RETRO

HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES 1983-1988
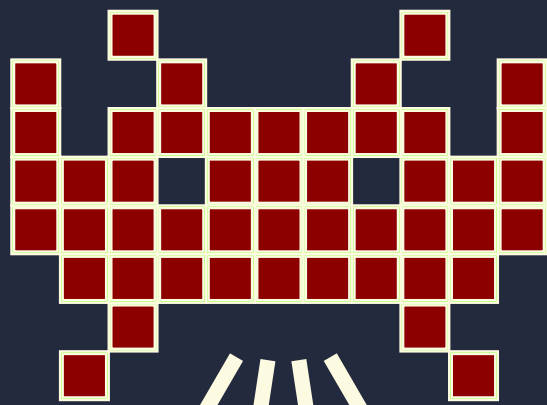
RETRO MEMORIES & GAME REVIEWS:

THE BEST FROM OUR READERS

GAMER DIARIES 1989-1994

RETRO GAMES, HARDWARE, REVIEWS, MEMORIES & MORE!

WELCOME

# WELCOME TO OUR VERY FIRST RETRO LIVE.

While putting this together we had a rush of nostalgia - defined as:

"a sentimental yearning for the happiness of a former place or time"

... by dictionary.com

Gaming really does bring back that rush. Those sounds of your favourite games from a SNES or perhaps a 486 PC. The less then perfect graphics that had your imagination working overtime to suspend disbelief. The joy of those game and PC magazines from the 90s where almost every week there'd be a new magazine published to fill a niche.

I can remember planning out my Saturday based on rushing into town to buy a game for my old PC, then spending the afternoon reading the manual and finally loading it up and losing myself for a few hours. Back then there was no ISIS, no politically correct police ready to pounce on you if you said the wrong thing. No real internet to be bullied on. No social media to distract you and

INSIDE
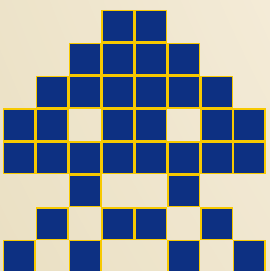
waste your day away. It really was a different time. We didn't have hi-res TVs or beautiful crisp monitors, we had 15inch screens or clunky old TV sets. But we still got lost in the game. Multiplayer meant your friend coming over to play for hours on another joystick with a split screen. Sega Rally or Daytona or maybe Stunt Car Racer on the Amiga with you challenging your friend via a cable hooked up between your systems.

They were different times and as nostalgia often does, you tend to remember the fun times, not all the times you had to spend an hour loading a game via 12 floppy disks. Or writing boot up code to allocate more memory cause that PC game needed it.

Retro Live is about the games and hardware of those good times. We hope you get a bit of a rush too...

Rob Jenkins
Publisher & Editor in chief

FROM THE EDITOR

When I think about it, the real reason I love old games is that I never stopped playing them. I owned my original Amstrad CPC until the mid 90s, and I was playing games on that computer right up to the birth of the 32-bit era. Today I own a Wii U that rarely gets touched, and I see no point in buying an Xbox One or PS4. I have a huge backlog of games on old consoles that I need to get through first.
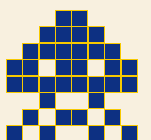
I suppose I am experiencing the problems of adulthood. I have a full time job, I'm studying journalism at uni, I write for several different retro sites and magazines… I have no time to get to that backlog of games. So it will continue to sit there and grow as I discover more titles from classic systems that I want to play.

Before we get into the magazine let's look at a question; what is Retro? It's a question that is often asked, but one in which the answer is always subjective. We could look at cold numbers and dates, though I prefer to look at the warm and fuzzy aspect of retro gaming, and that is the playing of the games. While people argue over dates and times, people bond over discussions of playing games. That's how it should be.

I hope that when you read the stories contained within this magazine that it fills you with your own positive memories, of times when you beat that nearly impossible boss, that you discovered a new game that you could share with your friends. That is our mission at Gametraders Retro, and I hope that you enjoy this inaugural issue of our magazine.

Paul Monopoli
Editor

HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES:

The previous part of this look at the history of video games ended with the industry standing on a razor's edge without even really knowing it. The second console generation had led to an unprecedented period of growth for the industry, but the lack of any kind of restraint and quality control for the games that were being released, especially in the last few years, would soon spell doom for everyone involved. The huge influx of bad games from new developers looking to cash in on the video game boom had an adverse effect on people's interest and trust in those making games, even quality ones.

During the holiday season of 1982 one of the most hyped games ever made up to that point in time, E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, was released on the Atari 2600. The game itself isn't actually as bad as its reputation would have you believe. It was simply the fi-

BY TANELI PALOLA
(AT VGCHARTZ)

CHANGING OF THE GUARD (1983-1988)

nal straw for an already disillusioned audience that had grown tired of being disappointed by a constant stream of bad games. E.T. was the game that was expected to carry Atari through the holidays into a new year, and the marketing reflected that. People's expectations were built up by a barrage of commercials hailing it as the greatest game ever, which it obviously wasn't. So when the game turned out to be mediocre at best, a lot of people decided they'd had enough.

As 1983 came along the industry had backed itself into a corner. The flood of poor quality games, combined with the failure of many

of Atari's recent high profile releases, had damaged the reputation of the industry, both in the eyes of consumers and retailers alike. The huge number of competing consoles was also adding to these problems and the birth of home computer gaming was beginning to dwindle the potential audience interested in home consoles. So there were a lot of different factors at work in conjunction that led to the event that is now known as the video game crash.

Revenues were still very high for everyone involved, with arcade and home video game sales in the U.S. bringing in a total of over

$6 billion combined, but this was already down on the previous year's all-time high of $8.1 billion and would signal a downturn for the industry in North America.

It wasn't all bad news, though. 1983 featured many landmark titles from a variety of developers, including Nintendo's Mario Bros, in which Luigi made his very first appearance. Other notable games from 1983 included Bomberman, M.U.L.E, and Ultima III: Exodus, which featured one of the first instances of turn-based combat in a video game and would influence many later series such as Dragon Quest and Final Fantasy. Dragon's Lair also gave arcades a much-needed life extension at a time when business was beginning to slow down. The novelty of a video game that looked like an animated film attracted a lot of people to the arcades.

This was also the year in which Nintendo's Famicom was released in Japan. It got off to a bit of a shaky start when reports of the console's instability came to light, prompting Nintendo to recall the system and re-release it with a new motherboard. The console would release a few years later in the west as the Nintendo Entertainment System. Interestingly, Sega also entered the home con-

sole market on the exact same date as the Famicom - July 15th. They released the SG-1000, which would later serve as the basis for their much more successful follow-up consoles.

1984 saw the effects of the crash taking form. Both Magnavox and Coleco had already abandoned the console business, and as a result of shrinking returns from video game sales retailers were abandoning the industry in droves, generally deciding that the video game had been a simple fad. Of course, outside of North America the industry was still doing perfectly fine; home consoles were still growing in popularity in Japan and home computers had found great success in Europe.

Arcades were beginning to suffer at this point. The novelty of laser-disc games like Dragon's Lair had wore off and very few new interesting games were released during the year. Punch-Out! helped briefly, but the downward spiral was already in full swing.

Outside of the arcades a number of significant games were released, but out of all of them only one could be argued as being amongst the most impactful games of all time. That game is Alexei Pajitnov's Tetris. Even with other games like Ice Climber and Boulder Dash coming out, Tetris was in a league of its own as far as importance to the development of video games was concerned.

The following year the video game crash continued on its merry way, leaving behind an industry that was barely functioning. In the

span of three years, from its peak in 1982, home video game revenue in the United States fell from over $3 billion to around $100 million in 1985, a staggering drop of almost 97%. At this point the dominance of the home console market had almost completely shifted from the U.S. to Japan.

Despite the awful situation the industry was in at the time, new gaming companies were still being founded, even in North America. Developers like Westwood Studios, Code Masters and Square all started up in 1985, all of which would go on to create numerous landmark, genre-defining titles in the future.

Arcades were also being dominated by Japanese developers. The only real exception to this was Atari, which was still making an effort and actually released a pair of influential games in Paperboy and Gauntlet. Japanese arcade developers on the other
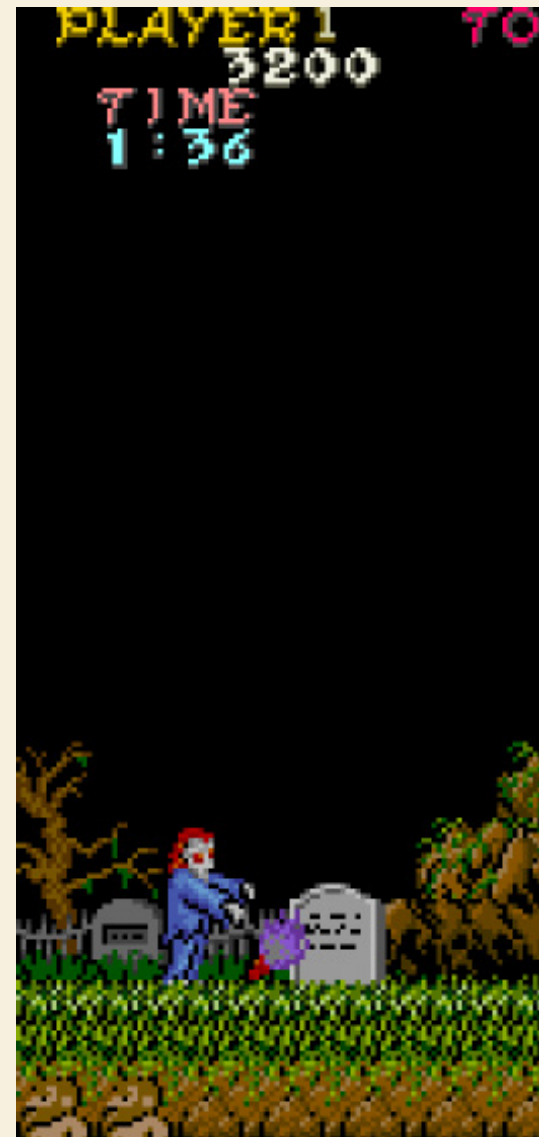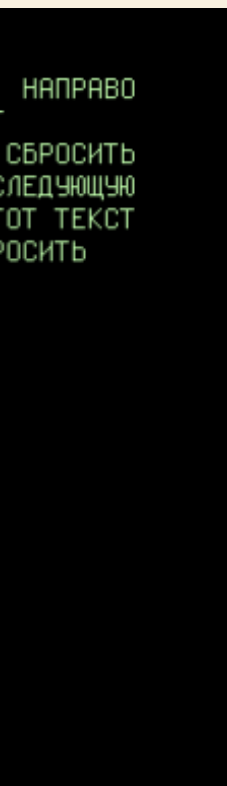
hand released Gradius (Konami), Ghosts 'n Goblins (Capcom), Space Harrier and Hang-on (both Sega), and more.

Nintendo, meanwhile, was turning its focus away from the arcades and towards the home console market that now had a significant power vacuum. At the tail end of the year Nintendo would release two highly impactful titles for the Famicom, one of which would go on to define the face of the entire industry for years to come. The less influential of these two was Duck Hunt, a hugely important game by itself, but the other one was, of course, Super Mario Bros. which probably doesn't require much of an introduction.

On the hardware side of things there were also some important releases. Nintendo would begin a test run in the U.S. with the NES, in preparation for a much wider release the following year. They also released the R.O.B peripheral along with the console in order to attract toy retailers to their console, as video games still carried the unfortunate stigma of the crash with them. By doing this, as well as by naming it the Nintendo Entertainment System, rather than calling it a video game console, Nintendo was hoping to avoid the bad reputation video games had in the U.S. As it would turn out, they were successful with this strategy.

"NINTENDO, MEANWHILE, WAS TURNING ITS FOCUS AWAY FROM THE ARCADES..."

However, the NES wasn't the only notable new piece of hardware in 1985. In Japan, Sega would launch the Sega Mark III, better known today as the Master System. Curiously, the Master System is actually the system with the longest lifespan out of any video game console, as it is still alive in Brazil, over 30 years after its original launch. By the end of the decade the console sold between 10 to 13 million units, which while reputable at the time, fell far short of the NES install base. In addition to these consoles, Commodore would also release the Amiga personal computer the same year.

1986 would become arguably the most important year in the history of video games up to this point. Not only was this the year during which both the NES and the Master System received wide releases in the United States - reigniting the console market in the process - but several hugely influential video game franchises would also be born this year, in numbers that have rarely been repeated since.

These games include, but are not limited to, The Legend of Zelda, Castlevania, Metroid, Kid Icarus, Bubble Bobble, Dragon Quest, Adventure Island and Alex Kidd in Miracle World. Although many of them would not see western releases for some time, every single one of these games would

the 7800, but at this point it was too late for the system to make much of an impact on the market. It didn't help that it was already technologically outdated when it was released after being shelved for two full years following the sale of Atari. The new owners of the company didn't put much weight or trust in the console and as a result it withered away on the sidelines until it was officially discontinued without much fanfare on January 1st, 1992.

The year also gave birth to a number of important new companies including Bethesda, Ubisoft, and Acclaim. All of this combined to create a perfect environment for the industry to once again thrive. Now all that was needed was to build upon the foundation

a developer could release on the system each year (five games) and integrating a specialized chip in each game cartridge to prevent the creation of unlicensed games. Nintendo also demanded that all cartridges were to be manufactured by them and be paid in full in advance. Sold cartridges could not be returned back to Nintendo, which effectively meant that third party developers assumed all the risk in the exchange.

These kinds of tactics would eventually cause numerous problems between Nintendo and other developers, but for now Nintendo made the rules for others to follow. Despite this strain in relationships, there was no doubt that everyone wanted to take advantage of the NES's success. As a result, 1987 would once again be a huge year for games, both on consoles as well as home computers. Even arcades saw a few important releases over the year, the most notable debuts being Konami's Contra and Capcom's original Street Fighter, which while fairly unremarkable by today's standards, would eventually spawn a sequel that revolutionized the fighting game genre.

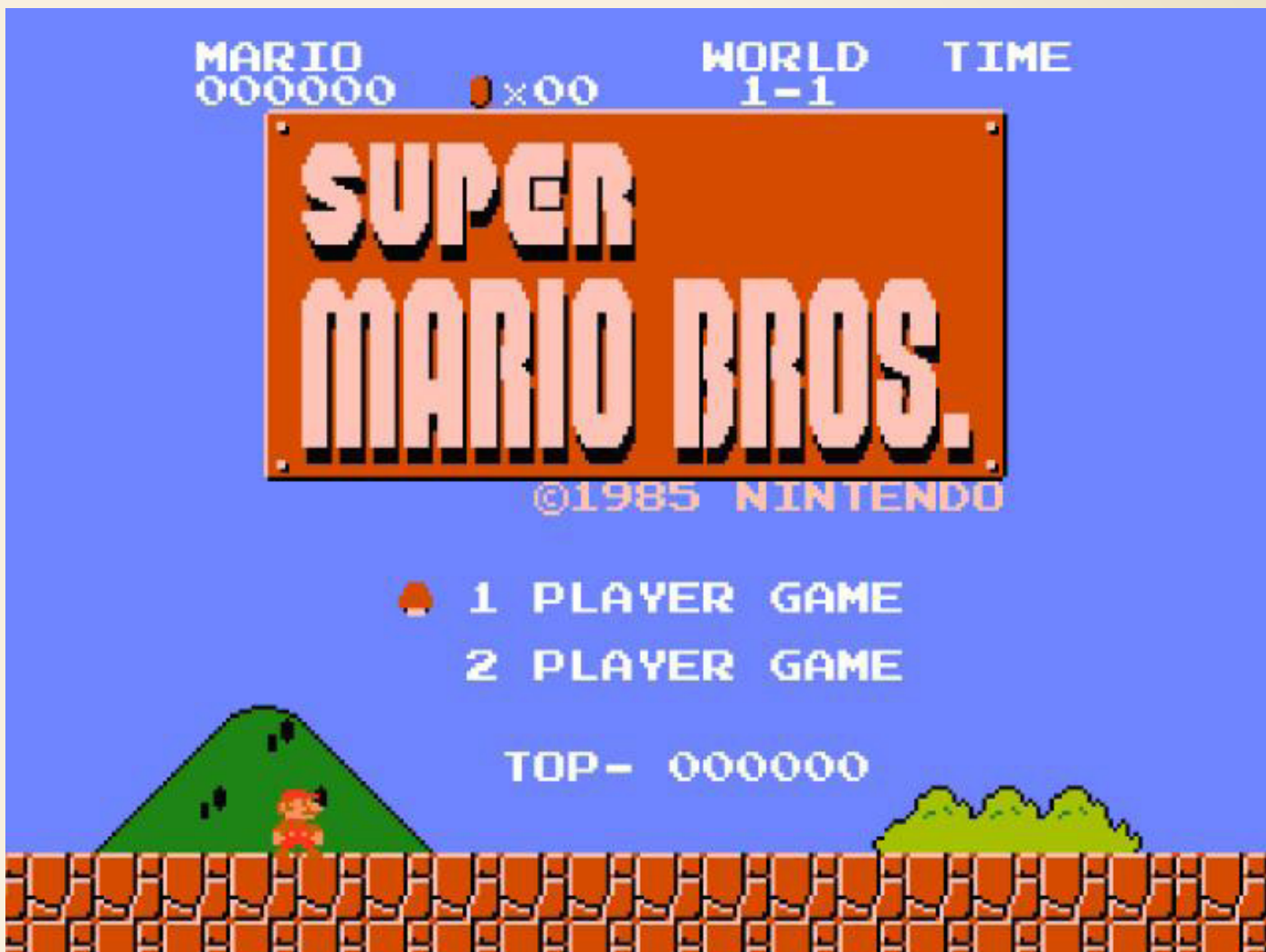**"...MAKING 1986 SUCH A LANDMARK YEAR FOR THE INDUSTRY..."**

become successful and would go on to spawn sequels. Not all of them have retained their popularity over the years, but their overall importance in making 1986 such a landmark year for the industry cannot be understated. Naturally, with games like Zelda, Metroid and Dragon Quest on their console, Nintendo was quickly beginning to dominate the console market around the world. Sega would put up a fight, but everyone else was pretty much just a bystander at this point.

Atari did make another attempt at a comeback in 1986 by releasing

that had been set in the last two years, and 1987 would very much deliver in that respect.

Although the crash of the video game market had at this point largely subsided and the industry was on the way to making a full recovery, the effects of the crash were still being felt in another way entirely. Fearing a repeat of the conditions that led to the crash prior to 1983, Nintendo had instituted very strict licensing policy that all third party developers had to follow if they wished to make games for the NES. These included a limit on the number of games

The NES was firing on all cylinders, with the western release of The Legend of Zelda, as well as the Japanese release of Zelda II: The Adventure of Link. Nintendo also developed Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!! for the console. In addition to Nintendo's own offerings several third party developers also released their own heavy hitters on consoles. Hideo Kojima introduced Metal Gear to the world on the MSX2, Square found success with Final Fan-

tasy, Capcom gave birth to Mega Man, and Castlevania 2: Simon's Quest continued the story of the Belmont family. Finally, Sega would release the sci-fi fantasy RPG Phantasy Star on the Master System.

On computers the adventure game genre took a leap forwards with the release of Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards and Lucasart's Maniac Mansion, which was the first game to use the SCUMM engine, allowing for the game to be controlled with a mouse. Beyond adventure games, Dungeon Master gave the RPG crowd something to play on their computers.

Finally, on the hardware side of things NEC released the Turbo-Grafx-16 in Japan as the PC Engine. This would cap off yet another huge year in the industry, continuing on the trend of the last few years and setting the stage for an even bigger year to come.

1988 was the year when the North American market finally recovered completely from the crash of 1983. The last few years had already been a period of great growth, but it wasn't until 1988 that revenue from video game sales reached pre-crash levels. Nintendo controlled the vast majority of the market, as its only real competition was Sega's Master System, which couldn't really hold its own against the NES except in Europe, Brazil, and a few other markets where the Master System rivalled or even surpassed Nintendo's grey box in popularity.

This would be yet another great year for gamers too. As with the

previous two years, several genre-defining franchises would be born and a lot of big games from previous years received sequels. In addition, Nintendo Power was born in 1988, becoming the go-to magazine for Nintendo fans for over two decades. Things were fairly quiet on the hardware side, but the games more than made up for it.

Franchise debuts during the year included Capcom's Bionic Commando, Altered Beasts from Sega, Ninja Gaiden from Tecmo, and SSI created the first of their "Gold Box" games based on Advanced Dungeons & Dragons - Pool of Radiance. Many game series also got new installments during the year, some of which are still often considered among the best in their respective series. Enix continued the Dragon Quest-series with its third entry, which became so successful in Japan that Enix decided to hold off on releasing future games in the series until weekends so as to not cause people to skip school or work.

Ultima V: Warriors of Destiny introduced day/night cycles to the series, while Super Mario Bros. 3 further cemented Nintendo's dominance in Japan. Final Fantasy II would experiment with the formula established in the first game to a decidedly mixed response. On the other hand both Mega Man 2 and Double Dragon 2: The Revenge built upon their predecessors, becoming two of

the most beloved entries in their franchises.

All in all, these last three years were among the most productive in the history of video games, giving birth to a huge number of long-running franchises and bringing the video game market back from the brink of extinction in the U.S. This was also the start of the long-standing rivalry between Nintendo and Sega, effectively becoming a prelude to the real battle between the two console manufacturers that was to begin very soon.

The market was growing by leaps and bounds, and this time there were no signs of a slowdown anywhere in sight. However, change was already in the air, as a new generation of consoles was fast approaching and Nintendo's position as the market leader would be seriously challenged for the first time ever.
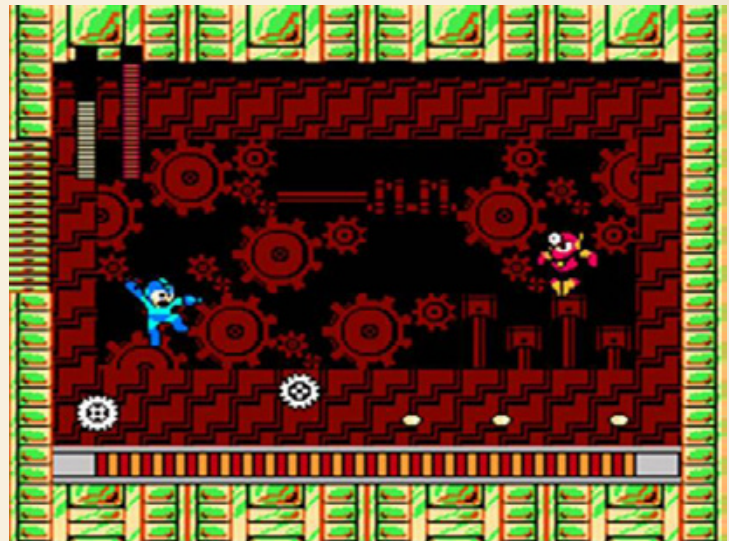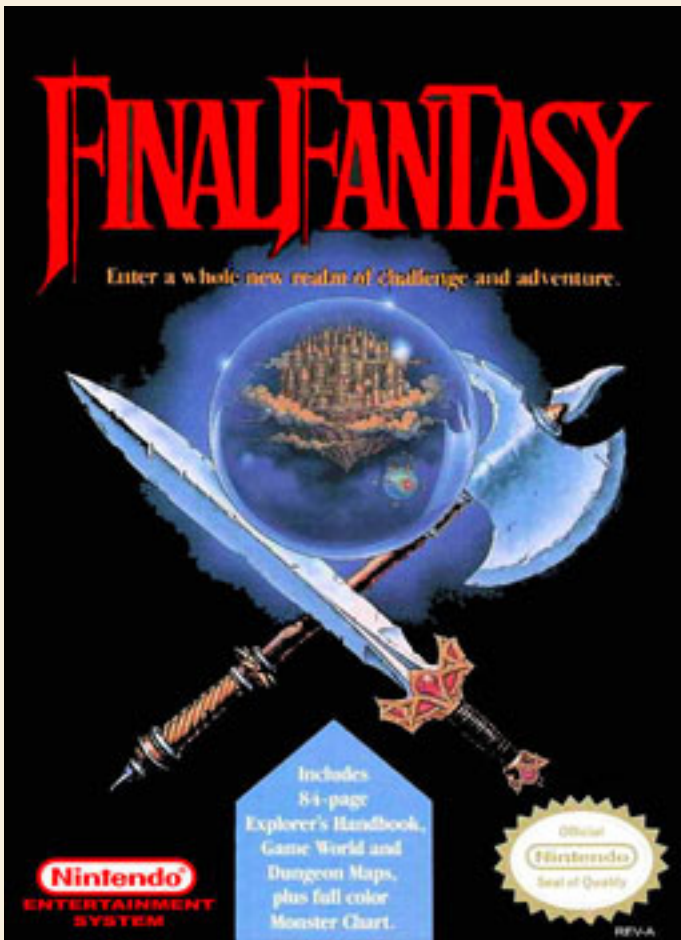
This is a good place to stop this part of our look at the history of video games. I hope you enjoyed

> **"1988 WAS THE YEAR WHEN THE NORTH AMERICAN MARKET FINALLY RECOVERED COMPLETELY FROM THE CRASH OF 1983."**

reading, and join me again next time when we witness the beginning of the first real console war between Sega and Nintendo.

At Head Office, we have a small retro museum with all sorts of consoles dating back from the 80's which we thought was pretty good, but then we found out about the Nostalgia Box in Perth so we sat down with Jessie, and asked her what it was all about...

First up tell us about the Nostalgia Box - when and how did it come about?

This is a passion project of a girl nerd – me. Hi my name is Jessie. It is the mirror image of my obsession to create a place that is meaningful to everyone who grew up with video games. Like many kids born in the '80s, I grew up with a video game known as "classics." And after more than two decades, I still have good memories of the excitement I felt when I first played Super Mario Bros. I still remember fighting with my older brothers over the controllers and being tricked to believe I was playing the game when given an unconnected one to press on (very clever now when I reminisce). It was an exciting time for all of us, but the responsibilities of adulthood meant we had to eventually leave those things behind. Now, my desire to recapture those wonderful childhood memories inspired the birth of The Nostalgia Box. After a long thought, I decided to quit a corporate job that I really liked and embarked on this weird, roller coaster journey so as to realize my childhood dream of starting my own business. This act turned out to be this Museum, which I named "The Nostalgia Box".

Tell us about the systems and items you have - what are some of the more unusual?

We have over 100 consoles on display, from the first generation through to the seventh. To name a few; we have the Magnavox Odyssey, the first commercial video game console ever released in 1972, Sears Tele-Games Pong which is Atari's first home console; more popular consoles visitors are likely to be aware of such as the Atari 2600, Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Mega Drive etc. Visitors can expect to see most if not all the consoles that have made a significant impact in video game console history from its early beginnings to what it is now. The unusual consoles we have are the Coleco Telstar Arcade which looks like a triangle, and then we have the Virtual Boy and Apple Bandai Pippin which many visitors have said they are glad they get to see them in real life.

Can people play on systems?

Yes definitely. I want the experience to be fun and we can't learn about video game history without some hands on playing. The museum currently have Pong, Duck Hunt, Atari 2600's Space Invaders, Super Mario Bros, Mario Kart 64, Sega Rally, Mortal Kombat on the Sega Mega Drive and many more. We have in total 12 consoles available for playing.

Do you have PC systems too? What games and systems are you featuring?

Currently I am focusing on consoles only, but I do have a Commodore 64 displayed in the Museum as many visitors have said they grew up with it and would love to see it. If all goes well, I would like to branch out to other systems like arcade and computer in the future, truly making this a nostalgic experience for everyone, not just home console gamers.

Where is it based and when can people visit?

The Museum is based in Perth, Western Australia. More specifically, we are located on Shop 3, 16 Aberdeen Street PERTH 6000. We are open 7 days from 10.30am to 5pm.

Where can readers go to find out more?

To find out more about us, please visit the
Website: www.thenostalgiabox.com.au
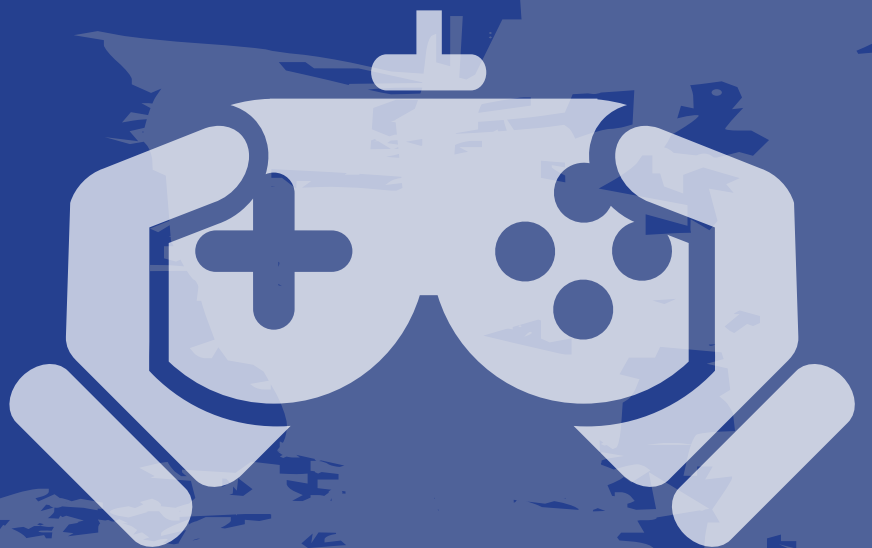Facebook: @nostalgiabox
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INTERVIEW

"IT WAS AN EXCITING TIME FOR ALL OF US, BUT THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADULTHOOD MEANT WE HAD TO EVENTUALLY LEAVE THOSE THINGS BEHIND. NOW, MY DESIRE TO RECAPTURE THOSE WONDERFUL CHILDHOOD MEMORIES INSPIRED THE BIRTH OF THE NOSTALGIA BOX."

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RETRO SEQUELS

Sequels can be a hit and miss affair, even where video games are concerned. If a game is popular enough, then the chances are you will see a follow up of some description, just like a Hollywood movie. This month I decided to take a look at some of my favourite retro sequels.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Turtles in Time

I have some great memories of playing the original TMNT arcade machine, though the lack of decent ports annoyed me somewhat. Lots of people love "TMNT2: The Arcade Game" on NES, but I can't get into it. The same cannot be said of "Turtles in Time", which is a joy to play. If you are unable to find the arcade version of the game, the Super Nintendo will do. Yes, it has modified levels and enemies, but the core gameplay is the same. Hacking and slashing your way through the levels may sound boring, but the music is amazing, there's so much colour, and you

know what? It's just a damn fun game! It's easily the finest TMNT game to grace a home console, and one you will find yourself revisiting every once in a while.

SNK vs Capcom: SvC Chaos

Not only a sequel, but the final SNK vs Capcom crossover game released to date. Capcom had released their "Capcom vs SNK" series using their own game engine, though SNK had only given us the brilliant "Match of the Millennium" and some decent card games. Sadly "SvC Chaos" was initially only released on the Neo Geo, which was very close to the end of its life. Though full of very questionable Engrish, the game boasts more of a "King of Fighters" style of gameplay, which works, even with the Capcom roster of characters. The moment I performed Ryu's 'hadouken' on my Neo Geo I knew I was playing something special. The game even features some unique characters, such as Violent Ken (a

counter to Evil Ryu), Red Arremer from "Ghosts and Goblins" and the original Princess Athena from "Athena". The game was ported to the PS2 version, which features more playable characters than the Neo Geo original, and it's more affordable.

Fantasy World Dizzy

The third game in the Dizzy series offers improvements over the previous 2. The original "Dizzy" wasn't the most difficult game in the world, though its sequel, "Treasure Island Dizzy", was impossible for the average gamer, due to you only being given a single life to complete the game. "Fantasy World Dizzy" set to balance this, by offering more lives, more game play, and improved animation. Like any of the games in the main range, this Dizzy adventure is a platformer that requires you to pick up items and use them in specific places, all the while avoiding enemies. There are hidden coins to collect, and this is the first game to feature Dizzy's friends, the Yolk Folk. All of these nice little additions give the game a more immersive feel, and it's a game that can really eat up your time once you get started.

Sorcery +

Initially an Amstrad CPC exclusive title, "Sorcery +" is the sequel to the original "Sorcery". This game follows the premise of the original, where you have to rescue all of the wizards by collecting items and using them in the correct areas. The original "Sorcery" would end once you have completed

this task. In "Sorcery +" you have to continue your quest to defeat the evil necromancer. Featuring very fluid animation for its time, the only downside to "Sorcery +" is the constant disc access. Other than that, the controls are spot on and the graphics are nice and colourful.

Super Mario World

Rarely an article is written where I don't gush over my favourite game ever. The follow up to "Super Mario Bros 3", and a launch title for the Super Nintendo, "Super Mario World" is the greatest game of all time… in my opinion. The graphics are very colourful, and the sprites are beautifully animated. The music is jolly and the controls just feel so good. If you die you know that it was your fault, and not the result of cheap gameplay. A massive game spanning multiple worlds, "Super Mario World" also introduced the world to Yoshi, the dinosaur with a big tongue. With traditional "Super Mario Bros" game play backing up a range of new enhancements, it's little wonder that so many people still love "Super Mario World"

WRITTEN BY
PAUL MONOPOLI

PC gaming in the 90s was a historic time. It was also a time of change. Faster processors allowed early gamers to experience higher end graphics, faster action and better sound. The 80386 microprocessor was replaced by the 486, and as a gamer back then you either had an Intel chip, an AMD chip, or one from a less popular brand, such as a Cyrix or IBM. Most people lusted after the 486DX2-66 from Intel, combined with eight to sixteen megabytes of RAM, along with a good sound card of course. With this, your MS-DOS powered PC was set for gaming.

My first PC was an AMD DX-40, built in Adelaide by one of the hundreds of PC shops that had suddenly sprung up. Saturday's paper was full of ads for custom PCs, and everyone seemed to be looking at buying a computer system for homework, home finances, recipes and all those excuses that were really a cover for their true purpose - gaming.

The first game I bought was Strike Commander, a combat flight-simulator by Chris Roberts which was published by Origin Systems. It came on something like 11 floppy disks and my first go at loading the game didn't end well. For some reason my graphics card was not playing nice and so a trip back to the PC shop resulted in them giving me a new card. Back

home I started the long process again, which thankfully resulted in the start up screen.

There was an excitement to playing a new game then. You see whilst waiting for the 11 disks to load (with me swapping them in and out as commanded by the OS) you'd read the manual, get a feel for the controls and also the back story.

Story:

In Strike Commander, you found yourself in the future - 2011… where the world has changed politically. There's conflict, and of course oil is involved. You are part of a mercenary team of fighter pilots called The Wildcats.

The intro to Strike Commander that loaded up from your hard drive got the excitement levels rising. The almost, "Top Gun" styled music kicks in and those dots in the distances on the horizon soon zoom past you as F16 Jets.

The games screen then lets you start a new game, where on our "Mercenary Defence License" you can fill in your name and call sign.

Then the story screens cut in with a bunch of talking heads discussing the jets and the issues with one of the old planes. You can talk to a couple of the characters and then head into the office. This is

where you learn you need to understand the budget of running a mercenary flight squad that takes on jobs for big money.

One mission sees the team taking on rebels who keep stealing Red Cross relief supplies and your mission is to escort a Hercules cargo plan and ensure the rebels don't intercept it. Then it's on to your jet - you can choose weapons - air to air or bombing weapons, and then you start your mission.

The next screen sees you on a runway, and away you go. You can switch your view to external, but for fighting you can choose the 'in cockpit' view.

A message comes across your headset - "Bandits inbound!" and then you're in dogfighting mode. Your radar shows where about the targets are, and then it's a matter of manoeuvring into position to get a lock. Turning hard, you try your canons but it's the missiles you really want to lock on with. When you make a kill the enemy screams as you hit them and their jet explodes. Once you get 'Mission Accomplished!' it's back to the base.

At the time it was a great game. Lots of action, a good story line and some classic lines from other characters in the game, such as, "Nice kill hotshot" and...
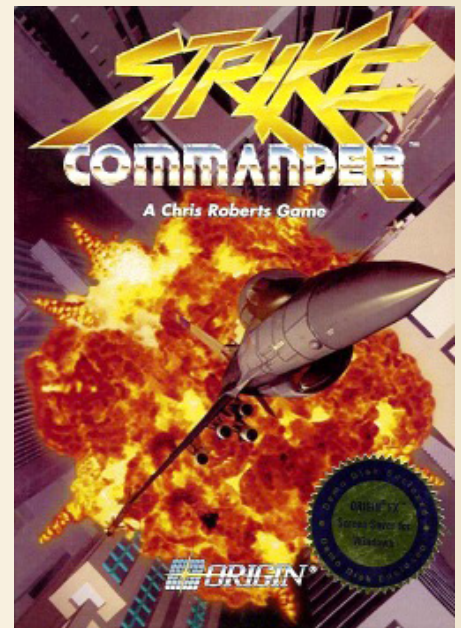
"I'm a fighter pilot, Tex, not a murderer."

The sound was '90s sound card' all the way, and the graphics were also of their era. Back then it didn't matter, as we played on CRT screens that were 14 or 15 inches.

Other flight games may have been more realistic like Falcon 3 and Falcon 4 but Chris Roberts games had the story lines and were aimed at an immersive experience that threw you into the action quickly.

Strike Commander was fun (for a while), but ultimately I got tired of missions that, to me, seemed a little repetitive. Today, that sound track and those graphics give me a real nostalgia hit!

TIE FIGHTER – THE CLASS

You can't have issue 1 of a retro magazine without mentioning how good TIE Fighter was. TIE Fighter is a fast paced, Star Wars themed, space combat sim with a good story backing it up.

"As the follow up to Star Wars: X-Wing, you take on the role of an Imperial starfighter pilot who takes to space and battles the Rebels. You are initially based in the Hoth System due to increased Rebel traffic. You start by inspecting ship cargo from your TIE Fighter, and dog fighting with Rebel pilots. You will want a joystick to play this and the flying is smooth and realistic (well, as realistic as possible for a ship that doesn't exist). The graphics are smooth, and when you are flying in formation with other TIE fighters it's an incredibly immersive experience. Your HUD is easy to use and informative, and the flying is intuitive. There are exterior views too, so you can see just how cool you look in combat.

Speaking of combat, you have laser cannons and ion cannons as short range weapons but you need to balance power allocation during play between weapons, your engines and if you have shields you'll need to push power to them to survive in some combat situations.

Success in your missions can lead to you joining the Secret Order of the Emperor, where you can progress in rank and, if you're good, prevent a coup against Emperor Palpatine. If you complete this you will be treated with a ceremony to reward your success.

As mentioned, the graphics were smooth (for the time) and sound was also excellent. In 1995, a CD-ROM enhanced version offered the option of SVGA graphics, which increased the screen resolution from 320x240 to a 'hires' 640x480. Yes, that was the highest resolution many people would have seen on their 15 inch SVGA monitors.

I loved TIE Fighter. The graphics were so smooth, with excellent gameplay and that amazing Star Wars sound.

FRT: ONECE 3

SHD
50%

SYS
100%

HULL
100%

DIST
2.58

REBELS

HULL

75

100 %

2:37

T: 1x

SHU: RAVTIN 1

SHD
8%

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DIST
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NO CARGO

FUSELAGE

63

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3:19
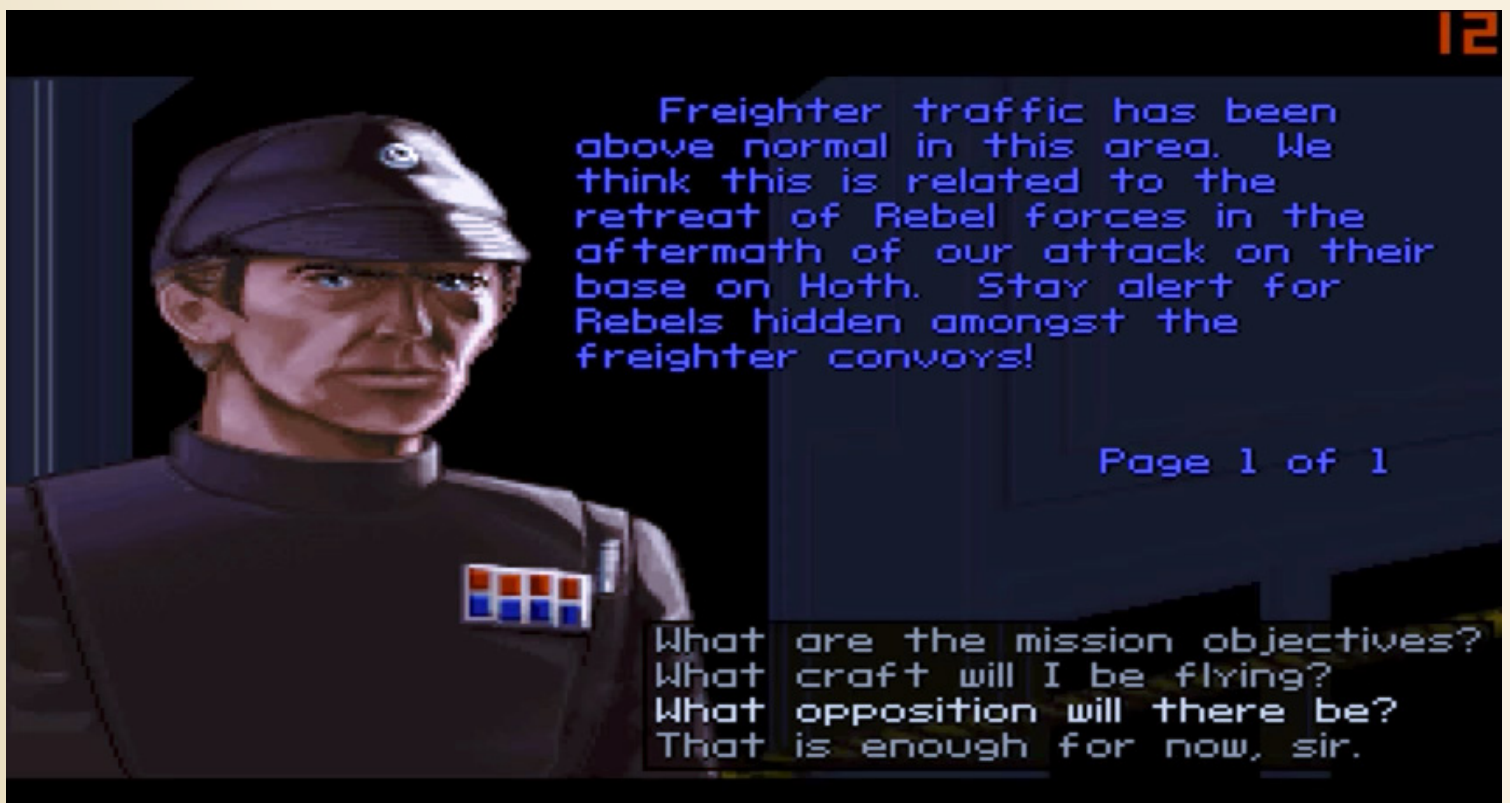
Engine throttle set to no power.

T: 1x

Retro Blasphemy!

OK, so that's a bit strong, but I can see it now; some retro fans freaking out because I loaded a classic game on my iOS device. Yes, it's true, there's a bunch of classic retro games available on your phone or tablet that will give you more of a nostalgia rush than a lime milkshake!

There are a great mix of old classics on both iOS and Android. You simply need to do some searching or you can simply use Google to find some lists to browse. Games Radar is a good start, as is Pocket Gamer.

Sure, I love playing on old systems, but sometimes I want the graphics to be a bit more modern for my new phone or tablet. Plus, the ability to re-live those classics anytime I want is a bonus. To start with, I headed over to the App Store and started checking out what's on offer…

To get started I downloaded **Crazy Taxi City Rush** - the old Sega game that had fans playing the role of a crazy cabbie flying around the city in a huge yellow taxi. The chaos and frantic pace are all there and the sound gives you that good old nostalgia rush… if only we could bottle it, we'd make a fortune (good point - Ed).

Sega, Hardlight, Hitmaker, Acclaim and Cheltenham are listed as the developers, and it shows. There is a real attention to detail to the important things, like sound and graphics. You can play as a variety of different cabbies, with more that can be unlocked along the way. Also, you can customise your cab and add music from your iTunes library to drive to.

Controls will take a bit of getting used to, as it's not like using a Sega controller. For this game you're using your fingers and thumbs on glass, so it does take a while to get the hang of. You do have an option to have the game turn for you while you control braking, but I didn't and well… crashed into everything around me. This resulted in my fare (a business man) not getting there on time.

The next guy I picked up hated his life, and got me to drive him to the park. I got the hang of the controls and remembered to rapidly tap so that I could do a major slide into the finish zone.

Crazy Taxi City Rush has ramps, so you can get some major air. You can also drift and collect a fleet of cabs. Give it a go - it's free to download on iOS and Android, but there are in app purchases which allow you to progress faster. In fact, if you add them up there's over $100 worth…?

The game has received excellent reviews by major sites and I had a blast with it.

CS LIVE AGAIN!

RETRO GAMES ON YOUR PHONE OR TABLET!?

Tales of Monkey Island - iOS

Another Classic to try is the Lucas Arts and Telltale Games port/ remake of Monkey Island. The classic and fun adventure game initial released in 1990 on various platforms including the classic Amiga. Atari ST, DOS, Windows, Mac, Mega CD and a bunch more.

On iOS it's been lauded as brilliant and won TouchArcade's "Best iPad Games 2010".

We're about to play this one so no in-depth review yet, but it looks amazing and everyone seems to have loved it. On the App Store it's got 94 ratings of which 47 are 5 star! Can't wait!

ONE-TOUCH CRAZY DRIVING

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COLLECT & CUSTOMIZE A CRAZY FLEET OF TAXIS

DELIVER FARES AND FACEBOOK FRIENDS. MASTER THE STREETS TO SPEED UP YOUR TIME.

RE
HARD

TRO
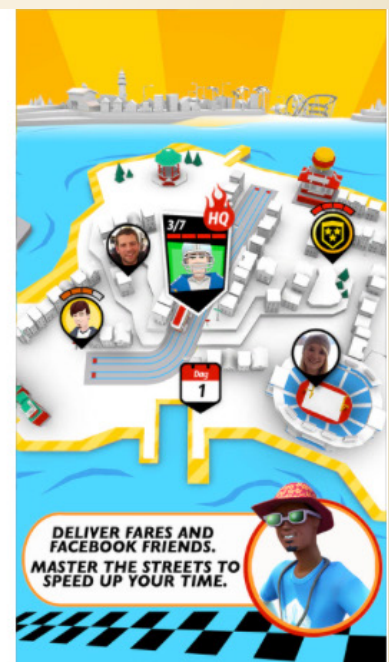
OWARE

3 CLASSIC GAME SYSTEMS YOU NEED TO PLAY BEFORE YOU DIE

If you are a bit older or just a hard code retro fan, you'll recognise these systems from days of old. It's impossible to choose 3 definitive systems, as gaming is subjective and we all have different tastes. Here are 3 systems that we just loved!

One of the all time classic consoles, the N64 was released in Japan in 1996 and sold around 33 million units. There are around 400 games for the system, and some of the best included Mario 64, Turok, Goldeneye, Wave Race 64 (a personal favourite), Pilotwings and Conker's Bad Fur Day.

The games came on a cartridge and, like it or not, worked brilliantly, with quick loading times and good graphics and sound. The N64 was a collaboration between Nintendo and SGI (Silicon Graphics), with SGI creating the "Reality Immersion Engine" that rendered 32-bit pixels (16.7 million colours) and a whole bunch of other technical marvels that resulted in one of the best consoles ever made. The 3 pronged controller was easy to handle, with its analogue joystick that was a treat to use with Wave Race and Pilotwings. The controller helped the latter game give a sense that you were actually flying.

Our friends at VGChartz have listed the top 5 selling N64 games as follows:

1. Super Mario 64 with 11.89 million sold.

2. Mario Kart 64 with 9.8 million sold.

3. Golden Eye 007 with just over 8 million sold.

4. The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time with 7.6 million sold.

5. Super Smash Bros - 5.55 million sold.

The system had a magic about it, with the way the graphics looked and the natural control of the analogue stick. Titles like Mario 64 allowed you to explore the game world with few limitations. Sadly, Nintendo only sold a fraction of N64s compared to its rival, Sony. The original Playstation sold 102 million units, with 157 million PS2s. While the 33 million sales seem paltry compared to those numbers, the N64 holds a place in gamers' hearts due to its brilliant design, fun games, and that secret ingredient that only Nintendo have.

NINTENDO 64
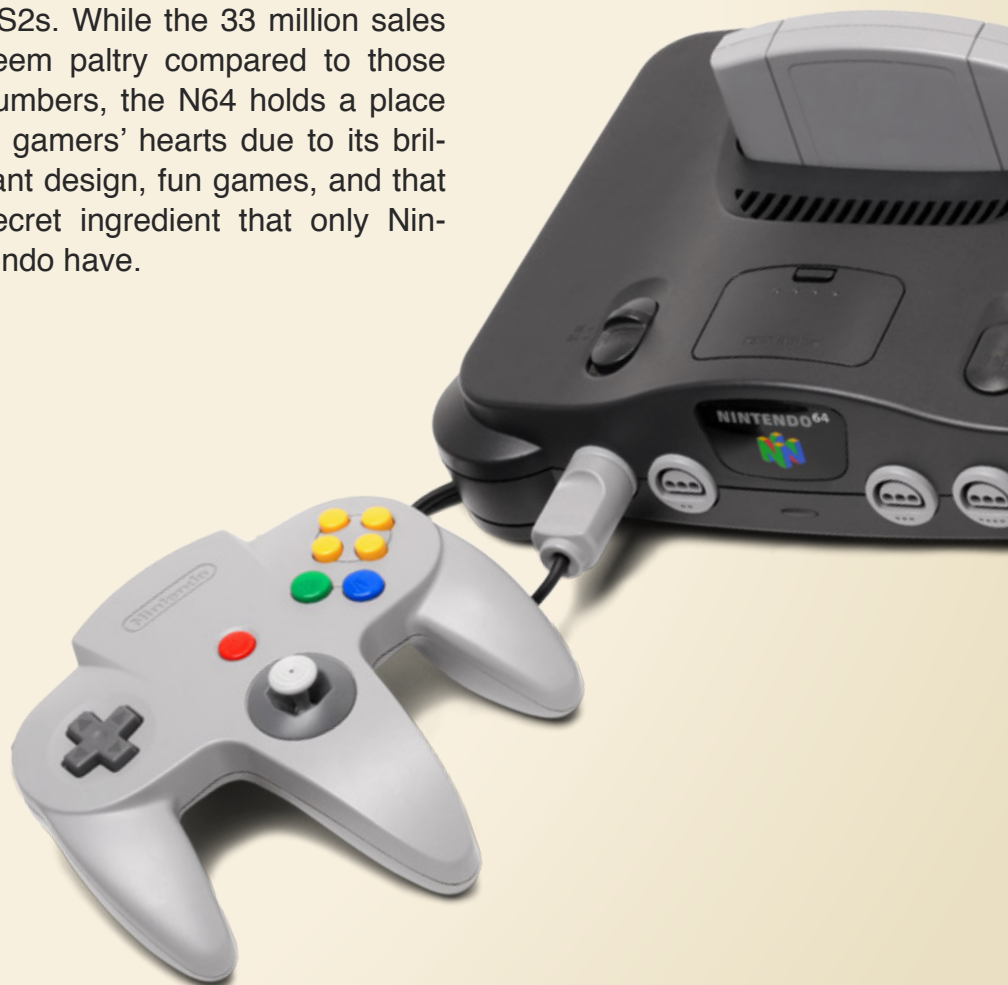
COMMODORE AMIGA 500

In 1987, the successor to the Commodore 64, the Amiga was launched in the USA. It was a single unit with a keyboard and 3 1/2 inch disc drive. It came with 512k of onboard RAM that could be upgraded to 1MB. It's interesting to note that the Amiga had a code name 'Rock Lobster', and was released to be in direct competition with the Atari ST. The launch price was $699US, though in Australia I paid $800AU for the computer with no monitor.

The Amiga had a Motorola 68000 microprocessor and ran on AmigaOS. It also came with a 2 button mouse that by today's standards looks ancient, but it worked well. You could also buy any standard 9-pin joystick for it, both analogue and digital were compatible. Some websites, such as Amiga Love suggest around 7 million Amiga 500s were sold. You can see their break down here: amigalove.com/viewtopic.php?t=45

Games that you had to play.

Well, there are just so many excellent games for the Amiga, and many classic titles were released, such as:

Sensible Soccer
The Secret of Monkey Island
Lemmings
Elite
Bubble Bobble
Sky chase
Speedball 2
Turrican II : The Final Fight

And dozens more. In fact many gamers would trade copies of games that been "cracked" to enable cheats, and piracy was rampant. It was a brilliant machine, and you could even link 2 Amigas with a cable and play games like Stunt Car Racer. Falcon 3 was a game I used to play against my friends. Sure, the graphics were simple, but the exhilaration of dog fighting with your friends was addictive.

"IT WAS A BRILLIANT MACHINE AND YOU COULD EVEN CONNECT TWO UP WITH A CABLE AND PLAY GAMES LIKE STUNT CAR RACER AGAINST EACH OTHER."

We've looked at some classic titles on the PC, like TIE Fighter and Strike Commander, but without a PC and 486 chip these games may never have been developed. Let's get back into our time machine and head back to around 1991 or so…

Boy, what a time for gamers. What can you say about the 486 PC? For those who loved desktop gaming, this was the system that changed everything. Sure, the 386 version of the PC had a great bunch of games, but for many of us it was the next generation chip that really got things moving. The 486 was introduced in 1989, with most markets selling them in 1990. Rather than going through a bunch of specs, let's remember the gaming experience. There were hundreds of 'computer shops' that opened up in the early 90s that would sell you a clone system, complete with a monitor, keyboard and mouse.

Shareware was popular, with games like Doom and Heretic being available for a small fee (for the disk and packaging) and taking up very little space on your hard drive, that was also shared with Windows 3.1 and DOS.

I can remember buying magazines with disks on the cover, full of game demos. I'd get one or two classic titles, like PC Format and PC Gamer from the UK, as well as PC Powerplay from Australia. Along with tech magazines like PC Magazine and Your Computer, it was a great time to be a gamer.

The early 486 systems came in a variety of flavours. At first I de-

"THE GAMING SYSTEM THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR GAMERS WHO LOVED THE POWER OF DESKTOP GAMING."

sired the DX-33, but the Intel chip was expensive. If you didn't know better, or had a limited budget, you may have purchased the SX-25, which really wasn't powerful enough to run some of the more advanced games that required graphics to be pushed around at a faster rate.

Later on, the DX2-66 became the standard, or if you preferred the AMD chip you would have purchased a DX-40. In my case, I had a DX2-80, then later a DX4-100.

Being a PC gamer in the early 90s was a great experience. First you would browse the game reviews in magazines, as there was no internet at this time. Magazines were huge, and a new issue would be released each month. After reading the reviews you would head out on Saturday morning to buy the latest 'must have' title. Back then games came in elaborate boxes with manuals, and occasionally key cards and short cut guides that showed keyboard commands. Some also came with novellas that would hook you into the story.

Sims were big in the 90s. No, not The Sims, where you control

small pixelated people, although that was a good game too. I'm talking about car and flight simulators. Rather than list the hundreds of titles available for the PC, and there were so many of them, I thought I would list a few of the 'sim' games that were big back then.

One of my favourites was Comanche Maximum Overkill where you flew a chopper across smooth flowing landscapes taking out the enemy. Others included:

ATF - Advanced Tactical Fighter.

EF 2000.

F/A-18.

Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator.

TFX.

U.S Navy Fighters.

NASCAR was brilliant too - in fact when we got our 28.8k modems, my brother and I would link via dial up and race. I can remember finding a cheat on a bulletin board back then that allowed my car to go around 10 mph faster and it drove my brother nuts trying to work out how come I was winning our online races… sadly a few weeks later he over took me on the straight and the grin vanished from my face…

PC 486

Special International-Only Editorial Section FOLLOWS PAGE 80

REVIEWS

ALR MicroFlex 7000

AST Bravo/286

Sysgen's Removable Hard Disk
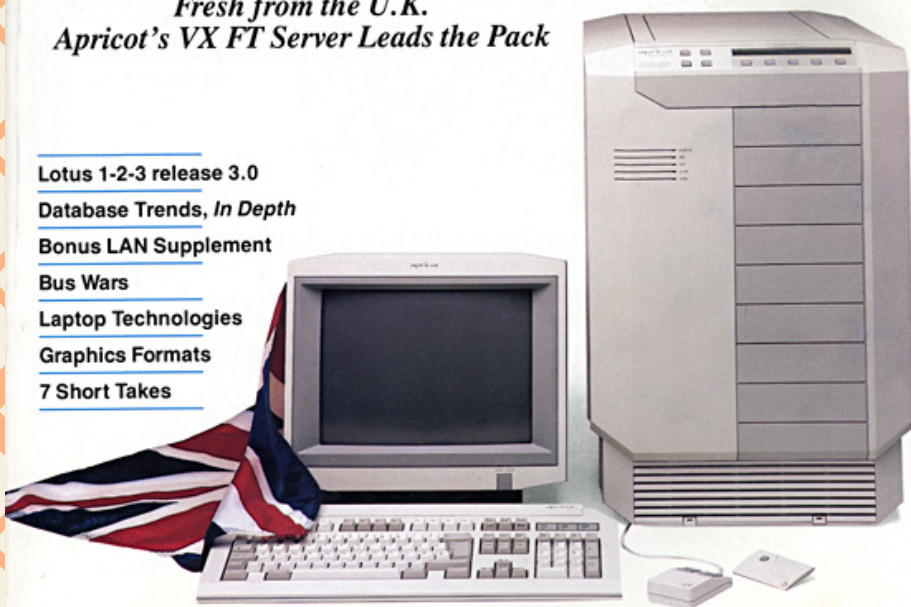
HyperPAD

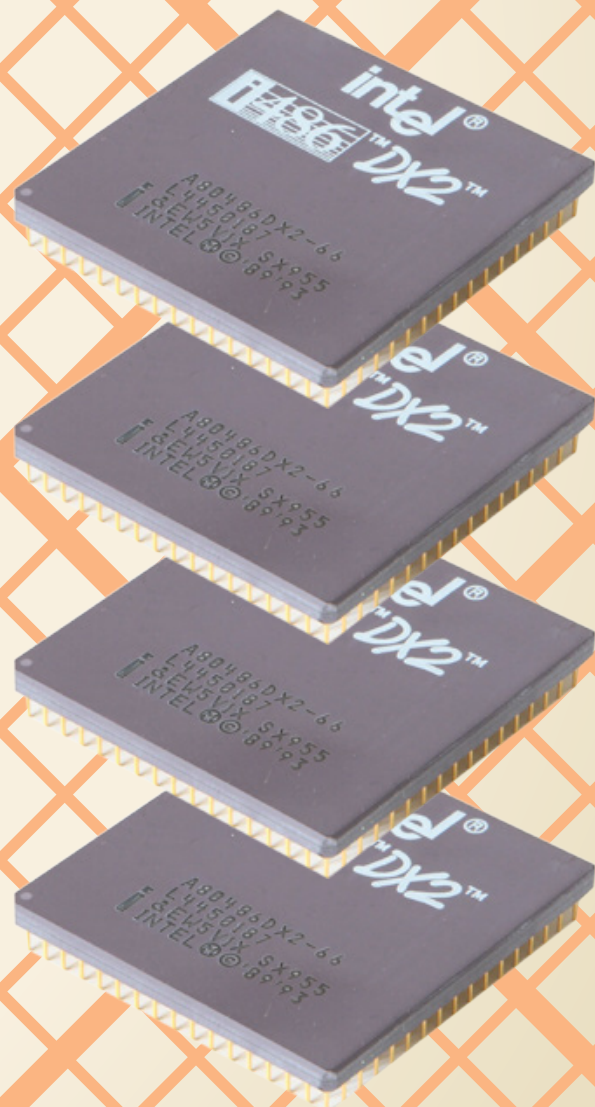Arriba

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*Fresh from the U.K.
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£1.95 U.K./A $6.50 AUSTRALIA
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0360-5280

All images from Wikipedia.

It's amazing how much we've progressed with technology. I often hear people mention how the latest smart phones have more tech and power than the computers that helped to land us on the moon. While researching this, I found out that while those old computers had small amounts of memory, they were reliable and could recover from crashes without the need for a help desk call… Could you imagine it?

"Yes, may I have your first name"

"Neil"

"Neil. How can I help you today Neil"

"I'm stuck on the bloody Moon - help!"

"Neil, I'm sure we can help, have you turned it off and then back on again…?"

Today, PS4 and Xbox One systems, along with the powerful PC and Mac computers can do amazing things that were unheard of 20 years ago. It got me wondering about the prices we paid for our tech. I know that over time prices come down, but I thought I would take a look at some of the big name consoles of yesteryear, and what they first cost when they were released.

Atari Lynx

This fun little, well not so little, hand held system came out in 1989 and had a 160x102 display. The launch price was $179 US which works out to around $247 AUD.

The average wage back in 1989 was around $491 per week.

Today, a Nintendo 3DS XL has a screen resolution of 800x240, or 400x240 per eye in 3D. It costs around $250.

Playstation 1994/1995

The first PS came out in the mid 90s and was a massive hit. It sold over 102 million and started Sony on a path of gaming success. Back then it cost $299 US which works out to around $413 Australian but according to CNET and my own memory the actual Australian price was $699.95 - quite a price when the weekly wage was $558.

Playstation 2

In 2000 the much hyped Playstation 2 was released and went on to sell over 150 million units. The Australian launch price was $749.95, and the average weekly wage was around $800. The PS2 gave us many hours of excitement and joy. The best selling were: GTA San Andreas, Gran Turismo 3, A-Spec, Gran Turismo 4 and GTA: Vice City.

Today the PS4 costs around $480 - $550, depending on the bundle you get. The Verge reports that the PS4 had sold 30 million units as of late 2015.

Nintendo 64 -1996

The U.S. price was $199, while in Australia it rounded out to $399. Nintendo sold around 33 million N64s world wide. It was, and still is, an amazing machine, with games like Mario 64 and Pilotwings 64 being great experiences. I can remember firing up the Pilotwings cartridge and feeling a real sense of flight. The N64 is still popular today, and many Gametraders stores stock them when they can get their hands on them. Both it and many of the games available for the console are in high demand.

While the Wii U is the current gen console from our friends at Nintendo, there is a lot of talk about the rumoured NX system. Rather then speculate on what it will be like, we're hoping that it's damn amazing and kicks butt!

"IT'S AMAZING HOW MUCH WE'VE PROGRESSED WITH TECHNOLOGY"

If you read game and tech magazines then you're probably a bit of a tech geek, like me. I love technology, particularly smart phones, cameras, consoles and sound equipment, which are all things that I use daily, or at least weekly. What I didn't really know was just how collectable some of those products are. In the past, we've looked at some rare games, but you'll be amazed at the prices collectors are asking, and paying for, old tech items. Let's take a look…

Firstly, let's take a look at the good old, first generation iPods. Yes, those little music machines are now fetching big dollars on eBay. While searching, one of the top results shows a "Collectors Set" of 3 iPods. This listing includes the first generation 20GB, 10GB and 5GB units. They are the original models that Steve Jobs unveiled in 2001, and you can check out the video of that presentation here: https://youtu.be/kN0SVBCJqLs

The listing is priced at U.S $50,000 and there's currently 7 people watching the auction.

There is also a 2nd generation, while 20GB unit listed at just $20,000. This one is still boxed and has never been opened. It's

generating a bit of interest with 17 people currently watching it. For The Beatles collectors, there is a very rare, limited edition, Apple iPod Classic Beatles Box Set available. One of 2500 made, it comes with a collectors box, a guitar plectrum and contains a CD filled with selections from The Beatles' back catalogue. These songs were not preloaded on the iPod, so you would have to rip them yourself. Originally priced at $795, this rare unit is available for just under $10,000.

What about games and consoles… what are some of the rarest around?

Stadium Events: NES … probably the most valuable video game for collectors.

One copy recently sold on eBay for $17,500. Apparently only around 200 copies made it into the hands of gamers, with approximately 20 still known to exist. Released in 1987 as 'Stadium Events', Nintendo purchased the rights to the game and rereleased it as 'World Class Track Meet'. To avoid customer confusion, Nintendo had all copies of Stadium Events pulled from the shelves and destroyed them.

One lucky customer, who had a copy of the game, was about to donate it to Goodwill without knowing its value. He had purchased the game, but had never played it. As such, it was still sealed in its box with the fitness mat. He came across a story about a copy of Stadium Events selling for $10,000 on eBay, so in 2010 he listed his copy which sold for $41,300!

There is a copy currently listed on eBay for U.S. $11,999.99 with 62 people watching. It's only the cartridge, so imagine what a boxed copy would sell for. Wikipedia states that only the NTSC copy is rare, as the PAL version wasn't recalled. Keep this in mind if you're searching online - don't be duped.

While looking at rare hardware I spoke to our retro editor, Paul Monopoli, and tapped into his well of knowledge. He suggests that the FM Towns is an uber rare console. Released in 1993 by Fujitsu and exclusive to the Japanese market, it was the first 32-bit home system and came with CD-ROM and disk drives. It featured an AMD 386SX processor that ran at 16Mhz and could produce 1024 sprites in 16x16. An online check shows that there are not

> ## "STADIUM EVENTS: NES... PROBABLY THE MOST VALUABLE VIDEO GAME FOR COLLECTORS."

many consoles available to buy. A browse of eBay shows a copy of Raiden Densetsu for $999.

Paul also claims that the PC Engine LT is rare and pricey, as he has just purchased one himself. An online search shows that they are priced around $1300, with many fans watching. They can go for more depending on the condition, with prices of $4000 not unheard of.

Looking at the pricing of some of these items, who would have thought that an original iPod would be worth a mint? Or that a console they played on is probably worth triple what they paid for it … or more? You just never know.
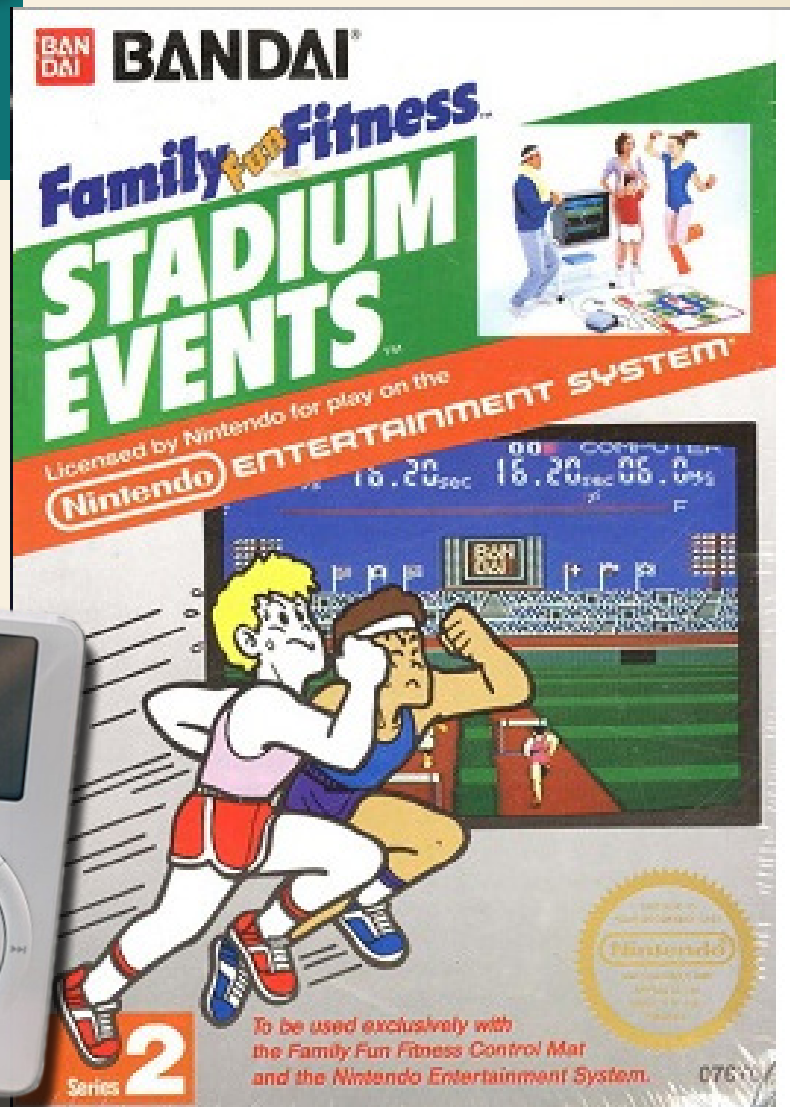
"Well I have a Pokémon N64, a Black Zelda 3DS & a MGSV PS4, but they aren't really that rare... but this is! Ladies & Gentlemen... the 10th Anniversary Final Fantasy VII PSP!"

- Jean-Paul Bartolomei

"Bought this console from Ebay a little while ago. I also have this. Apparently it's extremely rare. Got it fairly cheap too."

- Michael Pesak

"Ive got a sega master system II in original box. It still has a sticker on it saying you can get $50 cash back from Kmart."

- Joel Best

"Not sure. Maybe my Super Famicom Box (originally used in Japanese hotels)."

- Adrian Osty Ilsley

"Here is rare console! This my friends is an IS-NITRO CAPTURE. Used when making Nintendo DS games to test them and can also be used to play the games on a TV screen."

- Gina Ashley Watson

CONSOLE OR PC ITEM?

"I have a few uncommon ones. A Dick Smith Wizzard. A Sega SC 3000, which I couldn't be arsed to get out of the box. And this guy. Had it for years."

- **Aaron Yanner**

"Possibly my rarest console is my IS-CGB-Emulator (Gameboy Colour Development Kit).

Back in the late 90's it was sent back to Intelligent Systems and was upgraded to include the ability of developing and debugging Gameboy Advance games essentially making it an IS-CGB and IS-AGB Emulator."

- **Michael Behar**
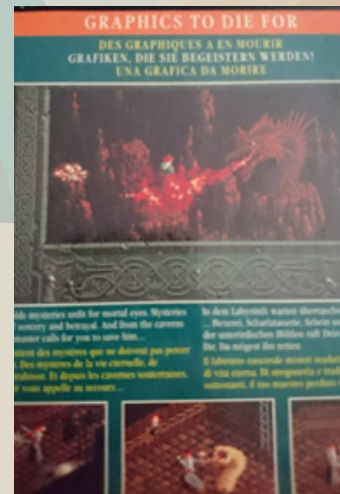
"I have quite a few kinda rare consoles ranging from Sega Master system, to NES Top Loader but my favourite is the Atari 1040 STe it was my first computer system growing up and me and my brother played many many hours fighting away on gauntlet especially haha. I also can't pass up the opportunity to post the back of the Immortal box with the "graphics to die for.""

- **Cameron Gilbert**
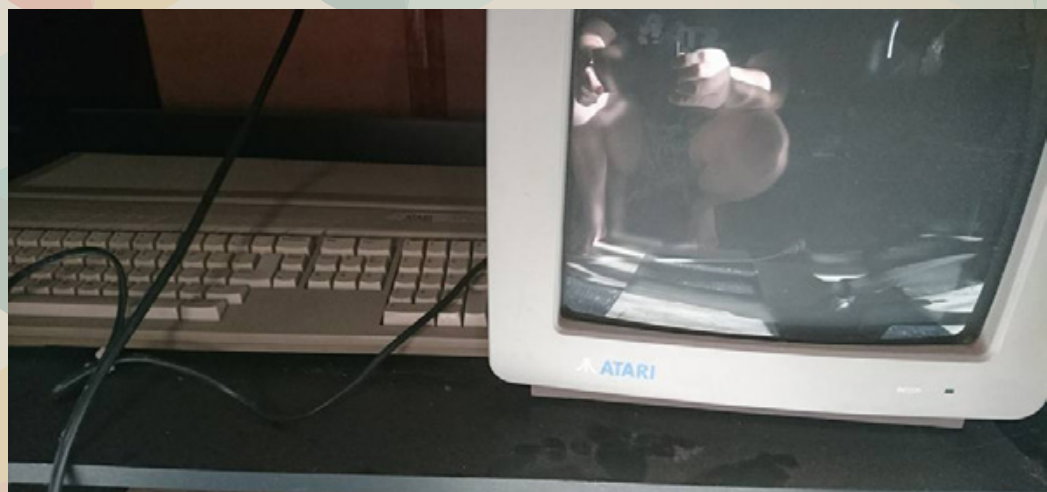
WHAT IS YOUR RAREST

" I actually don't know if this was a rare thing or not, though I got to say for me it is a pretty cool idea. The game 'Halloween harry' by S.O.D.A on floppy disk in a specially made 'CD' case. Did any other games of that era do this?"

- Das Dos

"Philips CD-i. One of the worst consoles ever? Definitely up there."

- Nick Schumi

"This is my rare beauty, Japanese exclusive final fantasy 13-2 PS3 console"

- Jacob Lee-Moore

"I have a Gameboy colour Pokémon edition and a com64. both in storage."

- Timothy Colin Small

"SEGA Dreamcast. It's my baby."

- Brett Hewitt

CONSOLE OR PC ITEM?

"Few handheld/tabletop consoles that I have sitting atop of my Sunnyvale 6 switch Atari 2600 Woody."
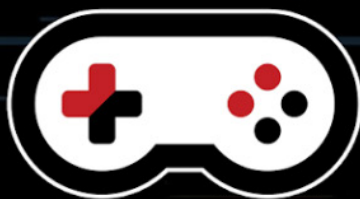
- Aaron Hunter

TRO
RO
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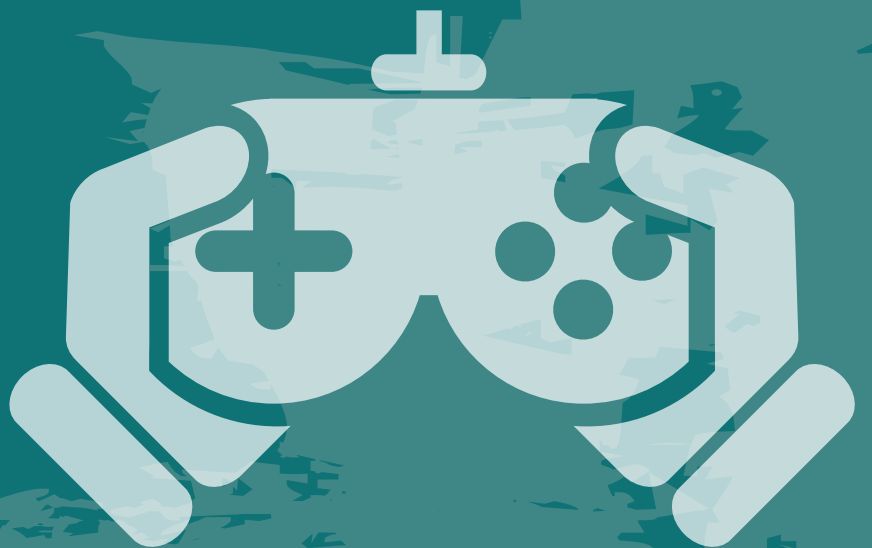
THE GAMER DIARIES
1989 – 1990

During 1989 my life become Amstrad, Amstrad, Amstrad. I read Amstrad magazines, I played Amstrad games and I made my own Amstrad programs. They were simple creations at first, but they became more complex as I learned more coding techniques. I enjoyed learning how to program, and though I covered many advanced BASIC commands I never got into the more complicated machine code. Back on the entertainment front, now that I had my own computer I was able to explore games at my leisure, and if I didn't have a game I would copy it. The problem I found was that some games featured advanced copy protection which made it difficult. Much to my chagrin, one such game was the classic building basher 'Rampage'.

'Rampage' allows you to take control of one of 3 creatures, Ralph the giant wolf man, Lizzie the giant lizard and George the giant ape. The game involves mass destruction of buildings, eating people and keeping the army at bay. When you finish destroying a city you move on to the next one.

In between levels you see newspaper headlines outlining your antics, which is a nice touch. After a while the game can feel rather samey, but there's something about it that makes you want to come back and give it another go.

Another title was 'Barbarian' which is a one on one hack and slash fighter. In this game you need to save Princess Mariana by defeating the wizard Drax and his evil warriors. A bloody game for its time, 'Barbarian' was famous for its spinning head chop that instantly ends any battle. After the head is cut off the body drops to the ground, with the head bouncing a couple of feet away. A little goblin then appears to drag the body away and (to add insult to injury) kick the severed head off the screen. Watching that animation still brings a smile to my face more than 20 years later. I did manage to face Drax once, but he attacks with projectiles and I was unable to get close enough to hit him.

The Christmas of 1989 is the first time I can recall noticing video games in department stores that potential customers could try. I remember K-Mart at the Ingle Farm shopping centre having a Sega Master System with 'Super Hang On' available to play. Not being a fan of racing games it made little impact on me, though I did have a go. Back in Amstrad world 'Super Hang On' became my first taste of the Spectrum Port, the bane of every Amstrad owner.

The Amstrad CPC and ZX Spectrum computers both use the Z80 same processor. As a consequence it was easy for companies to port games from one system to the other. As the Amstrad featured higher specs, many games were ported from the Spectrum. The Spectrum palette isn't as large as the Amstrad and it wasn't uncommon for colours to clash with each other on the screen. This code would be ported over to the Amstrad computer and released, with very little optimising. When a game was coded specifically for the Amstrad it had the potential to be colourful and fast. When it was ported from the Spectrum the game was in few colours and quite slow.

In 1987 I had joined the cub scouts, and one of the kids who had recently joined lived around the block from me and went to the same school, though we had never met before now. He also owned an Amstrad which piqued my curiosity. His name was James and we quickly became firm friends who spent many years gaming on Amstrad, Atari, Mattel and Nintendo systems. James also had a hefty collection of Amstrad magazines and we spent hours poring over issues of 'Amstrad

1980 - 1990

P1 000800   HI 060000   P2 000000
TIME 19   PUSH 2P

DOUBLE DRAGON
CREDITS 3
RetroShowCase.gr

TOP 10000000 TIME SCORE   21004
COURSE AFRICA 39 SPEED 274 KM
STAGE 1
S_____G

"...'BARBARIAN' WAS FAMOUS FOR ITS SPINNING HEAD CHOP THAT INSTANTLY ENDS ANY BATTLE."

Computer User', 'Computing with the Amstrad', and the Australian magazine 'The Amstrad User'. The Amstrad owners from the football club purchased a Nintendo Entertainment System at around 1990. It was my first time playing one and I was instantly struck by how comfortable the directional pad was to use, having only used joysticks and keyboard controls up to this point. Of the two games that they had 'Super Mario Bros' left a big impression on me. The graphics were basic but the scrolling was smooth and the game was just so much fun. It was quite different to the Commodore 64 hack of 'The Great Giana Sisters' that I had played earlier. Pinbot was the other game they owned and I enjoyed it, but I preferred 'Macadam Bumper' on the Amstrad CPC.

'Macadam Bumper' is actually an average pinball title that suffers from a bad case of slowdown. For me, what made it so much fun was the pinball table construction kit that came with the game. I built many tables, often trying to replicate those that I had managed to play in real life (but failing miserably). This made up for the fact that the game itself only came with a single table. The biggest problem with table creation was having the ball get stuck, and it required a significant amount of testing to ensure this didn't happen.

I went to school with twins whose family had recently purchased an Amiga 500 computer. It was the first time I had ever seen one and I was immediately blown away by the 16-bit wonderbeast. The twins had a few games including 'Sinbad and the Throne of the Falcon' and the Psygnosis version of 'Barbarian'. In 1987 both Psygnosis and Palace Software released very different games with the same title. The hack and slash classic I had played on the Amstrad was released by Palace Software but this title was very different. We loaded it up and tried to use the joystick but nothing was happening. We noticed that the screen contained arrow icons and a sword icon. Clicking these worked, but it was a clumsy, cumbersome control method that we quickly grew tired of. A little later in the year the twins got ahold of 'The Flood', which was one of the newest games on the market.

'The Flood' is a little known title, but it's an underrated classic that involves the player scrambling through the sewers to pickup items and reach the surface before they fill up with water. Your little green character can swim for a short amount of time, but it's better to try and scramble up the walls and ceilings before the water comes close to you. As well as avoiding the water you also had plenty of enemies to try and halt your progress. They could be dispatched with a variety of weapons that could be picked up at certain points in the level. I loved platform games and I thought this was a fantastic new take on the genre.

Back at school my computing teacher, Mr O'Reilly, started an unofficial computer club. Amstrad enthusiasts were encouraged to come along and discuss and share programming techniques. Yes, I was that kind of nerd! I spent many lunchtimes going over discs of code I had worked on at home, with Mr O'Reilly on hand to provide any help or guidance with our projects. I had one big project I had started involving those "heroes in a half shell", though sadly it would never see the light of day.

In 1990 the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles were the king of the kids, as was the arcade game. Time-Zone TV commercials at the time were advertising that the game was available to play at their game centres. It was also showing up in shopping centres and fish and chip shops. I don't recall where I first played it, but I played it a LOT. It was hugely popular, so getting time on the machine was a waiting game. I wanted more though, I wanted to play this game at home. We were still a good year away from home computer ports, but I suppose I had delusions of being able to code an Amstrad version using BASIC. How very naive I was back then… I can remember taking a book of graph paper everywhere with me and drawing pixel art. I had eventually drawn all 4 of the turtles and started to code them into the Amstrad. I ended up with a very simplified Michelangelo who would walk to the right. It was at this time that I realised I couldn't code sprites, so that project died.

In 1990 software for the Amstrad and most 8-bits was becoming scarce. Thankfully my grandparents went to the UK for a holiday,
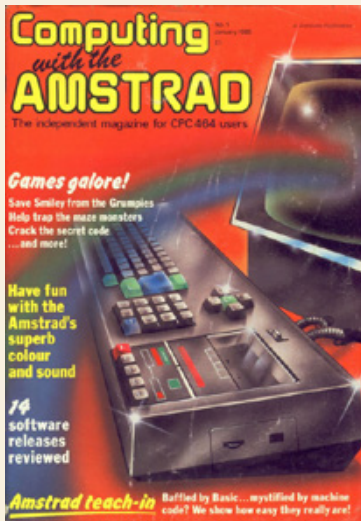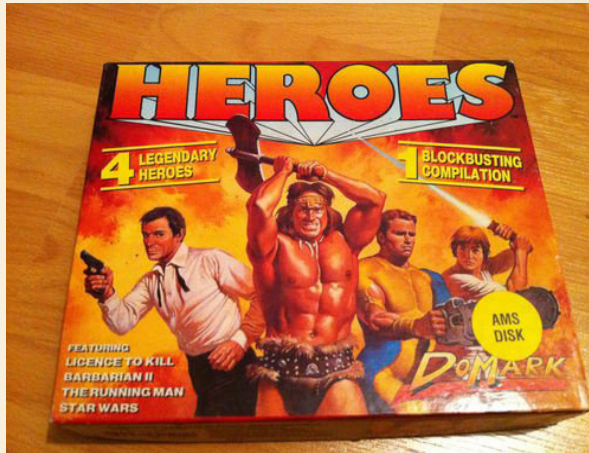
where Amstrad games were still plentiful. They came back from their trip with 'Double Dragon' and a compilation called 'Heroes'. The 'Heroes' compilation included 'Barbarian 2' (sequel to the Palace Software title), 'Star Wars', 'The Running Man' and 'License to Kill'. I was able to choose a title to own now and a title to have at Christmas. I decided that I wanted 'Double Dragon' now. There are two Amstrad versions of the game, a terrible 64k version and the much better 128k version, which was thankfully the one I got. James ended up getting 'Double Dragon 2', and on some days we would play through both games, one after the other, though 2 was a much harder game.

Though software was scarce I was made aware of a computer shop at the Modbury Triangle Shopping Centre called "Mr Computer", who were advertised as the Amstrad specialists. I walked into the shop and there was a wall of Amstrad games a few rows back. I had a difficult time deciding whether to buy 'Jack the Nipper', which I had played and enjoyed on the Commodore 64 or 'Bounder' which looked like a lot of fun on the box. I ended up choosing 'Bounder', which is a decidedly average overhead bouncing ball game. I was disappointed with my choice, but I pretended that the game didn't work and they allowed me to exchange it for another title. This time I made the right choice and chose 'Jack the Nipper'. 'Jack the Nipper' is the ultimate naughty baby game. The goal is to increase your "Naughtyometer" by creating mayhem. This included things like hitting people with your pea shooter, dropping plates, and using glue in the false teeth factory.

The problem with the game was, if you dropped something you were meant to use then it was gone and could not be recovered. While performing all of these naughty acts you had to avoid being spanked which increases your nappy rash meter. Once that hits the top you lose a life. At the end of the game Jack would walk on the screen and insult you. The insult you got would be dependant on how much of the game you had completed. In the pages of 'The Amstrad User' I found a complete guide to 'Jack the Nipper' which helped me to complete
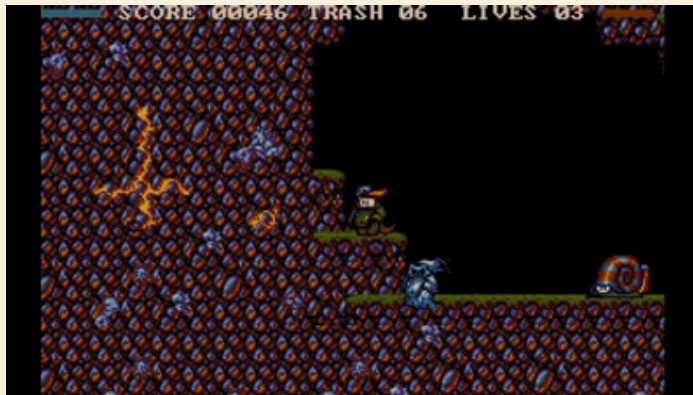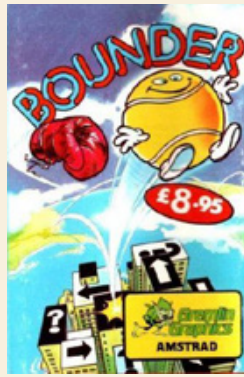
the game. I still had to use my skills to avoid getting spanked, but the guide told me which items to use and where.

At some point I also encountered the ColecoVision console. I can remember the day well, I had just hired a 'Sports Billy' video and was itching to get home and watch it. My father had other ideas though, and I found myself being dragged to another football club member's house. Understanding I would be bored sitting around a couple of adults they suggested I play the ColecoVision. The games I remember are 'Donkey Kong', 'Donkey Kong Jr' and 'Mouse Trap', a game I really enjoyed. 'Mouse Trap' is a 'Pacman' clone that requires you to avoid the cats and collect the cheese. You can also collect bones that turn you into a dog and allow you to eat the cats, very much like power pellets. At that moment 'Sports Billy' was forgotten and I had to be dragged away from the console.

That brings us to the end of this month's installment. Join me next month when I finish off 1990 and delve into 1991, a new school and a bunch of new gaming experiences.

"I HAD A DIFFICULT TIME DECIDING WHETHER TO BUY 'JACK THE NIPPER', WHICH I HAD PLAYED AND ENJOYED ON THE COMMODORE 64 OR 'BOUNDER' WHICH LOOKED LIKE A LOT OF FUN ON THE BOX."

1980 – 1990

WRITTEN BY
PAUL MONOPOLI

THE GAMER DIARIES

1990 – 1991

As 1990 progressed I found it more difficult to find games for my Amstrad CPC. Mr Computer was still "The Amstrad Specialist", but the focus was less on the CPC and more on the Amstrad PC and PCW computers. In September of that year my Mum bought me the latest issue of the Australian magazine, 'The Amstrad User'. In the pages of this issue I saw the biggest Amstrad mail order catalogue I had ever seen, as the magazine was supporting those who had difficulty finding software. I selected some game titles I was interested in, approached my mother and was told that I would not be ordering anything. This was the curse of having 2 children on a single income I suppose.

With that said, every birthday and Christmas I would be given one or two blank discs that I would promptly fill with games I would acquire from my friends. Friends of friends would go on holiday to the UK, often returning with Amstrad games which would be copied around to everyone else they knew, and everyone else those

people knew. Piracy was massive with my community of Amstrad owning friends and nobody even thought twice about copying games. When there were hardly any games available there wasn't really much of a choice. James and I owned copies of many titles, though we both managed to get ahold of the odd original disc. I can recall my parents coming back from a Sunday market with a copy of 'Monty on the Run', which was a nice surprise.

'Monty on the Run' is the the third in the Gremlin Graphics 'Monty Mole' series. A flick screen platformer, the game involves a working class mole called Monty who is on the run after being broken out of prison by his friend Sam Stoat. At the start you have to choose five items to help through certain sections of the game. The problem is, if you don't choose the correct five items then the game cannot be completed. The music is intense and urgent which immerses you in the platforming mayhem. Each screen is made up of bouncing enemies, crushers and carefully timed jumps.

One of my many blank discs ended up with a copy of the sequel, 'Auf Wiedersen Monty', a similar title where Monty has to travel to various European countries, raising enough money to retire.

At the end of the year I knew I would be leaving Para Hills East Primary School and doing year 7 and high school at St Paul's College. This would involve new friends, new experiences and a school that wasn't a 2 minute walk from home. It would also mean that I did not have direct access to Mr O'Reilly, so I would be on my own with my programming. My sister remained at Para Hills East for a few more years, so I did occasionally see Mr O'Reilly but it was never anything more than a 'hello, how are you?' I did continue to explore programming techniques I found in the pages of Amstrad magazines, though none of the projects that I started ever made it to completion.

During the holiday break some friends of the family visited us. The daughter had recently purchased an Amstrad and was curious to see what I had in my games library. Last month I mentioned my love of Jack the Nipper, though at this point I had played it to death and was thoroughly sick of it. I hid the game under my bed so I didn't have to show it to her. The family came over, I showed their daughter my Amstrad games and they left. Two weeks later I went to get Jack the Nipper out from under the bed but I couldn't find it. I knew it wasn't stolen as I was with this girl the whole time we were around the computer, and she had no way of knowing it was under the bed

anyway. To this day I have no idea what happened to that game and I never saw it again. Before I started my year at St Paul's College I purchased a copy of 'Computer and Video Games' or C+VG magazine. This was a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Special that featured Shredder on the cover. I picked up this issue as it featured screenshots of every port from the upcoming 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' platforming game, including the Amstrad CPC version. I continued to get a copy of C+VG every month until I noticed another magazine in the newsstand a late in 1991. We'll get to that next month though.

and in place was proper discussion. Clinton and someone else in the group had Amiga computers and someone else had a PC. We would talk about the latest popular games that we had played or seen in magazines. 'Rainbow Islands" was one of the most popular games on the market at this time and between us we owned the game on Amiga and Amstrad.

'Rainbow Islands' is one of the sequels to 'Bubble Bobble' (there was also a 'Bubble Bobble 2' for the NES and Taito's 'Bubble Symphony' which is also referred to as Bubble Bobble 2). In this game Bub and Bob are in their human

those at Intencity or Gameroom Essentials. We were exposed to classic titles such as 'Outrun', 'Golden Axe', 'and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles'. I played 'Afterburner' in the machine that had the moving seat. That was exhilarating at the time. Neo Geo cabinets were new on the scene at this time and having a cabinet which played four games was unheard of until now. Those early Neo Geo games didn't make much of an impression on me. I remember the 'Super Spy' being a bit average, and though I enjoyed 'Ninja Combat' it wasn't anything special.

In one of the issues of C+VG I saw a feature about a new console by Nintendo known as the Super Famicom. Screenshots were shown of Super Mario World and I knew that I had to play it. Platform games were my favourite genre and this looked like it was going to be something special. Prior to this my only experience with a Mario game had been the original 'Super Mario Bros', 'Donkey Kong', 'Mario Bros' and the Mario hack of 'Great Giana Sisters'. Every month I would read C+VG from cover to cover trying to find some updates about 'Super Mario World' or the Super Famicom system.

"I HAD A DIFFICULT TIME DECIDING WHETHER TO BUY 'JACK THE NIPPER', WHICH I HAD PLAYED AND ENJOYED ON THE COMM

For my first day at St Paul's College I took this magazine to read during break times. I was nervous and figured that I might need to take some reading material incase I didn't immediately click with anyone. As it so happened this magazine was what allowed me to click with the first friend I made at St Paul's, Clinton. Clinton spotted me with the magazine and mentioned that he owned that issue as well. We became good friends after that and I was introduced to Clinton's social group. We were all gamers but with a difference. I'm not sure if it was maturity but gone were the school ground "my system is better than your system" debates

form and have to climb to the top of each level using rainbows to attack the enemies and climb levels. At the end of each world there is a boss to challenge. A colourful game on both Amstrad and Amiga computers, the game features a world devoted to Taito's 'Arkanoid'. After playing both versions we discovered that the Amstrad version was easier and we could get a little further in the game. From memory the vampire boss was really difficult on the Amiga version.

James and I started to make semi regular visits to our local Timezone at Modbury. They would have lock in sessions, similar to

While I was waiting for the Super Famicom to be released I had a more immediate interest in the Gameboy. Nintendo's handheld was making a big impact on the gaming world and everybody wanted one. Who would have thought we would have a quality gaming system that we could

take anywhere and play a version of Super Mario that was as good as the original Nintendo Entertainment System version? I was aware of the existence of Sega and had played the Master System in stores (as mentioned last month), but Nintendo was making a much bigger impact on me.

At school my friends and I decided to try and write a computer magazine that we could sell to other students. I mean, who wouldn't pay to read our thoughts on games? We really were young and naive… We had a writing class at school and we thought we could use that time to write to write content for the magazine. The teachers very quickly put a stop to the money side of the project but didn't mind us writing something that could be distributed to students. The other problem was that the teachers wanted control over what was going to be written, so the project quickly died. While moving house recently I found the written draft for our magazine. Who the hell gave 'California Games' 94%? It's not my handwriting… Actually, none of it is my hand writing, so I don't think I have all of it. We also reviewed 'Narc', we had a cheat mode section, and I even have part of the draft for what was going to be the second issue.

In 1991 I was obsessed with Fleetway's British comics. This included titles such as, 'Buster, Son of Andy Capp', 'Whizzer and Chips', 'Big Comic Fortnightly' and more. One of my favourite characters was a character called Vic who starred in a comic called 'Vid

Kid'. Vic had a remote control that could be used in the real world, very much like the Adam Sandler movie 'Click'. I started a 'Vid Kid' BASIC project on my Amstrad. The concept involved using Vic's remote control to perform actions on items in his house. I got as far as drawing a picture of Vic on the computer, and starting to work on drawing the house before abandoning the project. It would be the last ever Amstrad BASIC project I attempted. The problem was a lack of time as, unlike my old school, St Paul's gave us homework. I'm not going into the whole public school vs private school debate but I did get a better education at St Paul's.

In writing class I had the idea to design my own Amstrad manual. This book included a lot of programming techniques that I learned from my time coding as well as a few bits and pieces I ripped off from Amstrad magazines. I received an A for the book which covered the Amstrad computer series, expansion peripherals and the basics of BASIC. At the back I featured a little game that had a spaceship flying through an endless screen of stars that had to be avoided. In the ultimate act of plagiarism I lifted that game line directly from a magazine I had lying around. While moving house I found the book recently so I might put it online at some point.

In the pages of C+VG I had my first glimpse of what would become a worldwide video game phenomenon. Street Fighter 2

featured in a 4 page arcade review and the magazine featured Chun Li on the cover. The game looked amazing with large sprites, colourful backgrounds and the variety of different characters was impressive. I wasn't even aware of the first Street Fighter game but, like Super Mario World, I had to play it! Thankfully I wouldn't have to wait too long, but that's all the time I have this month. Join me next month as I obtain my first Nintendo console and enter a whole new realm of gaming.

TwinsWorld

California Games by kixx

The first event involves skateboard
-ing followed by footbag(footbag)
Then comes the most enjoyable
event surfing after that is
rollerskating the BMX coarse and
finally the flying disk. A real enjoy
able game but the loading between
games takes a while but it is
worth it.

Graphics	90%
Sound	98%
Value	93%
Playability	95%
Overall	94%

1990 - 1991

WRITTEN BY
PAUL MONOPOLI

THE GAMER DIARIES
1991 – 1992

In 1991, St Paul's College was still in the dark ages where computers were concerned. This would be corrected in the years to follow, but in year 7 I was introduced to the BBC Micro with a green screen monitor. I had heard of the BBC Micro but had never seen one. I wasn't actually aware that they were available in Australia, but the computer lab had about 20 of them, so I was proven wrong on that one.

BASIC was taught by the school principal, and I was able to use many of the coding techniques I had learned from my Amstrad on the BBC Micro. Some commands didn't work but I was able to manage enough little tricks to impress the teachers. It came as no surprise that I received a 1+ (St Paul's primary level equivalent of an A+) for computing that year. Construction was starting on a new building at the school & I was told that a new computer lab was to be a part of it.

James was starting to collect C+VG magazine and during our weekend catchups we would look over the issues, discuss articles,

talk about the PC Engine, Super Famicom and other consoles that were out of our reach. We loved the look of "Street Fighter 2" and on TV TimeZone were advertising that the game was in their arcades. The morning we went was filled with excitement, as we would finally get to play one of the most desirable games of our time. We went to TimeZone on Saturday morning, got let in to the lock in and had to wait… and wait… and wait. It turns out that we weren't the only ones who wanted to play Street Fighter 2! When we got onto a machine it was amazing. Playing Street Fighter 2 for that

first time in the early 90s is one of those gaming memories that will stay with me forever.

In late 1991 I found myself at Ingle Farm Shopping Centre, standing just outside the newsagency. During this time they had a magazine stand on the outside of the shop that I used to buy C+VG from. I had no intention of buying anything but glanced at a few magazines anyway. I spotted the wording "AMS…" with the rest of the title hidden. Full of curiosity I pulled the magazine from the shelf and saw the words "Amstrad Action". I had never heard of this magazine before, but that wasn't the best part. This magazine had a COVER TAPE! Cover tapes were used on 8-bit computer magazines in the 80s and 90s and were filled with demos, games and utilities. I couldn't believe my eyes as they were normally seen on Commodore magazines, but there it was. I very quickly talked my mother into buying it for me and she agreed!

It was the July 1991 issue of Amstrad Action, which features Pang on the cover and a covertape

PLAYER1
1480

HI-SCORE
30000
Time 082:47

ROUND-01

TETRIS™

▶1PLAYER   2PLAYER

©1989 Nintendo

featuring playable demos of "Switchblade" and "Megaphoenix", as well as two complete games! The games were "Future Knight" and "Balldozer", a clone of the classic box shifting puzzle game "Sokoban". "Future Knight" is a platform game which has you controlling a knight from the future (obviously) as he tries to rescue Princess Amelia from the clutches of Spegbott the Horrible who is holed up in a wrecked space ship. It's a colourful title by Gremlin Graphics, who created the "Monty Mole" and "Jack the Nipper" games. This was a welcome addition to a game library that had been starved of titles for a while.

I introduced James to Amstrad Action and we both started collecting it each month. As Amstrad gear was practically unavailable in Australia these covertapes were a way for us to get more software, and to explore games that neither of us would have seen before. Future covertapes included demos of "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2", "Space Crusade" and many more. It was difficult as while the demos were fun to play, we knew that this would be the most we would see of the games. Many other formerly full priced titles were also packaged on these tapes and I would devote my spare time to playing through them each month. The games would vary in genre, from isometric platformers to Freescape 3D games. "Sweevo's World" was an isometric 3D platformer, in the vein of "Head Over Heels" and "Alien 8". You play a robot called Sweevo who has no

weapon and can't jump. However, he can move items around, go up and down via elevators, and drop things on enemies to kill them. The goal is to destroy the malfunctioning janitor units that are causing trouble in the town of Knutz Folly. It was fun but when I finally got a copy of "Head Over Heels" it was quickly forgotten.

I haven't yet mentioned that magazine which was quite a witty publication, headed by the brilliant Rod Lawton who now works at Techradar UK. The humour of the AA staff really shone through, as opposed to the dreary, mostly serious official magazine, the Amstrad Computer User. AA had an air of fun about it and I even enjoyed reading the serious articles. Rod, tech advisor Adam Waring, staff writer Adam Peters and everyone else involved in the magazine produced a quality publication in an era where the 8-bit home computer was dying a slow and painful death. They made fun of other magazines, they insulted each other and they even had the AA Christmas Pantomime. It was a fun read that I looked forward to every month.

During 1991 I met another Amstrad fanboy at school called Steven. We used to catch up on the occasional weekends and he introduced me to games that I didn't even know were available on my humble 8-bit. "Rygar The Legendary Warrior" was an arcade game that I used to play at Skateline. While many of the games there would be replaced over time there were two that always remained: "Bombjack" and

"Rygar". A side scrolling platformer, "Rygar" was a title that required you to battle through the levels to defeat the evil Ligar. As Rygar you could jump on the backs of enemies to stun them or hit them with your disc attached to a chain. It was a favourite of mine but I had no idea that it existed on the Amstrad CPC. I promptly copied the game and took it home.

Mum knew I was interested in the Nintendo Gameboy and my Aunt was about to go on holiday to America. The Gameboy was much cheaper over there, so she offered to bring one back for me. I counted the days, but when she returned in 1992 Nintendo's handheld gaming icon was mine. As with all Gameboys at that time it came bundled with the puzzler classic, "Tetris". Like so many other Gameboy owners I played "Tetris" for hours on end. Bulletproof Software's handheld conversion of the classic Russian puzzler was a huge success and it was the game that introduced many housewives to the world of videogames, including my own mother. Many evenings when I wasn't playing the Gameboy she would be. She loved Tetris and got to be very good at the game.

Back on the Amstrad front, Steven and I discovered a treasure-trove of Amstrad titles at Computer Recyclers. It's a shop that is still around today, you can see it as you travel down Main North Rd towards the Adelaide CBD. Today they specialise in new and second hand PC parts, but back then they were advertising second hand 8-bit games. My fa-

ther reluctantly took Steven and I to the shop and I was in awe. At the back were Commodore 64 games, near the front were Apple 2 games, to the right were Atari games, but the left side of the store was what interested us the most. A wall of Amstrad games greeted us and we spent a while perusing the titles. It was here that I purchased a second copy of "Jack the Nipper" to replace the one that mysteriously disappeared. I did hesitate as this copy was on tape when my original one was on disc, but I bought it anyway.

My father (again, reluctantly) took me back a second time on my own. I had been told by the shop owner that I could bring in games to swap on a two for one deal. I assumed that he was clearing his Amstrad stock, so I bought in a game to swap and chose two

to replace it with. I took them to the counter and the owner had a laugh and told me it was the other way around. My father's temper was already at a low point, having been dragged along to a gaming store. He gave the owner my game, took one of the titles I chose, said something to the owner and dragged me out of the store. I was never allowed to go back there again. My old man had no patience for video games and he made sure that I knew that. The game I ended up getting was the aforementioned "Head Over Heels".

\"Head Over Heels" is a 3D isometric platformer that requires you to control two characters, Head and Heels. Mr Head is able to jump two spaces high, but his walking speed is slow. Mr Heels can run fast but his jumping ability is only one space high. At key points in the game they can unite to make use of both of their abilities. The characters have been sent to liberate the planets in Blacktooth from the evil emperor. If you ever play a 3D isometric platform game then it must be this one. It's the pinnacle of the genre and is well worth your time.

My loyalty to the Amstrad CPC bought about the ire of my classmates at school. Many of them had moved on to consoles or 16-bit computers, though I was a still a staunch supporter of Alan Sugar's wonderbeast. I can remember having an issue of Amstrad Action on my desk at school, the issue with "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2" on the cover, and one boy taunting me for having such an old computer system. I didn't bite back, I simply didn't care. I don't remember what I said back to him, but I was very nonplussed about the whole thing and he stormed off rather frustrated. I guess I didn't give him the reaction that he was looking for.

At school Nintendo's Gameboy was gaining a huge following. Though it wasn't the case for

me, many of the kids at St Paul's came from wealthy families. One such student bought along a newly launched Sega Gamegear with Sonic the Hedgehog. This was not a cheap console and most of the kids were blown away by the bright colours of the blinding blue wonder. Personally I thought that the colours were very washed out, though this could have been because I was looking at it outside during break times. I was always loyal to the machines that I owned and I was a Nintendo man all the way. Plus, I thought that the Gameboy had better games for it anyway!

I recall James being quite interested in buying a Sega Master System and it was something he was mulling over for a while. The Master System 2 had recently dropped in price as the Megadrive was gaining popularity. I can remember trying to talk him out of it and suggesting that he waits for the upcoming Super Nintendo console to be released in Australia. It was coming later this year and it was rumoured to be getting Street Fighter 2, which was to be a SNES exclusive. We had a few discussions about it but James never ended up buying a Master System.

That's pretty much all the space I have this month. Join me next month as I explore the seedy side of PC gaming with my childhood friend Carmello, more Amstrad gaming with James and a few new Gameboy releases. I always forget to mention this but you can follow me on Twitter @dizrythmia & check out other bits & pieces I do at www.retrospekt.com.au.

WRITTEN BY
PAUL MONOPOLI

1991 - 1992

THE GAMER DIARIES

1992 – 1993

Carmelo was a friend who I had known since I was very young. We attended playgroup together, then kindergarten, then junior and primary schools. He lived around the block from me and our birthdays were 5 days apart in the same year! According to our parents, we hated each other in playgroup and used to fight a lot. By the time we were in school we were the best of friends. As I have an Italian background Carmelo's mother treated me like her other son, as he was an only child.

We grew up playing with Masters of the Universe figures together, which evolved to gaming on his Atari 2600, but around this time he got his hands on a PC. I was intrigued as PC computers had been around for years, but it was around this time they started to gain momentum as gaming machines. Eventually this would see the death of the home micro market, and the big computer companies could see this coming. Amstrad had its own PC line, with Commodore releasing the Colt range of PC compatibles. At this time PC gaming felt like a whole new world, one I would eventually become immersed in, but I'm getting way ahead of myself here…
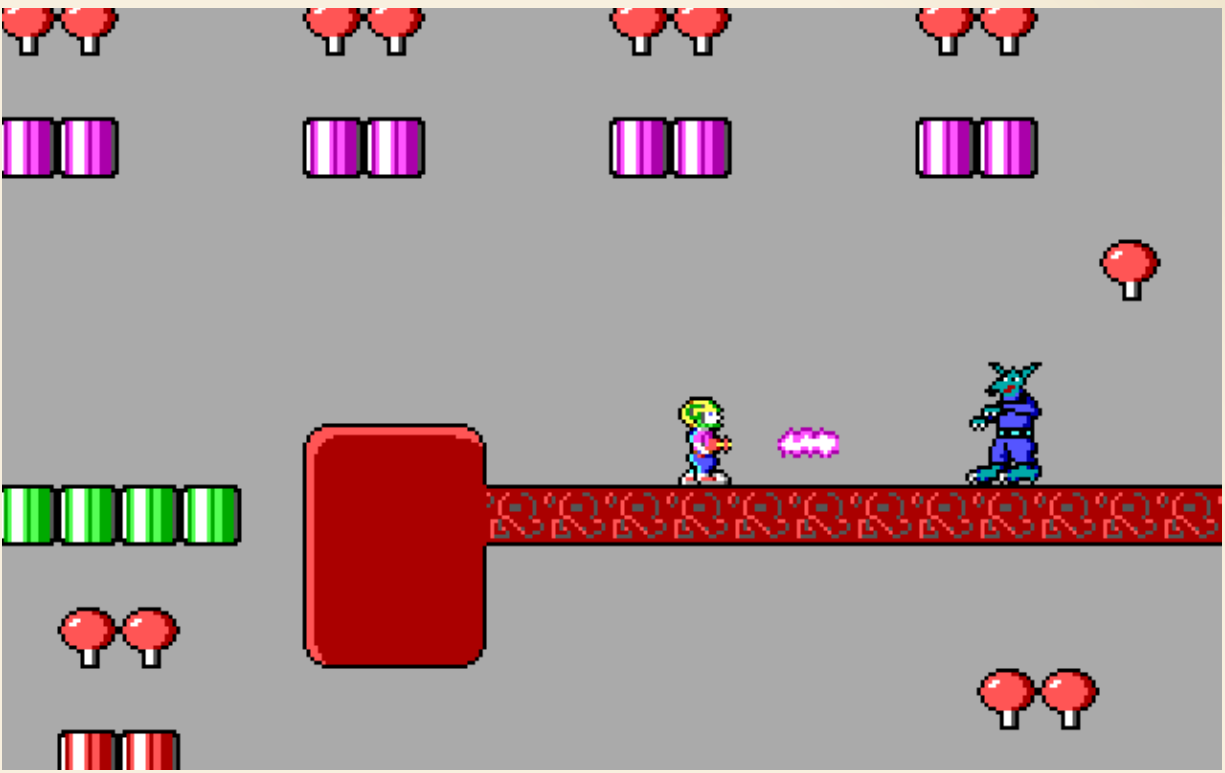
I was introduced to "Commander Keen", a very recently released platforming game. Genius child Billy Blaze, under the guise of Commander Keen, travels to an alien planet to liberate it from his rival Mortimer McMire. That's last part is a bit of a spoiler, as you don't find out who the protagonist is until the third game of the series. At this time we didn't have the third game, as part one was available to be distributed for free as 'shareware', with parts two and three requiring payment. It was a fun platfomer and the use of a pogo stick predated "Ducktales" on the NES and Gameboy. Having limited blaster shots was challenging and the levels were big, with plenty of secrets to discover.

Carmelo was also in possession of the first adult game I would ever see, "Leisure Suit Larry". At the age of around 13 a child becomes interested in that sort of thing, let's be honest. "Leisure Suit Larry" (LSL) was a humorous take on losing one's virginity. Even though we had difficulty completing it, it was fun watching Larry die in the many various ways. Even flushing the toilet in Lefty's Bar had consequences! I had played adventure games on the Amstrad before, but this was the first game I had seen in this style. Carmelo also had "King's Quest", though we enjoyed the humour of LSL a lot more.
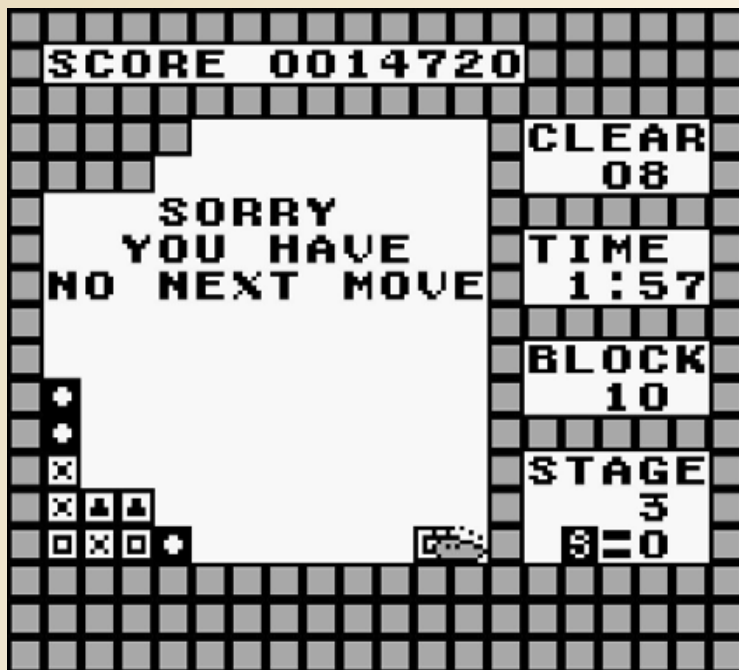
Back at school people were beginning to trade Gameboy games. It was similar to the way in which people traded Ninja Turtles cards only a couple of years earlier. I never traded any games, though I did buy one from a school mate. I had played "Choplifter" in the arcade and really enjoyed it, so when he offered me "Choplifter 2" I was interested. I think I may have paid $20, a reasonable sum for a 13 year old in 1992. I tested the game first and loved it. Similar to the first game, you have to rescue people and take them back to base, all while avoiding or shooting enemy artillery. It was a challenging game with great controls.

James had recently heard that a mutual friend had managed to score a copy of "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" on the Amstrad CPC. By this stage the Simpsons were dominating popular culture and TMNT was dying out. I always stood by the things I enjoyed and never bowed to peer pressure when it came to passing fads. If I liked something I stuck with it. James and I acquired our pirate copies of "Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles" (anything TMNT related in the UK used to have "Hero" in the title as "Ninja" was somewhat of a taboo word) and it was different to what we had seen before.

SCORE 0014720

SORRY
YOU HAVE
NO NEXT MOVE

CLEAR
08

TIME
1:57

BLOCK
10

STAGE
3

S=0

1P 999 TIME 11 2P 1600

B12

3 POW CREDIT11 3 POW

0010020 0012440

LEVEL 2-2

ENEMY
CREDIT 10

10 10

2 P = 111500 HIGH SCORE X 6 TIME
000000 113600 2:54

MARIO×02 WORLD TIME
2600 ○×15 1-1 370

1P GOLD HI-SCORE
38680 280 80000
PLAYER POWER ENEMY
TIME
2:56

CREDITS-5 PUSH 2P
START BUTTON

I had previously played the game on the NES, Amiga and C64. It was OK on the NES as there were 2 buttons, one to jump and one to fire. When you used the fire button in conjunction with up or down on the D-pad you would swing your weapon in that direction. On the home computers if you pushed up and fire to swing your weapon upwards you ended up jumping most of the time, as up was also the jump command on a single button joystick. On the Amstrad CPC the ability to swing your weapons up and down was removed, which was a smart move on the part of the programmer. The game was frustrating enough without having to endure an incorrect jump at the wrong time. The levels & enemies were slightly modified so you could hit them without the need to swing your weapon up or down. This did make the game easier, but that was a blessing as it wasn't very forgiving on other systems. In the end I found a cheat code which made the game even easier!

In the South Australian suburb of Para Vista, on the corner of Milne Rd and Nelson Rd are a collection of shops. On the very corner you can see a Red Rock Noodle Bar up on a small hill. Shops used to rotate in this space a lot, and previously there had been a fish and chip shop where the doctor surgery is now. I used to go in there to play arcade games with a couple of school friends. The 2 games I remember were "Hippodrome" and "Cabal". In 1992 one of the bigger spaces in this group of shops was vacant. This empty space ended up being an arcade called 'Megazone' and it was on the way home from school after I got off the bus. Whenever I had a few spare coins I would tell Mum to expect me late home as I would stop and play arcade games.

A friend of mine, Mark, decided to start getting off at my bus stop after I mentioned this at school. It was a much farther walk for him to get home, but he didn't care. We would play "Golden Axe" (which I loved), "Altered Beast" (which I was always indifferent about) and many more. I discovered "Legend of Hero Tonma", which is a difficult little platformer. You shoot magic spells which can be upgraded. You have to find keys to progress through the level and you can get treasure chests with coins a-plenty. C+VG magazine reported that this game was only ever ported to the PC Engine. I already wanted one as the quality of the games being ported on it were just amazing. "Legend of Hero Tonma" cemented my desire to eventually own NEC's little gaming wonder.

Mark and I befriended the owner's son, so our trips to 'Megazone' saw us spending less money than you would have thought a pair of young teens would spend in an arcade. The owner's son once gave us over 100 credits on TMNT, which we promptly completed with 4 Turtles. I first played "Double Dragon 2" here, and I was struck by the slightly unusual controls. You would push the left button to attack left and the right button to attack right. It sounds simple, right? After the first "Double Dragon" which had kick and

1992 – 1993

punch buttons it was hard to get used to. I remember being one of many who struggled with that.

Earlier that year my grandparents had gone to Singapore for a holiday, where Gameboy games were much cheaper than in Australia. They bought some back for me, and in the Christmas of 1992 I was given "Terminator 2", "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2", "The Simpsons - Escape from Camp Deadly" and my first ever multi cart. "The Simpsons" and "Terminator 2" were US releases in standard Gameboy boxes. "TMNT 2" was in a smaller Japanese box, while the multi cart was in a non standard box. At this stage there was no Internet, so no way of finding out what this thing actually was or how it came to be. The cartridge contained some interesting games, including "Ninja Gaiden" and an interesting puzzler called "Flipull".

On the Amstrad GX400 a puzzle game called "Plotting" was released, and I remember reading about it in Amstrad Action. "Flipull" is the same game with a different name. You play a blob who has a block that he has to throw at other blocks to remove them, change them, then it gives you a new block. That was a confusing description, but it's a confusing game. It's quite addictive, but is far from being a standard 'pick up and play' puzzles. "Flipull" requires the player to invest some time into discovering the mechanics of the gameplay. If you're prepared to put in the time you will find a pleasant little time waster.

As 1992 rolled into 1993 I also managed to get a copy of "Super

Mario Land". While it appears to be a re-imagining of the original "Super Mario Bros", this was a different game in a very different setting. Gone are Princess Peach, the Mushroom Kingdom and Bowser Koopa. In their place are Princess Daisy, Sarasaland and the evil Tatanga. It was a surprising side step from the traditional Mario story, and though its canon is questionable Princess Daisy has since established herself in the main Nintendo universe.

The world of consoles were starting to dominate my gaming interests. I purchased my last copy of Amstrad Action in January 1993, which ended up being the October 1992 issue. It was apparent that the Amstrad was dying as less and less games were being reviewed each month. The cover-tape on that issue featured an average game called "On The Run" which I was quite non-plussed about. I still loved my Amstrad, but in an era of emerging new technologies it was starting to look a bit old. With that said, the Amstrad remained in my room and I continued to play the classics, "Head Over Heels", "Jack The Nipper", etc… It was almost like going through the motions though, as I was becoming more and more focused on getting my hands on a Super Nintendo.

Around the same time I purchased my last issue of Amstrad Action, I was also given a copy of a new Amstrad magazine. I kid you not, in 1992 as the Amstrad was dying a new magazine was launched. It was called CPC Attack and I immediately recognised the mascot 'Amy' from Computer

and Video Games magazine, where she was called 'Sadie'. I'm not sure why the two magazines shared the same mascot or why her name was changed… Maybe they thought nobody would notice. Surprisingly, inside this magazine was a feature on consoles. I was rather taken aback, as in my mind this had no place in an Amstrad magazine, but there it was. If anything it only further whetted my appetite for a Super Nintendo.

I had started discussions with my parents on ways I could earn money to obtain a SNES. "Street Fighter 2" had been released on the system and there was a "Street Fighter 2" bundle pack. This was the one I had to have! Yes, I was a big fan of "Super Mario World", having played it on the Super Play Choice that was a Timezone Modbury, but "Street Fighter 2" was THE game to own. I figured I could always buy "Super Mario World" at a later time. At this stage James had already purchased a Super Nintendo, so we had moved on from Amstrad gaming. By now it seemed archaic and we wanted to immerse ourselves in the new technology. James owned "Super Mario World" but didn't have a lot of in-

terest in playing it. "Street Fighter 2" had consumed our lives with its characters, storylines and various endings, as it did for many other kids in the early 90s.

Anyway, that's all the space I have this month. If you're interested in my occasional gaming posts feel free to give me a follow on Twitter @dizrythmia

I can also be found writing articles and giving interviews on: www.retrospekt.com.au

1992 - 1993

WRITTEN BY PAUL MONOPOLI

THE GAMER DIARIES

1993 - 1994

Prior to the school holidays I figured out how much money I had, and how much more would be needed to purchase the Super Nintendo, Street Fighter 2 pack. SF2 was the game I was never able to get sick of. I had played fighting games on various systems, including my humble Amstrad, though most of the warriors you controlled were generic and faceless. Capcom made a wise move by including back stories for the World Warriors. A good story can take a game to a whole new level, and while the story of "Street Fighter 2" was hardly pulitzer prize winning material, it gave kids something to talk about. For a long time after its release various publications were still talking about the stories of Ryu and the rest of the cast, though this may have had something to do with the multiple re-releases of the game.

During the school holidays I worked in the office of my father's workplace to finish earning the money for the console. The work involved filing and administration, though when they noticed my ability to quickly pick things up on a computer I was given less menial tasks. During the second week I had earned enough, and my aunt, who worked at John Martins, had purchased the bundle for me with her staff discount card. I got the system home, connected it to my TV, tuned it in, turned it on and sat back for a minute. I paused to take in the momentous event of owning the best video game system on the market, with the greatest fighting game of all time. It was glorious! When that was all over I got stuck in to "Street Fighter 2"!

My parents had been discussing buying a PC, as it was thought that buying a computer that could help me with my homework would be in my best interests. I was in the middle of my high school years, and more of my friends were using PCs for their school work. The day after I acquired my Super Nintendo my parents purchased our first PC. I was not consulted on which PC we should buy, though if I had I would have done some research and chosen something with a little more pow-

er than the Amstrad 5286 that we ended up with. A friend of the family suggested it, and he even said that he was considering purchasing it himself. I don't know how true that statement was, but it was enough to convince my parents.

So the Amstrad CPC6128 was packed away, and it was replaced with the shiny new Amstrad PC. In late 1993 I had entered a whole new realm of gaming. I had my Gameboy, and now a SNES and a PC. By this time the Amstrad CPC was a dead system, though I still wanted to keep it. At the time the idea of having an interest in retro video games was pretty much unheard of. If a system got old then you threw it out, it was that simple. Still, this computer had been a big part of my life for the past 5 years. It was a friend who was always there, that never judged and would play awesome games with me. How can you just forget all about that?

At school I started to trade 3 1/2" discs with my friends to start building my collection of PC games. The Amstrad CPC 3" discs were close to $10 each, though with 3 1/2" discs you could buy a pack of 10 for double that. Very little thought was given to piracy, being that we were all poor school kids. If anything copy protection was seen as a slight nuisance, something you would have to tinker with, or try a more up to date duplication program on. If the copy worked then it was all worth it. I filled my blank discs with the "Commander Keen" series, "Duke Nukem" 1 and 2, and many more. This was the dawn of the era of serious PC gaming,
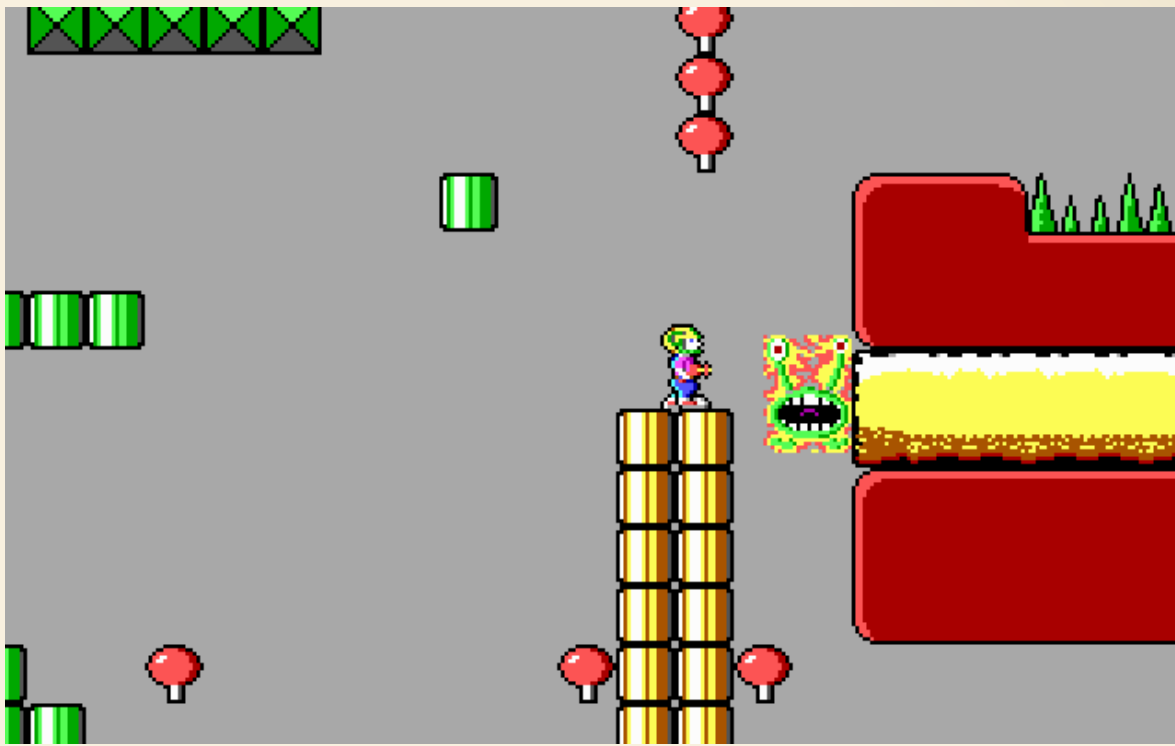
1993 - 1994

"BACK ON THE SUPER NINTENDO, "STREET FIGHTER 2" WAS THE ONLY GAME THAT I OWNED FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS, **BUT IT SEEMED LIKE IT WAS THE ONLY GAME THAT I NEEDED."**

whereas previously the IBM/PC clones had only been thought of as serious machines. One game that really grabbed my attention at this time was a little remembered classic called "Secret Agent".

Where games like "Duke Nukem" boasted reasonable sized sprites, "Secret Agent" had a small character with a larger playing area. Coming from Apogee, the same stable as "Commander Keen" and "Duke Nukem", "Secret Agent" was a platform game that was filled with action and secrets. It became a favourite among my group of friends. Looking back on it, Apogee Software were one of the companies that pushed PC gaming into the mainstream. Advanced platform games, shoot em ups, the kinds of games you would expect to see on consoles could now be found on your humble computer, thanks to Apogee.

Back on the Super Nintendo, "Street Fighter 2" was the only game that I owned for a number of months, but it seemed like it was the only game that I needed. Wherever I went, everybody wanted to play "Street Fighter 2". If I went to Clinton's house, James' house, Steven's house, it was the game that we never got sick of. If the person I was visiting didn't own a Super Nintendo, I would take mine with me. In 1993 Nintendo Magazine System was launched. From memory there was even a TV ad campaign for it, and it heavily promoted the "Street Fighter 2" content that was included with the first issue. It also featured "Super Mario Land 2" on the cover, another

game that would suck up a whole heap of my time when I finally got my hands on it.

Just before Christmas I saw an ad for "Super Mario World" in a catalogue. I forget which store, though I suspect it may have been Harris Scarfe. The other game that I had become obsessed with had been reduced to $49.99, a bargain! I went to the store to buy it and as I walked out I ran into Clinton. That is what is known as 'Adelaide small town syndrome', where it is rare to go out and not run into someone you know. I showed him my new prize and he invited me over so we could play the game together. I came over with the Super Nintendo and we ended up playing "Street Fighter 2" all night. I suppose when you're given a choice of either playing a game simultaneously with someone, or taking it in turns, most people would take the first option. Either way, I had no complaints.

That Christmas I opened up my presents to find two Gameboy games. The first was a copy of "Bart's Escape From Camp Deadly". A tough as nails platformer, this Simpsons game did exactly what it said on the box. As Bart Simpson you had to escape from the dreaded Camp Deadly. This was one game that suffered badly on the blurry Gameboy screen, though I persevered until I finished it. It took a long time and a lot of Game Overs, but I was determined to see that one through to the end.

The other game was "Terminator 2" for the Gameboy. I played

1993 – 1994

this one through to the end as well, though it was another difficult game. I don't normally enjoy playing games that mix genres, but this one did it well. T2 included platforming levels, motorcycle levels and puzzle levels. I can remember taking this one out with me on many car trips.

I believe that the experiences we have in life shape us into the people that we grow into. What happened in early 1994 would start my evolution into a video game collector, though if I had my time again I would never have done it this way. After a few months of owning a PC, Super Nintendo and Gameboy, my Amstrad CPC was being neglected. Mum came to speak to me and told me that my cousins were interested in buying it, but that it was my decision whether I wanted to get rid of it or not. I thought about this over a number of days, pondering whether I wanted to sell my old friend. I went out to the shed where it was being stored, connected it to the power and had a game of "Jack The Nipper". I enjoyed it, but I wasn't really feeling it anymore. I tried a few other titles, but they all seemed to pale in comparison to my shiny new Super Nintendo and PC. I gave Mum the go ahead and she sold it to my cousins for $100. They were supposed to give my parents $50 on pick up and $50 at a later time. That 'later time' never happened, and they never did end up paying the other $50.

The price of Super Nintendo games was prohibitively expensive for a school boy without a job, so I found myself playing my PC a lot more. As I mentioned

previously, the Amstrad 5286 was underpowered, featuring a 286 processor in an age where most of the PCs on the market had 386 chipsets. As a result I struggled to play one of the biggest games that was released at that time, "Wolfenstein 3D". While not the first game to be released in a 3D perspective, it was certainly the one that bought he genre into the mainstream. Like most success stories in video gaming history, "Wolfenstein 3D" spawned clones that were nowhere near as good as the original.

The first time I wandered around that Nazi castle I was in awe. The enemies would come right at you, and as items got closer you would see them become larger and clearer (though still pixelated). Shooting the enemies and seeing their reaction was just amazing. Finding the various guns and seeing them in action was a great feeling. I wanted to keep playing to find them all. Accidentally pushing the Space button while standing next to a wall and finding a hidden passage was another pleasant surprise. As my computer was unable to handle the game I had most of these experiences while I was over Carmelo's house, as his PC was more than capable of managing the 3D graphics.

Having a below spec PC was becoming an issue for me. I needed a more powerful computer, but I had no money. A few months after my 15th birthday I managed to get my first ever job at the Bi-Lo supermarket in the Ingle Farm Shopping Centre. It would take me time to save for my new computer, especially as I had a ten-

dency to spend money on blank discs, videos and CDs. I didn't quite understand the concept of saving, and my meagre earnings were being eaten up by things I could now afford to buy.

In the early 90s, Sega had discounted their Master System 2 consoles to $99. Steven's parents had purchased him one, and he also got a copy of "Sonic the Hedgehog 2". The prospect of playing a Sonic game as Tails, the flying fox, was exciting. Unfortunately the Master System version of the game has you rescuing Tails, rather than playing as him. Regardless, the game featured some interesting ideas that weren't present in the Megadrive version. I have never enjoyed games that feature mine carts, and that includes "Donkey Kong Country". I found the hang glider to be an interesting addition, though Steven and I struggled with it. Through perseverance I was able to master it to the point where I could easily get the Chaos Emerald in the windy level. After several tries I successfully completed the game with all Chaos Emeralds while Steven watched.

That was my big gaming achievement for 1994!

Anyway, that's all the space I have for this issue. Join me next time as I finally get that new PC, and am introduced to the world of LucasArts! If you're interested in checking out the other things I do you can follow me on Twitter @ dizrythmia.
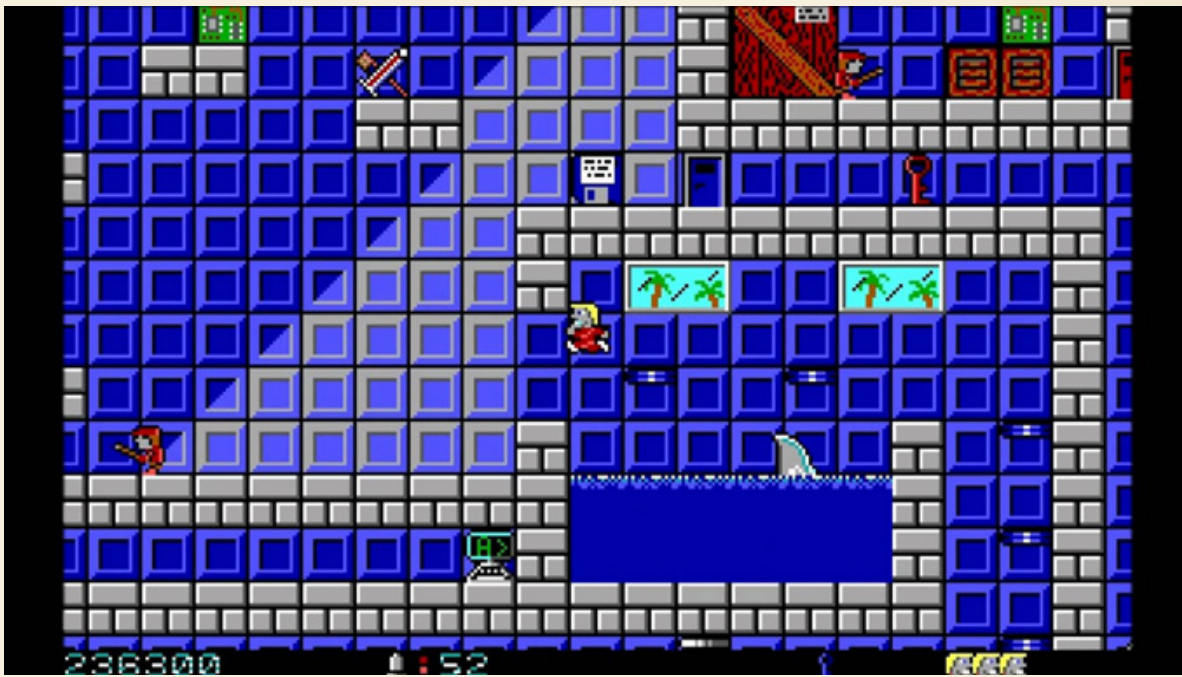
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RO GAMES
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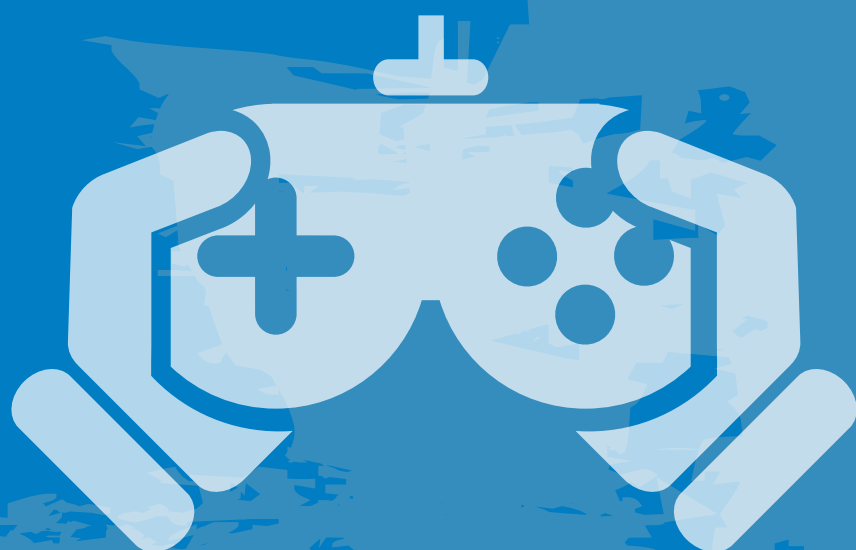
REmo R

RETRO
ORIES
BY OUR READERS

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES ABOUT A BOX

"I miss good old days, before digital downloads, DRM and the Kardashians, where PC games came in thick, physical, rectangular boxes that were roughly the size of a 13" MacBook Pro screen.

I remember my dad buying me a copy of Age of Empires 2 at my local Video Games Heaven store (a prehistoric video games store). I was a massive fan of the first Age of Empires game, history and also Real time strategy games.

"IT HAD A PHYSICAL MANUAL AND AN ADDITIONAL FOLD OUT QUICK GUIDE..."

While I was extremely excited to install Age of Empires on my computer, I was also wowed by what was in the box.

The box didn't just include a copy of the game and a licensing agreement; it had a physical manual and an additional fold out quick guide. By the way, this wasn't a pre-order bonus or special edition.

While I learnt a lot about history playing Age of Empires 2, I learnt a lot more through reading the textbook. The game was the history teacher, while the manual was the textbook. It wasn't a small booklet you'd find in a PS2 game; it was a full sized, bound book.

It was extremely detailed in explaining the instructions, menus, civilisations, upgrades and units in the game. It also gave tips about the strengths and weaknesses of the units. Each page had a blurb about the historical facts for each upgrade, unit or civilisation. I ended up reading the manual more than I played the game. I even made a book cover for it to avoid the cover or spine creasing.

There was also a quick guide that was laminated, glossy, looked visually appealing and easy to understand. It went through a summary of the civilisations, ages and the units and upgrades you could get. Like the manual I spent time studying it so I could use it to my advantage in my next match.

While memories come from music, photos, food and movies; my most memorable childhood memory comes from a physical PC box."

BY WESLEY UNG

XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS PLAYSTATION

""In a time of ancient gods, warlords and kings, there was Xena! This game was released in 1999 and was the first game that I ever owned. It takes place during ancient Greek times, and follows the story of Xena as she fights her way through various locations and situations to save Gabriel from the evil Calabrax. You play as the Warrior Princess herself and fight the enemies with her sword and iconic chakram. The player gets to use basic and advanced battle combos, where you can pull off moves like a 360 degree kick or a sword bash. The game is as enjoyable today, as it was 16 years ago when it was first released.

Throughout the game you will come across familiar settings and characters from the original TV series and be introduced to a few unique characters.

SHE FIGHTS HER WAY THROUGH VARIOUS LOCATIONS AND SITUATIONS TO SAVE GABRIELLE..."

The game was created by Universal and Electronic Arts. They have incorporated many elements of the show, including the witty humour and action packed fights that allow the player to immerse themselves into the game. I recommend this game to everyone, probably because I am biased and was a fan of the show, but also because it's just a good game to put on and relive the 'amazing graphics of the late 90s.'"

BY ANDREW ASHTON

CRASH TEAM RACING MEMORIES...

"This retro magazine got me thinking about the first time I ever beat my sister at Crash Team Racing on the Playstation 1. Here's how it went down:

The day was here, and it wasn't just any ordinary Saturday. This was the day that I had been preparing for, and I had been preparing for months. I, Dakota, was going to outwit, outsmart and CRUSH my older sister in Crash Team Racing! Oh yes, this would be the END of my continually being 2nd place, the L on the forehead motions, and the continuous planning on how I was going to beat her the next time.

> "...AM GOING TO OUTWIT... OUT SMART AND CRUSH MY OLDER SISTER IN CRASH TEAM RACING!"

I sat down with our Playstation 1, eagerly awaiting the moment I would see my sister's legs walking down the stairs. I was bracing myself, then I heard "thud, thud, thud". Could it be? Yes, here she comes… let's do this! She looks down at me as I sat, huddled around the PS1 with CTR blaring on the television.

I looked at her with determination, almost like looking down the crosshairs of a sniper rifle. I slam my fist on the coffee table and declare a rematch to the death.

The challenge was accepted and in that moment… I basically needed a new pair of underwear. I had been plotting this very moment since I emerged from the womb. We had our warpaint on and it was time to battle. The atmosphere was like a western shootout!

Let's do this!

The Playstation was turned on and I heard the majestic starting music, then the introduction of Crash Team Racing: 'Start your engines! For Sony Computer Entertainment Europe Productioooons! Fasten your seatbelt for another Naughty Dog creatiooooon!'

Ah yes, that's the sound of my childhood. I spent many hours on that game.

It was time! The starting screen popped up with the little red and green race lights to commence the battle. I couldn't believe this was happening! We weren't JUST racing, no no sir! This game requires you to try and attack your opponent as many times as possible until you reach a score limit. This is next level, Hunger Games stuff, and we were about to embark on an intense battle to the DEATH.

In the final moments before the battle, all I could think of was

Eminem's song "Lose Yourself", particularly the lines; 'his palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy. There's vomit on his sweater already. Mum's spaghetti?' In that moment I could relate to that song so much, but no! Positive vibes only. I couldn't let myself be defeated by the sick fires of Eminem. Not today Satan!

I watched as the red lights flickered… RED. RED. RED. GREEN!

We were off with a bang and I pulled a sick drift, heading towards my first box. No! It was just a boost! That wouldn't do me any good. I raced around in search of the next box. I performed a skid and slid into the next one. I couldn't believe this! Inside was an Ooger Booger!

Don't tell me you didn't call him an Ooger Booger when you were young, because that is a complete lie and I know it! "Oh ho ho! I've got you now!" I thought to myself. I scouted the map for my target, who I could faintly see in the mid distance, searching for her first weapon of choice.

This was it! This was the moment! She couldn't escape me now! I had this in the bag my friends… WRONG!

I was so wrong. That little sneak had one of those force field bubbles ready for me. She knew my

tactics and how I would strike. Genius!

Time was passing us by in the blink of an eye, but things were different this time. All of my practice seemed to be paying off. There was a possibility that I might finally win. I was 2 points away from victory, but she was only 1 point away. This was getting intense!

I had been constructing a devious plan and collecting as many TNT bombs as possible. Using these, I had made a long, wall like structure across a section of the map. It was akin to Attack on Titan's 'Wall Maria'. I just had get her over to that section as soon as possible. I had a sneak peak at the bottom of the screen and noticed that she had a rolly bomb (don't tell me you've never peeked at another person's screen).

This was it, this was my moment. I decided to take a chance and use myself as bait. I whizzed past her, swerving around, trying to get her to follow me to the wall. It worked, and she chased me around like a lion after its prey. We started to get close to the wall. I couldn't believe that my plan was working. I had to use my drifting skills to avoid her bomb, as one hit and I was toast! Not the good kind of

toast either! You know, that really bad, burnt board with a minimal amount of peanut butter that you used to get from tuck shops at 7:30am in the morning? That kind of toast. Don't trust people who don't use at least half a jar of peanut butter!

It was getting closer! The anticipation was so real! I was ducking and weaving like a duck in hunting season. We were about to come up to the wall and I could hear the bomb rolling along behind me. Thankfully it missed and crashed into a nearby obstacle. I was so relieved!

I masterfully created a small pathway for myself so that I wouldn't get clipped by my own trap. I zoomed through the small path with flying colours and waited for the noise of the TNT bouncing on her character's head.

WHA! WHA! WHAWHAWHAWHA POOOW! I couldn't believe that it worked! I was such a genius that I could be the next Einstein. I quickly raced to a nearby box and thought to myself: "Dear God, let it be a rocket. I am begging you"

I was like watching a slot machine at a casino cycle through its options, just hoping for that big 777 jackpot. It flicked and flicked, and

I thought my eyes were deceiving me. I had 3… lock on rockets. This was it! This was what I had been waiting for my entire life… okay, well, about 6 months, but still! When you want something so bad it feels like a lifetime.

I performed another one of my infamous drifts and raced towards her with full force. This must be how Jon Snow felt in the battle of the bastards with Ramsay. I pushed the circle button to fire my rocket and time slowed for a moment. It was like waiting for paint to dry.

BAM!! The Dominator popped up on my screen at that moment and I just about died. I couldn't believe it, but I had done it! I was victorious, and my sister's face was priceless. There was no L on the forehead hang gestures for me that day. I had emerged victorious."

BY DAKOTA KENAI HUGHSON

RETRO SHAREWARE

"There was something magical about being young in the early era of PC gaming. I can recall having my own PC from a young age, and spending many hours using it. I was exposed to the glorious concept of 'shareware', an idea where a floppy disk with a short version of the game or a demo would be released. These games from companies like Apogee or id Software would bring me hours of entertainment. Of course, being young I had no idea that these amazing demos were just that, demos. I wasn't aware that there was any kind of 'full game' I was missing out on. To me, shareware versions of the likes of Doom or

cepts like "demo disks" only giving you a level or, in the case of the PS1s early magazine cover CDs, a really cool graphical demo of a dinosaur that ran into a large empty void.

It was thanks to shareware that so many of us got to experience the joys of first person shooters (FPS). It is perhaps the reason why the FPS became king in the 90s. These games were made up on space marines, ass kickers, and bubblegum chewers who happened to be out of said confectionary. These characters always seemed to be perpetually angry about something.

"...THANKS TO SHAREWARE THAT SO MANY OF US GOT TO EXPERIENCE THE JOYS OF THE FPS"

Wolfenstein 3D were these full, amazing games with entire worlds that I could get lost in.

I had some vague idea that there were more 'episodes', but that means little to a child at the tender age of 5 or so, who just wanted to shoot more Nazis, aliens, zombie space marines or whatever else happened to be on the end of my usually large, and always deadly weapon of choice. The era of shareware ensured that players would be even a full experience, as opposed to con-

There were other genres of shareware games, and Epic Megagames released a pair of platforming classics in the form of Jazz Jackrabbit and Jill of the Jungle. These were games that I played and enjoyed, but they didn't have the same oomph has FPS titles. This is perhaps because they lacked huge guns and Hitler in a cool robot suit thing.

Either way, I have many, many fond memories of hours spent playing games that were probably far above my age bracket."

BY GRACE HESTER

OCARINA OF TIME

"At the age of 10 I had completed Banjo Kazooie, and had nothing else to play afterwards. A family friend, who was in her 30s, handed me a copy of The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, and said "I can't get past this. Why don't you give it a try?" I got past the point where she was stuck, and was unable to put it down. When I walked through the front door, the first thing I would do is continue the game, unless I was grounded. The family friend and I decided to see who could complete the game first, but with only one copy between us it wasn't really possible. My mother purchased me a copy, but I had to start again to catch up. I managed to do this in a matter of hours.

She managed to complete the final temple as I was going into the battle with Ganandorf. We would call each other to find out where the other was at, though at the end of the game I ended up finishing 30 minutes before her. The challenges and trials in this game were amazing, though there were many times that I felt like throwing my controller. Stupid water temple…

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time left a huge impression on me. To this day I haven't felt the that good about completing a game."

BY NAOMI BUG

SEGA SATURN REVIEW

"If you're not big on the retro games scene, chance is you've never even heard of this bundle of joy. The successor to the Sega Mega Drive, the Sega Saturn is a superb machine that is the powerhouse to some quality titles. Sure right off the bat there may be no flagship Sonic the Hedgehog title for this console, but that doesn't stop the Saturn from thriving. The team that brought you Sonic instead opted for the just as excellent on rails flying game hit NiGHTS into Dreams and later down the track the superb space fire fighting game Burning Rangers.

"...FOR A RETRO COLLECTOR I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THE SEGA SATURN."

A major draw into investing in a Sega Saturn would be the number of near perfect ports of arcade games. Sega themselves brought out hits like Daytona USA, Sega Rally Championship and Virtua Fighter 2. If you were a fighting fan, Capcom especially had you covered with ports of Street Fighter Alpha 1 and 2 (3 if you were Japanese), Darkstalkers, X-Men Children of the Atom and much more. While the Sega Saturn did relatively poorly in the west, over in Japan it was well received and led a healthy life. As a result, there is a mountain of Japanese import games to get your hands on such as the stellar shoot em up by Treasure, Radiant Silvergun (Although it may cost you an arm and a leg). Playing these imports is easy too as all that is required is a third party action replay cart that bypasses region and also doubles up as extra ram for the system and extra system storage!

The console is quite bulky and does take up quite a bit of space, yet still holds no match to the original Xbox. The standard controllers are essentially revised and improved Mega Drive controllers and they feel absolutely amazing. They'd have to be my favourite gaming controller next to the Nintendo GameCube's. Save data saves to the system via a lithium battery but this does eventually die (lasts about 2 years) so I'd highly recommend investing in one of the aforementioned action replay carts. The system can also play audio cds which is cool…for 1995. If you want to get wacky with peripherals you can as the Saturn offers all sorts from a light gun to the awesome Twin Sticks for mech-games.

If you love the arcade experience or just want to try a criminally underrated console that failed to captivate an audience back in the day, for a retro collector I highly recommend the Sega Saturn.

A few of my top picks:

Guardian Heroes

Panzer Dragoon 1 + 2

Saturn Bomberman

Virtual On

Fighters Megamix."

BY BEN WHITE

MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA FOR THE GAMEBOY ADVANCE REVIEW

"Nintendo has had a history of taking a familiar genre and turning it into something they can call their own. Mario kart, Mario party and even super smash bros all stemmed from familiar genres, this is no different with superstar saga. Nintendo has produced a very approachable Rpg with light equipment management and interactive combat. You follow the moustachioed brothers on their quest through the Beanbean kingdom to retrieve Princess Peach's stolen voice from the villainous Cackletta. Along the way fighting familiar foes and even some new rogues. The story is basic but the writing has its moments with each character having time to shine and give themselves an identity even among the star studded cast.

Travelling around the Beanbean Kingdom is enjoyable with the brothers teaming up to high jump or spin jump to solve basic puzzles. Along the way learning to cast fire and thunder attacks and gaining heavy duty hammers to clear debris. Nintendo have structured the combat around button inputs for dodging and dealing damage. Inventory management and stat spec'ing have been pushed to the back in the favour of this system which relies on timing. An enemy charges at Mario, a swiftly timed press of the A button allows Mario to jump or hammer his way out of danger. This works at keeping players engaged in drawn out battles as timing is everything. Replacing the use of traditional magic casting is the combo centric Bros. Attacks. where relying on well executed button presses Mario and Luigi team up to deal tremendous damage. Mario & Luigi : Superstar saga clocks in at around 20-25 hours to finish, is a great entry point for anyone wanting to try out turn based RPG's or anyone who loves the charm of the Mario universe. While this isn't for the hardcore turn based RPG fans it is a fresh palette cleanser that is suitable to all ages, with the game being available on the original Gameboy advance or even the Wii U's e shop, you won't go wrong picking up and playing this gem."

BY BRENDAN HAMILTON

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# Huge range now available at Gametraders!

"This is my game collection, game art books/info books and a few bits and pieces. The plush Clap-trap is actually signed by a bunch of Gearbox members, including Randy Pitchford himself.

I've only gotten serious about collecting consoles pretty recently. I'm glad I did, but now it's making me wish I had more SNES/Mega Drive games. My current goal is to get a Dreamcast or just. Any other consoles, really. And games for them. The more the better. I've always loved games and had a strong interest in them, since I was young, and it's great to finally be able to build up a proper collection."

- Grace Hester
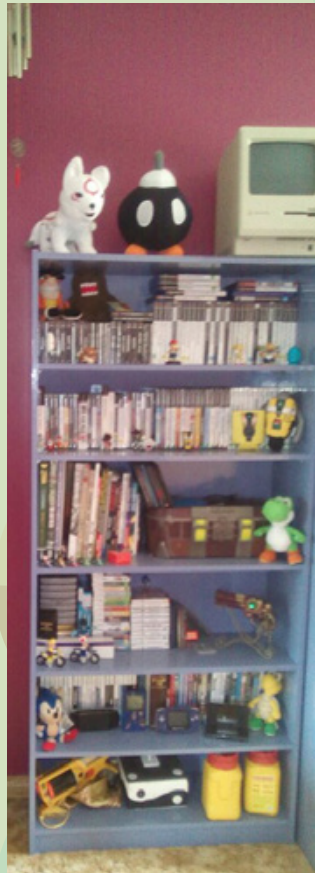
"I have a few collections. But I can only post one pic per comment, so here is one.

My partner and I spent a lot of time tracking these babies down."

- Melissa Oliver

"Retro you want? Retro I got! It ain't prehistoric retro (no Atari in sight) but this is my retro gaming room set up at the moment. I need more!"

- Jean-Paul Bartolomei

"I love collection gaming collectables mainly COD lol but my biggest passion is funko pops I share with my son & 2 step sons. It has brought us all so close and something I enjoy sharing with them. We have over 250 pops over $10,000 worth."

- Damo Grunill

"Half of it. Other is the tv stand of consoles new and old with more collectibles."

- Todd Van Gerven

"Because I love Nintendo." **- Todd Van Gerven**

"My GameBoy systems & Pokémon Gen 1 & 2 collection. Think I'll start Gen 3 soon. Red was my first ever game I owned & I still play the series to this day. This is what got me into gaming in the first place."

- Benjamin Jones

"Piece dedicated to my childhood."

- Jess Garner

"Now that ps2 is considered retro, this may be the only retro thing in my room. My mother moved most of the retro stuff into the shed when I was young. This game was what brought my brother and I together, LOVED it since it came out, it's even the reason why I'm going to save for a new gen console.

Feel free to look at my new gametraders merch collection too!"

- Micah Fede

"One half of my office.
That has a lot of my games, my c64s and old mac as well as my pc engines and 3do amounst other items."
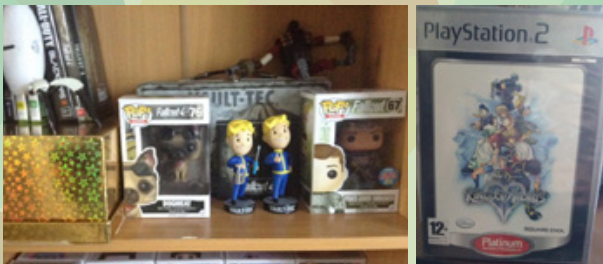
"And the other half of my office. (I do have a desk, but it is not interesting.) Under the transformers falcon is my collection of old pc games on cd or dvd. I dont keep mine plugged in, as i tryed that and it became unmanageable. Due to this i have a spot to swap out consoles and play them in the lounge."

- Aaron Yanner

"Here is just some of my dev gear dating from 1997 to 2013. Ever since I was a young boy I had an immense interest in video games. After completing high school and working for a period of time, I decided to go study Software Development through TAFESA and UniSA. For me it's the best of both worlds, combining gaming and my love of software development together."

- Michael Behar

"I have a draw full of this type of stuff from when I was younger, I think saw some spirits fly out and released an old world virus when I opened some of these boxes up!"

- Darren Clayton
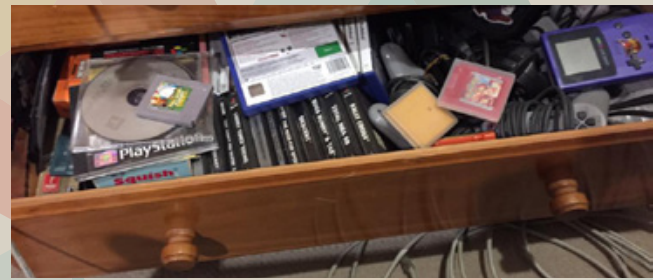
"My Playstation and Ninja Turtle collections."

- Andrew Cowell

"This is most of my zelda collection (Wii and Wii u games are in another cabinet) will be looking forward to adding to this with all the zelda goodies due out in March."

- Nell Foster

"Just a small portion of my collection. Been collecting for a few years now this is my showcase part. The top 2 draws are full 1 is full of sega megadrive and master system the other is my gameboy collection. One of my most favorite items is my super famicom from hongkong which can play all region games because of its 50/60hz switch the only model of super nintendo i know of that has a factory hertz switch."

- Ryan Mcdonald

"My SEGA Megadrive, UsA called them Genises"

- Randall Hall

"How about some vintage retro. Have all controllers and guns too. The Tandy gun builds to a rifle just over two feet long. Sorry missing controllers are packed."

- Eddie Valentine

"All of my childhood games, still played to this day. I'll never let them go!"

- Jade O'Shea

Tarrant Clark

"My ff collection, this is a lil bit older, I now have more figures, the type-0 collectors +guide, heavensward collectors, explorers collectors,and 7-9 guide reprint."

- Joel Phillips

"I don't have much, but this is my Jewel. A signed copy of RWBY season 1 signed by Gus, Jordan and Monty Oum himself. Ever since Monty's passing, it's become my treasure.."

- Ali Mackinnon

ITE "COLLECTABLES"

"I have a few pop vinyls and a Fallout Laser Pistol which aren't in this photo. But still, I'm making this wall grow."

- Jake Murch

"I don't have anything as cool as many of these collections but I have a story. Many years ago, I introduced my little brother to Zelda games. He loved it. Now he is married and my nephews name is Link."

- Mark Beaconsfield

"My Link statue from the Twilight Princess release."

- Scott 'Musto' Tobin

"You can check the full collection at the link. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_upKrxMo70."

- Michael Prosser

"How this? C64, wii, gamecube, n64, snes, ps3, dreamcast, nes, megadrive, atari 2600, turbo grafx, ps2, xbox EDIT : probably should have put wooden full size buster sword and metal keyblade in the pic as well as my psp, amiga 500 and gba."

-Scott Branson

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