VOLUME 1 MARCH 99 ISSUE 9

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN PC AND PLAYSTATION GAMING MAGAZINE

BUMPER ISSUE

ALIENS VERSUS PREDATOR
SPINE CHILLING PREVIEW

JAM-PACKED 31 REVIEWS

SBK SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
PREVIEWED

TOCA 2 TOURING CARS
PSX REVIEW

SIM CITY 3000
REVIEWED

FALCON 4.0
REVIEWED

NB!
IF COVER CD IS MISSING
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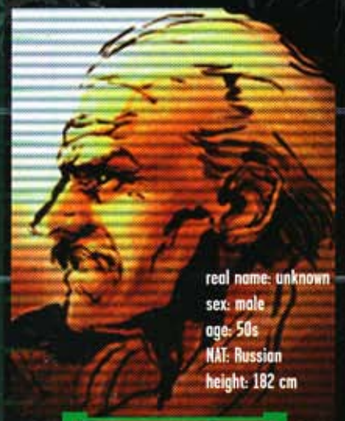
TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR® SOLID

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED, RUTHLESS MERCENARIES, HAVE SEIZED HUNDREDS OF NUCLEAR WARHEADS...



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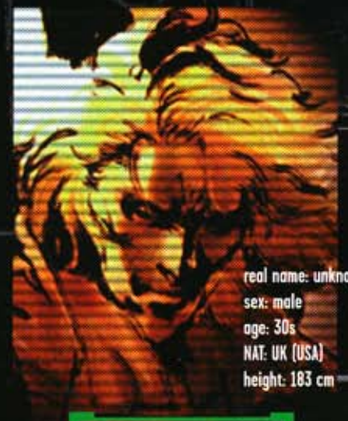
NAT: Russian
height: 182 cm

REVOLVER OCELOT



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NAT: UK (USA)
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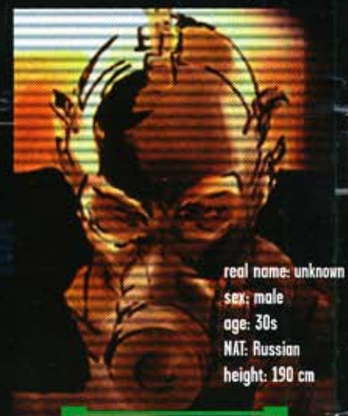
LIQUID SNAKE



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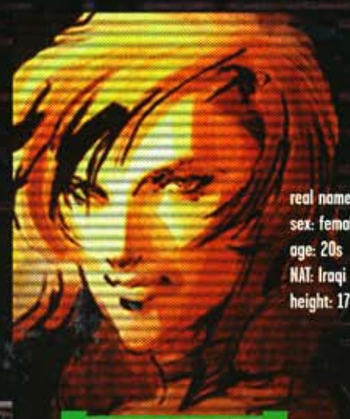
height: 190 cm

PSYCHO MANTIS



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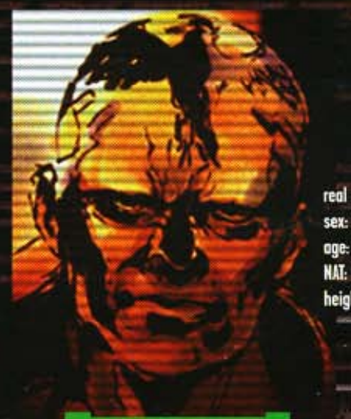
NAT: Iraqi (Kurd)
height: 176 cm

SNIPER WOLF



real name: unknown
sex: male
age: 30s
NAT: USA
height: 210 cm

VULCAN RAVEN

THE THREAT OF A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST LOOMS...

SK SEGA-KINEKOR INTERACTIVE

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SOLID SNAKE HAS
BEEN RECALLED.
THE MISSION:
INFILTRATE AND
ELIMINATE THE
TERRORIST THREAT....
SINGLEHANDEDLY.

SOLID SNAKE

real name: unknown
sex: male
age: 30s
NAT: USA
height: 182 cm
IQ 180.
Ex-FOX-HOUND member.
Speaks 6 languages fluently.
Expertise in parachuting,
SCUBA diving, free climbing.

10 / 10 The best game ever made.
OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

98% Unputdownable, unforgettable...
EDGE MAGAZINE

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ED's Note

Sticks and stones

I was invited for a quick slugging session at a driving range recently and at the end of the day I had the opportunity to reflect on my life long perception of golf, and the harsh reality thereof. To begin with it was all fun and games, striking fresh air half the time, laughing loudly at myself (which proved useful in drowning out the laughter directed at me) and generally having a good time. This is how it started. After about an hour of this ineptitude the grim realisation dawned that I wasn't going on the PGA tour anytime soon causing me to redouble my efforts if only to save face - I was going to hit that sweet spot or die trying. To cut a long and sad story short the day ended in pain with a few minor extremities demanding medical attention. When sitting in front of a PC or PlayStation I can play the odd sports title like a master, thinking that it couldn't possibly be that hard to repeat the performance in reality, but real life dishes up a plate of anguish and frustration. Bringing me to the point...

How many games have you played recently where your virtual alter-ego has been immolated, decapitated, eviscerated or even just squashed flat? It's likely that every game in your collection dishes out the death penalty for your mistakes in large healthy doses. Haven't you ever wondered how you'd fair in a similar situation? Often I've given myself a healthy pat on the back after completing a tricky triple jump and catch in Tomb Raider or successfully clearing out a room of aliens in most other games. We play computer games for countless hours never giving one seconds thought to the people who actually play those games - the ones who risk their lives every virtual day, the ones nobody ever thinks or cares about. This new awareness drive from us at New Age Gaming can be likened to hugging trees and saving whales. We're all guilty and we do it every day of our lives. Sitting in front of a PC or PlayStation pressing buttons and twiddling your thumb might seem like a strenuous workout for some of you, and in some cases it might be the only exercise you're looking at for the whole week. But just think of the characters in the games you play. Think of the Quake grunt who is literally ripped apart with numerous direct rocket strikes every game and think of Lara Croft who is likely to be mauled by a tiger if she manages to escape that rolling boulder or pit of snakes. If you think it's easy playing soccer on a PlayStation and being regarded by your friends as the next potential Alan Shearer, go ahead and give it a go in real life. It's tough out there and I've decided I'd rather be a virtual champion than a real life failure - games offer the kind of escape we all need but just remember who really does all the hard work when playing them. Hats off then to all the virtual characters that have been abused for so many years in so many games.

Happy Birthday NAG

That's right, New Age Gaming is turning one next month. For our birthday issue we've got something special lined up for our readers - so make sure you don't miss it. We have also permanently increased our circulation of the magazine to keep up with the demand. The other good news is that we won't be increasing our cover price anytime soon, so you can look forward to bigger better issues that still cost the same and offer the highest quality in the South African market.

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Made From The Best Stuff On Oddworld.

Evil rules - but Abe's new powers mean you're up to the task!

Fart possession! No other game has it - no other game wants it!

A full - on Exoddus requires more stealth than a ninja army.

Save your race...again! Save your game...anywhere!

Some cry because of the challenging gameplay. Others cry for their enslaved brothers. But most Mudokons cry because electrodes are attached to their tear glands, stimulating the ingredients for SoulStorm Brew, the best-selling nauseating elixir from SoulStorm Brewery.
In the classic Oddworld tradition, Abe's Exoddus delivers more intuitive communication and entrepreneurial evil than ever before. Richer language. Lusher environments. Tougher challenges. Deadlier farts.
Welcome to the tastiest gaming brew ever concocted. Slug it down.

AN ALL-NEW ACTION EPIC FROM THE CREATORS OF ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE

odd to the last drop

PlayStation PC CD ROM A.L.I.V.E. Avatre Lifeforms in Virtual Entertainment TEEN ODDWORLD INHABITANTS GT Interactive Software

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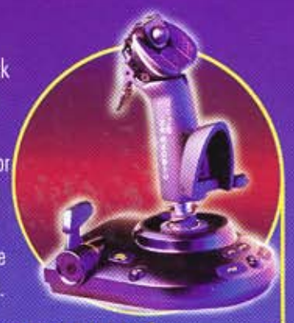
The Only Range of Controllers That Won't Cramp Your Style or Your Pocket



The only joystick adjustable for left or right handed users, or small or large hands using Saitek's unique Ajustment tool.

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A pad for the adult PC gamer! The Cyborg 3D™ Digital Pad combines steering wheel, joystick and gamepad - with adjustable handsize.

CYBORG 3D PAD

Uses Microsoft® Force Feedback technology, includes gear lever, adjustable steering height and adjustable resistance on pedals.

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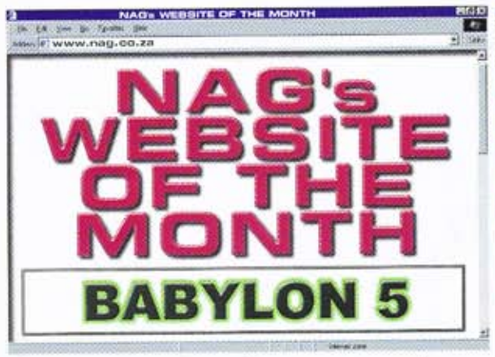
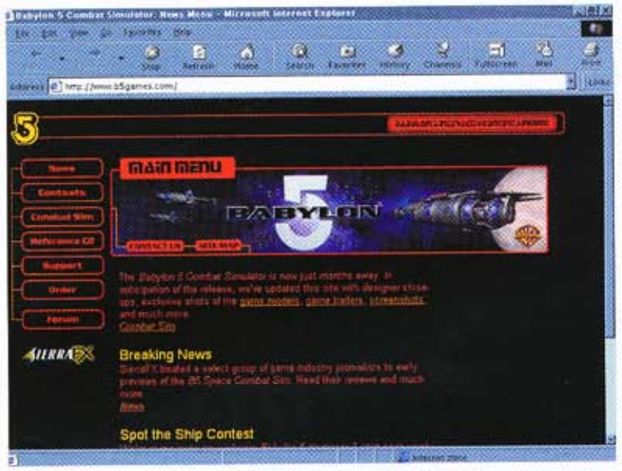




This is the official web site of the Babylon 5 Combat Simulator, a new game from Yosemite. If you enjoy games like the Wing Commander series then this site is an essential cyber checkpoint if you're a big fan of Space Combat games and enjoy the series on television. It has just recently been updated and overhauled so if you've been there in the past and found it a little lacking then now is the best time to go back and have another look. One of the more exciting features on the site has to be the spacecraft you'll be flying when the game is finally released - there are a total of 15 high resolution images and details for you to water your eyes over and more are promised soon. The final game is said to have around 60 unique ships in total and includes all 19 of the known races of aliens of which 15 can be viewed on the site. There are also exclusive interviews with the developers of the game - the most recent being with one of the 3D artists who create the stunning ships in the game. The mandatory screen shot gallery and trailers can also be found within the site thanks to a well designed and easy to understand interface. It's not all game news though and you can also find miscellaneous information and trivia about the series and a detailed story on the game. It's best described as an excellent web site that houses an amazing looking game. If just half of what is promised in the game actually makes in into the final product then we're all in for quite an experience when it hits the streets.

www.b5games.com

NAG's Favourite Websites of the Month

http://www.starwars.com	http://www.cavedog.com	http://www.starsiege.com	http://www.foxinteractive.com	http://www.tiberiumsun.com
Star Wars Episode One is set to turn this planet upside down later this year when the movie is released. The Internet site is a veritable feast of information on The Phantom Menace and the other classic Star Wars movies. Starwars.com has the distinguished reputation of being one of the first Internet sites that people visit when going on-line for the first time. You can have a look at the characters, aliens, creatures and technology that are going to feature in this silver screen phenomenon. Special features on the making of the new movie can also be found within. One major attraction on the site has to be the stunning trailer that dropped jaws around the world when first aired on the big screen, it's available for download so get moving.	Cavedog is the same company that released Total Annihilation not too long ago and they are still developing units for it, which you can download from their site. That's the old news - the new news is that they are currently completing development on a new game called Kingdoms, which should arrive later this year. The game uses the Total Annihilation engine but features a more medieval flavour. The site is very impressive and goes a long way to show people just how to do things the right way using the Internet as a mouthpiece. The Kingdoms section of the site is looking very flashy and keeps people informed almost on a daily basis with new features, developments and news. Two other new games to look out for from Cavedog are Amen: The Awakening and Elysium a third person adventure game.	The very best of both worlds is offered at starsiege.com. You can find information on both Starsiege (previewed in this issue), a 3D combat simulation and Tribes (NAG 82%), a multiplayer only FPS game that focuses on teamwork and cooperation. The site, like most others, features screenshots, reviews and information on the richly detailed Starsiege universe. This site should be generating plenty of traffic due to the popularity of both these games. Another interesting site to look at is www.starsiegeplayers.com which focuses on the 3D combat aspect and details things like vehicles, weapons, .Plan updates and even has a few new skins for your assault vehicles. www.dynamix.com will take you to the developers web site where you can find out all about the company responsible for two of the hottest titles this year.	Fox Interactive is highlighted this month mainly due to their upcoming game, Alien versus Predator. This month we've published a preview on the game and think you should also check out their site for more information and current developments. Take a look at their Inter-Ocular Brainwave Stimulator for all the latest news, previews, tips, hints and technical support on their current products. Two interesting titles in the line up this year are Alien Resurrection and Croc II. Alien Resurrection is being released first on the PlayStation and then later on the PC - it's an action adventure game based on the movie that promises an intense experience. Croc II needs little introduction and the sequel features new moves along with an improved environment to play in. Check it out and stay informed.	After the phenomenal success of the Command & Conquer games, Tiberium Sun must be one of the most anticipated titles due for release this year. If you thrive on speculation, titbits and rumours then get your ISP working on this site. It's not all just idle talk and time wasting though and the site offers tons of legitimate information on the game along with plenty of downloads and links to other sites. The other nice thing about this site is that the guys who run it are complete and total Tiberium Sun nuts so you're guaranteed not to miss anything. We're looking forward to the release of this game just as much as everyone else and we'll bring you an exclusive review when it hits the shelves.

NAG COMPETITION

SBK SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
5 COPIES

THIS MONTHS TOP GAMES ARE SPONSORED BY
ELECTRONIC ARTS Africa

SIM CITY 3000
5 COPIES

Answer the following question to stand a chance to win one of these amazing gaming packs.
Question: Which of the two games up for prizes is published by EA Sports?

Send your answers to NAG / EA Africa Competition
PO BOX 2749, Alberton, 1449
or E-Mail us at comp@nag.co.za

WORLD CHARTS

E-Mail:
topten@nag.co.za

Postal:
TOPTEN
PO Box 2749
Alberton, 1449.

10 TOP GAMES

PC

NAME
1. Baldur's Gate
2. Half-Life
3. Starcraft
4. Might & Magic 6
5. Railroad Tycoon 2
6. Fallout 2
7. Unreal
8. Thief - The Dark Project
9. Total Annihilation
10. FIFA 99

PLAYSTATION

NAME
1. Metal Gear Solid
2. Crash Bandicoot 3
3. Gran Turismo
4. WCW / NWO
5. Resident Evil 2
6. Grand Theft Auto
7. Parasite Eve
8. Actua Tennis
9. Tekken 3
10. Tomb Raider 3

SOUTH AFRICAN CHARTS

LM = Position Last Month TM = Total Months on chart RET = Re-entry

PC

NAME	LM	TM
1. Starcraft - Brood Wars	1	1
2. Baldur's Gate	new	new
3. Quest for Glory 5	3	1
4. Tomb Raider 3	5	1
5. Age of Empires Pack	10	1
6. FIFA 99	4	1
7. Combat Flight Sim	new	new
8. Biggest Names, Best Games	new	new
9. Caesar 3	7	1
10. Half-Life	8	1

PLAYSTATION

NAME	LM	TM
1. FIFA 99	1	1
2. Brian Lara Cricket	6	1
3. Tomb Raider 3	2	3
4. Gran Turismo	4	1
5. Crash Bandicoot 3	5	1
6. Tekken 3	3	1
7. Spyro the Dragon	9	1
8. TOCA 2 Touring Cars	new	new
9. TOCA Platinum	10	1
10. Small Soldiers	7	1

December Competition Winners

COMPETITION WINNERS!

We had a record amount of entries for our December competition, which had some amazing prizes on offer. Through all the sponsors we were able to give away six prizes in total to some very lucky entrants.

The prize-winners for December are ...*drum roll*...:

Jan Horak from Newcastle who won the PlayStation from Ster Kinekor Interactive and a copy of Fifa 99 from Electronic Arts Africa.

Stephen Fouche from Saldanha won the Sidewinder Force Feedback Pro joystick courtesy of Microsoft, a copy of Half-Life and Quest for Glory 5 from Datatec Crew, and a copy of Populous: The Beginning from Electronic Arts Africa.

Then we had four other lucky winners who each won a game pack consisting of Fifa 99 and Populous: The Beginning from Electronic Arts Africa as well as Half-Life and Quest for Glory 5 from Datatec Crew. The winners are **Philip Young** from Brits, **Cathy Knights** from Sandton, **Chris Koch** from Barberton and last but not least **C. Ebrahim** from Dundee.

Congratulations to all of the winners and we hope to see some more entries from all the gamers out there. It seems that everyone was gunning after the hardware, unfortunately we only had the PlayStation and the Joystick. For those who missed out on these fantastic prizes keep an eye out for our April edition competition, which BTW is our birthday issue, we will be giving away some great prizes. If want to stand a chance to win some of our competition prizes please send in your entries via email to comp@nag.co.za or via snail mail to Competition, P.O. Box 2749, Alberton, 1450.

Viper V550 Review Correction

Oops! We unfortunately made an error in last month's article on the Diamond Multimedia Viper V550 2D/3D display card. This excellent RIVA TNT from based card is available exclusively from CyberDyne Systems at the price quoted in Issue 8.

We unfortunately printed the wrong contact number for CyberDyne Systems. The correct number is (011) 327-0237. We apologise for any inconvenience we caused CyberDyne Systems and our readers regarding the mistake.

Gauteng Quake II LAN Party

We just received news that CybaWolf, Killjoy, Heidi, Bee, EyeTac and IceD-Fire are organising a Quake II LAN party here in Gauteng that will take place on the Saturday the 20th and Sunday the 21st of March. The party will be held at a warehouse 7 Km north of Kyalami on the R55, and detailed directions are available on one of the organisers web page at mzone.mweb.co.za/residents/rhendrik/homepage.html. There are only 80 available spaces and if you are interested make sure to reserve a place for yourself by contacting the organisers via email at lanparty@mweb.co.za.

Quake II will be the official theme of the day, but you can bring and play what you want. Please note that there will be a small entrance fee to cover the cost of the venue. Currently they aren't too sure what it will be, but have assured me that the cost will be minimal.

We wish the gang the best of luck and hope that the event is properly organised, the last LAN party of this size we went to had a couple of problems such as power failures and HUBs disappearing. Of course NAG will be there to cover the event, so if you see us, pop in and say Hi.

Final Fantasy Movie On The Big Screen?

And you thought Wing Commander and Tomb Raider were the only games to have a movie in production. Shame on you!

The movie will be produced by Hironobu Sakaguchi (Final Fantasy I-VIII) and Jun Aida (Street Fighter: The movie) while the script is written by Al Reinert (Apollo 13). This is to mention but a few of the very talented people who will be working on the production.

The setting for the film is Earth in the year 2065. Life has been discovered to be just another form of energy and Magic is another form of science. Aliens are threatening all life on Earth. Grey, the main character, joins forces with soldiers and scientists against the invaders, in the process answering the question about life, death, and what lies beyond.

We will investigate the possibility of bringing you a sneak preview on our Cover CD in the near future so keep your eyes open.

New Age Gaming - Price Comparison

	Incredible Connection	CNA Interactive	Business Land	Shop 99	Dions	Toys R Us	Reggies
Cool Boarders 3 (PSX)	R359.00	R359.00	None	None	None	R369.99	R369.99
TOCA Touring Cars 2 (PSX)	R479.00	R479.00	None	None	None	R469.99	R469.99
Duke Nukem: TTK (PSX)	R429.00	R409.00	None	None	None	R409.99	R409.99
Mortal Kombat 4 (PSX)	R429.00	R409.00	None	R456.00	None	R409.99	R409.99
Actua Soccer 3 (PSX)	R359.00	R369.00	None	None	None	None	None
Blood II: The Chosen (PC)	R349.00	R359.00	R349.00	None	None	None	None
Falcon 4 (PC)	R329.00	R329.00	R329.00	None	None	None	None
SimCity 3000 (PC)	R299.00	R299.00	R299.00	None	None	None	None
Abe's Exoddus (PC)	R359.00	R359.00	R359.00	None	None	None	None
Kings Quest 8 (PC)	R299.00	R299.00	R299.00	None	None	None	None

Baldur's Gate Expansion Coming

With the huge success of Baldur's Gate throughout the world it is with little surprise that BioWare has announced an expansion pack which will grace our midst before the middle of the year.

The expansion named Baldur's Gate: Tales of the Sword Coast will require a full copy of the original and will take gamers through additional areas, introduce them to new characters, and give them new quests to complete. Your goal is to reach an island just off the Sword Coast and unravel its mysteries before another evil comes to the coast. In another adventure you will be able to explore Durlag's Tower, which has claimed the lives of many an adventurer, avoid its sinister traps and search for that ever more powerful weapon or spell.

More spells and weapons will be available in the expansion and you will probably be able to further advance your character to higher levels and get ready for Baldur's Gate 2, which is rumoured to be scheduled for release at the end of 1999. Thus make sure you save your character and keep it in a safe place until the expansion arrives.

No price has been announced yet, but rest assured that we here at NAG will keep you abreast on developments, we have spent many a night playing Baldur's Gate and are looking forward to the expansion set just as much as you are.

More Voodoo 3 Specifications And Information

More information is flying around about the Voodoo 3 coming from 3Dfx this year. The latest news report is that the Voodoo 3s are running stable at 183 MHz and might even run higher by the time the card is released. Apparently there will be at least three versions of the chip namely the Voodoo 3 2000, V3 3000 and the V3 4000. The 2000 and 3000 models will be available in April Internationally and hopefully soon afterwards in South Africa. Rumours have it that the chipset might be launched at Cebit '99, one of the largest computer shows in the world.

The Voodoo 3 4000 will only arrive later this year, possibly in the 2nd or 3rd quarter. It will be the same as the V3 3000, but offer AGP 4X w/o AGP Texturing, which will be available at about the same time as Intel's 440JX chipset. The V3 4000 might even have 32MB RAM onboard for increased performance.

The Voodoo 3 is fully backward compatible and stable drivers should be available from the word go, since 3Dfx can reuse a lot of code from their Voodoo 2/Banshee drivers for the Voodoo 3. As a result the V3 will be able to run all Glide games.

The downside to the new Voodoo 3 cards is the fact that it does not support 32-bit output and the maximum size of textures is limited to 256x256 pixels.

Below are some specifications for those more technically inclined:

- Dual 32bit-Pipeline
- Bump Mapping using software help
- single pass Multitexturing
- Support for multi-triangle strips and fans
- Single Pass, Single-cycle trilinear mip-mapping
- Alpha blending on source and destination pixels
- Full-scene polygon-based edge anti-aliasing
- Floating point Z-buffer
- True per-pixel, LOD MIP mapping with biasing and clamping
- Texture compositing for multi-texture special effects
- Sub-pixel and sub texel correction to 0.4x0.4 resolution
- 8-tap anisotropic filtering
- 8.2 million transistors

March/April Intern. Release List

PC RELEASES

Daikatana	Eidos Interactive
FLY!	Terminal Reality
Heroes of Might and Magic III	3DO
R.C. Stunt Copter	Shiny Entertainment
Requiem: Wrath of the Fallen	3DO
Sierra Sports: Baseball Pro '99	Sierra Sports
South Park	Acclaim
Star Trek: Birth of the Federation	Microprose
Messiah	Shiny
Sega Rally Championship 2	SEGA Entertainment
EverQuest	Sony Interactive
Unreal level pack	GT Interactive
Lands of Lore III	Westwood Studios
Indiana Jones	Lucasarts
Drakan	Psygnosis
Heavy Gear 2	Activision
Malkari	Interactive Magic
Mortyr: Schloss	Mirage Media
Machines	Acclaim
Mordor 2	Interplay
Professional SportsCar Racing	EA Sports
TZAR	Haemimont
MechWarrior 3	Microprose
Gabriel Knight III	Sierra On-Line
Homeworld	Sierra On-Line
NASCAR Racing 3	Sierra Sports
Wall Street Tycoon	Interactive Magic
Prince of Persia 3D	Red Orb Entertainment

PLAYSTATION RELEASES

Alien Resurrection: The Game	Fox Interactive
Big Air	Accolade
Bomberman Fantasy Race	Atlus Software
Centipede	Hasbro
Clock Tower: The Struggle Within	ASCII Entertainment
Croc 2	Fox Interactive
Elmo's Letter Adventure	NewKidCo
Elmo's Number Journey	NewKidCo
Fighter Maker	ASCII Entertainment
Fisherman's Bait	Konami
Gex 3	Crystal Dynamics
Global Domination	Psygnosis
Guardian Crusade	Activision
Indiana Jones	LucasArts
Jackie Chan's Stunt Master	Midway
Jeff Gordon Racing	ASC Games
Lunar: Silver Star Story	Working Designs
MLB 2000	989 Studios
Monster Seed	Sunsoft
MTB Dirtcross	Sammy USA
NHL Blades of Steel 99	Konami
Point Blank 2	Namco
Populous - The Third Coming	Electronic Arts
Quake 2	Activision
R Types	ASCII Entertainment
R4: Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco
Rampage 2: Universal Tour	Midway
Rat Attack	Mindscape
Roll Cage	Psygnosis
RPG Maker	ASCII Entertainment
Shadow Madness	Crave Entertainment
Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom
Tai Fu	Activision
Triple Play 2000	Electronic Arts
Warzone 2100	Eidos
You Don't Know Jack	Berkeley Systems

New Age Gaming takes no responsibility for the accuaracy of this information. Any of the release dates may be changed if the developer deems it necessary. The only official shipping date that most developers give these days is "When it's done!".

Bits & Bytes

Baldur's Gate Shortchange

Thanks to Lohann for sending me the following email to inform me of the situation with Baldur's Gate distribution here in South Africa.

Check it out:
"As I am sure you have heard by now, the much-awaited game Baldur's Gate has arrived in SA. There is one problem with it though. It is the UK version and Interplay UK has shortchanged us here in SA. It does not come with the wall map and reference chart that is mentioned in the manual."
People are encouraged to write to UK Interplay (snail mail) to express their dissatisfaction with this. The address is:

Interplay UK
Harleyford Manor
Harleyford
Henley Road
Marlow Buckinghamshire
SL7 2DX England

The map and reference card can be downloaded (2.4 meg) from a list of sites at:
http://www.bgchronicles.com/dl/dl.asp?bgchronicles/off/BGMaps.zip

Ubi Soft Signs Up For Copy Protection

Macrovision Corporation has announced that Ubi Soft Entertainment, a publisher and distributor of interactive entertainment products, has signed an agreement to use Macrovision's SafeDisc PC CD-ROM copy protection technology on all of its titles through 1999.
"Many software publishers are spending enormous amounts of energy combining high technology with great game play but are neglecting to protect their finished product from the growing software piracy epidemic," said Yves Guillemot, president of Ubi Soft Entertainment. "We felt it was critical to use Macrovision's SafeDisc copy protection to ensure protection for our consumers and to maintain our reputation."
Ubi Soft joins GT Interactive, Interplay, Microprose, Red Storm Entertainment, Take 2 Interactive Software and TalonSoft on the list of companies to make use of the SafeDisc copy protection technology.
SafeDisc technology is a software-based solution that does not require any changes to standard PC or CD-ROM hardware. It is comprised of both and authenticating digital signature embedded on the disc, as well as a multi-layered encrypted wrapper that secures the CD-ROM content. The digital signature, which cannot be copied by CD recorders or mastering equipment, is embedded by the laser beam recorder at the time the CD-ROM master is made at the mastering/replication facility. An important feature of SafeDisc is the multi-level anti-hacking technology that helps prevent the compromise of its security features. The anti-hacking technology is designed to not only deter consumer copying, but to also thwart experienced hackers and commercial pirates.
This is good news for the gaming industry as more publishers and distributors make use of anti-piracy technology. Piracy has got out of hand the last couple of years, especially in developing countries. If SafeDisc is as secure as it states we should see sales increase in the gaming sector, which can only mean better things for all gamers. The extra money from the sales get put back into marketing and development of other titles, meaning more and better quality games.
We here at NAG discourage anyone from pirating ANY games, our local distributors are getting jacked and ready to raid and prosecute any offenders. Don't say you haven't been warned.

Battle.net Scorching Hot

Blizzard Entertainment's online game service Battle.net continues to gain momentum as the world's largest Internet playing venue. Since the beginning of the year, the number of active users has surged to more than 2.1 million and usage has increased by 50 percent. The world-wide dominance of Battle.net was recently highlighted by a weekend of record-breaking activity during which more than 675,000 games of StarCraft: Brood War, the company's StarCraft expansion set, were logged. Over that weekend, nearly 500,000 gamers spent more than two million hours playing online. Brood War shipped in December, more than 4.7 million games have been played over Battle.net with peak hours topping more than 50,000 players competing simultaneously. The success of StarCraft in 1998 added to Battle.net's rising usage numbers. StarCraft was 1998's biggest selling PC game, according to PC Data figures released last month. Since the release of StarCraft, Battle.net has grown 800 percent, both domestically and internationally. Internationally, much of Battle.net's global popularity can be attributed to the influx of Korean gamers. With approximately 400,000 games of StarCraft played per day, Korea has become the fastest growing market on Battle.net and has overtaken the United States as the number one market in the world. In all, Battle.net in Korea has grown by approximately 2,000 percent in the last six months, from 15,000 game hours per day to 300,000. Now we just need to get the South African players to log similar times. I mean how hard can it be to log 300,000 hours a day. We might not be in the same vicinity as Korea yet, but I can always dream can't I?

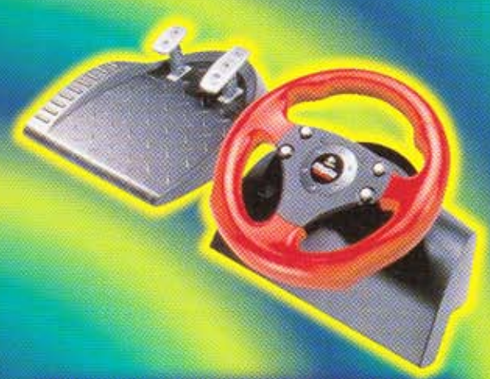
Speedball 2100

to The legendary Bitmap Brothers have recently announced that they are going to bring Speedball to the PlayStation, continuing the popular series from years ago. In the past, when asked if another Speedball game would ever be considered the answer was always an outright no. Pressure from fans seems to have changed things and soon PlayStation owners will be able to experience this ultimate futuristic sports game. Only very few gamers out there will remember the Speedball phenomenon - a tough sport that saw a field of players hammering each other into the ground in pursuit of a metal ball.

The Bitmap Brothers are currently hiring a development team for their office in England to work exclusively on the game. Speedball 2100 isn't due for release anytime soon, but we'll keep watching for it. Although their web site has no information on the new game, you can still take a trip down memory lane by having a look at games of days gone by. The Bitmap Brothers can be found on the Internet at http://www.bitmap-brothers.co.uk.

I hope you have enjoyed THIS edition of Bits & Bytes. We hope to hear your opinions and suggestions about how to improve this section. If you have any comments please
E-Mail me at bb@nag.co.za

Introducing the Logitech Summer 98 Collection
Hot technology in refreshing designs
Logitech



Wingman Formula Force
- Feel more, react quicker, drive faster
- 270 degrees rotation
- Four programmable buttons
- I-Force 2.0 & DirectX 5 Compatible
- USB or serial connector
- Dead pedal foot rest

Wingman Interceptor
- 33 Programmable functions
- Digital precision
- Three 8 way hat-switches
- 9 Buttons

Wingman Force
- 5 Programmable left hand buttons
- I-Force 2.0 & DirectX 5 compatible
- USB or serial connector
- Gearless cable drive for positive, realistic feeling

Wingman
- Designed for flying
- Throttle control
- Heavy steel base
- Sculpted grip
- Rubber encased buttons

Wingman Gamepad
- Shapely grip
- 8 way direction pad
- 6 buttons plus 3 for settings
- 2 triggers
- Digital technology

Thunderpad Digital
- 8 programmable buttons
- Precise lightning-quick play
- Digital technology
- Dual mode for second player

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BACKCHAT

PO Box 2749
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letters@nag.co.za

Thank you to everybody who wrote in. Unfortunately we cannot reply to all of them, but we do read them all. We have an e-mail address dedicated to the letters section. The address is stated above. If you utilise the e-mail you are almost guaranteed a reply. Congratulations to Vaughan de Villiers who wins a copy of Brood Wars. Keep those gaming related questions coming. See Ya.

Please include your name and postal address with your letter so we can forward your prize should you win. Any winners without the above shall forfeit the prize and the Editor's cupboard will collect another game (Damn not this month :Ed). The prize cannot be changed for cash or any other product. The Editor's decision is final and that's that.

DEAR NAG

It was with great anticipation that I opened my first issue (Jan/Feb99) of my subscription to your magazine. Being an avid gamer, I immediately went for the cover CD, trying out the (usually) great demos. My excitement didn't last long. After scanning through the list of demos, I realized that of the initial thirteen games on offer, only three needed a Video card of less than 4Mb, and of these three, only one seems to be worth playing. Ag nooit man!
Now I know that my 2Mb PCI graphics card is not exactly cutting edge technology, neither is my Pentium 200 MMX, but have you ever considered that most of the gamers (especially in South Africa) don't have the latest 3dfx / R1 700.00 price tag Video Cards! I think you will find that if you should hold a reader's poll that only a minor part of South African gamers do own a Voodoo2 or Riva TNT. Most gamers I know don't even have a 2Mb card! If, however, you look at the minimum requirements of the reviews on offer, you will note that a simple 2Mb card is more than enough. Why then should the demos be so hardware demanding when the reviews are not. I know the guys with the Voodoo2's etc. need to be satisfied as well, but couldn't you just balance it out a little, so that the less fortunate among us (I sound like a politician!) who don't have quite the hardware, also get our share.

Thanks

BEN GARIES

Ag shame man. Yes it is a tough life out there and only the few and the brave will live to install another day. Don't get me wrong I do empathise with you but the unfortunate truth of it all is that things aren't going to get any better in the future. Intel has just recently announced the Pentium 3, the knock-on effect of this will eventually equate to money out your pocket as the new breed of motherboards are released and then the new 3D cards will be shipping... Surely, you knew what you where getting yourself into when you bought your first machine. This is the nature of the computer industry and love it or hate it there isn't a thing you or I can do about it. We also don't really have any choice when supplying new demos to our readers, every new release needs a higher specification machine than the last one and you certainly won't find any new demos out there that will happily run on a 486. Don't despair though, you can buy a new 3D card and / or Video Card for well under R1000. It won't be the fastest one on the market but it will get your games running. You'll also note that we do award higher marks to games that manage to deliver quality gaming to the community without needing a Pentium 3 to run. In answer to your other question, the cover CD demos represent games due for release in the future so games on the shelves now are always going to be rated a little lower. When John Carmack of iD Software announced that Quake Arena was only going to support 3D graphics accelerated machines everyone expressed shock and concern but his prediction is looking more and more realistic as the release date gets closer. Where we can we will always try and get demos that will run on any machine.
Ed

TO NAG

I think the quality of games nowadays is deteriorating. Sure maybe the graphics are becoming better and more realistic, but because developers are putting so much time into getting the graphics so good, they are spending less and less time on story lines and making the game more interesting for you to play. Take Pagan: Ultima 8 for example. This is my all time favourite game, not because it has good graphics or ravishing battle scenes, but because the developers put years into building up the brilliant story line. It is the most amazing game I have ever played - it is staged in the most amazing world with hundreds of characters and places to go. All games nowadays are just mindless shoot em' up's with good graphics and a poor story line. Another classic example is the X-com games. The very first X-com game called UFO was an addictive game, not because it had brilliant graphics or cut-scenes but because it had great gameplay and was interesting to play. All the new X-com games have brilliant graphics but the quality of the gameplay is getting worse. So to all those developers out there I would just like to say that I really think that you should put more time into a game's story line and stop worrying if the graphics are good enough. And to all gamers reading this, do yourself a favour and get yourself a copy of Pagan: Ultima 8, its really worth playing.

VAUGHAN DE VILLERS
KALK BAY

This is a time-honoured argument and some of the statements you have made are probably hitting a chord with many of our readers out there. How often have you sighed in nostalgic bliss when walking past a corner café and spotting a favourite arcade game that you used to play to death when you were younger? Your statements on gameplay are mostly true but although Half-Life was a 'mindless' shooter, it had gameplay coming out of its ears. There is a big difference between the story line and gameplay, a good story always enhances the gameplay but the distinction between the two is quite clear. Another thing to remember is that in the past, game designers had very little else going for them other than good solid game design. Now developers around the world have huge budgets and literally hundreds of people working for them - it almost seems as if the creative pool has been diluted somewhat and the driving passion that was so prevalent in the past has sadly faded from the whole game developing process. Even the way we talk about new games these days has changed, it's a subtle change from 'making games' to 'developing games'. In the context of computer games, the words developing and making are worlds apart. As you must have noticed our scoring is broken down into multiple facets with graphics very rarely scoring anything under the 80% mark, but with the other rating criteria the scores can go from excellent to downright criminal. It's a true reflection of the state of games today and confirms some of your statements. Largely one can sum up by saying, they just don't make them like they used to.
Ed

A NUT

Hey, I saw your magazine in CNA and bought it.

E-MAIL

We've had a suspicion that CNA has been selling our magazine for sometime now, thankfully we've got people out there like you that are able to confirm our suspicions.
Ed

HI NAG

Thank you for a great mag! And a cool cover CD.
I was wandering if you could tell me where and when E3 would be held during 1999 and 2000?
Could you let me know whether you are going to put a demo of Klingon Honor Guard on the cover CD and finally when will the game Alien based on the movie "Alien Resurrection" be released?

Yours Faithfully

FRANCOIS DU TOIT
PRETORIA

Thanks for the praise. E3 will be held the Los Angeles Convention Centre in LA between the 13th and the 15th of May. The show is an industry show which means only developers, journalists and product managers can attend. Myself and Big Ed will be winging our way to E3 in May so we can get first looks at all the latest games and perhaps even meet somebody famous! What this all means to our readers is that they will be getting an exclusive first look at what we bring back from this highly anticipated event. The Klingon Honour Guard demo was included on our Jan/Feb issue's cover CD. The game you're referring to must be Alien Resurrection from Fox Interactive, which will first be released on the PlayStation with a PC version following close behind later this year - if all goes well. In the mean time why don't you have a look at our preview in this issue on the fabulous FPS game Alien versus Predator.
Ed

BACKCHAT
PO Box 2749
Alberton
1449

HI THERE

I live in a very small town where people don't even know that computers exist. I bought a game for my computer a couple of months ago called RAMA and it's made by Sierra. I don't seem to be able to get past a certain place in the game. It's the bit with the alien mathematics, I just don't seem to be able to figure out how to solve the problems. I know that you must be thinking that I am dense. I know that you do not write back to the people writing in and that you only publish a couple of letters, but I have to ask. Could you please write back to me with any kind of help. This town of ours doesn't even sell your magazine here, so there's no way for me to check if you published my letter. I am planning to subscribe to your magazine, if I could only raise the money.
Please help me.

IAN BOTES
OTTOSDAL

It's a pity that your big moment of fame will slip by you unnoticed. The solution to your one problem is quite simple, but since you are not going to be reading this, I won't waste the space. The only method I can think of for solving your other problem is to move out of that town and never return.
Ed

DEAR NAG

Thanks for the great magazine! I really like it.
I have a problem. I would like to know how to capture screenshots from Final Fantasy VII for my desktop. The only result I get from pressing Print Screen and pasting the picture in Paintbrush, is a black screen. We own CorelDraw! 7, which includes Corel Capture to capture pictures. Will it help? It has to be possible to capture screenshots, because all the magazines do it. I really like the posters that come with NAG, so how about a poster of Cloud from Final Fantasy VII or even a StarCraft or Tomb Raider III poster would be nice. Keep up the good work. I hope you can help me out.

Thank you very much

MARLI BESTER
Worcester

Capturing screen shots is an ancient art that requires many years of study, preferably on an desert island with a small wrinkled oriental tutor. Or you can try http://www.tucows.co.za and look under Screen Capturing Programs. So depending on how much time you have on your hands make a choice.
Ed

HI NAG

Just a few things I would like to see in the magazine if possible.

1. Test all the latest 3D cards like Voodoo2 (Single mode and SLI), RIVA TNT, etc on systems with the same specifications and publish the results.

2. I would like to see some utilities and programs like Winzip, Winamp, Paint Shop Pro, etc on the cover CD if there is space. (I know it's a gaming magazine but it'll help a lot if you put some of these on as it'll save us some serious downloading.)

3. I really like the part about the demo scene, and that of the history of game machines.

If it's possible I would like to see more stuff about game development (after the demo scene stuff is done). If you want I could write you some articles about game design, from doing graphics and sound all the way up to creating a finished game. The articles could follow each month until the game is finished with all the source code and libraries needed on the CD (wouldn't need a lot of space maybe -1MB or less). I'll do it for free if you want me too, I only want to see more game designers in SA, and if you could publish something like this each month it would help beginners to get into the design thing.
Well, thanks for a great magazine, I've been buying every edition since it arrived and am sure to subscribe.

E-MAIL
PL YOUNG

1. Keep an eye out for our birthday issue where we'll be running a comprehensive 3D card round up across different processors, all on the same specification machine. In the future we'll be doing more comparative reviews on hardware which should hopefully enable our readers to make sound buying decisions in the store.
2. The cover CD is pretty full at the moment and if we were to add even a single extra byte to the line up it would burst its sides. The good news is that we are currently looking at including a few utilities every other month on the CD - In an attempt to please all of the people all of the time.
3. Great.

Funny you should mention South African game development, we've got an interesting interview lined up for the next issue.
Ed

HELP NEEDED WITH RAW DEAL.

The first mag of yours that I bought was vol. 1,issue 7 in December 98, because it had a stunning profile of the Horned Reaper in a very serious festive mood. Great mag with beautiful pages. You can definitely look forward to my subscription.
In writing to you to share my raw deal, which I've also sent to Fair Deal and other magazines. I hope to open all user's eyes to the fact that there are sharks out there, who will play the quote game with you, but still stab you in the back when you're not watching...

UNKNOWN

I've recieved a number of letters and e-mails from people around the country who have been decieved by slick salesmen at computer stores. Reading between the lines, one thing becomes apparent, lack of knowledge. NAG cannot publish details of these so called back stabbers but rest assured they are out there. We also cannot give legal advice or attempt to assit you. The best thing you can do is get informed, make sure before you hand over any cash that you are getting what you're paying for, if you aren't sure then ask someone who kows about computers or ask for a second opinion. Dealing with only one company when buying a computer is silly, get a few quotes from different reputable companies. Common sense is your best friend when buying a PC.
Ed

Thanks to all the writers of this months letters, keep those topical questions coming!

ARCHIVES

Act 5
THE HANDHELD YEARS

Timeline: 1986 - 1990

Will Granzier A.K.A AtariBaby talks of the of the successes and failures of the computer entertainment industry. Enter the next Handheld Consoles.

By mid 1986 home computers were all the rage and seemed to have rooted themselves deep in the hearts of users the world over. Atari and Amiga were doing very well and giving both the PC and MAC a really hard time! But by 1989 things would have a different outcome

Meanwhile in the gaming industry big things were on the horizon...

In 1987 the Atari Corporation managed to purchase a portable video game system design by a financially strapped game company called Epyx. If you owned a C64 you might recall that they were the geniuses who designed the FASTLOAD cartridge that sped up the old 1541 diskdrive to just under Mach 2...well okay. Maybe not that fast!

Epyx, which had primarily focused in the past on making video games (Summer Games and Mission Impossible) for several computer and video game platforms, formed a new hardware division. With a team of Ex-Amiga engineers they went to work on creating an all new powerful and feature rich portable video game system. They achieved their goal and created the Portable Color Entertainment System. But when the cash ran out the project was put on hold and that's when Atari moved in.

The engineers at Atari worked overtime to make the Epyx design a reality. Many millions of dollars later, the Lynx was released to an eager gaming market around about 1989.

The Lynx was impressive, a 4Mhz 6502 system with built-in hardware scrolling and zooming, excellent sound and more importantly an easy to program networking language called comlynx. The idea being that up to 8 systems could be networked together for multiplayer games. Not to shabby hey?

An interesting truth is that although there were some test version systems available in America in the early 1988's, they were very limited. Due to the fact that they were a test or 'beta', Atari offered the user a no fuss exchange if anything went wrong. When the first production-line machine was released in 1989 everyone who had the 'test' version were offered a free upgrade! Most gamers leaped at the offer with open arms, as the new one looked much better, and had a much longer battery life. There were the odd few that kept the originals, and good for them, because although they only paid $250 for the unit way back then, they are today considered collectors items worth well over $1000. Might I say that they are Ultra Rare!

In short, the LYNX was really something to cheer about, as it was the worlds first 16 bit games machine, and it was portable. Hang on, let me say that again...It was the worlds first 16 bit handheld machine.

Although Nintendo were the first to cash in on the handheld game market with their very popular 'Game and Watch' LCD games and considering that the Gameboy was also released in 1989, they never tried to develop a handheld colour version due to the costs involved. There were some attempts to venture into the colour domain in 1984 when the widescreen Lumino 'Game and Watch' was released. It was 'colour' but you could only play it in a well-lit area to get the colours to really come through as it relied on a light sensitive reflective screen to bring the colours to life. If the smaller end of the video game scale interests you then keep reading, we'll be looking at the hand held gaming market in coming issues.

The Lynx never saw a major boom as it only sold 900 000 units world-wide and was officially discontinued by Atari in 1992. No one knows why... but... it could have had something to do with the fact that the Gameboy out sold it in the first year of its release, topping the 1 million-unit mark.

Extinction

So what happened to the home computer market? It faded, quickly! You see, with Atari and Commodore selling machines that were increasingly becoming more capable of outperforming the best IBM at the time, IBM had to react. No one ever acknowledges or denies this, but somewhere in the mid 80's IBM allowed external Asian companies to build and develop all the bits and pieces needed for their machines. Overnight a stockpile of PC hardware and accessories came flooding in from all over. As time went by, more and more developers wanted their share. This meant more competition and a price war ensued, that is still on going in today's PC industry.

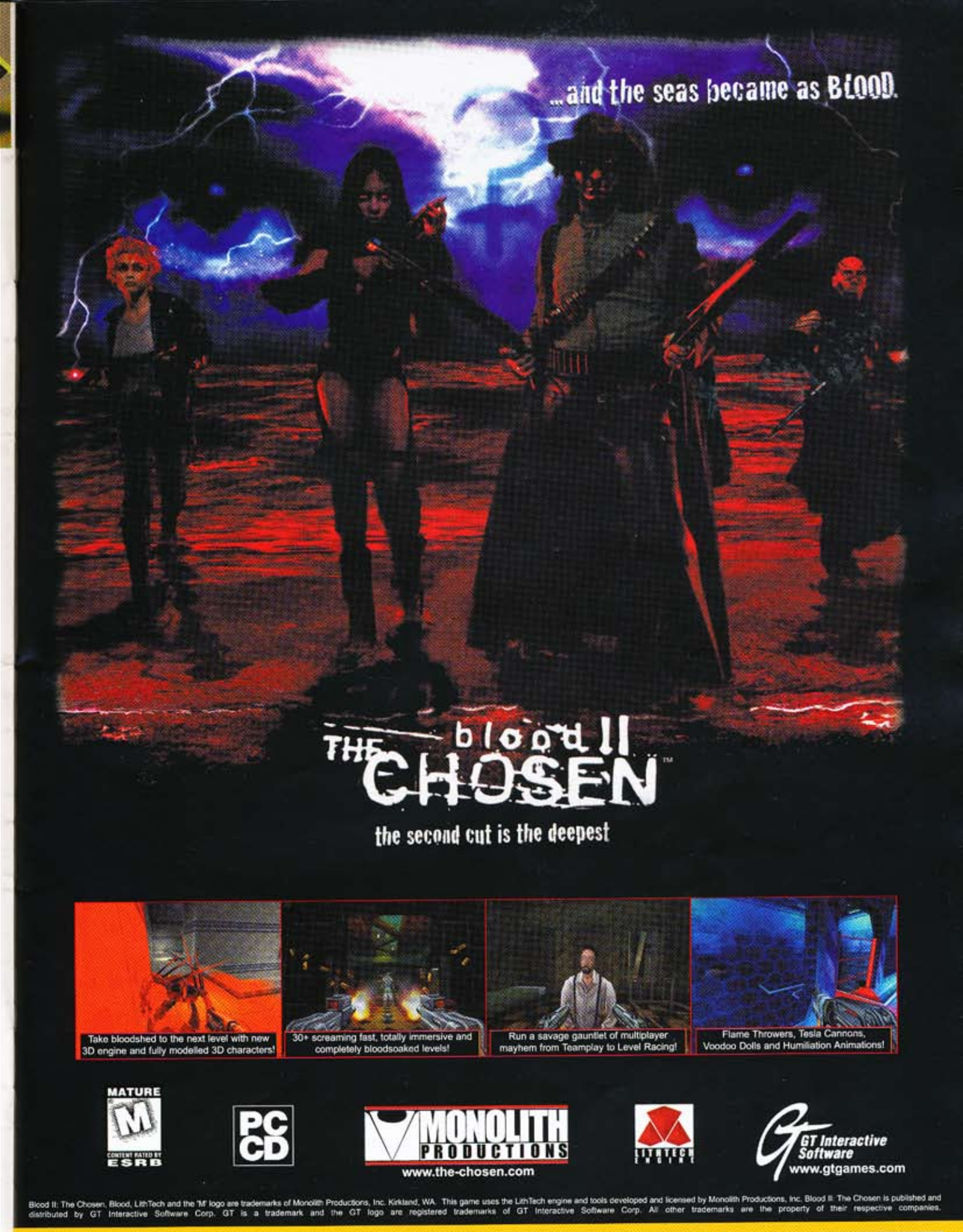
With Atari having bumped their heads before in the console industry by allowing every clown with programming skills to develop a game or hardware and sell it under their logo, they weren't willing to have repeated in their 'blossoming' computer industry. So they kept all hardware development in-house and Commodore did the same. Soon it was evident that the PC was quickly gaining ground and by the time Atari and Commodore woke up and smelled the sales sheets, it was too late. No one was willing to go with the Amiga or ST anymore and PC was the name of the game!

When all else failed Atari sold all the rights of their ST development to Falcon/C Labs, who still today build the 'Atari' computers. The latest model is the Falcon TT and will set you back over $7000. But what of Amiga? Well it's the same sad picture, however the Amiga was more successful in the DTP market and continued new developments and upgrades all the way up to 1995 when the entire Amiga stronghold was sold to German developer VISCORP. Amiga has become a strong force in the DTP and photo imaging market, and the latest machines are still available, even in SA.

Join me next month as we look at the resurrection of the console market and see how the worlds first video game maker ended up bankrupt! Until then, I am trying to locate an Atari Lynx in SA. If you have one let me know...will@radioalgoa.com

Until next month, keep on gaming.

AtariBaby



The Demo Scene

CODING

DEMO DESIGN AND THE ART OF MOTORBIKE MAINTENANCE

BY PAUL FURBER – THE MAN WITH CODE RUNNING THROUGH HIS VEINS – PART 7

Code is what makes demos tick. Art is what makes them fun to watch. Music gets you into their mood. Design is how it all hangs together. The very best designed demos are, funnily enough, the ones you want to watch again and again. It's easy to see why this is the case. The different parts flow smoothly from one to the next, the authors have taken care to polish the rough edges off and the demo fits together as a whole. One of the proverbs of the demo scene states that "good code isn't good design and good design doesn't need good code." There's a lot of truth hidden in that statement. Good code to a demo coder means it's fast and/or original. But it may not be part of a well-designed demo. You could write the fastest vector routines in the world and then waste your audience's time by spinning a whole lot of objects across the screen. This has been done far too many times and it reduces the impact of the effect. The corollary - good design doesn't need good code - is probably best demonstrated by the famous "Bill Gates effect" in EMF's demo Verses which won Assembly 94. The code is simple - take a few vectors across a texture map and then adjust the points.

Practically everybody around in the coding scene kicked themselves for how easy it was. But the end result - Billg's face is warped into some very amusing poses - is one that stays in the memory a long time. Good design doesn't need good code. (Verses is an outstanding demo all round by the way, with good code as well as good design - but I was just making a point).

How to design your next winning demo

A good design is easy to admire - but not so easy to come up with from scratch. When a South African group assured the crowd they were about to witness Really Cool Design before their demo was played at a recent competition, I was expectant. But what was good design to them seemed to me to be more like a bunch of effects slapped together with a cheesy soundtrack. This problem has been around since demos really took off and is a result of the way demo groups learn their trade. Since the first column in this series, some readers have been experimenting with some of the tools and techniques I've outlined. After a few months, when you've mastered some handy tricks, the temptation is to string them all together, put it into a demo and release it. Don't - unless you want your demo to be one of the thousands of others consigned to the bit bucket (/dev/null on my system, the Recycle Bin on other less sophisticated Operating Systems).

Structure and transition

This method is based on hard experience. I've used it - not that that means much. The French group CNCD used it for their classic demo Inside - which means you should pay attention.

1. Write a script for your demo. In it say exactly what you want it to do and when, much like storyboards for movies.

2. Code (or convince your coder to write) an events-based loop which hooks the timer chip and the music player. This sounds all technical but it isn't really. All you have to do is write an events checker which runs through your script and calls demo effects whenever a certain point in the music is reached. Once this is up and running - and only after that - should you then concentrate on writing the effects that slot into your script.

3. Modify your script in much the same way as a traditional scriptwriter would. Pay as much attention to transitions between effects as a film scriptwriter would to the transitions between camera shots.

You may have a better way than this method. Great - use it. Better still, mail me and I'll talk about it in next month's column along with a more detailed description of how to improve your design.

Maverick

THE ULTIMATE IN FIRST PERSON SQUAD WARFARE

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How can you go wrong when you team up the creative genius behind the Alien movies, the tense 'something's watching me' feeling of the Predator movies and the macho muscle tensing performance of military commandos in almost every action movie? - RedTide

Aliens versus Predator is an unique upcoming first person shooter from Fox Interactive. It takes a few risks by treading in the dicey no-mans land of movie to game licenses and by trying to offer the game player the best of three distinctly different worlds. It also supports a brand new 3D graphics engine developed by Fox Interactive that looks slicker than the revolutionary Unreal polygon pusher. We received an early build version of the full game and judging from what's on offer so far, it looks set to slot in somewhere between incredible and brilliant. In a blisteringly fast 3D environment you can choose to play the game as the Alien, Predator or Marine, each with it's own unique set of weapons and abilities. It can loosely be described as a cross between Unreal's graphical wonderland and StarCraft's diverse cultures.

1st Person Shooter	
Developer:	Fox Interactive
Publisher:	Electronic Arts
Supplier:	EA Africa Tel: (011) 803-1212
RRP:	R299.00
International Site	www.foxinteractive.com

Alien eats marine while digesting predator

The game is set somewhere between the second and third Alien movies at the edge of the known universe on a planet and in a military controlled corporate laboratory. The story is slightly different for each species but generally involves sabotage at the laboratory where humankind is experimenting with those poor aliens again. After the confusion, chaos ensues and the aliens escape, quickly overrunning the laboratory and turning scientists into living incubators. As the Predator you are released after the security system goes down, and your mission is to find the missing parts of your space ship and rescue your remaining crewmembers. As a marine, your objective is a search and retrieve mission ending with the destruction of the research facility. Lastly the alien must do what it does best - survive after escaping or eat whatever gets in the way. It's a messy place where these three races meet, a terrifying bump in the dark involving the lightning fast Aliens, the predatory Predator and the quivering afraid-of-the-dark marines - there can be only one survivor and it probably isn't going to be you.

Aliens

The game is simple - you must survive and if something gets in your way put those neatly manicured talons to the test. From the early release version playing as the Alien was an intense experience. Holding true to the movies, the Alien moves at an incredible rate and can outrun or catch anything with ease. In the version we received the Alien character was restricted to travelling along the ground but the final release promises that you'll be able to move along the walls and ceiling. As far as weapons go you can use your claws, tail and even spit at the enemy. Your inherent acid blood also does a good job of avenging your death should an attacker stray too near your fresh corpse. It was amazing to see the speed of the graphics engine when playing as the Alien, they are fast and nothing is going to touch these bugs when the game is released.

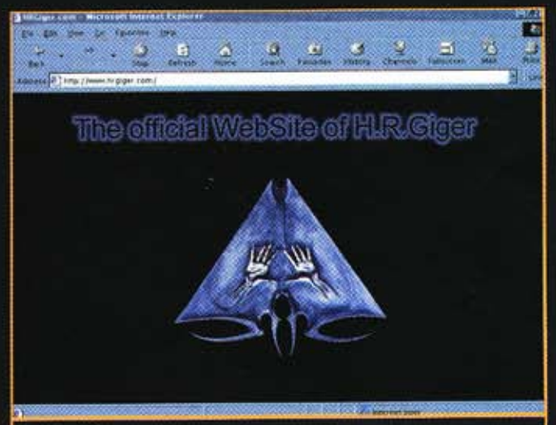
Predator

The Predator is built for hunting and using that flashy shoulder cannon, thermal vision and cloaking device, not many of its prey ever escape its attentions. The Predator represents the perfect technology augmented killing machine and where the Alien is born to kill, the Predator is trained to kill. Playing the early release as the Predator is again a totally different experience to any of the other species. He uses energy plasma that can be depleted so while being able to cloak is useful it comes at a price. The thermal vision sensor is extremely effective when trying to find hidden human opponents but worthless when scanning for the cold-blooded aliens and the opposite is true, so when you're up against marines and aliens in the same level you must decide who represents the biggest threat. The Predator also has access to a grappling hook that counters the wall scaling abilities of the Alien.

ALIENS VERSUS PREDATOR

'Eat lead you slime eating roach'

How do you like it done, medium rare?

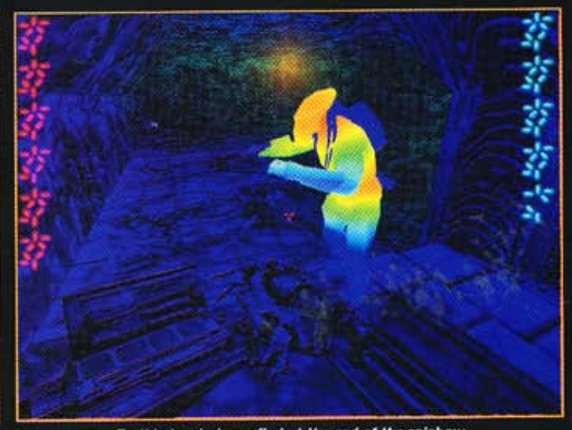


The Birth of a Species

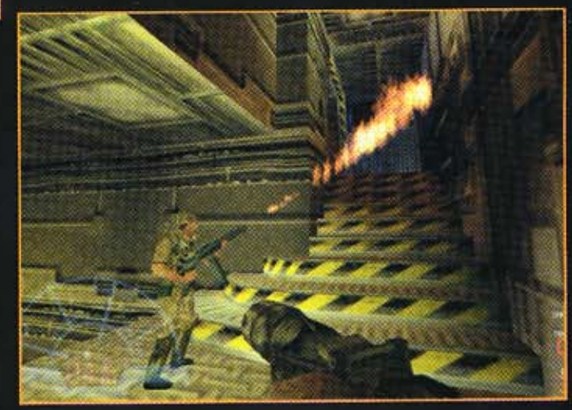
Ever wondered where those fantastic alien creatures from the movies originated? Well point your browser to *http://www.hrgiger.com* for a look at the artwork of the legendary H.R. Giger. He is the biological father of the Aliens and a number of other odd creations - his style is a distinctive technique that blends the biological world with the mechanical world into terrifying yet fascinating works of concept art. His talent is unequalled and recognised around the world. Strangely enough, he also has a line of designer furniture to his credit.

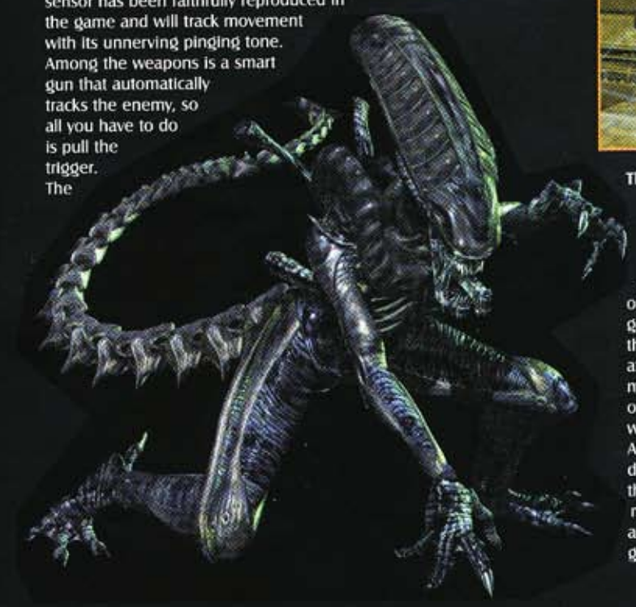
Marines

The good guy marine in this game must protect humankind from both these alien creatures. Returning after a training mission, you discover the disaster at the laboratory. It's up to you to survive long enough to retrieve data tapes on the alien research and destroy the base. The Marine has an impressive arsenal of weapons and useful gadgets to fight the alien species in the base. The 'favourite' motion sensor has been faithfully reproduced in the game and will track movement with its unnerving pinging tone. Among the weapons is a smart gun that automatically tracks the enemy, so all you have to do is pull the trigger. The other weapon worth mentioning is the flame-thrower - for the first time ever it's been done correctly and looks realistic. The Marine also has a jetpack, which allows him to fly around the maps and this then counters the Alien's climbing ability and the Predator's grappling hook. Playing as the Marine is a terrifying experience and you are always aware than at any second you could be sliced diced and served up as a trophy for the Predator or dinner for the Alien.



So this is what you find at the end of the rainbow.





Three into one will go...

The maps are a little on the dark and gloomy side in the demo, which is good for atmosphere, but terrible for everything else. It is hard to see anything clearly but then using the different vision abilities of each species negates this. One important aspect is the multiplayer side of things. So far the game makes for a great one-on-one deathmatch and the final release should see teams of players ganging up against a hive of aliens played by other humans. Already the game has capitalised one very important quality and that is atmosphere. The sound the Predator makes when changing vision modes is faithfully recreated from the movie, the clicking and hissing of the Aliens will have you looking over your shoulder and the weapon fire and radar of the Marines will instantly remind you of the Alien movies. It impresses you the more you play and what really does astound you is that the developers have managed to capture all these small details in the game. It's going to make one hell of a big mark on the first person shooter market when it's finally released and should put an end to all the negativity surrounding movie-to-game licenses.

RedTide

It's been a long wait for a motorcycle game that is worth the generous investments gamers make to the industry. Now with the FIM Superbike World Championship under the banner of EA Sports for the next eight years it should prove a worthy contender if EA continues its domination of the sporting genre.

Storm

SBK SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Motorcycle Simulation	
Developer:	EA Sports
Publisher:	EA Sports
Supplier:	EA Africa Tel: (011) 803-1212
RRP:	R299.00
Local Web Site	www.ea.co.za

EA Sports consider the signing of the licence agreement between themselves and the SBK World Championship a great feat, and who could blame them. With the success of the Championship over the last few years we can understand their boast with all the coverage we have been getting in South Africa of late through Supersport. With heroes such as John Kocinski and Carl Fogarty battling it out over the last few years we have become accustomed to the close, exciting racing that the SBK offers. Now we have the opportunity to play as one of our heroes or to blatantly steal his identity and race his steed.

With EA Sports backing the project, it's not surprising that the early release product we received showed just how great this game is going to be. Using an excellent graphic engine that shows off the potential of this almost new genre is only one of the key features that EA Sports are banking on for the success of SBK. Add smooth character and bike animations and truly detailed tracks that are designed to the metre and we can expect to see the leader in the Motorcycle Racing genre appear with very little competition. If the product improves from what we have seen then we would be even more surprised. The only thing lacking from our beta was commentary, and that would be a big oversight considering the entertainment we get from listening to the commentators howling through their microphones. After a few laps of the Hockenheim circuit it became very clear that SBK is not being developed to be a pushover. The control mechanism works well, but at this point is extremely difficult to master and needs a fair amount of timing and patience. There seems to be more emphasis on tactics than throttle open racing, which is exactly what the real deal is like. When reviewing FIFA 99 I was amazed at the realism that EA Sports was able to simulate, now I see another title with the same promise and ambitions. The physics seem to be perfect, creating actual incidents that wouldn't look out of place in the real situation.

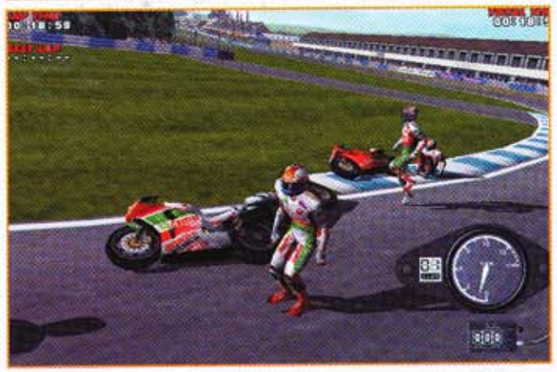
SBK Superbike World Championships from EA Sports is currently looking superb and if continued in the same track will certainly take control of the genre. EA Sports needed a solid addition to their already successful franchise, we sports lovers expected something different, just how different we didn't know. Now that the truth is out, we can expect 1999 to be a great year for sporting titles if SBK is anything to go by.

Storm

The SBK Superbike World Championship, now in its eleventh season, pitches the World's fastest production sports motorcycles against each other on twelve circuits across five continents. Unlike GP racing, the SBK features modified versions of the bikes you can buy and ride on the street. Ducati, Honda, Kawaisaki, Suzuki and Yamaha all enter factory backed teams supported by multi-million rand budgets. It is rumoured that the top factory machines, able to top 300 Kph, are worth a cool R10 million each. Eighteen official riders take part in two races at each of the twelve race weekends. At each race their numbers are bolstered by local riders who can increase the bikes on the grid to in excess of thirty machines

History

The origins of Superbike racing began in America in the 1970's where production bikes were adapted for track racing. Although this achieved some level of success it was later overshadowed by the custom built bikes of GP racing. Superbike racing as we know it today really took off in 1988 with the first season of the Superbike World Championship. Since then it has grown from strength to strength with the big four Japanese manufacturers battling it out alongside Italy's Ducati. The SBK Superbike World Championship is now the World's premier road racing motorcycle event, attracting fanatical crowds in excess of 80,000 who arrive at the circuit on the same machines that their heroes are racing. In 1998 the SBK Superbike World Championship was transmitted by 37 networks in 155 countries, making it a truly global sporting event. With ever increasing TV audiences, meeting attendance and increased interest from other North American and European manufacturers, the future for the SBK Superbike World Championship looks very bright indeed.



Aerobics in a leather suite, kinky!

You can be forgiven for thinking this is the real thing.

No matter what the game or the competition, the sports genre is as enticing as ever. Baseball has never been a national pastime for us South Africans but because of the attention given to it from the American developers, we could almost be regarded as veterans of the sport. We all know the rules and regulations, or so we thought. Play Ball!

Storm

TRIPLE PLAY 2000

Baseball Sim	
Developer:	EA Sports
Publisher:	EA Sports
Supplier:	EA Africa Tel: (011) 803-1212
RRP:	R299.00
International Site	www.easports.com

After trying to chew tobacco and oil my glove in an attempt to feel part of the campaign to win the World Series, it dawned on me that computer gaming has almost reached the levels of sensory perfection. Now that the millennium is knocking on the door, the first of the 2000 series sports games are about to hit with the baseball franchise entering first from EA Sports.

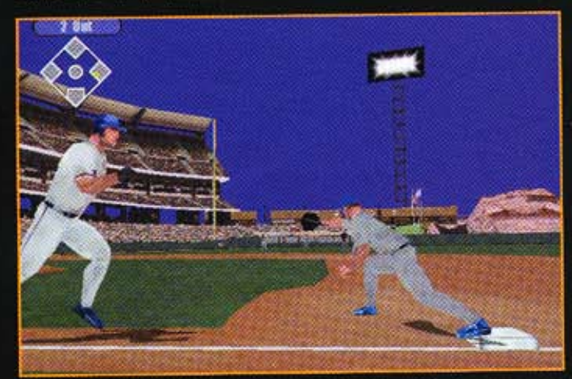
Many sports fans don't consider hitting a leather ball into a designated area and running for dear life an exciting venture, but if you have played any bat and ball sport, what exactly is the difference? The EA Sports franchise obviously realise that the American markets' love of the sport will bring showering profits, and why not with the success of Tripleplay over the years. Now Tripleplay 2000 takes us into the millennium with a larger, quicker and more responsive baseball game. The main change comes by the way of statistics which correspond to the 1998 season and has the likes of the New York Mets Mike Piazza battling through and the Atlanta Braves Chipper Jones coming off a great season.

As ever EA Sports have kept with the 3D graphics that has the virtual stadium of all the teams simulated to the last detail. From the early copy we received it must be said that the graphics don't stand up to the likes of FIFA 99 but they do simulate the game of baseball perfectly. Player animations are realistic and smooth even with this early release and they react to strike outs and home runs with life like realism. The timeous doubleplay and the awesome tripleplay are difficult to complete, but when you're on your game, Tripleplay 2000 accentuates the attempt. One of the major advances over it's predecessor is the sound which utilises Creative's EAX (Environmental Audio Extension), so if you are one of the few lucky gamers with a SBLive then you will be amazed at the stadium sounds and chants. Spectators shout, cheer and react to the gameplay, sometimes to the extent that you feel you are sitting in the crowd yourself.

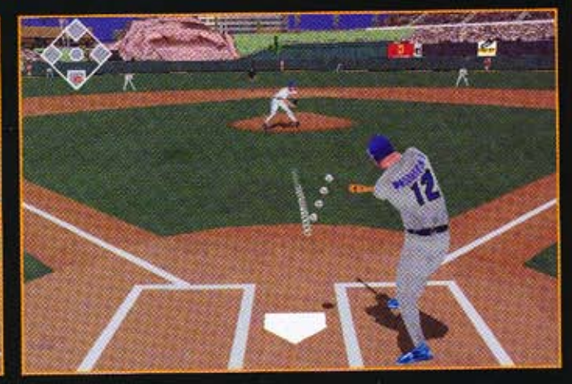
Baseball is widely known for the World Series and this is the main objective of Tripleplay 2000. Depending on your ambitions the options are fairly similar to the original but with more attention given to multiplayer gaming. Playing the World Series Final against a mate is to be considered war. The control mechanisms have also been paid attention to with more commands and an easier mouse control that is as good as using a gamepad or joystick. Different hitting areas help control where the player wants to hit the ball creating more of a strategic entity to the game that cries strategy in many ways. Camera angles are also abundant, you are never without a good angle of the play. TV style gameplay and commentary take this season's EA Sports title to the next level of gameplay without sacrificing playability.

Being a South African and not a fanatical supporter of baseball does not help sell the concept of the sport, but since playing Tripleplay 2000 for a few days, it is definitely a game that is already showing potential of becoming a regular purchase. If sport is your interest, then baseball cannot be overlooked as a serious contender for your collection. Time will tell whether Tripleplay 2000 improves enough to contend with the likes of World Cup Cricket 99 and World Cup Rugby 99 in the South African market.

Storm



Dive, dive or is it slide, slide?



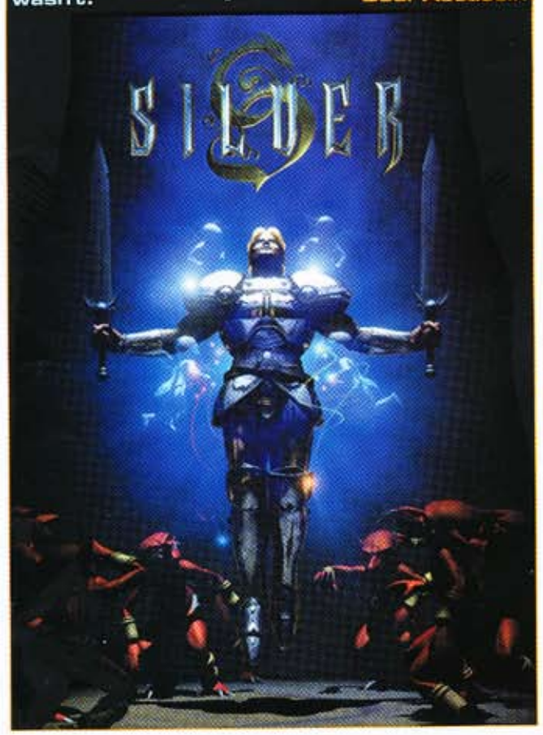
Don't drink and bat, it impairs your vision.

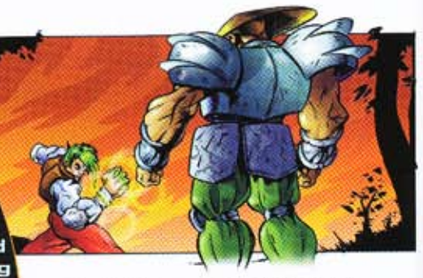
Strangely enough, the game is largely unknown in the gaming community and very few people have even heard of this Final Fantasy look alike. Silver is set in a fantasy world where an evil sorcerer has reigned supreme over the world for the last 999 years. Using his mystical arts and with his malevolent son at his side he controls the population with an iron fist and rules by invoking terror and fear in his subjects. That sorcerer is Silver. He now seeks a wife and has taken all the woman of childbearing age from the populace - be they married or not. You play the part of David who is rather upset, as one of the women taken is Jennifer, your love. Aided by your grandfather your quest is to rescue your wife as well as the other daughters and wives. The world will only be safe when Silver and his bastard son, Fuce, are destroyed for good. This is your goal and so shall it be!

The game has a kind of Braveheart ring to it - the only thing missing is Mel Gibson in the lead. All jokes aside though, Silver has a very detailed story behind it with interesting characters and elaborate settings. The game has been in development for the last 3 years by Infogrames and I must say that I am surprised to see such a quality title come out of them considering that it is an in-house production.

Silver uses a standard isometric view to portray the detailed environment you find yourself in and some of the locations are absolutely

Last year many people raved about Final Fantasy VII for the PC, personally I thought it was a good game but nowhere near to what it could have been. SquareSoft neglected the conversion process from the PlayStation and never used the PC's abilities to their fullest potential. Now, out of nowhere comes the Silver Beta and literally knocks me off my feet, showing what Final Fantasy VII should have been but wasn't. - Soul Assassin



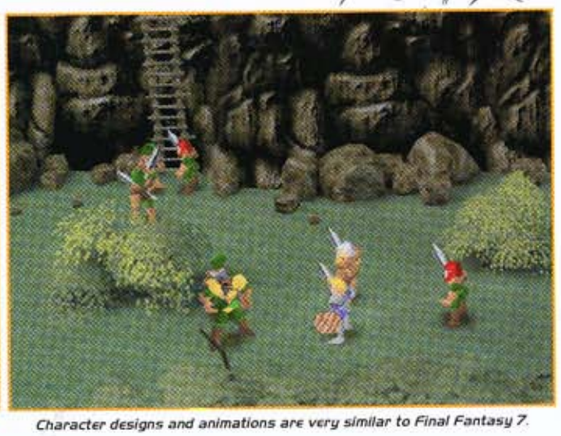


awe inspiring. From seas that ripple and roll to ancient libraries filled with Gothic architecture, each captures your imagination and sets the mood of an ancient medieval world filled with mysticism and heroes in the making.

Characters are portrayed in the same manner as in Final Fantasy VII. They are

1st Person Shooter	
Developer:	Infogrames
Publisher:	Infogrames
Supplier:	Datatec Crew Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP:	R299.00
International Site	www.infogrames.com

Testing a new anti-hijack device.



Character designs and animations are very similar to Final Fantasy 7.

Siver offers some of the highest quality graphics yet seen on the PC.

Unique camera angles and perspectives give Silver life and depth.

shaded 3D models which are rendered real time on top of exquisitely detailed and colourful backdrops. The obvious advantage of shaded models as opposed to textured models is speed and space, unfortunately this comes at the cost of detail. The shaded characters give Infogrames more space for content on the CD, while maintaining characters that are detailed enough for an enjoyable experience. Accompanying the characters is a plethora of different animations, which convey their feelings and emotions. Everything from frustration to anger is covered and these play a big role in identifying the mood of your character. This is important due to the fact that the world is viewed from an isometric perspective and you cannot see any facial expressions.

Unlike Final Fantasy VII, Silver will deliver character speech instead of the familiar text-based system. This makes the characters more alive and progression through the game that much faster. The only problem that I have with this is that some of the character's speech acting seems to be without feeling and makes some of the scenes unconvincing. This might still change by the time Silver is released, but I doubt it since the game is scheduled to ship within the next couple of months. According to Infogrames the game consists of 23,000 spoken words, which amounts to plenty of encounters and a well-developed plot and story.

One unique feature to look forward to is the real-time combat system implemented in Silver. Characters cast spells and attack using a directional thrust mechanism with your mouse. Your character, David, for instance can do a lunge with his sword just by holding down the CTRL key and moving the mouse forward. The system does take some time to get used to but once mastered makes for a much more exciting encounter. You have to think and plan your strategy as you battle and one wrong move can mean disaster. Silver also features a full two hours of music to set the environment and get your blood pumping in battle sequences with gothic drumbeats.

Looking ahead Silver promises to be an excellent game with its rich story, elaborate world and interesting characters. Any Final Fantasy fan should enjoy the game and I for one am looking forward to the final release. When Silver finally ships I will be able to play through the game without the odd bug popping up and screwing everything up, but I guess that's why they call it a beta.

Soul Assassin

The Current Character's of Silver

David	Fuce	GranDad	Jennifer	The Duke	Silver
The main character. Your character who is driven by love to rescue his wife Jennifer.	Silver's evil son. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree in this family and he is every bit as cruel and merciless as his father.	David's grandfather and protector, or so he thinks. He has looked after David since the death of his father and trained him well to become a master swordsman.	David's wife and the love of his life. Unfortunatel-y, Fuce who is Silver's malevolent son, kidnaps her.	The leader of the husbands and fathers who's wives and daughters have been taken. David teams up with him and offers help.	Killed his wife when she turned to someone else for affection. Now he rules the world with his dark sorcery.

The first person genre has faced little competition lately and other than real-time strategy games, only mechanised vehicle warfare has made any lingering impression. Starsiege, formerly known as Earthsiege 3: Future Wars is on its way and we give it a long hard look.

RedTide

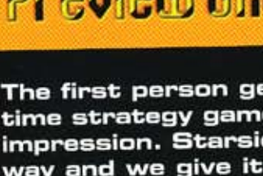
STARSIEGE

3D Combat Simulation	
Developer:	Dynamix
Publisher:	Sierra Studios
Supplier:	Datatec Crew Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP:	R299.00
Local Web Site	www.sierra.com

Starsiege is a 3D combat simulation where the player climbs into a huge robotic exoskeleton, tank or flying vehicle and does battle with other players or computer controlled opponents. The number of craft promised for the final release is staggering and should weigh in at around 45 different vehicles with access to about 52 weapons. Other equipment you can bolt onto your craft includes toys such as cloaking devices and shields. Everything is customisable and players that are a little more creative can even paint their robots with their own designs and watch them come to life in the game.

Revolting pheasants

The Starsiege universe and the story behind the game is a richly detailed affair with revolting colonists, evil emperors and a vast solar system spanning war. The intricate plot will be played out using the actual game engine, a style that is becoming popular probably due to the exorbitant costs of producing cut-scene movies. Of the 40 plus missions many will be fought in different locations around our solar system, so expect to find yourself on Mars, Pluto and even Titan. Each unique location will behave realistically and the effects of gravity will sometimes play an important role during battles with the unforgiving rules of physics affecting everything from the distance missiles travel to how fast you can move across the landscape. The 3D engine taking care of what you see on the screen is already looking good with a number of interesting innovations including flawless transitions from inside to outside, real-time shadows, rain, fog and snow. This all plays out across seven different kinds of terrain making it something worth buying a 3D-accelerator card for. The animation and detail of each vehicle is astounding and it's even possible to target specific parts of craft so often you can disable an enemy crafts' weapons by just pumping lead or energy into the same spot. Controlling your vehicle is easy and the old control system, which was criticised for being too confusing and labour intensive, is now out the window. The new control concept applies the idea of constant motion in one direction with your mouse controlling where your weapons are pointing. This revised interface makes it much easier to see where you're going while trying to eliminate the bad guys.



The final game will have a mission editor included that should guarantee the continuity of the game and a much-extended life on the Internet. Being able to create totally new missions and scenarios should make for some interesting multiplayer situations. The editor will allow players to alter every aspect of the game from placing a building to importing new textures and changing the gravity for that particular mission. From what we've seen already Starsiege is a good example of how to make a potentially complicated game easy and fun to play. The game is due for release later this year and should provide a worthy challenge for veterans and an easy introduction for people looking to get into this whole style of game.

RedTide

'locked on and ready to empty the barrels.'

Is this spontaneous combustion or did I accidently press the fire button?

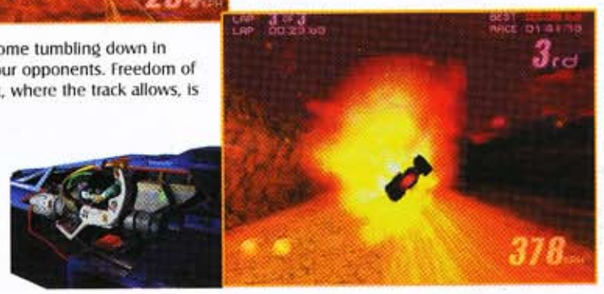
If you feel the need to express your sense of the open road by tearing it up with rubber, then Psygnosis might just have what you've been looking for.

rollcage

No rules, non stop racing

Futuristic Action Racer	
Developer:	Psygnosis
Publisher:	Psygnosis
Supplier:	Ster Kinekor Int. Tel: (011) 445-7900
International Web Site	www.psygnosis.com

Described as a futuristic combat arcade racing game, Rollcage focuses exclusively on speed with little concern for the consequences. The broad idea, as with any racing game, is to speed around each of the eleven single player tracks as fast as possible while trying to beat the competition. It all sounds fairly standard and boring but just imagine not having to worry about damaging your car, pit stops or being limited to driving just on the track. To achieve this end Psygnosis have created indestructible vehicles that can drive upside down, ride along walls and also stick to ceilings. You need to be careful though because if you hammer away enough at the buildings and roadside features they might just come tumbling down in front of you or your opponents. Freedom of lateral movement, where the track allows, is also a welcome addition. Now add all this up with death defying leaps, weapon pick-ups and booster patches on the road and you have got yourself one hell of a ride.



The early release version we looked at was really impressive and for once actually featured most of the unique selling points hyped by the developers, Psygnosis. For the final release, the action will be spread across four different environments including some alien world racing and you will have access to six different cars. With some excellent rave music accompanying the action, you can't get any hairier than moving at half the speed of sound, upside down in a collapsing tunnel four centimetres off the ground. When Rollcage is released we'll give you a full review and sort out the warthogs from the eagles.

NAG

Surprisingly, it's hard to find any decent arcade games these days where the screen scrolls down and you have to dodge, bomb and fire your way to the top of a never ending landscape of aliens, tanks and giant spaceships.

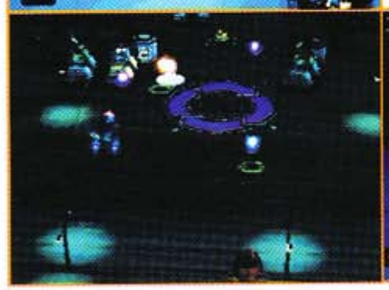
RETRO FORCE

Arcade Side Scroller	
Developer:	Psygnosis
Publisher:	Psygnosis
Supplier:	Ster Kinekor Int. Tel: (011) 445-7900
International Web Site	www.psygnosis.com

The second PlayStation game that we had early release code for this month is Retro Force, a new game from Psygnosis that looks like it might just drag back from the grave the classic style arcade shooter. You can play the game as any one of four different characters each with their own weapons and spacecraft. From the black depths of space another evil alien race, lead by a big nasty alien - Kyati, has taken over our blue planet. The future of Earth is at stake again and naturally, it's up to you to save the day.

It's a good solid blasting session from beginning to end and the only time the action lets up is when your skills fail you and your ship turns into a fireball. Not only must you worry about flying aliens, but ground based units must also be bombed from above, which is reminiscent of that old classic arcade game Xevious. One interesting point worth mentioning is that Retro Force is promising to support up to four players on the screen at the same time battling across the 15 levels on offer. Each spaceship will have 6 permanent weapons that can be powered up by a factor of 20. From what we've seen already there is plenty on offer to keep you busy for ages, the only question that remains is will it be enough to justify buying it?

NAG



Reviews Under Fire

NAG Rating System

39% - 0%

Any game scoring in this dreaded range isn't even worthy of bargain bin status. Avoid completely. Go lower down the scale and these games just keep getting worse, although titles scoring in the single digits might be good for a laugh. It got 20% for doing something right after all.

49% - 40%

Very poor games fall into this range. Terrible they may be but a few redeeming qualities rescue them from dropping into the next bracket. Sometimes worth a look if they sell in Rands what they scored.

59% - 50%

Middle of the road. Games scoring here are average games, not too good and not too bad. Games like these usually end up in your Christmas stocking from well meaning but clueless grandparents.

69% - 60%

Good solid games usually score around this mark. Combinations of serious flaws or lacking features prevent these games from scoring anything better. Fanatical gamers or fans of the genre will probably love these titles.

79% - 70%

Tricky territory here, there is usually no good reason for not buying a game that scores in this range. Good games here suffer from a tired formula or lack of innovation. Technically flawless but just not very inspired.

89% - 80%

Any game reaching this status deserves your attention. Good in every way but just lacks that little extra that separates it from classic status. No game is ever perfect but some come very close and here is where you'll find them.

100% - 90%

The ultimate achievement for a game is to get over the magic 90%. It represents an automatic purchase if you enjoy the type of game on offer. Also a good place to shop if you're tired of one kind of game and would like to broaden your horizons.

E for Effort...

There has been a lot of controversy recently surrounding the manner in which on-line gaming sites and gaming magazines rate games. Some say it's better to limit the score to a one to five system where others say it's better be more specific with a percentage out of a hundred. The argument surrounding the one to five system on one hand is that it's too simplistic but on the other it does give a clear and concise score with little room for error - the reviewer must commit to a definite score. The argument with the percentage system is how does anyone determine a score out of a hundred? Do we use atomic scales, microscopes and a hundred-point checklist or what? On the plus side, it gives the game enough leeway to make a few mistakes and not pay dearly for them. Now it's important to remember that these minor debates are industry related and it seems that the people who actually read the reviews don't really care how a game is rated, just so long as they know what the bottom line is.

How we see things

Strictly speaking, an average game should receive an average score of 50%. If a game proves to be an irritation to play with disgusting graphics and lousy sound it'll start moving down the score line until you in the picture - to get 20% the game should install and work, with functional graphics, audible sound and a working control interface at the very least. We are lucky in this country due to the fact that most games released in South Africa are normally of a better grade and quality because we don't distribute absolutely everything that is released overseas - and trust me you aren't missing anything. Not many games are just average and developers are always bending over backwards to try and be innovative with each new title released. So any game bringing something new to the table will start at around 60%, provided it works. With most people, this is perfectly acceptable but ultimately results in high marks awarded to average games ending in the scenario where games start receiving scores like 10 out of 10. For a game to get this kind of mark it must be perfect and we've never played a perfect game - ever. This is obviously ridiculous and poses the question of where to next - 12 out of 10? You will start noticing a gradual reduction of scoring in NAG until we are happy that games are getting what they deserve. If you have any comments on this topic please feel free to air your views in our backchat section - you've got the address.

dipping into the single figures.

While the Zerg and Protoss have been plotting to wipe the human race out, our very own Ed has been catching up on his strategy techniques. After much deliberation and half a dozen losses he finally conceded to the inevitable, the coverted NAG Editors Choice.

NEW AGE GAMING EDITORS CHOICE

See PG 40

StarCraft Expansion Set Brood War

The Awards Ceremony

Blood 2 PG 30

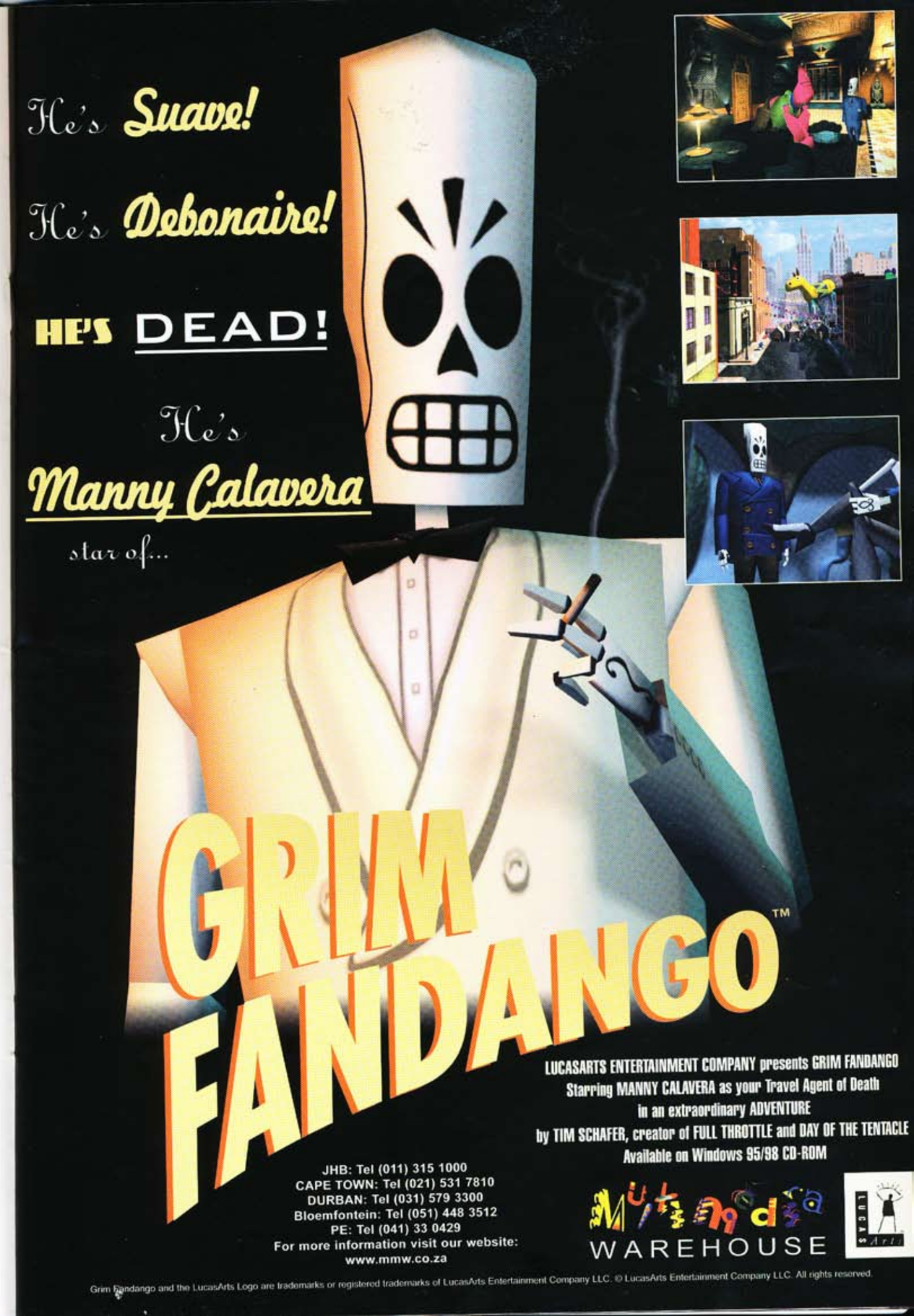
Falcon 4 PG 42

Viper Racing PG 32

TOCA 2 PG 58

PowerSlide PG 35

Actua Soccer 3 PG 62



Reviews Under Fire

PC CD-ROM

Currently on the shelves is Monolith Production's new game Blood II: The Chosen. Now many of you will agree with me when I say that the original Blood was a dismally poor game. Blood II actually set on my desk for 2 weeks before I got around to reviewing it because of Blood's bad reputation. If I had known sooner that Blood II uses the new Lithtech Engine I would have ripped the packet open on day one and probably played till the early hours of the morning - DarkSkies

blood II THE CHOSEN

One thing I can say with authority is that much has changed, so you should forget all about the original Blood and look at Blood II as a whole new game. The only continuity from the original is the story line. Blood II: The Chosen begins in the year 2028, 100 years after the original. Caleb the undead anti-hero of Blood has walked the Earth this entire time, mostly minding his own business and going on the occasional mindless rampage when the mood strikes him. The Cabal has in this time changed drastically and they now have an organised corporation, Cabalco, to front their activities. Gideon the current leader of The Cabal has been raised as a leader from birth and views his confrontation with Caleb as very personal. The Cabal's objective is to destroy Caleb and bring back their Dark God Tchernobog. They will stop at nothing hunting down Caleb and are even prepared to destroy entire dimensions to achieve their goals, in the process bringing the world to its knees. Welcome to the world of Blood II: The Chosen you are Caleb.

Blood II plays like most first person shooters on the market today - kill anything that moves and then some. Where it does stand out above the crowd is a decent story and the sheer amount of weapons and items that can be used to achieve the ultimate goal - destroy Gideon. The story is aimed at more mature audiences with implied swearing such as 'who the beep do you think you are', and a tendency to sway to the darker sides of life. This is expertly done through in-game cut scenes and text dialogue between levels. Unfortunately as with most FPS that use in-game cut scenes the inability of the characters to move their mouths detracts from the realism a little, but not enough so as to impact gameplay. Throughout the game you will be introduced to countless different ways in which to bag a monster or shred a friend's butt with the 20 weapons, which range from high tech hardware to things as sinister as a voodoo doll. One area where Blood II stands out is in the graphics arena. It uses Monolith Production's brand new Lithtech Engine, which we first saw in Shogo: MAD. If you have a Direct3D card which is DirectX 6 compliant, such as the RIVA TNT based cards, the game flies, giving you ultra smooth animations and movement. There are some problems with 3Dfx cards though since they mainly use the Glide API. Textures disappear and there is some stuttering as well as an average frame rate. Monolith's reply to this is to upgrade to the newest 3Dfx reference drivers, which apparently fixes a lot of the problems. There is also some bad news about the engine in the form of minimum specs. To run Blood II using software mode you will require at least a Pentium II 233 MHz processor and lower if you have a 3D accelerator. One annoying feature with the engine is the jump physics, which I hope Monolith addresses in an upcoming patch. Since when do you stop dead in mid-air when jumping forward by releasing your walk key? Stupid if you ask me and very difficult to get used to since other first person shooter games offer a more realistic jump with smooth continuous movements regardless of which keys are pressed or not.

1st Person Shooter

Min Required	Recommended
Pentium 166 (Pentium II 233 MHz Software) 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mb SVGA Video Card 200 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentium II 233 MHz 64 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (3dfx / 6/4Mb) 515 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Monolith Production

Publisher: GT Interactive

Supplier: Datatec Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111

RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.the-chosen.com

The attack of the killer washing machine.

I come in peace, shoot to kill!

One disappointing feature in Blood II is the sound effects of weapons. It seems that most developers neglect this and want the weapons to sound too realistic. When you fire a weapon, you want it to sound as if it is going to do some major damage, but instead you get some wimpy sound effects for weapons that blow up half the map. Fortunately this is the only bad point for sound, and the voice acting as well as the music is pretty much what we have come to expect of games nowadays.

What Blood II does well is its multiplayer. It is unique in the way that you start with all weapons and don't need to collect any. The only items that require collecting are ammunitions for all the different types of weapons, as the amount stays constant from death to death. There are also 4 unique characters to choose from, each with varying weapons, looks and skills. What will please most players is the power of the weapons - a great deal of them can kill you with just one shot, making survival and cunning important considerations. Another nice feature is the launch console. Monolith realised that most gamers don't want to mess with a configuration file to set up a deathmatch. The console allows you to set up multiplayer games where you can easily configure the spawning times of items, number of players, maps, frag count and time limit from an easy to use Windows interface.

Overall, Blood II is a highly enjoyable and bloody feast. Single player offers an interesting story while multiplayer brings something new to the deathmatch arena. The game should definitely only be played by mature audiences due to the explicit language. If you qualify and love your first person shooters make sure you get a copy of Blood II.

DarkSkies

Talismans

Scattered throughout the game you will find these useful power-ups. They can often shift the balance of power in a deathmatch, so familiarise yourself with the maps and know where to find all the extra goodies.

Life Essence	Life Seed	Necroward	Stealth	The Anger	Ward	Willpower
Restores 25 points of health to the player up to the maximum level. These rotating hearts are always nice to find after intimate encounters with evil creatures and their teeth.	A more powerful version of the Life Essence that allows players to boost their current health by 100 points. This power-up can boost health to above the maximum level of 100 points up to 300 points.	Adds 100 points to the players armour and can boost your defences to a maximum of 200 points. Finding this rare talisman can mean the difference between saving a game or loading one.	Makes the player almost completely invisible for 30 seconds, useful for surprise attacks and sneaking into the house when your parents are sleeping.	Increases attack damage by 3 for 30 seconds. This talisman can thank its existence to the mighty Quake, think of it as quad damage minus one - or trip damage.	This talisman adds 25 points to the players armour up to the maximum. Armour points can be accumulated during the game protecting your frail flesh against direct attacks.	This power-up reduces the damage the player receives from attacks by 95% rendering you practically invulnerable. Unfortunately, like all good things in life it only lasts for 30 seconds.

Who needs to aim when you have this kind of firepower?

Summary	Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability	Overall Rating
Blood II offers an interesting and compelling story and so many enhancements have been made that it really cannot be compared to its rubbish predecessor, Blood. Lots of weapons and some new elements added to the multiplayer arena make Blood II a must for any FPS fan.	87	81	86	88	80	90	86

Internet: www.the-chosen.com

Multiplayer: TCP/IP (32 Players), IPX/SPX (32 Players), Modem (2 Players), Serial (2 Players)

Comparitives: Quake II, Half-Life, Unreal

Pro's and Con's:
+ Excellent Graphics
+ Dark Story
+ Unique Multiplayer
- Jump Physics
- Voodoo 2 Problems
- High Requirements

PC CD-ROM

Within the South African borders we have very little chance of ever sitting behind the wheel of the monster powerhouse Viper GT, and with just cause. At first attempt to control this demon on the computer at the lowest of levels, I would have ended up redesigning certain Johannesburg road-signs if I were driving the real thing. After many hours of sweat and tears, I can confidently say I have tamed the Viper and can move on to reality. Who would have guessed that the salesperson at the House of Sports Cars wouldn't trust me with it, even with my Sierra Sports Drivers Licence - go figure! **Storm**

VIPER Racing

Racing Simulation	
Min Required	**Recommended**
Pentuim 133 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 4 Mb SVGA 55 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim II 233 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 3D Accelerator 55 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)
Developer: MGI	
Publisher: Sierra Sports	
Supplier: Datatec Crew Tel: (011) 233-1111	
RRP: R 299.00	
International Web Site www.sierrasports.com	

Over the years Racing Fans have had to put up with average releases geared around hyping the cars featured in the game more than how the game actually plays. Relying on the gamers will to sit behind a high powered sports car, fuelled the sales of these average products in the early years. Now as the modern gamer matures and his tastes diversify, developers have had to fall back to the basics of great gameplay, combined with the definitive racing machines to sell their products. As always the exception to the gripe comes out of the closet to inspire the dedicated gamer and that is no doubt Viper Racing from Sierra Sports. After playing the likes of Gran Turismo on the PlayStation, I was under the impression that the PC was finally playing catch-up with the console for a change. Now with Viper Racing competing on the graduate platform, the PC, we as racing fans are in for a treat. Viper Racing takes all the pretty graphics that we have been spoilt with of late and combines them with one of the most intense and feature filled products yet to be seen on the PC. The 'Designed Especially for Hardware Acceleration' sign on the front of the box will scare off the gamer without the accelerator, but it should actually cause him to rush out and buy one. This is one of the best-looking Racing Sim's we have ever seen and that includes competing with Need for Speed 3's great looks. Sierra Sports have taken the awesome looks and performance of the Viper and have marketed it extremely well in their efforts to sell more games. As fans of racing cars, the Viper does not feature on our top ten, but its impressions are moving in the right direction. But it's not the Viper that sells the product we can assure you, it's the pure depth and playability that gives us the reason for awarding Viper Racing a world class score. Viper Racing has everything a racing fan wants, from the beginner to the expert and beyond. The only down side to the product is that there are only Viper's and that's that. You cannot race against any other vehicle but who would want to especially when you can tweak and configure your car to your hearts content (only in Career Mode). VR comes with an in-depth selection of options, from four different race modes that include Pack, Clock, Ghost and the cherry on the top Career Mode. All of these have varying levels of difficulties that range from three different difficulty settings of arcade, intermediate and simulation. If you want a game that helps you actually compete then VR is on the right track if you excuse the pun. It helps with the normal selection of Auto Gears, Auto Clutch, ABS Braking, Traction-control and even YAW Control. Obviously to compete at the top level with all these helpers unchecked you could probably take on

Authentic internal views create a more realistic experience.

Viper Racing (cont)

The all new charismatic Viper, standard with redesigned bodywork.

Michael Schumaker on his favourite circuit and win. We found VR extremely helpful with the first initial stages of playing and this guaranteed that the boredom factor would be unseen.

But what is so great about a game that is just another Racing Sim? Well it is the Career Mode option that takes VR to the next level. Starting from the bottom of the four racing classes, you must perform your way around a selection of the eight available circuits and compete for the hard-earned money that will bring better vehicle parts and upgrades. With a garage that consists of upgrades in the engine, drive train, chassis, body, wheel and paint departments, each with varying numbers of options and prices, it is great fun to strategize where to spend your money on upgrades. Prize money is difficult to come by, especially in the early stages of the season because of the difficulty in coming into the big money. The main objective of the Career Mode is to work your way up the leaderboard by tuning your car into a fine oiled machine and eventually sitting on the podium as the winner and moving onto the next racing class. By the time you reach the GT class you will have become accustomed to the tweaks and squeaks of your Viper and should be extremely adept at racing around the well designed tracks. All this adds depth and character to the games' playability and overall continuity, which ultimately breaks down to true value for money.

Viper Racing certainly impressed us at NAG with its attention to detail, its superb crash-able modelled cars and intense racing tracks that range from short Daytona to arid desert tracks filled with visible landmarks. The vehicle physics and control is of the highest quality and if you are a true racing fan then you will agree that this is a key part of making the competitive experience all the more enjoyable. Playing over a LAN or with a friend over the Internet is simple and easily set-up and with the importance of good multiplayer it would have been a pity if Sierra had neglected this part. Viper Racing also supplies you with a fully comprehensive manual that we normally find lacking in this genre. The information and tips that are scattered around the manual make this an important piece of reading if you are to compete at the highest level. First impressions are average with Viper Racing but as you spend a little more time trying to further your ambitions you will notice a truly detailed and fun to play Racing Sim. This is a title that has not received many accolades since its release but features highly on NAG's top Racing Sim's of all time. This production was an ambitious task from Sierra Sports but a successful task in the end.

Storm

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Fully detailed Racing Sim that is geared towards the fun and serious gamer. Gorgeous graphics and spirited gameplay are the key elements behind Viper Racing's success. Add an element of strategy to the genre and you have a racing game with a difference. One that makes you plan your next session.	93	87	89	NA	90	90	90

INTERNET: www.sierrasports.com

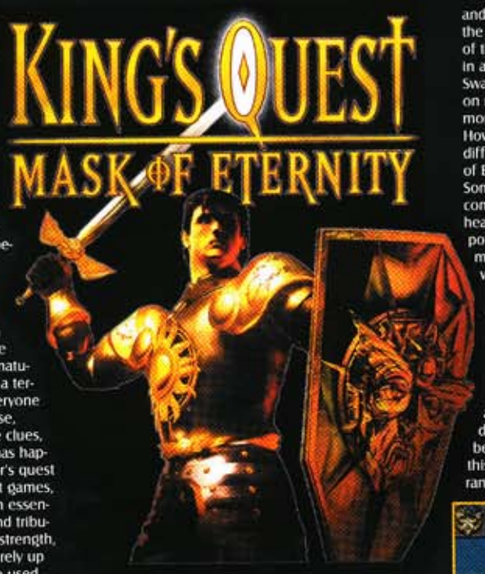
MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
TCP/IP (8 Players) IPX/SPX (8 Players) Modem (2 Players) Serial (2 Players)	TOCA Touring Cars 2 Formula 1 '98	+ Realistic Damage + Top Notch Graphics + Serious Racing Fun Pop-Up -

REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

PC CD-ROM

Roberta Williams has puzzled, mystified and entertained millions with her best-selling King's Quest series of adventure games. Her latest offering, Mask of Eternity, which brings the total number of titles in the series to eight, turns over a new leaf in adventure gaming...

RAVEN



Most of us are well familiar with the King's Quest adventure series, so my first look at Mask of Eternity surprised me somewhat - instead of the time-honoured point-and-click interface I had by now come to expect, I was greeted by a fully interactive 3D world! Sierra Studios have broken away from their traditional approach, and provided us with an advanced 3D engine that allows the player to choose either a third-person perspective (Tomb Raider) or a first-person view (Quake or Half-Life). This relatively new approach results in a far more absorbing experience, and one truly takes the part of Connor, the hero of this particular chapter.

Chatting up the girls

The game begins on a pleasant enough day, with Connor chatting to Sarah, whom we can only presume to be his intended. An unnatural wind rises, there are some fireworks and a terrible curse is laid upon the entire village. Everyone has been turned to stone. Everyone, of course, except for young Connor... As you follow the clues, you soon enough learn the nature of what has happened, and what is expected of you - Connor's quest is revealed. As is normal in the case of quest games, various clues must be discovered, along with essential equipment to help Connor in his trials and tribulations. Magical potions of healing, armour, strength, invisibility and the like abound, and it is entirely up to the player to decide when these are to be used. During the course of his travels, Connor will also pick up bigger weapons and better armour. Both melee and ranged weapons are available, and occasionally the opportunity arises to purchase the equipment of your choice, so your choice of weapons is not dictated entirely by the plot of the game.

This game is an absolute gem visually. The graphics are crisp and clear, with good 3D rendering that moves at a respectable pace. The engine's capabilities are shown off with the many sights and wonders to be found in the seven realms and the varied and well-designed textures set the mood and the

scene perfectly. Even playing in software mode, I found the scenery very picturesque and, at times, spectacular. 3D acceleration is supported by means of Direct3D or 3Dfx. The accelerated modes obviously also offer higher resolutions and the various rendering options may be turned on or off, in order to allow performance tweaking.

While the sound is of very high quality, it offers nothing particularly new. All conversations are, of course, delivered in digital audio, but some of the weapons' sounds are slightly 'off' and rather uninspiring. The musical soundtrack, on the other hand is out of this world, and creates some of the eeriest ambience that I have ever experienced in a computer game. Let me just say that playing the Swamp region alone, at night, with the music turned on requires only the bravest of souls. The interface is more than adequate for an adventure game. However, the combat side of things does tend to get difficult at times, as the interface provided with Mask of Eternity is rather clumsy in real-time situations. Some handy shortcuts have been provided, which come in handy in the midst of heated combat, when healing is urgently required, or perhaps a shield potion. For true adventure gamers, I highly recommend the "easy combat difficulty" setting, as otherwise the clumsiness of the controls in combat may hinder the enjoyment of the story and ultimately affect the playability.

How many times?

The story is solid enough, with enough subplots for a rich gaming experience. At times, one gets the feeling of playing something resembling a role-playing game, though your overall course is dictated by the story. The nature of the quest could be described as a bit cliché, but let's not forget that this is an adventure game after all. The puzzles range from trivial to downright difficult, and some

lateral thinking is required to complete the quest. However, the puzzles are still set, and once you've played it once that's it. I find it unlikely that many will replay it although I have come across one individual who had played it three times, looking for the perfect score. The scoring system is very much like Mask of Eternity's predecessors, in that your final score is given out of the maximum possible 'perfect' score, only the numbers involved are much larger.

Overall, I found this game highly entertaining at the time. In fact, "highly addictive" is a more accurate description. The story is strong enough although can be accused of being a little cliché. The puzzles, for the most part, are very stimulating but just remember to save often or it'll all end in tears.

RAVEN

3D Adventure

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 166 MMX 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 100% DirectX Comp. SVGA 400 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim II 266 / K6-2-3D 64 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (3Dfx / nVidia etc.) 400 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Sierra Studios

Publisher: Sierra Studios

Supplier: Datatec Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.sierrastudios.com

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
A good story, atmospheric soundtrack and beautiful graphics are somewhat spoiled by a mediocre control interface and occasional random crashes. Many hours of entertainment, but only once through. Appears well supported by the developers.	95	85	75	80	65	80	80

INTERFACE: www.sierra.com

MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
None	Lands Of Lore II Return to Krondor	+ Stunning Graphics + Good Story & Puzzles + Atmospheric Soundtrack - Poor Combat Interface - Resource Hungry - Random Crashes

REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

PC CD-ROM

Grab your monkey wrench and radiator and prepare for battle, this is gonna be an extremely bumpy ride. Forget the seatbelt, brake pedal and one way signs, they aren't needed where you going. Powerslide is gonna bang, crunch, flip and hurt you until you give in or win, (we at NAG personally prefer the winning) but it's a lot harder than you think. If it's a gladiator of the track you want to be, then Powerslide will test your pain threshold to the limit.

Storm

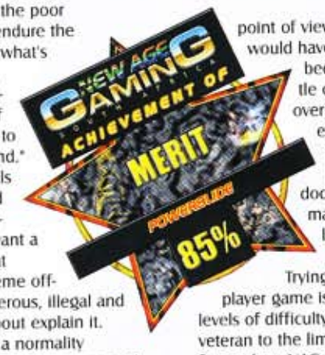
POWERSLIDE

Having taken Racing Sim's pretty seriously over the last few weeks it was with great delight that Powerslide made its way onto my computer screen. Lets get this out straight from the onset of this review, this is gonna hurt, don't expect courtesy calls and friendly handshakes with this racer, it's every man for himself.

Based in the year 2020, after an environmental holocaust devastated the population and created havoc amongst the survivors, the rich fled to the underground and the poor feral population had to endure the hardship of the surface (what's new?). As RATBAG put it, "With 98% of the population dead there's a lot of cars around just waiting to get driven into the ground." So just for sport the ferals started Powersliding and of course the rich corporates banned it. If you want a short description of what Powerslide is then 'extreme off-road racing that is dangerous, illegal and kicks butt' would just about explain it. 'Graphically stunning' is a normality amongst accelerated games now days and Powerslide does not disappoint, actually it accentuates the graphics by adding a true 3D environment that can be explored throughout. All the vehicles that range from the Sabre to the Orc are physically perfect with 4-wheel independent suspension and superb attention to graphical detail.

Ultimately what really makes Powerslide a success is the amazing track designs that will blow you away. From the Dam Track to the Mineshafter, you will be tested with awesome jumps and different racing surfaces that are made up of ten materials (sand, mud, dirt, asphalt, grass, snow, ice, slime, rock and cement) each with varying traction and grip attributes.

Powerslide prides itself on its true grit close racing and advanced AI with the sentiments true in every sense of the word. The battle starts from the beginning and only cunning and guts will prevail for the eventual winner. As the intense racing gets underway you will notice the lack of vehicle damage, but is this a blessing in disguise? From NAG's point of view it would have been a little of an overkill and created even tougher racing conditions considering it's an off-road racer already. Trying to dodge and slip vehicles is normally the least of your problems with wild jumps and obstacles in your way.



Trying to overcome the single player game is a feat on its own with four levels of difficulty that will test the seasoned veteran to the limit. If you are a multiplayer fan such as NAG crew then the 12-player option should bode well considering that the tests we ran were seamless and without fault, not to mention incredible fun. Consider the 'Fox & Hound' option for extra-added fun and some cool weapons that are not available without cheats in the single player mode.

If you are fortunate enough to have a force feedback device or a wheel then you will benefit from good, solid support for the game. As with most games there is always something that does not quite work as well as planned and that is the control. The cars seem to glide over the surfaces, which makes the realism factor a touch suspect. It's a slight problem that is overcome by the sheer enjoyment and challenge of playing Powerslide. Another oversight is the lack of an opening intro sequence or cool soundtrack that would have gone down well with the theme of the game. Not a necessity but with us spoilt gamers we like to be surprised by adventurous additions that make the purchase all the more welcome.

With my helmet in hand and six-year-old mouthguard I prepare for extreme racing on the edge and that's without my insurance policy paid for the month, a little daredevil don't you think, but hey, that's what Powerslide is all about. Consider this product for an interesting alternative to the average racer and let your senses take over.

Storm

Arcade Racer

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 133 MHz 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 100% DirectX Comp. VGA 20 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim II 233 / K6-2-3D 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (3Dfx / nVidia etc.) 60 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: RATBAG

Publisher: GT Interactive

Supplier: Datatec Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.gtgames.com

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Hard core off-road racing that will throw, crush and devour you. Well designed tracks and a drive anywhere 3D environment will test the racing pro with its entertaining close pack racing and advanced AI. True physics and 4-wheel suspensions are the call of the day. Prepare to be pummelled.	92	75	79	NA	89	91	85

INTERFACE: www.gtgames.com

MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
TCP/IP (12 Players) IPX/SPX (12 Players) Modem (2 Players)	Need For Speed 3 Test Drive 5	+ Good Graphics + Innovative Tracks + Arcade Style Fun - Slippery Control - No Music Tracks

PC CD-ROM

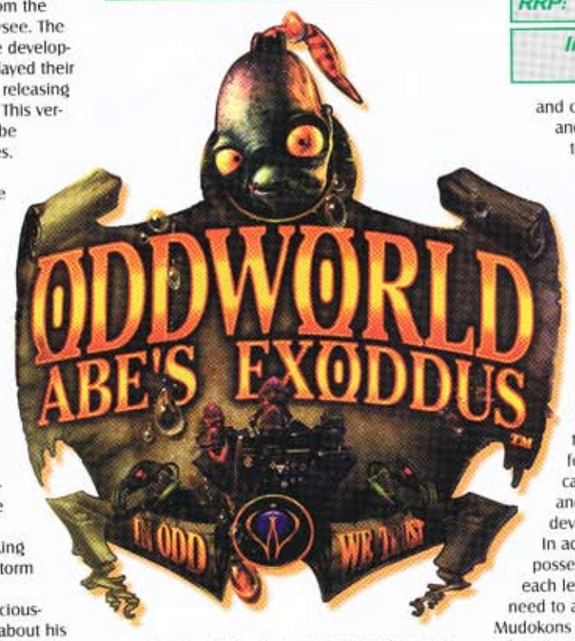
Unfortunately some developers just can't take a hint and keep on developing these out-dated and incredibly addictive games. I can understand that console gamers have little choice, but us PC players... well only when I'm slumming. There's definitely something fun about getting the little fellow to jump and hop about the screen trying to avoid being chopped in half or diced up like carrots, especially a character like Abe who looks like an X-Files experiment that went wrong and who farts at any opportunity. The game might not be as ground breaking as Prince of Persia or as high-tech as Flashback, but the game is... well, entertaining and addictive. There I said it, just don't quote me.

Abe's Exoddus is a follow on from the exceptionally successful Abe's Oddysee. The first version was so popular that the developers, Oddworld Inhabitants, have delayed their next project, Oddworld Quintology, releasing this second part, as a bonus game. This version is very similar to the original Abe but it does add a couple of surprises. The game begins with Abe being congratulated for the sterling job he performed while rescuing ninety-nine of his fellow Mudokons from the RuptureFarms, a meat-processing plant that was turning Mudokons into tasty snacks. Mudokons are pathetic green-skinned bug-eyed wimps that argue amongst each other and seem particularly useless at looking after themselves. During the ceremony, Abe trips and falls on his head - something he seems to do rather often - and has a vision of three ghosts who tell him a terrible story. RuptureFarms was not the only slaughterhouse and the evil Glukkons are in the process of making a super-addictive beer, called Soulstorm brew, out of the bones of dead Mudokons. Once Abe regains consciousness, he tells the other Mudokons about his dream and that he is about to embark on another adventure to destroy the Soulstorm Brewery which is located in Necrum, the ancient city of the dead. A bunch of his compatriots volunteer to help, but you get the feeling, after two or three hours of whining and complaining about the lack of lunch and their sore feet, that the volunteers are going to be trouble. True enough, shortly after you arrive at the city of the dead you are spotted by a flying Slig and although you manage to escape, your fellow adventurers are captured.

AN EPITAPH

It is sad but true; the age of the platform game is all but gone. Today gamers seek brighter and better games filled with such wondrous things as virtual reality, stereo sound and BFGs. No more will we have to guide little green men past hazardous traps, over flaming pits while fending off man- eating plants with our trusty laser pistol.

R.I.P. † - razOr



Platform

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 166 MMX 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mb SVGA Card 100% Comp Soundblaster Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim 200 MMX 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mb SVGA Card 100% Comp Soundblaster Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Oddworld Inhabitant

Publisher: GT Interactive

Supplier: Datatec Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111

RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.oddworld.com

The first part of the game is spent trying to free your friends. This involves jumping over chasms hiding in shadows and generally avoiding being shot by gun-crazy Sligs. These fellows are particularly stupid and have no respect for anyone's life, including their own. For a character in a platform game Abe is pretty smart. He can run, roll, jump, throw stones, and of course, fart, a feature the developers seem particularly proud of. In addition to this, he can also talk and possess the minds of other creatures. On each level there are teleports which you need to activate so that the captured Mudokons may escape. Once you have located a prisoner you will need to guide him to freedom by greeting him and then asking him to follow you. Once you have the Mudokons following, you will need to lead them towards a teleport. Often this entails opening gates, raising or lowering platforms, all the usual stuff you'd find in a platform game. It's not as easy as it sounds, however, as sometimes the Mudokons will be guarded and you will need to hide in shadows until the Slig passes by before you can make a move. There are also times when the captured Mudokons will not listen to you because they have been infected by laughing gas or they are cross with you. In each case you will need to pacify them either by slapping them across their face to bring them to their senses if they're stoned or sympathising with them if they are unhappy. While this does add a level of complexity to the game it's hardly rocket science and it becomes a little tedious at times especially when a tripping Mudokon decides to run towards a gun toting Slig which usually results in you both getting blown away.

Team SAB.

The Abe fart that went wrong.

Oddworld Abe's Exoddus (cont)

On later levels you will gain some special skills such as being able to possess other creatures in the game. When this happens you will be able to control them and use some of their special skills. Learning how the different enemies use their abilities is one of the most enjoyable parts of the game, such as controlling an enemy and ordering other enemies to blow themselves up. The potential for sadistic game play in Abe's Exoddus is seemingly endless. Unfortunately these special abilities are not carried throughout the game and while you can use stones in some of the early levels they're not always available. Similarly your possess skill is sometimes replaced by the ability to turn invisible. It's as though the developers ran out of keys to control the game, another hangover from the console game platform. Just as in the previous game, you must save as many of your fellow Mudokons as possible in your journey so as to get the better of the game's two possible endings. The cut-scenes are good, and at times are integrated seamlessly with the normal game screen. Control over Abe is via the keyboard or gamepad. In the early levels or whenever a new skill is introduced there are neon screens distributed throughout the game - much like electronic advertising billboards - which will instruct you on how to use a new skill or what to watch for.

In a world of 3D graphics cards and high-powered systems I found the graphics a little dull and dated. Animation is good however but colours and resolution and level of detail could be better. That said the monsters in this game are really cool - they remind me of a bunch of Mafia mobsters with attitude. In summary the gameplay in Exoddus is virtually unchanged from Oddysee which, if you enjoyed the first version could be a good thing. However after having played for a good couple of hours and having no real idea of how far I was I think this one can go back on the shelf for a couple of months when it might become fun to indulge in some senseless mayhem again.

razOr

I am about as stumped as Abe is about this caption.

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Addiction is a terrible thing and this second Abe game has it in spades. Taking control of Abe reminds you of the good old days when games were games and 3D was just a cool idea nobody could do. Good solid gaming in every sense of the word.	75	80	85	79	80	82	80

INTERNET: www.oddworld.com

MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S	
None	Abe's Oddysee Earthworm Jim	+ Addictive Fun + Clever	Disappointing Graphics - A Bit Repetitive -

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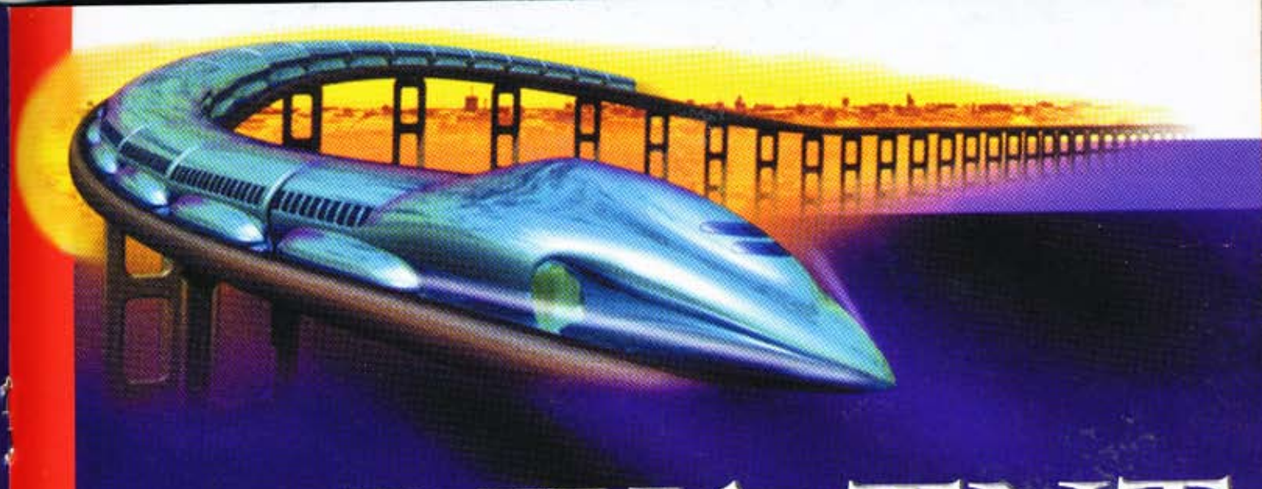
DIAMOND



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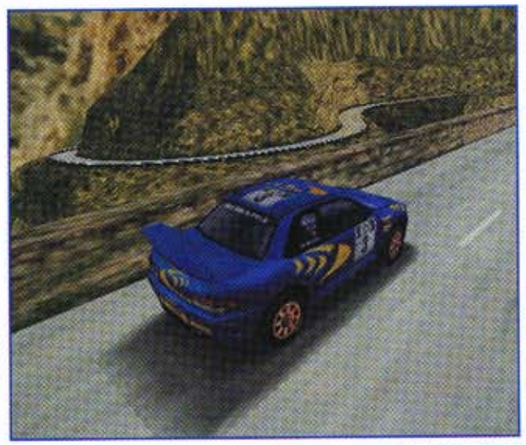
CYBER STORM COMPUTERS

PC CD-ROM

There comes a time in everybody's life when they wish to be thrust behind the wheel of a six hundred horsepower rally car and given free reign to throw the beast around. These aspirations are quite simply too far-fetched and untouchable considering the money and talent that is needed. Well, if there is ever a time to let the imagination run wild then playing Codemasters Colin McRae Rally will certainly bridge that gap. - Storm

After taking Colin McRae Rally for a spin for the PlayStation in our 'NAG August 98' issue and coming up with some pretty respectable figures, there was little doubt that we would find just cause to give the PC version similar treatment.

The change in processing power is definitely an added attraction to the ability of the development from Codemasters. Graphically this is a spectacle to behold and with the challenges that creating a rallying game brings up, Codemasters have left no stone unturned in bringing all the eye candy features that you would expect. Simulating certain features such as mud splashing, sand spewing and rain falling, all come easy from the original 'TOCA Touring Car' graphics engine being used. Frame rates are abnormally high (depending on machine specs) even on the recommended system requirements. This bodes well for the bulk of the South African gamer who is sitting on the boarder line between entry level and recommended, and if you are not then Colin McRae Rally certainly gives you the incentive to upgrade. The use of 3D acceleration does add that extra bite to the graphical look and feel, but even in software mode we were impressed by the graphical content.

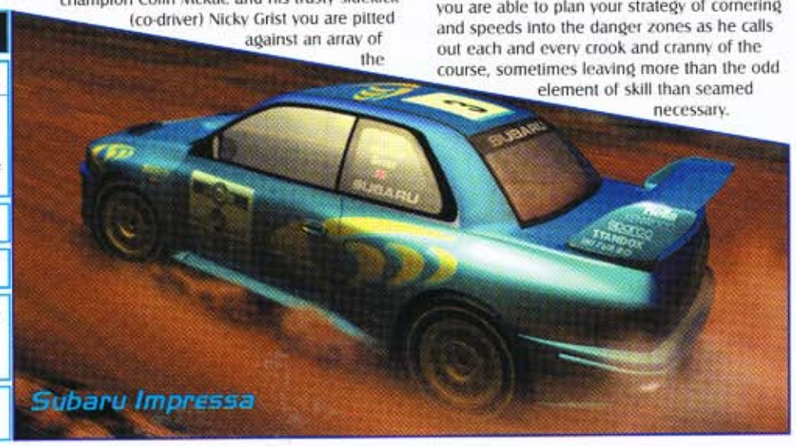


The most stand out feature of CMR is the incredible control that it gives you and can only be described as one of the best display of programming in this genre at the time of writing this article. Power slides, handbrake turns, full hard braking and speed reactions are all at your fingertips. Whether you are utilising a gamepad, keyboard, joystick or our personal favourite force feedback steering wheel, you will have ultimate control over the destiny of the car. This breathes life into what makes rallying fun, the adrenaline rush, living on the edge (of your seat in this case).

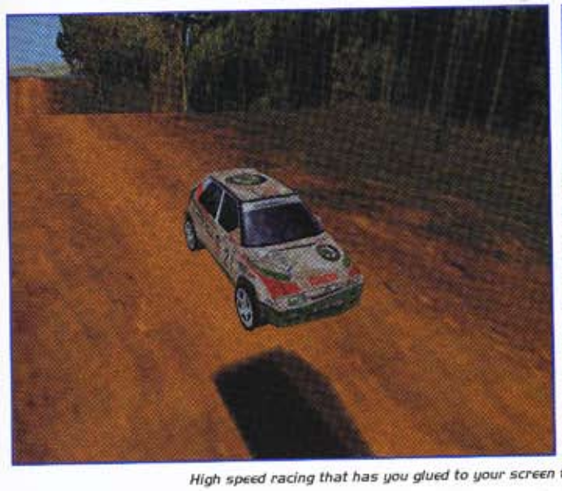
CMR is a wonderful showcase for this under televised sport and grips the hard action gameplay with both hands and squeezes every ounce of fun out of it. With the support of the worlds premier rallying champion Colin McRae and his trusty sidekick (co-driver) Nicky Grist you are pitted against an array of the worlds top drivers and on the three different difficulty levels you are challenge beyond limits. With the help of Nicky you are able to plan your strategy of cornering and speeds into the danger zones as he calls out each and every crook and cranny of the course, sometimes leaving more than the odd element of skill than seamed necessary.

NEW AGE GAMING ACHIEVEMENT OF EXCELLENCE Colin McRae Rally 90%

Rally Racing Sim.	
Min Required	**Recommended**
Pentuim 166 MMX 16 MB RAM 6 X CDrom 640x480 SVGA Card (16-bit) 350 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim 200 MMX 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 4 Mg SVGA Card 350 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)
Developer: Codemasters	
Publisher: Codemasters	
Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse Tel: (011) 315-1000	
RRP: R 299.00	
International Web Site www.codemasters.com	



Colin McRae Rally (cont)



High speed racing that has you glued to your screen throughout the varying rally stages across the world.

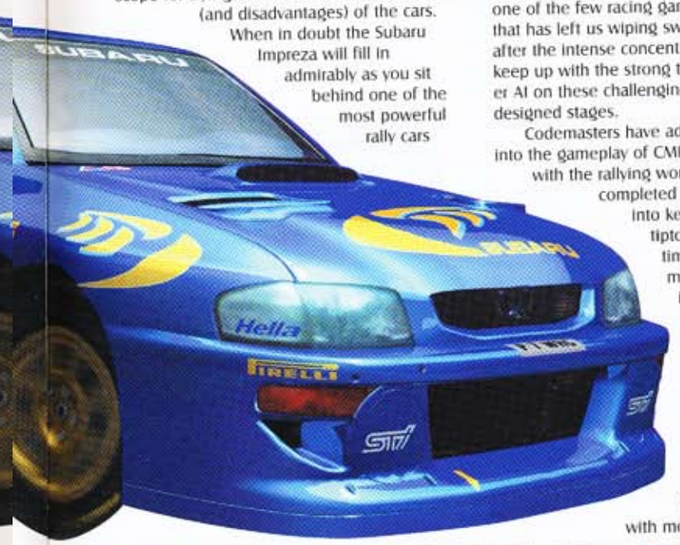
The game features 12 of the worlds top rally cars, each laser modelled to perfection. The cars handle and react differently leaving scope for trying out the different advantages (and disadvantages) of the cars. When in doubt the Subaru Impreza will fill in admirably as you sit behind one of the most powerful rally cars ever built. CMR also features 52 international stages across 8 countries, each heaving tons of obstacles, weather conditions, traction surfaces and even the odd surprise at you. It's one of the few racing games we have played that has left us wiping sweat from our brow after the intense concentration needed to keep up with the strong times of the computer AI on these challenging and impressively designed stages.

Codemasters have added other elements into the gameplay of CMR that reflect closely with the rallying world. Once stages are completed you are pressurised into keeping the vehicles in tiptop shape or pay in time restrictions that may leave your vehicle in need of serious handling and performance problems if not attended to. You have only 60 minutes of repair time for all the major components of your vehicle and normally after a hard and fast stage you are left with more than 60 minutes of repairs. This adds to the gameplay by forcing you to look after your car without losing time to the front runners.

If you are not one for losing to the computer continually then testing your human instincts on a friend or friends is one of the strong points behind CMR. Multiplayer is as exhilarating as any game of Quake we have played and has to be tried to believe that racing games can compete on this level.

As I sit back and consider what I have written about Colin McRae Rally, I notice no criticism of the product and quite frankly it is hard to falter it in any way. I have always found the pop-up syndrome that plagues racing games to be slightly irritating and CMR suffers from the same disease. It is obviously a difficult glitch to overcome but we have extremely high standards as gamers for our hard earned Rands. Another small oversight is the lack of a South African stage, after all we have some of the best rallying spots in the world, but then as South Africans we are use to being neglected. After that little bit of waddling it is with the overwhelming conclusion that I recommend Colin McRae Rally to all those who love computer games with top quality gameplay.

Storm



SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
All the thrills and spills of the real deal are packaged into this powerhouse production. Colin McRae Rally is the only rallying title out at this point in time that meets all the requirements of fun, addiction and phenomenal gameplay.	93	89	93	NA	86	93	90

INTERNET	MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
www.codemasters.com	TCP/IP (2-8 Players) IPX/SPX (2-8 Players) Modem (2 Players) Serial (2 Players)	Tommi Makkinen Rally VRally	+ Exciting Rallying + Ultimate Control + Special Effects Pop-Up Syndrome -

Reviews Under Fire

PC CD-ROM

In the past couple of years, we've seen game developers churning out expansion packs for various games. Generally, these add-ons have varied from mediocre to downright poor. Now, Blizzard Entertainment brings us something a cut above the rest: Brood War, the much-anticipated expansion to their strategy blockbuster, Starcraft. - RAVEN

"State the nature of your medical emergency"

StarCraft EXPANSION SET BROOD WAR

Starcraft Add-On	
Developer:	Blizzard Ent.
Publisher:	Blizzard Ent.
Supplier:	Datatec Crew Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP:	R 249.00
International Web Site	www.blizzard.com

The Starcraft single-player campaign ended leaving us hanging, and we knew that the war was far from over. Brood War starts exactly where Starcraft left off, and is structured in a similar fashion to the original - three sequential episodes, one for each race. Again, much attention has been paid to providing a convincing and entertaining story with impressive depth.

Brood War meshes seamlessly with Starcraft graphically and similar to the original, the unit and terrain graphics are crisp and clear. Three new tile sets have been added - a desert world (Korhal), a twilight world (Shakuras) and a snowy planet (Braxis). The sound is also on a par with the original, with new unit sounds being added, among which is my personal favourite, the Medic's "State the nature of your medical emergency." In trying not to diverge from the original too much, nothing new or groundbreaking was attempted either graphically or in the audio department. Along with the new environments, some new units have been added. Each race has been graced with one additional ground unit (though Protoss effectively get two) and one air-to-air combat unit. The Terran Medic can heal organic units and may also cure various negative spell effects and blind enemy units with Optic Flares. The Zerg Lurker is a derivative of the Hydralisk, and is a heavy support beast that can only attack while burrowed. It shoots out rows of spikes that impale everything in their path. The Protoss Dark Templar are close-up fighters who are permanently cloaked. Physically they are vulnerable but deal out considerable damage. Furthermore, two Dark Templar may merge to form a Dark Archon, arguably the most interesting and controversial unit in Brood War. These Dark Archons have the ability to permanently take over other players' units, stun organic units, or turn their own energies against them by means of Feedback. They have no attack modes, and are physically substantially weaker than "regular" Archons.

Air combats have now escalated in viciousness. The Terran Valkyrie Frigate is a dedicated air-to-air unit that is especially effective against groups of fliers, as it fires a volley of 8 Halo rockets which explode on and around their target, with splash damage to nearby units. The Protoss Corsair is another unit with an interesting new spell. Firstly, it is the cheapest and quickest to build air unit now available to Protoss. Its air-to-air attack does a minute amount of damage, with splash damage and a high rate of fire. It has no ground attack capabilities except for the Disruption Web, which is an area effect that negates all attacks by ground units within its bounds - perfect for breaking those Terran defensive clusters. The Zerg Devourer is the new horror spawned by the hive-clusters in attempt for air superiority. This unit has a slow attack that delivers not only 20 points of damage, but also a bucketful of acid spores. Every "dose" of acid spores slows its victim's attacks slightly, and makes that unit more vulnerable to other attack forms. Furthermore, acid spores are cumulative. Two useless and little-used units, the Goliath and the Ultralisk, now have new upgrades that make them formidable opponents. The Goliath's air-attack range can now be upgraded to equal a Guardian's range, while the Ultralisk's armour may now be upgraded, as well as its movement speed. All other units have also been reviewed and game balance has been fine-tuned. The addition of these new units has had a dramatic effect in the gameplay itself, and has expanded the number of possibilities far more than one might expect. Not only must we consider the new units themselves - we must also factor in their interaction with every one of the existing units! The scope of strategies has grown exponentially.

This box is a must for die-hard Starcraft veterans, even though it is, regrettably, a little overpriced for an expansion. However, it is well worth it for owners of Starcraft, as the scope has been broadened to virtually the level of an entirely new game. Well, for me it's another cup of coffee and back onto the battlefield, to control the minds of my enemies.

RAVEN

Corsair | Dark Archon | Devourer | Lurker | Medic | Valkyrie

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Not only has the game-play been expanded upon, the story has also deepened even further, and is rife with intrigue and unexpected twists. Highly playable, with a whole new world of possibilities to explore.	85	85	90	95	90	95	90

INTERNET: www.blizzard.com

MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
TCP/IP (8 Players) IPX/SPX (8 Players) Modem (2 Players) Serial (2 Players)	StarCraft Red Alert Total Annihilation	+ Continuity With Original - A Little Overpriced + Excellent Story - More Video Would Be Nice + New Units For More Strategies

Reviews Under Fire

PC CD-ROM

I was surprised to see Get Medieval on my desk for review and it brought back memories of days gone past. The older gamers out there should remember an arcade game called Gauntlet, which used to be in the bigger shopping malls and some corner cafes. Up to four players could play together through dungeon levels killing everything in site and collecting treasure. I used to spend most of my pocket money playing Gauntlet and in those days 50c a shot was a lot of money. - Soul Assassin

GET MEDIEVAL

Arcade	
Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 90 MHz 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 100% DirectX Comp. VGA 120 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim 133 MHz 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 100% DirectX Comp. VGA 120 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer:	Monolith Interactive
Publisher:	Monolith Interactive
Supplier:	Redlion Interactive Tel: 082 564 3206
RRP:	R 279.00
International Web Site	www.getmedievil.com
Demo on Cover CD	17 MB

The story behind the arcade action of Get Medieval involves a Dragon named Daramil who destroyed the previous King and now rules the land with a fiery breath and an army of minions who once belonged to the old King. The villagers, without an army to protect them, vow that whoever destroys the Dragon will become the next King. And so the adventure begins...

Up to 4 players can take the Quest either playing on the same machine, via a LAN or even join other avid players around the world on the Internet. You can play as one of four hilarious characters, Eryc the Archer, Kellina the Avenger, Levina the Sorceress, or Zared the Barbarian. Each comes with a unique attack, foot speed, weapon speed and weapon strength as well as their own totally

wacky comments about their surroundings and circumstances. The most identifiable character has to the Barbarian with his Arnold Schwatzeneger [actually it's Schwarzenegger - Ed] impersonating voice and comments such as "I am de biggest and strongist of all de girlie men". As you can see from his dialect Zarec has the intellect of a aggravated herd of oxen, but he does have it where it counts, which would be the damage - his 200 pound axe can inflict instant death on anything that crosses his path.

At its core Get Medieval is basically a PC version of the arcade game Gauntlet. While not exactly alike in all aspects, the gameplay is very similar if not exactly the same. The basic aim is to clear out the 40 action packed levels and finally face the almighty Dragon, Daramil. Along the way, there are 20 different monsters to encounter as well as a boss on every fifth level. Throughout you will be able to accumulate power-ups for your armour and weapon as well as collect treasure and artefacts. One thing lacking from Get Medieval is depth, the game just revolves around hacking and slashing and after a while this becomes a little boring, especially if you don't have a friend to play with.

On the graphical side Get Medieval utilises a sprite-based engine which gives exceptionally good frame rates. On my Pentium II 266Mhz I had a frame rate which hovered around the 150-FPS mark. The effects might not drop your jaw to the floor, but considering the context of Get Medieval, Monolith did an excellent job implementing coloured lighting, translucency and particle effects. The particle effects do seem to slow down a multiplayer game quite significantly and here at NAG we had to fiddle and tweak with the network settings a bit before we could get a playable network session going. Even then there was the odd hiccup while playing and at times you get so frustrated that you just want to switch off and get back to the single player mode.

In the greater scheme of things Get Medieval is a fun, fast paced action game with a little slapstick comedy thrown into the mix. It does have some variety in monsters and levels but ultimately becomes monotonous as you hack and slash everything, while going after that next weapon or armour power up. Definitely only for Gauntlet fans or the avid platform fan, but most gamers will enjoy playing it for a while at least, until it starts loosing it's initial lustre. If you do decide to get it, watch out for the excellent introduction movie. It will have you rolling on the floor with laughter.

Soul Assassin

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Get Medieval is at its core a PC version of the old arcade game Gauntlet. 4 players can play on one PC, via a LAN or on the Internet as they go Questing for the dragon, Daramil's hide. It's your typical hack & slash platform game and becomes monotonous after a while.	72	83	71	68	62	85	74

INTERNET: www.getmedieval.com

MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
TCP/IP (4 Players) IPX/SPX (4 Players) Modem (2 Players) Serial (2 Players)	Arcade Game Gauntlet	+ Hilarious Dialogue - Becomes Monotonous + Varied Levels & Monsters - Uninspiring Story + Fun To Play - Suspect Multiplayer Code

PC CD-ROM

FALCON 4.0

When Falcon 3.0 was released in the early nineties it was widely acclaimed as the greatest combat flight simulator ever. Since then many others have come and gone and some have even surpassed this lofty benchmark. When Microprose announced that it was working on Falcon 4.0, the flight sim community held its collective breath, and held it... and held it. Falcon 4.0 took approximately five years to complete and became the most anticipated flight sim in history. It finally hit the shelves in January 1999. Does it live up to expectations? Is it the greatest thing since peanut butter? Well to tell you the truth - I couldn't really find out! Read on and see why... - Reaper

Combat Flight Sim

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 166 mmx 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mb SVGA Video Card 175 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	PII 266 mmx 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (OpenGL) 400 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Microprose

Publisher: Microprose

Supplier: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212

RRP: R 329.00

International Web Site
www.falcon4.com
Demo On CoverCD
44.4 MG

Size doesn't matter... Yeah Right!

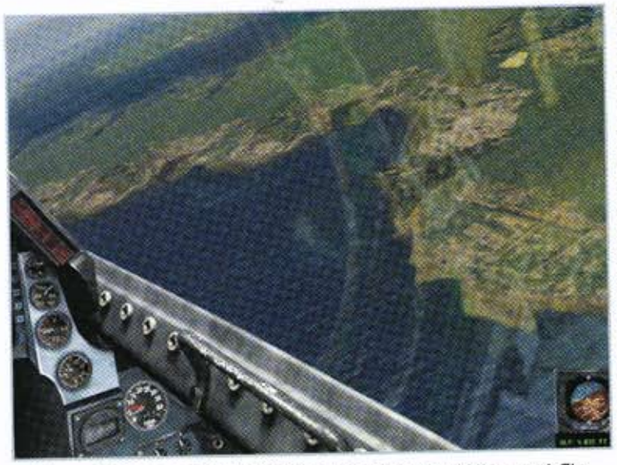
Falcon has the most authentic flight model, complex avionics, extensive communications and immersing game play of any sim ever released. I would need a 600+ page magazine to tell you about Falcon 4 in detail. Fortunately Microprose did this in their 600+ page expert manual. The manual is almost encyclopaedic in its nature and is undoubtedly the best manual I have ever seen. The first eight chapters deal with training missions. You will have to read the appropriate chapters in the manual in order to complete the 32 training missions and in this way you are introduced to all the facets of the Falcon. The rest of the manual deals with everything else contained in this sim and believe me there is a lot! For those who do not plan to become virtual F-16 pilots there is the Cadets guide which caters for the less hardcore flight sim enthusiasts out there. The reason for this is that Falcon is scalable from almost arcade-mode to awesome expert mode. In reality Falcon 4 is for hardcore simmers that seek absolute realism and detail in avionics, flight model and environment. The box also contains a map of Korea. This is quite appropriate considering the game is set in Korea. However this is where the first of many problems arises. The writing on the map is so small as to be illegible and therefore doesn't serve much purpose. Oh well at least they tried.

Everything but the kitchen-sink!

Microprose have really taken the kitchen-sink approach with this simulation. It has everything virtual combat pilots have been begging for and more. It has an Instant Action mode in which you can choose air-to-air mode or "mud moving missions" A.K.A. air-to-ground missions. It also has a Dogfight mode that is similar to Instant Action except that it is more structured, involves teamwork and is really geared for multiplayer. However should you choose to play single-player the computer will fly all the other pilots. It has a Tactical Engagement mode and a Campaign mode but more about these later. There is an ACMI mode in which you can watch recordings of your missions from beginning to end and it is in this mode that you'll get to see the mistakes you made and where that Atoll missile came from that toasted you. The ACMI recorder is very robust and you can watch from any angle, zoom in and out and many other options. The sim also contains a Tactical Reference section, which is the encyclopaedia of the sim. In this section you can read about and see photos and 3D representations of all the planes, vehicles, ships, missiles etc to be found in the sim. A very welcome feature is the ability to listen to and learn the distinctive tones of different blips, as they would sound on your Radar Warning Receiver in your cockpit. Then there is the Logbook where you choose your pilot, his photo and squadron insignia. It is here that a record is kept of your kills, deaths and most importantly your ranks and medals. The communications sec-

tion is your multiplayer-section. Falcon 4.0 boasts that it will enable players to join up and fly co-operative missions in real-time continuous campaigns or in missions created in the Tactical Engagement Mission Creator or in the Dogfight mode. However due to the problems encountered in the sim, which I will explain in a moment, I was unable to fly multiplayer.

Tactical Engagement is the heart and soul of the sim. In TE you will find the comprehensive training missions and also the very important mission creator. The mission creator enables you to create a mission, post it on the Net, download and fly other user-created single missions. You can even create mini-campaigns, which are campaigns consisting of a number of linked missions created in TE. The mission creator is brilliant and has tons of options, but it does contain numerous bugs and it is clear that Microprose still has some patching to do before it is 100%. Even as it is you can create millions of missions or if you're like me (i.e. the lazy type) you can just download missions from the Net. However, you will have to get used to downloading missions and mini-campaigns or creating your own if you really want to enjoy this sim because...the Campaign is broken!



Mirror reflections are some of the many eye candy features of this superb Sim.

Do you consider this enough ammo for a quick pass over Iraq?

The Campaign is Broken!

Unfortunately it is true. The campaign in Falcon 4.0 is unlike any other. It is real-time. It is dynamic. It is never the same. It waits for no one. It has a full ground war as well as an air war. Every little soldier, tank, plane and ship is modelled and is on the move. It is the most realistic and immersing feeling of being in a 'real shooting war' that has ever graced the PC. It is a thing of genius. So what's wrong with it? Well unless you have at least a Pentium II 450 and 128 MB RAM you aren't going to get to see it in its full glory. The problem is that the full campaign uses so many CPU cycles to run the campaign and all the units etc. that there is very little left to run the graphics engine. It becomes a virtual slide-show on lower end machines. It is clear that Microprose has a lot of work to do optimising the code in the campaign engine. As if that is not bad enough the campaign mode also has a memory leak that makes things even slower as time progresses. If Microprose eventually gets things sorted out in the Campaign it promises to be the closest you'll ever get to a real war without volunteering for the USAF but until then it is virtually unplayable. Thus the importance of the TE missions. The missions created in Tactical Engagement do not suffer the same frame rate problems and neither do the TE created mini-campaigns. So with the TE not all is lost for this sim. TE turns out to be this sim's saving grace - that is other than its superb graphics and avionics modelling!

Internal cockpit views are incredibly detailed.

Stand in line for the Korea Sightseeing Tour

Falcon 4.0 has the most photo-realistic graphics ever seen in a PC flight sim, bar none. You will have to experience these graphics to believe them. Even my girlfriend (who hates computer games) was raving about them and that says a lot! Microprose have modelled the entire Korean Peninsula and the terrain graphics are simply superb. Looking out your cockpit you'll see your reflection in the window! This feature is not just eye-candy but really helps with your situational awareness too. The aicraft graphics are excellent and all the objects in the sim are faithfully reproduced. Like many other recent sims you see moving parts such as landing gear, speed-brake, elevators etc. You can spot Mig-29s or Phantoms from their distinctive smoke trails in the distance, watch missiles flying about in the air and artillery shells arcing over the battlefield, as well as dust clouds from tanks that are on the move. Microprose has thought of every detail imaginable. Of course to see these graphical details in all their full glory you will need a mean-machine of a PC.

Welcome to my office.

The 2D cockpit is the most faithfully recreated cockpit I have ever seen and every single button, dial or lever is fully clickable, just like the real thing. This brings me to the vari-

REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

PC CD-ROM

Flying into the danger zone.

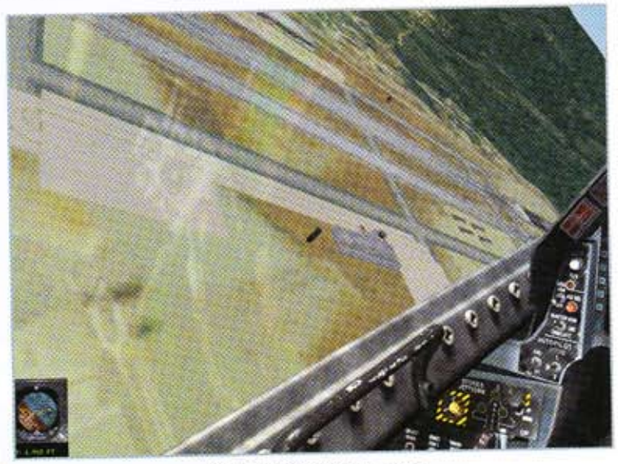
elled in terms of attention to detail and include everything that is on the real F-16C (as long as it isn't classified!). It has all the myriad of radar modes and sub-modes, all the various navigation modes and of course all of the weapons delivery modes. Those should take you at least a month to learn and will have hardcore simmers drooling. It doesn't get more realistic than this.

ous views available. To sum up... there is every view available that anybody could possibly want, from external views to 3D virtual cockpits to the action view and numerous others, such as tracking, satellite, enemy, friendly, incoming, chase and flyby views. There are also numerous types of padlock views available. You can choose to add labels to objects that you see in order to help with ID. There is even the option of adding arrows to your views that indicate which way to look to return to full frontal view. There is of course the night-vision green view and the redout and blackout, which generate a sort of increasing tunnel vision as you pull more G-forces. The avionics in this sim are extremely well mod-

Half-baked.... Can you say pre-Christmas rush?

The truth is that although Falcon 4.0 is the most comprehensive, realistic, detailed and graphically splendid combat simulation ever released - it was released too soon. It simply is not finished. There are far too many bugs, the programme crashes often in campaign mode, there is a memory leak and the loading times are extremely long. The Microprose crew have already released a patch and their support is the best in the industry and you can believe they will squash every bug in this sim with many more patches (a big patch is due anytime now). Unfortunately I have to review the product found on the shop-shelf and that product was not ready for release... and it's going cause a lot of pain and grief for those without the right system. In conclusion this sim is a very frustrating experience because it has everything I ever wanted in a sim and more but is going to force me to upgrade to experience it all.

Reaper



Anybody seen my barf packet?

Patched!

Reaper notified us that after installing the patch (available on our cover CD) the speed problem he was having with the Dynamic Campaign all but disappeared. Bear this in mind when checking our final score. You could effectively bring the final Playability score up to 71 giving you an overall of 86.

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Falcon 4 is the definitive jet combat simulator. It has the most complex, authentic and realistic avionics, flight modelling and immersing environment ever seen. However it needs a super PC to run in its full glory and it still has to be extensively patched. before it really earns the title "King of Combat Simulations".	92	90	90	85	90	60	85

INTERNET: www.falcon4.com

MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
TCP/IP (2+ Players) Modem (2 Players) Serial (2 Players)	Total Air War Janes F15	+ Super Avionics + Excellent Flight Model + Detailed Dynamic Campaign - Extreme System Req. - Memory Leak - Many Bugs

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW RELIGION

HERETIC II

Superior Character Capabilities
As Corvus, Sidhe warrior from Heretic, wield magical powers, cast spells, unleash animated weapons and perform instinctive moves, such as unprecedented climbing, gymnastic and acrobatic manouvers.

Revolutionary Quake® Powered Action
Seeing is believing. The enhanced Quake II™ engine delivers fluid 3-D animation and fast-moving action.

The Beauty of the Heretic Universe
Famed developer, Raven, does what it does best: beautifully rich gameplay. Battle through a 3-D continent of sinking cities and underground civilisations that are, in one word: legendary.

Heretic Meets Third Person
Surrender to insanely fast-paced action from a frighteningly immersive third-person perspective. Cooperative/deathmatch multiplayer has never seemed so real. You never knew it could be like this.

Actual gameplay screenshots

RAVEN

Mayhem WAREHOUSE

JHB: Tel (011) 315 1000 CAPE TOWN: Tel (021) 531 7810 DURBAN: (031) 579 3300 Bloemfontein: (051) 448 3512 PE: (041) 33 0429
For more information visit our website: www.mmw.co.za

ACTIVISION.

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PC CD-ROM

PRO PILOT 99

Comprehensive and complete - but only flying nuts need apply.

For starters there is no quick flight option in Pro Pilot 99, but it doesn't really need it anyway. The start menu allows you to select US or European Flights or training options before dumping you in your aircraft on the runway ready for takeoff. This can be configured, as can the type of aircraft you choose. Here the game offers the ultimate in mouth-watering options - the Cessna Citation 525 Jet. This should bring drool to the lips of any flight simulation fan that wants to know if anyone has done a better job than Microsoft at modelling a jet. Well Dynamix have. The sound as the jets start and warm up to operating RPM is more than enough to make up for any impatience generated in learning the controls. Moreover, the controls are complex so maybe that quick take-off might take a little longer. If jets aren't your thing then you'll be happy to know that you can choose from two different models of Cessna Skyhawks or three different Beechcraft.

I was lying about there being no quick flight options by the way. Just taking off involves a proper start-up cycle, pre-flight checks, pre-takeoff checks and a list of things to watch out for during various stages of your trip. To give you an idea, the Citation Jet checklist goes something like this - fuel pumps on, battery on, fuel selector on left and right, parking brake on, thrust to zero, landing gear down, fuel quantity check, beacon on, engines unlink, start left, check TT and N1 speed, repeat for right engine, link, avionics power on, engines link. In case you think I typed that out the manual you're wrong. I didn't. You'll get to know and love those procedures to the point of memorising them. The cockpit gauges are modelled exactly as they appear and behave, something which Flight Unlimited II skimped on. You can also turn your head and have a look at the interior of your aircraft, as well as peeking out the window to check for oncoming aircraft or bogies, no wait - wrong game.

The game's authors have thought of this possibility and included a tutorial on how to avoid oncoming aircraft using Visual Flight Rules. As far as I can remember it is a hard turn to the right but I haven't had to use it during a flight yet - touch wood. The tutorials detail how to accomplish manoeuvres, what instruments to scan and which controls do

Dynamix have applied themselves to the more leisurely complexities of civilian flight. Pro Pilot 99 is easily the most comprehensive civilian flight simulator to date and as an ardent Flight Unlimited series fan this means I had to do some pride swallowing to admit it. Good as it is though Pro Pilot does come second to Flight Unlimited in some aspects. Flight Simulator 98 fans could also try giving Pro Pilot 99 a spin to experience the actual sensation of flight on the PC. - Maverick

Civ Flight Sim

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 133 mhz 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mb SVGA Video Card 200 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim II 233 mhz 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (100% dx.) 450 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Dynamix

Publisher: Sierra

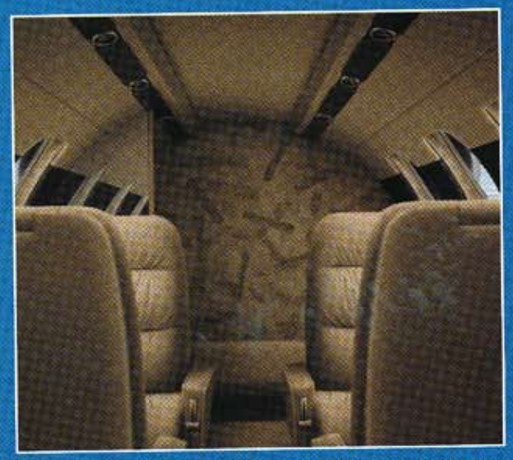
Supplier: Datatec Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111

RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.sierra.com

Awsome scenery and true flight physics are key to Pro Pilot 99 success.

The sought after Cessna Citation 525 Jet.



Forget about the dials. where is the control sticks?

what. The only pain is having to put the second CD into the drive to access them.

The navigational aspects of flying are modelled in very confusing detail. You have multiple NAVs, COMs, and GPS so you can't really get lost, ILS for landing help, and ATIS for local conditions. The radio section of the rather thick manual takes up a large proportion of it, prompting a friend to ask whether I was studying for my PPL. You just about can, despite warnings on the box to the contrary. They are probably just worried about getting sued.

In the air

A 3Dfx card is highly recommended and with Intel's finest and fastest and lots of RAM, Pro Pilot 99 is almost as good as Flight Unlimited II when in the air. I say almost because the amount of scenery you have means some sort of speed and quality trade-off. Ground textures are not as detailed and cities are limited to famous landmarks only. That having been said, you could log hundreds of hours without even coming close to exploring all the terrain.

Software mode is a different story though. A Pentium 166 MMX with 64 MB of RAM, DirectX 6 and a run-of-the-mill SVGA card just will not cut it. There are plenty of customisable options for the graphics, accessible from the top menu but they don't make up for the fact that software mode crawls. There's also some nasty rendering bugs. Clouds in the middle-distance look like grey skyscrapers and land textures look very blocky when flown over at low altitude. In this regard, Flight Unlimited II tends to win, as its software mode is far more playable on the average PC.

Cheaper than a PPL

I highly recommend Pro Pilot 99 to someone really in love with civilian flight in all its forms. It really is procedurally detailed to perfection, but loses height somewhat in the graphics department. Perhaps the ideal game would be a combination of Pro Pilot 99 and Flight Unlimited 2 with a combat option, but that will have to wait. Otherwise if you eat, sleep and dream flying (and you have a nice PC), grab a copy.

Maverick

PC CD-ROM

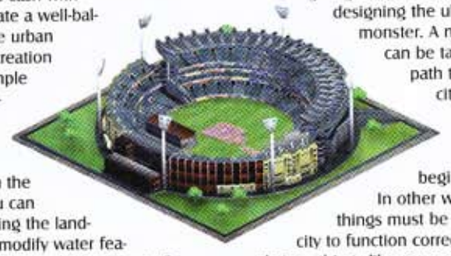
SIM CITY 3000

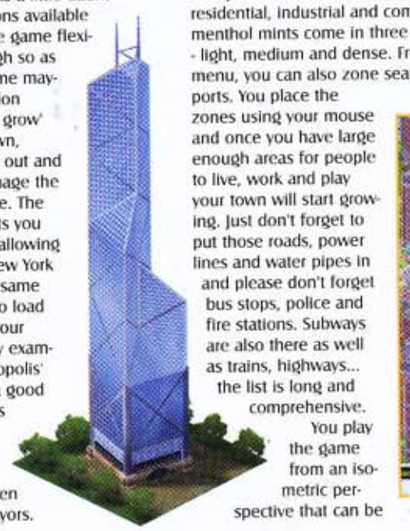
Foul smelling garbage dumps and washed out roads are just a few of the problems faced by local town councils here in South Africa, but this isn't a political platform so we'll end the discussion right here. More to the point though, if given the resources and authority do you think you could do better a better job?

RedTide

City Builder	
Min Required	**Recommended**
Pentuim 166 MMX 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mb SVGA Video Card 10 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim 200 MMX 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (3Dfx etc.) 10 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)
Developer: Maxis	
Publisher: Electronic Arts	
Supplier: EA Africa Tel: (011) 803-1212	
RRP: R 299.00	
International Web Site www.simcity3000.com	

The successful foundation that all 'Sim' games rest on is the fact that people love playing god wherever they can. These games have always had high appeal simply because they put you, the player, in the ultimate role. The idea behind Sim City 3000 is simple enough - you are given a piece of ground and some cash with which you must create a well-balanced and profitable urban environment. Your creation can grow from a simple town with surrounding farms right up to a continental hub with airports and skyscrapers. On the most basic level you can start your city by using the landscape generator to modify water features, topography and even the amount of trees generated before you position your first paving block. If this seems a little daunting there are easier options available that effectively makes the game flexible and accessible enough so as not to overwhelm first time mayors. The starter town option allows you to 'watch and grow' an established young town, everything is already laid out and all you have to do is manage the subsequent growth phase. The real city terrain option lets you load existing city terrain allowing you to build your own New York or Moscow on the exact same kind of land. You can also load previously saved cities (your own) or one of the many examples available. The 'Metropolis' saved city will give you a good idea of how complex this game can get - it's a sprawling densely populated nightmare that will test the mettle of even the most dynamic of mayors.

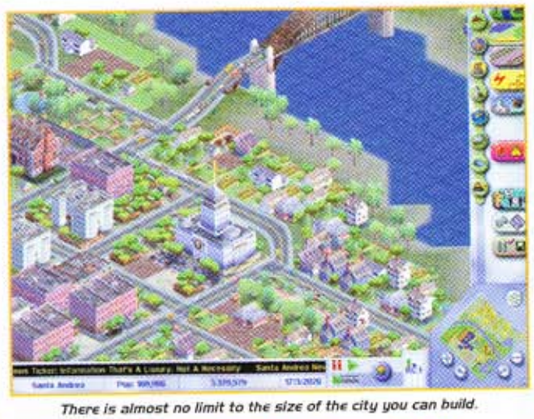




Enter the common sense zone

Your two best friends when building a city are common sense and planning. Everything in the game works around the same basic set of laws that governs real cities in the real world. Easy you might be thinking, far from it when put to practice. The game starts paused giving the player time to start designing the ultimate urban monster. A number of routes can be taken along the path to the perfect city but the same foundation must be laid each time you begin a new venture. In other words, a few things must be in place for any city to function correctly. Besides obvious things like power lines, roads and getting water to your people you must also set-up zones. Zones come in three flavours - residential, industrial and commercial and like menthol mints come in three strengths as well - light, medium and dense. From the zone menu, you can also zone seaports and airports. You place the zones using your mouse and once you have large enough areas for people to live, work and play your town will start growing. Just don't forget to put those roads, power lines and water pipes in and please don't forget bus stops, police and fire stations. Subways are also there as well as trains, highways... the list is long and comprehensive. You play the game from an isometric perspective that can be rotated around four locked views. You are also able to zoom in on the action which looks really good initially but the closer you zoom the more the graphics suffer, becoming blocky and ill defined. A nice touch is the inclusion of multitudes of people and vehicles

The 'Finger of God' touches down.

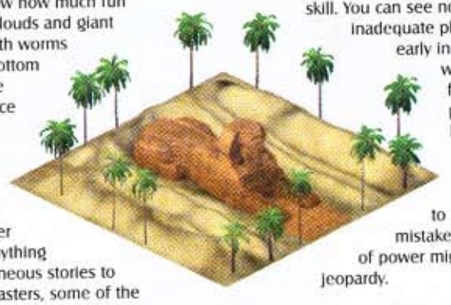


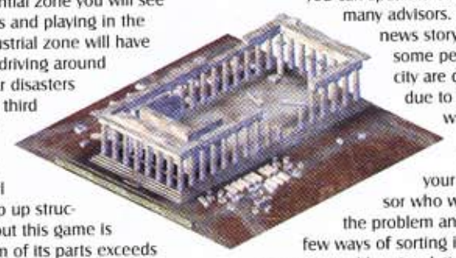
There is almost no limit to the size of the city you can build.

all moving around each city map as you play. If you select a residential zone you will see people riding bicycles and playing in the streets whilst an industrial zone will have people working and driving around in trucks. The popular disasters have returned in this third game and now look much better than ever before. The tornado will literally hurl debris around and rip up structures. Everything about this game is polished and the sum of its parts exceeds the whole product.

Playing Sim City 3000 is a full time job, there are literally hundreds of micro management tasks awaiting you in your new role as mayor. Taking out loans and approving ordinances becomes everyday tasks and it's all to keep your little city dwellers happy. Everything you do affects the game in a number of different ways. For example putting a coal power plant near your city results in unacceptable pollution levels, equally using nuclear power is risky anywhere as we all know how much fun nuclear dust clouds and giant Chernobyl earth worms can be. The bottom line is to make your city a place everyone is dying to get into. Along the bottom of the screen is a news ticker that covers anything from miscellaneous stories to full blown disasters, some of the news stories are real problems in your city and by clicking on them you can speak to one of your many advisors. Let's say a news story reports that some people in the city are dying of thirst due to a lack of water, following this link will take you to your utilities advisor who will point out the problem and suggest a few ways of sorting it out. A water shortage problem is relatively minor in the grand scheme of things but how well do you think you will cope when your transport infrastructure cannot supply the demand? It's easy to put up a water tower and lay a few pipes but redesigning and implementing a traffic problem solution requires a little more skill. You can see now how inadequate planning early in the game will result in financial problems later and once you start taking out loans to pay for silly mistakes your seat of power might be in jeopardy.

These are your Administrative Aids.





Too much pressure

This quick summation of Sim City 3000 really doesn't do it any justice, around an eighth of what is available has been covered and new features are discovered almost every time you play. There aren't any serious problems with it except for the blocky graphics on the closest level of zoom and being a touch slow on low end machines. It's a niche game that will appeal to people who enjoyed the first two games or basically anyone who thinks they could do better than their own local town council, just remember what you're buying here - it's the best city simulation game that exists for any platform.

RedTide

PC CD-ROM

I think that there is a plot at the NAG headquarters to get me to play a real-time-strategy game and enjoy it. I'm not a RTS fan and I haven't really enjoyed one since WarCraft II and although Soul Assassin says it's because I can't think on my feet, it's rather that I enjoy pondering over my enemy's demise.

- raz()r

Wondering around marshes and swamps is all in a days work for this maiden.

Well the Ed slipped this game into my hands a couple of weeks ago and asked me to review Rage of Mages, an RPG that is very popular overseas. Great, I enjoy roll-playing games having enjoyed the likes of Diablo and Fallout. Well, I started playing expecting a fairly standard fantasy RPG with plenty character attributes and speciality skills to tweak and was not disappointed. The game starts off predictably enough. There's the character set up where you select who and what your hero(line)'s going to be. Then a simple adventure, through a haunted forest, and then the arrival, some time later, at a town called Plagat (sounds positively colloquial).

Here you are able to sell off some of the treasure you picked up en route at the local trading store. There's also a pub where you can listen to gossip and pick up new adventures and hire mercenaries - for a cost - and a training hall for mages and fighters where you can improve their fighting skills. Your heroes gain experience, wear magical armour and use magical swords, just like any normal RPG. I started becoming suspicious on the third or fourth mission, when I was battling a horde of goblins. I had hired four archers and three-foot soldiers and a female mage had joined my cause of self-enrichment, when I found that it was becoming increasingly difficult to control my characters in the heat of the battle (I hadn't read the manual yet). Rage of Mages is a typical top down adventure and you need to select a character with your mouse and then issue instructions, such as "attack that goblin over there". Without really thinking about it, I selected all my archers and grouped them using the same CTRL + number that you would in Warcraft and did the same with my soldiers and two mages. I then sent the group of foot soldiers to start hacking at a group of goblins, and kept the archers back to pepper the enemy with arrows from behind, while the mages lent moral and medical support from a safe distance - then the penny dropped. I was using the same battle tactics I used in WarCraft II.

Rage of Mages is a RTS in the guise of an RPG - I'd been had and even enjoyed the experience, talk about sneaky!

Rage of Mages has a lot of depth. It is extremely popular overseas because of its unusual mix of roll playing and strategy that is set in a very rich world filled with Orcs and Trolls and plenty of magic. The other reason it's so popular is it is the first time that a strategy game includes heroes that you can nurture, grow and develop over time, a feature that I found adds tremendously to the value of the game. Rage of Mages was previously known as "Allods: Sealed Mystery", a game that was developed in Russia and then westernised by Monolith, a publisher of a couple of other RPG titles. One small gripe on its conversion is that while the game is great and the graphics truly impressive, the vocals really annoy. I found the really strong American accents that have replaced the original narration cold and impersonal. There is very little feeling and certainly no cultural association with a Yank that says "yeah" when ever you issue a command. Other than that small complaint, the game is, well refreshing. Trolls, Ogres and Orcs all have a completely unique style, animation is good and the graphics are very impressive. The landscape has been beautifully crafted. The terrain offers 3D similar to games like Total Annihilation as well as dynamic lighting effects with superb levels of detail.

The story is original and works well. Rage of mages tells the tale of a world that has been all but destroyed by a massive comet that brought destruction and death. Its force broke the world apart into fragments, showering everything with astral rain. The Great Mages, struggled to save the world and used their magic to hold the fragments together, forming separate islands or Allod. In order for this tenuous equilibrium to be maintained, each Great Mage must remain upon his island so that the world does not break apart. A mystery on the Allod Umoier causes you to be sent to the Emperor of Kania to fight against the forces of Kadagan and in your travels you become involved in the Allod's mysteries and intrigues. After you have selected your hero from the four available options, male or female fighter or mage, you can then adjust their character attributes or leave them as default. These include body, agility, mind and spirit. Next you will need to select your heroes skill focus. For the mage there are five different spheres of magic: astral, fire, water, air and earth while the fighter can choose from blade, axe or shooting. As the story progresses, you will find four other characters that you will add to your party in addition to hiring mercenaries for various adventures. As your heroes increase in skill, training them becomes more expensive as does purchasing weapons and magical items of more power.

The game is quest based and quite linear but there are numerous side adventures to keep the game interesting. Not all the characters you meet are evil and there are ogres and other residents of this land that you will befriend. There are over 30 missions to complete which should take you a good couple of hours to complete. At higher levels it can get quite difficult especially when the other side has magic to match yours. I chose the mage as my character, which although quite weak in battle does allow me to sit back and guide the battle.

In addition to the great single player qualities, Rage of Mages has excellent multiplayer capabilities on a variety of interesting maps. There is a spawn facility although I'm not certain how many can play on a single CD. There is talk of a campaign editor being released and you should be able to download new multiplayer maps off the Rage of Mages web site soon. In the Russian version, all maps have to be submitted for approval by the developer before they can be used which is one way to ensure that only high quality multiplayer maps enter the market.

To conclude, Rage of Mages is a really great game. This combination of role-playing alongside strategy and a strong story line makes for fun and rewarding playing. I hope that the local multiplayer community takes the trouble and sets up a local server so that this game can become a popular part of the online gaming culture.

raz()r

RPG / Strategy

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 100 (Mhz) 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mb SVGA Video Card 85 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 5)	Pentuim 166 (Mhz) 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (100% etc.) 180 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 5)

Developer: Byka Entertainment

Publisher: Monolith Production

Supplier: Redlion Interactive
Tel: 082 564 3206

RRP: R 279.00

International Web Site
www.rageofmages.com

The top down isometric view works to the advantage of the gameplay by bringing out the real-time strategy element.

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Combining genres is a tricky art that Rage Of Mage manages to pull off with out a flaw. It's engrossing story and stunning visuals deliver a polished game that's hard to flaw on any level. Just turn down that volume knob.	89	76	84	88	86	92	86

INTERNET: www.rageofmages.com

MULTIPLAYER: TCP/IP (16 Players) IPX/SPX (16 Players)

COMPARITIVES: Diablo Fallout

PRO'S and CON'S: + Combined Strategy & RPG + Varied Missions + Good Character Development - No Map Editor - Awful Soundtrack

Return to Krondor

Return to Krondor, the sequel to 'Betrayal at Krondor' finally graced our shelves over the festive season. I have been looking forward to this title for a while now due to the fact that it is based on fantasy author Raymone E. Feist's novels. He is known for his gripping stories, well-developed characters and detailed worlds. One would expect a similar game. Does Return to Krondor meet with the high standards put forward in the novels? - DarkSkies

To say that I am a Raymond E. Feist fan through and through would be an understatement. So far, I have read every single novel he has written and it was with great expectations that I accepted to review this title, which is based on his fantasy world of Midkemia. The Tear of the Gods, a holy artefact, on its way to Krondor via an Ishaplan ship is in peril as pirates board and scuttle the ship, killing everyone. Fortunately the pirates are too busy gathering gold and gems that they forget to remove the artefact before the ship sinks. Now one of the most powerful artefacts known to man is at the bottom of the sea and a pirate, Bear, has conspired with dark forces to retrieve the Tear of the Gods. You and your party are the only hope of restoring it to its rightful place, The Temple of the Gods. Return to Krondor is but a part of the story and according to Sierra there will be more games to continue the greater story, which seems to be the release of some great evil. Of course, your job would be to stop this from happening.

In Return to Krondor you play the part of the infamous Jimmy the Hand, ex-thief who saved the prince's live when he was still just a young boy. Currently Squire to the prince of Krondor and trying to make a name for himself, he sets off on yet another adventure. Along the way you meet up with three other characters to aid you in your quest. The story progresses much the same as with any typical Feist novel. Each chapter in the game starts with an introduction and chapters jump to different parts of Midkemia as characters follow their own adventures and quests, which ultimately help solve the one problem - recovering the Tear of the Gods.

The game offers some innovative options such as the alchemy systems with which your mages can mix their own concoctions or duplicate those you may buy in shops such as health potions or magic potions. The combat system is innovative as well, using a turn based system with initiative, where characters' attack order differs from battle to battle (very similar to the AD&D combat model). For each turn in combat a character has a certain number of attacks which can be made, and when you have mages who cannot wear armour in your party planning becomes essential, especially with the bigger monsters and enemies. Combat pretty much boils down to keeping your mages at the back while your fighters take all the punishment in the front.

The only area of RtK that falters is the graphics. Even though it is a good representation of the Midkemia world there is so much more they could have done. Characters are rendered real time with textures that seem blocky at times and the backdrops are very static. Usually RPG games have an environment that seems alive and draws you into the world. Not so with RtK and this is most apparent with the ocean scene where the backdrop is the ocean full of ripples and waves. There is only one problem though - the ripples and waves are static, meaning no animations. A lot in the game is taken for granted though, the developers seem to think that every gamer knows the history of Midkemia and they often fail to explain even simple things such as the Mockers. It is advisable to first read the books before buying the game since you will have a much richer understanding of the context. Besides this and a few other areas with the same static feel, RtK is one of the better RPG titles out at the moment. It offers decent graphics, a true Feist story and music and sound to fit the mood of Midekemia. Return to Krondor should hold plenty of appeal to any Raymond Feist fan.

DarkSkies

Riftwar Saga

To find out more about the world of Midkemia and its characters I suggest that you read the Riftwar Saga novels. The trilogy consists of "The Magician", "Silver Thorn" and "Darkness at Sethanon". If you enjoyed Tolkien's Lord of the Rings you should feel right at home with

I suppose you are all wondering why I called you here today?

Role Playing Gme

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 166 MMX 24 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mb SVGA Video Card 308 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim 200 MMX 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (3dfx / nVidia etc.) 308 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Pyro Technix
Publisher: Sierra Studios
Supplier: Datatec Crew, Tel: (011) 266-1111
RRP: R 299.00
International Web Site: www.sierrastudios.com

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Return to Krondor is based on novelist Raymond E. Feist's fantasy world, Midkemia. This title is the first in a series of games with a continuing story but unfortunately lacks ambience and fails to properly introduce the rich world created by the author.	80	79	80	82	78	81	80

INTERNET: www.sierrastudios.com

MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
None	Kings Quest 8 Quest for Glory 5	+ Raymond E. Feist Story + Innovative Alchemy + Interesting Combat No Ambience - Fails To Explain - The World In Detail

TRIBES

STARSIEGE

Co-operation and organisation are not qualities you think about when fighting to the death in a multiplayer game. Starsiege: Tribes goes a long way to bringing a little teamwork to the 'me, myself and I' madness of a typical deathmatch. - RedTide

On another level, besides being a 'work together' sort of game, Tribes takes a brave step forward by not offering a single player game and is instead a multiplayer-only game. This fact isn't advertised very clearly on the box so remember, we did warn you. A multiplayer-only game is always going to be a gamble in this country with our poor bandwidth and lack of support for online gaming - but things are changing...

1st Person Multiplayer

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 200 MMX Pro II or I-amD 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2 Mg SVGA Card 180 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98/NT (DirectX 6) Modem / LAN Required	Pentuim II 233 / K6-2-3D 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (3dfx / nVidia etc.) 180 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98/NT (DirectX 6) Modem / LAN Required

Developer: Dynamix
Publisher: Sierra Studios
Supplier: Datatec Crew, Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP: R 299.00
International Web Site: www.starsiege.com

You go there and I'll stay here

Tribes is a first person shooter that primarily takes place outside - there are a few buildings scattered about but they usually only serve as a base or spawning point. The game requires different teams or tribes to battle it out across a number of different scenarios including the standard capture the flag game, and now a new idea, capture and hold, which revolves around capturing and controlling locations by touching a switch. The team that can occupy the location for the longest wins (dead bodies don't constitute occupation in case you're wondering). Defend and destroy is another option where your team must protect your base and destroy the enemy base. Find and retrieve involves searching for items scattered around the map or in the opposing tribe's base - get all the items to your base and your team wins is the general idea here. These all work extremely well and if this seems a little too involved for you then you can always just play a standard deathmatch game. There are a few training missions available but they can't by any stretch of the imagination be described as a single player experience. The graphics are impressive, especially the fast moving outside locations, and there are a couple of nice looking munitions special effects. Some of the maps feature light fog and rain while others are played at night. All the usual moves are present and accounted for with the inclusion of a 'sniper' zoom mode that makes long distance offensive manoeuvres as easy as squeezing the trigger. Besides running around and jumping over rocks your character can also lift off into the air using a jet pack device, which is useful when attacking some bases as they are sometimes suspended meters in the air. Learning how to use this new mobility is often the difference between life and death and the tricky control system does take time to master.

The map screen in this game doubles up as your 'personal digital assistant' allowing commands to be given to your team mates from its dynamic real-time interface. It is here that you can plan your assault on the enemies base and assess your teams overall status. Learning how to use the 'personal digital assistant' is the key to winning certain missions.

Guns digest

There are rules governing the use of certain weapons, for example you must be wearing the heavy armour in order to use the powerful mortar weapon. If you do wear the heavy armour then you can't fly very high and your movement speed is reduced. Other than weapons, you can also use three different types of flying vehicles to move around the map quickly. Gun turrets are used to protect your base and there are a number of packs that you can use to repair yourself or fellow players. To buy equipment you must log into a station and from there you can change your armour, get more ammunition and even control gun turrets. The list is endless and this title has to be one of the most singled minded and focused multiplayer games available to date.

Addiction

The only eyebrow that must again be raised is the multiplayer-only nature of this game. It is vital that you have a reliable and fast connection to the Internet before spending your money. There is currently a server running Tribes in South Africa and thanks to the tight network code, minor latency between your machine and the server goes largely unnoticed. It's an excellent game and is the first of its kind to arrive on the scene. If you do play this game on the Internet then watch that phone bill - it's addictive and absorbing and having just another go could bankrupt you.

RedTide

Local South African Server

A Tribes server which runs a number of different multiplayer missions here in South Africa can be accessed in the following way. Install the game normally and it should automatically connect to the main overseas Tribes server. Now select the GameCity Tribes Server from the list, which should be the only one there with a decent ping.

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
If you have an Internet connection or access to a local area network then Tribes is without a doubt the best multiplayer experience you'll ever have. It's managed to take co-operative team gaming to the next level at the cost of no single player missions.	82	77	79	83	86	85	82

INTERNET: www.starsiege.com

MULTIPLAYER	COMPARITIVES	PRO'S and CON'S
TCP/IP (32 Players) IPX/SPX (32 Players)	Quake 2 CTF Quake Team Fortress Unreal	+ Brilliant Multiplayer + Innovative Concept + Executed Perfectly No Single Player Option - Tricky Jetpack Control - No Direct3D Support -

Sometimes a game comes along that tries to be a little different. Test Drive 4X4 is one of those games - it's different because you get to race four wheel drive vehicles on courses in unusual locations instead of the usual super cars in exotic locations. - Redtide

TEST DRIVE 4X4

Seeing that people can race dogs, horses, cars and even frogs it was inevitable that off-road racing would make an appearance some day. Test Drive 4X4 is all about off-road racing. The major differences that set a game like this apart from the numerous other racing games available are obvious only to the trained eye. Number one, your vehicle is big, ugly and slow but can navigate rugged terrain with ease. Number two, it seems that if you are going to race with an off-road jeep you don't require special effects, descent courses or an exciting game. This edition of the Test Drive series makes a dreadful turn for the worse. There is a large selection of off-road vehicles to choose from and besides all the usual Wranglers, Explorers and Defenders a few military ones have been thrown in for fun. You can drive on the verge of the road in interesting but unusual locations such as Switzerland, Wales, Morocco and Hawaii. It all sounds very interesting on paper but put to the test the whole thing falls flat on its face.

Four Wheel Drive Turkey

For starters the graphics are dull and boring with the same looking canyons, rocks and vegetation you could swear you've just seen seconds ago - it's very much like driving around in a tight circle. The sprites that make up the rest of the courses are also dismal, have no substance and look entirely out of place and crashing into things like trees has little impact on the game. The courses, besides looking similar seem to be designed to limit your racing to narrow spaces and deep gullies which kind of goes against the off-road theme and when things do open up a little you're surrounded by trees on all sides. The music isn't too bad but the sound effects are lacking and provide no hint of where you are and what you're doing. Some clipping problems also surface when turning corners and hitting walls. In summary this game should have been worked on a little longer, it's lacking in almost every department and there can really be no excuse for something like this. The only redeeming factor it has is a different approach to the tired racing formula.

RedTide

Off-Road Racer

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 133 Pentuim 200 16 MB RAM 2 X CDrom DirectX 2Mg SVGA Card 150 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim 166 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 3D Accelerator 150 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Accolade

Publisher: Accolade

Supplier: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212

RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.accolade.com

Criminals seem to be getting more and more advanced as time passes. Los Angeles is the setting this time around and it's all up to you, with the best the L.A.P.D. has to offer. - RedTide

FUTURE COP L.A.P.D.

After a devastating earthquake, criminal gangs have taken over the city of Los Angeles. The city is divided into zones and now it's all up to the police to take back the streets. Fortunately they've got something to back up their assault - the X-1 Alpha. This futuristic vehicle can transform from a bipedal robot shell into a hover car. It packs some serious firepower and has no trouble in taking down the bad guys - the good news is that you get to drive it!

The game can be viewed from a number of different isometric angles that are all useless except one. Each mission takes place in one of the city zones and they all involve walking or flying around and shooting enemy gun emplacements, drug crazed zombies and buildings. There are lifts and switches that must be activated in order for you to proceed and during each mission the police radio warns you of potential danger spots or tells you what to do next. This radio chatter is effective in providing a realistic sense of being in the middle of an urban war.

Graphically Future Cop is superb with stunning special effects and huge explosions. All the maps are detailed and there is plenty to see from your third person view. In essence there are two games in one on offer here. In the Crime War game you must infiltrate the criminal's stronghold and achieve different objectives progressing from level to level until the final confrontation. The second 'game' is the Precinct Assault, which is a tactical strategy game where you must beat your opponent with the help of Hover Tanks and Jet Choppers. You gain points for every successful mission. These points can then be used to purchase more vehicles and slowly build up your assault force.

Future Cop is good solid arcade action that keeps players immersed in the game with clever use of the police radio and a number of objectives for each level. There are a number of multiple player options and you can even play on a split screen as well as over a LAN or the Internet. It's a good game but doesn't offer anything new or innovative.

RedTide

Arcade Shooter

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 166 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom Direct3D Comp. SVGA 20 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim 200 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 3D Accelerator 100 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Electronic Arts

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Supplier: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212

RRP: R 299.00

Local Web Site
www.ea.co.za

Who needs depth and originality? We've all been longing for some pure action for far too long now and Barrage has come to the rescue. - NAG

BARRAGE

Looking very much like Incoming, which achieved high scores in the graphics and playability departments, Barrage is a rare find. You fly as a maverick freelancer in a futuristic fighter craft destroying and collecting as you go - the funny thing with this particular fighter craft is that it is almost impossible to die in the conventional 'hit the ground and explode' kind of way. The game is built around time limits and the more punishment you take the more time is subtracted. You also never run out of ammunition, which shifts the action away from collecting boxes and crates, and on to chasing down the clock. This formula works quite well and most levels can best be described as frantic. All the usual weapons are present and accounted for and there is a large selection of bad guys to blow up. Very little imagination has been injected into this title but it delivers what it promises, in abundant quantities. Which brings us to why it's a rare find. Barrage is a pure 'get in and go' type of game that offers ample challenge and demands quick reflexes. You don't need to invest hours on one game and it provides a good quick gaming fix. There are also numerous multiple player options so you don't need to play alone. Barrage is a 3D accelerated only title, which will obviously limit the amount of people that can play it. Overall a good solid game with plush visuals - just don't expect much. - NAG

3D Shooter

Developer: Mango Grits

Publisher: Activision

Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse
Tel: (011) 315-1000

RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.activision.com

Jumping up and down while screaming at a shiny silver ball might be acceptable down at the local arcade but these antics aren't very helpful when sitting in front of your PC at home - it's just not the same thing. - NAG

SIMON THE SORCERER'S PINBALL

There have been many attempts at recreating a game of pinball on the PC, some succeed and others like Simon the Sorcerer's Pinball fail. Your first warning sign is the fact that there is only one table to play on - no matter how many features one table can throw at you it just isn't enough. The character that everything is built around is Simon the Sorcerer, a teenager, who enjoyed some fame with his first two puzzle solving adventure games namely Simon the Sorcerer 1 and 2. A third in the series is promised at the end of this year and departs from the old games into the realm of real-time 3D. Somehow this pinball game tries to fit into the Simon the Sorcerer world but falls flat. If you're wondering, there is a story attached to this game - you must rescue the good guys by defeating the bad guys. It's pretty pointless and doesn't even translate into the game itself. For me, pinball is all about high scores and nothing else.

Simon the Sorcerer is let down by suspect ball physics and extremely average table animation. The table gains points for looking good but is static, confusing and doesn't give you any sense of pace, lacking fluidity with frequent pauses in the action. The sound effects are repetitive and consist mainly of a handful of spot effects and voiceovers, even the music, while bearable initially soon begins to grate the drums. There are far superior products on the market and without the scrolling tables and realistic animations of other pinball games, Simon the Sorcerer's Pinball is the furthest you can get from an enjoyable pinball session. Perhaps this game might find favour with the younger audience but without that important excitement element don't expect them to reap hours of pleasure from it. It is priced slightly lower than most other games but that still won't make much difference. - NAG

Pinball

Developer: AdventureSoft

Publisher: AdventureSoft

Supplier: Gametronix
Tel: (011) 886-1972

RRP: R 269.00

International Web Site
www.adventuresoft.com

One of the most anticipated flight simulation sequels of all time, next to Falcon 4, was Red Baron 2. However, it only supported 2D graphics and was extremely bug ridden. Sierra heard the calls for 3D support and the result is Red Baron 3D. - NAG

RED BARON 3D

Those of you who bought Red Baron 2 can get the 3D benefits by merely downloading the patch without having to buy Red Baron 3D. You can be up and fighting in no time at all. This is "in your face" combat and "seat of your pants" flying. You can fly single missions, choosing from 28 various sorties including escort, balloon busting and tutorial missions. Most of your time is spent in the campaign option, which is the real meat of the game and is one of the most immersing experiences you'll come across in any flight simulation. The attention to detail is amazing and the era has been faithfully recreated including terrain changes as you move through the different seasons. Graphically the sim is far better than Red Baron II because of the 3D acceleration that it now supports, although at this stage it only supports 3DFx Glide not D3D. However, in the graphics department this title still cannot compare to others such as TAW or Jane's F15. The aeroplanes still look like 2D objects, the damage graphics are not very realistic and when you fire your guns, the action looks antiquated. So, if you are interested in WWI combat, then there is no better WWI simulation than Red Baron 3D. The graphics are not eye-popping but the overall atmosphere and immersion is excellent. You'll end up spending hours on this one. - NAG

WWI Flight Simulation

Developer: Dynamix

Publisher: Sierra Studios

Supplier: Datatec Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111

RRP: R 299.00

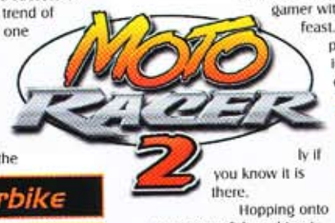
International Web Site
www.redbaron3d.com

Reviews Under Fire

PC CD-ROM

Slap the leathers on and grip the handlebars tight because the competition just became hotter. Whether its scraping dirt or burning rubber, Motor Racer 2 offers you the best of both worlds and all this with very interesting results in this arcade styled motorbike racer.

Storm



What we encountered with Motor Racer 2 was a little uncertainty about the success of attempting to continue the trend of two different games within one package. But to our surprise EA and Delphine Software have performed admirably in bringing the best of off-road and road based motorbike racing together. As usual with 3D acceleration features, the graphics are the stand out feature of MR2 with high frame rates and realistic landscapes, it serves the gamer with a stunning visual feast. However the common problem of pop-up graphics does happen quite often and can become quite annoying especially if you know it is there.

Hopping onto your powerful machine is all very well and easy but with the multiple selection of features per bike it is wise to consider the different advantages certain bikes will give you. Playing in Arcade Mode will make life a lot easier for the beginner because of the throttle open technique that will sling you around the well designed tracks (32 tracks in 5 locations) without coming off your bike. The computer AI is a little rough around the edges, not that it's easy, far from it, you will have a hard time keeping up with the front runners until you learn the ins and outs of the courses. The in-game options will allow for tests between either on or off road, and combining the two for the ultimate challenge. The physics around the game are not of the highest quality though, from what we gathered this is a very simple motorbike simulation with very little attention given to the finer details of normal racing simulations. You will however encounter big air jumps with death defying stunts thrown in for good measure and high-speed machines that give a new meaning to on-a-dime-cornering. MR2 comes with a Track Editor to design your own tracks that you can test yourself or friends on. It is one of the only games to offer this as part of the package and a pat on the back to EA for adding it to the retail version. One of the fun aspects of MR2 is the multiplayer option of 8-player LAN and 4-player split screen. There is nothing better than hitting a big air jump and flying over the heads of your buddies, while gaining two or three positions.

Don't expect anything too special to come from MR2 besides fast, exciting and fun racing that will keep you entertained for a reasonable amount of time. The lack of support for this genre has been capitalised on by Motor Racer 2 which gives you both options in one package and with a Track Editor thrown in it's not a bad deal at all.

Storm

Overall Rating: **77**

Arcade Motorbike

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 166 MMX 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom DirectX 2Mg SVGA Card 5 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim II 233 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (3Dfx / nVidia etc.) 200 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Delphine Software

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Supplier: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212

RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.delphinesoft.com

The human race would like to think of itself as the dominant species of earth but someone forgot that it's the cockroaches and not us that will still be around a million years from now.

RedTide

On a planet called Mur in a galaxy not too far away, feuding creatures have been battling each other for Mur's most precious resource, Anima. Now mankind has arrived and with typical human flair and grace has decided to take the valuable Anima for itself. Your job, playing as these fascinating alien creatures, is to stop this new alien invasion.

Something different is a good way to describe Dominant Species. It's a real-time strategy game with a slightly unusual approach to how the action is viewed. Similar to Populous 3 the game world is a 3D environment that can be rotated, zoomed and scrolled. You must do all the usual base building, unit producing and alien butt-kicking as countless other games in the past. The big difference with Dominant Species is that you get to control over 25 different alien creatures. The level of innovation and work done on this imaginary alien race is astounding - never before have so many unique creatures been so well designed and animated. It could almost put George Lucas to shame, given a much bigger budget. The game is a pleasure to behold in every respect and all the resource and base building is managed via an easy to understand interface.

Dominant Species

Everything about this title is great with two serious exceptions. To control the camera that shows you what's going on requires the most nimblest of fingers. It's annoying and quickly results in impatience with the whole thing. Weak artificial intelligence and path finding problems serve to further test your perseverance. Units behave stupidly and entire squads can be lost because they keep doing their own thing all the time. Dominant Species could have been one of the best games this year and, if given plenty of patience, might prove enjoyable, but it's hard to recommend a game that forces you to struggle with the controls so much. It would probably be better to try this one out before committing your cash - it's good but flawed.

RedTide

Overall Rating: **70**

Real Time 3D Strategy

Min Required	Recommended
Pentuim 200 MMX (without 3D Card) Pentuim 166 MMX (with 3D Card) 32 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 16-Bit SVGA Card 150 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)	Pentuim II 233 64 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator (3Dfx / nVidia etc.) 150 Mg Hard Drive Space Win 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Redstorm Enter.

Publisher: Take 2 Interactive

Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse
Tel: (011) 315-1000

RRP: R 299.00

International Web Site
www.redstorm.com

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After spending many days and nights attempting to be the first TOCA winner with the original release, which I failed at dismally, Codemasters have returned to ruin my life again with the next generation release. This time I promised the NAG staff that I would have the review finished on time and drop this petty attempt to beat the game. Yep, I failed dismally, again.

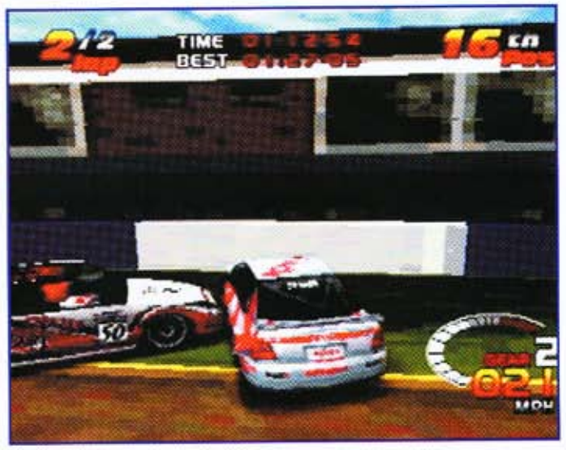
Storm

TOCA 2 TOURING CARS

Platform Action	
Developer:	Codemasters
Publisher:	Codemasters
Supplier:	Ster Kinekor Inter. Tel: (011) 445-7900
RRP:	R 459.00
International Web Site	www.codemasters.com

When a title enters its second phase, normally the next generation title disappoints in bringing something new to the game. What we encounter is a bit of a graphical boost and a few new characters but without actually making the purchase a viable option. Most titles expect to run on the success of its predecessor leaving the gamer disgruntled at the purchase. But as can be expected from Codemasters, they have made significant changes to the game mainly because the rules and regulations of the BTCC (British Touring Car Championship) have been reshuffled with a few interesting additions.

Codemasters decision to release TOCA 2 is not a calculated risk, actually far from it. The developers have kept close touch with the BTCC and have added the 1998 rules into the game. The standard 2-litre 4-door cars with a 8500 rpm limit are now featured in a short 'sprint' race (important to qualify high up on the grid) and a 'feature' race which is longer and has a compulsory pit stop to intensify the action. The BTCC is constantly monitoring the race and a new Penalty System has been added for dangerous driving. They have also included a 'Support Driver Championship' that has the drivers all racing in the seven new cars on nine new international tracks, leaving the competitive edge up to skill rather than raw power.



The introduction of the pit stop has added a new dimension to the game and is well presented. The autopilot takes control of the car while diving down the pit lane, relieving you to make decisions on the tyre changes, petrol intake and damage repairs. Setting up your vehicle before the race is also intensified with gear ratios, downforce pressures, brake balancing, and suspension settings all becoming imperative to the strategy of the race. The normal Arcade Mode is still available for the gamer looking to get in and burn rubber with the minimum of hassles.

In the graphical department the tracks are now featured in 512x256 resolution and the cars have been remodelled to accommodate the see-through windows and new damage settings. The game plays very similar to the original, though we found the frame rates to be somewhat quicker, simulating the feeling of speed slightly better. The internal car camera views have been spruced up with fully functional dashboards and a better viewing area.

The AI is of the highest quality and can be set by the use of the four difficulty settings that are opened when certain goals are achieved. The inclusion of the 'Two Player Championship' is great for bringing friends together (or not) as you both race for the same team in the hope of winning the overall constructors championship. Controlling TOCA 2 is a touch more sensitive than the original but the settings allow you to modify the sensitivity to suit your driving techniques. All the close intense racing and spine tingling spin-outs feature prominently in the gameplay and it has everything that a seasoned racing fan wants and needs. The overall playability is almost identical to TOCA and with just cause, why change something that works?

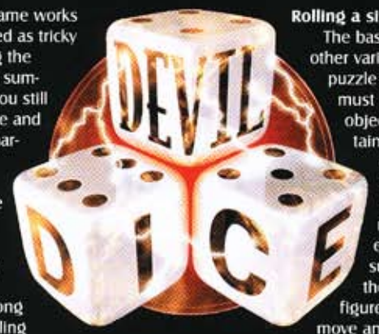
I cannot praise Codemasters enough with their range of solid hard working games that have recently entered the market. The PlayStation had only one contender for the racing game category, but now I can openly say that depending on the gamer' interests in racing, the comparatives are growing closer. TOCA 2 Touring Cars is a tribute to the console's ability to continue to entertain gamers old and young. If you want a game in your collection that is both entertaining and value for money then consider TOCA 2 next time you are out shopping.

Storm

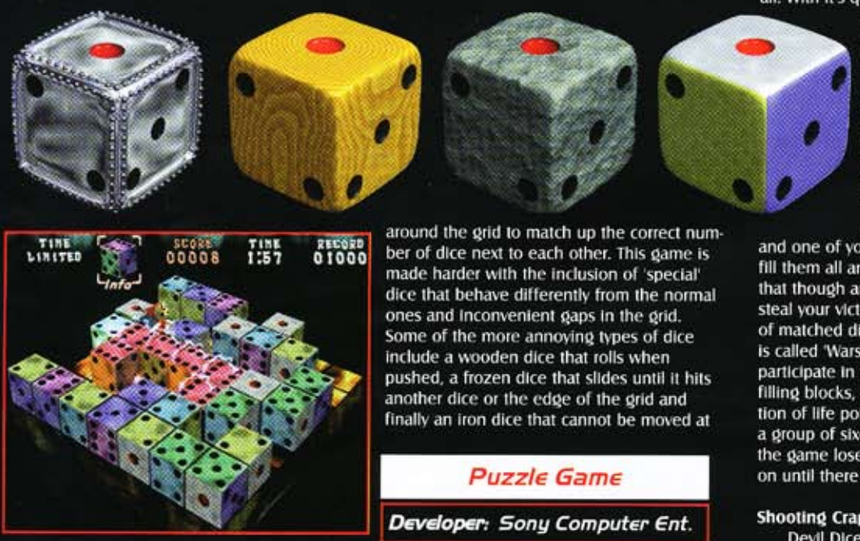
SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
With the new additions to TOCA 2 you will be overwhelmed at the changes to the game. The intense playability and eye candy graphics keep Codemasters flying high in the Racing Genre. If its racing you want then its TOCA 2 you must get.	93	89	88	NA	89	90	90

INTERNET	NO OF PLAYERS	MEMORY	PRO'S and CON'S
www.codemasters.com	1-2 Players	1 Blocks	+ Slightly Better Graphics + New Race Modes + Exciting Racing Still Thinking -

Puzzle games have been around for a long time. Tetris made them famous and now Devil Dice makes its mark with another valiant attempt. - RedTide



Describing how the game works can best be described as tricky and, without reciting the entire rulebook, this summary will have to do (if you still don't get it, buy the game and read the manual). The character you control in the game rides on top of a single dice, which can be rolled around a grid of dice sized blocks. Sometimes you'll end up on the floor of the grid and must push blocks along the ground instead of rolling around the grid to match up the correct number of dice next to each other. This game is made harder with the inclusion of 'special' dice that behave differently from the normal ones and inconvenient gaps in the grid. Some of the more annoying types of dice include a wooden dice that rolls when pushed, a frozen dice that slides until it hits another dice or the edge of the grid and finally an iron dice that cannot be moved at all. With it's quick-no-fuss interface along with speedy load times you'll keep trying until your brain gives up on you.



Rolling a six

The basic game has one other variation and that is the puzzle game, where you must complete specific objectives within a certain number of moves or try again. You begin with a few dice and a limited number of steps, each push or roll will subtract a step from the total. The idea is to figure out how to best move and roll the dice them. All this rolling and pushing must eventually result in getting a specific number of dice with the same value on the top face all lined up next to each other or grouped with their sides touching. The number of lined up dice must all have the same value facing up. For example, if you decide on the number four, you will need to roll, push and line up at least four dice next to each other in a group or row. Each of these dice must have the number four displayed on the top surface. As the last one connects, they begin to sink into the grid and while they're sinking, more dice will appear until the entire grid fills or you successfully curb the appearing dice within the allotted time. Easy huh?.

Puzzle Game

Developer:	Sony Computer Ent.
Publisher:	Sony Computer Ent.
Supplier:	Ster Kinekor Inter. Tel: (011) 445-7900
RRP:	R 399.00
International Web Site	www.playstation-europe.com

A big bonus is the inclusion of two unique multiplayer variants on the game theme. The first is a 'Battle' mode that sees two players, either a friend or a computer controlled character battling it out to make sides meet. Complete a sequence and one of your empty score boxes is filled, fill them all and you win. It isn't as simple as that though and your opponent can actually steal your victories or take over a sinking set of matched dice. The other multiplayer game is called 'Wars' and allows up to five players to participate in the same game. Here, instead of filling blocks, each player has a certain allocation of life points and if you managed to sink a group of sixes then all the other players in the game lose six life points each. This goes on until there is only one man standing.

Shooting Craps

Devil Dice seems terribly complex on the surface but after playing a few rounds the initial confusion soon fades. It's a tough mentally taxing challenge and somehow uses the simple dice in a very different way. You almost wonder why it hasn't been done before. The multiplayer aspect is superb and while it won't keep you up all night long it provides a nice distraction from all the death and violence.

RedTide

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Devil Dice is initially a complicated cerebral workout. Sitting on top of a dice while trying to figure out what number should appear behind the five while wondering which way to roll it can only be described as challenging. Good solid fun while the interest lasts.	70	75	78	NA	86	81	78

INTERNET: www.playstation-europe.com

NO OF PLAYERS: 1-5 Players | MEMORY: 1 Blocks

PRO'S and CON'S: + Unique Puzzle Game + Challenging | Average Graphics - Dull Sound - Fairly Limited -

Ever dreamed of visiting downtown San Francisco, the sight of many a movie car chase? It's the city with the amazing hills that has redesigned some very expensive car front-ends and tested stunt drivers to the limit. Now is your opportunity with San Francisco Rush - but is the game worth the investment? - Storm

Not known for their racing developments Midway's venture into the genre has to be considered a leap of faith. Better known for their Mortal Kombat franchise it's quite surprising to see a game of this nature in their stable. Unfortunately San Francisco Rush doesn't stand up to the normal high standards of this developer.

Racing games are being released in their droves for the PlayStation and it's difficult to compete with the high standards being set by the likes of Gran Turismo. But these standards are there for a reason, to safe guard the gamer from below par product and to give us reviewers guidelines to accurate scoring. This is one of those titles that just doesn't do anything particularly well. SFR is no Picasso - the constant clipping and 16-bit style graphics is nowhere near acceptable levels. Trying to find something within the game that actually looked good was extremely difficult and disconcerting considering the potential of the title. All the special effects are available including the normally overlooked car damage, but from the looks of it Midway should have just left it out. When reviewing a racing title, the physics and control are of utmost importance to the overall performance of the game. Hmm... the cars bounce off each other like two positive magnets, the cars don't react to different surfaces, the cars turn and slide unrealistically - a slight oversight maybe, I think not!

Arcade Racer

Developer:	Midway
Publisher:	GT Interactive
Supplier:	Datatec Crew Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP:	R 429.00
International Web Site	www.gtgames.com

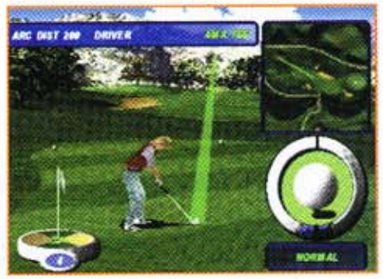
The only enjoyment we got out of SFR was the multiple racing modes that include the Explosive Race (if your speed drops below 60 MPH then you... explode, Speed style). You can also try the Time Pick-up Mode (picking up hourglasses in order to continue in the race) and the Grand Prix Mode (10 races against the console). But try as they might to make up for the lack of playability, the game never seems to pick up all the pieces. There are four difficulty settings and 16 tracks if played in reverse mode as well as hidden shortcuts and secret cars.

Sometimes you get a game that tries hard but fails dismally, San Francisco Rush is one of those games. There are plenty of other Racing Sim's out in the market that stand head and shoulders above this game - you know what to do.

Storm

OVERALL RATING 65

There comes a time when a bad game enters the market and consistently manages to irritate and faulter on the same basic principles of playability. Actua Golf series is one of those types of games. No matter how hard I try to find justice for the errors, the more it reminds me of how not to make a game. - Storm



I remember reviewing Actua Golf (NAG 49%) for the PC in our first edition of NAG and finding some of the worst errors a golfing game could make. As things would have it the PlayStation version has somehow caught the same virus and has managed to find those exact same problems even in their third edition of the game.

Where shall we start? The graphics, yes, if you want to know how not to develop a game graphically then Actua Golf would be your example. The character animations of the golfers are the worst I have yet seen in a Sport Sim. The texture alignments and positioning are laughable with the golfer looking more like a moving background than a golfer. The swing technique has a close resemblance to a mannequin stuck together with superglue. What is with Gremlin, this is the sport of Golf which has style and charisma, if you are going to be serious about the sport then try and get it at least approximately right.

I shudder at the thought of trying to explain the ball flight physics and golfballs reaction to the different surfaces. So I will refrain from doing so and just say that if you have ever played golf, you would end up using this CD as a coaster.

Not everything is as bad as I have led you to believe, though the fundamentals of a golf game are totally missing. But the depth of Actua Golf 3 is something more than the usual golf game. The reason why is because it uses a handicap system (similar to the original), which starts you off on a Amateur Tour with a handicap of 28, which in turn sets you up for the Pro Tour when you reach scratch and then the Pro+ Tour. This is a challenge for the new golf gamer and has been toughened up considerably from its predecessor.

Golf Simulation

Developer:	Actua Sports
Publisher:	Gremlin Interactive
Supplier:	Ster Kinekor Int. Tel: (011) 445-7900
RRP:	R 429.00
International Web Site	www.gremlin.com

The selection of modes of play has the usual batch as well as an interesting new bunch such as Clock Golf (must complete the shot and ball come to rest before the allocated time runs out, otherwise you incur a one shot penalty), Flag Golf (is a version of handicapped golf that allows you to play the par as well as the handicap for the game until you complete the course) and the Drive Competition (self explanatory except you play for prize money).

Actua Golf 3 has very similar features to its older brothers with the wide selection of viewing camera's and fly-bys of the holes some of the more prominent. This release now has a better control mechanism only if you have a Dual Shock Compatible controller, otherwise prepare to be irritated with the button mechanism.

I can only justify a purchase of this game if you have an overwhelming ambition to be the number one golfer in the world on the worst golf game. Over the year I have had to simmer down from the last review, I was hoping for major advances from Actua Sports, they never surfaced, so my verdict remains the same, its a really bad golf simulation.

Storm

OVERALL RATING 65

Cross tying the good old Adidas boots and stretching the tired muscles is a thing of the past. Luckily for me Football Sim's are not difficult to find, allowing me to work the wrist muscles more than usual. Now the closest I come to breaking a sweat is sitting too close to my computer lamp. Who says reviewing games doesn't break you out in a sweat?

Storm

actua SOCCER 3

The throne of the Football Sim king has been decided a few months ago and with very little competition to back it up. Setting the standard of solid playability makes FIFA 99 a clear winner in every respect. You ask yourself why am I talking about FIFA when it's an Actua Soccer review? Well, the truth is Actua Soccer 3 competes against FIFA 99 in every respect.

Not many people on the console follow the likes of the Actua Series, mainly because it first featured on the PC with resounding effects. Now after a few years as a competitor to the EA Sports range, the Actua Soccer series has finally reached maturity. Actua Soccer 2 was highly regarded as the king of the Football Sim's in the console market before the arrival of FIFA 99, that being because it featured high quality motion capture technology to bring the sim to life. Now the third in the range has taken on a clearer and smoother look with Alan Shearer, David Holdsworth and Simon Tracey offering their talents to the motion capture. Nothing really changes graphically, just better motion and a tweaking of the engine to make the game look and feel accurate.

The key to Actua Soccer 3 success is the depth of options and configurability. Nearly every option has a selection to configure the gameplay to your exact requirements, everything from the height of your players to the amount of bend of the after shot effect.

AI can be set to assist or handicap you, helping to level the playing areas for the new comer. The thorn in the Football Sim's side is the use of the keeper, now you are able to control him or set him to CPU control, (the latter is recommended). AS3 can be set for varying degrees of realism by setting fitness, footedness (pick the players better foot) and more. The omission of the league teams can be centred around EA's licence agreement with the FA, taking a great deal away from AS3 with only the International teams available, and they are very limited. The inclusion of the Editor does help overcome this problem by allowing you to customise and add teams, but recreating the FA Premier league is a large task. The one gripe of the lot is the lack of camera angles while in game. The side-view scolling camera makes the control awkward at times, especially when shooting. A selection of angles or a configurable camera would have done wonders for the viewing area and ultimately the playability. It's a little confusing that the replay has this option, but Gremlin failed to offer it to the game options.

Platform Action	
Developer:	Actua Sports
Publisher:	Gremlin Interactive
Supplier:	Ster Kinekor Inter.
	Tel: (011) 445-7900
RRP:	R 459.00
International Web Site	www.gremlin.com

Setting the ambience for a Football Sim is considered one of the most difficult tasks in development. AS3 has been known for leading the field in this enhancement and they don't disappoint. The intro movie is subtle yet enticing, with a main theme song called 'Let me entertain you' from Cavalleria Rusticana that we feel is one of the best on a game of this nature. Timeous commentary is from the ever present Barry (Bazza) Davies and Martin O'Neill welcoming advancement over the last title with very little repetition and more responsive comments. Manoeuvring players on the field has been noticeably enhanced to give more control to the gamer. A selection of clever tricks can be performed easily without minimal controller bashing. There is a definite difficulty in shooting from a distance but we found that as time went on we were able to perfect the angles we had to play with. The keepers do however stop 95% of the shots and then suddenly dive in the wrong direction. In all fairness we found that if a defender is blocking the keepers view it does affect the line of sight for the keeper, an interesting innovation for the game.

Actua Soccer 3 is definitely a worthy contender to FIFA franchise. If Actua Sports can work on a few fundamentals that influence the playability they might even perform the impossible and jump the ladder to the top. Actua Soccer 3 is good title with great prospects and imaginative options, not to be overlooked.

Storm

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Scalable options and realistic gameplay create one of the best Footy Sim's ever. It continues on the success of its predecessor by enhancing the features and adding superb depth. Lack of camera angles does not effect the overall performance of this world class product.	88	90	75	NA	81	89	85

INTERACT: www.gremlin.com

NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 Players

MEMORY: 4-8 Blocks

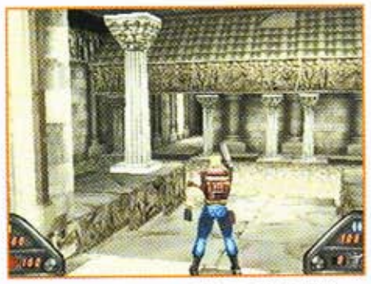
PRO'S and CON'S:
+ Excellent Commentary
+ Scalibility
+ Exciting Gameplay
- Keeper AI Tough
- Limited Camera Angles

Duke's tried and tested formula of girls, guns and comedy is back, and now he even gets to do a spot of time travailing.

LH Industries

DUKE NUKEM TIME TO KILL

It seems that poor old Duke Nukem can't just take a well-earned rest from his alien killing duties. We find the original PC male chauvinist relaxing in his local strip bar knocking a few beers back, while appreciating the view. And just in case you wanted to check out what is on offer, well the opening FMV sequence should reveal all (literally!). The FMV is not too unlike a low budget B-movie, with loud rock music, heaps of violence (not to mention blood), and of course the high body count. You might even say that the intro is verging on soft-core porn, what with the topless dancers doing their pole hugging routines, but some how the complexities of recreating believable human bodies (especially ones with no clothes on!) makes it pretty funny.



3rd Person Shooter	
Developer:	3D Realms
Publisher:	GT Interactive
Supplier:	Datatec Crew
	Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP:	R 399.00
International Web Site	www.gtgames.com

The reason our anti-hero is jumping back and forth in time is because of those unrelenting aliens. Not content in getting their butts kicked all over the PC, and N64, they are now trying to take over the world by going back into the past and messing it up on the PlayStation. Luckily Duke has found their time travelling portals, so now it's off to the good old Wild West, plus a visit to Medieval Europe and Ancient Rome. The biggest and most obvious change to the regular Duke formula is the transition from first person to a third person perspective. We now have Duke 'Lara Croft' Nukem so to speak. This means that there are now jump, grab and climb disciplines as well as the usual kill any thing that moves ones. The game is not just a straight shooting feast (but be under no illusions there is still plenty of that!), but now players must find the crystals to open the portals, and as the different worlds are far from small this will require a reasonable amount of time spent exploring.

The time settings are well implemented, so for each specific world come a whole variety of traps and puzzles. The completion of these as well as just finding your way around provides a much-needed break to the otherwise repetitive game-play. The other enjoyable diversions (or not as the case may be!) are the amount of different enemies. With a total of eleven kinds of aliens from the mechanical to the organic, and with varying degrees of AI it's just as well that there is a ridiculous amount of weapon power ups you can acquire in order to blow them away. Choose from up to fifteen forms of attack ranging from end of Dukes boot to the some what more powerful Holy Hand Grenade! Players looking for big guns need look no further as a Gatling Gun, Rocket Propelled Grenade Launcher and Flame Thrower are all included, just make sure you pick up enough ammo to keep them going. Another useful weapon at your disposal are the Pipe Bombs, these handy little devices can be thrown both long and short distances, and then detonated by remote control.

The best part of having so many lethal weapons is actually using them on another player. The two-player mode is a little confusing with the split screen and the unforgiving control, but those that persevere will get much out of the death match style game play. Devious tactics and select use of the weapons ensures many frantic encounters, while the different locations give opportunities for using the terrain to your advantage. Players with the Analog controller will find it easier to position Duke, but unfortunately no force feed back is supported. Overall Duke Nukem isn't going to break any records, but it does provide a solid playing experience, and if you're into the fist person shootem-up and fancy a small change, then you could do a lot worse than this action adventure romp.

LH Industries

SUMMARY	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	STORY	CONTINUITY	PLAYABILITY	OVERALL RATING
Duke is back with a new adventure for the PSX. Now in third person perspective as opposed to first, this adds a few more game play elements, but fans of the usual babes, violence and humor will not be disappointed. Also an entertaining 2-player death match mode is available.	70	60	50	70	70	70	65

INTERACT: www.gtgames.com

NO OF PLAYERS: 1-2 Players

MEMORY: 1 Blocks

PRO'S and CON'S:
+ Power-Ups
+ 2 Player Mode
+ Humour
- Control
- Repetitive Game-Play

Reviews Under Fire

Midway attempt to cash in once more with their latest addition to the successful & controversial Mortal Kombat series, this time opting for a 3D approach... but will it enjoy the acclaim of its predecessors?

MadMan

Beat-em-Up

Developer: Midway

Publisher: GT Interactive

Supplier: Datatec Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111
RRP: R 429.00

International Web Site
www.midway.com

Blood is thicker than water

Mortal Kombat is back, and this time the 2D view of the previous games and digitised actors have been ditched in favour of 3D. The other major change is in the introduction of a weapons system, but rest assured the blood and gore is still intact and in abundance! The match starts with weapons holstered and you may draw your weapon at any stage in the match but be careful, if you're knocked down while holding your weapon it will fall to the floor and can be picked up by your opponent. Although the game claims to be 3D it isn't as fully 3D as Tekken 3, you can side-step in and out but your opponent immediately turns to face you making it too slow to launch a surprise attack. The main reason for the side-step moves is to get to weapons or other items to throw at your opponent but I often had great difficulty in getting to the right place. The only other part of the game where a real 3D view is present is during some moves or throws when the camera pans around to give a better view of the action.

Mortal Kombat 4 has no shortage of characters combining old favourites, 8 in total among them Sub Zero, Lui Kang and Sonya with 7 new ones. In addition, MK4 brings to the table a selection of new game modes, which is good news especially if you're going to be playing this game alone. You can now play 2 on 2 against a friend or the CPU, a team battle mode where each team consists of 1-5 members, an endurance mode where your energy isn't replenished and a tournament consisting of up to 8 human players. Unfortunately, the latter hardly passes as a mass multiplayer mode as only 2 people play at a time.

Precision Mallets

The game controls just like its predecessors aside from the weapons, so veterans will feel quite at home. Also included is a practice mode where new comers can practice moves, tactics and fatalities without the constraints of a health meter or time limit. You will find that most moves of the old characters are present with a new one thrown in here and there, the button combinations are easier and lightning fingers are no longer a prerequisite to become a good player. Each character only has 3 or 4 unique moves, the rest of the arsenal consisting of the usual assortment of leg sweeps, roundhouses and the particularly devastating uppercut. Combinations can also be used for extra damage but you'll have to create your own or dig around the net to find them. MK4 also has some humorous touches such as seeing your opponent hurled towards the screen and 'splatted' on the wall when hit with a club or in the case of Reptile's bone-breaker, twisting your foe's head to face in the opposite direction! One gripe I did have was the fact that the big boss of the game is also an immediately playable character with no "boss" characteristics so there isn't much challenge to look forward to at the end of the game.

Look & Listen

Graphically, MK4 is a bit of a mixed bag. Although the characters are now polygonal as opposed to the digitised actors of the previous games they do look quite good but I couldn't help noticing that the joints made them look a bit like action figures. There are also a few clipping problems, especially when you're close to the walls and you'll often find that a knocked down opponent's head gets "lost" in the wall. Not all is bad news though and there are some nice effects during the fight such as the mist around Sub-Zero and the electricity coursing through Raiden's body. The fatalities are all in 3D, a lot of them borrowed from the original such as Sub-Zero's head rip, and look excellent.

Not a common sight when tackling Raiden.

MK4 isn't much of an aural masterpiece, the tunes are similar to the traditional Mortal Kombat tunes and aren't particularly painful to listen to. The sound effects are pretty good, moans and groans of your opponent and the occasional "excellent" or "superb" from the higher powers when successfully landing a high-damage move. When you complete the game, which isn't exceptionally difficult on the easier levels you get to see your character's ending movie. You heard me right, you now get movies as opposed to the text stories of Kombats past. Although the voice acting isn't excellent and the lip synch is lousy they're still quite cool to watch. Once you've saved your game you can rewatch endings of characters you've beaten the game with in the Kombat Theatre. The game also boasts support for the vibration feature of the Dual Shock Analogue Controller, making sure you feel it when someone drops you on your head!

Tekken beware!

Overall Mortal Kombat 4 is a very enjoyable game and fans of the series will probably be impressed. If you're new to the MK4 world, I'd recommend checking it out before you buy it; Tekken 3 may be more suitable. When it comes to a quick fight or when you have a real grudge to settle with that bloke next door, Mortal Kombat 4 remains the king with zippy gameplay and satisfying fatalities. For the fainthearted and squeamish, there's even an option to turn off the gore but remember to turn it on before inviting friends over so they won't call you a sissy. The new game modes add variety and longevity to the game. A faithful reproduction of the arcade version that brings to the PlayStation some much needed violence!

MadMan

Summary	Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability	Overall Rating
A good beat-em-up but unfortunately offers nothing that its predecessors haven't. The addition of weapons and the switch to 3D work well but clipping errors, glitches and useless story line don't complement it. Nothing we haven't seen before but fans of the series will enjoy it... it's no Tekken though!	80	78	84	62	87	90	80

Internet: www.midway.com

No Of Players: 1-8 Players
Memory: 1 Blocks

Pro's and Con's

+ Excessive Violence
+ Good Graphics
+ Quick & Enjoyable
- Glitches
- Useless Story
- Same As Previous MKs

Reviews Under Fire

Gamers who invested their hard earned Rands in Cool Boarders 2 will probably be slightly annoyed that it's only been out for several months, and already there is a new addition to the series. It looks like the developers had timed things for Santa's shopping list, just like a couple of other games namely Crash 3 and Tomb Raider 3. Is it just coincidence that this popular title just so happened to be out in time for Christmas? Somehow I don't think so, but seeing as it's a reasonable improvement on the last Cool Boarders, I'll ease off on the cynical comments.

LH Industries

Cool Boarders 3 seems to have matured a great deal from the last game, the previous 'cool', and 'funky' production qualities have been ditched for a more designer feel with big sponsors such as Levi's and Swatch getting involved. Thankfully, it's not just the look that has improved, but also the depth of game-play. Each event has a skill that has to be mastered in order to negotiate it successfully. Often you will have to combine techniques, and this is where you can really put your practice to good use. It might be easy to shoot straight downhill to the finish line, but the real movers will want to pull some stunts and gain more points.

The 2 Player Mode is better than the last effort, you now even get the option of punching the opposition as they try and slip by. This has the benefit of making the races more unpredictable, while also adding that devious element that is great when playing against human opponents. Unfortunately, the smooth motion that is so good in single player mode is not carried over to the 2 Player option. A margin on the left side of the screen reduces the action to a small window, and on top of trying to get into this little box, the frame rate seems to be noticeably slower, making the game feel unresponsive and generally unexciting to play. The tricks are pulled off with a combination of shoulder, directional and pad buttons. Not only do you have to get to grips with the silly amount of moves on offer, but you also have to get the timing just right. There is a power meter on-screen that increases when you charge a jump, so certain stunts will require a lot of height as well as a hefty amount of power.

Getting your head around the numerous controls and combinations will take some practice, but the more you put in, the more you get out. After mastering the controls you now have the choice of 32 courses, 20 different riders, and 23 individual boards, although the boards and riders have very little difference between them.

When you start the game there are 3 mountains to ride on, with another 2 opening up after you progress through the various events. The track design is pretty good, with enough obstacles and objects to keep the action flowing, although they would have benefited from a few extra short cuts. The motion captured riders are spot on, fluid movements and individual signature moves are all part of the polished look that is best appreciated in the replay mode. It feels like the designers have opted for a more ambient style, both in the art and sound departments. There is a skateboard type, indy sound track that accompanies you down the courses, and a few moans and grunts when taking a knock or fall. The snow sound effects are true to the real thing, changing accordingly when going over different surfaces.

I wonder if we will see the next Cool Boarders instalment on the present PlayStation console, it wouldn't surprise me to find out that 989 Studios (the games developers) are currently planning a new Cool Boarders game for the new PlayStation. Maybe then Sony will have a successor to Nintendo's snow and water titles, but lets not forget that Sega might well be holding the crown at this time. Either way PSX owners now have a worthy playing experience to get stuck into.

LH Industries

Snowboarding

Developer: Sony Computer Ent.

Publisher: Sony Computer Ent.

Supplier: Ster Kinekor Inter.
Tel: (011) 445-7900
RRP: R 399.00

International Web Site
www.playstation-europe.com

Summary	Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability	Overall Rating
Cool Boarders 3 is a big improvement on the last two editions. The 3 difficulty settings and large amount of options available throughout ensure a long and enjoyable ride for any snowboard lover who's not specifically looking for a strong 2 Player experience.	79	65	70	NA	70	75	70

Internet: www.playstation-europe.com

No Of Players: 1-2 Players
Memory: 1 Blocks

Pro's and Con's

+ Strong Single Player
+ Numerous Options
+ Good Re-play Value
- Lack Of Short Cuts
- Poor 2 Player Mode
- Little Variation

Bargain Buys

PC CD-ROM

In keeping with their record of producing quality products, Blizzard have released a boxed set consisting of StarCraft the original game, the StarCraft expansion set: Brood War and two official strategy guides - one for each game. For the price you're paying this Battle Chest scores full marks, especially for people who didn't buy the original game. StarCraft needs little introduction and set a new standard in the real-time strategy genre when it was released by offering the player three distinctly different races, including humans. The game was massively successful and caused ripples in the on-line gaming community with the Battle.net servers straining under the onslaught of thousands of players playing for tens of thousands of hours. Brood War is still relatively new and managed to score a respectable 90% in this issue. This expansion set breaks free from the poor examples set by other add-on packs and offers true value for money. The new units available change the way the game is played strategically and besides units and new terrain there are some high quality movies included to cap off the deal. And there's more... Along with a full game and the expansion pack you also get two strategy guides which will help you to hone your skills and then talk about your losses with some authority. In the strategy guides, information on all the units, both air, ground and structures are covered in depth, with details like unit speed, attack range and hit points all covered in loving detail. You can also find out how to play all the Zerg, Protoss and Terran missions to completion in the most effective way and the books even delve into the intricacies of multiplayer games. Both official strategy guides weigh in at around 250 pages and should keep you busy for ages. Overall, this compilation delivers more than you would expect for the price and is highly recommended for both the veteran and new comer to the StarCraft universe.

- NAG

Starcraft Battlechest

Publisher: Blizzard Ent.

Supplier: Datatec Crew
Tel: (011) 233-1111

RRP: R 399.00

Package Includes
- Starcraft Full Retail
- Brood Wars Add-On
- Official Starcraft Strategy Guide
- Official Brood Wars Strategy Guide

OVERALL RATING 92

Whenever you see the words six for the price of one you inevitably start wondering which one of the six is the good title, suspecting that the rest are just fillers destined to die in bargain bins around the country three years from now. Well oddly enough, this compilation comprises three games that are nothing less than classic and three others that could hold their own in any fight. The best game in the compilation must be Dungeon Keeper, which is still a compelling and addictive game but now shows its age with an average 3D mode - but considering this 3D mode isn't essential to play the game, who cares. The other Bullfrog title in the bag is Theme Hospital - a unique hospital simulation game that never takes itself seriously and originated the famous chain-reaction vomit. The older but distinguished Sim City 2000 is also included and provides a nice way to have a look into the business of city creation (check out our review of Sim City 3000, which is now available, elsewhere in this issue). Need for Speed II Special Edition puts you in the driving seat of super cars such as the McLaren F1, Jaguar XJ220 and the Ferrari F50. The game cannot compare to today's racing and driving games but a bonus is that the Special Edition part lets you take advantage of 3D acceleration which wasn't available in the original version. Nuclear Strike is the second last game and is a pure action arcade game where you fly a Super Apache helicopter across a top down sideways scrolling map - the object of the game is to destroy anything that moves and live to tell the tale. Dark Omen is the last title and is an excellent real-time isometric strategy game based in the Warhammer universe. On the good side, you get to control things like elves, dwarfs and powerful sorcerers fighting against zombies, goblins and vampires on the evil side. This compilation has a good mix of different genres and doesn't sell itself short on quality. It comes highly recommended and is a must have for the bargain hunter.

- NAG

The Biggest Names. The Best Games!

Publisher: Electronic Arts

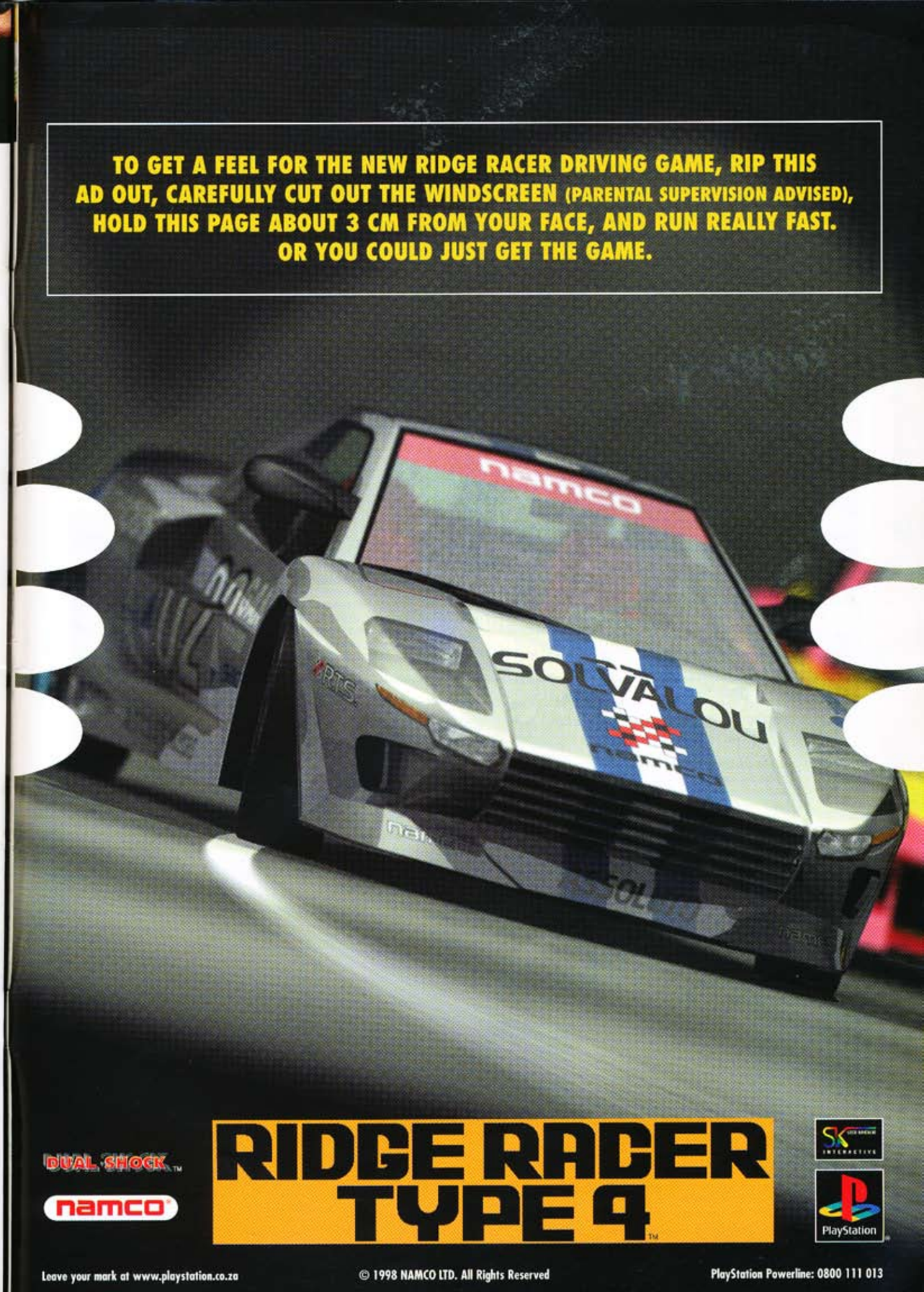
Supplier: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212

RRP: R 329.00

Package Includes
- Theme Hospital
- Need for Speed 2
- Dark Omen
- Sim City 2000
- Dungeon Keeper
- Nuclear Strike

OVERALL RATING 90

TO GET A FEEL FOR THE NEW RIDGE RACER DRIVING GAME, RIP THIS AD OUT, CAREFULLY CUT OUT THE WINDSCREEN (PARENTAL SUPERVISION ADVISED), HOLD THIS PAGE ABOUT 3 CM FROM YOUR FACE, AND RUN REALLY FAST. OR YOU COULD JUST GET THE GAME.



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PlayStation
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PlayStation Powerline: 0800 111 013

With the overwhelming prices being thrown around in the hardware sector of the Industry in South Africa, it is refreshing when a solid all round performer becomes the exception to the rule. Datatec Crew's Dexxa range of affordable products will surely make things a little lighter on the pocket. - NAG

DEXXA STEERING WHEEL

After reviewing the first range of force feedback steering wheels it is quite refreshing to finally receive an entry-level competitor that lacks all the bells and whistles but helps to make these peripherals affordable to the mass market. The Dexxa Steering Wheel cannot be considered to be the prettiest or most ergonomic of the racing pack but with the markets limitations on the range of cheaper products, it certainly competes on both platforms. At first look the Dexxa is obviously designed simply and basically. This is not a downside to the wheel, but a plus in many factors. The more complex wheels are bulky and overwhelming, the Dexxa however is light and manageable. Made from a strong durable plastic, except for the rubber finger grips with 2 axis - four button option which can be easily configured if you follow the excuse for a manual that you receive in the box, two and a half pages to be exact. Once setup and configured it becomes smashingly clear that the unit has definite potential and performs as if it's a R1000+ peripheral, all this because racing wheels are actually quite simple peripherals. The only gripe is that its clamp mechanism is a little underdone but if it saves money then

thumbs up to the Dexxa. The Dexxa Steering Wheel is a NAG favourite because we all feel the pinch sometime and it's a great alternate for the discerning gamer with a small budget. At R 799.00 who can complain about the full package when it does what the gamer wants. The Dexxa has two thumb buttons positioned to the left and right of centre which are easily reached, but my personal favourite addition to Dexxa must be the shift stick that adds to the realism of using manual transmissions.

NEW AGE GAMING EDITORS CHOICE

Setting up the Dexxa was quick and simple, only because the mechanism that fastens the wheel to the table is incredibly basic and a little flimsy. The unit has four suckers located beneath the steering column that should stick when moistened (that is the theory). There are also two table clamps that insert into the front of the unit and though they are an excuse for clamps considering what we have seen before, they do a fine job of securing the unit. The pedals are smaller than normal but with adjustable angles it will make racing easier for all sizes of gamers. The software, umm... what software? No demo's, no interesting applications, no special addition games and no drivers. Yes, no drivers and this is a bonus if you have had as much trouble with drivers as I have. The Dexxa simply uses the Game Controller's well. I have yet to see a similar priced steering wheel, then and only then may I consider a worthy challenger to the Dexxa as an affordable solution.

- NAG

OVERALL RATING 90

Pro's: Price, Great Performer, Ergonomic Design
Con's: Clamp Mechanism

R 799.00 (RRP)
Datatec Crew
(011) 233-1111
www.datatec.co.za

Considering the amount of Racing Sims floating around the market, it was a sign from the gaming gods that Logitech decided to release their Rolls Royce of steering wheels in the form of the Wingman Formula into the market.- NAG

WingMan FORMULA

Racking through my batch of Racing Sim's for this issue has left me with little time for the everyday living chores that keep the wife in a consistently good mood, but with the help of the Logitech Wingman Formula it has been a slight bit easier. My belief in first impression's count has finally been gratified with this gorgeous peripheral. Everything about the Wingman Formula reeks quality and performance and a hefty R 1199.00 to boot. Justifying the price has to come from how desperate the gamer is to feeling totally in control of the game he is playing.

The cosmetic set-up of the Wingman Formula is the best yet encountered, with a racing wheel that is made from high quality metal and plastic, as well as a strong rubber grip compound for the wheel. The four buttons on the wheel are made from a metal compound and easily reached for all hand sizes, but are slightly small. The other two shifters (buttons) are situated behind the steering wheel and in my opinion are better than the normal gear selection schemes, which makes it easier for manual transmissions, therefore making it easier on the playability of the game. The pedals are a little disappointing considering the steering column. The pedals are made from a plastic material that held up admirably to my constant pounding. The one thing going for the pedal base is the size and design, which is large and comfortable helping alleviate movement of the pedal base. With only a few niggles against the design, the Wingman Formula is the best looking steering wheel of the bunch.

Setting up the Wingman Formula was simple and effective. The small wheel base tightens with the help of two adjustable clamps that securely fastens the unit to most tables sizes, but what is even more effective is the rubber soles that stop the base from shifting, even under serious pressure. With the strong, sturdy grip that the wheel gives you, as well as the almost immovable clamp mechanism, you will be assured total control of your game. Software installation was a breeze, as can be expected with the modern day software that the larger companies depend on. The Logitech Wingman Software that accompanies the wheel installs all the product drivers. The interface for the Formula Software, it must be said, does not stand up to the Microsoft Software interface, but it works nonetheless. Software included with the wheel come in the form of Motorhead (NAG 86%) and Ubisoft's F1 Racing Simulation, both value for money that definitely helps alleviate the price tag wrapped around the Wingman Formula.

Putting the Wingman Formula through its paces was an enlightening experience, being accustomed to either a joystick or my favourite gamepad, the steering wheel certainly enhanced the playability beyond average thrill levels, especially when combined with Sierra's Viper Racing. After six hours of constant playing, it was a joy to feel no stiffness and relaxed. As most Racing Sim fans will agree, the uncomfortable nature of the other peripherals tends to take a small amount of the fun out of the game. The Wingman Formula is no doubt the Rolls Royce of steering wheels but considering the price tag there must be much deliberation to justify the purchase, but if you happen to love the racing genre and have a spare Grand to throw around, then this comes highly NAG recommended. - NAG

OVERALL RATING 90

Pro's: Extra Software, Sturdy Design, Great Feel
Con's: Pricey

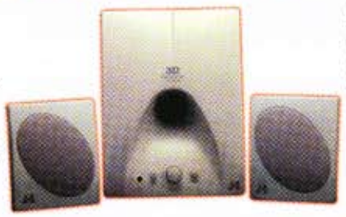
R 1199.00 (RRP)
Datatec Crew
(011) 233-1111
www.datatec.co.za

It's tough to write elaborately on speakers. They either work or they don't, all the cables should be present and a volume knob is always a welcome bonus. How they look on your desk and perhaps what your speakers say about you should be considered. Determining just how well they perform during an intense gaming session is another matter entirely. We look at all these aspects and a few other important criteria before coming up with a final and fair score.

Both the speaker systems on review claim virtual 3D and surround sound capabilities using an extra set of satellite speakers, effectively giving you one subwoofer and four speakers in total. They can't claim true four channel 3D surround sound but rather a two channel simulated 3D surround sound using conventional soundcards. This is then a cost effective 3D sound solution. Both offer the extra set of satellite speakers in a different way. With the J-7901 you need to purchase an extra set and with the J-7902 the extra speakers are hidden within the main set. Both sets are also shielded and won't distort your screen or easily accept interference. How realistic the virtual 3D surround speakers sound is a debatable point but at the end of the day a speaker test can only ever be opinion based with any serious problems highlighted or out right lies exposed. If what is written on the box differs from what you get inside the box we'll tell you.

JAZZ J 7901
COMPUTER SUBWOOFER SYSTEM

An inexpensive set of speakers that look stylish and perform. They're a good upgrade from the cheap shallow speakers you probably originally got with your soundcard. The subwoofer looks and feels solid with a volume knob, power button, 3D button and headphone socket and every component has cabling of respectable length. The manual that comes with this speaker system is pathetic and one page is all you get. In the box, you'll find a subwoofer, two speakers and a power supply. The subwoofer delivers loud meaty explosions and has all the bass power to make your desk rumble, if you keep on pushing the volume to glass shattering levels some distortion is detected but this is only at unbearable volume levels. The speakers are also capable of handling loud music and sound effects with no problem. The only time this set fails is when you really push up the volume, but no one needs audio this loud, so unless you're trying to open a budget night-club, they perform well. Also, you need to buy the extra set of speakers to take full advantage of the 3D part as the J-7901 only ships with two speakers. This extra set costs very little and is well worth the money. This set represents good value for money and quality and at the price, you really can't go wrong.



- NAG

R 320.00 (RRP)
Cyberdyne Systems
(011) 327-0237
www.cyberdyne.co.za

OVERALL RATING 88

JAZZ J 7902
VIRTUAL SURROUND SYSTEM

At around R300 more than the J-7901 these speakers seem to be trying to cash in on the Dolby Surround Sound System franchise. They look like they were designed by a computer with little flair and style but total functionality. Compared to the J-7901 they are downright dull. The subwoofer delivers a rich deep bass that managed to retain its composure when pumping up the volume to the max. Overall this system handles loud volumes well but just doesn't feel enthusiastic when doing it. A power supply and cables are all present along with the standard set of knobs and buttons on the right-hand speaker. One unique feature of the J-7902 is the way it deals with providing either a two-speaker solution or a four-speaker solution. The two main speakers have small detachable satellite speakers that can be unclipped and removed giving you four in total. These 'hidden' speakers are very small but pack quite a punch. One problem with a set-up like this is that the cables supplied with the detachable speakers are a little short so you have trouble placing them wherever you want. This system is good but just seems a little flat, otherwise it performs well in every other respect.

- NAG

R 765.00 (RRP)
Cyberdyne Systems
(011) 327-0237
www.cyberdyne.co.za

OVERALL RATING 79

There is a time when a gamer gets desperate to play the games he enjoys with the right peripherals. But, considering the costs of buying all the gadgets, you would be spending unnecessary time in your Bank Manager's office. Unless you consider the Cyborg 3D Pad as a financial alternative. - NAG

Saitek Cyborg 3D Pad

Standing at the retail store with the copy of the perfect game that was made just for you, but it's a racing game and you are tired of the keyboard for controls. The next game you pick up is a flight sim but your joystick is about to commit suicide. As a last resort you pick up a sports sim that you've been eyeing but with your beat-out gamepad, who knows what might happen. Then out of the corner of your eye, a blue box appears, somehow you are drawn to it. What! A gamepad that is a joystick, that is a steering wheel, how so? Being an avid fan of the Saitek range of products for a few years now, it was interesting to receive this do-it-all peripheral. At first glance the Cyborg 3D Pad has a very posh and expensive look to it but surprisingly the price tag is more along the pauper point at R 549.00. This is all fine and dandy, but what does the pad offer in return? Well, my answer to that is simple, value for money. The Cyborg 3D Gamepad has the unique ability of being an all round gaming peripheral that can be used for either arcade, racing or flight sims. The unique design and ergonomics allow for configurability and ease of use. Once you install the Saitek software (which is supplied with ten demo games) and have connected the device, everything sorts itself out. From calibration to gaming templates, the software is designed to help you through the traumatic period of installation.

Once up and running the Cyborg 3D has a number of different playing options and with a flick of a switch can be changed from joystick to a gamepad, pretty nifty. One small gripe that did come up was the positioning of the finger buttons, which are awkward to get at. The offering of an 8-way directional thumb pad, adjustable palm grips (for all hand sizes), rudder / steering function, throttle, mini joystick, 2 squeeze buttons and 4 triggers is a handful to deal with. Once you have used the Cyborg 3D Pad for a while you do become accustomed to the different configurations. We found that Saitek went a little overboard with the design and functionality of the device but with good intention and impressive results.

To summarise the device, the unit has great value for money (especially in today's economic times) but fails to do any one of its functions with great purpose. You will get the best of all worlds with this pad but you will miss your favourite controllers for doing the right thing the right way. - NAG

R 549.00 (RRP)
Virtual Media Systems
(011) 768-6080
www.vms.co.za

OVERALL RATING 86

CLUELESS

Tips, Cheats and Tactics

PC CHEATS

We have moved this section onto our Cover CD, so please browse the CD for PC cheats.

If you have any PlayStation or PC cheats please send them to us at cheats@nag.co.za.

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

Actua Soccer 3

Bonus Teams:
Enter PREM CLUBS as a team name at the team creation screen.
Joke Teams:
Enter TFF TEAMS as a team name at the team creation screen.
Shearer's XXX Team:
Enter SEXY FOOTBALL as a custom team name at the team creation screen. Shearer XXX team will appear under "CHT1"
Big Head Mode:

Duke Nukem: Time to Kill

Enter one of the following codes while the game is paused.

Level Select:
Press Down(9), Up {See Note Below} Note: After entering this code, exit the game. Then at the bottom of the main menu there will be a new option called "Time To Kill". Select this new option, then press Left or Right to choose a level and press X to go to the level.
Select Powered-Up Weapons:
Press Right(2), Left, Right(2), Left, Right(2), Left
All Weapons:
Press L1, L2, Up, L1, L2, Down, R1, Right, R2, Left
All Items:
Press R1(5), L2(5)
All Keys:
Press Up, Right, Up, Left, Down, Up, Right, Left, Right, Down
Invincibility:
Press L2, R1, L1, R2, Up, Down, Up, Down, Select(2)
Temporary Invincibility:
Press R1, L2, L1, L2, R1, L1, R1, L2, L1, L2
Unlimited Continues:
Pause game play and press Left, Right, Up, Left, Right, Down, Left, Right, L1, R1.
Powered-up Weapons:
Pause game play and press R1, R2, L2, L1, R1, R2, L2, L1, Select(2).
Invisibility:
Press L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1
Infinite Ammo:
Press [Left, Right, Left, Right, Select] twice
Double Damage:
Press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2
Big Head Duke:
Press R1(9), Up
Small Head Duke:
Press R1(9), Down
Big Head Opponents:
Press R1(9), Left
Small Head Opponents:
Press R1(9), Right
Beat the Game:
While playing hold L2 + R2 then press Square, Triangle, Circle, Circle, Start
View Rogue Trip FMV sequence:
At the GT Interactive logo during the opening sequence, press L1 + L2 + R1 + R2
Introduction Sequence:
Pause game play and press Select, Up(9), Select, L1.
Victory Sequence:
Pause game play and press Select, Up(9), Select, L2.
Kilt Sequence:
Pause game play and press Select, Up(9), Select, R2
View Credits:
Pause game play and press Select, Up(9), Select, R1

Devil Dice

Note: This game is also titled XI.

Bonus Puzzles:
Successfully complete all 100 puzzles under puzzle mode. Highlight "Random" at the stage selection screen and press X. Press L2 or R2 to select from 1000 new puzzles.
Play Your Own CD:
Replace the game disc with an audio CD after it reaches the menu screen. Press Start during game play to change tracks.
Fast Puzzle Completion:
Begin game play in "Wars" mode. Hold Triangle when your character loses to speed up the actions of any remaining CPU characters.
Audio Instructions:
Press Right at the title screen to listen to audio instructions for the game. Keep pressing Right to

San Francisco Rush

All Cars:
Press Triangle, Square(2), X, R1 at the options screen. A sound will confirm correct code entry.
Truck:
Select any car, then hold L1 until the race begins.
Buggy:
Select any car, then hold R1 until the race begins.
Hidden Car:
Select any car, then hold R1 + R2 until the race begins.
Various Cars:
Select any car, then press Down at the transmission selection screen to cycle between a low rider, bus, rocket engine car, taxi, and police car. Note: The number of cars vary depending on how many keys have been found. To drive the police car, circuit mode must be completed. Additionally, press Circle at the car selection screen to access four more vehicles.
UFO:
Hold R1 + R2 + L1 + L2 at the car selection screen and choose a car. Keep those buttons held and press X at the transmission selection screen. Then, hold Triangle until the race begins.
Alternate Car Colours:
Press Square at the car selection screen.
Reversed tracks:
Complete circuit mode to unlock an option for forward and reversed tracks.

Cool Boarders 3

At the Tournament screen enter your name as:
wonitall -- All tracks
open_em -- All riders
bigheads -- Big heads
openemall -- All boarders and boards
showpos -- Director's cut
Fast Eddie:
To earn FAST EDDIE you must complete the mountain POWDER HILL in first place and with 3,400 points of more.
Game Completion Date:
At the screen that reads one player or split screen press L1, L2, R2, R1. A screen will pop up the shows the date the game was completed.
New Boards and Characters:
To get new boards and characters, start a Single Race at Pro level and beat the record shown at the bottom of the screen (eg. Come in first with 5000 pts.)
Play as Burg:
To get Burg, unlock every player, every board, and every track. Play single event, powder hill downhill. Get in first place with more than 3400 points

NFL Xtreme

Big Head Mode:
Enter BIGHEAD BOBBY as a name at the create free agent screen.
Flat Head Mode:
Enter COINHEAD COREY as a name at the create free agent screen.
Long Neck Mode:
Enter GEORGE GIRAFFE as a name at the create free agent screen.
Long Arms:
Enter MONKEY MICKEY as a name at the create free agent screen.
Short Arms:
Enter SHRIMPY SEAN as a name at the create free agent screen.
Big Players:
Enter BIG BEN as a name at the create free agent screen.
Small Players:
Enter TINY TOM as a name at the create free agent screen.
Reversed Animations:

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THE END

WE ARE HIRING...

New Age Gaming is quickly getting out of hand for the few and the brave that put it together every month. We're already getting better each month but now we need to start getting bigger. This is good news for all you gamers out there and who knows it might even be better news for a few lucky individuals. The job will entail making coffee for the permanent staff at NAG and if you're really lucky you can also watch us type a few words and put a whole paragraph together for the magazine, in real-time 3D. Besides the important Java Technician position we also need someone who can head up the coveted Hygiene Management Team. The candidate must be prepared to... [Enough already!].

Seriously though, your favourite gaming magazine is looking for a few freelance writers. Ideally, the lucky sole(s) must be able to write English with some kind of authority and should be able to use the word 'dilettante' in a sentence. You will also need to have some experience in playing games - currently the big knobs at Nag have around 40 years of gaming experience between them so at least you know who you have to impress. See below for details.

Put together a 600-800 word review of a current game and e-mail it to us at ed@nag.co.za, unfortunately postal entries will be incinerated - being connected to the Internet is important. The review must follow the general style of the magazine and should be in English. Also tell us a little about yourself so we can decide if we could learn to like you or not.

- You must live in the Johannesburg area.
- A driver's license and car is important.
- You must have reliable access to the Internet and a valid E-mail address.
- Being able to play both PlayStation and PC games is a bonus especially on a decently specified machine.
- We don't support piracy so if you do, don't bother sending us anything.
- This isn't a competition so there are no rules except one - multiple entries won't help your case.
- Spelling mistakes and grammatical errors will be frowned upon.
- The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Closing date for submissions will be the last day of April 1999.

You Never Heard It From Me...

I hope you gamers out there enjoy the new layout, and it will have even more changes next month. Taking a look at games for the next issue, we have some interesting content incoming. The following games will appear in our Birthday issue for your enjoyment:

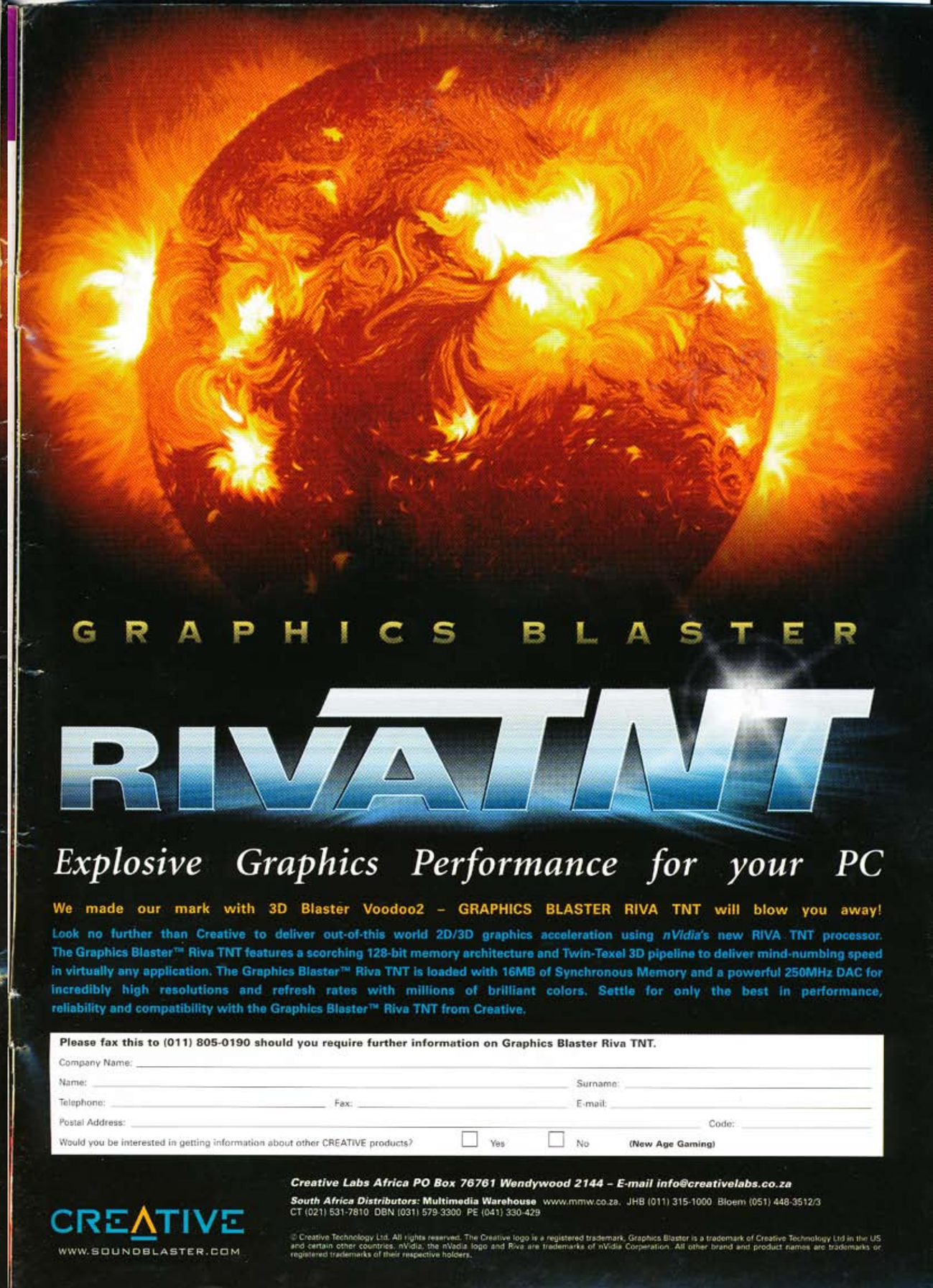
From Walt Disney comes the game based on the animated motion picture portraying a colony of ants enslaved by ruthless grasshoppers. You play Flik an aspiring ant out to search for help from the insect kingdom and rescue the colony while winning the heart of Princess Anna. Sounds interesting, huh?

The next in Sid Meier's evolution of the Civilization series. This time fans will be pitted against rivals when your spaceship crashes on a distant planet and the inhabitants form their own political factions. Alpha Centauri promises great things, but we will see if it delivers next month.

I think there are a great deal of gamers out there who have been waiting for Delta Force to arrive. It finally is available and gamers can take on the role of one of the elite in the special squad known as Delta Force. The game relies on Novalogic's Voxel engine, and makes no use of acceleration at all.

Please remember to keep sending in those e-mails and letters. We always enjoy hearing from the public out there, afterall we do this magazine for all the gamers and the gaming community. Until next month

Keep fraggin, kickin butt, strategizing, sportsizing and playing games - Soul Assassin



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