

The #1 Computer Game Magazine

Computer Gaming World



NOVEMBER 1996
NO. 148
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COLLECTOR'S EDITION
15TH
ANNIVERSARY

150 BEST (and 50 Worst) GAMES of ALL TIME

Which is
the *Best*?



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DOOM



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AND FIREARMS IS A
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THE GREAT MODERN

"...the freshest premise of any computer football game in years... Beautiful SVGA graphics and solid gameplay." Computer Gaming World

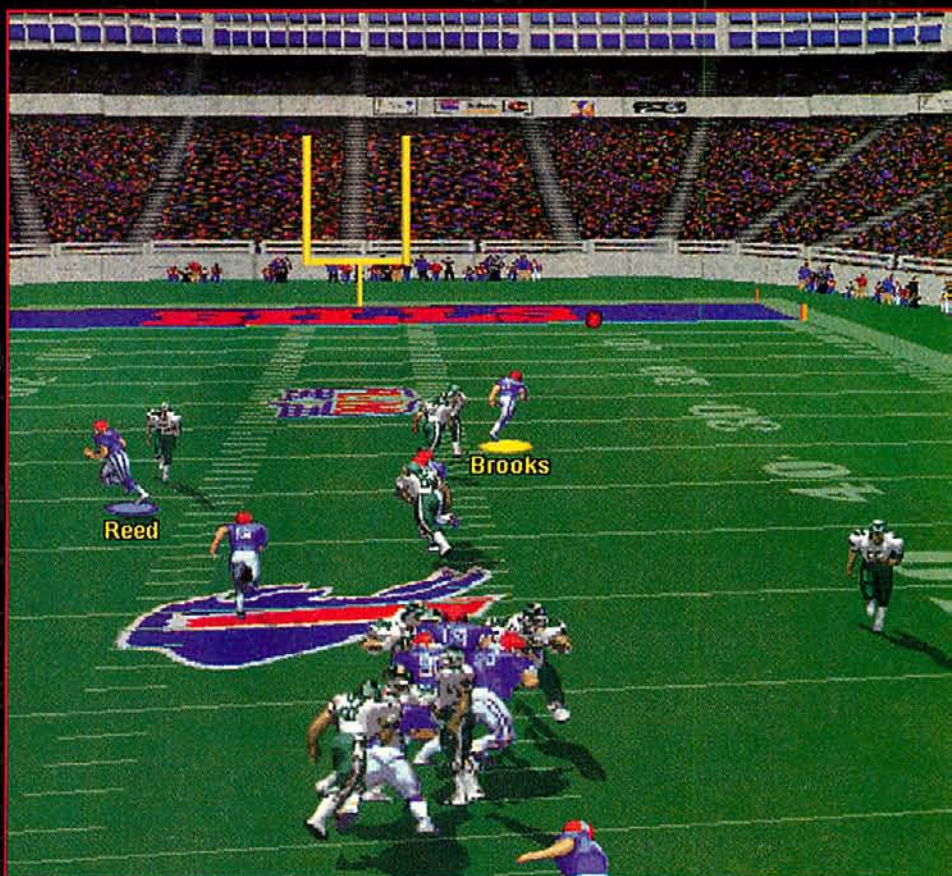
LEAGUE LEADERS

Quarterbacks	Team	Att	Com	Pct	Yards	Yd/Att	TD	Int	Rating
Young, Steve	SF	352	244	70	2981	8.47	29	11	95.9
MacNeil, Scott	DET	244	184	75	2098	7.89	30	26	93.5
Emery, John	DET	435	283	65	3232	7.43	17	11	91.6
Chambers, Curtis	HOU	307	215	70	2249	7.39	30	13	91.4
George, Jeff	AJL	661	485	73	4733	7.16	12	18	90.2
Boney, Steve	KC	241	164	68	3122	7.08	18	22	89.0
O'Donnell, Neil	PHI	475	318	67	3487	7.34	10	16	88.4
Everett, Tom	NO	579	382	66	4279	7.39	15	15	87.9
Ernie, Brent	GB	348	248	71	4286	7.55	20	11	84.4
Blake, Jeff	CIN	496	405	82	3377	6.89	20	28	83.6
Albano, Tony	DAL	312	193	62	2250	7.21	16	29	83.6
Kramer, Erik	CIN	266	154	58	2282	7.99	11	22	80.1
Reby, Jim	BW	488	220	45	3074	6.17	10	31	75.2
Harbaugh, Jim	IND	615	392	64	4114	6.69	14	15	74.9

You want stats? You got stats! Track over 100 different categories in single game or full season play.



Make your own plays and create your own players with the best Play Construction and Team Editor ever made!



The best football gameplay to ever hit the PC



LEGENDS '97

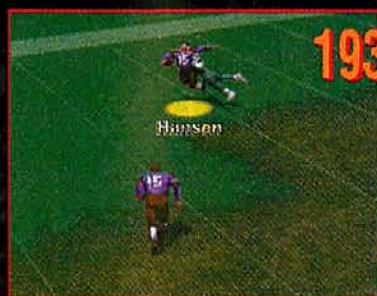
F O O T B A L L

For More Info On Legends Football '97 Visit The Accolade Web Site At <http://www.accolade.com>
To order direct, call 1-800-245-7744

GAME...Meets Three Legendary Eras



It's not always sunny on the gridiron - battle it out in snow, sleet, and rain. You'll have to adjust your gameplan to win.



1932

- 20 man rosters require most of your players to play both offense and defense. Get ready to use Dan Marino as a defensive back or Junior Seau at running back!



1950

- Rules favor the running game.
- Goal posts were placed in the front of the end zone. The "Post" pattern was commonly used to run defenders into the posts for an easy touch-down reception.

ROUND: 1 DRAFT 49ERS PICK

Linebackers	Wt.	Spd.	Acc.	Agil.	Str.	Int.	Box.	End.	Hgh.	THT
Alison, Steve	238	78	81	83	87	79	79	92	91	70
Hausig, Randal	247	85	81	83	87	70	82	70	86	88
Clotzerman, Duff	221	70	88	86	89	89	93	85	84	71
Johnson, Scott	235	78	81	83	87	85	91	85	71	80
Lincoln, Kirk	254	92	91	78	86	77	84	88	67	91
Dylan, Steve	228	75	80	85	89	79	87	83	86	75
Campbell, Del	218	68	70	73	78	74	88	74	85	91
Baker, Donald	228	80	72	74	78	77	93	70	89	89
Roach, Scott	233	86	76	91	70	70	66	99	74	87
Barnie, James	231	77	77	84	90	70	73	86	80	72
Hosse, Kevin	233	85	83	87	88	77	86	68	84	70

Build a football dynasty like Dallas or San Francisco. Draft, trade, and manage players throughout entire careers!

- All the NFL teams and players from four legendary eras of football: 1996, 1968, 1950, and 1932!
- Incredible 3D graphics
- Advanced A.I. with team specific styles and coaching strategies
- Intense multi-player action using the Gravis Grip Multi-player adapter
- "Time Travel" with teams to create fantasy matchups
- Action and Coach Mode play

1968

LEAGUE SCHEDULE

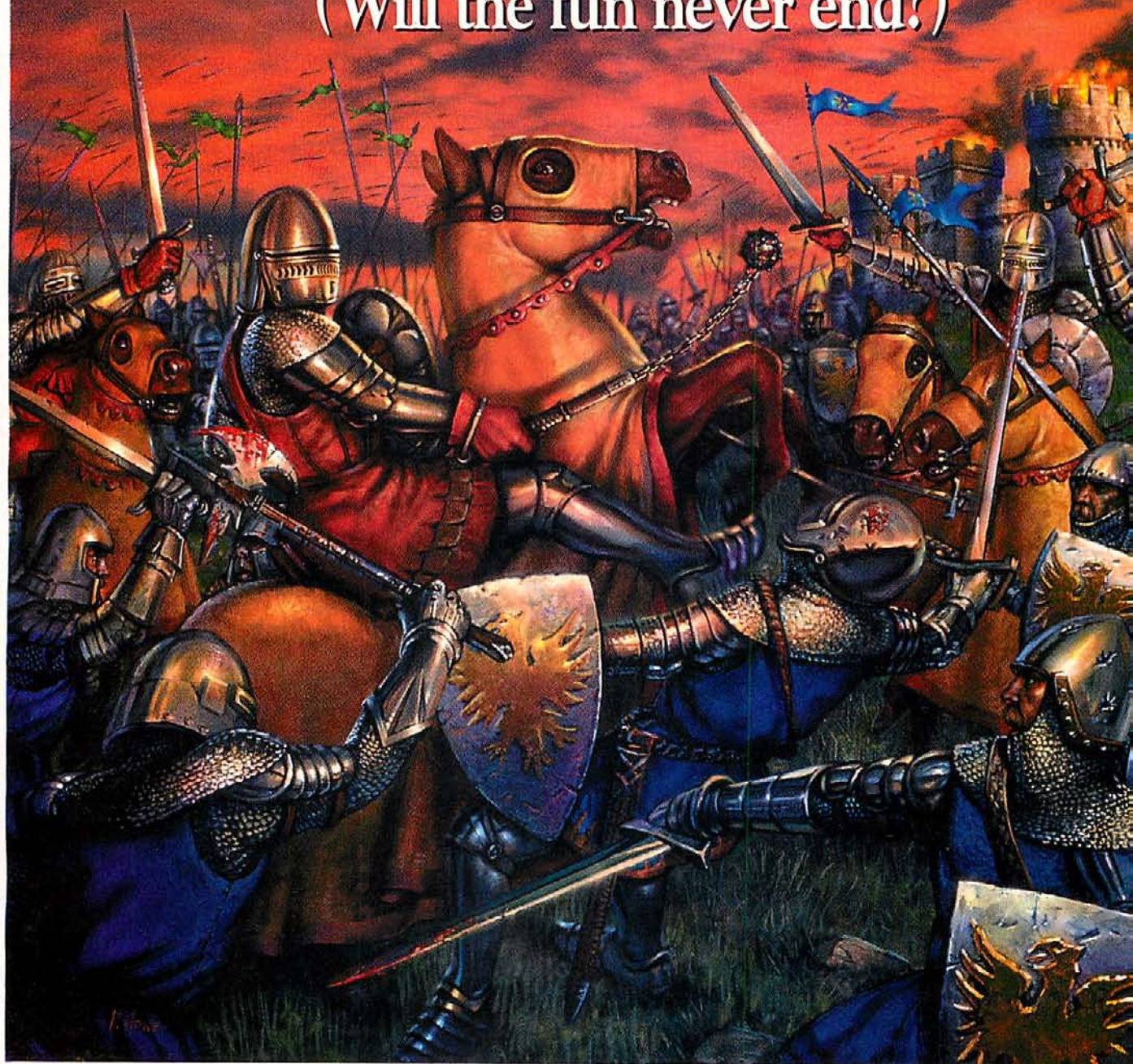
Home	Away	Score	Home	Away	Score
Giants	vs. Redskins	34-20	Giants	vs. Chiefs	26-0
Chiefs	vs. Dallas	24-23	Chiefs	vs. Cowboys	22-21
Redskins	vs. Chiefs	21-18	Dallas	vs. Chiefs	6-7
Chiefs	vs. Chiefs	21-38	Chiefs	vs. Rams	21-24
Chiefs	vs. Dallas	21-23	Chiefs	vs. Browns	17-10
Chiefs	vs. Chiefs	26-10	Chiefs	vs. Chiefs	17-10
Chiefs	vs. Redskins	18-10	Chiefs	vs. Chiefs	17-10

- Play a little rougher on the receivers. You can hit them anywhere on the field until the ball is thrown... and it's all legal!
- Players like Dick Butkus ruled the gridiron, paving the way for the modern day player.



Maces in your back.
Boiling oil in your face.
Fire in your fields.

(Will the fun never end?)



Free demo disks while supplies last!

To get yours, visit your local retailer. Or download your free demo and custom Lords II theme pack from our Web site at <http://www.sierra.com/games/lords2>. Order your advance copy today by calling (800) 757-7707.

Catapults are excellent for creating "backdoor" attacks and catching your rivals by surprise.

Douse the enemy with **boiling oil** — but beware of flaming arrows!

Storm the castle using siege towers.

Break down castle walls using the mighty **catapult**.

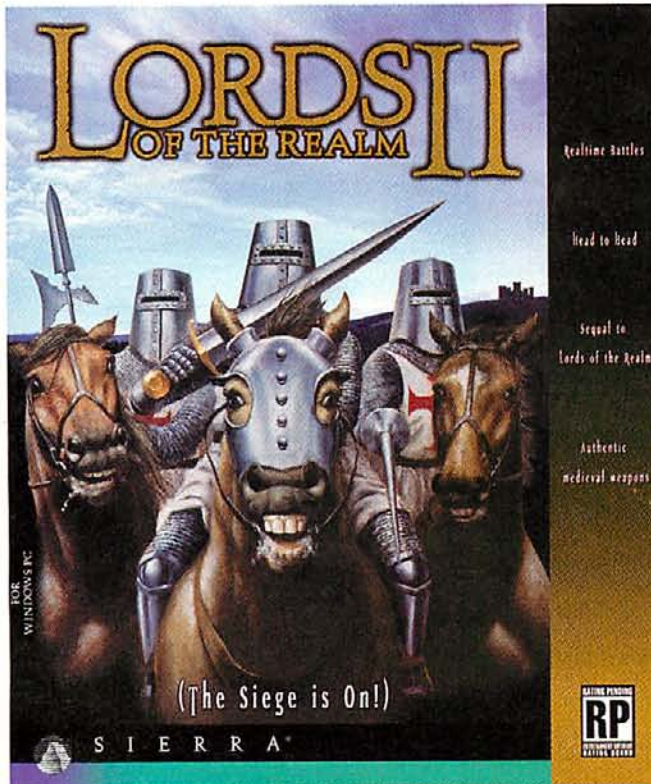


Use the mini-map to **plan** troop positioning.

When victory is imminent, use the **"Mop-Up"** tool to finish off the enemy.



Build your own medieval weapons including swords, maces, pikes, crossbows, longbows, knight armor and pitchforks — hey, the peasants gotta have something to fight with.



All herald the arrival of Lords of the Realm II. It's the late 13th Century and the Crown of England is up for grabs. It's time to sharpen your pitchforks. Round up your archers. And fortify your garrison. It's a fight to the finish against your fellow lords. Where the winner becomes King. And the loser has bloody hell to pay.

A sequel to the award-winning *Lords of the Realm*, this medieval strategy/action game separates the men from the boys. With challenging new tactics. Rich animation. Armor-piercing weaponry. And real-time battles that are frighteningly authentic. An improved interface makes start-up easy. Plus, you can clash head-to-head via modem, or 4 lords can lay siege at one time via network.

Prepare to smash your way to the throne in the battle of your life. Because in the end, you're either King — or you're dead.

Impressions Designed by Impressions Software



S I E R R A *

63 Cover Story 15th Anniversary Special Issue

After 15 years of publishing the #1 Computer Game Magazine, we've seen more computer games than anyone. Now, for the first time ever, we present our ultimate list of the best and worst PC games of all time. In this commemorative section, we stroll down memory lane to reward the greatest gaming accomplishments, castigate games that were ripped untimely from the development womb, sneer at the flakiest gaming peripherals, ridicule the worst excuses for plotlines, honor the most influential people in the gaming industry, and celebrate lots more of the best and worst of 15 years of computer gaming.

150 BEST (and 50 Worst) GAMES of ALL TIME

134 The Next 15 Years

No one who played STAR TREK on mainframes, much less PONG, could have envisioned the graphics, sound and playability of today's games. Who knows what gaming will become in the next 15 years? Keith Ferrell, former Editor of *OMNI* magazine, talks to noted designers and futurists to map out gaming's destiny.

147 3D Cards

The 3D revolution may be slower in coming than everyone anticipated, but the cards are finally hitting gaming beachheads. Contributing Technical Editor Loyd Case gets down in the trenches to separate the winners from the weenies in the 3D wars.

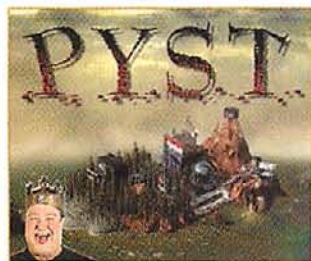
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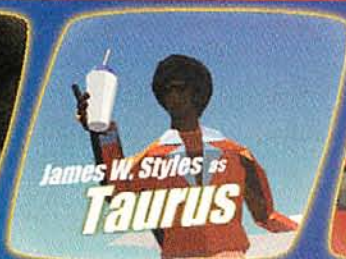
*On November 11th,
the Southwest will be
a war zone, your car
will be a weapon...
and "1976" will be etched
on a lot of tombstones.*



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**ANDERSON,
I NEED A VOLUNTEER.**



**THAT TANK UP THE
ROAD? SOMEONE'S GOTTA
TAKE IT OUT.**

**I NEED SOMEONE I CAN
COUNT ON. SOMEONE WHO'S
MAN ENOUGH TO RUN
THROUGH MACHINE GUN FIRE
TO GET THE JOB DONE.**

**AND ANDERSON,
THERE COULD BE A MEDAL
IN IT FOR YA.**



Anderson, Chuck. Sergeant. Leads 2nd Platoon's Recon team. Probably gotta wife back home. Damn good soldier. You give him an order and he figures out the best way to get the job done. So what's he doing cowering behind that bombed-out farmhouse?

Saving his own butt.

That's what you should expect if you order him to do something crazy. In



Close Combat everything reacts like it does on the battlefield, from the ripping canvas hiss of the German MG42 machine gun to the screams of the men it hits. It all goes down right in front of you. In real time.

So there's no time to thumb through the manual. You work your mouse like a weapon. Point and click and boom, the shooting starts the second your

Americans vs. Germans:
Which side you
gonna take?

men step off Omaha Beach and it don't let up 'til they've taken Saint-Lô. Troops, terrain, situations – if you want to get any more accurate, you'll have to shave your head.

Mac™ vs.
Windows® 95:
Which side
you gonna take?

Wanna go head to head with other military geniuses? All you need is a TCP/IP connection. And guts.

To experience Close Combat visit your nearest recruiter or head straight for the battlefield at <http://www.microsoft.com/games/kickbutt/>

Download the trial
version and start your
basic training today.

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What's on the demo disk this month? How can I find what I want and use it? What sort of abom-

inations did the voice-over actors on the CD-ROM commit this month? What's happening next month?



What's On The CD?

This month's CG-ROM celebrates 15 years of outstanding computer game cover-

age in *CGW*. View the magazine's top stories from the last 15 years, hear the 15 best game soundtracks of all time, and check out the 15 coolest game designs from our readers. Plus, the Multi-mediocre Players make an excruciatingly bad play of the games we'd like to see made, and the games we never want to see again. (Phoney accents exaggerated to protect the guilty.)

QUAKE fans—you'll find the shareware version of the game, plus deadly tactics and exclusive level maps to guide you to the goodies. For simulation fans, we have an exclusive of Philips's NET DUEL (the Internet version of FIGHTER DUEL), and an exclusive radar tutorial for Military Simulations' BACK TO BAGHDAD. For the Strategy Game enthusiast, we have exclusive WARCRAFT II scenarios and tips, and five additional scenarios for SSI's FANTASY GENERAL.

How Do I Use It?

If you have Windows 95, installation is simple: The CD is Autoplay enabled—just lock 'n' load. Otherwise, from Windows 3.x, select Run from the Program Manager menu, and type "D:\RUN-ME" (where D is the letter of your CD-ROM drive) to run it straight from the CD. Then type "D:\INSTALL" to create a *CGW* program group on your Windows desktop. If you have installed previous versions of the CG-ROM, this disc will use the program group already on your desktop.

How Do I Play The Demos?

To view the demos, first click on Editors' Hot Picks or Product Demos. Next, click on your favorite genre: Action, Adventure, Simulations, Sports or Strategy. Then click on the title of interest. Each demo has its own instructions for installation.

How Do I Get The Patch Files?

Click on Patches under the *CGW* Features, and then read the text window, which has instructions on copying the files to your hard drive. You can also access the patches from a DOS prompt by typing "D:\PATCHES" (where D: is the letter of your CD-ROM drive) and copying them directly from there to your hard drive. We strongly recommend that you back up any previously saved games before installing a patch, as this may overwrite your existing program.

How Do I Get The CG-ROM?

Newsstand issues come in two flavors: with and without the CD. Each type is clearly marked. If you can't find the version you want in the store you frequent, encourage your retailer to carry it (or subscribe to ensure that you get a CD every month). To subscribe, simply call (303) 665-8930, and specify that you want the CD-ROM version.

How Do We Classify Games?

Action/Arcade (AC): The emphasis is on hand-eye coordination and reflexes, usually emphasizing fast play over story or strategy.

Adventure (AD): Games wherein you control an alter ego and move through a story line or sequence of events and puzzle-solving takes precedence over conversation and combat.

Classics/Puzzles (CP): Classics are old stand-bys and parlor games that appeal to many different types of gamer. Examples include: backgammon, bridge, chess, MONOPOLY, parchesi, Risk, and SOLITAIRE. Puzzle games are computer games which emphasize spatial relationships, word games and/or problem-solving without requiring gamers to follow a storyline. Examples would be: SHANGHAI, TETRIS and ZIG-ZAG.

Role-Playing (RP): RPGs are a subset of adventure games, but stress character development, often through improving stats or other attributes. Conversations with non-player characters (NPCs) and tactical combat are general-

Computer Gaming World

PUBLISHER

Dale Strang

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief	Johnny Wilson
Managing Editor	Ken Brown
Features Editor	Denny Atkin
Reviews Editor	Terry Coleman
Technical Editor	Dave Salvator
Associate Editor, News	Jill M. Anderson
Associate Editor	Jeff Green
On-Line Editor/AOL	Kate Hedstrom
Assistant Editors	Allen Greenberg Elliott Chin
Editorial Assistant	Charlotte Panther
Editorial Intern	James Burns
Contributing Editors	Scorpio (Adventure Games) Charles Ardai (Interactive Fiction) Lloyd Case (Technology) Martin Cirulis (Science Fiction) Peter Olafson (Action Games) Paul Schuytema (Game Design) Rick Broida (AOL) Rusel DeMaria (Online Editor-at-Large)
Founder	Russell Sipe

DESIGN

Design Director	Edwin C. Malstrom
Graphic Artist	Jack Rodrigues
Graphic Artist	Dan Fitzpatrick

PRODUCTION

Production Manager	Steve Spingola
Assistant Production Mgr.	Martin Walthall
Assistant Prepress Manager	Fami Gargus
Senior Prepress Technician	Michele Kellogg

HOW TO CONTACT THE EDITORS

Address questions and feedback to CG Editorial, 135 Main St., 14th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105. Or you may contact us via:

Phone: (415) 357-4900
Editorial Fax: (415) 357-4977
CompuServe: (76703,622)
America On-Line: CGW

Internet: 76703.622@compuserve.com
Web site: <http://www.zd.com/gaming>

ADVERTISING SALES

Associate Publisher

Lee Uniacke (415) 357-4915

East Coast District Sales Manager

Laura Salerno (212) 503-4851

East Coast Sales Assistant

Audrey DeJesus (212) 503-3926

NorthWest Territory Sales Manager

Cathy Conway (415) 357-4925

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Senior Account Executive

Marci Yamaguchi (415) 357-4920

Advertising Coordinator

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Sales Assistant

Linda Fan (415) 357-5425

HOW TO CONTACT ADVERTISING SALES

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“Twisted humor
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One of the best games
you'll ever play!”

-The Discovery Channel

“MYST meets Blue Velvet”

-CD-ROM Today

“It will keep you playing
for hours.” -PC Magazine



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ly more important than in Adventure games. Finally, the game world tends to be large, and the plot less linear, often with some quests/treks outside the main story line.

Simulations (SI): Highly realistic games from a first-person perspective: you may drive a realistically simulated race car, fly a military aircraft with a meticulous physics model, or swoop through a detailed sci-fi environment. Usually polygon-filled technology is used to build the simulated world on the fly.

Sports (SP): The sports game category is a broad genre which includes action (NBA Live) and strategy games (FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL Pro) based on sports.

Strategy (ST): Problem-solving, short- and long-range planning are

the keys here. These games almost always emphasize resource and risk management. This genre includes conflict-based sci-fi and fantasy games (X-COM, Outpost, MOO), as well as "pure" strategy games and "software toys" such as SIMCITY.

Wargames (WG): A subset of strategy games, these recreate historical conflicts from a command perspective. They may be tactical, operational, or strategic, and stress anything from logistics and firepower to morale and leadership. They may be simple (PANZER GENERAL, EMPIRE II) to incredibly detailed and complex (PACIFIC WAR).

What Is CGW's Reviews Policy?

1) We only review from the final copy of the game. Though it has

become popular among PC gaming magazines to review from late beta copies, we feel that the reader is best served by having the reviewer look at the same copy of a game that the readers will find on the shelves. While we recognize that this causes some delay in coverage, we believe the reader is better served by such caution.

2) We expect our reviewers to finish the game. We want our readers to be assured that we do not review based on immediate or early impressions of a game. Our reviewers give a game ample opportunity to show its quality. In some cases, bugs make it impossible to finish a game, but we identify situations where that has occurred.

3) We make every effort to match the reviewer to the game. We take into

GAMES AND GOODIES ON THE CG-ROM

DEMOS AND STUFF	PLATFORM	DIRECTORY	EXECUTABLE
Back to Baghdad, Walkthru	Win	via CD interface	NONE
Diablo	Win 95	DEMOS\DIABLO	DIABLO.EXE
Eradicator	DOS	DEMOS\ERAD	INSTALL.EXE
Fantasy General Scenarios	DOS	DEMOS\FANTGEN	INSTALL.EXE
Fighter Duel	Win/DOS	DEMOS\FDDEMO	INSTALL.BAT
FPS Pro Baseball '96	Win	DEMOS\SIERRA	SETUP.EXE
GURPS	Win	DEMOS\INTRPLAY	GURPSI.AVI
Hong Kong Mahjong	Win	DEMOS\HKMJ	HKMJ.EXE
Hyperblade	Win 95	DEMOS\HBDDEMO	SETUP.EXE
Interstate 76	Win 95	DEMOS\I76	I76PROM2.AVI
MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries	Win	DEMOS\MERCS	MERCS.AVI
Nemesis: The Wizardry	DOS	DEMOS\NEMDEMO	INSTALL.EXE
Net Duel	Win/DOS	DEMOS\NETDUEL	NONE
Patches (for various games)	n/a	PATCHES	NONE
Quake	DOS	DEMOS\SHAREWAR\QUAKE	INSTALL.EXE
Quake Maps & Acrobat	Win	DEMOS\QUAKEMAP	ACROREAD.EXE
Quake Tutorial, Shareware	DOS	DEMOS\QTUTOR\SHRWARE	NONE
Quake Tutorials, Registered	DOS	DEMOS\QTUTOR\DEATHM	NONE
Ravage	Win 95	DEMOS\RAVAGE	RAVPLYR.EXE
Spiderman	DOS	DEMOS\SIXDEMO	SETUP.EXE
ToonStruck	Win/DOS	DEMOS\BURST	INSTALL.EXE
Virtua Fighter PC	Win 95	DEMOS\VFPC	SSP.EXE
WarCraft II Scenarios	DOS	DEMOS\WAR_SCEN	NONE
WarCraft II Tips	n/a	via CD interface	NONE
Wasteland	DOS	DEMOS\INTRPLAY\WL	WL.EXE

A COMMENDABLE EFFORT.

But we offer a more creative way to kill your co-workers.



BUNGIE introduces **MARATHON 2: DURANDAL**, the highly addictive game for Windows 95 that gives you a variety of ways to kill back-stabbing co-workers and shallow friends. Wielding a tasty arsenal of weapons, you'll enjoy 27 cooperative levels of Marathon plus 13 levels designed just for network carnage, such as Kill The Man With The Ball and King Of The Hill. WIRED MAGAZINE says: "Marathon comes on like a relentless fuel-injected nightmare." When you find yourself sitting in a puddle of your own bodily fluids unable to move or speak, you'll probably agree. **MARATHON 2: DURANDAL. HOW WILL IT RUIN YOUR LIFE?™**

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Circle Reader Service #75

MARATHON 2

consideration the preferences, background and possible biases of the reviewer and, where possible, we find people with actual life experience or special backgrounds that match a game. We believe this policy enhances both the credibility of the review and the enjoyment of gameplay when the real world and the game world are competently compared.

4) We do not accept free travel from software or hardware companies. We believe such gifts have a tacit assumption of coverage attached to them. We will only cover such events/launches as we believe will benefit our readers.

What's Up Online?

Addict them first, charge them later. Distributing Shareware via the Internet has proven to be a great promotional channel for marketing games: case in point, id Software and its DOOM, HERETIC, and WOLFENSTEIN 3D, all of which helped created the biggest little name in the software industry. See which games made CGW's list of top 15 shareware games of all time (hint:

all of the above). Download these greatest-shareware games from our AOL site, and see for yourself just how addicting they are.

Coming Next Month

Our annual Holiday Buyer's Guide returns with more than 50 pages of gaming goodies for the holidays. The CGW staff is sifting through mountains of new and pre-release games to show you the BEST ones

HOLIDAY HOT 100

in every category, plus hardware, stocking stuffers and children's edutainment. It'll be huge and helpful, so check it out .

THE ULTIMATE GAME MACHINE

December also marks the third year of our highly acclaimed Ultimate Game Machine roundup. If you need a hot new gaming system, see next month's issue for a complete evaluation of the hottest machines designed specifically for gaming. We'll test and rank the hottest rigs from Falcon Northwest, Compaq, NEC, Sony and Toshiba (providing they deliver them on time), and update you with new information on Zephyr and Gateway machines.

Hot Reviews For December

- DEADLOCK
- JAGGED ALLIANCE: DEADLY GAMES
- THE ELDER SCROLLS: DAGGERFALL
- NHL HOCKEY 97
- JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL 97
- STAR CONTROL 3
- F-22

Sneak Previews Next Month

- DESCENT TO UNDERMOUNTAIN
- iM1A2 ABRAMS
- MECHWARRIOR 2: MERCENARIES

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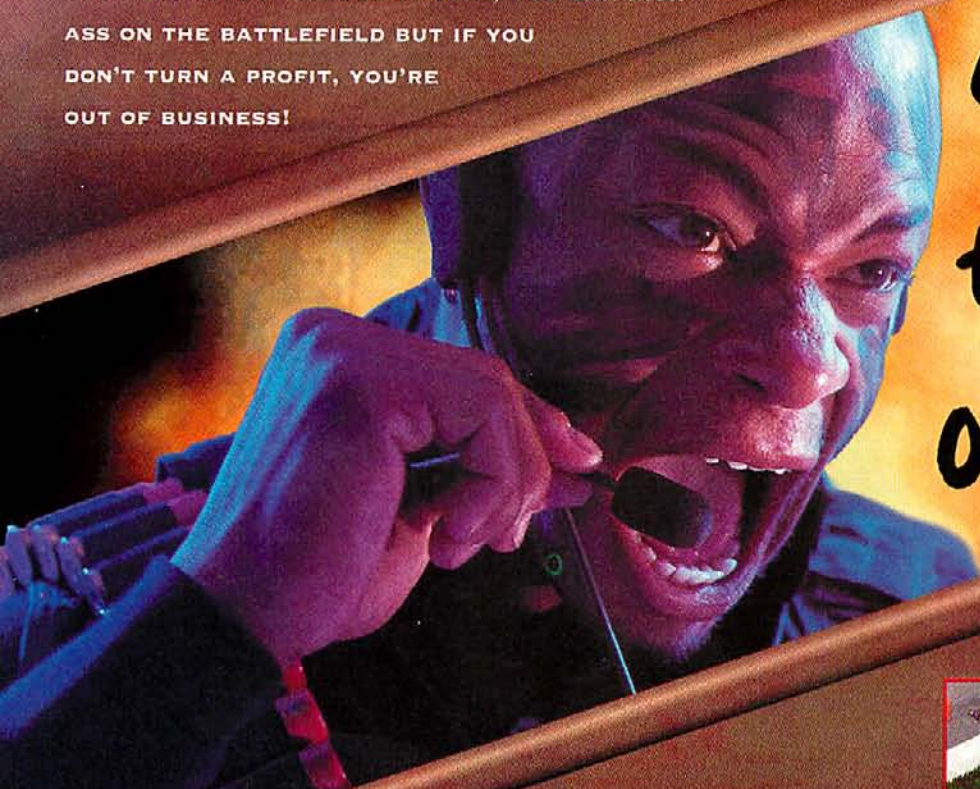
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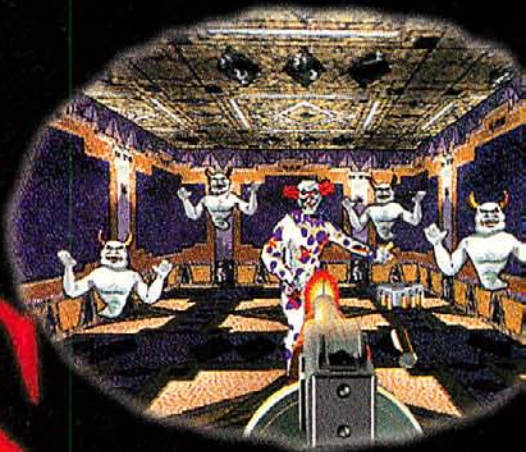
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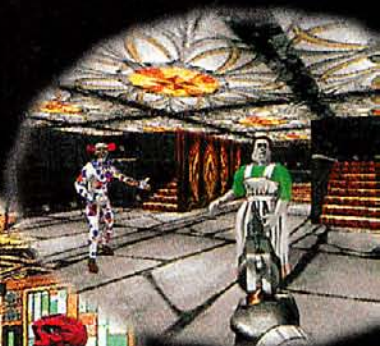
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Circle Reader Service #122

15 Years Of Playing To Win



CGW Founder Russell Sipe Reflects On The Magazine's History

I sit here at nearly midnight typing on the same keyboard that I used a few minutes before to send frenetic commands to my battle-weary troops. Click! Group One:

Move to the river crossing.

Click! Group Two: Move south and fire on the forces before you.

Click! Group Three: Regroup.

Fighting three opponents, I had rushed my troops about in a desperate effort to prevail in an Internet online game of *COMMAND & CONQUER*. The battle is over, dozens of vehicles destroyed, and even more troops sent to their electronic graves. Here I sit, the adrenaline rush subsiding, coming back to earth. Suspension of disbelief suspended.

Oddly enough, in many ways tonight was a lot like a night some

15 years ago when I sat in front of a different computer, turned my little single-prop aircraft around at about 24,000 feet, and aimed it at a postage-stamp-size grid floating far below me on the computer screen. On that night I was mesmerized by a tiny wire-framed grid representing the world of *FLIGHT SIMULATOR*. My Apple II served as my aircraft's Control Panel as I began the long descent back toward the world as Bruce Artwick had created it in 1979. In that world the enemy fighters were nothing more than simple white dots on the screen that flirted about like rocket-powered fireflies. Reality in ultimate abstract. A dot, nothing more, represented my determined opponent. Yet, I was totally engaged. It was just me and the dot. No mercy, no quarter. Talk about suspension of disbelief!

On another occasion, I booted



BREATH OF LIFE This dragon graced *CGW's* first issue in 1981, when the TRS-80 and Apple II were the reigning game platforms.

up a game and read these words: "You are standing in an open field west of a white house, with a boarded front door. There is a small mailbox here." These simple lines began what is without a doubt the most significant com-

puter adventure game of all time, *ZORK*. Somehow, recalling these games is a bit like attending your high-school reunion. It brings back a lot of memories.

The first issue of *Computer Gaming World* appeared 15 years ago this month. Now, 15 years doesn't seem like a long time when you consider the likes of *The New Yorker* or *Reader's Digest*. However, in the world of computers and computer games 15 years is a l-o-n-g time.

When *CGW's* first issue hit newsstands, all 36 black-and-white pages of it (only the two covers were in color) the hottest games were *ROBOT WAR* and *CRUSH*, *CRUMBLE AND CHOMP*. A fair portion of the games were distributed on cassette tape. The two big gaming rigs were the TRS-80 and the Apple II with the really complex games requiring an upgrade to 48K of RAM. The name Lord British was unknown, except to a few folks in Texas, and Trip Hawkins was a young executive at fledgling Apple Computer who dreamed of starting his own game company one day.

Here's how I happened to start *CGW*. In late 1979, I got the hare-brained notion that I could be a computer game designer. I had designed a board game or two and thought that, with a few months invested in reading programming tutorials, I could become a "player" in what I thought would be a wonderful emerging hobby and industry. I was right about the hobby and industry, but quite wrong about being a computer game designer. You see, in those days the designer and the programmer were the same person. The concept of specialized skills exhibited by design teams, producers, and the like would not make an appearance until the mid '80s when Electronic Arts codified the development-team approach to game design.

After spending only two weeks with the Applesoft tutorial manual,



WING AND A BLAIR Mark Hamill shares his experiences from *Wing Commander III* with Russell Sipe in early 1994.



You can be the monster. Or you can be its prey. Either way, some poor bastard will get his ass kicked.



First time ever on the PC: split screen head-to-head havoc.



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PLAYING WITH THE BIG BOYS *CGW* founder Russell Sipe (center) plays *MODEM WARS* with the game's producer, David Maynard (right), in 1988. The garrulous Johnny Wilson is at left.

I knew that I didn't have the personality to be a programmer. So here I was, stuck with the \$2,000 machine representing my life savings, and no way to make money with it. While trying to figure out how to get the computer to pay for itself, I was playing a lot of games.

In March of 1981, I was playing a game called *COMPUTER AIR COMBAT* from SSI. It was a thinly disguised computer version of a popular board-game system called *Air Force/Dauntless* from Battleline Games. Driving along the freeway one day in March 1981, I was thinking about the game. Mulling over the fact that a programming error caused the ME-109s in the game to turn more tightly than they should have, I wondered if others had noticed the same problem. I wanted to read a review of the game and see if others saw the problem. It occurred to me that no one was reviewing computer games in those days. Outside of a brief mention of an arcade game here and there, none of the existing magazines covered games. And certainly there wasn't anything like a computer game magazine to consult.

"Someone should start a com-

puter game magazine," I thought to myself as I drove along.

"You could do it," a voice said in my head.

"I don't know the first thing about magazine publishing," I thought.

"You could learn," said the voice.

It felt like some scene out of *Star Wars*. "Russ...Use the Force, Russ!"

The voice was right. I could learn. And I did learn. Now, 15 years later I look with pride at what *CGW* has accomplished over the years and at what it is today. In those 15 years *CGW* has reviewed thousands of computer games and entertained millions of gamers. But more importantly, *CGW* has helped mold and shape the look of the computer gaming as both hobby and industry. We played a key role in building the community of computer gamers. This is the greatest legacy a magazine could hope to attain. *Computer Gaming World* has done the job. And I am very proud of her.

Russell Sipe sold Computer Gaming World in 1993. Today he is the Director of Internet Commerce for DeltaNet in Southern California. He still plays games. ☞

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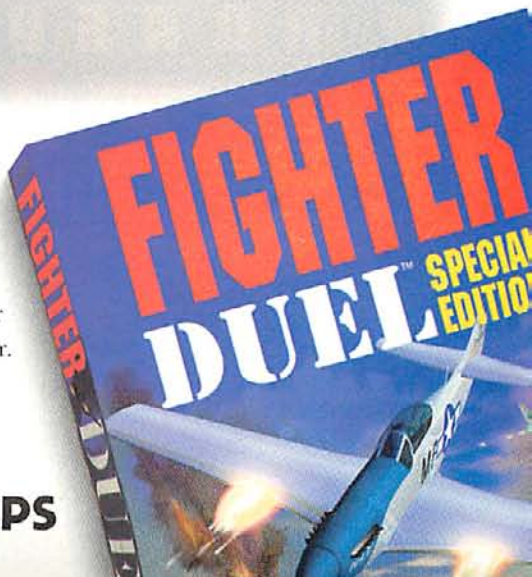
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Computer Gaming World

September 1996

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September 1996

**"Easy to play and still over the top in battle situations, not
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August 1996

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August 1996

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

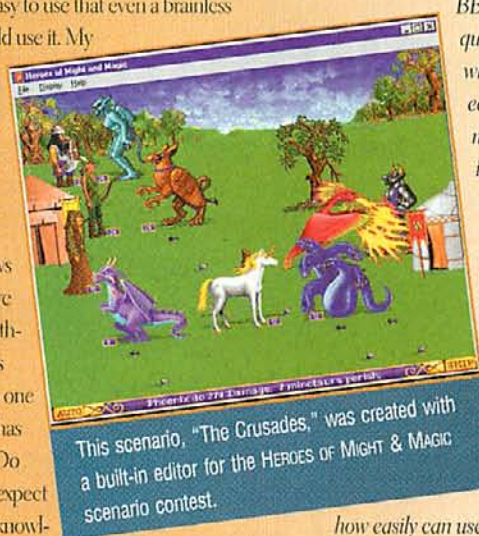
EDITORIAL COMMENT

I am a fairly new reader of CGW, since I have only recently gotten fairly heavily into computer gaming and am only 13, but I find it better than any other magazine I've seen, and I trust your opinions very much.

I have a question about game level makers and editors and the like. I recently purchased WARCRAFT II, and found the editor to be half the game. It adds infinite playability, and most of all, it was so easy to use that even a brainless fool like me could use it. My

problem is, why do other editors have to be so hard? Except for HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC (Windows 95 version), I have never found another editor that was this easy, or even one I could use, nor has anyone I know. Do these people all expect us to have a full knowledge of CAD? I know a WARCRAFT-style editor wouldn't have worked for many games, such as DOOM clones, but I think something a little more user friendly could have been thought up. Or take the CRUSADER series, which looks like it could easily have had an editor made for it, which would have been deliciously fun to use. Does anybody else feel this way, or am I just being foolish?

Andrew Gorill
Gray, ME



We wish it were possible to have an easy-to-use editor for every game. Different game companies have different philosophies about the value of editors. While the flexibility often gives legs to a game and causes a title to remain in the public's eye a little longer, it also reduces the desirability of producing a sequel with the same basic game engine, since gamers may be able to download new levels or maps from the Internet or a host of local

BBSs. The two biggest questions about whether to build game editors are 1) how much time/money to invest in creating an interface that gamers can understand and 2) what is the nature of the game objects (3D, object-oriented, limited to a library provided by the company, sprite-based) and thus

how easily can user-defined objects be implemented in the game? Companies like Blizzard and New World have obviously decided that giving users the extra flexibility to create their own scenarios makes the basic game into a better product. After helping to judge the HOMM scenario design contest recently (and seeing game maps like the one pictured here), we truly believe that editors are a good thing. Now, if only Mindscape would develop a WARHAMMER editor so we could create our own medieval wargames!

QUALITY AND QUANTITY

I love your magazine. You have always been a good resource (for me) on what games to buy and what not to buy. Your reviews and reviewers are intelligent, informative, and humorous. You do *not* surprise me every month when you put out a new quality issue. I would expect nothing less. But geez, why isn't your "Playing

Lately?" top 10 the same as the top 10 games in your "Top 100"?

Thanks for a really great magazine.
Josh Koury
From the Internet

The Top 100 is a cumulative tabulation of our subscribers' critical evaluations of many games—whether they were played months ago or recently.

The subscribers rate games from a list on a questionnaire. Playing Lately is a straw poll of the same subscribers where they "write in" the names of games they are currently playing. Hence, The Top 100 gives a qualitative evaluation, whereas Playing Lately may indicate popularity more than quality. We like to think that the former offers comparative quality while the latter shows what's currently hot.

THE GODFATHER ANALOGY

I was pleased to see your article defending the quality of sequel games. I only wish you could have seen it in your heart to give me credit for your *Sword of Shanarra*/Godfather analogy. After all, you first used this line of reasoning in response to my letter a few months ago, in which I took exception to the five-star ratings given to sequel games.

However, I must admit that I had never really played SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION II before writing that letter. Now that I have, I can see why it received five stars. I still adhere, though, to my belief that sequel games should be reviewed with at least a small bias. This time, let me clarify my reasons.

First, a gamer who has already played a great original game cannot (at least in most cases) get the extraordinary gaming experience that a five-star rating promises. In SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION II, you are

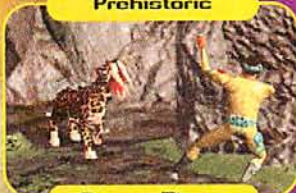
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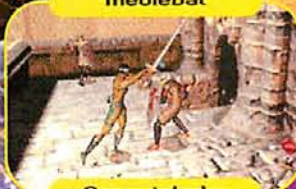
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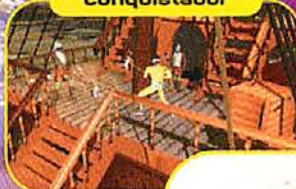
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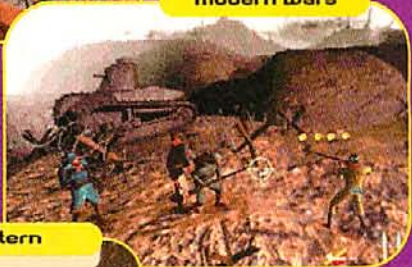
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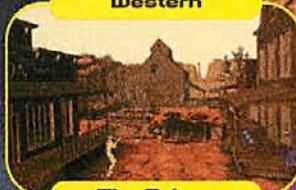
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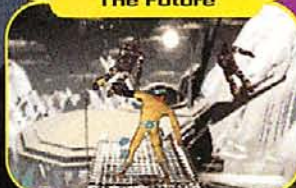
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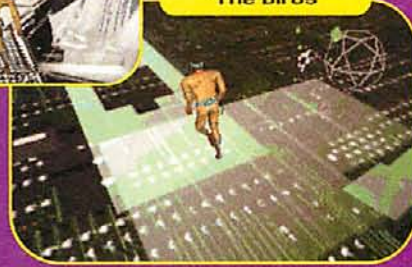
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THE HIDEOUS S
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building cities, managing military and economic expenditures, etc.—basically the same thing as in the old SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION. It is certainly entertaining, and the added multimedia is a nice addition as well. But a transcending gaming experience? I think not. Using your *Godfather II* analogy, CIVILIZATION II would be comparable to re-releasing *The Godfather* with an enhanced soundtrack and a few new scenes, and entitling it *Godfather II*. (In fact, George Lucas is attempting to do this very thing next year with *Star Wars*, but that's straying from the point.) You see, what made *Godfather II* even more successful than the original was the compelling, well-written and completely original script. You did not see a horse's severed head in both movies, now did you?

My second point centers around originality. In my opinion, games like PSYCHIC DETECTIVE deserve extra praise because of their striking originality. Let's face it, software designers can turn a profit on the same types of game year after year, so it is important to reward the program designer who stretches the imagination a bit. I know PSYCHIC DETECTIVE was well received at CGW, but if games like these aren't given extra recognition and promotion, there might not be enough incentive for the next designer with a creative idea.

Ian Umland
From the Internet

Actually, we don't believe Lucas is doing what you asserted above with regard to *Star Wars*. He isn't calling it *Star Wars II*, is he? Ironically, we think the *Godfather* analogy still holds. Coppola shot more footage for *The Godfather* than he could possibly have used. Some of that footage was used in *Godfather II*. It

had new script elements, new actors and new footage, but some of it was built solidly on the preproduction and production work done for the first film. In much the same way, SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION II is built on the preproduction and production work done in creating the original game engine. Yet, it was a work of art for the design team to integrate new elements (new units, new wonders) into the game without disrupting the play balance associated with the first game.

But before the *False Analogy Patrol* drags us into the darkened dungeons of the fabled CGW building and tortures us with choral readings from our competition, we'd like to go on record as stating that we approve of innovation. The producer/designer of PSYCHIC DETECTIVE has told us personally how much he appreciated our review. PSYCHIC DETECTIVE wasn't a game for hardcore gamers, but it was a fresh approach to game design. We welcome such approaches, even when they aren't commercially successful.

GETTING HIS 64 BITS IN

I am writing in response to Martin Cirulis's newest rant on gimmicks (September). In it he says that Nintendo is just pushing its new 3D games as a gimmick. I disagree. The way I look at it, it is a technological achievement. That they have the ability to cram 3D technology, processors, peripheral ports and all the other stuff into a box that's no bigger than the speakers on my computer (and have it priced at

\$250 or \$300 dollars, the average price of a good 3D accelerator card) is amazing.

Furthermore, the fact that they are able to stuff the entire game onto an 8-meg cartridge is equally amazing. I wish that more PC game makers could do that (it is extremely frustrating when the demo for a game takes up 70 megs of hard drive space).

Other than that, I agreed with everything else he wrote. I usually read his page first, and I rarely disagree with his views.

Jamal Cool
From the Internet

Cirulis questioned whether the 3D look significantly enhanced the gameplay. Several readers echoed your sentiments in insisting that the 3D in these games is not just a gimmick. Nonetheless, neither he nor we feel that proportionate attention is being paid to trying fresh game concepts or creating intriguing new game



corner of the viewing area—Hawkeye never obscures cockpit instrumentation. The window will only slide toward the center of the screen if the target moves directly behind you. Bands strung around the outer circle indicate the range and bearing of planes in visual range and their bearings to your aircraft. In the example above, the diamond at the five o'clock position and end up at 11 o'clock when you're inverted. The diamonds also display friend/foe status, if known.

whether the selected target is above, below, or to the side of you, relatively speaking. For example, if the bandit were at your high 5 o'clock, the window would be in the upper left-hand corner. If you then rolled inverted, the window would move to the lower right-hand corner of the viewing area—Hawkeye never obscures cockpit instrumentation. The window will only slide toward the center of the screen if the target moves directly behind you. Bands strung around the outer circle indicate the range and bearing of planes in visual range and their bearings to your aircraft. In the example above, the diamond at the five o'clock position and end up at 11 o'clock when you're inverted. The diamonds also display friend/foe status, if known.

CORRECTIONS

In Robin Kim's BACK TO BACK/DAD review in last month's issue, there was an error in the Hawkeye view tutorial sidebar. It said if the bandit was at high 5 o'clock, the window would appear at the upper left corner of the screen. It should have read upper right. The following example likewise should have said lower left instead of lower right. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by this error, and we've asked Mr. Kim to stop looking in the mirror while playing sims, no matter how dashing he thinks he looks in that flight suit.

Niggling Bits Department

In Martin Cirulis's article on game networks in last month's issue, he referred to Engage's relationship with House of Blues. Engage does not have a relationship with House of Blues. The article should have mentioned Engage's arrangement with Billboard Live! We apologize to Jake and Elwood for the confusion.

Only one adventure has earned the Wizardry title.

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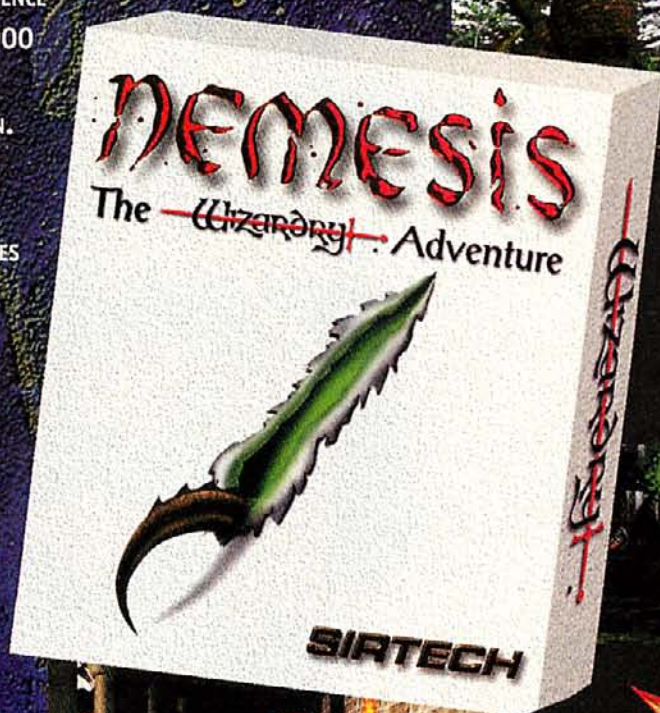
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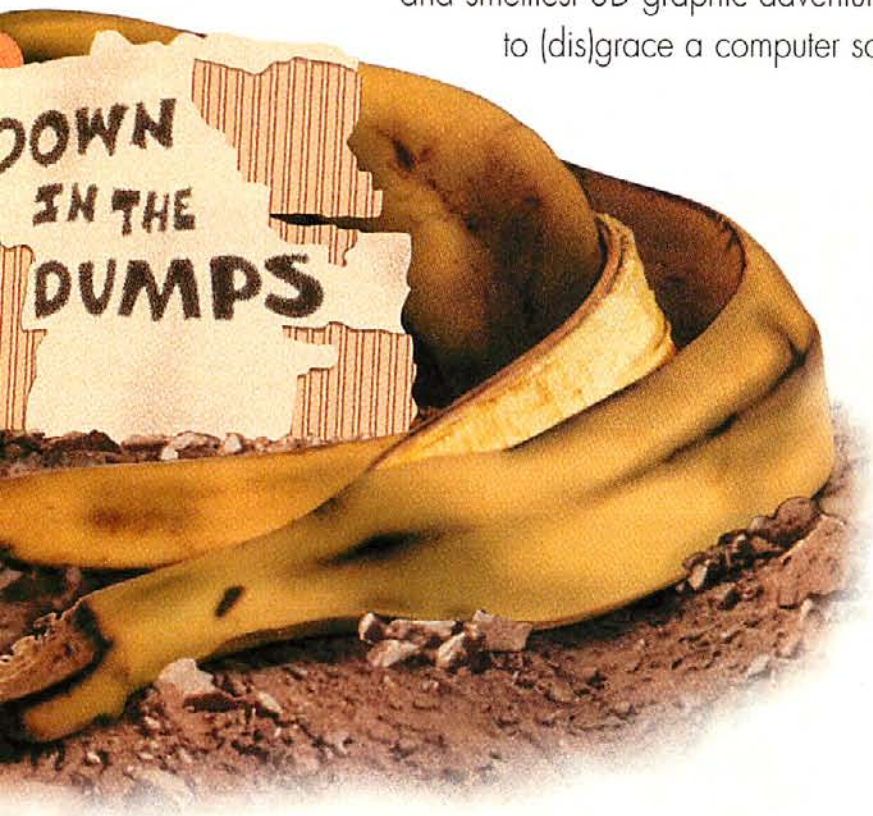
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<http://www.philipsgames.com>

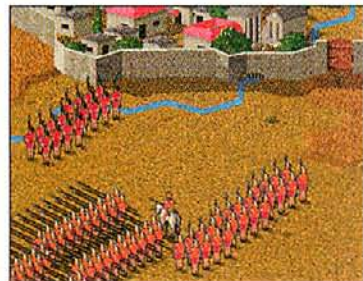
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Circle Reader Service #150

CGW's European Vacation

ECTS Provides An Updated Look At Games On Tap For The Holiday Season

The European Computer Trade Show (ECTS) is similar to the United States' E3 show, albeit with a smaller display floor and a longer history. Still, comparisons are inevitable, especially since the early-September timing of ECTS meant that showgoers were treated primarily to



BATTLES OF ALEXANDER Interactive Magic's new wargame lets you command Alexander the Great's ancient armies. Up to 12 players can battle over the 'Net.

updates of products already announced at E3.

That's not to say our European cousins can't hold their own when it comes to flash and dazzle. The first thing attendees saw upon entering the hall was a genuine, bright-red Fokker Triplane hanging over the Empire booth promoting FLYING CORPS. The award for flashiest premiere has to go to DID, who earlier in the week had invited journalists to the Farnborough Air Show to unveil the new 3dfx update of EF2000. What better way to show off EF2000 than with a show that featured a flying display with the *real* Eurofighter, as well as MiGs, Sukhois, and even a B-2 flyby?



SHOW BUZZ A genuine Fokker Dr1 triplane watched over the ECTS proceedings.

DID also showed early versions of TFX: F-22, which has a terrain engine that's as big an advancement over the current state-of-the-art as EF2000's was last year.

Interactive Magic unveiled FALLEN HAVEN, a strategy/resource-management game that puts you in charge of New Haven (the space colony, not



PROJECT X2 If you've got a hankering for a new shooter, Team 17's amazing X2 is the smoothest one we've seen on the PC.

Connecticut). You'll manage planetary resources and develop new technologies in this

turn-based game, and build weapons to fight off a relentless alien race. If you're feeling naughty, play as the aliens and do your best to wipe out the colonists.

Gremlin had a number of impressive titles on display, including FRAGILE ALLEGIANCE, seemingly a hybrid of MASTER OF ORION and DEADLOCK. The adventure game REALMS OF

THE HAUNTING has you preventing the Apocalypse by running through a country village Doom-style packing a shotgun. (It looked better than it sounds.)

Ocean's DREADNOUGHT evokes thoughts of the frighteningly bad AIR POWER, with fantasy triplanes launching from huge land-roving dreadnoughts in a future where Queen Victoria reigns supreme.

ON THE SHELF

Here are some of the hottest products on the market, as well as

the ones that frankly ain't so hot. Reviews for most are coming soon.

THE ELDER SCROLLS: DAGGERFALL

A massive role-playing game with layers of detail, DAGGERFALL is an extremely open-ended CRPG. You control one character who is assigned a covert mission from the Emperor, but how



you complete that mission is up to you. DAGGERFALL features the most emphasis on skill development we've seen since WASTELAND and the most emphasis on character reputation since DARKLANDS. As opposed to DARKLANDS, DAGGERFALL's handling of reputation is a much more sophisticated algorithm based on character class, social status, guild membership, race, religion and actions throughout the game.

Although a sequel to THE ELDER SCROLLS: ARENA, DAGGERFALL offers plenty of improvements over its progenitor. Landscapes are no longer flat, and the use of 3D in stairs, balconies, and roofs makes everything seem more real. Fast travel is easy, reduc-

Bullfrog's nearly finished DUNGEON KEEPER had me looking around the room for my socks—the extra time spent on this action/strategy hybrid has paid off, and it promises to be an impressive title. THEME HOSPITAL, on the other hand, is just what it sounds like—THEME PARK gameplay set in a hospital. More exciting is news of POPULOUS 3, which will merge the WARRING GODS strategy game with an enhanced MAGIC CARPET engine to give you amazing views of your dominion.

Long-time gamers were jazzed over 21st Century's impending release of PINBALL CONSTRUCTION KIT, the first steel-ball design set since Bill Budge's classic C64 PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET. Nostalgia buffs will also want to be on the lookout for LUNAR LANDING, a detailed Apollo simulator by U.S. developer AIM Software.

Finally, some of the biggest buzz at the show concerned the announcement of the U.K. version of *Computer Gaming World*, to be helmed by David Kelly, a leading figure in the U.K. computer industry since 1983. In a land where "reviews" sometimes precede a game's ship date by up to six months, the U.K. edition of *CGW* plans to set new standards for accuracy and timely coverage.—Denny Atkin

Toshiba Ups The CD-ROM Ante With New 12X Drive

CD-ROM drives have dramatically changed how computer games are packaged and distributed. But while their large capacity (640 MB) has helped usher in this new era, their speeds and access times have left more than a few gamers twiddling their thumbs waiting for installations to finish and scenes to load.

There have been incremental speed increases over the last couple of years, but Toshiba plans to dramatically raise the bar with its new XM-5701 and XM-5702 12x CD-ROM drives. Toshiba plans to ship both EIDE (\$165) and SCSI-2 (\$195) versions of the caddyless drive, which should be available as you read this. Improvements should come not only in speed—12x works out to a swift 1.8 MB/sec—but in access time as well, which Toshiba lists at about 125 ms. What does that mean for gamers? Faster installs, scene loads, and general file I/O, and in applications that hit different parts of the CD-ROM, faster accesses—which promises less thumb-twiddling for us all.—Dave Salvalor



3DO Goes Software-Only

3DO has announced that it will be phasing out its hardware division, focusing instead on the production of game titles for the PC, the 3DO-designed M2 game console and Internet gaming. Denying that financial difficulties motivated the decision, the Redwood City, California-based company stated that it was difficult to justify being dependent on outside companies to manufacture their game console, which floun-

dered amidst the competition. Cutting its staff by one-third—primarily outside developers, with the remaining layoffs coming from within the hardware division—3DO says it wants to focus on the "next generation of gaming technology." Enforcing its commitment to Internet gaming, the company's first Internet game, MERIDIAN 59, made its official debut immediately on the heels of the announcement.—Jill Anderson

ing the burden of some of the Fed-Ex-delivery-person scenarios, and even such mundane details as negotiating with shop owners is more fun. Also, combat seems both tougher and more interesting than it did in ARENA, since you have different strokes with your weapons. It's a big game with many, many hours of play for dedicated hack-and-slashers.—J. Wilson

Bethesda Softworks, (301) 926-8010

PC CD-ROM

Reader Service #301

DEADLOCK

In the coldness of space, seven warring races in a military deadlock have agreed to settle their differences on a single planet. Whoever controls the planet will be



declared victor, and the rest of the galaxy will be spared bloodshed. But those who must battle for rule over this planet will pay the price, for blood will be spilled in the battle for the lush planet, Gallius IV. The conditions for victory: building a set number of cities or the simple annihilation of the other races. This is the premise behind DEADLOCK, another space strate-

gy game in the same vein as MASTER OF ORION.

DEADLOCK succeeds where ASCENDANCY (and OUTPOST) failed. While not as epic as MOO and the upcoming MOO2, DEADLOCK is still a fun game. Combining true racial differences and abilities (the Cyth will *always* stay at 80 percent morale), multiplayer play, and good graphics with great sound, DEADLOCK should satisfy sci-fi gamers, at least until the Antarans return in MASTER OF ORION 2. The only quibbles I have are the slightly weak AI and a few interface quirks. But in the end DEADLOCK is just plain fun. For those who thought space colony management games died out after OUTPOST (as I did), this is a game for you.—T. Nguyen.

Accolade, (408) 296-8400

PC CD-ROM

Reader Service #302

3 OUT OF 4 GAME CHARACTERS SURVEYED

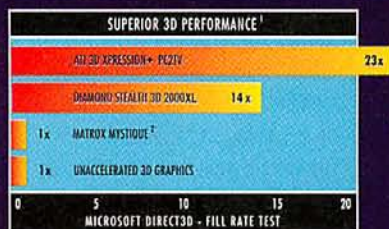
would rather crush and destroy you while playing on a PC with

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1. Test conducted using Microsoft Direct3D Fill Rate test in bi-linear. 2. Matrox Mystique does not support bi-linear texturing in hardware.

DUKE INVADERS

GT Interactive Battles The Bandwagon

Attempting to capitalize on Duke NUKEM 3D's success, Sierra Online recently released an expansion pack for the popular 3D action game. The only problem was, they didn't have permission from the game's developers and owners, Apogee/3D

Realms and GT Interactive. According to Apogee's Scott Miller, Sierra asked for authorization to create an add-on pack called **TOTAL MELTDOWN**, including original sounds and artwork in addition to levels created from the official level editor. GTI denied Sierra's request; however, Sierra published and distributed the \$19.95 package anyway. **TOTAL MELTDOWN** was on the shelves for two weeks before GTI confronted the Bellevue, Washington-based

company regarding copyright infringement. Sierra agreed to stop production, pay an undisclosed settlement, and destroy the remaining copies of the disc after selling the 50,000 copies it had already distributed.

But GTI's battle isn't over yet. Carlsbad, California-based Micro Star has developed its own add-on pack, **NUKE IT**. **NUKE IT** is a compilation of levels created by independent, third-party individuals and posted on the Internet, from where Micro Star collected the levels and is selling them as a "service" for \$19.99.

GTI has insisted that Micro Star stop distributing the discs, citing copyright infringement. Micro Star is using Apogee's characters—pig cops, the one-eyed monster, the trooper, and

other images—on the packaging. and keep the product on store shelves through the holidays. Micro Star also plans to create add-on discs for **DOOM**, **WARCRAFT II** and Microsoft's **FLIGHT SIMULATOR**.

Michelle Ruyle, Micro Star's director of marketing, says that GTI is attempting



TOTAL MELTDOWN Can you believe Sierra would do a knock-off of Duke Nukem without permission? You're looking at it.

Further, GTI is suing Micro Star for damages, stating that the poor quality of the **NUKE IT** product clouds the reputation and branding of the original Duke NUKEM 3D and circumvents potential income. Micro Star has filed a counter suit to keep GTI from threatening legal action against retailers that carry **NUKE IT**, and a suit for damages, stating that GTI is infringing on its business practices, a move that Miller believes is an attempt to stall the short-term injunction

to monopolize the market, and that "(GTI) is worried that we're going to take business away from Wizard Works," a small GTI division that specializes in add-on levels for popular games.

The case was set to be taken to the Federal Court in San Diego county in late September, and is expected to set precedence for intellectual copyright infringement cases in the future.—Jill Anderson



ON THE SHELF

CRUSADER: NO REGRET

Origin's return to the universe of **CRUSADER** is more of an update than a sequel, but it still packs an action-filled punch, with the same incendiary violence that fans of the original **CRUSADER: NO REMORSE** have come to know and love. This time, you're taking aim at the Corporations headquarters on the moon, storming through the level with several new weapons and battling some new enemies. Among the additions to the game are a freeze gun that both freezes and then shatters your opponent in *Terminator 2* fashion; a deadly gun that reduces your enemy to flesh chunks; and a new mech that can morph into such mundane objects as vending machines. The AI is supposed to be better, and some enemies will actually roll and duck for cover while blasting you.



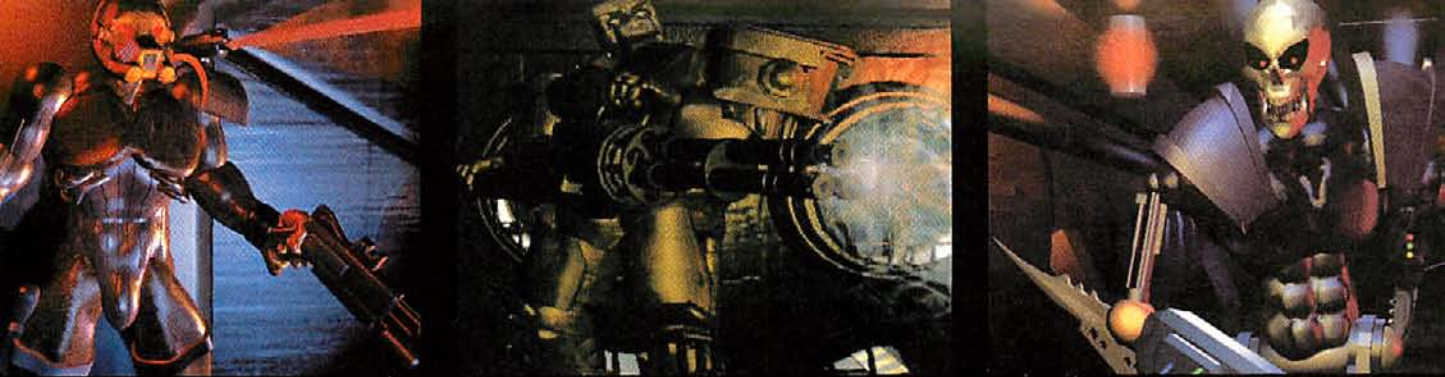
NO REGRET is a stand-alone product, but it only has 10 levels, as opposed to the original's 15. Still, if you like to see things blow up, and you love to flame, freeze, disintegrate and otherwise obliterate your foes, then you should definitely reserve a spot on your hard drive for **CRUSADER: NO REGRET**.—E. Chin
EA/Origin, (415) 571-7171
PC CD-ROM
Reader Service #303

JAGGED ALLIANCE: DEADLY GAMES

It's been two years since the Metavira episode, and the Association for International Mercenaries (AIM) is back with a vengeance. The new **JAGGED ALLIANCE** game comes with a nicely done campaign, but the focus is on scenario design and multiplayer competition against teams of mercenaries commanded by other humans.

The built-in campaign features a loose story line that's actually less hokey than the original but lacks that game's consistent focus. Each battle now has turn limits, which has proved controversial among former players (Sir-Tech has announced a patch that will make turn limits optional). The scenario editor is a gem, offering enormous flexibility in scenario design, including a large number of objectives whose requirements





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Circle Reader Service #229

ZD Finds A GameSpot

Ziff-Davis Publishing, SpotMedia, to Merge Game Sites

Look for a new gaming mega-site this fall from *Computer Gaming World's* parent company, Ziff-Davis Publishing Co., and SpotMedia Communications. The new site will merge Ziff-Davis' CG-Online with SpotMedia's popular GameSpot Web site. Both sites currently provide reviews, tips, hints, and features to almost half a million visitors each month. Ziff strategists hope to draw twice this number by offering a one-stop gaming shop for Web surfers.

Despite an expansion in user services, the new site promises to keep GameSpot's integrated look and feel. According to CGW publisher Dale Strang, the merger brings game fans the best of Ziff-Davis' online and magazine resources: "It offers a new opportunity for synergy between our continually improving online editions and our traditionally dominant print media." Strang also promises that CGW readers can "expect a fresher, faster, CG-Online."

For Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation and Nintendo users, SpotMedia has also launched VideoGameSpot, to provide reviews, previews, hints, cheats and demos for 32- and 64-bit platforms. You can access CG-Online at www.zdnet.com/gaming and GameSpot at www.gamespot.com. —James Burns

Sierra Gets Into 3D Hardware

Sierra On-Line has announced plans to market a 3D graphics board based on the Rendition Verité, one of the most promising 2D/3D chips. The 3D buzz has been fueled by 3D-intensive games like DUKE NUKEM 3D and QUAKE, and companies are now facing gamers' increasing demands for fast, affordable hardware solutions.

With the Rendition deal, Sierra hopes to provide gamers with high-performance acceleration hardware, in an attempt to take Sierra titles to the next level. The Sierra/Rendition board with 4 MB of EDO DRAM will retail for about \$200—throwing it into head-on competition with Creative Labs' Rendition-based PCI 3D Blaster. Sierra's board will be bundled with some of their hottest 3D games, and should be on retailers' shelves by the end of the year.—C. Panther

PLAYING LATELY?

Here are the games readers are actually blowing the most time with, as opposed to the reader's overall "quality ranking" in the Top 100.

CIVILIZATION II returns to the number one spot, shoving WARCRAFT II back into second place. DUKE NUKEM 3D maintains a Top 3 position, for the fifth consecutive month. MECHWARRIOR 2, DOOM II and COMMAND AND CONQUER remain static, while STEEL PANTHERS sneaks one place ahead of HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC.

You'll no longer find the CGW Poll Card bound into the magazine, but check your mail box: We mail a survey to 1,500 randomly-chosen subscribers each month, and we use the results to calculate the Top 100 and Playing Lately each month.

READERS'
TOP 10

	Last Month	Months On Chart
1. Civilization II (MicroProse)	2	6
2. Duke Nukem 3D (3D Realms)	3	7
3. Warcraft II (Blizzard)	1	9
4. Command and Conquer (Virgin/Westwood)	4	12
5. MechWarrior 2 (Activision)	5	11
6. Doom II (id Software)	6	8
7. Steel Panthers (SSI)	8	11
8. Heroes of Might and Magic (New World Computing)	7	11
9. Panzer General (SSI)	9	20
10. Wing Commander IV (Origin)	10	10

ON THE SHELF

range from killing everything in sight to photographing the objective. Multiplayer options include modem and network play for up to four people, but no specific Internet support. Game play is addictive, and the only downside is the plain-vanilla VGA graphics.—L. Case

Sir-Tech, (315) 393-6633

PC CD-ROM

Reader Service #304



DEVO PRESENTS ADVENTURES OF THE SMART PATROL

Way back in the '80s, children, a band named Devo played a type of music we liked to call "new wave," which was kind of like disco for dorks who couldn't dance. Devo wore these, uh, flower pot thingies on their heads and sang a lot of songs about potatoes and "devolution" and stuff. Maybe you had to be there.

Anyway, now Devo has a computer game, ADVENTURES OF THE SMART PATROL, and boy does this thing stink. The plot, such as it is, involves some sort of nonsense about bringing down an evil corporate empire and stopping

a genetically mutated creature called Turkey Monkey. I'd like to tell you how it turns out, but the game is such an incomprehensible and unplayable mess (and I had the walk-through!) that I gave up. Most disappointing—considering that Devo really were music-video pioneers—is how awful the game looks, with third-rate animation; jerky, out-of-synch video; and an atrociously annoying interface.

Members of Devo, it's time to ask yourselves: Are we not has-beens? If you're really this desperate for attention, put the flower pots back on your heads and hit the nostalgia circuit with Haircut 100 and A Flock Of Seagulls. The old folks'll eat it up.—J. Green

Inscape, (800) 510-1791

PC/Macintosh CD-ROM

Reader Service #305

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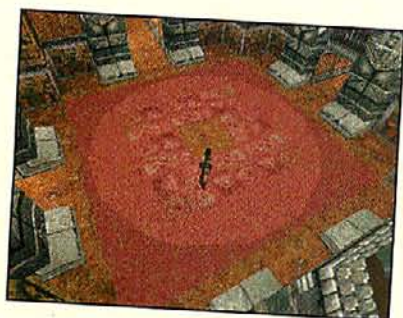
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Circle Reader Service #168





i take thee, Lara Croft,



*to be my
heavily armed guide,*



to have and to hold,

for better or for worse,

*in bat infested tombs
and
foreboding underwater
passageways,
from this day forward*



'til death



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**TOMB
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INTERACTIVE

The New World Just Got Better

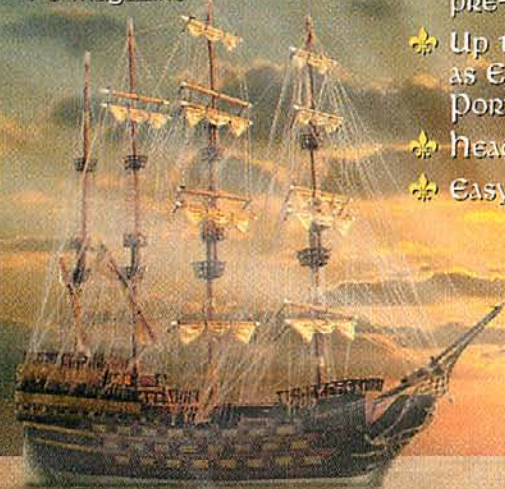
Conquest of the New World Deluxe Edition takes the award-winning strategy game and adds all the elements you asked for to create the definitive gaming experience.

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- Computer Gaming World

"Conquest of the
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- PC Magazine

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- new!** A custom game editor lets you preset the world with populations, armies and colonies
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- new!** Advanced game scenarios let you start a game with pre-developed colonies
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KIDS TO ADULTS



AGES 6+

FIRST LOOK

Here's your first look at games in development. These games aren't even playable yet, but we thought you'd want to see

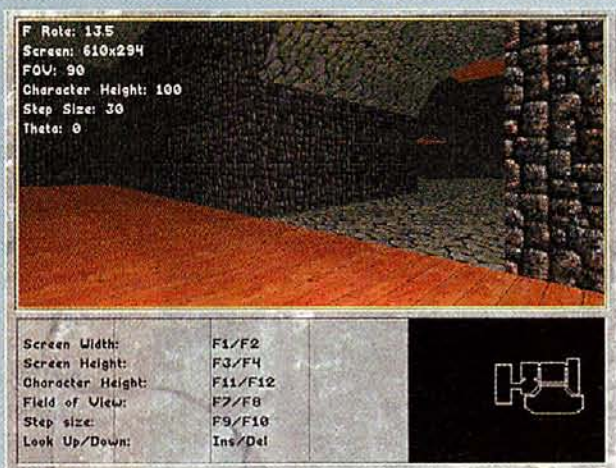
how they're coming along. If the game warrants it, we'll do a Sneak Preview or Hands On once they can be played.

Might & Magic VI

When last we visited the MIGHT & MAGIC series, we encountered two interlocking game worlds—THE DARK SIDE OF XEEN and THE CLOUDS OF XEEN. The developers at New World had cleverly devised two interlocking games that, when connected, gave a sum greater than that of the two separate parts.

When next we visit the MIGHT & MAGIC series, the creators' goal is to create the most logical 3D landscapes and interiors possible. The game world will be designed by a former architect who is supposed to use real-world logic in creating floor plans that make sense, cities which reflect the transactional and traffic flow of the city, and settlements that make the best use of existing natural resources.

The engine is currently being constructed with full 3D so that any *Lightwave*-generated town can be imported into the game engine. In this way, the artists can work on the environment using existing 3D tools while the programmers are still building the engine. Even the objects which can be manipulated in the game will all be defined objects with analogs to real-world objects.



The entire in-house staff at New World will reportedly shift to MIGHT & MAGIC VI after HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC II (see following) has shipped.

HANDS ON

These are the products in development we've actually spent some time with. They represent some of the most interesting

titles in the Pipeline, and they are complete enough to actually tell how they're going to play. Most should be released soon.

► NASCAR 2

There's not exactly a lot of PC stock car software out there, but Sierra has upped the standards anyway with their upcoming NASCAR 2 from

Papyrus Design Group. Early sampling indicates that although it won't be a quantum leap forward (hey, NASCAR was none too shabby in the first place), it'll certainly pack enough wallop to lure owners of the original back for another go.

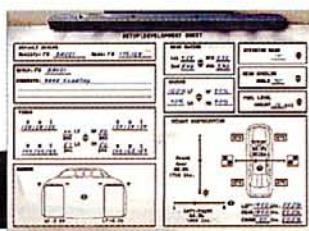
Off the track, NASCAR 2 sports interface improvements with tighter menus, upper and lower command bars and a single-screen setup routine that contains a spot for comments—a nice touch.

Race-time graphics are cleaner too, with a far more sophisticated look that includes clouds, prettier pavement, and generally more-stable movement. One recurring complaint about the original, coming mostly from outside the core Papyrus audience,

focused on NASCAR's extremely (perhaps overly?) realistic play. In short, it was just too darned hard to handle, especially on road courses. Suffice it to say that the



turns of Watkins Glen seem to be a changed animal with NASCAR 2—the car's lost some of that annoying "wobble." Also the



overdue implementation of curbing, which will tilt the car, should also help keep the tires on the black stuff.

But what sets NASCAR apart from

the rest will be the loud-mouth crew chief/spotter. Actually, he's a pretty decent sort and sounds a bit like ol' Mr. Jarrett, who coaches you about that car in your right or left blind spot, current lap count and the pit-lane speed limit.

Papyrus's latest will also feature optional steering assistance for a less demanding drive and an "arcade" mode for those that like it really unreal. As for tracks, Daytona won't be there (yet!), but 16 other tracks will, as will the unruly number 3 of Dale Earnhardt. Uh-oh, better get Maacol-G. Goble Sierra On-Line, (800) 757-7707

PC CD-ROM DOS and Windows 95 PC CD-ROM

HANDS ON

►Heroes of Might & Magic II: The Succession Wars

In the great fantasy tradition of sequels and trilogies, authors have given us hours and hours of fascinating reading by taking us beyond the "happily ever after" of their first books and introducing us to the trials and tribulations of their offspring. Jon van Caneghem has added a new twist in HOMMII. Gamers choose between playing the bad son and the good son in two different campaigns. Still not satisfied?

HOMMII offers almost four campaigns, because the good son can follow the dark side of HOMM's force and the bad son can be

redeemed by the good (playing similar endings to the other campaigns with different parameters). Best of all, van Caneghem has managed to add role-playing elements to a well-balanced strategy game without messing up the play-balance that made the original so addictive. The new elements include primary and secondary skills, character classes like the wizard and necromancer heroes, a new spell system that is mana (or strength) based, a broader range of opponents (up to six players), wider choice of castle/town improvements, and four different map sizes.

Graphically, the towns offer a more realistic feel. The castles are based on historical architectural styles, instead of the fantasy illustration of the original, and the buildings are rendered in 3D (so that they cast the right kinds of shadows) and then textured with hand-drawn 2D art to remove that sterile feel most 3D art has. Unlike the first game, in which you built dwellings once and were rewarded with one type of being to recruit, HOMMII allows you to upgrade nearly half the dwellings in the game. In this way, a dwelling for Paladins gives way to a more powerful home of

Crusaders, and a Dragon's tower scales up from Green to Red to Black Dragons.

Even some familiar buildings from the original have new value in HOMMII. Thieves Guilds now provide more detailed references, and taverns add rumors that can be useful. Most important, you can now hire a captain to manage the town or castle's defenses when your hero isn't there. In the original, there was no way for a town without a hero present to use "General's Orders."

Combat has changed considerably. In response to popular demand, van Caneghem has added a Wait command so that gamers don't have to attack with the creatures in the same order

during every battle round. This allows better use of "combined arms" tactics in the tough battles. Further, you can now divide creatures into attack groups. In the original, a player with 60 centaurs had to leave them in one group of 60. That way a rival sorcerer could tie up all 60 centaurs at once. Now you can have three groups of 20 centaurs, which foils that sorcerer's gambit.. Combat also allows you to use a PANZER GENERAL-style shaded hexagon interface, if desired.

Judging from our initial play sessions of HOMMII, it is possible to make a great game even better. —J. Wilson

New World Computing, (800) 325-8898

PC CD-ROM



PIPELINE

Age of Sail	Talonssoft	11/96
Aide De Camp 2	HPS Simulations	Winter 96
Battleship	Hasbro Interactive	11/96
Battles of Alexander	Interactive Magic	Spring 97
Blood	Apogee	Spring 97
Clandestiny	Virgin	Winter 96
Clue	Hasbro Interactive	11/96
Dark Earth	Mindscape	Spring 97
Descent to Undermountain	Interplay	11/96
Destruction Derby II	Psygnosis	Winter 96
Discworld II: Reality Bytes	Psygnosis	Winter 96
Dungeon Keeper	EA/Bullfrog	11/96
Ecstasica II	Psygnosis	2/97
Flight Sim for Win 95	Microsoft	11/96
FPS Football Pro 97	Sierra	11/96
Flying Corps Empire		Winter 96
Flying Nightmares 2	Domark	Winter 96
Hardball 6	Accolade	Spring 97
Harpoon Classic 97	Interactive Magic	11/96
Heroes of Might and Magic II	New World	11/96
History of the World	Avalon Hill	Winter 96-97
Hyberblade	Activision	11/96
IF22	Interactive Magic	Winter 96
IM1A2 Abrams	Interactive Magic	11/96
Interstate 76	Activision	Winter 96
Jack Nicklaus Golf 97	Accolade	Spring 97
Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II	LucasArts	2/97
Jettfighter III	Mission Studios	11/96
Leisure Suit Larry 7	Sierra	11/96
Lords of the Realm II	Sierra	11/96
Lost Vikings II	Interplay	12/96
Magic of Xanth	Legend	Winter 96
Master of Orion II	MicroProse	12/96
Myst II	Broderbund	Winter 96
NBA Full Court Press	Microsoft	10/96
NBA Live 97	EA Sports	Spring 97
New Order	Epic	Winter 96
NFL Instant Replay	Phillips	Fall 96
NFL Legends	Accolade	11/96
One Must Fall 2	Epic	Fall 96
Pacific Tide	Arsenal	Fall 96
PC Panzerblitz	Avalon Hill	Spring 97
Pod	UbiSoft	Fall 96
Privateer II: The Darkening	Origin	11/96
Reach for the Stars II	SSG/Microsoft	Spring 97
Red Baron II	Sierra	3/97
Return to Krondor	7th Level	Winter 96
Reverence	Cyberdreams	Fall 96
Risk!	Hasbro Interactive	11/96
Shadow Warrior	3D Realms/FormGen	Winter 96
Shattered Steel	Interplay	Winter 96
SimGolf	Maxis	Winter 96
Spider Man & the Sinister Six	Byron Preiss	11/96
Star Craft	Blizzard	3/97
Star Fleet Academy	Interplay	Winter 96
Star General	SSI	11/96
Steel Panthers II	SSI	Fall 96
TFX: X-22	Ocean	3/97
Tomb Raiders	Domark	Winter 96
Toonstruck	Virgin/Burst	11/96
Vampire Diaries	Her Interactive	Fall 96
VR Golf	VR Sports	11/96
X-COM: The Apocalypse	MicroProse	Spring 97
Xenophage	Apogee/FormGen	Fall/96
X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter	LucasArts	Winter 96

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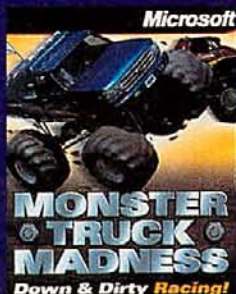
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HANDS ON

► War Wind

A techno-magical world torn asunder by warfare, Yavaun is the backdrop for SSI's new real-time strategy game, WAR WIND. An ambitious game, WAR WIND allows you to play any one of Yavaun's four races: the Tha'Roan, the current masters of the world, who are fighting to maintain their tenuous hold over the other races; the sturdy Obblinox, the slave-soldiers of the Tha'Roan, who are ready to battle all races to win their freedom; the treelike Eaggra, who wish to free themselves from their slavery under the Tha'Roan to find their mythic homeland; and the Shama'Li, wise druids who wish to stop the bloodshed for all parties and unite all the factions into one race.

Gameplay is similar to that of WARCRAFT II, in that you build structures



and harvest resources. However, there are differences between WAR WIND and previous real-time titles: You upgrade your basic worker units to soldiers instead of training new units, you attract mercenaries and heroes, and you are represented in the game by a leader unit who gains prestige (a game stat that influences your hero recruitment) as the game progresses. Each race does have different strengths and weaknesses, and the campaigns are very different for each race. With its differences and fun gameplay, WAR WIND should

hook all those WARCRAFT fans who are looking for new fantasy real-time battles. Look for WAR WIND to hit store shelves in early November. —E. Chin
SSI, (800) 245-4525
PC CD-ROM

► Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair

So, you want to be a director, huh? Think you could handle the pressures of Hollywood? Well, before you quit your day job, let's find out if you've got what it takes. STEVEN SPIELBERG'S DIRECTOR'S CHAIR allows you to be director for a day (or for as many days as your shooting schedule allows). In your new career, you'll be responsible for each stage of the movie-making process, from writing the script to schmoozing with the rich and famous at the premiere. You'll receive sound advice from Mr. Spielberg and his associates, and you'll be blessed with the talents of Jennifer Aniston and Quentin Tarantino, but it's ultimately up to you to write, film and edit your masterpiece, on time and under budget. Obstacles arise out of nowhere: During production, costumes may be delayed and actors may tarry in Makeup. While editing, you may realize you've neglected to shoot an important scene. Learning how to maneuver around such problems without annihilating your schedule or blowing your budget is key. After completing your first movie, you'll no doubt be raring to fine-tune

your skills, and with three levels of difficulty, the scope for replayability appears endless. This behind-the-scenes, hands-on program is a must for movie fans and control freaks alike. STEVEN SPIELBERG'S DIRECTOR'S CHAIR should be hitting stores the first week in November. —C. Panther
Knowledge Adventure, www.directorschair.com
PC CD-ROM

► Clandestiny

You waited until the 11TH HOUR and you welcomed the 7TH GUEST. Now you've been selected as the last Earl of MacPhiles: Thematically connected to the other two, though not at all a sequel, CLANDESTINITY promises more of the puzzles that characterized 7TH and 11TH. As the Earl, along with his feisty partner Paula, to claim your title you must solve these puzzles. They range in difficulty, to be sure, but you may also select a difficulty level such that some almost solve themselves. Additionally, a "tip" function will actually do the job for you, if any of them prove just too frustrating. (The problems become increasingly difficult as the game progresses.)

The game unfolds as a drama connected by animated sequences. Each puzzle you unlock leads to a new section of the drama, which in turn points the way to a new puzzle. The would-be Earl is frightened (as well he should be) of ghosts and rotting corpses, while Paula can't wait for the next challenge. The history of the place is not one to be proud of; it is filled with cowards and runaway knights. Nonetheless, it makes for some amusing background and diversion between puzzles. In general, CLANDESTINITY takes the edge off of piercing puzzles, at the player's option, and emphasizes cute characters. —F. Kantor
Trilobyte, (503) 857-0614
PC CD-ROM



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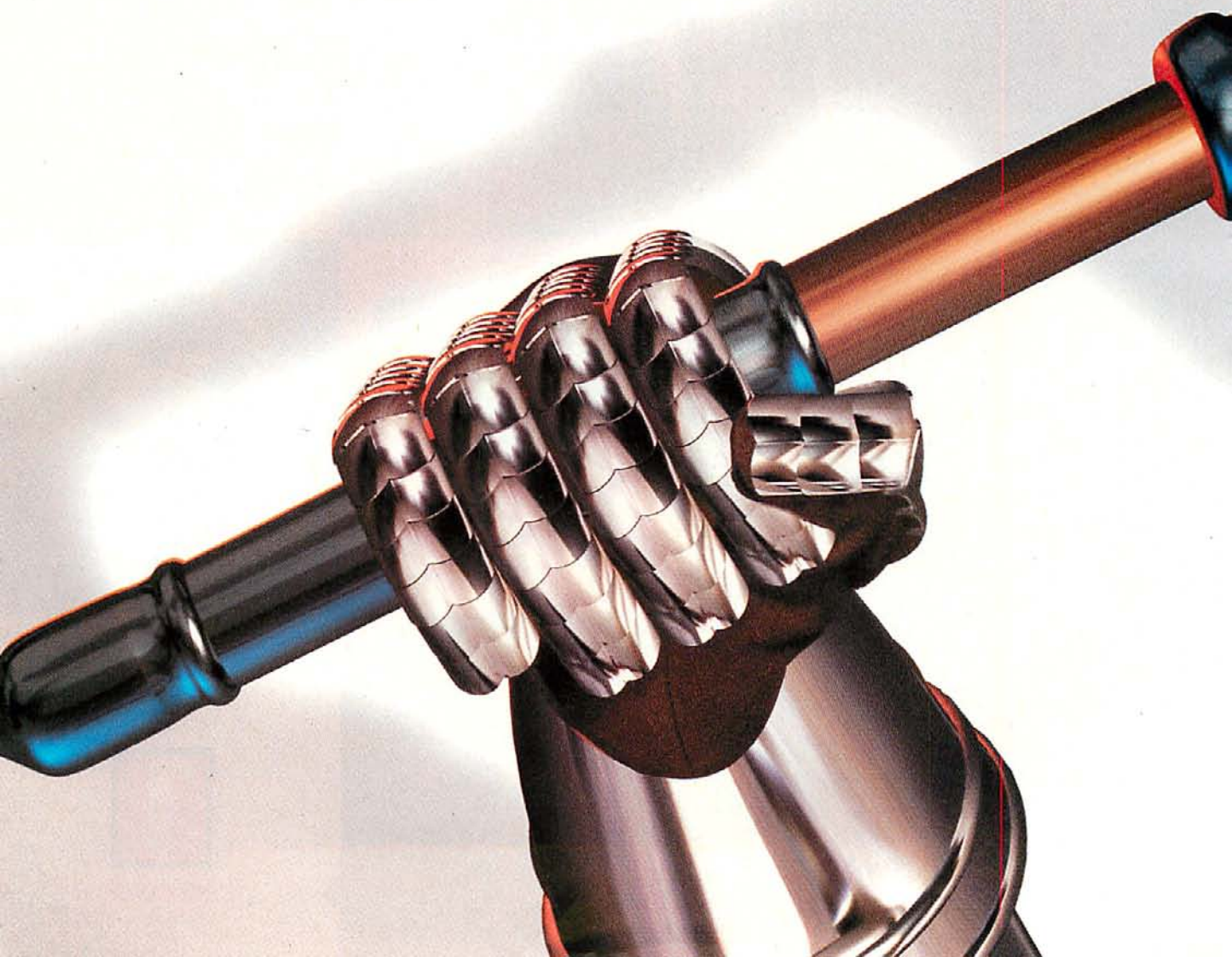
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HANDS ON

►F/A-18 Hornet 3.0

The F/A-18 Hornet is the workhorse of Navy and Marine air units, performing both air-to-air and ground-attack missions with such finesse that it was the first aircraft simultaneously designated "Fighter/Attack." Soon the Hornet will get a different sort of dual personality, when Graphic Simulations Corporation's updated F/A-18 HORNET 3.0 ships on both the Macintosh and, for the first time, Windows 95.

HORNET lets you fly single missions, a scripted career, or network battles (up to four players) in a single-seat F/A-18A. Unlike many recent sims, which have featured dynamic campaigns with strike packages composed of multiple aircraft types and have often concentrated on coordinating attacks with wingmen, HORNET seems to follow the older "you against the world" model. Not that that's too difficult in an aircraft that can simultaneously carry a full air-to-air load for self-protection, air-to-ground ordinance to perform precision strikes, and HARM antiradiation missiles to take out enemy SAM sites. (And for those really tough-to-clean enemy stains, try HORNET's tactical nukes, guaranteed to wipe out entire bases with one easy click, or your money back.)



HORNET's graphics engine doesn't use texture-mapping, but the large polygon count and high resolutions supported (up to 1024x768) make for extremely sharp ground structures and nicely detailed air-

craft—not to mention a speedy frame

rate on machines not blessed with 3D hardware.

The flight model feels in the middle of the realism range. With a nice set of tutorials, uncomplicated but challenging missions, and a fairly realistic but not overwhelming instrument package, HORNET looks like a great introductory game for the new sim pilot. More experienced fliers, though, might feel a bit alone in the skies.—D. Alkin

Graphic Simulations Corporation, (214) 386-7575
Windows 95 and Macintosh CD-ROM

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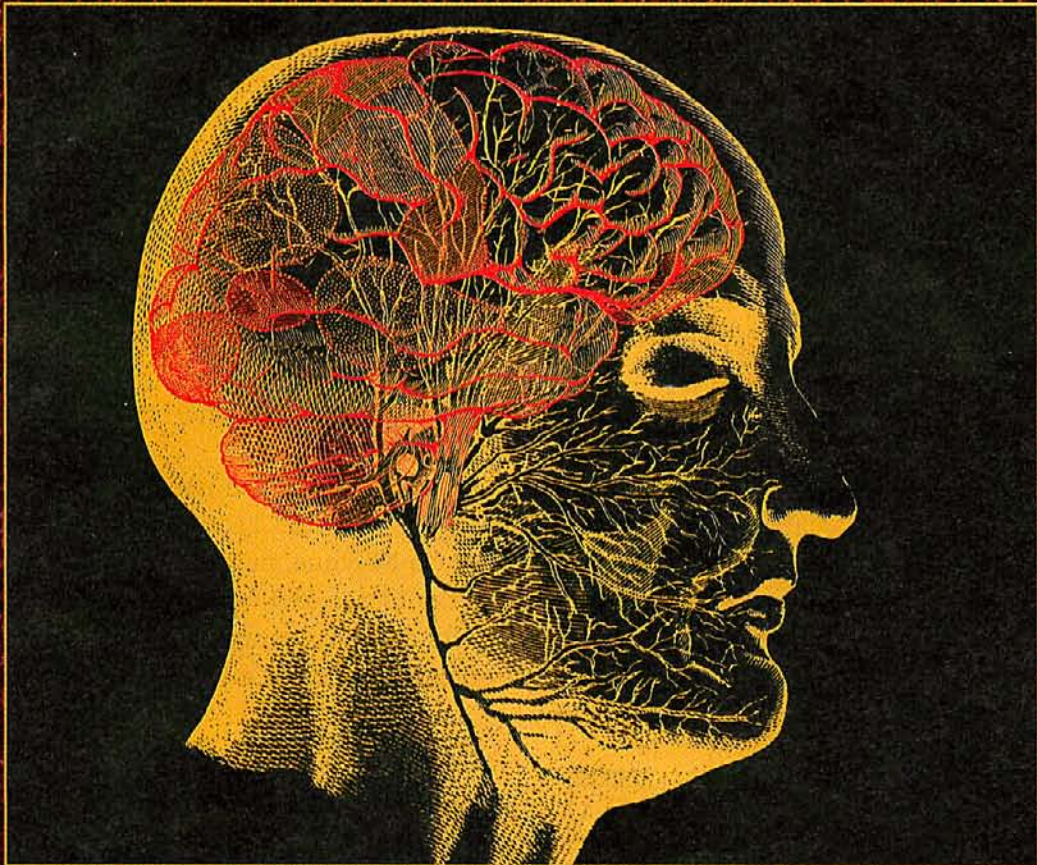
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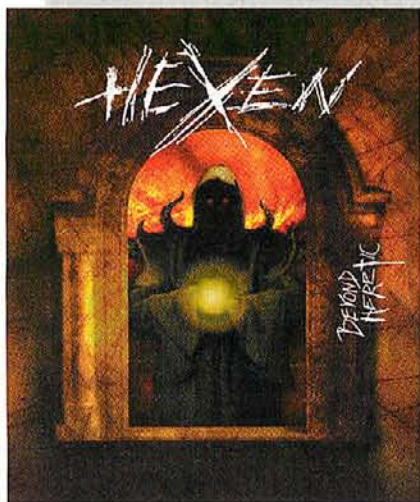


The National Arbor Day Foundation

CLINICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL DISORDERS



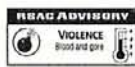
ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITY DISORDER:



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Perhaps the most disturbing issue here is that this game is one of the best-selling games of 1995.

- Shoot 'em up action from the creators of Doom
- Destroy the treacherous Serpent Rider and restore order to the Cronos dimension
- Jump, fly, throw lightning bolts, or even cast evil spells



DOS/Windows® 95/Macintosh®



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This manifestation of the disorder is of a more reclusive nature.

- The barren artist retreat of the late eccentric designer, Thurston Last
- Rebuild the Muse Machine, harness the power of the Muses and restore the resort to its original grandeur
- Solve brain-numbing puzzles along the way



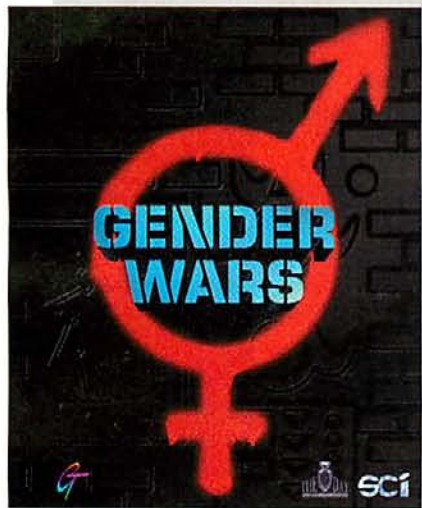
Windows 95/Macintosh



Buy 2 games and get a third



A pattern of disregard for and violation of the rights of others.



Now Available

What we see here is a definite cry for help.

- Play as either male or female and annihilate the opposite sex
- Choose from among 28, equally anti-social missions within each sector
- Blow up virtually everything in sight



DOS



Available October '96

Here we see, not just violence but ultra violence.

- Intense action thriller
- Evil alternate reality dictatorship, where the player must solve the mystery of their former identity
- Nightmarish artwork of underground phenomenon Aidan Hughes and the industrial sounds of Roland and Paul Barker



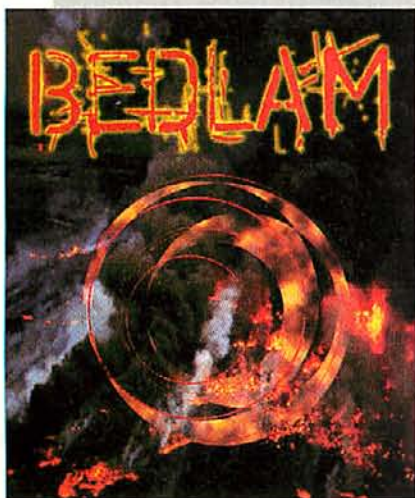
Windows 95/Macintosh



one free. Antisocial types will be unwilling to share news of this offer with others.

Availability dates subject to change.

IMPULSE-CONTROL DISORDER:



Now Available

Pray you never see a case this extreme.

- Control 3 independent robots and fight your enemy on 3 different battlefronts
- Totally interactive environments – blow up virtually everything in sight
- Thousands of enemies, incredibly destructive weapons, numerous power-ups and puzzles



Windows 95/DOS/Macintosh



Available October '96

Here we see a perfect example of impulse-control disorder.

- 3-D futuristic, "Gladiatorial Tournament"
- 60 supremely intelligent opponents with unique fighting styles and awesome weaponry
- 20 different playing arenas
- 4 player network compatibility



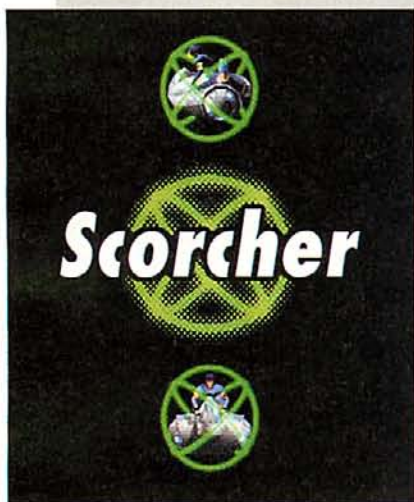
DOS



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Episodes of failure to resist aggressive impulses that result in serious assaultive acts or destruction of property.



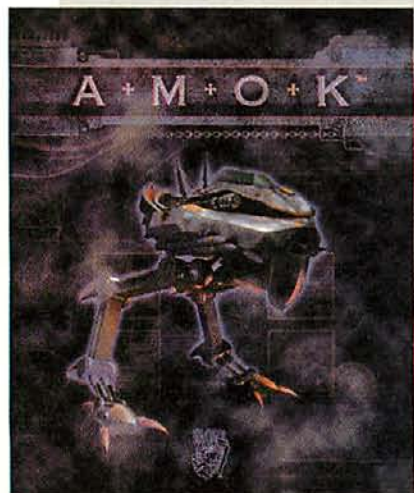
Available November '96

There's no misdiagnosing this one.

- Graphically-advanced, futuristic cyber-cycle racing
- Pit skills against a pack of high-speed rivals on totally outrageous tracks
- Screaming through a white-knuckled world of shadows and danger



Windows 95/DOS



Available October '96

The name says it all.

- Best graphics, fastest gameplay and most diverse replayability in its genre
- 3D shooter puts player in control of a hi-tech battle walker on one of many suicide missions
- Expansive, cutting-edge settings occur on land, underground and even underwater



Windows 95/DOS

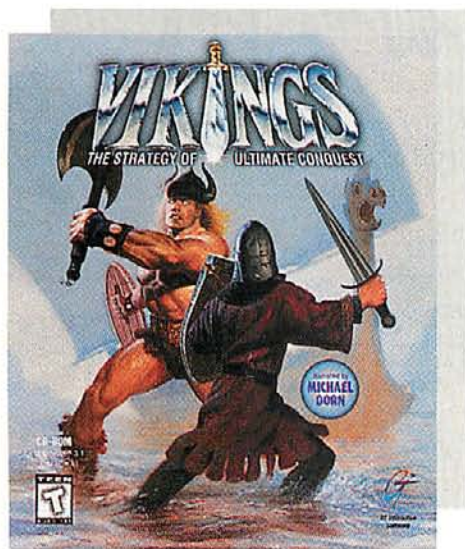


one free.

Impulse-control disorder types will be so excited by this offer they will probably roll up this publication and smack someone in the head with it.

Availability dates subject to change.

DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR



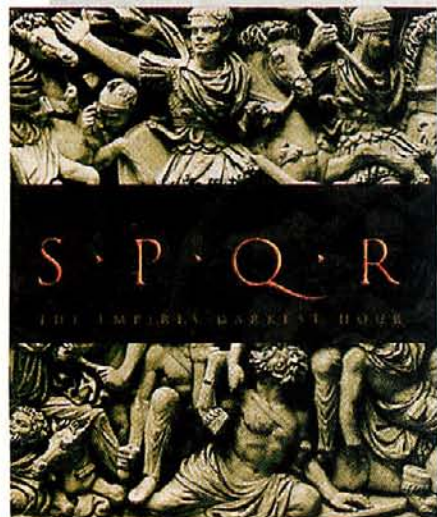
Now Available

This is a somewhat frightening manifestation of delusions of grandeur.

- Scheme your moves, strengthen your arms and conquer the world as a 9th century rack-and-ruin Viking
- Wreak havoc on unsuspecting villages, crushing all and carrying off spoils
- Narrated by Michael Dorn



Windows 3.1/Macintosh



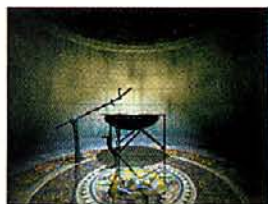
Available November '96

Here the player believes he must save the Roman Empire.

- Navigate a labyrinth of politics, murder and deceit
- Totally immersive and faster than the hit web game
- Historically accurate reconstruction of Ancient Rome, 205 A.D.



Windows 95 & 3.1/Macintosh



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Delusions of inflation of worth, power, knowledge, identity or special relationship to a deity or famous person.

(e.g., Nordic Gods, ancient Romans, heretics, commanders of inter-galactic space ships)



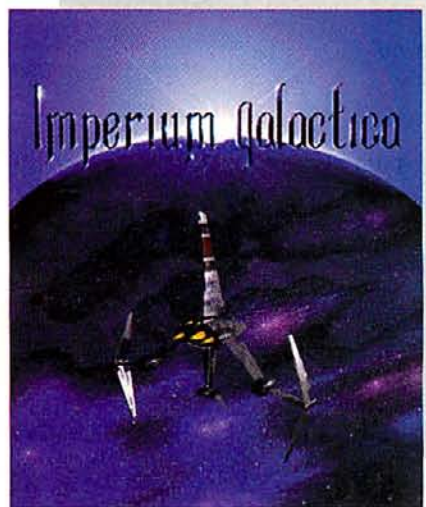
Now Available

Yes. It's as disturbing as it sounds.

- The ultimate sword and sorcery battlefest
- Fluid, seamless realism (which unfortunately, only serves to reinforce players delusions)
- The original 3 episodes of gameplay plus 2 new full episodes



DOS



Available November '96

The player has to prove just how great he is by uniting the galaxy under his leadership.

- Aggressive inter-planetary colonization and cunning political negotiations with alien cultures
- Real-time strategic space and ground warfare
- Clever resource allocation requiring heavy R&D



DOS



one free.

Those who suffer from delusions of grandeur will think this offer is yet another manifestation of their greatness.

Availability dates subject to change.

OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE:



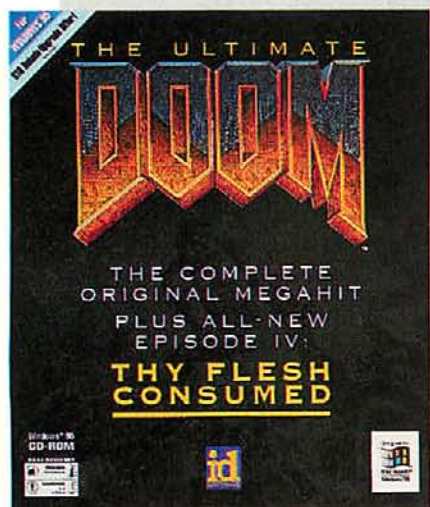
Now Available

This is only the early stage of this violent obsessive-compulsive disorder.

- The best selling action game of all time
- Higher resolution graphics and faster than ever gameplay



Windows 95/DOS



Now Available

At this stage you know you have not succeeded in early intervention.

- Gaming Hall of Fame inductee
- Includes the original 3 episodes, plus a new one: "Thy Flesh Consumed"
- Beefed-up graphics and sound



Windows 95/DOS/Macintosh



Buy 2 games and get a third



Repetitive behaviors or mental acts (e.g., doing magic tricks, or killing) that the person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession.



Now Available

This is it. The final stages of the disorder, and hence the final chapter in the legendary Doom series.

- Two new, 32-level versions
- New storylines
- The package Doom addicts have been craving



Windows 95/DOS/Macintosh



Now Available

This is an extremely rare case: the inability to control the impulse to perform tricks.

- Hilariously funny comedy adventure, taking place in bizarre cartoon world
- Six in-depth quests
- Over 90 wacky characters and 105 stunning animated locations



DOS



one free.

Obsessive-compulsive types will feel the need to keep turning back to this page to make sure this offer still exists.

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Here's the deal: Buy any 2 games from the "BUY" list below (either from your local participating retailer or by ordering directly from GT Interactive by phone), and then select a third game for FREE, plus \$6.95 shipping & handling, from the "FREE" list below. Buy now and you'll automatically be entered for a chance to win 15 HOT games in GT Interactive's Game Therapy Sweepstakes. Not some dust collecting throwaways. Really cool stuff! (No purchase necessary to enter. See official sweepstakes rules and details below.)

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1) BY PHONE: Simply call GT's toll free hotline at 1-800-432-3493 ext. M606 and use your major credit card to purchase any 2 games from the "BUY" list below. Order your FREE game at the same time by choosing one from the "FREE" list below. All orders must be received between October 1, 1996 and January 31, 1997. Your credit card will not be charged until all items ordered are available for shipment. Allow 8-12 weeks for delivery.

-OR-

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COST	SELECTION#	TITLE
\$49.95	04-11568	SPQR W95/W3.1**
\$49.95	04-20158	SPQR MAC**
\$49.95	04-11266	"9" W3.1
\$49.95	04-20113	"9" MAC
\$34.95	04-20064	HEXEN MAC
\$34.95	04-10826	HEXEN W95
\$49.95	04-11316	AMOK W95/DOS*
\$49.95	04-11567	XS DOS*
\$34.95	04-10722	ULTIMATE DOOM W95/DOS
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\$34.95	04-19723	DOOM II W95/DOS
\$34.95	04-20043	DOOM II MAC
\$49.95	04-20114	BEDLAM MAC
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\$49.95	04-11264	SCORCHER W95/DOS**
\$49.95	04-11789	IMPERIUM GALACTICA DOS**
\$44.95	04-11459	KINGDOM O' MAGIC DOS
\$49.95	04-11319	FINAL DOOM W95/DOS
\$49.95	04-20135	FINAL DOOM MAC*
\$44.95	04-11458	GENDER WARS DOS
\$49.95	04-11315	ZPC - NO FLESH SHALL BE SPARED W95*
\$49.95	04-20116	ZPC - NO FLESH SHALL BE SPARED MAC*
\$49.95	04-11163	HERETIC: SHADOW OF THE SERPENT RIDER DOS
\$39.95	04-11154	VIKINGS: THE STRATEGY OF ULTIMATE CONQUEST W3.1/MAC
\$38.95	04-10266	JUST ME AND MY DAD™ W3.1/MAC
\$38.95	04-10284	JUST ME AND MY MOM™ W3.1/MAC

THE FREE LIST

SELECTION#	TITLE
04-11568	SPQR W95/W3.1**
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04-11266	"9" W3.1
04-20113	"9" MAC
04-11316	AMOK W95/DOS*
04-11567	XS DOS*
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04-11265	BEDLAM W95/DOS
04-11264	SCORCHER W95/DOS**
04-11459	KINGDOM O' MAGIC DOS
04-11458	GENDER WARS DOS
04-11315	ZPC - NO FLESH WILL BE SPARED W95*
04-20116	ZPC - NO FLESH WILL BE SPARED MAC*
04-11154	VIKINGS: STRATEGY OF ULTIMATE CONQUEST W3.1/MAC
04-10266	JUST ME AND MY DAD™ W3.1/MAC
04-11789	IMPERIUM GALACTICA DOS**
04-10442	LOCUS W95/DOS
04-20059	LOCUS MAC
04-10258	ICE & FIRE W95/W3.1
04-20058	ICE & FIRE MAC

* Available October
** Available November
All others now available

Cost does not include sales tax where applicable. Not all games available on all platforms or operating systems. See game lists for details. Offer good only in Continental U.S. Allow 8-12 weeks from receipt of order for delivery. FREE offer expires January 31, 1997 or while supplies last. Availability dates subject to change.



GT Interactive's GAME THERAPY SWEEPSTAKES

1. Yes! Please enter me for a chance to win GT Interactive's Game Therapy Sweepstakes. Simply complete and mail this coupon in an envelope with postage affixed to GT Interactive Software, PO Box 985, Buffalo, NY 14207 no later than January 31, 1997. (Skip to item #4 below.) No purchase necessary. See official rules below for details.

-OR-

2. Please enter me for a chance to win GT Interactive's Game Therapy Sweepstakes and send me my FREE game by mail. (I've already purchased 2 games from my software retailer.) Simply choose your FREE game from the "FREE" list above. Be sure to write the item number of your selection in the space indicated below. Use the item number of your selection that corresponds to your operating system—not all games are available for every operating system. Enclose in an envelope with sufficient postage the following: (a) Proof-of-purchase (UPC bar code) for each game purchased, (b) store receipt dated between October 1, 1996 and January 31, 1997 for each game proof of purchase provided, (c) this fully completed coupon, and (d) \$6.95 payment for shipping and handling of your FREE game. Mail to GT Interactive Software, PO Box 985, Buffalo, NY 14207 no later than January 31, 1997.

My FREE game from the "FREE" list is Item Number 04-_____

In case first choice is unavailable, please indicate: 2nd choice 04-_____ 3rd choice 04-_____

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If paying by check, please make checks payable to GT Interactive Software. If paying by credit card, please indicate the following:

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Optional _____

YOUR OPERATING SYSTEM? Mac OS™ IBM® PC W95 W3.1 MS-DOS®

OTHER PLATFORMS OWNED? SEGA Saturn™ SONY Playstation™ NINTENDO Ultra 64™

OFFICIAL RULES

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY

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150 BEST (and 50 Worst) GAMES of ALL TIME

- 
- 64 The Top 150 Games Of All Time
 - 84 The Worst 50 Games Of All Time
 - 102 The Most Innovative Games Of All Time
 - 107 The Best Ways To Die In A PC Game
 - 110 The Most Influential Industry Leaders
 - 113 The Funniest Games Of All Time
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 - 118 The Hardest Computer Games Of All Time
 - 120 The Greatest Heroes Of All Time
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 - 124 The Worst Peripherals Of All Time
 - 127 The Most Rewarding Endings Of All Time
 - 128 The Most Disappointing Endings Of All Time
 - 130 The Most Vaporous Vaporware Of All Time

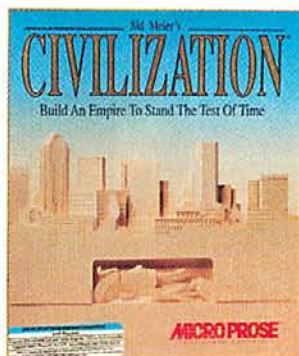
Break out the banners and strike up the band in salute to the

150 BEST Games OF ALL TIME

1. Sid Meier's Civilization

MICROPROSE, 1993

While some games might be equally addictive, none have sustained quite the level of rich, satisfying gameplay quite like Sid Meier's magnum opus. The blend of exploration, economics, conquest and diplomacy is augmented by the quintessential research and development model, as you struggle to erect the Pyramids, discover gunpowder, and launch a colonization spacecraft to Alpha Centauri. For its day, Civ had the toughest computer opponents around—even taking into account the “cheats,” that in most instances added rather than detracted from the game. Just when you think the game might bog down, you discover a new land, a new technology, another tough foe—and you tell yourself, “just one more game,” even as the first rays of the new sun creep into your room...the most acute case of game-lock we've ever felt.



everyone thought about the PC as a fast gaming machine. If you want to see us rhapsodize some more, check out this month's Hall of Fame.

6. SIM CITY

MAXIS, 1987

The ultimate in software toys almost never got published.

Supposedly, there just wasn't “enough game,” a description belied by the dynamic city construction involved. After you built your city from scratch, you



DOOM

2. ULTIMA IV

ORIGIN, 1984

Here began Avatarhood: where every major plot development depended on ethical choices made by your character. The detail was

such that even non-player characters would react to you based on your character's reputation, as word traveled from town to town of your actions. What the dialogue lacked in cleverness, it made up for with an authentic, gritty feel rarely found in other games. For the first time, NPCs became true companions, rather than bundles of statistics to help in combat.

Even the ending was a surprise, moving away from the “take out Foozle” climax so common in RPGs. If all RPGs were half as richly filled out as this, role-playing games wouldn't be in such a state of decline.



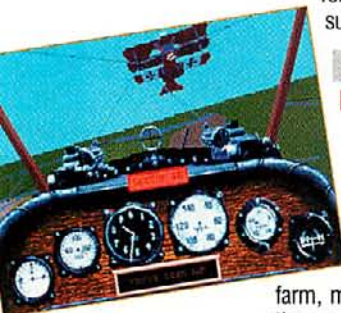
Sim City

live auction that actually made economics fun. Because EA could never manage to come out with a sequel, many of us held on to our C-64s and Atari 1980Ds just to play this, still the best multiplayer game we've ever seen.

4. RED BARON

SIERRA, 1990

While Falcon 3.0 (see below) may be the most impressive from a technical standpoint, there is little question that Red Baron is the better game. Damon Slye honed his craft while designing action hits like Stellar 7 and Skyfox, but with pure flight sims, he found his metier. With all the realistic options turned on, Red Baron is a bear to fly; it's all you can do to keep the fragile wings from tearing off. Rotary aircraft snap to the right, machine guns jam at the worst time—just exactly how you would expect these rickety constructions of wood and fabric to behave. When you toss in the interesting missions and wonderful campaigns, it's hard to imagine a better flight experience. A tribute to the design is that despite its dated VGA graphics, it is still selling. If Red Baron II is anywhere near as good, flight sim fans will have ample reason to rejoice.



Red Baron

3. MULE

EA, 1983

Four players try to colonize a planet while simultaneously driving the other players out of business. Named after the robotic “mule” that enables you to farm, mine and transport equipment, the game contains no bombs, guns or missiles—just offers an exciting game of cutthroat competition complete with

5. DOOM

ID SOFTWARE, 1993

Simply the best action game of all time. Even though DOOM wasn't true 3D, it transformed the way

had to run it, and the continued success comes not so much from the mechanics, but from tapping into the sheer joy of discovery. Challenging on many levels, it evaluates your performance even as you enjoy it. It's hard to ask much more than that from any game.

7. WING COMMANDER

ORIGIN, 1990

No, it didn't have the detailed “flight model” that X-WING or TIE FIGHTER would later bring to the galactic party. And compared to the multimedia production values of WING COMMANDERS III and IV, the original looks like stilted Saturday morning cartoons. But WING COMMANDER was the first to successfully blend interstellar action with a storyline. While the theme—a valiant struggle against a seemingly overwhelming foe—was typical sci-fi, the designers did a good job of developing the tensions inherent in the situation. The “hot washup” scenes at the Tiger's Claw bar between missions gave you a needed break from wrist-wracking action, and the conversations you had with other pilots left you with not just tactical tips, but the impression that your wingmen were personalities rather than mere algorithms.

8. EMPIRE

INTERSTEL, 1978

After proliferating on college and corporate mainframes all through the 1970s, *EMPIRE* found life on the personal computer when ex-NASA programmer Mark Baldwin was approached by Interstel to create an Atari ST version. Ostensibly a game of planetary conquest, complete with a sci-fi wrapping in the documentation, the game was really a delightful multiplayer version of strategic level WWII era warfare. Production level determined



economic level which determined the potential number of military units available. As a multiplayer game, it could be played by "hot seat" (CGW deadlines were constantly in danger due to office games) and by PBEM. Not a direct port of the mainframe game, Baldwin's version added greater roles for destroyers and new intelligence algorithms, among other additions.

9. WASTELAND

INTERPLAY, 1987

A fascinating science fiction story set in a post-nuclear world of disintegrating technology, dysfunctional society and mutant organisms, *WASTELAND* was the first game many of us played where the other members of the player's adventuring party acted like "real" people instead of inventory cabinets with names and automatons with skill sets. Ask the party to divvy up the cash and one or more might refuse. Try to get a party member to cough up his/her last clip of ammo? No way! But don't take our word for it. Play it yourself. The entire game is on this month's CG-ROM.

10. FALCON 3.0

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE, 1991

FALCON 3.0 was the first jet simulation to offer a truly realistic flight model, but it didn't stop there. It also introduced the useful (and necessary) wingmen and the first truly dynamic flight sim campaign. Moreover, *FALCON 3.0* was also one of the first games to support multiplayer network play. The fact that the game is still in the shelves more than five years after its initial release is testament to its quality and advanced design.

11. FPS FOOTBALL 1995

SIERRA, 1994

Most pigskin games are either realistic stat-based sims dryer than our favorite martini, or so reflex-dependent that your gridiron savvy is rendered totally irrelevant. *FRONT PAGE FOOTBALL* changed all that, somehow combining the best of both worlds, and improving up through *FPS FOOTBALL 95*, winning an unprecedented three CGW Premier awards in the process. Instead of relying on statistics, this models the physics of the game on the field: the fluid roto-scoped movement of the players; the quick release of a Dan Marino pass; the blocking power of a 300-pound offensive lineman. From the play editor, to the updated rosters of NFL players (who actually play like their real-life counterparts), and the career league options, no other game brings its sport to life quite like this one.

12. LEMMINGS

PSYGNOSIS, 1991

They cry "Oh no!" as you'd sacrifice a Lemming in an effort to save its brethren proved that the death of little animals had never been so cute. This diabolical puzzle game starts with simple challenges and works you steadily towards ultra-challenging conundrums that require split-second timing with the mouse. In its initial release, the PC version was a poor imitation of its Amiga predecessor, but the Win 95 update included with *LEMMINGS PAINTBALL* should be snatched up by all who missed this classic.

13. ZORK

INFOCOM, 1981

It all started with a little letter in a mailbox outside a small white house. From here began a magic journey into the land of Frobozz. This seminal Infocom text adventure combined challenging puzzles, wonderful descriptive prose, and a touch of humor to create

a rich universe that existed not in SVGA graphics, but within your head. A far different tone than the campy *RETURN TO ZORK* or the dark *ZORK NEMESIS* made this a universe many early gamers would spend all their non-school hours glued to until it was fully explored.

14. TETRIS



SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE, 1988

This insidious little puzzle game may have been the Soviet Union's last-ditch attempt at destroying American productivity. If personal computers had been more commonplace in 1988, it darned well might have succeeded. The seemingly simple task of matching falling blocks would become an obsession, to the point that many gamers would find themselves rotating *TETRIS* blocks in their dreams.

15. PANZER GENERAL

SSI, 1994

Most of us that play wargames began for a variety of reasons, but chief among them was that we wanted to be Patton, or Lee, or Rommel for a day. *PANZER GENERAL* lets you do just that, in a series of tough scenarios and exciting campaigns. PG isn't for everybody, since every time realism and fun clash, the latter wins out. But what the game lacks in historical insights, it more than makes up for in variety: the amphibious invasion of Norway; the airborne assault on Crete; the sweeping armored battles of Kursk and North Africa. *PANZER GENERAL* made more realistic games like *STEEL PANTHERS* possible, because it made wargames fun—and marketable—again.

16. WIZARDRY

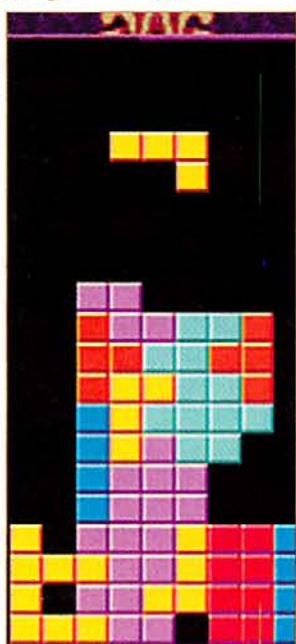
SIR-TECH, 1981

The seminal dungeon romp, this RPG sent AD&D fans scrambling to buy Apple IIs.

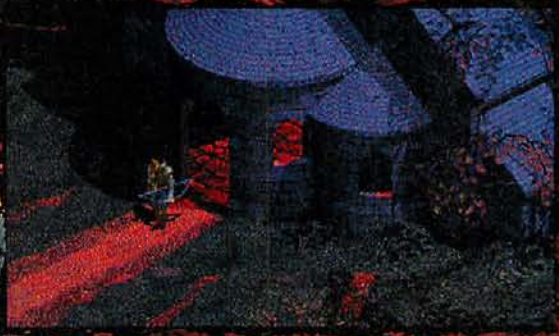
17. GABRIEL KNIGHT 2

SIERRA, 1996

A haunting tale from Jane Jensen, the interactive Ann Rice, which successfully blended the psychological and supernatural, an adventure game inter-



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THIS FALL
**ALL HELL
BREAKS LOOSE.**

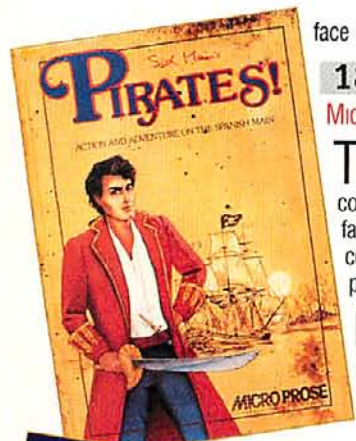


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*PC Gamer

Circle Reader Service #266

150 BEST Games OF ALL TIME



face and full motion video.

18. SID MEIER'S PIRATES!

MICROPROSE, 1987

The Amiga version of this hybrid game of exploration, combat and role-playing was by far the best, with smooth ship combat and fast-action sword-play.

19. SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

LUCASARTS, 1989

Who could ever forget the insult-driven duel system or the identity of the mysterious Swordmaster?

20. ARCHON

EA, 1984

The strategy of chess plus fast-arcade action made for an addictive two-player experience.

21. THEIR FINEST HOUR

LUCASARTS, 1990

The first World War II sim that really made you feel like you were *there*, this, like Red Baron, reminds us that a great sim can also be a great *game*.

22. X-COM

MPS, 1994

The best tactical system for squad-based combat combines with an excellent R&D model and pop culture about aliens and UFOs for an incredibly addictive strategy experience.

23. MIGHT & MAGIC

NEW WORLD, 1986

A 3D dungeon view combined with the biggest world map to date were just two of the major features of this advanced level CRPG.

24. RAID ON BUNGELING BAY

BRODERBUND, 1984

Smooth-scrolling, 360-degree shooter that redefined C64 arcade action and used graphics tiles that paved the way for SIMCITY's inception.

25. EARL WEAVER BASEBALL

EA, 1986

The Amiga version was a sports classic, from the stats to the graphics. Too bad the later versions gave it a black eye.

26. LINKS 386

ACCESS, 1992

When a "386" golf game is still selling to Pentium Pro owners, you know it's good.



27. MECHWARRIOR 2

ACTIVISION, 1995

The atmosphere and background story made this giant robot game an amazingly immersive experience.

28. WARCRAFT II

BLIZZARD, 1995

Doesn't reach all of its lofty goals, but it's fast, furious and compelling—what Interplay's Tolkien games should have been.

29. STAR CONTROL 2

ACCOLADE, 1994

STARCONTROL 2 was a fast-paced space game with a stunning blend of adventure, action, and humor.

30. POPULOUS

BULLFROG, 1988

As the father of real-time strategy games, POPULOUS gave you the opportunity to play god.

31. NASCAR RACING

PAPYRUS, 1994

Its fast action on the track introduced computer gaming to a whole new market.

32. M-1 TANK PLATOON

MPS, 1989

As the first simulation to allow you to command multiple vehicles, M-1 TANK PLATOON addressed several issues of combat doctrine ignored in other tank games.

33. MASTER OF ORION

SIMTEX/MPS, 1993

Steve Barcia leaped to the stage with this SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION meets REACH FOR THE STARS game of space conquest.

34. DAY OF THE TENTACLE

LUCASARTS, 1993

DOTT completely blew away its ancestor, MANIAC MANSION, with its smooth animated sequences, nifty plot and great voiceovers.

35. CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT

EA, 1989

Three eras of air combat came together in this flight sim classic. For the Korean War, this is the only flight sim which has addressed it.

36. QUAKE

Id, 1996

The ultimate implementation of the deathmatch, QUAKE also creates the spookiest atmosphere ever presented in an action game.

37. DUKE NUKEM 3D

APOGEE, 1996

A close match for QUAKE, with any deficiencies in its 3D engine made up for by its bizarre, and sometimes earthy, humor.

38. CRUSADER: NO REMORSE

ORIGIN, 1995

In an industry dominated by DOOM-clones, this shows that the *_*-view action game has a lot of very visceral appeal left.

39. RED STORM RISING

MICROPROSE, 1989

A modern submarine combat game unmatched even by today's offerings, the play balance of scenarios, campaign and realism was nearly perfect.

40. HARPOON

360 PACIFIC, 1989

Since modern naval combat is fast and diverse, HARPOON had to offer gamers a real-time perspective they'd never seen before. It succeeded.



Day of the Tentacle



WarCraft 2

STONEKEEP

MECH WARRIOR 2

QUAKE

WING COMMANDER

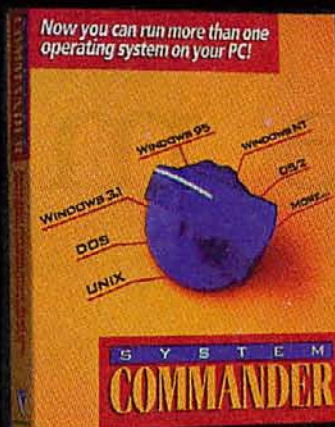


Win 95 is cool, but sucks with DOS games!

Games run best on the Operating System they were designed for!

...That's why you need *System Commander*. You've got great DOS games, but you really want to try that new Win 95 game. You want it all. But, if you upgrade to Win 95, it will really hose your DOS games. With *System Commander* you can play each game the way it was meant to be played...on the OS it was designed for.

System Commander allows you to boot both DOS (3.3 or later) and Win 95 on the same PC. When you turn on your machine, *System Commander* gives you a menu. Pick the OS you want and with the touch of a button. *System Commander* does the rest.



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System Commander is only \$99.95 and comes with an unconditional 60 day money back guarantee. Mention this ad and get **FREE*** overnight shipping. Call today and play your brains out tomorrow!



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Unlike most

hard drives

it's removable.

Unlike most

removables it



Don't worry, if one cartridge fills up there are millions left.

There seems to be an unwritten rule with computers. No matter how large the hard drive, you'll eventually find a way to max it out. Unless, of course, you get one that never really fills up, right? For example, the EZFlyer™ 230, the latest removable cartridge hard drive from SyQuest®. Don't let the small 3.5 inch cartridge deceive you, this thing is huge. 230 megs that rip along at twice the speed of any removable in its class.

The reason for our blistering performance is pretty simple. It works like a hard drive because it is one. Sluggish technologies from tape drives to high-capacity floppies just can't keep up. Use the EZFlyer™ 230 the same way you would with any hard drive, with a nice little bonus—it's removable. So you can add on to your system limitlessly, 230 megs at a time, till the end of time.



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s a hard drive.

150 BEST Games OF ALL TIME

41. SID MEIER'S RAILROAD TYCOON

MPS, 1990



Sid's fascination with rail-roading begat a combination of SIMCITY, 1830 and the ultimate model railroad that will be a strategy game icon for years to come.

42. HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE

INFOCOM, 1985

Douglas Adams' humor comes alive in this text adventure based on the five-book Hitchhiker's trilogy (pentalogy sounds so pompous, you know).

43. BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR

DYNAMIX, 1993



The universe of Raymond E. Feist came to brilliant life in this 3D, first-person perspective role-playing game.

44. ULTIMA VI

ORIGIN, 1990

Lord British hit new highs in virtuality with the defined useable objects in this game world. It also presented a brilliant treatise on the danger of prejudice.

45. ROCKET RANGER

CINEMAWARE, 1988

Cineware's tribute to sci-fi serials of old was artistically better than the similarly themed THE ROCKETEER from Disney and a much better game.

46. CHESSMASTER

SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS, 1986

The best of a competitive pawn-pushing lot, Chessmaster stays ahead of the competition with AI opponents based on real-life Grandmasters.

47. ACES OF THE PACIFIC

DYNAMIX, 1992

Corsairs came alive in this WW II sim that set new standards for graphics and performance.

48. COMMAND & CONQUER

WESTWOOD, 1995

Not quite as complete a design as Warcraft II, this still set a new standard for great multiplayer play combined with a good back story told through top-notch cinematics.



49. DUNGEON MASTER

FTL, 1987

The stereo sound in the Amiga version of this classic RPG had you looking around the living room for monsters.



50. PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET

EA, 1983

The first entertainment software that allowed you to build your own pinball machines and give them to friends.

51. REACH FOR THE STARS

SSG, 1984

Multiplayer space conquest reached a new maturity with Keating and Trout's design which included economic, research and military strategy.

52. F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

MICROPROSE, 1988

The first flight sim where you actually won by staying out of a dogfight, this game almost presaged the Gulf War.

53. STEEL PANTHERS

SSI, 1995

Gary Grigsby's superb implementation of tactical combat in WWII was

the culmination of such successes as KAMPFGROPPE, PANZER STRIKE and TYPHOON OF STEEL.

54. WING COMMANDER III

ORIGIN, 1994

Thrilling space action in the first successful interactive movie. The beginning of a new breed?

55. STARFLIGHT

ELECTRONIC ARTS, 1986

Not only was this the first game to use fractal graphics to define planetary surfaces, it was a rich science fiction role-playing game, as well.

56. TIE FIGHTER

LUCASARTS, 1994

A far better simulation of the Star Wars universe than X-WING, winning in this space combat game relied more on flying skills than puzzle-solving.

57. NBA LIVE

EA SPORTS, 1994

The first time we played this game, we had to look twice to make sure the players were animated and we hadn't switched on the TV by mistake.

58. SUSPENDED

INFOCOM, 1983

Controlling remote robots gave this CSF text adventure a unique flavor.

59. GETTYSBURG

SSI, 1986

This first in a best-selling series of American Civil War games was the first to experiment with a randomized reinforcement schedule for the order of battle.

60. EF2000

DIGITAL INTEGRATION, 1995

Graphics, sound, and realism took a flying leap forward in this combat sim.

61. SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD

EA, 1983

Orzark Softscape's fantastic game of New World exploration offended some with its accurate treatment of autochthonous tribes.

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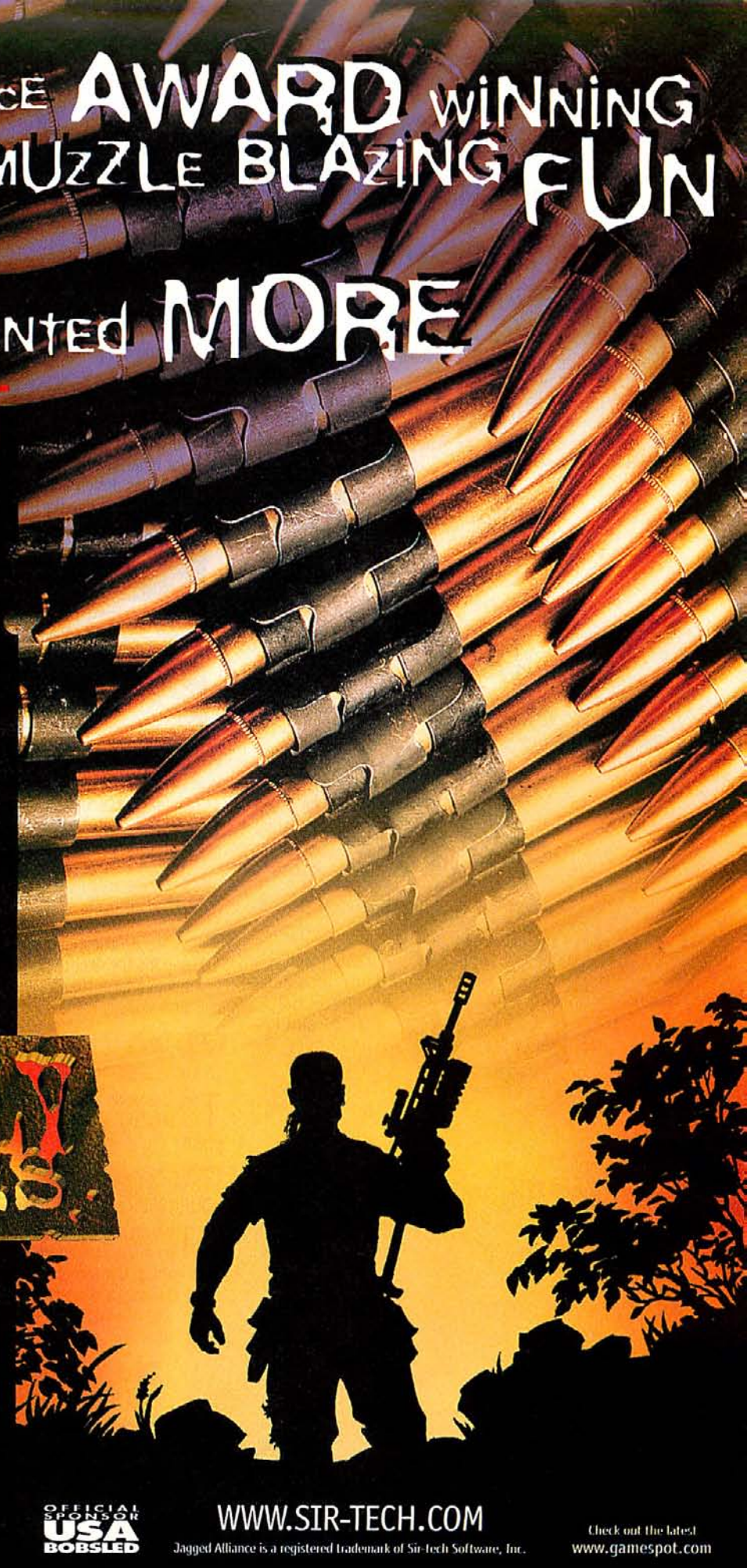
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150 BEST Games OF ALL TIME

62. INCREDIBLE MACHINE

SIERRA, 1993

This Rube Goldberg-style puzzle game was fresh in concept and long on game-play.

63. FAERY TALE

ADVENTURE

MICROILLUSIONS, XX

Real time adventure at its Amiga best. There is a rumored update (cross your fingers).

64. MARATHON

BUNGEE, 1994

This 3D action-fest was a big reason all the Mac users kept saying "DOOM what?"

65. WINGS

CINEMAWARE, 1991

WINGS featured a masterful combination of arcade action, flight simulation, and a cinematic story set in WW I as its wrapper.

66. WORLD CIRCUIT

MICROPROSE, 1992

A racing sim that provided a wonderful balance of authenticity combined with accessibility for beginning drivers.

67. SYNDICATE

BULLFROG, 1993

After a hard day, it was just fun to mow down civilians in this strategic action game of futuristic gang warfare.

68. ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

ORIGIN, 1992

With the 3D look that paved the way for other point-of-view games, the Looking Glass design team immersed gamers in a more intense Britannia.



69. LEISURE SUIT LARRY

SIERRA, 1988

Lowe's Larry's lascivious, lecherous life was launched in this remake of the lewd text game, SOFTPORN.

70. DUNE 2

WESTWOOD, 1992

COMMAND & CONQUER's predecessor used the universe of DUNE as the environment for a fabulously engaging real-time strategy game.

71. ACES OF THE DEEP

DYNAMIX, 1994

This U-boat simulator is still unrivaled for creating an authentic atmosphere.

72. SOLITAIRE'S JOURNEY

QQP, 1992

This unique game not only provided a large variety of solitaire games, but two different styles of campaigns (transcontinental trip and haunted house) in which to try them.

73. QUEST FOR GLORY

SIERRA, 1987

Whoever heard of combat in a Sierra adventure? Attributes? Skills? Corey and Lori

Cole made it work in this hybrid adventure/role-playing game.

74. SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND II

LUCASARTS, 1990

LeChuck was back and managed to provide the unhappily ever after for a washed-up pirate hunter named Guybrush.

75. YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

BERKELEY SYSTEMS, 1995

This irreverent cyber game-show will glue the most computer-phobic to the screen.

76. SHADOW OF THE BEAST

PSYGNOSIS, 1989

Parallax scrolling and fast action made this Amiga arcade game better than anything you could drop quarters in.

77. WARLORDS II

SSG, 1993

Probably the best of the Keating/Trout approach to challenging AI and scenario design. Best fantasy strategy game until Warcraft II.

78. BALANCE OF POWER

MINDSCAPE, 1983

A wonderful game of political intrigue that felt just like the Cold War and didn't require the detail of SHADOW PRESIDENT or CYBERJUDAS.

79. FLIGHT SIMULATOR II

SUBLOGIC, 1984

From the Atari 800 to the Amiga, this civilian flying simulator brought virtual flight to the masses.

80. LODGE RUNNER

BRODERBUND, 1983

The father of all platform games, this game of run and gun was much better in its original incarnation than its Win 95 zombie reincarnation.

81. LOOM

LUCASARTS, 1982

LOOM featured one of the most beautiful scores ever to grace an adventure game and a musical staff interface that was most original.



Dune 2

Wing Commander III



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Nerves of steel recommended.*

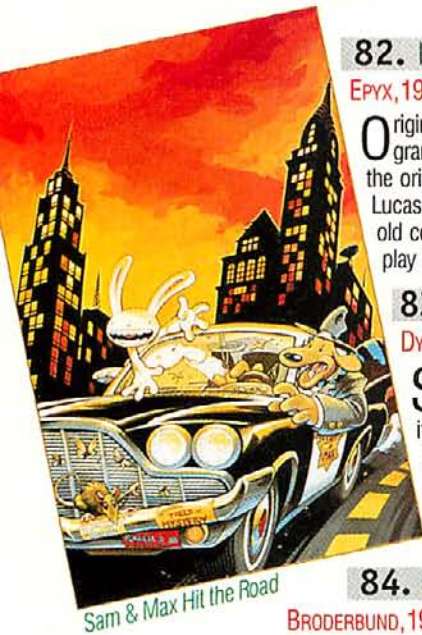


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150 BEST Games OF ALL TIME



Sam & Max Hit the Road

82. RESCUE AT FRACTALUS

EPYX, 1987

Originally designed with a grant from Atari, this was the original LucasArts (then Lucasfilm) game. Many keep old computers around just to play it.

83. RISE OF THE DRAGON

DYNAMIX, 1990

So good that a rival publisher tried to steal it, this cyberpunk game used rotoscoping, hot spot mapping, and cinematic cuts before they were standard.

84. PRINCE OF PERSIA

BRÖDERBUND, 1990

An acrobatic platformer with amazingly fluid action, *PRINCE OF PERSIA* let you become the legendary *Thief of Baghdad*.

85. ROBOT WAR

MUSE, 1981

In this ancestor of *C-Robots*, gamers programmed robot behavior in a subset of BASIC. Then, the programs fought it out on-screen.

86. SILENT SERVICE

MICROPROSE, 1985

SILENT SERVICE introduced the control-room interface for submarine games on a variety of platforms.

87. F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR

EA, 1987

Despite having only seven missions, this Amiga jet combat sim set the state-of-the-art for its era.

88. ALONE IN THE DARK

I-MOTION, 1992

Following on the heels of *OUT OF THIS WORLD*, *ALONE IN THE DARK* showed that 3D action needn't get in the way of a tense, exciting story.

89. BARD'S TALE

EA, 1985

With three-point monster animation, 3D maze window and new character classes, Michael Cranford's story started the successful trilogy.

90. CARRIERS AT WAR

SSG, 1992

Roger Keating and Ian Trout created the first playable game of WWII aircraft carrier operations with the release of this game.

91. BATTLES OF NAPOLEON

SSI, 1985

Although it didn't sell well, SSI's *A* game of tactical combat in the Napoleonic Era was not only a terrific game, but had an easy-to-use construction set, as well.

92. DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

CINEMAWARE, 1986

Jim Sacks' spectacular artwork and dazzling animations in this simple strategy game showed Cinemaware could live up to its name.

93. INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS

LUCASARTS, 1993

Three games in one, Hal Barwood's *I*ndy adventure let the gamer regulate the way it was to be played without losing its impact as a story-based game.

94. KING'S QUEST V

SIERRA, 1990

With *KING'S QUEST V*, Roberta Williams horrified Sierra traditionalists by getting the parser out of the way of some of the most beautiful graphics ever.

95. SAM & MAX HIT THE ROAD

LUCASARTS, 1993

The adventure game that redefined "wacky" as Steve Purcell's crazy animal detectives visit alligator farm miniature golf courses and freak shows.

96. STAR TREK: JUDGEMENT RITES

INTERPLAY, 1994



The first *Star Trek* game that truly captured the feel of the classic original episodes. The CD features voice-overs from Shatner, Nimoy and company, and is still available.

97. WOLFENSTEIN 3-D

APOGEE, 1992

Loosely inspired by Silas Warner's *CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN*, this was the 3D shooter in the hall that started it all.

98. SYSTEM SHOCK

ORIGIN, 1994

This hybrid action/adventure/RPG didn't get the credit it deserved for its tight cyberpunk plot, believable characters, and SHODAN, an excellent villain.

99. UNDER A KILLING MOON

ACCESS, 1993

Campy humor combined with amazing 3D scenery in this futuristic film noir.

100. AH-64D LONGBOW

JANE'S, 1996

The first helicopter sim to match its fixed-wing counterparts for realistic play.

101. KAMPFGRUPPE

SSI, 1985

Vehicle silhouettes, great sound effects in the Amiga version, and the tactical combat scale gave a different texture to this game of Eastern Front combat.

102. GUNSHIP

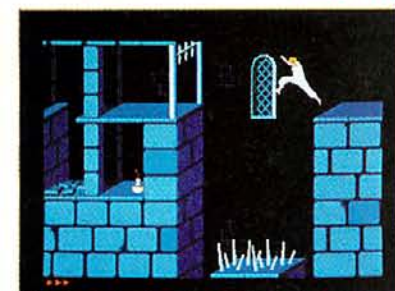
MPS, 1989

In the days of the abominable *SUPER HUEY*, this relatively simply sim with detailed campaign was the only authentic helicopter simulation.

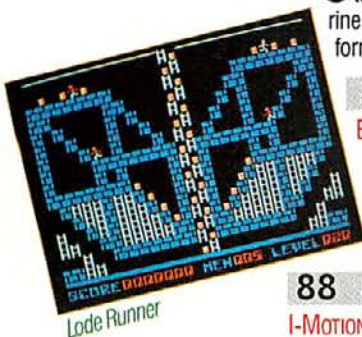
103. ERIC THE UNREADY

INTERPLAY, 1992

Full of puns, punchlines and personality, *ERIC THE UNREADY* was not only



Prince of Persia



Lode Runner

SOMEONE IN NEBRASKA JUST SUMMONED THE LORD OF THE PIT.

AND HE'S SENDING HIM YOUR WAY.

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150 BEST Games OF ALL TIME



one of the funniest games of all time, but Bob Bates' masterpiece.

104. DEADLINE

INFOCOM, 1982

DEADLINE was a tough text adventure that placed you in the midst of an intricate police procedural and let you wander around a mansion.

105. CRUSADERS OF THE DARK SAVANT

SIR-TECH, 1987

DAVID BRADLEY capped off his WIZARDRY trilogy with this combination sci-fi/fantasy adventure which paid subtle treatment to the Wizard of Oz.

106. BATTLE CHESS

INTERPLAY, 1988

STAR WARS' Chewbacca would have felt right at home with this chess game enhanced by funny, elaborate animated sequences and spectacular special effects.

107. PERFECT GENERAL

QQP, 1989

AS IN EMPIRE, Mark Baldwin (with new partner Bob Rakowsky) took a proven design (Bruce Williams Zaccagnino's table-top strategy game) and made it better.

108. NEUROMANCER

INTERPLAY, 1988

WILLIAM GIBSON's cyberpunk novel was retold with an interactive slant and a soundtrack by DEVO.

109. PACIFIC WAR

SSI, 1992

ARGUABLY the most ambitious wargame design in history, Gary Grigsby's magnum opus lets you refight the campaigns in the Pacific on a day-by-day basis.

110. OPERATION

CRUSADER

AH/ATOMIC, 1994

The low unit density and the vast sea of North African sands gave you plenty of room to maneuver, making this the best game of the WORLD AT WAR series.

111. WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY

BETHESDA, 1989

THIS masterpiece featured Gretzky's perspective and Marty McSorley's playtesting in a hockey game that captured the flow of the game for the first time.

112. TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL

CINEMAWARE, 1987

THE FIRST in a series of sports games, the idea of TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL was to present athletic action like you see it on television. It worked.

113. MONOPOLY

VIRGIN/HASBRO, 1995

BASED on the quintessential family boardgame, this Internet-capable version of MONOPOLY offered more than we ever expected in a computer version.

114. JAGGED ALLIANCE

SIR-TECH, 1995

115. BATTLEGROUND: WATERLOO

TALONSOFT, 1996

THE grand age of warfare comes to life with colorful uniforms, delightful landscapes, and above-average opponent AI in this recent release.

116. CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

MUSE, 1981

INSPIRED by the film, *Where Eagles Dare*, Silas Warner developed this game where you try to escape from a Nazi fortress.

117. BEACH HEAD

ACCESS, 1983

THE smooth sprite action in this beach-defense arcade game could have you diving under your desk.

118. FIGHTER DUEL PRO 2

JAEGER SOFTWARE, 1993

THE ultimate Amiga flight sim, FIGHTER DUEL PRO 2 had realistic flight models and SVGA-quality graphics.

119. PINBALL DREAMS

21ST CENTURY ENTERTAINMENT, 1990

SMOOTH scrolling and great ball physics made this Amiga game a wizard's choice.

120. TRINITY

INFOCOM, 1986

BRIAN MORIARTY's text adventure based on the Manhattan Project was a tense, ethical tightrope walk through the Cold War.

121. VIRTUA FIGHTER PC

SEGA, 1996

THE best of the horizontal-scrolling fighting games, this title succeeds on a platform for which it was not designed.

122. INDIANAPOLIS 500

EA, 1989

THE nascent Papyrus redefined the racing sim on the PC and Amiga with this game that allowed you to go backwards on the Indianapolis "Brickyard" for the first time.

123. DESCENT II

INTERPLAY, 1996

BUILDS on the promise of the original, with better 3D effects and enemy AI.

124. DEATHTRACK

ACTIVISION, 1989

DYNAMIX developed this seminal car-to-car combat simulation where *Car Wars*-style action had become a national sport.

125. WARCRAFT

BLIZZARD, 1994

ASPIRITED real-time rendition of the age-old conflict between Orcs and Humans, with an especially elegant network setup routine.

126. WAR IN RUSSIA

SSI, 1984

GARY GRIGSBY's strategic level game of combat on WWII's eastern front was the first "monster game" on the computer that came close to SPI's huge boxed sets.

127. STAR CONTROL

ACCOLADE, 1992



Citizens of Planet Earth:

You Are the Enemy.

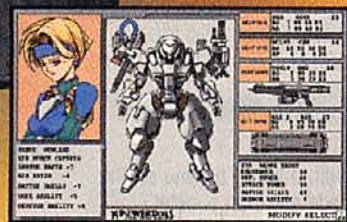


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Minimum Requirements: O/S - DOS 5.0, Ram - 4MB, Video - VGA, CD-ROM - 2x, Hard Disk - 5MB, Sound - Sound Blaster & MIDI, Input - Mouse

150 BEST Games OF ALL TIME



Crystal Caliburn

Space War enters the 90s with a touch of humor.

128. TONY LA RUSSA 3

STORMFRONT, 1995

The best of the LaRussa series, this game has graphics and stat-capabilities that sometimes outshine the original Earl Weaver. Sometimes, though, they don't.

129. M1G ALLEY ACE

MICROPROSE, 1984

Andy Hollis pioneered the head-to-head flight sim on the Atari 800 with this game.

130. OGRE

ORIGIN, 1986

Origin worked closely with Steve Jackson Games to create this faithful conversion of the boardgame based on taming one gigantic and futuristic supertank.

131. PRESIDENT ELECT

SSI, 1981

Playing this strategy game of public appearances, campaign financing and debate gave one an entirely new appreciation for presidential politics.

132. LEXI-CROSS

INTERPLAY, 1991

A futuristic combination of cross-words and *Wheel of Fortune* that was great for proselytizing non-gamers.

133. HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC

NEW WORLD, 1995

This award-winning remake of THE KING'S BOUNTY is a brilliantly balanced game of fantasy combat that quickly becomes addictive.



134. I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM

CYBERDREAMS, 1995

Harlan Ellison's dark, despairing history makes a smooth transition to dark, despairing adventure game.

135. NUKEWAR

AVALON HILL, 1983

Can you believe we fought global thermonuclear war with text and sprites on the C64?

136. DARK CASTLE

SILICON BEACH, 1986

For years, Macintosh owners would point with pride to the fact that this fluid, fantasy-based arcade game was only available on their platform.

137. MAGIC CARPET

BULLFROG/EA, 1994

Darned weird rules were offset by a rich, 3D world to explore and conquer.

138. ARCTICFOX

EA, 1986

Damon Slye's update of STELLAR 7 for the Amiga was the seminal 3D polygon-based shooter.

139. MEAN STREETS

ACCESS, 1989

This adventure's VGA graphics and digital RealAudio set a new standard for 286 games and offered tribute to Raymond Chandler's novels.

140. CRYSTAL CALIBURN

STARPLAY, 1993

Not as many tables as we'd like, but it looks and sounds like *real* pinball. The multiball action leaves TRISTAN in the dust.

141. MASTER OF MAGIC

MPS, 1994

Once patched, this fantastic strategy game was almost a SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION/MAGIC: THE GATHERING hybrid.

142. BLUE MAX

SYNAPSE, 1983

ZAXXON with a WW I biplane on the ZC64 made for a fun shooter.

143. TYPHOON OF STEEL

SSI, 1987

This 8-bit forerunner to STEEL PANTHERS had a great "Banzai" rule that really impacted games which had gotten out of balance.

144. ULTIMA III

ORIGIN, 1983

The conclusion of Lord British's first ULTIMA trilogy introduced one of the nastiest villains to grace a computer screen—the bloodthirsty Exodux.

145. KASPAROV'S GAMBIT

EA, 1993

Not up to the standard set by NCHESMASTER, but this was the first to effectively use multimedia in illuminating the mysteries of chess. Strong AI didn't hurt, either.

146. SHANGHAI

ACTIVISION, 1986

This mah-jongg style game not only transfixed puzzle gamers of both sexes during the '80s, but even has versions on dedicated word processors in the Far East.

147. SWORD OF FARGOAL

EPYX, 1992

This dungeon romp for the VIC-20 required a massive 16K expander and may have been the most ambitious game to ever appear on that platform.

148. TIGERS ON THE PROWL

HPS, 1994

Lackluster graphics and a learning curve like a Sandy Koufax pitch. Still, this game is the most realistic tactical WWII land combat wargame ever, and the tough AI *doesn't* cheat.

149. COURTSIDE COLLEGE BASKETBALL

HAFFNER, 1984

As a text-only, statistics-based sports simulation, Haffner's college basketball games have always been entertaining and eerily accurate.

150. STARFLEET I

INTERSTEL, 1985

The classic grid-based *Star Trek* game went commercial in this simple but addictive game.

**DO OVERWEIGHT MEN IN LITTLE
PINK TUTUS EXCITE YOU?
ARE SADISTIC CLOWNS YOUR
IDEA OF A GOOD TIME?**

?

**DO YOU THINK SHEEP ARE
KINDA SEXY? ESPECIALLY WHEN
THEY'RE DOLLED UP IN HEELS
AND FORM-FITTING LATEX?**

Toonstruck is a new twist on twisted. No computer gamer will want to be deprived of this depravity. Not when they can watch Spike the Clown torture balloon animals. See Seedy, the tu-tu clad bartender, do a little butt bowling. And



prevent an all-out war between the cartoon forces of good and evil.

Toonstruck blends live action (starring Christopher Lloyd) with wild animation for some of the most bizarre puzzle-



based adventure gameplay ever. *Toonstruck* is dark, weird and has more twists and turns than your lower intestine. So go ahead. Punch out a clown. Flush fish.

**HEY W
YOUR GAME H
TOONS**



TOONSTRUCK

"...hilarious cartoon quality animation and an absolutely bizarre world make Toonstruck



**WEIRDO.
HAS ARRIVED.
TRUCK.**

an adventure game unlike any we've seen. The all-over-the-board humor is delicious," says COMPUTER GAMING WORLD. "The twisted realms of this adult cartoon adventure (has)...all the elements of a great game: beautiful graphics, challenging puzzles, outrageous humor and good ol' star power," says PC GAMES. Finally, "A must see" from COMPUTER GAME REVIEW. We are sure you'll agree.

Weirdo.



Let's give a big Bronx cheer and three-fingered salute to the

50 WORST Games OF ALL TIME

1. Outpost

SIERRA 1993

The idea was a good one: to make a realistic space strategy game based on real scientific principles. What would it be like to found a colony on an alien world? Well, it couldn't be any more frightening than the way this product shipped. Overly complex algorithms had you micro-managing oxygen levels in habitats, among other minutiae. Worse, the design was so incomplete that many of the actions you took made no difference in the game's outcome. Poor documentation forced players to buy the strategy guide—conveniently authored by the game's designer—and the interface design was no help either.

Rightfully vilified as "the greatest screen saver of all time," this game, more than any other, tries to hide its vague concepts, and near-total lack of substance behind pretty pictures—with little success.



ground story that felt tossed off by Traveller creator Mark Miller from rehashes of pen

and paper modules he had designed in the past. Then, it featured the best character generation system ever for creating characters with skills that didn't really impact the game. Next, it had real-time combat, handled so fast that most players didn't have a chance in 90% of the battles. Finally, they designed it so that the player would have to run away from the first encounter or be killed within two minutes of spending 30 minutes to an hour generating a character. MegaTraveller I was easily the Mega-worst role-playing experience of all time, especially since its failure kept many other deserving paper RPGs from traveling to the computer for nearly a decade.



2. DefCon 5

COSMI, 1987

This Cold War era game combined the worst of two worlds: badly paced strategy with a poorly-designed arcade exercise.

Cosmi couldn't even get the title of the game right: DefCon 5 is the most peaceful setting. From there, the game went downhill with an irritating log-on procedure and arcade sequences that bore little resemblance to any SDI-style system. Imagine deploying anti-space mine robots to defuse space mines (the bad guys apparently didn't understand the concept of proximity detonators) or X-ray lasers that blanket wide areas of the atmosphere with severe radiation. Add dull graphics and lousy sound and you get the picture—DefCon None.



But even the most forgiving of computer pilots couldn't stomach Blue Angels. Blue Angels featured all the adrenaline rush of memorizing multiplication tables. The entire game was memorization, pattern recognition and reflex response. Much of the game is spent flying through wire-frame rectangles in order to memorize your "routine." Then, you get to go into show mode. That might have been okay if the visual payoff was adequate, but it wasn't. Instead of passing within feet of each other in a death-defying knife-edge pass, you see your partner a mile away and zoom, he's gone. Give me the flash cards, please!

4. MegaTraveller 1

PARAGON, 1990

WithSSI making plenty of money on their D&D license, Paragon opted to take another classic pen-and-paper game and convert it to silicon. Unfortunately, MegaTraveller I consisted of a back-

5. Homey D. Clown

CAPSTONE, 1993

Homey D. Clown was the epitome of the bad cartridge game on the PC. Capstone tried to cash in on some of the cachet associated with In Living Color, but defaulted to the simplest, most inane adventure elements to flesh it out.

Homey don't play like dat and neither did any real gamers, if they were smart. Too bad we couldn't borrow Homey's sock just to beat up the game box.



3. Blue Angels

ACCOLADE, 1990

Flight simulations cover a wide range, from the "flight model light" of US Navy Fighters to the painstaking physics of Flight Unlimited.

35 More Reasons To Buy Descent II™

20 New Levels

10 New Enemy Robots

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This Time,
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"5 out of 5 Stars!"
Computer Life

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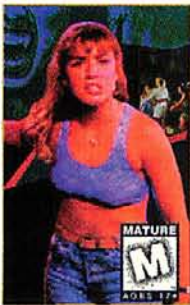


50 WORST Games OF ALL TIME

6. Night Trap

DIGITAL PICTURES, 1994

The ultimate experience of FMV gone bad, *Night Trap* gave a bad name to every game platform from Sega to 3DO to PC. The designers took a pretty ex-television star/ex-con named Dana Plato and put her in a nightgown. They surrounded her with an entire household of scantily clad



Junior Misses and sent aliens to drill their brains out—literally. As the player, it was your job to protect these helpless little sweeties (hey, we didn't write the script—that's how they were treated!) by activating hot spots on the video and entrapping the aliens before they could perform their nefarious deeds. Unfortunately, that meant before you saw the cool special effects. So, how many pre- and early adolescent gamers do you suppose saved the girls? Yeah, that's what the Senate subcommittee investigating video game violence thought, too.

7. Star Fleet II

INTERSTEL, 1989

Star Fleet I (listed in our Top 150 Games) didn't look like much, but it had all the options for which a Captain Kirk wannabe could ask. *Star Fleet II* was supposed to take this idea further with planetary assaults in a number of star systems. The first couple of scenarios were fairly interesting, but after that, the programming was so bad that you could never get any farther into the game. Hmm! Three missions and you couldn't finish the game? It was sort

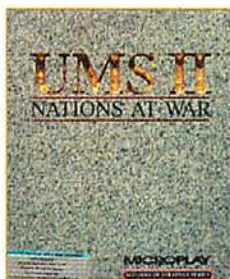


of shareware—except that you had to pay full price for a limited version. The latter part of the game was released some years later by Mindcraft, but it was leap years rather than lightyears too late. *Star Fleet II* remains an unfortunate monument to buggy, incomplete products.

8. Universal Military Simulator II

MICROPROSE, 1990

The design limitations were too numerous to mention in full, but they began with the designer's pet concept that "fog of war is unrealistic." As a command simulation, it told you little of why Napoleon won at Austerlitz, or how Lee consistently triumphed over Union armies twice the size of his own forces. The weaponry modeling was so homogeneous that WWII scenarios differed little from those of the 19th century. However, the worst thing about *UMS II* was the incredible time that the AI took to make a single move—often as much as 2-3 hours—and the move, once finished, was invariably terrible. The only thing "universal" about this entire series—including the recent *War College*—was the consistently low quality. *UMS II*, however, is so bereft of any redeeming factors that it justly deserves the title of worst wargame ever.



9. Air Power

MINDSCAPE, 1996

Assume that dirigibles became the dominant force in the air after WWI. If you're not offended by the silliest backstory idea since Capstone licensed Homey D Clown, you have to consider the design team's premise that no consumer really likes



anything resembling a flight model. Finally, throw in a lame strategic overlay, and you have a good idea of how these disparate elements became even less than the sum of their parts.

10. The Civil War

EMPIRE, 1996

Real-time games have their place—witness the success of *Warcraft II* and *Command & Conquer*—but this game set real-time strategy gaming back untold millennia. The scale wasn't particularly bad, but daily turns for the four-plus years of the American Civil War provided a case where more was definitely not better.



The concepts—training, production, supply—made sense individually, but failed to give any real feel for the conflict. This could just as easily have been *The Wars of the Austrian Succession*, for all the historical flavor it served up. It also had the dubious distinction of having the worst AI of any game since *UMS II* (see above). The morale/command system was so screwy that at the battle of Gettysburg, for example, the Army of the Potomac and Lee's Army of Northern Virginia—two of the finest armies in US history at their peak—both fled from the battlefield any time a shot was fired.

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PC Gamer, August '96

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PC Games, August '96

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50 WORST Games OF ALL TIME

We could go on about the unnecessary micro-managing, the bad interface, or the poor naval modeling, but we'll just sink this ship and move on.

11. College Slam

ACCLAIM, 1996

If NBA Live is a slam dunk, this game is a deflated basketball. Takin' the rock to the hoop might be fun once



or twice, but you soon find that your best defense is setting the basket on fire. Throw in the power pills, players that leap higher than Superman, horrid graphics, a ball that never goes out of bounds, and you have a game that looks embarrassing on a SNES, much less a PC. For those that like this sort of thing, we understand that Mario has a mean behind-the-back slam.

12. Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller

TAKE 2, 1994

From the turgid script to the poor acting, Hell lived up to the first part of its name. This cyberpunk smeller was an abomination that showcased all that's bad about most "inter-



active movies." The 3D art models are so stiff that they conjure up images of Gumby & Pokey in old age, and the ballyhooed cyberpunk setting looked equally tired—at least what you can access of it.

Crashes, sound problems and other bugs were more interactive and energetic than the actual design was in this

boring, abysmal product that wasted such formidable talent as Geoffrey Holder and Dennis Hopper.

13. El-Fish

MAXIS, 1993

Remember the "executive toy" craze of the '80s? Silver ball-bearings on a trapeze and panic buttons that weren't hooked to anything? El-Fish was the ultimate execu-

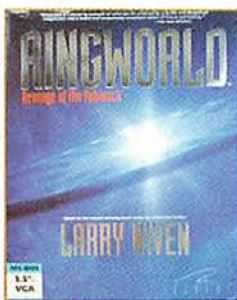


tive toy. It required the fastest processors of its day to spend up to an hour rendering artificial fish for your artificial aquarium. The movement was lifelike and the fish behavior intriguing, but there was no game there. After spending hours catching fish, mating them, rendering them and setting up the aquarium, you had a screen saver. What next, El-Grass?

14. Ringworld

TSUNAMI, 1993

Larry Niven's epic novel about an enormous world in which you could lose an entire star system was here reduced to the most insipid level of adventure games. The puzzles were either incredibly dull and predictable, or so obtuse as to defy any logic whatsoever. None of the puzzles had much to do with the plot. The characters were remarkably unmemorable, quite a feat considering the source material. On top



of all this, you had to sit through endless screens of the Ringworld-featuring plenty of places where you could not land or explore—without even the opportunity of clicking past them. While there may have been worse games, few quite defined the essence of tedium quite so well as this one.

15. Indy's Desktop Adventures

LUCASARTS, 1996

LucasArts rarely does a bad game, but when they do, they make up for it in style. "Billions and billions of possible games" are generated for the utmost in repetitiveness. Go there, Indy. Fetch this, Indy. Read the painfully obvious clues, Indy. Save this person you've never heard of, Indy. Do it again—different name, different body,



whatever—bad Nintendo-like figures running hither and yon, trusty hat and whip by your side. Or trade it in for a gun—there's little difference. You need a Pentium and 8 MB of RAM for this?

16. Martian Chronicles

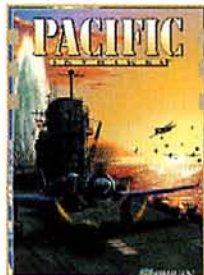
BYRON PREISS, 1996

Tired, pointless and insulting to Bradbury's poetic genius

17. Pacific Strike

ORIGIN, 1993

Even on today's Pentium 90, playing this game would be like flying WWI planes during WWII.



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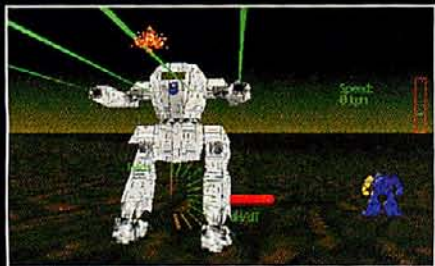
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50 WORST Games OF ALL TIME

18. Inca II

SIERRA, 1995

An indescribably incoherent action/adventure blend, with uneven graphics and ridiculous premise.

19. Sex Vixens From Space

FREE SPIRIT, 1990



This funny, sexy adventure game was neither funny, sexy nor adventurous.

20. Ultima VIII

ORIGIN, 1994

Once-great RPG series reduced to the level of Mario, but with hateful, virtue-less characters

21. Fighter Wing

MERIT, 1995

Poor graphics, flight model and scenario design caused this cooperative, multi-player flight sim to augur in.

22. Red Crystal

QQP, 1993

Deadly proof that QQP should have stuck to strategy/wargames.

23. Thexder

SIERRA, 1995

Even fans of The Transformers didn't like this arcade shooter that was universally bad on every platform from C64 to Win 95.

24. Aliens

MINDSCAPE, 1996

Bad art, plot and action shame the Dark Horse comic series on which it was based.

25. Treasure Quest

SIRIUS, 1996

Convuluted, insulting and pointless—the worst of all puzzle games

26. World Hockey

MERIT, 1995

Bad graphics and a worse interface made this game play worse than the Ottawa Senators.

27. Spiderman/Captain America vs. Dr. Doom

PARAGON

1989

Another great waste—a horizontal scrolling Spiderman game.

28. Speed Racer

ACCOLADE

1993

Worst driving model in a computer game, with floating car graphics.



29. Batman

DATA EAST

1989

A mindless arcade game where the Caped Crusader spends more time running from the crooks than fighting them.

30. Heroes of the 357th

ELECTRONIC ARTS

1991

Worst WWII flight model ever, and not even fun from a shoot-'em-up standpoint.

31. Coaster

DISNEY

1993

With game elements, this build-your-own rollercoaster sim would have been fun.



32. Isle of the Dead

MERIT

1994

Adventure/action hybrid with crude graphics, weak sound and a weak 3D engine.

33. Unnecessary Roughness

ACCOLADE

1994

Goes deep for the long bomb in more ways than one.



34. Pizza Tycoon

MICROPROSE

1994

No matter how many ingredients this strategy game offered, the game play was all anchovies.

35. Zeppelin

MICROPROSE

1994

Fresh idea, hampered by a dirigible-speed interface and Hindenburg-esque bugs

"Spin, fire, die die die! Nothing beats WingMan Warrior's 360 degrees of pure killing power."

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50 WORST Games OF ALL TIME

36. Cardinal of the Kremlin

INTRACORP
1993

Tom Clancy as spreadsheet, but Excel is more fun.

37. Blue Force

TSUNAMI
1993

CHIPS with worse writing than the TV series and nearly the same amount of gameplay

38. Chaos Control

I-MOTION
1995

A conveyor belt ride through a shooting gallery.

39. CyberRace

CYBERDREAMS
1994

Syd Mead's futuristic art surrounds a bad story and a mediocre racing game.



40. David Wolf Secret Agent

DYNAMIX
1989

Gamers were only able to affect the plot about as much as they could at a movie theater.

41. Fountain of Dreams

ELECTRONIC ARTS
1991

Wasteland got stupid as killer clowns, a silly plot and fear of Disney ruined the sequel.

42. Lawnmower Man

SCI
1993



Poor graphics, worse controls, and an unfathomable plot nearly killed the whole idea of virtual reality.

43. Labyrinth of Time

ELECTRONIC ARTS
1993

Pretty, empty, slow MYST-alike.

44. Inferno

OCEAN
1995

Bad sci-fi storyline, guttural voice acting, and way too many dull cinematics in a limp space shooter.



45. Patriot

360 PACIFIC
1992

M. Evan Brooks called it the "Harvard Graphics" of wargames—all flash, no action, lots of bugs.



46. Lightspeed

MICROPROSE
1991

More repetitive than "The Twelve Days of Christmas" with no payoff.

48. Disciples of Steel

FORMGEN
1993

Role-playing with all of the tedious details and none of the fun.

49. Star Wars Chess

MINDSCAPE
1993

Proof that there really is no intelligent life (or AI) even in a galaxy far, far away.



50. Shuttle

VIRGIN
1992

All the work of being an astronaut with none of the glory.



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FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Most Innovative Computer Games

1. Pinball Construction Set

ELECTRONIC ARTS
1983

Gamers got their first chance to create their own games (i.e. pinball tables) with this unique, early product.



11. MYST

BRODERBUND
1993

The game that launched a thousand imitations, *Myst* proved pretty 3D graphics and obscure puzzles were more important than plot.

12. Rise of the Dragon

DYNAMIX
1990



This cyberpunk adventure pioneered in using a dynamic, hot-spotted map as the game world travel interface.

13. Flight Sim Toolkit

1993
DOMARK

Domark's flight sim engine became a marvelous tool for flying fans.

14. Tetris

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE
1987

Who would have thought that manipulating colored shapes would create such a phenomenon?

15. Quest For Glory

SIERRA
1987

Corey and Lori Cole proved the Sierra engine was more versatile than anyone thought with this hybrid adventure/RPG game.



2. Ultima IV

ORIGIN
1985

The greatest *ULTIMA* was the first role-playing game to use series of ethical dilemmas to generate player characters

3. DOOM

ID
1993

DOOM accelerated the first person action trend by putting monsters right in your face and on your network.

4. Mystery House

SIERRA
1979

Roberta's first game was the first adventure game to use text and graphics together on the screen

5. Links

ACCESS
1990

With a photo-realistic look that is still widely copied today, *LINKS* may have inspired more "business machine upgrades" than any other game.



6. Modem Wars

ELECTRONIC ARTS

7. Falcon 3.0

This futuristic warfare game was on the bleeding edge of point-to-point modem play.

8. TV Sports Football

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE
1991

This F-16 sim set a standard for realism and connectivity that is only now being surpassed.

9. Wing Commander III

CINEMAWARE
1987

This game offered hot, fluid sports action years before *JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL*, much less *NBA LIVE* and *FPSPE*.

10. Adventures of Willie Beamish

ORIGIN
1993

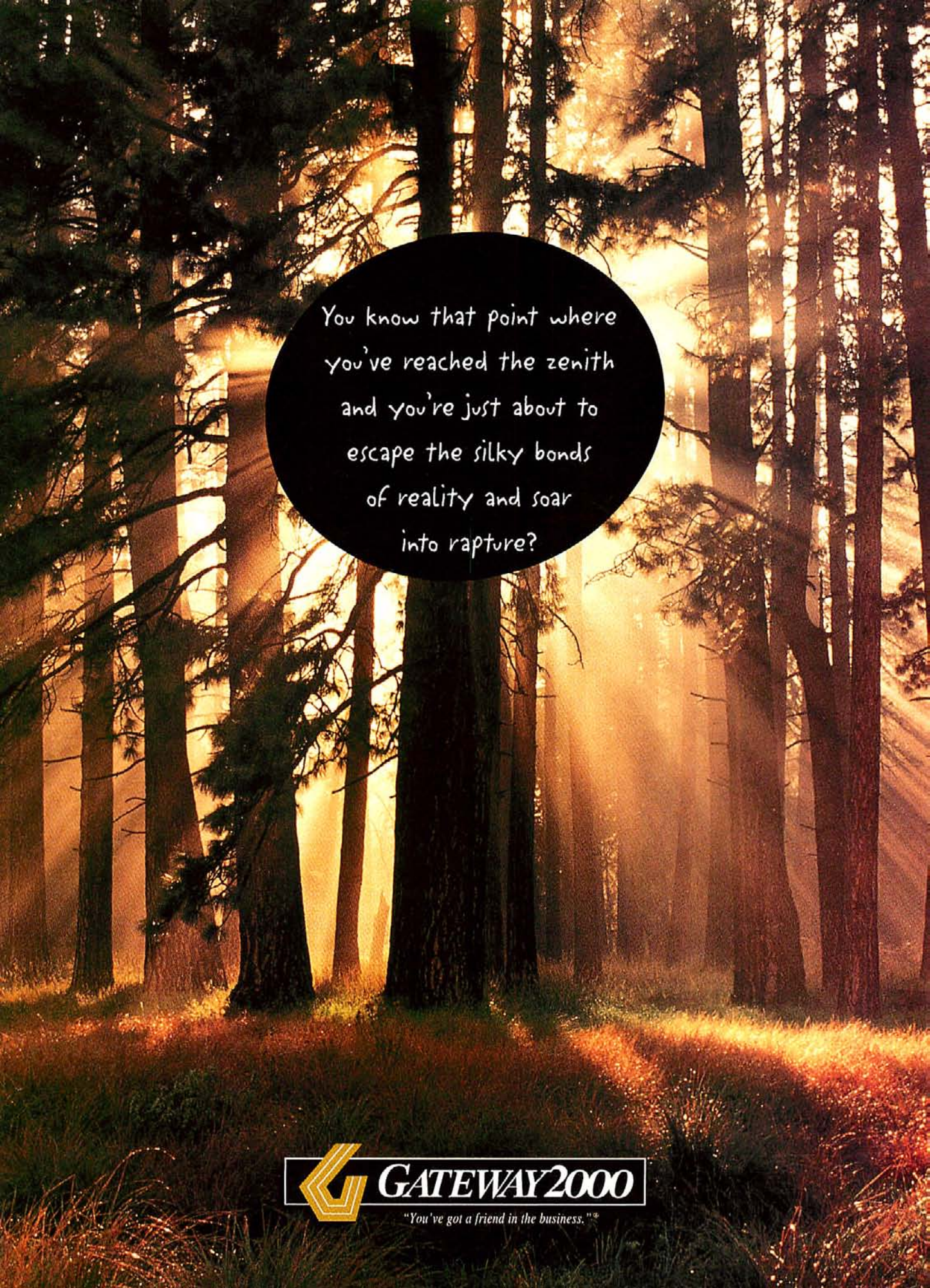
The first "interactive movie" that really worked, its FMV didn't get in the way of the game.

11. Adventures of Willie Beamish

DYNAMIX
1991

First adventure game to use traditional cel-based animation throughout the game.





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you've reached the zenith
and you're just about to
escape the silky bonds
of reality and soar
into rapture?



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FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Best Ways To Die In Computer Gaming

2. Space Quest III

SIERRA
1989

After your death, you see your various body parts moving down a conveyor belt to be sold at the local butcher shop.

3. Heretic

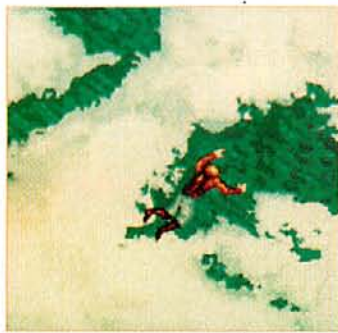
RAVEN SOFTWARE
1995

First you are turned into a chicken, and then you endure that fowl perspective until your opponents mercifully do you in.

4. Rocket Ranger

CINEMAWARE
1988

Failing the code-wheel copy protection dumped you into the Atlantic to drown, while your grandmother says, "If man were meant to fly, he'd have wings." Goodbye, grannie (and Cinemaware).



5. Flight Unlimited

LOOKING GLASS
1995

The exquisite physics modeling extends even to the crashes; your plane splinters in the most spectacular fashion.



1. Quake

ID
1996

Being "telefragged" gives a whole new meaning to long-distance exchanges.



6. Crusader: No Remorse

ORIGIN
1995

The ultraviolet rifle offers a more grisly demise than many big-budget action movies.

7. Gabriel Knight

SIERRA
1994

Designer Jane Jensen and company aren't squeamish. They allow a zombie to rip out your heart.

8. Panzer General

SSI
1994

Failure to complete your mission means that you

are "no longer required," and you hear a bullet click into the Luger's chamber.

9. Les Manly: Lost in L.A.

ACCOLADE
1993

You ring a doorbell and are asked if you are a lawyer. A Yes reply dumps you to DOS without saving the game.

10. Wing Commander

1990

Col. Blair's death receives a funeral oration and 21-gun salute. This was one of the first times a character's death was treated seriously.

11. Balance of Power

MINDSCAPE
1985

We can still see Chris Crawford's text message refusing to give us a

mushroom cloud "reward" sequence for blowing up the earth.

12. Mission Force: Cyberstorm

SIERRA
1996

Dying in your mech has been done before, but never so viscerally as in the flesh burning off the bioderms in this game.

13. Duke Nukem 3D

APOGEE
1996

The shrink ray is great to use on your enemies, but we still prefer poultry (see 3, above).



14. Alone in the Dark

I-MOTION
1992

Losing means you are dragged into the underworld and sacrificed to some unpronounceably named servant of Cthulhu.

15. Neuromancer

INTERPLAY
1988

Being a cyberjockey in Chiba City means you sometimes have to sell your body parts to survive.



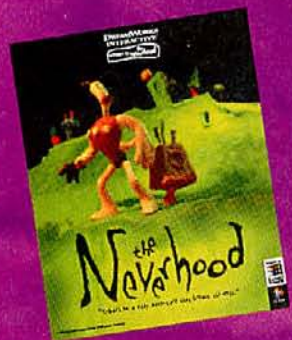
"A winner..."

—LA TIMES



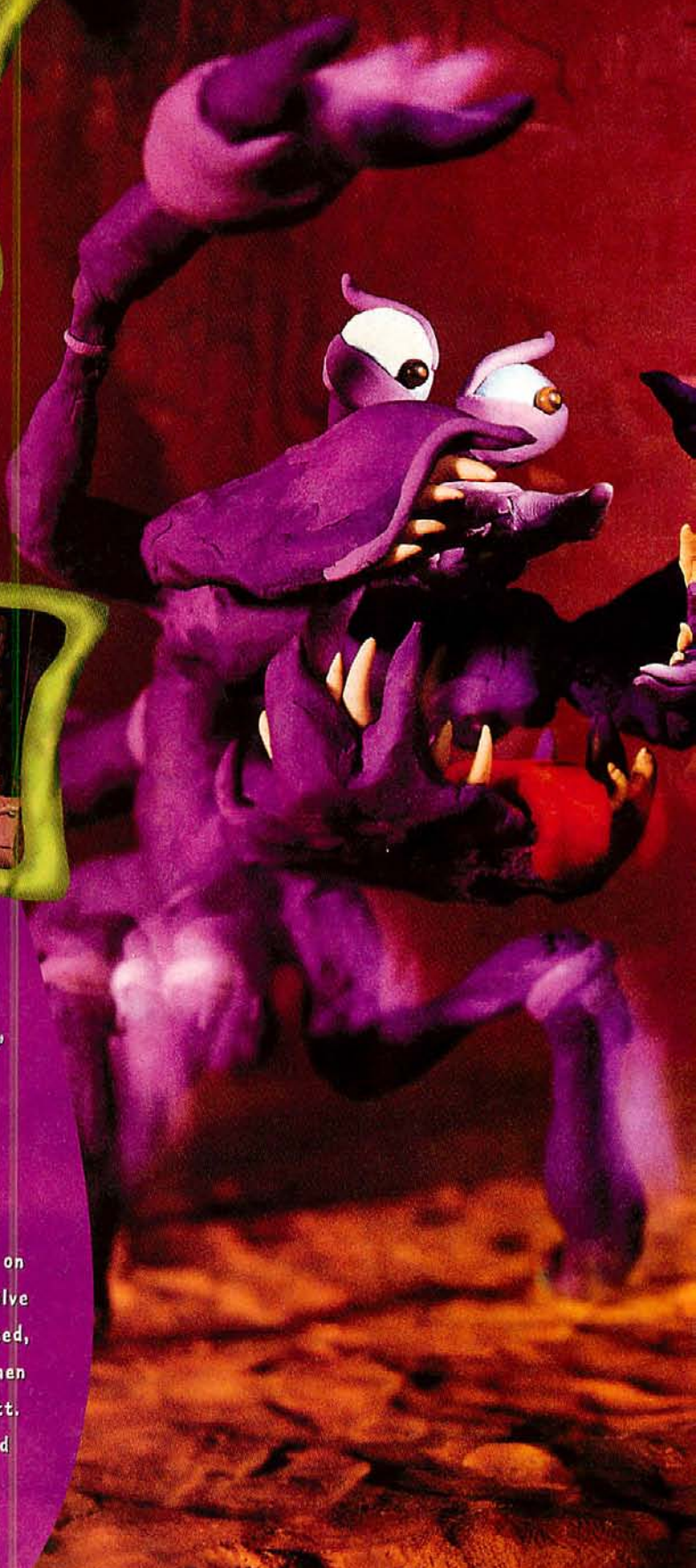
"Clever, an utterly different
vision and experience
from all the lookalike games..."

—NEWSDAY



The good news is you're a lot smarter than the guy on the left. Good thing, considering you'll have to solve more than 60 puzzles in order to succeed in the twisted, clay-animated world of Neverhood. You'll help Klaymen avoid pitfalls, collect clues, and kick a little clay butt. All to defeat the evil Klogg and bring the Neverhood back to normal. At least, as normal as it ever gets.

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You're Fighting to protect good and
Restore the Rightful King to power.

The Bad News is you're
the **guy** on the right.



TM
the
Neverhood

"Embark on a clay adventure that breaks the mold."

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FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

THE 15 MOST INFLUENTIAL INDUSTRY PLAYERS OF ALL TIME

1. Trip Hawkins

Hawkins' insights haven't always panned out, but he's always had a vision for this industry. As founder of Electronic Arts, Trip was right about the value of the recording industry model for software distribution and the need to recognize designers as artists. He was right about how good the Commodore Amiga was as a game machine, but wrong about its eventual place in the industry. And he was right about the future of CD-ROM, but bet too much on CD-I and 3DO. He was probably right about the power of the so-called set-top box, but he gambled on the bleeding edge of that technology. He has definitely been the prophet of the computer game industry as the New Hollywood, and the full effect of that paradigm is yet to be seen.



2. Ken Williams

The ultimate entrepreneur, Ken Williams literally moved from the kitchen table to the boardroom table with the inception of Sierra On-line. His programming of Roberta Williams' MYSTERY HOUSE, the original graphic adventure game, paved the way for Sierra's success. He shrewdly focused the company on making its own development tools, as well as establishing Sierra as a company driving technology such as VGA, the CD-ROM, a full-time online gaming network, and full-motion video. Watch for Sierra to enter the hardware wars in the near future and drive other standards, including 3D graphics and electronic software distribution.

3. Brian Fargo

As founder of Interplay Productions, Brian Fargo has shown both brilliant product vision and great business instincts. He moved the computer role-playing game out of the standard Ultima three-quarter-overhead perspective, and introduced three-point idle animation for the encounter windows on such products as THE BARD'S TALE, WASTELAND and DRAGON WARS. He helped break the heavy EA dominance on distribution in the late '80s, and his success as an independent publisher and distributor of European

software helped herald the European invasion of 3D adventure/role-playing products. He also deserves credit for the successful MacPlay division, which distributes Macintosh conversions of PC products, and the recent Engage! venture that is helping many companies bring multiplayer online products to market.

4. Lord British



Richard Garriott virtually defined computer role-playing. A firm believer in delivering hot new technology with each new ULTIMA, Garriott designed the most successful computer role-playing game series in history.

Through the years, the ULTIMA series has broken new ground in graphics, artificial intelligence, character generation, object-oriented worlds, and story. After leading Origin out of EA's Affiliated Label program over an intellectual property dispute, Garriott and his brother Robert built a full product line and recruited Origin's second design superstar, Chris Roberts of WING COMMANDER fame. As creative director, Garriott was instrumental in building Origin into a real publisher.

5. Roberta Williams

The original creative mind behind the Sierra product line, Roberta Williams is only listed below Ken Williams here because she has remained in the corporate background rather than on the front line. The fairer Williams created the first graphic adventure and was one of the first designers to build a full adventure from a female perspective (THE COLONEL'S BEQUEST, KING'S QUEST IV, PHANTASMAGORIA). Her KING'S QUEST series moved Sierra into the realms of EGA graphics, VGA graphics, movie-style soundtracks, parserless adventures, SVGA and, soon, 3D adventures.

6. Joel Billings III

A quiet player who isn't well known, Joel Billings founded SSI in 1981 to build the kinds of games that he wanted to play. He recruited important talents like Chris Crawford, Dan Bunten, Gary Grigsby and Roger Keating to write war games. Later, he diversified by licensing the most sought-after pen-and-paper game property in history, DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS, for a successful and unprecedented seven-year license. Today, Billings is the vice president of worldwide development for Mindscape, parent of SSI.

7. Chris Crawford



The game-design guru during the early days of Atari, Chris Crawford was the first designer to write a primer on computer game design and has written more about game design than anyone. His TANKTICS (a computer-assisted board game design for Avalon Hill) and EASTERN FRONT (an early Atari computer game design) set standards for opponent AI in a war game. His geopolitical *magnum opus*, BALANCE OF POWER,

established a new level of intricacy for game algorithms, and his *TRUST & BETRAYAL: THE LEGACY OF SIBOOT* introduced icon-based speech and broke ground for experiments in artificial personality. Yet Crawford's greatest legacy to computer games was the founding of the Computer Game Developers Conference, now a major event with thousands of participants.

8. Sid Meier

No one game designer has as many CGW Hall of Fame games as Sid Meier. Meier once boasted to colleague Bill "Wild Bill" Stealey that he could write a combat flight program in days that would put the commercially successful *RED BARON* coin-op game to shame. He was right. Meier's designs broke the mold at everything. Whether designing games about war, spies, railroading, civilization or pirates, Meier has always focused on what's fun and what works. Games always seem to be so multifaceted in Sid's designs that it is hard to tell whether they are strategy or adventure. Meier recently left MicroProse to form his own game-design company, Firaxis Software.

9. Russell Sipe

When Russell Sipe founded *Computer Gaming World* in 1981, there was no regular source of information about computer games. Sipe believed that gamers would want news, reviews and strategies about computer games, and he envisioned a hobby that would grow and mature into a major entertainment industry. Under Sipe's leadership, the magazine grew from a small hobbyist publication to a full-scale consumer magazine. His emphasis on a high editorial standard of journalistic accuracy and fairness continues to this day. He also believed that a magazine should take stands in the industry by advocating positions that benefit gamers. Such is the legacy of the best in computer journalism.

10. John Carmack

The technological genius at id Software, John Carmack is largely responsible for the explosive growth of first-person perspective action games. Without his programming tricks and gaming instincts, it is



questionable whether *WOLFENSTEIN 3D*, *DOOM* and *QUAKE* would have been made. Even games from other companies such as *DARK FORCES* and *DUKE NUKEM 3D* owe much to the basic design of Carmack's games. In addition, id's titles proved the viability of shareware as a distribution system, upgraded the public's perception of shareware quality, and accelerated the trend in multiplayer gaming.

11. "Wild Bill" Stealey

Major (now Colonel) Bill Stealey was the founder of both MicroProse Software and Interactive Magic. As entrepreneur, super salesman and industry "character," Stealey has always concentrated on the necessity for this industry to be fun. Whether plotting the latest move in guerrilla marketing or the newest promotional gimmick, Stealey has been one of the great evangelists of the computer game industry.

12. Doug Carlston

Doug Carlston designed *GALACTIC EMPIRE* and *GALACTIC TRADER*, two games that launched Brøderbund Software. A company founded by siblings (two brothers and a sister), Brøderbund emphasized social responsibility from the beginning. In addition to game publishing, it has been a leader in educational publishing and productivity software, as well. Because of its success in all three areas, Brøderbund became one of the first entertainment companies to go public. For gamers, Brøderbund's most important contribution may be the guidance and support it provided for Origin

and Maxis as they sought to become independent publishers.

13. Phil Adam

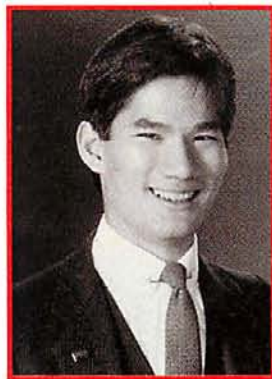
Phil Adam was one of the founders of Spectrum HoloByte, and he has built Interplay's marketing-and-sales effort into a powerhouse. More than a salesman, Adam has been the foremost statesman for the computer game industry in the Software Publishers Association, standing up for the game industry with regard to game ratings, packaging issues and government regulatory issues.

14. Jon Freeman

Jon Freeman founded the first surviving computer game company, Automated Simulations, which went on to become Epyx. Later, he became one of the first designers at Electronic Arts and formed his own design group with Anne Westfall (FreeFall Associates). *STARSHIP: ORION*, *TEMPLE OF APSHAI*, *ARCHON* and many more would never have appeared without the efforts of this early pioneer.

15. Gilman Louie

Chairman of the board of Spectrum HoloByte, Louie designed a *StarTrek*-like command simulation in the early '80s, and he is considered the visionary behind the legendary *FALCON 3.0*. His survival skills have kept him alive through the apparent suicide of financial backer Robert Maxwell, an attempted coup by former executives, and several quarters of major financial losses. As a simulation innovator and staunch advocate of multiplayer games, Louie is still an important influence on the future of computer games and hopes to lead Spectrum to a brighter future.



Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 40 oz. (1.3kg)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 2,180	Calories from Fat 432
Total Fat 72g	13%
Unsaturated 5,280mg	1-800%
Sodium 100mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 40g	8%
Dietary Fiber 1g	2%
Sugar 10g	20%

Your brain is its food.

There's a castle in Scotland with an insatiable appetite for your brain. It's Castle MacPhiles, and it's extremely haunted. And you, poor player, are invited to follow young Andrew, the cowardly 13th Earl of MacPhiles, and his fiancée, Paula, as they attempt to purge the castle of its evil curse. Relish the ghostly animated characters you meet as you explore the castle's lavish 3-D environment.

Savor the unearthly puzzles that block your progress (and choose their degree of difficulty, too). Scream with pleasure at the latest creation from the makers of The 7th Guest and The 11th Hour. But be forewarned: it likes to play with its food.

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FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Funniest Computer Games

2. Secret of Monkey Island I & II

LUCASARTS
1990

From the insult-driven swashbuckling to the Previously Owned gags of Stan the Salesman, this series was a non-sexist bust-up.

3. Day of the Tentacle

LUCASARTS
1993

The computer equivalent to classic Warner Bros. Cartoons, this sequel to MANIAC MANSION was funny, clever, and even charming.

4. Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

INFOCOM
1984

Douglas Adams' humor comes alive in interactive book adaptation, although the ending is more annoying than Vogon poetry.



5. Leisure Suit Larry

SIERRA
1986

Base, sexist, sometimes scatological humor, with no concessions made to taste or sensibilities, this was the best of a funny series.

6. Monty Python and the Holy Grail

7TH LEVEL
1996

From not-quite-dead Tetris to "Spank The Virgin," this adaptation of the cult film was funnier than a man with three buttocks.

7. Sam & Max Hit the Road

LUCASARTS
1994

With a sentient dog joining forces with a destructive bunny sidekick to form a detective agency, you knew wackiness was bound to ensue.

1. Space Quest IV

SIERRA 1991

Roger Wilco and friends transformed every sci-fi time-travel cliché with Gary Owens' voice (*Laugh-in*, *Space Ghost*) providing perfect comedic counterpoint.



8. You Don't Know Jack

BERKELEY SYSTEMS
1995

Pop culture trivia that was more fun than a Partridge Family marathon (isn't everything?). This is the game show the networks have nightmares about.

9. Eric the Unready

LEGEND
1992

Poor Eric gets treated like the least popular pledge in a medieval fraternity. Climbing into an out-house and kissing a pig is just the start of his misadventures.



10. Leather Goddesses of Phobos

INFOCOM
1987

The first adventure game to offer naughty and nice mode, this little jewel was pulp science fiction meets comic book humor.

11. Spellcasting 101

LEGEND
1992

There's a reason this is listed under LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS. It had the same author, but this was the beginning of a trilogy where fantasy met fraternity row humor.

12. Sid & Al's Incredible Toons

SIERRA
1993

Bouncing cartoon characters around Rube Goldberg-style devices was never this amusing before or since.

13. Freddy Pharkas, Frontier Pharmacist

SIERRA
1992

Al Lowe showed his brand of humor could tame the wild west and win the hearts of sheep everywhere.

14. Lemmings

PSYGNOSIS
1991

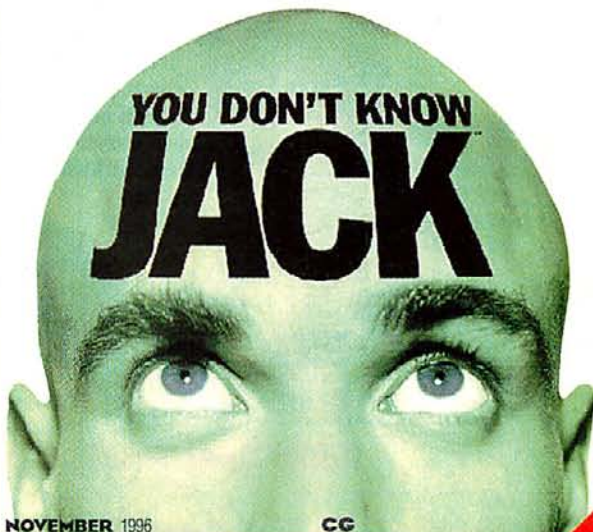
Yes, watching cute animals plunge off cliffs, drown, and explode can be fun.

15. Little Computer People

ACTIVISION
1985

Although not roll-on-the-floor funny, this consistently amusing product featured a little man and his dog living in your computer long before Dogz and CATz.

YOU DON'T KNOW
JACK



FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Worst Back Stories of All Time

1. Quake

ID, 1996

The quintessential example of "Don't let the plot get in the way of the action." There is no story for **QUAKE**.



2. The 7th Guest



TRYLOBYTE
1993

How they filled a novel with this fluff only Matt Costello will ever know.

3. Microcosm

PSYGNOSIS
1994

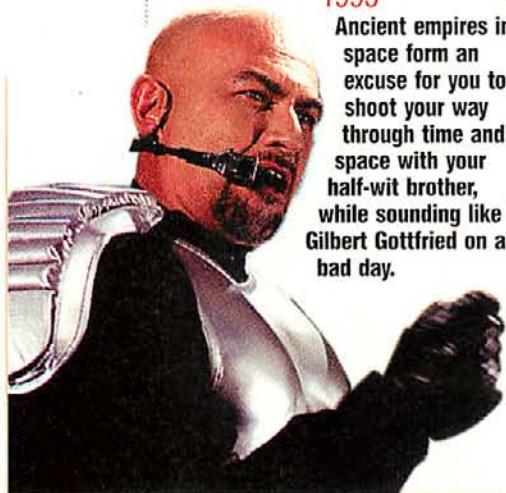
Blood vessels with more traffic than the Santa Monica freeway on a holiday weekend formed the basis of this *Fantastic Voyage* knockoff.



4. Inca II

SIERRA
1995

Ancient empires in space form an excuse for you to shoot your way through time and space with your half-wit brother, while sounding like Gilbert Gottfried on a bad day.



5. Fortress of Dr. Radiaki

MERIT
1994

"It was supposed to be funny" was the defense of this Doom-clone that stole equally from H. G. Wells and Japanime plotlines.

6. Dragon Lore

MINDSCAPE
1994

If the history of the dragons and their riders existed anywhere other than the documentation, this would have been a much better game.

7. Air Power

MINDSCAPE
1996

What if lighter-than-air ships had become the norm after WWI? Even taken as camp, this hot-air ship plummeted faster than the *Hindenburg*.

8. David Wolf: Secret Agent

DYNAMIX
1989

We immediately wanted to just say Dr. No to this James Bond wannabe.

9. Xenocide

MICROREVELATIONS
1993

The ultimate cheap setup, Xenocide's prime directive was "LOCK AND LOAD. IT'S TIME TO COMMIT XENOCIDE!"

10. Millennium Auction

EIDOLON
1994

This auction game reduced the idea of art to a competition in acquisi-

tion on a galaxywide Home Shopping Channel.

11. Coaster

DISNEY
1993

Why would you build a rollercoaster with Disney's mini-CAD program? Judging from the "game," they didn't know either.

12. DreamWeb

EMPIRE
1994

Gritty cyberpunk themes with a childish interface undermined this updated version of Donald Wandrei's pulp short story, "A Plague of Lunacy."

13. Endorfun

TIME-WARNER
1995

New-age mumblings combined with a diet of simple real-time puzzles made us hunger for red meat and caffeine with double cream.



14. Challenge of 5 Realms

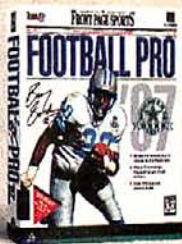
MICROPLAY
1992

Nhagardia was a multidimensional kingdom that had everything but an interesting plot.

15. Pizza Tycoon

MICROPROSE
1994

Even da bad Godfatha imitators know more dan ta maka da bad pizza pie into a real-time mess like dis one.



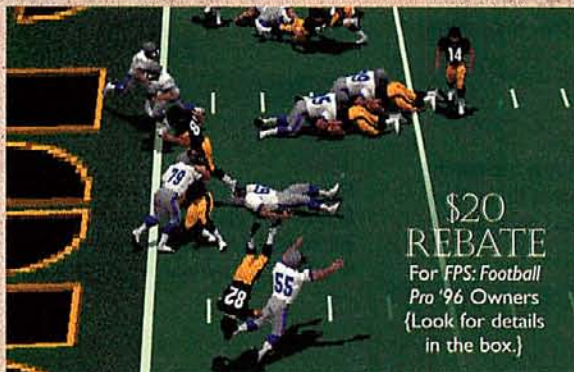
FRONT PAGE SPORTS®:
FOOTBALL PRO™ '97
IS SO
REALISTIC
YOU'LL
PROBABLY
THREATEN TO
MOVE YOUR
COMPUTER
TO ANOTHER CITY.

"SPORTS GAME OF THE YEAR"
GOES FOR A FOUR-PEAT.

Computer Gaming World thinks FPS: Football Pro is so true-to-the-game, they've awarded it gaming's Super Bowl ring three years running. But what's up for this year? Hang on to your helmets.

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Playing against the computer is cool. But it's hard to build up a big, bad case of nasty revenge against a bunch of microchips. So now you can play Football Pro over a modem or network to find out which of your friends



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are as good as their brag.

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POINTS FOR ACCURACY.**

- Up-to-date stats for every current NFL player—manage real players on real teams
- Only game with multi season career play to take into account players' aging and injuries
- CAMS™, our exclusive camera system, lets you view from anywhere in the stadium
- TV-like motion captured player movement
- More than 10,000 plays to choose from or design your own with the PlayWizard.



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Circle Reader Service #111

1. X-COM

MICROPROSE 1994

X-COM came from nowhere to win *CGW* Game of the Year and sell over a quarter-million units, despite nonexistent marketing. Clever, eerie and addictive.



2. Wolfenstein 3D

ID 1992

The true beginning of the first-person PC shooter craze, and the bane of vertigo sufferers everywhere.

3. I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream

CYBERDREAMS 1996

The only serious science fiction story to make the transition to the silicon screen. All games give lip service to the importance of story, but this one delivers a real wallop.

4. Fire Brigade



PANTHER GAMES 1987

The Amiga version was not only gorgeous, it was the first decent attempt at breaking

away from hex-based wargames.

5. Flight Commander 2

AVALON HILL 1994

Not a flight sim but a top-notch strategy game where thoughtful maneuvering means more than quick reflexes.

6. Dark Legions

SSI 1994

This action-strategy heir to *ARCHON* never got the credit it deserved.

7. Bad Mojo

PULSE ENTERTAINMENT 1996

Gamers always ask for something new and different; life as a roach is about as out there as you'll ever get.



8. Warcraft

BLIZZARD 1994

Few remember now that Blizzard was a small and risky venture by Davidson before this blockbuster.



9. 1830

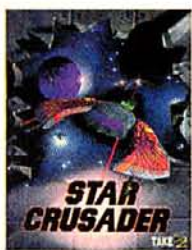
AVALON HILL 1995

If the *MASTER OF ORION* crew at Simitex had stayed with Avalon Hill, we could have had many more gems like this fine railroad strategy game.

10. Star Crusader

GAMETEK 1994

Lost in the hoopla of *TIE FIGHTER* and *WING COMMANDER III*



was this solid space sim, which featured moral dilemmas, good voice acting and

lots of weird alien spaceships

11. Title Fight Pro Boxing

COMP-U-SPORTS 1995

Alli's shuffle and Tunney's pinpoint jab are faithfully recreated, along with hundreds of other pugilists, in this simulation of "the sweet science."

12. Custer's Last Command

INCREDIBLE SIMULATIONS 1995

A gritty wargame that doesn't shy from the controversial subject matter and offers an incredible number of "what-ifs."

13. Connections

DISCOVERY CHANNEL MULTIMEDIA 1995

The wit, interesting puzzles, and James Burke's unique takes on science and history make this even better than the TV program.

14. Aide De Camp

HPS SIMULATIONS 1994

The holy grail for board gamers, letting them convert favorites from cardboard to computer.

15. Monopoly

WESTWOOD/HASBRO 1995

The all-time best-selling classic board game becomes a standard for quick, clean Internet play.



IT SEEMS TO US

(CLICK)

SWINGING A CLUB

(CLICK)

IN MOST PC GOLF SIMS

(CLICK)

ISN'T EXACTLY
LIKE SWINGING A
REAL CLUB

(WHOOSH)



TRUESWING™
MAKES IT A
WHOLE NEW
BALL GAME.

In most golf CD games, they make you click three times to set your power and accuracy. But *Front Page Sports™: Golf™* gives you TrueSwing, where you actually pull the mouse back for your backswing, then thrust it forward to launch your shot.





SO REAL YOU CAN ALMOST
SMELL THE GRASS.

Not only is the swing like real golf, so is the entire game: Texture-mapped graphics duplicate world-famous cours-



es to within inches. So now you can play The Prince in Kauai or the Pete Dye Golf Club in Bridgeport, WV without collecting frequent flyer miles.

IT DOESN'T JUST LOOK REAL,
IT PLAYS REAL.

Designed by Vance Cook, the genius behind Links 386, this new game gets a double eagle for authenticity:  Super-accurate, physics-based ball movement  Fully 3-D on-screen golfer mimics your swing  12 types of play, including skins, best-ball, and scramble  Network play with up to 255 golfers. Any way you slice it (and we hope you don't) you'll be playing a game that's so real it's unreal.



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FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Hardest Computer Games

1. Back to Baghdad

MSI
1996

At least the Air Force includes a complete operating manual with its F-16s.



2. Shadow of the Beast III

PSYGNOSIS
1992

Only over-caffeinated European teenagers had reflexes fast enough for this one.

3. Ultima VII

ORIGIN
1993

Until the SERPENT ISLE add-on came out, you suffered from mysteriously disappearing keys, unsolvable plot sequences, and party members who couldn't feed themselves.

4. Suspended

INFOCOM
1983

Controlling multiple robots remotely with a text parser—the very definition of a challenge.

5. Fighter Duel

JAEGER
1991

Come on guys; even real Corsair pilots didn't have to fight engine torque using a digital joystick.

6. Capitalism

INTERACTIVE
MAGIC
1996

An economy simulation so thorough—from making products to marketing them—it should include a free MBA in every box.



7. Pacific War

SSI
1992

Less a wargame than a way of life. Just moving units to the right island was a challenge, let alone winning.

8. Hitchhiker's Guide to Galaxy

INFOCOM
1984

The Babel Fish puzzle alone stumped many gamers in their interstellar tracks.

9. Falcon 3.0

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE
1991

If flying one of the first realistic flight models wasn't enough, you also got to manage the entire air war.



10. Gabriel Knight 2



SIERRA
1996

A lot of intermediate to complex puzzles throughout, but the killer was splicing those cassette tapes.

11. X-Wing

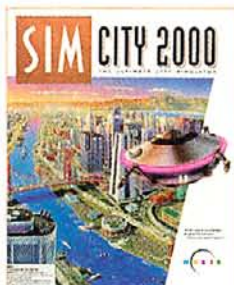
LUCASARTS
1993

You had to read Larry Holland's mind to know the proper sequence for completing each mission.

12. SimCity 2000

MAXIS
1994

If they'd just left the plumbing out, the challenge would have been more fun than frustrating.



13. MYST

BRODERBUND
1993

Even the pretty pictures couldn't hide how obtuse many of the puzzles were.

14. Fantasy General

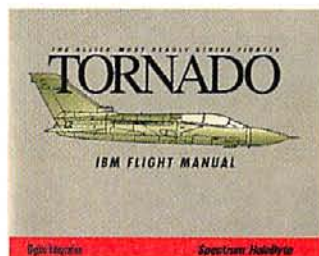
SSI
1996

Probably the toughest computer opponent of the past decade, plus you didn't have enough info to decide which campaign paths to take.

15. Tornado

DIGITAL INTEGRATION
1993

Easy to fly—after a few months of RAF training.






IS IT JUST US, OR ARE PRO FOOTBALL, BASEBALL, GOLF & BASS FISHING STARTING TO SIMULATE FRONT PAGE SPORTS® GAMES?





WE'RE TOTALLY INTO REALISM. REALLY.


When Sierra came up with their first Front Page Sports PC game, *FPS: Football Pro™*, it was so true-to-the-sport, that *Computer Gaming World* named it "Best Sports Game" three years running. Now that same kind of fanatical devotion to realism is showing up big time in all four FPS games.

NUTS FOR ACCURACY: THIS IS YOUR ASYLUM.

You'll find the kind of details that let you know we're sweating the small stuff.  Internet and network play lets you compete with people around the world



 Physics-based ball movement for greater accuracy  Extensive, up-to-date stats  Down-to-the-inch simulation of real-world stadiums, lakes, and golf-courses  Motion-captured, high-resolution movement of on-screen players and action **AS REAL AS HUMANLY (AND COMPUTERLY) POSSIBLE.**

If you want to see the games that blur the line between your computer and the rest of the sports world, grab some free demos and screen shots at www.sierra.com/games/fps, and then get real. 

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FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Most Memorable Game Heroes

1. Colonel Blair

WING COMMANDER
SERIES ORIGIN, 1991-96

An unforgettable character, from the old "blue hair" days to the full-motion video cinematics featuring Mark Hamill.



10. Greg Bradley

IT CAME FROM THE DESERT
CINEMAWARE
1989

Geologist turned hero, Dr. Bradley saved the world from giant ants.

11. Eric the Unready

ERIC THE UNREADY
LEGEND
1993

In his quest for knighthood, Eric proves that heroes make their own good luck out of misfortune.

12. Max Remington

COVERT ACTION
MICROPROSE
1990

Was Max Remington, the superspy in Sid Meier's espionage thriller, a male or a female?

13. Laura Bow

COLONEL'S BEQUEST and
DAGGER OF AMON RA
SIERRA
1990-92

Roberta Williams's journalism-student, cub-reporter protagonist captured the flavor of the flapper era, but not the hearts of predominantly male computer gamers.

14. Indiana Jones

INDIANA JONES &
THE FATE OF ATLANTIS
LUCASARTS
1993

Indiana Jones should have been an easy character to bring to life. Until this game, no one was successful.

15. Frank Castiglione

THE PUNISHER
PARAGON
1990

In the only successful comic book adaptation we've seen, Marvel's urban vigilante known as "The Punisher" was a solid character.

2. Gabriel Knight

GABRIEL KNIGHT SERIES
SIERRA
1993-95

Gabriel's mix of sexism, supernatural curiosity and down-home sensitivity made for an interesting voodoo blend.

6. The Avatar

ULTIMA IV-VIII
ORIGIN
1980-94

The anonymous hero of most of the Ultima sagas was particularly interesting when trying to balance the virtues.

7. Duke Nukem

DUKE NUKEM 3D
FORMGEN/3D REALMS
1996

Although Duke's been around, he never had quite so much personality as he showed with the delightful voiceovers for his latest incarnation.

8. Sam and Max

SAM 'N MAX HIT THE ROAD
LUCASARTS
1994

Steve Purcell's hilarious talking animal detectives brought gritty humor to the monitor screen.

9. Ben Whatsisname

FULL THROTTLE
LUCASARTS
1994

The hard-riding, gravel-chewing, punk-stomping biker hero who saves Corley Motors.

3. Guybrush Threepwood

SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND SERIES
LUCASARTS
1991-93

From 90-pound weakling to swash-buckling adventurer, this intriguing protagonist grew in more ways than just combat and puzzle-solving skills in these terrific storylines.

4. Madame Sophia

INDIANA JONES &
THE FATE OF ATLANTIS
LUCASARTS
1993

The female counterpoint to Indiana Jones, Madame Sophia, was every bit as strong a protagonist as Indy himself.

5. Roger Wilco

SPACE QUEST SERIES
SIERRA
1987-95

Roger was unique as a hero because he was a *schlemiel* who accidentally accomplished heroic ends.



FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Most Memorable Game Villains

2. Werdna

WIZARDRY/WIZARDRY IV
SIR-TECH, 1980/1987

The evil archmage was the villain you defeated in the first game and played in the latter game.

3. The Guardian

ULTIMA VII
ORIGIN, 1992

An insidious poison, this villain posed as your friend and supernatural mentor in beginning the third Ultima trilogy.

4. Cyber Demon

DOOM/DOOM II
ID, 1993/94

Action gamers who thought they'd seen "boss monsters" before suddenly realized they hadn't when they encountered the CyberDemon.

5. Adrian Ripburger

FULL THROTTLE
LUCASARTS, 1994

"Pond slime in an Armani suit," the documentation described this villain in a masterpiece of understatement.

6. Prince Thrakhath

WING COMMANDER II & III
ORIGIN, 1991-93

This long-fanged kitty got the top treatment from Origin, with cool voice-overs, some of the best lines in the script, and better pilot AI than the other computer-controlled Kilrathi fighters.



1. Purple Tentacle

DAY OF THE TENTACLE
LucasArts, 1993

This unforgettable villain was monomaniacal. Actually, he was mono-everything.



7. Fredrick von Glower

GABRIEL KNIGHT II
SIERRA, 1995

Although a man among men, the leader of the exclusive Hunt Club was much, much more.

8. Kronus Maelor

THE HORDE
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS,
1994

In setting up the fast-paced action sequences, Michael Gregory reveled in the role of the evil High Chancellor.



9. Scorpion

WASTELAND
INTERPLAY, 1985

This nefarious villain was ostensibly based on a famous role-playing columnist.

10. LeChuck

SECRET OF MONKEY
ISLAND SERIES
LUCASARTS, 1991-93

Whether alive or undead, this

scurvy-brained pirate made Guybrush Threepwood's life miserable.

11. Adolf Hitler

WOLFENSTEIN 3D
ID, 1992

When fictitious villains weren't enough, the monster had to come from the pages of history.

12. Gao Qui

BANDIT KINGS OF ANCIENT CHINA
KOEI, 1989

In this strategy game, an evil minister from ancient historical accounts tried to outwit you at every turn.

13. Count Dracula

DRACULA UNLEASHED
VIACOM, 1993

The actor who played this full motion video vampire was able to sink his teeth into the role.

14. Pirt Snikwah

ULTIMA V
ORIGIN, 1987

This pirate leader was loosely based on a game company president. Do you have to spell it backwards?

15. Tom Frisina

HARDBALL
ACCOLADE, 1985

A villain in a sports game? That's essentially how founding Accolade partner and game designer Bob Whitehead cast his left-handed, junk-throwing corporate president in the game which opened the movie, A Princess Bride.



WEREWOLF vs COMANCHE 2

2 GAMES 2 CD'S INSIDE



2 SINGLE PLAYER GAMES WITH MULTIPLAYER CAPABILITIES FOR OS/2 AND WINDOWS

MACINTOSH

Pick your poison: Russia's premier helicopter, the Werewolf, or the U.S.'s 21st-century Comanche. Either way, you're a flying fool, with more realism packed into two CDs than a tower buzz at Baghdad Airport. Motion sickness bag not included. From NovaLogic.

MECH WARRIOR 2

31ST CENTURY COMBAT

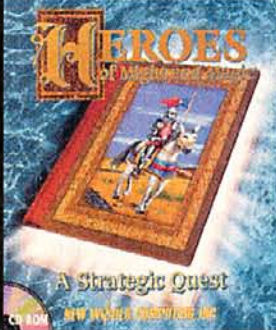


ACTIVISION

MechWarrior 2 puts you in control of the BattleMech, the awesome 31st-century war machine. Customize one of 15 Mechs to fight in over 30 challenging missions against enemy Mechs. Ascend the ranks of your clan to become the ultimate MechWarrior. From Activision.

Heroes brings out the warlord in you—a fantasy/strategy game that puts you in command, recruiting heroes and their forces to battle up to three human or computer adversaries. What's at stake? Only the entire world, as you know it. From New World Computing.

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC



A Strategic Quest

NEW WORLD COMPUTING, INC.

Gabriel Knight, the hero of the spine-tingling "Sins of the Father," scares the living pants off us once again as he solves this multiple mutilation murder tale, The Beast Within. You'll leave every light on in the house for a week after this one. From Sierra On-Line.

THE BEAST WITHIN



SIERRA

Here's a bunch

DESCENT II



BUNGIE

Never again feel the loss associated with finishing a game of Marathon. The third chapter brings it all full circle, and Bungie's own editing tools give you limitless power to create the adventures. We still recommend retina breaks every 30 hours or so. From Bungie.

DESCENT II



BLAST INTO ALL-NEW 360° 3D WORLDS

MACFLAY

MAC

Descent II's new 360° 3-D animation will keep you glued to the screen for hours as you battle an armada of crazed robots. You'll tap into a ton of cool, high-tech weaponry and all the wits and reflexes you can muster as you try to fight off the onslaught. From MacPlay.

Did you know that there's an actual strategy to going 220 mph? It's all laid out here, plus you can race to your heart's content with no fear of losing your license or melting a crankshaft. IndyCar is virtual decadence at its self-absorbed best. From Sierra On-Line.

PAPYRUS

INDYCAR RACING



SIERRA

WarCraft II, the best-selling PC game, now explodes on the Macintosh. Take command of either the ruthless Orcs or the noble humans in your quest to rule the land of Azeroth. Make powerful new allies, battle terrifying new creatures, conquer new lands. From Blizzard Entertainment.

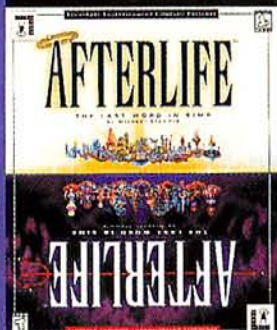
WARCRAFT II

TIDES OF DARKNESS



BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

AFTERLIFE

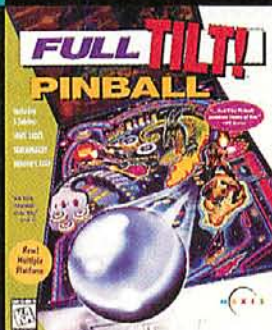


LUCAS ARTS

Become the omnipotent, godlike and somewhat goofy ruler of your own kingdom as you determine the final resting place of your "souls." Afterlife will have you laughing, or screaming, or possibly both as you try to figure out what to do with your new friends. From Lucas Arts.

FULL TILT!

PINBALL



MAXIS

Full Tilt! Pinball is as real as it gets. A truly realistic pinball experience on a computer. Accept the challenge of three mesmerizing pinball tables, each with its own photorealistic 3-D graphics, incredible sound effects and accurately modeled ball movement. From Maxis, Inc.



When it comes to cool games for the Mac, the world is your virtual oyster. (And if you'd ever look up from your computer for a second, you'd know this.) So, while we're lucky enough to have your attention, know this: you can find great Mac software on the web, in pretty catalogs and lots of great places

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f cool games for the Mac. Even though research tells us you'll have

a favorite and compulsively play it 46,658 times.



like Best Buy and CompUSA (understanding, of course, that leaving the house is unavoidable if you want to visit one of the stores). In fact, just short of beaming game code directly into your cerebral cortex via satellite, you can get your hands on the really good stuff almost any way you want. To begin your obsession with Mac software and to check out all these different ways to buy, get on the Internet and plant yourself in front of our web site at <http://www.macsoftware.apple.com>. Or, if you're into tradition, **call 800-500-4862**

FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Worst Peripherals

1. CyberMan

LOGITECH

This weird controller managed to fail as both a game controller and a mouse replacement.



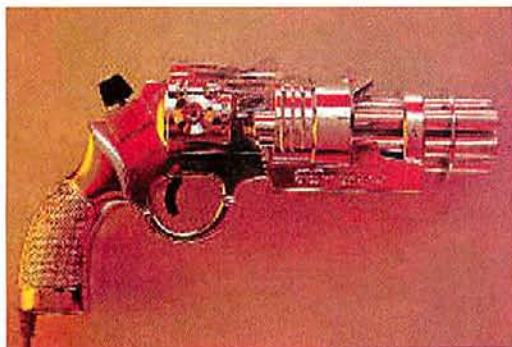
just when laptops were becoming good game machines, too.



2. Doom Gunn

TAC SYSTEMS

A tiny joystick mounted on a big ugly plastic gun makes for a controller that's unreliable and



unusable, as well as ugly. It's now marketed as the Demon Destroyer Gunn, but it's still the same uncontrollable controller.

3. Spaceball Avenger

SPACETEK IMC

It was the company's first attempt at a 360-degree controller, but only the designers could figure out how to use it.

4. Mousewheel

COLORADO SPECTRUM

A steering wheel/flight yoke you strapped to your mouse; one of the most imprecise controllers ever.

5. Aura Interactor

AURA INTERACTIVE

A subwoofer you could strap to your chest. Adult fun at its worst.

6. Wizzard Pinball Controller

THRUSTMASTER

We're still not sure how this is supposed to be better than a keyboard.



7. Amiga Joyboard

AMIGA, INC.

Suzu Chafee asked, "Why use a joystick for C64 arcade games when you can use a mini-surfboard instead?" Um, perhaps because a joystick works?

8. Thunderseat

THUNDERSEAT

A subwoofer in a chair, for serious flight sim fans. Well, it's better than in a vest at least.

9. First-generation VR headsets

VARIOUS

Low resolution obviates the coolness factor of VR tracking in all the first-generation VR devices; until inexpensive hi-res hits, these novelties hamper gameplay.

10. Destination keyboard

GATEWAY

Slight delays in key transmission let you experience lagging play without logging on to the Internet.

11. GlidePoint

CIRQUE

Imprecise as a Windows mouse replacement, touchpads are virtually useless as game controllers—

12. Mouse "Surf" Board

NEUTRAL PRODUCTS

A weird board for using your mouse in your lap. When the company brags that it also works as a drink coaster, you know you're in trouble.



13. RealMagic

SIGMA DESIGNS

It made full-motion MPEG video games look better. If only it could have made them play better.

14. Parallel Gameport

GENOVATION

A great idea for using a joystick on a laptop, but the near-total lack of drivers made it virtually useless.

15. Flight Sim Cockpit

THRUSTMASTER

OK, we think it's cool too. But if you have one, it's time to hang up the surplus-store flight suit and go out and try to meet a girl.



HUNT

From the co-designer of *X Wing™* & *Tie Fighter™* & the designer of the *Super Star Wars™* game trilogy

50 twisting, turning action-packed sub-missions rife with combat and puzzle-solving objectives

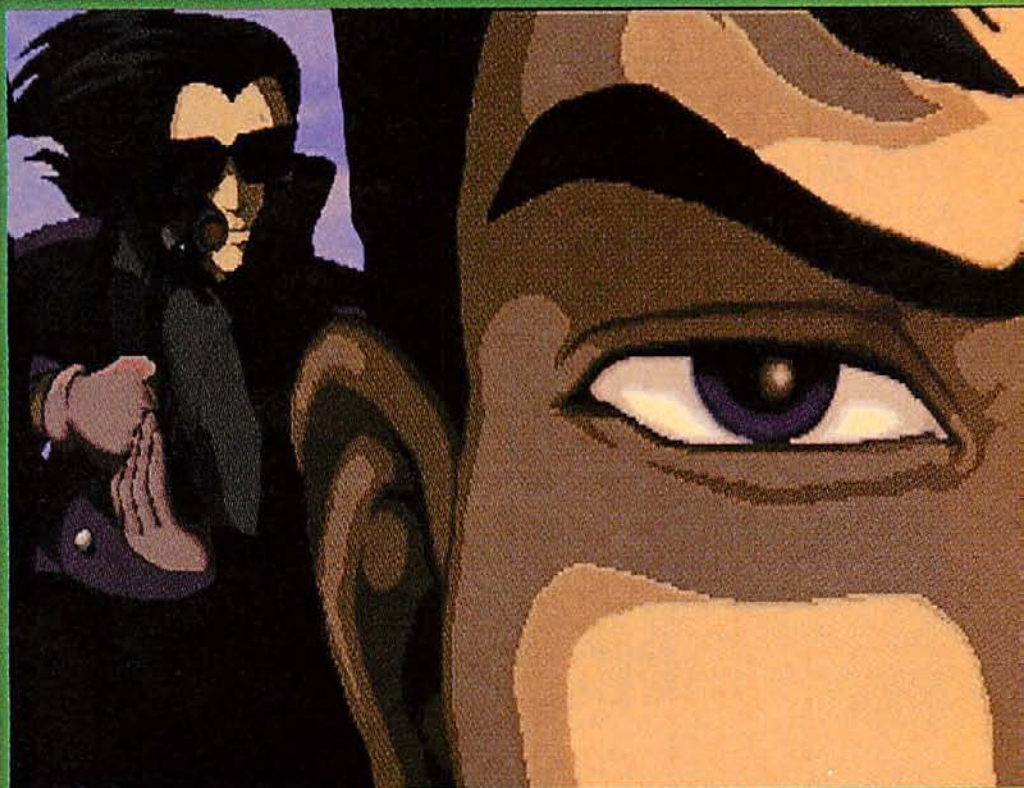
Dramatic graphics stunningly rendered in cutting-edge "Anime"-style animation

First person, side-scrolling action in 2 1/2-D combat environments teeming with drug lords, cyborgs and the vilest perpetrator of all

Written by world-renowned author Orson Scott Card (*Ender's Game*, *Speaker for the Dead*) this intense plot-within-a-plot storyline comes alive with sizzling dialogue and continuous interactivity between characters

High-tech crime fighting including DNA analysis

Cinematic soundtrack with original music and action-enhancing sound effects



OR BE HUNTED

It's 2095. You're Neo-Hunter Rick Gage—a human bloodhound hired to track down the killers of a powerful senator. Use your sharp wit and even sharper shooting to navigate the dangerous metropolis of future San Francisco in an action-thriller that embroils you in an underworld of corruption and greed. It's a race against time to track down the powers orchestrating the collapse of the new millennium. All before the hunter becomes the hunted.

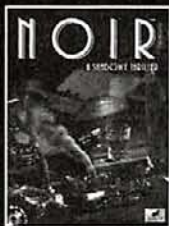
NEO HUNTER™



They call this the City of Angels...



but names can be deceiving.



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from wartime espionage to the underground lairs of Chinatown and seductive excesses of Hollywood — all brought to life in dramatic black and white —

as you search to discover the truth behind the disappearance of fellow P.I., Jack Slayton.



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FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Most Rewarding Endings Of All Time

2. The Secret of Monkey Island

LUCASARTS
1990

After solving the last puzzle, you are rewarded with a fabulous free-running animation starting with Guybrush being ejected from inside a doubloon-op grog machine and ending with Guybrush in love.

3. President Elect

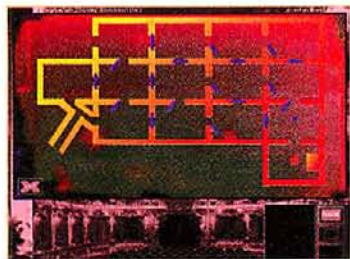
SSI
1981

Your careful planning is rewarded with an election-night television-style presentation of state-by-state results.

4. Gabriel Knight II

SIERRA
1995

Although there was a low-key attempt to wrap things up with the bridge scene, the *real* ending to this game was the climactic opera/ritual scene combined with the unique litte strategy game in the basement.



5. Defender of the Crown

CINEMAWARE
1987

It may have been not the coronation sequence at the end that was the most rewarding part of this game, but the sensuous shadow play when you rescued the damsel in distress.



6. Sid Meier's Pirates

MICROPROSE

1. The Magic Candle

MINDCRAFT 1989

Instead of fighting a massive battle at the conclusion, you enact a detailed ritual using—you guessed it—magic candles.



1987

This was the first game in which we received a "retirement ranking"—where we would have ended up in society when we quit.

7. Eric the Unready

LEGEND
1993

After interrupting the wedding and rescuing Lorealle, you kiss her and prepare to live happily ever after.

8. Red Storm Rising

MICROPROSE
1989

The successful conclusion of a tour of duty, ends in a ticker-tape parade and a presentation of medals.

9. StarCon 2

ACCOLADE

This rich and satisfying game entertains right down to the end, with some of the funniest credits since Monty Python's *Holy Grail*.

10. Full Throttle

LUCASARTS
1995

Ben rides off into the sunset instead of living happily ever after with Marlene.

11. Ultima IV



ORIGIN
1986

Your avatar ended up reading the Codex of Ultimate Wisdom instead of merely fighting "Foozle," the generic bad guy of most CRPG endings.

12. Wing Commander

ORIGIN
1990

After defeating the final Kilrathi armada, Colonel Blair is showered with medals and fireworks for his heroic achievements.

13. Master of Magic

MICROPROSE
1994

All roads lead to the casting of the ultimate spell. The facial expressions are priceless.

14. I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream

CYBERDREAMS
1995

It isn't a cheap ending when these soul-weary characters find their individual peace.



15. Duke Nukem 3D

FORMGEN
1996

Duke saves the world, and then, in a vaudeville-style blackout, a radio play lets you know that the good guy is coming to get some.

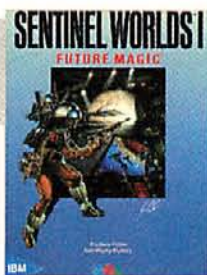
FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

The 15 Least Rewarding Endings of All Time

1. Sentinel Worlds 1: Future Magic

ELECTRONIC ARTS 1988

You win and immediately drop to the DOS prompt.



party ends up penniless at an inn with lots of fame points.

11. AI Unser's Arcade Racing

MINDSCAPE 1995

In a return to the victory screens of the '80s, you finish first in a season and get one lame picture of a trophy.



2. Eye of the Beholder

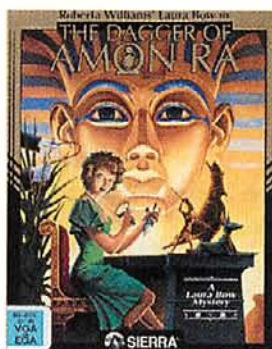
SSI 1991

You kill the beholder, get a text box victory message and drop immediately to DOS.

7. Laura Bow in The Dagger of Amon Ra

SIERRA 1992

After reaching the final act, Laura's inventory was inaccessible. Players suddenly needed notes they hadn't realized they needed to take.



12. Might & Magic II

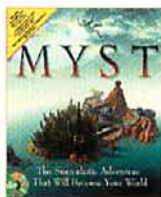
NEW WORLD 1989

After winning the game, your characters each get 50 million experience points. For what?

3. MYST

BRODERBUND 1993

After winning the game, you are automatically put back into the game. Some reward!



13. Witchhaven II

CAPSTONE 1996

The end of game screen features a skull. Then, a butterfly flies off the skull. Strange symbology?



4. Star Trek V: The Final Frontier

MINDSCAPE 1990

Paramount's ban on destroying the Enterprise caused this illogical simulation within a simulation ending.

8. EF2000

OCEAN 1996

After finishing a campaign, you receive the enlightening screen that informs you, "Campaign Won" or "Campaign Lost."

14. Jinxter

RAINBIRD 1988

Even when the player won, the protagonist died. Happily ever here-after?

5. QUAKE

ID 1996

After you were teleported into Shubniggurath's body, the id-meisters congratulated you for beating QUAKE. Big deal!

9. Champions of Krynn

SSI 1990

Upon the completion of the quest, characters were "rewarded" by having their most powerful artifacts removed.

15. Ultima III

ORIGIN 1983

After all the mega-combat in this game, the actual dispatching of archvillain Exodus was anti-climactic.

6. Starflight 2

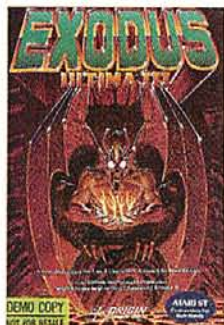
ELECTRONIC ARTS 1989

If your crew was destroyed, you lost your saved game files, as well.

10. Darklands

MICROPROSE, 1992

After giving up its wealth and health to defeat a demon from Hell, the



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five FAQ's about the most unique maze/adventure game ever!

who?

you! immersed in the first-person perspective, you play a renegade hacker trying to destroy an insidious virus launched by Rood O'Dor, an evil genius out to trash the world's computers.

what?

vertigo! negotiate real-time 3-D interactive mazes featuring multi-threat traps, dizzying pratfalls, and puzzling enemies by mastering a progressive set of gravity-defying skills.

where?

cyberspace! surf to 18 virus-mutated maze-like worlds, free-floating through a bizarre interpretation of the Internet.

when?

october! at your local software retailer.

why?

because! PC game players deserve the same mind-bending thrills, spills, and skills formerly available only on high-end cartridge games.

SURF AND DESTROY




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FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

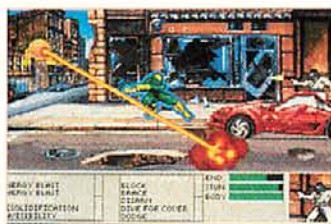
15 Top Vaporware Titles in Computer Game History

1. Champions

HERO GAMES

DUE: 1992 DELIVERED: NEVER

Exception-driven rules and weak game design document caused this to be the ultimate victim of the dreaded CGW cover curse.



for years, the game finally shipped, as an anti-climax.



11. Falcon 4.0

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE

DUE: 1993 DELIVERED: 1997?

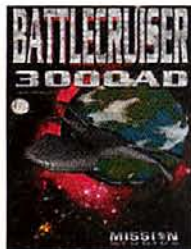
After more than one design team shake-up and more cost overruns than the real F-16, Spectrum hopes this will replace the metal fatigue on FALCON 3.0's wings

2. BattleCruiser 3000

DEREK SMART

DUE: 1993 DELIVERED: 1996?

Derek Smart's design of galactic proportions went through more companies than Liz Taylor has husbands.



3. The Dig

LUCASARTS

DUE: 1992 DELIVERED: 1995

After nearly killing three design teams, Spielberg's first interactive experiment

had moments, but was very dated in look and feel by its arrival.



6. Mean Time

INTERPLAY

DUE: 1989 DELIVERED: NEVER

This WASTELAND sequel succumbed to the death of the Apple II and to the virus that ate Interplay's homework.

7. Return of the King

INTERPLAY

DUE: 1993 DELIVERED: NEVER

The final segment of *Lord of the Rings* trilogy may never escape from Sauron's clutches, due to the aging of the series engine.

8. The Elder Scrolls: Daggerfall

BETHESDA

DUE: 1994 DELIVERED: 1996

Featuritis and creeping technology has held up this potential jewel for far too long.

9. John Madden 96

ELECTRONIC ARTS

DUE: 1995 DELIVERED: NEVER

The once-great action football king

12. Myst II

BRODERBUND

DUE: 1995 DELIVERED: 1997?

A tough act to follow, since everyone now develops with SGI machines to create similar environments.

13. Strike Commander

ORIGIN

DUE: 1991 DELIVERED: 1994

The haze you see from the cockpit is emblematic of this title's troubled development on the bleeding edge of technology.



4. Return to Atlantis

ELECTRONIC ARTS

DUE: 1985 DELIVERED: 1988

One of EA's first scheduled games, four years later, it became one of their worst-ever games.

5. 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea

REICHART VON WOLFSHIELD

DUE: 1989 DELIVERED: NEVER

Beautiful graphics were sunk deeper than the *Nautilus* when Disney legal threatened to sue.



hides its development difficulties behind the focus on a PlayStation version.

10. Stonekeep

INTERPLAY

DUE: 1991 DELIVERED: 1996

After seeing the same basic demo

14. Married With Children

MONARCH

DUE: 1989 DELIVERED: NEVER

Now-defunct Monarch Software had the license and the "Hollywood-style" producer who said he could do it. He couldn't.

15. Murder on the Orient Express

SMOKING CAR

DUE: 1994 DELIVERED: 1997?

Would photos from every mile of Orient Express track guarantee a great game? We may never know.

enter a compelling world that sets new standards for 3d games

Prepare to face your greatest fears, as Soultrap pulls you into a deadly world of terror and spiralling madness. Let your mind free-fall into a series of deranged dream-like environments that are constantly moving and changing in three dimensional space. With each addictive, real-time 3D level you'll slip further into insanity, until you finally lose yourself in this terrifying Soultrap.

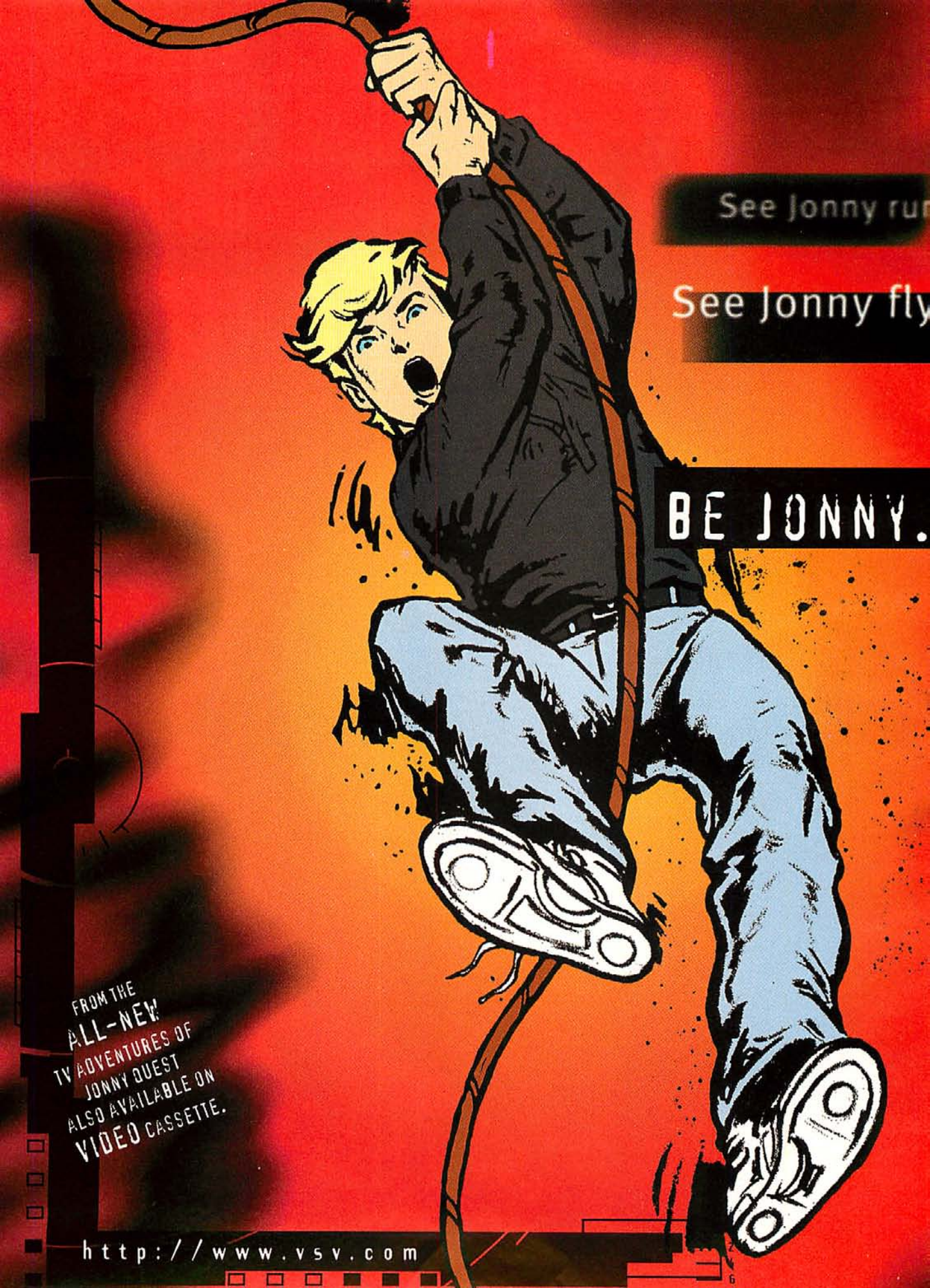
- Master your shooting skills while moving from platform to platform as enemies come at you from every direction - above, below or head-on!
- First person view plus a variety of third person camera angles allow for a uniquely playable game
- You'll be challenged by hidden clues and secret items that will help you overcome levels
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see. Experiencing what they experience.

It's a race against ominous Men in Black
and the evil Dr. Surd. On land. On sea. In
the virtual reality of QuestWorld.

There's hours of outrageous 3-D. Free
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the first 2 CD-ROM set for kids.

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GRANTED.
Log on to THE QUEST
CD-ROM.



Macintosh/Windows compatible. Minimum System Requirements: WINDOWS: 25 MHz 486/8 MB RAM, Double Speed CD-ROM Drive, Compatible Video Card, SVGA 256-color monitor, Sound Card required, Microsoft Windows 3.11 or higher, or Windows 95. MACINTOSH: 33 MHz 68030/8 MB RAM, 256-color monitor, System 7.0 or higher. © 1996 Virgin Sound and Vision. All rights reserved.  and Virgin™ are used under license from Virgin Enterprises Limited. © 1996 Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, Inc., A Turner Company. All Rights Reserved. Jonny Quest™ and all related characters are trademarks of and copyrighted by Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc. or Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, Inc.

Circle Reader Service #187



Jessie



Race



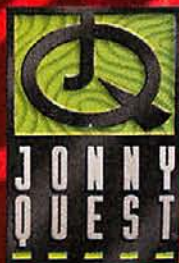
Hadji



Dr. Quest



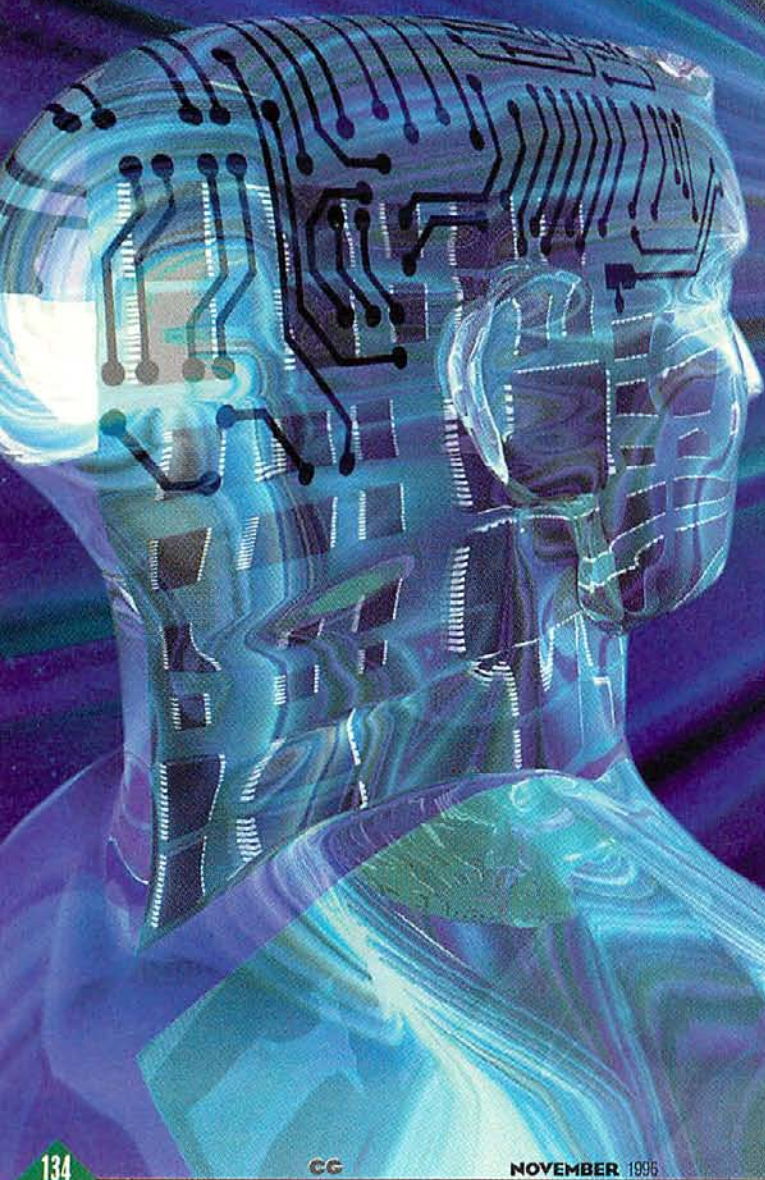
Bandit



The Real Adventures

Free! New state-of-the-art Techo 3-D glasses.

Computer Gaming



The Next 15 Years

A Look Back From CGW's 30th Anniversary

by Keith Ferrell

Fall, 2011, Somewhere in the electroniverse:

The 30th Anniversary *Computer Gaming World* was due any nano now and Jack couldn't wait. It was his birthday as well as *CGW's*, and that made it a special day. They were the same age and there was no question that they shared the same interests.

GAMES.

Computer games. (Was there any other kind?)

The only thing Jack lived for more than the moment the latest ish washed into his system was the games *CGW* covered.

Jack lived to play and played to live—it was a happy arrangement.

The aimless gameless didn't see it that way, of course, but then they never had. As a kid he'd had aunts and uncles, teachers, neighbors, even other kids who just didn't get it. But there were less of them every year, and every year Jackie cared less what they thought and listened less to what they said. Their words couldn't reach him over the multi-tracks that were games' latest rave.

Besides, Jackie knew he was tracking right—otherwise why even when the *New Mill* was less than two years old had *CGW* moved past *Reader's Digest* as the world's biggest monthly? And that was when it was still on paper, for byte's sake.

Well, it wasn't a paper world any more, and Jack wasn't a kid anymore either. But he still had a child's impatience on his birthday, and he figured he had a right to that. Waiting was never easy for him. But he had ways of passing time, of making time disappear...

Jack submerged himself in his system, all senses extended, cataloging his game cosmos, powering up, stretching out, becoming *one* with his games.

You are, Jack thought as he surged outward, what you play.

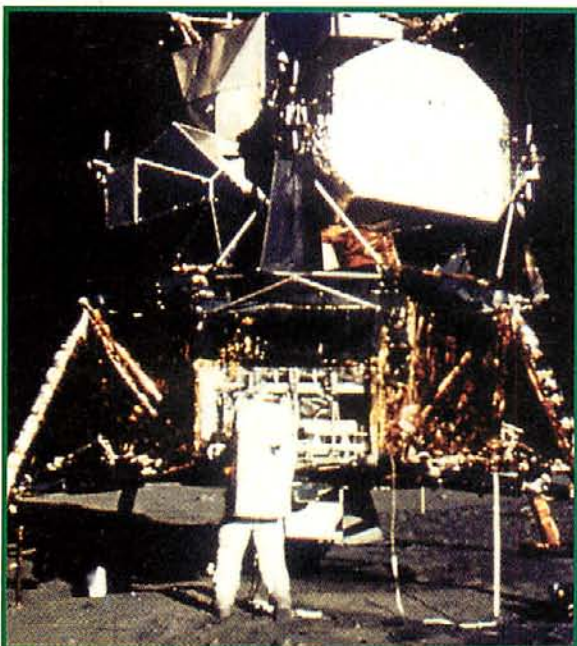


DIRECT DELIVERY As the November, 2011 issue of *CGW* washed into Jackie's mind, he wondered how anyone could have nostalgic pining for the days of paper.

THE VIEW FROM NOW

Players of computer games—and that's a growing number of us humans—are living in an age of wonders. If you doubt that, drop back 15 years or less.

You call those computers, those boxes with their mono monitors and clunky tape or clunkier disk drives, with jagged sprites moving across



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small screens, mostly without sound? We did call them computers—they *were* computers, after all—and in the context of their times they looked more science fictional than they ever will again. Computers and computer games are so much a part of our electronic environment now that we've forgotten how revolutionary 64K (or less) and a green or amber screen were.

"I remember what a kick in the head it was to see the first *MACPAINT*," says Al Lowe, designer of Sierra's *LEISURE SUIT LARRY* series. "Black and white on that tiny screen, but *wow*." That was 1984, when the hottest games used... text.

Today, we take it for granted that great graphics—and sound, and animation—are part of our games, and that they're going to get better. "The computer manufacturers know this, too," says Derek Smart, designer of *BATTLECRUISER 3000 AD*, a game that's been in development long enough to see a number of generations of hardware become obsolete. "They know that people use their machines for games, and that's why you're seeing 3D accelerators, plenty of RAM, and all of it on inexpensive machines."

You have at your disposal more raw computing power than NASA had when Neil Armstrong went to the moon. You use it, as do most people who own personal computers, whatever they claim, to play games. Compared to 15 years ago—or 10 or five—you have everything you could ever want.

But show me a gamer who's satisfied and I'll show you someone who's never had a dream. The *best* of today's games can't compete with our dreams of tomorrow's games, can they?

So what *will* tomorrow bring?

Whatever you want seems to be a pretty good guess.

LOOK AT THAT!

Short-term, call it five years out, we're looking at another round of

improvements in the appearance, speed, and feel of computer games. The sorts of technologies that have attracted a lot of attention in bits and pieces—great graphics here, fantastic animation there, those sounds over *there*—are going to start coming together.

"I think we're undoubtedly going to see another jump in graphics capabilities," says Al Lowe. "Combine that jump with increases in speed, movement, animation and you're going to get worlds where you can move anywhere, see anything from any angle, and do it while getting rid of those giant ugly pixels, letting us have gorgeously realistic high-res worlds to play in."

Lowe thinks these advances, combined with larger monitors and perhaps even high resolution flat screens, are going to bring about a melding of techniques. "Cross the world of *MYST*," he says for example, "with a fast action game, and think about what you can do. Graphically, there really aren't any limitations to the possibilities."

No limits? "It's like when I saw *Jurassic Park* for the first time," he says. "I remember thinking, *yeah*—now you can do dinosaurs, *real* dinosaurs. You've got dinosaurs on the big screen, and we're on the brink of anything we want on computer screens."

Plenty to look at then, and the odds are you won't be looking at it alone.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Drop back again—not even 15 years. Go back half a dozen and you'd be hard pressed to find more than a few hackers who could talk about the Internet. And if you had mentioned the World Wide Web, you'd be hailed as a visionary. (And if you'd invented it, you'd be rich.)

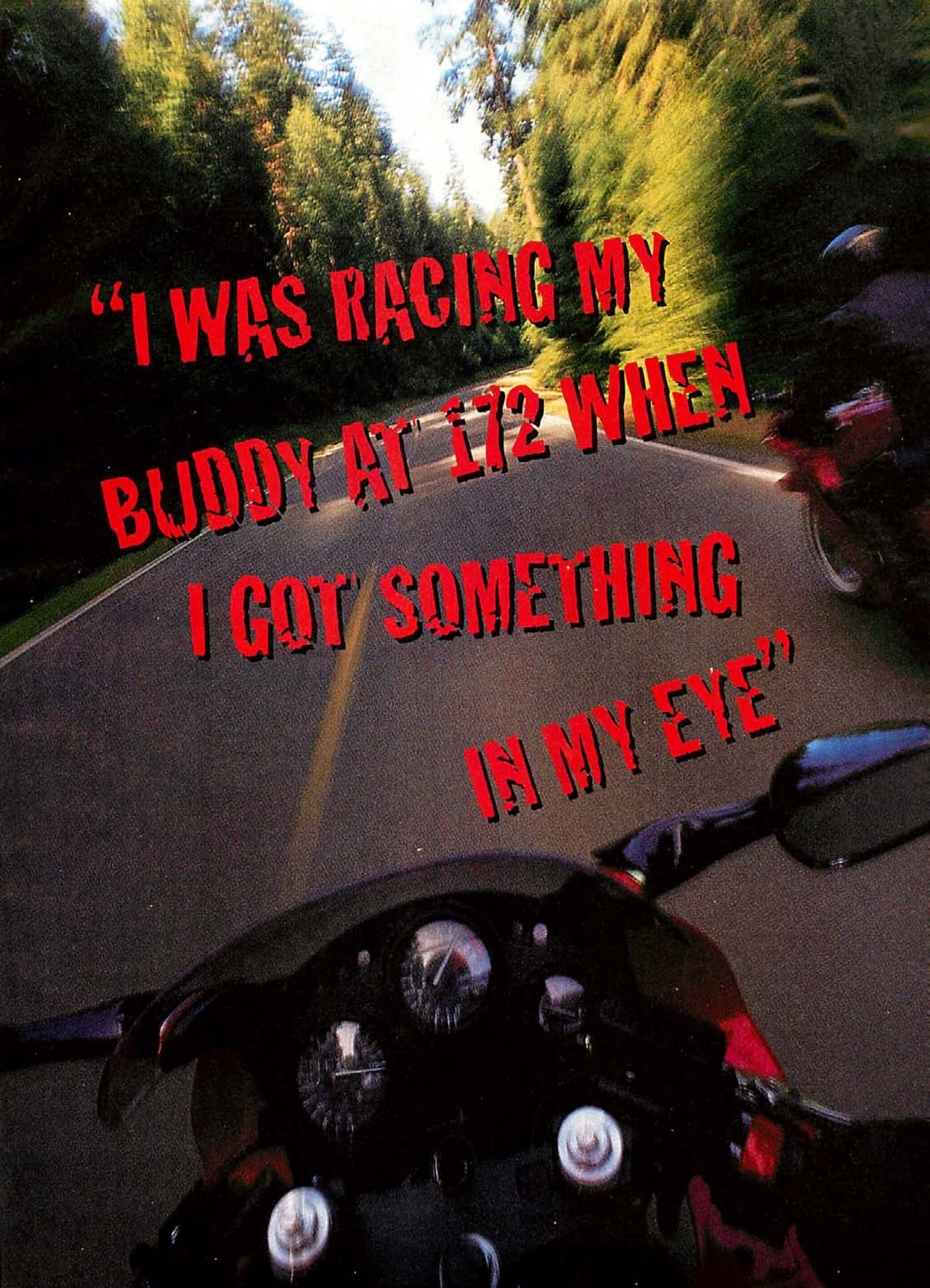
But one truism of the computer revolution is that its waves of change move ever faster, and connectivity via the net, the Web, services—name your connectivity poison—came of age faster than any innovation in the history of the industry.

"There's no question that future of computer gaming is multi-player," says Bill Stealey, president of Interactive Magic. Stealey's perspective goes back to the earliest days of personal computing: his first games at MicroProse were distributed in ZipLock bags.

Today, Stealey thinks that the days of solo computer gaming may be nearing an end. "People will still go one-on-one with their computer games," he says, "but primarily to practice for group sessions." The next five years, he argues, will see the groundwork laid for multiplayer gaming's dominance of the industry. The reasons are technological—the growth of the net, availability of high speed telecommunications, plenty of server power—but also social.

"Single play," Stealey says, "just can't compete with the challenge of facing another person or group of people. You will have communication during games, teamwork, a sense of being part of something. Multiplayer computer games will become a social activity just like a softball game."

Derek Smart thinks that multiplayer gaming will move to the forefront as well, but for reasons having much to do with the limitations of computer opponents. "Gamers want to challenge a mind that is prone to flaw," he says, something you don't often (bugs and sloppy code notwithstanding) get with computer opponents. "A serious player wants to be up against something equal or similar to himself, an alter ego, if you will."



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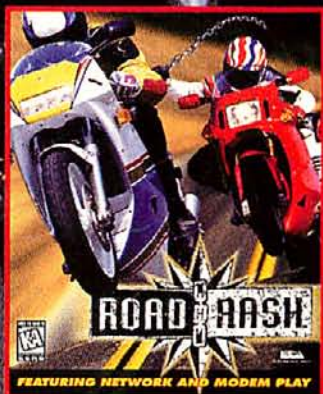
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You're in a low-resolution world when you put the goggles on. And in the world of gaming, high-res wins over low-res every time.

Undoubtedly we all will, many if not most of us all at once. And once we're facing the reality of a human opponent, the question arises as to whether we will face each other's reality virtually.

VIRTUAL WHAT?

VR was all the buzz before the Web cornered the buzz market, and a great deal of technical attention and research is still being devoted to developing virtual reality tools and systems. It just doesn't seem likely that we're going to be playing many of our games inside such systems.

The problem, many think, is one of resolution. We've grown accustomed to ever-increasing graphics quality displayed on bigger and better screens. VR goggles just can't compete.

"Those VR goggles put too many pixels too close to your eyes," Al Lowe says. "You're in a low-resolution world when you put the goggles on. And in the world of gaming, high-res wins over low-res every time."

Technically, virtual reality still holds a lot of promise, but increasingly that promise seems to lay in fields such as medicine and engineering, not computer games.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE

So if we're *not* going to be playing in some version of the holodeck, what interfaces *will* we be using?

In many ways they'll resemble our old familiar inputs: joystick, keyboard, mouse. The devices are ubiquitous, we're accustomed to them, and they're flexible—there's not a lot of input you *can't* put in with one of these tools or a combination of them.

There is, however, one other input/interface device that is ubiquitous and that most of us know how to use, and that is the spoken word.

Watch for a rapid explosion in voice processing technology, all but immediately incorporated into certain types of games. Bill Stealey thinks that our voices will become our primary housekeeping interface with our household computers: "You'll just tell your computer what game you want to play," he says, "you'll tell it to get your regular opponents on the line, or to round up a new group. And when you're done, you'll have your computer to put everything away. We're going to have HAL in our homes!"

Another area in which voice processing is likely to have a large impact over the next decade-and-a-half is in role-playing games. Increasingly, such games will be distributed over the net where, as with every other type of multiplayer game, we'll be talking with each other.

But there's no reason why we shouldn't also begin talking with our computer opponents. It's been tried before—remember saying "Fire!" into that microphone that came with some space-war simulators a few years ago? That, though, was hardly a conversation and hardly effective.

Have you talked to a telephone operator lately? Human or machine? Sure, you can tell now, but as with every other aspect of computer tech-

nology, *now* is a fleeting term. Voice processing technology is growing up fast, and it's going to move out of the phone companies and corporate offices and into our role-playing games well before the next 15 years are past.

WORLDS OF OPPORTUNITY WITHOUT END

Combat simulators, role-playing games, interactive movies, arcade games, strategy worlds—all of the categories of games we know and love are going to evolve and grow over the next 15 years.

But it could well be that we'll also see something... different. It's happened before, and sometimes it makes hits. Chris Crawford's *BALANCE OF POWER* was one. *SIMCITY* was one, *MYST* was an even bigger one, and *DOOM* the biggest of all. The game that comes out of left field, sometimes way out of left field, to redefine computer gaming.

It could be time for another one... or several.

Gentry Lee thinks, in fact, that the next decade and a half may well be the ripest time yet for that sort of explosive arrival, a debut that warps the whole gaming field in new directions.

A scientist and novelist whose latest book is *Bright Messengers*, Lee is currently wrapping up *RAMA* for Sierra, a game based on the series of novels he wrote in collaboration with Arthur C. Clarke. Combining the perspective of the scientist with that of the novelist, Lee thinks that we may be missing a point by focusing too much on the ways in which technology is going to evolve.

"We're going to see a whole new type of storytelling," Lee says. "We're going to see the sorts of stories that no words can tell, at least by themselves. The very *idea* of storytelling is going to undergo a transformation as we develop a fully enveloping medium, with a level of drama and possibility that we've only just begun to glimpse."

OTHER WORLDS MAY BE ENDING

Not everyone is excited about the future. Harlan Ellison, for 40 years now one of the most provocative writers anywhere, sees the emergence of interactive technologies and gaming as precursor to the end of language. Despite the amount of new writing he did for the recent interactive version of his *I HAVE NO MOUTH AND I MUST SCREAM*, Ellison is hardly sanguine about the impact of computer games on literacy.

"I feel an abject terror," Ellison says, "because I think we're living in the twilight of the word. There will always be books, but they're going to reach a smaller and smaller audience. Because the masses—that malleable, plastic wad of faceless people we call the majority—are the ones to whom technology is slanted, seducing them away from the word and into the image." The marketers, he feels, are going to do us in.

It's a feeling shared by Chris Crawford. "The marketing of computer games has steered the industry into an evolutionary blind alley," Crawford says. "A decade ago, we had all this potential, and the liberat-

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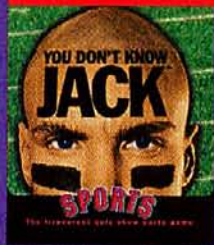
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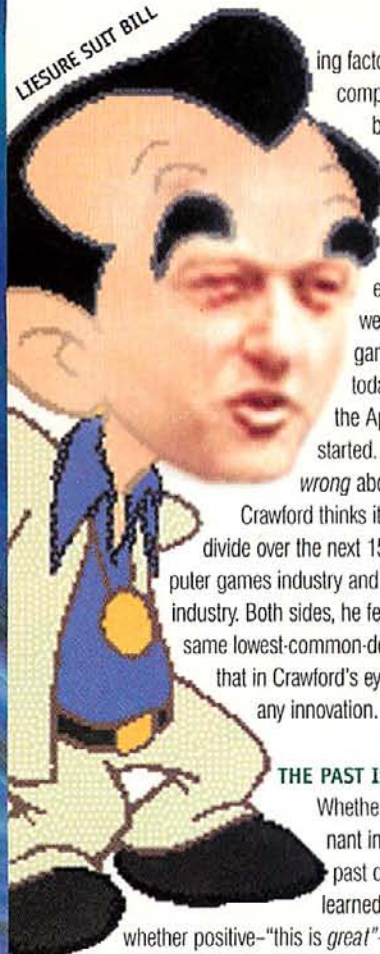


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LISURE SUIT BILL



ing factor of not yet knowing what a computer game was *supposed* to be, and the industry just hasn't *grown*." Crawford blames this situation on the relentless quest for market share on the part games publishers. "They decided that there were certain categories of games, and those are the same today as they were in the days of the Apple II, when the industry got started. Something is profoundly *wrong* about that."

Crawford thinks it likely that the field will further divide over the next 15 years, splitting into the computer games industry and the interactive entertainment industry. Both sides, he feels, will be dominated by the same lowest-common-denominator marketing mindset that in Crawford's eyes has robbed the industry of any innovation.

THE PAST IS PRELUDE

Whether or not the seeds of a stagnant industry were sown over the past decade, a lot of lessons were learned. And each of those lessons, whether positive—"this is *great*"—or negative—"oops"—provides a foundation on which future games will be built.

Having learned so much about the nature of computer games, it seems only fair that computer games should learn some things about *us*. At least that's the vision Pat Cadigan has. Among the most respected science fiction novelists currently working—her *Synners* should be required reading for anyone interested in evolving technological societies—Cadigan thinks we're about to see a leap in the intelligence and capability of our computer opponents.

"We're going to be playing against things that are more like living creatures," she says. "Our artificial opponents are going to learn the ways in which we think and play, and they'll be putting that knowledge to work against us. They're going to be tougher, smarter, and more adaptable, all of which will make for better and better games."

A serious student of the present, as well as of the future, Cadigan thinks too much is made of the power of computer games to "steal" us away from the "real" world. "When people want to play games," she says, "they're going to play games. And when they want insight into the human condition, they'll turn to media that offer insight into the human condition. Game players never mistake what they're doing for anything else, and it's a mistake to think that they do."

Gentry Lee thinks that we may see a combination of game playing with those insights that traditionally come from other arts. "Somewhere out there," he says, "is a master who is going to be able to do it all, programming, writing, storytelling, game design, all of it. And when he or she arrives, their work will create the same sort of impact as the best of fiction, or art, or movies."

Lee thinks that the coming revolution in computer games will feed back into traditional art forms. "Just as painters learned new tricks when photography came along, so will our novelists, and painters, and filmmakers add new tools to their palettes as computer games become themselves a fully recognized form of art."

IMMERSE YOURSELF

Whatever form or shape, familiar or as yet unknown, tomorrow's computer games assume, there's little doubt that they will wrap themselves around us and draw us into their realities to a degree we can only glimpse from our present perspective.

Al Lowe thinks we'll actually see *ourselves* in games. "A whole industry will grow up," he says, "that will put your face, complete with expressions, in your favorite games." LEISURE SUIT KEITH? The mind boggles.

Bill Stealey sees a real golden age of interaction on the horizon. "I want to create a virtual battlefield," he says, "with lots of *different* equipment, all of it linked, every player in communication, a real multiplayer virtual world."

"The fantastic worlds are going to be far more realistic," says Pat Cadigan, "and thus far more persuasive. Our illusions are going to look very realistic... and that's going to raise the level of the entire gaming experience."

Gentry Lee speculates about the possibility of a *total* experience. "Your imagination working in concert with the storyteller's imagination and the game designer's imagination to create something that has never existed before. You could have something that's going to be far more real, and far more *dangerously* real than any reality you've left behind."

The future has a way of surprising us. The boldest of speculators a decade ago did not foresee the power and affordability of even low-end systems today. And it may well be that even the boldest speculations in *this* piece pale beside the reality that unfolds as the next fifteen years pass...

ENDGAME

Fall, 2011, somewhere in the electroniverse:

The wave was here. Jackie felt it arrive, subtle nerve-stim letting him now the info-flow wave was breaking right now into his system, into *him*. He let the issue flow through him, became *one* with it, just as he did with the games he played.

It was a great issue and he would hold it livewire for a while. There were things to feel again before he archived it.

A great issue, a great day. He felt his games calling to him again and before he yielded to the call Jack allowed himself one wistful thought. Sometimes when *CGW* flowed in, he missed Johnny Wilson, gone these last few years to follow his call of the ministry.

Couldn't fault old JW for that, Jack thought as the games floated back to the forefront of his consciousness. Admirable, really.

Besides... maybe he just got tired of preaching to the converted. Jack... played.

For the past six years the Editor of OMNI Magazine, Keith Ferrell's latest novel, Passing Judgment, was published in August by Forge. Take a break from your favorite game and grab a copy—you'll be glad you did. ☞

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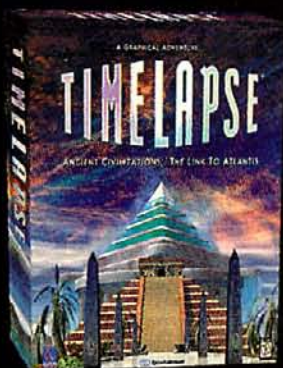
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The 3D Wave Hits The Shores

Here's How The First Generation Of 3D Video Cards *Really* Stacks Up

BY LOYD CASE

If you've been eagerly anticipating the wave of 3D graphics cards, you're not alone. Our e-mail coffers have been overflowing with requests for information on the performance of the first generation of 3D graphics accelerators. Last year, we saw the dominance of 64-bit, 2D graphics cards; this year, 3D is king. With that in mind, we split this survey into two parts, so we can take a look at the full spectrum of 3D offerings hitting the streets. This month, we look at the Matrox Mystique, three cards using the S3 ViRGE chip (Number Nine's Reality 332fx, the Hercules Terminator 3D,

and the Diamond Stealth 3D 2000XL), and the ATI 3DXpression PC2TV, as well as two 3D-only add-on cards that use 3DFx's Voodoo chipset (Diamond's Monster 3D and Orchid's Righteous 3D). Oh yeah, did I mention we'll be looking at three 2D cards—the Hercules Dynamite/128 Video, VideoLogic Grafixstar 600, and STB Lightspeed 128—too? (Ho-hum.)

The prying question is, Does 3D actually deliver? The short answer is yes; you'll get better image quality, solid DOS performance (in most cases), and good Windows performance out of these first-generation offerings. But as you'll see, the 3D performance of some of these cards isn't all it's cracked up to be. That said, let's dive into the numbers.

MATROX MYSTIQUE

Last year, Matrox took the 2D graphics world by storm with the highly praised Millennium. It delivered stellar Windows performance and solid DOS performance and was popular with many gamers. Matrox comes back this year with the Mystique, its first 3D accelerator tuned for the demands of computer games.

The Mystique is kind of a mixed bag. Its 2D performance approaches that of its sibling, the Millennium, but its 3D feature set is somewhat lacking. According to Microsoft's 3D Test tool supplied with the DirectX 2.0 developer's kit, the Mystique should be a 3D screamer. However, this didn't turn out to be the case with HELLBENDER, a Direct3D game. We saw frame rates during heavy action as low as 4 frames per second (fps), even worse than the 2D cards in the roundup.

On top of that, the Mystique lacks some key 3D image-enhancement features, such as bilinear filtering (which smooths out blocky textures), alpha blending (for transparency) and fog effects. (For more information on 3D jargon, see the August issue.) The Mystique ships

with an enhanced version of MECHWARRIOR 2. Because of the lack of texture filtering, this version of MECH 2 doesn't look as good as ATI's version, and we didn't see that performance was markedly better than the ATI-enhanced MECHWARRIOR 2.

The Mystique is a good choice where 2D graphics are the main thrust and 3D is only a secondary consideration. The Mystique's Winbench performance was the best of the roundup, and its DOS

MATROX MYSTIQUE

Pros: Fastest Windows 2D performance in the roundup; good DOS; easy setup

Cons: Lack of key 3D features, including bilinear filtering, fog and transparency



Software Bundle: MECHWARRIOR 2 (enhanced), SCORCHED PLANET, DESTRUCTION DERBY 2, MONSTER TRUCK RALLY (demo version), a software MPEG playback utility, and the WIRL VRML plug-in for Netscape 2.0 or Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0.

Price: \$199 for 2MB, \$259 for 4MB \$79 for 2MB to 4MB upgrade

Contact: Matrox, Inc. (800) 844-8312 <http://www.matrox.com>



MechWarrior 2

performance was second only to cards with the ET6000 chip, a 2D-only accelerator.

Installation and documentation were up to Matrox's usual high standards, and we encountered no major installation headaches. The Mystique has VESA 2.0 SVGA support built in, avoiding the need for a VESA add-on utility like Scitech's Display Doctor. Also available is a set of daughterboard upgrades, including one for MPEG playback and another for NTSC video output for display on a television set.

We reviewed Mystique last month, giving it four stars. But upon further review, we're inclined to revise that rating. Admittedly, performance in one Direct3D title is not a comprehensive indicator, but what we saw initially wasn't very encouraging.

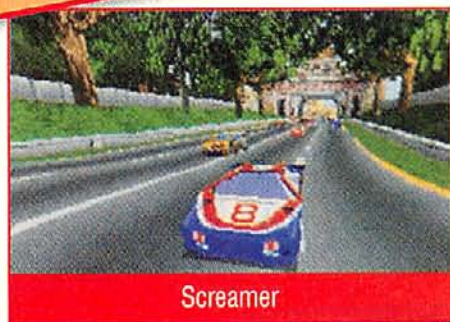
NUMBER NINE REALITY 332FX

The Reality 332fx is the first of a trio of cards we looked at based on S3's ViRGE accelerator. At its heart, the ViRGE is basically a 2D accelerator—using the same core as the S3 Trio64V+—with 3D features bolted on. The list of features used in the ViRGE is impressive, including bilinear filtering, MIP mapping, and alpha blending. Unlike the other two ViRGE cards we evaluated, Reality 332fx only comes in a 2MB nonupgradable configuration.

SOFTWARE BUNDLE: TERMINAL VELOCITY, SCREAMER, HAVOC, Realtimation STE, and Web 3D/FX.
Price: \$199 for 2MB card (no 4MB version available).
Contact: (800)GET-NINE
<http://www.nine.com>

Pros: Easy setup; interesting bundle

Cons: Pricey for what you get



Screamer

Of the three S3 cards, the Reality 332fx turned in the slowest performance on Direct3D Test. Its DOS VGA benchmarks were also the slowest, including the game benchmarks we ran. But in SVGA tests, Number Nine held its own. Winbench 96 test scores placed it smack in the middle of the pack, however. Interestingly, its performance in HELLBENDER belied the slow Direct3D Test numbers, with a frame rate range of 9 to 19 fps, depending on the intensity of the action.

Like most of these 3D cards, the 332fx ships with some bundled titles. Of these, one of the more interesting is a light version of Realtimation, a virtual reality modeling-and-simulation package.

Installation was fairly straightforward, but we encountered bugs in the Hawkeye resolution utility, which crashed frequently. However, we were able to tweak color depth and resolution settings through the normal Display Properties control panel. At a list price of \$199, the Reality 332fx is not the least expensive nor the fastest card around. As such, it's not a particularly strong value.

HERCULES TERMINATOR 3D

The Terminator 3D is another S3 ViRGE card, and we checked out the 4MB version for this review. Benchmarks were mixed for the Terminator 3D. DOS benchmarks were pretty much on a par with the other 4MB ViRGE offering we tested, the Diamond Stealth 3D 2000. Winbench 96 scores were the lowest of the ViRGE cards, and were actually the lowest of this month's roundup, reflecting a fairly immature set of drivers. Direct3D Test results were inconsistent: On one hand, the Terminator's fill rate was faster than the other S3 cards', but

its polygon throughput didn't follow suit. However, the HELLBENDER performance seemed a bit better than that of the other two S3 cards, topping out at 25 fps in some parts of our test.

Installation of the Terminator 3D was a breeze, and the Powerdrive utilities let us tweak all graphics parameters within a single control panel.

Overall, the Terminator 3D turned in good DOS performance and reasonably good 3D performance. We anticipate that Windows 2D performance

will improve with subsequent driver revisions. Given the very aggressive price of the Terminator 3D, it's an interesting alternative to some of the other cards in the roundup if you're on a tight budget. Hercules offers stellar support and is the only company in our roundup to offer a toll-free technical support line.



HERCULES TERMINATOR 3D

Pros: Great price; best 3D performance of the ViRGE cards; good tech support

Cons: Slow Windows 2D performance; limited bundle



Software Bundle: DESCENT II and possibly one additional title
Price: \$129 for 2MB; \$159 for 4MB (EDO DRAM)
Contact: (800) 532-0600
<http://www.hercules.com>

DIAMOND STEALTH 3D 2000XL

Diamond sent us their newly released 4MB version of the Stealth 3D 2000 for our roundup. Of the three ViRGE-based cards, the Diamond had the hottest Winbench scores, and while the 1024x768x256 color score was only average, the 640x480x65,530 color score was near the top of the heap. In the Direct3D Test, the Stealth 3D posted solid scores—near the middle for fill rate but near

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DIAMOND STEALTH 3D 2000

Pros: Smooth installation; fast Windows 2D; well-balanced card; good price

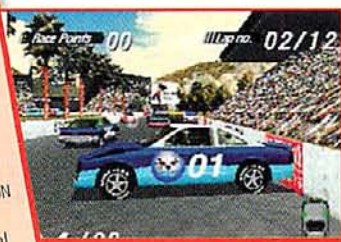
Cons: So-so 3D performance



Software Bundle: DESCENT II: DESTINATION QUARTZON, DESTRUCTION DERBY, Compton's MPEG Encyclopedia, Assymetrix Digital Video Producer and 3D/FX (4MB only).

Price: \$159 for 2MB, \$199 for 4MB (EDO DRAM)

Contact: (800) 4MULTIM <http://www.diamondmm.com>



Destruction Derby

the top for polygon throughput. It posted pretty much midpack scores in our HELLBENDER testing, with frame rates ranging from 7 to 18 fps.

The Stealth 3D's installation was straightforward,

although we did encounter a bug (which Diamond acknowledged) in the installation process for DirectX. The simple workaround is to use Windows 95's Explorer to launch DirectX's setup program, instead of the AutoPlay script that runs when you insert the CD. The Diamond control panel integrates nicely into the Display Properties.

Overall, the Stealth 3D 2000 is another solid offering from Diamond: It's a very respectable Windows 2D performer and offers decent DOS performance and moderately good 3D at an affordable price.

ATI 3D EXPRESSION PC2TV

This new card uses ATI's Rage II second-generation 3D chip. It layers 3D functionality onto the Mach 64 2D graphics accelerator, including bilinear filtering, alpha blending, z-buffering, fog effects and sub-pixel accuracy. In addition, this adapter boasts a unique feature: built-in NTSC capability. Now you can hook your computer up to your 60-inch large screen TV—the Xpression supports up to 800x600 when



using the NTSC port—and really see MECH-WARRIOR 2 in all its glory. Well, at least in theory. The chore of carting your game rig into the family room to hook up to a television may

be a bit much, but the capability is certainly enticing. Imagine videotaping your best gaming sessions...

Having said that, the performance of the ATI 3D Xpression is stunningly average. DOS VGA and SVGA benchmarks were among the lowest of the group, although Winbench 96 performance was quite good. The Direct3D scores were pretty good, with a fast fill rate, but fairly slow polygon throughput. HELLBENDER performance was so-so, with frame rates ranging from 7 to 15 fps. Unlike some other all-

purpose cards, the ATI card pretty much stayed in the 12-13-frame-per-second range, varying less than the extremes might suggest. The ATI-enhanced version of MECHWARRIOR 2 looks very nice indeed, completely obscuring the fact that it's only running at 512x384 resolution. The filtering of the

ATI 3D EXPRESSION PC2TV

Pros: Smooth installation; fast Windows 2D; well-balanced card; good price

Cons: 4MB version is pricey; slow DOS performance



Software Bundle: MECHWARRIOR 2 (enhanced), WIPEOUT, and ASSAULT RIGS

Price: \$219 for 2MB, \$299 for 4MB (EDO DRAM)

Contact: (905) 882-2600 <http://www.atitech.com.ca>

ground and sky textures, plus the animated sky, adds a dramatic touch of realism to the game.

Overall, the 3D Xpression PC2TV is a very interesting card, sporting a solid feature set and moderately good performance.

HERCULES DYNAMITE/128 VIDEO

Given all the focus on 3D these days, one wonders why anyone would come out with a 2D-only accelerator. Some of the most technically savvy gamers around hang out in CompuServe's Flight Simulator Forum (GO FSFORUM). The Hercules Dynamite/128 has gained favor among a good number of them, and for good reason. The Dynamite/128V is one of three cards we evaluated based on Tseng Labs' 128-bit ET6000 chip-set. No other graphics chip can touch the



HERCULES DYNAMITE/128 VIDEO

Pros: Good price; great DOS VGA and SVGA performance

Cons: Relatively slow Windows 2D performance; no 3D features



Software Bundle: Encyclopedia, productivity tools

Price: \$159 for 2MB, \$199 for 4MB (MDRAM)

Contact: (800) 532-0600 <http://www.hercules.com>

ET6000 for screaming DOS performance—and face it, the majority of games today are still DOS-based.

Let's dispense with the 3D argument for a moment. The 3D Test results for these cards are abysmal—so much

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COMPAQ

so that we didn't even bother printing them, since the 2D cards didn't meet our minimum criteria for 3D feature sets. But when we ran HELLBENDER, a Windows 95 Direct3D title, we saw frame rates ranging from 6 to 15 fps—not too shabby for a 2D-only card.

For DOS games, the Hercules card excelled, edging out the STB Lightspeed/128 by a hair. Winbench performance, however, was the slowest of the three ET6000 cards at 1024x768x256 color by a wide margin, although all three cards were pretty much on par in the 640-x-480-x-65,530-color test. If you're still a hard-core DOS gamer for the most part, this card is hard to beat.

VIDEOLOGIC GRAFIXSTAR 600

Last year, we were pleasantly surprised by the decent performance and reasonable price of VideoLogic's line of graphics boards, and its ET6000-based Grafixstar 600 continues this trend. The DOS benchmarks were pretty much even with the Hercules Dynamite/128V and STB Lightspeed/128. The 1024x768x256-color Winbench score was the third highest, though the 640x480x65,530 performance trailed off.

However, the Grafixstar 600 had two quirks that warrant mention: First, frame rate in DUKE NUKEM 3D was quite a bit slower than the other two ET6000-based cards. A more vexing problem was in its VESA 2.0 Super VGA implementation. When running QUAKE at 640-x-480 resolution, the entire game took on a distinctly greenish cast, as if the green values had been pumped up and the red and blue values toned down. Curiously, we didn't observe the "seasick lens" effect in DUKE NUKEM 3D or Electronics Arts' ADVANCED TACTICAL FIGHTERS. Using Scitech's Display Doctor (formerly UniVBE) version 5.3, the problem

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GrafixStar 600

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disappeared.

Overall, the Grafixstar 600 is a decent graphics card at a good price, but it's overshadowed by its competition.

STB LIGHTSPEED 128

It's kind of ironic that one of the best game bundles in this review

VIDEOLOGIC GRAFIXSTAR 600

Pros: Superb Windows 2D performance; good DOS performance

Cons: Quirky VESA SVGA implementation

Software Bundle: Prolabs' Video Works (video-capture and editing software) and Image Folio (image-editing software)

Price: \$179 (estimated street price) for 2.25MB MDRAM

Contact: (800) 578-5644
<http://www.videologic.com>



Card	Matrox Mystique	Number Nine Reality 332I	Diamond Stealth 3D 2000XL	Hercules Terminator 3D	ATI 3D Xpression PC2TV	Hercules Dynamite 128/Video	VideoLogic Grafixstar 600	STB Lightspeed 128	Diamond Monster 3D	Orchid Righteous 3D
Rating	3.5	2.5	3.5	3	3.5	4	2.5	4	4	4.5
Chipset	Matrox	S3 VIRGE	S3 VIRGE	S3 VIRGE	ATI Rage II	Tseng Labs ET6000	Tseng Labs ET6000	Tseng Labs ET6000	3Dfx Voodoo	3Dfx Voodoo
Graphics Winmark, 1024x768x8	41	32.3	37.4	26.6	37.6	34.2	39.5	40.1	N/A	N/A
Graphics Winmark, 640x480x16	37.6	28.7	37	21.8	32.6	31.8	32.6	31.6	N/A	N/A
CBench VGA (fps)	127*	116*	124*	126*	87*	127*	127*	127*	N/A	N/A
CBench SVGA (fps)	36.5	37.8	36.8	36.8	36.9	39.5	39.4	39.5	N/A	N/A
Duke 3D (640x480) (fps)	40	27	30	31	29	41	35	40	N/A	N/A
Quake (320x200) (fps)	32.8	31.8	34.5	34	30.5	34.6	34.02	32.36	N/A	N/A
Quake (640x480) (fps)	13.7	13.7 (2)	13.6 (2)	13.8 (2)	12.4	14.83	13.86 (1)	14.75	N/A	N/A
Min D3D Test - Fill Rate (megapixels per second)	9.92	6.16	11.84	12.5	12.18	N/A	N/A	N/A	23.92	31.84
Min D3D Test - Polygon Throughput (kilopolygons per second)	141.4	96.72	162.06	105.6	130.94	N/A	N/A	N/A	223.2	230.6
Max D3D Test - Fill Rate (megapixels per second)	9.12	3.64	5.04	5.36	5.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	24	24.7
Max D3D Test - Polygon Throughput (kilopolygons per second)	127.5	78.42	117.2	80.95	79.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	179.1	184.5
Hellbender: Slowest-Fastest (fps)	4-19	9-19	7-18	8-25	7-15	7-15	7-14	7-15	19-30	25-30

* These "frame rates" are reported by CBench, and though they greatly exceed the monitor's actual refresh rate (60 Hz), they represent the number of "frames" that could be computationally generated.
 (1) GrafixStar 600 ran Quake in VESA modes with a distinct greenish cast. Using UNIVBE 5.3 fixed the problem.
 (2) The S3 VIRGE cards would only run Quake VESA modes with Scitech's display doctor loaded.

ships with a 2D card. The Lightspeed 128 comes with Sierra's EARTHSIEGE 2 and SILENT THUNDER (A-10 II), a limited edition of TERRA NOVA (the first 10 missions), as well as a number of game demos from Sierra.

The card itself performed quite well, running all the DOS applica-

Lies, Damned Lies, And Benchmarks

Any test methodology is fraught with possible peril and erroneous results. A case in point are some of the toy applications that ship with Microsoft's Direct3D developer's kit. We looked at using two such applets: Tunnel and Twist. Several vendors are already quoting these numbers as 3D performance indicators, but caveat emptor. Unless you know which features are enabled or disabled, these frame rate numbers are at best suspect. Rather than look at frame rate data from these tools, we instead used Direct3D Test, also in Microsoft's Direct 3D kit. It too is far from perfect, but at least gave us a rough indication of 3D performance. Ziff-Davis will be developing a more comprehensive 3D benchmark, due out sometime next year.

Here's how we tested: First, the system was always the same, except for the graphics card. We used a Pentium 166 running on a Triton II chipset motherboard, with 32MB of EDO DRAM and 512KB of pipeline burst L2 cache. If the card supported it, the refresh rate was always 75Hz.

We used games wherever possible as test tools, as well as Winbench 96 and CBENCH, a simple DOS 3D performance metric written by Chris Dial.

Unfortunately, finished Direct3D titles were lacking at press time, but we were able to use Microsoft's new HELLBENDER, which had a simple frame rate counter. We ran HELLBENDER with all graphics features cranked up with a 640x480 frame size. Another problem: HELLBENDER is able (via Direct3D) to detect and automatically enable or disable rendering features to achieve optimal game performance, but a Direct3D game may not tell you which features are enabled and disabled, even if you set all graphics options to the highest level. Bear in mind that using HELLBENDER as our sole Direct3D game-as-performance metric, we got an *indication* of 3D performance, not the final word. That won't be forthcoming until more games-as-tools are finished and shipping.

In using Direct3D Test, we ran at two different test settings—both at 640x480x65,530 colors—representing different performance points. The minimum feature set allows for the highest possible frame rate. For the minimum test, the settings were:

- Flat shading
- Perspective correction disabled for texture maps
- Point filtering (rather than the more demanding bilinear filtering).

Turning on additional rendering features improves individual frame image quality, usually at the expense of frame rate. Our maximum settings were:

- Gouraud shading enabled
- Bilinear filtering enabled
- Perspective-correction enabled

We looked at pixel fill rate and polygon throughput data generated by Direct3D Test. Pixel fill rate is how fast the card can blast pixels onto a surface, and polygon throughput measures how fast polygons are generated (rendered). Bear in mind that if you don't know which features are enabled and disabled, these numbers become all but meaningless.

Long story short, the 3D numbers here are initial performance indicators, but the full performance story can't be told until more Direct3D titles ship and we see how 3D hardware fares accelerating them. Rest assured, we'll keep you posted.

—Lloyd Case and Dave Salvator

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tions we could throw at it with aplomb. Its Windows performance was pretty solid as well.

There's not much else to say about the Lightspeed 128, except that it's a solid card at a good price, with good bundleware. What more do you want?



DEDICATED 3D CARDS

This month, we take a look at a pair of dedicated 3D add-on cards, one each from Orchid Technologies and Diamond Multimedia. These cards require the presence of a standard graphics adapter for VGA, SVGA and Windows 2D chores. Both cards use the 3Dfx Voodoo 3D chipset, and both come with 2MB of EDO DRAM for frame buffer (display memory) and 2MB of memory for storing textures. The 3Dfx-based cards use a pass-through cable, so you connect a cable from your standard graphics card to the 3Dfx card and attach your monitor cable to a second connector on the 3D card. When running accelerated 3D titles, the 3Dfx chipset completely takes over and is not dependent on the 2D card's performance.

The cool thing about these add-on cards is that they'll even work with the more mainstream 3D cards, such as cards using the VIRGE and ATI chipsets, taking over the 3D chores when necessary. In fact, several system vendors are doing S3/3Dfx or ATI/3Dfx combinations for their graphics subsystems. Look for them next month in our "Ultimate Game Machine" feature.

The list of features of the Voodoo chipset is a mile long: bilinear filtering, trilinear MIP-mapping, alpha blending, fog effects, accelerated light sources. Let's take a look at the two implementations, which actually differ more than a first glance might indicate. 3D performance on both was impressive, and as more titles ship that take advantage of Direct3D, these will be the cards to have—if you have the bucks.

(Note that although we had final hardware, neither company had

STB LIGHTSPEED 128

Pros: Great Windows 2D performance; solid DOS VGA and SVGA performance; good software bundle.

Cons: No built-in 3D features.

Software Bundle: EARTHSIEGE 2, SILENT THUNDER, TERRA NOVA LE

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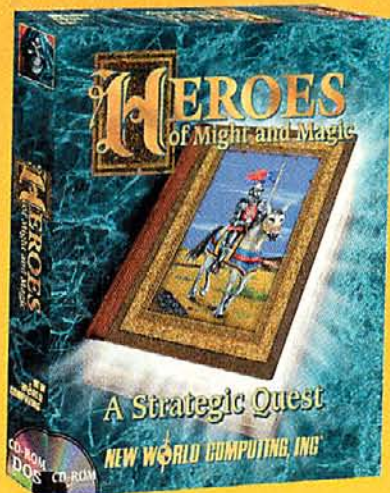
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finalized its software bundles, so we'll update you in part 2 of the graphics roundup next month.)

DIAMOND MONSTER 3D

Diamond's Monster 3D installed easily next to the STB Lightspeed 128 2D card (it was running in our system at the time), and the sample games we saw were testimony to 3Dfx chipset's rendering horsepower. Impressive though they are, we're hoping for better overall gameplay in future titles.

The Monster 3D was somewhat slower than the Orchid's offering in the Direct3D test—but that's not saying much. When we ran Microsoft's HELLBENDER, we never saw a frame rate number less than 25, although the frame rate counter was being updated so fast it was hard to read at times. Suffice it to say that gameplay was so smooth that we never saw any jerkiness.

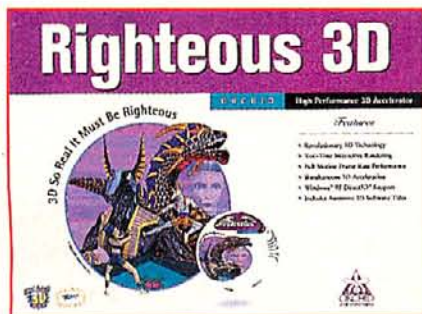
Monster 3D delivers the goods: Performance and image quality were stunning, and the price was...well, get out your wallet and be prepared to wince.

ORCHID RIGHTEOUS 3D

The Orchid Righteous 3D was the top 3D performer of all the boards reviewed, edging out the Monster 3D in the Direct3D test metrics. The card was simple to install, though the heavy shielded pass-through cable required a bit of effort, but a shielded cable is a plus in most modern systems.

One nice touch with the Righteous 3D was an additional panel installed in the Display Properties control panel, which allows you to tweak refresh rate and gamma/color balance.

When we ran HELLBENDER, we never saw the frame rate counter dip below 29 fps, although as with the Monster 3D the counter was being updated so quickly, it was hard to read sometimes. The frame rate was rock solid throughout the



DIAMOND MONSTER 3D

Pros: Terrific 3D performance and feature set

Cons: Price and performance relative to the Orchid card; need for additional graphics card

★

★

★

★

★

Software Bundle: DESCENT II: DESTINATION QUARTZON, MECHWARRIOR 2, HYPERBLADE, and two more to be decided.

Price: \$299 (2MB of frame buffer, 2MB of texture memory, 4 MB total)

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ORCHID RIGHTEOUS 3D

Pros: Best 3D performance of the group; terrific feature set; ease of setup and use.

Cons: Price; need for additional graphics card.

Software Bundle: To be decided.

Price: \$299

Contact (800) 577-0977



test, and playing HELLBENDER with this card was a truly righteous experience.

AND THE WINNER IS...

The age of 3D acceleration is finally upon us, with mainstream accelerators like the Diamond Stealth 3D and the ATI 3D Xpression bringing a new level of reality and performance to the standard PC.

Adding a dedicated board like the Righteous 3D can propel 3D game performance into orbit. Bear in mind, however, that to gain the benefits of 3D accel-

eration, a game must be written to take advantage of the hardware. So don't expect DOOM or F15 STRIKE EAGLE III to run any faster on these cards. A point to consider: Given the aggressive pricing of many of the 4MB boards, you'd do well to spend a little extra now for more 3D performance up the road.

Rumors of the demise of 2D boards have been greatly exaggerated, as the new ET6000-based cards from Hercules, STB and VideoLogic attest. These cards offer superior DOS performance, top-notch 2D Windows performance, and terrific prices.

Of the mainstream cards, there aren't any clear winners per se, though the Matrox Mystique proved something of a disappointment.

We'd give the nod in performance to the Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 for its smooth implementation and balanced performance. The ATI card would be an interesting choice if DOS VGA performance weren't a critical factor. The Hercules Terminator 3D is a tough value to beat, with reasonable performance coupled with a very aggressive price.

The best combination, however, would be to meld the 2D performance of a Matrox Mystique, Diamond Stealth or Lightspeed 128 with the Righteous 3D. Then you'd have the hottest graphics setup for gaming around—not to mention one of the priciest—at least for a while.

Next month, we'll be reviewing Creative Labs' long-anticipated 3D Blaster, as well as Rendition-based boards from Intergraph and Sierra (yes, Sierra). We'll also take a look at some cards using 3D Labs' Permedia chipset and some higher-end S3-based cards using the ViRGE/VX chipset, and we'll put the intriguing PowerVR through its paces. The age of 3D is upon us, but it's only in its infancy. There are still some teething pains to come as this burgeoning technology begins to mature, but this year's 3D cards, coupled with next year's crop of games, will bring us one more step on the road to realism. ☞

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Fast, Faster, Fastest

A Performance Report On The Hottest New Processors



Recently, I've been getting quite a bit of e-mail from gamers who are curious about some of the new processors out there. Usually, people understand the Pentium fairly well, but there's a dearth of information regarding two alternatives to the Pentium: the Cyrix 6x86 and the Pentium Pro. I would go so far as to say there's a lot of mythology about them as well. I personally prefer to keep my mythology either in novels or computer games, so I set out to test once and for all how the new kids on the block, CPU-wise, stack up against the Pentium.

But let's take a moment to reflect. Less than a year ago, CGW built the

ultimate gaming rig, which used the Pentium 133... now the Pentium 133 is the *entry level*. By the time you read this, the Pentium 75, 90, 100 and 120 will probably be historical artifacts—a staggering amount of change in such a short time. The high end of the Intel CPU line now is the 200MHz Pentium Pro, and the 200MHz Cyrix 6x86 and Pentium are nipping at the Pro's heels.

I took a look at the Pentium 166, the Cyrix 6x86 P166+ and the Pentium Pro 200, running game-oriented benchmarks. I didn't have either the Pentium 200 or Cyrix P200+, but the actual performance difference is probably around 10 to 15 percent.

I wanted the test to be as even as possible for the Pentium and Cyrix, so I used a motherboard with Intel's latest chipset, the Triton 2 (430HX, for you gearheads.) The Pentium Pro was tested on a P6SNE from Supermicro, and uses Intel's second generation Pentium Pro chipset, code-named Natoma

(440FX). I used identical peripherals for all the tests. The graphics card was a Videologic Grafistar 600 graphics card, based on Tseng Lab's new 128-bit ET6000 graphics chip. Disk and CD-ROM access chores were handled by an Adaptec 2940UW SCSI controller attached to a Plextor 6X CD-ROM and a Seagate ST31055NB ultra SCSI 1GB hard disk. All test configurations had 32MB of nonparity EDO DRAM. I even went so far as to use the same keyboard, mouse and monitor for the sake of consistency.

I ran the Winbench 96 benchmarks for CPU and Windows 95 graphics performance measurements. For DOS game performance, I used CBench, a DOS VGA and SVGA graphics benchmark written by Chris Dial. In addition, I used *QUAKE*, *DUKE NUKEM 3D* and EA's *ADVANCED TACTICAL FIGHTERS* for real-world game performance (all at 640x480). See the table for my results.

With the sole exception of *DUKE*

“ There's a Pentium Pro in your future, but your mileage may vary. ”

Table of Results

Processor	Graphics Winmark	CPU Mark18	CPU Mark 32	CBench VGA	CBench SVGA	Duke Nukem 3D	Quake	ATF
Cyrix 6x86	36.3	302	302	106.1 fps*	30.5 fps	22 fps	8.9 fps	21 fps
Pentium 166	33.7	321	318	121.6 fps*	39.0 fps	30.5 fps	13.5 fps	20 fps
Pentium Pro/200 (without FastVid)	36.0	357	542	146.6 fps*	28.9 fps	21 fps	17.3 fps	25.6 fps
Pentium Pro/200 (with FastVid)	N/A	N/A	N/A	190.1 fps*	48.6 fps	25 fps	19.8 fps	29.8 fps

*These "frame rates" are reported by CBench, and though they greatly exceed the monitor's actual refresh rate (60Hz), they represent the number of "frames" that could be computationally generated.

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LOYD CASE

TECHNOLOGY

NUKEM 3D, the Pentium Pro system clearly outpaces the Pentium 166 and the Cyrix 6x86. However, to get the greatest performance boost out of the Pentium Pro, you need to download a little utility written by John Hinckley (no, *not* the guy who took a shot at President Bonzo) called FastVid, which enables some key features on the Pentium Pro that are disabled by default. These features are—brace yourself—write posting, banked VGA write combining and SVGA linear frame buffer write combining. Without getting into too many nuts and bolts,

these features enable the Pentium Pro's Level 1 cache to work more efficiently with graphics output. The result is a dramatic increase in fgame graphics performance.

FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY...

Then there's the matter of floating point calculations, those arithmetic operations that use noninteger arithmetic for calculations. Most games today use integers (i.e., whole numbers) for many calculations, but more and more graphics-intensive 3D games will more than likely use floating-point calculations for geometry setup. Some current titles—QUAKE

GTIPS!

How Do You Rate?

Testing systems is a tricky business. Even when you think everything is identical except for the item you're testing—the graphics card, for example—you find that results can change from one test to another. Still, here are some hints on testing your own system with real applications.

▶ **ATF:** To test ATF frame rates, go into the pro mission builder. Create a mission with only one plane (yours) and have it sitting on a runway. Other aircraft or objects will affect frame rate in an unpredictable way. Enter the mission. Disable the joystick, since it eats into CPU performance and the potential maximum frame rate. When sitting in your cockpit, and the plane is idle, hit Ctrl-F (press the Control key and the F key simultaneously). You will see a number representing frame rate in frames per second at the bottom of your screen.

▶ **QUAKE:** To test Quake's frame rate, bring up the console window (press the ~ key) and type TIMEREFRRESH. You may want to do this past the beginning of a level to get the best number. Also, try it at different resolutions.

▶ **Duke Nukem 3D:** Run the Duke Nukem 3D setup program and choose the resolution you want to test; turning off sound will give you a better frame rate number. Save the configuration. At the DOS prompt, type "duke3d /m /1 /s3". When the spaceship crashes and you're actually in the game, type "DNRATE" without moving Duke. You'll see a continually refreshed frame rate number at the upper left corner of the screen.

▶ **CBench:** Download CBENCH from CompuServe's Flight Simulator Forum library 13 or from <http://www.dfw.net/~sdw/chris3d.html>. CBENCH is a "synthetic" benchmark, whose only purpose in life is to test the performance of your graphics system. There are two programs, BENCH, which tests VGA performance, and SVGABNCH, which tests SVGA performance.

▶ Finally, to get WinBench test results, you can order a copy of the new WinBench 97 (available in mid-November) from Ziff-Davis's benchmark operation group. Drop them a postcard and ask for the Winbench 97 CD-ROM:

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for example — already do. As it turns out, the Cyrix 6x86's floating-point unit (FPU) is slower than the comparable Pentium's. In turn, the Pentium's FPU hardware is slower than the Pentium Pro's, which explains why the *QUAKE* numbers vary greatly from one processor to another.

Also, the Pentium Pro shines in performing 32-bit operations — and all Win 95 titles these days are created using 32-bit technology (as opposed to older games using 16-bit technology). ATF is

a 32-bit game, and hence benefits from the Pentium Pro. The faster clock rate doesn't hurt either. However, the Pentium Pro doesn't work well with 8- and 16-bit operations, which shows up in the *DUKE NUKEM 3D* frame rate results. As it turns out, *DUKE NUKEM 3D* uses a lot of 8- and 16-bit operations, and the Pentium Pro's performance under *DUKE* suffers as a result.

Initially I was disappointed in the performance of the Cyrix chip, but

upon reflection, I realized it's pretty much performing at its potential. The 6x86 PI66+ costs less than the Pentium 166, and the Cyrix chip actually runs at 133 MHz, not 166 MHz. So is Cyrix's 6x86 PI66+ a Pentium 166 killer? For gaming, not really. It dusts the Pentium 133 for integer performance, but its floating point performance doesn't quite stack up. On the other hand, if you're on a tight budget, and you don't see yourself running a lot of floating-point-intensive games, then the 6x86 is worth considering. But if you're not on a tight budget, you'd do well to consider the Pentium 166.

What about the Pentium 200? I haven't actually tested a system using the Pentium 200, but initial reports indicate that the Pentium 200 runs only about 10 percent faster than the Pentium 166. Interestingly, the 200MHz Pentium Pro costs *less* at some outlets than the 200MHz Pentiums.

LAB NOTES

Something Klamath This Way Comes...

The next-generation Pentium Pro chip, code-named Klamath, will have some interesting features. The built-in Level 2 (L2) cache will no longer be permanently attached. Instead, there will be a snap-in module that may support cache sizes larger than 512KB. The detachable cache module will run a little slower than the current built-in L2 cache, but will run at a faster clock rate and will have a larger Level 1 cache. Intel will apparently offer Pentium Pro overdrive upgrades, for existing Pentium Pros, that will run at a higher clock rate and have Intel's MMX instruction set built in.

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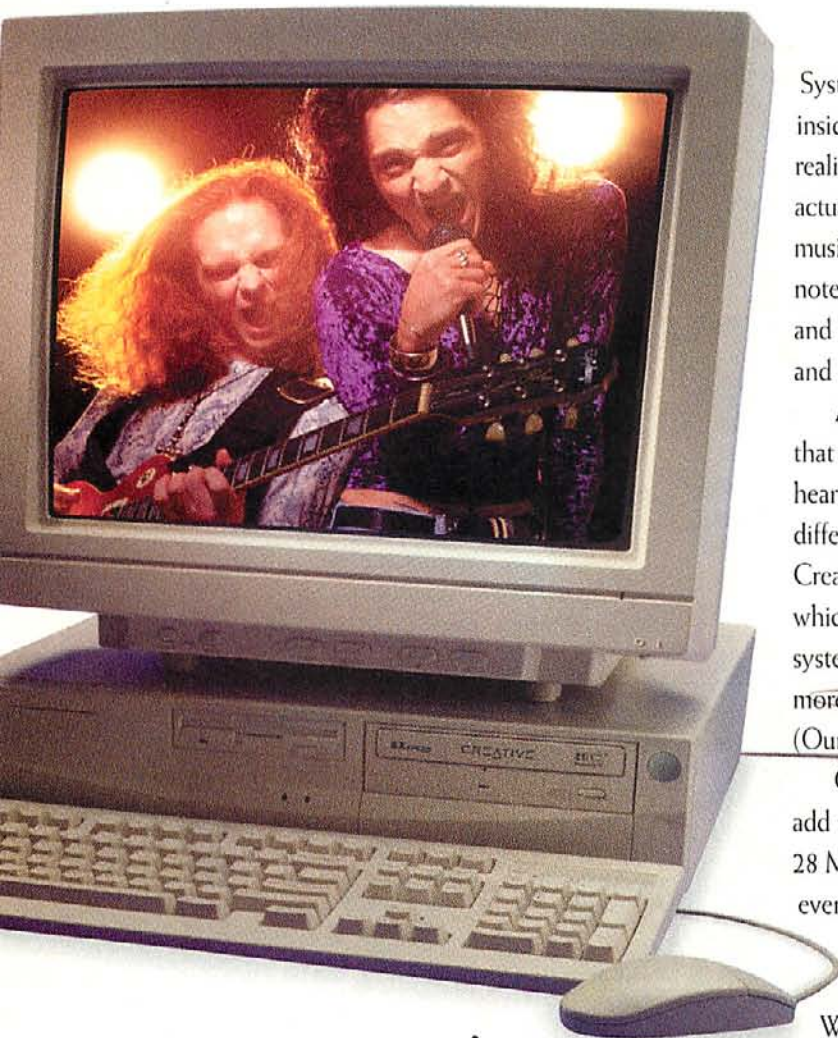


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MOTHERBOARDS AND OTHER RANTS

On to my next soapbox. Motherboard technology is advancing, too—in some ways faster than CPU technology. The *core logic chipset* or *CPU support logic* are those components on your computer's main system board that handle all the traffic-cop chores for moving data around. Recently, Intel has released a new core logic chipset for the Pentium. These new chips, collectively known as Triton II, have greatly streamlined data paths. In fact, it's possible now to build a motherboard that exceeds the capabilities of other components in the system if the designer isn't careful. I had a recent experience with one company whose motherboard wasn't ready for prime time. In truth, all they did was include a BIOS feature that could really juice up memory accesses—except that most people's memory couldn't handle, creating lockups and other problems. To be fair, the company did fix the problem, and most Triton II motherboards work quite well.

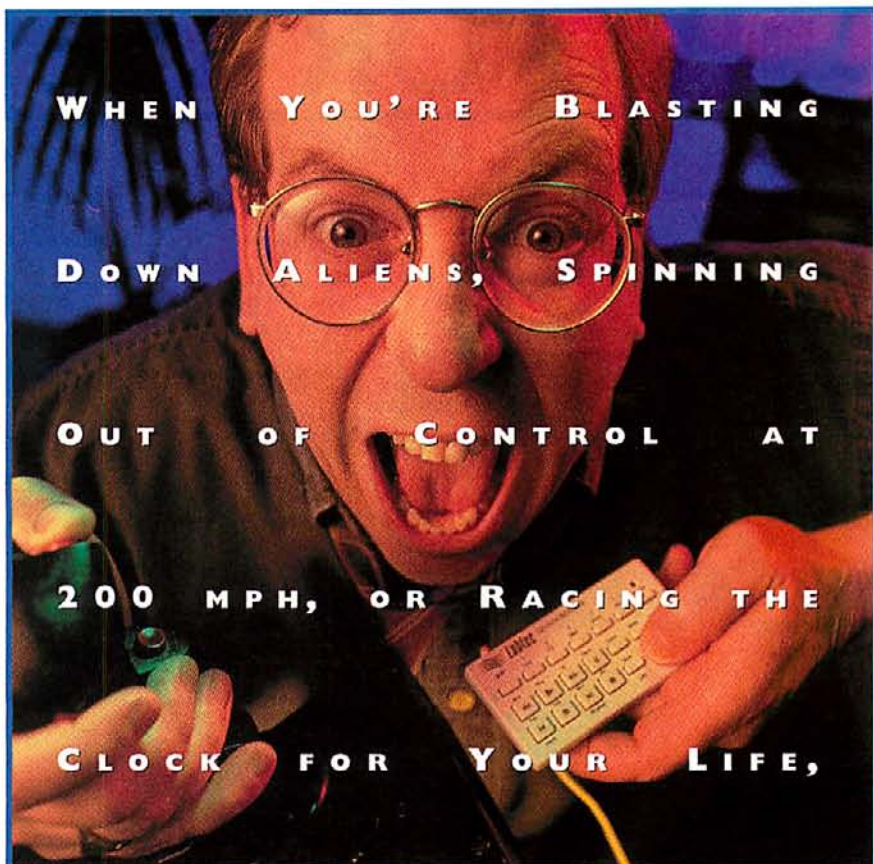
On the positive side, Intel also released a new chipset, code-named Natoma, for Pentium Pro systems. Natoma-based systems can use EDO DRAM and are much less problematic than systems using the older Orion chip-set. If you decide to roll your own upgrade, definitely look for boards using the newer chipsets.

By the way, if you decide to get one of the Cyrix processors, check with Cyrix to make sure your motherboard is supported. Better yet, buy a whole system. The P150+, the P166+ and the P200+ chips all generate a lot of heat, so a cooling fan is a must. Also, the P200+ has an external clock frequency—the speed at which it communicates with the memory bus—of 75MHz, whereas just about all other systems' memory busses run at 66MHz. Most motherboards can't handle the faster bus speed, so make sure the board you get has a memory bus capable of running at 75MHz.

Finally, what's in store for the future? Intel's MMX technology will show up in Pentium processors early next year, and MMX could have a significant impact on 2D graphics performance and audio. MMX will also be embedded in the Pentium Pro later in 1997. Another interesting development, Intel's Advanced Graphics Port (AGP) will be a special interface slot for graphics cards that will take voluminous 3D graphics traffic off the PCI bus and promises upwards of four times the PCI bus's maximum throughput.

Finally, Microsoft seems to have dipped a toe in the graphics hardware business. At SIGGRAPH, the annual conference for graphics gurus, Microsoft announced a reference hardware platform they call Talisman, specifically tuned to accelerate DirectDraw and Direct3D applications. Microsoft

doesn't want to get into the actual business of making graphics hardware; but instead wants to drive what they hope will be a standard specification (theirs), and license the technology to hardware vendors. Although Microsoft has strayed into the hardware business on occasion (the Windows Sound System, Microsoft Mouse and Sidewinder 3D joystick), Talisman appears to be much more ambitious. The ACP-based Talisman specification is very aggressive, calling for 75 frames per second running at 1024 x 768 x 24-bit color. More on this in next month's 3D graphics board feature. ☞

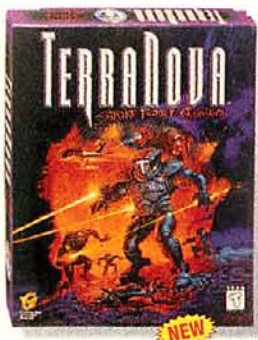
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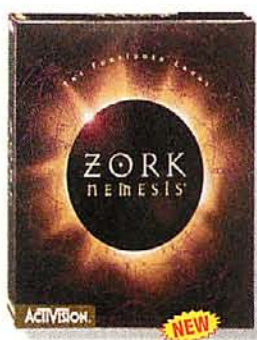


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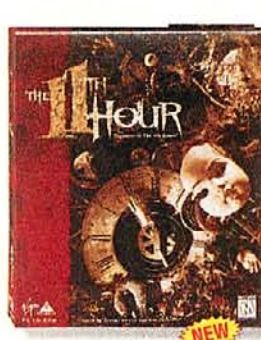
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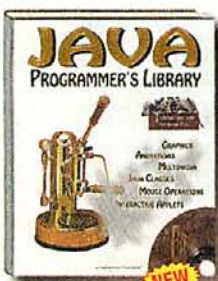
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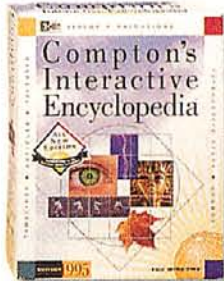
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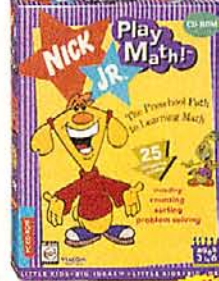
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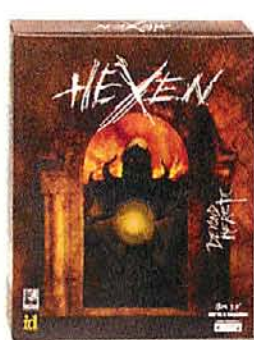
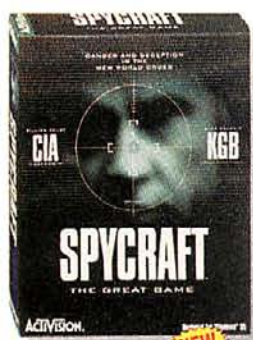
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Adventure 5069307

Flight Sim. 5051909

Arcade Style 5072400

Computer Tutor. 5061908

Adventure 5058102

Medical Ref. 5059605

Travel 5066006

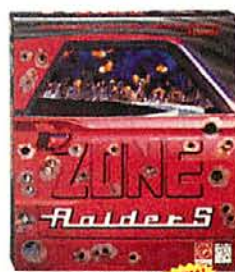
Children's Ed. 5045901

Children's Ed. 5037502

Children's Ed. 5027701

Children's Ent. 5072905

Adventure 5034707



Zone Raiders
Arcade Game 5058904
DOS 486/50, 8mb, J, K



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You Talkin' To Me?

Voice Recognition Finally Starts To Come of Age

by Dave Salvator

K2's Interactive's Verbal Commander is the latest speech recognition product designed for games. While not perfect, Verbal Commander (VC) does a good job of letting you drive DOS games with voice commands rather than keystrokes.

VC isn't Plug-and-Play, but it's easy to install since it requires only one I/O address (set with jumpers). Its DOS-based Verbal Commander utility ships with about 20 preconfigured command profiles for popular game titles.

VC is a "trainable voice-recognition system," meaning that you have to "teach" it commands, which it can then

recognize during gameplay. VC also ships with a headset that uses noise-cancellation to help improve the recognition rate.

We configured VC to play *QUAKE*, *DUKE NUKEM 3D* and *EF2000*, and for all three titles its hit rate on voice commands was pretty good, even with the



games' background noise. VC was sometimes intolerant of deviation from the original command sound, forcing the speaker to repeat a command several times before it would respond. But the hit rate was high enough in titles like *EF2000* to make flying the plane easier and more fun. Plus, VC is programmable, so you can configure games anyway you want.

K2 currently has a Windows 95 device driver and front end in the works; it's due out late this year. Over and out. ☺

Price: \$129.95

Vendor: K2 Interactive
(888) PLAY-K21
<http://www.k2i.com>
Reader Service #: 326

APPEAL: For action and flight sim gamers who pine for an extra set of hands to man the controls.

PROS: Easy installation; straightforward configuration utility; pretty good hit rate.

CONS: No native Windows 95 support yet; annoying reboot back to Windows 95 from DOS batch file.



REVIEW • QUICKSHOT SOUND FORCE SPEAKERS

Sound Deal

QuickShot Speakers Let You Crank It Up For Less

by Dave Salvator

What good are a game's killer sound effects and sound track if they're played through a pair of Dixie-cup speakers? As a rule, with speakers you do get what you pay for. QuickShot has introduced its Sound Force line of speakers, which deliver impressive sound quality at good prices. We listened to two models and we liked what we heard.

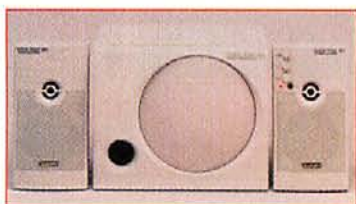
The Sound Force 660 is a two-speaker system with no subwoofer (actually, what's often referred to as a "subwoofer" is really a woofer). Despite the lack of a separate woofer, the 660 delivers good bass response and more-than-adequate vol-

ume levels with the volume control at about 50 percent. Other controls consist of bass/treble, power, and a 1/8-inch headphone jack that mutes the speakers when headphones are used. Gaming audio in *QUAKE* and *EF2000* sounded clean and well defined, with solid response from low

APPEAL: If you've had a hankering for better sound from your system, these babies could be the ticket.

PROS: Impressive sound quality at a good price. The 800's powerful amp and woofer will drive away pests.

CONS: You won't confuse them with Bang & Olufson speakers, but what do you want for less than \$200?



to high frequencies. Audio CD music also sounded clean, even at louder volume levels, and the frequency response didn't suffer at lower volume.

The Sound Force 800 features a 6 1/2-inch woofer with satellites, each of which is equipped with a 3-inch full-range driver. Again, quality was generally good, though some vocal music sounded a bit muddy. The 800's amplifier rating—240 watts overall—is four times that of the 660's, and it makes for louder volume levels sans distortion, and beefier bass response with the dedicated woofer.

Both speaker systems deliver good audio for the price, though the nod would have to go the 660, which at \$70 will greatly enhance any rig's ailing audio system. Your ears will see the difference. ☺



Price: Sound Force 660, \$69; Sound Force 800, \$149

Vendor: QuickShot, Inc.
Milpitas, CA
(408) 263-4163
<http://www.quickshot.com>
Reader Service #: 327

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All performance tests conducted by Matrox Graphics Inc. on a Gateway P5 166 configured with Intel P5 166MB, 16MB of 100 RAM with 256K cache. Matrox Mystique, Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 XL and ATI 3D Xpression were configured with 2 MB of memory for the PCI bus using driver releases 3.12, 1.0 and 2.22 respectively for Windows 95. WinBench 96 tests conducted at 1024 x 768 resolution with 8 bit color at 75Hz refresh using large fonts under Windows 95.

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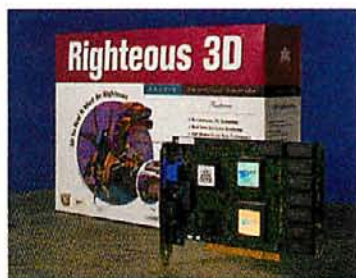
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Life With The Abby Normals



NORMALITY Offers Up Goofy, Lightweight Fun With An Edge

There isn't much that's normal about **NORMALITY**, a crazy little adventure from Gremlin Interactive and Interplay Productions. Set in an unspecified future in the city of Neutropolis, it follows the zany antics of Kent, an unkempt teenage malcontent who just wants to be left alone to do his own thing. Naturally, that's not about to happen.

Neutropolis isn't going to get on anyone's most-livable-cities list. A permanent cloud of smog hangs over the city, obscuring sun and sky. Norm troopers are everywhere, ready to enforce the "Stay Normal" motto of Leader Paul, one way or another, which usually means a stretch in the feared Blue Pens for the nonconformist.

Kent is very much a nonconformist,



YOODOO THAT YOODOO **NORMALITY** features, among other things, one of the oddest PDAs to grace an adventure game. Click on the doll's eyes to examine an object, click on his mouth to talk, and open his chest to open an object.

and, as the game starts, has just been released from a visit to the Pens. While doing time, he received a mysterious note from an unknown person. Following up

on that, it isn't long before he becomes involved with an underground movement, of sorts. "Of sorts," because as rebels, these folks are on the ineffectual side. They hide out in a dumpster, have no particular plan to follow, and aren't really working in any effective way to overthrow the current government.

Kent's arrival on the scene changes all that. Not that he's welcomed with open arms, mind you. Before he can join up, he has to prove himself. You get the impression that Heather, nominal leader of the group, hands him the assignment more to get rid of this stranger rather than as a real test.

Of course, when Kent is successful,

“ Only in **NORMALITY** can one make coffee from scummy water and white paint, and only in **NORMALITY** would someone drink it. ”

CRYSTAL BALL

The Crystal Ball foresees many new games set in TSR's AD&D universe.

Sierra Online now has the license to the Birthright world, and is working on its first title, **THE GORGON'S ALLIANCE**, as well as on a Birthright online game. As the Crystal Ball foretold in September, Interplay has the **Forgotten Realms** and **Planescape** licenses.

Take 2 has the **Ravenloft** and **Steel & Bone** licenses. Its first **Ravenloft**

game, **Iron & Blood**, will be published by Acclaim Entertainment.

Finally, SSI now only has the rights to finish its **DARK SUN ONLINE**; it does not have the rights to the rest of the **Dark Sun** world, which are up for grabs. SSI does have the license for the **Rod of Seven Parts** adventure, and is planning a game for a 1997 release.



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ROCKET BABE Join the revolution and meet fabulous revolutionary babes, such as the specimen shown here, ready to light your fire.

that attitude changes a bit, and suddenly our hero becomes the "man of all work" for the rebels. In fact, he ends up doing just about everything for them, while they continue to hang out in the dumpster, much as before. I guess old habits die hard. Heh.

DUMB AND DUMBER

While the background sounds grim, and there is a serious undercurrent, this is a comedy and it's all played for laughs. The 3D graphics have a certain cartoony aspect to them, everyone (except Kent) is about as sharp as a butter knife, and some

of the puzzles have improbable solutions. Only in *NORMALITY* can one make a cup of coffee from scummy water and white paint—and only in *NORMALITY* would someone drink it.

The interface, like many these days, is a simple affair. When the cursor is over a hot spot you can try one of three basic commands: Examine, Use, or Pick Up. This can be done from the keyboard by hitting the appropriate letter, or by using the game's "voodoo doll," which appears when you press the right mouse button while the cursor is over a hot spot. This doll is a caricature of Kent, and clicking

various parts of the body performs different actions. One hand picks items up; the other hand uses them. The eyes look at something, while the chest is used to open doors or other objects.

Moving around locations can be done using cursor keys or mouse; I found that the keyboard was generally easier. The view is mostly first-person 3D, although there are many cut scenes and automated sequences where Kent appears on screen. Usually these happen when Kent performs an action that is especially important, or especially bizarre. It's also possible to look up or down by using the Page Up and Page Down keys.

Movement between locations is accomplished by using a map. Places Kent can visit light up as the cursor touches them; clicking the mouse takes him there. Some areas are available throughout the game, while others are reachable only once. Kent has to learn about, or be sent to, most locations to get there.

Conversations begin when you click on a person. Occasionally, the conversation will be automatic between Kent and the other person, but most of the time, you have several topics to choose from.

Happily, *NORMALITY* allows for text only, speech only, or both speech and text. Since few sound cards are supported—the Gravis is fortunately one of them—having an all-text option brings the game



Price: \$49.95

System Requirements: IBM-compatible 486DX2 66MHz, MS-DOS 5.0, 8MB RAM, 20MB hard drive space, or better, 2x CD-ROM, Microsoft-compatible mouse, VGA or SVGA with correct VESA drivers. Supports Sound Blaster, Microsoft Sound System, Ensoniq Soundscape.

of Players: 1

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Designers: Gremlin Interactive Ltd.

Publisher: Interplay Productions

Irvine, CA

(714) 553-6655

Reader Service #: 328

CG TIPS!

NORMALITY TIPS: Having trouble gaining entry to the TV station? It's obvious that the security guard has an aversion to rats, but scaring him with the rubber rat from the mall is not good enough. If you think back to the beginning of the game, you should recall that there's a real rat trapped in your washing machine at home. To open the machine, you're going to need to smash the door with a heavy (frozen) object.

▶ Painting the waffle sculpture yellow, as Heather asks you to do, is no easy task. The first thing to do is to find the extin-

guisher and fill it with the yellow paint in the barrel by the river.

Does the Norm confiscate the extinguisher when you try to go back? Don't worry—it's all part of the plan. Just find a way to get the Norm to use the extinguisher on the statue himself. If there was just some way to set it on fire...

▶ At the Ordinary Outpost, you don't need to destroy the evidence against you, but it changes the game if you do. If you decide to do it, you need to fix



the grinder by finding and then attaching two cogs to it. Grab the ladder on the way out to the haulage container—you'll need it to find the smaller cog. Once you've fixed the grinder, throw in every piece of evidence to destroy it.

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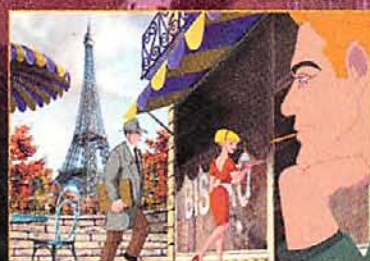
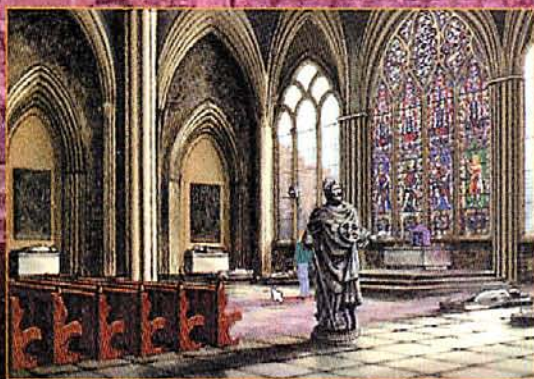
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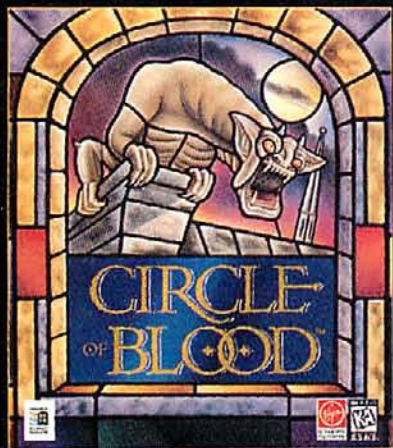
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AFTER



IndyCar with Reactor Graphics

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within reach of more people. On the other hand, having sound is important, since it is the voice of Kent (played by Corey Feldman) that carries much of the game. Seeing the words alone on screen just isn't the same as hearing them.

Save positions are generous; you can have up to 99 of them, as well as overwrite earlier saves. Saving and restoring can be done most of the time; there are a few instances, such as during conversations, when this option isn't available.

RIDDLE ME THIS

Generally, the puzzles are not, for the most part, all that difficult. Many times, what to do in a situation is obvious; it is having the right item or items on hand that can be trouble. Miss something somewhere, and you could be stuck for quite awhile on what is otherwise an easy problem. That happened to me in the Mall toy store. I ran the cursor over the tool wall; three items were "dead" spots, and I didn't touch the fourth one. Of course, that was the important item.

If you do get stuck, the back of the manual has some hints and obscure clues to solving many of the puzzles. It's fairly detailed on getting you started (out of the apartment); after that, the hints are not quite so generous, but enough in many cases to spur you on.

NORMALITY is also a short game. Major locations are few, and there is much running back and forth between them. Sequences tend to alternate between complex and simple. Painting the waffle sculpture at the MINT Mall is a complicated maneuver, while playing the video at the TV station is straightforward. Likewise, rescuing Saul is an involved matter, whereas the rescue of Dai Vanderlip is almost a trifle.

The two main irritations I had with **NORMALITY** were the inconsistent interface and the loading times. Supposedly, you can use keyboard commands for everything in the game, but that isn't

true. I first ran into this problem while trying to destroy evidence in the Research Lab.

After fixing the grinder, I simply couldn't do anything with the items needing destruction. Kent would say "I don't want it" or "What would I do with it?" when I tried to pick up or use the objects. This nearly drove me crazy until, in desperation, I tried the voodoo doll method, and then everything went well. There were a few other similar instances later in the game, where the keyboard didn't work but the doll did. I am surprised that something like this escaped the attention of the playtesters.

The other annoyance was the slow loading time of new areas. When Kent travels between locations, say from the Plush-Rest Factory to the MINT Mall, you see him either looking at a watch or jogging through a blue spiral while the new area loads in. There's nothing you can do here but wait, and the wait is a



SURF CITY Kent's adventures take him all over the grimy police state of Neutropolis, including, at one point, a raft ride down the city's polluted river.

long one. There were times I was reluctant to travel because of this, especially when I knew it was just to run somewhere, pick up a single item and then come back.

Overall, though, **NORMALITY** isn't bad. It has some genuine humor in it, and can be a good change of pace if you've been playing something heavy (like **THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE**) lately. While the game is not likely to keep veteran adventurers occupied for very long, anyone looking for light material and a quick play will probably find it here. **E**

Would it be uncouth to applaud myself?



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Circle Reader Service #87

Opening Pandora's Boxes

Need A Hint? Scorpia Takes A Walk Through THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE

This month, we take a trip through The Pandora Directive, and as there's a lot to cover, we'll get right to it.

As you probably know, PANDORA has seven possible endings. Which one you get depends for the most part on how Tex reacts to people, what deals he accepts or

refuses, and how he handles his relationship with Chelsea. This is entirely up to the player, so I'm not saying much about that, especially as the game path has little effect on the puzzles. I will mention one milestone along the way: If you take Chelsea to the Flamingo, you're not on Mission Street.

DAY ONE

This is get-acquainted-with-the-neighborhood day. Mostly you hit the stores around the block, finding out exactly how much Tex owes everyone. Paying up is a smart idea, but it's best to leave Nilo at the Ritz for last, as that gets you into a certain apartment and ends the day.

DAY TWO

Recovering from the traditional "PI gets conked on the head" routine, you have the chance to search Malloy's apartment. Take your time, look everywhere, and be sure to examine all you find. This gives you more things to ask about around the neighborhood. With the right approaches, Tex ends up with a couple of keys. One opens the warehouse; the other gets you into the Flamingo, briefly.

Then it's off to the cabin in the woods, where matters look rather ominous. Before you can open the locked door,

you'll have to go back to Tex's apartment and solve the (simple) color puzzle on the CD and return.

The day ends at the Flamingo; whether Tex is there with Chelsea or not, eventually he slips upstairs for a chat with Emily.

DAY THREE

A busy one. First, you have to reconstruct the torn note (pretty simple, this one). Who would know best about stalkers and killers? Right, go have a chat with him. Then another round of the streets is in order, after which you should have no trouble getting in touch with Lucia Pemell and setting up a very informative meeting.

Have we been to the roof of the Funhouse yet? No? (Did you remember to ask for the key?) Let's go take a look...after getting past the cop lock, that is. The first pair is a one-to-one relationship; the rest can be found with some trial and error.

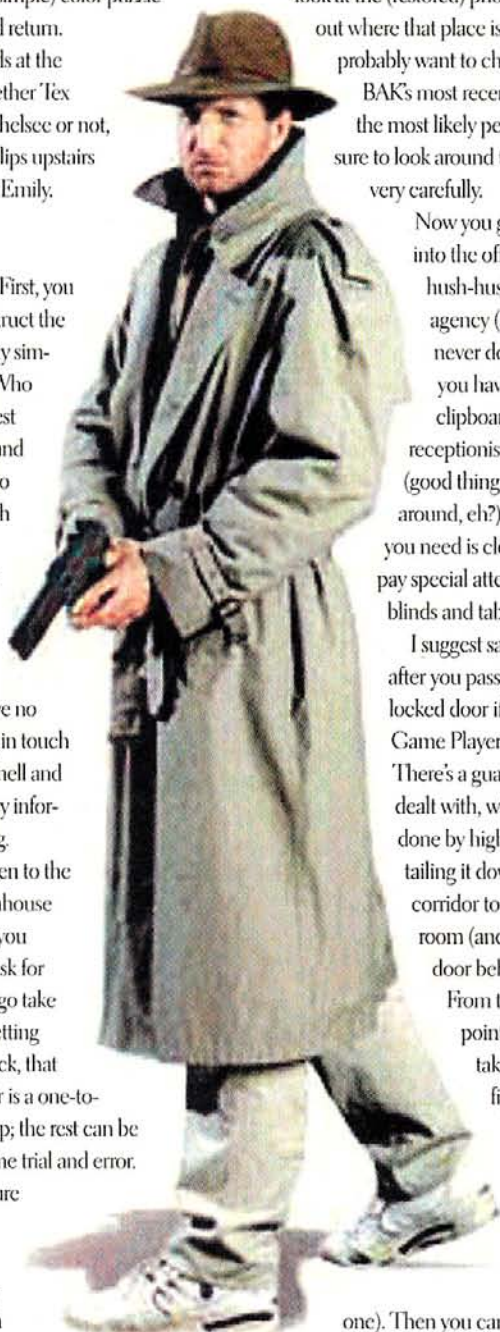
Someone sure was careless, leaving his jacket up here. Especially with

some stuff in it. You'll need to take a closer look at the (restored) photo to find out where that place is. You'll also probably want to check out the BAK's most recent victim; ask the most likely person, and be sure to look around the room very carefully.

Now you get to break into the offices of a hush-hush federal agency (a PI's work is never done). First, you have to get the clipboard from the receptionist's desk (good thing no one is around, eh?). Everything you need is close at hand; pay special attention to the blinds and table.

I suggest saving right after you pass through the locked door if you're in Game Player mode. There's a guard to be dealt with, which is best done by high-tailing it down the left corridor to the storage room (and close the door behind you!).

From this vantage point, it shouldn't take you long to figure out how to give the guard the slip (in more ways than one). Then you can snoop





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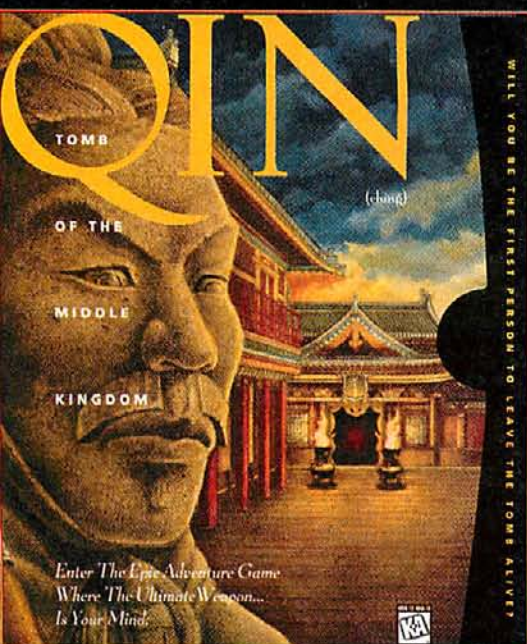
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SCORPION'S TALE

around a certain office, being sure to overlook the bookcase, among other things.

Whew! You made it out alive. There's one person to talk to (very important), then you can head to the water tower, and watch as the BAK gets ready for another victim. Uh oh! Will Emily survive? Maybe, maybe not. Either way, you have to catch the guy yourself (lucky 'Tex). This is tricky, and real-time, too. Basically, you have to get close to him without being seen. Timing and moving fast are crucial here, as well as keeping out of sight.

DAY FOUR

After the automated conversation with Malden (and a brief glimpse of Regan, Malloy's daughter), it's time to find the missing box. You'll want to look down under, once you have something from up on top. Don't be too quick to grab it, though. Check out the box first; a trap awaits the unwary (this is not hard to defuse).



TOWER OF POWER Observe the killer in action from the water tower on the Funhouse roof.

Sometime after this, Tex will be picked up for interrogation by the Feds. The rules for survival (Tex can easily die here) are don't be "smart," don't be dumb, don't tell all you know, and don't hang on to it.

There's something in the alley behind the Flamingo you'll want to take a very close look at (once you get it down). A friend can help you find the location. How you handle the landlady is up to you, but you must get into the room and pick up everything you can. It's also necessary to leave and return, so you can finally locate Malloy and have a chat with him.

DAY FIVE

After checking messages, the first order of the day is to return to the scene of last night's fire-works. Aside from stuff to grab there's a safe to be opened. The answer is on the Everlok card (the people who give you a square deal). This provides a couple of things, including an important key, which, of course, you run right off to use. Then you'll have to break the bad news to someone.

Now you hear from darling Lucia again. She doesn't want much; she just

wants you to break into the Fed offices again. Lucky 'Tex! Remember to ask for a favor in return (after this, by the way, Lucia will be unavailable until Day Eight).

OK, now you need a way in there. The dead can be of assistance here; talk to a pal about that.

Once at the offices, don't head to the Evidence Room right away; there's something else here to check out first.

Now you're ready for a little thievery. Four lockers in all can be opened. Two require keys (which you have); the other two are already open (careless, these security boys). Did you notice that "travel" was suppressed when you entered the room? This is deliberate. You'll have to do something with the evidence before you can waltz out with it. After this, hurrah! You won't need to return.

You'll hear from Regan again, and



HOTEL HELL Nilo wants his money in a bad way, but try to hold out until the end of Day One to pay him off.

while she hasn't much to tell, you do get another lead. Before rushing off, though, you might want to open those two boxes you have. Regan's is easy, if you have something from Malloy's crate; just match the patterns. Emily's box is quite another matter, however, and one of the tougher puzzles.

After combining the necessary items, concentrate on the physical relationship between the cities mentioned (you may already have noticed that the peg holes make no sense when compared with the map). When something appears on the peg board, you'll know you've placed a pair correctly.

Finally, you can go talk to your new contact. Be sure to go over everything with him; you may need to converse twice (the most important thing here is Roswell). Then Fitzpatrick will give you the info you need.

DAY SIX

Worried about Archie? You're right to feel that way. I suggest doing something about it, soon. Today and Day Seven take place in the Roswell military facility. This is the easy day; everything here is traditional adventure game stuff. Tex is in the security compound right now; the goal is to get into the main complex.

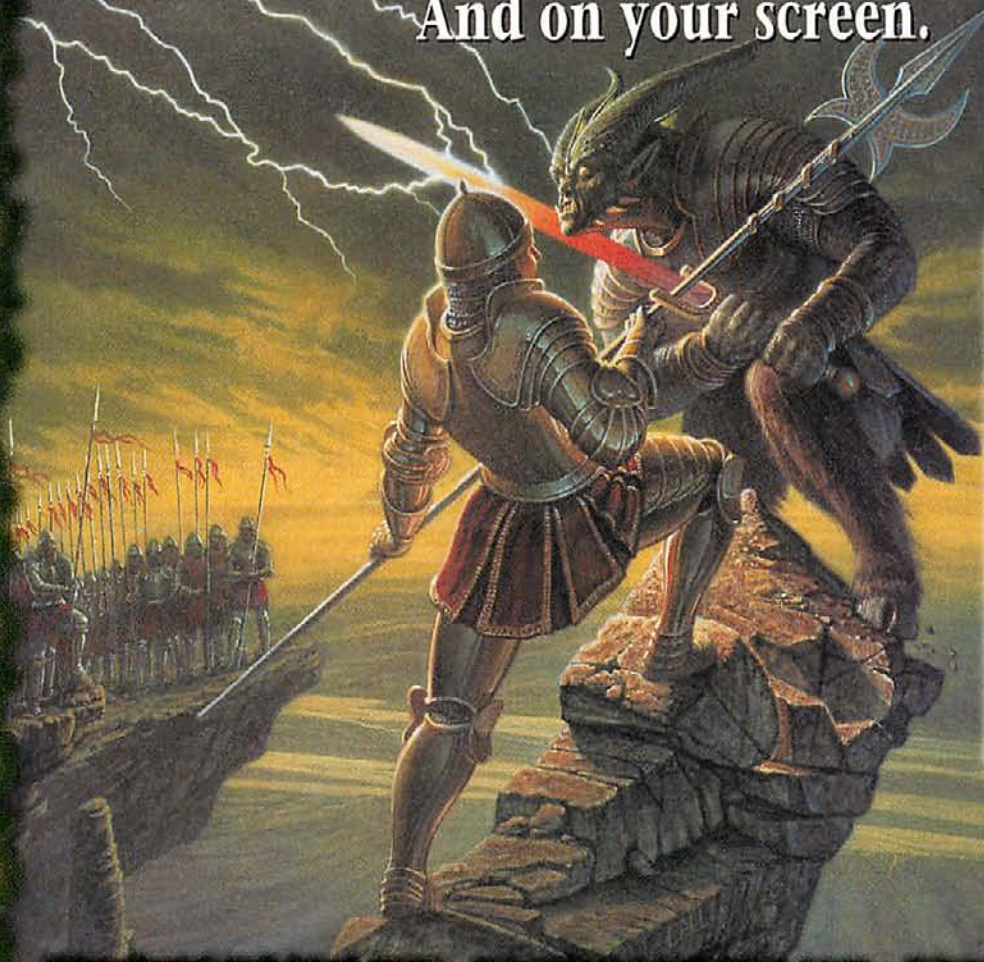
As usual, grab everything you can. In Game Player mode, you have to reassemble the paper punches for the code to the laser field room (no code in Entertainment mode). Outside, follow the same routine (only one shed can be opened),

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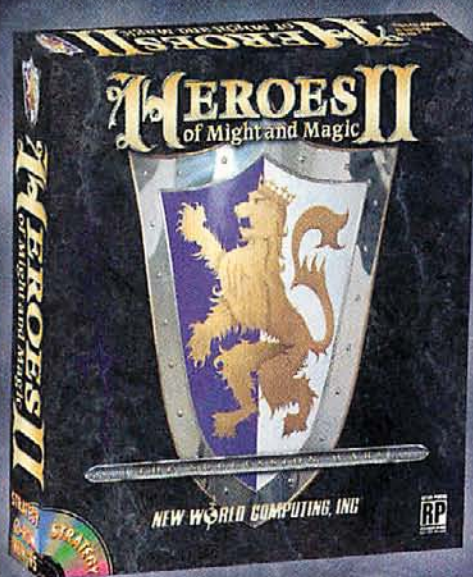
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Circle Reader Service #142

SCORPION'S TALE

noting the loudspeaker system. In the laser room, deactivating parts of the field is not hard, if you keep in mind that you don't have to use just the numbers mentioned in the instructions (this is an old puzzle, by the way). Then walk through the blue parts to the other end (this is where the sealed door is).

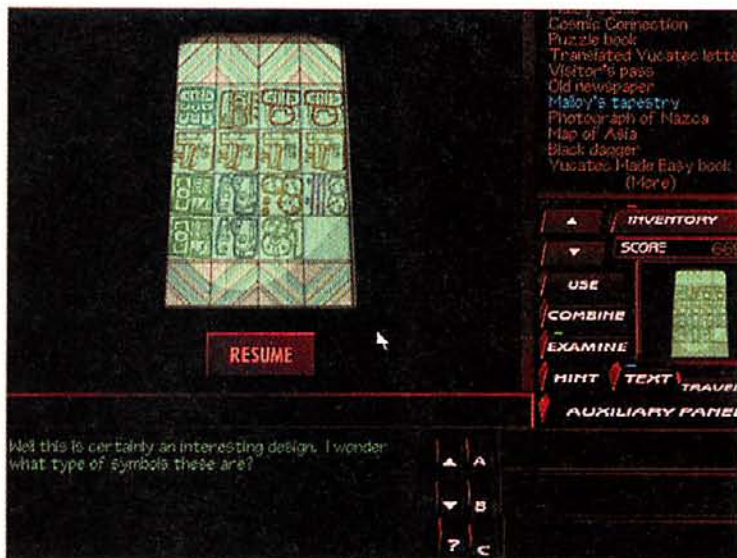
Now you can work on opening the emergency door in the security compound. This is very obvious stuff, so we'll skip to the important part: blowing open the sealed door. Stand as far from the door as you can when you place the dynamite. Once that's done, you must run back through the laser field and out the door ASAP! If you're not fast enough, Tex will be caught in the blast (you may want to save before setting the charge, just in case!).

DAY SEVEN

Nasty. An alien something is in there, and it's on the way. Tex will die if the thing catches him, so let's avoid that. Leave sightseeing for later. Everything needed is on this floor, in the rooms on the left (from where you enter) side.

The objective is to lure the thing to a certain place, where you can then use a certain device on it. After listening to the CD in the dorms, you'll know what room that is. I suggest starting with the mess hall kitchen, and then going on to the two storage rooms.

After the thing is gone, you can explore at leisure. The rec room has several



MALLOY'S AFORETHOUGHT Having trouble opening Regan's box? Check out the tapestry in Malloy's crate for help.

important items, especially the Abductor toy. Some of what you pick up, combined with the duct tape, will get you the security card. Unfortunately, only one room on level two is open; the rest are sealed off. Check this room carefully, especially around the projector.

Since you can't get past the doors, you'll have to send the abductor through the ducts instead. Everything is on J2; there are four rooms (three in Entertainment mode) to visit, and each has something you need. When you've got them all, you can use the second elevator...after dealing with the C-4 charge wired to the controls (this stuff is worse

than toxic).

OK, you're almost done.

Down on level three, you have to assemble a working acetylene torch (from what you find here and other items you should have found

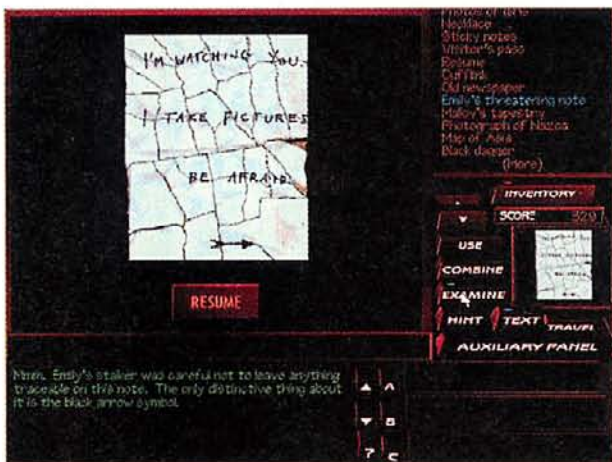
on level one). That gets you into the storage facility. The final puzzle is to manually move (via computer) the containers around so you can get out the one you want. This requires a bit of thought and some advance planning, but it isn't hard. Once you have the item you came for, you can leave, ending the day (whew!).

DAY EIGHT

Ms. Pernell is available again, so give her a buzz and make the exchange. Finally, you can read the disk you picked up from Malloy's other room (which seems ages ago by now). This gets you Elijah Witt's phone number (before calling him, you may want to visit the electronics store).

Talking to Witt is tricky; I found the fatherly approach best for starters. Essentially, you're going to lure him out so you can break into his apartment and grab his box. Save before going there. Once inside, an alarm sounds, and you must run around the apartment hitting plates (four) to turn it off before the cops come. Three are on the ground floor (two are visible, one is masked); one is upstairs.

Do a thorough search upstairs and downstairs, grabbing and examining everything possible. Check out the area near the fireplace, and you will soon have the key to the statue. Inside is a moving block puzzle; you should have found the



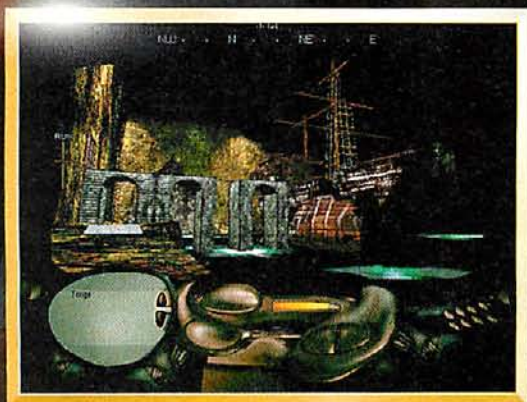
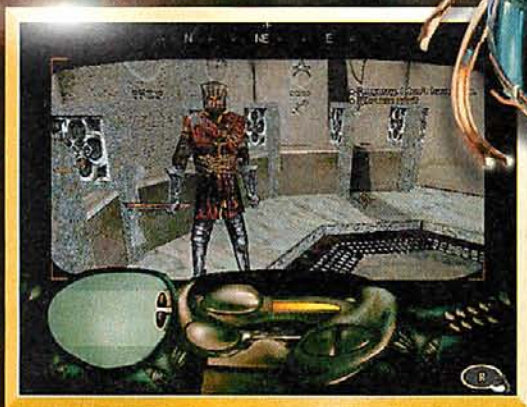
THE PUZZLE PLACE Blatantly ignoring the bounds of subtlety, we have assembled the torn note for your viewing pleasure. That's what you get for reading a walk-through.

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SCORPION'S TALE

numbers upstairs.

Now you have Witt's box, and this opens with the infamous Mayan Calendar puzzle. To solve this, just remember to treat the Mayan days as months (this is incorrect in reality, but it works in the game).

Only one box remains to be found. This is the one packed off to South America; it may have been returned to sender, so check that out. When you have it, use the onyx pieces from Witt's box to construct a frame around this box. At last, you can assemble the Pandora Device, which leads to a long automated sequence ending the day.

DAY NINE

This is a romp through a Mayan Pyramid. You start in the map room. Gather all 14 pieces, and check one of the corridors for something so you can copy the map after you put the pieces together. This area is not really a maze, but you



LIGHT MY FIRE What would a mystery story be without a bogus fireplace? Snoop around here for that key that you're looking for.

must check every corridor and dead end as you go so you don't miss an important item. If you are in Game Player mode, examine every room door carefully, not-

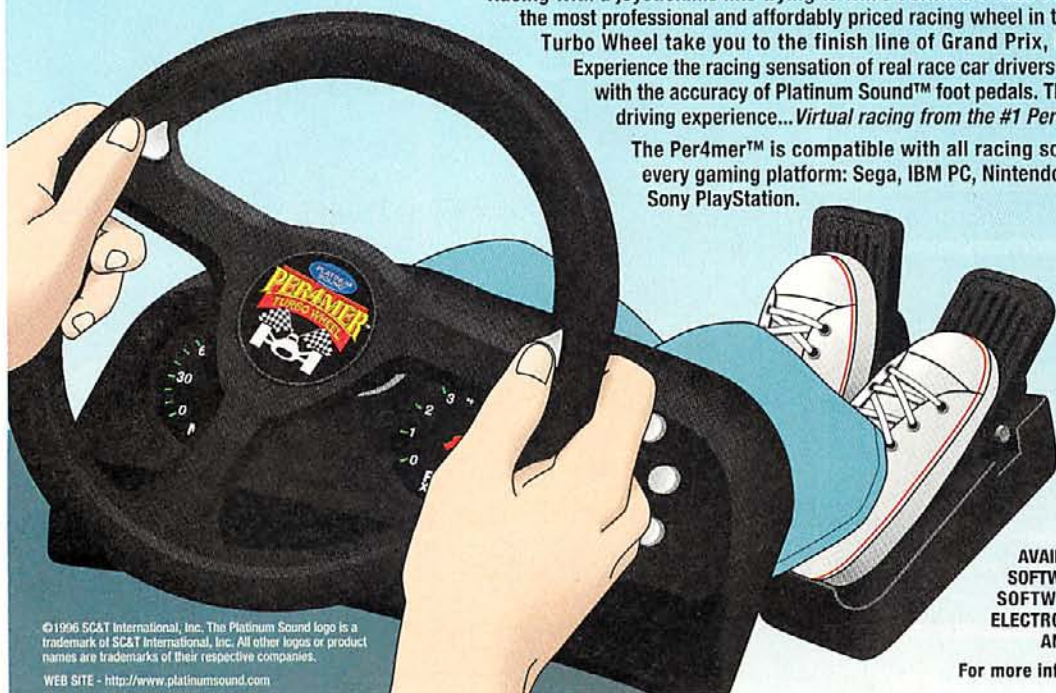
ing especially the dot positions.

Always examine the walls of each new room. They usually hold clues to puzzle solutions. In the birds room, the crystals

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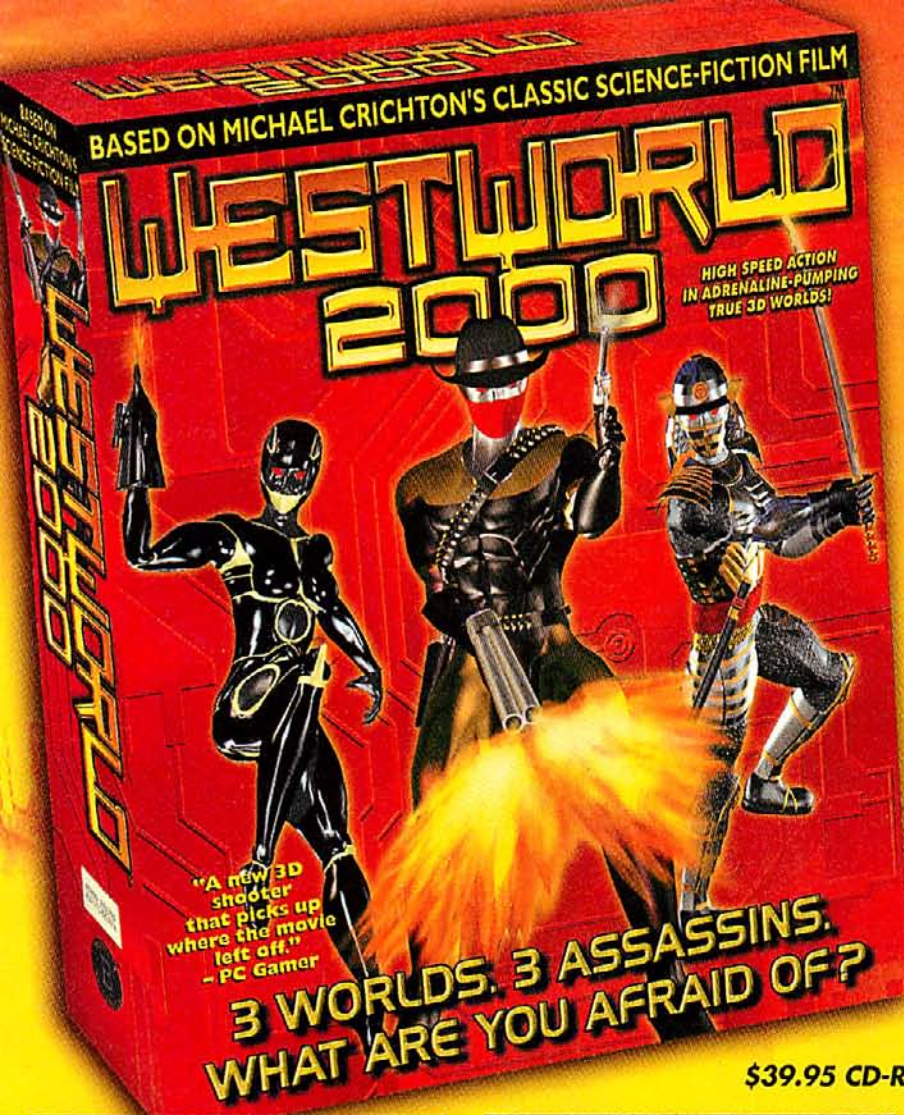


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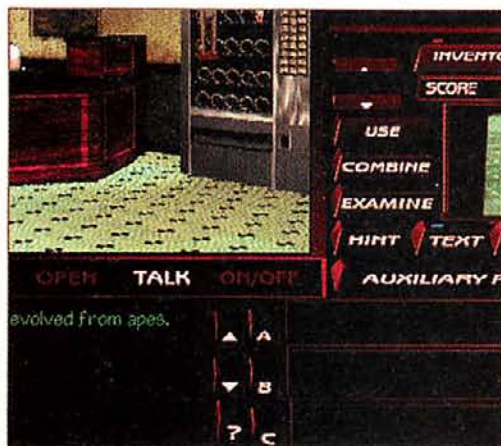


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OBSIDIAN

SCORPION'S TALE

are hit in pairs. When you do it right, the pair turns black. This opens the door out, which in Game Player mode (only) leads to the Fireball room. Here I'm giving the answer; you *must* try all four doors. The order doesn't matter; it's always the fourth



OUT, MON SEWER Having trouble locating a certain box? Try taking a trip through a manhole. And don't pick up that box too quickly!

door you try that opens, which is why you have to go to all of them.

In the wasp room, you have to smoke out the bugs before you can do anything. Then it's simply a matter of doing an easy jigsaw-type puzzle and moving on to the dagger room. Check the totem pole for the solution. Then you can head to the pentagon room, the last one. In Game Player mode, there is a puzzle to solve here; this relates to the door dot positions. When it's completed (don't waste time or the ceiling will crush you), Tex is deposited in the Mayan Ascension Room, where he meets up again with Regan. First look around for something useful, then see what you can use it on. An explosive combination and a little

weight in the right places will get both of you out of the room.

Finally, you're out of the pyramid...and right there in front of you is what you're after. And after this, I'm not saying anything, because what happens next depends entirely on the path you've followed through the game, and the rest is up to you.

Good luck! ☘

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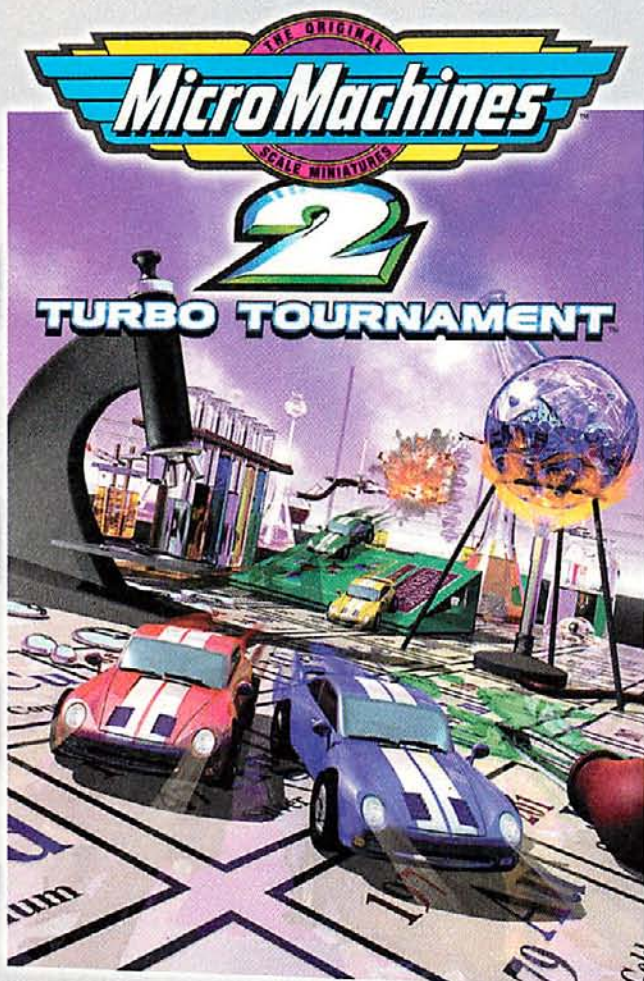
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Hate Myst? Get Pyst!

John Goodman And Jokesters From The Firesign Theater Team Up To Satirize Pretentious Megahit

By Kate Hedstrom

MYST is probably the closest thing we've got to a pop-culture phenomenon in computer games. While you were playing DOOM, your grandmother was playing MYST. It's been a permanent resident at the top of the sales charts, and industry bean-counters say that close to 4 million people have taken a crack at the game. If you've been paying any attention to computer games in the past two years, you've at least heard about those sumptuous graphics, that enigmatic story, and those, um,

challenging puzzles.

The game, for better or worse, spawned an entire subcategory of adventure game—the MYST-alike—as software publishers scrambled to duplicate its success with pretty, but mostly lifeless worlds chock full of irritating lever-and-button puzzles. And MYST took itself so darn seriously, which makes it a very ripe target for some good-natured ribbing.

Enter PYST. The first title in a planned series of parodies from Parrot Interactive, PYST is not a game but a tongue-in-cheek look at what might happen when 4 million pleasure-seekers are set loose on a tiny island (Pyst, in this case) to flip levers, poke buttons, and try to get something, *anything*, to happen. It looks like the midway at the county fair right after they kick out the last drunk and lock the gates.

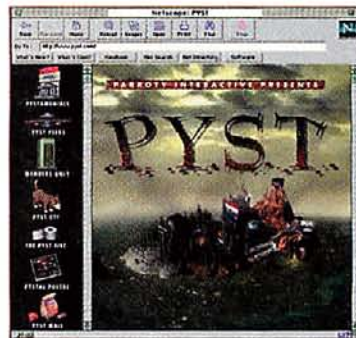
The devastation is revealed in a series of postcards: cigarette butts and trash litter the ground, graffiti covers the walls, a trailer park has taken root on the lawn outside the observatory, and, to make matters worse, there's a tornado on the horizon. Because a frustrated gamer is not a happy gamer, someone's been flinging stuff at that damn clock tower with a catapult. Anyone who's struggled



WHAT, ME WORRY? Not that you're likely to need it, but don't expect to get much assistance from the Help files if something goes wrong.

through MYST will experience a certain sense of satisfaction at seeing the great blue and red books sizzling away in the library fireplace.

Some of the levers and buttons around the island still work, but they've been rewired to give very different results. Clicking on the hot spots scattered throughout each scene yield animations in the *Mad* magazine vein—a dog



WILD, WILD WEB Spread the joy by e-mailing PYST postcards to your friends and loved ones from Parrot's site at www.pyst.com.



urinate, toxic waste oozes into the sea—and we see just how bad things have become for poor Pyst Island.

But they're about to get worse. The Octoplex Corporation has big plans to turn Pyst into a resort community, with condominiums, a golf course, even a jet-ski marina. Right away we meet our Octoplex representatives, Bob and Cheryl, a pair so perky they make the *Entertainment Tonight* anchors sound positively sullen. Before Octoplex breaks ground, however, they're going to have to do something about that family of aliens that's taken up residence in the rocket ship.

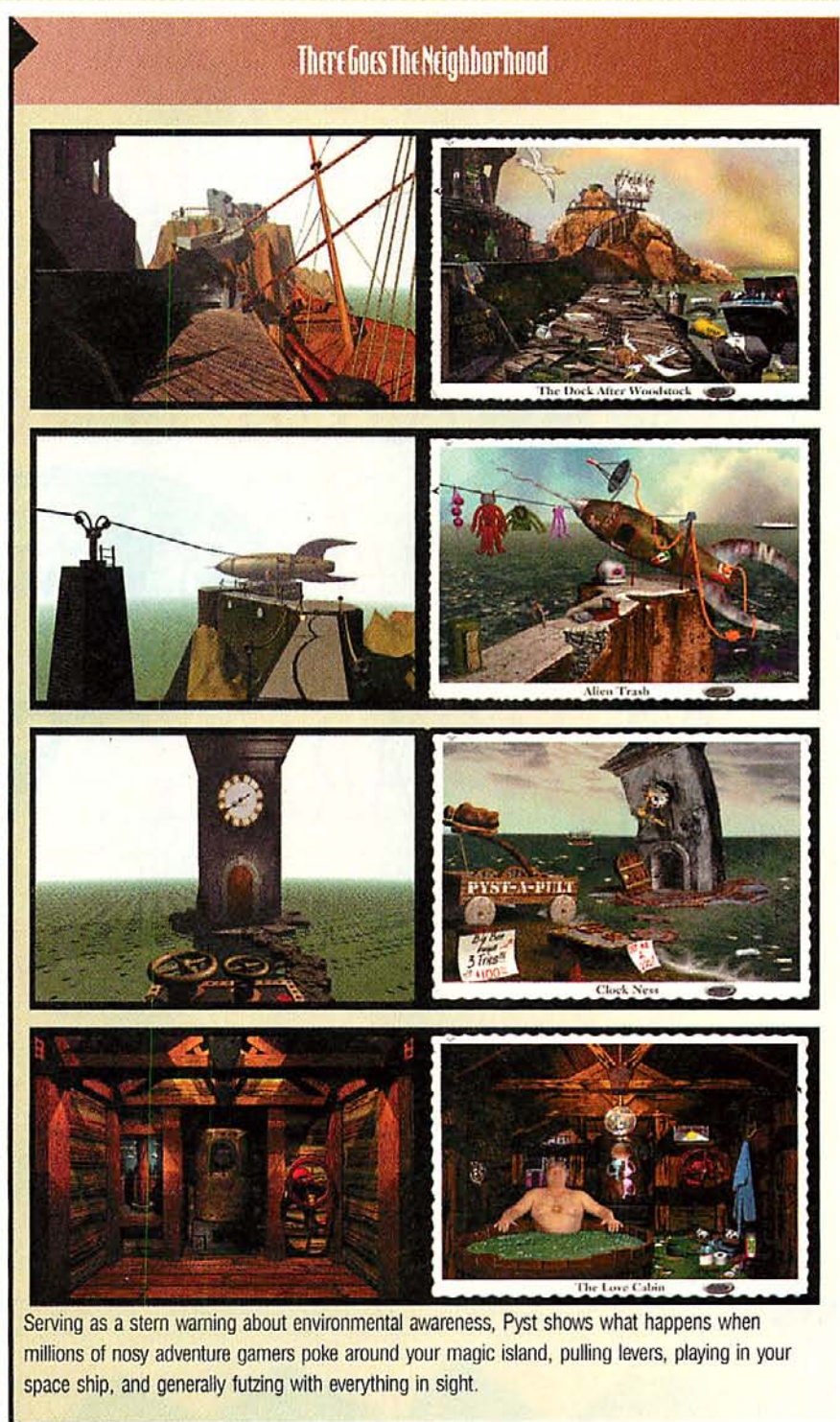
Oh, and in case you're wondering what happened to the mysterious creator of our fair island, he hasn't been left out. John Goodman plays the foggy King Matruss, who's since found a much better use for that furnace in the log cabin. He really *wants* to get rid of the riffraff who've invaded his peaceful kingdom, but he can't seem to get around to doing anything about it. Those two ne'er-do-well sons of his are still hanging around, too. The delicate Prince Syrrup appears to have developed a nervous condition from interacting with so many island explorers (well, who could blame him?). His brother, on the other hand, the Prince (formerly known as Prince), has fared much better and seems to be settling into his newfound celebrity quite well.

As mentioned earlier, PYST is not a game and doesn't pretend to be more than it is—a one-joke dig at a pompous, over-hyped product. Even so, not all the humor in PYST is directed toward its inspiration. Peter Bergman, cofounder of the venerated Firesign Theater comedy ensemble, created the video and audio clips, so many of the jokes derive as much from American pop culture and current events as they do from MYST. While this gives PYST a wider appeal, it's a little disappointing that the creators passed up some of the more obvious chances for having fun at MYST's expense.

Parrot's PYST plans don't stop with the CD-ROM. A Web site accessible directly from the program is being set up that will allow users to e-mail PYST postcards to

friends, as well as get a look at new scenes available only online. Purchasers of the product get access to a members-only area with chat, bulletin boards and extra goodies. Parrot also plans on expanding the site to include non-PYST chuckles and other parodies as the product line grows, as well as links to other humor sites on the Web. The disc includes a trailer of John

Goodman singing the "Theme from PYST" and a short movie chronicling the making of PYST, which is at least as funny as the parody itself. PYST is expected to ship in mid-October as a hybrid Windows-Mac CD-ROM. At a street price of about \$14.95, this might be just the right stocking stuffer for the favorite MYST-basher in your life. ☿



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Low-Tech High-Tech

A Wonderful Play In THE NEVERHOOD CHRONICLES

by Johnny L. Wilson

When you think of the onscreen magic of Steven Spielberg, you think of special effects. Spielberg, the genius filmmaker, has been known to tell his employees that "if

it doesn't seem impossible, it probably isn't worth doing." After bringing great white sharks, the Ark of the Covenant, an extraterrestrial with a capital E.T., and long-extinct dinosaurs to life, you'd expect that when this generation's answer to Irving Thalberg and Orson Welles turned his attention to computer games, they would be full of high-tech special effects.

You'd be wrong. Not only will one of the first Dreamworks SKG games to be released lack high-tech special effects for which Spielberg is known, but the design team has eschewed the digital tools with

which computer game pyrotechnic magic has usually been built.

Avoiding the more cost-efficient animation possibilities of Softimage or 3D Studio Max, the design team known as 'The Neverhood has brought THE NEVERHOOD CHRONICLES to life by using the

time-honored stop-action animation style made famous by brilliant animators like Willis O'Brien (*King Kong*, *Mighty Joe Young*), Ray Harryhausen (*The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, *Clash of the Titans*), and George Powell (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*). They hoped that the clay environment and occasional rough spots in the animation would have more charm than computer animation's relatively sterile look. Their instincts were correct.

CAN YOU SAY "NEVERHOOD!"?

The Neverhood is a design team created by a number of refugees from Shiny (including team members from the ALADDIN Sega Genesis game and EARTHWORM JIM), and THE



BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER CLAY Klaymen must assemble the bridge-control mechanism at this point and drain the lake to reach the laboratory.

NEVERHOOD CHRONICLES is their way of doing something different by creating a traditional-style adventure game with stop-action, clay animation. The protagonist, a latex Everyman known simply as Klaymen, lives in a universe literally made of clay (the sets themselves occupy 2,000 square feet and involved 2 1/2 tons of clay). Indeed, even the interface is made up of menus hand-drawn in clay, a clay cursor and clay buttons.

At first, the game feels like *MYST* in clay. Klaymen has to solve puzzles to get out of rooms where he is all alone, and is much like an inexperienced method actor still trying to find his motivation.

Fortunately, it doesn't take long to get past the *MYST* déjà vu. THE NEVERHOOD CHRONICLES (INC) should appeal to the *MYST* audience, since the puzzles are the spatial and logic puzzles similar to those found in that megahit. Also the game universe is so artistically wonderful that some players will just want to explore all the different scenes just to see the weird clay

**CG SNEAK
PREVIEW**
GAME STILL IN DEVELOPMENT



PUTTY-PUTTY CAR One cute puzzle in the game involves the orientation of these putt-putt cars with regard to these Mayan-esque etchings on clay walls.

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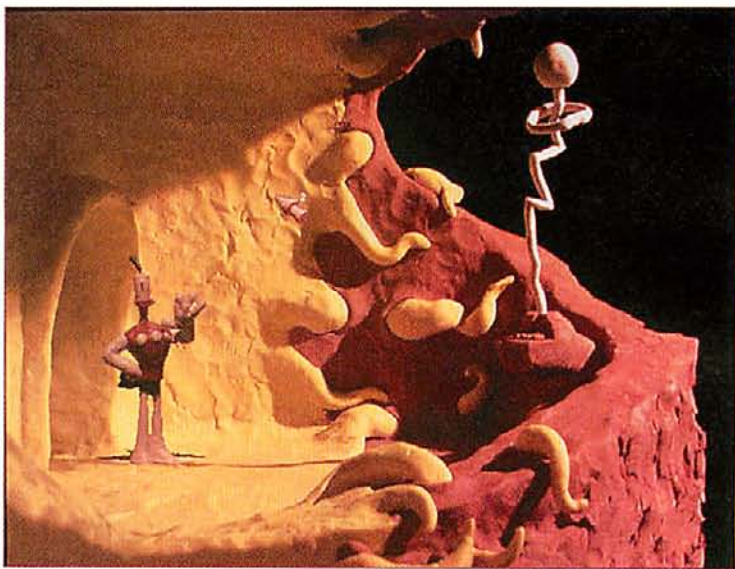
trees and architecture. TNC even has its equivalent of the postage-stamp video that passed for interaction in *MYST*; the difference is that TNC's video consists of cute, animated cartoons that delightfully unfold the story of the game universe.

Yet there is much more happening in *NEVERHOOD* than appears at first. Playing with a jack-in-the-box sets free a monster and triggers a delightful free-running animation sequence—not only setting up a new puzzle but opening up a new area of exploration. Choosing the wrong solution to a puzzle evokes cartoon consequences, like being punched out flat or temporarily decapitated, but it's all good fun because the game subscribes to the "no-death" school of adventure game design. You never have to go back and restart again. Plus the idle animation is priceless (leave poor Klaymen alone too long and he'll stretch his arms all the way across the screen or blinks expectantly). Even without the plot elements, gamers have to

experiment with Klaymen.

Indeed, Klaymen's antics and charm make up for any problems remaining in

the unfinished version I played. When the pace seems too slow, Klaymen makes up for it with some cute action or expression.



H IS FOR HOOP-HEAD To get into Willie Trombone's library, Klaymen has to assemble the puzzle pieces in the form of an "H."

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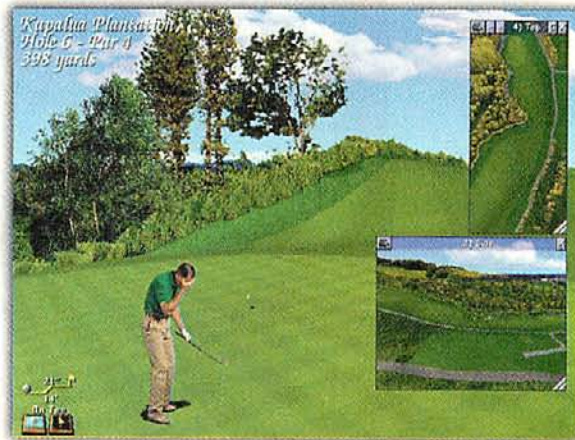
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When the interface seems awkward (there are times when the cursor doesn't indicate that you can exit a screen on one side, even though you can) or the puzzle seems annoying or unfair (the water, tube and tune door combination on one house seemed tremendously obscure), Klaymen saves the day with some animated move that makes up for any frustration. In short, the payoffs are better in TNC than in most adventure games. Also, the location-based jazz, Dixieland and blues riffs throughout the game are whimsical enough to keep you in a good frame of mind, even when you haven't yet solved that tough puzzle.

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

Another reason gamers will feel comfortable with TNC is that many of the scenes and puzzles are tributes to computer games, movies, cartoons and literature that have come before. One puzzle seems right out of THE 7TH GUEST or

SMART GAMES, while another could have come directly from Infocom's HOLLYWOOD HIJINX (remember the color-coded punch cards?). When Klaymen animates Bil the Robot, the camera cuts and angles look like classic martial arts movies. When Klaymen drives one of the putt-putt cars attached to the walls, the car reminds us of the film version of H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine*. Later, Ed Schofield's climactic cinematic harks back to a scene from *Dr. Doolittle*. You'll see Disneyesque character expressions (lead animator Mike Dietz is a firm believer in the Disney animators' bible, *Illusions of Life*, and built his style around those principles) and Warner Brothers-style cartoon violence.

Finally, students of myth and religion will recognize the commonality that this game universe's legends have with the great myths and theologies of the Western world. The legends are written in clay along the walls of a seemingly inter-

minable passage. Too lengthy for one sitting, they are cleverly crafted and delineate the rationale behind some of the actions Klaymen will have to take to win the game. Those who don't care can skip these wall etchings and watch the "Readers' Digest Condensed Version" in the animated cartoon segments that Klaymen finds throughout the game.

MAKE MY CLAY

THE NEVERHOOD CHRONICLES seems incredibly fresh for a product that pays tribute to old games, old technologies and old movies. It may feel fresh because of its primitive look or because of the terrific payoffs in the original animated sequences that follow many puzzle solutions, but TNC successfully evokes nostalgia and discovery simultaneously. It's not a game for adrenaline junkies or those with short attention spans, but it is a game for traditional adventure gamers and casual gamers alike. ☞

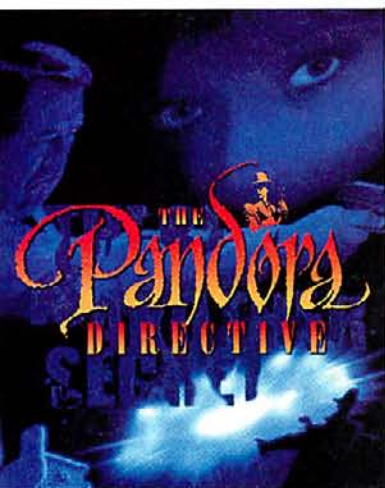
2
LEVELS
OF PLAY3
NARRATIVE
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Battle Of The Sexes

Can't Live With 'Em? Shoot 'Em In *GENDER WARS*



It's been a crowded house ever since *CRUSADER: NO REMORSE* revitalized the platform shooter with its isometric look. So any attempt at an angled-down action game these days needs an angle, and *GENDER WARS* from GT Interactive gives it a shot. It's a respectable, if not wholly original game, mingling *CRUSADER*-style pyrotechnics with squad-level tactics, a touch of *WARCRAFT*'s parallel sets of missions and something of a sense of humor.

GENDER WARS is a literal Battle of the Sexes that replaces the traditional wit and wile with firepower. You pick a side and from there are carted off to a command



THEY'RE ON PMS! *GENDER WARS* is supposed to be a battle of the sexes, but with little difference between the two sides, this angle is more of a gimmick than a real design decision.

center that's part *Star Trek: Next Generation* bridge console and part *RULES OF ENGAGEMENT* interface. Here you receive mission briefings, put together a four-person squad, equip your squad members with weapons and ship off the less-experienced members of your outfit for training,

Where *TOTAL MAYHEM* blew up the view, *GENDER WARS*' SVGA mode shrinks it down to doll-house level, and to good effect. The levels are enormous, both in height and breadth, and it shows. Even the most basic of the multiple mission objectives—get this item, kill so many of these enemies—will take some good time to achieve. Moving, firing and button-pushing with the mouse, you'll roam elaborate interiors and grounds, blowing the bejesus out of enemy conference tables, posters, mainframes and level inhabitants. As for your squad AI, you can issue four collective commands to the squad members: fire at will, fall back, fire defensively, or await control from you.

Like *CRUSADER*, there is plenty to blow up while traipsing through each level. I suspect that, destroyable item for destroyable item, there's an even higher level of damage here than in *CRUSADER: NO REGRET*.

“ Like *CRUSADER*, there is plenty to blow up while traipsing through each level. ”

IT'S ONLY A GIMMICK

Of course, imitation is also the lowest form of creativity, and I didn't find much here that separates *GENDER WARS* from its evident models. I suppose inter-sex warfare is better than killing off another set of aliens or corporate flunkies, but I can't detect a persuasive reason for the male-female conflict other than its simply being different. Apart from the high pitch of the enemy death shrieks and some cute graphic touches (men are evidently beer-swilling louts who leave trash to pile up in the streets) the missions are essentially interchangeable. If they'd made the supposed differences between men and women—brain versus brawn—more integral to the gameplay, they might have



Peter's 15 Best Action Games Of All Time

1. <i>Quake</i>	id	PC
2. <i>Prince of Persia</i>	Broderbund	PC, Mac and Amiga
3. <i>Crusader: No Remorse</i>	Origin	PC
4. <i>Magic Carpet/Magic Carpet II</i>	Bullfrog	PC
5. <i>Duke Nukem 3D</i>	3D Realms	PC
6. <i>Virtua Fighter PC</i>	Sega	PC
7. <i>Terminator: Future Shock</i>	Bethesda Softworks	PC
8. <i>Hexen</i>	id	PC and Mac
9. <i>Dark Forces</i>	LucasArts	PC and Mac
10. <i>Flashback</i>	Virgin	Mac and Amiga
11. <i>Doom/Doom II</i>	id	Doom: PC Doom II: PC and Mac
12. <i>Cannon Fodder</i>	Virgin	PC and Amiga
13. <i>Alien Breed 3D II: The Killing Grounds</i>	Team 17	Amiga
14. <i>Road Rash</i>	Electronic Arts	PC and Amiga
15. <i>Apocalypse</i>	Virgin	Amiga

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CG TIPS!

► **QUAKE:** The cheats for **QUAKE** (both shareware and registered) are so obvious you'd think id *wanted* us to find 'em. Just call up the console with the tilde (~) key and type:

God = god mode.

Fly = fly mode (D is up and C is down); use this even if you don't usually cheat—

it's a great way to see the architecture. Give [number] = gives you the appropriate weapon (8 is the lightning gun). Noclip = lets you walk through walls. Impulse 9 = all weapons and ammo. Impulse 255 = quad damage mode.

To use these cheats in DeathMatch, you'll need to make a hack with the **QUAKE** compiler (see the V. Long's *Quake Hacks* for details). Simply edit the **WEAPONS.QC**, find the

CheatCommand and ServerflagsCommand sections, and add "/" before the "if (deathmatch || coop)" statements, and add "*" after the "return;" statements.

► **DESCENT II:** **DESCENT II** only has six secret levels, but they aren't the easiest to find. The first can be reached via levels 3 and 4; the second from levels 5 and 8; the third via level 12; the fourth via level 14; the fifth via levels 17 and 20; and the last via levels 21 and 24.

had something here. But this appears to be more a presentation concept than a game design.

A *Battle of the Sexes* is also ripe with potential for humor, but at times, you can tell that *The 8th Day* tried too hard. The intro's robot-hosted TV show rapidly degenerates into a profane, *Pythonesque* exchange between the two talking heads. But the pre-mission cut scenes are leaden and obvious, and the missions are humorless firestorms.

The game itself works well for the most part. Troops do have some trouble following the leader when lifts come into play, and you'll often need to switch control to individual squad members to reunite the party (just as in *TOTAL MAYHEM*).

But *GENDER WARS* was pleasantly free of technical glitches. I ran into just one, and it was more of a "feature." On two Pentiums with different video cards, movement of characters in *SVCA* mode was accompanied by a shuddering display and the

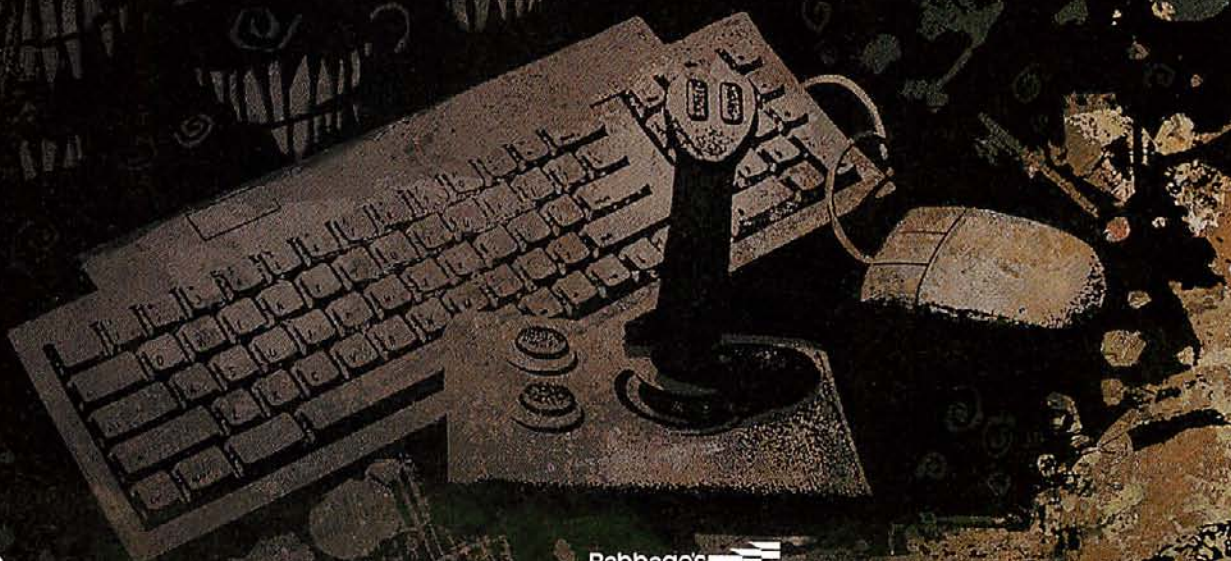
► **APPEAL:** Those tired of waiting for **CRUSADER: NO REGRET** and looking for some nonsensical, combustible action.

► **PROS:** Huge levels, lots of pyrotechnics and decent action.

► **CONS:** A clone is a clone, and the war-of-the-sexes concept doesn't hold up.



Are you still fighting futuristic aliens with a prehistoric weapon?



▶ *Hunter* seems to be the word of the hour for action games. *NEO HUNTER*, from Virgin, is a *VIRTUA COP*-style rail shooter set in the Bay Area, with cartoony characters, selectable levels and an adventure wrapper.

Sierra's *HUNTER HUNTED* is a side-view shooter with the accent on realistic movement.

▶ An early look at Scavenger's

AMOK (GT Interactive) reveals it as a likeable third-person 3D shoot-'em-up. You pilot a mech through several levels of the ocean floor and dryland, while blasting sharks and robots. The underwater graphics look appropriately murky and fluid.

▶ Spectrum HoloByte has

signed a letter of intent to license Epic MegaGames' *UNREAL* engine to produce its own games. Specifics on Spectrum's plans were zero, but the press release announcing the deal quoted Spectrum CEO Steve Race as referring to 3D action

games being one of "our three core strengths." Does anyone recall a 3D action game from the

Spectrum family? This sounds like a glimpse of future strategy...

▶ Another potential *QUAKE* killer on the horizon: Developers Friendware in Spain is preparing *BLADE* for fall release. The spec is daunting. Among the features: 3D weapons and the ability to throw anything in the game—including your enemy's head.



CAN'T LIVE WITH 'EM Whether you play the men or women (men in this case), you'll still go traipsing around vast levels, blowing up all sorts of items and fragging the opposite sex (though it's hard to tell which is which).

appearance of odd horizontal lines.

Happily, the solution was a keypress away: a tap of the "F" key, which toggles something called "flick screen mode." It's always nice to be able to solve a problem on your own through trial-and-error. I guess tackling these technical problems head-on is a "guy thing."

Or are those fighting words? ☞

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Quake C Basics

How To Hack Weapons And Use Cool New Toys With QUAKE C

by V. Long

"With QUAKE C, there's nothing you can't do."

—American McGee,
id level designer

Imagine swooping down in QUAKE in a highly maneuverable VTOL fighter, bristling with advanced armament. You spray the scurrying targets below with streams of lead from twin Vulcan cannons. Their health ebbing, you deliver the *coup de grace* with a salvo of folding fin aerial rockets sizzling down from side-mounted missile

racks. Inside the cockpit, the roar of the engines barely drowns out the radio chatter. Scanning for targets, you suddenly notice shards of the fuselage chipping off under sustained nailgun fire. You quickly lock stinger missiles onto a heat source and launch—the enemy aircraft goes down in a fireball, raining burning debris onto the lifeless victims.

Such are the friendly skies of QUAKE...more accurately, the QUAKE AirCraft project, as it's currently called. This custom QUAKE module adds an aircraft to your existing QUAKE game, letting you roam QUAKE's skies in DESCENT-like

fashion. Standard equipment includes stinger missiles, deadly autocannons and other weaponry for truly gut-wrenching pyrotechnics. According to Tim Willits, an id level designer, everyone at id from lead programmer John Carmack to the artists was impressed with the early version of the AirCraft project.

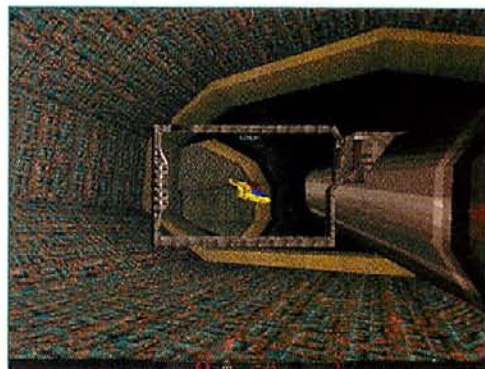
Steve Bond and John Gullric, the founders of QUAKE

Command (www.nuc.net/quake), are no ordinary fans: they've gained respect among knowledgeable QUAKE aficionados for their dedication to balanced gameplay, ease of use, and of course, fun. QUAKE Command first caught my attention with Bond's frag-grenade, a bounding bomb that spews lethal spikes à la Eraser. Since then, they've added devastating flamethrowers, throwable axes, and remote-controlled demolition charges, as well as ejecting cartridge casings. They've even added DESCENT-like flares; tossable backpacks; and even slippery banana peels!

Can we expect more from QUAKE Command? You betcha: next on the agenda is the "Jeep," which will lead to QUAKE Kart...complete with turtle shells and banana peels. Mario Kart fans can at last rejoice! Given how quickly the two pump out goodies, the Jeep, and even QUAKE Kart may be available by the time you read this (check CGW's online site for the latest).

But QUAKE Command

definitely isn't the only one talking about vehicles for QUAKE. Mark Dochterman of Hipnotic Interactive, which has licensed the QUAKE engine, says the Hipnotic team is considering them for its 15-level QUAKE add-on pack. And sources at id mention that vehicles may appear in QUAKE 2...but no promises!



SOON TO BE STUNG Once the Stinger locks onto any heat source, a mere twitch of the trigger finger sends it home. Cat lovers will be happy to know that the Stinger can lock onto Rottweilers.

COMPILE THIS

It's clear from the AirCraft project that QUAKE C enables an unprecedented degree of customizability, but what is it? Often called QC, it's the C-like programming language built into QUAKE to control weapons physics, combat rules, monster AI, multiplayer scoring and much more. The beauty of QC is that it does all this without ever touching the game engine itself, which governs core functions like graphics and connectivity, and it is stored on the game's CD.

Power to transform whim into reality is not the only attribute of QC. Ease of use is another, and sharing your QC toys is a snap. The easiest QC goodies to play with are PROGS.DAT files that use no external QUAKE data files. For a multiplayer session, only the server needs the PROGS.DAT. Bond's flamethrower



FLYING FLAMBE Savvy pilots will eject before their AirCraft erupts into an aerial barbeque. Falling chunks or exploding debris can be fatal to those caught below.



Download selected QUAKE C goodies, including the AirCraft, from www.zdnet.com/gaming

A + M + O + K



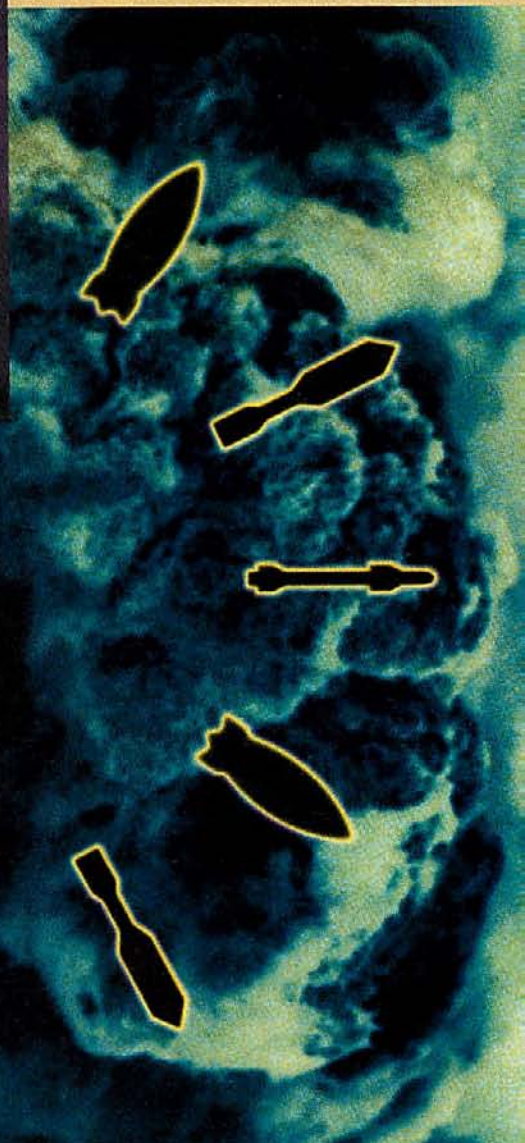
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PART SUBMARINE.
AND ULTIMATELY,
ONE FUNKY
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PC CD-ROM



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patch is a good example. Simply put the flamethrower PROGS.DAT into a dedicated **QUAKE** subdirectory, such as **C:/QUAKE/FLAME**, and run **QUAKE** with **QUAKE -GAME FLAME**. Anyone joining your game will also have access to the flamethrower.

Even the most elaborate **QC** modifications, such as the **AirCRAFT**, can be equally easy to use if they are well-packaged. The **AirCRAFT** has all necessary rules, graphics,

sounds, and 3D models compiled into a single **PAK0.PAK** file. Place the **AirCRAFT PAK0.PAK** in the **C:/QUAKE/AIRCRAFT** subdirectory, and run **QUAKE** by typing **"QUAKE -GAME AIRCRAFT +MAP HANGAR"**. (If you're joining a session, type **"QUAKE -GAME AIRCRAFT +CONNECT"**). Because this **QC** mod uses non-standard **QUAKE** data,



CHUNKS O' PLENTY A steady stream of nails will kick fragments off the **AirCRAFT's** hull. See the shards above and below the tail section.

each player needs to install and run it. Sometimes you'll encounter a patch consisting of a collection of **.SRC** and **.QC** files, which are raw source code. These need to be compiled into a **PROGS.DAT** file with the **QUAKE C** compiler. Keep reading and you'll learn how simple it is once you know how.

pile process, **QCCDOS** will provide feedback. Keep in mind that careless typing while editing **.SRC** or **.QC** files can cause errors and force the compiler to abort. After a successful compile, the resulting **PROGS.DAT** will be in the **/FULLAUTO** directory, not in the **/PROGS** subdirectory where the **.SRC** and **.QC** files are.

READY TO ROCK 'N' ROLL

Congrats! You've created a self-sufficient **PROGS.DAT**. Simply run **QUAKE** with the command line **"QUAKE -GAME FULLAUTO"**. Anyone connecting to joining your game will have access to the same full-auto weapons with inexhaustible ammo.

That's not all you can do with **QC**. Do you want to roll in your own 3D models and add custom sounds, graphics, and levels? Stay tuned: I'll show you all that, as well as how to pack everything into a nifty **PAK0.PAK** just like the **QUAKE** professionals do. Same **QUAKE** time, same **QUAKE** page.

Use a text editor to modify **WEAPONS.QC**. Find all lines with **"SELFATTACK_FINISHED = TIME + #"**, and decrease the number (**#**). For example, bump them all down to **0.09009** to increase the rate of fire to a blistering

666 shots per minute, not bad, eh?

To keep your steroid-pumped guns properly fed, you'll need an endless supply of ammo, Hollywood-style. Find all lines with **"SELF.CURRENTAMMO = SELFAMMO_SHELLS - #"**, and replace the **#** with a zero. Do the same for the **NAILS**, **ROCKETS**, and **CELLS**.

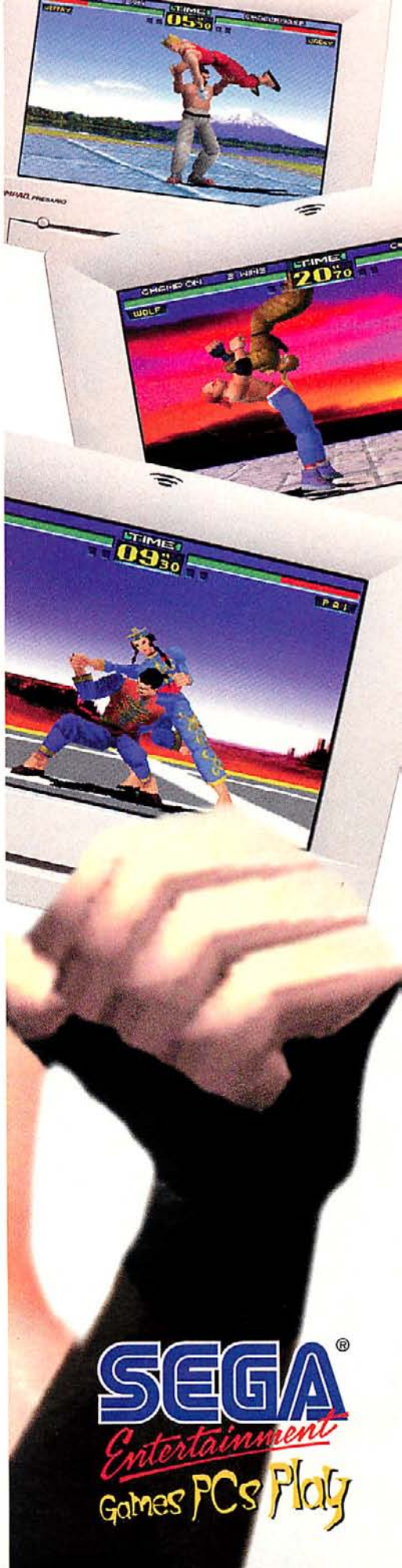
Then run **QCCDOS.EXE** from DOS mode, the Windows 95 DOS box, or the Windows 95 Explorer. During the com-

pile process, **QCCDOS** will provide feedback. Keep in mind that careless typing while editing **.SRC** or **.QC** files can cause errors and force the compiler to abort. After a successful compile, the resulting **PROGS.DAT** will be in the **/FULLAUTO** directory, not in the **/PROGS** subdirectory where the **.SRC** and **.QC** files are.

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*V. Long poses as a mild-mannered magazine editor for Computer Life, but he lives, breathes and sleeps **QUAKE**. ☞*



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Keep Da Peace

Making Noise In The Hood With Eidos' 3D Tank Shooter

by Mark Clarkson

SHELLSHOCK, the new first-person shooter from Eidos, drops you behind the controls of an M-13 Battletank with unlimited ammunition to kick evil oppressor butt all over the globe. To set this shooter apart from the crowd, Eidos gave it a distinctly urban vibe, with a pounding, bass-heavy soundtrack, and a collection of slang-slingin' homies with names like 9-I-I, Dogg-Tagg, and D-Tour.

SHELLSHOCK's driving model is a good compromise between fun and realism. You can control the turret separately, swinging it around to shoot sideways as you fly between buildings at full speed or behind you to slow down any pesky pursuers. Your view also dips and bobs as you



STARING DOWN A BARREL SHELLSHOCK's 25 missions show a little variety. One time you're out to blow up tanks and armored transports; the next time you'll be destroying buildings or rescuing prisoners.

negotiate terrain and torch bad guys. Or you can, if you're so inclined, drive your tank in a more realistic and complicated two-track mode; each track has its own forward and backward keys.

HOOK ME UP, G!

Powerups exist in the form of supply crates lying around the levels, often concealed within buildings or larger crates. You'll want to nab all that you can; Props, Da Wardenz' supply man, will pay for them back at the Den, and you'll need the money to repair your armor and upgrade your weapons. If you have the cash, Props can hook you up with a targeting computer that improves your hit accuracy, better armor, a hotter engine, SAM missiles, or even the ability to call in a tank-busting A-10 strike.

SHELLSHOCK's VGA graphics are adequate but unimpressive. There are no shadows, reflections or other graphical niceties. The sound quality is uneven: some of

the spoken clips are fine, others are unintelligible. There are only four save game slots, and you can only save between missions. When you die, you must restart the entire game, skip past the intro, reload a saved game, and skip through the briefing—an annoying 30-second process.

Still, while SHELLSHOCK doesn't set any new standards, it is fun and loud. Your M-13 rips through chain-link fences and snaps street lights like twigs, all while thumping music blares in the background. And best of all, in a LAN-based multiplayer game you can hurl both shells and taunts at your real-life homies. **E**



URBAN OUTFITTING Props will give you various goodies for your tank back at the home base, provided you pick up money along the way in each level.



ROLL OUT THE MAP SHELLSHOCK features a tactical map that gives you an alternate, 2D view of the action. Targets are highlighted in red.

Price: \$49.95

System

Requirements: 486 DX2-66, 8 MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, MS-DOS 5.00, SVGA video card, Microsoft-compatible mouse. Supports most major sound cards.

of Players: 1-8 (LAN)

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Designer: Core Design Inc.

Publisher: Eidos Interactive

San Francisco, CA (415) 693-0297

Reader Service #: 330

APPEAL: First-person shooter fans looking for a different, urban and heavily armored point of view.

PROS: Good, basic fun in a target-rich environment. First time we've played "Doom" from a tank.

CONS: Inconsistent sound, annoying interface quirks, no in-game save function, lackluster level design.



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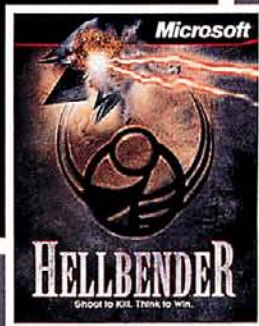
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Dillweed's Delight

Beavis And Butt-head's Arcade Game CD Doesn't Suck

by Jeff Green

Guess what, bumwipe? Beavis and Butt-head—those pimply faced poster boys for the decline of Western civilization—are back on the computer screen, ready to annoy spouses, parents and people with good taste everywhere. Following on the heels of last year's adventure game **VIRTUAL STUPIDITY**, MTV's love-'em-or-hate-'em cartoon morons now star in **LITTLE THINGIES**, a collection of seven monumentally stupid—and fun—“mini-arcade” action games.

Mini is the operative word here. The seven games, which include four that originally appeared in **VIRTUAL STUPIDITY** plus three brand new ones, occupy the same space in the gaming universe as **MINESWEEPER** or **SOLITAIRE**—perfect for a couple minutes here and there of glazed-over gaming.

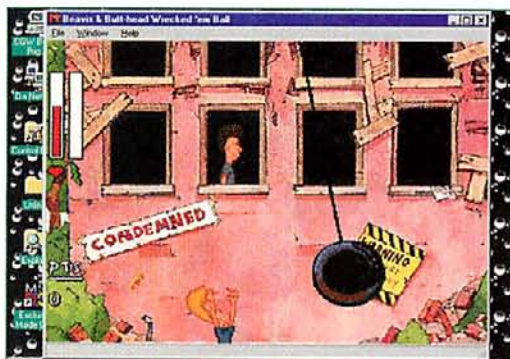
LOGGIES ARE COOL!

All the games in **LITTLE THINGIES** operate on the same basic principle: You earn points by successfully guiding Beavis and Butt-head through various acts of adolescent social deviancy.

- ▶ In **Hock-A-Loggie**, you advance through levels based on your ability to successfully spit on people (and a squirrel) from your vantage point atop the roof of the school. This one's cool.
- ▶ In **Court Chaos**, you need to bean obnoxious yuppies (and a squirrel) with tennis balls. This one sucks.
- ▶ **Bug Justice** challenges you to use your magnifying glass to burn bugs to

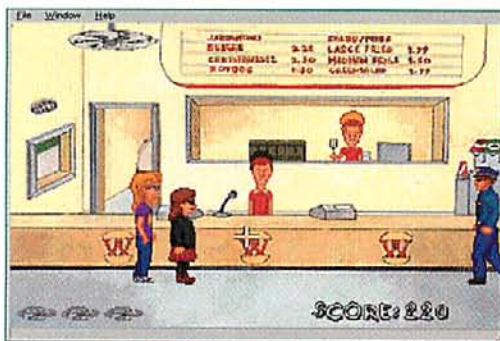
death before they march off with your candy. (Butt-head: “The penalty for stealing is having your ‘nads fried off!”) This one's cool.

- ▶ **Thank You, Drive Through** finds our heroes as employees of a fast-food joint, attempting to fling food at customers before the line gets too long. Earn extra points by serving someone a rat burger. This one's cool.
- ▶ **Change It** requires you to monitor a bank of TV screens and quickly change channels when something lame comes on. This one sucks.
- ▶ **Wrecked 'em Ball** finds Beavis trying



LOOK OUT, BUTTMUNCH! Hit Beavis enough times in the head with a wrecking ball and he just might notice it.

emanating from two different orifices of Beavis and Butt-head's bodies. There's even a **Record** option, so you can tape your rendition of Beavis burping “Mary Had A Little Lamb” to show everyone what a creative genius you are. This one's cool.



JOBS SUCK Keep slinging the junk food, or Beavis and Butt-head just might find themselves out of a job. Again.

to catch nachos that Butt-head tosses out a window, while avoiding hazards such as falling toilets and a wrecking ball. This one's cool.

- ▶ Finally, there's **Air Guitar**, which isn't a game at all, but wins as the most audaciously immature module of all (and of course, it's the one that garnered the most laughs around the CGW office). Here we have a keyboard that can be set to play “music”

PULL MY FINGER

Civilization II, this ain't. But let's be real. You know whether you want this or not, and it has nothing to do with gameplay. If you appreciate B&B creator Mike Judge's lowbrow humor and hilarious voice work, moments like Beavis's blood-curdling “Die die die!” to the bugs in **Bug Justice** or Butt-head's immortal “How'd ya like a side of Butt-head?” to a female customer in **Thank You, Drive Through**, are worth the measly \$20. Everyone else will just shake their head and wonder what's wrong with the youth of today. ☹

▶ **APPEAL:** Beavis and Butt-head fans and similar social miscreants.

▶ **PROS:** Very funny (for fans of the show), dumb little games.

▶ **CONS:** Can get old fast; pretty slim on gameplay.



Price: \$19.95
System Requirements:
 IBM-compatible
 486DX2 66MHz
 processor, Windows
 95, 8MB RAM, 20MB
 hard drive space,
 Windows 95-compatible
 sound card, 2x CD-
 ROM drive, mouse.
of Players: One
Protection: None
Designers: Brad
 Delaney and Brian
 Babendererde
Publisher: Viacom
 New Media
 New York, NY
 (212) 258-6000
Reader Service #: 332



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PARAGRAPH (3), SUBSECTION (1b):
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PARAGRAPH (3), SUBSECTION (1c):
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Swimming With The Sharks

Shallow Gameplay Awash in Pretty Seascapes

by Mark Clarkson



ST.O.R.M. isn't exactly a groundbreaking PC game. Put simply, it's just a console-style, side-scrolling action shooter. The year is 2055, and—you guessed it—the fate of the Earth is in your hands. The world's resources have been

exhausted, and now you must pilot the experimental submarine S.T.O.R.M., through a series of underwater levels to claim Earth's last energy alternative, a Praxillium mine.

Along the way, you'll have to battle your way past the evil divers and heavily armed submarines of the Nuclear Energy Office, not to

mention underwater baddies including gorgons, gluesnails and giant squids.

The numbers you'll have to watch in your aquatic adventure are your ammo, your oxygen supply, and your shield strength. All these can be augmented or replenished using powerups scattered along your path, which can be retrieved via mechanical arm, diver or tiny remote-controlled robot.



BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES You can send out divers or minisubs to retrieve powerups in hard-to-reach places, though you'll be more vulnerable to the ocean's dangers.

S.T.O.R.M.'s leisurely gameplay—strictly two-dimensional, with a side-on view—is reminiscent of the ECCO THE DOLPHIN games from Sega, though the theme is a little more violent. Levels run primarily from left to right, with some sideways turns to retrieve powerups. You'll also encounter occasional mazes and traps, as well as a powerful boss at the end of every level. S.T.O.R.M. is spiced-up a little with rendered graphics and cinematic cut scenes, but despite all that glitz, it's only a simple side-scrolling platform game. **E**

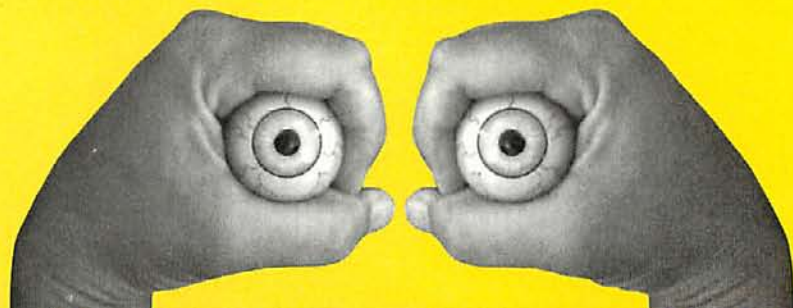
APPEAL: Grown-up fans of ECCO THE DOLPHIN and its ilk; anyone looking for some slow-paced, side-scrolling, shoot-'em-up fun.

PROS: Pretty pictures and basic, mindless fun.

CONS: Just pretty pictures and basic, mindless fun.



Price: \$49.95
System Requirements:
 486DX2 66MHz, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, 10MB hard disk space, SVGA video card, Sound Blaster-compatible or Gravis Ultrasound sound card, DOS 6.0, Microsoft-compatible mouse.
of Players: 1
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Virtual Studio S.A.
Publisher: American Softworks
 Stamford, CT
 (203) 327-3366
Reader Service #: 333



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 eye-bending computer animation on video

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King Kong Of Mahjong

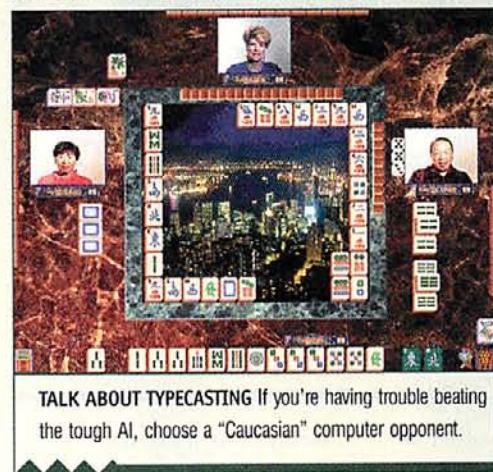


Nine Dragons Sets One Of The Oldest Of Classics On Fire

Some gamers may recognize Mahjong as a plot element in Jackie Chan's *Drunken Master 2*, and maybe a few old-timers recall the days, back in the fifties, when Mahjong and Canasta reigned as the Trivial Pursuits of their day. But it is years of playing Activision's computer version of SHANGHAI that generally makes gamers think they know a thing or two about Mahjong.

They don't. While SHANGHAI uses the classic Mahjong tile set, that's where the common elements end. SHANGHAI is a type of solitaire, sort of a cross between Concentration and Pick-Up-Sticks. Mahjong is a four-player hand-building game, somewhat similar to gin rummy. Where Shanghai takes about 5 minutes to learn, Mahjong takes...longer. The best way to learn to play Mahjong is to have been born in Hong Kong. Barring that,

you need a good and patient tutor. And no trio of human players could be as good or as patient as Nine Dragons Software's HONG KONG MAHJONG.



TALK ABOUT TYPECASTING If you're having trouble beating the tough AI, choose a "Caucasian" computer opponent.

FIZBIN, ANYONE?

Fans of the original *Star Trek* will remember the episode titled "A Piece of the Action," in which Kirk and Spock are stranded on a planet full of 1920s-style gangsters. To distract a pair of guards, Kirk teaches them "Fizbin," a card game with impossibly complex rules. Mahjong is the

closest I've come in the real world to playing Fizbin.

Instead of four suits of cards, you have three suits of tiles: Sticks, Balls, and

Chinese Characters. You also have four "Winds" (North, South, East, and West), three "Dragons" (Red, Green, and White), and eight "Flowers" (four red and four blue), plus a set of three dice (for randomizing the start of play). There are four of each of the 27 suit tiles, which are numbered 1 through 9, and four of each Dragon and Wind,

but only one of each flower—144 tiles in all. Each of the four players gets dealt a hand of 13 tiles, leaving a stacked "wall" of 92 tiles, unless one or more players are dealt flower tiles, in which case those are set aside and the players who picked them must pick again.

Play goes counterclockwise, as each player picks a tile from the wall and discards one from his hand. The other three players can grab a discard even out of turn, but only if it gives them a "set." If it does, the tiles that make up the set are displayed to the other players (all other tiles are hidden) and play continues from the interrupter's seat.

A complete hand is one whose 14 tiles are divided into one pair and four sets. A set may contain three identical tiles (a "Pong") or three tiles in numerical sequence (what poker players would call a straight, here a "Chow"). You can also have four of a kind—a "Kong"—but in

“ The Kabbala has fewer arcane numerological rules than those found in Mahjong. ”

CHECK!

► CHESS WARS, Art Data Interactive's attempt to out-crash and bash BATTLE CHESS, is nearing completion and should be available in late fall or early winter.

► We weren't the only ones who liked SMART GAMES: CHALLENGE # 1. It finished in the Top 10 unit sales for the summer, ahead of such blockbuster titles as WING COMMANDER IV. This is the best puzzle title released so far this year, so if you

haven't checked it out yet, the game's available as low as \$25 street price; check your local software store. Next up for Smart Games is WORDPLAY, due out this winter.

► Hasbro Interactive's ambitious schedule of computer versions of their classic titles—BATTLESHIP, RISK!, YAHTZEE, *et al*—is slipping a bit. Still, the most prominent of these titles should ship in time for Christmas.

that case the fourth tile is essentially ignored, your Kong is treated as a Pong for all but scoring purposes, and you get to draw a 15th (or 16th, or 17th, depending on your number of Kongs) tile. There are also some anomalous winning hands, such as the "Seven Pairs Hand," which has as many Pongs and Kongs in it as its name suggests. Take a deep breath and we'll move on to scoring.

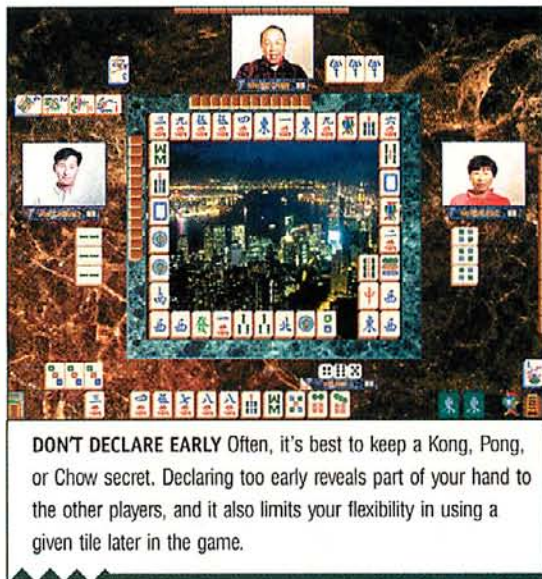
When you complete a hand, your score depends on what tiles you are holding, what round it is, and what chair you're sitting in. You get points for "purity" (a hand of all one suit) and you get points for "semi-purity" (a hand of all one suit plus Dragons and/or Winds). You get points for having flowers. You get points for not having flowers. You get points for Chowing on your neighbor's discard, but you can only do so if he is sitting to your left. For winning off a blind draw you get points; but if your discard enables another player to win, he gets points, and instead of collecting them from all the other players, he collects them all from you. And so on, endlessly.

The Kabbala has fewer arcane numerical rules than you find when scoring Mahjong. Play continues through the completion of four hands within each of four rounds, or until the players give up and decide to watch *Melrose Place* instead.

LOOK WHAT THEY DONE TO MAHJONG, MA

One thing that HONG KONG MAHJONG captures particularly well is the variety of rules you come across when playing Mahjong. Like Monopoly, every household plays it a little differently. Some say you can only declare a winning hand if your hand is not only complete but worth

at least one, two, or three extra points. Some say that discards should be turned face down, forcing you to hold in your head what everyone has thrown. Some say that you have to pay a penalty to all the other players if you declare a winning hand incorrectly. HONG KONG MAHJONG has all these options built in, along with the option of using modern or antique tiles, numbered or unnumbered tiles, and any 3 of 12 possible opponents.



DON'T DECLARE EARLY Often, it's best to keep a Kong, Pong, or Chow secret. Declaring too early reveals part of your hand to the other players, and it also limits your flexibility in using a given tile later in the game.

There are some minor snags. Not all tiles are numbered in the antique tile set even if you have the tile numbering option turned on. There is no option for multiple-player games or, what would seem to be a natural, modern play. The Help option helps you choose your own discards but not when to go after other players'.

But these are minor quibbles indeed. HONG KONG MAHJONG does everything a good Mahjong game should. It contains detailed rules (and even a short quiz) to bring beginners up to speed. It offers opponents at varying levels of proficiency. (If you want to win, select the Caucasians.) It doesn't let you cheat either accidentally or on purpose. It politely points out mistakes when you make them. It plays a good game. And it scores a winning hand instantly. For this alone, it deserves a medal.

Because we're living in the age of chrome, when even a Mahjong game

CG TIPS!

- ▶ If you're just starting out, click on the hint-supplying sparrow before every discard but after you've decided which tile you would throw. This way you can get an expert opinion on your choices.
- ▶ Always turn a declared Pong into a Kong when you can. Not only can you get extra points, but you remove a tile from play and up to three possible Chows from your opponents' arsenal.

needs to feature audiovisual fireworks before it can attract players' attention, designer J. R. Fitch has thrown in some decent music, photographic backdrops and portraits of the players, and little audio clips for when players win or lose. ("Yo!" says Christopher when you choose to play him. And when he loses: "Bummer!")

This is all incidental, though. At the core of HONG KONG MAHJONG is an extremely good game, rich and complex, which major game publishers have neglected even while they churn out the thousandth version of Chess or Las Vegas Poker. It is not only strong in Mahjong in general, but Hong Kong Mahjong in particular. However, as good and slick as it is, HONG KONG MAHJONG is currently only available by direct order from Mr. Fitch himself.

Surprised? Me, too. Perhaps one of the major distributors will snap it up. In the meantime, if you're in the mood for a strong and probably unfamiliar game, why wait? **CG**

APPEAL: Anyone who's played Shanghai and wants the real deal.

PROS: A detailed rendition of a classic game, with all the gameplay variations your family threw in for good measure.

CONS: Available in solitary mode only, and beginners may be inadequately assisted by the selective "Help" feature.



Play Hong Kong Mahjong on this month's CD.



Price: \$29.47 + S&H
System Requirements:

486 66MHz or better processor, 8MB RAM, 27MB hard drive space, 800x600 graphics (64,000 or more colors), 2x CD-ROM, Windows 3.1 or better, Windows-compatible sound.

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Designer: J. R. Fitch

Publisher: Nine Dragons Software
San Francisco, CA
(415) 664-3474
www.ninedragons.com
Reader Service #: 344

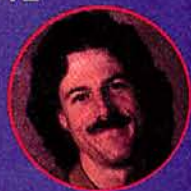


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Semi-Closed Opening

Corel Chess Is Competent But Uninspired

by Terry Coleman

Designing chess games for the computer has numerous advantages. There are literally thousands of Grandmaster games with which to stock your library. Chess players love to play with databases, which are themselves simple to design. Additional chrome is easy to come by, in the form of chess problems, diagrams, and tutorials by professionals, many of whom work for a pittance (steady work for a chess master is an iffy thing unless you're Garry Kasparov). Chess programs have always been at the forefront of AI, and it's difficult to accuse the computer of cheating, because all moves are made out in the open.

So it comes as small surprise that COREL CHESS, the latest 64-square contender, has many of the same features as

Knight Moves

Once the computer knows your move, it actually starts moving its piece just as your move is complete. This split-second timing is impossible for you to duplicate, so even the odds by giving yourself 20 percent more time than your silicon opponent.

COREL CHESS is mediocre positionally, which allows you to transpose into a favorable endgame. The computer also likes to castle kingside, even when it isn't warranted. So sacrifice some pawns to open some attacking lines for your rooks and go after the program's king!

its predecessors. But unlike the innovative multimedia tutorials of KASPAROV'S GAMBIT or the wonderful variety of opponent styles in CHESSMASTER 5000, COREL CHESS offers little that's fresh.

SAME OLD P-K4

The chess sets are pretty, as you would expect from a company famous for its computer art applications. They run the usual gamut from Staunton to Roman to

Art Deco, and if you've never seen a computer chess game before, they might impress you; just don't expect any surprises like the infamous Dali board from CHESSMASTER. Also, having become used to the "true perspective" view of CM5000, I was a bit annoyed at having to go back to the same old three-quarter view that's been around for some six or seven years now.

In fairness, COREL CHESS can make you a bet-

ter chess player, but it isn't as effective as CM5000 in this mode, and it's nowhere near the standard set by MAURICE ASHLEY TEACHES CHESS. Serious pawn pushers will appreciate the ability to import any chess game saved in .PGN format; otherwise, there's little that's new here. The computer opponents lack style, as well, making this a "been there, done that" affair even for those desiring no more than a fun chess contest.

COREL CHESS is competent, bug-free, and professionally packaged. Unlike a lot of multimedia companies, the graphics giant hasn't embarrassed itself with its first foray into the competitive gaming market. But games don't exist in a vacuum—they must be compared to others in their genre—and despite the care with which COREL CHESS was crafted, it lacks the essential spark that would raise it significantly above the norm. Next time, hopefully, the designers of, say, COREL CHESS II will take more careful aim at the competition and surprise us a little. In the meantime, stick with CM5000—still the best mainstream computer program. **C**



Price: \$59

System Requirements:

486-33MHz processor, 8MB RAM, 1MB hard drive space, 640x480x256-color graphics, 2x CD-ROM, Windows 3.1 or better, Sound Blaster or compatible, mouse. Requires Winsock for Internet play.

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

of Players: 1-2, modem or Internet play (Winsock required)

Designer: Artech Studios

Publisher: Corel Corporation

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (613) 761-7792

Reader Service #: 334



WHERE'RE MY SPECTACLES? A typical display (800x600), where the number of windows can be increased by going to higher resolution—although those 2D pieces to the right reduce to squint level.

APPEAL: This offers a competent, if not terribly original, alternative to CM5000, mostly for beginning and lower-intermediate chessmeisters.

PROS: Imports any game in .PGN format; nice graphics; huge library of games; good AI, though not quite up to the top chess programs.

CONS: A lot like the Caro-Kann defense: solid but unexciting.



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You Don't Know Spock

Or If You Do, You May Wish Otherwise

by Charles Ardaí

We're in for it now. Just as the success of DOOM called forth dozens of imitators, the success of Berkeley Systems' sar-

castic and intelligent trivia game, YOU DON'T KNOW JACK, is sure to have a similar effect on the game design community. But imitation really isn't easy if you want to duplicate either the quality or the success of the game being imitated. The SCI-FI CHANNEL TRIVIA GAME is the first of what is sure to be a long line of epigones, and it demonstrates this point as well as any game could.

JACK had its snide host, needling the players; SCI-FI has its. JACK had multiple categories of subject matter to choose among, multiple-choice questions to be answered by the first player to buzz in, and multiple rounds of play; so does SCI-FI. JACK had jangly, TV-style theme music; ditto SCI-FI. But JACK was a huge amount of fun, and SCI-FI bored me silly.

A TRIVIAL PURSUIT, INDEED

Even the worst shoot-'em-up is at least a little exciting, since shooting is shooting. Bad trivia, on the other hand, is merely bad trivia. The trivia here isn't all bad, but 2 or 3 interesting questions out of 60 or 70 per game doesn't leave you with a general feeling of having been entertained.

The mark of a good trivia question is that if you rephrase it as a statement that includes the answer, the statement is



NO WAY! Morphix should fix his Universal Translator—that way he might learn more than a half-dozen Earthling phrases.

interesting. So: "What material was used to bind 1953's special edition of *Fahrenheit 451*?" Answer: asbestos. They once published Ray Bradbury's book about book burning in an asbestos binding?

Interesting.

But: "Who wrote 'Portraits of His Children'?" George R. R. Martin wrote "Portraits of His Children." "In what year was the first Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award given?" The first Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award was given in 1987. Not interesting. "Who wrote," "Who played," "Who directed," "In what year..." —these are the bread and butter of SCI-FI's questions.

The five categories are Books, TV, Comics, Movies, and "Wormhole," a catchall of questions on astronomy, sf magazines, animation, and such. Your "genial host" is a smartass called Morphix who appears variously as an alien, a dragon, a skeleton, and a robot. When you select a correct answer, he says, "Yes!" or "Yép!" or "That's it!" When you get one wrong he says, "Wrong!" "Incorrect!" or

"No way!" So much for Morphix.

WIN, LOSE OR DRAW = MUCH THE SAME

The great gags and good writing of YOU DON'T KNOW JACK make it a fun game even when you lose. The few questions, plus a "speed round," are just enough to satiate the appetite rather than sicken it with surfeit. And when the

game is over, the best is still ahead: exquisite parodies of TV commercials play while you hear the game show "studio" shutting down.

In SCI-FI, things are more cut-and-dried: question, answer, question, answer. Seventy times, question and answer. And then, when you have answered all the questions, the game just ends, with barely a whimper, much less a bang. The only reason this isn't an anticlimax is that what came before was something of a whimper itself. ☹

▶APPEAL: Hardcore sci-fi fans only. Who else could care how many years *The Man From UNCLE* ran or who wrote "Enemy Mine"?

▶PROS: If your friends aren't willing to quiz you on your knowledge of sci-fi minutiae anymore, here's a computer to take their place.

▶CONS: Most people would rather have friends.



Price: \$29.95
System

Requirements: 486 33MHz processor, 8MB RAM, 3MB hard drive space, SVGA graphics, 2x CD-ROM, Windows 3.1 or better, Windows-compatible sound card, mouse.

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Publisher: Byron Preiss Multimedia

New York, NY
(212) 989-6252

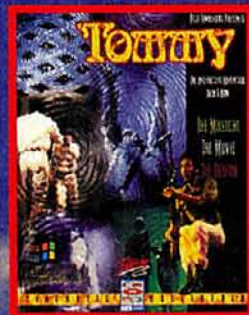
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New Players Hit The Gridiron

Three Expansion Teams Train For The Digital Football Playoffs



It's human nature to pull for the underdog. What kid doesn't cheer when the neighborhood bully finally gets his? Does anyone outside Chicago or Dallas root for the Bulls or Cowboys anymore?

A similar state exists among computer football sims. For several years Sierra's FRONT PAGE SPORTS: FOOTBALL PRO series has played Goliath to everyone else's David. Of course, there's been a reason for FRONT PAGE's success. Sierra's series has been very, very good, breaking new ground and winning three CGW Sports Game of the Year awards along the way.

But with \$1 billion in annual sales, the software gaming market is an intensely competitive arena. Even Goliath can't afford to kick back, although that's what

Sierra appeared to do last

year. My CGW review (March) of FPS FOOTBALL PRO '96 noted the malaise, and many gamers seem to agree. Quite a few FRONT PAGE leagues eschew the most recent edition, sticking with '95 instead. And for the first time in years, FRONT PAGE fumbled the CGW Sports Game of the Year crown, which went to NBA LIVE 96. Rival sports game companies have also noticed Goliath's misstep. Like sharks smelling blood, Sierra's competitors have retooled and swarmed into the current football season loaded for bear—FRONT PAGE bear.

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

The frantic competition should result in a fascinating year for football sim players. FRONT PAGE is back, but will be fighting that feeling that comes from an extended stay with the same system. Consequently, this year's excitement will likely come from one of the three big

graphical sims that are making their debut. I can't remember a football season with more hotly anticipated releases, or a showdown that's had as much of a playoff feel. So who are the rookies who are taking on computer football's wily veteran?

Emerging from the misty shores of vaporland, EA Sport's JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '97 will make its long-awaited debut on the PC. It was expected last season, but EA decided to red shirt JMF for one more year. We'll know soon if the extra conditioning paid off when this console hit blitzes the PC for the first time.

Leveraging the riches of ABC and Disney, Overtime Sports' first game will be MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL, a multimedia extravaganza that's after the glitz and excitement that pro football brings to prime-time TV. (For a scouting report on MNF, check out Terry Coleman's detailed preview in the September issue.)

The third, and in some ways most intriguing FRONT PAGE rival is LEGENDS FOOTBALL '97. Accolade has pinned its hopes on LEGENDS after three seasons of UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS. While every game has a hook, LEGENDS' is unique, promising authentic NFL play across four different eras: 1932, 1950, 1968, and the present. From the leather helmet days to Steve Van Buren to Gale Sayers to Emmitt Smith, huh? OK, Accolade, you've got my attention. What now?

"The thing that's getting the most hype," confirms the game's producer, Kevin Hogan, "is the LEGENDS concept, which is the ability to play in multiple eras. But I think that what's really going to set it apart is its play value—how intelligently it plays and how much fun it is."

“ Sierra's competitors swarmed into the football season loaded for bear—FRONT PAGE bear. ”

Dennis's 15 Best Sports Games Of All Time

1.	Front Page Sports: Football Pro '95	Sierra	PC
2.	NASCAR Racing	Papyrus	PC
3.	Links 386 Pro	Access	PC
4.	Earl Weaver Baseball	EA	PC/Amiga
5.	NBA Live 96	EA Sports	PC
6.	NHL Hockey 96	EA Sports	PC
7.	Front Page Sports: Baseball '94	Sierra	PC
8.	FIFA Soccer	EA Sports	PC
9.	Grand Prix 2	Microprose	PC
10.	NFL Challenge	XOR	PC
11.	Tony LaRussa Baseball 3.0	Stormfront Studios	PC
12.	Pro League Football '95	IBM/Microsports	PC
13.	Strat-O-Matic Baseball V6.2	Strat-O-Matic	PC/Mac
14.	Baseball for Windows	Miller/APBA	PC
15.	Virtual Pool	Interplay	PC

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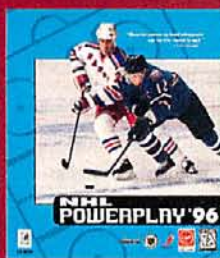
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Before signing on with Accolade, Hogan worked for EA Sports on big-name console projects like JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL, NHL HOCKEY and BILL WALSH COLLEGE FOOTBALL. CGW recently interrupted the LEGENDS producer's hectic schedule long enough for an in-depth interview about his new football title. From the ground up, LEGENDS is a completely original product. That's good news for gamers who were unimpressed with UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS.

"There's actually nothing of UR in LEGENDS," Hogan explains. "We decided we got as much as we were going to get out of that engine, and that if we were going to be competitive with FRONT PAGE we needed to start from scratch."

Easier said than done. For Hogan, the key was finding the right developer. He chose Saffire, an art house that primarily supplied graphics up until it made a recent move into game development. Prior Saffire credits include WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY on SNES, and HARBALL '95 for Sega Genesis.

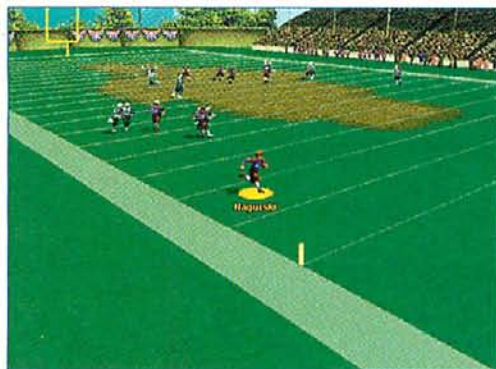
Given the large dose of console game experience behind the LEGENDS team, and the fact that PlayStation and Saturn

who prefers a good mixture of an arcade game with a lot of robust features. It's a difficult tightrope to walk. We want it to be as statistically accurate as possible, but if we have to make a decision between play value and statistics, we're gonna go for play value."

FOLLOW THE BOUNCING BALL

Pro football has undergone several distinct evolutions during its history. Modern NFL strategy is vastly different from that in 1968, let alone 1932. So how would the Decatur Staleys fare against the Jacksonville Jaguars?

Hogan's answer: "1968 obviously isn't as different from today as '32 would be. The differences are going to come out in the way each team plays. The '68 Colts (NFL champs) have a run-oriented, old-school, ball-control offense, whereas today you'll see quite a bit more passing. So there'll be a significant difference in the plays that they choose. If you're playing in '68, the



MEN IN TIGHTS In NFL LEGENDS, you'll be able to fulfill your leather helmet fetish when you face '32-era he-men against the plastic-helmeted sissyboys of the '90s.

In the look-and-feel category, LEGENDS includes 3D renditions of all 30 current NFL stadiums, as well as a representative venue for each of the nostalgic periods. With players from different eras competing, some fascinating matchups are possible. Can Crazy Legs Hirsch beat Neon Deion on the post pattern? Just how does a game mesh the smaller, slower players of yesterday with today's lightning-fast behemoths?

For Accolade the answer came through historical research and statistical analysis. Hogan does admit to a certain degree of subjectivity, especially for the distant eras where stats are not available. In some cases, the designers had to rely on newspaper accounts to assess strengths and weaknesses of individual players.

LEGENDS has some intriguing features, but can it flush FRONT PAGE out of the pocket? "I think that we're going to get a subset of people that have been longtime FRONT PAGE SPORTS fans," Hogan predicted. "FRONT PAGE is a great game, but I don't think they've done enough in recent years to enhance the game and keep their customers. I think there's an opportunity to go in and steal some of them. But FRONT PAGE also is a bit of a different market. There's overlap, but I think they tend toward the stats side of things, where we're tending toward the playability side. The real trick is figuring out the way to make it stand out, because there is plenty of competition out there."

That there is, and for computer football fans growing weary of the same old thing, that's very good news. Look forward to an exciting NFL season. **6**

▶ Well, the '96 baseball season is coming to a close, and one of the computer expansion teams didn't quite make it out of the dugout and onto the playing field. Virgin's GRAND SLAM '97 (formerly GRAND SLAM '96) is now expected for a first-quarter '97 release, in time for the opening of next season.

▶ Also delayed until early '97 is the PC version of VR Sports' VR GOLF. (The console versions should be out before Christmas.) We had a chance to play a late beta of the PlayStation version in multiplayer mode, and it's looking quite promising, with cool graphics and some of the best, funniest play-by-

play we've heard yet in a sports game. Keep your putter polished for this one.

▶ Answer: A Macintosh bowling game.

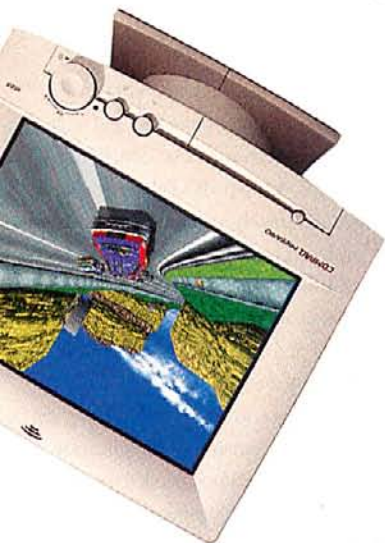
Question: Name the game least likely to be stolen from CGW's game library. Having gotten that cheap shot out of the way, let us now note, for the record, that the upcoming ALLEY 19 BOWLING is being made by Starplay, creators of two of the two best pinball simulators ever made: CRYSTAL CALIBURN and LOONY LABYRINTH. So if you're a Mac gamer, and a bowler, this 3D bowling sim (with four-player network support) may be good news, especially given the dearth of Mac sports games.

versions are due out as well, the obvious question is whether gamers can look forward to a football simulation or SONIC THE HEDGEHOG in shoulder pads. Hogan didn't waver in his design philosophy emphasizing gaming over simulation.

"For people who are into extremely accurate statistics, LEGENDS may not appeal to them as much as to somebody

things that will be different are the stadiums, the league rules, the music, the appearance of the players, and the overall look as you switch eras. The Cowboys will definitely have to vary their strategy playing in '68 because of the rule changes—things like hash marks being farther apart and goal posts placed at the front of the end zone."

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Duffer's Dream



LINKS LS Lets You Play Like A Pro, With A Pro

by Denny Atkin, Sr.

I'm on the first tee at Latrobe Country Club. A slight breeze rustles the leaves while birds chirp in the background. Arnold Palmer has just hit a long, straight tee shot. I get in position and swing away. The game is on. Here I am, fulfilling a "can't possibly ever happen to me" life's dream, teeing off against Arnold Palmer, pro against dreamer, in match play. My shot soars down the middle and lands softly in the fairway, just beyond Palmer's. I murmur to myself, "You're away, Amie."

Welcome to the world of Links LS, the latest attempt by Access Software to redefine the computer golf game. And like its esteemed ancestors—LEADER BOARD, LINKS and LINKS 386 PRO—this game's technological firsts and gameplay enhancements could very well make it the golf game to beat for years to come. With birds chirping in the background, divots and tees flying, and realistic ball flight, LINKS LS puts you on the fairway like no PC golf game ever has before.

WELL-TENDED GREENS

Much of game's realism is the work of an amazing new rendering engine, which supports resolutions ranging from 800x600 to 1600x1200 and beyond, in color depths ranging from 32,000 to 16 million colors. This unprecedented detail really reveals ground, grass and sand textures, highlighted by shadows and even fog. It also significantly enhances the game's 3D feel. Exactly how much detail you can display depends on your video card. With a 1MB card, 800x600, 16-bit color is the maximum, while a 2MB card will let you play in 800x600 24-bit color, or 1024x768 16-bit.

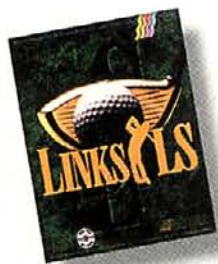
LINKS LS has moved most of the shot controls to a new retractable control panel, giving you a more open view of your actual shot. If you want to make a

club selection, spot the pin or adjust your stance, just move your mouse to the bottom of the screen and the panel pops up. As you move the pointer across various options on the panel, labels pop up to explain each button's function. Moving the pointer across a club shows its maximum hit distance, a feature beginning duffers will appreciate. Only the swing gauge (visually enhanced but similar to the one in LINKS 386) and slope, lie and wind indicators remain on the screen once all setup decisions have been made.

In addition, side, overhead, pin and other views are now available in windows that you can pop up, resize and place on

two generic male duffers and a female golfer—are larger, more fluid and more varied than those in LINKS 386. Palmer's swing process is particularly authentic, including his characteristic gyrations following each shot. Adding to the realism are Amie's colorful comments, such as, "I was moving off that ball," "That is much better," and even the classic "Looks like you hit the tree, Jim."

In addition to the cyber-Amie, you can set up both human and computer players; the latter add a much-needed sense of competition to this game. Choose a golfer animation, pick from 63 shirt colors (some of which only a true golfer would wear)



Price: \$79.95

System Requirements: 486 DX2 66MHz (Pentium 90 recommended), 12MB of RAM (16MB to run from Windows 95), 65MB of hard drive space, 2x CD-ROM drive (4x recommended), VESA-compliant video card with 1MB RAM (2MB recommended) capable of displaying 800x600 resolution in 32K colors, 8-bit sound card, mouse; math coprocessor required.

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Program Manager: Roger Carver

Publisher: Access Software, Inc.

Salt Lake City, UT (800) 800-4880

Reader Service #: 336



SWINGER'S FANTASY LINKS LS's stunning degree of realism will make you forget that you're actually inside, not in Hawaii, not playing golf at all.

your screen as desired. If you close these windows after setting up your shot, though, you'll find a spectacularly realistic view which includes every mound, tree, bush, cart path (you actually see the carts parked to the side in some of the shots), sand trap and even ball washer in the vicinity.

FORE PLAY

Access has improved more than just the scenery. The new golfer animation—which includes Arnold Palmer himself,

and set their ability level anywhere from amateur to championship. You can micro-manage the abilities of computer players, giving them better skills at certain kinds of shots. A point system lets you rate a golfer's overall skill, and even makes possible contests to, for example, create the best overall computer golfer using 700 skill points.

Golfers will appreciate the new choices of game style—you can take on players in Match Play, Best Ball or Skins games. For

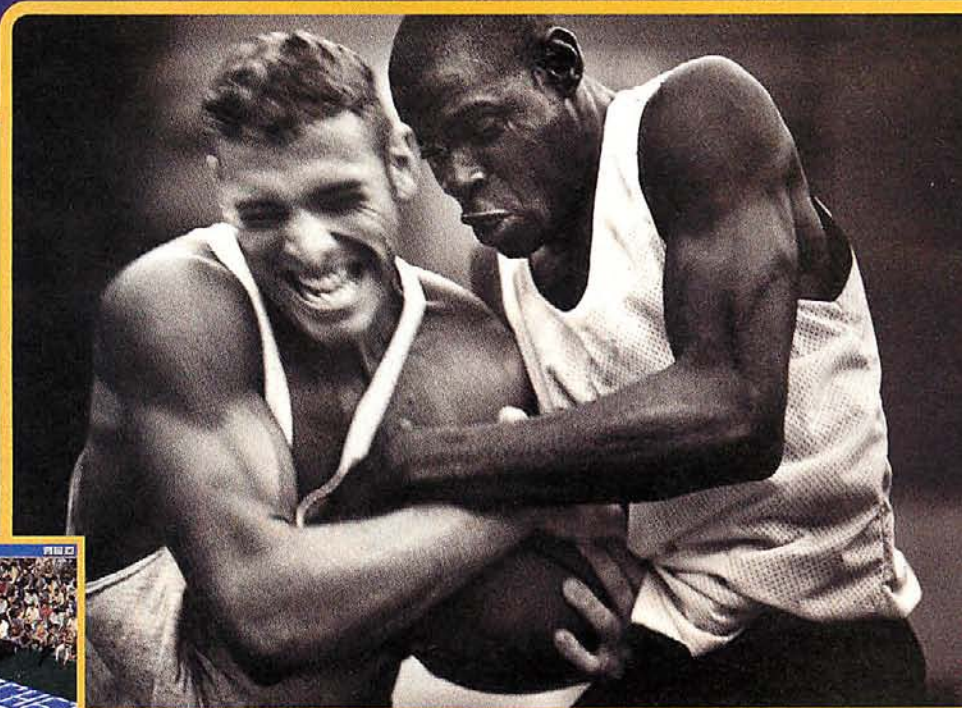
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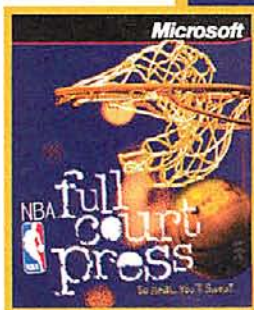


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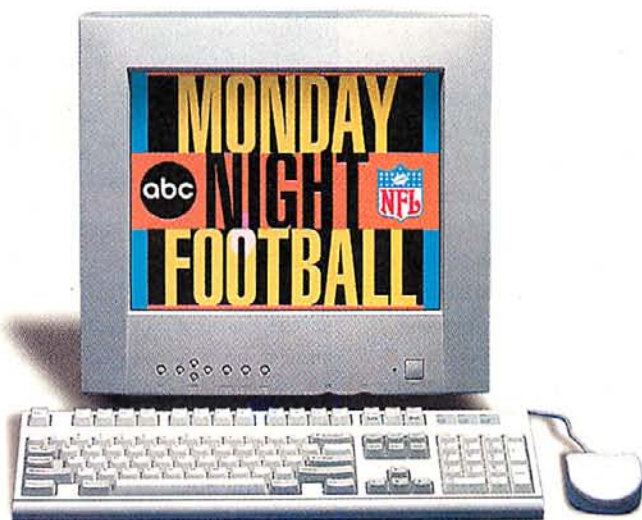
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my first game with Arnie, I chose Match Play, the oldest and most traditional form of competition. When taking on human players, you can compete on a single machine or connect via modem or local-area network. The Latrobe course and simulated Arnold Palmer included with LINKS LS are just the first entries in Access's new Tour Player Series. Other famous professional golfers will follow, along with their home courses.

COURSE WARE

Following my match with Arnie, I ventured to the windswept coast of Maui to play the famed Kapalua Village and Plantation courses, also included with the game. A striking difference to the Hawaii courses is always knowing in which direction the ocean lies, thanks to the crisp environmental 16-bit 3D stereo sound.

As a thank-you for longtime Links supporters who have already invested in the numerous add-on courses, Access has included 17 of the SVGA courses used with LINKS 386 PRO and LINKS 386 CD on disc 2 of the three-CD set. Simply point LINKS LS at the disc containing the original course, and the program will install an enhanced LS version. Although these courses don't quite



I MEANT TO DO THAT Hitting your ball close to the concrete makes it much easier to get back to the cart.

match the image quality or offer the animated fly-bys of the native LS courses, they are enhanced significantly from the originals.

ACE IN THE HOLE

LINKS LS is more than just a run-of-the-mill franchise update—the interface changes and more realistic sound and graphics give this classic golf game a really new feel, while new match play against

Arnie and other pro golfers gives LINKS LS a much welcomed competitive edge. And, lest anyone tell you that playing computer golf is a waste of time, the player animation is so great that you could actually get some good ideas for improving your real-life golf swing and course management through thoughtful playing of this game. Perhaps the only improvement this golfer can suggest would be to allow the player to be positioned anywhere in the teeing area when setting up for the shot. All in all, however, this is a great way to spend a Saturday when the real links are rained out.

Unlike the swing-challenged, flight-simplified Jr. edition, Denny Atkin Sr. is most at home on a golf course, as is evidenced by his recent capture of the 1996 Club Champion, Handicap Flight title at Oregon's Tualatin Country Club. ⚡

The Virtual Clubhouse

Although I couldn't wait to get to the golf game with Arnie, the standout extras included in the three-CD-ROM package turned out to be thrilling additions for any real golf fan. Two virtual reality 3D tours—Kapalua's Plantation Clubhouse and Arnold Palmer's office and workshop—use the engine from Access's THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE adventure game to let you walk from room to room and zoom in on specific items of interest.

The virtual tours are amazingly accurate. You move freely down the hallways of the opulent Plantation course clubhouse. Make your way down the circular staircase to the lower lobby where you'll find the Victory Wall, on which past Kapalua champions are displayed. In all, 93 points of interest are explained with a simple click of the mouse.

Arnold Palmer fans will love the virtual tour of Arnie's workshop, office and trophy room. I really enjoyed the feeling of being there, in my idol's private place. Also, video footage allows us to listen to Palmer's insights and recollections of his PGA and Senior tour memories. In addition, two video tours are included: Kapalua, on the island of Maui, and the story behind the legend of Arnold Palmer. Finally, video fly-bys are available for all the holes on the LINKS LS courses.

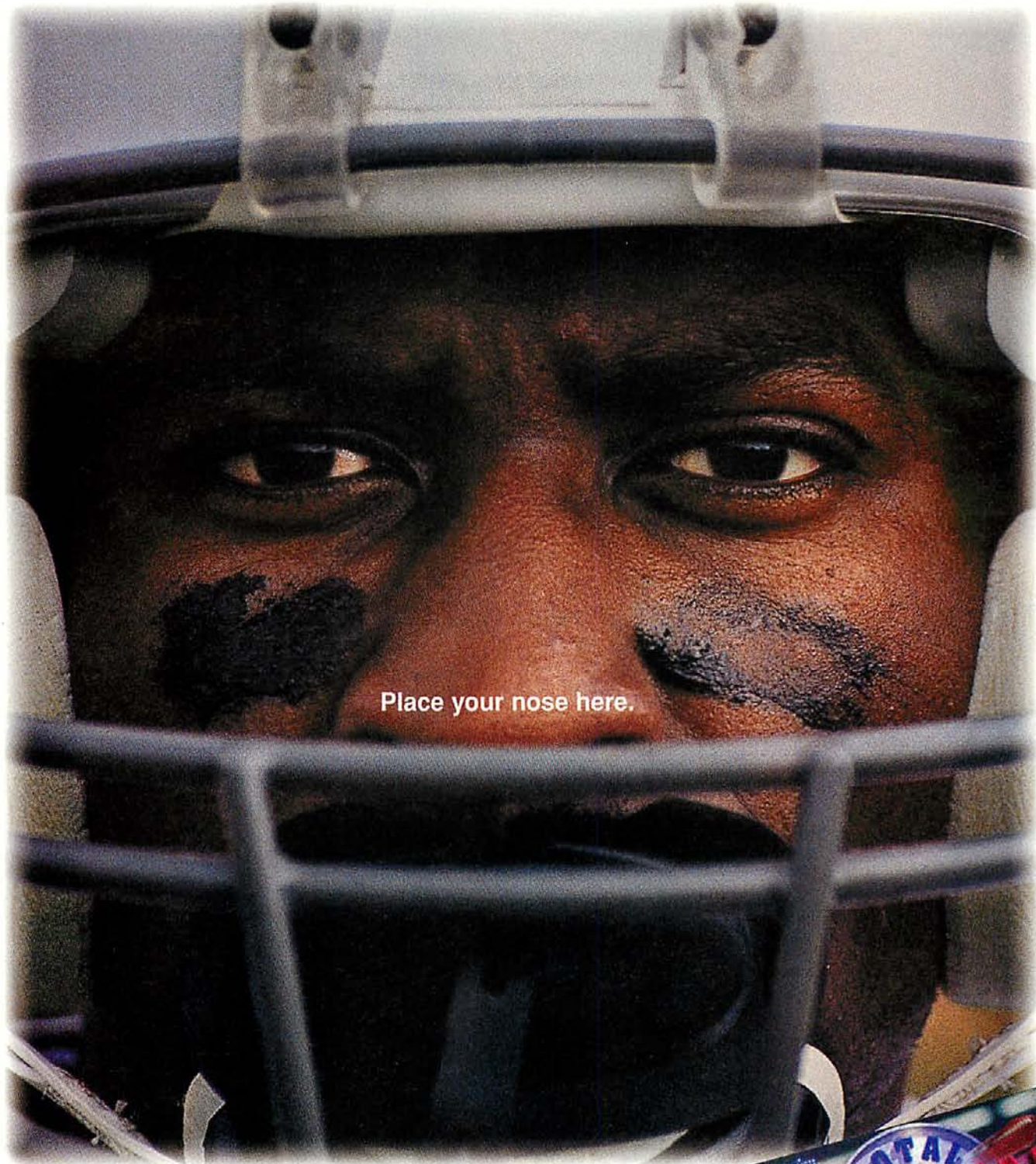


APPEAL: Computer golf fans looking for an accurate, realistic golf sim.

PROS: The "Like being there" sounds, textures and animation combine to make this simulation a real golf fan's delight. Multiple match types plus modem/network play expand the game's playability.

CONS: Other than slow rendering times, hard to find any. Perhaps the chirping bird?





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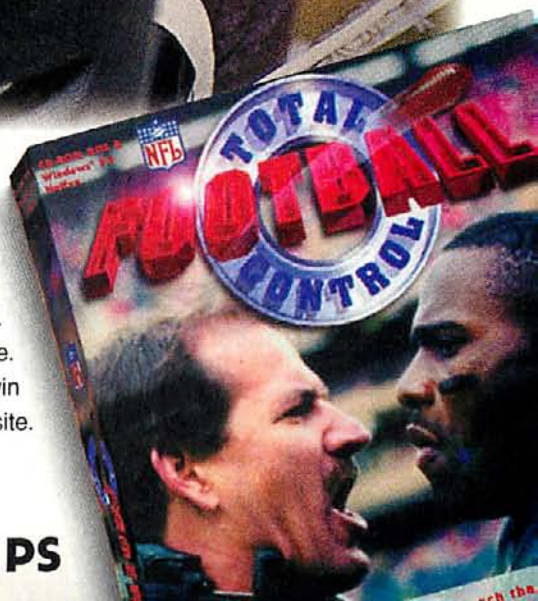
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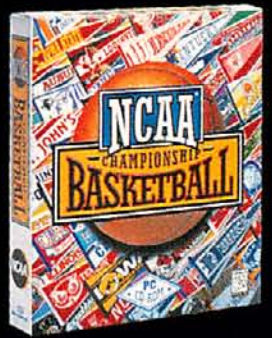
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Hit Parade

TRIPLE PLAY 97 Is Flashy, Arcade Baseball At Its Best, But Stat Geeks Beware

by Jim Gindin

EA Sports is kind of like the Michael Crichton of computer sports gaming. Like Crichton, who has perfected a captivating story-telling formula in his novels (*Jurassic Park*, *Disclosure*, et al) that eschews realism or social significance but nicely stretches the imagination, EA Sports creates games that are just plain fun to have on the hard drive. The company's new entry into the vast baseball market is *TRIPLE PLAY 97*, a smooth, attractive bundle of hitting, fielding and pitching, that, like their other games, is loads of fun to play but will leave statistical purists frowning.

BALL BUSTER

When evaluating *TRIPLE PLAY 97*, arcade gameplay is everything. EA delivers top-notch SVGA graphics in a seamless, smooth-scrolling playing field. The game has an excellent-looking batter/pitcher interface. Players have individual heights, weights and skin colors, so short, muscular players look a little Kirby Puckettish, while lanky pitchers resemble Randy Johnson. This gives the game a neat, polygon-like personality.

As the pitcher, you can select from nine pitches, and then guide the pitch by moving the pitcher right or left on the mound. Touching or holding the joystick moves the pitch in a certain direction. It isn't real baseball—the location of a pitch shouldn't be changed once thrown, obviously—but it is well executed. Getting a feel for throwing outside the strike zone and making the computer batter swing is very important in this game.

From the hitter's perspective, setup is more like real life. The hitter selects an open, even or closed stance, and can then move within the batter's box to select an

optimum position for swinging. Swinging the bat requires a button press. If you hold the joystick down, you get a ground ball. If you push it up, you get a fly ball. *TRIPLE PLAY 97* does not force you to select an area of the plate to swing into. After playing many different competitors' games, I think this was a good decision. There simply isn't any way, with current visual tech-



THIS IS A HIT! *TRIPLE PLAY 97* offers just about the best batting interface available in PC arcade baseball. Set your stance, position yourself in the box, and then prepare to whiff.

nology, to properly simulate the perspective of facing a real pitcher. All attempts to force players to swing in a particular area of the strike zone results in frustration; you need to retrain your brain to recognize specific pixel paths to make that kind of choice.

In *TP 97*, all you worry about is trying not to swing at inside or outside pitches. You're not going to walk, so timing the swing is everything. Unfortunately, once contact is made, realism deteriorates. The stance and your selection of whether to swing with an uppercut almost entirely determine where the ball goes. If you select a closed stance, your batter will pull everything. If you use an open stance, everything will go to the opposite field. Hitting and pitching also seem very streaky: Some innings, you can't buy a hit.

Other innings, you'll get (or will give up) six runs without even thinking about it.

Fielding is a little quirky: You can have your fielders automatically guided to where the ball will land. Otherwise, if you opt to do it yourself, you'll have to pump the joystick button to get them to move at anything quicker than a molasses-like pace. Once the players reach the ball,

throwing to the correct base can be tough, especially since these players can throw like DNA-manipulated monsters. Any outfielder is capable of zipping a one-hop strike to the catcher from 400 feet.

If you don't hit a home run, you will almost certainly hit a single with one-base advancement. Any kind of extra

advancement is difficult, and usually results in a costly out. Even computer-controlled base running is a little bizarre. It's not unusual to see a runner just a few feet from scoring from second base on a single turn and head back to third when the center fielder starts the throw. This part of the game needs a lot of work. The option for even faster, but riskier, throws will add a lot to the game once the kinks are worked out.

CHROME JOB

Since *TRIPLE PLAY 97* was developed simultaneously for console systems, it's designed to run entirely from joystick or gamepad input. This gives the action game itself a very smooth feel. EA has mastered this type of interface. The game moves from module to module



Price: \$59.95

System Requirements:

486DX2 66MHz,
Windows 95 or MS-DOS
5.0r, 26MB hard disk
space (60MB recom-
mended), 8MB RAM
(12MB for Windows 95),
1MB SVGA VLB/PCI
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compatible driver, 2x
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Protection: None (CD
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with attractive, circular menus.

Viewing the game's limited statistics, however, is a bit tedious. Setting or changing a lineup is very difficult, and if you make an in-game mistake trying to figure out player changes, you cannot undo that change. Adding the use of mouse input, while violating the concept of a pure, console-like game, would have helped this PC version.

TP 97 sounds great, however. The game's ambient sounds are cool, and you can select from a few unobtrusive background musical themes. The play-by-play is coherent and doesn't attempt to describe everything, a mistake other designers have made. While player names are provided, announcer Jim Hughson is a name-mangler who would make Harry Carey proud. No one should try to say Expos shortstop Mark Grudzielanek's name without help.

TP 97 also features a Home Run Derby that has more appeal than the game itself in a purely arcade sense. You can choose one or more players to participate, then select a ballpark and (optionally) some attributes about the computer pitcher. Then you simply try to hit the ball out of the park. It can be used for learning the timing required to hit fastballs and curves, and the program



THE SUN WAS IN MY EYES You might want to think about letting TRIPLE PLAY handle fielding automatically, unless you enjoy getting beat by in-the-park homers.



WHO YOU CALLING A BLIMP? TRIPLE PLAY's 3D graphics are most triumphant, including breathtaking, realistic renderings of all the Major League stadiums.

tracks the longest home runs hit by each player. I think this part of the simulation has more replay value than the rest of the game. It's simply great entertainment to try to get Grudzielanek to match the mammoth 500-foot Frank Thomas home runs.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

So the game looks great and plays great, but how about that statistical model? Simply put, TRIPLE PLAY 97 has no interest in providing results that reflect the numbers of baseball. Players either have power or they don't, and dozens will finish within striking distance of a league lead in the 40s in simulated seasons. Everyone steals a lot of bases, leading to results such as speedy Atlanta leadoff hitter Marquis Grissom (12 homers, 29 stolen bases in 1995) and powerful Fred McGriff (27 HR, 3 SB) posting nearly identical numbers (36 HR, 37 SB vs 41 HR, 37 SB) in simulated play. Rico Brogna, a Mets slugger who has one stolen base in his career, was among the league leaders with 51 in TP 97 life.

EA does a little better simulating pitchers, but only tracks walks, strikeouts, wins and losses. Saves are also listed, but none are ever recorded. There's no attention paid to pitching strengths. Greg Maddux can throw a knuckleball and a splitfinger pitch in addition to his fastball/change regimen. In fact, all pitchers can throw any of the nine supported pitch styles. This is fun, but will annoy those who are really into simulating baseball.

League management is nonexistent.

The computer selects the same lineup for all league games, so backups do not play. While it tends never to replace pitchers in head-to-head play, it takes them out much too early in simulated games. Every team has a reliever appearing in 120 to 150 games per season. To keep things moving at a fast pace, the game's designers obviously weren't too concerned about getting into the meat of simulating baseball—and it works, sort of, as games are simulated quickly at least.

PENNANT WINNER

Overall, TRIPLE PLAY 97 has state-of-the-art graphics, a decent interface and solid action gameplay—but not much in the way of realism. Comparison to other recent releases, like Sierra's FRONT PAGE SPORTS BASEBALL PRO '96, is a little difficult. FPSBB '96 attempts elements like a realistic physics model of a baseball in flight, while TP 97 has a few flight paths built in, some directly defying the laws of physics. FPSBB '96 makes a token effort at league management and statistical realism, while TP 97 completely ignores these functions. But TP 97, like Michael Crichton, does entertain, while FPSBB '96 reads a lot like some college consortium of literary critics trying to create the Great American Novel. Everything's there, but somehow it never comes together.

Though EA Sports has done a good job here, the graphics-based computer baseball genre still awaits its masterpiece. No game has completely succeeded yet in capturing both our trigger fingers and our imaginations. In the meantime, though, TRIPLE PLAY 97 is a very fun diversion. **E**

APPEAL: Console sports gamers looking for an action baseball game for their PC.

PROS: Easy-to-use interface, smooth and pretty graphics; excellent arcade action; a well-implemented home run derby, modem play.

CONS: Weak league management support; nothing to satisfy the stat-enthusiast; cartoon-like pitching interface.



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Strat Me Up

No-Nonsense Baseball Sim Gets Prettier In First CD-ROM Version

by Dennis McCauley

Together with long-time rival APBA, Strat-O-Matic is one of two producers of stat-based baseball sims that have successfully made the transition from table top to hard drive. Both are unique in the rapidly evolving world of computer games, where "long-standing" often means that a game has survived long enough to have a sequel. Strat-O-Matic, on the other hand, has been cranking out their computer baseball game for over a decade, and has been offering their card-based game since JFK played touch football on the White House lawn.

STRAT-O-MATIC BASEBALL (SOM) can be considered a boutique product, appealing to fans who demand the utmost in statistical realism—and get it. Make no mistake, SOM will never compete with the likes of EA's TRIPLE PLAY or Sierra's FRONT PAGE SPORTS: BASEBALL PRO, but then, it doesn't try to. The small, privately run company from Glen Head, New York, simply churns out what may be the finest statistical simulation available today. Thankfully, with the new version, they've spruced it up with just enough eye candy to keep things interesting.

Never let it be said, however, that Strat-O-Matic moves precipitously. While most other companies switched exclusively to CD-ROM and high-res graphics several years ago, Strat-O-Matic finally took the plunge this summer, and not without hesitation. Long-time fans waited impatiently for the game's release, their anxiety fueled by rumors of strange new arcade-like features inserted into what has historically been a shrine to statistics. Well, the new baby has arrived, and it's doing fine—a better-looking version of its older siblings. There is an extra appendage you should know about, though. It's called the



MIRROR, MIRROR For this first CD-ROM, Windows version, STRAT-O-MATIC BASEBALL's new look features much better looking stadium backdrops, though no one is going to mistake the game for TRIPLE PLAY 97.

Regulator, and it's ugly. But don't worry, the doctor says you can toggle it off and no one will know the difference.

There's one other major difference in the new STRAT-O-MATIC: It's Windows-based, running under both 3.1 and Win 95. Veteran SOM players will have little trouble navigating in the new version, since conceptually the game has changed little. STRAT-O-MATIC newbies may find things a bit more confusing, however, due primarily to the lack of a printed manual—a terrible trend in the industry in general that the company should not have followed.

A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN

To its designers' credit, SOM is about as flexible as a baseball game can be. Players can choose to manage their favorite team while committing the others to autoplay mode. Or, if they choose, put every ball club on autoplay, sit back and watch the results fly by. On a Pentium 90 or better, complete season replays can be completed in under 15

minutes. Anyone who's surrendered their computer for a weekend while waiting for FPSBB to finish a simmed season will relish SOM's speed in CPU-to-CPU play.

Gamers who scan the fine print on the stat sheets will appreciate SOM's inclusion of every player who picked up a bat or a glove during a season. It's great fun to use the late season call-ups and lesser role players in recreated seasons.

Player manipulation has been simplified in the new STRAT-O-MATIC as well. The old General Manager module has given way to a drag-and-drop interface for trades among teams in the same league. In a carryover from the old SOM, interleague trading remains more complicated than it should be, requiring an edit-copy-paste step.

One aspect of management that's especially cool is the Swap-O-Matic feature, which allows the gamer to propose trades as large as three-for-three with GMs of computer-run teams. The game's



MINOR LEAGUE ACTION STRAT-O-MATIC has thrown a bone to arcade gamers with an awkward beast called The Regulator, a cartoony pitcher-batter confrontation that you'll want to disable as soon as possible.



Price: \$66.00

System Requirements:

Windows 3.1 or higher,
8 MB of RAM or
greater, 20 MB of hard
drive space for full
install, CD-ROM drive.

Protection: Floppy disk
disk

Developer: Strat-O-

Matic

Glen Head, NY

(800) 645-3455

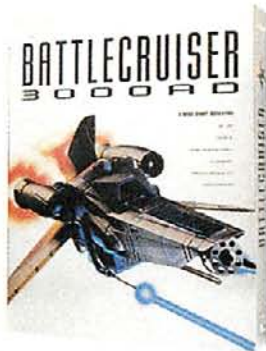
Reader Service #: 338

**GOOD THINGS COME
TO THOSE WHO WAIT...**

Ever heard the phrase "Patience is a virtue?" Well, never before has patience been more virtuous than with the arrival of Battlecruiser 3000AD--the most complex, expansive, and enthralling supergame ever created with multiple game engines, the first ever neural net-driven system, and more features than any PC game ever.

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**Derek Smart's BATTLECRUISER 3000AD.
THE LAST THING YOU'LL EVER DESIRE.**



Actual in-game graphics

Circle Reader Service #170



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EACH TEAM'S DROME ARENA HAS ITS OWN LETHAL COMBINATION OF WEAPONS, RAMPS, POWER-UPS AND AMPUTATING OBSTACLES.

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SCORE WITH THE "ROK" OR YOUR OPPONENT'S SEVERED HEAD. YOUR EQUIPMENT IS SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR SCORING AND BUTCHERING.



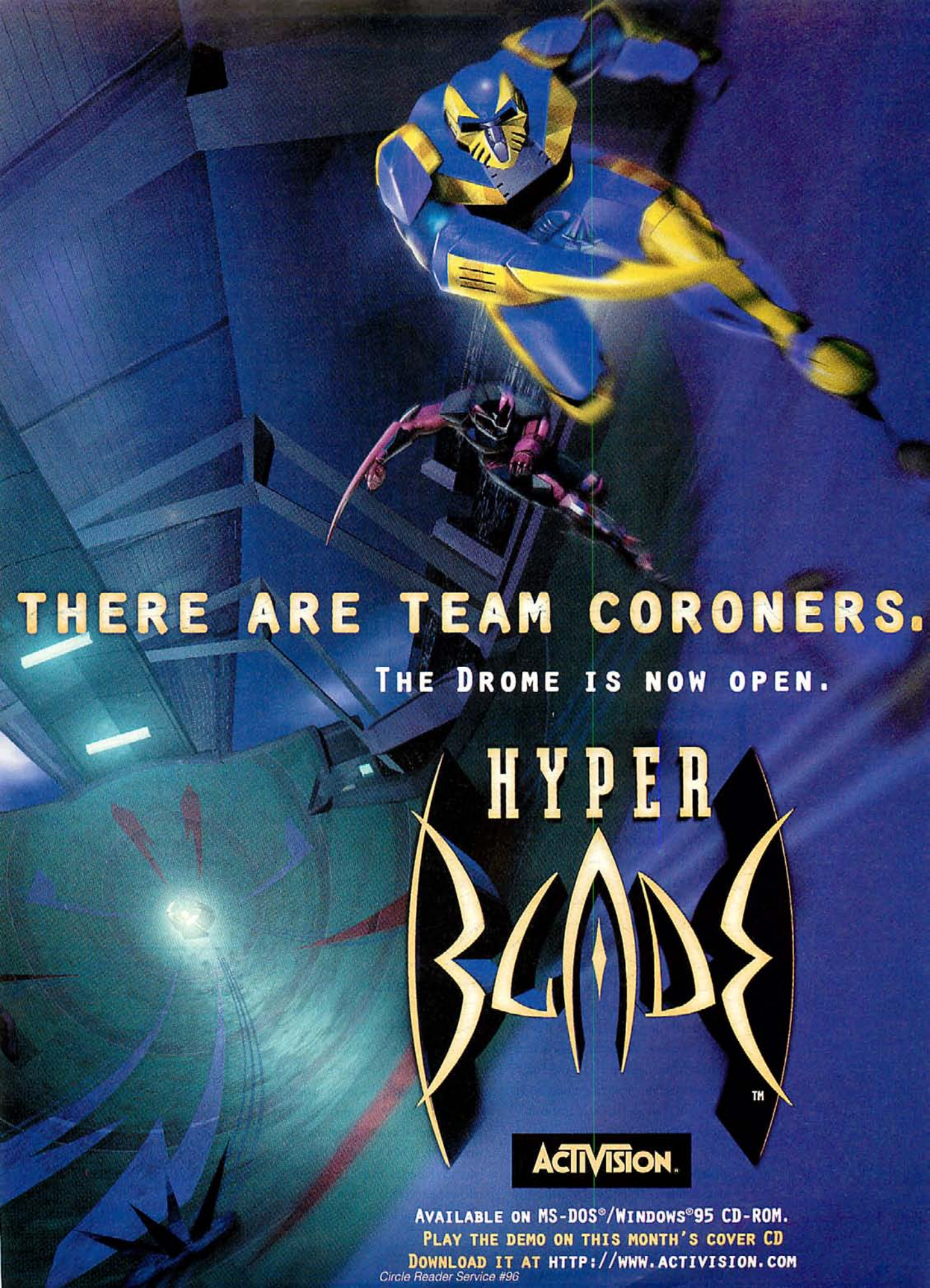
ENGAGE IN 4-PLAYER NETWORK ACTION THAT FEATURES THE SPEED OF HOCKEY AND THE SAVAGERY OF COMBAT. BE THE MVP OR BE DOA.



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trading AI is no patsy, either. It rejected out-of-hand my lame attempt to steal Barry Bonds for three underachieving Phillies (is there any other kind?). When I lowered my sights and offered three quality players for Matt Williams, my trading counterpart expressed interest but asked for more value in return, even suggesting areas where the Giants needed improvement.

PLAYING THE NUMBERS

Gameplay is the standard STRAT-O-MATIC fare, and hasn't changed much over the years. Players make out a lineup,

Statistical accuracy remains a STRAT-O-MATIC trademark, as players perform realistically across the board. Although certain offensive categories seemed a bit on the high side in several 1995 replays, aren't sportswriters today saying the same thing and attributing it to the sorry state of Major League pitching? Still, both Dante Bichette and Frank Thomas reached Roger Maris country with 61 HRs in separate replays, and several sluggers exceeded the 50-homer mark. The Indians maxed out at 116 wins on one occasion, exceeding their own 1954 major league record by 5 Ws. Other than these few anomalies,

the stats SOM produced were more than satisfactory, and much better than what you'll get from the graphics-oriented sims.

On the downside, STRAT-O-MATIC still uses an annoying floppy-disk-key copy-protection scheme. If the company really feels this is necessary, wouldn't it be simpler to just check for the presence of the CD-ROM rather than writing an encryption

to the user's hard drive? This is one thing that Strat-O-Matic needs to dump quickly to help shed their small-time image. Also lamentable is the lack of modern play, because so much of the competition is including it these days and so many leagues around the country are using SOM.

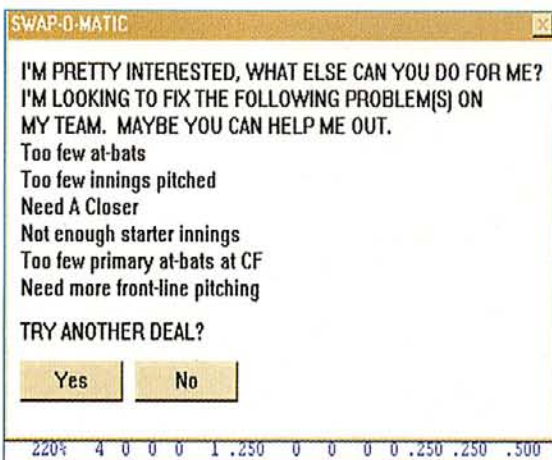
FEELING IRREGULAR

And then there's The Regulator, the news of which set tongues wagging among suspicious SOM faithful for months in anticipation. The Regulator is an arcade (that's right—arcade!) device that was included, one supposes, to draw action-oriented fans to the product. It won't work. When activated, The Regulator sends the player to a cartoonish pitcher-batter confrontation. This device is basically a circle drawn around the

strike zone, in which the user tries to click the mouse at the ball as it arrives at the plate. According to Strat-O-Matic, it has no impact on statistical accuracy, and the link between what one accomplishes at The Regulator screen and the actual play result is Byzantine, at best. Thankfully, this feature is optional. My advice to gamers? Toggle it off—immediately. My advice to Strat-O-Matic? The Regulator is no Natural. It deserves an unconditional release.

In yet another attempt to spice things up, Strat-O-Matic has upgraded the text-based play-by-play to include 10,000 lines of verbiage, so there will be less of the repetitive commentary of the older games. For a sawbuck more, gamers can purchase an optional team-specific play-by-play disk that names names, including the owner, mascot and coaches. There are also ambient sounds, such as the crowd, the crack of the bat and the peanut vendor, that succeed to some extent in adding atmosphere. However, I found that on my AWE 32, the general crowd sound had an underlying loud, rhythmic thump that was quite distracting.

Overall, Strat-O-Matic's first foray into Windows and CD-ROM gaming has to be considered a success. The game plays well, yields accurate stats, and offers a few pleasing new twists. To be sure, no one will ever confuse SOM with *HARDBALL 5*, *TONY LARUSSA*, *FPSBB* or any of the other big graphics-oriented baseball sims. But then, that's not why gamers turn to stat-based games like SOM. So, keep 'em coming, Strat-O-Matic—just not on a Regulator basis. **E**



SWAP TILL YOU DROP One of the game's best features is the Swap-O-Matic, which lets you make 3-for-3 trades with computer-run GMs.

select a starting pitcher, and then it's batter up! The pitcher vs. hitter matchup keys the action, but fielders' range and error percentages have an impact as well. In addition, SOM includes ballpark and weather effects that influence play. Home runs in Wrigley become long fly balls in the Astrodome, while night games in April often feature cold, wet weather which puts a damper on hitting. Couple these with true lefty-righty effects, and SOM provides the feel of real baseball, if not always the look. While the optional stadium backdrops are much improved over previous editions, featuring attractive day and night photos of major league ballparks, STRAT-O-MATIC remains primarily a stat-oriented game. If you need to see realistic, animated ballplayers and stunning stadium graphics, you're in the right church, wrong pew.

APPEAL: Hardcore baseball gamers and stat freaks who value accurate simulation over all else

PROS: Top-notch statistical engine, excellent player management tools, fast and accurate replays, complete major league rosters.

CONS: Ho-hum sound and graphics, key disk protection scheme, misguided attempt to inject arcade action into game system.



Get A Hold Of This Action

CH's New Force-Feedback Joystick Is A Wrist-Wrenching Winner



I've seen the future of flight sims, and it is a joystick. Specifically, the new force-feedback design from CH Products. While VR goggles make it look like you're really flying a plane (in a low-res universe, at least), the CH Force F/X joystick makes it feel like you're in control of a real aircraft.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

The Force F/X, which was slated at press time to ship in late September, will use the same handle as the CH F-16 Combat Stick. But that's where the similarity ends. The F/X's heavy base does away with the throttle wheel and simple gimbal mechanism found



STICK IT The CH Force F/X will share the handle design of this F-16 Combat Stick, but will include a sturdier base.

in the F-16 Combat Stick and replaces them with a complex mechanism of gears and motors. The resulting stick works like

a conventional joystick, but it provides you with amazing environmental feedback, simulating bumps, jolts, vibration, and resistance.

I recently had a chance to spend a week flying Philips Media's FIGHTER DUEL using a prototype Force F/X, and I'm a definite convert. (It's really hard to avoid a cheap joke about flaccid joysticks here, but I'll resist.) Going back to a standard joystick now is like downgrading from a top-of-the-line programmable fighter stick to an old Atari digital joystick; the experience just can't compare.

Force feedback has two effects. First, the realistic resistance the stick provides when you attempt to pull out of a high-speed dive or make a rapid roll motion adds a level of challenge to combat—you can't just jerk the stick in a Corsair like you're piloting a fly-by-wire F-16. But even better, the joystick actually significantly increases your situational awareness by providing much of the same feedback you'd get when flying a real plane. Encountering heavy resistance when you pull back the stick is a clue to check your airspeed gauge, because you're probably overspeed. Similarly, a shaking stick is a *much* more intuitive and realistic warning of an impending stall in a WWII aircraft than a warning horn. Self-proclaimed expert pilots often complain that aircraft in sims don't depart from controlled flight as easily as the real thing. However, that's reasonable, since you get very few of the cues from a screen and speakers that you get in a real cockpit. Until now, that is. Well-programmed force feedback will open doors to new levels of flight model realism.

“ A force-feedback joystick does more for the feeling of 'being there' than any VR helmet. ”

15TH
ANNIVERSARY

Denny's 15 Best Flight Sims of All Time

Below you'll find my picks for the 15 best flight simulations of all time. While some highly rated programs may not be the most technologically sophisticated sims, they were seminal efforts that influenced future sims in their respective subgenres.

1. Red Baron	Dynamix	PC/Amiga
2. Their Finest Hour	LucasArts	PC/Amiga
3. Falcon 3.0	Spectrum HoloByte	PC
4. Aces of the Pacific	Dynamix	PC
5. F/A-18 Interceptor	EA	Amiga
6. Chuck Yeager's Air Combat	EA	PC
7. Flight Simulator II	SubLogic	Apple II/C64/Amiga/Atari 800 & ST
8. Air Warrior	Kesmai	PC/Amiga/Mac/Atari ST
9. Longbow	Jane's/EA	PC
10. F-14 Fleet Defender	MicroProse	PC
11. EF2000	Ocean/DID	PC
12. Su-27 Flanker	SSI	PC
13. 1942: The Pacific Air War	MicroProse	PC
14. Fighter Duel	Jaeger/Phillips	PC/Amiga
15. Warbirds	ICI	PC/Mac

This is not a game.



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Is it a game when your stomach lurches in the course of performing a Cuban eight? Is it a game when beads of sweat appear on your forehead while flying under London's Tower Bridge to digitally sampled sound? No. This is not a game. This is Microsoft® Flight Simulator for Windows® 95, the latest upgrade to the most realistic PC flight simulation available anywhere.

Experienced sim pilots will relish logging time in their new Boeing 737-400 and acrobatic Extra 300S, extending the range of experience beyond the four planes already in the fleet. A heightened level of realistic flight

dynamics has been achieved,

as verified by Flight Safety International, the world's leading pilot training organization.

Buzz Las Vegas by night and Martha's Vineyard at dawn with a degree of photo-realism that only satellite imaging makes possible. Soar over New York, Paris, Tokyo and other cities with more detailed 3D rendering. Improved performance delivers smoother out-the-window views and more immediate response to cockpit controls.

Challenges have been added to test your skills under daunting weather conditions, over new terrain, in varied aircraft. Fly in the face of Mother Nature as you shoot an instrument approach into the fog. Climb over the Alps through rapidly shifting winds, turbulence and changing visibility. Blow the skirts up on the Statue of Liberty.

To find out even more about Microsoft Flight Simulator for Windows 95, visit our Web site at www.microsoft.com/games/fltsim/

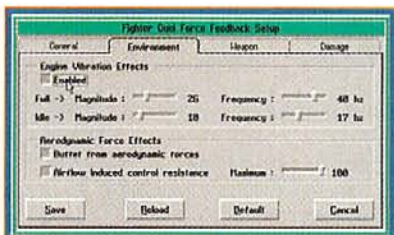
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Expansion Pack with southern California scenery, challenges and adventures available soon.



FIGHTER DUEL's force-feedback setup program gives you full control over the stick's reactions. You can enable engine vibration and adjust its degree; while realistic in both feel and the noise level generated by the stick's motors, it gets annoying quickly. More useful are the adjustable reactions to aerodynamic force effects, including buffet and control resistance. You can also toggle on stick reactions for cannon and machine gun fire, as well as buffeting from explosions,



POWER OF THE FORCE FIGHTER DUEL's force feedback support lets you adjust the degree of force used for engine and gun vibration, aerodynamic resistance, and more.

TIPS!

MORE ON BACK TO BAGHDAD:

The little arrows that appear on the JTIDS display in ILS mode are actually landing beacons. By flying directly over the beacons toward the land-



LANDING BEACONS

ing waypoint, you'll begin your final approach with a perfect lineup every time.

The real F-16's three-way dogfight switch is modeled in the game. Shift-D selects Sidewinders and the ACM radar mode. Alt-D arms AMRAAMs and puts the radar in TWS mode. Pressing D by itself switches you back to whatever configuration you had before. — Robin Kim

impacts and gun hits.

Look for force-feedback support to quickly become widespread. Even now, the latest version of ICI's WARBIRDS online sim supports the CH stick. Its feel is similar to FIGHTER DUEL's, but the program doesn't feature the same level of adjustment.

The Force F/X should sell for around

\$150, a small price to pay for the sensation of "being there."

NET RETURN

Speaking of FIGHTER DUEL, the NET DUEL nine-player add-on I previewed in the July issue is finally available. You'll find it on this month's CC-ROM, as well as on our web site at www.zdnet.com/gaming.

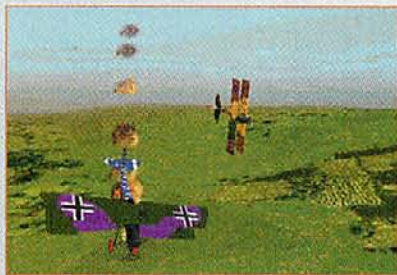
ON THE RADAR

This month we start with a sim that's dropped off the radar. A few months back, Sierra promised a free update to the lackluster SILENT THUNDER: A-10 TANK KILLER 2. The update was set to add a realistic flight model as an option to supplement the poor, arcade-like handling of the sim's A-10, and include a series of new missions as well.

The plan was to incorporate the RED BARON II flight model, which is force-model driven and can be used for virtually any plane which you have accurate dimensions and data for. Turns out that the estimates of the difficulty of grafting in the RB II flight model were more optimistic than realistic. Also the missions, which were almost complete, turned out to be too large to distribute online. At this point, the project seems to have been shelved, and players looking to fly a plane that handles like a real A-10 should instead check out A10 CUBA! on the Macintosh, or even the A-10 included in Jane's ATF.

The other news from Sierra's Dynamix

group is of the bad news-good news type. The bad news is that RED BARON II has been delayed until at least February of next year. The good news is that the delay will allow developers to further fine-tune the game and make it right before shipping. Look for support for the major 3D graphics cards to be included, and multiplayer is a possibility as well. (Multi-



SLOW CRASH Any chance of RED BARON II shipping this year has been shot down.

player will definitely be available in an add-on if it doesn't make it into the product.) After the recent OUTPOST-like fiasco with the early release of a buggy, rough FRONT PAGE SPORTS: BASEBALL update, we're happy to see that Sierra isn't exhibiting

more corporate shortsightedness and rushing RED BARON II out at the end of a fiscal quarter just to try to satisfy stockholders' expectations.

Another delay is in store for Micro-Prose's EUROPEAN AIR WAR, in part due to the departures of some members of the development team, but also because the decision was made to enhance the sim over the original design and move it from DOS to Windows 95. Look for it in the first half of 1997.

Finally, since this month's "Radar" seems to be about making you wait, I'll close with the scoop on the next project for the West Coast division of EA's Jane's group. After the completion of the latest sequel to 688 ATTACK SUB, due this spring, Paul Grace and his team plan a Jane's flight simulation set in World War II. It's the end of the line for the creaky US NAVY FIGHTERS engine, though, so don't look for this product until at least Christmas of 1997, because the team is building an entirely new simulation engine from the ground up for this project.

Force FX

The new force feedback joystick from CH Products.

You've never felt anything like it. The new **Force FX** Joystick jolts gameplay into the thrill zone. Feel the true-to-life vibration of revving engines and rough roads. Brace yourself for air turbulence or engine stall buffeting, and hang tough against the vector force in a tight turn. Now, fire off a round and feel it kick back. The **Force FX** puts the yeehaahh into flight simulations, driving, space combat and just about any other game. Your palms will sweat. Your knuckles will turn white. You'll swear it's alive.

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Unexpected Ace

Empire and Rowan's Latest Sim Is Surprisingly Realistic

by Denny Atkin

Empire makes heady promises about *FLYING CORPS*, its upcoming World War I flight sim. You have to be pretty confident to claim your product will "render other flight sims" obsolete, and claiming that computer pilots are "as smart as their real-life counterparts" is just asking for trouble.

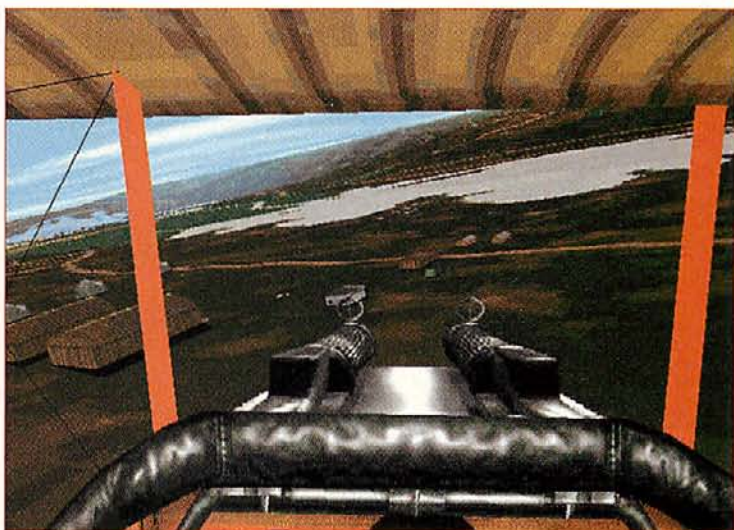
Whether the product will come anywhere near to living up to those claims will be seen when the sim ships in mid-November. But even in its unfinished state, it's evident that the product will do for Empire and Rowan's reputations as developers of flight simulations what *LONGBOW* did for Origin's. *FLYING CORPS* is a serious attempt at simulating the first air war, one that looks ready to surprise those who've encountered the previous arcadish efforts from this team.

IN THE BEGINNING

At the start of the Great War, nobody really knew what to do with the airplane. Unarmed aircraft were used for reconnaissance, but the respective armies had little respect for the potential utility of air power. Early attempts at air-to-air combat were



JOE CAMEL Because of the gyroscopic effect of the Sopwith Camel's rotary engine, you'll get much better responses when turning to the right in combat situations.



LOW AND SLOW Strafing supply dumps can cut off allied advances, but you'll have to watch for ground fire.

almost comical. Pilots tried to down other aircraft using shotguns, rifles, bricks, bottles—even grapnels! One air tactics guide advised pilots to force an enemy aircraft down by getting above it and pushing against the opponent's top wing with the landing gear. Air combat didn't get very exciting until France's Roland Garros mounted the first successful forward-firing machine gun on a Morane monoplane in late 1914.

From that moment, the days of enemy pilots flying carelessly by each other were over. At first, air combat was mostly a test of marksmanship. But soon, a series of maneuvers—including the Immelman, split S, and barrel roll still in use today—came about, and air combat became a test of flying skills. Names like Richthofen, Ball, and Rickenbacker would soon be revered—and feared.

And if *FLYING CORPS* accomplishes its aims, you too will fear these names. The program takes you back to the era of nascent air combat, when victory was gained as much by individual creativity, initiative, and reflexes as it was by combat training and hardware capabilities.

CAMPAIGN TRAIL

FLYING CORPS will be set in the latter half of the Great War, 1917–18, and offer four campaigns. These aren't typical scenarios that just drop you into the action as an anonymous pilot for a series of redundant fighter sweeps and strafing runs.

The "Flying Circus" campaign puts you in charge of Manfred von Richthofen's Jasta II in May, 1917. But instead of dropping into the role of the Red Baron himself, you instead fly as his brother Lothar. With Manfred on leave, you take command of the squadron and try to match or break his kill record. But Albert Ball and his 56th Royal Flying Corps Squadron have other plans for you. This is your chance to alter the course of history by forcing the encroaching British offensive back, and making *Lothar* von Richthofen the name that history remembers.

A similar campaign puts you in the boots of Eddie Rickenbacker, America's top World War I ace. Can you match his performance, lead the 94th Aero Squadron to victory, and win the Congressional Medal of Honor?

These are scripted campaigns, as is the

CG SNEAK PREVIEW
GADGET STILL IN DEVELOPMENT

Bad To The Drone!

BANZAI BUG!™

A Flight-Sim for Novices and Aces Alike
Beneath the animated, exoskeleton of Banzai Bug beats the heart of a joystick-wrenching, pheromone-pumping, action-packed flight-sim. Designed for all of you gamers with better things to do than memorize a tech manual the size of a calculus book, Banzai Bug weaves a humorous story-line and wise-cracking dialogue seamlessly into the aerial action. Lead Banzai on a mission to drive the bug-phobic humans out of the house forever. Banzai Bug will be flying off your local software retailer's shelf beginning this October.

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Scores of ground-based and airborne bogies



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Spring Offensive, which puts you in the shoes of a rookie pilot and lets you fly some training missions before your trial by fire. But perhaps most intriguing is the Battle of Cambrai, which does away with the scripts and puts you in the skies over history's first massive tank battle. You and your squadron must prevent the massed Allied tanks from reaching Cambrai. You'll defend your field guns and attack allied supply lines, aircraft, and artillery batteries. The battle front changes depending on

your performance; this dynamic campaign should offer plenty of replay value.

THE PLANE'S THE THING

Well-designed missions don't mean a thing without well-designed planes to fly them in. Happily, it looks like *FLYING CORPS* is set to deliver. In addition to combing hundreds of books dealing with WW I air combat, Rowan has been working with a test pilot at England's Old Warden airfield—who has actually flown many of the aircraft modeled here—to ensure authentic aircraft handling.

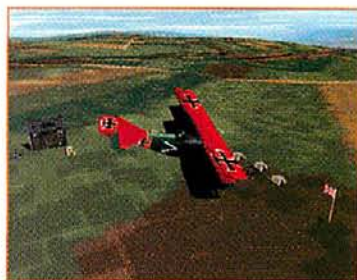
The flight model, even in the alpha version I've been flying, bears no resemblance to previous Rowan efforts. It looks like the days of jet-like biplanes are over. Aircraft handling feels good, with proper speed bleeds in turns and climbs, realistic stall behavior, and even torque effects.

The idiosyncrasies of each aircraft are properly modeled as well. For instance, the Sopwith Camel uses a rotary engine that spins as the propeller does. The torque and gyroscopic effects of this heavy spinning engine are properly modeled, making right turns dramatically

more effective than left. Subtle effects such as the engine pushing the nose down in a turn are modeled as well. The only problem with the alpha version's flight model was too-easy recovery from spins, an inconsistency Rowan plans to address before the program's release. Less experienced pilots can disable spins, as well as torque, wind, gyroscope, and slipstream effects.

The enemy AI wasn't fully implemented in the version I tested, but Rowan's design documents indicate that enemy pilots will fly according to their plane's particular abilities and weaknesses. For example, a Pfalz pilot will usually avoid combat unless he has a height advantage that will allow him to dive and zoom on the Allied planes. Look for some hectic aerial melees—the sim supports up to 48 planes in the air simultaneously.

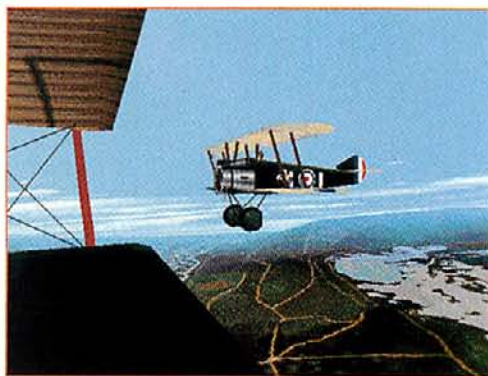
Rowan has finally buried the horrid



VISITING THE BRITS A Fokker prepares to lay waste to a British command HQ.

view system used in their earlier games. *FLYING CORPS* features a virtual cockpit as well as view keys. A Padlock view can be set to lose track of a plane when it moves out of your field of view or to "magically" track planes even when they're obscured by your wings and fuselage.

Graphics are nothing short of spectacular. The planes are sharp and detailed, as is the landscape. The ground is accurate enough that you'll be able to use rivers and roads to navigate to and from your targets—lap maps will be included. Rowan used a combination of on-site research and WWI aerial reconnaissance photos to create the terrain.



SIGN LANGUAGE Because WWI aircraft didn't have radios, communication with wingmen is limited primarily to hand motions signifying "break off" and "return."

AWAITING TAKEOFF

FLYING CORPS will include both DOS and Win 95 executables, with the latter supporting multiplayer play. Graphics resolution is adjustable—you can bump the standard 640x480 up to, say, 1600x1200 if your machine can handle it.

If *FLYING CORPS* delivers on all its lofty promises, it has the potential to make the Empire/Rowan team serious players in the simulation market. ☞

The Flight Line

FLYING CORPS includes 8 flyable World War I aircraft, as well as 16 additional types flown by computer players. Here's the lineup:

CENTRAL POWERS

FLYABLE AIRCRAFT



ALBATROS DII,
DIII, AND DV



FOKKER DR1

COMPUTER CONTROLLED AIRCRAFT

AEG CIV

ALBATROS CV

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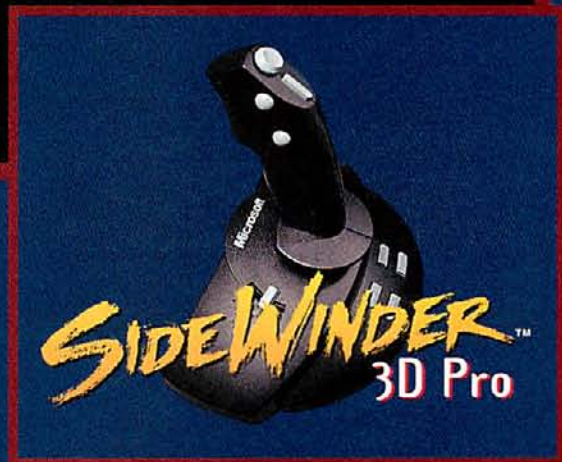
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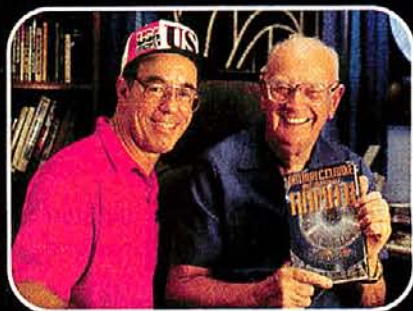
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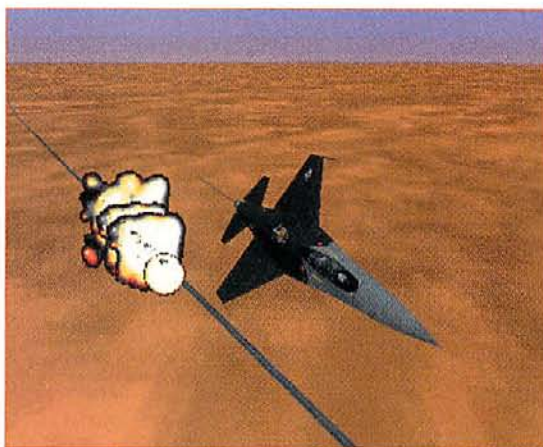
Back to Flight School

Gaining Air Superiority In BACK TO BAGHDAD

by Robin G. Kim

You feel like the poster boy for an ejection seat manufacturer. As a veteran fighter sim jock, you should be kicking butt and taking names against the wimpy Iraqis in *BACK TO BAGHDAD* (B2B). Instead, you're spending most of your time hanging under a silk canopy. You've read the documentation—what little there is—and memorized the drills backwards and forwards, yet you still have this sinking feeling that there are many things you *should* know about your F-16, but don't.

If you fit this description, take heart. The explanations and tactical tips that follow will enable you to make the most of



HOT STUFF The large blast radius of CBU-72 fuel-air explosive bombs makes them ideal for toasting enemy convoys.

your plane's air-to-air and air-to-ground capabilities. With practice, you'll soon be earning Silver Stars after your missions,

not just Purple Hearts.

AIR-TO-AIR

No matter which mission you select, you can always count on a friendly eye-in-the-sky AWACS feeding updates on airborne activity to your Joint Tactical Information Distribution System multi-function display (MFD). This ability

to detect air threats long before they can detect you gives you the initiative to dictate the terms of the fight. Maximize this



The *BACK TO BAGHDAD* strategy guide continues on this month's **CG-ROM**, where Robin Kim will show you the ins and outs of the sim's radar system.

The Bomb

At 730 pounds, the B-61 tactical thermonuclear bomb packs a huge wallop in a tidy package. It has no friends—if delivered incorrectly, it will kill you as readily as it does the enemy. By knowing the proper delivery profiles, you can learn to stop worrying and love The Bomb.

There are two basic release methods that guarantee you won't get caught in the nuke's enormous blast: high-altitude level bombing and toss bombing. Reasonable accuracy requires CCIP Mode 2 be used on a target designated by ground radar, near the primary objective.

The goal of each method is to end up at least 30,000 feet above ground level by the time the bomb detonates. If you start out above that altitude, a sim-

ple level drop will do. Otherwise, release while in a 40- to 45-degree pitch-up, with enough momentum to take you above the safe altitude threshold in



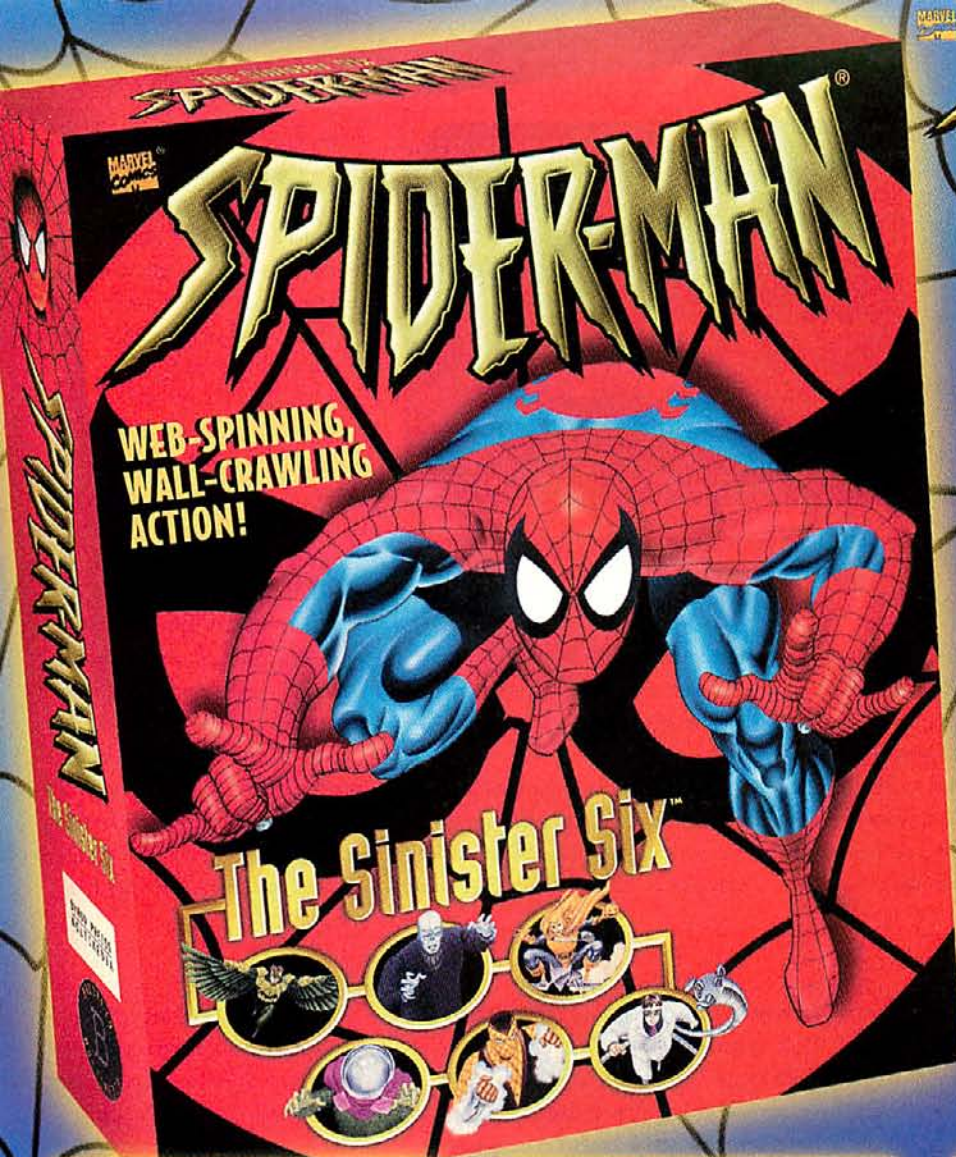
FLASH DANCE When a tactical nuke goes off, you'll need to be at least 30,000 feet above ground level to avoid being caught in its blast.

time. Note that the B-61 is a retarded bomb, so this toss-bombing technique won't grant you additional standoff

range, just more time to escape.

The HUD symbology looks the same regardless of whether you use level or toss bombing. The target won't be in the HUD's field of view, so you must maneuver until the vertical steering line bisects the target designator box with your wings level. Watch the time-to-go indicator to know when to drop. Squeeze the trigger when this number disappears, one second *after* it reads "00:00."

Coming in at such a high altitude makes you a target for enemy interceptors and air defenses, so you generally want to get in and out as fast as possible. In your haste, don't forget that the bomb will not drop if you're above Mach 1.2. When turning away, try not to dive below 30,000 feet. If you do, damage from the shock wave is certain.



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advantage by leaving your radar off as long as possible.

When you decide to engage, it will typically be from beyond visual range, using AIM-120 AMRAAM medium-range missiles. The computer pilots are fearless, and will drive in to fire AA-10 Alamos at you even though they know the missiles you launch will get to them first.

AA-10s employ semi-active radar homing guidance, so they're supposed to stop guiding if the launching aircraft is destroyed. In B2B, however, they remain a threat no matter what, making mutual kills a distinct possibility. While it's possible to dodge an Alamo (see "Missile Evasion" sidebar), it would put you at a



LIGHTEN UP Selecting your centerline fuel tank before you enter combat allows you to jettison it quickly when you need extra maneuverability.

distinct tactical disadvantage afterwards. The preferred option is to prevent a bandit from launching at you in the first place.

Dropping chaff will break any aircraft's radar lock on you, forcing it to spend 4 to 5 seconds regaining the lock. The trick is to deploy a chaff bundle every 3 seconds,

eliminating any chance of radar locking onto you until the bandit's taken out by your AMRAAM or you pass each other and enter a visual range dogfight. This technique consumes a large portion of your total supply of chaff, but for rendering deadly radar-guided missiles impotent, it's well worth the cost.

If your AIM-120s aren't 100 percent effective (as is usually the case), one or more bandits will survive to engage you close in. Should you decide to stay and fight, jettisoning unnecessary external stores will boost your turning ability significantly. AMRAAMs are heavy enough to be a liability in a dogfight. Instead of wasting them at this stage, try to fire them before the merge, launching two at each target when they can still do some good.

From this point on, it comes down to your dogfighting skills versus the computer pilots'. Just remember to keep your speed up and refrain from hauling all the way back on the stick unless absolutely necessary.

Missile Evasion

Defeating missiles presents quite a challenge in B2B, as they track you quite tenaciously.

The key ingredients to avoiding a SAM or air-to-air missile are airspeed, situational awareness, and good technique.

Spoofing heat-seekers is relatively easy. Dropping a flare every 3 to 4 seconds until the missile passes you by often works all by itself. The important thing is to know a missile is inbound. This can be difficult, because the missile launch warning system is

extremely unreliable. It's generally best to play it safe and drop flares whenever a bandit appears to be even close to firing parameters.

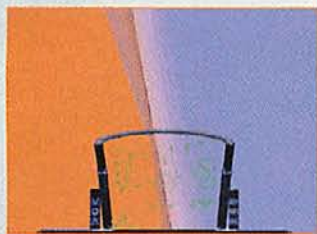
Radar-guided missiles are a whole different ballgame. They are not easily fooled by chaff or jamming, so your best defense is to outmaneuver them. First, you must spot the missile. The Threat Warning Indicator

will tell you the direction it's coming from. Turn toward it. When you see the missile, turn to put it 40 degrees off your nose. This allows you to judge the missile's range by its smoke trail, and it forces the missile to

steer out ahead of you. Speed is essential—the faster you go, the more lead the missile must pull.

Switch to the forward-up cockpit view and roll to put the missile directly above you. When it's 3 or 4 seconds away, break hard into, and then past, the missile. This method works consistently if your timing is good—and if you have

enough airspeed. Here's why: When the missile is leading you, its seeker head will rotate to one side in its gimbals to stare at your radar return. A well-timed break turn forces the seeker to turn so far to track you that it hits its gimbal limits because the missile body can't alter course quickly enough to compensate. Once the gimbal limits are hit, the missile "goes stupid" and stops guiding.



MISSILE BREAK When an incoming missile is three to four seconds away, it's time to start a maximum G break turn into it.

AIR-TO-MUD

For ground attack missions, B2B provides a good variety of ordnance types to choose from. Selecting an appropriate mix for the target at hand can greatly increase your chances of success.

Together, the electro-optically (EO) guided weapons, which include the CBU-10 glide bomb and the AGM-65 Maverick, are good choices for attacking a wide range of targets. They are deadly accurate and can be deployed from any altitude. And owing to a deficiency in the CBU-10 modeling, there's no blast radius to worry about. One or two CBU-10s can demolish almost anything. With its smaller warhead, the Maverick is best suited for destroying ground vehicles or parked aircraft, though two hits will usually take out a ship.

Because each weapon type's seeker can be slaved to a target designated by the ground radar, it's actually possible to guide multiple weapons toward different targets simultaneously, greatly increasing the amount of damage you can do in a single pass. It's not realistic to do this for the CBU-10, but neither is being able to use it at all, since your simulated F-16 does not

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carry a laser designator. Just pretend it uses TV guidance, like the Maverick.

There are two ways to do multiple targeting. The first involves locking onto a target with the radar, which automatically slaves the EO seeker to that same target, then manually deselecting the target in the EO MFD and locking onto a second one. If you then release two weapons, the first will aim toward the EO MFD's target and the second will head for the target being tracked by radar. There's no way to check that the second target is within the gimbal limits of the second weapon's seeker, so point the plane roughly toward that target just to be sure; if the seeker can't see where the radar is looking at launch time, it will not guide.

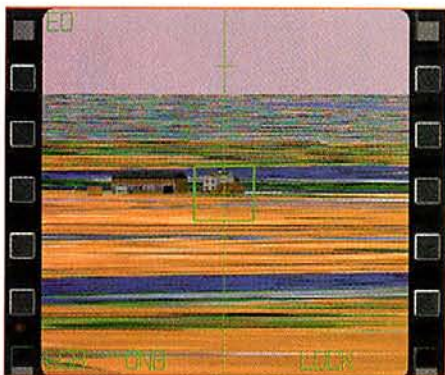
The second method relies only on radar. This means only the first target selected can be visually identified in the EO MFD, unlike the previous method, which allowed you to see both before



BOOM BOOM By learning how to guide multiple smart bombs simultaneously, you can wipe out half a convoy in a matter of seconds.

pickling. It does, however, have the distinct advantage of working with as many targets as you have weapons. The procedure is simple: lock up a target on ground radar, launch a weapon, break the lock, select the next target, lock and launch, and repeat as necessary.

You may sometimes want to allocate multiple EO weapons to a particularly tough target. Simply press the trigger repeatedly while the radar designates a target; all of them will lock onto that one target.



BIG PICTURE It's a lot easier to find and lock onto the right target when using the full-screen version of the EO MFD.

If you decide to carry dumb bombs instead of the fancy EO weapons, hitting moving targets in particular becomes much more difficult. You have to estimate lead manually, so use CCIP Mode 1 and place the pipper ahead of your target. The shorter the bomb's flight

time, the less lead you have to factor in. So the best profile when attacking ground vehicles is to come in from behind, 500 feet off the ground—just high enough for your bombs to arm before they impact. Mk 82s have such a small kill radius that they are useless for this task, so stick with Rockeye cluster bombs or fuel-air explosives. Against armed warships, this

technique is suicidal. Give in and use smart weapons instead.

LOW AND FAST

Regardless of the ordnance you're totting, approaching a heavily defended target is no easy task. Unless you use standoff weapons and trust your ECM pod to prevent SAMs from killing you before you can drop your load, the safest approach is to ingress down on the deck. Flying below 80 feet will render you practically immune to SAMs and AAA. Even air-to-air

missiles will be more likely to hit the ground than your F-16. Keep your speed up to minimize your exposure time.

All your missile weapons are fully effective at these altitudes, but except for the GBU-10, bombs will not arm before they hit the ground. If they did, the blast would surely kill you. The solution to both problems is to loft the bombs by pitching up and releasing while in a climb. If the climb angle is shallow, the impact point will still be visible in the HUD and you can use

the normal CCIP aiming procedures. For steeper climbs, use the toss bombing method described in the sidebar "The Bomb." Either way, roll past 90 degrees immediately after release and make a hard diving turn to escape the explosion and return to the sanctuary of low altitude. From the time you pull up until the moment you level off in the weeds, pump out chaff and flares and use your jammer if you have one.

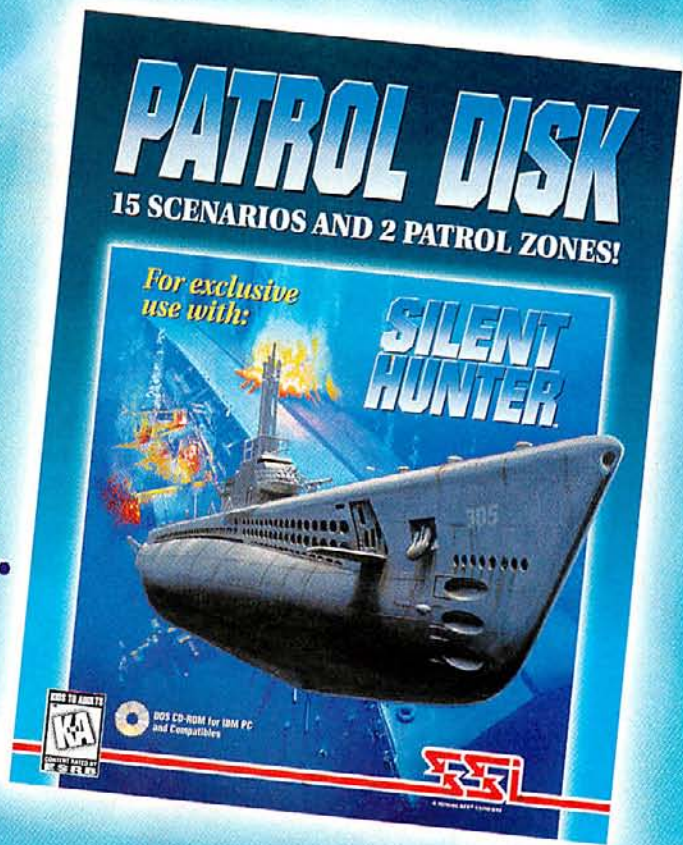
DAMAGE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION

Nobody's perfect. Some missions in B2B are so tough that even the best sim pilot will inevitably take some hits. You can do without most systems, but a working engine is obviously essential for avoiding a long walk home. If you see you have an engine fire, don't panic. Just shut down the engine, restart it in flight, and it'll be as good as new. Even catastrophic damage is not that big a deal in the sim, because ejection almost always succeeds.

If the Iraqis get lucky and manage to down you before you can eject, there's still a way to continue your career. Go to the pilot selection screen and click on the shiny metal harness buckle in the picture at the top of the screen, then click on the OK button. It will remain depressed. Now click on the pilot you want to recover and watch the OK button pop back out. Your pilot is now restored, and the events of the previous mission become nothing more than a bad dream. Wake up, get back out there, and do it right this time! ☺

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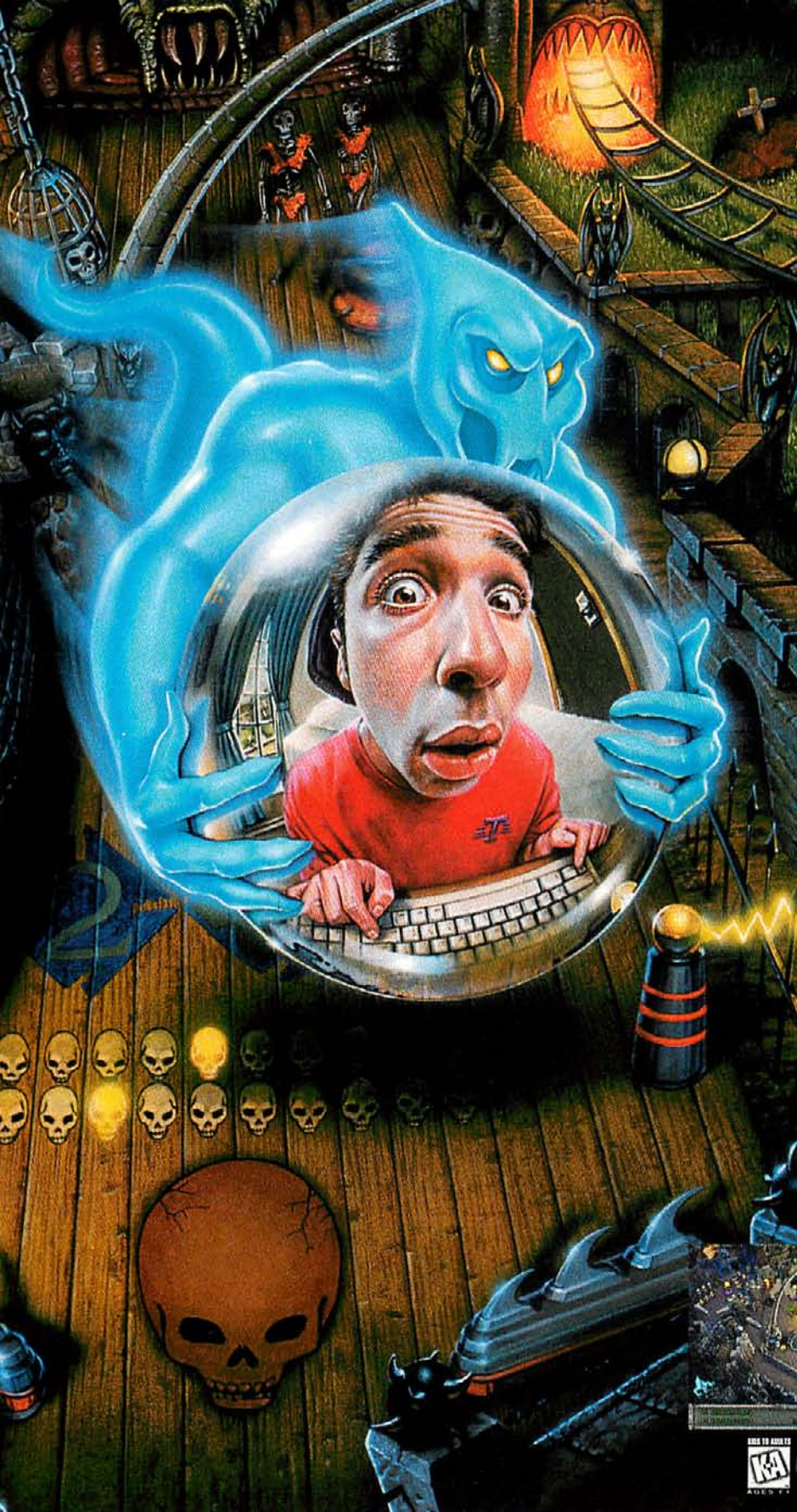
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Command Decisions

Battle Plans For Beating Four Great Strategy Games



I get a lot of questions every month concerning tips and winning strategies. Try as I might, there's no way that I can give detailed answers to every question. So this month I'm devoting the column to hints and tips. Since we've focused on real-time games lately—with our multi-installment articles on WARCRAFT II, I'll focus on some turn-based standbys.

SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION II

In high-difficulty games, such as King or greater, the Oracle allows you a lot of flexibility. Doubling the effect of temples allows you to build that big economic base with each city. It also adds to your offensive firepower, since citizens that would usually revolt with troops on the march under Republic and



I NEED MY SPACE The Oracle and Great Library make a tough combination, letting you dominate on both military and research fronts.

Democratic governments are rendered oddly content by the Oracle's vague yet persuasive powers.

The best weapon of ancient times, however, is the Great Library. Many players use this to fake their research, moving to a near-total warlike economy, secure in the knowledge that they will never be too far behind in crucial technology. This strategy can backfire, though, if one civi-

lization gets so far ahead in technology that a second civ doesn't discover the advance—the crucial prerequisite for garnering discoveries via the Great Library.

A much better use of the Great Library is to actually *step up* research in an area different from your opponents'. This way you get the benefits of their research, plus the applied fruits of your own labor. Meanwhile,

if you have a solid economic base, start building the *same* Wonder of the World at two different cities. Even if you build the Wonder at one city, *don't change* to something else, but leave the other city building in limbo. Soon your adversaries will discover something that you really need, which you then pick up with the Great Library. At that point, you can switch your production over to the Wonder associated with that technology, since most of the funds needed are already allocated. I often use this technique to snatch Leonardo's Workshop or Women's Suffrage from unsuspecting computer opponents (it works pretty well in games of CIVNET, too).

PANZER GENERAL

The Windows 95/Power PC version has created an upsurge of interest in this best-selling game. The biggest strategic omission I notice when playing games via e-mail is that would-be Rommels are so busy buying high-powered PzIII tanks and Pionere infantry that they neglect to buy recon units. You might get by with this when playing against the computer at

“ I'll meet your Great Library and raise you two squadrons of Focke-Wulf 190s. ”

15TH
ANNIVERSARY

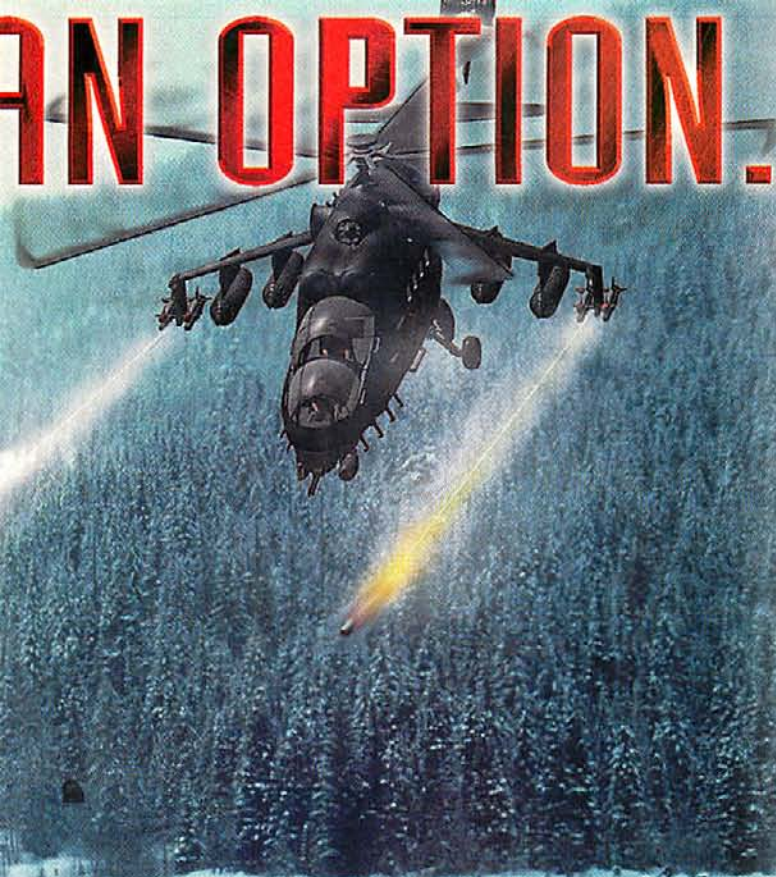
Terry's 15 Best Strategy Games Of All Time

1	Civilization	MicroProse	PC/Mac
2	Mule	EA	C-64/Apple II
3	SimCity	Maxis	Mac/Amiga
4	X-COM	MicroProse	PC
5	Warcraft II	Blizzard	PC
6	Archon	EA	C-64
7	Master of Orion	MicroProse	PC
8	Railroad Tycoon	MicroProse	PC
9	Command & Conquer	Westwood	PC
10	Warlords II	SSG	PC
11	Dune II	Westwood	PC
12	Reach for the Stars	SSG	Apple/C-64
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BRIEFINGS

▶ *STAR GENERAL* looks like it will be one of this season's hottest games, but SSI shows no intention of stopping there: they plan to bring the popular series back to WWII next year with *PACIFIC GENERAL* and a *PANZER GENERAL* sequel. Both will feature refinements to the classic system, with the possibility that the Pacific theater conflict will allow you to play both Douglas MacArthur and Tomoyuki Yamashita. I can see the add-on packs now:

Kamikaze General and *Generals of the Long March*. ▶ Talonsoft's first real-time game, *AGE OF SAIL*, has developed so rapidly that it should make Christmas. This has caused other games in the pipeline to shift: *BATTLEGROUND: ANTIETAM* should still be out in 1996; the shifting sands, however, will move the next 20th-century installment of the series, *BATTLEGROUND: SINAI*, to sometime in the spring of next year.

Kursk for the 37th time, but wily human opponents will exploit your lack of battlefield intelligence. Save yourself some hassles; at least buy a couple as auxiliaries.

13-15 strength can poke a few holes in even the toughest armor.

Rain and snow turns are often just as welcome to the German as the Allied player. They form a good opportunity to pump air squadrons up to overstrength status, to upgrade air units (particularly Me109s to FW190s), and simply to refuel aircraft without having to worry about reprisals from the other side's air units. Best of all, you can't be shot down by anti-aircraft fire, so send a couple of fighters deep into enemy territory—again, Focke-Wulfs work best, due to their long range—to find the holes in your opponent's defenses.

nearly impossible to hold the city for long. A better option is to combine Johnston's and Pemberton's troops, feint against Nashville, and invade Kentucky. Even if you end up retreating south, you should tie up a lot of Union forces.

Alternatively, Longstreet's idea of sending a corps from the Army of Northern Virginia to assist Bragg in Tennessee is a



DANCIN' IN THE RAIN Bad weather is your friend. Your scout aircraft can get up close and personal with even enemy AA guns.

Another myth that needs busting is "Over-reliance on air power will get you into trouble when the rains fall." Perhaps, but many Russian tanks that laugh at German artillery can easily be dispatched by experienced Ju87 dive bombers. And fighters are more than mere escorts—a Focke-Wulf 190 built up to

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

The Confederate side in the 1863 scenario is probably the hardest to win. A lot of players try to keep Grant out of Vicksburg, but this ties down a lot of troops, and "Unconditional Surrender" Grant is tough to beat on the battlefield. If you abandon Vicksburg, striking toward Memphis is tempting. Problem is, the Union navy and Yankee reinforcements from Cairo make it



BAD DAY FOR SADDLESORES Zulus should always target British cavalry, to reduce their recon capabilities and reduce enemy morale.

good gamble. Keep in mind, however, that this leaves Lee at the mercy of an Army of the Potomac not yet depleted by Gettysburg. What you do depends on how many more miracles you believe "Marse Robert" has left in him. In any case, the Rebels won't be able to invade Maryland or Pennsylvania this summer, perhaps never again.

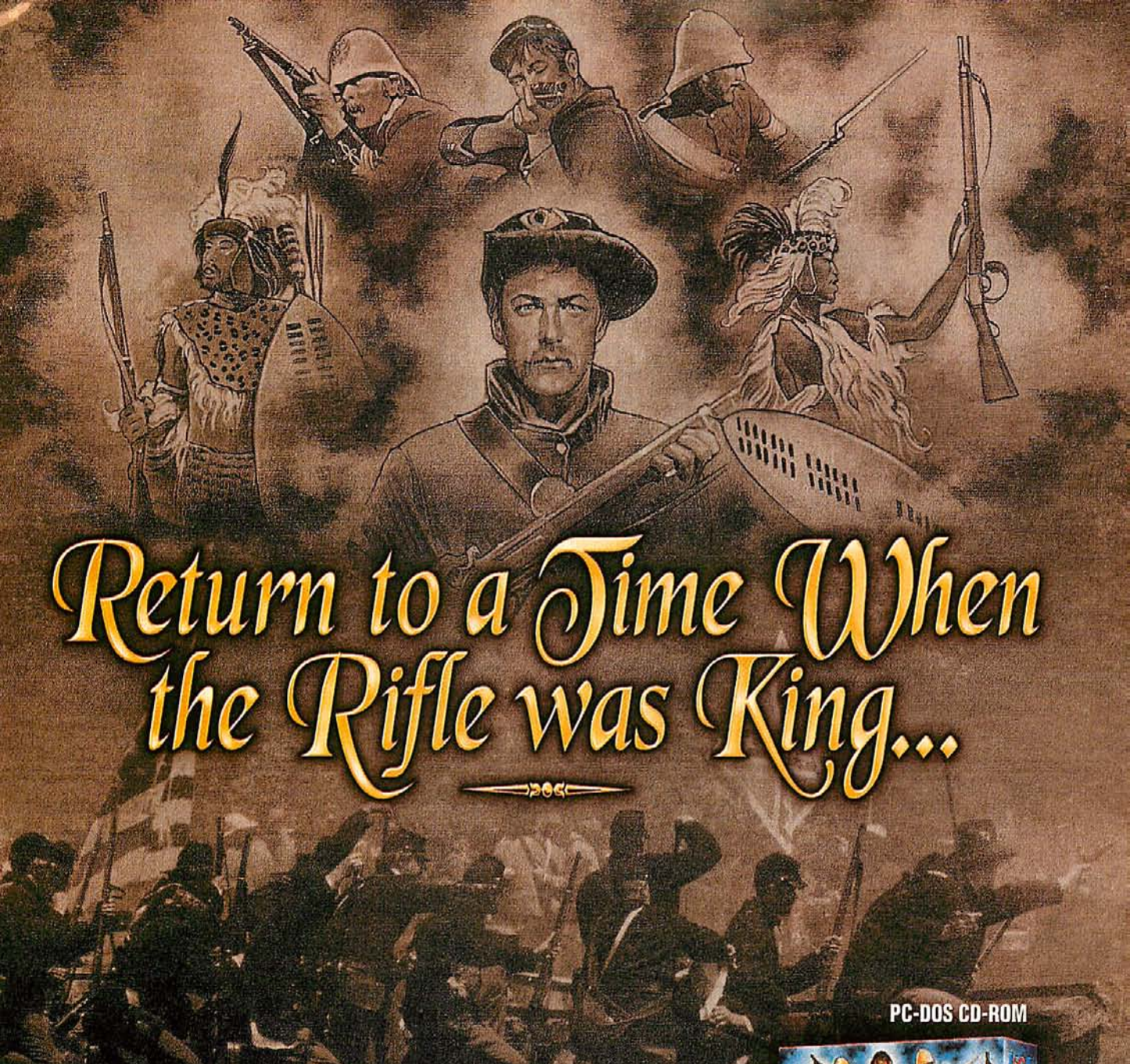
ZULUWAR!

A very aggressive strategy with the Zulus may pay off against a novice Brit, but the key to winning against veteran Anglophiles is to limit their mobility. First, balance the contest by selecting the "variable Kraal" option, to frustrate those players who have the Zulu setups memorized. Then the Zulu player should target the Anglo-Allied cavalry; the loss of cavalry probes will deny the British player the data he needs to plan coordinated attacks. ☞

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Terry's 15 Best Wargames Of All Time

1	<i>Panzer General</i>	SSI	PC/Mac
2	<i>Empire</i>	Interstel	Amiga
3	<i>Harpoon</i>	360 Pacific	PC/Amiga
4	<i>Steel Panthers</i>	SSI	PC
5	<i>Gettysburg</i>	SSI	PC/C-64
6	<i>Carriers At War</i>	SSG	PC/Mac
7	<i>Battles of Napoleon</i>	SSI	PC
8	<i>Kampfgruppe</i>	SSI	Amiga
9	<i>Operation Crusader</i>	Atomic/AH	PC/Mac
10	<i>Battleground: Waterloo</i>	Talonsoft	PC
11	<i>Tigers on the Prowl</i>	HPS Simulations	PC
12	<i>Perfect General</i>	QQP	PC/Amiga
13	<i>Pacific War</i>	SSI	PC
14	<i>War in Russia</i>	SSI	C-64
15	<i>Flight Commander II</i>	Avalon Hill	PC/Mac



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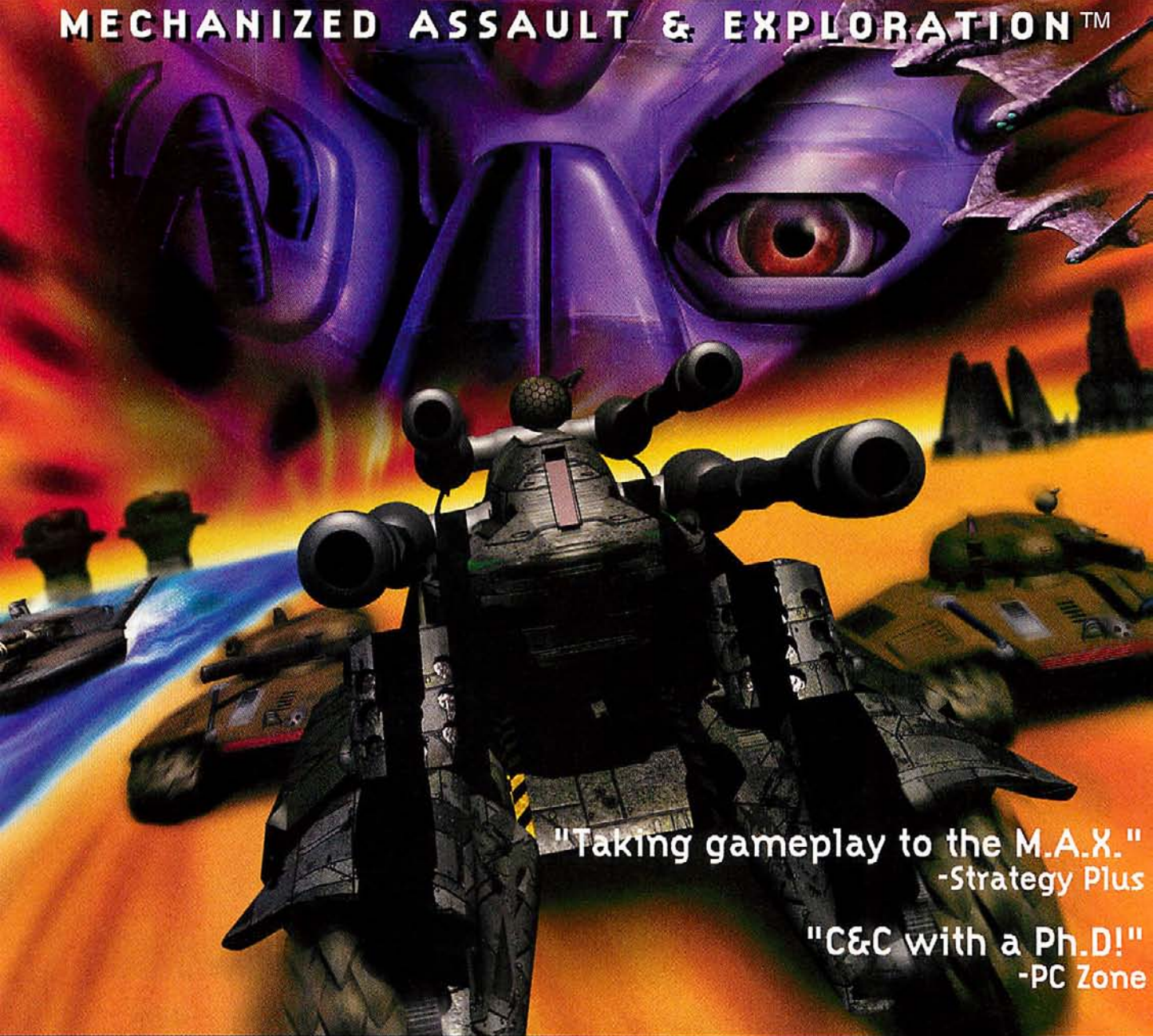
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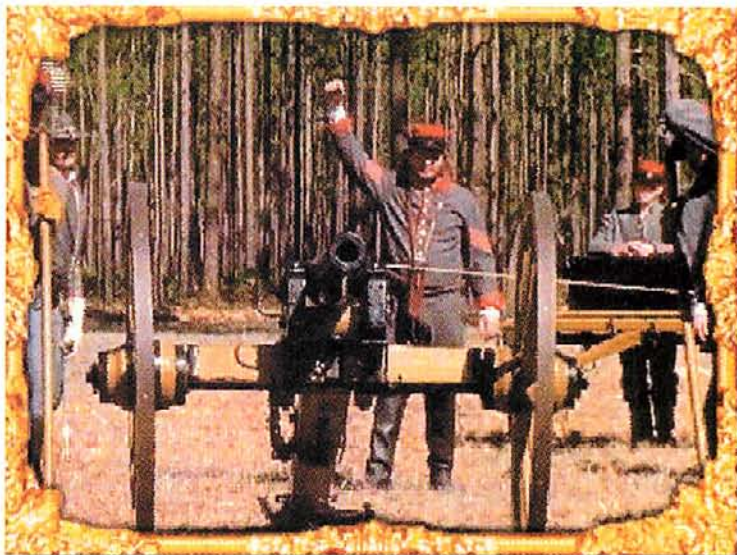
Rebel Generals

Both AGE OF RIFLES And ROBERT E. LEE Strive To Be The 19th Century's PANZER GENERAL

by Terry Coleman

I'll never forget a Civil War re-enactment I witnessed as a child. The tight formations of the soldiers as they marched were in sharp contrast to their coarsely woven, sometimes patched, uniforms of Confederate butternut and Union blue. Combatants on both sides sported wire-rim glasses, many chewed tobacco, and some took the realism too far by having holes in their shoes. There were bitter defenses, brave charges and counter-charges, and the glint of bayonets in the summer sun. But the most distinct memory I have of that day is the smell of gunpowder, accentuated by the thunderous roar of cannon.

It is this sense of martial beauty — the sounds, smells and pageantry — mixed with the all-too-real terrors of the battlefield that both ROBERT E. LEE: CIVIL WAR GENERAL and WARGAME CONSTRUCTION



SET III: AGE OF RIFLES try to capture. The graphic representations of units from both games recall stylized miniature soldiers, and the bases on the RIFLES figures, in particular, wouldn't have been out of place in a 19th-century tabletop game. LEE even

goes so far as to call itself "So realistic you can smell the gunpowder." While my childhood memories might wish for just that, I do wish Sierra's marketing would tone it down. Such quibbles aside, both these games have a lot of historical flavor to go with the pretty pictures, for which any aficionado of 19th-century conflict can count himself fortunate.

AGE OF TRANSITION

The true link between the Napoleonic conflicts and The War to End All Wars, the American Civil War began with

smoothbore muskets and finished with the telegraph, submarines, trench lines and machine guns. LEE chooses to focus specifically on this conflict, while highlighting the fighting genius of its most famous general. And though RIFLES has a broader scope — covering every major battle from the Mexican-American War to the Russo-Japanese conflict at the turn of this century — it simply takes a longer view of the transitions in technology and battlefield doctrine during this period when the common soldier was still king.

Partially because you don't have to manage air, land and sea forces (or Orcs, Dragons and magic spells), both games are fairly simple to learn. LEE has a nice video tutorial included right on the CD, and RIFLES has a generic "Civil War" tutorial scenario to get you marching and firing volleys in a hurry. Each game allows you to turn off the hexgrid outlines, and their attempts to distance themselves from traditional wargames don't stop there.

LEE takes the position that while small-arms weapons might fire up to 400 yards, they were only effective up to 200 yards.



ROBERT E. LEE:
CIVIL WAR GENERAL
Price: \$59.95

Required: 486 processor, Windows 3.1 or better, 4MB RAM, 14MB hard drive space, SVGA graphics, Windows-compatible sound.

of Players: 1-2 (hot-seat, modem or e-mail)

Designer: Jeffrey Fiske

Publisher: Sierra

On-Line, Inc.

Bellevue, WA

(800) 757-7707

Reader Service #: 340



TIP!

ROBERT E. LEE It's tempting to overuse your leaders in the front lines. While you might survive without Longstreet, Early or Hood, each of these popular leaders has a tremendous positive effect on morale—the most crucial factor in combat—so you'll thrive by keeping "Old Pete" and the rest of your senior officers healthy and happy. In fact, the most straightforward way to win the campaign is to prevent Stonewall Jackson's death at Chancellorsville; "Lee's right arm" makes a huge difference at Gettysburg and Washington.

Antietam Twice Told



In LEE, Use Jeb Stuart's cavalry to blunt the Union threat from the North. Most of the Yankees aren't available as "reinforcements" until the time McClellan got around to using them historically.



The toughest early fighting in Lee occurs around the famous Burnside Bridge. Take out those sharpshooters, then pull back from the bridge one unit at a time, delaying as long as possible.



The correct way to outflank an enemy unit in LEE: directly opposite from the first attack. As the Confederates, you must counterattack vigorously if you want to win at Antietam.



In AGE OF RIFLES, the fighting centers around the middle and lower bridges, but with a twist: You can't win a decisive victory unless you take the Union VP hex across the creek.



When set to "super tough," the AI is even more aggressive than "Fighting Joe" Hooker was at the actual battle, leading to historically high casualties in the famous Antietam cornfield.



Fitzhugh Lee is your 99-strength ace reserve. Since RIFLES rates formations more on training and morale than head count, this unit can repeat its fine showing at the bloodiest day of the Civil War.



WARGAME CONSTRUCTION SET III: AGE OF RIFLES
Price: \$59.95
Required: 486, 4MB RAM, 10MB hard drive space (65MB recommended), SVGA graphics, Sound Blaster- or General MIDI-compatible sound.
of Players: 12 (hot-seat or e-mail)
Designer: Norm Koger
Publisher: Strategic Simulations, Inc. Sunnyvale, CA (800) 245-4525
 Reader Service # 339



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Sadist. Megalomaniac. Slightly less than attractive. Meet Commander Z. You'll answer to him as you lead armies of beer-swilling, drunken robot soldiers from planet to planet, destroying everything that stands in your way. The game is called Z. It's got the depth of a strategy game, and the balls of an action game. Featuring the most realistic explosions out there, over 35 minutes of 3-D scenes and multi-player options for network and modem play. Z. Drink beer. Blow stuff up. It's going to get ugly. Really ugly.

"The action in Z can be described in one word: intense." *PC Gamer*

"Humorous, fast-paced and crowded with dismembered body parts and debris, Z promises to be a very stressful and challenging title that ups the ante on real-time wargaming." *Computer Gaming World*

"...Forget Warcraft; this game offers strategy, action and humor—with an incredible A.I. to back it all up." *Fusion*

Commander Z is waiting. www.vie.com

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They're drunk. They're stupid.
They're on your side.



It's a fight for Z, for country and for beer. (Not necessarily in that order.)

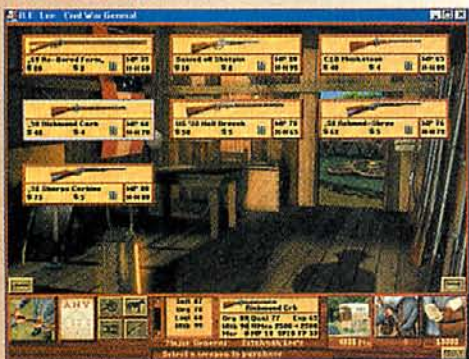


PC CD-ROM

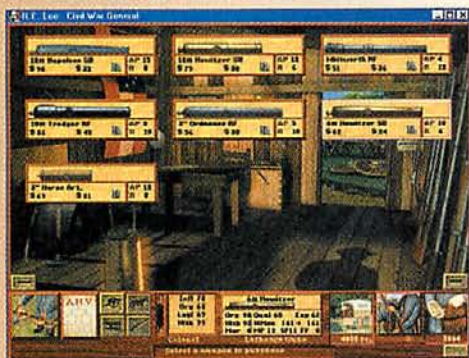
Choosing weapons in **ROBERT E. LEE** is a lot like upgrading in **PANZER GENERAL**: You never have enough money to buy every weapon you need.



Start by purchasing cheap rifles such as the 1842 Palmetto musket. Enfield rifles are nice, but you won't be able to afford the ammo.



Cavalry weapons are easier: Just load up on saved-off shotguns.



The six-pounder cannon is best: nice firepower (10), cheaper reloads, range of 6 is plenty in heavily wooded Virginia terrain.



So the designer set the map scale at 200 yards per hex, which allows each unit equipped with small-arms to fire at a range of one hex and *only* one hex. Since cannon may fire farther, of course, this does create an obvious qualitative difference between the two major arms. To compensate, units with Springfield repeating rifles, for example, are given proportionally higher firing strengths than 1848 flintlock muskets, for an equivalent number of men. This design decision makes **LEE**'s combat system a lot easier to assimilate than that of, say, **BATTLEGROUND: SHILOH**, but cutting down on the micro-managing also removes a lot of the tactical flavor.

RIFLES, on the other hand, varies its scales from 100 to 400 yards per hex, depending on the battle being depicted. And unlike **LEE**, **RIFLES** lets you shoot to the extreme length of your



DO YOU KNOW THE WAY TO SAN JOSE? If you're into obscure battles, **RIFLES** has Chileans and Peruvians facing off at Arica in 1879—acquired taste, indeed.

range, leaving you to decide whether it's worth expending the ammo for diminishing returns. When you take aim at an enemy unit, the color of the targeting cursor shows blood-red for point-blank fire, orange for average, and so on, down to green for minimally effective fire—an elegant visual aid that speeds play and aids in decision-making.

A MATTER OF FACING

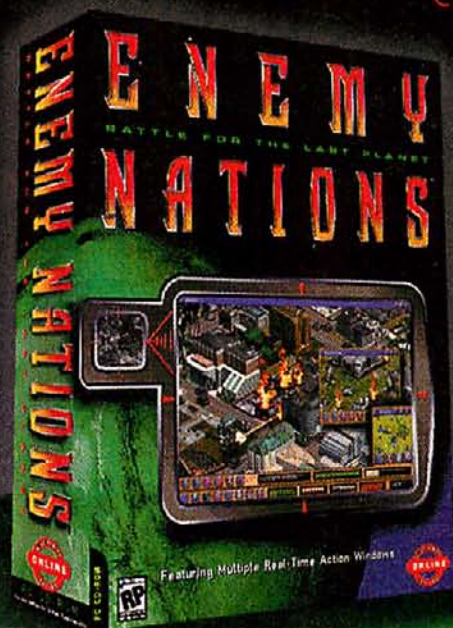
ZOCs—Zones Of Control—those hallowed old warhorses of turn-based games gone by, are nowhere mentioned in the manuals or **READ.ME** files of either **LEE** or **RIFLES**. In **LEE**, ZOCs are just like the hexgrid outlines, because even if (like the design team) you try to conveniently ignore the existence of ZOCs, they still restrict movement. ZOCs don't affect combat in **LEE**, but that's nary a problem, given the one-hex limitations of small-arms combat.

In **RIFLES**, ZOCs don't exist, per se. Instead, moving next to an enemy draws reaction fire, which may stop the moving unit dead

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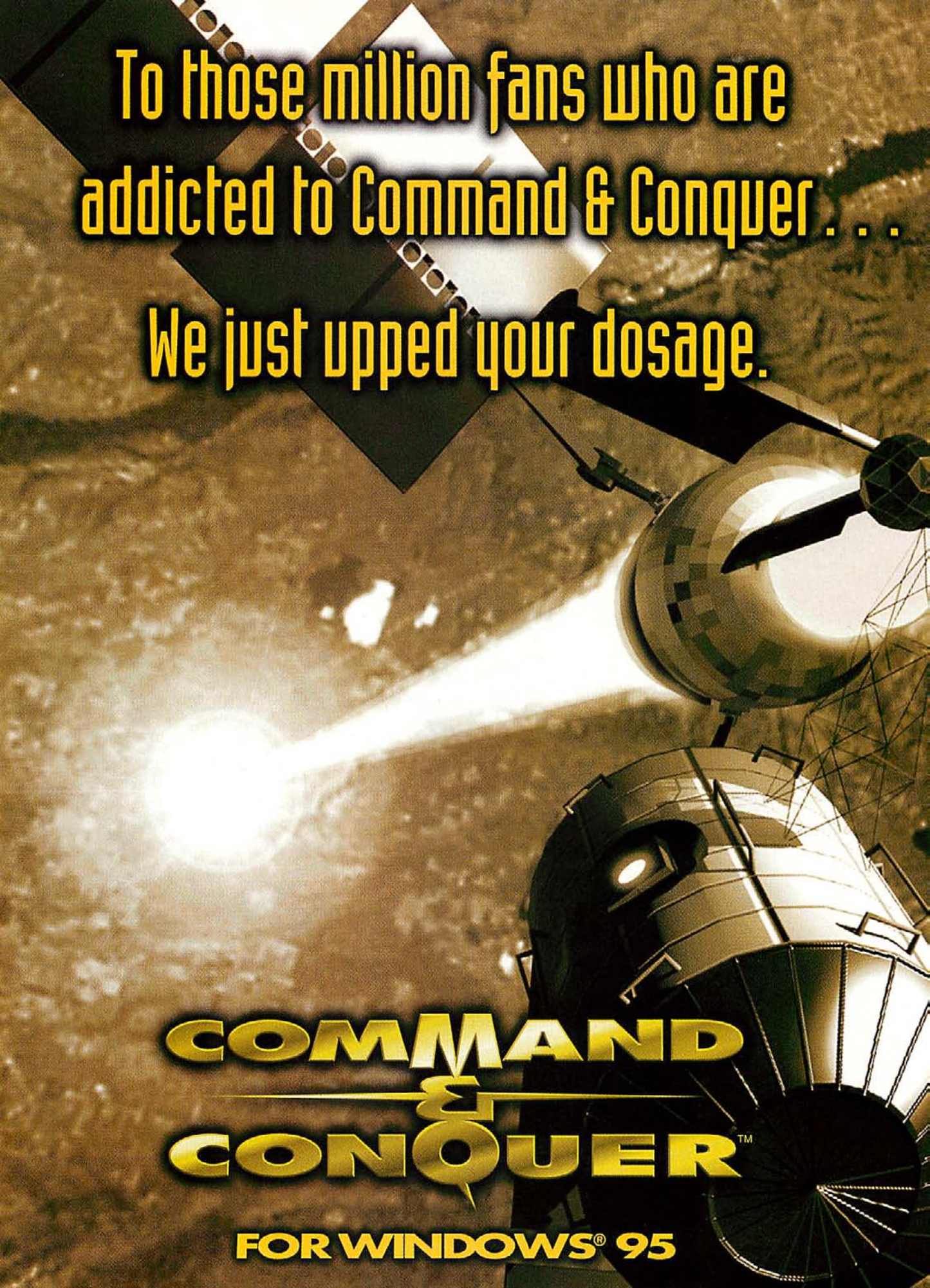
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Reward: • Grand Prize: \$1000 (1 winner) • 2nd Prize: 1 Framed Cranston Fine Arts Print, worth up to \$300 (2 winners) • 3rd Prize: Gift Certificate for a free game from SSI Direct Sales (20 winners)

Requirements: Scenarios must utilize a 100 yard scale on a minimum 50 x 20 hex map. Scenarios must be between 15 and 25 turns in length. Scenarios must feature land troops with a minimum of 2,000 troops and 8 game units per side. Scenarios copied from AGE OF RIFLES or any other computer or paper game will not be accepted. Scenarios must be created using the AGE OF RIFLES Game Editor.

Send your scenario, by pre-paid U.S. mail, on a 3.5 inch IBM® compatible floppy disk, along with your name, address and phone number printed on a 3 x 5 inch card, to the address below. Scenarios must be postmarked by December 15, 1996.

AGE OF RIFLES CONTEST • Computer Gaming World • 14th Floor • 135 Main St. • San Francisco, CA 94015

All scenarios submitted become the sole property of SSI and will not be returned. Criteria satisfaction will be determined by a panel of SSI Development and Computer Gaming World editorial staff. Their decisions are final. SSI is not responsible for lost, late, stolen, damaged or misdirected mail. The random prize drawing of eligible entries will be held no later than January 15, 1997. Random drawing will be conducted by Computer Gaming World. All decisions are final. All winners will be notified by phone within ten days, and then by U.S. mail. Winners who cannot be contacted by phone and whose prize notification letters are returned forfeit their prize, and new winners will be substituted via random drawing. Odds of winning depend on the total number of eligible entries received. All tax liabilities are the sole responsibility of the winners. Gift certificate redemption is limited to available stock. No purchase necessary. No prize substitutions. Void in Rhode Island and where prohibited. Contestants must be 18 years or older. Contest open to U.S. residents only. Employees of Mindscape, SSI and Computer Gaming World and their immediate family members are not eligible. For a list of winners, write to the above address after January 15, 1997. Contest sponsored by SSI. To contact SSI regarding this contest, write to the address above.

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in its tracks. Having a "field of fire" is essentially the function that a traditional ZOC performs in other 19th-century games. The major difference here is that the movement restriction when moving adjacent to an enemy is not absolute. Each unit in RIFLES is given a standing set of orders for when to fire, as indicated in the chart.

Thus, you see that if an enemy tried to run through a gap in your line, he would

By comparison, units in LEE have merely march-column and combat-line formations from which to choose, and no rules for facing. This scarcity of choice, combined with the rigidity of ZOC restrictions, would seem to limit LEE's flow of play, when compared to the free-wheeling movement through hailstorms of bullets that characterizes RIFLES. Well, yes and no. LEE is meant to be simpler to play, but it has a lot of subtleties. Chief

among these are the specialty units: Shotguns offer hard-hitting firepower with little manpower expenditure. Sharpshooters have an increased chance of taking out enemy leaders. Stragglers return when unit morale improves, and they increase supply—since they weren't around

before to fire any shots.

Also, it's easy to tell when you're behind an enemy unit in RIFLES. To outflank a unit in LEE, you must attack it with two different units from *exactly opposite sides*. There is also a vaguely explained

Reaction Distances At 100 Yards

Type of Fire	Reaction At
Free Fire	3 Hexes
Near Fire	2 Hexes
Wait Fire	1 Hex
Counter Fire	Weapon Range
Hold Fire	No Reaction

first be engaged at 3 hexes away, then 2, then at point-blank range, provided that you had given proper orders to your defensive line. Conversely, if all your units holding a particular position were flailing away at long range with weapons ill-suited to that purpose, you might find that the enemy force moved through your field of fire relatively unscathed to outflank you!

All units in RIFLES must face a particular direction, which determines their front, flank and rear hexes. Additionally, units may be in any of the following formations: line (best for combat), supported-line (fair), march-column (mobile), attack-column (great for melee), defensive (in forts); or that old Napoleonic standby, a square. When their morale breaks, units become disordered as well. RIFLES goes to great lengths to provide realism, accounting for fatigue on the march, skirmishers, and even stragglers, all handled effortlessly by the game system and interface.



TIP!

AGE OF RIFLES Keep in mind the disparities from conflict to conflict between armies of different nationalities. In the American Civil War scenarios, for example, cavalry is used more for reconnaissance, with some dismounted fire capability that is appropriately less than comparable infantry units. By contrast, most professional European armies, particularly British Lancers, have a high melee rating, making them perfect to run down retreating enemies. Trying this tactic, though, against high-morale units—especially those with plenty of ammunition—will quickly show you why the Charge of the Light Brigade was never repeated.

"Now here's the leader, driving on 17..."



Thwwak!

"And WOW, he really smacked that one..."

"Yes—but it looks to me like it's slicing way left..."

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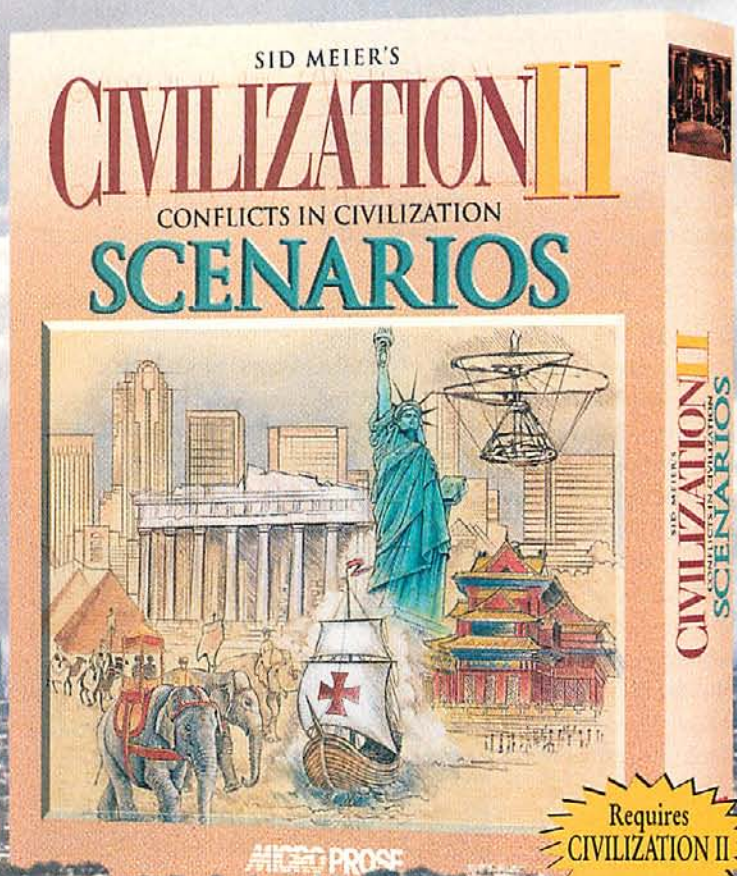
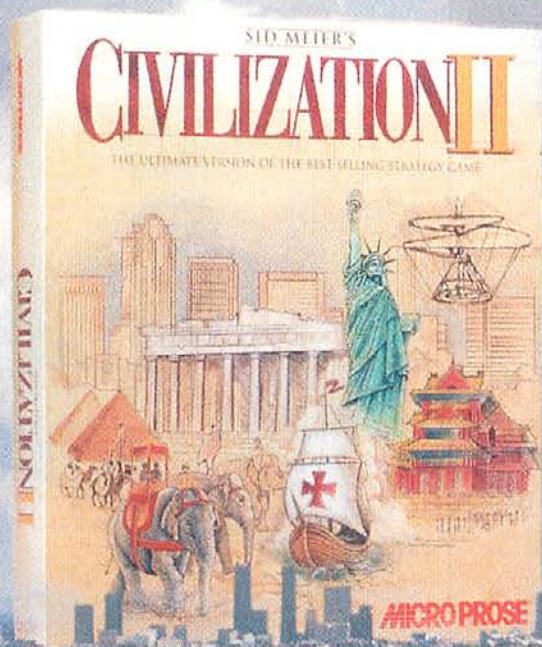
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algorithm that penalizes a unit each time it is attacked by an enemy of equal or greater force. Tedious, perhaps, but it works pretty well in practice. Both games handle charges realistically: In *RIFLES*, the charging units must undergo a morale check; Lee makes you spend Army morale to entice your tired soldiers to go "once more into the breach," a nice touch.

The din of battle fairly bursts from your speakers, with the digitized screams of *RIFLES* getting the edge, although the southern-drawl voiceovers of *LEE* offer a pleasant bridge between scenarios. Similarly, the animated sequences of *RIFLES* for each individual firefight can't touch the professional movie clips of *LEE*'s battles (filmed at a Civil War reenactment). Then again, many gamers will eventually tire of these and turn them off, just as they did the then-revolutionary animation of *PANZER GENERAL*.

NO PENINSULAS HERE

Comparing the incredible number of scenarios (over 40) and campaigns in *RIFLES* to those of *LEE* seems unfair, since the latter covers only the eastern theatre

of the American Civil War. Even so, *LEE* does cut a few corners. It includes First Bull Run for historical perspective, although Bobby Lee wasn't there. That's a nice gesture, but moving immediately after that to Second Bull Run in the campaign is misleading.

You see, Joe E. Johnston, a fine tactician, wasn't particularly loved by his men, so Jefferson Davis removed him from command. Replacing Johnston was Davis's military advisor — Robert E. Lee — whose only other campaign had been a disastrous loss of West Virginia (it was to become a Union state in 1863). Neither this campaign nor "Marse Robert's" coming-out party versus McClellan outside of Richmond are included. Where are the struggles of the Seven Days' battles, where Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was forged, forcing the superior Union forces down the peninsula? Surely these scenarios would have added more depth and more tactical challenges to the campaign game, besides giving gamers a glimpse into the beginnings of Lee's legend.

Once you get past these omissions, however, *LEE* does a good job of showing

"And it's headed right towards the crowd..."



"Ooohh"

"That's gonna leave a mark"



19TH-CENTURY STYLE The unit editor in *RIFLES* lets you outfit your army in forage caps, polished helmets or even pinstriped pantaloons.

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XENOPHAGE

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the ebb and flow of Civil War combat. Second Bull Run requires that you delay with Stonewall Jackson while Longstreet outmaneuvers the Union army. Chancellorsville is a march and counter-march desperation whirlwind worthy of Frederick the Great. The Washington scenario actually makes more sense here than the similar battle in PANZER GENERAL, because it offers a historically logical follow-up to a resounding Confederate victory at Gettysburg. Throughout all the battles, the AI performs pretty well, but as you'd expect, it fares better in the role of Grant than Pope.

THE LONG MARCH

In any collection of 40-plus scenarios, a few will inevitably fall flat. The stacking limits of two units per hex put a crimp in more than one scenario. But considering that some of the conflicts covered in RIFLES are hardly the most exciting material from which to craft wargames—take the Russo-Japanese War, *please*—the overall quality is remarkably high. The weapons of the Mexican-American War, for instance, pale in killing power to those of later conflicts, requiring that you master different tactics in each campaign. Moreover, the campaigns of RIFLES are every bit as difficult and addictive as those of PANZER GENERAL—high praise, indeed. The Soldier Queen is my favorite, a multifaceted romp through an era when the Union Jack flew in every corner of the world. You pit your Maxim machine guns against spear-carrying Zulu warriors, put down uprisings

in India, and even duke it out with old European adversaries in the Crimea.

If the campaigns aren't enough to keep you enticed for hundreds of hours, simply link existing scenarios into a new campaign. The scenario editor of RIFLES is much better than that of TANKS!—it even lets you create troops of fictitious nationality, complete with uniforms that you design—and is the single biggest edge that RIFLES enjoys over LEE.

So which is better? Currently, ROBERT E. LEE has the most entertaining Civil War campaign, but it isn't up to the superb BATTLEGROUND: SHILOH as a recreation of Civil War combat (keep in mind that Talonsoft needed some time to hone its craft as well). It also has some curious omissions in terms of battles and isn't as fully realized as RIFLES.

AGE OF RIFLES, for its part, is incredibly ambitious, and sometimes slips. Already, complaints are hitting SSI about the annoying play-by-e-mail bugs. While the documentation is adequate, some may wish for more strategy tips. Others may miss their familiar ZOCs. Still, few games of any genre realize so many of the lofty goals for which RIFLES strives. A game that refuses to sacrifice either history or fun, it stands as Norm Koger's masterpiece—a game that will be played by many gamers for a long, long time to come—and deservedly so. In the end, if you must buy only one of these, get RIFLES, but real Civil War fans should pick up LEE as well, so that the historical flavors can mingle on their hard drive. ☞

ROBERT E. LEE

▶**APPEAL:** For anyone interested in the Civil War's most legendary military leader.

▶**PROS:** Solid AI; nice period graphics; entertaining Civil War campaign featuring the most famous battles.

▶**CONS:** Questionable scale; light on tactical detail; some of Lee's most important battles are inexplicably left out.



AGE OF RIFLES

▶**APPEAL:** A must-buy for anyone remotely interested in 19th-century warfare.

▶**PROS:** Captures the flair and fun of the era without compromising the history; over 40 different scenarios; robust editor; wonderful campaigns; excellent AI. A winner through and through.

▶**CONS:** Some PBEM bugs; merely adequate manual; stacking restrictions limit some scenarios.



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'Z' Marks The Spot

Virgin Fires Off A Real-Time Strategy Game With Humor And Surprising Depth

by Martin E. Cirulis

Have you found yourself playing *COMMAND & CONQUER* lately and thinking, "Gee, this is fun—but I wish stuff blew up a little better and things weren't so darned grim?" Well then, do I have good news for you: It looks like the cybergods have smiled upon your needs once again and delivered a game that will satisfy. Virgin and those nutty Bitmap Brothers have come up with a fun little *COMMAND & CONQUER* clone called *Z*, which provides some interesting tactical challenges while keeping the tone on the cartoon side of the street.

Your mission is to make the galaxy safe for Red Robots everywhere by crushing the despicable Blue Robots who threaten peace everywhere because they...are not Red, I guess. Your first clue that you have entered a very silly universe is the introduction, where you meet your two Red Robot pilots. These rocket-fuel swilling, mechanical beach bum rejects are delivery men for the tin-can Patton, Commander Zod—the android who directs you to battle—and they serve as your comedic reward; you get to view their hi-jinks after completing every battle. Parents should be warned, though: These Robo buffoons are meant to entertain adults, and the swearing flies frequently.

Hard-core gamers may be annoyed by the funny animation, but for the rest of us



BOMBS AWAY Don't be fooled by Z's humor and graphics; underneath is a strategy game with lots of twists and depth, including units with pretty good AI that require different strategies of usage.

the excellent quality of most of the bits and their amusing nature can give a welcome respite from the usual teeth-gritting tension of real-time wargames.

THE COGS OF WAR

As far as the warfare itself goes, what you are really looking at is an excellent quick-'n'-dirty version of *COMMAND & CONQUER*, stripped down for speed and playability. All the marching units and shoot-outs have been maintained, but the concept of base-building has been dropped in favor of capturing territories, a step that makes the game less complicated but reduces the tactical difficulty of the game only slightly.

In a switch from

the C&C model, however, *Z* has little robot soldiers fighting over battlefields composed of several "territories." Each territory has a flag, and usually contains either a radar installation or automated factory. Whichever side captures the territory flag gains control of the structure in that territory. Once you capture a factory, you can begin producing units. All units are free, but they require time to produce—the more powerful the unit, the longer it takes. As you gain control of more territories, your factories become more efficient and units are produced more quickly. This is

good when you are winning, but it means that it becomes awfully hard to dig yourself out of a disadvantageous position. Also, factories do not stop production when the territory changes hands, and the computer player has an annoying habit of seizing a flag just 3 seconds before the attached factory produces its unit. Ultimate victory is only achieved by destroying the Blues' fort in their original



GOING BALLISTIC Explosions are huge affairs in *Z*; sparks and shards fly all over the screen, body parts and machinery soar into the sky, and all that shrapnel actually does affect gameplay.



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System

Requirements:
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sound cards.

of Players: 1-4 (IPX
network)

Protection: None (CD
must be in drive)

Designer: Bitmap
Brothers

Publisher: Virgin
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Fig. 1: Electric chair



Fig. 2: Gallows



Fig. 3: Guillotine



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REVIEW • Z

STRATEGY/WARGAMES

Basic Strategies

A couple of tactics will make your career as commander of the Red Robots a little easier and less frustrating.

The first time you see a battlefield, don't worry too much about winning it; instead, give some initial troop movement orders to nearby territories. Study what is out there, what you need, and the best path to get to it. Sometimes, a unit won't choose the best route automatically, so for key initial territories that you must race to capture, plot short, optimized routes for your units to follow. Use cheaper units like Grunts or Psychos to grab vehicles and

ing strategy planned out, restart the level and execute those moves as fast as you can.

The fine art of production can take a little getting used to. Only produce Grunts early in the campaign, for seizing unowned vehicles; after the initial land grab by both sides, switch to more versatile units. However, don't set all factories to produce heavy units, as a lot can go wrong while you wait for the best to roll out of manufacturing. It does you no good to have three factories producing heavy tanks if enemy jeeps roll up and take the territories because you have no units in defense. In general, the closer to



WHAT TO BUILD... Unlike in Command & Conquer, there is no base-building in Z. Instead, you have to capture territories with factories. Build defensive guns as soon as you can because the enemy hammers away at you constantly.

guns, and save precious Snipers and Toughs for defending your claims. Once you have your open-

the front lines your factory is, the cheaper the unit you should be producing there.

starting territory.

There are an interesting array of units. They initially come across as overly simple, but once you start ordering them around the map, you come to appreciate some of their novel twists. The Sniper unit is an excellent example of this: At first, it

seems to be a simple rifle unit with extended range, but once in combat you realize they are capable of killing off the crew of a vehicle so that any ground trooper can then capture it. There are six types of troops, seven kinds of

▶▶▶ continued on page 307

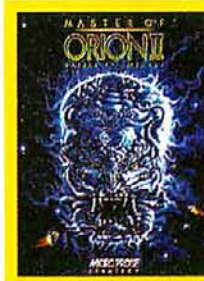


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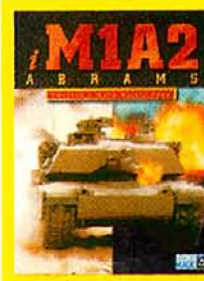
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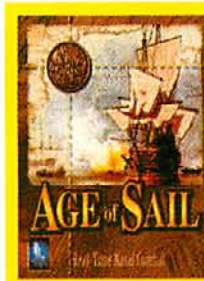
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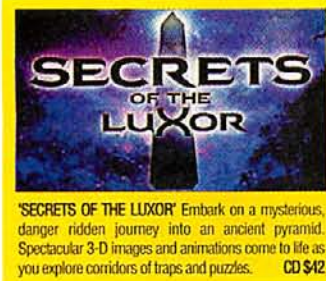
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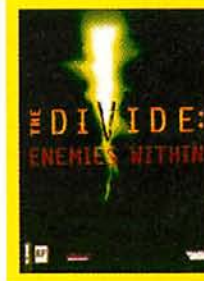
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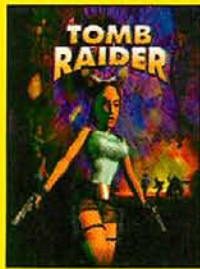
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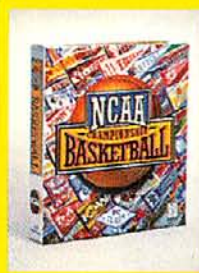
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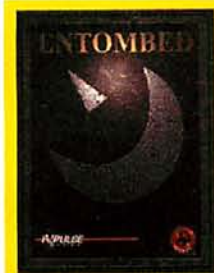
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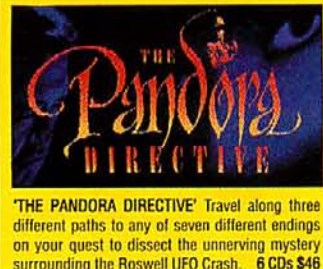
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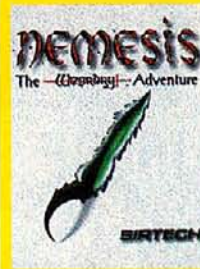
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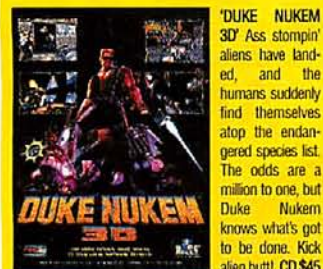
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►►►continued from page 304

vehicles and four kinds of stationary cannons used for defense. Often, maps will start with empty vehicles and guns strewn across them, and an important key to vic-



DEJA VU You'll see this scene a hundred times while playing, because Z's levels and gameplay get awfully repetitive.

tory is sending the right troops out to immediately capture and use these "free" resources before your computerized enemy does.

Units are also fairly clever in the art of combat itself, and will tend to retreat momentarily from a position where they are getting cut to pieces and attack again from a slightly different angle. While it pays to allocate targets yourself for units, they are also adept at firing automatically at any units that come within range and will even pursue a short distance to destroy a fleeing enemy—without chasing blindly after them, as WARCRAFT soldiers are wont to do. All in all, the unit AI is a small but satisfying improvement over that found in C&C.

WAR IS EASY, COMEDY IS HARD

Z is a fun, mostly successful game that plays on the success of its more serious ancestors in the real-time tactical wargame arena. The graphics are excellent, and they're humorous without being repetitious or stupid. Turrets fly high up into the screen, growing in size before tumbling back to "earth" and exploding in a great resounding blast that can cause even more damage. Soldiers give little yells and vaporize or tumble through the air themselves when hit by shells, and even units waiting for orders do amusing things like sit

down on tiny crates and play cards.

The program itself is extremely reliable; its only technical fault, for me, was that it wasn't a true Windows 95 application. Z has the same multiplayer

options of C&C (null modem, modem and IPX network support), and provides fast and reliable mayhem for up to four players.

For me, Z had only one major flaw (other than the manual, which was a little thin on unit capabilities): There just didn't seem to be a lot of game here for the buck. I would say the experienced wargamer can only expect 20 hours or

so of campaign play. While network play stretches the longevity of this product immensely, it might have been a good idea to slip in a random battle generator or add spawning technology

for cheaper network play. A more minor "flaw" goes without saying: If you don't like real-time games, or funny games for that matter, Z isn't for you.

But if you don't mind a game that's on the short side, and you are a real-time tactical game lover with a good sense of humor, then buckle into your computer chair, dude, and crack open a cold can of Rocket Fuel, because Z is going to be your favorite letter. ☺

►**APPEAL:** Real-time commanders looking for fast and fun tactical combat.

►**PROS:** Fun, smart and funny C&C clone with excellent graphics, hilarious animations and battles that are more challenging than they initially look.

►**CONS:** Campaign game is a bit short for the bucks; humor may not amuse some; C&C and WARCRAFT fans will be disappointed by the repetitive battles.



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Steel Yourself For Battle

New Campaigns Add Even More Depth To STEEL PANTHERS

by Patrick C. Miller

What computer war game enables you to pit Yugoslavian partisan cavalry against German Jagdtigers, or recreate the battles between the Soviets and the Japanese in China

during the closing days of World War II? STEEL PANTHERS, of course, a war game renowned for its broad scope and great depth. Now this superb game gets even better, with SSI's add-on STEEL PANTHERS CAMPAIGN DISK.

The CD contains three new campaigns and 35 scenarios for use with STEEL PANTHERS, as well as the version 1.2 patch. Those who have purchased Novastar scenario disks for STEEL PANTHERS should be aware that only three of the 35 scenarios on the CD are actually new. Most portray European battles, but there are a fair number of Pacific scenarios as well. The more memorable scenarios are the two depicting Obersturnfuhrer Michael Wittmann's heroics against British armor at



GIVE 'EM HELLCAT The CAMPAIGN DISK adds three new challenging campaigns to STEEL PANTHERS. As always, the health of your core units is key.

Villers-Bocage and the battle against American Shermans that ultimately cost him his life. Also included is a hypothetical scenario based on a battle in the movie *Cross of Iron*, in which the fictitious Sergeant Steiner fights his way back to friendly lines though a Soviet onslaught.

The best parts of the CD are the three new historical campaigns: The 1941 Operation Barbarossa, where you lead Germany's invasion of Russia; the Battle for North Africa, where you command the Afrika Corps against the British in June 1942; and Patton's 3rd Army campaign, in which you race the Soviets to Berlin.

GREASING THE TREADS

Before running the installation program, it's a good idea to make copies of any scenarios that you've created or saved in the game's save slots. If you don't do this, some of your scenarios could be overwritten without warning. After installing the CD, you can copy back your saved games and custom scenarios. Be advised that some terrain might not show up properly with the new patch version, since the map editor is altered with patch 1.2.

If you have installed previous patches for STEEL PANTHERS, you might want to delete your current version, reinstall version 1.0 and then install the CAMPAIGN DISK. SSI says this isn't necessary, but I experienced some problems when I didn't do it.

Version 1.2 of STEEL PANTHERS corrects many—but not all—of the game's bugs, adds more realism, and provides improved artificial intelligence. However, it

doesn't include the modern play option or the VCR replay feature that fans of e-mail play have been demanding. If you need the patch, but not the game, it is available from many online sources.

Those who already have the version 1.2 update and many of Novastar's scenarios might want to pass on this offering. But if it's been a while since you played STEEL PANTHERS and you're looking for a reason to jump back into CGW's War Game of the Year, the CAMPAIGN DISK provides a good excuse to do just that. ☞



Price: \$24.99
System

Requirements: STEEL PANTHERS game required, 486/DX33, 8MB RAM, SVGA graphics 2x CD-ROM, mouse; supports most major sound cards
of Players: 1-2

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Designers: Novastar and SSI

Publisher: SSI
Sunnyvale, CA
(408) 737-6800

Reader Service #: 343



SMOKE ON THE DACHA The CAMPAIGN DISK contains 35 historical scenarios from such locations as Iwo Jima, Guadalcanal, Arnhem, and Normandy.

APPEAL: For STEEL PANTHERS fans who want more challenging scenarios and campaigns.

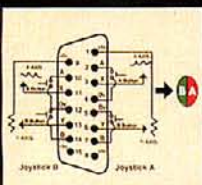
PROS: Adds even more depth and variety to STEEL PANTHERS; updates game to latest version; challenging campaigns and good mix of scenarios.

CONS: Most of the scenarios have been previously released by Novastar, and version 1.2 doesn't fix all of STEEL PANTHERS' bugs, nor does it improve two-player play.



AlfaTwin

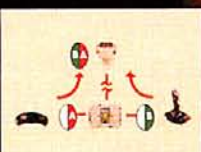
Other Alfa Data Products



Due to the design of the game port, the IBM PC supports two joysticks (A & B) Each with two firebuttons only. Four button joysticks, and joysticks which have throttle and rudder control or coolie caps, make use of the second joystick (B) controls.



At „one player mode“ the AlfaTwin allows you to switch between two joysticks, with all the functions supported, by simply pressing the fire button of the joystick you wish to use.



At „two players mode“, both joysticks can be activated at the same time for two-player-games. However the advanced functions of the joysticks are not supported.



You can cascade up to three AlfaTwins with four different joysticks for your free selection. Moreover, the six feet long cable brings the AlfaTwin round to the front of your desk, freeing you from the hassle of plugging/unplugging your joystick from the back of the computer.

„One of the most annoying problems of the PC has finally been solved!“
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This all works without having to pull out all the cables, einfach wunderbar! I cannot say anything else as „Congratulations with a very nice product.“
With kind regards, Edu Oskam „Technical Support Specialist“, (Gravis Europe/Holland)

Alfa Twin press comments:

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„This is an auto-switch and two-player adapter for any two 15-pin controllers...in auto-switch mode all the advanced controls, such as hats, are available. It costs less than 20 pounds...“
(Gold-award, PC Format 9/96)

„There is no need to install drivers or fiddle around inside your machine - it is almost too simple...AlfaTwin does its job and adds a whole new dimension to... gaming. Very useful...“
(Best Buy, CD ROM today 6/95)

Japan
„For the PC, to become a popular game hardware...it is also indispensable to be played with two players. It is no fun to play with pad vs keyboard. Now we can use AlfaTwin...“
(DOS/V 3/96)

Germany
„Due to simple „Plug and Play“ installation and the low price of DM 39,- this useful product recommends itself for every ambitious PC-player.“
(PowerPlay 9/95)

Germany
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(PC-Player 7/96)

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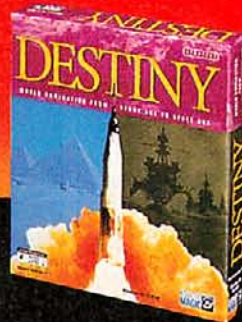
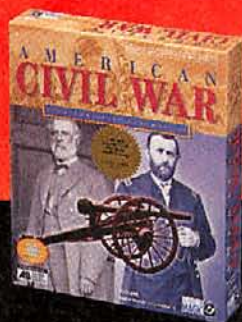
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A Fine Settlement

Addictive *SETTLERS II* Builds On Territory Founded In *SERF CITY*

by Tim Carter

Character is an oft-overlooked quality in computer games these days. It can't be quantified, but character can make the difference between a competently crafted diversion and an all-consuming career threatening obsession. *SETTLERS II* is a good example. At its core is a solid strategy game, but what makes the game fun is watching your army of serfs grow as your country expands. Each of these little men conducts a task, be it harvesting grain, carrying goods, or beating up your opponents. Watching the guys go about their duties is also useful, since it helps track how your economy is functioning.

SETTLERS II (*SETTLERS I* was released in North America under the title *SERF CITY*) is an "explore the world, build an empire, and conquer everyone else"-type game. The scale is somewhat smaller than many of the other titles in this genre, as players deal with hundreds of people and

individual buildings, rather than cities or whole planets.

WHERE'S THE FREAKIN' MANUAL?

SETTLERS II is all about the strategic challenges you face while working with very limited resources. Unfortunately, it seems the game's publisher took this ethos a step further and applied it to the documentation, too. As with a few other recent titles, *SETTLERS II* has an absolutely appalling manual.

The inadequacy of the documentation is particularly apparent when you realize that the game is obviously the product of a lot of work. Players may as well resign themselves to playing the first scenario a few times just to get the feel of the controls and figure out how everything works.

Even if you figure out the interface, the complete lack of an explanation for most of the key economic relationships in the game can hamper planning, which is really the key to winning.

To be fair, I did manage to figure most components of the game out through trial and error over a relatively short period of time, and I enjoyed the learn-

ing process—but not nearly as much as I would have enjoyed playing the game properly right from the start.



SERF'S UP *SETTLERS II* is all about building the most powerful economic empire in the world, and the game's cute little serfs provide the manpower to do just that.

IT'S ALL ABOUT MONEY

SETTLERS II is more of an economic game than a military one, although final victory lies in the conquest of others. The military side of the game is quite simple: build the necessary economic foundation to recruit and train a number of soldiers and garrison them near the front lines.

Building a sound economy, on the other hand, is no simple task. Raw materials must be gathered (or mined, harvested, hunted down, etc.), and then processed at least once—and in the case of tools and weapons, twice—before being shipped via your transportation network to locations where they are needed.

Thus, woodcutters are needed to chop down trees, which must then be shipped to a sawmill for conversion into boards. A forester may also be necessary to keep your supply of wood from becoming depleted. As most buildings require stone

continued on page 317 >>>

CGW
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For help getting started with *Settlers II*, see Tim Carter's gameplay guide on the CGW Web site.



Price: TBD
System

Requirements: 486-66 MHz, 8 MB RAM, SVGA graphics, 2x CD-ROM drive, 35 MB hard drive space, mouse; supports most major sound cards.

of Players: 1-2

Protection: None (CD must be in drive)

Designer: Blue Byte

Publisher: Blue Byte
Schaumburg, IL
(800) 933-2983

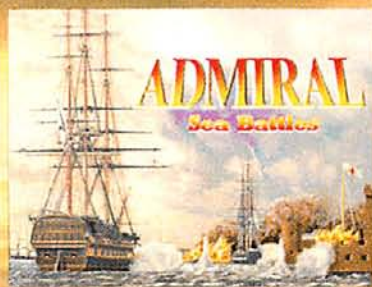
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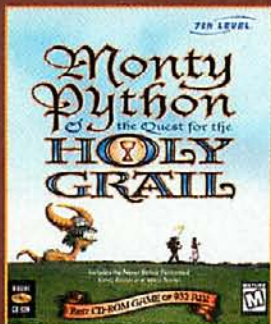
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▶▶▶continued from page 314

as well as boards, a quarry or granite mine must be constructed to supply stone to the building sites.

Miners require food to work effectively. Thus, you must keep fishermen, hunters, or farms near each mining location. Farms only grow wheat, which must either be milled and then baked into bread, or used to feed pigs, which then must be slaughtered elsewhere.

Somewhere along the way you must also make tools, weapons, beer (to keep the troops happy), and gold to pay for military training. Every commodity must be transported to the correct location, which can put a burden on your road system. Delays in the provision of the proper supplies can throw a monkey wrench into even the most comprehensive economy, so some thought must be given to the location of each building.

Then, of course, there is the question of terrain. Many buildings that you will need are large, and will only fit on flat, empty spaces. The iron, gold, granite and coal necessary to fuel your economy must be discovered by a geologist (and will become depleted over time).

Success depends on a combination of careful planning and the ability to keep your economy functioning as raw materials begin to run out. In part, a long-running economy requires some attention to sustainable resources, such as trees. Some raw materials, particularly those requiring

mines, cannot be kept running indefinitely. You must gain access to new lands and new riches if your economy is to grow.



▶ **SAIL AWAY** Though the game is smaller in scope than the world-spanning *CIVILIZATION*, you'll still need to do some island hopping to find the resources necessary for growth.

Thus, you will likely find yourself at war with your neighbors. If you have planned well, you should have little difficulty defeating the computer's armies. This is not to say that the game is easy. More

than once I thought I was progressing quite nicely only to be overrun by a massive horde of invaders. Remember, though, that winning or losing is rooted in economics, and it will be hard to compensate for economic weakness with superior military tactics.

Also, winning at *SETTLERS II* requires some degree of micromanagement. Transportation and production play an important role in economic development, and they have to be managed carefully. This may become boring for those players who would like to focus solely on conquest and exploitation, although I found the economic controls to be a lot of fun.

All in all, *SETTLERS II* is a fine strategy game. Its orientation towards economic rather than military action may turn some gamers off, and its truly appalling documentation may cause some people to leave it on the shelves in protest, but basically it delivers what most strategy games should: a fun and engrossing experience which challenges your brain without getting on your nerves. **E**

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▶ **APPEAL:** Those who like building realms and have an appreciation of finely detailed economic models will have a lot of fun.

▶ **PROS:** Fun, easy to learn, addictive, has complex economic model.

▶ **CONS:** Requires some micromanagement, has atrocious documentation; focus on economics may be too heavy for some gamers.



Orcs Rule

*Eat The Humans For Lunch
With These Strategies*

by Elliott Chin

Some would say the Orcs in the WARCRAFT II EXPANSION SET have an even tougher challenge than the Humans. After all, the Orcs, unlike the sissy Humans, are without healing and invisibility, two keys spells that allow Human players to scout with impunity and maintain an everlasting army. You've probably already encountered this problem if you've beaten the Human campaign and have progressed to the Orc side. Once again, though,



TIP

Before invading a camp, line up your melee units, support them with trolls, and then send one ogre (or a hasted unit) into the camp. When the enemy units start running toward him, turn around and lead them to your line. This is a quick way to whittle down resistance before you march in with catapults blazing.

CGW is providing a detailed scenario-by-scenario walk-through of the Dark Portal campaigns; this month, we tackle the Orcish side of combat. As we saw last month, the first act of the campaign has slightly easier scenarios. You can find those walk-throughs at the CGWWeb site. In these pages, we'll give you the necessary strategies to beat the nine scenarios of Acts II to IV and bring the Orcs final victory against the pitiful Humans of Azeroth.

Legend

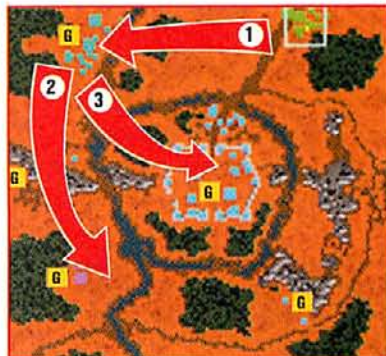
- Gold Mine
- Prisoners
- Oil Patch
- Mage Tower

SCENARIO 4: THE RIFT AWAKENED

When you first appear in Scenario 4, your lone goblin zeppelin will be under attack by Kul Tiras (green) in the west. Send your forces there. A great Azeroth fortress (blue) lies directly to your south, but don't attack it right away. Instead, sack the lightly defended Kul Tiras settlement. First use an ogre to lure the enemy units into your cluster of troops outside the village. Then destroy the guard towers with your catapults and waltz in. Your priority should be building a town hall, farms and a lumber mill. Erect several guard towers as soon as possible to guard entry into your village. Use farms to block the way into your camp as well.

Next send a few grunts and peons and a catapult south. Destroy Dalaran (violet) at the southernmost gold mine, and establish a second town hall. Build guard towers and farm blocks to protect it. As your gold starts to accumulate, keep harassing the

Azeroth with "hasted" goblin sappers. Also use death knights for hit-and-run attacks with their whirlwind spells. Use both to destroy all the towers on the west side of the fortress, since this is where you'll be



attacking from. Then simply gather together nine ogres, cast bloodlust on them, enter the fortress, and destroy any remaining towers, barracks and troops. You probably won't succeed with your first wave, so be prepared to send another one or two. You won't run out of gold.

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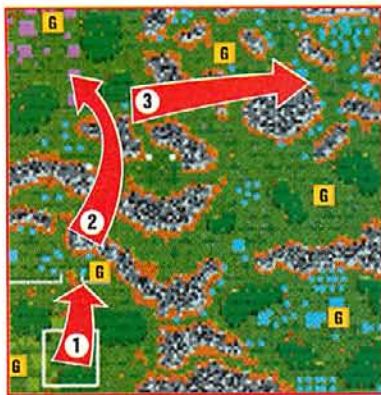


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SCENARIO 5: DRAGONS OF BLACKROCK SPIRE

In Scenario 5 you must free Deathwing's dragons. You begin in the southwest corner of the map; the guarded dragon roost lies in the far northeast. To get there, travel in an arc



that spans northward from west to east. The southeast quadrant of the map can be completely ignored. Seal off the bottleneck east of your camp with farms and

towers, and begin building a catapult. When you have a catapult, destroy the guard towers at the wall, kill all the Human troops, and then send in a few peons to establish a town hall near the second gold mine here. Clusters of human troops await in various pockets in the mountain maze leading to the dragons, as well as several towers. Use your catapults and ogres to destroy these humans. There is also a Human camp in the northwest, but it is easily dispatched. You won't really encounter much resistance otherwise until you arrive at the footsteps of the dragon roost to the northeast. There is a gold mine nearby, so build a town hall and a barracks here so you have access to troops immediately. Then send in as many bloodlusted ogres as necessary, until all the waiting troops are slain. Then free the dragon roost.

SCENARIO 7: THE SEAS OF AZEROTH

The nation of Azeroth (blue) to your south in Scenario 7 is incredibly tough to defeat, but don't worry. All you have to do is hold them off and concentrate on building up a strong navy. As soon as you start the scenario, build a horde of peons and upgrade your tower. Then start laying down a wall of farms to your south, with six or so guard towers behind to mow down any oncoming troops from Azeroth. As long as you support this line of defense with a few ground troops, you shouldn't have to worry too much about Azeroth.

To the north of this line, start building the rest of your city and a shipyard. Erect two cannon towers near your first shipyard to provide protection from enemy vessels. Then build two destroyers and escort a tanker to build an oil platform.



When you run out of gold, there is another mine on an island to your west. Use ogre juggernauts to clear away the towers that guard the island, and then slay the knights on the island with dragons. Build the five requisite shipyards, group together eight juggernauts and a goblin zeppelin, and then go hunting for enemy ships. Also use a group of dragons to search for enemy ships. Between the two units, you should be able to eliminate all ships in the scenario.

TIP To really cripple your opponent, attack his peasants. This cuts into his ability to mine gold, harvest timber, and repair and rebuild structures you destroy.

Legend

- Gold Mine
- Prisoners
- Oil Patch
- Mage Tower

SCENARIO 6: NEW STORMWIND

Begin Scenario 6 by building guard towers at all three entrances to your camp. Gryphon riders will begin attacking your village in only a few minutes. Build at least four towers on the southwest side of your camp, where the gryphons will come from, and then block all entrances with farms so that no Human troops can enter. You can keep



one sliver of open space in the northern pass of the forest surrounding your camp.

Build sappers and two or three dragon roosts as soon as possible. Send a few peons north to build a second town hall and a ring of guard towers around a second gold mine. When you have four sappers, send them west to blow a hole through the mountains protecting the Kul Tiras (green) camp and to demolish any towers standing there. Next send in a wing of nine dragons to decimate the Kul Tiras camp. Don't worry if guard towers are sniping at you; just concentrate all nine dragons' breath weapons on each tower, one at a time, and you'll destroy them quickly with no more than one or two dragons lost. Claim the gold mine here, as well.

Azeroth (blue) to the north, has over a dozen paladins in residence and they will all use their healing spells to maximum efficiency, so forgo sending in ground troops and just have your dragons kill them all. When you encounter towers or archers, concentrate fire on them and then return to the task of eliminating all paladins. When you've whittled the Azeroth forces down, send in bloodlusted ogres to bat cleanup.



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SCENARIO 8: ASSAULT OF KUL TIRAS

In Scenario 8, group your warships and a zeppelin together and stand against the onslaught of Kul Tiras ships that attack you at the beginning of the level. At the same time, load up



all your units onto your transports and then escort this naval group with your warships to the easternmost landmass, where you'll find a gold mine and some pig farms to be rescued. Begin building gold mines quickly, and then proceed to establish a full base.

Also group your troops into two parties and send them northward toward a second gold mine. Slay the Kul Tiras troops nearby; then send two peons here to build a protective wall of farms, towers and a town hall. Make sure you raise several guard towers in both camps, as gryphon riders will attack periodically.

Beef up your defenses at your northern camp, since this will be attacked the most. Build four catapults, assign them an escort party of ogres and trolls, and then proceed northeasterly to take out the Kul Tiras towers one by one. At the same time, build three dragon roosts and start training dragons. When you have a group of nine, send them due north to destroy the gryphon aviaries; then have them tear apart the rest of Kul Tiras. When you've created your second group of dragons, send them in as well. Your ground troops and death knights can mop up after the deadly wyrms.

SCENARIO 9: THE TOMB OF SARGERAS

In Scenario 9, there is no base building. It's a hunt for a renegade daemon, pure and simple. Because you start out with a small force, it is fairly difficult. Preserve your death knight at all costs. His death-and-decay spell is invaluable, and his raise-dead spell can create an instant army for you in a pinch. Move your small band eastward, capture the shipyard, and build a transport. Send your units east, except for the death knight, and capture the Temple of the Damned. Next pick up the death knight and head to the eastern forest island to recruit the trolls. With the trolls on board, head to the top of the map, and then unload your troops on the shores to your west. Use your trolls to cut down the elven archers standing guard. Then venture forward slowly and free the captured Orc prisoners. Don't bother with the tower waiting there; just free the troops and run back the way you came.

Fill your transport with grunts and ogres, and then sail south and unload at the open shore. Several Azeroth troops will attack you, but your ground troops should be able to take them. Then transport the rest of your force here. Destroy the towers with your death knight's death-



and-decay spell (120 mana will do the job). Free the catapult and blacksmith south of your landing point and proceed westward, hugging the southern mountain range. Lead with your ogres—not your death knight, because there are paladins waiting here. You'll meet resistance along the way, but remember to keep your death knight alive. Death coil will replenish his health, so use it if he is running low. Then when the trail turns northward, use death-and-decay and your catapult to take out the waiting towers. Now just rush ahead with your dozen or so ground troops. Your goal, the daemon, is up ahead, but make sure you keep enough trolls alive to kill him.



Look for the Act I walk-through and tips on how to use spells effectively on our CGW Web site: www.zdnet.com/gaming.



Legend

- Gold Mine
- Prisoners
- Oil Patch
- Mage Tower



TIP

Always build towers in clusters, and always protect them against enemy attacks with a wall of farms. Guard towers are best because they fire quickly, can attack air units and won't do splash damage to friendlies.

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SCENARIO 10: ALTERAC

Scenario 10 is relatively easy. First fight your way through the forest with your knights, ogre and dragons. Then, move your peons to the northern gold mine at the top of the map. Build your camp and erect guard towers and farm walls for protection. Build five or so catapults, and send nine



ogres east to sack Stromgarde village (red). At this time, send half a dozen peons to a second gold mine (one of the two closest gold mines to the south) and build a second town hall, guard towers and some dragon roosts. Train nine dragons and send them into the Stromgarde. Leave them to demolish the camp while you train more dragons to send south into the Lordaeron camp (white).

Around this time, you'll see the Lordaeron peasants (and Stromgarde ones, if they're still alive) making a bee-



line for a gold mine outside the protection of their camp. Send a peon to that gold mine and raise two cannon towers to kill Lordaeron's income and peasants. Your two groups of dragons should have no trouble laying waste to the two villages. Then have them sink the destroyers in the river surrounding Alterac to the southeast, build a shipyard and oil platform, and then transport the Alterac mage back to the Circle of Power.

Legend

- Gold Mine
- Prisoners
- Oil Patch
- Mage Tower

SCENARIO 11: THE EYE OF DALARAN

Once you enter Scenario 11, group your ships together and counter-attack the vessels near you. Load up your four transports, and have your battleships clear the shores due east. Once you've cleared three towers' worth of land, unload your troops and take the Lordaeron gold mine settlement to the northeast. You'll fight Lordaeron (white) troops along the way. Have your peons begin building farms and a town hall. Build a lumber mill and towers for protection; then build a barracks. After Dalaran (violet) has sent several waves at you from the south, mount an expedition. Build three catapults, escort them with nice ogres, and send them south to the Dalaran town. Take it and establish another town hall.



Train lots of death knights, and research all your spells. Send a party of two dozen ogres and trolls east to near the Dalaran mage stronghold. Have your death knights cast whirlwind to wreak havoc at the mage compound. Once the whirlwind has softened up the enclave, cast death-and-decay to slay some more troops, and then sweep through with your ground troops. Ignore Lordaeron to the southwest.

SCENARIO 12: THE DARK PORTAL

Scenario 12 is simply too hard to beat. You definitely start out with a huge number of troops, as well as all your powerful heroes, but they're not enough to defeat this scenario. Use Deathwing to destroy all cannon towers, while Teron Gorefiend and your other death knights cast whirlwind on the guard towers. Group your strongest ground troops together, and be prepared to meet onslaught after onslaught after onslaught right after you start the mission. Once you've cleared away the towers to your south, send your peons and an escort of nine melee units south and toward the easternmost edge of the map.

At the free gold mine, begin building a lumber mill and town hall. Erect as many guard towers as you can, because you will need them to stem the never-ending tide of enemy units pouring into your borders. Build farms around your towers so that melee troops won't be able to reach them. Then keep on sending one lone ogre into the Kul Tiras (green) camp to your west, and lure their troops into range of your towers. Repeat this until the Kul Tiras forces are whittled down. Then immediately send in a swarm of goblin sappers to destroy towers and barracks. Building a

second town hall here will be tough, especially since it is hard to defend. Nevertheless, build many guard and cannon towers so you have a line of defense that will kill oncoming troops. This is the only way I know to be sure of slaying all your enemy's troops; going toe-to-toe with the enemy, camp by camp, will not work. Only luring them to your towers repeatedly will assure their deaths. I also recom-

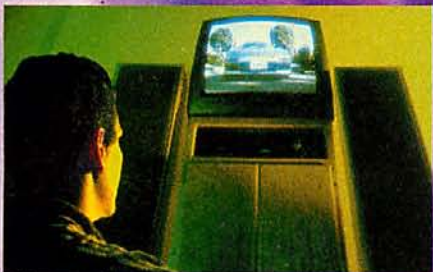


mend stationing zeppelins at the enemy borders so you are alerted of any and all invasions.

For Azeroth (which is guarding the ocean pass to the Dark Portal), I recommend an air attack with nine dragons. Don't forget to leave enough gold to build a shipyard and foundry.



games



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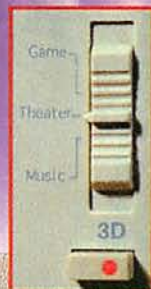
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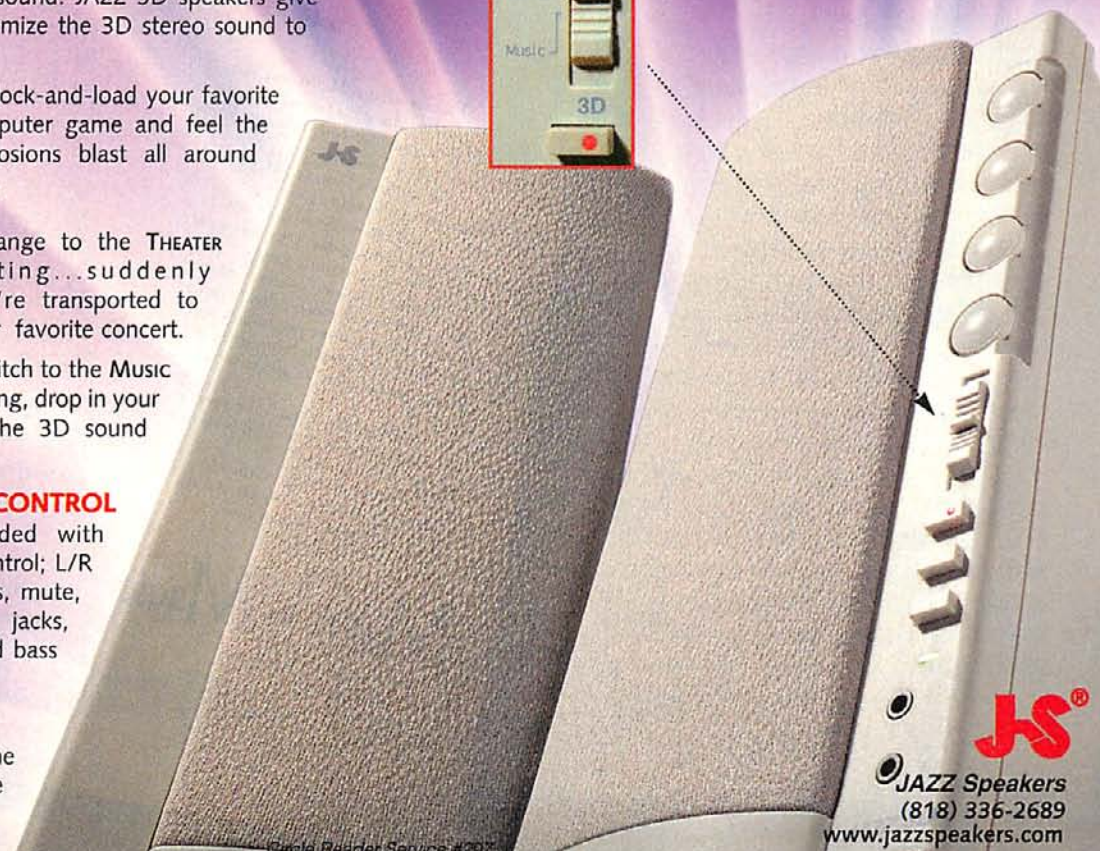
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"The Might and Magic series helped to revolutionize the industry."

This is the story of a man, an idea, and a shrink-wrap machine. Also, not coincidentally, it is the story of the birth of New World Computing. In 1984, Jon Van Caneghem, now President of New World Computing was an avid boardgamer and role-playing adventurer who decided to try his hand at writing a computer role-playing game. He started coding the game on his Apple IIe and the result was

MIGHT AND MAGIC: THE SECRET OF THE INNER SANCTUM.

The game was finished in 1986. Then, Jon and two friends pooled their money, bought a heavy-duty shrink-wrap machine, and worked through an entire sleepless weekend, shrink-wrapping the game for shipment the following Monday. In all, 5,000 boxes were wrapped that weekend.

The MIGHT AND MAGIC series helped to revolutionize the industry and now has five installments. MIGHT AND MAGIC: THE SECRET OF THE INNER SANCTUM was one of the first games to utilize a first-person perspective in its interface, and to adhere to common pen-and-paper role-playing rules: turn-based combat, experiential skill and level advancement, equipment that enhanced skills, etc. Since then, the series has grown to include: MIGHT AND MAGIC II: GATES TO ANOTHER WORLD, MIGHT AND MAGIC III: ISLES OF TERRA, MIGHT AND MAGIC IV: CLOUDS OF XEEN, and MIGHT AND MAGIC V: DARKSIDE OF XEEN. The final two chapters, installed on the same hard drive, allowed the player to experience a whole new scenario, called WORLD OF XEEN. A second scenario, SWORDS OF XEEN was included in the MIGHT AND MAGIC TRILOGY pack.

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Exactly what is Might and Magic? Technically, it's a fantasy role-playing simulation game for you and your Apple II[®] series personal computer.

Emotionally, however, Might and Magic is an adventure game.

It packs more detail than any other role-playing game. Yet it has more text than most adventure games.

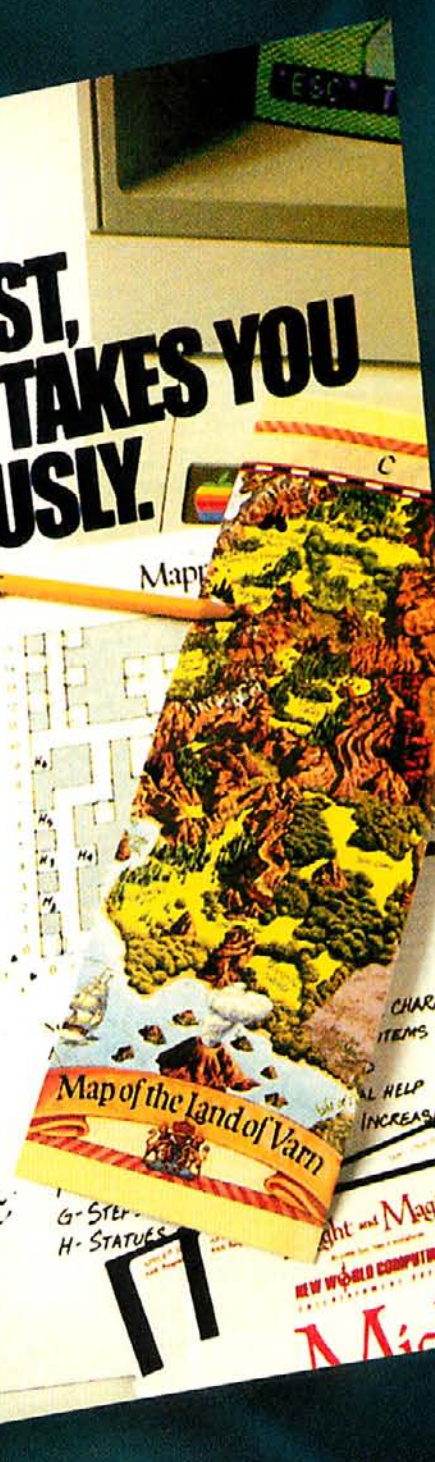
It also has more monsters, more spells, more speed, more individuality, more geography, more psychology and even more cartography than the best-selling fantasy game we all know the name of.

Cartography! That's the science of map making. Which you'll need to master pretty quickly.

You see, the map on the right only gets you to the outskirts of town. After that, you're on your own. Sorry about that.

Might and Magic

See your local dealer or order direct from New World Computing, Inc. PO Box 401415, SAN JOSE, CA 95141. In-state order for \$24.95 plus \$2.00 for shipping and handling. (CA residents add 4.75% sales tax.) VISA or MASTER CARD calls toll-free 1-800-445-1466. In CA 415-436-1466. © 1987 New World Computing, Inc.



"Heroes of Might and Magic II will expand on the original."

Realizing that gamers were enamored of the entire concept of fantasy worlds, a plan was devised to bring the characters and monsters of the MIGHT AND MAGIC series to the strategy game genre. HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC, a very slick remake of Jon's earlier THE KING'S BOUNTY, was the result, and its accolades have been sung far and wide. *Computer Gaming World* named it Strategy Game of the Year for 1995, and it won both *PC Gamer's* Editor's Choice award and *Computer Game Review's* Golden Triad award. HEROES OF

MIGHT AND MAGIC blends many of the fantasy elements of role-playing with a solid turn-based strategy wargame engine. Plus, it offers a rich and rewarding campaign game.

So, is it any surprise that the folks at New World Computing are working on a sequel? Of course not. HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II will expand on all of the things that made the original great, while adding new elements, such as secondary skills and Internet playability. Two new character classes have been added; all of the artwork has been updated; new monsters, spells, and artifacts have been created; and the combat screen has been enlarged to further the elements of tactical strategy. All in all, this should spell a huge success for the team at New World. It's an entirely New World from those early days of one man, an idea and some shrink-wrap.

THE SEQUEL TO THE AWARD WINNING HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC™

LONG LIVE THE KING?

After years of peace under the benevolent rule of Lord Ironfist, the lands of Euroth are again thrust into turmoil. Twin sons, one good one evil, vie for the coveted throne and you must choose which side to support in the coming wars. Will you back the villainous usurper and lead his evil hordes, or be loyal to the righteous king and lead the armies of the good?



Heroes of Might and Magic II brings completely new elements to one of the best strategy games of 1995, the first of which is a multi-part, split level campaign. Each scenario in the campaign brings you closer to your goal in this epic struggle of good versus evil. Additional features include two new

"HARDBALL is the epitome of the Accolade line"

R

ob Reiner opened his film, *The Princess Bride*, with an iconic computer game. It was HARDBALL. HARDBALL is the epitome of the Accolade product line because it reflects the desires of its co-founders, Alan Miller and Bob Whitehead, to move beyond the cartridge games they'd been writing at Activision. They formed Accolade to specialize in computer games. They intended to keep writing action games, but to add new elements and flair to them that couldn't be done in the cartridge world.

HARDBALL did just that. In an era when baseball games had either

blocky players in a generic stadium or text-heavy statistics, Whitehead captured the best of both worlds. The pitching interface was intuitive, the graphics were ahead of their time, the action was fast-paced, players had varying skills, and management decisions made a difference. It was the perfect package, a fact reflected in its sales success through a number of sequels, and they're not finished yet. And, since each new HARDBALL is the toughest competitor for the last, the tradition continues with the upcoming HARDBALL 6.

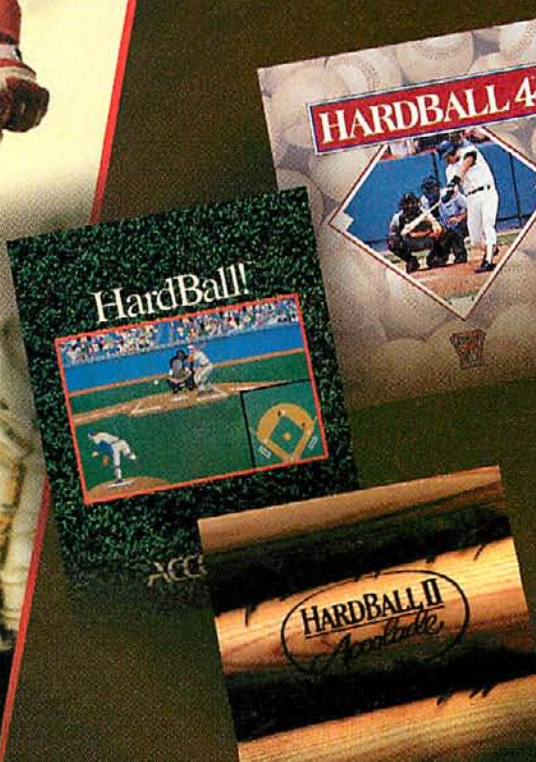
Looking back, Accolade wanted to beat Activision from the start, even with the name. "I remember looking in the dictionary to find a good word beginning with A that would come before Activision in the phone book," remembers Miller. "Accolade seemed like a winner."

Critical accolades were normal in Accolade's early years, whether for HARDBALL, LAW OF THE WEST, or ACE OF ACES, a WWII air combat game. Today, the accolades continue for their strategy games, as well as sports and action.

#1 selling Baseball Series for PC

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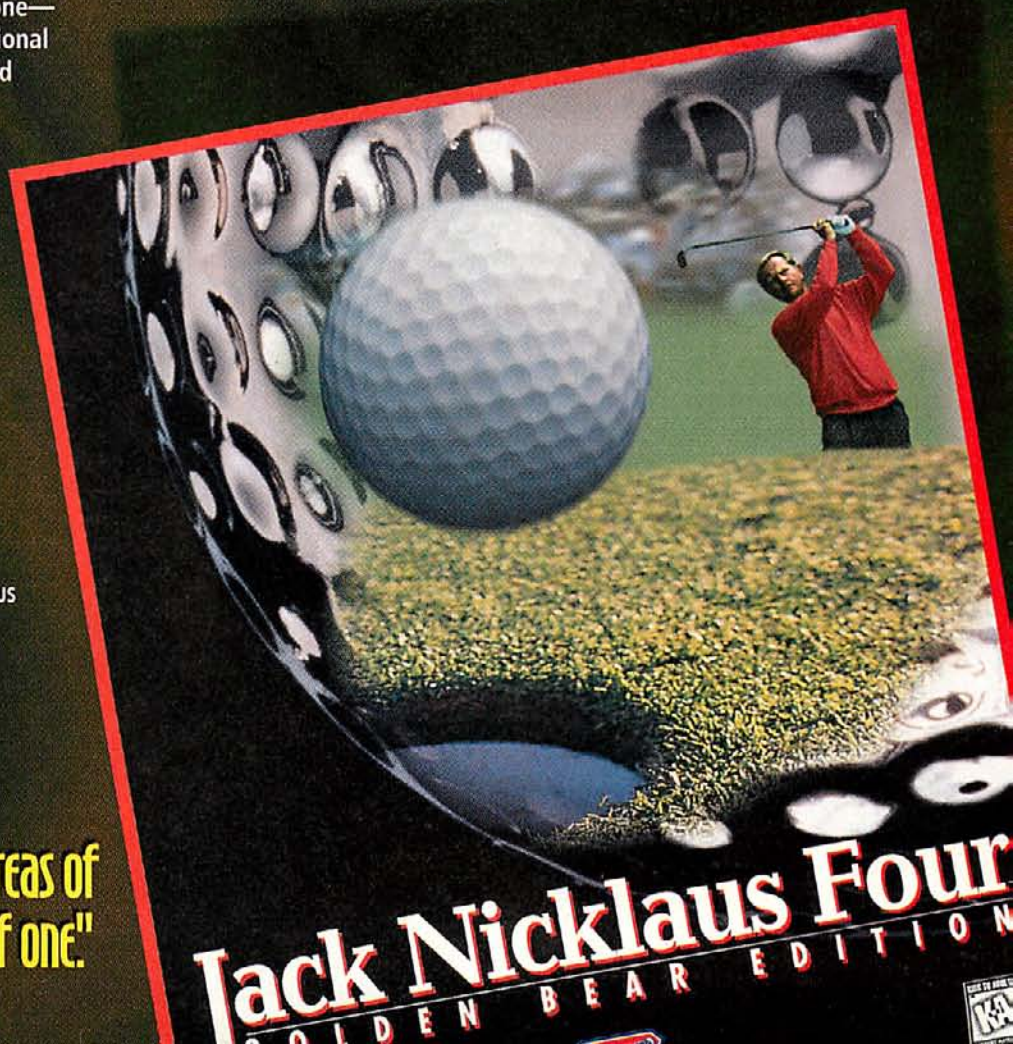
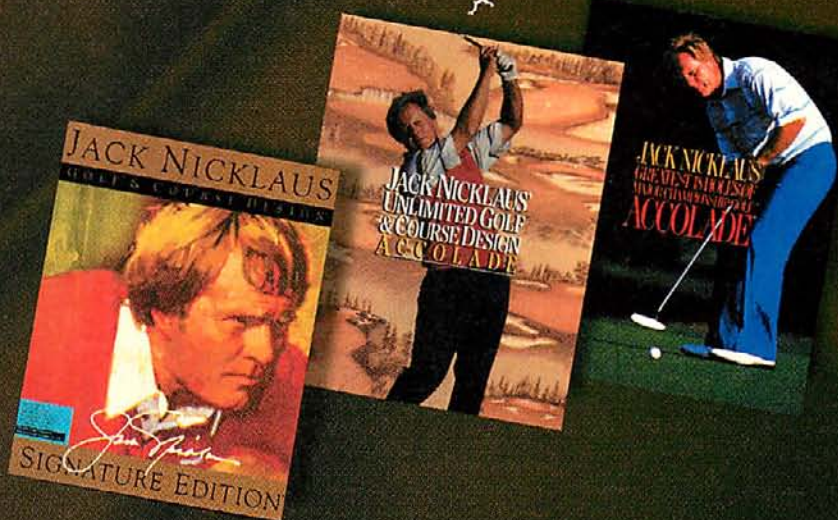
HARDBALL 5



Another early hit in the Accolade line was MEAN 18. An attractive golf game with an early implementation of the strength meter interface, MEAN 18 was a major success from the beginning, even generating solid sales of course disks. Yet, in those days as in these, every computer game publisher seemed to have a golf game. With improvement in the competition, Accolade felt like they needed to raise the ante.

Since they had already proven that they could publish a golf game with terrific graphics for the day and an easy-to-use interface, they decided that they needed golf expertise to improve the package. They decided to go for one of the best-known golfers of all time, Jack Nicklaus. In so doing, they picked up two areas of expertise for the price of one—a professional player and a professional golf course designer. Not only would players of JACK NICKLAUS' GREATEST 18 HOLES OF MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF get to play against a computerized Jack Nicklaus, who used club selection and averaged distances typical to the Golden Bear, on the hardest 18 holes in the world, but the package would also include two Nicklaus designed courses. The concept worked so well it led to more course disks and a series of products which included course architects, the editing tool that allows gamers to build their own digital golf courses. Now, the tradition continues with JACK NICKLAUS FOUR! The latest incarnation will include five courses, a new course architect and Leader Board tournaments conducted over the Internet. JACK NICKLAUS FOUR will be available in January.

"Jack Nicklaus—two areas of expertise for the price of one."



Jack Nicklaus Four
GOLDEN BEAR EDITION

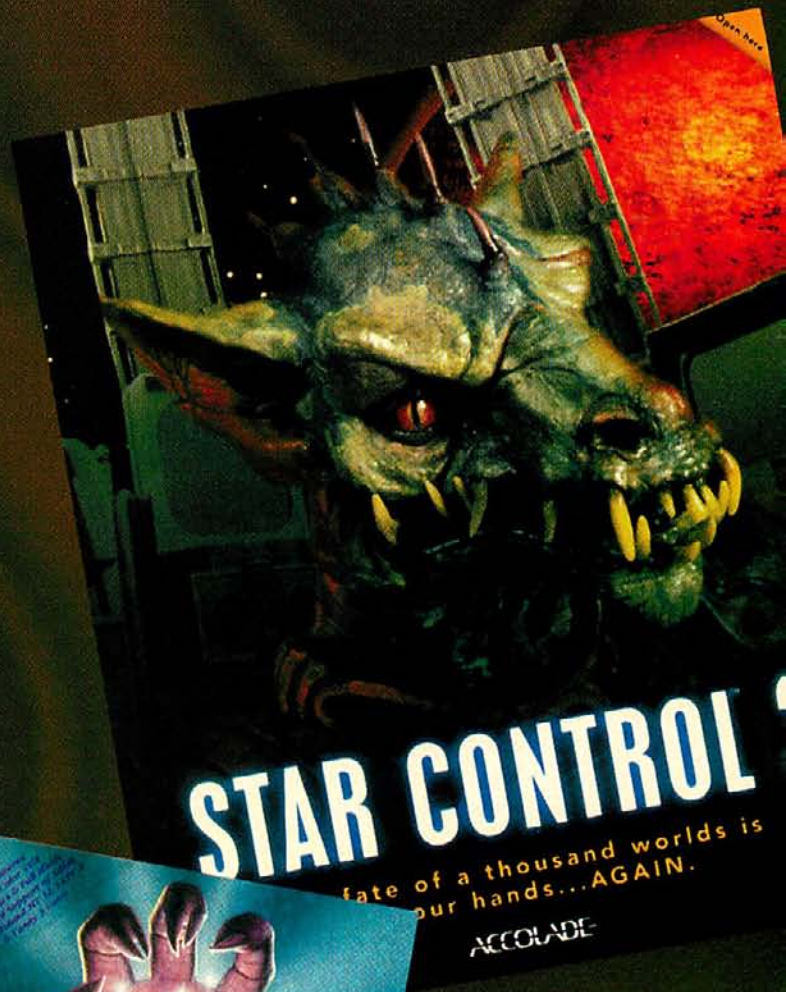
Accolade's tradition of wrapping action games with new elements and flair was to find expression in another ongoing series. The original *STAR CONTROL* was an action/strategy hybrid. In many ways, *STAR CONTROL* was the original "conquer the galaxy" game. You made strategic decisions about how many ships to send to what star system. Like *GALAXY* and *REACH FOR THE STARS* before it, *STAR CONTROL* was primarily a strategic space conquest game. But it was more.

Where earlier strategic space conquest games merely resolved the tactical battles according to various algorithms, *STAR CONTROL* let you control your ships in a wild, action melee mode of ship-to-ship action. Even better, no melee was quite the same because the ships of different alien races had different attributes and special attacks. Tactics which worked against one race might be totally ineffective against another. Plus, many of the aliens were just plain funny.

How do you top that? *STAR CONTROL II* opted for an adventure game wrapping. The aliens were even funnier and the story gave you a reason to fight. Accolade had managed to create an entirely new look and feel for the game without losing the essential element of fun from the original.

Here, at last, is *STAR CONTROL 3*. Once again, Accolade has been smart enough not to mess with the very successful action elements of the game. Yet, it has a brand new look. Now, 3D spaceships and wild, wacky puppets pull you into a game that has never lost sight of its hour-devouring roots.

"In *STAR CONTROL*, no melee was ever quite the same!"

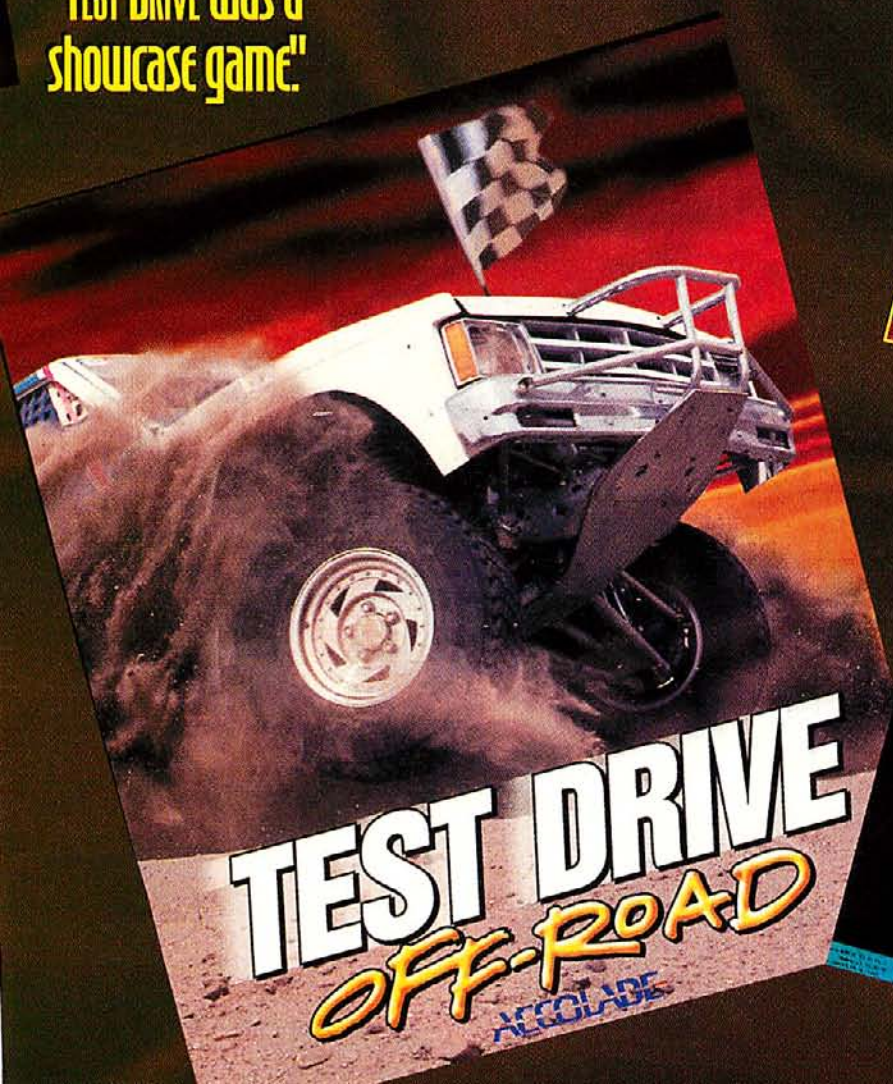


Before TEST DRIVE, Accolade had ignored a major market segment—simulation. Though some may argue that the original TEST DRIVE was more of an action game than true simulation. Even with its limitation to the highway, optional automatic transmissions, memorable traffic patterns, and stilted cracked windshields when you were supposed to have fallen off a cliff, it was one of the first computer games to put you behind the wheel of a high-performance Porsche, Corvette, or Ferrari. TEST DRIVE was a showcase game—the kind you'd show your friends, even if they weren't gamers. Best of all, TEST DRIVE showed that Accolade could do

competitive 3D games and that every simulation didn't need to have guns to be exciting. To be sure, TEST DRIVE opened the door for 3D military games like STEEL THUNDER (an early tank simulation) and GUNBOAT (one of two Vietnam games worth playing), but the company's real success in vehicle simulation came with the TEST DRIVE series. The cars got faster and the graphics got fancier in TEST DRIVE II and you were truly able to leave the road without crashing in TEST DRIVE III. Now, in TEST DRIVE: OFF ROAD, you'll be able to spend all of your time off the road in a Chevy, Jeep, Land Rover or Hummer and love it.

Through the years, Accolade has published a variety of games, but the emphasis has always been on action combined with new elements and flair. That tradition still holds. In fact, with the addition of strategy, it's growing.

"TEST DRIVE was a showcase game."



"Before Pool of Radiance, SSI was primarily considered a 'wargame company.'"



Strategic Simulations, Inc. has always had a gaming culture. Its employees didn't just design games, they played them—their games and everyone else's. At first, most of their games were largely computerized versions of board-based wargames they liked to play. Then, they expanded to publish science fiction strategy games like GALACTIC GLADIATORS and COSMIC BALANCE, as well as roleplaying games like QUESTRON and PHANTASIE.

Yet, until they announced an unprecedented licensing agreement with TSR, publishers of the

Advanced Dungeons and Dragons system, SSI was still known primarily as a wargame company. In 1988, they published POOL OF RADIANCE, the first of the "gold box" designs which, for several years, became SSI's flagship line. POOL OF RADIANCE was true to the AD&D rules and heavy on combat—just right for the audience in the late '80s. The game engine was so strong that the publisher was able to crank out new games every few months. As the engine aged, SSI published the editor as UNLIMITED ADVENTURES, oversaw development of the multiplayer online version, NEVERWINTER NIGHTS for America Online, and developed new games like the first-person EYE OF THE BEHOLDER series.

Today, the original TSR deal is over and SSI is publishing exclusive fantasy games, but they still have one title carrying on the tradition. This year, DARK SUN: CRIMSON SANDS had its debut on the Total Entertainment Network. DARK SUN: CRIMSON SANDS is a multiplayer role-playing game set in a fascinating universe where mages draw their power directly from the flora and fauna of the land itself.

Prepare for the ultimate fantasy when the first official **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons** Game Product comes alive on your computer!

POOL OF RADIANCE



SSI proudly presents POOL OF RADIANCE, the culmination of its collaboration with TSR to bring the legendary ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® fantasy role-playing system to your home computer.

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Though some wargamers were angry at SSI's management about the TSR license, a strange twist of fate occurred. For a time, wargames fell out of favor and even some great wargames did disappointing numbers. Fortunately for wargamers, SSI's management were committed enough to creating wargames that there were some years when the TSR-licensed games carried the ball for the wargames. So staunch was this commitment that SSI continued to publish wargames, even when the genre seemed in danger of dying away.

Then, in 1994, SSI published a wargame that captured the imagination of hardcore wargamer and casual gamer alike—PANZER GENERAL. It featured beautiful graphics, a great interface, and well-balanced campaign games. It sold well and *continues* to sell well! PANZER GENERAL invigorated the wargaming hobby in general, inspired the company to put great graphics in even hardcore wargames like STEEL PANTHERS and AGE OF RIFLES, and formed the centerpiece of an entire GENERAL series.

ALLIED GENERAL provided the flipside to PANZER GENERAL's German perspective. Indeed, it provided three flip sides, since you could now play a British, Russian or U.S. general. Yet, the GENERAL engine proved itself even more versatile with its application to fantasy realms, FANTASY GENERAL, and its upcoming release on science fiction warfare, STAR GENERAL. In many ways, PANZER GENERAL may have saved the wargaming hobby. In other ways, it brought SSI back to its roots—a computer game company that makes the fantasy, sci-fi, and wargames that its employees (and management) like to play.

PANZER GENERAL

Fast, Fun & Good-looking

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You'll love the way it plays: PANZER GENERAL is one blazingly fast and fun game!

The year is 1939; you are a German General with a fresh command in Poland.

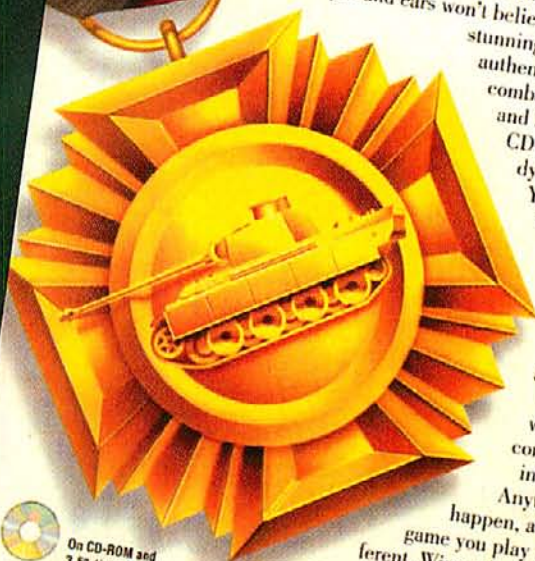
Anything can happen, and every game you play will be different. Win and advance to the next front of your choice. Lead well

core group of units could be plowing across Europe, North Africa and the Eastern Front. You could even end up in England by 1940 — or in America by 1945!

Besides the campaign game, there are 35 progressive scenarios which you can play as either the Allied or Axis side. Choose from 350 unit types, from Tiger tanks to B-17 Flying Fortresses.

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"Panzer General may have saved the wargaming hobby."

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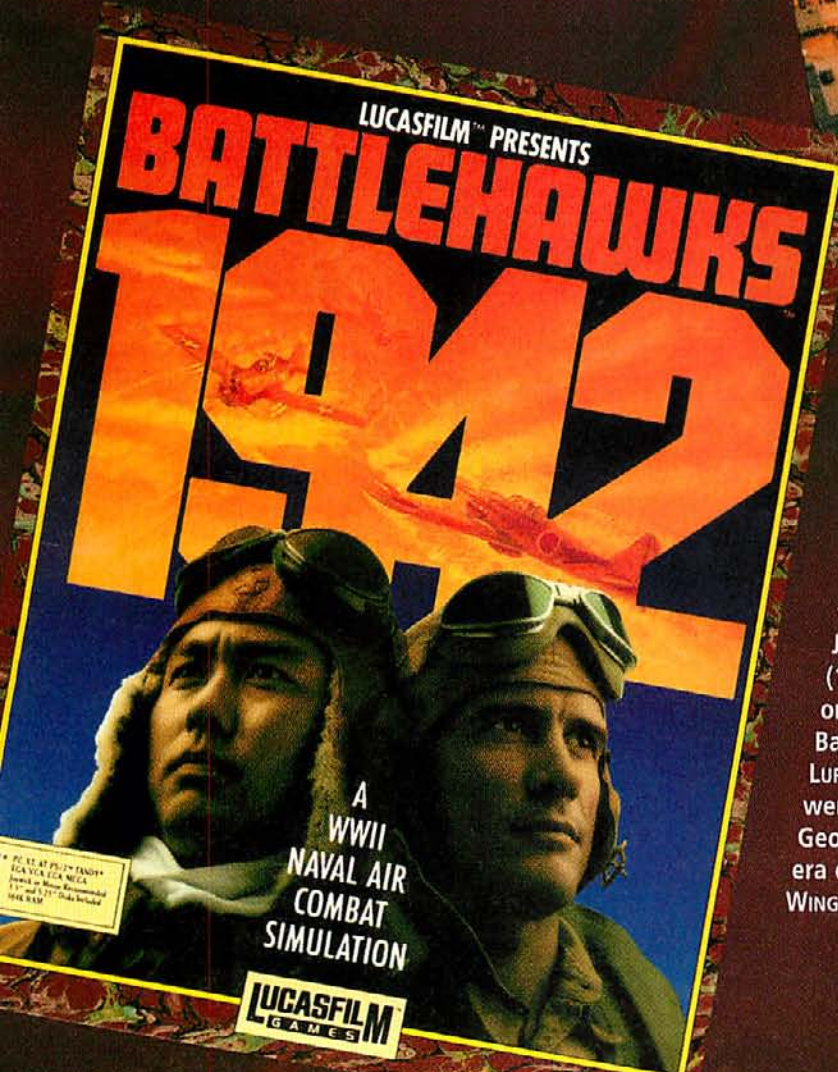
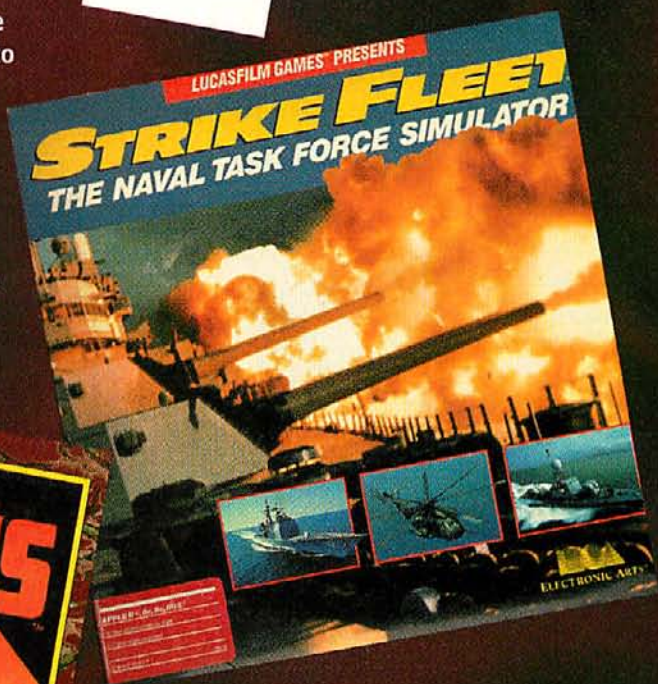
ince George Lucas had already revolutionized motion picture industry technology in bringing the *Star Wars* trilogy to the screen, it seemed only natural to create a new division for interactive entertainment.

Lucas visualized the future of interactive entertainment as taking place in an arena "where the digital production tools of filmmaking could be integrated into game development." Early research translated into the fast action of such early LucasArts

Entertainment Company titles as *BALLBLAZER* and *RESCUE ON FRACTALUS*.

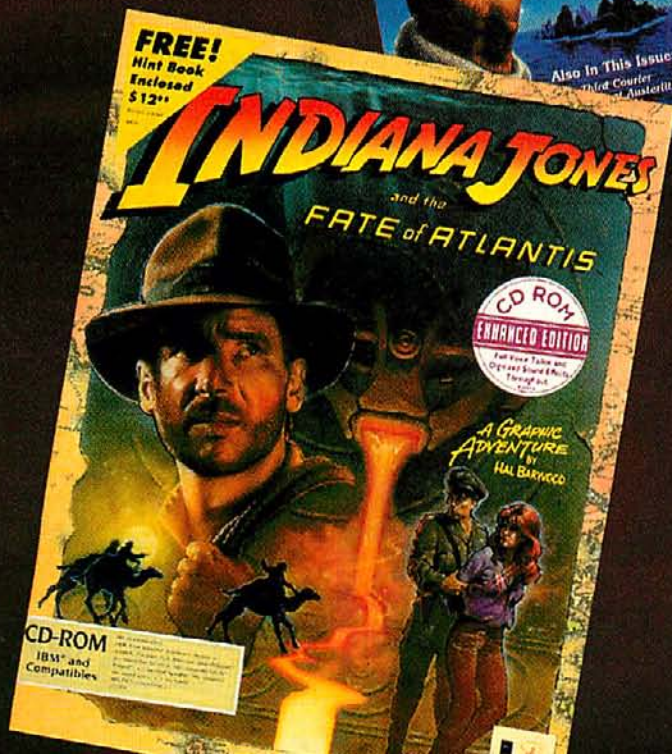
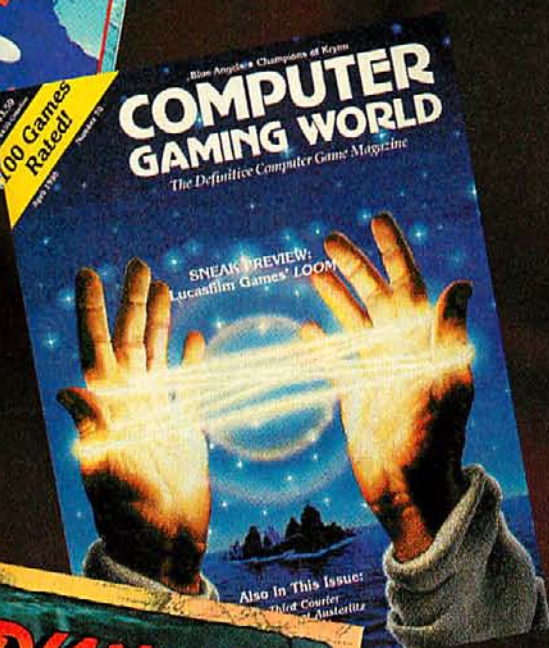
LucasArts' early days brought fantasy games like *LABYRINTH* and wargames like the hybrid *PHM PEGASUS* and *STRIKE FLEET* to market, all with fresh perspectives.

PHM PEGASUS and *STRIKE FLEET*, in particular, broke



ground for LucasArts' phenomenal series of combat flight simulations, building a market for new approaches to wargames. So, they decided to create a WWII flight sim where, for the first time, you could play as a pilot for either the Japanese or American side. *BATTLEHAWKS 1942* (1988) succeeded so well that the publisher went on to finish the trilogy with *THEIR FINEST HOUR* (The Battle of Britain) and *SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE* (a late WWII "What if?" campaign). They were also eventually able to do the same trick George Lucas had done in *Star Wars*, transform WWII era dogfights into outer space dogfights with the *X-WING* and *TIE FIGHTER* games. But that comes later.

"Gamers no longer had to play 'Guess the Verb!'"



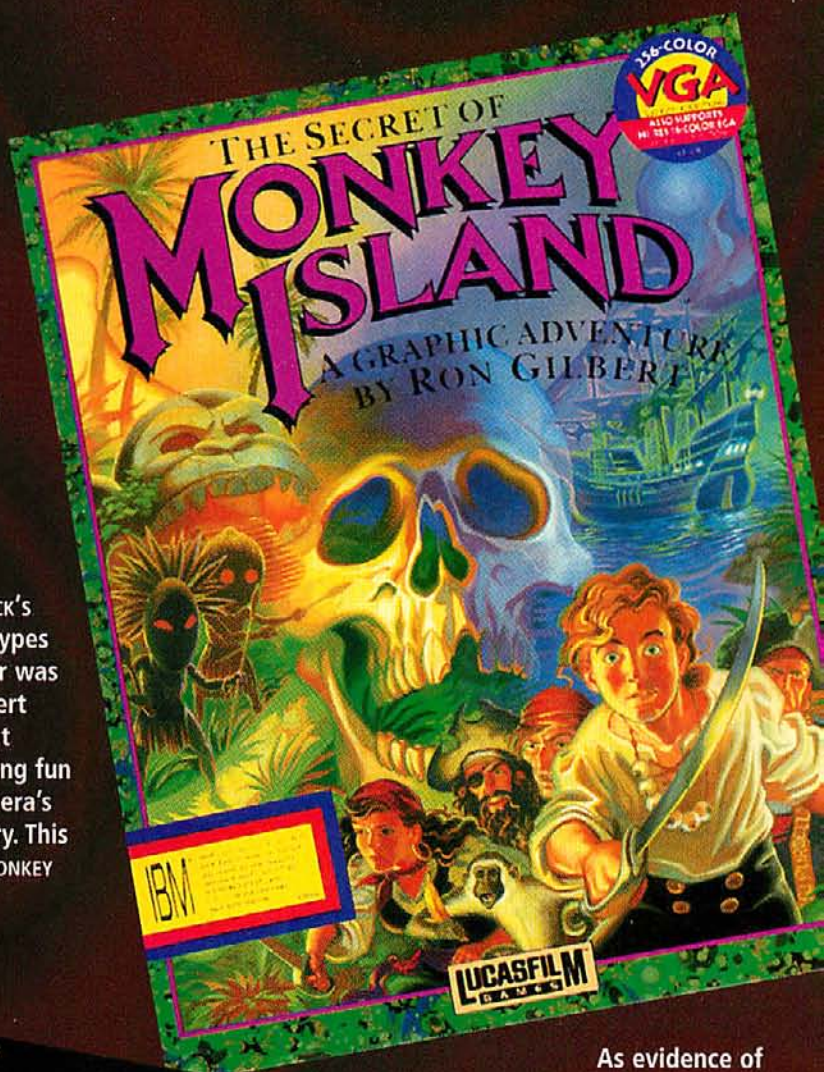
The late '80s brought another important genre development at LucasArts. The company quickly perceived that gamers were tired of playing graphic adventures with parser interfaces where they had to type VERB, NOUN to make things happen. So, they created the now legendary SCUMM, *Script Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion*, system. It may sound disgusting (every acronym in the toolset spells out a body fluid), but its inception was a key event in adventure game history. SCUMM was the first system to use a "point and click" interface. Gamers no longer had to play "Guess the Verb" in order to do anything.

The public *loved* MANIAC MANSION. It became an icon for a new style of animated adventures. The interface was intuitive enough that MANIAC MANSION was phenomenally successful on the 8-bit Nintendo system as well as the computer, and the game birthed such memorable characters that it became a live television show on the Family Channel.

The SCUMM system proved its further versatility in 1989 and 1990 when it served as the foundation for two landmark products: INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE and LOOM. The Indiana Jones adventure marked the first time LucasArts had ever used one of the film company's marquee licenses to build a game (prior to this, other companies had produced less than sterling Indy and *Star Wars* products). Loom was the first game to use a musical staff as its interface. These were just the beginning of a story game dynasty.

A

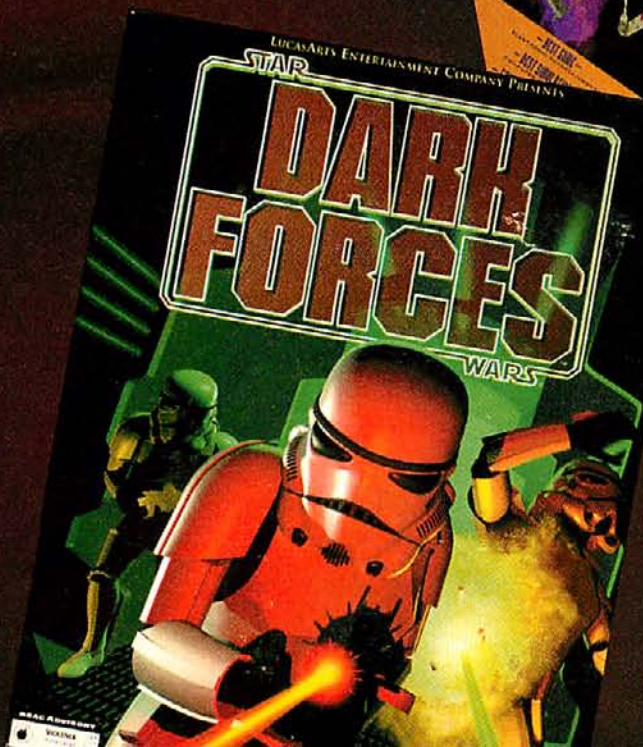
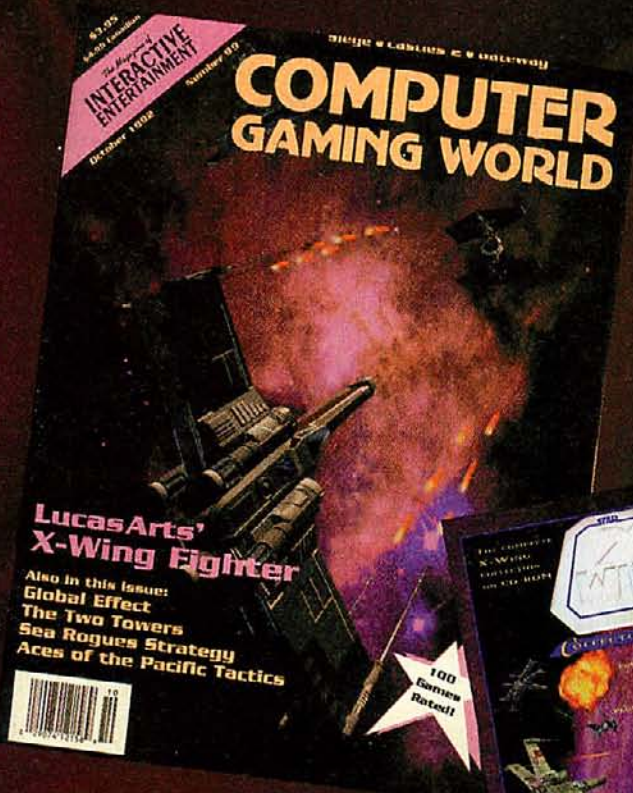
t the turn of the decade, LucasArts was achieving prominence in the combat flight sim category (THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN had just released and SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE was already greatly anticipated) and was so well-known in story games that gamers began to speak of "LucasArts-style games." They expanded their adventure game franchise with THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND adventure and its sequel, MONKEY ISLAND 2: LECHUCK'S REVENGE. Both games poked fun at sexual stereotypes and classic swashbuckling adventures. The humor was fresh and such things as the misunderstood "Insert Disk 256" joke (the game asked you to do so, but there was no Disk 256—the guys were just making fun of the proliferation of 5.25" floppy disks in that era's games) will live forever in computer game history. This great tradition will continue with THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND in 1997.



As evidence of the adventure game stronghold, LucasArts tried a bold experiment with INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS. Not only did the game require the player to "earn" their interface in one segment, but it was probably the first game to ever adapt itself to the gamer's playing style. As the player made decisions, the game would morph into either puzzle-, action- or cooperation-dominant mode to fit the player. Though it might eventually have been more efficient to produce three separate games, the adventure stands as a watershed to continued design innovation in LucasArts' traditional adventure game strength.

"Gamers began to speak of 'LucasArts-style' games."

"The *Star Wars* games put you in the middle of the film's universe."



ucasArts was able to create successful properties, both original and licensed, across every viable platform—nimble moving from one to another as windows of opportunity would open. In 1993, LucasArts brought computer gamers the first LucasArts-designed *Star Wars* computer game, X-WING. It was a tremendous

success as the company, like George Lucas before them, turned their WWII combat sims into mesmerizing space opera. The methodical pace of training, the interweaving of campaign elements and fast-paced action itself led to a tremendous sense of being in the middle of a *Star Wars* movie.

REBEL ASSAULT was even more phenomenal. The first product for a brand new game engine, "INSANE" (INteractive Streaming ANimation Engine), REBEL ASSAULT sold more than a million units worldwide. INSANE also supported the animated chase sequences in LucasArts' FULL THROTTLE, a biker adventure that was the first game to use both SCUMM and INSANE.

Both X-WING and REBEL ASSAULT spawned successful sequels (TIE FIGHTER and REBEL ASSAULT II), but DARK FORCES, a first-person shooter with defined mission goals, brought the *Star Wars* universe even more up close and personal.

Watch for further *Star Wars* titles like JEDI KNIGHT, REBELLION, and X-WING vs. TIE FIGHTER in the future. They'll also publish games like the surprisingly different AFTERLIFE, too. LucasArts has a first-person western shooter, OUTLAWS; several multiplayer, networkable games; and a STAR WARS strategy game as LucasArts Entertainment Company continues its tradition of excellence.

"Brøderbund doesn't settle for the same old games."

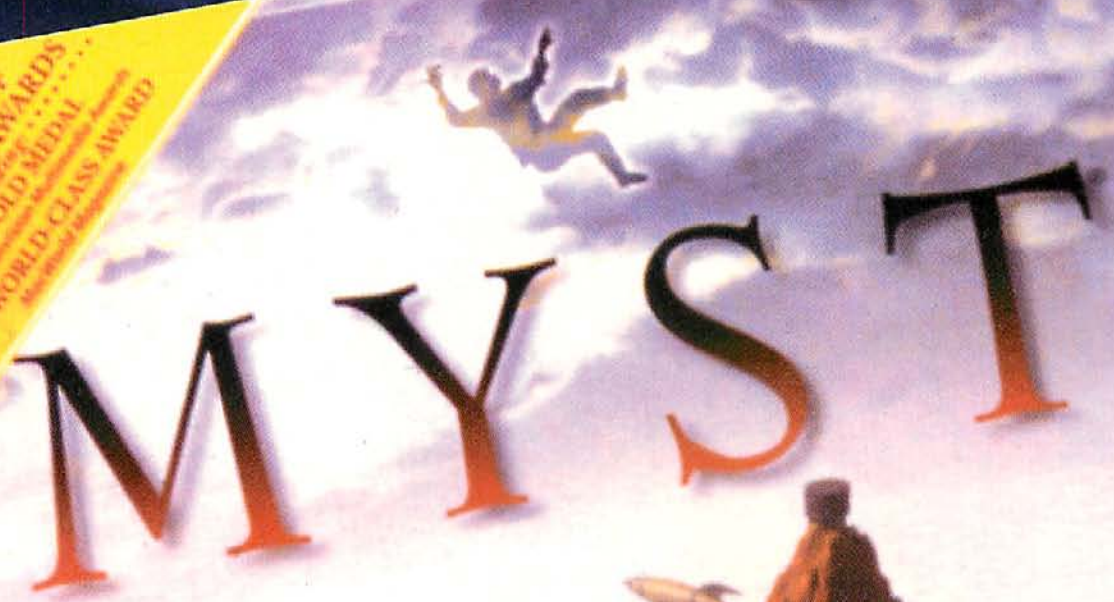
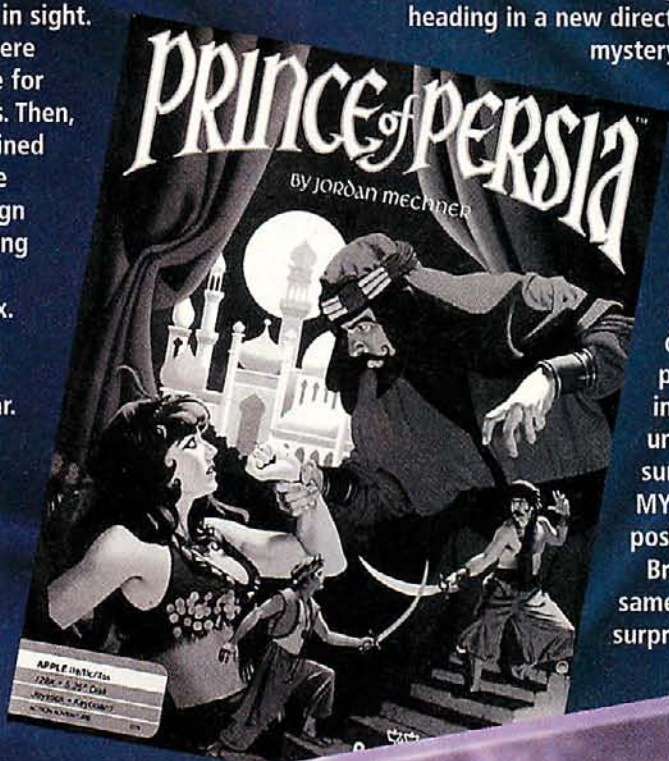
Brøderbund's *CHOPFLIFTER* temporarily relieved us from the "shoot everything and win by body count" action games. For the first time, you actually tried to rescue characters on-screen instead of blasting everything in sight. Plus, you were accountable for your failures. Then, *LODERUNNER* defined the platform-style arcade game for a while—its design editor function and "thinking person's" traps raising it above mere twitch and flex.

Even when it came to "twitch and flex," Brøderbund had a superstar. Jordan Mechner's *KARATEKA* was the definitive martial arts game for many years until, of course, he designed *PRINCE OF PERSIA*. *PRINCE OF PERSIA* had the smoothest animation ever seen. You would run, jump, climb, hang,

crouch, grab, and swashbuckle through level after level of a palace right out of *1,001 Arabian Nights*. With *PRINCE OF PERSIA 2*, Mechner refined the animation and graphics even further, adding a full array of traps and logic puzzles to further challenge gamers. Now, Mechner is heading in a new direction with *THE LAST EXPRESS*, a mystery adventure set on a certain famous railroad train in 1914. Once again, it looks like something very special.

Brøderbund isn't just about action, though. Rand and Robyn Miller stunned the world with *MYST*, a fully rendered 3D environment dedicated to exploration and puzzle-solving. Offering an intriguing dilemma as the story unfolded and the most lavish and surrealistic graphics imaginable, *MYST* forged its own style and a position as a cultural icon.

Brøderbund doesn't settle for the same old games. They always surprise us.



Can a computer make you cry? This early ad asked a great question, and immediately conveyed the vision that set Electronic Arts apart from the beginning. Founder Trip Hawkins knew that computer games could and would have an emotional impact on individuals and society. To convey this, he viewed the company from the start as equivalent to a music industry publisher and his "electronic artists" as the rock musicians of the future.

Early on, EA had a new perspective which translated into fresh ideas—construction sets, celebrity "designers," affiliated label programs, modem games, fractal landscapes, and sports game interfaces. Even its subsidiaries had fresh ideas: Origin's WING COMMANDER interactive movies and first-person role-playing games

like ULTIMA UNDERWORLD, as well as Bullfrog's original "god game," POPULOUS, and their mimitable SYNDICATE and THEME PARK.

EA's success formula was always "simple, hot and deep"—hot enough to attract, simple enough to play and deep enough to retain (and encourage repeat purchases). Over the years of building and distributing these simple, hot and deep products, EA has distributed a Hall of Fame wing full of developers and publishers including: Bethesda, Bullfrog, Dynamix, Interplay, Interstel, LucasArts, New World, Novalogic, Origin, SSI, and Three-Sixty Pacific, among others.

Today, EA is still publishing a wide range of simple, hot and deep products, and expanding its influence into multiplayer online games. And I'll bet they still want to make you cry.

CAN A COMPUTER MAKE YOU CRY?

Right now, no one knows. This is partly because many would consider the very idea frivolous. But it's also because whoever successfully answers this question must first have answered several others.

Why do we cry? Why do we laugh or love, or smile? What are the touchstones of our emotions?

Until now, the people who asked such questions tended not to be such people who ran software companies. Instead, they were screenwriters, filmmakers, painters, musicians. They were in the traditional scene, artists.

We're about to change that tradition. The name of our company is Electronic Arts.

SOFTWARE WORTHY OF THE MINDS THAT USE IT.

We are a new association of electronic artists united by a common goal—to fulfill the enormous potential of the personal computer.

In the short term, this means transcending its present use as a tool for managing tasks and data, and using it as a medium for blasting aliens. In the long term, however, we can expect a great deal more.

These are wonderful machines we have created, and in them can be seen a bit of their makers. It is as if we had invested them with the image of our minds. And through them, we are learning more and more about ourselves.

We learn, for instance, that we are more entertained by the involvement of our imaginations than by passive viewing and listening. We learn that we are better taught by experience than by demonstration. And we learn that the traditional

TOWARD A LANGUAGE OF DREAMS.

In short, we are finding that the computer can be more than just a processor of data. It is a communications medium: an interactive tool that can bring people's thoughts and feelings closer together, perhaps closer than ever before. And while fifty years from now, its creation may seem more important than the advent of motion pictures or television, there is a chance it will mean something more

distinctions—the ones that are made between art and entertainment and education—don't always apply.

Something along the lines of a universal language of ideas and emotions. Something like a code. The first publications of Electronic Arts are now available. We suspect you'll be hearing a lot about them. Some of them are games like you've never seen before, that get more out of your computer than other games ever have. Others are harder to categorize—and we like that.

WATCH US.

We're providing a special environment for talented, independent software artists. It's a supportive environment, in which big ideas are given every chance to grow. And some of America's most respected software artists are beginning to take notice.

We think our current work reflects this very special commitment. And though we are few in number today and apart from the mainstream of the mass software market, we are confident that both time and vision are on our side.

Join us. We see farther.



EA's formula has always been "simple, hot and deep."

"Sirtech is no longer just
"the Wizardry Company."



ne of the few things that's been around longer than CGW is the world's oldest independent software gaming company: Sirtech Software. It all started in 1979 with an Apple II purchased for Fred Sirotek's resin sands business. Robert Woodhead wrote a simple, but effective program to figure cost variances in rail shipment rates in a widely fluctuating market.

The program paid for the computer in an eye-blink, and as he wrote other business programs, permission was granted to use the company's computer for some of his personal projects. Norman and Robert Sirotek, Fred's sons, noticed the potential in Mr. Woodhead's programs and talked Fred into founding Sirtech Software in order to publish their first game, GALACTIC ATTACK.

For its first year, Sirtech operated out of 100 square feet. These humble beginnings led to the creation of the first episode of the award-winning WIZARDRY series. In 1996, Sirtech is still building on the famed WIZARDRY tradition with such slick remakes as WIZARDRY GOLD.

Today, with comprehensive worldwide distribution via alliances with a host of respected foreign republishers, and new types of games like JAGGED ALLIANCE, DRUID, DEADLY GAMES, NEMESIS, and SHADOWS OVER RIVA, Sirtech is no longer just "the WIZARDRY Company."

A pioneer in computer software, Sirtech has a dynamic vision for the future of gaming. Upcoming releases such as their Internet-driven science fiction action strategy game and their new WIZARDRY have ambitious goals. Inherent in all Sirtech games is a promise of exceptional quality and depth of play. And they've lived up to it.

JAGGED ALLIANCE
DEADLY GAMES

REALMS OF ARKANIAN
SHADOWS OVER RIVA

Wizardry
The Ultimate Fantasy Experience

Sirtech SOFTWARE, INC. Dept. F
6 Main Street, Ogdensburg, New York 13669 (315) 383-6653

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"Pickens knew business, but Stealey knew games."



The youngest company in our special section, Interactive Magic is still a company with historical significance. Chartered by Robert L. "Bob" Pickens in 1994, the company gained instant industry perspective when "Wild Bill" Stealey's non-compete agreement with Spectrum HoloByte expired. Stealey was the founder of MicroProse, the man who talked Sid Meier into writing computer games for profit as well as fun, the high flyer who took MicroProse public, and an inimitable, outspoken leader in the computer game industry for years. Pickens had years of executive experience, serving as CEO of Washington Aluminum Company prior to starting Interactive Magic.

Pickens knew business, but Stealey knew games—particularly, strategy and simulation. Remembering bad ventures in coin-op and graphic adventures, Stealey chuckles and says, "I now know the value of focusing on what you know best, especially when you have a partner who keeps you from doing anything stupid."

The short history of Interactive Magic has been anything but stupid. Their first release played to their strength. A detailed helicopter simulation, APACHE sold more than 120,000 units. The focus proved successful with STAR RANGERS, CAPITALISM and AMERICAN CIVIL WAR: FROM SUMTER TO APPOMATTOX, as well. In addition, the company has a half-dozen releases scheduled for the next six months: HIND, HARPOON CLASSIC 97, DESTINY, iM1A2 ABRAMS, and AIR WARRIOR II. The latter is the centerpiece of Interactive Magic's alliance with Kesmai and a key to their future online plans.

Fast out of the gate and expected to keep growing, Interactive Magic is already making computer game history.

**FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS,
THE RIDE MAY GET A LITTLE BUMPY.**

APACHE

The Combat Helicopter Simulation

From Digital Integration

© 1995 Interactive Magic

Circle Reader Service #14

War may be hell, but not from where you're sitting. It's 100% over-the-shoulder, white-knuckle, non-stop, in-your-face action with Apache. From the company committed to providing the most gut-wrenching CD-ROM games, Interactive Magic, it will haul you into the middle of unbelievable 3-D graphics. It's equipped with an incredible arsenal of weapons.

And the explosions are so realistic, you'll be thankful it's just a game. So pick up Apache, the ultimate combat helicopter simulation for your PC. And strap yourself in.

INTERACTIVE MAGIC

919-451-0348

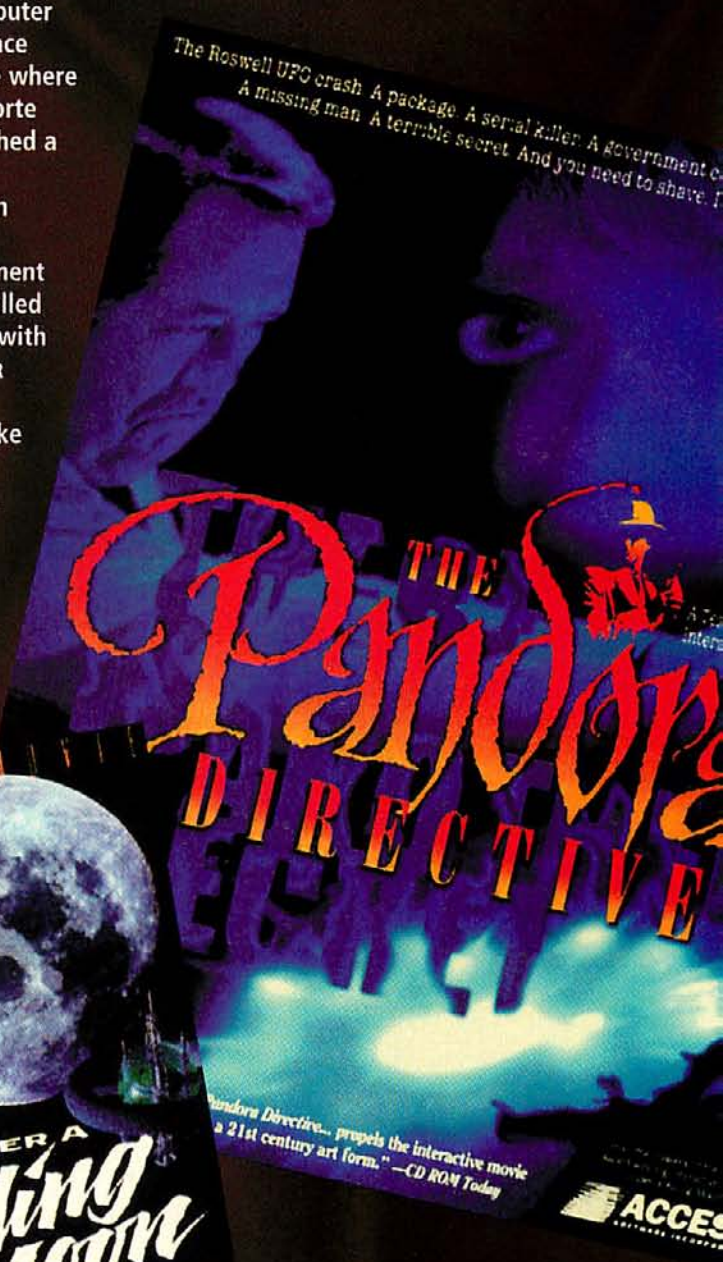
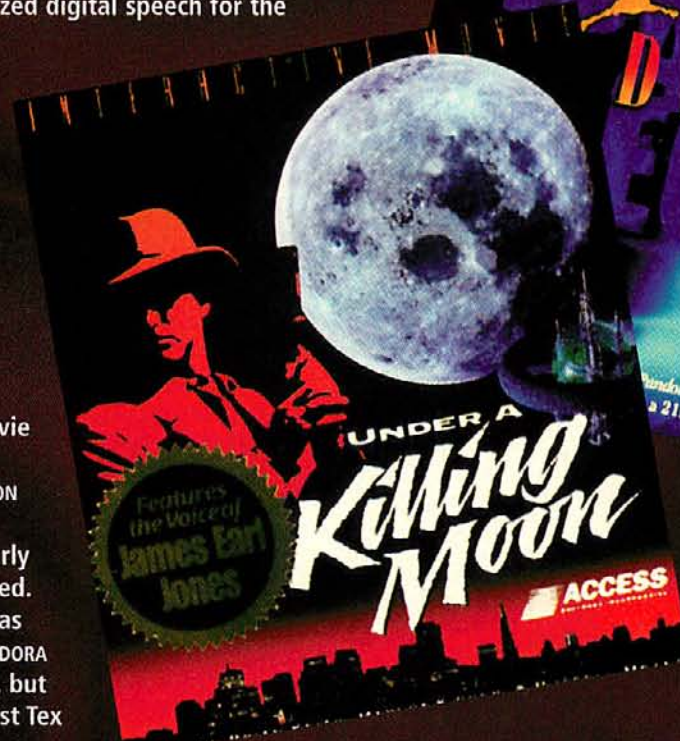
"Tex Murphy started a detective dynasty with Mean Streets."

Bruce and Roger Carver founded Access Software in 1982 in order to publish action-oriented computer games. Games like NEUTRAL ZONE, an action-space combat game, and BEACH HEAD, an arcade game where you defended a beach, were the company's forte until the mid-80s. Then, the company published a golf game called Leader Board that was to foreshadow the company's future success in computer golf games.

This was also when Access began to experiment with new technologies. By 1988, a space combat game called ECHELON offered voice command on the C-64 and shipped with its own custom hardware. Later, 1989's WORLD CLASS LEADER BOARD used RealSound, Access' proprietary sound technology, to offer commentary on your shots ("Looks like the ball's in the woods, Jim.").

Then came MEAN STREETS, the first Tex Murphy game. Tex Murphy, a futuristic throwback to Raymond Chandler's hardboiled detectives, started a detective dynasty with MEAN STREETS, the first game to fulfill the promise of an interactive movie in this VGA game combined with RealSound. When Tex next appeared, in MARTIAN MEMORANDUM, he was partnered with full-motion video and fully-synchronized digital speech for the entire cast.

Even so, Access wasn't satisfied. They wanted Tex to wander through 3D rooms and play scenes with even smoother video. They even added well-known professional actors to enhance the movie idea. As a result, UNDER A KILLING MOON was phenomenally successful, and nearly universally acclaimed. Now, Tex Murphy has returned in THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE—the best, but certainly not the last Tex Murphy adventure.



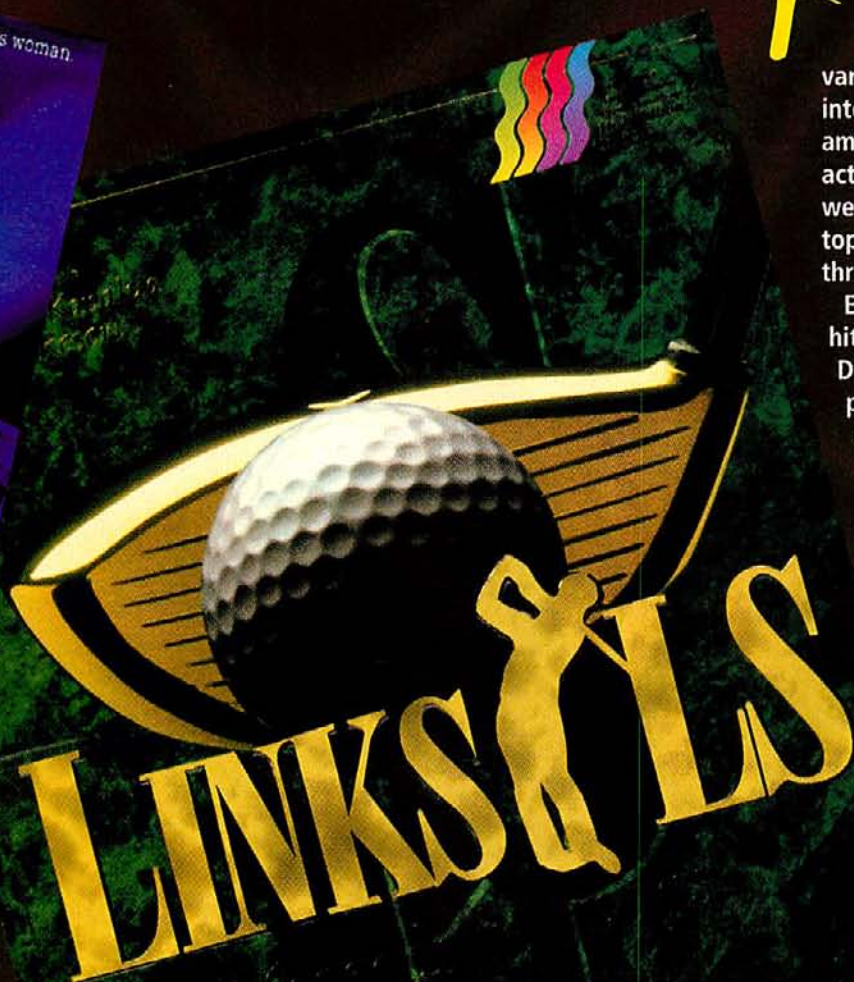
"links went right to the top
of the sales 'leader Board.'"

Access wasn't about to let go of their successful golf series, either. To move beyond WORLD CLASS LEADER BOARD, the company sent out teams to photograph and measure actual golf courses. The design team conscientiously rendered full 3D contoured terrain in full 256 color VGA graphics. They filmed and digitized golfers swinging various clubs and rotoscoped these golfers into the game. They recorded both the ambient sounds at various courses and the active sounds of club and ball. The results were phenomenal. LINKS went right to the top of the sales "Leader Board" and threatened never to come down.

Even the course disks for LINKS were big hits. FIRESTONE, BOUNTIFUL, BAY HILL, PINEHURST, DORADO BEACH and BARTON CREEK were all popular for LINKS players. Real golfers loved the chance to play famous courses on the computer which were restricted to them in real life, and couldn't believe the realism.

Then, in late 1992, LINKS 386 Pro did the impossible. The designers offered SVGA graphics, nine different viewing windows, extra bookkeeping of statistics, upgraded sounds, and faster redraw after each shot. It also offered the option of a female golfer for the first time in the series. Plus, it was backward-compatible with all of the Links course disks.

Amazingly, enough, Access still isn't finished. LINKS LS offers better graphics, 3D stereo sound, modem or network play, swing animation of Arnold Palmer, and VR tours of famous clubhouses via the UNDER A KILLING MOON technology. And somehow, we think there are more surprises along the way.



sterious woman.
worse

"Call Out—At Bethesda, folks from the CEO down, are scrupulous about reality."

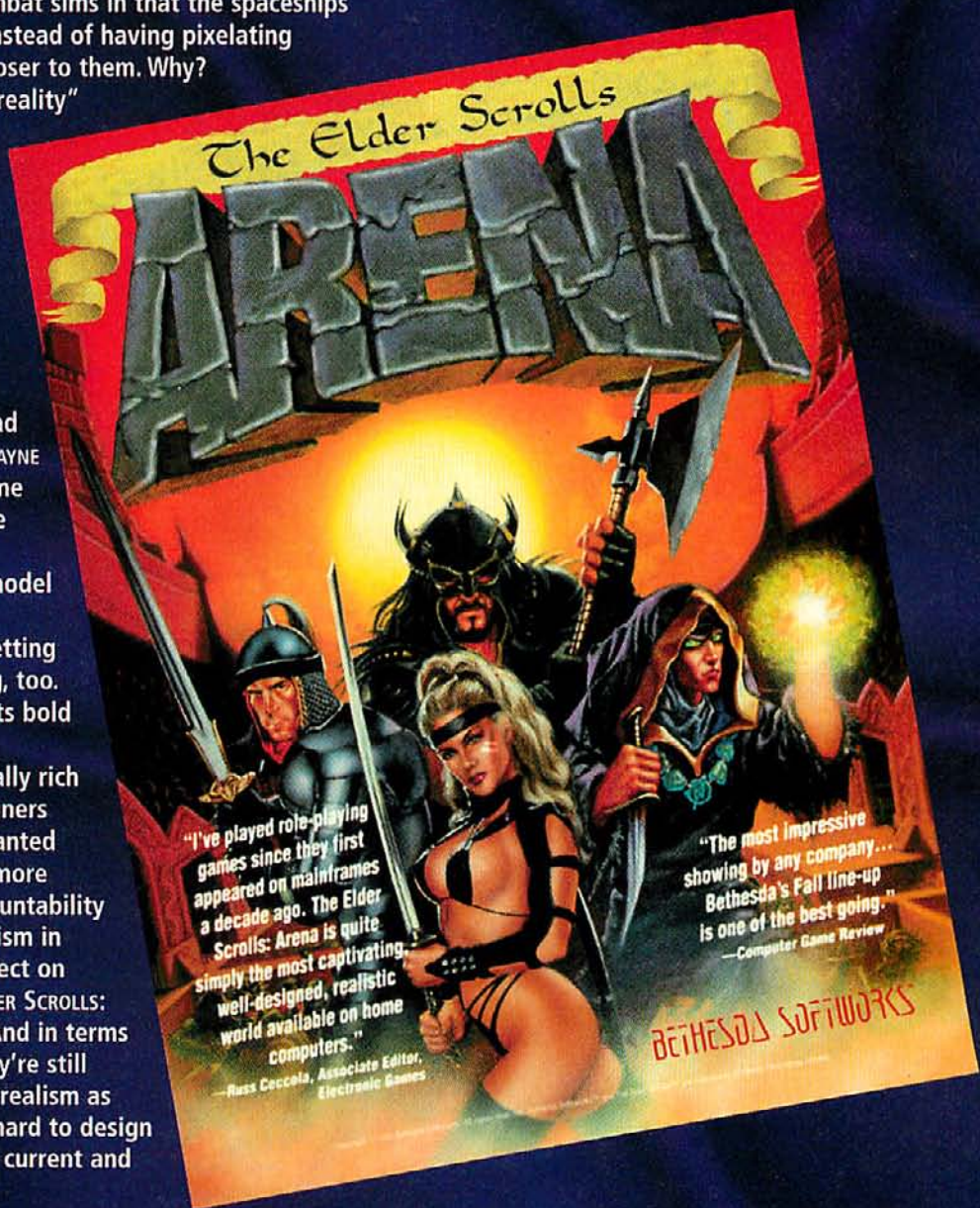
There is a familiar name in the credits for this summer's hottest film, Independence Day. Chris Weaver is the CEO of Bethesda. Not only does Weaver have a Ph.D. in Physics, qualifying him to serve as advisor, but he is working with the special effects geniuses behind Independence Day on a game to be called TENTH PLANET—a game that reverses an industry trend for space combat sims in that the spaceships actually look better instead of having pixelating textures as you get closer to them. Why?

Because that reflects "reality"

and at Bethesda, folks from the CEO down, are scrupulous about reality.

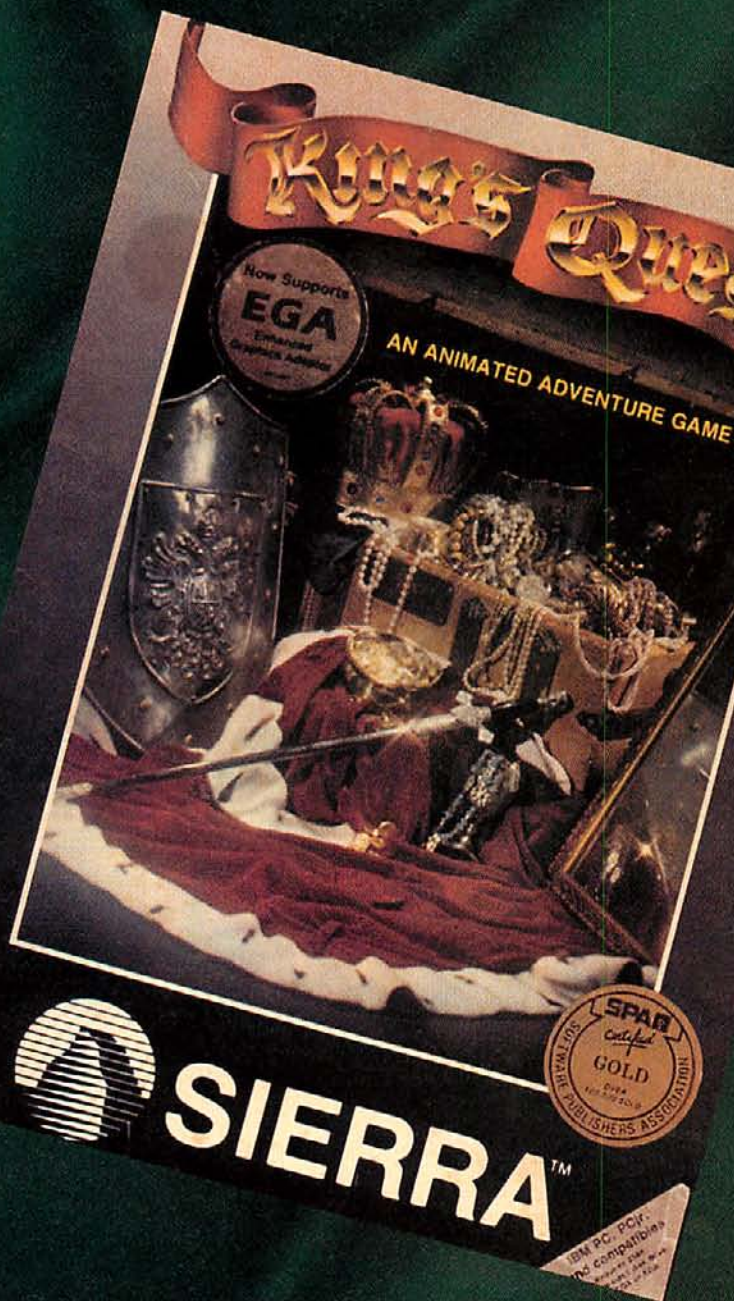
If ever a game publisher has been consistently underestimated, it has been Bethesda Softworks. From GRIDIRON, its physics-based football title on the Amiga, through its innovative overhead playing view in the original WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY to its X-CAR game of prototype high-performance cars, Bethesda has had a commitment to "getting the model right."

Bethesda is committed to getting the model right in role-playing, too. THE ELDER SCROLLS: ARENA (with its bold advertisement pictured here) introduced a vast and potentially rich role-playing universe. Its designers weren't happy with it. They wanted deeper character interaction, more verisimilitude in terms of accountability and reputation, and more realism in terms of 3D terrain and its effect on characters. The sequel, THE ELDER SCROLLS: DAGGERFALL, delivers just that. And in terms of a realistic game world? They're still showing their commitment to realism as they've imported Dr. Ken Maynard to design realistic fractal landscapes for current and future projects.



"Mystery House launched both a genre and a company."

Roberta Williams loved playing ADVENTURE, the original text adventure, via a primitive telecommunications terminal. She loved it so much that she decided to create her own adventure game. Yet, instead of being satisfied with a pure text adventure, she wondered what would happen if you married graphics to the text. She took a classic mystery setup like that in Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Indians* and put the gamer in the middle of a murder mystery. MYSTERY HOUSE was the result. Not only was it successful, but it launched both a genre, the graphic adventure, and a company, Sierra On-Line. Not only did Sierra and Roberta start the graphic adventure genre, but they continually improved it. To do so, they needed a showcase line—a product so good that it would herald a new breakthrough with every release. The product was the KING'S QUEST line. Starting with the adventures of Sir Graham in KING'S QUEST: QUEST FOR THE CROWN AND MOVING THROUGH KING'S QUEST II: ROMANCING THE THRONE, KING'S QUEST III: TO HEIR IS HUMAN, KING'S QUEST IV: THE PERILS OF ROSELLA, KING'S QUEST V: ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GO YONDER!, and KING'S QUEST VI: HEIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW through KING'S QUEST VII: THE PRINCESS BRIDE, the series brought to life the first animated adventure, the first Midi soundtrack in an adventure game, the first fully parserless interface, first rotoscoped animation in a graphic adventure, and many more. Soon, the adventure continues in full 3D with KING'S QUEST VIII.



"Expect Leisure Suit Larry 7
to take us to new Lowe's."

Leisure Suit Larry, also known as Leisure Suit Larry, made his graphic adventure debut when Al Lowe, a mild-mannered music teacher and brilliant jazz musicologist/musician, decided he needed to do something different (or, as Sierra once put it, they needed to "keep him from the impressionable youth of America").

LEISURE SUIT LARRY IN THE LAND OF THE LOUNGE LIZARDS was an instant

success, in spite of the fact that many traditional retailers didn't carry it. Sierra positioned Larry very carefully as a game for adults and even put a funny quiz as lock-out protection against underage gamers. Yet, the truth is that LEISURE SUIT LARRY IN THE LAND OF THE LOUNGE LIZARDS was tame by most entertainment industry standards. It was designed for fun, not titillation. To be sure the humor was ribald, but there was a cost to irresponsible behavior and, later, even redressment of early charges of sexism (like a lounge lizard wouldn't be sexist—right!) using a character named Passionate Patti. Lowe let you play part of the game from Patti's point of view in both LEISURE SUIT LARRY III: PASSIONATE PATTI IN PURSUIT OF THE PULSATING PECTORALS and LEISURE SUIT LARRY 5: PASSIONATE PATTI DOES A LITTLE UNDERCOVER WORK (the game which explains the missing Larry 4 game). Now, Sierra is bringing new 3D animation and "scratch and sniff" puzzles to the series with LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7: LOVE FOR SAIL. Expect the latest and greatest in computerdom's funniest on-going series to take us to new Lowe's.



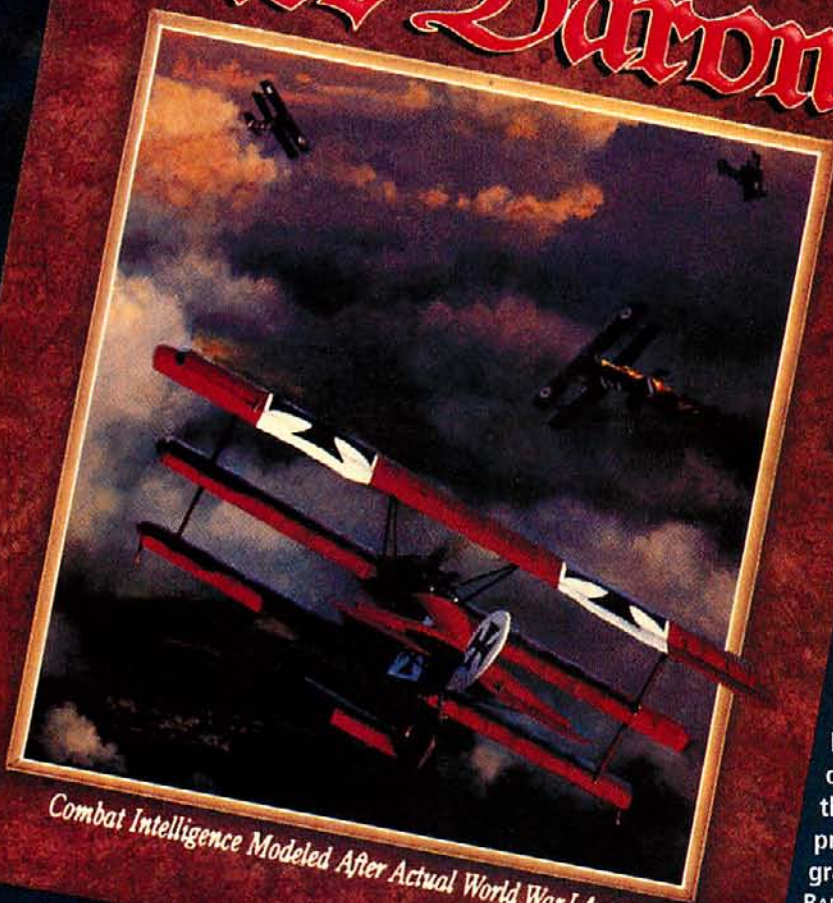
"Red Baron is one of the Top 5 computer games of all time."

Computer Gaming World has rated it one of the Top 5 computer games of all time. It is still selling in computerdom's most demanding genre—flight simulation—even though it is five years old. Its technology, 3SPACE, was one of the primary reasons that Sierra acquired Dynamix, Inc. in the first place. It was the first VGA flight simulation with both a decent frame rate and a realistic flight model.

The game was RED BARON. Developed by Damon Slye, a quiet University of Oregon graduate who had honed his skills on 3D action games like ARCTICFOX, SKYFOX and STELLAR 7, it signaled the beginning of a dynasty in combat simulation for Dynamix and Sierra. ACES OF THE PACIFIC, ACES OVER EUROPE and ACES OF THE DEEP were all extensions of the lessons learned and technologies developed for RED BARON. The planes were fragile enough to obey physical laws; the rotary engines were handled perfectly; the sounds were realistic; the 28 aircraft to be flown were meticulously modeled, and there was plenty of excitement whether you chose individual missions or played the campaign tour of duty.

Now, Sierra is preparing RED BARON II, a game that is expected to be more than a cosmetic makeover of the original masterpiece, more than a graphic upgrade. Using faster processors to provide more detailed graphics and higher frame rate, RED BARON II expects to dominate the category for yet another five years.

Red Baron™



Combat Intelligence Modeled After Actual World War I Aces!

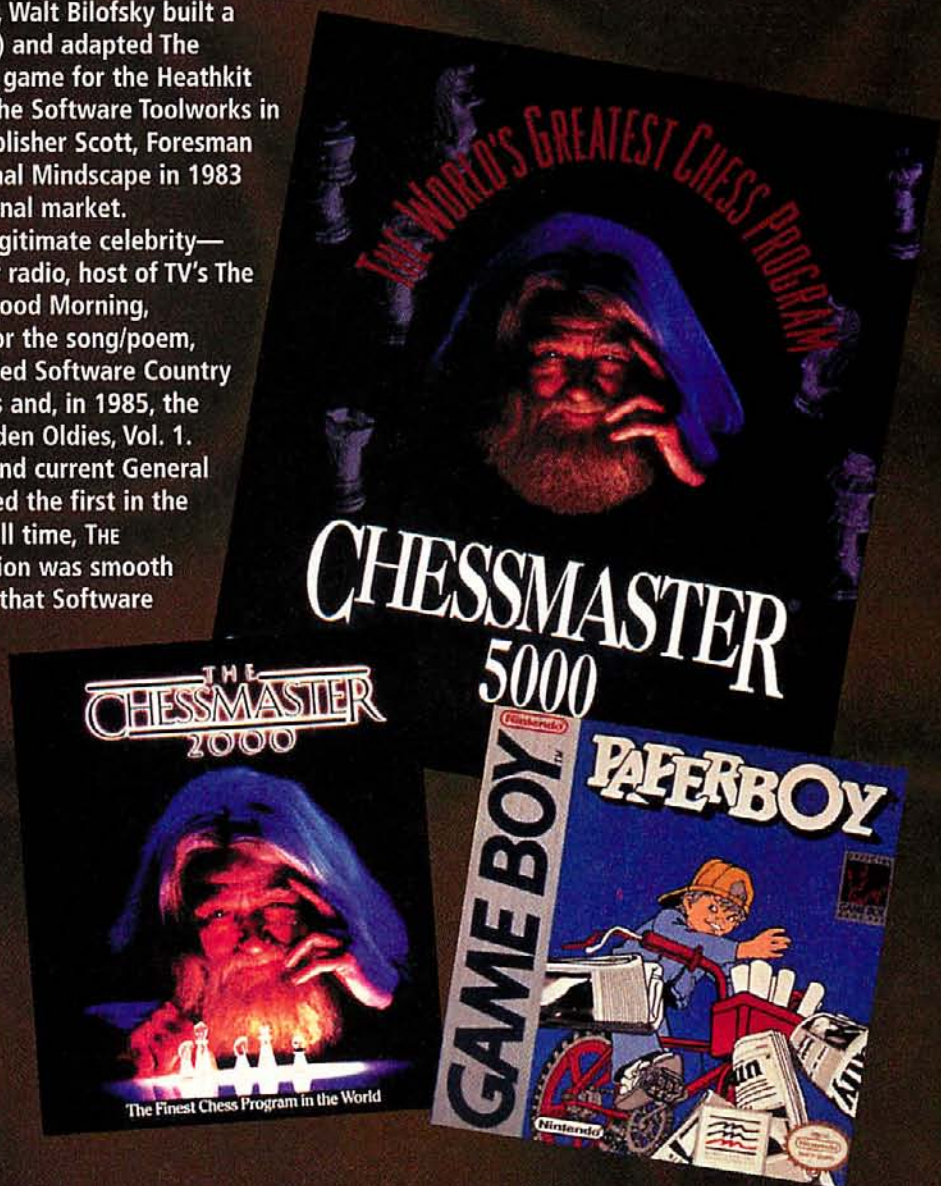
"Chessmaster is the most successful chess series of all time."

The stagecoach is gone at Mindscape. The frontier symbol which once graced the company's logo has been superseded by a topographical representation of imaginative frontiers. Once, the stagecoach was appropriate, since the history of Mindscape is one of pioneers taking different paths to reach the same unsettled territory. First, Walt Bilofsky built a chess game (MyCHESS) and adapted The Original Adventure text game for the Heathkit computer. He founded The Software Toolworks in 1980. Then, textbook publisher Scott, Foresman and Company founded the original Mindscape in 1983 to make inroads on the educational market.

In contrast, Les Crane was a legitimate celebrity—creating the "Top 40" format for radio, host of TV's The Les Crane Show (mentioned in Good Morning, Vietnam), and Grammy winner for the song/poem, Desiderata, in the '60s. He founded Software Country in 1984, marketing original titles and, in 1985, the first "value pack," Software Golden Oldies, Vol. 1. Then, with the help of Bilofsky and current General Manager Mike Duffy, he published the first in the most successful chess series of all time, THE CHESSMASTER 2000. The collaboration was smooth enough on THE CHESSMASTER 2000 that Software Country and Software Toolworks merged in 1986.

One year later, Mindscape underwent a change when John Purcell and Roger Buoy bought it to make it an entertainment software company. Mindscape's early hits included: BALANCE OF POWER, PAPERBOY, SUPERSTAR ICE HOCKEY, DEJA VU and some Lucasfilm movie licenses.

The pioneers hadn't all come together, but they were moving in the same direction.



"Software Toolworks was the first computer game company to go public."



Software Toolworks was on a roll, delivering another franchise product in 1987, MAVIS BEACON TEACHES TYPING. This gave Crane the confidence to go public. In 1988, Software Toolworks became the first entertainment software company to be publicly traded. Some of the new capital was used to acquire Intellicreations, publisher of ALTERNATE REALITY, THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER, and BRUCE LEE.

The original Mindscape, however, was not as healthy. Mindscape overextended itself during the peak of the Nintendo 8-bit phenomenon, focusing on such products as the very successful PAPERBOY. But the NES craze was slowing down. So, in 1990, Toolworks acquired Mindscape. The good relationship with Nintendo carried into the new company and products like MARIO IS MISSING began to appear.

Now, the industry pioneers were together, but in 1994, Software Toolworks was itself acquired by the U.K. conglomerate, Pearson plc. Then, Toolworks acquired Atreid Concept S.A. (now, Mindscape Bordeaux) and industry pioneer, Strategic Simulations, Inc. The company was renamed Mindscape, and headed into new frontiers.

In 1995, Mindscape was a leading publisher on the Windows '95 platform. AL UNSER, JR. ARCADE RACING, SU-27 FLANKER, and WARHAMMER: SHADOW OF THE HORNERD RAT each showed off the new OS in different ways.

This expertise should pay big dividends in this year's CHESSMASTER 5000, AZREAL'S TEAR, MEGARACE 2 and NECRODOME, as well as 1997's new Mindscape Sports Authority games (AARON VS. RUTH ALL-TIME SUPERSTARS BASEBALL AND NCAA BASKETBALL: FINAL FOUR 97), WARHAMMER sequel and potential role-playing blockbuster, DARK EARTH.

The stagecoach is gone, but Mindscape is still pioneering.

"Spectrum HoloByte has always been synonymous with simulation".

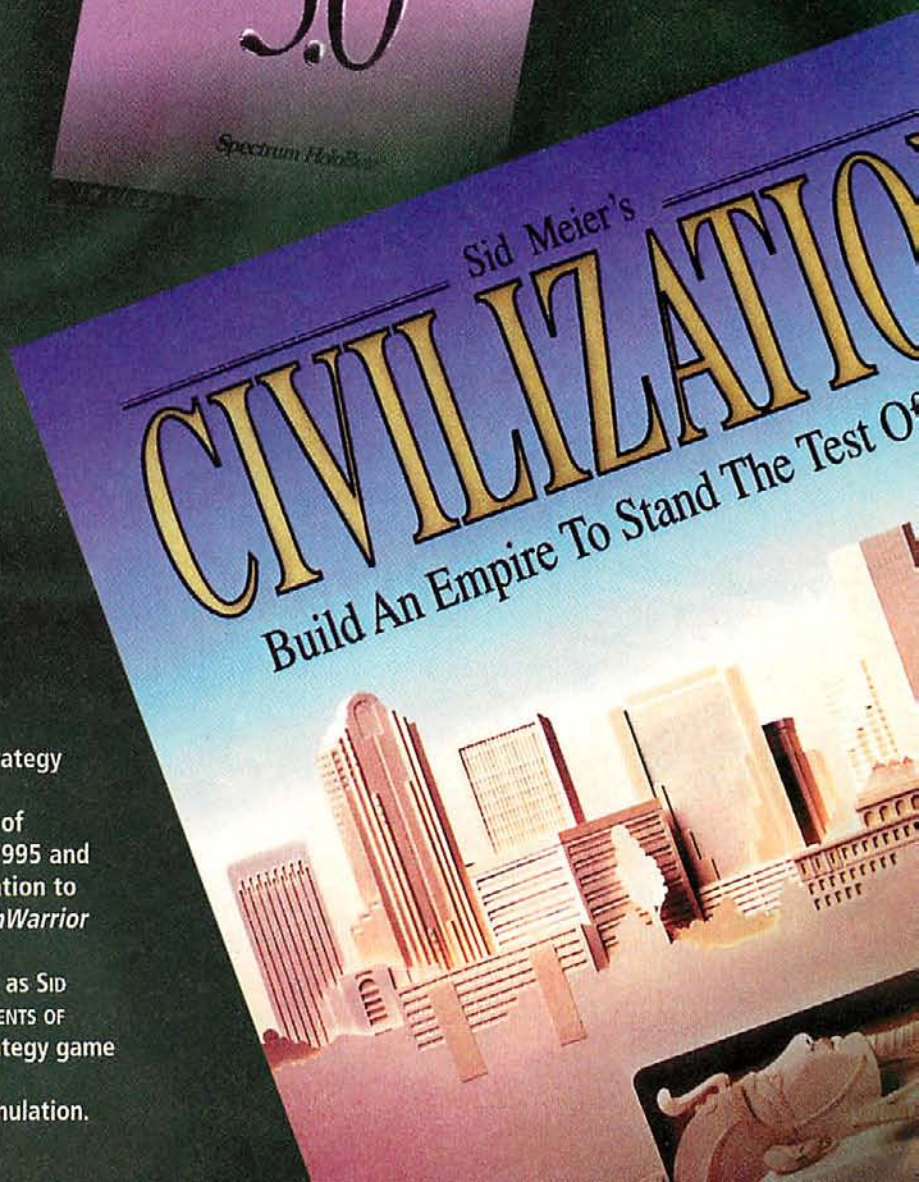
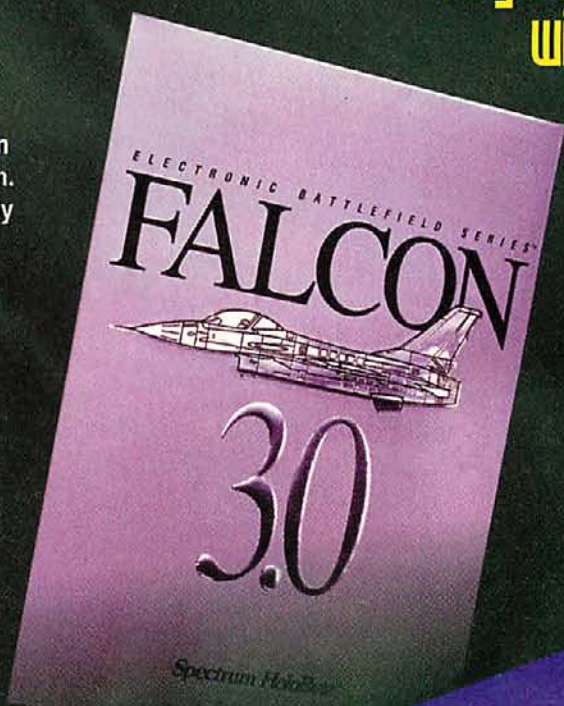


From its inception in 1982, Spectrum HoloByte has been synonymous with simulation. Gilman Louie, had previously published a command simulation of a *Star Trek*-like spaceship, and joined with co-founder Phil Adam to create a company that would eventually publish the FALCON line; develop flight sim software for military contractor Perceptronics; import European flight sim hits such as FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER and TORNADO; publish a realistic WWII submarine sim, GATO; release a simple, accessible PT-boat sim; and build a realistic M-1 tank simulation based on subcontracting work with SimNet (the military's massive training simulation).

By acquiring MicroProse Software in 1993, Spectrum further established its position as the simulation leader. MicroProse had its own combat flight superstar in the F-15 STRIKE EAGLE line and had experienced success with F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER (eventually F117A STEALTH FIGHTER) and GUNSHIP/GUNSHIP 2000. Plus, they were preparing to expand it with 1942: PACIFIC AIR WAR. The rich got richer.

In addition, MicroProse had an entire line of successful strategy games in SID MEIER'S RAILROAD TYCOON and SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION. Purchasing MicroProse gave Spectrum immediate credibility in the strategy arena, credibility they would enhance by purchasing SimTex Software (developers of MASTER OF ORION and MASTER OF MAGIC) in 1995 and signing an agreement with FASA Corporation to develop titles based on *BattleTech*, *MechWarrior* and *Shadowrun* properties.

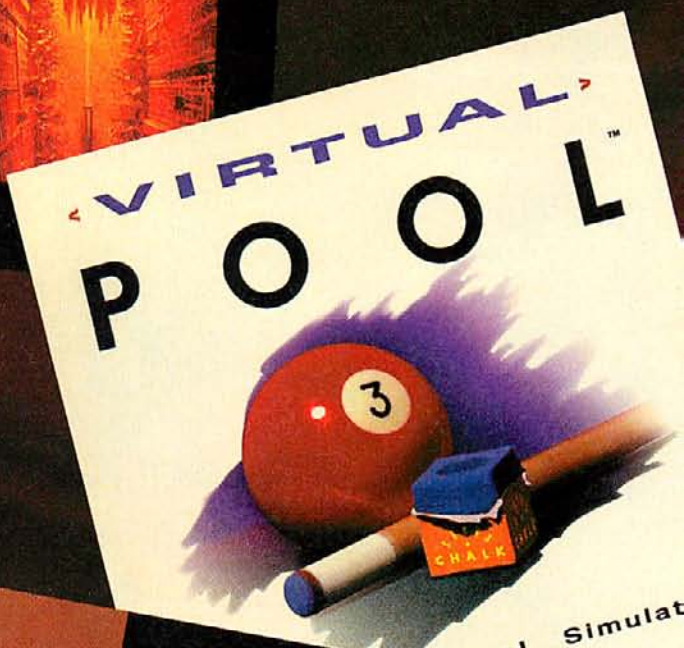
Today, new and upcoming releases such as SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION II, MASTER OF ORION II, AGENTS OF JUSTICE and 1997's real-time BATTLETECH strategy game are likely to make Spectrum HoloByte as synonymous with strategy as it is with simulation.



For years, Interplay Productions put the "story" in computer games. It was founded in 1983 to develop such story-based games as the text adventure, DEMON'S FORGE, and the ground-breaking role-playing series, THE BARD'S TALE. Interplay published story games because they were the types of games that the gamers who formed the company wanted to play. So, whether the games were based on original stories such as the award-winning WASTELAND and DRAGON WARS or licensed properties such as William Gibson's Neuromancer, J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, or the original Star Trek series, Interplay has usually managed to find a new technological or design wrinkle for each new game. Today, the company is a publisher of story-based games such as last year's Readers' Choice RPG, STONEKEEP, and the upcoming GURPS: FALLOUT (based on Steve Jackson's pen and paper game system), but it is much more.

In 1988, Interplay saw an opportunity in the Chess market. They wanted to make the interactive equivalent of a Franklin Mint collectible chess set. They scored high with the best-selling strategy series, BATTLE CHESS. Then, as almost a bellwether of the computer game industry, Interplay began to lead out in new areas: European imports, OEM bundling deals for the entire industry, Macintosh marketing through the MacPlay line, the short-lived full-motion video revolution, and, most importantly, anticipated the unprecedented interest in multiplayer online gaming by introducing DESCENT and starting to build the backbone to the Engage! network over three years ago. That's foresight!

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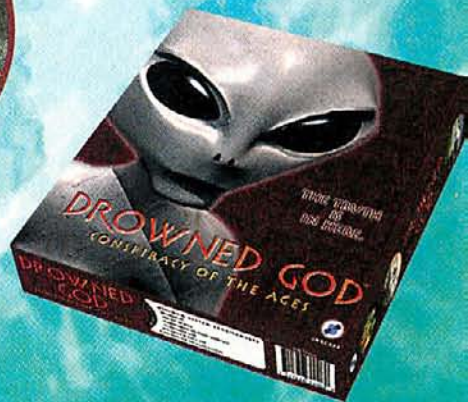
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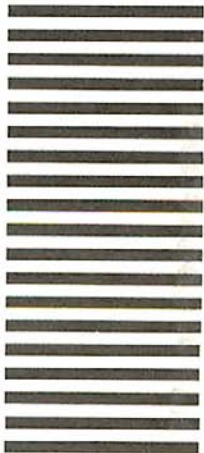
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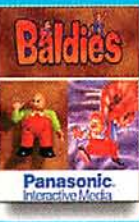


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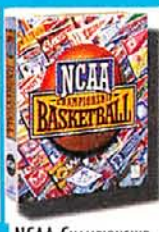


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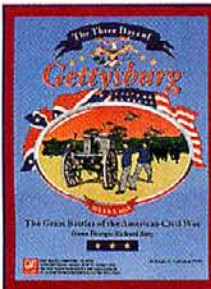
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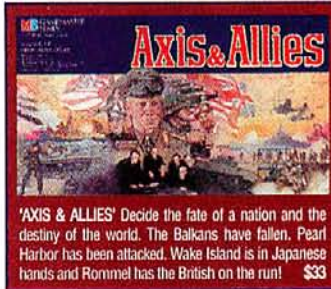
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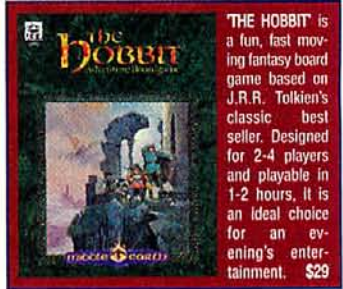
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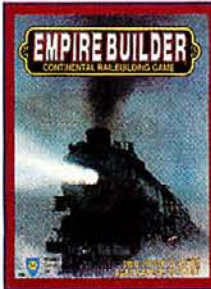
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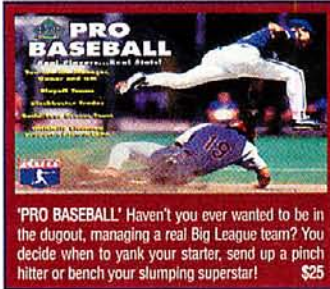
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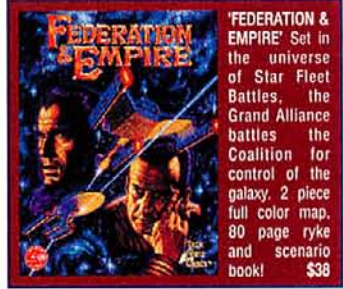
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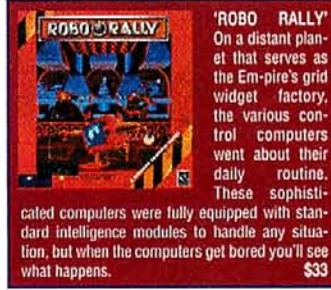
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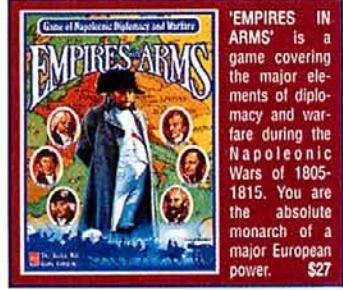
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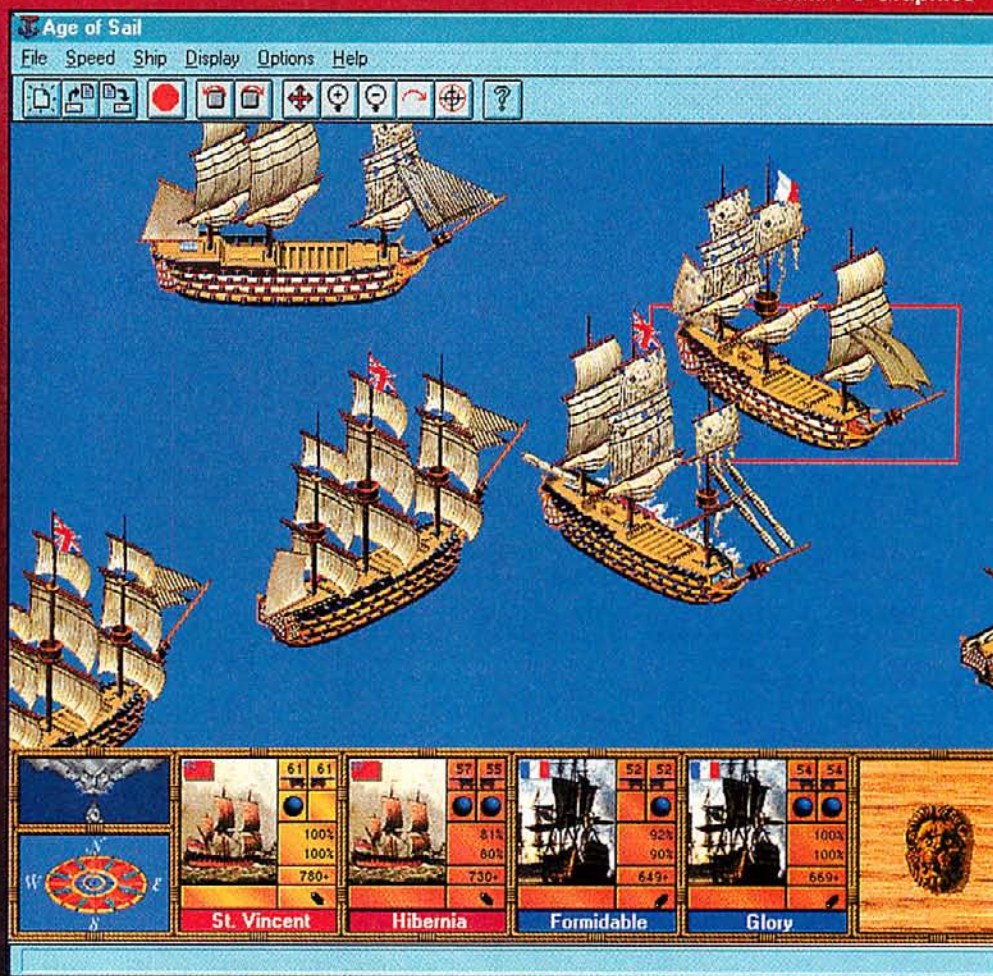
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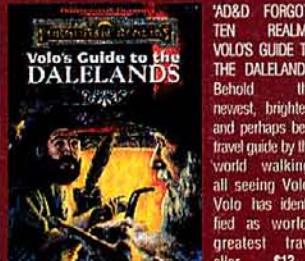
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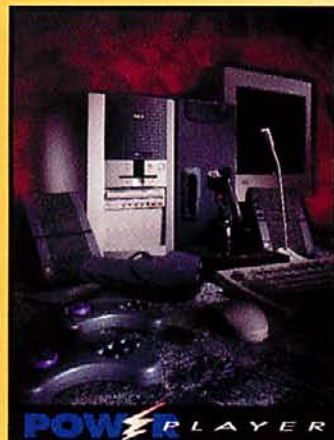
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- Oriental Diaries \$29
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- Secret Garden 2 \$19
- Sex 2 \$24
- Sex Games \$24
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- Prime Beef \$24

ANIME

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- Demn Beast Invsn \$24
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Computer game programs have grown so massive and the number of hardware configurations has become so huge that incompatibilities and glitches are frustratingly common.

Software fixes, or "patches," for buggy programs have become a necessary evil, and will be until we reach the golden age of standardized platforms and bug-free programs.

Advanced Tactical Fighters

V1.14: A general update filled with many additions and changes, such as weapons performance, radar enhancements, joystick support, etc.

AH-64D Longbow V.1.08F

Updates game to version 1.08. Includes many fixes, updates and new features, including updated flight dynamics, easier hovering and autorotation, and new rotor/engine sound.

Back To Baghdad Update: A general fix file.

Battleground: Gettysburg

V1.21: A massive update file with numerous fixes.

Battleground: Waterloo

V1.02: Update has several fixes, including correcting PBEM replies and other random crashes.

Chaos Overlords V1.1: A general update that fixes some bugs and makes some interface changes such as a new Search Sites panel.

Civilization II V2.41: A massive upgrade that revises every prior version of Civ II to 2.41.

Conquest Of The New World V1.10: A general update, with the major addition of Play-By-E-Mail.

Descent II V1.1: A general update file with many fixes. To install, unzip the "d2ptch11.zip" to get the "d2ptch11.exe," and then run the EXE file, which will install the patch for you.

EF2000 Midlife Upgrade V2.02: A patch that balances the campaign, with improved AI for both the enemy and your wingman. Run the "patchef.exe" file to use.

Fighter Duel V1.92: A general update that fixes many bugs and includes additions such as new aircraft and additional joystick support.

Flight Simulator 5.0A

Update: Includes several hardware and AI improvements including improved flight equations (including stall and spin models), Sound Blaster/SB Pro/SB16 improvements, improved Joystick response, and 320x200 256 color VGA mode for faster performance. Fixes the "Error 0039" problem with Pentiums in VGA mode.

Heroes of Might and Magic for Win95 V1.1: Fixes a few problems in Heroes of Might and Magic 1.0, including anomalies with the cursor and in the Map Editor.

IndyCar Racing II For

Windows 95 V1.01: A general update file that includes fixes for system crash while exiting and modem play bugs. Copy this file into your "c:\sierralicr2" directory, run the "w95icr11.exe" file, and run the "patch.exe" command.

Quake V1.01: Updates the fragfest extravaganza to version 1.01; improves the multiplayer code for modems.

Steel Panthers V.1.2: Update file fixes map editor, kills a few bugs and improves AI.

SVGA Air Warrior V1.16b: Fixes another bug in the macro engine.

TacOps V1.04: General fix file. See readme2.wri file after installation.

Top Gun: Fire At Will V1.1: A general patch file that fixes a few problems. Examples are: various crash problems, missile dodging is easier, gun kills are harder to get, accurate fuel usage model, and a KEY file for the Suncom F-15E joystick. To install, run the "tgv11.exe" file in your Top Gun directory, and then type "install" to install the patches. Afterwards, type "clean" to get rid of the unnecessary patch files after installation.

Virtual Snooker V1.1: Fixes a few bugs regarding modem play, and also modifies the Windows setup routine. Just unzip the "snkr_us.zip" file in the directory where Virtual Snooker was installed, and let it overwrite the necessary files.

Warcraft 2 V1.2: Updates version 1.0 to 1.2. Includes "war2kali.exe" for netplay using Kali, and the shareware version of Kall. Also has IPX network code optimized for better performance; fixes the Exorcism spell problem, and also fixes the error that occurs when 255 or more PUD files are in the war2 directory. Just unzip the "wc2_12.zip" file, and run the resulting EXE to install.



► New Patches are on disk.

ZDNet

These patches can usually be downloaded from the major online networks (CompuServe, AOL, ZDNet) and *Computer Gaming World's* Web Site (<http://www.zdnet.com/gaming>) but can also be obtained from individual software publisher's websites or direct from the publisher with proof of purchase.

Publisher Web Sites

Many of these patches are available directly from the publishers, at the following sites:

Access: <http://www.accesssoftware.com>

Accolade: <http://www.accolade.com>

Activision: <http://www.activision.com>

Apogee/3d Realms: <http://www.apogee1.com>

Bethesda: <http://www.bethsoft.com>

Blizzard: <http://www.blizzard.com/tech.htm>

Bullfrog: <http://www.ea.com/bullfrog.html>

Domark: <http://www.domark.com>

EA: <http://www.ea.com>

Id Software: <http://www.idsoftware.com>

Interactive Magic: <http://www.imagicgames.com/games.html>

Interplay: <http://www.interplay.com>

Looking Glass: <http://www.vie.com/lgt/utility.html>

LucasArts: <http://www.lucasarts.com>

MicroProse: <http://www.microprose.com/mpsfiles.html>

Microsoft: <http://www.microsoft.com>

Mindscape: <http://www.mindscape.com>

New World Computing: <http://www.nwcomputing.com>

Ocean: <http://www.ef2000.com>

Origin: <http://www.ea.com/origin.english/index.html>

Papyrus: <http://www.sierra.com>

Philips: <http://spider.media.philips.com/media/games>

Sierra On-Line: <http://www.sierra.com>

Spectrum HoloByte: <http://www.trek.microprose.com/shfiles.html>

SSI: <http://www.ssionline.com>

Take 2: <http://westol.com/~taketwo/ripper.html#patches>

Virgin: <http://www.vie.com/html/viesupport.html>

THE COMPUTER GAMING POLL • A MONTHLY SURVEY OF CGW SUBSCRIBERS

Each month, 2,000 CGW subscribers are selected at random to rate 100 computer games. The results of that poll are combined with the results of previous months to yield a cumulative average for the best plays in gaming. If you receive a ballot please return it with your ratings so that other gamers and game publishers can benefit from your experience.

TOP ACTION GAMES

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 The Need For Speed SE	EA	8.73
2 Duke Nukem 3D	Apogee/FormGen	8.69
3 Crusader: No Remorse	EA/Origin	8.26
4 Dark Forces	LucasArts	7.90
5 Doom II	id Software	7.79
6 The Need For Speed	EA	7.68
7 Descent II	Interplay	7.61
8 Hexen	id/Raven	7.55
9 EWJ 1&2: Whole Can O' Worms	Playmates	7.53
10 Magic Carpet 2	EA/Bullfrog	7.40

TOP ADVENTURE GAMES

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Pandora Directive	Access	8.76
2 Gabriel Knight 2	Sierra	8.34
3 Spycraft	Activision	8.00
4 Mission Critical	Legend	7.71
5 Zork Nemesis	Activision	7.67
6 Full Throttle	LucasArts	7.48
7 The Dig	LucasArts	7.38
8 Phantasmagoria	Sierra	7.37
9 Under A Killing Moon	Access	7.32
10 Riddle Of Master Lu	Sanctuary Woods	7.24

TOP CLASSIC/PUZZLE GAMES

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 You Don't Know Jack	Berkeley Systems	8.06
2 Incredible Toons	Sierra	7.18
3 Incredible Machine 2	Sierra	7.17
4 Trityst	Virgin	6.86
5 Monopoly	Virgin/Westwood	6.78
6 Connections	Discovery	6.71
7 Lemmings 3D	Psygnosis	6.10
8 Lemmings Paintball	Psygnosis	5.91
9 Gearheads	Philips	5.36
10 Treasure Quest	Sirius Publishing	4.75

TOP SIMULATION/SPACE COMBAT GAMES

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	8.68
2 Grand Prix 2	MicroProse	8.47
3 MechWarrior 2	Activision	8.43
4 AH-64 Longbow	EA/Origin	8.30
5 Wing Commander 3	EA/Origin	8.28
6 EF2000	Ocean	8.14
7 Silent Hunter	SSI	8.01
8 U.S. Marine Fighters	EA	7.97
9 Advanced Tactical Fighters	EA	7.95
10 NASCAR Racing	Sierra	7.77

TOP SPORTS GAMES

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 NHL Hockey '96	EA Sports	7.95
2 FPS Football Pro '96	Sierra	7.78
3 NHL Powerplay	Virgin	7.78
4 NBA Live '95	EA Sports	7.63
5 FPS Baseball Pro '96	Sierra	7.62
6 NBA Live '96	EA Sports	7.61
7 Tony LaRussa 3 '96	Stormfront Studios	7.57
8 PGA Tour Golf 486	EA Sports	7.54
9 FPS Football '95	Sierra	7.44
10 Hardball 5	Accolade	7.26

TOP STRATEGY GAMES

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 WarCraft II Expansion Disk	Blizzard	9.09
2 WarCraft II	Blizzard	9.02
3 Civilization II	MicroProse	8.84
4 C&C: Covert Operations	Virgin/Westwood	8.62
5 Command & Conquer	Virgin/Westwood	8.56
6 Missionforce: Cyberstorm	Sierra	8.28
7 Heroes Of Might & Magic	New World Computing	8.10
8 Master Of Magic	MicroProse	8.09
9 Jagged Alliance	Sir-Tech	7.92
10 WarCraft	Blizzard	7.75

TOP ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Might & Magic: Clouds Of Xeen	New World Computing	7.67
2 Anvil Of Dawn	New World Computing	7.46
3 Stonekeep	Interplay	7.21
4 Ravenloft: Stone Prophet	SSI	6.90
5 Wolf	Sanctuary Woods	6.21
6 —	—	—
7 —	—	—
8 —	—	—
9 —	—	—
10 —	—	—

TOP WARGAMES

GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1 Steel Panthers	SSI	8.65
2 Panzer General	SSI	8.31
3 Fit Commander 2: Mission Builder	Avalon Hill	8.00
4 Battleground: Waterloo	Talonsoft	7.85
5 Battleground: Gettysburg	Talonsoft	7.44
6 Stalingrad	Avalon Hill	7.28
7 Perfect General II	QQP	7.12
8 Close Combat	Microsoft	7.11
9 Flight Commander 2	Avalon Hill	7.06
10 Allied General	SSI	6.97

	GAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE
★ 1	WarCraft II Expansion Disk	Blizzard	ST	9.09
2	WarCraft II	Blizzard	ST	9.02
3	Civilization II	MicroProse	ST	8.84
★ 4	Pandora Directive	Access	AD	8.76
★ 5	The Need For Speed SE	Electronic Arts	AC	8.73
6	Duke Nukem 3D	Apogee/FormGen	AC	8.69
★ 7	Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	SI	8.68
★ 8	Steel Panthers	SSI	WG	8.65
9	C&C: Covert Operations	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8.62
10	Command & Conquer	Virgin/Westwood	ST	8.56
11	Grand Prix 2	MicroProse	SI	8.47
12	MechWarrior 2	Activision	SI	8.43
13	Gabriel Knight 2	Sierra	AD	8.34
14	Panzer General	SSI	WG	8.31
15	AH-64D Longbow	EA/Origin	SI	8.30
16	Wing Commander 3	EA/Origin	SI	8.28
	Missionforce: Cyberstorm	Sierra	ST	8.28
18	Crusader: No Remorse	EA/Origin	AC	8.26
19	EF 2000	Ocean	SI	8.14
20	Heroes Of Might & Magic	New World Computing	ST	8.10
21	Master Of Magic	MicroProse	ST	8.09
★ 22	You Don't Know Jack	Berkeley Systems	CP	8.06
23	Silent Hunter	SSI	SI	8.01
24	Fit Comdner 2: Mission Builder	Avalon Hill	WG	8.00
	Spycraft	Activision	AD	8.00
26	U.S. Marine Fighters	EA	SI	7.97
27	Advanced Tactical Fighters	EA	SI	7.95
★ 28	NHL Hockey '96	EA Sports	SP	7.95
29	Jagged Alliance	Sir-Tech	ST	7.92
30	Dark Forces	LucasArts	AC	7.90
31	Battleground: Waterloo	TalonSoft	WG	7.85
32	Doom II	id Software	AC	7.79
33	FPS Football Pro '96	Sierra	SP	7.78
	NHL Powerplay	Virgin	SP	7.78
35	NASCAR Racing	Sierra	SI	7.77
36	WarCraft	Blizzard	ST	7.75
37	Mission Critical	Legend	AD	7.71
38	Warlords II Deluxe	SSG	ST	7.69
39	The Need For Speed	EA	AC	7.68
40	Zork Nemesis	Activision	AD	7.67
★ 41	Might & Magic: Clouds Of Xeen	New World Computing	RP	7.67
42	NBA Live '95	EA Sports	SP	7.63
43	FPS Baseball Pro '96	Sierra	SP	7.62
44	NBA Live '96	EA Sports	SP	7.61
	Descent II	Interplay	AC	7.61
46	Fantasy General	SSI	ST	7.59
47	Tony LaRussa 3 '96	Stormfront Studios	SP	7.57
48	Wings Of Glory	Origin	SI	7.55
	Hexen	id/Raven	AC	7.55
50	PGA Tour Golf 4816	EA Sports	SP	7.54

	GAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE
51	CivNet	MicroProse	ST	7.53
	EWJ 1&2: Whole Can O' Worms	Playmates	AC	7.53
	U.S. Navy Fighters	EA	SI	7.53
54	Full Throttle	LucasArts	AD	7.48
55	X-Com: Terror From The Deep	MicroProse	ST	7.47
56	Anvil Of Dawn	New World Computing	RP	7.46
57	Battleground: Gettysburg	TalonSoft	WG	7.44
	FPS Football 95	Sierra	SP	7.44
59	Magic Carpet 2	EA/Bullfrog	AC	7.40
60	The Dig	LucasArts	AD	7.38
61	Phantasmagoria	Sierra	AD	7.37
62	Warhammer	Mindscape	ST	7.35
63	System Shock	EA/Origin	AC	7.32
	1942 Pacific Air War Gold	MicroProse	SI	7.32
	Under A Killing Moon	Access	AD	7.32
66	Flight Unlimited	Looking Glass	SI	7.31
67	Terra Nova: Strike Force Centauri	Looking Glass	AC	7.29
	Virtual Pool	Interplay	SP	7.29
	Sim City CD-Rom	Maxis	ST	7.29
70	Stalingrad	Avalon Hill	WG	7.28
71	Hyper 3D Pinball	Virgin	AC	7.27
72	Hardball 5	Accolade	SP	7.26
73	U-Boat II: Drumbeat	Deadly Games	SI	7.25
74	Riddle Of Master Lu	Sanctuary Woods	AD	7.24
75	Stonekeep	Interplay	RP	7.21
	Ripper	Take 2	AD	7.21
77	Incredible Toons	Sierra	CP	7.18
78	Incredible Machine 2	Sierra	CP	7.17
	Aces Of The Deep	Sierra	SI	7.17
80	Caesar II	Sierra	ST	7.15
81	Heretic	id/Raven	AC	7.14
82	Star Trek: TNG, Final Unity	Spectrum HoloByte	AD	7.12
	Perfect General II	QQP	WG	7.12
84	Close Combat	Microsoft	WG	7.11
	F. Thomas "Big Hurt" Baseball	Acclaim	SP	7.11
86	Flight Commander 2	Avalon Hill	WG	7.06
87	Relentless	EA	AD	7.02
88	Rayman	Ubi Soft	AC	7.00
	Back To Baghdad	Military Simulations	SI	7.00
	Fire Fight	EA	AC	7.00
91	Apache	Interactive Magic	SI	6.97
92	Conquest Of The New World	Interplay	ST	6.97
	Allied General	SSI	WG	6.97
94	Legends Of Kyranida 3	Virgin/Westwood	AD	6.94
95	Earthsiege 2	Sierra	SI	6.91
96	Ravenloft: Stone Prophet	SSI	RP	6.90
97	Destruction Derby	Psygnosis	AC	6.88
98	Chronomaster	Intracorp/Capstone	AD	6.86
	Magic Carpet	EA/Bullfrog	AC	6.86
	Tritryst	Virgin	CP	6.86

Games on unnumbered lines have scores equal to the line above. ★ = Top game of type. Red = New Game, AD = Adventure, RP = Role Playing, SI = Simulation/ Space Combat, ST = Strategy, WG = Wargame, AC = Action, SP = Sports, CP = Classic/Puzzle. Games are retired after two years and become eligible for the Hall of Fame.

It's Been The Best Of Times, And The Worst



Fifteen years ago I was going crazy in a one-horse town in British Columbia, and one of the few things that kept me going was

computer and video games. These were the days when an Apple was like something out of *Forbidden Planet*, and a tabletop *ASTEROIDS* was the Altar of Infinite Quarter Sacrifice. Computer games were just hitting the market in plastic bags and stored on audio tape, ASCII characters doubled as computer graphics, and the first *STAR FLEET* game was worth hours of amusement. It would be another couple of years before I would see actual graphics on anything other than a cartridge game.

Now it's 15 years later, and I type this on a Pentium 150 with more memory than the mainframe we went to see on junior high school field trips. Sometimes it seems like another world, but there's been a helluva lot that's gone on in between, so here's a list of my personal highs and lows.

THE BEST

1. Playing endless hours of *POLARIS*, a *MISSILE COMMAND* clone, on the first Color TRS-80 at a buddy's house.
2. Getting my first computer, a Commodore 64 with a real disk drive.
3. Playing *MULE* with some friends and realizing that multiplayer is best.
4. Playing an overhead-view chop-

per game for the C-64, and realizing that arcade action could still be intricate and interesting.

5. Blowing \$200 for a 300-baud modem for the C-64, and thinking what an incredibly cool gadget it was.
6. Playing endless games of *IMPERIUM GALACTIUM* from SSI. A space war experience that really hasn't been equaled by an SF wargame since.

7. Selling the C-64 and looking in awe upon the Atari ST I had gone halves on, with every penny I had.

8. Programming my version of *STAR FLEET BATTLES*, and realizing just how fast a 16-bit processor was.

9. Watching my girlfriend play *LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS* in female mode and laughing my guts out, little realizing it was one of the last times game developers would give women any credit.

10. Becoming addicted to *ROGUE*, mapping out *DUNGEON MASTER* with the help of another girlfriend, and endless hours with my friends playing *EMPIRE*, watching the automated efficiency of *FredWorld*, all on that old ST.

11. Discovering the incredible world of *AIR WARRIOR* on GEnie.

12. Seeing *WING COMMANDER* running in a software store and knowing that I had to have it. (A year and a half later my wife and I spent every penny to purchase our first IBM, a 386-33—and *WING COMMANDER* was ours.)

13. My wife coercing me to write a nasty letter to *CGW* about *MANTIS EXPERIMENTAL FIGHTER*, and editor Chris

Lombardi liking the style and inviting me to review for the magazine.

14. Playing my first cooperative network game of *Doom*.

15. Watching my five-year-old daughter play *Toy Story CD* on her very own computer, which is a thousand times more powerful than anything I ever dreamed of 15 years ago.

“After playing *MULE* with some friends, I realized that multiplayer was the best.”

THE WORST

1. Spending countless hours loading *POLARIS* into that color TRS-80 from a tape deck.

2. Realizing that there was no way on earth to network the CBM's in my high school to create a multi-crew position space sim.

3. Wasting countless hours of my life watching things load from that C-64 floppy drive, a process only slightly faster than typing the code in yourself.

4. Upgrading to the ST and leaving *IMPERIUM GALACTIUM* behind forever.

5. Getting a \$300 VISA bill for playing *AIR WARRIOR* on GEnie.

6. Watching Atari screw over the ST.

7. Watching the ever-growing list of extremely cool games coming out for the IBM and accepting that they were never going to be translated to the ST.

8. *MANTIS EXPERIMENTAL FIGHTER* from MicroProse.

9. Realizing I was going to have to upgrade my 386-33 before I was even finished paying it off, and that I would get \$25 for the old processor and motherboard, if I were lucky.

10. Watching Sid Meier become a design god as he produced one needlessly single-player strategy game after another, forgetting what made the early strat games great and setting a trend that has only recently begun to change.

11. Almost anything from Merit Software.

12. *OUTPOST* from Sierra, after they had ruined the game's potential by overriding the designer's cool design, which I had previewed the year before.

13. Watching a guy from another game magazine get away with giving *ASCENDANCY* a 92 percent review, just as his *Strategy Guide* was released.

14. Watching as one cool SF strategy game after another is delayed or canceled (*PAX IMPERIA*, *MECH LORDS*...).

15. Seeing 15 years of advancement in computer gaming reduced to endless, hopelessly adolescent blood-gore ads, until you can't tell us from the much-too-sugary-breakfast-cereal cartridge gaming crowd. ☹



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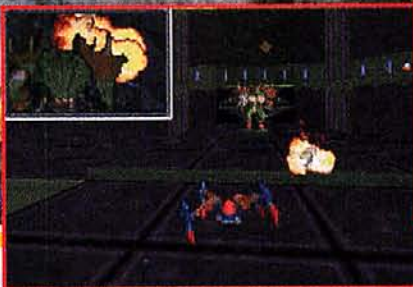
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