levels and victory's task is to find the secret Rainbow Gems on each, all of which lead down to a lot of jumping from platforms to platforms, picking up and throwing blocks, sliding down slopes and climbing ladders.

Fantastically it's a Mario clone and so a bad one of that. There are some original touches, such as the 'Red' level which scrolls from left to right, which proves pretty disorientating but challenging nonetheless. The graphics are very attractive and the sound is superb. In fact, it's games like this that make GameBoy owners feel that they're doing the right thing in buying out the cash for a colour handheld.

0 0 0 0

CASTLES



Price IBM PC £34.99
Genre Strategy
Publisher Interplay, EA

Castles takes several graphic genres and combines them with a healthy dollop of historical authenticity. The game consists of three increasingly difficult scenarios involving around the not particularly rivalling sounding task of constructing castles. Each castle consists of wall sections, gateways and towers. There are seven classes of blocks available and the player's main game task is to apply the optimum mix of labourers to each section. It's an attempt to think the castle as quickly as possible.

There are often the walls if attacked by the neighbouring Woods (some things never change). Initially the opposition are incredibly weak and their use is strength is gradual, so defeating them is a lot easier than it might be to. Although additive enough to ensure repeated play, Castles is miserly flawed in too many ways to achieve classic status.

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CENTURION - DEFENDER OF ROME



Price Megabyte £28.99
Genre Action Strategy
Publisher Electronic Arts

Out as an ageing Centurion, it's the player's duty to help defend the homeland and expand the Roman Empire as far as it's possible. This single-mission aim is somewhat faded at first by the fact that the player starts with just a single type of soldier and a city of disgruntled citizens to keep under control.

The game is a well-judged blend of low-differs strategy and arcade-style adventures. For example, to keep the soldiers provisioned happy, the player can take part in chariot races and keep them tight. As the game progresses the armies under your command grow and ships placed at your disposal to take armies to neighbouring shores become bigger and better. If the player's luck is really in he can even have a crack at inducing the voluptuous

Compsa. Megalithic warriors in particular are starved of this type of game, so if you're looking for something to exercise your brain a little, you could do far worse than to give this a go.

0 0 0 0

CHASE HQ.



Price GameBoy £29.99 (Import)
Genre Race Game
Publisher Taito

There can be few readers who aren't familiar with the excellent outcrop of its sequel S.C.I. What a business on the part of the designers to combine high octane racing action with bumper bumping action. The player takes on the role of an Armored-wearing Miami Vice style cop, chasing various prey as a stepped up Porsche with the aim of burning them off the road to make the arrest. The GameBoy version is technically excellent, with lots of fast action and good sound, although the cars are a little small. Unfortunately, it's about as rough as a parked banana, and even Grandy will soon be looking away Mr Big. You're Busted! Well, actually you're likely to be bust off buying this. It's a lot of money for such a short-lived challenge.

0 0 0

CHOPLIFTER 2



Price GameBoy £24.99
Genre Arcade Shoot
Publisher Nintendo

Choplifter first appeared in 1981 at NintendoLand and is still fairly remembered today. The player's mission is to crash-land a helicopter pilot in to rescue survivors from a horrendously scorching wasteland. To do this the player must land near the refugees and wait for them to board. This can be quite harrowing at times as you're a sitting duck for all the enemy gun installations and planes which constantly fly rings.

The player's copier is equipped with a rapid-firing cannon and a limited number of bombs with which to protect himself. Fast action, challenging game play and a powerful system help make this one of the best games ever on the GameBoy, and a must for any serious fans collection.

0 0 0 0

CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT



Price: IBM PC \$29.99

Genre: Simulation
Publisher: Electronic Arts

Chuck's previous two titles were purely the vintage pastiche, only permitting the player to do such fancy things as perform perfect loops and dives. This new aerial thingy has changed considerably, with lovely CGM making a welcome appearance. Air Combat allows the player to pilot war planes from any one of three eras: WWI, Korea and Vietnam. There is a multitude of single missions to fly along with a comprehensive campaign mode featuring over 21 missions. These include the standard "work and destroy" forces, protecting bomber formations and attacking ground targets. Should some of these take your fancy, the in-built mission-designer is available.

The most useful feature is the ability to replay missions after completion and view them from any angle, allowing the player to see all his most spectacular dogfights and crashes to die. Even more interesting is the ability to dual planes from different eras, allowing such innovations as piloting a Mustang against an F-4. Class.
★★★★

CLOUD KINGDOMS



Price: Atari ST, Amiga £7.99

Genre: Platform
Publisher: BMG/Oceanic

Cloud Kingdoms is a load of balls-in-a-bowling-balls-to-be-pinned (that) the old ones are the balls. As Terry the Ball, the player has to negotiate thirty-two huge multi-way scrolling levels, each of which floats high in the sky, collecting all the gems that litter the narrow walkways. Terry has to take care not to leave the path, else he'll fall to his doom and woe below. This isn't as easy as it sounds - Terry's solitary body bounces wildly off walls and pillars, and parts of the floor may crumble beneath him. In addition, if Terry passes over areas set on fire they'll burn him away, usually over the edge of the narrow channel. If that weren't enough, other hostile opponents wander the walkways, keen to see Terry's

demise. Fortunately, Terry can bounce over these threats with a tap of the fire button.

Cloud Kingdoms, formerly from Millennium, is an attractive game, with a strong comic feel. The cast's graphics, though lacking a little detail now do the trick, and the scrolling on both the Amiga and ST versions is very smooth. The inertia control is a little tricky to get to grips with, but rewarding when mastered. Some features appear, like the fact that it is impossible to know where a walking floor is until it's been bounced on, but overall this is an accessible bargain at just under eight quid.
★★★★

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE



Price: Amiga £24.99

Genre: Adventure
Publisher: Delphine, UK Gold

The plot for Cruise for a Corpse is firstly pivoted on the Agatha Christie "milkmaidication, glory of suspect" crime story tradition, deriving from the player is invited to a Greek island yacht for a well-earned holiday only to get there and find his boat hijacked off by an unknown member. Before you can say "Inspector Wintford" the player is forced to don penny moustache and telly whiskers to enter the heinous crime.

After a bit of generalised interest from the press, there were high hopes for Cruise for a Corpse. In it the excellent game everyone seemed to think it's best: Well, yes... and so. In the graphics and sound department it's exemplary, with large, fully animated sprites moving over exquisitely detailed backgrounds and plenty of suitable music and samples playing away in the background. All concepts to generate an excellent sense of mood and atmosphere.

The player directs his on-screen character (Randy) via the mouse. By clicking the mouse pointer on objects of interest, a menu appears listing the various things the player can do with the selected item (i.e. 'Open' or 'Examine' hot-key). Movement around the yacht is effected by walking back from location to location by clicking on only to the current location, such as doors or hallways, or more quickly by calling up the yacht map and "walking" Randy immediately from place

to place. As a user interface it's difficult to think of another as intuitive and easy to use.

The major problem with Cruise for a Corpse is its pace. The animation, though wonderful, is slow. Examining the contents of a room can become quite painful, as Randy slowly turns, walks, turns, bows down, examines the items only for a message to appear stating that "There is nothing of interest here". Equally annoying is the frequent though inevitable scrolling and swapping of the 1000+ "vms" game data. All too often the player's enthusiasm for the hunting can be severely dampened by the reduction of the game's speed to near snail's pace. Less important, some of the generally excellent French-English translation is a bit dubious in places, such as the Cabin Boy who is described as "dynamic".

Those comments apart, anyone with the patience to sit through the occasional additions will find Cruise for a Corpse a superb buy, topped with quality presentation and atmosphere and presenting a big enough game task to satisfy even the greatest sleuth.
★★★★

DEUTEROS



Price: Amiga £24.99

Genre: Strategy
Publisher: Antikitten

This sequel to Millennium is a by the name argued to set a thousand years after the previous events. Marked Ian falls into a sort of post-technological midstate and begins his for, now space-travelling glory. It's the player's task to relocate man's position in the stars and take the race into the numbers of the Galaxy once again. The gameplay looks down to endless resource and manpower allocation between various departments, dealing with the occasional crisis that crop up and so on. Although programmed well and moderately entertaining, there really isn't anything on show that hasn't been done more entertainingly elsewhere, chiefly one for the strategy die-hard.
★★★

DRAGON CRYSTAL



Price: GameStar £29.99

Genre: Role-Playing Game
Publisher: Sega

No hunting about with complex plot here. The player is riding his bike one day when he takes a wrong turning down a strange alleyway and ends up in a fantasy world bustling with the towns with dragons or slugs. As an RPG the gameplay couldn't really be better. The action is fairly on screen, with all the "Take the Floor Ring of Oak to the Crack of Floor Moomins" stuff fixed to the background.

Although competent enough, it's a little difficult to see who exactly this game is aimed at. It's too simple for the typical RPG head, while commentators are likely to get more than a little bored at having to state down the power, but before they complete a level just because they reached their final step. But if you've got the time, you'll find that this makes a welcome addition to the GameStar library.
★★★

E.A. HOCKEY



Price: Magister £24.99

Genre: Sports Arcade
Publisher: Electronic Arts

Like Back Off with lightning it, Electronic Arts' Hockey will appeal to everyone. A series of teams from around the globe, each with their own abilities and weaknesses battle it out in the Ice hockey World League.

Following on from their success with John Madden's Football, the poll yet another winner out of the bag with this, perhaps their most classic title to date.

Having selected the length of game, whether the player wishes to compete in seven-off matches or a quick one, select the ice team and that of the enemy. It's game on!

Moving around the rink is simple enough, and control over the puck is surprisingly intuitive. Since the rink is so small and the players can move so swiftly and violently against each other, the Hockey is an extremely rapid, high scoring game. Basically, wherever you get the puck from the face-off it's most likely to score. Well, of course, the player gets the bang of the wide variety of passing moves available to him, from a good honest grapple the puck remains to a full body check.

Like an opposition player on a top regular basis, though, and you'd bet-

to be ready to put your fist where his mouth is, as one of the buttons included is breathing. While the rest of your team are trying to do some good, it's possible to hang over at that guy who's asked over your chest for as long as you like!

Graphic and gameplay marvel. I.A. Hockey is undoubtedly a game awarded to one and all. **Heave!**

010000

ELF



Price **Amiga £25.95**
 Genre **Arcade Adventure**
 Publisher **Ocean**

As Caroline the Elf, it's the player's task to locate the evil wizard who has the power called 'clashes of Sorcery' the Not Very Nice. The game takes place over six Tolkien-esque levels filled with platforms, pitfalls, ladders and bridges. Caroline's magic powder allows her to protect herself from Sorcery's rampant hoards of blemish-monsters by firing balls of magic energy. Numerous items containing spells and powers-ups can be bought from T-T-Ole Wizard

Sluggo using cash picked up along the way.

Each massive maze-like level presents its own unique set of problems to solve and tasks to achieve, requiring that the player constantly evolve new strategies to deal with them. All in all, ELF is a polished high-quality game, perfect for platform or arcade adventure fans.

010000

THE EXECUTIONER



Price **Amiga £25.95**
 Genre **Arcade Shoot**
 Publisher **Minsk**

The Executioner is Minsk's attempt to improve on the Asteroids style game. As in most inertia-driven titles, with the player flying through turbo galaxy centers, blasting away rocks and then using fixed benefits to purchase bigger and better weapons systems for your ship.

Set in a dark and dreary landscape are pods which die as the player and occasionally launch ships. Now to be found are fuel pods which must be collected

if further play is to be enjoyed.

Initially, the Executioner is quite enjoyable, but as the miles take over. There just isn't enough gameplay variety to bring the galaxy back for ever. Also, the fact that a single alien missile can kill the player's freighter is far from encouraging. After the long struggle to work your way to the second stage, the player may well find him- or herself whether to run really be bothered to continue.

The potential of the game simply hasn't been exploited. The graphics are perfectly acceptable, but nothing to write home about, and the play of the game and in particular the behaviour of the player's craft isn't as jerky and unpleasant, too.

010000

F-117A: STEALTH FIGHTER 2



Price **IBM PC £25.95**
 Genre **Simulation**
 Publisher **MegaForce**

Your chance to pilot the Stealth Plane in The World is a more inspiring one than you may think, although it's more

real as to whether owners of the previous Stealth game will actually need this installment in the series.

Opting to either pilot a realistic F-117A or a artificially enhanced 'Microstealth' version, the player can enter his chosen war scenario, be it Cold, Limited or Conventional and then choose a particular location for the conflict to take place. The number of combat areas has been radically increased. New battlefields, including those from Fig. Fig 2 and some scenarios have been chosen in the good measure.

Graphically, F-117A is enriched, with graduated skyboxes, complex objectives. There are four total levels for users with diverse machines. In contrast, even on a 486 or 486, the frame rate is hardly city-smooth.

There's no denying that F-117A is a superb flight sim, and Microstealth's best yet. However, despite the radical 3D-rendered graphics and increased number of combat areas, one does wonder whether there's enough new in the gameplay to make it a real purchase in contrast of the original. **F-117A**

F-14 TOMCAT

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reviews directory



Price **IBM PC \$34.99**

Genre **Simulation**
Publisher **Activision**

There's no shortage of flight sims on the PC, but Activision's release may appeal to some. The game lets the player fly a series of missions around the front of I-170. The player can either pilot straight into the action or start at the bottom and climb back his way up through a full Navy career. After a good performance in a series of missions the player gets transferred to the Naval Fighter Weapons School better known as the home of the infamous Top-Guns. Weapons available in the usual mix of Sparrows, Sidewinders and Phoenix missiles, along with the cannon for close-up work. There isn't really much emphasis on realism in F-14 Tactics and to be honest it really hasn't got much to offer players over other similar titles. In the final analysis it's a satisfying enough effort without too much screen baggage.

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F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II



Price **Mac/ST/Amiga IBM PC \$29.99**
Genre **Simulation**
Publisher **Mindspeed**

Mindspeed make a departure from their usual rigorously accurate titles with this action-oriented affair. It's the flight sim equivalent of the beer and John books, in that it's simple with no complications. Players have six combat arenas to choose between, each with various missions to select. These missions are nearly all simple 'get in, deliver a couple of targets and get out' jobs, with the player having virtual tonnage defined against various of enemy jets. Control is via keyboard, joystick or mouse and is highly responsive in each case.

The screen update is fast enough but there are quite a few moments about it's more than adequate for the job in hand, however. Sound is disappointing, with a white noise hiss being the player's only audio companion for most of the journey. In the gameplay department this is a winner, with plenty of achievable action to get the adrenaline pumping. Veterans may be aware the game's lack of depth, but

anyone else should find this just their cup of tea, with a yummy January Dodge in the next to last track.

F-ZERO



Price **Super Famicom \$24.99 (import)**
Genre **Racing Game**
Publisher **Nintendo**

F-Zero takes advantage of the Famicom's built-in budgeted multi-adapter capabilities to create one of the fastest and smoothest iterations of 3D yet seen. It's like looking in a bubble dished, highly put. F-Zero is a race game, with the track curved above and behind the player's vehicle. At first, despite the impressive 3D, F-Zero appears to offer little over the myriad of other race games about, but after a few goes it qualifies itself through.

The real fun control over the craft is more precise than in any other race game. As well as accelerate, brake, left and right controls, you can also use the Famicom controller's two side buttons as banking controls. This degree of precision means you can race your rival like a cross between a high speed hovercraft and a rally car. F-Zero may not look like anything special, but it's genuinely one of those games that has to be experienced to be believed.

0 0 0 0

FINAL FIGHT



Price **Amiga \$29.99**
Genre **Beat 'Em-Up**
Publisher **US Gold**

The number in US Gold's ever-widening catalog of SuperComs continues. In Metro City (SuperCom based on Neo Tokyo all in one well, cause it's like and to make a bad situation worse the Mayor's eight-dirty daughter has been kidnapped by...you guessed it...the Big. The old Mr Big certainly gets around, doesn't he? The player and optional partner have to fight their way through the city's wasteland to rescue her. Why? Why not?

Final Fight is something of a first for Neo-Tokyo on the lower computer, but it's actually quite good. The sprites are large and clearly animated, the background scroll is smooth and the

action is fast. Someone of the drawing whether a punch connects or not is a little dodgy, but apart from that there's no recommended crossover to anyone who doesn't like a little aggression without leaving their knuckles bruised.

FLICKY



Price **Magazine \$24.99**
Genre **Platform**
Publisher **Bugs**

"Don't be put off by the screenshots on the back of the box" is probably the best bit of advice I can give about Flicky. It looks awful - very primary-colour space and generic background sprites and generic backdrops - but in-between things don't improve much in the game itself. However, like Quaxxon, an ugly appearance conceals the goodness inside.

The player controls the tiny bird of the title. The ball-bouncing/catcher ball game and get themselves lost in the events of a giant evil industrial horror. Flicky has to run and jump about, collect his scattered food and take them to the safety of the nest, while avoiding the growing menace. Flicky is a wonderfully playable game, very simple but packed with fun. Some may dispute whether it's the epitome of fun, but for those with the cash it's a great purchase.

0 0 0 0

FLOOR 13



Price **IBM PC \$24.99**
Genre **Strategy**
Publisher **Virgin Games**

The world that strategy games are being far from well and truly exploited in a game that's likely to convert even confirmed trigger addicts to a more simple and intelligent software diet. Floor 13 offers a more direct and a strategy game by having itself around a compelling scenario and offering players that get beyond the regular strategy framework.

Set in present day Britain, it tells of a government-run secret police force that must eventually wipe out subversive elements and generally protect the government. From re-emerging incidents so that it doesn't fall from grace. An Director General of this con-

cept agency, the player is solely responsible for its operations.

The game is played almost entirely from a single main screen of an office desk, onto which intelligence reports and newspaper stories arrive from the outside world and from the banks of the information which the player works from as plots and storylines unfold. Various sub-departments, such as surveillance, investigation and dissemination are the mainstays of the player's work, with study agents taking reports, tapping phones, matching profiles and even recruiting and killing people to advance the government's internal aims.

The way in which the game reveals information as half-stories and half-gossip means that good detective work and through-time checking of intelligence data is an important as the conventional strategy skills which are also required. It's all through the viewing, very realistic stuff, and comes highly recommended, even to those who can't normally stand strategy games.

0 0 0 0

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR 3



Price **Atari ST/Amiga \$7.99**
Genre **Sport Game**
Publisher **B&B Software**

This isn't really a sport game at all. It's more like a test of the player's knowledge of football trivia. Lots of text and full graphics don't help things along either. If that's your bag, then good, otherwise don't waste time.

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX



Price **Atari ST/Amiga \$24.99**
Genre **Racing Simulation**
Publisher **Mindspeed**

Believe you not, you've never seen a racing game like this. Lotus of Outlaw Ramps Indianapolis race! They are but children's toys compared to complete and utter excellence of Formula One Grand Prix. The latest and greatest game from the programing genius that is Geoff Swan. Car Race? Challenged. The graphics are truly amazing, with high-resolution

complete with driver's helmet peeling out of the cockpit literally soaring around tracks lined with stands, trees, fence-lined crosses. The second monitor on the visuals, with good use made of stereo samples for the engine.

But it's not just the quality of the graphics or the sound that makes *Fast* so special. It's the meticulous attention to detail that guarantees an authentic and involving Grand Prix atmosphere. Everything you'd expect to find on a Grand Prix circuit - stands, bridges, tunnels, etc. - is there (and in the ideal positions they'd be found in real life), even extending right down to street-side parking spaces cars off the track and engine-room waiting in the pits. The wonderful control over the car is the essential icing on the cake, with plenty of different modifiers to make the game easy enough for Grand Prixers to play or tough enough to bring thrills even to non-leads of tennis. Indeed, so good is *Fast* that I'm not sure it's an ACE Titleholder and the honour of becoming the new Racing Simulation benchmark. Good enough for you? *Fast*

FRENETIC



Price **Amiga £20.99**
Game Master's Best Buy
Publisher Game Design

Not on the levels of *Kyrandia*. Can release this vertically scrolling shoot-em-up/scroll down to inspiration from just about every other Master ever released. To anyone more than half-way familiar with the genre the game-play holds few surprises - the screen scrolls slowly down while you fire away after waves of eminently identifiable alien creatures across the screen. The non-standard power-ups can be collected by destroying various special alien or weapons paths as they appear at the end of each of the eight levels (there's the obligatory stage bonus that takes a huge amount of shots to destroy).

Frenetic is a competently executed game that lacks that spark of novelty to hold a candle to the rest of the shelf. The alien sprites are large, fat and mean, the action is non-stop and highly demanding at times. The most annoying niggles is the way that power-ups are lost when the player's ship is destroyed, leaving the player naked before the alien onslaught. Unless you're already got the superlative *EMUL*,

this is a fair buy.
8/10

GHOST BATTLE



Price **Amiga £25.99**
Game Master's Best Buy
Publisher Titmouse

Ghost Battle is a struggle of 'despairs' affairs that involves more than a few elements from *Clowns & Goblins*. The player is a hero who has to enter any evil demon's kingdom in an attempt to rescue his kidnapped girlfriend. On each level it's ladders, platforms, gun-paths and redesigned corners all the way, leading to a big body of the very end.

There are the usual extra weapons to collect and no less levels keys and various tools that must be used as machine-guns appear to add some much needed depth to the otherwise shallow game-play. *Ghost Battle* is unambiguously graphics and sound, and play is sluggish. Not one for the top of the 'must get for' list.

8/10

GUNSHIP 2000



Price **IBM PC £20.99**
Game Simulation
Publisher MicroProse

Sideway writes simulations like *Microprose* does. This is highlighted into sequel to the company's earlier mega-hit *Commander*, which has gone down in software history as one of the best-selling titles ever. This sequel is far more than just *Commander*. Every part of the game has been given a radical overhaul.

Probably the most impressive aspect is the revamped graphics system. Using a sort of post-render-split technology, the game world has been modelled in amazing detail, complete with rain, hills, mountains, valleys, castles. If it's a geographical feature, it's there. As usual, the game takes the form of a series of plot-twisting missions. Undoubtedly this complexity means that you really need at least a 486DX PC to get anything approaching speed from the game. Speed with a board is marvellously straightforward, and adds a twist to the gully-baiter/feel. The 'copter control is good,

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but actually getting the stuff to fly works as different of the real thing, i.e. it's very difficult and certainly makes Combat 1000 use the word of game to get your sleeping birds on. However, if you're looking for the ultimate chopper simulation, then here it is.

0-0-0-0-0

HALLEY WARS



Price Gamecube \$29.99 (Import)
Genre Arcade/Real
Publisher Yato

Given the fact that the vast majority of the software currently available for the GameCube doesn't even come close to doing the impressive hardware justice, Halley Wars comes as a beautiful breath of air. Every handoff needs to be tight and short (or up), the GameBoy has Nintendo, the Lynx has Gates of Endor, and now the Game Boy gets a game that's arguably better than the pair of them. It uses no puns in the originality stakes, being your typical space-based arena-style central battle with all the standard pick-ups and cool of level guardians, but it scores high on creativity, offering the physical, colorful graphics, smooth animation and surprisingly impressive sound. The game's only major limitation is that, due to the machine's limitations, it can't produce the flashy effects that similar games on more powerful machines often rely on to hold the player's interest, so Halley Wars must depend on gameplay alone—and there's no doubt as to why that's possible that all-important urge to progress to the later levels.

Also, it's a shame that the game is actually a fairly easy and unexciting game system may find the long-term challenge somewhat lacking. That aside, it's still a fine Master and undoubtedly one of the better GameCube titles for a year that's expected to be playing it for a year's time.

0-0-0

MATRIX



Price Gameboy \$29.99 (Import)
Genre Puzzle
Publisher Bullet-Proof Software

Along Fujitani is the third-best behind the time-consuming addition

Tetris. Now let's look with Matrix which, like its foreword, is deceptively simple in concept. Pairs of different balls fall down via "tubes", by moving the pair left or right and snapping the matching ball's position the player has to try and stack balls of the same type. Stack five balls together and they disappear. The larger the player carries the faster the balls fall. The game is over when the stack of balls reaches the top of the screen.

A Matrix is scored when two stacks are completed at the same time. The player is awarded in a finished which can be used to register some of the balls at the top of the column. Alternatively the player can collect three finisheds and score a bonus which can be used to create all the in one line.

Matrix takes a while to get into but eventually becomes an engaging and addictive as its illustration further. Recommended to all Tetris fans.

0-0-0-0-0

HEART OF CHINA



Price IBM PC \$40.95
Genre Adventure
Publisher Dynamix/Share In Line

Many games skirt the role of "adventure movie" but very few actually deliver the goods. Fortunately Heart of China is one of the few games which is actually deserving of the title title, but it's the space. The game puts the player in the shoes of "mushroom" Lucky (aka Master), asked to find the wealthy widow girl Kate Linman, his soon made up in the far East.

Unlike most games it doesn't concentrate only on one character, allowing the player the player to switch between the members of the cast and adding greatly to its film-like appearance. Also the numerous puzzles can be solved from a variety of different angles. Heart of China also has multiple endings which makes the game enjoyable to play even once it's been completed. To reward it all off itself there are also some polished audio sequences, though fortunately these can be skipped if the disc doesn't appeal. If you like anything mildly adventurous then Heart of China comes highly recommended.

0-0-0-0

HEROQUEST



Price Amiga \$29.99
Genre Role-Playing Game
Publisher Spectrum Games

Hero Quest was one of the best selling computer games of last year, and Gamelit look set to replicate so that success with its massive computer conversion. A game for one to four people, players can select to be one of four characters for all if playing alone. Wizard powerful magic, paladin strength, elf lightning, sorceress strength (well good strength, can spot traps) and finally Barbarian (meaning strength).

The game plays identically to its table-top counterpart. Play most complete fourteen opens to sets in a series of monster-infested dungeons, culled using in a showdown with ArchMage Marat. All controls are via the mouse using icons and menus. Players move in turns with each location, corridor and room split into movement squares. During the adventures, players collect a variety of items ranging from gold to magic weapons to aid them on their adventures. Highly polished, the excellent cinematic graphics, atmospheric soundtracks and superb attention to detail make this a worthy addition to the RPG genre.

0-0-0-0

HUDSON HAWK



Price Atari ST/Amiga \$24.99
Genre Platform
Publisher Ocean

Bruce Willis' film was a disaster, and Ocean hadn't turned out anything of note in the film conversion stakes the game a while, so nobody was really expecting very much out of Hudson Hawk. But instead of the usual cynical and barely-playable boxes, what we got was the best platform game so far this year. Special FX took a big gamble in its interpretation of the film by checking 95% of the source material out of the window, and getting on with the business of just building a great game around the film's basic premise—that of a cat burglar stealing valuable artifacts from around the world.

It works superbly, to reach the same style as former platform classics like Mario, Rob Dunnington and Lemmings, with small, cerebral characters giving you seriously-designed platform levels. It's a classic, without a doubt, with beautiful maps and levels taking around every corner. The gameplay is easily up to modern-day standards, and the graphics and sound really do enhance the fun factor because they're so jelly. Don't be put off by the slightly slower conversations—Hudson Hawk is a real-time game in its own right and deserves a place in your collection. Today.

0-0-0-0-0

HUNTER



Price Atari ST/Amiga \$24.99
Genre Action Strategy
Publisher Activision

It's a sad old world, this one we live in, but when your old Activision gets some decent products together, their MegaTrix, deadly game and puts the player on them. Now, however, after the aforementioned "doom producer" has been walking around doing very little indeed for the last few months, Activision's current game—cost of the game. The Data Company have taken it upon themselves to do another trick of of games as made the streets.

It's one of the best of games that combine of playing. A polygon-based action strategy game with all of the usually associated bonuses removed, it offers all the "you'd think it be great,..." features which should, by rights, be included in all these games.

Taking the role of the Hunter, the player must head around a bunch of islands, systematically destroying all enemy installations in whatever way he sees fit. Your particular mission is detailed in a briefing where specific, immediate targets are detailed by your ally commander.

The best thing about Hunter is that there's no missing stuff. If you want to initiate an enemy base, get a dinosaur and you're away! If you want to get about, and a helicopter jump/break or a ballast. It's all so easy and because the unnecessary complexity of basic tasks has been removed, the player can concentrate on progressing with the mission much more intently.

Excellent graphics and a fast-paced storyline can only add to Hunter's

already two-impinging disks. A witness.
TRAVIS

IN YOUR FACE



Price **Gateway \$29.99 (sport)**
Game **Sports Game**
Publisher **Infocom**

In Your Face is a basketball game which boasts some elegant presentation. It has only one skill level, but the play-off-diffing characteristics it does have. The gameplay is simplistic, the player simply guides his on-screen avatar against the most talented for jump and stealing the ball is achieved by simply running into the opponent. This makes the game easy to get into but provides little instability. There's a sense of two teams for some Kick Off style action (but nowhere near as good).

The game's major problem is the play area. It's much bigger than the screen which means the view is continuously scrolling. On other machines this is not a serious thing, but the Gateway screen does the image badly, nothing special. In Your Face is definitely one to leave On The Shelf.
TRV

JAMES 'BUSTER' DOUGLAS BOXING



Price **Megabyte \$24.99**
Game **Sport Arcade**
Publisher **Megabyte**

Oh dear. In the light of infinitely superior last year's offerings, James Buster Douglas is not so much on the ropes as on the stretcher.

Below presentation being games only on speed, presentation and a wide enough number of moves to keep the player entertained that he can improve his technique. Unfortunately, Buster can offer no more of these elements, as the truly crummy fight scenes are more likely to cause a substitution through sheer tedium than anything else.

Redirection and thoroughly unimpressive graphics of the heavy shuffle towards each other, and then furiously fall away with high and low blows and one of them falls over. You may feel the same way about boxing, but believe me, this is pain.

And for a fight game, it contains the

cardinal sin of simply being too easy, just by making you at the first but not later than your opponent, it's possible to win. There's no skill involved here. Crappy scenario.
D

JETFIGHTER 2



Price **IBM PC \$29.99**
Game **Simulation**
Publisher **Velocity/MS Data**

In a crowded market, Jetfighter 2 really stands out from the rest. The only plot centres on the invasion of America's West Coast by a combination of Latin American countries. Full scale simulation is one of the question, so small tactical strikes are the order of the day. There are four planes available with which to fly the missions. For: F-16, F-15 and the Top Secret F-42 'Black Widow', a plane that combines the handling characteristics of the F-16 with the stealth capabilities of the F-117. Its advanced technology gives it a deadly advantage over the enemy.

Graphics are among the best yet seen on the PC, being both fast and impressively shaded. Sound is nothing to brag on, but is adequate. The score is more so, with three simulations, making this one of the most realistic of not acronymsically accurate sims available.
TRV

JIMMY WHITE'S 'WHIRLWIND' SNOOKER



Price **Atari ST/Amiga \$24.99**
Game **Sport Simulation**
Publisher **Nege Games**

Anders Mathias, veteran programmer of 80's and 90s games is probably the last person you'd expect to write a snooker sim. Our games have been around since the beginning of computer gaming, a few coloured shapes, some angle-of-deflection algorithms and away you go. But even with the advent of 3D-graphics, none of these have truly had any element of realism, until now.

The table is viewed from behind the cue ball with the player can line up shots as if on a real table. The view can be rotated through various axes and

rotated in on so the player can see from virtually every angle conceivable. The ball movement is accurate, without balls stopping for no apparent reason or going off at peculiar angles.

Two player games are the best, but free levels of computer opponent are available for the lone player. As the player progresses more sophisticated tactics can be incorporated, the positional play, however, slow, score and even type of spin are all possible, and any vital for introducing opponents. The real credit of JWB's comprehensive and realistic approach to creating snooker is the most authentic sports simulation to date.
TRV

KA+GE+KI



Price **Megabyte \$29.99**
Game **Shoot 'Em Up**
Publisher **Nege**

The player is cast as a large-headed hero (who looks a bit like a flounder head) puppets an scenario who must slowly battle his way through a multi-stage maze that is an attempt to reach the top. Why, we don't know. The bit intriguing of order means you have to go through each level individually, a task not made any easier by the appearance of a number of other big-headed thugs.

For a best 'em up, Ka+Ge+Ki is distinctly underpowered. Apart from steering the player can punch, kick, jump, and shoot (shoot it, Ka+Ge+Ki leaves a lot to be desired). The graphics are just plain ugly, the backdrops are dull, although some of the sound is okay. The way gameplay is substandard and the game has few redeeming features. There are far better titles available.
D

LOGICAL



Price **Atari ST/Amiga/IBM PC \$24.99**
Game **Puzzle**
Publisher **Rainbow Arts**

Logical is a bit on a par, a thought provoking (but not too game) which is primarily as addictive as the Mac/Clone. The game is as follows, along the top of the screen runs a track, along the track come circular obstacles which drop down through into revolving disks. Each disk has four smaller disks

and is connected to other disks by the three channels.

Your task is to rotate the disks (by clicking with the right button) and launch smaller disks left to such a way that each disk becomes filled with four smaller disks of the same colour. As always it sounds too simple, but there are various-size complications and obstacles which spice up the gameplay, such as time limits, colour gates, teleports and various other twiddles. The graphics are clear and well defined, and the sound is too good with some nice riffs and effects. With 30 levels, this should keep any puzzle addict for a while.
TRV

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE

Amiga **244.99**
 Racing Game
Graphics **Coolpix**

A worthy successor to the excellent Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge, this game has a number of interesting differences to its predecessor. For a start, it's a better one-player game, but not so good for two players. Technically superior to its original, there's nevertheless something just a little bit lacking. Perhaps it's the removal of the lap system, or perhaps it's the fact that crashing into the other cars really doesn't do you that much damage, but whatever, it isn't quite as good.

However, it is a great deal better than 20% of the driving games on the market, and there's a Linkup option allowing up to four players to race at once. The action is fast and furious and the control the players have over their car has been greatly improved.

Players must take their way through a selection of stages, each featuring a particular hazard, whether it be natural potholes, rain, sandy or man-made hazardous ingredients (rubble) across the road. Graphically superior to the vast majority of similar titles, Lotus just looks like business, with fairly realistic obstacles and a high level of detail on the car themselves.

Despite being hampered by some annoying decorations whenever the player drives through any water and the fixed two player mode, Lotus 2 is a pretty impressive game.
A

MAGIC POCKETS



Price **Amiga \$29.99**

Game Platform
Publisher/Manufacturer

The Straypack track topped and spin-impairing (it's in a strange old alien). It looks great, has a simple enough premise and is regarded by many to be a piece-of-cake action. To our minds, however, it just doesn't hang together.

The evocation in atmospheric nature where here others the Straypack did's says. The Straypack led most journey through four worlds, entering his too and remembering host of fun and exciting challenges along the way.

Imagine Maze crossed with Speedball and that's what you get. Nearly. You get a genuine Straypack version of Maze entries which is actually quite irritating, a sub-standard control interface which is utterly chaotic and leads to many sticky-locking incidents, and one of the most annoyingly-over-complicated maze/puzzle-up systems on the planet.

Today's lead in his video-worlding quest around the four worlds, power-ups are available in the correct object collection procedures are followed. Having to sit down and work out how the system works when the very point is that three games are involved (it is a more tricky compared to the fury instilled in the player who has to wait for the pick-up points to flash, leaving before he can collect them, making any flexibility in his, stop, start, stop, start, stop.

MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE



Price Range £25.99

Genre Sport Games
Publisher

With Kick Off's currently leading the football arena, it's a brave company that launches yet another footy game into the market. Mind you, with the original game selling over a hundred thousand copies, maybe Europa are not taking much a risk after all. The player can compete in either the UEFA Cup, European Cup or the Cup Winner's Cup. Before a match the player can adjust formations, tactics and composition which due to the video-flourishes is a pretty painless process. However inquisitive gamers will be pleased to know that this can all be skipped.

This game is displayed in preside-

nt which allows for some decent play-er animation and graphics skills. As is traditional the player cannot the ball has control, and there's a huge variety of move-able-including-shooting tactics, variable power shots, through-kicks to the side as well as volleys, headers etc. Our minor gripe is the fact that it's difficult to see where the ball is going to end due to the view point.

EU Europe isn't Kick Off's but it is a good footy game for those looking for something different.

MARTIAN DRAGONS

IBM PC £25.99

Role-Playing Game
Manufacturer

Imagine all the 19th Century characters that you'd most like to meet, placed them all in an experimental spaceship, and then...for added SF interest...blast them to Mars. The result is a mesmerizing blend of The Forbidden Planet and Starline on the Desert Express with a small cast of celebrity celebrities wandering around Mars.

The player's objective is to recover three watches from the Red Planet. Along with companions Tiggered Pencil, Dr. Blast and Nicks Tink, the player must get back to Earth just eyes with a strange and hostile planet which entails making sense of the various Martians' (some alien) and discovering why they died out...or did they?

The Martian Dragons game interface is superb—the game is entirely mouse driven, although the keyboard commands can be used to shortcut. The game is instantly playable thanks to some thoughtfulness by the programmers, because the game provides the player with enough clues to get off to a quick start. The character interaction system made very enlightening the player's ability to have some quite lengthy conversations. Some really impressive graphics combined with excellent graphics and involving scenario result in one of the better role-playing games in recent years.

MARVEL LAND



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Genre Platform
Publisher Name

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object is in the downright badly-thrown variety sported in Namco's latest arcade effort. But the old directors of never getting a bonus by its cover is proved right by playing this game, whereupon it becomes apparent that despite the visuals, which look like they're been produced by a pre-school child armed with a paint-spray, Marvel Land isn't bad at all. It's a rather obvious instant classic, and while it's not a patch on Nintendo's classic four there what left, it's certainly one of the better attempts. The Japanese designer which appears in corner of the sub-game takes a lot of following out, but that's the standard price to be paid for playing important games, and so this case at least it doesn't affect the final verdict. Many Megaworld owners may be offended even at the prospect of buying a game that looks like this had for their beloved technical wonder, but those who want extra fun money will find this to be a better bet than the flashy-looking things that form a large part of the Megaworld software line.

MAGNETIC SCROLLS COLLECTION



Price IBM PC £24.99
Genre Adventure
Publisher Virgin Games

For gamers keen to add some heavy-weight adventuring to their catalogue but unwilling to fork out for the undeniably quality Magnetic Scrolls titles individually, the fascinatingly named Magnetic Scrolls collection may well prove an appealing prospect. Here we have three previously scattered titles, all revised and tuned to run on the Wonderlab window system, ensuring a reasonable degree of coherence in what would otherwise be a rather diverse package. The *Cold of Theros* by far the most traditional game in the set, all ancient plotting and the like, while *Compass of Souls* is of more contemporary theme showcasing against a high-flying industry backdrop. *Wind* is just plain odd, comprising some truly puzzle-worthy perilous aquatic perils.

All the titles are packed with atmospheric if not actually stunning graphics which, for the benefit of punters, can be viewed with a click of a switch. Despite the difference of spiritus in the Magnetic Scrolls genre, you'll still find the best thing since sliced bread or a

wonderful instance of the Tolkien-esque world of about 100 years ago; players will find far more entertainment and scope for plot involvement than in any other game system. Worthwhile.

MAUPITI ISLAND



Price Amiga ST, Amiga £25.99
Genre Adventure
Publisher Lakeside

The latest in a line of adventures using the famous galle derivative (because large, Maupiti Island is a wonder mystery appo allian in the same vein as Delphinus's excellent *Crusade for a Compass*. This effort, however, lacks much of that game's imagination and quality, and though there's a very complex storyline packed with clues and suspense and all set on a remote Caribbean paradise, there seems to be little to really set it out and so such, there's an uncomfortable, claustrophobic atmosphere. Given the price not offered by the price and it's tropical setting, Maupiti Island would have been a lot more interesting and better than it actually is. And the occasional impressive examples and poor GUI speech seems only to put the player off.

The game is presented well, with an effective menu-driven game and text reader that gives the somewhat same result as to which the player is asked to find clues (it's more often down to finding a plot holder in a cluttered room than using any deductive reasoning). It's unlikely that anyone will find much to enjoy here. Given it's a much better bet for the any would be Maupiti on their. Great music, though.

MEGAFORTRESS



Price IBM PC £24.99
Genre Simulation
Publisher Mindscape

The trouble with games based on taking every single rule in a big, stupid old place like the 80's is that virtually every rule is mind-numbingly boring. It means, who honestly wants to plot their career across thousands of rules of Britain using a 3D terrain map, since computer or have to fiddle around

with abstracted frequencies in order to just the enemy's radar?

The aim of the game is to pilot a battle-scarred B-17 across both Iraq and the Soviet Union, keeping the location and aim of your mission utterly secret until the extensive message of frequency can be understood on the target. Unfortunately, in all it's going for packaging and looks, Megafortress is just a very good simulation of a rather dull experience. For more fun can be had in any of a host of more recently released flight games, and Microgame's South Fighter series even offers you the very-up-to-the-minute action for those players who are especially keen on that sort of thing.

Perfectly competent both graphically and on the play front, Megafortress has systems designed by real flight navigators and from writing author Dale Brown, although it's one of those games that I guess you really need to have experienced the real thing to appreciate.

MEGA LO MANIA



Price Amiga £24.99
Genre Arcade Strategy
Publisher Mirosoft

Followed until a bunch of God-views that are still coming thick and fast, Mirosoft's offering has farred better than most, proving sufficiently clear of the Big Daddy franchise while not being afraid to borrow little bits here and there where appropriate.

Set in an alternate universe, Mega Lo Mania is all about the quest for power. From over a set of islands, each made up from a state of islands, to provide 'New worlds are formed and intelligent life is placed upon them, upon which interstellar invaders descend and try to seize the reigns of power by themselves.

The conflict arises, needless to say, when more than one Godleader takes a shine to a particular island. Since each one can only have one ruler, a campaign of interplanetary logic, with each player trying to use the forces at his disposal to overthrow the others.

Each island state within one time period, and the rate of development, intelligence and so on of its inhabitants is governed accordingly. Players quick to invest time in invention and the refining of natural elements, rather than simply creating around hitting

the others with sticks are more likely to succeed.

MEGATRAVELLER 2: QUEST FOR THE ANCIENTS



Price IBM PC £24
Genre Role-Playing Game
Publisher Empire

This latest UK release from American-based team Penguin is more than surprisingly a sequel to *Megatraveller* in The Distant Conspiracy. As before, the player leads a team of five space adventurers through tall and trouble to (supposedly) return and fame. This time around, the player task is to find a way to halt the flow of toxic waste emanating from a mysterious set of ruins left by a dead race called the Ancients, but are they dead? That is up to the player to find out.

Springing high-quality role-playing VGA, this is certainly a treat on the eye, and the music as well with a suitable sound card. The game itself is an RPG in the Ultima style, but not half as rigorous - which for many will be more than a blessing. The story is fun and involving, with plenty of sub-plots to problems that provide welcome and often amusing relief from the main plot. If you fan a minor niggle it's that the space combat, which you'd think would be the more exciting part of the game - is flat and dull, with little sense of player involvement. In summary, highly recommended.

MERCS



Price Amiga ST, Amiga £25.99
Genre Arcade Shoot
Publisher US Gold

While on a peace mission to attend Africa as the President of the United States has been kidnapped by a notorious band of heavily armed rebels. For Diplomatic reasons his recovery has to be carried with a maximum of two operatives - the player and a friend. The game is a combination of Capcom's arcade shoot 'em up and retains the right way scrolling (after a bit of a while, especially on the ST).

reviews directory

By virtue of two blank areas on either side of the screen, the play area has been reduced to a strip down the middle. In one player mode this is fine, but for two players, things get very crowded. The action quotient is of a very high level, with blocks adding to your flow and adding to your flow up. Also nice is the ability to blast away huge chunks of the screen with some boogieing explosions. From the year action fest and frantic this year is probably for you, but if you're usually going to be playing two-player, then Core Design's *Warzone* is probably a better bet.

10/10

MICROPROSE GOLF



Price **IBM XT \$24.99**
Genre **Simulation**
Publisher **MicroProse**

The venerable MicroProse style carries to this golfing game (or would you with a reasonable amount of success. It's all extremely competent stuff here... Looking a happy medium between an arcade-colossal approach of such winners as *LPGA* and *Leaderboard* and their own more friendly abilities, *Microprose Golf* offers the player the chance to fiddle around with every aspect of the game, from the size of his club right down to the positioning of his feet or how high he tees it.

Handy-handy usage of the control board gives the player a rough estimate as to what he's about, with the computerized help suggesting the best club for the shot. From here, the revamped graphics give you a workable (and polished) view of the course, and the familiar strength of accuracy a more fitting reward.

The club ball is then followed down the course in jerky golf until it lands and the whole business can start again.

All bases are covered and the presentation for the most part is top-notch (the ball), but the big rewards are reserved for players willing to put in enough hours to perfect their golfing ability rather than instant gratification funds.

10/10

MIG25M SUPER FULCRUM



Price **IBM PC \$24.99**
Genre **Simulation**
Publisher **MicroProse**

Improving on an already successful formula, *Comanche* here does away with many of the longevity problems of their first MIG game and here it's the game itself an epic backdrop of conflict in southern America. Taking the role of the pilot of a United States controlled MIG, the player must launch himself into hostile airspace from a military allied-controlled base—his mission is to gradually evade the striking rebel infantry's grasp on the area by blowing up their supply lines and destroying their fuel depots.

It's ironic that the company must recently associated with an especially excellent air-up-converter should turn out such a classy simulation, and as a result, it may be tough for them to find the right audience. Nevertheless, a classy product it is, with a touch of external views and a flexibility of mission structure enabling the inventive player to try his hand at planning his own strategies for doing away with the enemy threat.

Also included in this game is an implementation of the real MIG's fly-by-wire system, an auto-stabilizing device which prevents the plane from flaking around all over the place like a big girl's blouse. Instantly in control.

Presented, surprisingly enough, in polygon graphics, MIG leads the competition in the case-of-use front, even if it is a bit tricky to imagine it requiring some of the more intense MicroProse products. A winner.

10/10

MONOPOLY



Price **Amiga £24.99**
Genre **Strategy**
Publisher **Virgin Games**

Money, money, money, etc. The game for building property-tycoon may well bring about a peculiarly ironic, but in those recessionary times, but Virgin's version is almost as much fun as the box's original original, which is more than can be said for the most boardgame conversions. Players must rove around the board by rolling dice, accumulating as much cash as possible and using it to purchase squares on the board. Landing on a previously purchased square involves the entire

rate player either having to pay out (usually to either the owner of the property or the bank. Players who do the best are those who invest wisely and build houses. Spots on are their spots. This business is done up by actually "Go To Jail" squares. He who ends the game with the most cash wins.

Without any unnecessarily flashy graphics, this version falls far from the most, still a refreshing level of all the silly touches which software must not adding in board game conversions for novelty and ruin the whole thing in the bargain.

Colorful graphics present the board in a perspective (if not than plain, while the computer controlled bank keeps an eye on everyone's progress. User friendly mouse control makes the player's actions over his piece's position and money-shuffling almost as easy as when playing the game in real life.

10/10

MONSTER BUSINESS



Price **Amiga £24.99**
Genre **Puzzle**
Publisher **Softlog**

The mad scientist from the big forest has now gone below town, and all wanting for little time they've created completely speaking Mr. Bo's construction site. Before long, the best best best around and blow off these nasty little monsters you light! A goal is to fill it out there was one. *Monster Business*, the epitome of the average arcade game features stupid graphics and a deadly stupid premise: to remove all the objects from the building site, Jerry must blow up all the monsters with some sort of lead bubble-popping, causing them to inflate and eventually die to the top of the screen, dropping all their objects as they go.

Despite the silliness of the whole idea, *Monster Business* actually gives you a hell-of-a nice arcade game, with a different sort of board, whether it be stilling platforms or a speedy time limit, and the player is so interested in trying to get the the end of the level that he probably won't realize quite how easy and dull the game is.

Smart graphics and it could only be German made, but *Monster Business* is about the best and one out as an example of what arcade-games should

be about. It's like an Atari speed, if you know what I mean.

10/10

NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE



Price **Sametime £29.99 (Import)**
Genre **Sport Simulation**
Publisher **LHA**

The another *Gatorbox* one-on-one basketball game. This succeeds only in that fact by virtue of keeping all the action on one static screen and thus avoiding the writer-blaring of player's offering. In addition, there are no sub-games to take part in, some of which are particularly different to "normal" basketball but they at least it some style. NBA requires far more skill to play than IFF because of the more complex moves which, although making hand in to learn, at least makes the game more skill based and thus more rewarding in the long run.

10/10

NEBULUS 2



Price **Amiga £24.99**
Genre **Platform**
Publisher **21st Century Entertainment**

Being from the Houston area like a photon looking the dimension into the whatever it may be (it is), was born, a 21st Century Entertainment aren't having much luck at the moment. Not only as they having some considerable difficulty with their Megabyte product, but the one game that looked like it could actually make them some money has turned out to be somewhat of a disappointment.

The Houston center responsible for supporting *John Phillips'* original idea, have done a bit of a clean job, raising the gameplay that made the first game so excellent by piling on lots of maze and warlike power-up type stuff. The classic formula has been totally revamped by the sheer weight of these new "ideas", and as such anybody who enjoyed the first game is likely to be very disappointed by this. However, it is quite pretty and, at least for those who haven't seen the first game, not a total washout on the playability front, the while the first game knew exactly where the abilities, but

rather than hold it was, Heliodor's a step closer to like it wasn't even there. Not recommended.

BT

PREHISTORIK



Price: **Amiga \$29.99 IBM PC \$29.99**
Genre: Platform
Publisher: Tilt, Entertainment Inc.

For another game that pretends to span the earth that the continents existed at the same time as the dinosaurs. This one puts the player as the role of Bill, a hairy hunter with a bottomless pit of a stomach. Bill has to goaded around his flock-waddling amphibian world in the search for food. Bill's menu items come in either pasture (pre-killed and pre-cooked and just ready to be eaten) or active dinosaurs that have to be stalked over the land before they can be successfully flown. It's this latter deal that, along with the pits and spikes that have to be jumped, that provide the game's main obstacles. At the end of each level, awaiting Bill's return enough, there's a feeding match against a giant dino before progress onto the next level can occur.

Prehistorik has little to recommend it to any department. The species are cute, but very small. The flock-waddling is decidedly 8-bit and sound merely perfunctory. And considering that so little is moving on the heavy-duty graphics through scenes, the action is slow. The pixel-perfect nature of much of the jumping doesn't help things either, either.

BT

RAILROAD THROCK



Price: **Amiga \$29.99**
Genre: Strategy
Publisher: MicroProse

The ACE Benchmark game makes it's way onto the Amiga, and what a fine conversion it is! Building a railroad empire across the USA is the task of the 19th Century may sound like the hard work, but for those who like their strategy to run deep, that Micro's simulation of that very process is fun. It isn't FUN! It's more difficult to imagine how, but even so, it is. The feeling of

power in parliament as you lay your track from sea to shining sea, combine big-time business and generally nice loads of cash.

Beginning life as an empty river in the early days, you must turn a small state into the biggest state in railroad industry history ever! By taking control of every element in the decision-making process which makes the railroad work, the player must handle the details as well as broader political and economic issues, all at the same time as competing either with others or against rival systems from history. And every element of the game is represented with top-quality graphics to make even the most number-crunching income sections of the title easy to manage.

Micro's excellent, friendly user interface and the clear precision of the game design and balance compared with the top-notch power of the Amiga make this version of the game an outright winner. Wholeheartedly recommended.

BT

ROBIN HOOD



Price: **IBM PC \$29.99**
Genre: Arcade Strategy
Publisher: MicroProse

MicroProse's cost-saving the publicity of the recent launch of Lincoln Green Studios, MicroProse's completely new, forward version of the tale is surprisingly entertaining.

Presented in Populous-style, the game sticks to the classic mode of Robin of Locksley being lured out of his lair by the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, lured out by his people and left to fend for himself.

The player, taking the role role of course, must assemble a band of merry men and set about doing away with the nasty old Sheriff once and for all. An equally important goal for the player is to convince all the peasants and other inhabitants of the forest and its environs that Robin isn't the murdering thieving Maggot that the Sheriff has described to them but is a lovely kind hearted soul.

Aside from combat and object-waddling, there's a refreshing amount of genuinely funny dialogue in the game too, with the characters coming up their own to the best of their ability.

It's an extremely enjoyable and instructive arcade adventure-cum-strategy

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can role playing game who's worst failing would be that the player is forced to play through to the very end to see if he physically can, then denouncing the spirit of more visits.

0 0 0

RODLAND



Price **Amiga £25.95**
 Game Platform
 Publisher **Storm**

Essentially unimpragmatically cute it may be, but there's nothing that Rodland is a fine game. The latest release wasn't particularly successful, finding itself adrift in a sea of graphically marbled games upon its release. Now, however, the conversion seems to have snapped up when the highest possible rate game over the conversion (prog Pocket) has failed to meet expectations.

The player must work his way through a massive mine of screens, collecting points or power-ups and killing monsters without too (and/or the) money by looting them into the bin.

The end of each level is marked by the arrival of an enormous end-of-level bad guy such as an octopus, one, despite looking about as threatening as a big jump of rather small in a limited way will do for the players both with.

Interestingly enough, the player can opt to play a girl if he/she wants, but that makes much difference to the playing style. And to be honest, the 'big' looks so loopy/effeminate you'd never know anyway.

Overall a bit of a mediocre staple, Rodland is a fine conversion and it could even be argued to better its out-of-print, as content over the database has been improved. Certainly not a title for gamers into depth or going for blasting, but a comfortable purchase for anyone else.

0 0 0

ROLLING RONNY



Price **Amiga £29.99**
 Game Platform
 Publisher **Virgin Games**

Rolling Ronny is a roller skating control by. It's most like around Pinballing

collecting spinning gears and delivering packages for people. At the end of each set of Pinballing events, Ronny must get on a bus and go to a different part of Pinballing to collect more gears and deliver more packages.

The player must guide Ronny around making precision jumps in order to make the tall buildings stop which the gears usually do.

In it's cuteness and simplicity, Rolling Ronny is not of the Car-A-Vip, lot of primary colour graphics filling in the blanks, but what is effectively an extremely basic game of balling/stop collecting when. When Car-A-Vip failed in its control over the player's character, however, Rolling Ronny succeeds. He can float around in mid-air, duck and jump to avoid enemies in a manner beautifully absent from his predecessor relative.

It's not said Ronny starts falling over and being peddled that the player is rewarded of quite how difficult collecting can be. More often than not we find little Ronny on his way with newly laid and then flying around his head.

Completion of a level will result in a nice little bus trip, assuming Ronny has completed enough events for people to earn the cash for the bus. Otherwise a rather unexciting 'Game Over' message means.

Perhaps entertaining someone else, perhaps amusing, German video game.

0 0 0

R-TYPE II



Price **Atari ST/Amiga £25.95**
 Game Available Until
 Publisher **Activision**

R-Type was the forerunner to many of today's shoot-'em-ups, and introduced many of the features that players now take for granted in a full-on shoot 'em up, such as power-ups and end-of-level bonuses. Rather than start up with a new idea for it to reach state-of-the-art, it was chosen to keep to the same formula, which is not such a bad thing where you consider it.

There are no horrendously scrolling levels, each with its own style of graphics, all of which are excellent. Although ST seems very fast by period by the way, scrolling. The music is subtly spooky and provides off the game being very similar to the original, we wonder whether hopes of that will want

to fork out another £10 for what amounts to a jumpy-up data-disk of new levels. However, newcomers to the R-Type legend are in for a treat.

0 0 0

SARAKON



Price **Atari ST/Amiga/IBM PC £25.95**
 Game Puzzle
 Publisher **Virgin Games**

Games which all the player should not be willing to go down to history on game extensions, yet Sarakon, despite making this final edition is a perfectly decent rip-off of the high (and the wrapping business). Basically, if you imagine being played with some old colored tablets and with some completed 'anti-theft' rules, then you're pretty close to imagining what Sarakon is all about.

The aim of the game is to click on similar tablets which sit in a particular orientation, eventually ending up with 100 tablets left, or at least as few as possible before the time limit runs out. Once done, the player is rewarded with a breakdown of his score and a comment from the computer as to his logical ability.

The problem with these puzzle games, however, is that they all look similar enough to make the player want to pick them up and have a go, yet they must be containing enough rule wisdom to make doing just that impossible, the most? The high (and) player will be informed that he can't make his normal moves work.

The presentation is first class, apart from the choice sound effects and music which don't so much create the ambience of the fun that as a slightly irritating in Dubois.

If comparatively solid music clicking is your 'big' and you are one stand starting at the machine for ages while you scratch your head, Sarakon is the game for you.

0 0 0

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND



Price **Atari ST/Amiga/IBM PC £25.95, £25.95, £25.95**
 Game Adventure

Publisher **LucasArts, £25.95**
 Monkey Island is the latest in LucasArts' celebrated series of 'unimad' graphic adventures. The player is Guy (Thompson), a young thief intent on looting a place. To do so, he must complete three mini-games, during which the player slowly becomes involved in more and more hilarious interaction with characters (both beautiful, evil and absurd). The game also contains several sub-games, which serve to make it more enjoyable. These range from simple memory games to a more elaborate involving a grand place from Hell.

The graphics are pretty impressive, using a variety of 'textures' such as clear-ups when conversing with characters and long shots of the landscape when Guy travels from place to place. The music adds a bit to the game, and provides an atmosphere in some scenes - the tavern scene almost all of its potency to the accompanying sound track. Monkey Island is easy to play due to good use of the mouse and simple key commands, and using with the presentation they combine to make this an excellent game which deserves its place on the software shelf of its adventure.

0 0 0 0 0

SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE



Price **IBM PC £25.95**
 Game Simulation
 Publisher **LucasArts, £25.95**

Deep, deep, deep, 'Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe' is a big old game and its mistake. It's also the sequel the critically acclaimed 'Two Fronts War'. The title comes packed with new goodies but brings the same problems of the first game, i.e. the flaky and rather horrible language/graphics.

The player is offered the chance to pilot aircraft in a somewhat limited number of historical missions, shadowing or guarding planes and taking place in actual battles and scenarios of the Second World War.

However, played in a Wing Commander style with things taking the place of the polygons is frequently, and successfully used in other flight sims. Luftwaffe will have all but the status of the latest machine gunnering down the aerial level in the attempt to get it to occur an acceptable rate.

Ambitious players can then define their own mission to determine what history would have turned out like if there was just one less Interventionist in the world in a particular combat situation.

Lafayette is exactly the sort of game as distinct from King Commander - that you actually want to make excuses for. And that's simply down to the fact that under the keyless hand graphics which usually look pretty absurd every now and again, there is a quite brilliant game.

SILENT SERVICE II



Price Amiga £29.99
Genre Simulation
Publisher Microprose

It may have taken five years, but the sequel is one of the most critically acclaimed and publicly adored sea games to finally reach us. Silent Service II features all the best bits from the first game as well as a host of original and new details.

Detailed graphics and excellent

sound simply confirm the developer as a game which is undoubtedly one of the most detailed, accurate and realistic on the market, but one gamers should be warned that, just like life on a real submarine, it's not all walking, re-acting.

No, there's a lot of the old *Alone In The Waves* stuff with turning off engines to sneak up on enemy warships without setting their radar. And as for all that tank blowing stuff, I ask you!

Microprose are indubitably the wrong kind of all things sea, but their policy of increasing the action and tightening the dial - watching as used to reach good effect in *For The Love Of It* would be well extended to this particular title.

For gamers wishing to purchase an accurate but simulation, even so-called, there is absolutely none better. But those expecting to get their tentacles off straight away would be better to wait for a more accessible equivalent.

THE SIMPSONS



Price Amiga £29.99
Genre Platform
Publisher Bowen

The conversion of the TV show and matching phenomenon which is truly really funny, honestly so, really it's great because they're funny like cartoon characters who behave like real adults oh it's so hysterical oh but really hasn't actually taken too well at the hands of Ocean.

From the coding pen of Airc Developments, this version of the NES game released by Hudson has lost out the charm of the cartoon and on top of that, it isn't a particularly good game either.

Space mutants have landed in the sleepy American town of Springfield, and are planning to build a weapon which will help them take over the entire planet.

The player, taking the role of Bart, must travel around Springfield. Basically, Bart must destroy or deliver all the evil day elements in Springfield which the Mutants are using to con-

vert their space weapon.

Ocean's attempt to create something a bit more depth than a straightforward arcade game is commendable, but the result is frustrating because the sloppy elements of game design just make it too difficult to play. It's a pity for Bart to die through no real fault of the player, and the cartoon market is ineffective. Must...

SNEAKY SNAKES



Price GameBoy £29.99 (import)
Genre Platform
Publisher B&B

From the people who used to obsess over those Knightmare games, presents us these cunning Snakey Snakes, an exercise in excellent control and little depth. A female snake has been kidnapped by the Nasty Nibbles and the player taking the role of either Gorgon or Ailla must explore the Nibbles' base and utilize her language rating strength food to make them big enough to activate their switch box which opens doors

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through to the low levels.

It may not sound quite as much fun as boiling one's head but actually it's not that bad. Apart from the wacky idea of the whole thing, the plotting of the game is pretty good. Control over the snake is confident and all-inertiduous. Food is obtained by bouncing on little plates which lie all over the floor or waiting around by pieces which open out balloons.

The weight of the snake is denoted by its length. Unfortunately, once he's long enough to activate the switch to go through to the next level, he's also long enough to be more easily led and hurt by the nasty things in the landscape. Although the game never quite matches up to the quality of the original method, there's probably just enough rapid novelty value here to justify a purchase.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG



Price: **MegaDrive £34.99**
Game Platform Game
 Publisher: **Sega**

Sonic is on a mission to rescue his fluffy chums from the clutches of the evil Doctor Eggman. Profits and pit-bosses are the order of the day, but the emphasis has been placed firmly on variety too, with numerous shades of Red, Dangerous and Striker to spot along the way.

Our speedy hero can rid himself of nasties by either jumping on their heads or rolling up into a ball and spinning a tremendous speed to launch them out of his way. The most important objects in Sonic's world are gold rings. These act as a safety buffer for contact with the enemies: one touch causes all of Sonic's rings to spray out, while contact without any rings results in the loss of one of Sonic's three lives. These rings can also be traded for a life once one hundred have been collected.

Spread around each of the **SEVEN** levels are a myriad of useful objects that deliver some temporary bonuses such as invulnerability and speed boosts.

The impressive graphics are by far the best yet seen on the MegaDrive, being smooth, colourful and moving at a speed that leaves you slack-jawed. Along with the scores of 99 per-level and the superb playability, this is a

game that'll keep you playing well into the early hours. If there's one MegaDrive game you buy for the year then this should be it.

SPACE 1889



Price: **IBM PC £78.99**
Game Role-Playing Game
 Publisher: **Empire**

This is an RPG which shares many similarities with Origin's *Marika's Dreams* in both plot and user interface. However, this lacks the atmosphere and graphic quality of Origin's effort, and the plot is too linear - one often feels as though they're being led along a fairly narrow path. It's rather simple, and could act as a good intro to the world of RPGs for the novice, but more experienced players may feel the game a little retrograde for today's gaming tastes.

SUPER PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL



Price: **Super Famicom £54.99** **Import**
Game Sport Simulation
 Publisher: **Atari**

The Great American Sport makes it onto the Famicom with a certain amount of style. A game for one or two players, it's viewed in two very different ways. When the ball is pitched, the player view switches in-camera from just behind the pitcher. The pitching player can adjust the power and angle of the pitch using the joystick. The batting player then has to strike the ball by being similar. As the ball sails into the air the view cuts to a scrolling park view. Using the stick in the corner of the screen the pitching player has to guide one of his outfielders to catch the ball, while the batting player has to decide whether to risk pushing his man round the bases one more time. It's just like the real thing, actually.

As a simulation, Baseball is fine. The graphics are a bit rough at times, but the all important gameplay is marvellous - almost relaxing at times, although a rather simple game, with the simu-

lated risk of early burnouts (and a nearly-stay-up-for-the-entire-game as a fairly big risk). Baseball is entertaining enough to be worth consideration.

SUPER R-TYPE



Price: **Super Famicom £30** **Import**
Game Arcade Beat
 Publisher: **Atari**

Apart from *Centauri III*, about 10m-ops on the Famicom see a little time on the ground, so Super R-Type comes as a real treat. Basically it's R-Type with some shiny beam lasers on. Atari has added a couple of new worlds - the first one has you blasting through a space minefield - but it's still the game we know and love. With impressive graphics and exciting sound, it's the game Famicom owners have been waiting for.

SWITCHBLADE II



Price: **Atari 2600/Amiga £15.99**
Game Arcade Beat
 Publisher: **Genie**

Some seven months after appearing on the Amiga, Switchblade II - arguably one of the best arcade shoot-outs in existence - has finally made its transition onto the 2600 and what a success it's been!

The appeal of this sequel to Genie's much underrated original is the distinct Japanese flavour of the graphics. Quite aside from it having more action and weapons and flexibility than most, it features three layered, black-haired characters and translucent white enemies in a side-on multi-directional scrolling battle to the death.

Control over the central character has more than a little muscle feel to it, as the buttons respond all over the place firing away with his powerful laser rifle.

A host of different landscapes - some all broody and mechanical, other quite sunny and happy looking - react those willing to play, each indicated by it's own particular level of solar disk.

Perhaps more than the graphics or the gameplay, it's the style of Switchblade which makes it such a nice game to own. Don't be fooled by the godawful cover artwork, one think-

ing this is just another Blast with no frills, it's a thoroughly polished and classy piece of work, and well worth your pennies.

TAIL GATOR



Price: **Gameboy £29.99** **Import**
Game Platform
 Publisher: **Nintendo**

Put Tail Gator into your Gameboy and you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd accidentally picked up a Game and Watch on the way out of the house instead. This Mario Bros rip-off features an alligator trudging through a bunch of levels of the *Mystery Kingdom*, trying to dispatch the creatures who have invaded.

Clearly (the alligator) won't fish away the monsters using his tail. Chomps occasionally yield bonuses or smart bombs which will clear the entire screen of bad guys. But we all know the one of cheat that Chomp is really interested in. Yes! The chomps with the key which will lead him off the level.

We're really bored as from games where the entire objective is to get off the current screen by collecting a key, or at least everyone except *Kirby* have. For the record, Tail Gator looks as if it could be one of those simple yet addictive games which look rubbish but play like a dream. But it isn't. So don't be fooled.

THUNDERHAWK



Price: **Amiga £35.99**
Game Simulation
 Publisher: **Core Design**

Most flight sims require a good deal of practice before any reward can be garnered from them. All those keyboard controls and miscellaneous aircraft functions do quite a lot to put off anyone looking for a quick fix. Core Design have won this gap in the market and more than adequately filled it with *Thunderhawk*. All control is via the mouse, which makes everything, from weapon selection to helicopter control, quick and easy. It's a welcome change from the usual nervous test of clicks and non-clicks.

the blitter end

Right, you've had your reviews, news, previews, tips and in The Works... what else is there...? All of course! This monthly portion of *EW*, whether group and opinion, brought to you is only the blitter run to let's get down to it and let's do it...

The vast majority of Britain's tele-viewing families were dreading perhaps a couple of hours back as they watched the finale of *The Clothes Show's* annual model-of-the-year contest. The reason? One of the contestants was no less than debut speed balling programmer Lisa Cooper! Knowing that programmers need to be kept like wilderbeasts with a bit of discipline over the less than 3000 spots and an ungleaming body odor, the show's panel (made of top platform gait) had set out a challenge for little tokens on the catwalk as the finest of contract developers announced their bids up to the audience. What a haul! Stars usually did very well, making it was the last light beauty games before he was outcooled and eliminated. We think it was something to do with the poor people panacea and staged fanfare for they made him even. Poor they...

Last month's *How They Used to Live!* feature about what top industry folk used to do prior to bringing up industry beds certainly created a lot of interest, especially from up Manchester way, where the days at Ocean tend to get blitter at the wind up by taking a little from Sales Director Paul Patterson, explaining how engaging it was to be called on as a program and how he was going to see us all in court. He had needless to say we saw right through it and promptly dispatched a girl's grin of our own up to Ocean's Matchmaker HQ to put the record straight. Poor old Paul was a bit of

words as the man in the jury suit burst into a top-level meeting/brown-hair and Managing Director David Ward and started scribbling and leaving his desk. David is a... write...

Oh, and while we're on the subject, lots of last month's feature may be interested in this fascinating addition... Entertainment International's PR Manager Maria Pavesio used to be below it or not, the best of the biggest series of TV quiz favorite *The New Cards Right!* remember, if you got 4000 points or more, you have a chance to go for the car. Whoooo...

Bygone days go to work! eg New Computer Express (the other magazine which is a mix of services for, as readers of *Image Power* may have noticed which makes and loans the month). Current owners Future Publishing have finally decided to let the money get straight in and after some eye issues. It comes as a particular blow to us here at the Blitter as we always used to look forward to *Games Week*, because we could never make up our own minds whether *Top Gear* was better than *The Terminator* or not. Future drops that NCI's demise was in fact too connected to the appearance of a challenge weekly games magazine called *Games* (which cut the price and was late better).

Capital Radio is currently causing a big promotion with Nintendo, where the prizes include NES systems, games, and as the star prize is a fabulous trip to the home of Mike - New York City! Alan, excuse us, but we're always amazed under the assumption that Mike was an Italian fellow. If he was a New Yorker he wouldn't have an Italian accent like he does in the cartoon, would he? So there. We played

Match to get a comment from the man himself, hoping that he could let us a copy of his bank certificate to set the record straight, but he was not banking George Orwell.

Here at the Blitter find we're becoming increasingly dismayed by the big new ultra-expensive ad campaign, which is supposed to send interactive sales skyrocketing over Christmas. Does anybody really believe that people like the Mike in the stupid meeting chair really read *EW* now we all know that interactive means drive around in a big truck attached to a car with all their legs get in the back, sucking off there. What an object it is that somebody as obviously not as he is could pull such a long list of names, like the one in the second advert. And even then he prefers playing his *Games Gear* to getting his steamy hands on his bottom, but what is wrong with this world? And we haven't even ask about the relationship between him and his little sister "help", who can't be more than seven or eight. Considering he's got a dog as well, what gets on in the back of that truck after lights out is a story waiting to be contemplated...

When it comes to this year's imminent Computer Games conference in Mexico, is some other story worth trying. All the top industry gurus at this tropical holiday resort every year to relax in the sun, get pissed in the bar, lounge the night away in the disco, try to get off with each other's girlfriends and, if they've got a bit of spare time at the end of it, have a quick discussion about the state of the software industry. It's all really important stuff, of course, and wouldn't be anywhere near as profitable if it took place somewhere wet and miserable just cheap like Britain, where 90% of the

participants actually come from. These people who think that it's just a three-to-week course to have a cheap holiday in the sun under the guise of doing business are too stupid because they're not going. With a bit of luck, maybe next year's conference could take place on the QJG in a winners off the coast of Peru all Spain, with security-chef handmaidens peeing games and maintaining tabs as the conference try to decide something of earth-shattering consequences, like Commodore's deal or space policy or whether or not games should come to big towns...

If you believe word lead in this industry as the editor of one of ACE's more inferior trade newspapers to their director last month, but particularly pleased with the low mark given to one of their products, a representative of a major software house publicly invited by the editor of the offending paper, during a visit to its offices, why it had been treated so badly. Obviously the various pressures of deadlines, production problems had been taking their toll, and the said editor was thus an equal opportunity to be off some news. So the people needed to be screaming, demanding not only every aspect of the game itself to be fixed and alternative terms as possible, but also the design team of the existing version deluged. This little bit of slapping around went on for quite a while. Needless to say the software lead was less than pleased - and neither was the fat's boss, who promptly called him into the office and gave him a thorough wage-batter or something. It's the Blitter's always said - if you can keep your head where all around you are looking then you'll be great, no one, and you won't look like a big willy either.

Hoops! That's the end. Actually, it has to be said that a lot of inside you good electrical industry connections you know who you got off pretty tight in this month, but that's only because Blitter's been in a good mood, and so just you remember to keep your nose clean - Blitter has you and not every-one. And if any reader should have to know of any reader dealings, industry contacts, write us in Blitter at the usual old address under no name. Someone's got to clean the streets...

TIP OFF

The sheer pace of the game, end to end action and tactical game play is the core of TIP OFF, a basketball simulation -

A SIMULATION WHICH IS GREAT FUN TO PLAY

Players' skills, attributes and fitness together with the astute substitution of players and change of tactics back by the coach, holds the key to success in basket ball. TIP OFF, therefore includes some managerial aspects of the game. The main features are:

- Multi directional scrolling screen
- Five skill levels. Skill level of both teams can be set independently.
- 1 to 4 players option. Option to play against the computer or another player or team up with another player against the computer or another player or two players.
- Facility to practice skills and tactics.
- Facility to create a team of all skill levels and design tactics.
- Intuitive joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot or do a dummy. There are two running speeds, two types of dribbling and passing and five types of shots at the basket (Jump shot, Hook shot, Skyhook, Running Jump shot and Slam Dunk).
- Each player on the court is an individual with a unique mixture of attributes (Age, Weight, Hair, Pace, Stamina and Composure) and skills (Passing, Dribbling, Stealing, Shooting and Jumping).
- Two types of leagues - Action Replay at 3 speeds.
- Extra moves are available using two independent button (joysticks) using the EXORLENCE System.



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...I don't think so.

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