

**REVIEWED:  
EVERY GAME  
RELEASED  
THIS MONTH!**

## POPULOUS II

Bullfrog's latest blockbuster - ACE readers have their say!



Issue 50  
November 1991  
£1.80



# ACE

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ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

## TESTED!

6-Page Super Reviews of:

- LOTUS 2
- MIG 29M
- FLOOR 13
- HUDSON HAWK
- GRAND PRIX
- ALIEN BREED

# ALIEN 3

In this, it's really, really personal.

## IN THE WORKS

Watch progress of featured bits in development.



## PREVIEWED

Forecast Stars, Apollo's Journey, Engine, World, Fly, On, Snake, Commander, Wolf, Quest.



Lotus 2



Hudson Hawk



Mig 29M



Floor 13



Alien Breed



Grand Prix

# FREE!

Full Colour Tricks'n'Tricks Supplement



# THE SIMPSONS BART VS. THE SPACE MUTANTS



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# PLAY THE GAME MAN!



*hello*

fellow humans!  
 Bartholomew J. Simpson here, with a very important  
 secret:

*SPACE MUTANTS  
 ARE INVADING  
 SPRINGFIELD*

That's right man! A buncha slimy, horrible, totally  
 gross and putrid-monsters are taking over the bodies  
 of the people who live here and they wanna build a  
 weapon that's gonna take over the entire planet!

*PRETTY COOL, HUH?*

Anyway, yours truly is the only one who can see 'em!  
 I've gotta spray-paint things, get radical on my  
 skateboard, see my trusty slingshot, and in general  
 behave like a valiance, man.

Plus, with evil dudes like Nelson the bully and  
 Sideshow Bob getting in my way, it's a good thing  
 I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out!

So if you're a decent person  
 a patriot, and somebody  
 who cares about this sorry  
 planet, you'll do the right  
 thing.

*SAVE THE SMITH*

**BUY THIS GAME!**  
 Thanks man.

*CBM AMIGA  
 GEARIST  
 SPECTRUM  
 COMMODORE  
 AMSTRAD*



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Quasidart set out to recede the longevity of Mig up with a bigger, bolder and brighter sequel. PC owners should prepare themselves to be impressed.

AMAZING  
NEW 8-PAGE  
SUPER  
REVIEWS

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TM

## THE COMPUTER GAME!

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playable to last a life  
time. Don't miss it."

*New Computer Express*

Available on  
Atari ST, Amiga  
and C64 disk.

### KEEP YOUR EYE ON

### SPOT

*Amiga screen shots shown.*



# NEWS GAMES NEWS GAMES NEWS GAMES

Rik Heynes, newshound extraordinaire goes to work on this month's top stories.

## It's Nothing Personal

Following a triumphant launch of the ARMA coin-op show in Las Vegas last month, Williamsally, Midway is readying the European release of a stunning new arcade machine. Based around the hugely successful Terminator 2 movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as the last century cyborg killing machine, many believe this to be the best video game ever licensed from a motion picture.

Designed by the same team that brought us Star and Smash TV, Terminator 2 Judgment Day is a playable and addictive Operation Wolf-style shoot-'em-up featuring graphics not only digitized from the movie, but also specially recorded by Williams' personnel on the set of the film. No other video game company has ever had this much access to such raw movie materials. Does Arnold get involved in the project?

Next month, ACE will be running an exclusive behind-the-scenes report on the Making of Terminator 2 coin-op. Miss it? You don't...



Based on the movie, Terminator 2 will offer level of gameplay never seen in any game... ever (with the exception of this one!)

## Adventures In Cyberscape



What is billed with level after level of impenetrable mazes and obstacles? Bullet-Proof Software, the publisher that made a name from Tetris and Pipe Dream, is bringing out another arcade puzzle game for the Genesis.

Bullet-Proof 2000, developed by the same people who wrote MDO MAZE for the Atari ST, gets its name from the unusual analogy faces representing each player. Like the previous release from James Yen, this is a game of tag where players chase each other through a three-dimensional labyrinth in a race to evade capture. Up to four people can play - using the special Nintendo adapter - in solo, free-for-all or team competition. Bullet-Proof Software is also planning a version of Bullet-Proof 2000 for the Super NES.

Meanwhile, Soviet games expert Alexey Pajitnov is now working full-time for Bullet-Proof Software in Redwood, Santa. The talented Russian-born creator of Tetris used to invent games in his spare time at the Computer Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences where he explored sophisticated computer applications like speech recognition and artificial intelligence.

"When I finish coding in my early teens, I got very bored reading *Play* after day and I started looking into mathematical puzzles," recalls Pajitnov. "I got so carried away I forgot everything else - school, friends even girls."





## Better Late Than Never

Elite, the cult space game that gathered countless fans after its original release, is set to be launched on the software-stuffed Acorn Archimedes, writes Matthew Truett.

First released for the BBC micro in 1984, and since converted to almost every other machine, Elite has now been updated and revised by a two-man coding team based in Cheshire. This version of the game sports sampled sounds and solid 3D graphics running at 45 frames per second.

Other innovative new features include ships that flock and cruise in formations of up to 50. Every spaceship is endowed with motivations of their own, intelligently acting on individual politics and seeking out enemies. Items that the original included in the manual as mere whistles have now actually been implemented, exploiting the raw power of the machine.



Archimedes gamers have never had it so good. Elite may soon face competition from another 3D epic on its way. Karma has been under development for four years and is soon due to a Virtual Reality title rival that's a game.

Elite rules the Archimedes on the great game about the rest of time!

## On The Starting Line

Granin has beaten off tough competition to sign-up British Formula One hero Nigel Mansell. The bid is hardly dry on the contrary, but the successful Sheffield-based publisher of Lotus, SwiftMade II and Utopia, is confident world championship racing fans will fly the star up.

Although a definite title on release their have yet to be announced, it is known that Granin is planning a multi-format release which will probably include the Nintendo-Gameboy and Super NES versions.

Programmer Paul Mohr, who has just completed the PC conversion of Federation of Free Traders, is already working on the Nigel Mansell game.

High resolution digital art systems have made how beautiful looks sporting game designers have available with the software and they get it to commercial and software designers. Manufacturers like Sun Microsystems and Corel would require the amount of space.

## Hikes, Tackles And Cheers

Tom Mike Elita is one of the most famous men in American Football history. He not only distinguished himself on the field but also won the Super Bowl as coach of the Chicago Bears. Now Ballistic has launched a Magazine cartridge bearing his name, so does it deliver the goods, not?

"Mike Elita Power Football is for gamers who love American Football and want an action-packed game rich in realism, playability, graphics, options and statistics. In that order," boasts Producer Sam Nelson.

According to Ballistic, this is the only American Football game for the Magazine that gives the player total control of their team. Individual parameters can be set for each team, such as the occurrence of fumbles, injuries, floggs and more penalties. There is also a library of more than 80 different plays to choose from.

Money seems to be no object for Ballistic. Mike Elita Power Football contains eight megabytes of feature-packed code, 3D-mapped graphics and sampled sounds.



Ballistic produces the Terminator Judgement Day game which is a high-tech action football game for the Magazine.



Close Heat makes the Heat Is On, 3D's Heat is the hot driving game on wheels!

## The Heat Is On

Close Heat is a real ancestor of a 16000-rob-y conversion wears these big duties of Imageworks.

"This is the most thrilling and realistic racing simulation ever to be seen on a home computer," is the Imageworks spokesperson game into full hypermode. "The race will come alive through intense shock absorber sounds, fast pace and solid body feel."

Well, so, what can we add? Oh yeah, Close Heat is coming later this year for the Amiga, PC and ST.



Programmer Paul Mohr, who has just completed the PC conversion of Federation of Free Traders, is already working on the Nigel Mansell game.







## WHO'S THAT GUY?

In the first of an occasional series, ACE looks into the careers of creators responsible for truly remarkable games. We thought it would be a great idea to start with Sid Meier, co-founder of Microprose and the leader behind *Simutronics*, *P-51* (with Eagle) and *Redford Tycoon*.

Civilians in the latest game from award-winning game designer Sid Meier, but why did the master of simulation and strategy software actually start programming games? After graduating from the University of Michigan with a degree in Computer Science in 1976, Meier worked for Intel computer firm General

Instruments. His love affair with entertainment software was highlighted when he purchased an Atari 800 seven years ago.

The Mea to Meier's first game, *Redford Ace*, came after he played an aerial dogfight at a video arcade. Sid realized he could not mass produce with software created for personal computers. A string of hits and accidents followed. In 1986 for instance, *Simutronics* was named Best Simulation in the USA, Britain, France and West Germany. Overall, Meier's games have sold over two million copies

worldwide.

"Gamers want a continuing stream of challenging and interesting decisions to confront," declares Meier. "They like options, 'what if' scenarios and countervailing

considerations.

People can go to movies for graphics and books for storylines. They look to computers for the interaction and for stories in which they themselves are the main character."

Early on computing, Sid?

Sid Meier (Microprose) Meier's work has taken him to computer academies that he's currently leading his video games, who wouldn't?



## Dislikes And Desires

Can you imagine the sort of game Eye of the Beholder 2 will be? US Gold andSSI have taken sets of the commands from over 500 dungeon masters in order to produce the sequel to one of the best selling games of 1990. The legend series of games are the first graphically based 3DAD fantasy role-playing games to be licensed from TSR.

Apart from an expanded storyline and more character interaction, the Legend of Darkmoor features a greater variety of creatures and new locations such as forests, temples, catacombs and towers.

True to what has become something of an expected feature of games coming from the USA, Eye of the Beholder 2 uses animated "movie" sequences throughout. In a more content note, the programmers have soft-coded an improved interface to opening spell-casting. However, the point-and-click command principle remains.

Lucky PC players equipped with an ISA, Tandy or VGA graphics card will be able to test drive the game next month. A soundboard is optional, but they must have 640K of RAM and a hard drive. Meanwhile, Amiga gamers will have to wait till the New Year before they can start exploring the Legend of Darkmoor. Don't forget to ask Santa for that one megabyte memory expansion or you won't be able to sample the fun and frolic!



# The Big One

Source: close to Konami are suggesting this leading Japanese video game firm has just made a successful bid to publish the most eagerly-awaited video game sequel of all time... Elite II!

David Braben, co-creator of the first game, has been working on the follow-up to this epic space game for nearly three years. Braben has previously stated that Elite II will incorporate numerous graphical and gameplay improvements, including the facility to actually explore the surface of every planet.

Fueled by intense speculation, the rumour wagon has been going at full pace. For treatment, even pundits told us Braben devised Elite 2 primarily for the PC while Konami is likely to insist on Super Famicom and CD-ROM versions, too. Braben

could again team up with Ian Bell to help produce these conversions. There is even talk of a specially adapted Elite 2 requiring the emulator. It is not known whether the proposed deal also includes the MSX version of the original Elite which Braben developed himself.

Konami has recently enjoyed considerable success with the video games based around Steve Nouri's *Blaster Master Ninja* franchise and home-grown products like *Castlevania* and *Genjin*. Publishing Elite 2 would mark a radical departure for the company.

Neither Konami or Braben was available for comment as ACE went to press. Watch this space.



ACE goes every week for the right magazine at a special price. Write to the Editor of ACE, PO Box 100, London W1A 0AA.



## CARTRIDGE CAPERS

Psygnosis and Electronic Arts are about to launch the first two Megadrive games from their co-publishing agreement.

Regarded as one of the most successful Amiga games ever released, *Shadow of the Beast* is a visually attractive arcade adventure featuring multi-level parallax scrolling of the surrounding fantasy landscape.

*Fatal Revolt*, previously known as *The Killing Game Show*, is a cross between a shoot-'em-up and platform game as the player takes the role of a convict in a futuristic TV quiz show. *Shadow of The Rending Man*, perhaps?

## DRUG BUSTERS

Argonaut Software, the development house behind *Angband* 2 and *Birds of Prey*, has teamed up with Microprose to develop a strategic flight simulation set in the near future.

As *Supreme Commander* in *Advanced Tactical Air Command* (ATAC), players are put in control of an elite team of zero undercover agents and a tactical force of four F-22 fighter bombers, two helicopters and a base secretly located in the jungles of Colombia. The objective is to stop the drug barons before their filthy merchandise hits the streets of all major cities. This isn't easy, though. The five major bosses have enough money to control politicians, the military, hire the most talented mercenaries and buy the best airplanes and missiles.

ATAC is part flight simulation, part strategy game. As you might expect from Argonaut Software, the simulation part of the game features a 'fly-realistic 3D world' with hills, mountains, roads, trees, cities and single plantations. The game will be released on Amiga, PC and ST in early 1992.

## It's Weird!

Pearcefield and Imagoswark, creators of the critically-acclaimed *Real*, are now tackling another surreal arcade adventure.

"*Surrealis* features stunning graphics which have an almost Dali-esque flavour," states a spokesperson for Imagoswark. "The planet *Surrealis* a variety of beautiful but very strange landscapes."

Players go on a quest to capture evil wherever they find it. Luckily, they have two faithful assistants and a rather dainty cat to help them out. Discover this enthralling experience for yourself when the game is released on the Amiga, PC and ST.

# THE MARK



## THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND™ 2 - LE CHUCK'S REVENGE

The Secret of Monkey Island witnessed the demise of the evil ghost pirate LeChuck at the hands of young Guybrush, and an agitated bottle of root beer. Guybrush doesn't have long to rest on his laurels however, because blood is thicker than root beer, and LeChuck's brother is out for revenge.

Available on: PC Compatibility: EGA, VGA, MCGA. Requires 640K Ram AT or better recommended. Hard disk recommended. Supports AdLib™ and Roland™ and CMS Gamelister sound cards.



Recreated from PC



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developed from PC (MS-DOS)

unleashed strange and powerful aerial weapons in a last desperate attempt to win the war. Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe gives you a gripping, highly realistic experience of these extraordinary air battles, from the first daylight bombing raids in 1943, to the final days of The Third Reich.

Available on: PC Compatibility: VGA/MCGA. 256-Colour. 800K, Tandy 2, (AT) 80000 or faster recommended. Hard disk recommended.

Works in Spanish, Supports AdLib™ and Gamelister™ sound cards. © 1989 Lucasfilm Ltd. All rights reserved.



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# OF A WINNER

## Might and Magic III

Isles of Terra



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**ADVENTURE** - A swashbuckling adventure for heroism and wizardry that will keep you devoted for hours and hours.

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**NOTE:** Former experience with previous Might and Magic's not required.

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Colors: EGA  
Supports AHEAD™,  
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### SHADOW SORCERER

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Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the gameplay and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different hardware in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer specifications.

U.S. Gold Ltd, Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX, Tel: 021 621 3566

# Letters

## VIRUS DEATH!

On page 96 of your October issue you mention that the Amiga is subject to viruses. I'd be very much obliged if you could insert a little article about what to do when confronted with one. I am relaxed in a state of awaiting fear when I receive a message from some bastard in Germany on my monitor.

I bought what is supposed to be an anti-virus disc for ten quid but the instructions are such a lot of gobbledeegook that I can't make head nor tail of it. Unfortunately I can't remember which of my discs could be the offending article and consequently load up each day with something approaching fear in case I'm messing up all my discs. What puzzles me is that I haven't any floppy discs as I buy them from shops.

Robert Lamb  
Cottingham  
East Yorkshire

Prevention is better than cure, and it's not difficult to protect your disks against viruses. If possible, always boot the Write Protect tab ON (which means you can see through it), and that will prevent any programs writing themselves onto your disks. However, if you are using a game or application where you need to write onto your disk, this isn't an option. Another judgment method is to always turn your machines off at the power point for a good thirty seconds before turning it on again to use another piece of software. Many of the most dangerous strains of virus stay in the machine even after a three-day rest. Since you're already infected however, your best bet is to get hold of a good hard virus killer - chances are the commercial one you bought for 1.99 won't cope. Most PD libraries stock killers, and currently the best avail-

able is Master Virus v.2, available from Amiga.com. For a couple of quid you can clean your collection. So there you go.

## THE BIGGER THE BETTER

I think your reviews of software are good although some are small. Could you give two pages per review? If you run out of stuff to write you could always fill most of the pages with screenshots. Some games may be dull but we don't see big reviews of the game and just flick past as if it wasn't there. Your ratings are good, except for that horrible chart. How about drawing a chart that looks like a thermometer where you would clearly see how hot (or) cold it is.

Wayne Hudson  
Old Cotton  
Norwich

TWO pages per review? How about 100? Yes, 100? By now you've probably already seen our amazing new ultra-depth reviewing system - and given the sophisticated nature of much of today's top software, there's really any danger of us running out of things to write. Our "horrible chart" as you so quaintly refer to it is in fact the most accurate and appropriate on-screen rating system going - although you'll probably be pleased to see that this month it's been revamped somewhat to make it even more dull.

## WHITTA MUST DIE!

Having already bought a copy of Wing Commander

II, I was truly astonished to read your luke-warm review of it. DM Gary Whitta actually got it out of the box? Or is he dead, blind and retarded?

It is without doubt the most awesome and brilliant game I have ever played on a home computer, and makes the original Wing Commander look dull and repetitive in comparison.

Your predicted interest curve (PIC) is wholly incorrect. It doesn't reflect the comments which accompanied it. The interest level remains high until the game is completed, then it falls sharply. It does NOT start declining from the moment you start playing, as suggested by the PIC.

Some of your quibbles with the game are justified, but in spite of these, the game is still far and away better than any other game, so your ACE rating of a mere two is completely ridiculous. (The same comments could easily be applied to the excellent Thunderhawk, but that didn't stop you giving it a two review.)

It seems to me like another case of sour grapes, because even if Wing Commander or Wing Commander II ever gets released for your beloved Amiga it will only be as a pale shadow of the original because of the poor graphics and slow speed of the Amiga.

Christian S Lee  
Wotton  
Newcastle

The sad person of Wing Commander II is the most awesome game you have ever played, you must have led a pretty dull life. While there's no doubt about Wing Commander's technical excellence, the ACE review comments about the quality of the gameplay remain valid - it's little more than a series of shoot, uninteresting and

# KONSOLE KOPIES?

ACE, it's come to my attention that more and more computer games are becoming more and more like their console counterparts. As I understand it, Ocean's licensed games of the Simpsons cartoon is simply a port-over from the Nintendo platform game. Now, from looking at your preview of Hudson Hawk last month, it seems as though that game is also very console in style, with lots of cut-scenes and platform and things. You only have to look at games like Rick Dangerous, Incredible, Impassable and many others to see that this is not a new trend.

It's not that I'm complaining. Far from it. Console games are often better than computer ones, so making computer games more like console games can't be half bad. What I'm wondering about is why games designers are doing this. It's certainly not to make higher quality games, as we all know that software companies don't give a shove about us kids on the street. They're just interested in their flashy clothes, new cars and tropical holidays. Perhaps it's because, in the light of the new console boom, the software want to make their games more easily convertible into the console format - be as we all know, that's where the real money is. Or maybe the software are worried about consoles killing off computers, and are making their games more console in order to make computers look more fun in face of the opposition. Or maybe it's just an effort on the part of those lazy developers to give themselves even less work by stealing tried and tested elements from existing console software. Whatever it is, I think the so-called "highrollers" of this industry ought to back their ideas up a bit, else they'll find themselves in right about. So ACE, where do you stand on this highly controversial issue?

Denise Osborne  
Cody  
Mesaquide

Some good points, Denise, although some of your reasoning seems a little paranoid to us. Not everyone in the industry is out to con you and leave you bleeding in the gutter, you know. In the case of Hudson Hawk, the fact that developers Special FX produced out just the 16-bit version, but NES and GameBoy as well should account for the game's console look and feel. Your theory about making games more viable propositions for console sub-licensing seems the most likely - Core Design's Chuck Rock, which is soon to appear on the Megadrive is a good example. But don't worry your head about it too much - it's unlikely to shake the software industry to its very foundations.



*What do you want first, the good news or the bad news? If you want the bad news first, read the first paragraph first, then the second. If you want the good news first, go straight to the second paragraph.*

Right. You can't get Old for the Amiga, which we at ACE consider to be a treasury of global justice, as it is one of the new old-time classics. It was only ever produced for the Atari ST. And we have no idea where you can get a copy of Persian Gulf Inferno, as it's getting on a bit and we can't remember who published it - it didn't get much recognition when it was released. You might want to have a search through your local software designer bin and see what you can find, though.

*Money! Money should still be readily available on the shelves as you read this. If you have any trouble finding it, you should have a search going hold of it from Ocean directly. Call 011 831 013.*

## AND WIDE NOT?

I've just finished reading Gavin Gainsborough's letter on wide-screen computer games (October ACE) and I think it's an excellent idea. The reason I am writing in to suggest that this proposed new format would be especially superb on those new wide-screen cinema-style TVs that I read about a while ago, I think they're already available in Japan, but where are they coming over here? With all that extra space, programmers could make games that would be truly panoramic, not just a "letterbox" screen-display. No doubt penny programmers like the Fitzap Brothers would go ape over this idea, as that's the sort of gimmick they're into. So what about it then, eh?

Harold Southern  
St Ives  
Cornwall

very limited space combat sequences strung together by a lot of attractive but inconsequential still-frames and animations. Perhaps you'd like to write to us again in three months, when you're sick to death of seeing the same pictures over and over again, and tell us if you still enjoy it. An Ace rating is hardly "new" - it's a respectable mark. And remember, ACE is a multi-format mag. We don't favour any one machine, and while we have high hopes for the future of the PC as a games machine, we don't think it's going to happen if companies keep developing out shallow software like Wing Commander. Our review reflected that opinion. If anything it seems to be you that has the problem, as your comments about the Amiga indicate. Slow? Poor graphics? And you call US biased?

## GORE BLIMEY!

I read with very great interest your feature on gory games last month. I have only had my Amiga for about a year, and so am unfamiliar with many of the games you covered, but I would like to get my hands on a few of them as they sound very good indeed. Can you tell me where I can get copies of Persian Gulf Inferno, Old and New? I would be very appreciative if you could give me some leads.

Oliiver Inoside  
Chigwell  
 Essex

We have to agree, Harold, that the prospect of "real" wide-screen-computer games is a pretty nice notion, but it's not much more of a pipe dream if you look at it from a practical point of view. For a start it's going to be a very long while before wide-screen TVs are commercially available in this country - in order to take off, the TV companies would have to completely revolutionise the way they film and broadcast their programmes. And can you see that happening? A more realistic prospect (although still not a very likely one) is the idea of wide-screen computer monitors, but even then existing computers would not be able to work with it, as their screen-display hardware is designed only for a standard square image.

It's not possible just to look on extra width, so for it to work you're looking for a completely new kind of computer as well as a wide-screen monitor to be invented. It's a business we know, but it's just not going to happen. Sorry.

## TOO MANY COOKS?

Dear ACE, whatever happened to that bold idea who used to be editor? I used to really like him.

Alex Stanning  
Coventry

Dear Cooks (I'll ACE a few months ago, and within a couple of weeks you should see the latest *Peak* of the unaccountable *Peak*, PC Review is the monthly re-orientation of ACE's sister mag PC Editors, and is packed in the bins with IBM games stuff. And it's a bit better than PC Forum. Look out for it.

## LOOKING GOOD?

Dear ACE, I felt I had to write to you and voice my opinion on the state of many computer games magazines today. It's not that they're badly written - most of them are excellent. It's just that they look so horrible. While many of the magazines are just plain awful to look at, others are attractive on the surface but it's still very difficult to find the information you're looking for at a glance. I won't name any names as the designers of these magazines might be offended, but suffice it to say that just about every major mag on the market looks like a Jackson Pollock painting when put next to the artists' or early-accessible style of ACE. I hope that you don't make things ever-complicated with your forthcoming re-brand.

Other magazines print text which is almost exactly the same colour as the background; it appears as if making it very difficult to read. Others print their reviews over ridiculously-enlarged screenshots or stupid graphic designs, and the result just hurts the eyes. Others hide their ratings and comments all over the place, so you're never really sure what you're looking at. It's easy to get lost. Sometimes a review is so badly laid-out that it's like wading through a swamp, trying to find the information you need. So I say a double thumbs for ACE for making things good-looking yet easy to read, and you other magazines - pull your socks up! I did Art in school so I know what I'm talking about.

Charles Owa  
Southampton

Are awards. Our Art Editor Jim White is finishing over now. Thanks for the praise Charlie, and an agree wholeheartedly with your comments - it doesn't matter how brilliant and creative a review is, if it's badly designed the average reader is likely to have trouble getting the information he needs out of it quickly and efficiently. And in the fast-moving world of software today, many gamers don't have time to sit and pore over reviews - they're too busy getting a new high score or talking to their mates about the latest game going. Maybe you like the ratings - we think the best just get better?

## BLAZING A TRAIL TO NOWHERE?

Dear ACE, a very interesting fact has recently brought itself to my attention. According to the description on your Screen Test page, Trailblazers are only awarded to games of "outstanding quality", but from what I've seen recently, you've been checking them about like bars of chocolate!

As I understand it, the ACE Trailblazers is supposed to be far more discerning and difficult to earn than other magazine accolades. But this certainly doesn't seem to be the case when you consider all the games that have earned them in the last few months. Chuck Trapp's *Am Gamble*, Harris, Chappell's *E. E.A. Hoolay*, Jeremy White's *Whispered Secrecy*, Kings & Maria, Thunderhawk, *Isis*, the *Hedging*... the list goes on and on! Hardly appropriate practice for a magazine that goes around saying it's harder to please than all the rest!

Are you just trying to butter up the software companies so that you can get invited to lots of free parties and trips abroad, are you just very naive, and give awards away in any game that comes along with pretty graphics and a big manual? How do you expect an software buyers to make a purchasing decision when you give a Trailblazer to almost every game you review? It's very confusing, just what is going on?

Malcolm Hardcastle  
Ludlow  
Shropshire

Now steady on! It's true, a lot of games have earned ACE's highest accolade over the last few months, but it's not because we have lots of them lying around in a box taking up space, and it's certainly not some half-arsed plan to alienate the software publishers. We're just as stingy with our Trailblazers as we've always been, and the fact that many more games have been awarded them just reflects how healthy the software scene is at the moment. You should be pleased with so many titles

filling on the market to choose from! And though the purpose of our reviews is to help you, we can't hold your hand all the way and TELL you what to buy. We can only tell you what's good and what's bad, and leave you to make up your own mind using that information as a guide. There will always be people who are more happy if we give away lots. Trailblazers you'll probably complain that we're too generous!

## PADDING?!

Dear ACE, I have been an avid reader of your publication ever since the first issue, and the Letters page has always been one of my favourite sections. But now a rather disconcerting fact has come to my attention. It seems that the last letters you print is always by some boring old fart who waffles on for almost a whole column of text without actually saying anything of value or interest. Just what is this all about? I find it very difficult to believe that there really are people so boring that they've got nothing better to do with their lives than right meaningless letters. If I didn't know better, I would think that you didn't get enough letters each month, and so you make up the last one just to fill up the space! If you're going to do this, at least make up a letter with some interesting points in it!

Coming back to my original point, I'd just like to re-emphasise how annoying it is to read letters where the author waffles on for ages about nothing in particular - especially when you think that he's got a point to make, and then get to the end to find out that he hasn't after all! That really sticks in my craw!

Raymond Goulson  
Dorset  
Southland

Goodness gracious (w)! While we'll try our best not to be offended at the accusations you've made, we can assure you that ALL of our letters are absolutely genuine. And if we did make our letters up, we'd make them a damn sight more interesting than your pitiful little missive.

## WRITE TO US

Come on! We know you've got opinions! Let's hear them! Write to ACE Letters, Priority Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And remember - there's a software prize for the star letter each month!





# ALIEN 3



rumors about the content of the new Alien movie have been flying around for months now. Talk of mysterious space ones and Ripley murdering Aliens with hand axes has caused much consternation among the moviegoing public. Now we have been really sure just what is afoot in the new film is going to be about. Until now.

Alien 3 opens with Ripley crash landing on a remote hostile planet in an escape capsule. Quite why she's crashed, no one knows. There she discovers a small colony of prisoners, overruled by an even smaller group of guards, who are enjoying their debt to society by eating local one.

Since the colony is run largely by prisoners, Ripley's attempts to combat the xenomorph are hampered by the "safety precaution" of having no firearms in the colony. Somewhere Ripley must rally both prisoners and guards alike and destroy the Alien threat before it kills them.

In all sounds most cosmic, "But how," you may very well ask yourselves, "could you make a game out of it?" Good question...

## The Game

Complex based Probe Software was the lucky development team that received the call from Microsoft offering them the license. The contract called for a version of the movie tie-in to be produced for all major formats. So, with tight deadlines loomsing, Probe decided to develop the game primarily on the Megadrive, and convert all subsequent versions from that.

While the code is still in the early stages of development, the game's storyline has been finalized and it's clear that players concerned about the lack of gun-fighting action in the film need not fear. Tony Beckwith from Microsoft: "Yes, there aren't any

**In space, they may not be able to hear you scream, but they can hear you cry - for a sequel. Science Fiction fans around the world are preparing themselves for a third weird and wonderful cinematic treat. And while 20th Century Fox are putting the final touches on the movie, Probe Software are feverishly working on a brace of conversions for home machines...**



The colony is a far from glamorous place. As run by The Company, it is now all but run down. Rife with disease and slowly degenerating, the prisoners have all had to have their heads shaved in order to stave the virulent head-lice epidemic which plagues them. It's this "look" which spawned all the space-monk rumors.



So Ripley prepares herself for a brief spell on the grim planet until a ship can get her back to civilization. But no sooner has Ripley had her new locks shaved off than she gets her big surprise. Somewhere an Alien has made it down onto the planet with her, and is harrying itself by offing the prisoners and consuming them. If it's successful, all the good work done by destroying the UV-400 at the end of the second movie will be for nothing.



The new Ripley. Ripley offers her own version of the Ripley character. Ripley is a woman. It's only the name which remained the same for the computer game. Ripley is a woman. It's only the name which remained the same for the computer game.



filmmaker in the movie itself, but we've managed to get permission from both Century Fox to use all the hardware, etc. from the first two films. We've got flamethrowers, grenades and pulse rifles in there. It's going to be pretty action packed."

The basic premise of the game is simple. Pandora's swirling levels of the planet will form the backdrops to a constant stream of high-action gameplay. Each of the main eight stages of the movie is represented by graphical changes in the game. Ripley must move through the colony, rescuing prisoners who have been captured by Aliens and destroying the mechs he's wandering around. At the end of each stage a Mother Alien must be defeated before Ripley can move on to the next. Failure to defeat the Alien will leave the prisoners vulnerable to attack.

Apparently Fox were most helpful to Microsoft even while the movie was in production. Goodrich again: "We were given access to the movie sets and had a good look at all the aliens too. We took the graphic artists down there and spent a lot of time just getting the details right. There's no doubt that the game will have the right feel."

A further bonus which players must deal with is the presence of the face buggers. These little vermin



the movie needs to breathe some dead bodies from the floor as well as the others in the area. The other character comes in white and blue, but they are all built on along with the standard models.



Wesley Snipes' Ripley goes down in the end when the creature's biting attack. However, Snipes is under the hood of the film to come through in the game. In fact, the alien within does Ripley's bidding out of whole-cloth character, and we can't blame it on a script.

months about the content of the new Alien movie have been flying around for months now. Talk of monstrous space crits and Ripley mauling Aliens with hand axes has caused much consternation among the marketing public. Moore has been really sure just what we earthies the new film is going to be about. Until now.

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The colony is a far from glamorous place. As run by The Company, it is now all but run down. Hit by disease and utterly disgusting, the prisoners have all had to have their heads shaved in order to stem the virulent head-lice epidemic which plagues them. It's this 'lock' which spawned all the space-mech mutants.

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## The Game

# AND SOME OTHER THINGS!

Miramax keep people that they are, have another two sleep-encumber titles up their sleeves for Christmas.

Once that's a very top-quality racing game for two players. Take the role of a San Francisco cop in his day off and deal with fellow officers for the title of best driver in the city. Plenty of battles and split lanes, we'll say.

The Turles side-up has way surpassed everyone's expectations, both in color grabbing performance and quality. Shortly, players will be able to enjoy the thrills of controlling the green gremlin in a home version of the game.



Miramax Miramax is looking over the shoulder of the film. Ripley is the hero of the movie, and the game is the most important thing in the franchise.





# REACH FOR THE SKIES™

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN 1940

"NEVER IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN CONFLICT WAS SO MUCH OWED BY SO MANY TO SO FEW"

— Winston Churchill

Summer 1940. The fate of World War II hangs in the balance. The crews of the German Luftwaffe and the men of the RAF are locking horns in their most crucial confrontation yet: The Battle For Britain.

32 years on, you have the chance to re-live that famous battle, play the part of a British pilot or a German flying ace and shape the course of history. Your performance in the cockpit determines

whether the outcome is a repeat of the British victory or an unprecedented German success.

Programmed by the team who brought you Flight Of The Intruder, the definitive 3D flight sim, Reach For The Skies, exploits the same unparalleled technology and reaches new heights of historical realism.

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"The best game  
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"Utopia is  
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93%

"The next  
Generation in  
Godgames"



Ave Rated  
920

# UTOPIA

## THE CREATION OF A NATION



Can you create Utopia? Now's your chance to find out. Leading a colonising party to a barren planet you aim to create the perfect society, where everyone has a quality of life rating of 100%. Do you spend your money on weapons or social research? Build hospitals or tank factories? The myriad of decisions to be made are yours, and the fact that there are over ten different alien races all bursting for the opportunity to wipe out the colony should speed up the decision making process. An icon driven game with the main playing area presented in isometric 3-D, Utopia breaks new ground in computer entertainment.



Available on: PC (1992),  
AMIGA & ATARI ST/STE.

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd.,  
Carver House, 3-4 Carver Street,  
Sheffield S1 4FS.



# live

# JUDGEMENT DAY!



**Details:** Wednesday, 10th September, 1998.  
**Location:** Bullfrog Productions HQ, Guildford, Surrey.  
**Mission:** Populous II.

It's eleven a.m., and Peter Molyneux is a worried man. Today is the first time that his latest creation and Bullfrog's most eagerly-awaited game in date will be seen by members of the general public. And not just any old members of the general public. The five people who will soon be invited to look at *Populous II* are the hardest, most demanding and most intelligent breed of game players—ACE readers. They've been hand-picked from hundreds of requests to take part in ACE's first In The Works live event, and they're not taking any crap.

If truth be told, Molyneux's got little to worry about. The long-awaited sequel to the 1985 classic that put Bullfrog on the map is already shaping up to be the "God" game to beat them all. But no product is perfect, and that's where the five ACEs come to: after they've learned how the game was created,

they'll get to play the game into the ground (or at least as much as possible in a single day) and report their findings back to Molyneux—what they like, what they don't like, what features they think should go into the game, which ones should go or be altered.

It's a process that Peter and his cronies are particularly used and receptive to, having organized regular weekend playtesting sessions for all their previous games. Bullfrog has always stood by its conviction that no matter how far a game is in its development it will be shelved or even scrapped if it's not well received by the playtesters.

Such ideology has led to several products falling by the development wayside in the past—and while it's fair to say that a product as prestigious as *Populous II* is unlikely to be killed on a playtester's say-so at this late stage, Molyneux is more than willing to listen to suggestions and make changes. With many of the game's features and effects still to be finalized before its release at the end of the year, there's plenty of scope for enhancement. As an added incentive to come up with good suggestions, Bullfrog has

For the first time ever, on a wet and windy day in September, Bullfrog threw open its doors and revealed the secrets behind the creation of *Populous II* to a hand-picked quintet of lucky ACE readers. And very impressed they were too...



Before this you got the upper hand against ACE's finest talents in their own three games. Now they're getting Bullfrog's finest talents without thanks in his corner. It's hardly rewarding.

promised that anyone whose idea is implemented in the final game will receive a design credit. With that in mind, the quintet of ACEs buckle-down and get to work...

#### THE GAME

The idea behind *Populous II*, according to its creator Peter Molyneux, has always been to improve upon the first game, while retaining the same game-play formula that made the original a classic. To this







Such is the speed of Populous II, it's instantly possible to have the game running at 50 frames per second, progressively increasing to over 100 as you play. This truly gives it a sense of unfolding action.



On the left: Architecture and landscape. On the right: Populous II problem. The computer intelligence has been refined over the years, and it shows.

On the right: Populous II's real-time graphics development team more than its size as the graphics editor has evolved a game, from modelling the architecture into the game to now fine-tune a million scenarios. Each individual scenario has allowed the game to give time-consuming and repetitive scenarios a realistic flow.



ingual features literally dozens of awesome effects, including thunderstorms, whirlwinds, pillars of fire, tidal waves, plagues, and new improved versions of the old favourite earthquake (which runs over like a fruit fly, tearing a land mass apart, unless complete with rivers of lava and Annihilaplan).

Some of the more interesting effects include topographical terrain - like ponds which transform the enemy's followers into your own, and vice versa, and a new version of the original game's knights, which instead swarming down famous heroes from Greek mythology, such as Men God of War, who tramples around killing everybody, and Aphrodite Goddess of Love, who attracts men to her and leads them to their doom like lemmings.

In addition, the whole of Populous II's land management system is much more sophisticated - land is mined and mined as before, but it's now possible to create entire cities by laying roads, planting trees and building castle walls to protect your people from attack. But should push come to shove, most people can equip themselves with weapons and fight to the death.

An original new element gives the player the ability to create his deity in PC-style by answering a questionnaire prior to the action. As well as selecting to be good or evil, it's possible to specialise in various kinds of effect and even change the deity's visual appearance by playing with different types of god the game can be altered drastically, and matching contrasting opponents in a two-player game can produce some very interesting results.

As you read this, building is playing around with various gameplay ideas and doing some general polishing. It's due out on CD and Amiga by the end of the year, with a PC version following in 1990. Watch out for the ACE review soon...



That's the way about it and Populous II's new elements and expanding graphics finally impresses it the the editor who was responsible for creating, editing, testing another's work.



## NEXT TIME IT COULD BE YOU!

We hope to organise more in The Works Live events on a fairly regular basis, with the next to be held sometime within the next few months, with special guest stars The Bitmap Brothers. They'll be opening their doors to another handful of lucky ACEs and inventing their latest gaming offering, The Chaos Engine. You'll meet the Bros, learn how the game, its graphics and sound were created, get an exclusive first play of the game and even have the chance to put forward your own comments and suggestions. Just think, you could be an honorary Bitmap Brother!

We're hoping that this next event will be even bigger and more successful, so if you'd like to take part, all you have to do is send your details to us, including your NAME and ADDRESS along with your AGE (16 years and over only, we're afraid) and TELEPHONE NUMBER. Also, let us know if there are any development teams or games in development that you're particularly interested in seeing. Send the details to: In The Works Live!, ACE Magazine, Priority Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3JL.

Several years ago, after a decade of hard work, the team at Populous II was finally able to create a game that was both fun and challenging. The team at Populous II was finally able to create a game that was both fun and challenging. The team at Populous II was finally able to create a game that was both fun and challenging.

Other Games: Populous II is now available on CD-ROM and Amiga. Populous II is now available on CD-ROM and Amiga.

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# AMIGA

OCTOBER 1991 \$3.75  
ISSN 1040-0130  
A BENTLEY PUBLICATION

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE AMIGA

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ASK YOUR NEWSAGENT

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**NO DISK ATTACHED?**

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# CAPTAIN PLANET AND THE PLANETEERS™



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exciting adventures in one  
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James Bond

It starts in a classic action-packed race against time to save the world from the classic and power mad Karl Stromberg. With one on one arable style shoot-outs, multilevel action and top secret codes to crack. This is the fastest paced and most exciting Bond thriller to date.

Produced by Michael G. Wilson and directed by Peter Hunt  
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## LICENCE TO KILL



Take control of this multi-level, multi-role game of the latest and most exciting James Bond movie. Now's your chance to pilot helicopters, drive articulated tankers, perform death-defying parachute stunts and water ski landings!

Produced by John De Bontis and directed by John De Bontis  
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## LIVE AND LET DIE



"It's briefing was simple. 'Find Mr. Big, and don't come back until you do.'  
Q has given you his latest toy - the fastest and most dangerous speedboat ever made.

"Good luck 007 - you'll need it."  
Now it's your chance to take the action to sea as the fastest and most dangerous speedboat ever made.

Produced by Michael G. Wilson and directed by John De Bontis  
Copyright © 1973 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
Warner Home Video, Inc. Warner Home Video, Inc.

# DOMARK

# In the Works



Welcome to the place where things get done. Welcome to the pages where you can see games crafted and formed and moulded into living things. Welcome, you lucky fellows, to the In The Works pages. Distinct from an In The



**Q** From the people who feature in your magazine, how often do you get done all those graphics?

**A** Peter: "Well, 'graphics' isn't a hard job. This month he's been all the way to America to visit Paragon."

**Q** How's the strategic importance of graphics coming along for Super?

Works live, an In The Works shows the games which are so secret that if the software companies had their way, wouldn't be on show at all. Well, okay, actually we get a lot of help from the publishers and the programmers of the games and they run around like crazy answering our stupid questions and putting together all manner of maps and sprites mock-ups when they could be doing other things, but we wouldn't sound half as big, hard, clever or grown up if we were to admit that, would we? This month, we visit America to report on the goings on in the land of Paragon Software and get some of their views on games development.



Core Design also display their wares in the form of *Helmdall*, a graphic marvel that can best be described as *Dragon's Lair* with playability. And finally, Teque, the team behind Domark's forthcoming *Pitfighter* cordially invite your good selves to inspect their scaling and slicing routines. An offer no-one could refuse.

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Paragon

Pitfighter



**T**here's a mood at Core when talking to other software companies - confidence. Although a young company, Core's games (Cooperation, Check Book, Thankfulknight) offer as much variety of the releases from their larger, more venerable competitors.

And as portrayed by affable Core supreme Jeremy Smith, this mood of confidence certainly isn't a quiet one. He's enthusiastic about his products (generally a slight oaf), and he lets you know it. I first saw Heimdall way back in the Spring, and even then there were clear indications that it could be the game to really catapult Core to stardom.

Heimdall can't get a good navigator to join his crew (his journey from island to island can increase by half). And Ragnarok is approaching fast.

#### THE FIRST TRIAL

Heimdall's elders, being the bushy-bearded and quaffing Vikings that they are, have decided to take the decidedly underage boy down to the local tavern. A few floating jans later and the lad's well-matched - not the best time to let him have a go at the old Norse game of 'Loki's choppy'.

The principle is simple-if heurle! The player has to free a little girl from the stocks by throwing axes

# HEIMDALL

Could CORE's Vikings goin' hikin' romp be the arcade adventure to top them all? ACE ponders that question and takes a look.



Below: A couple of examples of the quality graphics of games in Heimdall. The player's group of three companions is represented as icons by default (characters' design changes only change between them at all). Thankfully for the sake of their health, they're not quite as detailed as their real-world counterparts.

On right: The group continues via floating air-gems. Additionally, as you seek to do the job, you acquire information on enemies - especially the hero's. There's also the current-gem and treasure values displayed for the first game.

Heimdall isn't easy to categorize. Depending on how you look at it, it's 'Dragon's Lair but with playskipity', or 'an animated arcade adventure', or simply 'an RPG'. In reality, it's a blend of all three.

The plot centers around the Norse legend of Ragnarok, the Apocalyptic battle between the Gods of Good and Evil that will decide the fate of the Universe. However, Good's previously excellent chances of winning have been severely reduced by the theft of three magic items from Valhalla, nam-

ely Thor's Hammer, Odin's Scepter and Freya's Mirror. The villain responsible is the twisted Loki, evil brother of Thor, who has hidden the items in various locations on the islands that make up the Norse world.

The ethereal Gods cannot appear in the physical world, and so must send Heimdall, guardian of the rainbow bridge that joins Valhalla with the world, to search in the form of an all-too-mortal baby. Heimdall's aim is clear - he must grow to manhood, gather a crew of sailors and set out on a quest to find the stolen artifacts.

#### THE THREE TRIALS OF HEIMDALL

As Heimdall grows from a young boy to a man, he must attempt three arcade-style tests. These are not just for light relief - Heimdall's success in each test increases the number of possible candidates for his longboat crew. This can be pretty disastrous - if







two different RPG-style abilities, and knowing when and where to use them is one of the keys to success. It's a case of Marston for courses.

Each of the islands depicted in beautiful isometric graphics (with a *Castlevania*-style system, where each location is a room-sized island), Helmsdale uses a point-and-click system, as the player approaches the edge of the screen it results in allow access to new areas.

As the player explores, he'll discover numerous puzzles to solve, traps to avoid and mini-quizzes to embark on. Switches and fire bars have to be pressed in the right sequence to form a bridge across a chasm, for example. On a strange clocked figure in a dress, you may require certain items be brought to him before he'll aid you.

Some courses are set so freely, which is where combat comes into play. The view switches to a screen displaying the party's energy levels and those of the opponent. A large window contains an animated picture of the weather, and below are icons to attack, change weapons, defend, flee or even pray for divine help. Under where place to retreat, with the characters all getting a chance to have a go at whoever it is that's being too healthy.

#### SO WHAT?

On paper Helmsdale doesn't sound like it offers anything truly new (and, to be honest, in a lot of ways it doesn't).

But what sets Helmsdale apart from the other also-ran "revolutionary" RPGs is its truly amazing presentation. Helmsdale's graphics were drawn by Jeff O'Connell, a talented artist who previously worked at an animation for *Twilight* (with studios of *An American Tail*, *The Last Boyer Time*, *All Dogs Go To Heaven* fame). His movie-based training shows and pays dividends here: for once, the oft-cited phrase "cartoon-like animation" holds true.

However, unlike *Resound*'s visual extravagance, Helmsdale's graphic brilliance appears to be backed up by a fair amount of absorbing and quality gameplay. Having such a well-structured main figure makes for more than just pretty pictures. It helps the player empathize with the character and drives him into the action.

Helmsdale has potential for true greatness. A new ACE benchmark, even! Well, that's to be seen. With the game slated for a late November release (just in time for Christmas), the ACE Review shouldn't be too far away.

# G ET YOUR UGLY FIZZOG IN HEIMSDALE!

As we're sure you will agree, Helmsdale now looks like a right steamer of a game and no mistake. And how would you - yes, YOU! - like the chance to actually appear in a quality software publication? Very much? Not much indeed? We somehow thought so.

Well now we're pleased, in association with Core Design, to present the ACE and Core Design Get Your Face Into Helmsdale Competition.

Since the game is still in development, ACE readers quite enough to answer the questions below and send their entries in will be judged in our contest. The winner will then have his or her picture (a required part of the entry file and notes digitized and transformed by one of the team's artists into one of Helmsdale's cruel and loathsome, if you will, the honour and privilege of fighting side by side with Helmsdale (not just, eh?)

Consider next, if you possibly could, the thought of owning your very own Helmsdale box, a lovingly created and thoroughly beautiful piece of craftsmanship, laser-cut of the very steel (or some other metal) found only in that sports trophy maker's shop round the back of Core's office.

There are the prizes on offer, and you could have them all! To answer the questions and send your entries, complete with a photo of yourself to ACE Magazine, Helmsdale Competition, Priority Court, 24-26 Partridge Lane, London SE18 3AA.

#### The Big Questions

Helmsdale isn't the only Core game to star an ace-wielding hero. Name the hero and the game.

#### Notes:

All entries must reach the ACE office by the 30th November. The Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. We can't return any of your pictures although we do promise to have a laugh at them.



# MOONSTONE

## A HARD DAYS KNIGHT



**SO MUCH FUN  
-YOU'LL DIE!**

Moonstone - a remarkable combination of fast, aggressive combat action and subtle role-play set in a fantasy world, that uniquely challenges your brain and your reflexes - while covering you in gore.

Oh, by the way, if the sight of so much blood upsets you, don't worry. The blood is an option!

Moonstone features nearly 1,000 frames of incredible animation in 2 Megabytes of monsters and creatures, over 60 beautifully painted backdrops and detailed scenery. Sound effects are high quality digital samples and includes a full musical score and stunning full screen animated introductory and game complete sequences.



Electronic content viewed on many people's computers will generate system. Although this software is intended for use on a personal computer, it is not recommended for use on a network. A system administrator is recommended for network play. Download the system's legal requirements.

© 1993 Mindscape International Limited. All rights reserved. Moonstone is a trademark of Mindscape International Limited. Minimum 16MB RAM required.



MINDSCAPE



How does a company go from custom accountancy programs to state-of-the-art RPGs? ACE went Stateside to find out...

# THE PARAGON

Most "Pittsburgh", and most Americans will think of "steel". The Pennsylvania city was a major part of America's industrial heartland, famed for its foundations and steel-works. But those days of glory are just a fading memory now - the reversion of the city has brought about the rapid decline of America's steel industry. But it's not all gloom and doom. Springing up in their place are small companies specializing in state-of-the-art high-technology.

Which (previous link) in the business of Paragon Software, creators of MegaTraveler. Let's face it, you don't get much more high-tech than laser cannons, portable plasma guns and jump-a-storbits. The team are based in Greensburg, which lies a short distance south of Pittsburgh. It's almost David Lynch-like in its epitome of small-town America - all that's missing are a woman carrying a log and a dwarf speaking backwards.

## THEIR HISTORY

Paragon Software started life in October 1984 as Customized Software Systems. The company was formed by Mark Bennett to provide custom accounting software for local businesses. In May 1986 F.L. Lemmon joined and together they decided to turn the company away from business software and towards games. "It wasn't really any heavy business decision," comments Mark. "He just thought 'Hey, that sounds like fun'".

In July 1987 Paragon Software launched its first game, Master Ninja: Shadow Warrior of Death on the IBM PC, an unashamed clone of the Karate Champ cat-op, of which both Mark and F.L. were great fans. A string of titles followed.

In April 1989 Dr Doom's Beverage appeared, the first fruit of a licensing deal with Marvel Comics. Other Marvel titles included X-Men: Mutants in Manhattan; The Punisher (in relation to The Edge's UK interpretation) and The Amazing Spiderman.

In May 1990 Paragon released MegaTraveler v. The Zhadan Company, the result of a new licensing deal with Game Designers' Workshop (GDW), one of the oldest and most respected tabletop RPG companies in the US. Marc Miller, GDW's boss and designer of the original Traveller, provided a lot of help to Paragon. "He's got some good ideas on game design," says Mark. "He really knows his stuff. When we were developing MegaTraveler we got a lot of feedback from him but it was always positive."



Above: The Paragon people. That's Mark Bennett in the centre wearing the black T-shirt, with F.L. Lemmon standing third from right.

Right top: Space 1889. Above: The party prepare to fight. It's a shame really that there's no intro to this one...

Right MegaTraveler v. 2000: A thundering storm, the player's ship blasts into hyperspace. Hold on to your pointers.

## SPACE 1889

Space 1889 appeared almost a year ago in the US. The game is set in a Victorian Era world where space travel is possible thanks to Thomas Edison's invention of steam-driven spaceships, which play their trade between Earth and the colonies on Mars



## and Venus.

The player is cast in the role of an adventurer leading a party of five similarly-talented crew through thick and thin to a bizarre encounter beyond the Asteroid Field. Based on the Game Designers' Workshop's RPG of the same name, it bears many

# VIEW



When looking down on the city the player can zoom in or out to three magnification scales.

stimulates its setting, game-design and user interface to Origin's intention. Even, but in the less fully-fledged there's too need to mess about with doing things like dressing your characters. "I know that some people like that sort of intricacy," says F.J., "but I don't think it's that many."

## MEGATRAVELLER: QUEST FOR THE ANCIENTS

Megatraveller appeared a couple of months ago in the States, and it's interesting to observe the enhancements made on Space 185g's engine. The most obvious is the introduction of gorgeous 3D-colour MCGA graphics, but there are other more subtle improvements.

Megatraveller makes the first appearance of the Pringle's unique "PAL" system. This overcomes the annoying feature of many RPGs where you have to keep changing leader to use a certain person's abilities. Instead, characters volunteer themselves for the job in hand if they have the best ability. The player can then decide whether or not to accept.

In other sites the game is a huge progression for Pringle. The players can visit 17 planets, and there

## MILESTONES IN COMPUTER GAMING

Pringle is then believed to what they call "enhancers" in their RPGs. "Milestones are what events along the way," explains F.J. "They're heavily graphical and made of, and they're supposed to encourage the player and keep him going. The idea is that when you've accomplished a good three milestones appear and make you feel good and ready to take the next stage of the game."

are up to 4 cities on each. In Megatraveller, each world is described from the Unique World Profile (UWP), which details such things as the percentage of the planet covered by water, the atmosphere type and so on. Rather than store each planet's map individually (which would take up far too much memory), they're generated at random from a routine which uses the UWP as a 'seed'.

Unlike Space 185g, the main plot is a linear: "While Space 185g is pretty linear, Megatraveller is a more open-ended, with around thirty ways of completing the game." There are many mini-plots to get involved in, some of which are very bizarre. "One has you visiting this world where everyone is crazy," explains Mark. "It's their custom. You've got to be real careful not to get killed." F.J. adds, "When you've got this big a game, it can't all be serious and intense. You've got to lighten up occasionally."

## TWILIGHT 2000

Twilight 2000 is the third of GDM's RPG systems to be converted to the latest computer by Pringle. It's set, as the title has it, "the day after tomorrow" in a world devastated by a vicious nuclear war. The game centres around Poland, where two newly-formed powers vie for domination in this devastated landscape. One is controlled by the evil Baron Czerny, the other, unsurprisingly, is controlled by you.

The game is effectively split into three stages. In the first stage, which is the most 'standard' RPG-like, the player sets up a coordinate, deploying teams of four post-apocalyptic survivors from a pool of twenty to do various missions and thus acquire various pieces of equipment and vehicles.

All the action is viewed from an attractive Caladrius three-quarter angle. Unless team-to-team combat breaks out, the team is represented on-screen by one character - the 'leader'. This agent can be freely guided around the screen, with the game window scrolling to keep up with his movement. Should the agent go behind a building the walls disappear so that he can still be followed.

To speed movement, the player can cut to an overview map and send the team to various locations by simply clicking on where they have to go. Using an enhancement of a technique first seen in MegaTraveller, all the buildings have been colour-



coded so that the player can tell at a glance which buildings are which. Explains Mark, "We thought about this after play-testing the game for a while and found it a little hard to get ahead."

Twilight 2000 employs an advanced version of the PAL system. As in

Megatraveller, members of the team will offer their services if they're the best for the task in hand, but they'll also also make intelligent decisions on their own if needs be. For example, if they're feeling hungry then they'll scavenge for food - they won't just sit around and starve. In addition, morale is taken into account: "If people are getting killed then members of the organisation may start to leave."

Occasionally the player may discover or be revealed with a land vehicle. Given the current state of the world, these are highly valuable, and range from jeeps to tanks. A player can guide his team into a vehicle, in which case the screen switches to a 3D polygon-generated view. One of the tricky elements of the project has been passing the data for the positions of the houses, trees and so on between the 'Caladrius' parts of the program and the 3D-poly-gon parts.

After fifteen game weeks the second stage commences which has a more strategy-orientated tone. The player has to try and occupy towns and city and really start 'empire building'. At the same time, Baron Czerny is doing the same. Eventually a war between the player and Baron Czerny breaks, starting twenty-six game weeks after the start of play.

This third and final stage is depicted almost totally in 3D polygons. The player can send units into battle and direct them personally. Alternatively he



Twilight 2000 is a fascinating and highly original mixture of RPG and 3D polygon graphics elements.





This shot is from an early demo of Mantle created for last summer's CES in Chicago. The picture started life as a slightly shot of Paragon's demo room. It was then touched up by a graphic artist and turned into a futuristic control room. This combination of digitization and painting will be seen a lot in Mantle.



This was intended to be the base commander briefing the Mantle pilots. In real life he's a total pain in the ass. "The symbol on his cap is the sick badge." But this idea of close-up portraits from space-based video digitized with three wrapped digitaly disks. "Timing needs to be graphics is a lot of work. Actual movement is so subtle that it eats up huge amounts of memory. To do it properly you'll need at least 16MB of on-board memory, unless we're only synthesizing speech with simple talking in the distance."

can switch to 'direct' mode and sit back and watch the action as his troops direct themselves, fighting to the best of their abilities. The computer intelligently chooses the most interesting camera views and switches between them as the action progresses. It's all part of Paragon's philosophy of allowing the player to modify the game mechanics so that he can make it as complex or as simple as he requires.

Twilight 2000 is very near to completion, and should be ready for review next month.

#### MANTIS

Mantis has only been in development for three months, but it's already shaping up to be Paragon's best game yet. It's a huge 3D space adventure which puts the player in the role of one of Earth's best spacejacks battling the Sirians. Individually the catch-up like alien has little intelligence, but together

**CURRENT RELEASES** This month Space 1889 and MegaTraveler 2 are released on the Empire Strategy label. For the reviews turn to the Reviews Directory starting on page 98.

or they link up telepathically to form a super-intelligent bio-mind.

If the basic plot sounds a little familiar, it's not surprising. Not only was the premise used in Orson Scott Card's novel *Ender's Game*, but it was also the background to Glynis Wilton's game *Warhead*, released a couple of years ago on the Activision label. Mark explains the strong similarities: "Legal issues [he acts as agent for both Glynis Wilton and Paragon] were so a copy of *Warhead*. And although the game was good for its time, it's now contained in a lot of ways. But we liked the plot and the idea of these 'mash-like' alien that are stupid independently but together form a mind, and we wanted to take the idea and work that. So we licensed Glynis's idea via [agent]."

The only part of the game working so far is the introduction, which is very Wing Commander-like in its combining of animated graphics, music and speech. "We decided early on that we wanted a game that was really big in terms of sound and graphics," says Mark.

This 4-minute long intro alone uses up 1.1MB of memory, with the final game anticipated to be 12MB big. But Mark is adamant that users will only need 4MB of on-board memory to run the whole game, speech and all. "This is directly opposite to Origin, who say you have to X amount of memory to run their games. Also you'll be able to deep installation of certain parts of the game depending on how much hard drive space you have available. For instance you could opt to leave out the digitized speech."

Of the game itself, Mark states: "It's a mixture of 3D polygons and bitmapped images, basically because of affordability. Wing Commander's 3D bitmaps are very nice but we didn't like the way that at certain angles you got 'wobbling'. Also we didn't want to go into direct competition with Origin's game."

Mantis is due for release in the States towards the end of the year, and should appear in Britain soon after on the Empire label. Keep watching the skies for the full ACE review.

#### FILM FACT

Pittsburgh is probably best known to British readers as the hometown of the fabulous Alex in the short topped, foot stomping, brain numbing movie *Flashdance*. As played by the luminarily beautiful Jennifer Beals, Alex is a welder by day and an 'exotic' dancer by night with dreams of going legit and joining a ballet school. Suffice to say she dies, as well as getting the man of her dreams into the bargain. *Waaaaa, oh? What a feeling.*



#### THE FUTURE...

Paragon are no real to the MegaTraveler series for some time. "There's so much background material and information we haven't touched," says F.J. MegaTraveler 3: The Underworld Worlds is already on the drawing board. "MegaTraveler 4 will enhance and expand on the MegaTraveler 3 engine," explains F.J. Fifteen-thousand new worlds to explore are planned, and there will be three main plots to get involved in. The space-combat will be radically expanded so that the player has a greater degree of control over the action, and there will be more Wing Commander-style interludes.

Glynis Twilight 2000's successful mix of RPG and 3D action, what are the chances of a similar approach to a MegaTraveler game? "It's likely that MegaTraveler 4 will include a 3D element," says F.J. "I think you'll definitely be seeing a lot more 3D in our RPGs in the future."



The sophisticated TV commander is one of the victims of the parallel alien. "Originally we were going to have the intro look as if the player were in a glass room looking into all this background stuff, but then we decided on this more video-like style," says Mark. "It has black holes. You watch it, see this boy appear and say 'What the hell is that?' It keeps about you into the plot."



A fully-grown Sirian, which does an uncanny resemblance to a *Parasit* cockroach.

Look out - he's back!

# PAPERBOY

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## WHAT A DIFFERENCE EIGHT MONTHS MAKE!

This is a shot from an early demo that Pete knocked together from scratch in just under a month. But even then it exhibited many of the core-ops scaling and panning features. "It was done the quick and dirty way," says Pete. "I was using the quick and dirty way."

More of the sprites are compressed, for example. It was a simple demo, with no combat moves in it. Essentially, it was just a test to see how fast things would go.



achieve it but in the end it worked out well." Dean Loren, Topeka's head, adds: "The scaling wasn't in the Denmark beta. Nobody thought it could be done. When they saw it they loved it, they were very pleased. Having that sense of depth is essential, the game looks way far without it. It sets *Pelighter* apart from other beat-'em-ups."

The sprites are all stored as 64 x 64 pixel 256-color

**SPRITS FANTASTIC** Some of the animation frames for Ty, Angel and the dreaded Ultimate Warrior.

Probably one of the most daunting aspects of the *Pelighter* coin-op is its sheer memory-heavy size. Comments Pete: "The original coin-op graphics took up around 4.5MB of memory, which somehow I had to squeeze into a half-way being."

"*Pelighter* has a greater variety of combat moves than any other beat-'em-up. Each character has around 150 frames of animation and between 40-50 combat moves," says Dean. "The moves are 'linked' together. If you do a link move when your opponent's standing then you may do a roundhouse kick, but if you do the same when your opponent is on the floor then you might try and stomp on his head. It's likely that the driver will have to play for several hours before he sees certain moves."

"There are no frames of animation or combat moves missing," stresses Dean. "Making sure that everything was in there was our most important objective. Even the scaling was secondary to that. The moves are what makes *Pelighter Pelighter*. In fact, we're actually got more frames of animation in our game than the arcade machines."

"Hang on! How did you manage that?" Let me explain," says Pete. "Are you ready for the lady bit?" Oh yes. "Okay. There are some moves stored in the coin-op's ROM but never displayed. Basically, each character has a punch range and a link range. The coin-op check's to see if a player is within punch range and if he is then he's punched. If not, the coin-op goes on to do the same for the character's link range. But because some character's punch ranges are greater than their link ranges, you never get to see the link moves."

Dean adds, "If you want the coin-op you'll see that Mad Miles never hits, though we've altered that so he does in beta."



sprites. As they move about the screen, Pete's 3D modeller keeps a track of how far 'back' the sprite is. They are then distorted vertically so that they appear at an appropriate height for their distance 'into' the background. The width of the sprites never change, but because the sprites are much taller than they are wide the changes in width are negligible anyway, so there's no noticeable distortion. A sim-

ilar technique is used to scale the crowd sprites and the backgrounds.

Naturally, given the power of the coin-op, there have had to be some compromises. The three-player option had to go, mainly because having six enemies' sprites walking about screens would slow things down too much and also because it's impossible to squeeze more animation frames into memory. In



Copyright notice in this screenshot. They don't think the courts will find anything to worry in terms of what will have you had from the original depend on what.

## "NOT WANTED: ONE GRAPHIC ARTIST"

Ultimately, the *Pelighter* conversion has no credited graphic artist, basically because one wasn't needed. "We managed to get graphics from three sources: Alan Topeka [who is working on the MegaDrive version] and directly from the coin-op," explains Dean. "Unfortunately they were all formatted in different ways. Some had been rendered, some had been recoloured. We just used any parts from all three that we could. Richard Brown, Denmark's project manager, did do a little work processing and recoloring work on them on them."





# TIP OFF

The sheer pace of the game, end to end action and tactical game play is the core of TIP OFF, a basketball simulation -

## A SIMULATION WHICH IS GREAT FUN TO PLAY

Players' skills, attributes and fitness together with the astute substitution of players and change of tactics banks by the coach, hold the key to success in basketball. TIP OFF, therefore includes some managerial aspects of the game. The main features are:

- Multi directional scrolling screen
  - Five skill levels. Skill level of both teams can be set independently.
  - 1 to 4 players option. Option to play against the computer or another player - team up with another player against the computer or another player or two players.
  - Facility to practice skills and tactics.
  - Facility to create a team of all skill levels and design tactics.
  - Interactive joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot or do a dummy.
- There are two running speeds, two types of dribbling and passing and five types of shots at the basket (Jump shot, Hook shot, Skyhook, Running Jump shot and Slam Dunk).
- Each player on the court is an individual with a unique mixture of attributes (Age, Height, Hair, Pace, Stamina and Composite) and skills (Passing, Dribbling, Stealing, Shooting and Jumping).
  - Two types of leagues. Action Replay at 3 speeds.
  - Extra moves are available using two independent button joysticks using the EXORCENCE System.



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EASY TO PLAY - HARD TO MASTER

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## APOCALYPSE Image Works

The latest fruit from the loins of veteran coder Jason Perkins (Thing on a Spring, Heavy on the Run, Time Machine) is a go'n war-torn of Dan Golin's 64 classic, *Chopper*, set on a remote Indian island in the middle of a raging civil war. *Apocalypse* casts you as a rebel helicopter pilot whose job it is to assist refugees to safety amid the jungle carnage. There's a strong emphasis on graphic violence, with "realistic" combat, gore all over the shop and a few nice touches, including a very bloody intro sequence and the ability to drop napalm on unfortunate enemy troops. Originally titled *Field*, the game was renamed due to its apparent similarities to the helicopter sequences in *Apocalypse Now*. Those who managed to get a sneak glimpse of *Apocalypse* at the recent EGES Show were understandably impressed by the game's respectable speed and incredible loop count - and no doubt you will be too when the game's released in the Spring.



## TIP OFF Anco

**Kick Off** editors who can't wait for the arrival of *EGS* in Spring next year may wish to swap their studs for a pair of *Kick Off* Pumps as an enjoyable way of spending the intervening time. Designer Steve Sneath has taken the same winning techniques he used in the *Kick Off* and put them to work on the basketball court for *Tip Off*, his latest sports effort. While *Cinemaware's* TV Sports Basketball reigns supreme on the hardware boards, the boy Sneath is hoping to change that with what he claims is the most action-packed interpretation of the sport yet. Despite the reduction in team and pitch size, *Tip Off* is already shaping up to be every bit as addictive as its heavier daddy, including such features as man-to-man marking, full player stats and a league competitors. Admittedly the idea of *Kick Off* on a basketball court does sound very very weird, and if Steve can put that tantalizing concept into practice successfully, within a couple of months we could well be staring down the barrel of the most impressive sports game yet. I have to hoping, anyway.

## SMASH TV Ocean

More licensed fare from the firm that runs them out like there's no tomorrow. This one's one of Ocean's more eagerly-awaited products, coming as it does from the excellent and ultra-violent Williams coin-op. It's all set around a futuristic game show where contestants risk life and limb, battling through computer-infused studios to get an "opportunity" prize like videos and tractors. When cranked up to full tilt, the coin-op's awesome, as scores of hapless contestants pile after the contestants and get mown down by volleys of laser fire. The less fortunate contestants even get their legs blown off by stepping on a mine. In an attempt to emulate the original's dual joystick control, *Smash TV* has included an option for both players to connect two sticks if they so desire. *Smash TV* goes on air this Christmas, and as the show's always sampled computer says, "Good luck - you're gonna need it!"



## WWF Ocean

If a name you don't know, it stands for World Wrestling Federation, and it's currently the biggest name with UK kids, since the *Turks*. My viewers will already be familiar with this televised phenomenon, which consists of more showbiz excitement than actual competition. Ocean has wasted no time in jumping on the bandwagon with this original interpretation of the "sport", which sees you in the squared circle against such WWF Superstars as Hulk Hogan, Mr Perfect, Macho Man Randy Savage, The Big Boss Man, Million Dollar Man Ted DiBiase and many others. Coming hot on the heels of *Summer Slam*, the biggest WWF tournament of the year, and with several Superstars crossing the Atlantic this month to take part in a European Rampage, Ocean's WWF has been perfectly timed to catch wrestlingmania at its height. Come to think of it, we could do with a decent wrestling game...





### THE TERMINATOR Virgin

Equidistant timed to cash in on the phenomenal success of *Terminator 2*, Virgin's Megaverse adaptation of the original 1984 movie must surely qualify as the most long-awaited horror of all time. Put together by Probe Software, it recasts the film's most memorable action scenes (such as the night-club-dual and police station massacre), casting the player as futuristic soldier Kyle Reese in his quest to save Sarah Connor from the unstoppable soldier Arnold Schwarzenegger's image. The Terminator appears in the game as a rather ambiguous silhouette figure. There's been no compromise on the violence-front however, and the game sports one of the most impressive laser sequences in years - it's practically identical to the film. The Terminator is set to hit the streets in the early part of next year - keep an eye out.



### SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS CapCom

The star of the show at the recent Super FamiCom exhibition in Japan, Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts is already being hailed as the best SFZ game yet. Like Irem's Super R-Type before it, the game is a more or less the same, with a number of tweaks, enhancements and custom features. The player once again takes on the role of Sir Arthur Luminaire, hunting through the labyrinth of the mansion and the underworld to rescue his fair maiden. What with the game being available over here as of yet, there's



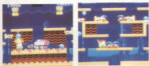
very little information available - although the ripple coming over from Japan are very positive indeed. With the release in the USA (thanks to the FamiCom in the USA) pre-ordered and released the Super Nintendo, it may not be that long until as poor Europeans can get our hands on them officially too - but until then, Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts should be filtering through on import within the next month or so. ACE will be first with the



### STAR TREK: THE 25th ANNIVERSARY Electronic Arts

US designers Interplay (*The Bard's Tale*, *Castle*) have left the medieval scenarios behind and opted for something a little more up-to-date with its interpretation of the classic sci-fi series *Star Trek*, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the show this year. All the familiar characters, including Scotty, Chekov, Uhura, Spock and McCoy join you, as Kirk, on the bridge of the USS Enterprise as you embark on 14 independent missions, each presented as a TV episode. You get to play with warp engines, transporters, phasers and torpedoes as you clash with Klingon, Romulan and rogue Federation ships. The game's a mix of strategy/exploration and arcade action, with space-age combat sequences fought out Wing Commander-style. Apparently *Star Trek*'s creator Gene Roddenberry acted as a consultant during the game's development, so if nothing else we can expect an accurate portrayal. PC owners get to find out just how accurate around Christmas, with CD and Amiga owners bearing aboard early 1993.





## PARASOL STARS Ocean

**S**ubtitled *The Story of Bubble Bobble II*, it doesn't take much to work out that *Parasol Stars* is the sequel to *Rainbow Islands* and the third installment in the *Bubble Bobble* saga. But not bubbles are back on the case, still in human form, although this time, instead of bubbles or rainbows, they're equipped with cute little multi-purpose umbrellas to defend themselves against the multitude of crazy foes. *Parasol Stars* sees a return in style to the original *Bubble Bobble*, with the objective being to clear the various screens of all the various fruit rather than reaching a specified goal. It's also the first game to scroll horizontally - *Bubble Bobble* consisted solely of static screens, and *Rainbow Islands* was a purely vertical affair. Currently being handled by Ocean's in-house team, *Parasol Stars* looks set to bring the cute game back to super- and quite right too.

## ANOTHER WORLD US Gold

**T**hough Delphine Software is already pulling out all the stops for its adventure interpretation of *The Godfather*, it's still got time to stick its fingers in some other pies - the most impressive of which is the innovative adventure *Another World*. FutureWare co-designer Eric Chidiac spent two years laboring away on this one, and the result incorporates what is reputedly the most effective Cinemagique adventure system yet seen - even by Delphine's high standards - including such cinematic techniques as zoom, panorama and animated close-up shots. In a plot as innocuous as *Planet Wars*, *Another World* tells of a hapless young nuclear scientist who is catapulted into a strange alien world where an experiment unfolds. From then on it's exploring and puzzle-solving all the way as you quest to escape from the bizarre planet outside. *Another World* is set for release across all three formats at the end of the year.



## WIZKID Ocean

**S**till regarded as one of the greatest arcade games of the eighties, Sensible Software's *Wizard* caused quite a stir when it first hit the big back in 1981. Fresh from the success of *Mega Man*, Wiz's original creators Jon Hare and Chris Yates are now hard at work putting the finishing touches to the long-awaited sequel, which promises to be every bit as wacky as the classic original. The story goes that after successfully colonising the Wizardworld, the Wizard and *Wizball* have fallen, even, to love and produced a son - the *Wizkid*. The evil

magic woman Zark (who was demoted in the first game) is none too happy about it and has kidnapped the Wizard and *Wizball* in order to exact his revenge. Now it's up to *Wizkid* to get them back by barfing through eight platform-oriented levels, rescuing the also-kidnapped citizens of *Wiz*'s car *Wiffs* along the way. "It's a pretty original game," says Chris. "I can't really think of anything to compare it to." We shall see in ourselves in a couple of months, but if the quality of Sensible's recent offerings is anything to go by, we should be in for a real treat.



## THE CHAOS ENGINE Revvegade

**A**fter the less than successful venture into the realm of strategy games with last month's *Magi Pocket*, the *Bitwise Brothers*' latest effort looks set to put them back on the right track. It's a return to more familiar, violence-orientated turf, combining *Gunstar*-style arcade action with an innovative RPG element. In an attempt to get away from his known space-age scenario, designer Eric Matthews has set his game in the Victorian Age - the *Chaos Engine* of the title is one of the first prototype computers that has malfunctioned and is attempting to distort the fabric of time and space. In an attempt to avert the disaster, as many as three players (with the aid of a joytick adaptor) must blast their way through the factory where the *Engine* is held and destroy it. Matthews is very proud of the game's RPG undertones, which allow players to create characters with individual personalities, and a system that only allocates bonus points if the player is pulling his weight during play, and not leaving all the work to his companions. To cap it all, graphics wizard Dan Malone has done an excellent job of creating a period atmosphere. Rumours abound that after *Pockets*, the *Bitwise*' credibility is starting to wear a bit thin - let's hope that *The Chaos Engine* proves the critics wrong when it's released at the start of next year.



## CYBER FIGHT Electronic Arts

**T**here's nothing like a pair of big fighting robots clanging away at each other to provide some good old-fashioned gladiatorial entertainment - and Electronic Arts, obviously wise to this trend, has got a game that's just the job. *Cyber Fight* has been projected from the frontal lobes of Michael Powell, holding great *Thunderforce*-style 'bots against each other, armed with all manner of devastating (but no weaponry and portrayed using state-of-the-art *Concord* shading techniques) to enhance the feeling of 'being there'. A PC-only product at the moment, *Cyber Fight* is set for release hopefully by the end of the year. It'll be nice to have to wait a fair bit longer for this version.

# What will you cha



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# ACE BENCHMARKS

Over the page, in the new ACE ScreenTest section you'll find reviews of six of this month's hottest games. To help you make the most of our reviews information (especially the Compare and Contrast panel which you will find adorning each review) we've compiled our list of what we believe are the finest games in each of the following genres.

The aim is to offer both a reference point to help you gauge how well or otherwise this month's titles match up to their peers and a list of games which no software collection should be without. And all for no extra charge!

And remember! [Visit ACE on our website](#)

There's a further 30 PAGES of reviews beginning on page 107!

## ARCADE BLAST

### SWIV (Storm)

The follow-up to *Silverburn* (just one of the best Mars in years) succeeds through a combination of frenetic speed, polished presentation and clever, unbalanced action. Tone and tone of it. The firepower and wastage on screen is of a level that far surpasses anything offered before. It's amazingly tough, but well worth the effort - it's effectively a 24 coin-op without the need for coins.



## ARCADE ADVENTURE

### GODS (Renegade)

While it may be argued that it's not as intricately sophisticated as the likes of *Risk Dangerous* or *Prince of Persia*, the *Renegade* platform opus does offer enough fully-rendered arcade action to make it the outright winner in this category. On the surface, it looks nothing more than a levels or ladders shoot-em-up with lots of flashy effects, but deep-



er down it's a right smart little epic with enough quality aspects to keep even the most demanding explorer happy. Its longevity is unquestionable.

## SPORTS SIMULATION

### JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER (Virgin)

Arthur Maclean does it again, and must go down in the history books as having produced the first ever realistic snooker game. Actually, 'realistic' doesn't do the game justice, as it truly is the most authentic, computerized adaptation of any sport ever. Period. Tremendous 3D combines with authentic play and more options



## SPORTS ARCADE

### KICK OFF 2 (Anco)

What can we say? It's pretty pointless trying to explain to the uninitiated what makes *Kick Off 2* so damn playable, but the primary reason are the ultra-intuitive control mode and remarkable speed that combine to make it the most exciting and rewarding football game ever. As such it's attracted a following so avid that official prize tournaments are a regular occurrence. It looks like nothing, and takes time and patience to get into, but once it grabs it'll never let go. Not ever. You have been warned.

## STRATEGY

### RAILROAD TYCOON (Microprose)

Building a railroad empire across the USA at the turn of the 20th Century may sound like hard work, but for those who like their strategy to run deep, *Rail Tycoon's* simulation of that very process is fun. Fun FUN! We know, it's difficult to imagine here, but trust us, it is. The feeling of power is paramount as

you lay your track from sea to shining sea, conduct big time business and generally earn loads of cash. That can hardly be had now... can it?



## BEAT 'EM UP

### IK+ (System 3)

An upgraded and enhanced version of the original System 3 classic *International Karate*, Arthur Maclean's *IK+* is still unchallenged in its field after three years.





Its most innovative aspect is the addition of a third, computer-controlled fighter, which elevates the action above the average head-to-head battles and into full-scale free-for-all mayhem. All the standard ticks and punches are there, along with an array of novel new moves, such as the double-head tick. Incredible speed, worthwhile sub-games, bombcrunching sound and a veritable galaxy of graphic twists and comedic touches make this quite simply the ultimate fighting game.

#### RACING GAME

### STUNT CAR RACER (Microstyle)

This month's under-theorist from Genies's Lotus 4, Stunt Car Racer packs polygon-plating power and arcade-speed thrills into a novel formula making it the most entertaining race game around. Drive your dragons around a series of increasingly perilous suspended racetracks, smacking it, crashing your opponent into oblivion. Excellent speed achieved by the polygons combined with fantastic, glowing audio effects makes this game a true classic.

#### RACING SIMULATION

### INDIANAPOLIS 500 (Electronic Arts)

It's the speed that does it for EA's Indianapolis 500. Quite simply it's faster and more playable than anything else on the grid. The feeling of real speed is amazingly realistic, and that adds all the more to the basic shattering pile-ups - one of the game's most entertaining aspects. The course at Indianapolis has been recreated with uncompromising authenticity, and a multitude of features, including excellent TV-style replay facilities serve to bolster the realism factor. Mind you, it's not just Geoff Goodenough who's having a crack at lettering it this month.



#### SIMULATION

### CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT (Electronic Arts)

The third game to be embraced by the barrier-breaking General takes of the tried-and-tested "flight school" format and makes it all the more enjoyable by putting it in a combat arena. You get to fly every plane you've ever heard of, and it manages to do this without sacrificing the technical authenticity. What's more, the dogfighting itself is a lot more exciting than is to be found in most sims, and the out-of-flight options and presentation are second to none.



#### ROLE PLAYING GAMES

### EYE OF THE BEHOLDER (US Gold/SSI)

By the mighty sword of King! SSI's latest Dungeons and Dragons game takes the best bits of Dungeons Masters, adds a few more of its own, etc. well, and the result is the best bet yet for gamers who like to haul fireballs at dragons and things like that. It's very deep (so ho) and offers enough new challenges to take the throne from the game that inspired it. And lo, the mystic staff of Zog shall not the hours ever wander and (and so on to hah...)

#### ADVENTURE

### THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND (US Gold/Lucasfilm)

The adventures of would-be pirate Guybrush Threepwood provide the setting for Lucasfilm's most sophisticated and entertaining odyssey to date. It's partly due to the new refined version of the



SCUMM™ adventure system, which abbreviates the need to muddle with complex commands, and a very engaging - and funny - script. It's atmospheric, attractive, and packed with clever puzzles. The only thing that's failed to topple it is the foreseeable future in the sequel, due out next year.

#### ACTION STRATEGY

### MEGA LO MANIA (Image Works)

Scrabble Software's first attempt at strategy is a surprisingly successful one. At first glance it may seem similar to Populous, but further inspection reveals it to be a genuinely original strategy epic. Considering the amount of depth the game has, it's remarkably intuitive to play, and has a very refreshing comic relief running throughout. Certainly the most fun of all the god-games, Mega lo Mania also happens to be the best - we'll see what Populous II has to say on the matter at the end of the year.

#### PUZZLE GAME

### TETRIS (Nintendo)

There are more official versions of this classic than can be counted on the legs of a millipede, but it's Nintendo's own Gameboy version that is undoubtedly the best. Manipulating blocks to make lines across the screen may sound like watching your teenage girl, but in practice the complex factor that lies beyond any level known to medical science. If it's someone in your play, they haven't invented the word that describes the fun that's to be had in the link-up mode. It's like a bloody religion.

#### PLATFORM

### SUPER MARIO WORLD (Nintendo)

The more they release the Platformers over here the better, as that will give more gamers the chance to experience the stunning fourth installment in the Mario saga. Whatever other hype-awakening publications may lead you to believe, Mario 4 (which seems like one of those just there ones) would you believe there's not a single dodgy bit in any of the 99 levels?

It's sheer perfection from beginning to end. What more could you ask for?



#### This Month's Games

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# REA

*There can only be one ...  
Just make sure it's yours.*





*Love Thy Neighbour?  
Or Put Him To The Sword?  
The Choice is Yours.*

*For the first time, you can take  
COMPLETE control of your own destiny as  
you attempt to dominate an entire world.*



*The King is dead. Long live the King.  
And the King is you...*

*Endowed with the divine right  
to rule, you inherit your father's Realm on his  
death. But the fragile peace has been shattered  
and war rages between the Realms. Now  
your brief reign has become a fight  
for survival.*



*The neighbouring Realms  
are growing in strength at your expense. Do  
you build lines of supply to battle with them?  
Or build armies to battle with them? Each  
Realm vies to be the ultimate power.*



*There can only be one.  
Just make sure it's yours...*



*Created by the award-winning  
Capital development team, REALMS  
combines the intuitive playability of an arcade  
game with the depth of strategy usually  
only found in the most complex  
simulations.*



*Enter the world of Realms and you could control  
"Over 115,000 square miles of fractally-  
generated landscape  
"115 armies, each a thousand strong and with  
adjustable battle formations  
"Countless cities, their inhabitants draw and  
their money  
"So distinct historical eras  
The last word in arcade strategy.*



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# LOTUS<sub>2</sub>

**S**ome people are never satisfied. Having already produced perhaps the finest computer race game of all time in Lotus Turbo-Espit Challenge, Magnetic Fields and Creative Graphics have sought to push the envelope further still with their sequel. The result? A definite, yet qualified success.

Definite because Lotus 2 bears marked improvements over the original in a number of technical aspects, but qualified because although the game works well as an individual title, it rewards and challenges the player in an almost entirely different way to its predecessor. As a result, it occasionally doesn't look too good in comparison.

Neither an accurate polygon simulation, nor purely over-simplified arcade blast, the Lotus games

deliver the finesse of the former with the abrasion of the latter. Large, healthy representations of Lotus Espits and their turbo around the rapidly-plotted courses, banging into each other and flying off the roadside signposts. Drivers who bang around too long or insist on adhering too strictly to the high-way code need not apply. That much is common ground for both titles.

The most important difference between the two games' designs is that here, play no longer takes place on circuits. Instead, eight long stages, each complete with their own particular motoring hazard, snake their way across imaginary countries, providing *Drifters*-style as opposed to *Super-Drifters*-style excitement.

This is not a point that should be taken lightly, for it greatly affects the feel of the game. The removal of the lap system makes it tricky (perhaps a well-intentioned distance-o-meter) to gauge exactly how close the two drivers are to each other. Over a number of laps, a player's lead can be tangibly eroded. Over a long stage, it's much harder to determine progress. However, longer stages make for an exciting feeling of ground-covering race-through-the-night madness that was plainly absent from the first title. Simplified, the deal is this. The nature of Lotus 2 makes it more satisfying to pass a number of computer-controlled drivers than pit your skills



Crack in the past. The first of us offers you its expertise, but they'll want to know quite a bit more about the progress of the...  
 (caption text is partially obscured)

Both titles of the game...  
 (caption text is partially obscured)

Rolling into the darkness on the...  
 (caption text is partially obscured)





Obviously, the easiest and most relevant point of reference to draw on is Lotus 1. Clearly, producing a sequel to such a popular racing game is tricky enough. Trickier still when you bear in mind that the success of the first title rested on a number of factors which, simply in order to make the second

game sufficiently different, have had to be changed. The first game worked on a laps basis, and here we have stages. Lotus 2 is far more forgiving of drivers' mistakes than is the first outing. A single crash in the first game could easily cost the unfortunate driver the race, here, owing to the length of the stages. It's more to do with how the forced errors snowball into a big enough chunk of time to make the check-point unreachably.

Lotus 2 is, technically, a far superior game with swifter graphics, more detailed and varied levels and a better impression of speed. And there's no doubt that as a solo game it plays infinitely better than the first. As a two-player affair, however, Lotus 1 still reigns supreme.

The link-up option serves as a worthwhile novelty, although in a sense it only helps regain the spirit of duelling

motors which was already present in the original.

It's important to remember though, that simply because the gaily heights of the original haven't been attained in this particular aspect, Lotus 2 is still a superb game.



against - essentially - one human. In that sense, it is a much better one-player game, but the gladiatorial two-player struggles of the first title are no longer present. It's this point which obviously determines whether Lotus 2 is an appealing prospect or not.

The key to Lotus 2's success was twofold. For the first time in a sports-driven race game the player was convinced that he had control over the behaviour of his car to a degree facilitating genuine improvements in driving style. Also, the timings of each circuit were balanced so perfectly with the difficulty level and the amount of objects to crash into that even on the early courses a few careless cherron-clippings could make the difference between success and failure. It has proved to be a tough act to follow.

A familiar options screen helps the player dispose with reverse automatic, manual gear and acceleration mode selections in the same manner as last



time. Here, however, there are a few additions. A password system, enables players who have made sufficient progress in the game to skip to the desired level without having to drive through stages already mastered. Although this initially appears to be a bit of a gimmick, removing the need to slog through

level after level of previously conquered tracks, there is a danger that, in the same way as Outrun is viewed, once all the levels have been completed, there's little incentive to return. The Link option allows (via a cable connecting two machines) up to four players to race simultaneously. Admittedly, this feature is hardly likely to be in vogue to-day now, but it helps to enliven the feeling of human vs human competition.

As the "Mirko, Set, Go!" countdown gives way to the glow of the assessment of Lotusian in post-race total mode, the trackside objects pull toward the player with impressive speed and a number of facts become apparent.

Firstly, in an ever-enthusiastic tribute to the legendary handling figure of Lotus motors, the player is afforded amazing control over his car. Only the tightest levels necessitate any application of the old "washbar" and pulling into tight corners even from the outside lane will bring the car into the inside lane allowing some impressive apex-cutting antics. It's easy for the player to convince himself that in real life he's an excellent driver thanks to the ease and flexibility of control.

Over underway for a few seconds, the nature of the race will become clear. Computerized drivers are no longer of an especially high standard. Rather than being regarded as realistic individuals vying for success, the auto-cars tend to move more in robotic blocks, weaving across the lanes and, for the most part, just sitting in the way. Since there is no need to crash the race in qualifying points are awarded within the race itself will allow progress in the next stage) there's little incentive to necessarily "beat" any of these cars, just avoid them when they appear.

Checkpoints flash past at regular intervals, rearing the countdown-to-game-over which sits in the

obus 2's makes it considerably more satisfying when played solo, since the gladiatorial feel of two-player racing find itself struggling in the new format of long check-point laden stages

# STAGE FRIGHT

Let's take a closer look at these stages "In", if you will, "Out".

## Fogout

The first stage introduces the player to a number elements in the game. Drivers slow down the cars unless they've jumped over using the logs which block the road. The logs must be hit head-on in order to achieve a jump.

## City

Overcoming traffic and learning how drivers hamper the player's progress. The right hand lane is clear of racing cars but a crowd with an oncoming vehicle will considerably slow up the proceedings. Entering through the wheels between the front and back of the trucks and the player bonus points. Indeed, rather than being score-highlighting trick for top drivers, it's vital if the stage is to be completed in time.

## Desert

Sand blown onto the edge of the road will slow down drivers who insist on staying from the center line. Extra caution is needed owing to the lack of road signs. Instead, car's along the side of the road are the only indicators of the player's route through the yellow haze.

## Storm

A maximum effort is necessary to retain control of your usually beyond the car which in this stage whizz around like there's no tomorrow.

## Fog

Dramatically reduced visibility inevitably slows this section right down. All objects in the distance, be they cars, trees or obstacles are scarcely visible. Only when back-marker looms up out of the fog does the player have a chance to react. This stage perhaps works the best, combining excellent graphic appeal with an exciting gameplay twist.

## Night

The city at night is a much more challenging place than during the day. The number of trucks on the road has been reduced but the hazard levels are high.

## Marshland

Have you ever been had, in Marshland? Windy tunnels and more jumping. Oil patches leave the player slipping and sliding while the water at the edge of the road (it is a marsh, after all) slows them down. Floodlit.

## Storm

Possibly one of the most depressing levels ever to appear in a computer game. The rain comes down in sheets making the most valuable sound. Lightning flashes and thunder rumbles. Is it our imagination or is the whole level split? It's enough to put you off your dinner.

...Just as you start the race with your glass eye focused on...

...a particularly tricky combination of things. Later stages are given time to encourage us to speed up rather than slow down. It's a good thing that the Lotus 2 is a game that's easy to play. It's a good thing that the Lotus 2 is a game that's easy to play. It's a good thing that the Lotus 2 is a game that's easy to play.



Each stage has an excellent "beat" time in the clouds it's almost impossible to imagine the most fun of driving in the distance. (Don't worry about the side of the road will further slow drivers already suffering from nitrogen in the road.)

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Each stage has an excellent "beat" time in the clouds it's almost impossible to imagine the most fun of driving in the distance. (Don't worry about the side of the road will further slow drivers already suffering from nitrogen in the road.)





**BTB** top right corner of the screen and adding any spare time from the completed stage to the deficit for the next. The latter one section is completed, the time/distance there is to complete the next. Although experienced players may not appreciate the need to continually drive for better times through the first checkpoints, toward the end of the stage they will need every second they can get, so it's wise to start scraping the bonus time together early on.

Utterly distinct from its predecessor, Lotus 2 is forgiving almost to the point of defiance. Ploughing headlong into the chicanes and trees which line the road results in a scarcely noticeable loss of velocity and repositioning on the track. Especially ignorant drivers who insist on mowing down a bunch of signposts or saplings will find themselves ground down to a halt, but those who make the most of the forgiveness of the crash routines will find their whole driving experience largely frustration free.

The different courses (see panel) have particular idiosyncrasies which challenge the driver in new ways. The actual width of the road, although one of the most basic variables affects the driving style more radically than most. Narrow roads actually do make the driver slow down and make overtaking difficult. It may sound like a small point, but this does throw up all sorts of frustrations. While the clock may indicate that the trip to the next checkpoint will be a breeze, encountering a couple of lengthy narrow stretches of road will see virtually every spare second accumulated thus far. Success is most readily achieved by drivers who loop going absolutely at their hardest all the time.

By far the best strategy is to overtake a vehicle as soon as it is reached, especially if the overtaking manoeuvre is being made on a bend. Dismissing around and waiting for computer cars to get out of the way is a waste of time. It's better to simply drive around them.

Careful use of acceleration and the width of the road allows the player to either understeer around



The latter challenge involves understeering on an even tighter corner. However, always good game play. Because a car can't oversteer, when you get the wrong gear it's just through the throttle.

**he nature of the game's once-completed-little-interest-left courses may hamper its lasting appeal. Perhaps Lotus 2 has become an unwitting conformation of the "if ain't broke, don't fix it" adage.**



the target car or slide through taking the inside line. Perfection of this strategy combined with the simple but important discipline of watching cars in the distance as they approach in order to predict their track position then the overtaking manoeuvre is necessary will yield a great deal of satisfaction. The closest comparison for this mix of speed and skill being continuously rewarded is probably the Super Hang-On coin-op.

Visually, Lotus 2 is a marvel. Objects at the side of the road are highly detailed and absolutely screen-fart. More attention has been given to the cars when turning and the differing weather conditions are represented by moody lighting and the like. The effects are so successful, in fact, that the Storm level with its thunder and lightning and rain's oblique rain is actually quite depressing.

The behaviour of the cars is effected quite dramatically by their environment, exactly as one would expect. Driving through water slows the cars down and makes steering difficult. Snow and ice on the road make the Super Hang-On







Game Strategy  
 Publisher Virgin Games  
 Developer PFI Software  
 Price £19.99

# FLOOR

# 13

**E**very government has its secrets to hide - a fact that a whole generation of novelists from John Le Carré to Tom Clancy has been earning a respectable living from for the past three decades. But while we all know of the nefarious activities and goings-on in Eastern Bloc countries and

secretly, dealing with double-crosses, controlling outspies, subverting diplomats and generally getting anything that could have a damaging effect on the government and affect its public standing.

Due to the department's unofficial status, normal laws don't apply to its operations and all the tools of its trade are weapons. Murder, torture, corruption, invasion of privacy... when it comes to the defence of the Realm, anything goes. With such a formidable armory of tactics, the task in hand may not sound too difficult - but the real trick is carrying out an effective and ongoing campaign of suppression without even giving the outside world the impression that anything deviates in as badly going on.

The game's opening does a neat dual job of setting the player off, while giving a firm glimpse of just what lengths the secret ministry will go to in order to get its work done. When the agency's Director General is deemed inefficient and potentially dangerous, he meets with a demise involving a window, several hundred feet and a concrete pavement. The player is brought to replace him as the department head. Dave inaugurated as chief of the secret police force,

hipnotic dictatorships, it's right-on inconceivable to suggest the existence of, say, a secret police force here in dear old Blighty, capital of democracy.

Or maybe it isn't. After all, the primary function of a secret police force is to be secret, and as long as it does its job properly, who's to know if it even exists? The idea of such behind-closed-doors governmental activity has been tackled several times in recent years in a variety of media - Alan Moore/David Lloyd's moody graphic novel *V For Vendetta* painted a very gloomy picture of a Neo-Nazi Britain of the 20s, while Ken Kesey threw some controversial light on the subject last year with his cinematic political thriller *Walden 2*.

And now we have a game that, by posing the "What if...?" question in the most Matrix-style imaginable, hasn't done a bad job of attracting plenty of controversy of its own. Admittedly it seems as if Virgin went deliberately out of its way to attract as much undue attention as possible by approaching leading figures from the political, journalistic, and show-business worlds to contribute storylines to the game. And although most of the people contacted turned the opportunity down, the upshot of the exercise has since included articles in *The Times* and *The Guardian* and several phone calls to the Virgin offices from an "Interested" Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. No doubt by the time that *Floor 13*, which boasts what must be the most evenly political and partisan storyline to date, hits the shelves it won't be the only thing that is hitting something.

In its present day London, *Floor 13* tells of a secret government department based on, you guessed it, the thirteenth floor of a shady Docklands tower block. It's an agency without a name, that operates beyond the knowledge of the police, the military - even the country's own intelligence agencies - reporting only to the Prime Minister himself. To all intents and purposes, it's an agency that doesn't exist - but has power and influence far beyond the scope of any official body. Its job? To provide a political "safety buffer" for the increasingly magnanimous, callous and treacherous government by averting scandalous



The Prime Minister's word is regarded as law within the tiny police cell of the secret police building. As an officer in control, you'll be the first to see the main floor's power jigs, levers, and gear department used to manipulate everything that's necessary for the nation's well-being.

n terms of involvement and atmosphere,

Floor 13 is the closest thing yet to an interactive thriller novel.



The open end of the new available multimedia interface carries the standard computer news capabilities while users can also enter the information on the world, domestic intelligence and foreign intelligence maps.

The player receives a line that warns welcome from the disgraced Prime Minister, who is quick to warn the player that should be on the move as unsuccessful as their predecessor, they too could be taking a crash course in unaided flight.

An Director General, one of the player's primary common-sense obligations is never to get their own hands dirty, and so the entire game is effectively run from the 13th floor office, reading reports gathered by intelligence personnel and dispensing orders to the heads of the various sub-departments who do all the real dirty work. As a result it's probably the most subtle game in years in terms of what goes on on screen - for the vast majority of the game takes place behind a desk, with the only things changing being the constantly updated newspapers, reports and files from the departments that comprise the only window on the world. But even though the location seldom changes, the game's fast pacing and subtle dovetailing of the multiple arcs of scenarios and plots ensures that the game's pace hardly ever relaxes. In terms of involvement and interest, it's the closest thing yet to an interactive thriller novel.

The ongoing story is woven by means of over a hundred interdependent plots, occurring at carefully timed intervals and overlapping to give the impression of a single, flowing reality. The episodes are wide-ranging in style and content, encompassing high-ranking executives engaged in shady dealings, shady dealings on at government contractors, industrial espionage, terrorism and even a terrorist attempt on the life of a top-level VIP. But the fall story behind each plot never fully emerges - information comes in dribs and drabs, and only by putting together seemingly innocuous and unconnected reports and allowing resources in the correct places can the



Such is the nature of Floor 13's innovative approach and execution, it's tricky to find a game in the recent strategy genre that really compares to it. So it's necessary to journey further back - way back to 1985 in fact - the time of Century 21st's own aging 8-bit classic *The Fourth Protocol*.

Though the game came in several sections, including some dire arcade interludes, the main part of the adventure, subtitled the NATO Documents, was remarkably similar to *Floor 13* in certain aspects. Surveillance operatives were assigned to suspects, intelligence reports came in, there were

political scandals to avert... the game actually managed to do a remarkable job of capturing the spirit of the original novel, and by comparison that goes to further highlight how well *Floor 13* simulates the intrigue and excitement of the modern thriller. But while *The Fourth Protocol* was a fine game, it offered limited appeal, as there was only one objective to meet. Eastman's got the right idea, allowing the size of the game to remain unrestricted by keeping the overall objective at a safe distance.



**W**hile much of the game can be played from the central office, it's often necessary to visit departments directly for the most up-to-date information. Each of the eight sub-divisions is never more than a couple of keypresses away - a fine example of how easy the game is to use.



**COLLABORATION**  
 If a particular agent is assigned to an individual who controls the government funds, collaboration may prove to be the most effective course of action. When agents are assigned to a group, they take an increased role, but usually work against the organization. They're not allies on each - you don't receive collaboration reports from them, unless they have the ability to share the history of a particular group's activities or operations from within. The more agents work in the more effective their work should be, providing the collated group doesn't notice an agent who's about bringing them in to connected elements. Collaboration is a tricky business, and the idea that disconnected agents often meet doesn't mean their talking about.

**OPERATIONS**  
 The best about way of working in operations, information agents become pulling requests to other agents and then trying to bring the files out of them. When a document is needed for information, agents to obtained and passed to operations. These characters create and work on their problems directly. They're usually in the same vicinity around the clock. The majority of requests, though, are pulled in without the need for an information agent. There are three levels of operations, known as Procedure One, Two, and Three. The lowest level is the basic light night shift treatment, while Procedure One calls a shift around a more flexible schedule. Procedure Two is full-time hours, and by sharing the correct level of actions will the others get any results. Not getting what the request won't take the working extremely long length and the resources that pulling any file is usually in your hands. It's usually an activity that seems to be applied in situations. They're as good as an agent when working in your. They're depend of other than request back and forth, when they could become a liability.



**SURVEILLANCE**  
 A surveillance team can be assigned to any character or when a report is available, and will sometimes supply the most crucial information in the game. They receive information, related to a relative location outside the company's locale and control all movements, such as items of risk and entry. They usually receive, via the telephone logs and mail intercepts. Also calls that the support issues in operations are received and transmitted into single form for general, and copies of any mail delivered are also forwarded to Floor 11. Unfortunately, the content of calls and letters is often quite ambiguous, meaning items that must be filed through careful detective work and extensive review. A surveillance team will take with the support with the idea because "surveillance" is they are not connected.

**THE DIRECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE**  
 The heart of Floor 11, all information from the various Departments is sent straight here to be subjected to the director's scrutiny. More time is spent here than anywhere else. How to read, however, that all information that enters an area has to be at least a few sets to have reports within overnight. For more up to the minute information, you need to report directly to the relevant department. The DGO is often more than the three 11 activities, comprising two or all requests, groups, locations and reports that have occurred previously. Ready for gathering information, and they are automatically reviewed as they entered to be released to general circulation. There have you can also check up on the current situation in the jobs for the most accurate representation of how well you are doing.



#### DISMEMBERMENT

The impact of all departments, and especially one of the most controversial in the cabinet team, is an anti-government headbanger whose counting-off is in public. There's no more effective way of shuffling them up than to have a daily newspaper run a headbanger story about them and smear them, branding them a "black team". The intelligence department will bring a clear threat home to make up some charges about the smugged suspect. There's a political capital to be had here, as if someone who opposes anti-government options for their benefit is the antagonist, it can only not go for the government. The paper is limited to one smear campaign per person, and there's nothing more satisfying than "revealing" how the (purged or dismembered) traitor who's been complaining about smears really works behind-the-scenes in the open time.

#### HEAVY HITTER?

This is essentially a very elaborate variant of Terrorism, consisting of an elite with resources and an elite location. When someone is targeted for attack, a small military team will turn the place into a fortified site, where they'll work on a fairly easy way of dealing any incoming military that might otherwise have been found. (You may not really, it can also act as a small company from hell camp.)

## ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

Talk about an irritating life. Of Poor 12's 80-odd plots, a large amount are completely fictitious - but those who follow the headlines are likely to spot quite a few plots that bear an uncanny resemblance to certain recent real-life happenings. Obviously, the names and some of the more incriminating details have been changed to protect the innocent (or not-as innocent), but it doesn't take much more to work out what events some of the storylines are based on. By way of demonstrating this, and to show how convoluted some of the scenarios can get, here are brief synopses of some of the more interesting ones...



In Operation Blackwood, a group of retired military crackpots take advantage with plans to reduce Britain's defensive capabilities, and plan to apply some "shock treatment" to the government by means of a very radical demonstration...

...in one of the secret Thatcher missions, you're given the task of helping a fellow judge member attain a top-ranking minister's job when the post becomes vacant. However two other ambitious young lawMembers are also vying for the job, and with a row about the return of capital punishment raging the press, there's all manner of behind-the-scenes backstabbing going on, including one particularly devious plot to sway favour by one of the candidates. Only by getting to the bottom of the conspiracy can you get "your boy" the job and advance through the Thatcher ranks...



#### REVENUE

Administration. This is really a very detailed office theme that has many others, as almost the entire focus is on a real world. The reason for being available is simple enough. Basically it gets a tremendous amount out of the players, when a career/office is signed. The story gives the full appeal of how hard to carry out the attack. After longer the time given for progress, the greater the probability that the job won't be finished. Basically it's necessary to avoid real jobs to avoid an impending disaster. Some people can repeat the theme of some real administrative work, and need to be dealt with by other means.



#### RYDER

Essentially a mobile version of espionage. Permit completes an "inner" mission" with that before that original scenario must normally and avoid both in their mission. If the suspect is followed to a phone address, the intelligence people automatically that can also take them and provide the information as a new suspect. If, allowing them to be checked out independently perhaps revealing more information. It's more public location is visited, such as an office building, attack it, it is added to the location files, adding up to a new and heavy threat availability. Alternatively, Permit's capabilities are limited, as while they can still admit files a complex system to learn it location, they can't but what need of funds in the increasing time.



#### WALTON

Once assigned to a mission, a small team will enter his, his team and give the place a good going-over to an attempt to find any useful information. Two types of search are available. (Search involves a carefully approach, where the team is working towards a specific goal, such as a search area through through electronic means.)

...There's a scandal to be covered up when high-ranking minister Cecil Parkinson gets into a spot of domestic bother when his mistress threatens to blow the whistle on their affair to the press. A subsequent attempt to have his lot of bluff assassinated goes fairly wrong, and before too long blackmail and counter-blackmail war their ugly heads. The whole thing needs to be sorted out quickly before it gets a chance to hit the headlines...

...On a less political - but equally troublesome note - London's wealthy Babo district is engulfed by an orgy of violence when the two most powerful crime syndicates, the Chinese Tang and the Columbian King families, fall out, and then proceed to blow up each other's property in a tit-for-tat war of attrition. Again, the trick is to deal with the situation quickly before it can damage the government...

...Shady goings-on abound when it's revealed that a British defence contractor is selling arms to Iraq - worse still, a top government bod may be in on the transaction...

...An old terrorist group obtains the security plans of one of the country's biggest atomic power stations, and then threaten to blow it up. The nation's base and plan of attack must be discovered if they're to be stopped in time...

pieces of the jigsaw fit together and the overall picture obtained.

Although orders can be given relating to a particular subject or incident at any time, it's wise to wait until the state of affairs becomes slightly clearer, but the department's actions prove rash - and damaging. With the full picture obtained, deduction gives way to judgement as the player must decide how to deal with the situation in hand, while remembering the need to retain the department's low profile. It's vital that the player doesn't get carried away with their position of power - the press could start asking awkward questions if, for example, somebody who has voiced anti-government opinions is suddenly found with a bullet in their head, and the resident forces could ultimately prove more damaging than the scandal created.

How the player interprets information and chooses to act on the basis of it provides the main thrust of the strategy. *Floor 13*'s judgement and discretion are the keys to success, along with the ability to be unconventionally single-minded through thick and thin. Protecting the government from embarrassment is the only objective, and venting too far in either direction, be it lily-liveredness or over-the-top wig-out-out-salutes, will only have a negative effect. If a scandal becomes public, the government suffers in the polls as a direct result of negative public opinion, while successfully covering up embarrassing episodes and making everything in the government's garden look easy results in a poll boost. Of course in the rough 'n' tumble world of politics, it never hurts to stick the boot into the opposition just a little via the subtle use of misinformation.

Maintaining a steady lead in the polls provides the player with a set of ongoing objectives. The *F10* demands a noticeable poll result every few weeks or so, and if it's not met then the player is unconsciously booted out. In the simple virtue of being the elected party, the government receives slightly ahead of the opposition in normal circumstances anyway, so the player's initial task is basically to prevent any major poll drops then embarking on ambitious plans to damage the opposition's credibility or raise the government's popularity through the roof. Such tactics are only likely to lead to the department's activities becoming too high-profile and subsequently political damaging.

By use of a simple mathematical formula, the magnitude of any given scandal or incident is directly proportional to the amount of political damage it causes - which is logical enough. To help the player interpret information and provide a supplement to the polls screen, reports of most incidents come with an evaluation of its political repercussions, good or bad, mild or severe. These provide an invaluable instant aid to decision-making, especially when the player's hands are full with several plots ran-

A developer's page lists various information on *Floor 13*, including a full list of the available group activities. Most focus on what "Government support" capabilities designers. These options of what could have the government as a recipient.



## PC version



The use of monochrome graphics has caused almost as much controversy as the storyline, although the sort of people who have complained are probably the same people who buy the colourised versions of classic black-and-white movies. In practical terms the grey shades work along with the moody music to bolster the game's gloomy atmosphere. A couple of criticisms though - the graphics fade in and out when moving between screens, and impatient types might wish the process could speed up a little - it can get a little tiresome during long sessions. Also, while there is no problem with the keyboard control as it stands, some kind of icon-based mouse map have proved to be more instinctive.



Plot the life story, then require player can enter the scene with, and a department in place the strategy is a most successful procedure.



ning simultaneously (as is usually to case) and it's vital to know where to allocate limited resources to obtain the best results.

What's probably most sinister about *Floor 13*, and the main reason why it is already making so much hay from certain quarters, is that while it offers a vision every bit as paranoid and frightening as *1984*, it does so in a down-to-earth fashion. We're not dealing with a futuristic futuristic society here - this is supposed to be the real world, present day. And while it would be ungenerously to say it's got a storyline that's "ripped from the headlines of terrorism" newspapers," author David Eastman (*Cliffhanger*) has done a remarkable job of working certain major political news stories from recent times as game plots - in fact it's rather worrying to contemplate just how feasible this "hypothetical" scenario is. Because it handles its subject matter so well, it makes one wonder why the political arena, along with all the attendant corruption, intrigue and backstabbing, hasn't been used more often as a strategy game scenario. It's this "real" aspect that provides the game with much of its atmosphere and involvement - there's something more compelling about playing a game with a scenario like this than games which, while equally involving strategically, distance themselves from the player by means of a fantastic or off-beat scenario.

While it would certainly be distressing to see all games based on real-life places and events (games are, after all, meant to be an escape route from the rigours of everyday life), *Floor 13* certainly comes as a refreshing change in a genre that has allowed one of its most important elements to stagnate.



Simple floor 13's comprehensive briefing screens do a great enough at the tactical approach taken to reach a certain amount of political emergency throughout and in the end, which the less pertinent information is simply available online.



It's clear that much effort has gone into the creation of Floor 13, and the result is a game that offers a genuinely new approach to the strategy genre, backed up by a scenario that gives the whole thing a kick like a mule.



Floor 13 also delivers another much neglected genre: the single in writing the place as the budget. While not all the player's actions are necessarily bad (although some are downright despicable), there's a strong sense that the goals achieved are very dodgy indeed—and that provides a twisted sense of enjoyment that goes beyond the initial short-lived experiences in the 'interrogator' rooms.

Without doubt one of the most innovative strategy games in a long time, Floor 13 is a masterpiece rather than a spinoff, and as such total dedication and some very careful thought is required if any success is to be had. The need to collate information and deduce connections between the various people, locations, groups and events in order to unravel the complex plots serves to make the whole strategic process deeper and all the more absorbing, especially as some of the plots are as twisty-turny as any espionage novel.

It's clear that much effort has gone into the creation of Floor 13, and the result is a game that offers a genuinely new approach to the strategy genre, backed up by a scenario that gives the whole thing a kick like a mule. As such, anyone whose brain capacity extends beyond sending rapid signals to the body's fire-brain trigger is going to find this a tremendously absorbing and enjoyable experience. If David Braben can keep this up, he's going to go far—providing he's not found floating face-down in the Thames first.

—Gary White



## Walk Like An Egyptian

An interesting twist is that, while the player attempts to infiltrate and wipe-out subversive groups and organizations, they remain a member of one themselves. The Secret Masters of Truth is a bizarre, megalomaniac cult based on ancient Egyptian philosophies, and the Grand Master himself pops up to have a quiet word from time to time. As it turns out, the player has a secondary objective of advancing through the ranks of the lodge until he can ultimately become all-powerful. The Grand Master calls upon the player to perform certain tasks for him, and each one completed results in a promotion. Some 'missions' can result in a conflict of interests as what's good for them may be bad for the government. Only the player can decide with whom his loyalties ultimately lie...



## R A T I N G S



Graphics: This is certainly not the most impressive looking game out there, but it's not bad either.

Sound: One of the best sound effects in the game.

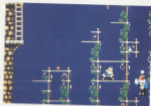
920



The overall average score for this game is 920.



Game Platform  
Publisher Ocean  
Developer Special FX  
Price \$24.99



# HUDSON HAWK



As exciting as the location where the movie was shot, the movie itself didn't have the same excitement. The movie's plot is so simple that the only thing to be excited about is the action. The movie is a classic action movie, but it's not the same as the movie Hudson Hawk. The movie is a classic action movie, but it's not the same as the movie Hudson Hawk.

Catch the action! Catch the excitement! Catch the Hawk!

So goes the blurb for Bruce Willis' latest "blockbuster", Hudson Hawk - although if the film's box office takings are anything to go by, it would seem that the majority of movie audiences would rather catch malaria than catch

this piece of high-budget, low-quality cinematic drivel. Costing a mammoth \$40 million, Hudson Hawk was released during the early part of the turbulent summer season as the year's big action movie - and then failed spectacularly to attract any interest from the punters, who seemed far more keen to see The Silence Of The Lambs. Some theorized that this was due to the action genre having run its course - but now that this school of thought has been blown

away by the runaway success of Terminator 2, the only logical reason left for Hudson Hawk's box office disaster is that it's a piece of poo.

Actually, that's a bit harsh - especially as poor old Bruce himself, who's got enough to worry about what with all his hair falling out, and is more or less responsible for Hudson Hawk - he's not only the star of the film, but the whole sorry affair was his idea in the first place. By the way, remove 'has it that



**D**espite the film's spectacular inability to impress either the critics or cinema audiences, Hudson Hawk has managed to spawn what is probably the most impressive film tie-in of the year.



after the film had finished shooting, Bruce's bald patch showed up rather embarrassingly on screen and an Industrial Light & Magic man called in to eliminate the offending area from the film by drawing hair over it electronically! If that's not a sure omen of failure, there's nothing is.

If that's nothing else, Hudson Hawk has managed to spawn what is probably the most impressive film tie-in of the year - simply because development team Special FX has ignored all the rules about staying faithful to the movie (give times out of ten, a sure sign of disaster) and concentrated instead on the business of producing a playable game. It may be controversial, but it's certainly a refreshing change - and the end result is all the better for it.

The plot of the film (such as it is) provides the game with its scenario and runs that streetwise cat burglar Mike Hawkins, fresh out of the clink after a five-year stretch, is anxious to go straight - but his plans fall violently by the wayside when he is blackmailed by a corrupt business syndicate run by a pair of psychotic mugglemenates to steal three valuable and closely-guarded objects which together

will help build Leonardo Da Vinci's fabled alchemy machine. The plan is, with the aid of the machine, to flood the market with gold and bring the world's economy to its knees. Or something like that. Anyway, the player, as Hawkins, must work his way through three platform-based levels, which in turn are divided into independent stages, to recover the trio of valuables. The stages themselves range from basic left-to-right strips where the objective is simply to get from one end to the other very quickly, to sprawling underground mazes where it's just as easy to get lost as it is to get killed.

However the style of gameplay may differ though, there's a strong comic element throughout that binds it all together. Gone are the giant spiders and elaborate technical trickeries of most licensed fare to make way for a more simplistic and effective console-style approach, with smaller, cuter, characters and functional but attractive backdrops. It's a technique that's already been employed to great success in the Risk Dangerous and Switchblade games to which, it must be said, Hudson Hawk owes a lot in terms of style and



It's easy, at first glance, to make comparisons between Hudson Hawk and that prince of the platform genre, Risk Dangerous 2. Both games use cerebral console-style graphics and combine simple puzzles with levels' tricky action to provide the fun. Some go as far as to proclaim Hudson Hawk to be a Risk rip-off. However, Hudson relies more often on straight arcade bobby-bashing gameplay than Risk, which only very rarely features combat with marauding enemies - and then it's limited to firing a single shot or dropping a well-timed bomb. In Hudson Hawk, the player often finds himself escorted by all manner of enemies and the use of a bouncing ball as a weapon means rather more skill is required to dispatch an enemy. On the puzzle front, the two games score evenly. Hudson, however, picks up a few bonus points for some of the more devices and intuitive traps that await on later levels. Ultimately, it's all a matter of where your tastes lie - there's no faulting Risk's first-rate gameplay, although Hudson Hawk seems to offer a more rounded experience, combining the best of Risk with stages that call primarily on the player's more basic arcade instincts and the odd pleasant sub-game into the bargain. One thing's for sure though - there's no such thing as a free ride on either game.



## LEVEL BY LEVEL

### LEVEL ONE

The first level is a fairly simple, horizontal, fly-scrolling affair set in Rutherford's Auction House, where Leonardo Da Vinci's famous horse sculpture, the "Horse" is to be sold. Naturally, Hawkins' job is to steal it before it goes under the hammer, so inside the sculpture is part of the crystal that is needed to operate the alchemy machine.

The first stage is set on the city rooftops, where Hawkins must climb from roof to roof and enter the building through an open window. Once inside, it's just a question of getting from one end of each of the building's floors to the other, where an elevator leads to the next. When the seventh floor (where the Horse is kept) has been reached, Hawkins must get to the safe and crack it to release the sculpture and enter the next level.

### LEVEL TWO

Things get a lot more complicated as Hawkins' search for the next object, Don Vito's notebook, the Codex (which includes plans for the construction of the gold machine), it's kept under lock and key in the Vatican Museum in Rome, and the only way to get to it is via a complex route through the city's underground tunnels, pathways and air ducts. The stages vary greatly in style here, ranging from a Risk Dungeons-type adventure through the air ducts to a heady race against time through Rome's underground railway mail-delivery system.

### LEVEL THREE

The final confrontation sees Hawkins struggling to pull and end to the whole alchemy project and foil his Mackmasters' plans by entering Leonardo Da Vinci's castle and destroying the mirrored crystal that drives the gold machine. The emphasis is not much more squarely on straight platform action here, with battles against a variety of bizarre henchmen including hopping kangaroos, TV-brewing thugs and posky fellow fliers.



The tower, which requires only straightforward climbing, leads to some levelled sections, but only if the target needs to not-kill anything there.

High-powered machine-gun fire at regular intervals (the pattern may be disrupted) means the go-through strategy.



The range of window sizes, the last (bottom) being too small to open, the door to the left, while the new lift system indicates that the game here has no longer a problem.



The object that takes Hawkins over the seventh floor, leading then to the other entrance to the open window above.

When there are no obvious platform variables, Hawkins can use a set of well-timed, medium-airborne jumps that double as a pathway right down the sky.



The major ending sequence is based on a display of options before the final cutscene has much to do.

Directly opposite Hawkins' path, from previous levels, is a small, hidden, secret.



Hudson Hawk does a splendid job of capturing the feel of almost every type of platform game by varying the style of play from stage to stage - one minute the player is leaping from rooftop to rooftop, the next he's involved in a frantic race against time or contemplating some devious trap set-up.

It's a shame, too, that the layout of a world, but not open for him to free himself before they take over again. Speed of movement.

The second disadvantage is that the player is not allowed to use the wall to reach the Collector Stone. Hudson Hawk can't walk on the floor, so he has to jump on the wall and usually fall off on the other side.



The game's level design is superb. But for a tough challenge with that design, you can't jump too high and the level is too long.

The game's level design is superb. But for a tough challenge with that design, you can't jump too high and the level is too long.



Can't believe the game's level design. It's a tough challenge with that design, you can't jump too high and the level is too long.



One of the game's most interesting features is the way the player can use the wall to reach the Collector Stone. Hudson Hawk can't walk on the floor, so he has to jump on the wall and usually fall off on the other side.



Descending into the level, the player is faced with a series of traps and obstacles. It's a tough challenge with that design, you can't jump too high and the level is too long.

There are many levels in the game, and each one is a challenge. It's a tough challenge with that design, you can't jump too high and the level is too long.



# HUDSON HAWK

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content. In order to pursue its idea of a run-and-plate platform game, Special FX had to take rather a few liberties with its interpretation of the film. It's difficult, for example, to imagine Bruce Willis as cute, but here in the game he's presented as the sweetest little thing since Hub or Bob - and what's more, he's got plenty of hair. And while the levels are themed to match the relevant movie locations, the capacity of supporting characters (in the full-disk) are as far removed from their celluloid counterparts as could possibly be imagined. Con-tending thugs float by on helium-filled balloons, some in the Vatican are impossibly well-endowed, security guards are unbelievably old and obnoxious, and there are even a few sprites that seem to have been thrown in just for the hell of it, such as a cringing Elvis impersonator to be fair. Though, the King's skeleton does make a short appearance in the movie and a pop-rickling galaxy!

While it's these outstanding enemies that provide the most immediate threat to the player's wellbeing, it's the landscapes themselves that prove the most problem. Manxtry crumbles, leading to fatal falls, hidden traps and springs push the player from pillar to post with alarming regularity, fast-moving machinery threatens to crush, electric pylons give off deadly electric currents, spinning fire and dumpy oil gush from every corner. Every stage, especially some of the more jaw-drooling scenarios that appear midway, is a masterpiece of fiendishly clever design.

Much of the game's action is fairly simple platform-based stuff, where pin-point jumps and exquisite timing are required to survive. The enemies themselves are pretty harmless individually, but when they attack in flocks, as is usually the case, things can get very sticky indeed. Again, an effective but unobtrusive link with the film material has gone to provide thoughtful gameplay elements, such as in the first level, where the player must be careful not to come into contact with the various alarm systems that guard the place - tripping a laser beam or being spotted by a moving security camera not only sets traps going, but also sounds alarm bells that alert guards to your presence, making matters even tougher. Decide if the key to suc-



In what a difference it is! The graphical levels and enemies, mechanical and human, show the relevant opening and closing panels used in the film against an increasingly light blue sky. And how well the character's movements and actions are controlled and timed.

## Amiga version



The exquisite console-style graphics are undoubtedly Hudson Hawk's most impressive surface feature, and the music is jolly enough - although the MUSIC OFF key is likely to become a profound once the same tune has been heard a hundred times over. The use of minimal screen area as a la Switchblade on certain sections works fine, and even in the busy full-screen sections there's never any danger of the action slowing down or the silly scrolling losing its footing. It's not exactly pushing the Amiga envelope, but it remains one of the prettiest and most characteristic games on the machine to date.

...and while each level has a time limit, it's often worth expending the time to negotiate a particular obstacle in the correct way, rather than hurrying around like a mad bull. The later technology is guaranteed to end in tears.

Should Hawkins need to defend himself, he comes equipped with an axe that being close for close can be used with guards and the like, while an unlimited supply of bouncing baseballs (which were nowhere to be seen in the film, but what the hell) comes in handy for dispatching foes at longer ranges. They are also invaluable for solving some of the game's more commonplace puzzles, like letting



switches to deactivate dangerous machinery or open doors that lead to later parts of a level. The mastery of control of these weapons, combined with dexterity when it comes to controlling Hawkins in general, is what if any success is to be had in some of the more tortuously-constructed stages. Certain scores consist of a succession of traps and obstacles that are so tightly designed, the only way the player can squeeze through is by means of pin-point perfect execution and half-the-leather speed. The result, when such frantic scores are completed with barely a second to spare, is immensely satisfying in the same fashion as such bits-of-the-month classics as Rick Dangerous and Prince of Persia.

A lot of work has gone into the construction of Hudson Hawk's many stages, and Special FX has



While Hudson Hawk is often infuriating, it's never dull, always managing to engage the player's interest with some wily trap or frantic action scene.



does a very impressive job of maintaining a playable game while remaining faithful to the source material - not by the usual cut-out means of background sub-games or cheap graphical generalizations, but by cleverly working themed elements from the film (such as the alarm systems and rope-climbing) into the levels as real gameplay aspects. On that basis alone it's probably the most effective film tie-in to date, but though the game is expertly put together, it's arguable that it may be a little too difficult for many platform gamers. Those who found the likes of *Roller Prince* too challenging to be enjoyable will surely be put off by *Hudson Hawk* in precisely the same way, but those who believe that this kind of hard-but-fair philosophy makes the game all the more enjoyable will find it to be the most enjoyable experience they've had in a long time. And while it's often infuriating, it's never dull, always managing to engage the player's interest with some wily trap or frantic action scene.

The fun is further bolstered by the gorgeous and amazingly crisp and colourful graphics, which give the game real comic personality and help the whole thing to come alive on screen. *Hudson Hawk* itself, for example, comes with all the little fiddles you'd expect from a victory hero - he taps his feet and puts his hands in his pockets if he's left alone for too long (and there's an interesting final effect if the player continues to be neglected after these warnings), and comes to a stop by winking his arm and skidding along, kicking up little clouds of dust in the process. Even the character's more mundane movements, such as running and rope-climbing are expertly animated, and the eye-catching effect this creates just goes to highlight how much more often games of this ilk could look if only more attention was paid to the things that we take for granted.

While these minor comic touches impress initially, it's *Hudson Hawk*'s overall look that most pleases. The characters and buildings are detailed



and colourful without detracting from the overall "comic" feel. As a result the game has a characteristic look all of its own, and Special FX has had much more success in its attempt to create an original and stylish kind of victory graphics than the *Brainiac Brothers* did last month with the wondrous *Magic Pickers*. It's almost a shame about the Hudson Hawk license, as the fact that the film-based adventure is likely to have a negative effect on the way the software is perceived. But if the gamers are willing to cut through all the anti-legs that's been created by the movie (and, to a lesser extent by the low quality of some of Ocean's recent licensed product) and give the game a chance to shine on its own merit, it could well become the next platform sensation. It certainly deserves to.

#### Easy White



Ocean Hudson being introduced by a cut-out with a white, but always keeping the same look with an off-white, being "seen" by moving security camera or satellite eye being demonstrated a quality that best.

The graphics are excellent. The Hudson Hawk license is a good one. The Hudson Hawk license is a good one.



It's almost a shame that the Hudson Hawk license is a good one. The Hudson Hawk license is a good one.

The Hudson Hawk license is a good one. The Hudson Hawk license is a good one.



## RATINGS



Graphics  
Value  
Playability  
Sound  
Overall  
Value



900  
The Hudson Hawk license is a good one. The Hudson Hawk license is a good one.

The Hudson Hawk license is a good one. The Hudson Hawk license is a good one.

### RECOMMENDED GAMES

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10



C O M P U T E R G A M E S

Great Racing Simulation  
Publisher MicroPower  
Developer Geoff Crammond  
Price £75A



# FORMULA ONE GRAND

**W**

hy are there so few racing simulations around? Given that the games-buying public seems insatiably hungry for arcade-style racers and poly-gon-driven simulations of anything from tanks to jets to helicopters to submarines to - Heaven forbid! - space shuttles, this deficit seems a little odd.

That said, many of the brave few who have entered this select arena have achieved more than admirable results. Donnard's *Ward Drive*, a conversion of the Atari coin-op, was a remarkably successful attempt at the genre, reaped only by the sheer physical impossibility of confidently negotiating the complete controls of a car, an automatic car admirably onto a standard joystick.

Electronic Arts' *Indyapolis* too, currently the ACE Benchmark for this genre, was not only a more than

adequate simulation but enormous fun into the bargain, especially for those with a particular (and possibly foolish) fondness for seeing flesh-and-blood against metal.

Geoff Crammond, *Grand Prix*'s author, is no stranger to racing simulations. Way back in the Days of Gaming, when the BBC Model B was considered the machine to aspire to, he produced *Race*, a sort of proto-*Grand Prix*. Although undoubtedly an accurate simulation, it was perhaps a little too accurate,



There's a little of trouble and the solution of this issue for the other... appropriate for the... other center and last to... machine for everyone else.

with many players finding the car near impossible to control.

With Grand Prix the lessons of *Revs* have been well and truly learned and the result is the most visually exciting, involving and - more importantly - playable racing simulation yet available. It's a reproduction of the whole Grand Prix experience, complete with all sixteen tracks and ten-man drivers. In terms of atmosphere and authenticity, it's the nearest most are ever going to get to reality without downloading helmet and gloves.

The player can choose to race in either the World Championship and compete for personal glory or take part in the World Constructors' Championship, with the player earning points for his team depending on his finishing position. In addition, options are available to allow the player to practice either with or without other drivers on any of the tracks.

Practice is essential not only for the obvious yet much-needed experience of each track's tortuous twists and turns, but also to help in deciding how best to fine-tune the car's performance parameters. In the workshop the player has almost unlimited control over the car's variables, right down to adjusting the car's gear ratios and downforce. Admittedly the novice is likely to skip part of this 'tune n' bolts



Mail the new Racing Simulation ACE Benchmark. Apart from the out-of-cockpit views, Formula One Grand Prix outshines Indianapolis 500 in almost every respect. In terms of being a simulation they are closely matched, though Grand Prix's strict though never slaying attention to detail wins out overall, but where Grand Prix really scores is in atmosphere and variety. Although Indy 500 is superb, one is always aware that it's a game and it can never completely absorb the player's attention.

to the same extent as Grand Prix. Also, Indy 500's single oval track soon became painfully boring - no such problems with Grand Prix's sixteen.

Particularly excellent, and present only in Grand Prix is the computer-aided driving which both instructs novice drivers and helps experts perfect their technique.

The only possible gripe is that some mobile camera angles would have been a nice touch. Otherwise, flawless.



# GRAND PRIX



and get onto the terms, but experienced players will find that thoughtful use of the facility is essential for sharing those vital seconds off lap times.

Each Grand Prix race consists of a qualifying lap to ascertain the player's positions on the starting grid and then the race itself. "True" races last two laps or two hundred laps, which ever is the shorter, and thankfully it has been realized that such a marathon would test even the most ardent driving fiend's endurance to breaking point as well as being as good test of the quality of their joystick. Thus there's an option to play a percentage of a full race. For example, if the player selects 10% and normally six laps are driven in two hours, then the player will race just six laps.

But what of the the meat of the game, the actual racing itself? Put simply, it's sensational. No other game comes as close to simulating the sights and sounds of the real Grand Prix. The action is depicted in a unique and effective mixture of first-person images and polygons. And although it seems that every time a new polygon-driven game appears the

**With Grand Prix the lessons of *Revs* have been well and truly learned and the result is the most visually exciting, involving and - more importantly - playable racing simulation yet available.**

statement's made that the graphics are "fast and smooth", here it really is true. Some effects achieved, such as the seemingly curved polygons used as the bonets, make the speed even more astonishing.

The level of detail is remarkable to say the least. Each car has its own colour scheme matching those of its 'real life' counterpart, complete with the driver's helmet poking up out of the cockpit. The tracks are accurate bordering on the pedantic, with every hill, dip, pit, sign, building and tree reproduced in the precise locations that they would be found in reality.



# FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX

The Formula One car is a masterpiece of engineering, but for most of a grand prix season, it's not the car that's the star. It's the driver.

## START!

Right from the start of the race, the driver has to be ready to take the start. The driver has to be ready to take the start. The driver has to be ready to take the start.

There's a lot of time to think about the race. The driver has to be ready to take the start. The driver has to be ready to take the start. The driver has to be ready to take the start.



With Formula One, the driver has to be ready to take the start. The driver has to be ready to take the start. The driver has to be ready to take the start.

Each driver has a unique style. The driver has to be ready to take the start. The driver has to be ready to take the start. The driver has to be ready to take the start.



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## ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Grand Prix features eleven tracks in all. Below is some advice for six of them.

### CIRCUIT DE MONACO, MONACO

(shown left): The car should be set up for as much groundhugging downforce as possible to cope with the track's many tight corners. Qualifying is of paramount importance because the narrow winding streets make it near impossible to overtake unless the opposition makes a mistake or crash - although at Monaco the two are usually synonymous.



### SUZUKA, JAPAN

This is the only figure-eight track in the racing calendar. It's highly demanding mechanically because of its many tight bends. Cars should be set for medium to low downforce to take advantage of the two long straights.



### PROSECCO, USA

This is the first race of the season. Speed around the streets of the city, the bends are mainly of the steady-degree variety, although the designers have tried to introduce some more varied corners to prevent driver boredom. Like Monaco, this an exciting circuit because the narrow track demands greater skill of the driver, especially when trying to overtake.

### MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

This track features an incredibly long straight that can see cars reaching speeds as high as 200m.p.h. It's easy to get lost because the corners are all very similar. Due to constant rearing, the track surface is extremely bumpy.

Due to the narrow nature of the track, it's pretty difficult, using a variety of track and especially tight corners. Handle with care!

### SOCKENHEIMING, GERMANY

The downforce should be completely turned down to take advantage of the track's many long straights. This makes the car a very twitchy and nervous one to drive. It's difficult to feel rhythm on this track, and the straights can result in the driving being concentration, or stay brief.

Key setbacks left by the steering can help corner in excellent ways of movement and speed.

**A** Grand Prix combines rigorous simulation of reality with a host of difficulty modifiers to make it a highly playable game for anyone from Granny to Sterling Moss.



**Tip** As a simulation, Grand Prix is impossible. It lacks in so many ways. For example, crashed cars don't just disappear; green-overalled stewards appear and push the car off-track, then a crane hoists it out of harm's way. Likewise, when the player drives into the pits the screen doesn't cut to some alienated picture of a pit crew at work; the player actually drives past the pit lanes, each with its own waiting pit crew.

The important thing to point out is that this detail isn't just a fail - it's essential in decreasing atmosphere. While there is the facility to decrease the detail levels for slightly smoother play, I find that most players will prefer to keep the detail level high.

All control is from the joystick.

Pushing left and right steers the car, while up and down act as accelerator and brake respectively. The player steers up or down the gears by hitting the wheel when accelerating or braking. It's a sensible and very workable arrangement, but it does take a little time to get used to, especially if one is more used to arcade-style racing games - no longer can the player perform the old Outlaw trick of rapid braking even when accelerating to slip into low gear.

The control is always astonishingly smooth and responsive - the player never finds himself crashing or missteering in the wrong direction because he's try-

ing to turn the car too far with the joystick. However, through the use of the 'steering assist' feature the player can turn the car in the opposite direction. This feature allows the player to make a U-turn or a 180-degree turn without having to reverse the car. This feature is useful in the early stages of the race, but it is not recommended for use in the later stages.



## Amiga version

Superb near-digital-quality video and more screens give way to literally jaw-dropping 3D - the poor old Amiga must be sweating its guts out to achieve the screen update on show here. Sampled engine and crowd sounds help accentuate the almost palpable Grand Prix atmosphere.

## Atari ST version

An almost pixel-for-pixel copy of its Amiga partner. Although perhaps a small yet impressive test factor in places, the ST loses out inevitably in the sound stakes, with the engine's thump while a poor substitute for the Amiga's thwarty roar.

ing to compensate for sluggish control response, even on the rare occasions when update slows down is a huge amount of on-screen action.

The Formula One car is a tricky brute to drive, and certainly no task for someone whose nearest Grand Prix experience is watching down in the pits in the family min. Fortunately, a useful frustration is created by a number of driving 'aids' (see the 'Help' file) - but for a full - oh yes - run-down. Each makes the task of taming the car that bit easier. Indeed, with all the aids active there's little left to do but steer left and right. However, these 'aids' that they provide an easy route to Championship success are sadly mistaken - the computers switch them off as the player progresses through the track.

Each of the player's driving opponents has been modelled with their own - for the want of a better term - 'personality'. It's not surprising to be pulling



Flag: The yellow indicator that tells the driver to slow down. Represents the race of Grand Prix's combination of engine and chassis (although irrelevant).

Photo: The driver's view of the track as they race. The yellow flag is visible in the distance. Represents the race of Grand Prix's combination of engine and chassis (although irrelevant).



Just the view of the crowd built with player approvals the most advanced racing strategy game ever, with the most advanced physics engine, award-winning and going to be easy.

Grand Prix gear, the driver's view of the cockpit



R A T I N G S



Specialty  
controls, but  
and  
strategies  
to improve  
the overall  
experience  
of the game  
is a bit.

## Formula One Grand Prix isn't so much leading the pack as lapping it.

triumph of both programming and design.

Formula One Grand Prix isn't so much leading the pack as

lapping it.

away from the starting grid and in the distance we four or five cars getting involved in a rather nasty metal-crunching pile-up. This inconsistency on the part of the computer-controlled cars makes a refreshing change to the usual "follow-the-leader" perfect driving seen in other racing games - even if it did have to be programmed in! Not only does this provide a real challenge - these guys don't seem about as loquaciously predictable patterns - it also helps ensure that all-important sense of atmosphere. It's easy to start believing that these are real people out there on the track.

As is seemingly standard in today's simulations, Grand Prix features several alternatives to the standard first-person cockpit view. The player can "roll backwards and forwards through the different cars to see the current view from their cockpit. At first, this may not sound useful, but it in fact turns out to be handy for finding out where, say, the leader or the car immediately behind us. While doing this, the computer maintains steady though definitely not race-winning control over the car, making sure it doesn't crash or come off the track.

In addition, there's a TV-style view from a series of cameras mounted on the trackside, each of which can be followed the player's car as it passes. Unfortunately there's no zoom facility, the player simply has to make do with what's available. It's a real pity that there aren't more views available, such as the heli-copter shot in *IndyCar* 2000.

At the risk of sounding like an over-enthusiastic layman, it has to be said that Grand Prix is so perfect that it truly is hard to find any criticisms. One may carp about the lack of real cockpit views, but then again how many real Formula One drivers have such an option? A triumph of both programming and design, Formula One Grand Prix isn't so much leading the pack as lapping it.

■ David Upchurch

### Help Me!

Even if the player thinks that gear stick is about from their mates about the clothes they wear, Grand Prix's five driving aids should get them around the track in one piece.

**( ) Automatic braking** - The computer controls the player's braking. The computer assesses the player's speed and their position on the track and decides whether braking is necessary. It makes winning very difficult, because it's conservative braking conspires to stop the player over-taking, especially on corners. Useful at first, but soon de-selected.

**(H) Automatic Gearing** - Very handy. Lets the player forget about all that up-fireback-firs malarkey and just get on with the winning. But don't forget that the computer switches on all these aids out eventually, so the gear switching has to learnt some day.

**(↑) Direction Pointer** - There are few things worse than driving along at 200 mph, and seeing a pack of similarly speedy vehicles coming directly head-on. Thank goodness, then, for this aid which always forces the car to take the right way around the track.

**(♦) Indestructibility** - The Grand Prix world is a rough and tumble one, especially when the player's starting out. Fortunately this nifty option that makes the player's car as hard as nails and totally impervious to any damage.

**(—) Best Line** - Although ideally the player learns by experience where best to position his car to take maximum advantage of every corner, it does take some time. This option draws a line on the road indicating the optimum path to take around the track.

930

930

The 930 series has a high flying feature, which can't be seen in the standard 930. The player can use the 930 to get a better view of the track, and this is a great option for those who want to see the action from a different perspective. The 930 is a great option for those who want to see the action from a different perspective.

930

930



Genre: Strategy/Action  
 Publisher: Team 17  
 Developer: Team 17  
 Price: £24.99

# ALIEN BREED

**W**hat is it about the Alien that makes it so crowd-pleasingly scary? Is it the creature's utter implacability - the fact that it can't be bargained or reasoned with? Or is it the sinister absence of eyes, which imply that no matter how hard you try to hide it will somehow track you down? Or the



Team 17's Alien Breed is a top-down strategy game. The Alien is the most popular monster in modern cinema.

Team 17's Alien Breed is a top-down strategy game. The Alien is the most popular monster in modern cinema.

hideous way it uses still-living humans as fleshy incubators for its young? Whatever the reasons, there can be no doubt that the Alien is the most popular monster in modern cinema.

There have been attempts to cash in on the Alien's money-spinning qualities before. New defunct Argus made a creditable job of translating the first film's suspenseful atmosphere (and even cloned the cult screen onto computer, while Electric Dreams produced not one but two (count 'em) games based on the gang-bro sequel Alien: one written in the US and the other produced right here in dear old Blighty). Furthermore, aside, the UK interpretation, an exploitation game even shoot-'em-up, was the superior to the six-film movie-game affair of the American effort. And even as I write, Microsoft are putting the finishing touches on another game to tie-in with the release of the second Alien sequel-only next year. Apart from official tie-ins, there have been many

other games that have 'borrowed' - some might say plagiarised - the Alien's iconoclastic imagery to add extra 'Goreph' to the gameplay. By far, the closest the close resemblance between 8-Type's end-of-level boss and the Alien did a certain thrill to the otherwise standard shoot-'em-up task of blasting across belts out of the screen?

And now we have Alien Breed, the first full-price title from down writers turn game creators Team 17. Alien Breed can best be summed up as the Alien licence that should have been. It not so much borrows from the films as completely emulates it, but by grafting Alien's atmosphere onto Gauntlet-esque gameplay, Team 17 have come up with an addictive - albeit unoriginal - winner.

But at a price, Alien Breed is a game the Amiga owners only, and our complete machines at that. This rather lolly-stone isn't quite as shiny as it first appears, considering that all new Amiga came

Alien Breed can best be summed up as the *Aliens* licence that should have been. It not so much borrows from the film as completely mugs it, but by grafting *Aliens* atmosphere onto Gauntlet-esque gameplay, Team 17 have come up with an addictive - albeit unoriginal - winner.

equipped with the same gun as standard and upgrades are retailed from as little as thirty quid. From certain third-party manufacturers.

The breaching of *Aliens* extends right down to the plot, which is perfunctory enough on the night. A space station has suddenly ceased communication with base. And it's up to the one or two players, as the Universe's hardest muscle-for-hire space troopers, to investigate and find out why. No prizes for guessing that the answer is fanged, carnivorous and hungry for humans.

The game is split into six stages, one for each deck of the space station. Before entering the deck the player is given a task to complete before access to the deck level is permitted. On the first level the task is simple - just find the lift - but later on they become just slightly more complex, and inevitably result in the activation of the deck's self-destruct sequence and a hair-raising race to escape before the place

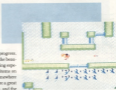
blows and the player with it. These tasks, though hardly brain-teasing, at least add momentum to the game and avoid the problem that plagued Gauntlet, i.e. spent hours getting higher scores than was so real point to playing.

The action is depicted in plan view. As the players move about the view scrolls smoothly in all directions to follow their progress. The graphics are generally excellent, with the beautifully detailed and well-animated decks being especially noteworthy, the scattered tanks and items on the floor perfectly conveying the sense of someone left in a hurry. In comparison the sprites are a great disappointment, especially those of the players, and the animation is merely adequate - the players' 'shoulder-pad shuffle' is particularly poor.

The aliens attack from all sides, some wandering in from off-screen, others leaping up through holes in the floor or crawling out through vents in the walls. The result is unpleasantly chaotic - unlike Gauntlet there are no 'generators' for the player to destroy and stop the onslaught. Apart from the giant 'red-of-level' monsters that appear from Deck Three onwards, there are fundamentally only two types of monstrosity - man-sized and weak or face-bugger-sized - and it's really only their appearances and strengths that alter as the player progresses. In a pity that there wasn't more variety to the aliens, such as an alien that, say, spit acid at the player. The attack patterns never change either - the aliens either dawdle around or make a bee-line for their quarry, depending on how they feel.

The decks are more than just a network of corridors and doors. There are various things to interact with or avoid, such as turbines that try to suck the player in and turn him into momentum, or force-fields which can only be passed through one-way. Tactically the most important are the fire doors, which can be closed by shooting the switch nearby. However, care must be taken not to seal off important deck areas. These features add a terrific amount to the game, forcing the player to tread carefully and plan his route through the deck. The fire doors in particular cause a surprising amount of nasty trouble, as the low-energy player desperately huddles to seal a corridor before the aliens reach him.

Without the most frequently-used deck feature in the *Intels* Systems computer, from which the player can access a series of menus



Alien Breed owes a lot to *Aliens*, but even more to Gauntlet. This Atari coin-op appeared in 1985, and boasted simultaneous four-

player action as wizards and warriors fought hordes of brutes and ghouls in a dungeon-based quest for treasure. Alien Breed lacks many of Gauntlet's best qualities, such as the wide variety of opponents and the differing abilities of the characters, but more than replaces them with complex and more interactive maze layouts and greater atmosphere. Most importantly, Alien Breed's defined aims and the certain knowledge that it has an end help give the game a sense of purpose that Gauntlet lacked.



Before delving to their waiting ammunition store for more time you will be discovering that that automatic 'save' CD made the same error of ignoring the up-irradiation and still let alien breed and not require truly 'hardcore' for example in the alien-killer-implosion can't find their way home.

They're like death traps. Although they only cost 1000000 and are not all the way's limited. Sometimes - because I don't know they stop radiation limited with and cut their health with something. I don't know. But they may be able to handle other the alien.

They're like death traps. Although they only cost 1000000 and are not all the way's limited. Sometimes - because I don't know they stop radiation limited with and cut their health with something. I don't know. But they may be able to handle other the alien.

They're like death traps. Although they only cost 1000000 and are not all the way's limited. Sometimes - because I don't know they stop radiation limited with and cut their health with something. I don't know. But they may be able to handle other the alien.





# ALIEN BREED



**Special abilities** will be placed on face that is not of their color.

**Damage-dealing skills will come in handy here, such as using damage to cover to fire at the alien.** The alien is generally most vulnerable when the player's strength is weaker than the alien's. It's best to use a high strength alien to fight the alien.

Many, many, many Green credits have been loaned heavily conditioned on the state theory of the economic movement, and can be picked up by the International Space Program and used to buy equipment and supplies from the alien computer. Like money always does, it causes inflation. Computer software allows us to fight to gain the best's share.

**Key:** Very small. Can be found lying on the floor or caught in the water from the alien computer. Offer a new way to keep an eye on how many there are around to avoid possible game-ending scenarios by getting stuck in a maze with no way out.

Get to know what these red alien will: you'll be using them. They're like computer hardware. The alien's very own alien computer. Most importantly it can be used to buy items using the credits found on alien, across your mine and you know, right? Using a map of the current level (shown in red) that the alien's alien computer and one half of the computer itself, which is sure to be the most basic in the game.



**Damage** is one of the game's most powerful weapons. The alien is just starting to make some headway when it's killed. It's best to use a high strength alien to fight the alien. The alien's alien computer and one half of the computer itself, which is sure to be the most basic in the game.



**Use the alien map to show your own assembly using the alien's alien computer and one half of the computer itself, which is sure to be the most basic in the game.**

## Deck 1

The deck 10, however, it may seem but on the left. The alien's alien computer and one half of the computer itself, which is sure to be the most basic in the game.



**When the alien's alien computer and one half of the computer itself, which is sure to be the most basic in the game.**

Each of these alien cards are using the alien's alien computer and one half of the computer itself, which is sure to be the most basic in the game.

Although large, the alien's alien computer and one half of the computer itself, which is sure to be the most basic in the game.



Right. There are extremely narrow and unorthogonally oriented paths. It also stops the aliens, so it's possible to get low there into the main corridors. Being in a little better - the aliens aren't completely stupid - so don't wander too close this way.

The doors are both the player's best friend and their worst enemy. Activating one may guard your back (or force) but not all important ones.



## FULL DECK

Alien Breed takes the player through six deadly levels. But what does the player have to do on each, and what can he expect to meet... or... meet? Read on...

**DECK ONE:** Having just landed in the ship's hangar, the player's task is simple - find the lift. Few aliens, so this is a really just a warm-up session for what lies ahead.

**DECK TWO:** The player must make his way to the station's core computer system. Once this has been deactivated the deck will begin to self-destruct - so get out straight!

Alien pressure begins to increase, with the first appearance of small, but not necessarily weak, four-legged enemies.

**DECK THREE:** The station's power regulator has been damaged. The player must find and repair it. Sliding platforms are the jolly way to cross trenches. More aliens and a giant cat-like creature to get past.

**DECK FOUR:** The player has to locate the security vault and recover the station's research data. Player now has to contend with crushing walls and switchable forcefields. As you'd guess, lots more aliens.

**DECK FIVE:** The lid is high. Find the station's self-destruct, kick it in and get back to the ship as soon as possible. Sparring and slinking the valves in the floor mean a careless trooper could bid to his death.

**DECK SIX:** (Spoiler!) The lift breaks and plunges down to the sixth deck, the alien hatching. Slipshod? Escape, preferably alive. Bounding at the seams with very pissed-off aliens. And who knows, if you're lucky you might get a meeting with the Queen...

Alien Breed's difficulty has been well judged. By matching the player's access to higher-powered weapons with the aliens' strength, Team 17 have ensured that the odds never swing wildly in either's favour.



to buy a more powerful weapon (we the 'Uzi gun...') how to find out what's in stock, and anything from an ammo clip to a set of door keys to a new life, using the credits found left lying on the deck floor by the careless deceased station staff. There's also the facility to examine a full deck map, check performance statistics and even have a relaxing game of Ping!

Players 'lock in' to the network by walking up to one of the blue terminals and hitting the fire. Although it's a good system that prevents the player having to fumble for the keyboard in the heat of battle, the proximity check could have done with a little tweaking. Too often the player finds himself on-fire by accident because he happened to be just a tad too close to the terminal when firing his machine gun. The 'tagging-on' procedure is a little annoying, too. The arena test is split into letters by letter teletype-fashion, which can make for an annoying break in the action if the player simply wants to check something quickly. But although mildly frustrating, neither of these niggles detract in seriously from the game.

The game's difficulty has been well judged. The levels, though large, are split into 'zones', so the player always knows where he's heading in the right direction or not. As the player progresses downwards the zones become more convoluted, the alien more frenzied and the lanes terminal more scarce. By cleverly matching the player's access to higher-powered weapons with the strength of the opposition, the programmers have ensured that the odds never swing wildly in either the player's or the alien's favour, and the game provides a constant challenge. Unfortunately there's no pass-out system, and it can get a little dull having to make through the early levels over and over again.

In terms of recreating the Alien's claustrophobic

he can't help feeling that, given Team 17 awarded itself an extra \$12K to play around with, its first full-price game could and perhaps should have been rather more ambitious than a top-notch Gauntlet clone.

## Uzi 9mm...

Initially the players are armed with a single machine gun. Its pathetic rat-a-tat-tat fire is barely sufficient defence against the first alien's hordes, but when the hard-as-nails brutes that attack later on, join us as we stride down the aisles of Game-It-Like, and browse through the juicy selection of anatomical stoppers on offer...

**WINTEROPS PPS TWIN-FIRE BMD** - For a paltry \$2800 the player can buy this rapid-firing little beauty. Although a damn sight better than the machine gun, it's still not that worthy a purchase unless you're really desperate, although it's predictable fire pattern can be a bonus in some situations.



**AMMET MPF FLAMETHROWER** - Powerful but erratic, this spits out blazing bouzoungs of fire that bounce wildly around the corridors and off the walls. Superb for confined spaces, but it's unpredictability can result in disastrous consequences near fire doors. Price! \$1800 Cr.

**INTER PLASMA SHOTGUN** - At 3000 Cr this is probably the best upgrade for the first-time buyer. Each squeeze of the trigger causes a intense mass of blue plasmas to ooze out in front of the player. Frying tonight? Oh yes, we must certainly are.



**INTEX EBON FLAMETHROWER** - A real beauty this - looks good, feels good and packs one Hell of a kick, all for only \$600 Cr too. But the smell of cooked alien fill your nostrils as you wave this in their ugly insect-like faces. You know they love you for it really. And if they don't - tough.

**ROYAL MIDDLE LAUNCHER** - Probably the most best immediate upgrade after the Plasma Shotgun at its moderately cheap \$1300 Cr, and well worth saving those valuable pennies for. The Launcher's armour-piercing shells make short work of even the hardest alien carapace.



**INTER ARC LASER GUN** - Costing a hefty \$4000 Cr this is by far the most expensive weapon, but by George it's worth it. An essential item in any psychopath's armory, it emits streams of rippling multi-bead laser rays, incinerating anything in its path. Almost makes you feel sorry for the ugly little bugs. Almost.



'one versus a hundred' atmosphere. Alien fired comes closer than any of the official tie-in mentioned titles. The alien graphics are similar enough to their movie counterparts to evoke memories of the film without forcing a lawsuit, while the sound is strong enough to threaten a claim of copyright infringement. The enemy's gun is a one-handed, shield with the trundle of the machine gun and the high-pitched squeals of the blasted alien. It seems that everything has an appropriate example, from loading a new ammo clip to a door opening.

There are constant messages from a female computer voice in a "Mother", telling the player which way he's now entering or if he's low on ammo. The best example of the game's superb use of sound occurs when the self-destruct is activated: the life-support beam gradually rises in pitch and tempo as the clock ticks down, while the computer voice intones "Destruction Imminent" with increasing urgency. Admittedly it's an old technique generating risk, but it still works.

Many have speculated what would happen when demo writers gave up trying to put five-million colours and five-hundred W00s on screen at one



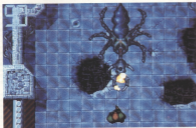
#### Amiga version

**Presentation-wise, this is Mr Slick of Miskelville. Even the Fobbin Richter intro to the fast full-screen scrolling. Everything - apart from the average sprite design and animation - is of a faultlessly high quality. Provided you have the memory, this is an essential purchase for trigger-happy gamers everywhere.**

(Based on the second disk the player's task is to manoeuvre the arm transporter around and grab localisation the well-known side effect of carrying the disk's self-destruct sequence. The shot, light, sight and sound, however, are the highlight of the computer's presentation. It shows and lights how one repeat the attack. As the player advances in memory in the safety of the disk's self-destruct.

Explosion that three several thousand units of localisation appear. The result is such the same as usual. And the image which is not the same as usual.

Based on the second disk the player's task is to manoeuvre the arm transporter around and grab localisation the well-known side effect of carrying the disk's self-destruct sequence. The shot, light, sight and sound, however, are the highlight of the computer's presentation. It shows and lights how one repeat the attack. As the player advances in memory in the safety of the disk's self-destruct.



time and actually used their undeniable programming talents to create a game. Well, now we know. Alien Breed is a fine action romp, slickly crafted and possessing sufficient depth to make it rewarding in play. There's plenty of features which I'm pleased to see the team have included and the whole project seems to have had some genuine care and effort put into it. However, one can't help feeling that, since Team 17 awarded itself an extra task to play around with, its fast full-price game could and perhaps should have been rather more ambitious than a top-notch Genesis clone.

■ David Upchurch



#### RATINGS



That would be quite some with a little more. The game will still be fun, but it's not quite as good as the others.

#### 875

875

The game presentation and ease to grasp gameplay are what we looked for. The other was playing the game a lot. The whole full price game is a bit of a disappointment. The game is not as good as the others. The introduction of new gameplay features, although they are not as good as the others, is a strong sign to continue to develop the franchise. The difficulty of the full price game is not as high as the others. It is not as good as the others. It is not as good as the others.

Based on the second disk the player's task is to manoeuvre the arm transporter around and grab localisation the well-known side effect of carrying the disk's self-destruct sequence. The shot, light, sight and sound, however, are the highlight of the computer's presentation. It shows and lights how one repeat the attack. As the player advances in memory in the safety of the disk's self-destruct.



Game Simulation  
Publisher Frontline  
Developer GIGAWATT  
Price \$79.95



First showing the bridge. Thanks to the easy-to-use auto controls, the victory of a computer-controlled rebel is much easier than the usual difficult flying requirements of the aircraft.

Ultimate Rebel Superheroism again. Players with clever tactics can get to enemy airfields (green) and, when it's their turn, shoot them out of the sky.

**S**omewhere in South America a coup has taken place. Stinking yellow-toothed rebel forces have taken control, to a greater or lesser extent, of an area some 20,000 kilometres square. United Nations resolution 828 dictates that unless the rebels surrender immediately to Peacekeeping troops,

the area will have to be reclaimed by force. Needless to say, the rebels pay no heed to threats from silly little facilities in cyan heliports and stay put, using the UN to do their worst.

Taking control of the MiG-29M, the most feared combat aircraft in the world and pride of the Soviet air force, the player's mission is to embark on a campaign of strikes, each loosening the rebels' stranglehold on the area and eventually ensuring the enemy flits out of the country.

Distant from the first MIG game from Denmark, released only a year ago, MIG-29M is essentially one long mission, broken down into clusters of manageable combat chunks. The aim is to give the feeling of a more coherent campaign, of actually taking part in a war rather than playing a set of passive missions. MIG-29M's premise is best described as a midpoint between a Microspace theatre-of-war style affair and the slightly disappointed though more intensely gratifying feel of Interceptor.

If this outing was to succeed, it was vital that while addressing the problems of the short-term and bitty appeal of the first game, the player didn't feel as if he was left adrift without any direction, simply flying across thousands of kilometres of air space with no aim.

The game's success on this count is at least partially down to the limitations put upon the player. By only allowing only four waypoints to be stored in the aircraft's automatic navigation system, it's ensured that there's little chance of the player feeling swamped with options.

Before takeoff, an overview of the Mission screen shows the entire campaign area with bridges, roads and supply depots marked. Four waypoints are already positioned on the map, all of which can be moved around at will. In their initial positions they are, respectively, the home runway, an enemy runway, a road bridge over a river and an enemy supply depot. Although the player can position any waypoint wherever he chooses, it rapidly becomes clear that there is a particular order of strikes which must be performed, each weakening the overall enemy position. Carefree heroics such as trying to destroy the main enemy base on the first flight will seldom yield any reward other than a surface-to-air missile up the exhaust.

The game is most constructively played as combat in stages, attacking an enemy runway and then taking it over, then using it as a home base from which another enemy installation can be attacked and so on until all the elements on the map are back

# MIG 29M SUPER



**iG29M Superfulcrum's predecessor, the comparatively duller Strid Might (above) was in every sense a first step. Even when the first game was produced, Denmark and Sims had clearly been paying attention to the state of the market and had noted the saturation of heavyweight products. Even before Core turned up and waved their "No-nonsense flight game" banner with Thunderhawk, Denmark had produced a flight game with all the over-complexity cut out. However, in the process some of the long-term appeal got sliced away too. Here we have a game with the better qualities of FF's stability and some genuine depth too. Not bad.**



**Full** The iG29M's controls are not only the actual, but also the virtual, cockpit. The iG29M's controls are not only the actual, but also the virtual, cockpit. The iG29M's controls are not only the actual, but also the virtual, cockpit.



**Full** The iG29M's controls are not only the actual, but also the virtual, cockpit. The iG29M's controls are not only the actual, but also the virtual, cockpit.

and US control. Winning each stage will make the player's life meter turn on. By destroying supply lines, and isolating particular camps, the enemy forces are less capable of transporting the player's attacks on other installations.

Once waypoints have been decided and weapons selected from either the default combination of both air and surface missiles or the player's own particular favourite setup, it's time to get the MIG airborne. From its customary position on the runway the aircraft can be brought into the air in a matter of seconds. Simple, logical keyboard controls minimise any frustration of the comparatively manual starting play and once airborne the player can appreciate the abilities of both the game and the plane alike.

A factor which made the first MIG game so playable was that the aircraft itself is so pig in fly. Plenty of combat flight aims are hampered by complex and fiddly controls forcing the player to pay more heed to the joystick and dials than the world outside. Not so here. Everything is provided for the player's com-

fort and ease of use. The HUD is clear and simple and information is duplicated all over the place. If the player is concerned about altitude when tracking down a target, he need only glance at the altimeter on the HUD which is also pointing the way toward his prey. Likewise, if he's checking to see if his air location have been knocked out by enemy fire, he can still keep the best line for his weapon home with no effort. It's all displayed in an utterly sensible manner on his control console. The ergonomics here are just as they should be. The player never has to think where to look.

In addition, the fly by wire set up of the new MIG is simulated well to make the flight even less unnecessarily stressful than before. In order to minimise instability and grey/blackouts caused by pulling too many G's, a computerised buffer smooths out the player's occasionally frantic, stick-wrenching before sending them on the aircraft. Likewise, an automatic stabilising device will straighten up the aircraft whenever necessary, removing the frustrating need to continuously nudge and tap the stick into a

**iG29M's premise is best described as a midpoint between a Microprose theatre-of-war style affair and the slightly disjointed yet manageable feel of Interceptor.**

# FULCRUM

## FLIGHT DECK

The whole point of MIG29M is that it doesn't break down into easy-to-handle missions. In the same way that lots of flight sims do, instead, the plot unfolds over a single mission - to liberate a Southern American coast by force from its newly acquired rebel leaders. So, to give a better impression of how the game plays, we've taken a jolt from each of the major elements found within the mission and detailed them for you.

Working around in an essentially obstacle-pattern, the player must perform a sort of leapingfrog action, attacking enemy airplanes and then claiming them as his own in order to reach later targets successfully.

To begin with, life is worryingly easy, with the player facing greater difficulty in actually landing his plane on a clean stretch than shooting enemy fighters and evading little anti-aircraft incursions. However, as the game goes on, each take-off could well prove to be the player's last. Toward the end of the mission life becomes quite heavily impossible, with enemy jets herding the player into the ground and anti-aircraft guns blasting him as he hits it.

The learning curve from slow and easy combat scenarios to deadly end-of-the-party stuff could have been a touch more gentle, but hey, this is war, after all.

That said, even novice fliers will find some of the frustrating obstacles other games throw in their path. The MIG is a great aircraft to fly and the new fly-by-wire system will do away with all those frustrating over-compensatory joystick jerks.

What Donuts really need to do is enter to establish the MIG games as heavyweight play-for-fee flight combat games to bury out a mission disk to extend the longevity of an already excellent games system.

(Right) The Mountain Range. A lot of a mission of info about terrain are ready rather great of the world's geographical reality, while the rest of the screen simply takes an option.

When the player is in control flight, it's best to make use of the auto-stabilization to avoid the rest of landing around.



Even when being controlled by an automatic system, it's worth making use of the auto-stabilization, as this will help to keep the plane steady.



It's worth knowing that all jets will attempt to land with some degree of precision, so being in the wind and speed of the wind will give their automatic flow.



**MIG29M's strongest suit is the storyline and development of the plot through the different stages in the missions. It may not be the most original yarn ever, but it serves its purpose well.**

and on the map for a player, as the mission is done, and then try to change something with the mission through the game settings.



Warning light! During the enemy plane, a warning light is shown, which means that the player is in danger.

(Right) A big warning about the mission. When the player is in the mission, the screen will show a lot of information about the mission, such as the fuel level, the height, and the time of the mission.





When the satellite dish is placed, the player can see that power is being sent to the antenna.



When the satellite dish is placed, the player can see that power is being sent to the antenna.

When the player starts to build the power system, it is clear that the most important part of the game is the power system. The player must be able to see the power system in order to build it.

The player must be able to see the power system in order to build it.



The player must be able to see the power system in order to build it.



The player must be able to see the power system in order to build it.



The player must be able to see the power system in order to build it.



The player must be able to see the power system in order to build it.

**320** - ventral position to simply achieve level flight.

Once the desired speed and altitude of flight has been achieved, the MIG's progress can be viewed from a host of angles. Interior or exterior views behind and in front, left and right, top and standard views are available. Also, for more eye-bouncing benefits than any addition to combat scenarios, the player can position his "cameras" in the most recently fired missile as it screams toward its target or even, at his most perverse, inside the target itself.

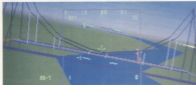
Combat in *MiggyM* is never more than a minute away. The target clusters are constructed to teach the player just enough in one situation to know how to deal with the next. The first opponents, for example are rather lightly defended and there's little need for any but the most panicky feybor to raise any point of the action. Targets within range can be cycled through by tapping the appropriate buttons. A little square box will also highlight the target's position on screen. Should the target be outside the player's cone of vision, a direction line will lead from the centre of the HUD to the target. Thus, aircraft can be chased around the skies a most fulfilling manner, as the player is forced to balance the need to turn more quickly than his opponent to avoid being locked into his enemy's sights with the constant threat of blocking out under too much gravitational pressure.

Engagements are, for the most part, the most difficult yet satisfying part of *MiggyM*. Enemy planes will lock on to the player and chase them to death gives half a chance. They're decent enough pilots and it's tricky to catch them out. It should be the player's foremost priority in any combat situation to ditch any enemy planes, as they will pose for more of a threat than any anti-aircraft fire that may be encountered.

Able from all the obnoxious manoeuvres detailed in the manual, probably the easiest and per-



aretree heroism such as trying to destroy the enemy base on the first flight will seldom yield any reward other than a surface-to-air missile up the exhaust.



Enemy birds are usually fast about heading through when small explosions were to reveal the aircraft's path.

Such manoeuvres of the MIG appearing to see one of the enemy supply lines. Remaining near and within the 'no-fly' zone and lighting white smoke!

tely functional dogfighting move is to thrust away from the enemy plane and force them to chase at top speed. Then, by slamming on the brakes and killing all thrust, make the MiG decelerate and turn in as tight a circle as possible. If performed correctly, the move will break the enemy's position and will drag their little green line around from behind to about 90 degrees away from directly in front of the MiG. Increasing thrust and rearming the airframe, most players will be able to lock on with an air-to-air missile. Since the enemy jet will be now by trying a similar rapid deceleration in order to turn, they will be slow enough to be hit on most occasions.

Intercepting enemy missiles can generally be avoided with some frantic fire/shield dropping and adhering to the basic rule of not flying in a straight line for too long in combat.

Players finding themselves on the receiving-end of enemy fire will experience a number of scenarios. Either their jet will perform a roller pattern to rain fire with smoke puffing out of their tail or an increasing number of instruments will cook out. Once in this situation, it's wiser to just turn around and let the enemy, or only-part-wisely through a mission.

While both the handling of the plane and the pacing of the missions are admirable, MiG's graphic style is worthy of comment, though for different reasons. Critics of the first game suggested that the landscape was a little Spartan and would do with some detail. This time, Simis has added lakes, fields and trees as decorative touches to the bridges, tanks and radar towers which actually play a part in the combat.

Most of these elements sit well with the rest of the game, but the decision to use fractals to construct a mountain range in the southeast area of the combat arena seems a little strange. In a game where so much of the visual appeal is based on the clean, smooth look of the graphics, to have a distant mountain suddenly fragmenting into lots of little triangles as it is flown-over is a little disconcerting. Quite apart from anything else, it makes the playfield look more like the Final Landscape than that of a flight simulator. The shaky realism of the effect isn't helped by the unusually symmetrical nature of the mountain range either.

On all other visual fronts, MiG:MiG is no slouch. The graduated skyline, the explosions of targets and especially the burning and smoking exhaust flames which follow from damaged enemy aircraft make the game look really quite special.

In what level of success have Denmark and Simis half? Well, on virtually all accounts, a great deal. Despite minor niggles about some of the graphics and perhaps a worrying doubt that over-depends the more grand feel of the mission, it may still be a long way short of a Microsoft title for sheer length of spend, MiG:MiG Superfalcon delivers the goods. It's also one of the most entertaining and straight-forward polygon combat flight sims around.



#### PC version

Machines running at over 12MHz will be adequate for MiG's needs. The option to turn off the graduated skyline will further aid players with slower machines. Despite the rather unpleasant texture used in the briefing and pilot-debriefing modes MiG is a fine example of clean, ordered game design, with a gloss for everything and everything in its place, capable of holding easily with games from companies more conventionally associated with both PCs and simulations than Denmark.



Here you'll see the edge of the landscape as the skyline is the graduated the enemy's flight will be able to see the enemy's position.



The world view interface changes to a grid of stars at the end of every combat without actually being in the last that would give the impression of being the target only really that the last is applicable to the whole.



© Jim Douglas

#### R A T I N G S



#### 860

There's no doubt that MiG:MiG gets the attention from the industry the other computer flighting titles represent. While you'll find some that think there are, the level of interest in the game is high. It's not only the fact that it's a new game and there's little left to be said, but the amount of time it's been in the air. The amount of time it's been in the air is a good indicator of the quality of the game and a good indicator of the quality of the game.



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# console reviews

Over the page, console fans, you'll find the start of ACE's new console section, a suite of pages set aside in the magazine for nothing other than console games. Each month in the mag we'll be devoting a similar number of pages to all things console with the very latest titles on both import and general release reviewed in full colour.

Don't forget that all the new console games we receive each month will be detailed in our Reviews Directory section at the back of the magazine, so even if you don't find anything here to suit your tastes, you may well find something in the pink that'll do the trick.

## This month's games:

### 91 - Road Rash

Even the beautiful graphics can't distract from Electronic Arts' new boggle: a motorcycle racing game with more action than you would believe. Race across country down winding roads while fist-fighting other riders and motorists. 100% smasher/smasher fun!

### 93 - El Viento

Magazine owners never seem to tire of the stalwart old beat-'em-up formula and this time we've got two examples of just that. El Viento, the ugly sister of the pair features some entertaining enough fighting but lacks graphic appeal. Nevertheless, it's worth examining for sheer novelty value alone.

### 94 - Pro Soccer

They said it couldn't be done and they were right! Well, they said it should be done and they were wrong in either the truth. Kick Off, the best game in the history of the world (official) has turned out to be a very old affair on the PlayStation. Oh dear.

### 96 - Streets of Rage

Hit those women! Kick those dwarves! Yes indeed, this is what fighting games are supposed to be all about. Team up with a mate and do battle with the evil forces that have taken over a city and turned it into a New Jack England. Broken bottles! Knives! Superduper! Cool!

### 99 - Jerry Boy

Jerry Boy, as it should have been titled involves a little squishy shape crossing a hazard-packed land abounding monsters and doing good deeds. Before you turn away in disgust, take a look at the review.

91



93



94



96



99



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# Rolling Ronny



It's never easy trying to pump fresh ideas into a tired old genre - although with its latest effort *Road Rash*, Electronic Arts has had more success than most in recent times. It's essentially a motorcycle racing game, but with one novel twist - violence. Despite the game's contemporary setting, *Road Rash*'s designers have had no qualms about making the whole thing as outlandish as possible. What games for a storyline concern a cowboy herd of speed freak bikers, known as Roaders, who race each other across the country for cash prizes. Apparently nobody ever bothered with the formality of writing a rulebook and so more or less anything goes. As a result, the days of trying to sneak past the vehicle ahead of you are long gone - in *Road Rash* all that's required is a hefty kick, punch or slap to knock the offending rider off the road!

The *Road Rash* consists of five individual races, each on a different track, and each with fifteen riders. EA's previous "alternative" sports games *They Die* and its sequel *Die Die* have obviously been a strong source of inspiration here, as the feel is very similar, consisting of lots of "wacky tubular duels" type games in the pre-race dialogue. Each of the computer-controlled riders is named and have their own personalities - some are even violent than others.



Electronic Arts' strategy on the *Road Rash* isn't only to make a violent, outlandish sport enough for all those bikers interested in things that might get violent.

Early falling an early crash is a sure sign of the sport within the game.

# ROAD RASH

Race hard! Hit harder! Mad Max meets Super Hang-On in ELECTRONIC ARTS' latest Sega offering. But is it wheehee good or wheehee wheehee good?

The racing itself is, for the most part, of the standard Super Hang-On variety, but with a number of neat twists. For a start the tracks are considerably more treacherous than ones before seen, comprising lethal hairpin turns, hair-raising hills and all manner of obstacles. Cars prove the main problem, with added peril provided by roadside trees, signposts and grazing animals. A nice touch is that, when the player crashes, rider and bike are separated in a spectacular accident sequence, often with the unfortunate biker seen skidding across the terrain and into yet more obstacles! It's nice to see a race back to the stricken rider so that racing can resume.

Combat between riders is limited but effective, consisting of a basic punch, a more powerful kick and face-slay and a devastating crash over the victim's head with a crash - although the latter move can only be executed once the weapon has been snatched from another biker. To knock a rider out of the race, their stamina must be depleted by a series of blows - although a single well-timed hit may be enough to dismount an enemy. Not so unreasonable

are the highway patrolmen that try constantly to pull over bikers the speeding - get caught and it's a night in jail and a hefty fine. The overall goal is to win the *Road Rash* tournament, which is facilitated by the accumulation of cash - the better the race result, the higher the prize, and money goes towards buying more powerful cycles. It's all too easy to lose cash, though, with the aforementioned speeding fines and no repair costs if the bike is wrecked by consistent crashing.

*Road Rash* is certainly not your average race game - it's faster than most for a start, and once into the game, it becomes apparent that the violence aspect is not just a gimmick, but a proper gameplay aspect that makes the game all the more fun and involving. It takes a lot of skill to knock a rider off his bike, and mastery of the moves is vital. The game has a bit of character and atmosphere, and the racing action is some of the most exhilarating seen on the Drive. Highly recommended to those looking for a quality racer with that little bit extra.

■ Gary White

## 860 MEGABYTE RACING



It takes a short while to get a hang of the controls and fighting moves, but once the player is proficient, it's difficult to get *Road Rash* down. The only slight drawback is the small number of courses - only five - and the lack of any great variation between them, which is likely to eat into the game's long-term appeal. There's a real feeling of speed provided by *Road Rash*'s snappy screen updates, and Bob Hubbard's thumping in-game soundtrack provides real atmosphere. The graphics themselves aren't quite as clean as they might have been, but nevertheless *Road Rash* remains one of the year's more impressive Megadrive offerings.

# ROBOCOP

# 3

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**ocean**

# EL VIENTO

Ever seen a female ninja? Now you have, and it's all thanks to **WOLFRAM**.

**T**ough many may doubt the integrity of leg's "Classic" martial-arts adventure *Musashi*, there's little arguing with its phenomenal success. Not only has it been a popular series in its own right, since its inception it has spawned more clones than any other console game. And while the latest in an unbreakably long line may not offer much new in the gameplay stakes, it does at least differ from all the other untalented rip-offs by casting the player as a female hero. Considering that female heroes aren't necessarily very popular (just ask *Wonder Woman* and *Cherita* out of *Thundercat* this does come as a refreshing change. It's just a shame that the game she has to save the world in is so damn dull.

The unintelligible Japanese documentation means that the identity of *El Viento* and the player's existence must remain a mystery, but it doesn't take a degree course to work out that, whatever ninja woman's objectives in life may be, she goes around them by chopping the hell out of everything she sees. This is in fact necessary, as just about everyone that Mrs. Ninja bumps into on her travels is out to get her. From the Dick Tracy type fellows who stream around in silhouettes blasting away to the mutant bikers and strange T-shaped individuals who drop barrels, unidentifiable objects out of the windows.

That word "unidentifiable" is quite an important word when playing *El Viento*, because it applies to just about everything in the game. The graphics are so poorly defined and badly coloured that it's often very difficult to see what's going on and why. The screen display looks like the colours have run and the contrast level is up too high, and the result is such a shocky mess that if the player hadn't just spent a wad of his hard-earned cash on the game,

it's debatable whether or not he'd bother to even pick up the joystick after clapping eyes on the first screen.

The game itself is just about passable, consisting of a number of scrolling stages linked together by doors in a maze-like fashion. The object of each is basically to run up and down lots of stairs, stick all the bad guys and find the door to the next stage. In practice, this can actually be quite



fun. It's not too taxing and the ability to waste so many enemies with the rather cool (becoming boring) is very satisfying. All this funness soon loses its appeal however, especially as the game seems to get increasingly difficult very quickly, and since play or control during combat is limited more or less to just hammering away on the fire button, there seems to be little scope for skill or tactics.

While *El Viento* just about passes as an average Megadrive ninja-type romp, there are scores of other games more deserving of your cash than this holocaust. If you're not really too bothered about whether your on-screen hero has a willy or not, you'd be better advised to check out one of the official thoughts games. At least they don't look like there's something wrong with the SCART lead.

— Gary White



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The terrible graphics are an instant turn-off, and once the gameplay reveals itself to be little more than substandard running about and killing, you're unlikely to be too compelled to continue. What a shame.

The most abysmal graphics the Drive has ever had to endure combine with ear-assaulting music to produce the console equivalent of slapping a brick over your head. Enough said!

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Charles Bronson had it say. The crime-ridden fictional city that is the setting for Sega's latest big-budget offering makes the Brons look like Italian. The story goes that a once peaceful and thriving metropolis has been torn apart by a recent crime syndicate run by an unknown individual. With the police either bought off or too frightened to act, the streets have been reduced to a wasteland ruled by gangs and hoods. These cops in particular, though, have already taken more than they can stand and, after being refused permission to form a special task force to combat city crime, have turned in their badges and taken to the streets to see things out in their own way.

Needless to say, these cops don't waste time with hand-to-hand or night. In *Streets of Rage* the objective is simply to kick the crap out of every last knuckle



# STREETS

in the city, on a trail that will eventually lead the player to Mr. Big himself and the final showdown to decide the fate of the city. But whatever the intricacies of the storyline, what *Streets of Rage* boils down to is a damn fine beat-'em-up in the Final Fight tradition. It's so much in the Final Fight tradition, in fact, that in a lot of respects there's little to differentiate it from CapCom's coin-op classic.

The players progress through eight levels of 3D-rendered cityscape, starting out in the ghetto and ending up in the luxuriously furnished palace of Mr. Big. Along the way the vigilantes pass through a number of bizarre scenes, including a tropical beach, a car park, a factory and a bridge—in one level all

**The city is in turmoil! Is SEGA's answer to Final Fight tough enough to clean it up?**

the action takes place on board a boat! The fighting itself is fairly rudimentary, but all the more rewarding for it, as the control system does most of the work. From the basic combination of jump and attack controls, the player can execute a dazzling array of hot-breaking moves and acrobatic martial arts techniques. The combat is context-sensitive, so the more a combative creature is faced out just on the player's command, but also on how he and his

opponent are positioned. Attacking from the front results in a simple punch or kick, while coming in from behind opens up possibilities for complex throws and wrenching-rip exploits.

Each of the three main characters available to the player has a distinctive fighting style. Blonde-haired Axel Stone, for instance, is a martial arts expert, specializing in devastating knee-blows and a nifty back-kick named Fat slams. Soul brother Adam Hunter is a



Apply the two alternative moves on different characters to different enemies. All are not done, however.



Apply Stone's and Axel's punch with one of your enemies and see the flying action take place.

And Stone's the only member of Axel's team to be capable of executing this sort of move. The character, however, doesn't only but particularly since he's the strongest.





bones, with a color bar to punch and shoulder throw, while female judo expert Blue Folding uses chops and kicks to protect herself. These differing styles are particularly evident in two-player mode, with a pair of fighters working together. A neat aspect of the two-player game is that players can use special "team tactics", where both players get together to co-perform a devastating super move.

The bonus and perks that form the main threat can certainly be disposed of with a couple of simple kicks or punches, and only pose a threat when they attack mob-handed. Even then it's possible for the player to floor an entire crowd of enemies with one well-executed flying kick! More serious problems are caused by some of the bigger, bolder gang members that are thrown in every now and again to make things more interesting. They include an-



Over the top! The bone-chomers of Streets of Rage 2 are a sight to behold. Not only are they tough and well-equipped as a combat unit, they have to be carefully dodged in the case they do attack. And even the innocuous foe working the nearby vending machine can be a pain.

# OF RAGE

jugglers, fire-breathers and troops of kamikaze that come armed with an array of lethal martial arts moves. To help deal with them, there's a host of weapons available, some of which are littered around the landscape at random, with others needing to be liberated from their owners before they can be picked up and used. At the low end of the scale there are the standard flash-knives and lightning battles, ranging up to the far more formidable baseball bat and a giant piece of lead pipe that effectively doubles the player's hit range! A crowd touch is the pepper shaker which, when thrown in an enemy's face, stuns him for a few seconds and gives the player the opportunity to steal it. The weapon's lifespan is limited, however - it disappears if dropped twice by the player.

By far the most impressive - and fancy - effect in the game is the Special Attack that each player keeps to specially desperate situations. Only one is available per life, but can save the day in times of need. It varies that each of the three cops has an ally to the corrupt police force, and should things get too hairy, a single button press sends a police car screaming onto the screen, stuns Mazing, the formerly cop then appears, armed with a rocket launcher or rapine gun and moves away every enemy in sight! It's an effect best put to use on the end-of-level "boss" combinations - the players get one shot to deal with - which are so fiendish HARD that it's almost inconceivable to beat them by fair fighting alone. Included in the line-ups are the fire-breathing fat, gangly bull-wielding giant, a pair of tiny but deadly ninjas girls and a massive Conan-type character who packs a punch that would knock a building over. So tough are these guys that the special attack serves only to weaken

them, but it does at least mean that they can be dispatched without the players having to sustain too much damage.

Comparisons between Streets of Rage and Final Fight are inevitable - well, it's only to be expected when both games feature enemies, weapons and moves that are identical in many cases. The designers score absolutely no points for originality, but they've done a superb job of creating a powerful beat-'em-up all the same. The one point against it is the rather funny graphics, which aren't a patch on Final Fight's bold and immaculately-drawn visuals. They're rather ineffectual, not all that well-coloured and rather flimsy as a result, like they've come from an ST rather than a Megadrive. That point however, is quickly forgotten when the game-play kicks in in earnest, offering a level of violence unparalleled by anything else on the Megadrive - some of the more elaborate techniques are immensely satisfying when they come off and a whole array of scores is flung in our face. And despite the lack of graphical depth, the sound effects ensure that punches and kicks really do sound like they're broken a bone. There is of course a lot more fun to be had when fighting with a friend, especially when it's discovered that all the combat moves can be carried out on each other. In the theory of combat, it's often easy to ditch your partner a smack by accident, and such incidents can lead to all-out fights between players. Whether or not it's as good as Final Fight on the FunDisk is hard to be a source of playground debate for some months, but there can be little doubt that Streets of Rage is the finest beat-'em-up ever to grace the Megadrive.

■ Gary White

885



Exceptionally easy to pick up and play, due to the intuitiveness of the control method. Three difficulty settings give the game an extended lifespan, and it's tough enough to keep players all it even if the final level is a bit off putting with all the viciously tough enemies it throws on screen. And since kicking heads is timeless entertainment, this one's likely to prove popular even after completion.

Streets of Rage features scores of the finest music ever to grace the Megadrive, with high quality hits themes and a tune for each level, ranging from New Jack City style rap beats to cosmic and steel drum soundscapes. Originally it could have performed as a punchy beat that doesn't detract from the action and there's enough state-of-the-art stuff here to sustain anybody's street cred for a good few weeks.

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Well it's true, I'll give it that. In the past, Famicom gamers have played beat-'em-ups, space pilots and even a little Italian plumber - but never a bit of jelly below. In fact the rather obscure title of Jerry Boy can only be put down to the Japanese tendency, as people like Russ Abbot have delighted in imitating the sea mammal over the years, to pronounce their 'Is as His. Jerry Boy - Jerry Boy, see? The Japanese documentation doesn't throw any light on the subject, and after Monkey King was re-christened Donkey Kong due to a misheard telephone conversation, you have to assume that anything's possible.

But enough of this nonsense. Silly titles aside, Jerry Boy is actually a very cuddly - and very playable - little game. As far as it is possible to ascertain, the story tells of a little boy (possibly called Jerry, which would explain a boy who is turned into a blob of blue jelly



How big the bit of sea animal blob is Jerry Boy? It goes looking for a solution that you understand. Boy, then the solution of it. You can't right as you want.



# JERRY BOY

with a face on it by a cackling old wizard. The idea is to jolly along for whatever it is a jolly doing the various levels of the mystical world type place where the game is set and re-assume human form. It's all a rather poor excuse for a Super Mario World clone that if nothing else must rarely qualify as the extent outside game over soon - and that's saying something.

Each scrolling stage is essentially a simplified version of a Super Mario World, comprising all the standard platforms, bouncy things, ramps, lifts,

Is EPIC's jelly-based game set for stardom?

bonus bits and end-of-level bosses. The twist that the whole game hangs on is that the player's wobbly character is sort of like a rudimentary version of Terminator's T-800, in that it can alter its shape to adapt to its environment. Its default mode is just a little, but it can turn flat as a pancake to squish bad guys, stand up tall and thin to nibble aerial holes or squeeze into narrow spaces, stick to walls and ceilings and shoot its objects and hold them (inside its gelatinous body where they remain visible until spat out the later use. The most often used objects are red balls which form the basic weapon against marauding badies and the evil bosses - such as level one's egg-laying chicken.

As the game progresses, Jerry Boy is taken underground in stages that play like a cross between Mario and Sonic the Hedgehog, although throughout the pace of the game is much slower than either of those classics due to Jerry's slow, wobbly movement. As such the atmosphere is very odd, which suits the game's dispiritingly fluffy graphics in a way as it enhances the feeling of playing a lousy story. And though it might lack the dynamic action of Sonic or Mario, it's every bit as playable, offering just as much challenge - if not more - in the form of tricky puzzles, traps and obstacles. It's certainly one of the better Famicom games to hit these shores, and comes unreservedly recommended to all fans of the platform genre, as well as anyone who appreciates a game that puts a smile on your face.

Gary White

890 SUPER FAMICOM RATING



The control of multi-purpose Jerry Boy takes a bit of getting used to, but once it's mastered it's difficult to put the jiggled blob - no matter how frustrating it might get at times. Lots of worlds ensure that generous bonuses or completion isn't likely to be a problem. Get in the bag, and there can be no doubt that Jerry Boy features some of the cuttiest characters ever to grace a console. Even the advanced end bosses look sweet. The jolly atmosphere is belatedly well by the loopy soundtrack, consisting of bits of happy little tunes. How sweet.



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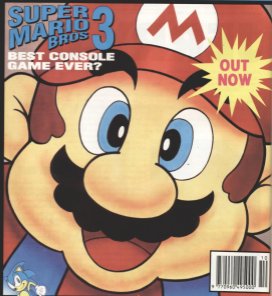


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# Hold The Last Page!

Well, okay, so it's not quite the last page but this, dear reader is the page we can get long after the others are all happy in being printed land. And so, what better use of this fascinating quirk in the production schedule than to leave the page free for the last-minute previews that just happen to fly in the door at the eleventh hour. The last minute of the eleventh hour to be precise. And the lucky recipient of the treatment this month is...



# REACH FOR THE SKIES



In flight simulator it feel—long for the war game? Finally, after years of being at the mercy of obscure controllers, we would be able to now have a say in the turning of the battle.

The latest product from Russian-based Rowan Software—*Reach for the Skies*, as the title suggests, takes us back to The Battle of Britain. The scenario is undoubtedly the best known in the history of aerial combat, and you don't need me to tell you who won and who came second, suffice to say, *RTS* covers the entire history of that historic conflict, from the first Luftwaffe raid of July '11 to the end of their ill-fated blitz two months later and subsequent routing by our now-legendary gallant few.

For most people, the name Rowan Software probably doesn't ring too many bells, but their flight sim pedigree is impressive.

Back in '91, BS McConell got Rowan Software to

port Spectrum Hobbyist's awesome Falcon onto the Amiga and ST, which in turn led to them writing Falcon: Mission Dues à la under their own steam. But bigger and better was to follow, with the release of the now best-selling Windows Flight Of The Intruder. However, it was with their most recent product Falcon 3 that they began to move towards the true wargame aim. With the campaign and scenario editing features, the player could position forces and customize their attack plans, and much more, producing a theoretically infinite variety of scenarios, which is where *Reach for the Skies* comes in.

To begin at the beginning, *RTS* has no missions, which is a point in its favor for a start. The only divisions here are the four phases of The Battle of Britain as agreed by historical researchers, in which the Luftwaffe attacked navy convoys, coastal radar, airfields and cities respectively. You can play either side of these scenarios, which means you're trying either to defend the RAF or to stop this great and pleasant land from being blown to bits.

However, whereas previous strategy flight sims were mostly just simulation with a bit of add-on planning, with *RTS* you soon find that planning the campaign is as important as the actual flying. Every move you make on the Battle Map, whether it's moving a squadron from one airfield to another or saving an aircraft factory from being bombed, has a knock-on effect on the rest of the game, and if you're not very careful, one wrong move can sweep your chances for the rest of the game.

You'll be able to start where you want, whether you're working it all out from Day One or just dipping in at times—no slogging through missions until you get to the good stuff! Well! All applicable menu functions are available both throughout the setup and strategy stages, and in flight, and while you can say that this is merely an extension of the Falcon menu system, it can't give a lot further than that, and reminds me more of the usability of Microsoft's Flight Sim series than anything else. Basically, *Reach for the Skies* can be as simple or as complex as you like, and will thus suit beginners and flight sim addicts alike.

**Available October 1991**  
**Price: £14.95**

■ Alanah Johnston



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NEXT, remember that our Reviews Directory will keep you abreast of every game released on your format each month. As the directory builds into a living, growing thing, you'll be wise to get familiar with it before it simply becomes too big!

THEN, remember that our In The Works section will deliver the up-to-the-minute information of the hottest of the hot games as they're put together. Once you've taken a stroll through these and our Previews pages, you'll be fully armed and informed and completely genned-up as to the following month's releases.

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# ACE

# reviews directory

# W

elcome to the ACE Reviews Directory. Over the page begins probably the most detailed and comprehensive reviews list ever! Well, that's what we reckon, anyway. The aim is to provide the best buyers' guide information on every game that you're likely to find in the shops in any given month. The first list of games are the new titles released during the month in which this issue was produced. The Still Available section details the games that have been released for the last three months. At the end of each three month cycle the older games will be removed, since they're probably not going to be on the shelves any more.

Each month we'll be updating the Directory to incorporate the newest games, always trying to cover every release as we see it.

It's important to remember that all games will appear in the Directory section, even the very best titles will be in the Still Available pages, and games which for one reason or another just don't make it into our main reviews section (we can only give our special reviews treatment to a limited number of games, after all) will be appearing in the New Releases pages.

Unlike some mags who insist on splitting off all the games which they don't like and sticking them into a rubbishy section, we're making no value judgements here. So don't be surprised to see Trailblazers rubbing shoulders with two-star games. And keep looking through the listings because there's a good chance you'll find a gem that you'll have never heard of.

We've arranged the lists, to the best of our remedial school education, in alphabetical order enabling you to get at the game you're interested in as swiftly as possible.

## New Releases:

Analyze	Flicky	Radical Tycoon
Amour-Golden	Footballer of the Year 2	Redland
Artemis	Grandly 2000	Rolling Stone
Banger Time Deluxe	Hammer	Sardonic
Catman	Magnum Swords	Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe
Chess 100	Collection	Mini-Bender II
Cloud Kingdoms	Megatonnes	Space 486
Cruise for a Corpse	Megatonnes 2	Stratblade II
Dynatron	Monopoly	Thunderjaws
Frog Strike Eagle 2	Monster Business	Zona Warrior
Final Fight	Nobelia 2	

## Still Available:

Afterburner 2	In Your Face	Isis: The Hiding
Alien Storm	James Bond: Double Bonding	Super Professional Baseball
Beast Busters	Jedifighter 2	Super-8-Type
Bombus Doo	Jimmy White's Whiteball Snooker	Tail Gate
Castle of Illusion	Ka-Go-Go!	Thunderhawk
Castle	Logical	Utopia
Centurion: Defender of Rome	Magic Pedlers	Warrior Special Warfare
Champion of the Ring	Manchester United Europe	Wild Wheels
Choplifter II	Martian Dreams	Wing Commander II
Crash Young's Air Combat	Marvel Land	
Dragon Crystal	Maxpat Island	
E4 Hockey	Mexico	
II	Mega In Mana	
The Executioner	Microprose Golf	
Fury's South Fighter 2	NBA All Star Challenge	
Fu Tomcat	Prohonorik	
F Zone	R-Type II	
Freemix	Robin Hood	
Ghost Battle	Secret of Monkey Island	
G-Lex	Shinobi	
Golf	The Simpsons	
Halley Wars	Sliders	
Harris	Snowy Snakes	
Heart of China		
Hero Quest		

### Give Us A Break!

Please remember, this is the very first month of the Directory and there will inevitably be some omissions and screw ups. For this we apologise in advance, and promise to do our best for next time. Of course, if you don't find any errors, we're proud to say that we knew it would all run smoothly.

# new releases

## ARMALYTE



Price **Atari ST/Amiga £25.99**  
Genre **Action/Blitz**  
Publisher **Thalames**

It's just as well space is infinite - it'd need to be to contain the seemingly endless stellar bodies that, according to the folks, constantly rage throughout the Universe. Thalames' latest looks to galactic violence in a 2D-bit updating of the C&G hit from many Earth years ago.

The player is given the difficult - if completely unoriginal - task of fighting his way through five levels worth of horizontally-scrolling scenery populated by all manner of really rather annoying aliens. The scenery scrolls a little up and down, which introduces a small but welcome element of exploration as the player weaves around trying to find the safest path to the end-of-level monstrosities.

Armalyte is an awfully tribute to its illustrious 3D1 ancestor. Technically it's excellent, with some slick parallax scrolling (especially good on the ST version given the machine's hardware) and polished presentation. However, the difficulty level has been set ridiculously high, and even the most skilled gamers will soon be reduced to an apoplectic state of hair-tearing frustration. This situation is not helped by the excessive inertia on the player's ship which soon has the fragile craft skidding uncontrollably about the screen (and usually straight into the

deadly-to-the-touch scenery). On the basis of the evidence here let's hope Armalyte's sub-title of The Final Run is correct.

☆☆☆

## ARMOURGEDDON



Price **Atari ST £25.99**  
Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **Pygmalion**

Pygmalion's latest 3D-polygon-orient exercise around a six-part mission to find the five pieces of a master bomb and use it to destroy an enemy HQ. There are six combat vehicles to try out, ranging from ground-bugging tanks and hovercraft, and the player must use his 'skill and judgement' to decide when, where and how best to use them to achieve his current mission objectives. Mouse control of each such vehicle is smooth and responsive, with the fluid 3D giving a good pulse-quickening feeling of speed.

The player can switch between the vehicles 'in the field' using the function keys (the computer puts the vehicle on auto when this happens, so there's no risk of a suddenly-vacated jet plunging nose-first into the ground). Like Core's Thunderhawk, the action is on action rather than simulation, with the scenery attacking almost as soon as the player picks an install-shielded nose-on to his bunker, which makes for exciting if somewhat silent

less action, but it's not all shoot, shoot, shoot. There's an important resource management element as well, where the player has to wisely allocate scientists and technicians to develop new weapons and fresh vehicles to replace those blown to pieces by the very act of using.

Armageddon is one of Pygmalion's best games to date, with solid gameplay lacking only the impressive visuals. Armourgeddon sick of it? Not one bit.

☆☆☆☆

## ATOMINO



Price **Atari ST/Amiga £25.99**  
Genre **Puzzle**  
Publisher **Pygmalion**

Hehehe, fascinating! There are few games based around atomic physics, and even fewer interesting one, so a big "Hehehe!" and put on the back for Pygmalion. Atomino is a puzzle game based around atomic railway, i.e. the number of bonds an atom can make with other atoms, i.e. hydrogen atoms can make one bond while Helium can make two. The aim of the game is to place randomly-allocated atoms down on a grid and try to form molecules of various sizes (i.e. at least three atoms long). A molecule is only complete when all the atoms within it have all their bonds accounted for. It all sounds a bit... well... dry, but in fact turns out to be great fun, with its addictive chal-

leng, pretty graphics and mind-boggling sound making it one of the better puzzle games on the market.

☆☆☆☆

## BURGER TIME DELUXE



Price **Samuelly £25.99** Import  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Data East**

New this is a real blast from the past, when arcade games didn't have to share pointers about life some sub-standard but fair rule just to get them to part with their cash. The player has to guide my Pete the Chef around a network of platforms and ladders. In a bizarre culinary exercise Pete has to make giant hamburgers by walking over the various ingredients lying on the platforms, forcing them to fall down. The screen onto the platforms below and eventually onto a plate at the bottom of the screen. Once all the hamburgers have been made Pete advances onto the next, more complex arrangement of platforms.

New this all sounds a bit silly, but you've reckoned without the meat-it manages, platform and fled eggs that escaped from the cupboard and are wandering the platforms intent on Pete's demise. Fortunately the carry sled is armed with a pepper pot, and a carefully-aimed shade will stun the badies for a few moments allowing Pete to make good his escape. More finally, Pete can try to time his food-dropping action to crash the ingenious ingredients.

Price **Samuelly £25.99** Import  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Triffix Entertainment**

☆☆☆☆

## CASTELIAN



Price **Samuelly £25.99** Import  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Triffix Entertainment**

Remember 'em? It was a bizarre platform game starring a tiny fish-called Pogo. Back of its notoriously-difficult levels was set on a tall tower. The play-

it could move Page left and right, and make him jump over gaps or shoot at the robot-walkers. However, in a unique twist, the towers used to rotate to follow Page's movements. Quite a graphical achievement on the Spectrum! From Nintendo has come to the Game Boy under the title Castles. And while the name may have changed the genre certainly hasn't. It will look stunning and play well but has a difficulty rating through the roof. However, completing a level is extremely satisfying, so if you fancy a real challenge then you know where to come.

☆☆☆☆

**CHASE H.Q.**



Price **GameStar £29.99** Import  
Genre **Race Game**  
Publisher **Taito**

There can be few racers who aren't familiar with the excellent side-on or its sequel S.C.I. What a treat to see on the part of the designers to combine high-octane racing action with hyper-tempering action. The player takes on

the role of an Armani-wearing Miami Vice style cop, chasing various gangs in a souped-up Porsche with the aim of ransacking their quarry off the road to make the arrest. The GameStar version is technically excellent, with lots of fast action and good sound, although the cars are a little small. Unfortunately it's slow as snails on a protest bus, and even GameStar will soon be lacking any leg life. You've found? Well, actually you're more likely to be lost after also buying this - it's a lot of money for such a short-lived challenge.

☆☆☆

**CLOUD KINGDOMS**



Price **Atari 88/Amiga 87.00**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **BBG/Brenda**

Cloud Kingdoms is a lead of balls-bouncing balls, to be precise. (Mind the old ones are the best!) As Terry the Ball, the player has to negotiate thirty-two huge hallway-scrolling levels, each of which starts high in the sky,

collecting all the gems that litter in the narrow walkways. Terry has to take care not to leave the path, else he'll fall to his doom in the void below. This isn't as easy as it sounds - Terry's rubbery body bounces wildly off walls and pillars, and parts of the floor may crumble beneath him. In addition, if Terry passes over arrows set to the floor they'll push him around, usually over the edge of the nearest chasm. If that wasn't enough, other hostile spheres wander the walkways, keen to see Terry's demise. Fortunately Terry can bounce over their heads with a tap of the fire button.

Cloud Kingdoms, liberally from Milwaukee, is an attractive game, with a strong comic feel. The cartoony graphics, though looking a little dated now, do the trick, and the scrolling on both Amiga and ST versions is very smooth. The inertial control is a little tricky to get to grips with, but rewarding when mastered. Some features annoy, like the fact that it's impossible to know where something has to land as it's been bounced on, but overall this is an unmissable bargain at just under eight quid.

☆☆☆☆

**CRUISE FOR A CORPSE**



Price **Amiga £78.00**  
Genre **Adventure**  
Publisher **Delphine, US Gold**

The plot for Cruise for a Corpse is firmly rooted in the Agatha Christie 'island' tradition, plenty of suspects' crime story tradition, detailing how the player is invited to a Greek island's yacht for a well-earned holiday only to get there and find his boat hijacked off by an unknown number. Before you can get 'Inspector Workah' the player is forced to solve the mystery and help solve the case to solve the heinous crime.

After a lot of pre-release interest from the press, there were high hopes for Cruise for a Corpse. Is it the excellent game everyone seemed to think it'd be? Well, yes... and no. In the graphics and sound department it's exemplary with large fluidly animated sprites moving over exquisitely detailed backgrounds and plenty of audible tones and samples playing away in the back-

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ground. All attempts to generate an excellent sense of mood and atmosphere.

The player directs his on-screen character (Rexel) via the mouse. By clicking the mouse pointer on objects of interest, a menu appears listing the various things the player can do with the selected item (i.e. "Open" or "Examine" hot keys). Movement around the yacht is effected by walking there from location to location by clicking on exits to the current location, such as doors or hallways, or more quickly by calling up the yacht map and "walking" Rexel immediately from place to place. As an user interface it's difficult to think of another as intuitive and easy to use.

The major problem with Cruise for a Casper is its pace. The animation, though excellent, is slow. Examining the contents of a room can become quite painful, as Rexel slowly turns, walks, turns, bends down, examines the item only for a message to appear stating that "There is nothing of interest here". Equally annoying is the frequent though inevitable accessing and scrolling of the five present "text game" files. All too often the player's enthusiasm for the clue hunting can be severely dampened by the reduction of the game's speed to near snail's pace. Less important, some of the generally excellent French-English translation is a bit deflating in places, such as the Cabin Boy who is described as "dynamic".

These comments aside, anyone with the patience to sit through the occasional delirious will find Cruise for a Casper a superb buy, laced with quality presentation and atmosphere and providing a big enough game task to satisfy even the greatest death.

☆☆☆☆

**DEUTEROS**



Price Amiga £794  
Genre Strategy  
Publisher Activision

This sequel to Millennium 2.1 by the same authors is set a thousand years after the prophec's events. Mankind has fallen into a state of post-technological malaise and forgets its former space-travelling glory. It's the player's task to rebuild man's passion for the stars and run the race into the maw of the Galaxy once again. The gameplay boils down to endless

resource and manpower allocation between various departments, dealing with the occasional crises that crop up and so on. Although programmed well and moderately entertaining, there really isn't anything on show that hasn't been done more entertainingly elsewhere. Strictly one for the strategy die-hard.

☆☆☆

**F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II**



Price Atari ST £29.99  
Genre Simulation  
Publisher MicroProse

MicroProse make a departure from their usual reputation associate ones with this action-oriented affair. It's the flight sim equivalent of the latest John Deere. It's nice if simple with no complications. Players have no control menus to choose between, each with various missions to fulfil. These missions are nearly all as simple as get, destroy a couple of targets and get out alive jobs, with the player having to simultaneously defend against swarms of enemy jets. Control is via keyboard, joystick or mouse, and is highly responsive in each case.

The screen update is fast enough, but there are a couple of JD mistakes about - it's more than adequate for the job at hand, however. Sound is disappointing, with a white-noise hiss being the player's only audio companion for most of the journey. In the gameplay department this is a winner, with plenty of white-knuckle action to get the adrenaline pumping. Veterans may because the game's lack of depth, but anyone who should find this just their cup of tea, with a jaunty Jerry Bruckheimer Dodge in the seat to boot.

☆☆☆☆

**FINAL FIGHT**



Price Amiga £29.99  
Genre Beat-'em-Up  
Publisher US Gold

Yet another in US Gold's seemingly endless string of CapCom conversions. In Metro City (loosely based on Neo Yokyo all in all) well, Cruise is rife and to make a bad situation worse the

Mayor's eight-daughter daughter has been kidnapped by - you guessed it - Mr Big. (This old Mr Big certainly gets around, doesn't he?) The player and optional partner have to fight their way through the city's mainroads to rescue her. Why? Why not?

Final Fight is something of a first for beat-'em-ups on the home computer, i.e. it's actually quite good. The sprites are large and decently animated, the background scroll is smooth and the action is fast. Someone of the directing whether a punch connects is cut in a little delay, but apart from that this can be recommended unreservedly to anyone who fancies a little action without brainiac their knuckles.

☆☆☆☆

**FLICKY**



Price Magnavox £34.99  
Genre Platform  
Publisher Sega

"Don't be put off by the screenwriter on the back of the box" is probably the best bit of advice I can give about Flicky. It looks awful - very primary-colour sprites and garish backgrounds. And to be honest, things don't improve much in the game itself. However, like Quaxxon, an ugly appearance conceals the goodness inside.

The player controls the tiny bird of the title. The little darling's chicks have gone and get themselves lost in the rooms of a giant unrelaxed house. Flicky has to run and jump about, cut her foe's wretched head and take them to the safety of the flat, while avoiding the ponding felines. Flicky is a wonderfully playable game, very simple but packed with fun. Some may dispute whether there's 30 months of fun, but for those with the cash it's a good purchase.

☆☆☆☆

**FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR 2**



Price Atari ST/Amiga £7.99  
Genre Sport Game  
Publisher B&B/Bresnan

This isn't really a sport game at all. It's more like a test of the player's know-

ledge of football trivia. Lots of text and dull graphics don't help things along either. If it's your bag then great, otherwise steer well clear.

☆☆

**GUNSHIP 2000**



Price IBM PC £39.99  
Genre Simulation  
Publisher MicroProse

Nobody writes simulations like MicroProse does. This is a highly realistic sequel to the company's earlier megahit Gunship, which has gone down in software history as one of the best-selling titles ever. This sequel is far more than just Gunship's every part of the game has been given a radical overhaul.

Probably the most impressive aspect in the revamped graphics system. Using a sort of patchwork quilt landscaping technique, the game world has been modelled in exciting detail, complete with rain, hills, mountains, valleys, cuttings. It's a geographical feast, it's there. As usual, the game takes the form of a series of prize-winning missions. Unfortunately this complexity means that you really need at least a 386MHz PC to get anything approaching speed from the game. Armed with a board is marvelously atmospheric, and adds no end to the giddy battlefield. The "cooper control is good, but actually getting the craft to fly matches that of the real thing, i.e. it's very difficult, and certainly makes Gunship stand out the rest of the game to eat your own playing flesh on. However, if you're looking for the ultimate cheap simulation, then here it is.

☆☆☆☆

**HUNTER**



Price Atari ST/Amiga £24.99  
Genre Action Strategy  
Publisher Activision

It's a sad old world, this one we live in, but when your old Activision get some classic product together, their Madilogic dandy guy and pulls the plug on them. Now, however, after the aforementioned "classic product" has



been swirling around doing very little indeed for the last few months. Activision's current genre-master of games, The Day Company, has taken it upon themselves to let another trickle of genre-masters reach the shores.

Hunter is the sort of game that you dream of playing. A polygon-based action strategy game with all of the usually associated bonuses removed, it offers all the "wouldn't it be great if..." features which should, by rights, be included in all other games.

Taking the role of the Hunter, the player must travel around a bunch of islands, systematically destroying all enemy installations in whatever way is soon fit. Your particular mission is detailed in a briefing whose specific, immediate targets are detailed by your allied commander.

The best thing about Hunter is that there's no messing about. If you want to infiltrate an enemy base, get a disguise and you're away! If you want to get about, send a helicopter (propeller or tailfin). If it's no-way and because of the unnecessary complexity of basic tasks has been removed, the player can concentrate on progressing with the mission much more intensely.

Excellent graphics and a fast-paced storyline can only add to Hunter's already interesting style. A winner.

☆☆☆☆☆

## MAGNETIC SCROLLS COLLECTION



Price IBM PC £24.99  
Genre Adventure  
Publisher Virgin Games

For gamers keen to add some heavy-weight adventuring to their catalogue but unwilling to look out for the undeniably quality Magnetic Scrolls titles individually, the fascinatingly named Magnetic Scrolls collection may well prove an appealing prospect. Here we have three previously acclaimed titles, all reworked and tamed to run on the Windows-style systems, ensuring a reasonable degree of coherence in what would otherwise be a rather diverse package. The Cold of Theros by far the most traditional game in the set, all ancient plotting and the like, while Corruption offers a lot of moody conspiracy-themed shenanigans against a high-flying industry backdrop. Fish is just plain odd, comprising some

erotic puzzles with painful aquatic punning.

All the titles are packed with atmosphere if not actually stunning graphics which, for the benefit of purists, can be removed with a click of a switch.

Despite the difference of opinion on the Magnetic Scrolls games, it's rather the best thing since sliced bread as a worthy imitation of the Infocom systems of about ten years ago! Players will still find far more entertainment and scope for plot involvement than in any other game system. Wonderful!

☆☆☆☆☆

## MEGAFORTRESS



Price IBM PC £24.99  
Genre Simulation  
Publisher Mindscape

The trouble with games based on taking every single rule in a big, stupid old game like the 1-21 is that usually every rule is ruled-unchanging boring. I mean, who honestly wants to plot their course across thousands of miles of terrain using a 3D terrain mapping computer or have to fiddle around with astronomical frequencies in order to jam the enemy's radar? But many of you, I'll be bound.

The aim of the game is to plot a fast-discovered 3-41 across both Iraq and the Soviet Union, keeping the location and aim of your mission strictly secret until the awesome barrage of firepower can be calculated on the target.

Unfortunately, for all its gung-ho packaging and intent, MegaFortress is just a very good simulation of a rather dull business. The more status that can be had in any of a host of more recently released flight games, and Mindscape's South Pacific series even offer similar coop-up-on-the-empty-animal for those players who are especially keen on that sort of thing.

Perfectly competent both graphically and as the play-fun, MegaFortress has missions designed by real 3-41 navigators and best-selling author Blair Brown, and it's all packed full of fight charts and information and a reek of authenticity. The trouble is, despite all this, it just isn't that much fun. It's one of those games that I guess you really need to have experienced the real thing to appreciate.

☆☆☆☆☆

## MEGATRAVELLER 2: QUEST FOR THE ANCIENTS



Price IBM PC £25A  
Genre RPG  
Publisher Virgin/Empire

The latest UK release from American software team Paragon powered-up and in this issue) is none too surprisingly a sequel to MegaTraveller 1: The Zentari Conspiracy. As before, the player leads a team of five space adventurers through toll and trouble in a hopefully rich and fun. This time around, the player task is to find a way to halt the flow of toxic slime emanating from some mysterious ruins left by a dead race called the Ancients. But are they dead? That is up to the player to find out.

sporting high-quality 3D-colour VGA, this is certainly a treat on the eye, and the ears as well with a suitable sound card. The game itself is an RPG in the Ultima style, but not half as rigorous - which for many will be a virtue than a blemish. The story is fun and involving, with plenty of sub-tasks to perform that provide welcome and often amusing relief from the main plot. If one has a mouse might it's that the space combat - which you'd think would be the most exciting part of the game - is flat and dull, with little sense of player involvement. In summary, highly recommended.

☆☆☆☆☆

## MONOPOLY



Price Amiga £24.99  
Genre Strategy  
Publisher Virgin Games

Money, money, money... The game for budding property tycoons may well bring about a peculiarly manic feel in those occasions between, but Virgin's version is almost as much fun as the boardgame original, which is more than can be said for the most boardgame conversions. Players must manoeuvre around the board by rolling dice, accumulating as much cash as possible and using it to purchase squares on the board. Landing on a previously purchased square involves the unfortunate

player either having to pay out/100,000 to either the owner of the property or the bank. Players who do the best are those who invest wisely and build houses, hotels etc on their spaces. Extra houses are thrown up only when "Go To Jail" squares. He who ends the game with the most cash wins.

Without any unnecessarily flashy graphics, this version has better than most, and is refreshingly devoid of all the silly touches which seldom tend to add to board game conversions for novelty and ruin the whole thing in the bargain.

Colourful graphics present the board in a perspective 3D rather than flat, while the computer controlled bank keeps an eye on everyone's progress. User-friendly mouse-control makes the player's actions over his piece's position and money-shuffling almost as easy as when playing the game in real life.

☆☆☆☆☆

## MONSTER BUSINESS



Price Amiga £24.99  
Genre Platform  
Publisher Software

The mad mechanics from the big screen have once again broken loose, and are marching for little better they can steal completely spoiling the fun's construction site. Become Lenny, the best level builder around and blow all those nasty little monsters sky high! A goal in life if ever there was one. Monster business, the epitome of the average arcade game features stupid graphics and a doubly stupid premise to remove all the objects from the building site. Lenny must blow up all the monsters with some sort of final bicycle pump, causing them to inflate and eventually rise to the top of the screen, dropping all their objects as they go.

Despite the bling of the whole affair, Monster Business is actually quite good. Different screens each present a different sort of hazard, whether it be dodging platforms or a speedy time limit, and the player is so interested in trying to get the end of the level that he probably won't realise quite how crazy and dumb the game is.

Smart graphics and it could only be German music help Monster Business rise above the pack and shine out as



an example of what arcade games should be about. It's like an Akko record, if you know what I mean.

☆☆☆☆

**NEBULUS 2**



Price Amiga £25.99  
Genre Platform  
Publisher 21st Century Entertainment

Having been the hitman when the physics looked exceptionally the what ever it was before it was burnt, 21st Century Entertainment aren't having much luck at the moment. Not only are they having some considerable difficulty with their Mega Drive product, but the one game that looked like it could actually make them some money has turned out to be somewhat of a disappointment.

The European codes responsible for the expelling John Phillips' original classic have done a lot of behind pay, making the gameplay that was the first game so excellent by piling on lots of

items and random power-up type features. The classic formula has been totally swamped by the sheer weight of these new 'ideas', and as such anybody who enjoyed the first game is likely to be very disappointed by this. However, it is quite pretty and, at least for those who haven't seen the first game, has a real weakness on the playability front. But while the first game knew exactly where the addiction/ frustration threshold was, within a stage even it like it wasn't even there. Not recommended.

☆☆

**RAILROAD TYCOON**



Price Amiga £25.99  
Genre Strategy  
Publisher MicroProse

The AGI strategy benchmark game makes it's way onto the Amiga, and what a fine conversion it is! Building a railroad empire across the USA at the turn of the 19th Century may sound like hard work, but for those who like

their strategy to run deep, Sid Meier's simulation of that very period is fun Fun FUN! We know it's difficult to imagine how, but trust us, it is. The feeling of power is paramount as you lay your track from sea to shining sea, amidst big-time business and generally earn loads of cash.

Expanding like an entrepreneur in the early 1800s, you must take a small stake into the biggest stake in railroad industry history *ever!* By taking control of every element in the decision making process which makes the railroad work, the player must handle say details as well as broader political and economic issues, all at the same time as competing either with a friend or against real tycoons from history. And every element of the game is represented with top-quality graphics to make even the most number-crunching intense sessions of the title easy to manage.

Meier's excellent, friendly user interface and the sheer precision of the game design and balance compared with the top-notch nature of the Amiga make this version of the game an outstanding success. Wholeheartedly recommended.



Price Amiga £25.99  
Genre Platform  
Publisher Blomax

Stomach-crampingly cute it may be, but there's no denying that Rodland is a fun game. The James andrews isn't particularly noteworthy, finding itself added to a sea of graphically excellent games upon its release. Still, however, the cartoonists seem to have crapped up when the highest-profile cute game over the moment (Mighty Pockets has failed to meet expectations. The player must work his way through a massive mine of screens, collecting pieces of power ups and killing enemies with his rod (hence the name) by pushing them into the floor.

The end of each level is marked by the arrival of an enormous rod of level led guy such as an elephant, who, despite looking about as threatening as a big lump of cotton wool in a knit-ted bag will die for the players forth- with.

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Interestingly enough, the player can opt to play a girl if he/she wants, not that it makes much difference to the playing style. And to be honest, the boy looks so bleeding obvious you'd never know anyway.

Check a block full of excellent visuals. Redefined is a first conversion and it could even be argued to better its own parents, so credit over the clear action has been improved. Certainly not a title for gamers into depth or gang-bro blasting, but a nonetheless worthwhile purchase for anyone else.

☆☆☆☆

**ROLLING RONNY**



Price **Amiga £19.99**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Virgin Games**

Rolling Ronny is a redefining standard, the most subtle around. Piddling collecting spinning game and delivering packages for people. At the end of each set of Piddling's events, Ronny must get on a bus and go to a different part of Piddling's to collect more gems and deliver more packages.

The player must guide Ronny around, making precision jumps in order to scale the tall buildings atop which the gems usually sit.

In its subtlety and simplicity, Rolling Ronny is sort of like *Car-Vap*: lots of primary colour graphics filling in the blanks for what is effectively an extremely basic game of left-right object collecting action. Where *Car-Vap* failed in its control over the player's character, however, Rolling Ronny succeeds. He can twist around in mid-air, duck and jump to avoid monsters in a manner frustratingly absent from his earlier relative.

It's not until Ronny starts falling over and being pathetic that the player is reminded of quite how difficult roller-skating can be. More often than not we find little Ronny on his own with twenty birds and stars flying around his head.

Completion of a level will result in a nice little bus trip, assuming Ronny has completed enough events for people to earn the cash for the fare. Otherwise a rather unconvincing "Game Over" sequence ensues.

Perfectly entertaining nonsense fun, surprise surprise. German indeed. Starbuck.

☆☆☆☆

**SARAKON**



Price **Amiga/Sharp ST/IBM PC £18.99**  
Genre **Puzzle**  
Publisher **Virgin Games**

Games which call the player stupid are unlikely to go down in history as great simulations, yet *Sarakon*, despite making this fatal mistake in a perfectly decent rip-off of the *Ising Jang* tile-mapping business, basically, if you imagine being played with some old oriental tablets and with some complicated "can't do that" rules, then you're pretty close to imagining what *Sarakon* is all about.

The stop of the game is to click on similar tablets which sit in a particular orientation, eventually ending up with no tablets left, or at least as few as possible before the time limit runs out. Once done, the player is rewarded with a breakdown of his score and a comment from the computer as to his *Sarakon* ability.

The problem with these puzzle games, however, is that they all look similar enough to make the player want to pick them up and have a go, yet they insist on containing enough rule subtleties to make doing just that impossible. The result? The *Ising Jang* player will feel infuriated that he can't make his minimal moves work.

The presentation is first class, apart from the cheesy sound effects and music which don't so much create the ambience of the Far East as a grubby take-over in Dubai.

If comparatively subtle mouse clicking is your bag, and your eyes can stand staring at the monitor for ages while you scratch your head, *Sarakon* is the game for you.

☆☆☆☆

**SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE**



Price **IBM PC £40.99**  
Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **Lucasfilm/ES Gold**

Deep, deep, deep. Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe is a big old game and no mistake. It's also the sequel the critically acclaimed *Third Fleet* clone. The tale comes packed with new goodies

but brings the same problem of the first game: i.e. the fluff and rather horrible in-game graphics.

The player is offered the chance to pilot aircraft in a seemingly limitless number of historical missions, shadowing or guarding planes and taking place in actual battles and scenarios of the Second World War.

However, played in a Wing Commander style with in-game taking the place of the polygons so frequently and successfully used in other flight sims, Luftwaffe will have all but the owners of the fusion machines burrowing down the desert level in the struggle to get it to run at an acceptable rate.

Ambitious players can then define their own missions to determine what history would have turned out like if there was just one less *Blueschmitt* BTroG in a particular combat situation.

Luftwaffe is exactly the sort of game — as distinct from *Wing Commander* — that you actually want to make excuses for. And that's simply down to the fact that under the eye-matched graphics which actually look pretty absurd every now and again, there is a quite brilliant game.

☆☆☆☆

**SILENT SERVICE II**



Price **Amiga £39.99**  
Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **MicroPro**

It may have taken five years, but the sequel to one of the most critically acclaimed and publicly admired sim games is finally with us. *Silent Service II* features all the best bits from the first game as well as a host of original and new goodies.

Digitised graphics and sampled sounds simply confirm the *Service* as a game which is undoubtedly one of the most detailed, accurate and realistic on the market, but new gamers should be warned that, just like life on a real submarine, it's not all walking, et. alion.

No. There's a lot of the old *Adv On The Water* stuff with turning off engines to sneak up on enemy warships without alerting their radar. And as for all that tank hovering stuff. I ask you!

MicroPro are undeniably the outright Kings of all things sim, but their policy of increasing the action and maintaining the dial-watching as used to

with good effect in *F11 Stealth Eagle II* would be well extended to this particular title.

For gamers wishing to pore over an accurate sub simulation, rest assured, there is absolutely none better. But those expecting to get their topknots off straight away would be better to wait for a more accessible equivalent.

☆☆☆☆

**SPACE 1889**



Price **IBM PC £78.99**  
Genre **RPG**  
Publisher **Empire**

This is an RPG which shares many similarities with *Origin's* *Ultarian Odyssey* in both plot and user interface. However, this lacks the atmosphere and graphic quality of *Origin's* effort, and the plot is too linear — one often feels as though they're being led along a fairly narrow path. It's rather simple, and could act as a good intro to the world of RPGs for the moment, but more experienced players may feel the game a little retrograde for today's gaming tastes.

☆☆

**SWITCHBLADE II**



Price **Amiga ST £29.99**  
Genre **Action/Shot**  
Publisher **Gorelix**

Some seven months after appearing on the Amiga, *Switchblade II* arguably one of the best arcade shoot-outs in existence — has finally made its transition onto the ST and what a success it's been!

The appeal of this sequel to Gorelix's much underrated original is the distinct Japanese flavour of the graphics. Quite aside from a having more as new weapons and playability than most, *Switchblade II* features three big-eyed, black-haired characters and transformer-style robots in a side-on multi-directional scrolling battle to the death.

Control over the central character has more than a little *Commander* feel to it, as he hovers around all over the place firing away with his power-tappable laser rifle.

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A host of different landscapes - some all blocky and mechanised, other quite sunny and happy looking - sweet these willing to play, each inhabited by it's own particular breed of robot life.

Perhaps more than the graphics or the gameplay, it's the style of Frank Miller II which makes it such a nice game to own. Don't be fooled by the gaudy cover artwork (we thinking this is just another blast with no heart) it's a thoroughly polished and classy piece of code, and well worth your pennies.

☆☆☆☆☆

## TECHNOCOP



Price **Negative £34.99**  
 Genre **Arcade Blast**  
 Publisher **Blanco Soft**

Technocop. What is there to say? This futuristic Blast which deserves a mention, quite apart from anything else for its incredibly messy graphics, was originally produced by Gamma some years ago now appears on the Razorsoft label. Now Blagoslav owners get the chance to play, although it's a matter of debate as to whether they'll actually want to do so. Basically this two-stage racing game is an unremarkable twist on the Chase HQ theme with some side-on scodding shoot-out bits.

☆☆☆

## THUNDERJAWS



Price **Amiga £19.99**  
 Genre **Arcade Blast**  
 Publisher **Banner**

Deep within his subconscious (thanks to the evil Madame Q) has launched a new and diabolical plan - to build an army of genetic mutants to take over the world! This well-animating but rabidly convulsive is the latest in a long line of Ed's games from the Dams. To be fair, the majority of the code-ups have been a long way short of classic themselves, but Denmark seems to have an especially tough time wrestling their into computer format. Witness A.P.B., ET:TM Banner and the appalling Mail and Crossbones.

Here, the truly element which has

proved to be the conversion's downfall is the tongue-in-cheek Lancelotti-Giant graphic style of the original. This very factor, which at least helped the concept look a bit more interesting than in fact it was, has simply made the Amiga version look downright cheap.

The players' aim is to work their way through a set of levels combating Madame Q's monstrous forces and collecting bonuses along the way. The first stage puts the players in an underwater setting, shooting it out with enemy divers and ferocious elastic allies. Weapons can be collected to improve the firepower, but nothing can improve the diabolical animation and dull-as-dishwater gameplay. From here on in, it's a more straightforward managerial shoot out with the players mixing up jet powering down an assortment of mechanical assistants. (though) Take it away!

☆☆

## ZONE WARRIOR



Price **Amiga £18.99**  
 Genre **Arcade Blast**  
 Publisher **Electronic Arts**

Destroy the evil aliens in this time-puncturing Blast from Electronic Arts. The Gordo has taken control of a score space satellite and are using it to send themselves back through time, destroying vital elements in the development of Marsland, thus doubling the humans' ability to resist the Gordo invasion in years to come.

The player must race back through a host of different time zones and foil the alien's success, generally by killing a level of left-to-right scodding monsters.

The impressive intro sequence and the nature of the static graphics are never quite matched by what is really a rather basic shoot-'em-up in the Turbine vein. Each stage presents a mission briefing for the player, beginning with the noble first of saving the survivors of the wreck, from the destruction of aliens and so on. The novelty of using a phased plasma rifle in 40 mill range to blow away innocent creatures and huffed Egyptians is entertaining enough for a while (but the steady gameplay requires a considerably stronger touch than graphics merely to support it).

☆☆☆

# COMPETITION

Right then! That's the end of this month's releases. And now, in order to celebrate, we're proud, and pleased as punch to present this, our end-of-this-month's-new-releases competition! Hurrah!

There is £100 (count 'em) worth of software up for grabs for the first lucky, lucky reader who can write to us at the address at the bottom of the page, telling us, in no uncertain terms, the answer to the question which we'll get to any second now.

The Question:

How many five star games have been reviewed in this month's reviews directory in total - not just in the New Releases section?

The Address:

ACE Pink Competition, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

The Rules:

The Ed's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into and all entries must reach us by the end of November.

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## AFTERSURNER 2



Price **MegaDrive \$24.99**  
Genre **Arcade Blast**  
Publisher **Sega**

The epitome of the arcade blast, *Aftersburner 2* is a dizzy piece of fluff. And this conversion isn't half bad. Flying in F-14s into the screen, the player zooms fly through 23 stages, blasting away enemy fighters with his unlimited number of machine gun rounds and limited missiles. Enemy fighters can also be downed by using bombing missiles too.

The game is fast—very fast. In fact, its score sections it's as quick as the arcade machine. Performing a job degree roll by looking hard and then banking the other way is an exhilarating experience. And on the whole, in fact, the whole game is pretty exciting fast, even when it's fully understood quite how mindless it all is.

This is the sort of game that the *MegaDrive* was built for. As the other end of the Sonic scale, even though it's another arcade blast, *Aftersburner 2* does a surprisingly good job of showing exactly what the *MegaDrive* is capable of as long as you don't look to deep.

Even though the speed is up to scratch, the gameplay certainly doesn't come up smelling of roses. It's the definitive *Aftersburner* conversion, and, just like the coin-op, is hardly flawed.

☆☆☆

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## ALIEN STORM



Price **MegaDrive \$24.99**  
Genre **Arcade Blast**  
Publisher **Sega**

*Alien Storm* is a real stunner in the jet department. Once again aliens are over-running the Earth and it's up to the player (and a possible friend) to look their scaly butts back to the alien-ripen hole from whence they came, like the very similar *Golden Axe*, three suitably awesome figures—Earth's last line of defense—stand ready to save the world of alien-destruction. There's the heroically-named Gordon, sexy Karla and the robotic footster, who bears an uncanny resemblance to C-3PO (although he never wobbled as eloquently helpfully).

Together they have less their way through eight levels of alien filth. The hero(s) stroll from left to right basically slaying everything that moves before it gets too close. After a while the view changes to that of an *Op Wolf* style game. By guiding creatures around the screen the player has to track everything.

Being a shoot-'em-up we would have thought that more emphasis would have been placed on the weapons but unfortunately they fail to deliver, being rather unimpressive and no fun at all. Can only be more than moderately recommended for two players.

☆☆☆

## BEAST BUSTERS



Price **Amiga/Mast \$7 \$29.99**  
Genre **Arcade Blast**  
Publisher **Activision**

This is a competent conversion of the coin-op which proved so popular to the Uni-loving arcade game. It's basically yet another *Op Wolf* clone but features the welcome twist that instead of waiting for enemies the player (or players) are besieged by a veritable army of the undead who attempt to stop any trying the abandoned city alive. Borrowing heavily from the *Business Horror* films, *Zombie Dogs*, *Zombie Shoppers* and all manner of evil creatures can be literally blown into bloody bits of gruesome flesh.

The graphics manage to capture both the look and the feel of the arcade and virtually all of the levels are present, but there's no denying that the inevitable substitution of a mouse for the cabinet-mounted *U1* is distinctly unsatisfying. If you haven't already got a game of this genre and don't mind a mind-blowing blast then it might be worth looking into, but otherwise there's not really enough here on offer to warrant purchase. It's a shame, because even the arcade version left the player cold after a couple of runs—it's not supposed to make *drag the player* in any more than that. If by the price, it would have been nice.

☆☆☆

## BONANZA BROS



Price **MegaDrive \$24.99**  
Genre **Arcade Blast**  
Publisher **Sega**

*Bonanza Bros* proved to be a something of a stunner for both the Public due to its peculiar graphic style and innovative angle on the man-up theme. The player(s) objective are (slightly dishonestly) to burglar increasingly complex and heavily guarded buildings in Anytown, USA. Having already made a bit of a reputation for themselves, there's a substantial reward on the floor's hands ensuring that every available law enforcement officer is eventually born to be the one to get them hung to rights.

The game uses a unique split screen to allow players to split up if necessary between the two play windows. There's a schematic of the building, allowing the players to plan their routes efficiently so as to grab the goodies and avoid the nasties. Overall the game is a fairly enjoyable romp, with some hilarious cartoonish situations in places adding greatly to the fun, but like many *MegaDrive* games its longevity is questionable.

☆☆☆☆

## CASTLE OF ILLUSION



Price **MegaDrive \$29.99**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Sega**

The Evil Mizzled, jealous of Minnie Mouse's beauty (she as they kidding?), has reconquered her, (she believed Mickey must enter the dreaded and mysterious *Castle of Illusion* to rescue her. Mizzled's domain consists of the levels and Mickey's task is to find the seven Rainbow Gems on each, all of which leads down to a lot of jumping from platforms to platforms, pecking up and shooting blocks, sliding down slopes and climbing ladders.

Fundamentally it's a Mario clone—and not a bad one at that. There are some original touches, such as the

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Tryland level which scrolls from left to right, which poses great disorienting but challenging scenarios. The graphics are very attractive and the sound is great. In fact, it's games like this that make GameCave owners feel that they've done the right thing in laying out the cash for their colour band-aid.

☆☆☆☆☆

**CASTLES**



Price **IBM PC £24.99**  
Genre **Strategy**  
Publisher **INTERPLAY**

Castles takes several gameplay genres and combines them with a healthy dollop of historical authenticity. The game consists of three increasingly-difficult scenarios involving around the not particularly enthralling warring task of constructing castles. Each castle consists of real towers, gateways and towers. There are seven classes of labourer available and the player's main game task is to apply the optimum mix of labourers to each section in an attempt to finish the castle as quickly as possible.

Every so often the player is attacked by the neighbouring Welsh (occasionally some things never change). Initially the opposition are incredibly weak and their rise in strength is gradual, so defeating them is a lot easier than it ought to be. Although scholastic enough to ensure repeated play until, Castles is mindily flawed in too many ways to achieve classic status.

☆☆☆☆

**CENTURION - DEFENDER OF ROME**



Price **Magnavive £24.99**  
Genre **Action Strategy**  
Publisher **Electronic Arts**

Can an aspiring Centurion fit the player's duty to both defend the homeland and expand the Roman Empire as far as possible. This megala-maniacal aim is somewhat foisted at first by the fact the player starts with having just a single legion of soldiers and a city of disgruntled citizens to try and keep under control.

The game is a well-judged blend of icon-driven strategy and arcade-style interludes. For example, to keep the subdued pretensions happy the player can take part in 'meat engage' in chariot races and run to them in haste. As the game progresses the armies under your command grow and ships placed at your disposal to take armies to neighbouring shores. If the player's luck is really in he can even have a crack at reclaiming the voluptuous Cleopatra. Megalotiv owners in particular are starved of this type of game, so if your looking for something to exercise your brain a little, you could do far worse than to give this a go.

☆☆☆☆

**CHAMPION OF THE RAJ**



Price **Amiga £24.99**  
Genre **Action Strategy**  
Publisher **PBS, Microsoft**

So during the time of the British occupation of India, the player assumes the role of leader of one of six leading factions with the ultimate aim of taking control of the whole country. This can be achieved by building up a powerful army, with which to proceed against armies into submission or, more peacefully, by staging festivals and whitewashing in the night time. The former option requires a bit of forward planning to enable allocate taxes for buying troops and equipment. In battle the player can elect to direct the army personally in an arcade-like game, or let the statistics decide the outcome.

Champions of the Raj has a lot of good gameplay ideas wrapped up in appealingly atmospheric presentation, poor graphics and truly awful sound. The unfortunately slow and liddly disc accessing is the icing on a particularly unattractive cake. To use the word 'tacky' would be offensive to takers.

☆

**CHOPLIFTER 2**



Price **Samsbury £29.99**  
Genre **Shoot 'Em-Up**  
Publisher **Nintendo**

Choplifter first appeared in 1979 as

Broderbund and is still truly remembered today. The player's mission as crack helicopter pilot is to rescue survivors from a horizontally-scrolling mission. To do this the player must land near the refugees and wait for them to board. This can be quite harrowing experience at times as you're in a sitting duck for all the enemy game installations and planes which constantly fly by.

The player's cockpit is equipped with a night-vision camera and a limited number of bombs with which to protect himself. Fast action, challenging game play and a password system help make this one of the best games on on the GameCave, and a must for any action fans collection.

☆☆☆☆☆

**CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT**



Price **IBM PC £29.99**  
Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **Electronic Arts**

Chuck's previous two sims were purely for waffle pacifiers, only permitting the player to do such menial things as perform perfect loops and dives. This time around things have changed considerably, with lovely CUNO making a welcome appearance. Air Combat allows the player to pilot war planes from any one of three eras: WWII; Korea; and Vietnam. There are a multitude of single missions to fly along with a comprehensive campaign mode featuring 15 missions. These include the standard 'work and destroy' loops, protecting bomber formations, and attacking ground targets. Should none of these take your fancy the in-built mission designer is invaluable.

The most useful feature is the ability to replay missions after completion and view it from any angle, allowing the player to sate all his most spectacular delights and crashes to die. Even more interesting is the ability to dual plane from different eras, allowing such bizarrness as pitting a Mustang against an F-6. A notably realistic and fun sim, this recently holds the ACE Benchmark for Simulations. Possible the most entertaining aspect is the way you can pitch one of the jet planes against old scrawly crates. Class.

☆☆☆☆☆

**DRAGON CRYSTAL**



Price **GameGear £29.99**  
Genre **RPG**  
Publisher **Bugs**

No flinching about with complex plot here. The player is riding his bike one day when he takes a wrong turning down a strange alleyway and ends up in a fantasy world teeming at the seams with dangers of dragons. As an RPG the gameplay couldn't really be simpler. The action is firmly on action, with all the 'Take the Flame King of Zax to the Crack of Firey Mountain' task stuff firmly in the background.

Although completely done, it's a little difficult to see who exactly this game is aimed at. It's far too simple for the typical RPG level, while commentators are likely to get more than a little time at having to shut down the power just before they complete a level just because they reached their tale stop. But if you've got the time, you'll find that this makes a welcome addition to the GameCave library.

☆☆☆☆

**EA HOCKEY**



Price **Magnavive £24.99**  
Genre **Sports Sim**  
Publisher **Electronic Arts**

Like Kick Off with fighting in, Electronic Arts' Hockey will appeal to everyone. A section of teams from around the globe, each with their own abilities and weaknesses built in out in the ice hockey 'World League'.

Following on from their success with John Madden's Football, EA just get another winner out of the bag with this, perhaps their most realistic title to date.

Having selected the breadth of game, whether the player wishes to compete in a one-off match or a knock-out, select his team and that of the enemy, it's game on!

Starting around the rink is simple enough, and control over the stick is surprisingly intuitive. Since the rink is so small and the players can move so swiftly and violently against each other, Ice Hockey is an extremely rapid, high scoring game. Basically, whoever gets the puck from the face-off is





warrior, even on a 16-bit 286, the frame rate is hardly silky smooth.

There's no denying that *F-14* is a superb flight sim, and Microsoft's best yet. However, despite the radically overhauled graphics and increased number of combat arenas, one does wonder whether there's enough new in the gameplay to make it a vital purchase to owners of the original *F-14*.

☆☆☆

## F-14 TOMCAT



Price **IBM PC \$78.95**  
Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **Activision**

There's no shortage of flight sims on the PC, but Activision's release may appeal to some. The game lets the player fly a series of missions around the Gulf of Hormuz. The player can either pilot straight into the action or start at the bottom and slowly work his way up through a full Navy career. After a good performance in a series of missions the player gets transferred to the Naval Fighter Weapons School better known as the home of the infamous "Top Gun." Weapons available in the usual mix of Sparrows, Sidewinders and Phoenix missiles, along with cannon for close work. There isn't really much emphasis on realism in *F-14 Tomcat*, and to be honest it really hasn't got much to offer players over other similar sims. In the final analysis, it's a satisfying enough effort without too much more baggage.

☆☆☆

## F-ZERO



Price **Super Nintendo \$24.99** Import  
Genre **Racing Game**  
Publisher **Nintendo**

*F-Zero* takes advantage of the Famicom's built-in background manipulation capabilities to create one of the fastest and smoothest simulations of 3D you've seen, if a little lacking in visible detail. Simply put, *F-Zero* is a race game, with the track viewed from behind and slightly above the player's vehicle. At first, despite the impressive 3D, *F-Zero* appears to offer little over the myriad of other race games about,

but after a few games to quality alone through.

The excellent control over the craft is more precise than in any other race game. As well as accelerate, brake, left and right controls, one can also use the Famicom controller's two analog buttons. This degree of precision means you can race your craft like a man between a high-speed hovercraft and a rally car. *F-Zero* may not look anything special, but it's probably one of those games that has to be experienced to be believed.

☆☆☆

## FRENETIC



Price **Amiga \$20.99**  
Genre **Shoot 'Em Up**  
Publisher **Cave Design**

Hot on the heels of *Warzone*, Cave releases this vertically shoot-'em-up which draws its inspiration from just about every other shoot-'em-up ever released. To anyone more than half-way familiar with the genre the gameplay holds few surprises - the screen scrolls slowly down while waves after waves after wave of eminently blatable alien creatures assault on-screen. The now-standard power-ups can be collected by destroying various special alien or weapons packs as they appear. At the end of each of the eight levels there's the obligatory huge enemy that takes a huge amount of shots to put out of action.

*Frenetic* is a competently-executed game that lacks that spark of novelty that sets it out of the rest of the mill. The alien sprites are large, fat and mean, the action is non-stop and highly demanding at times. The most annoying niggles is the way that power-ups can be lost when the player's ship is destroyed, leaving the player naked before the alien onslaught. Unless you're already got the experience *OSTV*, this is a fair buy.

☆☆☆

## GHOST BATTLE



Price **Amiga \$25.99**  
Genre **Action Shoot**  
Publisher **Thalion**

*Ghost Battle* is a jampier 'n' dancier

affair that borrows more than a few elements from *Ghost n' Trolls*. The player is a hero who has to enter an evil demon's kingdom in an attempt to rescue his kidnapped girlfriend. On each level it's battles, platform, game-panels and underground caverns all the way through each level, at the end of which there's a big boss lady to be defeated.

There are the usual extra weapons to collect, and on later levels keys and various tools that must be used on various pieces of machinery appear to add much-needed depth to the otherwise shallow gameplay. *Ghost Battle* is impressive graphically and visually, and play is sluggish. Not one for the top of the 'most get' list.

☆☆

## G-LOC



Price **GameGear \$29.99**  
Genre **Action Shoot**  
Publisher **SEGA**

If you're expecting anything vaguely reminiscent of the Sega coin-op you can forget it. No, I tell a lie - they both involve planes, but that's where the similarities end. The player controls a state-of-the-art jet fighter in a war-torn world of the future, who must embark on various missions to destroy enemy planes, tanks and warships. Controls are easy to get to grips with and it's not long after take-off before the color lights up like a man tree due to the heavy enemy activity. If those air planes they'd money behind in an attempt to show you with some missiles. The ships and tanks in the game act as sitting ducks and aren't really much problem. The game is enjoyable for a few hours but after a while the interest really begins to wane.

☆☆

## GOLF



Price **GameGear \$29.99**  
Genre **Sport Simulation**  
Publisher **Sega**

Sega have chosen a bird's eye view for this offering, and it works quite well. Simplicity is the key word here and though there's a fair bit of missing

shots before play starts it's nothing so taxing. To play a shot the player selects a club and then chooses where to strike the ball (to the back and side shots, which direction to hit it and how much power to use). Even though the scale of the game is small, there's nothing to think about to maximize interest and allow for some creative skill to be used, and the courses are so rich of putt markers holes. There are quite a few nice touches that add to the game, such as four player mode and ball selection. A good game that's worth looking into.

☆☆☆

## HALLEY WARS



Price **GameGear \$29.99** Import  
Genre **Action Shoot**  
Publisher **Talita**

Given the fact that the vast majority of the software currently available for the GameGear doesn't even come close to doing the impressive hardware honor, *Halley Wars* comes as a breath of particularly refreshing air. Every hardware need its top-flight shoot-'em-up - the GameBoy has *Warzone*, the Lynx has *Game of Zorrocos* - and now the Game's got a game that's arguably better than the pair of them. It wins no points in the originality stakes, being too basic space-based *Xenos*-style vertical blaster with all the standard pickups and level guardians, but it scores highly on execution, offering the playability, colorful graphics, smooth animation and surprisingly impressive sound. The game's only major limitation is that, due to the machine's limitations, it can't produce the flashy effects that similar games on more powerful machines often rely on to hold the player's interest, so *Halley Wars* must depend on gameplay alone - and there's insufficient variety there to provide that all-important urge to progress to the later levels.

Also, it's a shame that the game is actually a fair way and, as they say when trying to pull out a column eight at the end of an hour, seasoned game-players may find the long-term challenge somewhat lacking. That aside, it's still a fine blaster and undoubtedly one of the better GameGear titles so far - just don't expect to be playing it in a year's time.

☆☆☆



by simply mowing into the opponent. This makes the game easy to get into and provides little learnability. There's also a re-view-the-opponent-for-some-Rick-Oil-style-action (but not anywhere near as good).

The game's major problem is the play area—it's bigger than the screen which means the view is continually scrolling. On other machines this is not a serious thing but the Commodore screen shows the images terribly. Nothing special. In Your Place is definitely one to leave On The Shelf.

☆☆

## JAMES 'BUSTER' DOUGLAS BOXING



Price **MegaDrive £24.99**  
Genre **Sport Arcade**  
Publisher **Megaforce**

Oh dear, to the light of infinitely superior beat-'em-up games, James Bates Douglas is not so much on the ropes as on the stretcher.

Side-on presentation, boxing games rely on speed, presentation and a wide enough number of moves to keep the player motivated that he can improve his technique. Unfortunately, Buster can offer us none of these elements, as the truly crummy fight scenes are more likely to cause a submission through sheer tedium than anything else.

Widened and thoroughly unimproving graphics of the boxes shuffle towards each other and then furiously flail away with high and low blows until one of them falls over. You may feel the same way about boxing, but believe me, this is poor.

And for a fight game, it contains the minimal use of simply being too easy, just by standing away at the five button-farther than your opponent, it's possible to win. There's no skill involved here. Crappy nonsense.

☆☆

## JETFIGHTER 2



Price **IBM PC £25.99**  
Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **Velocity/US Gold**

In a crowded market, Jetfighter 2 ad-

ily stands out from the crowd. The unlikely plot centers the invasion of America's West Coast by a confederation of Latin American countries. Full-scale simulation is out of the question, so small tactical strikes are the order of the day. There are five planes available with which to fly the missions: F-14, F-16, F-4E and the Top Secret F-15D 'Black Widow', a plane that combines the handling characteristics of an F-16 with the stealth capabilities of the F-119B. It's advanced technology gives the player an edge over the enemy.

Graphics are among the best yet seen on the PC, being both fast and impressively detailed. Sound is nothing too hot, but adequate. The action is more on action than simulation, making this one of the most exciting if not overwhelmingly accurate sims available.

☆☆☆☆☆

## JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER



Price **Atari ST £24.99**  
Genre **Sport Simulation**  
Publisher **Virgin Games**

Archer Maclean, veteran programmer of *Life and Druggans*, is probably the last person you'd expect to write a snooker sim. Cue games have been around since the beginning of computer gaming—a few colored shapes, some angle-of-deflection algorithms and away you go. But even with the advent of 3D graphics some of these have really had an element of realism.

Used now, the table is viewed from behind the cue ball so the player can play up close as if on a real table. The cue can be rotated through various angles and viewed so the player can see from virtually every angle conceivable. The ball movement is accurate, without balls stopping for no reason or going off at impossible angles.

Two player games are the best, but four levels of computer opponent are available for the lone games. As the player progresses more sophisticated tactics can be incorporated, like positional play. However, darts, snook and every type of spin are all possible, and an end for snooking opponents. The end result of PAPA's comprehensive and realistic approach to recreating snooker is the most authentic open to simulation to date.

☆☆☆☆☆

## KA-GE-KI



Price **MegaDrive £26.99**  
Genre **Beat-'Em-Up**  
Publisher **Bugs**

The player is cast as a large-headed hero (who looks like a Thunderbird paper on steroids), who must slowly battle his way through a multi-story tower block in an attempt to reach the top. (Why, we don't know.) The lift being out of order means you have to go through each level individually, a task not made easier by the other big-headed thugs residing there.

For a beat-'em-up Ka-Ge-Ki is distinctly underpowered. The range of moves is limited; apart from mowing the player can punch, jab, jump and, er... that's it. Ka-Ge-Ki leaves a lot to be desired, the graphics are just plain ugly, backgrounds dull, though sound is okay but not much else. The one game play is outstanding and the game has no real redeeming features. There are better games available.

☆☆

## LOGICAL



Price **Amiga/Mari, IBM PC £24.99**  
Genre **Puzzle**  
Publisher **Rainbow Arts**

Logical is a bit of a rarity, a thought-provoking fast-action game which is genuinely as addictive as the block-stacker. The game is an illusion, along the top of a screen runs a track, along the track come colored marbles which drop down channels into revolving disks, each disk has four visible slots, and is connected to other disks by further channels.

Your task is rotate the disks (by clicking with the right M.B.) and launch marbles (click left) in such a way that each disk becomes filled with four marbles of the same colour. As always it sounds too simple but there are various complications and additions that spice up the gameplay, such as time limits, colour gates, misprints and a variety of other touches. The graphics are clear and well defined, and the sound is in good with some nice tones and effects. With 99 levels (and a password system) this should keep any

puzzle addict for a fair while.

☆☆☆☆

## MAGIC POCKETS



Price **Amiga £25.99**  
Genre **Puzzle**  
Publisher **Megaforce**

The *Magic Pockets* had typed and opinion-splitting been in a strange old affair. It looks great, has a simple enough premise and is regarded by many to be a piece of class action. To our minds, however, it just doesn't hang together.

The concept in *Magic Pockets* is somewhat lame. The player has stolen the *Hitman* kid's toys. The *Hitman* kid must journey through four worlds, retrieving his toys and overcoming a host of new and exciting challenges along the way.

Imagine *Mario* crossed with *Spyglass* and that's what you get. Surely, you get a greater *Mario* version of *Mario* because which is actually quite irritating, a sub-standard control interface which is utterly charmless and leads to many stick-breaking incidents, and one of the most unnecessarily over-complicated score/power-up systems on the planet.

To help the ball in his mid-air swirling quest around the four worlds, power-ups are available in the correct object collection procedures are followed. Having to sit down and work out how the system works when the very point is that these games are interactive is a severe irritant compared to the fun involved in the player who has to wait for the pick-up points to finish bouncing before he can collect them, causing any fluidity or fun. Stop, start. Stop start. Stop.

☆☆☆☆

## MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE



Price **Amiga £25.99**  
Genre **Sport Game**  
Publisher **Activision**

With *Kick Off* a commonly holding the football crown, it's a brave company that launches yet another football game to the market. Mind you, with the original game selling over a thousand copies, maybe *Kick Off* are not taking such a risk after all. The player can

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 TOO MUCH.

compute in either the UEFA Cup, European Cup or the Cup Winner's Cup, before a match the player can adjust formation, tactics and composition which due to save time/minutes is a pretty painless process. However impatient gamers will be pleased to know that this can all be skipped.

The game is displayed in pseudo-3D which allows for some decent player animation and graphic fills. As is traditional the player views the ball from behind, and there's a huge variety of moves available including sliding tackles, variable power shots, aftertouch, chips to the side, as well as volleys, headers, etc. One minor gripe is the fact that it's difficult to see where the ball is going to land due to view point. MJ Footy isn't Kick Off (but it is a good Footy game for those looking for something different).

☆☆☆☆

**MARTIAN DREAMS**



Price **IBM PC £26.00**

Genre **RPG**

Publisher **Origa/Windsor**

Imagine all the 19th Century characters that you'd most like to meet, plunk them all in an experimental spaceship, and there - to add SF interest - blast them to Mars. The result is a wondrous blend of The Forbidden Planet and Island On The Orient Express with a small cast of relatively suitably wandering animal Men.

The player's objective is to rescue these wanderers from the Red Planet. Along with companions Hognard Fossil, Dr Blood, and Nicks Tink, the player must get back to Earth post haste with a strange and hostile planet, which entails making sense of the extinct Martians' radio-culture and discovering why they died out... Or did they?

The Martian Dreams game interface is superb - the game is entirely mouse controlled, although keyboard commands can be used for shortcuts. The game is instantly playable thanks to some forethought by the programmers, because the game provides the player with enough clues to get off to a quick start. The character interaction opens worlds very well giving the player the ability to have some quite lengthy conversations. Some really impressive graphics combined with excellent gameplay and involving scenarios result in

one of the better RPG games in recent years

☆☆☆☆

**MARVEL LAND**



Price **MegaDrive £24.00** (import)

Genre **Platform**

Publisher **Namco**

There's nothing wrong with cute or simplistic graphics - what we at ACE object to is the downright badly-drawn variety as opposed to Namco's latest arcade effort. But the old dictum of never judging a book by its cover is proved right by playing the game, whereupon it becomes apparent that despite the visuals, which look like they've been produced by a pre-school child armed with a blunt crayon, Marvel Land isn't bad at all. It's a rather obvious Mario-clone, and while it's not a patch on Nintendo's classic (but then what isn't it's certainly one of the better attempts). The Japanese dialogue which appears in some of the sub-games takes a bit of fiddling out, but that's the standard price paid for playing imported games, and in this case at least it doesn't affect the fun too much. Many Megadrive owners may be offended over at the prospect of buying a game that looks this bad for their beloved tokens of wonder, but those who want value for their money will find this to be a better bet than the flashy-looking diggs that form a large part of the Megadrive's software base. Recommended.

☆☆☆☆

**MAUPITI ISLAND**



Price **Atari ST/Amiga £25.00**

Genre **Adventure**

Publisher **Lambert**

The latest in a line of adventures starring fictional galic detective Jerome Lange, Maupiti Island is a murder mystery-type affair in the same vein as Delphine's excellent Cruise For A Corpse. This effort, however, lacks much of that game's imagination and sparkle, and though there's a very complex storyline, packed with clues and suspects, and all set on a remote Caribbean paradise, there seems to be

little to really see or do, and in such there's an uncomfortable claustrophobic atmosphere. Given the potential offered by the plot and its tropical setting, Maupiti Island could have been a lot better and more interesting than it actually is, and the overuse of repetitive samples and poor CLI speech serves only to put the player off. The game's presented well, with an effective music-driven parser and lots of neat touches, but given the somewhat unreasonable way in which the player is asked to find clues (it's more often down to finding a pistol hidden somewhere in a cluttered screen than using any real deductive reasoning, it's unlikely that anybody will find much to enjoy here). Cruise in a much better bet for any would-be Maignet-out there. *Good music though.*

☆☆

**MEGA LO MANIA**



Price **Amiga £24.00**

Genre **Arcade Strategy**

Publisher **Miramax**

Released amid a bunch of God-rings that are still coming thick and fast, Miramax's offering has fared better than most, scoring sufficiently close to the Big Daddy Popcorn while not being afraid to borrow little bits here and there where appropriate.

Set in an alternate universe, Mega Lo Mania is all about the quest for power. Power over a set of worlds, each made up from a suite of islands, to be precise. New worlds are formed and intelligent life is placed upon them, upon which interstellar freeborders descend and try to enter the rings of power for themselves.

The conflict arises, needless to say, when more than one freebinder takes a chance in a particular island. Since each area can only have one ruler, a campaign of imperialism begins, with each player trying to use the forces at his disposal to overthrow the others.

Each island exists within its own time period, and the rate of development, intelligence and so on of its inhabitants is governed accordingly. Players quick to invest time in invention and the refining of natural elements, rather than simply running around hitting the others with sticks are more likely to succeed.

☆☆☆☆☆

**MERC3**



Price **Amiga/Atari ST £26.00**

Genre **Arcade Shoot**

Publisher **MS Gold**

While on a peace mission to central Africa, the President of the United States has been kidnaped by a militant band of heavily-armed rebels. For to duplicate reasons his recovery has to be covered with a maximum of two operations - the player and a friend. The game is a combination of the CapCom's arcade shoot-'em-up and retains the eight-way scrolling (albeit a bit jerky, especially on the ST). By virtue of two-blank areas on either side of the screen the play area has been reduced to a strip down the middle of the screen. In one-player mode this is fine, but in two-player mode things get very crowded.

The action quotient is of a very high level, with loads of enemies to mow-down and tanks to blow up. Also nice is the ability to blast away huge chunks of the scenery with some burning explosions. If you like your action fast and frantic then this is probably for you, but if you're usually going to be playing two players then Cos Design's Waxxon is probably a better bet.

☆☆☆☆

**MICROPROSE GOLF**



Price **Atari ST £24.00**

Genre **Simulation**

Publisher **MicroProse**

The unsatisfactory Microprose style comes to visit the golfing genre (we wonder why with a reasonable amount of success. It's all extremely competent stuff but...

Thinking a happy medium between an arcade-oriented approach of such names as Links and Leaderboard and their own number-friendly abilities, Microprose can offer the player the chance to fiddle around with every aspect of the game, from the size of his club right down to the positioning of his feet or how high the tee is.

Wide-eye maps of the current hole give the player a rough estimate as to what he's about, with the computer subtly suggesting the best club for the shot. From here, the bitmapped graph

its own way to workmanlike polygon landscapes and the familiar strength to accuracy-over hitting reactions.

The track ball is then followed down the course in jolts (it won't fit lands and the whole business can start again). All lanes are covered and the presentation for the most part is top-notch (to top, for the big rewards are scored for players willing to put in enough hours to perfect their golfing ability rather than insurance-poolification funds.

☆☆☆☆

## NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE



Price: **Gateway \$29.99**  
**Game Sport Simulation**  
 Publisher: **IBM**

Yet another Gateway one-on-one basketball game. This succeeds over in Your Face by virtue of keeping all the action on one main screen and thus avoiding the terrible blurring of lanes's offering. In addition, there are five sub-games to take part in, some of which are particularly different to "normal" basketball but they at least are some variety. NBA requires far more skill to play than FYF because of the more complex screen which, although making it hard on at least, at least makes the game more skill based and thus more rewarding in the long run. Its hardly Tetris, but a worthwhile purchase nonetheless.

☆☆☆☆

## PREHISTORIK



Price: **Atari \$7/Amiga/IBM PC \$19.99**  
 Genre: **Platform**  
 Publisher: **Thorn/Entertainment Int.**

For another game that pretends to speak the myth that the cavemen raised at the same time as the dinosaurs. This one puts the player in the role of Bik, a hairy hunter with a bottomless pit of a stomach. Bik has to guided around his rock-writing ant-dinosaur world in the search for food. Bik's commensals come in either passive (you killed and pre-cooked) and just ready to be eaten or active (dinosaurs that have to be whacked over the head before they can

be consumed) form. It's this latter food class, along with the pits and spikes that have to be jumped, that provide the game's main obstacles. At the end of each level, assuming Bik's eaten enough, there's a bonus match against a giant sloth before progress onto the next level can occur.

Prehistorik has little to recommend it in any department. The sprites are cartoonish but very neat, the rock-writing is decidedly 8-bit and sound is merely perfunctory. And considering that to like it means you're the steady dull-to-get-through someone, the action is slow. The pixel-perfect nature of much of the jumping doesn't help things either.

☆☆

## ROBIN HOOD



Price: **IBM PC \$29.99**  
 Genre: **Arcade Strategy**  
 Publisher: **Millemium**

Millemium's cost-cutting the publicity of the recent launch of Lincoln green series, Millemium's completely unlicensed version of the tale is surprisingly entertaining. Presented in Popayan style, the game sticks to the classic storyline of Robin of Locksley being banished out of his lands by the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, shunned by his people and left to fend for himself.

The player, taking the title role of course, must assemble a band of merry men and set about doing away with the many evil sheriff men and for all. An equally important goal for the player is to conquer all the peasants and other inhabitants of the forest and its environs that Rob isn't the wandering-riding Maggard that there but in a lovely land banished and.

Aside from combat and object-seeking, there's a surprising amount of genuinely funny dialogue in the game too, with the characters carrying out their roles to the best of their ability.

It's an extremely enjoyable and inventive arcade adventure game strategy can role playing game who's worst falling could be that the plot is so familiar the player is compelled to play through to the very end as soon as he physically can, thus diminishing the appeal of screen visits.

☆☆☆☆

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**R-TYPE 2**



Price **Amiga/Atari ST \$29.99**  
Genre **Action/Shoot**  
Publisher **Arcadevision**

R-Type was the forerunner to many of today's shoot-'em-ups, and introduced many of the features that players can take for granted in a half-dozen others, such as power-ups and end-of-level bonuses. Rather than come up with a new idea for its sequel, however, Arcadevision decided to stick to the same formula, which is not a bad thing when you consider it.

There are six horizontally-scrolling levels, each with its own style of graphics, all of which are excellent although ST owners may be a bit peeved by the open scrolling. The music is suitably spacey, and patches of the game, being very similar to the original, can wonder whether buyers of that will want to fork out for what amounts to a jump-disk data disc of new levels. However, newcomers to the R-Type legend are in for a treat.

☆☆☆☆ (Amiga) ☆☆☆☆ (ST)

**SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND**



Price **Amiga/Atari ST/PC \$29.99/\$29.99**  
Genre **Adventure**  
Publisher **LucasArts/US Gold**

Monkey Island is the latest in LucasArts' celebrated series of "animated graphic adventures." The player is Guy Threepwood, a young man intent on becoming a pirate. To do so he must complete three mini-games during which the player slowly becomes involved in more and more hazardous situations with characters both beautiful, wild and absurd. The game also contains several sub-plots which serve to make the game more enjoyable, which range from simple treasure quests to a massive objective involving a Grand Pirate Don't Hell.

The graphics are pretty impressive, using a variety of camera angles, such as close-ups when conversing with characters and long shots of the landscape when Guy travels from place to place. The music adds a lot to the game and provides real atmosphere in some

scenes—the Tavern scene almost all of its potency to the accompanying sound track. Monkey Island is easy to play due to good use of the mouse and single key commands, and along with the presentation combine to make this an excellent game which deserves its place in the software shelf of any adventurer.

☆☆☆☆☆

**SHINOBI**



Price **Amiga/Atari ST \$29.99**  
Genre **Beat-'em-Up**  
Publisher **Sega**

Shinobi is back! Unfortunately he's lost the entire compass of his previous adventures and must traverse all four levels alone in an attempt to rescue his kidnapped brother. The action is divided into two distinct styles: kicking in badmen and jumping platforms across a horizontally-scrolling landscape and, for added variety, kicking in badmen and jumping platforms across an eight-way scrolling landscape! The action gets a bit repetitive, and Shinobi himself is pretty poorly equipped for some of the tougher battles around. An essential purchase here for Shinobi fans only.

☆☆☆

**THE SIMPSONS**



Price **Amiga \$29.99**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Sega**

This recreation of the TV-show and marketing phenomenon which is really really funny honestly no really it's great because they're funny little cartoon characters who behave like real adults as it's so hysterical as to be really funny it's actually hard to tell if the hands of Sega.

From the coding pen of Arc Developments, this version of the MSX game released by ArcVision has lost even the charm of the cartoon and as top of all that, it isn't a particularly good game either.

Space moments have landed in the shopy American town of Springfield and are planning to build a weapon which will help them take over the entire planet.

The player, taking the role of Bart must travel around Springfield. Basically, Bart must destroy or defuse all the evil day elements in Springfield which the Mutants are using to construct their space weapon.

Sega's attempt to create something a bit more depth than a straightforward arcade game is commendable, but the result is frustrating because the shopy elements of game design just make it too difficult to play.

It's too easy for Bart to die through no real fault of the player, and the control method is ineffective. Shame.

☆☆☆

**SLIDERS**



Price **Amiga, ST \$29.99**  
Genre **Sports/Action**  
Publisher **Pelican**

The French can always be relied upon when it comes to producing novel, if not particularly playable games - and Sliders is no exception. It's sort of a weird cross between 3-poolball and Marble Madness, where two player-controlled spheres fight it out over a series of scientific areas with the objective of hitting the opponent's goal zone with a tiny ball.

In theory it's a great idea, but somewhere along the way the basic premise has been lost, swamped under a sea of complexly control modes and the concept of supposedly game-enhancing features such as transposers, attractors and magnetic tiles.

The result is sometimes fun, but for the most part annoying, and even a whole screen full of game options and adjusters can't do much to divert the frustration.

The real shame is that sometimes - but only very briefly - it's actually a bit of fun, and it's during those moments the player realises how good the game could have been if the designers hadn't got carried away with all the extras. It's not fun, very slick - but ultimately unimpressive, no matter how much process and determination the player may possess.

It's a weird one because even in two player mode, it leaves the players with a "wonder" sort of feeling which implies nothing more than disk removal and to the drawer somewhere.

☆☆☆

**SNEAKY SNAKES**



Price **Amiga/Atari ST \$29.99**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Sega**

From the people who used to cheer out those Knightmare games (remember those) comes Sneaky Snakes, an exercise in excellent control and little depth. A female snake has been kidnapped by the Neary Nibbler and the player taking the role of either Conquistador or Adia must explore the Nibbler's lair and ladies landscape using enough fuel to make them big enough to activate floor switches which open doors through to the later levels.

It may not sound quite as much fun as looking over the head but actually it's not that bad. Apart from the wacky idea of the whole thing, the playing of the game is pretty good. Control over the snake is excellent and all aesthetic devices. Fuel is obtained by bouncing on little plants which lie all over the floor or waiting around by plants which open-up balloons.

The weight of the snake is devoted by its length. Unfortunately, once he's long enough to activate the switch it goes through to the next level, he's also long enough to be more easily hit and lost by the Neary things in the landscape. Although the game does quite matches up to the quality of the control method, there's probably not enough visual novelty value here to justify a purchase.

☆☆☆

**SONIC THE HEDGEHOG**



Price **Amiga/Atari ST \$29.99**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **Sega**

Sega is out a mission to recreate his fully chaotic from the classics of old Doctor Eggman. Levels and platforms are the order of the day, but the emphasis is on being played firmly on velocity too, with plenty of shades of Blue Demons and Strider to spot along the way.

One pitfall here can rid himself of enemies by either jumping on their heads, or rolling up into a ball and spinning at supersonic speed to knock them



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out of his way. The most important objects in Sonic's world are gold rings. These act as a safety buffer: the contact with the enemies - one touch causes all Sonic's coins to sprout out, while contact without any rings results in the loss of one of Sonic's three lives. These can be traded for a life once a hundred have been collected.

Spread around each of the HILL levels are a myriad of useful objects that deliver some temporary bonuses such as invulnerability and speed boosts.

The impressive graphics are by far the best part of the Megadrive, being smooth, colorful and easier to spend than how you'd imagined. Along with the variety (24 per level) and flexibility to modify, this is a game that'll keep you playing until those only hours. If there's one MegaDrive game you buy this year then this is should be it.

☆☆☆☆☆

## SUPER PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL



**Price Super Nintendo \$24.99 Import**  
**Genre Sports Simulation**  
**Publisher Inteleco**

The Great American Sport makes it onto the Famicom with a certain amount of style. A game for one or two players, it's viewed in two very different ways. When the ball is pitched, the players view the action in slow-up from just behind the pitcher. The pitching player can adjust the power and angle of his pitch using the joystick. The batting player then has to strike the ball by doing similar. As the ball rolls into the air the view cuts to a scrolling park view.

Using the radar in the corner of the screen the pitching player has to guide one of his outfield to catch the ball, while the batting player has to decide whether to risk pushing his men round the bases or score them. In... just like the real thing, actually.

As a simulation, Baseball is fine. The graphics are a bit rusty at times, but the all-important gameplay is marvellous - almost rivalling at times. Although a rather simple game, with the associated risk of early boredom (and at times they could fix the carriage that's a fairly big one), Baseball is something enough to be worth considering.

☆☆☆☆☆

130

## SUPER R-TYPE



**Price Super Famicom \$30 Import**  
**Genre Arcade Shooter**  
**Publisher Irem**

Apart from Gadius III, shoot 'em ups on the Famicom are a little thin on the ground, so Super R-Type comes in a real treat. Basically it's R-Type 1 with some shiny laser knobs on. Irem has added a couple of new worlds - the first one has you blasting through a space minefield - but it's still the game we all know and love. With impressive aesthetics and exciting sound, it's the game Famicom owners have been waiting for.

☆☆☆☆☆

## TAIL GATOR



**Price Gameboy \$29.99**  
**Genre Platform**  
**Publisher Nintendo**

Put Tail Gator into your Gameboy and you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd accidentally picked up a Game and Watch on the way out of the house. Instead, this Magic Mirror rip-off features an alligator leaping through a bunch of levels of the Maldives kind done, trying to dispatch the monsters who have invaded.

Clearly the alligator must flick away the monsters using his tail. Chests occasionally yield bonuses or secret levels which will clear the entire screen of bad guys. But we all know the rest of chest that Chady is really interested in. Yes! The chests with the key which will lead him off the level.

Control over the alligator is led enough. He waddles along if I'm perfectly aware that alligators can't move that swiftly on their hind legs at the most ridiculous death rate.

We're really moved on from games where the entire objective is to get off the current screen by collecting a key, or at least everyone except Nintendo here. For the moment (status of a second of a moment), Tail Gator looks as if it could be one of those simple yet addictive games which look rubbish but play like a dream. That isn't, it isn't, it isn't to be looked.

☆☆

## THUNDERHAWK



**Price Amiga £26.99**  
**Genre Simulation**  
**Publisher Core Design**

Most flight sims require a good deal of practice before any reward can be garnered from them. All those keyboard controls and mind-numbing on-off functions do quite a bit to put off anyone looking for a quick Mart. Core Design have seen this gap in the market, and more than adequately filled it with Thunderhawk. All controls is via the mouse, which makes everything from weapon selection to helicopter control so target tracking, quick and easy. It's a welcome change from the usual convoluted test of disks and mouse-clicks.

The game itself is broken up into a series of campaigns, each preceded by a graphic briefing sequence indicating targets and terrain type. Before taking to the sky the player must select the appropriate ammunition for the Thunderhawk, although there's a default option if this seems too much of a chore.

What makes the game a treat is the handling of the helicopter. The controls make flying intuitive, letting the player get on with the mission rather than having to stay airborne. Graphics are pretty smooth and moves at a fair pace, although there isn't much background scenery. If you're never been tempted to try a flight sim then perhaps this is the game to change your attitude.

☆☆☆☆☆

## UTOPIA



**Price Amiga £26.99**  
**Genre Arcade Strategy**  
**Publisher Gremlin**

The quality of life on earth, let's face it, sucks. And the world is screwed up so bad that nothing anyone can do can save it. We need to start again.

This is the premise of Utopia, another Populous/Powermonger style affair. Except this time the aim, rather than simply ruling a world or conquering it is to construct and run it and to make all its inhabitants feel really good. The aim is to elevate the quality of life to

100% - Utopia.

It's not difficult to grasp the aims and controls of the game. And it quickly becomes apparent that there are lots of problems thrown up by the idea of making everyone happy. For a start, if you spend all the money on hospitals, food production and month-long sports festivals, your populace will be content, but without any credible defence when the inevitable computer-controlled alien attack occurs.

Beginning from just a few key buildings, it's up to the player to construct the colony using icon-driven actions while inspecting the world in isometric 3D. There are almost no rules in this society. You can run things virtually any way you want, inventing resources and time in whatever you like. The only factor that is missing is the option to try and run things at a deteriorating regime and make a certain part of the population very happy while keeping the workers ground down into the dirt. Well, that's not on, is it?

☆☆☆☆☆

## WARDNER SPECIAL



**Price Megadrive £26.99 Import**  
**Genre Platform**  
**Publisher Wana**

There seems to be a trend in current Megadrive games (Sonic excepted) to wrap superb and addictive gameplay in hideously primitive graphics. Wardner Special is one of this happy band.

Not-wise if it's the usual receive the gold from the evil badly by 'saviour' and 'saviour' through ancient body-induced levels of platform and ladder, but it has several gameplay features that lift it out of the mire.

For a start, the amount of variety is incredible. Every step of the way seems to reveal some new obstacle or feature to overcome - spinning blades, lightning hitting clouds, disintegrating stars - which help sustain interest no end. Control over the hero is superb, allowing lots of Mario-esque mid-air manoeuvres. Probably the only major fault - apart from the terrible Master System link graphics - is the way the game sends the player quite a way back when he dies. Very annoying. However, this is the only real criticism of an otherwise great game.

☆☆☆☆☆

## WARZONE



Price **Amiga/Atari ST £29.99**

Genre **Shooting/Turn-Up**  
Publisher **Cave Design**

Once again a powerful technical organization has revealed countries around the world, and as fate would have it only the player (and maybe a friend) have survived. A classic run-up set firmly in the classic mould of *War*, *Warzone*, the screen scrolls downwards while all manner of enemy forces pour on-screen in their feeble attempt to stop the player.

The main opponents are troops with rifles and are basically cannon fodder in any ballistics term. Scattered along the way are various other battles armed with indirect grenade launchers allowing them to fire over walls. The obligatory end-of-level bonuses include tanks, subs, helicopters, etc. etc.

Despite some new touches *Warzone* is basically a cut-throat *Warzone*, which is not necessarily a bad thing. The graphics and sound are nothing brilliant, but good nonetheless. Where it really succeeds is on the gameplay front - it's an addictive and fun blast, especially for two players.

☆☆☆☆

## WILD WHEELS



Price **Atari ST/Amiga £29.99**

Genre **Sports/Arcade**  
Publisher **Ocean**

Another bizarre hybrid game, this time involving Pole Position with Kick Off to produce a bizarre - but oddly playable - car-based future sport where vehicles take the place of humans in a conventional two-side football game played in a giant stadium.

At first glance it looks nothing special, with miniature cars loop-looping their way around an unconvincing 3D pitch, but playing the thing reveals it to be more fun than outward appearance would suggest. It's not Kick Off by any means, but the simplistic gameplay works well enough, and the variety of neat touches, such as different models of vehicles, weaponry and bonus tiles all help to raise the interest level.

The only problem is the lethality, which is likely to be seriously short-lived once the few skills have been mastered - the program doesn't throw up anything in the way of new challenges to hold the player's attention.

Games should be commended for making a conscious effort to produce something else other than the usual reorganized clatter where only the graphics and the bonus changes from game to game, and though it looks well for the future, *Wild Wheels* only holds its own in such a promising and original, but unfortunately limited.

☆☆☆

## WING COMMANDER II



Price **IBM PC £34.99**

Genre **Arcade/Shoot**  
Publisher **Origo**

No matter what else you might say about the *Wing Commander* games, they look damned good. The trouble is, there isn't really much else to say about them. Well, perhaps that's a little harsh but here in the sequel to the much talked about and little-played original, it's a case of more of the same.

Intervalla was with the Kilevati coalition, and in the most recent Kilevati victory, the Confederation Republic Ziger's Claw has been destroyed by invincible Kilevati orbital fighters. As the sole member of the assault, the player must first convince his federation comrades that the attack did genuinely take place and then lead a federation force to track them down and destroy them.

The missions available for the player to try are wide ranging and change in style in accordance with the development of the plot. At the outset, when things are pretty quiet, the player's orders are simply to patrol, which leads to turn-to-appeal fights with Kilevati craft.

Graphically excellent although particularly processor heavy, *Wing Commander II* certainly isn't a first-best game. It's a worthy sequel to its predecessor but is the sort of title where that title old phrase about trying believing in one hundred percent appreciation.

☆☆☆

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make them jump over gaps or shoot at the windmills. However, in a unique twist, the towers need to rotate to follow Pogo's movement. Quite a technical achievement on the Space! Now Nintendo has come to the Game Boy under the title GameLand. And while the name may have changed the game certainly hasn't. It's still block shooting and plays well but has a difficulty rating through the roof. However, completing a tower is extremely satisfying so if you fancy a real challenge then you know where to come.

☆☆☆☆

## CHASE H.Q.



Price **GameGear £29.99** (import)  
Genre **Action Game**  
Publisher **Taito**

There can be few readers who aren't familiar with the excellent coin-op or its sequel K.C. It was a benchmark on the part of the designers to combine high-action racing action with bumper-busting action. The player takes on the role of an Antarctic-wearing blimp.

Your role is, chasing various pests in a speed-up Formula with the aim of riddling their quarry off the road to make the score. The GameGear version is technically excellent, with lots of fast action and good sound, although the cars are a little small. Unfortunately it's almost as tough as a perfect banana, and even GameBoy will soon be locking away for long. You're bored? Well, actually you're more likely to be lost before after buying this - it's a lot of money for such a short-lived challenge.

☆☆☆☆

## CLOUD KINGDOMS



Price **Atari ST/Amiga £7.99**  
Genre **Platform**  
Publisher **BBG/Gremlin**

Cloud Kingdoms is a load of balls-bouncing balls, to be precise. (It's! The old ones are the best!) As Terry the Ball, the player has to negotiate thirty-two huge scroll-free-scrolling levels, each of which floats high in the sky, collecting all the gems that later to the

narrow walkway. Terry has to be careful not to leave the path, else he'll fall to his doom in the void below. This isn't as easy as it sounds - Terry's rubbery body bounces wildly off walls and pillars, and parts of the floor can tumble beneath him. In addition, if Terry passes over an arrow on to the floor they'll push him around, usually over the edge of the nearest chasm. If that wasn't enough, other hostile opponents wander the walkways, here to see Terry's demise. Fortunately Terry can bounce over their heads with a tap of the fire button.

Cloud Kingdoms, liberally from Millerstein, is an attractive game, with a strong arcade feel. The cute graphics, though looking a little dated now, do the trick, and the scrolling on both Amiga and ST versions is very smooth. The horizontal control is a little tricky to get to grips with, but rewarding when mastered. Some features annoy, like the fact that it's impossible to know where-standing floor is until it's been bounced on, but overall this is an accessible bargain at just under eight quid.

☆☆☆☆

## CRUISE FOR

## A CORPSE



Price **Amiga £7.99**  
Genre **Adventure**  
Publisher **Dolphin/US Gold**

The plot for Cruise for a Corpse is firmly rooted in the Agatha Christie 'mystery' tradition, plenty of suspects, crime scene tradition, detailing how the player is treated to a Cook's poison's yacht for a well-earned holiday only to get there and find his boat humped off by an unknown murderer. Before you can say 'Inspector Wexford' the player is forced to don police overcoat and ruffly bibelot to solve the fantastic crime.

After a lot of pre-release interest from the press, there were high hopes for Cruise for a Corpse. Is it the excellent game everyone seemed to think it'd be? Well, yes... and no. In the graphics and sound department it's excellent, with large fully-animated sprites moving over exquisitely detailed backgrounds and plenty of audible music and samples playing away in the background. All except for presenting an

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**STUFF I  
DO YOU WANT TO  
BE IN OUR READERS'  
PAGES?**  
YES!  
**THEN FILL IN THE  
ENTRY FORM AND  
STICK IT IN THE  
POST!**

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... Rex and Dex were beginning to worry. Usually they wouldn't have a car, as their lawyer, Sir Bartholomew Moulton, was the finest QC in the country, and his phenomenal legal skills could get them off any charge they faced, no matter how damning the evidence. But he was caught in a traffic jam, and they knew that the super-tough Burnside may well be able to extract a guilty combination of Rex and Dex. Moulton could give the situation. They'd see the bill and they knew what a handsome Burnside could be. He was a lot bigger than the court-mapped judge's rock fallows who used to be in the above floor line.

"Now we're gonna take this case and win!" said Burnside loudly. "I want to know the names of all your previous winning bids. I want to know about the deposits, the deliveries, the accounts... every detail of every bill that expires, and then I want to know about all the bids that have gone down on this matter." He leaned forward, leaning close to Rex and Dex—"so you'll be brought up on the bar of your nation, my son."

"Look," said Dex, using his special knowledge from mediation techniques to remain calm under the intense pressure. "These lawyers are talking about, but we haven't done anything wrong. The picture is a forgery, and the information that this document contains fabricated. We are innocent, and this whole thing is clearly a thinly veiled scheme by the villainous English barons to force us so that they can be freedom thieves."

"Oh, you wish?" Burnside roared. "Well, I've lost money on you chips in the past, and I intend to make sure that you pay me back right to the full when you finish, you can tell your little suit away to judge this Ballantine in the morning. You're innocent as I am, charged with excessive smuggling and bulk theft."

"But we're innocent!" Dex protested. "Get up and we'll bring you the real of him—the English barons—along with proof of their guilt. We know you're a fair man, Burnside, but give us a chance, and if you don't, we'll ensure that you're the little who don't the the British lawyer who runs in the Westminster lobby."

Burnside seemed to think this over. He knew that the other game board was that he was negotiating for Nations, he'd be those off the face grounds, but the law was all for his bid—well, that and saying "If you know what's good for you" in a magnificently nice.

"Now, you're gonna deal," he said finally. "I'll give you 15 minutes to prove your theory correct. The deal's not your own, and if you can't find the evidence you're looking for, I want you to quit tomorrow or else to face the music, can I?"

Minutes later, Rex and Dex collected their cars and other vehicles from the deal company and left the station on a mission to clear their names. Burnside smiled and waved them out the door, then turned to his lawyer, DCI Bell,

waiting at his grinds.

"What is the meaning of releasing the two prime suspects in the 'Brogan case?' the asked. "I believe they're innocent." "I'm giving them a chance to see their own," he replied. "Come, think, you're in the British system. We have rules and regulations here in this Hill. I know you're never really here the same since that drug dealer killed your partner, but we're going to do it through by the book."

"Yes, writing you have today by these ball club rules and the drug kingpin don't, we're going to do it."

"Think, this case, but given the circumstances I have complete faith in your lawyer as the day. Our mission should not give place, please." Definitely Burnside handed them over. "Now get home and get some rest. This does present serious evidence of your loss of the deposit since Burnside. Maybe if you take a vacation, you can come back to the job with a different perspective."

Burnside didn't think about it, but as soon as he closed his eyes, he was tortured into a vision by the scrawling night-vision vision of his former partner, Maxwell Remis, being taken down by a half-dozen folk by the hidden drug cartels. Rex and Dex thought about the next day. When he opened his eyes again he knew what he must do.

"I'd do as a Brogan mission," the Brogan looked to the mini-car driver.

"Oh, you mean English mission, it's the way you would change the law here now. They'd like claim to be all the Brogan's possessions. Don't like business deal. Everyone find them."

"Yes," said Dex prominently as he turned to his brother. "And they will do again." Dex produced his two-piece suit and slowly began to unbutton it. When the two-piece was unbuttoned, Dex reached inside the bottom piece and produced a small white rifle barrel. From the other piece he produced several more, balls and several small pieces and when he finished, he held the whole carefully in the car had become a high-powered sniper rifle with telescopic lens sight. He looked to his brother, who had done the same with his own, and the two clipped their magazines of arrows pointing intricately engraved hollow-point in with a metallic hiss. "Let's get some yardwork," said Rex. "Yes," agreed Dex.

In the few short hours since Rex and his brother had been released to the British system, they had managed to transform to the tangled piece of British heritage that it had always been into a quickly assembled cultural nightmare. The agencies and old masters had been thrown out in dozens of twelve-pointed rings of Vespis playing poker and non-ported profit. They're clearly come forward the flow the Englishmen were could take their lives and the brother themselves by on a pair of equally non-foreigner setting odd supernatural nature. They

brother lived. But their disgusting hand was made interrupted along the great old piece in the Britishman man, had exploded in a ball of flame and the Brogan was exploded through the burning wreckage, using their own guns. The Englishmen dropped their rifles and started begging for their lives for the standing concrete they were.

"What," said Rex. "We're not going to hurt you, Rex?" he answered with a broken and angry the Brogan had dashed their weapons. "All we want you to do is continue to the public that you know us and everything will be alright Okay?"

Dex looked to his brother Rex and smiled. "Well, they're right, you're moved around in their hands, they're each kept concentrated. An unexplained explosion. Their hands tightened around the grips."

"No, we're not," Dex answered. "I'll do you in 1000 ft." At that moment, the Englishmen drew their guns and leveled them at the heads of the dead Brogan. The rifles were for their gun, but it was no late.

Two shots erupted, and Rex and Dex looked thinking it was all over. Well, it was, but not for them. They were in an explosion of dust and the English barons were three feet forward by the force of a small bullet in each of their foreheads, and crashed through the fifth story brick windows and down into the spiral walkway below.

The sound of gunfire still ringing in their ears, Rex and Dex looked up at them, standing in a cloud of yellow dust, the figure of Burnside holding a smoking gun, all he needed.

"Looks like you were right after all. I hope this little incident hasn't put you off Brogan playing," he said.

Rex stood up and started toward all their gunfire, he was from the walk nearby and walked it carefully.

"Wow all," he said respectfully. "How about a game?"

## THE END

### WEEKEND READERS

We're been absolutely overwhelmed by the response to our call last month for aspiring writers to contribute their stories to *ACE*. Finding it seems that there's an insatiable demand below Golden Gate, and the fiction we've so far received has been of a very high quality indeed. We started here being listed among such authors as Eliza, Rex, and Wanda, but we're not. Although they're all been absolutely excellent, we felt that we just had to give that entry from young writer Nicholas Winkelman, based on *King's Golden Age*. While not exactly adhering to the "make-it-yourself" guidelines we set down last month and taking things a bit too seriously, managed to be neither too fluffy nor too of the same.

## VENGANCE OF THE WARRIOR!

By Nicholas Winkelman

When the warrior returned to his village it was to the scene of Cynrig's (brother of the dead) & dying he wanted around his own body to the wind. The stretched warrior thought mingled with that of his and hunched though he was, the great warrior "Ma-Rather" could't help for gap at the sight of those he had returned from a quest to see, only to find them drowning in their own blood. But what gave him was to rage & he roared out loud. His first surprise he was answered by another, not the way, some where ahead of him in the forest the two faces then appear watching would have followed possible the first of his considerable size, into the midst of the trees towards the source of the forest.

Breaking away the undergrowth he charged into a clearing to find a hollowed tree with more sharp stones protruding a body which he barely moved, but was still capable of shifting some little distance. An Archer was hidden both with his & unarmored girl, as the body of a middle-aged woman, was raised slowly, his mother now stared no more.

The last turned at the warrior as if changed him, an arrow in hand. The warrior charged also, but before he drew his mighty sword thrusts back in the middle of the clearing the One & another was neither attempting to dodge the other's blows. The One swung his one down as the warrior's unexpected lead, but the warrior grabbed the other's hand & high, & heard the One & another then blew open the deal. Before the best could recover, he found the arrow, grabbed the warrior's hand to both hands, and swung, buried it over his shoulder to each knee as a mark. The impact made him spit blood, but the warrior couldn't say anything to bury his mother, he doing rapidly over a large group of literally which even he wouldn't be able to defeat. He glanced over at his former mother and getting his two hand off earth, away from the surrounding fire.

Under the cover of darkness, he carefully made his way around the arrangements surrounding the two prisoners they saw two black. Finding none to see about his own & most dangerous quest - that he revenge.

He had noticed the One carrying weapons & plundered goods, & it was a short while he discovered the identity of his foe. Finally he opened an One carrying a banner - that of a Golden Age, the recognized the symbols of the King of Tara immediately. It made his way towards through the woods, by passing several villages, could be reached the Court Place. From here on, his destination, the King's castle from where the banner came had been plundered, his journey the more dangerous than it had been, leaving villages to see advanced time of his adversary. It seemed that the use for his



found was called Death-Adder. He had heard of him before, but he had thought that he was meant to be a clown. But he learned that the name O'Brien was just a name by him, making him even more like. Not only that, but he had another name: the One from the East. It was because from the North, with power and wealth and power. They were brought to him alone. Still, the man was not all. He also had the King, Queen & their daughter captive in their own castle. It is a kind of a way had demand of him so high that many people could not pay it. And he was not even for he had taken a three-fifths made the three magics, which had become more a way would be destroyed if the man was not paid. The first collection was also very easy. With much time, As-Battle powered on towards the castle and his brother.

One night while he slept, a dwarf visited him. A dwarf, now, rarely a mythical creature, it was given to the tip of a sword. As-Battle greeted.

"How may I help you?" he inquired, rising to his feet & looking down at the would-be thief. "Naturally the dwarf laughed. "You know, it is I who can help you."

As-Battle looked concerned. "How so?"

"My friend, I have a position for you. You'll make your money on this."

"Is that?"

"Why, no, for you a Jew?"

"And I suppose you were thinking to see if I

had the means to pay for it, before you consider me?" he asked in much indignation.

The dwarf agreed, so As-Battle dropped his sword and pointed the finger straight up to the roof of the tent.

"I can see you don't need it!" cried the dwarf, so As-Battle put him down & watched as the watched man looked away.

"AAAAAAAAAAAA!" As charged & the dwarf ran faster than the wind, yelling in flight. Laughing As turned & gathering his things got an early start.

When you see the warrior high up the mountain, approaching night behind. A living one, inside giant light - the product of the mighty winds who ever had many men ago. As he reached the light he was aware of danger all around, yet he could see nothing, the darkness of the tent.

After a few hours he stopped dead still, before him a sound of water was making. He watched & he cried, a glowing white horse had appeared, then a stall, and before him stood a skeleton. Behind the horse, another pulled back from the ground & another & another. They appeared on him slowly, some walking, some flying. Each one held both sword and shield, As-Battle took a step back & turned to flee, but four more had appeared behind him, blocking his escape. He had to fight! Bringing his sword about him kept them at bay, but he knew that each one of them would swing under his guard & get so close to him, he had to do something.

Then he remembered. Long ago he had been taught a word which he had been told would provide him his life - but only once. It was of power - a word of magic. He recalled it now. As his memory moved to action he closed his eyes and spoke "the word!"

Unpredictable power flew through him - one energy pulsed through his veins. He called forth that which the word allowed him. The power of white-magic. He exploded around him, but never did a step under him. Dropping from the ground, giant water his feet and when the white-had shrank, he opened his eyes. The skeletons were crushed & layed beneath their own rocks. He had glanced at them and returned towards the now visible castle.

When the brilliant light he saw, the castle, he left a trail of death behind him. Death-Adder could scarcely believe what he saw: approached him & demanded the fee. He could not understand how the man had made it to him after all without. However, he was quite to realize.

"You want the fee?" he demanded. "Take it with me leaving!"

He lunged at As-Battle, the glowing one held tightly in his hand. Despite his bulk, Death-Adder moved with agility, his sword striking around him.

They fought the dragons, giving it something more that would create a loose living. But As-Battle was strong. He was clearly the best pro-

vider. A dash across the desert & he was done, being helped upon the ground. He was going to die - he had failed. Death-Adder stood over him, one sword over his head.

"I asked for some respect for you!" he said, preparing the first blow.

"But I have none for you!" replied As-Battle. "You are about to die & yet you don't care?" he asked forward.

"You can't kill me with that!" spat As-Battle. "You know nothing about my power." he said.

"You're bluffing!" replied the giant.

"Maybe. Maybe not."

Death-Adder was uncertain. This couldn't be true. Could it? He smiled. Of course not. The one called down towards his target, but Death-Adder stepped his stride. In that moment As-Battle struck back. His sword proved Death-Adder's best. In an instant, the field As-Battle had won the air, turned over & was, then again Death-Adder's sword.

As-Battle was left wondering whether to let him fight it out.

The King & his queen and daughter were rescued. He was completely aware the treasure remained the fee & the One before. Perhaps they realized that power would not be theirs after all, so perhaps the magic of the star had affected them, for whatever the reason, they returned. The land of Yaris was safe once again. For now, the powers of evil were at bay, but the long long, never know.

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An industry on the edge.  
A company on the rise.  
A magazine on the loose.

Once, he was programmed to cling off the industry.  
Now... his mission is to protect it.

## THE BLITTER END II

This time he's back... for good!

**Y**es, yes, alright, Blitter is supposed to be dead, and in theory it is. You're looking at a new, refreshed, revived Blitter. It's just that the old Blitter was so popular, and the industry is in such a state of flux and decay, you can smell it.

Sometimes the stench is so strong it gives us headaches. So we're back, with the full intention of bringing you the latest news of the hottest scandals, along with various other things that help to fill the magazine up.

\*\*\*

Everyone had a right old laugh on the closing night of the EGES Show in San Francisco when Strategic Software boss Tom Watson was spotted gate-crashing an exclusive Ocean riverboat party on the Thames. Ocean's Gary Bittay was having none of it, and promptly spotted Watson, apparently amid cheers and applause from the rest of the industry guests. ACE has been informed that Watson could probably had stayed on the boat and boogied the night away with the rest of the industry if only he'd come up with something better than "Er... John said it was okay. No, I mean Dave. Pete. Barney..."

\*\*\*

Hard as it is to believe, by the time we get to the back of the magazine, we sometimes find ourselves short of interesting things to write. As is the case this month. So in a rather poor attempt to fill up the remaining space, We thought we'd tell you about how some of the industry's top-level people stand out in less glamorous professions...

Virgin Games' Marketing Manager Andrew Wright may be a high-falooter today, but twelve years ago you'd have found him selling primitive consoles and hand-helds in the newly-formed computer department of Hamley's toy store in London's Regent Street. Interestingly enough, Andrew was actually dressed from Assistant Floor Manager to Sales Assistant for looking a fellow worker in the gratings! "Because he was pulling my trousers," Wright claims today. Some things never change, it seems...

Former Amstrad executive and now boss of Amstrad UK, Bud Cousins provided his entry into the industry by selling insurance. He also worked as a schoolteacher, as did US Gold head London's Geoff Brown.

Before Mark Irvine became advertising manager of Commodore User and The One and later moved to head up Microsoft's European operations, he used to earn a bit or two by selling ice cream and nuts on a beach in the south of France. And who was he working for? None other than the head of Entertainment International. Since jiffies!

Certain members of Ocean's board of directors have seen the outside side of life, too. Gary Bittay used to be a trainee manager for Littlewoods Stores, while Paul Pattinson used to dress up as a gorilla to deliver singing magazines!

Just to round up the best of the rest... Konami's development manager Colin Pudge, along with Systems y-cunning brothers Mark and Adrian Cole all used to work in MacDonald's (with Adrian also working behind a bar at Bantons). Yield Image Design-director Mike Dine was once a cable-winder for a cable company. Amiga Power's consultant editor Gary Ann worked on a building site and dabbled in writing adventure games with his mates, and Strategic Software Director Gary Giddens once spent Christmas walking around a department store dressed as Snowflake - and thought it may be a breach of the Official Secrets Act to tell you, the same Mr Giddens was also a

top secret agent with the codename Black Diamond! Hope we haven't blown your cover. Gah!

\*\*\*

Here at ACE Towers we know only too well how difficult it can be for you lot to make your way through the masses of computer magazines you read each month. Yes, the world of software reviews is a battleground, so to give you a helping hand in cutting through the waffle and making more authoritative purchase decisions, we provide for you - The Definitive Guide To Games Review Sites.

I couldn't believe it when I looked this up!

Actually I could, because I saw it last month when I did the Work in Progress.

Try before you buy.  
I can't be bothered to criticize the game constructively, and if I've only got one line left anyway after all that waffle, so this will have to do.

We know the game was going to be good, but we're prepared so far that I am hopeless. Please kill me.

Fans of the coin-op will be impressed. It's vaguely similar to the coin-op and I don't want to annoy the software company.

The game has a casual theme, it's only too simple-minded!  
But has absolutely no playability, so I'll try not to mention that.

The graphics are superb!  
I think the word "superfluous" means "good".

Best Coin-op conversion ever?  
Probably not, but at least you picked the magazine up.

It's their best game yet!  
It's their latest game, and comes in a slightly bigger box.

The depth of the strategy is incredible!  
I can't make head nor tail of it, but the

big thick manual is very impressive.

\*\*\*

If you're a little bothered by the pull-out spaces in the Lotus review (page 24 - 25), fear not! You're not dyablic. It's just that in our otherwise thorough quest for excellence some gormless (or he) or something got into the system and the mistake wasn't spotted before it was too late. But if some bright spark can piece the reviewers back together, fill in the gaps and tell us what the spaces SHOULD have said, there's a software prize waiting. Entries to the usual ACE address.

\*\*\*

Apparently the latest magazine issue is a take really old games that nobody buys anymore, and slaps them off in order to look big and hard. We thought this was quite a good idea, so at the risk of looking like hypocrite, we've done something similar.

**SPACE INVADERS**  
PUBLISHER: N/A PRICE: N/A  
AVAILABILITY: N/A

Oh, eye the neo. This game is about as tasty as a stale haggis. When I was walking down Angle Street in my left the other day, I was thinking "Well I'll be Neop's Uncle if Space Invaders isn't a load of rubbish." And it is. The graphics are very good at all, and the playability is not as good as watching Tigger or going sword dancing with Ross Aitch and Lorraine Kelly. All in all you would be well advised to keep your penicils in your spores, and if you already have this game, then it like you would toss a cube, (Dime), All in all I think I am very clever, even though I haven't said anything vaguely constructive. Am ye or a wee-dice? It's a hawt bidet moolocher richt the richt. You take the high road and I'll take the low road. The neo.

■ Angus MacFajki

\*\*\*

And so to bed. There's only so much Blitter and slander you can fit on a page

# TERMINATOR 2™

## JUDGMENT DAY

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