VOLUME 2 DECEMBER 99 ISSUE 9

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN PC AND PLAYSTATION GAMING MAGAZINE

THE NOMAD SOUL

NAG's HIGHEST RATING EVER

NOCTURNE

CHILLING REVIEW

HUGE HOLIDAY ISSUE INCLUDES EXCLUSIVE TOMB RAIDER 4 A2 POSTER & INDIANA JONES DEMO MAKES CoverCD 12

FINAL FANTASY VIII

BEST PSX RPG GAME EVER

BLACK & WHITE

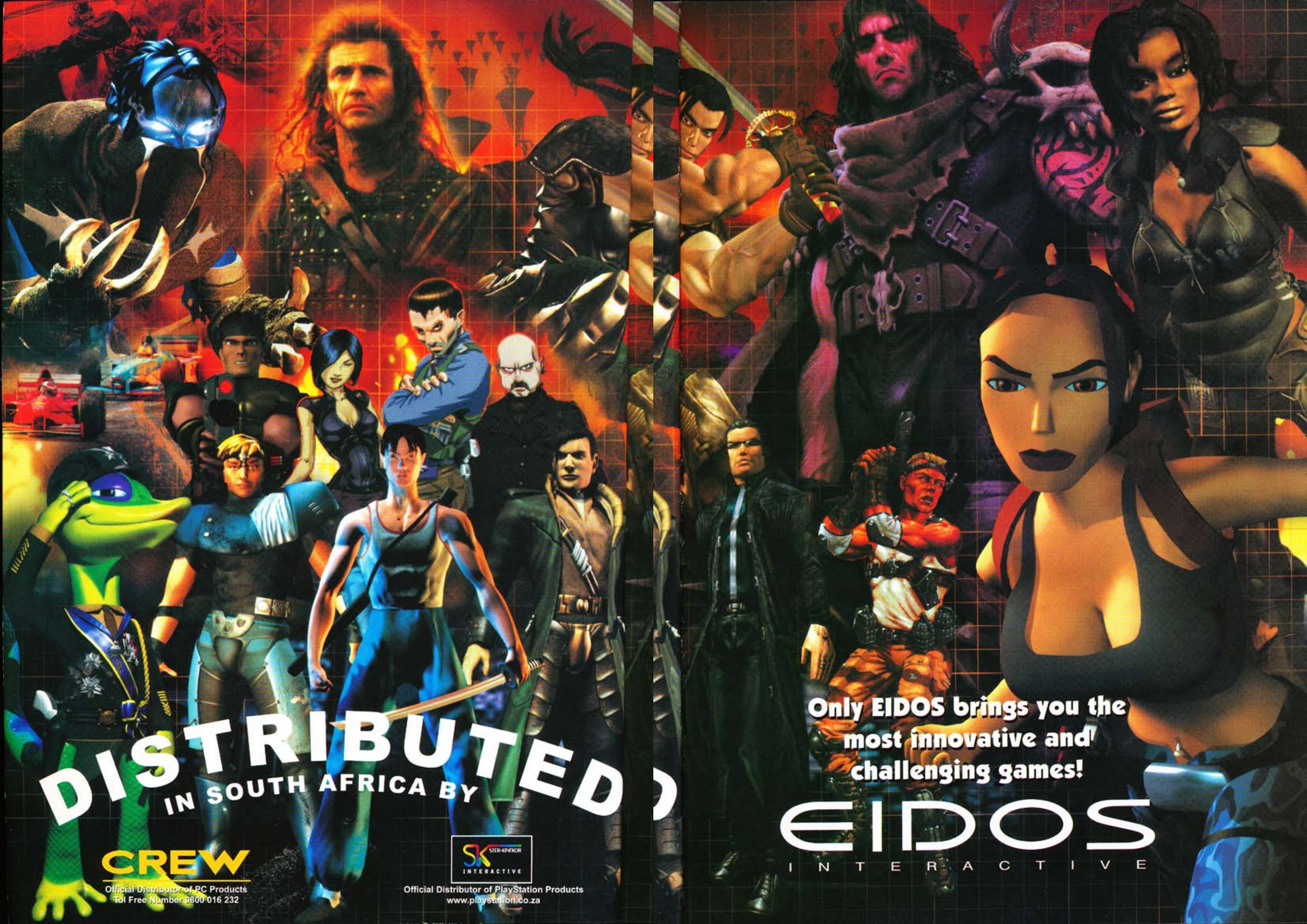
EXCLUSIVE Lionhead Studios INTERVIEW and a first look at their title tipped to be the game of 2000

AWESOME CoverCD 12 INCLUDED INSIDE, IF MISSING PLEASE ASK YOUR NEWSAGENT

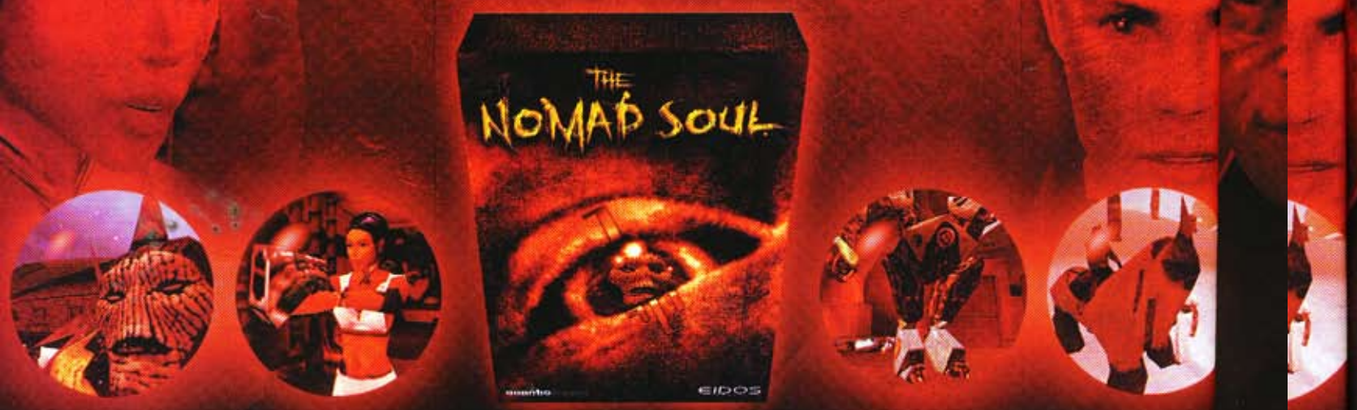
South Africa R24.95

12>

9 771028 053002


DISTRIBUTED
IN SOUTH AFRICA BY
CREW
Official Distributor of PC Products
Tol Free Number 0800 016 232
SK STER-KINEKOR INTERACTIVE
Official Distributor of PlayStation Products
www.playstation.co.za
Only EIDOS brings you the most innovative and challenging games!
EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

Have I been you somewhere before?



quantiqdream

PC CD

Featuring an original soundtrack by
David Bowie and Reeves Gabrels

The Nomad Soul™. Developed by Quantic Dream. © and Published by Eidos Interactive Limited 1999. All Rights Reserved.

THE NOMAD SOUL

It's soul play, not role play

www.thenomadsoul.com

CREW

EIDOS INTERACTIVE
www.eidos.com

Distributed by Crew. For more information please call Johannesburg (011) 233-1111, Cape Town (021) 418-4240, Durban (031) 579-1974, or PE (041) 513-515.

ED's Note

The virtual sex machine

This Ed's note strangely coincides with our Rampage article that was written a few days after without prior knowledge and... right, now I sound like I'm making excuses. Anyway, the wife has lodged a serious complaint that for once didn't fall on a deaf ear, it raised a debate that was quickly snuffed but it also highlighted a disturbing trend. The concern at hand before we embark on the next thousand years is why are there no sexy virtual men out there, drawing the naturally direct parallel between say Tomb Raider and Quake Arena? Granted you have your muscle flexing fighting game characters and even good old Duke knew how to chat up the odd lass, but in all honesty what's sexy about the Quake grunt? What's sexy about a smelly old wizard or a half-arse man-machine concoction dashing from level to level peppering the bad guys and pasting the aliens? I tried in vain to argue tradition, home-fires, ethnic bonding and even good old logic but was ultimately forced to concede defeat. The more we preach about equality the less of it there seems to be, faced with a choice between two boxes with almost identical games inside we're more likely to grab the one featuring the sexy heroine instead of the hairy gorilla marine. Has it finally happened, are they, and by they I mean the developers, using sex to sell computer games? Consider games of years gone by. How many can you count on one finger that feature a gorgeous woman on the cover or even in the game. Computer gaming has long since been the domain for the male animal. A while back women started taking on the best of the best in Quake and won, and as the months fly past more and more women are taking part in one of mans favourite pastimes, playing computer games. This goes much further back and deeper than we have room for here, beginning with berry picking cave-women right through to ancient Greek Olympics. So now we arrive ready to embrace the female player and what is the first thing she is greeted with, a half-naked women holding a gun and 'staring into the lens' while all hell breaks loose around her. The Tomb Raider series has in one way or another proven that given enough hormonal potential you can sell anything to any male under the age of sixty, even a simple computer game with two average sequels. The point isn't the lack of male leads in these games it is the point at which all successful marketing begins and ends - with scantly clothed women. So to our female readers, please don't give up on the male species and remember there are still some good games out there that don't rely on sex to sell. To the developers, try and concentrate on making the game fun to play and not the vital statistics of the lead character. The best part about this small essay is that I used the very same technique I'm complaining about to grab your interest in the first place, don't tell me the line, 'The virtual sex machine' didn't get you interested. Case closed.

New Stuff

We've implemented a new review bar that now includes two new score boxes, originality and judgement. The originality score is in place to put those games that rely on past glory in their place and commend new ideas and innovation. The judgement box spot is a score that the reviewer thinks the game deserves and not based on pure mathematical gymnastics. We will be revising the scoring system again early in the New Year, check out our letters page for another insightful take on the whole process and let us know what you think. They often say you should never experiment in the public eye but those wise words were written many years ago and as you are all aware times change and in the ever-evolving world of computers and gaming we need to follow suite. An educated reader once told me that the success of a business is directly linked to its ability to adapt to change, how right he was. So if you're getting a headache trying to keep up with all the changes remember it's for your own good and familiarity does breed contempt even though people hate change, that's the human race for you, full of contradictions.

Michael James, Editor

Merry Christmas

To the New Age Gaming team, freelancers and all our faithful readers, thanks for everything... we really couldn't have done it without you. I'd also like to take this opportunity to say, hi mom. No really, to our readers both new and old, have a great Christmas (if it applies to you) and a fabulous New Year. <Tearjerker Speech> Remember that whatever you take with you into the next millennium will be there to stay, so cast off those shackles and make the next thousand years count, we know we will! Thanks for all the support and if you keep reading, we'll just keep getting better, we promise... really!

New Age Gaming
South Africa's own Gaming Magazine
An
Unreal Design FX
Initiative

P.O. Box 2749
Alberton
1449
Tel: +27 (011) 462-5463
Fax: +27 (011) 462-5463

Publisher
Unreal Design FX

Editor-in-Chief
Warren Steven
biged@nag.co.za
082-331-8308

Editor
Michael James
ed@nag.co.za
083-409-8220

Assistant Editor
Leonard Diamond
assassin@nag.co.za

Marketing & Sales
Len Nery
lenn@nag.co.za
082-331-8309

Staff Writer
Walter Pretorius
shryke@nag.co.za

Subscription Manager
Tracy Steven
subs@nag.co.za

Contributors
(In order of who paid the biggest bribe)

Frederik Mülder · Paul Furber
Derek dela Fuente · Alex Jelagin
James Melliar · William Granzier
George Kairinos · Peter Coode
Adam Liebman

Design & Reproduction
Unreal Design FX
Colour Curve

Printer
Paarl Printing
(011) 804-6201

Distribution
CNA Newstand

Responsibility cannot be taken for unsolicited editorial material. The Editor reserves the right to amend and / or alter any submitted copy.

Copyright © 1999. All rights reserved. No article or picture in this magazine may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form whatsoever without the express written consent of the Publisher. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Publisher or the Editors.

All Trademarks and Registered Trademarks are the sole property of their respective owners.

"and you thought Genius only made mice"

Genius®

Everything you could wish for...

GENIUS: WORLD LEADERS IN

MULTIMEDIA SOLUTIONS

Genius Multimedia Systems:

- *Genius has the PC systems designed for your total multimedia and gaming experience - Intel Celeron and Intel Pentium II and III processor-based computers with plenty of slots for PCI boards and other devices, all put together in a stylish case.*

Multimedia Devices:

- ***Gaming Controllers:*** *- Digital, Analog and Force Feedback Joysticks, Game Pads and Speedwheels with Pedals*
- ***Sound Cards:*** *- ISA & PCI 16 Bit to 128 Bit Sound Cards - Quadraphonic Surround Sound Cards*
- ***Speakers:*** *- 120 , 200 and 320 Watt PMPO Amplified Dual Speaker Sets - 1200 Watt Four Speaker Surround Sound Set with Sub-woofer.*
- ***Microphones:*** *- Omni-directional Microphones - Omni-directional Single and Double Ear-dome Headphones with Microphone*
- ***CD-ROMs:*** *- 44x and 50x Speed IDE Drives*
- ***Graphic Accelerators:*** *- 'nVIDIA TNT, TNT-2, VANTA and S3 Trio Chipsets*
- ***Video:*** *- VGA to TV Converter - TV/Video Capture Card with Remote Control and a built in TV Tuner, FM Tuner optional. - USB Video Conferencing Camera*
- ***Monitors:*** *- 15", 17" & 19' Digital Monitors with On Screen Display*
- ***Input Devices:*** *- Windows 98 Multimedia Keyboard with Palm Rest - KidsBall Mouse*
- ***Modems:*** *- Internal, External & PCMCIA 56K Modems - IP Gateways*

UNBEATABLE QUALITY UNBEATABLE PRICE

www.geniusnet.com.tw www.tvr.co.za Tel: (011) 807 1390 or Tel: (021) 418 7252

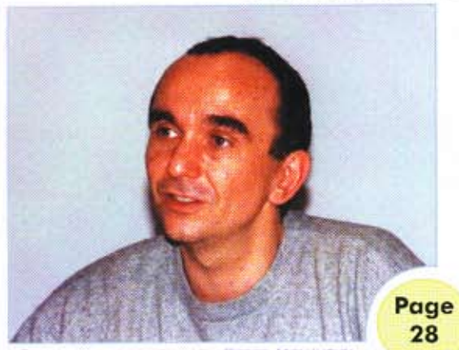
TVR Computers are exclusive distributors of all Genius products.

TVR COMPUTERS

Contents

What's in this issue...

Departments



Exclusive interview with Peter Molyneux from Lionhead Studios

Page 28

6 **Editor's Note**
The Editor has worn out yet another keyboard in a late night writing frenzy. If that man sucks his thumb any more, it will certainly fall off.

10 **The Web**
What more can be said about this particular page? Sites, sites and more sites. However, we have taken a slightly different slant on things, yet again.

12 **Bits & Bytes**
Our intrepid investigators once again bring you the latest industry drivell. Get the last news of the millennium right here, right now.

16 **Top 10 & Competition**
This is your last chance to enter a NAG competition this century! There will be no more chances to win until the year 2000! Don't delay!

18 **Rampage**
Being such a tasteful, home body type, RamJet has opted to discuss a nice family topic this festive season - sex. We have contacted our lawyers in advance...

20 **Backchat**
We didn't like any of the letters that readers sent in this month, so we wrote an application to randomly generate a whole bunch. They're not bad, actually...

24 **Archives**
Just to prove his age, AtariBaby waxes nostalgic about the heady days of hand held LCD's. His autobiography, "The Dinosaurs and I" will be printed soon.

26 **Generation K**
Look! A brand new department! This is page is dedicated to gamers who have added to the world's overpopulation problem!

28 **Feature: Lion Head**
This exclusive interview with Lion Head's Peter Molyneux sheds a more personal perspective on the company and its leader.

80 **Bargain Buys**
With Christmas mere days away, it's always good to be able to find a bargain. This is the obvious place to start.

90 **Magic Zone**
With a tear in our eye, we bid a fond farewell to Martin Frain and the Magic Zone in this issue.

94 **The Demo Scene**
Maverick reports back about the highly successful Optimize'99 party that took place recently.

96 **Clueless**
At this time of year, it's understandable if you need to cheat. But that only applies to people above the legal drinking age...

106 **Send Off**
Okay, so we keep missing the mark with our predictions. So we forced Shryke to come up with a bigger cartoon...

Hardware

78 Stocking Fillers

There is so much new hardware out there that we are almost battling to keep up. However, keep up we must, and so we bring you the latest and hottest from the world of mice, gamepads, steering systems and speakers, not to mention a look at a nifty gear shifter for those drivers out there, and an in depth discussion of the Sound Blaster Live! Platinum. Go ahead, indulge yourself. It is Christmas, after all...

We had a rocking good time with the new Sound Blaster Live! Platinum from Creative Labs. Take a look on page 82 for the whole story!

Games

Previews

30 [PSX] PSX Games: <PSX Games>
Galerians
Vigilante 8: 2nd Offence
Ehrgeiz
Toy Story 2
Space Debris
34 [PC] Wheel of Time <Role Playing Adventure>
36 [PC] Soldier of Fortune <First Person Shooter>
38 [PC] Black & White <Cross-Genre>

Reviews

42 **Reviews Introduction**
44 [PC] FIFA 2000 <Sports Simulator>
46 [PC] Revenant <Role Playing Adventure>
48 [PC] Cutthroats <Pirate Management>
50 [PC] Prince of Persia 3D <Adventure>
52 [PC] Omikron: The Nomad Soul <Adventure>
56 [PC] Nocturne <Horror Adventure>
58 [PC] Flight Simulator 2000 <Flight Simulator>
60 [PC] Pharoah <City Management>
62 [PC] The Tainted <Adventure>
64 [PC] Septerra Core <Role Playing Adventure>
66 [PC] Tarzan <Platform Adventure>
68 [PSX] Final Fantasy VIII <Role Playing Adventure>
72 [PSX] Hotwheels Turbo Racing <Racing Game>
74 [PSX] The X-Files <Role Playing Adventure>
76 [PSX] Kurushi Final <Puzzle>
78 [PSX] Kingsley's Adventure <Role Playing Adventure>

It was an easy decision for the coveted Editor's Choice this month, Omikron: The Nomad Soul is so good we put it on page 52

Since NAG's inception we have come across very few exceptional developments in gaming. In our quest to find the 'Holy Grail' of gaming we have more often than not come a little short of the perfect mark. We at NAG believe that there is no perfect game but 'The Nomad Soul' has finally come closest to achieving that prestigious mark. We are proud to announce that we have finally broken the 94% barrier with this title from Eidos Interactive.

Cover CD

Demos

OMIKRON: Nomad Soul
Age of Empires 2: Age of Kings
Dungeon Keeper 2
Spec Ops 2
Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine
Tomb Raider Last Revelation
Fifa 2000
Bugs Bunny Lost in Time

Movies

Black & White Concepts
Half-Life Opposing Forces
Giants
Independance War

Patches

Flight Unlimited v2.0
Rogue Spear v2.04
Soul Reaver v1.2
Star Wars: The Phantom Menace v1.1
Broodwars v1.07
StarCraft v1.07

Extras

DirectX 7.0
Octopus Handheld Game
Popeye Handheld Game
Half-Life Launcher
Quake 3 Wallpaper
Unreal Tournament: Halloween Mod

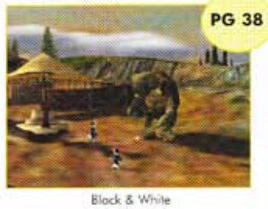
Creative Labs

Creative LiveWare 3 & Drivers

Please note that the CD contents have changed, and those appearing on the CD cover are incorrect. Please refer to the above list for the correct contents.

PG 58

MS Flight Simulator 2000



PG 38

Black & White

PG 26

Reader Rabbit

PG 68

Final Fantasy VIII

Unfortunately, with publishing being what it is, there has been a change to the CD since its cover was printed - We have scooped the Indiana Jones demo for you!

Coffee Mat Number 10

Introducing the world's fastest 3D processor - the 650MHz Athlon!

AMD

AMD Athlon PROCESSOR

AMD processors (Athlon, K6-2 and K6-3) give you the perfect balance of 3D graphics, sound, video and online performance that's never before been available.

Leading-edge Performance for Business, Internet and Games

Business - The AMD Athlon significantly outperforms equally clocked processors, and delivers the highest floating point, integer, and 3D multimedia performance for x86 system platforms..

Internet - Optimized DirectX 6 and OpenGL deliver a faster, more visually intense Internet experience.

3DNOW!™

Games - PCs powered by AMD with 3DNow! Technology and superior floating point performance can unleash the potential of today's 3D multimedia software for the ultimate gaming experience.

AMD K6-2 3DNOW! AMD K6-III 3DNOW!

WITH AMD YOU GET THE BEST PRICE AND BEST PERFORMANCE

Contact your local dealer for AMD processors

AMD
AMD South Africa
www.amd.com
Tel: (011) 768-6079. Fax: (011) 768-5885

The Web

Into the second month of our new format on The Web, and still raring to go. This month, aside from the usual gaming related web sites and the like, we also bring you a little look at 'warez' sites, and give you the address of a very interesting discussion about computer game violence. Also, we have decided on a rather different web site of the month. Check it out for all the details.

Running Rampant

It would seem that all attempts to squash out piracy are being foiled by the Internet. I am speaking of 'warez', of course, those sites of dubious distinction that have set themselves up as anti-establishment organisations distributing software, movies and music to those who are cunning enough to find them. These sites, which seem to be in cahoots with some of the more hardcore pornographic spots, are what most people consider to be a blessing.
Realistically speaking, who is going to fork out the cash for any of these products if they can just download them at a fraction of the price? However, what our intrepid little wannabe hackers fail to realise is that the products they are downloading are sub-standard titles. They are ripped… in other words, they are lower quality, in the case of videos and music, and have had music and movie files removed, in the case of software. Additionally, often they do not work correctly, and download speeds are slow - never mind unreliable connections. Piracy is irresponsible behaviour that is both anti-social and illegal. Unfortunately, these Internet criminals have a free reign, what with the difficulty that is experienced in policing the Internet. However, international copyright laws still do apply, and we are happy to report that these 'warez' peddlers are diminishing in number every day.

Kill or be killed

A title that seems to be stirring up a bit of a fuss is Soldier of Fortune, a FPS which is described as action packed and hard core by it's creators. The web site for the game can be found at www.soldier-of-fortune.com. As always, this is a typical pre-release hype site, with lots of screen shots, news and a forum, to name but a few. Seeing as how this exciting looking game is based on the world of mercenary soldiers as popularised by Soldier of Fortune magazine, we decided to try and

find that magazines web site. What we found was a highly informative web site about this magazine, which is based on the real life exploits of mercenaries around the world. This is an unusual place to visit, and can be found at www.sofmag.co.za. It is bound to be highly informative.

Rodents…

There seems to be a huge drive to create "the ultimate gamer's mouse" these days. It seems that the creators of peripherals have decided that gaming products are the way to go, and

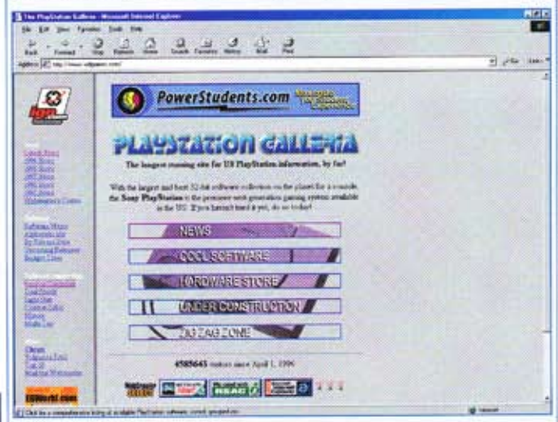
everyone is jumping onto the bandwagon. A newcomer on the block is the Razer Boomslang, which can be investigated at www.razerzone.com. One of the most interesting features of this site is the performance simulator that can be downloaded - this nifty little programme simulates the handling of a Boomslang while using a conventional mouse. So, is the Razer Boomslang the ultimate piece of gaming equipment? Check it out and see for yourself.

Big, Bad and Battle ready

Enjoy big games? We're talking big graphics, big story, and big action. Well, if that's the case, you will adore Slave Zero, from Accolade. This city busting, steel twisting action game features some of the biggest battle machines ever seen on the PC. Take to the streets in giant battle robots, while a vast tale unfolds around you. Check this game out at www.slavezero.com.

NAG's site of the month

PlayStation web sites, from a South African point of view, are often considered something of a squandered resource. As a matter of fact, the PlayStation gamer generally does not get involved with the internet, considering the fact that most console gamers aren't PC crazy, and most PC owners don't go in for consoles. However, sweeping generalisations aside, there are obviously quite a number of individuals residing on the far ends of the oceans that are utilising the Internet's potential for the spreading of information about the Sony PlayStation. After all, that's what the Internet is all about - information. What better source of knowledge is available to us today, with such a broad coverage?
One site that really gets down to the job of spreading the PlayStation



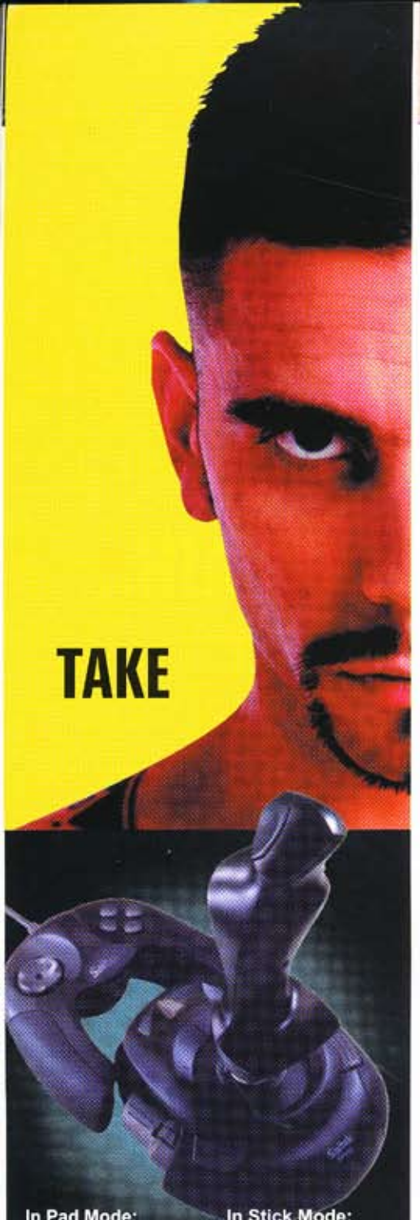
word is the PlayStation Galleria, and an American site which can be found at www.vidgames.com. This is, without a doubt, the best independent PlayStation site that we have come across in a very long time. The Galleria covers every aspect of the PlayStation, from games to hardware, cheats to news going back as far as 1995. It is an amazing resource for the casual gamer, as well as those players that want a bit more in depth information. Links to every major (and minor) developer can be found, and games can even be cross-referenced with input devices and other aspects for compatibility. FAQs, previews and reviews are also available for all featured titles (which, by the way, includes every title on the US market). This is a truly impressive site, with a wealth of useful information for the PlayStation gamer. So, loan a computer and get your feet wet; check it out!

Where the real SA gamers go…

A local site that is of great interest to "pro" gamers is Challenge.ZA www.challenge-za.com/. This is a site where all the important news concerning local and international gaming can be found. There are links - literally hundreds of them - to sites all around the world, dealing with all types of multiplayer computer gaming. Everything you could possibly want to know about multiplayer gaming can be found here - it is a very valuable information resource for the serious, competitive gamer. Another site, linked off of this particular one, is 3D Xtreme, the only South African site linked from Challenge.ZA It deals directly with local gaming, with news on events, gossip, downloadable demos, and much more - located at www.3dxtreme.co.za. So, take your multiplayer experience to the limit with these two sites.

Food for thought…

Here's something we don't look at every day. And yet, sites that deal with information in it's many guises are so numerous that we could not even begin to cover even one per cent of what's out there. But, we did dig up an interesting discussion concerning computer game violence, and it's effect on people. This is, and has been for quite some time, a very topical subject. The two schools of thought concerning this question have very differing views, and getting all the necessary information when formulating one's own opinion. Visiting sites like www.pcparadox.com will certainly help you in coming up with what you need to believe about this type of question. Check it out - it really is informative and, yes, it is game related!



In Pad Mode:
- 4 Fire Buttons
- 8-way D-Pad
- 2 Triggers

In Stick Mode:
- 6 Fire Buttons
- Hat Switch
- Slider Throttle

SP550 2-in-1

The Saitek SP550 Stick and Pad integration offers superb functionality that is ideal for the first-time gamer. This is the ideal combo for all types of games, use the pad on its own or combine the unit for a highly featured stick.

Saitek

Call SDD on (011) 652-8651 for sales.

Virtual Media Systems
Call (011) 768-6080 for info and support.

Bits & Bytes

Baldur's Gate 2

In more news of things that go 'role-play me' in the night, BioWare, Interplay's role-playing division has officially announced Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn. Under a tight veil of secrecy, Interplay has been developing the game since January this year. The team behind the game has also been working closely with Wizards of the West Coast and TSR to ensure that this sequel is as rich in Forgotten Realms lore and history as possible with an impressive story, more in-depth and detailed than ever before. The game will be using Advanced Dungeons & Dragon 2nd edition rules. Every single aspect of Baldur's Gate 2 has been pulled through the mill, re-arranged and perfected and promises to give computer role players the game they thought they always wanted. The game engine has also been refreshed and improved on and now offers greater depth, increased realism and a far more engrossing experience. Besides improving everything the team behind the game have added more character classes, dramatically increased the number (300 in total) and graphical complexity of spells, have added and increased the size and number (over 120) of monsters in the game and implemented drastic changes with a number of gameplay issues. The game also promises to be accessible to newcomers with user friendly controls and a well designed manual but will also stun veterans with its complexity, depth and sheer size. Naturally the design and development team are improving on everything and fixing all the past mistakes, thereby creating the perfect

computer role-playing game. The game is set along the southern portion of the Sword Coast in the merchant realm of Amn and will include such diverse environments as the Capitol City of Amn, the Astral Plane, Hell, and even an underwater city. Here are a few of the more interesting snippets of information: Only gold pieces will used as currency; there will be no seasonal changes in the game; the same isometric view will be used; maximum party size will be six; there will be offensive and defensive party formations; encumbrance will be tracked for each character; instantaneous travelling to places past visited will be possible; there will traps in dungeons and on chests; over a 100 sub-quests are planned; Druids will be able to shape change into any animal in the area; a faster overall walking speed has been used; there are more than 20 new kits and character classes as well as a few new races; the game will support 3D accelerators but the background will still be 2D; resolutions up to and including 800 X 600 are supported; it will ship on 4 - 5 CD's with a similar install size; the game will play for around 100+ hours and finally the game has roughly 300 000 animation frames, not including water, waving flags or other animated objects.

Diablo II Delayed

Christmas slippage seems to be quite fashionable this year and sadly Diablo II has become yet another victim of this annoying 'condition'. However, if you take a step back and look at the predicament many of these game developers find themselves in, it's easy to understand how this happens. For example, a few seconds

after any new game, sequel or piece of hardware is announced everyone's next question is, "when will it be released?". The best answer has always been - when it's ready. With regards to the Diablo debacle the official stance the developers are taking is one of perfectionists, saying that they would rather delay the title to ensure a better product when it is finally released. A recent Internet poll saw that although the game has been delayed, many will still buy it when it comes out. Developers, Blizzard also said that Diablo II is the most ambitious project they have ever undertaken and they want to get it right the first time. A limited (1000 players) beta testing phase will commence before the end of the year (New Age Gaming is on that beta test list, so we'll have an inside scoop for you soon). After the beta phase, an Internet 'calling all gamers' demo will be released to stress test Blizzards' new Battle.net servers. The game is now pegged at an early 2000, just remember though that 'early' can mean anything.

Clowning Around

Here's a strange one, ever wanted to waste a clown with a rocket launcher? Well now you can, sort of... KISS: Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child, besides being a mouthful offers the player four unique realms of anguish. The game is a first person shooter that features the realms of fire, earth, air, and water. There aren't too many details on the game as of yet but it's promising to be one hell of an experience. The game is based on the KISS comics from Todd McFarlane Productions, the guy responsible for Spawn among other things. If everything stays on track the game should hit our dark and distant shores in the early half of 2000. For more circus foolery go to www.godgames.com, quick!

DVD Encryption Cracked

One of the movie industry's worst fears has been realised, as computer hackers have cracked the encryption code on DVD movie discs that is supposed to prevent them from easily being copied. Every movie released on DVD is encrypted under a scheme called CSS (Content Scrambling System), meaning it can't be played back except by a DVD player that has a special decryption key built into the hardware. Some 400 different hardware keys were created - one for each manufacturer. Unfortunately one of these manufacturers neglected to encrypt their decryption key, making it easy for the hackers to unlock the movie files. The programmers were then able to guess more than a hundred other keys, and a utility called De-CSS was eventually released. De-CSS is a freeware program that can read DVD movie files and save them to hard drives unencrypted. Ironically, the programmers who broke the code weren't trying to enable piracy, they were trying to create a DVD player that was compatible with the Linux operating system. It was while playing around with Windows DVD-ROM drives that they discovered the unprotected key. It's too early to tell what effect this may have on the fledgling DVD market, but speculation has ranged from delays in releasing high-capacity DVD writers to higher prices for DVD movies as companies try to make up for perceived lost profits. Even the PlayStation 2, which is supposed to have a DVD player built-in, could be affected.

The Next Oddity

The next title in the Oddworld series, Munch's Oddysee is almost upon us. This time around the developers are taking a different approach to this successful series and instead of presenting the player with an endless gauntlet of puzzles they've decided on a 'world simulation' angle. This new game will feature both Abe, the Mudokan mystic from the first two games and Latamire Munch, the last of the Gabbits. In continuing with the Oddworld black comedy theme, the story trails the last member of the Gabbits, another of the many odd types of inhabitants in the game world. These Gabbits are a weird species that were exploited by the Glukkons (bad guys), for example many Glukkons who had lung cancer would take the lungs out of healthy Gabbits to replace their own. In addition to this Gabbit eggs were used to make a tasty dish called, "Gabbiare'. As you can see very strange stuff indeed, the game should arrive July 2000 for both the PlayStation and PC.

Bleem! Slow Down

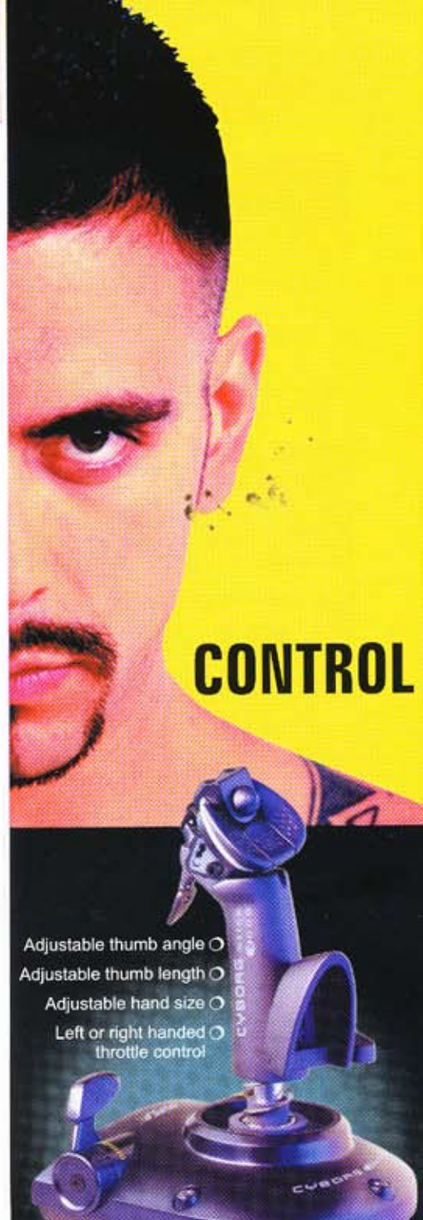
At their site, www.bleem.com you can download Bleem! 1.5, the latest upgrade of a program that allows PC users to play PlayStation games on their computers. This latest version delivers improved compatibility for more than 70 games, bug fixes, improved texture rendering in Direct3D and better speed management for consistent play in windows. Bleem! 1.5 also improves memory card support for popular games such as Final Fantasy VIII and WWF: Attitude effectively adding more than 40 new titles to the 250 plus existing games. The upgrade will now also let users play, for the first time, Dino Crisis, Knockout Kings and Final Doom. The major tweak however is for better game speed control largely due to the fact that PC users end up playing games quicker than the original versions due to internal timing differences between the two platforms. This code fix now brings better sound synchronisation and gameplay that more closely matches the PlayStation. Other improvements include a new 'texel alignment' option that eliminates faint lines that occasionally appear between textures when playing the games in 3D hardware mode. Besides all that the new version has support for automatic configuration profiles for some game controllers and an installer/uninstaller program for easier download, installation and removal. The new upgrade is free, so if you own Bleem! go get it.

bleem!

Don't throw this controller!

We've all seen people do it and have often done it ourselves, that is move, turn and twist a PlayStation controller in the air as if to somehow get across the urgency of the button pressing or D-Pad pushing. We all know this never works, but what if it did? A new company,

Airpad Corporation has developed a highly sensitive two-axis tilt controller called the Airpad. The way the pad works is by translating hand movements into game control commands, for example tilting it from left to right moves your car, or character from left to right and the same with backward and forward motions. The company plans to release different versions including 'rumble', 'resister', and even voice-activated models. There will be both PlayStation and PC versions of the same controller and a range of funky clip-on attachments that allow gamers to customise their Airpads. If you want to have a closer look, visit www.airpad.com and tell them we sent you.



The Saitek Cyborg 2000 Stick gives you superb design, excellent ergonomics and complete functionality regardless of whether you are left or right handed. Four unique adjustments allow you to shape the stick to your exact needs - putting you in complete control.

Saitek

Call SDD on (011) 652-8651 for sales.

Virtual Media Systems
Call (011) 768-6080 for info and support.

Bits & Bytes

New Age Gaming Price Comparison

Game Title	Incredible Connection	CNA Interactive	Toys R Us	Reggies
WWF Attitude (PSX)	R 439.99	R 439.00	None	None
Hot Wheels (PSX)	R 369.99	R 369.00	R 379.00	R 379.00
Sled Storm (PSX)	R 369.99	R 359.00	R 379.00	R 380.00
Castrol Super Bikes (PSX)	R 459.99	R 469.00	None	None
Army Men 2 (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
Darkstone (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA
Prince Of Persia 3D (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.99	NA	NA
Tiberian Sun (PC)	R 299.99	R 299.00	NA	NA

Release Lists

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

PC Release List

December

01 - Boarder Zone - INFOGRAMES
01 - Mission Impossible - INFOGRAMES
01 - Official Formula Racing 99 - EIDOS
01 - Test Drive Rally - INFOGRAMES
01 - Urban Chaos - EIDOS
02 - MechWarrior III Expansion - HASBRO
07 - Battlezone 2 - ACTIVISION
07 - Crusaders of Might & Magic - 3DO
07 - Quake III: Arena - ACTIVISION
10 - Wall Street Trader - INTERPLAY
14 - Invictus - INTERPLAY
14 - Messiah - SHINY
15 - Operational Art War II - TALONSOFT
20 - Daikatana - EIDOS
28 - Earthworm Jim - INTERPLAY
28 - Star Trek: Klingon Academy - INTERPLAY
29 - H & D Mission Pack - TALONSOFT
31 - Soldier of Fortune - ACTIVISION

January

03 - B17 Flying Fortress - HASBRO
03 - Fading Suns: Noble Armada - RIPCORD
03 - Flash Point - UBI SOFT
03 - Giants - INTERPLAY ENTERTAINMENT
03 - Halo - BUNGIE SOFTWARE
03 - IHRA Drag Racing - BETHESDA
03 - Legend of the Blademasters - RIPCORD
03 - Mortyr - INTERPLAY
03 - Risk II - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
03 - Road to Moscow - UBI SOFT
03 - Silent Hunter II - MINDSCAPE
03 - Skip Barber Racing - BETHESDA
03 - Splinter - ELECTRONIC ARTS
03 - Wall Street Tycoon - UBI SOFT
03 - Wizardry VIII - SIR-TECH CANADA
17 - Amen: The Awakening - GT
17 - Dukes of Hazzard - SOUTHPEAK
17 - Hired Guns - PSYGNOSIS
17 - Imperium Galactica 2 - GT
17 - Rising Sun - TALONSOFT
17 - Team Fortress II - HAVAS INTERACTIVE
18 - C&C2 Tiberian Sun: Firestorm - EA
18 - Need for Speed: Motor City - EA
18 - Superbike 2000 - EA
21 - 1602 A.D. - GT INTERACTIVE
25 - F/A-18: Jane's - EA
25 - Final Fantasy VIII - EA
25 - The Sims - MAXIS 51

PSX Release List

December

01 - Iron Soldier 3 - VATICAL
01 - Rugrats: Studio Tour - THQ
01 - Twisted Metal 4 - SCEA
02 - Army Men Air Attack - 3DO
02 - Ballistic - INFOGRAMES
02 - Knockout Kings 2000 - EA
02 - Spyro Ripto's Rage! - SCEA
02 - Supercross Circuit - SCEA
02 - V-Rally 2 - EA
04 - Monkey Magic - ELECTRO SOURCE
05 - Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition - SNK
09 - Formula One 99 - ACTIVISION
09 - Killer Loop - CRAVE
09 - Supercross 2000 - EA
09 - Test Drive 6 - INFOGRAMES
09 - Tomorrow Never Dies - EA
09 - Wu Tang: Shaolin Style - ACTIVISION
10 - Resident Evil 3: Nemesis - CAPCOM
10 - Shadow Tower - AGETEC
11 - Worms Armageddon - HASBRO
12 - Q-Bert - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
15 - Barbie Ride and Race - MATTEL MEDIA
16 - Medal of Honor - EA
16 - Missile Command - HASBRO
16 - Rainbow Six - SOUTHPEAK
16 - Renegade Racer - INTERPLAY
16 - Toy Story 2 - ACTIVISION
16 - Warpath: Jurassic Park - EA
17 - Dune 2000 - EA
17 - Silhouette Mirage - WORKING DESIGNS
22 - Glover - HASBRO INTERACTIVE
23 - Mission Impossible - INFOGRAMES
23 - Smurfs - INFOGRAMES
23 - Vandal Hearts 2 - KONAMI
29 - Carmegeddon - INTERPLAY

January

01 - All Star Tennis 99 - UBI SOFT
01 - NBA in the Zone 2000 - KONAMI
01 - NHL Blades of Steel 2000 - KONAMI
07 - Broken Sword 2 - CRAVE
07 - Gran Turismo 2 - SCEA
07 - March Madness 2000 - EA
14 - Army Men Sarge's Heroes - 3DO
14 - Crusaders of Might & Magic - 3DO
14 - Fighting Force 2 - EIDOS
15 - Shao Lin - THQ
15 - Urban Chaos - EIDOS

In Passing...

Back in time

Xatrix is working hard on a Wolfenstein 3D sequel imaginatively called, Wolfenstein 2000 and have confirmed the rumours of the 'other' tentatively titled sequel, Return to Castle Wolfenstein, the same game. Nothing is set in stone at this time but the developers are hoping to get the game in stores before Christmas 2000. Questions about what engine it will use and how far along it is are all up for speculation until the company releases something more solid.

Simon 3D

The third instalment of Simon the Sorcerer is coming soon and Hasbro Interactive is going to publish it. The developers are taking all the elements that made the first two game such a success (humour and mind-bending puzzles) and incorporating them into a new real time 3D environment. The same 3D engine that Prince of Persia 3D uses will power the game along and it's currently set for a 2000 first quarter release. Expect a full preview soon.

Hey monkey boy!

Fox Interactive is gearing up for the release of their upcoming 3D action and adventure game, Planet of the Apes (based on the classic novel by Pierre Boulle). As Ulysses, you crash land a spaceship on an uncharted planet 1,000 years in the future and soon discover a cruel evolutionary twist where Apes rule and human beings are at the bottom of the food chain. In a bid for survival, you must progress through this huge action adventure game and unravel the mystery of the compelling story line. Go see www.foxinteractive.com for more.

ION Storm clam

Finally someone is going to do something useful, Eidos is going to take control of the rocky Ion Storm. Both Todd Porter and Jerry O'Flaherty won't be surviving the transition, they're leaving as Eidos takes a hefty 51 percent share of the company. John Cavanaugh from Eidos will be moving in to run the show and John Romero, Tom Hall, and Warren Spector will remain as employees of Eidos. Maybe we'll see some of those promised games soon... any day now in fact would be good.

Dual Shock incompatible

According to an English Hong Kong gaming site, the Dual Shock and Dual Shock 2 are incompatible. If this rumour is true it simply means a second player can't use your older spare controller while playing a PlayStation 2 game and so the divide opens wider.

Heavy Gear Cartoon

Fans of Activision's Heavy Gear computer game franchise can look forward to seeing their favourite pastime on the small screen. Sony Pictures Family Entertainment today announced a 40-episode deal that will make the game a cartoon.

Quake 3: Arena Demo

To alleviate the strain the entire Internet will feel when id Software releases the official Quake 3: Arena demo a company called Sandpiper Networks will undertake the task of worldwide distribution across the Internet. This will speed up the download process and decrease congestion.

Big Games

If you've ever wondered which games sold the most units since gaming began then peruse the following list, it's more surprising than you think. (The rather large number on the right of each entry denotes how many units (in total) of each title have shipped from January 1993 to September 1999).

1. Myst - 4,236,198
2. MS Flight Simulator - 2,781,288
3. Doom II -1,553,587
4. Riven - 1,305,595
5. Monopoly Game - 1,273,553
6. Warcraft II - 1,250,675
7. Diablo - 1,176,457
8. Doom Shareware - 1,154,541
9. Sim City 2000 - 1,136,244
10. Star Wars: Dark Forces - 952,033
11. Duke Nukem 3D - 946,664
12. Deer Hunter - 944,703
13. 7th Guest - 926,948
14. Starcraft - 906,128
15. MS Return of Arcade - 902,313
16. Lego Island - 897,005
17. Red Alert - 869,623
18. Sim City Classic - 827,355
19. Barbie Fashion Designer - 825,655
20. Ultimate Doom Thy Flesh - 787,397

Sunglasses at Night

A product that simply begs for a look of the long and hard kind are the Diamond Monster shades 3D glasses, the company recently announced this newest addition to its family of 3D gaming products. S3 are using stereoscopic shutter technology to design lenses that take the spatial relationships created from the game

and created an illusion of 3D depth. The unit works by plugging it into the VGA output on a system graphics accelerator (and requires a monitor capable of a minimum of 120 MHz refresh rate). The shades offer support for titles designed with DirectX, OpenGL and Glide API's, and a host of chipsets and accelerators including 3Dfx's Voodoo III, Nvidia's TNT Ultra and S3's Savage 4. The package will ship with the unit, connector cable, driver discs and user guide, users will also be able to change the units colour with a number of Snap-On frame attachments. It certainly sounds innovative, but only a tough hardware test will expose it for what it really is.

Elite IV Coming Soon!

What was your status, dangerous, deadly, or elite? The good news after much legal wrangling is that David Braben will be developing the next Elite.
The first game was a space trading/fighting game that used primitive wire frame graphics to get the message across. Back in those days you didn't have much graphical gloss when it came to gaming but somehow David Braben managed to give us the universe to explore. Many still regard this old classic as the best space trading game ever, even in light of what you can play today.
The two previous sequels were failures due to a number of different problems, and somehow never attained the heights reached by the first game.
No details are available but the very promise of this title sends shivers down the spine.

Fly! with the Flies

More flying things and ground bits

Fly!, published by Gathering of Developers and created by Terminal Reality is about to get its first expansion pack. The add-on will feature scenery from the Pacific Northwest Region, including Washington, Northern Oregon, southern British Columbia, and

Canada. The expansion was created using actual satellite imagery so it should look just like the real thing, great if you live in America, interesting for everyone else. Three new aircraft will also be added including the 757, 767 and 777, the new aircraft will have full working cockpits, detailed external models and flight manuals. The individual cockpit instrumentation of each new plane has been designed according to actual layouts and will contain most of the systems contained on the flight deck, even the odd cup of coffee and bullet shells left over from recent hijackings. For the real interesting stuff click your way to www.avsim.com for a huge collection of flight areas created with the Fly! scenery editor, including Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon, other add-ons and alterations made to existing models can also be found there.

Fly! II

Developer, Terminal Reality has announced they have started designing and developing Fly! II. The new game will offer expanded 3D models, aircraft and scenery including new elevation scenes and higher resolution images. Fly! II will offer more points of interest, improved visual effects and complete thorough instructions and assistance for beginners as well as a global flight area, a worldwide digital elevation terrain model, true satellite imagery and avionics systems detailed to each aircraft's original specification. Gathering of Developers will publish the game late in 2000.

Joysticks and Game Controllers

Call SDD on (011) 652-8651 for sales.
Virtual Media Systems
Call (011) 768-6080 for info and support.

jUSt cHARTs

Well, the silly season is officially here, and no doubt a lot of software is going to find its way to the special spot under the Christmas tree. Times like this obviously play havoc with charts as people embark on buying sprees, and the charts may look totally different next month!
However, for now, we have some (expected) new faces in the charts. Most notably, of course, is Microsoft's Age of Empires 2, which makes it's local chart debut in the prized first position - nothing strange there, as we were expecting this to be the case with one of the most anticipated titles of this year. Some old stalwarts of the chart are showing signs of slipping, but newcomer Homeworld features favourably at fifth. On the PlayStation side, Croc 2 stands firm for its second month, with Silent Hill quietly creeping through the ranks. ShadowMan opens well at third, and Sled Storm blasts onto the chart in fifth position.

Local PC Charts

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Age of Empires 2 Age of Kings	New	New
2.	C&C 2 Tiberian Sun	1	2
3.	System Shock 2	2	1
4.	Stars	4	1
5.	Homeworld	New	New
6.	Dungeon Keeper 2	6	3
7.	Outcast	5	2
8.	Aliens Vs Predator	7	3
9.	Rage of Mages 2	New	New
10.	Hidden & Dangerous	9	2

International PC Charts

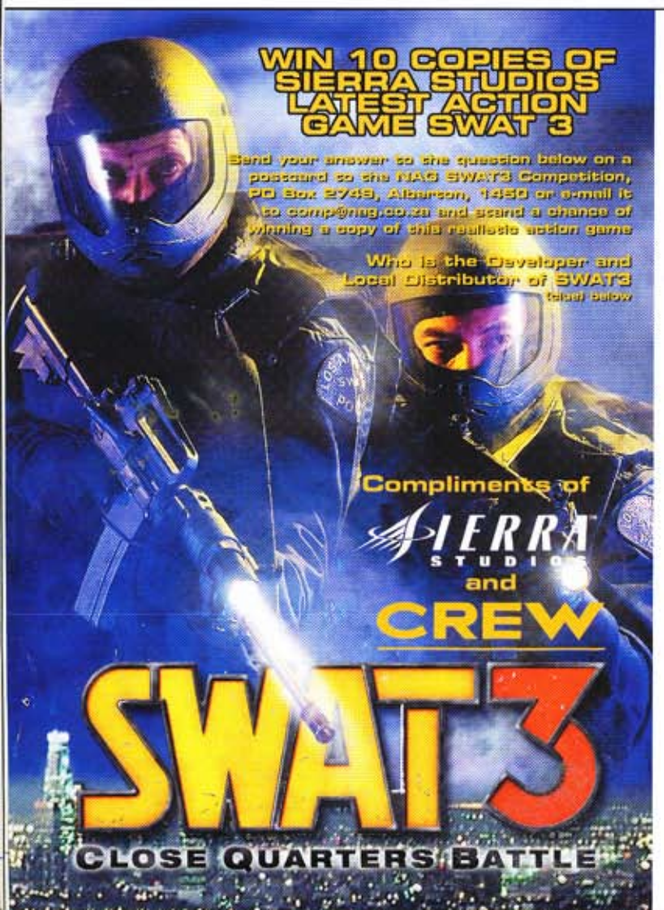
Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Age of Empires 2 Age of Kings	Microsoft
2.	Heroes of Might and Magic 3	New World/3DO
3.	Alpha Centauri Firaxis	Electronic Arts
4.	Baldur's Game	Bioware/Interplay
5.	Jagged Alliance 2	Sir-Tech/Talonsoft
6.	System Shock 2	Looking Glass/EA
7.	Homeworld	Relic/Sierra
8.	C&C 2 Tiberian Sun	Westwood/EA
9.	Half Life	Valve/Sierra
10.	Might and Magic 7	New World/3DO

Local PlayStation Charts

Position	Name	Last Month	Total Months
1.	Croc 2	1	1
2.	Silent Hill	3	2
3.	Shadowman	New	New
4.	Castrol Super Bikes	6	1
5.	Sled Storm	New	New
6.	Driver	4	4
7.	WWF Attitude	New	New
8.	Syphon Filter	2	2
9.	Point Blank 2	7	1
10.	Metal Gear Solid	Re-entry	Re-entry

International PlayStation Charts

Position	Name	Developer/Distributor
1.	Final Fantasy 8	Square
2.	Suikoden 2	Konami
3.	Ridge Racer Type 4	Sony
4.	Grandia	Gamearts/Sony
5.	Final Fantasy Antholgy	Square
6.	Dino Crisis	Capcom
7.	Metal Gear Solid	Konami
8.	Driver	Reflections/GT
9.	Lunar	Sony
10.	Star Ocean	Tri-Ace/Enix/Sony



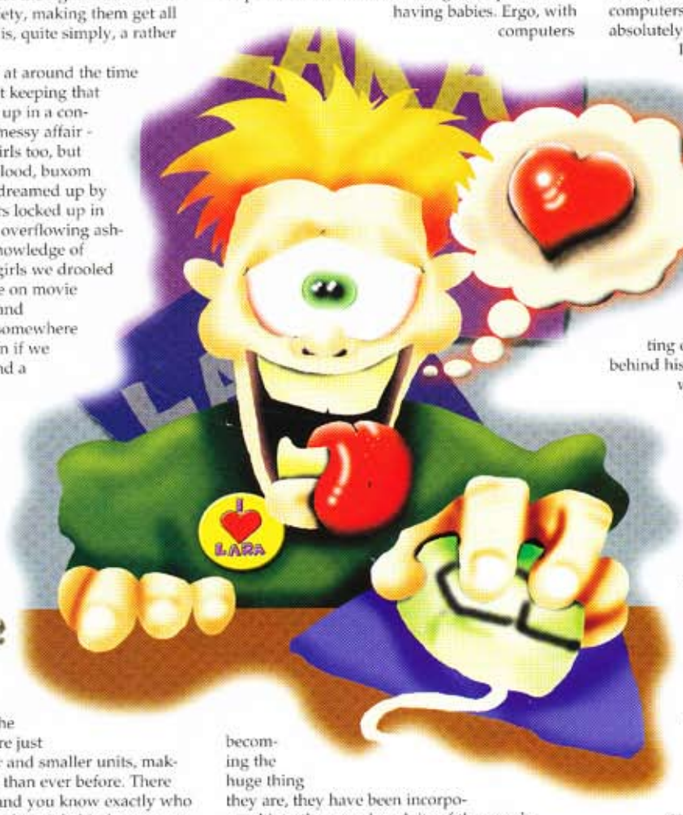
Love, Lust & Lara

RamJet gets the Christmas spirit, and talks about what's on everyone's mind over the silly season: sex!

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

There seems to be a strange phenomenon that has cropped up in the last few years. It appears that hot-blooded young men are now spending their time in front of their computer monitors, rather than at the pool or beach, watching girls in bikinis jiggle by. Why? What strange mind-cult has these poor unfortunate plebeians so firmly in their grasp? What strange aberration of human nature has forced these unfortunate souls to turn from lusty, lively pursuits and barricade themselves in their rooms, accompanied only by the sickly glow of a PC monitor? The answer, in two words: cyber babes. These virtual, pixel-based playmates dance across the game in tantalisingly tight garb, with gravity defying, err... assets that make your eyes water. They dash around the game and wobble at just the right time to affect this certain sect of society, making them get all sweaty and excited. It is, quite simply, a rather sad state of affairs.

When I was younger - at around the time that Noah realised that keeping that many animals cooped up in a confined space is quite a messy affair - guys used to look at girls too, but these were flesh and blood, buxom wenches that weren't dreamed up by horny game developers locked up in dark little rooms with overflowing ashtrays and very little knowledge of female anatomy. The girls we drooled over, even if they were on movie screens, at least lived and breathed and existed somewhere on the planet, and even if we would never even stand a chance of meeting them, they at least shared the same planet with us. The chances of having an affair with Lara Croft are, to say the very least, incredibly remote. And the kids would look really funny.



What are computers (and computer games) doing to society? We already have an insular, distrusting and paranoid way of life. But the effects of computers are just forcing us into smaller and smaller units, making us more antisocial than ever before. There are people out there (and you know exactly who you are) who would rather sit behind a computer and watch their monitor than go out and meet people. These folks think that IRC chatting is a socially solid way of making new friends, forgetting that half the people that frequent chat rooms are weirdos, freaks and potentially mentally disturbed (I know this because I am one of the latter ones). Add to this horrid little twist the fact that half of these guys are now spending their time drooling over misshapen cyber-babes (which just keeps them in their rooms for longer and wreaks havoc with the household's toilet paper consumption) and the future of the human race is in serious jeopardy. This is, however, not the fault of developers. See, humans are inherently sexual creatures. We were created so that we can continue the survival of our species. In essence, this is the purpose of every living creature on the planet, from amoebas to elephants - life is about making whoopee and having babies. Ergo, with computers becoming the huge thing they are, they have been incorporated into the sexual exploits of the people who use them. The developers didn't perpetuate this - they are just taking advantage of it.

I find it incredibly disturbing (not to mention lame) that people are starting to get turned on by cyber babes. Okay, so the amount of guys who actually get really turned-on is quite minor, but they are out there. It seems that, as a species, we have devolved into complete and utter mental and physical weakness, our senses and passions dulled by the Information Age.

Some guy actually asked me why he should go out and meet people when he has the Internet. I was appalled, and tried to explain to him, with the use of several diagrams and large, sweeping gestures, why its impossible to actually have kids, or even plain, good old sex over the net. His blank faced response cast me into a pit of despair. His comment about cybersex that followed ensured that there was no ladder to get out.

This is an incredibly sad situation, and one that disturbs me deeply. Look, I like computers as much as anyone else (well, maybe not) and enjoy chatting online and playing games and all that stuff, but come on, people? Have we lost all our backbone? Have we lost all our passion, and our drive, that we must now isolate ourselves and hide behind cheesy nicks and false pretences? This is why people who use computers are called Nerds, folks. There is absolutely no excuse for this kind of behaviour.

It indicates a weakened society, filled with people who have growing identity and personality problems. Thankfully not everyone has fallen into this trap of pathetic apathy, but the numbers of these offensive little jellyfish are growing daily. And, the really scary thing is that it seems to affect mainly the male population - which is cool, because it leaves more chicks for guys; like me, that do go out.

I issue a challenge to every guy sitting out there that spends every night behind his computer and blushes if a real woman even walks past him. Take one night, just one little night, out of your busy schedule (which is crammed up with chatting, playing games and staring at a blank monitor because the other two things have just got too boring - I know, I've seen you) and go somewhere. Speak to a girl. Really. Not just "excuse me" as you flee past her out the door, but actually have a conversation. And not someone that you met in some IRC chat room either, and have been talking to for seven years, and have taken three years to finally meet face to face, but an actual stranger. I guarantee that not one of you 'computer nerds' has the guts to do it.

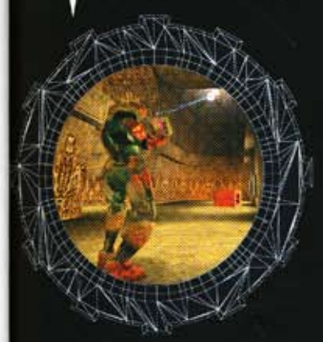
Now, wait a moment, guys, before you flood me with stupid mail, let me clarify. Once again, not every computer user is a loser. The few out there know that they are. They are the ones that need to catch a major wake up.

So, take down those Lara Croft posters *[Never! Ed]* and quit IRC, discover that there is a world beyond the four walls that you exist between. Air the room. Open the curtains. Go out. Put on sun block, because you're probably the colour of a corpse. But please, if only for yourself, get a life.

RamJet

IT'S HERE

QUAKE III ARENA



Multimedia Warehouse ACTIVISION. id

South Africa Distributors: Multimedia Warehouse a division of SDD - www.mmw.co.za JHB (011) 652-8400 Bloem (051) 447-3193 CT (021) 550-8300 DBN (031) 263-0121 PE (041) 363-0540
This Ad including all artwork © 1999 id Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Quake III Arena and the Quake III Arena Logo are trademarks of id Software, Inc.
The id Logo is a registered trademark of id Software, Inc. in the U.S.A. The Activision Logo is a trademark of Activision, Inc.

BACKCHAT

Thank you to everyone who wrote in this month. Unfortunately we cannot reply to all of the letters we receive, 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. Any arguing will be dealt with violently!

Well done to **Ross Kukard** who wins our letter of the month - keep the questions coming. Until next month...

Backchat
PO Box 2749
Alberton
1449

letters@nag.co.za

SA Gaming

A few months ago in your magazine you had an article on South African game companies and since then I have not heard a thing about it. So I was wondering what's been happening and what games we'll be seeing from then.

Jonathan
E-mail

Well since we ran that article we've had a number of people come out of the woodwork and present us with their efforts. IRQ 5 for example (you can read all about their efforts next issue and play their game on next months cover CD) have put together a nice little game called Steel Venom, with the sequel currently under development. The biggest problem you see, is the fact that there are so few game makers in this country that we cannot dedicate a page each month to them or even every second month. However, next year we'll be starting a whole new section on how to make your own game. This string of articles will run for about 12 issues and dedicated programmers, graphics artists and sound engineers (amateur and professional alike) will get a chance to show us what they can do. In fact no matter who you are you can learn from scratch how to make a real game. Remember, keep reading it always gets better.
Ed

The performance factor

I know - I'm going to have to upgrade my computer sooner or later, but I still have some type of point to prove. For example take Total Annihilation: Kingdoms, it came out and naturally people bought it, but of course before they did, they looked at the requirements, and then many complained about the slow downs. Then a month later out came a patch to increase the performance of the game, so as to give smoother game play. Now many of these people don't have the Internet and will not be able to acquire this patch. Now why could they not have in the first place, tested the game on slower machines, than the Pentium III that they most probably have in their million dollar offices. This also, in many other magazines caused the game to receive low reviews, because of these slow downs, and I'm sure many people who wanted to buy the game, in the end did not. Another thing is that if they could write a code for the game to run better, why did they not do it before they had released it. I mean it makes it look like these game developers can actually release games with lower system requirements, if they only worked on them a little longer. There are also some games that don't have many options that can be turned off, (detail and resolution) so as to increase the game performance. In single player games, it's usually fine, but when it comes to multiplayer, you want to squeeze every ounce of resources so as to have a smooth, lag free game. Multiplayer doesn't really need all those lush graphics and unnecessary tiny animations that you can hardly see. Games are evolving far too quickly. I'm just a guy with a job that does not pay much, I just can't afford to upgrade all the time, and my parents are just getting sick of it too. Many thousands of Rands are spent, just so I can play games. Say it to yourself a couple of times, and then you'll start to think, 'Is spending all this money really worth it?' The games that are on sale are also expensive. So is it all really worth it? (That's a rhetorical question - in other words yes, it is worth it). I'm such a hypocrite.

EVERYONE WANTS QUAKE ARENA FOR XMAS!

Shay Gurevich
Randburg

This is why you should be clever like us and start a gaming magazine, that way you get games and some hardware for nothing. Depending on your cash flow situation, you are correct when you say that gaming is an expensive hobby, but at the end of the day I'd much rather be playing games than planting vegetables in my garden or collecting stamps. In some cases, playing games is cheaper than certain hobbies, like Bonsai trees and fly fishing.
Ed

Ask a question

I just have a few suggestions and questions:
1. You could add another aspect to the scoring bar like 'Originality'.
2. What program do you use to make your magazine?
3. Do you personally come to Paarl to print your magazine, if so e-mail and tell me, then I can actually meet you.
4. Whatever happened to the emblem of the "New Age" part of "New Age Gaming" that had the South African flag instead of lightning?
5. What the hell happened to the idea of making a web site?
6. How do you make your magazine so nice?
7. How about having a section of the magazine devoted to "Where Gaming is Going".
8. What qualifications do you guys have?
9. How do you make such Brilliant graphics!
10. How about trying to get a television program called "New Age Gaming" for the gaming public in South Africa.
11. How do I get back or old issues?

At the letters sections of your magazine you state you read all our letters but can't reply to all of them, but could you please reply to this one, you guys are such skilled writers it couldn't take too long.

Ryan Brodovcky
E-mail

1. Funny you should ask, check out our new scoring bar, we got bored of the old one and decided to make people work late and do another one.
2. We use Quark Xpress 4.0, Photoshop 5.5 and Macromedia Director 7.0 and all the usual other programs that people find on computers everywhere.
3. No, we only visit them when they pay for the hotels, food and plane tickets.
4. It's a long story involving a corrupt file and a quick fix job that looked really cool.
5. Honestly, we're too busy right now to give it our full attention... but it is coming.
6. We're very clever.
7. A section, no, perhaps an article.
8. We are quite a qualified bunch if divided up and regrouped in alphabetical order. There are some business qualifications, a writing diploma thing or two and Leonard's Spur Steak Ranch ranger badge.
9. See answer 2. We do all the magazine artwork except the game art as the separate game developers usually supply some graphics to get things going. Screenshots are taken for all games except in the rare case or two when we are forced to use press kit screenshots.
10. Nice idea but very expensive... one day, soon.
11. Call our office number and speak to Tracy or Angie on (011) 462-5463.

This should actually answer about eighty different letters received over the last two months from readers asking similar questions. Thanks for the skilled writers suck up, it looks like it worked. ;)
Ed

No small request

What's your ICQ number?

Diablo
E-mail

I think ICQ is a great thing, for people who have all the time in the world. Incoming messages and chat requests can quickly consume an entire day, and that leaves me with exactly zero time for e-mail and writing and so on. So while I'd love to give you my ICQ number... hang on... umm, no!
Ed

Suggestion

A small suggestion, why not include pictures with the cover CD as some people like messing around with screenshots and desktops.

Bradley
E-mail

Occasionally we do include desktop themes and Windows backgrounds on the CD but seeing that you'd rather have 50+ megabyte samples of upcoming games instead (due to massive reader requests) we're kind of pressed for space, excuse the pun. Nice idea but supply and demand effectively rules it out... for now.
Ed

Rating system

Please tell me how you rate games. Now I'm not talking about the 0% - 100% thing but this is actually a new concept I thought of. I want to know if you rate games by starting off at 100% and for everything the game does badly you minus a mark. Or do you count everything good into points and then add up all the points and that gives you a mark or do you just make it up. I've got every issue and I'm a good fan, but your scores just seem either too high or too low. Also you have to remember that 70%

REMEMBER, IF YOU DIE A HERO, YOU'RE STILL DEAD.

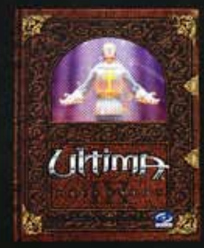
The Avatar has battled twenty long years for Britannia's glory.

Now, you must draw your sword and sharpen your wits one last time.

As you travel through the fully-animated landscape, all attention can be devoted to your epic quests thanks to Ultima's new intuitive interface.

And once you've carved your name into the final chapters of Ultima's history book, continue adventuring online at www.uo.com.

Provided, of course, that you survive.



www.ea.co.za

PC CD

ELECTRONIC ARTS Africa

Distributed by Electronic Arts Africa. For more information call Johannesburg (011) 803-7272 or write to Electronic Arts Africa, PO Box 2180, Rivonia, 2128, South Africa or visit our website at www.ea.co.za.

Software and documentation © 1999 Electronic Arts Inc. All rights reserved. Origin Systems Inc., Ultima, Ultima Ascension, The Second Age, Origin, the ORIGIN logo and We create worlds are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. ORIGIN is an Electronic Arts Inc. company.

BACKCHAT

is brilliant, not just worthless. A 90% for a game would have to be special and you just can't give 90's like its going out of fashion. Anyway thanks for the magazine that beats any other hands down.

Jonny Solomon

Here is your answer, more or less. We've made a few small changes to our review bar this month and I have received another insightful letter from our friend Daniel at the Department of Statistical Sciences, University of Cape Town, which I'm still trying to decipher (I'm more the creative A-type personality and advanced mathematics terrify me, which is why I didn't tick the 'love working with numbers' box in my career planning sessions at school). Know this, we are giving this whole rating system a very long hard look, and as a humble gaming magazine from South Africa we are set to change the way games are rated forever with pioneering ideas and a little imagination. The letter from Daniel (we'll publish it soon) is actually rather brilliant so I'll have to apologise for calling him deranged just to cover up my mathematical inadequacies but the hot clue here is a weighted scoring system based on relevancy. Honestly we really just make up the score as we go, this used to work well, but now people are starting to talk and ask questions so I'm afraid we'll not be able to cover up the truth for much longer. Joking, maybe… The truth under the lies can be likened to a scab, keep picking and all will be painfully revealed.
Ed

Is It Even Worth Buying Games?

To this, all the people swimming in dough with their Pentium III 500 MHz processors, 128 MEGS RAM and TNT2 Ultra Graphics Cards will immediately shout, yes! (no insults or discrimination intended), but those of us who as of yet are not millionaires would answer, well, maybe. As games get more and more advanced and prices skyrocket, one could conceivably spend a fortune on the latest games and still not have a respectable stockpile at the end of it all. It's a vicious circle: A new good game comes out (R300), you buy it, you play it for a week, and then 'bang', out comes an even better game (R320), so, you buy it, play it for a week, and then 'bang', again another even better game comes out! And so it continues: bang, bang, bang (in case you're wondering why the bang, it's to aid in the visualisation of this new game magically appearing on the shelf at the PC store with smoke, flames and flashing lights). Well, if you're not deaf yet, or you're too stupid to notice, you can stay in for a few more rounds and run your wallet completely dry. However other people may rather just sit back and pick out specific games to purchase. And then there are a few who are left wondering whether it is worth buying any of these games in the first place, because they will just get better and better and better. But now what happens when games can't get any more realistic, and the imaginations of game designer's have dried up like the Serengeti in the middle of summer, what then? Will 'clones' keep being produced for all eternity or will people eventually go mad and go for the ultimate exercise in realism, real life itself, stealing cars and shooting police as in GTA. Or will we see people racing around cities and farms in high-speed sports cars as in NFS, or perhaps both? There is a cure though, by only buying the best, high quality games that show new innovative ideas and gameplay, graphics, sound, and great stories we can stamp out the rubbish, blow away the chaff and preserve that which holds the name of PC/PSX gaming high.

Ross Kukard
Cape Town

This is a great Christmas message for everyone in a way… All too often we see clueless parents, wide-eyed girlfriends and well meaning grandparents in their droves lurking in computer stores during the festive season buying frenzy. These people never frequent computer stores during the year, aside from the odd birthday gift and unfortunately walk right up to a casual staff member (just hired yesterday) and ask the fatal question - what's a good game for my son / boyfriend / husband / daughter? The casual then remembers the store manager telling him to try and get rid of 'Bicycle Stunt Challenge', an overstocked turkey of a title. So the well-meaning gift-buyer leaves the store with a 'great' game, which really is the gaming equivalent of socks and underwear gift packs. So I think the message Ross is trying to get across is be more selective with what you buy or at the very least make sure you write that letter to Santa or you could be looking at a very dull Christmas gaming session.
Ed

Very Unhappy

I'm a very disappointed person today. I was one of the first people to mail you in support and tell you guys to increase your price if that means we will get better cover discs and posters. Well looks like my advice has been taken, a couple of months back the price went up by a couple of Rands, not much. But then I have also noticed that you decided to cut back on the posters and my walls have stayed the same for three months. So what is happening - you're taking more of our money and also taking away our posters, man I wait every month for your magazine to come out and then of course for your nice poster and it really ticks me when I don't get a poster. Then also that last poster in the October issue, now what do we call that an advertisement or a poster? I know you get money from your sponsor but that's really a rubbish poster and went straight to the rubbish bin. It's a gaming magazine after all and therefore I would like to see some gaming posters. It troubles me when I find a poster like that in my Nag without any gaming poster. Man I live on your Nag and my whole month is a mess when stuff like that starts happening, it's like I'm an incomplete person and very unhappy. Then also I don't know where you get your information from but I must say I'm a bit disappointed in your inside info as well. I made a total arse out of myself cause after reading your magazine which states that Shadow Company and Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver is still under construction, a friend phoned me and told me he has both games. I read your magazine so I knew that both games are still 'under construction' and started arguing with my friend, telling him that both games are still 'under construction'. I asked him where he bought them and also brought up the possibility that he got a ripped version of the game or maybe a illegal Alpha test version floating around. It was only until he showed me both games complete in their packages that I believed him and then stumbled onto the Internet to investigate further. Well my findings are as follows Shadow Company will not be released in December but was already out in October. The same story applies to Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver it was also released early. Now I'm not checking your other under construction games because that will mean I'm doing your job and, well that just won't be right would it? So I don't understand how something like that can possibly happen. I'm getting more and more depressed by the thought of my favourite magazine, which I buy every month and use as a guideline to see when I should start saving for certain releases, turns into an unreliable source of information.

Conraad
Mountain View

Rubbing hands while preparing the meat grinder… All I'm saying with regards to the price increase, posters and all things financial and decorative is this - read the Ed's Note in the September and November issues and you'll get the answers, I'm not wasting any more ink on this. One thing however, if you're becoming depressed and morbid over a poster you should seek help, it is not the end of the world, or is this what happens after too much Quake? Now for your other accusations… I did respond to your e-mail initially and asked you to ask this 'friend' where he bought those games, I'm still waiting… I checked with our local distributors and based on what they said there is simply no way in hell your friend bought those games through legitimate channels in South Africa. If the official distributor doesn't have the game then your 'friend' doesn't either. The dates we quote in the previews we run in the magazine are based on what the developers and distributors tell us at the time. If you knew how many games slipped past their deadlines in a year you'd die of embarrassment for them. We try and give a 'rough guide' on the dates or would you prefer the standard release date of 'when it's done' instead? The other problem here is that often games are released overseas a long while before they arrive on these shores (usually this is an exception and always depends on a different set of circumstances each time). How much flak do you think we'd pick up if we published the 'incorrect' international release dates? This is a South African magazine dealing with the South African market. The other question is why on earth would we publish a preview of a game when we could run a review?
Ed

English please

My name is Clifford, I buy my NAG every month, and now I am puzzled. Why do you give a game that scores 39% - 0% or when a game that scores 59% - 50% a page or two if it isn't that great a game? Yes, sure you have your reasons why it isn't that good a game but why don't you take one page write down all the reasons in columns and just place the games.

Clifford
Vereeniging

Can anyone else figure out what this guy is talking about? Here is a general tip: before sending a letter to someone at least read it through once.
Ed

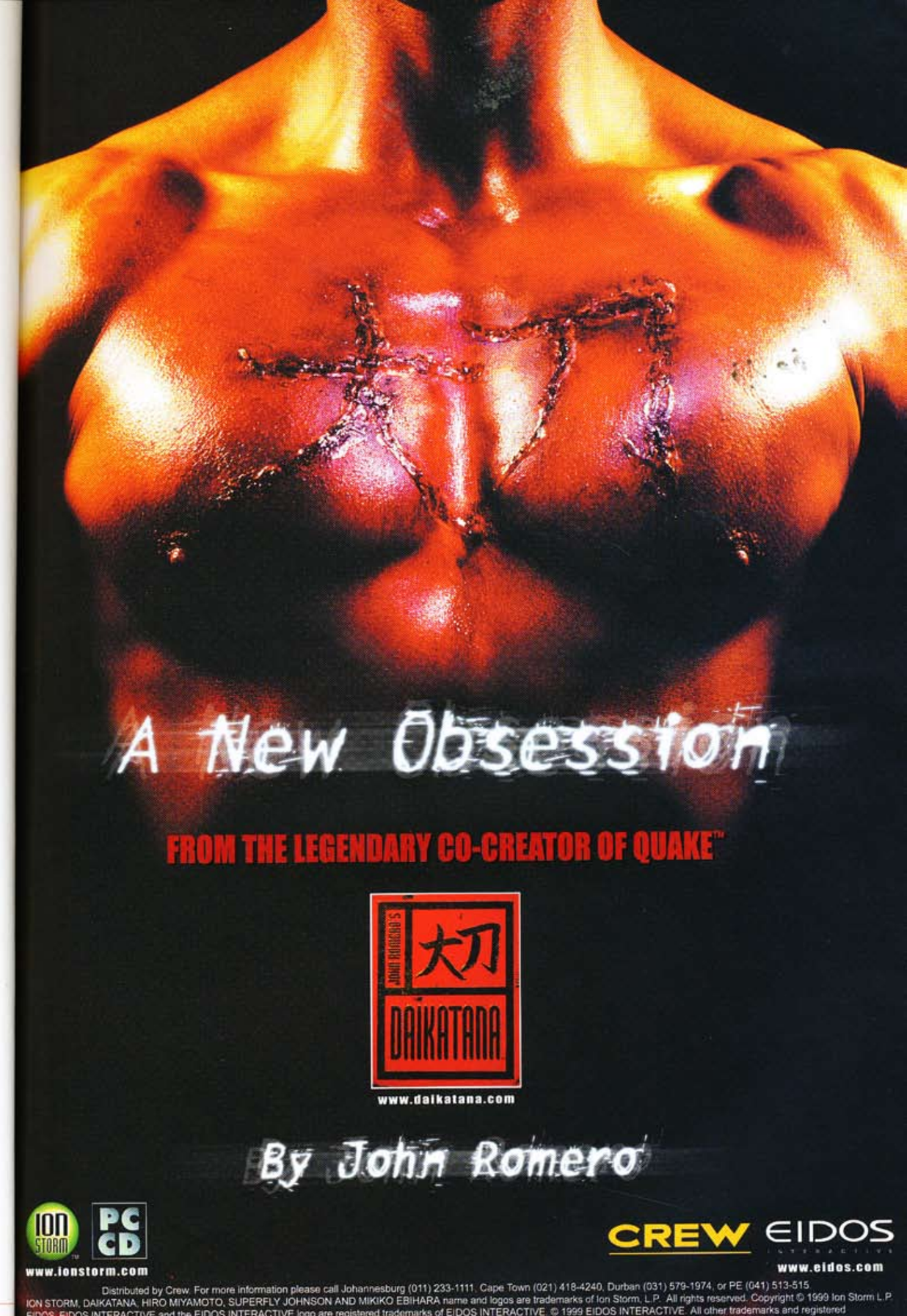
Please send all questions and any opinion related mail to:

Backchat

Please send all technical related questions to:

Backchat Technical

'To mail is better than not to mail' - Michael James, Editor.



ARCHIVES

Greetings fellow retro game fans! Yes Christmas awaits and so does the end of the world, it's only an odd 15 days away now, scared yet? At least retro gamers and console gamers have fewer worries than PC gamers do. If the rumours on the Y2K thing are for real, we'll still be able to use our Atari and PlayStation consoles. Well with that grim outlook behind us, I managed to see a couple of old 80's movies in the past few months and that has inspired me for this months article.

AtariBaby

Game & Watch

AtariBaby has given up his monitor in favour of something smaller, a 10cm LCD display, and he loves it!

During the year we looked at the rise and fall of gaming in general and we looked at some of the world's biggest games - how they rose to fame and how they ended up in someone's attic! Seeing that it's the Christmas issue and all, I thought I'd rekindle thoughts on past Christmas gifts that most of us received in the 80's!

Yes I'm talking Nintendo Game & Watch, handheld LCD games. It was 'the' handheld game of the 80's and was the envy of just about every schoolboy in those days. I can still recall having to beg my mother to get me one from the local games shop in East London. Having spent hours convincing her that it was a great idea and that it would improve my hand eye co-ordination in such a way that I could fly the space shuttle when I grew up *[I guess that all went to hell - Ed]*. I managed to get her into the store and about to spend the R99 to buy the damn thing and guess what? They were all sold out!

Handheld oversized batteries?!

The first G&W handheld games were made in about 1982. We managed to get them in SA in about 1983 with games like Octopus and Ball being the first 2 titles to hit the shelves. Made in Japan by the game giant Nintendo, it was probably the best handheld on the market at the time. Powered by two-oversized LR series watch batteries the game came packed snugly w'rapped-in polystyrene moulds with great instructions. Apart from being a game, the G&W also had a basic clock and alarm built in with a neat stand that allowed the unit to be used as a bedside alarm clock! As with their Nintendo Home Entertainment system, the G&W's were huge hits worldwide and it's estimated that up to 1989, over 3.5 million units were sold worldwide. It also allowed Nintendo to give more people access to the gaming world for basically next to nothing.

Nintendo managed to achieve this success with relative ease, due mainly to their great marketing of the product and of course their ability to have titles like Donkey Kong, Mario and Disney's Mickey and Donald. The other plus factor was the design and manufacturing process!

The game concept and design came mostly from the managers at Nintendo, with most of the artwork for the LCD bit being drawn in black ink by Tashi Nobitchi.

Hence the fact that all the game characters had the same characteristics, facial features and expressions!

Once the complete movement bit was drawn, photo negatives were made of the artwork and the LCD glass etchings were done.

All the games used a basic 1 MHz clock with a PIC type chip to store the programmes on. The casings were all from the same moulds with just the colour differences. The original 6 games in the G&W series had very basic controls. Two big red buttons being left and right respectively and that was it! As basic as they were, they were an amazing amount of fun. The player had 2 options of games, A and B. A being the easiest and B slightly faster with more things happening on the screen. That was until 1984 when the first double screen games were released with the famous Nintendo Entertainment System type thumb joystick controller. The double screens allowed the G&W system to take on a new level of play with more movement and control being made possible by the 'joystick'. Games like Oil Panic, Green House, Safebuster, Mario Bros and the Donkey Kong series were probably the biggest sellers! Retailing for about R150 - R180 it was still very affordable and it still had a clock! Soon the double screen thing wasn't enough and Nintendo introduced a very rare and limited edition G&W Wide Screen series. This was quite an ingenious little device using a concave mirror to get the reversed picture nice, big, and wide. To add a different flavour Nintendo released these games as a colour LCD series, using a transparent window on the upper side of the LCD display to allow light to shine through layers of coloured images and background drawings. These were projected onto the little mirror and gave the look of the more expensive LED colour handheld units like the Coleco Pac Man series. There was one major flaw to the game though! To get the best result the game had to be played in pretty bright light in order for the colours and LCD to light up to its full potential. For this very reason it did not compete as well as anticipated with the much cheaper G&W mono colour rivals, which could be played in darker conditions.

It wasn't long after 1984 - 85 that various Grey models of the original G&W were released world wide. There were numerous variations, but were not of the same high quality as their Nintendo counterparts. The buttons were made from an inferior rubber-silicone and even the game casings were made from a cheaper and less durable plastic. Then there was the artwork and game design that was really nothing to write home about. The problem was that although they were of inferior quality they were cheap, very cheap. R 20 compared to R 99 for the original G&W. The price war, together with the release of the Gameboy made Nintendo withdraw the G&W from the market, with the last model released in 1989 being the famous Zelda that still keeps on popping up on the N64. Currently, these games have managed to find their way to the bottom of most toy boxes. One would expect them to be dead, well think again! With the rise of all things 80's, the G&W has been resurrected. Most of the famous toy stores now allow you to get all the old classics on key ring palm sized versions for about R 80 - R 100. If you can't find them you can give the guys at Josse Feldman industries a call at (011) 629-3900 and they will tell you where you can buy them.

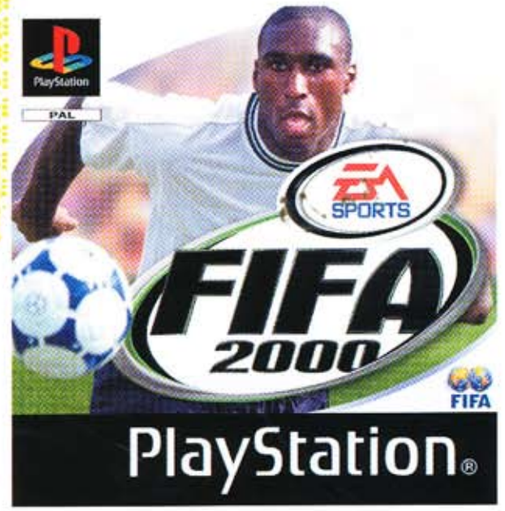
For the true addicts, there are many G&W emulators available for download on the Internet that run using JAVA. They're really cool, to download try www.geocities.com/hollywood/lot/6166/gwsim.htm or check our cover CD for two of these classics.

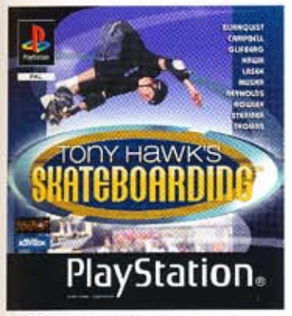
Well that brings to an end a great year of archives. Next year... Umm, sorry... next article we'll look at an emulator project that has revived all the old 80's games in all their glory - I promise you that you'll not be disappointed! Have a great festive bit and remember to emerge from the games room at least once a day to feed.

AtariBaby

First with the goodies!

SA's largest PlayStation Retailer!





FIFA 2000
450 of the World's Top Teams. Increased physical contact and 40 classic teams. Pit your teams against the all time greats!
R329

TONY HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING
Skate like the pro's, without the broken bones and bruises it takes to be No.1!
R399.00

WCW MAYHEM
Heart pounding, muscle aching, bone crushing action!
R329.00

XENA WARRIOR PRINCESS
Use Xena's special powers to battle epic mystical creatures.
R359.00

STAR WARS EPISODE 1 THE PHANTOM MENACE
"Feel" the Force as you blast your way through this epic adventure!
R399.00

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2
Stealing cars is just the beginning of a life dedicated to gangs and crime syndicates - but beware of which enemies you make!
R379.00

QUAKE II
The world's biggest selling game arrives. Quake on!
R399.00

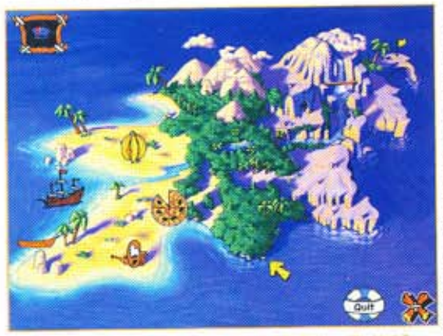
CNA INTERACTIVE STORES: Alkantrand, Balfour Park, Bedford Centre, Brooklyn Plaza, Cavendish, Centurion Centre, Cloisters, Eastgate, East Rand Mall, Fourways Mall, Great North Greenacres, Killarney Mall, Kolonnade, Lakeside Mall, Louis Trichardt, Lowveldt, Menlyn Park, Middestad Centre, Midrand, Musgrave Centre, Nedbank Cresta, N1 City, Pavillion, Riverside Mall, Riverwalk, Rivonia, Rosebank Mall, Sandton City, Secunda, Somerset Mall, Southgate, Sunny Park, Table View, The Bridge, Tygervalley, Victoria Wharf, Vincent Park, Vryburg, Waterfall Park and Westgate.

E&OE. All prices include VAT. Offer valid while stocks last.

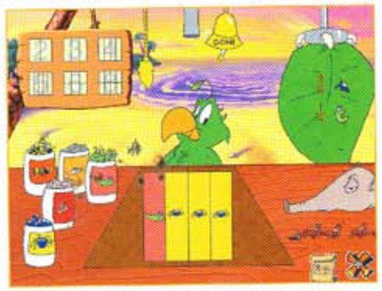
If you told almost any parent a few years ago that computer games would eventually become the perfect tool for teaching children mathematics, reading and other subjects they would have laughed at you. The Learning Company has always come up with high quality educational titles that are fun to play and really do teach kids a thing or two. So who is laughing now?

Reader Rabbit's Maths Ages 6-8

Maths is generally a tough subject to master at school so what better environment to learn all about fractions, identifying numerical patterns and multiplication than a tropical island complete with rat pirates and buried cheese (treasure). Like most educational kids titles, Reader Rabbit's Maths Ages 6-8 is full of 'games' that are really more about learning and the activities in each game are geared around solving mathematical problems to progress further. In this game, once these individual problems are solved and as each separate game is successfully completed, the player is presented with a reward. These rewards are parts and supplies for a new ship and the player is presented with an overall objective of building a new boat to leave the island. There are 9 games in total and if you return to the same game again after completing it the first time the mathematical complexity of the specific problem increases. The main game interface is an island map and from here kids can click on various areas to start the different games or simply go and spy on the pirates' hideout. It's not all about solving problems and there are two other areas you can visit on the island that are there just for fun. The first area is your base camp where you can check up on the ongoing process of building your ship, here you'll find a checklist with a detailed list of what you have and what you don't. The other area open for exploration is the pirates' hideout, and if players are lucky enough they might actually find pirates in the hideout and can listen to one of the many pirate songs in the game. The game's graphics are of a high standard with humorous animations and short videos to move the overall story and link up the different games, something different is always happening on the screen and this effectively eliminates the possibility of players becoming bored half way through. The other important area here that has been well covered is the sound, each character has a distinctive voice and all the voice acting is of a high standard, it's loud and in your face, working together with the graphics and prolonging the attention span. The interface is easy to grasp and works well within the game world, never once coming across as confusing to understand or difficult to manipulate. As you would expect there are also a number of difficulty settings and a good reporting system for parents or teachers that highlights where kids are having trouble. It's no substitute for any real teacher / parent child interaction but gives a good idea of where to start looking and is great incentive and praise for a job well done.



WHO WANTS TO DO SUMS ON A TROPICAL ISLAND?


MAKING PIZZA AND LEARNING FRACTIONS

Games

The games are divided up into two different types of activities, arcade (faster paced) and exploration (slower).

Arcade Activities

Don't Wake the Pirates
Educational focus: Identifying number patterns, adding and subtracting numbers to form a series and practising the multiplication tables.

Fishing for Numbers
Educational focus: Adding and subtracting two-digit numbers, multiplying to create two-digit products and dividing with one and two digit dividends.

Pirate Splash
Educational focus: Recognising when a number is greater or less than another number, between two numbers and recognising when a number is greater or less than a math expression (using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division).

Exploration Activities

Sail Maker
Educational focus: Creating basic geometric shapes, completing symmetric shapes, determining the area of a shape, creating shapes within a specific area and creating shapes with a specific measurement.

Going Bananas
Educational focus: Exploring the concept of place value, adding two and three digit numbers (with and without regrouping), subtracting two and three digit numbers (with and without regrouping), multiplying with numbers less than 10.

Monkey Pizza Party
Educational focus: Creating fractions, creating equivalent fractions and exploring addition of fractions.

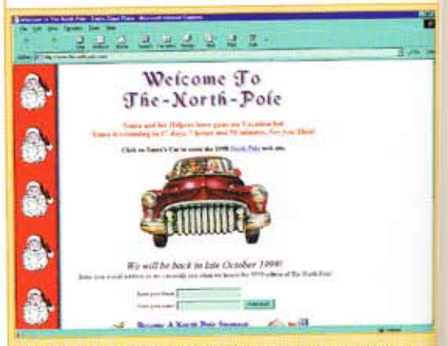
Pirate Lookout
Educational focus: Reading a clock, adding and subtracting on a clock.

Tourist Trap
Educational focus: Counting, adding and subtracting money (this is American Dollar based and useless in South Africa).

Number Line Measurement
Educational focus: Finding a number on a number line, adding and subtracting numbers on a number line and solving multiple-step problems.

Category: Education | **Ages:** 6-8 | **Internet:** http://www.learningco.com | **System Requirements:** 486 DX/66 or Higher - Windows 3.1 - 16 MB RAM - 20 MB HHD - 1 MB Video Card | **Developer:** The Learning Company | **Publisher:** Mattel Interactive | **Distributor:** EA Africa (011) 803-1212 | **RRP:** R 179.00

Kids Net



You've heard rumours somewhere that there are good sites for kids on the Internet, but finding them is proving a little difficult, especially since you'd rather be surfing for other more important things, like rugby and soccer scores. Don't give up yet because Santa Clause has his own special spot on the Internet. The site, surprisingly enough, is located at http://www.the-north-pole.com/ making it easy to remember for kids and suitably named to boot. Once inside the site you can send a letter to Santa, send a letter from the North Pole to a relative and even do a little Christmas shopping. The site also has a number of 'interactive' things for kids to do including singing along with Christmas carols and discovering different ways to entertain themselves during December with recipes and crafts for kids (supervision recommended in the kitchen!). Besides the fun and games kids can also travel around the world and see how children celebrate the festive season in other countries and read up on the history of Santa Clause. It's a fun site and well worth a visit, even if it's only once a year around this time.

No matter how much paper you put down or what you restrict their 'creative' activities to, kids will always make a mess. Paint programs for children are great, now you can let them spend that quality time in front of a computer monitor and after the fun and games are over all you need to do is click your mouse a few times and all that mess just disappears.

Disney's Magic Artist Studio

Disney's Magic Artist Studio is a basic paint program for 'kids' of all ages, and even the odd parent. All the tools you'd expect to find in a title such as this are present and accounted for plus an impressive selection of special painting tools and a wonderful library of Disney's Magic Stamps (animated Disney characters, static backgrounds and props for each of the many included themes). There are three unique studio areas, starting with the Creation Area where you can work with 15 different tools from the Tool Drawer, these include things like a shape maker, eraser, image spray and normal items such as pencils, paintbrushes and markers. Clicking on the tools again after they've been selected will turn them into Twisted Tools, a weird selection of modified versions of the original tools. The second creation area is the Stamp Drawer where you can choose from over 100 Magic Stamps, which can then be combined with your own creations. The last area, Under the Hood, is where you can organise your creations into impressive slide shows with music and a wide range of image transitions. These files can then be outputted as .AVI files, which can be sent to granny and grandpa via e-mail. There is an additional section called Chalk Talk where kids can learn how to create their own simple chalk animations, which can then, again, be combined with all previous work on the same page. Each drawing tool has a number of different sliders that change what the tool does on the canvas. There are endless combinations that can be fiddled with making for greater end result variety. Two of the more fun tools in the line up are the Image Spray Tool that will paint animated images such as bugs and popcorn. The other is the Image Tube Tool that lets you make lines out of things like ribbon and even worms. Besides watching the pre-set animations on the stamps you can also make your own basic animated pictures by using the Doodle Morph Tool. Using a key frame animation technique you can draw a line or shape and then after drawing a second line or shape you can watch your first shape or line transform into the second one. This tool ties in with the basic animation tools so after seeing what can be achieved kids can try it out for themselves. Images can be imported into the program for basic manipulation and all pictures can be exported as either Windows .BMP files or .AVI movie files. Overall this painting program is great fun… for a while, but simply doesn't have enough real variation to keep most kids occupied for hours on end. What it does is provide an excellent platform for creativity and even offers a limited course in animation by the experts of art.

LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES WITH THE PROVIDED TOOLS

Category: Creativity | **Ages:** All Ages | **Internet:** http://www.disneyinteractive.com | **System Requirements:** Pentium 133 MHz - Windows 95 - 32 MB RAM - 70 MB HHD - 1MB Video Card | **Developer:** Disney Interactive | **Publisher:** Infogrames | **Distributor:** Crew (011) 233-1111 | **RRP:** R 299.00

Animated villains are always on the receiving end of all the punishment, so wouldn't it be great if they started changing the rules and did away, once and for all, with all the happy endings?

Disney's Villains' Revenge

Disney's Villains' Revenge is an elaborately presented collection of eleven simple games, seven of the games are immediately available but the final four will only be unlocked once you've beaten the game by defeating all the villains. This is a good carrot for kids and encourages them to continue playing right until the end. Some of the games are very simple while others are a little tricky and there are a few tedious games in the mixture that fail to keep players interested for long. This title is purely a kid's game and has no 'educational' value, so know what you're buying. Naturally Disney's graphical content is without equal and features Jiminy Cricket, game's host, as he leads you through the whole story occasionally offering useful advice when things get hairy. During a video sequence players are transported out of a kid's bedroom and into a storybook, a book without any happy endings. Once in the story mode they must select which story to 'fix' and so the adventure begins. Some of the games include having to mix ingredients into the queen's cauldron to wake Snow White, guiding Alice through a topiary maze (in the first person), fighting Captain Hook with mouse guided sword play and saving Dumbo from crazy circus clowns. After completing all these games you have one final confrontation, after which you are returned back to the room. If you've successfully completed all the games in the book the Blue Fairy will enchant some of your bedroom toys which then become four separate games, games that offer a little more replay value than the ones in the storybook mode. These involve a dancing clown whose dance moves must be mimicked; a simple coin game, similar to noughts and crosses; a puzzle game where players must help the Seven Dwarves through a mine and finally a maze game where you must guide a purple worm to freedom. Overall the collection of games is well presented and the lead into each one is engrossing - an excellent collection that suffers a little from a few instances of tedious play but the good here far outweighs the bad.

Category: Games | **Ages:** 8 & Up | **Internet:** http://www.disneyinteractive.com | **System Requirements:** Pentium 133 MHz - Windows 95 - 16 MB RAM - 60 MB HHD - 1MB Video Card | **Developer:** Disney Interactive | **Publisher:** Infogrames | **Distributor:** Crew (011) 233-1111 | **RRP:** R 299.00

Charts

1	Freddi Fish Deluxe	GT Interactive
2	JumpStart First Grade	Havas Interactive
3	Reader Rabbit Personalised 2nd Grade	Mattel Interactive
4	Reader Rabbit Personalised 1st Grade	Mattel Interactive
5	JumpStart Pre-school	Havas Interactive

Competition

2 lucky parents each stand a chance to win a Jump*Start reading or maths title here in our new section. Just tell us who distributes Disney Interactive in South Africa and send your answers to the usual e-mail and postal addresses with 'Kids' as the subject. PO Box 2749 Alberton.

About the Man - Peter Molyneux

There are few icons in our industry and even fewer who manage to continually create games that break new ground. Peter Molyneux, who sold up Bullfrog two years ago and started a team known as Lionhead, is putting the final touches to his next game called Black & White. Having first met Peter 10 years ago whilst he was making his first hit Populous no one would know that this unassuming and amusing man was a millionaire. Most people in his position would grant you an audience for 30 minutes but Peter is still eager to talk and explain and so time is never a problem. I met up with Peter to find out a bit more about what makes him tick and also delve into Black and White at his Guildford office!

Derek dela Fuente

NAG : Where would you be now if the gaming thing hadn't happened?
PM : I really do not want to think where I might have been. I have a strong belief that I am not that intelligent. I can't write or draw, play music or do sports. I live and breathe games. I would possibly be in some corporate hell not doing very well. If I had the gift of being clever then I would have gone into genetic engineering!

NAG : Who is your role model?
PM : Shigeru Miyamoto, the guy who wrote Zelda. This is the game I would have most liked to work on.

NAG : Has your lifestyle changed much?
PM : Ten years ago I lived on baked beans and could not pay the bills. Now I do not have to struggle but I love creating games. I have tried to give it up but after a week I felt panicky and stressed so I do what makes me happy. This is my life!

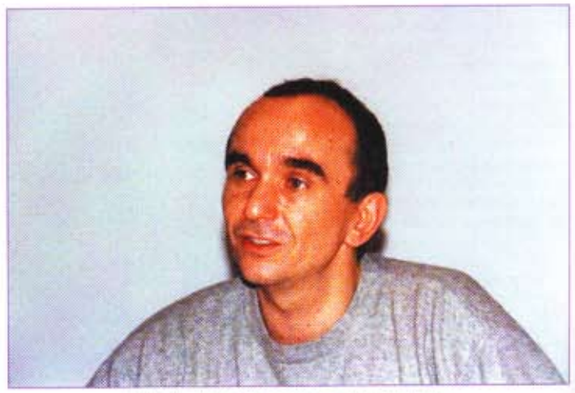
NAG : What games are you looking forward to?
PM : I am looking forward to playing Homeworld. I have a copy but daren't boot it up, as I will not have time to do other things. Quake 3 and also rumours about Civilization 3.

NAG : What are your favourite games?
PM : It must be Zelda. The first game I bought was Space Invaders on the BBC Acorn that I was really disappointed with. It did not live up to the arcade version. The first game I bought and enjoyed was Defender of the Crown on the Amiga and Red Alert is one of my all time favourites.

NAG : What is your hidden talent?
PM : What I do best is to get the best out of people and spot their talent. When I first met Glen Corpes, who wrote many games for Bullfrog, he walked into the office, had never written a game, was a computer operator, never done any programming but once I spoke to him I knew the guy was a genius.

NAG : What was the best day in your life?
PM : This is going to sound really boring but it was the first showing of B/W. There was a lot riding on it and it was incredible the reaction I got.

NAG : Which game was your biggest disappointment?
PM : I really enjoyed Red Alert, I must have played this five times from start to finish and I was like a 12-year-old kid waiting for Tiberian Sun and I was really disappointed. It was good but wasn't what I had expected. With three years in development, I expected a lot more. To add I believe there is a lack of vision in our industry. When people spend all that money on motion caption suites it was a darn waste of money. You only need it for a week so why buy it!


ONE OF THE FEW AND RARE GAMING GODS!

NAG : What is your favourite pastime?
PM : My love and passion is creating computer games. I have no real hobbies. In the week I never really switch off. I work every hour I can. Yesterday for instance, which is nothing unusual, I started work at 11am and 4.30am the next day I would go home sleep and start again. At the weekend I never go near or turn on a computer - anything but - I get drunk. I do not even watch TV much. I guess I socialise a lot but nothing more. There is not enough room in my mind for any hobby. If you are designing a game you must be obsessed with it and so that does not leave you any room for anything else. I can't understand how people can flit between so many things. My focus is on games!

> "Image is very important to the company and me but I have never been on any courses to learn the best way to get over an idea. It is all via lots of years of experience. It is being passionate about the games you are working on that you can endear yourself to the public. If you take out time to explain things then people will be more ready to talk and ask questions. The real trick, as far as I can see, is taking notice of journalists and the public. When I explain a game, I take note of their reaction. If I see a spark of interest in their eyes I know they have taken things in and if I notice lots of people are interested in one area then I will work on that element even more! One smile or one reaction is all I need! I show games a lot earlier than most developers so I can get the feedback I need. I can easily see if they are bored."
>
> - Peter Molyneux

NAG : Has being dyslexic affected your life at all?
PM : Being dyslexic was a problem at school, so much so that the school said that I would never achieve anything or be suitable for any real kind of job. People thought I was lazy and in my school days dyslexia was unheard of. People with dyslexia cannot express themselves on paper and I still cannot but give me a computer with a word processor - complete with spell and grammar checker and I am fine. You will never see me writing notes on paper. I was on a TV program about being Dyslexic and the general opinion was that people who are dyslexic are more creative but I would challenge this point. If you were to ask me to write an essay on paper I would break out into a sweat!

NAG : What do you have in your pocket right now?
PM : Ha, I have 2 lighters and a wallet, yes I smoke. The reason for two lighters is that people say I steal their lighters so having two makes me feel at ease.

NAG : Where do you get your inspiration?
PM : The ideas for games? Hmm. They usually come at any time but it is unfair for me to say that I design games for I may come up with the initial idea but then a team will work on it. You have never seen in a manual or on a box that the game designer is Peter Molyneux, that is unfair.

THE OLD BLACK & WHITE PHOTO - NOT THE GAME!

NOW THIS ALMOST LOOKS LIKE THE NAG OFFICES

The idea could be two tiny bits of paper but in the end it is all of us, hence, Bullfrog.

NAG : Did you ever think your life would turn out this way? (I produced a photo of Peter 10 years ago, which I took before Bullfrog were a name)
PM : Wow look at that photo, you &*$#?! I certainly had more hair. I was writing Populous with Glen Corpes and others. No I never imagined that things would turn out like they have. I still wake up and think this is a bizarre dream. I have been incredibly lucky. Being in the right place at the right time.

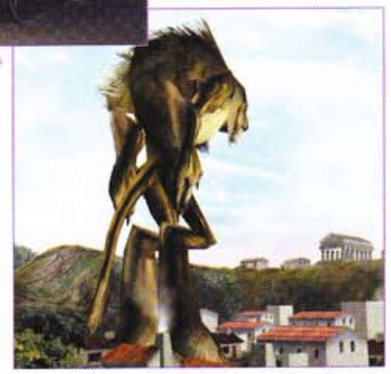
NAG : What are your feelings about Bullfrog?
PM : I never feel jealous about Bullfrog but very protective. It is also good to see games I worked on coming out in new versions that are so good. Being a part of the original Populous or Theme Park game is a tremendous feeling. It is a slice of immortality. Bullfrog has 250 people; I started it with just five of us. I do feel jealous with the resources they have but I have been paid well for selling the company!

NAG : What makes you laugh?
PM : Anything to do with toilets. We British are very 'lavatorial'. People in any other country do not understand this but we do! Strangely enough, and I am not doing this purposely, in B/W you actually see bodily functions being performed. To put it in a straightforward way, turds can actually kill people if they get hit from the great height of the creature's outlet!

NAG : What makes you angry?
PM : I do not suffer fools very well. I hate people who are foolish intentionally. I have no patience with them. It is terrible to waste your life being stupid, you only live once and so you must take things seriously and to the full. You are only here for a small time so make the most of it. (So what about drunks?) No, anyone who is drunk is different and I speak from personal experience for I love a good drink. Although it does not make me angry, it does annoy, when at a dinner party you mention you write games, people look at you with glazed eyes and say... really?! Then I will go and get another drink!

NAG : What is your motto?
PM : Don't be impatient!

NAG : Why Black and White?
PM : I have always wanted to create a game with a single creature that was a representation of the player playing it. I have always been asked what's the point in such and such a game. Every time I have said, you play through the levels, etc. I have thrown away levels and presented chapters and now it is so much clearer. People can now understand they are playing in a setting that they can create and change. This is an incredibly rewarding game. I can go and look at the game hours on and find it has changed completely. This is what games are about. Even using the word 'game' sounds slightly derogatory. This I hope is a new genre but that is up to other people to say. I will only say this cannot be categorised.


A SCREENSHOT FROM BLACK & WHITE, PREVIEWED THIS ISSUE

NAG : How would you sum yourself up?
PM : I would say I am a chaotic person but unpredictably calm!

NAG : What is your earliest recollection as a child?
PM : I was born in Beckenham, a small town in Kent. This town has no real claim to fame apart from Bill Wyman going to school there, as well as David Bowie. My only claim to fame is that my uncle owned a garage there, which was a landmark built like a Chinese pegoda! I was born in my grandmothers house and the only recollection I have is a photo of me two hours after my birth in my mother's arms, her cradling me - like a real cherub with her looking at me lovingly with a cigarette hanging out of her mouth! Was I going to end up a smoker...? I think so.

NAG : When were you born?
PM : May 1959 born a Taurian - Hence the name of my first company with ex Bullfrog partner Les Edgar (Les also being Taurus) was Taurus where we wrote our first games, as well as application programmes, the most remembered being Acquisition!

NAG : What did you do after you left school?
PM : I went to university and got a degree in computer science and then got the conventional job, became a consultant working in the city designing databases for corporate clients which then progressed onto Taurus and forming our own company to produce our own application programs. With spare time and a love for games... the rest is now history.

NAG : What are your favourite web sites?
PM : I spend a great deal of time on the Internet and love Jeeves site which is really a search engine. Amazon.com is also where I go a lot. I spend a good few hours there some days. I used to run ICQ but had around 2000 people listed so when I loaded up, Whoosh, everyone knew I was around and kept on sending questions so now I have a pseudonym and I still use ICQ. I tend to steer clear of the popular sites and one of the biggest flaws on the net is its speed can sometimes be so slow. The Internet is a brilliant idea and has brought a refreshing cultural change but one day when things get faster then it will get even bigger. Can you believe that last week I went on the net to do all my Christmas shopping? I am a technical person, understand the net to the full, so it could not be easier. I went to buy a starry starry night pillow, logged on to the site and it took me an hour and a half to order. I could have flown over to the manufacturer in less time. I believe the Internet is a bigger cultural change than we now realise. How it will change in 10 years I cannot say but it will play a massive part in everyone's daily life. The Internet is still in its infancy!

NAG : Why work when you can retire?
PM : I've made computer games the pivotal part of my life. I've enjoyed every single day I've worked on Black & White I can't see any reason to stop now.

NAG : What is your favourite food and drink?
PM : Easy. My favourites are Beer and Spaghetti.

NAG : What cars do you own?
PM : A Nissan Skyline, a fabulous car and an Aston Martin. Why an Aston Martin? Yes it is a James Bond car but I like its temperamental features. It always has some feible. I could be going at 80 mph and all of a sudden it would slow down. I decided on my cars through a famous TV car presenter called Jeremy Clarkeson. I was on a plane flying across to the US to literally pocket a cheque for 2 million pounds and watching a program on board in which Jeremy was saying... if you had the money then an Aston Martin is the car. I bought it and hate it, I despise it.

NAG : What is your favourite movie?
PM : Forbidden Planet (1939) a science fiction film or Blade Runner or Beauty and the Beast.

NAG : What is your marital status?
PM : Single.

NAG : Where do you see the future of gaming?
PM : The computer game is still not mass market but it will be someday despite what people are saying. I believe that 80% of the people will own and play games. With machines like PSX2, entertainment boxes will be a new perception on things and not game machines, as it will play DVD, music, films, etc. If the games industry is an art form, then we are presenting a very primitive one just like the early silent movies. When we start to deal with emotions in a game and caring about characters in a game will we then start to see it become mass market? I ask the question with a film you have the beginning 20 minutes, the middle and the end, two hours where people become really immersed in the characters and the plot. With a game you have characters that are there for months so when you get someone to write a story to pluck the emotion will be when the gaming industry really takes off.

The look of the game with its manga-spiced graphics is in the style of Resident Evil and one that is viewed as a real epic to have you on the edge of your seat. The plot is very closely based on the Akera film and you take the part of Rion who is unwillingly being tested on in a laboratory.

Derek dela Fuente

GALERIANS

Rion is an extremely gifted young man. He is blessed with telepathic powers that have helped him through many a scrape, but now everything's gone horribly wrong. Trapped in a world of drugs, chimaeras and nightmares, Rion must lead the battle for Good against Evil in the high-rise slums of the Japanese Metropolis set 500 years in the future. The game starts as you see Rion strapped down in the lab but using your mind power you break free and now is your chance to escape. The essential feature of the game is that as the hero you can use your psychic abilities to open things and move objects. The game has some really clever graphics and features. If you by chance find a mirror, looking into it will give you some flashback of what has happened and some short segments of what is about to happen helping the player get a real fix on the plot line. Having lost your memory trying to find out what has happened is a part of your objective, why you have been experimented on, and this gradually comes back via the unfolding story. All you really know at the start is that you are in a lab and must escape!

The player will also constantly hear a girl's voice throughout the game which in itself is a part of the solution to the whole game. Galaerian is a massive game, hence it coming on 3 CDs, and the laboratory section - which is three levels - equates to one floor in Resident Evil. The PR person for Crave was at pains to point out some of the features that made it a better experience than Resident Evil. There you had to watch your ammo and pretty much up front there is lots of subtlety to the game so you must heed what you do. For instance dotted around the locations are chemicals that you will find and be able to take but pop too many and it will drive you crazy and you must search for a quick fix tablet that will calm things down. The chemicals equate to adding abilities but using them properly and not in one mad rush is part of succeeding in the game.

Getting out of the lab and making your way to the mansion you will be confronted by some shady characters and their attacking moves are impressive, having some of the abilities you have! At the end of the level is a tasty confrontation with a cyborg. Crave, "The game mixes a lot of different game's styles - fighting, action, exploration and plenty of puzzles, many of which are quite intelligent. Of course things will gradually get harder so at the start you may need to find a fuse to turn on the lights but later on things really start to become devious. Most other games are too obvious. We believe the game is very intellectual!"

Rion has two kinds of psychic abilities, the offensive where you can take chemicals, which give you sonic blasts, or the triangle button where you will be able to sense things, which is more defensive. On screen info and icons are on display to allow the player to know which strengths are high and which are low. All the weapons are in Rion's mind so the game is quite clever using physic mind power. You will actually see this power manifest in action. For instance if you want a fireball you will summon this via your mind although this actual action, one of the many, may be toned down for the European market. In effect each chemical you find will give you a power and the more of the chemical you take will heighten the ability even more, so you must really use them with care. As the game has already been released in Japan, the process making it European is a very long one and there is a chance that some details of the game might change. Some censorship of the game whilst it is being converted is already underway. Taking chemicals via injection is out for it may convey the drug culture so it will be done via screen meters. Also no heads exploding with blood but sparks when you overload with chemicals. Crave commented that any changes will not give the game less impact as the story line, battles and look are already very strong. Experience a gripping PlayStation adventure that you won't be able to put down. ASCII's top programmers have created a 3D epic that will freeze the blood in your veins. Moulded into the dynamic action sequences of the gameplay, Galerians offers a breath-taking story line that gives no peace to the player.

PlayStation PREVIEWS

DEREK DELA FUENTE

VIGILANTE 8 2nd OFFENSE

Developed by Luxoflux Corp., Vigilante 8: Second Offence delivers non-stop intense full-throttle vehicular mayhem complete with new outrageous vehicles equipped with enhanced capabilities and a variety of unique charismatic characters. The game introduces players to a host of different challenges and objectives as they battle through a series of death matches in realistic fully destructible off-road arenas spanning the United States. The sequel will expand on all of the breakthrough features of Vigilante 8 including one of the most popular and unique elements of the original game, the quest mode, by introducing larger and more challenging quests with diverse objectives. Other features include new power-ups, weapons, special moves and modes of play. Additionally the game introduces an improved level of graphical detail including exhaust, fog, water effects, brake lights and bigger and better explosions. If the first V8 is anything to go on then the sequel should be something special to look out for. Fast paced action in the 'Twisted Metal' frame of mind is what all serious PlayStation owners are looking for. [NAG]

TO SAVE THE FUTURE, SHE MUST FACE HER PAST.

TOMB RAIDER THE LAST REVELATION™

DISTRIBUTED CREW

PC CD

SOULMINDER INTERACTIVE

www.playstation.co.za

CORE

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

PlayStation

Tomb Raider The Last Revelation & Lara Croft © & TM Core Design Limited 1999. © & Published by Eidos Interactive Limited 1999. All Rights Reserved. "PS" and "PlayStation" are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

PREVIEWS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

GOD BLESS THE RING

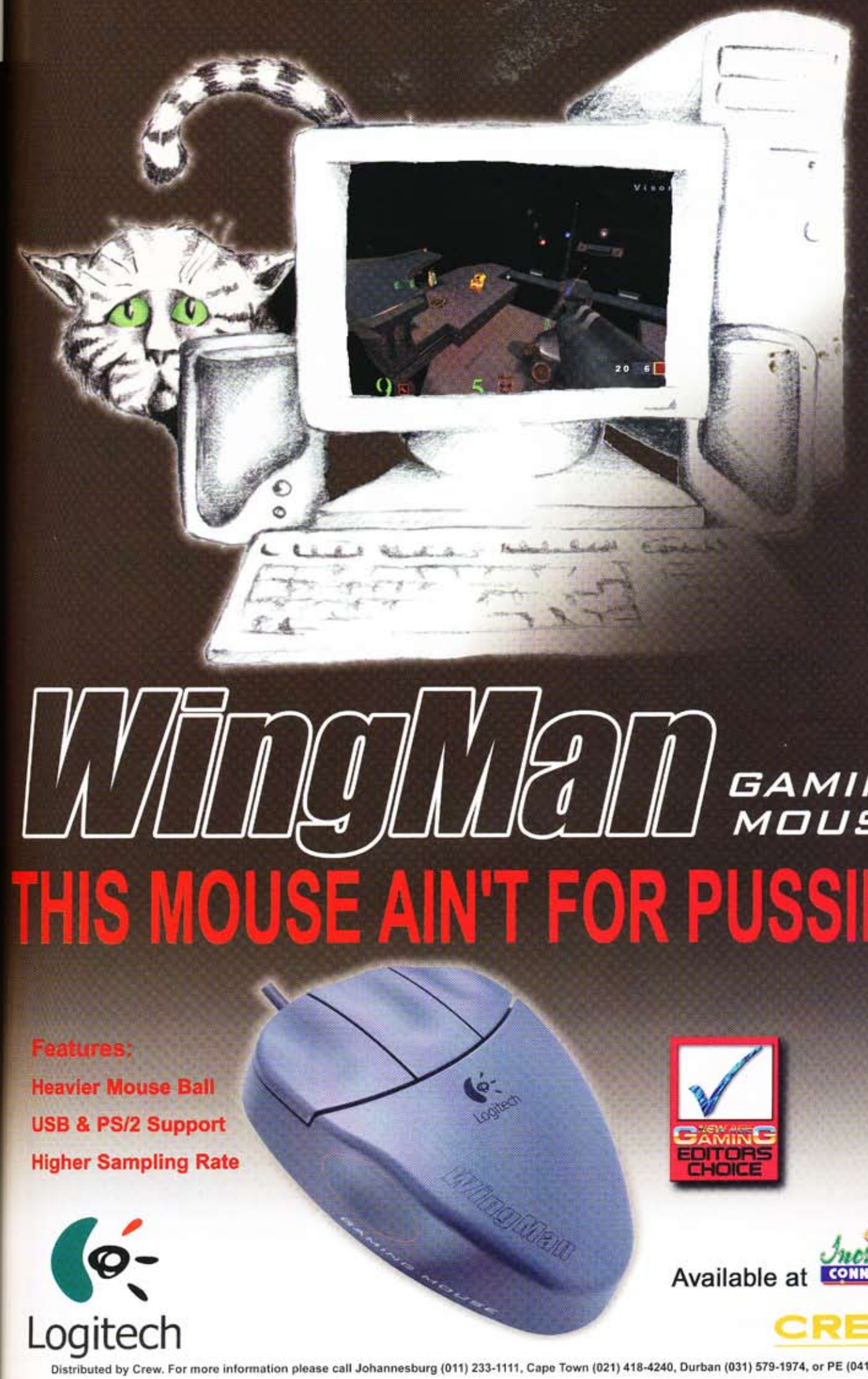
EZ エアガイツ EHRGEIZ

You've got ten seconds to correctly pronounce the name, Ehrgeiz. Tough nut to crack that one, the worst part is trying to tell your friends how much butt you kicked last night while playing your new game. They'll probably just get stuck on the name and quickly forget your triumphant horn blowing while asking you, 'what game, say that again?' That's just the name, not very important, what is important is that it's from the Final Fantasy people and it's starting to look like Ehrgeiz is going to be the next big thing. The game is an arcade fighting game with a smattering of role playing elements, basically it's like Tekken combined with a cut down version of any recent Final Fantasy game. The tale behind the game begins 50 years ago where a mysterious weapon, (known simply as Ehrgeiz) made from an unknown material is found in the remains of an ancient German castle. It eventually was presented to the winner of a tournament that determined the world's greatest fighter. In the game players will find themselves fighting to save the world, exploring ruins for the secret of immortality and testing their skills in fighting contests. What makes the game all that much more special is the varied array of characters, all bringing something different to the table. For example take Yoko Kishibojin, a young 17-year old girl skilled in martial arts and the use of a deadly yo-yo. Next up we have Han Daehan, a 23-year old action movie star from Korea who uses his artificial leg to fire missiles at unsuspecting opponents. As an extra bonus the game also features characters from the Final Fantasy VII game world, three of which are available immediately and three that must be unlocked. The straight up fighting mode of the game features a new engine that allows for full 3D movement anywhere in the arena regardless of where your opponent is and generates some lightning fast battles with large well defined characters. The fighting mode will include four mini games, Battle Panel, a strategy style game, Battle Beach, a barefoot race requiring insanely quick button presses and finally Infinity Battle, an endurance based fighting game. So the final line up has 3 arcade modes, 4 mini-games and a stand alone role playing game where you play an archaeologist descending into a dungeon on a quest to find the spring of eternal life. There are two modes to the quest game, normal mode where you can return to the village to purchase weapons and equipment and the hard mode where you enter the dungeon and can only return when you find eternal life. So far, first looks at this title only impressed with its many game modes and slick fighting engine, if all goes well it might just be the genre mixing title that all others are judged by in future. [NAG]

The highly anticipated movie event of 2000 will soon be the video game event of the year when Disney Interactive, Inc., launches the new title based on Disney / Pixar's Toy Story 2. The game's launch is expected to coincide with the release of Disney / Pixar's computer-generated animated film Toy Story 2 early next year. Based on Disney / Pixar's upcoming sequel to the hit animated film, Toy Story 2 is a 3D, third-person free-roaming adventure game that uses the magic of Pixar computer-generated animation to deliver a unique mix of gameplay elements. As the resourceful hero Buzz Lightyear, players embark on a perilous quest to save Woody from an overzealous toy collector. Players must navigate through seven action-packed worlds filled with dangerous obstacles, environmental challenges, and unique enemies. [NAG]

SPACE DEBRIS™

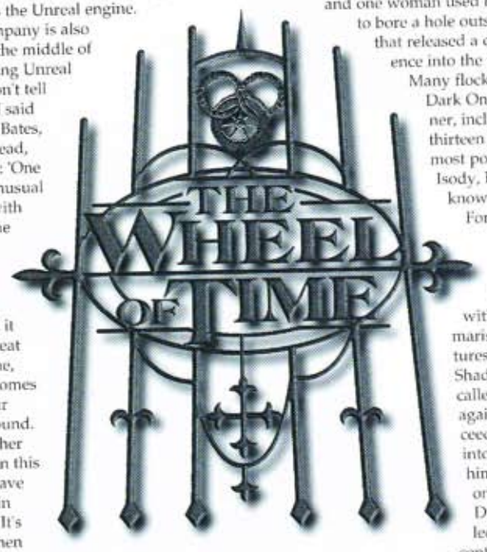
It seems the Earth is quite a popular target in the future and whenever we see a slice of life in the near future it's a marred and tatty place that's either sinking under the weight of its own problems or under attack from above. Fortunately there is always some hero type just waiting in the wings to be discovered and save the day, just in time, again. This time around that hero is James Bryant, a crack pilot of the UFL (United Earth Defences) who has to mobilise a fighting force to deal with the imminent attack by aliens who have just entered our solar system. Bryant must lead an advanced force to engage the enemy and draw them out. The UED fleet soon makes contact with the enemy as is quickly overcome by superior firepower, forced to retreat and regroup. Somehow Bryant is left stranded behind enemy lines, before he can even consider his options he receives a distress signal from a nearby UED research outpost where he meets Dr. Band. With a little help from the doctor Bryant must now put an end to this alien invasion even if it means sacrificing his own body. Space Debris is a fast paced 3D action shooter, played in the third person the game spreads the pain across ten levels all featuring their own geography and level end bosses. The game looks very similar to Omega Boost, but does promise to offer more variation in play with a greater number of environments and a solid story. From the early release version, the emphasis is very clearly on action and the evolving story, as one section is completed a full motion video sequence kicks in and gives purpose to the upcoming battle. The way the video sequences compliment the action is an approach that works well and you really feel that the fate of mankind rests in your sweaty palm. There will be a total of six different craft you can play with, including a huge mechanised robot and the highly classified Phoenix, a man machine hybrid that was outlawed after initial experiments went bang. Unlike Omega Boost the game boasts a wide variety of combat environments and players will get to travel through space, explore relic space stations and even find themselves flying through craters and valleys. One unique feature worth mentioning are the giant bosses in the game, some of them are so massive that their entire bulk won't fit on a single screen. Spaces Debris is looking really fine at this stage and the five play modes (including two player modes) the game has, are sure to prolong its life. This title promises to be a must for the action fan, but if you tire quickly of repetitive shooting at aliens then you might be better off looking at something else. [NAG]



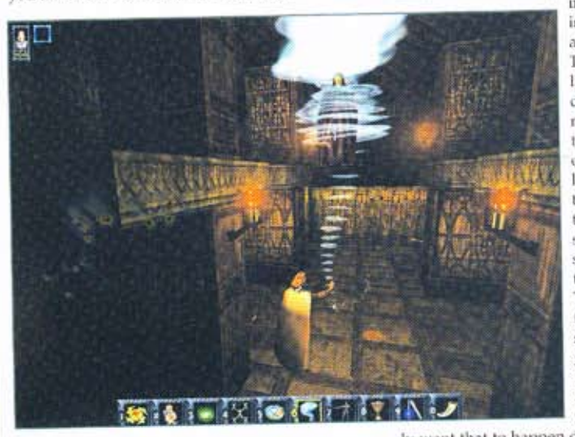
Legend Entertainment has been developing games based on fantasy and science fiction worlds for around ten years, covering authors such as Piers Anthony (Xanth), Terry Brookes (Shannarah) and Spider Robinson (Callaghans Crosstime Saloon). Apart from being in the same stable regarding content, all those games were adventures, a genre the company is moving away from. Wheel of Time, due for release in January 2000 from GT Interactive (the publisher who bought Legend last December), is one of a series of books by fantasy writer Robert Jordan, a man who's novels make War and Peace seem like a flyer. The first of the eight tome series, Eye of the Beholder, stretched to 800 pages whilst subsequent offerings are a shelf bending 1,000 pages. In his collection, Jordan has created a very detailed world that Glen Dahlgren, a designer for Legend, wanted to turn into a game.

Derek dela Fuente

In a radical departure for the company, Wheel of Time will be their inaugural foray into the first person shooter. It's also a game that uses the Unreal engine. (The company is also right in the middle of developing Unreal 2, but don't tell anyone I said so). Bob Bates, studio head, explains: 'One of the unusual things with this game is that, for a first person shooter, it has a great story line, which comes from our background. Most other games in this genre have very thin stories. It's only when you see a loading message that you realise you've completed a level.' In Wheel of Time, cut scenes explain what's happening to move the story forward with a straight forward account of what you have to do at the start of each level.



YOU CAN EXPECT SOME STUNNING LEVELS DESIGNED BY REAL ARCHITECTS



Story

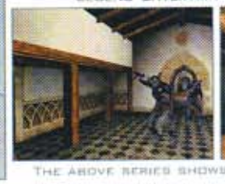
As the Wheel of Time revolves, legends fade into myth that in turn is forgotten when the age that gave it birth returns. In one such age man enjoyed a time of great prosperity and a certain race, the Isody, were born with the ability to sense enchantment with a single power. This power was the energy at the centre of the Universe and, drawing on it, the Isody could accomplish anything: they controlled the weather, healed the sick and were almost immortal. With this mastery, however, came arrogance and one woman used her power to bore a hole outside time that released a dark presence into the world. Many flocked to the Dark One's banner, including thirteen of the most powerful Isody, later known as the Forsaken. Their army was filled with nightmarish creatures and the War of the Shadow had begun. A man called Dragon led an assault against the Dark One and succeeded in forcing him back into the hole, trapping him and the Forsaken on the other side. The Dragon created a collection of stone seals containing the power that kept the breach closed. The seals were entrusted to the remaining Isody who kept them in the White Tower. Before being forced back, the Dark One tainted the male Isody driving them insane and causing them to ravage the world. The women rallied and destroyed the madmen but, in the ensuing chaos, many of the stone seals were lost, leaving only two in the White Tower. To this day, the Isody search for the missing seals but unknown to them, so do others....

The idea of the game is to gain control of four stone seals. If the bad guys, who have two, find two more, they'll be able to release the Dark One, and you don't really want that to happen do you? The Sisterhood of the Isody also has two and doubling those will seal in the Dark One forever. In Wheel of Time, you play Elaina Sidy, a member of the Brown Hasha, a group who studies magical artefacts. This is fairly handy because our heroine isn't possessed with the ability to channel power to create magic as the other Isody are; she has to collect and use artefacts that essentially form the weapons within the game (both offensive and defensive). The actual game begins in the White Tower where a lone assassin gains entry in an attempt to steal the two seals. Unsuccessful, he kills many of the women, pinches a lot of precious artefacts and escapes. The Isody send you out after him and the early levels of the game

consist of you chasing your quarry mostly through the deserted city of Shadar Logoth. Each of the weapons is made of a 'type', either earth, air, fire, water or spirit, and while this may not seem important to you now, it means that only shields of a similar 'type' can defend you. If you were paying attention earlier, you'll know that the artefacts are used to destroy and defend, so if a Trolluc shoots a fireball at you, only a fire shield will save you. Bob Bates again: 'Legend has created the environments you play through differently from most companies. Many use a level designer to invent a room, put textures on it, place creatures there and that's level one. We went through an unconventional process. We brought in a real architect who created the room geometry, from which the rooms are built, something that makes them look real. Artists came in to put textures on everything before the level designer populated them with creatures according to what Glen needed to advance the story for that level.' Like all level designers, those at Legend have put in lots of secret places where you can collect bits and pieces. It's something of a tradition in this genre of game that these areas are included for those players who want to explore everywhere. You don't need to find these rooms; it's simply that giving the game multiple paths results in longevity.

Genre: First Person Shooter [PC]
Developer: Legend Entertainment
Publisher: GT Interactive
Supplier: Crew
tel: (011) 233-1111
Expected Release Date: Dec/Jan 2000
Internet: http://www.gtinteractive.com

FROM CONCEPT ART (LEFT) TO RENDERED IMAGE (MIDDLE) TO FINAL IN-GAME VERSION (RIGHT), DEVELOPERS LEGEND ENTERTAINMENT, ARE PREPARING TO SCARE EVERYONE TO DEATH...EVEN THEMSELVES!



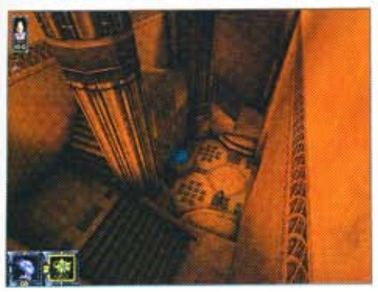
THE ABOVE SERIES SHOWS SOME OF THE UNIQUELY GROTESQUE, SCARY AND DEADLY BEASTS IN THE GAME

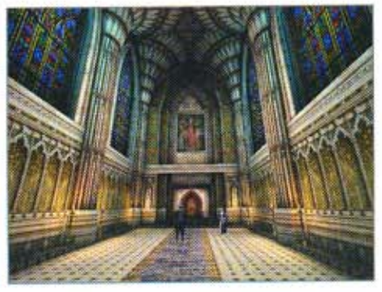
Puzzle me up

Now, Wheel of Time may very well be a shooter, but it can also be classed as an adventure game in that it's one of 'discovering'. To this end, Wheel of Time has to have puzzles in order for you to traverse the environments. In traditional adventure games, the player has to be given enough clues in order to use their own intelligence to solve the problem. In the world of the first person action game, players tend to run around without realising why certain things happen. Puzzles in this type of world aren't cerebral; they're trial and error ones that mostly happen to be of an access nature. One such puzzle sees you trying to escape from a locked room. There is a box of explosives by the door that you know you have to shoot to blow down this door. However, you'll be killed in the process unless you remember to wear the fire shield. Common sense really.

What about multiplayer? Is there one? In fact, there's two. Arena Deathmatch levels will be different to the 20 single player ones in that the latter is linear with regards to creatures to attack and places to get. Arena will be circular in nature and also enclosed, designed to keep you at each other's throats. The extra multiplayer variant is Citadel, similar to a 'capture the flag' game. Limited to 16 players, the idea of Citadel is to hide a given number of seals in your home base, set up defences then go out into the world, get your opponents seals and get them back to your own base. Legend originally had this Citadel section as third person but decided fairly early on, that a first person perspective would be more fun.

Wheel of Time has employed the talents of six programmers, four level designers, five in-house artists, three external art teams, two composers and 25 voice actors. A lot of people, but the most unbelievable fact is that development began shortly after Legend published Death Gate in 1994! Development in the sense that that's when Glen Dahlgren started toying with an idea for the game, actual software development has been around two years.





Quick Facts

Pick me up

Wheel of Time has a variety of pick-ups used for attack and defence including Fireball; Chain Lightning; Decay; Seeker; Dart Gun; Explosive Wards; Tracer; Whirlwind; Earth Tremor; Freeze and the games most powerful weapon, Bale Fire. That's only a small selection of the 40 artefacts scattered around the game that may come into play somewhere. Each one has a charge (the number of times it can be used) and there will be no limit as to how many you can carry.

Brain dead

Bob Bates believes the traditional point and click adventure is struggling for three reasons; 'When I designed games for Infocom, the puzzle was the thing. They made you think but as more people entered the market, they became more unfair for the player. It made them look stupid which isn't a good thing to do. Secondly, games are now very expensive to develop because the player wants an interactive environment. Text adventures were quick and cheap to make, but now you're limited to what you can include, which doesn't make for an interesting experience. Publishers see adventure games as a very risky genre. Lastly, games have moved in as replacements reflect our culture; they're very active, faster paced and less cerebral. What we're trying to do is take story telling elements and put them into other genres.'

DEREK DELA FUENTE

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Many see this action come realistic war game as one of Activision's most eagerly awaited titles. Its explosive action and varied missions ensure this is a game that both arcade gamers and even strategy fans will love. NAG spoke with Ken Hoekstra at Raven to get an in-depth insight into the title!

Derek Dela Fuente

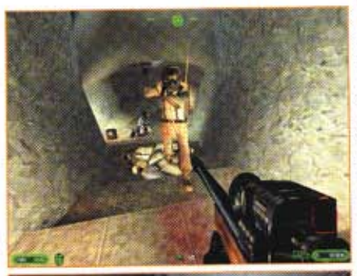
NAG: How many are working on the game?
KH: The core development team for Soldier of Fortune consists of four programmers, four level designers, three artists, two animators, a project administrator, project director, a sound/music guy and four leads for each of the respective departments: programming, design, art and animation.

NAG: What kind of research has gone into the game in terms of weapons, their real effect on the body and environment and how important is the story?
KH: We bought a lot of books and did a lot of research on the Internet to study weapons and their effects. Everyone on the team is an action movie fan, so we had no trouble finding references in the cinema. The best resource we found, however, was from John Mullins, the real-life mercenary we hired to consult on the game. His input on weapon effects, sound and gameplay was invaluable to the development process. The story and the plot are the driving forces behind the game. We want players to care about John Mullins and the job that he has to do. We want to draw the player in and really compel him/her to finish the game and save the world. Everyone on the team offered story and game ideas and Scott Rice, Eric Biessman and Brian Raffel wrote the script with some assistance from renowned author Gonzalo Lira. Joe Koberstein and the artists worked with the level designers to do the storyboards for the in-game cinematics.

NAG: How different is each mission?
KH: There are ten missions spanning 26 levels all over the globe. The missions vary in many ways. Some of them are search and destroy. Others require you to retrieve items and/or information from the enemy. There's a level that takes place on the back of a moving train and really, each situation and environment is different. Each of the missions and their objectives further the story and bring the player further into the experience.

NAG: With so much action and movement on screen, has this caused a problem in optimising and leaving bits out?
KH: We have targeted a Pentium Pro 200 with 48 MB of RAM and a Voodoo1 3D Accelerator Card as our minimum machine and we are working around that. We've made just about every aspect of Soldier of Fortune customisable so the player can create the best configuration possible to run the game smoothly on his/her machine. We have scalable lighting, textures, models and a dozen other features that can be turned on and off or up and down to run the game at a decent frame rate on lower end machines and to take full advantage of hardware and processor speed on high end machines. Inevitably some things are left out of every game that is developed in this day and age, but Soldier of Fortune hasn't suffered much in this department because of the customisability of Soldier's GHOUL rendering system and its various options.

NAG: How detectable are the players.
KH: The GHOUL rendering system allows us to have per-polygon collision detection. That means that each face of each polygon that makes up a model or an enemy can be detected and hit with the weapons. Each enemy model is divided into 26 "gore zones" that can be turned on and off to simulate damage to the body. Under extreme duress, activation of some of these gore zones can lead to dismemberment of limbs and miscellaneous body parts. Enemies will limp when shot in the leg and clutch their shoulders or arms or stomach when shot in those places. Damage inhibits the enemies, but not the player at this point. We toyed around with these features, but decided that it would be too difficult to QA the product because of all of the "what if the player is wounded and can't make this jump" kind of situations that would inevitably arise.



NAG: Lots of developers expound the merits of all encompassing AI but the average player cannot see this. They see most games as being perfect. Is too much emphasis placed on AI, Kinetics etc?
KH: The AI is important to Soldier of Fortune's overall experience because our goal is to challenge the player without making the game too difficult for the player to have fun. Because of the realistic damage levels, it's challenging to balance the intelligence of the enemies with the deadly nature of the weapons. Fortunately, we've found a successful mix with Soldier of Fortune. I do think that there has been a lot of talk about "advanced AI" as a buzzword for today's games, but it is a lot harder to pull off than most people think. It's easy to make an enemy deadly to the point of making it unfair and it's easy to make an enemy so unintelligent that anyone can step in and breeze through the game. The challenge is finding that middle ground where the player feels challenged enough to continue without feeling the situation is hopeless or ridiculously easy. People do put too much emphasis on AI these days, in my opinion. I'd much rather hear, "I had a lot of fun playing your game" than "Wow! The enemies in your game were really hard to kill."

NAG: Can you expand on the camera views and interface?
KH: The game is set in a first-person perspective with an in-view weapon and that is the standard view for about 90% of the game. The cinematics in each level are presented from a third-person perspective that pans the action from multiple camera angles, much like an action movie. The interface for the game is set up like a web page so the player can easily manoeuvre through the menus by pointing and clicking on the desired options. We did this to make it quick and easy to set up your configuration and get right into the game.

NAG: Have you added to the Quake engine and were there any limitations?
KH: We have made tons of modifications to the Quake II engine. We started by converting all of the engine code to C++ and then proceeded to add (in no particular order) - Detail and damage texturing; new lighting system; new AI system; full 32 bit texturing; new weapon system; designer scripting; language; dynamic music system; fog regions.

NAG: What do you feel SOF offers that is new, interesting, and even compelling from a game player's perspective?
KH: The strong story line, the characters, the professional voice acting, the realistic enemies, weapons and environments and the real-world scale of the levels stand out immediately in my mind as both compelling and interesting. Add to that the fact that Soldier of Fortune will provide gamers with a strong single-player experience and solid multiplayer options (not just one or the other) and you've got yourself one hell of a game.

DEREK DELA FUENTE

Genre: Realistic War Game [PC]
Developer: Raven Software
Publisher: Activision
Supplier: MMW / SDD
Tel: (011) 315-1000
Expected Release Date: Early 2000
Internet: http://www.activision.com

THE GAME IS PROMISING PLENTY OF "REAL" ACTION

PURE ACTION. PURE ADVENTURE. PURE INDY.

INDIANA JONES™ and the INFERNAL MACHINE™

ACTIVISION®

Multimedia WAREHOUSE

South Africa Distributors: Multimedia Warehouse a division of SDD - www.mmw.co.za JHB (011) 652-8400 Bloem (051) 447-3193 CT (021) 550-8300 DBN (031) 263-0121 PE (041) 363-0540
© 1999 Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. Used under authorisation. Activision is a registered trademarks of Activision, Inc. All rights reserved. All trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

BLACK & WHITE

Black & White is a game that is possibly going to be the biggest game ever. It is due for release around March 2000 and will encompass multiplayer and single player versions, as well as a surprise package. With its outstanding looks, it is full of new and inventive ideas. It has ground breaking Artificial Intelligence. The animation will shame every developer you could mention. There is an in-game cast that will captivate, along with a central creature that you will learn to love. Black & White is a game that is easy to play but deep and thought provoking. One wonders what will be next. Peter Molyneux gives his own insight into the total experience!

Derek dela Fuente

Strangely a lot is riding on the back of Black & White and it is more than money. Peter and his team have put their heart and soul into Black & White. Peter Molyneux is the inspiration behind the game but a team of experts is also showing how important it is to have talent that complements Peters. From the animator to the person doing the AI, many new benchmarks are about to be made when you eventually see and play Black & White. Because the game is so different, a lot of conflicting reports have been written about it. It is not a GOD game, a role playing game, or a real time strategy experience. But as Peter explained in detail, 'I was purposefully unclear about the game when I first started giving information. What I did was to centralise on the features of the game, its techniques, the technologies, the tribes, the spells, the creatures but I did not explain what the game, actually the story, was. Many people have made their own interpretation. This is our first game so it has to be original, innovative, but the key point is that this is not a God game, nor real time strategy, it is in fact an RPG where you play the role of a God. Within the story anything that is presented to you, you can choose to deal with in whatever way you like. You can choose when you are presented with the world, with all the little people running around living their own lives, creating their own community, to be wonderfully kind and caring to them or you can be unspeakably mean and evil.' The first shot you get of the game is from a spire-topped citadel located in a remote corner of the game-world, as you survey the surrounding 3D landscape. In technical terms, the game-world is constructed using Lionhead's revolutionary new, fully scalable, rotating, environment-mapped, modifiable landscape with an engine giving through-the-eye vision, bump mapping, light sourcing and reflections.

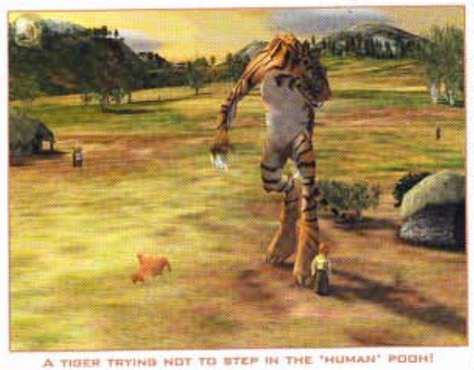
'Black & White offers the freedom that has been highlighted in that different people see the game in differing ways. What we have done is to construct a simulation of a world and around this we have wrapped a story that unfolds and will change slightly depending how you play. A story that centres on the most important facet of the game - the idea that early on you will find this little creature which you are able to nurture and see grow up and give whatever personality you want to. You can teach your creature anything you wish. You can turn him into a rampaging murdering mass killing machine or you can make him benevolently kind and caring. It is that freedom in the game that makes it quite unique. It is the actual story that is being kept unclear because to give this away would spoil the whole game but explaining the game in detail will give the user a real insight into what they can expect.'

A gripping story!

Quizzed on the story a little deeper Peter started to open up. 'All of the games I have previously written have absolutely no story other than something we have tacked on at the end. Look at Dungeon Keeper, you are a bad guy, and things just get 'bad'. Populous, Powermonger, Theme Park, again, no story, even Syndicate was very weak in plot line. It occurred to me that if we were writing a game wouldn't it be fantastic to approach it from a story perspective in single player form. You play through the story and as you play you improve but at any point in the story you can leave the story, take your creature (another central facet of the game that I will explain shortly) that you have developed and given a unique personality and place it online. You then place this creature against others in a new world where it will continue to learn and you can then take your creature back into your own world from the multiplayer world and continue playing. This again is another aspect that no other game has done before. I want people to enjoy the story in Black & White like no other game has been able to present. I have been inspired by Shigeru Miyamoto who wrote Zelda, Zelda was essentially a role playing game but if you delve deeper it is really a platform game that was tied into a universe with a compelling story - that was 'bloody' clever. I am trying to do a similar thing.'

Peter's forceful and convincing focus on story line was interesting, however I made the point that a story line is fine but only when you can achieve emotion in a game, real empathy with the creatures/cast in a game will it be valid and as yet this has not been achieved. Peter jumped up like a coiled spring! 'Yes... that is one element we are working on. That is the passion of mind which we are working on in the game, we want people to care about the creature you control or the little people in the game. If I can make you, convince you, to care about it then the story becomes a lot easier. The creature you control in the game is uniquely yours, it is formed from what you do, not only that the creature is visually unique to you - the creature has one rule in that it unconditionally loves you, like a child or parent. You can hit it, be cruel and it will still love you. There are a few emotional hooks that we pull on in the journey of the story that we believe will give you real empathy with the creature. If you were to visit the Studio and see some of the team playing the game and talking about their own creatures it is plain to see that we are starting to build on the emotional factor. Whether we can achieve this emotional factor in a game only the public can decide but that is one of many goals we are striving for.'

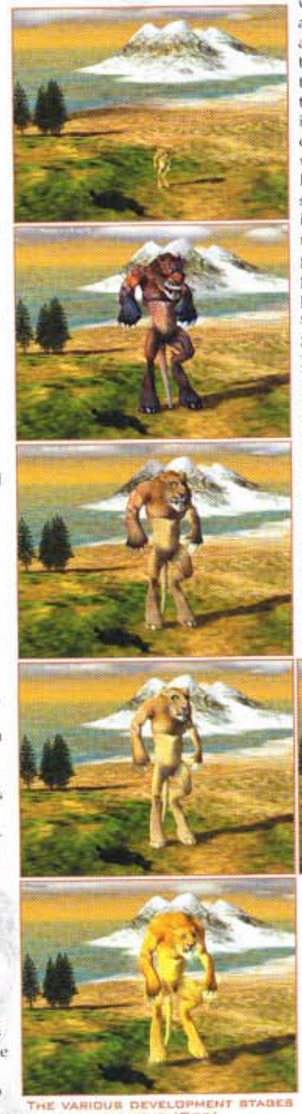
THE KRUGER PARK, PORTRAYED IN AN ALTERNATIVE REALITY



A TIGER TRYING NOT TO STEP IN THE 'HUMAN' POOH!

Easy but hard

The first ambition of the game is to make the interface as simple as possible so that anyone can understand how to play without a manual. Get rid of the icons and just view a world as it is, a living breathing evolving setting. The only icon you have is a hand, for total interaction with the world. Place the hand anywhere on the world and you will move to it, clicking the hand on a feature will allow you to zoom in to get fuller detail. You control one of a number of selectable creatures. To the villager this creature is their God, he can be seen or not depending on how you use it. You, the player, control this creature so in effect you are the 'God' factor in the game. The incredible detail in the game is another of the many features we have developed. You can zoom in on say a little women, who has a unique and individual face or look at the island from high above the clouds. Whilst you are away from the machine or controlling your creature, the game world is evolving. You only have one creature (a God to the cast in the game) to control in the game. When you first select him he is small and does not understand things but you can teach him how to eat and react. You are responsible for teaching him what is right and wrong. I like for instance to teach it to make funny faces at the villagers. It is the pinnacle of AI in computer games and once again this is a goal I always strive towards. Richard Evans has been responsible for writing the AI and it is quite unimaginable how good this is. How does the creature learn... easy, by watching you play the game. An analogy is that children watch adults and they learn from watching them, the same is true of the creature. If you are cruel and hit him then he will be mean to the villagers in the game. Via interacting with the creature, rubbing him, patting him will make it more passive.'



THE VARIOUS DEVELOPMENT STAGES OF YOUR 'GOD'

It is at this point whilst Peter is showing how to convey mannerisms to the creature, looking at the most wonderful animation in a game, understanding that here is a game with AI unsurpassed that you start to see this game in a completely new light. Peter is not merely showing the game he is living it and everything he says and does is plausible. His passion in creating a game is quite remarkable. Whereas other developers would boast and become almost unbearable in explaining the merits, Peter explains, wanting you to understand that they are striving to achieve new goals and there is never the slightest hint of boastfulness about what the team is doing. Peter then looked inquisitively to me to ensure that I understand what he is explaining. 'It is only via interaction with the press and the public that we can know if what we are doing is understood. We would never present a game that we believed in if there was a large band of people who didn't. Many developers are so convinced and narrow minded with their game that they never get real feedback from outside sources. The gesture technology in the game must be understood and, to put it simply, if the creature is good you reward it, if bad you smack it, not by clicking on icons but interacting directly with the creature.'

THE FAT LAZY VERSION OF THE SAME LION THAT EATS TOO MUCH

Real World

The creature can fend for itself and so you can leave it alone and come back two hours later to see what it has done. A lot is focused on your teaching of the creature, you can even teach it to eat humans or vegetables all of which have an effect on the game. It can be greedy or normal and so you can have a fat and obese creature or a lithe one. The teaching scenario is so vast, from teaching it magic to fighting. It was the fighting setting when it came up against another god-like creature that was interesting. In a fight the creature will scar and 24 hours later you will see bruises and the more fights the more susceptible it will become to more injury. Asked the question, can you teach it to fight and fight, Peter explained fully, 'When it fights and gets injured it will run off but if you instruct it to stay and fight to the death it will because you are its master.' The actual animation whilst in fighting made games like Tekken look almost old-fashioned. Although a cow or lion could be the God figure, the remarkable animation was the most fluid yet seen in a computer game, so good that Lionhead is thinking of letting the player control the creature when in fighting mode!

'The creature evolves and grows until it

towers over a village, which is a problem, for it can easily squash a villager.
If you create a fat and lethargic creature then, when you go online, explaining it to fellow players and letting him interact with other creatures, there will be some interesting outcomes. Creating a well-formed and clever creature will result in a better and more interesting single and multiplayer game.'

Brain Power

The AI, being one of the fundamental factors, is about the programmers adding lots of parameters, so in effect it is not true AI but lists of attributes and actions coded into the game. Once again I had hit on a key feature and Peter, like a wound up toy, was eager to expand on this. 'There are no parameters, we have placed in a host of variables and we have no idea how they interact. There are no 'if' statements. If the creature is doing this, then do that. It is all about the creature working things out himself. The creature has belief emotions that have all been built up via experience, which makes Black & White so unique. If there were 'ifs' in the game then the whole simulation would be broken. Richard Evans is the genius behind this AI. Forget about neural networks, etc., this is the closest we have come to real AI and it is not based on the conventional AI within a game but what Richard has invented and my experience working on simulations. The only cheat we have in the game is when a creature is born it knows that a tree is heavy and a cow is maybe made of meat, very simple parameters - it's not born without any knowledge. Some of the testers have done things with the creatures that I would not have thought possible. He can get scared, curious, bad, lead other creatures, the list is endless, even fall in love and that can happen online or

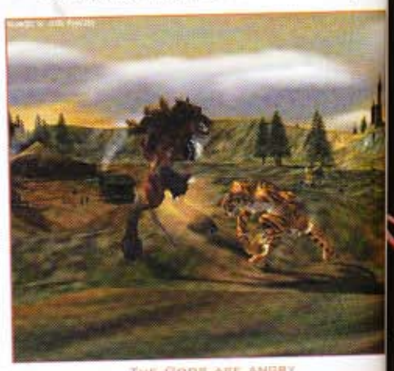
DID ANYONE SEE A RABBIT GO PAST HERE?

in a single player game. It is hard to convey that chemical reactions are happening in the creature's body as it would any living form. A small example would be if he were scared he is no longer hungry, his adrenaline goes up, and he will run faster and lose tiredness. Being curious he is much more sensitive to objects around him.

To make this simulation believable we must ensure that as many humanistic qualities as possible are in the game.
My overriding ambition is for even a non player to say, I know why that creature is going to sleep - it is because he is tired, feels safe and needs to move through the evolution cycle. To achieve this you must have a full, living world. I understand it is hard to explain how the brain works and how we have conveyed this and you can get into a very deep philosophical argument into this area but I will say, if you play the game, feel empathy with the creature, then we have achieved what we have planned!'
So now you can understand the principle of the game - you control a creature that can learn many different traits and mannerisms. He controls his own set of people. The game reacts and interacts pertaining to events but what events, what story will pull the player through the game? I asked Peter if a character can only evolve and interact if there are situations that are planned but he is saying that nothing is set. 'If you have read Isaac Asimov then you will understand certain principles. He wrote about robots that must have three laws, they must never kill humans, they must never damage humans through their action or inaction and they must listen to humans and seek their own preservation as long as it does not conflict with the first two rules. Well that is very much the way the creature works. The creature unconditionally believes in you. He will do things that are good for you and finally he will look after himself! The actual story is dependent on what you do. It is an open book. The game has no flashy cut scene but because the creature changes as it evolves, and this is quite dramatic, the whole setting and scenarios will reflect this. Yes, it is a role playing game, yes, it could be a virtual pet game, yes, it's strategy, yes, it's war... anything. In effect it has evolved from all my previous games. All my previous mistakes have been rectified in this. As you are in a real world you can do whatever you want. If you go to the toilet on the ground, you will notice that this organic matter will ensure the crops underneath it grow better. So teaching the creature to do this has its plus points, equally in multiplayer you can do this over your opponent. There are so many cool features, one I love is you can play any musical CD, and it will dance and learn in perfect time to the music. [*Now this, I have to see, Ed*].
Another clever facet is that if your creature gets cut it will scar. If you spot a creature with a scar you will know that if you hit that scar it will tear more easily, spotting scars will also tell you that the creature is more aggressive and is prone to fighting.'

It's like, magic...

The player starts by 'converting' the villagers in an attempt to persuade them to worship you. Once they have become your loyal followers, they can be used to perform a vital function. By summoning them to your Citadel, you can have them perform strange and elaborate worship rituals in your honour. And as they dance around the Citadel praising your name, they are generating life force; the essential ingredient for the magic spells you will soon be able to cast.
'The magic that you can create is all important and the way you get magic is to get the people believing in you. The more they worship you the more powers/magic you can attain. By raising a totem it informs the people that it is time to worship you, time to pray, hence more power. There are endless spells so if you feel the village could be attacked you use a shield and by drawing around the area you wish to be enclosed it will be protected from attack. The shield will constantly be pulling power from the citadel and that very power will be draining the life force of the people. Casting magic is so simple and as you learn spells, your creature will watch you and learn as well. Then it will go out and act as an agent of battle on your behalf. When you do something neat it will actually turn



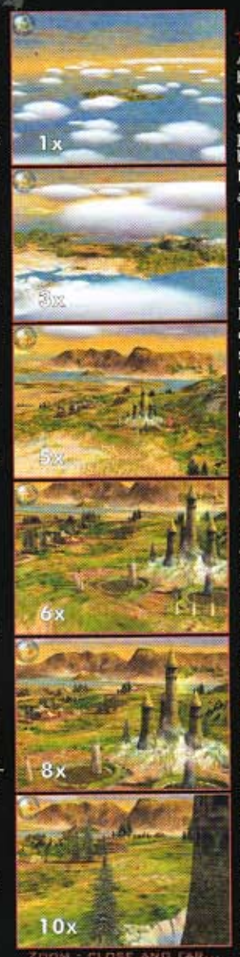
THE GODS ARE ANGRY

around and look at you. And his face will actually smile and it will cry and it will laugh. To elaborate, imagine as you continue casting a fire spell in a straight line your creature will curiously watch you, then eventually begin casting the spell in the same manner.'
'As a designer I find it a huge challenge trying to design a game which will please everyone. What we have done with Black & White is make it tailor itself to the player. If you want you can focus on your creature and leave the AI to take care of the little people - or alternatively you can play a more active role in the lives of the villagers - it's up to the player. If you do not feed the villagers they will come to you and request food, if you take no notice they will look for someone else to worship. These people I like to call 'innocents'. They will not be violent, they merely want to live and survive and worship you either through love or fear. They also have a learning system, which you may find unbelievable. You can give them a ball and they will learn to throw and eventually when you come back they could have designed a football pitch and you can sit and watch them play, even get the creature to play but it may end up squashing them! You may ask if the villagers are intelligent and can manage on their own why they become so dependent on the creature? It is far easier to take from the creature, feel safe, and be beholden to it, for this is their God! Once they become dependent on you, which happens early on, they will forget tasks, like knowing where the fields are and how to grow food. The more you do for them in certain areas the more they forget how to do these tasks themselves! Worshipping you and playing is far better to them than working. If there was a God and he came down and gave us food and everything, we would evolve into lazy creatures, we would not work harder!'
If you like statistics and information then a special area in the Citadel will allow you to view all past actions, like spells cast throughout the game, when you

acquired them, plus health and injuries of your creature, complete with dates. There are even photos of the creature taken as he has grown up. It's first fight, what food he loves, his friends - endless information. You are not alone in this game. At the start, whilst you expand your territory, any number of other sorcerers are creating their own power base and ultimately you will clash. In these battles, your weapons are your magic spells. The aim as Peter explained? 'To play through the story to see and immerse yourself in the many varied settings. Right from the very start, the game will construct the opponent you will meet and that opponent is the antitheses, the opposite of what you represent. If you have created a world of full beauty, kindness, and love (complete with backdrops of lush and organic surroundings, blue skies, sun, etc.) the end opponent will be quintessentially evil and the converse also applies. In effect, it is the mirror opposite. That is aside from gaining more magic spells and followers on other islands.'

Quick Facts

Black & White, the name?
The title initially had no real relevance and were words picked out randomly but since has become a very significant description of the game. Black and White is the full spectrum, the biggest contrast. In effect in the game you have the same broad band to play within!



ZOOM - CLOSE AND FAR...

Creature Comforts
At the start of a game you can choose between a lion, ape or a cow. Later on you change the creature's body to one of 20 other creatures but the mind of the original creature will be placed in the new body from turtles to wolves, bears, monkeys! The real beauty is each creature is unique to the way you have trained it. You can have a vegetarian lion or monkey that is friendly.

Face it
The creatures have full facial expressions. When you type in words on the keyboard the creature will mouth what you have said. This is done by breaking down the words into phonemes and it will mouth in perfect sync what you have typed!

3D-Glasses
The game will offer 3D-glasses technology but what makes it seem so stunning is that everything in Black & White is in 3D so there are no icons to obscure the 3D view. The glasses will be available later on this year.

The World
All the tribes, every town and village has their own AI routines so the world will carry on regardless of you the player. You can watch the little people get married, go hunting, build homes and play games. What Lionhead has tried to do is simulate a tribal culture but without war.

Peter on inspiration
I would say that there was some inspiration from Little Computer People. I loved the family and their house - it's not the world but the creature that you can give any personality you like. How he interacts with the world, makes him the real star of the show; you can create an evil killing machine or a benevolent Mother Theresa figure.

Help!
A feature of the help system will be two characters, an angel and a devil, which will give you advice. For example, if you are poised with a lightening bolt in your hand the devil will recommend that you cast it and destroy everything in it's path, while the angel will remind you that destruction is wrong. The final choice will be up to you.

Scawen Roberts - 3D Engine
In order to create more lifelike characters, a theoretically similar system of linked animations and interpolations is being utilised. This makes a seemingly simple animation, such as bending over and picking something up, quite complex; we're going to have to adjust things for different ground levels. There will be combinations of different animations so that you can have an animation of reaching here and another animation of reaching there. And if there is a point anywhere in the middle, the different proportions of these animations are combined.

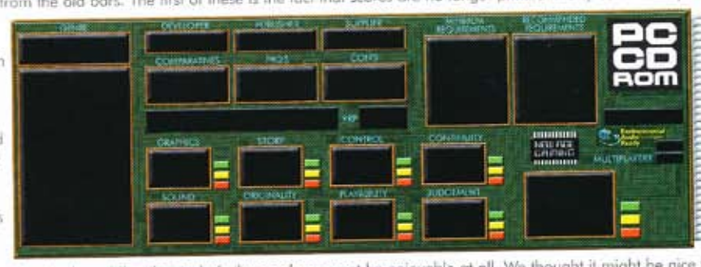
Single Player - Multiplayer
The single-player game is planned as an open-ended set of events based in a persistent world. There will be no 'levels,' just an expanding playing area for you to try to dominate. And the single-player and multiplayer games will be interchangeable, allowing you to take your creature back and forth between the two. Also there will be an amazing 'Gathering' which could be free where your creatures can chat and fight other creatures when you can go online.

DEREK DELA FUENTE

Genre: Virtual Pet / RPG / Other [PC]
Developer: Lionhead Studios
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Supplier: Electronic Arts Africa
tel: (011) 803-1212
Expected Release Date: March 2000
Internet: http://www.lionhead.co.uk

Everything Changes

Those of you who are particularly observant may notice the new review bar that accompanies our professional, insightful and entertaining reviews. We would like to claim that we changed these integral and all important bars for a higher purpose, but the truth is we were just really bored with the old ones. However, you will notice that there are a few variations from the old bars. The first of these is the fact that scores are no longer printed in any colour except white. That's what the little 'lights' next to each score box are for - these lights represent the level of each score in a far more graphic manner than the old system of coloured scores. The second, and most important change, is the inclusion of two new score categories. These are originality and judgement.



Originality relates directly to how fresh the ideas behind a game are. Even the best graphics and most stunning gameplay cannot hide the fact that, all too often, we can say that we've seen it all before.

Judgement is the personal opinion of the reviewer - it is purely a matter of taste. We have included this score because, through our work, we have found that some games, even though they are technically weak, are great fun to play, while other technical marvels may not be enjoyable at all. We thought it might be nice to reflect the 'enjoyment' that the game provided. We hope that you find the new bars to be easy to read, concise, informative and a pleasure to refer to!

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON
CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PC PREMIUM SYSTEMS

Intel Pentium III 500 MHz Processor
Intel 440BX AGP-Chipset Motherboard
128 MB SDRAM Memory (PC-100)
13 GB Ultra DMA Harddisk
1.44 MB Floppy Drive
Microsoft Windows 98 Pre-Installed
Sound Blaster Live!
PC-DVD 6X MPEG2 Kit with Dxr2 Technology
3D Blaster Riva TNT 2 Ultra 32 MB
Cambridge SoundWorks FPS 2000 Speakers
Modem Blaster Flash56 PCI Modem
BlasterPC Black Case with INFRA Remote & FM Tuner
17" High Resolution Monitor
104 Key Keyboard
PS/2 Mouse

BLASTER PC

Evaluation System

90 - 100 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.

80 - 89 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.

70 - 79 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.

60 - 69 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.

50 - 59 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.

40 - 49 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.

0 - 39 Any game scoring in this dreaded range is 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.

Awards Ceremony

The Nomad Soul is one of the finest, most gripping game to enter our overworked office this whole year. Check out Storm's in-depth review on page 52.

PHARAOH

NOCTURNE

FIFA 2000

FINAL FANTASY VIII

FIFA 2000 Page 44
Soccer has never looked this good, ever before.
Nocturne Page 56
Scare seven shades of yellow out of your liver.
Pharaoh Page 60
Build a tomb and then die in it, don't forget your cat.
Final Fantasy VIII Page 68
The best PlayStation Game ever, until the next one.

FIFA 2000

It's another year, another season, more advances, more mistakes, and more money to be made. FIFA is the most successful sports franchise in modern day history and deservedly so. Its dedication to exacting the rules and regulation of the sport and creating one of the most realistic sports simulations on PC and PlayStation is a wondrous feat and we can only tip our hats in admiration. But with the success of FIFA 99 could the next generation stand up to the high standards set by its predecessor?

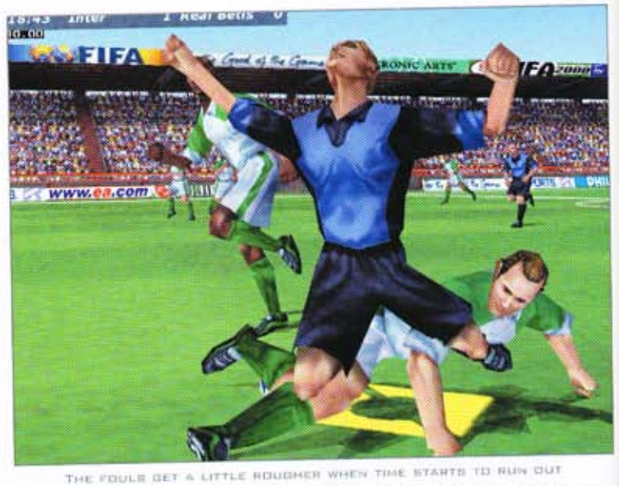
- Storm

Ever since I reviewed FIFA 99 in November last year I have wondered how the developers could possibly improve upon the gameplay and graphical features. The improvements made from 1998 to 1999 were tremendous as the motion capture frenzy took the sports simulation market by storm. Players took on personal looks and features, while also becoming more lifelike and believable. There were a few glaring omissions but none so dastardly as to take away the sheer passion of the gameplay. Moving into the millennium with a solid title under your belt is prioritised above all - especially when you call yourself the 'King of the Soccer Sims'.

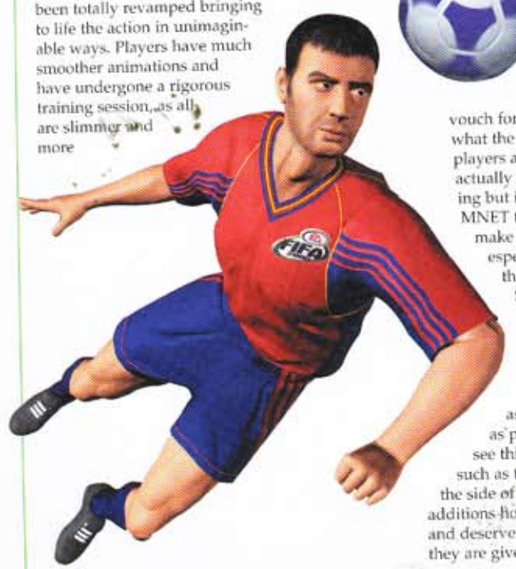
It has become a well-known trait of the EA Sports team to add character to their titles by adding a dance tune to their intro's and menu sequences. FIFA 99 had the unmistakable sounds of Fatboy Slim at their disposal and the recent FA Premier League Stars attracted the likes of ATB's smash hit '9PM-till I come'. Now EA Sports have taken on Robbie Williams to add his unique flavour to this product but I cannot help asking myself if this is a step down rather than a step forward. Yes, I am a Robbie Williams fan and I enjoy his music but up against two of the best dance hits of its predecessor's, it relegates Robbie Williams and his targeted single 'It's Only Us' to third spot out of the contenders. Though this is a personal opinion it's still a feat to have the talents of Mr Williams on the title nonetheless.

FIFA 2000 has undergone a major cosmetic operation for its graphics showing EA Sports' ongoing commitment to the consumer that it doesn't want to make too much money off its ageing graphics engines [*really, Ed*]. As interfaces go EA Sports have done better, but sticking to the basics is what makes EA Sports masters at their craft. The internal game engine has been totally revamped bringing to life the action in unimaginable ways. Players have much smoother animations and have undergone a rigorous training session, as all are slimmer and more talkative than before. With the talents of Sol Campbell of Spurs at EA Sports disposal we are now entertained by the best animations yet in the series. The game has now taken on a new dimension by the addition of mouth movements and facial expressions that are now animated and offer life to the once static stands that we are normally accustomed to. The crowd movements are basic and unimpressive but they do continually show the joys and passions that crowds have at football matches. This is a major step forward, as developers now have no choice but to follow this new trend of bringing the spectators into the game, rather than just slapping down a simple texture in the background. Yes, it's the developers nightmare, processing power being sapped up by animated crowds, is gameplay more important? A sorry excuse in these times of graphic accelerators and quicker CPU's, well done to EA Sports for being the first to take the plunge.

FIFA 99 had one major problem that I didn't really take much notice of in my review last year, that being the dreaded clipping of players. The 2000 developers have taken it upon themselves to correct this unsightly problem by adding a well-coded crash detection system into the gameplay. Players can now hand-off defenders and slip tackles in the correct manner of the game. You are now forced to make the challenge if a player gets past your defence leaving you and your opponent open and vulnerable to yellow and red cards, only this time the referees are a little more lenient than before.



THE FOULS GET A LITTLE ROUGHER WHEN TIME STARTS TO RUN OUT



are a joy to watch. In-game celebrations and tackles have such appeal that you would be forgiven for thinking you were in front of your TV watching the game. I cannot vouch for what the players are actually saying but if you watch British soccer on MNET then you can more or less make out the gist of the speech - especially the complaints to the referee. EA Sports are desperately trying to find new ways of making the game as true to form as possible, we can see this in subtle ways, such as the water bottles in the side of the net. Most of the additions however are not subtle and deserve a lot more praise than I think they are given credit for. Firstly, the crowds

Talking of referees, the rules of the game are very well followed except for the distasteful offside rule that is not only controversial but difficult to implement in any sports game. FIFA 2000 developers have taken the easy way out by applying the basic rule of an offside position, this being offside's whether you are interfering with play or not. This does annoy at times since wingers and attacking forwards do battle to get back into an onside position especially during a counterattack from a place kick.

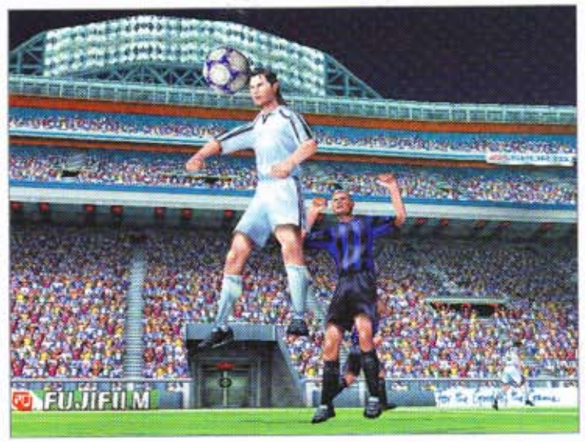
However the developers have worked on the goalkeeper AI by sticking to the backpass rule and the understanding the keeper has of being able to pick up a backpass header.

The main selling point of the FIFA franchise has always been the gameplay addiction and what makes the gameplay so much fun is the almost perfect control mechanism. Noticing the similarities from the '99 version is an understatement, a few tweaks and that's about that. A six or eight button gamepad is required to get the full advantage out of FIFA 2000's control selections with the usual speed bursts, shoot, pass, lob and tackle making up the choices.

Something I totally disagree with is the inability to customise your controls in any way, leaving you stuck with the static button choices at all times. Why they have reverted to this over the last few titles is bewildering to me and should be addressed in 2001 if they are to gain any credibility from the consumer's point of view.

Something that caught my eye is the new control highlight's describing in-game happenings to the player. You are now informed if the character is in possession or not, whether a controlled player is off screen, which player is closest to the ball, and best of all the potential pass indicator. All are easily indicated by icons beneath the player's feet giving feedback to the gamer at all times.

The potential pass indicator deserves a mention because it tells you in what direction a pass can be played and whether the player is being marked or not. This information is vital for keeping the possession required to build up an attacking move. The IGM (in-game management) has become easier to select with a simple button or keystroke used to change team tactics at any time. This can be configured before the game with a maximum of three differing team formations and strategies. Set pieces can be played from corners, throw-ins, and free kicks and use a different process than before by giving you the option of three players which run different lines of attack. Though this is innovative it has affected the use of the hard pile-driven shot curled into the top-corner ala Beckham style, which for some reason is extremely difficult to score from. FIFA 2000 now has an advanced shooting technique added in, not anything spectacular, but extremely effective in attacker on keeper situations - it's the side-foot shot. I always wondered when this would be implemented as so many goals are scored in leagues all over the world from side-footing the ball past the keeper rather than attempting a risky shot - kudos to EA Sports for this one. The use of selective heading is also worth a mention with the ball being airborne for a considerable time in each game, the gamer now has a choice of whether to pass the ball to a team mate's head or foot or have a go at goal.


CONTROLLING THE HEADER IS NOW A PRIORITY TO KEEP POSSESSION

Something that has been a thorn in the developer's side for years is the level of AI (artificial intelligence) that competitive games such as FIFA 2000 shouldn't exceed. Somehow I feel that EA Sports have got something wrong with this important gameplay issue. The game plays extremely easy on Amateur level with games running into the teens on the scoring. The Professional selection seems to be the one that will pertain to most experienced gamers because it offers a chance at winning the leagues and cups available in FIFA 2000. Then comes the World-Class level and believe you me its at this standard no doubt. Winning a game at this level is extremely difficult (though not impossible) but the game resorts to almost a pinball like affect with the computer cheating as usual and passing the ball with pin-point accuracy resulting almost always in a goal. Yes, we want to be challenged to the limit, but how far does a gamers limit go, are we ever going to win any cup or league on the World-Class level - I think not.

The commentary is still of the same mould of its predecessor only more of the same comments and better timing of the sarcasm. Repetition is still a constant with the commentary especially with the introduction of the teams but we have come to except that - or have we? The sounds and chants from the crowd are rewarding only this time a shot that hits the corner flag is not followed by cheers for a closely missed shot. Players moan as crunching tackles fly, the ball thuds with every shot and The Cob gets louder as Liverpool take the lead (not really, but it would have been nice).

FIFA 2000 is most certainly a giant leap forward for soccer simulation fans. It offers enough variety and gameplay options to keep the game addictive for many months. The simplistic options of friendly, tournament, season and training are much more in-depth than originally thought with customisable options giving depth to the game. South Africa is available in the World Cup but as a league based option it has been excluded, but all the top European leagues are available. The FA Cup has been unceremoniously renamed to the English Cup and though it is exactly the same in principle, it would have been nice to be able to play the FA Cup in all its glory.

Strangely, not enough is said about the multi-player ability of soccer sims, maybe because we don't compete against other gamers as fiercely as action orientated games. It's not something new for FIFA but if you have a competitive friend that enjoys soccer then you will have hours upon hours of fun slide tackling and scoring against a human opponent rather than a silicon one.

FIFA 2000 is a benchmark for all developers to gauge their products, including all of EA Sports internal developments. As far as being the top contender for the soccer sim market, FIFA 2000 is not a contender, it's the soccer sim market leader and it will take something almost magical from another developer to topple FIFA 2000 from the perch it created.

At the options screen, enter any of the following:

Code:	Effect:
burnaby	EAC pitch
dizzy	Alien mode
hooligan	Bonus teams
lightsout	Glow mode
momoney	Infinite bankroll
sizzle	Lightning mode

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS	
Soccer Simulation	EA Sports	EA Sports	Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212	Pentium 133 MHz 32 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 2 MB Video Card 80 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium 200 MMX 32 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 3D Accelerator 150 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	PC CD ROM
Enough has been changed and added to FIFA 2000 to continue its trend as soccer sim leader, at least for now. Crash detection and a new graphics engine lead EA Sports' FIFA 2000 into the new millennium with enough ammunition to last another year. This is sports at its best and deserves all the accolades it will receive from the gaming community over its reign at the top.	COMPARATIVES: FIFA 99 Actua Soccer 99	PRO'S: New Graphics Engine Crash Detection Model Animated Crowds	CONS: Difficult on its Hardest No Customisable Controls	http//:www.easports.com	RRP R 269.00	Storm

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY	NEW AGE GAMING	MULTIPLAYER?
94	71	92	85	90	Environmental Audio Ready: No / Yes

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
86	83	92	95

Revenant

Dungeon crawling and forest lurking with a little town talking and buying are all very good descriptive phrases to illustrate what Revenant is all about. It's a hack and slash role-playing game that features you, playing a resurrected warrior, with a bad attitude.

RedTide

There was a time on the planet Ur when things were good, but times change, gods grow bored and jealous, and ultimately wars break out. In Revenant this destructive course of events is referred to as the Cataclysm and thousands of years ago it literally tore the world of Ur apart with dark magic, evil creatures and thousands of lost souls. The gods eventually abandoned their creation and now Ur stands barren and scared. Today, the effects of the Cataclysm still shape and affect the people, land, and creatures of Ur, in particular the small island community of Akhiulon and their leader Lord Tendrick of the House of Averam. The character you play will arrive in this dismal setting to save the day, rescue the damsel, and discover himself. You are Locke D'Averam, the revenant. You died over a thousand years ago and have now just been resurrected from the dead by the powerful sorcerer, Sardok as a 'warrior slave'. You have taken the name of the house you serve and are compelled to obey, for now… (The summoning spell compels you to do their bidding). The reason Lord Tendrick and his sorcerer brought you back from Anserak (an eternal hell) is made clear from the onset, there is an evil cult threatening to take over the town and you must stop them, they've already kidnapped Lord Tendrick's daughter, adding another complication to your task. You once were a great warrior, but cannot remember your past, it will come back to you as will your fighting skills, but now you must go and do your masters bidding.

Hack and Slash

Revenant is a Hack and Slash role-playing game, one of many games in this brave new genre, the role playing bit is loosely defined as talking to different characters with branching conversations, buying weapons and armour and having character attributes, called 'statistics' in this particular case. The hack and slash bit is derived from the fact that you must pick up this big sword here, go over to that monster there, and do a little hacking and slashing until either you or it are what most chefs call mince meat. This violent monster bashing activity happens most of the time in Revenant and largely defines what the game is all about. The odd thing here is that the game almost seems as if it should have something more to it, but never delivers and when it's all over you're left wondering about certain instances or things characters said. It's almost as if the game was designed to be much bigger than it turned out. The other aspect to the game is magic… while you play Revenant you'll discover magical talismen that when combined in a specific way give you the ability to cast different spells. For example if you combine the Water and Earth talisman, you'd probably cast a swamp spell. These talisman combinations are written in ancient scrolls scattered throughout the game world, particularly in wooden chests and on the floor in the dungeon modules. This flexibility can't touch the sheer number of character classes in other games but is great and should suit almost any casual role-player. As you play your character does become more proficient in certain areas, such as strength, mind and agility so you must decide early on if you prefer to use magic or metal to defeat creatures. As you increase in experience certain selectable attributes are improved, you have the opportunity to decide which ones are to be increased when you level up and you can change these any time during the game. The best combination seems to be the jack of all trades approach, keeping your blade sharp for close encounters and your mind agile for magic spells.

AS YOU CAN SEE NOBODY IS GOING TO BE POINTING A FINGER AND LAUGHING AT THE GRAPHICS IN REVENANT

Muffins and carrots

The action is viewed from an isometric angle with the camera centred on the main character at all times. The game's graphics are crisp and well defined right down to the last blade of grass… well almost. The main character is large as are the wide variety of creatures lurking about in the game. The size is great for visual stimulation but does tend to be a problem when you have all your option panels open. With all the different windows open the playing area is drastically reduced and one can't help thinking that the developers could have designed them a little better, or made them smaller. This is a mute point however because a simple key press takes all the menus away leaving you with a full screen to play in. There are a number of different locations you'll play in including the Town of Mist Haven, the forest (a huge area encompassed by the ocean), various bone yards and an enormous dungeon. In the town you'll meet many different non-player characters, some will talk to you, others are wary of this resurrected stranger and some will try and sell you anything from potions to armour. Travelling around in the town requires a little patience largely due to the fact that every time you enter a building the game pauses to load. This loading takes time and when multiplied by every building in the town and any locations within these buildings you're looking at quite a chunk of time. There are options to increase cache sizes and overall loading performance but fiddling with these settings didn't alleviate much of the waiting. Once you've finished your business in the town it's onto the forest and your first battle. Not too long after entering the forest you'll more than likely run into a giant spider, which should be hacked or slashed. Your character has two stances, normal and combat, the combat stance will automatically kick in when facing any danger, and from there the simple method of furiously clicking your mouse button should eliminate the arachnid. As you progress through the game things don't stay that simple for long and you'll have to use your head as well as the different types of attack and defence options to survive. Initially you have a set number of attack options but as you increase your character level you can return to the town and learn new fighting moves from your tutor. The basic fighting controls are simple to use and well implemented so there's no time wasting while you desperately search for the 'right' combination. The game offers a number of controller options but it's probably best to use the mouse seeing that you'll need to navigate through the menus anyway. In summary the game controls well, looks good, and offers enough variation in fauna and flora to keep most players entertained.

ONE OF THE MANY SPECIAL EFFECTS

Too many sausages

Revenant is a good game with many good attributes but it is important to highlight all the problems especially in light of the fact that many games falling into the same genre are due for release this month and in the New Year. The first gripe centres on the consistent and persistent loading. Just as you become engrossed in something the game halts and the next bit of the map is loaded into memory, these 'loads' average out to around three seconds, which could easily be overlooked if they didn't interrupt play so often. From an aesthetic point of view this interrupts the flow of the game and totally destroys any atmosphere the artists were trying to create, it seems that just as you become engrossed in something interesting, the game stops to load, again! From a gameplay point of view you occasionally have to endure this loading while being chased by a creature and often when the action comes back on-line you're facing the wrong way or are just about to be killed. It's annoying and does damage the title on a number of different levels.

AND HE STILL WONDERS WHY EVERYONE AVOIDS HIM

One other oversight on the part of the developers is the multiplayer game, it reeks of a quick cheap knock together effort, but the good news is that it allows you to play as one of four different characters. There are custom maps on offer but the whole concept just lacks any cohesion and it's doubtful that Revenant multiplayer is going to take the world by storm.

The game is big and has more to offer than any world is easy and requires very little effort. If you add up all the good points and tackle the game for what it is then you shouldn't be disappointed. If you enjoy the odd dungeon crawl, fancy yourself as a part-time sorcerer or warrior and want to rid the world of all that is evil then Revenant should satisfy.

THESE PANELS HOLD PLENTY OF INFORMATION ON SPELLS, ITEMS, STATISTICS, AND EVEN A USELESS MAP, IT'S JUST A PITY THAT THEY'RE A LITTLE TOO BIG AND END UP GETTING IN THE WAY MOST OF THE TIME

review could possibly tell, the story is great and develops as the game progresses, almost in such a way that you simply have to find out what will happen in the end. The control interface works well but should have been a little smaller, fighting and moving through the game

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON
CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
Role-Playing Game	Cinematix Studios	Eidos Interactive	Crew (011) 233-1111	Pentium 233 MHz, 32 MB Ram, 4 X CD Rom, 2 MB Video Card, 400 MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium II 266 MHz, 64 MB Ram, 8 X CD Rom, 8 MB Video Accelerator, 400+ MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)

COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CON'S
Nox, Diablo, The Tainted	Huge World, Crisp Graphics, Great Story	Easy, Too Much Loading, Bugged

Revenant is a strong effort in the hack and slash RPG genre. The game has everything you'd expect from a title in this line and then a little more that you didn't expect. The game world is varied enough to keep a player engrossed right up till the end and it's fun to play, you couldn't ask for more.

http//:www.eidos.com

RRP R 299.00

PC CD ROM

RedTide — Environmental Audio Ready: Yes

NEW AGE GAMING — MULTIPLAYER? Yes

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
92	83	81	71

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
88	79	90	80

83

REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

Cutthroats

The acrid stench of fired gunpowder assails your nostrils, while the sound of grinding timber fills your ears. Your eyes sting from smoke and salt spray, your muscles ache from battling both wind driven sails and bloodthirsty enemies. All around you, the screams of the wounded and dying fill the air, and the deck is slippery with their spilled blood. You summon up your strength, staggering to your feet, fingers limply curled around the hilt of a cutlass. Looking up, you see them swarming over the railing, hordes of pirates hungry for gold, plunder and murder. You have no other option but to steel yourself for their approach. - Shryke

During the seventeenth century, especially around the 1640's, the Caribbean was the province of pirates, buccaneers and other rogues of an ocean faring sort. These ship board thieves and murderers plied their trade between small colonies belonging to the Spanish, Dutch, English and several other nations, using "safe harbours" to repair their vessels and sell their captured booties.

This is the background for Hot House Creations' Cutthroats, released through Eidos. In this management game, the player takes control of a band of pirates, and battles his way to the top through thieving, looting and pillaging. No ship is safe from the player as he takes to the seas, increasing his fleet and manpower complement around every cove, capturing new ships and forcing unwilling men into his "employ." The aim of the game is to become the ultimate scourge of the high seas, a man notorious for bravery, cruelty and cunning. Unfortunately, despite all the hype, Cutthroats falls somewhat short of the mark. While the idea of making your enemies walk the plank and stringing their gizzards from the yard arm is very appealing, Cutthroats lacks the technical sizzle of games that are coming out these days. Graphically, the game is rather weak, reminiscent of titles that were produced a few years ago, rather than something that has surfaced at the brink of the new millennium. This is rather unfortunate, seeing as how much of a gaming experience is based on how good the game looks. Don't get me wrong - Cutthroats is not ugly - it just looks a bit primitive. The argument that isometric view, RTS style battles never really look that good is invalid, of course, with several older titles looking far better than this one.

RAID, PILLAGE, MURDER... A PIRATE'S WORK IS NEVER DONE!

On the sound front, Cutthroats is not too bad at all. Thundering cannons and moaning decks add to the battle ambience, while the captain roars out orders in the background in accordance to what the player wants done. Cheesy pirate style lines abound (like "send them down to Davy Jones' Locker") and one wonders how much of an influence Hollywood had on the speech files of this game. Controlling the game itself is quite simple, and fairly comprehensive - provided you've taken the time to read through the manual. The controls are not always obvious, and can get a little frustrating, but enough play time will ensure that you know what you are doing. As far as story goes, well, there isn't much of a story other than what the player creates for himself. This is, in a way, a good thing, as it allows the player to generate his own reputation by dint of his actions. The background is, of course, rich and historically accurate, and a little time spent reading the backgrounds that are provided can prove quite educational. Basically, however, Cutthroats is, technically speaking, not great. At first glance, it looks terrible, to be honest - maybe even bad enough for people to not get into it. The strength of the game, however, only comes to the fore when you've been playing it for a while, and look at the clock only to realise that five hours have passed. For some or other indefinable reason, Cutthroats is highly addictive. I admit that I personally enjoy management games a great deal, but I do not think my personal bias really entered into this. There is a definite appeal to cruising the oceans in search of riches and infamy, and I found myself absorbed in the technicalities of correctly stocking my ever increasing fleet of ships before sailing off to plunder a colony or two, or just do some general raiding. There is so much more to this game than just blasting your prey to splinters and raiding the wreckage. The reputation is the thing, see, and one was quite keen on becoming the scurviest sea dog of the Caribbean. Games like this are actually fairly common. The initial impressions that they create are not necessarily the best. However, once you get even mildly involved, consider yourself hooked. The unfortunate fate of these games is that far too many gamers are too shallow to give anything more than half a chance if it doesn't blow them away from the word go. Sure, Cutthroats is not the greatest game out there, particularly from a technical point of view. And, being a management game, it certainly will not catch on with the action adventure fans. But it is good, for what it is, and it would be terrible to see first impressions leaving it dead in the water.

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON
CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER
Pirate Management	Hot House Creations	Eidos	Crew (011) 233-111

COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CON'S
Syndicate Streetwars Gangsters	Good Management Highly Addictive	Poor Graphics Confusing Gameplay

Cutthroats is a really fun pirate management game which allows the player to rise in notoriety as the Scourge of the High Seas and build a huge fleet of scurvy sea dogs. However, technical weakness will probably relegate this one to the back of the cupboard for the vast majority of what is a very fickle, very picky market.

http//:www.eidos.com

RRP R 299.00

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
Pentium 166 MHz 32 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 2 MB Video Card 700 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium 233 MHz 32 MB Ram 24 X CD Rom 4 MB AGP Video Card 700+ MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)

PC CD ROM

Shryke

Environmental Audio Ready: No

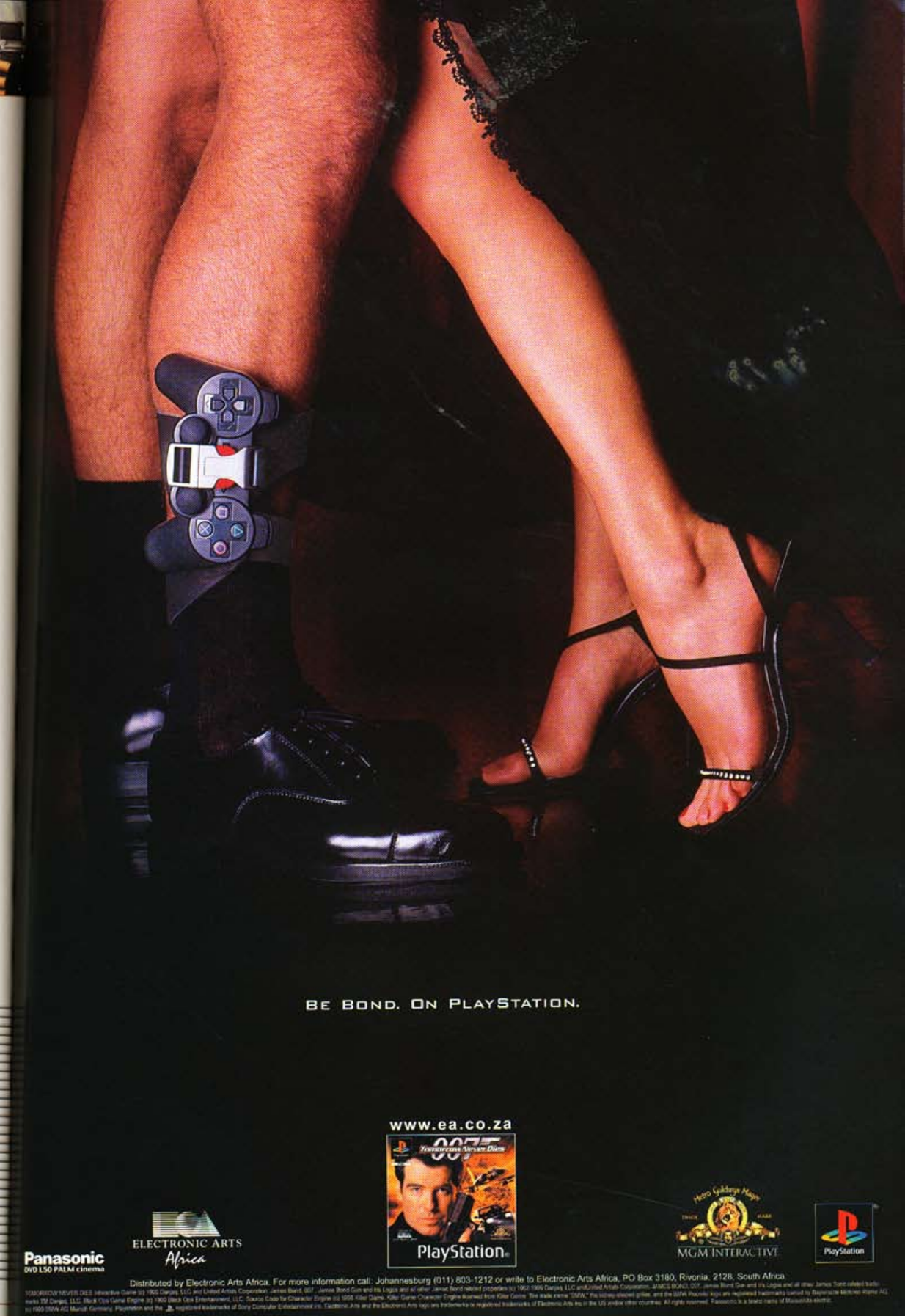
MULTIPLAYER? No

NEW AGE GAMING

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
55	71	70	77

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
67	62	75	82

70



Distributed by Electronic Arts Africa. For more information call: Johannesburg (011) 803-1212 or write to Electronic Arts Africa, PO Box 3180, Rivonia, 2128, South Africa.

Prince of Persia 3D

Prince of Persia 3D is the third in a series that dates back to 1990. In this, the latest adventure the young prince once again has to save his beloved princess, this time from the clutches of the evil King Assan and his son Rugnor who wishes to kill the prince and marry the princess himself. Set in an impressive 3D world you will need both speed and agility if you wish to survive the many devious traps that the King has set for you.

raz()r

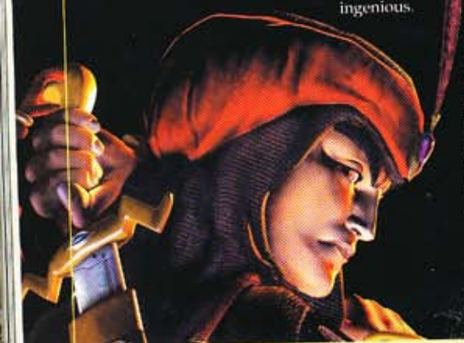
Persia is a place that conjures up images of mystical palaces, bandits, and beautiful princesses, of magic and enchantments filled with intrigue and adventure. In the game, Prince of Persia, the developers have managed to capture the essence of this fantastic land and have produced a truly fun game that will have you glued to your system for days. Although the game features no multiplayer capabilities, it has a strong story line, features excellent gameplay and includes all the eye candy that one expects from a top-class game these days.

Tomb Raider?

Prince of Persia 3D is the third in a series by Broderbund that dates back to 1990 and one that I played extensively. As with the earlier versions, it is a platform game that in 3D form compares closely to Lara Croft in Tomb Raider, except it doesn't include her curvaceous character of course. Instead, you play the hero, one-time beggar and now Prince of Persia and married to the princess - daughter of the Sultan. The story of how you came to be the Prince is told in the earlier games and goes something like this.

HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF THE FREE LOOK WITH ME IN THE WATER AFTER I FELL OFF THE QUAY

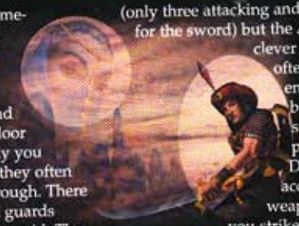
While the Sultan was away fighting the enemies of the kingdom, the princess fell in love with the hero of our story. Unfortunately for him, the Sultan's grand vizier and court magician Jaffar had other plans that included marrying the princess and taking the kingdom for himself. To get you out of the way the vizier had the hero thrown in prison from where you had to escape through a maze of passages filled with deadly traps and armed prison guards. As you progressed through the dungeon the traps became more challenging and ingenious.



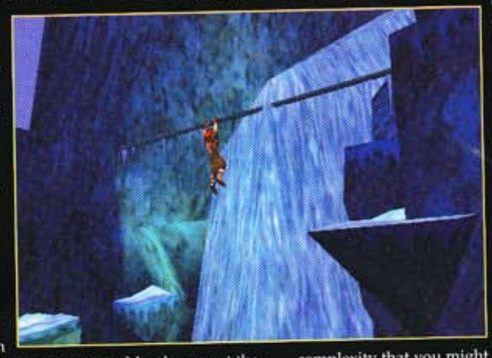
These included the good old-fashioned spike trap, saw traps and collapsing floors. Although the game was played in VGA at 640 x 480, the graphics were considered good for its time. After having saved the princess and defeated Jaffar, the Sultan returns and rewards you with the princess as your bride. You get married and settle down to connubial bliss for about eleven days when Jaffar returns and casts an enchantment and takes on the guise of the prince while you are made to look like a beggar. In your enchanted form neither the Sultan nor the princess recognise you and you are forced to flee and stowaway on a merchant ship. However, Jaffar calls up a storm and you find yourself wrecked on a desert island with the only way out through secret caverns filled with deadly traps. In the second game the developers have added some perspective and more ingenious traps but it remains a 2D-platform game. After having defeated Jaffar for the second time life returns to normal and you settle down to life at the palace. Sometime thereafter, the Sultan's brother, King Assan invites the Sultan and his family to visit his kingdom. This is where the third game begins. During a feast, reserved for the men, Assan's men attack and throw you in the dungeon. It seems that the Sultan had, sometime before, promised Assan that his son would marry the princess and the king intends to make sure that the Sultan sticks to his word. Fighting off unwanted suitors seems to be your lot in life and while most of us would probably question the sense in sticking around, the hero has no choice in the matter - anyway it's a fun adventure. The game begins with you being tossed into a prison cell. Fortunately there is a secret door that you can push open. It lets you into a passage from where you can escape. A room to your left reveals two prisoners chained to the wall. If you talk to them they will give you some hints about escaping from the dungeon. The view is over the shoulder and feels a lot like Tomb Raider but alas the prince can't prance around like Lara Croft, but is restricted to fairly conventional moves, (though, that said, he is able to jump about twice his own height). After escaping from the prison cell your first priority is to find a sword but you'll have to make your way through most of the first level before you get lucky *[what, with the princess or the guards? Ed]*. The key to surviving on the first level is to look in unlikely places for magic potions and clues and to save often.

Unlike the earlier versions, the game is quite interactive and you can activate and search various objects in the game world. Character movement is also quite unrestricted and you can climb up ropes to traverse sheer walls. One thing about the prince, he sure is tough and can hang by his hands indefinitely. He can leap across a 10 metre gap and slam into the opposite wall while managing to hang onto a narrow ledge by his fingers (I can't help thinking that the prince is going to have one real flat nose at the end of the game). There are limitations, however, and the developers won't let you climb around corners, if they had it would make many of the puzzles easier to solve. The default movement is running but you can make the prince walk by using the shift key and is something I'd recommend unless you can see the way is clear. As with the previous games PoP3D is filled with nasty traps, like blades that swing out from the wall and chop your head off, or camouflaged buttons on the floor that fire arrows at you. Unfortunately you can't avoid trying out all buttons as they often open a door that you need to get through. There are also collapsing floors and prison guards searching for you that you'll need to avoid. The game is divided into a number of levels but you can save at anytime.

THIS FIGHT GIVES NEW MEANING TO THE EXPRESSION 'YOU WILL SEE SPARKS FLY'



While I can see the sense in this I think it does make the game a bit too easy. In Prince 1 you had to play from the beginning whenever you started and only had 60 minutes to finish the game, in Prince 2 you could only save at the beginning of each level although they were not very long.



Potions and swords

You begin the game with three health points but you will find health blue potions that will keep you going plus bonus health potions that will add extra health points, however these are rare. Combat is important and you will need to fight your way through the game. There are 30 different types of enemies (six basic types) using a variety of weapons. New in this game are the additional weapons that you will be able to use. These include a sword, staff, assassin double blades, and bow with a number of different arrow types. I found the combat pretty good and very versatile although a little easy in the early levels. I'm not a Mortal Combat fan and the prince certainly doesn't have as many moves (only three attacking and three defence for the sword) but the AI is pretty clever and you can often confuse the enemy by darting back or to the side, which will put him off. Damage varies according to the weapon and where you strike the enemy or are hit yourself. You don't have to fight everyone you come across, however, I noticed that guards seldom leave their post to follow you. The bow is one of my favourite weapons and you will also use it to do more than shoot enemies but I won't spoil it, you can discover it for yourself. Graphics are good although some of the scenes lack the complexity that you might be familiar with in Unreal. But the rendering of the water and effects while swimming and when fighting are better than in any game I have ever played. Characters are okay but not wonderful but they make up for it by moving and fighting in a realistic manner. All the while the camera position is good and feels very natural, offering a clear view. The camera position changes for each weapon while fighting. For the sword it is low and to your characters right giving you a clear picture of the combat, while for the bow it moves directly behind the prince for you to position the sights on the enemy. With all the climbing you also spend a lot of time falling and here the camera work is almost cinematic.

A SUDDEN CAREER CHANGE FROM LEAPING PRINCE TO HEADLESS HORSEMAN...

Although the graphics and gameplay have changed, POP3D feels very similar to the earlier games. One of the reasons for this is that the developers have kept the same control options and limit the user to keyboard or gamepad only. While this might sound like a major restriction - it isn't and you will find that you can move very quickly and more accurately than you could using a mouse. In summary an excellent title that will have major appeal to any 3D action adventure fan or those looking to try something different.

Prince of Persia in those days...

I JUST LOVED THOSE TRAPS IN PRINCE OF PERSIA 1 - HURTS DOESN'T IT?

SCENERY IN PRINCE 2 WAS MUCH BETTER THAN PRINCE 1, BUT IT WAS STILL A 2D-PLATFORM GAME

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS	PC CD ROM
Action Adventure	Red Orb	Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212	Pentium 266 MHz MMX 64 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 4 MB Video Accelerator 120 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium II 266 MHz 64 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 8 MB AGP Video Card 210 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)	
	COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CON'S			Raz()r
	Tomb Raider Heretic 2 Indiana Jones	Devious Traps Graphics Great Story	Not Enough Interaction Character Development Limited Moves			Environmental Audio Ready: No
Prince of Persia 3D is a really enjoyable game that will appeal to all the Tomb Raider fans out there and especially anyone who has played the earlier two Prince of Persia games - for you this game is a must.	http//:www.pop3d.com		RRP R 299.00			MULTIPLAYER? No

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY	NEW AGE GAMING
90	88	83	77	84

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
81	80	88	85

THE NOMAD SOUL

The action adventure genre has undergone so many facelifts over the years that it could teach Michael Jackson a thing or two about cosmetics. But as we evolve into better and more constructive gamers we are challenging the talents of the developers to test our resilience and abilities. Unexpectedly, we are being taken head on by a crowd of determined and adventurous developers from Quantic Dreams and Eidos Interactive, who are steadfast in their belief that gaming should be more than a virtual experience, but an ambiguous realisation of true life - and how close they've come. - Storm

From the offset of the installation you are given signs of the splendour and magnitude of 'The Nomad Soul'. A whopping 1.7gig full installation bursts the seams of most hard drives. A big dose of 'bye, bye love' comes in as you merrily say goodbye to your hoards of favourite games that have to be deleted to make way for this wondrous gaming experience. Unknowingly you are about to enter a world so vast and expansive that you're going to have to start thinking of excuses for the days off work you're gonna take.

If you have been searching for a story driven game, then TNS will entertain your fictional needs. David Cage, head of Quantic Dreams and creator of the game, spent more than a year writing a solid story with a deep, well-thought-out background. The basis of the plot begins many years ago in a parallel universe to our own. The planet of Phaenon is being wrought by a battle between good and evil. The legend has it that Kushulainn, leader of the human armies, took on the beasts and their master Astaroth with a magic sword, but failed to defeat them.

The people of the planet then sealed Astaroth in a magical cage and buried him in a tomb where he supposedly was to be held for all eternity. As time went by and with the advent of modernisation, it ironically happened that while constructing a great structure to house the computer 'Ix" (which controls all of the 5 cities on Phaenon) the builders unknowingly opened the tomb and unleashed the demons and its master into the general population. Astaroth, now freed and extremely angered by his treatment is hell bent on not only taking control of Phaenon, but also opening portals to our parallel universe of Earth and consuming our souls. This is where the game begins as you embark on an adventure of epic proportions that has more twists and turns than Chapmans Peak.

From the first encounter you are thrust into the intrigue of the story as a plea for help comes from Kay'l, a police officer who is desperate to save his planet. His requests are not easy but being the avid gamers we are, we oblige by taking control of his body and assuming the role he had in Omikron. This is the basis of the game, you are not tied down to any one character in the game. You will resurrect into many different personalities who have differing abilities whether they are beneficial or not. You can manipulate and train whoever you possess in the arts of skilled fighting and even become a hot shot marksman at the local shooting ranges around Omikron. This open style play is the genius that makes TNS the wonder it is Being able to converse with over 140 non-playable characters and being able to possess around 40 playable characters is such a vast step beyond anything currently out in the market. TNS makes Tomb Raider look like a small fairy wonderland compared to its size and scope. The city of Anekbah (where you begin your quest) is roughly around two square kilometres on its own, all totally explorable. This is another of TNS's many features, the ability to explore the realms of all the cities in almost unending

The transferring of your soul to another character is imperative for the completion of the game. Pic (1) shows the first stages of the transformation. Pic (2) the acquisition of the character. Pic (3) the body of the character is returned to its previous occupant resulting in a loss of memory for the period of your stay.

The Nomad Soul (Continued)

fashion. Inhabitants mill around the place and sliders (the main transportation in the cities - very much like our taxi's) go about their business in a virtually realistic world.

TNS is a graphical masterpiece of the modern era of gaming, it looks superb in all facets of the game. All combat moves and dialogues are entirely animated with advanced 3D motion-capture technology, including incredible fighting moves executed by martial arts world champions. Over 220 minutes of dialogue has been seamlessly added to some of the best facial animations ever seen on PC. Facial expressions are considered to be the most difficult to simulate in the 3D world environment, but Quantic Dreams have overcome the fears and have come up trumps with everything from frowning to mouth movements. The masks used are eerily realistic, giving each and every character life and dimension beyond the virtual realms of the game.

Not only do the characters have life, also the cities of Phaenon, which hustle and bustle with activity. Each envelops a different size scale and social being, with the Blade Runner type appeal being used more than once to give the ambience of the social life on the planet. From Anekbah's high-rise buildings stemming from its security services, Qualisar's red light district depicting the lower class services, Jaunpur's hybrid of middle class residential housing and Lahareh's setting of tranquil canals and jet set living, each offers a graphical experience beyond the normal boundaries we have experienced.

If it's sound you want then TNS will tickle and tantalise you ears with soft instrumental rhythms and if you venture further into the game you will find a welcome surprise hidden within the depths of the gameplay, a virtual concert masterminded by the glass spider himself, David Bowie. David Bowie and his sidekick and long standing musical companion Reeves Gabrels took the task of bringing the musical offerings to life, and have done it so well that an assumption could be made that a 'The Nomad Soul' album would perhaps become the most successful soundtrack for a game ever.

Fittingly, the venue for the virtual concerts are mostly the seedy bars scattered around Qualisar, securing David Bowie's influence over the title. But his input does not stop there, he features as an in-game character that is the leader of the resistance who was forever inserted into the networks of 'Ix', from where he can plan and corrupt the innocence of the system. From this virtual realm he controls the underground sect called 'the Awakened', which is trying to save the world from the demons and its master. Special voice overs by David have been exclusively recorded to bring the character 'Boz' to life as he masterminds plans to bring down the system and to keep his touring band of misfits playing concerts around the cities.

The most compelling drawcard of TNS is its aversion to one-style regimes. The game not only has basic 3rdperson action-adventure elements, but also boasts fairly well presented

The Nomad Soul developers have pushed the boundaries of sex in games by sticking to their gameplan of creating a realistic world within the game. Don't get all hot and excited just yet, the scenes within the game are erotic to a point but offer no sexual exploits beyond the odd sensual dance or two. The mere inclusion of such exploits does however throw caution to the wind but is totally necessary for creating the experience of the red-light district within Qualisar. Most of the explicitness comes from the so called 'Sex Shops' that sell an array of pleasure items, (un) fortunately no such purchase can be made.

THE CITY OF ANEKBAH, A ZEN VIRTUAL WORLD, WITH HUGE WINDMILLS THAT SUPPLY THE POWER RESOURCES FOR THE CITY. THIS HOUSES THE SECURITY CENTRE OF THE PLANET.

ANIMATED FACIAL EXPRESSIONS OF THE HIGHEST CALIBRE

YOUR INVESTIGATIONS WILL TEST YOUR HAIRED LEVELS TO THE LIMIT

HANGED !! HANGING AROUND FOR SOMETHING TO DROP

YOUR TRAINING INSTRUCTOR 'JUDY' WILL NOT BE PLEASED WITH YOUR IMPROVEMENTS

ONE OF THE MANY PUZZLES YOU WILL HAVE TO OVERCOME

fighting and 1st person gameplay inserts. The action-adventure does however dominate the proceedings for much of the game. The action is viewed behind the character as you try to unravel the plot against you and the inhabitants of Omikron. The puzzles at times are quite easy to complete, but increase in difficulty as you progress further in the game. Sometimes you will be stumped because you have failed to complete a task but if you follow the 'sneak' (a computer strapped to your wrist that houses all the clues and inventory items in your possession) clues you can overcome this irritating anomaly. At certain times in the game you will have to fight demons, at which time the game changes to a 'Mortal Combat' style fight sequence. This depiction of the fighting genre is not of the high standards of the game but it does the job of changing the stance of the gameplay quite well. A choice of two viewpoints is given to offer the player personal preferences of the view. The 1st person style gameplay comes in mostly when asked to complete missions or assault tasks in the game. From here you are given the normal eyeball view with a gun in hand and are told to charge into battle. Once again the 1st person style leaves quite a bit to be desired but does the fundamentals well enough to make it fun and playable. The only real gripe is with the AI of the enemy, who at times are useless buggers, who suddenly become expert marksman. Even with this inconsistency you will be challenged enough to keep you coming back for more.

(ABOVE) THE 1ST PERSON PERSPECTIVE
(BELOW) SIDE ON FIGHTING PERSPECTIVE

A totally configurable control mechanism has been put into place for TNS and though not totally flawless, it deserves commendations. Whether you use a gamepad for the fighting and a mouse for the 1st person sequences, it can all be configured to suite each individual's playing needs. It must be said that the keyboard configuration I used was all I needed to enjoy almost all the elements within the game.

The game features many sub-plots (or mini games if you like) that can be attempted during your quest to save your soul. Things such as competing in a brawl for money with the intention of winning lots of seteks (money) with only the consequence of losing your life at stake. These sub-games are scattered around the game adding to the already immense gameplay of the main plot. Whether you choose to take on these tasks is totally up to the player and normally doesn't affect the true path of the game but every now and then it becomes necessary to take one on, in order to further advance either the character or his belongings. Something that definitely comes in handy is the ability to transverse between characters, especially if they have special traits or abilities. Logical thinking will make you realise when its time to move bodies, sometimes becoming entirely necessary at times to do so. Don't be caught 2 hours into the game and realise you cannot continue because your body won't permit you to. The save points within the game are positioned well enough not to irritate and if you explore well enough you will have enough rings (each time you save you need a ring) to save to your hearts content.

Within the confounds of the game are a number of interesting inclusions, them being the ability to cast spells, buy and sell goods, swim around, watch erotic shows, take fighting lessons, just to mention a few. Some of these abilities require substances to be consumed to make them effective. Almost all of these substances can be purchased at the many shops around the cities which includes everything from food to 'mana'. The interacting with the environment and the people within it will keep you alive longer than the demons would like, so don't be afraid to shop until you drop.

I can reliably say that my experience with 'The Nomad Soul' has been a challenging and regretful one. Why regretful? It ends. This is a huge production on a grand scale and it won't take hours or days to compete, more like weeks and months. After venturing onto the Internet for a walkthrough and finding a scaled down version on its site (www.nomadsoul.com) it became blatantly clear that I've missed so much there is to see in Omikron. The mystery around the game is most certainly its twists and turns, you never quite know where you stand or who to trust. As the story unfolds you will be pleasantly surprised by the subtle way it changes course.

There is not another game that offers the intrigue, suspense, depth and playability of 'The Nomad Soul' on any platform or genre. Whether you are a seasoned veteran or casual gamer, this title comes highly recommended. Everybody from every walk of life should experience the quest to save the Nomad Soul.

David Bowie - uncut

A good portion of the music from TNS appears on Davids new album *hours...* Featuring an all original soundtrack co-written by David Bowie and his long-time collaborator, Reeves Gabrels. David and Reeves, along with fellow musician Gail Ann Dorsey will be playing in several bars in the city as a "virtual band". Featuring **David Bowie** as **Boz**, the Virtual Being. For the role of **Boz**, David Bowie contributed his voice and allowed a graphic fantasy rendition to be made of himself for the role. In addition, his wife, supermodel Iman, acts as the model for one of the characters (**Iman 631**) in the game that players can take control of as part of the "virtual reincarnation" process.

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE: Action Adventure / Fighting / 1st Person

The game we have been waiting for, a story driven epic production told in the grand scale it was made. Multiple genre input makes this one of the broadest productions yet. Twists and turns keep you engrossed in the game. Make this game your own and you will reap the benefits of masterful development at its best.

DEVELOPER: Quantic Dream
PUBLISHER: Eidos Interactive
SUPPLIER: Crew (011) 233-1111

COMPARATIVES: All Action Adventures, All Fighting Games, All 1st Person Games
PROS: Multi-Genre, Excellent Story, Huge Production Value
CONS: Certain AI Problems, Small Graphical Glitches, It Ends

http//:www.nomadsoul.com
RRP R 299.00

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: Pentium 233 MMX, 32 MB Ram, 4 X CD Rom, 4 MB Video Card, 350MB H/D Space, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)
RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS: Pentium II 266 MHz, 64 MB Ram, 8 X CD Rom, 3D Accelertor, 1.7Gig H/D Space, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

PC CD ROM

Storm
Environmental Audio Ready: No
MULTIPLAYER?: No

NEW AGE GAMING

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
92	96	89	92

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
96	97	92	95

94

THE SHADOW HUNTER RETURNS,

HIS FATE FINALLY SEALED.

Blood of the sacred
GABRIEL KNIGHT 3
Blood of the Damned.
A 3D MYSTERY ADVENTURE
FIND THE TRUTH. RISK YOUR SOUL.

CREW

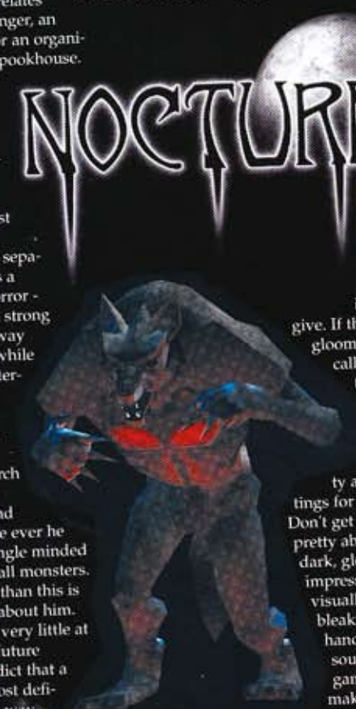
Distributed by Crew. For more information please call Johannesburg (011) 233-1111, Cape Town (021) 418-4240, Durban (031) 579-1974, or PE (041) 513-515. © 1999 Sierra On-Line, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Sierra, Sierra Studios, Gabriel Knight, and Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned, are trademarks of Sierra On-Line, Inc.

SIERRA STUDIOS
www.sierrastudios.com

NOCTURNE

Nocturne is a game that caused quite a stir in the NAG offices, even when only the initial teaser screen shots became available. Now, having seen the final product, I can quite honestly say that this is one of the finest pieces of software ever to grace the pages of this publication. It is games like this that make all the hard work worthwhile.
This game is inspired by the pulp horror novels of the 1930's and 40's. It relates the tale of the Stranger, an enigmatic agent for an organisation called the Spookhouse. This organisation hunts down and kills monsters. Vampires, werewolves, zombies - they're all on the list, and the Stranger is the best man for the job.
Presented in four separate chapters, it is a story rife with horror - more than once a strong chill coursed its way down my spine while playing this masterpiece.
As an agent of Spookhouse, the Stranger travels the world in search of the extraordinary and evil, and destroys it where ever he finds it. He is single minded in his hatred of all monsters. However, more than this is hard to fathom about him. The game hints very little at his past, or his future (although I predict that a sequel will almost definitely be on the way shortly). With his coat flapping and his twin pistols, the stranger takes on some of the most horrific creatures generated by the imaginations of pulp fiction writers, all in the name of mankind. He is, despite all the mystery surrounding him, a wonderfully portrayed character. More than once I found myself giggling at the lines he delivers in his deep, emotionless voice. He has an attitude slightly worse than Attilla the Hun's, and he is not afraid to speak his mind - resulting in some wonderfully "cool" lines issuing from between his lips.

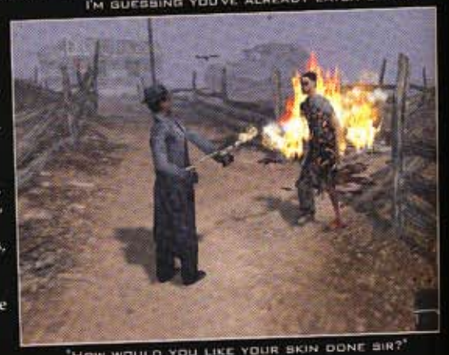
Beneath the rim of his black fedora, his eyes are obscured by dark goggles - the remainder of his craggy face is devoid of emotion, cold and unreadable. His grey coat flaps in the chill wind like the wings of some strange, deranged demon. In his hands, a pair of .45's held with the easy confidence of a competent killer. When he speaks, his words are few, and his voice carries the deep, hollow echo of a tomb. He shows no mercy as he performs his heinous acts of destruction - compassion does not enter his mind as his weapons roar. He is single minded in his purpose, bent on the destruction of his enemies. Nothing will prevent him from completing his task. And he's the good guy... - Shryke



One of the most striking aspects of Nocturne is the graphical excellence of the game. The stunning collage of imagery within the game, from the twisted camera angles to the extensive use of muted greys, blacks and browns lends the game a feel unlike any I have seen before. The characters, too, are remarkably well handled, with excellent modelling and a myriad of little touches (frosting breath, flapping coats and the like) which, although not always noticeable, make a huge difference to the entire experience of playing Nocturne.
Unfortunately, the seemingly inescapable problem of clipping does rear its ugly head every now and then, but this, when the quality of the graphics on the whole is taken into account, is very easy to forgive. If this game wasn't quite so dark and gloomy, the scenery could be called breathtaking. With settings ranging from rural Germany to Chicago, small town Texas to Paris, the developers took every advantage and opportunity at presenting stunning settings for the Stranger to appear in.
Don't get me wrong - there is nothing pretty about Nocturne. It is, as I said, dark, gloomy and grey. Yet, it is impressive in it's starkness; it exists, visually, as a stunning study of bleakness. Another remarkably handled aspect of the game is the sound track and effects. The game is generally very quiet, making use of a long forgotten technique for scaring people: silence. Take a look at any horror movie from the black and white era, and see how well it works. The only time you hear music while playing Nocturne is at the most effective times. And then, it is "classic" horror music, relying on the musical elements and nuances that make horror music so unsettling. The sound effects within the game were obviously well considered, too. They were not just included because the game needed sound - the developers made damn sure that the sound score was perfect. Once again, in this case, God lies in the details. Unless you're really looking out for what makes the sound so special, you don't spot it. But it's there, and the fact that these elements are not obvious proves their brilliance. When action takes place far away, the sounds are quieter, and take a longer time to reach the ears of the "viewer". For example, if the Stranger fires a gun while "far away" on the screen, the sound is played a split second after the gun's muzzle flash is visible. This is no accident, or bad programming. This is a realistic, thought out effect that adds (albeit almost imperceptibly) to the atmosphere of the game.
Which brings me to the third, and possibly most impressive, masterstroke within Nocturne: atmosphere. This game cannot be played during the day. The screen is just too dark. Yet, when played at night, the visual quality improves immeasurably. This, once again, is no accident. Instead of allowing the player the luxury of playing this game at any time, the

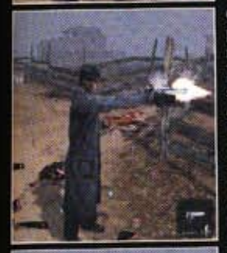
EXCELLENT LIGHTING EFFECTS

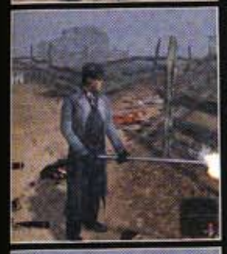
I'M GUESSING YOU'VE ALREADY EATEN GRANNY



"HOW WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR SKIN DONE SIR?"

"I suspect your religious sensibilities might be offended by what I am about to do..." - the stranger

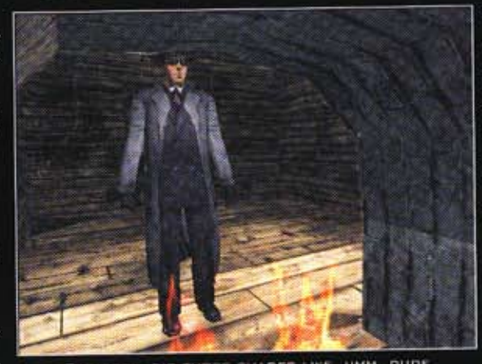




developers have decided to "force" the player into playing the game in the dark - when everything is all that much more frightening. And frightening it is. The atmosphere is wonderfully thrilling, with well-timed flashes of lightning, glimpses of monsters at just the right moment and an overall tension unlike any ever created. I succumbed to the whims of the developers and played the game at night, with all the lights out. The game is so enthralling, so engrossing, that I found myself breaking out into a cold sweat more than once, and had to turn the lights on several times to avoid... well, unfortunate accidents involving bodily functions!
As a whole, this game is the scariest thing I have ever encountered on a computer (and we're talking about a person who laughs at even the most frightening horror movies and books here). This game deserves its score for scare value alone.
The only true criticism I have of Nocturne comes up when considering the story line. Unfortunately, the tales told in the four chapters are fairly linear and straightforward. They do not allow the player to gather enough rope to hang himself. However, this is quite all right, because when you've had the whatever scared out of you, it's kind of hard to concentrate. Also, the developers avoided falling into the trap of highlighting items needed to complete missions. Looking for a key, or a clue? Then you had better look, because nothing jumps up and screams "here I am" in this game. If you don't spot it, tough. You just keep battling on until you do. So, despite the fact that the stories are fairly simple and uncomplicated, the puzzles and mysteries provided by the game are by no means easy to solve.
The Stranger is fairly easy to control (despite the fact that the controls can be very sensitive) with the entire game being keyboard driven. As a matter of fact, the developers have not tried to create a shoot-em-up, how-fast-can-you-tap-the-keys action adventure. Atmosphere is the whole thing here, and to the end of keeping the player enthralled with that side of things, they have included little features like simple control and player aids in the form of elements like auto-aiming. This does little more than assist you in shooting bad guys (if you can call these abominations "guys") and makes the Stranger look supremely cool as he extends an arm slightly sideways and lets fly with bullets, while still facing forward. The Stranger has a myriad of weapons with which to deal out damage, and many other pieces of equipment can be found and used during the game. Some of this equipment is quite "advanced" (when one considers that the game is set between the 1920's and 1940's) and include night vision goggles and "spirit sights" (which are basically laser sights) on certain weapons. Sounds great, right. Well, the biggest down side of this game is the fact that, to pull all of this off, you need something of a monster machine to run it, as it demands a lot from a PC. However, I think I have found, in Nocturne, a great reason to get an upgrade...
Nocturne is a wonderful game in almost every respect. It is a brilliantly put together product that exits the realm of a mere computer game, and lifts entertainment software to the status of an art form. I recommend this one with total confidence... in fact, it is a game that every gamer should experience, just to see how good these things can get.

"It's our job to be in grave danger" - the stranger

DRIVE BY SHOOTING



TOO COOL. DIG THOSE SHADES LIKE, UMM, DUDE

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
Horror Adventure	Terminal Reality	Gathering of Developers	MMW / SDD (011) 315-1000	Pentium 233 MHz 64 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 2 MB Video Card 500 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium II 400 MHz 128 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 8 MB Video Accelerator 1 GB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

An absolute masterpiece of a game, Nocturne is a scary, chilling and thrilling journey into the world of early 19th century pulp horror. With several incomparable elements, this game will definitely thrill everyone who experiences it.... not to mention scare the living daylights out of them!

COMPARATIVES	PROS	CONS
Resident Evil 2 Nightmare Creatures	Wonderful Graphics Excellent Sound Chilling Atmosphere	Some Clipping Simple Story System Specifications

http//:www.godgames.com — RRP R 299.00

PC CD ROM

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
95	89	91	90

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
95	91	92	98

NEW AGE GAMING — 93

Shryke

Environmental Audio Ready

MULTIPLAYER? No No

Flight Simulator 2000

Flight simulations for the PC have been around for nearly two decades now, and the civil aviation title that is the most familiar to us through the years has been Microsoft Flight Simulator. It is now 17 years since it's original incarnation, and it's remarkable to see how this title has evolved into the glorious state in which it resides at present. Many described Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000 as the flight simulation of the new millennium, and although it might not be 100% accurate, it sure provides the home user with an experience very close to the real thing in many ways...

MemnocH

Arguably Microsoft Flight Simulator is maybe the most widely sold and played flight sim around the globe, and has a huge fan base due to the open structure used for the aircraft models and the terrain files. There are always a zillion add-ons after a version is released where fans create their own planes and scenery for different exotic locations, and best of all, these creations can be imported from Flight Simulator 98 into Flight Simulator 2000 with ease. Microsoft has really outdone themselves this time, by adding a list of new features nearly as long as the grid-lock on the Ben Schoeman highway during peak hour.

THE IMPRESSIVE CONCORDE...

Microsoft also chose to produce the sim in two packages, the standard version, and the professional version. Although the professional version offers more value to the already jam-packed product, it is debatable whether the choice to do so is justified. A recent poll on the Internet at SimHQ.com showed that 62% of the participants weren't convinced that producing a flight simulation should be done in two different packages, while 15% chose a neutral opinion.

Flight Simulator 2000 boasts an all new 3D graphical engine that incorporates generic elevation data for virtually every public airport in the world. This is quite impressive, although not an entirely new concept, but I must say that Microsoft went to great lengths by bringing us 20 000 airports, a 17 000 improvement from that of Flight Simulator 98. The custom installation allows the player to pick which countries or parts of the world should be installed. FS 2000 (Flight Simulator 2000) features 6 new or improved high detail scenery for London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago, additionally the professional version offers Boston, Washington DC, Seattle, Berlin, Tokyo and Rome. These cities are nicely detailed by skyscrapers, bridges, and all kinds of landmark buildings found in the real world.

Microsoft chose to stick with the tiled scenery system which is quite functional, but lacks the beauty of the satellite imagery scenery found in simulations such as Flight Unlimited III and Fly!. The tiling is much more visible at higher altitudes, which can get a bit boring at times, but after all, we're flying the plane and not browsing through National Geographic, right?

Speaking of the planes, there are a few new additions to the Flight Simulator hanger. For those of us not familiar with the earlier versions, the default plane set consisted of the Cessna 182S Skylane, the 182RG version with retractable gear, and the 182 cockpit optimised for IFR with a more detailed instrument panel. Other planes include the Learjet 45, Boeing 737-400, Sopwith F.1 Camel, Schweizer 2-32 Sailplane, the Extra 300s and the Bell 206B JetRanger III helicopter. FS 2000 introduces the infamous Concorde and the large body Boeing 777-300, and the professional version offers the Raytheon/Beech King Air 350, the Mooney Bravo, and the IFR cockpit version of the Bravo. This is quite a comprehensive set of aircraft and offers a very wide range of flight disciplines in the civil aviation world. Each plane has it's own cockpit graphics which contains all the basic relevant instrumentation found for each of the planes. The cockpit is clickable on the buttons and controls that support it, but unfortunately the detail doesn't come close to the scope of the cockpits found in Terminal Reality's Fly!. All the dials are squashed into the one screen dashboard, giving a survey-sim feel to Flight Simulator, which isn't all that bright. Microsoft tries to compensate for this by having separate windows for the radio, GPS, throttles, compass and fuel management, depending on the type of aircraft. The problem comes in when a few windows are opened, the rest of the cockpit becomes invisible, and the view through the windshield becomes obscured.

BELL 206B JETRANGER III

After becoming used to the head movement in Fly! that allowed the virtual pilot to get a better view of what's happening in front of the plane, the lack thereof in FS 2000 is a major letdown. The 3D models of the planes is very nicely detailed, and at a closer look one can actually see the sunglasses on the pilots' faces. The propellers have very nice moving details, the turbines can be seen spooling up, and the retracting undercarriage and flaps gives a realistic appearance to the aircraft. The flight models for the planes are somewhat of a mixed bag. Overall, the flightmodels adhere to the data provided for the planes in all 6 degrees of freedom. Take off speeds with and without flaps, as well as the landing speeds are on the spot. All the figures throughout the entire flight envelope are also dead on. Someone might pick up the negative vibe I feel here. The planes do what they are supposed to do, but it doesn't always feel like one is flying. One can almost feel the number crunching going on in the background, and regrettably Flight Simulator 2000 lacks the feel and personality in the flight models of other flight simulations on the market. The problem seems to be a lack of feedback provided to the pilot, and I'm not referring to an issue that can be resolved by a force-feedback joystick. The overall smoothness is missing, and virtual pilots that come from Fly!, Pro Pilot or Flight Unlimited may be somewhat disappointed.

The Learjet 45 has the nasty characteristic to oscillate in the pitch axis, and although I'm not a Learjet pilot, I'm quite sure that the real plane doesn't do that. I was so looking forward to taking the Bell JetRanger Helicopter through its paces, and here some major holes in the flight model appeared. Having read numerous manuals and books on helicopters and playing nearly every helicopter sim ever brought out on the PC, I could for the life of me not manage to go into a stable hover close to the ground, making landings impossible. Taking off is usually a process of trying to keep the chopper upright while trying to get as much forward acceleration to get into a stable forward movement without hitting the ground, no matter how much I countered the gyration of the rotor with the rudders and tak-

BOEING 777 - 300 (THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE AN IN-DEPTH CAPTION, ED)

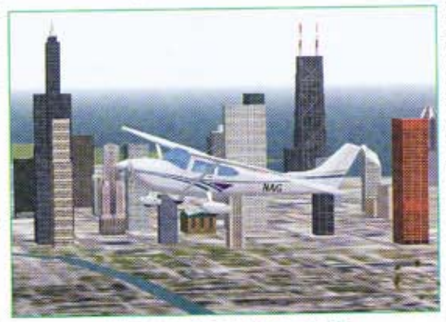
ing ground effect into account. During one manoeuvre I lost total control over the helicopter and she spinned merrily around, without falling to the ground even after I switched the engine off. The rest of the aircraft behaves much more realistically, and the larger planes were the most pleasing ones to fly.

The kneeboard is a very handy feature in the form of a pilot's handbook that can be called up at any time. It acts almost as a checklist for take off, climbing, cruising, landing and parking the plane. It will also show the specific speed restraints for the different flight envelopes, and all the keyboard commands relevant to the specific plane.

Getting up in the air is very easy, by default the simulation will start up with the Cessna Skylane 182S from the Meigs airfield in Chicago. Through simple menu options, one can choose a different plane, jump to any airport, or choose the weather conditions. The weather in Flight Simulator 2000 can be downloaded through the interface from the Internet, so realistic weather data for any one of the 20 000 airports can be downloaded in real time, and the simulation will do the rest. Wind, turbulence and precipitation in different degrees are modelled, and it's quite an exhilarating experience to do landings at close to zero visibility during thunderstorms. One can also access the realism options through the menu, so if the experience is a bit daunting at first, newcomers can slowly move their way up to full realism through a plethora of settings.

The one thing that sets Flight Simulator 2000 apart from other simulations is the added value provided with the package. The highly detailed GPS system makes navigation over the globe very easy, while the flight planner allows one to define flight routes via direct GPS, low altitude airways, high altitude airways or VOR to VOR. The help section includes a wealth of information, including articles from magazines relevant to situations that can be reproduced in the simulation. The manual is maybe one of the best I have ever encountered, and makes for very entertaining reading with interesting facts and a fine tone of humour. The manual provides the virtual pilot with flight lessons, information on the aircraft as well as how to fly them. The professional version adds a few more sections to the manual such as Getting Certified, and Learning to Fly with Rod Machado. Added features in this version also include a Flight Dynamics Editor, Instrument Panel Editor, samples and a discount of a training package from Cessna on one of the CD's, discount on FlightSafety International add-on products and discount on flight training videos from King Schools.

THE CONCORDE OFFICE DESK...



CESSNA 182S SKYLANE - 'NAG'

Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000 also includes multiplayer where one can fly with friends over the Internet or LAN. The total package is one that speaks of high quality, and taking into account what Microsoft achieved with the latest addition to their very popular and successful Flight Simulator series, it will surely appeal to each and every fan of civil aviation simulations. The product still has a rough feel to it, especially in the flight model department, and I suspect the problem to be one of design and beyond the scope of a future patch, one never knows.

Looking at the differences between the standard version of Flight Simulator 2000 and the Pro version, one might ask: "Why will I bother buying the standard version if I can get all the nice added features of the professional one?" Dear Watson, the difference lies in the fact that the standard version retails at R 399.99 and the shiny professional one at R 559.99. This must be a first for gaming, of course one would like to have the car fitted with the air conditioner, but why pay more for it as an extra option when the competitors ask less for a package with the air conditioner already included? It appears as if Microsoft is pulling a quick one here, and sadly the flight enthusiast is the victim. Flight Simulator 2000 Pro is definitely a must buy for the simulation fan, but the pricing structure of the product should be frowned upon, and I hope Microsoft re-evaluate their marketing strategy for this popular title.

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON
CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE: Flight Simulator	DEVELOPER: Microsoft	PUBLISHER: Microsoft	SUPPLIER: Crew (011) 233-1111	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: Pentium 166 MHz, 32 MB Ram, 4 X CD Rom, 2 MB Video Card, 350 MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS: Pentium II 300 MHz, 64 MB Ram, 8 X CD Rom, 4 MB AGP Video Card, 365+ MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)

PC CD ROM

COMPARATIVES: Pro Pilot '99, Flight Unlimited III, Fly!

PROS: Large Variety of Aircraft, South African Scenery, Great Manual

CON'S: Controversial Pricing, Dodgy Flight Modelling, Dull Cockpit Art

For over 17 years now Flight Simulator provided the flight enthusiast with a high quality gaming experience. Flight Simulator 2000 and Pro offers us the richest simulation in the series yet, and although the competition has caught up, it's still a worthy addition to the simulation fan's collection.

http//:www.microsoft.com/games

RRP R 399.99 R 559.99 (PRO)

MemnocH

Environmental Audio Ready: No

NEW AGE GAMING

MULTIPLAYER? Yes

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
82	NA	85	90

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
75	78	80	84

82

PHARAOH

It seems that most game developers are currently cashing in on previous hits in some or other way. It is the year of sequels for most, but Impressions Games (under the Sierra Studios label) have opted to instead release something that is not a sequel, but makes use of the rather impressive Caesar III engine. Prepare to re-enter the classical world, this time in mystical ancient Egypt...

R.A.V.E.N.

Allow me to set the scene: the year is 3 500 BC, and Egypt is still but a nascent nation, consisting predominantly of scattered bands and tribes, with a primitive social hierarchy emerging. Several relatively powerful "noble" families now seek to expand their influence, and the birth of Egyptian civilisation is at hand. And so it is that you find yourself heading one of these families on its road down history...

The engine employed in Pharaoh is virtually the Caesar III engine, but a few tweaks and upgrades have been applied to it. Those of you who have played Caesar III will be familiar with the basic concepts and premises, and yet the game still covers enough new ground that even Caesar III veterans will need to learn the game's subtleties before they can play with confidence. The object of the game is ultimately to become Pharaoh, ruler of the Egyptian Kingdom. This is accomplished by building progressively more powerful, influential and advanced settlements, starting with the rudest of villages and culminating in the Pharaoh's capital. Furthermore, history must be informed of all these accomplishments, and this can only be achieved by building imposing monuments to Egyptian might and glory, ranging from burial tombs to massive pyramids and sphinxes.

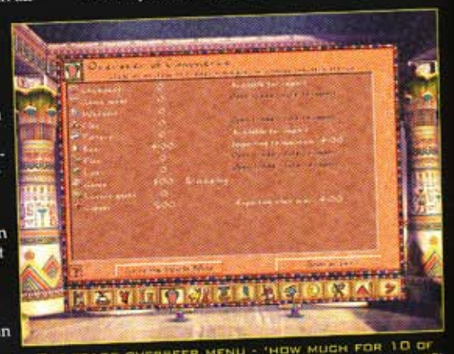
Being based on concepts introduced in Caesar III, Pharaoh once again has you juggling population, food production, jobs, finances, industries, health, education, entertainment, military forces and the favour of the gods. The safety of the population is of prime importance, and so you must protect them from fires, crime and disease, and you must look after their homes and their places of work. You must provide them with water and food, and their living areas must be pleasant to live in. Later on, their needs grow to include such luxuries as pottery, beer (yes, everyone's an alcoholic!) and varied food types. They also require services such as education (which generally requires papyrus to function), health services (whose requirements include linen) and entertainment. Each of these requires an entire supporting industry, and they all require people in order to operate. It is thus imperative to grow your city at a controlled rate. How well you run your city influences the happiness of your citizens, and thus you must be able to not only provide them with all the required amenities, but also pay them well enough, tax them little enough and supply all of them with jobs. Should the citizens' mood turn sour, you will suffer inefficiency, crime, and emigration; when they are really upset they begin to riot and burn down buildings.

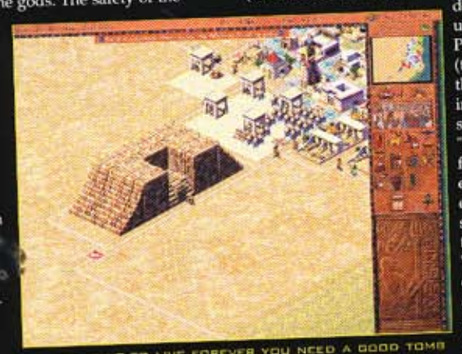
The gods take a daily interest in Egyptian life, and woe to the powerful who do not pay their dues! However, should you flatter the deities enough, they will reward you for your faithful observance (and fear!). Primarily, five major Egyptian deities are used in Pharaoh (though, of course, there were far more in actuality), and several others make "guest appearances" for specific purposes. Interestingly enough, it is now sometimes possible to appease deities "through each other", as it were, due to the nature of the Egyptian pantheon. Another addition to the religious theme is the concept of "patron gods" of various cities, and each assignment will have you paying particular attention to a different god. Often this is also reflected in the nature of the city - an agricultural settlement will act differently and worship differently to a military encampment, for example.

The provision of food has become more complex and varied. Farming in desert-covered Egypt was a very different affair to farming in most of Europe at the time or later. The Nile River was the lifeblood of Egyptian culture, for the very simple reason that without it life in the Sahara would be harsh enough to preclude the birth of a civilisation. Not only did the Nile provide drinking and washing water, it also flooded its banks annually, depositing rich, fertile sediments upon it. This soil was used by the Egyptians to cultivate crops. However, the farmland was flooded over for three or four months every year, leading to a rather unique situation. In Pharaoh you learn to manage an annual crop, rather than the ongoing affairs prevalent in Caesar III, as non-floodplain farming is extremely rare and inefficient.

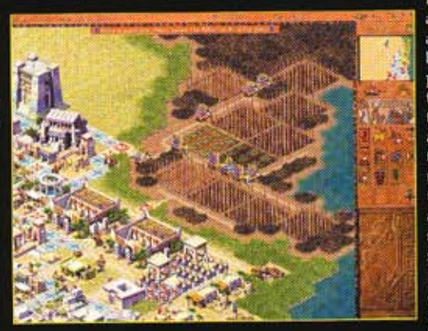
Hunting also contributes to the citizens' diet; this is an ongoing affair. Balancing these main food-gathering options with others, including imports of food types from other cities, is a delicate task that, if botched, will surely result in your city's downfall.

As the Pharaoh learns to trust your judgement and abilities, you will be entrusted with assignments of a military nature. This does not mean that you can now neglect your civilian population and concerns. In fact, if anything, these become more demanding, as your city must now support not only itself, but also armed forces for its defence and that of the Kingdom in general. The Pharaoh will occasionally request levies of troops in addition to any monetary or goods tributes he may require.


THE TRADE OVERSEER MENU - 'HOW MUCH FOR 10 OF YOUR BEST STONE SLABS AND SIX SLAVES TO CARRY IT?'


IF YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER YOU NEED A GOOD TOMB

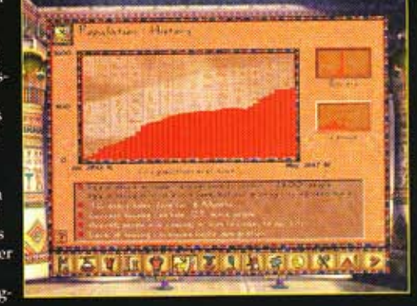
All of this sounding a little complex? Well, it is, but at the same time, it isn't, thanks to the incredible engine being employed here. As mentioned above, Caesar III's engine was not too bad to begin with; Pharaoh's engine takes all the best from that engine and improves further on it. It is now so detailed that you can keep an eye on every aspect of your city. And easily, too. As before, right-clicking on anything displays a brief (ish) information box. However, almost every report now has buttons linking you to the most relevant other reports and advisors (now called "overseers"), and so it is very easy to quickly run through all the most important aspects of your city, or to execute an in-depth investigation of any specific factor. This ease is also reflected in the control interface itself, as all instructions are accessed just as easily. Tax rates and festivals alike can now be set directly from their relevant structures, never leaving the main city map view. This view can, of course, be rotated in 90-degree intervals to view the city from any compass point. The sidebar can be retracted, though I doubt many players play that way. The various categories of buildings, facilities and public works is organised slightly differently from Caesar III, but are attractively grouped under graphic icons resembling hieroglyphics. As before, most of these lead to submenus to specify the exact feature you require.



Sound and Vision

The main city map is presented as an isometric projection, with the sidebar (containing the control buttons and the minimap) on the right. The detail in the graphics is at least as great as in Pharaoh's predecessor, Caesar III. Each hut, temple, citizen, tree - in fact, anything you care to name - has been rendered in meticulous detail that stands up to scrutiny in any of the resolutions available (which are 640x480, 800x600 and 1024x768). All buildings, features and people are clear and distinguishable, even though at times there is a hell of a lot going on to see! The Kingdom map resembles something you might find in a museum, which is to say it depicts a papyrus scroll. Even the Overseer report pages look appealing, while managing to impart a wealth of information.

You can pretty much always hear what is going on in your city - each building makes its own distinctive noises, and people chat to you and give you their honest (sometimes too much so!) opinions of your city if you ask them (by right-clicking on them, of course). During play you may, of course, choose to listen to the music included (which, incidentally, is implemented by means of MP3s). This soundtrack is no doubt the work of a very talented digital musician, and blends classical Egyptian styles with synth-trance and funk ideas. Not bad at all!



How does it play?

A very important question about any game is "how long will it entertain me for?" Now, given that each assignment in Pharaoh takes between an hour (for the first couple of missions) and upwards of twelve (for some of the later missions), and the number of assignments and their incredible variety, it is safe to assume that this title is good for a very long time indeed. Being "real-time" (the term "scaled-time" may be more appropriate, as weeks pass in the space of minutes) means that Pharaoh can get dangerously addictive, due to the "just a couple more adjustments" syndrome! Pharaoh's updated interface also means that it is very easy to pick up where you've left off previously when resuming a saved game.

In addition to being a beautifully crafted game, Pharaoh also boasts an impressive degree of authenticity, from a historical point of view. As was the case with Caesar III, after playing this one is left with a far more accurate and detailed picture of life in ancient Egypt, which might (some day) pay dividends in a Trivial Pursuit game!

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON
CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER
Empire Building	Impressions Games	Sierra Studios	Crew (011) 233-1111

COMPARATIVES	PROS	CONS
Caesar III	Hellishly Addictive Powerful Interface	Slow Pace

http//:www.sierrastudios.com

RRP R 299.00

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
Pentium 133 MHz 32 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 1 MB Video Card 460 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium 200 MHz 64 MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 4 MB AGP Video Card 600 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)

PC CD ROM

R.A.V.E.N.

Environmental Audio Ready: No

MULTIPLAYER: Yes

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
87	88	94	93

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
84	86	91	92

NEW AGE GAMING

89

THE TAINTED

It does the heart good to see a locally produced computer game hit the shelves. The determination, discipline and sheer amount of work required for such an endeavour is phenomenal. However, so often the attitude towards projects like this, held by most South Africans, is "hey, man, it's local. It can't be good." The true question is, just how good is Twilyt's The Tainted, and will it hold it's own against international competition?

Shryke

It has been some time since we saw a locally produced entertainment software title. In other words, a product like Twilyt Productions' The Tainted is long awaited. This isometric adventure game sends the player on a planet-hopping spree, complete with alien creatures, strange landscapes, and misleading intelligence reports! Travelling via portals, your character explores each planet, meets interesting creatures, and then blows seven kinds of kidneys out of them. The game features a myriad of worlds to explore, and tons of nifty equipment, both violent and non-violent, to make use of. Not to mention psionic spells and powers that makes your character just a little more than "normal" by everyday standards. Up to four different character classes may be chosen with which to traverse this dangerous journey.

The Tainted is an action packed game, but it does not only come down to who shoots faster. You will at times find that discretion is by far the better part of valour and, to coin two clichés in a row, he who fights and runs away lives to fight another day.

Characters within The Tainted advance fairly quickly, at least initially, and the blue glow surrounding your character when a level up occurs is a welcome sight during the early stages of what often proves a tense and challenging game. The AI used by the developers is intelligent and pretty damn sneaky, forcing the player to think carefully about tactics - enemies attack in large numbers, and retreat when wounded, allowing stronger, fresh enemies to close in for the kill. It is a nice change from some of the more, umm, direct AI programming out there. Okay, so we know what it's about. But what does it look like? How does it sound? How does it handle?

Graphically, The Tainted presents an attractive picture. Characters and backgrounds are well handled, and offer a level of animation and activity far above what I initially expected. The colours are bright, and the graphics are crisp, clear and easily distinguishable. A few unfortunate problems do seem to occur when the screen gets too active, however, and the jerky nature of this problem can become mildly annoying. However, handling the game in a tactical manner, rather than charging blindly into combat with two million bad guys, will ensure that this problem rarely crops up. On a sound front, the game needs some attention. Although the sound score is easy enough to hear and understand, and the files play correctly at the right times, the sound quality is, well, messy. A lot of background noise can be heard, especially in speech files. This is a problem, but does not prove to be anything more than merely distracting to the game as a whole.

One element that I found annoying was that of control. Perhaps this was through a fault on my part, but I found that the character became almost obstinate at times, particularly when firing at enemy creatures. I also had a few difficulties with aiming initially, but I put both of these down to not being one hundred percent used to the game's controls at the time of reviewing, due to its late arrival at our offices. Certain keyboard commands - those that call up different screens - were at times slightly sluggish.

I SHOOT YOU, YOU SHOOT ME...

One of the challenges that The Tainted is faced with is the fact that games of this type - the Diablo's and Fall Out's of the world - are very well represented in the market. This game is literally entering a market, which is almost saturated with isometric adventure games, and with many more on the way. One hopes that buyers give The Tainted the benefit of the doubt, and try support the efforts of our local developers. It is a very difficult task that they have undertaken and, although the game is not devoid of problems, it is very playable, and highly addictive. It certainly holds it's own again a large number of titles, and does surpass some that I have seen.

What has to be considered is the fact that the poor chaps at Twilyt are in a very isolated market situation, and that they are a very small team. It's one thing producing a game with twenty developers and a distribution house at your disposal, but considering the size of Twilyt one has to admit that The Tainted is actually a remarkable achievement for the small development house.It stands as a testament that Twilyt productions are certainly going from strength to strength, and I personally cannot wait to see what they produce next.

FUNKY LIGHTING EFFECTS!

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
Action Adventure	Celestial	Twilyt Productions	Gametronix (011) 886-1972	Pentium 166 MHz 16 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 2 MB Video Card Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium 166+ MHz 16 + MB Ram 8 X CD Rom 2 MB Video Card Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)

PC CD ROM

COMPARATIVES	PROS	CONS
Fall Out 2 Revenant Diablo	Sneaky AI System Requirements Friendly Interface	Suspect Sound Sometimes Jerks Sluggish Controls

A local effort that, while it has a few problems, shows a lot of promise for things to come. The Tainted is an isometric shoot-em-up adventure that requires thought and planning to get through. You cannot just blast your way through this one!

http//:www.twilyt.com

RRP R 299.00

Shryke

Environmental Audio Ready: No

MULTIPLAYER? Yes

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
66	57	61	69

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
56	68	62	68

NEW AGE GAMING

63

NASCAR® Racing 3
Takes The Pole

Steer clear of trouble - a bent front end will take you out of contention

All 28 included tracks have been updated to reflect the 1999 NASCAR® season

An animated flagger and caution light instantly alert you to changing race conditions

The ultra-competitive AI will race you 4-wide for position

Sierra Sports Crew

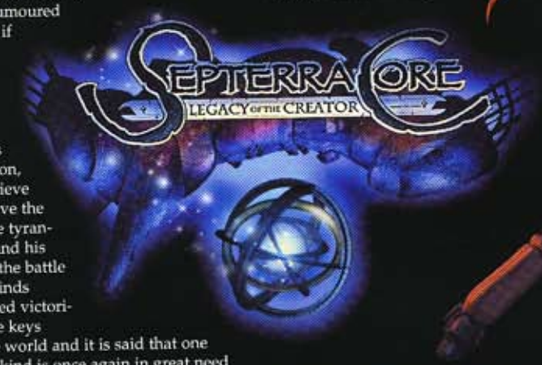
PAPYRUS

Distributed by Crew. For more information please call Johannesburg (011) 233-1111, Cape Town (021) 418-4240, Durban (031) 579-1974, or PE (041) 513-515

©1999 Sierra On-Line, Inc. Sierra, the "S" logo and Sierra Sports are trademarks of Sierra On-Line, Inc. Papyrus logo are trademarks of Papyrus Design Group, Inc. NASCAR® Racing 3 is officially licensed by NASCAR®. All rights reserved. Any other trademarks are the property of their respective owners

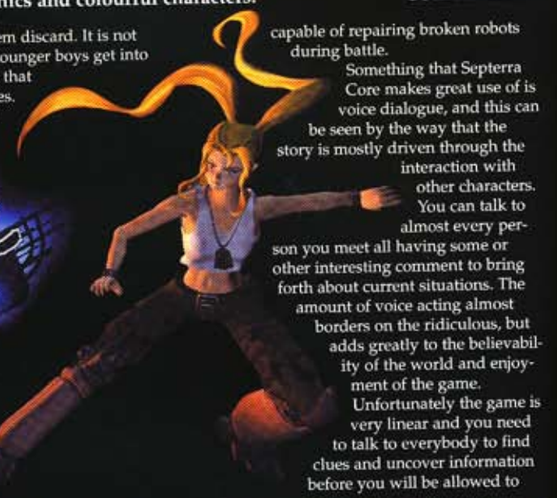
From Monolith and Valkyrie Studios comes an RPG set in a world that is not only peculiar in its functioning but is also filled with magic, mystery and technology. A strange combination indeed but those familiar with manga should feel right at home with a story that is the driving force behind the anime style graphics and colourful characters. - Soul Assassin

Many ages ago a daemon by the name of Gemma stole the sacred keys from the Creator and mocked him as he stood on the soil of the seven floating continents of Septerra Core and spilled the blood of the innocent. It is rumoured that these keys, if used at the right time on the core, could open the gates to heaven. The Creator sent his only begotten son, Marduk, to retrieve the keys and save the people from the tyranny of Gemma and his minions. After the battle of the Seven Winds Marduk emerged victorious and hid the keys throughout the world and it is said that one day when mankind is once again in great need the keys will be recovered by a descendant of Marduk and the core finally unlocked to reveal its secrets.



Now the keys have been found and one of Marduk's descendants, Doskias, who is planning to force an alignment of the continents against the wishes of the Chosen Elder, Emperor Aspertine. They have decided to hide the keys from him, but unfortunately through his persistence he now threatens to start a war to regain the sacred objects.

And so the game begins as you take on the role of Maya a young spirited teenage girl from level 3. She is from a small town called Oasis where the people make their living from collecting and utilising all the junk that the continent above them discard. It is not too long before one of the younger boys get into trouble for smuggling guns that he collected on the junk piles. As she sets out to help the Tori events are in motion behind the scenes that will eventually lead her to the other layers and finally to a confrontation with Doskias. Unknown to Maya he was responsible for the death of her parents and so the plot thickens as she sets out on her quest. Along the way Maya will meet up with friends that will aid her in her adventure and up to 2 other characters can join her to form a party. As the game continues more people will be willing to join her party, although the maximum allowable of three forces you to drop a member if another is chosen. This is very similar to the party system used by Final Fantasy VII and keeps things fresh as you constantly get to meet new characters and explore their personalities. Characters range from mindless robotic dogs right up to technical wizards capable of repairing broken robots during battle.



Something that Septerra Core makes great use of is voice dialogue, and this can be seen by the way that the story is mostly driven through the interaction with other characters. You can talk to almost every person you meet all having some or other interesting comment to bring forth about current situations. The amount of voice acting almost borders on the ridiculous, but adds greatly to the believability of the world and enjoyment of the game.

Unfortunately the game is very linear and you need to talk to everybody to find clues and uncover information before you will be allowed to proceed and continue with the story. One irritating aspect of all the interaction with other characters is the fact that Septerra Core doesn't keep track of what you have spoken to NPC's about before, and often you find yourself talking about a subject that you have already covered in a previous conversation.

HEY, I THINK I CAN SEE MY HOUSE FROM UP HERE!

Doskias: "It is not heresy. The artifacts are meant to unlock the secrets of the Core. Now that we have found them, we must use them."

A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE GAME'S UNIQUENESS

Battle sequences utilises a semi real-time technique where characters have an action meter below their portraits containing information such as HP, very similar to the ones used in the Final Fantasy series. Once the bar is full your character is able to perform and attack. There is a difference however, each characters bar is split into three sections and the more sections that are full, the more complicated the move that your characters can perform. In most instances it is best to wait until the bar is full before you attack although to perform a simple action such as drinking a health potion only require one section to be full. I found this method a little better than the Final Fantasy method although it can take some time for 3 section to be filled. One peculiarity of the game is the way that characters move towards each other for an attack during battles. Instead of walking/running to the enemies or vice versa they leap across the screen make an attack and jump back. This looks a little awkward and comical and takes away from the believability of the battle.

The game also utilises a magic system based on cards. During battles each character has a single card slot that can be used. These slots can either be used separately to cast a spell to perform its intended function, i.e. heal card can be used to cast heal, or any combination of three cards can be used to cast an entirely different spell. Players will have to experiment to find different combinations since they aren't listed. Finding new spell effects is almost a game within itself and I really enjoyed finding new spells.

Graphically Septerra Core also reminds me of more of Fallout. It has a similar look and feel inside the towns and cities; the only difference being that Septerra Core has a manga theme. Most of the game utilised very intricate pre-rendered and pre-drawn backdrops with characters animated on top. The locations themselves look fantastic and range from exotic cities to old temple ruins. Unfortunately there are a couple of locations that are not as detailed as the rest that gives the impression that Valkyrie might have rushed to finish the game. Some of the graphics are also not properly anti-aliased and due to this there are a lot of jagged little edges that can be seen in the environments. This doesn't detract from the game too much, probably only noticeable if you really look for it. Another graphical feature that I found irritating was that a lot of the NPC's you converse with have the same portrait. I would have liked to see different faces every time I speak to someone, you can never pay too much attention to small details like these. One aspect that has been exceptionally well done by them is the special effects of the magical spells. They tend to be very colourful and make use of almost every graphical technique to present stunning eye candy.

THE GIRL AND HER SPANNER

Overall Septerra Core offers an enjoyable gaming experience even though it lacks total freedom to move wherever you want and is bound by a linear story. Veterans of RPG games might find the gameplay a little too easy but the story is the main attraction, which all should enjoy and the manga appearance offers a unique graphical look.

The Layered World

Septerra Core is a world unlike any other and consists of seven layers of continents each layer rotating around a central core and all linked by an axis. It's best to think of the world as seven continents floating on top of each other with the core in the centre. Every 100 years the continents align to allow a beam of light through to the core allowing it to recharge its energy and sustaining life on the upper continents for another century. It is at this time that the sacred keys can be used to open the way to heaven and for the core to reveal its secrets.

THE SKY IS FALLING. THE SKY IS FALLING!

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
Role Playing Action	Valkyrie Studios	Monolith	Gametronix (011) 886-1972	Pentium 166 MHz, 32 MB Ram, 4 X CD Rom, 2 MB Video Card, 120 MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium II 266 MHz, 64 MB Ram, 8 X CD Rom, 4 MB AGP Video Card, 240+ MB HD, Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)

COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CON'S
Final Fantasy VII, Fallout	Interesting Story, Good Sound, Character Development	Standard Characters, Jumping in Battles

Septerra Core is an RPG game in the same vein as Final Fantasy VII with a manga theme to it. The story is interesting and the concept of the world where the game takes place is unique. You play as a young teenage girl, Maya, whom by way of circumstances ends up having to face an evil that threatens the world.

http//:www.lith.com

RRP R 299.00

PC CD ROM

Soul Assassin

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
75	86	75	81

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
82	78	82	81

NEW AGE GAMING

80

Environmental Audio Ready

MULTIPLAYER? No / Yes

If life in the rat race is getting you down why not move to the jungle, build a tree-house and live with the apes. This way you can escape pollution, noise, and backed-up highways. The only problem with the jungle is that you've got leopards, big spiders and thieving baboons, so in the end you just can't win.

RedTide

Disney's TARZAN™

Disney's Tarzan comes to us shortly after the blockbuster movie by the same name, and has 'perfect Christmas present' written all over it. Disney has always had the ultimate marketing tool when it comes to children's entertainment but in spite of their animated feature film successes they never really managed to amaze anyone with their 'interactive' efforts. In the past we've seen some terrible games that don't try very hard to be different or innovative and it seems that everyone, including Disney thinks a simple platform game automatically makes for a good movie tie-in. The assumption that you just throw in the main character and make him collect things ensures you'll have a monster hit on your hands has been ridiculed by the gaming press for years.

Disney's Tarzan game is again proof of this kind of thinking. However this time around something has changed, there's a new direction, a bit of innovation, not much mind you but enough to keep hoping. So it is with little surprise that we have yet another platform affair on our hands, one that isn't too bad in places. The story, adapted from Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan books, tells the tale of an orphaned human child, found, and raised in the jungle by Kala, a female gorilla. As you'd expect with the arrival of more humans Tarzan's world is changed forever, and this game is an adapted account of his adventures in the jungle. The game does follow the movie very closely and before each level is played you can watch a choice movie clip from the animated feature film. The movie segments tie in nicely with the upcoming levels and on a whole the developers have done a good job integrating the game with the movie. Naturally the entire game is graphically superb with some exquisitely drawn backgrounds that ooze pure jungle ambience. All the game's characters including the many frogs, birds, the odd monkey and Tarzan himself are well animated, as you'd expect from Disney. As far as sound goes the game features the original motion picture sound track performed by Phil Collins as well as a host of other well-sampled sound effects, straight from the movie. The best audio aspect of the game has to be the many ambient jungle sounds emanating from all directions such as monkey howls, bird chirps and leaf rustling, completely immersing the player into the game world.

STOP ACTING LIKE A MONKEY!

The game is a typical platform game that sees Tarzan climbing, swinging, and swimming through the different jungle environments while dodging all the 'cute' bad guys. There are jungle tokens scattered throughout each level and as you'd expect the usual collect-a-hundred-tokens-for-an-extra-life gameplay is what it's all about here. You can also collect the letters making up Tarzan's name to earn the right to watch special movie clips in the options menu. Bonus levels can also be unlocked by collecting all four sections of a map hidden on each level. Tarzan has a health meter that can be extended by collecting mangoes and is topped up by grabbing bananas. All this collecting and eating is done across the game's thirteen levels, with an additional five bonus levels to be found throughout the game. The reason why this movie tie-in platform game is a little innovative is that it offers a large variety of platform gaming as you'll often find yourself surfing down vines, running away from stampeding elephants and smashing up the odd camp site. You'll also get to play as different characters from the game.

Just okay

It's not a terrible game, and its not a terribly good game, it's okay and does try here and there to do something different. The graphics, sound and control are perfect but nothing keeps you glued to the screen, interest is eventually lost through lack of any 'real' variety and this does slightly mar a fun, good looking and sounding title. The fact that the game is aimed at a very young audience does lift this judgement a little but you will still be surprised how many older people enjoy a good old-fashioned platform romp every now and then.

CREATIVE
ALL GAMES REVIEWED ON CREATIVE LABS BLASTER PREMIUM SYSTEM
BLASTER PC

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS
Platform	Eurocom Developments	Disney Interactive	Crew (011) 233-1111	Pentium 166 MHz 24 MB Ram 4 X CD Rom 2 MB Video Card 50 MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 6.1)	Pentium 200 MHz MMX 32 MB Ram 4+ X CD Rom 4 MB Video Accelerator 50+ MB HD Windows 95/98 (DirectX 7.0)

PC CD ROM

COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CON'S
Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time	Graphics Sound Control	Repetitive Unoriginal Console Port

http//:www.disney.co.uk

RRP R 299.00

RedTide

Environmental Audio Ready: No

MULTIPLAYER? No

NEW AGE GAMING

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
83	67	80	69

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT	
81	51	78	65	72

Disney's Tarzan is a very good attempt at a movie tie-in, graphically it shines, and from a control and playability point of view it cannot be faulted. The big problem is that although you've got plenty of different levels and various styles of play the whole effort is wasted because it gets dull quickly.

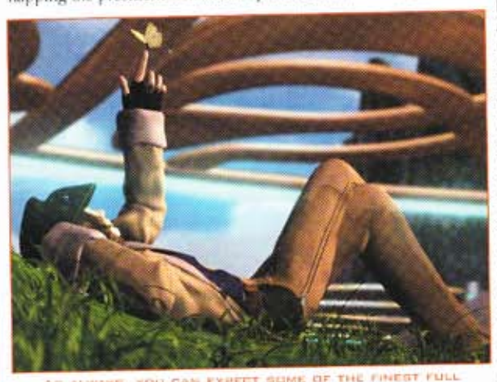
Disney • PIXAR
TOY STORY 2
It's Buzz Lightyear to the rescue in this immersive, fast-paced, 3-D action-adventure featuring Buzz, Woody, Mr. Potato Head, Hamm, Rex, Slinky Dog and a host of new "Toy Story" characters.
Disney Interactive
PC CD ROM
CREW
www.disney.co.uk./disneyinteractive/
Distributed by Crew in South Africa. For more information please call Johannesburg (011) 233-1111, Cape Town (021) 418-4240, Durban (031) 579-1974, or PE (041) 513-515. Mr. Potato Head® and Mrs. Potato Head® are registered trademarks of Hasbro, Inc. Used with permission. © 1999 Hasbro, Inc. All rights reserved." "Slinky® Dog © James Industries" Original Toy Story Elements © Disney. Toy Story 2 Elements © Disney/Pixar. All rights reserved."

FINAL FANTASY® VIII

Final Fantasy VIII has to be one of the most anticipated titles this year for the PlayStation and rightly so. The developer, SquareSoft, is renowned for the FF series and with the latest addition they have outdone themselves and presented gamers with a title that is intriguing, beautifully presented and most of all fun to play. The aspects that stand out the most in the Final Fantasy series are the unique, intriguing and complex storylines presented and in FF8 SquareSoft has created a masterpiece that will be the envy of all game developers.

Soul Assassin

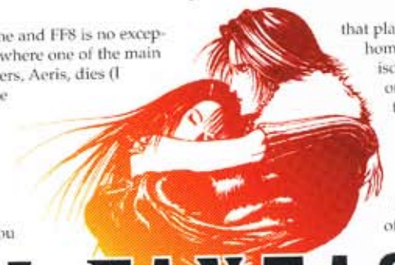
You play Squall Leonheart, a 17-year-old anti-social teenager enrolled in the most prestigious military academy in the world. The academies, simply known as Garden, train elite mercenaries known as SeeD for hire to the highest bidder and Squall is on the verge of graduating as a full fledged SeeD member. He is enrolled in one of the smaller academies known as Balamb Garden where he meets up with the other central characters such as Seifer Almasy - Squall's class rival, instructor Quistis Trepe, the loud-mouthed Zell Dincht, and the quirky yet lovable Selphie Tilmitt. Later on you also meet Irvine Kinneas who joins the group as a sharpshooter. After successfully completing the final SeeD exam, which is a nicely disguised tutorial, Squall and his party are dispatched to help out a small resistance group. Led by the beautiful Rinoa Heartilly they plan to liberate their country from the oppression of the Galbadian government by kidnapping the president with the help of SeeD. As fate would have it, through a series of events a long forgotten sorceress, Edea, makes an appearance with Seifer at her side and is hell bent on world domination. She eventually becomes the group's new focus and has to be destroyed at any cost to save the world and Garden.



AS ALWAYS, YOU CAN EXPECT SOME OF THE FINEST FULL MOTION VIDEO AVAILABLE ON THE PLAYSTATION

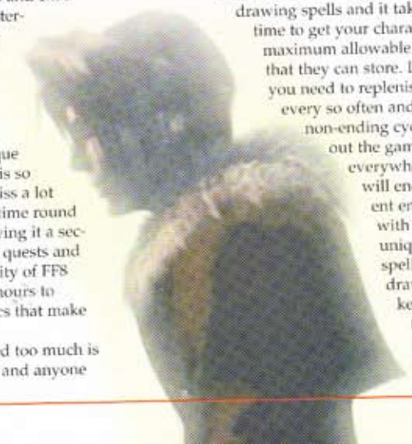
From here on the story takes many unexpected turns, and every time you think you have the plot figured out something new develops and throws you totally off guard. I won't spoil the game and go into detail of what happens in FF8, it is an integral part of enjoying the game and anyone wanting to know the details will have to play the game. Suffice to say that it is the most enjoyable and intriguing plot I have encountered in any game.

The whole game revolves around six characters and their relationships and changing attitude towards each other as they try and save the world. As always romance features big in any FF storyline and FF8 is no exception. Unlike FF7 where one of the main romantic characters, Aeris, dies (I will never forgive Square for that plot twist), in FF8 the romantic involvements continue to the conclusion, so you can expect a surprising ending where all the characters could still be alive and bring their romantic evolvement to a conclusion. Through a storyline that is believable and exceptional FMV sequences you become emotionally attached to the characters and totally immersed within their world. A note of warning for those embarking on FF8 - once you start playing the game, kiss all your free time goodbye and give notice to friends and relatives that you will be unavailable until you have finished FF8 - it is that addictive! Until that time Squall and his mercenary group will become your new best friends. (Something tells me I have been playing this game way tooooo much.)



Another feature that makes Final Fantasy 8 such a tremendous game to play is the scope of the world that it takes place in. Simply put the world is Huge! The world has numerous towns and exotic locations to visit each with interesting NPC's to meet and beautifully portrayed with detailed backdrops. During your travels you will encounter numerous quests and subquests to pursue and come up against monsters that are unique and challenging. The world is so big that most gamers will miss a lot of quests and items the first time round and will probably end up playing it a second time to find all the hidden quests and items. This adds to the continuity of FF8 and the game takes almost 90 hours to complete as you play the 4 discs that make up FF8.

One aspect that hasn't changed too much is the battle system used in FF8 and anyone that played FF7 will feel right at home. It utilises the same close up isometrical view with enemies on one side and your party of three characters on the other. Each character has a battle meter and once it is full they can perform an action such as attacking a monster or casting a spell. Should all three of your characters get killed during a battle it is game over and it is a good idea to keep them healthy at all times using potions and magic. One aspect that is new to the battle system is the way that magic is used. Unlike FF7 where you learned spells and could cast them as many times as your magic points allowed during a battle, in FF8 you have to draw magic from your enemies and store it for later use. An example would be a character drawing the Cure spell from a monster. They would receive four Cure spells every time they draw it and can then cast Cure four times before they would have to draw it from a monster again. It does however become slightly tedious to keep drawing spells and it takes up a lot of time to get your characters to the maximum allowable level of 100 that they can store. In addition you need to replenish used spells every so often and it becomes a non-ending cycle throughout the game. Almost everywhere in FF8 you will encounter different enemies each with their own unique set of spells that can be drawn. This keeps hunting for monsters interesting and usually



with any new monster you encounter you will be able to draw new spells to add to your arsenal.

The most innovative new system introduced in FF8 is the Junction system, which replaces the Materia system of FF7. It is a complex system with which you can modify your characters attributes such as strength, vitality, speed etc. It also allows you to make your characters less vulnerable to certain attacks and forms of magic. It works in conjunction with Guardian Forces and drawn magic. Guardian Forces (GF) can be best described as unseen members of your party and are monsters that can be summoned during battle. They can take damage and gain experience the same way Squall and his group can and advance in level as well. GF's are gained by fighting them directly and winning the battle in which case they will voluntarily join you or they can be drawn from certain boss monsters in the game. Once a GF is obtained they can then be Junctioned to a specific character and provide them with stat modifiers and extra actions that can be performed during battle. Magic that is drawn from enemies serve as the modifier for stats. An example of this would be to change a characters strength attribute. Lets say you have four Cure spells and twenty Thunder spells in stock. You can then junction any of the two spells to strength. Obviously twenty Thunder spells will increase your strength more than four Cure spells. The amount any modifier increases is dependent on the amount and level of the specific spell being junctioned to it. For instance later in the game you get a spell called Thundara which is a second level Thunder spell - it is more potent than Thunder and will increase your strength even more than Thunder would. The trick is that not all GF's allow you to junction spells with all your stats. Each GF allows you to modify only certain stats and therefore complicates things even further and taking into consideration that any number of GF's can be junctioned to any one character you end up with thousands if not hundreds of thousands of different combinations. GF's can also provide your characters with unique abilities such as 'Mug' which allows you to steal from monsters during battle or 'Find-Move' which allows you to find hidden objects and save points during the game. These abilities are learned by your GF's as they gain experience and each GF has a unique ability they can provide. In total there are 16 different GF's that can be found during the game.

All of this sounds very complicated on paper but is actually very easy to learn, in the game there is a comprehensive tutorial included to familiarise any new player.

JUST ONE OF THE MIGHTY GUARDIANS FEATURED IN THE GAME - THESE GUYS PACK A SERIOUS PUNCH AND LOOK GOOD TOO

Triad Card Game

Included within FF8 is a game within a game in the form of a card game named Triad. It isn't necessary to play it to complete FF8 but does prove to be highly addictive and I wouldn't be surprised if the game actually gets published in the real world. Throughout the FF8 world you will encounter NPC's that can be challenged and usually supply potions and the like if you win, although some provide unique items and upgrades that can only be found by playing Triad.

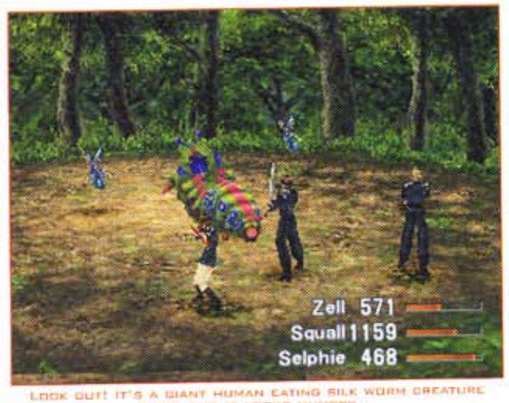
DOES ANYONE REALLY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

The game is straightforward and is played on a board with 3x3 squares on it, each player starting with 5 cards. All the cards have four values on them, each value representing the card strength on a specific side - top, bottom, left and right. The cards represent different monsters and GF's that are encountered in the FF8 world. The stronger the monster pictured on the card the higher the values on every side. Cards can be gained by winning them from NPC's or sometimes after battles you could gain a card of the monster you fought.

'... THE DIFFERENT RULES ARE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS ARTICLE ....' - REALLY MEANS, 'I DON'T KNOW THEM ALL.'

The winner in a game is decided by the amount of cards controlled. The number of cards controlled on the board is represented by the blue and red shades of the cards. To gain control of a card you need to place a card with a higher value on the side of the card than you are trying to control. Lets say there is a card in the top left corner of the board with a strength value of 4 on its right hand side. You need to place a card to the right of it that has a strength higher than 4 on its left hand side. This will flip over the top left card and you will gain control of it. The player that controls the most cards once all nine blocks have been filled wins. Sounds very easy but trust me when I say that the computer-controlled opponents are difficult to beat at times.

The minimum that can be lost during a card game is one card and the maximum every single card you own. This is dependant on the rule in affect for the region you are playing in and varies from town to town. Unfortunately all the different rules are beyond the scope of this article and they are covered in depth within the game.



LOOK OUT! IT'S A GIANT HUMAN EATING SILK WORM CREATURE THING AND IT LOOKS HUNGRY...

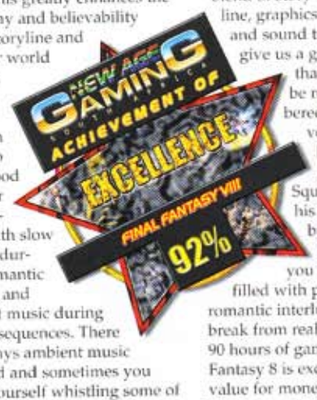
ers with it. There is an auto junction feature as well for those who don't want to fiddle with the Junction system to make life easier, although you will never be able to get optimum stats for your characters using it and I recommend everyone should learn the ins and outs of the Junction system.

Graphically FF8 is the most impressive game I have ever encountered on a PlayStation not to mention that it is the best work SquareSoft has done to date on any of their games. The in-game graphics utilises effects such as transparency, lighting and shadows to their full affect for spells. The characters are also very detailed and FF8 doesn't have the blocky and cartoony look and feel that FF7 had. The characters and environments are more realistic due to high-count polygon models and high-resolution textures that have been utilised. Characters are rendered utilising a real-time 3D engine on top of stunning pre-rendered backdrops. Most of the FMV sequences flow seamlessly with the in-game graphics and I have to congratulate Square on the stunning quality of their FMV sequences. Squall and his group come to life during these and this is the closest I have seen any game come to real-live video footage as possible using rendering. The motion, facial expressions and settings are flawless in their detail and realism. One departure that has been made in FF8 is the Manga look the previous games in the series had. The new characters have been 'westernised' and look more like real people than dolls. This greatly enhances the gameplay and believability of the storyline and also draws you into their world totally immersing you in the game.

The music within the game has also acquired a lot of attention adding to the mood of your characters with slow music during romantic scenes and upbeat music during battle sequences. There is always ambient music around and sometimes you find yourself whistling some of the tunes even after playing FF8. The sound effects are similarly well done, especially the spell effects. There are a few places where Square could have done a better job such as the sound effects for in-game vehicles, but these discrepancies are minor and really do not detract from the game.

The music and sound effects are a major part of FF8 as the game utilises no voice acting and evolves the story using text boxes. As I stated in my FF7 review last year, the Final Fantasy games read like a great novel and you don't even take notice that you are reading the story.

Overall Final Fantasy VIII is the most addictive and immersive game I have played this year. Once again SquareSoft has offered a unique and almost perfect blend of storyline, graphics and sound to give us a game that will be remembered for a very long time. Squall and his rogue bunch of mercenaries draw you into a world filled with possibilities and romantic interludes to give a break from reality and with over 90 hours of gameplay Final Fantasy 8 is exceptional good value for money. If you own a PlayStation RUN to the nearest store to pick up your copy, if you don't own a PlayStation Final Fantasy VIII is the perfect excuse to request one from Santa this Christmas.



GENRE: Role Playing Game

FF VIII is the largest epic adventure to be introduced to the PlayStation world. A brilliant story, excellent graphics and inspiring music combined with the almost endless variety of ways characters can be customized brings you a game that will not soon be forgotten. Definitely a classic and must have game for any PlayStation owner.

DEVELOPER: SquareSoft
PUBLISHER: Sony Computer Entertainment Europe
SUPPLIER: Ster Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900

COMPARATIVES: Final Fantasy Series Energizer
PRO'S: Massive Game Exceptional Graphics Character Development
CONS: It Ends!

http//:www.playstation-europe.com
RRP: R 399.00

CONTROLLER SUPPORT: Vibration Function Compatible; Analog Controller Compatible
OPTIONAL EXTRAS: 1 Player(s); Memory Card 1 Block(s)

PlayStation

Soul Assassin

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
94	92	89	93

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
93	89	93	95

NEW AGE GAMING

MULTIPLAYER? No

92

Your life just got shorter

here in december

www.playstation.co.za

DINO CRISIS
CAPCOM
PlayStation

CAPCOM
SK STER-KINEKOR INTERACTIVE
PlayStation

©CAPCOM CO., LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. CAPCOM and the CAPCOM LOGO are trademarks of CAPCOM CO., LTD. DINO CRISIS is a trademark of CAPCOM CO., LTD.

REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

Electronic Arts can always be relied upon to bring a breath of fresh air to the stale world of console racing games. Last month saw the arrival of Sled Storm, the popular snowmobile racing game. This month, the title goes to Hotwheels Turbo Racing. After faithfully recreating some of the best and most popular Hotwheels models onscreen, the guys at EA packaged the whole lot into a slick, fast paced racing game that will take you through a whole range of emotions as you strive to outdrive, out manoeuvre and out-stunt the opposition.

I remember, way back when I was knee high to a grasshopper and dinosaurs still roamed the earth, that I had an absolutely enormous collection of 'dinky toys.' These scaled down toy cars were the be all and end all of a kids life back in the days before PC's, and entire reputations were staked on how many of these diminutive vehicles a kid owned. Among the best of all of these was the Hotwheels range. These were beautifully cast, gorgeously painted and solid as rocks. Hotwheels were a five-year-olds status symbols. Hotwheels ruled. Now, Electronic Arts brings them to the PlayStation in a thrilling, tyre burning, car flipping, metal grinding, engine roaring racing game where being the fastest isn't enough. - Shryke

Playing this game took me right back to my childhood. Memories of bright plastic tracks and gut wrenching loops, twists and jumps, impossible physics and all round good fun abounded as I set this baby spinning in the trusty grey box. Electronic Arts developers were obviously careful to capture the carefree joy of playing with Hotwheels when they put this title together (one wonders if they have a group of kids locked up in a room somewhere for study). The action is fast and practically impossible as these cars take to a huge variety of brightly coloured (plastic) tracks in a bid to out do everyone else. The mayhem that ensues when the race begins is only matched by a kid's imagination, I more than once found myself longing for a lolly-pop and mud pie to go.

RACING FOR THE BOOSTER - LAST ONE THERE IS A ROTTEN DRIVER!

One of the best features of Hotwheels Turbo Racing is the wonderful variety of dynamic tracks that is available within the game. These surrealistic racing environments feature brightly coloured raceways set in a variety of landscapes ranging from deserts to icy wastes. But the player by no means has to keep to the track. Each and every race track features hidden paths and areas, some containing bonus vehicles that need to be unlocked, others being short cuts around the track, others yet unlocking even more raceways.

YES, THIS IS ACTUALLY ON PURPOSE. HONESTLY. I KID YOU NOT, I REALLY MEANT TO DO THIS...

Playing Hotwheels Turbo Racing couldn't be easier. It seems that racing game developers who design software for the PlayStation have reached a consensus on which buttons should be used for which functions - at least with the important functions. The cars themselves are also easy to control, not displaying the treacherous features of more realistic physics models. In fact, it's pretty difficult to crash one of these babies. They tend to bounce around a bit, but they generally keep their tyres where they belong as they hurtle down the tracks.

Once you get airborne, however, it is a different matter entirely. A large part of the game - in fact, you have to rely on it if you plan on winning - is the performance of aerial stunts. The tracks are crammed full of jumps, bumps and humps, so your chosen vehicle spends quite a bit of time in the air. It is then that you can earn yourself valuable bonus turbo boost awards. This is quite simply done by doing something more than flying for the next bit of the track. To perform stunts, all you have to do is fiddle with the D-pad. The results are spins and somersaults that earn turbo boost according to the complexity of the manoeuvre. Performing stunts is easy in Hotwheels Turbo Racer. Completing them is a bit more of a challenge, because the correct timing is needed if you're going to land on your wheels and head the right way. Bonuses are only awarded if you land the right way up, and seeing as how you cannot win the races without using the odd turbo boost or two, it is a skill that needs to be learned quickly. Of course, some cars stunt better than others do. Every car is different from the next, sometimes in very subtle ways. Either way, this does add an element of variety to the game, which extends its potential game life quite considerably.

Graphically, this game is very pretty - although it does suffer from the odd clipping problem that seems to plague PlayStation titles - and the impression of speed generated by the game is very real. The sound, too, is great and the game features music by bands like Metallica and Primus. This is somewhat of an addictive game, which in my mind always indicates something of a good title. There is an ever-present desire in the player to complete one more race, try out one more car. Add to that a wide appeal (kids will love the action, adults will love the nostalgia of racing with their favourite toy car) and you have a game that is fun, exciting and very satisfying.

GENRE: Racing

Here's one that will thrill old and young alike. With easy gameplay, the emphasis of this game lies on fun and excitement for the whole family, with youngsters enjoying the fast paced, brightly coloured action, and the older set able to enjoy the nostalgia of racing with their favourite toy car from yesteryear.

DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER
Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts Africa (011) 803-1212

COMPARATIVES	PROS	CONS
Sled Storm Need for Speed Wip3out	Easy Control Large Variety Highly Enjoyable	Perhaps Too Easy Graphics Problems

CONTROLLER SUPPORT: Vibration Function Compatible; Analog Controller Compatible

OPTIONAL EXTRAS: 1-2 Player(s); Memory Card 1 Block(s)

http//:www.ea.com/hotwheels

RRP R 399.00

PlayStation

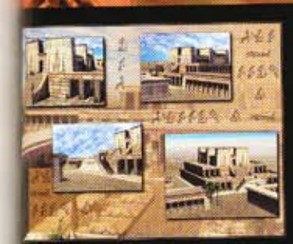
Shryke

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
82	NA	86	83

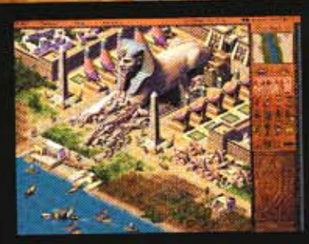
SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
85	85	86	83

NEW AGE GAMING: 84

MULTIPLAYER? Yes

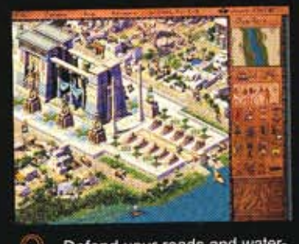


Experience ancient Egypt first-hand as you build legendary monuments like the Great Pyramids and a farm at the mercy of the Nile.



Multiple scenarios and a full tutorial campaign provide a variety of assignments and challenges.

Includes multiple difficulty settings and a City Construction Kit to let you build the perfect city at your own pace.



Defend your roads and waterways from invaders by leading your Chariot Warriors into battle or sending your galleys to ram enemy ships.

PHARAOH™

SIERRA STUDIOS Impressions™

CREW

Distributed by Crew. For more information please call Johannesburg (011) 233-1111, Cape Town (021) 418-4240, Durban (031) 579-1974, or PE (041) 513-515.
© 1996-1999 Sierra On-Line, Inc. ® and/or ™ designate trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc., Bellevue, WA 98007. All rights reserved.

THE X FILES™

While the PC game arrived on our shores some time ago, the PlayStation version of the X-Files adventure game has been long awaited by console players and series fans alike. It has, finally, seen the light of day on our shores, making many people, including me, very excited.

This title has been designed with the X-Files fan in mind. It's not some cheesy spin off that hopes to aspire to its inspiration. Rather, it's more of an X-Files episode, presented in a slightly different format. In this way, the game is very similar to the X-Files movie. If you don't know the X-Files, you will certainly be lost, at least a little at first. No explanations or apologies are made in that regard, almost as though the developers are saying "If you don't know the X-Files, tough. You should know them. Doesn't everyone?" While this is a great thing for fans, who don't have to sit through boring explanations and step by step instructions on how to run an X-Files type investigation, what are the implications for someone who has never seen the X-Files before? Quite simply, not too much, in terms of working their way through the puzzles and challenges of the game. However, a lot of the plot's subtleties will be lost on those who don't know the series. What was the significance of cigarette butts lying around near the crime scene during the intro movie? What does it mean when strange, oily black patterns dance across some guy's eyes. And just who is that black dude, and should I be wary of him? These are questions that, to the X-Files fan, need never be asked, while the non-fan may finish the entire game without ever having found their answers. Not that these type of things need to be answered; it just makes the world of difference to the game when you arrive at the spine chilling conclusion that the Smoking Man may be right around the corner, or the guy whose eyes you just gazed into while he tried to separate your head from the rest of your body is possessed by an alien intelligence. It adds that true X-Files feel. It brings the game to life.

"Agent Mulder? I'm Dana Sculley. I've been assigned to work with you..." So started one of the greatest partnerships in modern entertainment history, that of FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Sculley, the intrepid pair who push the limits while investigating the cases nobody else wants: The X-Files. These two investigators have fuelled the imagination of fans around the world with their strange brand of alien controlled conspiracy theory, and millions of watchers tune into their exploits around the globe. It only makes sense, then, that the software entertainment industry should get in on the act. - Shryke

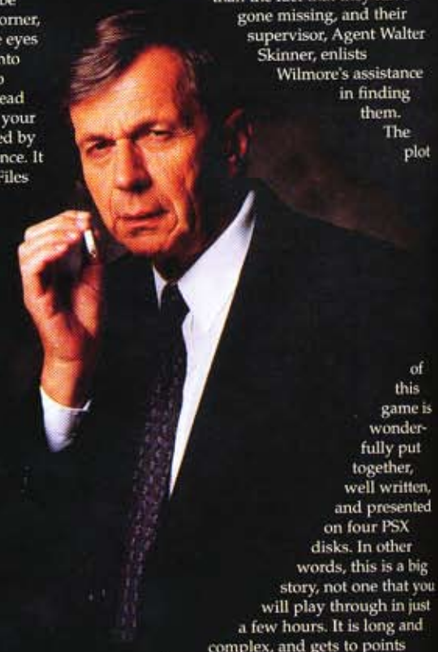
However, as I said before, you don't have to be a fan to enjoy the game. In fact, after the PC version was completed by a few of my friends, those sad few who weren't X-Files fans were 100% converted File junkies.

The player enters the world of the X-Files as Agent Craig Wilmore, an FBI Special Agent based in Seattle. Personally, I was initially really miffed at the fact that I couldn't take the part of the flaky Fox Mulder or the luscious Dana Sculley, but this feeling soon passed as I began identifying with the very well characterised, very "real" Wilmore. Freshly divorced, Wilmore is the typical "renewed" bachelor, having just moved into his new apartment. He has friends. He has urges (which result in a rather heavily implied love affair with a female police detective). He has a bicycle, which he keeps in his living room. He has moods, and a sense of humour. It is almost as though you are peaking into the life of a real, living human being. This is one of the best elements of the game. This is not a game filmed by developers (who, it sometimes seems, know nothing about acting, directing, and camera work). This, rather, is a smartly produced, video based adventure, well acted and brilliantly directed by the self same team responsible for the X-Files series. In fact, within the game Fox Mulder is played by David Duchovny, just like in the series, and Sculley is played by Gillian Anderson, also just like the series. In fact, every familiar face from the TV series that shows up in the game is played by the same actor that plays the part in the TV series, adding more of a "real" feel to the game. Even the intro to the game runs exactly like a typical X-files title sequence.

One complaint that cropped up about the PC version of this game, and will most certainly surface concerning the PlayStation version (which, by the way, is identical to the PC version) is the fact that players do not get to see much of Dana Sculley or Fox Mulder - and no, 'MemnocH Mulder' does not come into the game at all! However, this is a story centred around Wilmore, and his attempts to find them. It is not really about Sculley and Mulder as such, other than the fact that they have gone missing, and their supervisor, Agent Walter Skinner, enlists Wilmore's assistance in finding them.

Cellular phone

"HELLO? IS THAT TONY'S HAIR SALON?"



The plot of this game is wonderfully put together, well written, and presented on four PSX disks. In other words, this is a big story, not one that you will play through in just a few hours. It is long and complex, and gets to points where progress seems impossible. However, think like the X-Files, and you will make your way through it. Be thorough and leave no stone unturned. As the plot unfolds, it develops into a chilling tale of betrayal and conspiracy that so typifies the X-Files. It is an engrossing and entertaining tale that will keep both File Junkies and "normal" people thoroughly entertained.

Like the series, this game is not high in body counts. In fact, the action is rather low key in this title. Rather than shooting everything that moves, the player is required to rely on mind power. This one will get you thinking, without a doubt. What few action sequences are to be found in the game are beautifully handled, with all the resources at the producers disposal fully utilised. Stunning explosions and brilliantly choreographed fight scenes are the order of the day (when they crop up). The best part about the violence in this game is that it is there for a reason: it is used as a plot device, rather than as a title seller. This is a subtle title, and it is beautifully handled.

Binoculars

"HEY WILMORE... CHECK OUT THAT BABE!"

This game is really pretty to look at. Everything is based on real life, filmed video, rather than making use of computer generated characters and backgrounds. The producers spared no expense on set and special effects, making for a visually thrilling and beautiful product. The downside of this is that the game is huge - taking up four disks, as stated before. The upside: no clipping problems, no misshapen figures, no weird little visual anomalies. The good definitely outweighs the bad in this case.

The soundtrack is crisp and clear, featuring a very definite X-Files feel - complete with all the music and effects that you would expect. Having clear sound is vital in a game of this nature, seeing as how much of the game, and most of the clues, are based on what the various people within the game say. Controlling Agent Wilmore couldn't be simpler. In fact, the whole game relies more on thought than dexterity - there are very few scenes where you need quick reflexes. This is one where you can sit back and relax, letting your mind do the calorie burning while your hands perform only the bare necessities. However, there are scenes when a quick eye is needed, so be warned. The game's interface is wonderfully friendly, too. Accessing inventory items and making use of them is a matter of two or three buttons that need to be pushed. Moving is a matter of positioning the cursor and hitting one button.

One downfall that this title holds is the fact that it will most probably appeal only to X-Files fans. And, while this is a large number of people, not everyone will see this as a must have title. Another problem lies in the fact that this is aimed at mature audiences, not because of sex and violence, but because the game requires the kind of mature thought processes that most younger players are not capable of. This is one that Dad should buy for himself.

On the whole, this is a really cool game. It's like watching a bonus episode of the Files, and having some control over what happens within it. Even the way Agent Wilmore responds is up to you. So, enter the world of conspiracies, aliens, corrupt government officials and mysterious men who would stab you with weird pointy things just as soon as look at you.

EASE OF USE RULES THE GAME

GENRE: Adventure	DEVELOPER: Hyperbole Studios	PUBLISHER: Fox Interactive	SUPPLIER: Ster Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900	CONTROLLER SUPPORT: Vibration Function Compatible; Analog Controller Compatible	OPTIONAL EXTRAS: 1-2 Player(s); Memory Card 1 Block(s)
	COMPARATIVES: Broken Sword, Myst	PRO'S: Excellent Graphics, Excellent Sound, Great Story	CON'S: Aimed at Fans Not Much Action		
	http//:www.foxinteractive.com	RRP R 399.00			

A title most certainly aimed at fans, the X-Files is a wonderful 'episode' of the world famous and ever popular TV series. Excellent graphics, easy control and a gripping tale of intrigue, betrayal and conspiracy, the X-Files is a long, challenging game that will most certainly thrill gamers... especially those that enjoy the X-Files.

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY	NEW AGE GAMING
92	84	84	73	82
SOUND	**ORIGINALITY**	**PLAYABILITY**	**JUDGEMENT**	
86	73	81	80	

PlayStation

Shryke

MULTIPLAYER? No

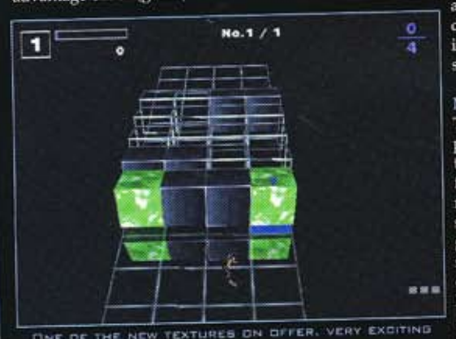
What is this fascination that humans have when it comes to slotting blocks, cubes and other puzzle pieces together? Is it a simple case of much needed mental exercise or are we all trying to show that grey lump of plastic, with PlayStation written on it, who has the smartest CPU in the room?

RedTide

KURUSHI FINAL™

Cubism for amateurs

For those of you who missed the first game the concept behind Kurushi Final is simple. The puzzling action unfolds on a giant rectangle block floating in an unimaginative black void - you control a small character that represents your interface in the game world. When the game starts a few rows of cubes will begin slowly rolling towards you (like giant dice, without the dots) and the basic idea is to try and capture all these cubes before they fall off the edge. Using your virtual persona to move around, you must mark squares on the stage and then deactivate them when a cube is positioned on your marked square. Deactivating the square results in the cube being vaporised, or as the game puts it, captured. This process is repeated until no cubes remain. If the rolling cubes get past the player and fall off the edge of the giant rectangle the last row of the playing field disappears depending on how many went over the edge. This leaves you with less space to manoeuvre and forces you to figure out the correct sequence faster. In addition to the standard cubes there are two others, forbidden cubes (black) and advantage cubes (green). Forbidden cubes, if accidentally captured, cause the last row of the playing field to disappear immediately. The idea with the black cubes is to let them roll off the edge and fall harmlessly into the graphically challenged black background. The advantage cubes serve a different purpose and when captured place a green marker within a one-block radius all around the captured site, so if an advantage cube is captured in the middle somewhere a total of nine blocks will be marked. Pressing another button deactivates these special marked blocks and all the cubes on those markers will be captured. It's a good idea to watch what you do as more often than not you'll end up capturing four black cubes and end up with less time and space than when you started. So the idea is to figure out how to capture all the non-black blocks before they roll over you by using the green blocks to your advantage. If you're not quick enough your character can be avalanched by the blocks or even fall off the edge with a dramatic cry for help. New to this version of the game are extra characters that must be unlocked by successfully completing various stages of the game. These locked characters and textures represent the bulk of the reason for prolonged play. Unfortunately they aren't enough to justify a midnight till dawn quest to see it all. That's the game in a nutshell, fun? Yes, for a while, but soon grows boring.

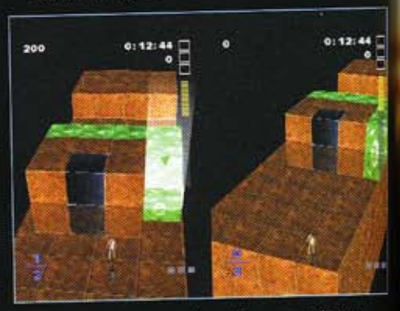


ONE OF THE NEW TEXTURES ON OFFER, VERY EXCITING

No brains

The different game modes up for the paying start with '100 Attack'; this is true puzzle based play where you must figure out the puzzle within a certain number of moves. This move limit is something that permeates all levels of the game and although is not essential to successfully completing all the levels, does reward you with bonus points. The hundred single puzzle levels are quite devious and the later levels require plenty of cranial muscle to complete. The second mode is indicative of what the game is all about as you progress through a series of increasingly difficult levels. The most distressing part of this mode is the final score where the game judges and then proudly displays your 'I.Q.' based on how well or poorly you played. 'Survival' is a single or two-player mode where you need to beat a friend or simply survive against progressively tougher levels that never seem to end. Playing against another human is always fun, but the day won't end with screaming and idle threats after the rather pedantic style of multiplayer competition the game offers. The creation utility completes the quartet and is flexible enough to allow almost any combination of cube puzzles to be built, but once you find yourself trying out a level comprised solely of advantage cubes you know you've hit the theoretical 'fun' limit and will move onto other things. The added bonus here is that after building your own devious level(s) you can trade them (it) with your other terminally bored friends by using a clever code system.

The bottom line reads something like this. If you love puzzle games that aren't cute and fluffy, but provide a more dramatic game and you haven't played the first version, then Kurushi Final might find a happy home in your collection. If you only have a mild interest in puzzle games and you've had a go at the first game than leave this one alone. As far as an update it's great, but the primitive graphics and repetitive puzzle action have unfortunately held it under the water until it stopped moving. It's a mental block that has no style and isn't fun to play, play at your own peril...



GENRE: 3D Puzzle

It's not a sequel, it's not new, and it's an updated version of an old game. Nice to play for a while but lacks any real set of compelling reasons to keep playing. The nice music, interesting concept and extra features just don't compare favourably with other, similar games.

DEVELOPER: Sugar & Rockets
PUBLISHER: Sony Computer Entertainment Europe
SUPPLIER: Ster Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900
COMPARATIVES: Kurushi, Tetris, Devil Dice
PROS: Nice Idea, Again Atmospheric Music, 'Create' Mode
CONS: Rubbish Graphics, Dated, Becomes Dull
CONTROLLER SUPPORT: Vibration Function Compatible; Analog Controller Compatible
OPTIONAL EXTRAS: 1-2 Player(s); Memory Card 1-2 Block(s)
http//:www.playstation-europe.com
RRP: R 329.00
PlayStation
RedTide

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY
49	NA	69	58

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
78	73	74	61

NEW AGE GAMING: 66
MULTIPLAYER? YES

SQUARESOFT
FINAL FANTASY VIII
You'll get over it. One day.
www.square-europe.com
SK INTERACTIVE
PlayStation
www.playstation-europe.com/ff8
All rights reserved. 'PlayStation' and 'PlayStation' are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.
©1999 Square Co., Ltd. All rights reserved. FINAL FANTASY, SQUARESOFT, and the SQUARESOFT logo are registered trademarks of Square Co., Ltd.

Kingsley's Adventure

Kingsley's Adventure is a platform game, interestingly enough it tells the story of Kingsley and his 'adventure'. Are you intrigued yet?

Madman

You play the part of Kingsley, an orphan fox cub. The game starts with an opening video of a puppet show that tells the tale of how the Fruit Kingdom wasn't always as peaceful as it is now and how Kingsley the fox saves the day all by himself. You are out to save the Fruit Kingdom from their former self-taught chef Bad Custard. Bad Custard used to poison the food until the King and Queen cottoned on to his plot and sacked him. He then stole the Queen's big bad book of magic and begins his quest for world domination.

Platform Pandemonium

Kingsley's Adventure doesn't seem to fit into any one particular genre, rather quite a few. While the game does comprise the basic platform elements of similar titles such as Spyro and Ape Escape, much of your time wandering around town will be spent conversing with the locals. While this does add a touch of RPG to the mix, no user interactivity is really offered between Kingsley and whomever he is talking to. Puzzles are also present, no matter how simple they actually are. The cast of Kingsley's Adventure mainly consists of the King and Queen, Bad Custard, the Dark Knights (former true knights under spells of Bad Custard), Kingsley and his mentor, a badger named Old Wrinkle. This is where you can actually see that the game is aimed at the younger player, as the story and characters don't ever take themselves too seriously, and with villains named Bad Custard can you really blame them?
Having said that, while Kingsley's Adventure is less than desirable for the mature gamer it does fit in perfectly for little kids mainly due to the colourful setting and the lack of violence, plus the 'humorous' theme of the whole thing.

I can't believe my eyes!

When it comes to the visual side of things, Kingsley's Adventure is far from disappointing. The characters, whilst not portrayed to be realistic, look convincing enough to be cartoon characters as they are supposed to. Kingsley's movements are all well animated including his patented ninja-backflip that he is so proud of. All the areas you visit are well detailed, including some nice touches such as books along the path to the library and numerous 'pieces' along the halls of the castle such as suits of armour, swords, shields as well as a few guards who don't say very much. Lighting effects also make the areas seem true to life, so if you're in a dungeon it really is a dank and dark atmosphere.

Enemies are also fairly detailed; some good ideas went into the creation of most of them as well. When you walk into certain rooms you may find spiders lowering themselves from the roof and then crawling towards you in numbers.
"Cheery" tunes accompany you throughout most of the game as well as the usual sound effects of soon-to-be-expired enemies expiring as well as those of our hero in whatever situation he may be.

CUTE GRAPHICS EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK

Like driving an M1 Abrams tank

The main let down with Kingsley's Adventure would definitely have to be the control. What is otherwise a good game is let down by absolutely terrible control and more often than not, it makes playing Kingsley's Adventure more of a stressful experience than it should be. The jump, status, defend and attack functions are assigned to the four trigger buttons on the PlayStation controller, with the shoulder buttons performing the tasks of switching the camera angle (you have two different choices) left/right steps and sniper mode (borrowed from Ape Escape no doubt!). Up till there, there is no problem. Movement is, as one would expect, controlled via the D-Pad or Analog Controller but the main hassle I found with it was that you can only walk or run forward and step backwards. Essentially, that means that in order to run to your right instead of just being able to hold right on the direction pad you first have to turn around to face that direction and then hold forward. It may not sound like such a big thing, but once you start playing it is! It makes it extremely difficult to position Kingsley during battle and flicking switches and so on is also relatively difficult due to the precise positioning required for those tasks. I actually found it easier to play using the D-pad since Kingsley seems more willing to turn if you don't hold any other direction that isn't the direction you wish to turn. I have to say that the rotten control is a serious blow to the game as it's not all that much fun to have to do the same thing over and over due to a useless control system.

The total package?

Overall, Kingsley's Adventure is not a bad game, rather quite a good one, with one or two flaws in it and it would make a good gift for the slightly younger gamer as it is definitely way too cute and childish for anyone older than that. It's a pity that Kingsley's Adventure is let down by the control, otherwise it may have earned a higher position on the recommendation list.

GENRE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SUPPLIER	CONTROLLER SUPPORT	OPTIONAL EXTRAS
Platform / RPG	Psygnosis	Sony Computer Entertainment Europe	Ster Kinekor Interactive (011) 445-7900	Vibration Function Compatible; Analog Controller Compatible	1 Player(s); Memory Card 1 Block(s)

COMPARATIVES	PRO'S	CON'S
Spyro the Dragon; Crash Bandicoot 3; Ape Escape	Good Graphics; Good for Kids; Fun	Rotten Control; Only for Kids

Colourful, good graphics and above-average sound are let down by a rotten control method. Ultimately though, Kingsley's Adventure may not be the worst you can do as a gift for a kid over the silly season. Look out for Spyro 2 though!

http//:www.kingsleythefox.com

RRP R 429.00

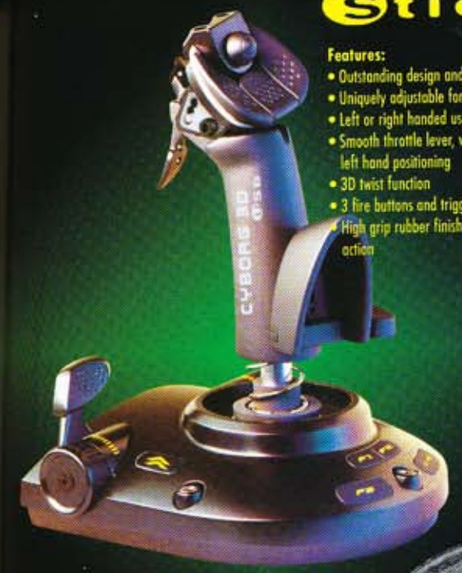
PlayStation

Madman

GRAPHICS	STORY	CONTROL	CONTINUITY	NEW AGE GAMING	MULTIPLAYER?
86	67	55	72	73	No

SOUND	ORIGINALITY	PLAYABILITY	JUDGEMENT
75	83	68	75

CYBORG 3D Stick



Features:
- Outstanding design and top features
- Uniquely adjustable for hand size
- Left or right handed use
- Smooth throttle lever, with right or left hand positioning
- 3D twist function
- 3 fire buttons and trigger
- High grip rubber finish for non-stop action

Whether you are left or right handed, whatever your hand size, the Saitek Cyborg 3D USB Stick is designed to fit your hand perfectly. Styled like and Olympic weapon, the 3 separate handle adjustments allow you to customise your Cyborg 3D. The special Cyborg tool locks everything into place. Ideal for all joystick games, this feat of ergonomic design becomes your own personal weapon giving you power, precision & performance.

CYBORG 3D Pad

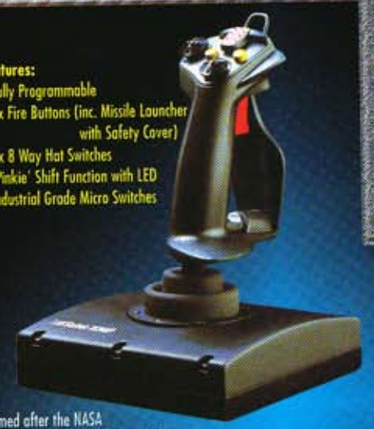
At last - a pad for the adult PC gamer. The Cyborg 3D Digital Pad provides the ultimate style, features and comfort. One pad for all game types - the mode selector allows instant set-up for arcade, driving and flying type games. Revolutionary style, performance and ergonomics combine to give you the edge. All controls at your fingertips allowing for hours of stress free play!

Features:
- Adjustable palm grip for any hand size
- 12 Buttons - 4 triggers, 6 fire, 2 squeeze
- 8 direction micro-switched D-pad, acts as a hat switch when configured for CH mode
- Rudder/steering function with 100 degrees of rotations
- 2 turbo/autofire modes
- Fully programmable
- Velvet rubber finish for easy grip

Evo Technologies

Tel: 082 772-9762
Saitek Support: 011 768-6080

Features:
- Fully Programmable
- 5x Fire Buttons (inc. Missile Launcher with Safety Cover)
- 2x 8 Way Hat Switches
- 'Pinkie' Shift Function with LED
- Industrial Grade Micro Switches



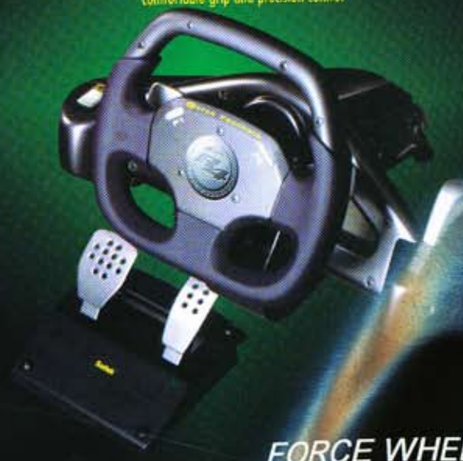
Named after the NASA experimental aircraft developed to explore new techniques of aircraft control, these award winning joystick and throttle take PC Flight simulation into the next millennium.

Features:
- Fully programmable
- 2x Fire Buttons
- 4 Way Hat Switch
- Rudder Control
- 2x Rotary Control
- Mouse Controller/8 Way Hat Switch
- 3 Mode Status LEDs

Saitek X36

The Saitek R4 Force Wheel has been formulated for the PC gamer who needs an ultra-realistic driving experience. It provides the ultimate in Force Feedback technology, ergonomics designed for long hours of driving, flexibility for use with all types of driving games and probably the world's simplest but most stable clamping mechanism.

Features:
- Microsoft Force Feedback Technology
- Adjustable driving position
- Adjustable foot pedal resistance
- Fully padded asymmetric wheel for comfortable grip and precision control
- Quick response gear shift lever
- Ultra-stable foot pedal unit
- Force on/off switch



FORCE WHEEL

Saitek R4

Bargain Buys

Those nice folks at Sold Out - you know, the guys that like to keep gamers gaming by producing classic software titles at affordable prices - have launched a whole new range of products: Sold Out Extreme. This range features some of the biggest and best titles of yesterday (and even the day before) and are guaranteed to provide the cash strapped gamer with hours and hours of great entertainment. In addition, the Q range keeps growing larger and larger, and they too have a few new titles for us to take a look at. Lastly, the friendly blokes at Blizzard provide a little nostalgic Christmas cheer.

Sold Out Extreme - The Sold Out Extreme range is distributed by Gametronix, and all retail for R149.00. Any queries can be directed to (011) 886-1972.

Special Ops

Lead a crack team of US Rangers through a number of challenging missions in this versatile strategy title.
Destroy enemy aircraft before they can take off. Assassinate an overly ambitious drug lord. Free a hostage moments before he is executed. These are the hazards that face the US Rangers, a little mentioned group of crack troops who enter the fray as special operatives, highly trained and skilled in the use of hundreds of weapons, high tech gadgetry and high explosives. Crack troops to the last man, the Rangers are the US Government's answer to many a sticky situation.
As a player of Special Ops, you find yourself immersed in the world of the Rangers. Take the stealthy route, or wage all out war - the choice is yours.
Special Ops is one of the first 3D accelerated games, and is a pioneer of the 3rd person strategy genre.
Featuring good graphics and a simple keyboard based control interface, Special Ops is simple to play, but very difficult to get the best of. It takes brains to get through these missions - one wrong step, and you may be sending your troops home in pine boxes.
The wide variety of operations that are available for completion in Special Ops are a wonderful aspect to this game. From hostage rescues to search and destroy, as a US Ranger, you get to do it all!

Sold Out Extreme Three Pack (Worms, Screamer, Atomic Bomber Man)

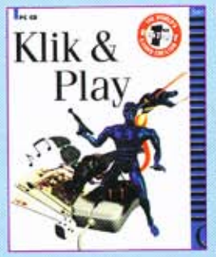
Getting more than one game for the price of one is always a bonus, and this particular Sold Out title features three good ones.
Atomic Bomber Man is a fun platform game which allows up to ten players on a LAN, or two at the same PC, to challenge each other in a remake of this classic console favourite. Who can be the fastest, slyest and, above all, most explosive Bomber Man? Have you got what it takes to negotiate a maze, annihilate your friends and cause major destruction, without blowing yourself to Kingdom come? This is the perfect way to find out - and it's megatons of fun to boot.
Screamer takes you to the track in a racing game that allows you to take control of the fastest, flashiest cars in history. Six tracks are provided to challenge your vehicular skills as you burn rubber around them. Up to eight of the ten cars that take part in each race may be controlled by other players via LAN, as if the computer controlled drivers aren't tough enough to beat. Get ready for some absolutely intense racing action.
Worms is a great favourite, and it returns in another Sold Out multigame pack. Take control of an army of four intrepid worms, and blast the living daylights out of your friends, family, pets and landscape in this platform based bit of chaos. Rocket Launchers, Uzis, Grenades and Airstrikes are just a few of the forms of nastiness that you can rain down on human or computer controlled opponents.

Q Range - The Q Range range is distributed by TCM Warehouse, and all titles retail for R99.00. For details, please call (011) 312-1067

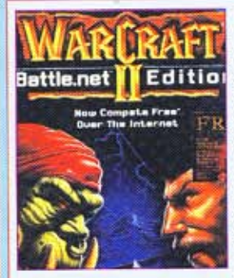
Plane Crazy

Now here is a game that brings back tons of fond memories of sitting clustered around the LAN table with good friends, swearing at them, trying to out do them at every turn, and generally having good, clean (if slightly uncivil) fun. Plane Crazy, the zany aeroplane racing game, is back with a vengeance, to challenge single players and LAN players alike. Take to the skies in your customised crazy plane, and take on some of the most challenging aerial race courses ever devised.
Plane Crazy brings new definition to both flight sims and racing games. While it certainly is not a nuts and bolts flight simulator in the traditional sense, it is the closest thing to flying by the seat of your pants that you will get on your PC. Only the most skilful pilots win races as they steer their planes over and under obstacles, zipping in and out of nooks and crannies and performing insanely risky stunts to get power ups and weapons.
This is a game where the word fair play flies out the window as you try every dirty tactic in the book to do your opponents in: slow them down with weapons, or try and drop bits of landscape on them as you rocket through the canyons and cityscapes that make up these courses at high speeds. Fly mere metres above the ground just to get the quickest line. Winning isn't everything in this high speed game... it's the only thing!

Klik and Play



This title is one of the most unique game oriented software products ever to hit the market. Getting tired of playing games that other people have come up with? Think you could do a better job on your own? Well, then Klik and Play is exactly what you need. This programme allows you to design your own Windows based games, play them and even distribute them to your friends. So, let your creative juices flow, and leap right in.
With Klik and Play, you can devise any of a vast number of game genres: space shooters, racing games, card games, puzzles and many more are all possible with this easy and fun to use code writer. And, with Klik and Play's step by step instructions and user friendly interface, everyone can get in on the act.
So, if you think you have what it takes to put together killer games, then Klik and Play is for you. The beauty of this software lies in the fact that everything is provided for the would be designer, from backdrops to actors and special effects - everything is a click and drag away.
Your friends and family will be amazed at your new found skills as they enter the challenges of the games that you put together - hey, you might even get Dad to buy his "aspirant young programmer" that upgraded machine you've been nagging about. And they will never know that you had all the help you needed right there in one convenient tool kit: Klik and Play!



Warcraft II Battle.net Edition

There is nothing like a little nostalgia at this time of year. And no game tugs at the heart strings of gamers like that old favourite, Warcraft II. Yes, it's back on the shelves, boys and girls, this time in the guise of the Warcraft II Battle.net Edition. This beautiful box set comes complete with a full version of Warcraft II, the Beyond the Dark Portal expansion set, and a large number of new multiplayer maps.
It is a great way to spend the festive season, playing one of the games that made multiplayer real time strategy great.
And that's exactly what this boxed set is aimed at. It seems that the boys at Blizzard finally realised how much fun players around the world had leading their armies of elves, humans, orcs and trolls up against other human players, and have taken full advantage of that fact.
Not only does this box contain all that is mentioned above, but the developers at Blizzard have updated the original Warcraft II game, making it a much better multiplayer experience.
So, why not spend this festive season showing your friends how much you care by beating the living daylights out of their favourite armies? You know that it's the right thing to do...
This special edition comes from Crew ((011) 233-1111 and retails at R249.00.

64MB MP3
CREATIVE
NOMAD™
DIGITAL AUDIO PLAYER/VOICE RECORDER

Your Individualism. Your Portable Digital Audio.

Sleek contours, portable-size and cool magnesium casing. Enjoy MP3 Internet music on the go. Compile your favorite CD songs and tune in to the hottest radio channels. Dictate & record notes of key events or transmit voice messages to friends. Anytime, anyplace & anywhere in crystalline Digital Audio. Take flight with your 100% skip-free Creative NOMAD!

Digital Audio Anywhere

Check out www.nomadworld.com for more details.

Please Fax this to (011) 805-0190 should you require further information on the NOMAD 64MB MP3 Player.

Company Name: _____
Name: _____ Surname: _____
Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____
Postal Address: _____
Would you be interested in getting information about other CREATIVE products? ☐ Yes ☐ No (NAG)

Creative Labs Africa, PO Box 76761, Wendywood, 2144 - E-mail info@creativelabs.co.za

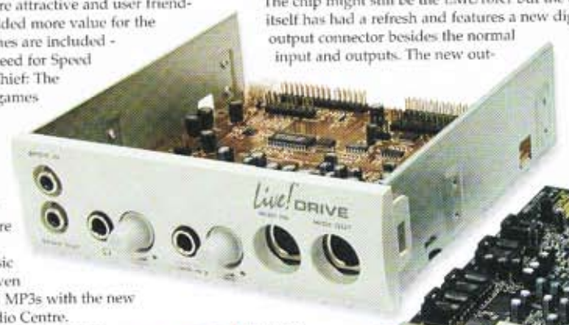
South Africa Distributors: Multimedia Warehouse a division of SDD - www.mmw.co.za
JHB (011) 652-8400 Bloem (051) 447-3193 CT (021) 550-8300 DBN (031) 263-0121 PE (041) 363-0540

©1999 Creative Technology Ltd. All rights reserved. Sound Blaster, the Sound Blaster logo, and the Creative logo are registered trademarks of Creative Technology Ltd. in the United States and/or other countries. Nomad is a registered trademark of Aonix and is used by Creative Technology Ltd. and/or its affiliates under license. All other brand and product names listed are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.

CREATIVE
WWW.CREATIVE.COM

Sound Blaster LIVE! Platinum

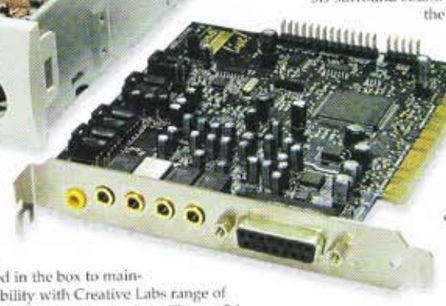
The question arises; just how much could have been improved from the initial SB Live! released last year? The card had it all - the exceptional EMU10K1 chipset, game developers supporting the newly developed EAX API, and more input and outputs than you would ever need. Just how much can be added to an already existing product to make users want to buy or upgrade?
The newly released Sound Blaster Live! Platinum from Creative Labs, however hard to believe, has added more value to the Sound Blaster Live! range with the addition of the Platinum, and also listened to their customers and implemented technology to make the bundle more attractive and user friendly. They have also added more value for the gamer and three games are included - namely Descent 3, Need for Speed 4: High Stakes and Thief: The Dark Project. These games alone will set you back R900.00 if bought separately. Besides games the Platinum also contains a host of other useful sound software that can be used to make your own music or effects. You can even playback and record MP3s with the new Creative Digital Audio Centre.
The SB Live! Platinum card is based on the award winning EMU10K1 processor, which was introduced last year on the SB Live! and is capable of stunning real time effects that ultimately free up CPU load. The chip has undergone some revisions over the year and the latest one is used on the Platinum card to ensure cutting edge technology. The chip itself handles effects such as echoes, pitch shifting, distortion and many more in real time adding more depth to games that utilise these features. They are made possible through the DirectSound, DirectSound 3D API and Creative Labs own unique sound API named EAX, which is currently on version 2.0. The card also supports the latest IA-SIG (Interactive Audio Special Interest Group) I2DL2 standard, which has taken its roots from EAX. To date over 50 games have been released supporting the EAX API and many more are due to be released in the future, ensuring that you get the most out of your gaming experience if you own the card.
The quality and clarity of sound reproduced by the SB Live! Platinum can only be described as crystal clear and noise free. This due to the 95db signal to noise ratio as well as Creative Labs patented 8-point interpolation to recreate sound as close as possible to the original source. The card supports up to 64 hardware voices and can go up to 1024 voices with software. This is impressive since you only see professional audio cards costing in the R5000 - R7000 region supporting these numbers, no wonder most musicians are raving over the EMU10K1 processor. The card also supports 48 midi channels for those inclined to make their own music.



The chip might still be the EMU10K1 but the card itself has had a refresh and features a new digital output connector besides the normal input and outputs. The new output port utilises a jack instead of the old DIN, although a DIN connector is included in the box to maintain compatibility with Creative Labs range of digital speakers such as the Desktop Theatre 5.1. The most exciting new addition to the Live! range has to be the Live! Drive that ships with the Platinum. Unlike the older SB Live!, which shipped with a IO card that plugged into an empty slot at the back of your machine, the SB Live! Platinum takes some initiative from the Blaster PC and incorporates the IO card in the front of the PC.
As can be ascertained from its name the Live! Drive slots into an empty 5 ¼" drive bay and snugly fits below your CD-ROM or PC-DVD drive and has an easy to access front panel with various input and outputs listed below:

- S/PDIF In (RCA / Coaxial Jack)
- S/PDIF Out (RCA / Coaxial Jack)
- Midi In (Standard DIN)
- Midi Out (Standard DIN)
- Line In (1/4" stereo jack/shared Microphone In)
- Microphone In (1/4" jack with gain control)
- Headphone Out (1/4" stereo jack/volume control)

By moving all these to the front Creative has made it easier to connect and disconnect various peripherals used by the average user as well as the hardcore musician. No more unnecessary messing around with cables behind your PC, which I know most users will appreciate.
The Platinum ships with the latest release of LiveWare! and this is where the most value lies from a software perspective. Creative constantly updates LiveWare! to incorporate the latest drivers, EAX API, and software upgrades. It gets updated roughly every four months with additional programs and functionality to make sure that SB Live! owners get the most value out of their product. The new LiveWare! 3 adds the much talked about LAVA MP3 player. It is best known for its ability to sync animations with MP3 songs and offers something new for audiophiles to play around with.
The SB Live! Platinum is by far the best value for money purchase anyone can make who is in the market for a new soundcard. With a suggested retail price of R1999.00 you get a top of the range soundcard that not only enhances the gaming experience but can also be used by professional musicians to compose music tracks. The card is capable of true 3D surround sound and with the addition of the Live! Drive users can now access regularly used input and output port from the front of their PC. The Platinum definitely earns our Editor's Choice with its quality of sound and value for money, not to mention Creative Labs continued development and support for owners of their soundcards. If you don't own a SB Live! card yet make sure that your next card is one. It is the most sensible and rewarding sound hardware you will ever buy.



NEW AGE GAMING EDITORS CHOICE

Distributor: MMW / SDD
Tel: (011) 652-8400

Pros: Price
Easy Access with the Live Drive
Excellent After-Sales Support
Cons: Requires Extra 5 1/4 Inch Bay

RRP: R 1999.00
Internet: www.sblive.com

Logic 3 Top Drive Reactor

The Logic 3 Top Drive Reactor is a double-edged sword if we have ever seen one. Perhaps a few things went awry in the transition from drawing board concept to final product, but it seems that the creators of this hand held steering wheel just missed the mark in the execution of the device's construction.
An aesthetically beautiful piece of equipment for the PlayStation, the Top Drive Reactor's convenient size and compact nature immediately sets it above the standard PlayStation steering wheel system. Add to that its sturdy construction, and you have what appears to be a winner. However, the controller does have a few problems. The first, and most important gripe that we have with the controller is the fact that it is, initially at least, uncomfortable to handle, particularly for someone who is more familiar with standard PlayStation controllers. Secondly, the wheel system used by the controller is highly sensitive - great if you've been using the Top Drive Reactor for a while, but really annoying when you first pick it up. As a concept, the Top Drive Reactor is a great idea, especially when you take the vast number of driving games available for the PlayStation into account. Its compact design does set it above the standard steering system in terms of storage and manageability, and it features a full range of settings that can customise the controller for each player's specific taste and particular preferences. However, as it stands, it may be advisable to wait for a second-generation device to hit the market before taking the plunge.

PlayStation

Distributor: Gametronix
Tel: (011) 886-1972

Pros: Compact Size
Responsive
Cons: Too Sensitive
Needs Getting Used

RRP: R 499.00
Internet: http://www.gametronix.co.za

Genius MaxFire Programmable G08

TVR Computers the official distributors of Genius products in South Africa offer a large range of peripherals aimed at newbies to hardcore gamers. This time we look at the highly affordable Maxfire G-08 Programmable, which could be considered a newbie device but is also aimed at the price conscious gamer looking for a gamepad specifically.

The G-08 has taken the form of the new design products from Genius that uses the latest 'boomarang' shape for added comfort and grip. The G-08 is not sumptuous to look at but that's not what I feel this controller is about. Simple is the first word that comes to mind when trying to sum up the G-08 and it's extremely effective at what it's trying to achieve. A 6-button thumb selection is not a limitation for the controller because all the buttons are fully programmable. A steady and durable 8-way D-pad and two programmable flipper buttons back this up, but the lack of the nowadays common trigger buttons does leave the device a little bare. The driver software is quick and easy to install and picks up the gamepad first time in the controller panel. As more and more devices use USB for easy plug and playability, Genius have decided not to go that route just yet with the G-08, this seems more for the cost factor than anything else. Giving the G-08 gamepad a big thumbs up is easy because it does what it sets out to do in an affordable manner. This is not for the hardcore gamer looking to suck out every ounce of usability in a multi-genre gaming arena. This is a gamepad that is best used in the platform, sporting and certain action environments, plain and simple. If you're looking to get yourself a gamepad with this in mind, give the Genius G-08 Gamepad a whirl, it's not a looker but it does the job right.

Distributor: TVR Computers
Tel: (011) 807-1390

Pros: Inexpensive
Programmable
Comfortable
Cons: No Proportional Support
Ugly Duckling

RRP: R 99.00
Internet: http://www.tvr.co.za

Microsoft Game Pad Pro

Ever since Microsoft entered the gaming peripheral market they have dominated due to their superb design and practical configurations. The Sidewinder series of gamepad's has become a household name even though it was a little on the expensive side. Now the next generation Sidewinder's have entered the fray with new looks and some interesting new features.
The Sidewinder Gamepad Pro takes over the older generation gamepad with a sleek new metallic look and design. The Gamepad Pro is most definitely the best looking gamepad on the market at the moment. It has been given a major facelift and is now lighter and more manageable than before. Strangely enough most of the big name players in the gamepad market have similar designs with their new products, both the Logitech and Microsoft gamepad look and feel very similar. The gamepad features a revolutionary new dual precision D-Pad that is not only a digital but also a proportional control pad as well. The controller can be configured to utilise either simply by installing the Sidewinder software and selecting the required control mechanism. Now you can play your fighting/sports games with the tact of digital response or your favourite racing/advanced sports games with the precision of proportional response (USB only). The gamepad also has the highest level of programmability ever offered in a Sidewinder gamepad. It has 6 action buttons, two triggers and an 8-way D-Pad, as well as a new shift function, which doubles the number of programmable buttons to 16. This stretches the Gamepad Pro beyond the traditional gamepad boundaries because of its ability to adapt to the ever-increasing demands of games. Trying to find a weak link in the Gamepad Pro's armour is almost impossible, the only thing that could possibly bare some mention is the amount of pressure exerted on the proportional D-Pad might cause problems with the functioning of the D-Pad as time goes by. Even this is merely hearsay and cannot be backed up by any form of proof just yet.
Microsoft's in-depth Sidewinder software and the new 'scheme' features (maintaining of all your games control functions for quick configuring) is very important for quick game selections. At the estimated retail price tag of R329.95 the Sidewinder Gamepad Pro is not cheap, but after much deliberation it was decided that the innovation and playability of the device steers the gamepad into Editor's Choice range. This is one for the Christmas stocking and will make a fine addition to your gaming peripheral collections.

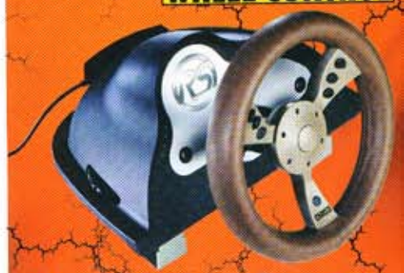
NEW AGE GAMING EDITORS CHOICE

Distributor: Crew / SDD
Tel: (011) 233-1111

Pros: Best Looking Gamepad
Dual Precision D-Pad
Sidewinder Software
Cons: A Little Expensive
Slippery Finish
Proportional only through USB

RRP: R 329.00
Internet: http://www.microsoft.com

FORCE RS Racing System
HARDCORE FORCE FEEDBACK WHEEL CONTROL

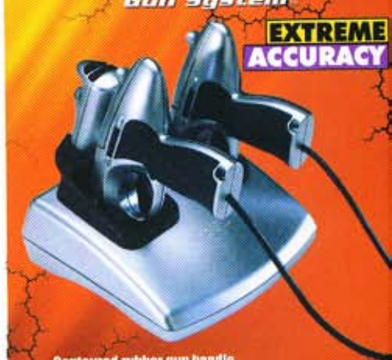


- Immersion I-Force technology
- Compact racing wheel with 280-degree turning radius
- Solid pedal base prevents floating and slipping
- Program custom force-feedback effects using our software
- Unique Future-Proof RS EngineTechnology

RS Shifter PC Shifting System
HARDCORE RACING CONTROL

- Hi/Lo Mode - full legacy support for older games
- Mounts on either side of your wheel for Left/Right hand support
- Ultra realistic feel with "true" gear resistance
- Default die cast metal 8-gear shift pattern consisting of 7 forward and reverse
- Sleek metallic and black shifter knob
- Full Gear mode - access any gear at any time

ACT·LABS GS Gun System
EXTREME ACCURACY



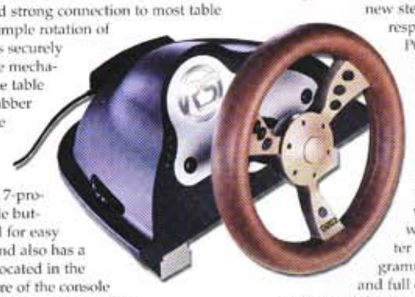
- Contoured rubber gun handle
- Innovative system includes 2 guns and a handheld controller unit
- 3D accelerator support
- Uses ACT LABS gun technology

ACT·LABS
EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST A TOY

All products above available direct to the public.
IASOS cc
is the sole distributor of Act-Labs in South Africa
For further information contact Lindy
(041) 992-3350 or 082 701 8805 - lindud@iafrica.com

Act Labs Force RS

The advent of force feedback has been around for many years now and the racing fraternity has seen the benefits to the realism and enjoyment of their games from such peripherals. NAG has reviewed a number of force feedback devices and the general consensus is one of mixed reaction to what exactly force feedback does for the gaming experience.



There are two major forces (excuse the pun) in force feedback technology, they being Microsoft and Immersion. Act Labs have gone with the latter in an attempt to further enhance the quality and reliability of their racing wheel range. A few issues back NAG made the statement that Immersion's I-Force technology was the one of choice because of its silent mechanism and amazing manoeuvrability of feedback. The Force RS is one of the sturdiest, less flashy steering wheels I have seen for a while. Its composition is made up of strong industrial plastic base and internal wheel with a leather grip that has a 270° turning radius. The flywheel clamp mechanism is the best in the market at the moment and offers quick and strong connection to most table bases. A simple rotation of the wheels securely clamps the mechanism to the table and the rubber soles make for a strong grip. The wheel has 7-programmable buttons positioned for easy thumb usage and also has a hat switch located in the centre of the console that acts as an 8-way for things such as multiple car views. The steering wheel also comes with highly responsive F1-style gear shifters, which gives fingertip control when needed most. The pedal base is one of the heaviest I have encountered and is well designed for comfort and responsiveness. The pedal base does not move around in intense action irritating like some of the other steering wheels I have encountered. Act Labs have developed a cartridge mechanism that is said to offer the best response to force feedback commands and it shows in the performance of the wheel. The most astounding thing is that with a simple purchase of a cartridge you can use the FORCE RS on your PlayStation and N64 without having to buy a whole new steering wheel. Simply plug in the respective cartridge for either your PC or consoles and away you go.

The Force RS showed the strongest feedback out of all the wheels we have tested thus far. Is this really gonna help the playability of the game? We certainly enjoyed the responsiveness of the wheel but as a steering wheel on its own is where it really shines. Even without the force it performs better than most and with the programmable force feedback software and full copy of Need for Speed 3, this is most certainly our steering wheel of choice thus far, even for the price.

Distributor: IASOS
Tel: (041) 992-3350 / 082 701 8805

Pros:
I-Force Technology
Simple Cartridge Swap for Multiple Platforms
Sturdy Design

Cons:
Not Cheap

RRP: R 1699.00
Internet: http://www.act-labs.com

RS Shifter

The RS Shifter could be categorised as a gimmick to the racing fan but in essence it is an integral part of what makes racing games fun and addictive - their control and realism to the sport.

The RS shifter is an addition to the Act Labs range of steering wheels and offers a unique gearing set-up that no other competitor on the market provides. Its function is simple but could be construed as a waste considering that you have all the buttons and F1-shift mechanisms built into the steering wheels themselves. Yes, this was my first consensus but after playing a few of my favourite racing games it struck me that I was enjoying the close resemblance to driving actual cars. The Shifter is unique in design and practicality by offering a cast metal 8-gear shift pattern consisting of 7 forward and reverse. The shifter actually "clicks" into each gear, incorporates shifting resistance and has a reverse gear with 'forced' access only. The days of having to gear down in sequence are over, now you can shift directly from 5th to 2nd gear in one swift motion, allowing for quicker response to acceleration in corners. The unit also comes with a gear cover to limit the shifting to older games legacy mode of 'HI/LO'. The device secures to a special metal rod, which can be either side of the wheel (left or right handed) and is secured by the actual steering wheel clamps that hold it in place. The industrial plastic is strong with the fake metallic gear lever removable in case you get the desire to put your Ford lever in its stead. The Shifter is certainly a wonderful addition to any steering wheel but can only be used with its Act Labs counterpart. This does limit it usage quite considerably, but understanding Act Lab's intentions, its seems that upgrading their products to certain standards is what is required. As an add-on to Act Labs' outstanding RS Racing Systems, there can be little doubt you will own one of the best racing systems in our country, though it will cost you. Thus it is based on a financial decision more than a playability decision. Can you afford to spend money on something that only makes the gaming experience a slight bit easier, but a whole lot more fun? This is the dilemma that will face the average gamer, though I would highly recommend it if you are already an owner of an Act Labs Racing System or plan to become one.

Distributor: IASOS
Tel: (041) 992-3350 / 082 701 8805

Pros:
7 F-Gears, 1 R-Gear & Direct Shifting
Legacy Mode Support (HI/LO)

Cons:
Add-on for Act-Labs Only
Current Software Support Limited
Gimmicky

RRP: R 399.00
Internet: http://www.act-labs.com

Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer.

It has always been a constant irritation to gamers - the mouse ball. The rubber ball that collects every known piece of pizza, crumb, hair and dust particle on your mouse pad. That annoying bumpy ride that happens during an intense game of Quake and more often than not relegates you to the bottom of the food chain for the duration of the game.

Attempting to surgically clean the 'trackers' of their gunk needs a steady hand and iron will to overcome one of the gamer's most ardent enemies - dirty mouse balls.

Now Microsoft, the pioneers of durable performance mice (no, they are not giving me the mouse), have come up with the first non-ball based mouse in the Intellimouse Explorer. It utilises Microsoft's Intellieye optical tracking technology that has an internal digital signal processor (DSP) and optical sensor that scans the surface and tracks the movement of the mouse. What makes this technology so useful is that it can be used on almost all surfaces - no more mouse pads. The Intellieye takes digital pictures at an amazing 1500 per second which is then translated into extremely accurate pointer movements promising smoother control.

The cosmetic design and feel of the mouse has undergone more than a few transformations. The mouse is now made from a lightweight plastic that although feels cheap and flimsy, has stood up to the rigours of a few heated gaming sessions. The mouse is quite a bit bigger and broader, which benefits gamers with bigger hands. The middle wheel is more responsive and manageable and made from a rubber compound, and the standard top two buttons are bigger and very click friendly. There are two new thumb buttons positioned just above the thumb grip position that are defaulted to the forward and back Internet functions in Windows. A big disappointment was that they are mapped to the same function in Quake 3 Test, therefore only allowing the use of one of the buttons for an extra button option. I came up empty trying to find out why this was the case, if this can be overcome and the extra button can be utilised then this will enhance the usability of the mouse in a gaming environment.

Does the new technology increase gaming performance? After many hours of Quake 3 Test and a LAN party I can only say that making the change is a difficult but rewarding one. The mouse responds almost instinctively and is precise and smooth in intense situations. The Intellimouse software is great for the finer touches and the USB connector helps with higher sample rates for improved performance - a serial connector is provided for those without a USB port. The 'no moving parts' philosophy of Microsoft is going to become a major phenomenon in gaming. Less moving parts means less friction and breakable entities. Only time will tell on this statement but Microsoft has not disappointed us gamers yet, but at a hefty R 499.00, there are some serious decisions to be made.

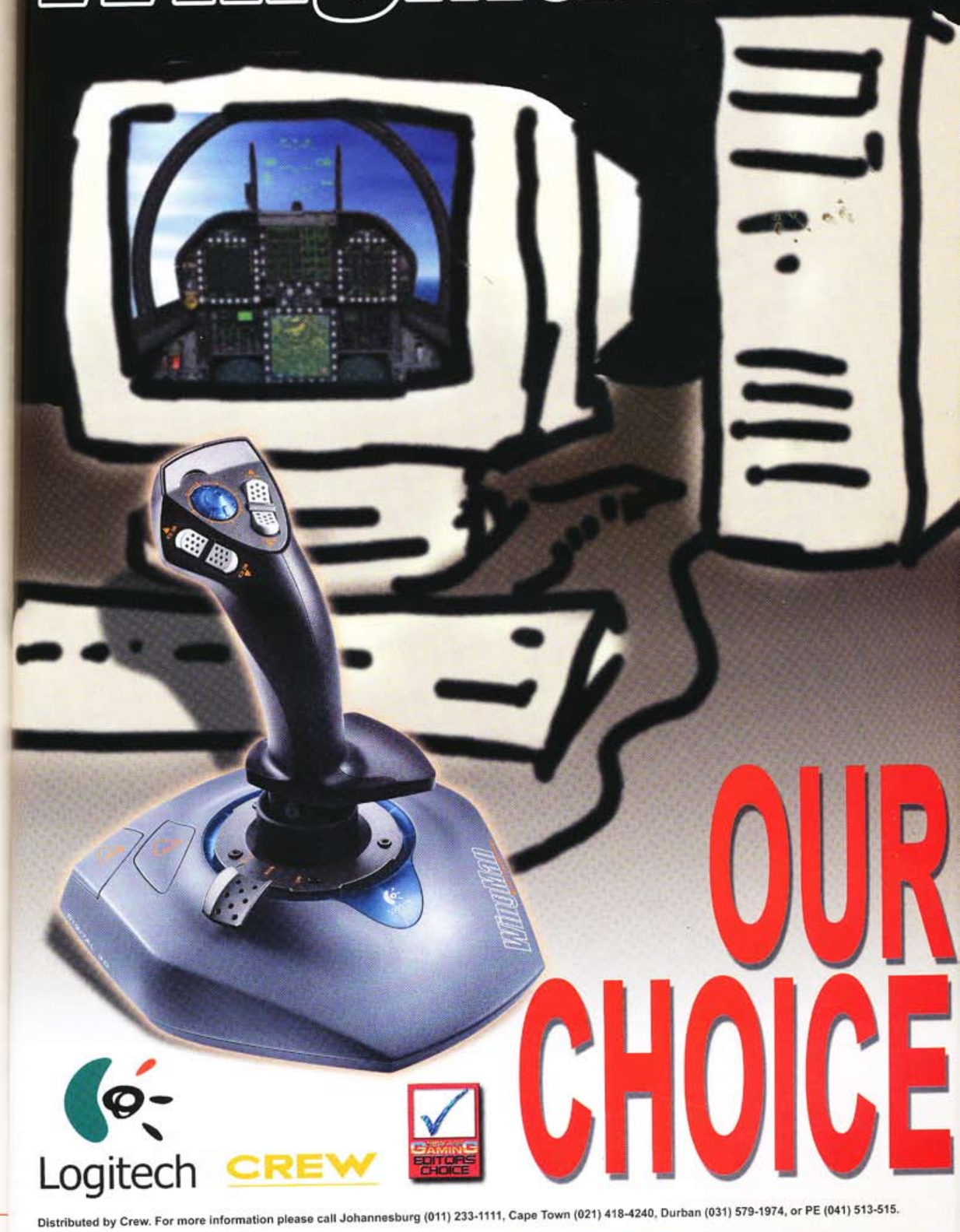
Distributor: Crew / SDD
Tel: (011) 233-1111

Pros:
No Mouse Ball
Improved Mouse Wheel
Sharp Performance

Cons:
Plastic Finish
No In-game Double Thumb Button Support
Expensive

RRP: R 499.00
Internet: http://www.microsoft.com

WingMan EXTREME DIGITAL 3D



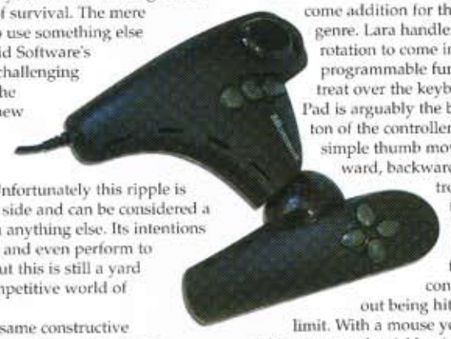
OUR CHOICE

Logitech CREW

Distributed by Crew. For more information please call Johannesburg (011) 233-1111, Cape Town (021) 418-4240, Durban (031) 579-1974, or PE (041) 513-515.

Microsoft Dual Shock

We are pretty sure that hardware developers all over the world are trying to invent the perfect action based controller for the hungry control freaks out there. What we didn't expect was Microsoft to plunge headfirst into the pot with their new Sidewinder Dual Strike controller. As we all know, Quake style games are restricted to the mouse and keyboard if we are to give ourselves any chance of survival. The mere thought of trying to use something else sends tremors into id Software's cubed offices. But, challenging the godly ways of the gamers is nothing new to Microsoft, who enjoy creating ripple effects through the communities. Unfortunately this ripple is a little on the weak side and can be considered a gimmick more than anything else. Its intentions are extremely good and even perform to certain standards but this is still a yard too short in the competitive world of action gaming.



The device has the same constructive medium as the Sidewinder peripherals of old, the black solid and unbreakable mould. Designing a controller that has the same controlling interests of a mouse but includes the button configurability of a gamepad is not an easy task. Somehow Microsoft have managed to do just that by designing a gamepad with a swivel mechanism in the middle. The left hand is the static hand that controls functions such as running, strafing and dodging. The right hand controls the swivel mechanism in a 3D manor, which intentionally is the crux of the device. The Dual Strike features 6 programmable buttons, 2 triggers, an 8-way D-Pad, a shift button for doubling the configurations and full USB/gameport support.

Being as openly blatant as possible, the Dual Shock is a total waste of money for all the Quaking fans (and similar games), but to put a spoke in the wheel of that statement, it's actually quite a welcome addition for the action adventure genre. Lara handlers will find the 3D rotation to come in handy and the programmable functions a welcome treat over the keyboard. The 8-Way D-Pad is arguably the best functional button of the controller because it allows a simple thumb movement for the forward, backward and strafing controls. The big limitation of the controller is the circumference limit, this stems from the inability to continually turn without being hit by the turning limit. With a mouse you overcome this by picking it up and quickly giving yourself more room to move. The Dual Strike uses a turn overkill feature that is more of a hindrance than a help. The Dual Strike is also extremely sensitive, taking hours to try and get a happy medium with the slickness of the movement. It simply doesn't cut it in the hard and fast competition of action gaming. The Sidewinder software once again exceeds itself with over 20 pre-configured schemes included in the package, but big doubt stems from the action gamers use of them. It must be said that with a considerable amount of practice the Dual Strike could become a contender for more than the action adventure genre, but to shower that statement, there were a number of times that experienced action gamers who helped evaluate the controller fell under the motion sickness spell for some unknown reason. The Sidewinder Dual Strike exudes Microsoft's confidence, a good try all round, which could lead onto something greater with the next attempt, but for now this would be at the bottom of my Christmas wish list.

Distributor: Crew / SDD
Tel: (011) 233-1111

Pros:
- Decent Action Adventure Controller
- Good Software Support
- Easy to Manoeuvre

Cons:
- Not Competitive Enough
- Turning Limitations
- Overly Sensitive

RRP: R 499.00

Internet: http://www.microsoft.com

Logic 3 Sound Station

A first for the PlayStation, Logic 3 have produced the Sound Station, a 300W independent speaker system for use with the Sony console. This attractively designed speaker system features a large sub-woofer with a pair of smaller satellite speakers, with a base level control and a combined volume/power knob. And, as an added bonus, they can also be used with the Sega Dreamcast, Nintendo 64 and any PC. While the idea for an independent speaker system for the PlayStation is great, it seems that a little went wrong in the execution of this design. While they are pretty to look at and of a distinctly modern design - which would look great next to any game console or personal computer - the performance of the speakers is slightly questionable. Certainly, they out do most television sound systems, and provide the gamer with a fuller, better quality sound than the dinky speakers on the majority of the televisions out there, they do have a distinct problem with volume. Anything above medium volumes causes the sound produced by these speakers to distort, and it gets worse the louder the volume is set. However, the sound clarity at medium volumes is crisp and clear, and the variable bass levels and sound quality do make quite a difference to gaming, especially on the console side of things. The best feature of these speakers is their versatility. If a player of both PC and console games is looking for some new sound providers, then these are a good way to go, due to the fact that they can be used on virtually any gaming platform available today.

Distributor: Gametronix
Tel: (011) 886-1972

Pros:
- Good Sound
- Funky Design
- Base Level Control
- Multi-Platform

Cons:
- Distortion at Loud Volume

RRP: R 699.00

Internet: http://www.gametronix.co.za

Genius Speed Wheel Formula

Once again Genius and TVR Computers position a gaming peripheral at the entry level market, this time it's the Speed Wheel Formula for all the speed freaks out there. Supposedly designed through Genius' Digital Centra superior human factor engineering, it actually looks like it comes out of a basic car mould. This is not a downside but merely an observation of the character of the wheel, which is made entirely from industrial plastic, meaning no rubber grip. But if you want all the trimmings you are going to have to pay for that, and normally considerably more. The steering column has 6 assignable buttons positioned within reach of either thumb (3 each side of the wheel) and has a unique racing shifter that resembles the old auto shifters of the 80's. What is different to the norm is the inclusion of a 2-button thumb position and 2-button index and forefinger position situated on the shifter itself. These come in handy for arcade style racers and even the odd flight simulator, which reminds me, you have a racing and flight mode that changes the shifter into either a throttle or gearing mechanism, very handy. The clamp device is not of the highest grade but does the job of securing the wheel to the table. The pedal base is heavy for its size, which is quite small. The pedals bear a striking resemblance to bus pedals, they are large and have a rubber sole for better grip. Interestingly we found the pedals to be the best part of the peripheral because you never seem to be reaching for them, as with other racing designs. The software installation was the most disappointing of the entire set-up ordeal. Genius once again has failed to add specific drivers and have chosen to rather utilise the Windows controller set-up of 3-axis and 4-button configuration. Though this does the job quite effectively, you can't help feeling a little cheated at your purchase, especially since there is not a stitch of software with your purchase. If you are in the market for a steering wheel to further enhance your gaming experience and have a limited budget, then definitely consider the Genius Speed Wheel Formula, just don't expect anything too fancy.

Distributor: TVR Computers
Tel: (011) 807-1390

Pros:
- Inexpensive
- Big Responsive Pedals
- Racing & Flight Modes

Cons:
- No Software
- Clamp Outdated

RRP: R 399.00

Internet: http://www.tvr.co.za

Voodoo3™ 3500 TV AGP

New

- RAMDAC - 350 Mhz
- Fast 16 MB SDRAM
- Refresh Rate - 60Hz - 160Hz
- DirectX, Glide, OpenGL
- TV Tuner, S-Video in/out, Composite Video in/out, Audio in/out

3dfx

- Full range of Voodoo3 Products: Voodoo3 2000 PCI, Voodoo3 3000 AGP, Voodoo 3500 TV AGP.

VOODOO3 2000 PCI

16MB, up to 60 frames per second, 2046 x 1536 resolution, PCI slot required

VOODOO3 3000 AGP

16MB, over 60 frames per second, 2046 x 1536 resolution, AGP slot required

VOODOO3 3500 TV AGP

16MB, over 60 frames per second, 2046 x 1536 resolution, AGP slot required, TV Tuner, Video and Audio in/out, software bundle

For more information contact PUMA TECHNOLOGIES cc TEL: c

HARDWARE ZONE

Y2K UPGRADE SPECIALS

OPTION 1 - AMD
K6 2 - 400 Mhz CPU
32MB Ram
4MB SVGA Card
Upgradable Motherboard
+ Free installation at our premises

R1750.00

OPTION 2 - INTEL
400 Celeron PPGA CPU
32MB Ram
4MB SVGA Card
Upgradable Motherboard
+ Free installation at our premises

R1850.00

MULTIMEDIA

44X CD-ROM Drive	R 320.00
48X CD-ROM Drive	R 340.00
128 Bit Sound Card	R 120.00
200 Watt Speakers	R 100.00
800 Watt Sub Woofer & Surround Speakers	R 399.00
RICOH Blank CD	R 11.00
Mr Data Blank CD	R 7.75
CD-ROM Cleaning Kit	R 50.00
RICOH 4x4x20 CD Writer	R1 799.00
RICOH 6x4x24 CD Writer	R2 200.00
TV Tuner + FM Radio + Remote	R 520.00

MODEMS

56K Internal Modem	R 199.00
56K External Modem	R 459.00
MWEB - I'm a Genius Offer (56K External)	R 99.00

MONITORS

17" Acer Monitor	R1 880.00
14" Acer Monitor	R 899.00

MANY MORE PRODUCTS AND COMPONENTS AVAILABLE - PLEASE CONTACT US FOR A FULL PRICE LIST AT THE NUMBERS BELOW

ORDER FORM (FAX or POST)

NAME:.....
ADDRESS:.....
.....
POST CODE:.....TEL:.....
CASH ☐ CHEQUE ☐ POSTAL ORDER ☐ Collection ☐

SIGNATURE.....

ITEM	*PRICE*
	R
	R
	R
P & P	R
TOTAL	R

Post ☐ ,Call to confirm delivery charge

Puma Technologies cc Tel: (011) 802-4751 Fax: (011) 802-4789
Shop Lower 5, Kelvin Village Shopping Centre, Corner South Way & Raymond Street, Kelvin, Sandton
P.O. Box 76255, Wendywood 2144

PUMA TECHNOLOGIES CC
Reg. Number CK94/28159/23
Your computer workshop...

All prices are VAT inclusive and are subject to change without prior notice.
Prices are valid while stocks last.
Please call for latest prices.
All Trademarks belong to their respective owners.

RICOH

SQUARE ONE

EL: (011) 802-4751 or E-MAIL: pumatech@hixnet.co.za

Millennium Magic

1999 has been a fantastic year for Magic, with South Africa sending competitors all over the world to compete in major international events. The plans for 2000 are bigger and better than ever before with plans to send South African competitors and teams to all the major events. These include Pro-Tour events, European Championships and the World Championships.

Agenda for 2000

The world championships for Magic: The Gathering will be held in Brussels in August 2000 and preparations have already begun to send the best South African contingent to compete. Anybody has the potential to make the team to go to Brussels in 2000. Last year Christiaan Du Plesis of Pietersburg managed to qualify to compete in the World Championships in Japan, (see previous issues of New Age Gaming) after having played for under six months.

Event 2000

Pre-release: Nemesis (to be confirmed)
6 - 13 February 2000

PTQ New York: (Johannesburg and Cape Town) 27 March 2000

Regional Qualifying Rounds:
16 April 2000 KZN and North West Province
23 April 2000 Western Cape and Gauteng
30 April 2000 North Gauteng and Eastern Cape
7 May 2000 Freestate

Pre-release: Prophecy (to be confirmed)
28 May - 4 June 2000

Nationals:
24 and 25 June 2000

Gencon 2000 Incorporating the S.A. Open:
13 to 17 July 2000

How to get involved

If you are keen to know more about Magic : The Gathering, you can pop into your local bookshop or CNA Interactive and pick up a Starter Box Set. Alternatively you can contact Peter on 083 230 0332 or on Johannesburg (011) 482 3771, or visit our website on www.geon.co.za or mail Peter at magic@icon.co.za.

Drafting Tips for Mercadian Masques

One of the most useful skills for a tournament player is choosing the correct cards during a draft, constructing a deck and playing it effectively in a tournament environment. Here we hope to shed some light on this dilemma in terms of Mercadian Masques, the recently released new expansion for Magic: The Gathering.

1. Take the best card first and only focus on specific colours later, this will level the playing fields for your opponents and not allow one person to have too many power cards of one colour.
2. Do not expect specific rares on uncommons, focus on the commons and have a working knowledge of the power commons.
3. Essential cards to boost are: Creature kill cards, Creatures with special abilities and card drawing engines (cards that allow you to search for specific cards or draw extra cards).
4. Theme decks are always a possibility, Rebel Decks and Mercenary decks can easily be built in this format due to the number of common Rebels and Merc's.
5. Watch your mana curve, always try to cast a spell every turn.
6. Single colour decks require less land (14 or 15), however they lack versatility, two colour decks provide better control, but require more land (16 or 17).
7. Try to limit your decksize to 40 or 41 cards, more cards in a deck mean there is a smaller chance of getting your power cards into play.

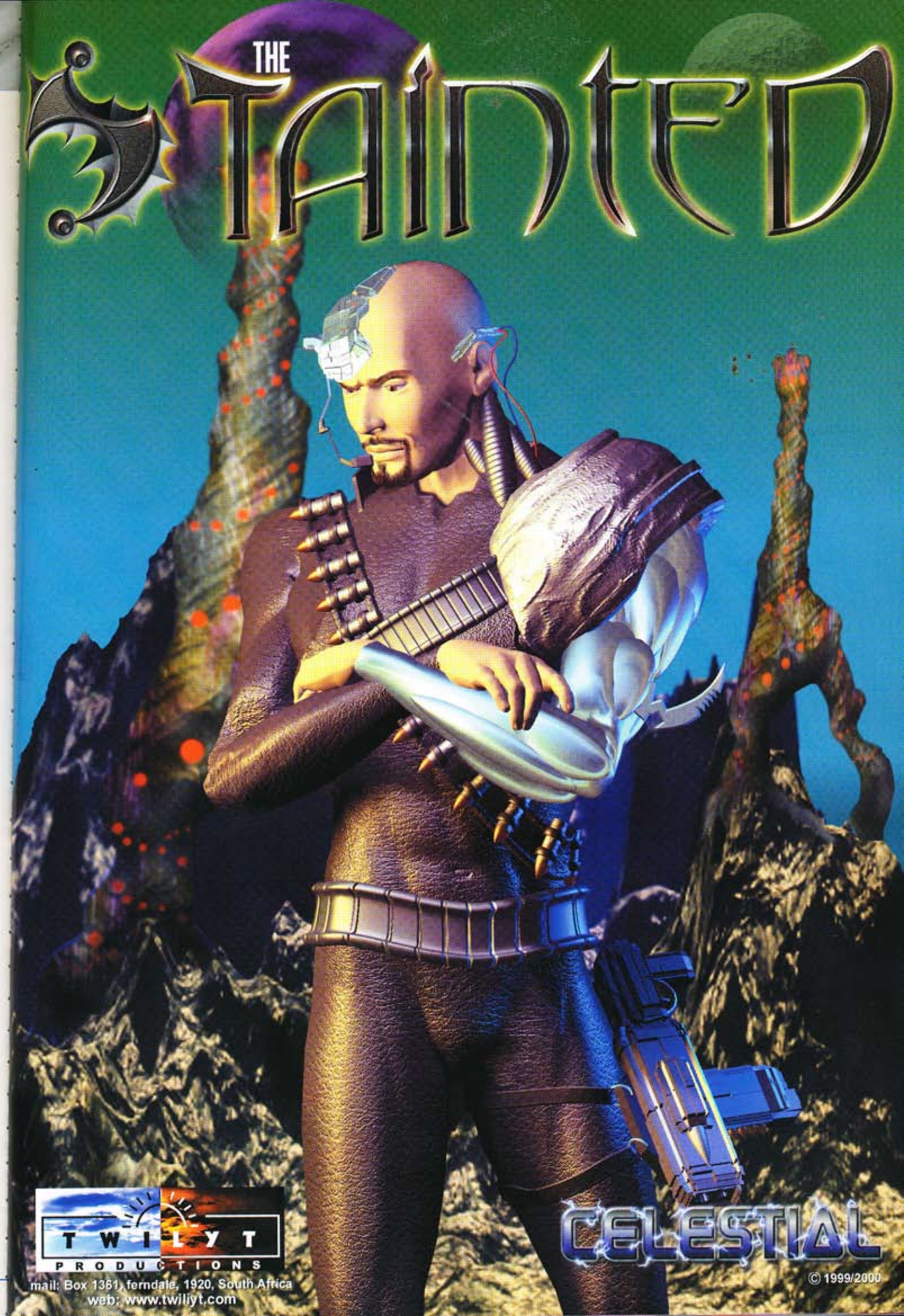
Format Changes

From November 1999 the Standard (Type 2) tournament format has changed. The Wrath cycle has rotated out of Standard tournament play and Mercadian Masques is now tournament legal. The current Standard tournament format is as follows: Urza's Saga, Urza's Legacy, Urza's Destiny and Mercadian Masques.

New DCI Head for South Africa

Martin Frain, previous DCI coordinator for South Africa has left for the greener pastures of England and is now working for Wizards of the Coast. Thanks to Martin for all your hard work in putting Magic where it is today, and good luck to you and Bridgett in the U.K. The new DCI co-ordinator for South Africa is Peter Coode. "I have been a Magic player for two years and I run a coffee shop in Melville, Johannesburg. I spend most of my time drinking coffee and playing Magic. I am also a level Two DCI Judge and I run a tournament every Saturday in my coffee shop. I will be taking over all the aspects of organised play in South Africa. If you have any questions please contact me on 083 2300 332 or mail me at magic@icon.co.za."

[Unfortunately this will be the last Magic Zone article in New Age Gaming. We are bringing you something really special in the New Year, Ed]



SUBSCRIBE TO SOUTH AFRICA'S PREMIER SPECIALISED GAMING MAGAZINE

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA

AND SAVE AN AMAZING

33%

ADD A NAG SUBSCRIPTION TO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING LIST, IT WILL MAKE THE PERFECT GIFT TO LOVED ONE'S OR FRIENDS

AND GUARANTEE YOURSELF 12 ISSUES JAM PACKED WITH GAMING INFORMATION, REVIEWS, PREVIEWS, COMPETITIONS, FEATURES, LOCAL ARTICLES PLUS OUR MONTHLY COVER CD FILLED WITH DEMO'S, PATCHES, MOVIES, TIPS & CHEATS AND OUR BACK ISSUE ARCHIVES OF ALL NAG'S REVIEWS. NAG'S COVER CD IS UNMATCHED IN THE LOCAL MARKET. - DELIVERED TO YOUR DOORSTEP EVERY MONTH.

OPTION 1

12 issues of NAG
+ Monthly Cover CD
+ Postage and Packaging
All inclusive

R 199.00

(R 16.66 per copy saves you R 100.45)

OPTION 2

12 issues of NAG
No Monthly Cover CD
(you missing out)
+ Postage and Packaging
All inclusive

R 169.00

(R 15.00 per copy saves you R 130.45)

Direct Bank Transfer :
Fill in the subscription form below and fax it with your deposit slip to (011) 462-5463. If a deposit slip or notifiction is not faxed to us using this method, your magazines will not be sent unless confirmation is received.

Cheque / Postal Order:
Fill in the subscription form above and post it along with your payment to *New Age Gaming: Subscriptions, P.O. Box 2749, Alberton, 1450*

Mr./Mrs./Miss .....
Address .....
.....
City .....
Postal Code .....
Telephone ( ) ..... Fax ( ) .....
E-Mail .....
Birthday ...../...../.....

Subscription Type
- ☐ Option 1 - PC CD-ROM (R199.00)
- ☐ Option 2 - No PC CD-ROM (R169.00)

Payment
- ☐ Cheque (enclosed)
- ☐ Postal Order (enclosed)
- ☐ Direct Transfer/Deposit

(Make Cheques and POs payable to 'Unreal Design FX')

BANKING DETAILS

Bank:	Standard Bank
Branch:	Alberton
Branch No:	01-23-42-45
Account No:	020652755

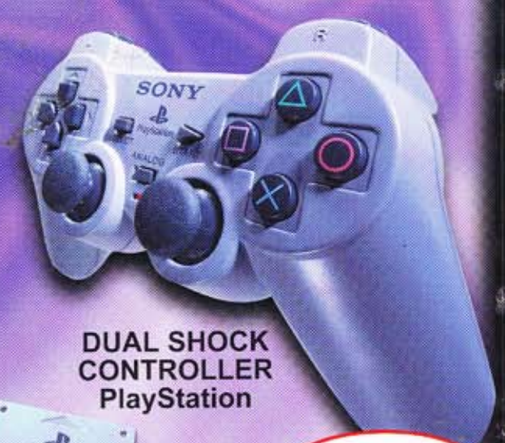
Signature _____ Date _____

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

NB! Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery. For more information call (011) 462-5463 and ask for Tracy.

R949

PlayStation
DUAL SHOCK
System



DUAL SHOCK
CONTROLLER
PlayStation

R229

R99

MEMORY CARDS
PlayStation

R399

FINAL FANTASY VIII
PlayStation
SquareSoft

R389
Includes Memory Card

CROC 2
PlayStation
Fox Interactive

COMING SOON!
Book now to qualify for a reduced price!

If you have any queries please contact your nearest branch:

Westgate Shop 111c - Roodepoort
Tel: (011) 768-0968
Lakeside Mall Shop L5 - Benoni
Tel : (011) 427-1949
Savannah Centre Shop G19 - Pietersburg
Tel: (015) 296-0175
Boulders Shop 83h - Midrand
Tel: (011) 805-0508
Safeways Crescent Shop E-2 - Witbank
Tel: (013) 690-3721
Waterfall Mall Shop 68 - Rustenburg
Tel : (014) 537-3684
The Glen Shop M19 - Glenvista
Tel: (011) 435-8784
Riverside Mall Shop no 5 - Nelspruit
Tel: (013) 757-0172

LEVEL 10

The Demo Scene

Optimise 99 Report Back

BY PAUL FURBER

INTERNET: HTTP://WWW.SURF.TO/DEMOS
E-MAIL: SADEMO@EGROUPS.COM
E-MAIL: MAVERICK@IS.CO.ZA

Recent E-mails to the local SA demo mailing list said it all: 'I'm dead', 'I'm finished', and 'I've just spent the day sleeping.' Most of them were from organisers but some were from attendees of Optimise 99, SA's premier demo scene competition. The reason: two days of hard partying, kick-butt productions and lots of networked games in between. Most agree that despite the almost mandatory odd technical glitch, this year's party was a huge success. Although sponsors didn't come to the party - literally and figuratively - as much as the organisers would have liked, the few that did were extremely generous. The owners of the Horror Café and Microsoft in particular need to be thanked for donations of time, money and prizes above and beyond the call of duty. And thanks to NAG of course for letting me plug the demo scene on a monthly basis!

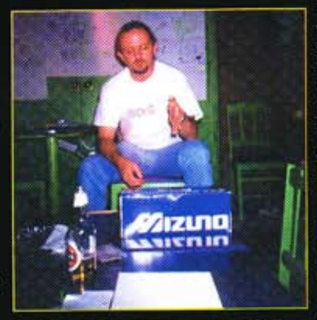
On to the party

Imagine if you can a double-story house festooned with all sorts of classic horror movie memorabilia. Downstairs is a bar at which several lolling figures are sitting; upstairs is a maze of UTP cable, PC's and accessories. Screams and shouts can be heard as victims and victors of various networked games duke it out over a makeshift network, only just audible above the blaring of the latest musical entry. Three or four figures wander around in a state of permanent stress, trying to give the (false) impression that the programme for the day is completely under control. If you're struggling, check out some of the pictures on the page. You'll have a pretty good idea of the atmosphere of the party.

MORE COMPUTERS THAN PEOPLE IS NEVER A BAD THING

Of course a demo party wouldn't be a demo party without a few hitches. The sound stubbornly refused to work for the first hour of the programme, prompting some quick rescheduling of some of the competitions. That worked out OK, except for those poor idiots who hoped to complete their musical entries on the day. I stand guilty as charged. But the music that was finished on time was of a very high standard. Lots of styles, lots of individuality and lots of surprises. The votes were counted (as for all subsequent competitions) in hyper-modern fashion: strips of paper torn off, scribbled on, and placed in a cardboard box. The papers were then counted later and audited by Deloitte and Touche. Don't believe me? Well Viper counted them and he works for D&T as a security auditor. Next year it will be better I promise.

In between competitions on the first day, some artists played their own MP3s over the sound system. Impressive stuff it was too. Meanwhile the surprise competitions were already in full swing. Programmers with quick problem solving bent had to produce a maze with exactly one entrance and one exit. Many theories were proposed and many languages were used, but only one entry eventually did the job correctly. Surprise music and surprise art were also entered by a surprising amount of attendees. The music hopefuls were given a narrow range of terrible samples with which to try and produce a decent tune. Artists could choose any picture they wanted from the walls of the venue as a subject. Both competitions were eventually completed the next day as I recall, but then I don't recall much of the night too well. The open competition attracted some amusing and diverse entries. The eventual winner was a Worms clone which was played by the author on the big screen. After that, Travis Bulford gave a talk on game development - how to get started, what tools to use, what attitude to approach a project and the pitfalls of moving from demos to games. It was attended from just about everyone who was still around mid-evening. Thanks Travis. He disappeared to go and finish the final touches on his new game, which should be out soon. Keep an eye on future NAG issues for more details.



TRAVIS BULFORD SHEDING LIGHT

Around 4am, most organisers had made themselves comfortable on some handy mattresses in the basement and proceeded to catch a few hours. This proved too much temptation for the night owls with cameras. The results of their underhanded photography can be seen on the Web page along with plenty of other pictures of personalities and general goings-on at the competition.

Arising next day at a decent hour, I discovered that disk throwing was in full swing. This is quite an easy competition and open to all. Throw a floppy disk or a CD as far as possible. Marks are awarded for style, distance and height gained in the process. If you've never done it before, you'll be amazed at how far a stiffy can actually travel.

More competitions started later on the afternoon after some great food courtesy of the Horror Café's kitchen. By the time it was dark, it was time to judge the intros and demos - the main reason in most people's minds for the competitions. Few were disappointed. The winner - Genesys - won easily thanks to a great soundtrack, original effects and good design. Pick it up off the Web page or check out the NAG CD for all the entries. Intros had disappointingly few entries but those that made it were fun to watch.

Highlights

If you've ever had the privilege of going to an overseas demo competition, well Optimise 99 had it all. Technical hitches, complaints that the Quake games were too loud, great entries, a shifting programme, and odd corners of people desperately trying to finish their entries. Much earnest discussion on the best techniques for music, code and art could be heard throughout the weekend, and the presence of guys from Durban and Bloem made it more than just a Gauteng event. Denthor, aka Grant Smith, author of the famous Denthor tutorials which have got so many started on demo programming was there too, despite hobbling around on crutches. Next time we'll organise a bus, Cape Town sceners. I promise. The overall quality of all the entries was the biggest surprise of the event. Music, art and the winning demos were of very high quality indeed and just goes to show what talent we have locally. But don't take my word for it - check out the entries for yourself.

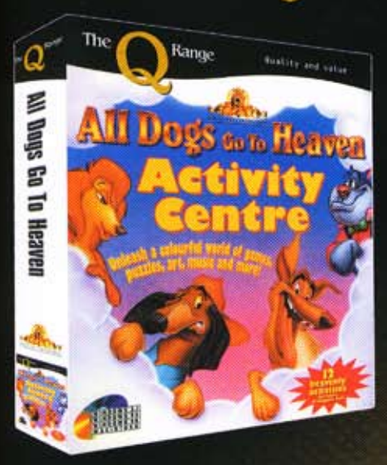
Lowlights

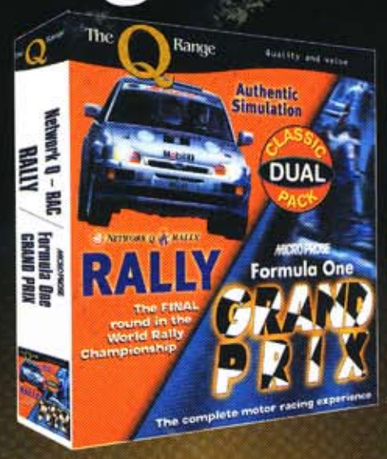
Very few really. The voting system needs to move out of the Cretaceous Period. The sound hitches were normal and probably won't be entirely eliminated. Panning effects are hard to hear on the sound system at the venue, but to be fair that's the only complaint about it.

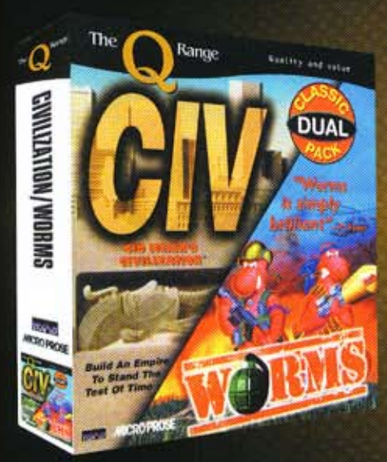
Perhaps the biggest problem was marketing - it was non-existent! If you read NAG or the SA Demo mailing list you knew about the competition. If you don't you probably didn't. That will change next year without doubt. More sponsors and more entries should only make Optimise go from strength to strength. So start working on your entries for Optimise 00. Or should that be 2000? In just a few weeks, we'll know for sure.

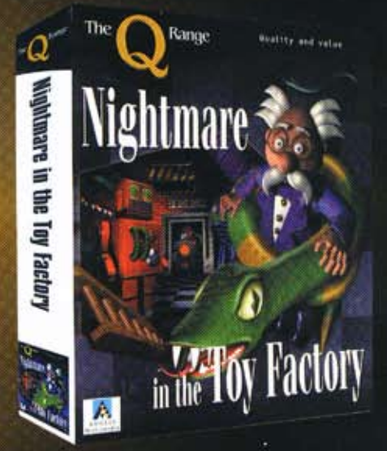
MAVERICK

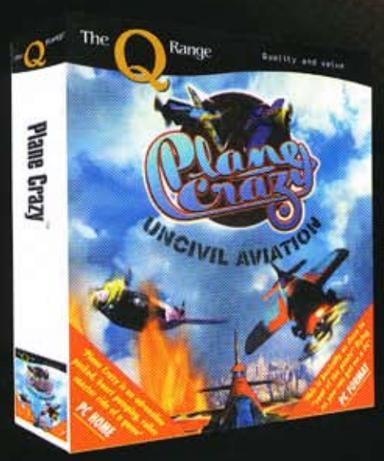
The Q Range Quality and Value

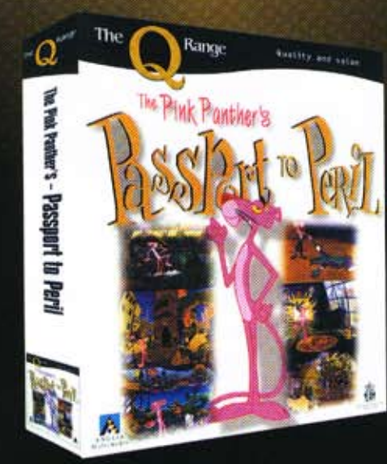


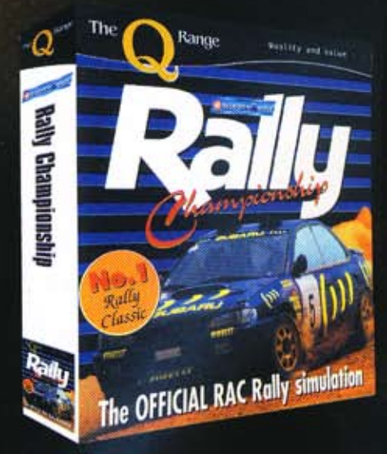












Titles available from R99.00 at all leading retail stores.

www.tcmwarehouse.com

For more information contact TCM Warehouse on Telephone: 011 312-1067 Fax: 011 312-0143 or email sales@tcmwarehouse.com

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.

Xena Warrior Princess

Invincibility
At the main menu press Up, Up, Up, Circle, Square, Up, Right, Left.

Refill Shield and Attack Meter
At the main menu, press Triangle, Square, Triangle, Square, Square, Up, Up, Up.

Sword and Shield Upgrades
At the main menu, press Triangle, Square, Triangle, Square, Square, Up, Up, Up.

Grand Theft Auto 2

Use these player names for the desired effect:

ITSALLUP	Level Select
LIVELONG	Unlimited Energy
NAVARONE	All Weapons
BIGSCORE	10 Million Points
NOFRILLS	Debug
LOSEFEDS	No Cops
DESIRES	Maximum Wanted Level
MUCHCASH	More Money
WUGGLES	Display Co-ordinates

Tune Radio
Press Up when driving a car that has a radio to change stations.

Getting Rid of Cops
Go to the territory of whatever gang you are working for and they will shoot them for you.

MGS: VR Missions

Alternate Selection Screen
Press Start at the Konami logo before the introduction to the game in order to get a different picture at the selection screen, it will feature the Ninja with his mask broken open.

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 any level 2 attack.
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.

Dragon Ball Z Characters

Goku
Beat 1 player tournament and get excellent on Raone or Zauber, Felma or Rohzen, and Reyus or Princess Anjie. Go to the 2-player battle and do the following:
Player 1 holds R1 and L1, Player 2 holds R2 and L2 and if done correctly, Goku should appear on character selection screen.

Gohan
Beat 1 player tournament within 3 minutes with Goku.

Crillun
Go to a 2-player battle with Goku vs Goku and player 2 should become Crillun, now save immediately or you will lose him.

Castrol Honda Superbike Racing

Pop a Wheelie
To pop a wheelie, accelerate out of first gear. At roughly 100mph let off the throttle for about three seconds before accelerating again. Note: This cheat will not work while cornering.

Crash Team Racing

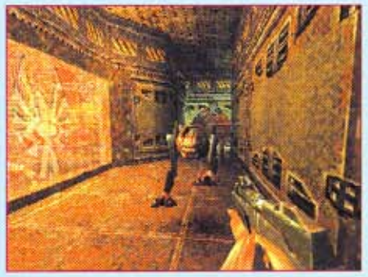
N Trophy
Finish the Roos Tubes level using time trial mode.
Spyro the Dragon 2 Demo
At the main or new game screen hold L1 + R1 and press Down, Circle, Triangle, Right.
New Battle Arenas
Use the arcade 1 player mode to finish the easy, medium and hard difficulty to get up to 4 new arenas.
Red Gem Cup
Collect all four red coins in adventure mode.
Race as Ripper Roo
Win the Red Gem Cup to unlock Ripper Roo.
Green Gem Cup
Collect all four green coins in adventure mode.
Race as Papu Papu
Win the Green Gem Cup to unlock Papu Papu.
Blue Gem Cup
Collect all four blue coins in adventure mode.
Race as Komodo Joe
Win the Blue Gem Cup to unlock Komodo Joe.
Yellow Gem Cup
Collect all four yellow coins in adventure mode.

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

Race as Pinstripe
Win the Yellow Gem Cup to unlock Pinstripe.
Purple Gem Cup
Collect all four purple coins (crystal levels) in adventure mode.

Race as Fake Crash
Win the Purple Gem Cup to unlock Fake Crash.
Turbo Track
Collect all five gems by collecting all coins.

Quake 2



Bronze Cheats
Beat the game on the easy difficulty. This will give you two options for multiplayer mode: Weapons stay and One hit kills.

Invincibility
Pause game and press L2, L2, R1, R2, R1, and L2.

Sled Storm

Unlock the Storm Sled
Enter Circle, Triangle, Square, R2, R2, L1, X, Triangle as a password.

Play as Sergei
Enter Square, L1, Square, L2, Triangle, R2, X, Circle 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.

NATO intelligence services report that, for reasons unknown, the Russian military has destroyed Gorky 17, one of the old Soviet "Secret Cities".

A year later NATO takes over an abandoned Russian secret base. Diggers discover a mysterious research laboratory in the completely demolished complex. After examining the wreckage, NATO decides to leave the lab as it is, at least for now...

But after a few days the previously deserted streets suddenly are teeming with hordes of grotesquely deformed creatures. Word soon gets out to the media, which means NATO can't just destroy the scene. So troops are ordered to hermetically seal off the area. Nobody is allowed in or out. A team of three NATO specialists under the leadership of Cole Sullivan is sent in to examine the horrifying events on the ground...

METROPOLIS SOFTWARE HOUSE
GAMETRONIX
Topware INTERACTIVE

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.
© 1999 Topware Interactive. All rights reserved. All trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their owners.

CLUELESS

One-handed Superman Hold
To do one handed superman hold down R2 and push Left and Up and then push Right and Up and you will get 1000.

Knockout Kings 2000

Box as a Gargoyle
Enter "GARGOYLE" as a name at the boxer creation screen to fight as a gargoyle. Press Circle at the pre-fight ranking screen to save the boxer for use in career and exhibition modes.
Box as Tim Duncan
Enter "TIM DUNCAN" as a name at the boxer creation screen to fight as Tim Duncan from the San Antonio Spurs. Press Circle at the pre-fight ranking screen to save the boxer for use in career and exhibition modes.
Box as Marlon Wayans
Enter "MARLON WAYANS" as a name at the boxer creation screen to fight as Marlon Wayans, the comedian. Press Circle at the pre-fight ranking screen to save the boxer for use in career and exhibition modes.
Box as Marc Ecko
Enter "MARC ECKO" as a name at the boxer creation screen to fight as Marc Ecko, the founder of the Ecko line of clothes. Press Circle at the pre-fight ranking screen to save the boxer for use in career and exhibition modes.
Box as Jermaine Dupri
Enter "JERMAINE DUPRI" as a name at the boxer creation screen to fight as Jermaine Dupri, the hip-hop musician. Press Circle at the pre-fight ranking screen to save the boxer for use in career and exhibition modes.
Box as Q-Tip
Enter "Q TIP" as a name at the boxer creation screen to fight as Q-Tip from the band "A Tribe Called Quest". Press Circle at the pre-fight ranking screen to save the boxer for use in career and exhibition modes.
Box as O
Enter "O" as a name at the boxer creation screen to fight as the musician that performed most of the game music. Press Circle at the pre-fight ranking screen to save the boxer for use in career and exhibition modes.

NASCAR 2000

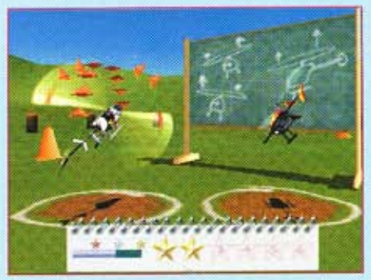
Race as Alan Kulwicki
At the driver selection screen, press L1, R1, L2, R2, Square, R1, L1, R2, L2, Circle.
Race as Benny Parsons
At the driver selection screen, press L1, R2, R1, L2, Square, R2, L1, R1, L2, Circle.
Race as Davey Allison
Start a season and win the first four poles and races to unlock Davey Allison.
Montana Track
Finish all ten races in "Race The King" mode in first place.
Waving Driver
Select cockpit view in single player mode, then hold Select until the driver waves.

Mission: Impossible

Secret Message from Programmers
Enter "TTOPPSECRETT" as a password under "Load Game".
View all FMV Sequences
Enter "SEECOOLMOVIE" as a password under "Load Game".
Slow-motion Mode
Enter "IMTIREDTODAY" as a password under "Load Game" and ignore the "Bad Password" message.
Turbo Mode
Enter "GOOUTTAMYWAY" as a password under "Load Game" and ignore the "Bad Password" message.
Super Jump
Enter "BIONICJUMPER" as a password under "Load Game" and ignore the "Bad Password" message.
Disable AI
Enter "SCAREDSTIFFF" as a password under "Load Game" and ignore the "Bad Password" message.

RC Stunt Copter

Select Level
At the title screen press Down, Up, Right, Left, Triangle, X, Square, Circle.
Get Gold Medals
At the title screen press Down, Up, Left, Right, Triangle, X, Square, Circle.



More Points
At the title screen press L2, R2, L1, R1, Triangle, Circle, X, Square.
Show End Game
At the title screen press Up, Down, Left, Left, X, Square, Triangle, Circle.
Long Name
At the title screen press Up, Down, Left, Right, Triangle, X, Square, Circle.

Hot Wheels Turbo Racing

Infinite Turbo
At the main menu, press R2, L1, Square, Triangle, R1, L2, L1, R2. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.
TowJam Car
At the main menu, press Square, Triangle, L1, R1, L2, R2, Square, and Triangle. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.
Small Cars
At the main menu, press Square, R2, L2, Triangle (2), L2, R2, Square. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.
Large Tires
At the main menu, press Square, Triangle, Square, Triangle, R1 (2), and L2 (2). If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.
Flat Shaded Graphics
At the main menu, press L1, R1, L2, R2, L1, R1, L2, R2. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.
"Dude" Sounds
At the main menu, press R2, R1, L2, R2, Square, Triangle, L1, R1. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a sound.

Secret Cars
The secret cars listed below may only be played by the first player. These codes must be entered before you race where it says to sign in at car select area. All letters should be upper case or else they won't work.

Sol-Aire CX4	or8b4ork8r 3f89jr33LH
Formula 5000	4wdg84wpds 7k7xnw77QM
Hotwheels 500	yLkMffovnp dQBMToddw8
Slide out	om46domf4f _9lndm_ _cc
Super van	op482oph6b 1cpQgp11Jf

The rest of these cars are only for the second player, so if you really want to play them, switch sides.

Stage Fright	o_jLdo_TJT cp6o9_ccvr
Sol-Aire CX4	or8b4ork8r 3f89Jr33LH
Slide Out	owdg8owpdJ 7KHXnw77QM

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

THE OFFICIAL GAME EXPANSION FOR HALF-LIFE™,
THE THRILLING PC CD-ROM NAMED
"GAME OF THE YEAR" BY OVER 30 PUBLICATIONS.

HALF-LIFE
OPPOSING FORCE

SIERRA STUDIOS VALVE™ gearbox software CREW

Distributed by Crew. For more information please call Johannesburg (011) 233-1111, Cape Town (021) 418-4240, Durban (031) 579-1974, or PE (041) 513-515. ©1999 Sierra On-Line Inc. All rights reserved. Sierra, Sierra Studios, Opposing Force and Half-Life are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sierra On-Line, Inc. Valve is a trademark of Valve, L.L.C. Gearbox Software is a trademark of Gearbox Software, L.L.C. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners

CLUELESS

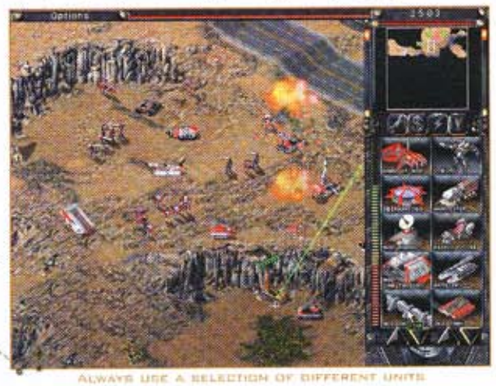
In last months Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun Strategy Guide we discussed some general basic concepts that apply to both GDI and NOD, as well as specific issues pertaining to GDI only. In this instalment we take a look at some more advanced general concepts and at options available to NOD.

R.A.V.E.N.

ADVANCED CONCEPTS

A Philosophy of Diversification

In most current real-time strategy games, it is important to diversify your troops. In Tiberian Sun, it is absolutely critical, as no construction rate bonus is given for multiple production facilities (for example Construction Yards, Barracks, and War Factories). It is therefore imperative to have all possible production facilities as early as possible, in order to be able to produce units faster. One should therefore climb quite quickly to Helipads, even if only one gets built initially. There are, however, some substantial benefits to having at least two of everything - firstly the "backup" aspect, i.e. the second Barracks or War Factory acts as a spare, and secondly, if you spread them around as much as possible, you will have flexibility as to where you can produce your units. Keep in mind that additional War Factories may not do anything for your building times, but they will definitely impact on your power supply. Either keep the ones you're not using offline, or build additional Power Plants.



ALWAYS USE A SELECTION OF DIFFERENT UNITS

Command & Conquer has always emphasised the use of mechanised units over infantry. This is, in "realism" terms, somewhat incorrect, as it is the infantry rather than armour or air superiority that captures territory. In Tiberian Sun this issue has been addressed, and it is vital to include infantry as part of one's offensive and defensive forces. Besides the fact that EMP Cannons can utterly neutralise armoured assaults (detailed later on) infantry also offer cheap damage-dealing potential. However, relying entirely on infantry is as poor a choice as neglecting it, as foot units (except for Cyborgs) are vulnerable to being squashed en masse. In short, keep a diverse and versatile force and you should not only be able to deal with any threat, you will also be able to mount a most effective attack.

Engineers

Engineers have always been a prominent element of Command & Conquer, and have often resulted in the untimely demise of the unwary. It is therefore important both to know how to use them and how to defend against them. You will often be choosing, at the beginning of the game, whether you will be doing one or the other - you can seldom do both early. Here we will discuss how to defend against them (probably the most important aspect when dealing with them). Your very first few buildings need to be placed as close together as possible, without restricting access (for Harvesters, mainly).

Place your Power Plant, your Barracks and your first Refinery close together (leave some space for movement, but keep things tidy) and your War Factory as near as possible. This way, you will find that fewer defensive structures need to be built, as they get shared between the various buildings. Start your defensive net with a core (right next to your Construction Yard and Refinery, the two prime targets), and only then begin designing a perimeter. Build your perimeter first in the direction from which you are most likely to be attacked, but do not neglect to place at least light to moderate defences at the rear (surprise attacks at the rear can be most inconvenient). To deny Engineer entry, make sure you have numerous Light Infantry in the very early game, and any other anti-personnel units and structures thereafter.

The danger of this type of anti-Engineer defence is that you leave yourself fairly vulnerable in the late game to such things as Cluster Missile and Chemical Missile strikes. This means that, once it becomes economically and strategically viable, key structures such as Barracks and War Factories should be "backed up" - i.e. duplicates should be built, as defensibly as possible, but spread enough to minimise the impact of Missile strikes and strafing runs by Orca Bombers. In the later game it also pays to replace any lost central structures in locations other than their original ones.

The Importance of EMP Cannon

One of the most important defensive (and offensive - more about that later) structures you can build is the EMP Cannon. This weapon, when properly directed, can neutralise even substantially large mechanised threats. Even subterranean units are affected, and surface once they have been disabled, making them vulnerable. Bear in mind that your own armoured units (and some structures) will be affected if the EMP is fired too close to them, so keep some infantry on hand to clean up any uninvited guests. Attacking an opponent who has a charged EMP Cannon requires some care and preparation.

Sometimes it is advantageous to send in a small portion of your mechanised forces ahead of the main assault to entice your opponent into using his EMP Cannon, if he has one, then bringing the main attack forward to defend the disabled units and carry out the main attack. (Should the main attack get hit by an EMP shock wave, it could be a very expensive loss). This way, the disabled units may live until the EMP wears off (as your opponent should be targeting units that are active and attacking him) and thus still be able to participate in the offensive.

EMP Cannon - an Offensive Weapon

The EMP Cannon is not only a defensive weapon - it can also be used as part of an attack. Remember that EMP affects not only units but many structures as well. Buildings that will be disabled by an EMP blast include all weapon emplacements (such as Obelisks, Component Towers and SAMs) as well as Radars and Stealth Generators, among others. Production buildings (Barracks, War Factory, etc) are not affected, so targeting them is pointless.

The first step to an effective attack incorporating EMP is to have one built at your own base and fully charged. Once your Cannon is charged, any others you build are also charged (multiple EMP Cannons don't charge any faster, but yield flexibility as far as possible target areas are concerned). The next step is to build your offensive EMP Cannon near your opponent's base. There are several ways to go about this: firstly, you could deploy an MCV near your enemy's base (whether playing with re-deployable MCVs or after having built one - Tech Level 10 only); another possible way is by capturing an enemy building with an Engineer, then deploying the pre-built EMP Cannon near it. Once these measures have been taken, you may proceed with the attack. Obviously, the EMP blast in itself does not constitute any kind of effective attack, so your blast should target as many units and defensive structures as possible (make yourself familiar with the EMP's area of effect) while leading with a force of infantry, and follow up with your armour. Try to time any aerial strikes to coincide with your main assault.

BROTHERHOOD OF NOD

Underground

Many players consider NOD to be superior by dint of their stealth capabilities. This is not necessarily the case, but nevertheless stealth is

Spring-bok Interactive

Internet site: www.Spring-bok.co.za
Email: Sales@Spring-bok.co.za
Fax no: (012) 664-3333

REVOLUTIONARY!!
ORDER GAMES/SOFTWARE/MULTIMEDIA EQUIPMENT THROUGH MAIL/INTERNET WITH FREE OVERNIGHT DELIVERY
(Overnight delivery only valid should stock be available)

ALL THE LATEST DVD MOVIES, PC SOFTWARE AND MULTIMEDIA EQUIPMENT, PC AND PLAYSTATION GAMES

DVD MOVIES R150 each		PC GAMES		RECOIL	R289	PLAYSTATION TITLES:	
101 DALMATIONS	JEREMIAH JOHNSON	BALDUR'S GATE	R289	SPORTS CAR GT	R289	ALL STAR TENNIS '99	R329
ADDICTED TO LOVE	JUNGLE 2 JUNGLE	BREAKNECK	R289	SUPER BIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	R260	BATMAN AND ROBIN	R249
A TIME TO KILL	LA CONFIDENTIAL	DESCENT 3	R289	TEST DRIVE 5	R260	LIVEWIRE!	R289
ALICE IN WONDERLAND	LOST BOYS	EXPENDABLE	R289	SETTLERS 3	R249	RE-VOLT	R329
ALL THE PRESIDENTS MEN	MAD MAX 3: BEYOND...	FLY!	R309	COMPLETE CHESS	R319	RIVEN, THE SEQUEL TO MYST	R289
AMADEUS	MARS ATTACKS	GARY PLAYER GOLF PRO2 W/W ED.	R289	STARCRAFT	R279	SHADOW MAN	R329
ARMAGEDDON	MAVERICK	HEAVY GEAR 11	R309	STARCRAFT BROOD WAR	R239	COLIN MCRAE RALLY	R389
ASSASINS	METRO	HEROS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC 3	R289	QUEST FOR GLORY 5: DRAGON FIRE	R279	CONSTRUCTOR	R359
BATMAN	MICHAEL COLLINS	HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS	R289	KQ : MASK OF ETERNITY	R279	TOCA TOURING CARS	R379
BATMAN AND ROBIN	MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN	INTERNATIONAL CRICKET CAP 2	R289	VIPER RACING	R279	C&C PLATINUM	R219
BEETLEJUICE	MR MAGOO	JACK NICKLAUSE 6, G.BEAR CNAL	R289	POLICE QUEST : SWAT 2	R279	C&C RED ALERT PLATINUM	R219
BLAZING SADDLES	MURDER AT 1600	KINGPIN, LIFE OF CRIME	R309	HALFLIFE	R279	C&C RETALIATION	R329
BODY HEAT	NIGHTMARE BEFORE XMAS	LIVEWIRE!	R199	HOMEWORLD	R279	CROC 2	R319
BONNIE & CLYDE	NOTHING TO LOSE	MIGHT & MAGIC VII	R289	CEASAR 3	R279	F.A. PREMIER LEAGUE STARS	R319
BULLITT	ONE FLEW OVER THE OUTBREAK	STARWARS EPISODE 1: RACER	R329	BUGS LIFE	R269	FIFA 99	R319
CITY OF ANGELS	OUTLAND	STARWARS EPISODE 1: PHAN- MEN	R329	TOTAL ANNIHILATION : KINGDOMS	R289	FUTURE COP LAPD 2100 AD	R329
CONAIR	PHENOMENON	BRIAN LARA CRICKET	R299	DARK VENGEANCE	R289	NFS ROAD CHALLENGE	R349
CONSPIRACY THEORY	PRETTY WOMAN	CARMAGEDDON 2	R299	BLOOD 2 : THE CHOSEN	R329	POPULOUS BEGINNING	R329
CONTACT SPECIAL EDITION	RANSON	CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER	R319	MORTAL KOMBAT 4	R299	SMALL SOLDIERS	R349
COOL RUNNINGS	RISKY BUSINESS	COLIN MCRAE RALLY	R299	ODDWORLD : ABE'S EXODDUS	R329	SPORTS CAR GT	R329
CRIMSON TIDE	ROMY & MICHELE...	GRAND THEFT AUTO	R199	POWERSLIDE	R299	TEST DRIVE 5	R349
DANGEROUS LIASONS	SANTA CLAUSE	GRIM FANDANGO	R299	OUTCAST	R329	DRIVER	R279
DAVE	SPACE JAM	HERETIC 2	R309	DEATHKARTZ	R269	MORTAL KOMBAT 4	R379
DEAD POETS SOCIETY	SPHERE - SPECIAL EDITION	MONKEY ISLAND III	R309	SILVER	R269		
DEVIL'S ADVOCATE	SPLASH	RAILROAD TYCOON 2	R309	TARZAN ACTION GAME	R279	MICROSOFT SOFTWARE & GAMES:	
DICK TRACEY	SPY HARD	RAINBOW SIX	R309			OFFICE 2000 DSP BOS ED.	R1499
DISCLOSURE	TEQUILA SUNRISE	RESIDENT EVIL 2	R319	CREATIVE MULTIMEDIA EQUIPMENT:		WINDOWS 98	R749
DOG DAY AFTERNOON	TERMINAL VELOCITY	SIN	R309	48X - INFRA DRIVE	R559	WINDOWS 95	R749
DUMBO	THE BRIDGES OF MADISON..	SOUTH PARK	R319	PC DVD ENCORE 6X/24X	R1799	WINDOWS NT	R1349
FACE OFF	THE CLIENT	STARWARS ROGUE SQUADRON	R309	BLASTER SAVAGE 4 AGP	R979	GOLF	R79
FALLEN	THE COLOR PURPLE	TOCA TOURING CARS 2	R299	BLASTER SAVAGE 4 PCI	R979	MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS	R79
FATHER OF THE BRIDE 1	THE FOGITIVE	TUROK 2	R309	GB RIVA TNT 2 16MB	R899	MAGIC SCHOOL BUS EXPL.	R79
FATHER OF THE BRIDE 2	THE GETAWAY	X WING ALLIANCE	R339	GB RIVA TNT 2	R1699	ENCARTA98 COMBO VALUE PACK	R99
FATHERS DAY	THE PELICAN BRIEF	ALIEN VS PREDATOR	R289	GB RIVA TNT 2 ULTRA	R2099		
FLUBBER	THE POSTMAN	ALPHA CENTAURI	R289	SB LIVE VALUE	R759	LIMITED OFFER SPECIALS:	
FOREVER YOUNG	THE RIGHT STUFF	C&C COUNTERSTRIKE	R129	SOUND BLASTER VIBRA 128	R309	BLOOD 2: THE CHOSEN	R250
GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE	THE ROCK	C&C MEGABOX	R169	2X2X24 RE - WRITER	R1339	HEAVY GEAR 2	R250
GOON MORNING VIETNAM	THE SPECIALIST	C&C RED ALERT MB2	R169	4X2X24 RE - WRITER	R1799	VIPER RACING	R250
GOODFELLAS	THREE MUSKETEERS	C&C TIBERIAN SUN	R289	MODEM BLASTER 56K PCI	R499	STAR WARS PHANTOM MENACE	R250
GREEN BERETS	TIN CUP	CRICKET WORLD CUP 99	R279	MODEM BLASTER 56K	R799	STAR WARS RACER	R250
GROSSE POINTE BLANK	U.S. MARSHALS	DUNE 2000	R289			TIBERIAN SUN	R250
HARD TO KILL	UNFORGIVEN	DUNGEON KEEPER 2	R289				
HOMEWARD BOUND	WHILE YOU WERE	F.A. PREMIER LEAGUE STARS	R209	MWEB INTERNET CONNECTION:			
HOMEWARD BOUND 2		FIFA 99	R259	MWEB BIG BLACK 80X	R99		
INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE		FUTURE COP L.A.P.D.	R209	MWEB BIG BLACK 80X - 56K	R799		
JACK		SIM CITY 3000	R289				
		NFS ROAD CHALLENGE	R289				

We stock all Game/DVD Movies/PC Software and Multimedia equipment available on the South African market. For products which you are looking for but can't find on our price list. Please Fax or E-Mail a query and we will locate the product, availability and price for you and we will promptly reply to your query.

All goods are sold NEW and ORIGINAL. Products are supplied by the AUTHORISED distributors and are sealed in their original packaging. Games are supplied in their boxes.

Ordering Instructions: The client is required to either: E-mail or fax an order through to the company's specified fax number. The client will be notified via e-mail or telephone whether stock is available. Should stock be available the client would be required to deposit full payment for the goods. After proof of payment has been faxed or e-mailed to Spring-Bok Interactive , goods will be sent. Goods will then arrive the following morning at the specified address of delivery. The delivery is guaranteed and goes by respectable couriers. ALL TRANSACTIONS ARE 100% SAFE. Goods come with full 12 month swop-out warranty. All prices are inclusive of all charges. NO SURCHARGES. The client is required when sending an e-mail or fax order to specify name, surname, I.D number, full physical address, contact numbers and products required.

Banking Details
Bank: Standard Bank
Branch Code: 0945
Branch name: Lyttelton
Account No: 310677262
Account type: Cheque

Sping-bok Interactive PO Box 11816 Centurion 0046 Fax: (012) 664-3333 Mobile: 082 -377- 7870
E-mail: sales@spring-bok.co.za www.spring-bok.co.za

EVO TECHNOLOGIES CC

Budget PC:

AMD K6-II 400 MHz with 3D NOW!
32 Mb Ram memory
4 Mb SiS 6326 Display Adapter
Creative 48x CD-ROM drive
4.3 Gb Seagate Hard drive
1.44Mb Stiffy drive
Creative Vibra
Creative SBS-10 Speakers
Win98 Keyboard
Genius Geni mouse
14" Viewsonic Monitor
Windows 98 OS

Payment plan:
Dep: R529-00 Cash Price: **R5299-00**
Repayment: **R 265-00 x 24 months**

Entry Level PC:

AMD K6-II 400 MHz with 3D NOW!
64 Mb Ram memory
16Mb Voodoo 3 2000 Display adapter
Creative 48x CD-ROM drive
6.4 Gb Seagate Hard drive
1.44Mb Stiffy drive
Creative Vibra 128 PCI sound card
Creative SBS-20 Speakers
Win98 Keyboards
Genius New Scroll mouse
15" Viewsonic monitor
Windows 98 OS

Payment plan:
Dep: R 679-00 Cash price: **R6799-00**
Repayment: **R 340-00 x 24 months**

Peripheral equipment:

Saitek R4 Steering wheel & pedald	R 1255-00
Saitek X36 Combo control stick, throttle & rudder	R 955-00
Saitek X6-32M Game pad	R125-00

Manuel: (082) 772-9762
E-mail: evotech@iafrica.com

NOD's main advantage, and should be taken full advantage of. Thus, Stealth Tanks and Stealth Generators are important to master, as well as the various subterranean units. The other NOD units, however, are far from useless. Let's take a closer look at some key players:

NOD Infantry

The Brotherhood is the only side that has access to rocket troops. These are the most effective type of infantry against armoured vehicles, and also fire most eloquently at flying units. Their main disadvantage is the fact that NOD has no medics, and thus Rocket Infantry tend to have a limited life span, in contrast to GDI's Medic-assisted troopers. The same applies to NOD's Light Infantry, so NOD veteran infantry troops are rather rare, except for Cyborgs.
Cyborgs are a very important NOD unit that regenerates when in Tiberium (unlike most other infantry). They pack a chaingun that is murderous against infantry, but substantially less useful against armour. Their own armour is vehicle-class, which means that machineguns and the like don't do them much damage, but rockets and cannon shells take their toll.
Cyborgs excel at guarding Harvesters - these spend at least half their time in Tiberium fields, and Cyborgs heal in Tiberium, so any engagements in the field give Cyborgs the advantage of regeneration even during combat (albeit slowly).
The specials available to NOD are the Cyborg Commando and the Mutant Hijacker. The first of these is a killing machine of note with considerable health and strong armour (of vehicle type) and a tremendous punch - always good to have. The Mutant Hijacker is rather overpriced given his ability, but one of his more devastating uses is to capture MCV's (granted, the opportunity for this kind of stunt presents itself very rarely, but it's definitely been done!).

Light Vehicles

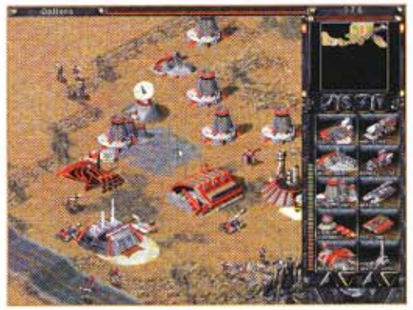
A throwback to Command & Conquer (Tiberian Dawn) is the Attack Cycle (previously known as the Recon Bike), and it remains the fastest land unit in the game (though GDI Wolverines move almost as fast). As such, this makes the Attack Cycle one of the ideal scouting units, especially in the early game. They are also effective against armour (due to their rocket launchers), but must hunt in packs (as in C&C: Tiberian Dawn), and can no longer shoot at air units. They are not as effective against tanks and the like as in the original, but in packs of six or eight they can hunt down Harvesters almost with impunity, then withdraw when resistance appears. This is typical of NOD's guerrilla style of warfare, and is a principle that should generally be adhered to, as GDI will in general out-firepower a NOD player's forces - guile and subterfuge are vital to NOD's success.
The NOD Buggy is one of the vehicles with arguably the least use. While cheap and quick to produce, they lack the firepower to deal with anything other than normal infantry (i.e. not Cyborgs). As scouts, however, they are essentially on a par with the bikes, having a longer visual range but slightly slower movement.

NOD Armoured Units

Excluding Stealth Tanks, Subterranean APC's and Devil's Tongue tanks, NOD's armoured arsenal consists of Tick Tanks and Artillery, not counting Mobile Sensor Arrays. Tick Tanks are essentially normal tanks with the ability to half-bury themselves to protect themselves. This allows for a mobile defence, when needed, as the Tick Tanks can be deployed in key defensive positions, then relocated as the perimeter expands. Because they do not require to be deployed in order to shoot, they are a wonderfully versatile unit with dual capabilities.
Artillery are NOD's long-distance annihilators. Their first use is usually as defence, due to the fact that they can open fire on incoming enemy units before they are anywhere close to shooting at you. As an offensive unit, they need to be used in groups, as buildings can be repaired faster than one Artillery unit can damage it. Furthermore, Artillery must always be backed by other units, as they become vulnerable once enemies manage to get close. The fact that they move slowly and must be deployed on flat ground before they can fire means that fine micro-management is often required.

The Sneaky Stuff

NOD truly shines in the arena of guerrilla warfare. Stealth Tanks are the pet hate of many a GDI commander. In Tiberian Sun they are not as effective as in Tiberian Dawn, for the following reasons: they have become more expensive, require a higher tech-level and they can now be detected by Mobile Sensor Arrays. They remain exceptionally useful, though. They can be used to harass Harvesters, fading away as soon as organised resistance materialises.



They can be used to infiltrate bases that don't have the luxury of a Mobile Sensor Array. They can lie in wait until the enemy's forces have left to attack you, then pounce on the lightly defended base, once again slipping away if challenged. Learning to use the Subterranean units can mean the difference between victory and defeat.
Subterranean units have great psychological value, as a player defending against them usually ends up suffering something akin to a state of chronic paranoia. Also, one of the most unwelcome notifications is "subterranean unit detected" (usually repeated several times) even though the lack of this warning usually ends even uglier. The power of Subterranean APC's should be pretty apparent - a troop and Engineer delivery system that, while underground, is immune to everything except EMP Cannons. Devil's Tongues are devastating against regular infantry (i.e. not Cyborgs) and torch some buildings (for instance, Power Plants) in fairly short order.
Don't forget that any subterranean unit that is in trouble can usually be pulled out of the fight by making it burrow - if the situation is not favourable, just dive under and get out of there, to return to fight another day.
The trick to using subterranean units is to draw the enemy into firing off his EMP Cannon (if he has one) before attacking with them. It is also quite useful to take out any Mobile Sensor Arrays whenever possible. Thereafter it is merely a matter of surfacing at some relatively unprotected point (usually toward the rear of a base) and striking quickly. This requires fairly good intelligence, so scouting the enemy's base is imperative, even if some units must be sacrificed in the process.

Repairing Vehicles

Where GDI have the advantage of Medics healing infantry, NOD benefit from free repairs to their vehicles (assuming at least one Mobile Repair Vehicle has been constructed). As soon as your first engagement becomes likely, you should build one or two Mobile Repair Vehicles (having more, when possible, is not at all a bad thing!). Keep them in guard mode so they seek out nearby damaged friendly units (including your allies', in team games) and repair them. This ability is a huge help when facing GDI's superior firepower, as several MRV's working together can keep a number of your units alive while they are being shot at.

Air Units

NOD's air arsenal consists of two units - the Harpy and the Banshee. The first of these is a general-purpose unit with a machinegun that does unusually high damage to all armour types, as well as having a huge payload. These are great for hunting Harvesters and chopping up clusters of infantry. Banshees are bomber units with a more specific purpose - erasing buildings. They are very fast and, if used correctly, can often outrun SAM's and the like. Their damage, unlike GDI's Orca Bomber, is not an area effect, but rather pinpoint-accurate plasma shots. A fact to be aware of - Banshee shots go right through Firestorm Defences, though normally the Banshee itself will crash into the Firestorm Wall and be destroyed.

NOD Buildings

The most controversial, and one of the most important NOD defensive structures, is the Stealth Generator. Become familiar with the Stealth Generator's area of effect if you are planning on using them, as efficiency is very important. Few people find themselves able to afford more than one Stealth Generator, partly due to their high cost, but also because of their huge power drain. Bear this in mind, as the loss of a couple of Power Plants usually results in discovery.

Closing Comments

In short, playing NOD effectively revolves around effectively waging a war of hit-and-run attacks, terror and psychology. Players often panic when their opponents' bases disappear from the map by being cloaked - use this fact. Players are often intimidated by approaching subterranean units - take advantage of this. Above all, maintain a well-balanced army whose different elements can protect each other, and don't stand and fight a GDI opponent except on your own terms, i.e. if you outnumber or outposition him sufficiently.

Next issue we'll take a look at Age of Empires II: The Age of Kings...

Distributed by Electronic Arts Africa. For more information call: Johannesburg (011) 803-1212 or write to Electronic Arts Africa, PO Box 3180, Rosmead, 2128, South Africa.
Software © 1999 Electronic Arts. EA SPORTS, the EA SPORTS logo and Electronic Arts are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts in the United States and/or other countries. All rights reserved. Official FIFA licensed product. ©1977 FIFA TM.
Manufactured under license by Electronic Arts. All other trademarks and tradenames are the property of their respective owners. PlayStation and the PS are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.

Send Off

Finally we have come not only to the end of a year but also to the end of the millennium, and yes I know technically speaking the millennium only starts in 2001 but let's just pretend 2000 is the new millennium. At least it is for your computer as far as the Y2K bug is concerned. Come to think of it January 1st will be an interesting day to see just how many computers will be affected worldwide. Who knows I might just get 100 years worth of interest in a split second, at least that's what I will be dreaming about on December 31 1999.

As for New Age Gaming we will be back in the New Year with a jam-packed January/February edition that will be hitting the shelves in the last week of January. This monster issue will contain reviews of all the big titles that didn't quite make their December shipping date on time such as Diablo 2, Quake 3, Gabriel Knight 3, Ultima Ascension and so on. We realise that everyone would like us to have a separate January and February edition, but due to all the companies closing over the Christmas period and the fact that we need a short break (to play Quake 3 of course) it's impossible this year. We have planned next years schedule well in advance, meaning, if all goes well, there should be a separate January and February edition.

Anyone who buys the magazine at their local newsagent and haven't quite got around to subscribing yet should take note that as of next year all issues will be on the shelves the last week of the month prior to the publication month. In layman's terms you should be able to buy the May edition by the last week of April for example. This way we will be bringing our release dates in line with international standards.

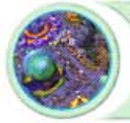
Also note that our phone numbers have changed and the new numbers are listed on the Editor's Note page. So should you have any queries or need to contact us please use the new numbers. This is especially important for anyone that is faxing through a new subscription and would like to receive it on time.

We also have some other interesting events planned for the New Year although at this time they are hush, hush and my Editor will kick my butt if I reveal them. Suffice to say that some of these will be GLSA events and there is a rumour about a game faire planned for the middle of next year floating around the office too. No confirmations yet but keep your eyes out for the next issue, I think we will be making announcements of some of these events then.

'This is the end of the world... and we feel fine...'

Everyone here at New Age Gaming would like to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and also the best of luck come the 1st of January. Until next year...

There is a very good chance that many of the games that didn't arrive this year December will be out in June 2000...



Theme Park World

The guys and girls at the mighty Bullfrog have always managed to impress everyone with their innovative and fun titles through the years. Everything has been updated in this fun amusement park game, you can ride on the attractions, open hotdog stands and even clean up vomit off the sidewalk (a favourite feature that returns for this big sequel).

Quake III Arena

The biggest problem with this game is how does one justify scoring it over 100%? After much anticipation and a stampede at the door, Soul Assassin eventually won the name calling and pushing contest and bagged the big one for 1999. Pure multiplayer mayhem in its finest form, nothing comes close and until the next Quake, we doubt anything will. Expect a railing review next issue.

Spyro 2: Gateway to Glimmer

It looks like a kid's game but you'll probably find more adults playing it after bedtime, when the house is still and not a mouse is stirring. Guide this little dragon through a series of quests to flame grill the bad guys and collect the collectibles. It's got better graphics, better sound, a bigger game world and more evil creatures than ever before. [*I just had to get the last word in this millennium, and here goes, Ed*]: Word.

a NAGging suspicion...

true tales of horror, disgrace and idiocy from the NAG office, written and illustrated by Shryke.

experience true competition

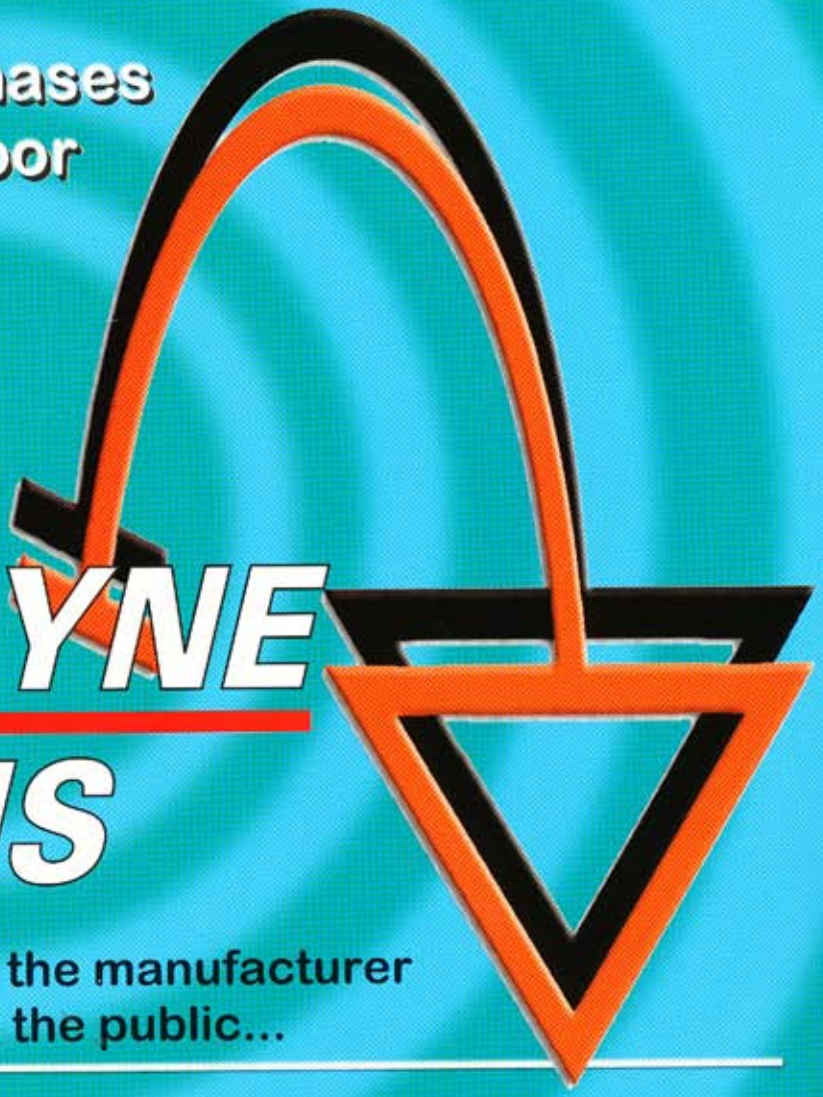
3

www.playgames.co.za

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

Wanting quality branded products, with full, reliable guarantees?

Needing your purchases delivered to your door anywhere in SA?



Speak to...

CYBERDYNE SYSTEMS

We import directly from the manufacturer and sell directly to the public...

CyberDyne Systems SA are the importers and resellers of the following internationally recognised brand names: **Diamond Multimedia** *(graphics cards, sound cards, and all your multimedia requirements)*; **Maxtor** *(a leading hard disk drive manufacturer)*; **Intel** *(Celeron, Pentium II and Pentium III processors)*; **Hyundai** *(manufacturers of a full range of superb desktop monitors)*; **SuperMicro** *(main boards - first in leading-edge technology and innovation)*; **Jazz** *(speaker products - hear your computer for the first time)*; **Ricoh** *(recordable and rewritable CDs - your assurance of the highest performance and reliability)*; **Toshiba** *(for the best CD-ROM drives)*; plus Cyberdyne represents Actisys, Keytronic, Surecom, A4Tech and Micron Memory.

CYBERDYNE SYSTEMS S.A.(PTY)LTD.

IT PAYS TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE IMPORTER

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

CyberDyne House, 32 Melville Road, Illovo, Sandton

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

CyberDyne, CyberDyne Systems S.A. and CyberStorm Computers are registered trademarks of CyberDyne Systems S.A. (Pty) Ltd.
All trademarks mentioned are the property of their respective owners. Company Reg. No 98/00175/07. VAT Reg. No 4660175979.