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The #1 Computer Game Magazine

Computer Gaming World

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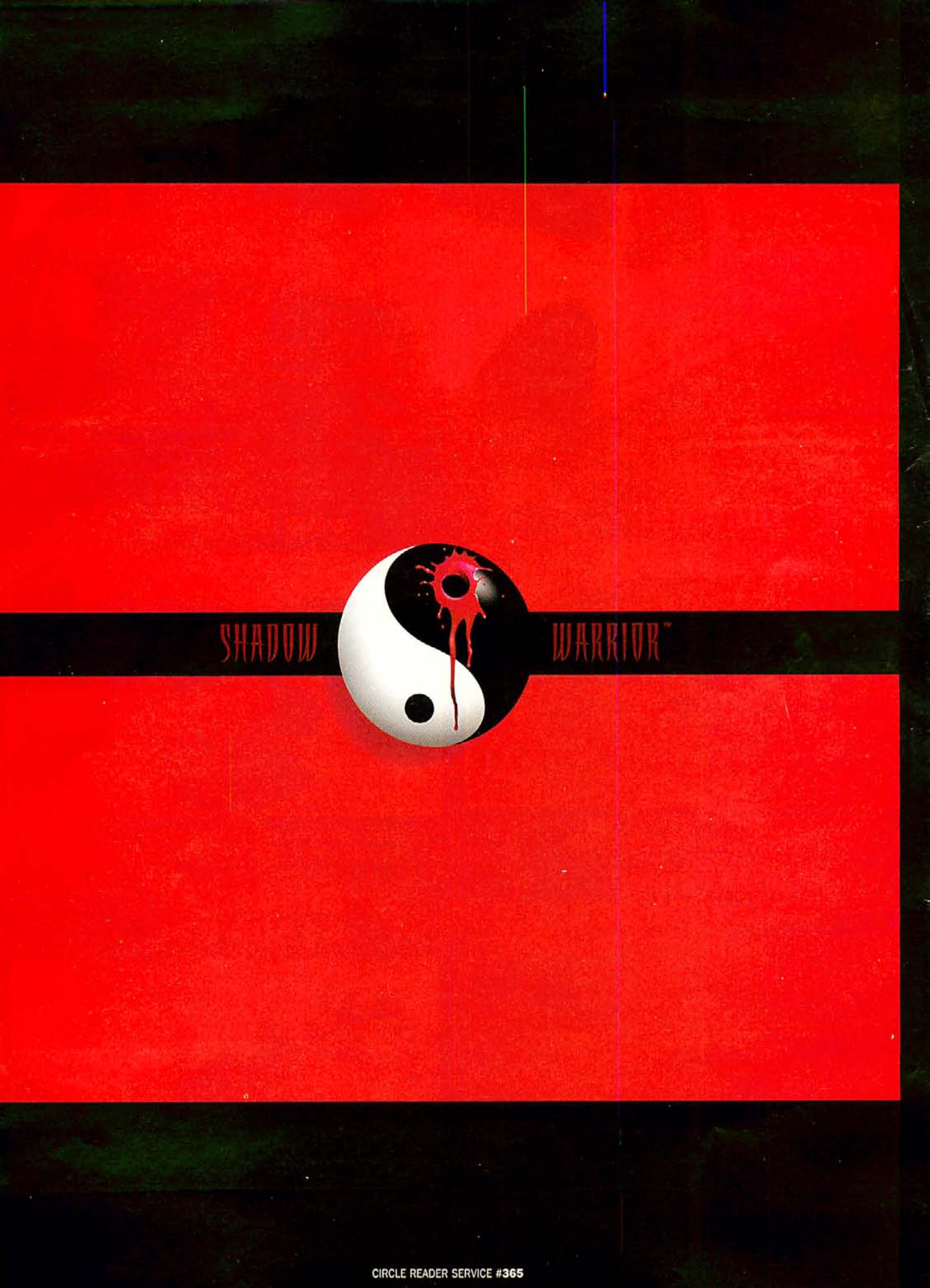

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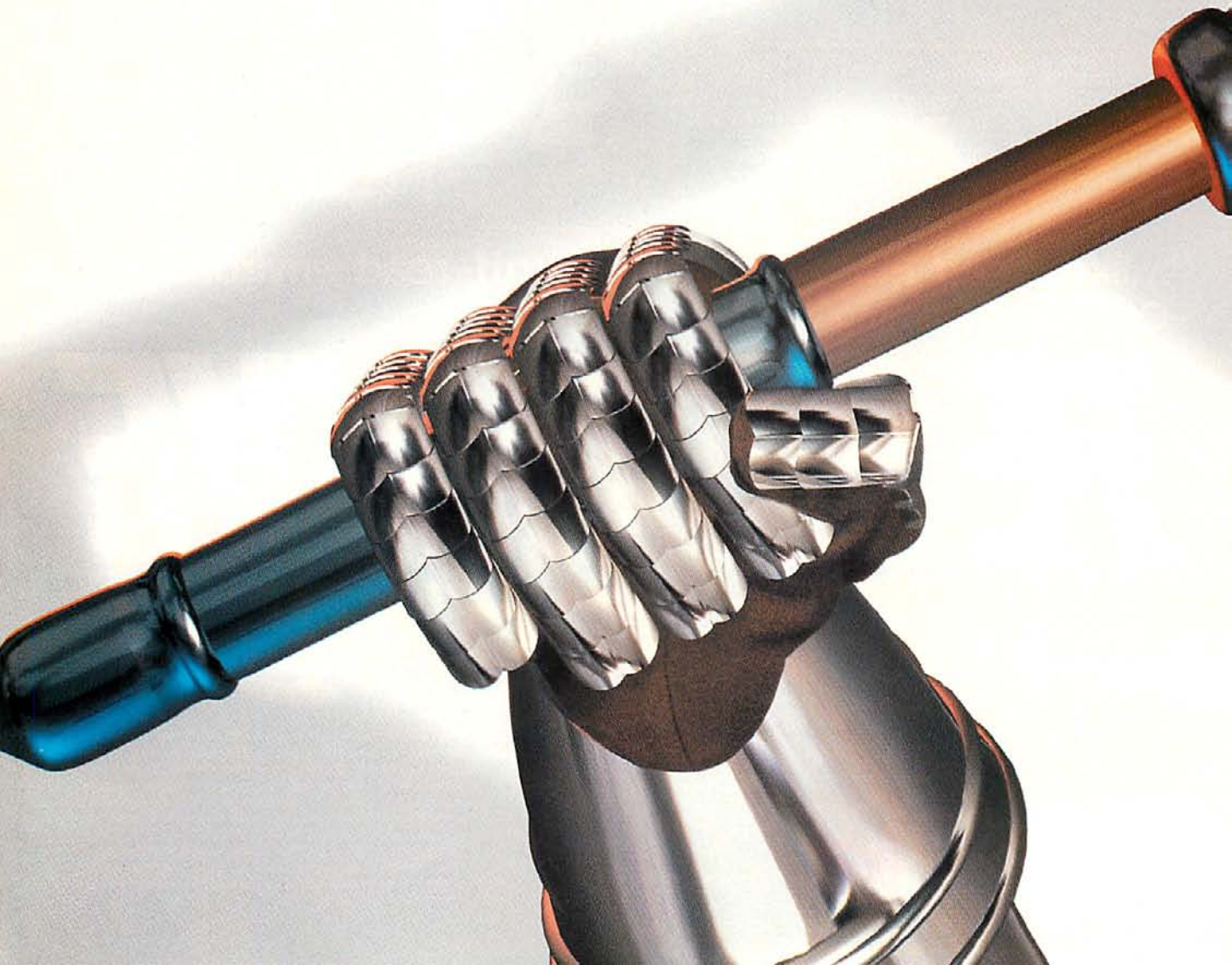

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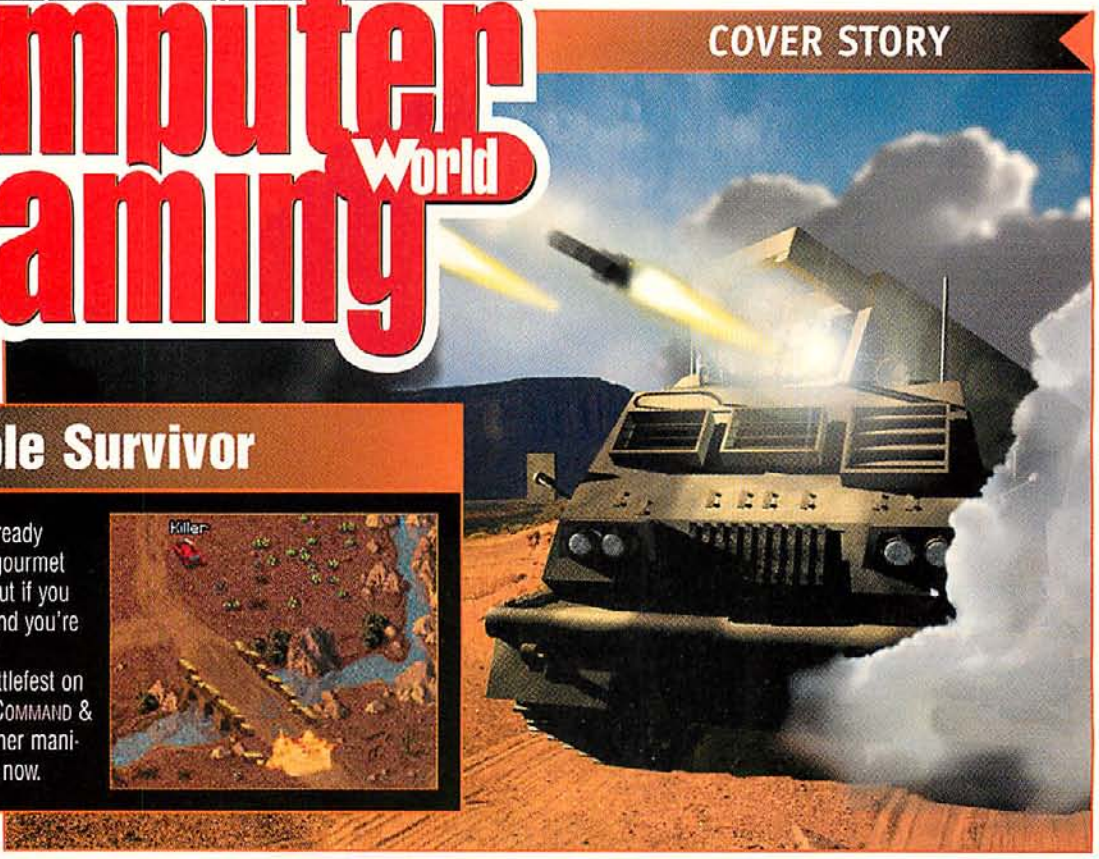
COVER STORY



C&C: Sole Survivor

52 Maybe you're already feasting on the gourmet gameplay in RED ALERT, but if you like multiplayer gaming and you're not on a LAN, check out Westwood's new C&C battlefest on the 'Net. It lets you play COMMAND & CONQUER with up to 50 other maniacs, and it should be live now.

COVER ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS DEMERS

FEATURE

61 Win at any cost with this 16-page guide to "special features" in computer games. Games of almost every category are included, and there are plenty of non-cheats, too, for those who disdain dirty tricks.

1,001 CHEATS & TIPS

Destruction Derby

Virtua Fighter PC

Hexen

And Dozens More!

HARDWARE

100 The Ultimate Gaming Machine Part 4

Thinking about buying a computer? How about a screaming Pentium 200 with 32MB of RAM, a 12x CD-ROM drive, and a 15-inch monitor for under $2500? And that price even includes speakers and a joystick. We show you how.

Pentium 200 Under $2500

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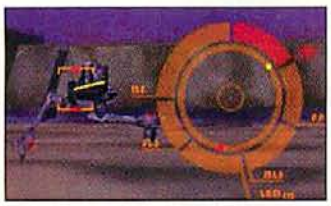
113 The Making Of MechWarrior 3



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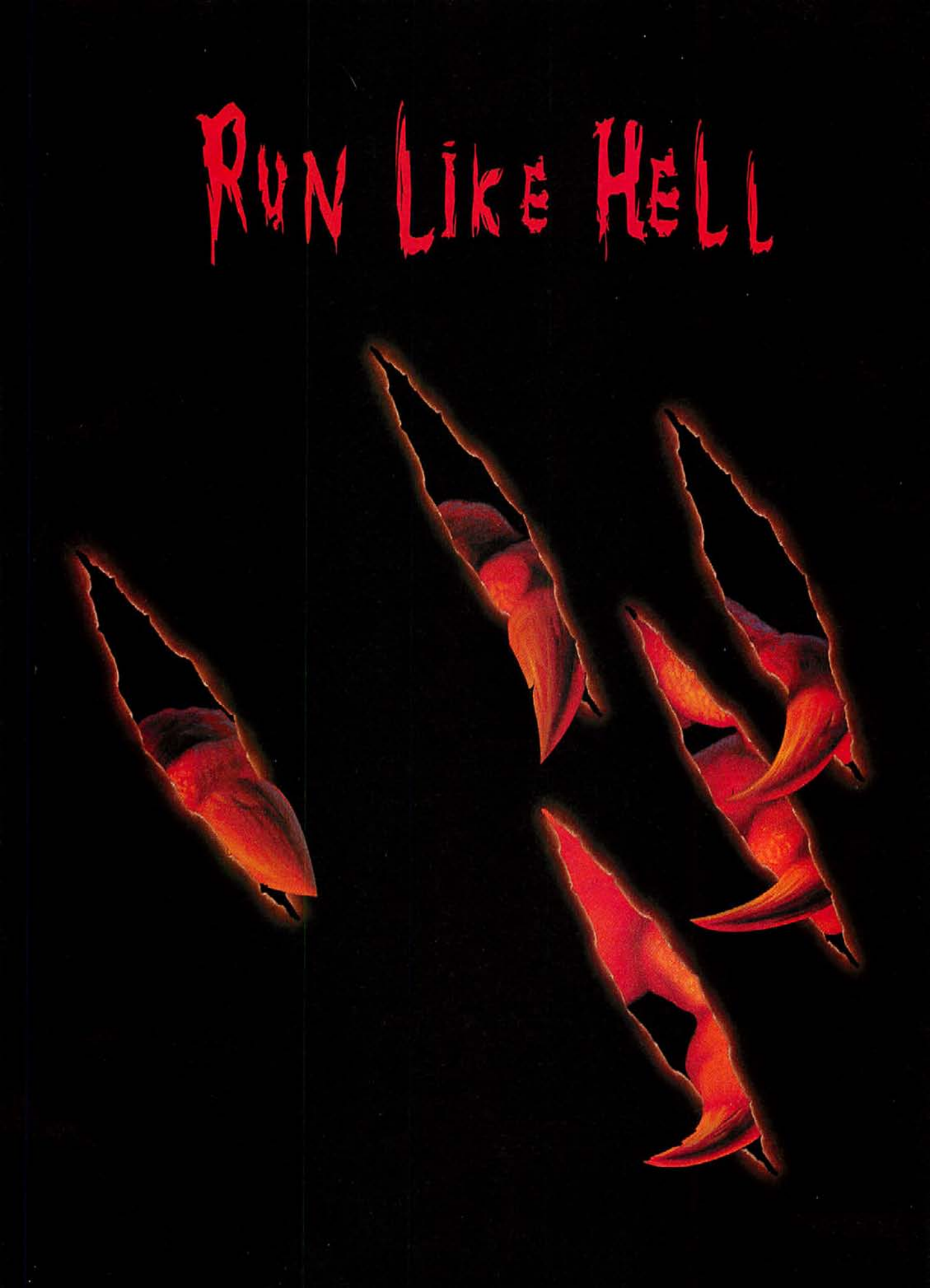
Run Like Hell



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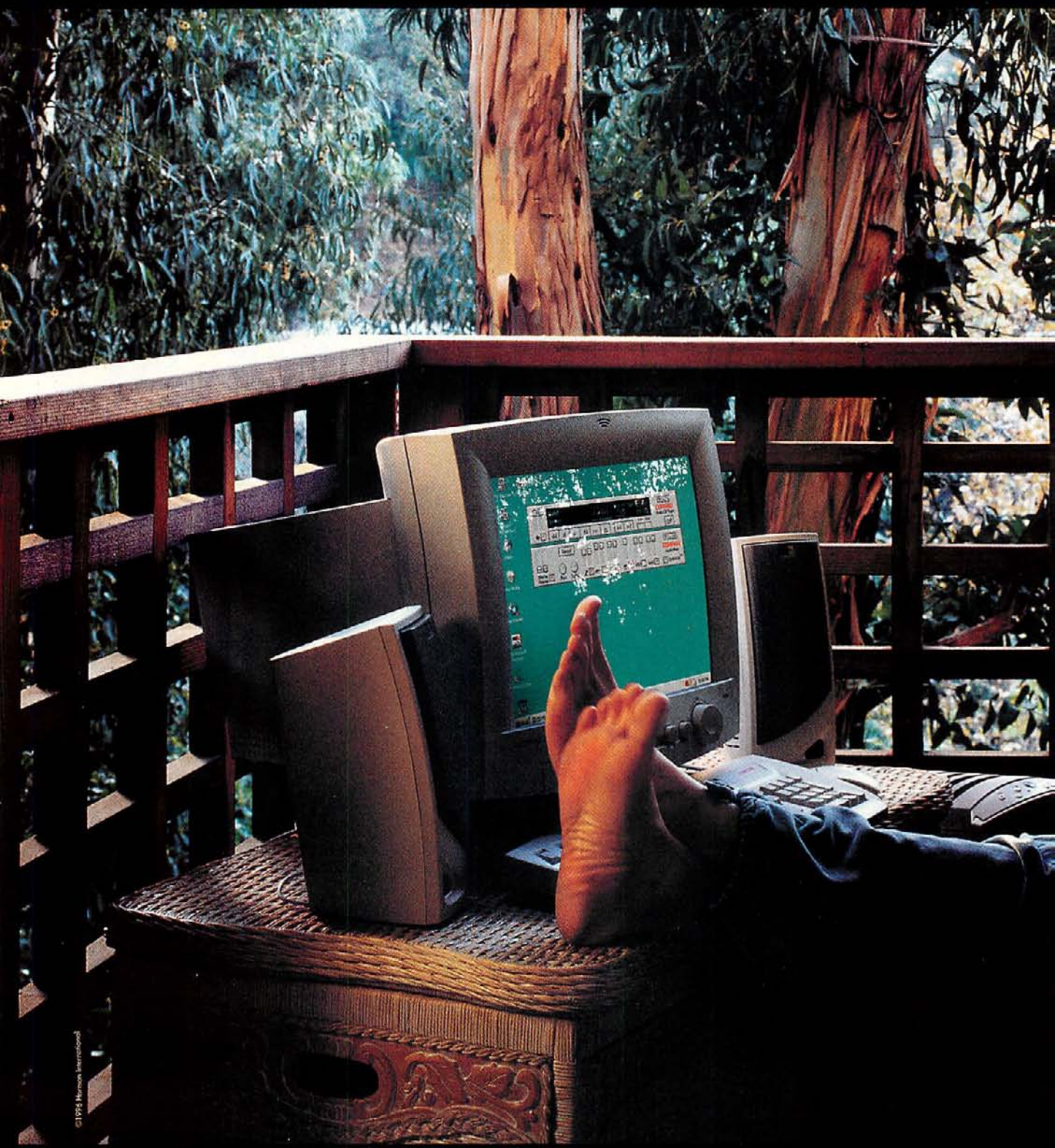
WAS AT WORK.



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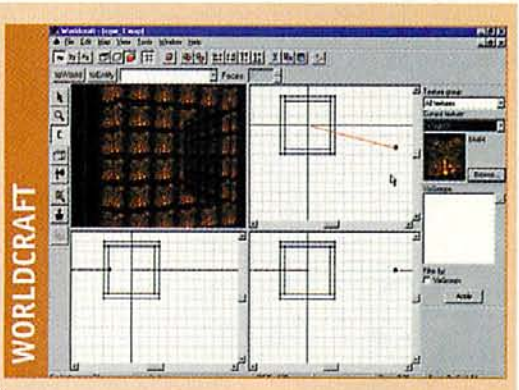
What's on the demo disc and how do I use it? What can I do if I have a CD sub and I didn't receive a disc? Where's the justice in this world? Is anybody listening? What's coming next month?

What's Up Online?



You don't have to undergo years of boring programming classes to edit your own QUAKE levels. Check out our Web site for a detailed guide to using the Worldcraft editor covered in this month's QUAKE column.

CG ON-LINE

http://www.zdnet.com/gaming

Plus: sneak previews, reviews, strategies and more.

What's On The CD?

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to be a game designer, this month's CG-ROM gives you the tools to build your own games. You can create your own playing

fields with Accolade's JACK NICKLAUS 4: GOLF COURSE DESIGNER or design your own tables with 21st Century's PINBALL BUILDER. Who knows, maybe you'll be discovered as the next premier game designer. Imagine your name splashed everywhere in big, red neon bitmaps. In fact, this month *CGW* and *New World Computing* pay homage to aspiring designers across the country and present the winners and runners-up of the HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC World Builder contest.

As for the rest of the disc, Crypt-keeper Sire Johnny slips into the darkness of the medieval era to bring you our regular demo line-up. Look out for sports games, action games, fighting games, mindtTeasers, first-person shooters, irreverent adventures, mech wars, and much, much more. And, as usual, we'll be back next month with a completely new line-up, all on the original CG-ROM.

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.

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If you subscribe to the CD version but you have not received a disc with your magazine, you can now e-mail the company responsible for fulfilling your order. Send your complaint along with your name, address, phone number and subscriber number to cgw@neodata.com. Neodata is a magazine fulfillment house that is not owned or operated by Ziff-Davis.

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Computer Gaming World

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Founder	Russell Sipe

DESIGN

Graphic Artist	Dan Fitzpatrick
Graphic Artist	Jack Rodrigues

PRODUCTION

Production Director	Carlos Lugo
Assistant Production Mgr.	Martin Walthall
Electronic Prepress	Michele Kellogg Tami Gargus

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
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ADVERTISING SALES

Associate Publisher
Lee Uniacke (415) 357-4915
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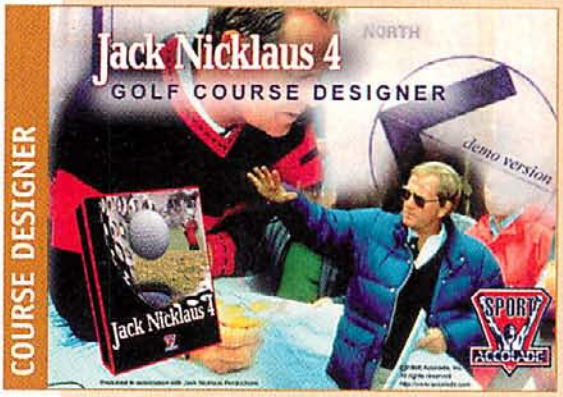

received missing CDs, or you wish to register a complaint concerning Neodata, please e-mail Charles Mast at cmast@zd.com. Include your name, address, telephone number and subscriber number. Mr. Mast is the subscription director for Ziff-Davis Publications.

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 that 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.

Disclosure

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GAMES AND GOODIES ON THE CG-ROM

DEMOS AND STUFF	PLATFORM	DIRECTORY	EXECUTABLE
Alien Trilogy	DOS/Win 95	demos/alien	install.exe
BattleTech: Solaris	Win 95	demos/mpbt	btech. exe
Birthright	Win 95	demo/birthrt	setup.exe
Callahan's Crosstime Saloon	DOS	demos/ccs_demo	install.exe
Fork in the Tale	Win 95	demos/fork	setup.exe
Heroes: World Builder Contest	via CD interface	demos/maps	none
Jack Nicklaus 4	Win 95	demos/jack	setup.exe
MDK	Win/95	demos/mdk	mdk.mov
MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries	DOS/Win 95	demos/mech2	setup.exe
Mind Grind	Win 95	demos/minddemo	setup.exe
Mplayer	Win 95	demos/mplayer	setup.exe
NCAA Championship Basketball	DOS	ncaa	install.bat
Patches (for various games)	n/a	patches	none
Pinball Builder	Win/95	builder	setup.exe
Power F1	Win/DOS	demos/f1demo	install.bat
Sacred Mirror of Kofun	Win 95	demos/kofun	setup.exe
Soccer	95	demo/soccer	socdemox.exe
SoulTrap	Win 95	demo/stdemo	stsetup.exe
Tomb Raider	DOS/Win 95	demos/tombraid	setup.exe
Virtua Squad	Win 95	vsquad	setup.exe

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Gamer's Edge Is Back!

You asked for it, you got it. We're bringing back our Gamer's Edge section and making it better than ever. You'll find game-beating strategies, tips, and cheats in *CGW*'s Gamer's Edge every month starting in March. Don't miss it!

In-Depth Strategy Articles Next Month

- Diablo
- SkyNet
- Red Alert
- War Wind
- Syndicate Wars

GAMER'S EDGE

THE ULTIMATE GAME MACHINE PART IV

Techno-wizard Loyd Case concludes our Ultimate Gaming Machine series with five pages of advice and information about upgrading your PC. Whether you want to gut your machine and replace everything or just swap out your CD-ROM with a faster drive, you'll learn the issues behind replacing components.

HOW DO WE RATE?

Outstanding: The rare game that gets it all right. The graphics, sound, and gameplay come together to form a Transcendent Gaming Experience. Our strongest buying recommendation.

Very Good: A high-quality game that succeeds in many areas. May have minor problems, but is still worth your money, especially if you're interested in the subject matter or genre.

Average: A mixed bag. Can be a game that reaches for the stars, but falls short in several ways. Can also be a game that does what it does well, but lacks flair or originality.

Weak: A game with serious problems. Usually buggy, seriously lacking in play value, or just a poorly conceived game design—you should think long and hard before buying it.

Abysmal: The rare game that gets it all wrong. This is reserved for those products so buggy, ill-conceived or valueless that you wonder why they were ever released in the first place.

March Review Madness

Diablo
Red Alert
Tomb Raider
FPS Football '97
Phantasmagoria 2
Lords of the Realm II
Master of Orion II
Jet Fighter III
HyberBlade
SSN
Risk
Battleship
NASCAR 2
Age Of Sail
Daytona USA
Virtua Squad
A-10 Cuba
SkyNet
Noir

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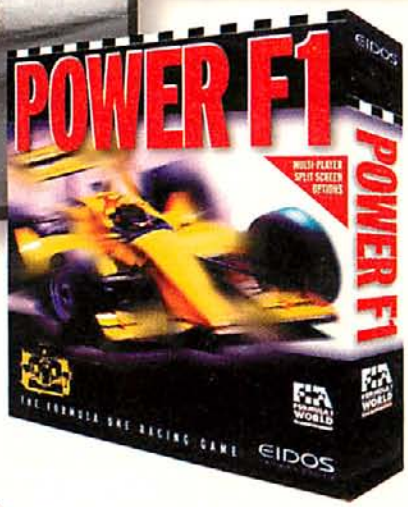

F1

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #274

What To Expect From DVD

DVD's Huge Storage Capacity Is No Panacea For Gamers

DVD is neither a savior nor a curse. It's an advancement that will both benefit and beleaguer computer gamers. Over the next six months or so, you'll read lots of cheerleading about this most recent storage technology. You won't read it here. Why? Let's just say we've learned from our earlier impetuosity.

THE ADVENT OF CD-ROM

In the mid-to-late '80s, *Computer Gaming World* looked forward to a new era of possibility in gaming with the advent of CD-ROM. At that time, the ability to produce compact discs with more than 600 MB of data seemed phenomenal. After all, many computers were then being sold with 40 MB hard drives. The idea of each new game having more than 15 times the amount of data as you could store (without compression) on your hard drive was, as the kidnapper suggested in *The Princess Bride*, "Inconceivable!" With the advent of CD-ROM, such pundits as yours truly reasoned, computer games would undergo revolutionary changes. Publishers would be able to upgrade their graphics, use digitized film technology, and/or add CD-quality audio. The use of these technologies alone would expand the scope of computer games. All publishers had to worry about was filling up the discs. Some pundits even suggested that it would be too expensive to fill up the discs.

Although the changes we envisioned didn't really occur until the '90s, almost everything happened except for the expansion of the scope of computer games and the publishers having trouble filling up the discs. Computer games are still based on the same subjects on which they've always been based. They are still primarily games where the plot or score advances more by mechanical applications of artificial puzzle solutions, bullets and biceps, or resource management than by human applications in conversation, diplomacy and empathy. The anticipated revolution didn't occur. Beyond that, digitized video didn't win over the masses and, contrary to the pundits, publishers not only managed to fill the discs but fill up three, five, six or seven of the little silver monsters.

Game art and audio improved because of CD-ROM storage. The need for copy protection was significantly reduced (at least temporarily) and the cost of goods for a game title was reduced (one CD was cheaper than 6-10 floppies of compressed data). Prices didn't really go down as a result, but they didn't go up substantially, either. CD-ROM technology was, in general, good for gaming, but it took considerably longer to take hold than expected and didn't offer all of the promised benefits.

> **"You'll read lots of cheerleading about DVD. You won't read it here."**

THE NEW DVD DRIVES

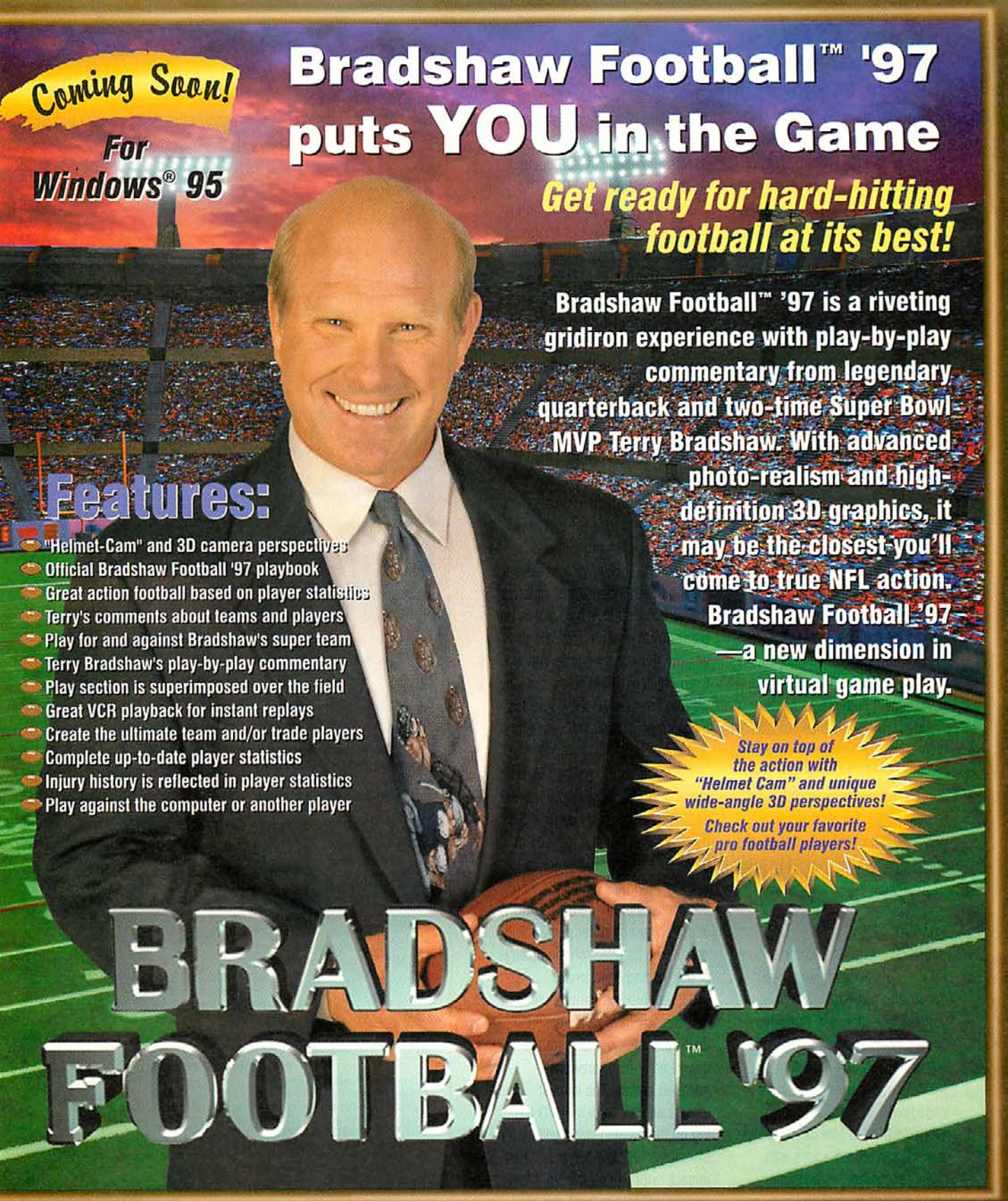
The new computer-based DVD-ROM drives will allow you to view movies on your PC, listen to audio CD recordings, play your current CD-ROM games with a 6x to 8x backward compatibility, use huge data-intensive reference works, and play DVD specific games. Panasonic plans to have their first DVD-ROM drive on sale by the time this editorial reaches the newsstands. It will handle single layer discs with 4.7 GB of data and 8.5 GB with a double layer. Reading a DVD disc, data flows at about 1.4 MB per second. Games like GABRIEL KNIGHT II: THE BEAST WITHIN and WING COMMANDER IV could now be contained on one CD.

Further, most DVD-ROM equipped computers will ship with MPEG-2 compatibility. This is vital to the DVD manufacturers because one of the uses to which computer owners will want to place the DVD drives will be in playing back movies on DVD. The units will need MPEG-2 capability or the digitized film footage won't look good enough to watch.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

But don't hold your breath waiting for games that take advantage of the technology. PCs will start shipping with DVD-ROM drives in mid-to-late '97, but there won't be enough of an established base of DVD-capable PCs for game publishers to serve until at least one year later. Even then, we expect a few deluxe DVD editions of popular games to lead the way rather than a wholesale adoption of DVD as the anticipated storage medium.

So, what's the advantage of DVD adoption for gamers? First, the greatly increased storage capacity will, once again, reduce the cost of goods for the average game and, in the short run, reduce piracy. As with CD-ROM, it is unlikely that the technology will reduce prices, but it may keep them stable through the end of the millennium.



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Second, many companies already build their products with higher resolution (16-bit) art than they can afford to store on current CD-ROMs. DVD will allow for prettier games, the main reason we expect deluxe DVD editions to sell and encourage gamers to upgrade to DVD-ROM drives. Processor intensity may impede full 16-bit implementation on fast-paced real-time games, but 3D graphics cards should assist in that area.

Third, the extra storage will allow for CD quality soundtracks, another reason deluxe DVD editions will sell. Fourth, DVD-ROM should allow for bigger game databases. Imagine a role-playing game with a conversational database of several GB. Non-player characters can have more detailed conversations with your characters and character knowledge can be cross-referenced more effectively. The games could conceivably become richer, but they may raise development budgets yet again.

Finally, DVD will allow for bargain-priced shovelware collections on one DVD-ROM. This may keep some worthy games available in the channel because several games will be available in the shelf space that normally would be taken by a single-title.

FILM AT 12X

Will DVD and its accompanying MPEG-2 capacity create a new demand for digitized video in games? We hope not. Publishers should have learned their lessons with CD-ROM. The inception of CD-ROM games caused publishers to engage in a star chase where everyone tried to hire as many out-of-work and retired actors with name recognition as possible. Then, we ended up with tired performances which added a great deal to game budgets and very little to game value.

MPEG-2's higher resolution may encourage studios to believe that the picture is good enough that they can finally leverage their film assets into interactive products.

The problem is that CD-ROM games with digitized video didn't fail as much because of image quality but because of bad game design. Gamers want to feel like they are really changing the face of game events, that the nuances of their decisions ripple through a game and change the game world. Whether these decisions are real-time or turn-based, digitized video offers a feeling of closed-endedness. Publishers cannot afford to film all possible ramifications of an action, so they tend to create minimalist branches for the storyline, cut-scenes and victory/defeat sequences. This, in turn, creates a feeling of redundancy that reduces the satisfaction level and makes the game world less credible. That's why we think most games which used digitized video failed and why we don't think DVD will cause history to repeat itself. DVD is a storage solution.

We'll see some digitized video in introductory sequences, cut-scenes and victory/defeat sequences, but it really won't change the face of gaming. The bottom line for us is still, "It's the game, stupid!", and the success or failure of DVD-ROM adoption by computer gamers will depend on its effect on the quality of the gaming experience.

Although some gaming companies already have DVD titles in development, most of them are deluxe editions of previously released games. The earliest impact we can perceive DVD having on the gaming world will be for Christmas '97, and the most likely impact is for Christmas '98. Most gamers will take a "wait and see" attitude toward DVD-equipped computers, and I believe that's just what they should do.

You may read DVD hype elsewhere, but you won't see it here.

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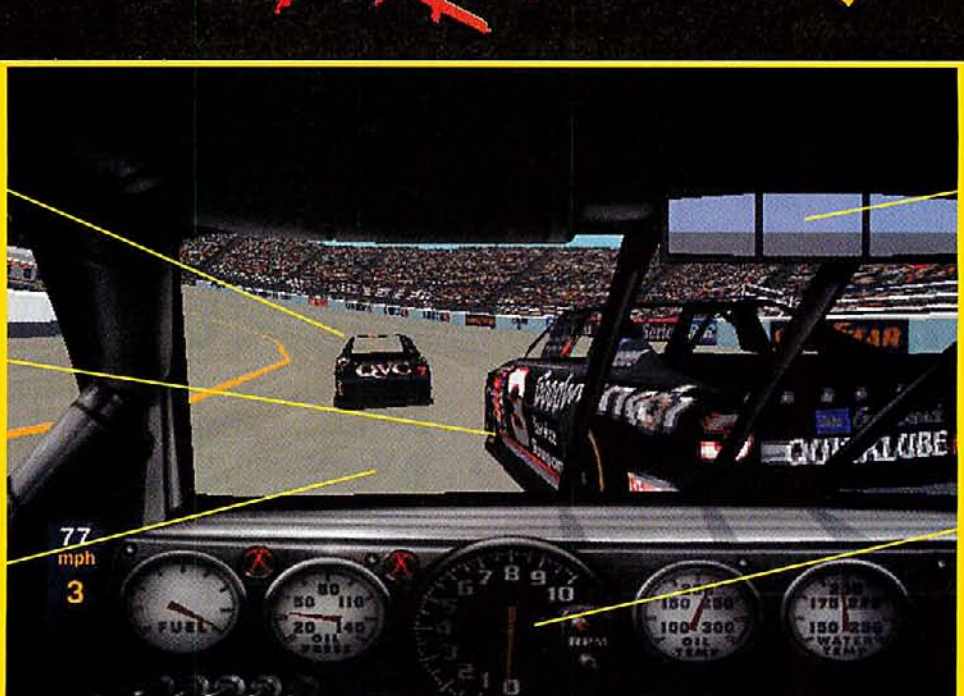

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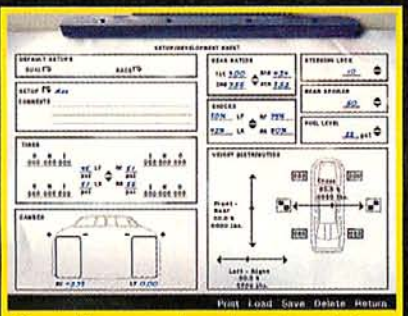

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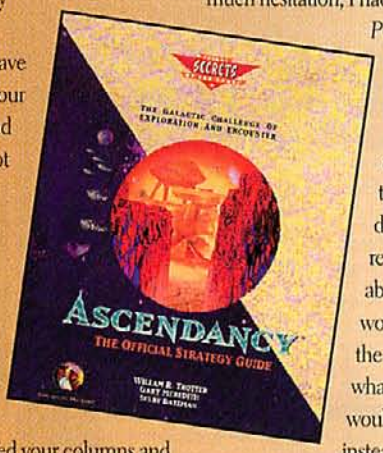
LETTER OF THE MONTH

BILL TROTTER SPEAKS

William Trotter sent the following letter to Contributing Editor Martin Cirulis after the latter's critical aside in his November column. Originally a private message, we thought Bill's perspective was so interesting that his story needed to be told. We asked and received his permission to print the letter in its entirety.

In the two or so years since the incident happened, I've taken an incredible amount of flak for my review/strategy guide mistake with ASCENDANCY, but until now I have not replied, either in public or in private, to any of the derision or accusations—during my 13-year career as a salaried music critic, I developed a pretty thick skin with regard to such matters and generally followed a policy of dignified silence. In this case, however, "dignity" doesn't cut it, and so I feel compelled to break that silence in response to the honor of being singled out in the recent 15th anniversary issue of *CGW*.



Perhaps it's because I have such abiding respect for your magazine (I've bought, and kept, every issue since I got into this field in late 1987)—it is the only worthy competition *PC Gamer* has, and the continuing rivalry between the two titles helps, I suspect, to keep all of us honest. Or perhaps it's because I've always enjoyed your columns and reviews so much; or perhaps it's because of my personal and professional admiration for Johnny [Wilson] and Russell [Sipe], both of whom I've met at various CES functions, and with whom I always enjoyed "talking shop."

In any case, I would like to at least get my side of the story on the record, once and for all. The whole wretched experience has confirmed the old proverb about reputations being hard things to build and easy things to damage. For almost a decade, now, I've labored in the software vineyards, trying to bring a historian's and novelist's insights into a field where the average standard of journalism is abysmal, and mostly, I think, I've made a positive contribution. But the one time I seriously screwed up, I managed to wipe out all the accumulated good will and respect I may have acquired up to that time. At least I learned my lesson: when the editors asked me to do a review of CLOSE COMBAT, one that would appear more or less contemporaneous with the strategy guide I had written for Microsoft, I flatly refused. I suppose if I were 20 years younger, I could just shrug it all off, but at age 53, it's not so easy to do that any more. Ironically, some of my nine published books have gotten terrible reviews, too, but they've always been balanced-out by the good notices; in our genre, nobody "reviews the reviewers" except one's colleagues, and it is as one colleague to another that I write you this letter.

When I was approached, by a third party, about writing the major part of the ASCENDANCY book, I took the job without much hesitation; I hadn't had a raise from *PCG* since 1989, the city Housing Authority had condemned part of our home (built in 1907), and I desperately needed to raise a few thousand dollars to make the repairs, or it was conceivable that me and my family would find ourselves out on the streets. If I had known what I was getting into, I would have robbed a bank instead.

Only after I had signed the contract, did I learn that the game's developers, for reasons never made explicitly clear, had no intention of providing me with the customary raw material necessary to write a valid strategy guide: no strategies, no easter eggs, no data tables. Hell, they wouldn't even give me the technology tree that's so important to the game! Never before or since have I encountered such an obtuse, paranoid attitude on the part of any game company. There was no alternative, with the deadline now only a month away, but to take a deep breath and blitz the friggin' game. So for two solid weeks, 12 or more hours a day,

▸▸▸Continued on pg 28

3D PROTEST

Your recent article entitled "The 3D Wave Hits The Shores," published in the November issue, attempted to rate the new crop of 3D graphics accelerators. Unfortunately, the testing methodology used to measure 3D performance was faulty and did not adequately represent the benefits of 3D hardware acceleration, nor did it accurately reflect the performance differences between each of the products reviewed.

There are a number of reasons why the testing methodology used is inaccurate. First, the results published in your article cannot be reproduced by Matrox when following the same methodology on a comparable system. Our testing shows Matrox Mystique consistently achieves higher scores than Diamond's Stealth 3D 2000. Second, HELLBENDER was the only Direct3D (D3D) title used to test the products in "real-world" conditions (admittingly the only one available at the time). Because of this limitation, and testing methodology, the results simply indicate how each product would behave in one particular instance of that specific game, and therefore, does not appropriately rank how each 3D board could perform in any D3D game.

In fact, the most disappointing aspect of the review is the fact that your testing methodology actually did not push the 3D hardware to its limits, and therefore did not test the boards' true capabilities. Although you set out to benchmark the new wave of 3D boards, your testing simply measured the CPU's performance (see www.matrox.com/mga "3D benchmarking" for further details). Therefore, the results you printed do not accurately represent the differences in 3D performance between software 3D rendering (i.e. the STB Lightspeed 128) and a true mainstream 3D hardware accelerator (i.e. the Matrox Mystique). Your methodology also introduced the ele-

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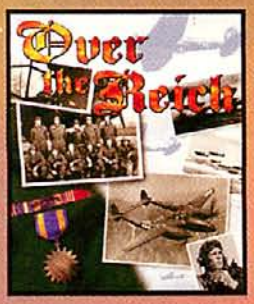

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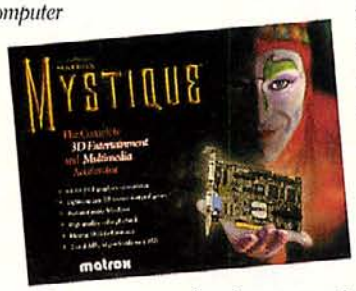
ment of human error in the testing, resulting in data that cannot be accurately reproduced. And by only publishing a minimum and maximum range, and not an average score, your chart does not accurately represent the overall performance of the boards during extended game play.

Although you do acknowledge, in the sidebar, that using HELLBENDER as the sole application tested could only give "an indication of 3D performance, not the final word," (p. 153) you use these benchmark numbers to draw some very definite conclusions. In fact, the reviewer claims that "the 3D performance of some of these cards isn't all it's cracked up to be," which is a strong and invalid statement considering the lack of comprehensive tests used to draw such a conclusion.

In the end, this 3D accelerator feature fails to correctly depict the benefits of using a mainstream 3D hardware accelerator such as the Matrox Mystique in a real world application. The test measurements, and therefore the ranking given for each product, are both inconclusive and erroneous. Had you used a methodology which effectively stressed hardware acceleration, your results could have been more representative even though you had only one Direct3D game available at the time.

As a manufacturer of 3D hardware, Matrox relies on industry influencers such as *Computer Gaming World* to educate readers, and accurately measure, the impact of new technologies. Instead, we are very disappointed to see CGW developing such an ill-conceived 3D hardware test. It contributes to readers' confusion and the misrepresentation of the true capabilities of the technology. As the leading publication in the gaming industry, and as a Ziff-Davis magazine, you are responsible for ensuring that your tests are reproducible and fair, and therefore, accurately measure true performance. At least, since you do acknowledge that these tests were only the beginning of a series of evaluations, you should have made a conscious effort not to draw the conclusions you did.



In order to effectively reflect the hardware's capabilities in "real-world" situations, a 3D test or benchmark should not be limited to the measurement of a very specific situation, which was what the CGW tests did. We invite all CGW readers to visit Matrox's Web site and read the in-depth explanation of how the 3D graphics accelerators should have been tested, using HELLBENDER, in order to more accurately reflect the boards' hardware 3D performance (www.matrox.com/mga).

Nathalie Benoit
North American Marketing/ Communications Manager
Matrox Graphics, Inc.

We believe our tests were conducted on a level playing field. We measured CPU utilization because we believe that high-quality 3D cards should offload some of the CPU calculations to their chipset. This improves game speed and benefits gamers in the long run.

»»Continued from pg 26

I did nothing but play ASCENDANCY, setting up every possible game-variant I could think of and trying to mine nuggets of useful information by dint of sheer exposure.

The curious thing is that I became totally obsessed with the game. The more I played, the more I wanted to play. Looking back, I can see now that it was simple obsession, rather than the quality of the product that was driving me; but *at the time*, I really and truly did think ASCENDANCY was a great game. Therefore, when I was asked to do the review, I had no hesitation about saying yes. Given my mindset at the time, I would have given the game a grotesquely high rating anyway, regardless of my involvement with the strategy guide. Call me naive, call me stupid, call me temporarily insane—I'll cop to all those charges. But I was NOT—not consciously, at any rate—being venal, cynical, or manipulative with an eye toward bigger royalties.

Of course, the strategy guide, when we finally finished cobbling it together, was pathetic. Given the total lack of cooperation from the game's designers, we did the best we could—a lame excuse, I know, but the truth. It really did not occur to me, until after I started getting a merciless on-line flaming about the matter, that I might be perceived to have a conflict of interest. And not until the other reviews came out, especially the scathing one in CGW, did my blinders come off with regard to the game itself. Once those reviews did come out, I went back and replayed the game, and discovered, to my chagrin, that my colleagues were absolutely right: it *was* a half-baked and essentially hollow game, all surface flash and precious little substance. I had simply been in the grip of an almost pathological case of game-lock, and, in order to sustain any enthusiasm whatever for the project, I managed to shut down my better critical faculties for the duration of the project.

"I have paid a very high price indeed for letting my guard down."

Since that day, I've never been able to play the damned game again, and have paid a very high price indeed for letting my guard down. The final irony in this whole sorry business is that, to date, I have not received a single penny of royalties from the book. I got a crummy advance of three grand, all of which went immediately into house repairs, and that was it. I got out my calculator, after the manuscript has been sent off to the black hole that is Prima, and figured out that, on the basis of the hours I'd put in trying to explore the guts of the game, I ended up making about $4.25/hour.

Well, that's my tale of woe, and I thank you for taking the time to hear me out. I don't expect this confession to change your opinion of me or of my work, but I hope it may give you reason to feel a bit more sympathy and a bit less contempt. I walked into the situation with my eyes wide open and I got cold-cocked. I don't suppose I'll ever live it down, but I certainly won't ever allow myself to get backed into such a corner again.

I look forward to reading your informed and refreshingly witty column for many years to come, and I hope some day to have the pleasure of meeting you.

William Trotter
Greensboro, NC

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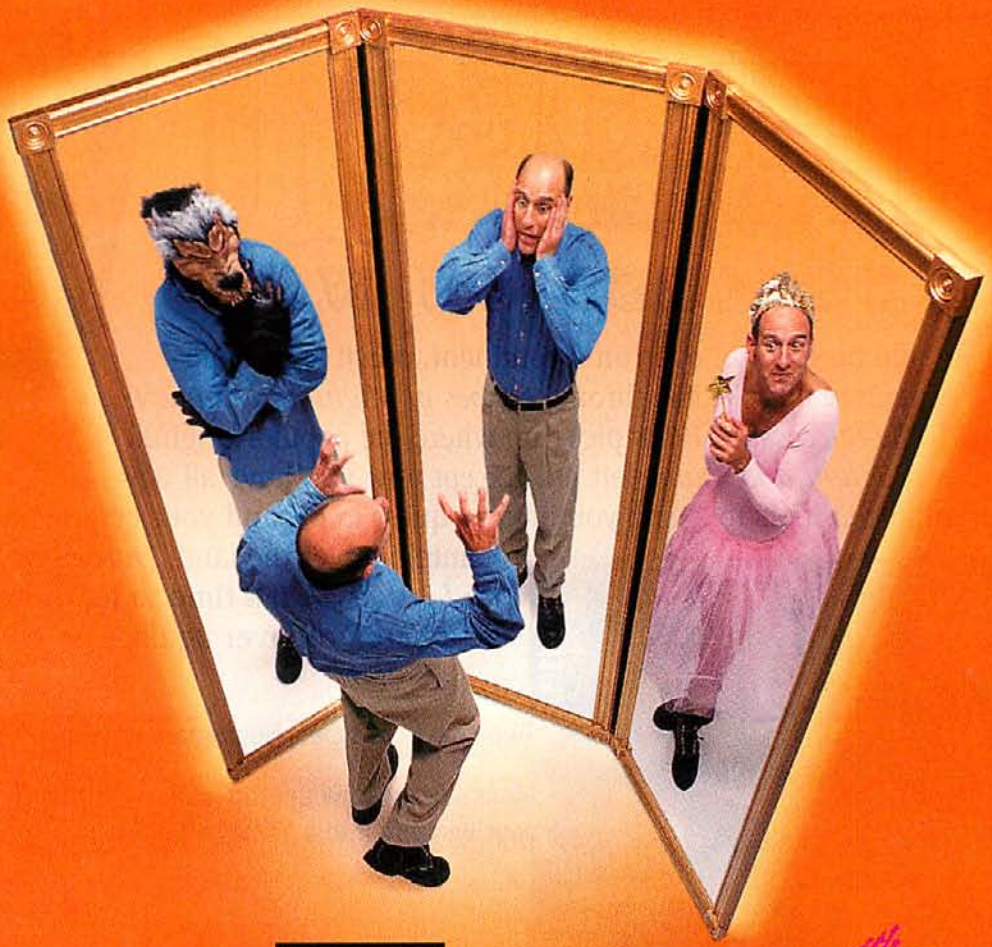

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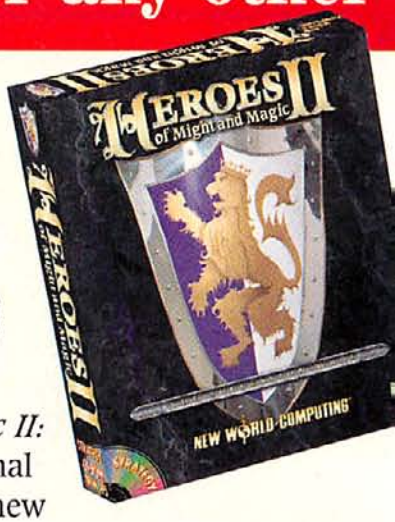
CG RATED
Computer Gaming World

"Heroes of Might and Magic™ II is games of this year–or any other

HEROES of Might and Magic™ II

THE SUCCESSION WARS



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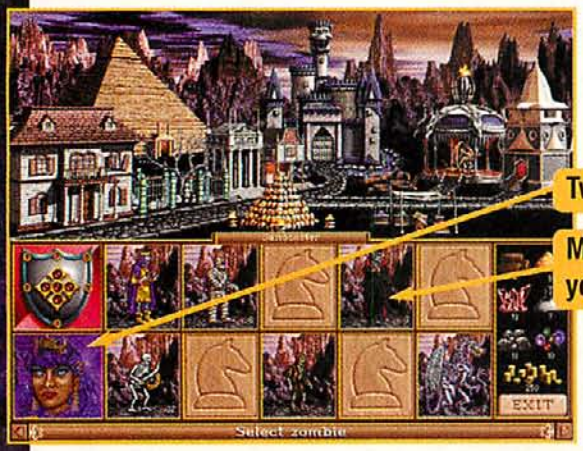
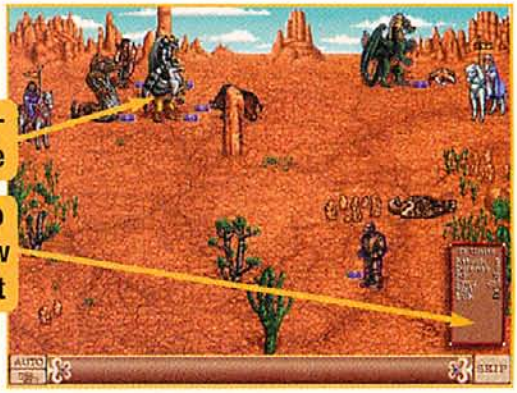


Two new Hero types, Necromancer (shown) and Wizard

Monsters are now upgradeable—make your Vampire into a Vampire Lord, etc.



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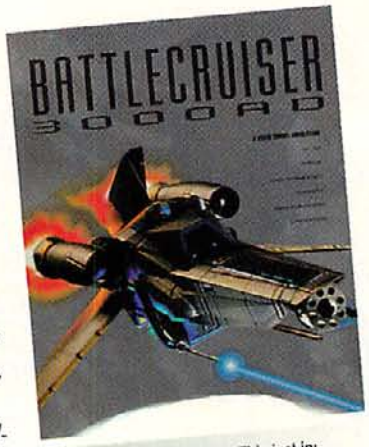
CIRCLE READER SERVICE #142

What Matrox calls "human error" and "data that cannot be accurately reproduced" is the result of flying through HELLBENDER *with a joystick and the 2D cockpit overlay on. That's why we showed a range for frame rate instead of an average. We believe gamers want to be in the driver's seat. The frame rate goes up if you're not flying the game, but who cares?*

It was important for us to test real-world performance, and we believe our results reflect that approach. We urge our readers to check out Matrox' Web site and then see the Computer Gaming World *online edition on ZDNet (http://www.zdnet.com/gaming) and join the discussion on "3D Testing."*

NOT-SO SMART GAMES

I wish I had found your review of BATTLECRUISER 3000 AD before I bought the game! Your caveats were right on the money: crashes, bugs and a lousy manual make the game virtually unplayable. To make matters worse, significant features of the game (communication between ships, piloting



BATTLELOSER 3000 This just in: Generalissimo Francisco Smarto's Battlecruiser 3000 is still not finished.

individual marines, etc.) have not been implemented, but are "promised" in future patches which will (hopefully) be available online from Take 2.

Take 2, to its limited credit, is issuing patches as fast as Derek Smart can crank them out. Unfortunately, some of these patches are proving as buggy as the original game. I have deleted BC3000AD from my hard drive until I receive a proper manual and a definitive patch.

Jeff Powell
via the Internet

Your letter is representative of lots of letters on this subject. We wish the product had been playable, too. We'll let you know if we ever discover that it is.

NAPOLEON SOLO

Reading your December issue's "Letter of the Month" got me boiling. I for one am sick and tired of people in your magazine—and in various newsgroups—griping and moaning about the lack or inadequacy of multiplayer gaming. I could care less about multiplayer gaming as I rarely have time for it. Until fairly recently it wasn't even an option in most games—now people act like it's an essential element. Bull! As far as I can see we're in danger of multiplayer being used as an excuse for poor AIs. Come on game companies! Forget multiplayer! Give me well-designed and balanced games—give me games I can load, play for a while and then quit for more productive things! I don't want to have to log on, find an opponent and log off just to try my hand at a good game! I've been playing computer games for years, and I've had a lot of fun with them, too, (but) I'm afraid all these resources put into multiplayer this and that is going to detract from what we really need—smarter computers!

David V. Watts
via the Internet

For a counter-example to your doomsday scenario, you might check out COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT *and* HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC II. *Both games have solid multiplayer capacity, but both have artificial opponents that offer plenty of challenge.*

Firing Line

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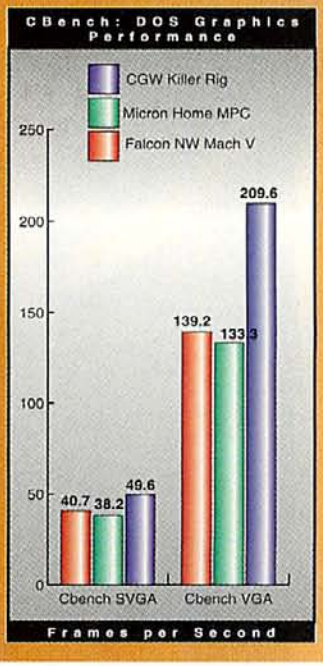
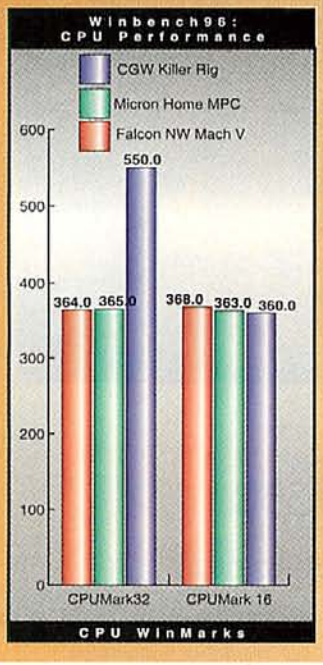
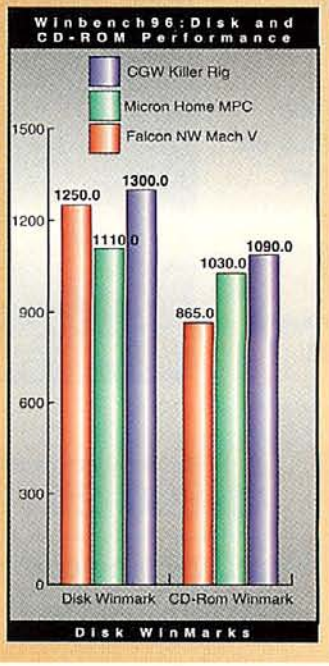
UPDATE: ULTIMATE GAME MACHINE SCORES







In our January coverage of the Ultimate Game Machine, we managed to switch the performance graphs for our system with those of the Falcon North-west. If you were wondering how a $9,000 custom system could be beaten by a machine that costs half as much, it wasn't. These corrected graphs show how our Ultimate Game Machine out-performed the Micron Home MPC and Falcon Northwest Mach V, in some cases considerably. In the interest of preventing such mistakes in the future, the parties responsible, and their villages, have been sacked.

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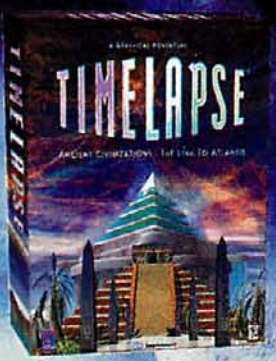

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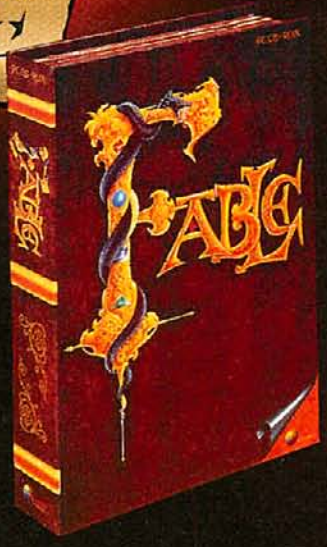

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #125

Letting Zork Be Zorky

Next Zork To Return To The Game's Roots In Humor

Following quickly on the heels of Zork Nemesis is Activision's interesting plan for a new chapter in the saga of Zork, the granddaddy of all adventure games. We visited Activision's office in Los Angeles for an exclusive interview with the team, who talked about the new game for the first time.

Tentatively titled Zork: The Grand Inquisitor, and scheduled for a September 1997 release, the new game represents Activision's revitalized effort to "let Zork be Zorky," according to designer and writer Margie Stohl. While Nemesis was quite successful in its own right, many longtime fans considered it rather dark for the spirit of the series. This time, says director Laird Malamed, the design team will attempt "to embrace what was wonderful about the old text adventures—a fantasy world with an undercurrent of humor."

"We're (trying to make) the interaction more refined, so you can do things like put steak sauce in a toaster oven, and get a reaction." —*Michael Douglas, Lead Programmer*

Set 150 years after Nemesis in the year 1090, The Grand Inquisitor opens with trouble brewing in the Land of Frobozz. An evil character named Mir Yannick has just seized complete power over the Land through his mastery of technology. Magic, which disappeared in the year 966, has slowly been creeping back, and threatens to undermine Yannick's authority, so he uses his might to begin a Magic Inquisition—imposing a curfew on the land, making daily roundups of citizens and severely punishing anyone caught practicing magic.

You play (of course) a hapless adventurer who, upon arrival in Port Foozle, learns of the Inquisition and sets about to stop it and take down Yannick. Along the way, you'll encounter the third Dungeon Master, a former classmate of the Inquisitor, who has been imprisoned in a lamp. The Dungeon Master becomes your guide throughout the early part of the game, until he embarks on his own story arc.

WEST OF HOUSE The new Zork will incorporate familiar sites, including the famous white house of Zork 1. This mock-up is not representative of actual gameplay.

The Grand Inquisitor will use the same 360-degree panning engine as Nemesis, but lead programmer Michael Douglas is working on a few major refinements. An inventory screen is being added, which will allow you to manipulate items with each other, rather than with the environment alone, along with a spellbook, which will hold the magic spells you'll need to ultimately defeat the Inquisitor. Navigation is being made easier with a new map, which you can use to instantly transport to places you've previously visited. Graphics-wise, the team is still evaluating whether to continue with the photorealistic, FMV-heavy look of Nemesis or go with a 3D animated approach. (The screen shot shown here is concept art only.)

Douglas's overall goal in refining the engine was to make the entire Zork world more interactive. One of the great things

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.

TOMB RAIDER

CG HOT

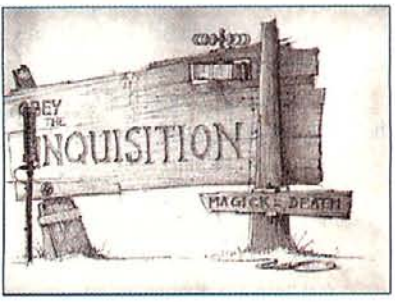
In a world of Doom clones, it's always refreshing to see a different kind of game. What is most unusual, though, is when that game exceeds expectations and amazes gamers with its very different style of gameplay.

Tomb Raider isn't really anything new. After all, it's a platform game with a mixture of Doom-style shooting, a little bit of puzzle solving and a great deal of exploration. What *is* new though, is the excellent execution and the sheer beauty of the game. The environment is true 3D, and in hi-res mode, this game shines with incredible beauty. The gameplay is also very nice and reminds me of Mario 64 on the graphically brilliant Nintendo 64. In fact, these two games play similarly, and while Tomb Raider fails to capture the true 3D movement and gameplay of Mario 64, it comes very close.

For those who've been living in a cave, or those rebelling against the hype, Tomb

about the old text adventures was that you could try anything, no matter how outrageous, and you'd always get some kind of response (usually humorous). "We're rethinking the scripting system," Douglas said, "so that the interaction is more refined, as in the old games, so that you can do things like, say, put steak sauce in a toaster oven, and get a reaction." The team is actually prototyping and playing the game as a text adventure as they work on it, which, said Douglas, gives them "a design feedback loop that lets us see the structure of the game a lot better."

Director Malamed, a longtime fan of the series before joining Activision, feels the pressure to be true to the ZORK universe. "Managing a franchise is the best thing and the worst thing in the world," he commented. "I have a lot of fond memories of the ZORK games and really believe in the ZORK universe. We feel a big responsibility to show people *their* ZORK." To prepare for the project, Malamed's team has built a linear history of the universe based on all previous games, similar to the *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* bibles, so that no anomalies are created in the new one. "If even one person notices a mistake in the new game," he said, "that's one too many for me."—*Jeff Green*



Blizzard Frees Diablo Online

4 Gaming Editors Instantly Hooked On Battlenet

When four early versions of Blizzard's battle.net software arrived with a stripped version of DIABLO, the staff clamored to get their hands on them. Those lucky enough to play the beta were impressed, not only with DIABLO's excellent gameplay and dark atmosphere, but with the incredibly streamlined battle.net interface.

Installation was easy, and we were never asked about our modem or internet configuration; the program was "smart" enough to figure this out on its own. After the DIABLO introduction you'll see a class selection display and then the battle.net connection screen. With one simple click, and a short wait for a connection, we were in. It was that easy.

Anyone who fears any sort of hacking or headaches in connecting to Blizzard's online service can rest easy. The process is amazingly simple. And once you're in, the interface is well set up. You can choose to enter chat rooms, create an adventuring group, or join a group already in progress.

Blizzard is offering the battle.net service for free, although you'll still have to pay charges to your ISP for use of your Internet connection. DIABLO is the first battle.net game to go live, and STARCRAFT is expected to follow in June. Blizzard plans to put more of its games on the service as they become available.—*E. Chin*

Red Alert On Mplayer

Mplayer recently announced that COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT would be playable over its online gaming service. RED ALERT will join COMMAND & CONQUER, which is already one of the most played games on Mplayer. For more information on the RED ALERT announcement, turn to our website at **www.zdnet.com/gaming.** —*E. Chin*

RAIDER is a 3D, third-person platform shooter, where you play a female adventurer, Lara Croft, attempting to find the missing pieces of an artifact called the Scion. Along the way, you'll have to navigate the treacherous terrain of tombs and ruins and fight deadly beasts and stranger opponents. The graphics, which are in breathtaking 3D, are spectacular when accelerated on 3D boards such as the 3Dfx or Rendition parts. Next month, we'll bring you an in-depth review...if we can tear ourselves away from the game long enough to write it.—*E. Chin*

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Reader Service # 301

PHANTASMAGORIA 2: A PUZZLE OF FLESH

The title pretty well sums it up. Flesh abounds in this game, and not all of it's soaked in blood. The creators of this non-sequel to last year's PHANTASMAGORIA put a lot of effort into dishing up scenes to shock and titillate even the most jaded sex 'n' gore film buffs. Too bad they didn't give as much thought to the story or gameplay.

Curtis is a young technical writer at a sinister pharmaceutical company who's afraid he's losing his mind. He's bothered by horrifying visions and receives e-mail from Hell—literally. Before long, P2 degenerates into a muddled conspiracy yarn that makes *The X-Files* look like C-SPAN by comparison.

While the puzzles aren't difficult, they often don't make any sense, either. You're frequently required to perform tasks far more inane than going down into the basement. It's a shame, too, because under the bloody mess of a plot, the pacing and gradually deepening creepiness are the stuff great horror is made of. The end result, however, is neither fun nor entertaining. At least the sex in this PHANTASMAGORIA is consensual.—*K. Hedstrom*

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Reader Service # 302

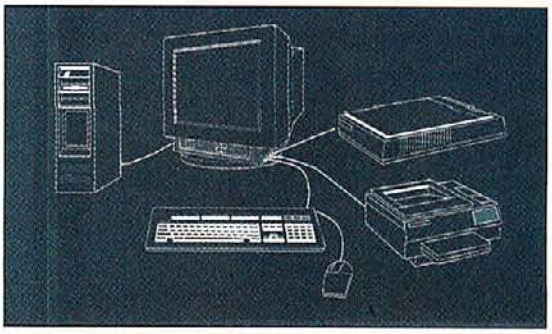
The Buzz From Comdex

3D Chips, 3D Audio, Faster Modems & DSVD Are On The Way

The biggest computer convention in North America lived up to its hellish reputation, but once again it paraded new hardware technology of interest to gamers. This year's highlights include new graphics chip-sets, 3D audio that actually works, faster modems, and new storage devices, among others.

Both Tseng Labs and 3Dfx were showing off new 2D/3D chip-sets. Tseng's ET6300 chip-set takes their successful ET6000 2D core, and adds 3D functionality. It features a well rounded complement of 3D features, including: bilinear/trilinear filtering, MIP mapping, subpixel accuracy, fog, z-buffering, Gouraud shading, and alpha blending. Most notably, it moves up one step in the 3D pipeline to handle rasterization setup. Hercules has already announced a board based on ET6300, due to ship this spring.

3Dfx introduced a new version of their Voodoo chip-set called Voodoo Rush, which will integrate with Alliance's ProMotion aT3D chip, a 2D accelerator. Both will be able to share the board's frame buffer, which will help keep the cost down.



GOOD IDEA Monitors like this one from Eizo will make connecting your peripherals easier—a Universal Serial Bus port is built right in to the base.

There was a fair amount of buzz about new modems boasting a peak downstream data rate of 56 Kbps, nearly twice the throughput of current V.34 modems. There may, however, be a small ruckus brewing since different chip-sets introduced by two major modem players are currently incompatible (see related story later in this section).

Eizo (the monitor maker formerly known as Nanao) displayed a 17-inch monitor that was remarkable not so much for its image quality, which is sharp, but for the Universal Serial Bus port found on its side. Imagine being able to daisy-chain your keyboard, mouse, joystick and gamepad from your monitor, and eliminate all that clutter going to your CPU. Eizo expects to ship its i-Station monitors this spring.

Another buzzing technology at the show this year was DVD, with Pioneer, Panasonic, Mitsubishi, Toshiba and Yamaha all showing their works in progress. DVD drives will support MPEG-2 and Dolby's AC-3 positional audio. For gamers, what they'll bring to the party is gobs and gobs of storage, with first-generation units offering up to 8.5 GB (see this month's Editorial).

Diamond Multimedia was previewing its upcoming PCI-based Freedom 5600 DirectSound 3D accelerator, which incorporates binaural rendering technology from Aureal Semiconductor (formerly Crystal River Engineering). Binaural rendering is a real-time 3D audio technology that models how humans determine the position of sound and applies algorithms to simulate various sound "sources." Unlike earlier attempts at so-called 3D audio, this technology is remarkably realistic. In headphones, the experience is startling as sounds are rendered in full 720 degrees (360° horizontal, 360° vertical). In speakers, the vertical cues aren't quite as discernible, but the horizontal cues are still pretty stunning.

As all of these up-and-comers make their way to shrink-wrap, we'll test them and give you the low-down.—*Dave Salvator*

ON THE SHELF

CIVILIZATION II SCENARIOS

CG HOT

The stand-alone scenarios that came with Civ II weren't particularly memorable, a situation corrected in a big way with this excellent add-on pack. The ancient campaigns are a wonderful change of pace, forcing you to conquer the known world as Alexander and Genghis Khan *did*, without the benefit of tanks and stealth bombers. There are several nice touches throughout: Spices are enhanced for the *Age of Discovery*; the Great Wall is obsolete in *The Mongol Horde*; you can't change government types in *Jihad*. It's a shame that multiplayer options haven't yet been implemented, but even so, this should keep Sid Meier fans sleepless until the seemingly inevitable Civ III.—*T. Coleman*

MicroProse, (510) 522-1164,

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Reader Service # 303

JETFIGHTER III

CG HOT

In my recent preview of this game, I expressed concern that the delay in shipping JetFighter III might result in a product with an outdated feel. However, it seems that Mission Studios saved the best for last, and with the last-minute additions to the terrain engine, the game has actually leaped to the front of the technical pack.

The accurate Chilean landscape over which most of the combat occurs is breathtaking, with huge mountains, deep valleys to buzz through, and wispy clouds. The textures flow

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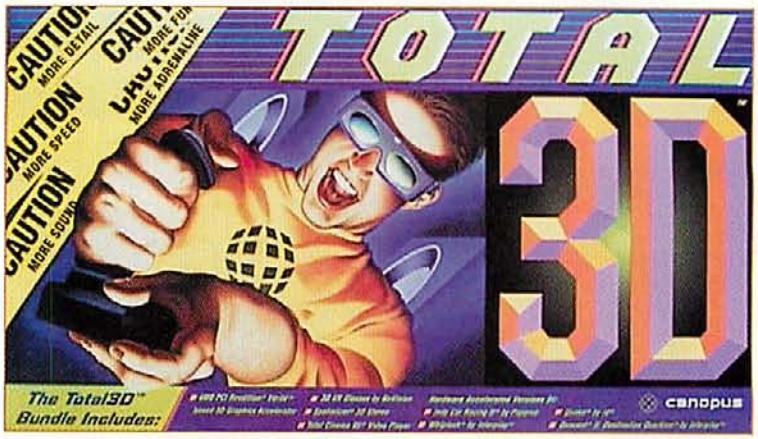
Total 3D: Fashionably Late

New Canopus 3D Card Is Fast And Packed With Features

The Canopus Total 3D, based on the Rendition Verité accelerator chip, hit the scene just a little behind the first Verité cards, but in this case, later is better. Canopus has added features and tweaked performance, making the Total 3D a solid, well-rounded, single-slot solution for 2D and 3D acceleration.

In addition to the standard 2D and 3D graphics features, the Total 3D is the first Rendition-based card to offer support for stereoscopic VR glasses. The card even comes with a pair of NuVision 3D Spex and a couple of games—DESCENT 2 and WHIPLASH—that have support for VR glasses. In addition, there's support for Spatializer 3D audio.

Performance is probably the best of the Verité set. On a P166, it cranks out 30.1 Graphic WinMarks on Winbench 96 at 1024x768x8, and 28.1 WinMarks at 800x600x16.



In addition, Total 3D supports true color (32 bit) at 1024x768, the only Verité card to date that can do this—and does it at a brisk 85 Hz refresh rate.

The 3D performance isn't shabby, either. Like all Verité cards, The Canopus card will improve QUAKE frame rates, and adds bilinear filtering and anti-aliasing. At 640x400, we saw frame rates at the starting level of 26.1 frames per second (compared to 25.1 fps for the Intergraph Reactor—both running VQUAKE 1.06 beta 9). INDYCAR 2 is also stunning, especially on the new enhanced tracks. The Total 3D will ship with shareware QUAKE, DESCENT 2, WHIPLASH and INDYCAR 2.

SVGA performance was also good, although we did run into a problem with F22 LIGHTNING II. This will be fixed in the next F22 release, but a terminate and stay resident file downloadable from CompuServe's Flight Simulator forum enables the current version to run. Like all Rendition cards, the Total 3D runs best in a system with fully functional, PCI bus-mastering DMA. VGA is slow, but there's now a utility available from Rendition's ftp site (ftp.rendition.com) called *renutil* that will speed up most standard VGA games—but it won't work with games such as DOOM and HERETIC that have a resolution of 320x240.

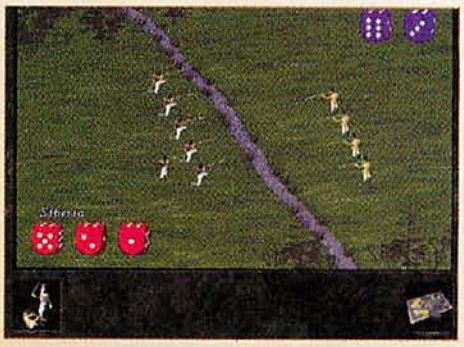
Canopus, a new player in the US market, is the biggest graphics card manufacturer in Japan. They also manufacture the Sierra Screamin' 3D, which was one of the leading performers in our December graphics card roundup. The Total 3D will be offered at a list price of $279 with 4 MB of EDO DRAM.—*Loyd Case*
Canopus (408) 467-4000
www.canopuscorp.com

ON THE SHELF

smoothly between areas, with no "patchwork" feel, and the variety of objects strewn over the landscape is astounding.

Unfortunately, this detail comes at a price, and unless you have a 166-MHz or faster Pentium, you'll need to turn down the detail a bit. The game includes a plethora of adjustable detail parameters so you can adjust the frame rate to suit your desires.

The flight model here is very light, and the game is far more about air-to-air action than realism. Still, no sim has captured the feel of speed as well as JF III, and all but hard-core sticklers should give it a look.—*D. Atkin*
Mission Studios, (847) 202-3951
PC CD-ROM
Reader Service # 304



RISK

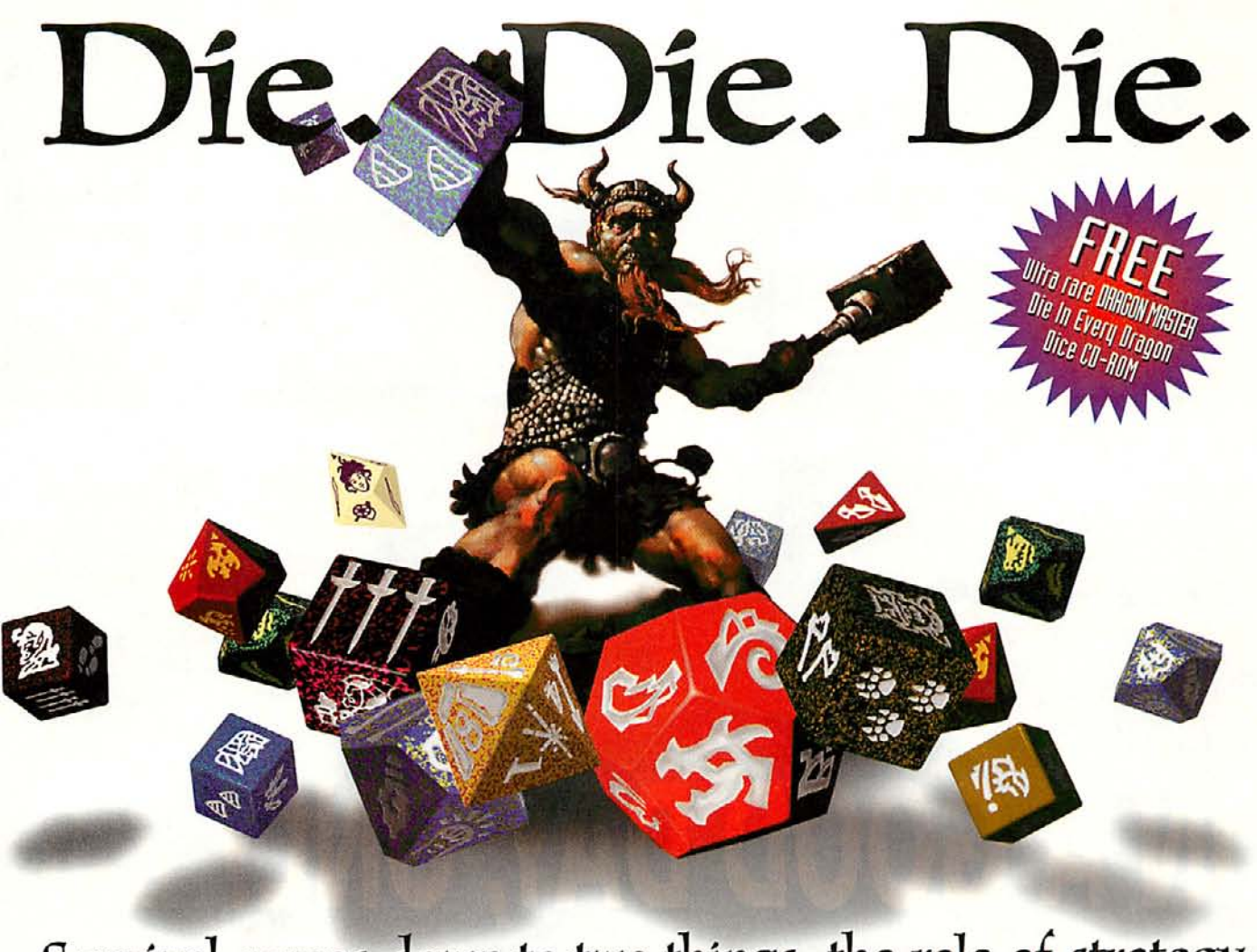
CG HOT

If this old favorite merely received the same class treatment as Monopoly CD-ROM, fans would be content. *Classic Risk* is still here, but it's to Hasbro's credit that the package is much more than the old Risk board game. *Ultimate Risk* brings gorgeous new maps of Europe, Asia, and North America, along with (gasp!) terrain effects. The fun chrome covers random events such as storms in the North Sea and plagues, while the alliance rule keeps diplomacy—always a cornerstone of Risk play—to the forefront. And while the AI is actually OK, it's the multiplayer options (including Internet) that will keep this light, very enjoyable game on hard drives for many campaigns to come.—*T. Coleman*
Hasbro Interactive, (508) 921-3700
PC CD-ROM
Reader Service # 306

FPS FOOTBALL PRO 97

With the disappointments of the computer pigskin season almost too numerous to mention, it's about time we had something to

Die. Die. Die.



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– PC GAMES

ON A GOOD DAY, ONLY 2.5

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"This highly anticipated title is certainly one of the slickest games we've seen...could be the action fest to rival Quake."
– BOOT

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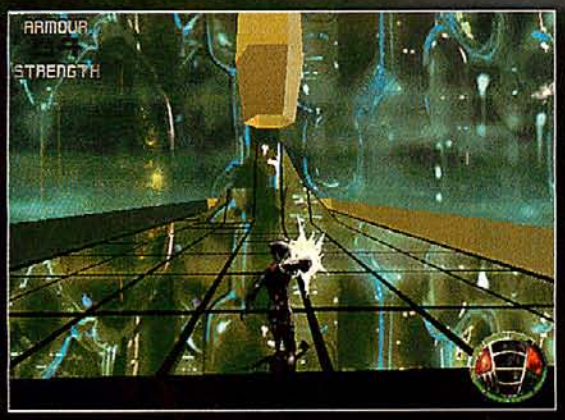
PC CD-ROM

Created by Shiny Entertainment, Inc. © 1996 Shiny Entertainment, Inc. MDK is a trademark of Shiny Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Artwork and design © 1996 Playmates Interactive Entertainment Inc. PIE™ is a registered trademark of Playmates Interactive Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved.



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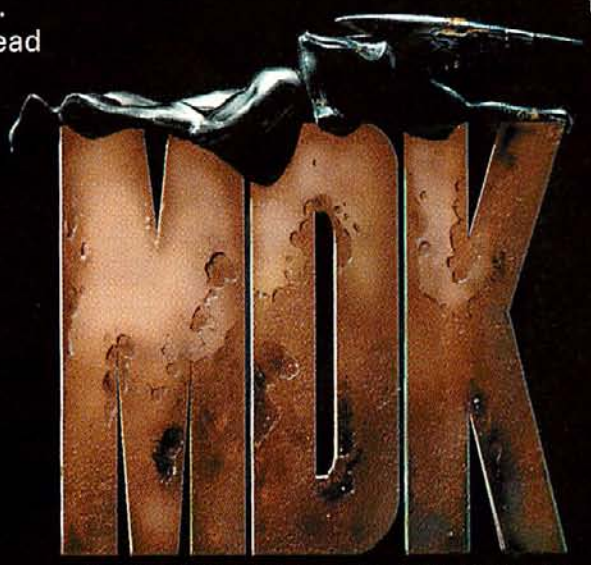

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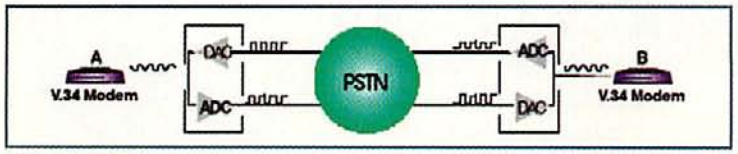
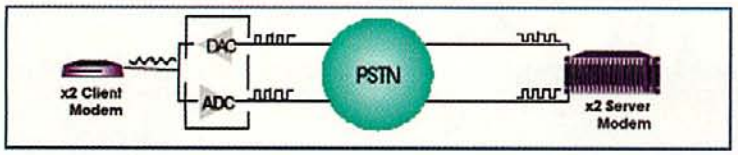
56K Modems

2 Chip-Sets Vie For Dominance

The bane of all Netizens' existence is invariably their painfully slow connection to the Internet. Newer V.34 modems, with their 33.6 Kb/sec data rates and various compression schemes, have improved connection speeds, but these modems often achieve higher data rates by using larger memory buffers. These buffers, like another train stop along the way, tend to increase latency, which slows down gameplay. Additionally, V.34 modems often fail to achieve their 28.8 or 33.6 Kbps connection speed, since the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) usually can't sustain the faster speeds. because of varying line conditions.





WIDENING THE PIPE Conventional modems require two conversions from analog to digital and back (above). New 56K modems (below) nearly double their speed by leaving the downstream data in the digital domain, eliminating the line noise that reduces bandwidth.

While cable modems and Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line modems offer fatter pipes and lower latency, they require additional equipment that cable and phone companies will need to deploy. In the meantime, enter two new modem chip-sets—Rockwell's K56 Plus and U.S. Robotics' X2—both of which claim a transmission rate to your computer of 56 Kbps, nearly twice that of 28.8 modems.

The new 56K modems achieve higher bandwidth by using only digital signaling on the server modem side, thereby eliminating certain kinds of line noise that can limit connection speed. The new 56K modems will be asymmetric, however, since their data rate from your PC will only be 33.6 Kbps.

The two 56K chip-sets, despite being compatible with V.34, are *not* compatible with each other. USR has submitted their X2 to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) for approval, and Rockwell is following suit. Rockwell has also lined up several large OEMs, while USR is offering free flash-ROM upgrades on some of their V.34 modems. Hopefully, the ITU will help the two companies find some middle ground.—*Dave Salvator*

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.

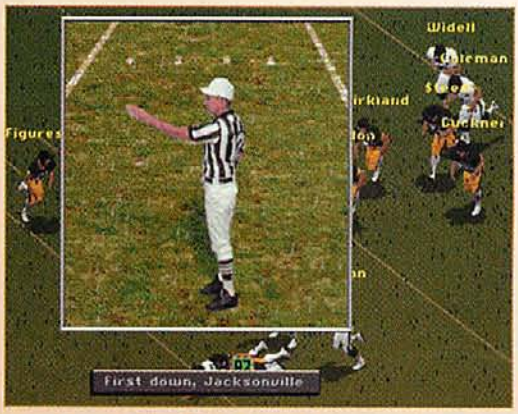
READERS' TOP 10

The top five retained their lock on gamer's hard drives, with Civ II, Duke Nukem 3D and WarCraft II maintaining Top 3 positions for the seventh consecutive month. Quake and Heroes of Might and Magic creep steadily up the chart, Doom II slips into eighth place, and Daggerfall makes its grand debut at number ten.

You'll no longer find the *CGW* Poll Card bound into the magazine, but check your mailbox: We mail a survey to 2,000 randomly chosen subscribers each month, and we use the results to calculate the Top 100 and Playing Lately each month.

		Last Month	Months On Chart
1.	**Civilization II** (MicroProse)	1	9
2.	**Duke Nukem 3D** (3D Realms)	2	10
3.	**WarCraft II** (Blizzard)	3	12
4.	**Command and Conquer** (Virgin/Westwood)	4	15
5.	**MechWarrior 2** (Activision)	5	14
6.	**Quake** (id Software)	7	2
7.	**Heroes of Might and Magic** (New World Computing)	8	14
8.	**Doom II** (id Software)	6	11
9.	**Steel Panthers** (SSI)	9	14
10.	**Daggerfall** (Berthesda)	-	1

ON THE SHELF



cheer. Football Pro 97 is far beyond the mere graphic upgrade of last year's version. Yes, the graphics are excellent, but the interface is also more navigable and the play editor more robust. The AI—especially for player trades—has been upgraded, and the new playbooks include the trendiest zone blitzes and reverses. Simulating a season still takes a while, but the Win 95 interface lets you minimize the application (so that *CGW* editors can meet their deadlines). Best of all, earlier oddities in the programming, such as wide receivers turning around to catch most passes, have been corrected. What else can we say? It's a winner.—*T. Coleman*

Sierra On-Line, (800) 757-7707
PC CD-ROM
Reader Service # 307

You're outnumbered.
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You face an intensely fierce Persian army.
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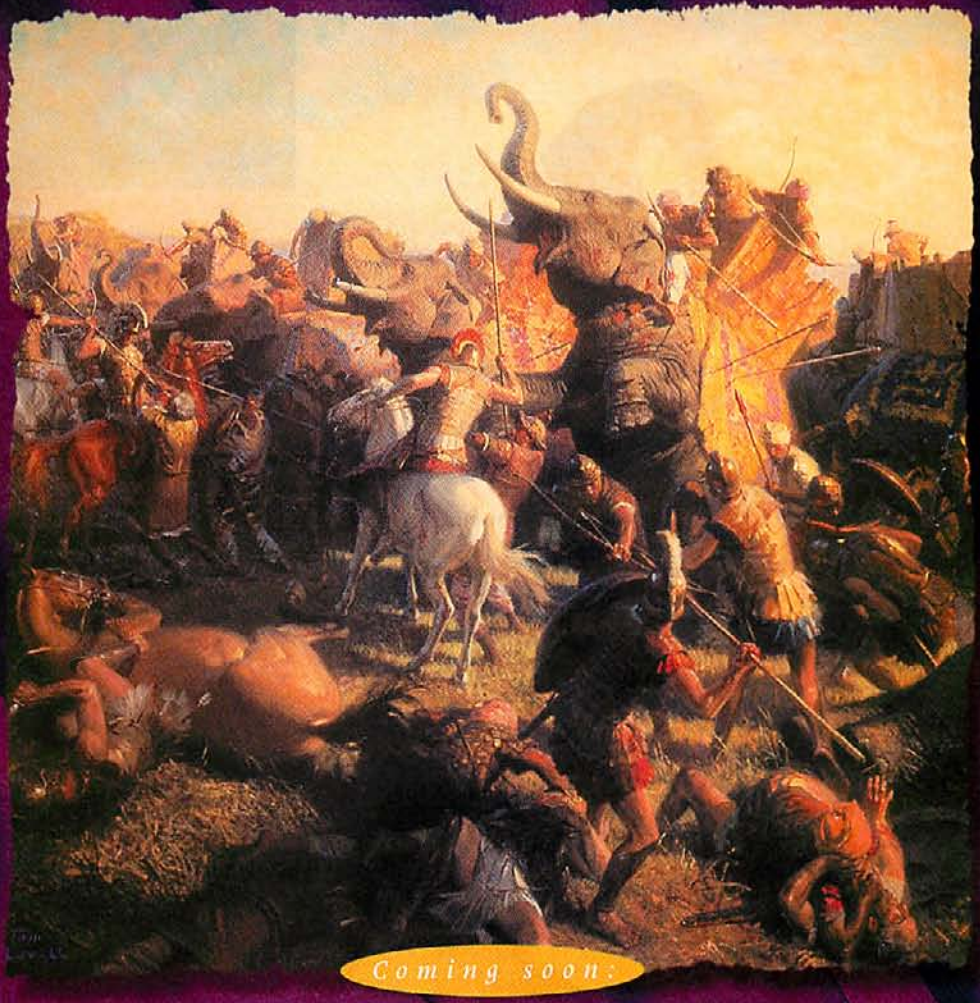

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FIRST LOOK

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.

Flying Nightmares 2

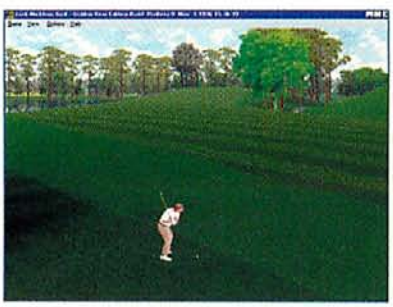
Eidos Interactive's FLYING NIGHTMARES 2 is on the leading edge when you consider just the simulation portion of the game. You fly both the AV-8B Harrier II and AH-1W SuperCobra over Cuba, supporting an evacuation of Guantanamo Bay and battling Russians over Havana. The Win 95 simulation engine promises realistic flight modeling, 65,000-color graphics, and support for 3D graphics cards and MMX processors. Producer Bryan Walker flew Apaches during the Gulf War, and that experience will pay off with factors such as "time on target" and rules of engagement playing a big part of successful missions.

But what makes FN2 unique is the Commandant multiplayer module. Up to 16 players can participate in an air/ground battle. One player takes the role of team commandant, handing out assignments to both humans flying Harriers and SuperCobras, and AI-controlled M1A1 tanks, LAV-25 Personnel Carriers, combat engineers, infantry companies, and more. As the game progresses, the Commandant can issue updated orders and new objectives to individual players. In addition to LAN play, the game should be playable over the Internet and via an online gaming service, so you should never have trouble finding an opponent. FN2 is currently slated for a March ship date.—*Denny Atkin*

Jack Nicklaus Golf: Golden Bear Edition

While some might argue that Chi Chi Rodriguez is more quotable or Arnold Palmer more charismatic, few could disagree that Jack Nicklaus deserves the title "Golfer of the Century." Accolades for the software that bears his name have been somewhat less forthcoming, mostly because of LINKS. What makes this attempt different is the attention to detail. If the look is not quite so photo-realistic as that of its storied competitor, it's still more than adequate, right down to reflections in the lakes. And you can erect those finely sculpted trees—and dig those insidious sand traps—with the easy-to-use, revamped course editor, a wonderful tool that both PGA TOUR 96 and LINKS LS lack.

The competitive level of the computer players for now lies somewhere between the Palmer opponent in LINKS LS and the multiple pros you face in PGA TOUR 96. Still, with the ability to create your own golfer and tee up with friends over the Internet in match play, tournament, or skins format, NICKLAUS is one driver that won't collect dust for a long time.—*Terry Coleman*



PIPELINE

Achtung: Spitfire! Avalon Hill	4/97
Agents of Justice MicroProse	Spring 97
Alde De Camp 2 HPS Simulations	Spring 97
Armored Fist 2 NovaLogic	4/97
Atlantis Cryo	3/97
Battleground: Middle East Talonsoft	2/97
Battles of Alexander Interactive Magic	Spring 97
Battle Sport Acclaim	2/97
Betrayal at Antara Sierra	2/97
Blade Runner Virgin/Westwood	Fall 97
Blood Apogee	Spring 97
Blue Heat Cyberdreams	3/97
Boggle Hasbro Interactive	6/97
Callahan's Crosstime Saloon Legend	Q1/97
City of Lost Children Psygnosis	2/97
Commanche 3 NovaLogic	3/97
Dark Earth Mindscape	Spring 97
Dungeon Keeper Bullfrog	2/97
Ecstatica II Psygnosis	3/97
Entrepeneur Stardock	Q1/97
European Air War MicroProse	Summer 97
Fallen Haven Interactive Magic	Spring 97
Flying Nightmares 2 Domark	3/97
Front Page Sports Golf Sierra	Q1/97
Grand Slam 97 Virgin	Spring 97
Hardball 6 Accolade	7/97
History of the World Avalon Hill	2/97
IF22 Interactive Magic	Spring 97
Imperialism SSI	Spring 97
Interstate 76 Activision	Q1/97
Jack Nicklaus Golf 97 Accolade	3/97
Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II LucasArts	3/97
Lands of Lore: Guardians Westwood/Virgin	3/97
Marvel Mindscape	Spring 97
MicroLeague Baseball 6 MicroLeague	Spring 97
Mig Alley Empire	Summer 97
Myst 2: Riven Broderbund	Summer 97
NBA Live 97 EA Sports	Q1/97
NFL Legends Accolade	9/97
Pacific General SSI	Summer 97
Reach for the Stars II SSG/Microsoft	Spring 97
Rebellion LucasArts	3/97
Rebel Moon Rising Fenris Wolf	7/97
Red Baron II Sierra	4/97
Return to Krondor 7th Level	Spring 97
Sabre Ace Virgin	Spring 97
Shadows of Riva Sir-Tech	Spring 97
Shivers 2 Sierra	4/97
Ship of the Line SSI	Fall 97
Sole Survivor Westwood/Virgin	3/97
Spider Man Byron Preiss	Spring 97
Star Craft Blizzard	6/97
Star Fleet Academy Interplay	2/97
Test Drive Off-Road Accolade	2/97
TFX: X-22 Ocean	3/97
Theme Hospital Bullfrog/EA	2/97
Ultima On-Line Origin	Spring 97
Unreal Epic	5/97
VR Baseball VR Sports	Spring 97
VR Golf VR Sports	Q1/97
X-COM: The Apocalypse MicroProse	Spring 97
6300 2D/3D Chip Set Tseng Labs	3/97
Sonic Vibes Audio Chip Set S3	Q1/97
Voodoo Rush 3D Chip Set 3DfX/Trident	Q1/97
Wipeout XL Psygnosis	3/97
Zork: Grand Inquisitor Activision	Fall 97

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.

MDK

Anyone who saw the Stallone flick *Demolition Man* will know that MDK stands for Murder, Death, Kill. That, in a nutshell, is this game. But before anyone starts ranting on about the evils of violence in computer games, it's worth pointing out that nothing you kill in the game bears any resemblance to the creatures that inhabit our wonderful world. They're aliens; they deserve to die!

Essentially a shoot 'em up, MDK is a remarkably sophisticated game with beautifully drawn futuristic cityscapes. Since nothing you meet will be friendly, the idea is to shoot first and ask questions later. But there's more to MDK than hammering at the fire button. Switch to sniper view and you'll be able to zoom in on any part of your foe's anatomy (without a hint of pixelation), enabling you to select *where* you hit a target. Not even the mighty QUAKE lets you do that. And if it seems sadistic, there's a valid reason for it: when aliens spot a wounded comrade, they'll rush to his aid, allowing you to pick them off at leisure. Sneaky, huh?

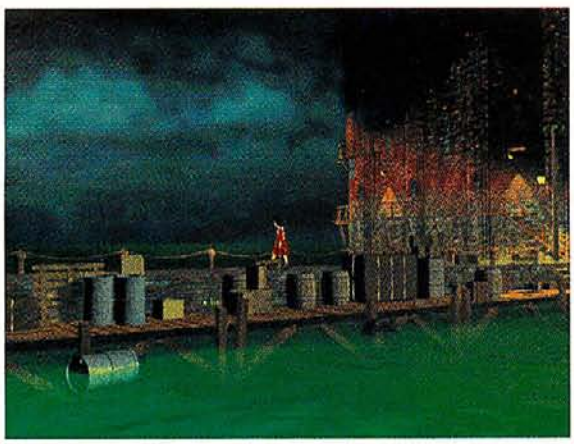
In addition to his sniping helmet, our hero Kurt is equipped with a parachute that you can open or close to control the speed of descent while firing at nearby targets.

The attention to detail is what makes MDK shine. The graphics are clear, crisp and bright—not a dull dungeon wall to be seen anywhere. Aliens range from big and menacing to spindly and comical. Platforms, airborne surfboards for you to ride, glass floors to smash through, forcefields and Hunter-Killer style spaceships pep up gameplay. Surprisingly, MDK is the first PC title from EARTHWORM JIM developer Shiny Entertainment, and perhaps that's why it seems so fresh. You get the feeling that Shiny looked at the PC and said "Great—different technology! What can we do with that?" rather than "How can we improve on QUAKE or COMMAND AND CONQUER?" MDK should be a winner.

The City Of Lost Children

THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN is an upcoming adventure game from Psygnosis loosely based on the movie of the same name by French filmmakers Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Junet. The movie is an amazing, surreal experience—a self-contained fantasy world made up of equal parts Terry Gilliam, Jean Cocteau and Fritz Lang—and is well worth renting for any fantasy or science-fiction fan (if you can deal with subtitles). So far, the beta version of the computer game shows a lot of promise in its own right.

When the story opens (in both the film and the game), the little brother of a circus strongman named One is kidnapped by a mysterious group of men and carted away in a van. One hooks up with a young orphan girl named Miette (French for "crumb"), who is being forced to work for the evil Siamese twins who run the orphanage, and the two set off to uncover the mystery of the disappearance of this and other children in the city.



In the game, you play the part of Miette, and your search for the children takes you through a pretty standard set of adventure game challenges—finding objects, solving logic problems, getting past barriers and so on. What helps set the game apart is its beautiful, bizarre look, which is quite faithful to that of the film. The game's motion-captured 3D characters are most reminiscent of Frederick Raynal's ALONE IN THE DARK and LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE.

Gameplay was a bit frustrating in this beta—it was often hard to find the objects and hotspots you're meant to interact with, and there just didn't seem to be *enough* to interact with. Hopefully, Psygnosis will tune gameplay enough before its final release so that it matches the game's truly stunning graphic look. — *Jeff Green*

3 OUT OF 4 GAME CHARACTERS SURVEYED

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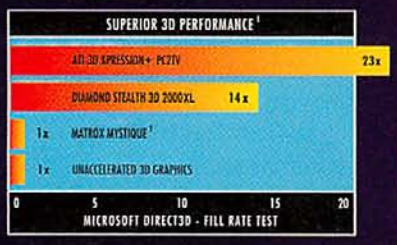

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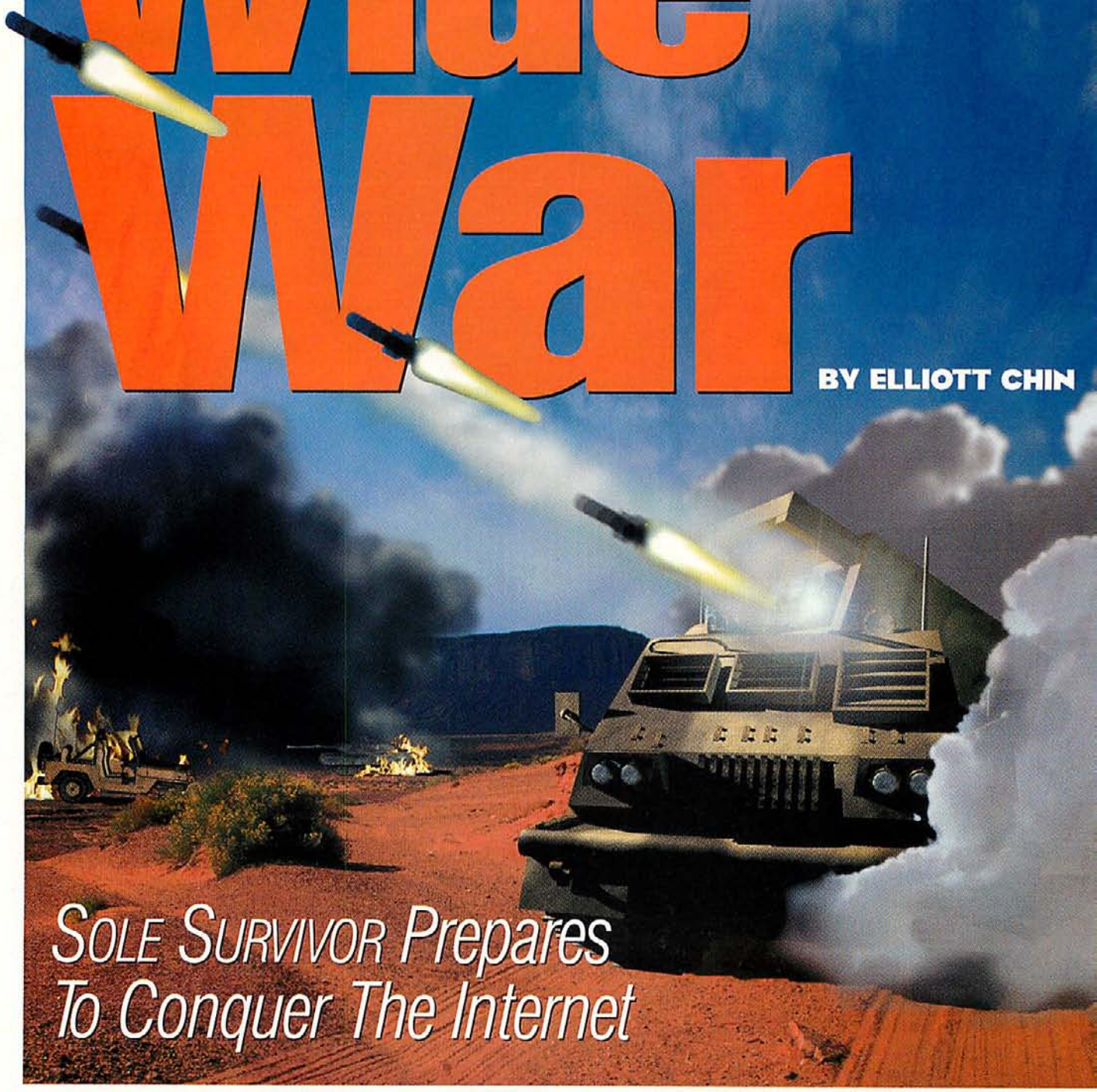
CIRCLE READER SERVICE #106

World Wide War

BY ELLIOTT CHIN



Sole Survivor Prepares To Conquer The Internet

Westwood has certainly earned its star on the Computer Gaming Walk of Fame. After creating DUNE II, which could be considered the grandfather of real-time strategy games, Westwood went on to create the "sequel," COMMAND & CONQUER, a classic battle between good and evil set on a near-future Earth.

With C&C eclipsing the million-unit sales mark half a year ago, Westwood is now ready to mine the franchise for all the gold it will produce. While the first sequel, RED ALERT, is very similar to its predecessor, the company isn't just planning to mindlessly stamp out cookie-cutter sequels in the C&C universe. Take, for example, COMMAND & CONQUER: SOLE SURVIVOR. This upcoming Internet game will bring all the frenzy and real-time excitement of the original C&C online, but it's a new gameplay experience.

CG SNEAK PREVIEW
GAME STILL IN DEVELOPMENT

CONQUERING THE INTERNET

SOLE SURVIVOR is designed to be played exclusively on the Internet, and it won't have any single-player campaigns or scenarios. After playing a few games of SOLE SURVIVOR at Westwood's offices, we were hooked. SOLE SURVIVOR isn't as much a strategy game as COMMAND & CONQUER. There are still obviously strategy elements, and the look is still that of C&C, but the gameplay is more action oriented. Here you don't command an army, nor can you build one. You don't even harvest Tiberium. Instead, you only command a single unit, and your only mission is to eventually kill everyone else.

The game doesn't fit into the COMMAND & CONQUER story line. Actually, at this writing, there are no plans for a story to tie this product into the C&C line, and there will be no campaign play. Instead, the guys at Westwood like to describe SOLE SURVIVOR as "total anarchy," a multiplayer game with a top-down COMMAND & CONQUER view, with C&C units, encompassing dozens of players in a battle to find out who will be the last unit standing. You can play SOLE SURVIVOR in simple deathmatch mode (like a strategic version of QUAKE Deathmatch), or you can play the game by allying with others and battling it out with other grouped players. The choice is yours, and ultimately, the goal of each game is to use whatever violent or treacherous means necessary to ensure that you are the sole survivor of the fray.

GDI SANDWICH Westwood's Internet-only multiplayer game, SOLE SURVIVOR, pits you against up to 50 other players. You can kill everyone yourself or form alliances, as Killer and Leach have done to crush Cremator in a heavy metal sandwich.

Q&A ALERT

CGW played an early version of COMMAND & CONQUER: SOLE SURVIVOR, but since it's not live on the Internet yet, we needed to dig a little deeper to get the full scoop on the game. So we asked the folks behind SOLE SURVIVOR a few questions, to give us the full picture of their Internet-only game.

Q. What is SOLE SURVIVOR?

A. COMMAND & CONQUER: SOLE SURVIVOR is Westwood Studios' new game being developed for exclusive Internet hyperplay. We call it hyperplay because our multiplayer technology allows up to 50 people to play together at once. What's unique and cool about this game is that you get to play in the familiar universe of COMMAND & CONQUER, but the rules are totally different. It's fast paced and vicious. You command a single unit and focus on survival and acquisition instead of production. The challenge is to collect power-ups that make you the deadliest unit in the game.

Q. How is the game being developed?

A. Bill Randolph is heading up the development effort for us. He is one of the lead programmers from the original COMMAND & CONQUER, as well as COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT. Bill is one of our most savvy Internet communication engineers. He's developed a server-based technology that enables us to continually enhance the quality of the game for our players through auto-updates.

Q. Has COMMAND & CONQUER: SOLE SURVIVOR been beta tested yet?

A. We've been beta testing for almost six months. We expect to begin an open beta as early as February and, hopefully, it will be available to all our fans by late March.

Q. How and where can people sign up for beta testing?

A. Interested beta testers will be able to register by early '97. As a lot of our fans know, Westwood already has a comprehensive online presence includ-

Q&A ALERT

ing a Web site, ftp site, online chat and game matchmaking services. Keep checking our Web site at http://www.westwood.com for information about these and exciting new services we are evolving.

Q. Where can you play it?

A. COMMAND & CONQUER: SOLE SURVIVOR is a unique product that can be played only on the Internet. Anyone with direct Internet access can log on to the Westwood game server to play.

Q. How will SOLE SURVIVOR be priced?

A. We're not sure right now. We want the game to be accessible to all our friends and fans around the world. We're considering letting people with existing Internet access play free by downloading the front end. We do plan on having a version available at retail that will provide instant Internet access for those gamers not already connected.

Q. What kind of system do you need to play?

A. You'll need to be running a Pentium system with Windows 95, 16MB of RAM, and at least a 28.8 modem with direct Internet access. We're not sure if you'll need to own the original COMMAND & CONQUER—that's an issue we're still working on. SOLE SURVIVOR is also hi-res only.

Q. How big are the SOLE SURVIVOR battlefields?

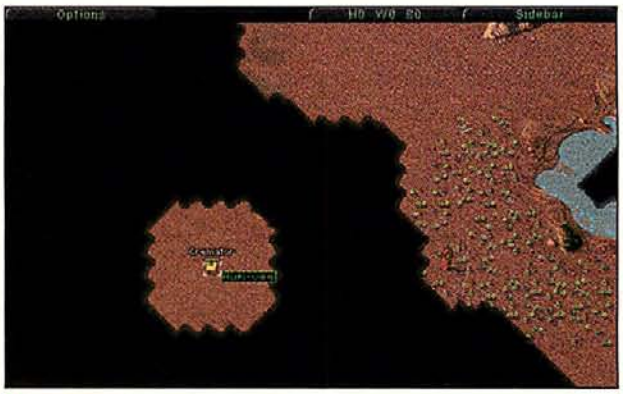
A. They are up to four times the size of the battlefields in COMMAND & CONQUER.

Q. What variety is there to the battlefields, and will you be able to select the ones you play on?

A. We're planning to include many of the best battlefields from the original COMMAND & CONQUER as well as some unique ones never before seen. The server will randomly select the battlefields.

Q. Will there be any units from RED ALERT included?

A. COMMAND & CONQUER: SOLE SURVIVOR will feature units found only in the original COMMAND & CONQUER. We're considering a RED ALERT variation of SOLE SURVIVOR, but if you don't have many human players to play against, the game can spawn its own AI-controlled units. At this early stage, though, I wasn't able to play against these units and analyze the sophistication of the AI.



DONUT HOLE Some C&C features, like the shroud, are there in SOLE SURVIVOR. This GDI Humvee will now explore the shroud, looking for targets and power-ups.

HOPPING INTO BATTLE

My first few games of SOLE SURVIVOR were amazingly simple to grasp. As soon as I started the game, I was greeted with a screen showing all the available GDI units, such as mammoth tanks and engineers, from COMMAND & CONQUER. A click of a button changed the screen to the NOD selection screen, with NOD buggies, recon bikes and stealth tanks. You can choose only one unit, though you aren't necessarily stuck with the unit you choose. As soon as I jumped into the game, I knew I had been here before. The look is right out of COMMAND & CONQUER, except that the graphics are in beautiful SVGA. The viewable play area is thus larger, just as in RED ALERT or C&C for Windows 95. The map terrain was mostly desert and hills, reminiscent of the levels in COMMAND & CONQUER. The games that I played did boil down to kill-or-be-killed deathmatches, and the point was to rack up as many kills as possible. Obviously, the game hasn't been play balanced yet, but for the task of dealing death, I always gravitated to either the striking speed of the recon bike or the sheer power of the mammoth tank. You will die a lot, unless you have an insanely powerful unit or you're a very skilled player, but if you do die, you can simply respawn with the touch of a space bar.

You can choose to change vehicles, but when you do, the game will deduct from your overall kill list. Thus, you can't just keep switching vehicles at will.

Although there is theoretically no limit to the number of players in a single game besides the server capacity, SOLE SURVIVOR will likely allow a maximum of 50 players to duke it out on the battlefield. That's still plenty, and with dozens of players on the battlefield, that means you'll have plenty of targets and plenty of people to run from. The more the merrier in SOLE

THE NOD SQUAD

The first form of strategy you'll have to mull over is which vehicle to choose. All the C&C vehicles and units, both GDI and NOD, are available in SOLE SURVIVOR. Each unit is rated in three different characteristics: armor, weapons, and speed. Each vehicle's rating is true to what you encountered in COMMAND & CONQUER. Mammoth tanks have the best armor and weapon power but the lowest speed. Recon bikes have the highest speed but significantly lower weapon and armor ratings. Each unit also has a health bar, with the heavier units obviously having more health points than the weaker units.

Of course, if all you had to do was hop into a unit and shoot people, SOLE SURVIVOR would get boring and frustrating. Units like the mammoth tank would crush the lesser units, like puny little riflemen. Thankfully, Westwood is spicing up play by adding power-ups to the battlefield. Every map is peppered with crates. Within each crate lie power-ups and special items. There are power-ups that increase your three primary stats—armor, weapons, and speed—as well as health crates that heal your unit if it is damaged.

There are also special crates that will cloak you,

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Q&A ALERT

Survivor, as well as a variation that combines units from both. Don't forget, our server-based technology will allow us to regularly auto-update Sole Survivor. This means we will have the opportunity to add power-ups and other game enhancements and variations.

Q. What is Westwood doing to better balance the game?

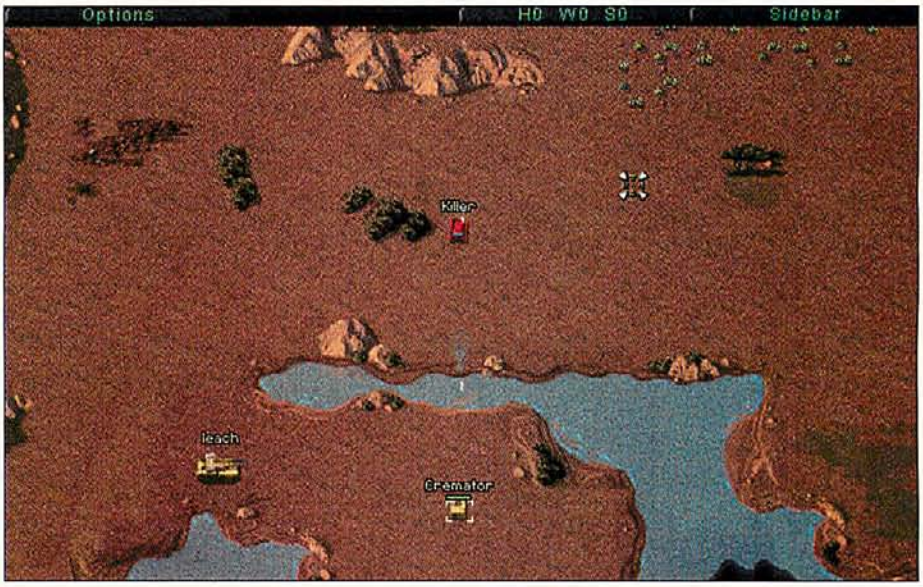
A. What we've done is create a game where, with a little luck and skill, players can design their own unit. You could start out with the Artillery Unit, get the speed of a Recon Bike, the armor strength of a Mammoth Tank and the shot power of a Rocket Launcher. The fun is a combination of hide-n-seek, direct confrontation and how you choose to pick your fights. All of this depends on how wise and lucky you are in collecting your power-up crates.

Q. What other types of gameplay will there be besides death match?

A. We don't refer to Command & Conquer: Sole Survivor gameplay as death match—it's more like anarchy, because you have so many people playing simultaneously with no set structure. We're also working on making it possible for players to form alliances with other players, which will change gameplay continually. Sole Survivor will take on an entirely new dynamic when you must decide what other types of units/players make the most deadly teammates. Since the combinations are endless, you cannot predict what any match might be like—they'll all be different.

Q. Will you be releasing new units or battlefields for download after people have purchased the game? What can people look forward to in future upgrades, if you upgrade the game at all?

A. There will be downloads and auto updates that add battlefields, power-ups and other features to the game periodically. In addition to this—though we haven't figured out how yet—we are planning to have tournaments and contests that will make it really cool as well as mean something to our fans to be the Sole Survivor champion.



POWER TRIP Half the battle in Sole Survivor is finding power-ups to increase speed, power and armor. With these upgrades, even light tanks can dwarf mammoth tanks.

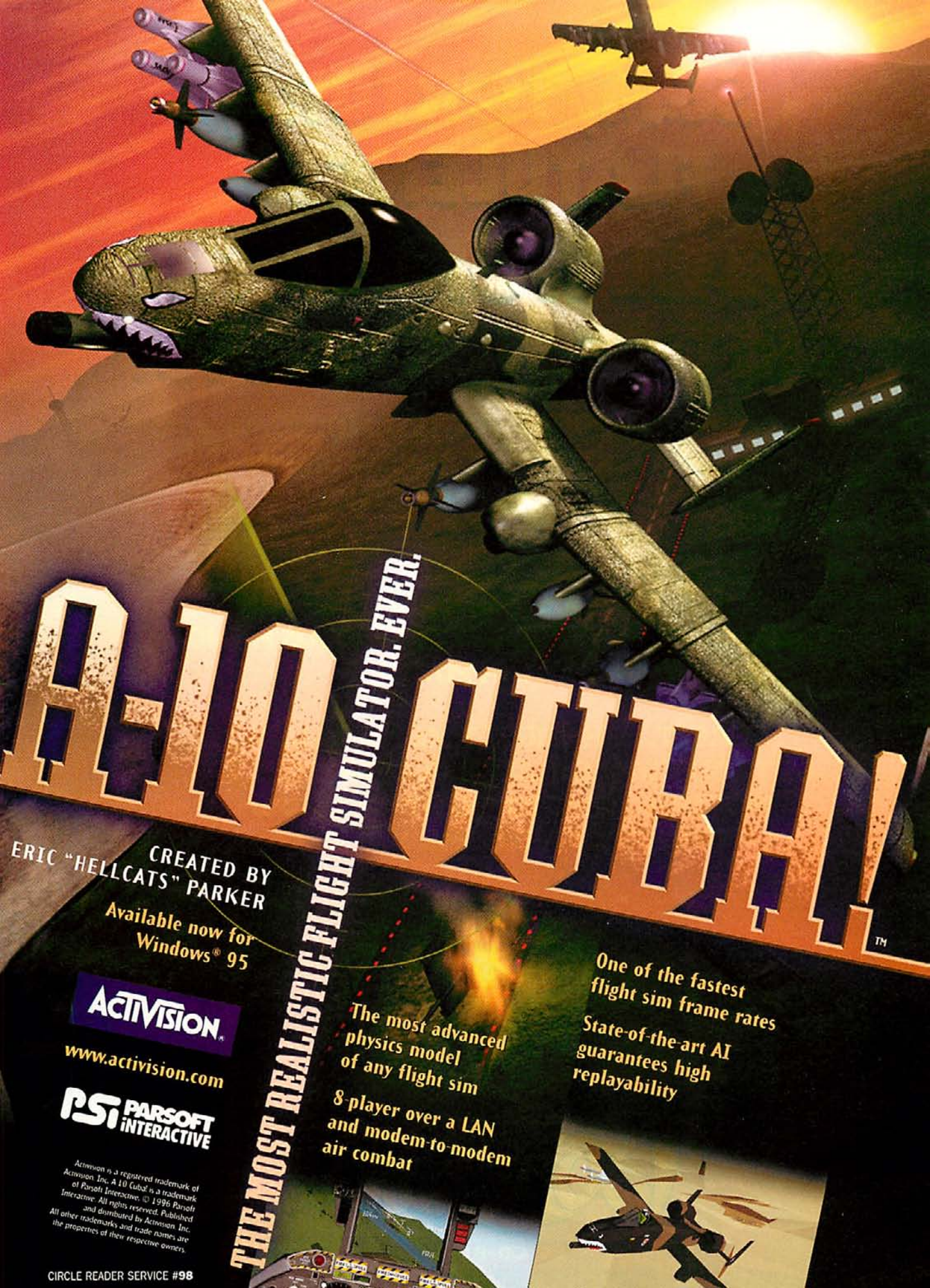
teleport you or reshroud the map. Then there are other, less beneficial crates, that will destroy you with an ion blast, rip up the surrounding terrain with a nuclear detonation, or decloak your invisible unit. Even a tiny unit like the Recon Bike can become a formidable opponent if it has five weapon, armor and speed power-ups each. A mammoth tank is especially deadly with a surplus of speed power-ups. However, to better balance the game, as you pick up more and more beneficial power-ups, the likelihood of picking up a bad crate will increase so that the really powerful players are more likely to get zapped, while the less powerful are more likely to pick up helpful items.

WHAT'S FAMILIAR?

There will be features in the game that will be familiar to the Command & Conquer general. For one, the shroud is still in effect and operates just as in Command & Conquer. The map starts out black, and as you move, the areas around you become visible. However, certain crates will reshroud the map. Also being kept are some C&C commands. Very useful is the "next unit" command, which in C&C moves you to your next unit, but which in Sole Survivor highlights your only unit. Westwood is thinking about putting in an auto-target key, so you can press a key to click the closest target. Otherwise, it's a bit difficult to draw a bead on moving units with your mouse, especially when they're souped up with speed power-ups.

There are other aspects of the game that are still being determined and questions that were left unanswered even after I played the game. However, Sole Survivor, with its simple and addictive gameplay, looks very promising. With support for up to 50 players at once, it could attract a huge following over the Internet. Westwood sure hopes so, and the company won't be disappointed at all if gamers from all over the globe clog up their phone lines and fill the Westwood Chat servers to maximum capacity. In fact, they're counting on it.

CLOAK AND CONQUER With the aid of cloaking power-ups, any unit can possess the Stealth tank's invisibility. This cloaked unit will get the jump on Speed and Cativa.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Compiled by Thierry Nguyen

ILLUSTRATION: EDDIE LEE

1,001 Underhanded, Sneaky Ways To Win

Sometimes, you could just care less about honor. You're tired of having your tail waxed by those mangy Kilrathi. You're tired of being the only "Mortal" one in MORTAL KOMBAT. Or you're kicking yourself for investing so much time in DOOM KLONE #942, but you want to see the fireworks at the end.

The solution? Type the magic word, invoke the powers of the developers, and *cheat*. Wreak unimpeded havoc on enemy ships after a tough day at work. Get to the *end* of that lame $45 game you bought so you can move onto something better. Or breeze past that seemingly impossible end-of-level challenge that's kept an otherwise intriguing game on the shelf for so long.

Because sometimes honor has to be put aside in the name of *fun*.

Simulations/ Space Simulations

MechWarrior 2

To enable the cheats, hold down the Ctrl, Alt, and Shift keys and type the appropriate code.

1. BLORB Enables complete Invulnerability
2. CIA Unlimited ammo for weapons
3. MIGHTYMOUSE Unlimited jump jet fuel
4. DORCS Allows you to meet the makers of Mechwarrior 2
5. ENOLA GAY Destroys all targets in the mission (type quickly)
6. FLYGIRL Adds jump jet capability to any 'mech
7. ICANTHACKIT Ends the mission successfully
8. TINKERBELL Unlocks camera from your 'mech
9. XRAY Gives image enhancement plus the ability to see through objects
10. HANGAROUND Allows you to continue exploring a mission after time runs out
11. GANKEM Destroys targeted 'Mech

MechWarrior 2: Ghost Bear's Legacy

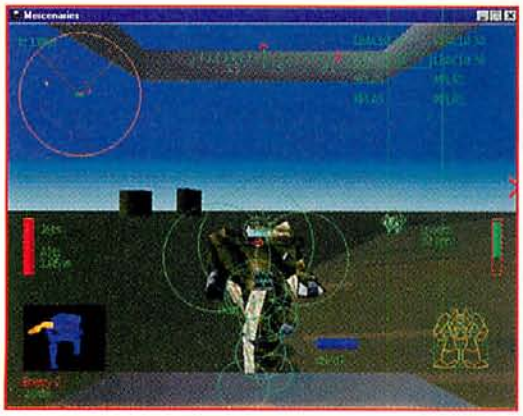
Hold down Ctrl, Alt, and Shift and type the appropriate code.

12. KENT Invulnerability
13. CLARK X-ray Vision
14. PUTZ mission over
15. DORCS shows the guys
16. PALEX kill targeted mech
17. BURR heat tracking off
18. THUNDROS unlimited ammo
19. KABOOM kills all mechs
20. DRONE free eye mode
21. JUMBO jets on any mech
22. CRILLION unlimited jet juice
23. MERLOCK time expansion toggle
24. SPEEDYGONZALE time compression
25. VOYEUR mini camera
26. TIK collision spheres

Shattered Steel

Press Enter and type any of these codes at the prompt to activate.

27. GONZALES Makes bot fast
28. RAGNAROK blows player bot's head off
29. SMITE destroys your target
30. CAPONE spawns five gnats to help you
31. HENCHMAN spawns a shiva to help you
32. FNORD 120 howitzer
33. BLIPPLEBLOOPS rapid laser
34. RATSNEST med laser
35. NUMBERCHANGER rolling mine
36. CGQ large rocket 8 pack
37. GFY small rocket 18 pack
38. BCUA large rocket 18 pack
39. DINGLEBERRY heavy laser
40. KWAHAMOT radar missle
41. FISHHEADS IR missile
42. BUMSAUCE heavy rapid laser
43. NAPALMINTHEMORNING fae mortar
44. EATMYSHORTS mortar
45. KICKSOMEBUTT heavy plasma, small rocket 64
46. TINKERBELL nova
47. DOGAN 120 howitzer
48. CURVEDLIVES 50mm gat
49. HARDCODE 30mm gat
50. BIGONES 70mm gat
51. STOOL mine launcher
52. PYROTEK big boom
53. LOCKANDLOAD gives all weapons max ammo



BUBBLEBOY With the Spheres cheat, you can see the hit spheres for each of an enemy Mech's parts.

MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries

54. SUPERFUNKICALIFRAGISEXY Invulnerability
55. ISEEFIREANDISEERAIN Ammo
56. OOOHHHLLLAAALLLAAA Heat
57. WEDIDITAGAIN *Dorcs*
58. ITSDABOOOMB Bomb
59. INMYBEAUTIFULBALLOON Jumpjets
60. REDJACKRULES Auto Kill
61. LIKETHECOMSTARBABY Auto win
62. ONTIMEEVERYTIME Fast Mode
63. BUBBLEBOY Spheres
64. CRAZYSEXYCOOL Infinite jumpjets
65. BEHOLDMYGLORY Free eye
66. ANTIJOLT Slow Mode
67. IMOUTTAHERE wins mission
68. RODRIGO spawns two light choppers to help
69. CHERNOBYL nuke
70. Teleport <1-512> <1-512> teleports player to any position on map

Wing Commander Series

71. When you type the startup command for either WC or WC2, add a space then type "Origin -k". Make sure you use a capital O or the cheat won't work. You'll be able to fly against wave after wave of Kilrathi without taking damage and destroy any targeted ship (including the big capital ships!) at will by pressing Ctrl and Del simultaneously.
72. Wing Commander III is similar. Use the command line wc3 -mitchell and while in combat Ctrl-W will kill a locked-on enemy, and Ctrl-Alt-W will destroy all enemies in the radar map.
73. For Wing Commander IV, use the command line wc4 -chicken. These controls should work: Ctrl-W to destroy targeted enemy, Ctrl-Alt-W to destroy all enemies on radar, and Alt-O to become invulnerable.

X-Wing

74. Type WIN for infinite weapons

Aces over Europe

75. BATAT full life
76. Dads full armament
77. QUARTS invisibility

Win 95 is cool, but *sucks* with DOS games!

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WING COMMANDER

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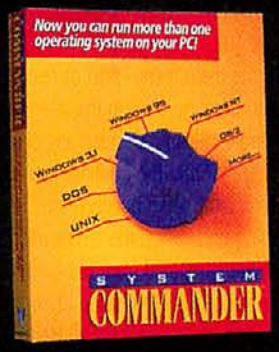

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Comanche: Maximum Overkill

78. From the options menu (press Esc from anywhere and you'll be there) hold down backspace and type KYLE. A new pull-down menu will appear called "Cheats." Go there during a mission and you can repair your helicopter and rearm all the weapons.

Falcon 3.0

79. Shift-T time of day
80. Shift-U look down
81. Ctrl-Alt-5 auto level
82. P-TAB recon camera (Wait for pause before hitting TAB)
83. P-TAB-D debug mode
1st line: (unknown programming gibberish)
2nd line: N/S & E/W Coordinates; Alt. (divide by 2); Speed
3rd line: Frame Rate
84. P-TAB-T transporter; type location code & hit enter.

While in Camera mode use the following:

85. + / - increase / decrease speed
86. PgUp / PgDn increase / decrease altitude
87. F3 / F4 rotate right / left
88. Hold Shift for up & down rotation
89. Hold Ctrl for fine tuning
90. Hit ~ to start sim back up

1942: Pacific Air War

9 1. Type the code RASTA to enable cheat mode.

Red Baron

92. Put your plane in a forward slip (full rudder one way and enough aileron the opposite direction to fly a constant heading). Enemies will think they can't get a shot at you. It only works from the front.

Interactive Magic's Apache

Just type these in as your login name (it's case sensitive) to activate the cheat modes.

93. Flamdwyn Aiobhell infinite weapons
94. Lyn Wins infinite weapons + invulnerability + model cheats Model cheats are:
95. Alt-T overtorque toggle.
96. Ctrl-T terrain following toggle
97. Alt-V no Fuel
98. SHFT-V refuel
99. Shift-Ctrl-Alt-Tab (with overtorque off) Speed warp. Each successive press of Tab (with the other keys held down) will cycle warp through 0-9.

Monster Truck Madness

100. Type TREX and your monster truck will turn into a real monster—a robotic dinosaur!

Battledrome

101. If you've been clanking around in a low-budget herc in Sierra's METALTECH: BATTLEDROME, looking for a way to get a juicy upgrade to that top-of-the line model, then this cheat is for you! When you type in your name at the main screen, simply add an asterisk (*) as the first letter of your name. You'll find that you have all the money you need to buy the best equipment for your battles in the arena.

EarthSiege

102. From the main menu, start or resume a campaign. Now go back to the main menu and select single mission. Choose any of the missions offered. Enter the briefing, then click on armament. Grab a big hulking Herc. Return to the briefing and cancel the single mission. Resume the campaign from the main menu, play the first assigned mission, then save. Load the save and you'll now have all Hercs completely decked out and ready for action.

Star Rangers

103. Java enables cheats
104. Shazam invincibility
105. Cameo warp tunnel autopilot
106. Vitaminz full fuel and ammo
107. Scotty infinite warp
108. Iseeu view all enemies on the map
109. Zoomerz time acceleration
110. Bogons shows design team
111. Boxes target boxes
112. Dust fly through ships and objects
113. Shift-f12 low res mode
114. Voizis finish mission
115. Voizif fails mission

DEATH BY KEYPRESS A simple press of Ctrl-W will destroy enemies in WING COMMANDER IV with the cheats active.

TFX

116. In flight, Shift-D gives you full ammunition, rockets and chaff.

Inferno

117. While in the cockpit hold down the Right-Shift key and type LOLIFE. "Cheat-Enabled" will appear on your HUD. You will be invincible and have unlimited weapons.
118. In addition, pause the game using Alt-P and press numbers 1 thru 7 to award the corresponding combat pod.

Adventure /RPG

Full Throttle

119. To win fights on the Old Mine Road : Press Shift and type V. Also, if you stop moving and don't touch anything for a few minutes, a screen comes up showing a selection of different vehicles and rotating them.

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis

120. Just press the Insert key during a fight to defeat your enemy.

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #**368**

PUZZLING INTERVIEWS If you're interested in talking to suspects like Falconetti in RIPPER, but you'd rather not deal with their puzzles, these sequences can be skipped using cheat codes.

Harvester

121. BRUCE — god mode
122. NICK — full health
123. MURDERER — extra guns
124. SON OF SAM — extra items
125. DUSTIN — warp to the first level
126. BOSTON STRANGLER — warp to the second level
127. HELTER SKELTER — warp to the third level
128. CHARLES MANSON — warp to the last level

Ripper

Type these in during the puzzle or action sequences to skip over them.

129. ARCADE — catherine's well ice
130. ARCADE — falconetti's shooting gallery
131. CAFFEINE — catherine's brain ice
132. ZZTOP — web runner's archive sliding puzzle
133. HEADACHE — falconetti's secret well puzzle
134. ASPIRIN — pegasus well chess game
135. ARCADE — orestes well ice
136. ARCADE — odysseus well ice
137. SPONGE — falconetti book puzzle
138. PRETZEL — anti-viral well puzzle

Relentless

139. To restore Life Health and Jetpack Power, hold down the keys B-I-G.
140. Tech Parameter Mode: Press Ctrl-Alt-Right Shift-F12 all together to display your current coordinates.

Inca

141. Ctrl-Alt-Left Shift gives full energy in space dogfights.

Daedalus Encounter

142. To skip a scene: select game from main menu, press Alt-F5, select JUMP TO to reveal saved games for all scenes. Click on one to jump to it.
143. To skip a puzzle: press Alt-Shift, type the first letter of the puzzle's name. (Press alt-Shift-i to skip orbit puzzle.)

Ultima VI

144. Talk to Iolo, say "Spam" three times, then say "Humbug" to get a cheat menu. You can get objects, power-up your team, and look at portraits of people in the game. (You must experiment a bit with the object list.)

Betrayal at Krondor

Here are the chapter passwords, potions, and everything else you'll need to beat the game: On the overhead map, hold down the Alt-Right Shift and ~ (the tilde) for about three seconds, and a chest will appear. Each chest contains the items needed to finish that chapter, and an option to heal all characters. Just use the cheat trick, in conjunction with these level codes, and you can beat every chapter:

145. Chapter 1: 6478
146. Chapter 2: 9216
147. Chapter 3: 7702
148. Chapter 4: 2132
149. Chapter 5: 5052
150. Chapter 6: 0680
151. Chapter 7: 0194
152. Chapter 8: 4743
153. Chapter 9: 9995

Dark Sun 2

154. To enable the cheats, run DSUN -K911 at the command line. Then, during the game:
155. T — Raise level
156. M — Restore all magic
157. Alt-F2 — Increase attack power
158. Alt-F4 — Learn all spells

Clouds of Xeen

Type at the teleport mirrors:

159. LORD XEEN — to Lord Xeen
160. BOGUS — to Lord Xeen
161. COUNT DU MONEY — to dragon's lair
162. SHOWTIME — to endgame
163. SHANGRI-LA — to hidden town
164. I LOST IT — get magical sword

Strategy

Warcraft 2

To enable the cheats hit Enter while in the game, then type one of the codes, and hit Enter again. In multiplayer, cheats effect both sides.

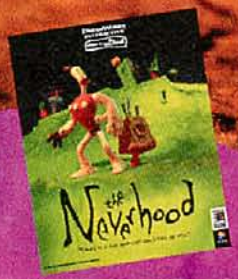
165. UNITE THE CLANS — Takes you to the scenario's victory sequence
166. YOU PITIFUL WORM — Takes you to the scenario's loss sequence
167. IT IS A GOOD DAY TO DIE — Gives players Godlike powers
168. GLITTERING PRIZES — Adds gold, lumber, oil
169. VALDEZ — Adds oil
170. HATCHET, AXE AND SAW — Accelerates production of lumber
171. EVERY LITTLE THING SHE DOES — Upgrades player's magic
172. DECK ME OUT — Upgrades units
173. ON SCREEN — Shows whole map
174. MAKE IT SO — Faster upgrades, construction
175. THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE — Takes you to finale sequence
176. NEVER A WINNER — Makes victory impossible
177. TIGERLILY — Enables Scenario Jump
178. ORC# or HUMAN# — Jumps to mission number (put a number in #)

Warcraft

179. To enable these cheat codes, hit enter, type one of the codes, and then hit enter again. *First*

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

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



"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. [www.DreamWorksGames.com]

DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE

the Neverhood™

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

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use the Corwin Master Code to enable the others. CORWIN OF AMBER enables the use of the codes below:

180. THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE Makes all of your soldiers invincible to everything except catapults, and can kill an enemy in one hit.

181. HUMAN# Warp to any human mission. Replace # with the number of the mission you want to warp to.

182. ORC# Warp to any orc mission. Replace # with the number of the mission you want to warp to.

183. HURRY UP GUYS Speeds construction, research

184. EYE OF NEWT Gets all magic spells available to your team

185. IRON FORGE Get the best weapon and shield strength

186. SALLY SHEARS Get full map (a help)

187. POT OF GOLD Get 10,000 more gold and 5,000 more lumber

188. IDES OF MARCH Takes you to the final sequence

189. YOURS TRULY Takes you to the victory sequence

190. CRUSHING DEFEAT Takes you to the failure sequence.

Command and Conquer: Covert Operations

191. If you want to play secret missions with Dinosaurs type C&C FUNPARK and start a new game. Choose either GDI or NOD, and you'll see a new movie and about 5 new missions.

Heroes of Might and Magic

192. 101495 Reveal the whole map.

Afterlife

193. SAMNMAX Show the Sam & Max disaster

194. $@! Get 10,000,000 pennies; works only three times per game.

Chaos Overlords

When asked to type in your name before a one-player game, type one of these codes instead:

195. SMGHUBBLE See every gang in all places

196. SMGKICKASS Five ground zeros, fully loaded

197. SMGMILK Every hire in at maximum health

WARCRAFTY Falling behind in WarCraft? A little cheat magic can speed construction and research.

Master of Orion

198. Alt-GALAXY Scouts the whole galaxy for you

199. Alt-MOOLA Gives 100bc while in Planet screen

A-Train

200. Hold down the Ctrl and Shift keys and type "petercheatercheaterwimp." This will give you a million dollars and full supplies.

Master of Magic

201. In the "M"agic screen hold down the Alt key and type POWER. You can cast all learnable spells, including the Spell of Mastery, and get a fair amount of mana. Wizards also get this.

202. Alt-REVEAL You will get to see everything on the map, and so will all the wizards.

CivNet

To activate the cheat menu in CivNet, type Ctrl A O D B A M F in order. Don't hold down the Ctrl key. The menu enables these cheats:

203. SCALEIT Increases production

204. ARMYINFO See information on other races

205. MONEYANDPOWER Gives money and power

206. ALLSEEINGEYE Reveals the whole map

207. GETRICHQUICK Gives you 1,000 coins

208. GETSMARTQUICK Gives you a Civilization advance

209. MISSILECRISIS Creates a nuclear missile in each city

210. SETTLERSHO! Creates a settlers unit in each city

211. NUKESTORMS Causes global warming

212. AUTOMODE The computer moves for you

213. ARMAGGEDON Nukes every city.

SimAnt

214. QEEN Makes another queen in the nest (works only when you are underground).

215. FUND A message telling you that $10,000 dollars is worthless pops up.

216. RAND Gives the yellow ant full health.

217. ERAD Depletes the yellow ant's health.

218. HOLE Creates many more ant nest holes.

219. JUST Gives 10 more fertilized queens to place in Full Game.

220. OOPS Gives the red ants 10 more fertilized queens to place in the Full Game.

221. JEFF Places a new black ant colony in every single tile in the yard and house.

222. WILL Never lose a fight against a red ant.

223. JOKE Shows a joke.

224. SUSI Unlimited health for the yellow ant.

225. JENN Unlimited health for the black colony.

226. MICK Makes the spider walk backward.

227. FRED See how it looks if you win the game

228. Weird Spider: Did you know that you can make the spider shoot laser beams at ants? Did you know that you can make it walk backwards? To see these, click on the blank mystery button a few times. Be careful, for you may have to click it many times and many other strange phenomena may occur.

SimLife

229. SEED Plants seeds around world.

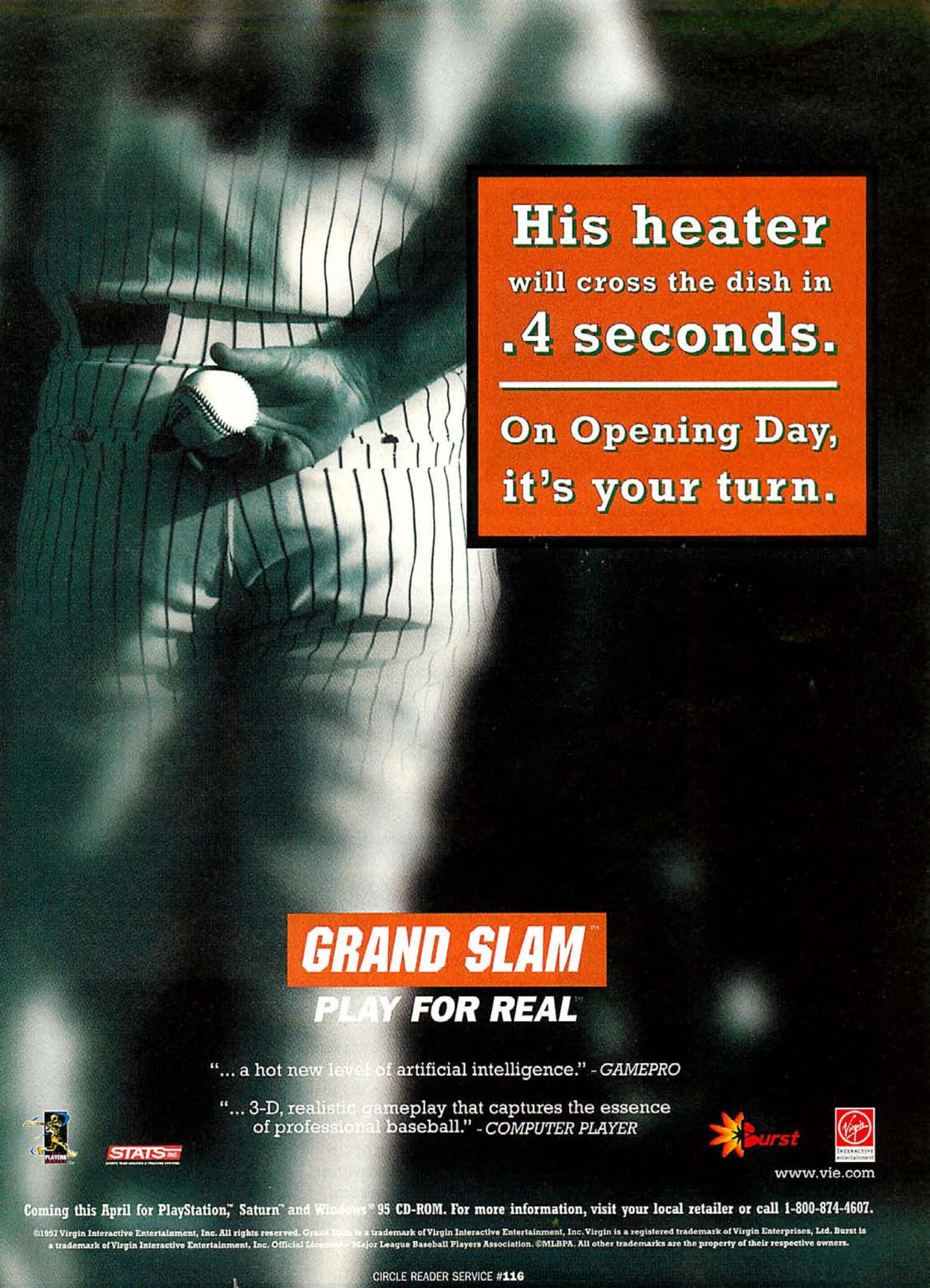
230. JOKE Shows a joke.

231. BABY Makes every female of the selected animal species give birth.

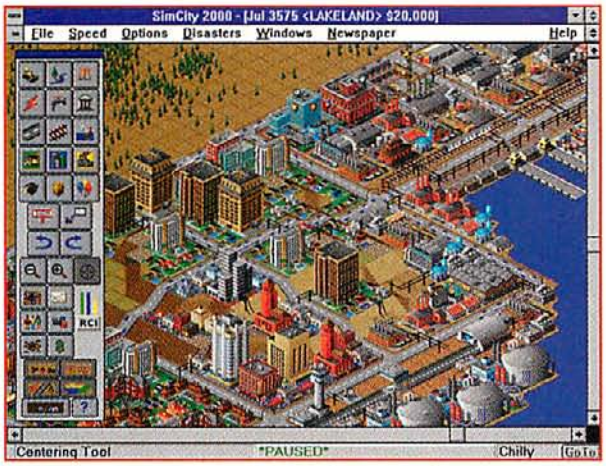
232. JUST Makes a funny noise.

233. WALL Toggles barriers between SimLife rocks and SimAnt walls. Normally barriers, toxins, mutagens, and Ultra-Food Sources can't block flying animals, but while this toggle is on, not only will barriers turn into walls, but all artifacts can block flying animals.

234. FUND Shows a window with three choices. Each one gives members of the selected animal species a



CIRCLE READER SERVICE #116



BANKER BENEFITS Sure, the FUND cheat will work in SimCity 2000, but it'll cost you 25 percent interest.

health rate equal to the percentage on the button you press (e.g., 100% gives every member of the selected species a health of 100%). When this is used on plant species, their food and water rates are affected.

235. FOOD Eliminates every Ultra-Food source.

SimCity

236. Pause the game. Type FUND in all-caps. You will have 10,000 more dollars. Repeat this until you have about $80,000. The simulation will not allow you to have more than that. Don't unpause the game yet or countless earthquakes will occur! Save the game and exit. Start SimCity again and load your city. Unpause game and play. Repeat this process whenever you are low in money.

240. If there is a SimCity scenario that has a great city but you can't beat the disasters to win it, try this. Start the scenario. Save the game. Restart and load the saved scenario. It will be yours!

SimCity 2000

Here are the cheat codes that we know about. For the Mac, these cheats are case sensitive (they must be typed in ALL CAPS to work). Unless otherwise stated, you don't have to be anywhere in particular when you type these cheats in— just be looking at your city.

(All Platforms)

241. CASS Money or a disaster (15% chance of a disaster)

242. FUND $10,000 bond (at 25% interest)

243. JOKE a Joke (Macintosh, v1.0 only)

244. PORNTIPSGUZZARDO $500,000, all rewards activated

(Windows 3.1)

Click on top of tool bar to make these work.

245. BUDDAMUS $500,000, all rewards activated

246. GILMARTIN Military base

247. NOAH Starts a flood

248. MOSES Stops a flood

249. MRSOLEARY Starts a fire

(Windows 95)

250. IMACHEAT $500,000, all rewards activated

251. PRISCILLA Debug Menu

(DOS, v1.0 floppy version only)

252. At the beginning of a new city, type in FUND and click on Yes. Type FUND again and click on Yes. Pull down the Window menu and select Budget. To the right of Bond Payments, you will see an open book. Click on it. Select the button Issue Bond and click on Yes. Select the Repay Bond button to repay the first bond. Select the button Issue Bond and click on Yes. Select the Repay Bond button to repay the second bond. Select Issue Bond and click on Yes. Don't repay this bond, ever. This will give you $1.4 million every year.

SimIsle

To use the cheats, save your game as the name of the cheat.

253. SIMONSCHICKENKB Increases heavy machinery by 100 and unskilled labor by 10

254. IAINTESTEDITCO Adds 10,000 to EMU's

255. DEESEXTRAPIXEL Adds 1,000 building materials

256. RAGSCHOCOLATESTACH Adds 5,000 to food

257. MARKSANCHOVYPIZZA Toggles agent pay off (they work for free)

258. 3527490 Adds 10 skilled labor to game.

Colonization

259. Cheat Menu: Press Alt and type WIN during play

Defender of the Crown

260. After you have started playing, try holding K during a load for 1024 Knights in your army and 1024 Knights protecting the castle.

Stronghold

261. Enter STRONG DEBUG to load the program, then press:

262. Alt-B Change building type by one

263. Alt-F Change building type by ten

264. Alt-C Change character(don't use enemies!!)

265. Alt-K Destroy a random enemy stronghold

SimEarth

237. SMOOTH Smoothes the coasts of your planet's continents.

238. JOKE Type this when the Gaia window is in view. Her face will be in a frying pan!

239. Robots!: There is another class of life not explained in the manual, the robot. Robots are able to survive everywhere, including on rock, arctic, and ocean. Robots can evolve sentience, too, but because they are already so advanced, they will not be able to have stone age, bronze age, or iron age cities. They will begin civilization at the level of the industrial age. To create robots, simply place one nanotech city of any life form and set an atomic test on it. Robots in the city will escape and live as separate life forms!

Theme Park

266. Choose HORZA as your nickname and start the game. Press and hold the C key and you'll be informed that you're cheating.

267. Ctrl-Z All attractions

268. Alt-Z All shops

269. Shift-Z and Enter-Z enable for features like toilets and trees.

270. Press C to gain money and when you think you have enough, press Enter

Trust

A secret shared.
A promise kept.
A heart opened.

Trust is the shiny jewel glistening
brightly in the rock of friendship.
Then, like any rock, it can be a powerful tool.

A blunt object that can be hammered against your allies'
unsuspecting, trusting skulls, against a monolithic church
and warring noble houses, against all that stands between
you and ultimate power as leader of the universe.
Trust is indeed a shiny jewel.

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Designed for Microsoft Windows 95

TEEN

271. Alt-P Promote your character
272. Alt-L Increase character level (press repeatedly, then click on character)
273. Alt-Z Destroy enemy units on screen

Minesweeper

274. When you start, type XYZZY and press Right Enter key and Left Shift key. When you move over a covered square with a mine, a pixel (very small) at the top right corner of the screen with be black.

Metal Marines

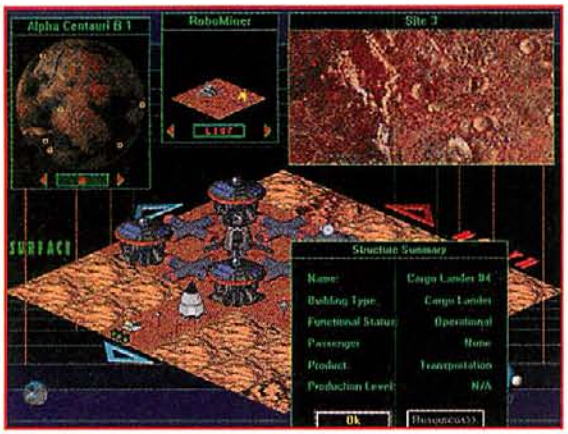
275-289. Level 1: PNTM, Level 2: HBBT, Level 3: PCRC, Level 4: NWTN, Level 5: LSMD, Level 6: CLST, Level 7: JPTR, Level 8: NBLR, Level 9: PRSC, Level 10: PHTN, Level 11: TRNS, Level 12: RNSN, Level 13: ZDCP, Level 14: FKDV, Level 15: YSHM

Master of Orion: Battle at Antares

Hold down the Alt key and type:
290. EINSTEIN Gives you all technologies
291. ISEEALL Onmiscience (use with care—it alters your race's statistics)
292. MENLO Robo miners
293. MOOLA Gives you 1000 BC
294. SCORE Shows the score

Outpost

295. During play, press Alt, then type WIN.
296. Ctrl-F8 Get some encouragement
297. Ctrl-F9 Cause traffic pile up
298. Ctrl-F10 Disaster strikes
299. Ctrl-F11 Recoup resources
300. Ctrl-F12 Increase/decease morale, education, or crime.



OUTHOUSE? COMPOST? With a little creative cheating, you can get to the end of Outpost sooner—and on to a more complete game.

Classics /Puzzles

Lemmings 3D

Warp codes; type at any time.
301. NASTALIK Level 2 (Which Exit?)
302. PADUASOY Level 3 (Alilemm's)
303. BRELOQUE Level 4 (Castle Lemmalot)
304. OCHIDORE Level 5 (A Short Cut Through the Woods)
305. CECROPIA Level 6 (Alpine Assault Course)
306. KABELJOU Level 7 (Land Ahoy)
307. DOUMPALM Level 8 (A Head Above the Rest!)

Gobliiins

Type in the code at any time to skip directly to these levels:
308. Level 2: VQVQFDE
309. Level 3: ICIGCAA
310. Level 4: ECPQPCC
311. Level 5: FTWKFEN
312. Level 6: HQWFTFW
313. Level 7: DWNDGBW
314. Level 8: JCJCJHM
315. Level 9: ICVGCGT
316. Level 10: LQPCUJV
317. Level 11: HNWVGKB
318. Level 12: FTQKVLE
319. Level 13: DCPLQMH
320. Level 14: EWDGPNL
321. Level 15: TCNGTOV
322. Level 16: TCVQRPM
323. Level 17: IQDNKQO
324. Level 18: KKKPURE
325. Level 19: NGOGKSP
326. Level 20: NNGWTTO
327. Level 21: LGWFGUS
328. Level 22: TQNGFVC

Action

Crusader: No Remorse

329. Type JASSICA16 and you will hear a voice saying "Crusader: No Remorse." By pressing Alt-F10 you'll become invulnerable; pressing F10 gives you all the items and weapons.

Crusader: No Regret

330. Type LOOSECANNON16 and you will hear a voice saying "Crusader: No Regret." By pressing Alt-F10 you become invulnerable; by pressing F10 you gain all items and weapons.

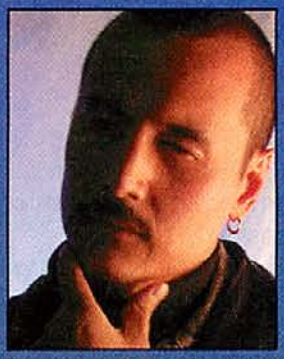
Duke Nukem 3D

331. DNALLEN says a message
332. DNCLIP walk through walls (very unstable)
333. DNCOSMO another message
334. DNHYPER steroids effect
335. DNBETA yet another message
336. DNSKILL# set skill level
337. DNCOORDS shows your coordinates
338. DNRATE displays the frame rate
339. DNITEMS gives you power-ups
340. DNKEYS all keys
341. DNDEBUG displays debug info
342. DNINVENTORY all power-ups
343. DNWEAPONS all weapons and full ammo
344. DNMONSTERS toggles the monsters off
345. DNCASHMAN throws money when you hit the use key
346. DNVIEW external Duke view (same as F7)
347. DNSCOTTY## level warp (episode, two-digit level number). To warp to level in episode 1, you would type dnscotty107. It is important to include the zeroes.
348. DNSTUFF all weapons, keys and power-ups
349. DNSHOWMAP shows entire map
350. DNCORNHOLIO God mode, unlimited jetpack
351. DNKROZ same as Cornholio

Doom and Doom II

352. IDDQD God Mode
353. IDFA Ammo & weapons
354. IDKFA Ammo, keys & weapons
355. IDCLIP Clipping mode on. Walk through walls! Toggle this mode back off to pick up items or use switches and doors.

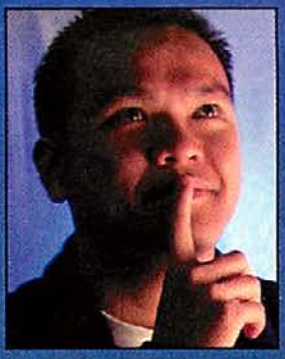
These testimonials are from some people who have played Soultrap...



"It's amazingly addictive. Once you start playing you won't be able to stop."

"It's like playing Quake™ and Super Mario® combined in one game, only better!"

"The fact that I could change camera angles as I played was really cool. There's even a smart camera that picks the best view for you!"



"The soundtrack is incredible, so I love the fact that I can change the music as I play."

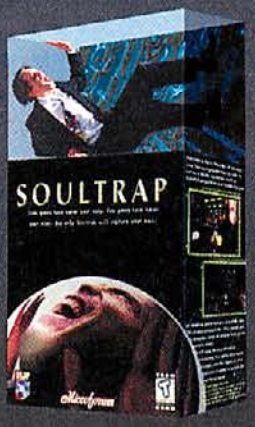
"You look up, down... 360 degrees around you. I've never seen anything like it!"

"Stunning 3D graphics, an amazing soundtrack and unmatched playability... I really didn't think you could get this kind of experience on a PC!"

"It's more exciting to play than Quake™. It challenges you on so many other levels that it goes beyond a traditional shoot'em-up!"

"It's the only 3D game I've played that has a large amount of strategy built into it - its not just another mindless shoot 'em up!"

...But don't believe everything you read. Experience it for yourself.



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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #80

Quake

You need to type these cheats in the console. Activate the console by hitting ~ (tilde).

356. GOD — God mode
357. IMPULSE 9 — Gives all weapons
358. IMPULSE 255 — Gives you Quad Damage
359. MAP ExMy — Level warp. Replace the "x" with episode number and the "y" with the level number.
360. NOCLIP — No clipping mode
361. FLY — fly around use the "d" and "c" keys to move up or down
362. NOTARGET — Monsters won't target you unless you attack
363. REGISTERED 1 — Tricks the SW into thinking it is the Full version, allowing all weapons in multiplayer mode. Does not let you get into registered levels.
364. GIVE — Gives you weapon #
365. GIVE S # — Gives you # Shells
366. GIVE N # — Gives you # Nails
367. GIVE R # — Gives you # Rockets
368. GIVE C # — Gives you # Cells
369. GIVE H # — Gives you Health #.

370. IDSPISPOPD to turn clipping mode on for Doom I
371. IDCHOPPERS Get the chainsaw (and a cryptic message)
372. IDDT With the AutoMap showing, cycles between normal map, full revealed map, and a full map showing the objects and enemies
373. IDBEHOLDS Get berserker pack
374. IDBEHOLDV Get temporary invulnerability
375. IDBEHOLDI Get temporary invisibility
376. IDBEHOLDA Get full AutoMap
377. IDBEHOLDR Get antiradiation suit
378. IDBEHOLDL Get light-amplification visor
379. IDCLEV Followed by episode and level number, warps to that level
380. IDMYPOS Display coordinates and heading.

Descent 2

(Demo version)

381. ZINGERMANS Invulnerability toggle
382. MOTHERLODE Wowie Zowie Weapons
383. ALIFALAFEL Accessories
384. EATANGELOS Homing weapons (every weapon)
385. CURRYGOAT All Keys
386. JOSHUAAKIRA Full Map
387. WHAMMAZOOM Level Warp
388. ERICAANNE Bouncing Weapons
389. BITTERSWEET Psychedelic walls
390. PIGFARMER Use it once and it displays "Hi John!!!" Reduce the size of your screen, use it twice and it displays "Bye John."

(Registered version)

391. GOWINGNUT Makes the Guidebot attack enemies
392. HELPVISHNU Makes more Guidebots
393. GODZILLA You can kill robots just by bumping into them.
394. FREESPACE Level warp
395. SPANIARD Kills all robots first time, then the boss robot, then poor Guidebot, if you type it a third time.
396. ALMIGHTY Invulnerability
397. ROCKRGRL Full automap
398. LPNLIZARD Gives you homing weapons.

DNPERVERT? Sorry, kids, there's no cheat for this section of Duke Nukem 3D.

Dark Forces

399. LABUG Bug Mode lets you squeeze through narrow passages and greatly reduces your size when crouching (very helpful in the garbage crusher).
400. LACDS Reveal Map gives a full map of your current level and locations of enemies, objects and doors.
401. LADATA Reveal Navigation Counter: Useful in marking the exact coordinate of items and important corridors.
402. LaiMlame Invincibility Toggle: God Mode
403. LAMAXOUT: Full ammo, shields, and weapons; plus complete inventoy of items all maxed out.
404. LANTFH: This cheat allows you to teleport to the current map position one level above or below your current location.
405. LAPOGO: Disable height checking; allows you to reach high precipices and ledges without cumbersome climbing gear.
406. LAPOSTAL: Get all weapons and ammo.
407. LARANDY: The cheat produces the same effect as the weapon super charge power-up, giving you an increase in rate of fire from all weapons for 50 seconds.
408. LAREDLITE: Freezes enemies in their tracks. All enemies take damage in this mode, but you'll need to toggle it off before it takes effect.
409. LASKIP: Typing this cheat successfully completes the current level.
410. LAUNLOCK: Get all keys, code cards, the broken Dark Trooper gun, data tape, ice cleats and Phrink metal.

Level Codes: For those of you stuck in the early levels of the game, the following cheats will transport you to any level you want. Just type in the cheat during the game, and you're on your way.

411. LASECBASE Level 1: Secret Base (The Death Star Plans)
412. LATALAY Level 2: Talay: Tac Base
413. LASEWERS Level 3: Anoat City (The Subterranean Hideout)
414. LATESTBASE Level 4: Imperial Weapons Research Facility
415. LAGROMAS Level 5: Gromas Mines
416. LADTENTION Level 6: Imperial Detention Center

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WARNING: This game contains nudity, sexual content, mature themes and adult situations but in such a goofy, non-explicit, cartoony way that anyone looking for the really dirty stuff will be offended.

CIRCLE READER SERVICE #235

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Descent

In order to get the most out of these cheats, you'll probably want to reconfigure your keyboard settings so you don't set off any bombs when you're typing (that deadly 'b' key) or move yourself into danger.

(Shareware version)

417. SCOURGE WowieZowie Weapons
418. MITZI All Keys!
419. RACERX Invulnerability On/Off!
420. GUILE Cloak On/Off!
421. TWILIGHT Shields Recharged!
422. FARMERJOE Warp to Which Level?
423. ASTRAL Spirit mode (only from v1.4)

(Registered version)

424. GABBAGABBAHEY Cheats enabled
425. BIGRED SuperWowieZowie Weapons
426. BUGGIN Turbo mode; everything (including enemies) speeds up
427. BRUIN Extra Life
428. FLASH Shows the path to the exit
429. AHIMSA Keeps enemy ships from firing
430. POBOYS Destroys the reactor (version 1.4 only)
431. PORGYS MegaWowieZowie Weapons! (version 1.4 only)
432. LUNACY The robots speed up (version 1.4 only)
433. LARAMSHED Level 7: Ramsees Hed Docking Port
434. LAROBOTICS Level 8: Robotics Construction Facility
435. LANARSHADA Level 9: Nar Shaddaa
436. LAJABSHIP Level 10: Jabba's Ship
437. LAIMPCITY Level 11: Imperial City
438. LAFUELSTAT Level 12: Fuel Station
439. LAEXECUTOR Level 13: The Executor
440. LAARC Level 14: The Arc Hammer

Eradicator

(Commercial version)

441. \RAGAMUFFIN invincibility
442. \ARMS all ammo
443. \GIFT all inventory items
444. \DIG turn off clipping
445. \OVERDRIVE turn on microchip powerup
446. \SPUTNIK fill in automap
447. \AMOBJECT turn on objects in automap
448. \VICI finish current level
449. \BLOAD load a particular level
450. \GOBBET kill yourself
451. \AIMOVE stop enemy a.i.
452. \FRAME display framerate
453. \FMK full health
454. \OUCH hurt yourself
455. \GRAV lower gravity
456. \BLUB toggle slo-mo
457. \GUNS take away ammo
458. \DUNHOUR kill all enemies
459. \POED no gravity at all
460. \OREILLY give radar tracker
461. \76TRUMBOS display sfx
462. \GPS diplay location
463. \\ repeat the last cheat (Demo version)
464. \FUSHIPI invincibility
465. \GUNS all ammo
466. \XMAS all inventory items
467. \TUNNEL turn clipping off
468. \BLOODLUST give microchip powerup
469. \2KRAD4U kill yourself

Terminator: Future Shock

470. BANDAID Replenishes power, armor
471. FIREPOWER Gives you all weapons
472. SUPERUZI Gives you a super uzi with 9999 ammo
473. NEXTMISSION Takes you to next mission
474. TURBO activates turbo mode
475. ICANTSEE infrared sight
476. GARBLE Lets you see cheats as you type them
477. WHOAMI Displays your coordinates

Hellbender

478. TOTLPWR Makes main energy 100%
479. URDEAD# The # = a weapon from 0 - 9

DEATH IN THIRD PERSON With cheats, ERADICATOR can play like a whole new game. For real fun, turn off gravity.

480. MAXMEUP Makes the hull 100%
481. IMPUMPD All weapons!!!
482. AUNTEM# Warps to the planet 1 - 8
483. IMSTUCK Skips the current mission
484. STEROID Invincibility

Marathon I and II (Macintosh)

485. At the new game scene press Command-Option, then start a new game. Then type BUIHAVENOCLUE. Type slowly—type a letter, then wait two seconds before typing the next letter.

Rayman

All letters must be typed without using shift, alt or control keys. To type the numbers, use the top row of the keyboard.

486. For 5 lives type "kom0ogdk"
487. 10 tings type "86e40g91"
488. Breakout type "b76b7081"

Heretic

489. QUICKEN Same as God Mode in Doom, the path to invincibility.
490. MASSACRE Kills everything on the level.
491. SKEL Get keys
492. RAMBO Get full health armor and weapons recharge
493. ENGAGE Level warp. Type "engage" and then the number of the level you wish to warp to.
494. KITTY This will let you walk through walls just like idclip for Doom II. Turn it off before you pick up an item or activate a switch.
495. COCKADOODLEDOO We're not going to say what this one does, but you'll get a laugh when you try it out.

Hexen

Use these mystic formulae to punish the monsters in the commercial version:

496. SATAN invulnerable
497. DELIVERANCE turns you into a pig
498. BUTCHER kills all the monsters
499. CLUBMED maximum health
500. NRA full weapons, mana and armour
501. INDIANA full inventory
502. LOCKSMITH gives you all the keys

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #174

503. SHERLOCK gives you all the puzzle items
504. CASPER no clipping (like IDCLIP)
505. SHADOWCASTER# change class; # is a number: 0 = Warrior, 1 = Cleric, 2 = Wizard
506. Where gives map coordinates
507. Ticker displays frame rate
508. Mapsco toggles map detail in map mode
509. Mrjones displays version number
510. Noise sound information
511. Visit## Warps to level 01-31 or level 41
(Cheats won't work at hardest difficulty level or in multiplayer.)

Use these cheats in the demo version:

512. BGOKEY God mode
513. CRHINEHART All weapons
514. BRAFFEL Get 25 of artifacts
515. MRAYMONDJUDY All keys
526. SGURNO 100% health
527. RJOHNSON No clipping (walk through walls)
528. JSUMWALT X and Y coordinates
529. EBIESSMAN Turn yourself into a pig!
530. REVEAL While in mapmode toggles full map, full map with enemies/items, and normal map
531. TMOORE Get items
532. BPELLETIER## Warp to level ##
533. CSTIKA Massacre enemies
532. PLIPO Change player class (0 for fighter; 1 for cleric; 2 for mage)

Earthworm Jim

533. ITSAWONDERFUL Gives you an extra life
534. HATMAN Turns Jim into Hatman
535. ONANDONANDON Maximum number of game continues
536. POPQUIZHOTSHOT Gives you 1000 bullets

KLINGON HIGH-FIVE Tired of being a Warrior? Use Hexen's "shadowcaster" cheat to change to Cleric or Wizard class.

537. SLAUGHTERHOUSE Access the first five levels of the game.

Fury 3

538. TRYMEON god mode
539. GIVITIUP all weapons
540. URDUSTD turbo
541. JUMPNIT warp to next level
542. WORMITx warp to level x
543. SSMOKIN turbo mode
544. TUFENUF gives you shields
545. PACKIN1 servo ammo
546. PACKIN2 isokinetic ammo
547. PACKIN3 rapidfire laser ammo
548. PACKIN4 DOM ammo
549. PACKIN5 viper ammo
550. PACKIN6 baryon ammo
551. PACKIN7 superbombs

Need For Speed

First you need to win the tournament to get a bonus track. When you win the second tournament you can use the following codes.

552. EAC POWR Bonus Car
553. EAC WARP Speed Up
554. EAC RALY Rusty Springs Becomes Egyptian

Jazz Jackrabbit

To enable these cheats, pause the game by pressing the "P" key, then hit the Backspace key before you type in the code for the cheat. In some versions of Jazz Jackrabbit, you have to add the letters "DD" before each cheat.

555. SABLE Turn Jazz red and increase speed
556. CSTRIKE Gives you a flying surfboard
557. BAD Gives you the escort bird
558. DOOM Makes the enemies tougher
559. KEN Exit to DOS
560. HOOKER Collect a gem
561. MARK Kills Jazz
562. APOGEE 16 color version that runs at half the speed
563. LAMER Skip the current level
564. HOCUS Teleport around the current level
565. BOUF Become invincible
566. GUNHED Get all weapons plus 100 rounds of ammunition for each.

Radix: Beyond the Void

(Many cheats work only with version 1.1.)

567. NSOPTA Full weapons, shields, energy
568. NSBAGWAN Turns on Ultra Shields
569. NSBJIPP Turns on manuevering jets
570. NSDIEBESTERDS Weapons fire at a faster rate
571. NSE Full energy
572. NSOPTL Lighting turned on.

Rebel Assault

573. After the animated LucasArts logo, move your joystick UP and press FIRE, move the joystick DOWN and press FIRE, then move the joystick LEFT and press FIRE, then move the joystick RIGHT and press FIRE. You'll hear a telephone ringing and a voice answering "LucasArts," which lets you know that the cheat mode is active. Now you'll be able to jump to any chapter in the game without having to write down all those silly codes!

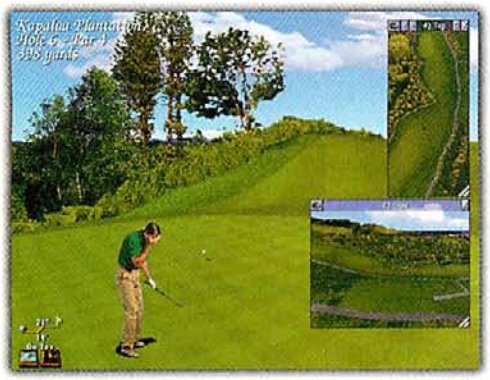
To go anywhere in the game, type the number of the chapter you want to play. Type numbers 1-9 for chapters 1-9 and A-F for chapters 10-15. By pressing the + key on the numeric keypad, you'll reset your damage to zero, and pressing Esc will let you move to the next cut-screen.

Strife

(Commercial Version)

574. GPS shows position
575. SPIN## changes music
576. OMNIPOTENT God mode
577. BOOMSTIX all weapons
578. JIMMY gets you some keys
579. PUMPUP get Powers
580. GRIPPER no sliding
581. ELVIS no clipping mode
582. RIFT## Level Warp 01-32
583. STONECOLD Kills all monsters on a level
584. DONNYTRUMP Gives you 300 gold
585. LEGO Gives you another sigil piece
586. TOPO Full Map Toggle (when looking at map)
587. DOTS FPS Ticker
588. SCOOT# Teleport to map spot
(Shareware Version)
589. STUFF Invincibility, all weapons and keys,

ACCESS
SOFTWARE INCORPORATED



"Can I challenge Arnold Palmer
and my buddy in Tibet
to a skins game
on Maui
in heavy fog
at 3AM?"

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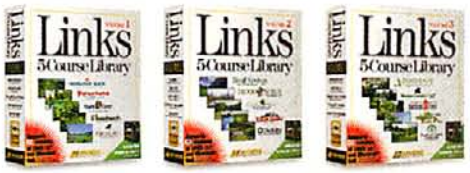

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #248

and a teleporter beacon

590. IBGOD Invincibility
591. GUNS All weapons
592. LISTIT Accessories
593. OPEN All keys
594. STIC Stealth Boots
595. MONEY Money and Toughness
596. KELLEM Kill all enemies on level
597. SPIRIT No Clipping mode
598. GOTO## Warp to level ## (32-34)
599. MOVEME# Teleport to Map spot
600. IDDT Full Map toggle (when looking at map)
601. ILIVE Auto use health toggle (same as pressing F5)
602. AIBRAIN AI toggle
603. IDMYPOS Display co-ordinates
604. IDMUS## Change music to track ## (01-10)
605. TIC Devparm Toggle

Terminal Velocity

606. TRIFIR0 Temporary Invincibility
607. TRIFIR1 Reloads PAC
608. TRIFIR2 Reloads ION
609. TRIFIR3 Reloads RTL
610. TRIFIR4 Reloads MAM
611. TRIFIR5 Reloads SAD
612. TRIFIR6 Reloads SWT
613. TRIFIR7 Reloads DAM
614. TRIFIR8 Recharges afterburner fuel
615. TRIFIR9 I nvisibility
616. TRIFIR10 Full Invincibility
617. TRIGODS God mode plus weapons powerup
618. TRINEXT Jumps to the next level
619. TRISHLD Restores shields to full strength
620. TRSCOPE Oscilloscope
621. TRIHOVR Combat hovering
622. TRFRAME Frames-per-second
623. TRIWARP# Warps to level number typed at #
624. TRIBURN Super afterburner booster
625. 3DREALM Weapon power-ups.

Syndicate

Rename your team one of the following names (depending on which cheat your want to enable) and you'll be all set.

626. Nuk Them Select any country on the map
627. To the Top Try it and see
628. Rob a Bank Gives money
629. Cooper Team Get money and items
630. Watch the Clock Speeds up the clock allowing for faster research completion.

Magic Carpet

To enable the cheats for Magic Carpet, bring your carpet to a complete stop (or type the cheat at the beginning of a level), and type "!". You'll be given a prompt under the status bar for you to type in a message. To activate the cheats type RATTY. The following key combinations will make you a very powerful wizard.

631. Alt-F1 gives you all the spells.
632. Alt-F2 gives you more mana.
633. Alt-F6 bestows complete healing.
634. Alt-F7 kills all creatures on the level.
635. Shift-C completes the level.
636. To jump from one level to another, type CARPET at the prompt followed by the level number (1-50), and you're off!
637. For Magic Carpet 2, type WINDY at the prompt to enable cheats. The Alt+Function keys work the same as in the original.

Wolfenstein 3D

Start the game with a command line parameter:

638. For version 1.0 type "wolf3d -next"
639. For version 1.1 type "wolf3d -goobers"

Once in the game, you need to activate the cheats:

640. For version 1.0 press Ctrl-Alt-Enter
641. For version 1.1 press Left Shift-Alt-Backspace

Now you can use these cheat codes:

642. TAB-G God Mode
643. TAB-I Add Item
644. TAB-H Self-Mutilation
645. TAB-N No Clipping Mode
646. TAB-P Pauses Game
647. TAB-Q Exits
648. TAB-W Turbo mode
649. TAB-X Adds Extra Stuff
650. TAB-E Finishes Level
651. M-L-I Weapons, ammo and invulnerable

Death Rally

During the race:

652. DRUB No-damage
653. DREAD Unlimited ammo
654. DRAG Unlimited turbo
655. DRINK Rocketfuel
656. DRUG Mushroom effect At the menu:
657. DROOL Get $500000
658. DRAW Get $1000
659. DROP Drop 10 points
660. DRIVE Get 10 points (Full version only)

SlipStream 5000

661. While you're in the main menu, type REFINERY (on some non-US keyboards this is REFINERZ). You'll get a message that says "Cheating will get you everywhere". Now you can chose any racing course and you'll always have enough money to repair your ship.

Screamer

Type these codes at the menu screens.

662. VTELO All normal tracks available
663. INVER Reversed tracks available
664. MONTY Obstacle graphics are changed
665. JOINT More obstacle graphics
666. CLOCK Turn off that clock
667. TAZOR Makes the bullet car available
668. UPDOW Turns graphics upside down
669. MIRRO Mirror mode
670. ABURN Other cars become Bullet Cars. You can't undo this without a reinstallation or backing up the choice.dat file.

REGIS WOULD BE PROUD The "gripper" cheat in STRIFE helps you flame opponents by disabling sliding.

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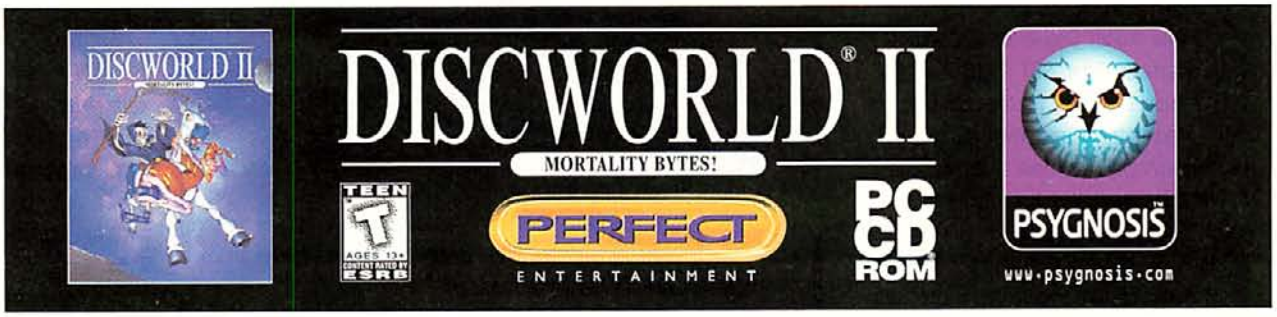
[Discworld II features the voice of Eric Idle, former star of Monty-something-or-other.]



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Hi-Octane

671. Alt-F1 Selfdestruction
672. Alt-F2 Kill enemies
673. Alt-F3 Petrol
674. Alt-F4 Maximum ammo
675. Alt-F5 Maximum shields
676. Alt-F6 One more lap
677. Alt-y Autopilot on
678. Alt-c Autopilot off

Whiplash

Use these codes as your player name.

679. SUPERMAN Makes your car invulnerable
680. CUPWON See the end of championship sequence
681. CINEMA Play in widescreen
682. FORMULA1 Access alternate cars
683. MREPRISE Access to bonus set of tracks
684. MRFROSTY Tracks become very slippery
685. WARGATE Cars warp.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

686. FRAMERATE displays the framerate
687. HATMAN turns Harry Jr. Into a stick figure. Type it again to undo
688. LETSDOTHETIMEWARP Access the secret Atari 2600 level
689. IDBUYTHATFORADOLLAR Gives you access to all levels
690. IDDQD Shows developers and a message
691. MEOWMEOWLIKEMEOWMAN Gives you nine lives
692. PUMPYOUUP Reloads weapons
693. EATMOREBRAN Gives you nine continues
694. FIVEEASYPIECES Access the first five levels.

Raptor

695. Customer Cheat: Backspace key will restore your energy and give you a death ray at the cost of your money. Registered version only.
696. Debug mode: Type "SET S_HOST=CASTLE" (it must be in caps) at the DOS prompt before loading the game. When you play you become invincible and have all the weapons.
697. Warp: There is a level warp built into the game, so you can see any level you want at any time. Get to the screen where you see the level selection (Bravo Sector, etc...). The warp combination is a two-key entry. The keys are not to be pressed at the same time. You cannot use the level warp unless debug mode (see above) is active. Key 1 is Z (Episode 1), X (Episode 2), or Y (Episode 3). Key 2 is any key between Q and O. Q is Level 1, and O is Level 9. This works in both the shareware and registered versions. If you try to warp to a registered episode from the shareware version, it will crash the game.
698. Birthday Mode: This will automatically put you into "Battle Cow" mode, and it will also play the goofy Apogee theme song. To get it, change the system's date to the birthday of one of the Cygnus programmers, given below. Any year should be ok, as long as it's not in the past: March 12 - Bobby Prince; May 16 - Scott Host; August 28 - Rich Fleider; October 2 - Jim Molinets.
699. You can also get "Battle Cow" mode by darkening the switch on the "choose sector" screen and turning on all three lights on the right (for v1.0, don't turn on the middle light). The Apogee theme song will not play if you do it this way.

Mortal Kombat I and II

700. Open the setup menu by pressing F10. Hold down shift while typing DIP. This brings up a DIP-switch menu you can alter at will. Their purposes:
701. Switch 1: Fatalities on/off
702. Switch 2: Blood On/Off
703. Switch 3: Comic Book Offer On/Off
704. Switch 4: CPU Fatalities on/off
705. Switch 5: Freeplay on/off

Mortal Kombat II...

706. In copyright screen (black with white letters) type AICULEDSSUL. In the demo, press F9.

One Must Fall 2097

707. Access the hidden menu during the game by pressing and holding the number keys 2,0,9,and 7 simultaneously. This gives you many new options, including increased height, vitality, damage, difficulty, and more.
708. To increase difficulty in a 1-player game, at the settings menu under Difficulty, several presses of the right arrow key after World Class will increase the computer to "Deadly." After that, Hold down the keys O, M, and F. The computer will then increase to "Ultimate."
709. During gameplay, hold down the keys B, I, and G, plus a number 1-9 to increase the amount of debris and scrap metal that flies after a hit. Holding down the keys R, E, I, and N will cause all flying debris to "rain" through the floor to the ceiling to the floor, nonstop.

Battle Arena Toshinden

710. FUNNYHEADS Gives fighters big heads
711. LIFEISUNFAIR Use the number keys to perform special moves
712. GIMMEJIM Lets you select bosses
713. VIRTUAL1 Changes the perspective to first-person. (Go to Options menu and adjust camera angle to bring perspective back to normal.)

CAR BORES If you're working through the lackluster WHIPLASH to see the pretty graphics on your 3D card, use SUPERMAN as your player name to drive an invulnerable car and speed through the tracks.

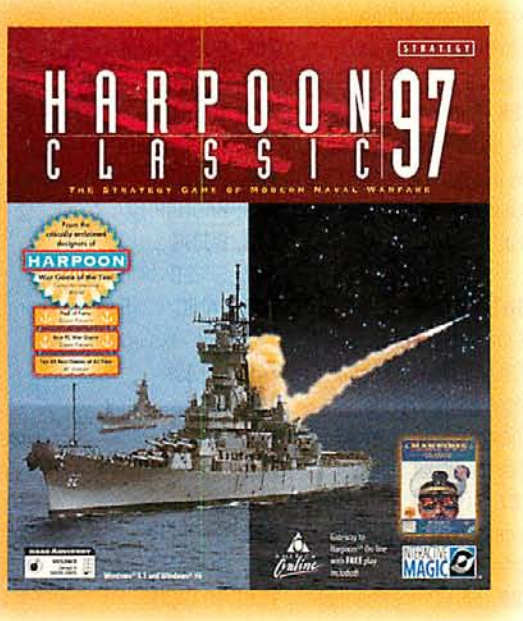
Rise of the Robots

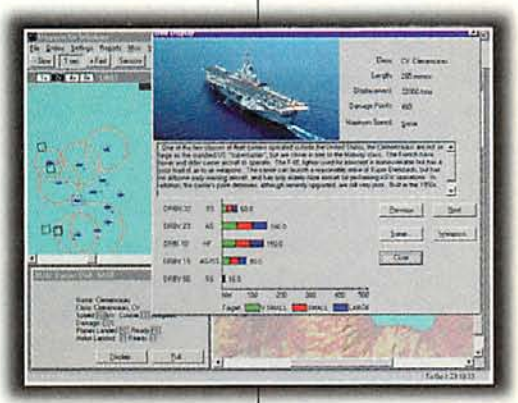
(Some of these only work in the two-player game)

714. Temporary invincibility: away, away, away, away, attack
715. Temporarily change opponents con-

"The classic game of naval strategy is afloat, refitted and battle-ready for '97"

— *Gamesmania Web Site*





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Virtua Fighter PC

All of the Saturn cheats are available in the PC version, including DURAL. (Note: When translating Saturn cheats to the PC keyboard, the following substitutions have been made: Button A is now Del, Button B is now End, Button C is now PgDn, and Start is now Enter.)

716. Play as Gold Dural: In the Character Selection menu, press Down, Up, Right then Del+Left. If it worked you will hear a woosh sound.

717. Play as Silver Dural: At the character select screen, enter Down, Up, Right, DEL+Left. You will hear a "swoosh" sound effect if you entered it correctly.

718. Add Dural to the Records screen:

A. At the "Press Start" screen, enter Up 17 times, then Enter

B. .Now enter the options screen, and you should hear "Ring Out."

C. Dural's stats are now on the Records screen.

719. Ring Size and Stage Select:

A. At the "Press Start" screen, enter Up 12 times then Enter

B. Now enter the options screen, and you should hear "K.O."

C. Move the cursor down to Exit, then press down once more.

D. The cursor will disappear.

E. Press Del and a second options screen will appear.

720. View Credits: Hold the DEL button down during the opening demos to see the names of the makers of VF.

721. Slow motion replays: At the end of a round, press and hold Del-End-PgDn and the replay will be in super-slow-motion.

722. View from other camera angles (in Watch Mode): Press F7.

723. Choose the victory taunt: Hold either Del, End, or PgDn before the character does his/her victory stance and you will be able to select which one you see. There is also one reserved for when you get an "Excellent!"

trols: forward, forward, forward, forward, attack

724. Play military vs. military: At main screen, press left, then right, then left, then right repeatedly until the screen flashes.

725. To fight the supervisor: At the main screen, press left, left, right, right, then repeat until the screen flashes. Then you can either play against the supervisor as player 2 or go to training and play with the computer as supervisor.

726. Supervisor's moves are down-toward-up to do the praying mantis, and down-away-up to melt and heal.

Battle Beast

At the order form type YOYOYO. Type one of the codes below into the Cheater menu. Then left-click the Cheat button.

727. AOFREOIO grants Access to all the bonus doors

728. EATEE Beast morphing off

729. EHRTRR toggles Autoflying in bonus rooms

730. ERHNE makes You fight all opponents

731. ERHYHRLY Weakens the insidious Toadman

732. ITIHFO Activates two out of three bouts

733. OAOAEIOA Engages autoflying in the lab

734. OFOVH Doubles time limit in bonus rooms

735. OIVNNFOF Activates tadpole attacks in lab

736. ORUFO Gives your beast invincibility in bonus rooms

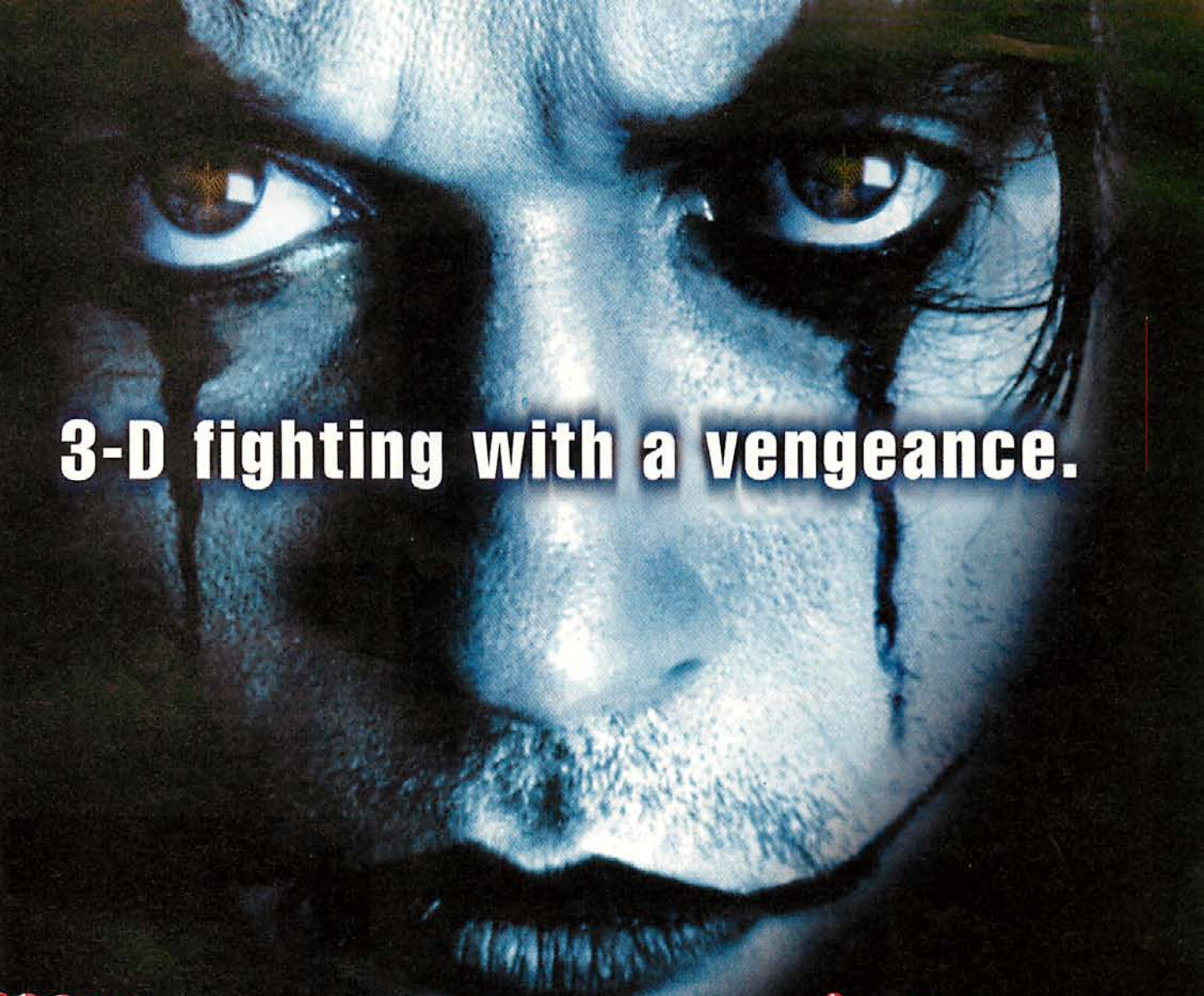
Rise of the Triad

ROTT is our winner for game with the most cheat codes (not counting level codes). To use these codes, just type them in during a game (remember to type the first code, "Dipstick," to enable the cheats).

737. DIPSTICK Enable/Disable Cheat Codes
738. SHOOTME Bulletproof Armor
739. BURNME Asbestos Armor
740. CHOJIN Woundless With Weapons
741. BOOZE Drunk Missile
742. BONES FlameWall
743. TOOSAD God Mode (Temporary Invulnerability)
744. FLYBOY Mercury Mode
745. BADTRIP Shrooms Mode
746. BOING Elasto Mode
747. SPEED Enable Autorun
748. PANIC Restart to normal, full health, no modes, keys or guns
749. WHACK Whack Yourself
750. 86ME Kill Character
751. DIMON Light Diminishing On
752. DIMOFF Light Diminishing Off
753. GOTO Go To Another Level
754. GOOBERS Restart Current Level
755. GOGATES Exit to DOS
756. GOARCH Exit Current Level
757. LONDON Fog On
758. NODNOL Fog Off
759. SHINEON Light Sourcing On
760. SHINEOFF Light Sourcing Off
761. LUNGDUNG Gas Mask
762. SIXTOYS Items Aplenty
763. HUNTPACK Outfit Player (Bulletproof Armor, Keys, HeatSeeker)
764. JOHNWOO Double Pistols
765. PLUGME MP40 Machine Gun
766. VANILLA Bazooka
767. FIREBOMB Firebomb
768. HOTTIMES Heatseeker
769. SEEYA Hand of God (Permanent God Mode)
770. RIDE Missile Camera On/Off
771. WHERE Toggles Coordinate Display On/Off

Prince of Persia

772. Start Prince of Persia by typing PRINCE MEGAHIT and the following bonus keys become available.
773. K Kills all enemies on the screen.
774. R Resurrects you where you last died.
775. + Increase time left.
776. - Decrease time left.
777. Shift-L Warps you to next level.
778. Shift-T Gives you an extra life.
779. Shift-S Heals a lost life.



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COMMON CODE You'll be hard-pressed to find a game with more cheats than RISE OF THE TRIAD.

780. Shift-W Allows you to float down long drops.
781. Shift-N Look at screen below current one.
782. Shift-U Look at screen above current one.
783. Shift-H Look at screen to left of current one.
784. Shift-J Look at screen to right of current one.
785. Shift-B Blocks out no-animated objects.
786. Shift-I Inverts the screen.

Prince of Persia 2

787. For the powers of Jeffar, hold down the 1, 2, and 3 keys when starting the game.
788. F1: show position (press again to disable); F3: player on/off; F6: ruler
789. Type PRINCE MAKINIT2 to start game in cheat mode.
790. Shift-T Add energy
791. Shift-I This will invert the screen. Press the key again to return to normal.
792. Shift-R Shows you what number of room you are in and jump right.
793. Shift-W Shows you what number of room you are in and jump left.
794. Shift-B "Blind Mode." Everything in the room is blacked out except animated objects. In other rooms everything is blacked out.
795. Shift-K Depletes one health point.
796. PLUS KEY(Shift =) Adds minutes of time to the time left.
797. MINUS KEY Subtracts minutes of time left.
798. COMMAND-K Kills all enemies instantly.
799. COMMAND-G Opens a level select screen.
800. COMMAND-L Takes you to the next level.
801. COMMAND-T Gives you extra health point.
802. COMMAND-V Tells the version number.
803. COMMAND-R Return from the dead.
804. Alt-N Skip to next level
805. Alt-D Create DUMP.TXT

FlashBack

806. QUENCH Level 1
807. GHOST Level 2
808. LEGEND Level 3
809. BULLET Level 4
810. DISRUPT Level 5
811. TREMOUR Level 6

Quarantine

812. omnicorp is all knowing Level 1
813. keep the opressor oppressing Level 2
814. the meek shall inherit zilch Level 3
815. have you had your hydergine today Level 4
816. kemo city is a nice place to visit Level 5
817. At the dos prompt add the below options after the EXE file you run: -cheater -infinite -nocar -invince. When in the game, press Alt, Ctrl, and F7 before anyone hits you or you hit them and you will be invincible, with no cars on the road and infinite weapons.
818. BEAVIS Skips ahead to 100 points from level finish
819. GULLIVER Midget mode: turns all your enemies small
820. KMFDM Full ammo
821. BELFAST Kill all enemies

Lode Runner

To make the Mad Monks your slaves, use these cheats:

(DOS Version)

822. Press Ctrl-F3 to activate monk mode, then control the monk with the T-Y-U/G-H-J/B-N-M keys. Press TAB to switch monks.

(Windows versions 1.2 and 1.3)

823. Click on the dot in the upper left corner of the main menu screen, then Type CTHULU (v1.2) or YOG (v1.3). Listen for a gong, then control the monk with the T-Y-U/G-H-J/B-N-M keys. Press TAB to switch monks.

Tek War

824. NOGUARD No guards in the game
825. NOENEMIES No enemies in the game
826. NOCHASE No shooting enemies in the game
827. NOSTROLL No innocent bystanders in the game
828. Alt-Shift-G God mode (full version only)
829. Alt-Shift-W All weapons (full version only)

Greed

830. RAVEN Full health
831. OMNI Full map
832. ALLAHMODE God mode

Corridor 7

833. To receive all nine weapons, full life and proximity mines, press and hold the letters W, A, and X all at the same time. Note: Your score is set back to zero every time you use this code. You can also gain access to individual cheats by typing C7 LEVEL1 DIAGNOSTIC at the DOS prompt when you begin the game. Then, during play, try these key combinations:
834. Backspace-G Toggles God mode on or off
835. Backspace-W Warps between levels

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836. Backspace-N Lets you walk through walls
837. Backspace-R Puts a skull image in front of your character
838. Backspace-I Increases your score.

The Hive

839. There's one known cheat for this one. Use the name TORYO at the startup screen to get access to all 20 missions immediately.

Novastorm

840. Attack of the Killer Tomatoes: There are codes that make you stronger and codes that let you walk through walls, but it's rare that a code will bring a smile to your face. This one will. During the first level of NovaStorm (full version) if you type the word "tomatoes" you'll be treated to a few new levels, enemies, bosses, sounds—and some very unusual music.

Super Stardust

The following codes should be entered as passwords on the title screen.

841. NOBRAKES Full engine power
842. HARDGAME Makes the game harder
843. DNUMUAHCS Ten times more energy, but only one life
844. DIEALIENDIE All weapons on full power
845. JJRULES Thirty-five lives, all weapons on full power
846. WARHEAD Makes missiles detonate when they hit a target

Witchaven

847. Backspace Enter Cheat Mode
848. SCOOTER for all weapons
849. MOMMY for all magic
850. WANGO for all keys

Witchaven II

851. Backspace Enter Cheat Mode
852. MARKETING God Mode
853. WEAPONS all weapons
854. HEALTH restores health
855. ARMOR restores armor
856. STRENGTH gets you the STR powerup
857. POTIONS gives all potions
858. SPELLS get all spells
859. KEYS gets all keys.
860. INVIS invisibility
861. LEVEL## for level warping. i.e. level01, level14 etc.

862. ELITEMASTER Weapons are ten times more powerful
863. PETSKUMODE Enables reverse gear.

Total Mayhem

To activate, hold down Ctrl and Shift and type CHEAT from the base screen.

864. Ctrl-C Gives 1,000 credits
865. Ctrl-A Buy all weapons (use on base screen)
866. Ctrl-N Level Skip (use on base screen)
867. Ctrl-P Move unit to cursor (use in game)
868. Ctrl-I Invincible (use in game)
869. Ctrl-R Shield Restore (use in game)
870. Ctrl-M Monster toggle (use in game)

SHIELD BOOST When doom seems near in FIRE FIGHT, the Restore Shields cheat can save the day.

Worms

871. Type BAABAA at the weapons options screen to get access to devastating super-weapons.

Fire Fight

872. While playing, hit C, W, and the + key on the numeric key pad. Then press F12 to access the cheat menu. From there you can choose Restore Shields, Full Weaponry, or toggle Invulnerability.

Gender Wars

873. Save game as BUY A PLAYSTATION before mission and get invulnerability and unlimited ammo.

Black Thorne

To access these levels directly, select the passwords option and type one of these codes.

874. FBWC Level 2
875. QP7R Level 3
876. K3CH Final Level

Blake Stone (Aliens of Gold and Planet Strike)

877. Press JAM and Enter. These keys are to be pressed one at a time. When all are pressed, the message "Now you're Jammin'" appears, and you will be given all keys, and you will get 100% health. Your score will also be taken to 0. Works only on the registered version.
878. Typing POWERBALL enables debug keys. This also requires that you hold down the left and right shift keys during the JAM Logo intro. Don't hold them down until the white letters start to appear. Once the PC-13 screen is loaded, you can let go. You will hear a "ching" during the intro when debug mode has been successfully enabled (if you have a sound card). With a PC speaker, you won't hear this. These cheat keys can be used during gameplay only if you invoked the program with the "powerball" parameter:
879. Backspace-W Warp to level ([shift] [W] loadsthe default map)
880. Backspace-D Player invisible (dumb objects)
881. Backspace-G God mode
882. Backspace-I Item cheat
883. Backspace-M Memory info
884. Backspace-P Pause screen
885. Backspace-Q Fast quit
886. Backspace-A Add Actors to AutoMapper.
887. Backspace-U Unlock all floors

CIRCLE READER SERVICE #43

888. Backspace-O Show hidden walls on auto mapper
889. Backspace-E Quick Win Mission
890. Backspace-B Border color
891. Backspace-C Count objects
892. Backspace-F Facing spot
893. Backspace-H Hurt self (if not in God mode)
894. Backspace-S Slow motion
895. Backspace-V Extra VBLs (Vertical Blanking Signal)
896. Shift-Tab Show full automap containing all live actors.

These cheat keys can be used during gameplay:

897. 67 Collect all bonus items (gold, ammo, health, etc).
898. 78 Kill all actors.
899. 68 Collect all bonus items and kill all actors.

Commander Keen: Goodbye Galaxy and Aliens Ate My Baby Sitter

900. Pressing B, A, and T simultaneously gives you 99 shots, an extra life, and all the gems.
901. Press A, 2, and Enter together to enter debug mode to activate the following cheats.
902. F10-G God mode
903. F10-I Free items
904. F10-J Jump cheat
905. F10-N No clipping
906. F10-Y View hidden areas in the level.
907. F10-B Set border color (1-15)
908. F10-C Show number of active/inactive objects in the level
909. F10-D Record a demo
910. F10-E End the current level
911. F10-M Display memory usage
912. F10-S Slow motion
913. F10-T Sprite test
914. F10-V Add 0-8 Vertical Blanking Signals
915. F10-W Warp to any level
916. F10-Y Reveal hidden areas

Commander Keen: Invasion of the Vorticons

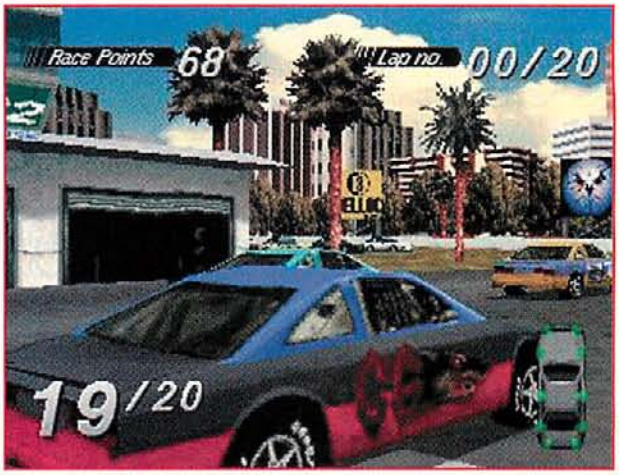
917. C-T-Space (all three keys together) pogo-stick, all keycards, and full ammo.
918. Shift-tab Pass through an unplayed level on world map.
919. G-O-D (all three keys together) Enter god mode, with flying when you jump

Tyrian

Type these cheats at the opening menu:

920. TECHNO The Experimental PQZ Special weapon: Mine field.
921. STORMWIND StormWind The Elemental Special weapon: Sandstorm.
922. UNKNOWN TX Silvercloud Special weapon: Proton dispersal.
923. ENEMY Captured U-Fighter Special weapon: Dual vulcan.
924. WEIRD Foodship Nine Special weapon: Banana bomb-Spreadfire bananas.
925. STEALTH Ninja Star Special weapon: Blade field.
926. Artillery Mode: At the opening menu, type DESTRUCT. This is a game in itself. If you like Artillery-type games, this is the action version, with one or two players. Press F1 a list of keys.
927. 5 Card War: Probably the best one. You get five vehicles each. Slug it out.

Traditional: Two tanks trying to kill each other. Can't use degrees and power.
Heli Assault: Player one gets the weak helicopters, and player two gets to shoot them.
Heli Defense: Same as Heli Assault, but you're shooting down the choppers.
Outgunned: Similar to five card war.



DRIVING, CALIFORNIA-STYLE If your penchant for Destruction Derby is based purely on mayhem, just make you car invulnerable and start smashing.

Cannon Fodder

928. During game, press M to bring up map. Press and hold Ctrl while typing FODDER. A white border appears around the screen. Pressing Enter advances you to the next stage.

Pinball Fantasies

929. Select table, but before the game starts, type EARTHQUAKE to stop table tile.
930. Type EXTRABALLS to add seven balls.

Arcade America

931. Press ESC, type "7th" and enter the Codes. After entering the code press Enter and Joey will say "Cool" if it worked.
932. ILOVEJOEY 50 lives
933. GOLDENGUN 500 bullets
934. OMNIJOEY invincibility
935. URHOPELESS obtain Special item
936. FATBOYCANTJUMP enable fly mode
937. GIMMETIME Set time to 10 minutes
938. MAKEAWISH 10 extra lives
939. GIMMEAMMO 10 extra bullets

Destruction Derby

940. For invincibility, select Wreckin Racing and enter your name as "!damage!"
941. To select number of cars, enter your name as "nplayer".

Lion King

942. Type DWARF on the title screen, when "Cheat enabled" appears start the game
943. Type H for health
944. Type L for level select

Silver Ball

945. Esc b n extra ball dropped on table!
946. Esc j n control ball with arrows
947. Esc <F9> n neat sounds and graphics
948. z lock left flipper
949. x lock right flipper
950. Space tilt!

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Havoc

To use these cheats, hit the Tab key and then type:

951. VVV — Extra Vehicles
952. SSS — Full Shields
953. MMM — Heatseeker Machine
954. AAA — Full ammo
955. To skip levels, go to the "pick your vehicle" screen, type CHEAT, type the world number (1-6), and type the level number (1-5).

Deathkeep

956. LEBUZ — Fly
957. LEGEO — Map and teleport options
958. LEHAT — Unlimited spells
959. LENEE — Invincibility
960. LEOLD — Extra experience points
961. LEPIK — Extra key
962. LESKP — Skip level

Shellshock

Hit the Esc key, type in the following code during gameplay, and then hit the Esc key again.

963. RATTY RAT RATTY — invincibility

Zone Raiders

Hit the F8 or F11 function key, then type in the code at any time during game.

964. ISITWENTY20 — Reveal all of automap
965. ISILETSBAIL — Successfully end mission
966. ISIJAVANET — Shields/hull maxed out
967. ISIWHEELS — Xcar available
968. ISIDRIVE — All other vehicles
969. ISIMAKEITSO — Access all levels
970. ISIBEENTHERE — Access secret level
971. ISIFATPACKED — Weapons/ammo maxed out
972. ISISLEEP — All enemies asleep
973. ISIQ — Immortality
974. ISIWIRES — Show grid

Zool

975. Type GOLDFISH, hit Enter during gameplay to enter Cheat Mode, then type the following:
976. 1 — Temporary invincibility
977. 2 — Skip level
978. 3 — Skip to end of the world

Realms of Chaos

Cheats for shareware: (Press Caps Lock, D, X. Before entering a cheat, press Backspace.)

979. FIRE — powerup weapons
980. RAIN — health
981. MAGMA — power up stamina
982. ASTRAL — 250 mana gems
983. PRIME — combines above four
984. ETHER — level warp
985. WIND — somewhat invincible

Wetlands

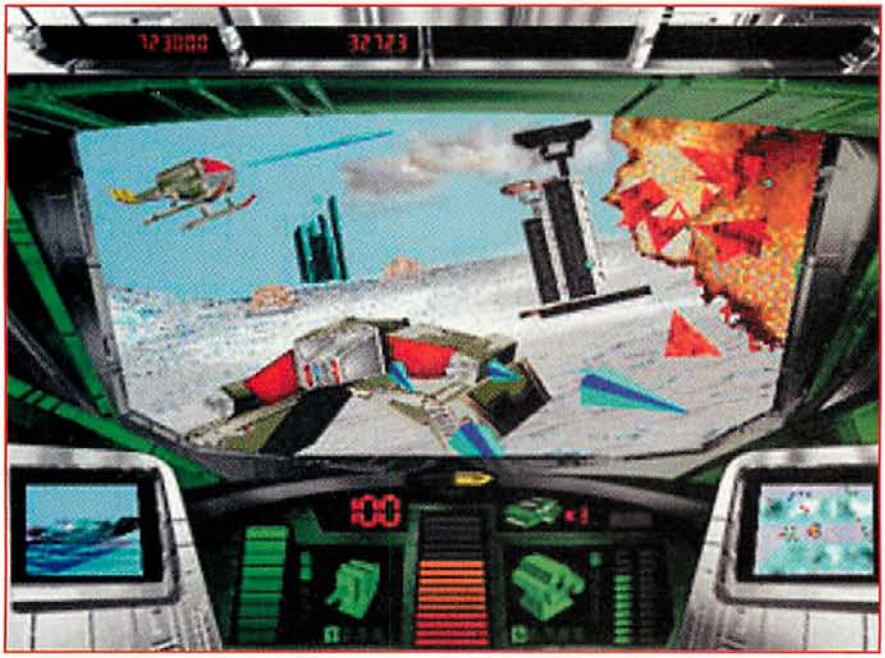
Enter this instead of your name:

986. COOLCOLE — all missions
987. SAVANNAH — 100% energy
988. ELRAPIDO — munitions

Total Mayhem

To activate, hold down Ctrl and Shift and type CHEAT from the base screen.

989. Ctrl-C — Gives 1,000 credits
990. Ctrl-A — Allows buying all weapons (use on base screen)
991. Ctrl-N — Level Skip (use on base screen)
992. Ctrl-P — Move unit to cursor (use in game)
993. Ctrl-I — Invincible (use in game)
994. Ctrl-R — Shield Restore (use in game)
995. Ctrl-M — Monster toggle (use in game)



RAISING HAVOC Sure, the Havoc cheats can help keep you alive, but can they make that hideous box fit on your bookshelf?

Bio Menace

996. C, A, and T simultaneously — receive the machine gun, 99 ammo, & 99 grenades.

Secret weapons:

997. Super Plasma Bolt — Hold the up arrow until you hear a charge sound, then hit fire; this causes one hit point of damage.
998. Fireball Attack — Turn left and right 6 or 7 times in succession, then hit fire.
999. Electron Shield — Turn left and right 6 or 7 times in succession, then hit jump key.
1000. Invincibility Burst — Hold up arrow until you hear a charge sound, then hit the down arrow.

All Games

1001. Press Ctrl-Alt-Del, then flip the switch labeled "Power." Enter the strange mode called "reality," laden with 3D graphics, surround sound, and beautiful texturing. Although the campaign seems extensive, we're not so sure about the flight modeling, and many of the character interactions seem pointless.

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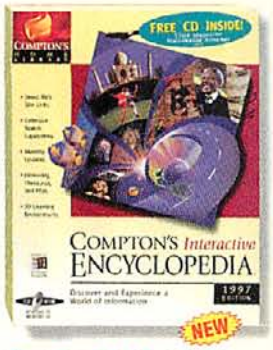
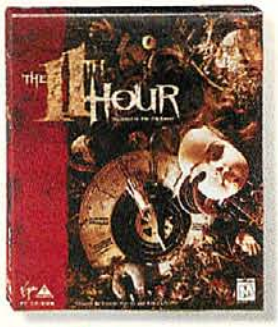
Zork Nemesis
Adventure 5065602
DOS 486/66, 8mb or
MAC PMAC, 16mb, M

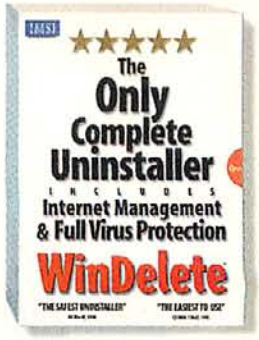


Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia '97
General Reference 5090501
WIN 3.1 486/66, 8mb, M

First Aid '95 Deluxe
Utilities 5066402
WIN3.1 386, 4mb, M



The 11th Hour
Interactive Game 5054309
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M



WinDelete
Utilities 5084504
WIN3.1 386, 8mb, M

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NEW **Bedlam** — Strategy Game — 5091301
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M

NEW **Pro CD Internet Directory** — Internet Guide — 5091103
WIN3.1 386, 4mb, M

Are You Afraid Of The Dark? — Children's Ed. — 5072905
DOS 386/33 or MAC LC, 4mb, M

Phantasmagoria
Interactive Game 5004502
DOS/WIN3.1 486/66 or
MAC LCIII, 8mb, M

Spycraft: The Great Game
Adventure 5063201
DOS 486/66 or MAC 68030, 8mb, M

NEW **Urban Runner** — Adventure — 5082300
WIN3.1 486/66, 8mb, M

Williams Arcade Classics — Arcade Style — 5072400
DOS/WIN3.1 486/33, 4mb, M, J

Earthsiege 2 — Arcade Style — 5080700
WIN '95 486, 8mb, M, J, K

The Oregon Trail II — Children's Ed. — 5078308
WIN3.1 486, 4mb or MAC 68030, 5mb, M

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure — Arcade Style — 5076005
WIN '95 486/33, 8mb, M

Steel Panthers — Strategy Game — 5065503
WIN3.1 486/33, 8mb, M

Shannara — Role Playing — 5065008
DOS 486/33,4mb, M

Flight Unlimited — Flight Sim. — 5070800
DOS 486/66 or MAC PMAC/66, 8mb, M, J, K

Trophy Bass Fishing — Arcade Style — 5054101
WIN3.1 486/66 or MAC LCIII, 8mb, M

NEW **Azrael's Tear** — Adventure — 5089909
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M

NEW **Harvester** — Adventure — 5090600
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M

NEW **Freddi Fish And The Case Of The Missing Kelp Seeds** — Children's Ed. — 5085709
WIN3.1 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb, M

NEW **Home Phone '96** — Home/Personal — 5090006
DOS 386 or MAC 68030, 4mb, M

Cyberia 2 — Arcade Style — 5074703
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M

Mortal Kombat III — Arcade Style — 5052501
DOS 486/33, 8mb, M, J, K

Hoyle Classic Games — Strategy Game — 5053202
WIN3.1 486/33, 8mb, M

Death Gate — Role Playing — 5062906
DOS 386/33, 4mb, M

Java Programmer's Library — Computer Tutor. — 5073200
WIN3.1 386, 4mb, M

NEW **Jumpstart Pre-K** — Children's Ed. — 5091400
WIN3.1 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb, M

Quest For Glory Anthology — Adventure — 5072806
DOS/WIN3.1 386, 4mb , M

Star Trek Deep Space Nine: Harbinger — Adventure — 5072608
DOS 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb, M

Just Me & My Dad — Children's Ed. — 5067400
WIN3.1 486, 4mb or MAC LCIII, 8mb, M

Panzer General — Strategy Game — 5045505
DOS 386/33, 4mb, M

Fantasy General — Role Playing — 5067301
DOS 386/40, 8mb, M

TerraNova: Strike Force Centauri — Arcade Style — 5066600
DOS Pentium, 8mb, M

Gryphon Bricks — Strategy Game — 5080007
WIN3.1 386 or MAC Classic, 4mb, M

Trivial Pursuit — Strategy Game — 5027404
WIN3.1 386 or MAC LCIII, 4mb, M

Compton's Complete Street Guide — Travel — 5065909
WIN3.1 386, 4mb, M

Command Aces Of The Deep — Strategy Game — 5080809
WIN '95 486/33, 8mb, M

Angel Devoid — Adventure — 5065404
DOS 486/66 or MAC LCII, 8mb, M

Dinotopia — Adventure — 5063003
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M

Tritryst — Strategy Game — 5075106
WIN '95 486/33, 8mb, M

Mission Critical — Adventure — 5062807
DOS 486/33, 4mb, M

Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer 2 — Flight Sim. — 5080908
WIN '95 486/66, 8mb, M, J

NEW **Invention Studio** — Children's Ed. — 5086806
WIN3.1 486/50, 8mb, M

NEW **World Beer Hunter** — Gen. Interest — 5087408
WIN3.1 486/66 or MAC 68030, 4mb, M

Masterclips 35,000 Premium Image Collection — Clip-Art Library — 5084801
WIN3.1 386, 4mb, M, K, P

7th Guest — Interact. Game — 5004700
DOS 386 or MAC LCIII, 4mb, M

Pool Champion — Arcade Style — 5060306
WIN3.1 486/66, 8mb, M

Zone Raiders — Arcade Style — 5058904
DOS 486/50 or MAC 68040, 8mb, J, K

Screamer — Arcade Style — 5058805
DOS 486/66, 8mb, K

Shivers — Adventure — 5058102
WIN3.1 486/33, 8mb, M

Mechwarrior 2 — Arcade Style — 5075403
WIN '95 PENTIUM, 12mb, M

The Complete Multimedia Bible — Bible Reference — 5031703
WIN3.1 386, 4mb, M

Command And Conquer
Strategy Game 5050208
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M

IndyCar Racing II
Driving Sim. 5083308
DOS 486/66, 8mb or
MAC PMAC, 16mb, M

Hexen — Arcade Style — 5056403
WIN3.1 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb, M, J

Shanghai — Strategy Game — 5075601
WIN '95 486/33, 8mb, M

1001 Really Cool Web Sites — Internet Guide — 5053004
WIN3.1 386 or MAC Classic, 4mb, M, K

Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing 4.0 — Typing Tutorial — 5052402
WIN3.1 386/33, 8mb, M, K

Chessmaster 5000 — Strategy Game — 5083605
WIN '95 486/66, 8mb, M

NEW **Final Doom** — Arcade Style — 5083209
DOS 486, 4mb, M, J, K

Cyberstorm — Strategy Game — 5079900
WIN '95 486/66, 8mb, M

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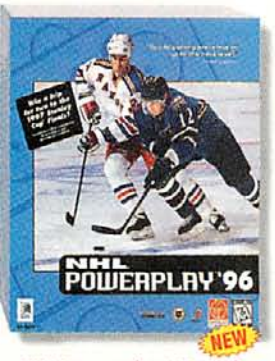
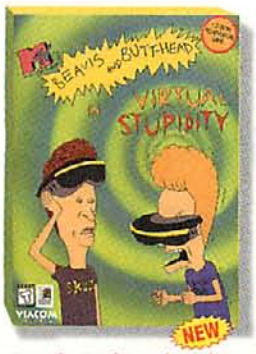


NEW

NHL Powerplay '96 Hockey
Sports 5089701
WIN '95 486/66, 8mb, M, J , K



NEW

Beavis And Butthead In Virtual Stupidity
Adventure 5075007
WIN '95 486/33, 8mb, M

NEW

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Strategy Game 5089404
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NEW **A.D.A.M.: The Inside Story '97** — Medical Ref. — 5083803
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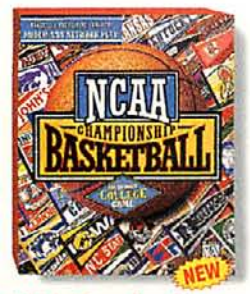

NEW

NCAA Championship Basketball
Sports 5089503
DOS 486/66, 8mb, J, K

NEW

Muppet Treasure Island
Adventure 5085303
WIN3.1 486/66, 8mb, M

Police Quest: SWAT — Adventure — 5062500
WIN3.1 486/33, 8mb, M

The Unexplained — Historical — 5079801
WIN3.1 486/50, 8mb, M

Resume Maker Deluxe CD — Home/Personal — 5050703
WIN3.1 386/33, 8mb, M, K, P

Navy Strike — Flight Sim. — 5051909
DOS 486/66, 4mb, M, J, K

Earthworm Jim — Arcade Style — 5075304
WIN '95 486/33, 8mb, M

Aces Collector's Edition — Flight Sim. — 5037908
WIN3.1 486, 4mb, M, J, K

The Lost Mind Of Dr. Brain — Children's Ed. — 5037502
WIN3.1 486 or MAC LCIII, 4mb, M

Caesar II — Strategy Game — 5068606
DOS 486, 8mb, M

Nick Jr. Play Math — Children's Ed. — 5072707
WIN3.1 486/33 or MAC 68030, 8mb, M, K

Heretic — Arcade Style — 5066709
DOS 486, 4mb, M, J

Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia Of Sex — Home/Personal — 5027602
WIN3.1 486, 4mb, M

Nascar Racing — Driving Sim. — 5001300
DOS 386/40, 8mb, M, J, K

Cyberspeed — Arcade Style — 5076104
WIN '95 486, 8mb, M

Doom II — Arcade Style — 5021506
DOS 386/33, 4mb or MAC LCII, 8mb, M, J, K

NEW **SU-27 Flanker** — Flight Sim. — 5083902
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M, J, K

NEW **The Elk Moon Murder** — Adventure — 5082201
DOS 486/66 or MAC 040/66, 8mb, M

Jumpstart Kindergarten — Children's Ed. — 5027701
DOS/WIN3.1 386, 1 mb or MAC LCIII, 4mb, M

NEW

Time Commando
Arcade Style 5089602
DOS 486/66, 8mb, M, K

Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within
Adventure 5060405
WIN3.1 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb, M

Corel Gallery — Clip-Art Library — 5010301
WIN3.1 386, 4mb or MAC LCII, 2mb, M, K, P

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DOS 486/33, 8mb, M, J, K

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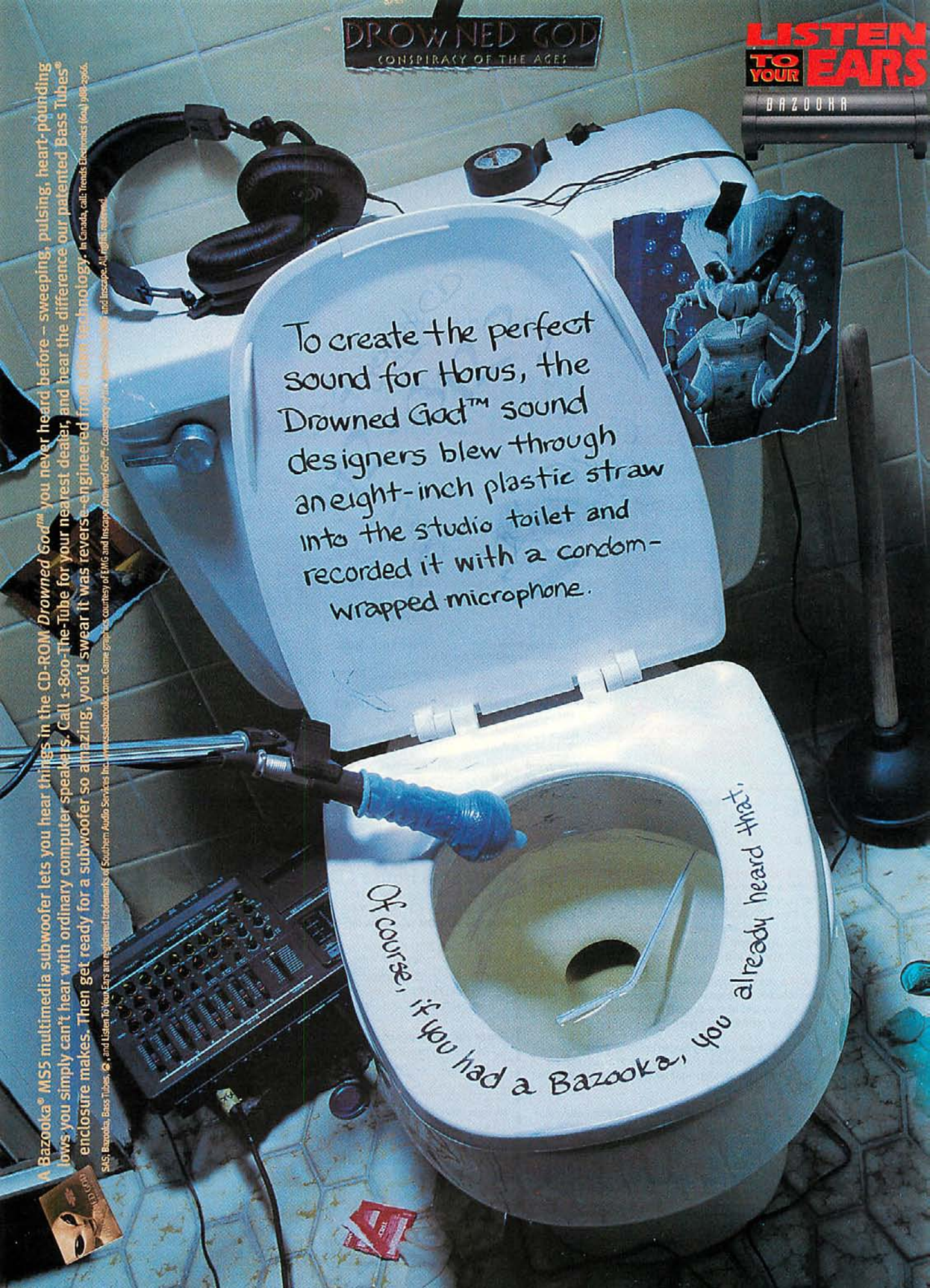
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The Agony And The Ecstasy

A Toast To The Best—And Torches To The Worst—Of Gaming Tech

In the past year or so, I've come across a lot of interesting pieces of hardware and software and have played my fair share of games. While most products fall into a middle ground when it comes to issues like installation or the user interface, there is kind of a bell curve at work here—there are a few products that are egregiously bad in some areas and others that are stellar. Don't get me wrong; even some of the products with bad qualities, such as a really awful installation, may actually be utterly cool if you can get them to work.

I wanted to somehow reward products that really thought about user issues, and also lob a few bombs at some that forget there *are* such things as users. After some consideration, I've come up with "Torches and Toasts." A torch means that the product was taken out back and burned (only in effigy, of course). A toast means that we cracked open a bottle of Dom Perignon '59 and toasted the product (after a few of these, I avoided playing NASCAR...)

With these thoughts in mind, let's dive into the product list. These are in no particular order, by the way.

> "I've lost count of the number of games I've crashed by accidentally pressing the Windows 95 key."

The Toasts

Diamond Multimedia's Suprasonic 336 external modem. The Suprasonic 336 sports a cool LCD front panel that gives you information like baud rate, whether compression is on and even what kind of compression is being used. Although connecting with a friend via a modem has gotten much easier with recent games, there's still occasion to have to tweak those dreaded modem strings. The extra info provided by this display can help get the connection right.

Creative Labs' Plug-and-Play configuration manager. Creative Labs (finally) shipped a PnP configuration manager that actually works. Intel's ISA Configuration Utility (ICU) that often ships with PnP products doesn't work well, particularly under Windows 95's DOS mode, but Creative's works quite well. Note that you'll need to update your Win 95 settings to match any changes to the configuration of the card. If you're running DOS 6.22, you can also run the full configuration manager to tweak the card configuration.

ATX design motherboards. The ATX spec makes installation of new motherboards a much easier task. ATX systems also have more efficient cooling and a "soft" power switch (at long last). Not only that, but you can have more full-size cards if you need them.

3COM's ISA Etherlink III network adapter. Cheers to 3COM for allowing the user to disable the PnP capability on

▸▸▸Continued on pg 98

The Torches

The WING COMMANDER Kilrathi Saga's crummy installation procedure. If you have AutoPlay enabled, when the CD-ROM is inserted it *proceeds to install DirectX without asking you.* The result has been much anguish among gamers who have had their recent, DirectX-compliant video drivers overwritten with the DirectX default drivers, resulting in distorted screens and lowered refresh rates.

Any game controller that requires the keyboard port. Okay, so HOTAS (Hands On Throttle And Stick) is a cool concept, but even some gamepads now plug into the keyboard port. I like to switch back and forth between game controllers, and having multiple keyboard dongles daisy-chained doesn't cut it. As an aside, we'll herald the arrival of joysticks and other game controllers that adopt the Universal Serial Bus (USB), forever doing away with the somewhat dysfuntional IBM game port/multiple keyboard pass-through config.

An oversight in the ATX specifications that doesn't define the back panel cut-outs for parallel, serial, keyboard and audio ports. I've seen at least three different cut-out patterns, and no ATX case I've seen supports all of them.

Poorly designed Windows 95 keyboards. Some new keyboards have a Windows 95 key right next to the spacebar. I've lost count of the number of games I've crashed by accidentally pressing this key, which in Win 95 pops up the Start menu, a

▸▸▸Continued on pg 98

Toasts ▸▸▸Continued from pg 97

The Toasts

the ISA version of the Etherlink III network adapter. This way, the card can be used in any system appropriately, without the need for arcane configuration managers.

CH Products keyboard connectors. CH Products includes all possible keyboard connectors for their joysticks that need a keyboard pass-through. These days, it's a crap shoot as to what kind of keyboard connector comes with a system; some use the smaller PS/2 connector; others use the older AT plug. If you get a CH Throttle or Pro Throttle, both connectors are included and attached—just plug in the right one for your system.

RAD Software's free Smacker tools. Smacker tools let you view Smacker-encoded video files that ship with many games. RAD lets you download them for free from their Web site at www.radgametools.com, or CompuServe's Game Developer's forum (GO GAMEDEV). Bravo!

Syquest's EZFlyer 230 MB SCSI. The SCSI version of the EZFlyer sports an automatic termination feature. On the end of an SCSI chain, it will turn on termination, and in the middle of the chain it turns off termination. If only the rest of the SCSI universe could figure this out…

IWILL Corporation's motherboards. IWILL, a Taiwanese motherboard manufacturer, packages their motherboards in a very user-friendly way. The packaging lists the features of the motherboard, and the internal packaging is actually labeled with the contents of those little boxes. On top of that, their Quick line of motherboards comes with onboard ultra or ultrawide SCSI for a very small price premium.

Brian Reynolds' support for CIVILIZATION II. Formerly of MicroProse and lead designer of CIVILIZATION II, Brian Reynolds supported that game beyond the call of duty. Reynolds was all over the online services, responding to messages and issuing new patches almost daily. The best part was that the patches weren't just bug fixes, but actually added cool new features to the game in response to user requests.

Torches ▸▸▸Continued from pg 97

The Torches

minor convenience not worth the hours I've lost in game-play.

The nVidea NV-1 multimedia chip-set. The NV-1 inflicted the most arcane hardware/software installation procedure I've seen since the days of S-100 computers. With a gaggle of connectors, installation options and puzzling prompts, you don't quite need an electrical engineering degree to get an NV-1 board running, but it sure would help.

Intel's Triton II chip-set. Intel promised but didn't deliver on their much-anticipated Triton II chip-set, which shipped with several key, heavily advertised capabilities missing, including universal serial bus support and parity memory support (in the case of the HX version). Worse yet, motherboard vendors sold boards with these early chip-sets without removing references to unimplemented features from documentation or the BIOS.

John Hinkley's FastVid utility. FastVid dramatically accelerates graphics in older Pentium Pro motherboards, and even gives a bump on newer Pentium Pro boards. On top of that, Hinkley freely distributes the program on the Web, to the eternal thanks of Pentium Pro owners everywhere.

Chris Dial's Cbench. Dial managed to finally bury the venerable 3D Bench DOS graphics benchmark with his Cbench, a simple DOS 3D benchmark that will test both VGA and SVGA performance, and has a nice mix of floating point code thrown in as well. While not perfect, it's a decent gauge of DOS performance for your graphics board. Best of all, it's free at www.dfw.net/~sdw/chris3d.html.

And finally, **a toast to all the readers** who have sent me email or snail mail. I can't always respond, but seeing your insights and questions helps me do a better job serving you. Thanks very much for taking the time, and keep them coming.

Loyd Case can be reached via email at loyd@proaxis.com.

CG TIPS!

▸If you're getting consistent read errors from a CD-ROM, before you throw in the towel and try to get a replacement, try washing it. That's right, with a little warm water and nonabrasive liquid dish-soap, hand-wash the CD on both sides. Then dry it with a lint-free cloth. More than half the time, this will "clean up" any read errors you might be having.

▸If you have a particularly thin or long VGA cable, and your graphics display has a bad case of double-vision, you might try installing a pair of ferrite cores. Available at better Radio Shacks and electronic hobbyist stores, ferrite cores are little metal cylinders, usually encased in plastic, that wrap around a cable. Place one set of cores near the monitor connection and the other adjacent to the graphics adapter connector. If this doesn't fix the problem, a new VGA cable or monitor service may be in order.

▸If your Windows 95 game seems to be performing sluggishly, and you've already installed the latest and greatest drivers for your graphics card, here are some other things to check. First, turn off any screen savers—they eat up CPU cycles. Next, make sure that File and Printer Sharing aren't installed. While networking in general uses some of your CPU, File and Printer Sharing can cause a performance hit, especially if someone is connected to you. Finally, if you do have networking installed, make sure the network card is connected to a specific LAN, since some older cards pester the CPU unnecessarily as they hunt for a LAN connection.

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And unlike many of the competition's 3D *decelerators*, Mystique delivers true 3D game power with the highest frame rates possible and a unique set of 3D features not available with other products. You'll also get blazing fast DOS game acceleration with Mystique's superior 32-bit VGA engine.

By adding on the Matrox Rainbow Runner series of upgrades, you'll discover an exciting new universe of digital video and make obsolescence nightmares a thing of the past (Q1 '97). You'll be able to send video over the internet, play PC games on a big screen TV, decode MPEG video in hardware and watch TV on the PC! Explore all the possibilities at incredibly low prices.

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All Direct 3D tests conducted by Matrox Graphics Inc. on a Gateway P5-166 configured with Intel P5-166Mhz, 16MB of EDO RAM with 256K cache. Matrox Mystique, Diamond Stealth 3D 2000XL and ATI 3D XPRESSION + PC2TV were configured with 2 MB of memory for the PCI bus using driver releases 3.16, 4.03.00.2101 and 3.0 respectively for Windows 95. Direct 3D tests done using Tunnel from the DirectX 2.0 SDK. Diamond Stealth 3D 2000XL and ATI 3D Xpression + PC2TV tests were conducted at 512 x 384 @ 16 bit while Matrox Mystique testing was conducted at 640 x 400 @ 16 bit based on Gouraud shaded, perspective correct textured, point sampled, 16-bit per pixel color, dithered rendered polygons.

CIRCLE READER SERVICE #259

Pentium 200

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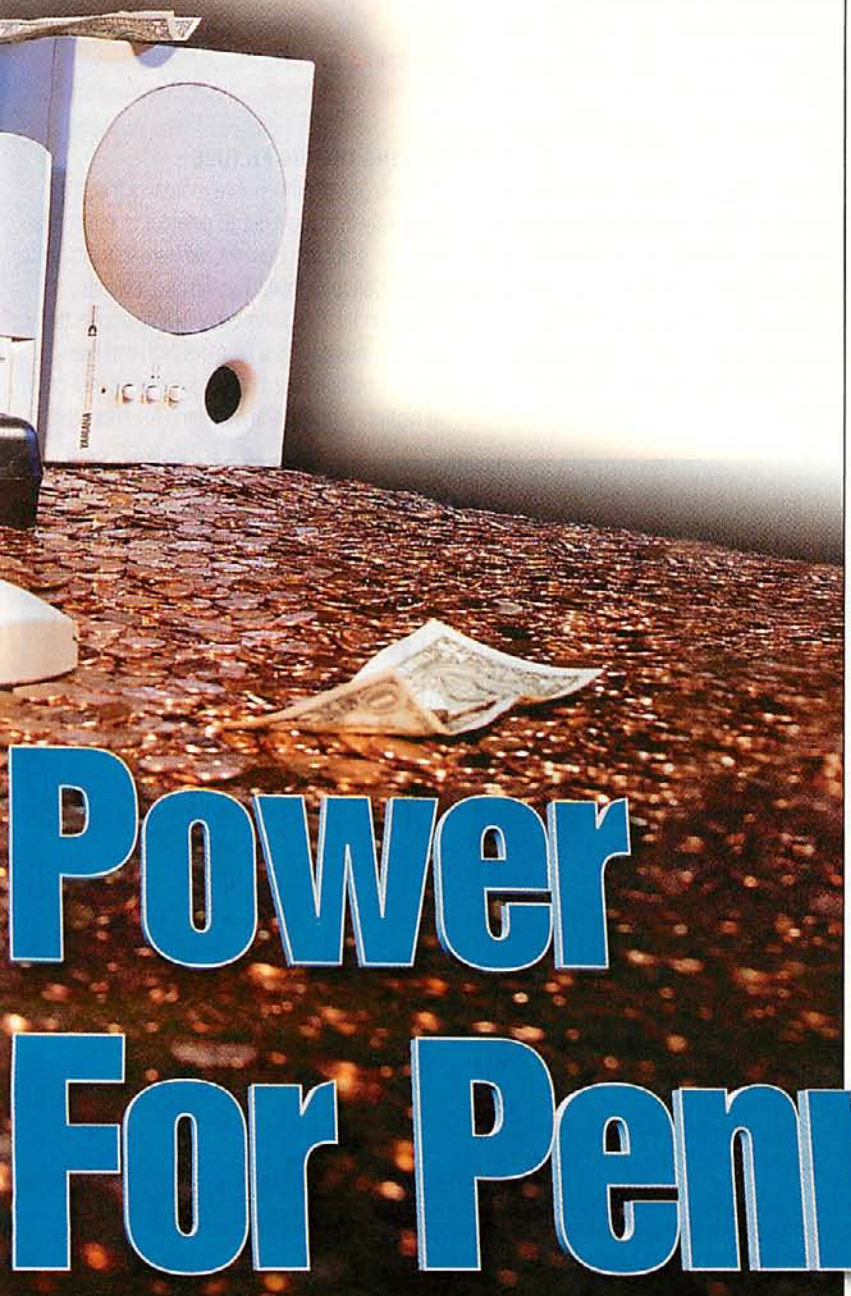


Power For Pennies

BY LOYD CASE

Last month there was an article on a fantasy game called "The Ultimate Gaming Rig"; fantasy because most people don't have nine grand to blow on a gaming rig—at least, not all at once. So I sat down and mulled over what might constitute some best-of-breed components to build a "real world" ultimate rig. While I didn't set a particular price point, I wanted to build a system using the best price/performance gear I could get my hands on.

The real problem was that the number of products at mid-level prices is staggering, and there are probably more opinions and emotional attachments to affordable products than to products at the high end. So it's very likely you might not agree with the choices here—if so, substitute your favorite item. The point is that you can build a very fast, very solid computer for a reasonable amount of money. Let's take a look at what went into *CGW*'s "budget" gaming rig.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN POPPLEWELL

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The processor was a tough choice, because the Intel Pentium Pro 200's price point was—except during a brief shortage toward the end of last year—pretty close to that of the 200 MHz Pentium. However, the cost of Pentium Pro motherboards was still higher, and we did want to make realistic decisions, so we chose the Pentium 200.

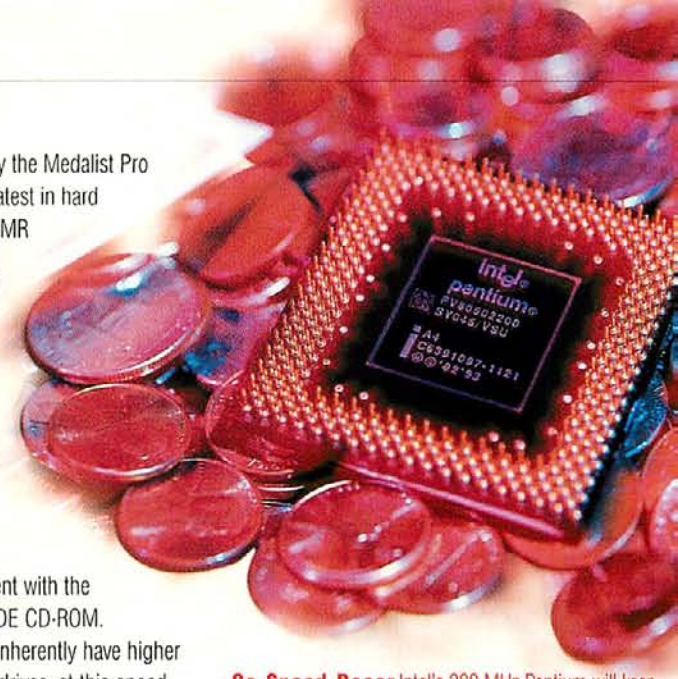
The motherboard choices are huge, even if you restrict yourself to somewhat higher performance chip-sets, such as the Intel Triton II 430HX. However, after our experience with the Micron Home MPC system in the December issue, which earned a 5-star rating and Editor's Choice award, the choice became clear. We used the Micronics M55Hi Plus board, which ships with a 512KB Level 2 cache and is virtually identical to the Home MPC's excellent motherboard. Toss in 32 MB of EDO DRAM and you have the beginnings of a very solid system.

STORAGE EN MASSE

Again, there are numerous choices for mid-priced hard disks, but we finally settled on the venerable Seagate Medalist Pro 2140 (aka the ST32140A). This drive rotates at 5400 RPM, has a 256KB buffer, and moves data at the fastest PIO Mode 4 setting in most newer BIOSes. This drive will soon be superseded by the Medalist Pro 2540, which features the latest in hard disk technology, including MR (magneto-resistive) heads, PRML read channels, and a 5400 RPM rotational speed, at about the same price as the Medalist 2140. It should be available now. The drive mates well with the built-in PCI EIDE controller on the Micronics motherboard.

For the CD-ROM, we went with the brand-new Toshiba 12x EIDE CD-ROM. Although EIDE CD drives inherently have higher CPU utilization than SCSI drives, at this speed most game titles should still run quite well. On top of that, the price point was attractive, at less than $200.

Finally, we threw in a garden-variety 3.5-inch floppy drive for around 30 bucks. If backup is an issue for you, I would recommend Iomega's parallel port Zip drive. The Iomega Zip doesn't have the lowest cost per MB, but Iomega offered a rebate program at the time of this writing, which brought the Zip drive in at around $150.

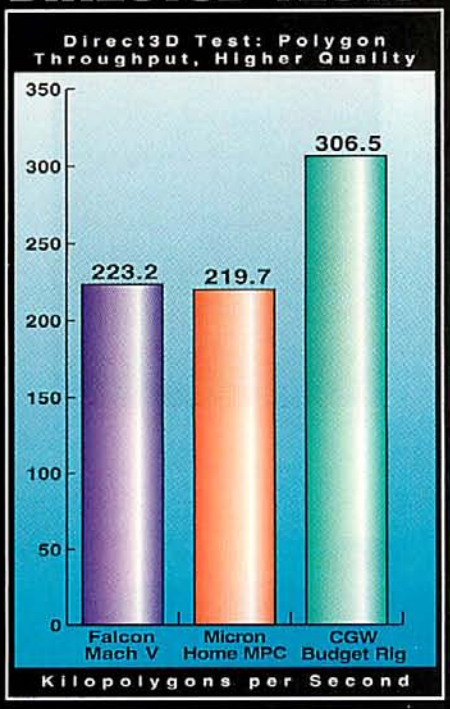


Go Speed Racer Intel's 200 MHz Pentium will keep even the most demanding titles moving along smartly.

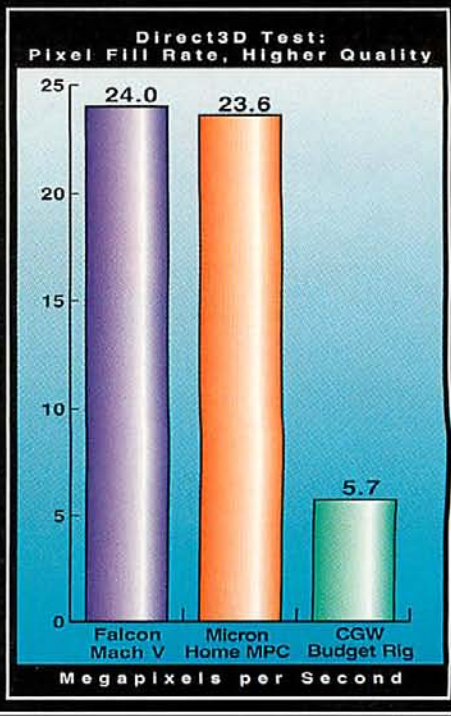
GETTING THE BIG PICTURE

If you get 10 gamers in a room together, it's very likely that you'll get 10 different recommendations for graphics. However, we were very intrigued by the Canopus Total3D graphics accelerator. Based on the Rendition Verité 2D/3D accelerator, the Canopus card is a bit more high-end than the other Rendition-based cards, supporting true color at higher resolutions and offering full support for

DIRECT3D TESTS



Polygon Throughput denotes the number of polygons a chip can render; higher throughput yields greater scene complexity without a loss of frame rate. Pixel fill denotes the speed that pixels are painted onto a surface; this helps improve performance in games containing fewer, larger polygons. As graphical realism increases, polygon throughput becomes more important since there are more polygons per scene. So, while the Rendition-based card in our budget system has lower fill rates, it delivers good poly throughput, and most 3D games will run smoothly on it.



The Falcon Northwest Mach V and Micron Home MPC machines scored the highest ratings in our December survey of off-the-shelf systems, earning 4.5 stars and 5 stars, respectively.

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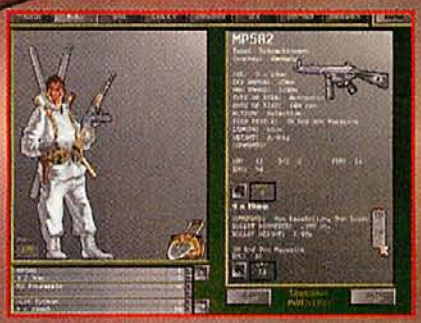

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stereo-shutter VR glasses.

Choosing a monitor was another tough challenge since this article is intended for those on a real-world budget. My baseline recommendation is the 15-inch monitor from Viewsonic. The 15ES displays good image quality with a 0.28 mm dot pitch and has a maximum screen resolution of 1024x768. For $200 more, though, you can have a 17-inch monitor from Princeton Graphics. The EO70 is a real deal at a street price of only $499. It won't win any awards for features, but it does offer high refresh rates even at 1024x768, has digital controls, and features a quality image with a 0.28 mm dot pitch. The EO70 is a solid monitor and a good deal.

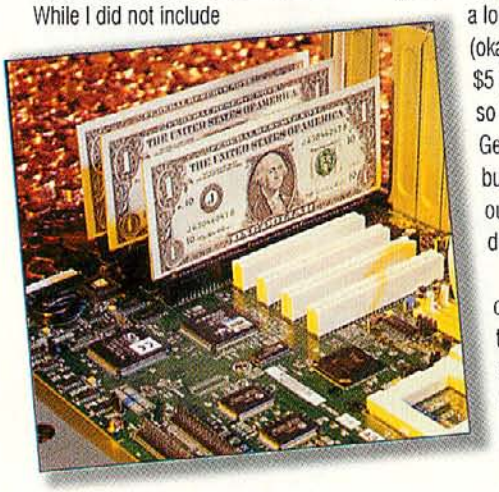
THE SOUND AND THE FURY

Good audio is an increasingly important piece of the game puzzle these days. One of the cool things about our choice of the Micronics M55Hi Plus motherboard is that it comes with a built-in Creative Labs Vibra 16 chip on board. This solves the digital sound problem and gave us a workable game port. You should know, however, that the MIDI quality of the Vibra 16's FM synthesis isn't very good. I'm one of those people who consider audio *very* important, so I plugged in the Yamaha SW60XG Waveforce ISA card for MIDI sound. While I did not include the Waveforce card with my baseline system, it's worth spending the $180 if high-quality audio is important to you. If it helps you to rationalize it, remember that the Sound Blaster comes free with the motherboard.

Having been weaned on high-fidelity audio systems, my ears can't take the sound of crummy speakers. Still, I wanted to stay within a reasonable budget, so I opted for the Yamaha YST-10 desktop speakers. Despite the lack of a woofer, the YST-10s deliver good bass response and impressive sound quality for $100. If you want better speakers, you can opt for the Yamaha system 35, which mates the 25-watt MSW-10 woofer with a pair of YST-M7 5-watt-per-channel satellites. These will never be mistaken for a set of Polk Audio's finest, but they do sound good, and can be found for around $150.

I'M IN CONTROL HERE

Of course, you need to interact with a computer to play games. After a bit of research, we unearthed the Focus 6200 keyboard. At first glance, this looks like one of those ergonomic keyboards, until you realize that the keys themselves are still arranged in single rows; it's the oversized spacebar that throws you off. It has those funky Windows keys, but also has a nice, light touch, good tactile feedback and a logical layout, all for $25 (okay, we had to throw in a $5 PS/2 keyboard adapter, so it was 30 portraits of George). The Logitech 3-button Mouseman rounded out the standard input device list.



Controllers are always controversial, and I have to confess: I punted on this one. I had two very nice joysticks and just couldn't choose between them. One was

Playin' the Slots Because the Micronics M55Hi Plus motherboard has an audio and joystick port built in, you save about $70, and additional installation headaches.

Where to Score the Best Deal

When doing the research for building *CGW*'s budget game rig, I tried to look for the best prices possible. Here's what I would recommend if you want to do the same thing.

First, I started with catalogs. I get a zillion catalogs from various computer mail order companies. Since I've been building computers for a few years now, I have a pretty good nose for reasonably good prices.

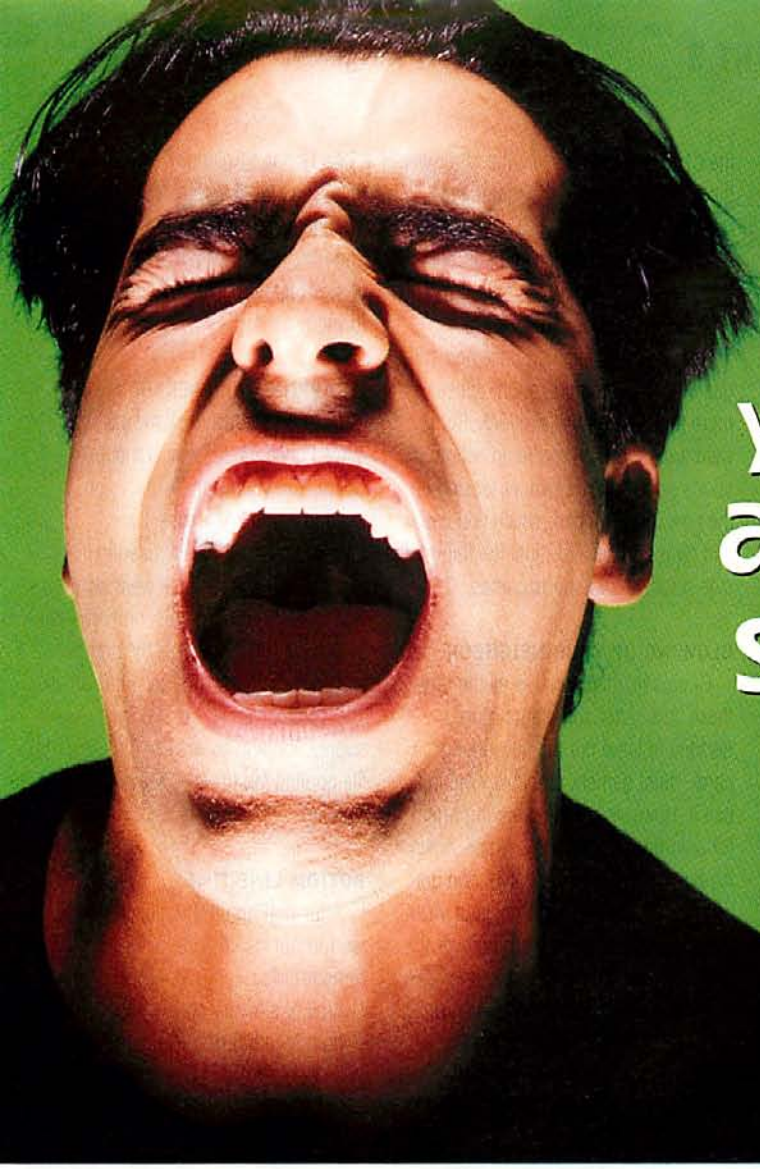
Another invaluable source is the giant *Computer Shopper* magazine. This enormous publication, which can be delivered to your doorstep monthly, contains a seemingly endless array of mail-order vendors, pricing information and 800 numbers. And the technical articles are pretty good, too.

Then there's the Internet. Although I still prefer to order by phone, I'm finding more good deals over the Internet every day. I've bought motherboards, memory, CPUs and more, all from vendors who advertise only in their Web pages. In other cases, I've found the Web site through an ad in another source (such as *Computer Shopper*), but the Web site will contain more up-to-date pricing or offer specials not in the paper ad.

Finally, there's an interesting new medium that's available: the online auction. For example, check out OnSale at www.onsale.com. The chief caveat about buying in this format is that you *must* have a good idea of what you're looking for. It's very easy to get sidetracked and get something that looks "almost" right but turns out to be not quite what you expected. Bear in mind, too, that an auction medium like this will often have used or refurbished components, but if that doesn't scare you, then have at it.

Shopping remotely has its benefits but also its drawbacks. There are unscrupulous vendors posing as legitimate mail-order companies on the Net. They never deliver and move on to a different phone number before you realize you've lost your money. Thankfully, most credit card companies will refund most or all of a fraudulent transaction, if you report it promptly. Then there's the merely incompetent, which is almost as bad. These are folks who send you the wrong stuff, causing you delays and often reshipping or restocking charges. Make sure you double-check the return policy of any company that does business by mail order.

Buying mail order is one of the most cost-effective ways to gather components for an upgrade or new system. All you need to do is exercise a little caution and do a little research. The potential payoff is substantial.



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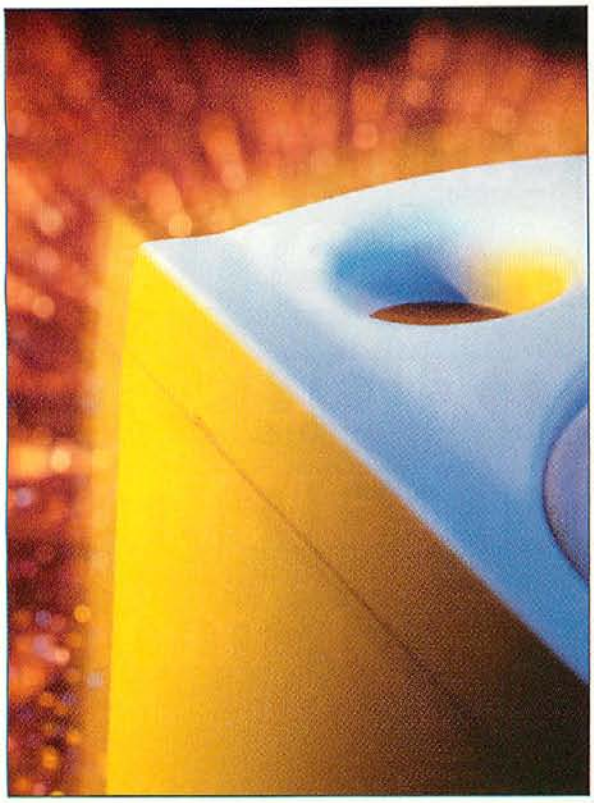


Where's the Beef? Living below your desk, Yamaha's MSW-10 woofer will give your audio that needed oomph.

the CH F16 Combat Stick; the other was the new Thrustmaster X-Fighter, their updated version of the FCS. The CH stick has a light, precise feel and built-in throttle wheel, yielding a somewhat more versatile stick, whereas the Thrusty, with its weighted base and stiff, geared potentiometers, might appeal more to the hard-core sim jock. Both were around $60. If you're an action or sports gaming fan, consider tossing in the new CH Gamepad, which you can find for less than $20—just the thing for side-scrollers and sports games.

BLOWING UP YOUR NEIGHBOR

Of course, multiplayer is all the rage these days. After some agonizing, I decided to leave out the networking card—most gamers probably wouldn't use it. However, modems are important for a number of reasons—e-mail, downloading the latest game patch, and getting together with a bunch of your virtual friends and blowing them up over the Internet. I wanted a low-cost but reliable modem, so I chosethe Hayes Accura 28.8 DVSD modem (also called the "Total Gaming Solution"). You can find it for around $120 with a bit of shopping. Though an internal modem, it is Plug-and-Play, installs with little or no difficulty, and once running, is a very solid performer.

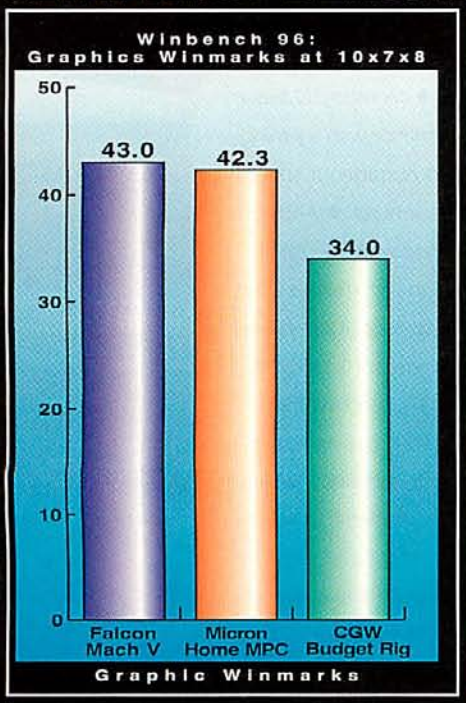
WRAPPING THE PACKAGE

Most people overlook the case, but since I used the Micronics motherboard, which uses the ATX design, I needed a good ATX case. I was impressed with the case used in last month's ultimate rig, so I went with a mid-tower from the same company—an In Win IW-G500A. It uses the same slide-out motherboard tray but is smaller and comes with its own 235-watt power supply. Topping off the CPU is a low-profile cooling fan from PC Power & Cooling.

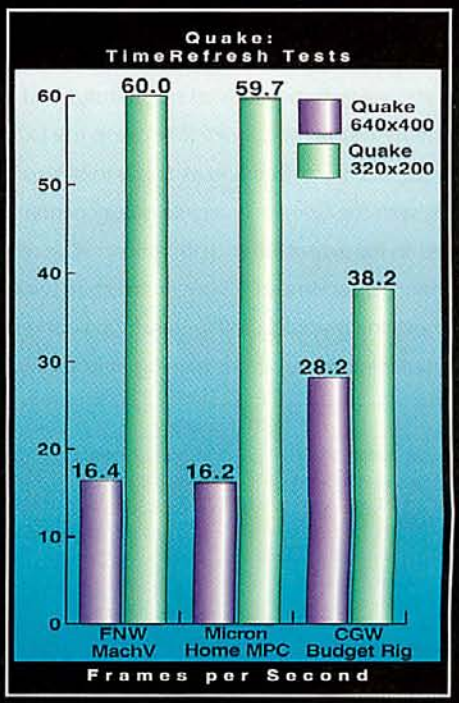
BOTTOM LINE TIME

After putting all the pieces together, we ran our usual suite of benchmarks— check out the graphs. Overall, it's a very solid contender—but more important, it's a

GRAPHICS BENCHMARKS



Winbench 96 performance data, though not specifically relevant to gaming performance, will give you a very good idea how a graphics board or a system will perform in moving business applications along smoothly. It can also be quite handy for the Spousal Rationalization Factor. In our QUAKE tests, we used unaccelerated QUAKE in testing the Micron and Falcon systems, and the Rendition-accelerated VQUAKE for testing our budget rig. We used the TimeRefresh command issued from QUAKE's command prompt at the same point in the first level.



The Falcon Northwest Mach V and Micron Home MPC machines scored the highest ratings in our December survey of off-the-shelf systems, earning 4.5 stars and 5 stars, respectively.

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #**118**

The Ultimate Game Machine On A Budget

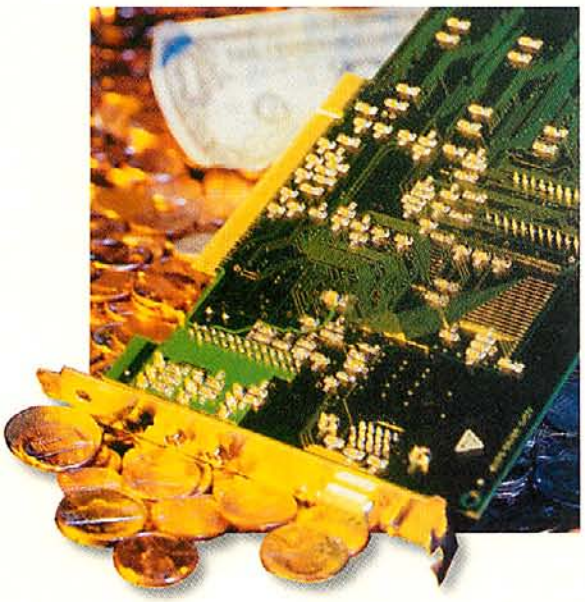
Component	Street Price	Vendor Name	Web URL
Micronics M55 Hi Plus (with audio)	$300	Micronics, Inc	www.micronics.com
Pentium 200 w/256 KB L2 cache	$490	Intel	www.intel.com
32 MB EDO DRAM	$144	(Various)	n/a
Seagate Medalist Pro 2520	$279	Seagate Corp.	www.seagate.com
3.5" Floppy drive	$29	Teac	www.teac.com
Toshiba 5702B 12x CD-ROM drive	$199	Toshiba, Inc.	www.toshiba.com
Canopus Total 3D	$250	Canopus Corp	www.canopuscorp.com
Viewsonic 15ES Monitor	$329	Viewsonic	www.viewsonic.com
In Win IW-G500 midtower case	$99	In Win Corp.	www.in-win.com
Hayes Accura 28.8 DVSD	$120	Hayes Corp.	www.hayes.com
Yamaha YST-10 speakers	$99	Yamaha Corp.	www.yamaha.com
CH F-16 Combat Stick	$59	CH Products	www.chproducts.com
Focus FX6200 keyboard	$30	Focus, Inc.	n/a
Logitech Mouseman 3-button mouse	$59	Logitech	www.logitech.com
Total	**$2,486**		

Bells & Whistles You Might Consider

Princeton Graphics 17" monitor (EO70)	$500	Princeton Graphics	www.prgr.com
CH Gamepad	$19	CH Products	www.chproducts.com
Yamaha System 35 speakers	$149	Yamaha Corp.	www.yamaha.com
Yamaha MIDI Card (SW60XG)	$179	Yamaha Corp.	www.yamaha.com
Iomega Zip Drive	$150	Iomega Corp.	www.iomega.com

system that uses the components we wanted to use. The other nice thing about building your own rig: now that you know what's in it, you can plan a logical upgrade strategy, some of which we'll cover next month.

When the Chips Are Down Can you guess which board this is? No? Canopus' Total3D delivers excellent 3D performance, respectable 2D, will run any Rendition-ready title.



As for gameplay, everything ran beautifully. We were concerned that running VGA games might pose a problem for the Rendition Verité chip, since its VGA performance is quite slow, but DAGGERFALL ran smoothly and DUKE NUKEM 3D in standard VGA mode seemed smooth as well. The only hitch we ran into was a clash between Novalogic's F22 LIGHTNING II and the Total 3D's VESA SVGA mode, but a small TSR available from CompuServe's Flight Simulation Forum fixed that glitch.

As for cost, the whole package came in at just under $2,500 which is a terrific price point for a machine this fast. If you see comparable-sounding systems advertised for less, it may be because we have included more of what you really need to play games, as well as better-quality components. If $2,500 is beyond your means, you can build a respectable Pentium 166 with 16 MB of RAM for around $2,000, which I've outlined in the adjoining sidebar. Although it's difficult to quantify the difference between the two systems in a brief manner, you can expect the Pentium 166 to be approximately 10-15 percent slower than the 200.

Finally, if all of this sounds great, but you want to save even more money by upgrading your present system, I'll have a complete report on how to do that in next month's final installment of the Ultimate Game Machine series.

The Lean & Mean Pentium 166

Micronics M55 Hi Plus (with audio)	$300
Pentium 166	$368
16 MB EDO DRAM	$72
1.6 GB drive	$199
3.5" Floppy drive	$29
Toshiba 5702B 12x CD-ROM drive	$199
Intergraph Reactor	$160
Viewsonic 15ES Monitor	$329
In Win IW-G500 midtower case	$99
Hayes Accura 28.8 DVSD	$120
Quickshot speakers	$70
Focus FX6200 keyboard	$30
Generic mouse	$15
Total	**$1,990**

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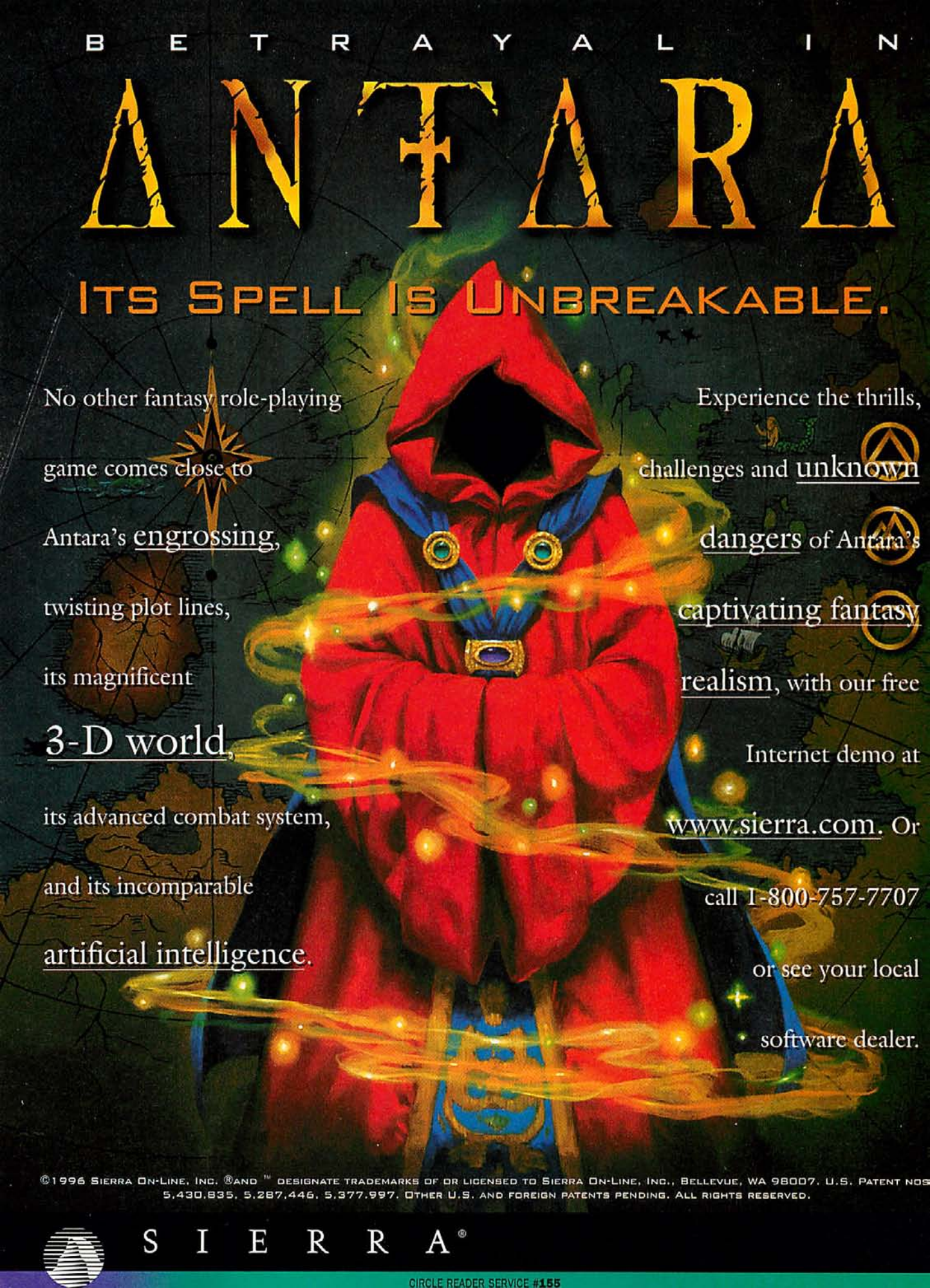
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The Making Of MechWarrior 3

A Game Designer's Path To The Big Leagues, And How He Handled MECH 3's Design Challenges

It seems like it was a million years ago. My father had just died and a friend of my mom convinced her to buy me one of those "new fangled" TRS-80s, to help me get my mind off of the whole deal. It worked. I sublimated my grief through endless hours of BASIC programming, creating the world's crappiest dungeon romps.

STRANGE TRIPPIN'

Senior year in high school was a joke—I cut classes like a master, only to sneak back home, guzzle Strohs and program 6502 assembly language. In my first year of college, computers were my life—I was going to create the world's greatest games one day.

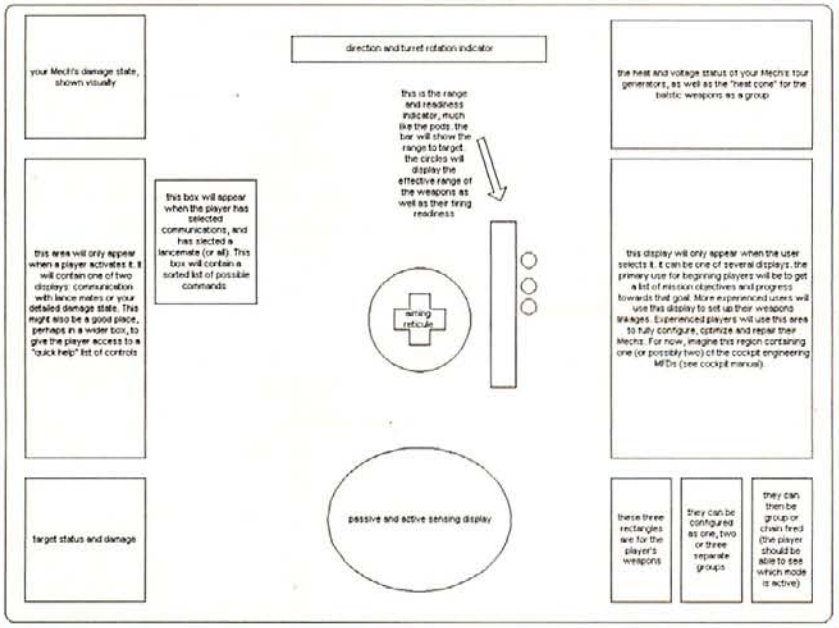
Until reality hit me. It was not really the fault of my data structures prof—he wanted to "ground me in the real world." Life with computers wasn't about programming games, he told me, it was about crafting solid COBOL code for your Fortune 500 employer. The next day I switched my major to undecided and tossed my digital dreams over my shoulder.

But those dreams never died I guess, and in the years since college, life came full-circle for me. I became a college prof, too, but I chucked it all to design MECHWARRIOR 3.

I'm devoting this last column to my experiences on that project, and after I send this to Ken Brown—the best (and crankiest!)

MOVING TARGET This display could change, but you can see it's shaping up as a major enhancement from MECH 2. For a full Sneak Preview of MECH 3, see c|net's coverage at gamecenter.com.

MechWarrior 3 Interface: cockpit HUD controls



INTERFACE DESIGN Here's how a game designer's schematics help translate their vision into reality. You can tell from the gameplay screen that MECH 3 syncs pretty closely with this design.

editor I could ever hope for—I'll be folding up my laptop and heading off to Texas with wife, daughter and dog to head up 3D Realms' PREY. What a long, strange trip it's been.

MY MECH ATTACK

I spent my summer and fall as lead designer for MECHWARRIOR 3, at FASA Interactive Technologies. While my occasional ventures in freelance game design gave me some intense rushes, I wasn't prepared for the intellectual whammy I got when I landed at FASA. For weeks, my brain ached from the mental gymnastics needed to keep every variable of the game's design in my mind at all times.

Working on MECH 3 was a true rush. It began with Jordan Weisman, a man so stratospherically creative that he had to have a "grounded" assistant just to keep him aware of earthly concerns. It was from Jordan that I inherited the concept for MECHWARRIOR 3—30 rough pages of a game gem. From this, they expected me to distill the entire experience.

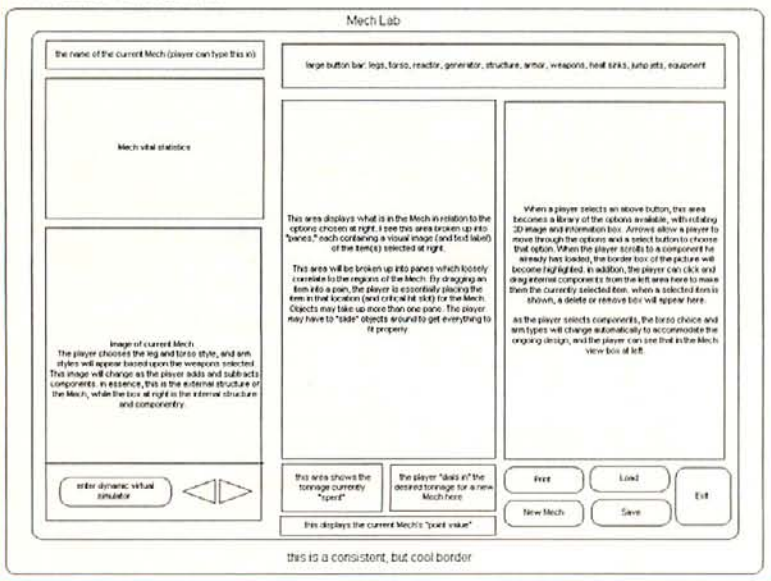
My job was to envision, extrapolate and explore every aspect of MECHWARRIOR 3, and then write it down in a way that the entire team could actually create a game out of it. What a cool project, but where do you start? How do you organize it?

MECHWARRIOR 3, being a simulation with a foundational campaign game, meant that the design needed to be reasonably grounded before the game production could begin at full steam (this approach is very different from that of DOOM or DUKE NUKEM—for those games, the design is sculpted as the levels are being built).

My approach was to first nail down and refine the concept of the game, in a document which explored all of its aspects and features. This introduction had to be short, crisp and concise—its goal more than anything was to create a team-wide concept of the game that everyone could visualize and groove on.

From here, the design grew as a mason builds a house—first the foundation (the interfaces), then the load-supporting bricks (the development tools needed), a strong base for the walls (the combat simulation) and up from there (scenarios, AI, the campaign game engine, etc.).

MechWarrior 3 Interface: Mech lab



UNDER CONSTRUCTION Welcome to the future Mech Lab, where you'll be able to select various parts, such as weapons and jump jets, and drag them onto your mech under construction.

WORLDLY THINGS

It's interesting trying to design within an established universe. The Battletech universe has something like 10 million words in print already, and we had to make sure that MECHWARRIOR 3 fit into the universe neatly. One of our first tasks then was to find a world upon which to base the game. MECH 3 takes place in 3058, on a Kurita world now held by the Smoke Jaguar clan. The world is behind the front lines, but it is where, if the player plays the campaign game well, the front line will move back to. Armed with that information, it was time to dive into the star map and see what worlds would work.

I ended up finding about 15-20 possible worlds, and my first step was to cull out all the worlds with stupid names. Who wants to log zillions of hours playing even a great game on a wimpy-sounding planet? That cut the list down to about five (I'm very hard on names). From there, it was into the Battletech texts, to seek out any and all references to those worlds—I wanted a world of which almost nothing had been written about, and it turned out to be Yamarovka. One paragraph in the Invading Clans book listed the date of the Smoke Jaguar invasion, and that was about it. I checked with the folks at FASA (the keepers of the universe), got the thumbs up and was ready to go.

Next, I worked through some of my old space and planetary physics to craft the world's physical properties, like insolation, speed of rotation, gravity, atmospheric make-up and other factors. I had to try out a slew of numbers to get the math to work out right. I wanted the world to be Earthlike and yet far cooler than Earth—lower density, lower gravity and higher insolation leads to more tectonic activity, which in turn leads to more dramatic mountain ranges, more spectacular erosion, etc.

COLLISION ME THIS

One of the most interesting aspects of the early design processes of MECH 3 was working on the terrain system. While I was cranking away on interfaces and other design areas, the technical team was getting a handle on porting their MUNGA (Multi User Network Game Architecture) code over the Windows 95 using the Direct X APIs. That task proved to be anything but trivial, revealing countless quirks in Direct X and in Microsoft's Visual C++. Soon, though, they had gotten far enough that we could have some team meetings on the terrain system.

The terrain system in a sim like MECH 3 is a component in the 3D code which creates what you see out the window from your mech. The 3D code is made up of numerous parts, from Mech animations to the code that spawns things like explosions and flying chunks, to the physics

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model and the renderer (that all important "black box" which translates the digital goo of the 3D code into an image which appears on the screen).

The terrain system is the component which handles two chief tasks—representing the visual terrain of the world (hills, canyons, cliffs, etc.) and handling the collision of objects with that terrain. Since computers have to be told how to do everything, it's not as simple as making a cliff face and then expecting a mech to stop and collide with it—everything has to be programmed.

In the first meeting, Tim Gerritson, the producer, put his goals succinctly on the dry erase board: "I don't care how we do it, as long as it's f#$@#%& cool!"

The first attack was to brainstorm just what sorts of things we'd like the player to experience in the MECH 3 world—such things as cliffs, canyons, rolling terrain and water.

Consider rolling terrain. From a visual point of view, it can be fairly easily represented as a rolling mesh of triangles. Textures can then be applied to the triangles to make it look like dirt, grass or snow. No problem, right? Then how do you make a mech walk on it?

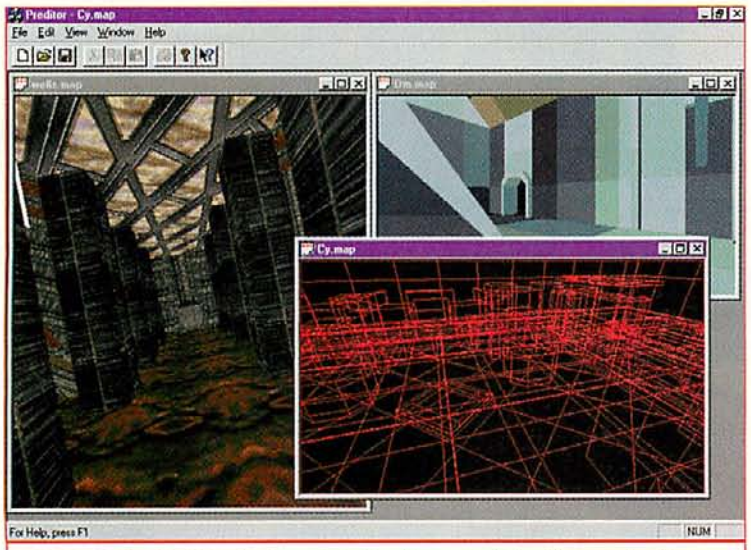
To make a mech walk, you need to know where each foot lands with each step, or, more precisely, where it "collides" with the terrain. Consider a rolling terrain map, just a single kilometer squared, made up of triangles roughly two meters on a side—you can already guess that the number of triangles in that simple map would be astronomical. To calculate the collision of a foot with the ground, you first need to determine what triangle the foot is in, the angle of the triangle, the exact, three-space position of the foot and triangle and ask if the two collide.

To check all positions on a map in this manner for a single mech is a daunting task, but consider doing it for just four mechs, a tank and all of their missiles and lasers (yes, collision has to be done on lasers and the like, so that an explosion occurs at the right position). You can easily see that this complexity of calculations, performed each frame, would drag even the zippiest computer down to a screeching halt.

Now, let's add one more variable—we want the mechs to act differently on different terrain types (walk faster on roads, slog through mud, etc.). Yet another check, and yet another calculation to slow down the system.

It's JM Albertson's task to listen to all of our design requests and sit there and shake his head as he considers the myriad of calculations, as well as the seemingly endless exceptions: what happens when you shoot a machine gun at an angle in water? There needs to be a splash where it hits the water, right (one collision detection)? But do the shells move through the water to hit the legs of a Mech standing in a pond (another collision)?

While I've got to keep quiet on the absolute specifics of the terrain system, the way the problem was solved was by using a system which creates a visual terrain mesh (like the triangles described above) along with a polygonal "collision volume" which, far more economically, represents the terrain as a series of polygons which are faster to compute (the best example is of a Mech walking on a plateau—with the two-layered system, the ground can look as cool as you want, but since its essentially just a big expanse of flat rock, a single collision polygon, as opposed to zillions of small triangles, can represent the collision plane between a mech's foot and the ground).



PREDITOR PREY is still in development, but here's an early look at the game's editor. Some toolbars will be added later, and the textures are temporary, but at least it's running.

THE ROAD TO RODEO-LAND

While I write this article, I'm wrapping up the specifications of the campaign game engine. I can't tell you anything specific other than it's going to be damn cool, and as a player, you're really going to feel like you're living (and battling, of course) in the Battletech universe.

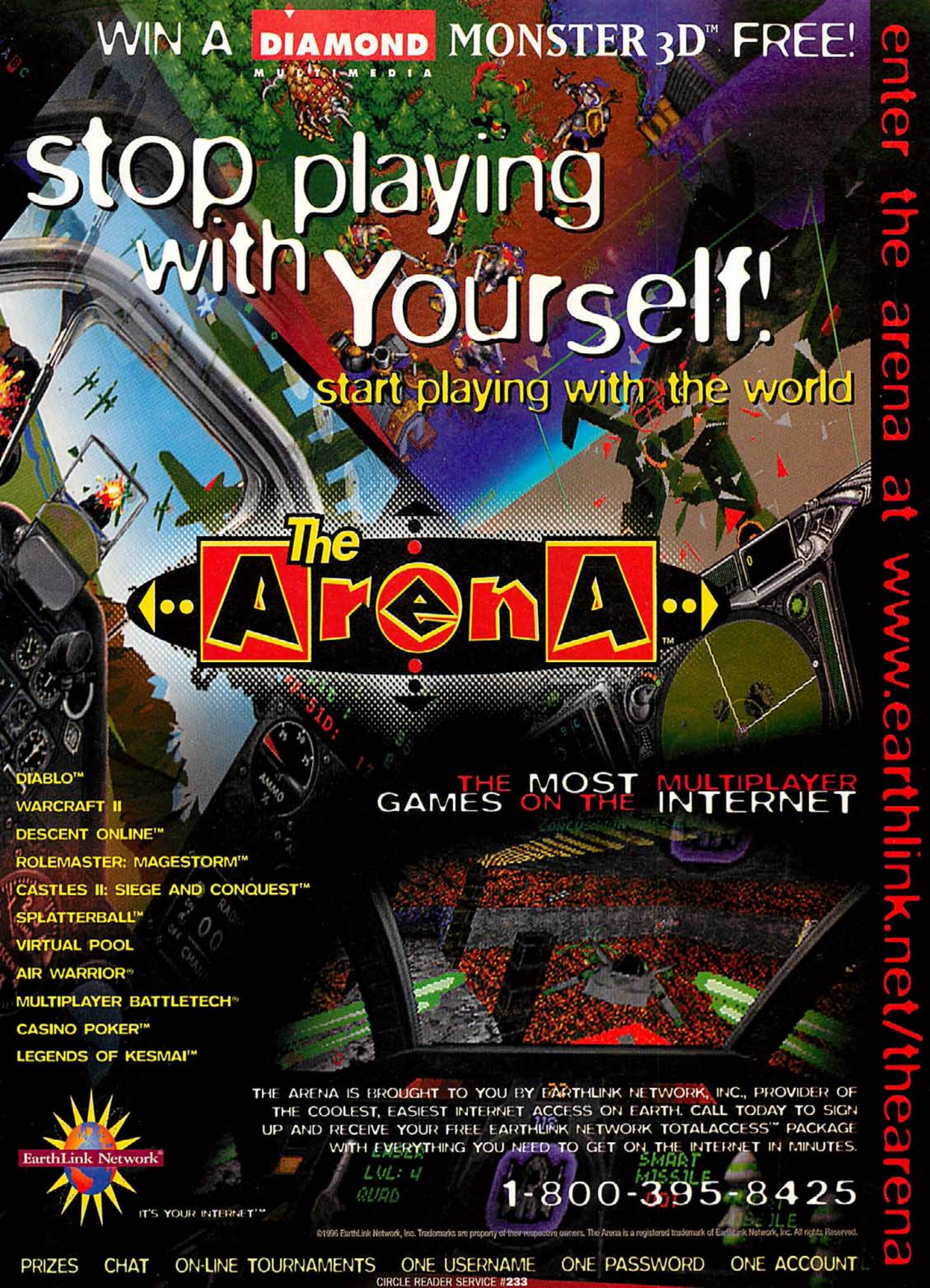
After I finish the last of my MECH 3 projects, it's time to pack up my PC and head off to Texas, to get my hands a little bloody in the world of PREY.

Our first task is to really nail down the character, plot and universe, fictionally. We'll essentially be creating the "bible" from which the PREY game, and any other PREY-related projects (movie, novels, comic books, more games, etc.) are based.

After that, it's up to my elbows in hardcore game creation—an opportunity that just wouldn't have been possible without the feedback and support of readers like you. Thanks for everything!

As a parting remark, I encourage you to keep letting us (both at CGW and in the game industry) know what you think. Let us know what works, what rules and what sucks—it really does make a helluva difference. Cheers!

This marks Paul's last column on Game Design for the foreseeable future. We wish him great success in his new role with 3D Realms and look forward to his imaginative designs for MECHWARRIOR 3, PREY, and everything that follows. You can reach Paul at his new lair by tapping into his bitstream at PaulOnPrey@aol.com.



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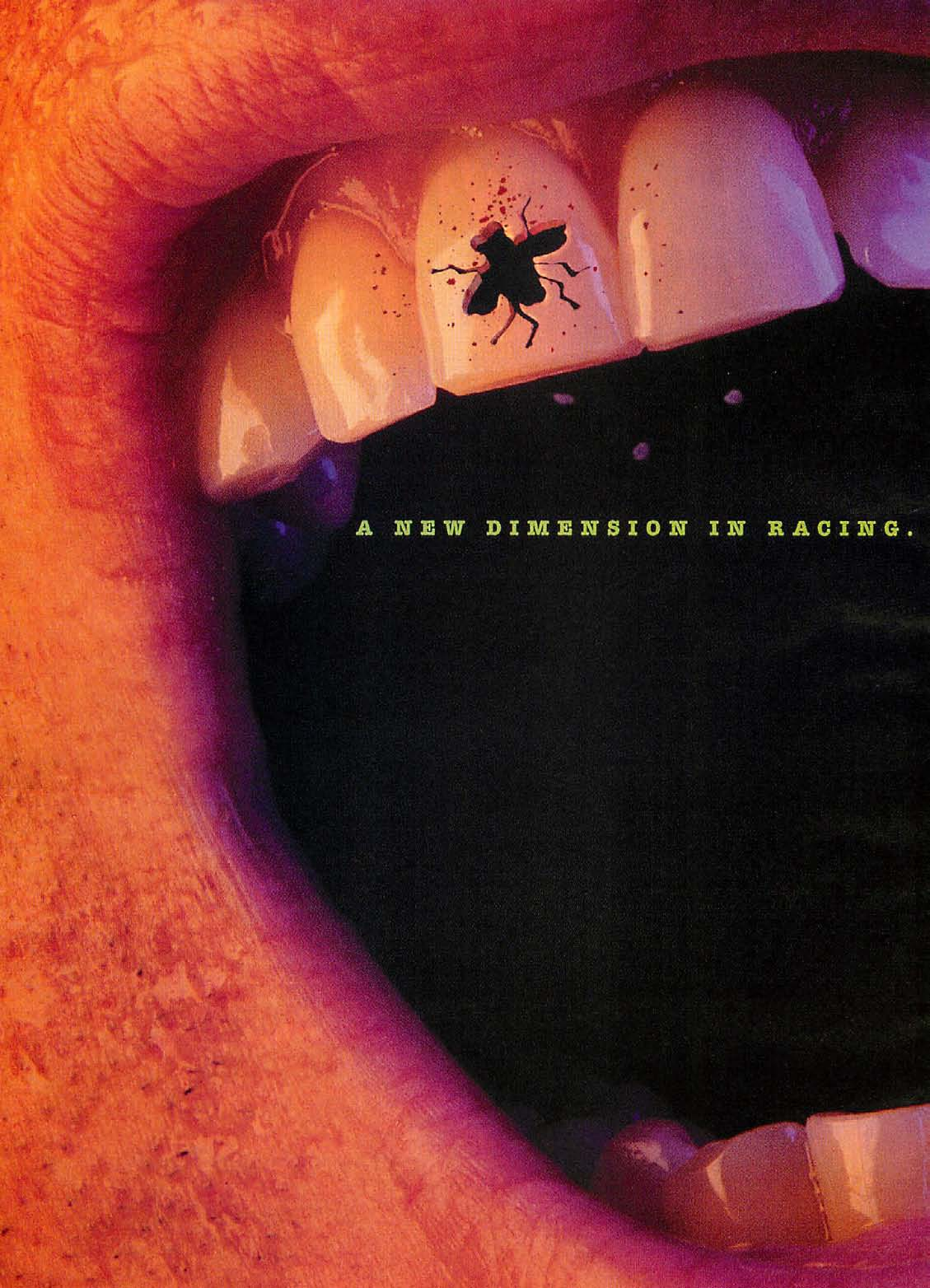
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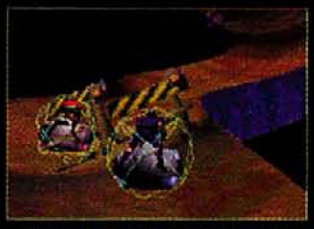

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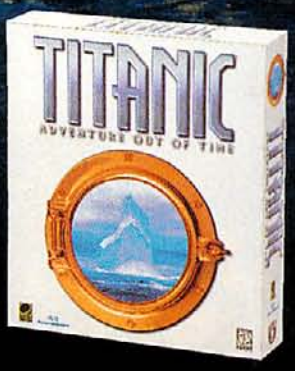

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Dull Blade

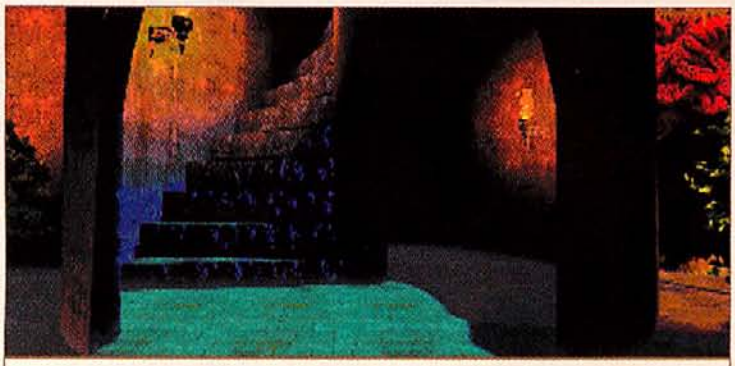
Neither Adventure Nor RPG, WIZARDRY NEMESIS Disappoints

WIZARDRY NEMESIS is billed as "a WIZARDRY adventure," but it is not a true adventure game, nor is it related to any of the WIZARDRYs we know and love. This one is actually a hybrid, reminiscent of the QUEST FOR GLORY products: part adventure, part role-playing, and designed for play with a single character rather than with a group. If you were expecting a more traditional WIZARDRY, this isn't it.

The plot is simple and familiar: an ancient evil has risen again, and you have to stop it. The method is familiar, too, namely, "pick up sticks." In this case, the "sticks" are the seven parts (talismans) of a powerful artifact. Once all the talismans have been collected, it's off to the big confrontation with Foozle, which is actually a fizzle, but more on that later.

NOT YOUR FATHER'S WIZARDRY

The game's perspective is the usual 3D view, with the screen divided into three sections. The top holds the spell icons; the bottom holds the icons for automap, logbook and inventory; and the middle of the screen is the main action area. The game is quite pretty, and each dungeon has its own look. You won't be bored by seeing the same graphics, or the same graphics with different colors, all the time. Every area is distinct.



DISTINCTIVE DUNGEONS The best thing about NEMESIS is the graphic look, which varies considerably from one locale to the next.

Interacting with the world is simple. The cursor changes into a hand when it passes over an item of interest. Right-clicking usually provides some information about the object, while left-clicking picks it up or manipulates it in some way: push a button, pull a lever, open a door, and so on. Talking to people is very much a one-sided affair, and can hardly be called "conversation." They say something to you; you never say anything to them. It's more like being lectured than anything else.

Most of the puzzles are not difficult. Usually, it's a matter of having the right item and figuring out what to do with it. In some cases, a little experimentation, or just simple inspection and a little thought, will be enough.

Unlike traditional WIZARDRY games, your character is precreated. He has a number of weapon skills, plus

> **"NEMESIS is more frustrating than fun."**

CRYSTAL BALL

▸ It's been delayed for years. Hyped by many, dreaded by many others. It's the sequel to MYST, and it finally has a name: RIVEN. Now, what game does this remind you of?

▸ With PHANTASMAGORIA 2 out the creaking door, Sierra's wrapping up SHIVERS 2: HARVEST OF SOULS. This lightweight frightfest will apparently feature original songs and videos that provide clues to some of the game's mysteries. Can you say "Cop Rock"?

CG TIPS!

▸ A patch for WIZARDRY NEMESIS fixes a CD switching problem. Instead of reading the volume info for the new disc, it retained the information from the first one. Obviously, that made playing beyond the first CD impossible. The patch is available from **www.sir-tech.com**, major online services, and on *CGW*'s Web site at **www.zd.com/gaming**.

▸ If you do get stuck, the Tour Guide booklet that comes with NEMESIS provides a fairly detailed walk-through for the first level of the first dungeon (including a map). After that, it has hints for the rest of the game (some obscure, some obvious).

▸ Using the keyboard for movement is difficult. On one occasion, the character turned in place for a good 30 seconds or so before I had control of his movements again. Another time, I backed him away from combat, and he kept going until he was all the way back in town. Problem is, mouse response isn't any better.

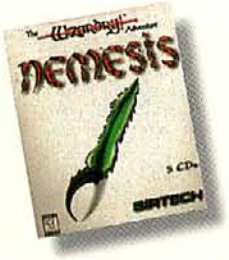
WHEN THE LIFE SPRAY COOLS You don't need to rest to regain hit points, which is good, because the mouse/keypad controls will have you fumbling in combat.

five attributes: strength, dexterity, health, magic ability and magic points. These increase slowly over the course of play, typically through combat with a variety of monsters.

Critters are always ready to fight; you have to hit the spacebar to put yourself in combat mode. This brings up your left and right hands, which are controlled by the left and right mouse buttons, while the cursor becomes a crosshair for aiming blows.

Magic is based on the four elements of earth, air, fire and water. There are two spells for each of these, and each spell in turn has an offensive and defensive function, making 16 effects in all. Once a spell begins to take effect, it draws energy from your magic points. You can let it go to the maximum points, in which case it fires automatically when no points remain, or you can send off the spell before all the points are used up.

An interesting feature of NEMESIS is that your hit points and spell points regenerate constantly. No special rest periods are necessary to restore them. Of course, if you've taken severe damage from a fight, you may need to use a healing spell or potion to help matters along, but given enough time, the points will come back on their own.



Price: $49.95
System Requirements: IBM-compatible 486/66 or better processor, MS-DOS 5.0 or higher, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM (4x recommended), 256-color SVGA graphics, mouse; most major sound cards.
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Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Linda Currie
Publishers: Sir-Tech Software Inc. Ogdensburg, New York (315) 393-6633
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HERO OR SISSY?

NEMESIS could have been fun to play (especially after an epic like DAGGERFALL), but I found it more frustrating than anything else. There were far too many times when I would click the mouse (both left and right buttons) to swing a weapon and get no response from the character. Similarly, once a spell had begun, it was often difficult, sometimes impossible, to send it off before all the magic energy was used up. I had the feeling the game was so involved in providing fancy effects that it wasn't noticing my input at all.

Even more aggravating was the "sissy hit," where you strike an opponent and, regardless of the weapon you're using, do absolutely no damage at all. This is especially true early on, when the character is still inexperienced, but even late in the game a fair number of strikes will be ineffective. Just to add some salt to the wound, most weapons don't do a lot of damage in the first place. You end up killing most of the critters with paper cuts. All of this means that most fights take about twice as long as they should and are often very annoying. Combat isn't a lot of fun here.

The worst combat, however, is the big confrontation with the demon at the end. It can be done at one of two extremes: very, very fast or long and tedious. If you use the right talisman just before opening the final door, the demon dies the moment you walk in (presuming you bypass all the cut-scenes). That's it; the fight is over before it even begins. If you don't use the talisman, you spend a little time pumping up your character as best you can, then go in and hope you can whittle the demon down (it usually has 300+ hit points) before it kills you. Since the critter hits much harder than you do, this method usually takes several tries before it works.

This is just plain nonsense. What's the point of going through all the previous combats if you can kill off the main enemy at first glance? Or, if you're supposed to fight the demon, why make it such a tedious experience? All you can do, basically, is stand there and beat on it. Either way, the finale really leaves you feeling let down.

Overall, WIZARDRY NEMESIS turns out to be mediocre at best. The trite plot, poor mouse response, weak combat system and unsatisfying climax combine to make the game a disappointing experience.

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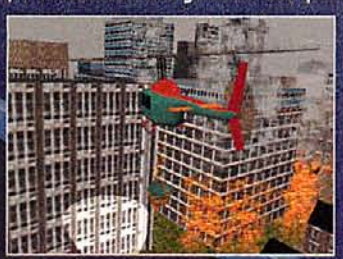

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Tales From The Glib

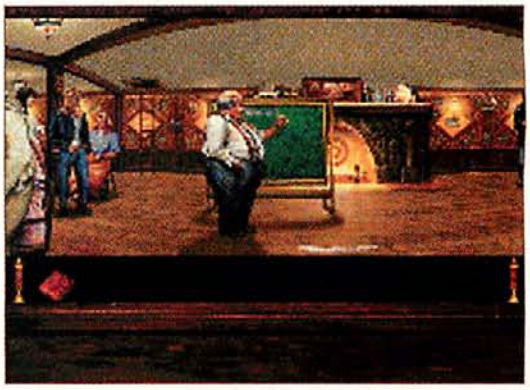
Time And PUNishment In Callahan's Crosstime Saloon

by Johnny L. Wilson

SNEAK PREVIEW
GAME STILL IN DEVELOPMENT

Although my first trip to Boston didn't spawn an irresistible urge to visit the inspiration for the television show Cheers, my first visit to Long Island had me occasionally glancing out the window for any glimpse of a bar that only exists in the realm of imagination, Callahan's Crosstime Saloon. The eerie juxtaposition of Long Island's sleepy little towns so close to the urban insomnia which is New York City had me feeling like I was in a timewarp from the start. The bizarre idea that I would see that cozy little tavern where time travelers, aliens and mutants gather nightly for liquid therapy and loquacious catharsis seemed significantly more probable once my car had crossed the bridge from city to country, urban to suburban.

Callahan's Crosstime Saloon, for those of you who have never mentally navigated the conceptual byways of Spider Robinson's half-dozen anthologies of interconnected short stories, is the place where everybody knows your blame. It is a Long Island saloon where Mike Callahan, mild-mannered bartender from another planet, plights a never ending battle for Truth, Justice and the most humanitarian way. Callahan's offers the best in humorous and human stories. Whether expressed in the wide range of contests like Riddle Night and Tall Tales Night held nightly at the bar (wherein patrons can win back their entire night's bar tab) or the punful conversations through which Robinson weaves his stories, Callahan's offers the kind of cheerful retreat most of us would like to have in our lives. Callahan's is also the kind of magical place where confession is truly good for the soul and understanding is ubiquitous.



CHALK DOC The game begins on Riddle Night at Callahan's, where Doc puts all of the clues on the board.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE The Transylvanian section of the game features some haunting special effects.

THE GODS MUST BE HAZY

As a game, CALLAHAN'S CROSSTIME SALOON is meticulously faithful to Spider Robinson's universe. Josh Mendel, former Al Lowe co-conspirator (FREDDIE PHARKAS, FRONTIER PHARMACIST) and designer of CALLAHAN'S CROSSTIME SALOON has both successfully paid homage to the humor and humanity of Robinson's work and created what may be the most sterling product ever to come out of Legend Entertainment (the studio which brought us the SPELLCASTING series, GATEWAY, SUPER HERO LEAGUE OF HOBOKEN and ERIC THE UNREADY). The humor is perfectly in rhythm with the literary work and the game takes gamers beyond the setting of the bar. Instead of verbally solving the problems within the assembled throng at the bar, the gamer must assume the role of Jake, the folk-singing protagonist/narrator of the Callahan's stories, and proactively go out and solve the problems of six very different patrons—everyone from a time cop to a talking dog.

The casting for Callahan's is delightful. The voice actor who plays Jake has the perfect world-weary voice. George Lucas should have used *him* to voice *Howard the Duck*'s lines. Pyotr, the vampire, is a perfect Transylvanian, but a mixture of cockney and Yiddish accents decorate the program in just the right spots. In addition, Robinson will sing some of his own folk songs for the game's soundtrack (such as his famous "She Was Only A Telegrapher's Daughter, But She Didit-Ah-Didit" from "The Law of Conservation of Pain"), but I haven't heard these yet.

The game proper begins with a non-interactive uber-story. It is essentially the

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #79

prologue to the Book of Job in the Bible with amorphous, ephemeral, hazy aliens arguing about the future of the universe in corporate terms. One celestial being is called to report to the other, and they argue over the disposition of their creation. The universe seems to be lagging celestial indicators in such things as return on investment, so Gingrinich is informing Parabalus, the manager of our universe, of his intention to "rightsize." Parabalus decides that he might be able to avert these draconian budget cuts if he can prove there is something in the universe that has paid off. If you win the game, that something is Callahan's Crosstime Saloon.

The prologue segues into a narrative voiceover about Callahan's in general and dissolves into a lavishly recreated version of the saloon itself. Gamers will only have to click around a few times to realize how rich the game environment is. Almost everything pictured in any room of the game has not only a brief text description, but a humorous one. For example, when Jake enters Transylvania's Wereworth's (their equivalent of Woolworth's) you can click on a wide variety of merchandise, including a dinosaur. Much to your chagrin, you'll discover that the dinosaur's name is Pee Wee Vermin and that he is not for sale, just for shelf gratification.

PEE WEE VERMIN Can you find the toy that's merely for shelf gratification?

Play CALLAHAN'S CROSSTIME SALOON on this month's CD.

As the game proper begins, it is clear that it is Riddle Night. Doc, as Riddle Master, has placed ten riddles on the chalkboard and you, as Jake, need to solve them in order to have enough cash to move forward in the game. In order not to give away any of the puzzles, here's a sample from "Pyotr's Story" in the Callahan's Secret collection: span; tavern; money. You expect the answer to the riddle to be a famous name or title. Get it? It's Bridge-it; Bar; Dough . Here's one from the game: guided; fastener with sliding fasteners, face that launched ships. If you get it, you're going to love this opening segment. If not, the riddles give you an excuse to interview other people/aliens in the bar and get both hints for the riddles and direction toward one of the first three stories.

WHAT KIND OF A MAN READS VLAD? Even the window dressing for Callahan's is often humorous.

PYOTR AND THE WEREWOLF

In order to win the game, you must solve three problems (miniquests) in any order. You can help Josie the Timecop in her quest for cocoa, reunite Pyotr the vampire with his lost love, or save the world from an anti-testosterone ray. After that you meet the world's most famous talking german shepherd, Ralph Von Wau Wau of Philip Jose Farmer fame, and Alphee, the time-traveling salesman. Later, a sixth story proves that Callahan's itself is the return on investment for which the aliens pine.

One of my favorite parts of the game is the Transylvania miniquest. It has some of the best visuals in the game, variety in the voiceacting, and puns that complement the dark side: a jukebox plays such songs as "I'd Really Love to See You Ignite" and "Everybody Flays The Fool;" a Wereworth's novelty store and a Starbucharest's coffee shop; and a hilarious puzzle that allows you to play the headless homeless person. More than that, even in the society of the undead, one gets a sense of the humanity among the characters that makes the Callahan's stories rise above "mere" science fiction.

Most of all, Legend veterans will appreciate the new wrinkle in the game engine. Now, whenever you have a puzzle that requires gathering elements from various locations, (such as the one Jake has to solve in order to get into Casimir's, the Transylvanian bar where Pyotr is drinking himself to undeath death), the engine ascertains whether you have all of the ingredients to solve the puzzle and, assuming you are in the right locale with the right inventory, it automatically advances the game until the puzzle is solved. Further, even the advancing of the game lets you hear the funny badinage between characters that is so vital to the spirit of this game.

WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR FAME

In short, Mendel has succeeded in going beyond his famous namesake. He has taken the genes from a popular literary universe and forged a genesplice between the characters that come alive in Spider Robinson's stories and the kinds of characters with which we want to interact in games. Unlike many hybrids, Mendel hasn't diminished either lineage. CALLAHAN'S CROSSTIME SALOON looks to be a brilliant incarnation of its inspiration. CG

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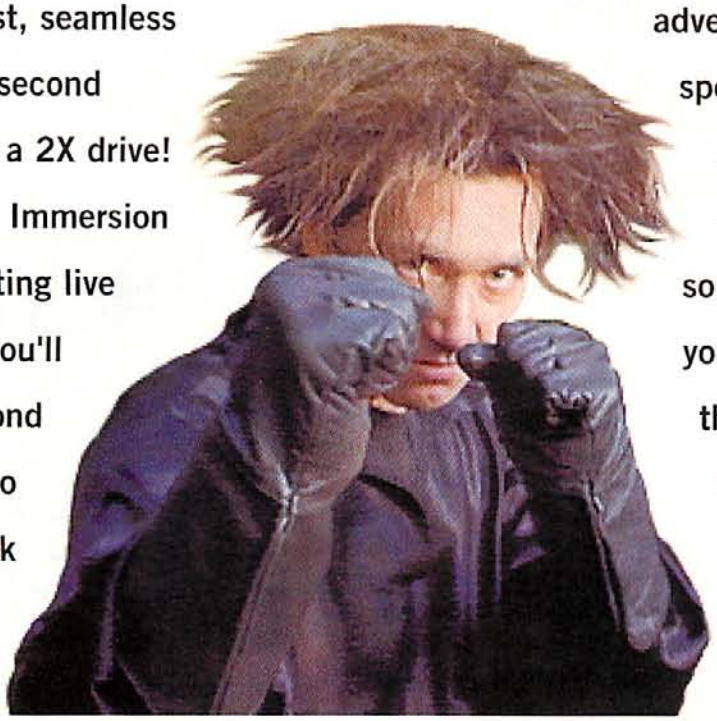

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★★★★½ REVIEW • RAMA

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

CG CHOICE

Reinventing Rama

Gentry Lee And Arthur C. Clarke's Presence Make This A Truly Interactive Novel

by Keith Ferrell

It would be hard to think of a serious SF novel better suited for adaptation to computer games than Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous With Rama*. The novel itself is, like many adventure games, a journey of exploration, during which the protagonists are confronted with a variety of sometimes maddening puzzles, each of which must be solved before larger and more enigmatic puzzles are revealed. Of course, something similar could be said for Larry Niven's *Ringworld*, and we know what happened when *that* one was adapted for PC play.

Indeed, RAMA *has* been a computer game once before, back in the days of text-based adventure games, when Tellarium's well-intentioned title ultimately failed. Sierra has now returned to Rama, under the guidance of Gentry Lee (Clarke's collaborator on three Rama sequels), and the results are a spectacular and in some ways breathtaking adventure that, ultimately, may work better as an interactive novel than as a game per se. Lee himself has been evolving as a storyteller—if you haven't yet picked up a copy of his solo novel *Bright Messengers*, you should—and his sense of story serves RAMA's design beautifully. Science fiction—and good computer games—depends upon unfailing internal self-consistency, and Lee and Sierra deliver the real goods here. Nothing is shoehorned in simply for effect, nor is the integrity of the Raman environment ever seriously violated.

The bones of the story match Clarke's original more so than the Clarke/Lee sequels: a huge cylindrical construct enters the solar system and an expedition is mounted to explore it and, if possible, make contact with any intelligence it may contain. The hook for the game is equally simple: a key member of the expedition has been killed and you are selected as the replacement.

Within that framework, a variety of storylines and opportunities are concealed, ranging from the interpersonal—can you trust other members of the exploration teams, and which ones?—to the immense. Just what *is* the purpose of Rama and what is the nature of the guiding intelligences behind it?

TECHNOLOGICAL TROPES The SF gadgets that underlie RAMA—arm computer, video mail, etc.—allow for seamless introduction of video sequences and some fascinating special effects.

Price: $54.95
System Requirements: 486DX-66 or better processor (Pentium 90 recommended), 8MB RAM (16MB recommended), SVGA graphics, DOS 5.0 or Windows 95, 4x CD-ROM, mouse; supports most major sound cards.
# of Players: 1
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Design: Dynamix with Gentry Lee and Arthur C. Clarke
Publisher: Sierra On-Line, Inc.
Coarsegold, CA
(800) 757-7707
***Reader Service* # 336**

ALIEN VISTAS REVEALED Despite the limitations of 20th century home computers, the immensity of RAMA's SF world is brought to life through the gorgeous graphics.

PROLOGUE

The game gets going quickly, with a prologue that establishes the scenario, followed by a video welcome. You are issued equipment that includes a personal computer/communications device, on which you will quickly come to depend for vidmail messages and other information. Additional equipment reveals the creators' occasionally puckish sense of humor.

Paying close attention to the beginning of the game is essential to your success, and it would not be a bad idea to keep a

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

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #156

notepad handy for jotting down information. Review *every* message that awaits you in the staging area before your descent to Rama proper: failing to do so will quickly result in your being stuck.

Likewise, take a deep breath before proceeding, and drop into game exploration mode: that is, look at *everything*, touch *everything*, go *everywhere* you can before leaving your arrival point. Navigation around the various settings, and acquisition and use of the various implements at your disposal are simple and well conceived. It does not take long to get the hang of getting around in RAMA.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Interpersonal relationships are equally well done, with the various other members of the Rama exploration team being given levels of characterization that are surprising and refreshing for a computer game. In the course of playing RAMA you will come to learn the personalities of your fellow explorers (you'd *better*!), and from that knowledge will come the ability to navigate your way through some of the game's more challenging aspects.

Deciphering the essence of an alien culture is not *supposed* to be easy, but it's a tribute to the seriousness with which the designers approached their source material that nothing here is arbitrary. In Raman context, almost all of the puzzles make sense. The puzzles themselves are as challenging as one might expect from Clarke and Lee. Linguistic and mathematical in nature, the puzzles will draw upon all of your skills as an interpreter and scientist, as well as your ability to pay attention to the world you find yourself in.

Thus armed with a sense of your fellows, a gathering understanding of the Ramans and their technologies, you're ready to explore the vast ship and uncover its secrets.

Among the many charms of the novel that the game seeks to duplicate is its sense of *vista*. There's only so much you can do within the limitations of a monitor screen, and as a result, some of the interiors fail to communicate the sheer size of Rama. Additionally, the brightness of some scenes works to mitigate the mystery and enormity of the alien craft. Even so, there isn't a single frame in the game that's less than gorgeous, and only a few that are less than convincing.

It *does* seem too easy to get around within the game's confines, and this occasionally works to diminish the sense of size of Rama. On the other hand, you wouldn't want to spend real hours getting somewhere, no matter how awe-inspiring the scenery along the way, would you?

EPILOGUE

These caveats aside, RAMA is among the most convincing computerized worlds I've encountered. Certainly the various creatures and creations you'll encounter are striking and believable. To a large extent they appear to have stepped—or fluttered or crawled—directly from the pages of the novel itself. Their appearance and function are brilliantly accomplished and almost wholly persuasive.

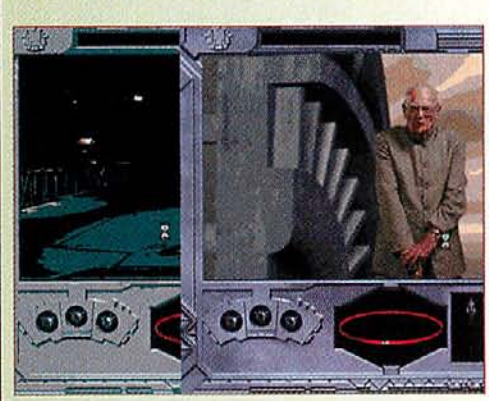
Is this a game? Like MYST, it's an environment studded with puzzles and enigma, challenges and mysteries. Unlike MYST, the story here outweighs its setting, a tribute to Clarke, Lee, and the team that supported them. RAMA is in virtually every way a triumph and another large step toward the creation of wholly convincing interactive SF novels. It begs for a sequel, I think, and not least because, as Clarke himself wrote years ago, the Ramans *always* do things in threes. ☯

Keith Ferrell was Editor of OMNI Magazine *from 1990 until 1996. His latest novel,* Passing Judgment, *was published last fall by Forge.*

A MATTER OF TRUST Is the doctor on your side? Such interpersonal dilemmas keep RAMA livelier than most interactive dramas.

Clarke Lays Easter Eggs

Clarke himself is very much a presence in the package, with the third CD being devoted to interviews and commentary from and about this global intellectual treasure. At *OMNI* we always knew we had something special when a new piece from Arthur arrived, and it's reassuring to know that the same holds true for this game. Clarke fans will want to take a careful look around the first location in Rama proper: there's a gift hidden there, hot off his word processor, crafted especially for those who can't wait for the arrival of *3001*.



GALACTIC CARETAKER When you die in the game—and you will—Clarke himself pops in for the wake.

APPEAL: Science fiction and adventure game fans looking for an experience that treats their interests seriously.

PROS: Faithful to the spirit of Arthur C. Clarke's novel; terrific graphics and sound; well-realized and self-consistent alien world and cultures.

CONS: Still a puzzle-driven game, with some *very* tough puzzles.

CG RATED ★★★★

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Designed for Microsoft Windows'95 Mac OS

★★★★☆ REVIEW • CIRCLE OF BLOOD

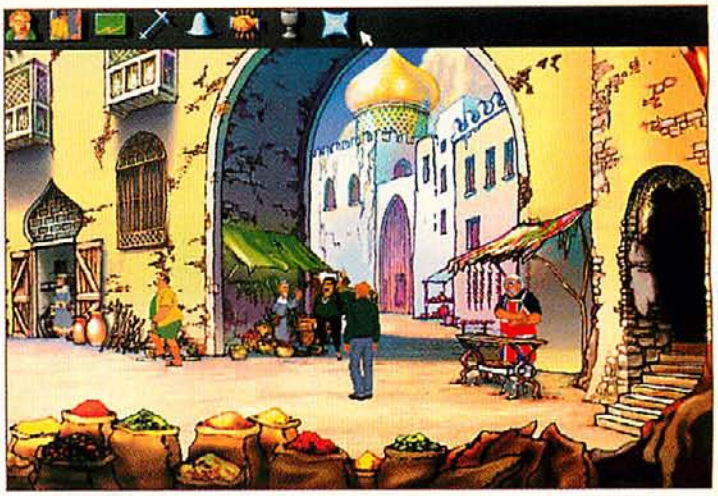
DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

French Twist

An American In Paris Digs Up Ancient Intrigue In Virgin's CIRCLE OF BLOOD

by Kate Hedstrom

It's almost enough to make you wish you'd saved your money and gone to Disneyland instead: George Stobbard, a young Californian on holiday in Paris, is soaking up the ambience at a sidewalk café when a man dressed as a clown barges past. A moment later, BOOM!...the place is blown to smithereens, leaving a man inside dead. While the French probably have some sort of law against the obstruction of justice, especially by foreigners, George gets a load of the Clouseau-like French detective attempting to investigate the bombing—and decides to take matters into his own hands.



THE UGLY AMERICAN Apparently on an unlimited budget, George takes his investigation into Syria, where he risks his life, and not just by eating the kebobs.

Price: $49.95
System Requirements: 486DX-66 or better processor, 8MB RAM, 20MB hard drive space, SVGA video with 1MB RAM &VESA 1.2 SVGA driver, Windows 95 or MS-DOS 5.0 or higher, 2x CD-ROM, DirectX 2-compliant sound & video drivers (for Win95), or MSCDEX 2.2 or higher, Microsoft-compatible mouse, FM & PCM sound compatibility.
# of Players: 1
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Revolution Software
Publisher: Virgin Interactive Irvine, CA (800) 874-4607 or (619) 549-0222
Reader Service #: 317

So begins CIRCLE OF BLOOD, an adventure game from UK developer Revolution, published by Virgin Interactive. The story revolves around the legend of the Knights Templar, an order of knights founded by a French nobleman in the 1100s to protect travelers to Jerusalem during the Crusades. Despite taking vows of poverty and generally conducting themselves in a monklike manner, the Knights managed to amass significant wealth over the next two centuries. Their flair for matters financial attracted the attention of King Philip IV, who had been casting about for ways to fund his war against England. Needing a way to discredit the Knights and seize their gold, Philip resorted to the ever-popular accusation of devil worship, and before the order was officially dissolved in 1312, the Knights were subjected to torture and persecution.

BY THE SWORD

That much is historical fact, but in CIRCLE OF BLOOD this is where the story takes off. Legend holds that the Knights were far wealthier than anyone guessed, and their treasure still lies buried somewhere, awaiting discovery, along with a supernatural sword believed to be the apex of their power. It seems that a medieval document that might be a map of the Knights' hidden secrets has recently been discovered, and lots of dangerous types—including a guy who dresses in funny costumes to murder his victims—are after it. Throw in a rival group that models itself after the bloodthirsty Assassin sect, and a beautiful photojournalist who may or may not be what she seems, and George can kiss his plans for a quiet vacation goodbye.

REVENGE OF THE MOLE PEOPLE To unearth the Knights' deadly secrets, George spends a lot of time underground hunting for hidden chambers.

Gameplay is typical adventure fare. George checks out likely locations for clues, talks to everyone he can, pieces together bits of the story and gets himself into messy situations. CIRCLE has one of the cleanest interfaces I've ever seen in an adventure game. Using the now-familiar hotspot routine, the cursor changes when it passes over objects or people with which he can interact. If he can pick up an object, he puts it in his pocket for later use, and it appears in a drop-down bar at the top of the screen. When he talks to someone, the subjects he can bring up for discussion are displayed as icons across the bottom of the screen.

I'M TALKING AND I CAN'T SHUT UP

CIRCLE is at its best when George is talking with one of the many supporting characters. The script is witty (though uneven in places), peppered with comical types eager to use George as a straight

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Stop Running In Circles

TRUST NO ONE Despite being warned, George gets attached to Nico early on. Are her interests strictly journalistic?

Though CIRCLE OF BLOOD shouldn't give you too much trouble, here are a few tips to get you started. *Allons-y!*

- Look at everything you can. Certain objects bear a repeated or "up close" examination.
- Nurse Grendel will allow only doctors into the ward.
- Policemen lounging in cafés can sometimes be amused by Americans wearing funny props.
- If George finds himself cornered by the man with the scar, he should be as truthful and honorable (and as quick) as he can be.

man for their sly repartee. Especially memorable are a young Arab street trader who picked up his command of the English language from P. G. Wodehouse, and a janitor with a special fondness for his floor polisher. Don't get me wrong: this game is hardly a TOONSTRUCK or a SAM 'N' MAX. The humor is not the focus, but it provides a nice counterpoint to the often lengthy and involved lectures about Knights Templar lore that reveal further clues.

In fact, most of the game's riddles are solved through conversation, sometimes in surprising ways, so it pays to click on most, if not all, of the icons that appear during a discussion, even though it might seem ridiculous at first to broach a particular subject with a given character. Abundant save game slots make it easy to restore and try again if saying the wrong thing prompts a dead end...literally.

George gets around through a map interface very similar to the one used in Sierra's GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN. When someone mentions someplace new, it appears on the map and George can travel there. When he's done everything he can at that location, it becomes grayed-out on the map.

ZUT ALORS!

CIRCLE's designers deserve applause for displaying restraint in the puzzle department. Most of the puzzles are plot-based (the sole exception being a single, not-at-all-difficult chess problem), with nary a maze nor an arcade game in sight to artificially lengthen play. The sometimes endless conversations take up quite enough time by themselves. Granted, there are a couple of instances where George needs to be nimble on his feet,

PICTURE THIS When George wants to talk to someone, the available topics of conversation appear at the bottom of the screen as icons.

but they're not so frustrating as to bring the game to a standstill. If there is anything wrong with the puzzles at all, it's that they're too easy. Veteran gamers won't find much to challenge them and may even get frustrated by the lack of depth.

The designers also deserve kudos for CIRCLE's very elegant look. Following the current trend away from live actors and full-motion video, CIRCLE wisely opts for lush, layered animation and hand-drawn backgrounds by artists formerly with Don Bluth Studios (*An American Tale*). The game also features a conceit from animated films that works well in the context of a computer game, that of drawing the main characters realistically, while taking more cartoonish liberties with the secondary characters. The music, too, is reminiscent of animated features, often swelling triumphantly when George solves a puzzle and is back off in hot pursuit of the bad guys.

Though things start off a little slowly at first, CIRCLE OF BLOOD's story is engaging—reminiscent of a Jane Jensen (GABRIEL KNIGHT) game in its historic detail or a good *Tintin* comic in its globe-trotting adventurousness. I would have liked to see Nico, George's romantic interest, get involved more often—it doesn't make sense that he would trust her so completely right off the bat—and a few other plot points don't hold up well under close examination. But overall, CIRCLE OF BLOOD is a classy, entertaining adventure—perfect for whiling away a few dark winter evenings.

APPEAL: History buffs and novice adventure gamers or gamers seeking plot over puzzle challenges.

PROS: Involving, historically accurate story; engaging characters; sumptuous animation; seamless interface.

CONS: Puzzles are too easy; lengthy conversations often drag on before getting to the point.

CG RATED

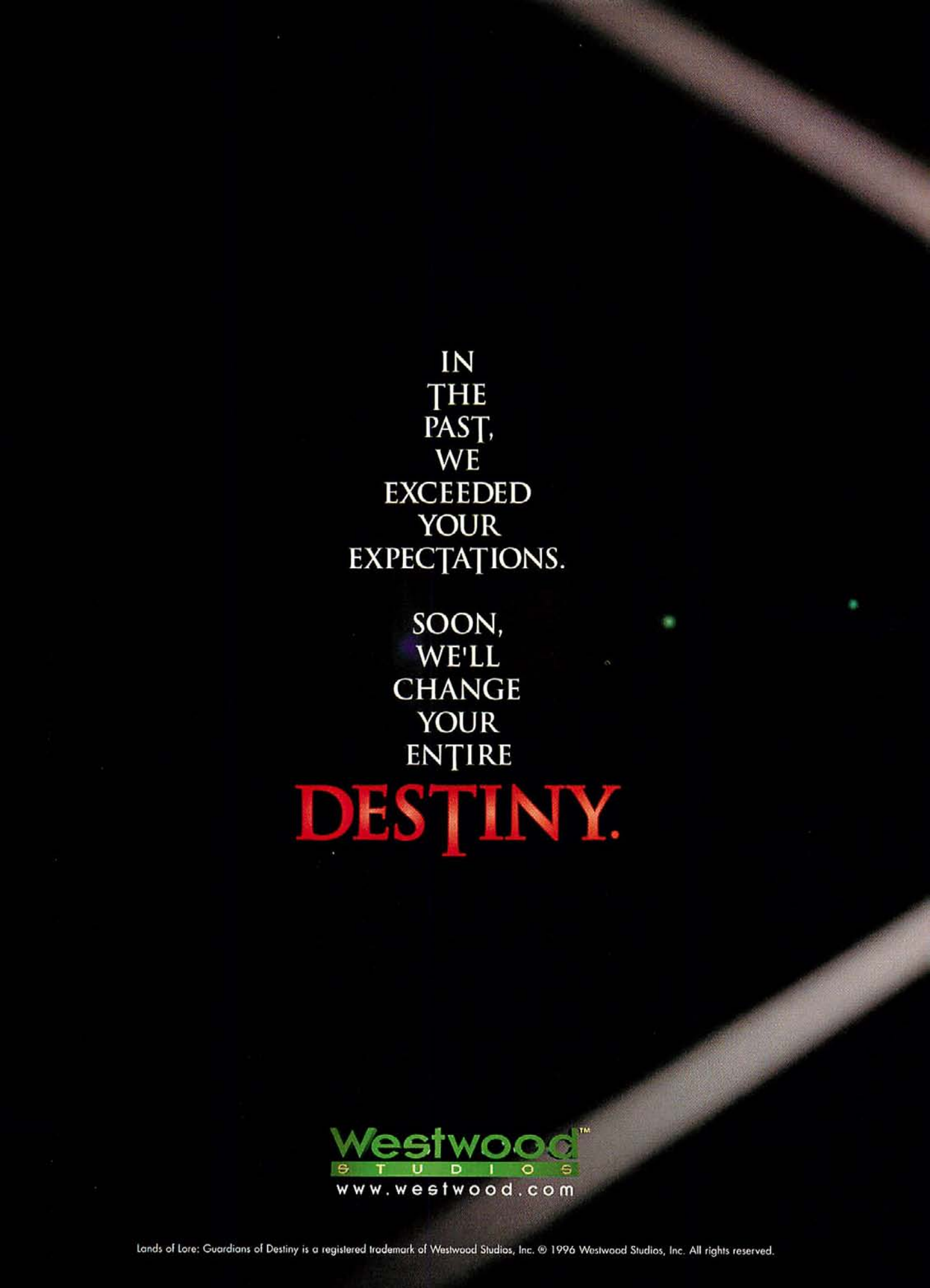
IT WAS THE EUROPEAN TRAINS YOU GOT KILLED ON.

A CD-ROM thriller by Jordan Mechner, coming in April. www.lastexpress.com

Broderbund

TEEN T AGES 13+

CIRCLE READER SERVICE #370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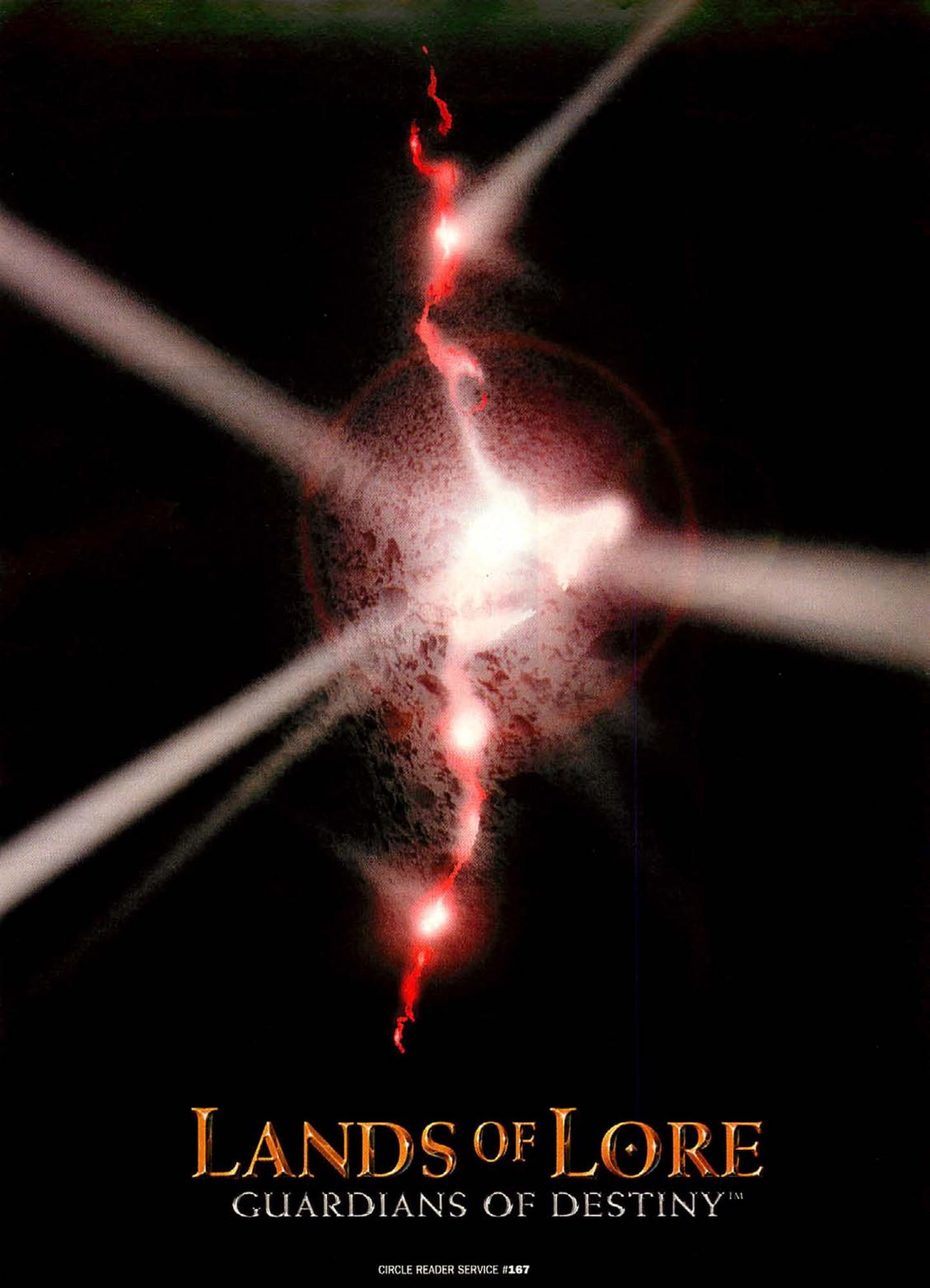


CIRCLE READER SERVICE #167

★★★½☆ **REVIEW • AZRAEL'S TEAR**

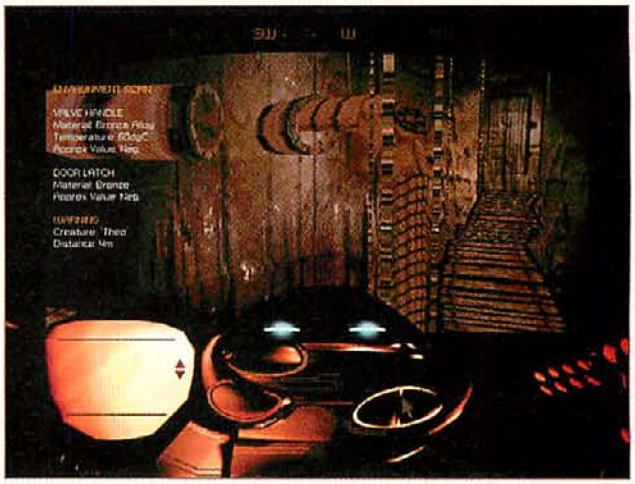
DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Dark Knights

More Than Another Myst-Alike

by Robert Coffey

In 1146 A.D. the twelve good and honorable Knights Templar moved the legendary Holy Grail underground for safekeeping. Hiding in the tunnels where grailstone, the marvelous stuff the Grail was made from, was mined, they bided time, waiting for a compelling sign that the world above needed the healing power of the holy object. Flash forward to the year 2003 where you, a ruthless archaeological mercenary known as a Raptor, are on the trail of the most prized relic in history. You drop into a dank tunnel overrun with tiny, mutant dinosaurs, and the strange journey that is AZRAEL'S TEAR begins.



TIME BANDIT It's the year 2003, you're searching for the Holy Grail, and you're in an underground world full of evil, deformed knights. Have fun.

Price: $45.00
System Requirements: IBM-compatible 486 DX2/66 (Pentium recommended), 8MB RAM (16MB recommended), 7MB free XMS memory, MS-DOS 5.0 or above, 10MB uncompressed hard drive space (25MB or more recommended), 1MB VESA-compliant SVGA video card, 2x CD-ROM drive (quad recommended), Sound Blaster or 100% compatible sound card, Microsoft-compatible mouse.
# of Players: 1
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Intelligent Games
Publisher: Mindscape, Inc. Novato, CA (415) 897-9900
Reader Service #: 318

ASHES TO ASHES

The underground world of AZRAEL'S TEAR is impressively rendered in full 3D. Initially, the striking nature of the graphics seems wasted, as many of the rooms show significant decay; but as the plot unfolds, the dichotomy between the few spaces of breathtaking beauty and those on the verge of collapse subtly underscores the complex story behind the game. The unusual look of the game quickly grows on you.

While there are a few action elements, the bulk of gameplay is concerned with exploration and discovery. The puzzles you must face to recover the Grail are part of the game's world and are concerned primarily with opening doors, powering machinery and retrieving items. There's nothing groundbreaking here, but then you don't have to beat a ghost at checkers to open a gate, either. It's all logical, moderately challenging and fairly enjoyable, but the true rewards of AZRAEL'S TEAR lie in the compelling plot, played out through letters, books and conversations with the deathless knights.

THE ROAD TO HELL

As you discover, the Knights Templar are still alive, sustained by the unearthly power of grailstone. But while grailstone prolongs life it also mutates body and mind, resulting in some dangerously disturbed and evil knights, not to mention deformed dinosaurs and scorpions with tails like poisoned bullwhips.

Most notably, an overwhelming sense of sadness and betrayal pervades the game. The knights' good intentions have ultimately doomed them to centuries of hell, corrupted and tormented by the absolute symbol of goodness, the Holy Grail. It's an unhappy world, and recovering the Grail doesn't necessarily make it better. If you enjoy mulling over movies long after the credits roll, you'll find ample food for thought here.

AZRAEL'S TEAR isn't without problems. The automap feature is only marginally useful, displaying nothing more than the room you're in and those on the other side of the exits. The game crashed only once, but the music—a real high point of the game—cut out entirely a number of times and occasionally I lost all control over movement, finding myself careening around wildly.

The biggest drawback is just how slow the game is. Even on a Pentium 150 the movement at the highest resolution is ponderous, and some rooms and animations still take well over a minute to load. Forget about playing this with the minimum system requirements—on a 486/66 movement becomes a lurching slide show and the blocky graphics at low resolution make finding small objects extremely difficult.

Still, if you have the computer and the patience for it, AZRAEL'S TEAR has a lot to offer. Its beautiful decrepitude, haunting music, and unsettling, bleak story offer a unique and rewarding gaming experience.

APPEAL: Adventure gamers looking for a game that goes beyond puzzles to stimulate the mind.

PROS: Striking 3D graphics; strong, compelling plot that colors every aspect of gameplay.

CONS: High system demands; yet another lever-yanking, key-hunting adventure game.

CG RATED ★★★★

Poor, delicate humans. Just when the fighting gets good they drop dead on you. Now a CyberGladiator, on the other hand, is built for some serious mayhem. Choose from 8 different fighters, each with their own arsenal of over 50 different moves like the "Pyro Punch", "Spine Grinder" and the "Humiliator." You can even knock off your opponent's head. And if decapitation wasn't bad ass enough, you can use stuff from the arena environments as weapons like spears, rocks, crates and barrels. 3-D camera moves capture the action in ten different arenas on four amazing planets. Try it and you'll see why CyberGladiators reduces other human fighting games to bloody pulps.

CYBERGLADIATORS

TEEN T AGES 13+

k.a.a.

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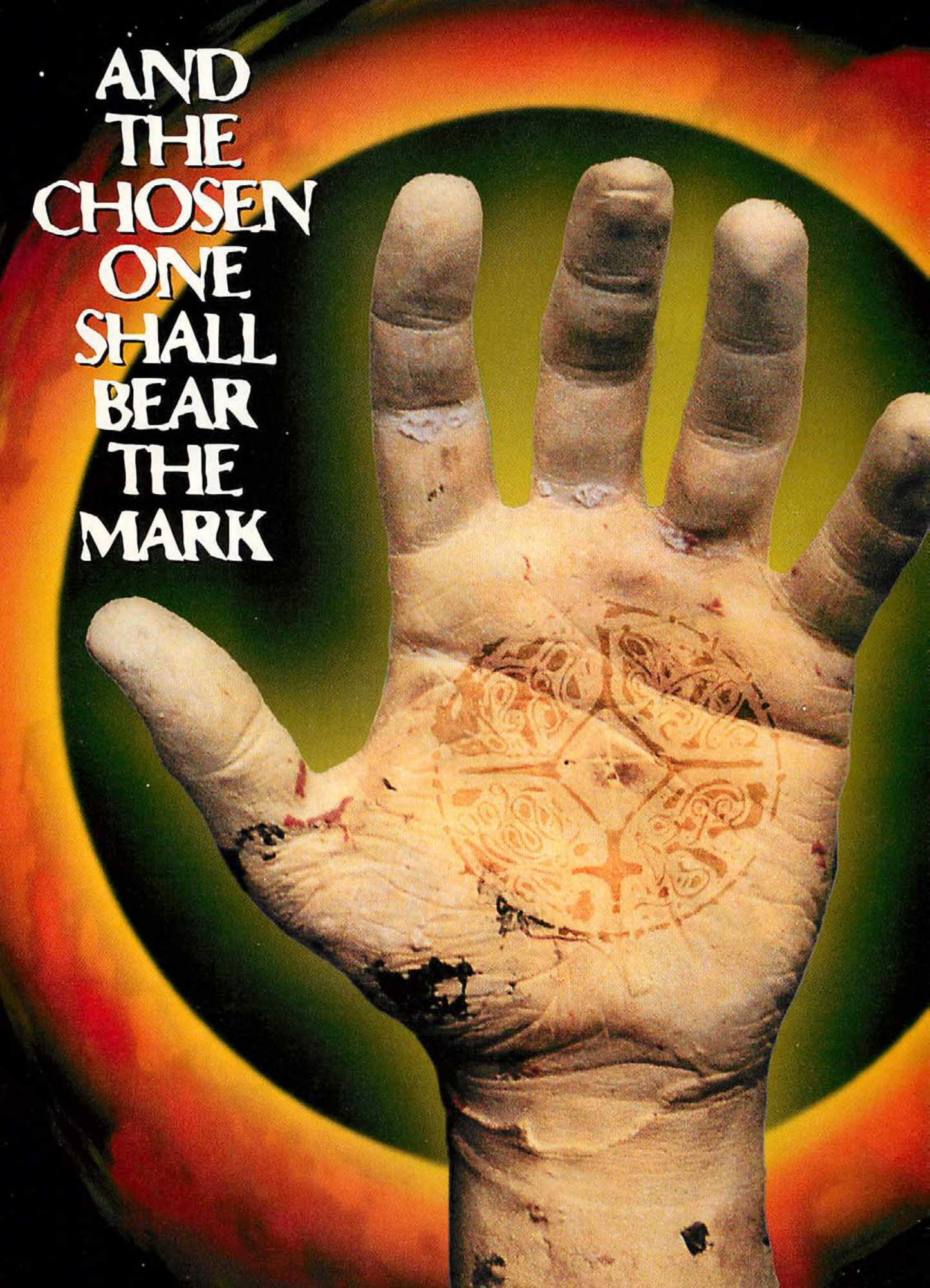
CIRCLE READER SERVICE #72


AND THE CHOSEN ONE SHALL BEAR THE MARK

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RATING PENDING RP ESRB

AVAILABLE FOR PC CD-ROM

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★☆☆☆☆ **REVIEW • SPIDER-MAN: THE SINISTER SIX**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

World Wide Web-Slinger

Spider-Man Gets Tangled In Byron Preiss' Sticky Snare

by Charles Ardai

When I was growing up, I wanted to be Spider-Man. I wore a jacket with a spider sewn onto the back, took double-exposure photographs of myself apparently crawling up a brick wall, and stayed up late to watch the live-action version starring Nicholas Hammond. I also longed for a good Spider-Man videogame, but never got one. Many years ago, Scott Adams released a graphic adventure, which I remember as being absolutely unplayable. Now there is Byron Preiss Multimedia's SPIDER-MAN: THE SINISTER SIX. The good news is that it *is* playable.

SPIDEY MEETS SPACE INVADERS If your spider sense is tingling, it's to tell you that the cool animation doesn't make up for the insipid combat sequences. MJ wouldn't recognize her husband in this badly spun affair.

DOES WHAT A SPIDER CAN

The bad news is that SINISTER SIX is really no better than that awful adventure game of a decade ago. The graphics are jagged, the story weak, the puzzles laughable (cryptograms, anyone?), and the action sequences so dismal, so minor, so clumsy, so basic, so dull, so *Atari 2600* as to defy comment.

The game opens with an impressively vigorous cartoon sequence, showing Spider-Man swinging from building to building in vintage form. "Bravo, old boy," I thought when I saw it. "Welcome home."

But then the cartoon ends, and though similar cartoon sequences crop up throughout the game, to get to them you have to solve lame puzzles, choose paths through interminable dialogues, and fight six of Spider-Man's enemies in a set of ludicrous action sequences.

The storyline involves a plot by six costumed bad guys to trap our hero, in part by impersonating him and implicating him in their crimes, and in part by endangering his aspiring actress wife, Mary Jane. The baddies are Mysterio, The Vulture, Dr. Octopus, Shocker, The Hobgoblin, and The Chameleon, plus Mary Jane's nasty film director, Chip Alvarez. All of these characters speak in hokey stage voices, as though the game's director told the actors to imagine themselves in an 1898 melodrama. And this may have been the right call, given the dialogue they have to utter. "I am a *pro-fesh-un-al!*" shouts Alvarez. "It's not your wifey on the line!" And this, from Peter Parker to Mary Jane: "Watch out Sharon Stone! Pretty soon I'll be dusting off the mantel for Mr. Oscar!"

The worst thing about the dialogue scenes is the dialogue, clearly, though the accompanying visuals (which often involve a screen full of characters standing perfectly still while one character's lips wiggle a little) are no prize. The worst thing about the game, though, is clearly the action. In 11 fight sequences the same three games keep shamelessly repeating: a first-person shooting game, in which you fire webs at oncoming projectiles by aiming a crosshair and clicking the mouse button; a third-person shooting game, identical except that you see Spider-Man on the screen; and a third-person dodging game, in which you move the mouse left, right, up, or down to make Spider-Man leap to the one of four walls along which no projectile is then approaching. Sometimes the projectile is a flaming jack-o-lantern thrown by Hobgoblin; sometimes it's one of Doc Ock's mechanical arms. Big deal. This is a game for a Casio wristwatch, not for a CD-ROM.

How can someone buy the Spider-Man license and then squander it like this? Someone needs to tell that Rumpelstiltskin of computer games, Byron Preiss, that his gold-into-straw act is getting tired very fast.

Price: $34.95
System Requirements: 486 DX2 or better processor, 8MB RAM, 20MB hard-drive space, SVGA graphics, Windows 3.1 or better, 2x CD-ROM, Windows-compatible sound card, mouse.
# of Players: 1
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: F.J. Lennon
Publisher: Byron Preiss Multimedia New York, NY (212) 989-6252
***Reader Service* # 323**

APPEAL: Easily pleased, patient Spider-Man fans.

PROS: Fine animation between game segments.

CONS: Lousy game between animation segments.

CG RATED

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TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #123

Getting In Toon

CGW Walks You Through The Wacky Worlds Of TOONSTRUCK

by Petra Schlunk

Spoiler Alert

This article offers a complete guide through TOONSTRUCK. Since it includes complete solutions to its puzzles, don't read any farther than you have to, so as not to spoil your fun.

Wandering in a world of portable holes, exploding cigars and talking animals, there's no way to avoid being "toonstruck." The trick, of course, is not to let your brains seize up while your side is splitting in this very funny adventure game. TOONSTRUCK centers around the comical adventures of the cartoonist Drew Blanc (Mel's long-lost brother?) as he tries to find a way back to our world after being pulled into a world of his own animated creations. For those who get stuck (with Wacme super glue) trying to figure out who framed Drew Blanc, this article provides a complete walk-through of the game. So toon in, turn on (your computer) and get Drew out!

THAT SMELL The broken shuttle needs one thing: an alert mouse! Maybe you can give the mouse a whiff of something to get him going.

LANDING IN CUTOPIA

Downstairs in the palace, head east to meet Bricabrac. Talk to the footman in the trophy room. Speak to Bricabrac again and get the plans to the Malevolator. Here you'll learn that you need to find the Malevolator's counterparts to construct the Cutifier.

Talk with the insufferably cute guards outside. Have them repeat their dance, and then pick up the dropped key. Unlock the king's bedroom. Collect the music box and have Flux search the bed for a voucher. Move the rug on the floor. Read the note on the dresser, which should help you solve the dresser puzzle. Enter the new passage to the basement. Have Flux stand on the loose floorboard, and then step on it to open the trap door. Return to the bedroom and roll the rug over the trap door. Pull the cord. In the trophy room, grab the red fish. Head to town.

WATER SPORTS To leave the trophy room, you'll have to replace the watering can with the reward you got from the barkeeper.

THE BAKER BOYS

In the bakery, play the piano to get some keys. Talk to the bakers. Visit the Costumarama and speak with Ms. Fit. In the tavern, speak with the bartender. Try to pick up the mouse in the tavern until it runs near the mousetrap. Play the organ and, while you play, have Flux use the trap. Collect your reward (a battered mug) and the mouse.

Back at the palace's trophy room, grab the watering can. Replace it with the mug. Go to the arcade. Speak with its owner, beat him at Wacman to collect a chain, and try the Strength-o-meter.

Head south out of town and talk with Fluffy. Go west and speak with the Carecrow. Grab a corncob. Go to the barn, fill the watering can with fertilizer, and speak with the cow. Then head west past the Carecrow to a forest. Head west and meet B. B. Wolf.

ON MICE AND ELEPHANTS

Go east and north to reach a broken shuttle. To fix the shuttle, place the mouse in the empty hand. Use the fertilizer on the mouse. Take the shuttle to Zanydu.

Head east to Wacme. Note the broken clock. Wait for a light to go on over a door at Wacme and then enter that door. Speak with Woof. Collect the stars after he demonstrates the boxing glove. Look at the Gift-o-matic. Examine the portraits and make a note of the security guard's phone number.

Head west from the town center. Enter the gym, try to use the Pump-o-tron, and speak with Jim. Leave and notice the flyer nearby. Copy down the phone number.

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.

In Hunter/Hunted, whether you live or die is all up to you because you choose the character you play. Either way, monster or prey, you'll need to dodge traps and run a gauntlet of 3-D characters just to stay alive. The blistering action takes you through flesh-eating tunnels and booby-trapped sewers with only your wits separating you from a body bag. Well, wits and whole bunch of guns, knives, grenades, and rocket launchers. Because, hey, when it's kill or be killed, it's better to give than receive.

HUNTER HUNTED™

k.a.™

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Talk with the outhouse guard.

Go to Cutopia's tavern and use the phone to call the guard. From the message you can deduce that the guard's shift ends at 6:00. Call the Wacme Contest. You must answer six questions (relating to the colors of various things in Zanydu). You may need to do this part a few times. When you win, leave the tavern and collect your prize: Wacme jumping beans.

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Return to Zanydu and set the clock to 6:00. Enter Wacme and show Woof the beans. Use the Gift-o-matic to collect all the prizes: a glove, mallet and magnet. Enter the outhouse and discover that the toilet is clogged.

SUFFERIN' SUCCOTASH Drew and Flux are in some hot water. A little rock 'n' roll may help them out here.

Use the magnet on the haystack in the barn. Fix the Churnatron with what you find and collect two sticks of butter. Bring one stick to the bakers and receive a lump of dough. Use the remaining butter on Jim's vaulting horse (at the gym). Ask Jim to demonstrate his routine. Use the Pump-o-tron. At the arcade, use your mallet on the Strength-o-matic. Win some wine and collect the bells from the broken machine.

Return to the barn and talk with the cow. Fill your watering can with weed killer. Go to the forest and kill the briar patch with the weed killer. Collect the pepper. Return to the barn and get more weed killer.

IN HOT WATER

Give the wine to B. B. Wolf and get thrown in a stewpot! Rock the pot back and forth until it tips over. Use the corncob on the fire to make popcorn. Cook the dough on the spit to make a roll. Pocket the spit and pick up the book (and read it!).

Note: If you get caught by Nefarious's goons, here's how to get out of jail: Walk on the rug until you are staticky; then touch the buttons by the door. Repeat until you are free. Retrieve your belongings from the safe (after solving a sliding block puzzle).

Give the popcorn to Fluffy in exchange for cotton candy. In the palace, use the spit on the locked cabinet's hole to open it. Retrieve the stuffed cat.

Exchange books with Ms. Fit. Go to the Malevolands, speak with the bouncer and pick up the meat. Enter the first building to the east and speak with the robot maker. Use Ms. Fit's book on him and take the plunger.

Go to the next building to the north and retrieve the ink pad. Solve the safe's sliding block puzzle to get a portable hole.

WEED KILLER HAS MANY USES

Return to Zanydu and use the weed killer on the meat. Feed the meat to the vulture. Collect the arrow sign and a feather. In the outhouse, use the plunger to fix the toilet. Flush your red fish and collect a green one (a sole).

Bring the feather to the cow and get some glue. Use the glue to join the jumping beans, the stuffed cat, the piano keys and the cotton candy to make a female "squirrel." Use the squirrel at the malevolated squirrel's door. Have Flux collect the nuts.

Use the ink pad on the music box, and then use the blackened crest to stamp the voucher. Pick up a harlequin outfit at the Costumarama. You will also get a fly suit. Give the costume to the Carecrow and get the cloak.

Use the cloak to get past the bouncer at Seedy's. Use glue on the bear's bowling ball. Bowl Flux to score a strike. Collect some pins as your reward.

FINAL ASSEMBLY

You now have everything you need to build the Cutifier (pins, cloak, sole, nuts, arrow, roll, pepper, bells, stars, spit and chain). Assemble the Cutifier and press the red button.

Drew ends up in Count Nefarious's dungeon. Speak with the guard. When he is sneezing, try to pick up the mat (you'll get a crystal). Pick up the mat and swat it against the bars. Collect the key and unlock your cell. Speak with the bird several times and take notes. Head east.

Notice the chest in the fishbowl. Peek into the kitchen to the west. Manipulate the clown door, playing a game of imitation to open it. Talk with the clown. Head to the dungeon and go north. Look at the Climatron. Press a button by the air circulator to open the vent. Climb in and use your fly suit to go up.

In the bathroom, if you peek out the door you risk getting caught. Search the medicine cabinet for chloroform wipes. Fill your watering can with tap water. Go down the vent and visit the clown. When the clown removes his nose, pick it up and wipe it with chloroform. Pick up the clown's pin and balloon. Fill the balloon and your red glove with helium.

FRIED FISH, ANYONE?

Use the pin to fix the Climatron. Set it to hot, and then back to normal. Hurry upstairs and grab the chest from the fishbowl. Take the key from the chest. Retrieve the Climatron's pin. Head upstairs from the fish and look through

A BITTER END One of Zanydu's popular sports, fish-flushing, is a fine way to spend a rainy afternoon. Flush the red fish.

THINK ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE? THINK AGAIN!

AND AGAIN.
AND AGAIN.
AND AGAIN.

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Don't joke about his height or he'll bash in your kneecaps.

Amputation, just what the doctor ordered.

On second thought, maybe you shouldn't have skinned her babies.

If he only had a heart, then you could rip it out.

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #388

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #236

SNEEZE GUARD What to do with an allergic guard that has swallowed your cell key? Stir up a little dust!

the west door. Go through the east door and look at the odd books. Pull out, in order: blue book 1, red 1, red 3, blue 2, blue 3, red 4, red 2 and blue 4.

Enter the new passage and use the music box on the guard. Set the monitor to view the knight. Use your magnet on the ceiling plate (your view will switch to the monitor), and move the knight onto each raised tile until the gate opens. Go back upstairs, take the knight's gauntlet and go through the new doorway.

You will find Nefarious's goons playing cards. Use the pin to unlock the chest near the door and free Ray, who gives you a crystal. Get in the chest and hop, while the guards are not looking, toward the TNT. Grab a stick and leave.

Return to the kitchen. Use the water on the robot. Open the oven and grab a turkey. Stuff the turkey with dynamite, light it in the oven, and put it on the dumbwaiter.

Go upstairs to the pool room and grab a pool cue. Outside the pool room notice the two gargoyles. Manipulate the left head to get a crystal. Touch its horn (this unlocks the other head). Now, go downstairs. (Note: if you cross the landing to the right head, it will relock.)

A COLD SHOWER

Put the pin back in the Climatron and climb the vent to the bathroom. Plug the sink and turn on the faucet. Return to the Climatron and set it to freezing. Go back to the bathroom and open the door. Leave the bathroom through the door and go downstairs.

Manipulate the left horn to unlock the right gargoyle. Go upstairs and down to the dungeon (via the bathroom vent) and back upstairs. Manipulate the right gargoyle head to get another crystal.

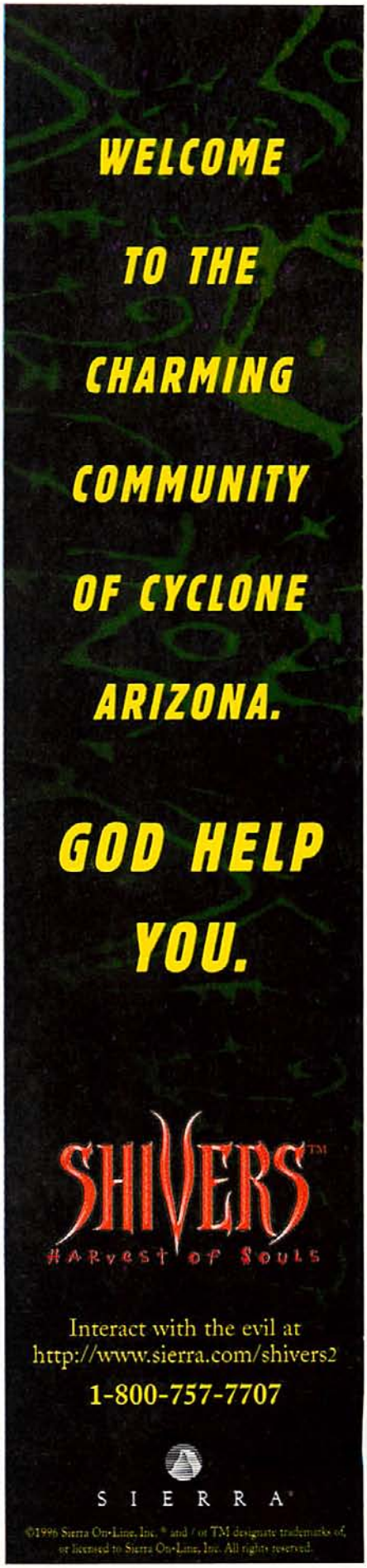
Go upstairs and open the east door with the fishbowl key. Here you will play "chase the sunglasses." Try to get them from the bookcase. Turn "off" the ceiling fan. Move the chair and try to get the glasses from the mounted head. Use the fly suit to get the flytrap to release the glasses. Finally, use your mallet to break the vase and retrieve the sunglasses.

Leave the room and head upstairs. Put the gauntlet on the pool cue and use this to press the button to open the gate. Go to the left door and take a whiff of helium. Use the intercom and say you are Lugnut. Before walking up to Miss Fortune, don your new shades or you'll end up in the dungeon again.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING Give the gators a dynamite turkey they'll never forget. Put the bird into the oven (to light the fuse) and then send it on its way on the dumbwaiter to the left.

FINALE

Talk to the hypnotized cat and move her to the landing. Have her open the east door. In this last room, use the four crystals on the panel (they will glow when correctly placed). Pull the lever and retrieve the warp device. Go to the monitor by the west door and set the devices properly. Enter the west room to reach the epilogue. And ttttttthat's all, folks!



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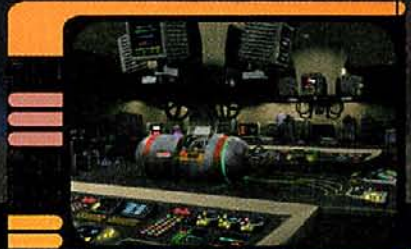

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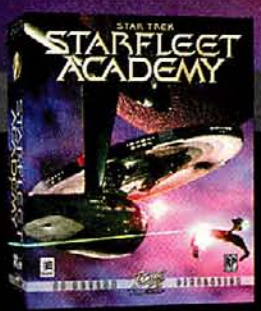

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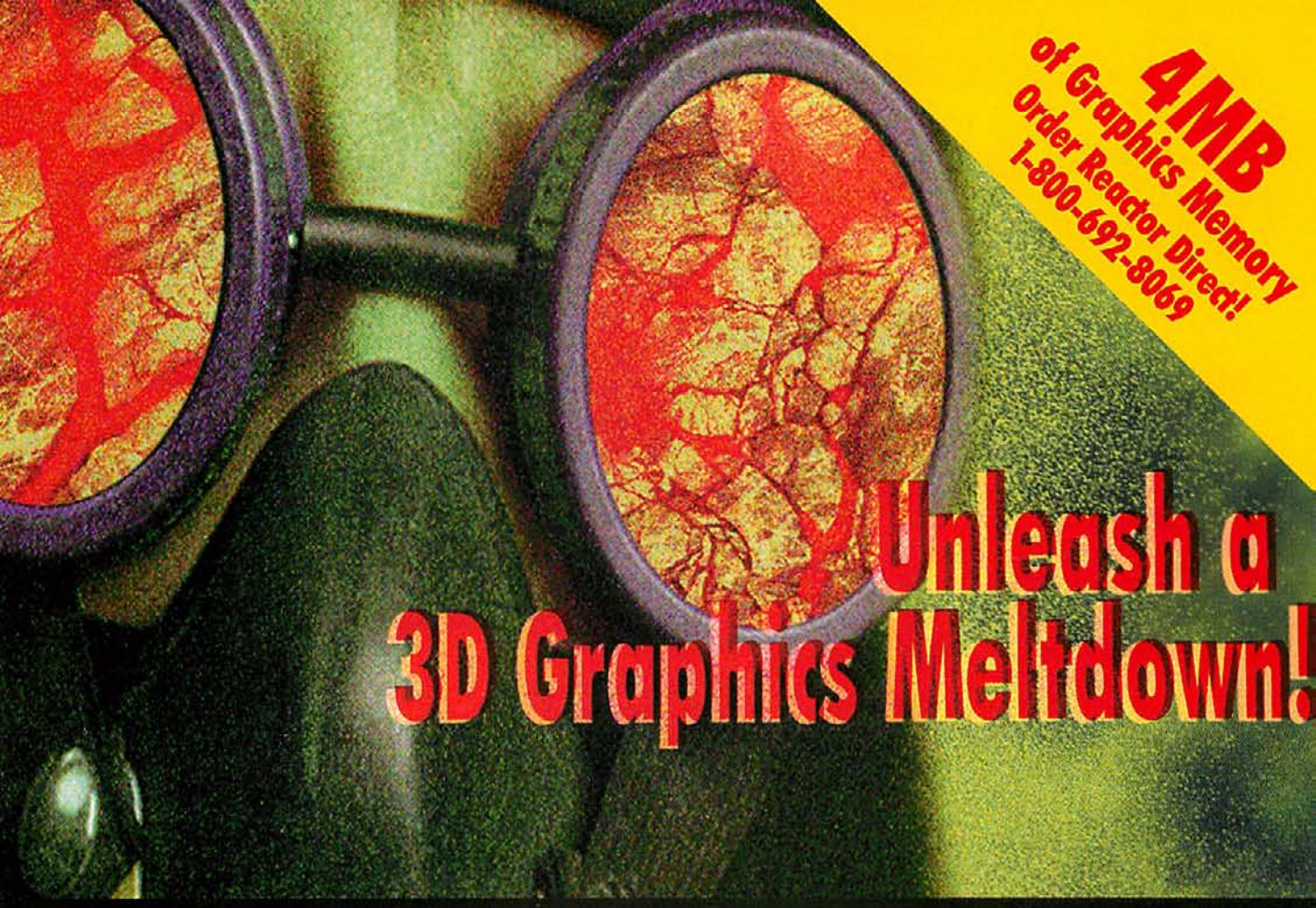

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INTERGRAPH

Burnin' Down The House

Bullfrog's Classic Returns In The Explosive SYNDICATE WARS

Bullfrog is a respected name in gaming circles. Aside from GENE WARS, Peter Molyneux and crew have produced a stable of imaginative and addictive titles: POPULOUS, POWERMONGER, SYNDICATE, and MAGIC CARPET. And so it is with SYNDICATE WARS, an inspired update to the 1993 classic that peels back the top of this dark world and pulls you in.

Things aren't going well for the EuroCorp Syndicate, the world government that you originally fought against in SYNDICATE. Its worldwide empire has come apart at the seams. A computer virus unleashed by the Church of the New Epoch—a mysterious rival—has punctured some citizens' chip-induced illusions of a bucolic existence. These "unguided" are dressing like punks, acting like terrorists, and exacting an explosive revenge on their surroundings. People are being shot dead in the streets. Giant concrete buildings are coming down with a crash. That is, things are a right mess, and you're the broom.

SYNDICATE ENCORE SYNDICATE WARS is an action-packed sequel with an abundance of explosions and fun. Gameplay is similar to SYNDICATE, but with multiplayer options, better graphics and more mayhem.

DEJA VU?

This is still basically SYNDICATE. You are once again directing a quartet of agents on a trail of blood across a series of grim cityscapes—seen from an angled-down point of view—while funding the R&D department to produce bigger and badder weapons of destruction. These 60 multistage missions may find you killing key opponents, recruiting others, stealing technology, or guarding EuroCorp installations. There's no sense of repetition; even when you're doing the same sort of thing from mission to mission, you're doing it differently and the game quickly moves beyond its quick-draw beginnings.

Once again, solutions lie partly in good strategy, patience and adapting to a level's tricks and traps. The agent you've been assigned to expunge may be right next door to the drop zone from which your team starts. But the great door of the compound in which he's taken refuge won't open for anything but a hovercar. You've got to find that car, and you can bet it's all the way across town with an honor guard of its own.

LIVING LARGER

So, from the sound of it, this is the same game, yes? Not at all. The most profound change is the view. SYNDICATE had a small feel, and you had to squint to see your four agents. SYNDICATE WARS feels *huge*. For one thing, you're *much* closer to the action. In fact, the distance varies with the action; the game has a dynamic zoom effect that adjusts to what's taking place onscreen. The great gray prisonlike cities—some 30 of them—loom up in your face, and it seems all the monitor can do to contain them. The effect of rotating the 3D playfield is to open the game up. You can see the game exactly the way you want to see it.

And there are the explosions. SYNDICATE was strange that way. You could wreak chaos upon its people without making a dent on the infrastructure.

But the explosions here are simply spectacular. The box brags of a "fully destructible environment," and, to my

> "The box brags of a 'fully destructible environment,' and, to my pleasant surprise, it's the truth."

INSIDE ACTION

The release date for Epic Megagames' UNREAL is looking like April or May of 1997. The game will be playable with or without the MMX chip, so those who won't be jumping on the bandwagon will have full reign of the same cool QUAKE killer. CGW saw the non-MMX engine, and it has fantastic light sourcing, dithering for getting rid of pixelation, and an overall 3D graphics engine that is much better looking than QUAKE's.

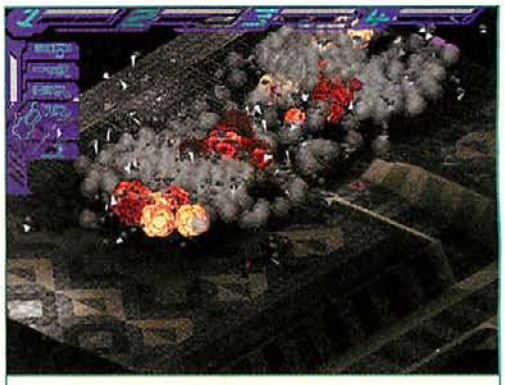
pleasant surprise, it's the truth. It's a SYNDICATE sales event: everything must go, and everything does—in expanding rings of smoke and flame and waves of hot, bright light. Top-down shoot-'em-ups everywhere are turning green in jealousy.

Another change is that you can play as either the Syndicate or the Church. The threads aren't so different—you get to wear a cape and big shoulder pads as New Epoch warriors—but it's nice to have the extra missions.

SYNDICATE didn't offer a cutaway view of your party when it entered buildings. Indeed, it adopted this conceit as a sort of quirky subgame of anticipation and timing. You can still go inside buildings in SYNDICATE WARS—you'll need to in pursuit of some objectives—but, happily, these sequences seem to have been simplified. In the missions I played, I didn't need to fidget with the mouse to shoot or persuade semi-visible targets.

The overall structure is different, too. The original game was set up a little like *Risk*: you could undertake missions only in regions adjacent to those under your control. Here, you're all over the map as a Syndicate fireman; one mission may see you visiting Hong Kong, Beijing and then Phoenix. It doesn't give SYNDICATE WARS the texture of a step-by-step conquest, but it does free you of the burden of playing IRS agent with the conquered regions.

It all looks great. The graphics are wonderful in SVGA mode. The textures have that rich combination of smooth surfaces, fine lines, bright centers and shadowy edges that comes only with SVGA. And, beyond the technicalities, it's strangely, darkly beautiful. Water ebbs and recedes. Smokestacks smoke. Tiny citizens flee, shrieking at the sight of your guns. Everything seems bathed in a streetlight glow. I was so immersed in the single-player mode that I never tried out the multiplayer modes (eight-player network and modem).



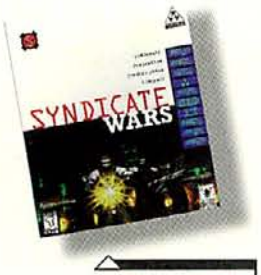
DYNAMITE! SYNDICATE WARS has incredible explosions, some of which are so vivid that you can almost feel them. I recoiled at the flashes, dreading their accompanying sound of tearing fabric; and that's kind of scary.

SYNDICATED DISSENSION

Not to say that everything works perfectly in SYNDICATE WARS. The 3D engine has the odd rough spot. On one occasion, I watched the bottom of a compound gate appear beneath the supposedly opaque sidewalk outside. On another, a hovercar pulling off the side of the road passed through a perimeter fence. On a third, one car passed through another and a member of my team was caught waist deep in a ramp. (That glitch cost me a mission.) But these goof-ups were the exception rather than the rule. By and large, SYNDICATE WARS is clean as a whistle—so clean, in fact, that the oddities threw me off a bit more than they should.

GET IN THE CAR SYNDICATE WARS still has a nice blend of strategy in its action-packed gameplay. Most missions are goal oriented, with some goals hidden or reachable only after completing certain actions: like hijacking a car.

If there must be a downside, it's that, for all this ingenuity and craft, the guts of the game haven't changed appreciably. The basic gameplay is derived almost slavishly from the original. This is essentially the 1993 game with church bells and steam whistles—and perhaps we had the right to expect something more. But, right now, with my agents under fire from three directions and a world of blood and flame collapsing about their heads, I can't think of what that might possibly be.



Price: $59.99
System Requirements: 486-66 or better, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, VGA graphics, 55MB hard drive space, DOS 6.0 or Win 95, mouse, Sound Blaster -compatible sound card.
# of Players: 1-8
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Bullfrog
Publisher: Electronic Arts
San Mateo, CA
(800) 245-4525
Reader Service #: 320

APPEAL: Fans of explosions, isometric shooters with depth, or the original SYNDICATE.

PROS: Gorgeous SVGA graphics, totally combustible world, network and modem play, a more flexible gameworld than SYNDICATE.

CONS: Same basic gameplay as SYNDICATE; a few visual glitches.

CG RATED

CG TIPS!

▶ SKYNET is out, and we'll have a review and strategy article next month. For now, though, chew on these cheat codes for Bethesda's TERMINATOR sequel.

superuzi Gives you lots of ammo for an uzi that will rock your world!
arnold Gives you all the weapons, though not all the ammo.
surgery Full health and armor.
nitrous Speeds the game up.
illbeback Jump to next level.
joycam Switches to 3rd person perspective. Only for multiplayer gaming. You need to have a joystick peripheral attached for this to work.
counters Shows game counters.

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#4 Can load an automatic and wax his legs at the same time
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#6 Does the tango better than Rupaul
#7 Wears bullet-proof panty hose
#8 "Gender-Defender" Uzi wipes off that smirk real quick
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#10 Stunt-doubles for Pamela

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #198

Hell's Kitchen

Grow Your Own QUAKE Levels With New Shareware Editors

by V. Long

Finally, usable QUAKE level editors have arrived. It's taken a bit longer than expected, but then again, QUAKE is a true 3D program, and that extra dimension adds an entirely new twist.

Of the ones I've tried, three (all still in beta at press time) stand out. BSP is freeware by patent attorney Yahn Bernier. THRED is shareware by Jonathan Mavor, a programmer for Neural Storm, the makers of RADIX: INTO THE VOID. WORLDCRAFT is shareware by Ben Morris, the renowned creator of the popular DOOM CONSTRUCTION KIT. Each has its advantages, but all are powerful and easy to use.

CG ON-LINE

For a demo on using WORLDCRAFT, visit our Web site: zdnet.com/gaming

CRAFTING A NEW WORLD

Getting started with QUAKE level editing is quite easy. To illustrate, let's use WORLDCRAFT to create a simple room—the basic building block for any level.

Select New from WORLDCRAFT's File Menu. Select the Block Tool (wireframe cube) from the Object Bar on the left. In the top view (top right pane), left-click/drag until you form a box of about 6x6 grid lines.

CONNECT THE ROOMS Levels are cleverly connected rooms of various sizes. WORLDCRAFT's camera shows you the level as you create it.

Check either the front (bottom left pane) or side (bottom right pane) view for a box with solid black squares. Left-click on a top-middle black square and drag it up until the box is about six grid lines high. The modeling views merely show a wireframe representation of a solid cube yet to be created. Reposition the box by left-clicking/dragging the outline of the box. Center it on the two black axes crossing each pane.

CHURCH OF GAME DESIGN Good luck trying to duplicate the masterpieces of design you'll see in Raven's QUAKE variant, HEXEN 2.

Add a texture to the box by left-clicking Browse in the texture selector window on the right, and select a texture suitable for a room (i.e., not a liquid). Check that the Solid Type selector says Block. Check the size, shape, position and texture of your cube,then hit Enter to create a solid.

You now have a solid cube that needs to be hollowed out. Click the Selection Tool (giant cursor) button and select the solid. A red bounding box will outline the solid. Select Make Hollow from the Tools menu. The default wall thickness of 32 is fine. Voila, what was once a solid object is now a room consisting of six solid walls joined at the edges.

At minimum, you need one entity: a player start point. Click the Entity Tool (axe) button. Select info_player_start as the Entity Type. In the top view, left-click inside the room. Check another view to make sure the green/purple reticle is inside the room; if not, left-drag it into the room. Avoid placing the info_player_start in the floor. Hit [Enter] to create the entity. If you want, add other entities,such as light_ , monster_ , and so on. Hit [Enter] for each one.

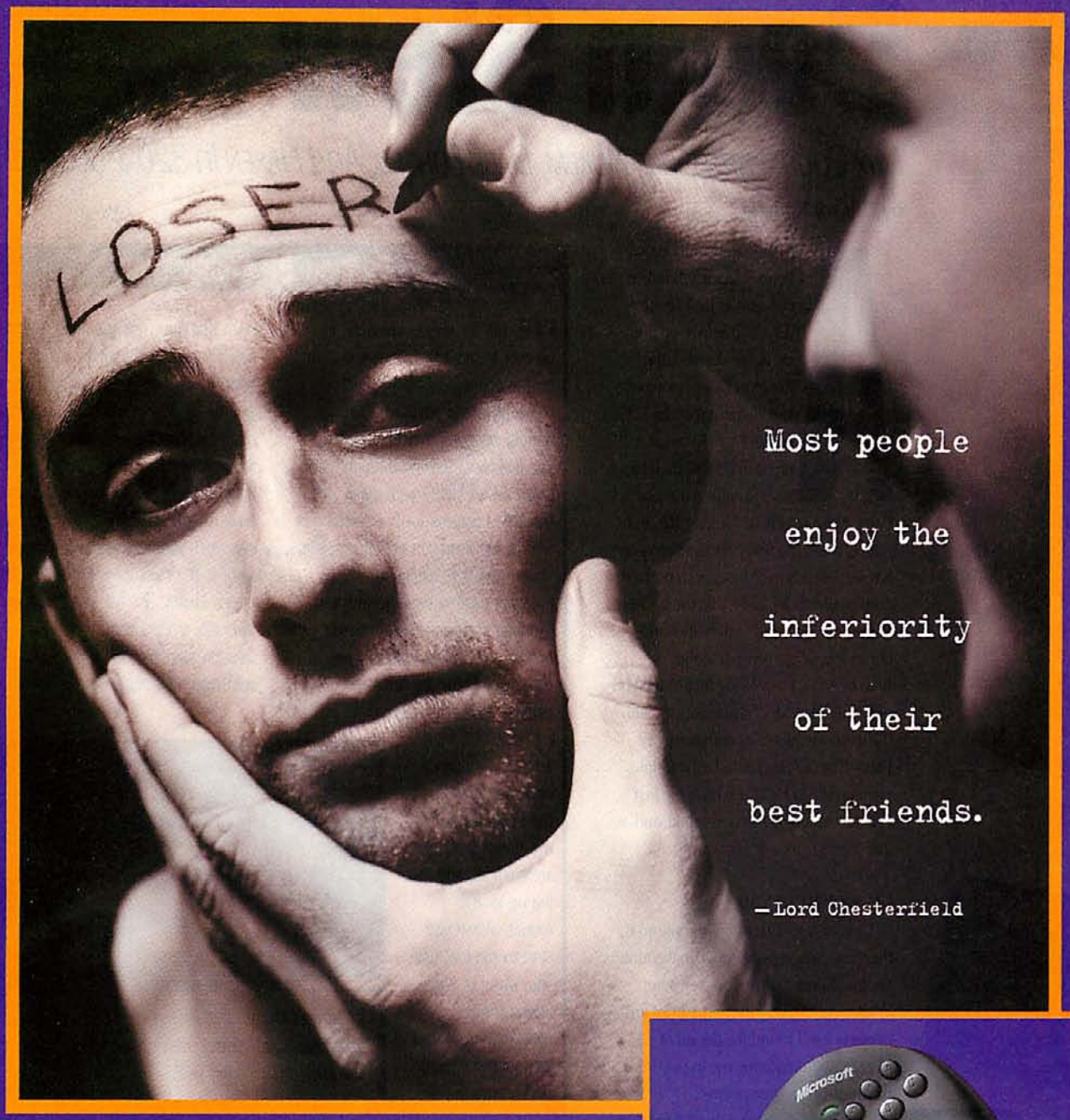
Hit [F9] to compile (QBSP), light (LIGHT), and visually "optimize" (VIS) the level. Select Normal QBSP and Full VIS and No LIGHT. If you've added "light_" entities, try Extra LIGHT. Then hit [OK]. Congrats, you've created your first QUAKE "level," called a .BSP. Put it into your QUAKE/ID1/MAPS subdirectory and run it with QUAKE -MAP (name of BSP).

Now you're ready to add all the other goodies that make a good QUAKE level deliciously hellish. Next month we dive into QUAKE server modifications, like Capture the Flag. See you next month, same QUAKE time, same QUAKE page.

Online Resources

▶ You can download these level editors from the following addresses.

BSP	**http://ourworld.compuserve.com:80/homepages/bernier**
THRED	**http://www.visi.com/~jlowell/thred**
WORLDCRAFT	**http://www.islandnet.com/worldcraft**



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★★★★★ **REVIEW • ERADICATOR**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Doom Stew

Mix Equal Parts DUKE NUKEM, DARK FORCES, And HEXEN In 320x200 Broth

by Thierry Nguyen

Ah, the DOOM-clone. Forever being refined, as companies look for new ways to improve on the model of slaughtering things in first-person perspective in a pseudo-3D world. From the masterpiece of DOOM itself to such notable games as DARK FORCES, DUKE NUKEM 3D, and now QUAKE, the first-person action genre has seen steady evolutionary steps. Now comes Accolade's ERADICATOR. If I were to play the "mix and match titles and components" game to describe ERADICATOR, I would say that it's a blend of DUKE NUKEM 3D's interactivity, with the mission objectives and puzzles of DARK FORCES, and a dash of multiple characters a la HEXEN. This is the first shooter Accolade has developed, and as first steps go, it's a decent start.

Price: $49.99
Minimum Requirements: 486-66 or better, 8 MB RAM, 30 MB hard drive space, VGA graphics, 2x CD-ROM, MS-DOS 6.0 or higher; supports all major sound cards.
# of Players: 1-8 (Modem, serial, or IPX)
Protection: None
Designer: Scott Amos
Publisher: Accolade
San Jose, CA
(800) 345-7744
Reader Service #: 322

I'M WATCHING YOU

One of Accolade's big promotions is the third-person perspective that counters the traditional first-person viewpoint. While you can play the game from first-person view, I found the design of ERADICATOR requiring me to play from the third-person perspective.

One interesting twist they added that needs this third-person view is the MARIO gameplay. The jumping puzzles that were the downfall of ULTIMA 8 aren't as bad in ERADICATOR, but they're still there. There are quite a few platforms scattered around the various levels, and you will need to perfect your jumping skills; this is best done from the third-person perspective. While you can view your character from seven other perspectives, I find those extra seven excessive; over-the-shoulder is the best way to play.

Another ERADICATOR feature is its picture-in-picture view. Most of the time it's quite useful, such as when you take control of an enemy (you can control the enemy and still see from your character). This viewing feature is also used whenever you look through a surveillance camera. However, in certain situations, such as the guided missile, it's not as useful. The missile simply moves too fast for you to guide it accurately. Still, the picture-in-picture view is a good addition overall.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

Taking a cue from HEXEN, ERADICATOR allows you to portray one of three characters. They differ mainly in the basic attributes of defense, offense, and speed. Eleena the mercenary is quick but flimsy, Kamchak is strong and lumbering, and Dan Blaze is the balanced fellow. Another factor separating the characters is the weapons they use. Out of the 15 available weapons per character, there are five that vary from character to character.

Since only the beginning levels are different for each character, and the rest are identical, it's hard to see the differences in single-player mode. But when it comes to multiplayer, these differences will affect

A Primer On Eradication

- First off, for all you cheaters, just flip on over to the 1,001 Cheats feature for the codes.
- Use picture-in-picture only for remote weapons (like the crawlers) and enemies. Looking through cameras doesn't yield much detail, and the PIP is useless for the guided missile; by the time you get into missile view, it will have exploded.
- *Always* destroy those towers with lightning on them. They're power generators, and they are usually key power points for any forcefield or defense system you run into.
- In terms of weaponry, I use a universal weapon, the Death Darts, as my standard. They are plentiful, and can fire up to 200 rounds. When you start to run low, use your pistol or shockwave cannon (weapon slot 3) until you get more Death Dart ammo.
- On that note, use the other weapons only for certain situations. Mines are good for retreating, and so is weapon slot seven. Even though slot seven is a character-specific weapon, it is always an explosive that leaves something behind. Use the flyer only when you have room to maneuver, and the missile when you have a straight line-of-sight at the creature and need the firepower. Finally, use the little "crawlers" to sneak around corners, and use weapon slot 15 to kill a lot of enemies with minimal resistance.

RC BOMBS Use the PIP window for the remote-controlled weapons, like this crawler-mine, which is a key element in finishing this level.

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #376

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PLOT COMPRESSION ERADICATOR's plot is fleshed out in a unique first level for each character, but the gameplay is basically shoot-'em-up with a few limited twists.

your play style: Eleena is best for fast hit-and-run attacks, while Kamchack is good for simple showdowns.

Also, after you finish the game, you unlock the bonus fourth character. I don't want to spoil it for you, but this fourth character *is* pretty cool and can be used in multiplayer matches as well.

ENGINEERING WEAPONRY

ERADICATOR doesn't have a true 3D engine, but like DUKE it pushes 2D graphics technology pretty far. Also like DUKE, it features interactive environments, such as breakable windows and computer terminals. However, you *can* have small level sections on top of other sections, which is an admirable feat for a 2D engine. This is evident in the first level for Dan Blaze, as you hop into a secret room that lies on a platform above the ground. The levels are filled with lifts and floating platforms for you to jump onto.

One big plus is the amount of weaponry in the game. There are a total of 15 weapons ranging from your fist to a deadly kill-all fireball that homes in on its enemies. There are also weapons that you can remotely control and a mine that can be used as a camera.

CAN IT ERADICATE THE COMPETITION?

Despite the few good details and

PICTURE IMPERFECT The picture-in-picture feature lets you see action through the eye of a camera, a guide robot and even from the tip of certain weapons.

Don't fight futuristic creatures with a prehistoric weapon.

Available at: AAFES, CompUSA, Computer City, Electronics Boutique, Elek-Tek, Fry's Electronics, Incredible Universe and Nobody Beats the Wiz.

EDITOR'S internet insider CHOICE

CG RATED

boot KICK ASS! PRODUCT

YOU ARE HERE ERADICATOR's automap is actually quite well done, as it tells you your objective, where nearby items are, kills, time, and number of keycards for the bonus levels.

enhancements, ERADICATOR just does not push gameplay hard enough in an innovative direction. With four unique characters, I expected more varied weaponry or levels. HEXEN lost replay value because the levels were exactly the same no matter who you played, and I was hoping that there would be level variety in ERADICATOR's single player mode. Also, only five weapons are different among the characters, and those five still function similarly for each person. I would've preferred completely different weaponry, which would have brought a tactical edge to the game that hasn't been seen before.

Also, the enemies weren't very memorable. DOOM and QUAKE had creatures that gave me nightmares, while DUKE had comical pulp sci-fi aliens. I will always remember DOOM's Cyberdemon, QUAKE's Fiend, and DUKE's BadAss, but I won't remember G'or from ERADICATOR.

And for you folks with the hot-rod gaming rigs, there's no hi-res here. The game plays only in 320x200. Though graphics do not entirely make a game, it still would be nice to have something higher than the outdated and chunky low-res display.

So in the crowded world of 3D shooters, how does ERADICATOR fare? Sadly, it cannot challenge DUKE or QUAKE, though it does have enough to stand above the rest of the clones out there. Accolade was playing it safe with this one, and who knows, they might make a sequel. If they do, I hope they can push the gaming envelope by doing what they should have from the beginning: dreaming up memorable creatures, using the engine for more than MARIO-esque run-and-jump puzzles, and making different characters *truly* different.

APPEAL: DUKE and QUAKE fans who need a new clone.

PROS: Decent level design, innovative third-person view, wide selection of weapons.

CONS: Characters too similar in solo play, identical levels limit replay value, average enemies, low-res graphics.

CG RATED

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★★★½☆ **REVIEW • HUNTER HUNTED**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Hunting Season

Head-to-Head Side-Scroller Is A Fun Break From The Usual 3D Fare

by Scott A. May

Not long ago, players drooled at the concept of first-person 3D games. Now that store shelves are littered with dozens of DOOM knock-offs, maybe those old side-scrolling shooters weren't so bad after all. Apparently that's what the designers at Sierra's new k.a.a. development team were thinking when they created HUNTER HUNTED. This side-scrolling blast-fest has a delightful retro look and feel, described internally as "LODE RUNNER on steroids." Relax, though. Although the game's basic structure may be shopworn, its presentation is anything but dated.

TICKET TO RIDE Various weapons and supplies are scattered throughout the multilevel mazes, including pieces to this vehicle, which is your only means of escape.

MULTIPLAYER MASTER MISSIONS

In the future, Earth has been annihilated by an alien race known as The Masters. For entertainment, the invaders stage a gladiatorial game called Hunter Hunted. As contestants, players assume one of two roles: Jake, a street-wise human survivor, or Garathe Den, an enslaved beast imported from another ravaged planet. The playing field is a series of labyrinths, located below Earth's demolished cities, each teeming with monsters, traps, and puzzles.

The game can be played three ways: single player (65 missions), multiplayer cooperative (15 missions) and head-to-head deathmatches (20 missions). In solitaire mode, you play either man or beast, depending on each mission's objectives.

You also have the role of either the Hunter or the Hunted. As the Hunter, your goal is simply to seek the exit and destroy everything in your path. As the Hunted, your goals vary, from surviving a certain length of time, to collecting objects, to reaching a destination.

Multiplayer mode splits the screen and is great fun. In cooperative missions, players must work together—one as Jake and another as Garathe Den—to solve puzzles and overcome obstacles. The real thrills come in the death match scenarios, a blazing game of hide-and-seek where everyone and everything is your enemy. This mode is a blast, but would have been even better with a modem option.

WHERE ARE YOU? HUNTER HUNTED allows you to move in and out of the multilevel dungeons along the z-axis through those doorways.

2D WITH DEPTH

Graphics consist of 2D backdrops, full of grimy detail and spot animation. Dungeon layouts are multilevel, scrolling up, down, left, and right. Each dungeon also has several parallel sections along the z-axis, adding three-dimensional depth.

The characters are 3D rendered miniatures that stand out nicely from the backgrounds. Unfortunately, though, they sometimes blend with solid objects.

The game offers special support for most PC gamepads, which is the preferred method of control. Response is good, but not always precise, especially when jumping from surface to surface.

Like most games of this type, HUNTER HUNTED starts off easy, but quickly heats up as you enter the larger, vermin- and puzzle-infested missions. Dynamix claims to be considering both a level editor and supplementary missions, available as downloadable patches. For the sake of side-scrolling fans, let's hope the game sells enough to warrant such additions. At any rate, this is a fun and refreshing change of pace from the usual 3D fare.

Price: $54.00
System Requirements: Pentium 90 or better, 16 MB RAM, 35 MB hard disk space, SVGA graphics, Windows 95, 2x CD-ROM drive, mouse; supports Win95-compatible joysticks, gamepads and sound cards with DAC.
 # Of Players: 1-2
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designers: k.a.a. (Dynamix)
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Bellevue, WA
(206) 649-9800
Reader Service #: 324

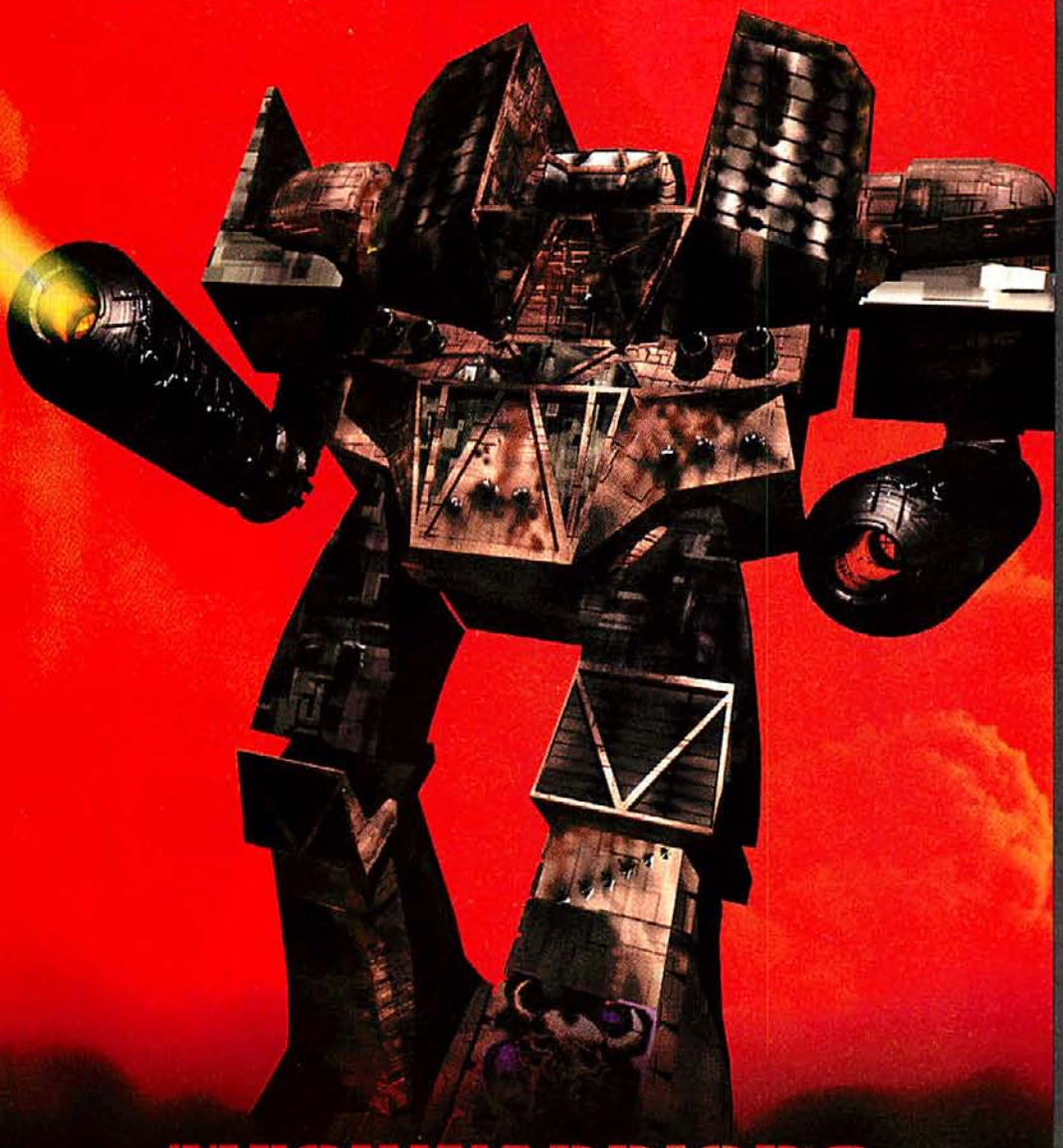
APPEAL: Fans of side-scrolling arcade action, weary of first-person retreads.

PROS: Lots of large, intricately designed levels, filled with explosive action and terrific special effects. Split-screen, two-player deathmatch is particularly intense.

CONS: Incredibly slow load times. Character control is sometimes sluggish. Missing both modem play and level editor.

CG RATED ★★★★

ANOTHER CRITICAL HIT!



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— PC GAMER

"In a nutshell, MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries is an incredible game."
— NUKE

"I bought it and no one has seen me since."
— GAME SPOT

"There's no denying that this is the best looking and sounding game set in the BattleTech Universe."
— PC MULTIMEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT

"★★★★½"
— COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #41

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id: anthology

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #241

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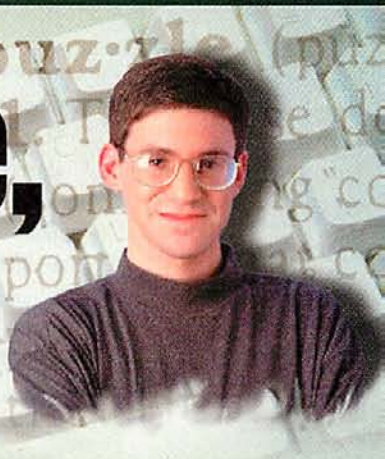
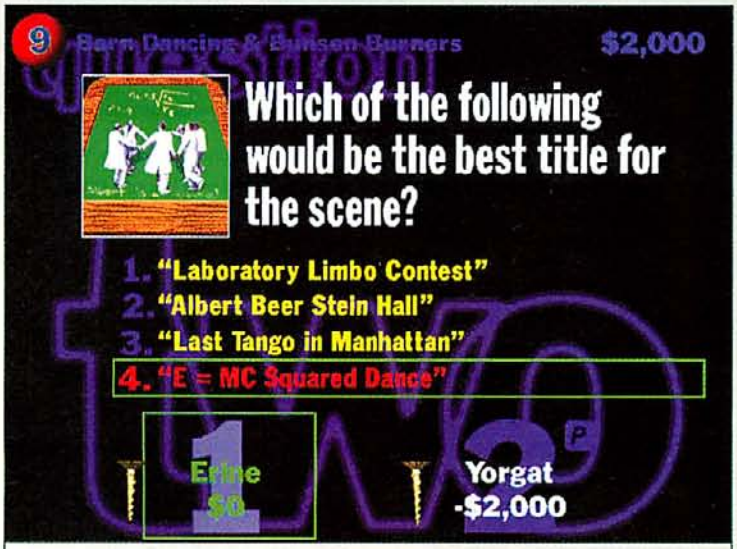
Jack Be Nimble, Jack Be Quick



Both JACK 2 And JACK SPORTS Are Sassy, Sarcastic And Hilarious

If there's one thing the folks at Berkeley Systems understand, it's how to milk a franchise. Following the success of screen savers like *After Dark*, they gave us a sassy and sarcastic TV game show parody called YOU DON'T KNOW JACK. And because the thing was brilliant, it immediately shot to the top of the charts. Sure enough, a 400-question expansion set quickly followed, along with promises of more in the future. A few months later, the future is here.



BIG AL'S BAR & GRILL You don't need to know the Theory of Relativity to laugh at JACK's clever questions.

> "The YOU DON'T KNOW JACK franchise is the master of gonzo trivia."

CG CHOICE

HIT THE ROAD, JACK

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK, VOLUME 2, and YOU DON'T KNOW JACK SPORTS both follow in the footsteps of the original, the former more closely. Both keep the format of the first game: up to three players race to buzz in and answer multiple-choice questions posed by a snide off-screen host. Both also keep the little bits of gameplay (such as the "Screw Your Neighbor" option, which allows you to force another player to answer a question you find particularly hard) and style (such as the twisted parodies of TV commercials that play after a game ends) that have made JACK such a hit at parties.

The differences come in two flavors, improvement and expansion; in the case of JACK SPORTS, there's specialization as well. Under the heading of improvement there isn't a whole lot to cite, not surprisingly. The only bad thing about the first game was the repetitiveness of the (relatively) long musical passages that introduced each question in a game. In both of the new games these have been shortened and some variety has been added.

As for expansion, this is not merely a matter of there being hundreds of new questions to answer, though that is certainly the case. It's also a matter of new question types being introduced, to keep things fresh. VOLUME 2 contains some questions with visual aids, for instance: you see a photograph of Rodin's "Thinker" with its arms missing and have

CHECK!

▸ If you can't get enough YOU DON'T KNOW JACK (who can?), you might want to check out YOU DON'T KNOW JACK NETSHOW, available at **www.berksys.com**. At press time, the Berkeley folks had a $5000 contest going.

CHARLES ARDAI

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

to guess that the name of the modified statue should be "The Thinker de Milo." It also contains haiku whose subject you have to determine (what TV character would have written, "Coroner's office/I do the work but Quincy/Takes all the credit"?) and "Dis or Dat" questions in which you have to indicate into which of two categories a given word or phrase falls. (Puck: Santa's reindeer or MTV personality? Mixture stop: musical instrument or sex organ?)

Of course, the designers have retained the original "special" types of questions, such as the gibberish questions, which require you to figure out, for example, what famous army recruiting slogan rhymes with "Bits got rust. The slob spits a bad denture." Once in a very long while, you get to hit the road for a "Fiber Optic Field Trip," in which an ordinary person poses a question for you to answer. And each game still ends with the "Jack Attack" matching sequence, in which you have to buzz in when matches appear on the screen: "Billie Jean King" and "Bobby Riggs," for instance, in the category "Bitter Rivals."

In JACK SPORTS you have the additional fun of seeing JACK through a sports-colored lens. The fonts are changed into the chunky letters you see on football jerseys; the generic ball that splats on the screen between rounds is replaced by a baseball, basketball, tennis ball, or football; the sound effects include cheers and other appropriate matter ("Get Your Ice Cold 19 Here!" the game shouts before question 19); and the number that represents you on-screen high-fives itself when you get a question right.

Needless to say, the questions are all about sports, but they're still wildly creative ("If Mahatma Gandhi had represented India at the Olympics in freestyle wrestling...") and sex-obsessed, so there is plenty here for non-sports fans to enjoy. In fact, except for the *Jack Attack* questions, which I tended to play by buzzing in at random until they ended, you don't need much sports trivia knowledge at all in order to play JACK SPORTS.

NO TRIVIAL ISSUE

Actually, the JACK games really aren't about trivia in the conventional sense. Unlike some other recent trivia games that have tried to cash in on JACK's popularity, you don't have to know how many pounds the world's heaviest man weighed at his death in 1953 or how many episodes were in the full run of "The Avengers." What you need are bits of marginal but comparably common knowledge, and you need to be able to recognize what bits are being requested at any given time. JACK would never ask, "What color was the giant knight slain by Sir Gawain?" Instead, it's "If Sir Gawain went shopping, which of the following would frighten him: the Smuggles bear, the Pillsbury Doughboy, Cap'n Crunch, or the Jolly Green Giant?" Clever questions like this one, combined with very funny retorts whether you guess wrong or right, make JACK a joy. One sign of just how good the writing is is that I've been known to play a three-player game by myself, just so I can hear the responses to all the wrong choices.

There is just one problem with the new JACK games, aside from the obvious, which is that the idea isn't new any longer. This is the problem of good taste or, to put it another way, the problem of bad taste. The first game contained plenty of innuendo, but it stayed on the right side of the invisible, fine line dividing silly and sexy from sophomoric and embarrassing. Suggestive categories like "Kiss With More Tongue" and "Little Pricks" are fine, and so are most of the host's elbow-in-the-ribs asides. But the designers, among whose good qualities I would list fearless audacity, don't know when to stop. There's a lot of flatulence in this game, and a fair amount of vomiting. And the commercial parodies this time around make you cringe, with ads for "Eat-and-Serve Colostomy Bags," "No-Slip Ben-Wa Balls" and "The Wedge Butt Cheek Separator" appearing in place of the original game's much funnier "Health Food Store Boy Doll" song and "Chockolicious Num-Num Bits." Less Jim Carrey next time, guys. Otherwise, you're on a roll. CG

Price: $29.99 each
System Requirements:
PC–486-33 or better processor, (486-66 or better recommended), 8 MB RAM, 16 MB hard drive space, Windows 3.1 or better, 256-color graphics (640 x 480), 2x CD-ROM; supports Sound Blaster 16 and compatible sound cards.
Macintosh–68040 Mac or any Power PC, 5 MB RAM, 16 MB hard drive space, 256-color monitor (640 x 480), 2x CD-ROM.
 # Of Players: 1-3 (hotseat)
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Jellyvision
Publisher: Berkeley Systems
Berkeley, CA
(510) 540-5535
Reader Service # 325

CG TIPS!

▶ Gibberish questions require you to come up with a silly rhyme under time pressure. There's no better time to use the "screw your opponent" tactic—especially if he/she is laughing over the question.

You can easily frustrate the walking sports almanac in your family with JACK SPORTS, because unlike say, Trivial Pursuit, sports knowledge is secondary to quick thinking.

▶APPEAL: Though the jokes sometimes seem aimed at the *National Lampoon* crowd, the questions will appeal to any fan of "Jeopardy" or other TV trivia game shows.

▶PROS: Questions and gags every bit as creative and hilarious as in the original, with plenty of new surprises to keep things fresh.

▶CONS: Sometimes a bit too fresh; the designers should ditch the worst of their toilet humor.

CG RATED ★★★★

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Circle Reader Service #371

★★★★★ REVIEW • SMART GAMES: WORD PUZZLES

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Get Smart

Word Puzzles Serve Up More Cerebral Fun

by Charlotte Panther

If you adore word puzzles but find yourself filled with ennui as you glance over the insipid selection provided each day in your local newspaper, perhaps it's time to discard your well-chewed pencil, toss those dreary black-and-white pages aside, and embrace a new form of cerebral exercise.

Imagine taking four of your favorite word puzzles—the crossword, the word melt, the word search, and the anagram—and throwing them into a mixing bowl. The result? SMART GAMES WORD PUZZLES #1: four new games, familiar in appearance, but each with certain surprises. As you play, you may notice elements associated with one particular puzzle arising in another, while some completely new factors appear out of nowhere.

Take the crossword, for example. Instead of filling in the answers to clues on a blank grid, SMART GAMES' *Crossed Words* provides you with a grid packed tightly with letters. Your job is to fill in the black squares and create as many *real* words as possible. The more words you create, the more points you score, and there's an extra bonus if you complete the puzzle. (Every line, vertically and horizontally, must make an actual word—no gobbledygook allowed.)

HOLD THE VOWELS, PLEASE

Then there's *Word Melt*, in which you're given one word that you must change, letter by letter, into another. Forming specific words, or using all the letters of the alphabet in the process can score you bonus points. In *Scanagrams*, you gain bonus points by unscrambling words, then guessing the punch line that links them all.

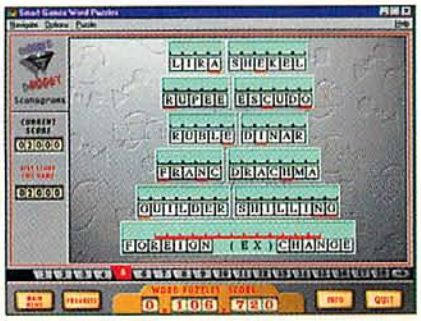
If you think you're going to miss solving the clues in *Crossed Words*, don't worry. In my favorite puzzle, *Word Hunter*, you must figure out the answers to clues in order to reveal the words you're searching for. The category could be well-known pairs: if your clue was Troilus, you'd search for Cressida. Likewise, if the subject was poetry and your clue *The Wasteland*, you'd look for Eliot. (Get ready to dust off your *Golden Treasury of Poems*.)

Puzzles vary between 60 and 99 levels of difficulty, and if you find the first few puzzles too easy, you can jump straight to the higher levels. If you're completely stumped, solutions are posted on the Smart Games Web site. (Unfortunately, players without Internet access will just have to tough it out themselves.) The object of the game is to earn as many points as possible. Although only one person can play at a time, you can save multiple games and compare scores with friends (or post your high scores on the Web site).

HEROES, BARDS, AND GRANFALLOONS *Word Hunter* tests your knowledge of poetry, pop culture, and pithy sayings.

WORD PUZZLES certainly doesn't forsake substance for shadow: these are intelligent brain-teasers, set in a user-friendly interface, which focuses more on practicality than on prettiness. That's not to say it doesn't look good, just that unlike some other multimedia products it doesn't *rely* upon a graphical extravaganza.

This game has something for everyone. Whether you're a whiz at the *New York Times* crossword or you have problems completing the puzzles in *TV Guide*, there's a WORD PUZZLE level just for you. And it sure beats getting newspaper print all over your hands. CG



A SHECKEL SAVED If you're into word jumbles, *Scanagrams* will have you racking your brain for memories of vacations past.

Price: $29.95
System Requirements: 386-SX or higher processor, 4 MB of RAM, 5 MB of hard drive space, 640x480 256 color SVGA graphics, Windows 3.1 or Win 95, 2x CD-ROM, Windows-compatible sound card, mouse.
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer/Publisher: Smart Games, Inc.
Distributor: RandomSoft
New York, NY
(800) 788-8815
Reader Service #: 326

▸APPEAL: For anyone who relishes turning to the puzzle page of the newspaper each day, and wants something even better.

▸PROS: New variations spice up these much-loved word puzzles. The interface is very user-friendly, with multiple levels of difficulty. Another winner from Smart Games.

▸CONS: Solutions are only available on the Web. There are only four basic puzzle types, although each may vary slightly as skill level progresses.

CG RATED ★★★★

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #65

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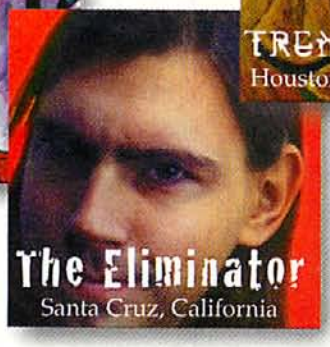
Think you've mastered all these games?

So do they.

"I'm the Quake master. You're fresh meat."



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And get ready for the kind of opponents you won't find in a shrink-wrapped box.

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Circle Reader Service #362

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PC-CD ROM

WINDOWS® 95

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The Art of Fly Fishing is not just a fun fishing simulation; it also contains an extensive library of information to help you learn more about the fish, their habitat and their behavior. Choose your fishing spot based on conditions including time of day, season, temperature and water currents. Once you've chosen the right conditions, a variety of flies and rods will help you land the fish of your dreams, provided your casting skill is up to par. After you've practiced, invite up to 5 friends to enter into a fishing competition where the winner receives a cash prize and the opportunity to upgrade his equipment. *The Art of Fly Fishing*; the only fly fishing simulation for your PC.

KIDS TO ADULT
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PHILIPS

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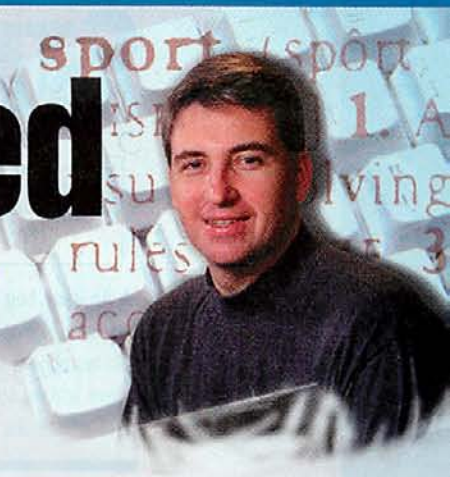
GTE's NCAA Championship Basketball Is Real March Madness



While pro basketball fans have gleefully run the floor with EA's excellent NBA Live series the past couple years, college hoops fans who have longed to create their own March Madness have suffered through a gaming slump. That's why I was excited to get my sweaty palms on GTE's NCAA Championship Basketball, a groundbreaking sports sim that combines the up-close graphic elements of NBA Live with the career concept pioneered by Sierra's Front Page Sports games. Although the hybrid product has its problems, it does succeed in dishing up a game that has appeal for action-oriented gamers and computer coaches alike.

NCAA offers gamers their choice of 64 Division I schools to compete with. It's no coincidence that you're provided exactly enough teams to complete the NCAA Tournament, since your ultimate goal is to reach the Final Four and win the National Championship. While the concept is exciting, GTE threw up a brick by restricting play to just the 64 included schools. Sadly, no oddball underdogs are around to sneak in—the Ball States and Drexels that annually lend so much excitement and collegiate flavor to the tourney. Worse, you're assured of reaching March Madness, even if you finish the regular season 0-28.

WHATSAMATTAH U

Graphically, NCAA tries, but it's no NBA Live. While its large players are noticeably pixelated, their movements are nonetheless fluid. The clever behind-the-back pass, the subtle wrist motion as a jump shot is released, and the follow-through on the slam dunk will please even hard-core hoops fans.

PAINT JOB If you can handle the pixelated graphics, NCAA Championship Basketball offers fast, challenging arcade-style action.

Gamers will also soon notice that NCAA is rather wooden—in a nice way. Its planked courts are trimmed in school colors and polished to a high shine that reflects player movement. A harried coach paces the bench nervously, and spectators hold up posters, signs, and those silly "number one" sponges. The game earns a foul, however, for an unfortunate bit of coding that has players with single-digit numbers displaying zeroes on their backs as well. Number 7 thus becomes 07.

Perhaps the least pleasing graphic aspect of NCAA is its claustrophobic viewing angle. Players follow the action from a point slightly above court level. The camera position changes with the flow of the ball but is controlled by the CPU—with no customizing. This is troublesome in arcade play, where at times you can lose all perspective beyond the narrow confines of the ball handler. Overall court awareness is an obvious casualty.

NCAA offers arcade play, a coaching mode, and a fast sim option. If your joystick is up to the challenge, NCAA's arcade play is one of the toughest yet in a basketball sim. The opposing team's AI knows just what it wants to do, and then goes ahead and does it—if you let it. Coaching can be problematic, unless you're quick on your Air Jordans. The difficulty is mainly caused by timeouts, which blitz by so quickly that it's hard to make substitutions and change strategies before the game returns you to the court. An extended timeout option would be a welcome addition. In a nice touch, players let you know they're fatigued by wiping their brow or standing hunched over at the foul line. Now if only the timeouts lasted long enough to get the subs in the game.

> **"NCAA blends the best elements of arcade and coaching action into an enjoyable simulation."**

ON DECK

▸ Mac sports fans: there's one more reason to live. Sierra has finally released NASCAR Racing for the Mac. More than just a port, the game has been updated to include 31 drivers from the '96 season, includes network play over AppleTalk, includes single versions of night races, and incorporates speech recognition so you can talk to the pit crew. Now that it's here, of course, PC owners are moving on to NASCAR 2...

DENNIS McCAULEY

CG TIPS!

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL
Up Close & Personal

▶ An early bug in NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL that caused computer-controlled players to freeze with the ball has been addressed by a patch available at GTE's Web site (http://www.im.gte.com).

▶ OT Sports' ABC's MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL is at its best as a multiplayer game. If you have an Internet connection, you can access the company's Web site (www.otsports.com) for a couple of cool multiplayer options. The Match Up screen lets you find, challenge and set up kickoff times with other MNF owners for direct Internet play.

▶ The I.Challenge is a special online tournament that will continue through the regular NFL season. You play in real time as coach of one of the teams of the upcoming televised MNF games against someone representing the other team. Winners will receive all sorts of MNF-related goodies.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

What helps elevate NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL above the ordinary is its career mode. Employing scarce recruiting resources to attract the best talent to your program lends an indisputably exciting aura to play. At the start of each new season, you're taken to a recruiting screen where you'll have an opportunity to compare scouting reports on hundreds of (fictional) high school seniors. Since NCAA rates players for offensive, defensive, and physical skills, it's fairly easy to find the types of players you need. Landing them is another question.

The prep stars are interested in your school's coach, reputation, and Final Four potential. Getting substantial playing time, playing close to home, and playing for a school that shows an interest in them are also important issues for recruits. NCAA serves as your bird dog, letting you know what's on a kid's mind and what schools he's leaning toward.

Armed with this information, you must choose how heavily to pursue each player. Your recruiting is measured as heavy, average or light efforts, with five of each type available. Be careful, though. There's nothing more frustrating than sinking four heavy tries into a sought-after point guard only to have him sign with a rival school. Not only have you missed out on the player you wanted, but while you were wooing him, dozens of other top prospects were inked to letters of intent by your competition.

While the recruiting aspect is fun, it could be more challenging. Gamers who take time to analyze the scouting reports will have little trouble uncovering the winning strategy. By not wasting time on unlikely recruits, you will quickly learn how to focus on the type of player you can successfully attract. After a few strong recruiting seasons, your record improves, and you'll move deeper into the NCAA Tournament. Now you're able to attract those hotshots who base their college decision on Final Four potential. Soon you're one of the four. I successfully employed this strategy twice, taking both Villanova and Wake Forest from poor rankings to national titles in six years.

SCHOOL SPIRIT You can choose from among 64 Division I teams to lead on your long march to Final Four glory.

As in most career mode games, player ratings change over time, and player attrition takes its toll on your roster. While ratings can both increase and decrease, it's not entirely clear what drives the changes, although playing time does seem to be a factor. Each year players leave through graduation, but none ever seem to bail out early for the instant riches of the pro game. Adding this element would have increased both the realism and the challenge of NCAA. Fretting whether your dominant 7'2" sophomore center might declare for the NBA draft would add a healthy dose of tension to the strategizing.

AT THE BUZZER

Give NCAA a few extra points for including a good manual—increasingly rare these days. Keep the manual handy, too, since the game's nonintuitive interface can be difficult to navigate.

Overall, though, NCAA is a well-conceived effort, blending the best elements of arcade and coaching action into an enjoyable simulation. In some ways, the differences between NCAA and its NBA gaming competition reflects the difference between the college and pro games themselves. Both are fun and exciting, but the NBA products come at you with a whole lot more multimedia hoopla. Nonetheless, if you love college ball, NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL is a solid pick.

Price: $59.99
System Requirements: 486DX2/66 or better; MS-DOS 5.0 or better, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, SVGA graphics; supports Sound Blaster-compatible sound cards.
# of Players: 1-2
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Jerry Albright
Publisher: GTE Entertainment
Carlsbad, CA
(619) 431-8801
Reader Service #: 327

APPEAL: Fans of college hoop and gamers who enjoy career mode sports sims, as well as those who crave very challenging arcade action.

PROS: Unique recruiting aspect, nicely modeled player movement, ability to work through a multiple-season career.

CONS: Recruiting game is too easy, player graphics are not up to current standards, viewing angle is out of player's control and at times hinders arcade play.

CG RATED

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #133

★★★★☆ **REVIEW • TROPHY BASS 2**

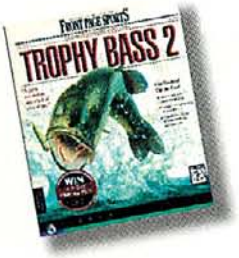
DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Gill Joy

Sierra Serves Up More Of That Funky Fresh Fish With TROPHY BASS 2

by Scott May

Never underestimate the power of a niche market. In 1995, TROPHY BASS surprised everyone—particularly the marketing folks at Sierra—by remaining the company's top-selling title for more than 12 months. Given the original's success, it's not surprising to see Sierra dip their nets one more time with TROPHY BASS 2, part of the company's growing FRONT PAGE SPORTS line. Stylistically, this new version looks and plays pretty much the same. Several new key components, however, have been added to increase the challenge and prolong play value. If you liked the original, you are going to love what they have done here.



Price: $59.95
System Requirements: 486DX/66 or better, 8 MB RAM, 17 MB hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM drive, SVGA graphics, Windows 3.1 or better, mouse; supports Win 95-compatible sound cards; Windows 95, modem, network card or Internet connection required for multiplayer options.
# of Players: 1-100
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designers: Randy Dersham and Kurt Weber
Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Bellevue, WA
(800) 757-7707
Reader Service #: 328

FISHING AROUND

To begin, five new lakes have been added to the roster, for a total of 10, including the exotically named Castaic Lake, CA, and Lake Kissimmee, FL. Each lake is rendered in full photo-realistic glory, including every inch of shoreline, and a topographic navigational map. It's like hitching up your desktop for a coast-to-coast dream fishing trip.

Although fishing alone can be fun and relaxing, nothing beats the challenge of matching techniques with other live fishermen in an online multiplayer tournament. You can take on a friend in a two-player modem game, or assemble an office expedition with a LAN connection. The biggest kick, however, is fishing the Internet, where dozens of people from around the world can join in competitive or cooperative play. Four online skill levels—novice, intermediate, advanced and guru—assure that everyone will get a bite. Chat lines let you inquire about current "hot spots" on the lake, brag about your luck, or lament the ones that got away.

The excellent online user manual features video tips from Kevin Van Dam and other award-winning bass pros. Other options include hundreds of user-defined lure types and configurations, rod sizes, line weights, and casting styles. If the three base skill levels aren't challenging enough, you can manually tweak nine different fishing variables. Sierra even claims to have improved the fish AI, although you'd have to be a bona fide fishhead to notice.

LUCKY STRIKES Land a fish and reel 'em in, but don't expect your prey to give up without a fight.

CATCH OF THE DAY Tall fish tales are part of the sport, but your livewell never lies.

REEL LIFE

Despite all this realism, the game takes certain liberties in regard to the actual simulation of casting, catching and reeling in your aquatic prize. The angler's vantage point is too omnipresent—visible on-screen at all times, even when you cast 15 to 20 feet away. As you reel the lure in, the surface water scrolls upward, while your boat remains fixed at the bottom of the screen. This makes it very difficult to gauge distance and gives the impression of fishing in a barrel. A better solution would be a 360-degree virtual camera, locked on your position, employing a 3D first-person perspective. As is, you're granted an overhead view of the surrounding water well beyond the normal visual range. While this makes fishing a breeze for first-timers, veteran anglers will find the challenge greatly dissipated.

Overall, though, TROPHY BASS 2 further refines what's come to be the best fishing simulation available. The game's streamlined play mechanics are easy bait, even for novice anglers, while the wide selection of lakes and multiplayer options will have you hooked. OK, enough puns. Go fish.

APPEAL: Armchair anglers of all skill levels.

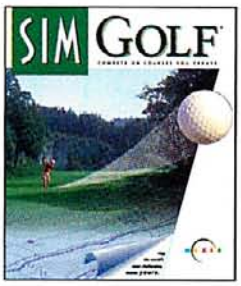
PROS: 10 accurately rendered lakes, improved fish AI, online multiplayer tournaments and a boatload of variables guarantee almost limitless gameplay.

CONS: The single-minded, passive nature of this sport may prove tedious, and some visual aspects of casting are oversimplified.

CG RATED

TIRED OF THE SAME OLD LINKS?

CHANGE COURSE.



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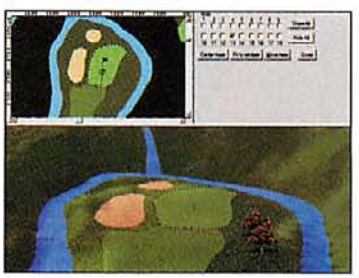

Use the powerful Course Architect to customize courses. Make them flat or hilly, place holes and hazards, and it's tee time.

Once you've designed your ideal course, tee off for high-stakes skins, stroke or match play.

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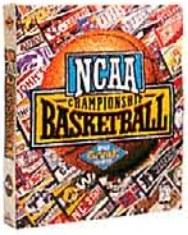

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Back To 'Nam

Vietnam Scenarios And Multiplayer Action Make This Sim Worth One More Visit

The Vietnam War has been neglected by sim producers since the release of Spectrum HoloByte's old FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER. This is probably another result of those same marketing "experts" who have quashed Korean War sims in the past, on the theory that the only proven markets are the world wars and ultramodern jets.

Luckily, Jane's Combat Simulations decided to listen not to the marketing department but to the users who actually play their simulations. After overwhelming requests for a Vietnam sim, Jane's delivered quickly with their Windows 95 update of the venerable US NAVY FIGHTERS (USNF).

SAME FACE, NEW PERSONALITY

USNF 97 is a single-CD game that includes all the aircraft and missions from the original US NAVY FIGHTERS and the MARINE FIGHTERS add-on. New to this version are 10 single missions and 25 campaign missions set during the Vietnam conflict, in addition to multiplayer support and new Jane's multimedia reference data.

New flyable aircraft include the F-4B and F-4J Phantom IIs, the F-8 Crusader, the MiG-17 Fresco, and the MiG-21F Fishbed C. Also present (and flyable in multiplayer mode) are the A-4E Skyhawk and new models of the A-7 Corsair II and A-6 Intruder. Unfortunately, Vietnam staples such as the A-1 Spad, A-5 Vigilante, and F-105 Thud are nowhere to be found in these skies.

GUNFIGHTER CORRAL The new planes in USNF 97, such as this F-8 Crusader, are highly detailed; the original planes, however, are still plain.

You'll fly all the included missions in either the Phantom or Crusader; you can pilot the MiGs in Quick Missions or use-created Pro Missions. Even if you're a whiz at the original USNF, you'll find you have to relearn combat maneuvering when flying these vintage supersonic jets. They're very fast but not maneuverable. Get into a turning fight with a nimble MiG-17 and you're toast. You'll need to take advantage of vertical maneuvers and your jet's ability to speed away from your opponent, allowing you to regroup into a better position.

You'll also have to develop new techniques to deal with the far less effective missiles of the Vietnam era. Heat-seeking Sidewinders are effective only within a very small cone right behind the enemy's tailpipe, and hitting with a

> **"Even hard-core sim pilots will enjoy Crusader vs. MiG-17 matches in USNF 97's multiplayer mode."**

ON THE RADAR

If you're frustrated by JetFighter III's slow frame rates in higher graphics resolutions, a solution may be just around the corner—if you don't mind a little hardware investment. Mission Studios is hard at work adding support for Intel's MMX processor, as well as the 3dFX Voodoo and other high-end 3D chipsets. Also planned is multiplayer support, a mission editor, and a campaign add-on that may be based in more familiar territory.

▶ Meanwhile, Longbow developer Andy Hollis has made no secret of the fact that his East Coast team is working on a "fixed-wing jet simulation." Our information that this is to be yet another F-15E Strike Eagle simulation seems to be confirmed by recent posts by Hollis on the Internet, where he jokingly responded to someone's attempt at using reverse psychology to get him to produce an F-15 sim with "You're right...I give up. I'll never do another F-15 sim again.

"Bartender, another round!... and I used to be good <sigh>..."

We're working on infiltrating the Skunkworks now and will follow up in coming months with more information on this late-'97 release—as soon as we get our operatives away from Andy's bartender.

Sparrow from any angle is only a little more likely than winning the lottery. Radars are also realistically less effective.

Unfortunately, these classic planes utilize the same pop-up Multi-Function Display (MFD) and HUD metaphor as the modern jets—instrumentation far too high tech for this era. Another annoyance—some of the ATF improvements, such as the ability to display more than four instrument windows, weren't carried back to USNF 97.

GOIN' DOWNTOWN

USNF 97's missions are based on actual Vietnam strikes. Some liberties are taken, such as sending Navy F-4s on missions actually flown by air force zoomies, but overall the historical flavor is there. The flavor of Vietnam is there, but much is missing. There's no air-to-air refueling—crucial in the real conflict—and MiG-17s tenaciously fight to the death instead of employing the one-pass slash-and-run techniques actually employed by the NVAF. It doesn't hurt gameplay, but it's sure to irk aviation buffs.

The engine has seen some minor improvements, although they're evident only in the Vietnam scenarios. The planes and ground terrain look much better, and you now have to deal with flak bursts and more realistic SAMs. Flight modeling's a bit better, but it's still pretty basic. Although it's a Win 95 game, it still looks and feels just like the DOS version. It's a little slower on some systems, a little faster on others, with video card performance being the deciding factor.

Multiplayer mode is essentially identical to that found in Jane's ATF, allowing LAN, modem, and null-modem connections. While Internet play isn't possible yet, nor is connection to ATF, both are planned enhancements. Although some of the extra planes here aren't modeled as well as in ATF, the Phantom/Crusader vs. MiG-17/21 combat is much more exciting. The radical performance differences between the various planes and the ineffective missiles make for thrilling dogfights. Many hard-core realism sticklers who don't like USNF's simplified environment are still drawn into the multiplayer mode.

The Jane's reference section is packed with aircraft data and some nicely done videos of the flyable aircraft, and there's a superb spiral-bound manual included as well.

Realism sticklers may want to wait for Eagle Interactive's PHANTOM ACE, due in late 1997, for the full Vietnam experience. But if you don't mind a little game in your simulation, USNF 97 is a fun change of pace.

SCRATCH ONE TINKERTOY As this MiG-17 closes on its tail, the A-4 pops its speedbrakes in an attempt to make the attacker overshoot; someone's been watching too much *Top Gun*.

CG TIPS!

US NAVY FIGHTERS 97: In multiplayer mode, you can fly any of the sim's planes, including those available only to computer-controlled pilots in single-player missions. But what if you want to practice flying the A-4 Skyhawk? Simply hold down the right Ctrl, Alt, and Shift keys and click "Create Quick Mission." Now continue to hold down those keys as you select your aircraft. The sim will toggle through all available planes, including those not normally flyable in single-player mode. Now you can fly any aircraft—including the Atomic Moth introduced in Marine Fighters—as you practice against the computer.

If you hold down the right Ctrl-Alt-Shift sequence when choosing Single Mission, you can fly any of the campaign missions. Not only that, but you can fly any of the single-player-mode aircraft when you enter a campaign mission using this method. Those Vietnam missions are a lot easier in the F-22!

JETFIGHTER III: The best solution for getting a decent frame rate on anything less than a 200 MHz Pentium Pro is to drop down to 640x350 mode, which maintains a high level of detail but also allows for speedier updates. Alas, many graphics cards don't support the 640x350 mode, so you're stuck in either running the pokey 640x400 mode or hopping in the Wayback Machine and flying in 320x200 mode. Fortunately, the shareware SciTech Display Doctor 5.3 (formerly known as UniVBE) plugs VESA support holes in almost any graphics card. With SDD 5.3, most graphics cards will support all of JFIII's resolutions, including 640x350. For more information, see http://www.scitech.com.

SCOOTER VS. MOTHRA Using the USNF 97 cheat, you can fly the A-4 against the Atomic Moth.

APPEAL: Fans of the original USNF looking for new missions or multiplayer play; pilots so anxious for a Vietnam sim that they're willing to tolerate USNF's compromises.

PROS: Sixties-era jets provide a much more interesting challenge than superplanes like the F-22. Extremely addictive multiplayer play, especially in the Vietnam arena. Multimedia content is well done, not just filler.

CONS: Creaky 1994 graphics engine and flight models have seen only tiny improvements. Modern MFDs and HUD displays out of place on Vietnam-era planes.

CG RATED

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DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Restringing Longbow

CG CHOICE

No Back-Seat Driving In This Updated AH-64D Apache Sim

by Robin Kim

In the rugged borderlands between North and South Korea, death comes swiftly to the careless or impatient Apache crew. Nap-of-the-earth flight through the twisting maze of claustrophobic canyons is a risky proposition, but one you can't refuse, because every hill you crest could be an ambush waiting to happen. For those who have mastered Jane's AH-64D Longbow and are looking for new challenges, Flashpoint: Korea (FPK) may be the ticket to chopper heaven.

COPILOT/GUNNER'S SEAT The new crew position in front allows the best use of the TADS and radar, but the eye-level canopy brace makes back-seat driving best for low-level work.

Price: $29.95
System Requirements: 486DX4/100, 8 MB RAM, local bus SVGA video, 2x CD-ROM drive, 19 MB hard drive space, MS-DOS 5.0 or higher, mouse. (Original AH-64D Longbow must also be installed.)
# of Players: 1
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designers: Andy Hollis and Origin Skunk Works
Publisher: Jane's Combat Simulations Austin, TX (800) 245-4525
Reader Service #: 330

WHITE LIGHT, WHITE HEAT The FLIR sensor makes targets stand out in stark contrast to the terrain, and it can also be toggled so targets appear dark against a light background.

The heart of FPK is a hypothetical campaign that begins as the North Korean army surges south across the border, precipitating a second Korean war. Scores of stand-alone missions are included in addition to the ones comprising this branching tree-structured campaign. Unlike many add-ons, FPK goes beyond providing just a new locale and extra vehicle types to blow up. New features and enhancements are found in almost every aspect of the sim, resulting in greatly improved atmosphere and gameplay. Nearly all these enhancements apply to the missions from the original game as well.

SPLIT PERSONALITY

The most obvious new feature is the ability to jump to and from the copilot/gunner (CP/G) cockpit position, with its optical relay tube and two extra multifunction displays. The avionics associated with this position are significantly expanded from the simplified treatment they were given in Longbow, making them considerably more useful. The TADS (Target Acquisition Designation Sight) now displays realistic pictures in all three modes at the correct magnification levels, aiding target detection and identification. New radar controls allow you to tailor the width and direction of the scan zone or zoom in on a particular area. Full-screen TADS and radar displays are available from the CP/G's seat for extra detail.

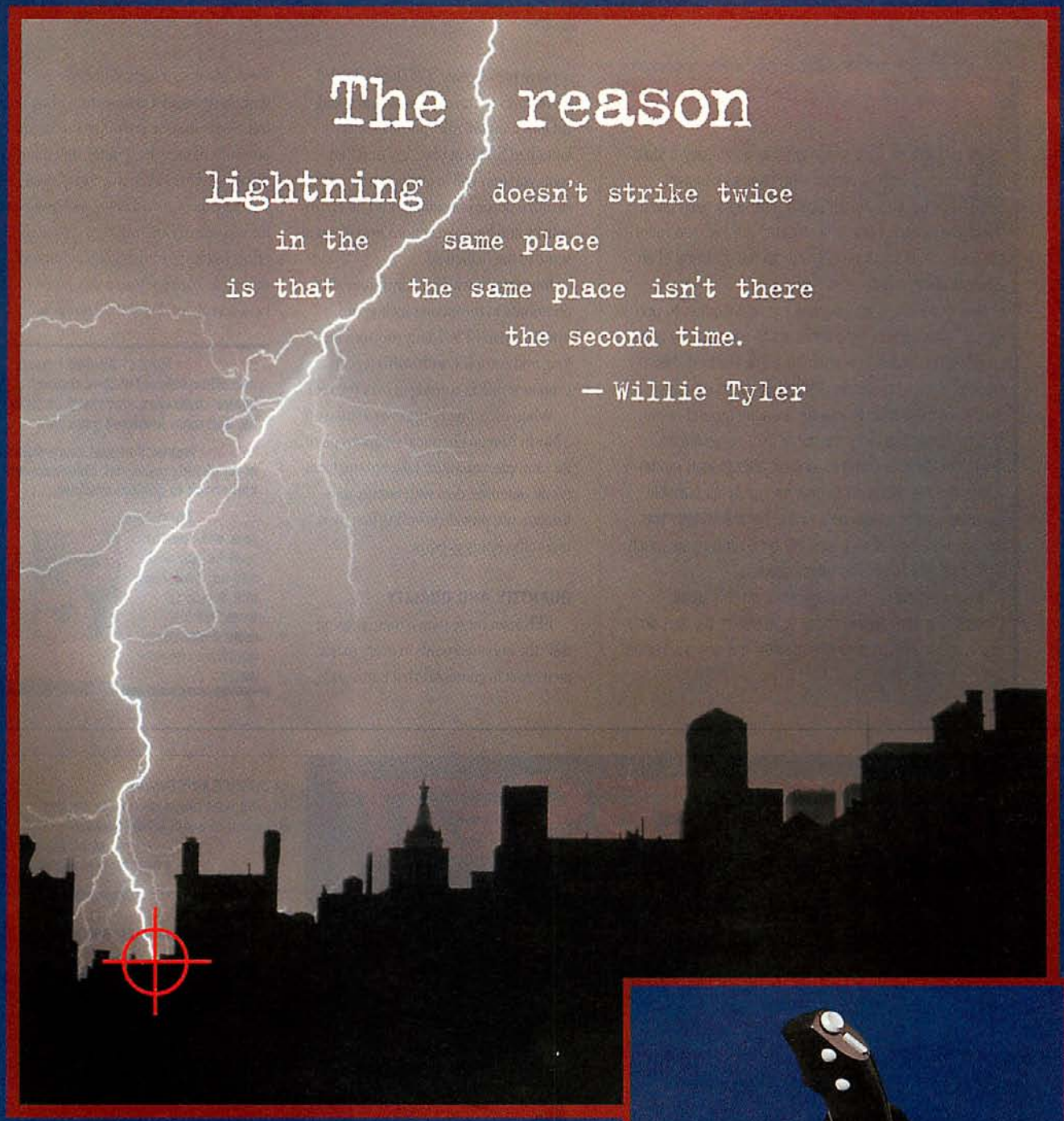
Other changes better reflect AH-64D's real-world capabilities. The RF Hellfire is given its due as a true fire-and-forget missile, radar detection ranges have been drastically reduced, and target icons now accurately convey needed information. Curiously, one glaring omission remains: the ground scanning mode is still limited to a 90-degree arc directly ahead despite information from both Jane's and Martin Marietta (a Longbow radar manufacturer) that show the real unit can rotate farther to either side, permitting a 270-degree arc to be covered in 90-degree segments.

All this added workload is not everyone's cup of tea, so FPK lets you select just the options you want. Even if you ignore all the new gadgets you have to play with, the game's enhanced wingman effectiveness (see sidebar), enemy AI, and mission complexity may still draw you in.

THIS IS WAR

Unlike Longbow, enemy units here don't just sit there as you pound away at them with your chain gun, but move to

BIG GUN This A-10 will make many passes over a priority fire zone, using its legendary 30mm cannon and potent Maverick missiles.



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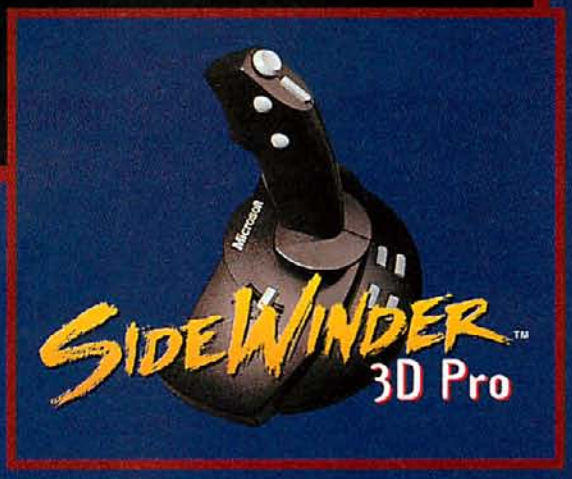

Microsoft

Where do you want to go today? www.microsoft.com/sidewinder/

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Wingman Evolution

In LONGBOW, your wingman was essentially a slow-moving Hellfire carrier who needed constant handholding. Forget about him: he's been given the boot in favor of a smarter, quicker, and more communicative replacement with all the makings of an efficient killing machine.

New commands let you direct your wingman to pop up and pass targets he detects on to you, or stay planted while you move to a different battle position. His reaction time to orders is gratifyingly short—there's almost no hesitation before he engages ground or air targets. Given a priority fire zone, he'll ripple-fire a swarm of Hellfires (even in lock-on after launch mode) to destroy the assigned targets as rapidly as possible. No matter what orders he's given, he always tells you exactly what he's doing, and will even report how much ammo he has remaining when queried.

Your wingman in FPK is an indispensible asset. Protect him, and he will repay your efforts the first time you blunder into an enemy ambush—few are quicker on the draw than he is.

achieve preset goals. T-80 tanks defend themselves or run away when attacked. Infantrymen fire rifles and shoulder-launched SAMs at you. Any unit that spots you may call in air support, making stealth a prime consideration. The enemy activity and logical reactions impart a real sense of the battlefield.

Interactions with friendly forces also contribute to the greater feeling of immersion in FPK. Many missions are long and complex, with status reports and even new orders coming in over the radio.

When escorting Rangers to a strike on a North Korean chemical weapons plant, for example, you must: take out the facility's air defenses; deal with enemy reinforcements; provide covering fire; then escort the Rangers home.

QUANTITY AND QUALITY

FPK is far more than a mere mission disk: the enhancements in every major area result in gameplay that transcends the original, so it feels almost like an entirely new game despite its add-on pricing. Some may be put off by the large amounts of time and energy that many of the more demanding missions require, but nobody ever said being an army aviator was easy. Those willing to invest the effort will be rewarded with an unprecedented level of realism in this, a new benchmark for flight simulations.

APPEAL: Fans of AH-64D LONGBOW and other helicopter sims seeking bolder challenges, increased complexity, and more involving gameplay.

PROS: Improves almost every aspect of an already great sim. Enhancements carry back to original missions.

CONS: Multiplayer fans will have to wait for the next add-on; landscape still devoid of trees; slightly more demanding hardware requirements.

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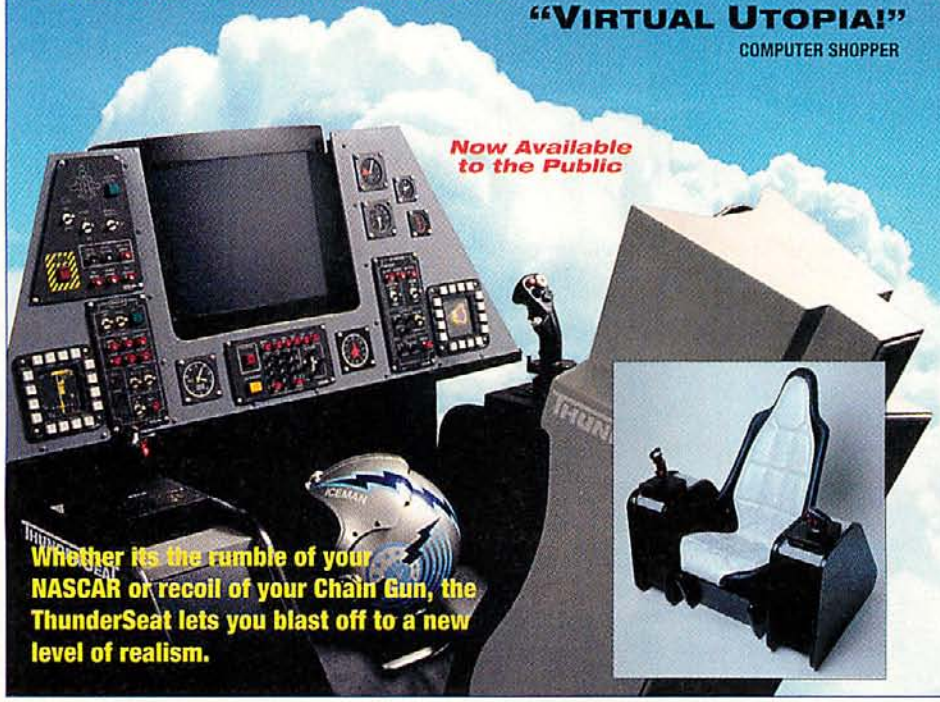

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★★★½☆ **REVIEW • FLIGHT SIMULATOR FOR WINDOWS 95**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Still Aloft

The Old Bird Flies To Win 95 With A Minor Overhaul

by John Nolan

Since MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 1.0 hit the shelves in November of 1982, over three million copies have been sold, making it not only one of the most successful simulations of all time, but also one of the longest lived. The sixth iteration, MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR FOR WINDOWS 95, sports a new Win 95 interface, two new aircraft, an excellent aviation reference section, more lessons, and scenery improvements. However, you'll also find some of the previous versions' flaws here as well.

POLISHED WINDOWS

First off, the old, agonizing joystick setup routines are gone; the Joystick setup applet in the Win 95 Control Panel does the job. On start-up, the Fly Now button defaults to the Cessna 182 at the easiest aircraft settings, and you begin in Chicago at Meigs Field with preset scenery options. While you can create and save flights with the specific options you desire, there's still a bit of extra pointing and clicking before flying. Moreover, each time you set up in a new aircraft or airport, you must reselect all your personal preferences. After so many versions, you'd think Microsoft would let you select and store personalized start-up defaults.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR'S world database contains over 300 airports, and you can create representative weather effects. Though these two assets make the sim a capable instrument procedures trainer, creating weather areas is unfortunately awkward. You must enter two points using latitude and longitude to define the area, and then specify its width in miles. It would be much simpler to display a map and allow you to zoom in and drag open the desired weather box with the mouse.

REINFORCEMENTS HAVE ARRIVED

Two new aircraft, the Boeing 737-400 airliner and the Extra 300S, are excellent additions and long overdue. The available choices now cover most types of unarmed aircraft, and the 737 provides a chance to step into the cockpit of a very popular commercial airliner. The extensive database of airports and navigation aids, coupled with an elementary 737 operating handbook, allows you to create credible imitations of airline trips. There are even a few instrument approach plates. It's overly simplified, but it's a decent introduction.

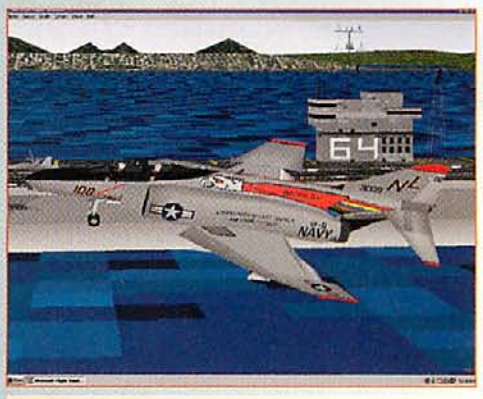
Similarly, the Extra 300S allows you to experience one of the most exhilarating aspects of flying: aerobatics. You can rat-race around the sky, yanking and banking for the sheer fun of it, or you can try the program's Aerobatics Course. Competition Aerobatics are precise, challenging maneuvers; you'll get instruc-

Price: $59.95
System Requirements: 486DX/66 or better (Pentium recommended), 8MB RAM (16MB recommended), 40MB hard drive space, SVGA graphics, Windows 95, 2x CD-ROM, Windows 95-compatible sound card, mouse.
Protection: None
Designer: Bruce Artwick
Publisher: Microsoft Seattle, WA (800) 344-2121
Reader Service #: 331

Easter Eggs In The Clouds

Customizing flights is easier thanks to the Win 95 point-and-click interface. You can select the time of day, as well as month, day and year. While this may seem just a minor adjustment to vary your flights, there are a few surprises hidden in the calendar:

WHERE'S WILBUR? Check out Kitty Hawk, NC, on December 17, 1903, at noon (go to N 036 01 10.5999 / W 075 40 46.4675; stay below 50 feet and set the scenery options at Dense). Many scenery areas have date-related Easter eggs such as this Wright Flyer.



CESSNA? BORING! Microsoft provides a free converter on its web site which allows you to import FLIGHT SIMULATOR FLIGHT SHOP planes such as Michael Gurezka's superb freeware F-4B Phantom II.

And hey, it's networkable.

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tion from Patty Wagstaff, one of the world's best. The superb in-flight videos showing Wagstaff in action, text instruction and instant replay feature combine to make this a great introduction to the sport. However, the flight model is showing its age and is nowhere near as accurate as that found in FLIGHT UNLIMITED.

The six flying lessons and the Flight School section are one of the best aspects of this sim. If you intend to take real flying lessons, read all the info in the School entries, and practice each lesson until you get it right. The School provides a basic understanding of the "how and why" of flying, and the lessons give a general idea of how to perform the maneuvers you'll be asked to demonstrate. You won't be an instant ace, but you'll save yourself time, money, and embarrassment when you go out to the flight line.

ROOM FOR A VIEW?

The game's visuals have seen a slight enhancement. Most big cities received a graphics tune-up, with additional photo-realistic effects and textures. Weather effects also received minor updates.

Unfortunately, a few features that needed an overhaul didn't get one. FLIGHT SIMULATOR still sports gigantic instrument panels. You can move the panel down to make the viewing window larger, but that may cut out the vital information that keeps you from mixing the aluminum with the dirt. Realism notwithstanding, there's no need for the radio stack in the Extra to take up so much valuable space. All the cockpit's panels should be reevaluated to emphasize the primary references, minimize the frills and shrink the panels overall.

BETTER SQUINT FLIGHT SIMULATOR's instrument panels block much of your view as you buzz the Olympic opening ceremonies in your 737-400.

The keymap is also in desperate need of an overhaul. Most view changes require the pilot to hit two keys. After looking left, it takes two more key presses to look out the front again. A good programmable controller setup like a CH Pro Throttle/Combat Stick combo solves this problem. Starting fuel flow on a jet engine requires you to press Ctrl-Shift-F4; it's not that complicated in a 737! The present keymap was probably retained because three million users are already familiar with it. However, it's not particularly intuitive, and perhaps it's time that it joined the WORDSTAR keymap in the computer museum.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR provides the best all-aspect civilian flying experience presently available. If you don't own an earlier version and you're interested in this type of aviation, the choice is a complete no-brainer—at least until Sierra's PRO PILOT arrives to provide some stiff competition later this year. If you already have a recent version of the program, the choice is more difficult. The improvements are incremental, and you'll have to decide if the new interface, aircraft and videos are worth the price of admission.

Realism's In The Eye Of The Pilot

While the scenery is touted as "as real as it gets," the flight model can't match that claim. A quick flight in the Cessna 182 will demonstrate that you just can't enter a fully developed spin. Pitch the nose up to 20 degrees, pull power to idle, and hold attitude by increasing aft stick. When the stall buzzer sounds, stomp a rudder to the floor. The nose will slowly drop and you'll enter a lazy spiral. Release the rudder and ease the stick, and you almost instantly recover. It's not that easy in a real 182.

Also, while the Extra 300S is described as having a roll rate exceeding 400 degrees per second, a single aileron roll takes over two seconds in this simulator. You can exceed 9.5 G's in the Extra without a trace of grayout, let alone blackout. (Perhaps FLIGHT SIM Extra pilots have G-suits.) None of the prop planes exhibit propeller torque effects when you push the power up, nor is this characteristic even mentioned in the Flight School documentation.

The game's 737 also suffers from a mild flight model. I've got a significant number of hours behind the yoke of the Boeing; it's a great airplane. Many pilots call it "the sports car," and indeed it has excellent control response in pitch and roll. In this sim, though, it's rather ordinary. The present level of realism is more than adequate for the flight lessons, instrument practice and challenges built into the game, but it can't match the state of the art set by some of the combat simulations.

VIRTUAL FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR Extremely detailed help files provide you with useful information for flying both virtual and real aircraft.

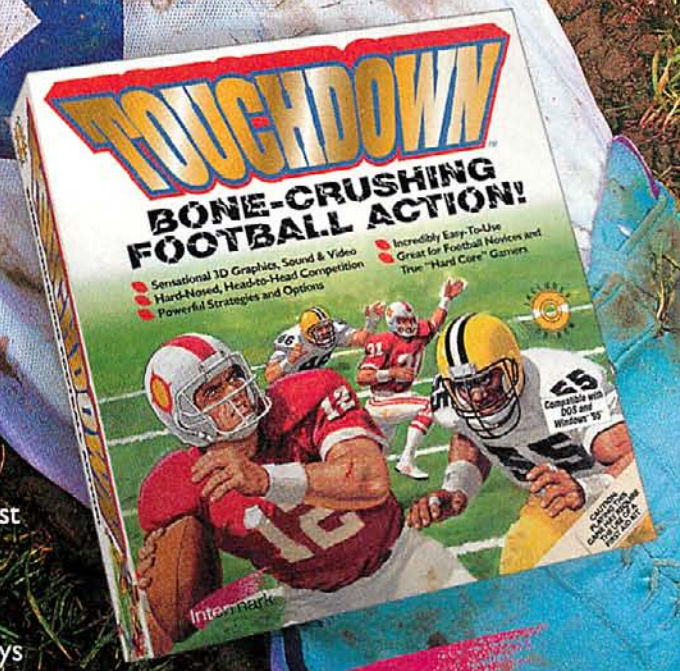
APPEAL: Aspiring private pilots, or anyone who wants to fly on a PC without dodging missiles.

PROS: Windows interface, two new aircraft add ease and variety, while weather capabilities make this a good instrument flying experience.

CONS: Some cumbersome aspects; keymaps and controls need an update; instrument panels obscure the view; flight model is unsophisticated.

CG RATED

Wake Up and Smell The Pigskin, You Douche Bag!



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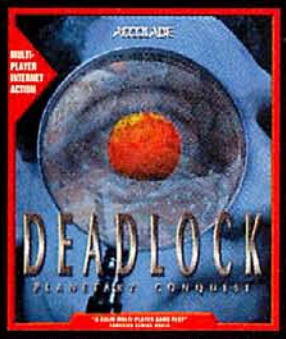

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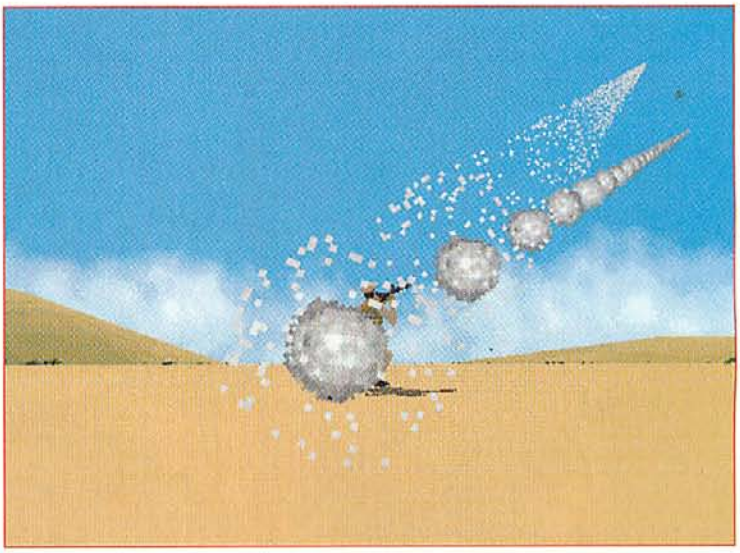
RATING PENDING RP

Russian Rotor Results

Ruling The Battlefield In Interactive Magic's HIND

by Robin Kim

Big, fast, and ugly, the Mil Mi-24 HIND is a testament to Soviet practicality in aircraft design. In the right hands, this odd fusion of helicopter gunship and troop transport can be a fearsome force on the virtual battlefield. Nevertheless, APACHE sim veterans accustomed to kicking butt with the AH-64's sports car-like responsiveness and whiz-bang technology may be in for a rude awakening. The Hind's bulk and lack of computerized flight controls give it all the handling prowess of a souped-up Winnebago on bald tires, and its avionics are decidedly low tech. The solution to overcoming these disadvantages is a paradoxical combination of brute-force in-your-face tactics and piloting finesse. Timid or uncoordinated pilots need not apply.



TIP! **ROCKET ATTACK** Because RPGs are unguided, you need only make constant changes in direction or altitude to avoid getting hit.

BE PREPARED

Though you're eager to rush into battle, striking terror in the hearts of the Rodina's adversaries, take the time to study every aspect of the mission plan before you lift off. Don't hesitate to alter the default flight plan to make use of cover and avoid known air defenses. It's safest to stick near hilly areas as they can provide refuge from danger; ground units are generally found only on flat terrain. If that's not possible, marking out a route over water is better than nothing because it allows you to distance yourself from many threats; just watch out for armed patrol boats. Above all, avoid traveling along roads, or you'll risk encounters with armored columns.

TIP! **LANDING ZONE** If you must land during a mission (as when unloading troops) it usually pays to wait and reload your weapons before you take to the air again.

Once you've memorized all pertinent mission parameters, it's time to take off. The Mi-24 is a handful to fly when using the realistic flight mode. Repeat the training missions until you've learned to compensate for collective changes with anti-torque pedal movements to avoid undesired yaw. Several of your weapons are unguided—you won't be able to hit much with them if you can't keep the nose steady.

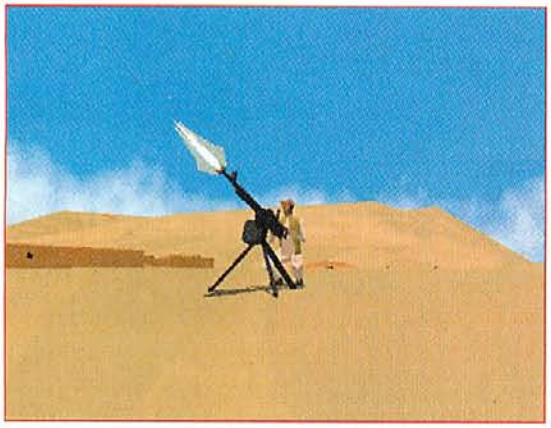
Good altitude control is also mandatory. Always keep close tabs on both the altitude indicator in the head-up display and the vertical speed indicator gauge in the

instrument panel. Unless there are no enemies about, you should always fly as low as safety permits. Staying below 15 meters keeps you immune from most SAMs but requires intense concentration—especially in Korea, where you must weave around trees. Cruising at 25 meters is a happy medium that takes you over the tops of trees and provides a greater margin for error when you're distracted by other tasks. Be ready to dive for the deck if you come under attack.

HEALTH HAZARDS

The most common threats you'll confront are SAM launchers and AAA. Flying low will usually foil SAMs, but it's not always practical to stay right on the deck. If you have a missile inbound, turn to put it to one side and drop countermeasures to try to spoof it. Your aircraft carries a huge supply of decoys—100 seconds worth of flares and 195 seconds of chaff—so if you find yourself entangled in a huge melee, just leave the dispensers on until the smoke clears.

Unlike SAMs, AAA can find you no matter how low you fly. If you see tracers coming at you, jink and weave violently to throw off the gunner's aim, then either line up a counterattack or escape out of range. The Mi-24 is tough enough to withstand an occasional hit, but not the massive pounding it will take if you don't evade, so react quickly.



TIP! **UNFRIENDLY FIRE** The 12.7mm machine guns common in Afghanistan aren't as deadly as the AAA vehicles in the other theaters, but they shouldn't be ignored.

Though relatively rare, the deadliest foe your big bad attack helicopter will face is—you guessed it—another attack helicopter. Of these, the worst is unquestionably the AH-64 Apache. While other craft can ruin your day using missiles launched at long range, only the Apache wields a deadly accurate 30mm chain gun that can rip you a new exhaust port in the blink of an eye. Kill any attack helos you see as quickly as possible, from as far away as possible, because you may not get a second chance. Fixed-wing close support aircraft are much less of a threat, but fighters can be a problem. Avoid them when possible. If you're attacked, retreat through uneven terrain.

THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

The payload screen in the mission planner presents a variety of weapons to choose from. Your selections should match the strengths of each class of ordnance with the types and quantities of targets you expect to engage.

With its long range and superb accuracy, the 9M114 Shturm antitank guided missile is the most valuable weapon in the Hind's arsenal. Since it's your only true stand-off weapon and you can carry only eight, you should ration them carefully. Facing off with the dreaded Apache is the one exception to this rule: launch two missiles in rapid succession to ensure a clean kill.

Shturms are not fire-and-forget, but they can be ripple-fired at multiple ground targets as long as you wait several seconds between each launch. All missiles will head for the initially selected target until it's destroyed. The others still in flight will then turn toward the next target the weapon systems operator (WSO) designates, and so on.

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able is the R60 air-to-air missile. Regardless of its tiny warhead and attraction to flares, the R60 is still your best bet for bagging fast movers. Fire in salvos of two, making sure to pull lead on crossing targets.

In many ways, the Hind's turreted 12.7mm machine gun is your most versatile weapon despite its limited range. Boasting a huge supply of ammo, it is devastating against infantry. Lightly armored vehicles, cargo planes, and most helicopters are also vulnerable if you pump enough lead into them. Just don't bother trying to hose down an AH-64—you won't even scratch the paint.

Unguided rockets are your bread and butter for attacks on groups or columns. To saturate an area, turn off the Silicon WSO and walk the crosshairs over the targets with the pedals or fore-aft cyclic movements while holding down the trigger. When using the computer controlled release mode, it's also possible to nail individual targets out to 4 km, but it requires good aim and steady flying. Both sizes pack enough punch to destroy any vehicle, but the larger 80mm's sizable kill radius more than offsets the smaller quantity per pod. Take some along on every sortie you fly.

Bombs and 23mm cannon pods are strictly specialty weapons; always consider whether one of the more generally useful ordnance types described above might suffice instead. For instance, any building or bunker that can be destroyed by bombs will also fall to rocket barrage. Bombs can be useful on very large concentrations of enemy ground units, but be sure to break hard away after release to avoid fragging yourself.

Cannon pods should be relegated to attacking aircraft, where their high lethality and lead-computing sight can be best exploited. They aren't the best choice for dealing with ground targets because they have a shorter range than rockets and no blast effect, yet are just as difficult to aim.

HIT AND RUN

Because of your aircraft's limited ordnance carrying capacity, you should avoid trouble while en route to your main objective, engaging only those threats you cannot bypass. Conserve your weapons for the target area, since it's invariably well defended. As you near your destination, you might launch some

Target Selection

The pilot's duties of keeping the aircraft in the air, navigating, and operating various systems won't leave you much time to look around for targets—that's what the weapon systems officer is for. The computer-controlled "Silicon WSO" (SWSO) usually does an adequate job, diligently scanning for threats as you tend to other matters, so 90 percent of the time it's best to leave him in charge. For that remaining 10 percent, HIND offers two other targeting methods: the Track Target mode and manual targeting. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

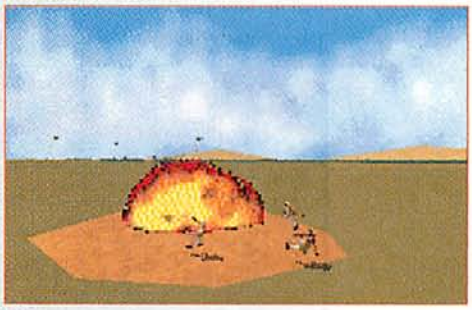
The SWSO can't be beat for initially spotting targets; activate him as soon as you take off. When there are many enemies nearby, however, you may disagree with how he prioritizes them. For instance, he may decide to target an APC when you're more concerned about that Apache firing Hellfires at you. Only occasionally will the Re-scan command switch his attention to the target you want.

Use the Track Target command in such cases to select targets yourself. From the WSO's seat, you must slew a reticule over the desired target before selecting it—a time-consuming process in the heat of battle. Fortunately, there's a quicker and more convenient way to do it. From the pilot's position, you can designate a target simply by pointing the aircraft toward it and then locking on.

The Track Target command can be given as a temporary override while the SWSO is active; he'll automatically resume activity when you exit Track Target mode. Note, however, that manually aiming the WSO's reticule will silently deactivate both the SWSO and Track Target modes.

The default manual targeting mode is best suited for those times when you just can't get the reticule locked onto the right target, or when you need to disable computer-controlled weapon release so you can just point and shoot.

HIGH LOB Launching antitank guided missiles while nose-high helps them get over obstacles that may be between you and your target. Reducing collective as you pitch up lessens your altitude gain.



CLOSE ENOUGH The blast effect from rockets and Shturm antitank missiles is deadly against infantry concentrations.

SCRATCH ONE CONVOY Rocket salvos fired in manual targeting mode can devastate vehicle columns. Once you're lined up, just hold down the trigger.

TIP! **MEDEVAC** Try to park nearby when picking up wounded soldiers because they move very slowly.

Shturms to eliminate some of the air defenses at arm's length, but you'll eventually have to jump in and get your hands dirty. Make high-speed slashing attacks, extending away after each firing run so that the time needed to line up targets is taken outside the enemy's engagement envelope rather than from within it. Don't get greedy: concentrate on the assigned targets, then bug out once you've finished the job. The only time you should sanitize the entire area is if you must set down to load or unload troops.

You'll often find yourself low on ammo at this point. If you're not already on the ground and can find a spot clear of enemy activity, it pays to land so you can reload your weapons and countermeasures. Contrary to what the manual says, the ground crew packs reloads aboard before the mission starts even when you're transporting troops. Once this is done, it's time to fight your way home.

It's almost always best to plan your egress route to overlay the path you used to come in, since you've probably flattened most of the air defenses along the way the first time through. The battlefield is a dynamic environment, however, so never let your guard down.

HOME SWEET HOME

When you arrive back at the base, tired but victorious, your final challenge is to set your Hind down amidst the clutter of tents, supply pallets, trucks, and other aircraft. Always make your approach into the wind (you did memorize the direction of the prevailing wind before you took off, didn't you?), and make certain your chosen landing area is clear of obstacles using the wider field of view available from the WSO's seat. An ideal approach will have both your altitude and ground speed decrease to zero at the same moment, but it's also okay to slow to a hover first and then drop straight down. Instead of constantly adjusting the cyclic during final approach, try to find one pitch angle that results in the proper deceleration and sink rate. Pick out a nearby landmark and use it to judge your lateral drift—it's essential that your sideways velocity be reduced almost to nil. At the last moment, put the nose three degrees above the horizon to match the attitude the Hind assumes on the ground, then gently descend to a perfect touch-down. Well done, comrade!

Managing Your Wingmen

You're accompanied on each combat sortie by at least one wingman, sometimes up to three. They're valuable assets both offensively and defensively, and if employed properly, they'll greatly increase your chances for success.

Perhaps the most vital function your wingmen play is to divide enemy antiaircraft fire. Without them along, all those guns and missile launchers would be aimed solely at you. It therefore behooves you to stick close by them, for their sake as well as your own.

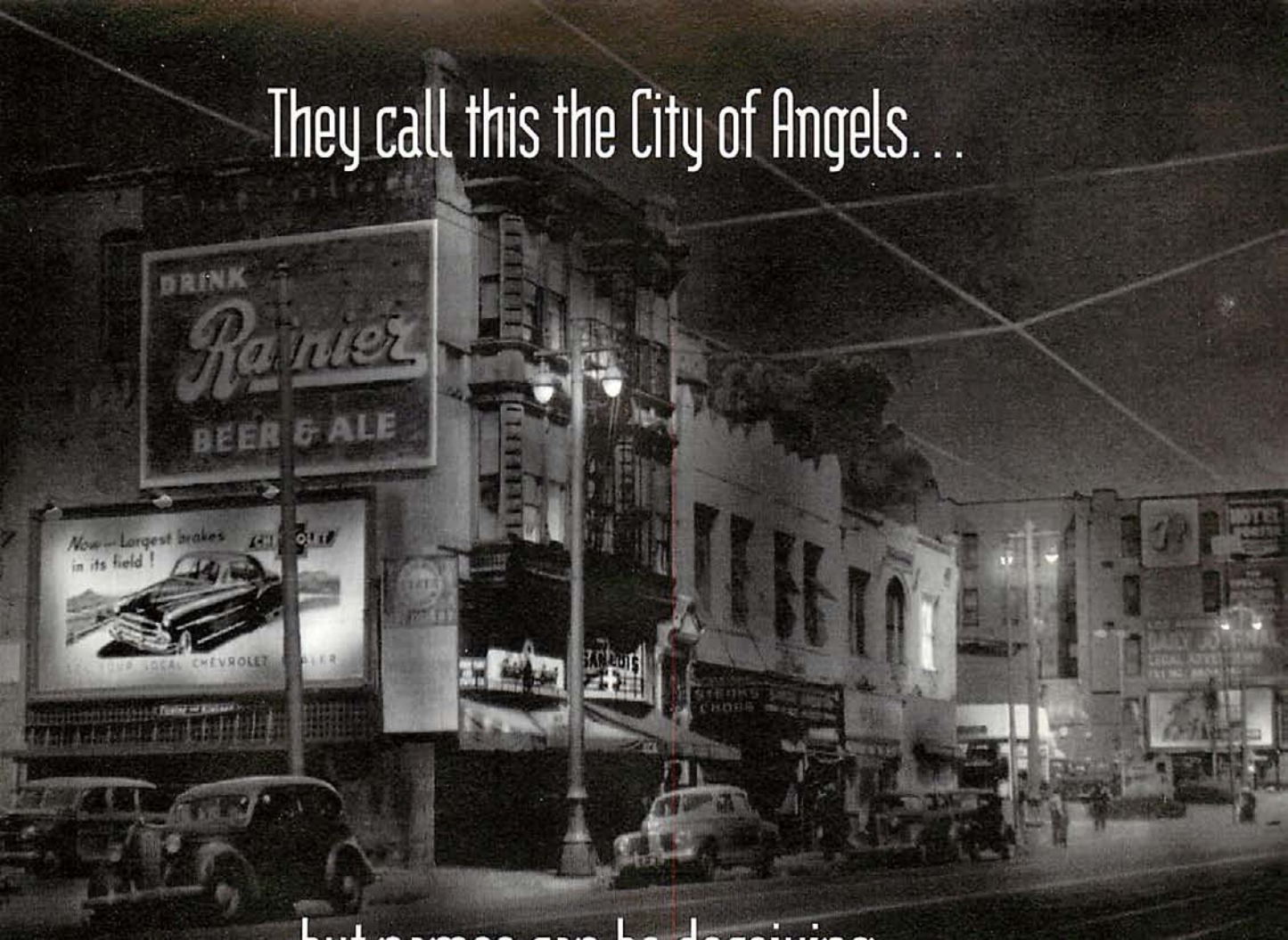
FORM AND FUNCTION Ordering your wingmen to follow you will bring them into tight formation from wherever they happen to be.

There are two ways to fly as a group. You can follow your wingmen or order your wingmen to follow you. The choice is yours, but keep in mind that if you loiter in an area for an extended period, your wingmen will continue on without you unless directed to do otherwise. When flying near other helicopters, the potential for midair collisions is ever present. If you decide to let your wingmen pick the course, hanging back a bit lets you keep track of them all to avoid getting sideswiped. When you take the lead, they'll form up in a tight echelon formation, so avoid making abrupt maneuvers.

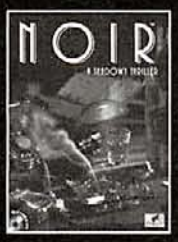
Your wingmen will usually engage air defenses en route to the primary target only if they're fired on first. Use the Attack My Target command liberally to order preemptive strikes from maximum range. While your wingmen are taking out one target, you can focus on others to maximize the firepower your formation brings to bear.

▸▸▸Continued on pg 204

They call this the City of Angels...



but names can be deceiving.



Femme fatales, fedora-wearing henchmen and corrupt city officials—just a few of the unsavory characters you'll encounter in the urban underbelly of 1940 Los Angeles. Journey through unsolved cases ranging 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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Pilot/WSO Two-Player Mode

The real Mi-24 splits the tasks associated with flying and fighting between two people, so it's not surprising that a single player will occasionally find the burden of doing both jobs at once difficult to manage. The Silicon WSO helps enormously, but he simply lacks the intelligence and initiative a human being can bring to the table.

It's for these reasons that the two-player pilot/WSO mode is where HIND truly shines. With half the workload of single-player mode, crew members can devote more attention to their specific responsibilities. The pilot can fly lower without compromising safety, and the WSO can search a wider area for possible targets while maintaining complete control over how they are prioritized.

Both players must know the exact division of duties to prevent costly misunderstandings. The pilot is tasked exclusively with flying the helicopter, operating the landing gear and cargo bay doors, and navigating. The WSO selects weapons, designates targets, fires weapons, and also controls the chaff and flare dispensers. This last capability is odd because the WSO has no idea when to turn them on or of—only the pilot can see the threat warning indicator. Either crew member can issue wingman commands.

Because the pilot cannot fire weapons, cooperation with the WSO is essential to make effective use of unguided munitions. If the WSO selects a target, the pilot should turn to line it up. When the pilot has the target centered in the crosshairs, the WSO must pull the trigger. It sounds difficult, but with a little practice, you and your partner will find the two-player pilot/WSO combination to be devastatingly effective.

OVERWATCH When you must land in enemy territory, telling your wingmen to follow you will keep them close by to protect you from unexpected threats.

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this may hurt a little.

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #275

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Crippled Ship

The Ambitious Effort Left Out A Major Feature: Fun

by Martin E. Cirulis

In my entire career as a critic, BATTLECRUISER 3000 A.D. (BC3K) is easily the strangest and most difficult title that I've ever had to review. I say this because this game presented me with so many bewildering firsts. This is the first time I ever had to wait for a game's third patch before I could even play it long enough to decide what was going on. This was the first time I ever reviewed a game with documentation so bad that a software pirate would be embarrassed to send it along. This was the first time I had to wonder if one of my reviews would garner me a lawsuit, as threats seem to fall like rain around anybody who says anything untoward about this product in print. And this is the first time I've had to do two reviews of one game.

SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY Shuttles can be used to carry cargo to and from planetary surfaces that, unfortunately, look very dated.

Price: $59.95
System Requirements: Pentium 60 or better processor, DOS 5.0 or higher, 8MB RAM, 50MB hard drive space, 2x CD-ROM, 1MB SVGA graphics card, mouse; supports all major sound cards.
# of Players: 1
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Derek Smart
Publisher: Take 2 Interactive Software (212) 941-2988
Reader Service #: 335

REVIEW A

This review is for those of you who can't access the Internet in order to download patches or those of you who believe that after plunking down your hard-earned bucks at the software joint, you shouldn't have to do anything else but sit back to enjoy your new game. In other words, if your plan is to play only the product that comes out of the BC3K box, then this advice is for you: *Do not buy this game under any circumstances!*

It runs for less than 15 minutes at a time on the majority of machines out there. The documentation pamphlet is poorly done, incorrect, and about as useful to players as if FALCON 3.0 had shipped with only 30 pages of info. Take 2 has promised to send out proper docs to any registered user free of charge, but to date this has not occurred. In its original, store-shelf condition, this is a nongame.

REVIEW B

If you are the type of gamer who does not mind a lot of fixing up if the game is worth it, this is the review derived from playing the 1.01C patch version (see the sidebar). There is still no adequate documentation for this game, but various FAQs give you a shot at figuring things out, and a downloadable set of relevant instructions is still possible.

BC3K is basically the mother of all starship simulator/space exploration games. The genre goes back almost to the dawn of computer gamin, and includes such notable titles as SUNDOG, ELITE and PRIVATEER. The twist in this case, though, is that instead of being a free trader in a tramp starfreighter, you take the role of a captain of a huge military starship that could be the bastard child of the *Galactica*. Despite the fact you are regular navy, you can still engage in a little free trading just to keep your hand in.

There are two paths of play in this game. One is the advanced campaign mode, where you accept various missions assigned to you from High Command and try to carry them out, working your way through a prearranged plotline. The other mode is simply one of free exploration, where you can journey throughout the 25 star systems and involve yourself with the various goings on as you see fit. What makes this secondary mode at all interesting is the fact that BC3K supposedly has a dynamic neural net system running the various worlds and governments, resulting in a universe that not only reacts to you and your actions, but goes on without you. However, despite some interesting events that take place in the game, there is a fair amount of evidence that there are as many hard-wired incidents as there are dynamic ones. So, the jury is still out on exactly how "alive" this universe is.

Despite this, you are free to do a dazzling number of things in this game. Your starship carries not only fighters, but shuttlecraft as well, and these can carry all-terrain vehicles down to the surface of any solid world. You can also beam space marines around to board other vessels or take over surface installations.

Your BattleCruiser itself isn't simply a

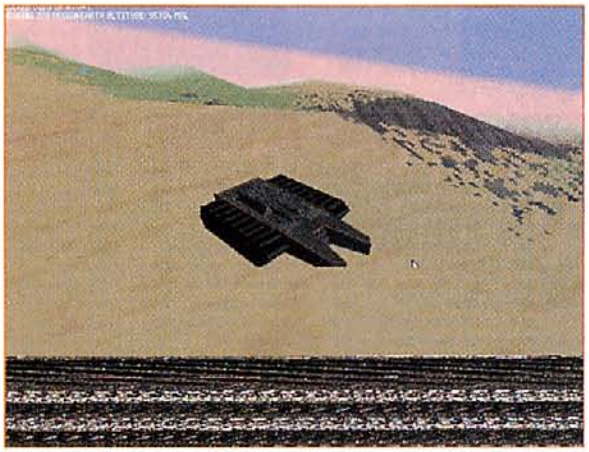
Patching It Up

APOLLO 13 REDUX With a huge crew and a variety of vehicles, your BattleCruiser would be an amazing mount for space exploration; unfortunately, it doesn't work very well—even with the version 1.01C patch.

This game was reviewed using the 1.01C patch (available at **http://www.bc3000ad.com**), which corrects most of the frequent crash problems and gameplay aberrations, but still leaves more than 25 known "features" unhindered (avoid all previous patches!). The D-level patch is in the works but was unavailable at the time of this review. Derek Smart, the designer, has promised to get BC3K working before he gets on with adding modules to it. It is unknown whether the expansion modules will be released in a functional or non-functional format.

The nonfunctional version of this game, with its inadequate documentation, will not be replaced in stores until Take 2 has sold out the entire first printing. Sources inform us that should Take 2 not include returns as sales, the Devil will be skating to work before a playable version reaches stores.

flying gun/landing pad, it is an environment unto itself, with personnel taking time to get from their quarters to their posts, getting injured and having to be taken to sick bay, and getting down to fixing the myriad things that can be damaged in combat or in day-to-day wear and tear. This is really the most extensive and ambitious SF simulator made to date—when it works.



HERE, ROVER Along with fighters and shuttles, your BattleCruiser carries ATV rovers which can be used to explore planetary surfaces.

THE PRICE OF AMBITION

The bottom line for me is that at no point was I deeply thrilled with BC3K as a game. While graphics are not the be-all and end-all of any sim, here they are poor enough to actually inhibit gameplay. Combat is reduced to guessing if you're hitting the target, and if the graphics could just match those of WING COMMANDER I, it would have made a huge difference just in getting involved with this game. As it is, it's like adventuring through Microsoft's SPACE SIMULATOR. The information is all there, glaring in its stark accuracy, but you can't really get excited about it, and you would be better off reading text descriptions of the combat instead of trying to figure things out from the graphics.

The amount of effort put into imaginary jargon doesn't help either. I realize the designer wanted the feel of a serious sim, but if he had a dime for every acronym that appears in this game, he'd triple what he got from Take 2. It all comes across like an air force wannabe's wet dream.

As for the missions, again it seems far less concern was invested in playability than in backslapping oneself over how difficult and realistic it was all going to be. By your fourth mission, you are already facing an opponent you cannot defeat. If the Earth is this badly off technologically, you should be playing this sim from the other side.

BATTLECRUISER 3000AD, when it's working, is a big, intricate game with dozens of hours of gameplay and plenty to do no matter how many times you play. I just wish there were any reason, other than sheer intellectual curiosity, to do so.

APPEAL: Science fiction and simulation fans who like to explore complicated sims without the help of documentation.

PROS: The largest and most complicated space simulator yet. If the bugs are ever fixed, it could be the most open-ended sci-fi game universe yet seen.

CONS: Unplayable without the latest patch. Space combat can't match even the original WING COMMANDER. Too little of the game's rich universe works properly.

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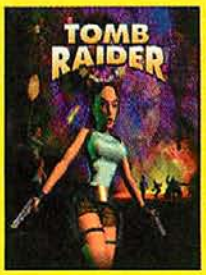

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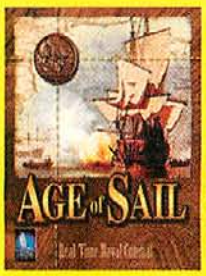

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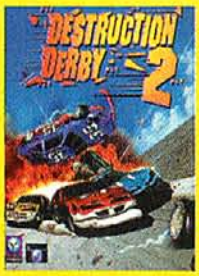

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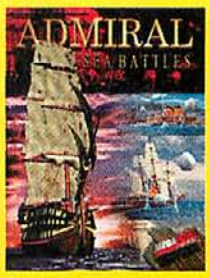

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Red Alert

Real-Time Strategy Gaming Grows Up

This just in! Real-time strategy gaming **was invented** in the last year and a half! Forget about all that time you spent playing SIMCITY, or SIMEARTH, or SIMANT, or SIMWHATEVER, those many years ago, because **those don't count** (they're all "sims," right?). Worse, even real-time strategy games that sold well a few years ago, such as HARPOON and DUNE 2, are **ignored** in the New Order. Why? It's very simple, really. Marketing mavens **refuse to believe** that they've missed out on any **big trends**. So, games like COMMAND & CONQUER and WARCRAFT II are hailed as the **new frontier of gaming** for the next millennium, simply because these two titles have moved, between them, somewhere near two million units.

What this gives us is a **flood of real-time strategy games** due to arrive over the next couple of years, because the computer gaming industry is **much like Hollywood**: why risk trying something new when you can copy a success? As we've seen with such **tepid titles** as Z, simply going real time is **no guarantee** of either artistic or commercial success. Nevertheless, expect **every company** to come out with its C&C or WARCRAFT basher by next summer, with the good first efforts (SSI's WARWIND) far outnumbered by the clunkers. If you think I'm overstating the case, just think of the countless—and soulless—MYST clones that hit the shelves every month.

WESTWOOD TO THE RESCUE

Okay, now that I've gotten the Dvorak out of my system, I want to tell about one of the few clones that gets it all right. C&C: RED ALERT is a Mozart symphony to all the Salieri clones. A marvelous technical achievement, RED ALERT takes the quaint sprites of COMMAND & CONQUER and transforms them into SVGA figurines that move at high speed, even in Windows 95. The all-digital music is robust, adrenaline-pumping stuff, with great range, although the technopunk dance club riffs don't always jibe with the specific mission you're playing.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR You actually need real combined arms tactics to take your objectives in RED ALERT.

You probably know the setup by now: Albert Einstein goes back in time, kills Hitler, and changes history by leaving a power void in Europe for Stalin to fill. Is it great sci-fi? Maybe not, but it works well in game terms to set up the plausible Soviets-vs.-the-West conflict that historians, professional and armchair alike, have speculated about in the decades since WWII. Like DUNE 2 and C&C before it, RED ALERT then eases you into the action with a good tutorial that introduces some interesting characters. My favorite is Tanya, a not-so-closet pyromaniac who empties her revolvers into anything that moves. She isn't quite

> "C&C: RED ALERT is sleek, sophisticated and very addictive."

BRIEFINGS

▸ It's a tribute to the popularity of real-time strategy gaming that the best of them are still widely available. HARPOON CLASSIC '97 just shipped prior to press time from Interactive Magic, while most of the rest are still carried via mail order or direct from the game companies. If you pick up one of the older games, such as DUNE 2, make sure to get the latest drivers for your Pentium systems (see Patches in this issue).

▸ Alternative history, *a la* RED ALERT, has long been a sci-fi staple. One of the most thought-provoking is Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*, which has recently been re-released. It postulates a very believable, and chilling, version of what might have happened had the Axis won WWII. No word yet on whether this will be made into another movie for Arnold to flex his biceps.

TERRY'S REAL-TIME FAVORITES

1.	HARPOON	360 Pacific	Still the best—deep and challenging
2.	RED ALERT	Westwood/Virgin	Sleek, sophisticated and very addictive
3.	WARCRAFT II	Blizzard	An elegant design spiced with humor
4.	COMMAND & CONQUER	Westwood	Multiplayer "DUNE 3" with improvements
5.	DUNE 2	Westwood	Great atmosphere, severely challenged AI
6.	WARCRAFT	Blizzard	Derivative but charming Tolkienesque affair
7.	DEFEND THE ALAMO!	Incredible Sim.	Low budget but heartfelt and accurate
8.	PAX IMPERIA	Changeling	Playable real time *or* turn-based

TERRY COLEMAN

Lara Croft from TOMB RAIDER, but Tanya makes up for it via her proficiency with plastic explosives.

From the very first RED ALERT mission, you see the Westwood stamp: plenty of interesting units and buildings, but not so many different types as to overwhelm you during play. The best of the new items are right out of a 1950s B-film, full of McCarthy-era "Soviets are going to conquer the world" imagery, except that here, it isn't paranoia. The Soviets have V-2 rocket technology that they lifted from the Germans, to complement their own rocket infantry (from the old Red Army rocket artillery days?). Just as they did in our history, Stalin's lads have developed MiG fighters, the world's largest submarine fleet, and Hind helicopters—complete with Vulcan chain guns! Which, we can only assume, they got through some bizarre alternative to Lend-Lease.

If those nasty weapons weren't enough, the Soviet Tesla Coils, a lightning-based defense, can deep-fry a chicken (or a tank) at 100 yards. In fact, when you toss in spy planes, flame throwers, and parachute bombs, it's obvious that the Soviet side gets more cool new toys. But Westwood has always done a good job making sure that opposing sides have dissimilar units—which requires you to master a variety of tactics if you want to win from both the Allied and Soviet sides.

Tesla Coil

Named after its inventor, Nikola Tesla, this high-energy device is used when great amounts of light, heat and energy are needed for sustained periods of time. The typical coil consists of placing two metal rods (usually steel and brass) in a salt solution, and running a small electric charge into the solution. The electricity runs up both of the metal rods, releasing electrons into the air, with the positive electrons moving to the brass rod and the negative to the steel rod. As these electrons move faster and faster, strong electrical currents are built up and begin arcing between the two poles. You see the same thing happen anytime there is a lightning storm.

EAT YOUR HEART OUT, TOM EDISON The secrets of the Tesla Coil and other mysteries of RED ALERT are revealed online at **http://www.westwood.com.**

TWITCHY TEENAGERS NEED NOT APPLY

Many of the sillier aspects of C&C are diminished in RED ALERT. It's a shame the Fog of War rules aren't as sophisticated as the rest of the design; but if you had really good intelligence reports, that would spoil half the fun. And yes, the designers carefully avoid any comparisons with realism by sticking to their alternative-history guns. Still, tanks are tanks—regardless of whether you call them Tiger IIs or Mammoth Tanks—and if you shoot at them with small arms fire, they are going to crush you under their unforgiving treads. Allied naval vessels are pretty indiscriminate about where they lay down their salvos, and if you aren't careful, your units will fall to friendly fire—a nice touch.

What I find most encouraging about RED ALERT is the reduced emphasis on arcade reflexes to win. You do need to react quickly, but even on top speed, you actually have some time to think, not just twitch. Fireteams have evolved from C&C as well. It always irritated me in C&C that you'd land crack commandos or other supposedly elite units in an area, only to watch them stand by and perish ignominiously because you couldn't click on them fast enough. The AI isn't all that much better—your units are still pretty stupid individually—but there are many ways of improving your troops' likelihood of survival.

First off, your units will actually react—other than dying—to enemy attacks. Often, there seems to be no rhyme or reason to whether they run or shoot (the C&C universe could really use a dose of X-COM's morale system), but at least they do *something*. Alternatively, you may save all the collected units into a fireteam, and give them orders with a hot key that you assign.

- **Guard Mode** is useful for aggressive deployments, such as search-and-destroy sweeps.
- **Force Fire** lets you lay down fields of fire even where there are no apparent enemy target, and is great for suppression or covering fire.
- **Force Move** is basically overrunning enemy infantry with armor.
- **Scatter** can save you from imminent death by bombing nearby hungry tanks or other mass destruction weapons that otherwise ruin your day.
- **Escort** works better in theory than in practice, but it's better than clicking around constantly on units of widely varying speeds.

All in all, the formation and ordering modes give RED ALERT a much-needed dose of depth and internal consistency. It's still nowhere near the small-unit tactical exercises of X-COM or STEEL PANTHERS. And in terms of perceived "realism," this can't touch HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC II, or even PANZER GENERAL, for that matter. Still, RED ALERT does what it sets out to do: deliver fast-paced strategy excitement in a familiar milieu. That it does so with even better graphics and sound than before, we have a right to expect. That it manages to deliver this visceral punch with surprising tactical subtleties, we can count our blessings. And we can be secure in the knowledge that no matter how many wannabes crowd themselves onto store shelves this Christmas and next, there will always be plenty of space for the Westwood folks—the real deal in real time.

CG TIPS!

▶ **RED ALERT**—My advice is to start as the Allies. This way, you have to learn how to maneuver your teams to their objectives without the benefit of Tesla Coils.

When clearing a road for an approaching convoy, you need a two-pronged attack. Send some heavy units to wreak havoc at the enemy base, while you send a couple of fireteams to the critical road junction and set them to Guard Mode.

▶ **CIVILIZATION II Scenario Disk**—If you are having a tough time keeping the folks at home from getting restless in the Alexander scenario, remember: invention can't be discovered; so, research Pottery and build the Hanging Gardens for more happy campers. It isn't worth going for Medicine and Shakespeare's Theatre, since the scenario is so short.

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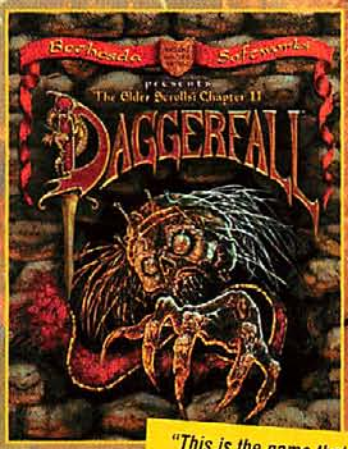

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★★★★★ REVIEW • HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: FAST / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

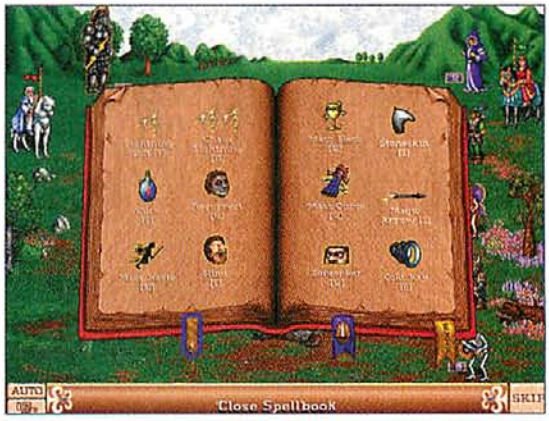
CGW CHOICE

Classic Heroism

HEROES II Is An Amazing Sequel To '95's Best Strategy Game

by Elliott Chin

Once in a while, you get a strategy game that amazes everyone with its surprising, addictive qualities and amazing ease of use. The original HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC was such a game, earning the coveted CGW 5-star rating. When that game hit our offices, several CGW editors suddenly found themselves knee-deep in warlocks and dragons—strictly for research purposes, you understand. And now, with HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II having cast its own magic spell, I find myself campaigning for endless hours, conquering castles and heroes while articles pile up on my desk.



WELL, BLESS MY CHAIN LIGHTNING! Whether it's Mass Haste or Berserkers you prefer, you'll find both the magic and combat systems improved in HEROES II.

A HEROES BRIEFING

For those who never played HEROES, HEROES II will be a welcome treat. Unlike SSI's FANTASY GENERAL, which is simply a succession of tactical battles, HEROES II requires that you master tactics *and* strategy. Most of the game is played at the strategic level, as you move your heroes about the map, searching for artifacts, looking for resources and gold, and taking control of mines. Mines are essential because you need the resources in them to build up your towns. The towns are where you recruit units and build your troop quarters, mage guilds and other structures. Tactical combat arises from the inevitable struggle to defeat your rivals and conquer his holdings. To that end, you build armies, assign them to the control of a hero, and then send that hero out to attack your enemies.

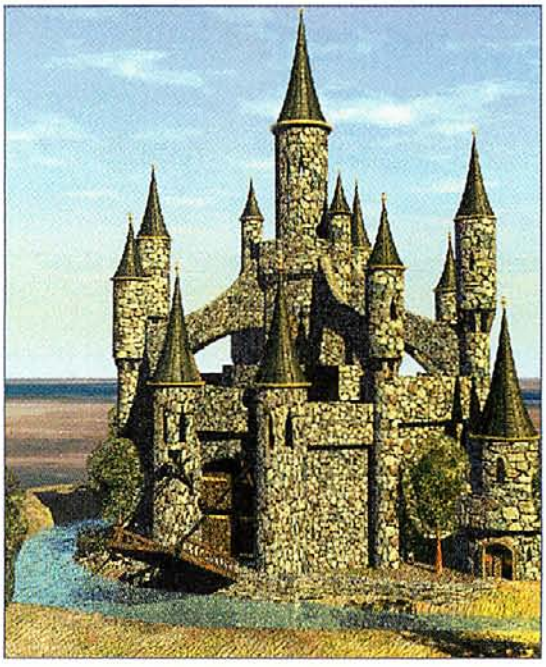
Yet within this seemingly simple structure lies incredibly robust gameplay: a good tactical model; an expansive game of building, exploration, discovery and resource management; even an element of role-playing in the heroes you recruit and command. Your champions' stats—attack, defense, spell power and knowledge, and so on—increase as you gain more experience, which is acquired through success in combat or in special areas on the game map, such as training gazebos.

Price: $59.95
System Requirements: 486-66 or better processor, 8MB RAM, 55MB hard-drive space, SVGA graphics, DOS 5.0 or Windows 95, mouse; supports all major sound cards.
# of Players: 1-6 (null modem, modem, network and Internet)
Protection: None (CD must be in drive to play)
Designer: Jon Van Canegham, Phil Steinmeyer
Publisher: New World Computing, Inc. Woodland Hills, CA (800) 325-8898
Reader Service #: 332

BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER

I've placed seven-year-olds in front of a computer with HEROES II, and they picked it up inside half an hour. But the easy learning curve hides a deceptively good AI; and unlike HEROES I, where the computer fared well mostly due to its superior initial troop allotment, in HEROES II, the AI seems stronger. The computer often creates one superhero, with all the most powerful troops and best magic, just like experienced HEROES II players would. The AI opponents also seem to upgrade mage guilds faster and use higher magic intelligently. In several instances, I was literally pulling my hair out because the computer kept on casting chain lightning on my troops, decimating my horde before I moved even a single unit. It helped that the computer also gave his army a very fast stack so he could move first.

I can't stress enough how much better this game is than the original HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC. The less cartoonish



look means I won't have to cover up the sprites now when my WARCRAFT II buddies come to ask what I'm playing. HEROES II also now sports two new classes: the Wizard, the most powerful mage character, and Necromancer, the commander of the Undead. Each class has new units and building as well. All six classes also now can upgrade a certain number of their troops, so you can make war trolls out of regular trolls, or veteran pikemen out of pikemen. This simply adds an even greater array of units to the game, in addition to the unique units that come with the two new classes.

The tactical and strategic play areas are now twice as large as they were in HEROES I. This is an improvement, especially for tactical combat, where it's no longer so confining and restrictive.

The role-playing element has also been enhanced to include secondary skills. Now, each hero can learn up to seven different skills, including logistics (which increases your movement), basic estates (whereby your hero contributes 125 to 500 gold per day), leadership (which gives you permanent morale bonuses), and up to 11 other skills for a total of 14 available abilities. Each skill also has three degrees of proficiency, so you can make your hero even more specialized in particular abilities.

The magic system has also been overhauled in HEROES II. There is now a fifth level to the mage guild. More important, each hero now has a number of spell points, and each spell takes off a number of those points, depending on its level and power. Your overall spell points are determined by your knowledge, so if you have 3 knowledge, you possess 30 spell points. Not every hero has instant access to all spells now though. One of the new secondary traits is mysticism, which is a skill you need in order to cast any spell beyond second level. Obviously, knights and barbarians don't start with mysticism and so can only cast up to second-level spells, while warlocks and the other spell-casting classes, who begin with this skill, can cast spells beyond that level.

Nearly everything is perfect in HEROES II. I still wish there was a wait function in the combat, and you still can't command your hero in combat if all your troops are immobilized. But apart from those little squabbles, this is a great game, even better than HEROES I. It complements the expected mix of simplicity and addictiveness with more special objects and magic artifacts to be found, larger map sizes, and two new classes. Tactical combat has been enhanced with a larger map and more units, the role-playing has been expanded with new skills, and the magic is much more extensive. Add in null modem, modem, network and even Internet play and you arrive at that 5-star package that will suck any strategy gamer into this black hole of addictive fun. CG

LADIES AND GHOULS This town, where you recruit troops and raise essential buildings, showcases the new Necromancer class, complete with menacing Undead legions.

▸APPEAL: Fans of the original and anyone looking for an engrossing, challenging and fun strategy game.

▸PROS: Very easy to learn, with a wonderful blend of tactical, strategic and role-playing elements. Great multiplayer options, combined with an improved magic system and campaign, make this even better then the original.

▸CONS: Could stand a few more tactical tweaks.

CG RATED

A Tale Well Told

HAIL THE CONQUERING HERO The familiar HEROES look has been enhanced by SVGA graphics, improved AI, and a well-focused campaign.

Perhaps the most noticeable improvement for HEROES veterans is the inclusion of a much more integrated and enjoyable campaign. The campaign in HEROES I was simply an excuse to have you play nine scenarios in a row. In HEROES II, though, there is a tight story with a consistent plot.

A civil war has broken out in the kingdom, forcing you to choose: do you champion the good or evil king? It's more than a simple plot element, as the scenarios in each campaign derive from your choice. As the evil general, you will play one scenario that requires you to break up the Dwarven-Human alliance, while if you play the good side, you will actually have to forge that Dwarven alliance. Not only are the scenarios for each side thus dynamically different, but you also get opportunities during the campaign to betray your present king and switch sides! Short cut-scenes also flesh out the story between each scenario, giving the campaign a much more consistent feel. Of course, if you tire of the campaigns, you can create new scenarios with the excellent editor.

★★★★½ **REVIEW • STEEL PANTHERS II: MODERN BATTLES**

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

CG CHOICE

A Penetrating Success

SSI's Steel Panthers II: Modern Battles Is Right On Target

by Patrick C. Miller

In 1975 *Mech War '77*, SPI's excellent board game covering tactical armored combat in the '70s, came with colored cardboard pieces representing 51 units from six major powers. The game's ten scenarios were played on a single two-color map. For desert scenarios, players had to pretend that the trees on the map didn't exist. What a difference 21 years and computer technology makes! Steel Panthers II: Modern Battles has more than 50 types of tanks, as well as 400 different weapons from 25 nations, and covers tactical armored combat from the 1950s to 1999. The six campaigns and 55 scenarios, portrayed in brilliant SVGA graphics, are accompanied by realistic sound effects. If that's not enough, you can randomly generate scenarios or create your own with the game's editor, choosing from three different terrain types (desert, summer and winter).

Price: $54.99
System Requirements: 486-66 (Pentium 90 or better recommended), 8MB RAM, 12MB hard-drive space, SVGA graphics, 2x CD-ROM, DOS 6.22 or higher, mouse; supports Sound Blaster and 100% compatible sound cards.
# of Players: 1-2 (e-mail, hotseat)
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Gary Grigsby, Keith Brors
Publisher: Strategic Simulations, Inc.
Sunnyvale, CA
(800) 245-4525
Reader Service # 333

ON TO KUWAIT

Following the success of the original Steel Panthers, the question was: could its game engine be adapted to modern armored combat without a serious overhaul? Armored warfare in World War II was primarily a question of gun power against armor thickness, and few weapons were effective beyond 1,000 yards. However, in this age of highly accurate, long-range guided missiles, high-tech fire control and gun stabilization, Chobam and reactive armor, helicopter gunships and troop transports, supersonic attack aircraft, cluster munitions, radar and infrared antiaircraft systems and a variety of armor-piercing ammunition, simulating the interaction between the units and weapons systems is a far more complex proposition. To their credit, designers Gary Grigsby and Keith Brors have made it happen. Steel Panthers II, while more complex than its predecessor, is just as much fun to play.

The game is turn-based and played on a hex grid map. Each hex represents 50 yards and each turn represents 2 minutes of time. Infantry units can be as small as a single sniper or as large as a 12-man squad. Squads are organized as platoons or companies. Vehicles are represented individually and can be organized in two-unit sections, platoons or companies. Air mobile infantry and attack helicopters are also available. The interface remains as clean and easy to use as that of the original.

The variety of historical scenarios include: Korean War battles from the 1950s; '60s Vietnam air mobile and armor operations; Israeli-Arab conflicts over three decades; even Desert Storm scenarios from 1991. Be forewarned that some of these scenarios have been play-balanced to make the battles more challenging and interesting than they were in real life. However, another strong feature of the game is the player's ability to control various factors that affect troop quality and weapon performance. If you want the Iraqis holding Kahfji to defend the town as they really did, adjusting morale and accuracy settings can provide a more historical result.

Campaigns test your command skills

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF Historical scenarios in Steel Panthers II feature conflicts from the 1950s to the 1990s. Here, the U.S. 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment slashes through the Iraqi Republican Guard at the battle of 73 Easting during Desert Storm in 1991.

over a series of battles and your ability to manage combat resources. First, you purchase core units for the campaign. Depending on the mission, you then have the opportunity to purchase various support units prior to battle, such as off-map artillery, attack aircraft and engineering units. After a battle, points are available to repair damage, replace losses and upgrade to better vehicles and weapons. In the long campaign, you can play against up to three different nationalities.

Play by e-mail support has been improved with a VCR playback function, but computers must have 16MB of RAM to use this feature. Modem support for two-player games didn't make it into the final code. The word from SSI is that its future is uncertain. That's too bad, because although the AI is okay, it can't match the challenge of playing against a human opponent.

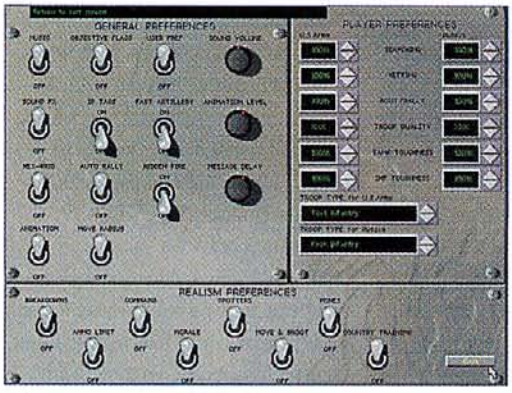
CHINKS IN THE ARMOR

The two biggest flaws in this game are its skimpy manual and a significant number of irritating bugs. At least the online unit encyclopedia provides more detailed information than was found in the first game. Unfortunately, the manual doesn't provide a good explanation of how to interpret this data. Gamers have already begun the laborious process of breaking down the unit data, converting it into readable charts and posting it as downloadable files online. Why SSI doesn't include this information as text files on the CD is puzzling.

While playing STEEL PANTHERS II under DOS and Windows 95, I didn't experience any game-crashing bugs as with its predecessor. Most of the bugs are minor annoyances, such as an Su-25 attack jet making the sound of a prop-driven plane and having the picture for the earthen bunker unit show up as an F-8 Crusader. There are also problems with land terrain sometimes showing up in water and non-amphibious units being deployed in water.

A new feature gives vehicles a chance to bog down and become immobilized when crossing a stream. That's fine until you discover during a campaign game that the only way you can get the vehicle's mobility back is by spending the points to completely replace it. Probably the most annoying feature is that some hexes that appear to be clear terrain are actually buildings. Driving a vehicle into what you think is an open hex, only to hear the sound of a collapsing building and see your unit become immobilized, is a tough way to find out where the buildings really are.

In the final assessment, STEEL PANTHERS II, like STEEL PANTHERS, is more of a game than a highly realistic simulation. Units with wire-guided antitank missiles are allowed to move and shoot, which they shouldn't, and despite attempts to model morale, casualty rates are almost always appallingly and unrealistically high. Nonetheless, STEEL PANTHERS II is an excellent game with enough realism to satisfy most grognards and enough fun to entice casual wargamers.



FREEDOM OF CHOICE With a simple click of the preferences button, players have a tremendous amount of flexibility in adjusting troop and weapon performance.

Is The Abrams Really That Good?

If you've ever wondered whether the U.S. M1 Abrams tank is really as good as it's portrayed, one engagement from Operation Desert Storm in 1991 suggests that it probably is.

Just before dawn on February 25, an entire battalion of 31 Iraqi T-72s and four T-55s closed to within 1,200 yards of Bravo Company from the 4th Marine Division's 4th Tank Battalion. This Marine reserve unit had 13 M1A1s and was supporting the 2nd Marine Division's assault into southern Kuwait. By the time the Marine tankers recognized the threat, the Iraqi battalion was well within the effective range of the T-72's 125mm gun.

Despite the Marines' being surprised by the Iraqis and being outnumbered nearly 3 to 1, in seven minutes Marine tanks destroyed 34 of the 35 Iraqi tanks. The Iraqi gunners didn't score a single hit. The M1A1's thermal sights and its ability to fire two shots for every one of the T-72's proved lethal and decisive.

AMAZING ABRAMS The STEEL PANTHERS II scenario editor lets us recreate Bravo's encounter with a battalion of Iraqi T-72s, which fare no better here than they did in real life.

APPEAL: Grognards and casual wargamers alike will find enough realism and variety in STEEL PANTHERS II to keep them entertained for months.

PROS: Modern armor galore, hundreds of weapons and dozens of nationalities combine with first-rate graphics and sound to provide tremendous depth and replay value.

CONS: A poor manual, numerous annoying bugs and lack of modem play detract from an otherwise outstanding wargame.

CG RATED ★★★★

★☆☆☆☆ REVIEW • DESTINY

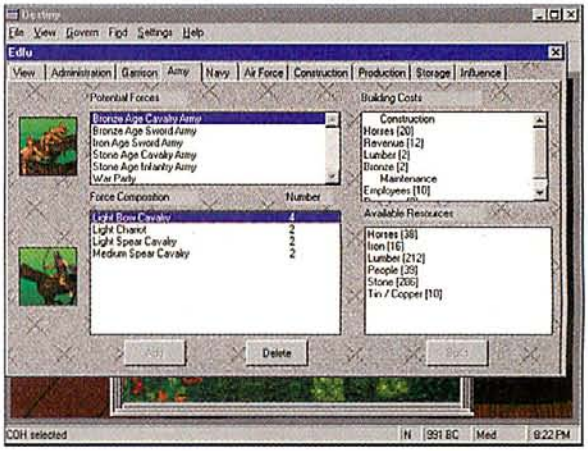
DIFFICULTY LEVEL: EASY / INTERMEDIATE / ADVANCED

Destined For Failure

I-Magic's DESTINY *Definitely Won't Make You Stop Playing* CIVILIZATION

by Tim Carter

If I were a professor at Computer Gaming U and needed to illustrate the principles of game design to bright-eyed freshman, I might well choose DESTINY, a recent release from I-Magic, as part of my demonstration. Unfortunately, particularly for those who spent their hard-earned cash on this turkey, I would have to use DESTINY as counterexample, a foil, to show what *not* to do. Set alongside real computer games, this product stands out for its all-encompassing awfulness, its almost total lack of respect for its consumers, and its complete dearth of redeeming qualities.



SPREADSHEET COMMANDER DESTINY really isn't a game, but a mocked up spreadsheet program with very bad graphics and awful sound thrown in.

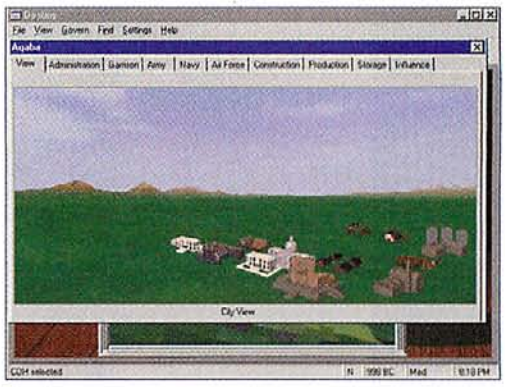
Price: $49.95
System Requirements: 486/66 or better, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive, SVGA graphics, Windows 95; supports Windows 95 compatible sound cards.
# of Players: 1-8
Protection: None (CD must be in drive)
Designer: Adrian Earle
Publisher: Interactive Magic
Research Triangle Park, NC
(800) 298-0872
Reader Service #: 334

IT'S ALIVE! IT'S ALIVE!

DESTINY feels more like a kind of Frankensteinian mistake than a completed game. All of the requisite parts have been stuck together in more or less the conventionally accepted fashion (although a few are ugly, and others don't quite work right). Yet, once that jolt of electricity is administered, it quickly becomes apparent that the beast has no soul. Where are those villagers with torches when you really need them?

The marketing approach for DESTINY seems to be "CIVILIZATION with all the extra options you wanted." This strategy has two obvious flaws. First, there already is a product on the market that can legitimately be termed "Civ with options." It's called Civ II, and it works pretty well. Second, anyone who thought that the inherent strength of Civ-like games was the options they offer isn't paying anywhere near enough attention.

True, DESTINY does have an impressive array of options. For instance, you may play in overhead or 3D perspective, real-time or turn-based. You may start your game in any one of a number of historical time periods, with technology and military equipment to match. The range of technology, associated military units and buildings is broad, as is the range of commands that you may give them. Further, you can play the big, build-an-empire-across-a-global-landscape-type game, or play shorter, strictly military engagements involving limited forces and a small tactical map.



CENTER OF HABITATION? Why not just call these cities? COH management leeches the fun out of this game, as you spend way too much time micromanaging annoying little details.

This melange of options, lists, and doodads lacks one crucial ingredient, however: fun gameplay. Simply put, DESTINY plays like a spreadsheet program, and the last time I checked, Excel just wasn't a lot of fun. (Actually, this comparison may be somewhat unfair to Excel.) DESTINY—in contrast to your favorite statistics program—has graphics, although they are pretty cheesy, and would be more in keeping with a game from four years ago. And, DESTINY has sound, even if it is boring, immensely repetitive, and completely unrelated to gameplay.

The basic problem with DESTINY is that it just isn't fun to play. Virtually every

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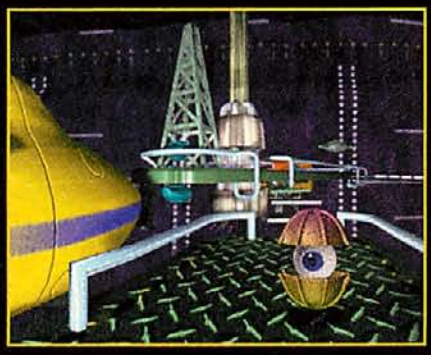

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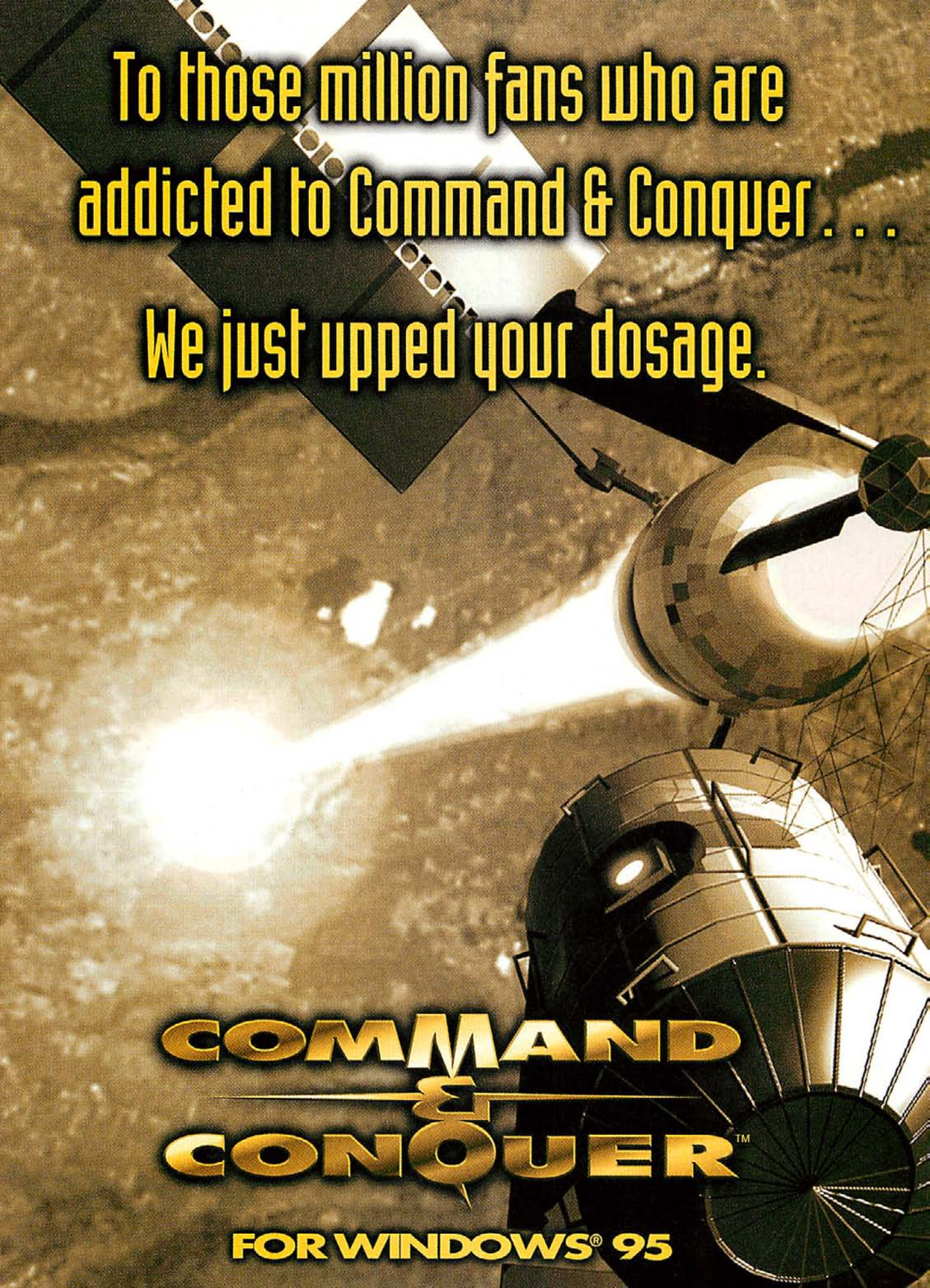
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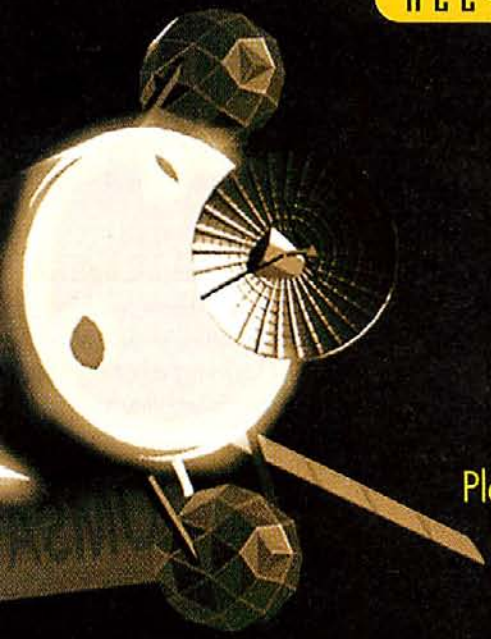

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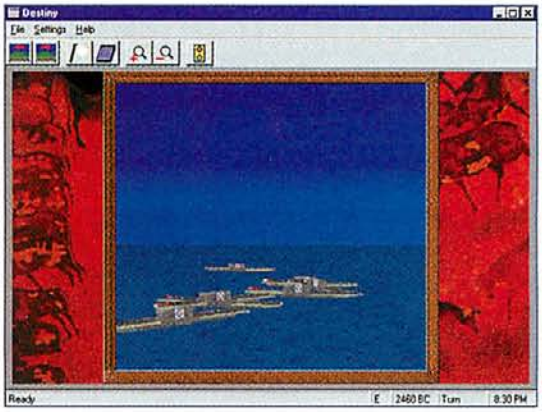
aspect of the game works against the player's potential enjoyment: from clumsy commands to bad graphics to a weak interface and an overemphasis on micromanagement.

HOLLOW HABITAT

You begin DESTINY at your first Center of Habitation. Why the designers couldn't call these cities (or villages, settlements, bases, or homes) is beyond me. This may seem like nit-picking, but in fact it is symptomatic of what's wrong with the whole game: it feels like it was created by and for accountants–really, really, bored accountants.

From your COH, you send out military units to explore the surrounding terrain and settle in new COHs, near the appropriate terrain, of course. Mind you, it can be difficult to determine where the right terrain is, as the map tends to be a wash of colors. Which brings up the question of graphics: on the whole, I do not believe that graphics are particularly important to a strategy game. Certainly there is no shortage of products on the market with snappy pictures and no gameplay, and there are as many with fairly clunky graphics that are most enjoyable. Graphics only matter when they begin to interfere with gameplay. Unfortunately, in DESTINY this is the case. The map is difficult to read, some military units are hard to tell apart, and most do not show up well against the terrain background.



UNSAFE AT ANY SPEED The artificial intelligence of the units really makes the tactical combat atrocious. Here, a line of German ships heads straight toward the enemy, running into and over the other battleships.

Within each COH, you control your burgeoning civilization through a series of Windows menus. There is a lot to do within each COH, which tends to become highly burdensome as time wears on. The effective management of each location will require many, many changes in a relatively short period of time as your COH grows. If you are playing in real time, this gets especially annoying, as the clock is ticking and meanwhile each of your other settlements will, no doubt, be accumulating lots of other things for you to do as well.

This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the computer doesn't do a very good job of prompting you when new orders for research or construction are required. Nothing along the lines of, say, CIVILIZATION, where the various tasks are quite manageable.

I found real-time combat to be much too fast also, although I'm not sure that it makes any difference. Combat takes place on a tactical map, also difficult to read, with a limited number of units. Aside from the problems reading the map, tactical combat is greatly hampered by the game's abysmal artificial intelligence.

In virtually every situation, the computer sends its forces straight at the defenders, although to its credit it doesn't always charge with its long-range artillery in the vanguard. Perhaps the silliest battle I fought was a Jutland-style slugfest between battleships circa World War I. Controlling the Germans, the computer went straight at my battle line, and at one point actually sailed directly over the top of several of my battleships. Now, admittedly it has been a while since I took a military history course, but I don't remember overrun attacks at Jutland, or even the Dogger Bank. The artificial intelligence is also deficient in the strategic game, as the computer does not expand quickly or efficiently, and at the lower levels of difficulty does not expand at all.

To top off all of my complaints, many commands seem to require multiple clicks of the mouse to register with the program. I have no idea why this should be the case, nor am I sure how you would even program this into a game, except to deliberately torture the helpless saps playing it.

I have no idea how games like this get created, let alone why they see the light of day. Without redeeming features, and with no recognizable potential for fun, there is, quite simply, no reason to spend money, time, or effort, on this product.

Too Little, Too Late

I-Magic has released several patches for DESTINY, the most recent of which addresses not only repeated crash problems, but also some of the more annoying aspects of the game interface. While these changes help, they cannot salvage the basically flawed game. In fact, in many ways the patch draws attention to the initial weakness of the program.

The version 1.35 patch gives the option to upgrade the map resolution, albeit at the expense of additional memory. (Given the low initial resolution, one has to wonder why extra memory is necessary just to get this game into the same ballpark with other strategy games.)

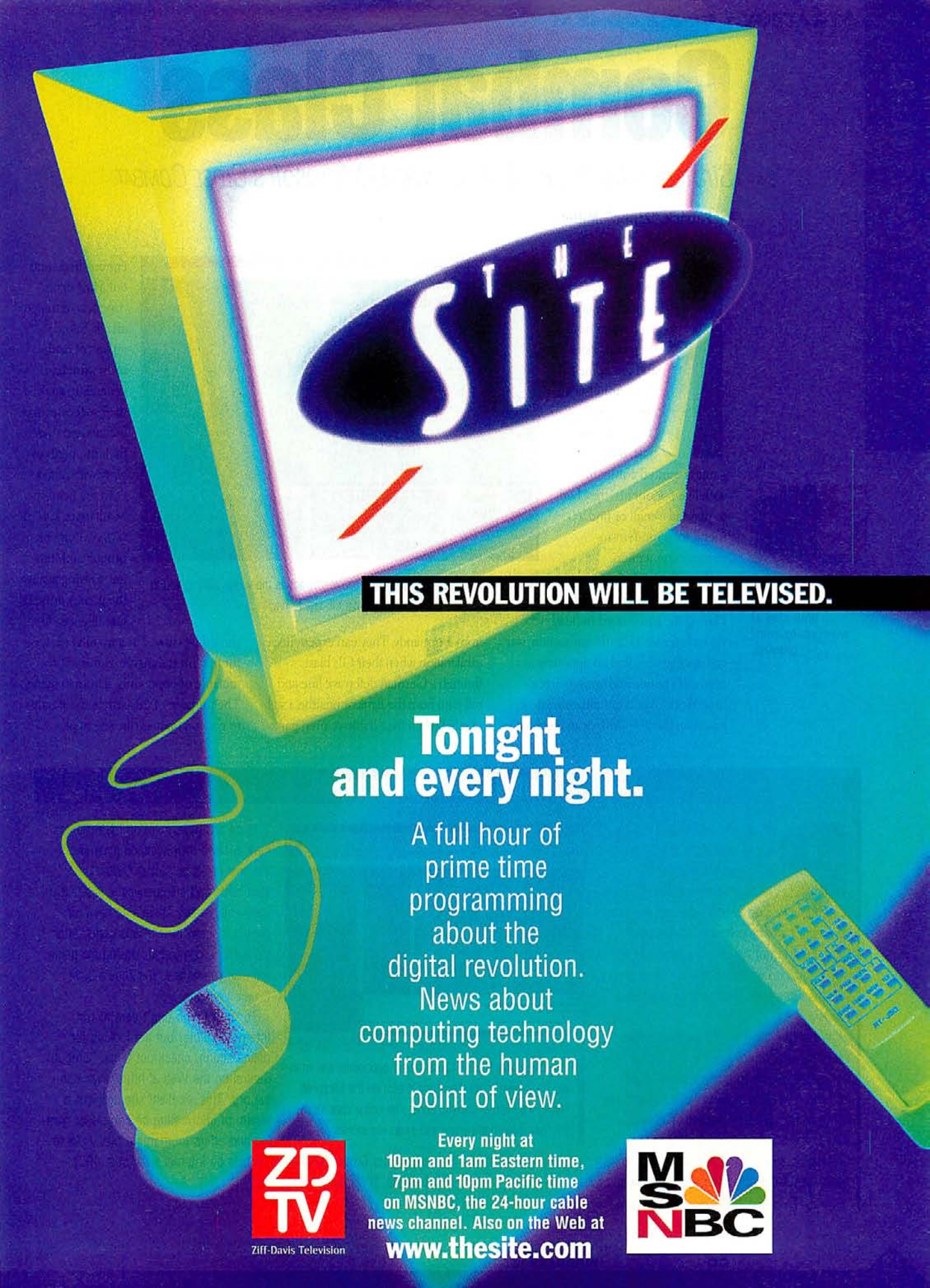
Considerable attention has been given to reducing the micromanagement necessary when improving your Centers of Habitation. You can now filter out obsolete improvements and units, and the dialogue boxes open to the most recently used category, saving a few mouse clicks. A governor feature also allows players to have the computer control the expansion of each COH. While well-intended, this feature leaves the gamer with two choices: mindless tedium through micromanagement, or mindless tedium through the computer's control of your empire.

APPEAL: For those who feel compelled to pick up another CIVILIZATION clone.

PROS: There is a patch.

CONS: Too many to list here. Essentially, this is not a game, it's a spreadsheet program augmented with bad graphics and a nice cardboard box.

CG RATED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Combat Class

Strategies For Going Head-To-Head In Microsoft's CLOSE COMBAT

by Patrick "Zippo" Miller

For years, flight sim jockeys have gone online, blasting each other from the virtual skies and recording their exploits with gun camera "films." In contrast, if wargamers wanted competition with live opponents, they had to play via e-mail or find a friend for a modem-to-modem connection.

SURPRISE! Hidden snipers and recon teams act as trip-wires, alerting you to your opponent's intentions before it's too late to react.

CG ON-LINE

For more CLOSE COMBAT strategies, visit our Web site at www.zdnet.com/gaming.

Two-player CLOSE COMBAT has dramatically changed this. Playing the game head-to-head via an Internet TCP/IP connection, wargamers can now find an opponent at a moment's notice and engage in real-time World War II ground combat based on the 1944 American breakout from Normandy. They can experience exhilaration when their GIs blast through a German defensive line and roll it up from the flank or breathe a sigh of relief when their battle-scarred panzergrenadiers snuff out a last-ditch American armored attack. Saved replays of battles allow armchair generals to analyze their successes and failures and share their moments of glory with others.

In the head-to-head arena, CLOSE COMBAT can be brutally unforgiving. Playing against the game's artificial intelligence (AI) should be viewed as a training exercise for that most dangerous and unpredictable of opponents, a human being. The purpose of this article is not only to get you up and running to play

Getting Some Online Action

Perhaps the fastest and easiest way to play CLOSE COMBAT online is through the Microsoft Network's Internet Gaming Zone at http://www.zone.com. To use this free site, you must have the commercial version of CLOSE COMBAT (not the demo) updated to version 1.0a and be running Internet Explorer 3.x (available free from Microsoft) as your Web browser.

At this site, there are 12 gaming "tables," a list of players currently online and a chat area that allows players to exchange messages. You can either join a game hosted by another player or host a game yourself. The host selects the scenario and the settings used. Clicking on an empty table makes you the host while clicking on an occupied table enables you to join the host's game.

IN THE ZONE Finding CLOSE COMBAT opponents and making two-player connections is a breeze on the Microsoft Network's Internet Gaming Zone. The online chat room lets you make battle plans and swap war stories.

Once two players are on the table and have decided their scenario preferences, the host clicks on "Play." CLOSE COMBAT then loads and the connection is automatically established. There's no need for players to know their IP addresses. After the battle is completed, closing the game will take you back to the Zone's CLOSE COMBAT Web site.

For those who don't care to run Internet Explorer but are looking for online action, check out Close Combat Central on the Web at http://www.combat.org. This excellent site provides a wealth of information on two-player gaming and offers tournament play, links to other CLOSE COMBAT Web sites, details on Internet relay chat (IRC) channels, FAQs and strategy tips.

CLOSE COMBAT online (see sidebar), but also to provide you with tips on strategy and tactics that can help you make a respectable showing when you're pitting your skills against an online nemesis.

THE MORALE OF THE STORY

Inflicting casualties and seizing objectives are an important part of the game, but lowering the morale of the opposing force is just as important, if not more so. Therefore, knowing how to lower your opponent's morale while maintaining yours is essential. Because the game models troop reactions to combat stress, one of your goals should be to place as much stress as possible on the opposition. Stress is increased when troops are under attack from tanks and artillery or being ambushed, encircled, outnumbered or pinned in the open. Stress is reduced when your troops ambush or outnumber the enemy, their unit cohesion is intact, and they're under your orders rather than orders from the AI.

Recon is another key element of two-player CLOSE COMBAT. The more you know about what your opponent is doing or trying to do, the better off you are. On the defensive, you must determine the enemy's main point of attack, ensure that you have adequate forces to halt it and spot opportunities for counterattacks.

On the offensive, your initial goal should be to probe the enemy defenses to determine the locations of machine guns and anti-armor weapons. Three-man recon teams work best for this. Your reconnaissance efforts must be aggressively followed up with supporting fire from tanks, infantry and mortars to pin the enemy units and defeat them. The worst way to discover your opponent's antitank weapons is with your tanks.

AMERICANS ON THE MOVE

The Americans are on the offensive in nearly all scenarios. This generally makes their side more difficult to play because the terrain favors the defender. There are two primary ways to attack: either on a broad front or on a narrow front. In most cases, attacking on a broad front is better for the Americans. They have more infantry and a higher proportion of automatic and semiautomatic weapons. Combined with an edge in armor, the Yanks are capable of unleashing a much higher volume of fire than the Germans.

Attacking on a narrow front, if successful, can lead to a quick and decisive victory. However, this type of attack can play directly into the hands of an experienced opponent. If the German commander quickly spots the American player's point of attack, he can shift forces to that area and contain it. A few strategically placed machine guns and antitank teams can quickly turn an American offensive into scrap metal.

To improve your chances, be sure to pin the German forces and interdict their likely avenues of reinforcement. For example, if there's a road running east and west across the map, the German player will probably move his units across this road to reinforce his flank. A tank, half-track or machine gun team firing down this road can disrupt his reinforcements.

SHERMAN SHORTCOMINGS?

While the American armor is inferior to the German's, the closeness of the terrain tends to diminish the German advantage, allowing very few opportunities for them to engage at longer ranges. The M4A1 Sherman, armed with a 75mm gun and machine guns, is very effective against infantry. At close range, its gun can penetrate all but the thickest German armor from the front. The 76mm gun on the M10 Wolverine and the M4A3 Sherman can effectively engage nearly any German vehicle from the front, with the exception of the Jagdpanther.

Avoid at all costs sending American armor into areas that haven't been cleared of enemy infantry. The Germans have a wide variety of antitank weapons, but for the Americans, the best antitank weapon is another tank. Losing your tanks leaves your infantry dangerously exposed to enemy armor. Bazookas are seldom as numerous or as effective as German infantry antitank weapons.

These tips by no means provide a comprehensive overview to all the possible strategies and tactics you can employ in your online CLOSE COMBAT battles. They can, however, serve as a useful foundation upon which to build. CG

Slashing Shermans

BOLD, DECISIVE ACTION Three Shermans traverse open ground to outflank the German defensive line for a decisive victory with a minimum of casualties.

WHAT GERMAN SUPERIORITY? At point-blank range in close quarters, even the humble M4A1 Sherman is a viable threat, as it shows here by icing two German StuG IIIGs.

PAYING THE PRICE Don't send your Shermans into unfamiliar territory without infantry support. Set up a combined arms attack so your tanks fight the enemy's machine guns and rifle teams while your infantry and artillery fights his antitank teams and antitank guns.

BLINK AND YOU'RE SCRAP METAL

Eject from your HAWC, steal another. Bot-jacking is relatively legal here.

Wage war in everything from icy tundra to blistering desert. We suggest wearing layers.

Storm the enemy guard towers; try to avoid being turned into a red sinewy pile.

Destroy the enemy's HAWC delivery system and cut down on the number of missiles headed your way.

Communicate with wingmen via radio; share amusing anecdotes about global warfare.

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CIRCLE READER SERVICE #120

The Naval Academy

A Treasure Trove Of Tactics For The Age Of Sail

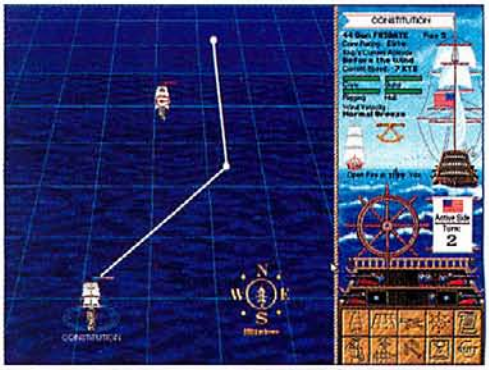
by Bob Proctor

WOODEN SHIPS AND IRON MEN (WSIM) is sure to lure even the most landlocked wargamer onto the open seas, but it won't do to lose your first naval battles while getting your sea legs. There are basically two ways to win in WSIM: board the enemy ship and capture it in hand-to-hand fighting; force the enemy ship to surrender by inflicting the maximum number of crew or hull hits. Hits on guns or rigging will NOT force a surrender.

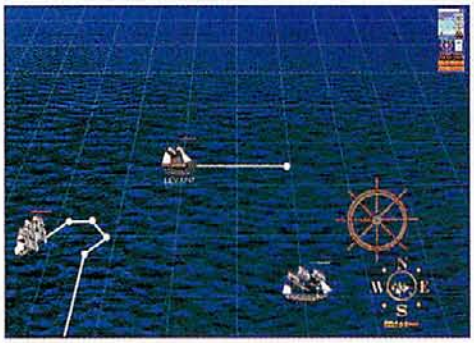
TWO WAYS ABOUT IT

Consider how you match the enemy in key characteristics. Compare the size and quality of crews; if you have a large advantage in crew strength, then boarding is the surest way to victory. If you don't start with a major advantage, watch for one to arise during battle if the enemy takes heavy crew hits. Be careful, however, if your crew quality is lower than your opponent's. An Elite crew of 100 is equal to an Average crew of 300 or a Poor crew of 500!

If your opponent has the advantage in crew strength then you must fall back on gunnery for your victory. Compare the firepower of the two ships by counting the gun boxes on the status screen. Just count one side, either port or starboard. First count the long guns (bigger boxes), which is the firepower at more than 600 yards. Then add the carronades (smaller boxes) to get the firepower at ranges under 600 yards. If you have the advantage in long guns, plan to stay 800 to 1200 yards away. The most challenging situation is when you are more powerful at close range but have inferior crew strength; trying to fight a gun battle at ranges of less than 600 yards and avoid being simulaneously grappled is a real test of your merit as an officer.



GO EAST, THEN WEST, YOUNG SAILOR Here, zig to the east and then zag to the west, bringing your guns to bear on fleeing ships. Aim for the rigging, unless your prey is close to surrendering.



DIVIDE AND CONQUER These two British vessels can employ crossfire to get more rakes, but they may get so far apart that the *Constitution* can close with one and defeat it before the other can provide support.

CONTROLLING THE BATTLE

One of the most important tactics to remember is to keep the Weather Gauge. This means making sure you stay upwind of your opponent (see the sidebar). Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you'll be in a situation where you are hopelessly outgunned and outmanned. Short of running away, your best bet is to find a way to fire at your opponent while preventing him from firing back at you. It's called "Raking Fire," and it means shooting at either end of a ship (bow or stern). Raking increases the amount of damage you do, and prevents the enemy from returning fire since none of his cannon point directly forward or aft.

Just remember that while you're getting yourself positioned at one end of the enemy, he'll be able to turn 90 degrees and give you a full broadside. You should expect to take a broadside or two while getting into raking position. The exceptional case is when the enemy has taken so many rigging hits that he loses all maneuverability. Then you can approach from a safe direction (generally upwind) and blast away until he hauls down his flag. This suggests the interesting tactic of standing off and shooting at his rigging until you've dismasted him, and then moving in for the kill. The problem is that rigging absorbs lots of hits, and he will be shooting back. In order to keep him from aiming at your hull and crew, you can stay more than 1200 yards away, which forces him to aim for rigging as well. It helps if your crew quality is better as the crew mem-

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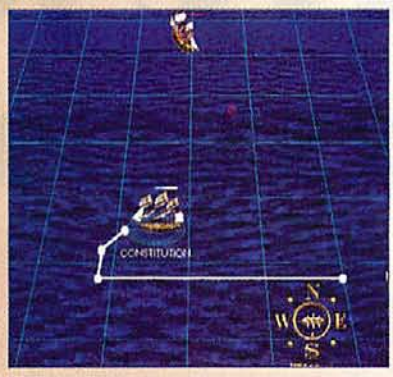
bers will shoot more accurately. It is tempting in this situation to load chain shot, which doubles damage to the rigging, but that has a maximum range of only 600 yards, and your gun crews will hold their fire until in range.

The Weather Gauge

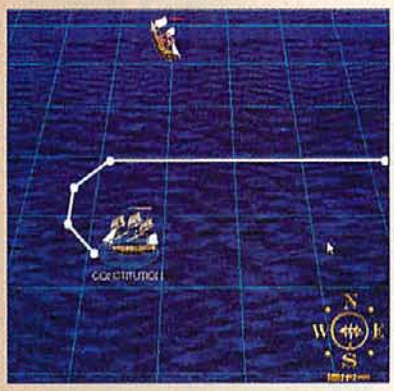
An important tactic from the Age of Sail is the Weather Gauge: getting upwind of your opponent. It allows you to control the range since you can sail downwind rapidly when you want to while your opponent can only sail upwind very slowly. Here, U.S.S. Constitution has the weather gauge against HMS Africa (a 64-gun ship of the line!). The wind is blowing from south to north, so Africa is close-hauled and cannot turn south toward you. The ships both have 14 gun boxes per side, but Africa outguns the frigate 12 to 8 in long guns, so Old Ironsides needs to stay within 600 yards (1 grid square equals 100 yards).

The safer move in this situation is to tack upwind and attempt to sail across her bow for another rake. If she turns east, you still have the weather gauge and can maneuver for a stern rake.

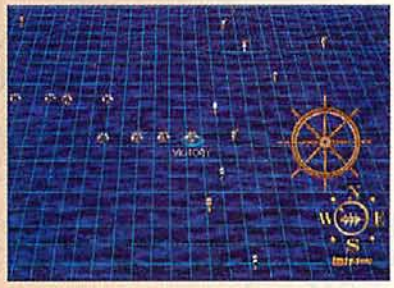
The more daring move is to turn downwind, knowing that Africa will only sail about 200 yards upwind if she holds her course. This would give you a bow rake at closer range with 10% more of the crew on the guns. Knowing this, Africa's captain is likely to move east to avoid the rake and hit you with a broadside.



PLAYING IT SAFE Tacking upwind sets up a high-percentage medium-range rake.



THE BOLD MOVE Turning downwind can set up a close-range bow rake, but leaves you open for a broadside.



LINE-BREAKERS A classic use of the weather gauge is at Trafalgar, where Admiral Nelson, aboard *HMS Victory*, leads the British line, delivering nasty raking fire to the French-Spanish line, before boarding with superior crew.

ADDING MORE SHIPS

First and foremost, keep your ships in a line. This gives every ship an unobstructed field of fire on both sides and protects the ships in the middle against rakes. The formation is called the "Line of Battle" and is where the name "Ship of the Line" originates. You must give orders yourself for each ship to maintain the line; auto-pilot is of no use until you are ready to break formation and enter into melee.

Having more ships does not give you any new ways to win. You still have to pound away from a distance or close and board, although you can now consider a combination of the two. Maneuvers with a line are much more unwieldy than with a single ship, especially if some ships are faster than others and are always backing sails to try to keep position. Consider making separate lines for ships with different sailing qualities.

Some useful tricks become possible with multiple ships and you should watch for opportunities to use them. The first is to let your leading ship absorb all of the punishment while your line closes the range. It will be a target for every enemy ship but the rest of your fleet will arrive unscathed.

Another tactic is to split your forces so that if the enemy turns to fire broadside at one group, he gets raked by the other. You can try this in the scenario "Old Ironsides' Last Fight." Here, the British have two smaller frigates whose combined firepower is slightly greater than the Constitution, although they have no long guns and must stay within 600 yards. It's a very difficult scenario for the Brits, but they can use crossfire to get more rakes. This, in essence, is what Nelson accomplished at Trafalgar, breaking the Allied line so that a third of their ships (the "van" or front) were carried downwind. Using superior crew quality, the British were able to board and capture most of the rest before the van was able to join the melee. These battles aren't easy to win by any means, but if you heed our tactical advice, you'll have no trouble recording victories of your own in any battle in the Age of Sail.

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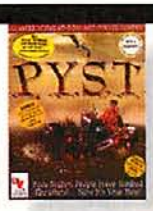

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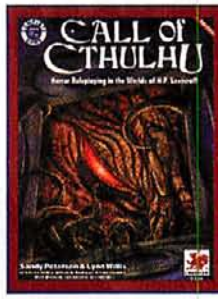

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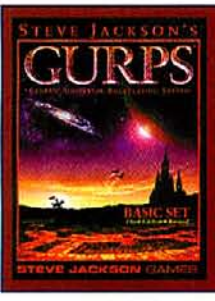

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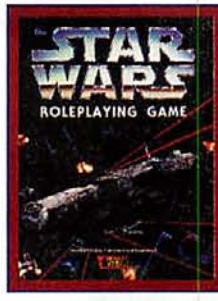

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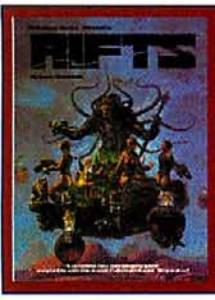

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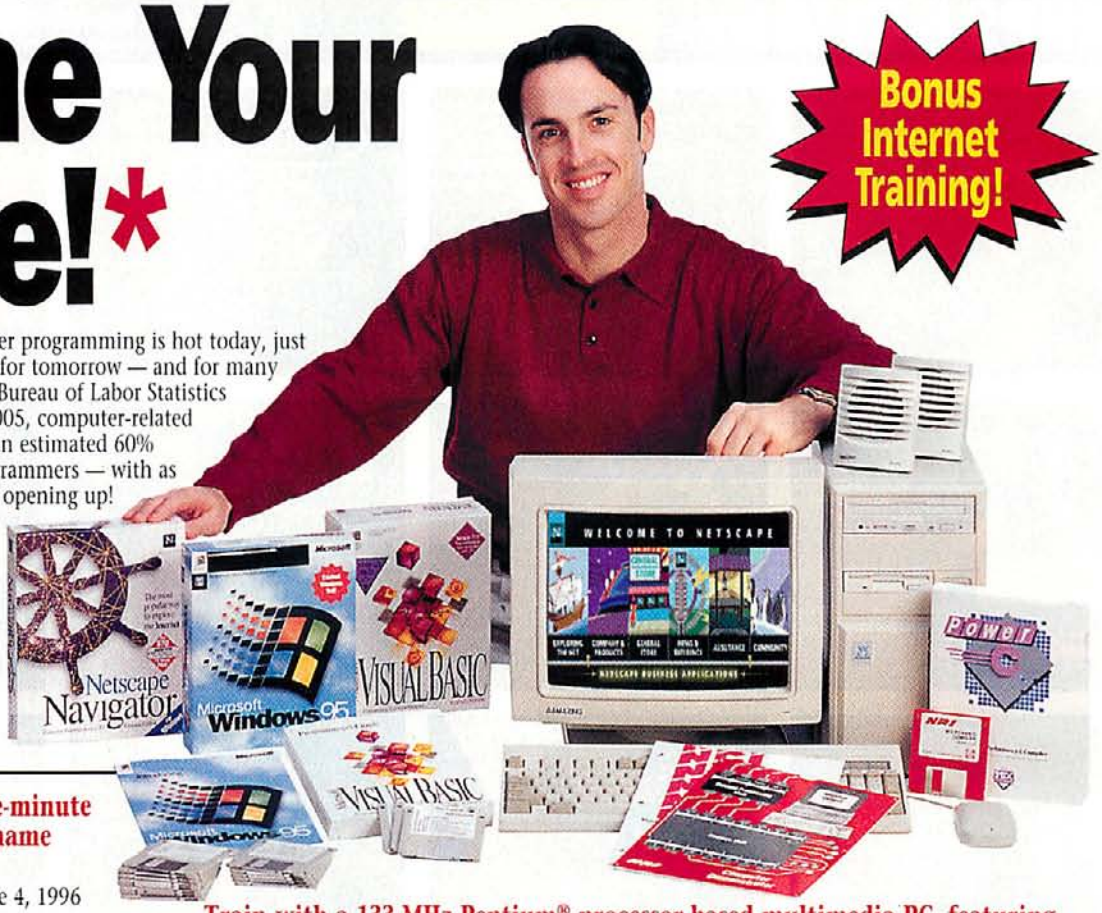

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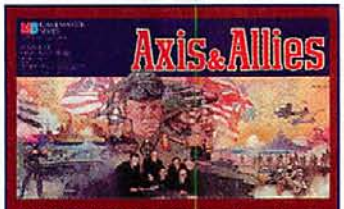

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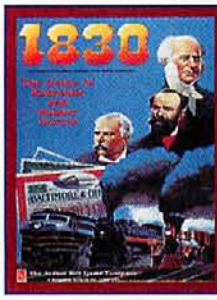

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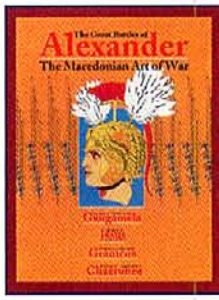

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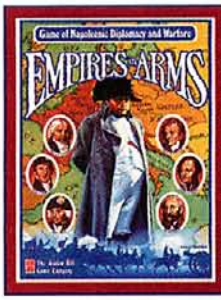

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HIGHLIGHTS

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
MicroProse, 1988

Published before the government's real-life announcement of the F-117 A, F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER hearkens to an earlier age, that pre-FALCON 3.0 era when most combat air games on the computer were closer to souped-up arcade experiences than real simulations. Though its gloss is somewhat faded now when compared to more recent Gouraud-shaded simulators, F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER still offers one thrilling ride, a reminder that MicroProse once ruled the simulated skies. Without today's multifunction joysticks and throttles, pilots of the mythical F-19 had to manage with keyboard overlays and hot keys; yet the game still provided challenges unique to flight simulations of the day. Although the F-19 was adequately armed (free-fall and guided bombs, Vulcan 20mm cannon, and over a half-dozen missile types for land, sea and/or air), the electronic profile and stealth elements were so well done that it was often more fun to avoid a dogfight than to engage in one. So, even considering the holes in the simulation—the real stealth fighter wasn't yet built—the game took on the nature of a "thinking man's sim," a real departure from the reflex-heavy simulators of the time. The missions in particular were particularly well-designed, as they involved sneaking around through a variety of enemy defenses. Perhaps the most intriguing thing about the game was how surprisingly similar it was to actual desert Storm sorties years later. Maybe MicroProse will give us an F-19 II someday?

FALCON 3.0
Spectrum HoloByte, 1991

The FALCON line has always been Spectrum's flagship, and the long-awaited introduction of FALCON 3.0 was no exception. FALCON 3.0 was the first jet simulation to offer a truly realistic flight experience, advancing the state of the art, not just in terms of the basic flight model, but in the detailed simulation of advanced radar instruments and techniques. The graphic treatment was also impressive (remember, this was some 2-3 years before SVGA graphics). FALCON 3.0 further distinguished itself by being the first to offer the padlock view, an improvement added because the design team actually flew in some aircraft and noticed that you don't stare straight out the front of the cockpit at all times.

FALCON 3.0 introduced the useful wingmen that we now take for granted, along with the first truly dynamic campaign design for a detailed flight sim. And while the computer opponents may seem tame now compared to those of EF2000 or LONGBOW, the game offered the toughest AI routine of its time. Moreover, FALCON 3.0 was one of the first games to support multiplayer network play, and the design team integrated follow-on products into the human-to-human challenge of modem and network dogfighting. Now, some five years after its initial release, the game is still on store shelves–a testament to its quality and advanced design.

Inductees Prior To 1989

- **BATTLE CHESS** (Interplay Productions, 1988)
- **CHESSMASTER** (The Software Toolworks, 1986)
- **DUNGEON MASTER** (FTL SOFTWARE, 1987)
- **EARL WEAVER BASEBALL** (Electronic Arts, 1986)
- **EMPIRE** (Interstel, 1978)
- **F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER** (MicroProse, 1988)
- **GETTYSBURG: THE TURNING POINT** (SSI, 1986)
- **KAMPFGRUPPE** (Strategic Simulations, 1985)
- **MECH BRIGADE** (Strategic Simulations, 1985)
- **MIGHT & MAGIC** (New World Computing, 1986)
- **M.U.L.E.** (Electronic Arts, 1983)
- **PIRATES** (MicroProse, 1987)
- **SIMCITY** (Maxis, 1987)
- **STARFLIGHT** (Electronic Arts, 1986)
- **THE BARD'S TALE** (Electronic Arts, 1985)
- **ULTIMA III** (Origin Systems, 1983)
- **ULTIMA IV** (Origin Systems, 1985)
- **WAR IN RUSSIA** (Strategic Simulations, 1984)
- **WASTELAND** (Interplay Productions, 1986)
- **WIZARDRY** (Sir-Tech Software, 1981)
- **ZORK** (Infocom, 1981)

Modern Inductees

- **ALONE IN THE DARK** (I-Motion, 1992)
- **BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR** (Dynamix, 1993)
- **DAY OF THE TENTACLE** (LucasArts, 1993)
- **DOOM** (id Software, 1993)
- **FALCON 3.0** (Spectrum HoloByte, 1991)
- **FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL PRO** (Dynamix, 1993)
- **GUNSHIP** (MicroProse, 1989)
- **HARPOON** (Three-Sixty Pacific, 1989)
- **KING'S QUEST V** (Sierra On-Line, 1990)
- **LEMMINGS** (Psygnosis, 1991)
- **LINKS 386 PRO** (Access Software, 1992)
- **M-1 TANK PLATOON** (MicroProse, 1989)
- **MASTER OF ORION** (MicroProse, 1993)
- **RAILROAD TYCOON** (MicroProse, 1990)
- **RED BARON** (Dynamix, 1990)
- **SID MEIER'S CIVILIZATION** (MicroProse, 1991)
- **THEIR FINEST HOUR** (LucasArts, 1989)
- **THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND** (LucasArts, 1990)
- **TIE FIGHTER** (LucasArts, 1994)
- **ULTIMA VI** (Origin Systems, 1990)
- **ULTIMA UNDERWORLD** (Origin Systems, 1992)
- **WING COMMANDER I & II** (Origin Systems, 1990-91)
- **WOLFENSTEIN 3-D** (id Software, 1992)
- **X-COM** (MicroProse, 1994)

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 until we reach the golden age of standardized platforms and bug-free programs. New patches are in red.

Battlecruiser 3000 AD V1.01c: The latest patch—release 2—in this ongoing saga will actually allow you to begin playing the game, but don't go in with lofty expectations.

Civilization II V2.42 Update: This prevents crashes with auto-settlers, help and Civilopedia screens, in addition to many other tweaks. If you have V2.41, the only addition is that heralds will now animate if you are using 32-bit video for windows.

Deadlock V1.2: If you barely meet the system requirements, this smoothes your path to planetary conquest. *Do not* use this file for any demo version.

Drumbeat PowerMac Update V2.04: For PowerMacs running V2.0.3 only, V2.0.4 contains over 180 changes, including a governor, which should keep those ships out there from skittering around like water bugs on faster machines. Be sure to read the "What's new..." document.

Dune 2 Sound Update: If you've returned to this real-time favorite, the update allows for the use of two sound cards simultaneously, and enables daughterboards such as the Waveblaster.

Front Page Sports Baseball V1.1 Patch: Corrects some errors, but leaves many others hanging over the plate.

Gabriel Knight 2 Mac V1.1: This Mac-only patch includes an interpreter update which fixes "Unimplemented Trap" error messages, random lockups and all other known issues.

Hoyle Solitaire Patch: Allows you to play the Windows version without a sound card.

Jagged Alliance: Deadly Games V1.12 Update: Mercs now speak up when they are spoken to. The F9 key will update the number of enemies in "sector" view, and modem dialing has been fixed to include asterisks and long phone numbers.

Jane's Longbow Patch: Your Longbow will now crash less due to DOS/4GW video hardware and memory settings conflicts. Combat is smoother, now that the shift +/– no longer gets stuck.

Lighthouse Patch: The light does shine more brightly: palette thrashing is fixed; lock-ups in dark domain are banished; the error opening resource 65535/v56 in submarine cavern is corrected. The dark side is that you have to start the game over.

Madden Football '97 1.1: Fixes the QB/RB/TE freezing or running in place after the snap, and will enable you to update rosters. Doesn't help the AI or poor gamepad support, though.

MechWarrior Mercenaries V1.05 Patch: All clans will benefit from this latest upgrade from Activision, which repairs a number of mech deficiencies.

Nemesis CD Patch: If your gaming nemesis has been a failure of the game to recognize your CD-ROM drive in DOS, this patch from Sir-Tech magically clears up the problem. Just be sure to check out the read.me text file.

Shattered Steel V1.03 Upgrade More mech mania can be had with this latest patch from Interplay.

Star Trek Judgment Rites V 1.01 Update (Mac only): Mac users with 32MB of real RAM, or Macs with two monitors, will find this patch more helpful than Mr. Scott during a Klingon attack.

The Incredible Machine 3 Mac Patch: Any Mac puzzle-meister having problems saving, restoring, and playing homemade puzzles, or beset by weird window sizing, lockups or other technical issues, will find their Rube Goldberg dreams less of a nightmare with this comprehensive patch.

Third Reich V1.21 Update: Mein Herr, we need concern ourselves with neither the Russian "deselect unit" bug, nor the freeze-up in Win95, any longer. Answer "ja" to any prompts to overwrite.

Warcraft II–Beyond the Dark Portal V1.33 Patch: Orcs and Humans alike will appreciate the fixes for incompatibility problems with old saved games. Expansion Heroes and the Draenor tileset are now available in the Map Editor. This self-installing archive is *only* for American versions of the game.

Wing Commander IV Win 95 Upgrade: Ol' Bluehair might raise an eyebrow, but this will update an existing MS-DOS installation of Wing IV to the Windows 95 version. Confederation commanders are encouraged to check the read.me file; this also requires Microsoft's DirectX2!

X-Wing Update: Owners of the floppy disk version can now fight the Empire in digital sound, without the Dark Side of the Force locking the game up.

▶ Check for new patches on this month's 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 publishers' Web sites or direct from the publisher with proof of purchase.

Publisher Web Sites

Many patches are available directly from the publishers, at the following sites:

Accolade: http://www.accolade.com
Activision: http://www.activision.com
Apogee/3d Realms: http://www.apogee1.com
Atomic Games: http://atomic.com
Bethesda: http://www.bethsoft.com
Blizzard: http://www.blizzard.com
Bullfrog: http://www.ea.com/bullfrog.html
Domark: http://www.domark.com
EA: http://www.ea.com
EA Sports: http://www.easports.com
Epic MegaGames: http://www.epicgames.com
id Software: http://www.idsoftware.com
Interactive Magic: http://www.imagicgames.com
Interplay: http://www.interplay.com
LucasArts: http://www.lucasarts.com
MicroProse/Spectrum HoloByte: http://www.microprose.com
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
Papyrus: http://www.sierra.com/papyrus
Philips: http://www.aimla.com/games
Sierra On-Line: http://www.sierra.com
Spectrum HoloByte: http://www.microprose.com
SSI: http://www.ssionline.com
Take 2: http://www.take2games.com/main.html
Virgin: http://www.vie.com

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	Duke Nukem 3D	Apogee	8.60
2	Crusader: No Remorse	EA/Origin	8.25
3	The Need For Speed SE	EA	8.08
4	Crusader: No Regret	EA/Origin	8.05
5	Quake	Id Software	7.95
6	Dark Forces	LucasArts	7.79
7	Doom II	Id Software	7.76
8	The Need For Speed	EA	7.67
9	Descent II	Interplay	7.49
10	EWJ 1&2: Whole Can O' Worms	Playmates	7.38

TOP ADVENTURE GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Gabriel Knight 2	Sierra	8.37
2	Pandora Directive	Access	8.29
3	Spycraft	Activision	7.84
4	Full Throttle	LucasArts	7.57
5	Zork Nemesis	Activision	7.39
6	Under A Killing Moon	Access	7.36
7	Star Control 3	Accolade	7.32
8	Phantasmagoria	Sierra	7.30
9	The Dig	LucasArts	7.09
10	Star Trek: TNG, Final Unity	Spectrum HoloByte	7.07

TOP CLASSIC/PUZZLE GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	You Don't Know Jack	Berkeley Systems	8.05
2	Incredible Toons	Sierra	7.25
3	Incredible Machine 2	Sierra	7.17
4	Monopoly	Westwood/Virgin	6.86
5	Lemmings Paintball	Psygnosis	5.89
6	Gearheads	Philips	5.59
7	Treasure Quest	Sirius Publishing	4.30
9	—		
9	—		
10	—		

TOP SIMULATION/SPACE COMBAT GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	8.57
2	Grand Prix 2	MicroProse	8.49
3	Mechwarrior 2	Activision	8.36
4	Wing Commander 3	EA/Origin	8.26
5	AH-64 Longbow	Origin	8.22
6	EF2000	Ocean	8.02
7	Silent Hunter	SSI	8.01
8	U.S. Marine Fighters	EA	7.99
9	Advanced Tactical Fighters	EA	7.78
10	Nascar Racing	Sierra	7.76

TOP SPORTS GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Links LS	Access	8.75
2	NHL Hockey '97	EA Sports	8.59
3	Tripleplay '97	EA Sports	7.79
4	NHL Hockey '96	EA Sports	7.78
5	Madden '97	EA Sports	7.76
6	FPS Football Pro '96	Sierra	7.75
7	NBA Live '96	EA Sports	7.65
8	NBA Live '95	EA Sports	7.60
9	PGA Tour Golf 486	EA Sports	7.49
10	Tony Larussa 3 '96	Stormfront Studios	7.46

TOP STRATEGY GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Warcraft II Expansion Disk	Blizzard	9.07
2	Warcraft II	Blizzard	8.97
3	Civilization II	MicroProse	8.84
4	C & C: Covert Operations	Westwood/Virgin	8.56
5	Command & Conquer	Westwood/Virgin	8.46
6	Heroes Of Might & Magic	New World Computing	8.08
7	Master Of Magic	MicroProse	8.07
8	Jagged Alliance: Deadly Games	Sir-Tech	8.03
9	Jagged Alliance	Sir-Tech	7.87
10	Warlords II Deluxe	SSG	7.78

TOP ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Daggerfall	Bethesda	7.75
2	Might & Magic: Clouds Of Xeen	New World Computing	7.63
3	Anvil Of Dawn	New World Computing	7.37
4	Stonekeep	Interplay	7.06
5	Ravenloft: Stone Prophet	SSI	6.80
6	Albion	Blue Byte	6.23
7	Wolf	Sanctuary Woods	6.21
8	—		
9	—		
10	—		

TOP WARGAMES

	GAME	COMPANY	SCORE
1	Steel Panthers Campaign Disk	SSI	8.83
2	Steel Panthers	SSI	8.51
3	Panzer General	SSI	8.38
4	Battleground: Shiloh	TalonSoft	8.20
5	Robert E. Lee Civil War	Sierra	8.19
6	Battleground: Waterloo	TalonSoft	7.83
7	Battleground: Gettysburg	TalonSoft	7.52
8	Flight Commander 2	Avalon Hill	7.08
9	Perfect General II	QQP	7.06
10	Age Of Rifles	SSI	6.84

	GAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE
★ 1	Warcraft II Expansion Disk	Blizzard	ST	8.67
2	Warcraft II	Blizzard	ST	8.66
3	Civilization II	MicroProse	ST	8.61
★ 4	Steel Panthers Campaign Disk	SSI	WG	8.60
★ 5	Links LS	Access	SP	8.53
★ 6	Duke Nukem 3D	3D Realms	AC	8.48
7	NHL '97	EA Sports	SP	8.43
★ 8	Wing Commander IV	EA/Origin	SI	8.32
9	C & C: Covert Operations	Westwood/Virgin	ST	8.31
10	Steel Panthers	SSI	WG	8.28
11	Grand Prix 2	MicroProse	SI	8.19
12	Command & Conquer	Westwood/Virgin	ST	8.18
13	Panzer General	SSI	WG	8.09
★ 14	Gabriel Knight 2	Sierra On-Line	AD	8.01
15	Mechwarrior 2	Activision	SI	8.00
16	Pandora Directive	Accolade	AC	7.99
17	Wing Commander 3	EA/Origin	SI	7.98
18	Crusader: No Remorse	EA/Origin	AC	7.96
19	AH-64 Longbow	Origin	SI	7.94
20	Battleground: Shiloh	Talonsoft	WG	7.93
21	**Robert E. Lee Civil War**	**Sierra**	**WG**	**8.19**
22	Heroes Of Might & Magic	New World Computing	ST	8.00
	The Need For Speed SE	EA	RA	8.00
24	Master Of Magic	MicroProse	ST	7.90
★ 25	You Don't Know Jack	Berkeley Systems	TV	8.00
	Crusader: No Regret	EA/Origin	AC	7.90
27	Jagged Alliance: Deadly Games	Sir-Tech	ST	7.89
28	EF2000	Ocean	SI	7.88
29	Silent Hunter	SSI	SI	7.80
30	U.S. Marine Fighters	Ocean	SI	7.77
31	Quake	id Software	AC	7.76
32	Jagged Alliance	Sir-Tech	ST	7.76
33	Spycraft	Activision	AD	7.74
34	Battleground: Waterloo	Talonsoft	WG	7.69
35	Dark Forces	LucasArts	SI	7.67
	Triplepley '97	EA Sports	SP	7.66
37	Advanced Tactical Fighters	Origin	SI	7.60
	NHL Hockey '96	EA Sports	SP	7.60
	Warlords II Deluxe	SSG	ST	7.59
40	Nascar Racing	Sierra	SI	7.58
	Madden '97	EA Sports	SP	7.57
	Doom II	id Software	AC	7.56
43	FPS Football Pro '96	Sierra	SP	7.55
★	Daggerfall	Bethesda	RP	7.54
45	Warcraft	Blizzard	ST	7.52
46	**F-22 Lightning II**	**NovaLogic**	**SI**	**7.71**
47	The Need For Speed	EA Sports	RA	7.50
48	Fantasy General	SSI	ST	7.49
49	NBA Live '96	EA Sports	SP	7.48
50	Might & Magic: Clouds Of Xeen	New World Computing	RP	7.47

	GAME	COMPANY	TYPE	SCORE
51	Romance Three Kingdoms	Koei	ST	7.60
	Quake Mission Pack	id	FI	7.60
	NBA Live '96	EA Sports	SP	7.60
54	Full Throttle	LucasArts	AD	7.57
55	Civnet	MicroProse	ST	7.56
56	Battleground: Gettysburg	Talonsoft	WG	7.52
57	Hi-Octane II	Bullfrog	AC	7.49
	PGA Tour Golf 486	EA Sports	SP	7.49
59	Star Trek: Judgment Rites	Interplay / Stardock	SP	7.46
60	Wing Commander IV	Origin	SP	7.40
61	X-Com: Terror From The Deep	MicroProse	ST	7.39
	Zork Nemesis	Activision	AD	7.39
63	Bad Mojo: Where Can I Go? Worse	Playmates	AC	7.38
64	Anvil Of Dawn	New World Computing	RP	7.37
65	Under A Killing Moon	Access	AD	7.36
66	Sim City 2000 CD	Maxis	ST	7.33
67	Doom	id	AC	7.32
68	Star Control 3	Accolade	AD	7.32
69	Magic Carpet 2	EA/Bullfrog	AC	7.32
70	Phantasmagoria	Sierra	AD	7.30
71	Time Commando	Adrenalin	AC	7.30
72	MS Powerplay	Virgin	SP	7.27
73	Incredible Toons	Psygnosis	DP	7.25
74	Wings Of Glory	Origin/Warm Eagle Software	SI	7.23
75	Virtual Pool	Interplay	AD	7.22
76	Terra Nova: Strike Force Centauri	Looking Glass	AC	7.21
77	Flight Unlimited	Looking Glass	SI	7.20
78	Incredible Machine 2	Sierra	DP	7.17
79	Hardball 5	Accolade	SP	7.16
80	System Shock	EA/Origin	AC	7.12
	Caesar II	Sierra	ST	7.12
82	The Dig	LucasArts	AD	7.09
83	Hyper 3D Pinball	Virgin	AC	7.08
	Fleet Commander 2	Avalon Hill	WG	7.08
85	1942 Pacific Air War	MicroProse	SI	7.07
	Star Trek: TNG, Final Unity	Spectrum Holobyte	AD	7.07
87	Perfect General II	QQP	WG	7.06
88	Stonekeep	Interplay	RP	7.06
89	Virtua Fighter PC	Sega	AC	7.06
90	Rebelstar	Electronic Arts	AD	7.05
91	Aces Of The Deep	Sierra	SI	7.04
92	Hopkins	Activision	AC	7.01
93	Legends Of Kesmai 3	Westwood/Virgin	AD	6.98
94	Warhammer	Sandcastle	ST	6.97
95	Shadow II	Blue Byte	ST	6.96
96	Operation	Accolade	ST	6.94
97	Battleship 2	Ocean	SI	6.93
98	Apache	Interactive Magic	SI	6.88
99	X	Virgin	ST	6.86
	Monopoly	Westwood/Virgin	DP	6.80

★ Red = New Game

MARTIN CIRULIS

What's The Deal With... Getting Excited?

By the time you read this, the Christmas season buying frenzy will be over—and more importantly, the flood of new software will slow to a trickle. Oh, there will still be a few hot items that missed their December deadlines, and the one or two casualties that won't make it onto the retail shelves until next Yuletide, if ever...but for the most part, the deafening hype roar will have died down—at least for a couple of months, before picking up steam as we gain on the E3 show. As spring approaches, the myriad screams of "This is the next big thing for (fill in the genre) games!" will begin again. Looking at the mound of blazingly hyped software piled high on my desk at the beginning of December, I find myself wondering if any of these games will turn out to be the phenomenon they all claim to be.

Well, all the nominees are not in yet, but you know what? I don't think there's a hall-of-famer in the bunch. Oh, don't get me wrong. There are some very cool games out there this season, in almost every genre of computer gaming—STEEL PANTHERS 2, AZREAL'S TEAR, MOO2, NHL '97, and QUAKE, to name a few titles with some serious hard-drive hang-time for me. But I can't honestly say that any of them really shook me to the core of my gamer's soul. Of course, my first thought after this epiphany was to question whether being a critic has just jaded me beyond redemption—and, while this may be true in a small way, upon further introspection I discovered that there were still things that would hush my puppies should I ever come across them.

> **"If I've got a backpack with 50 rockets in it, then I want to be able to go *through* that door."**

For instance, I think NUKEM and QUAKE are nice twists of the form, and certainly a hoot to play networked—but regardless of the horde of "QUAKE/NUKEM Beaters" being touted and previewed left, right and center, it's going to take a leap beyond cooler graphics and more weapons to get me to start shoving copies of a 3D shooter in my friends' faces again. To get excited over a first-person shooter, I'm going to need to see a bit more "environment" involved. And I mean more than flying and cracks in walls that bust open when you blow them up; I need a total environment where I can affect everything and nothing is "wallpaper." Sure, the key card may be important, but if I've got a backpack with 50 rockets in it, then I want to be able to go *through* that door instead—or through the wall beside it, for that matter. And if the explosions bring down the ceiling and crush me, or start a fire that suffocates my character, all the better. One's own stupidity should be at least as dangerous as the enemy.

In CRPGs, I'm impressed with work like DAGGERFALL and I'm hoping DUNGEON KEEPER and DIABLO will make dungeon hacks the social experience they were meant to be...but I won't be really as thrilled as I was playing ULTIMA IV until the form begins to resemble the books and stories they are supposedly modeled after. Even the weakest *D&D* novelization has more going for it than the thinly disguised "go there, fetch that, talk to them" routines that are still the backbone of these games. The technical sophistication is out there now; designers could bring to bear some of the subtleties and scale that have made High Fantasy a reading staple. More characters, more subplots that aren't FedEx runs, and more betrayals that aren't as obvious as Darth Vader lurking in the Vatican. And for the love of Tolkien, I need to see some more interesting properties being optioned out there. Where's my CRPG set in Jack Vance's dark fantasy worlds or the military intrigue of Cook's *Black Company* books? I realize it costs a bit to pay a writer for the use of intellectual property, but Feist's *Betrayal at Krondor* should prove that it's usually worth it.

Across the other genres, I think things can be done that would be truly exciting. Races with utterly different technologies, in "spaceploitation" games. Hockey and basketball games that have players that act like the names on their jerseys. Adventure games without any gratuitous "puzzles" that are there just to kill some time, and so on. I may be getting a bit jaded, but there are still a lot of things that I (and most gamers, I suspect) would love to see. Being derivative isn't a crime if you just go a little farther with it.

So in the long run, what does it take for me to get excited about a game these days? What do I need to go along with the pretty pictures, the multimedia databases, and the endless hype?

The same thing that did it for Darwin. A little evolution.

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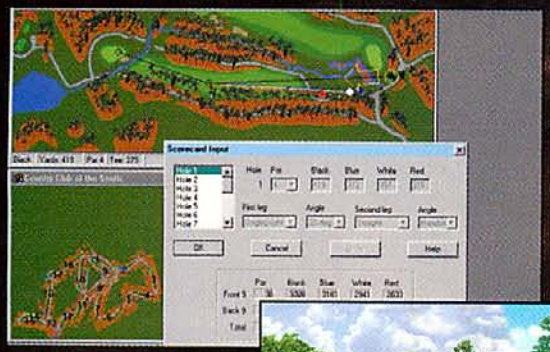

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The Hole View of the new bunker.

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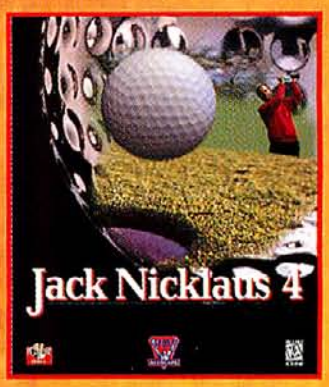

PC CD-ROM WINDOWS 95

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