

FUSION



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FUSION

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RISE OF THE ROBOTS



Was RISE really the failure we were all led to believe?

VECTREX

The Vectrex has become a cult system for retro collectors to own. FUSION celebrates the Top 5 games on the system.



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Regardless of your computer history, you may have looked on at the CPC with some disgust but also with a tinge of jealousy. For the £359 launch price (£249 for the mono version) you had absolutely everything you needed to get started with your journey into computing. Even better, there was the bonus of not having to make the choice between watching crap 80s TV or playing games as you had a monitor included in the price. When you consider just how much a monitor was back in the mid-1980s, it makes the price point of the CPC even more incredible. Amazingly, the monitor was rather good. It could take an RGB signal which resulted in a super crisp image. These Amstrad colour monitors are still used today; build yourself an adaptor cable and it makes a great display for your RGB equipped retro-systems.

Let's also not forget that the CPC range was a very capable system. Some would argue that from a graphical standpoint the CPC had the best of the C64 and Spectrum in one package — high-resolution graphics and a good colour palette resulted in some very pretty games. The sound was catered for by the AY-3-8912 chip allowing games to have a great variety of sound effects and music.



HEAVEN & HELL

For the price you (or your parents) paid for the CPC, you have to admit it was excellent value — that is of course as long as you bought the colour monitor. Let's be honest, you could play games on a mono screen, I certainly did with my BBC, but it would impact your enjoyment massively. Some games would play fine but due to the colours used by the game, it could be hard or even near impossible to see what was going on. Yes, the mono screen was fine for serious applications but who would buy a cassette-based mono screen computer system to do word processing?

Whilst we are putting the screen down, let us address the other big failing of the CPC range. As became common on a lot of Amstrad computing equipment, the monitor contained the power supply that ran both itself and the computer. If your monitor had a problem and no longer powered up, then you were screwed. Amstrad did release an MP1 external television adapter that combined external power supply and video connection box so allow your CPC to connect to any screen. It wasn't exactly the highest quality item that Amstrad ever made though and was famous for the poor-quality image that it provides. In fact I own one of these MP1 units and I was told to never connect it to my CPC as after 30 odd years the power supply would most likely fry the computer.

FUSION's recommendation

Put away your prejudices and try the CPC, you might be surprised.