

# G NEW AGE GAMING G

S O U T H A F R I C A

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN PC AND PLAYSTATION GAMING MAGAZINE



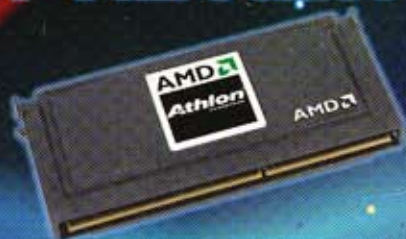
EXPECTATIONS REACHED?



THE AGE OF KINGS TO RULE OR NOT TO RULE?

## HOMEWORLD

NO HYPE ALL GAME EXCLUSIVE FIRST REVIEW



NEW KING OF THE CPU HILL

### LEGACY of KAIN SOUL REAVER

IMPALING PREVIEW

PS2 REVEALED PC KILLER?



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# ED's Note

## THE ROAD TO HELL

I've recently taken up squash (now don't worry, we're not going to be doing a five page squash game roundup anytime soon). However, if you're wondering why, read on and I'll tell you, if you couldn't care less, sorry this is my space and I'll abuse it in any way I like. There is a point coming out of all this anyway, so you might as well put up with my personal saga just a little. So, the squash thing is my way of justifying the time I spend sitting down and soaking up monitor radiation. I'm starting to think that I'm getting lazy (physically that is) and I'm ending up agreeing with myself more and more, not to mention that coastal holidays are coming up sooner than my waistline is disappearing. The two fold point I'm getting to here is firstly to all you gamers out there, get up and run around the garden every now and then so you'll live long enough to play the next seven versions of Quake. Secondly, participating in sport clears the mind, unshackling it to come up with insights and profound thoughts, one of which I had just the other day... What do you think would happen if technology froze where it is today, no more new 3D chipsets or processors, no more advances in audio technology, Peripherals or the ever increasing size of your hard drive? The computer on your desk, as it is right now, forever. Besides every other sphere of life on Earth, what would the implications be on something as simple as gaming? As I see it games these days are driven and led by technology, not programming techniques or new advances in coding optimisation. Developers rely on technology more than innovation to keep impressing the game playing community - unlike the PlayStation where developers only have a platform this big and must somehow keep improving the quality of games by pure innovation alone. I'm not talking about new concepts or different genres; I'm talking about the real improvements, new techniques to shift polygons faster through programming alone and not because the latest 3D card can now support a greater colour depth and resolution. Why is it that we pursue this technology beast with such fervour when we know it'll all end in tears? Debating aside, I'll return to my original question... I wonder where we'll be in a few years if somehow all new technology development for the PC stopped? What would the games look like five years from that point... Just how much are these game developers not squeezing out of the existing technology and more importantly why do we find games that don't support everything new out there somehow lacking? If you think you have all the answers to these questions then please drop me a mail and we can argue about it in the next issue - who knows, perhaps someone out there has a solution or at the very least a reasonable argument and case for the developers.

Michael James, Editor

### THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Firstly, an apology to all those readers out there who experienced difficulty with last months cover CD... the ironic thing is that in the process of trying to improve things we made a left turn instead of a right and ended up five turns back. The responsible people have had their game playing privileges revoked for a week. If you couldn't access last months CD interface then simply run the goodies on the disc from within Windows Explorer, once again, sorry and it really shouldn't happen again. Secondly, I'd like to thank Daniel Botha for helping out with this issue while he was temporarily working here as part of a school project (read Bits & Bytes for more information), it's nice to see that so many people are so interested in what we do here. Thirdly, stop reading this and get to the back page, our cartoon has arrived and each month we'll give you a little insight into the workings of New Age Gaming, the people behind the show and what we really do all day. The cartoon is yet another slice of inspiration from Shryke who is turning out to be more useful than we could ever have imagined. Lastly, we now have a new column called Rampage within these hallowed pages, the main focus behind the editorial there is to uncover the truth behind the hype or as the writer of the column put it, stop picking your noses and start thinking, rude fellow. If you have any comments about the topic or just want to shower praise then send a mail and we'll make you famous.

**NEW AGE GAMING**  
SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN GAMING MAGAZINE

AN  
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Volume 2 **NEW AGE GAMING** Issue 7  
SOUTH AFRICA

## HOMEWORLD demo

feel the call to ACTION...

- DEMOS INCLUDED:
- BattleZone II Driver
  - Jagged Alliance 2
  - Mig Alley
  - Prince of Persia 3D
  - Rally Championship 2000
  - Septerra Core



Action is the watchword on this month's CD

## cover cd

### DEMOS

- Homeworld
- BattleZone II
- Darkstone
- Driver
- Jagged Alliance 2
- Mig Alley
- Prince of Persia 3D
- Rally Championship 2000
- Rogue Spear
- Septerra Core

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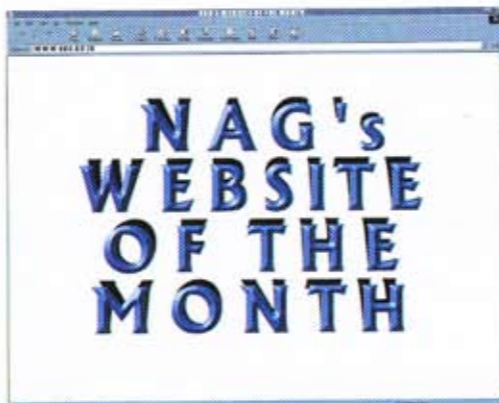
For many long years, the Lord of the Rings has been considered the definitive work of fantasy fiction. It's author, John Ronald Reuel (JRR) Tolkien, is considered the father of modern fantasy fiction by all who read it. This amazing tale, which took twelve years to write, was first published in 1949, as a follow on to the also well known The Hobbit. The world of Middle Earth was, and still is, one of the most complete settings ever created by an author. It captured the hearts and minds of all who sojourned there, by way of the novel,

**THE ROAD GOES EVER ON AND ON  
DOWN FROM THE DOOR WHERE IT BEGAN  
NOW FAR AHEAD THE ROAD HAS GONE  
AND I MUST FOLLOW IF I CAN  
PURSUING IT WITH EAGER FEET  
UNTIL IT JOINS SOME LARGER WAY  
WHERE MANY PATHS AND ERRANDS MEET  
AND WHITHER THEN I CANNOT SAY**  
- Fellowship of the Ring

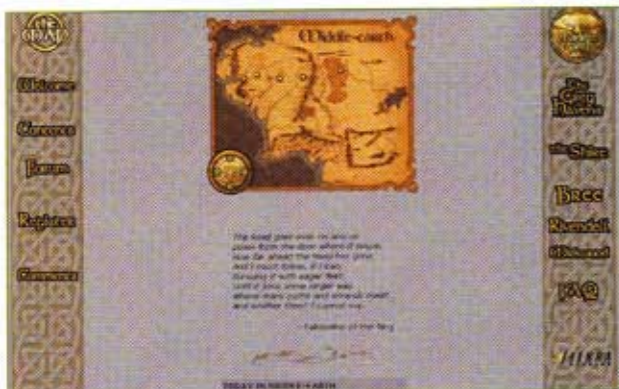
playing game set in Tolkien's amazing fantasy world. To find out more about this game, it is vital to check out [www.middle-earth.com](http://www.middle-earth.com).

As web sites go, this one is one of the best we've seen. Just from a plain look point of view, this is beautifully put together. The entire site looks like it belongs together, yet there is a wonderful non-conformity to it that keeps it fresh and new, no matter which page you visit. Navigating the web site is simple, with the designers obviously having put a lot of consideration into ease of use. But what makes [www.middle-earth.com](http://www.middle-earth.com) such a wonderful web site is the absolute wealth of information to be found on it. There are very few reference works about Tolkien's world that are as complete, yet easy to read and entertainingly light in approach. Full details about all the regions of Middle Earth can be found here, as

explained by "natives" of the areas. These are flavourful and interesting insights into the world that the new game will be set in. Each region page has various links of interest, dealing with topics pertaining to the regions in question.



Aside from the usual FAQ's, billboards and such that always populate sites of this nature, a very interesting and thorough biography of JRR Tolkien is also provided for those who wish to learn more about the brilliant man behind Middle Earth. With a web site like this to judge by, it is quite certain that we can expect big things from the game when it finally surfaces on our shores. And, quite honestly, it's about time that someone undertook a project based on Tolkien's work. Of course, hats off to the brave souls that have undertaken this truly enormous venture!



and is still ever popular to this day. Tolkien's work has also been captured in popular entertainment, including films and role playing games. Now, however, Sierra FX is working on a new computer gaming experience: an on-line role

### NR6's Favourite Websites of the Month

<p><a href="http://www.rally99.com">http://www.rally99.com</a></p>	<p><a href="http://www.e3.net">http://www.e3.net</a></p>	<p><a href="http://www.nocturne.nu">http://www.nocturne.nu</a></p>	<p><a href="http://www.playstation.co.za">http://www.playstation.co.za</a></p>
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So often, web sites dedicated to games get rather tiresome. More often than not, they contain just a few pictures and tons of press releases and hype. This site contains all of the above, but the true beauty of it lies in the vast amounts of pictures and in-game artwork available for browsing. There are several different categories of pictures available for perusal, making the site wonderful in terms of promoting the in-game graphics. The site is nicely constructed and easy to navigate. Copious options present themselves to the visitor, in the form of a link bar near the top of the page. This is not the most attractive way to navigate a web site, and we have seen far more exciting things done with site maps and the like, but it's clear, concise, and, above all, it works! This will certainly be one of the hottest motor sport titles of next year. Get the scoop at [www.rally99.com](http://www.rally99.com).

Here's a site dedicated to gaming that takes a slightly different slant on things. Instead of being dedicated to a single game, the site is a resource related to the recent E3 exhibition that took place in Los Angeles, California. The site is FULL of information for gamers to make use of. However, one of the most interesting pursuits is not in the game related topics, but in the various industry scoops that the site presents. Although E3 is very certainly a thing of the past, there are still several interesting things to find out about the greatest Electronic Entertainment show on earth. Check out the awards pages to find out which games are bound to be brilliant, or take a look at the various exhibitors that took part in the show. Sound bytes, pictures and more make this site the next best thing to actually walking those hallowed exhibition halls.

Every so often a game comes along that pushes the envelope just so much further than its competitors. One such game is Nocturne, a dark adventure into the world of the unknown. This is most certainly a disturbing investigation into the dark side of life. Nocturne is an engrossing, scary tale guaranteed to raise goose flesh on your skin and make you look over your shoulder more than once. As with most developer sites, this site is full of screen shots, press releases and similar information, the sole purpose of which is to promote the game and create hype. But, judging by the previews listed under the press link, the hype is all well deserved. It seems that people around the world are incredibly impressed by this stunning piece of software. This is a beautifully eerie web site with tons of information about Nocturne. Be sure to stop by during your next surfing session.

It's finally here an official web site for the South African PlayStation gamer. I was primarily impressed by the front page, although a little empty, the few animations ran smoothly and it is not congested like some web sites these days that give you so many decisions you don't really know where to start. Three simple categories Play-Pen, Play news and Play to win are presented conveniently on the page, with a pop up main menu bar in the heading bar. This menu features many links to the different features of the site, these include a section containing an up to date cheat list, a well-composed top ten list with the basic plot and player actions for all ten games and a rather short catalogue of PlayStation clothing. Any visitor can see at first glance that this site is still young due to its lack of content in some sections, but it definitely has potential.

# JAGGED ALLIANCE



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## UNREAL - TO LET



The powerhouse 3D engine behind the incredible first person shooter, Unreal is attracting keen development interest from the most unlikely places. In addition to independent game developers, the engine is currently being used as a platform to host virtual tours through ancient and historic buildings, there is even a martial arts training program that relies on the engine as its virtual dojo. The most diverse usage so far has to be Unreality, an advanced architectural design program that uses the engine as a visualisation and presentation tool when showing off commercial real estate to potential buyers. The main reason why Epic's Unreal engine is such a sought after development platform is its flexibility, making it an obvious choice for programmers who don't want to spend eighty percent of their time creating a new engine from scratch. Besides the juicy graphical splendour the engine offers - it also brings to the table sound networking code, artificial intelligence and realistic texture mapping. All these out-of-the-box features allow developers to spend more time on creating atmosphere, story line and graphical effects.

## NEW CHIPS FROM S3

Sigh, we've only just finished spending our hard-earned cash on the current crop of 3D accelerators and already the next wave of expensive technology and innovation is about to break onto our cash-strapped shores. S3 has announced a new chipset, the Savage2000 that makes and details all sorts of elaborate and hard to understand statements and specifications. The very stripped down basics look like this: 128-bit memory support, 64MB of memory, resolutions of up to 1600 by 1200, 32-bit colour depth, full DVD and DTV support, and so on... The list is long and distinguished but as always we'll have to wait and see what the other 3D chip manufacturers are up to before passing judgement. In the meantime go and have a look at <http://www.s3.com> for all those technical specifications that no one ever understands. In other related news, Diamond Multimedia should be the first retail board available with the new chip set, imaginatively



called the Viper 2 series, which will probably come in two different flavours to correspond with the two different models of the new Savage2000 range, the Savage2000 and the Savage2000+. We'll check it out when it arrives.

## TUROK: RAGE WARS

Acclaim has launched a new web site for the next game in the Turok franchise. The site is visible on any clear day at <http://www.turok.com>. Acclaim has focused heavily on the multiplayer elements of this new game while still delivering heart pounding single player action to the gaming masses. The single player aspect will feature a performance dependent mission tree along with advanced enemy AI. Currently there are four new multiplayer game modes on offer and around 36 deathmatch maps as well as a new

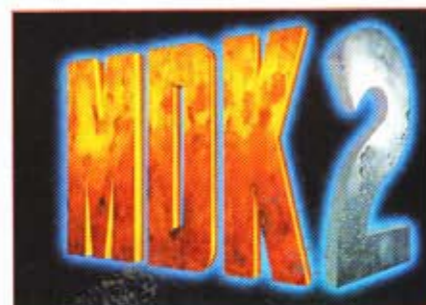


training option. The game will have around seventeen different characters to play, fourteen of which can only be unlocked in the single player mode. Besides characters there will also be twenty-five player skins, nineteen ranks, over fifty medals and sixteen weapons to play with. In addition to all this there are a few power-ups on offer including invisibility and stone skin. If you're tired of playing against computer controlled creatures and have no friends handy for a quick multiplayer skirmish then you can take on up to six computer controlled multi-player 'friends' in a fierce fight to the death. Considering that the last instalment in this series was a cracking good title we have much to look forward to, coming soon...



## KURT IS BACK

MDK 2 is almost upon us, which is good news for fans of the first game, a weird but compelling action adventure with the coolest sniper mode ever. This next game is still going to follow the bizarre and humorous style of the last one but the strange news is that none other than development team BioWare will be making the game - the same BioWare that put Baldur's Gate on the map. In the game, the same team will be returning to battle the foul aliens, including that crazy flying dog with an appetite for destruction and Kurt, the king of the snipers. The game is due for release as soon as it's finished and we'll be picking it apart just for you!



## BLACK & WHITE

No one needs to introduce Peter Molyneux, formerly of Bullfrog, creator of the original Dungeon Keeper and inventor of the god game genre. He's been very quiet for the last few months setting up his small development house, Lionhead Studios and is currently developing Black & White, a game that promises to do for real time strategy titles what Populous started for God games. Described as an artificial life simulation your entire interface is represented by a disembodied hand, spells can be cast, creatures disciplined and you can



even move through the game world without ever having to touch the keyboard. If that doesn't sound innovative enough then consider the 3D engine that allows you to zoom from cloud height right down into the middle of a village, add to this a special 3D glasses mode and you have something quite spectacular. Your 'units' will be made up of any local wildlife you can persuade to join your side including apes, cows, tigers and other strange and exotic fauna. Is anyone drooling right



now? Well sorry you'll have to wait until next year, around March, but if the first Dungeon Keeper is anything to go by expect it in another four years time when you'll haul out this issue and laugh at this unusually accurate, from a chronological point of view, news item.

## FINAL FANTASY ON PLAYSTATION 2

SquareSoft has confirmed that there will be a Final Fantasy for the PlayStation 2 (as if there was ever any doubt). The interesting thing is that the game will cost around \$40 million to produce - setting a new record that in turn should result in an awesome game. Can there be anything better than playing any Final Fantasy on Sony's new dream machine... nothing comes to mind!

## IN THE CAN FOR DOOM

Don't hold your breath while you wait for the release of the movie, Doom, according to a number of sources the movie of the game has been officially canned. John Carmack told reporters that TriStar Pictures let the option on the project lapse and also went as far as calling the couple of scripts they read, awful.

## WARCRAFT III SOON!

In a not so surprising move Blizzard have announced their next big game, Warcraft III. The news was met with mixed opinions considering that this next instalment in the Warcraft series is making a drastic departure from the



Warcraft we all know and love. The game is carving its own genre, the role-playing strategy title where instead of base building, resource gathering and army massing you'll end up controlling a small group of adventurers as they undertake quests and engage non-player computer controlled characters. Blizzard is quick to stress that Warcraft III isn't going to be like any other role-playing game out there and will involve plenty of exploration, interaction and bloodletting, saying that the game is still essentially a strategy game, only different. Some of the more impressive features the title promises include, six different races with their own unique qualities, an engrossing and detailed environment with wandering monsters, temples and weather effects. Incredible skeletal and skin animation, advanced design tools and improved multiplayer aspects are also listed. The game has already been in development for over a year and is set for release early 2000, more news at <http://www.blizzard.com>. Watch for a monster preview in NAG soon.



## DIRECTX 7.0 LATE, AGAIN!

### Slipped DirectX 7.0

After a number of announcements, promises and pure desperate speculation it seems that Microsoft's latest DirectX, version 7.0 is going to be delayed, again. The application protocol interface (API) should arrive on the scene by the time you read this, we hope. The API was due for a debut launch at this year's ECTS trade show, but due to a number of undisclosed issues did not. Developers and gamers alike are anticipating this new release for a number of reasons including the fact that the new version will support Creative Lab's environmental audio extensions and also feature support for S3's texture compression algorithm. What this all really boils down to is that you can expect better playing, sounding and looking games in the not too distant future. Just remember to update those hardware drivers or all of Microsoft's hard work and effort will simply pass you by unnoticed.

## RUN THEM DOWN, AGAIN

The controversial computer game series, Carmageddon is about to be joined by another release going by the name of Death Race 2000. Besides the obvious movie tie in this one promises to pull no punches in the artful but tasteless business of running down pedestrians and wildlife for points. As usual with anything that has subtitles or numbers in the title, a sequel should offer some improvement over the last effort and not only graphically either. The biggest new feature is a massive boost in the artificial intelligence department, in which your opponents are more organised, and will often hunt you down using group tactics. The infamous pedestrians have also received a brain boost and will now interact with their environment, crossing roads and huddling in terrified groups. Unfortunately, the game is only slated for release sometime during the middle of next year so until then keep those fists clenched on that steering wheel - relief is almost here.



## WESTWOOD IS MAKING A NOISE AGAIN

Amazingly enough, so soon after the release of their long awaited title Tiberian Sun, Westwood have announced their latest project. Set in the Command & Conquer universe, Renegade, formerly known as the Commando Project, will be their attempt at cracking the



popular 3D-action genre. The game will be a third-person action game (with no puzzle solving or ledge leaping) that will see a lone commando taking on all the bad guys in whatever mission he finds himself in, using devious tactics to outsmart the enemy. The commando character will also be able to capture enemy vehicles including tanks, armoured personal carriers and even harvesters, although it's hard to imagine anything exciting about driving around in a harvester, you'll probably just get lost and drive right into the enemy base. The game should arrive sometime next year, but in typical Command & Conquer fashion, that could be anytime in the next few years.

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## NEW AGE GAMING PRICE COMPARISON

Game Title	Incredible Connection	CNA Interactive	Toys R Us	Reggies
G-Police: Weapons of Justice (PSX)	R 219.99	R 369.00	None	None
Croc 2 (PSX)	R 349.99	R 349.00	R 399.00*	R 399.99*
Point Blank 2 (PSX)	R 349.99	R 369.00	None	None
Castrol Super Bikes (PSX)	R 459.99	R 469.00	None	None
Jagged Alliance 2 (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
EA Premier League Stars (PC)	R 199.99	R 199.00	NA	NA
Dungeon Keeper 2 (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.99	NA	NA
Tiberian Sun (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA

\*Includes Memory Card

### 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

#### OCTOBER

- 01 - Age of Empires II - MICROSOFT
- 01 - Giants - INTERPLAY
- 01 - Odium - MONOLITH
- 01 - Star Trek: Klingon Academy - INTERPLAY
- 01 - Tonic Trouble - UBI SOFT
- 07 - Army Men: Toys in Space - 3DO
- 08 - MS Flight Simulator 2000 - MICROSOFT
- 11 - MtG Interactive Encyclopedia - TSR
- 12 - Alpha Centauri: Alien Crossfire - EA
- 12 - Comanche 4 - EA
- 12 - Septerra Core - MONOLITH
- 12 - USAF: Jane's - EA
- 15 - Asheron's Call - MICROSOFT
- 15 - Battlezone 2 - ACTIVISION
- 15 - Heroes Millennium Edition - 3DO
- 19 - Ace Nevada Casino - HASBRO
- 19 - Delta Force 2 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 19 - NASCAR Revolution SE - EA
- 20 - Wheel of Time - GT INTERACTIVE
- 22 - Family Game Pack Royal - 3DO
- 22 - Grand Theft Auto 2 - ROCKSTAR GAMES
- 25 - Team Fortress II - SIERRA
- 26 - FIFA 2000 - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 26 - Monopoly II - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
- 26 - SU-27: Flanker 2.0 - MINDSCAPE
- 28 - Planescape: Torment - INTERPLAY

#### NOVEMBER

- 01 - F-18 Super Hornet - INTERPLAY
- 01 - Hired Guns - PSYGNOSIS
- 01 - Nocturne - GOD
- 01 - Trivial Pursuit NASCAR - HASBRO
- 02 - Interstate 82 - ACTIVISION
- 02 - Need for Speed: Motor City - EA
- 02 - NOX - EA
- 02 - Quake III: Arena - ACTIVISION
- 02 - Tachyon: The Fringe - NOVALOGIC
- 08 - Force Commander - LUCASARTS
- 09 - Ultima: Ascension - ORIGIN
- 12 - Rising Sun - TALONSOFT
- 16 - Sim Theme Park - ELECTRONIC ARTS
- 16 - Slave Zero - INFOGRAMES
- 22 - Age of Wonders - GOD
- 22 - Monopoly Casino - HASBRO
- 22 - Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation - EIDOS
- 23 - B17 Flying Fortress - HASBRO
- 24 - Warcraft Battle Chest Platinum - SIERRA

### PSX RELEASE LIST

#### OCTOBER

- 01 - Mission Impossible - INFOGRAMES
- 01 - Test Drive 6 - INFOGRAMES
- 01 - Off-Road Racing 3 - INFOGRAMES
- 01 - Rainbow Six - SOUTHPEAK
- 05 - Formula One 1999 - ACTIVISION
- 12 - CyberTiger Woods Golf - EA
- 12 - Final Fantasy Anthology - EA
- 12 - Metal Gear Solid VR Mission - KONAMI
- 12 - Tony Hawk's Skater - ACTIVISION
- 12 - Warpath: Jurassic Park - EA
- 15 - Army Men: Air Attack - 3DO
- 15 - Army Men: Sarge's Heroes - 3DO
- 15 - Crusaders of Might & Magic - 3DO
- 15 - Fighting Force 2 - EIDOS
- 15 - Trickin' Snowboarder - CAPCOM
- 15 - Tron Bonne - PLAYSTATION - CAPCOM
- 18 - Messiah - INTERPLAY
- 19 - Alien Resurrection - FOX INTERACTIVE
- 19 - Crash Team Racing - SCEA
- 19 - Dune 2000 - EA
- 21 - Grand Theft Auto 2 - ROCKSTAR GAMES
- 26 - FIFA 2000 - EA
- 26 - Grandia - SCEA

#### NOVEMBER

- 01 - Darkstone - TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE
- 01 - Earthworm Jim 3D - TAKE 2
- 01 - Men in Black - ELECTRO SOURCE
- 01 - Railroad Tycoon 2 - TAKE 2
- 01 - Superman - INTERPLAY
- 02 - Cool Boarders 4 - SCEA
- 02 - Knockout Kings 2000 - EA
- 02 - Road Rash Unchained - EA
- 02 - Spyro 2 - SCEA
- 02 - Wu Tang - ACTIVISION
- 09 - Gran Turismo 2 - SCEA
- 09 - Ready 2 Rumble Boxing - MIDWAY
- 09 - Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000 - EA
- 10 - Resident Evil 3: Nemesis - CAPCOM
- 15 - 3D Stunt Track Driver - MATTEL
- 15 - Panzer General Assault - MINDSCAPE
- 15 - Shadow Tower - AGETEC
- 15 - Spec Ops Stealth Patrol - TAKE TWO
- 16 - Konami Rally - KONAMI
- 16 - Missile Command - HASBRO
- 16 - Tomorrow Never Dies - EA
- 16 - Toy Story 2 - ACTIVISION
- 22 - Tomb Raider 4: Last Revelation - EIDOS

During the final put together of this issue we had a fresh face office guest, Daniel Botha. As part of a school project he had to find a 'real' job for two weeks, and he decided that *something* at New Age Gaming would be the sample career for him, for reasons we still cannot fathom. Part of the job at any magazine obviously involves a little writing\* so without further ado, here's his effort...

\*Some small print: New Age Gaming takes no responsibility for the following article and will not enter into correspondence with teachers about disallowed spelling words due to excessive computer game playing...!

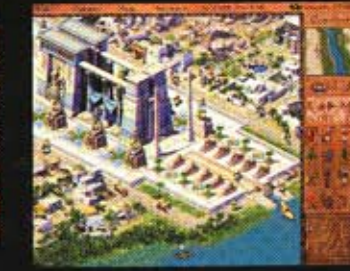
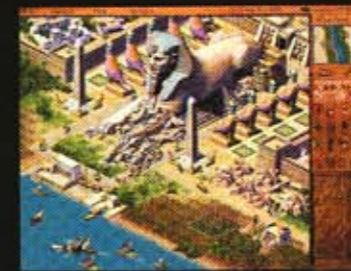
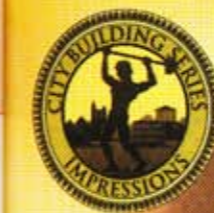
### MY TWO WEEKS AT THE NAG OFFICE

(The true life story of a South African youth in extreme situations)

It seems like a year ago when I was ecstatically dancing around the room after reading Big Ed's e-mail stating that I had been given a job for two weeks at the NAG office. I immediately phoned my friends to tell them that I actually had a job that I was looking forward to. Unlike some of my peers who, while I write this are answering phones, balancing cheque books or trying to avoid having their hand bitten off by a rabid dog. And so it was with a rapidly inflating head that I handed my job form to my teacher, stating that I had a job at the best magazine in South Africa. I just couldn't hold in that sadistic laugh when my good friend disclosed that he would be working at a vet, where he had to sign a form stating that the vet held no responsibility whatsoever for any injuries or loss of body parts occurring during the two week period. He was told that he would be handling the animals that were brought in to the vet, regardless of size or mental condition.

The following day was to be the first of many trips from Benoni to the NAG offices in Randburg. I don't actually know what I expected to find, but basically I pictured a tall building with people running around in suits and ties and bowing to Big Ed. What I found was nothing of the sort. On arrival I was shocked to find a seemingly informal house with no apparent activity in it. Nevertheless I sucked in my gut and prayed that I was not going to be shot in the head by some gun totting fool who owned the property. It only took one look at the shelf across the room bursting with games to tell me that I had come to the right place. Shaking hands with the staff was very reassuring, as I was sure I was going to be hopelessly underdressed in my T-shirt and pants [what are you trying to say? Ed]. After a short while I became familiar with all the members of the NAG family and the highly qualified office guard cats, NAG and Big Boy. The random jobs that were given to me were relatively easy but I could make no mistake of the dedication and importance of each team member and their jobs. It became apparent that without everyone working together as a team and each person doing their job to the best of their ability, the magazine could never be produced as it is. I realised that it is not the building or the dress system that makes a productive office, but the dedication and commitment of each team member. These two weeks gave me a huge insight into the fine art of a "computer entertainment magazine" and I never will forget the many things I have learned here. I would like to thank New Age Gaming for offering me this opportunity and I would like to give my apologies to my school C.B.C Boksburg for not returning to school, I don't think I'll be able to face going back.

...Daniel Botha



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## Role Playing Rumble

While standing waiting for an inevitably late bus, I happened to engage a youngster in a conversation. The lad, somewhere in his mid teens if the angry acne blotches on his face were any indication, was one of those types. You know the kind - the ones who wear jeans with the crotch between their knees, backward baseball caps and strange dog chains at their sides (the reason for which I still have to fathom). What would possess someone to wear pants fifteen sizes too large, accompanied by a Rottweiler's choke chain is far beyond me. But I digress. Our conversation meandered from topic to topic until it finally came to rest on computer games. "So," I said, "I assume that you play quite a lot of games then?" "Well, like, ja, like, fully, like, broo," was his response. I am under the impression that he was answering affirmatively; I took it as such anyway. It is a marvellous talent that today's teenagers possess - the ability to insert the word like in every possible position in a sentence. But I digress yet again. After a few seconds he added, "I, like, really, like, like, like role playing games, you like make out, broo?" "Oh really," I responded, lifted by the thought of having found a kindred spirit. "What do you play? Dungeons & Dragons? Call of Cthulhu? Vampire?" "I dunno those, broo. Were they like, made by the guys who, like, invented, like Baldur's Gate?" A cold realisation dawned on me. I was obviously talking to a completely uneducated cretin. Which by way of a long meandering example sort of leads me to my point. There is absolutely no way that any computer game can ever hope to aspire to the status of a role playing game. Never. No way. Real role playing games, like those three that I mentioned to Mr Rottweiler-in-my-shorts, would never be able to be played on a computer. No developer has the talent, facilities or ability to create a true computer based role playing game. It is just not possible. Why, you ask, ready to begin sending me really nasty e-mail. If you don't know, perhaps I can introduce you to Mr I-can't-tell-my-pants-size. You've got a lot in common. However, before that, I shall give you the benefit of the doubt, just in case you had a really poor education and don't really know what role playing games are supposed to be.

A true role playing game is a work of imagination. Everything takes place in the player's mind, where anything is possible. Everything is spoken by the players, who co-operate to create a rich, full tale. It is a social activity by nature, where people actually play roles (hence role playing games, dummy) by representing their characters,

**Our foul mouthed colleague RamJet delves into the controversial issue of whether PC Role Playing Games on computers is actual role playing.**

Any comments or replies (or general slating) can be sent to [rampage@nag.co.za](mailto:rampage@nag.co.za)

much as an actor would play a part. They actually surpass the boundaries of a game, and enter into the realms of the arts. They take true skill, thought and imagination to play, because they are limited only by the player's minds. So how can anything played on a computer rightly be called a role playing game? I enjoy computer games immensely, but this fact has always escaped me. These games, which are solidly plagiarised from real role playing games, spoon-feed the



computer game. Yes, you may get two or three choices, but the true freedom, scope and scale of a human being's imagination can never be emulated by a mere PC programme. All you do while playing a PC game is click on the option best suited to your current mood. You don't have to plan, scheme or manipulate your way to the conclusion of the tale. All that you are really doing is piggy-back riding on someone else's imagination. Which is what certain game developers do in the first place. Take, for example, a very popular fantasy based computer game that came on the market not so long ago. A good game, yes, but while everyone was marvelling at it's

nature, the true role players were pointing out that virtually every word had been scaped from the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons rule books. This was done with AD&D's permission, granted, but that hardly qualifies what was nothing more than an unmitigated work of binary plagiarism. And, even then, the game in question could not even hold a candle to the bright light that is true role-playing. But what really bites my ass is the fact that people start getting all catty and stupid when you tell them that they wouldn't know a role playing game if it kicked them in the nether regions. These sterling examples of intelligence vehemently defend the fact that computer games are role playing games, full stop. And it gets even worse. I have run

into several of these creatures who even call themselves role players. They actually have the bald faced temerity to state that they have been playing role playing games for blah years, and that they are experienced role players. That is a badge you don't get to wear, buddy. Spending what amounts to years of relying on someone else's imagination does not a role player make. Instead, it creates a slug with no ambition to use his God given abilities to think, imagine and create with his mind. The games are not to blame, of course, and neither are the developers. These guys are only in it for the money,

which is pretty acceptable in this day and age. No, the ones who have to bear the brunt of real role players are the little maggots who claim to be what they're not. Get real, people. Call them adventures. Call them puzzle-solving games. Call them logical interactive tales. But please, don't, like, insult role playing games more than you, like, already have.

player every piece of information needed to play. It takes no imagination to play them. You see everything, you hear everything, and you are told everything. This alone goes directly against the grain of what Gary Gygax, the guy who actually invented role playing long before 286's were a twinkle in their creator's eye, intended. And you don't even play a role in a

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# juSt cHARTs

As we enter the final Christmas stretch it seems that the spring freshness in the air is creating a demand for the cricket titles on both the PC and PSX. World Cup Cricket 99 holds strong on the PC and Brian Lara Cricket works its way back into the pole position on the PSX. Now that Tiberian Sun has hit, no matter what the opinion, its selling like crazy as it enters the local PC charts straight in at number 3. New additions to the PC Charts are Outcast and Hidden & Dangerous with Half Life still showing signs of mass support in South Africa. On the local PSX charts we have two obvious additions in the action based Syphon Filter and the horror filled Silent Hill. Tekken 3 once again shines as it enters the local PSX charts once again with the older Heart of Darkness and Gran Turismo bringing up the rear. The International PC charts is being pummelled with new titles as Tiberian Sun, Jagged Alliance 2, System Shock 2 and Darkstone all make an appearance. The International PSX charts look very similar to last months except a new leader in Final Fantasy 8. Till next month.

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	World Cup Cricket 99	1	3
2.	Age of Empires Gold Edition	2	2
3.	C & C Tiberian Sun	New	New
4.	TA Kingdoms	4	1
5.	Aliens vs Predator	3	1
6.	Dungeon Keeper 2	5	1
7.	Half Life	9	3
8.	Star Wars Racer	7	1
9.	Outcast	New	New
10.	Hidden & Dangerous	New	New

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Brian Lara Cricket	4	7
2.	Metal Gear Solid	1	3
3.	Driver	2	2
4.	Syphon Filter	New	New
5.	Abes Exodus	10	2
6.	Silent Hill	New	New
7.	Tekken 3	Re-entry	Re-entry
8.	C&C Retaliation	8	3
9.	Heart of Darkness	3	2
10.	Gran Turismo	5	9

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Baldurs Gate	Interplay
2.	Alpha Centauri	Electronic Arts
3.	Heroes of Might & Magic 3	New World/3DO
4.	Half Life	Valve/Sierra
5.	Jagged Alliance 2	Talonsoft
6.	C & C Tiberian Sun	Westwood/EA
7.	System Shock 2	Looking Glass/EA
8.	Darkstone	Delphine/EA
9.	TA Kingdom	Interplay
10.	Might & Magic 7	New World/3DO

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Final Fantasy 8	Square
2.	Driver	Reflections
3.	Star Acean	Tri-Ace/Enix/Sony
4.	Metal Gear Solid	Konami
5.	Syphon Filter	Eidetic/989 Studios
6.	Tomb Raider	Eidos
7.	Ridge Racer Type 4	NAMCO
8.	Gran Turismo	Sony
9.	Ape Escape	Sony
10.	WWF Attitude	Iguana/Acclaim

## Multiplayer Competition

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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 **Emanuele Lemme** who wins our letter of the month - keep the questions coming. Until next month...

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### Cool job dudes

I am not writing this letter so it can get published or anything [Oh, sorry, Ed]. I would just like to know the kind of qualifications you guys at NAG have, as I would really like to be doing something like that one day. I know its hard work but it must all pay off at the end. I am currently finishing school so I would like to know what kind of course you would recommend me taking. I was thinking IT, along with a course in journalism maybe?

**David Borchardt**  
**Irene**

*I honestly don't think we could come up with a single qualification between us, although Soul Assassin won a colouring-in competition about a year ago (even though he lied about his age). In essence you need to be able to put together an English sounding sentence and be able to use words with more than a single syllable. A firm background in computers is essential, perhaps not as far as knowing Microsoft Exchange inside and out, but it'll help seeing as we still can't figure out which container what e-mail address belongs with or is that to? Your study route thinking is correct but remember the job market in this field is limited so have a back up. I wonder what would happen if we ran a competition just to see who could come up with the best amateur gaming magazine, let me just think about that for a while... maybe in December...*  
Ed

### He shoots...

Looking at your reply to Willem Grobler's letter in the August issue of NAG, I take it you don't like negative letters so I'll try and keep this letter as positive as I can. I see that people who write in to comment on your scoring system always get a 'No, we want to keep our scoring system the way it is' remark from the Ed. I don't think my letter will change the system but I hope that at least it'll keep you guys thinking. So here goes. I really think that by adding the six scores (graphics, sound etc.) together and dividing it by six is an inaccurate and unfair scoring system. After reading the letter from

Daniel Polakow (April issue page 38) I think he has a very valid (although confusing) point. Some things are just more important than others for example, sound versus playability or graphics versus control. This also depends on the makers of the game and what they are trying to accomplish. An example of this is Aliens versus Predator where the reviewer even states that the maker was putting the emphasis in the action and playability rather than the story, so the story doesn't matter too much. But then the story gets the same importance when you add the scores and divide by six. Another issue deriving from this is the N/A factor. Most sport games don't have a story so they get a big fat N/A for that slot in the scoring section. But then what happens when a sport simulation does have a story, lame as it might be? Then say it gets only 45% for the story. This brings down the average just because it does have a story. But if it doesn't have a story, it will get a good score because the total of the scores will only be divided by five instead of six. And look at Mankind: it gets a N/A for sound! Who wants a game without sound? But if you gave it a 0% for sound instead of N/A, it would bring the average down by quite a bit. So if all the magazines have a scoring system like this then the game developers would be lazy and never put stories or sounds in games because of the N/A factor. A simple solution to this would be to keep the six score system but have the final score based on what the reviewer thinks it should get and not based on the average of the six scores. I can go on forever with reasons and examples but I think (no wait, let's just say: I hope) you get my point of view.

**Quintin Pan**  
**E-mail**

*I don't dislike negative letters at all, the problem is that some people don't usually have all their facts in a straight line and I feel compelled to point these little 'inconsistencies' out. Now due to the fact that this is a public platform so to speak and I have the last say doesn't mean I'll slate everything that crawls across my desk, I encourage negative letters; provided*

*they are constructive and have a point, like yours (or so you think). Now the scoring system - it is after all one sixth of the mark, let me illustrate. Let's say you gave a game a straight 50 in all scoring fields, you'd end up with a mark of 50. Now increase one of those to 80 and leave the others at 50 the total score ends up at 55, hardly a huge leap now is it, especially when you consider the gap individually. By leaving out the story and dividing by 5 we still get to the same thing only this time things are again 'slightly' weighted, individually. So the bottom line is that in the great scheme of things, mathematical averages do work out quite well, which is why they use similar systems when rating almost anything. Often it's the small differences that don't matter when there is a big difference between a rubbish game and a good one, a few percentage points either way can only swing things into the award status and this is where those small things matter. Can you tell I've given this some thought? If anyone would like to argue this point please by all means... and lastly I have yet to come across a sports title with a story or a 'normal' game without a story or sound (except your correct point on Mankind).*  
Ed

### No grip

Have you noticed that in the last few years the addictive quality of games has been slowly but surely deteriorating? Sure, there are still the occasional masterpieces like Half-Life and Starcraft, but in all fairness this aspect of gaming has been neglected. All the new games are advertised to be bigger and better but how long has it been since the last seat gripping must play all night title? A year, or is it two? Remember the days of the Quest for Glory series? Those were the types of games that you could not stop playing till they were finished. An addictive game doesn't need the latest graphics engine or even the best story (these help, but they aren't necessary) it just has to start well, carry on well throughout and then end well. I can give you hundreds of examples of older games: Ultima series, Doom, Quake, Command & Conquer, Dungeon Keeper, Theme Hospital and so on. How many of these are new games, DK2, Grim Fandango, Heroes of Might and Magic 3 maybe. For example I can't picture sitting down all night to finish Pod Racer or Worms Armageddon. Sure, they have good graphics, eye candy and the rest, but they have no staying power, they will keep you interested for a week or two and then you'll get bored of the level you can't beat, or just the game itself. I've played and finished Starcraft and Command & Conquer over and over again and still will for a long time to come. When it comes to first person shooters, which in my opinion is the most disappointing genre of all, what are we get-

ting for our hard-earned money? Lately, nothing.

**Ben Buhler**  
**Kyalami**

*I can go even further back and cite examples like the original Wizardry on the Commodore 64, or what about the first time you docked with a space station in Elite... pure heaven. Addiction, playability and enjoyment in days gone by, the self same questions that plague your every waking second are also the very same questions that have been posed to the best and worst out there and it seems that nobody has come up with a good answer yet. The best possible explanation I can think of is summed up in the word, nostalgia. Nothing ever seems as good as what has already passed before, it's an old humanism and nothing rings truer than the old saying - they don't make them like they used to. Games in the past have set a standard that no one can ever challenge today because in the past we used our imagination more than we do with each new release today. Your imagination is always going to be better than what you can see, hear, touch and feel which is why you can read the same old novel over and over but quickly grow tired when watching a really old, but fondly remembered movie, it's called getting old. I'm open to any comments on this subject - do you have a better explanation?*  
Ed

### The fountain of originality

The other day I was thinking, just how much have games changed, really changed? Forget the graphics side. How much would you say? Think back to the beginning. Doom, Quake, Unreal, Half-life... um, Warcraft, Starcraft, the Command & Conquer series, Total Annihilation... Compare sports titles, oh, and the thousands of flight simulators. Thanks for reminding me, the endless supply of driving games. If you had to undress Outcast and Shadowman it's basically just more Tomb Raider. All these games are basically the same. Wait, before you lash out at me it should be known that I love playing these games and just like you I trade in hours of sleep to play them. The question I'm asking is what has happened to the originality? Remember Battlezone, what a brilliant but highly underrated game. Why didn't we enjoy it, was it too different or were we too scared to leave what we know to play something we don't? I'm sure that if gamers gave it a chance they would have enjoyed a thorough gaming experience. The developers know how the gamers act and are reluctant to take the risk of this happening, so they pump out games they know we will play. As a result we have a market flooded with clones. Not all developers can afford to create a game that dares to be different. If it does, this game

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**Emanuele Lemme**  
**Table View**

*It saddens me to hear about your dubious encounters when dealing with our local game distributors, I can't comment on this mainly because I know who to speak to when calling them, so I'm hoping yours is a simple case of speaking to the wrong person. How many times did you say? Nevertheless in most cases our local distributors don't exclusively deal with games but a wide range of other non-game related products making it difficult to dedicate teams of people to this one single aspect of their business. But keep bugging them and eventually things will improve. Regarding your scoring comments, I think the scoring of Cricket was influenced by the fact that Storm was overseas at the time. Somehow in-between rushing off to go and see live World Cup Cricket matches and losing luggage, he sent us the 'slightly' favourable version of the review under the influence of cricket mania. We forgave him because he ended up reviewing, playing and writing the whole thing in an Internet Cafe in London, the things we do for you readers... We're constantly arguing about the scores some games get, so rest assured you are getting at least two different opinions on every game, one way or another.*  
Ed

### Out for a duck

Often I contact a computer game retailer or supplier enquiring about a new game, which I know has been released overseas or have seen an advert for. On these occasions I am either told that they have never heard of the game or that there is always a long delay before games make it on to the South African market. I could perhaps excuse a retailer for not knowing about new releases but a supplier has no excuse, especially when they have advertised that they are going to be releasing the game. While I am strongly opposed to software piracy I believe that these shortcomings are contributing to the growth of the software piracy problem in South Africa in that many gamers find it much easier and quicker to pirate games. Some might argue that no harm is done if a game is released two or three weeks late. However, I believe that if the industry is to grow in SA then our retailers and suppliers have to start marketing games a lot better than they are at the moment. This should start with employing salespeople who know something about games and furthermore have an interest in games. I also make a call on all reviewers to be more severe on sub-standard games. For example, you were much to forgiving in your review of World Cup Cricket 99. This game is absolute rubbish. It's possible to consistently bowl the computer opponent out for fewer than 20 runs on the highest difficulty rating. The game deserves an overall score of 20 because of its great graphics. In no way can it be called a cricket simulation because it is about as realistic as a Hollywood action movie. Since the game is practically unplayable Electronic Arts or even the retailers should consider giving gamers the option of returning the game in exchange for a refund (don't worry nobody is going to pirate this game). I know this is wishful thinking but if the gaming industry is serious about curbing piracy then consumers should be protected against sub-standard games. This could be one of the ways of encouraging people to stop purchasing pirate software. The reality is that there are so many poor games being released that consumers are not prepared to buy more games or many simply turn to piracy. The situation is not helped if reviewers don't adequately trash games, which are clearly poor. Yes a game may have redeeming features but what counts is the final product. You don't buy a car if it has great wheels and upholstery but a bad engine. The same should apply to games.

**Emanuele Lemme**  
**Table View**

*It saddens me to hear about your dubious encounters when dealing with our local game distributors, I can't comment on this mainly because I know who to speak to when calling them, so I'm hoping yours is a simple case of speaking to the wrong person. How many times did you say? Nevertheless in most cases our local distributors don't exclusively deal with games but a wide range of other non-game related products making it difficult to dedicate teams of people to this one single aspect of their business. But keep bugging them and eventually things will improve. Regarding your scoring comments, I think the scoring of Cricket was influenced by the fact that Storm was overseas at the time. Somehow in-between rushing off to go and see live World Cup Cricket matches and losing luggage, he sent us the 'slightly' favourable version of the review under the influence of cricket mania. We forgave him because he ended up reviewing, playing and writing the whole thing in an Internet Cafe in London, the things we do for you readers... We're constantly arguing about the scores some games get, so rest assured you are getting at least two different opinions on every game, one way or another.*  
Ed

*ously, which is a good thing. It's nice to see the gaming community taking a long hard look at what is on offer and condemning the endless procession of dull, mediocre and clone titles. Originality and addiction are just two of the qualities in the hot seat this month and these days a game needs to have a lot more on offer than the latest graphical special effects to impress. Ever since the beginning of the graphical revolution we've all been easily wooed by all this impressive 3D technology, to such a degree that we've forgotten what makes up a good solid game - until now. The idea here is to keep asking questions like this and eventually someone will pay attention. The very worst that can happen is if nobody does anything about it, but you have to agree that some of the titles lined up for this festive season look good enough to eat, original or not!*  
Ed

### That's no excuse

Before I continue, please excuse any spelling mistakes, throbbing headache, lack of sleep and lack of oxygen, aren't conducive to good grammar and spelling... That mouse! We've all seen that advert, where the blond clicks the mouse on the screen, but have any of you noticed how important the mouse is when it comes to controlling games. Let me take a few classic scenes from my recent history. Scene A: Diablo - which has made a strong revival in obvious anticipation of its sequel! But back to that mouse thing... some twenty guys slicing, hacking and generally killing each other. Stop and listen... okay what do I hear... the clicking of mouse buttons, shouting and general gratuitous language about mouse failure... for those of you who are still young and pure at heart I will not repeat... Scene B: Starcraft - another favourite, people who have failed to plan and defend their bases properly complaining about the fact that their mouse is not functioning to its full capacity... So they quit... Scene C: Quake 2: Deathmatch - 8 guys and girls running around and causing carnage... oh yes people if your folks are over forty don't bother trying to explain to them how killing another person with a rocket launcher can be fun... they will never understand, and will in all likelihood philosophise about the innocence of 'their' days... sex, drugs and rock 'n roll. So innocent... Anyway the guy with the rocket launcher dies and swears cursing everything unholy for the fact that his mouse isn't working. So the conclusion I have come to is this - no matter how bad you are at a game, if you can sound convincing enough that it is the mouse to blame for your

problems you can make yourself seem infinitely better. Although if you do, consider yourself in my eyes a lousy loser...

**Luke**  
**E-mail**

*The things people will say when they're on the losing side of any game is quite remarkable. I've heard everything from, 'I'm tired and it's hot in here' to, 'well you knew I sucked at this game anyway'. What we need in this business is a little more sportsmanship, if you lose stop whining and moaning, nobody's buying your trail of excuses, just make sure you do better next time.*  
Ed

### Religious nuts

In my opinion your magazine is one of the best gaming magazines that I have ever read. I do admit, this was my first NAG that I have bought, and the price is surely an indication of why I bought it, but after reading it, I was so surprised that you people can get this brilliantly written magazine out on such a low budget. I mean, pop a CD in and you're well on your way to selling it for R60 or more. One question though, the name, how did you come by it? Does it in any way indicate your religion or does it purely mean, 'the latest games'. Anyway, keep the competition falling and keep the reviews sailing.

**David Putter**  
**Graaff-Reinet**

*Sometimes I lie awake at night and in-between the tossing, and turning I often wonder why it is that I invariably at some point or another during the month end up having to explain the simple name of the magazine to someone in an e-mail or on the phone. Even later into those nights and now in a much more desperate panic to sleep, I also wonder what this obsession is that people have about the name of our magazine. For the third last time, it means nothing more than what it is, a name, the latest games, new games, modern games whatever - it isn't getting any deeper than that, sorry about squashing all those conspiracy theories but that's the story. Anyway, thanks for your comments, we always try our best!*  
Ed

Please send all questions and opinion related questions to [Backchat](mailto:Backchat)  
Please send all your technical questions to [Backchat Technical](mailto:Backchat Technical)

If you don't send more letters we'll...



So there I was playing my pinball machine and wondering what to use as a feature in this month's article and then it hit me, shed some light on the mystical world of pinball. So, after tons of research and sifting through piles of e-mail from around the world, here is the low-down on what some gaming historians believe to be the most legendary game of all time... Pinball

When you hear the word pinball I think there are a lot of gamers out there (especially the older ones) who will recall the era when pinball machines were right on top of the gaming charts with the best of the video games. Face it, if you have never played a 'pin' you've missed out on probably one of the greatest gaming experiences of your life. Most pinball players are devoted fans, and just like video games there are certain games that are favoured by all. Most of today's games are even more complex than the System 11 boards found on Namco's Tekken III. But there were times when Pinball was played on machines that were purely mechanical, and instead of computer PC boards, electronic displays and digitised sound effects there were relays, mechanical gears and bells for sound effects. As boring as it might sound, it was one of the first forms of arcade amusement available.

**BROWN COW**  
Records indicate that the first game of this kind arrived on the scene in 1932. Produced by a company called Bay City Games in Bay City Michigan, the first pin was Kow Tow. It was a very basic game that had no electrical bits and pieces. As a matter of fact it didn't even have a scoring feature. The player had to keep the score himself as he guided the ball in to the holes on the play-field by moving the slanted deck left or right. This was where the word Pinball really originated, as actual pins or tack nails guided the holes on the play-field. Not long after Kow Tow appeared on the scene, Rockola, a company known for its jukeboxes introduced a game called Juggle Ball. Juggle Ball was a bit more sophisticated than its predecessor in the sense that it had a ball-launching device (generally known as a plunger in pinball circles). Play was controlled by a cue stick with which the player could influence the ball in play by using a handle protruding from the front of the machine. The game also boasted very colourful artwork.



## PINBALL

PART 1 OF AN INTERESTING SERIES IN WHICH WE SEE ATARIBABY FONDLING HIS SILVER BALLS AND STROKING HIS RUBBER FLIPPER...

### PINBALL

PART 1 OF AN INTERESTING SERIES IN WHICH WE SEE ATARIBABY FONDLING HIS SILVER BALLS AND STROKING HIS RUBBER FLIPPER...

on cue sticks, levers and deck tilting to obtain some sort of ball control. In 1947 however pinball received a serious facelift with the introduction of flippers. The impact this had could be seen as an innovation similar to the joystick in video gaming. Williams, a pin manufacturer in Chicago founded by a gent called

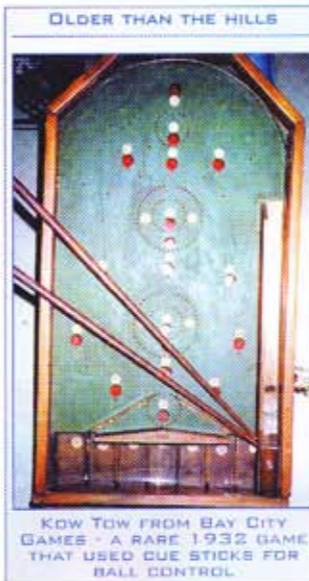
Harry Williams, were the first to implement flippers. Some say that Williams actually invented it. (Video gamers might recall Williams as the company who made the now classic 80's game Defender). The truth of the matter is that although Williams played a huge part in the original idea, it was ace pinball designer Harry Mabs who was working for D. Gottlieb and Co. at the time, who finally realised and introduced the idea on their game Humpty Dumpty.

#### FLIPPING FLIPPERS

So the flippers came and revolutionised the game of pinball. By 1948 just about all the pinball manufacturers had some sort of flipper system in place, be it electric or mechanically operated. Pretty soon DIY 'add a flipper' kits became available to those who wanted to add flippers to their original machines that came without. This brought problems in it's own right. Most of the operators who added the flipper to their older games sometimes had no idea where to install them and often they would be placed in such a way that the player didn't benefit at all from them being added on to the game. The second problem was that the games' dated scoring system couldn't handle the elongated play sessions. When flippers were added a skilful player could keep the ball in play longer than he could on the original game. This resulted in much higher scores (often near the maximum of what the game could register) making the setting of the replay scores more difficult for the operator. Even with these problems which were encountered when flippers were added to the pre-flipper pins, many operators



1932, JUGGLE BALL FROM ROCKOLA - ANOTHER EARLY STICK DRIVEN GAME



KOW TOW FROM BAY CITY GAMES - A RARE 1932 GAME THAT USED CUE STICKS FOR BALL CONTROL

around the world.

In most countries gambling laws were pretty tight and there were strict guidelines as to what constituted a 'gambling device' and an 'entertainment machine'. With the early games offering very little ball control, it was argued that the game was based on pure luck! The flipper changed this as it introduced a 'skill' level to pinball. If one looks back, the flipper probably saved the pinball from being classified as a gambling device, which in turn would have made it less accessible to the gaming fraternity. This was very similar to what happened in South Africa in the late 70's when pinball's were banned from operation... but more about that later. From 1947 until about 1951 developers such as Williams, Gottlieb and Bally all started introducing electric powered games, which in turn made pinball faster and gave more high-powered flips. This was due to

the fact that high-powered coils were now used to activate the flippers and the bumpers in the game. There was one problem however. Due to low level protection circuitry on the early games most of them burned up a lot of coils, and in some cases it wasn't just the coils that burned up. Many a game went up in smoke due to over heating coils, making pinball quite a hot commodity! It was not uncommon to see a "Potential Fire Hazard" warning sticker on the back of most of the machines. With the arrival of the first Solid State Circuitry in the mid 1970's a new breed of machine saw the light. Not only did they have built in protection circuitry against overheating and short-circuits but they had flashing lights, stronger and longer coil driven flippers and zinging sound effects. This was the first step towards pinball, as we know it today.

Make sure to catch next month's 'Archives' when we find out why South Africa lived in the pinball 'dark ages' for about 15 years. We will also look at the biggest selling pins of all time and look at the face of pinball in the future. Until then let me carry on 'flipping'.

ATARIBABY

# Wipeout



## THE GAME THAT BROKE ALL THE RULES IS BACK





# UPGRADING FOR IDIOTS

FOR IDIOTS

## PART 6 - PERIPHERALS



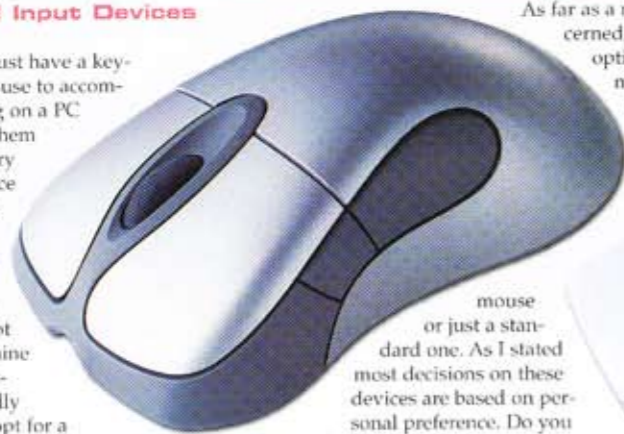
So far we have covered everything needed to upgrade a computer except for the smaller peripherals that most people leave until last. The components you usually only realise you need when you want to switch on your creation and discover them missing. These include keyboard, mice, speakers and the like... Unlike the other peripherals personal preference is the main deciding factor in these purchases, for example some gamers totally loathe a natural keyboard while others won't play on anything less. As a matter of preference very few people will ever be swayed one way or the other after getting used to using a specific input device, the ball is totally left in your court.

Soul Assassin

### Standard Input Devices

Everybody must have a keyboard and mouse to accomplish anything on a PC and without them you own a very expensive piece of equipment that is going to do absolutely nothing. You can't even boot up your machine without a keyboard. Typically most people opt for a Microsoft Natural keyboard and an Intellimouse wheel mouse since these usually come standard with any new PC and Microsoft offer them to OEM vendors at very competitive pricing. There are of course still a lot of people using the standard 101 keyboard design and they are also generally cheaper than their natural cousins. From a functional viewpoint both do exactly the same job, it's purely a personal preference as to which of the two you are used to using. Personally I would recommend a natural keyboard since the design prevents repetitive motion injuries over the long run.

There is however one aspect to watch out for when purchasing a keyboard, and that would be that you buy a keyboard with the American key layout since most of our software is based around this key configuration. You can verify that a keyboard uses an American layout by checking that the '\$' sign is above the '4' key just below function keys. A lot of companies in South Africa still sell the British layout where there is a '£' above the '4' key and this could present some problems with certain legacy games, not to mention that you would have to mess around with the Windows keyboard layout function to get certain applications to work correctly. Another problem would be that once you get used to the British layout finding a replacement keyboard can be a problem especially since these keyboards are in the minority.



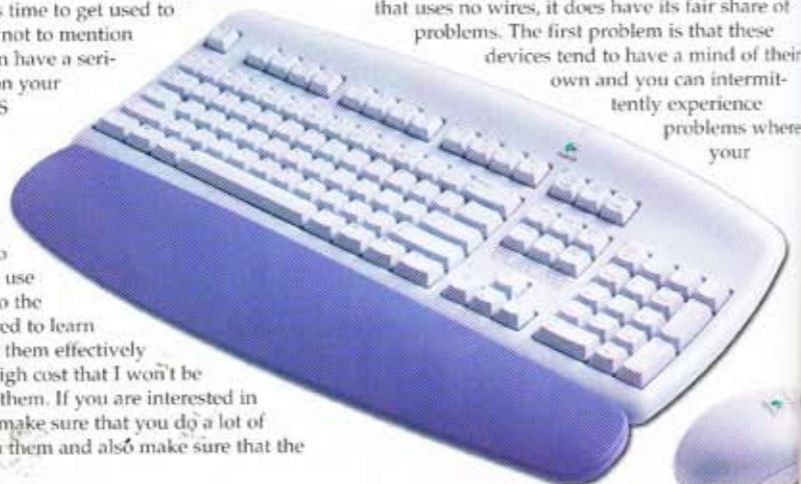
As far as a mouse is concerned, you have a lot of options to consider, mainly how many buttons you want it to have and should it be a natural mouse or just a standard one. As I stated most decisions on these devices are based on personal preference. Do you want a mouse with 2, 3 or even 4 buttons and should it have a mouse wheel? Generally most people opt for a 2 button mouse with a mouse wheel since you have the added benefit of using the wheel in first person shooter games such as Quake III and it also comes in handy for scrolling through large documents. You should also remember that once you choose a mouse, you should stick to that same design for as long as possible, changing mice every couple of months is hardly a good thing and it takes time to get used to a new one, not to mention that this can have a serious affect on your score in FPS games.

There are of course also trackballs, but so few people use them due to the time required to learn how to use them effectively and their high cost that I won't be discussing them. If you are interested in trackballs, make sure that you do a lot of research on them and also make sure that the one you intend to buy is compatible with the applications you want to use it for, especially if you still use legacy games or legacy applications.

Other options to consider when buying a keyboard or a mouse would be what type of connection is required to connect it to your PC. Generally most computers since the Pentium II have used a PS/2 connection port, although you can plug keyboards and mice directly into your USB port as well. Just make sure that if you do decide to purchase a USB keyboard that your motherboard's BIOS has an option called 'USB Legacy Keyboard Support', otherwise you might find that the keyboard won't work under the MS-DOS prompt and it can present a problem during the initial installation of a new operating system.

There is still one other connection option to consider, and I only mention it to be complete since this option tends to be very expensive. The connection is wireless and called infra-red. Devices making use of infra-red are still fairly new in the market and while it does sound appealing to have a keyboard or mouse that uses no wires, it does have its fair share of problems. The first problem is that these devices tend to have a mind of their own and you can intermittently experience problems where your

contract are limited to a month or so, you start paying a ridiculous rate per hour. Your safest bet is still to purchase your modem separately and search for the features required to get a stable connection. Personally I still use a US Robotics modem due to the excellent support they have and also because most of their modems ship with a flash BIOS, making upgrading the modem a snap should they ever decide on a new communication standard. Highly unlikely, but you never know. Currently most modems ship V.90 ready, which is the standard-



it will be the PC hardware to cover the bases, isn't it? Well, you might be surprised to find that the mouse or keyboard just doesn't want to work. This is largely due to the fact that the receiver that plugs into the back of your PC needs to have a clear line of sight to the device it controls, otherwise the infra-red signal won't get through. Another drawback is that most of these devices use batteries, while this isn't much of a problem, finding a replacement pair could be an issue when you're in the middle of a deadline or miles from the nearest convenience store, or even worse yet - in the middle of a LAN party. Just ask our humble Editor-in-Chief who uses an infrared keyboard. He never can find a replacement battery when he needs one. Unlike the rest of your PC where the warranty on the components count for a lot, on keyboard and mice you will be hard pressed to find any that have a longer warranty period than 12 months. The most you can look for is a decent manufacturer such as Logitech and Microsoft who have decent support programs and will swap out any faulty keyboard or mouse.

### Modems and Internet Access

The Internet has become a must have option lately and if you're not connected a world of information is passing you by, and if you're a gamer you are missing out on the number 1 information source for patches, demos, add-ons and cheats. Most Internet Service Providers have made it easier to connect and nowadays you actually purchase your modem with an account at the same time. While this makes getting connected easier, you will probably find that the modem you receive is not of the greatest quality and some of these boxed modems come

with a year contract that has a lot of fine print. Usually you are limited to a certain amount of hours per month and after you have reached your limit you start paying a ridiculous rate per hour. Your safest bet is still to purchase your modem separately and search for the features required to get a stable connection. Personally I still use a US Robotics modem due to the excellent support they have and also because most of their modems ship with a flash BIOS, making upgrading the modem a snap should they ever decide on a new communication standard. Highly unlikely, but you never know. Currently most modems ship V.90 ready, which is the standard-

ised 56Kb/s communication protocol for modems. Be careful though not to purchase older modems that support the US Robotics X2 or Rockwell K-56 Flex protocols since both these have been superseded by the V.90 standard and you could have a hard time connecting at above 28.8 Kb/s with one of these modems since most ISPs only support the V.90 protocol for high speed connections. Whether or not to purchase an Internal or External modem is yet another personal preference. Some people prefer external since you can see the status lights and use them for picking up connection problems, others prefer Internal modems since they don't use up any desktop space and are easier to configure. At the end of the day both work equally as well and most manufacturers ship an Internal and External version of all their modems. There is however one very important factor to look for when buying a modem, and this would be that the modem has been approved by Telkom. If it isn't Telkom approved your insurance company will refuse to reimburse you should your modem get struck by lightning.

### Speakers

The last item on your upgrade list should be speakers. So many people forget that sound is just as important as graphics when it comes to playing games. Everyone should make a long-term investment in a decent pair of speakers and try to avoid purchasing the cheapest pair they can find. A decent pair of speakers will last you at least a couple of years and the extra money you spend will repay itself tenfold over time. Generally any of the Cambridge Soundworks, Altec Lansing and Jazz speakers will make an excellent option. The Cambridge speakers are aimed at people who purchased a 4-channel

soundcard and are willing to pay for a real surround sound system that has support for the new Dolby Digital sound standard. These speakers are made by Creative Labs and are mainly aimed for use with their SB Live! soundcard although they will function with other 4-channel cards on the market as well. Altec Lansing falls in the middle range of speakers and caters to those who have a 2-channel soundcard but wish to experience surround sound with only a 3-speaker system using the older Dolby Pro Logic sound scheme. The most attractive aspect of Altec Lansing speakers is that they offer a lifetime warranty on all their speakers and the local distributor has pledged to replace any speakers should they be faulty. The Jazz speaker range from CyberDyne Systems comes in as decent lower end speakers. Their quality is not inferior to the other makes but they do tend to be cheaper. These speakers are also primarily aimed for users with a 2-channel soundcard. These are not the only decent speakers available in South Africa they are just the better-known brands. If you do consider other makes of speakers please research their capabilities prior to purchasing and make sure that the speakers are of good construction and that they do have a local distributor that is willing to offer support for them.

There are also currently some USB speakers available in South Africa, but these are best avoided if you take your gaming seriously. They tend to use more processing power from your CPU than equivalent speakers using a soundcard. There are also some other minor compatibility problems with certain makes and this is largely due to the fact that USB speakers use relatively new technology that is still in its infancy. For now your best bet still lies with Digital or Analogue speakers that are driven by a soundcard. The only real advantage that USB offers is crystal clear sound, but similar clarity can also be found with Digital speakers that have a digital connection to your soundcard.

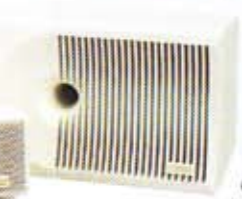
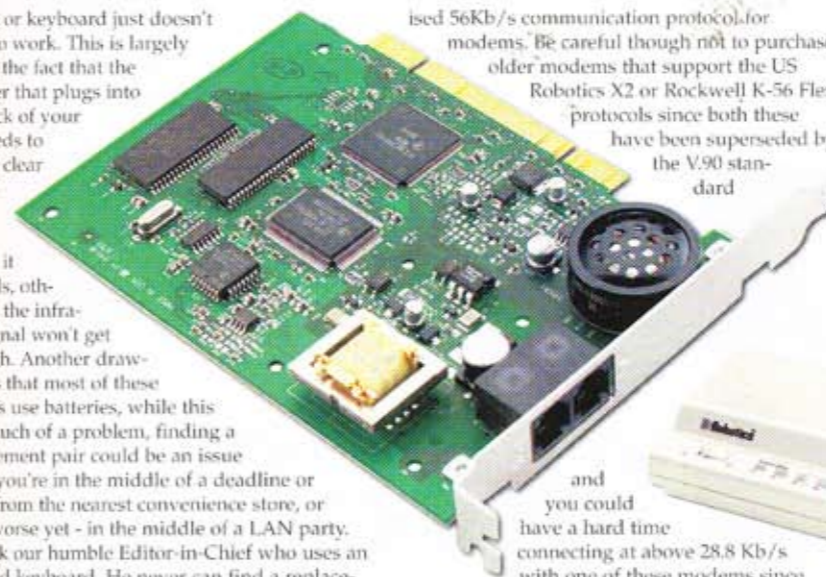
In Closing

I think over the past couple of months I have covered everything that needs to be considered when buying PC components for upgrading. I have tried to cover each and every aspect to look for when buying the different components just enough so that when you purchase any hardware you can make an informed decision and not take everything the sales staff at a computer shop tells you at face value. I hope that everyone out there, especially those new to the field of computers have learned something from my articles. Should any of you have requests or comments on this series please feel free to email me at [assassin@nag.co.za](mailto:assassin@nag.co.za)

# UPGRADING FOR IDIOTS



HELP







The casualties were high, but one of our scouts managed to make it back from Microsoft's camp, and with his dying breathe spilled the beans on their latest empire-building venture. Age of Empires II is possibly one of the biggest real time strategy titles due this year with its hypnotic blend of RTS elements and historic settings.

Well, it seems the Age of Sequels is still with us, and Microsoft isn't missing this bandwagon. All the most successful games, including such worthies as Quake and Command and Conquer, are now in their second or third generation, and even Warcraft is being resurrected, according to the latest field information. And so it is that the hugely successful Age of Empires is due back soon, taking the art of empire building a few steps further.

What are the characteristics of a worthy sequel? Well, for starters, it must be continuous with the original. That is to say, it must be based on, and contain enough of the original concept to be considered a direct descendent. But that's not all - essential is improvement over the original, and this does not only mean presentation-wise. Sure, the graphics and sound must keep moving forward, but also, the game concept must be expanded upon, the interface may need revamping and new ideas and features are essential. If these criteria are not met, one might as well just stick to the original, and save some money.

So, by now you are wondering, will Age of Empires II: The Age of Kings measure up to these requirements? Let's take a step by step look at what our scouts ferreted out about the almost-final beta version...

**A NATURAL PROGRESSION**  
Age of Empires II will feel delightfully familiar to veterans of the original title, with an interface that is virtually unchanged, if somewhat

# AGE OF EMPIRES II

## THE AGE OF KINGS

<b>GENRE:</b> REAL TIME STRATEGY (PC)
<b>DEVELOPER:</b> ENSEMBLE STUDIOS
<b>PUBLISHER:</b> MICROSOFT
<b>SUPPLIER:</b> CREW TEL: (011) 233-1000
<b>EXPECTED RELEASE DATE:</b> DECEMBER 99
<b>INTERNET:</b> WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/GAMES/AGE2/



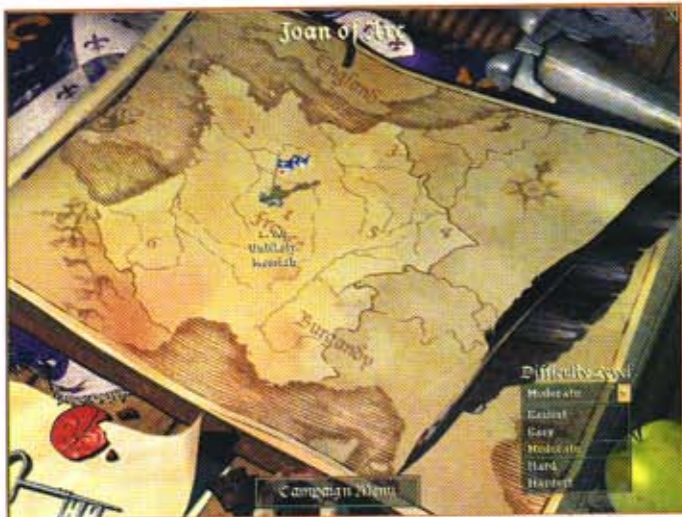
more responsive. The main view is depicted, as in the original, in beautifully detailed isometric view. The mechanics and basic premises of the game are also directly derived from the original. Once again we face the challenge of managing a population of villagers that carry out the various tasks that will decide whether your fledgling empire thrives or dies, and fielding a

military force on top of that. The overall structure of the game is largely unchanged. You start in the Dark Age with a Town Centre, a couple of villagers and a scout unit. At this point it is necessary to begin collecting the resources that will be needed to vanquish the other players. First and foremost is food. Initially you'll be foraging (berries and the likes from nearby bushes), hunting (deer and wild boar, for the most part) and butchering

livestock (predominantly sheep). After that it is time to build a Mill for the gathering of food-stuffs. The Mill also allows you to build farms. These are finite, however, as in the original, and must be replanted once they are exhausted. At the same time as feeding your population you must provide housing. Housing works very much like farms in Warcraft II or supply

depots in Starcraft - each one you build supports a number of troops. However, houses require wood in order to be built (as do farms) so collecting wood becomes important. A Lumber Camp near some trees will allow you to collect timber more efficiently. Later on, various upgrades will appear at the Lumber Camp to facilitate faster chopping. Now having all this food and wood allows you to create villagers, farms, Lumber Camps and Farms, but this isn't all. Wood also allows you to build a Mining Camp, which comes in very handy later, for collecting stone and gold from the appropriate mines. Wood also allows you to build a

Barracks - very important! This is where you will be training your infantry units (which are the first ones you have access to). The Barracks also offers some upgrades later on, and these depend mainly on food, wood and



THIS IS HOW A CAMPAIGN GAME BEGINS



A TREBUCHET UNLEASHES ITS DEADLY PAYLOAD

gold. You can also start training Militia (the most basic of infantry units) at the Barracks. At some point (usually after about ten to fifteen minutes) you will have enough food and structures to advance to the next Age - the Feudal Age. This is accomplished at the Town Centre, and takes a little while. Once you have advanced, new upgrades become available to your various technologies. For instance, you can now upgrade your farms to be more efficient, which means that each farm yields more food before it must be rebuilt, Militia can be upgraded to Men-at-Arms, the lumber saws can be improved in order to speed up lumbering. The Mining Camp offers upgrades to both stone and gold mining. Another useful structure is the Dock (but only if there is water to put ships onto!). The Dock can produce fishing boats,

Monasteries and Universities, as well as Castles. Monasteries produce Monks and are where all Monk-related research is done. Universities give access to various empire improvement upgrades, such as building quality, and advanced technologies like chemistry. Castles are where your race's unique units are produced. Later on, the Castle offers certain upgrades and one of the game's most powerful units - the Trebuchet. This last is a siege engine with phenomenal range and damage. The last age is the Imperial Age. The tech-trees max out at this point, with the final few upgrades being made available. Only one new structure becomes available - the Wonder. This is different for every race, but its effects are the same - it means victory for the Wonder's owner if it remains standing for a specific amount of time (as in the original Age of Empires). Along the way, there are several military structures that you will find yourself needing to build. Besides the Barracks, the Archery Range, the Stable and the Siege Workshop train archers and crossbow men, cavalry and siege engines, respectively. A well-balanced army is a successful and versatile army, and thus you will most likely need to build at least one of each of the above. For base defence, there are Watch Towers (which can be upgraded to Guard Towers and, with some races, to Keeps) and walls, which can also be fitted with gates. Wall strength can be upgraded as one progresses through the ages. The sheer number of technologies and upgrades to be researched during the course of a game is astounding. It is unlikely that a player will research everything possible by the time the game is over, which means that it is he who makes the most intelligent choices, in general, that wins.

THE BELL AND WHISTLES  
The level of graphical detail is, in fact, quite astonishing (one can virtually make out individual leaves on trees), and even when running in the highest resolutions, graphical items are clear and easy to make out. In fact, running in a lower resolution is not advisable, as the graphics then become too big, filling up too much of the screen and not showing enough at a glance. No pretence at rendering the terrain in 3D is made, sadly, but nonetheless the tilesets are



THIS IS WHAT YOU START WITH



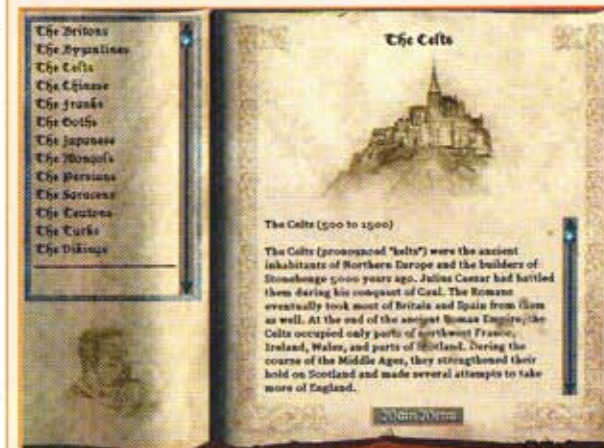
SOME ADVANCEMENT, AND SHEEP KEPT FOR FOOD



FARMS CLUSTERED AROUND THE LOCAL MILL, NEAR THE TOWN CENTRE

which gather another alternative food source for you. Once you have entered the Feudal Age, you may build Blacksmiths and Markets. Blacksmiths allow you to upgrade some aspects of your troops' weapons and armour, while the Market offers some trading services and trade-related upgrades. Also, having these structures and enough of the appropriate resources allows you to advance to the Castle Age. The Castle Age is where things start getting really interesting. Now you are able to build

The game features 13 different 'races', each with their own unique strengths and weaknesses, historically speaking.



**Britons**  
Benefit in the field of archery, with increased ranges and reduced build times, and early economy benefits from cheaper Town Centres and more efficient shepherds.

**Byzantines**  
Enjoy much faster healing by monks and tougher buildings. They also get to advance to Imperial status much easier.

**Celts**  
Are adept at building and using siege engines, and are blessed with faster moving infantry.

**Chinese**  
Start with a slightly larger population, and have more productive farms. They also research new technologies at a slight discount.

**Franks**  
Have a knack for farming. Their military enjoy better cavalry armour, cheaper castles and slightly tougher knights.

**Goths**  
Specialise in infantry, and their barracks builds quicker and infantry are cheaper to produce.

**Japanese**  
Are skilled at optimising food production, and have superior fishing boats. Their infantry are also a bit more enthusiastic, attacking faster.

**Mongols**  
Must have been born while on horseback - their mounted archers are superior, their light cavalry tougher, and their hunters are more efficient.

**Persians**  
Gain some trade benefits and start with some additional resources. Their Town Centre and Dock are also more efficient and tougher.

**Saracens**  
Build transport ships that are twice as big. They also boast archers that are far more effective against buildings than other races.

**Teutons**  
Have strong convictions, and are thus more resistant to conversion. Their defensive buildings are more effective.

**Turks**  
Have the upper hand where gunpowder-based weapons are concerned, and have skill with chemistry.

**Vikings**  
Have tough infantry, and are expert shipwrights, resulting in reduced shipbuilding costs.





THE MAP EDITOR

sented with a number of proper campaigns to choose from. Each is based on some historical conflict from the medieval world. Examples are the trials and tribulations of Joan of Arc, for one, and the Crusades, for another.

Each campaign consists of a number of scenarios to be completed sequentially. Some of these are "limited forces" missions, where you do not get to build a



viewing the game from a particular player's perspective, or watching everything happen at the same time. There is a slo-mo function, as well as a fast play-back option (of course, there is also a 'pause' button).

#### CHANGING THE LAY OF THE LAND

As has become virtually mandatory in the RTS genre, Age of Empires II includes a powerful scenario and campaign editor. This editor is presented somewhat differently from other level editors we have seen (notably Warcraft II, Starcraft and Black Moon Chronicles) but is no less user-friendly. An unusual feature is the inclusion of support for custom cinematics within scenarios and campaigns, as well as a few other fairly original touches - for instance, one can redefine the victory and defeat messages displayed at the end of a game - minor, but cute!

#### FINAL ANALYSIS

Well, we have studied our infiltrator's intelligence (and found it lacking?) and have concluded that Microsoft appear to have learned a lesson or two regarding real-time strategy. For starters, Age of Empires II features far more diversified races than its predecessor did. Even though most of the units and technologies are still available to all races, each race does lack access to a couple of technologies. Also, each race has a unique unit that only it gets to produce, and each race has various advantages and setbacks.

The pace of the game has also been picked up somewhat, making for quicker games. This is a welcome improvement. Make no mistake, a game could still take several hours, but at least not every game now will. Furthermore, the sys-



ENEMY MEN-AT-ARMS ATTACK MY TOWN... HOW RUDE!

most appealing and varied to boot - there are currently around fifteen different terrain types. However, a question springs to mind: what do modern game developers have against animating water? Older games such as Knights and Merchants incorporated water animations, so it can't be that hard, but now Command and Conquer: Tiberian Sun has been released with static rivers and waterfalls, and Age of Empires II suffers from the same syndrome. Come on, guys! Even rotating palettes would be preferable!

The sound effects were not really particularly inspired, but let's keep in mind that the product is not finished yet. The sole exception to this "aural mediocrity" is the excellently designed tutorial campaign (more about that later). The music is pleasant at first, but I soon found myself in "options" turning it off, as the



sound-track appears to be comprised of three tracks, none of them particularly long. Once again, let's hope the finished product introduces some variety.

#### CAMPAIGNING

The single-player component of Age of Empires II consists of a number of campaigns and a "skirmish" mode. Let's start with a look at the campaigns. The very first campaign is the tutorial. In this, you play as the Celts against the Britons, in a struggle to gain Scotland's independence. The tutorial campaign consists of seven missions, each teaching a number of specific aspects of the game and its interface. Once the tutorial is complete (it is optional, by the way) the player is pre-

town at all, but rather must rely on superior unit control and management in order to win through, as well as intelligent tactics, rather than just shoving units around the map.

#### Multiplayer Carnage

Multiplayer games and 'skirmish' type games take a similar format to each other. A number of parameters can be set by the game initiator, including terrain type, map size, resource levels and a whole host of other variables. Victory conditions are among these, and determine, in the same way as in Age of Empires, how a game will be won.

Technology trees can be kept diversified, or every player can be given access to all units and technologies. An innovative feature is the ability to record games (a la Quake demos) for review at a later date or by another person. This, once again, does not strike me as a particularly difficult feature to implement, and I am frankly quite surprised that no other major players in the real-time strategy genre have yet done so. The playback interface is rather basic but very effective. Some useful options include



R.A.V.E.N.



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  
**GABRIELKNIGHT**  
BLOOD OF THE DAMNED

COMING SOON

CREW

SIERRA STUDIOS  
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It seems that the world of the PlayStation game has become a little jaded, a little stilted. Games come and games go, without much difference to them. They seem to become nothing more than a blur of games, one after the other - nothing more than the same thing over and over again. However, things seem to be changing. With the arrival of Eidos' Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver, it seems that a new age in the PlayStation game arena is dawning...and that's not to mention the PC version. - Shryke

# LEGACY OF KAIN SOUL REAVER

It is seldom that a game like Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver comes along. Yes, there are games that make something of a difference; they are the type of games that just go a little further than all the others do. However, titles like Soul Reaver - amazingly rare in their brilliance - surpass even those. They go beyond the point of being 'good' and enter into the realm of excellence. There are not many games that can compete with Soul Reaver. Developers Crystal Dynamics and distributors Eidos have

are graphically beautiful, even to the point of being translucent). As a "reward," Raziel's wings are destroyed, and he is sentenced to be executed in the Well of Souls - a swirling mass of water that spells certain doom for vampires. However, despite an eternity of agony, Raziel survives, a shadow of his former self. The now desiccated and destroyed creature is granted a chance to exact revenge on those who betrayed him. This is where the player comes in. You have to guide what's left of Raziel through the strange, gothic city of Nosgoth in his quest to get even with Kain. So what? Big deal! Well, yes, actually, it is something of a big deal.

Although the demo we saw only provided us with one level of this enigmatic and labyrinthine city to explore, it really knocked our socks off. Hopefully the Ed will put his back on soon. What we saw was a game that surpasses anything of the sort that we've seen on the PlayStation before. Firstly, the entire myth behind Soul Reaver is stunningly thorough and highly inventive. They didn't just suck this one out of their thumbs - they put a lot of thought into it. The world of Vampires is full, rich and complex, as well it should be. For example, enemy vampires cannot simply be beaten into a pulp. Sure, tons of physical abuse does stun them, but they recover soon enough and come at you with a worse attitude than before. No, to truly get rid of these horrific creatures, you have to use Raziel's highly impressive and certainly very savage impale function - literally driving a magical stake



replenish Raziel's power is to "eat" the souls of vampires. Yes, very pleasant, we know, but the game provides no end of satisfaction as you watch some vampire that you just had to trounce disappearing as you snack on his very essence! Another very impressive feature about Soul Reaver is the fact that the developers made use of a continuous data streaming technique that greatly reduces load times. What this means for the player is that you spend more time playing the game than watching a cheesy "loading" screen. It's high time that PlayStation developers considered this aspect of playing a console game. Load times can seriously destroy the enjoyment of the game. This is thankfully not the case with Soul Reaver.

In addition to beautifully designed characters, and truly awe-inspiring background and environmental graphics, Soul Reaver makes use of high resolution graphics: 512 x 240 Vortex, to be exact, which, in layman's terms, translates into the fact that Soul Reaver looks better than most other PlayStation games. Add to that dynamic real time lighting, single skin technology, segmented skeletons, joint interpolation and over 550 polygons for the main character (300 plus for other characters) and you get something that looks almost as fluid as real life. Raziel features a huge amount of moves and techniques, all of which are imbued with something of a magical quality by the above mentioned graphic wizardry techniques.

ing button - which makes opening a can of whip-ass so much simpler for the player. It keeps 3D combat simpler to handle, enabling the player to concentrate on timing attacks and techniques rather than worrying about facing in the right direction. And the fact that this feature is

ing. In truth, a little inventive thinking is all that's required taking care of this 'problem'. We could carry on singing the praises of this game for several pages yet. The plot is stunning. The game play is exceptional. The graphics are excellent. The soundtrack and effects are

enthralling. The list is endless. But we have to save something for when we finally get to review Soul Reaver. Let's just say that its possibly the most impressive 3D adventure we've seen yet, as far as PlayStation goes - and the PC version will probably earn a similar response. This is certainly a game to be on the look out for. Clever developers will soon realise that Soul Reaver is not just another game. It is also a yardstick that will be applied to the world of PlayStation 3D-action adventure from now on!

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BEAUTIFUL MOVIE SEQUENCES AROUND

Software z buffering and variable fog values within the levels make the world that Raziel exists in a beautiful, mysterious and above all believable universe in which to experience this game. Raziel can run, jump and climb like most other PlayStation heroes. Controlling the character is very simple, with variable camera angles thrown in just as a cherry on top. In addition to these normal movement modes, Raziel is pretty good at breath stroke, and can use his shattered wings to glide on thermals or off of high cliffs. Perhaps the best part of controlling Raziel comes when he takes on an opponent. Crystal Dynamics saw fit to include a combat auto-fac-

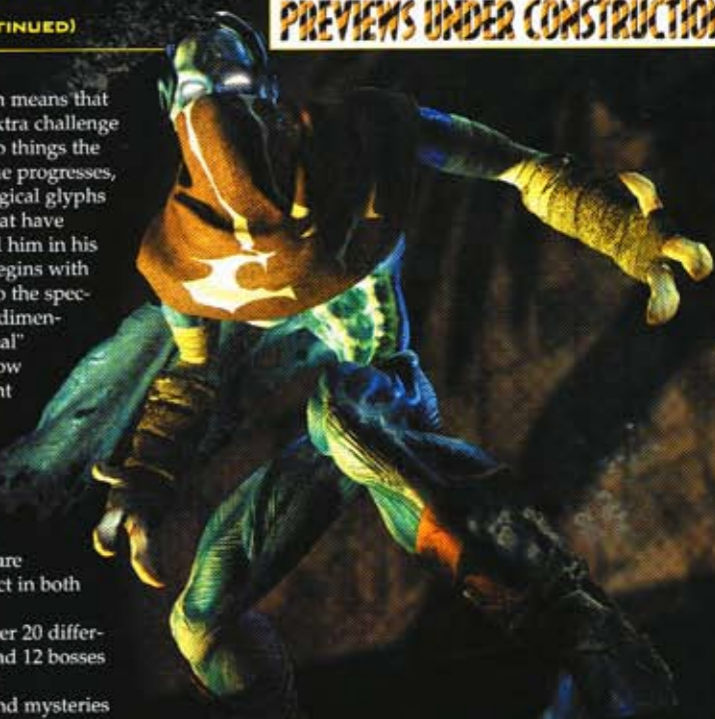


ENTER THE MAGICAL WORLD OF NOSGOTH

ing button - which makes opening a can of whip-ass so much simpler for the player. It keeps 3D combat simpler to handle, enabling the player to concentrate on timing attacks and techniques rather than worrying about facing in the right direction. And the fact that this feature is



IMPALING: FIRST YOU STICK 'EM... THEN YOU LIFT 'EM! UNFORTUNATELY THE TOP HALF OF THE 'LIFT SHOT' IS TOO DISGUSTING TO PUBLISH

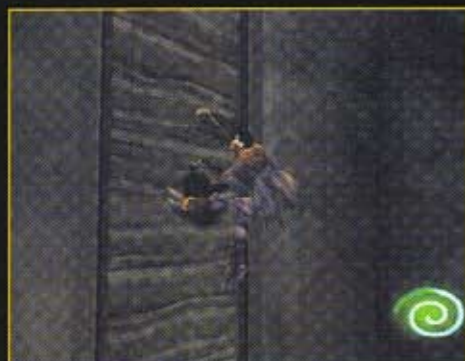


controlled by a button means that players wanting an extra challenge can just lay off and do things the hard way. As the game progresses, Raziel learns new magical glyphs (powerful symbols that have magical effects) to aid him in his quest. However, he begins with the ability to shift into the spectral plane - a strange dimension mirroring the "real" Nosgoth. Seeing as how the entire environment changes when he enters this strange realm, the hard

working developers designed each level twice, to ensure that everything is perfect in both planes of existence. Soul Reaver features over 20 different kinds of enemies, and 12 bosses to challenge the player. Additionally, puzzles and mysteries woven into both game play and the story line will ensure that the player is mentally exercised as well. The "real" nature of the world is further enhanced by the fact that all characters met in

the game will have future reactions based on actions taken by the player. In other words, the non-player character remembers what Raziel did when they met previously met, and acts accordingly. This is a stunning feature of the game, no doubt, but it does mean that you have to be sensible. Raziel won't get far if everybody wants a piece of him! Raziel may also recruit some of the NPCs he meets to help him on his quest. Another wonderfully thoughtful idea that Crystal Dynamics came up with is what they describe as a transparent user interface. What this means is that aspects like inventory screens have been excluded from the game. A nice thought, but players may find the fact that Raziel can only carry one object at a time a bit disturbing.

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SOUL REAVER WILL CERTAINLY CLIMB TO THE TOP

simply ensured that it is in a league of its own. So what makes it so special? At first inspection, Soul Reaver is little more than a 3D-adventure game saturated with copious violence and something of a bizarre story line. But give it a whirl - grab that controller, go on, you know you want to - and you will see exactly what we're talking about.

We'll begin at the very beginning. Before entering game play, an enthralling introductory film shows us the origins of Raziel, the strange vampire prince that the player controls while playing Soul Reaver. It would appear that Raziel is one of the favourite creations of Kain, the big honcho in vampire circles. Unfortunately, Raziel has the audacity to physically surpass his master by growing a pair of tenebrous bat wings (which



I'M A LITTLE LOST BUT I'LL BE ON MY WAY NOW... HELP!





The competition for Racing Simulations has always been a fierce and highly competitive arena in the gaming industry. Over the last few years the Racing Simulation has taken a back seat to the Rally Simulation as the competition heats-up for the pole position. New technologies are being created to enhance the playability of these daredevil, balls to the wall, Rally Sims. Gamers have always been fascinated with the genre because of its death defying use of the motor vehicle to hurl oneself around unknowing corners with little than a map and co-driver. Capitalising on this desire are Europress who have always had the ambition of creating the ultimate Rally Simulation, and by the looks of it, they are not far from it. - Storm

**EUROWHO?**  
This is the fifth in the title in the Rally series from Europress and after selling over 1,000,000 copies of the series it is blatantly clear that there is definitely a desire to own the rallying road. Since Europress' specialisation in the rally genre in 1996, they have been recognised as the experts in this field and their success of their range of rally titles is proof of that. But last year their reign came to an abrupt end when Codemasters released Colin McRae Rally, which won critical

## Rally 99

CHAMPIONSHIP

leading software event - ECTS. Andy Wood is the marketing and sales guru behind the success of games such as the Mortal Kombat series, FIFA Soccer from Electronic Arts and some of the world's biggest selling computer games. Europress are also taking the expert opinions extremely seriously as Martin Rowe, winner of the 1998 British Rally Championship, is personally overseeing the project and comments "this is the most realistic game I have ever seen."

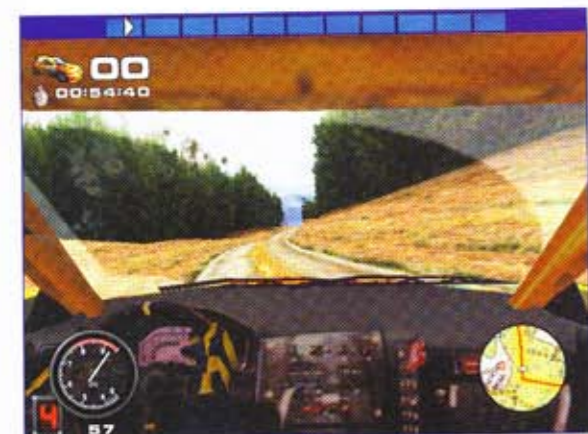
Andrew Morris the Creative Director of Rally 99 says "what we hope we have achieved is the most immersive experience possible" and Shaun Southern the Programming Director adds "it feels real because it is real. It feels right because it is right. We are just modelling reality which means it will be real, it's the easy way of doing it!" It certainly seems that Europress are taking their steps towards winning the admiration of the gamer very seriously, but what about the game, does it make further progress into the genre? Does it take sufficient advantage of today's technologies to be the ultimate rallying game?

Since being lucky enough to get my hands on an early copy of Rally Championship 99, I have been overwhelmed by the inroads made by the Europress team. A wonderful array of new and innovative features are still currently being added to the final product, if they get them all in then this would be one of the masterpieces of not only the rallying genre but could possibly take this title to the ultimate crown of 'Game of the Year'. Some of the innovative features include 25 cars with animated drivers, enhanced car damage, extensive set-up and repair options, 36 classic stages from the official British Rally Championship - totalling ±714 kilometres, weather effects which include external and internal rain that has its own physics model, open area rallying for freedom of driving which includes dead ends and re-routing.



NEW SURPRISES AROUND EVERY CORNER!

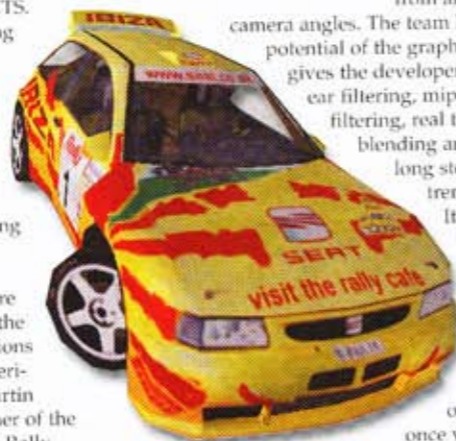
acclaim for its superb gameplay and realism. This has sparked the desire in Europress to reclaim the throne and by doing so have acquired the services of the top specialists in the rallying sector. Actualize is a new division that was set up solely to focus on the potential of Rally



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 99 HAS A GREAT OUTLOOK!

Championship 99. It's being headed up by Meash Meakin and Andy Wood who have between them 30 years of experience in the gaming industry. Meash Meakin is the CEO of Europress who has taken the Europress range to new heights and has created Europe's industry

36 classic stages from the official British Rally Championship - totalling ±714 kilometres, weather effects which include external and internal rain that has its own physics model, open area rallying for freedom of driving which includes dead ends and re-routing.



camera angles. The team have grasped at the potential of the graphic accelerators which gives the developers use of bi- and tri-linear filtering, mip mapping, anisotropic filtering, real time lighting, alpha blending and vertex fog - to cut a long story short, it looks tremendous.

It must be said that for the ability to run the game even in minimum specs you will have to have nothing less than a P233MMX and 32Meg RAM, though this is above our markets minimum's, once you see it you will make the effort to upgrade if necessary.



MUD IN YOUR EYE

The proof is really in the mud with this title as it takes you into its world of absolutely awesome graphics and realistic physics. We will have to wait until the full product is released to make the final verdict but I am making a safe assumption in predicting greatness for this title. If you want more than my first impression of Rally Championship 99 then browse through this issue's Cover CD, load the demo up and experience it.

STORM
GENRE: RALLY RACING SIMULATION (PC)
DEVELOPER: MAGNETIC FIELDS
PUBLISHER: ACTUALIZE
SUPPLIER: T.C.M WAREHOUSE TELE (011) 312-1067
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 99
INTERNET: <a href="http://WWW.RALLYCHAMPIONSHIP.CO.UK/">HTTP://WWW.RALLYCHAMPIONSHIP.CO.UK/</a>

# THEY SAY THE DEAD KNOW NO PAIN...

## LEGACY of KAIN

# SOUL REAVER

# THINGS ARE ABOUT TO CHANGE







Being the commander of a highly experienced group of mercenaries can be a headache at times. Selecting the right people for the mission, buying the necessary equipment, and especially balancing the accounts to remain a profitable organization can be daunting to say the least. To make things worse, the company that employs you, leaves you and your team for dead, deep in Africa...welcome to Shadow Company.

This ambitious upcoming title from Interactive Magic combines great qualities from titles such as Myth and Jagged Alliance to produce a game like nothing we've seen before. The game plays out in the year 2010, where the world is run by business corporations. Terrorism threatens the well being of these companies, and the trend of the time is to get rid of the terrorist groups through hiring mercenary groups. In Shadow Company, you command your team of skilled mercenaries through various locations in Africa to other parts of the world after being

# SHADOW COMPANY

## LEFT FOR DEAD



I THINK WE'RE LOST. THIS DEFINITELY ISN'T AFRICA

betrayed by the Granite company. Your motivation is to survive, and to make money to keep your team equipped and battle worthy. Like the saying goes, no bucks, no Buck Rogers.

### ANGLES AND PERSPECTIVES

Shadow Company is played from a third person perspective through the use of a moveable camera system, which works quite well. The camera perspective can be moved independently from your mercs, can rotate, change angle, or be slaved to follow a selected character. Your team is controlled in a fashion similar to real-time strategy games much like Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines. The game itself is fully 3D, and features scenery reminiscent of the levels found in Hidden & Dangerous. The levels in Shadow



GO AND TAKE OUT THOSE SAM SITES WITH THESE BULLETS

Company are detailed with all kinds of real world objects, and tanks, helicopters and other vehicles are totally interactive and useable by your forces should they have the skills to pilot them. Mercenaries need weapons, and Shadow Company caters for a wide variety of tools to equip your team with, from assault rifles, pistols, sub-machine guns, shotguns, sniper rifles, LAW rockets, frag-grenades, smoke grenades, and a whole lot of other items necessary to survive in a combat environment. At the start of a mission, the player must hire mercs, buy weapons and ammunition and other equipment the team might

need to complete their goal. Should they run out of ammo in a mission, your team can scavenge weapons from dead soldiers or buildings in terrorist camps. The fun part comes in when a merc hijacks a tank for that extra bit of firepower. The terrain is everything but flat, and by crawling over a hill, your team will have a great firing position while benefiting from the extra cover as Shadow Company employs realistic line of sight.

Campaigns consist of various missions each with multiple goals. Some missions may require your team to destroy some kind of terrorist camp, while others might have the goal of assassinating a terrorist leader. The open structure of Shadow Company allows the player to complete these missions in whatever suits their style of play. For instance, on an assassination mission, you have the choice of destroying the plane in which the target is supposed to escape in, switch off the lights of the runway to prevent reinforcements from dropping in, or ambush the poor fellow on his way to the airport. As commander, the player chooses the landing and extraction zones, depending on what the mission plan calls for. Missions will take place in prison camps,

Memnoch

sub-marine bases, built-up areas, savannahs and other detailed areas. Each of your mercs will have their own personalities and abilities, and their own voices as well. Losing an operative in a mission denies you from using that character again, so protect your people, and they will serve you well. Up to 12 mercs can be assigned to any one mission, although you might not have the resources to arm each of them to the teeth, so a smaller group with more firepower might prove to be more effective in most cases. A neat feature is the overwatch mode, where your mercs will stay stationary and attack hostiles once they come into range. This mode is selectable, and makes sense where it isn't a great idea for your mercs to start firing on a tango while you're trying to sneak them into a base where stealth is a requirement.

### COMING SOON

Shadow Company will also feature 16-player multiplayer over LAN and via the Internet, where opposing and co-operative modes will be featured. For a title in an alpha state, most of the features are already in place and the game is highly functional and fun to play. Where the modern trend in gaming follows the first-person shooter path, Shadow Company follows a great alternative approach which can be defined as real-time 3D tactical combat, and should be a very enjoyable title for fans of realistic combat strategy type games.



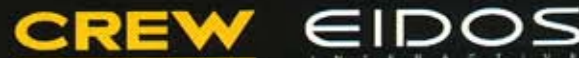
MEMNOCH	
GENRE:	COMBAT STRATEGY (PC)
DEVELOPER:	INTERACTIVE MAGIC
PUBLISHER:	UBI SOFT ENTERTAINMENT
SUPPLIER:	MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE
TELEPHONE:	(011) 315-1000
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE:	DECEMBER 99
INTERNET:	WWW.SHADOWCOMPANY.COM

# RAID. PILLAGE. PLUNDER.



# Cutthroats

## Terror on the High Seas



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It is a constant surprise to many that the home of football (England) is not where the game is coded but in the land where football is called soccer, Canada. You only have to look at some of the new screenshots and compare them with FIFA 99 to be impressed.

The question you are all asking is what is new within the FIFA 2000? It appears that the game has been built from scratch and not a simple case of adding some new features, which was apparently the case in some of the previous versions. There is nothing wrong in looking at some of the areas, which could be improved, and merely adding to the original program, when you have the market leader. This time around, with time not the major issue, the team have taken all the best components from previous games and started working from that basis. Take the best and make it bigger, better and more interesting is not a bad introduction to FIFA 2000. There are so many improvements it is hard to know where to start, was the word back from the team.

Split the game into three areas. (1) Realism in the way the players move, act and react. (2) The graphics/animation including in-game detail from movement of the players to their faces. (3) Finally the way the game code runs. These are some of the main areas of the game that have been worked on and in effect these are the main components that make a game!



CRASH DETECTION FOR HOLDING OFF PLAYERS

Making the game more realistic is dependent on utilising motion capturing techniques and blending them with animation whilst adding more moves. EA sports have led the field in

this area for many years so it is merely a case of adding more interaction between the players. It is the little touches that really matter. Who can forget David Beckham's little kick whilst on the ground in the last World Cup that got him sent off.

Although individually some of the minor interactions may seem insignificant on their own it is when you add up the many scenarios, action, little touches, facial expressions etc that results in more realism to the game that really add excitement and immerses you in the game.

### Nice move

Adding more animation means the players move better and so you have more set pieces, formations and even new trick shots. If you thought that dribbling around a player, making some quick passes and lobbing the

When it comes to sports titles, then we all know that EA are tops. Talking about football titles in the words of Carly Simon, "Nobody does it better." Already the media hysteria to get all the latest news, information and screens regarding FIFA 2000 is starting to build and it is only mid summer. Looking at the recent set of football action games everyone is waiting with baited breath to see what new features, innovations and compelling gameplay will be set to carve a new benchmark in EA's latest version. -

Derek dela Fuente



ball into the goal mouth was impressive in FIFA 1999 then FIFA 2000 adds moves that some of the current crop of players have created in the last season to give an experience not to be missed.

What more can you ask for? You have the lot; bicycle kicks, volleys, headers, scissors kicks as well as pinpoint passing, shots and dribbling. New shielding logic allows for more precise ball control, deliberate pacing

GENRE: SOCCER SIMULATION (PC & PSX)
DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS
PUBLISHER: EA SPORTS
SUPPLIER: EA AFRICA
TELE (011) 803-1212
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 99
INTERNET: WWW.EA.CO.ZA



INTENSIVE WORK IS BEING DONE ON THE FACIAL FEATURES OF EACH PLAYER

and increased player interaction. Chest trapping allows players more control over air balls than ever before, allowing them to shield the ball from defenders' attacks.

### EA Speak

'Now you will visibly be able to discern a player's aggression towards the ball. Anticipating passes and blocking shots have been implemented along with defensive formations which will prove difficult to get through, while attacking play will be much easier to counter attack and score. Such aspects of the game become clear in your first attempt at FIFA 2000, comes the feedback from EA.

Now not only do you have more moves but better control! So make a dazzling run, score a goal and watch the crowd celebrate! Now you will



THE RED DEVILS BEING GIVEN A RUN BY THE WHITE HART BOYS: (PC)



AN EARLY DEVELOPMENT PIC OF THE PLAYSTATION GAMEPLAY

## Game Features

### Up To Date

It began with FIFA International Soccer, then came FIFA 96 that really got people excited about the game to be followed by FIFA 97. FIFA 98 created another wonder in the eyes of gamers with a leap forward in its graphical content. The revolution went on to FIFA 99. Now, it is FIFA 2000, which is the biggest leap forward from any of the previous versions!

### Its Got The Looks

FIFA 2000 will this time around be top heavy with technological advancements but not to the detriment of the game. New motion capturing techniques, and new lighting effects technology present a whole new game. The players have been constructed on a complete 3D scale, where the players' movements are based on the 3D engine e.g. a player's scream will be created by real movement of the mouth rather than frame animation, as was the case in FIFA 99.

### Live

There will be more stadiums in the game than previous versions. The stadiums will also be more complex and more realistic where the lighting effects will affect stadium shadows and toning. Also, the crowd in the stadium will no longer be a flat image. People will stand around the actual field. These 'people' might be the media, photographers, security... lots of surprises are still in store!

### The Right Moves

Moving onto the players. The players will be designed, shaped, and toned to be more realistic. More motion capture, and new moves will give you more dribbling options. Players will be more responsive to the ball and will anticipate passes and shots, making blocks and interceptions.

### Leagues In Front

More Leagues and Teams will only add more to the thrill of the game. League and Cup games will be integrated into one Season mode game. And EA Sports say that there will be promotion and relegation in the game. Winning your League will get your team to play for the major cups the very next season. To add even more thrill and spill, EA have added Classic Teams to the game where you will be able to match them against the best teams today. The game features 17 leagues from all around the world (see information section for specific leagues). As well as the 17 leagues, EA Sports have also implemented a league which features top teams from other leagues of the world. Attention has been paid in the localising of the game so Italians who only want to play games in the Serie league can sit back and enjoy but if you fancy some English flavour then check out the Premier League. (I wonder where Nicolas Anelka will be playing when you read this).

EA SPORTS, "We focus on completing the important parts of the game first and then worry about the smaller additions. If we finish ahead of schedule then be sure to expect cheats."

- In-game navigation has also been elevated with an attractive interface that is easy to follow.
- The in-game management function has apparently been overhauled to give you more options over set pieces and individual player moves, as well as formations.
- FIFA 2000 will not be playable over the net. The Internet cannot support this sort of game. Although Multiplayer will still be made available through Local Area Networks.



LIGHT MAPPING TECHNIQUE USED FOR ADVANCED MOTION CAPTURE PROCESS

That's not all for even the players celebrate in a more animated way. The new trends to celebrate a goal have become more interesting each year and it varies from country to country! Realism, looks what more could you want? Lots of teams, stats and players to choose from. Well its all there. There are over 40 classic teams; you can match today's best against the greatest teams of all time. The redesigned season mode delivers league and cup matches in one schedule. Fight for the



right to progress to the European Cups for the next season or suffer the ultimate consequences, relegation. Newcomers to the series will enjoy easy-to-play accessibility while experienced game players will appreciate the depth of gameplay. You have all the up-to-date teams from around the world that include leagues from Brazil, USA (MLS), Spain, England, Germany, Italy, France, Scotland, Netherlands,



Sweden, Belgium, Korea, Norway, Denmark, Greece, Israel, Turkey and Portugal, plus a vast selection of cup-contending teams from the rest of the world. Everything is in a nicely formed structured fashion with consecutive season play, with the joy of promotion and the threat of relegation, which offers the chance to earn your team's advancement into the European Cup for the next season. Cinematic cut-scenes seamlessly capture all the action so players experience the impact, pain and emotion of a world-class game.

DEREK DELA FUENTE

## Exclusive Interview with Kerry Whalen Producer - Animation for FIFA 2000

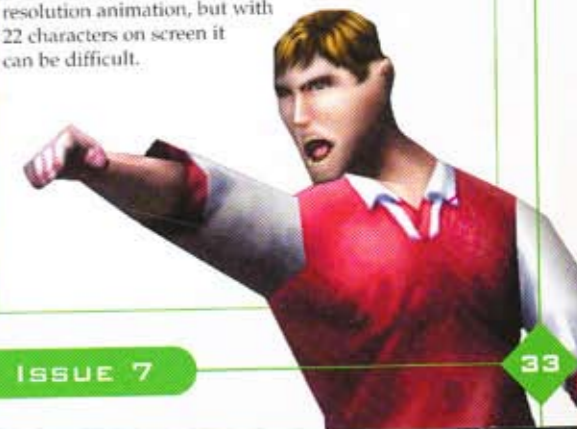
**1) What exactly does an animation specialist do?**  
**Terry:** On FIFA we have 3 dedicated animators and a large team of motion capture specialists. The animators and producers decide what new animation will go into the game and the animators create storyboards. Animators work with the motion capture specialists and professional players to capture the real life football motions in the studio. This process is called MOCAP (short for motion capture). The captured-football motion is digitized and the animators take this data and apply it to a "skeleton" that they have created from scratch. The animators use these skeletons to enhance and tweak the animation so that it fits the purpose for which it was designed. For example they may move the leg of a slide tackle up to enhance a "fouling" type animation. They fix small flaws in the motion and tune them for gameplay responsiveness. This is very important for FIFA because gameplay is the number one priority and it takes very skilled animators to create animation that can respond at the touch of a button. Once this is done the player geometry (the player's skin and clothes) is applied to the skeleton. Just like a real person's bones the FIFA skeleton moves the player's body from the inside. The animators also do a lot of work creating all the goal celebrations and foul reactions you see in the game using the individual animation they have created previously.

## 2) In terms of animation, what's the main difference between FIFA 99 and FIFA 2000?

**Terry:** The focus this year was to enhance the player to player interaction in the game. We really wanted playstation users to "feel" the action on the pitch. To that end facial expression has been added to the PSX version. The facial animation is actually matched to the player's body language so that you can see the agony of being injured or the elation after scoring a goal. There are many new and entertaining goal celebrations, and foul reactions as well. This year our motion capture starred English National Sol Campbell. Most of his motion will be used in gameplay to make the players jostle, shield the ball and barge one another. The tackles, falls and collisions are all new. The runs, goalie saves and many others are replaced with better animation.

## 3) Is there anything you'd like to do on PlayStation which you couldn't do because of hardware-limitations?

**Terry:** This is probably the biggest design consideration we have and results in a great deal of engineering creativity. Each year we go through careful planning to ensure we maximize the number of features we can complete using only 2 megs of RAM on the PlayStation. If we were to compare the PC version to PlayStation you'll notice that pretty much all the same features are there. Ideally we'd like to make the whole game look a lot more realistic by using bigger and more detailed models and textures as well as better resolution animation, but with 22 characters on screen it can be difficult.







Some people argue that the turn-based strategy genre has been reduced to nothing more than an empty husk, just waiting for someone to come along and throw it away. That might be true in some circles, but when considering a game like Age of Wonders you can't help wondering if there might still be a little life left outside the realm of real time strategy. - RedTide

Here we are, once again, looking at a screen full of dragons and elves, nymphs and other fantasy inspired creatures. Age of Wonders is set in this fantasy world and the basic premise of the game is to take control of a heroic character, either evil or good and set about conquering realms and slaying evil minions. On your quest to rid the land of all things foul and disgusting you must also form alliances, manage towns and decide what spells to study before you go to bed. Sounds simple enough at a glance and could easily be mistaken for Command & Conquer with dragons or Total Annihilation: Kingdoms with talking bits, but it's not.

**WHAT'S UP**  
The early preview version of the game is certainly looking lovely and at this early stage not a single bug or glitch was encountered which should translate through to the final version if everything goes well. The game is a turn-based strategy title in which up to twelve different races can be played, all with their own strengths and weaknesses. For those of you who don't normally play turn-based games the flow of the action can seem a little stilted at times, the trick is to keep playing and you'll quickly discover that this game lends itself extremely well to this genre. There is something satisfyingly soothing about playing a turn-based strategy game - in this case it would seem that a break from the hectic pace of real time strategy is a welcome one. The only time when the game comes close to 'real time' is during the battles. There are options, during the battle sequences, to run the action simultaneously cutting down on the waiting time. If you want to play the game strictly as a strategy title and if you aren't in the mood to actually decide which unit attacks what bad guy then there is a fast automatic combat mode that resolves the conflict for you. Although the more tactical, manual approach is recommended if you want to make sure the computer doesn't get the upper hand. Once you've warmed up to the pace and style of the game it proves to be an absorbing experience that keeps you playing and playing until you've conquered every little town, village or outhouse. On the management side of the coin once you've successfully taken a town either by diplomatic means or violence you have a number of different options available to you. You can use the town to produce more units for forthcoming battles, get the town folk to pro-

duce merchandise or you can simply loot or raid the town. Looting can yield significant rewards but torching the whole place just seems more fun. Once you've established yourself and have a steady income it's time to start building an army to take down the opposition, who are always looking at your farms and towns with scheming and envious eyes. Besides the usual metal on metal tactics in war you also have the ability to research spells. The number of different spells on offer is mind boggling and you can do simple things like temporarily freeze water for safe passage right through to summoning creatures to do your dirty work for you. The size of your army is limited to groups of eight units, the scale here is a little on the small side and you won't be sending hundreds of dwarfs into battle but instead small well balanced platoons. The choice of combining the use of sheer muscle and metal or intellect and magic is up to you, most battles are really down to who has the better units but sometimes the clever use of a spell at the right time can increase your odds significantly.

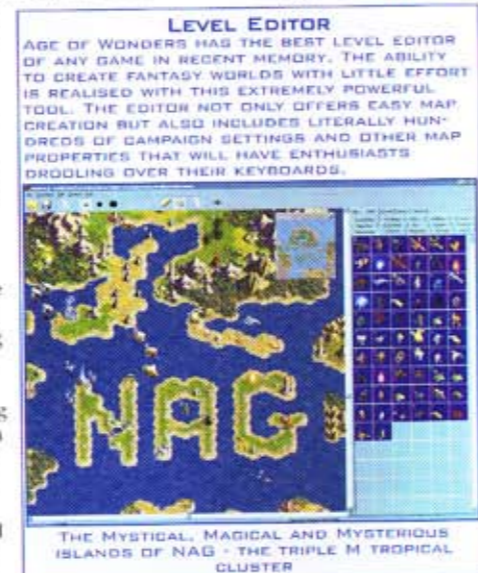
**TINY LITTLE TREES**  
Even at this early stage one area that the game excels in is graphics, especially the terrain, landscape features and buildings. Everything is real-

ly small but drawn with exquisite detail right down to the last rock on the ground. The entire playing field is alive with activity all the time, ambient graphics such as volcanoes smoking ominously and even snow melting to reveal green grass adds immeasurably to the whole feel of the game. Many more effects are promised for

## AGE OF WONDERS



THIS IS WHERE MOST OF THE ACTION TAKES PLACE



THIS IS WHAT THE QUICK BATTLE OPTION LOOKS LIKE

the final version including some really mind blowing particle effects. The final version promises huge dynamic maps with up to two subterranean levels, over a hundred spells in seven spheres of magic, special items and a host of other innovations. Even though the game is nearing completion there are already rumours of a sequel, the developers have promised to release an add-on pack shortly after the game hits the shelves and it should include more scenarios, heroes, items and even a smart random map generator. In this genre the only real significant competition is the excellent Heroes of Might and Magic, but if the developers make good on their promises, Age of Wonders might just be the next big thing in the turn-based fantasy strategy genre.

**REDTIDE**

GENRE: TURN-BASED STRATEGY (PC)

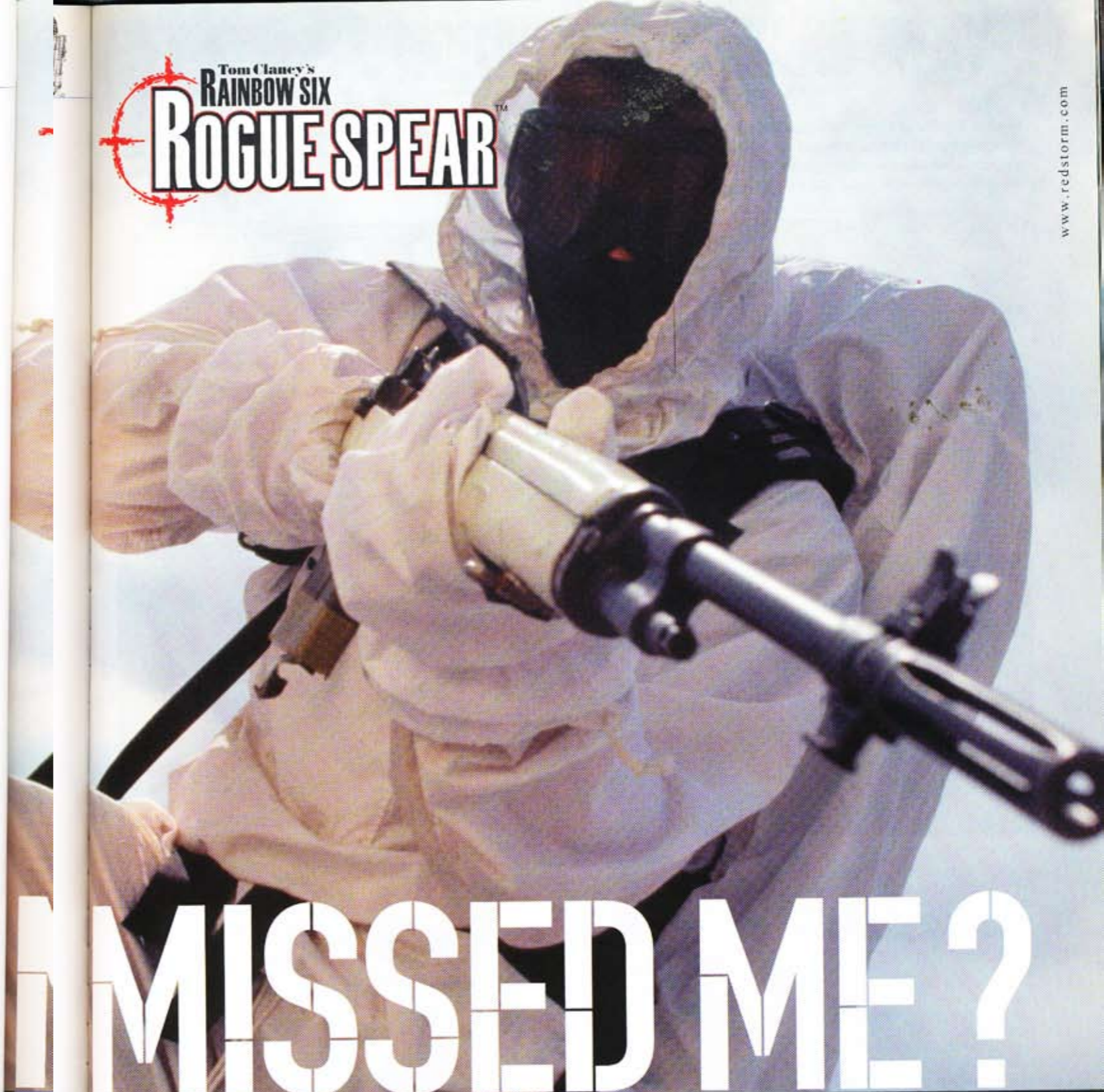
DEVELOPER: TRIUMPH STUDIOS

PUBLISHER: TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE

SUPPLIER: MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE  
TEL: (011) 315-1000  
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 99

INTERNET:  
WWW.AGEOFWONDERS.COM

## Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX ROGUE SPEAR



Team Rainbow is back in full force. Rogue Spear, the sequel to PC Gamer's 1998 Action Game of the Year, immerses you even deeper in the explosive action of an elite multinational strike force.

Rogue Spear feels so real, you'll be yelling 'Tango Down!' in your sleep for weeks. And the multiplayer action is to die for. Remember, when stalking the enemy: Walk softly but strike like a thunderbolt. You only have one shot to save the world.



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Hype - The Time Quest is a game currently being developed by Ubi Soft with a difference. Unlike most games striving for absolute realism Hype is based on a medieval fantasy setting in a world populated by popular toy Playmobil characters, very similar to some of the Lego games that have been released recently. Unlike past games utilising Playmobil characters Hype caters for both young and old by offering a complex plot and intriguing story line.

Soul Assassin

The story starts as an evil Black Knight appears and casts a spell on Hype, turning him into stone and warping the highly unlikely hero three generations back in time. Once awakened by a friendly magician our hero regains consciousness and sets out to search for a way to return to his own time and defeat the Black Knight. Easier said than done and our hero will have to scour the lands in search of a magical gem that enables time travel. The story sounds like a children's fantasy book, but that is where the comparison stops. The plot introduced throughout the game is complex and Hype has to be careful that he doesn't speak to the wrong people as he

# HYPE

THE Time Quest



will know the Playmobil characters are toddlers dressed from varying professions that one might find in a fantasy world including Knights, Magicians, Guards and the like. Throughout his journeys Hype will encounter 80 different Playmobil characters, some of them will assist

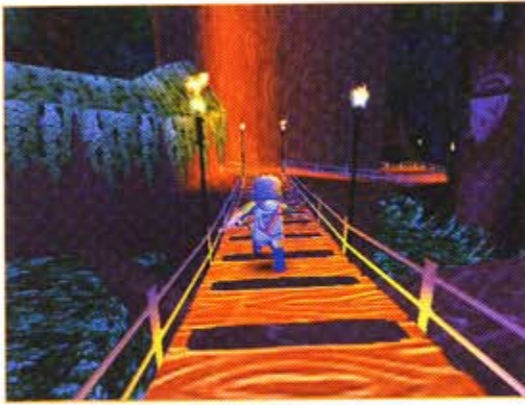
the buildings look like large toy buildings. This whole atmosphere makes the game easy on the eyes and adds to the believability of playing in a Playmobil world. Hype also utilises the in-game engine for playing cinematic sequences, similar to the way that Jedi Knight and Homeworld did with their engine. It would have been nice if they used pre-rendered sequences but the in-game engine does an excellent job of seamlessly switching between the cut-scenes and gameplay. Currently the beta version we have is still in its early stages and Ubi Soft still has to add many features as well as fix the numerous bugs that are left in the game. One feature that I sorely missed is the voices for all



Hype with his adventure offering various items, while others will attack him on sight. There is no shortage of monsters to attack and the villain's range from Robin Hood lookalikes to ghost and wild animals. Hype does of course have his trusty curved sword and crossbow with him at all times and he can also cast one or two magical spells should the need arise. The game utilises a Tomb Raider type third person perspective and this does tend to make combat slightly difficult since aiming with the crossbow in this mode can be

visits the 14 different time zones. By mistakenly talking to the wrong person he could inadvertently notify the Black Knight of his intentions to return. I actually think this is the first game in which the concept of a time paradox is explored. Something that I found interesting is the simple tutorial in the beginning of the game which is cleverly disguised as a training seminar hosted by the magician that awakens Hype from his stone encasement. It seems that more and more developers are actually including the tutorial section of games as part of the story and not as a separate introduction like in the past. After training you are free to roam the land and continue on your quest as you meet up with both friend and foe. As anyone with children

a little awkward and inaccurate. Fortunately Ubi Soft anticipated this and added a first person mode that can be used for aiming the crossbow although you can't play the game in this mode the whole time since it is a key-toggle. As most gamers have come to expect by now from most new games, Hype uses a 3D accelerated engine for drawing the world and the characters within. The game utilises Direct3D and Glide to make sure that most 3D accelerators will support the game when it is finally released later this year. Using acceleration adds a lot to the game and some of the visual effects that can be seen are of the highest quality. The environments that Hype finds himself in are very colourful and tend to have a cartoony look to them, mostly due to the fact that



A BRIDGE TOO FAR...



the characters and in the beta you have to read the subtitles to understand what is happening in the world. I also hear that there is a friendly Dragon somewhere within the game that helps Hype on his journeys, unfortunately I have been unsuccessful in finding him so far but rest assured my search continues. The things we do to play games. From what I have seen so far Hype -The Time Quest is going to be a fun and relaxing game to play and not as intense as most action/adventure games. Unlike most games, which are genre specific, Hype also promises to entertain all gamers regardless of genre. I am looking forward to the final game and hopefully by the time it is released I have found the Dragon...

**SOUL ASSASSIN**

**GENRE:** ROLE PLAYING GAME (PC)

**DEVELOPER:** UBI SOFT ENTERTAINMENT

**PUBLISHER:** UBI SOFT ENTERTAINMENT

**SUPPLIER:** MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE  
TELE (011) 315-1000

**EXPECTED RELEASE DATE:** DECEMBER 99

**INTERNET:**  
WWW.UBISOFT.COM



Since Worms and Lemmings no one has created a game based on simple game play, which is not technology led, that is until now. If initial perception of a game is anything to go by then a lot of people are going to make their minds up about this game within seconds. It is only when you sit down, play the game and understand that the team, Minds Eye, believes in what they are doing, you can see it's what some might call a retrospective and restorative game!

Derek dela Fuente

**GAME IDEA**  
What is Sheep all about then? It is a herd 'em up, for want of a better description. The view is C&C style, and the player controls a herder. A 3D format was tested but it was found that the 2D format worked better. The herder is given a flock of sheep at the beginning of each level, and the aim of the game is to get as many of your flock to the exit level as possible. Rounding up the sheep is the basic game play mechanic, but that is just scratching the surface. The player has to herd their sheep through 16 levels of danger and mayhem, each level being more surreal than the last. Herding your sheep may not sound that engrossing but with all the many factors that are controlled in a random way via the many intricacies of the AI you will find there is a lot to keep a grip on. There is a choice of four herders to select from, two herders and two dogs, all of which have dif-

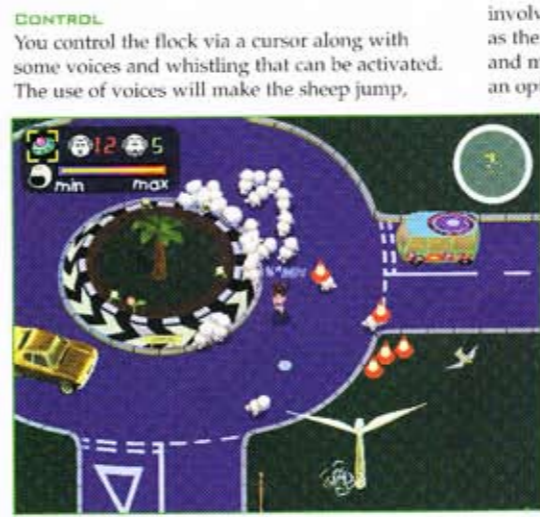


ferent attributes. One may move faster but is more gentle, whilst another may be slower and aggressive. The dogs are fast, but will scare the sheep more. At the start of each level you are given instructions along with a collection of sheep. Some players may merely wish to get one sheep to the end of a level which is good enough, whilst others may wish to get them all safely through. Level One is a conventional setting, a farm and open fields to familiarise the player with the controls and environment and this is more of a learning level.



LAMP CHOPS AND STEAKS EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK!

**CONTROL**  
You control the flock via a cursor along with some voices and whistling that can be activated. The use of voices will make the sheep jump, experience a problem you can move on to another. Within each of the levels there is not a set route or routine to complete it but a number of ways giving more interest. It is all about puzzle solving, along with hand eye co-ordination. Level two sees the player trying to move through an ice cream factory along with sheep fed sharks. You may have to get the sheep to drink tons of liquid ice cream so that the sharks are out of the liquid thus dying. Sounds weird but it all works in the context of the puzzles and graphics. Sheep in space with jetpacks, with inertia implemented. Sheep in the Titanic, a timed level, Sheep in a night-club... (so many strange locations that you will



SOUTH AFRICA IN TWO YEARS...

either love or hate this game). On-screen you have your help features, such as a radar display to see if any of the sheep may have wandered far away from the main herd, also if they are in danger. A meter to show how well you are doing. A selection icon to implement the specials' icons you have collected is available.

Most levels are around six screens by six screens in size, but vary enormously in complexity. The first level is very open to allow you to get used to controlling your flock, but as you progress, the levels become more maze-like and will require finer control of your flock. It is the complexity, not size, which is the most important thing. The game is designed to appeal to as many people as possible, so players should be able to make their way through levels relatively quickly (15-30 minutes). But there is a big difference between making it through a level and completing it. Each level has multiple routes and solutions, and for a player to explore all of these and the difficulty levels will take many hours per level.

**ACCLAIM AND CRITICISM**

Roger commented, "We do understand that people must get over a preconceived idea about this sort of basic puzzle come arcade game. We have gone back to basics and gone for a game that will have mass appeal. It is true that Sheep is a game, which relies more on creative game play design than cutting-edge programming techniques. There will always be a problem of magazines dismissing it out of hand and we expect that some magazines will give it 10% and others will give it 90%. We have looked into this area and we



hope that the magazines, which are extremely influential, look at it as a game in its own right. Empire is not a giant of a company but we have been around for 10 plus years. Now if this game were to be released by one of the big boys then everyone would be saying, what a novel game, isn't it good to see such a simple game with such clever ideas. The fact is you just can't win.

**DEREK DELA FUENTE**

**GENRE:** HERD STRATEGY (PC/PSX)

**DEVELOPER:** MINDS EYE

**PUBLISHER:** EMPIRE INTERACTIVE

**SUPPLIER:** MULTIMEDIA WAREHOUSE  
TELE (011) 315-1000

**EXPECTED RELEASE DATE:** DECEMBER 99

**INTERNET:**  
WWW.UBISOFT.COM



## 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.

## Calm Before the STORM

It would seem that there's not a whole hell of a lot going on in the game market at the moment. But, judging by the streams of E-mail that we have been receiving, concerning the arrival of new game titles, we can certainly say that this is a small lull before the storm of big releases hits us for the upcoming holiday season.

With Christmas scant months away the local game distributors are gearing up for a big season, with some huge titles ready to hit the market.

We here at NAG are looking forward to three or four bumper issues, stuffed full of game reviews and previews, as this huge

thunderhead of titles bursts over our shores. Rest assured that we will be right there, and will take you along with us.

The next few months are a very exciting time for gamers the world over, with titles like Quake 3 Arena, The Sims and Gabriel Knight 3 (to name but a few) supposedly making appearances for the silly season. Of course, it does mean that we won't be getting much sleep between now and the New Year. In fact, the lot of us will all probably be playing games in a small dark room somewhere while the rest of the world welcomes the year 2000. But these are the rigors of dedicated journalists around the world.

## CREATIVE

### ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PC PREMIUM SYSTEMS



**BLASTER  
PC**

Intel Pentium III processor 450MHz  
Intel 440BX AGP-Chipset Motherboard  
128MB SDRAM memory (PC-100)  
13 GB Ultra DMA Harddisk  
1.44MB Floppy Drive  
Microsoft Windows 98 pre-installed  
Sound Blaster Live!  
PC-DVD 5X MPEG2 Kit with Dxr2 technology  
Graphics Blaster RIVA TNT 16MB AGP  
Cambridge SoundWorks FPS2000 Speakers  
Modem Blaster Flash56 PCI modem  
BlasterPC Black Case with INFRARED remote & FM tuner  
17" High Resolution Monitor  
104 keys keyboard  
PS/2 mouse

## HOMEWORLD



Homeworld will blow your mind as it takes Real Time Strategy to a new level with a full 3D world that will take your breath away. We had no qualms about awarding our Editor's Choice award to this RTS gem!

**See  
PG 50**

### The Awards Ceremony



**System  
Shock 2  
PG 56**



**Rogue Spear  
PG 54**

# IT'S COMING!





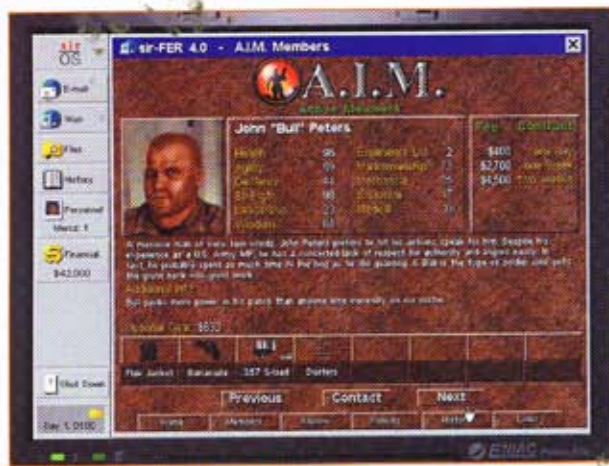
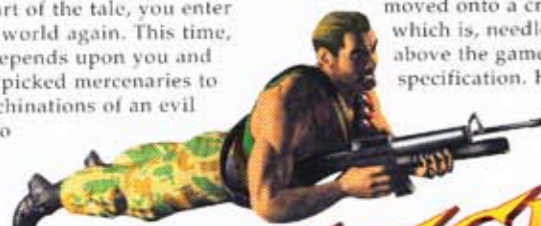
The heat is something oppressive, sending rivulets of sweat running down your temples, back and creating a sheen of moisture on your top lip. Mosquitoes buzz around you constantly, raising itchy red welts on your skin as they feed off of your blood. But you dare not swat them - the slightest movement or sound, even in the thick foliage of this jungle, could betray your position to an enemy that wants to see you dead. It is a game of cat and mouse, of hunter and hunted, where the role of the latter falls to the one who manages to see the other first. Then you see it - a small movement. But it is still large enough to belie the presence of your enemy. You shift slowly, painstakingly, bring around your automatic weapon. You line the sites with the base of his skull, inhaling once, twice, before squeezing the trigger. As the shot resounds through the trees, sending flocks of birds from their roosts and pushing the butt of the rifle hard against your shoulder, you silently muse: "another day, another dollar..." Welcome to the world of professional mercenaries.

Jagged Alliance 2 has been a long time coming. In the first instalment of this isometric strategy / role playing hybrid, you took control of a mercenary squad sent to save a small island from domination. Now, in the next part of the tale, you enter into this cut-throat world again. This time, an entire country depends upon you and your army of hand picked mercenaries to free it from the machinations of an evil dictator. Welcome to sunny Arulco, where the streets are wet with the blood of innocence and the people are slaves to the evil Queen Deidranna Chivaldori. Hired by her deposed husband, Enrico (long thought dead by his still loyal subjects) it is your job to put together a team of mercenaries, equip them and get them to the embattled kingdom. Thanks to your in-game laptop computer, that's the easy part. But winning the war is a guaranteed uphill struggle against the odds. Players of the original Jagged Alliance will recognise many similarities between the first instalment and this new one. The entire interface is very similar, although many improvements have been made. It is now possible, should you have the resources, to run an army of several mercenary squads, rather than just the one six member squad that the previous game allowed. Better control over the mercenaries has also been included, both in the main action screen and on the map screen. But furthermore, it's more of the same thing. Developers Talonsoft really did their best with this one, and the changes and improvements over the last instalment are obvious. But the game, despite being fun to play and quite engrossing, still has its problems. Specified with a Pentium 166 MMX as recommended for the game, Jagged Alliance 2 should perform favourably on almost any

machine around. But the performance on the 166 is questionable at best, particularly as far as sound and smoothness of graphics are concerned. Guessing that the game might have been incorrectly specified, I moved onto a creative Blaster PC, which is, needless to say, far above the game's recommended specification. However, I encountered the same problems on that

monster PC as I did on the 166 MMX. This can only be a problem in programming - there simply is no other explanation. The game also has a lot of load time. This is not much of a problem, because the levels last fairly long, unless you just pass through without encountering any enemies. The game's sound is also on the suspect side. Aside from problems with jerkiness, the sound gets very poor during cut scenes - almost as though the sampling rate is far too low for decent quality to be achieved. And speaking of cut scenes, well... they are a little disappointing to say the least. Although a few entertaining ones feature full screen action, the majority are comprised of isometric views, combined with "speech interaction boxes." These aspects are actually very detrimental to the image of the game, and it's developers, Talonsoft. Surely, with the technology available to developers today, these stupid little problems could have been eliminated entirely. Lastly, the story line behind Jagged Alliance 2 is fairly predictable. Rather than calling it weak, I would prefer the term "B Grade". Being such a forgiving person who supports numerous charities (like the "Shryke Benevolent Fund" and "Shryke Financial Aid Organisation") I searched the game for good points. And thankfully, the good does outweigh the bad to a degree. The best thing the game has to offer is a totally enthralling game play aspect. Get into this one, and the hours will pass like minutes while you search out foes and point out their errors in judgement by improving their physical ventilation system. Yes, it is turned based (stop whining) but the action style that Jagged Alliance 2 makes use of lends itself to turn based play. Try real time in a game like this and you're guaranteed to be frustrated, irritated and, most of all, dead. Despite it's "your go, my go" style, the action is still quick and exciting, with incorrect decisions being more than detrimental to your game. One mistake and you could see your entire army in tatters. Besides which, interacting with your squads is quite time consuming. Each mercenary is dealt with individually, as far as movement, stance (standing, crouching or lying down) and attacks are concerned. Each mercenary has an allotted number of movement points within each turn, with which they must perform all actions: moving, firing, and changing stance, reloading, and so on. Starting out the game is simple enough. You have your mission, your laptop and your budget. Hiring a team of mercenaries is accomplished via your laptop (an indispensable tool) and the Internet (ain't technology grand). Of course, you have to watch your expenditures when starting out, as

## JAGGED ALLIANCE 2

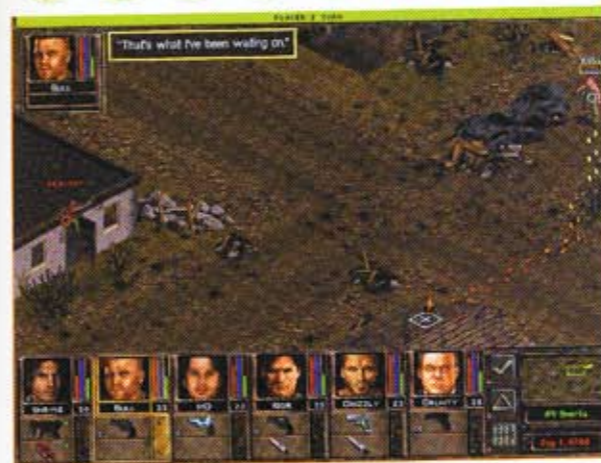


LIKE BAKING A CHOCOLATE CAKE, HIRING MERCENARIES COULDN'T BE EASIER...



THE DETAILED AND USEFUL MAP SCREEN

funds are quite limited, and the only source of income during the game is what you "acquire" during your adventures. Next it's on to Arulco... The game makes use of three main interfaces. The laptop is the first such interface, and is where most of the in-game adminis-



RUNNING INTO TROUBLE!

tration takes place. The next screen is the map screen, which allows you to handle major movements, team assignments and orders, options and the like. The last screen is the tactical screen, the isometric battle map on which you will spend most of your time. It is here that you explore the surroundings, looting and eliminating those who don't agree with you with gay abandon. All interfaces are mouse driven, with a few keyboard functions to assist you. However, almost everything within the game does have a keyboard shortcut, which can greatly reduce play-time if you take the time to learn the keys.

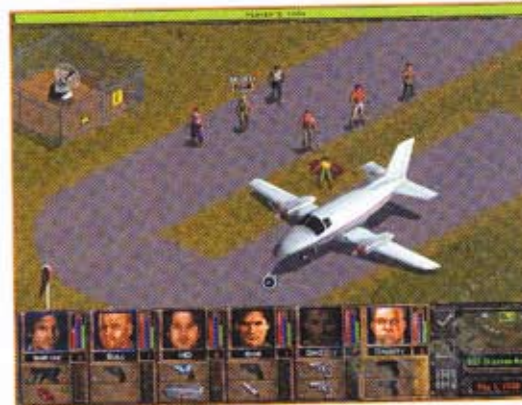
Jagged Alliance 2 is hardly revolutionary as far as graphics go. However, the game does look good, and is comparable (graphically), to games like Fallout and possibly Diablo (although the effects aren't as swanky as those in the latter). The characters' movements are smooth and quite realistic, and the screen layout and set-up makes it easy to play, and simple to spot enemies, objects and other points of interest. Despite the sound problems I encountered, Jagged Alliance does sound good. Every mercenary has a distinctive voice and catch phrases (which may get annoying after a while) and the weapons

and associated sound effects are realistic and impressive. Unfortunately the sound files seem rather fragile, even leading to a blue screen or two! Game play is, as I stated before, a simple mouse driven affair. The characters are responsive and fairly intelligent, and point out things of interest as soon as they enter the character's point of view. Yes, the game does make use of aspects like line of sight and elevation, thereby enhancing the tactics behind the game. It is an easy trap, speaking of tactics, to get involved in the simple "rush forward and blast seven kinds of



AND THESE GUYS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE DISCRETE!

excrement out of anything that moves" play style. This will work once, twice if you're lucky. But as the game progresses, the enemies can get very sneaky (one thinks of an instance where, while chasing a fleeing enemy around a building, my entire squad got taken out by an ambush just



LIBERATING AN AIRFIELD MADE EASY...

around the corner). There is nothing overly easy about succeeding in Jagged Alliance 2. It takes skill, wits and a smattering of luck to get anywhere in this game. Also, the world is fairly reactive, which means that sectors cleared of enemies today may have a whole fresh batch tomorrow. There are hundreds of ways to tackle this game, which will allow the player to play and replay the game several times. The developers obviously took this into account, seeing as how they included a "skip" option for the in-game cut scenes. It is very difficult to make a hard and fast judgement about Jagged Alliance 2. While it has a few minor bugs, it is almost sinful to skip this kind of enthralling game play. The game has its problems, sure, but they can either be ignored or focussed on. That is purely up to the individual player. I quite enjoyed the game, personally, and would give it a recommendation despite its bugs. However, unless you're a die-hard strategist, enjoy isometric action and don't mind taking turns, don't bother too much if you miss this one. Jagged Alliance 2 is firmly aimed at the market that enjoys these kinds of games.

**CREATIVE**  
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON  
CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PC PREMIUM SYSTEMS

**BLASTER**  
PC  
PC CD-ROM

**SHRYKE**

**GENRE**  
Turn-Based Strategy

Min Requirements		Recommended	
Pentium 133	32 MB Ram	Pentium 233 MMX	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	2 MB Video	12 X CD Rom	4 MB PCI Video
380 MB HD	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	850 MB HD	Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

<http://www.cryo-interactive.com>

<b>Developer:</b> Sir-tech Canada	<b>Publisher:</b> Talonsoft	<b>Supplier:</b> Game Ironix (011) 886-1972	<b>RRP:</b> R 299.00
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<b>Multplayer</b>	<b>Comparatives</b>	<b>Pro's</b>	<b>Con's</b>
No	Jagged Alliance Fallout	Enthralling Gameplay Simple Interface Good Sound Effects	Some Bugs Simple Story

<b>Graphics</b>	<b>Sound</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Story</b>	<b>Continuity</b>	<b>Playability</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>85</b>

78

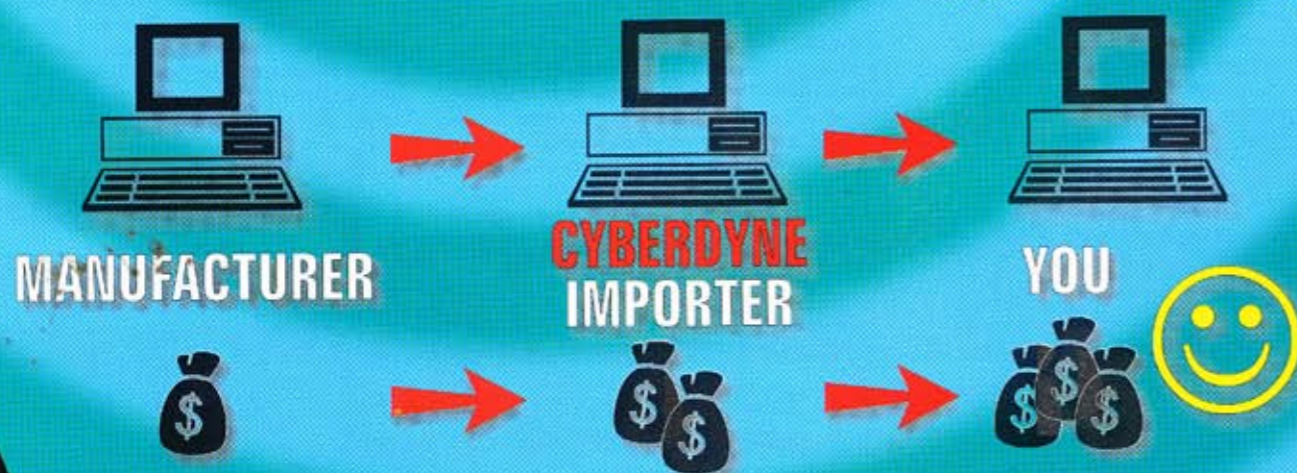


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Westwood Studios and the team that put together Dune 2 are widely regarded as the fathers of what we today call the real time strategy. Acceptance of this new genre was limited but sparked a significant enough interest, which led to the development of the virtual gaming revolution that was Command & Conquer. Numerous 'copycat' games arrived on the scene following the success of C&C, the only notable exception to the plethora of me too titles was Blizzards effort with Warcraft II. In the same way that Heretic drew interest in a Doom world by giving the player a fantasy setting and moving away from the lone marine scenario. Now riding high, Westwood released Red Alert, a game which many say finally perfected the art of real time strategy gaming. Blizzards answer to this was Starcraft, and again the playing field changed, Warcraft II in space with three different races to choose from firmly put Red Alert in its place. In amongst all this we've seen this compelling genre evolve from sprite based units to polygons in Total Annihilation and then later, Age of Empires showing us that our planets history could also be drawn from when putting together a real time strategy game. One common trait exists through all this diversification and innovation and that is the founding principles set in stone by Dune 2 and perfected in C&C and Warcraft II. No matter how outlandish or pioneering they try to be, all the others are just subtle variations on the common theme. Currently we have such a rich and diverse range of titles to choose from that Tiberian Sun enters the market with far to much to prove and the marketing hype behind the game, and no matter how good it might be it's bound to disappoint many people. - RedTide

When dealing with a game this big it's hard not to be swept away by the hype surrounding the title, the impressive history of the company behind the game and lastly the eager anticipation suffered while waiting for the final release. It's been a long time in coming and the hardest part is being objective and unemotional while playing it, a tough task for any fan of the genre, impossible for anyone who has played the previous titles from the series. It is important to remember that by being what it is the name Tiberian Sun conjures up an image of the perfect real time strategy game in anyone's head. Fantasies about the game, it's graphics, the fantastic movies and the multiplayer challenge have created a beast no one could ever hope to tame, and all this before the first screen shot was published on the Internet. Before getting to the deconstruction, the game can accurately be summed up in this way. Tiberian Sun is a glorified update of Red Alert - similar in many ways to what Dune 2000 did for Dune 2 - not much.

**BEGINNERS START HERE**

The game is a real time strategy game where you must, usually, build a base, harvest Tiberium, mass an army and finally attack the bad guys on the other side of the map. The real time part means that everything moves, attacks and builds without the annoying click here to finish your turn process that made turn based games so famous a while ago. The strategy part, although some might argue, is to do with which units you build, where you send them, how you protect your base and finally terminating the enemy. Now to do all this you need money and the commodity you harvest and trade in is Tiberium, a strange alien substance that now covers large parts of the globe. All this harvesting, building and attacking continues until either side wins. The control interface has you clicking on units and directing them to attack this or move there, large numbers can be commanded from your mouse and what it all boils down to is playing miniature



FOR THE MOST PART THE GAME HAS IMPROVED IN MANY AREAS, FROM THE FREEZING GOLD TO SPECTACULAR ION STORMS RIGHT DOWN TO MAPS LITTERED WITH CIVILIAN BUILDINGS. EVERYTHING YOU'D EXPECT FROM A SEQUEL... BUT IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN RELEASED TWO YEARS AGO!

# COMMAND & CONQUER TIBERIAN SUN

soldiers on your computer without all the mud, melted plastic and lost tank tracks.

**WESTWOOD HIRES HOLLYWOOD**

Of any game, in any genre Tiberian Sun has without a doubt the best full motion video ever seen on a computer screen. This isn't due to the fact that James Earl Jones and Michael Biehn play the lead

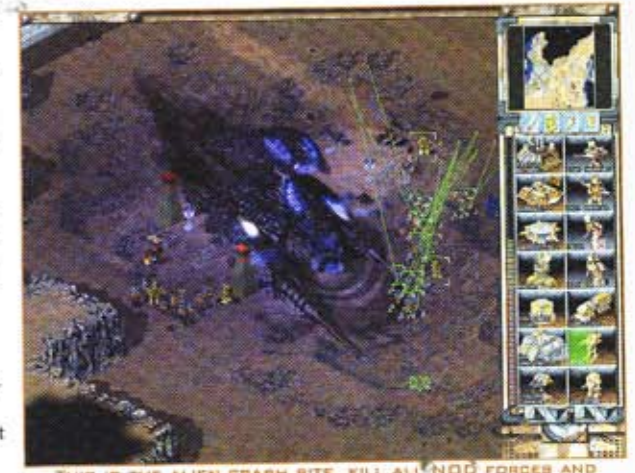
roles along with the return of Joseph D. Kucan as Kane but rather because they somehow capture the very essence of the game and the fact that they look stunning does nothing but help. The first time you see the mobile command centre taking off from the desert floor and vanishing into the distance you know that a high level of commitment to quality, timing and attention to detail has been observed. If you follow the GDI campaign the tone of the movies is as typical as American apple pie, General Solomon, played by James Earl Jones, is as impressive as ever in his role and everything looks like it comes straight out of the next big Hollywood blockbuster. Michael McNeil, played by Michael Biehn follows the generals orders to the letter and unlike the NOD campaign these guys are all fighting the good fight. In spite of the impressive video sequences you do end up feeling a little short changed. There are enough of them around but the majority of the segments involves short order barking sessions and people left waiting for the next audio cue. The problems seem to stem from the inability of actors to get to grips with acting in a computer game, the performances are up to standard but a small indefinable something is missing. The NOD campaign features it's own set of movies and the tone here is definitely one of unlawful conduct and policies that would have the UN up in arms. More people are shot and murdered than actual lines are delivered, it may be slightly violent and shocking but is very entertaining to the last, again Kane plays an excellent role and don't be surprised if you see him at the local cinema circuit soon. The other set of movies in the game are the rendered sequences, bridges exploding and buildings being infiltrated are all of the same high standard we've come to expect from Westwood. The story being told through the movies and sequences is intriguing and although pulls the action along nicely can sometimes be a little confusing.

**TIBERIAN SUN (CONTINUED)**

especially with the NOD campaign. The third component of the story involves the Forgotten, a race of mutants who are victims of extreme Tiberium poisoning. The story tells of the ongoing conflict between NOD and the GDI, involves the mutants, an alien crash site and the on-going research and illegal use of Tiberium. Essentially the plot is a little on the weak side as much knowledge is assumed and not explained which might throw first time players in the deep end. But for all intents and purposes it is brilliant and has now set the standard that all others should follow, but not too closely because many a good game has been ruined by too much spending on the movie parts and not enough on the game parts.



the best real time strategy gaming of any game. The missions are diverse but mainly comprise of two different tracks of play. The one type of mission involves you controlling a small and sometimes specialised force of units where you must complete a specific objective either within a limited amount of time or before enemy forces detect you. The other type of mission is the now standard, build a base and wipe out the opposition kind. The short missions do provide a nice change of pace to all the base building but also don't feature too regularly to ruin the game. The action is addictive to the very last and will keep you playing simply because each objective is unique and diverse. The single player opposition is a little on the stupid side and the game can be played right through on the normal difficulty setting without encountering too many replays. This problem is due to the predictable tactics the computer uses to try and wipe you out. It is safe to say that Tiberian Sun isn't going to be getting any awards for intelli-



THIS IS THE ALIEN CRASH SITE. KILL ALL NOD FORCES AND CLAIM THE TECHNOLOGY FOR YOURSELF!

gence. In one of many similar instances it is possible to shoot a soldier a few feet from another, even though his comrade has hit the deck bleeding he'll just stand there until you move closer. The other annoying AI problem is that the computer seems to give up when you've battered his base badly, often you can drive a unit right through the front door and around to the back of the base and you'll be left alone there to do as much damage as possible before a few single troops wipe you out. To illustrate how the game plays, what has improved and how everything mentioned so far fits together, here is a run through of a typical mission. This will also high-

Blatant truth! I never really enjoyed the Command and Conquer series. I am more of a Warcraft come Starcraft fan. This doesn't mean I think the game sucks, just that it was too easy in multiplayer to utilise the bombard and rush tactics. But if I come down to my indiscriminate little office chair, I consider Tiberian Sun to be both a masterpiece and a failure. As a single player entity you will battle to find any game as refined and absorbing with intensive work done on creating a movie style story with quality acting, add to that intensive work on creating entertaining missions with valid objectives. The style is still that of the old school, with almost three years of work, I think we deserved more. Many will say if it ain't broke, don't fix it - quite frankly, that's crap. We are moving towards the Millennium and with what I have been privileged enough to see over the last few months in gaming development and the advances in 3D acceleration technology, Tiberian Sun is a step backwards for the multiplayer market. - Storm

Perhaps Tiberian Sun has become another victim of the ever present hype that surrounds long awaited titles. It just seems that what was promised is so much more than what was delivered in the final product. Not to say that Tiberian Sun is a bad game - it's just that I personally expected so much more. - Shryke

**SECOND OPINION**  
Because everyone felt they just had to have their say on this game we've decided to humour them, with their own little spotlight and all fragile egos still intact.

I for one expected a lot more from the title and I was hoping that they changed a few building details from the Command & Conquer interface, like not being able to build up a base defence very quickly, especially with walls since you have to place each and every square inch of it. I think the fans would have liked a way to queue a whole wall for construction instead of nit-picking with micro management when you could be doing more important things like attacking or harassing the enemy. I also found the multiplayer AI a little too clever - I mean how can an enemy controlled base be capable of nuking the crap out of you? And all of this without ever coming close to your base, it seems to see right through the cloaking device. Other than these and a couple of other flaws, Tiberian Sun is an addictive game that will keep a lot of Command & Conquer fans playing for hours on end, sadly however it doesn't add any significant improvements to the Real Time Strategy genre, and can therefore only be considered an average game. - Soul Assassin

Westwood Studios have truly resurrected Command & Conquer with this title. The most notable aspect is that Tiberian Sun is indeed true to the original Command & Conquer concept and implementation. New features, weapons and structures are available, but the entire feel of the game is very similar to that of the game that started it all. As always, Westwood have created a polished finished product featuring an engrossing story presented by means of plentiful video cut-scenes with a dark and atmospheric soundtrack. Tiberian Sun was designed with a heavy emphasis on multiplayer gaming. While the single player campaigns are well designed and absorbing, most games of Tiberian Sun will be played over LANs and Westwood Online. The feel of the original game has been maintained, and many of the old tactics we used in C&C are still valid, albeit harder to pull off. It is, in general, easier to defend in Tiberian Sun than in its predecessor, making for longer, more challenging games. The waypoint management system is exceptionally useful, and user-friendly enough to come in handy even in multiplayer games, where time is always notoriously short. Unfortunately, it seems Westwood's network engine is still not perfect, and it is not unheard of for a Tiberian Sun multiplayer game to end prematurely due to the latest version of "Game is out of synch." Another (admittedly minor) point of irritation is the fact that water is totally static - surely it isn't so difficult, these days, to code an animation for water? And as far as the "reactive terrain" goes - well, it is a nice concept, but don't expect to be able to shoot any cliff to make a ramp, for example - these "reactive" bits are very localised, except for cratering due to heavy weapons detonations - that can happen anywhere, and could cramp your construction style! - R.A.V.E.N.





YOU NEED TO TAKE OUT THOSE DAMN WALLS

light some of the flaws and problems as well as all the good stuff.

You find yourself on the battlefield with two Hover Multiple Launch Rocket System all-terrain vehicles, an Amphibious Armoured Personal Carrier and a handful of engineers. The ground is covered with snow and your mission objective is to retake a GDI base overrun by NOD forces. As the game starts you destroy a bridge and claim two crates, inside the crates should you move over them are medical supplies that will heal all your units instantly. Through careful and tedious exploration of the terrain you'll discover a number of enemy encampments, but due to the long range of the rockets you can eliminate most of them from a safe distance. This process carries on until you discover your objective. Until now, no real resistance has been met with and the enemy is quite happy to watch you destroy their buildings while they follow their predetermined patrol routes. You're also feeling quite lucky right now because you managed to take out a number of units and buildings without losing any of your units, largely thanks to the three

medical crates discovered earlier. Along the way you also had to shoot at a hilltop ridge thereby destroying it allowing safe passage through. Once you finally get to the base and take out the remaining NOD forces your engineers can take over a few buildings, the barracks being the most important (so you can train more engineers). Soon the entire base is yours again and it's time to prepare for the final assault on the NOD main base. For starters shooting out the bridge acts as a temporary defence mechanism because the enemy forces cannot get to your base. This is another flaw in the AI because there are about four dif-

ferent routes to enter your base and the computer keeps sending units along the same route, repairing the bridge over and over again. This is

the case with many of the enemy attacks, they are usually small annoying teams of units instead of a massive attack force, and once you figured out the routing the computer uses the game turns from mildly tough to easy.

After some serious Tiberium harvesting you mass up a huge army and head for his base, during this time you've already sent the odd flying craft over to figure out where everything is and which approach is best suited. Your entire force arrives at his gate and proceeds to bash it down, following this all his units and finally all his buildings. Game over, you win. The problem with the single player missions is that you're always taking the fight to the enemy, the computer seldom ever launches effective attacks in your direction, unless he has access to missiles in which case you can expect one arriving at precise time intervals. In spite of all this the game offers enough of a challenge and somehow keeps you playing until the last base has fallen.

MULTIPLAYER

One area that many people will be itching to try out is the multiplayer arena, we need a successor to Starcraft and depending on your preferences, Tiberian Sun might just be that game. The game favours NOD as the attackers and GDI as the defenders, although when you weigh up the different strengths and weaknesses NOD come out on top when playing against scheming human players. The games don't suffer from the tank rush syndrome that marred the previous games largely due to the fact that Westwood simply removed all the tanks from the game. It is possible to execute an infantry rush, but defending against this earlier is easier than defending against twenty-nine super tanks later. A nice inclusion is a random map generator, although this definitely doesn't make up for the lack of a level editor. Was it really that hard to include one, now we'll have to wait until third party level editors appear on the Internet. One other problem with the multiplayer is the fact that engineers can now take over buildings instantly -

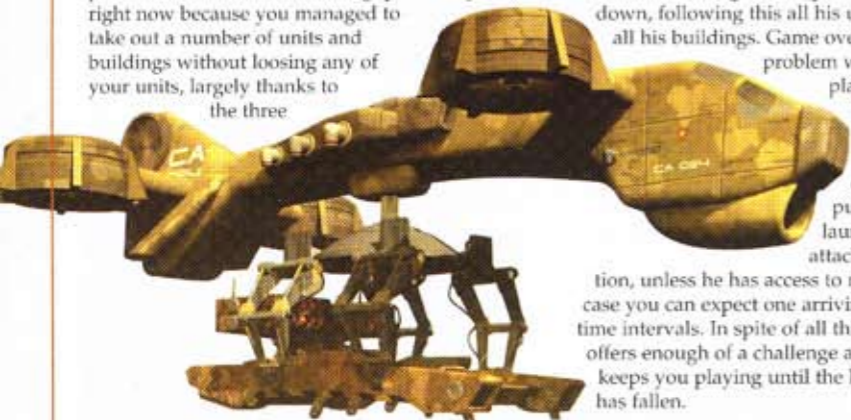


this can swing a game around very quickly. The multiplayer game is great once you know what you're doing but is definitely fatal territory for new comers.

COME AND GO

Make no mistake, Tiberian Sun is an excellent title in almost every single aspect, it has all the polish and presentation you'd expect but has through all the hype and

promises, anticipation and time lost a little of its lustre. The big problem is that it's nothing more than an updated version of Red Alert, set in the future with better graphics. The game lacks any real innovation and unfortunately doesn't do anything really special, considering the development time involved here you can only wonder what went wrong. On the positive side it has to be one of the better real time strategy games out there and if you are a fan of the series you simple must add this latest game to your collection. For those who are a little disappointed, the big question you have to ask yourself is what were you expecting anyway? Play the game and forget about the hype. It's a compelling and addictive game that continues the series with style and never loses focus of what it set out to do.



**REDTIDE**

**GENRE**  
Real Time Strategy

Min Requirements		Recommended	
Pentium 166	32 MB Ram	Pentium II 266	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	200 MB HD	8 X CD Rom	200+ MB HD
Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)		Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	

http://www.tiberiansun.com

<b>Developer:</b> Westwood Studios	<b>Publisher:</b> Electronic Arts	<b>Supplier:</b> Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212	<b>RRP:</b> R 299.00
---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--	-------------------------

<b>Multiplayer</b>	<b>Competitives</b>	<b>Pro's</b>	<b>Con's</b>
Yes	Age of Empires Red Alert TA: Kingdoms	Huge Improvement Addictive Movies	Zero Innovation Stupid AI Too Easy

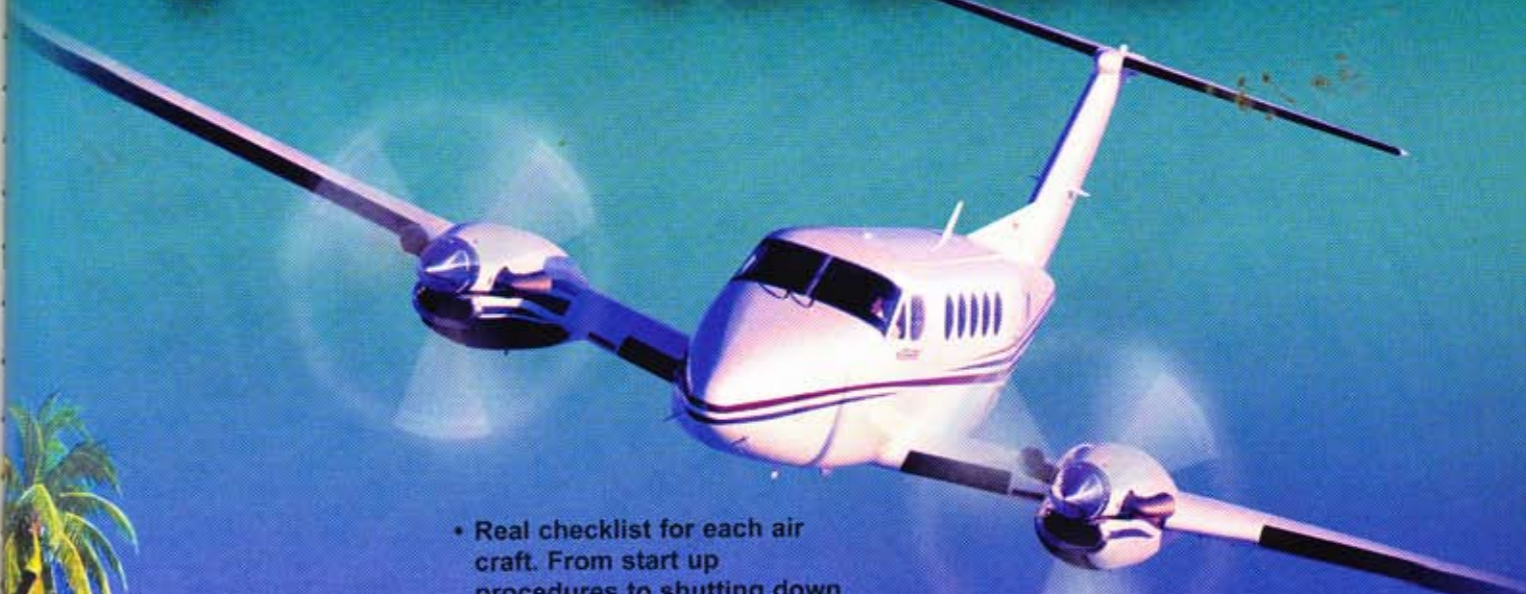
<b>Graphics</b>	<b>Sound</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Story</b>	<b>Continuity</b>	<b>Playability</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>71</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>80</b>	

Environmental Audio Ready

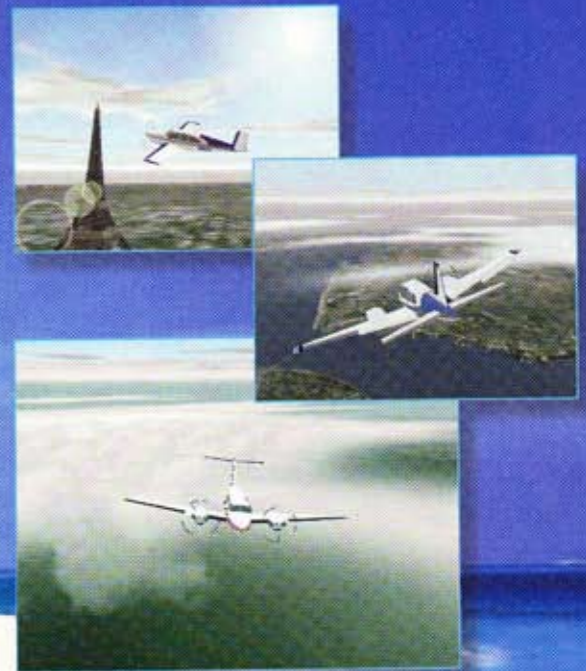
So after all the hype and anticipation we're left with a mediocre game, it's classic Command & Conquer in every sense, but seriously lacks any real innovation. However, Tiberian Sun is still hellishly addictive and plays like a dream.

# Make the Dream of Flight Come True

# PROPILOT 2000



- Real checklist for each air craft. From start up procedures to shutting down the aircraft
- Specific aircraft performance data
- 48 flight maneuver tutorials developed in conjunction with NAFI
- Scenic flights so you can easily experience the joy of flight
- Challenge flights that test your piloting skills
- Create your own scenic flights, challenge flights, or tutorials and trade them on the Internet with other enthusiasts
- Text-based personal notes section for your private use and easy reference



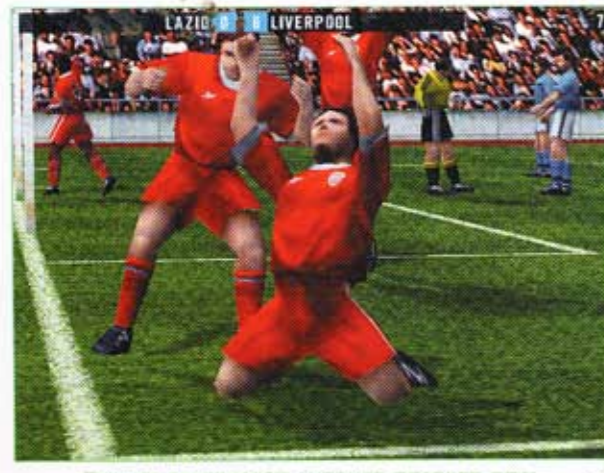


Throughout the ages of computer games, football sims have been at the forefront of technology and development. The leader in sports sims, EA Sports, have taken the award winning engine and creativity from FIFA 99 and added a unique blend of management and skill to the English FA Premier League. The FIFA franchise is still booming and with the upcoming release of FIFA 2000, can Stars stand up to the pressures of its own competitor?

With the FA Premier League firmly underway and the usual selection of teams making whoopee at the top of the table, EA Sports have released Stars into the market with the right timing to cash in on the early season hype of the FA Premier League. It has been almost a year since the last Football sim from EA Sports and we are not too far away from FIFA 2000. Surprisingly Stars makes considerable inroads into changing the rigid playability of this genre with EA Sports stepping up once again to take the honours as leader of the genre.

Taken from the award winning FIFA 99, the graphics have been refined (if that were possible) and given lifelike attributes to the point of believing you are in the stands watching your favourite team. Each and every FA Premier League stadium has been modelled with the grass surfaces unbelievably believable, the character models of each and every player are recreated to each player's attributes including height and features and the animations are smooth and lifelike. A small amount of clipping occurs when the players models get too close confirming that we are only likely to see crash detection with the upcoming FIFA 2000. As is usual with EA Sports and especially their Football sims the intro is something to behold, this time footage is taken from the 1999 season and

**WORLD CHAMPION LEAGUE WINNER**



FOWLER CELEBRATES ANOTHER CRACKER GOAL

combined with The Ministry of Sound's musical theme of 'Till I Come', it creates the settling for this thoroughly entertaining game. A special mention must be made of the new interface, though a little difficult to navigate, is one of the better we have seen in a while. Although Stars is simply a portal of FIFA 99 there are definite benefits and changes to what Stars offers. You might ask yourself why you should buy Stars when you have all your favourite teams in your copy of FIFA 99? Yes, Stars only offers the FA Premier League.

Storm

teams, making the choice a little difficult but there are definite benefits to what Stars offers. Firstly, Stars has all the latest changes such as the big transfer of Bosnich to Man United, unfortunately someone forgot to let the developers in on the Paul Ince move from Liverpool, which gave the kidney stone another lining, but hey who's perfect? Secondly, the ambition of Stars is to win the FA Premier League, the European Challenge Cup and the World Club Cup, which in essence is not difficult on easy, but almost bloody impossible on hard. And lastly, the secret weapon, the stars quota format that allows you to win stars (yes, little

Storm



CRUNCHING TACKLES!

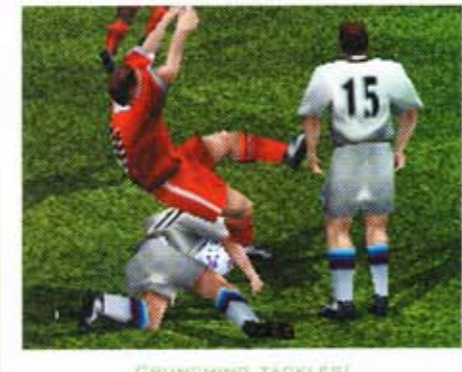
stars) for performing well on the pitch and then allocating them to players to upgrade each of their ten abilities. What on earth do you mean? Well it's quite simple actually, we are used to the developers decision making principles of just how good each and every player is. They then thumb succ... oops, um, create detailed performance charts and allocate attributes accordingly, leaving us the gamers wondering just how they

came to give our stars such appalling scores. Now the slipper is on our foot, we are able to allocate stars to create our own stars (very much the same as giving experience points to RPG characters - what next?). Each team is given an allocation of stars to start with depending on last season's performances, building on that over the season is the primary objective. Stars are awarded for wins, goals scored, star goals (help me on this), fair play (no cards) and the man of the match. Has this allocation system been done before? I think not - it's a culmination of mini micro management and simulation that joins to become one of the most addictive Football sims on the market.

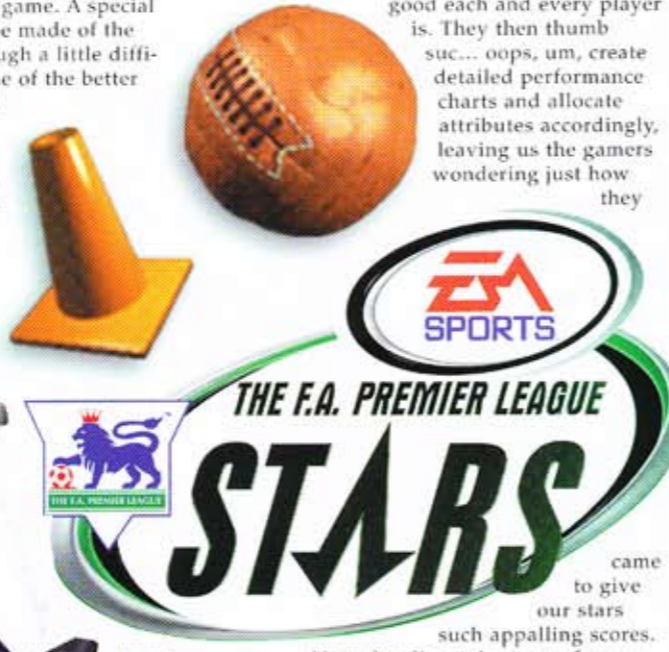
Gameplay is not something that EA Sports are scared to dish out, sometimes we are overwhelmed by the sheer pleasure of spending a 12 hour shift playing their

Storm

Storm

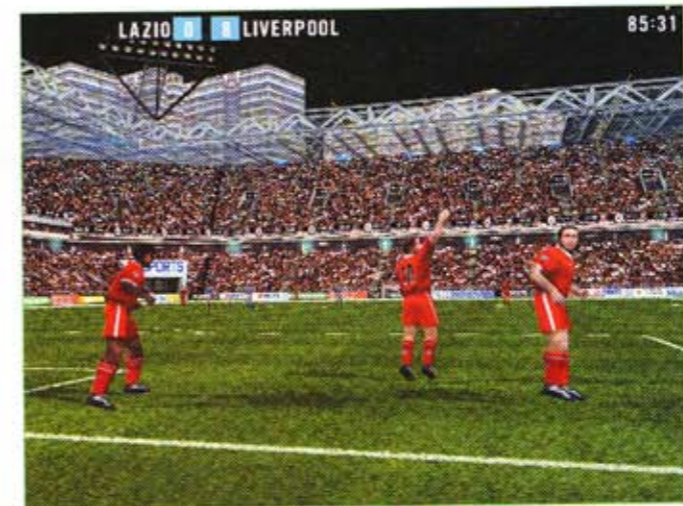


CRUNCHING TACKLES!



A DIVE OR A PENALTY, LOOKS LIKE HOLLYWOOD TO ME

sports sims - don't expect anything less. The TV style presentation is of the normal high standard but is actually just a portal of FIFA 99. All the goal celebrations and in-game cut scenes (bad fouls etc.) are exactly the same except for a new goal highlight system that replays each and every goal from three differing perspectives. Though not a major downfall it does however leave a bad taste in your mouth since it has been almost a year. As usual the commentary and sound effects are impressive with limited repetitive commentary and timeous responses to action in the game. The team of Martin Tyler, Richard Keys and Andy Gray work well together with their adverse style of humour and sarcasm making up the bulk of the comments,



**CREATIVE ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PC PREMIUM SYSTEMS**

A unique concept of improving player attributes is something fresh for the soccer simulation. Taking the best of FIFA 99 and adding to it is not only clever but wise as well. It is FA Premier League in your face all the way and why not if it's the most exciting league in the football world.

Developer: EA Sports  
 Publisher: EA Sports  
 Supplier: EA Africa (011)803-1212  
 RRP: R 199.00  
<http://www.ea.co.za>

Multiplayer: Yes  
 Comparatives: FIFA 99, Viva Soccer, Actia Soccer 99  
 Pros: The Stars Concept, Graphically Impressive, FIFA Developers  
 Cons: Lacks the Depth of FIFA 99

Graphics: 86  
 Sound: 82  
 Control: 85  
 Story: NA  
 Continuity: 65  
 Playability: 86

**81**



AN AWESOME MID-AIR STRIKE THAT SAILS INTO THE TOP CORNER

although there is a fair bit of similarity in each of the responses. A slight bit annoying is the mildly put version of the continual slaughter of a missed shot but then this is the FA Premier League, we're not supposed to miss. As with any sports sim the control mechanism is of utmost importance, so why would EA Sports change from the tried and tested FIFA 99 configuration?



drop (crunching tackles included). Making use of these do however decrease the chances of winning the important matches, therefore they were only used in the easier matches. If you're a FA Premier League fan or simply looking to while away the hours with a good football sim then Stars will certainly fill the gap. Hopefully we can expect a change from the stars principle (which feels immature) to an experience points system, which gives it more of a realistic mood. But most importantly we need to keep the concept going beyond Stars and towards the next batch of FIFA titles.

Unfortunately EA Sports don't see the need for the stars concept for FIFA 2000, which in my opinion might do the work done in Stars an injustice. Stars does however lack something, the depth of leagues and objectives that we are used to from EA Sports titles, which almost resigns Stars to an add-on status. This sounds quite harsh for the innovation that went into Stars but with the big boys all vying for the top spots, can we expect anything less? A certain decision must be made though, can we wait for FIFA 2000 or must we experience the revelation of FA Premier League Stars? Experience it, it will change your perception of a football sim and it gives good value for money entertainment.

**STORM**

**GENRE**  
Soccer Simulation

Min Requirements	Recommended
P166 MMX/AMD K6 2 32 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 2MB SVGA 40 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	P11 266 / AMD K6/3 32 MB Ram 8 x CD Rom 3D Accelerator 225 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

Environmental Audio Ready: No



Innovation in gaming has come along very seldom over the last few years, leaders and originators of genres have almost exhausted every ounce of playability from almost every genre. The days of sculpturing our enjoyment and redefining new technologies are gone as developers scratch their heads for new and innovative ways to entertain us. It's not very often that you get a title that is not only fresh and exciting but takes a tired genre and re-invents it into something spectacular. Homeworld reiterates that there is life in genre building by taking the common practice of constructive thinking and non-corporate policies, and moulding it into one of the most rewarding gaming experiences since 'Doom'.

Storm

Ever since first seeing Homeworld at the E3 convention in Atlanta in 1998, I was bewildered at its ability to mould a tired genre into something new. Strategy games, though thoroughly entertaining, have become the battered titles that no longer give inspiration to its purpose. We are constantly being overwhelmed by features and graphical overtones that are normally enhancements to the game, and less likely to be new and fresh. Copycats follow the top brands and developers into already charted



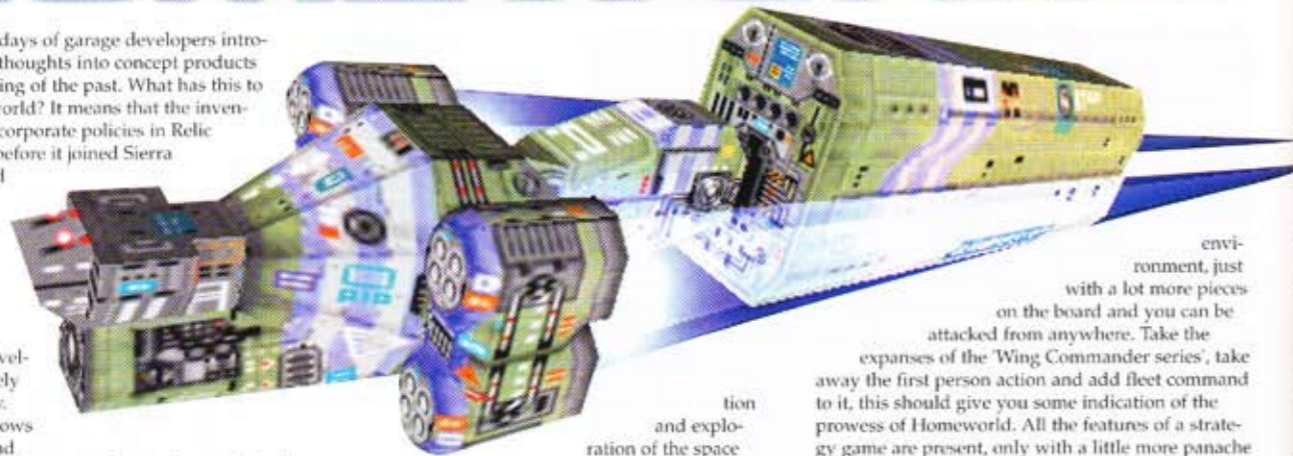
of the most beautiful games by designing a proprietary graphics engine from scratch and creatively recreating the beauty of space. Nebula's and star consoles are glorious to behold as you travel through space to find your lost civilisation. Just when we thought graphics could not get any better, Homeworld comes along and creates new benchmarks in design. With almost 5 years of development under its belt you would expect this, but the graphics was actually one of the first features to be put to bed as the team focused on gameplay and balancing issues. But a game cannot survive on graphics alone, this is where Homeworld breaks the ice. Homeworld can be described as a game of chess in a 360-degree

follows the untold story of a lost civilisation, which once lived a placid and peaceful existence, but was conquered and relocated to a barren and cold planet called Kharak. As hundreds of years passed the Clans of Kharak started to form technologies and advancements, sufficient enough to build an economy and spacecraft. This brought about communica-

tion and exploration of the space regions around their planet, which resulted in an accidental and startling discovery of the lost city Khar-Toba and the Guidestone.

# HOMEWORLD

realms, and the days of garage developers introducing gamer's thoughts into concept products has become a thing of the past. What has this to do with Homeworld? It means that the inventiveness of non-corporate policies in Relic Entertainment, before it joined Sierra Studios, released the youthful minds of this company to create and invent Homeworld in the ways of the old school of development, creatively and instinctively. Homeworld follows on the simple and effective trends of the strategic genre by copying the basics and adding unique and innovative concepts to them. Based in the vortex of space, Homeworld



environment, just with a lot more pieces on the board and you can be attacked from anywhere. Take the expanses of the 'Wing Commander series', take away the first person action and add fleet command to it, this should give you some indication of the prowess of Homeworld. All the features of a strategy game are present, only with a little more panache and feel. The backdrop of space is the perfect storyboard for a strategy game because it has all the aspects of exploration needed to fulfil gameplay.



BALYARINO UNIT IS AN EFFECTIVE RESOURCE GAIN

The old and battered piece of rock described a path towards a resourceful and warm planet. This Guidestone proved that Kharak was not their home planet, this is when the entire population of Clans unites to embark on a wondrous adventure to return home to Hiigara, their Homeworld. The developers Relic Entertainment have created one



EXPLOSIONS ARE BELIEVABLE AND EYE CATCHING

## HOMEWORLD (CONTINUED)

As usual, resource management features highly as you consume the minerals of asteroids and particles that is the much-needed sustenance needed to sustain the fleet as you travel slowly towards your destination. All resources collected get converted to one

currency called a RU (resource unit); this is then used for all the purchasing and repairing needed. Homeworld also has 25 different technological research paths for upgrading of ships, weapons, drives and armour.

Interestingly enough, the research vehicles are the only expense needed to research technologies, changing from the normal resource strains put on you when researching. Following a specific path is needed to backup specific strategies, concentrating on a direct task stops the downfalls of time wasting and low resources. This is one of Homeworld's greatest assets, its ability to create a multitude of differing attacks and defences, many more than our current batch of strategy titles. It could be said that Homeworld's strategy guide would be almost impossible to write due

to its overwhelming broadness and scope. Another of Homeworld's brightest features is the AI sub-structure buried deep beneath its playability glands. In the nebula of space it's difficult to imagine controlling the paths and personalities of all of Homeworld's units. Relic has created simple routines that control and organises each and every unit, making the arduous task of unit and group control easy and effective. 8 ship formations and tactical rules of engagement help you to manipulate your armada into a finely tuned fighting machine. One of the most asked questions about Homeworld was how would its control mechanism stand up to the pressures of a real-time strategy game? The answer is quite simple actually - very well. The mechanism has been modified slightly to help with the 360-degree environment but it effectively uses the same principles. The only difficulty anyone who plays strategy games will have is the new movement control function. Because Homeworld is not a flat environment you need to not only be able to move in any direction, but up



**Kushan Ion Cannon Frigate: 'Firelance'**

The Firelance class of frigate is one of the deadliest special-purpose combat vessels ever made. When Kushan scientists finally made a breakthrough in directed particle beam technology, it was clear that it was just too large to mount effectively on the current class of capital ship hulls. Unwilling to wait for the evolution of larger hulls, combat engineers went to work wrapping a frigate class hull around the huge ion cannon itself. The result was the Firelance class of frigate, whose only real combat function is to deliver the incredible damage potential of the Ion Cannon to the battle. There are few sights more terrifying to the enemy than one of their ships caught in a web of perfect ruby cutting beams.



**Kushan Gravity Generator: 'Trapper Mk.4'**

Experiments in gravity wave manipulation have allowed Kushan engineers to develop a gravity well generator, capable of halting any space vessel under a specified thrust limit. While capital ship drives can easily compensate for the artificial gravity, strike craft simply do not have the necessary power needed to break out of the field, and are effectively pinned in place until they are destroyed or the field collapses.



**Kushan Cloaked Fighter: 'Spectre'**

Cloaking technology is on the cutting edge of Kushan science, and is only employed on one of their ships. The Spectre strike craft, based on the heavy fighter chassis, uses light-curving energy fields to render the ship invisible to both sensors and

the naked eye. This first application of light-folding has not been without its trials and tribulations, and much of the heavy fighter's weapons and armor capability had to be removed to make room for the field generators. This makes the fighter somewhat vulnerable when it has to drop the cloaking effect to attack, and these fighters are often more useful in a scouting role or in small groups, raiding support vessels deep in enemy-controlled space.

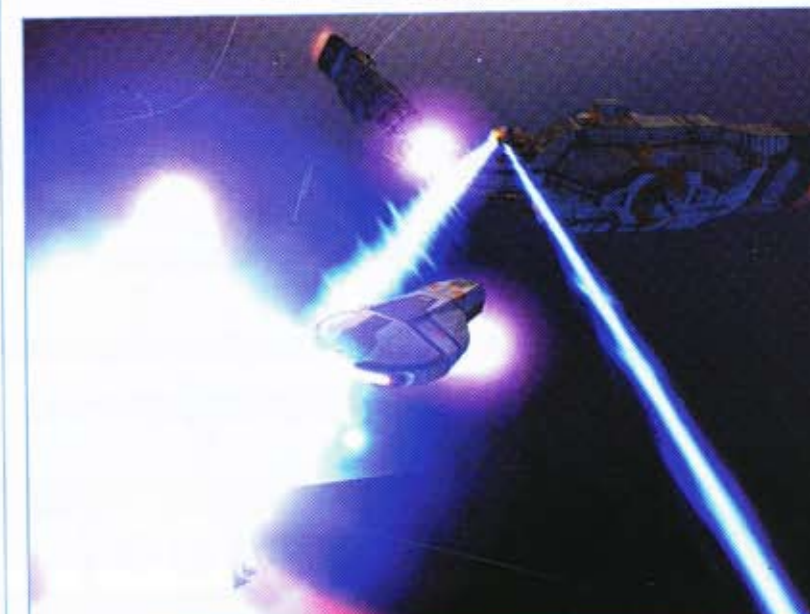


**Kushan Heavy Corvette: 'Hammer'**

The Hammer class of heavy Corvette lives up to its name by being hard, brutal and completely utilitarian in design. When Kushan engineers worked up the prototype for this class, their only concerns were lethality and survivability - only a few moments' perusal of this heavy strike craft will show how well they succeeded. Hammer class corvettes have been nicknamed 'Coffins' by their 3 man crews because they are the only corvette class vessels without any sort of crew area whatsoever. Every spare cubic meter aboard has been packed with targeting systems, weapon support functions, and armor plating, so that the only spaces left for crew are small cocoon cockpits that are sealed from the outside, with an armor plate, by a technician. The only way for a pilot to leave the ship without the help of a technician is to eject the entire cockpit cocoon.



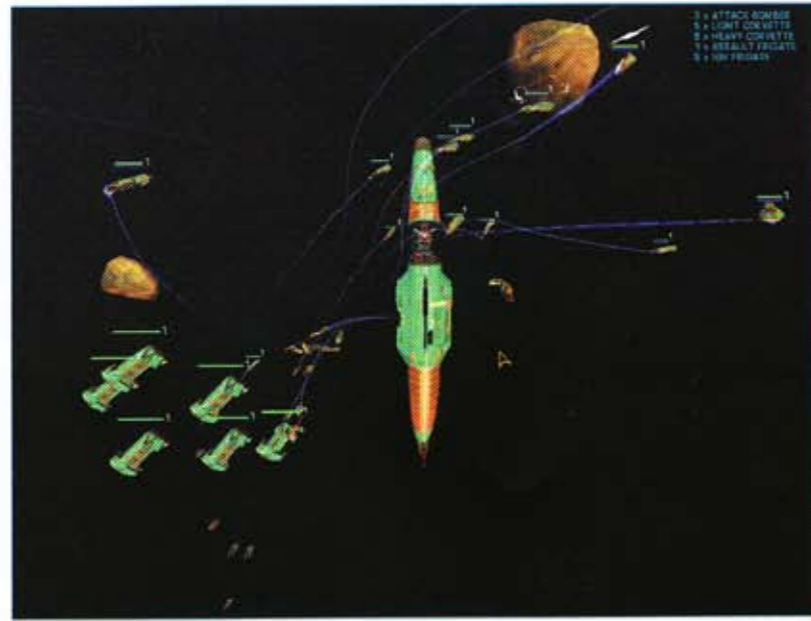
SOME OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE GRAPHICS YET SEEN ON PC CREATOR THE PERFECT SETTINGS FOR THE NEBULA OF SPACE.





and down as well. I feel Relic have created the best possible mechanism for this and have come out with flying colours. The only gripes might be that in the heat of battle it's a touch slow and tedious, but with practice it becomes more an asset than a liability. Grouping of units is a priority if you are to gain any form of sanity, this is then backed up by a grouped attacking command, which converts your group selection and highlights all enemies in your selection, and gives your units the command to attack them. This sounds complicated but it's actually quite simple to perform, making the task of giving groups attacking commands much easier.

In a game such as Homeworld, sound effects and music are just as important as any feature in enhancing the playability. The ambient background music sounds as if it comes from your local church choir and that is exactly what is required to set the mood. Its tranquil tones relax you as you frantically try to perform strategic manoeuvres. The sound effects are well done and the unit responses informative to the point of being annoying. The voices seem a little uninspiring, but most microphone conversations are and you do have three voice options to choose from. This brings me to the most important factor around the success of Homeworld, the multiplayer. Relic Entertainment developed Homeworld especially for multiplayer, so much so that it almost never received a single player element. Actually the multiplayer



IMMENSE ARMADA'S GREAT SPECTACULAR BATTLESCENES



was ready almost a year and a half ago. After slapping together some form of single player in roughly six months, Sierra sent Relic back to the drawing board to perfect the single player. This is the reason around the extensions to the release dates, Homeworld was supposed to arrive almost a year ago. If my conclusions are correct it's certainly worth the wait for all you single player fans out there. But even more so for the multiplayer fans who will revel in the mass of tactical options. The options are IPX - TCP/IP 8-player LAN, internet play via WON.net and a skirmish against the CPU,

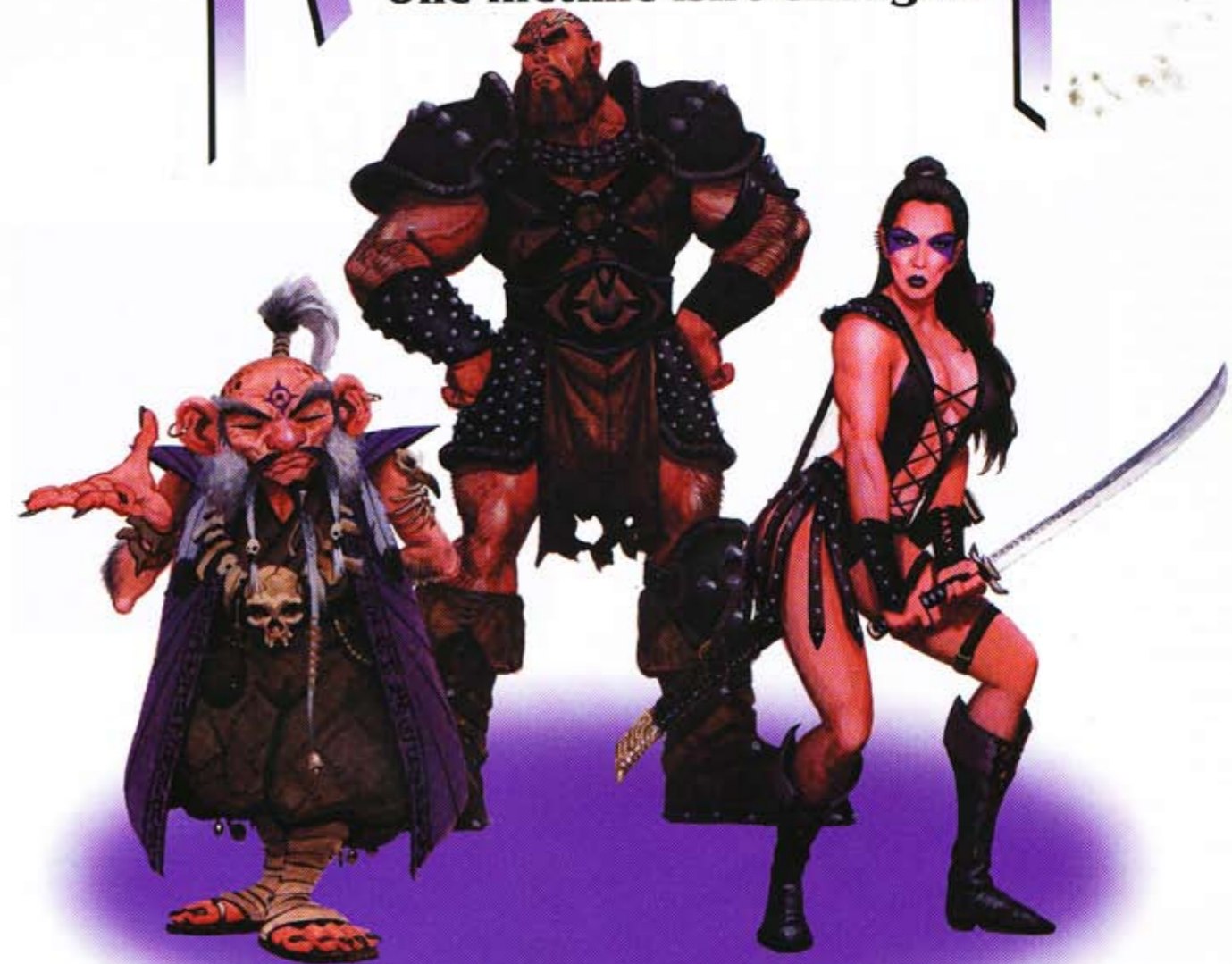
which are all easily configured. With all the test games performed there were minimal problems and LAG, making the multiplayer experience all the more satisfying. As always there has to be some downfall and that comes from the time span required to complete a multiplayer game. It's incredibly difficult to complete requirements such as destroying a Mothership or capturing a capital ship, as there are always effective defensive counters for most attacks. Most of the time it comes down to resource management and repair techniques, which will decide who still has effective units and even then it has to be strong enough to take damage from a Mothership. I can easily say that you will either hate or love Homeworld for its cross-pollination of the strategy genre. With the state of genres at the moment it is a welcome sight to see a title that challenges the stale system of corporate policies of new releases. I predict greatness for Homeworld, so much so that I feel that all other strategy titles drown in its wake. Homeworld is not going to be an overwhelming success at first because of the limited hype around it, but once gamers play it and experience it, then they're going to be just as hooked as me.

<p><b>GENRE</b> Real Time Strategy</p>					
<p><b>Developer:</b> Relic Entertainment</p>		<p><b>Publisher:</b> Sierra Studios</p>		<p><b>Supplier:</b> Crew (011) 233-1111</p>	
<p><b>RRP:</b> R 299.00</p>		<p><a href="http://www.homeworld.net">http://www.homeworld.net</a></p>			
<p><b>Multiplayer:</b> Yes</p>		<p><b>Comparitives:</b> Age of Empires Starcraft Tiborian Sun</p>		<p><b>Pro's:</b> New and Innovative, Varying Research Paths Excellent Multiplayer</p>	
<p><b>Con's:</b> Lengdy Multiplayer</p>		<p><b>Environmental Audio Ready:</b> Yes</p>			
<p><b>Graphics:</b> 95</p>		<p><b>Sound:</b> 87</p>		<p><b>Control:</b> 89</p>	
<p><b>Story:</b> 90</p>		<p><b>Continuity:</b> 93</p>		<p><b>Playability:</b> 90</p>	
<p><b>91</b></p>					

Homeworld creates a new gaming experience from a tired genre without changing the fundamentals. Awesome graphics and sublime gameplay arouse even the most ardent of gamers. Multiplayer has never been more technical or strategic, so much so that it challenges chess for its crown.

# REVENANT

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More or less a year ago Red Storm Entertainment brought out Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six, a title that defined the tactical first-person shooter as we know it today. Although they didn't invent the genre, they are constantly busy perfecting it, and with the arrival of the long awaited sequel Rogue Spear, it seems they have done it pretty much perfect this time round. - Memnoch

How does a game company make a brilliant game even better? Is it at all possible, without losing the elements that made the first title so successful? Rogue Spear picks up where the original Rainbow Six ended. The Rainbow team saved humanity from the Horizon Company engineered Shiva virus, and for a while, terrorists were too cautious to get in the way of this highly trained team of counter-terrorist specialists.

Unfortunately one can never get a gun crazed fanatic down, and a string of terrorist events starts taking place. At first these acts of cowardice seem unrelated, but as the story develops, another sinister plot surfaces indicating a purpose to the newly sprung madness. The events are of a very sensitive international nature, thus calling for the intervention of the Rainbow team led by John Clark, otherwise known as Rainbow Six.

This time around, some crazy organization is fooling around with nukes, and your team has to track them down step by step, to make our world a safer place to live in once again. Therefore the name Nuclear Weasel, um... Rogue Spear derives from... it's got something to do with nukes ok! At first glance at the menu interface, it seems like Rogue Spear is merely an overhaul of the original, but after a few milliseconds the truth becomes clear.

Red Storm built an entirely new graphics engine to take advantage of all the technological advances that have been made over the past year to include features such as weather effects like rain, snow and fog. The new engine also allows the use of better lighting effects, which makes for some nasty night missions, and adds to the overall authentic feel of the environment. It also allowed the level designers to create levels with a painstaking degree of realism, and some of them are so beautiful that they nearly distract one from the mission goals. On more

than one occasion my character took multiple rounds of enemy fire while staring at the horizon or at my teammate's zippy outfit, no time to smell the flowers... One aspect that plagued the original

aged to dispatch the now terrified terrorist guarding her, but next time she might not be that lucky.

### BIGGER AND BETTER

Another major improvement in Rogue Spear is the player models and animations. More than 150 new motion captured animations have been added, making the characters

seem almost life-like. The models are much more detailed as well, and your teammates will be caught scratching themselves while standing still for a while.

# Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX ROGUE SPEAR

Rainbow Six was the enemy and friendly AI. Terrorists had the ability to put a bullet up the player's cranium from a range of 100 meters while firing from the hip, less than a second after spotting the player. That made even the easier missions a nightmare at times. While the terrorists were the cream of the crop snipers, your own teammates would block your passage while you were attempting to run for

cover, or would simply get stuck on the furniture or other objects.

Not to mention the bloke that would stare

at his fallen mate beside him, standing there wondering if it was something he said? Red Storm listened, and scrapped the original AI altogether.

They built an entirely new system from the ground up, which has got to be the best AI I have seen yet. The AI characters have uncanny human behaviour, and react to situations in a more realistic fashion, which adds to the total immersion of the game. Some terrorists will now be totally alert, and some will be taking a smoke break out of boredom, and once the player is spotted, the tango has to reach for his/her weapon, aim, and only then be able to take a shot, allowing for the player to take them down with ease. Once alerted, tango's will react in many ways by either starting to fire blindly in your direction, or will retreat to a safe position while calling in reinforcements. Your own team will move aside when you try to retreat, and will effectively cover you. Hostages react like, well, hostages I guess. On one mission, a female hostage screamed, got up and started running as my team made a dynamic entry into the room, and crossed my line of fire for a brief second. I man-



WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MY BUM LOOKS BIG IN THESE PANTS?

In some of the colder environments, the characters will emit little clouds of vapor whilst breathing, either that or they're smoking on the job. The damage model has been tweaked, and shooting a character in the foot or leg will cause them to limp around, depending on the severeness of the wound. The death sequences are nicely done, as characters won't just drop down, but might stumble around and then drop to the ground. Rogue Spear also introduces movement while crouching which was high on the 'please-add' list. Another neat new feature is the ability to lean and shoot around corners, while making a smaller target for the enemy to shoot at. Being a very successful counter-terrorist group has its perks, and after the demise of the Horizon Corporation, the Rainbow team's budget has been drastically increased. Rogue Spear offers a lot of new items that can be utilised by your team in the field. The armoury has been expanded by the introduction of new weapons such as the Heckler&Koch MP5/10mm series, the UMP .45 submachine gun, the trusty M-14 assault rifle, the Steyr AUG, Enfield Individual Weapon, Franchi Spas 12 automatic shotgun, and two models of the Desert Eagle pistol. A welcome introduction is the new sniper mode and rifles such as the Barret Model 95 .50, Sig PSG1 and the Walther WA2000. In sniper mode, the char-



HEY! WE'RE UP HERE!



GUERRILLA IN THE MIST

acter crouches into a comfortable position for high accuracy shots. The scopes have multiple levels of zoom, and although it can take a while for the snipers to set up, they make for invaluable assets in the more open levels. Rogue Spear features an enhanced ballistics model, where bullet drop and loss of kinetic energy over distance is taken into account, and it is now possible to shoot through doors and windows as well as to over-pen-

etrate and kill two characters with one shot. Also featured is the use of full metal jacket (FMJ) and jacketed hollow point (JHP) ammo for the rifles and pistols, while shotgun bearers have the option of buckshot, slugs and rubber ammo. The full metal jacket ammo gives better performance over long distances and has a good overall penetration. This type of ammo is great for outdoor environments,



THESE ARE SOME OF THE NEW TOYS YOU CAN PLAY WITH IN ROGUE SPEAR

but for close quarter battles, where hostages are involved, jacketed hollow points are preferable to cause optimum damage to tango's whilst preventing over-penetration. Like I mentioned before, the levels are lavishly decorated and are huge compared to the levels found in Rainbow Six. Locales range from art museums, desert power plants, oil tankers, to a mission in war torn Kosovo and the much-talked about airport with a Boeing 747. Where the use of more than one team made one's life a bit easier in the original, Rogue Spear features some missions where multiple teams are mandatory to successfully complete a mission. This can be achieved by using the mission planner with some handy new features. At specific way-

points, teammates can be ordered to cover, defend or snipe. The 3D view of the map is now a scaled down replica of the real level, and prepares the player on what to expect. The Eagle Watch mode from the add-on is retained where the gamer can let the team play without his/her active participation, where only go-codes need to be issued. The mission recorder makes its debut in Rogue Spear, where the mission is automatically recorded and can be viewed after a mission through the perspective of any one of your teams. These recordings can be saved and viewed later, and makes for great debriefing material and entertaining after action satisfaction memorabilia. Another strong point of Rogue Spear lies in the multiplayer. Deathmatch, team deathmatch, stronghold, co-op and various other modes of play are

included. To make team identification a tad easier, Red Storm included arm patches, which should hopefully make life easier for



those team-killers out there. There is a much more tense feeling in Rogue Spear multiplayer, as the ambient sounds really keep players on edge and I have heard myself screaming a few times when bullets started raining and all hell broke loose.

### GOOD SHOW THEN

Red Storm included a highly detailed mission editor, where new missions can be created with all the different entities available in Rogue Spear through adding terrorists, and even vehicles.

These new missions can also be played in multiplayer, and should add to the overall longevity of the game, not that the 18 included missions and terrorist hunt modes shouldn't keep the player busy for quite a while. After playing Rogue Spear it's hard to go back to Rainbow Six and the add-on Eagle Watch, and it is at that point that I realised exactly how much the things that made Rainbow Six such a great title have been improved. Looking at the other tactical shooters that should appear this year such as Spec Ops 2, Delta Force 2 and Sierra's SWAT 3, Rogue Spear has got what it takes to face the competition head-on.

**CREATIVE**  
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON  
**CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PC PREMIUM SYSTEMS**

**BLASTER PC**  
PC CD-ROM

**MEMNOCH**

**GENRE**  
First Person Strategy

Min Requirements		Recommended	
Pentium 233	32 MB Ram	Pentium II 266	64 MB Ram
4 X CD Rom	2 MB Video Card	12 X CD Rom	8 MB 3D Video Card
200 MB HD	Windows 95/98	200+ MB HD	Windows 95/98
(DirectX 6.1)		(DirectX 6.1)	

Environmental Audio Ready  
Yes

<b>Developer:</b> Red Storm Entertainment	<b>Publisher:</b> Take 2 Interactive	<b>Supplier:</b> Multimedia Warehouse (011) 315-1000	<b>RRP:</b> R 299.00
<a href="http://www.redstorm.com">http://www.redstorm.com</a>			
<b>Multiplayer:</b> Yes	<b>Comparatives:</b> Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch Delta Force	<b>Pro's:</b> Great Graphics New Improved AI Nice Environments	<b>Con's:</b> It's Addictive Not Entirely New
<b>Graphics:</b> 91	<b>Sound:</b> 82	<b>Control:</b> 86	<b>Story:</b> 80
<b>Continuity:</b> 88	<b>Playability:</b> 90	<b>86</b>	



First off let me say I never played the original System Shock, but after playing System Shock 2 that is definitely on my agenda. Therefore I will be looking at the game from a totally fresh perspective. As the sequel to one of the most praised games of all time, System Shock 2 from Looking Glass Studios is set to be one of the best titles of 1999.

Soul Assassin

It has been forty years since the artificial intelligence known as SHODAN (Sentient Hyper-Optimised Data Access Network) took over Citadel Station. All hands were murdered by the sentient computer entity in that incident and it is all but forgotten. It is now the year 2114 and Earth is about to test its first faster than light spaceship known as the Starship Von Braun, which is being escorted by the UNN Rickenbacker. During their maiden voyage the ship picks up a distress call from Tau Ceti 5 deep within unknown space, could this be first contact for humanity?

Your character awakens several weeks later from cryogenic sleep after cybernetic surgery without any recollection of why the surgery was done or why the crew aboard the ship has been slaughtered. Somehow SHODAN survived Citadel Station, and now threatens mankind during one of the most critical moments in our evolution. Raising the stakes is another mysterious force called "The Many", a small worm-like organism that forms a collective consciousness of unknown power and intelligence. Trapped and alone your first mission becomes survival and then you have to figure out the events that led to the tragedy of the crew being murdered on both ships. This is the story of System Shock 2, and you are in the middle of the whole mess. Nobody said that military service would be easy.

At first glance you might be forgiven for mistaking System Shock 2 as a First Person Shooter, it is this but the game can also be called an RPG. In simplest terms you can view the game as a hybrid between a FPS and a futuristic RPG. While the gameplay does look and feel like a FPS, you additionally have access to features such as an advanced inventory system, a detailed note and log book, and you can upgrade certain aspects of your character as the game advances.

Players can choose one of three careers to pursue while playing System Shock 2 each allowing the player to customise his character over a period of three years. Each year you can choose to advance one aspect of

your character's statistics or skills by spending that year in training on various outposts and bases. Each career option is specific towards certain skills and you have the option of



playing as a Naval Engineering Officer with skills in technical aspects such as hacking and repairs, a Marine with weapon skills or even as an OSA agent who is trained in the use of the mind with psionic powers. By choosing a career you

make certain aspects easier on the earlier levels, but you are given the option to upgrade any of your statistics by collecting upgrade modules throughout the game. In essence it really doesn't matter what career you choose, you can still customise your character the way you see fit.

The most exciting feature of System Shock 2 is that you can interact with most of your environment. You can hack your way into locked compartments or one of the various replicators found on each level as well as various other computer based equipment. You can modify and maintain your weapons and even operate medical equipment to heal your character. In all the levels you will also encounter discs that can be used with your MFD. These inform your character of what happened during your cryogenic sleep and advance the story as you start piecing together the puzzle of how the crew got murdered. Some of these also contain simple yet fun mini-games to play such as 'Cornfield' which is a spoof of the Minefield game found in Windows. These small little

touches that the developers added only add to the believability of your environment. The crew had to have something to do while in space, and gaming is of-course the best entertainment available, isn't it?

You might be one of the few survivors aboard the Von Braun, but there are plenty of monsters to face as you move through each of the levels. They range from mutants, which are crewmembers inflicted by parasites, to Cyborg Assassins and Robots. There are even monkeys running around that have developed the use of psionics (don't ask me where they got that idea from). Don't make the mistake of thinking that these enemies are easy prey. The AI used in System Shock 2 offers opponents that come after you no matter what. They will follow you if you run and can open doors and will shoot at you if there is only a piece of glass separating your character from them. Not only do you have to worry about enemies you also have to look out for toxins that can infect your body as well as radiation.

There is of course a range of weapons to use to combat these threats, if you can find them that is. The weapons range from standard projectile weapons such as pistols and shot-guns to the more exotic psionic powers that can be obtained via upgrades using the modules you find. Even when you find them you need to maintain the weapons or they deteriorate and become non-

functional after prolonged use. For toxins and radiation you need anti-toxin and anti-radiation hypos, which are injections that you give yourself. The availability of these items is dependent on the difficulty you chose when starting the game (Easy, Normal and Hard). The higher the difficulty the less weapons and hypos are available. I actually think the game is a little too tough and there are far too few munitions and hypos available. As you annihilate different enemies they drop various body parts that can be researched. After you have researched these parts they give valuable information on how to effectively destroy the various monsters in System Shock 2. After looking at the horde of features that System Shock 2 offers I thought the game would be a keyboard hog and that you would have to configure most of your key-



DO YOU FEEL LUCKY, GUNK?

board just to access all the functions available to you. This couldn't be further from the truth. Looking Glass made an excellent user-friendly control interface. Using barely more keys than I do in Quake III, I was able



PREPARE TO GET TOASTED, FISH FACE!

to access all the functions. This is due to the fact that after you bring up the inventory and statistics overlays (which are overlaid on the first person view), you can access the rest of the functions with your mouse. While this does work well, I do have one gripe with this method. You can't turn or fire your weapon while the overlays are present. This presents a small problem if a monster pops up and starts hacking at you. Unfortunately the game doesn't support

together to present the player with an environment that is terrifying and constantly creepy. You also have to keep avoiding the security cameras that are all over the place, or hordes of monsters come converging on your position. To avoid them you constantly have to keep sneaking through the levels and peering around corners to make sure that you don't accidentally walk into them. Throughout the game you always feel deserted and alone on the massive levels and the fact that you can manipulate the majority of items, such as consoles, plants and other various items adds to the realism of actually being there.

Since System Shock 2 uses the Thief engine, sound becomes an important tool for manipulating your emotions. The game supports hardware accelerated 3D sound such as Creative's EAX to offer true surround sound. While playing the game you are treated to an eerie soundtrack and throughout the background noises such as Hybrids mumbling to themselves and sounds of malfunctioning computer equipment can be heard. System Shock 2 conjures up a hostile environment in which you constantly feel lost in and there is always a sense of the unknown being right around

Direct Input and gamers making use of a mouse wheel will have to find an alternative way of accessing functions they usually assign to it. System Shock 2 uses an advanced version of the 3D engine used in Thief and delivers a visually stunning environment as you explore the deserted decks of the Von Braun and even some levels of the Rickenbacker. Dynamic lighting, fog effects, and expert texturing are used to conjure up levels that are masterfully put

the corner ready to pounce on you. The game is easily one of the most frightening experiences of my computer gaming life and I take my hat off to the developers for delivering a game that draws you totally into the gaming world.

While the out of the box product doesn't have any multiplayer features, the developers have promised that this is coming in a patch that will be released soon. The patch will address a couple of minor issues and enable gamers to play in a co-operative multiplayer mode with up to 4 players. There will unfortunately be no support for deathmatch multiplayer games, the reason probably being a problem with how players would upgrade their characters before each deathmatch game. Let's just hope that the co-operative mode makes its debut in the patch. This will make System Shock 2 an even more enjoyable experience especially since we here at NAG like to play together, just call us multiplayer junkies. Overall I found System Shock 2 to be one of my best gaming experiences this year. It



offers gameplay that can be best described as a cross between Half-Life and Resident Evil 2 and offers challenging FPS action and an in-depth role-playing experience. If you enjoy first person shooter or role-playing games make sure you pick up a copy at your local retailer, you definitely won't be disappointed. Well let me get back to playing the game a second time round, maybe I missed something the first time.



EVEN THIS PLACE IS NOT GRAFFITI FREE!

**CREATIVE**  
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON  
CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PC PREMIUM SYSTEMS

**BLASTER**  
**PC**  
PC CD-ROM

**SOUL ASSASSIN**

**GENRE**  
First Person Shooter

Min Requirements		Recommended	
Pentium 200	32 MB Ram	Pentium II 300	64 MB Ram
4X CD Rom	200 MB HD	12X CD Rom	300 MB HD
Windows 95/98	(DirectX 6.0)	Windows 95/98	(DirectX 6.1)

Environmental Audio Ready: Yes

Multiplayer	Comparatives	Pro's	Con's
No	System Shock	Totally Engrossing Excellent Graphics Brilliant Gameplay	No DirectInput Support No Multiplayer Yet

Graphics	Sound	Control	Story	Continuity	Playability
90	92	87	89	85	93

89

System Shock 2 comes as a refreshing change from the usual FPS or RPG and offers gameplay that is a hybrid of the two genres. An immersive world built around a compelling story combined with stunning graphics makes SS2 one of the better games to come out in 1999.

Developer: Looking Glass Studios  
Publisher: Electronic Arts  
Supplier: Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212  
RRP: R 299.00  
<http://www.shock2.com>



It would seem that the clean, neat, mostly nice future visions embraced by works of science fiction a few decades ago are a thing of the past. No more neat, sterile space ships filled with happy people. No more gleaming crystal cities on pristine new worlds. No more friendly alien races who come in peace. Rather, the view taken by modern science fiction tends towards the dark, dreary and depressing. Huge cities, rife with crime and corruption, spread across scorched planets like a strange and inevitable cancer. Brother steals from brother in a constant struggle to survive at the lower rungs of the social ladder, while those at the top just grow richer and more detached, jaded about the plight of their fellow man. Other planets are colonised not out of curiosity, but out of necessity, as the Earth dies a slow and painful death. This is the kind of setting that popular fiction now makes use of. And G Police 2 is no different. - Shryke

Let's face it. There are tons of science-fiction style shooter games on the market. Every second game requires the player to totally annihilate the alien invaders from Blubberon 7 with his magnetically charged spectro-whatzit-phaser gun. They're a dime a dozen, and get pretty damn boring after a while. I mean, how much time can be spent splashing green blood around without you getting just a little, well, tired of it? G-Police 2, like it's predecessor, is something of a fresh breeze to the whole science fiction shooter genre. In fact, it's so refreshing that it actually gets quite addictive. The whole premise behind the game lies in the fact that the Government Police Forces (hence G-Police) on the Callisto colony are understaffed, under armed, under funded and overworked. They have just finished a major war against an evil, manipulative super-corporation (which took place in the first instalment of G-Police), leaving them tired, worn out and generally not in great shape. These conditions are obviously perfect for the rise of several criminal gangs. These gangs have somehow managed to get their hands on pretty big firepower and cutting edge technology, and look set to take control of the Callisto Domes. Add to that the pressure

population. This is one of the joys of playing G-Police 2; you can fly over, under or around virtually everything in the game. Tunnels, overpasses, traffic and buildings become something of a playground as you engage in routine patrols around the Domes. The speed of the gunboat makes zipping in between obstacles quite exciting, with close calls by the million. Of course, the game is not about winding your way through a living obstacle course. The major concern for the player takes the form of the gangs, and later the Syndicate. These guys are bad news. They are dare devil pilots who enjoy playing chicken while spraying your craft with tons of hot lead, only to turn away at the last minute and come back for more. And there are lots of them. Being in a G-Police craft doesn't help either. Show up on any crime scene, and the gangsters immediately drop whatever they're doing and turn their attention on you - improving your craft's ventilation becomes their immediate and all pervasive goal. Thankfully, your craft is apparently better armoured than theirs are, if nothing else. While your craft can take quite a pounding, it is relatively easy to blast a gangster out of the sky. This does not make the game any less challenging. In fact, it adds quite a large

# G-POLICE WEAPONS OF JUSTICE

put on by an official investigation into the activities of the G-Police, and you have a less than perfect situation - a truly bad time to be a cop. Not to mention the United Earth Marines that are about to declare a police state...

As in G-Police, G-Police: Weapons of Justice is a 3D environment of enormous scale. The world represented in the game is dark, gritty and impersonal, almost like something straight out of a William Gibson novel (and if you don't spend all your time playing games, you may actually know who William Gibson is). Giant buildings make up the most of the Callisto colony, with searchlights constantly sweeping the skies and thick traffic clogging both the streets and airways. The entire situation is under the constant cover of darkness, just to add to the feeling of gloom and doom that pervades the atmosphere of the game. This is the world that you enter as a G-Police officer, the pilot of a versatile thrust-booster driven attack gun ship. You're armed to the teeth, manoeuvrable and pretty tough. Aboard this primary vehicle or one of the secondary vehicles available in later missions, you wind your way through the enormous, maze like cities that make up the Callisto Dome

amount of satisfaction to game play as you send one gangster after another spiralling towards the ground in a disabled fighter after a chain-gun attack or two, or blow them into small atoms with seeker missiles. Gunfire is a big thing in G-Police 2. There is a huge amount of lead filling the air most times, and it seems that the authorities (including yourself) have little regard for public property as they chase their quarries. Thankfully, the developers behind the game managed to get a really nice chain-gun sound going. It does the heart good to hear the throaty roar of your weapon as you show a gangster the error of his ways. The explosions, too, have a really pleasant, resonant boom. But the good sound effects are not restricted to violence. Much of the game's atmosphere is added by the eerie music that is ever present in the background - something almost reminiscent of Blade Runner (the movie, that is).

Of course, graphics are also important, and G-Police 2 doesn't go sparingly on the way things look. Yes, everything is pretty damn dark in the Callisto Domes, but we're not talking bright cheery Smurf villages here, are we? Despite the drab setting, which I might add



enhances the game no end - the graphics are crisp, clear and smooth. The inevitable clipping problems that seem to creep into most PlayStation games are present, but generally only occur if you're thick enough to go crashing into everything you see. Fly properly, and clipping will not be a problem. Excellent visual effects also abound, with beautifully handled explosions being

Small explosions (like those of gangster craft in mid-vaporisation) are pretty enough, but try blowing up a building for a truly spectacular, whiteout experience! The whole graphics package that G-Police represents is not eye-candy, because it could never be called pretty, but it is still impressive. So it looks good and sounds good. But is it playable? It certainly is! The controls are comprehensive and simple to master. Getting used to the physics of the game may take you a little while, but that's pretty usual anyway, so there are no complaints there. One questionable decision lies in the configuration of the thrust controls - flying forward required pressing the button closest to you, and reversing the button furthest away. It seems that this is a little backwards, but once you get used to the con-



LOW LEVEL FLYING - LITERALLY!

cept, does not pose major problems. The craft is quick, in terms of acceleration, but can tend towards sluggishness when turning. This is something to be aware of initially, if you don't want mouthfuls of pavement after attempting a rather steep dive. But none of these represent major control problems.

The missions represented in G-Police 2 are long and various, and number 35 in total. Basically this means that it's worth more than a couple of hours of game play. Whether you're busting gangs on a routine patrol, or trying to prevent a breakout from the penitentiary, the missions are fast paced, exciting and fun. You won't do the same thing twice in this game, and a multitude of weapons that become available as you progress through the levels make for even greater variation. Three vehicles, namely the gun-ship, cop car and the impressive Raptor MKII ground assault vehicle will all have you at the helm, just

to make sure you don't get bored flying the same old thing all the time. Add to that the three difficulty levels, and you might just still be playing G-Police by the time you retire. The story line behind G-Police 2 is far better than the majority of tales that accompany this type of game. It actually gets quite complex and engrossing after a while, and will keep you playing just to see what happens next. Combined with stunning cinematic sequences, the story line makes G Police 2 exciting to watch as well as play. The whole package is slick, neat and really impressive. There should be very few people who do not enjoy strapping themselves into the cockpit of a G-Police vehicle and dispensing some instant and in-your-face justice!



SHRYKE

**GENRE**  
3D Action

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

G-Police: Weapons of Justice is a fast paced shooter that transports the player into a dark future where gangs and huge corporations run the world through fear and subjugation. A solid title, no doubt, that will entertain many gamers for a long time.

<b>Developer:</b> Psygnosis	<b>Publisher:</b> Sony Computer Entertainment	<b>Supplier:</b> Star Kinekor Interactive (01) 445-7900	<b>RRP:</b> R 349.00
<a href="http://www.playstation-europe.com/gpolice">http://www.playstation-europe.com/gpolice</a>			
<b>Multiplayer</b>	<b>Comparatives</b>	<b>Pro's</b>	<b>Con's</b>
No	G-Police	Fast Paced Action Good Graphics Easy To Get Into	Minor Control Difficulties Long Loading Times
<b>Graphics</b>	<b>Sound</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Story</b>
85	85	77	75
<b>Continuity</b>	<b>Playability</b>	<b>80</b>	
80	80	<b>80</b>	

**80**



First came Time Crisis, complete with the GunCon. Then Namco brought us Point Blank, which also utilised the GunCon45, but instead of shooting at real people you were pitted against menacing targets. Now comes the sequel... **Madman**

The original Point Blank was a "family-friendly" shooter if you will. Violence was at a minimum because instead of shooting at every thing that moves you had to only shoot at the designated targets. No blood, no mess, no fuss. Point Blank 2 shares the identical concept, as well as execution, of the original. What Point Blank 2 does have, however, are loads more modes and levels to busy yourself with. The prequel proved that a game doesn't need to be complicated to succeed and Point Blank 2 itself revels in simplicity yet is amazingly effective.



require you to blast accurately (1 bullet, 20 seconds to kill 1 gangster hiding behind tons of people). The game play really shows if you're playing with a lightgun but as I've said a gamepad doesn't do the game justice. If you

gets (i.e. ninjas, sheep, mice, gangsters) are just like those stand up cardboard promotional figures. Cars drive across the roads in some levels to make hitting your target more difficult, a nice touch is that the windows of vehicles are breakable so if your target is an occupant of said vehicle you first have to "bump off" the window before you can get to the villain. All the targets slide around instead of moving but that's expected, I guess, since this is a shooting range simulation where you would usually find cardboard stands instead of real people to shoot. If you're looking for a graphical masterpiece then you're more restricted to a mindless first person shooter since you won't find what you're looking for here.

**IN MY SIGHTS**  
The main objective of Point Blank 2 is to hone your shooting skills by progressing through a seemingly innumerable number of levels until you are satisfied that you are the ultimate sniper or you've got the highest score in the neighbourhood. Point Blank 2 is designed to be played with Namco's GunCon45 but can also be played using a standard PlayStation controller. Playing with the controller, in my opinion, defeats the purpose of the game. It's one thing being able to accurately aim and fire a (light)gun in 0.35 of a second but it means nothing to be able to move the cursor along the screen and press the X button. It just proves you have fast fingers, but does not

don't already have a GunCon and this is your type of game you might want to consider investing in one... just don't play Point Blank 2 without one! Anyway, back to the different stages and modes available in Point Blank 2. Point Blank Castle (the "default" mode), Theme Park Mode (the new story mode), Party Mode (for more players) and Practice are the different modes on offer. Most levels are designed for 2 or more players which really adds to the frenzied fun, with the player who has the most points taking the victory. The objectives of the different levels are clever and humorous, some forcing you to shear sheep, shoot gangsters, destroy houses within 20 seconds and many more. The SPCA will have something to say about Point Blank 2, as it isn't uncommon to be told to shoot certain animals. Most of the game however consists of shooting your own colour round targets and missing the others. This may sound terribly boring but the targets move around unexpectedly as well as change colour. This, combined with the level themes makes Point Blank 2 a very exciting and playable game. Graphics were never the strong point of Point Blank and PB2 is no different. Much of the game is 2D and all the targets that aren't tar-



THE NON-VIOLENT 'SPCA' LEVEL...

**GUNSHOTS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD**  
When it comes to sound, Point Blank 2's sound is similar to the concept... simple yet effective. You don't expect much and you don't get much but it does complement the action well. The Japanese "technoish" tunes and the sounds of bullets being fired and targets, bombs and innocent people exploding combine well to form the correct environment for this type of game. Most times you won't notice the sound which, in my opinion, is a lot better than really rubbish sound that you do notice!

Overall, if you loved Point Blank you'll love the sequel. It takes everything Point Blank had and soups it up to form a game that provides simple fun yet is so much more than the original. Level depth is greater, sound is improved and the possibilities for play are endless. Point Blank 2 is an extremely entertaining single player game but really excels in multiplayer where it becomes the ideal party game. If it's your sort of game make sure you don't miss it. Just make sure you have a lightgun!



WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO WIN A TEDDY BEAR ANY SECOND NOW?

ing for your aiming and shooting skills that are so necessary in this country. The myriad of levels are all timed and some require logical thought before you blast (i.e. spelling and maths sum levels) while others just require you to blast (unlimited bullets, 20 seconds to kill 45 gangsters) whilst others

Point Blank 2 combines the winning formula of the original with tons more levels, improved graphics and sound. A great game if you have a light-gun and an excellent party game. If you enjoyed the first Point Blank, you'll love PB2!

<b>Developer:</b> Namco		<b>Publisher:</b> Namco		<b>Supplier:</b> Star Kinekor Interactive (01) 445-7900		<b>RRP:</b> R 349.00	
<a href="http://www.namco.com">http://www.namco.com</a>							
<b>Multiplayer:</b> Yes	<b>Comparitives:</b> Point Blank, Time Crisis	<b>Pro's:</b> Simple Yet Fun, Great Multiplayer Addictive	<b>Con's:</b> Poor Graphics Needs a Light-gun				
<b>Graphics:</b> 55	<b>Sound:</b> 82	<b>Control:</b> 81	<b>Story:</b> 75	<b>Continuity:</b> 93	<b>Playability:</b> 95	<b>80</b>	

The history of Motorbike Racing Simulation on the PlayStation is a non-existent affair. Nobody can really pinpoint why, but most of the conclusions stem from the demographic age group associated with the PlayStation. Superbikes is accurately associated with the older more mature gamer that prefers the realistic simulation to the arcade, now THQ have seen the opportunity to offer both in one, broadening its options to young and old. **Storm**



Nowhere in the history of the PlayStation have we come up with a comparative title for Castrol Honda Superbikes except for similarities in RoadRash and Motor Racer from Electronic Arts. THQ realised the potential of bringing the Superbike Championship to the PlayStation after the successful of the title on the PC. It is not really sure whether the portal will be success or not but my prediction is that without competition in the genre it should perform well.



Getting down to the finer details of Castrol Honda Superbikes, you only have the option of riding for the Castrol Honda Championship winning team of 1997, not that that is such a bad thing, my only gripe is that its two years old. You race on the winning bike of 1997, the Honda RC45, which in those days was electrifying. If modern day success is anything to go by then it could be said that 1998 was a disappointment for the team, but 1999 is turning out to be more successful after a few wins against the Dukati team of Carl Fogarty.

The portal from the PC to the PSX for CHSWC was not as seamless as I anticipated. Graphical glitches can be picked up at will and quality is certainly lost somewhere along the way. If you take the current crop of titles on the PSX as standard, then you could argue the fact that it's quite disappointing to say the least. There are good



IT'S JUST YOU AND ME BOY

things going for it though with the use of high tech motion capture, the rider and bike animations are smooth and realistic. Certain graphical touches such as smoke billowing from the exhaust and tyre marks from taking too much out of a corner help to complete the attention to detail. All the tracks have been recreated in applausable detail and THQ have added some interesting street circuits that will test your resilience most of the time.

It is highly recommended that you have a Dual Shock controller or similar control mechanism in order to maximise your playing pleasure. It's extremely difficult to master the normal button and digital left and right movements of the standard controllers especially on the more difficult settings. With the Dual Shock you are able to manipulate the amount of speed and turning needed to negotiate the tight cornering of the circuits. This is also dependant on how well you look after your bike because the more damage it sustains, the harder it is to control, or should I say the harder it will pull to either side. There is no visible damage on the bike (or the rider, next please) except for a small visual guide on the left of the screen, which explains the area of the bike that has taken damage. For all the Superbike and general racing fans out there who want total control over their racing pleasure, then Castrol Honda Superbike offers you plenty of that. Selections vary from rookie to ace levels, each selection can offer help for the beginner right through to the ultimate challenge for the experts. The AI is not of the highest calibre but does scale according to your level of expertise, I found that as you make the transition to semi-pro that the AI takes a drastic advancement and is

extremely difficult to beat. One interesting piece of trivia is that you can race in Ace level against 23 AI controlled opponents, but I honestly feel your biggest threat comes from yourself as you attempt to go faster and keep your rear-end in the saddle at the same time. Castrol Honda Superbike has realistic revving sounds and a vibing, heavy rock soundtrack, but for the most part the sound is average. A thumbs-up goes to the addition of adjusting and improving your bike's performance before a race, with a few tips thrown in from the Castrol Honda team, giving the simulation fan a little more to



LEHME OUT OF HERE!

tinkle with. There is also the 2-player option with split screen (vertical or horizontal) support for challenging your friends and foes. After completing the game on Ace level you are awarded the sole use of the famous Montegi test circuit as reward for your efforts (it's something). I have to admit that Castrol Honda Superbikes is an enjoyable game that preys on my Superbike addiction but it is not an overwhelming piece of software by no means. Pinpointing the eye-catching features is difficult but then the same goes for its failures. If your interest lies in the genre then a recommendation must be given.

An average title that neither shines nor disappoints. The use of the 1997 Castrol Honda Superbike is rather outdated but effective with its support of the simulation. Good support for arcade and simulation fans alike is the catch net for what could have been a heavy fall.

<b>Developer:</b> THQ		<b>Publisher:</b> THQ		<b>Supplier:</b> Star Kinekor Interactive (01) 445-7900		<b>RRP:</b> R 459.00	
<a href="http://www.thq.com">http://www.thq.com</a>							
<b>Multiplayer:</b> Yes	<b>Comparitives:</b> Road Rash, Motor Racer	<b>Pro's:</b> Realistic Animations, Full Arcade and Simulation Support	<b>Con's:</b> Clippy Graphics Outdated				
<b>Graphics:</b> 65	<b>Sound:</b> 70	<b>Control:</b> 75	<b>Story:</b> NA	<b>Continuity:</b> 66	<b>Playability:</b> 70	<b>69</b>	



It seems that every second game made for the PlayStation today is a racing game. This is quite annoying, because it implies that developers are capable of nothing more than simulating racing around a track. One of the greatest criticisms that non-console players have is that variety is somewhat lacking in games made for use with television sets. So it doesn't really help when yet another racing simulator crosses my desk - the immediate response is "ah, no man. Not another one!"

Shryke

How much can really be done with the racing game genre? Let's face it, it comes down to ripping around a track, whether the means are planes, speedboats, rally cars or F1 powerhouses. It essentially comes down to the same thing. This is a problem to be encountered on both PC and PSX platforms. It finally boils down to developers competing with each other to create better looking, smoother running versions of exactly the same thing. Admittedly, it was with some unenthusiastic grumbling that I approached Wipeout. Not only was it another racing game, but it was the third installment of the Wipeout series, which made it even worse a prospect - a sequel to a game making up part of an over-exploited genre.

It was, however, much to my surprise that I found myself getting mildly addicted to the high-speed action that forms part of Wipeout. This isn't just another racing game. Granted, there's nothing really revolutionary here. It's still all about speed, and being able to read the correct way to navigate your way around a convoluted race

track. But there is a certain indefinable something about Wipeout that makes one want to keep playing it. One of the most wonderful aspects of this game is the fact that it is easy to play. Certainly, the tracks pose a good challenge, and mastering their twists and turns in conjunction with the performance of the various vehicles available for use is not something that happens overnight, but the game is playable from the word go. There's no crashing on the first turn, or running out of time. Sure, you may battle a bit to end up top of the log at first, but the game has to have some kind of challenge. A major problem with follow-up games is that we really have seen it all before - literally. At least the guys behind this one - Psygnosis, to be precise - have tried to do something about advancing whatever story lies behind the Wipeout series. Not that racing games really need a background tale of epic proportions. But the developers have trundled along the track established by previous editions of Wipeout, furthering the in-game technology represented by the craft available for use over the tracks available. One aspect of Wipeout that is really pleasing is the fact that the tracks are fast. They look fast, and feel fast. There is nothing more annoying than a racing game where you don't really feel like you're actually in a race. Fortunately, the hover vehicles available for use in the game are regular bullets, and the feeling of speed generated in either of the three available views is great - particularly in the "first-person" view, with all the iron work turned off. The tracks, too, enhance this feeling, with steep downward corkscrews, high

trucks and incredible drops. Graphically, Wipeout is stunning. Everything has a certain believable quality that adds to the excitement of the game. The tracks are long, and graphically complex - although you don't get much time to look at the scenery when you go rocketing past it. It's nice to know that the detail is there, though. Racing against the AI competitors can be quite a challenge. They tend to be fairly vicious in terms of trying to run you off the track, firing missiles at you, or generally just getting up your nose in a very big way. And, of course, they navigate the tracks perfectly, leaving little room for mistakes in your game play. If you keep smashing into walls and stuff, you're going to end up last. Getting to a point where your craft doesn't automatically gravitate towards every obstacle on the track is only a matter of time, practice and memory. Once you remember where the nastier turns and twists in the track are, there will be very few surprises in store for you. This does not make the game boring - there is a certain sense of satisfaction to be gained from traversing one of these monsters with little or no error. Of course, dealing with the other race competitors is another story... To this end, the developers included a slew of wonderful weapons that can be collected while speeding around the track. They may be employed to slow your enemies down quite nicely. Wipeout is easy to control, fun to play and highly addictive - it certainly does not fall into the category of "just another racing game!"

Wipeout is a fast, addictive racing game. In a market where racing games are far too numerous, the impact of Wipeout is slightly dulled, but the game is fun, fast and very playable. This third game in the Wipeout series is well worth it.

## Wipeout



NOT ONLY BALLOONS CAN FLY...



THIS GAME'S NOT GOING DOWNHILL!



SHRYKE

**GENRE**  
Racing Simulator

**Controller Support**

- Vibration Function Compatible
- Analog Controller Compatible

**Optional Extras**

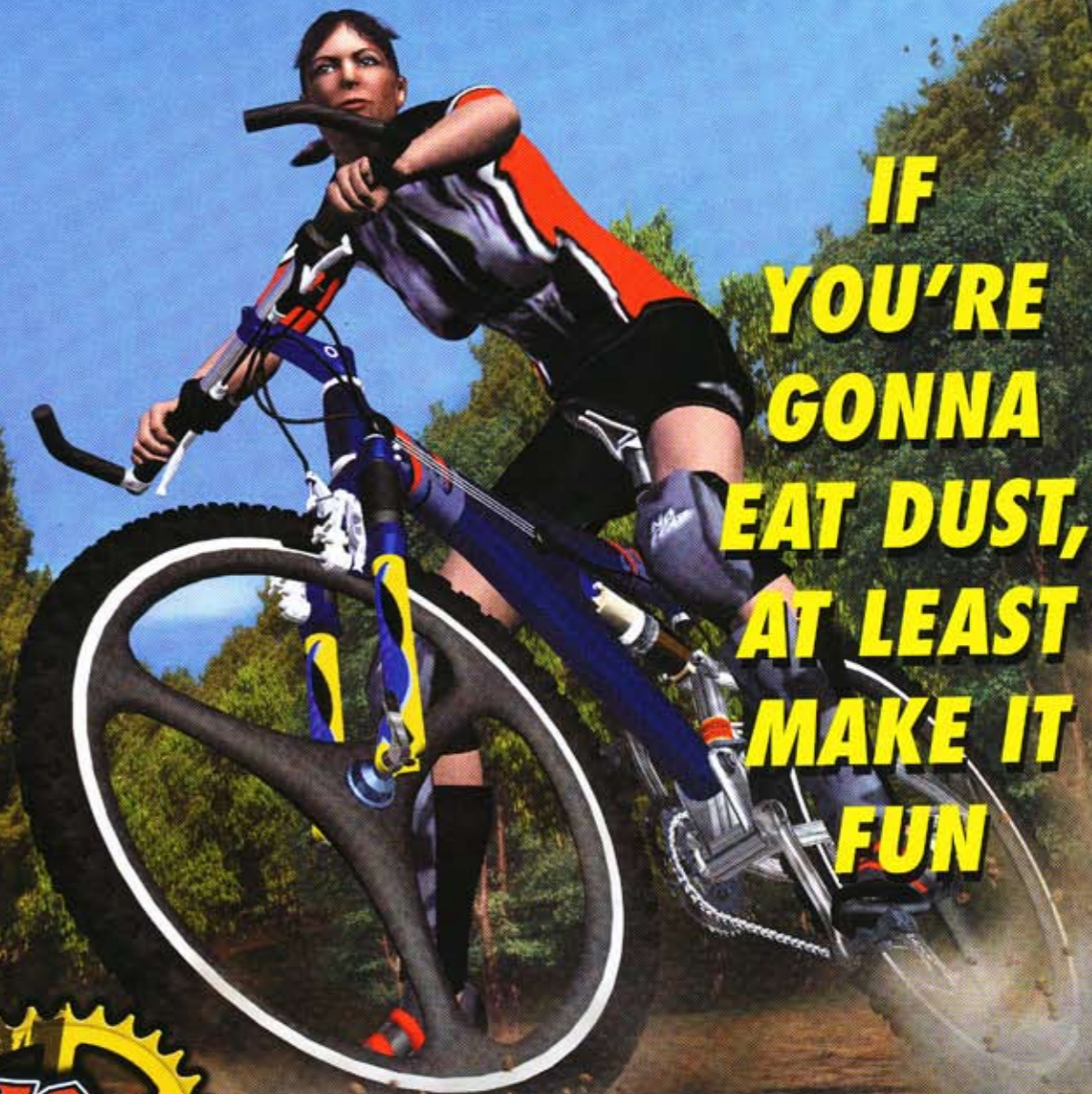
- Memory Card (1-3 Blocks)
- 1-2 Player

Developer: Psygnosis  
 Publisher: Psygnosis  
 Supplier: Star Kinetor Interactive (011) 445-7900  
 RRP: R 429.00  
<http://www.playstation-europe.com/wipeout>

**Multplayer:** Yes  
**Comparitives:** WipeOut, Dogem Arena  
**Pro's:** Easy To Play, Good Graphics, Exciting and Fast  
**Con's:** Very Similar to Other Games

**Graphics:** 80 **Sound:** 70 **Control:** 75 **Story:** NA **Continuity:** 72 **Playability:** 80

**75**



**IF YOU'RE GONNA EAT DUST, AT LEAST MAKE IT FUN**

## NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING





We've all heard the tales of babies being raised by wolves, apes and given time possibly even aliens too. However, it is only in the fantastic world of computer games that tiny furry characters with huge eyes can raise a single toothed bright-green crocodile. Throughout the upbringing, you have to wonder if this crocodile ever realised that he was being raised by a potential late afternoon snack, but that's a different game altogether. It's more 3D-platform fun and this time you control a crocodile instead of a bandicoot. **RedTide**

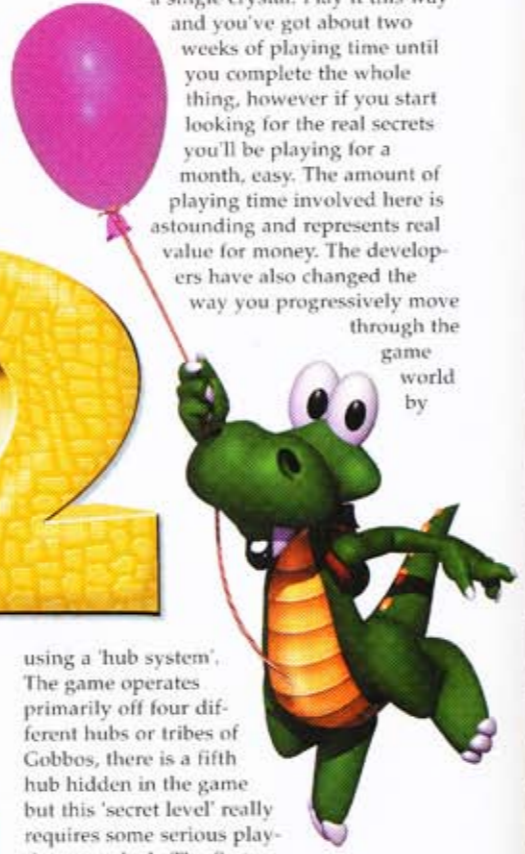
Our tale begins, not too long ago on the Gobbo Islands. A baby crocodile is found by a friendly race of small furry creatures called Gobbos who inhabit this remote island formation. The king of the Gobbos took it upon himself to raise the young crocodile, teaching him the ways of the tribe and giving him the imaginative name of Croc. One day an evil magician going by the



either stranded or captured Gobbos or finding special items. There are a few alternative play-style levels scattered around where you'll be able to fly a hot air balloon, ride a snowball and even drive a kart. Each level has a hundred standard crystals hidden in it, finding them all means your health will be fully restored. There are also five

# CROC 2

a single crystal. Play it this way and you've got about two weeks of playing time until you complete the whole thing, however if you start looking for the real secrets you'll be playing for a month, easy. The amount of playing time involved here is astounding and represents real value for money. The developers have also changed the way you progressively move through the game world by



name of Baron Dante captured all the Gobbos and the king leaving poor little Croc, who managed to evade capture, alone. That was the first game, and we saw Croc fighting against all odds, rescuing the Gobbos and finally defeating the evil Baron Dante. In this second game, the evil minions of Dante, the Dantinis have somehow resurrected the Baron Dante from his temporary grave. The first introductory movie serves as the reason why you're battling the odds again but in the next movie segment, you see Croc discover a message in a bottle on the beach with a note inside. The message has a baby crocodile footprint on it and a message from Croc's real parents and the king tells Croc to try and find his folks on the mainland. So the story begins, your overall quest is to find your parents and on the way help all the Gobbos you meet defeat the Dantinis and their boss Baron Dante.

coloured crystals in each level, these are really hard to get or find but if you do find all five you'll receive a special golden Gobbo statue. Find all the statues in the hub you're playing and you'll be able to play through a secret level where you must find a hidden jigsaw puzzle piece. Once all



RESCUE THE BABY GOBBOS

four puzzle pieces are found you'll be able to enter the Lost Levels, playing through these secret levels completes the game one hundred percent. It isn't imperative that you find all the special secrets in the game and it is possible to finish it without picking up

**HEAPS OF STUFF TO DO**  
The basic idea behind the game is to control Croc through the many 3D levels, defeating the bad guys, collecting crystals and rescuing



using a 'hub system'. The game operates primarily off four different hubs or tribes of Gobbos, there is a fifth hub hidden in the game but this 'secret level' really requires some serious play-time to unlock. The first tribe you'll meet as you arrive from the island is the Sailor Tribe, followed by the Cossack Tribe, the Prehistoric Tribe and finally the Inca Tribe. The Gobbos in each area are dressed differently and the graphical nuances are indicative of the different tribe themes in the game. The different hubs all have five separate levels and two different boss levels each, these levels must be completed successfully before moving onto the next main hub. As you travel around the different hubs you'll run into Gobbos with problems - solving the problem, be it racing a boat or rescuing Gobbos from a burning jungle,



YOU'LL GET TO RACE BOATS...



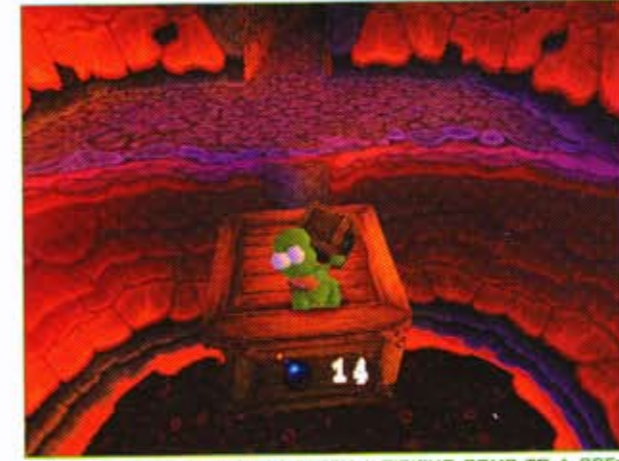
...RISE ON TOP OF A SNOWBALL...



...AND EVEN FLY A HANG GLIDER!



TICK, WHIRR AND BLEEP! A CLOCKWORK GOBBO IN ACTION



ON THIS LEVEL YOU MUST CARRY A TICKING BOMB TO A SPECIFIC LOCATION BEFORE THE TIMER RUNS DOWN

be stomped on which will either reveal crystals or special platforms, some boxes explode a short while after being landed on and others just fall apart. Croc can also push some boxes around to allow him to get to hard to reach places or permanently keep buttons depressed. Built into some levels are walls that can be climbed, these are sometimes hard to see so you'll have to keep those eyes open. While playing a level you can save your progress temporarily by hitting special gongs in some sections of the level with Croc's tail, these then become the new starting spot should you die in the level. The other type of gong is a Swap Meet Pete Gong that will transport you to the local store to stock up on lives or Jelly Jumps. If you look at all the different levels, playing styles, size and scope on offer here you can't help but be impressed with this sequel, in all of these areas the development team have outdone themselves in giving the player much more to do.



jovial bars in others. Overall the game isn't the best looking or sounding ever but is definitely above average in every respect. Croc can walk or run, jump and attack, push, pick up and throw certain objects, climb and use his backpack. Some



... AND PINK BALLOONS - OR SOMETHING!

equals a completed level. The playing area is massive, almost overwhelming when you first realise the true scope of the game and this represents one of the first obvious improvements over the original title, there's just more of it. Each hub also features a convenience store run by a fellow called Swap Meet Pete where goods can be purchased using a special credit card system linked to how many crystals you find while playing the different levels. In the shop you can buy Heart Pots, this effectively represents the amount of lives you have to play with, the more pots you have the more hearts you can keep. Besides the Heart Pots you can also buy Clockwork Gobbos, wind up toy Gobbos that allow Croc to find extra crystals in the levels. On the shelves in the store there are also three different kinds of Jelly Jumps that Croc can use at specially marked locations in most levels to allow him to jump higher or further and thus collect more crystals or items. While you move through the levels you'll also discover balloons that Croc can ride to hard to reach places or simply to take him back to the beginning of a tricky area. Boxes feature big in the game and must

**EAR, EYE AND BRAIN SURGERY**  
So far so good, everything is bigger and better, now let's look at the other 'important' components - graphics, sound, control and finally playing the game.

Graphically Croc 2 is far superior to the previous game - the graphics are crisp, clear and wonderfully atmospheric, depending on where you are. Not everything is perfect though and on many occasions small clipping problems appear, ruining the experience. The game also suffers from distance fogging, this is well implemented in the game so ends up not looking all that peculiar while playing and definitely doesn't detract from the game, but it is there every now and then. All the game's sound effects are executed on cue and will extract more than a few smiles for being terribly cute if nothing else. The music is functional, nothing special and instantly forgotten, the tracks are nice to listen to while playing and in most cases sum up the current urgency of the on-screen action with dramatic tones in some cases and light



combinations are possible including the Triple Jump and the Flip Jump. Croc can also Swing hand over hand from monkey bars to get around, it's easy getting him to do all these moves and everything works quite well up to a point. In spite of everything, controlling this little green crocodile is a painful and frustrating experience, you can never seem to get him to do what you want resulting in numerous deaths. The exact nature of the problem is hard to define but it has plenty to do with turning Croc around and lateral movement while running. Now add to this 'tricky' control problem the





THIS IS WHERE THEY TEACH SMALL CHILDREN HOW TO RUN UP A BIG CREDIT CARD BILL



THE INCA HUB IS THE LAST SECTION IN THE GAME, UNLESS OF COURSE YOU CAN FIND ALL THE SECRETS...

fact that the camera is sluggish while panning around and you've got a first class recipe for irritation as Croc keeps falling off ledges and taking ages to collect a single gem. Not only is the movement control tiresome but the jumping and rope swinging almost always feels more like it has everything to do with luck rather than skill. This is a pity and effectively ruins one of the better 3D platform games to arrive on the PlayStation this year. The control quirkiness does damage the enjoyment of the actual playing



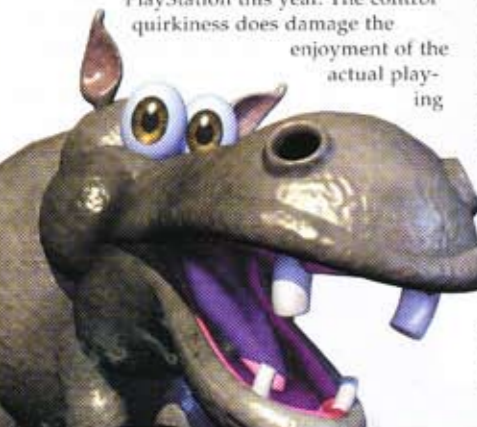
He might look friendly and helpful but the reality of Swap Meet Pete is closer to that of a power hungry monopolising corporation. He is the only guy you can deal with in the game when buying special items, freeing him up to charge whatever he likes for the goods you need. The fact that you can only use the Swap Meet Pete Card to make these purchases adds more weight to the observation.

He sells Jelly Jumps in three different flavours, Orange, Lime and Strawberry - each of these has different properties so choose wisely. Pete also sells Clockwork Gobbos that allow the player to reach areas in the game that Croc cannot get to, useful for finding all those crystals. The last item on offer in the store are Heart Pots - this game's version of a health bar. Once you've conquered a level, visiting Pete is essential as he holds the keys to all the different hubs and if you ask nicely he'll even take you back to a previous hub.

eight times in a row. Also worth noting is an interesting 'on paper idea' that has been implemented in the game - the OmniPlay option. This 'unique' feature lets two players control the same character in the game. One can sum this idea up as totally useless and the lame excuse used in the manual is that this mode of play is ideal for teaching someone how to play Croc. It is definitely unique but has very little practical application in the game, any attempt to get anything done in this mode results in frustrating deaths and airborne controllers. It's not going to take off as the next big thing by a long shot. This becomes even more absurd when you realise how difficult it is to control Croc on your own never mind having someone else performing the jumping and shooting while you control the movement and inventory, no thanks.

**PITY**  
Taking a long hard look at the game you always arrive at a number of firm conclusions. The developers, Argonaut Software have really pulled out all the stops with this one - it is truly an outstanding achievement for a sequel as so much has been added to the successful Croc formulae, it's bigger and better in almost every possible way. The problem is that they haven't addressed the poor control system that Croc 1 was plagued with other than adding a few new moves. This effectively takes the game down from a must have to an average worth a look. Bearing in mind that Croc 2 is aimed at the younger market, and if you enjoyed the first game then by all means grab a copy, as a sequel it's a first class effort if a little on the tough side. However, if you're looking for some serious 3D-platform action your first choice should rather be, Crash Bandicoot 3 or Ape Escape.

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Croc 2 is remarkable as far as sequels go, everything has been added to, improved upon and enhanced - except the control, making the game frustrating and difficult. It's worth playing if you can put up with the control system, but only just.

<b>Developer:</b> Argonaut Software		<b>Publisher:</b> Fox Interactive		<b>Supplier:</b> Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212		<b>RRP:</b> R 349.00	
<a href="http://www.foxinteractive.com">http://www.foxinteractive.com</a>							
<b>Multiplayer</b>	<b>Competitives</b>	<b>Pro's</b>	<b>Con's</b>	<b>REDTIDE</b>			
No	Crash Bandicoot 3 Ape Escape	Excellent Sequel Plenty To Do Super Cute	Control System Too Difficult Frustrating	<b>GENRE</b> 3D Platform			
<b>Graphics</b>	<b>Sound</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Story</b>	<b>Continuity</b>	<b>Playability</b>	<b>Controller Support</b>	
89	81	49	68	92	59	<b>Optional Extras</b>	
						Vibration Function Compatible	
						Analog Controller Compatible	
						Memory Card 1 Block	
						1 Player	
						<b>73</b>	

# GTA2



**GRAND THEFT AUTO 2**  
**STEALING CARS IS THE EASY PART**



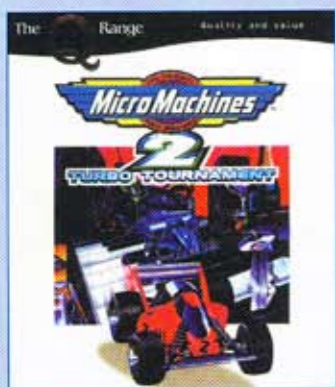
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## The Q Range

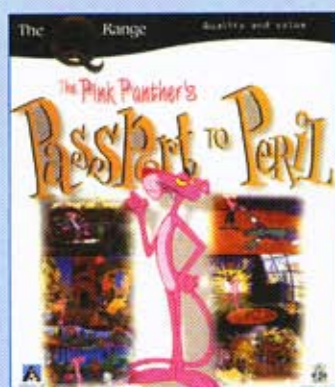
THE NEW Q RANGE WILL MOST CERTAINLY THRILL THE GAMER ON A TIGHT BUDGET. AS AN ADDED BONUS, CERTAIN TITLES ARE COMBOS, MADE UP OF TWO POPULAR GAMES INSTEAD OF JUST ONE. AT **R 99.00** A TITLE, THE Q RANGE IS DEFINITELY SOMETHING TO LOOK AT!  
**Distributor: T.C.M Warehouse Tel: (011) 312-1067**

### MICRO MACHINES 2: TURBO TOURNAMENT



Speed around dinner tables, work benches, picnic spots and music studios in turbo charged, diminutive vehicles. This game is a firm favourite with gamers the world over, in which up to four players can duke it out in over 17 different sea, air and land vehicles in the quest to be the king of miniature racing. This is a manic, thrill a minute game, full of fun and laughter. Four game modes allow for Challenge, Head-to-Head, League and Time Trial play styles, coupled with fully sampled music and brilliant sound effects. Quick thinking and sly tactics form a large part of this game as you try to do your opponents over while trying to stay on the straight and narrow yourself. Careen past knives and forks, speed over rotating corncocks, avoid dangerous power tools, and punch the gas over piano keyboards. And, as if that isn't enough, a full track editor is supplied, so that you can design your own perilous miniature racetracks to challenge yourself and your friends. Micro Machines 2: Turbo Tournament is a fast paced, laugh a minute racer that will keep you busy for ages.

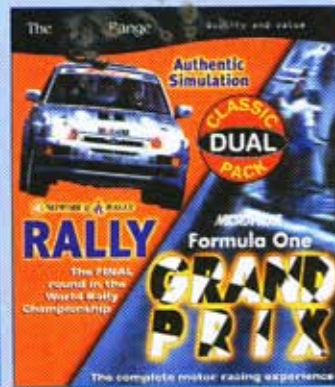
### THE PINK PANTHER'S PASSPORT TO PERIL



It's a wonderful thing when a game both educates and entertains. The value of such games is totally underestimated, and they are so often passed over in favour of other titles. The Pink Panther's Passport to Peril is such a game - one that will teach you while it entertains you. Take the part of that wonderful cartoon character, the Pink Panther, as you are charged with protecting the children of top international politicians. Travel from Bombay to Cairo, the Himalayas to London and beyond as your adventures span the globe in this informative and entertaining game. This is a true adventure game, in which puzzles and mysteries are mixed with skill challenges and humorous situations. The whole thing looks, sounds and feels

just like a real Pink Panther cartoon, making the problem solving and logical thinking required by the game more fun than can be imagined. You won't even realise that you're working your mind while you giggle your way around the world. This is a game for kids from 8 to 88 - everyone will enjoy this adventure!

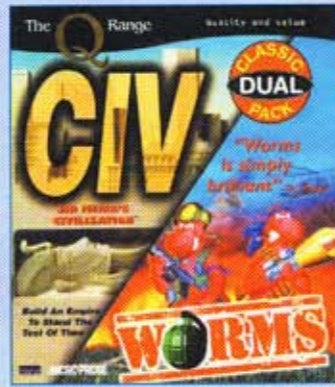
### NETWORK Q RALLY / MICROPROBE FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX



This double title racing set is perfect for lovers of motor sport simulators. The first title takes you through the entire Network Q RAC rally series, with 35 stages to challenge and entertain you. You may choose from multiple weather and track conditions, times and five cars, to keep things fresh and challenging. The 350 miles of the RAC rally championship has been painstakingly recreated within this title, in order to lend it the greatest amount of authenticity possible. Digitised speech serves as your co-driver, helping you navigate through some of the toughest rally courses in the world. Formula 1 Grand Prix takes the racing theme to a whole different area. With this game, you get into the driver's seat of the most prestigious motor sport

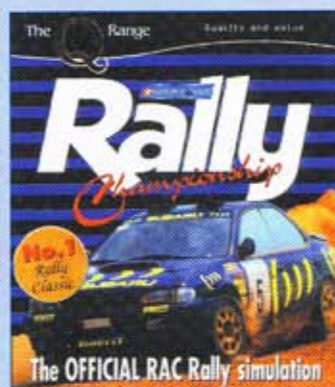
event the world over. This game includes detailed versions and scenery from 16 of the world's best known racing circuits, from Mexico City to Monaco. Add to all of that a quick start facility, comprehensive cockpit set-ups, five levels of difficulty and multi-player options, and you certainly have a game that's worth its megabytes in gold.

### CIVILIZATION / WORMS



This combo features two of the most popular games ever! Sid Meyer's Civilization is a wonderfully popular management / strategy title that has set the standard for every similar title that followed in its footsteps. In this game, every major decision is yours to make, be it political, economic or military. This is a thought provoking, interesting and engrossing game that allows you to raise your own personal civilisation from obscurity to greatness, all on your PC. Form history as you steer your chosen people from 4000BC to the future in an attempt to create a society that will stand up to the rigors of time. Worms is one of the best games ever, despite all predictions. Take your army of dedicated, cute, cuddly and completely psychopathic worms and blast the living daylights out of the opposition. Arm your men with machine guns, hand grenades, rocket launchers, guided missiles, air strikes and exploding sheep (to name but a few) and enter the greatest platform based war of all time. Worms will supply you with year's worth of thrills, excitement and, above all, bellyaching laughter. Random level generators make multiplayer games limitless, with up to sixteen players all on the same PC. This is one turn-based game that will certainly become a social event, resulting in aching sides, paranoia and sleep deprivation.

### RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP



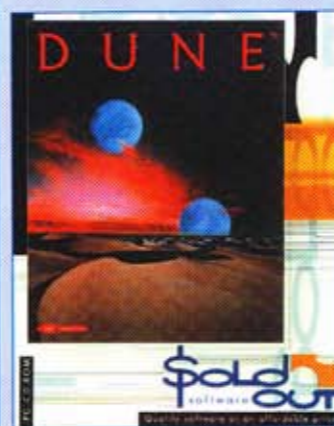
Experience the speed, challenge and thrill of the full RAC British Rally Season behind the wheel of a Subaru Impreza Turbo with the Q Range's Rally Championship, the official RAC rally simulation. This thrilling game includes all the races from the entire British Rally season made up of a total of 28 races. Six cars, including the Subaru Impreza Turbo, Renault Maxi Megane and VW Golf Gti 16V are available to tackle these challenging and accurately represented tracks. All sound effects are wonderfully authentic, having been recorded from actual rally cars in action. All in-game commentary is supplied by the legendary Tony Mason, who also fills in as the voice of your navigator. Three views are available to suit your own play style, as well as four game modes - championship, arcade, individual and time trials - to challenge your skill behind the "wheel." Add to that full weather and road surface effects and you have quite a race waiting for you! You can even get your friends in on the action, with up to 8 players available via network for some of the most frantic racing action you'll ever have in front of your computer. This budget title is a true 'value product', guaranteed to supply you with a huge amount of enjoyment for quite some time to come!

## PC BARGAIN BUYS (CONTINUED)

## Sold Out

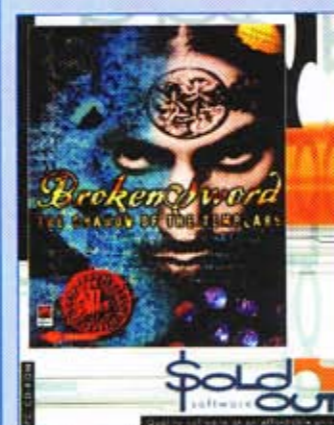
WE TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN ONCE AGAIN DIRECTING FINANCIALLY CHALLENGED GAMERS TO THE SOLD OUT RANGE OF PC TITLES. THESE ARE, AS ALWAYS, CLASSIC GAMES THAT HAVE BEEN RE-RELEASED SO THAT GAMERS CAN ENJOY THEM AT THE FRACTION OF THE PRICE OF A NEW TITLE. SO, AT **R 99.00** A TITLE, YOU CAN EXPAND YOUR GAME COLLECTION WITHOUT EMPTYING YOUR BANK ACCOUNT.  
**Distributor: Gametronix Tel: (011) 886-1972**

### DUNE



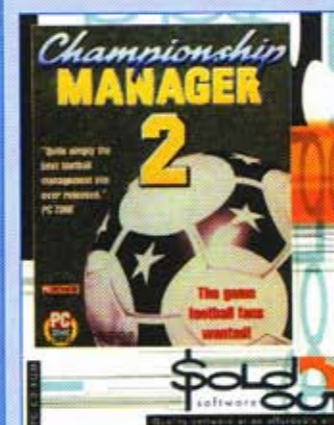
Enter the world created by award winning science fiction author Frank Herbert. Take control of Paul Atreides, as he enters on his quest to discover the mysteries of the strange desert planet Dune, and those locked within himself. The surreal, mysterious setting is captured perfectly in this strategy cum management classic. Battle against the machinations of the dark and horrifying Harkonnen clan on a political and strategic level, while entering the strange adventure that is Paul's life. Meet the strange inhabitants of this world, and develop political and economic ties with them. Can you be the saviour of Dune? Well, only skill and thought will get you to that point as you explore an entire world in your quest to become the legendary Muad'Dib. With a story line that faithfully follows Herbert's classic sci-fi series, Dune is an engrossing mind trip through an alien world. Beautiful graphics combined with compelling game play make Dune something well worth experiencing, for both fans and new comers alike.

### BROKEN SWORD



Imagine an innocent vacation in Paris turning into a strange and dangerous mystery, the outcome of which could change the future of mankind. That's exactly what happens in Broken Sword, a thrilling adventure from the makers of the highly acclaimed Lure of the Temptress and Beneath a Steal Sky. Good graphics and sound combine with an intriguing story line to create a game that is a definite classic in its own right. Not an action packed shooter, Broken Sword none the less requires quick thinking and nerves of steel to play. As George Stobard, you enter the world of Broken Sword, to discover an earth-shattering plot that could change the destiny of humanity. Embark on an exciting and dangerous adventure that spans the globe as you puzzle your way to the bottom of their monstrous plan. This certainly is a challenging game, with many mysteries, puzzles and enigmas to entertain you for many hours. It requires a strong resolve, guts and determination to get to the bottom of the mystery.

### CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2



The world's best loved sport is soccer, without a doubt, and we often get to see the teams performing at their peak on playing fields from around the globe. We feel the excitement as they outplay their opponents and score wonderful goals against all odds. And on top of it all sits the English Premier League, with a following around the globe. This is the high-profile world of action, spills and chance goals, but what of the faces behind the scenes? What about those people who make the decisions that can make or break a team's future? That's where you come in. In Championship Manager 2, you get to be that all-important person. The one that makes all the major decisions for the team that you choose. This sophisticated game includes both the English and Scottish leagues, and allows the player full control over the team.

Enter into the world of soccer management with Championship Manager 2 - you can even take on seven other players to complete the challenge!

## Bargain Buys

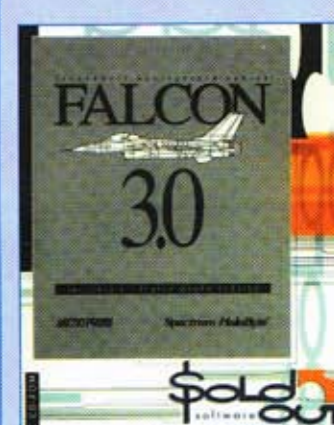
### TERRACIDE



Terricide is a space shooter that takes its basis from the theorised effects that alien planets would have on the human body and psyche. Quite simply, human colonists on new worlds would adapt to their new environments, becoming so-called "mutants" because of the rigors of living on an alien planet. The game begins with a large fleet of ships containing mutants which is detected heading towards the planet Earth. These colonists, now changed in bizarre ways and retaining little semblance of humanity, are intent on exacting revenge on the inhabitants of Earth, who sent them out into the stars to colonise new worlds long ago, and then forgot about them. The only way to stop these horrific creatures from destroying the Earth is by getting a small ship through their scanner defences, and destroying them from the inside. And, of course, you are the pilot for that craft. Will you be able to take on this threat? Do you have the guts to take on the vast invading force? Do you realise that failure means extinction of the entire human race?

Terricide is a fast paced, thrilling, action packed game in which time is of the essence, and failure is not an option.

### FALCON 3.0



Combat flight simulators are a very popular genre of game, and it is great to see one hit the shelves as part of the Sold Out Range. In this combat simulator, you take to the skies in an F-16 Falcon, pitting your courage and wits against enemies flying Mirages, MiGs, Su-25s and Su-27s. Choose your weaponry and flight paths as you train in Saudi Arabia, then

campaign in Panama, Kuwait and Israel. Engage your enemies in a deadly aerial ballet, where losing means certain death or at least a quick return trip to the ground. As with all flight simulators, Falcon 3.0 takes you up against tough opponents who want to see you shot out of the sky just as much as you want to see them go down in flames. Or take on a friend via the modem play version included in the package as an added bonus. Good graphics and excellent sound effects make Falcon 3.0 an almost real life experience. Feel the thrill of air combat as you engage in nail biting dogfights around the globe, armed with high tech weaponry and with one of the world's best aircraft at your beck and call. Falcon 3.0 will blow you away!



Did you just buy yourself a new 3D accelerator? Maybe you bought a TNT-2 based card or maybe Voodoo3 based board. It cost you an arm and a leg and finally you have the latest in 3D-accelerator technology, or so you might think. Currently outpacing the CPU, which doubles performance roughly every 18 months, graphics accelerators are set to double performance every 6 months, and nVidia has made an announcement concerning their new next generation chipset, which are due to ship by the time you read this.

The new chipset titled GeForce 256 from nVidia is really going to be pushing the envelope and this time we will not only see increased frame rates but also richer, crisper and clearer representations of 3D environments. Unlike previous generations of 3D accelerators, which kept on pushing the performance envelope by bringing us faster and faster frame rates, the new GeForce 256 is not only aiming at bringing increased performance but also promises to advance 3D acceleration into a whole new dimension of increased realism. The chipset will be bringing some very high-end technology to the ballpark, technology usually reserved for professional OpenGL cards such as the ones made by 3D Labs and Intergraph. The keywords for nVidia's GeForce 256 chipset are 'Transformation & Lighting' engines (also called 'Geometry and Lighting Units'), Cubic Environment Mapping, and a 256-bit rendering pipeline.

**T&L AND WHAT IT WILL DO FOR GAMING?**  
So just exactly what is Transformation & Lighting and how will it benefit us gamers at the end of the day is the question I hear from everyone out there.

Simply put T&L engines will allow for more photo-realistic environments with higher polygon counts and realistic lighting effects, which in turn will allow developers to bring us more immersive games. Imagine playing a Lara Croft game where Lara actually looks like she does on the box. This is going to become a reality in the not too far distant future and the inclusion of dedicated T&L units is a step in the right direction. The GeForce 256 will be the first mainstream 3-D graphics chip to integrate discrete transform and lighting (T&L) units on the chip.

Until now a lot of processing power from the CPU has been responsible for doing T&L calculations and this inevitably takes away processing power that could have been better used for other tasks such as more advanced AI routines or more realistic physics models. If you also take into consideration that CPUs are currently not advancing as fast as graphics accelerators, one can see the need for graphics accelerators taking away some of these processing burdens so that the user experience can continue to evolve, and not be hindered by the limitations of the CPU. The obvious step is to move these intense calculations to the 3D chipsets. This is why nVidia are incorporating dedicated Transformation & Lighting engines into the chip themselves. Not only does this lighten the processing load on the CPU, but due to the specialised nature of 3D accelerators and the general purpose nature of the CPU, these cards can do the calculations a lot faster than the CPU could ever hope to do. With a simple lighting scenario nVidia is stating that the GeForce 256 is four to five times faster than a Pentium III 550, but they have measured speed differences of up to 10 times faster.

This will give developers more processing power on the CPU to use for other tasks while simultaneously giving them access to more advanced hardware accelerated T&L functions on the 3D chipsets. At the end of the day it is a win-win situation for both game developers and gamers. Obviously we gamers

benefit the most with improved realism and more eye candy; graphics is after all the most important factor in a game after gameplay.

**CUBIC ENVIRONMENT MAPPING**  
Up until now developers have been using Sphere.



Environment Mapping, which creates a realistic reflection off of reflective objects, unfortunately the reflection only looks realistic while the object is stationary. Once any motion is introduced or the camera angle is changed you can pick up that the reflection doesn't change with the motion and then changes to a very discernible fake reflection. To provide more realism the GeForce 256 will support the more advanced method of Cubic Environment mapping, which offers realistic reflections, even when motion is introduced or the camera angle changed.

**ON UPGRADING**

From an upgrading perspective I think there are quite a few graphics accelerator owners grinding their teeth right now, after reading this article. At roughly R1500+ every time a new chipset is released, keeping up with the latest and greatest graphics technology can become quite expensive. Very few gamers can afford to keep paying that amount of cash every six months. Unfortunately or fortunately depending on your perspective there is no slow down in sight, and we have to bite the proverbial bullet as it were and keep forking out if we want immediate access to the latest technology. I would recommend that anyone taking their gaming seriously put away some cash every month so you can afford these cards when they are released, or at least purchase every second generation if it is going to strain your budget too much.

This combined with a 480 million pixel/sec fill rate will make the GeForce the fastest graphics accelerator to hit the market yet, and all of this just for gaming. I can't wait to get my hands on a reference board to do some serious Quake III testing. With an estimated 50 Gigaflops of processing power the GeForce 256 will be capable of an unprecedented 15 million sustained polygons per second, enough to draw a scene that is twice as realistic as current 3D accelerators.

nVidia is also hoping that cards based on the GeForce 256 will be used on high-end workstations for CAD/CAM applications. It will give decent acceleration under 3D programs making use of the OpenGL API and it will be cheaper than the professional cards that most 3D developers use.

**OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS**

nVidia will have support for DirectX 7 in the drivers for the GeForce since it should have been released by the time the first cards appear on the market, which should be in late September in the States and probably late October for South Africa. As always the card will come with support for the Direct3D and OpenGL APIs making it capable of running any of the newer games on the market.

Unfortunately the only games that won't be able to run on the GeForce will be old legacy games making use of 3Dfx's proprietary Glide API, but this is to be expected since 3Dfx will not allow other chipset vendors to run Glide games.

As we have come to expect from nVidia's chipsets, the GeForce 256 will be a 2D/3D solution, as the TNT and TNT2 were, and will ship with a 350 MHz RAMDAC for optimum 2D performance. The chip will also have support for DVD motion compensation for use with DVD playback and it will also have support for using a TV Out via an external control chip should a card developer wish to make use of it.

The GeForce 256 will also have support for 4X AGP and by the time the first cards appear on the market Intel should have also released their 820-controller chip, which will enable cards to make use of the 4X technology. Until now the TNT2 has had support for 4X but due to the delay of the 820 chipset none of us has seen what the graphics accelerators performance increase will be when using this technology. Overall one can say that the GeForce 256 is a very ambitious development by nVidia and promises to push graphics acceleration into a new era where not only can we look forward to increased frame rates but also to more detailed and immersive games. I for one am definitely looking forward to the GeForce 256, but the taste is in the pudding. Keep an eye out for the GeForce 256 review that we will perform as soon as we receive one of these fantastic boards for testing.

Soul Assassin

**QUOTES FROM THE INDUSTRY**

"It is fast. Very, very fast. It has the highest fill rate of any card we have ever tested, has improved image quality over TNT2, and it gives timedemo scores 40% faster than the next closest score with extremely raw beta drivers. The throughput will definitely improve even more as their drivers mature."  
John Carmack, id Software

"The sheer power of NVIDIA's next-generation GPU gives us greater freedom when designing characters and worlds. The technology not only allows us to incorporate unbelievably detailed visuals, but it also offers the ability to add more robust artificial intelligence, level design, and more. In short, it's the next giant step in gaming."  
Darren Falcus  
VP and General Manager, Acclaim Studios

"Space isn't likely to feel empty here (Babylon 5). Instead, you can expect some battles of an unprecedented epic scale. So far, the team has tested the engine with up to 350 ships fighting it out."  
David Gehringer, Product Manager, Sierra Studios

The market's first seventh generation x86 processor from AMD has surprised the whole computer industry, and for the first time the world's largest processor manufacturer, Intel, finds itself in the precarious position of playing catch-up with a competitor. Built around DEC Alpha technology the Athlon is now the fastest processor currently available, the new 'King of the Hill'. The AMD Athlon consists of no less than 22 million transistors and delivers the highest performance available today, be it for business or pleasure. The processor is currently available at 500 MHz, 550 MHz, 600 MHz and 650MHz with the price ranging from R2120.00 to R6400.00. A little more expensive than Pentium III processors, but the difference is marginal and you get what you pay for.

The AMD Athlon ships with a 128 KB L1 cache, four times the size of the 32 KB L1 Cache found on Pentium III processors. This will ensure that the AMD Athlon scales very well even as it approaches a 1 GHz clock speed. The increased L1 cache ensures that the processor can be fed with instructions just as well at 1 GHz as it can at 600 MHz. AMD also introduced the industries fastest front side bus running at 200MHz using the DEC EV6 bus protocol. The front side bus has a peak bandwidth of 1.6 GB/s and the bus is still scalable to 400MHz, which can increase the bandwidth to an amazing 3.2 GB/s. Comparatively Intel's system bus will only be capable of 1.06 GB/s once the i820 chipset is released later this year. As you can see the AMD bus is not only faster but also utilises superior architecture to the P6 bus.



# New King of the Hill

From a gaming point of view the AMD Athlon processor makes an excellent choice. The AMD Athlon processor includes the first fully pipelined, superscalar floating point engine for x86 platforms. This means that it has a very fast FPU and according to AMD it is 35% faster than Intel's Xeon processors and even rivals some RISC processors on the market today. As any gamer should know the FPU is extensively used when playing any

case. AMD developed a new connector named 'Slot A' which is incompatible with 'Slot 1'. Therefore anyone wishing to use an AMD Athlon processor would have to upgrade their motherboard to a board that has the new connector type. Potential buyers should also note that the AMD Athlon is not over-clocking friendly, a feature for which previous AMD processors were renowned.

The Athlon requires specialised equipment to over-clock the processor. Something to keep in mind if you're a fan of previous AMD processors. As it currently stand Intel will have to do something drastic to catch up with AMD. The AMD Athlon is now definitely 'the' processor to consider when upgrading. It offers faster speeds and better technology than the Pentium III and therefore gets an Editor's choice. It is about time that Intel faces some real competition and this can only be healthy for the market. For more information on this amazing processor make sure you visit <http://www.amd.com>.



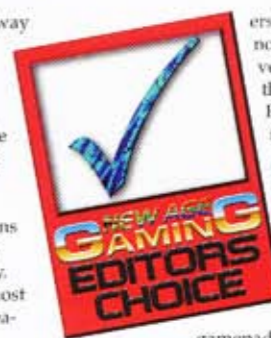
3D games and therefore will give improved performance when playing these games. The AMD Athlon also supports Intel's MMX instruction set and includes support for the new instruction added on the Pentium III chipset. It also has Enhanced 3D Now! support which is AMD's version of MMX, although the two work very well together. It also means that you have immediate access to a host of optimised display drivers, which make use of 3D Now! As with any good news, there is always a little bad news. While the AMD Athlon processor might look like it will fit into a

- Pro's:** First Real Intel Competitor  
DEC EV6 Bus Protocol  
Fastest Processor Available
- Con's:** Proprietary Slot A Connector
- R 2120.00 - R 6400.00 (RRP)**  
(Athlon 500) (Athlon 650)
- Virtual Media Systems  
(011) 768-6080  
[www.amd.co.za](http://www.amd.co.za)

Ever since winning one of these babies at E3 1998 I have been head over heels in love with it. It may seem odd that I am only actually reviewing the Xterminator now after so long, I can only say that I have tried to keep it a secret for as long as I could. Now my reign of being the only person in the office to have one has come to an abrupt end with the realisation of a South African distributor in Accord Multimedia. Let me firstly mention that this is an entirely biased review based on an entire year of solely using the Xterminator for all my gamepad requirements. The features are simple yet incredibly versatile for all your gaming requirements including the odd action flight sim or two. It is totally programmable and comes with the Gravis Keyset Manager for excellent gaming support and ease of use. The drivers are easily installed with full support for Windows 98, which in turn means no calibrating or settings. The features include 19 pro-



grammable functions with an 8-way Digital Directional Pad, as well as my favourite addition, the Proportional Directional Pad. The unit comes with a Proportional Throttle and 6 Primary Buttons with full programmability. One of the most interesting features is the 2 Proportional Flippers based at the top of the Xterminator that utilises analog sensitivity for the driving games. There are also two Digital Triggers and an 8-way Hat Switch, all positioned for convenient accessibility. Add to that a built-in two-player connector for split screen multiplayer and you get one of the most dynamic controllers available in South Africa. The Xterminator is designed with one thing in mind - comfort. All buttons and slid-



ers are positioned almost perfectly, nothing really gets in the way of its versatility. The only slight downfall is the price, which is a little heavy at R569.00, but then you normally pay for the better peripherals. Helping the pricing factor is Accord Multimedia's 3-year warranty, but I can personally vouch for the durability of the unit. After almost a year and a half I have battled to find any gamepad that comes close to my Xterminator's durability and comfort. This is NAG's gamepad of choice thus far.

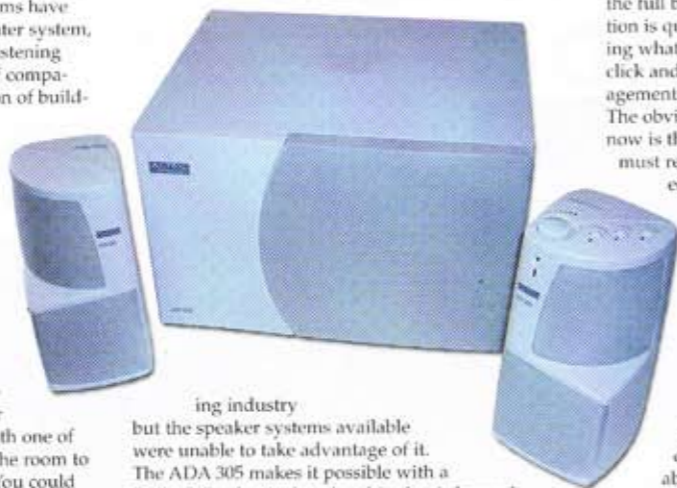
- Pro's:** 19 Fully Programmable Selections  
Excellent Game Support  
Proportional Directional Thumb Pad
- Con's:** Heavy Price Tag
- R 569.00 (RRP)**  
Accord Multimedia  
E-Mail: [amendelsohn@bulltech.com](mailto:amendelsohn@bulltech.com)  
(011) 315-8277  
[www.gravis.com](http://www.gravis.com)



## Altec Lansing ADA 305 Digital Powercube

Over the last few years speaker systems have become an integral part of a computer system, whether it be for gaming or for musical listening pleasure. In those years only a handful of companies have been able to build the reputation of building high quality speaker systems that offer excellent performance, one of those companies being Altec Lansing. Their range of speakers is almost endless depending on the need of the computer user. I finally got my hands on the 3 speaker ADA 305 Digital Powercube system, though its been out for some time now, is still on the upper wrung of the speaker ladder.

The 305 is a 3-speaker system but it actually contains 5 speakers that drives the Dolby® Pro Logic integration that is supported in most games today. One speaker contains two 3-inch drivers (speakers) with one of the drivers facing towards the corner of the room to give the impression of surround sound. You could consider that cheating but it is most effective when used with Dolby® Pro Logic. You may ask what is Dolby® Pro Logic? It takes a stereo signal and converts it into four channels of audio that makes up a left and right, surround and centre channel. This technique has been used for a few years in the gam-



ing industry but the speaker systems available were unable to take advantage of it. The ADA 305 makes it possible with a Dolby® Pro Logic decoder chip that is housed in the subwoofer, giving you the opportunity to take advantage of surround sound, in a manner of speaking. The system performs superbly, creating crystal clear sound and loud performance with no distortion. The subwoofer is a 6-inch driver that pumps out bass at an alarming rate and is housed in a specially designed wooden box that can be placed under your desk for ease and convenience. The desktop speakers are elegant in design and make the perfect partner for your monitor. The 305 speaker system is USB ready, this gives you the added benefits of plug and playability and the Altec Lansing Audio Management Software that allows the use of independent speaker volumes, stereo or Dolby® Pro Logic settings and on screen control with integrated volume control that eliminates volume distortion. The speaker system however does work without USB support but is a necessity to get

### FEATURES:

- Drivers (per satellite): Two 3-inch full range drivers
- Driver (subwoofer): One 6-inch dual voice coil
- Frequency Response: 20 Hz - 20 kHz
- Satellite Power: 20 Watts (5 watts per driver) at <0.8% THD
- Subwoofer Power: 20 Watts at <0.8% THD
- Input Impedance: >10K ohms
- S/N Ratio: >70 dB
- Single Port USB Node
- USB 1.0 Specification Compliant

the full benefits of the system. The software installation is quick and easy with a toolbar graphic showing what setting you are using, just a simple double click and it automatically opens up the audio management software.

The obvious question that springs to mind about now is the price? Yes, it's fairly expensive, but you must remember that this is a step into the upper echelon of experiencing the multimedia extravaganza. At R1599.00 you would probably expect them to talk back to you, well with the right software they will. There are many speaker systems available at the moment but not many with the quality of the Altec Lansing range, so the distributors Accord Multimedia have thrown in a curve ball to help with the purchasing decision, the ADA 305 3-speaker system comes with a lifetime warranty. That is sheer madness considering how many speakers I have been able to blow over the years, but certainly makes the price seem more than reasonable.

Thumbs up go to Accord Multimedia and Altec Lansing for giving the SA market an opportunity to experience another quality product for our gaming enjoyment and this isn't even the top of the range system yet.

**Pro's:** USB Compliant  
High Performance Specs  
Dolby® Pro Logic Support

**Con's:** Not True Digital Sound  
A Bit Pricy for Speakers

**R 1599.00 (RRP)**  
Accord Multimedia  
E-Mail: [amendelsohn@bulltech.com](mailto:amendelsohn@bulltech.com)  
(011) 315-8277  
[www.altecm.com](http://www.altecm.com)

### SAITEK GM2 Gaming Mouse

With the constant demand for bigger, better and faster coming from gamers all over the world, technology has quite a time keeping up. Thankfully, certain companies seem to dedicate themselves to making the gamer a happy person. One such company is Saitek, who are bringing out some new controllers for both PC and PSX players to enjoy.

Unfortunately these controllers are not available in South Africa just yet, but will undoubtedly hit our shores before long. The first unit is the Saitek GM2 "Game Mouse". Instead of your usual single unit, the GM2 is made up of two separate controllers, connected in series and connecting to the PC via a USB jack. One is a fairly standard mouse, with two buttons and a wheel. What sets the mouse apart is a hat switch located on the side of the mouse, exactly



SAITEK GM2 Gaming Mouse

where the users thumb can get to it easily. The Mouse is connected to a second single hand unit, which is designed to replace the keyboard for game playing purposes. This second unit is beautifully designed, shaped for maximum comfort. Six function buttons are located on the unit, placed for quick and easy access. A shift button, hat switch and wheel (which can be set to auto-centre if so desired) finish off the unit. The game mouse is an innovative idea which, with some practice, will revolutionise mouse

### SAITEK PSX Controllers PX 2500 - PX 3000

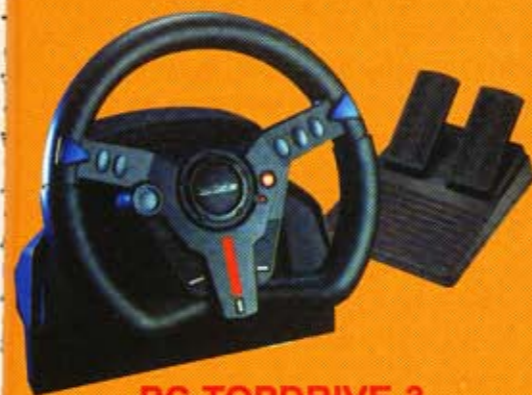
oriented gaming. The second pair of controllers that Saitek will be bringing to South Africa are the PX2500 and PX3000 controllers for use with the Sony PlayStation. These two ultra sleek beauties are virtually twins, except for a few features. Both are analogue controllers, with dual shock



SAITEK PSX Controllers PX 2500 - PX 3000

functions. Both also feature a unique throttle wheel set at the base of the controller. However, the PX2500 is a "standard" dual shock controller, with two analogue controllers and standard PlayStation button configurations. The PX3000, on the other hand, features only one analogue controller. The space normally taken up by the other analogue controller has a tilt control switch located in it. Yes, that's right, the PX3000 is a tilt sensitive controller. Both are finished in matt black and dull silver, and are aesthetically very pleasing to the eye. Though slightly larger than the standard PSX controller, they sit comfortably in the hand, and have a good and sturdy feel to them. Saitek certainly is becoming very prominent in the field of game controllers and, should they carry on the way they are right now, will most certainly become a very big name in input devices!

Virtual Media Systems  
(011) 768-6080  
[www.saitek.com](http://www.saitek.com)  
[www.vms.co.za](http://www.vms.co.za)



### PC TOPDRIVE 3

- Analog Steering Wheel and
- 10" Auto Centering Wheel
- Programmable Steering Angle Rotation
- A, B, C and D Fire Buttons
- Accelerator & Brake Controls on Pedals



PlayStation

### TOPDRIVE 2 WHEEL

- Twin Vibration Motors
- 10" Auto Centering Wheel
- Digital 8-way D Pad Cursor Control
- Dual Clamp Anchors & Suction Feet



PlayStation

### PREDATOR 2 GUN

- No Battery Required
- Vibration with Each Shot
- Single Shot and Auto-Shot Mode
- Konami PS & Namco GunCon Modes
- 3 Speeds for Auto Fire, Auto Reload and Manual Reload



### PC AVENGER PAD

- 8 Button Analog/Digital Pad for PC
- Analog Throttle and Control Stick
- Dual Speed Turbo Fire Function
- Complete with Windows 95/98 Drivers



### PC INTRUDER PAD

- 8 Button Analog/Digital Pad for PC
- Turbo Fire
- Win 95/98 Custom Drivers



PlayStation

### PS DOMINATOR

- PlayStation Compatible
- 8 Fire Buttons
- Auto-Fire & Slow Motion Modes
- Hands Free Auto-Fire



PlayStation

### PS CHALLENGER PADS

- Twin Analog Stick Gamepad
- 8-way Directional Control
- Compatible with Dual-Shock Games
- 8 Independent Auto-Fire Buttons

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Distributed by GameTronix, Suite 9 Ground Floor, 177 Blairgowrie Drive, Randburg. For more information contact Tel: (011) 886-1972. Fax: (011) 886-1966, [gametronix@icon.co.za](mailto:gametronix@icon.co.za).

# GAMETRONIX



It's faster, bigger, better and boasts possibly the most advanced multimedia chip-set in the world, it's the PlayStation 2 and we've got the pictures. Below you'll find details on the new controller, memory cards and some of the games that will be released when the unit goes on sale in Japan on the 4th of March 2000. The only bad

Your first look at what the PSX2 looks like...

#### SPECIFICATIONS

The technical specifications below sound very impressive, but can also tend to be a little confusing... just know this, each of these single components are very impressive on their own, now put them all together in a single machine and you have pure gaming power.

**Product Name:** PlayStation2

**Dimensions:** 301mm W x 178mm D x 78mm H

**Weight:** 2.1 Kg (perfect for a doorstep, right?)

**Media:** PlayStation 2 CD-ROM, PlayStation CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, DVD Video and Audio CD (You can play CD's, DVD movies, your old PlayStation games and obviously all the new PSX 2 games)

**Interfaces:** 2 controller ports (more on them below), 2 Memory card slots, AV Multi-cable Output, Optical Digital Output, 2 USB ports, 1 i Link (IEEE1394), 1 Type III PCMCIA card slot.

**CPU:** 128 Bit Emotion Engine, System Clock Frequency 294.912 MHz, Main Memory - Direct RDRAM, Memory Size 32MB

**Graphics:** Clock Frequency 147.456 MHz, Embedded cache 4 MB VRAM

**Sound:** Number of voices - 48 channels and software, 2 MB Sound Memory

**I/O Processor (IOP):** CPU Core - PlayStation CPU+, Clock Frequency 33.8688 MHz or 36.864 MHz (selectable), 2 MB IOP Memory

**Disc Device:** 24 Speed CD-ROM, 4 Speed DVD-ROM

**CD-ROM Colours:** PlayStation 2 CD-ROM - Blue underneath; DVD Discs - Silver; PlayStation Discs - Black

#### PERIPHERALS

Sony has naturally made numerous improvements to their existing peripherals, and these two new outside-the-machine-bits will be shipped with the PlayStation 2 with more to follow.

**Memory Cards:** 8 MB Memory card (grey), Larger capacity, 250 times faster than the current version. On an interesting side note Sony plans



"PlayStation2 is charting a path toward the future of networked digital entertainment. Just as the PlayStation brought interactive gaming to an unprecedented mass market, PlayStation2's combination of breathtaking digital graphics, superb sound and DVD video will open the doors to a new computer entertainment experience in the home." - Ken Kutaragi, President and CEO, Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

news is that the rest of the world, including South Africa is going to have to wait a little longer until Sony's new dream machine arrives. Don't worry though, we're planning an illicit trip to the Far East next year to see if we can buy a few, now how much is that Yen to Rand conversion again? **NAG**



FORMAT: PSX2 TITLE: TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT



LADIES & GENTLEMEN WE PROUDLY PRESENT THE PLAYSTATION2...



FORMAT: PSX2 TITLE: GRAN TURISMO 2000



Well there you have it, apologies to our printers who had to wait a whole extra day before starting this issue just so we could bring you this hot information, aren't you glad we care so much?

to launch their new on-line authentication and encryption system in 2001 called 'MagicGate'. This new system will work by using an authentication and user number system that will allow you to play your downloaded games - perhaps Sony has finally found a cure for the cancer we call piracy. In case you're wondering... Sony will be manufacturing and selling hard drives in the future to store downloaded software (how this will affect the South African market also remains to be seen).

**Controllers:** Dual Shock 2 (Black). Same size specifications as the existing Shock controller, with the exception of the Start and Select buttons the entire controller is analog based allowing for more precise D-Pad control, just how the analog buttons (Circle, X, O and Square) benefit playing games remains to be seen. The controller will work on your old PlayStation.

#### DEVELOPMENT

The PlayStation 2 enters the market with tremendous support from a number of third party development companies all falling over themselves to get in on the action. What this means is that you'll have no shortage of games to play. Here is a very short list of some of them - Street Fighter Ex3; Bass Fishing; Bust A Move 3; Bloody Roar; Bomberman 2001; Wild Wild Racing; New Ridge Racer; Tekken Tag Tournament; Gran Turismo 2000.

These titles represent just some of what we can expect from the new machine, but as the first PlayStation proved it'll take a few years before we really start seeing what this new console can do.

#### ANY YEAR NOW

The future is bright in the world of PlayStation and everyone out there should start saving up for the release next year, just think, it's a CD player, a DVD player and a gaming platform that'll keep wowing you for the next five years.

# The Magic Zone

## Getting your Tournament right

Tournaments can be a lot of fun and are a great place to meet other players and pick up good combos. They can also be as confusing as all hell, with more jargon than a government

department. Why all the different kinds? Who came up with this stuff? And what the hell is a Block? There are a host of different kinds of Magic: The Gathering tournaments, each with different rules. With all of the different cards available, the DCI runs different events to suit different players. Tournaments are either "Constructed" or "Limited".

Constructed means you bring your own deck to the event while at Limited events you get cards to build a deck from. Constructed is further broken down into different tournament types, which restrict what expansions you can build your deck from.

The most played event in South Africa (and internationally) is called Standard (it used to be called Type II). Players build decks of at least 60 cards, but may not use more than four of any one kind (except basic land). Cards you may use

currently are Classic, Tempest, Stronghold, Exodus, Urza's Saga, Urza's Legacy and Urza's Destiny. At the end of every year a "Block" of cards cycles out of the Standard environment, and is replaced with another. Mercadian Masques will therefore replace Tempest, Stronghold and Exodus in Standard events at the beginning of November.

Standard events use currently available cards, which means that as new cards are released, older sets are no longer allowed and cycle out - giving new players a chance to compete on a level playing field. A

block of cards is made up of the main expansion (such as Tempest or Urza's Saga) and its expansion sets - in the case of Tempest, these are Stronghold and Exodus. An Urza's Block



Constructed event means you bring your own deck, and it may only contain cards from Saga, Legacy and Destiny. The other main Constructed event is "Extended". This event allows use of cards from Revised (third edition) and The Dark onwards. Cards from expansions such as Ice Age and Visions are therefore allowed, and the Tempest block will still be legal in this environment after November. The 60-card minimum and other deck construction constraints still apply. Certain cards in both of the above Constructed formats are banned by the DCI, being overpowered for tournament play. These do

change though as the environments change, and an up-to-date list can be found at [www.geon.co.za](http://www.geon.co.za). "Limited" events put deck-building skills to the test, as each player gets their cards when they get to the tournament.



There are three kinds of Limited events: Booster Draft, Rochester Draft and Sealed Deck. A Sealed Deck event (such as a Pre Release) gives each player a tournament deck and a number of boosters (usually two or three), and the player must build a deck of at least 40 cards from the cards they have been given - they may not trade or use any other cards. Booster draft is a little different. Each player

gets three boosters. They sit in groups (called pods) of eight or so, and each player opens a booster. They look at the cards, choose one and pass the remaining cards to the player next to

them, who chooses one and passes it on, and so on. When all the cards are finished, they each open another booster, choose a card and pass the rest on in the other direction. When all the boosters are done,

players add as much basic land as they want and build a deck of at least 40 cards. You build your deck as you go, choosing the cards you want but at the same time perhaps denying a particularly powerful card of another colour to someone else by taking it before they can. Rochester draft is similar in that the group sits in a pod, and each player has three boosters, but in this event the judge opens one booster and places the cards face up on the table. The players each get a turn to choose cards before another booster is opened. Players can see what the others are choosing, and denying them a particular card is much easier. You also know what you are up against when you play. As with Booster draft, once you have finished drafting you build a deck of at least 40 cards (including as much basic land as you want). That's it, the main tournament types played here and around the world. Joining the DCI is free of charge, and you can do it at any sanctioned event, getting your membership card on the spot.

### Level 10 joins the fold

Nine new sources for Magic: The Gathering are up and running (or soon will be) as Manga and anime specialists Level 10 put the game on their shelves. If you have been looking for a tournament venue, talk to the managers at these stores - these guys are keen to get gaming going. The three outlets that tested the waters for Level 10 are Waterfall Rustenburg, Boulders Midrand and Westgate Roodepoort. Check advert on inside front cover for contact details.



PTQ LA

# Mercadian Masques

That's Pro Tour Qualifier for Los Angeles for those not into acronyms, and it will be held in Durban and Cape Town in December. Format is Mercadian Masques sealed deck (with two boosters) with the top eight getting to play a booster draft. Cost is R100.

## Drafting Tips

- Look out for creatures with special abilities, they are more powerful than you might think in Limited environments.
- Know your colours. In Destiny for instance green and black are the colours with the strongest cards - and avoid blue in this expansion. It bites.
- Keep your eyes peeled for useful artifacts. Masticore is an example of a game winner. (See card illustration above).
- Deny the power cards. You might not be playing the colour, but in Destiny draft Attrition, Bloodshot Cyclops and Opposition.







# The Demo Scene

It's all systems go for Optimise 99. By the time you read this, the competition will be only a few weeks away. Probably less than three weeks away in fact. So this month's column is devoted to a quick summary of what you can expect, when to expect it, and also to clear up some misconceptions about what will happen there. Misconceptions out the way first:

### Misconception #1:

It's only for Joburg-based people. Answer: Wrong. Cape-based demo people are organising a bus up here which is already half-full I hear. There will also be some Durban entries including Denthor of the demo tutorial fame.

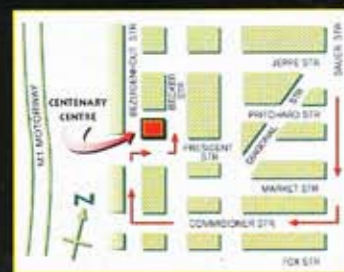
### Misconception #2:

The rules seem designed to exclude people. Answer: Nothing could be further from the truth. Artists will have two separate competitions to test their skills with both hand-drawn and rendered creations. They are separate for a reason - 3D Studio and Blender tend to produce better images than a hand-moved mouse, for example. Likewise musicians will have two separate competitions to test both their four channel and multiple-channel skills.

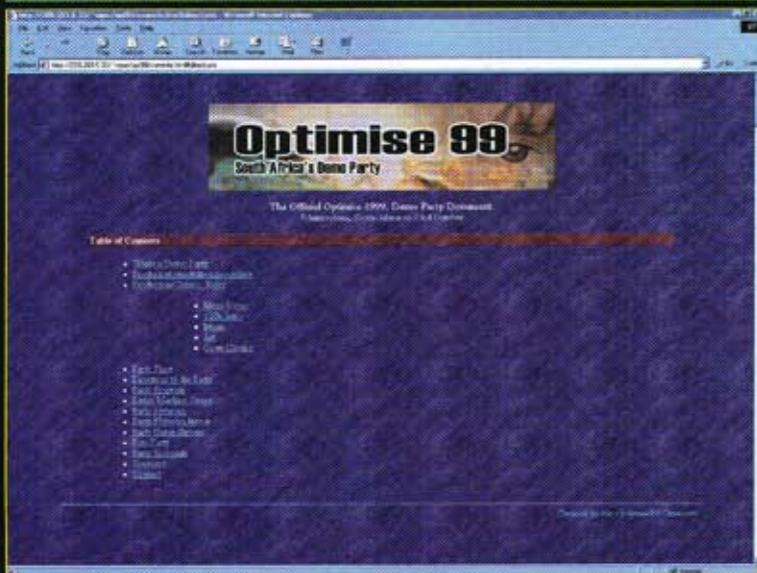
A word on rules: competitions in general must be pretty carefully circumscribed for them to have any meaning. I could break the world record for the hundred metres simply by dropping from an aircraft. The rules are there so as to define not only how people are competing, but also to highlight the skills they used in their entries. The 128k intro will show the audience that the team (or single programmer) has no mean skill in squeezing as much as possible into as small a space as possible. The open competition will produce a few surprises - but then, that's what it's there for!

### Misconception #3:

There will be nothing except recognition if I win. Answer: No, there will also be T-shirts, games, accessories, R10 000 software packages, hardware and CDs available to the lucky winners. So there.



**OPTIMISE 99**  
*Stop wondering and start plundering.*  
*All of SA's top demo experts will be there. Will you be?*  
**BY PAUL FURBER**  
 INTERNET: [HTTP://WWW.SURF.TO/DEMOS](http://www.surf.to/demos)  
 E-MAIL: [SADAMO@EGROUPS.COM](mailto:SADAMO@EGROUPS.COM)  
 E-MAIL: [MAVERICK@IS.CO.ZA](mailto:MAVERICK@IS.CO.ZA)



### Misconception #4:

The demo scene is dying - why bother to fight the trend? Answer: This is an easy one to answer. The demo scene is made of the people who occupy it. What they do and organise defines how "dead" it is or isn't. This year's competition is in a nightclub, will be professionally organised with plenty of prizes and is being looked at with very interested eyes by some very large local software houses. The reason: they want to get into funding local games programming teams. There might even be some overseas visitors to check up on the talent. Dead? I don't think so.

### Misconception #5:

I'm not good enough to enter. Answer: If you don't enter, you won't know. Besides, the event

is far less about winning and losing and more about a community getting together and showing what they can do. Bring your entry along - no one is there to pick holes.

Now that you're all convinced, here's a quick breakdown of the details you need to know about what's going to be happening. (By the way all of these points are available in more detail from <http://www.surf.to/demos>).

### Place:

The party venue is "The Horror Cafe" which is a club in Newtown Johannesburg.

### Address:

16 Becker Street, The Horror Cafe is part of the SAB centenary center and is accessible from the Becker street side. (See the Maps)

### Date:

Saturday 23rd to Sunday 24th October 1999

Official Starting Time: 12:00pm (registration will happen from 9:00am onwards)

### Competitions on Day 1:

Ray-traced Art, 4-channel music, and Open competition

### Goodies on Day 1:

Multipayer games, game development talk, surprise competitions

### Competitions on Day 2:

Hand-drawn art, multiple-channel music, 128k intro, and

### Megademo

### Goodies on Day 2:

Multipayer games, surprise coding competitions.

The venue has a restaurant and bar, so there'll be



plenty to keep you well fed and watered. Just please check out the rules on drugs and drinking.

See you there! And remember my challenge from last month. If you enter the ray-traced or hand-drawn art and place higher than I do and this is the important bit - you don't use Gimp or Blender, then I owe you a drink.

Next month will see a full report back on the competition! Till then adios and work hard on your entries!

PAUL FURBER - 'MAVERICK'

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### 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.

### WWE Attitude

#### Alternate Costumes

Selecting your wrestler in any mode other than the Career Mode, press X for the default outfit, hold L1 and press X for outfit 2, hold L2 and press X for outfit 3 and hold R2 and press X for outfit 4.

#### Bonuses

To unlock all the codes in WWE Attitude, you must bring a wrestler through the entire Career Mode successfully (meaning win the Heavyweight Belt at the end).

#### Random Wrestler Selection

When selecting your wrestler, press R1 and the icon will be randomly placed on a name.

#### Career Mode Bonuses

Win the following championship titles or Pay-Per-View events in Career mode with any wrestler on any difficulty setting to unlock the indicated bonuses and / or wrestlers

#### European Title

Unlocks Sable, Marc Mero, Trainer, squeaky mode, and new custom stuff in 'Create Wrestler' mode. Squeaky mode makes wrestler voices sound squeaky and fast.

#### Intercontinental Title

Unlocks Jaqueline, Chyna, big head mode, and gives three additional attribute points in 'Create Wrestler' mode. Big head mode gives the wrestlers big heads.

#### WWE Heavyweight Title

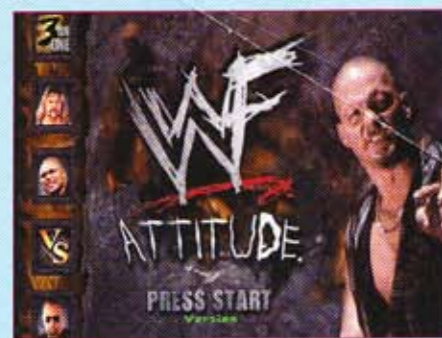
Unlocks head, beep mode, and ego mode. Ego mode makes the size of a wrestler's head increase when they gain momentum, and shrink when they lose momentum. When beep mode is unlocked a 'Bleeped Out' option on the language menu under utilities will appear. Enable that option to bleep out all foul language.

#### King of the Ring PPV

Unlocks Kurrgan and Taka Michinoku.

#### SummerSlam PPV

Unlocks Sgt. Slaughter and Shawn Michaels.



#### Play as Referee

Successfully complete career mode as 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin to unlock the referee in PPV events.

#### Play as Godfather

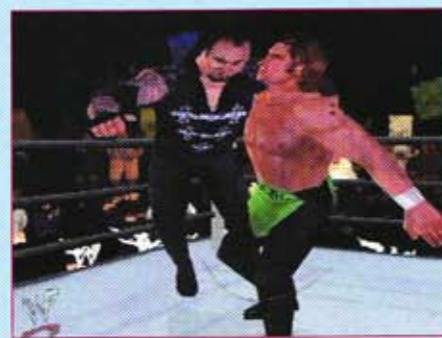
Beat the game as D-Lo Brown or Mark Henry in challenge or career mode under the normal or hard difficulty setting.

#### Ladies Costumes

Beat the game as Val Venis in challenge or career mode under the normal or hard difficulty setting. Additional female clothing will be available in creation mode.

#### New Costumes

Beat the game as Mankind in challenge or career mode under the normal or hard difficulty setting. Additional male shirts, jackets, masks, pants, and accessories will be available in creation mode.



#### More Hair

Beat the game as 'The Rock' Rocky Maivia in challenge or career mode under the normal or hard difficulty setting. Additional facial hair will be available in creation mode.

### Sled Storm

#### Unlock the Storm Sled

Enter Circle, Triangle, Square, R2, R2, and L1, X, Triangle as a password.

#### Play as Jackal

Enter L2, L2, Circle, R2, Square, R1, L1, and Triangle as a password.

#### Rabbit Points

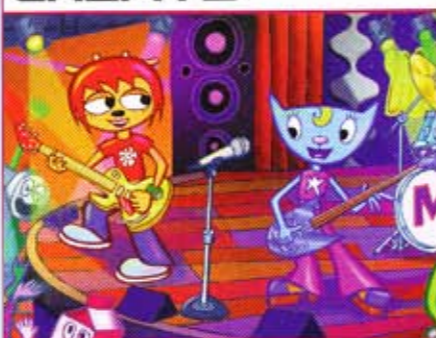
If you see little rabbits hopping across the course, run into them. They'll give you 7500 points.

### Um Jammer Lammy

#### Bonus Stages

Beat any 2 stages in the normal game to unlock 2-player Lammies. Beat 2-player Lammies to unlock 2-player versus Lammies. Beat the 1-player game to play as

## PLAYSTATION CHEATS



#### Parappa.

Beat 1-player Parappa to unlock 2-player Lammy Parappa. Beat 2-player Lammy Parappa to unlock 2-player versus Lammy Parappa.

#### Get Bonus Parappa Levels

Finish the game, return to the level select screen and press Right until the bonus levels appear.

#### Custom Lyrics & Notes

As soon as Lammy appears on the title screen when booting the game, immediately reset the PlayStation system. When the game restarts you should have a new menu next to Lammy's guitar on the title screen.

### Tarzan

When low on lives, replay the earlier levels over and over. Save the game after completing each level that is replayed. After accumulating enough lives, return to the last level that was unlocked and continue the game.

#### Unlimited Lives

While playing, press L1, R1, L2, R2, L1, R1, L2, R2.

#### Level Skip

While playing, press R1, R2, L1, L2, R2, L1, L2, L2.

### GTA 2 London 1969

#### Cheat Codes

(Cheats can be used in combination) Enter one of the following codes as a player name. Enter and accept a code, then go to 'Rename' and enter another code. Your character can also be renamed to any desired name after the last code is entered. The streets will never be the same again!

#### Codes with Multiple Features

Enter 'HAROLDHAND' as a player name for all levels, all weapons, infinite ammunition, 'Get Out Of Jail Free' card, armour, parrot picture, 9,999,990 points, ninety-nine lives, 5x multiplier, no cops, and display co-ordinates.



Enter 'GETCARTER' as a player name for all levels, all weapons, infinite ammunition, 'Get Out Of Jail Free' card, armour, ninety-nine lives, 5x multiplier, maximum wanted level, and display co-ordinates.

Enter 'FREEMANS' as a player name for all levels, all weapons, infinite ammunition, 'Get Out Of Jail Free' card, armour, and 5x multiplier.

Enter 'DONTMESS' or 'TOOLEDUP' as a player name for all weapons, infinite ammunition, 'Get Out Of Jail Free' card, and armour.

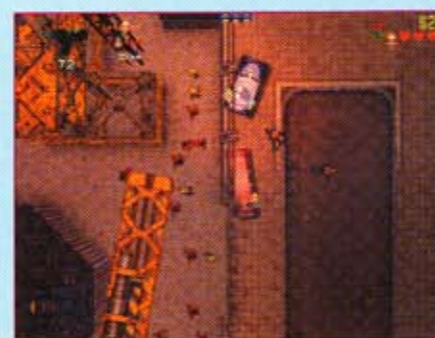
Enter 'SORTED' as a player name for all levels, all weapons, infinite ammunition, 'Get Out Of Jail Free' card, and armour.

#### All Levels

Enter 'RAZZLE' or 'READERWIFE' as a player name.

#### London Levels 1 and 2

Enter 'MAYFAIR' as a player name.



#### London Levels 1 through 3:

Enter 'PENTHOUSE' as a player name.

#### Ninety-nine Lives

Enter 'MCVICAR' as a player name.

#### 9,999,990 Points

Enter 'BIGBEN' as a player name.

#### 5x Multiplier

Enter 'SIDEBURN' as a player name.

#### Maximum Wanted Level

Enter 'OLDBILL' as a player name.

#### No Cops

Enter 'GRASS' as a player name.

#### Display Co-ordinates

Enter 'SWEENEY' as a player name.

### Destrega

#### Maximum Charge Dash

Charge two or three levels then cancel with a dash. These dashes can deflect lower level attacks. For example, Dash level 3 deflects all level 2 attacks.

#### Random Level Select

Press START on the level select screen to randomly pick a level.

#### Secret Characters

Finish one player mode with any character then in the Character Select press start on that character to get the hidden character.



### Chocobo Racing



#### Bonus Characters

A bonus character is unlocked each time you beat the story mode. Then at the character selection screen, highlight Squall and press the following buttons to get the bonus characters

Cid - L1.  
Mumba (FF8) - L2.  
Cloud (FF7) - R1.  
Cactuar / Cactrot - R2.  
Aya (Parasite Eve) - L1 + L2.  
SD-Style Chocobo - R1 + R2.  
IbenSuper Airship - L1 + R1.  
Jack - L2 + R2.

### Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver

#### Infinite Health

Pause the game and press Left, Right, Left, Right, Square, Circle, Square, and Circle. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear the sound of a growl.

### Omega Boost

#### Find Secret Levels

U1 Zone - Complete on hard difficulty setting with 90 AP and without using any continues.  
U2 Zone - Complete on hard difficulty setting with 60 AP.  
U3 Zone - Complete on hard difficulty setting with 50 AP.  
U4 Zone - Complete on normal difficulty setting with 90 AP and with-

out using any continues.  
U5 Zone - Complete on normal difficulty setting with 60 AP.  
U7 Zone - Complete on hard difficulty setting without using any continues.  
U8 Zone - Complete on normal difficulty setting.  
U9 Zone - Complete on normal difficulty setting without using any continues.  
V5 Zone - Complete with 60 AP.  
Inner Level A - Complete with 60 AP (with invincibility, all weapons at level 9).  
Inner Level B - Complete on the hard difficulty setting with 90 AP (with unlimited special attacks, all weapons at level 3).  
Inner Level C - Complete on the normal difficulty setting (with highest speed, all weapons at level 9).  
Inner Level D - Complete on the normal difficulty setting with 90 AP (with five-way attack, all weapons at level 9).  
Inner Level E - Complete on the hard difficulty setting (with improved speed when moving up, down, left, right, all weapons at level 9).

### Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

**Unlock all Practice Mode Levels**  
Pause game play, then hold L1 and press Square, Up, Left, Up, Circle, Triangle. The pause screen will shake to confirm correct code entry. Quit the current level and enter the level selection screen. All practice mode levels will be unlocked.

#### Big Head Mode

Pause game play, then hold L1 and press Left, Up, X, Down, Up, X. The pause screen will shake to confirm correct code entry. Quit the current level and start another game.

#### Extra Points

Hold the D-pad + Circle while in the air and release the button before hitting the ground.

#### Special Moves

Press Left, Left, Square to perform a special move when in the half-pipe in the street course. You need to get enough air to land it.

Please send any cheat requests to [assassin@nag.co.za](mailto:assassin@nag.co.za).



# Send Off

I finally have my cartoon thanks to the Editor getting his act together [Hey, watch it sunshine - Ed]. This will be a continued feature - at least so I am promised. This month the comic features our resident cartoonist Shryke and it illustrates actual events that took place here at NAG. Just kidding, but Storm was really close to actually flinging his cordless keyboard.

I wonder who here at NAG Shryke will make fun of next month, maybe RedTide and his piece of Prestick. He's actually trying to convince us that the piece he sticks on his monitor improves his aiming in Quake III, not that any of us have noticed a difference in his score yet.

I expect everyone has noticed that last month's CD interface didn't quite centre properly at any resolution under 1280x1024. My apologies for any inconvenience that his might have caused our readers, in my rush to get the CD finished I forgot to turn on Director's centre option. I promise it won't happen again... Really!

This month we also welcome Daniel Botha who came to visit us for two weeks to find out just exactly how a magazine is put together. Very simple actually, lots of work, lots of Quake III and lots of caffeine. Hopefully he learnt something from his experiences here at NAG and who knows, one day after he's finished school he might want to join our team. Maybe we should arrange some type of competition for next year where the winner

will spend his school holiday here at NAG.... Just an idea, but send any comments on this to assassin@nag.co.za

We also finally received Tiberian Sun and I must say that I was a little disappointed with the game, after so much hype the game still follows the traditional C&C style gameplay. I would have liked to see some new advancements and innovations for the RTS genre, unfortunately Tiberian Sun won't be the game to deliver this. Not that it's a bad game, I only expected more. By the way we all did receive a copy and for one I think the Editor is happy about that since he doesn't have to spend some time in hospital. (If you're confused with the last statement see last month's Send Off article).

Well the end of the year is nearing and almost every developer in the world is releasing their best titles over the next 3 months. We can look forward to such titles as Quake III, Diablo 2, Ultima Ascension, Swat 3, FIFA 2000, Tiger Woods 2000, and so the list continues. It is definitely going to be a jolly Christmas this year. You might want to consider drawing up that Christmas wish list a little early this year and giving it out to all those who 'love' you, who knows you might just get what you asked for... Without further ado here is the prediction list of games that should appear in the next issue of New Age Gaming, developers and distributors willing of-course.

## Some slippage has occurred - you just never know in this industry...



**DARKSTONE**

Well this game didn't make it this month due to some minor slippage, but we're now sure that it'll feature in the next issue (fingers crossed). We'll still be leaving no stone unturned in our continuing quest to find out if Darkstone is more than just another pet rock simulation. Nothing has changed since last month and the game is still going to be a 3D medieval role-playing game.



**FINAL FANTASY VIII**

Question: What comes on four black discs, costs a packet to produce and is the biggest game on the PlayStation. Answer: Final Fantasy VIII. If you know nothing about this landmark series of games then make sure you get the next issue of New Age Gaming. If you've been waiting all your life for this title, then just know it's almost here.



**GABRIEL KNIGHT**  
BLOOD OF THE DAMNED

Our intrepid and somewhat laid back investigator of the occult returns to test his skills against a whole new set of adversaries in Gabriel Knight III, and in true Gabriel Knight form, the game looks totally different yet again! But it is guaranteed to be a spine chilling and hair-raising affair, with the flavour and feel that made Gabriel Knight famous.



**QUAKE II**

This game is the second one that didn't make it to the church on time. We're really looking forward to Quake II on the PlayStation, just to see if the PlayStation version can cut the mustard in the wonderful world of Quake. So look out for it next issue, it simply has to make the deadline this time or we'll be dropping its score by a few percent... just kidding.



**LEGACY OF KAIN**  
SOUL REAVER

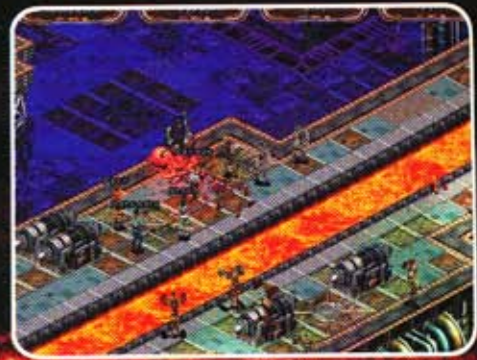
The strange city of Nosgoth beckons you in Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver. Take control of Raziel, a betrayed vampire bent on revenge as you make your way through this gothic masterpiece. Rest assured, this one is going to blow you away! New technology makes Soul Reaver the next big game to beat on PlayStation. Prepare to be amazed...

## a NAGging suspicion...

True stories from the NAG office written and illustrated by Shryke



# No cure. No hope. Only death.



### FEATURES:

- \* Real-time, team based tactical combat
- \* Powerful Multi-player options: LAN and Internet support for one to eight players.
- \* Equip your operatives with over 150 different weapons.
- \* Maximum replay value: Proprietary game generator creates unique mission every time you play.

**ABOMINATION**  
The Nemesis Project



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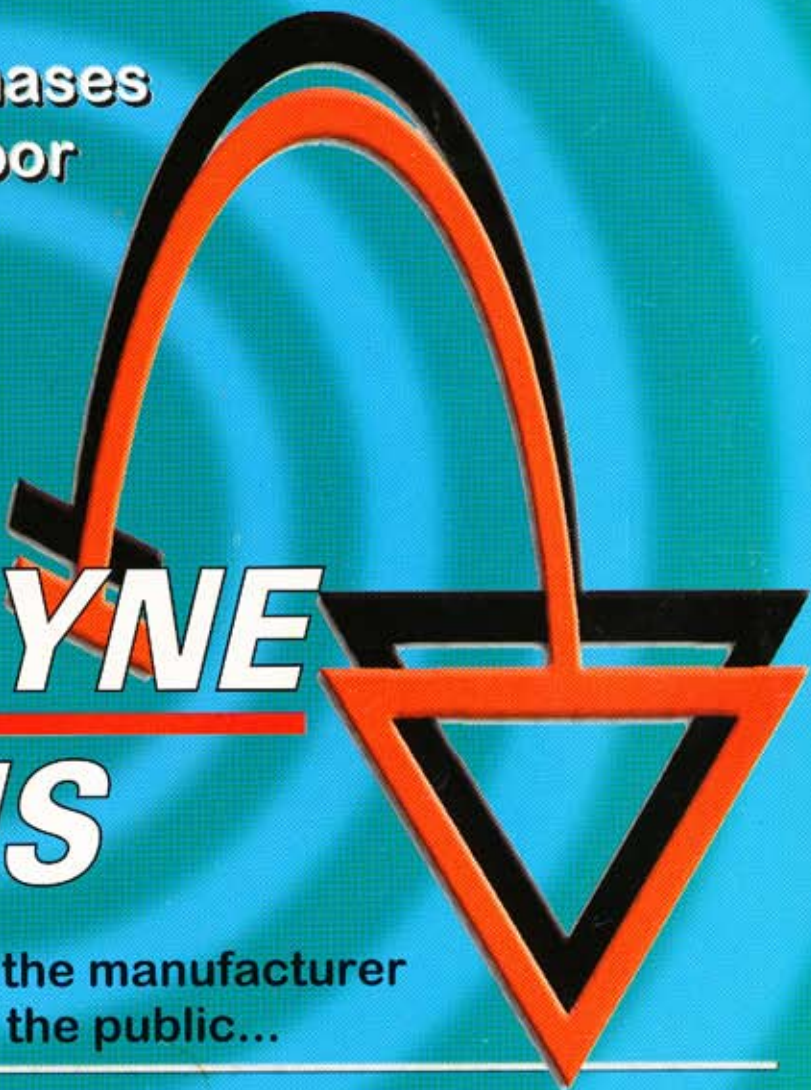
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