

NEW AGE GAMING

S O U T H A F R I C A

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN PC AND PSX CONSOLE GAMING MAGAZINE

DIABLO

BUMPER PREVIEW

REVIEWED:
MECHWARRIOR 3
HEAVY GEAR 2
MIG ALLEY
KINGPIN
RE-VOLT

SILENT HILL (PSX)
OMEGA BOOST (PSX)
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REVIEW

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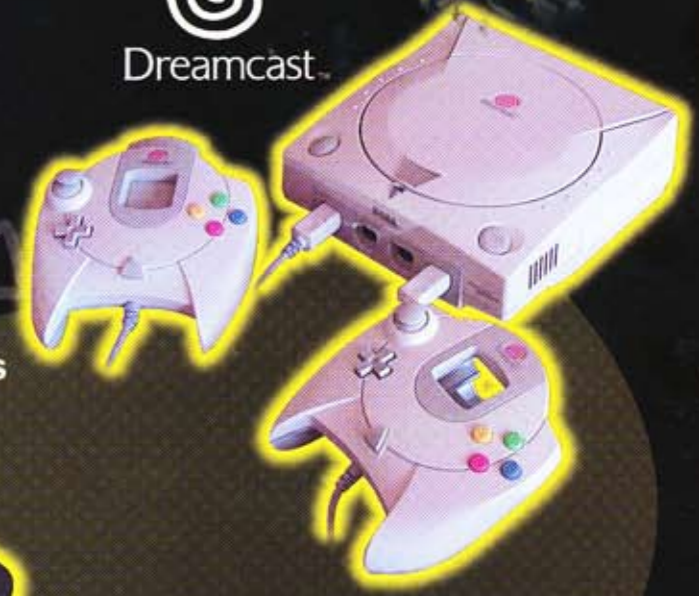
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ED's Note

YOU'RE RIPPING ME OFF!

I've always wondered why it is that magazine Editors feel this overwhelming need to justify a price increase in their editorial, you know, the usual play on words making sure for every negative there are at least two positives, and finally rounding up the whole affair with a real positive note. I will instead try something different and give it to you straight. My feelings are that we are putting out one of the best gaming magazines in the world every month and we can no longer protect you from our increasing costs. It might seem a little harsh but I've always had the policy of cutting to the bone and not trying to sell anyone up the river with anything in the magazine. Honesty is always the best way to handle these things. Over the last year we've managed to keep our price way below that of many other publications but the magazine you're holding in your hands costs a bundle to publish every month and we simply cannot continue doing it at the low price of R18.95

If you're smart you can continue getting the magazine at the old price by subscribing, we're extending the deadline for new subscribers at the old price for another month so do it now. So there is it, now read below for what we have planned for the next two years and by the time you're done you won't care how much you've just paid.

IF WE BUILD IT WILL YOU READ?

Now for the good stuff, so grab a cup of coffee and by the time it's cool enough to drink I'll be done. The good news is that we've had a drastic increase in circulation due to reader demand, so from this issue forwards there'll be more New Age Gaming magazines piled up in CNA's across the country. Even better still, in December we're increasing the print run again which should finally satisfy all those people who can never seem to find us every month. We also get many letters each month from people who think we only come out every second month, to all those people: NAG is on the shelves around the middle of the month every month except for our Jan/Feb issue. That was the good news now for the better news. Even though I really shouldn't make promises like this I'm hoping you'll all forget about them in a few months. The December issue represents the first big page increase we've had this year largely due to the sheer number of games we'll be getting in before the mad Christmas rush. We'll be going up to 100 pages in total and bringing you a few new departments in the New Year. If all goes well we'll also have a special Christmas edition with that extra CD no one's prepared to talk about. That's 1999 over with now for 2000. In the new millennium you'll notice some serious growth and expansion while still keeping the same format everyone knows and loves. Things are definitely happening in the games market in South Africa and we'll be there to keep you informed while trying to improve with each passing issue. So that's it for now and I hope everyone out there is looking forward to all the things I probably shouldn't have said anything about.

Michael James, Editor

We'd like to welcome Len to the team, someone who has no idea of what a deadline is or how to program his cell phone. He likes potatoes and can put anyone to sleep when he starts telling one of his 'interesting' stories. He's a nice guy though and shouldn't have to put up with this direct attack on his character, but he'll only find out when it's too late...

LIGHT NOTE, DARK SOUL

If you knew what happened during the final stages of putting this issue to bed you'd be quick to kiss the cold hard surface of the Cover CD. You see while our Assistant Editor was putting the final touches to his monthly masterpiece his main hard drive died, and I quote his cry for help, "It won't even boot, I don't know what to do". After some salvaging and scraping together he managed to re-install his system and get back to work (two very early mornings). Now the hard drive in question lies in the heap of things to fix and the CD lives to tell the tale of its narrow escape... We all laughed and cried when his answer to, "Where's your backup?" was, "What backup?"

NEW AGE GAMING

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN GAMING MAGAZINE
AN
UNREAL DESIGN FX
INITIATIVE

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COLOUR CURVE

PRINTER
PAARL PRINTING
(011) 804-6201

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WE GOT IT RIGHT IN THE LAST ISSUE - EACH AND EVERY REVIEW PREDICTION WE MADE IN IN THESE HALLOWED PAGES - AND SO WE'RE GOING TO TRY FOR THREE OUT OF THREE. ONE DOWN, TWO TO GO!



SHADOWMAN WILL CHILL YOU TO THE BONE WITH IT'S VOODOO SETTING. READ THE REVIEW: PG 32



READ ON

Volume 2 **NEW AGE GAMING** SOUTH AFRICA Issue 6

feel the FEAR...

SHADOW MAN

demo demo

SYSTEM SHOCK 2 demo

BLOOD OF THE SACRED GABRIEL KNIGHT movie

BLOOD OF THE DAMNED

DEMO'S INCLUDED:
Seven Kingdoms 2
Fleet Command
Force 21
Descent: Freespace 2
Mig Alley
GP 500
Revenant

Feel the fear with our bumper cover CD!



READ OUR BUMPER PREVIEW OF ONE OF THE MOST ANTICIPATED GAMES OF THE YEAR, DIABLO 2: PG 22

COVER CD

- DEMOS**
- Seven Kingdoms 2
 - Fleet Command
 - Force 21
 - Descent: Freespace 2
 - Mortyr
 - GP 500
 - Revenant
 - Shadow Man
 - System Shock 2
- MOVIES**
- DarkStone
 - Fly!
 - Gabriel Knight 3
 - Nocturne
- PATCHES**
- Braveheart v3.14
 - European Air War v1.2
 - Fly! v1.01 Beta
 - Hidden & Dangerous v1.1
 - Kingpin v1.1
 - Machines v1.1
 - Sports Car GT v1.551
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- Action Half-Life
 - Alpha Centauri Scenario
 - DirectX 6.1
 - Descent 3 Level Editor
 - Kingpin Skins
 - Metal Gear Solid Wallpaper
 - Podracer Theme
 - PlayStation Screensaver
 - Naboo Starfighter
 - Woodoo3 Wallpaper
 - X-Wing Alliance Theme

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The Web

Visit the home of the Brotherhood of NOD to find out more about the idealism of this villainous and ultra-cool faction from the world of Command & Conquer 2: Tiberian Sun. Still under the influence of the long dead Kane, the charismatic madman who built the Brotherhood from nothing, NOD is ready to take on the world with it's doc-

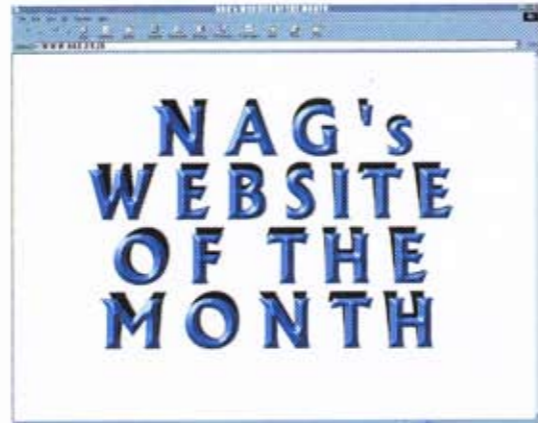
trine of Peace Through Power - which is kind of like saying "peace through superior firepower..." Just like the GDI site also available from the parent Westwood web site, the official brotherhood's site is full of interesting information to serve as a background



[HTTP://WWW.WESTWOOD.COM/GAMES/CCUNIVERSE/TIBERIANSUN/GDI](http://www.westwood.com/games/ccuniverse/tiberiansun/gdi)
[HTTP://WWW.WESTWOOD.COM/GAMES/CCUNIVERSE/TIBERIANSUN/NOD](http://www.westwood.com/games/ccuniverse/tiberiansun/nod)

through superior firepower..." Just like the GDI site also available from the parent Westwood web site, the official brotherhood's site is full of interesting information to serve as a background

you may find yourself swept away by their hypnotic words... If you find yourself being ensnared by the message of Kane, come back down to earth by visiting the official GDI web site. Where the NOD site is filled with ranting, raving and emotional blackmail, the GDI site is cold, hard and factual,

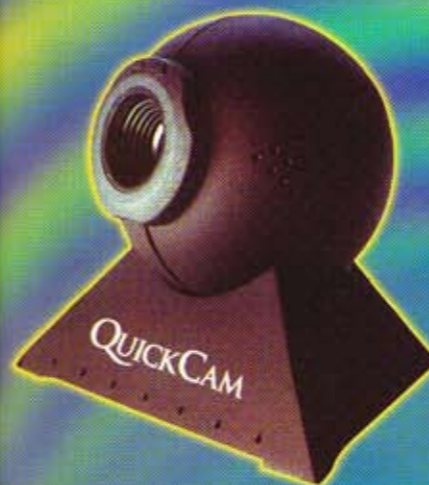


complete with press releases and "official" data concerning the actions of the Brotherhood. The two sites really have to be viewed together. They set each other off perfectly, and provide wonderful background information that will only serve to enhance the experience of actually playing Tiberian Sun. And for those of you who don't know, a popularity poll between these two factions has been running from the main Westwood page

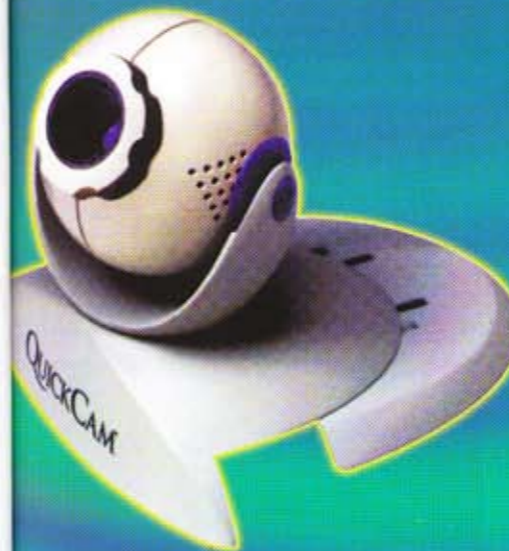
NAG's Favourite Websites of the Month

<p>http://www.eidos.co.uk</p>  <p>Eidos is certainly one of the leaders in game design, with products that are strong and sound, as well as highly entertaining. One of their biggest titles for the year is Braveheart, based on the award-winning film starring Mel Gibson as William Wallace, the Scottish freedom fighter who gave his life to oppose British rule in 13th-century Scotland. If the site is anything to go by, the game is something of a masterpiece. This site, accessed via the main Eidos site, is replete with screen shots, history, gameplay and other information. It is specifically designed to tantalise the visitor, which it does. After checking this out, I cannot wait to see the game!</p>	<p>http://www.sierrastudies.com/games/swat3/welcome.html</p>  <p>Sierra's much awaited SWAT 3 can be investigated at this web site. There have been several major changes between SWAT 2 and 3, and this is the perfect place to check them out. Visit the press releases and media sections for an official word, or duck into the forum to see what the gamers themselves have to say - and they have said a lot already! A very interesting section of the site details the development side of SWAT 3. It seems that Sierra assembled quite a team to take on this project... Although not the most exiting site ever, it is intuitive, informative and easy to navigate, which are very important factors in site design.</p>	<p>http://www.tinytank.com</p>  <p>Armed with only an opinion and an NTSC demo, I am convinced that Tiny Tank is going to be one of the major PlayStation events of all time. The adventures of this toy tank, which is small on size and big on annihilation potential, will get many people hooked, and is certain to cause many nights sitting up with the PlayStation overheating next to the TV. The site is just as entertaining as the game, with tons of tongue in cheek information for you to glean about what seems to be a fast paced, foul mouthed, fun game, as well as a few animations - Tiny Tank's facial expressions (if they could be called facial) are priceless!</p>	<p>http://www.silenthill.com/</p>  <p>This PlayStation title really created quite a stir in the NAG offices, so it's only right that we visit the web site for this truly warped game. The strange, eerie atmosphere that developers created within the game is wonderfully captured by this site, which has full information on the game, in terms of FAQs, screen shots and more. This site is a good example of excellent potential possibly misused. The whole eerie feel of the site is lessened by the choice of green as the predominant colour in the site. Everything is green. Literally. One wonders what possessed the web designers to go the verdant route, but the site is well worth the visit, none the less.</p>
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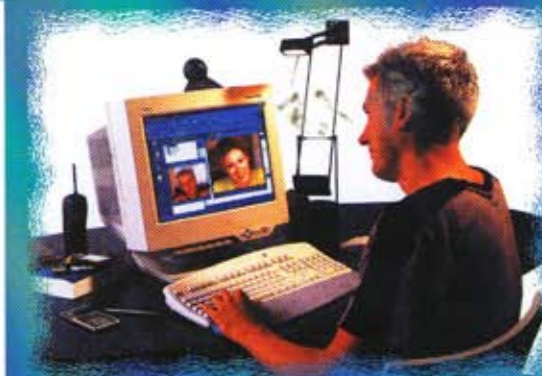
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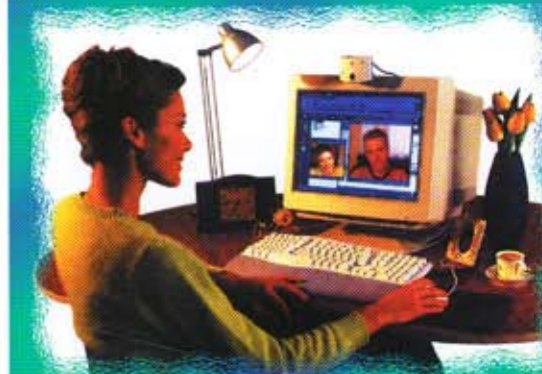
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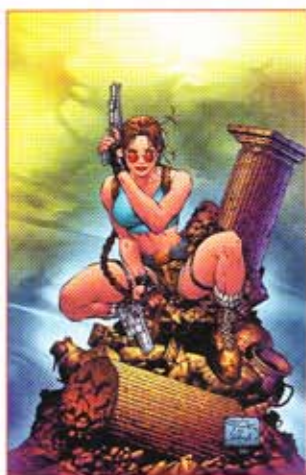
QuickCam Home



CREW

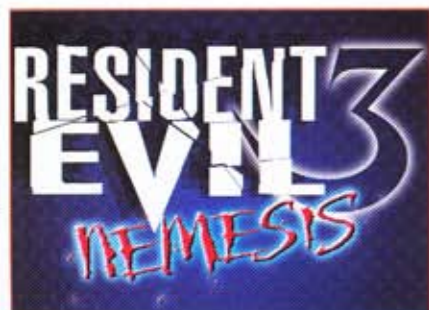
SUPERMAN, TOP GUN AND TOMB RAIDER

A monthly Tomb Raider comic book series written by Dan Jurgens (the writer famed for killing Superman) is to be published by Top Cow comics and is due for release soon in America. Rumour has it that Eidos Interactive have also bought a sizeable stake in Top Cow comics, news that could only indicate that we might be seeing a number of comic book video game titles released from the Tomb Raider guys. By killing off the man of steel in the early nineties, Dan Jurgens raised the profile of Superman to such a degree that Warner Brothers took a sudden interest in this time honoured tale and are currently planning another Superman movie starring Nicholas Cage. When asked if he planned to do something similar with Lara Croft he responded by saying, "I'm trying to write a more well-rounded (no puns) character than readers are usually exposed to in such a book. As well as a book that has plenty of action and drama in the Indiana Jones fashion, it will be one that will keep people coming back for more. The guys at the Cow and I are having all sorts of fun putting this together."



RESIDENT EVIL 3

Capcom has told press that they will be including a demo of their highly anticipated survival horror series, Resident Evil 3, with the first half a million copies of Dino Crisis. Dino Crisis is a dinosaur adventure and is starting to look more and more like a cross between Metal Gear Solid, Resident Evil and Jurassic Park - it's going to be a huge smash when released in September. The RE3 demo will show what players can look forward to in this next zombie blasting epic.



QUAKING ALICE IN WONDERLAND



Does the idea of pasting the Mad Hatter with a rocket launcher send chills down your spine or does the prospect of ruining the tea party in Wonderland with a few shotgun blasts open new doors of entertaining possibilities to you? Whatever your alignment, American McGee (former id Software level designer), the Lewis Carroll classic, Alice in Wonderland and Rogue Entertainment are cooking up a real treat for first person shooter fans. Using licensed Quake Arena technology this unlikely grouping will be creating the game you never thought you'd see. Forget all about the fairytale world you may have grown up loving as a child as this title will be pulling no punches and hosting no tea parties. The design team has opted for a surreal world where anything can happen - the dark side of Wonderland if you may. Rogue Entertainment has been responsible for a number of add-ons for id titles in the past and with this kind of experience and talent, the game is sure to be a treat. It's slated for release towards the end of next year and will be published by Electronic Arts.

CLASSIC ATARI

After the smashing success of their first Atari Arcade Hits, these veterans of classic gaming are about to release the next instalment in the series. Digital Eclipse are the people behind the compilation and fans can expect to be playing Asteroids Deluxe, Battlezone, Crystal Castles, Graviton, Millipede and Warlords. The title will be released in 2000 and will also feature all the original options and themes from the first version. Additionally a patch has been released for the first Arcade Hits and is available at the companies web site.

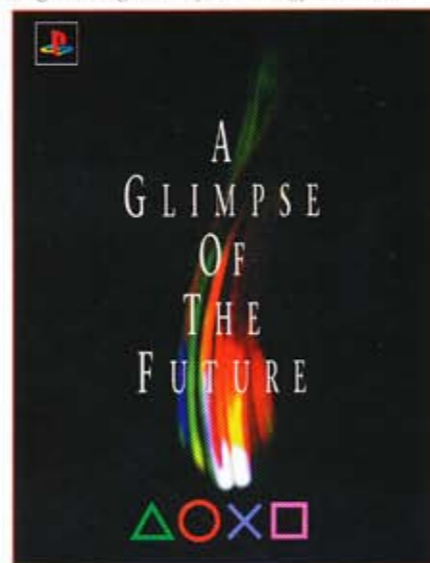


FREE BUILDINGS FOR SALE

Ever since Maxis released their Building Architect tool for SimCity, fans across the world have been busy creating their own architectural masterpieces. If you visit the Maxis web site you'll be pleased to discover over 4000 new buildings submitted by fans of the game. All these new structures are available for download at no extra cost. If you're a fan of the game get yourself down to <http://www.simcity.com> and burn out that modem.

NO MODEM FOR PSX 2

News that the PlayStation 2 will not be shipped with a modem has caused quite a stir in the gaming community - this is the well-formulated excuse from Sony. Phil Harrison, vice president of research and development for Sony Computer Entertainment America claims that it would be a waste to adopt a particular modem strategy for the PlayStation 2 at this stage, stating that any technology used now



would be obsolete by the time the platform was released. This isn't to say that there will be no modem capabilities in the future though. The aim now is to let users choose whatever connection hardware suited them at the time. By using USB and PCMCIA PC card interfaces PlayStation 2 owners could add to their machine a wide variety of connectivity options that suited them. So you'll be able to use the machine for Internet gaming but you'll have to buy the hardware yourself, just like all your PC owning friends - and slowly the gap closes.

TRIBES ADD-ON

Xtreme has been hard at work developing a smart new add-on pack for the multiplayer sensation, Tribes from Dynamix. Xtreme has also announced that the add-on pack will be released at no charge and forms part of a big thank you to the gaming community. The add-on will feature more than ten new missions, two new game types called King of the Hill and Team Deathmatch plus a host of new skins, weapons and a few other interesting surprises. The add-on will be available at <http://www.tribesplayers.com/tribesplayers/extreme.html> soon.



TOMB RAIDER, AGAIN

The rumours have been confirmed - there will definitely be a fourth game in this hugely successful action adventure series. The best part about it is that the game, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation should be arriving on our shores in November. The location for the game is apparently going to be Egypt where we'll even get to see the luscious heroine portrayed as a teenager discovering her trademark backpack. This new angle on the action also heralds a return to the original game with much



less emphasis placed on platform jumping and bad guy killing. Travelling to exotic locations around the world has been abandoned in favour of a single location and a look at how the young explorer was introduced to archaeology. Doesn't this all sound a lot like an instalment of Indiana Jones? Besides the new concept, the game will also feature some new technology that should now finally fix all those little problems that kept plaguing it in the past. Seamless links from the full motion video to the actual game have been implemented as well as improved character modelling and animation. The old circular inventory system has been done away with in favour of a new system that will allow items to be stored and combined including a diary. The developers are also addressing the game's difficulty levels, graphics and lack of integration with primary focus going to the game's graphics engine. In certain respects this fourth game will force attention towards solving puzzles and exploration but at the same time it is going to have to impress many people who've become a little tired of the whole concept. Check out www.tombraider.com for more.

FRIDAY THE 13TH PATCH

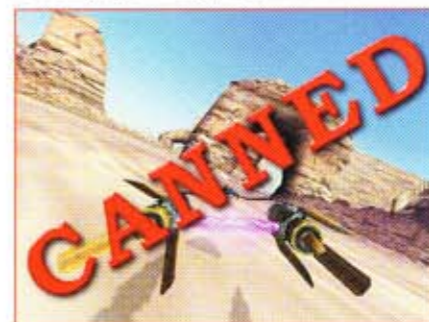
Bullfrog announced to all interested Dungeon Keepers the release of the first patch for their evil game, Dungeon Keeper 2. The company planned on releasing the patch on Friday the 13th August - a coincidence? We think not. The update is around 10 MB big so a local download is recommended. You should try Electronic Arts Africa's site: <http://www.ea.co.za> for the patch first before browsing overseas. Refreshingly, the patch doesn't contain any major bug fixes but rather a host of new and exciting additions to this stunning game. These include: five new maps - four multiplayer levels and one My Pet Dungeon level, the ability to continue after completing a level, the ability to add AI players to multiplayer games, added stability and a few minor multiplayer fixes.



RACER CANNED

THE BAD NEWS

In a surprising move LucasArts has announced that it will not be releasing a PlayStation version of its highly acclaimed Star Wars: Episode One Racer game. The company stated that it would be concentrating its efforts on developing new Episode One titles, in addition to developing games for current and emerging console platforms. The Pod racing force will now unfortunately be felt by the millions of PlayStation owners around the world who were eagerly awaiting the game's release date.



THE GOOD NEWS

George Lucas in a recent interview stated that he really wants to see a game based on Star Wars: Episode Two made for the PlayStation 2. He said that it should be possible for the original movie graphics to be used on Sony's new platform. George Lucas is a big fan of the PlayStation 2 commenting that all the original special effects sequences were generated using super computers running twenty four hours a day. Now with the improved technology these same effects could be generated in real time.



ASCENSION UPDATE

In what might become the most delayed game of all time, Ultima IX: Ascension is in the news again. The game was originally due for release towards the end of last year but unsurprisingly never made the deadline. The good news surrounding this game is that with each new preview release or news snippet the title keeps looking better. Besides the old news that the game will feature the latest in 3D graphics the latest news is that it will also feature a special sound system including recorded speech for the 200 plus characters. Other interesting features include weather effects, day and night cycles, real-life physics and the ability to manipulate every item in the game world. This is great news for fans but there is still no news on a release date.



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NEW AGE GAMING PRICE COMPARISON

Game Title	Incredible Connection	CNA Interactive	Toys R Us	Reggies
Silent Hill (PSX)	R 469.99	R 489.00	R 449.99	R 449.99
Attack of the Saucerman (PSX)	R 349.99	R 359.00	None	None
Omega Boost (PSX)	R 349.99	R 359.00	None	None
Asterix (PSX)	R 379.99	R 479.00	None	None
Rent-a-Hero (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
International Cricket Captain 2 (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
Street Wars (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
Mig Alley (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA

RELEASE LISTS

NEW AGE GAMING TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCURACY 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!"

PC RELEASE LIST

SEPTEMBER

- 01 - Earthworm Jim - INTERPLAY
- 01 - Forgotten Realms: Atlas - TSR
- 01 - Pro Pilot 2000 - SIERRA
- 01 - Messiah - SHINY
- 01 - Wizardry VIII - SIR-TECH CANADA
- 06 - Cutthroats - EIDOS INTERACTIVE
- 07 - Tetris - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
- 08 - West Front: Sea Lion - TALONSOFT
- 10 - Close Combat Trilogy - MICROSOFT
- 14 - Expert Pool - PSYGNOSIS
- 14 - Flight Unlimited 3 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 15 - Gabriel Knight III - SIERRA
- 15 - Sinistar Unleashed - THQ
- 15 - Unreal Tournament - GT INTERACTIVE
- 20 - Abomination - EIDOS INTERACTIVE
- 21 - Nations - ACTIVISION
- 21 - Panzer Elite - ACTIVISION
- 21 - Rage of Mages 2 - MONOLITH
- 21 - Scrabble II - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
- 21 - Space Invaders - ACTIVISION
- 21 - Tanktics - INTERPLAY
- 24 - Splinter - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 27 - Star Trek: New Worlds - INTERPLAY
- 28 - Chess 2000 - INTERPLAY
- 28 - Driver - GT INTERACTIVE
- 30 - Descent Freespace 2 - INTERPLAY
- 30 - Homeworld - SIERRA
- 30 - Revenant - EIDOS INTERACTIVE

OCTOBER

- 01 - Age of Empires II - MICROSOFT
- 01 - Giants - INTERPLAY
- 01 - Odium - MONOLITH
- 01 - Star Trek: Klingon Academy - INTERPLAY
- 01 - Tonic Trouble - UBI SOFT
- 08 - MS Flight Simulator 2000 - MICROSOFT
- 12 - Comanche 4 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 12 - Septerra Core - MONOLITH
- 12 - USAF: Jane's - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 15 - Asheron's Call - MICROSOFT
- 15 - Battlezone 2 - ACTIVISION
- 19 - Delta Force 2 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 20 - Wheel of Time - GT INTERACTIVE
- 22 - Twelve O'Clock High - TALONSOFT
- 25 - Team Fortress II - SIERRA
- 26 - FIFA 2000 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 26 - SU-27: Flanker 2.0 - MINDSCAPE
- 28 - Planescape: Torment - INTERPLAY

PSX RELEASE LIST

SEPTEMBER

- 07 - Final Fantasy VIII - SQUARESOFT
- 07 - G Police 2 - ACTIVISION
- 14 - Die Hard II - FOX INTERACTIVE
- 14 - Jet Moto 3 - SCEA
- 14 - Kingsley - ACTIVISION
- 14 - NHL Hockey 2000 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 14 - Omega Boost - SCEA
- 15 - Bass Landing - AGETEC
- 15 - Demolition Racer - INFOGRAMES
- 15 - Dino Crisis - CAPCOM
- 15 - Gallop Racer - TECMO
- 15 - Juggernaut - JALECO
- 15 - LEGO Racers - LEGO MEDIA
- 15 - Toonstein - VERTICAL ENTERTAINMENT
- 20 - Rat Attack! - MINDSCAPE
- 21 - Suikoden 2 - KONAMI
- 21 - Space Invaders - ACTIVISION
- 21 - Wipeout 3 - ACTIVISION
- 24 - WCW Mayhem - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 30 - Clock Tower 2 - AGETEC

OCTOBER

- 01 - Mission Impossible - INFOGRAMES
- 01 - Test Drive 6 - INFOGRAMES
- 05 - AGH Atari Collection III - MIDWAY
- 05 - Formula One 1999 - ACTIVISION
- 05 - Major League Soccer - KONAMI
- 05 - Medal of Honor - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 05 - Tenchu Green Label - ACTIVISION
- 12 - Warpath - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 12 - Metal Gear Solid VR Mission - KONAMI
- 12 - Tony Hawk's Skater - ACTIVISION
- 15 - Indiana Jones - LUCASARTS
- 15 - Army Men: Air Attack - 3DO
- 15 - Army Men: Sarge's Heroes - 3DO
- 15 - Crusaders of Might & Magic - 3DO
- 15 - Fighting Force 2 - EIDOS INTERACTIVE
- 15 - NHL Blades of Steel 2000 - KONAMI
- 15 - Trickin' Snowboarder - CAPCOM
- 15 - Tron Bonne - CAPCOM
- 18 - Messiah - INTERPLAY
- 19 - Alien Resurrection - FOX INTERACTIVE
- 19 - Crash Team Racing - SCEA
- 19 - Dune 2000 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 19 - Pong - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
- 21 - Grand Theft Auto 2 - ROCKSTAR GAMES
- 26 - FIFA 2000 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 26 - Supercross 2000 - ELECTRONIC ARTS

IN PASSING...

TOY TRAINS

Railroad Tycoon II: Gold Edition from publishers, Gathering of Developers is set for release with a few interesting bonuses. The special edition will feature the full version of the game, The Second Century expansion pack, 12 new scenarios and a special strategy guide which includes tips on completing all the scenarios in the game as well as The Second Century and the new missions.

MAPPING MASTER

John Romero, ION Storm game designer has revealed that he is rolling up his sleeves and returning to his favourite pastime, designing maps. Ever since work began on his delayed FPS title, Daikatana, he has been involved in overseeing the direction the game was taking, a role that prevented him from doing what he does best, designing maps, something he hasn't done since the first Quake.

ANOTHER INTERNET SITE

The upcoming game, Drakan has given birth to a new web site, PlanetDrakan. The site is community based and can be seen over at <http://www.planetdrakan.com>.

MOVIE GAMES

Threshold Entertainment, the guys making the upcoming Duke Nukem movie have put a web site online for the project. The site has a number of interesting features including a message board, chat room and a 'Dear Duke' section. You can find out all about the movie and other interesting things at <http://www.threshold.com/dukenukem/>.

MAKING GAMES

If any of you out there are interested in creating your very own computer game then you might be interested in a new book by Marc Saltzman called, Game Design: Secrets of the Sages. The book covers topics such as, getting started, creating your masterpiece and finally getting in the front door and staying there. If you think you've got what it takes to start coding the next Quake and are wondering where to start and what to do then this is the book for you. Go now and spend all your money with these good people: <http://www.amazon.com>

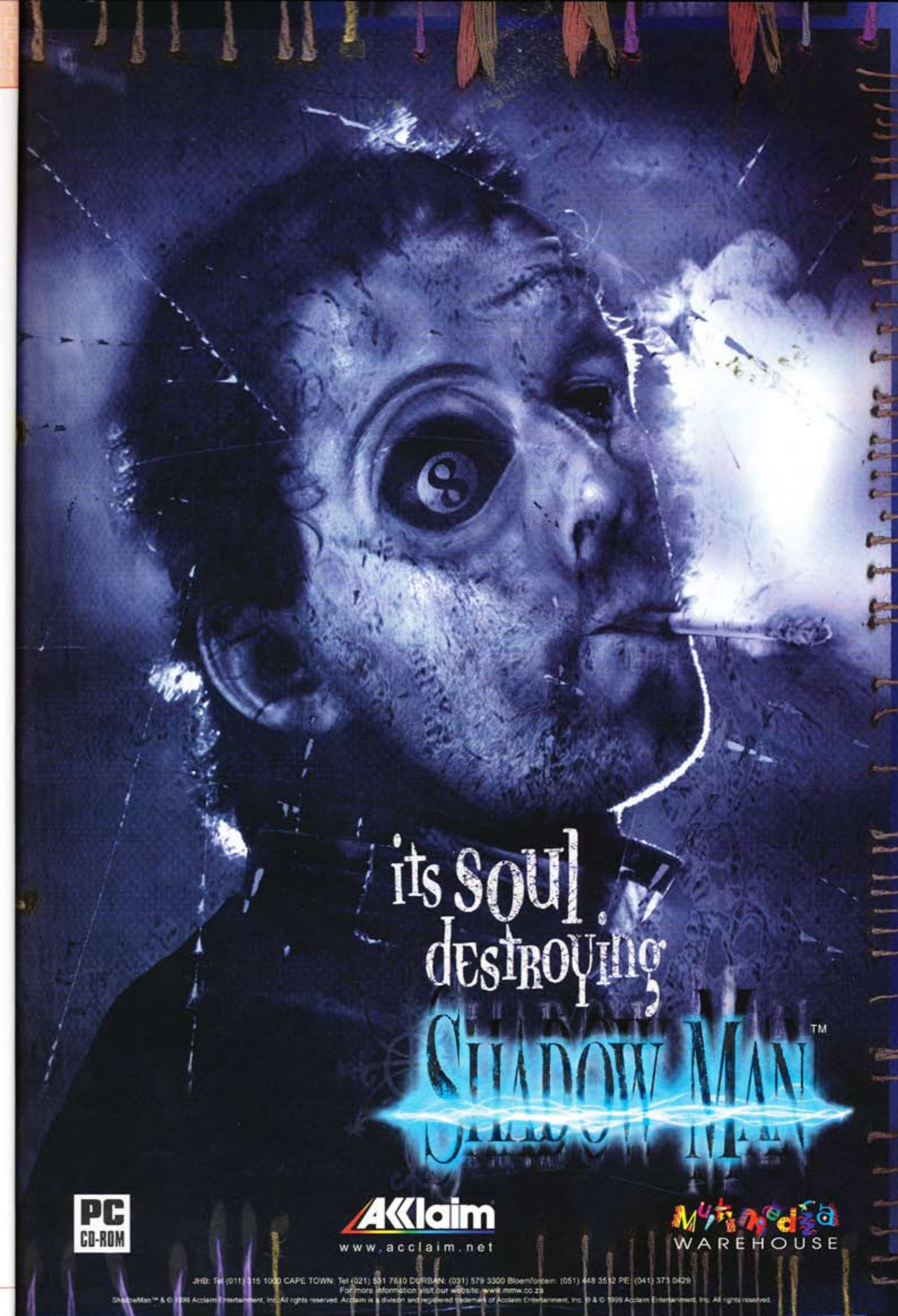
RESIDENT BLADE

If a game that manages to combine all the best elements of Resident Evil 2 and Bushido Blade sounds interesting then make your way over to <http://www.konami.com> for a closer look at Soul of the Samurai, an upcoming release for the PlayStation. The site has a few movies and the all-important plot of the game.

GTA 2 4 U

No, it's not a new Gauteng license plate, but rather the new web site for Grand Theft Auto 2, found at <http://www.gta2.com>. Here you'll find a new mission for GTA: London 1961, a movie, press releases and links to fan sites.

...(NAB)



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JUST CHARTS

Local PC Charts			
Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	World Cup Cricket 99	2	2
2.	Age of Empires Gold Edition	6	1
3.	Alien vs Predators	New	New
4.	TA Kingdoms	New	New
5.	Dungeon Keeper 2	5	1
6.	Need for Speed Road Challenge	New	New
7.	Star Wars Racer	New	New
8.	Sim City 3000	7	1
9.	Half life	8	2
10.	Myth 2 Soulblighter	3	2

Local PlayStation Charts			
Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Metal Gear Solid	3	2
2.	Driver	9	1
3.	Heart of Darkness	7	1
4.	Brian Lara Cricket	8	6
5.	Gran Turismo	1	8
6.	Fifa '99	6	6
7.	Time Crisis Platinum	New	New
8.	C&C Retaliation	4	2
9.	Crash Bandicoot 3	2	6
10.	Abes Exoddus	Re-entry	Re-entry

International PC Charts		
Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Heroes of Might and Magic 3	New World/3DO
2.	Alpha Centauri	Electronic Arts
3.	Half-Life	Valve/Sierra
4.	MechWarrior 3	Microprose
5.	Quake 3 Test	iD Software
6.	Dungeon Keeper 2	Bullfrog/Electronic Arts
7.	Might and Magic 7	New World/3DO
8.	Total Annihilation: Kingdoms	Cavedog/GT
9.	Descent 3	Interplay
10.	BattleCruiser 3000AD	Derek Smart

International PlayStation Charts		
Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Driver	Reflections/GT
2.	Final Fantasy 8	Square
3.	Metal Gear Solid	Konami
4.	Star Ocean	Tri-Ace/Enix/Sony
5.	Syphon Filter	Eidetic/989 Studios
6.	Gran Turismo	Sony
7.	Lunar	Game Arts
8.	Tomb Raider 3	Eidos
9.	Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco
10.	Tomb Raider 3	Eidos

As things start to hot up for the pre-christmas release rush, we are anticipating a total lock down of new titles on the charts for the Nov and Dec issues. With the imminent release of titles such as Tiberian Sun and Age of Empires 2 for the PC, as well as Silent Hill and Spyro 2 for the PlayStation, we can expect to see movement in next few months on the charts. This month Cricket fever is still running high with World Cup Cricket 99 taking top honours on the PC and Brain Lara Cricket still going strong at 4th spot on the PlayStation. Metal Gear Solid shows its class as it retakes the number one spot on PlayStation, showing that mature gamers are supporting the console. On the International front Alpha Centauri finally loses its crown to Heroes of Might and Magic 3 from New World Entertainment and a surprising entry comes from support for iD Software's Quake 3 Test. On the consoles we have a new king of the hill in Driver from GT Interactive. The next few months are going to be great with top releases about to hit our shores. Cheers.

BLOOD OF THE SACRED GABRIELKNIGHT BLOOD OF THE DAMNED THE ADVENTURE RETURNS IN SEPTEMBER

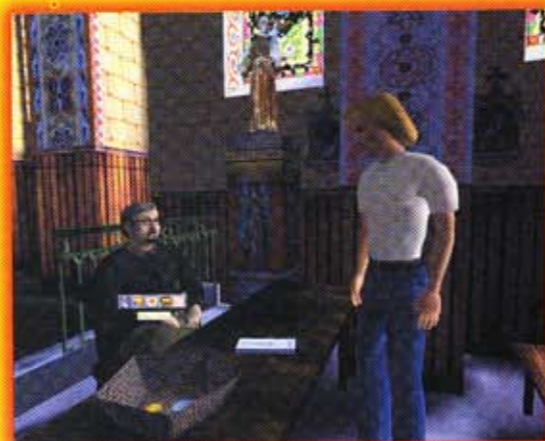
The best-selling adventure series is back with a vengeance! Gabriel Knight 3: Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned is the third title in the award-winning Gabriel Knight series, created by writer/game designer Jane Jensen. A controversial, reality-based mystery with a paranormal and political edge, Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned is a 3D adventure game weaving intrigue and the occult into a very powerful and compelling plot. Out soon.

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- 1) What is the full name of the title to be won?
 - 2) What company developed Gabriel Knight 3?
- (Clue: NAG September PG25)



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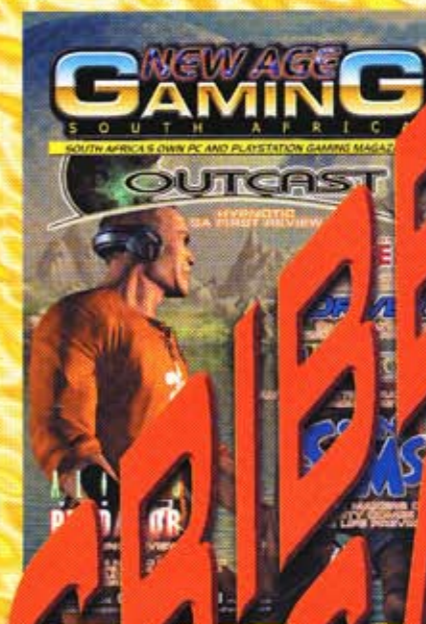
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Thank you to everyone who wrote in this month, unfortunately we cannot reply to all of the letters, but we do read them all. You can send your letters and e-mail to the addresses on the postcard. Please remember to include all your details when you write in or we can't send you your prize should you win. Don't ask us to change your prize or magically convert it into cash. As always, the Editors' decision is final and that's that.

Well done to **Anton Fortein** who wins our editors choice this month - keep the questions coming. Until next month...

PHOTO: GUY AROLD/ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

Backchat
PO Box 2749
Alberton
1449

letters@nag.co.za

Graphics are everything

The reason for my letter is simple, I would like to give all those people out there who moan about today's games having all graphics and no game play a message - are you mad? I do agree that a game must have some depth in order to succeed, but I still say that the graphics of a game are as important if not more so than the game play. Sure, some games like Red Alert didn't have the greatest graphics but here game play was the key. However take a game like Unreal, lower the resolution, take down the detail and you have one really bad game. The graphics in Unreal, as you already know are absolutely stunning, take these away and the game left behind just wouldn't cut it. I have a Pentium 200 MMX, I ran Unreal (just) at a resolution of 512 by 240 with a Frame rate of about 17fps thus making action really choppy, but the graphics alone were enough to keep me glued to my PC. In 1997 EGM celebrated their 100th issue with a list containing the greatest 100 games of all time. I expected to see games like FF7 and Resident Evil 2 in the list. Well, they were, but so were about 50 other games that were made for the older 8 bit machines. I mean, can you honestly tell me that you would rather play one of these old turkeys on the SNES than FF7 or FF8 on the PlayStation. No, of course you can't. The graphics of FF7 were awesome as well as everything else in the game, making any other 8-bit or 16-bit title look rather pathetic. All this old schoolboy rubbish about game play is a thing of the past. Gamers of today know what kind of graphics can be achieved, so we expect the best, all the time. So throw away that old Commodore or SNES and jump aboard the 'accelerated' super highway.

David Borchardt
Irene

I believe that the reason we so fondly remember those archaic games for the way they played and not how they looked and sounded is because in those days that was all we had. In the past the role of the 3D-accelerator and surround sound system was played by your imagination. In your mind that

suspicious blocky blob of pixels could represent anything and the combination of turning an imagination loose with a little help from a game has branded those fond memories in the back of your mind forever. Today everything is handed to us on a plate, and thus, slowly and sadly imagination dies - at the end of the day it's always better never to return (with the aid of an emulator) to those games, they'll always feel and look much better in your memory than in reality. But back to the point, if the graphics are rubbish then the game sucks - not true, there are more than a handful of games that looked like a dream but played like hell. The truth of the matter is that the graphics do tend to keep getting better, but the games don't - it's always the same thing over and over again, and those 'lovely' graphics just keep changing. What I want is a good dose of originality, innovation and for heavens sake, games that are fun to play. The bottom line is simply this - we've come to expect amazing graphics and sound in games these days, so a game that excels in these departments won't automatically hit a big score, unless they offer a little substance to go with the allure. What everyone should be after is playability and good old-fashioned fun, give me these elements and I'll respect the game.
Ed

You've got mail

A few weeks back I wrote to you asking about a problem that I had... I really didn't expect a return on my letter but I got one... I just want to thank you guys again for reading and responding to my letter... it makes a big difference... to the people... us... the readers of NAG...

Reboot
E-mail

Thanks and it really is a pleasure. However, I must tell you that we cannot reply to all the mail we get, or that's all we'd be doing everyday, and then there'd be no magazine and then the letters would stop and then we wouldn't be able to play games all day... you get the picture. We do however read every single scrap of mail that arrives, all the way from one-line requests to three page epics. The best thing about the mail is that it keeps us

going, so we don't start thinking that we're all alone out there in our fight to bring South Africa a decent gaming publication. So keep the letters coming and remember to think before you write... before you make a point, make sure you have one... then write anyway!
Ed

Bored in the dark

The time was 11:00 PM and I was lying in my bed, dead from the night before and out of the blue it smacked me! Why doesn't NAG have special evenings where they can chat online to the gamers who buy their magazine? I think that this is a brilliant idea [of course you would - Ed] and it just hit me out of the blue... I wasn't thinking about anything so it must be some type of message from a superior gaming being. It could just be a channel on IRC because most people have IRC and it would be easier than sending in e-mails. This way us mere

Learning to loose

Daniel, (letter printed in NAG July, Issue 4) don't ever forget why you spent R300 for the game in the first place. I hope you bought the game to 'get into it' (excuse sounding 'new age' - no pun intended). To have us gamers successfully immerse ourselves in the game is the primary objective of the creators of a game. Making it difficult to complete a certain level is, I imagine just as important, but hopefully a definite secondary objective. This gives the game a level of longevity, keeping us punching those keys a little longer. I believe making it necessary to cheat accomplishes one objective (longevity) but totally negates the more important one of enjoyment (you said yourself - losing interest in the game itself). If a game cannot hold you captivated and still keep you progressing, then you need to play something else or practice a little harder and stop complaining about how expensive games are and how programmers conned you. 'Cheats' should be left alone and only whipped out when a game has you climbing the walls at 3 o'clock in the morning. They are not there for blasting your way through a game, level upon level until you emerge victorious without even breaking a sweat. Cheats are normally used by programmers for various and obvious reasons, including being able to effectively test certain levels and making 'fixes' without having to cycle through the lower levels. The thing is, remember why you bought the game and if winning is so important for you, why not try out for the SA rugby or cricket team and leave playing games to the rest of us gamers - people who enjoy playing and struggling along and learning that to get ahead, you sometimes have to loose a little.

Anton Fortein
E-mail

Go easy on poor Daniel there, I believe he was trying to make the same point you are but his comments were laced with ample doses of sarcasm (unless he really did try and take over a military base with a keyboard and a handful of cheat codes). So now that Daniel has been removed from the firing line so to speak, I can deal with your letter. There isn't a single point you make that I can disagree on with any kind of conviction, the scariest thing about cheating is that like messing with drugs, once you start it's hard to stop. In the past even I have had the cheating blues (coined phrase) at one time or another, the mindless playing of a game in which you cannot die, levels fly past in a blur and the rendered ending seems little more than a wasted effort. Living with the guilt is the hardest part though but then again, the only person who ever suffers from guilt is you, so wallow away while you learn to live with your regrets. Just one more thing, you also stated that programmers use cheats to move along in a game quickly for bug fixing and so on, the question I have for you now is why then don't these programmers remove these cheats before releasing the final code... any ideas?
Ed

mortals can give their suggestions about the magazine, ask questions about new games, chat to fellow gamers, or just to argue with the reviewers on the poor ratings they gave certain games.

Darren
E-mail

Sorry, but our reviewers cannot conduct themselves in any normal social situations, be it a blind date, an IRC chat or even a simple task such as walking the dog around the block. All they are really good for is playing games, eating pizza and moaning about deadlines. Like I always say, no seriously, it is a rather good idea that has now been filed in my 'things to do in the next millennium or anytime sooner' book. If anyone out there knows any reason why this might not be a good idea then speak within the next month or hold your peace forever... and don't say we didn't warn you!
Ed

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Ken P
E-mail

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The future

I've been wondering of late, why the people at NAG would review games not available in South Africa, seeing that NAG is a South African magazine. At first I thought it was just plain stupid, but now I see it's actually quite devious. Yes, and the scheme works like this: Staff member Bob really wants a game that's not available here. However (in spite of all that crap about piracy), he wouldn't actually spend his money on a game (especially with the extra expense of importing it). So he gets it through NAG, pays nothing and pretends to be working while he reviews it. That's brilliant! Sir, I salute you. Keep it up, and keep it cheap.

Amused
E-mail

We do it because there isn't one single reason why you can't order those games from overseas yourselves, if its not coming in to the country via a local distributor then order it over the internet. On the other side of the coin, if the games are available locally then make sure you buy them here or you'll make the whole situation even worse.
Ed

All the same deck of cards

Here's the thing... 80% of the demos, games etc. that swirl around us need a 3D card. Now I cannot justify 1,5K to 2K Rands for a 3D card on my salary, doubtless some will make the purchase regardless. Also my Pentium doesn't even support AGP so I am looking at a 4-5K upgrade of motherboard, chip and memory to climb on the 3D bandwagon. I really would like to know the demographics of the computer gaming industry (questionnaire results) as to what percentage are in a similar blue funk. Consequently I will never be able to purchase any of these 3D games. I appeal to you as the voice of the SA gaming industry. Why don't the manufacturers of 3D cards and 3D games get together, subsidise the cards and broaden the customer base for 3D games. I am not talking about chucking some horrible old game in with a card, but a real price decrease in cards. Give the consumer the chance to choose and purchase some of the great new titles out there. Instead of wistfully returning it to the shelf after reading the system requirements.

Ken Pope
E-mail

Yes, 3D games are currently in vogue right now and probably always will be. The things they can do with hardware acceleration these days is amazing, not to mention what's planned for the future. The next generations of 3D cards are already knocking on our

door. The problem you are having is a little unfounded as it is entirely possible to pick up a decent PCI 3D card for under a thousand bucks from most hardware vendors. Only a few cards price anywhere near R2000 and some of the latest cards even support PCI slots. You aren't going to be able to buy a top of the range card with your current set-up but who cares, there isn't anything wrong with these 'slightly' lower specification cards that will be running games for a least the next two years. From a financial point of view this works out to roughly R50 a month for those two years, and R50 a month for absolute gaming bliss can't be matched. Your subsidising idea would be great if the hardware manufacturers and the game developers worked together a little better from a price point of view but this will probably never happen.
Ed

Cione

Why are there so many really rubbish games for the PlayStation, I mean only one out of six games are really good and the remaining ones are junk. There are the odd few that are actually worth the large amount of money I'm paying for example, Gran Turismo and Metal Gear Solid but then there are games like Tank Racer and even Spawn that suck. Why don't developers take time to actually complete games or as the case usually is to cash in on something (South Park) and as for sports games, it really irritates me how people buy a game just because of its name. Maybe if they changed this I would spend more money on games!

Eduard de Franca
E-mail

Surprisingly enough it's the rubbish games that inspired the first game review. Someone somewhere decided that, like restaurants, music and movies people needed to know if a game was poor, average or excellent and thus the first gaming review was born. Why should anyone care about these rubbish games when publications like ours are there to inform readers of these suspect titles? So the trick is to first buy the magazine, read the review and then make your buying decision. It's only the foolish that rush in and buy the first game that features a famous sports star or a big name license - historically these games have always been of a lower quality.
Ed

Back in time

When I picked up my latest copy of NAG at CNA I recognised the same old E3 logo thing and I had a startling sensation of déjà vu. I was standing in the exact same spot with a copy of NAG in my hands similar to the one I was holding previously, with the exact same E3 icon on it a year ago. But it was

somehow... different. I then saw the staples connecting the cover to the arcane pages. I then saw that there was no cover CD connected to the magazine. I also discovered that it contained a mere thirty-odd pages. I quickly flipped back to the cover and the date at the top was... you guessed it: 1998, Volume One. Pretty scary stuff, huh? I was relieved when I was brutally pulled from my paranormal experience by quickly checking the cover... Whew! 1999. My point: even though you guys were under severe stress in trying to launch a South African Gaming magazine and criticised by many, you pulled it off. You had your ups and downs, good point and bad ones, like any good overseas publication. The difference between you and the Euro or American trash... your magazine can be used for more than purely toilet paper. Don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to insult the other overpriced and glorified overseas magazines... err... I'll just get off that subject. Through almost impossible odds, you guys have won the respect of all or most of the South African gamers and proven yourselves capable of being right up there with the big boys. Instead of those irritating staples that defiled your magazine you use that nifty glue-stuff, your magazine has grown thicker every issue as more ideas and games sprung in (I remember the first E3 report back was in the magazine itself so you could fill up more pages). Above all else it contains articles written by actual intelligent writers. My friends and I thoroughly enjoy each of your magazines, and now every month there is a kind-of competition to see who can get his new NAG first. I've been reading NAG since issue number one and have seen you grow from worth buying to an outright bargain.

Angelfire
E-mail

It's interesting to see the growth and improvement of the magazine from a readers point of view. I think we get a little too close to the action here and with each modification or drastic change we notice it a little less each time. I hope the new price still qualifies us as an outright bargain. We've got many great things planned for our readers in the future - watch out for our bumper December edition in particular. Our goal is to keep increasing the quality of the content and the size of the magazine - more pages and let's not forget the cover CD. I personally think we need another one. The good thing about our baby growing so fast is that our readers will eventually get the biggest and best gaming magazine this side of the moon.
Ed

Another one

A while ago I contacted NAG about what it took to become a part-time reviewer for NAG. If you guys don't have part-time reviewers at NAG then just tell me to bugger off and I will. There is, of course, the possibility that you do have part-time reviewers at NAG but would never seriously consider me. I must point out again that I am a serious game player and a down right cynic looking to make something tangible out of my hobby. Oh, if you're looking through your subscription list and can't find my name... it's because I prefer to wait 4-6 weeks for the new issue. Although, those trips to CNA are killing me... I resolved to subscribe this month anyway. By the way... brilliant publication (I've noticed the trend towards PC games and away from the PlayStation... keep it coming!). So, is there any way that a lowly computer science student like myself could review for NAG part-time? And I believe that my English and writing skills are of some use (like right there, you're not supposed to begin a sentence with "And"). You must get asked this quite often and I would fully understand if you just replied "Bugger off."

Krishendran Rangappa
E-mail

[The 'bugger off' reply in disguise]: We don't favour subscribers over regular readers in the first place, I can't understand why people think this is the case. The trend towards more PC and less PSX simply isn't true, especially now with the PlayStation 2 arriving in the next millennium - believe me, you'll want to own both platforms. And, lastly, writing reviews (you can start a sentence with and if I say so). The official line is this: show me the money, I'm open to bribes and lucrative kick-backs - so if you send your review in along with a financial incentive then you can review for NAG (does anyone else notice that the Ed must be low on cash this month, must be those car repayments? - Editor-in-Chief). No, seriously we can only consider anyone writing for the magazine if they put the effort in and actually send me something I can look at - like a review of a current game... or does this kind thinking only make sense to me?
Ed

Please send all question and opinion related questions to
Backchat
Please send all your technical questions to
Backchat Technical

Thanks for all the letters, send more!

Greetings fellow gamers and welcome to yet another edition of the strange and bizarre world of classic video games. Where did they go? Were they all sucked up in the Bermuda triangle of classic gaming? As newer and better technology comes to the fore, most of the oldies as we knew them, were trashed or 'raped' for spares or simply just thrown away! This month we will uncover the entire story behind a game that for a collector is one of the most difficult to find. We are talking Xevious.

AtariBaby

GAME CONCEPT
Xevious is probably the first game ever to have been immortalised in print before it was even developed.

Confused? Let me explain! Mr Mosanobu Endoh, (the Japanese geezer who designed the game) originally wrote a novel as a background story, so if you want to know more about the Xevious world you can read the book, details of which will be given later. Soon after its release the book became quite a cult thing in Japan. It was only then that the development of the game came into action. The story behind Xevious 'the game' is pretty simple! Alien scum have set up shop on earth, and it's up to the player to send them back to where they came from. This was done by con-

XEVIOUS

Would you have guessed that this classic game was actually based on a book, well, anyone? ATARI BABY goes investigating...

Anyway... enough of the in-depth stuff. The game was a project of the Namco gaming company. Following the success route of the book, Xevious was a colossal money maker in Japan. But Japanese success was just not enough for Namco who soon started looking for a company to release the game in the United States. Atari (who else) jumped at the opportunity and in



GIANT MOTHER SHIPS AND SECRET SPECIALS - YOU HAD TO LOVE XEVIOUS

trolling your ship (called a Solvalou) on a vertical-scrolling screen, creating havoc by blasting both ground and air based targets with either lasers or by dropping bombs. You moved

through 16 levels of mayhem with your eventual goal being the destruction of the network of Andor Genesis

(the mother ships). This was quite a thing in itself considering the game used adaptive logic that adapted its offensive strategies to the player's skill level.

were treated to bootleg versions of Xevious, in many cases called Xevos, which were slapped into locally constructed 'mock wood-grain' finished cabinets with a shoddy hand written name

card. This was mainly due to two things. The first being the state of

apartheid and the trade embargoes placed on SA in the early 80's (damn government) making it difficult, but not impossible to get most of the original releases. The second is entirely the fault



of local importers of video games who wanted to cash in and make big profits fast by selling crappy 'bootleg' versions to game vendors. Phew, now that I got that off my chest let's carry on.

BIGGER THAN SPACE INVADERS!

Atari took the game to great levels in both the US and Europe, but with rise of the home computer it wasn't long before computer software designers came

knocking on Namco's door looking for distribution rights. For the Japanese based companies it was pretty easy, get the rights from Namco themselves! But then came the snag. Namco originally gave the rights for western distribution to Atari who paid large sums of royalty for this exclusive right (± \$4.2 million). So when companies like Commodore

came a knocking on Namco's door for conversion rights for the C64, Namco wanted to cut Atari out of the distribution bit, and since then there has been bad blood between the two giants. Could that be the reason why so little of Namco's products appeared on the ever-popular 2600 VCS or any of the Atari home computers? Well I guess we will never know!

THE XEVIOUS DID YOU KNOW FILE



feature in the game you had to move to the far right of the screen and start bombing constantly, once the first set of rings appear on the screen you have to shoot them and Voila. The message appears on the screen.

Mosanobu Endoh, Xevious's designer left Namco 5 years after the game was released and founded his own gaming company which he has been running ever since.

The background music and sound effects to the game were created by Yuriko Keino (a lady), who left Namco in 1985. All together the entire game ran with only 4 tunes and 13 sound effects.

In the end Xevious was released on just about every conceivable home computer and gaming console. From the old Apple II to the Sinclair Spectrum, I guess in a way it became the Pac Man of 'shoot-em-ups' as far as popularity went. Think of it this way, the last shooting game that caused the same impact on the gaming industry was Taito's Space Invaders, and that saw the light in 1978-9.

Well I guess that's it for now, but first I have to bow down and say thanks to a great friend Tony Bosch, who undoubtedly is the greatest Xevious junkie in South Africa and has the biggest collection of Xevious game PCB's and game related information on file. Thanks for allowing me to use your archive!

I haven't decided which game to tackle for next month, so if you have any suggestions e-mail me at will@radialgoa.com. Until we meet again in the gaming attic...

ATARI BABY



THERE'S A LITTLE HITMAN IN EVERYONE



THE ONLY CURE FOR AN ITCHY TRIGGER FINGER.



UPGRADING FOR IDIOTS

PART 5 - SOUND CARDS

One would think that as long as you have sound on your computer it doesn't really matter what type of soundcard you have, just as long as the sound doesn't come out of the system's built in speaker [I remember those days, yuck! - Ed]. This couldn't be further from the truth - over the last 2 years sound has become an increasingly important aspect of not only gaming but also for use in multimedia applications. New technologies have emerged and offer true surround sound by implementing front and rear speaker outputs.

ISA versus PCI

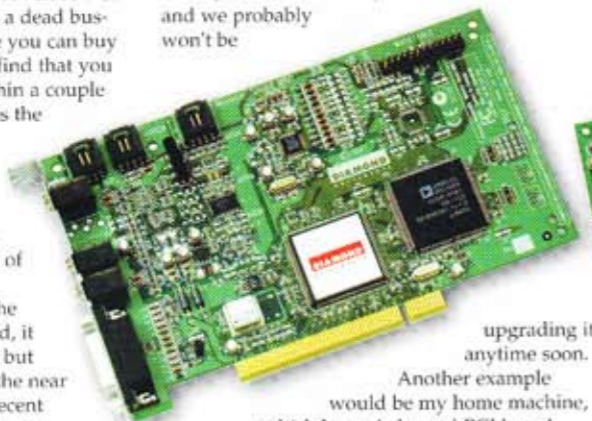
The biggest consideration today when deciding on a soundcard brings the whole ISA versus PCI issue to the front. Essentially ISA is a dead bus - it just hasn't been buried yet. While you can buy an ISA soundcard now, you might find that you don't have a slot to plug it into within a couple of years, maybe even sooner. That is the reason why soundcard manufacturers are moving to PCI based products. Besides the inevitable death of ISA, PCI also offers additional benefits such as a faster bus to transfer information on, and of course Plug & Play detection. This should make you reconsider the purchase of an ISA based soundcard, it might be very affordable cost wise, but you will have to upgrade again in the near future. Rather pay the extra for a decent PCI based soundcard now. Sound is one aspect of your PC that you will not want to upgrade every time, as with your processor

Sound Blaster Compatibility

The days of DOS are gone, but still many gamers enjoy going back and playing the games of yesteryear. For them Sound Blaster compatibility in DOS mode is extremely important since this was the standard in the DOS era. Even today soundcards that are Sound Blaster compatible state this fact. Cards that offer this compatibility ship with DOS drivers and give gamers the option to play legacy games. In Windows this is not an issue as all soundcard manufacturers supply Windows compliant device drivers to enable sound, so cards without this feature are still capable of producing sound under Windows. If you still play any old DOS games make sure you get a soundcard that is Sound Blaster compatible though, without it you might experience some problems when playing these games.



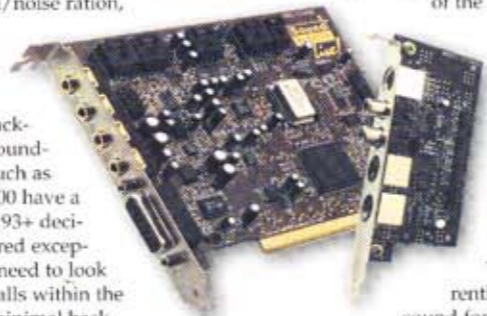
and motherboard. For example we still use a cheap PCI soundcard here at work in one of our machines. It works well for the machine's application, which is a server, and we probably won't be



upgrading it anytime soon. Another example would be my home machine, which has a 4 channel PCI based soundcard. I paid a fair amount of money for it, but believe me when I tell you it will have to last for at least two and a half years before I will even consider upgrading it, and then only if the new cards on the market offer significant improvements. As you can see your soundcard would have to last a while, and paying for a decent PCI based one now will save you money in the future.

Sound Quality

Sound quality can be best ascertained by looking at a soundcard's signal/noise ratio, which is measured in decibels. The higher the signal/noise ratio the less noise will be heard in the background. The newest soundcards on the market such as the SB Live! and MX300 have a signal/noise ratio of 93+ decibels, which is considered exceptional. Generally you need to look for a soundcard that falls within the 90+ decibel level for minimal background noise. Another feature to look out for that deals with sound quality is Wave-table synthesis. A sound-



card with Wave-table synthesis is capable of reproducing accurate sounds of existing instruments making it ideal for games that use instruments to re-produce background music. Older sound cards used a method called FM synthesis instead to re-produce instrument sounds, but this technology is inferior and should be avoided at all costs since it has an artificial sound to it.

Features

Features to look for when buying a soundcard highly depends on what you will be using it for. You get cards that can run into thousands of Rands, and typically these are intended for musicians interested in producing studio quality audio on a computer. The average gaming enthusiast doesn't need all the extra functions and ports included on these expensive cards. We are happy with the standard ports - speaker out, lineout, line-in, and the microphone jack and of course the old trusty game-port for using joysticks and other controllers. Most soundcards ship with all these input and output ports, but it is always recommended that you look at the cards technical specifications just to make sure.

API Support

Features to look out for include hardware acceleration for DirectSound and DirectSound3D for speeding up sound in games making use of the DirectX API. There are of course APIs that are important besides the default DirectX sound APIs. The two major APIs external to DirectX to look out for is Creative Labs Environment Audio Extensions (EAX) and Aureal's A3D 2 API. These companies are currently the forerunners in PC sound for gaming. Of course EAX is only supported by Creative Labs soundcards, and only the PCI based cards. On the other hand A3D is not a soundcard manufac-



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USB UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS

USB Sound In The Future

USB is hailed as the sound technology of the future. Although it currently has some problems, it could potentially become an accepted sound technology by consumers over the next couple of years. For now it seems that most people are still opting for analogue soundcards. The way that USB sound works is quite simple and the only requirements are a computer with USB ports, Windows 98, and USB speakers. No soundcard required, but what exactly are the advantages and disadvantages? The major advantages are that the audio stream stays in digital form until it reaches the speakers where it is then converted to analogue sound for playback. This allows for crisp and clear sound especially from audio CDs since the audio will be digitally extracted and sent to the speakers. The catch is that you need a CD-ROM capable of DAE (Digital Audio Extraction). DAE only became available on most drives over the last two years and started appearing on the 24x CD-ROM drives. This shouldn't be a real issue unless you have a CD-ROM drive that is older than 2 years, but it is always recommended to check your CD-ROM's specifications just in case they neglected it to bring down the price of the drive. What makes USB so attractive for sound is the hassle factor. The only component that you need to connect is the speakers, which are true plug and play peripherals. Install the USB sound driver and you are set to go. No worries about hardware conflict problems and you don't even have to open up your machine. The disadvantages of USB start off with the fact that your CPU is doing all the sound processing. It might only take up 8% - 12% of the CPU's time, but for some people that is a lot of processing power that could be spent elsewhere on graphics or game play issues. The problem here is that as soon as a large amount of disk activity occurs the sound will start skipping which can be annoying when playing games in which you gain an advantage by listening to the ambient sound. Another disadvantage is the lack of input jacks, which appear on soundcards. There are no inputs for a Microphone or Line In. There are also no internal auxiliary jacks as well since no sound card is used. This can become an issue when you have TV and Radio cards which require an external loop cable (from line-out to line-in) or an internal connection that plugs into the auxiliary jack on soundcards. There is also no implementation of integrating the two main sound APIs in the market today. USB can't take advantage of EAX or A3D for sound positioning and surround sound. This isn't a problem if all you want to do is listen to audio CD's and Windows sound files, but for the game player who demands the best it can be considered a serious drawback. There are less serious drawbacks as well but despite all of them USB Sound looks promising and should become more widely used in the future. For now Soundcards is the still the way to go, unless you feel like experimenting a lot, especially with legacy games from the DOS era which seem to have a problem with USB sound. Some games work, some don't.

turer and source their chipsets to external manufacturers such as Diamond Multimedia, which produce the MX300 Soundcard that uses Aureal's Vortex 2 chip that in turn utilises the A3D 2 API for increased sound features within games.

As you can see it is easy to figure out which cards support EAX, but you would have to check your cards actual specifications to see whether it supports A3D 2 due to the fact that more than one manufacturer produce cards using the Vortex 2 chip.

Voices

The number of voices that a soundcard supports refers to the amount of simultaneous sounds that can be mixed together. This is obviously important to gamers since a lot of sounds get played simultaneously. The more voices a soundcard support the better your gaming experience will be. Of course there is a limit that game developers usually don't go beyond and some soundcards have an extreme amount of voices that they can support. Usually the soundcard specification state two different amounts of voices supported. One is the total amount and one is referred to as hardware voices. The most important one is the hardware voices since this is the amount of sounds that can be mixed together directly via your soundcards. Hardware voices require very little processing from your CPU and thus are faster than software mixed voices.

Surround Sound

As stated in the beginning of this article, sound technology has come a long way since the days of the built in speaker of your PC. Today soundcards support true surround sound by outputting 4 independent channels, 2 front speakers and 2 rear speakers. This makes a world of difference and has to be experienced to be believed. With true surround sound games come alive and you should strive to purchase a card that supports it. Soundcards are even offering Dolby Digital surround sound as well these days, which is known as 5.1 surround sound. Dolby Digital 5.1 consists of 2 front, 2 rear, 1 centre and 1 bass speaker. This format is mostly used by DVD movies and games are still in the process of adopting this standard although a few have already appeared that offer Dolby Digital surround sound. While not necessary that a sound-

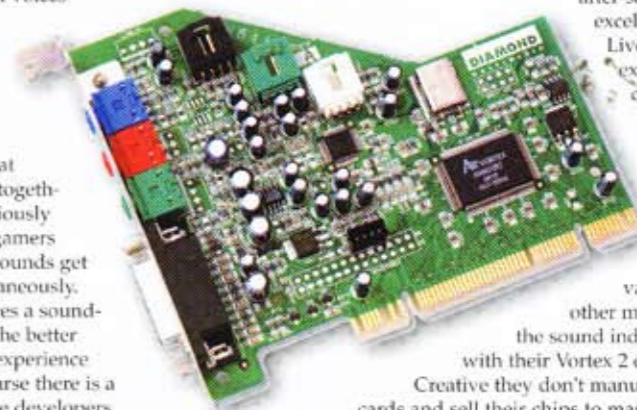
UPGRADING FOR IDIOTS

card supports this standard it is a great addition if you have a DVD drive and watch DVD movies on your computer.

In Closing

I am changing my stance on recommending soundcards, unlike the other hardware I wrote about - in the soundcard industry the leaders are clear. The two main players are Creative Labs that produce the SB Live! and SB Live! Value, both exceptionally good cards and Creative Labs after-sale support is excellent. The full SB Live! is a little expensive, but it caters to the musician and has an extra daughter board with inputs and outputs that the value lacks. The other main player in the sound industry is Aureal with their Vortex 2 chipset. Unlike Creative they don't manufacture soundcards and sell their chips to manufacturers. Diamond Multimedia is one such manufacturer that recently launched the MX300 that uses this chip. There are other cards that use the Vortex 2 chip, but I single out the Diamond card due to their superb support. Any of these cards make an excellent choice.

Next month we'll be looking at peripherals - particularly speakers, keyboards and mice. The whole philosophy behind speakers has certainly changed in the past few years and these days when you walk into a shop to buy a speaker system you can take with you as little as R199 or as much as R3000. Keyboards have become warped with some even sporting infra red connections - quite a choice there. The mouse has also undergone numerous innovations and enhancements over the last few years, next issue we'll be looking at all these different bits and bobs scattered around the average desktop.



TO GO WITH YOUR SHINY NEW SOUND CARD YOU SHOULD GET A SET OF SPEAKERS. NEXT MONTH WE'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT WHEN ORDERING YOURS...

DIABLO



II FEATURE PREVIEW

Following the huge success of Diablo the team in North America has been hard at work coding and creating the sequel that is due towards the end of the year. Speaking with the team it appears they really have moved the game on with lots of improvements in both the look, feel and settings that made the original game so popular with RPG fans.

Derek dela Fuente

sacrifice of all – casting his soul and his very sanity aside, the hero took the spirit of Diablo into himself, hoping his own strength of will could contain the demon within. The hero could never have known that his selfless act would not only ensure Diablo's victory, but would irrevocably damn his soul for all time.

In Diablo II, players return to a world of dark gothic fantasy. As one of five distinct character types, players will explore the world of Diablo II, journey

across distant lands, fight new villains, discover new treasures and uncover ancient mysteries.

Blizzard Speak

"Our goal for Diablo II is to give our fans as much of what they wanted after playing the first game as possible. This includes more areas, more monsters, more spells, more weapons, more armour, more items, a more involved storyline and support for more players and a vastly improved Battle.net to play over. We are confident that we will be delivering on each of these points while also giving them quite a few more features and improvements that we feel will fulfil their gaming desires", explained the team.

Added

Diablo has been listed as the game of the year in most countries around the world. Adding more of the same, with new entertainment, enjoyment and ideas must be a hard job but when players return to the dark world plagued by the evil forces as one of the five heroes, the player will undertake a new series of quests to rid the world of the vile brethren forever. Some of the many other improvements include expanded world filled with more involved quests, deeper characters which include non-playing characters. There are now four different, fully populated towns complete with wilderness areas. One of the essential features is the advanced combat system, which incorporates class specific fighting techniques and spells.

To create a new feel the engine and graphics have to be an essential area and the team explained this. "Diablo II has a completely reworked engine from game play to graphics. We are also supporting players who have OpenGL or Glide based 3D acceleration with an improved lighting engine and a perspective mode that offers more warmth and depth to the game. While a 3D card is not needed to play the game, we wanted to provide something extra for people who have one. The game is now faster, with smoother game play and no loading time on any of the levels. We have worked hard to ensure that no cheating can appear in the game as that did happen in the first game. In effect what we have done is basically to make Diablo II bigger, badder, better and even more compelling than the first one."

On-line

It does appear that even though the Internet options are not a great focus for Europeans a lot of time has been given to on-line features and the team believe that a large new chunk of players will find this so compelling they will use

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the battle.net option for the first time. "We are always working to improve Battle.net, and Diablo II will see a huge jump forward in what support our service provides. We will be able to handle more players while storing their character information on our servers, thus preventing cheating. We are also expanding our base of servers both in the US and globally. By continuing to make it as easy as possible for people to connect to Battle.net through a single button click interface within the game while improving the scope, depth and stability of our network we believe that we will continue to increase the number of players we service.

II FEATURE PREVIEW

improved mini map, storage areas for items, clan support, which it appeared, was wanting in the game, which have been implemented. "We are trying to add a lot more things that build on the success of Diablo and really take the game to a whole new level. We have many more types of monsters, with an emphasis

being placed on making them unique from each other and even strategically challenging to fight. We have added the concept of passive skills. An example of this would be 'block', a skill that inherently makes your character more likely to be able to block incoming melee attacks. Each character class has 30 skills/spells, so the huge variety of effects that players can employ in Diablo II is pretty impressive."

Creating new appeal

One essential point was, with so many games now very similar to Diablo, did they not feel that cloning of the game has now become so prevalent that even they could have problems in a market that is saturated with this type of game? "You must remember that we have written many games, including Warcraft, and I would say the



THE FIREWALL SPELL RETURNS WITH A VENGEANCE

The Cast Info

Necromancer

From the steamy recesses of the southern swamps comes a figure cloaked in mystery. The Necromancer, as his name implies, is an unseemly form of sorcerer whose spells deal with the raising of the dead and the summoning and control of various creatures for his purposes. Though his goals are often aligned with those of the forces of Light, some do not think that these ends can justify his foul means. Long hours of study in dank mausolea have made his skin pale and corpse-like, his figure skeletal. Most people shun him for his peculiar looks and ways, but none doubt the power of the Necromancer, for it is the stuff of nightmares.



Paladin

The Knights of Westmaric who felled the armies of mighty Leoric are pure at heart and follow closely the teachings of Zakarum, the Religion of the Light. A Battle-Ready warrior, for whom faith is a shield, he fights for what he believes to be right. Furthermore, his steadfastness gives him powers to bring blessings to his friends, and wreak cruel justice upon his foes. There are those who call the Paladin an overwrought zealot, but others recognise in him the strength and goodness of the Light.



Barbarian

The Barbarian is a member of any of several tribes on the fringes of civilisation, and he refuses the influence of those he sees as soft and weak. Ceaseless clan warfare and the constant struggle to survive in the hostile wilderness are reflected in the Barbarian's sturdy and powerful frame. Though perhaps lacking the sophistication of city folk, the Barbarian has an acute awareness of his surroundings. Because of his shamanistic belief in the animal powers with which he identifies, the Barbarian is sometimes associated with stories of lycanthropy. In fact, he believes he can call upon the totemic animal spirits to infuse him with supernatural strengths and abilities, but these work only to improve his already superb battle-tactics.



Sorceress

One of the rebellious women who have wrested the secrets of magic from the male dominated Mage-Clans of the East; the sorceress is an expert in mystical creation ex nihilo. Though somewhat lacking in the skills of hand-to-hand combat, she compensates for this with fierce combative magic for both offence and defence. Solitary and reclusive, the Sorceress acts based on motives and ethics inscrutable to most, sometimes seeming capricious and even spiteful. In reality, she understands the struggle between Order and Chaos all too clearly, as well as her role as a warrior in this battle.



Amazon

This powerful woman warrior belongs to nomadic bands that roam the plains near the South Sea. The wandering of these groups often brings them into conflict with other peoples, so the Amazon is accustomed to fighting to defend her own. This lifestyle has made her fiercely independent and able to weather severe hardship and travel. While her skill with the bow rivals that of the Rogues, the Amazon is also adept in the use of spears and other throwing weapons, as well as in hand-to-hand combat. The Amazon is much sought after as a mercenary, in which type of service she will be loyal as long as her own ends are also served.



The story, the setting

Since the beginning of time the forces of Order and Chaos have been engaged in an eternal struggle to decide the fate of all Creation. That struggle has now come to the Mortal Realm and neither Man, Demon, nor Angel will be left unscathed... Diablo, Lord of Terror, and youngest of the Three Prime Evils, awoke from his long sleep beneath the dark earth. Setting in motion a grand scheme to free his exiled brothers, Mephisto and Baal, Diablo took control of the small western kingdom of Khanduras. Working from deep within the ancient catacombs beneath the town of Tristram, Diablo gripped the entire populace in a blanket of fear and paranoia.

Ultimately, as even Khanduras' good King Leoric fell under Diablo's wicked power, a lone hero arose to challenge the darkness that had engulfed the land. After plumbing the hellish depths of the labyrinth under Tristram, the nameless hero finally confronted the Lord of Terror himself.

Knowing full well that Diablo's spirit could never be truly destroyed, the hero made the noblest



A

FEATURE PREVIEW

sequel was a lot different to the original game, and that is what we believe Diablo II will be, a new experience. The only route we can go is to ensure that there are so many interesting ingredients in the new game that people will feel compelled to play. We would

like to believe we could introduce a whole new audience to RPGs and a selling point is that it is easy to understand and hard to master. Too many similar games have too steep a learning curve. In one word we believe we offer fun. We are striving constantly to break new ground and make people sit up and say, wow! 2D games appear to create less excitement but we want people to see what can be done in a 2D game that has not been done before.

There are many areas in Diablo II that break new ground. There are seamless transitions between areas and the levels are so alive they will just pull you in. The role playing game has a lot more to offer, so much so, that we really have a long way to go and Diablo II is really at the evolution of the genre. As we are there first we hope to ensure that Blizzard continues being innovative. You may ask can it be done? The list is endless - generating more item types, implementing new spells, creating skill effects and making the challenge even more exciting!

When talking about the learning curve skill



"IT'S MY PARTY AND I'LL CRY IF I WANT TO!"

tree' was mentioned. The skill tree will allow the players to really customise their characters. Every level a player advances, he will get points with which to develop his/her character skills or spells. This means that two Sorceresses of the equivalent level may have focused their points into completely different areas and would both be beneficial to an adventuring party for different reasons. With around 30 unique skills/spells for each character class, you can expect to see some very different characters on the battle.net mode.

In Diablo II this is a new trading area as the team explained. "In Diablo II, we want to make this fun and rewarding part of the game easier to accomplish. There will be a specific 'game type' that will be a trading post that can be launched directly from a chat channel when you are playing with the multi player mode. This will take players to a single screen where they



"IT'S PRETTY WARM INSIDE ALL THIS ARMOR, I WONDER WHY?"



"FANCY MEETING YOU SKELETONS HERE! OW, THOSE BONES NEED CRUSHING"

The Towns Info

In Diablo II you are not going to save just one town but a whole world. There will be four different towns. Every town will have one main boss. Diablo will be the boss of the last town. Andariel will be your last enemy in the first town "The Monastery". The towns will be fully populated. You will recognise some villagers from the last game, and that is to say Cain and Wirt "the peg-legged boy". You will have to finish a town before moving on to the next. You will always be allowed to return to a town, and in some quests you will have to travel among the towns to solve the quest. In Battle.net play you will be able to start off as far into the game as whoever created the game has made it. In other words if people have made it to the second town, you will have the option of starting there.

sible actors for the roles in our game, and we have the same composer working on Diablo II that created the much-acclaimed score for the first game. This is an often overlooked area in games that Blizzard has always been dedicated to supporting and evolving in the same way that we approach art, programming, cinematic sequences and game design." Asked to give a quote on the game that summed up the teams thoughts. "Diablo II will meet and pass the expectations of the millions of people who have played the first while remaining accessible to the mass market. We strive to create games that are fun and addictive and Diablo II has all of the ingredients to become the next big thing."

Derek dela Fuente

Developer : Blizzard Entertainment
SA Distributor: Crew (011) 233-1000
Release Date: Nov - Dec 1999

The ancient bloodline was embodied 2,000 years ago just outside of Bethlehem.

1,900 years later, its dark secret surfaced in the small town of Rennes-le-Chateau.



BLOOD OF THE SACRED
GABRIEL KNIGHT
BLOOD OF THE DAMNED

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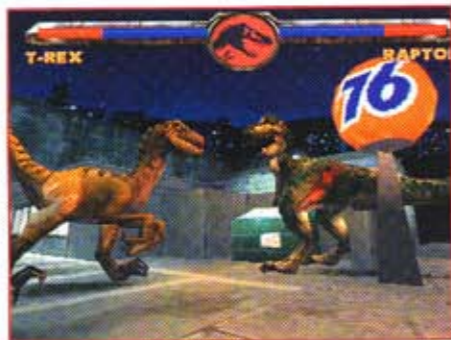
Most readers will not remember the arcade game Primal Rage that was ported over to the PC and other console formats a good while back. At the time the supposed selling feature of this old game was the impressive amount of moves, including some really nifty special combos, but the real selling point was the fact that the fighters were huge pre-historic monsters. This was at the time when Street Fighter was fashionable and the PlayStation was only a baby.

Derek dela Fuente

In a way Jurassic Park: Warpath bears many similarities to Primal Rage in the sense that you have massive creatures and lots of fighting. Whereas Primal Rage was very limited in both the amount of moves and also restriction of fighting space, Jurassic doesn't suffer from any limitations on the imagination of the creators, whose pedigree cannot be dismissed lightly. Developed by Dreamworks and published by EA you expect the game to ooze class and it will! The game is based around certain aspects of the Jurassic Park films. The first thing gamers will notice when playing are the many cinematic touches and the lush graphics with a nice rich palette of colours. The sky with its billowing clouds, the ground with grass and trees and all manner of vegetation with massive shadows being cast by the creatures as they fight, all go into creating a visually enticing game. Dreamworks are renowned for their skills in this department and they have all been utilised to their fullest potential in this game. Fighting games may have gone out of vogue in some circles, but this title will make a little niche all for itself!

TYRANNOSAURUS REX

When two prehistoric creatures fight you have massive 3D locations to move around in with varying panoramic views of the fighting. Just as you



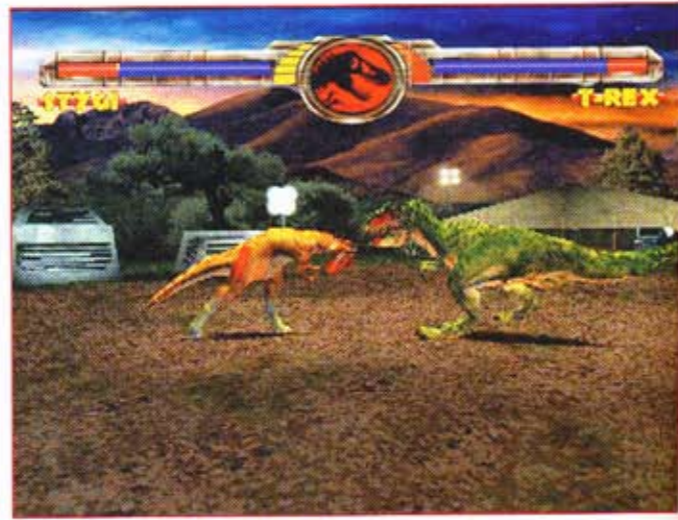
GENRE: DINOSAUR FIGHTING (PSX)
DEVELOPER: DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
SUPPLIER: EA AFRICA
TELEPHONE: (011) 803-1212
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 99
INTERNET: WWW.EA.COM

diverse and well-known predators from the Jurassic Park world, including the ever-popular Tyrannosaurus Rex and Triceratops. Helping to bring another level of excitement and interest to the game, players will also be able to choose from an array of newly discovered dinosaurs, such as the Mega Raptor and Gigantosaurus. The game's fighting arsenal will include moves such as bites, snaps, claw rakes, grabs, combos, reversals and slams. Battles will be super-charged with real-time wounding effects, shadows and lighting, rising dust, blood and environmental effects, such as lightning. Players can also take advantage of destructible objects such as electrified fences, exploding oil drums and scaffolding to damage their opponents.

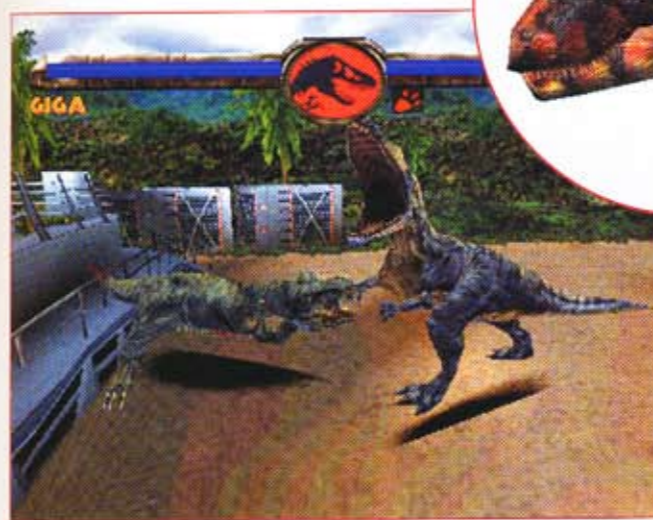
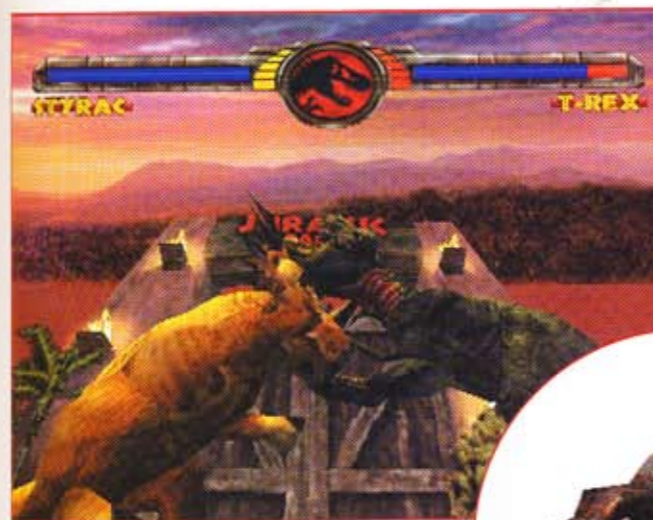
It is when the player is in control of one of the monsters that you will feel the force and might of these gargantuan creatures. As you lunge forward you will see blood coming from the mouth of a creature as it hits the backbone of the opponents. It appears



are ready to lunge with the final move to kill off the opponent you will see people running across your path. Fighting in living and organic worlds brings the game to life. Jurassic Park focuses on extremely ferocious dinosaur combat among a variety of wild,

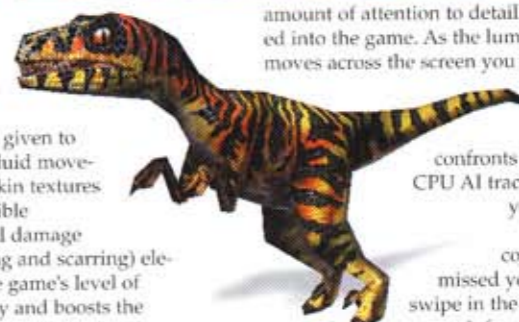


YOU'LL GET TO FIGHT WITH AND AGAINST OVER 14 (AND THEY'VE ALL BEEN UNLOCKED!) DIFFERENT TYPES OF PREHISTORIC CREATURES



that attention to physics is important and so if you pick one of the larger creatures his movements may be slow but the force it can make with one blow is truly impressive. Like all fighting games, each creature has its plus and minus points and it is up to the user to make the best of what they have.

Players will be able to choose from more than ten dinosaurs and multiple unique 3-D arenas based on actual movie locations. The attention given to each of the dinosaur's fluid movement, skin texture and visible physical damage (bruising and scarring) elevate the game's level of intensity and boosts the player's adrenaline.

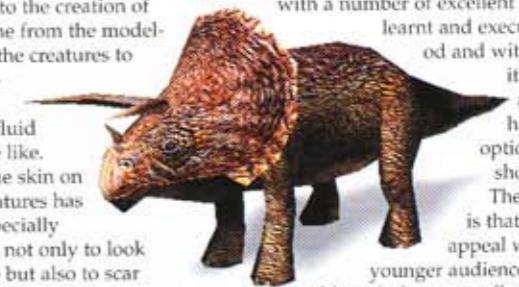


amount of attention to detail the team has crafted into the game. As the lumbering creature moves across the screen you can almost sense the ground moving as dust rises from its feet. As it confronts the opponent the CPU AI tracks your move and if you go for a quick thrust you could find you have missed your target and get a swipe in the face in return. On screen information pertaining to you and the opponents well being keep you up to date with how well you are doing.

Some of the Key Game Play Features:

- Head-to-head feral dinosaur combat against human opponent and/or Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Ten dinosaurs to initially choose from (with more dinosaurs to be unlocked), each exhibiting unique moves looking remarkably different and having a plethora of their own moves, such as flesh ripping attacks, neck-breaking grabs and powerful throwing abilities.
- Fourteen arenas come to life, which were modeled on recognizable locations from the films including the Visitor's Centre, Helicopter Pad, Embryo Lab and T-Rex Paddock. Human and animal 'edible' power-ups which increase a dinosaur's health.
- Challenging one and two-player modes that provide plenty of variety for competitive players.
- Unique 'Blood Rage' mode that awards players with secret attack moves. Interactive Dinosaur Institute that allows players to find in-depth historical information on each dinosaur.
- Sound effects such as bone crunching, primal tribal music and an original orchestral score which all help to escalate the degree of mayhem and damage going on in the game.

A LITTLE FINE TUNING
What makes Jurassic Park: Warpath is the expertise that has gone into the creation of the game from the modeling of the creatures to the animation that is fluid and life like. Even the skin on the creatures has been specially created not only to look life like but also to scar up. The lighting gives the game its very ambient look. It is dark and sinister and where there is full light you look at the screen in wonderment at the



The controls on the early demo were precise with a number of excellent moves that can be learnt and executed in a short period and with more fine tuning it looks like EA has another hit on their hands. With plenty of options to customise this should please all! The one limiting factor is that the games main appeal will be to the younger audience on the PSX. Although the game offers nothing remarkably innovative in terms of the fighting genre it has got the look and variety of locations to keep you wanting to come back for more.

Derek dela Fuente



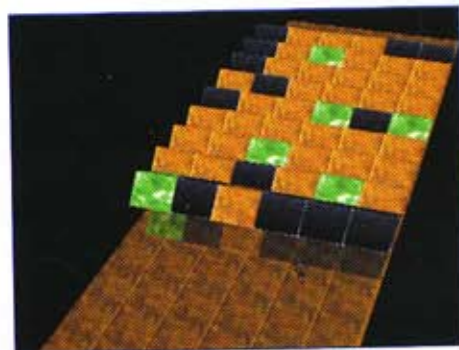
With so much attention being given to PC previews, we have decided to give all those dedicated console junkies out there a look at a few of the PlayStation titles that are coming out in the next few months. Needless to say, we've waded through good and bad alike, and have selected a cross section of up and coming games that you will see reviewed within our hallowed pages before long. And so, without further ado, we present a smattering of the future of PlayStation gaming...

UM JAMMER LAMMY

Enter the world of Um Jammer Lammy, a surreal 2D environment where music is power. The game play for this game is all based on the magic, musical prowess of Lammy, a guitar virtuoso who uses the power of her guitar playing to get through this different adventure. Enter the world of Um Jammer Lammy as the lead guitar player for the band Milkcan, accompanying the vocals of the mysterious ChopChop Mr Onion. Unfortunately, while trying to create a feel, a lot was lost on the execution of this game, with graphics that sacrifice potential for uniqueness. However, if music is your thing - especially guitar driven sounds that are sadly so rare these days, then Um Jammer Lammy is just for you. Game play is made up mainly by trying to match the game in executing hot guitar sounds, rather than partaking heavily in the adventure. With this game you can play cool riffs without having to spend thousands of Rands on guitars, amplifiers and effects pedals.

KURUSHI FINAL

Once again mankind is challenged by the superior Kurushi intelligence. But this time solving the puzzles means the continued existence of mankind. You become the champion of the human race as you work your way through wave after wave of challenging, entertaining and, above all, deadly puzzles. A simple game to learn, Kurushi Final will prove a mental challenge for every player taking it on. The strange, crushing puzzles that need to be solved vary in difficulty from routine to almost impossible. Only the smartest, quickest thinkers will be able to make their way through this time-based battle of wits and willpower. But be warned, Kurushi Final will imprison you with its addictive spell. Sleepless nights and aching fingers will most certainly result as you battle your way through puzzle after puzzle.

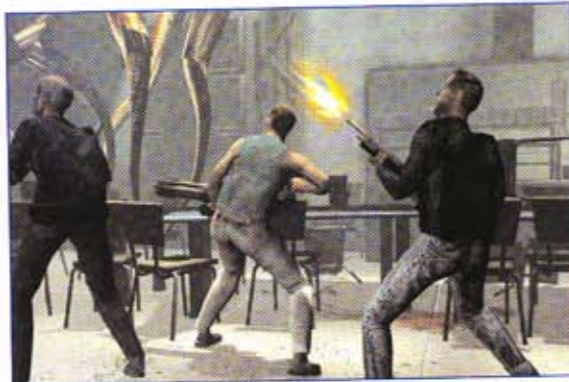


KURUSHI FINAL: SOLVE IT OR DIE!

TINY TANK

It is rare that a game this cute is also quite this brutal. Tiny Tank details the adventures of the hero of the same name, who has to save the world from the evil machinations of Mutank. Game play is fast

and furious stuff, resplendent with huge explosions and nasty bad guys. Not to mention, of course, the foul mouthed, diminutive hero of this explosive shooter. Tiny Tank is as loveable as he is abrasive, and players are guaranteed to enjoy his antics as he blasts the living daylight out of the opposition. Armed with a large arsenal of truly savage destruction, Tiny Tank careens over rough terrain and smooth roads alike in his quest. Fine graphics, smooth game play and a truly hilarious, addictive approach makes Tiny Tank something that will certainly garner huge amounts of fans the world over. He is living proof that size is not a measure of annihilation potential!



VIRUS: EXCELLENT CINEMATICS

VIRUS

A deadly computer virus of unknown origin is turning people into half-man, half machine abominations that bring terror and destruction with them. As the player, you need to penetrate their alien organisation and find the evil that spawned these strange events, and destroy it. Based on the recent film starring Jamie Lee Curtis, Virus is an action packed game in the spirit of Resident Evil and Silent Hill, with a new scare sitting around every corner. The copy we at NAG got to look at is obviously still in its early days, and problems like

interesting clipping abound. However, when writing a preview, potential is one of the most important factors we can take into account. So, problems aside, Virus holds huge amounts of potential. Graphically excellent, atmospherically perfect, Virus will most certainly rival horror titles like Resident Evil and, who knows? It may even become the watchword for PlayStation horror adventure games!

X FILES

Step into the shoes of agent Craig Wilmore as he follows the trail of two missing FBI agents: Fox Mulder and Dana Sculley. The trail of intrigue, cover-ups and betrayal grows more and more intense as the story progresses, leading Wilmore into a world of conspiracy, paranoia and fear. Quite simply, this game captures the essence of the ever popular, award winning TV series it is based on. Fans will certainly enjoy seeing the familiar faces of Mulder, Sculley, Skinner, Mr X and the Cancer Man in this game, which looks and feels exactly like an episode of the series. Full of action, intrigue and a smattering of romance, the X-Files is a stunning adventure prying at the edges of government conspiracy and the unknown. Unfortunately, those not

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VIRUS IS DARK AND FRIGHTENING...

familiar with the X-Files - those few sad, lost souls out there - will not necessarily understand everything about what's going on in the game. This game is aimed at X-file-ophiles, people who understand the nuances of seeing a guy with weird black stuff clouding his eyes...Fox Interactive deserve a huge pat on the back for this one.

POINT BLANK 2

Load up your guns and get ready for more zany blast-o-rama game-play as you enter into the world of Point Blank 2. Useable with either standard controllers or light guns, Point Blank 2 exists purely as a celebration of pumping lead into defenceless targets. The game is one of those "easy to learn, hard to master" efforts that so often proves to be very successful and popular with gamers. Point Blank 2 offers the player several different play modes, each comprising of different challenges of varying difficulty. Whether you prefer picking off moving targets, firing at defenceless, fluffy creatures, precision aiming, lashing the trigger in rapid fire action, or merely blasting everything that moves (or doesn't), Point Blank 2 has something for you. Test your speed, skill and accuracy, and push your game play abilities to the limits with this one! Even though every-



HAVE YOU SEEN THESE 2 MISSING AGENTS?

thing is cute to the level of being saccharin within the game, the play is fast, fun and satisfying. Even though it may look like it at first, this is not a game for kids only.

CHOCOBO RACING

Yet another PlayStation racing game, Chocobo Racing is a cute whirl around surreal tracks that wind through the earth and soar into the sky. Several cutely bizarre characters are available for the player to use, although Chocobo, which resembles a Manga-style chicken on jet powered roller skates, is the character of choice. The whole question surrounding Chocobo Racing is its target market.

Although the game is so cute that it makes you want to hurl, the courses are pretty challenging, and will take more than a little skill and theoretical knowledge to complete successfully. Aside from that, the game is really fun, with strange power ups and weapons

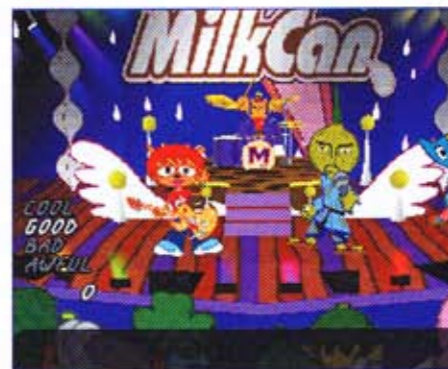


dotting the courses. This game will certainly be one to watch, particularly, we suspect, for the younger market.

PlayStation. What makes 360 different? Variety, mainly, and a challenging yet fun set of tracks to traverse. Add to that brilliant graphics and good sounds, and you have a game that is filled with huge amounts of promise.

All the games listed above, will be coming soon to a PlayStation near you. NAG

How can one best describe the fast paced action of 360? How can one capture the awesome speed and fierce competitiveness of this racing game? To be honest,



UM JAMMER LAMMY: THE HOTTEST BAND IN THE LAND



POINT BLANK 2: WATCH YOUR FIRE, BUDDY!

it's virtually impossible. Suffice to say that this game takes place at break neck speeds through race tracks that wind and twist through a wide variety of terrain types - with opponents launching deadly weapons at you at the same time! But there are so many racing games like this available for the



360: FULL OF SPEED, ACTION AND EXCITEMENT



CHOCOBO RACING: DON'T CALL THIS GUY CHICKEN!

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.

Sinners or Saints?

For a long time, certain forms of entertainment have been the target of ill-conceived and under-educated witch-hunts. Role Playing Games, horror movies and novels, certain musical genres... even TV shows like the Smurfs and He-Man! And now it seems that computer games are the latest target. It would seem that certain people have chosen to believe that computer games are "evil" or contain "Satanic" imagery.

One can see the perceived evil quite easily in some games. There is no doubt that the cinematic sequences and graphics of certain games are quite disturbing, even to the point of being "evil", to create the necessary effect within the game.

It's all a matter of what gamers want to see and, quite obviously, the vast majority of gamers enjoy this type of scenery, atmosphere and feel. Let us not forget, of course, that most games are all about the fight against evil. In fact, one can not remember ever coming across a single game that advocated evil acts - not in the sense that these mother Grundies mean to convince us of.

What do they think? That playing these games is going to turn us into covens of baby sacrificing, slaving savages bowing down to golden idols beneath a full moon? Do all gamers go straight to Hell? Certainly a preposterous notion, but this is a very real problem facing designers, distributors and gamers alike. The question lies in how much sway these anti-computer game zealots actually have; can they sway opinion? Do they have enough clout to make a difference? The answer is no, they probably don't. However, the effect that they have on the industry is still tangible, even if it is on a small scale. How many gamers can't play a game because their parents and partners may believe that it will turn them into slaving devil worshippers? What these people have to realise is that, although we love gaming, it is not our religion. Don't find evil where it doesn't exist. It's a waste of time and energy that would be far better spent elsewhere!

Shadow Man

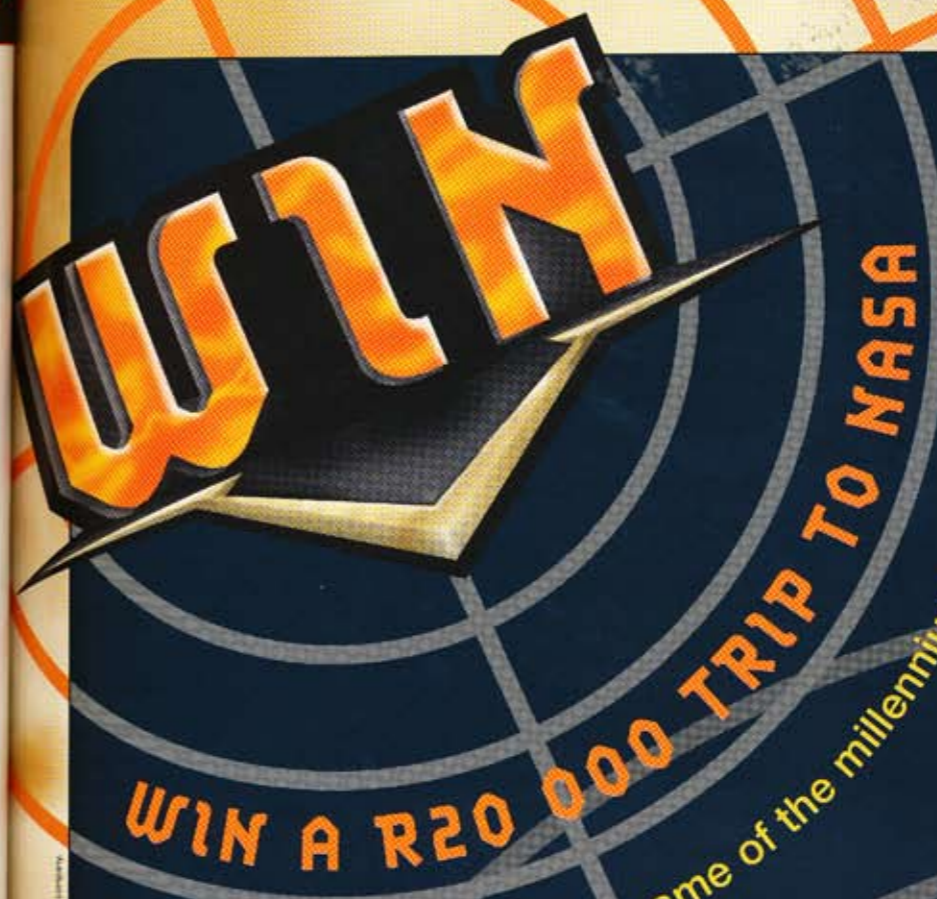


Here's a game that will chill you to the bone as you battle the forces of evil. It is an exciting rollercoaster ride full of action, mysticism and Voodoo. We at NAG have no doubt that Shadow Man will be top dog, and have decided to give it our Editor's Choice award.

See PG 32

The Awards Ceremony

	Fly! PG 46		X-Beyond the Frontier PG 48
	Mig Alley PG 56		Heavy Gear II PG 60
	MechWarrior 3 PG 62		Descent 3 PG 36
	Silent Hill PG 66		



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You and a partner can win 5 nights accommodation and a 7 hour excursion to the Kennedy Space Centre in Orlando, USA. There are also loads of games and T-shirts to be won. To enter simply answer the following question (visit www.ea.co.za or www.westwood.com for help) and send your entry to Electronic Arts/ Tiberian Sun Competition, P.O. Box 3180, Rivonia, 2128 before the 1st of December 1999.

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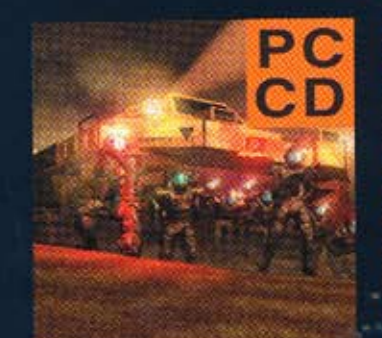
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Name the studio responsible for the development of the most anticipated game of the Millennium:

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It's time you saw the future...



In Command & Conquer Red Alert you changed the course of history.



In Command & Conquer you set the stage for a new world order.



Now the Battle For The Future has begun.



If you look back into the history books it is extremely difficult to find a game based on the interesting topic of Voodoo mythology. Actually I cannot recall any, which explains why I grasped at the chance to review ShadowMan. Another reason for the lack of titles with a voodoo background is the gaming industries attempt to keep away from the controversial. Now that the gamers profile has proved to be a more mature and affluent age group we are sure to see the controversial barrier stretched to the limits, and ShadowMan certainly pressures those morals. ShadowMan is based on an Acclaim Comics character of the same name that has been chosen by the Voodoo Priestess 'Nettie' to save the world from Armageddon (the end of the world, as we know it). Mike LeRoi, a college dropout, takes on the role of ShadowMan through no choice of his own. After getting caught up in a drive-by shooting, he steals the money that the unfortunate occupant of his taxi left behind, \$20000 to be exact.

SHADOW MAN

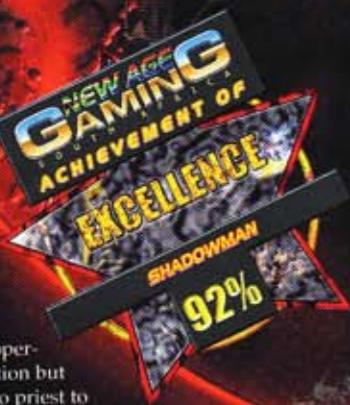
HE IS COMING, WALKING BETWEEN WORLDS....
TRAILING EVIL FROM LIVESIDE TO DEADSIDE.
HE IS COMING, SKULL IN ONE HAND, CALABASH IN THE OTHER....
A VOODOO MASK IN HIS CHEST AND LINES OF POWER IN HIS BACK.

HE IS COMING, STALKING MONSTERS IN TENEMENTS AND DESERTS,
SUBWAYS AND SWAMPS, SPIRIT WORLD AND REAL WORLD.
SHADOW MAN IS COMING.
VOODOO DISCIPLE AND HERO.
SEEKER AND DEFENDER.

HE IS COMING, WRITING WITH PARCHED FINGERS.
CHANNELLING ALL HIS VOODOO ENERGY INTO GAMING ARTICLES,
SQUARE EYED AND EXHAUSTED AT SHADOW MAN'S WONDER,
NAG'S LIFE-FORCE RECHARGED BEYOND IT'S CALLING.....OOPS.

WHERE WAS I NOW? OH YES. ACCLAIM TAKES YOU ON A
MAGICAL JOURNEY INTO VOODOO AND ADVENTURE WITH AN EPIC
TALE OF ARMAGEDDON AND SALVATION. EXPERIENCE IT. - STORM

Unfortunately for him, the money belonged to a powerful gang that managed to track him down and starts harassing Mike for the money back. But, as fate would have it, he spent it on his family and his little brother's much needed operation leaving him with no option but to ask for the help of a voodoo priest to protect him. The protection worked, but all too well, as he survived a drive-by shooting by



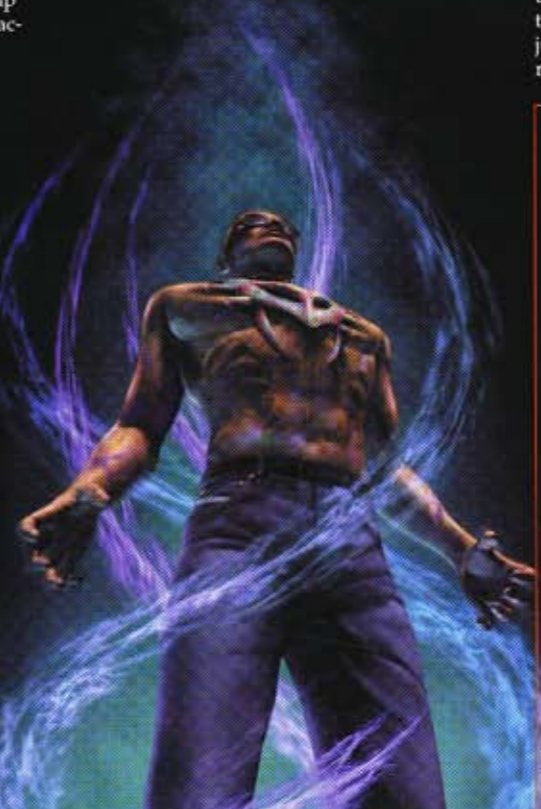
AND THIS IS JUST THE START OF THE MAYHEM...

some miracle, but his parents and brother were killed. Mike's recovery was swift, but with it came his loss of memory and an ensuing debt to the priest for his protection, he was drawn into the underworld as a hitman with the pseudonym 'Zero'. Oblivious to his true identity, Mike was summoned by a powerful, but dying voodoo priestess named Mama Nettie who predicted the coming of Armageddon. She needed someone to be her puppet in the world of Deadside (where our souls go to die) to track down the perpetrators of the coming atrocity, and Mike was her first choice. As she implanted the powerful Shadow Mash into his chest all Mike's memories returned, leaving him with the agony of his torn life. Armed with his anguish and the power of voodoo, you embark on a journey that only you can take, to the Deadside. You might be wondering why I highlighted the trials and tribulations of Mike LeRoi, the unfortunate soul who is chosen to save us all. Well, if Acclaim and Iguana Entertainment can come up with such an interesting tale for the main character, you must wonder what the actual story entails. From the onset you are challenged to follow and decipher information pertaining to your tasks. Files full of details regarding your goals and opposition are guttered with details that Scotland Yard would be proud to have. To cut a long story short, ShadowMan must travel between Liveside (reality) and Deadside adding to his voodoo powers and at the same time track down five of Liveside's most dangerous serial killers, each with their own special brand of killing. ShadowMan's every detail seems to have been researched and tediously implanted into this action adventure that will take you to the depths of hell itself. Add to this shocking yet powerful story one of the best gaming engines yet produced for PC. An engine developed exclusively by Iguana Studios UK called VISTA (Virtually Integrated Scenic Terrain) and highlighted in ShadowMan with such intensity that your anxiety will be pushed to the limit. With the option of 3D-acceleration and 32-bit (16-bit included) texturing you will be in awe of the splendour of the graphics. Character animations, especially those of ShadowMan are incredibly detailed and



HANGING AROUND NOWADAYS CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH

immersed in gloriously rendered graphics the likes of which I have never seen before. With that you have the weapons and power-ups that are spread around the worlds, some of the most spectacular water ripple effects ever seen on PC, and realistic fire effects to ogle. All characters within the game are depicted using a highly advanced 'softskin' system, which allows them to be accurately depicted with a high level of detail. Characters feature realistic muscular definition and deformation effects and are brought to life using



realistic, classifying him as the Lara Craft of the underworld. Panoramic scenes are spectacularly created and awesomely detailed and refined in every way. Whether you are in the passages of Deadside, the rooms of the Asylum, or the living of Liveside, you are

Acclaim's Motion Capture technology. Everything that Acclaim set out to achieve with ShadowMan has been realised but I was unprepared for the immense effect that the sound, music and special effects would have on me. Playing ShadowMan at 12.00 o'clock is definitely not recommended, actually I found it difficult to find a preferred time, the eerily realistic sound scared the living daylights out of me, rendering me into a frightened, fragile boy. Creating this weakling out of me was certainly not on my agenda when I started playing ShadowMan, next time I will heed the words 'you will confront unimaginable horrors that exist at the edges of our perceived reality'. If you are a horror film lover or perhaps enjoy the odd scare or two then the ambience of ShadowMan combined with intense moments of horror should be your cuppa tea.



Taking on the action adventure market has become more difficult since the high standards of enjoyment were raised by Tomb Raider and with all the accumulative guru heads at NAG we tried to find a suitable comparative title to challenge it, but we came up empty, until now. ShadowMan is better in my opinion because of its

controversial theme and it's addictiveness that will enthrall you for hours. The non-linear aspect of ShadowMan will torment your detective skills as you explore an open-ended world with no certain path. Finding much-needed artifacts, clues and objects are but a small part of the gameplay. The Tomb Raider franchise should take heed at the advanced movements and control techniques utilised in ShadowMan. Yes, the jumping, swinging, falling part of the gameplay reeks Tomb Raider, but then what action adven-

*And he called him
"What is his name?"
And he answered, saying
"My name is Lazarus."
For he was among...*

*It emerges from the depths of each individual being
A thought unconsciously that represents the life force
Every human being's eternal soul. The soul, the death
The eternal presence exists inside the body and
one flows there and one flows... and...
It awakens among the dead... and...
It has come to the Deadside*

And then they said it is necessary

*What then they said into the deep nothingness of the hell
bound underworld soul. It feels the suffrage of all eternity and
lets a human essence only to those who have entered the
eternal evil. The Deadside begins to all show to that all
there is a will to... and... the soul one comes to the
eternal... and... they may perhaps be Lazarus.*

And then the world will know their pain

*And he, Lazarus, of the term included when the pain
was only to those bound in suffering. For it is they
that Deadside were to save and The first will not and had
the name. For they only to understand their souls with a light
that will destroy the soul and save the soul with soul
that will alter... and... come to choose to stand against
them... and... the will to please Lazarus' soul.*

*And then the universe will rise with the voice of the
eternal.*

For his sacrifice will destroy them all.



THE SHADOW MAN

Undead voodoo warrior
The Walker-Between-the-Worlds.

Bearer of the Shadowmask, the
charge of an ancient warrior lineage
Source of immense dark power

Baton, Flambeau, Marteau
ShadowGun
Enseigne, Poigne, Gad
Instruments of Apotheosis

Immortal
Taker of souls
Opener of the Ways
Lord of Deadside



MIKE LeROI

6' 2"
210lbs
Muscle, bone, flesh
.50 Magnum Desert Eagle
Teflon Hollow-point Deathbringer

Bound to this Liveside,
enslaved by voodoo
Hollow man
Servant to Mama-Nettie
Physical fragment of an immortal
alter-ego

would have been an added bonus to have better movement control. How Acclaim make up for this is with auto targeting and a strafe mechanism that circles your opponent while tracking him in your sights. Though this makes life a lot easier it does complicate multiple attacks. The camera angles available are third person only but can be panned 360 degrees to help with certain obstacles. The use of a sniper mode (first person) does come in handy in certain areas in the game but is mostly a gimmick or irritation because it doesn't allow movements in any direction while in the mode. ShadowMan's save game feature is excellent, you are able to save at anytime and can pick up auto move positions during play that will allow the use of your brother's teddy bear to transport you to direct destinations without having to travel many gaming miles. Another interesting feature is the immortality of ShadowMan as he is already dead and his mortal soul, Mike LeRoi, when killed is transported to Deadside where he transforms into ShadowMan, who has the power to resurrect Mike. Though you are burnt to a cinder, decapitated and generally killed during the game, you will always be returned to your level start point. Luckily this doesn't mean you have to start the level all over again because all the characters killed are not a part of the level anymore. Allowing you the peace of mind to continue the journey you had already taken and completed.

ture doesn't. The gameplay does rely heavily on the exploring aspect as well as the need to click switches that open doors or swing on ropes to extended areas. One interesting aspect of ShadowMan is the use of his Voodoo powers to explore and manoeuvre between the gaming areas. ShadowMan's evolution of powers will unlock gateways to deeper realms of Deadside, which in turn opens up the outer shells of Liveside (five cities which house the serial killers) and the atrocities of the Asylum, the root of the evil. As you perform specific trials you are awarded with a 'Gad', which unlocks powers that ShadowMan needs to proceed with the adventure. One of the more difficult features to come to grips with is the control mechanism. Though it is configurable, you are challenged by its simplicity. ShadowMan can perform varying movements to help himself onto, over, around and through objectives, but a fair amount of practice is required with timing and precision. While being shot at, sliced, pummeled or set alight it

ShadowMan is a masterful creation that takes the crown of Tomb Raider head on. With the wait for the next Lara still a few months away, ShadowMan will certainly fill the void felt by most lovers of this genre. Acclaim has added depth to character development that only Eidos were able to do, as well as raised the stakes of playability and enjoyment. It takes something special to raise my interest in the action adventure slot and ShadowMan has done just that. A distinct storyline, combined with a puzzling explorative world shall keep your precious gaming hours filled to the maximum. Expect to

SHADOWMAN, HOW?

SHADOW MAN's influences are extremely diverse, not only drawing inspiration from the comic-book and various Voodoo references, as well as gaming classics such as Myst, Legend of Zelda and Super Mario-64, but also other cultural influences as well - the paintings of Bacon, Bruegel and Bosch; movies such as Seven, Hellraiser, Nightbreed, Manhunter, Jacob's Ladder and Eraserhead; the poetry of T.S. Eliot (in particular, The Wasteland and The Hollow Men); the works of Joseph Campbell; and intensive studies in the fields of psycho-sexual pathology and forensic psychiatry. These diverse influences are reflected in the game and have helped to create a rich and highly entertaining gaming environment, further assisting SHADOW MAN's creators to develop a product that will rise above the popular perception of the video-game as fast food and with SHADOW MAN create something more akin to a gourmet meal (albeit one served with fava beans and washed down with a nice Chianti...).



spend weeks completing ShadowMan if you have the time, lifting the value for money option beyond the norm.

I haven't had so much fun playing a title since the original Tomb Raider. Reaching beyond the depths of reality and into the realms of the abnormal might seem a little demonic, and it is. The gradual increase in complexity as you progress and the clever AI will irritate the hell out of you, turning what seems to be an innocent action adventure into a sinister gut wrenching mind flip that will horrify and shock you beyond any game since 'Phantasmagoria'. This is a must get piece of software even if it

is not up your alley, because it will grip you between the legs and squeeze every emotion from your staid body. Entering the world of Mike LeRoi and becoming ShadowMan is regarded as highly dangerous to your perception of life as we know it, but then we play games to get away from the turmoil's of life - let ShadowMan be your guide.

STORM

GENRE
Action Adventure

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 166 MMX 16 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 4 MB Direct3D SVGA 185 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium II 266 64 MB Ram 4+ X CD Rom 16 MB 3D AGP 600 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

Developer: Iguana Studios	Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R 329.00
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<http://www.acclaim.net>

Multiplayer	Competitives	Pro's	Con's
No	Tomb Raider Franchise	A+ Detailed Engine Unsurpassed Story Non-Linear Gameplay	Difficult At Times No Multiplayer

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
95	94	85	93	91	92

92

Beyond anything that has graced our PCs, into the harsh and savage world of voodoo you will drop, your sanity will be challenged as your senses are punished. Playing ShadowMan is risky to your social being as it enters the realms of most entertaining action adventure of '99. You cannot experience it without having tasted the fruits of torment and evil, for only you can save us now. Get it or be forever lost.

HOMEWORLD

NO HYPE

Game of the Show E3 1998 -CGW
Winner of UGO's Best Real-Time Strategy Game of E3



ALL GAME

COMING SOON

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STUDIOS
www.sierrastudios.com

relic™

CREW

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Grab a gun, travel to an alien world, shoot everything and press a button - first person shooters seem to have a raw awkward feel to them don't they? It's the subtle difference between the civilised battle between two men with swords and the one with barbarians hammering away at each other with clubs. By giving the player a true three-dimensional environment to explore and fight in, *Descent 3* opens the space where only the most elegant and skilled of warriors can do battle. - RedTide

Needless to say we can once again forget about trying to find that 'deeper' meaning in the plot that holds things together in *Descent 3*. Even though the tale is completely devoid of imagination, it just manages to resemble a story of sorts and does continue and evolve sufficiently enough into the game to get away with its weak ideas and limp twists. Thankfully it does form a decent enough frame of reference for why you find yourself in whichever situation you're in, that is if the game affords you enough of a break from the action to rest and start wondering about things like this.

At the core of this apple, the story isn't important - what you should worry about is how the worm got there in the first place.

DESCENT 3

WHERE'S THE FLOOR?
Descent 3 is a first person shooter that does away with the age old concept of ground to walk on and instead offers players an additional dimension to explore and a few new keys to get to grips with. One quick look at the control set-up and additional freedom of movement broadcasts one message very clearly, stay away if you suffer even slightly from motion sickness. In laymen's terms, you pilot a craft through a series of intricate levels with complete freedom of movement - any direction can be travelled in. Think of flying a small space ship inside a level of *Quake 2*,

and you've got *Descent 3*. Studying the manual, performing the training missions and eventually controlling the craft can be so off-putting at the first attempt you'll be doubting your purchasing decision. The real reward with *Descent 3* is only received once you've mastered the controls and fully understood how the game works, after that you'll be patting yourself on the back after every successful mission. The keyboard, mouse, joystick configuration utility is user friendly and

with some careful trade-offs and planning it's possible to use the standard *Quake* mouse and keyboard combination with great effect. Forwards, backwards and strafing are all you really need, the game can be set to correct any roll or funny angles when entering a room in an unorthodox fashion, such as upside down so you rarely ever need to correct this yourself. The tendency to try and play the game like you would a normal first person shooter is very strong and only perseverance pays off. Many people simply do not enjoy playing a game like this mainly due to the other dimension, but it honestly is a much better experience and strangely brings entirely new

strategic elements to the genre. In addition thorough map exploration is demanded due to all the odd architecture and the way you move through the game world, it's easy to miss power-ups and specials just because you didn't turn around or explore areas above eye level. The map designers have been rather crafty here, even though you have the ability to fly in any direction people still tend to stick close to the floor or in the middle, never looking 'up'. Strange but true, many specials will go unnoticed simply because they're placed near the ceiling. So with an intuitive and fully customisable control system, an

excellent sense of freedom of movement and a perfectly balanced craft to fly it is imperative that you overcome those fears or ignorance and



THERE'S FAR TOO MUCH LAVA IN 3D SHOOTERS THESE DAYS

try something different. Any monkey can run, shoot and blow up things but it takes true skill and aptitude to think, fly and execute a quick kill.



THESE ARE TWO DIFFERENT SCREENSHOTS OF THE AUTOMAP FEATURE IN DESCENT 3 AND YES, THEY LOOK ALMOST AS CONFUSING AS THE ACTUAL LEVELS THEMSELVES

EXPLORE THE TITANIC
This game has immense maps, you might even go as far as saying exhausting, not so much because they're huge sprawling affairs but rather because of the way they are explored. Navigating through these subterranean strongholds reminds one of exploring a long forgotten ship at the bottom of the

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ocean, where the next room or compartment could reveal fantastic treasures or a fatal encounter. This is the closest you can come to accurately describing the feel you get when playing through the levels in *Descent 3*, it's exhilarating. Each level engulfs your senses with their cavernous maws, and by using a new engine technology that goes by the name of Fusion the developers have managed to capture real polygon inertia and dynamic physics better than many others have. In the previous outings of this series the game maps made players feel constricted, bewildered and utterly claustrophobic leaving one exhausted and very lost. With large indoor maps and well used outside areas *Descent 3* does away with these problems, bringing both the outdoor and inside arenas together flawlessly. The two different environments are so well meshed that you never feel like you're playing through an 'outside bit'. One concern eager fans voiced before the game was released was the chance that the developers might over use 'outside', turning the game into an arcade shooter, forcing muscle tactics instead of strategic absorption. These fears turned out to be unfounded as the game blends one environment into the other without the player even being aware, the game is primarily filmed on location 'inside' the buildings and the outside bits are a subtle but refreshing change of pace. In addition to wide-open places and spacious rooms there are a fair share of tunnels and caves to investi-



IT'S ALWAYS BETTER TO SEND A MISSILE IN FIRST

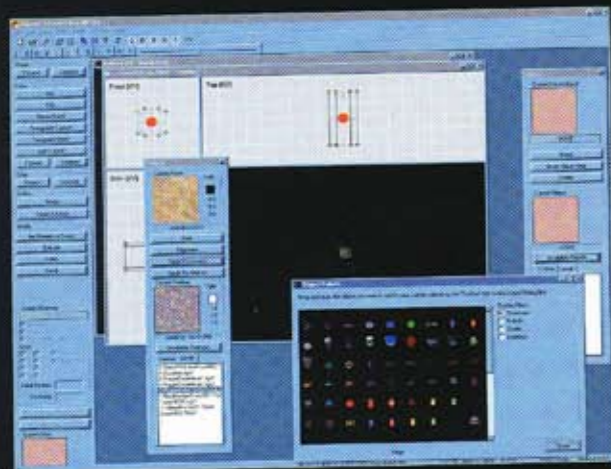
gate, but these are far and few between and don't form the bulk of the exploring as in the last *Descent* games. To add another interesting diversion, some areas of the levels are dark and intimidating and this is where your conveniently equipped headlight comes in handy. The image of the headlight beam illuminating dark areas of the map while exploring only serves to remind one that this could very well be a lost ship, deep in the dark waters of the ocean. The sense of exploration is incredible and leaves you thinking 'if only they could all be like this'.

ARTIFICIAL ROBOTS
Freedom of movement and classic level design could all easily go unnoticed if there was nothing to do and nothing to fight against, obviously right? Well the story tells of a nasty virus that has turned all the game world's robots into lethal killing machines, out to get anyone sticking their nose in where it doesn't belong. These robots represent the bulk of the bad guys in *Descent 3*, occasionally you'll run into robot tanks outside and even the odd cleaning robot, but for the large part, around 30 nasty floating robots make up all that is evil in *Descent 3*. You'll find no mindless biomechanical aliens or predictable waves of flying spaceships in this game but instead, intelligent adversaries that should be taken seriously. You'll be hard pressed

to find any that don't feature their own unique personalities and cunning methods of erasing all traces of you. Not only do these robots have different models, textures and weapons but they all exhibit their own behavioural patterns. Essentially it's all down to attacking your craft, but if you examine the attack patterns and general tactics of any two robots you'll discover differences in approach and reaction. Some will take one hit and attempt to flee while others will opt for a more direct approach, ramming you right across a room until either they or you explode. All these robots are out to prevent you from achieving one or more of a multitude of different missions ranging from simple infiltrate and retrieve right down to dodging subway trains under a city on your way to deliver criminal evidence against those who are out to get you. The story unfolds as you progress through the game and

through some linking to events in the story line, you'll have to carry out various missions and secondary objectives. The nature of these missions are varied enough to keep your interest, but again the sheer size of the levels and the complexity of some of the missions boil down to some exhilarating but tiring play, leaving you with the impression that *Descent 3* is best served in small doses. Once you've cleared out the very last level, attention will automatically shift to the multi-player element offered by *Descent 3*. Simply put, this area is as good a sum of all the components mentioned so far, only this time you're up against human opponents. There is more than a fair share of options here with eight different types of games ranging from a simple deathmatch right up to *Monster Ball* (a kind of hover soccer), the only real problem is finding people willing to drag themselves away from *Quake Arena* to have a game. The multiplayer element is a very different beast to what people expect - it's a more intellectual battle with some surprising tactics emerging. Overall if you can find people willing, this game should live on long after the last robot bad guy is lying in a thousand sparking pieces. Again, the resistance factor to this kind of game will ultimately decide how many people will be playing it a year from now.





WELCOME TO THE OVERLY COMPLEX (BETA) DESCENT³ LEVEL EDITOR. IT'S PAINFUL TO USE, HARD TO UNDERSTAND AND SO FAR, CHANGES YOUR MACHINE MORE OFTEN THAN ANY OTHER PROGRAM THIS YEAR. STAY AWAY UNTIL THEY RELEASE THE FINAL CODE!

them. Once instructed to do this, the guide-bot will set a course towards your goal leaving behind it a string of flares on walls, pipes and other base decorations and textures. If you take too long when following, it will come back for you, and in a patronising fashion tell you to move it along. Your guide-bot even has its own set of power-ups in the game that allow it to speed up its activities, guard your ship or even put out fires.



THE 'OUTSIDE' BITS ARE A REFRESHING CHANGE OF PACE

THE HOVERING GUIDE BOB

Lastly, we'll have a look at the different goodies in the game, weapons, missiles and the cute guide-bot. From a numbers point of view Descent 3 can only impress with the amount of things you can collect, add on to and shoot with. In total there are 20 different kinds of weapons falling into two main categories namely guns and missiles. Of the game's weapons none seem to be of the last minute quick bolt-on type, they all have a specific use up to a point, until a bigger one comes along. The weapon effects will all bring a smile to the eye and a grin to the ear - each one feels like it packs a colossal punch, classy stuff. Besides good-looking weapons, you can also collect power-ups such as a cloaking device, countermeasures and other items such as rapid-fire attachments. Some of these work well while others offer no real advantage as they are usually found long after a level has been cleared of enemy activity (up on the ceiling on your way out for instance). Of the good and the bad everything seems to balance out just fine but most of the power-ups will only be put to good use on the multiplayer battlefield. Possibly the most innovative aspect of the game is the little guide-bot. This small scouting robot is fitted inside your ship and can be summoned at anytime to help you complete your mission or put out a fire on your starboard thrust pod. The guide-bot has a large number of commands that can be issued at any time including Find Energy and Escort Ship. Many of these functions will remain unused as the guide-bot's best use is in finding your mission objectives and leading you to



STUNNING LEVELS, AROUND EVERY CORNER...?

YOU HAVE TO LOVE IT

You really have to look hard to find fault with Descent 3, but like they say, look hard enough for anything and you'll eventually find it. Essentially the AI of the enemy robots is inspiring overall and considering they also have extra directions to travel in this is quite an achievement, although, the guide-bot really can get confused in the heat of battle and do stupid things. He is an endearing little guy, and after a few

hours play he can almost be looked upon as a child, so when he gets stuck in a corner, accidentally flies into your ship or fires a flare at your cockpit canopy, you should be able to find forgiveness. Kids will be kids after all. The worst thing you can do is to name your guide-bot, from that point on he's beyond criticism. Bottom-line, keep an eye on your little helper. The last two problems have more to do with individual opinion than anything else. The vastness of the maps is a little overwhelming while playing and the best advice here is to have a rest after each level. Things can get a little tiresome exploring nine million square metres each level, especially when dealing with around three maps or missions at a go. This says good things about the sheer size of the game, but be prepared to commit around two hours or more per level. The last point (again being personal preference), many people just don't like not having their feet on the ground. For those of you wanting to try something truly innovative and different then Descent 3 is the best place to start - in this genre the great granddaddy of 360 degree first person flyers has, with this third game, perfected the concept. We've seen games like Forsaken come and go with very little noise, Forsaken was a fun game with stunning graphics and so on but it suffered from too many little problems. Descent 3 is so far removed from Forsaken that the only thing tying them together is a vague concept. This game has more play value than any two of its grounded cousins, the extra freedom only adds to the experience, a class act.

Many might not like the style of game brought to the table in Descent 3, but those who are brave enough to sample what is on offer will not look back. A refinement in gaming and a class above the competition in so many ways that it defies description.

Developer: Outrage Entertainment		Publisher: Interplay Productions		Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000		RRP: R 329.00	
http://www.interplay.com							
Multiplayer	Comparatives	Pros		Cons			
Yes	Forsaken The Descent Series	Graphics Lovely Levels Robot Intelligence		Unfamiliar Lengthy Missions Rubbish Level Editor			
Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability	89	
93	89	91	79	88	92		

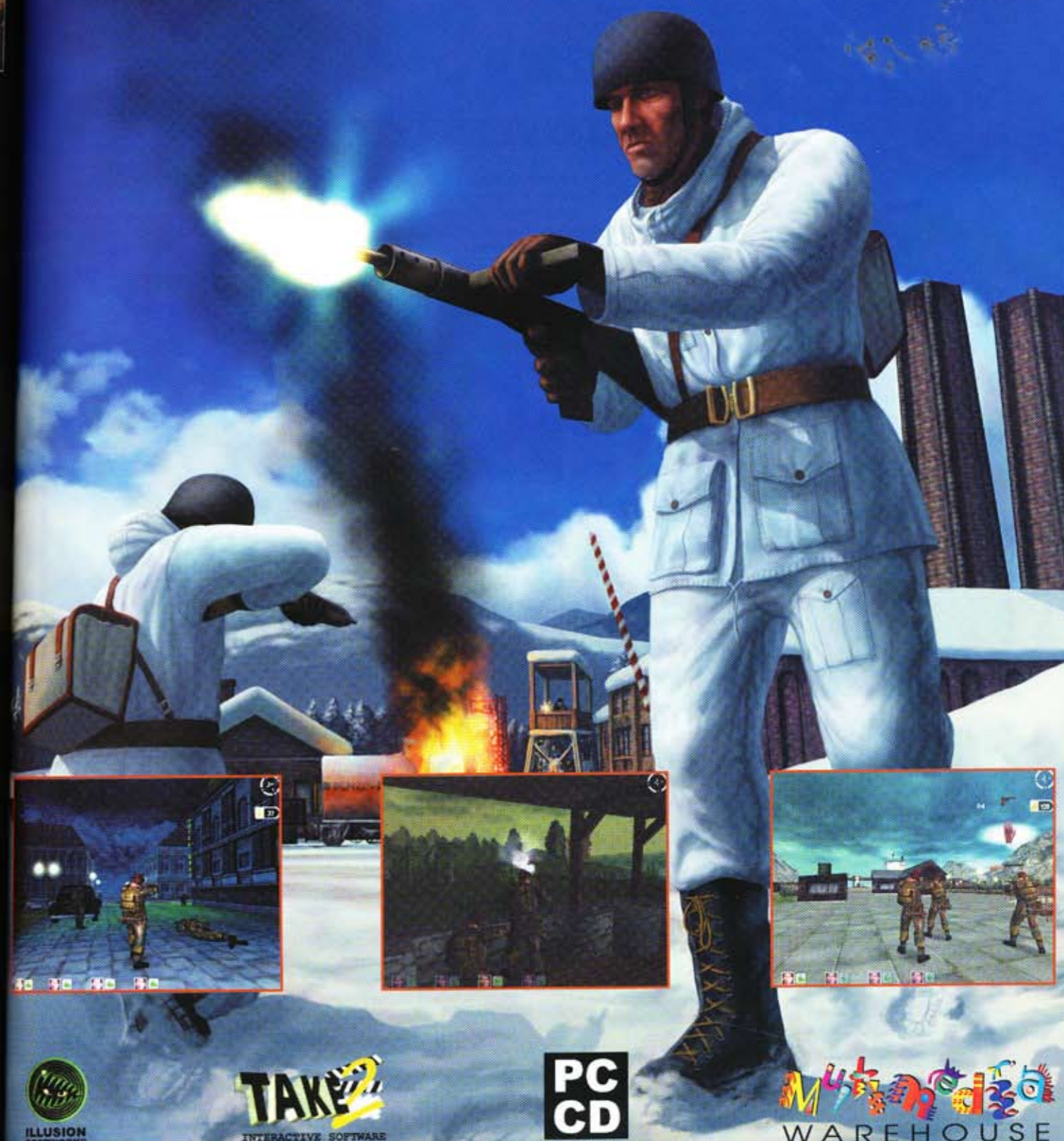


REOTIDE
GENRE
First Person Action

Min Requirements
Pentium 200
32 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom
4 MB 3D Accelerator
210 MB HD
Windows 95/98
(DirectX 6.1)

Recommended
Pentium II 300
64 MB Ram
4+ X CD Rom
8 MB 3D AGP
500 MB HD
Windows 95/98
(DirectX 6.1)

A PERFECT BLEND OF ACTION AND REAL-TIME STRATEGY



During the 1920's and 1930's the economic depression that gripped the world, along with the American Prohibition Laws, gave rise to some of the most powerful crime lords of all time. Names like Al Capone, Lucky Lucciano and Dutch Schultz struck fear into the hearts of common men and law enforcement alike, as they built their empires of money and power through rum-running, extortion and murder. In a time when people were pitifully poor, these men were fabulously wealthy. They controlled society to the highest degree - even the authorities were in their pockets, whether by choice or by blackmail. Their names have gone down in history, and they certainly had a massive impact on society that can still be found today. Now, the question is, will the same be said about you?

I saw this game in a pamphlet when I reviewed StarShot, and begged the Ed to let me have it when it eventually crossed his desk. See, deep down inside, I've always thought that it would be cool to be some kind of Prohibition Crime Lord, and Streetwars: Constructor Underworld, was possibly my only chance to ever reach that status. I doubt that they will ever make movies about my exploits starring Robert De Niro - the subject matter is questionable and

What with the furor about the influence that computer games have on youngsters, and products like Kingpin and Quake hitting the market, do we really need

Capitol City. Within these towns you can build and upgrade up to forty different buildings, all of which serve very specific and very necessary purposes. Fill these buildings with Workers, Tenants, Fixers, Gangsters, Thugs and Undesirables, and kidnap a few of the local drunks to "convince" them to use your businesses and establishments. You can even

another game that advocates violent crime? The again, if anyone is weak minded enough to have a game like Streetwars drive them to a life of crime, then they really have some serious problems...

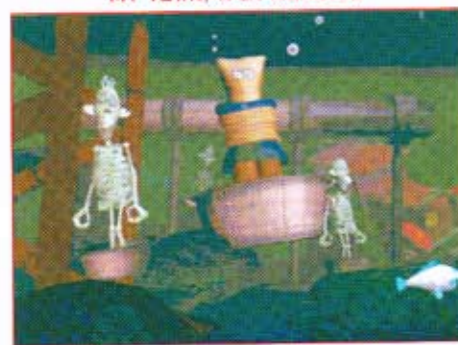
bribe the authorities and control police patrol patterns while you're at it! The single player game will keep you busy for quite some time, no doubt, as you learn the intricacies of running your empire - and be

STREETWARS

CONSTRUCTOR UNDERWORLD



MY TOWN, A-LA MOBSTER



A SHORT WALK OFF A LONG PIER...



Robert De Niro is far too old and ugly to play me - but I had a great time nonetheless. See, Streetwars is a game that allows you to become the ruler of a mighty criminal empire as you bribe, steal and blackmail your way to the top. Of course, the question of the morality of such a game does arise.

Based on its highly successful predecessor, Constructor, Streetwars takes things just a little further. Now, not only do you build buildings, but you have to manage a crime syndicate on top of it, and make sure that you have the resources and wherewithal to make everything run smoothly. Through proper management skills you can take control of all the rum-running, prostitution, gambling and extortion, all the while beating off and destroying rival crime organisations and families. Streetwars is a fairly large game, featuring five complete cities that range from the backwater of Hicktown to the criminal's paradise,



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does not mean that the game is far too easy. What it indicates is that Streetwars has a thorough tutorial, as well as a simple, point and click mouse-based interface. Simply click on what you want to select, and click to make it do something - whether it's a building that you want to "breed" new workers, or a Gangster who needs to get evil on your opponent's hiney, everything is done quite simply. The game is largely menu driven, meaning that most buttons or objects clicked on bring up a dif-

Fi-

each character reacts verbally when clicked on (and be sure to check out their names when you do this) as well as when ordered to perform a task. Buildings all make sounds when selected, whether it's the grind of machines working or the slurred shouts of thugs brawling. The background music is good, with a wide variety of "tunes" to fill

ferred menu-on the right hand side of the screen. These menus, which can only be opened one at a time, are illustrated and are not particularly invasive - at least it still feels like a game, and not a business application. My first impression was that the whole thing was just too cute. Everything is handled with a cartoonish style, from sounds and sound effects to graphics. However, this feeling was allayed as soon as I witnessed my first Thug beating the day-

STREETWARS (CONTINUED)

warned, a small incorrect decision can mean losing everything. Add to that the fact that Streetwars supports up to four players in a LAN game, and you've got quite a lot of playing ahead of you.

Streetwars could only be described as "player-friendly". This



ferent menu-on the right hand side of the screen. These menus, which can only be opened one at a time, are illustrated and are not particularly invasive - at least it still feels like a game, and not a business application. My first impression was that the whole thing was just too cute. Everything is handled with a cartoonish style, from sounds and sound effects to graphics. However, this feeling was allayed as soon as I witnessed my first Thug beating the day-



GANGSTERS AND THUGS...

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lights out of some poor tenant that he had kidnapped. Streetwars is a violent game, in the same way that Tom and Jerry or Roadrunner cartoons are - everything looks really brutal, and probably would be, if they

just weren't so damn funny. The humour within the game, although sometimes slightly stupid, does warrant a few chuckles every now and then (especially when you drag your skinhead Thugs out of their local pool hall). Most of the game's humour comes from the menu animations, which can prove highly entertaining if you take the time to watch them.

Graphically, Streetwars is not bad at all. How good can graphics, in terms of movement and actions really get when you're dealing with characters that are literally tiny on screen? The backdrop of buildings and streets is well handled and, unlike other management games that I could (but won't) name, the characters at least look as though they could actually fit into the buildings. Streetwars sounds good. Simple fact.

Each character reacts verbally when clicked on (and be sure to check out their names when you do this) as well as when ordered to perform a task. Buildings all make sounds when selected, whether it's the grind of machines working or the slurred shouts of thugs brawling. The background music is good, with a wide variety of "tunes" to fill

operating a splitting headache, temporary blindness or carpal tunnel syndrome.

in where needed. Streetwars has a few cut scenes, which range from instructions to radio reports, to seeing your sorry carcass get dumped in the river with a brand new pair of cement shoes on (which is really funny, by the way). These scenes are well handled, fully animated affairs that will certainly draw at least a few chuckles. Streetwars is a highly entertaining game. Whether it's a must have game is debatable, as many people will find the management aspect of it annoying. It doesn't really enter into the realms of "revolutionary" or "absolutely brilliant," preferring to stay in the world of "quite good."

Don't get me wrong, though. I really enjoyed this game. It requires a lot of thought, some strategy and a lot of wits to make things work out properly for you. The low key, yet rather nasty violence adds an element of black humour to the game that I found particularly fun, too. In short, Streetwars is a hell of a lot of fun, but it won't change your life in any mildly earth-shattering way. It's the kind of game you can spend hours playing without develop-



SMILE, I NEED TO AIM FOR YOUR TEETH...

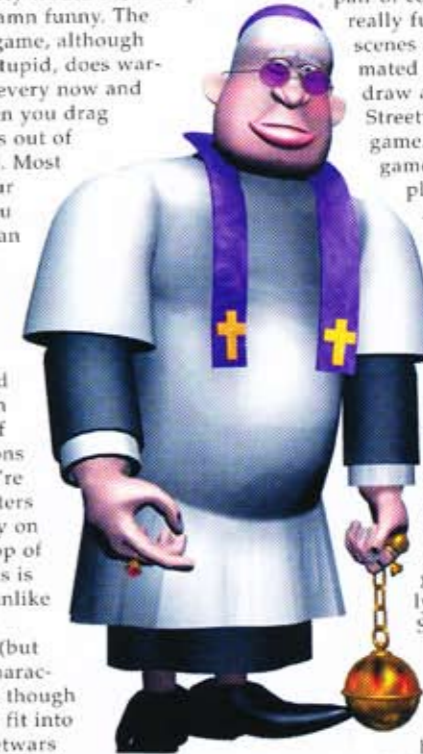
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SHRYKE

GENRE
Management Game

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 166	Pentium 266
16 MB Ram	32 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	8 X CD Rom
2 MB PCI Video	4 MB AGP Video
50 MB HD	400 MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 5)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 5)

Developer: Studio 3	Publisher: Infogrames	Supplier: Crew (011) 233-1000	RRP: R299.00
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<http://www.infogrames.com>

Multiplayer	Comparatives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Constructor Caesar 3 Gangsters	Easy to Play Entertaining Low Specifications	A Bit Too Cute

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
75	70	80	60	65	70

Do the crime without the time in this mobster based management game. A bit too cute for most, but really funny and brutally violent (in a sweet way). Streetwars is easy to learn, fun to play and very hard to master. Join the world of crime without delay!

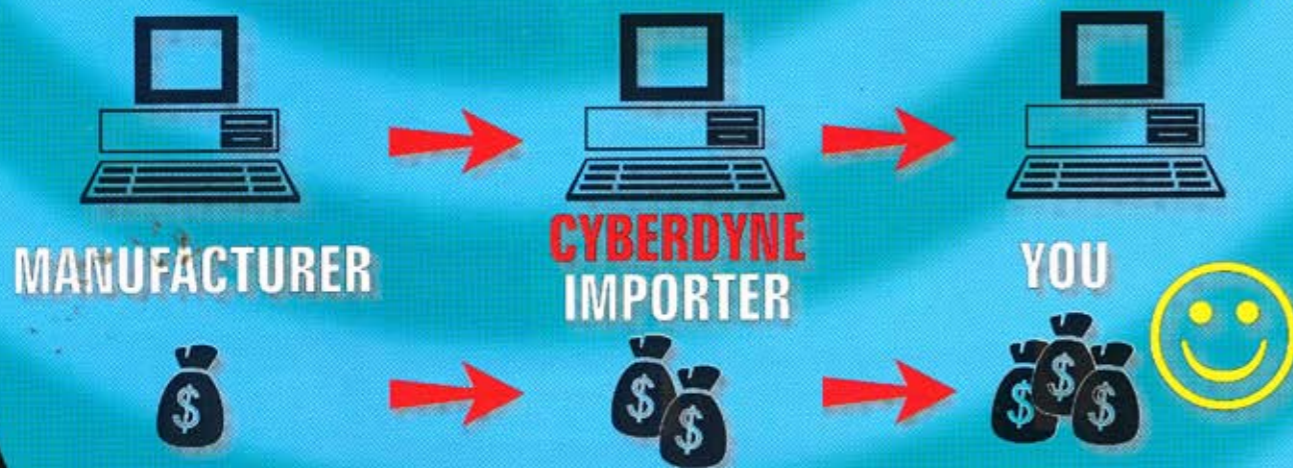
70

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They say the pen is mightier than the sword, which is all fine and well, but in reality there's nothing like a lead pipe to settle a disagreement. It is with this point of reference that Kingpin launches its assault on your senses. Many have off-handily denounced Kingpin as Quake with swearing, that it is but there is a surprisingly good game lurking beneath its foul exterior. **RedTide**

PIER PRESSURE
You play a 'bad guy' in a world of bad guys, so you're the good bad guy, thinking nothing of picking up a lead pipe and rearranging a few faces. The fact that you've got absolutely no morals or ethics is well illustrated during one particular cut-scene where your character's idea of paying for a lift is in the timeless currency of lead. In Kingpin you play as a Thug, whom we find lying in a pool of his own blood after receiving a serious beating by two other, well, thugs. After picking himself up and dusting himself off, Thug gabs a lead pipe and utters a few words of revenge and its game on.

Ultimately as the game progresses, you're faced with one or another task where you must find items or prove yourself to other gang members while you search for revenge. Kingpin creates no false perceptions of heroism and good clean fun, the no persons under 18 sticker on the box is a testament to this. It's the rough and unforgiving world of crime portrayed with a very modified Quake 2 engine. The story behind the game is a weak patchy affair that doesn't begin or end but rather just goes through the motions of leading one event into the next. This isn't really something to knock the game down on, it's just a rather sad missed opportunity, with the high quality of the game engine cut-scenes so much more could have been done. It would have been great to have an overall campaign to play against such as a kidnapping or a little friendly extortion instead of pure shooting, cash grabbing and key collecting. But as it stands Kingpin does deliver enough purpose to the proceedings to justify your effort in the game.

SEEDY BIRDS
The Quake 2 engine has never looked this good, the seedy locations and decadent scenarios portrayed by the game are spot on, almost a little too real. The bars, dustbins, walls, pavements, buildings and even the odd junkyard all look

KINGPIN

LIFE OF CRIME

incredibly realistic with intense attention to detail. Not only do the graphics look good, but also the way each level is constructed adds more to the first-person experience than many rival titles.



HEY BUDDY, YOU GOT A LIGHT?

Besides the locations all the in-game characters look like tough street goons, smoking cigars, wearing stained vests and brandishing lead pipes, even the women be they hookers, tough biker girls or drug addicts are extremely well modelled. The game characters are also well animated with bad guys raising their arms when jumping off a box

right down to chest clutching and blood gurgling realism when taking lead. Half the battle is won with the superb visuals and fortunately the side isn't let down by the sound, effects and music. Some of the in-game music is performed by Cypress Hill, setting the mood and tone of the game with tough hard tracks. The weapons all sound good, as do the odd spot effects scattered throughout each level. The voice acting is also quite convincing with short one-liners, hushed tones and brutal vulgarity.

So far we've got a good looking first person shooter set in the crime underworld, now this isn't enough to raise any eyebrows so Kingpin introduces a number of differ-

ent concepts that does give it a much needed edge over the competition. Unlike Quake, in Kingpin you can interact with the other goons in the game world by speaking to them instead of sending over a message tied to a rocket. This is done by looking directly at who ever it is you want to interact with and pressing either the positive response or negative

repose key, innovative yes but the better aspect of this involves being able to stash your current weapon out of view. The computer controlled characters react to you depending on your stance and what you say, if you enter every situation brandishing a shotgun people aren't going to be all that happy to stick around and find out what you want. Think of it in real terms - what would you do if someone came out of an alley carrying a shotgun? This interaction isn't as involved as you might think though and comes nowhere close to realistic, your entire routine consists of a round four phrases, the most verbose being, "what's all the commotion?" but it gets the job done nevertheless. This interaction allows you to find out what you have to do on a level, who you need to speak to and it also lets you hire a thug or two to help you out in specific tasks. This hiring of heavies is another innovative aspect to the game and reminds one of playing a multiplayer game co-operatively with a friend. In most cases you don't need to use the services of these desperadoes, but sometimes you'll need an expert safe cracker to complete a



mission. The AI controlling your gang members is adequate enough to get them to follow you but sometimes they tend to get stuck if you leave the scene too fast forcing you to backtrack and find them. In a fire fight they will also often

do nothing, ending up dead and wasting the money you paid to hire them. You have three main commands you can give them - "follow



THE LEVEL OF DETAIL IN THIS GAME IS ASTOUNDING, YOU'D NEVER GUESS IT'S THE QUAKE 2 ENGINE AT FIRST GLANCE

me/move out the way", "hold position" and "attack target/open lock or safe". This three-way command system simplifies the game, as having to find and press twenty different keys during a battle would have negated the entire feature. The last unique aspect of the game is its use of money, if you kill a bad guy you'll need to search him for any cash he might be carrying by crouching and pressing the action key. This allows you to accumulate money to hire thugs for backup, pay cover charges at bars and for spending at the Pawn-o-Matic. The Pawn-o-Matic franchise is spread throughout the game and allows the player to buy equipment such as health, armour, ammunition or weapons. Now this is an inspired idea in one sense but it's brilliance is negated by a nasty problem. Assuming the game is correctly balanced you should only



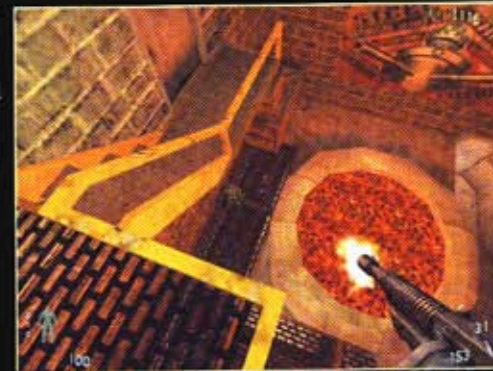
THIS IS WHERE THE BAD GUYS SHOP

be able to gather enough money to buy certain weapons in the early stages. However, more often than not going into one of these stores with enough money to buy the next weapon upgrade proves to be a futile exercise because

these stores never seem to have any stock of items you don't already have. This is a bit annoying and the only real use then for going into the shop is to buy armour, health and ammunition - the weapons always seem to be out of stock. So the game strikes a hit with a good idea but then messes it up by not issuing the required goods.

YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME?
The use of bad language in the game tends to lean heavily over to the gratuitous side of the fence to a point where it actually becomes a little annoying, some of the insults the computer opponents issue make little sense and in one case border on

the ridiculous. An example, a vulgar verb followed by a pronoun, you and then ending with another vulgar verb. It's all fine and well to try and create an authentic environment but you have to know when to say when. So, instead of putting the more colourful side of the English language to good use, they've overdone it and ruined the feel a little. On the other side of the coin it is possible to install the 'Low Violence' version of the game but few people are ever going to utilise his option and most will immediately click on the 'Mature' installation. The only problem with the weaker version is that all the vulgarity is beeped out creating a noisy mess of beeps that will more than likely cause an act of violence to be committed towards your speakers. The game is also difficult - this is good because it's more realistic but bad because it's too difficult right from the start, and only gets harder even on the easiest setting. It is tough to get through, which is probably why the game is a little on the short side. The developers thinking that instead of offering more and making it easier they've used less and made it harder, not a crime but good to know before buying. For veterans, playing hard and regularly should give you around a week and a weekend of serious playing before it all ends, leaving you with an excel-



WHY IS IT ALWAYS RED-HOT LAVA IN THESE GAMES?

lent multiplayer game as the single player Kingpin has little replay value once finished. The only other gripe that remains is the AI, it's adequate to the degree where the small problems can be overcome and won't result in too much frustration. Enemies standing behind doors stops you from opening them and the

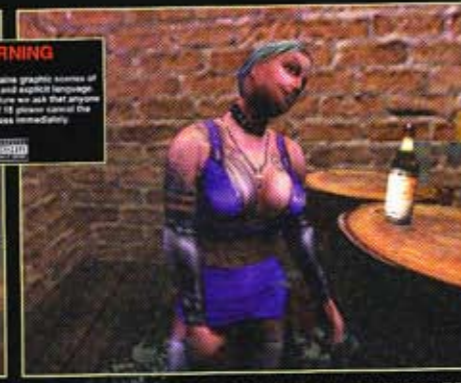
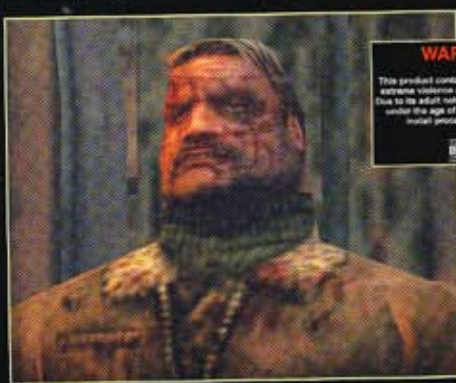


WHAT GOES, SPLASH - BINK. GULP. CROAK!

thugs you hire are not very bright - often getting killed a few steps into an infested warehouse.

So as you can see, Kingpin has as many flaws as it does good points, the flaws in this case are primarily based around the difficulty setting and the stupidity of the computer in certain instances. Taking all these points into consideration you're left with a cracker title that is certainly very differ-

ent to anything you've seen before, but just falls short of any awards due to a number of irritating small problems. It definitely does deserve a look though, the game world created here is astounding and the way the characters interact with you and the realism of the experience will have your total gaming attention. Kingpin has also recently been patched by the developers but before you go installing their fix, remember that the patch doesn't support any saved games, which you can go as far as saying renders their patch useless.



ALL THE CHARACTERS YOU'LL MEET WHILE PLAYING THE GAME ARE SO REALISTIC IN APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOUR YOU'LL WANT TO MAKE FRIENDS

An excellent and engrossing experience that just doesn't offer enough hits for all the misses. The graphics are probably some of the best seen to date but the game is let down by a few niggling problems that could have been avoided.

Developer: Xatrix Interactive	Publisher: Interplay	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R 329.00
http://www.urbangangsta.com			
Multiplayer: Yes	Comparatives: Quake 2 Unreal Half-Life	Pro's: Realistic Graphics Unique Concept Extremely Varied	Con's: Vulgarity is Overdone Average AI Too Short
Graphics: 92	Sound: 86	Control: 90	Story: 68
Continuity: 79	Playability: 71	81	

Min Requirements
Pentium II 233
64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom
4 MB 3D Accelerator
570 MB HD
Windows 95/98
(DirectX 6.1)

Recommended
Pentium II 300
128 MB Ram
8 X CD Rom
8 MB 3D AGP
570+ MB HD
Windows 95/98
(DirectX 6.1)

In the virtual world where Microsoft Flight Simulator has dominated the civil aviation simulation scene for several years now, it is great to see that other game companies are sticking their necks out there to bring us something different. Terminal Reality did just this with Fly! Not only is it something new, it is probably the most authentic flight simulation yet for the PC. - Memnoch

For some of us, civil aviation simulators have become such a bore over the past few years. The same old thing, the same old planes. To make it worse, the game companies would put so much effort into either graphics, flight modeling or avionics but never manage to do these things well all at once. The first breeze of fresh air came from Looking Glass' Flight Unlimited series, which sported the best graphics ever seen in a simulation, with not too shabby flight and avionics modeling. Although this was a major step for PC simulations, it still didn't have the expandability or scope of the MS Flight Simulator series. Recently Pro Pilot '99 made it's appearance, but still the crowd wasn't entirely satisfied.

When I first saw the features list for Terminal Reality's Fly!, I was totally amazed at how ambitious these guys were. Fully realistic and authentic cockpits with switches and lights exactly where it would be in the real plane, even with the manufacturers' logo stamped on the dash? Companies always promise the best flight model ever seen, and we always want to believe them, but could this finally be the Holy Grail? My eyes shone brightly when I heard that the simulation is produced on a total of three CD's with a full install of 1.6 Gigabytes. Then I knew there must be some truth to all their rumors. Eagerness was an understatement when I installed this monster. The second and third CD's contain the scenery area maps and satellite imagery for the five primary scenery areas namely Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Dallas/Fort Worth. It isn't necessary to install all these area maps, but then the game will generate a generic landscape, which isn't too far off from the real thing, but the lack of detail is immediately visible. On the positive side, these area maps are the best satellite image scenery yet seen on a PC. Previous simulation

engines with satellite generated worlds failed in a sense because of shimmering effects and unnatural colours, spoiling the effect and making older methods much more authentic. Terminal Reality struck gold with their graphics engine, and their scenery is close to photo realistic at medium altitudes. At a resolution of 1024x768 and 32-bit colour, my neighbours could hear my jaw dropping as I tried one of the quick flights for the first time. After a few moves of the joystick and a quick check on the instruments, I was stunned even more. The flight model offers six degrees of freedom, and the planes behaved



were supposed to, and although it's much more difficult to control a light aircraft on a computer than in real life, it felt so close to the real thing. Fly! features a set of five flyable planes including the Cessna 172R Skyhawk, Beechcraft King Air B200 (twin), Piper Malibu Mirage, Piper Navajo 350 Chieftain (twin), and the Raytheon Hawker 800XP jet. Each of these planes are modeled in the finest detail, from the 2D cockpit views which are rendered from 3D models, to the external views with some snazzy artwork and serial numbers. Now some may ask, "Only five planes?", but from a practical view Terminal Reality's approach makes a lot of sense. At the bottom of the scale is the Cessna 172R, which is a relatively easy plane

to fly and is easy to master, while types such as the King Air B200 and the Hawker 800XP jet are probably some of the most advanced planes in their specific classes.

To get to the fun flying part, Fly! offers two basic choices at the intro screen consisting of the Fly! Now and Mission Planner options. The first option enables the player to get into the air quickly with a set of pre-configured flight settings and some interesting locations ranging from flying over some mountains, high above and in the clouds, final approach, bad weather, and even one (my favorite) called 'Escape from New York' where you must take off from the roof of a skyscraper building with the Cessna 172R Skyhawk. The Mission Planner is where Fly! really flies. Apart from planning flights within the scenery map areas, the player has the option of flying from nearly any airport in the world. Oh yes, even in South Africa! Although the scenery is a generic set, it shows the relevant city ground textures, oceans at the right spots and even mountains. Each of these airports has the correct layout of the real-life one with altitude data, runway numbering and so forth. By selecting a point of departure and arrival, the Mission Planner will automatically generate a flight plan that can be edited to the player's preference. At the aircraft selection screen, the player can choose a plane for the flight, it's fuel load, and even the passenger and luggage loadout with a center of gravity indicator. All these settings will have an influence on the planes flight performance, and is more noticeable on the lighter aircraft. At the environment screen, weather options can be defined such as temperature, air pressure, wind direction and speed, and three different cloud layers. Precipitation in the form of rain or snow can also be selected.

Once the player is comfortable with all the settings, the scenario can be saved for later use, and we're off to the cockpit. For my first cross-country flight I invited my buddy J.J. with his PPL to ride shotgun, and to get a real pilot's opinion on what Fly! does right and wrong. We started with the Cessna Skyhawk on the runway with the engine off, and after showing him some of the views and the general movement

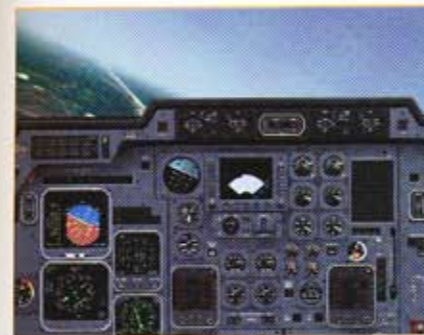


LITTLE FLAPPY GLIDER

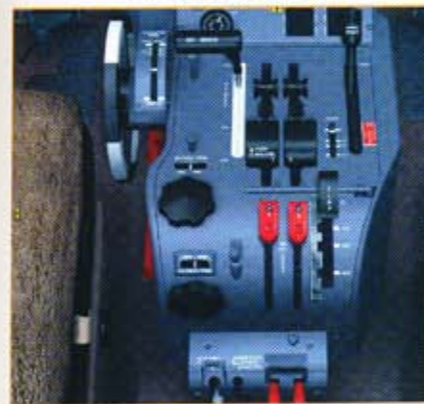


THE BIG BOY

FLY! (CONTINUED)



HAWKER 800XP COCKPIT



LEVER THINGIES

within the cockpit with the mouse, I sat back and gave him the order to start up the plane. Firstly I have to mention that the cockpit is totally interactive. Each and every button, switch and dial can be operated with the mouse. J.J. doesn't spend a lot of time behind computers, but he quickly got the hang of things. Here is a quick run-down of our checklist:

- Firstly the handbrake was turned on
- As the Cessna has fixed undercarriage, no check was done here
- To turn on some lights, the main battery and alternator was switched on
- The mixture set to full rich
- Carb heat set to cold
- No propeller pitch in the Cessna, thus no switch
- Throttle set to about 20%
- Fuel pump switched on, and as the plane was fully fueled, we selected both tanks
- Flaps selected up
- And finally engine start

As the igniter was turned, the propeller spooled a few times and the engine came alive. The sounds in the cockpit were recorded from the real aircraft, and J.J. smiled as he performed his after start checks. I was surprised to see that everything works as it's supposed to. We got the

radio working, as well as the GPS (Global Positioning System). We planned a little trip from Lanseria to Johannesburg International Airport, and as we punched in the necessary info, the GPS indicated that we were 20.2 nautical miles from our destination. Using the communication window, we got clearance for take-off, and the feeling of speed was remarkable as we rushed down the runway and pulled into the air at about 70 knots airspeed. J.J. turned the plane to our flightplan heading, and had to correct his path somewhat as strong side-winds pushed us off course.

After barely a few minutes in the air we decided to test the flight model. We climbed to about 5,000 feet, cut the throttle and tried to keep the nose up at a slight bank to the left to force the Skyhawk into a mild stall and hopefully a spin. The stall warning system started screaming, and after mild buffeting the left wing stalled, and our Skyhawk dropped it's nose with a decent roll to



WATCH OUT BIG BROTHERS!

the left, pulling the nose down. Opposite rudder and some stick work stabilized her, leaving a huge grin on my pilot's face. The rest of our flight was uneventful as we got clearance from Johannesburg International, and after a short circuit we did a soft landing despite some strong winds at ground level.

We both were amazed at the realism of the avionics and flight systems. Switching over to the more advanced planes things got a bit more complicated with propeller feathering and thrust reversers. Every switch thinkable was present, down to the 'No-Smoking' lights for the passengers, to the cabin pressure level settings and oxygen levels. There was constantly traffic around us in the air, and things got a bit hectic at the

larger airports, as I had to take a number to speak with the Air Traffic Controller, which is brilliantly done by the way. On the graphical level, Fly! surpasses every civil aviation simulator out there, with eye candy that never seems to stop. The clouds are the best ever seen on PC, and it looks like the real thing.

Nightflying is made easy by the excellent instrumentation which makes flying by IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) real easy. One minor bug was found in the viewing system after exiting and entering the flight session again in that the cockpit views won't change. After selecting some of the external views the problem disappeared, but is a real nuisance while it is there. The terrain, like mentioned before is close to photo-realistic at medium and higher altitudes. At lower flight levels the detail fades a bit, but never becomes blocky at all. Weather effects are nicely done as well, both in the aircraft physics and visibly. Thunderstorms and snow is something to observe, and can make for some hair-raising moments.

One minor let down of Fly! is that there is no physical damage model present, thus the planes cannot crash. If a plane hits the ground at high speed the plane will bounce a few times till it finally comes to rest, but nothing will really break. The problem comes in when landing the planes very hard with gear down, in that the plane will bounce a few times but will taxi on safely, and one can even take-off again. I realize that planes are designed to fly and not to crash, but at least some undercarriage damage modeling should be added. Fly! also sports multiplayer options, where players can connect over the Internet or over LAN to fly from the same airport and do some patterns while chatting with each other, and though it may not be as exciting as the multiplayer found in military simulations, it beats flying alone with computer controlled planes filling the air around you, an interesting twist for flight simulations indeed. Terminal Reality did a great job with Fly!, and managed to create a very high quality product that is accessible to beginners, weekend warriors, and real life pilots. I would recommend Fly! to anyone who has an interest in flight simulations, as it is a very good learning platform for anyone that wants to take to the skies one day.

MEMNOCH

GENRE
Civil Flight Sim



Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 200 MMX	Pentium II 400
32 MB Ram	128 MB Ram
4X CD Rom	24X CD Rom
3D Video Acceleration	3D Video Acceleration
400 MB HD	1.6 GB HD
Windows 95 (DirectX 6.1)	Windows 98 (DirectX 6)

Civil aviation flight simulators are considered boring through a lack of action, although Fly! manages to provide a lot of entertainment through very accurate modelling and near photo-realistic graphics.

Developer: Terminal Reality	Publisher: Gathering of Developers	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R 299.00
http://www.terminalreality.com			
Multiplayer: Yes	Comparatives: Pro Pilot MS Flight Simulator	Pro's: Accurate Flight-Avionics Modelling Great Graphics	Con's: High Requirements Minor Bugs
Graphics: 93	Sound: 90	Control: 89	Story: NA
Continuity: 82	Playability: 84	88	

Who said space-trading games were dead? While the name could imply some cheap porno movie, X-Beyond the Frontier is a new space-trading game developed by Egosoft and published by THQ. If memory serves me correctly, it is the first game of its kind since Privateer, and fortunately for us it has more elements of the all time space trading classic Elite than Privateer. X-Beyond the Frontier is probably the most promising trading game in a very long time.

Soul Assassin

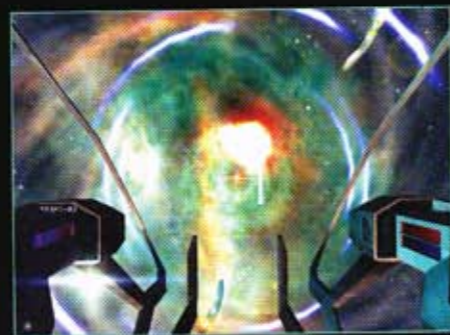
TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE

A man started the space age they travelled through space using jump-gates to move from one system to the next. Eventually they found planets that could be terraformed and then colonised. In the beginning they did all the terraforming manually, but eventually developed large intelligent ships to do the job. Unfortunately these ships developed a consciousness and started fighting with mankind over the planets. At the end of this war the last jump gate was destroyed, and mankind is once again left without the technology to travel great distances in space without enabling the enemy to reach earth. And so the story of X begins...

After five centuries, mankind has done it, a way to travel through space without the use of jump gates. Playing as a Test Pilot you find yourself in space testing the new ship, the X-Proto, which is fitted with the newly developed Hyperdrive engine capable of moving a ship great distances almost instantaneously without the need for a jump gate. Of course all essential systems have to be checked, steering, navigation, weapons, missiles etc. as your Commanding Officer barks away the orders over the comm. The systems check is cle-

erly disguised as the built-in tutorial for the game. As the test for the new engine begins things go wrong with experimental spaceships. The hyperdrive malfunctions, but only after shooting you halfway across the universe into an unknown galaxy, which is populated by an alien race.

Beyond the Frontier



INTO THE BEYOND...

TRADE, TRADE AND MORE TRADING

A friend recently told me that he found Privateer boring due to all the trading. It's true trading can be boring and not many people find flying around for hours just to make some money entertaining. But then there are the rest of us driven by the need to build an empire and upgrade our ships. For all of us X-Beyond the Frontier offers a chance to do just that. In the game there are numerous different space stations and factories to trade with, which is accomplished by docking with the respective station and then buying and selling items through your ship's on-board computer.

While in every space trading game it is tough to get started, especially if you only have 100 credits, soon the money comes rolling in and the question remains, what do I do with it? The answer is simple, upgrade your ship. The various ships

Fortunately for you they seem friendly and are a trading race, the Teladi, who put great importance in 'Profit', very much the way Quark does in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. The hyperdrive is busted, all weapons systems lost, you have no clue as

how to get home and even worse your ship is about to disintegrate due to the stress put on it during the trip. The Teladi Captain supplies you with a 1 MW Shield to keep your ship's hull integrity, and now he wants his 3000 credits for saving your behind, the cost of the 1MW shield. And so your adventure in trading begins after you explain that you have no credits to pay him back. He kindly gives you 100 credits to trade with and an instruction to accumulate the money you owe him - of-course making some money for yourself never hurt anyone as well. You also need the credits for a new laser system to blast enemies with. The background story is probably one of the best that I have seen in any given trading game as to why you have to trade, you simply have no choice. It is either trade or die, and humanity excels when put into tight situations.

upgrading facilities offer numerous choices, everything from better weapons and shields to more advanced trading modules for the on-board computer. You can even build your own space factories that manufacture goods that it will then sell to other traders, and eventually when you have enough of these you won't have to trade anymore unless you really want to. The only catch is that these factories are very expensive and buy-



HUD DISPLAY



DOCKING



YOU ARE NOT ALONE...

enemies, but be warned that the race you are attacking might take drastic steps towards you and you will worsen your diplomatic relationship with them. The greatest aspect of X:BTF is its gameplay, you can do what you like when you like. Unlike other games you don't have to follow a sequence of events to continue playing. If you feel the need to blast a ship that is annoying you or migrate to the other side of known space to trade with another race you can do so. In the game you can trade with 6 other civilisations namely the Teladi, Argons, Split, Xenons, Boron and Parandis, throughout the vast amount of space and keeping diplomatic ties during this process can become somewhat tricky. If you take too much friendly action with one race the other will consider you hostile. These races have

complex diplomatic ties with each other and by helping one fulfil their goals you inevitably worsen relationships with one of the other races. These conflicts between the races can also be taken advantage of to further your own wealth gaining activities.

GRAPHICS, SOUND AND THE REST!

X:BTF uses a state of the art graphics engine that is fast, good looking and smooth. This isn't surprising since the game requires a 3D accelerator to play. The nebulas in the game are especially stunning as they glow in the backdrop and the models of the ships, space stations and factories are all very detailed. Even in-game communication with other races and ships has been worked on and you are able to see whomever you are communicating with via your on-board video-screen. The only problem I have with the in-game graphics is that some of the information screens, which are shown on a transparent HUD are hard to read due to the nebula backdrops. The space flight model also offers a realistic feel to the space flight with its physics making your ship a dream to handle. The controls needed to fly and fight are few and the creators tried to stay away from the too many key syn-

ing just one of them can take a considerable amount of time to gain the necessary resources.

I DON'T WANT TO TRADE I WANT TO FIGHT!

The whole game doesn't just revolve around trading, but you are required to trade in the beginning to replenish your damaged weapons system. After that is accomplished you can fight other ships in head-to-head combat to satisfy that itching trigger finger. Besides trading you can attack convoys en-route to accumulate wealth or defend convoys under attack from

drome. The in-game sound effects are brilliant and the weapon sounds really make you feel that you are firing a weapon of destruction with its deep bass sounds. Even in-flight music is provided as you fly to all the corners of the galaxy, and the ambient sound-tracks are easy to listen to and tend to relax you. The music also keeps pace with the



THE ALIEN VERSION OF A COLOMBIAN PLANTATION?

gameplay and changes to a fast beat orientated track when you fly into a hostile situation. Overall I would have to recommend that you rush out and buy this game if you enjoyed Elite or Privateer. It has been a long time since a space trading game made it onto the gaming scene and the next one is still far from finished. X:BTF offers a large universe with hundreds of stations to trade with and enemy ships to fight. Definitely a must have if you enjoy trading or space action games

SOUL ASSASSIN

GENRE Space Trading Sim

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 166 MMX	Pentium 233MMX
32 MB Ram	32 MB Ram
8X CD Rom	8X CD Rom
3D Acceleration	Direct3D Accelerator
280 MB HD	280 MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)



Developer: Egosoft	Publisher: THQ	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R 299.00
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<http://www.thq.co.uk>

Multiplayer	Comparitives	Pros	Cons
No	Elite, Privateer	Excellent Background Story Large Universe Open Gameplay	Hard to Read HUD 3D Accelerator Required

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
89	88	85	90	90	88



One of the better games to come out this year and the first new space trading game in quite some time. X:BTF offers a large universe to trade in and comes complete with story line. Excellent gameplay, graphics and sound make it a must have for Elite or Privateer fans.

An intriguing new entry from Cryo Interactive combines turn-based strategy and real-time strategy, with a good dollop of role-playing thrown into the mix for good measure. **Raven**

Thirty years ago, a young Emperor consulted an oracle about his realm's destiny. The oracle's words were not cheerful, and indicated the coming of a man, whose arrival would spell strife and warfare. Three decades have passed, and memory of this prophecy has faded, but dark forces have, of late been stirring, and the Black Moon is rising. Into this rides Wismerhill, the warrior foretold, and he must not only choose his path, but also that of the world...



PREPARING FOR BATTLE...

From the very first instants of the introduction, one is aware of a somewhat different style and presentation associated with this title. Cryo Interactive are a French company, and their interpretation of medieval dress, building style and art have a substantially more European flavour than the bulk of productions these days. The next thing one notices is the grandeur of events, the sheer epic proportions of the armies involved and the struggle itself. The introductory video depicts armies composed of thousands of soldiers and siege engines, accompanied by countless war-beasts, and often wielding spectacular magic.

The format of this game might remind some of an oldie called Fantasy Empires. Campaign travel and large-scale planning are achieved on the region map. This is an overland chart drawn to look as medieval as possible, and depicting plains, mountains, towns and various other places of interest, usually encounter areas. Some of these encounter areas have padlock symbols on them, to indicate they are as yet locked; in other words, some other objective must be met before that particular one can be attempted. During the Initiation, the campaign objectives are linear - one encounter must at least be played (and, usually, completed) before the next one is available. There are five campaigns to choose from - the Initiation, and one campaign for each side (Empire, Justice, Light and Black Moon). Each of these campaigns is rated according

Black Moon Chronicles

to its difficulty. Each campaign also consists of several region maps (with the sole exception of the Initiation, which all takes place in one area) and most offer several mission options at any given time. This non-linear approach means that some "subplots" can be ignored if they are not deemed either important enough or even possible. Some missions do not appear to be doable in any case, and seem to be there mainly as story elements. However, the main objective on any region map must be completed before the next one can be accessed, and some "minor" missions result in rewards or benefits that may greatly aid the ulterior goal. So what happens when the regiment walks into an encounter area on the region map? The mission begins, well and truly,

and the view switches to a real-time strategy format. However, this game does not rely on base-building and generation of troops and technologies during the course of combat - what you start the mission with is all you have to work with, and it is what you must carve your victory with. The emphasis here is to get absolutely the best value and use out of the available troops, and to keep them alive if at all possible - you carry the units through from one mission to the next, so if they don't die, they don't need replacing! Also, all units gain experience as they survive battles. The older your units, the more capable they become, and the easier it becomes to keep them alive. Because of these factors, the missions become tactically very demanding and precise so one must make use of every subtlety available. Place archers on raised areas and they fire further and do more damage; block cavalry with Phalanxes, while you lead your infantry and spellcast-

ers into the fray, etc. Replenishing troops and researching upgrades and such is accomplished at Wismerhill's castle, which shows up in a real-time view, but without any enemies to fight (usually). Here the various structures you begin with allow you to take care of a number of things, such as researching Commercial Skills (to improve pricing), the Distance Bow, Power Bow and Precision Bow upgrades for archers, numerous construction, weapon and armour upgrades for both buildings and units, horse quality and speed, spells and mana capacity and regeneration, among many others. Here, too, in the Barracks, units may be bought or sold, and regiments topped up to replace losses. Bear in mind that up to eight regiments may be fielded simultaneously, which means that one can have up to eight independent forces scattered across one or more region maps at any given time. Each regiment may consist of up to eight sections, each section being composed of nine horsemen, or six archers or Phalanxes or footmen, or one special character or spellcaster (priest, magician or necromancer).

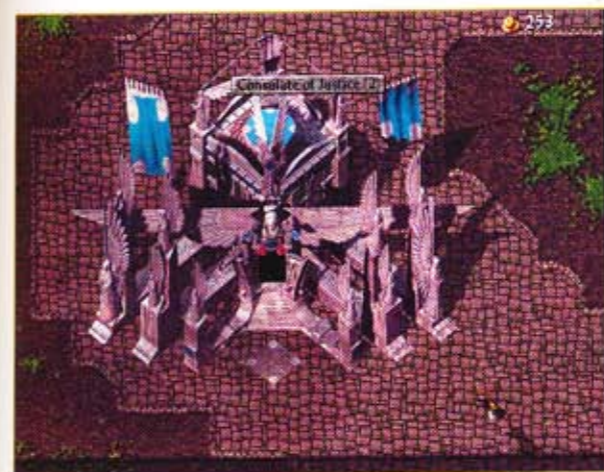
One important factor to remember is that Wismerhill must survive - he is the "hero" of the story and it revolves around him - if Wismerhill dies the story ends (in defeat, of course). Thus it is that, when fielding several regiments, Wismerhill's one must, of necessity, be the strongest and best-equipped. Here is where the role-playing elements mani-



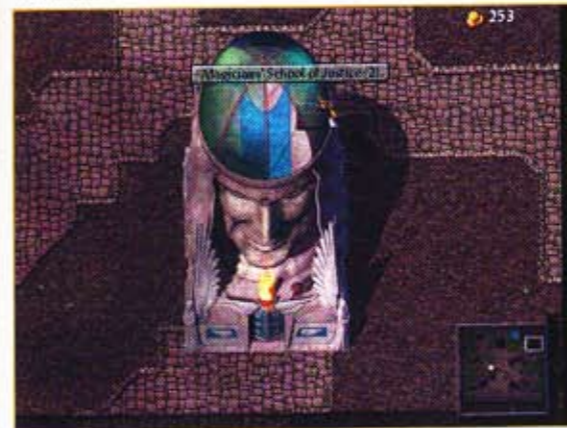
fest themselves. For starters, Wismerhill is a heroic figure - he is capable of far greater level advancement than any other unit. Regular troops seem to max out at level three, which indicates they are veteran troops. Wismerhill, however, makes it well into double figures, and consequently becomes incredibly tough and powerful eventually. Many a battle is won or lost according to how Wismerhill's actions are directed - if used to his fullest potential, often he will save most or all of his troops' lives. The interface in Black Moon Chronicles can be divided into three main components, excluding the main menu and game management aspects - the tactical real-time interface, the region map interface, and the castle interface. The tactical and castle interfaces are basically identical, both taking place in the real-time view, with the main difference being functionality - no fighting occurs while you are buying troops and outfitting them. The tactical interface is similar to most con-



BRONCHES AND BORDERS DARK...



temporary real-time strategy game interfaces, but lacks many of the most important features. For instance, it is not possible to designate tactical groups by means of numbers or such. In fact, the only hotkeys for troops are "W" to select and switch between any special characters in the scenario, and "A" to select all units. In addition, a la Knights and Merchants, individual units cannot be selected - the entire section is selected, each squad acting as a combat tactical unit. Note that squads derive benefits from maintaining their combat formations, and so Black Moon Chronicles is not for anyone who thinks he can win by selecting all units in one big bunch and throwing them around the battlefield (well, not often, at least!). The region map interface is nothing particularly notable - as there is no time constraint and no actions that require particular precision or decision-making, the interface as it stands is quite adequate. Unfortunately, however, the various summary boxes that appear to describe regiments on the field are rather cryptic, at best, and take much getting used to before they can be deciphered. Audio-visually Black Moon is quite impressive. The graphics, while not exactly groundbreaking, are crisp and colourful without being gaudy or plastic looking. All video clips and artwork very beautifully portray a medieval fantasy setting - one could almost say authentic, had any such setting actually existed! In-game resolution can be adjusted according to taste and system performance. Be warned - at the highest resolutions the units and characters do become rather small, although you can then obviously see much more of the battlefield at a glance. The soundtrack to this one is a gem, if not necessarily everyone's cup of tea. It is definitely of medieval origin, with more than a smidgeon of religious themes from time to time, as well as martial themes. All in all, the music perfectly fits in every instance and respect - each side has a theme track associated with it, and each suits perfectly. Should you play this game late into the night (as is almost inevitable should you choose to try it) you will find yourself haunted by



BEAUTIFUL GRAPHICS ABOUND

the music from time to time. As implied above, this game can be exceptionally addictive. This may be the result of the combination of a well-thought-out story with a non-linear strategy campaign in a shade of role-play. The graphics and sound are of a quality appropriate to a game released nowadays. Replayability is difficult to comment on, as it would require the (very) long campaigns to be completed at least once, but it should prove better than most, as the story-line is as non-linear as they could make it (though somebody please explain to me why the beta version had more decision branches than the full release version - tsk-tsk!) All in all, a way-above-average game that conforms to no specific genre, but rather almost creates its own. Note that this is a single-player only game, with no multiplayer functionality at all (in this day and age that seems something of a blunder).

EMPIRE
Emperor Haghendorf has ruled his Empire wisely and firmly for the past 30 years. Now all hell is breaking loose, and he must make some hard and, at times brutal decisions.

LIGHT
The Order of Light is a martial priesthood dedicated to God and good. However, its current leader, Fratus Sinister, is corrupted by ambition and seeks the Imperial throne.

JUSTICE
Parsifal leads this order of paladins dedicated to fairness and protecting the weak and punishing the evil. He yet remains pure of heart (as few other leaders do at this point).

BLACK MOON
These are the forces of darkness. Haazheel Thorn is the necromancer in charge of these dark legions of orcs, trolls, giants and worse.

the music from time to time. As implied above, this game can be exceptionally addictive. This may be the result of the combination of a well-thought-out story with a non-linear strategy campaign in a shade of role-play. The graphics and sound are of a quality appropriate to a game released nowadays. Replayability is difficult to comment on, as it would require the (very) long campaigns to be completed at least once, but it should prove better than most, as the story-line is as non-linear as they could make it (though somebody please explain to me why the beta version had more decision branches than the full release version - tsk-tsk!) All in all, a way-above-average game that conforms to no specific genre, but rather almost creates its own. Note that this is a single-player only game, with no multiplayer functionality at all (in this day and age that seems something of a blunder).

RAVEN

GENRE
Real Time Strategy

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 200 MMX	Pentium II 233
32 MB Ram	32 MB Ram
8X CD Rom	8X CD Rom
2 MB PCI Video	4 MB AGP Video
350 MB HD	350 MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

Developer: Cryo Interactive	Publisher: Cryo Interactive	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R 329.00
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<http://www.cryo-interactive.com>

Multiplayer No	Competitives Shadow of the Horned Rat, Dark Omen	Pro's Nice Music Beautiful Introduction Good Gameplay	Con's Dodgy Interface No Multiplayer
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Graphics 85	Sound 90	Control 75	Story 80	Continuity 80	Playability 85
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83

Game developers never seem to know when to say when, especially the guys who make racing games. Waving fingers of accusation aside you seriously have to wonder when the great racing-genre pool of inspiration is going to run dry. We've seen everything from tanks to cars and from planes to pods. They're even starting to invent things to race these days, so it is with little surprise that we now have a radio controlled car racing game in the mix as well.

From the onset of this project the creators of Re-Volt were very focused on doing something different with the tired and drab racing genre, sick of the endless procession of standard racing games so prevalent these days. To that end they have succeeded in more ways than one but at the same time have also suffered the consequences of pursuing their dream to the exclusion of all else. The idea of a racing game with correctly modelled radio controlled cars all behaving realistically within their physical limitations is a very appealing sounding idea. Now add to this the fact that all the environments you race in are accurately represented to scale and you should have a winner on your hands. Although Re-Volt has all the correct and best ingredients possible it suffers from a few serious problems that effectively undo all the good intentions the development team had when putting it together.

JUST LIKE THE REAL THING
Variation comes in the form of the 28 unique radio controlled cars that can be driven throughout the course of the game. You can't control all of them right from the start and in traditional racing game fashion, the better ones

need to be unlocked first by completing the different racing tracks. This injects a little extra addiction into the whole package, as the prospect of playing with those fancy expensive cars that only the rich kids used to have when you were small moves within reach. All the cars are well detailed right down to the thin flexible radio antennae that gets all bent out of shape should you suffer a minor mishap. Each vehicle is more than adequately animated and sticks to the ground realistically in spite of their flimsy construction -



RADIO CONTROLLED MAYHEM IN THE WILD WEST

never once looking like they're hovering a few millimetres above the ground. The important thing to remember here is that this game is trying to emulate the touch and go zippy and flimsy sensation you get while racing with real radio controlled cars. Two areas that need to be well covered then are vehicle physics and the control system. As far as the actual physics go they seem to have got it as right as you ever can with a virtual simulation, the cars certainly bounce around a lot, indicative of the real thing. Besides rebounding off walls and other cars the fast acceleration and whining electric motors are all perfectly captured making for a very convincing simula-

never been more correctly represented in any game until now. Overall, the control works and that's it, it feels right but there is always a lingering sense of being totally out of control for large portions of the race.

BONE MARROW NUMBING
Like any 3D accelerated game the graphics are almost flawless. Transparent surfaces, special effects and lightning quick rendering all fly past you without a single hiccup. The shining gem in Re-Volt's crown is the superb attention to detail throughout the many levels. It's not only the level of detail that sets the graphics apart from the rest but also the unique locations and the scale of the game, you're only a

small radio controlled car remember so everything is big in this world. Besides looking good, the levels are deviously well designed. The game has seven different environments or themes to race in and each one has a number of different single tracks. There is Toy World where you must dodge giant beach balls and in one place drive over a flashing coloured piano keyboard. There is also the Museum with huge dinosaur skeletons and polished marble floors - the Supermarket is littered with soda bottles and features some tricky navigation

between the entrance turnstiles. Neighbourhood, Botanical Gardens and the Wild West make up the remaining settings, again all well detailed and full of the kind of obstacles you'd expect to find there. If you grow bored of the game's levels then you can design your own with the supplied Track Editor. Now the Track Editor is a weak example



tion of the real thing. Putting a finger on what it is exactly that does feel so right about the way the cars behave is hard, the answer definitely lies somewhere in-between a little of everything and the way the cars are modelled and coloured, they really do look and act like they should. The next important factor that needs to be perfect is the instantly reactive control system radio controlled cars seem to have, touch that lever and you're likely to flip your car. Simplicity seems to be what was intended as far as the control systems goes - left, right, accelerate and reverse form the bulk of the control buttons, as well as a horn, flip car, reposition car and finally fire. One thing you will miss from this mixture is any kind of braking system, touch and go racing has



WATCH OUT FOR SPILT MILK IN THE KITCHEN

RE-VOLT



ALL OF THE GAME'S LEVELS ARE SIMULATED REAL-LIFE LOCATIONS AND EVERYTHING IS BUILT TO SCALE ADDING TO THE UNIQUE 'FEEL'

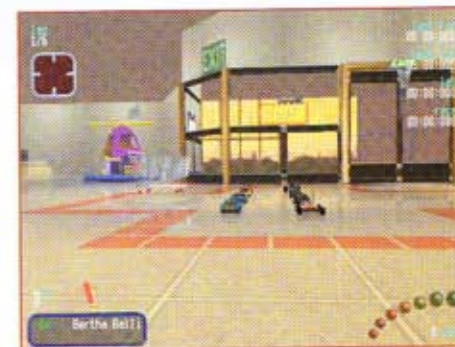
of how not to do a track editor, it really isn't worth the hard drive space used to install it. We can only hope they release a very big patch to make it worthwhile using.

BULLET POOF
All the usual game modes are on offer from the main menu with the inclusion of a Time Trial mode where you try and beat the ghost of your best time, this is always entertaining and beats racing against a handful of numbers hands down. There is also a Training mode and a Stunt mode, the stunt section is a fun diversion from all the racing and you are required to collect stars after pulling dangerous stunts, it's all quite thrilling really especially when driving a radio controlled car. Finally the ever-present multiplayer option - playing against other people seems to be more fun somehow with radio controlled cars than the usual selection of Hondas and Nissans. The pick-ups, which we'll get to later, add a new dimension to the racing fun and during the final stages of a race there is nothing more frustrating than someone firing a rocket up your exhaust pipe and putting you at the back. Now for those damn pick-ups, scattered like sheep




in a meadow each level features a large number of brightly coloured lightning bolts - usually placed in hard to drive over spots. Collecting these icons will endow you with a special power up, there are around eleven different power ups, some fun, some aggravating and others just plain useless. From the top we'll begin with the Shockwave, a blue ball of electricity that flips any cars in your path into the air. The Firework shoots a single homing rocket into any car ahead of you, great fun at parties. Using the Electro Pulse you can temporarily cut another car's power. Besides these three the standard Oil Slick, Turbo and exploding pick-up are all present but the most fun is to be had with the Bomb pick-up. The Bomb pick-up works by turning your car into a bomb with a slow burning fuse, let the fuse run down and you go bang but it's also possible to transfer the bomb onto another car by touching it, this will have people throwing keyboards during multiplayer games.

MY BATTERIES ARE FLAT
Now for the misses. Re-Volt is a great racing title but even though it's all fun and exhilaration in the beginning all this seems to fizzle out after playing a few rounds. The ability to unlock new cars and tracks will hold your attention for a while but after everything is said and done you will find the game

limited in the long run. The Track Editor could have provided that little extra something but unfortunately is just too poor to be of any use to anyone. The other frustrating thing is that no matter how well you know a level you never seem to stay in front for any length of time and most wins are down to having a lucky round. Other than these two major problems Re-Volt is a remarkable achievement in many areas but



does unfortunately have its problems that pull an otherwise high score down. If you like racing and have a nostalgic soft spot for radio controlled cars then this game might just be the best thing you'll ever play. However, if the above description doesn't sound all that appealing then try something else.

REOTIDE			
GENRE			
Radio Controlled Racing			
Min Requirements		Recommended	
Pentium 200		Pentium II 266	
32 MB Ram		64 MB Ram	
4 X CD Rom		8 X CD Rom	
2 MB PCI Video		4 MB AGP 3D	
130 MB HD		130+ MB HD	
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)		Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	
Developer: Probe	Publisher: Acclaim Interactive	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R329.00
http://www.re-volt.com			
Multiplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Tank Racer	Vehicle Physics Great Fun Graphics	Rubbish Track Editor Limited Frustrating
Graphics	Sound	Control	Story
93	81	78	NA
Continuity	Playability	82	
73	86		

A technically sound and engaging game in almost every way. The inclusion of high-powered pick-ups adds tremendously to the game. All this is fine and well but be warned, the game is somewhat limited and a touch frustrating.

Picture it - a shady room, smoke filled and hazy. In the centre of the room, a group of suspicious individuals sit and eye each other. Then, one speaks: "Okay, boys, its crunch time. How do we beat StarCraft?" **Shryke**

Game developers around the world have found their hard work superceded by a game, namely StarCraft, that has been available for quite some time, and seems impossible to dethrone as probably the best isometric view RTS of all time. But still they try, bringing the gamers newer, smarter and more inventive ideas each time they try a new design. Perhaps, in the future, one of the young usurpers will take the title of best RTS game of all time, but, for the moment, they are really nothing more than attempts that, when taken for what they are, are actually very good games that unfortunately fall victim to intense bigotry on the part of StarCraft lovers.

MACHINES 3D REAL-TIME STRATEGY



Machines is such an attempt. The developers at Charybdis knew exactly what they were up against when it comes to competition, and they planned long and hard to take on the giant task of making a better RTS game. What they produced is a rather unique, if not world beating, isometric real time strategy game that would have done much better for itself had StarCraft not been on the scene.

Machines sees the player constructing and commanding an army of machines and robots on various landscapes. Over 50 different units may be constructed, along with 18 building types and 25 weapon variations, and 20 campaigns are available to challenge the player.

In overview, Machines is quite a good game that unfortunately falls flat in a number of spheres. Perhaps the designers bit off a little more than

they could chew, or were not quite on track during conceptualisation. Either way, the oversights and shortcomings of Machines ruin what could otherwise be an absolutely excellent game. Graphically, Machines is not unattractive, and its 3D polygonal nature allows the player to, well, play with what he sees. Zooming in and out allow for detailed views or full screen battles, while not losing any unit or landscape detail. Additionally, and this is possibly the best feature of the game, three view modes are available. The first is a standard isometric view, the type that other RTS games have made us familiar with. Playing in this mode is natural to the RTS gamer, although the horizon point in Machines is a little low, and not enough is visible, even when fully zoomed out. Scrolling in this mode is also a pain, seeing as how the sudden speed burst brought on by moving the mouse to the edge of the screen takes you by surprise - dumping you deep in the fog of war. The fog of war, is, however, somewhat unique, using visual interference (snow) instead of fading out like most other RTS games. But that makes no difference when you can't find your base...

The second mode is a 3D, third person perspective that allows you to get down on the ground, amongst your army of machines. This is quite fun, but doesn't make much of a difference to game play. The third view mode is the fun one, however, which adds something of a novel angle to strategy games. This mode allows you to "climb into" one of your machines and experience the battle first hand in a first person shooter style game. Don't expect a Quake style experience, though - you're pretty much going to end up dead if you rely on this mode to win battles.

The biggest failing that brings Machines down is the fact that all of the four "races" available for play feature exactly the same units - making them more teams than races. While this does damage the variability of play, it does also mean that each



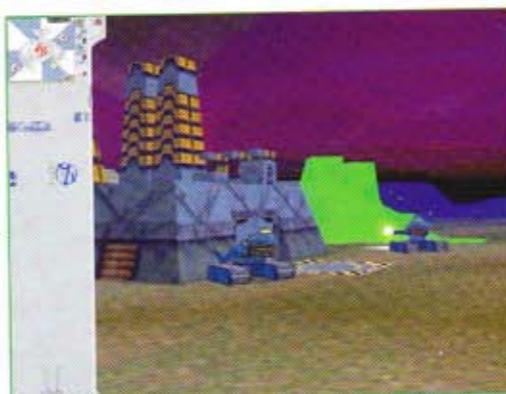
FIRST PERSON BLASTING...

army has a large variety (50 to be precise) of units that can be built. This large choice of units, and their varied capabilities, allows for a large number of strategies to be employed by inventive players.

And inventiveness is the key in a game like machines. The AI opponent that has to be defeated in this RTS is smart; smart enough to pose a challenge even in the initial levels. It takes full advantage of everything it can lay its virtual hands on; elevation, access and other important tactical decisions are effectively made by this rather smart computer.

Machines fights something of a losing battle in it's bid for the Big Title. There are several aspects of the game that could have been handled far better to ensure being a contender, but it's a bit late to cry over spilt milk.

Despite its shortcomings, Machines is a fun and challenging game for the RTS lover.



...AND 3D SUPERVISION.



ISOMETRIC VIEW WARFARE...



GENRE Real Time Strategy

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 200 MMX	Pentium II 266
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	4 X CD Rom
100 MB HD	400 MB HD
Windows 95/98	Windows 95/98
(DirectX 6.1)	(DirectX 6.1)
Glide / Direct 3D	Glide / Direct 3D

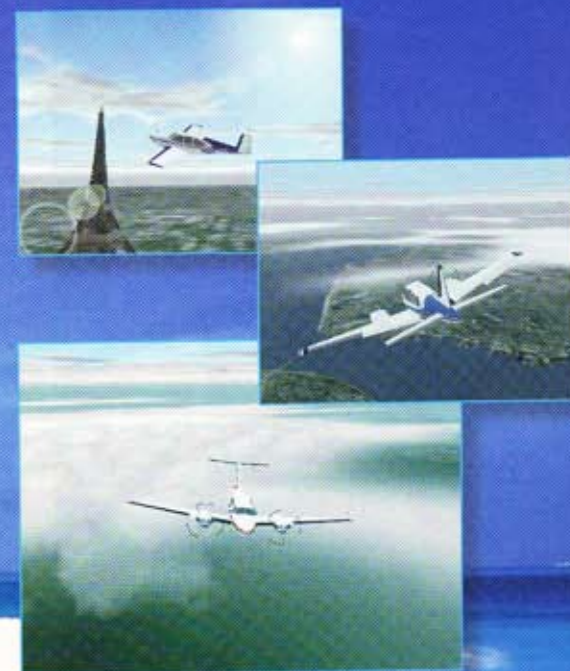
Developer: Charybdis	Publisher: Acclaim	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	RRP: R299.00
http://www.acclaim.net			
Multiplayer: Yes	Comparitives: StarCraft KKND 2 Command & Conquer	Pro's: Three View Modes Intelligent AI Large Number of Units	Con's: No Racial Variation Often Difficult to Control
Graphics: 75	Sound: 60	Control: 77	Story: 70
Continuity: 70	Playability: 65	70	

With games like StarCraft setting the pace for RTS, it isn't easy to compete. This attempt from Acclaim uses some pretty nifty ideas, but does not quite make it. A fun, fast paced game, Machines is more for the RTS lover than the casual player.

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In the recent years we have seen so many new WW2 simulations, and it seems there's still no end to them. On the modern side of the scale is a title like Falcon 4.0 with hyper realistic avionics and modern weapons, but where is the missing link? MiG Alley takes place in a time where the days of prop fighters were counted, and the start of the jet era was in its infancy... - Memnoch

Barely five years after the end of WW2, the North Korean Communist forces decided to invade South Korea, and before they knew it, the United Nations had to step in to help defend South Korea. It was dubbed the Korean War, and it was the first war that saw dogfighting action between jets. Having much more power than prop planes of that time but similar armaments, the early jets were gracious birds of war that could fly faster and higher, but still had to get close in to get the job done. Air-to-Air missile technology was still in its infancy, so the same dogfighting rules still applied from WW2, but with greater power and speed. MiG Alley simulates the Korean War conflict, and covers the period of time between June 1950 and July 1953. Looking at Rowan Software's earlier title such as Flying Corps Gold that took a long time to reach it's full potential, one cannot help but feel a tad skeptical about MiG Alley. The list of features I must add sounded like sim-

declassified document named "The F86 v The MiG 15" which is reproduced in a booklet, but looks like the original document done with a typewriter, and one can even notice the oily stains on the pages, very nice touch.

MiG Alley

manual, or pilot's handbook, contains a lot of helpful info on how to get started, the working of the campaigns and campaign history, mission planning, cockpits and instruments, basic flying and multiplayer. Firing up the simulation, I was greeted with a short intro movie, and then the menu interface. Rowan managed to add a very nice 50's feel, with colour photo backgrounds of scenes in the Korean War. Like a decent simulation should, MiG Alley has a preferences section with a plethora of settings. Beginners can choose easier settings, while the more hard-core crowd can add features like stalls, airframe stress, wind and gust effects, engine flame-outs and even realistic engine spooling. The player has a choice between single player and multiplayer type games, where the single player options consists of Hot Shot, an instant action type option, quick missions, campaigns, and the entire Korean War. A good place to start would be the quick missions, and that's where I took the F-86E Sabre for my first flight.



TAKE THAT YOU BRIDGE!



MIG-15 BITES THE BULLET

ulation heaven stuff, and I couldn't wait to get stick time with this promising title. After full installation and the setup of my Thrustmaster joystick files, I was ready to take the beast on. Inside the box was the CD, a good looking pilot's handbook, the keyboard layout, and a

declassified document named "The F86 v The MiG 15" which is reproduced in a booklet, but looks like the original document done with a typewriter, and one can even notice the oily stains on the pages, very nice touch. and now I had the options to either engage, or run. With an altitude advantage, I opted to engage, and ordered my group to drop their external fuel tanks, and positioned them for the merge. The merge came head on, and I could nearly see the whites of an enemy pilot's eyes as I banked to miss his plane. The sky around me was filled with silver birds of prey caught up in an aerial ballet...oh yes, where was I? I padlocked the closest MiG-15 and pulled hard on the stick to comfortably slide in behind him. I adjusted the range on my gunsights, and gave a short burst of my six .50 machine guns, which had the pleasant effect of sending sparks flying off the MiG, who was now suddenly aware of my attack and started doing the funky chicken to evade me. Another burst hit his exhaust pipe, and black smoke belled from his airframe. He pulled up hard and forced me to overshoot, and over my shoulder I saw him losing control, which resulted in a bad spin and the pilot decided it was time to eject. My first kill, and I was really surprised at how realistic it all seemed. The flight modeling is very accurately done, and if you punish your plane with excessively violent maneuvers, you will be punished in return with stalls, spins and engine flame-outs. Rowan did a lot of research on the characteristics of the

planes, and it really pays off. MiG Alley sports five flyable planes, the F86 Sabre with three variants, the F80 Shooting Star, F84 Thunderjet, F51 Mustang (the only flyable prop plane), and the MiG-15 with two variants. Each plane has it's own unique cockpit, and the player can definitely feel the difference in flight characteristics, providing a unique flight experience for each of the planes. One of the greatest features in MiG Alley lies in its campaign system. There is always a debate about scripted, semi-dynamic and dynamic campaigns. Rowan took on the daunting task of creating a dynamic campaign, and although the war doesn't really play out in real time, it matches the fully dynamic campaign of Falcon 4.0 in scope, and even surpasses it in certain areas. The player can accept the missions as they are generated by the computer, or one can decide to tailor the effort of the entire campaign to one's liking.



SUPERFORTRESS ESCORT DUTY

DEATH FROM ABOVE:



SOME OF THE AIRCRAFT FROM MiG ALLEY: F86 SABRE VS MiG-15 (TOP LEFT); F80 SHOOTING STARS ENROUTE (TOP RIGHT); F84 THUNDERJET (BOTTOM LEFT); F51 MUSTANG (BOTTOM RIGHT).

Rowan has added controllability never before seen in a simulation, where resources can be managed, supporting flights can be set up, new targets can be assigned, priorities can be changed, loadouts can be changed for your flights, and even the uncontrollable flights. The basic goal of the air campaigns is to support UN ground forces by attacking the advancing enemy forces. By attacking the enemy supply lines, the enemy effort will be weakened, forcing the 'Reds' to halt their advance, and to retreat if all goes well. What complicates matters is the Soviet equipment used by the North Koreans in the form of very effective Anti-Aircraft Artillery, and the formidable MiG-15, which could eat any UN bomber alive. In comes the Sabre to protect the bombers and establish air superiority. The campaign incorporates all these factors, and it results in a very realistic and immersive combat experience. With the entire War Campaign option, the player takes the role of the Air

Commander for the UN forces. The player now has the duty of organizing the entire air campaign, and can build any session from scrap by designating priorities, targets and setting up flight groups and waypoints. The campaign system works great and is literally bug free considering today's standards, and sets an example that other simulation companies should follow if they want to do it right. The graphics in MiG Alley are very functional, it looks great, and Rowan manages to establish an historic feel to it all. The planes are very accurately rendered with metallic surfaces that look very real. All the planes feature moving control surfaces, and damage effects are clearly visible in the form of bullet holes and even missing body panels. Once I took a nasty few shots from enemy AAA (Anti-Aircraft Artillery) and my Thunderjet kept rolling to the left, and it took a lot of right rudder and right aileron to keep her

straight and level. Again I glanced over my shoulder, and saw some HUGE holes staring at me. The damage model is quite accurate, and damage will affect the flight model in a realistic way. The cockpits are fully 3D, and the gauges work well even in padlock mode. The canopies have the now standard reflections, which helps a lot with situational awareness in a knife-edge dogfight. Explosions are spectacular, although some fire and smoke effects seem very blocky at times. The overall graphical impression is great, and has a quality feel to it - well done Rowan. MiG Alley supports eight-player Multiplayer, with deathmatch, team play and quick missions. Although it is great that Rowan added co-operative play, it would have been even better if they could have co-operative campaigns. The quick missions allow for multiple flight groups,

which makes up for the lack of campaign play. Being of the hard-core simulation fan base, MiG Alley left me with a feeling of utter satisfaction especially after the bad taste some of the recent WW2 simulation titles left in my mouth. It promises, and it delivers it in a great package that is scalable to be enjoyed by beginners, all the way up to the crowd that won't accept any compromises on realism. MiG Alley provides a great transformation experience from prop fighters to jet fighters, and it fills the gap nicely in the under-exploited Korean War era.

Of all the war theaters depicted in flight simulations, the Korean War is definitely the most under-exploited era. MiG Alley provides a fresh new theme with a great dynamic campaign, excellent flight model: a must have for any flight combat simulation enthusiast.

MEMNOCH

GENRE
Combat Flight Sim

Min Requirements		Recommended	
Pentium II 66 MMX	32 MB Ram	Pentium II 266	32 MB Ram
6X CD Rom	4MB Direct3D	12X CD Rom	12MB Direct3D
400 MB HD	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6)	400 MB HD	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6)

Developer: Rowan Software

Publisher: Empire Interactive

Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000

RRP: R.299.00

<http://www.empire-us.com>

Multiplayer: Yes

Comparitives: European Air War

Pro's: Great Graphics, Dynamic Campaign, Decent Flight Model

Con's: Blocky Special Effects, Minor Graphical Bugs

Graphics: 88

Sound: 78

Control: 95

Story: NA

Continuity: 84

Playability: 85

85

During the staging of the Cricket World Cup in June this year we were inundated with the ups and downs of the players in the event. The Klusener/Donald mix-up highlighted the pressures of being watched by millions of dedicated fans. But something we never seem to fathom is the immense pressure that the manager of the team somehow handles. This is your chance to fill Bob Woolmer's shoes in the arduous task of winning the World Cup.

Management simulations have been around for many years, I still remember playing Football Manager on my trusty old ZX81 Spectrum. The hours were whiled away by choosing, managing and controlling every aspect of taking your team to the pinnacle of success. We have come a long way since then but surprisingly the cricketing fraternity has been sorely neglected in this genre, until now. This may be the second of the International Cricket Captain series but it's still the only title of its kind available to the public. Having been glued to the 'tele' for almost a month and being lucky enough to make the trip to Lords to watch the rather anticlimactic final, it was with great interest that I loaded up ICC2. The main enjoyment aspects of any management sim is the ability to control minute details and somewhere along the line see changes from

the program pertaining to the decision. There are too many management titles that are so bent on making the game look good that they tend to forget the database elements and attention to detail. Then there are those that have too much detail and too little looks. ICC2 falls somewhere in the middle of the two because it depicts everything with just enough class to grip your attention for many hours. The game itself has the 1999 stats and figures of almost every player in the first class game, right down to our South African domestic players. The game was almost certainly developed for the England market as its prime directive is to earn the England management title and then to win the World Cup. Don't despair though, you can choose any of the test playing nations to manage with all the trials and tribulations included.

If you are tired of waggling joysticks and high system specs than ICC2 will calm things down. All cricket lovers will thoroughly enjoy the attention to detail and intense cricketing highlights of First Class and International cricket action in ICC2.

INTERNATIONAL Cricket Captain 2

IN ASSOCIATION WITH WISDEN



All the aspects of the game have been painstakingly included in the game. Pitch reports, weather conditions, the odd injury, team selection, staff control, match tactics, bad

light, ball wearing, player form, match fixtures, friendlies, pitch bounce, outfield conditions and this is even

before a ball has been bowled. There is not a piece of information left out that I could think of to complain about. You will spend hours sifting through information, trying to pick up on a subtle change in player performances, trying to make that decisive decision to win the match. In-game controls are very limited as usual, but have more input than the average football management sim. You are able to

give batsmen varying degrees of aggressiveness depending on the time in the innings. For one-day Internationals it's no use having a batsman hanging around with three overs to go. A scalable bar represents if he has played himself in, thereby giving you control over his attitude to each and every delivery. It must be mentioned that boundaries

come thick and fast, but then so do the wickets. The bowlers are controlled in much the same manner as the batsmen, this time you are able to control the line and the aggressiveness of each

and every ball. In-game highlights are my favourite part of any management sim. The way the genre can keep you in suspense for critical decisions is almost unbearable, and ICC2 does its fair share of that. Third umpire decisions are part and parcel of almost every innings, leaving you wondering for just a few more seconds than it should. The graphics are not the most fantastic in highlights mode, but they certainly do the job well enough to keep you coming back for more. They seem to be more refined and improved from the previous version, but in essence they are the same, and it works. Ball-by-ball commentary comes from BBC's Jonathan Agnew and is actually quite good, though very limited. This commentary does however breathe life into the highlights giving it that TV style presentation.

Micro management is a detailed and difficult section of any management title to get right. You have to balance just how much of it is enough not to irritate the gamer. Football management sims went through difficult times because there was just too much to do before you actually sat down and watched a game. Well ICC2 does have small elements of micro management, but has balanced it enough to get you into the action fast. If you are sitting around letting the game play itself then you are going to make it difficult to come back with results under your belt. The more active you are in the game the better your chance of winning. ICC2 is in a class of its own due to the lack of competitors, but even if there were more, it would be the title to challenge. Empire have not sat back and cashed in on its singularity but have taken the challenge to other developers. If you are a cricketing fan and after something more than wagging a gamepad around and don't have a powerhouse machine to run all the latest games, then International Cricket Captain is the one to sink your teeth into.



TENDULKAR GET STUCK IN AGAIN



3-RD UMPIRE VIEW

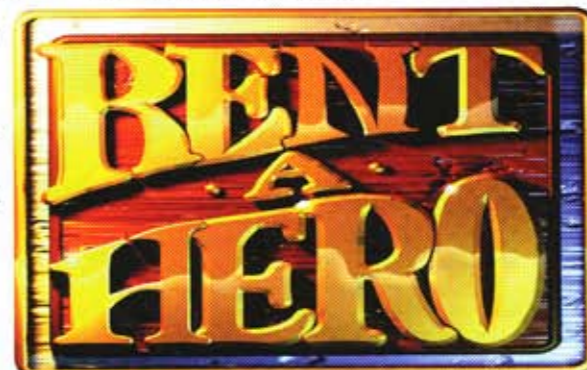


Developer: Empire Interactive		Publisher: Empire Interactive		Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000		RRP: R 299.00	
http://www.empireport.com							
Multiplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's				
No	International Cricket Captain	Immense Database System Requirements Hours of Fun	Graphically Average Little Micro Management				
Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability		
71	75	82	NA	92	87	81	

Everybody wants to be a hero - right? Well here is your chance. The game Rent-a-Hero from Neo, until now an unknown game developer in Vienna, says everything you need to know in the game title. You obviously take on the role of a Hero who puts his services up for hire to the highest bidder or in your case - anybody that will pay.

The setting for this unique adventure game is an island known as Tol Andar, which has the distinction of having magic and technology in the same era. Armed with a hover-bike for transport and your wit as your main weapon you take on the role of Rodrigo, a very young but not so successful Hero. Even though you have rescued dozens of Princesses, and recently a Prince, from Dragons, the Princess in distress jobs have gone out of fashion quite some time ago. They are usually reserved for the lower class Hero's of which you are unfortunately one. As luck would have it a quirky dwarf acquires your services to rescue his captured wife from the Pirates. At last, your chance to play with the big boys of the Hero business. These pirates are barbarians who have chosen not to return to civilised life after the last big war. They are the outcasts of society mainly roaming around on the high seas with their mediocre fleet of war ships. Until recently they have posed no real threat but in the past week or so reports have come in about pirates attacking small coastal cities, in flying ships none the less. If Rodrigo can save the dwarf's wife and find out the mystery behind the pirate's ships and of course stop their sudden well coordinated attacks, he will be the most notorious Hero in all of Tol Andar.

of them seem to be based on German characters. An example would be the barman, Sancho, in the inn who looks like he just came out of a beerfest with his curly moustache and German



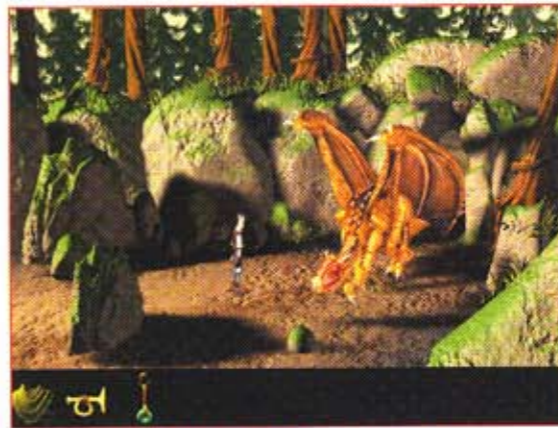
cap. Then there is also Jasmine the young women captured by the pirates who looks, acts and talks like a young attractive spoilt stereotypical French woman.

Rodrigo's future is in the hands of the player and only you can decide the outcome of the story. Unfortunately the story is very linear and there is only one way to finish the game, and this is by doing everything required in sequence. Having to find an object or speak to a specific person before other options become available in the game can become frustrating very quickly.

The developers do however give the gamer a good idea of what task to perform next as the story progresses,

SOUNDS LIKE A JOB FOR A HERO...

Not too bad as far as story lines go and quite unique with the mixing of magic and technology in the same time period. It does however make you wonder how they can invent a hover-bike and still fight with swords. You would think some sort of projectile weapon at least. All the characters are based on one or another stereotypical European type person, although most



MEDIUM RARE PLEASE, UMM, SIR

Rent-a-Hero is the first new adventure game in quite some time. It offers good graphics, an interesting story and easy gameplay, which is suited towards a beginner gamer. It does fall short in continuity and the game is far too short, largely due to easy gameplay.

Developer: Neo		Publisher: THQ		Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000		RRP: R 329.00	
http://www.rent-a-hero.com							
Multiplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's				
No	Quest For Glory Series Simon The Sorcerer	Good Graphics Interesting World	Too Easy Too Short Very Linear				
Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability		
82	71	70	80	55	70	71	

does to progress in the game. Usually adventure games are well balanced with difficult puzzles in place for the more seasoned gamer to offset this. Here Rent-a-Hero falls short, the puzzles are easy and have obvious solutions offering no challenge to experienced players whatsoever.

One area where Rent-a-Hero does stand out is the graphics. The world is beautifully illustrated with vivid colours and the characters come alive in the environment. This is largely due to the new technique Neo developed with characters changing facial expressions, even in non close-up situations. In their marketing they refer to Rent-a-Hero as the first 'really animated movie adventure'. In part this is true, although there are games currently in development with similar features.

As with all adventure games nowadays Rent-a-Hero use the point and click interface. You are presented with options such as directions to move in or objects to pick up just by moving the mouse over 'hotspots'. It would have been great if a more defined movement system was in place to explore the rich world. The point and click way limits your options and is a contributor to making the game too easy. The inventory interface is also absent of the usual features found for inventories in your average adventure game. There is no combine or examine feature, but you don't need them anyway, although it could have made the game more interesting if you had to combine items. My biggest gripe about Rent-a-Hero's gameplay would be one of continuity. I finished the whole game in 7 hours and this without a walk-through. Paying the odd R300 bucks to only be entertained for 7 hours seems a little extreme and as an experienced adventure gamer I would rather spend my money on something with more play value. There is just one problem - there are no new adventures to spend it on. It seems as if the adventure genre is dying quite rapidly and RPG, Action and Strategy games are more prevalent these days. Rent-a-Hero can honestly only be recommended to beginner adventurers, seasoned adventure gamers will find it too easy, although they might enjoy the story even if the game is so short.

Predictably in that mysteriously foggy and ever changing area of time called the future, the human race is still at war with each other. Now somehow, the great military minds of that time have decided that the armed forces doing the dirty work of war must carry so much equipment of destruction into battle that they need to strap on a giant robot suit to get the job done. Some argue that the diverse nature of this kind of set-up allows for more effective destruction and options on the battlefield while others just think it's better to make love, not war.

Defining this game into any particular genre is a challenge. It has action, strategy, first person and simulation elements, and the only thing that seems to be missing is an official sports license tie in. First person junkies will find the complex control system a little too much for their Quake fried brains, strategy freaks will have trouble getting to grips with the hands-on approach of steering these metal behemoths and simulation propeller heads will shake their heads at the lack of any air traffic control. So this leaves us with a type of game that attracts a very specific market on one hand but you could also say it caters for everyone who likes any of the above genres - it's the giant robot simulation.

THE REAL DEAL

It is the 62nd century, the game begins with a devastating anti-matter explosion at Peace River, on a remote colony planet called Terra Nova, far from Earth (Terra Nova was incidentally the setting for the first Heavy Gear game too). After a terrible war long ago, the Terra Nova colonists broke away from Earth's rule under a united banner - Earth finally admitted defeat and acknowledged the independence of the colony. Many years have passed since and the once united colony has separated into two warring hemispherical leagues, forgetting the powerful and united force they once were. Time heals no wounds and now in a renewed onslaught and launching their attack from the Gate World of Caprice - Earth's forces want their lost colony planet back. Terra Nova must settle their inner conflict and unite once again to stave off the ever-encroaching threat of Earth's domination. Commanding an elite team of Gears called the Black Talon squadron it's up to you, using whatever means you have, to prevent the Earth

HEAVY GEAR

III

scum from taking the colony. The game takes the story line very seriously and you'll never find yourself on a mission that isn't intricately tied into the progression of the overall plot. To this end you'll find yourself fighting the good fight in a number of diverse locations throughout the Heavy Gear universe.

RE-MAP THAT KEYBOARD

It's important to remember that this game among other things, is essentially a complicated robot simulation and this means plenty of keys to press - it's a little more involved than changing weapons and pressing the firing button. You are supplied with a keyboard reference card assuming you want to leave the key assignments as they are, this works quite well and it really is best to just leave well enough alone. The tendency to try and configure the game

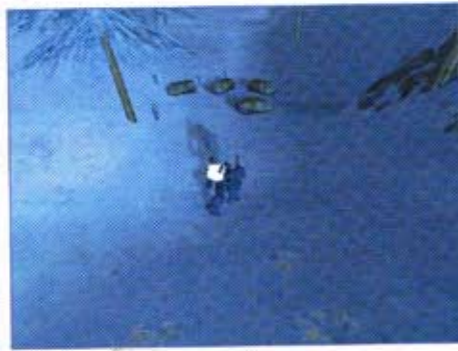
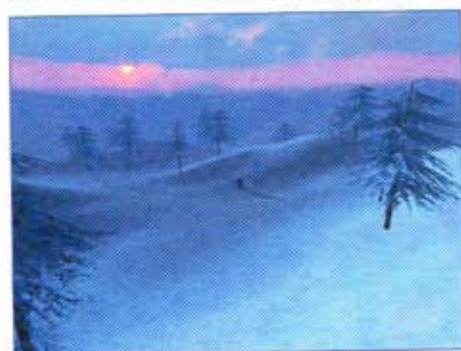
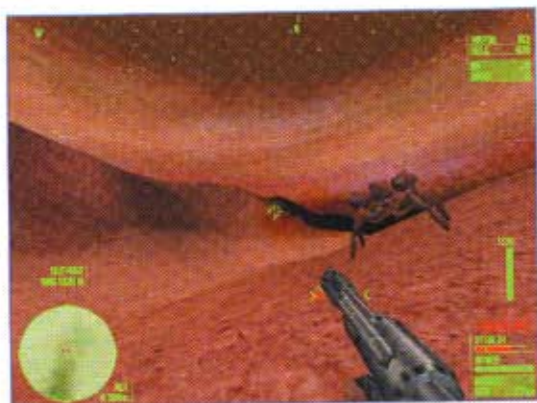
as you would a first person shooter will end in tears. Perseverance is the trick and once you've died six times trying to find the zoom out key it becomes a very satisfying feeling taking your gear through its paces and pulling off your first

success without having to look at the reference card. Lucky for you, due to the complicated nature of controlling these robots a number of training missions are included with the game where a stern and patronising commanding officer barks out instructions while you fumble with the controls. It is a good idea to work through these basic initiation phases before jumping into the game itself, the only drawback here is if you've customised the keyboard layout then the training mission won't pick up on the new set-up

leading to a little head scratching and note pad consulting. The game can be played with a mouse and keyboard configuration just as effectively as with a joystick keyboard set-up, both methods work well and it's all down to preference at the end of the day. After you've mastered the basics you can attempt your first mission.

MISSION STEALTH

The game features a few different modes of play - the first one being the campaign mode, comprising of 30 or so game missions in total. There is also an instant action mode for the impatient, multiplayer modes and lastly historical once-off set-piece missions. The emphasis in Heavy Gear II is definitely placed on stealth and tactics, in other games of this kind you spend most of your time barging in and destroying everything in sight, but here you'll spend more of your time sneaking around and trying not to be seen. The main difference is that the robots in Heavy Gear II are much smaller, allowing for a stealthy approach, some missions will even have you following convoys at a discrete distance, avoiding detection at all costs. A testament to this fact is the stealth bar on your HUD. In Heavy Gear II you can kneel or lie prone while playing the game. The stealth box on your display screen



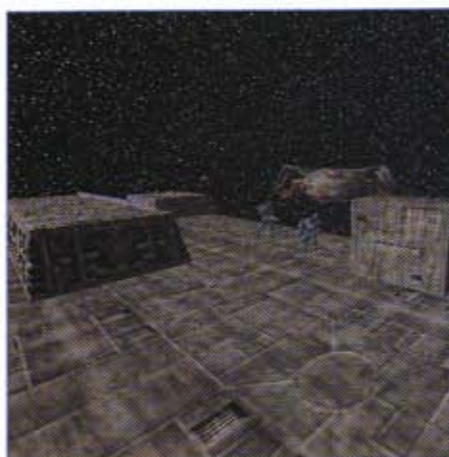
THE DARK SIDE, HARD AT WORK. THE GAME ENGINE IS REMARKABLE FOR ITS VERSATILITY FROM CUT-SCENES TO IN YOUR FACE ACTION



YOUR SQUAD, DOING SOME DAMAGE



has a slide bar that is linked to a number of different things in the game such as your radar and stance. If you run around firing your weapons at everything then the bar moves until it is red, meaning the enemy has detected you making your mission that much more difficult. Stealth isn't your only option though and it is perfectly acceptable to be seen, only then the mission becomes much harder to complete.



SOME OF THE MISSIONS INVOLVE A LITTLE SPACE WALKING

In line with the strategy feel of the game, bringing up your tactical map displays the surrounding terrain including any squad mates you might have brought along. Your squad is computer controlled and you must decide, using the map interface who shoots what and who goes where. You can even decide on what kind of formation your team must move in. Learning how to use the map feature and the effective deployment of your team will ensure the success of many missions. Before you leave on any mission you can also modify the different weapons and items attached to your gear.

A smart 'threat' system prevents you from bolting on all the best weapons on to your gear and works by allocating a certain number of points for the particular mission. This is again balanced out when adding to your squad, so it's up to you to determine what you'll need to take with you depending on the mission specifications.

ENGINEERING DEATH

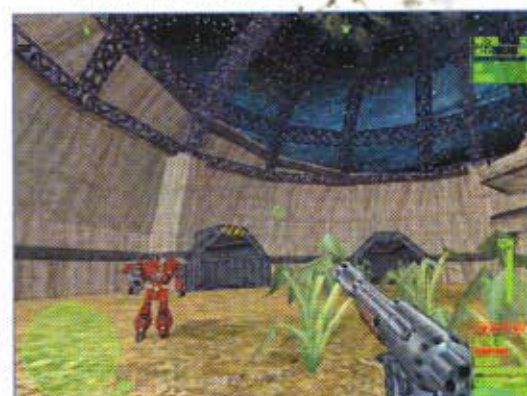
The Dark Side graphics engine powers Heavy Gear II, it's a new engine that will drop any jaw. The Gears are superbly animated and due to their small size it is

important that realism with regards to movement was correctly captured. It's only when you start playing the first mission that you begin to understand just how good the engine is. The weather effects really need to be seen to be believed, rain, and even snow are all portrayed in a very convincing manner and the use of the game engine to tell the story segments only adds to the overall effect.

In the multiplayer arena there are five primary games types that can be played once the last battle is won, the Duel mode is a dedicated one-on-one battle with various outcomes determining the winner, a standard death-match mode and capture the flag are also included. Steal the Beacon is also fun where you must find a beacon and hold onto it and a team based strategic game has your team protecting your base while trying to destroy the enemy's base. Does the game offer what it promises on the box? Well yes in many respects Heavy Gear II gives you exactly



THE SNIPER MODE... ALWAYS ENTERTAINING!



what you expect. This is good because you're getting good play value from the game and bad because other than the superb graphics it is just that, exactly what you expect. A number of innovative features such as the threat value and tactical map manage to pull its score up a few notches. Is it fun to play, yes, once you've moved past the steep learning curve the game starts opening up. Overall, not for action junkies, more of the creep and snipe game, it offers plenty diversity and scope, Heavy Gear II is a success. It's initially very hard and not for the impatient. When comparing games of this type is has to be said that Heavy Gear II is far more technically proficient and innovative than the 'more classical' competition but is less fun to play. It must be said though that Starsiege (reviewed in Issue 2, May 1999) scored 88% and remains a better game because it was ultimately more fun to play - so you decide.

REDTIDE

GENRE
Robot Simulation

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 166	Pentium 233
64 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	4+ CD Rom
4 MB 3D Accelerator	8 MB 3D AGP
530 MB HD	530+ MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)



In this limited genre Heavy Gear II is a winner in many ways. It caters for almost every taste and pulls off the whole experience perfectly. The great graphics and innovative game features will draw you in despite the steep learning curve.

Developer: Activision	Publisher: Activision	Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse (01) 315-1000	RRP: R 329.00
http://www.activision.com			

Multiplayer Yes	Competitives Starsiege MechWarrior 3	Pro's Graphics Engine Engrossing Story Innovative	Con's Complicated Control Nothing Special Systems Requirements
---------------------------	---------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
93	82	78	90	80	87

85

What stands 17 metres tall, weighs just over a 100 tons, is made of metal and carries more firepower than a small underprivileged, but militant country? The answer you're looking for is a BattleMech, one of many different giant bipedal robots that you get to drive in this latest instalment in the MechWarrior series from Microprose, and boy have they put together a damn fine game.

WHY ARE WE HERE?
The universe in which the game takes place, from a story line point of view is immense, a little too much to go into here, so a concise summary will have to do. It is the 31st Century - you play the role of a MechWarrior from the Eridani Light Horse unit, the good guys. Your enemy is the Smoke Jaguar Clan and the game plot tells the tale of the final obliteration of this evil Clan, through a number of successive missions. The introductory movie that sets the scene is a work of art and does a good job of generating excitement and anticipation for the gaming to come.

The game offers four main game modes namely, Campaign, Training, Instant Action and Multiplayer. If you select the Campaign mode you'll begin a series of intense missions that form the bulk of the game. The training mode is essential for getting to grips with the controls, weapons and other minor management tasks required for piloting your vehicle - it's a good refresher course for veterans and a vital tool for newcomers.

The inclusion of the training missions effectively cover everything you need to know about playing the simulation without getting shot at and saves on manual reading time. If you're keen for some mindless killing then the Instant Action option will satisfy any appetite for destruction. There are plenty of options available in this mode and you'll be able to set variables for anything from a single enemy encounter to multiple waves of progressively harder enemies. Lastly, the Multiplayer mode is where you can go up against real people and prove yourself in the real world. The Multiplayer mode has numerous options that can be fiddled with including where you'll be playing, kill and time limits and whether or not players will be allowed to modify their

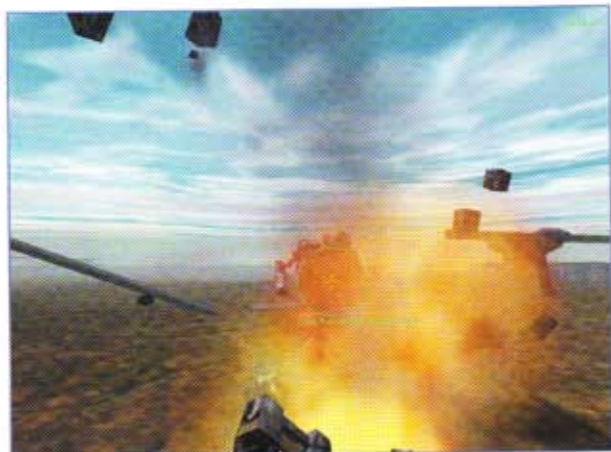
Mechs. The actual multiplayer game type options are somewhat limited in MechWarrior 3 but seeing that the game proper is so in-depth and challenging this isn't a major concern.

The Campaign missions are introduced using some intelligence footage (gathered by probes who are forever getting shot down), map layouts, crude icons and symbols. The great thing about the pre-mission intelligence report and unfolding story is that

everything is so well put together that by the time you're ready to enter the fray

you're extremely apprehensive and keen to get your part of the job done. The voice-overs and techniques used in these briefings are among some of the best you'll ever see. You begin the game on the battlefield, with your objectives clearly marked out on the radar. By pressing a key you can also access your mission parameters and the

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ZOOM IN AND TAKE OUT THAT COMMANDER

tends to draw away from the realism a little as it seems absurd that the enemy is just happy to sit and wait for your arrival even though he knows you're there. Once you do encounter enemy forces the pace changes slightly and the true nature of the game shows its face. You see these Mechs are very inefficient and tend to overheat quickly during a battle resulting in reduced performance and in some severe cases, a complete

shut down. This heat problem leads to a game problem or what might be called a quirk, most battles against other Mechs usually end up as stand off shooting matches where both combatants will stand still waiting for their weapons to cool down or charge up. This isn't a serious problem but goes a long way to illustrating just how the game runs - stop start action.

MOBIL FIELD BASE

Two innovative features in the game come in the form of the MFB or Mobil Field Base and the control and use of your Lancemates. The MFB comprises of three vehicles that can be deployed in the battlefield and their primary function is to repair and rearm your Mech. They can be controlled via the radar and deployment command, the idea is to clear the area before calling in your troops so to speak. This adds a new element to the game and results

resulting menu will tell you what you still need to do, so there is no confusion as to what is required of you. A typical mission will usually involve a number of sub-objectives, which adds to the enjoyment factor significantly as it manages to cover up the slightly linear nature of the missions. The game isn't as fast paced as many might assume from watching the movie, there always seems to be a respite in the action once you've completed each of these sub-goals. This

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MECHWARRIOR 3

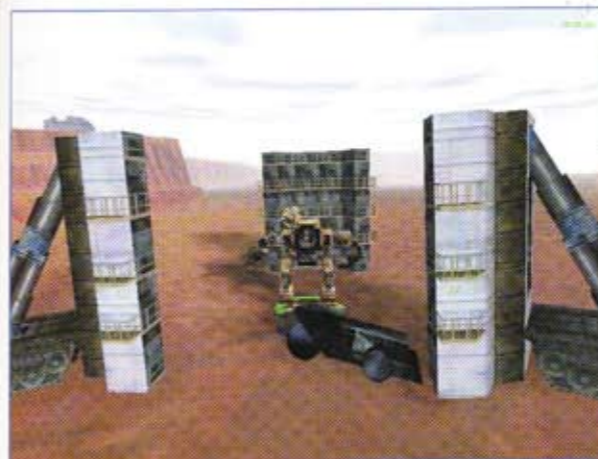


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THE MOBILE FIELD BASE IN ACTION

in a more heavy handed approach when dealing with enemies because you know that if you clear the area you'll be repaired afterwards. The MFB units also salvage items from the battlefield so if you're running short on supplies your opponent's equipment will usually do nicely and this can be anything from ammunition all the way up to entire BattleMechs. You can also control a certain number of allied forces while playing and they come in the form of Lancemates, AI controlled pilots who are there to help you overcome the odds. The range of control options for these comrades is limited to stay here, attack my target and defend my target. Nonetheless they are very helpful if only for drawing fire away from yourself. Other nice touches the game offers is the ability to easily change and configure your vehicle. The menu driven system is a pleasure to use and by carefully balancing out the weight and hard point set-up of your Mech,



HEAVY METAL ON THE MOVE - PLENTY OF WEAPONS AND GREAT SPECIAL EFFECTS MAKE IT A WINNER

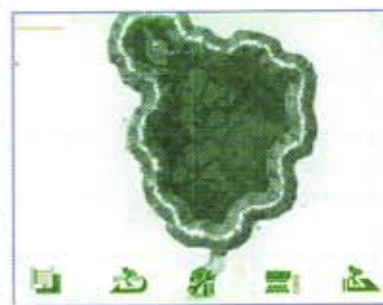
you can intelligently arm it for the mission to come. Another nice thing to see is the sheer amount of different weapons and items you can bolt onto your metal monster. If you like tinkering with technology then you'll never want to leave the Mech configuration utility. Anything from colour all the way to number of heat sinks can be changed and balanced.

One thing to remember is that some weapons generate more heat than others so don't go bolting on hundreds of energy weapons.

LOOKS LIKE STAR WARS

Graphically speaking, MechWarrior 3 is a pleasure to look at - there are two additional camera angles to choose from that offer a first and third person view on the action, thereby catering for everyone's tastes. The game engine is technically sound with very few hiccups or glitches during play. Once small complaint would be the fact that you cannot

remove the cockpit view altogether, only the HUD. The graphic style used in this game reminds one of the Star Wars universe, rough hard looking technology - both primitive and advanced in the same scene. The Mechs are well animated and all recoil from direct hits and even limp around convincingly if a leg is damaged. In the audio department the game has more than its fair share of meaty thumps and deafening explosions - you really know your Mech is on the move and dealing out the punishment. The control system used is intu-



'THE PLAN OF ATTACK' MAP

first thing is that it's a little too easy on the medium setting and not all that tough on the highest difficulty setting. This does shorten the life span of the game a little as most missions can be com-



ONE OF THE THREE DIFFERENT CAMERA ANGLES

pleted in one or two tries. The graphical problems that do appear occasionally are of the collision detection ilk, sometimes you cannot move forward because something small is embedded in the ground, a little annoying but good navigation eliminates the problem. Other than these few things there is very little else to fault the game on and anything else would really only be picking at nothing. MechWarrior 3 is a superb game, beating the competition hands down. It is aimed at a slightly different market, but if it's big robot bashing action you want then look nowhere else.



REDTIDE

GENRE
Robot Simulation

Min Requirements	Recommended
Pentium 166	Pentium 200
32 MB Ram	64 MB Ram
2 X CD Rom	4+ X CD Rom
2 MB PCI Video	4 MB 3D Accelerator
240 MB HD	390+ MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

MechWarrior 3 is a stunning accomplishment in so many ways - it's innovative and engrossing right down to the smallest detail. Without a doubt it is a class act and easily the best title in this genre by far.

Developer: Zipper Interactive	Publisher: Microprose	Supplier: No Local Distributor	RRP: \$ 49.00
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<http://www.mechwarrior3.com>

Multiplayer	Comparitives	Pro's	Con's
Yes	Heavy Gear II StarSiege	Great Fun Amazing Graphics Engrossing	Graphical Glitches A Little Easy

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
92	88	86	87	84	91

88

There is a lot out there, out beyond our frail atmosphere, which we don't understand. The sheer size of the Universe is unfathomable to the human mind, and the possibilities of what could be out there, amongst the stars, are virtually limitless. Not that we don't speculate. UFO sightings, conspiracy theories and speculation about the involvement of extra-terrestrial beings in the history of our world and our race abound. Let's say these things are real. Go on. Suspend your disbelief for a while. Imagine that visitors from other planets moulded our very species in its ways. Do that and you realise that we have a lot to be grateful for. Because we turned out pretty okay, as a species. It could have been far worse - we could have been influenced by the idiot aliens from *Attack of the Saucerman!*

When the Ed handed me this game with a grin that said "you're going to hate this" plastered all over his face, I dreaded popping the lid on the PlayStation and inserting the game. I had visions of his "new guys are supposed to suffer" attitude manifesting itself full force in the guise of *Attack of the Saucerman*. So, after making sure that all dangerous objects and substances were well hidden (for my protection and his) I started out on my journey into the dreaded unknown. Let me digress for a second. Ever had a dream where you had something really cool, only to wake up and realise you don't



YIKES! WASN'T THAT THING SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD?

actually possess the item of your desires? Okay, of course you have. Now reverse that. Imagine expecting something really bad, like in a nightmare during which you can't find your trousers, and waking up to realise that it's not bad at all. That is the only way that I can describe what happened when I switched the PlayStation on... *Attack of the Saucerman* is, if appearances are to be believed, intended for younger players. The cartoonish appearance of the game's sleeve



YOU WANT ME TO DO WHAT?

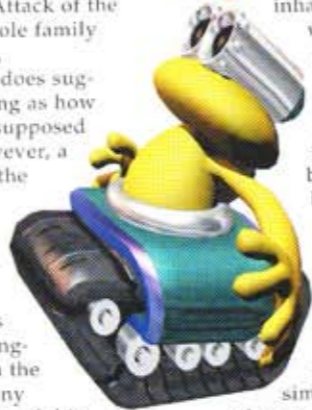
ATTACK of the SAUCERMAN!

could suggest nothing less. However, *Attack of the Saucerman* is something the whole family can enjoy. Why? Let me explain. Game play is very simple. That does suggest a younger orientation, seeing as how games for younger players are supposed to be easier. Fine and well. However, a certain sequence during one of the in-game cinematics convinced me otherwise. The ship aboard which the hero, Ed, is travelling, is shot down and crash lands in the infamous Area 51 - you know the one made famous by every paranoid they're-coming-to-get-me conspiracy theorist in the world. The question is, how many kids understand the implications of this rather humorous twist in the game? How many children will know that it's really funny when Ed wakes up on a gurney, surrounded by humans ready to perform an autopsy on him? Not too many, says Shryke (but then again, what exactly does he know?). It is for this very reason that I

believe older players - at least those of us who have a rather warped and mercenary sense of humour - will enjoy *Attack of the Saucerman* as much as the younger players will. Now that I've talked rubbish for more than half of the review, let's get down to nuts and bolts. The

game play, as I stated, is very easy, relying on the typical 3D-platform style that PlayStation developers seem to love so much. There is nothing overly taxing about the game, which allows you to actually relax for once while playing.

Graphically, the game is not too bad, although I have seen better. But there is something charming and sweet about the malformed and foul tempered aliens that inhabit the game, and something would have been lost if the graphics had been taken any more seriously by the developers. From a sound point of view, *Attack of the Saucerman* is stuffed full of beeps, whirrs, clangs and bangs, as any game of its type should be. A juke box facility allows you to scroll through the different songs featured in the game via the main screen - some of them are, to be honest, pretty good. The story line is simplistic enough for younger players to understand, and entertaining enough (with its slightly silly humour) for older players to enjoy. Everything comes across by way of subtitles for, even though Ed speaks, he only speaks Grimloid - his mother tongue. This warbling language can get a bit annoying, but you just have to live with it. At least it gives the game a feeling of authenticity (and if I get away with that comment, I deserve a medal!). Come right down to it, and *Attack of the Saucerman* is not a bad game. It's not great either. Suffice to say that its entertaining, with a few laughs and a few mild challenges for the player. Do you simply have to own it? I don't think so. But you probably won't be sorry if you buy it, either.



SHRYKE

GENRE
3D Platform

Controller Support



Optional Extras



Developer: Fube

Publisher: Psygnosis

Supplier: Star Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900

RRP: R359.00

<http://www.playstation-europe.com>

Multiplayer

No

Comparitives

Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time

Pro's

Easy To Play
Quite Humorous

Con's

Perhaps Too Easy

Graphics

65

Sound

79

Control

75

Story

70

Continuity

60

Playability

65

69

Join Ed the Grimloid on a strange journey to stop the evil Nedco from colonising Earth and turning it into a giant Ned farm. Although it seems aimed at a younger market, older players will also enjoy its off-beat sense of humour.

The sequel to *KKND* involves three nations warring for world domination and neither side will give up till either its enemies and/or the world has been destroyed. The same plot has been used in countless other games and sci-fi movies alike, but no one seems to realise it's getting old, as are numerous other aspects of *Krossfire*... Madman

Well once again, as in most other Real Time Strategy games, you're out for world domination, whether by hook, crook or excessive

the computer, giving you an idea of how dated they look. Another area in which *KKND* fails is sound. Awful tunes are complemented by awful effects that combine to make an

awful experience... Igor, bring me my earmuffs!

violence. From the start, *Krossfire* underimpresses. I've always been quite sceptical about the functionality of RTS games on the PlayStation mainly due to the fact that an RTS game isn't particularly suited to a game pad. Unfortunately I was right. The control is extremely dodgy, immediately detracting from the gameplay. I found it difficult to select individual units and issuing commands was just as painful, it's laborious and difficult and even after playing a few rounds I never felt comfortable and in control. The game does have Dual Shock support though I found that to be more of a gimmick, Dual Shock is better suited to fighting and racing games or when put to good use in a game like *Metal Gear Solid*. Scrolling around isn't particularly hard but singling out an individual unit is too time consuming, resulting in frustration and sometimes ruining a good strategic play just because you can't move tank A to position B. The graphics are of a decent quality... from a Master System point of view, but the units are small, badly detailed and fuzzy making it hard to distinguish between them. The graphics are virtually identical to those of its predecessor on



REAL TIME STRATEGY ON THE PLAYSTATION IS A RARE EXPERIENCE

BUT HOW DOES IT PLAY?

I suppose I should start moaning about the gameplay before it's too late. You have two modes to play, either the nor-

mal campaign mode or Kaos mode (i.e. skirmish mode). In the campaign mode you choose one of the 3 factions - the Series 9 are the new ones, you'll recall *KKND* only had 2 nations; the Survivors who hid in bunkers during the first war, shielded from the nuclear explosion; and the Evolved (formerly known as the Mutes) who stayed upon the Earth's surface and somehow survived the explosion and their brains weren't fried, just lightly sautéed in natural juices. They believe the Earth is rightfully theirs and their primary units are weird, mutated beasts and other natural nasties as opposed to the Survivors' mechanical menaces. The Series 9 robots are the agricultural robots that went slightly insane as a result of the explosion and they are now striving for world domination using their armoured tractors and ploughs. The problem with the campaign missions is that first of all you don't get to build in the first missions which makes them quite boring and once you lose your first batch of units that's it. The first missions usually consist of moving one or a group of units to someplace else on the map with enemies patrolling all the roads etc. You basically have to figure out the correct path and avoid fighting as much as you can so as to preserve the lifespan

of your units since no replacements are available. It also isn't all that submersive; you don't really feel like you're doing very much. You can't really plan any strategy; you just move your units around the map and watch them die. The missions are quite difficult, even the early ones making the learning curve steep and frustrating. There is seemingly no purpose to doing the same mission over and over again till you find the exact right path to guide your single unit along since it is too weak to fend for itself. Kaos mode is good for a group but that is when *KKND*'s faults really start to show. In Kaos mode you find out that the differences between the different nations is just cosmetic, most units are virtually identical underneath. The best multiplayer strategy is to just sit back and guard your base letting everyone else kill each other.

Whilst it may be cowardly you're almost guaranteed to win.

COMMANDED AND CONQUERED

The game does feature one nice touch and that's the ability to go up against the computer with a friend via a split screen multiple player option, which turned out to be fun and this feature manages to rescue the title somewhat. The game has a few good points but overall fails dismally. Quite frankly, whilst the PlayStation is seriously lacking in the Real time Strategy department this is more of a joke than a game. You're much better off getting

Warzone 2100 or even the original *Command & Conquer* is better than this. A failed attempt is the best way to describe *KKND 2*... maybe someone will eventually decide to grace our TV screens with a decent RTS game.



MADMAN

GENRE
Real Time Strategy

Controller Support



Optional Extras



Developer: Melbourne House

Publisher: Infogrames

Supplier: Star Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900

RRP: R 329.00

<http://www.melbournehouse.com>

Multiplayer

Yes

Comparitives

Command & Conquer
Warzone 2100

Pro's

Addictive Multiplayer
Three Races
Last in the Series

Con's

Poor Story
Lacking Game Play
Useless Control

Graphics

61

Sound

51

Control

53

Story

69

Continuity

68

Playability

59

60

An absolutely disgusting pile of trash. Terrible graphics, worse sound, no gameplay and useless control. Want RTS? Get C&C or Warzone 2100... but leave this on the shelf. A failed attempt and the PlayStation is still in need of a decent RTS title... maybe someone will answer our cries!

Strange creatures lurking about an otherwise peaceful but now foggy neighbourhood? A lone human soul facing insurmountable odds? Fearful gripping of a PlayStation controller in a pair of sweaty palms, with the occasional creaking of grey plastic? All this evidence can only add up to one thing - another horror survival game, and this time it's coming from the Metal Gear Solid people, Konami. It is time to enter Silent Hill

RedTide

SILENT HILL

noise and is quickly overwhelmed by a couple of strange creatures - he falls down, unconscious, again. Harry wakes a few moments later in a diner -

dazed and confused he meets a female police officer, also in the diner who gives him a gun and leaves to get reinforcements.

Now Harry must explore the town of Silent Hill to find his daughter, and so your game begins. The introductory movie is unusual and effectively comes across as a trailer for the game you're about to play, the strange music that accompanies the movie sets the tone of the game effectively with its strange melodies and haunting tones. Many of the cut-scenes during the game first opt for a rendered sequence followed by effective use of the game engine - the two formats blend into each other seamlessly and look fairly convincing. The only downfall of the numerous interactions between Harry and whomever he's talking to is the voice acting and response timing. The actors have injected little emotion into their speech segments and the fact that the 'lines' are delivered after delays only adds to the poor impression. Try to imagine if you will the following dialog: Young policewoman, 'With all those deadly creatures about, your daughter probably

won't make it out there by herself.' Long pause, Harry, 'Yeah.' Not very convincing by a long shot, so instead of immersing you deeper



HARRY RUNS AWAY FROM POTENTIAL GIANT MONSTER BIRD DROPPINGS

into the story the cut-scenes only serve to add some humour to the proceedings, obviously not what was intended by the creators of Silent Hill.

SCARY FOG AND TAME MONSTERS

The game is in essence very similar to Resident Evil 2 and even features a few of the more basic elements that made Tomb Raider so successful. During the course of the game the creepy town of Silent Hill is portrayed in two different ways. One, as a regular small town, if a little ominous and foggy to begin with, the other as an alternative world where things just don't feel or look right. The alternate reality version of the game world is so disturbing that it's always a relief to return to the 'normal' game world.

The game's grainy graphics mainly comprise of polygons that are a little ill-defined but nevertheless superbly detailed and well thought through. The use of lighting effects

SILENT HILL (CONTINUED)



I WONDER... IF I PUSHED THAT BUTTON...

and the fog, snow and gloomy weather cover up the problems well, they get the job done without slowing the action down, leaving a good overall impression. Your character animation is also limited to running and taking aim, shooting and taking damage. One restrictive factor is that Harry cannot climb - considering the sheer size of the town and special locations this seems a little absurd. Being able to climb onto tables or even the bonnet of an abandoned vehicle would have added so much to an already richly detailed world. If you step back and take everything into consideration, not being able to climb isn't detrimental to the game as such, it just would have been nice, not to mention a little more realistic. Besides climbing Harry can't duck, crawl or sneak - again this isn't a problem but remember that Konami are the developers behind Metal Gear Solid, so it's not as if these actions can't be done with good effect. An interesting question is, will we be seeing an amalgamation of these two genres in the near future? A kind of Special Forces operative alone and up against all that is evil... we can only hope!

THIS BIG

As previously mentioned, the town of Silent Hill is massive as far as PlayStation games in this genre go, two huge maps filled with



numerous special locations all await your careful exploration. It really is big and running across town or even around a block takes almost as much time as it would in reality. Many of the houses and buildings lining the streets are just there for front-end decoration but many of them can actually be explored. Just when you thought you'd seen the whole town you'll enter an area like the hospital for example and when you eventually find a map for these inside locations, you're left looking at a three or four page map of an entire hospi-

tal. Each level of the hospital has around eight to fifteen rooms all littered with monsters, items and often a nasty mess on the floor. These 'inside' locations are almost as big and involving as the outside area, again just stressing a point, this is a big game. The snowy foggy weather that plagues the game is great for effect but we all know there are better ways to create atmosphere other than emerging everything in either gloomy fog or the inky blackness of night. If you think of a game such as Resident Evil 2, that never used these 'cheap tricks' to try and scare the player - then Silent Hill starts looking a little desperate for ideas. The creatures in the game are also well conceived and animated but they fail to do one important thing, create fear. The only time you'll fear a creature might be at the initial encounter, after that they all seem to pose no real threat because you know exactly how to dispatch them. This is a real problem for this game as most of its appeal will lie in terror,



you can't very well play in fear when you know it's easy to kill anything nasty.

Besides being a little easy to get rid of, the monsters of Silent Hill are way too few in number to impress, especially when the next bright creature idea turns out to be zombie-like hospital staff. That said the bosses scattered around the game are worth running away from, and fast. Negatives aside, a balance has been struck between sheer numbers of enemies, variation and danger value. You won't find anything in Silent Hill like that roof crawling bundle of misery in Resident Evil 2, the creatures in Silent Hill just go Boo and are instantly forgotten.

PUZZLES AND STATIC

One of the items in the game that you find right at the start is a radio that

starts crackling and hissing whenever monsters are near, this an inspired idea. The radio making any kind of noise always gets you worried, like the motion tracker device in the Aliens movies - it strikes fear in your veins. Other things you carry with you include health drinks, medical aid boxes, a kitchen knife, crowbar, pistol and shotgun. These are the tools of the survival



RARE SCENE: IT ISN'T DARK. WHAT DO YOU KNOW



THE NOTEPAD ON THE DESK IS A SAVE-GAME POINT

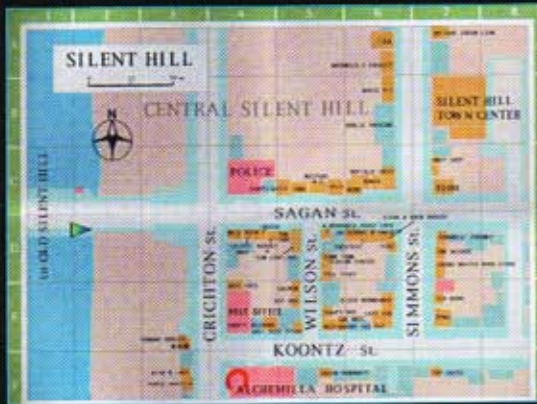
NEW AGE GAMING ACHIEVEMENT OF MERIT SUBJECT HILL 86%

You begin the game as Harry Mason, a man with a serious problem. After swerving to avoid a mysterious pedestrian on a lonely highway at night his vehicle leaves the road - the resulting accident knocks Harry unconscious. He awakes to find his seven-year-old daughter missing and heads out into the night towards the town of Silent Hill to find



IT'S DARK, DARK AND VERY SPOOKY - PLAY IT ALONE AT NIGHT FOR A THRILL!

her. During his trip into the town centre he notices that a dense fog has descended on the town which is also eerily quiet - something is wrong with this place, things are not as they should be. A brief chase through the town after a phantom shadow that looks like his daughter yields no reward but does lead Harry into an alley way. After passing through a few gates and passageways a sudden twilight descends over the town leaving Harry feeling very alone and in the dark so to speak. Further investigation leads Harry to discover the gruesome remains of a crucified humanoid figure, now at a dead end he hears a strange



THIS IS ONE OF THE MANY MAPS YOU'LL FIND WHILE PLAYING THE GAME

downfall here is that important clues can be forgotten just because the game misled you when you initially found an item or area of interest, it's an annoying aspect of the game that will have to be lived with. The control and menu options are well designed and easy to understand, moving Harry around the game world is also easy and accessing your inventory and using items is only ever a single button press away. From a control and access point of view there isn't much more you could do with the current system and it works a charm.



THE GRAPHICS ARE WELL DETAILED IF A LITTLE GRAINY - NICE EFFECT THOUGH

trade, scattered throughout the town you will find more ammunition and health, there is plenty to go around provided you don't use two magazine clips to finish off every monster you run into. As you play you'll also end up finding keys to different houses or rooms, the finding of keys and their respective doors forms the most basic of puzzle elements in the game. The tougher puzzles are really hard to figure out sometimes, but careful examination of the clues will always lead to the right answer. Overall the puzzles in Silent Hill are of a far better quality than most other games so far, the piano key puzzle in particular is incredible and you're always left with a real sense of accomplishment when you figure one out. Regarding puzzles, another small problem that can potentially lead to long frustrating re-exploration of all locations is the trigger effect this game employs to move the story along. Even though there is this huge environment to explore the game does force you along a very linear route with most of the key sequences unlocking once you've read this scrap of paper or found that key. The

RESIDENT HILL AND SILENT EVIL
Seeing that there can only be one king in this genre and Resident Evil 2 is without a shadow of a doubt the recipient of that crown, comparatives between the two games are inevitable. Both games bear similar concepts but they are so different in style and execution that they should be viewed in different leagues altogether. Support for the survival horror genre is growing daily and new titles such as Dino Crisis and Resident Evil 3 will soon be available. The true indication if a game has scored a hit or a miss is how much fun you have while playing it, in this case specifically it's really all based on how scared you are while exploring locations and fighting creatures. It is also a good thing if the game doesn't try too hard to create a scary experience with cheap parlour tricks. The balance is hard to find and thankfully Silent Hill delivers the goods on all levels.

Whether it's a better game than Resident Evil 2 is a highly debatable point as both games have their strengths and weaknesses. The game covers all the bases well and will have you drawn in faster and further than you probably want. It's a highly charged adventure game that doesn't disappoint and makes a solid impression on the genre. If you're ever standing at the great PlayStation crossroads



THE ALL IMPORTANT INVENTORY. THE INTERFACE IS EASY TO USE AND YOU ALWAYS KNOW WHERE EVERYTHING IS.

with grey sign posts reading Resident Evil 2 this way and Silent Hill that way and wondering which direction to head then don't look here for any answers. Both games exhibit such different and diverse qualities, good points and bad it's almost impossible to decide which is better. This isn't a quick weasel out of making a choice - it's just plain fact.



Silent Hill has what it takes to scare the Player... provided it's dark and late at night. The games graphics let it down a little as does the methods employed to try and make the game frightening. Although, if you like this genre don't miss it!

Developer: Konami
 Publisher: Konami
 Supplier: Star Kinkor Interactive (011) 445-7900
 RRP: R 429.00
<http://www.konami.com>

Multiplayer No
Comparatives Resident Evil 2
Pro's Huge Game World, Good Puzzles, Engrossing
Con's Average Graphics, Borrows Ideas Deceptively Linear

Graphics 83 **Sound** 88 **Control** 89 **Story** 86 **Continuity** 79 **Playability** 93

86

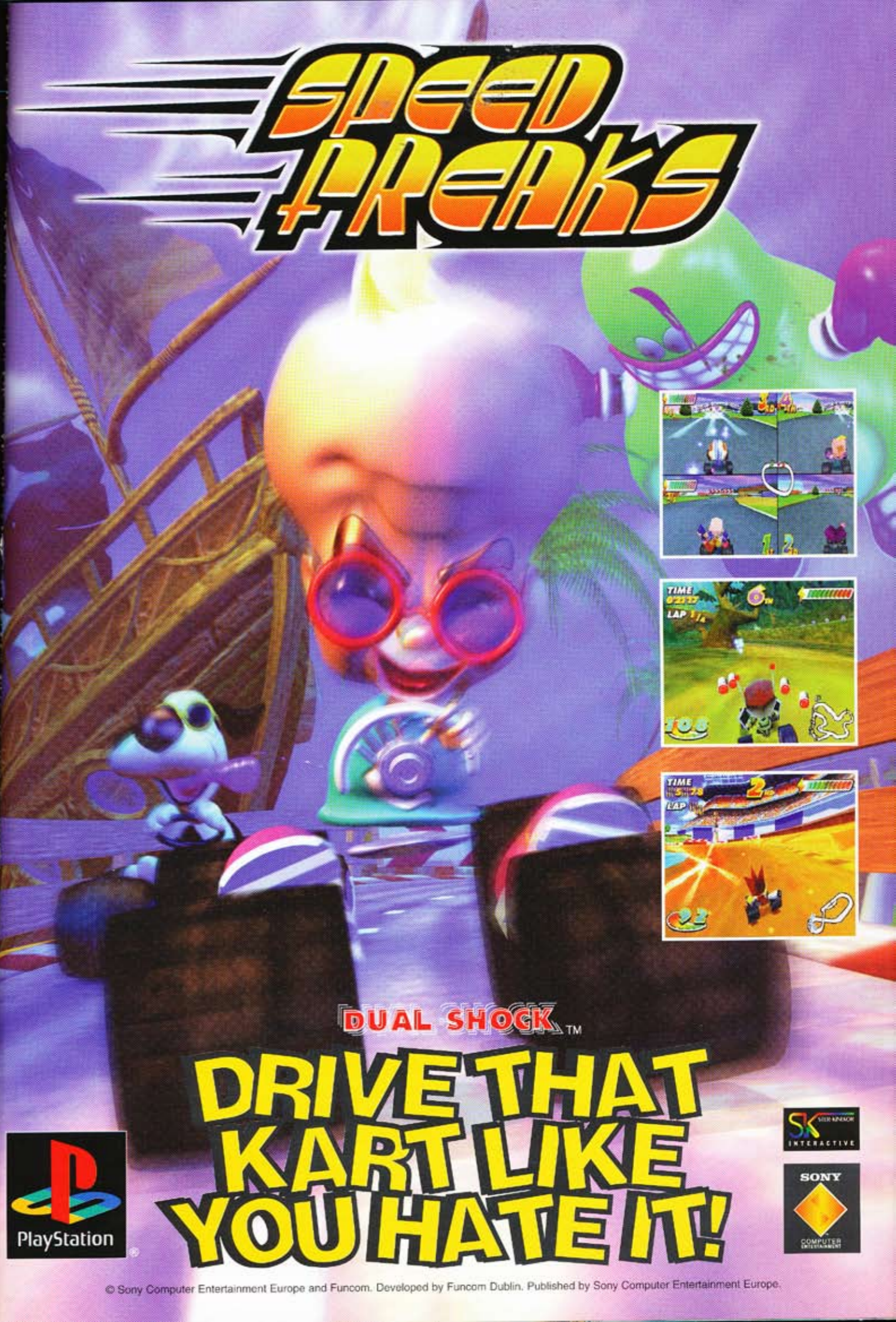


REDTIDE
GENRE
 Survival Horror

Controller Support: Vibration Function Compatible, Analog Controller Compatible
Optional Extras: Memory Card 1 Block, 1 Player



PlayStation



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Potential, potential, potential. A word we in the gaming industry hear and use so very often. Games that could have been so very, very good but inevitably end up gathering cobwebs on a shelf or in the bargain bin because they were lacking in one area or another. What do they have in common? They all had potential. - Madman

Omega Boost has potential. Sure, the story line may be a bit suspect, but isn't that what you expect with a shooter? If a little bit of game play had been thrown in,

Omega Boost could've been huge, but due to it's lack thereof Omega Boost is, in my opinion, a failed opportunity. Let me start from the beginning. The story line has the typical Japanese touch. You're out to save the earth. Big surprise. But wait! It gets even more stereotypical! You're outfitted in a mech-like suit, complete with rocket launchers and huge gun. It's you vs. everyone (as you would expect) and the odds are stacked heavily against you. Common logic dictates that one man in a robot suit cannot defeat millions of planes, other people in robot suits and space craft out-sizing you about 10 times. Oh, and they have better weapons than you. But, as previously stated, 3D shooters aren't supposed to have story lines.

STICK TO RACING

Now would be a good time to mention that Omega Boost has been developed by none other than Polyphony Digital, the team that brought us the ultimate racing game, Gran Turismo. I found it hard to believe that the same people who made the masterpiece of GT also produced Omega Boost and I haven't really touched on any of the downfalls of Omega Boost apart from the tenuous story line/concept. Well, the good news is that the control isn't terribly bad. Freedom of movement has been increased in Omega Boost as opposed to other titles in this genre but you, unfortunately, are still confined within the levels. There are basically two modes of movement in Omega Boost. You can either search out your numerous targets manually, although this mode is still very restrictive,

OMEGA BOOST



especially when trying to turn around. Secondly, you can use your scanner. The scanner button will find an enemy and automatically move you to face the foe in question. You can also move manually while in scan mode allowing you to keep on the tail of any particular enemy. Shooting is achieved by use of 2 of the four fire buttons, the other 2 are used to "boost" your robot. You can choose to shoot

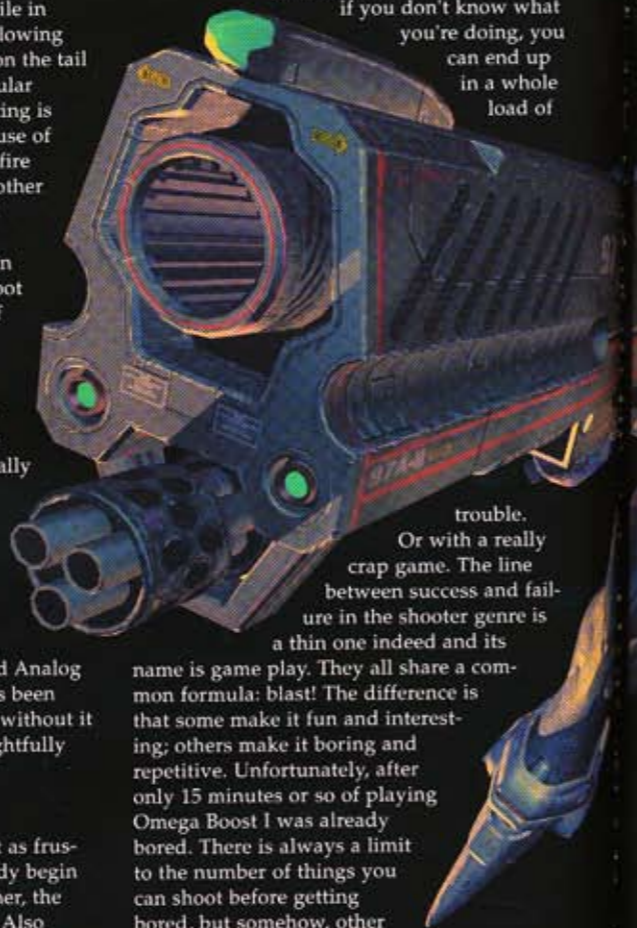
the normal "dumb-fire" method, or if you keep your target in your sights long enough, you can lock on to a number of enemies and fire guided missiles at them. The number of targets you can simultaneously lock on to increases as you progress. Eventually you will receive the Viper Boost, allowing you to ram your enemy, albeit that you have no control over these slamming attacks. One of the main aspects of a shooter is the control, and thankfully, Omega Boost doesn't do too badly in that department. Oh, and Dual Shock and Analog Controller support is present, but it's been quite a while since I've seen a game without it - it has become the standard, and rightfully so.

DIFFICULTY UNLIMITED

Omega Boost is hard as hell and just as frustrating. By the 3rd stage you'll already begin struggling and as you progress further, the levels become increasingly difficult. Also available are challenge levels, basically the same as the single player mode, just a lot

more difficult. Omega Boost also boasts around 5 training levels to teach you the basics of the game, saving you about 5 of the 10 minutes it would otherwise

take to learn the controls. And if you pull off any amazing victories you can save the replays and watch them over and over again. That brings me to the main downfall of Omega Boost: game play. Making a 3D shooter is a difficult business, and if you don't know what you're doing, you can end up in a whole load of



trouble. Or with a really crap game. The line between success and failure in the shooter genre is a thin one indeed and its name is game play. They all share a common formula: blast! The difference is that some make it fun and interesting; others make it boring and repetitive. Unfortunately, after only 15 minutes or so of playing Omega Boost I was already bored. There is always a limit to the number of things you can shoot before getting bored, but somehow, other 3D shooters seem to offer a little more in the way of

OMEGA BOOST (CONTINUED)



LOOKING INTO SPACE AND HEARING NOTHING Graphically, Omega Boost is one of the best looking titles I have ever seen on the PlayStation. The 3D engine is nothing short of amazing, the visual effects are brilliant and the game maintains a respectable frame rate throughout.

Also on offer are good looking, but short FMV sequences, the purpose of which is to advance the plot of the story. Considering that Gran Turismo was so visually astounding, it is no surprise that Omega Boost follows suit, with great textures on the different enemies you encounter. The enemies look good and are realistically shaped. They also move realistically and while the background of space doesn't offer much all the graphical elements come together nicely to make Omega Boost, arguably, the best looking and most graphically advanced PlayStation game available.

When it comes to sound, Omega Boost offers just what you'd expect from a decent 3D shooter. The effects are good and complement the action well. The sounds of your shots being fired and absorbed are realistic, and the effects accompanying the "Boost" and so on are also done well. The tunes hover around the techno side of things fitting in well with the genre. The pace of the music is speedy enough to integrate with the action but it doesn't frustrate. You'll be so busy blasting alien scum, you probably won't even think about the sound.

Not being a fan of shooters (first person especially) this review may have made Omega Boost sound like it isn't even worth 10c. But if you are a dedicated fan of this genre you might find the mindless blasting right up your alley. For me, a game lacking game play and story line already has one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel. Omega Boost boasts great graphics, relatively good sound and control but it does tend

his attack and then shooting from the next angle. Another thing Omega Boost lacks is a multiplayer mode, a real pity because that could've gone miles to improve this game.



to become boring quite fast, and although some boss levels are difficult the game can be completed fairly quickly. Had Omega Boost been given a decent story line and a bit of game play, it would've definitely been a top title and a must have for every PlayStation owner. Unfortunately, in those respects it disappoints and offers little in the way of replay value. I wish that I could say that the spectacular graphics and the other aspects of the game could make up for what Omega Boost lacks in game play but that isn't so. If you enjoy games like Blast Radius and Colony Wars then this one will definitely hold some appeal for you otherwise I would strongly recommend you try before you buy. A pity, because Omega Boost had potential.



GRAPHICS: 1 - GAME PLAY: 0 - VERY UNFORTUNATE FOR A GAME WITH SO MUCH POTENTIAL...

Omega Boost has spectacular graphics, good sound and good control. Unfortunately there is no story to speak of and doesn't offer much in the way of game play. It can be completed quickly - provided you don't die of boredom before then.

Developer: Polyphony Digital	Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment	Supplier: Star Kinetix Interactive (011) 445-7900	RRP: R 429.00
http://www.playstation-europe.com			
Multiplayer: No	Comparatives: Forsaken Panzer Dragoon Series	Pros: Amazing Graphics Challenging	Cons: Too Short No Multiplayer
Graphics: 96	Sound: 80	Control: 82	Story: 50
Continuity: 59	Playability: 66	72	

Controller Support: Vibration Function Compatible, Analog Controller Compatible

Optional Extras: Memory Card 1-4 Block, 1 Player

The Demo Scene

Forget shelling out tens of thousands of Rands for a high-end graphics studio and a system to make it run properly. 3D graphics, raytracing, Photoshop and animation capability is here now for your lowly 166 - and it's free!

When the first version of Autodesk's 3D studio was announced, I got my hands on a brochure. It looked very cool - 3D rendering, animation, lighting, cameras - all the things I needed to leave the job I was at and go off and start my own commercial graphics company. Then I saw the price. Eeek! I didn't earn that much in a year - let alone a month. About a year ago, I got my hands on an electronic brochure advertising a similar 3D package. It looked very cool - 3D rendering, animation, lighting, cameras - all the things I needed to go off and produce some great ray-traced graphics for the Optimise demo competition. Then I saw the price. Free! Nix! Nothing! I'm glad times have changed. The program is called Blender, it's home page is at www.blender.nl and it's a commercial quality 3D rendering environment which runs on most platforms out there - including Windows 9x and Linux. As of two months ago it supports hardware-accelerated rendering if you have a TNT or a TNT2-based card. On both Linux and Windows this hardware acceleration is very cool indeed, and produces rendering speed and quality comparable to a mid-range Silicon Graphics box if your CPU is quick enough. If it isn't then don't worry - Blender runs just fine on a 166 (well, it does for me anyway).

3D GRAPHICS FOR EVERYONE

BY PAUL FURBER

[HTTP://WWW.SURF.TO/DEMOS](http://www.surf.to/demos)

E-MAIL: [SADEMO@EGROUPS.COM](mailto:sademo@egroups.com)

E-MAIL: MAVERICK@IS.CO.ZA



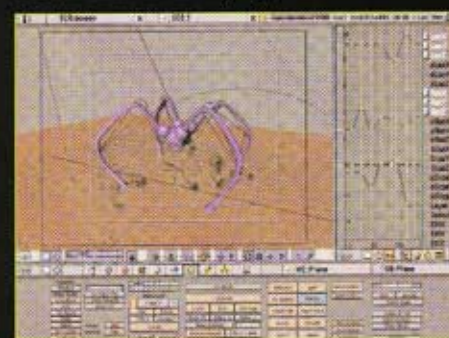
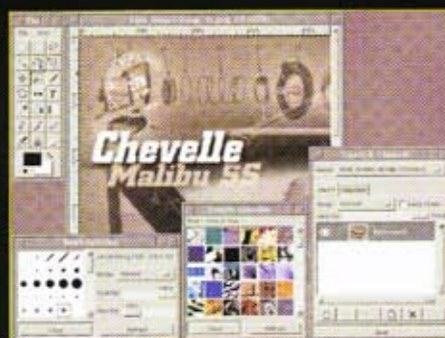
nothing to do with the freaky guy dressed in leather who appears in the basement scene in Pulp Fiction. Gimp stands for Gnu Image Manipulation Program. As with most programs that sport Gnu in the title, it's free. Today, Photoshop is the program most associated with 2D digital art. But a quick wander down to my local Incredible Connection showed that it's still in the thousands price-wise. Gimp is not quite yet up to the league of Photoshop but it comes pretty close. It also has hundreds of free plug-ins which extend its capability to MPEG video editing, panorama viewing, Bryce-like landscape generation, and a whole lot more besides. You can buy a commercial manual but it's better (and cheaper) to stick to the official Postscript or HTML manual written by one of the authors. Printing it out will take a bit of toner but reliable sources tell me it has all you need to know to get started.

The program is easy to use although it has its quirks. Several of the most commonly used effects are available as instant scripts to run on your image. These scripts are easy to put together yourself, since the source is open and plenty of tutorials exist. Gimp also supports input from any of the digital pen devices that work with XWindows - a bonus I intend testing for myself if my Wacom PenPartner ever gets here (by the time you read this it will be two months since I ordered it - sigh). Go to www.gimp.org to get what you need in terms of libraries, executables and add-ons for your platform.

CONCLUSION

3D and 2D art need not cost an arm and a leg. If you're depressed about the price of software, or just don't feel like ripping off the tools you need, then give these two packages a once-over. I'll lay down a gauntlet now: if you attend Optimise 99 and place higher than I do in either the hand-drawn or raytraced categories and - this is important - you're using tools other than Blender or Gimp, then I'll buy you a drink. No questions asked but mail me and tell me you're entering. Even better - go to www.surf.to/demos and fill in the forms saying you're entering!

animal to get used to. Once you do though, it becomes a highly organised and logical way of doing things. I am no 3D professional, but with Blender it's easy to turn out very impressive rendered material after a couple of hours figuring out the basics. Animations are also very straight-



The only catch that exists is that - like most complex graphics software - the program by itself is very tricky to get the hang of without a manual. NaN - the company who wrote and published Blender - offer one for sale as a way of making their investment back. It's around \$40. Having just shelled out for one, I can say it's well worth the money. If you don't want to pay money for either, there is a basic manual to get you started with 3D editing. Strangely enough, lack of experience with other 3D editing packages is probably a good thing; Blender's interface is a strange

forward. Just in case you're wondering if this is the kind of program that is cheap and nasty as well as free, then relax. Blender is used by hundreds of commercial designers across Europe and the US to do things from game character development to professional commercials for companies such as Philips. In other words, it's industrial strength.

PHOTOSHOP SCHMOTOSHOP

If your hankering is more towards the 2D side of things, then the Gimp is your answer. No, it's



Paul Furber - 'Maverick'



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Two players bound for London Pro Tour after GenCon

The best players in the country (and a few determined scrubs) descended upon the sleepy town of Edenvale in July to fight it out for two tickets to London and a place in the \$150 000 Pro Tour event in October.

Hard-core Cape Town player Russel Lund took the drive up from Cape Town ...

... And so it was that Andrew Monteith and I, Russel Lund your amiable host hit the 1400 kilometers of tarmac between Cape Town and Johannesburg yet again. Our destination was the country's premier games and role-playing convention, GenCon (formerly ICON). A three-day event for once, Gencon had such highlights and events including nearly all known role-playing systems, from Alternity to Vampire and with a LARP or two thrown in for good measure.

Wargaming? Yup, it was there all right. GenCon also hosted the Pro-Tour Qualifier for London for the Magic fraternity, some Quake 2 and the Starcraft team and single player events in the computer arena, where the main prize was a R21 000 Blaster PC. It was there for the taking, had you but greater desire than the competition. And let us not forget the auction, the party and the stands selling anything from R115 Mox Diamonds to dice to Star Wars toys, and shifty-eyed store owners willing to buy anything, including your soul, first down-payment due upon arrival in hell ...

With over 3 000 people through the door, hell could have been standing in a queue of sweaty gamers trying to get a mug of free coffee. But coming back to the Pro Tour Qualifier for a moment ... Western Cape DCI co-ordinator Garth Murray takes up the story ...

The tournament was scheduled to start at 10:00am on Saturday morning. We eventually got under way at 10:05, after buying an extension cable for the computer setup. This tournament was run with the DCI reporter software with a backup being done with a paper based system, all hardware and paperwork supplied by Brigitte Frain (thanks a million - if that had not been done, we would have been dead in the water). The event had a level 3 rules enforcement with deck lists and swaps. This seemed to cause a few problems for some of the less experienced players, and just marking off the cards took 45 min - then another 15 min to collect and hand back. As per usual, some of the 25% who got their decks back were really happy, and some of the rest who got rid of theirs were smiling too. After deck building and seating arrangements the actual event started at 12:00 (a little late for my liking - but oh well...). The rounds were 45 min each with the extra 6-turn rule in effect (this worked quite well btw). The first few rounds were pretty normal with not much tension as the players were starting off, gathering a few points. After round 3 though, there was more urgency to win. Many players dropped out during the event, which was expected as this was a Con and if they had no chance, the players were keen to see what Martin Frain (DCI representative for SA and Chairman of the GenCon committee) had organised for gamers and general public interest. At the last round there were only 59 players left in the field. The first days Swiss style tournament finished at 7:30pm with a huge list of warnings that had

been given out for mainly small offences, and silly mistakes.

Top 8 (seeding after the first day)

- 1) David Hofmeyer (JHB)
- 2) Gavin Westermeyer (KZN)
- 3) Jordan Boyle (WC)
- 4) Alan Campbell (WC)
- 5) Michael Nurse (JHB) - also 1999 National Champion for SA
- 6) Gary Glen-Young (JHB) - 1998 GenCon Champion
- 7) Jason Neale (BLM)
- 8) John Irvine (JHB)



The judges helping me this day were Dennis Battiscombe and Petrus Hillebrand. This event was an Urza's block Booster Draft with one booster from US, UL and UD. It was also run as a level 3 event, but from the beginning, nerves were on edge as here was where it was going to count. The top 2 players would get invitations and plane tickets to PT London, so all the tension was building up. The draft completed without incident and all players seemed happy with their decks. The first games saw

David Hofmeyer playing John Irvine, Gavin Westermeyer playing Jason Neale, Jordan Boyle playing Gary Glen-Young and Michael Nurse playing Alan Campbell. David beat John and was then matched up with Michael who narrowly beat Alan. Jordan beat Gary and went on to play Gavin to see who was going to play in London. Michael conceded to David as he would be writing exams at that time and would not have been able to go. Jordan beat Gavin to put him in the final, but more importantly, on the list for PT London. With all tension now gone David and Jordan played with David winning the championship - well played guys, and good luck for the Pro Tour.

Chicago Pro Tour Qualifier

Planned for St Louis, the second \$150 000 Pro Tour of the 1999/2000 season has been moved to Chicago. South Africa has been allotted two slots at the event, and tournaments are being held in Cape Town (The Atrium) and Johannesburg (Wits University Student Union) on Sunday 19 September to determine who will be representing us in the States. The format for the qualifier events is Urza's block constructed (only cards from Urza's Saga, Urza's Legacy and Urza's Destiny may be used in your deck, which must contain at least 60 cards and no more than four of any one kind, except basic land). Cost to play at the PTQ is R20. The Johannesburg event starts at 9am and the Cape Town event at 10:30am. Please bring accurate, legible and signed deck lists. Pro Tour Chicago will run from 3-5 December and is an Extended format event.



Rathi set to leave...

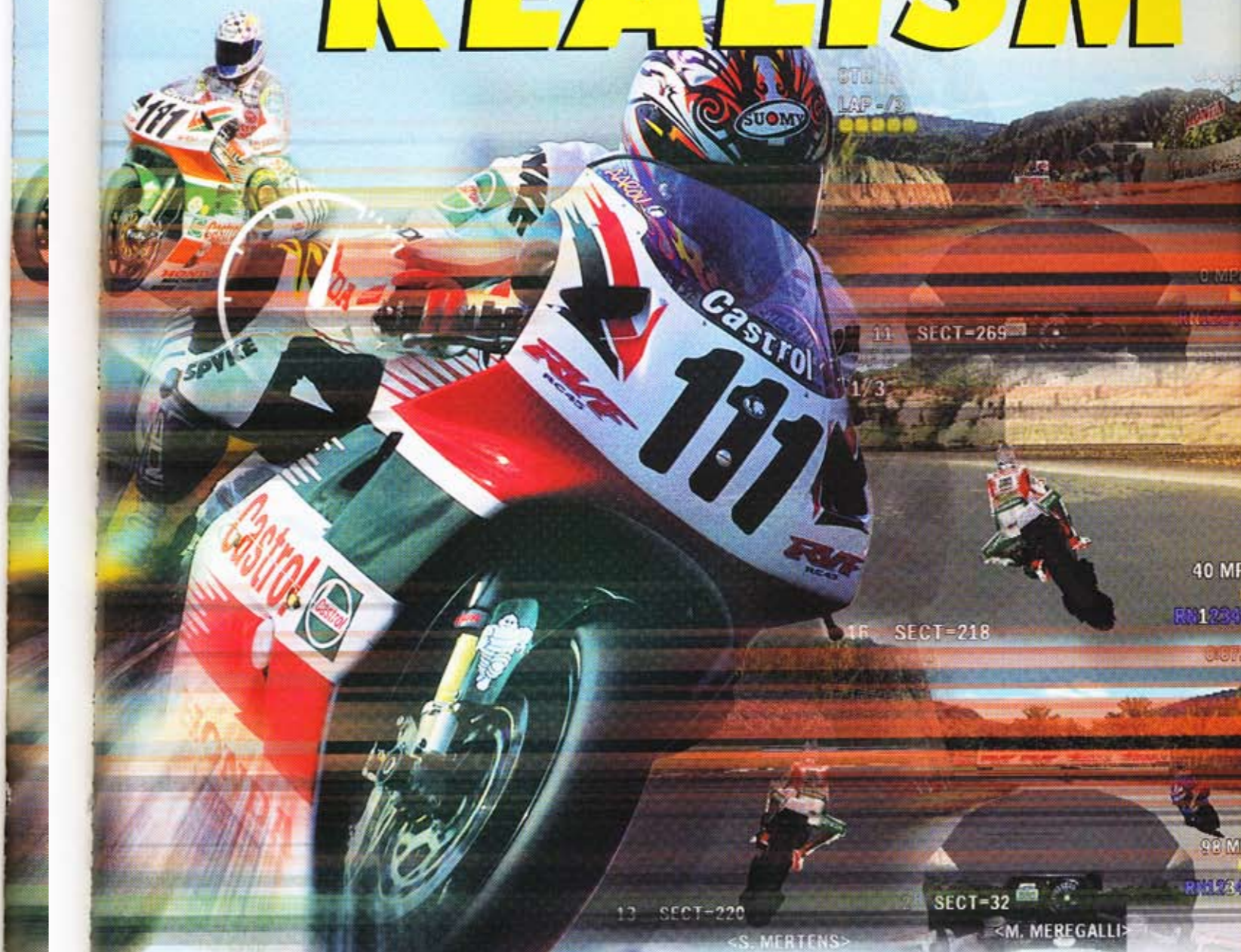
When Mercadian Masques cycles into the Standard tournament environment in November, Tempest, Stronghold and Exodus cycle out. These cards can still be used in Extended tournaments, though.

Masques preview

Get a sneak preview of the new Magic: The Gathering expansion Mercadian Masques at one of the fun Pre Release events being held around the country. Mercadian Masques is the stand-alone set due for release in October, featuring 350 cards - and foil-finished premium cards, including land. A tournament deck, three boosters and a special commemorative foil card will cost you R110. Places at each event are limited, but you can book your place beforehand, and you can play in as many tournaments as you want. DCI Legends members will receive priority booking.

Venue	Date	Places
Johannesburg (Martin 083 2300 332)		
Balfour Park Shopping Centre	Sat 25 September	64
Balfour Park Shopping Centre	Sun 26 September	64
Outer Limits Melville	Sat 2 October	32
Wizards Games Edenvale	Sat 2 October	16
Cape Town (Garth 083 600 1988)		
Venue to be determined	Sat 25 September	32
The Atrium Shopping Centre	Sun 26 September	96
Port Elizabeth (Petrus 082 800 3501)		
Fantasy Fortress	Sat 25 September	8
Bridge Club	Sun 26 September	32
Bloemfontein (Nicky 082 802 7440)		
St James Pub and Restaurant	Sun 26 September	32
Durban (Rob 083 449 2702)		
Lahee Park Sports Club	Sun 26 September	48
Lahee Park Sports Club	Sun 3 October	8
Pretoria (Joe 082 770 0514)		
Net Cafe Hatfield	Sun 26 September	16
Net Cafe Hatfield	Sat 2 October	16

TASTE the REALISM



Castrol 
HONDA

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MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM

As we progress into the Millennium, competitive gaming is becoming more of a sport than a hobby. So in our quest for better gameplay, we have evolved into cyber athletes with a divine passion to win. Now that we have taken the internet as our own and moulded it into a finely tuned machine dedicated to bringing gamers closer all over the world, we are able to compete at the highest levels. But with that comes sacrifices, especially the financial one.

ISP's all over the world have realised that the PC entertainment industry is a strong tool for fuelling their coffers with our hard-earned money, and the South African ISP's are starting to warm up. With MWEB's Gamezone and almost every other decent ISP running gaming servers in South Africa, we can be sure that the pay to play issue is just around the corner. The signs are here with the first step being taken by a company called Magenta that has the official rights to bring MPlayer to South Africa. As we speak the servers are being configured to handle the hoards of online gamers all looking for their piece of glory. What you may ask

is the intention of such a company? Well, as most gamers know, MPlayer is a pay for play service that offers a fair degree of free titles that are mostly there to entice gamers into the pay for play areas. For a monthly fee, you are given access to the latest technology and multiplayer games. For the service you are given ranking systems, organised comps, prize money and lots and lots of lag. The offer is enticing and somewhat rewarding, especially in other countries where affording your ISP and a monthly fee is not a problem. In South Africa the big decision has further reaching consequences. Telkom firstly monopolises our bandwidth infrastructure and our pockets with their ever increasing telephone costs. In doing so, the ISP's are also strangled to raise prices on us, and are more expensive than most comparative overseas ISP's. Then there is the burning issue of bandwidth problems that makes our gaming experiences a living nightmare on the online servers. Pings in excess of 500ms are sometimes what has to be put up with irritating us no end. It must be said that online speeds have increased dramatically over the last two years, but we are still a considerable way off our overseas counterparts. Our ISP's have policies of never reaching certain saturation points on their lines, normally 70%, but it seems more and more like we are closing in on the 100% mark. Then we have the issue of segregation between the ISP's who are all out there trying to steal as much from their competitors as possible. With SAIX and the rest of the ISP's showing teeth at each other, certain ISP's are given minimal local peering, mean-

TO PAY OR NOT TO PLAY? That is the question.



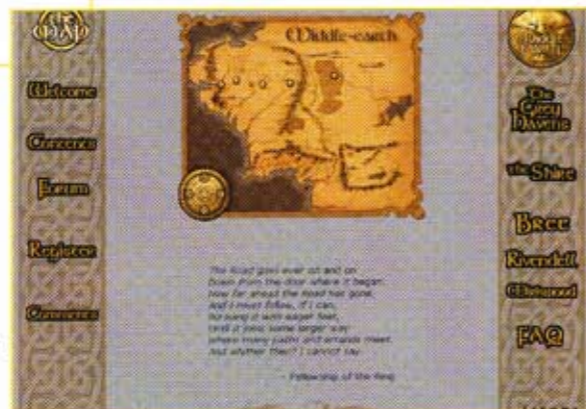
ing terrible performances on the net if you are on a competitive server. Coming back to Telkom, they are continually fixing or upgrading something, trying to get the country on a digital service, but with the line conditions as they are, why bother? Almost everybody with a modem has experienced some form of line noise reducing your modem to a 14.4-baud. With all this on our plates, who wants to pay for play?

To cut a long story short, it's not all that bad. Those are definitely the negatives but with

come for the games, stay for the party!

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MPLAYER - ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PAY TO PLAY SITES



MIDDLE EARTH - ONE OF THE LARGEST MULTIPLAYER ARENAS UNDER DEVELOPMENT.

that comes a heck of a lot of positives. I am not going to spell them out for you because you probably know them, and if you don't you'll find out as soon as you log onto your first online competitive game, it's addictive. However the main issue that will be on everybody's mind is the financial implications. Hey, we get free servers, what is your problem? I don't mean to burst your bubble, but all those nice handy machines that pump out tons of information to your PC's everyday, are there for a higher purpose. As much as the ISP's promise not to make pay for play a part of their service, so the suits do the sums and realise that money speaks louder than words. The first phases are being put into place as we speak, and it only takes one to start the trend. Overseas markets are swarming with players all vying for space on the gaming servers. With Ultima Online leading the way for mass market gaming, we in South Africa haven't even tasted the fruit. As more games are being developed for multiplayer only we can rest assured that we are closing in on the multiplayer age. Games such as Quake 3 and Tribes are being dangled in front of our weak and fragile obsession with gaming; these are only the first. Huge multiplayer

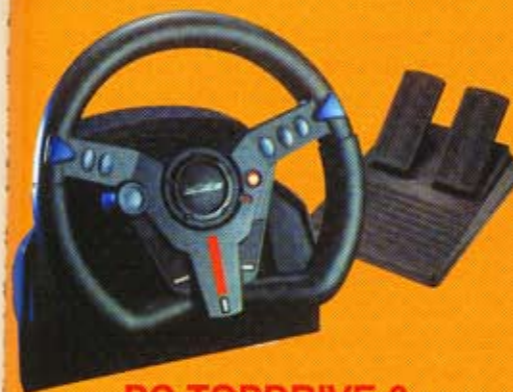
arenas are currently being developed to curb the demanding appetite for more online gaming. To name one, Middle Earth, which is based on the books Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit from the critically acclaimed author J.R.R. Tolkien. The virtual world is almost 400 million square feet in size and can hold in excess of 10000 players at any given time and is said to be the largest development of its kind. I think old John Ronald Reuel Tolkien would turn in his grave if he knew just how far his tales of bravery and honour had come.

My opinions are simple, if I enjoy something enough, I don't mind paying. I have a personal account on Everquest (Sony's best selling online game) and thoroughly enjoy spending a Saturday or Sunday building my Elven character's attributes and persona. I gladly fork out a monthly fee of R60.00 for the service, because the game runs smoothly at pings of up to 1000ms. But would I pay to play Quake 3 when it's finally released? No, because at those pings you couldn't pick a fight with an ammo box. Its quite simple, get our house in order and we will be your journeyman.

Well, my fellow gamers we are about to enter a new age of gaming in the next few months. We are going to get our very own pay to play option that looks and sounds like the real McCoy. Where it might pop-up is a mystery, perhaps MWEB, or ICON, who knows. Wherever it might be, we are a demanding bunch, so if you are planning pay for play make sure your support numbers are well manned. We don't pay yet

and we can complain, just look at the noticeboards on the server sites and you'll learn that we are a tough audience. Visualise when we are forced to pay for the service, consider a session of Quake 3 on Q3testdm2 with 64 players all firing rockets in your direction while you grasp your rail-gun with a ping of 300+ms. Not a pretty picture, it's going to take time and patience to convert our spoilt ways, but then counting our hard earned dosh every month does alleviate the burdens and pressures of running a pay for play service. To lighten the load a little, we are already sold on the concept. Hey, we're gamers. We'll try anything once, but we are definitely twice shy. Signing us up is the easy part, keeping us is the difficult task. Our opinions will be different, but it still comes down to the original question - to pay or not to play? Just how much is this going to cost us?

NAG
If you have an opinion on this subject mail us at letters@nag.co.za.



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GAMETRONIX

Wow! Awesome!, not exactly the words I used when I first plugged in the new Cambridge Soundworks DTT2500 Digital system into my SB Live!, but it will have to do since the actual words would have to be censored. After having a look at Creative Labs last set of speakers, the Desktop Theatre 5.1, I thought it would be a long time before any speakers would impress me that much again.

Creative DTT2500 Digital Desktop Theatre 5.1

How wrong I was, in less than 6 months after the original Desktop Theatre from Creative Labs was released the new DTT2500 Digital Desktop Theatre 5.1 surround sound speaker system appears on the market. To say the output of these speakers is amazing would be an understatement. They simply have to be heard to experience the difference in sound quality from your average day two speaker desktop system.

PACKAGE CONTENTS

It is always nice to receive a large glossy box that weighs a ton, especially if it contains a state of the art black surround sound speaker system. Its also a good time to start hinting just exactly what you want for Christmas as well - maybe a new speaker system <hint, hint>.

Inside the box you will find four satellite speakers each featuring a 2.5" long-throw driver, one centre speaker also with a 2.5" long-throw drive, and one subwoofer featuring a 5.25" long-throw driver. The satellite speakers are larger than the ones found in the last Desktop Theatre 5.1 system and give you a little more output than the original ones.

The contents also contains the power cable, and the AC-3 Digital decoder, meaning you don't have to fork out extra cash to buy one, and you would have probably ended up paying the same amount just for the decoder if you bought it separately.

Of course there are manuals for the installation and operation of the decoder included, but the most striking feature in the box would have to be the two tripod stand on which to mount your rear speakers. It is only made of plastic but has a stylish black design and comes in handy if you don't want to mount your speakers on a wall.

Last but not at all least is the myriad of cabling that you have to connect, ranging from the connectors for your DVD and soundcard to the cabling required to connect your speakers to the decoder. One aspect of the cabling to keep in mind if you decide to buy this system is that you only receive 3-meter cables for the front, center and subwoofer speakers and 5-meter cables for the rear speakers. This can make installing the speakers a little tricky if you have a room that requires longer cabling. Fortunately unlike the Original Desktop Theatre 5.1 system, you can extend the cable quite easily just by having longer ones made up. The cables aren't physically connected to the inside of the speakers but rather connected to two jacks on the back of the speakers, very similar to the ones you find on Hi-Fi speakers.

Even though the sound is still sent in analogue form to the speakers it reaches the DTT2500 decoder in digital format, unlike normal speakers where your soundcard outputs the audio stream in analogue format. The audio is streamed to the decoder in digital format and then it gets decoded into 6 separate channels, 5 for the surround sound and 1 for the subwoofer. Each speaker is then sent the respective sound in analogue format.

DIGITAL SOUND SYSTEM

Before the digital sound issue confuses anyone, let me explain what the term digital speakers infers.

Unfortunately only the SB Live! is capable of outputting the audio in digital format since it is the only soundcard that actually has the digital din connector used with the speaker system. The difference is in the decoder, most soundcards can't output Dolby Digital 5.1 sound by themselves and the decoder takes on this task. It has a built in 24-bit Digital to Analogue Converter (DAC) for this task, which is a lot more technologically advanced than the DAC on most soundcards. The DAC is responsible for decoding incoming audio streams and then converting them to 5.1 surround sound. It even simulates stereo from a stereo input over the 5.1 surround speaker system.

Inputs:

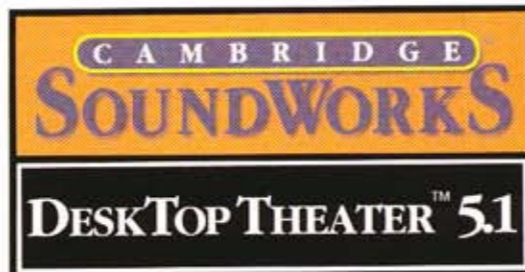
Front Speakers (Stereo Line-In)
Rear Speakers (Stereo Line-In)
AC-3 SPDIF Connector (DVD)
SB Live! Digital DIN Connector

Outputs:

Front Left Speaker
Front Right Speaker
Rear Left Speaker
Rear Right Speaker
Centre Speaker
Subwoofer Speaker
Additional Subwoofer Speaker

installing, it details everything from putting the stands together to sticking on the self adhesive information sticker onto the speakers. This might not sound too important but trying to find the right cable when there is 20+ meters of cabling lying behind your desk can become a task in itself if they aren't labelled properly.

The manual also details how to connect the CD-ROM for audio CD's and a DVD decoder for 5.1 surround sound together and to your soundcard for optimal digital performance and sound clarity. I only had to make one small adjustment, and that was removing the cable connecting my DVD decoder to the soundcard, since I would be making use of the AC-3 input port on the DTT2500 decoder. Other than these steps the installation only requires connection of the cables to the correct ports then you are set to blow the top of your roof off with the DTT2500 Digital speaker system, or if you are like me, waking up the neighbours at 3 o'clock in the morning.



DTT2500 Digital

The biggest advantage is apparent if you have a DVD decoder board, such as the Dxr 2 from Creative that is capable of outputting digital AC-3

sound. You need an AC-3 decoder in this scenario to actually listen to the sound, and the one included in the DTT2500 package fits the bill nicely. You can also connect a dedicated DVD player to the decoder, making the DTT2500 a viable option for setting up a little home theatre system in your living room. The decoder is also capable of mixing the input from the digital in and AC-3 input together making it an excellent choice for future games that will make use of AC-3 and your run of the mill wave files at the same time.

SUPPORTED SOUND CARDS

Although the DTT2500 system can be used with other soundcards besides the SB Live!, you will lack the digital advantage that the SB Live! offers. If you don't have a SB Live! it is preferred that you have a soundcard capable of outputting 4 independent sound channels, 2 front and 2 rear, to take advantage of the DTT2500 Digital speaker system, such as the SB Live! Value or Diamond MX300.

You can also use older soundcards that only has stereo output, but then you might as well buy normal two-way speakers, since you will still only hear the sound in stereo even when they are decoded to 5.1 surround sound. The only exception is when your card is capable of outputting Dolby Pro Logic analogue sound, in which case the sound will appear to have extra depth due to the extra sound being decoded into 4 channels, 1 right, 1 left, 1 centre and 1 surround sound stream.

The new DTT2500 Digital Desktop Theatre 5.1 surround sound speakers from Creative Labs is a definite must have for any serious music or gaming enthusiast. I am very impressed with the sound quality, new larger satellite speakers and bigger subwoofer, which add that extra OOMPH! to your gaming experience as well. The DTT2500 system is expensive, coming in at R2999.00, but once you plug it into your soundcard you know exactly what you paid for - crisp clear audio and a decoder capable of decoding Dolby Digital Surround Sound.

Pro's: Digital Input on Decoder
AC-3 Decoding
5.1 Surround Sound

Con's: Cost
Long Installation Time

R 2999.00 (RRP)
Multimedia Warehouse
(011) 315-1000
www.mmw.co.za



Rumours are flying around that S3 might be buying out Diamond Multimedia and its only fitting that we review the new Diamond Multimedia video card the Stealth III S540 that used the S3

Savage4 chipset. The card offers a combined 2D/3D solution as the new TNT2 and V3 cards do and ships in an AGP configuration with 2x and 4x AGP support. Not that it needs to use system memory since it has 32 MB of fast RAM on-board and this is enough to satisfy any new games for the coming year, and maybe even beyond. As with most of the new graphics cards currently shipping the S540 uses a 300 MHz RAMDAC making it capable of supporting extremely high resolutions and it has a maximum resolution of 1920x1440. Enough to satisfy even those of us that are privileged enough to own a high-end 21" monitor. The new Stealth III S540 from Diamond Multimedia

might not be as fast as the current RIVA TNT2 or Voodoo3 cards, but what it lacks in speed it makes up for in visual quality. S3 coined the phrase "bal-

Savage4's 32 bit rendering and you have a card that becomes hard to beat in the image quality department. Another plus is that the card supports 2048x2048 size textures making it a better choice than the Voodoo3 since the V3 only supports 256x256 textures. This allows the game to make use of the larger texture being used in games today.

Diamond Stealth III S540



- Advanced graphics technologies at an affordable price
- 32 bit rendering for superior 3D gaming images
- Life-like 3D image quality featuring S3TC texture compression
- Lightning fast, high resolution 128-bit Windows acceleration
- Streaming video and hardware-accelerated DVD playback

ance in speed and graphics quality" to market the product due its lower frame rates. The excellent graphics quality is due to S3's patented S3TC texture compression technology that is used. This allows the card to use higher resolution images than other 3D cards on the market while still only using the same amount of RAM. Combine this with the

Unfortunately the game developers have to make use of this advantage in their game and it requires that they include higher resolution textures for use on Savage4 based cards. So far all the major 3D game developers have pledged their support, even id Software with Quake 3, but the question remains just for how long will they support this proprietary technology. Without the support the card gives the same quality as the TNT2's and Voodoo3 cards. The Stealth III S540 is only R830.00 from CyberDyne Systems and is good value for money if you don't have the extra cash to fork out for a TNT2 or Voodoo3 based card. You get decent frame rates and graphics quality that has to be seen to be believed, Quake 3 looks especially good, since the game makes use of the S3TC technology. If you are in the market for a sub R1000.00 graphics card the Stealth III is definitely worth having a look at.

- Pro's:** Image Quality
Good Price
Decent Frame Rate
- Con's:** Not as Fast as TNT2 or Voodoo3
S3TC Needs - Developer Support

R 830.00 (RRP)
CyberDyne Systems
(011) 327-0237
www.cyberdyne.co.za

Saitek SP550

THE POOR MAN'S CONTROLLER/S

In the ever-evolving world of innovation we are constantly inundated with useless devices that are designed to make life easier. Every now and then a gaming device comes along and changes that perception by being practically correct. As dedicated gamers we are constantly changing between our favourite gamepad and joystick depending on the game we are currently playing. Why doesn't somebody design a combination device that can perform both these tasks? Step up and take a bow Saitek for being the first to take the plunge into the unknown. The Saitek SP550 is what you might call a 'new gamers peripheral'. It is made from a rigid plastic that looks and feels affordable yet it's design shouts expensive. Its

claim to fame is a unique combination of a 6-button joystick that unlocks to become a 4-button gamepad. How you ask? Well, the devices are designed to clip into one another allowing for quick and simple functionality between games. Two for the price of one mentality is thoroughly practical nowadays especially in

today's economic pressures. But do they perform the different functions with enough panache to make them a viable option? Yes, and more, they are from the stable that designed the NAG award winning Saitek X-36 Combo, so they know a thing or two about gaming devices. The gamepad is solid and sturdy in grip, but it does feel slightly bland and unattractive. It has an 8-way D-pad, 4 fire buttons and 2 trigger buttons, which is standard to most gaming requirements. In joystick mode the gamepad clips into the base of the joystick to add extra functions. The ergonomically designed grip is comfortable and caters for a wide range of

hand sizes, and offers 6 fire buttons (4 from the gamepad), hat switch (D-pad of gamepad) and a Slider Throttle. The joystick uses Saitek's new 'Precision Gimbal Mechanism' that offers constant operating feel in all directions and it uses fewer moving parts for less wear and tear on your device.

With an RRP of R429.00 this must be one of the most practical solutions to the new gamer looking to start his collection of gaming peripherals, and to the price conscious veteran that is looking for something innovative and easy to use. The package does not have any bundled software besides the driver requirements but who can expect that for something under R500.00.

To sum up the device I think that Saitek have developed something special in the SP550. Not only is the price in range (the device's work out to a cost of R215.00 each) but the device performs both functions admirably without losing value. If you don't have

Pro's: Two for the Price of One
Ergonomic Design
Throttle Slider

Con's: Cheap Plastic

R 429.00 (RRP)
Virtual Media Systems
(011) 768-6080
www.vms.co.za



Important Information
This section is for PlayStation exclusively, PC gamers please see the cover CD where we place any new cheats for PC games. The archive on the CD is ongoing and contains all PC cheats to date. In the future we may consider placing a PlayStation cheat archive on the CD.

Croc 2

Unlimited Crystals

Hold L1 and press Square, Square, Circle, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right at the title screen. Then hold R2 and press Square during the game to add one hundred crystals to the current total.

Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis

View All End Sequences

When the phrase "Press Start" appears on the main menu, press Up four times, Down four times, Left four times, then Right four times on Controller 2. You must do this very quickly.



Unlock Hidden Features

Each time you win a Grand Slam tournament you receive a new piece of equipment. Every time you win a Street tournament you will receive a secret character from other Namco games like Tekken 3, Time Crisis and Ridge Racer.

APE ESCAPE

Beat Specter Easily

In Specter's first stage in the level Monkey Madness, instead of using the Slingshot, just ram the machine using your Super Hoop.

Hidden Mini-Game Boxers

You can get extra boxers on the Specter Boxing mini-game by defeating them on Championship mode, although you'll have to run through it multiple times to get all of them.

Peak-Point Matrix

To get to the secret board in Ape Escape, you must beat Specter at the Level Monkey Madness (the carnival), wait till the ending finishes (including the credits), and then when the game gives you the option, go back to the Time Station and save your game. Then, go to all the levels, and finish catching the Monkeys you missed. When you catch every Monkey, the Peak-Point Matrix will open up, where you will get to fight Specter for the last time,

and finally catch him. Then, you'll see the true ending.

V-Rally

Cheat Mode

When the Infogrames logo appears on the white intro-screen, quickly press Up, Down, Triangle + Circle. The words "Lock Off" should appear. After that, enter any of the following codes to modify the game. Hold the final button (L1, R2) until you've selected your language, then release everything and get ready to roll.

No Time Limit

Left + L1

18 Extra Narrow Tracks

Left + L2

Restart in Arcade Mode

Left + R2

Debug Mode (Useless)

Left, Right

All Cheats

Left + L2 + L2 + R1 + R2

Need for Speed: Road Challenge



Enter these codes as a player name in the "User Name" option.
Note: Game saving will be disabled.

All police cars (in Hot Pursuit mode)
NFS PD

Police Helicopter (in Test Drive mode)
WHIRLY

Super Car
HOTROD

Titan Car
FLASH

Dashboard View

At the Loading screen, press and hold Up + Triangle + X.

Drunk Mode

At the Loading screen, press and hold Up + L2 + R1.

Turbo

First enable Dashboard view then, while driving, press Up.

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

Slow CPU Cars

At the Loading screen, press and hold Left + Square + Circle.



Heavy Car

At the Loading screen, press and hold Left + Square + Circle.

Wrong Way - Hot Pursuit

When the cops break-off their pursuit in order to set up a roadblock quickly turn around and the block will be set-up in the wrong direction. Turn back around and you can almost complete half a lap before they figure out they screwed up.

Memory Card Trick

For easy money and cars all you have to do is buy a car and enter a tournament and get at least \$20,000 no matter how many times you have to enter. As soon as you do, save it, then plug in the other controller and go to two-player mode and then to high stakes. Select the course and then it will read the memory card in slot one when it tries to read the card in slot two it won't find one so it will tell you to insert one. Take the card out of slot one and put it into two. As soon as you push race it will have to read both cards again so switch them. As soon as you start to race grab the second controller and push start and forfeit the race. It will say that you have beat the second player and you win his car so you will have duplicate cars. Do this as many times as you want and sell all the duplicate cars. It is very important that you always keep 2 cars or one car and \$20,000 dollars on the memory card, if you don't you will have to win more tournaments.



Asterix

Cheat Mode

Hold Triangle and press Up, Right, Down, Left (2), Down, Right, Up at the language selection screen. The phrase, "Cheat Mode Active" will appear to confirm correct code entry. Select a language and start a new game to access the cheat menu.



KNND 2: Crossfire

Passwords

KQULLZ

Last mission with The Evolved

GTH6JZ

Last mission with The Survivors

MHICYZ

Mission 7 with The Series 9

Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time

All Levels

At the "Era Selector" screen, hold L2 + R1 and press X, Square, R2, L1, Circle, X, Square, Square, Square.

Full Carrots

At the "Era Selector" screen, hold L2 + R1 and press X, Square, R2, L1, Circle, X, Square, Square, Circle.

View Ending Sequence

At the "Era Selector" screen, hold L2 + R1 and press X, Square, R2, L1, Circle, X, Circle, Square, Circle.

Silent Hill

Aiming in the Dark

When the light is off, accuracy when using the gun is reduced. When the light is turned off, carefully approach the enemy and shoot from close range to ensure a kill.



Complete Kills

When Harry has beaten an enemy, make sure he has completely taken it out or it may rise again to cause trouble, you know it's really dead when the radio goes completely silent.

Confrontations

It is not always best to confront every single enemy in the game, sometimes it's better to run away and save those bullets.

Darkness

If you find the night scenes too dark, try increasing the brightness level in the options menu.

Flying Monsters

It is difficult to pinpoint flying enemies. However, if Harry keeps a wall to his back, he can cut down on blind-side attacks.

Gun Aiming

When using guns, hitting the weapon button will aim at the nearest enemy in front of Harry. Hitting left or right on the directional button will change the aim on to the next enemy.



Gun Skill

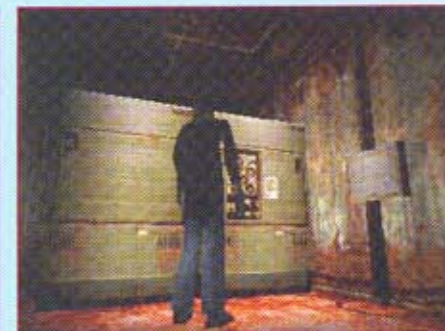
Since the character is a normal person with no special training in shooting a gun, his skill with it is marginal. Even in daylight or with the light on, his accuracy with the weapon is questionable and is certainly dependent on the distance. Try to let the enemies close in a bit to get off a sure hit.

Light and Sound

The creatures have eyes and ears and use these to locate the character. So if they are not alerted to the character's presence, they will not start attacking. If the light is turned off and the character is careful not to go right in front of the creatures, he can avoid needless confrontations. However, with the light off, the character cannot search or look at the map. Also his accuracy with projectile weapons will go way down. Therefore, it is not possible to complete the adventure with the light off.

Multiple Enemies

Harry will be quickly overwhelmed if surrounded by several enemies. When there are many enemies around



keep your distance or try turning off the light to avoid them. Try to keep confrontations to one-on-one situations.

Quick Turn

Pushing the L1 and R1 buttons simultaneously will make Harry quickly reverse his direction. This is useful for getting out of situations in which Harry is in danger quickly.

Radio

The radio will alert the player to a creature's presence with white noise. This white noise will change slightly depending on the number and distance of the creatures, so listen carefully. The creatures cannot hear this noise, so there is no reason to turn the radio off.

Search View

While pressing the L2 button, the camera angle changes to the Search View mode. This mode changes the focus of the camera from having the character centred on screen, to focus on where the character is looking. In this view mode, the player can look further forward and around corners. Utilise the Search View to your advantage.

Wielding Weapons

While using a weapon that you swing, the motion will change depending on how the action button is pressed. Tapping it quickly will make the weapon swing around, while holding it down will cause it to swing down or thrust, dependent on the weapon.

Extra Health Drinks in the Hospital

For three health drinks, search the wrecked Drink-Machine in the first floor of the hospital.

Silent Hill Street Names

The Silent Hill street names are all names of famous horror / science fiction writers. Perhaps there's a sci-fi fan on the Konami staff?

Hyper Blaster

The Hyper Blaster is actually the name of Konami's light gun for PlayStation and it even has the same shape in the game (although not the same colour).

Please send any cheat requests to assassin@nag.co.za.

What a month! My PC had to have a hard drive crash, and it had to be the one with our Cover CD on it. On top of this it had to happen a day before we have to send the CD in for duplication. Talk about bad timing! Fortunately we had it finished on time to give to our replication company and I must thank everyone here at NAG for not bothering me too often while I reconstructed the CD overnight, especially the Editors for letting my article deadlines slip ever so slightly. Next thing on my agenda is to contact my hard drive manufacturer and give him a piece of my mind about the 5 year Warranty, who knows I might be able to walk away with a completely new SCSI drive, unless of course they want to send it in for checking. Which from experience I know takes 6 months longer than you want it to be, and they will still come to the same conclusion - the thing is stuffed. As for my comic strip, I don't know what to tell you since the Editor hasn't told me anything new on the subject. Maybe you guys should just harass him a little and we might see it sometime this year. Send all harassment to ed@nag.co.za.... Revenge! Other than that, we are all anxiously awaiting the arrival of Tiberian Sun and hopefully



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF SHOOTING THE BREEZE WITH JOHN ROMERG AT E3

we get more than one copy or a fight will ensue when they drop it at the offices. It always seems that we get fewer copies of the good games and more of the crap ones. I wish the distributors started realising that they will be liable if I send any of my colleagues to hospital due to the fact they only send one copy of a game. Come to think of it, I think the Editor needs a week or two in hospital to work on my comic strip.

As for what games are coming in the next month, besides Tiberian Sun, you can have a look below. I have successfully passed my Crystal ball onto Michael who picks the upcoming titles for review. So far he has had better success than I have in reading its encrypted visions of the future.

That is it for this month from me, and I think I need some sleep now after my marathon session of recreating the Cover CD and writing articles. Please keep those competition entries and letters coming, it's one of the few mechanisms that we use to base our improvements in the magazine on. We always look forward to hearing from our readers. Almost forgot, please send any 'NAG in League with the Devil' emails to ed@nag.co.za as well, just in case you mistake the magazine cover as some ritual offering to the underground.

Watch out for these hot new titles next month!



DARKSTONE

Next month the NAG team leaves no stone unturned in our quest to find out if Darkstone is more exciting than just a pet rock simulation. The official and impressive sounding marketing line for the game describes it as a 3D medieval Role Playing Game that's easy to get into and difficult to leave... We'll just have to see about that - full review next month.



**COMMAND & CONQUER
TIBERIAN SUN**

One of the most hyped games of all time will finally be reaching our quivering and unworthy palms next month. The entire team at the office has been engaging in some seriously sad and persistent grovelling at the Ed's feet in the hope they might be the chosen one to review the game. Too bad the Ed's already booked it for himself and has told nobody, as he likes all the attention.



BRAVEHEART

Anyone who saw the movie by the same name will be wondering just how exactly they've managed to capture all the emotion and thrills the Hollywood blockbuster had. To tell you the truth we're also wondering. Wondering if this is another shoddy money-making licensing deal or will the game actually be decent, find out next month... now where's my sword?



HOMEFRONT

If you've seen the screenshots or read the marketing pitch on this game you can be forgiven for thinking that they're making it all up. But we can safely say it's all as true as the driven snow. [The dangers of creative license! - Ed] Absolutely everything we've seen so far on this game be it an early alpha or bug ridden beta has been nothing short of deliciously yummy.



QUAKE II

Don't laugh or you might end up laughing on the other side of your alien invasion force, Quake II is arriving for the PlayStation. Using a modified engine, this game promises to bring to the PlayStation what it has brought to the PC. Violence. Addiction. Late nights. Hunger. Deathmatch. Poverty (after spending food money on hardware).



CROC 2

The design document looked like this: The player controls a crocodile around a pile of levels collecting things and killing other things until he gets to the end and finds a full motion video telling him how clever he is. Sounds like a good idea, now all we need is a few years development time and some graphics and we're all set... right? NAG finds out in the next issue.

Hmm, it's a toss up between Age of Empires 2 and Rainbow Six 2: Rogue Spear. Now let's see, who wants to play a little Quake 3!
KEEP FRAGGIN, KICKIN BUTT, STRATEGIZING, SPORTSIZING AND PLAYING GAMES - SOUL ASSASSIN

Introducing the Logitech Collection Hot technology in refreshing designs



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- 33 Programmable buttons
- Digital precision
- Three 8 way hat-switches



Wingman Force

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- Sturdy two hand base
- 5 Programmable buttons
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- USB or serial connector



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- Feel more, react quicker, drive faster
- 270 degrees rotation
- Four programmable buttons
- USB or serial connector
- Dead pedal foot rest



MouseMan+

- Design for precision and comfort
- Unique soft covering for better grip and handling.
- 3 Year Warranty



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

CREW



Buying products from a computer dealer
and paying inflated retail prices?

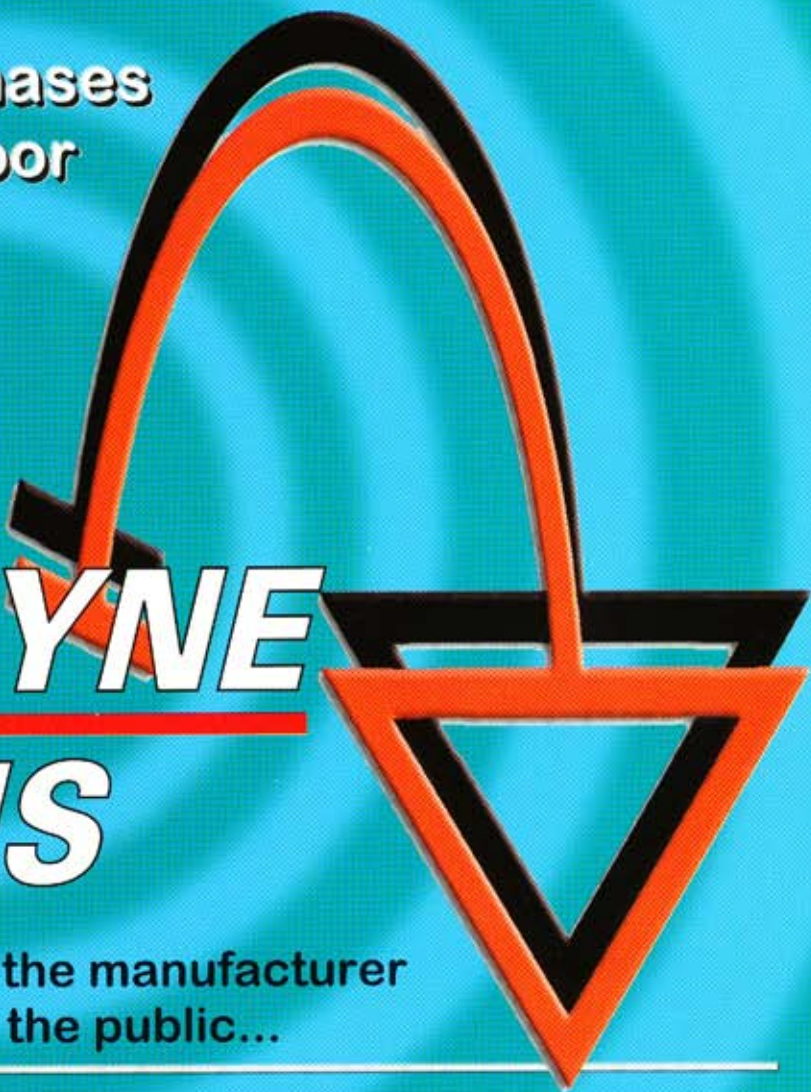
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CYBERDYNE SYSTEMS S.A.(PTY)LTD.

IT PAYS TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE IMPORTER

Tel: (011) 327 0237 Fax: (011) 327 0806 Fax: (011) 268 0088 Email: sales@cyberdyne.co.za

CyberDyne House, 32 Melville Road, Illovo, Sandton

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our latest price
list as new products
arrive, contact us to
receive a faxed copy,
or send email to
sales@cyberdyne.co.za.

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