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NUMBER 86

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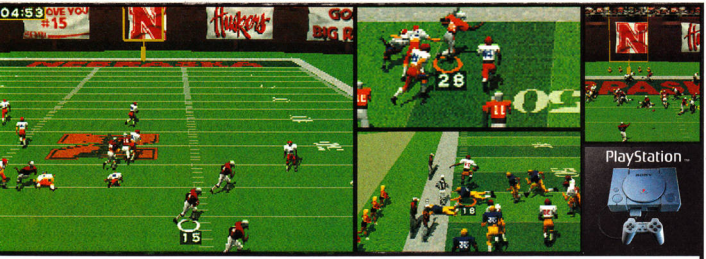

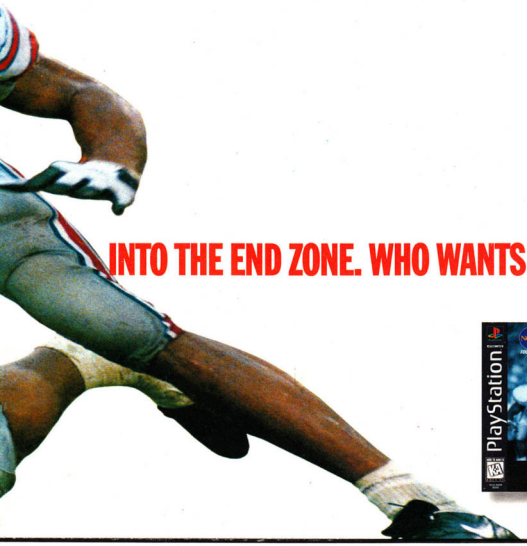

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ELECTRONIC GAMING MONTHLY

By **Ed Semrad**

The Nintendo 64 launch in Japan was apparently a success with all 500,000 game systems reportedly sold in a matter of days. But was it really the beginning of a new generation in video games?

First, let's look at the numbers. While selling a half million systems is certainly a great way to roll out a product, one has to remember that it happened in Japan. Even Pioneer's LaserActive and NEC's PC-FX sold very well when they were introduced, mainly because Japanese game players like new technology and aren't hesitant to spend a few hundred dollars for something new. We'll have to wait and see how well the second production run of N64s sells later this month. If all 300,000 sell out, Nintendo could just break the magical 1 million mark in a matter of a couple of months.

On the game front, Super Mario 64 was also a hot item. The story is that it was selling on a 1-to-1 basis with the systems. Nothing new here, players have to play something on the new system. Anyway, who could resist playing the best 3-D game ever made? It was no surprise when it easily got the number one spot on the *Famitsu*'s weekly game chart. At press time, Super Mario 64 still remained at number one for the second week. PilotWings 64 is a different story. It started at the number-four spot and quickly dropped to number seven the second week. Apparently the Japanese game players' interests quickly switched to the new second- and third-generation Saturn and PlayStation games like International Track & Field and KOF '95. Perhaps PilotWings will have a more loyal following here in the U.S. The third N64 launch title? Don't even ask. The uninspiring and certainly underpowered Japanese chess game started at number 16 and dropped to position 24. Apparently we were about the only players who opted to buy this sad game. (It's probably a difference in culture.)

Ed tries out Namco's Galaxian 3 at a recent Japanese PlayStation show.

So where does Nintendo go from here? It appears that they are going to "coast" for a couple of months as there are no new games scheduled to come out for about 60 days. There has been no hype or new screen shots in the Japanese magazines for Nintendo's second batch of games like Mario Kart R, Star Wars or Cruis'n USA and one would guess that having done the required "official" Japan-first launch, Nintendo would now have to start cranking on getting the half million systems and games ready for the scheduled U.S. launch on Sept. 30.

Meanwhile, in the U.S. the sales of the grey market N64 import machine are brisk despite very limited quantities and an unusually high $699+ price (plus shipping) being charged in some stores. Also, Nintendo of America is being unusually quiet this time around about any potential U.S. game compatibility problems that we might eventually encounter if our players jump the gun and buy the Japanese N64 system. Hmmm.

Bottom line: It's still too early to see if the N64 will become the dominant game system in Japan. The only thing I know for sure is that I'm having the most fun I've had in years playing Super Mario 64. It's like 1991 all over again when I spent three weeks playing Super Mario World. Good job Mr. Miamoto!

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SOVIET STRIKE CRASHES INTO ACTION IN THIS ISSUE. CHECK OUT WHAT MAKES THIS GAME TRULY STAND OUT AS A WINNER ON PAGE 50!

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WIN BIG!

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FEATURES

SAY HELLO TO THE NINTENDO 64 AND ITS AWESOME GAMES!

With the Nintendo 64's release just around the corner, gamers will finally be able to answer the question: Was the system worth the wait? With *EGM*'s in-depth coverage and detailed pictures on the system as well as Mario, PilotWings and other N64 games in this issue, rest assured that the answer will be YES!

"...gave players their first chance to soar above realistic terrains."

IT'S A LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NiGHTS

Go behind the scenes to take a look at one of Sega's biggest games coming out this year: NiGHTS. Play as a child, traveling in a land of dreams trying to stop an evil wizard from porting over to your reality. With awesome graphics and high replay value, this game will give Sony and Nintendo a run for their money!

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"...she carries two pistols that she wields *Reservoir Dogs*-style."

NEXT WAVE

82 SATURN
Street Fighter Alpha 2 serves up some serious fighting action!

88 PLAYSTATION
Save the Muu Muus from the evil clutches of an unusual baddie in Jumping Flash! 2.

106 SUPER NES
Race as one of your favorite rubber-suit wearing Power Rangers in a fight to the finish line.

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THE BEST VIDEO GAME NEWS

PRESS START

SELLS LIKE HOTCAKES

The Nintendo 64 Launch in Japan Made History—but will History Repeat Itself in the U.S? *EGM* Checks It Out

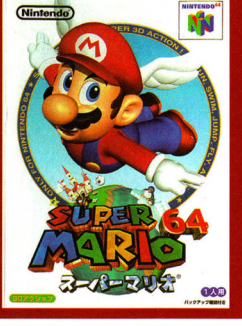
The June 23 launch of the Nintendo 64 in Japan, as expected, generated incredible fanfare—enough to arouse the interest of major news networks that turned some N64 sales points into a media event. The system launched with three available games and a lineup of peripherals and controllers.

Nintendo of America representatives had no official comment on the success of the Japanese N64 launch. However, a source close to the company claimed the stores sold 90 percent of the initial 350,000 systems in the first couple of days. In addition, the source asserted that Super Mario 64 sold at almost a 1-to-1 ratio with the system. Those numbers seem to jibe with published reports from Japan. In those statements, Nintendo of Japan officials were quoted as saying 80 percent of the 500,000 systems were already reserved for gamers—and those were just gamers who already pre-ordered systems. In fact, most of the initial lines that formed for the N64 on June 23 were players who already preordered, and were just impatient about getting their hands on the system, according to *Weekly Famitsu* Magazine in Japan. Overall, the launch seems to have generated phenomenal sales, which seem likely to continue this summer.

and on this end...

Thanks to importers and mail-order houses, die-hard players did celebrate the Nintendo 64 launch here in the United States by buying Japanese systems and games. However, as in the Japanese PlayStation and Saturn sales, the fun didn't come cheap. Prices for the system reportedly went as high as $1,000 a pop; however, *EGM*'s checks to import houses revealed price tags closer to the $500 range—a system plus one game. Games sold separately were running for $140-150 (not too bad considering that gamers in Japan are paying $95 retail for N64 carts). Even with these high prices, sales of the Japanese N64 have been rather brisk, with one retailer going as far as saying, "They're selling like hotcakes."

The Three Amigos: N64 Launch Titles



Super Mario 64: Not surprisingly, reports from Japan indicate this game has sold at a 1-to-1 ratio with the system—not too shocking considering the dearth of titles out in Japan (and Mario's popularity). However, it's too bad the launch in the United States will have no pack-in—after all, why give away for free a game you know everyone'll buy?

Here's the box cover for Seta's Japanese chess game. This game, along with the other titles, is selling for roughly $95 U.S., a tough sell when 32-Bit CDs cost half that price.

History repeats itself: Nintendo launched the original Pilotwings to show off the Super NES' Mode 7 graphics (remember the rotating grounds?); this new version truly showcases the N64's anti-aliasing and 3-D capabilities.

Bigger isn't always better: Compared to the Super NES cart (above), the N64 cart (below) is the same thickness but it's an inch thinner and a tad shorter.

But will the phenomenal Japan launch be mirrored in the United States? While the Christmas season remains an X-factor, with Sony and Sega yet to counterattack, the first few weeks of the U.S. launch are bound to look like Japan's, but on a smaller scale—shortages and all. With that said, here's some factors to consider if you're thinking of buying a Nintendo 64 system on Sept. 30:

■ **Prepurchase:** There've been reports on the Internet that some retail chains are cutting off their prepurchase programs for fear of a system shortage. While this might be a smoke screen by Nintendo of America to entice more prepurchase sales, the first two shipments of Nintendo 64 systems in Japan were promptly devoured by retailers within days. Considering that only 500,000 systems will be up for grabs for the entire U.S. this Christmas, prepurchasing may be a prudent move—besides, the $249 price tag doesn't seem to be going down any time soon. An added bonus is that a prepurchased system guarantees a $249 price tag; although that's Nintendo's suggested retail price, a caveat states retailers can charge whatever they want—so if shortages occur, the N64's price might very well rise without Nintendo's consent.

More importantly, it may be a good idea to prepurchase software if you can find a store that's doing so. Some retailers experienced similar shortages with Saturn and PlayStation software in the initial weeks of their respective launches—expect history to repeat itself here.

■ **Cheat:** If you're really, really that depraved for N64 action, you might want to shop around before prepurchasing. After all, Nintendo will have to ship all these systems weeks before launch—and they will find it difficult enforcing the Sept. 30 launch date with every single retail store, no matter how hard it may try. In Japan, a few vendors jumped the gun and sold their systems the night before or at midnight, which was frowned upon by Nintendo but inevitable. Ask your local retailer when exactly they'll be selling the

On the road again: To meet the anticipated demand (and long lines) for preordered N64 systems, some vendors set up shop in the streets.

Mad Catz Gets Into N64 Act

Joining Nintendo's launch of its 64-Bit platform will be Mad Catz. The peripheral maker will come out with several accessories for the N64, including the Advanced Controller (below), which has a Turbo button in addition to the standard N64 controls. Also, Mad Catz will make an N64 version of its Analog Steering Wheel, which gives players two foot pedals, a stick shift and a wheel that turns 270 degrees. Other products slated for release include 256 KB memory cartridges, a flight stick and various cables.

Talk about priming the pump: Roughly a week before launch, Nintendo of Japan sent out demo units to retailers so shoppers could sample the goods.

N64—if you're lucky, you might get your system hours or days ahead of the crowd. (However, expect Nintendo to levy some sort of penalty on retailers who sell before the launch date.)

wanted: N64 games

The only factor tempering the Nintendo 64 launch, it seems, was the lack of software available. Even worse, the N64 launch took place without an RPG game—a staple for Japanese gamers—and none seem to be in the works until next year. Mario 64 may have sold the system, but the N64'll need a lot more than that to win the video game war.

EGM has compiled a list of all *officially* announced N64 games to date (* denotes working title):

■ **Games for U.S. Release (first-party titles except where otherwise noted):** Blast Corps, Body Harvest, Buggie Boogie, Cruis'n USA, Doom (Williams), FIFA 96 (EA Sports), Freak Boy (Virgin), GoldenEye 007, Ken Griffey Jr. Baseball, Killer Instinct, Kirby's Air Ride, Mission: Impossible (Ocean), Monster Dunk (Mindscape), Mortal Kombat Trilogy (Williams), NBA Hang Time (Williams), PilotWings 64, Robotech: Crystal Dreams (GameTek), Robotron X (Williams), Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire, Silicon Valley* (BMG), StarFox 64, Super Mario 64, Super Mario Kart R, Tetrisphear, Top Gear Rally (Kemco), Turok: Dinosaur Hunter (Acclaim), Ultra Combat* (GT Interactive), Ultra Descent* (Interplay), War Gods (Williams), Wave Race 64, Wayne Gretzky Hockey (Williams) and Zelda 64*.

■ **Partial List of Games for Japanese Release (not already listed above):** Dark Rift (Vic Tokai), Dragon Quest VII (Enix), Cu-om-pa (T&E Soft) and Super Bomberman 64* (Hudson Soft). ■

(Pictures on this page were reprinted courtesy of the July 19 issue of *Weekly Famitsu* Magazine)

PRESS START

Famitsu

You'd think one huge system launch would be enough excitement for **Nintendo**. Nope: Now the company wants to launch into outer space! This is no small-fry operation either, considering its main partners are **Nomura Research Institute** and the software empire **Microsoft**. The partnership's game plan is to provide TV content to homes via satellite communication, similar to digital satellite systems here in the U.S. However, the service would provide Internet and online programs in addition to regular TV shows. The program could be up and running as soon as mid-1997. Given the presence of both **Nintendo** and **Microsoft**, there's sure to be lots of gaming-related material available; however, at a press conference **Nintendo** of Japan President Hiroshi Yamauchi dismissed rumors that the system would turn the Nintendo 64 into a possible Internet machine. For now, the company will pursue PC-based software (not just games) that could include news and other services. While **Nintendo** provides the home linkup and modem devices, **Microsoft** will provide the 'net interface, which will be based on its network service. Unfortunately for U.S. gamers, the deal at this point involves only the Japanese market.

SATURN'S FIRST TO EXPLOIT 'NET

Peripherals Give System Full-Fledged Online Access

In the race to marry online access with video gaming, Sega has blown the doors off its competition in Japan—and aims to do the same in the United States. In a matter of months, the company has announced a new modem, called Net Link and several new online services that run the gamut from avatar-based worlds to network gaming via the XBand—all lumped together under the Sega Saturn Network label.

New details have surfaced about how the Saturn will handle these chores, beginning with the introduction of two new peripherals (shown below) that very well might make their way to the United States.

The Netscape-compatible browser program that will be able to wade through Web pages will be placed on CD, and 'net access will be made available through 150 service providers in Japan.

An additional service, dubbed Habitat II, will let users create an alter ego and explore a virtual community. In this digital domain, visitors will be able to see each other in the "streets" and interact with one another—not just with Saturn users, but with PC owners who have the Habitat II program (which probably won't be released outside of Japan, unfortunately.)

Still, the Net Link service that should generate the most excitement with players is XBand, which will connect two players by phone lines and let them battle head-to-head with no noticeable latency.

Sega of America has announced only Baku Baku as a Net Link-compatible network game. Also announced by Sega of Japan are some of the games that will be made XBand compatible: Virtua Fighter Remix, World Series Baseball Sega Rally Championship and Daytona USA.

A slot on the right side of the Net Link modem (14.4 kbps in Japan, 28.8 in the United States) will hold credit cards, which will operate much like prepaid calling cards. The cards, which will sell for roughly $20 U.S., will give gamers 100 XBand sessions.

Look for the U.S. version of the Net Link system late this year, with a price tag of $200. ■

The XBand's first compatible game will be Sega's Virtua Fighter Remix, which will be bundled in with the Net Link modem package.

A special Web page brings 'net surfers up to speed on the Saturn's navigational controls.

The Saturn Net Link: Spec Sheet

Disk Drive

As previously hinted at in the Sega Saturn owners manual, this device will let gamers save game data as well as e-mail.
- **Uses: 3.5" HD floppies**
- **Weight: 1.5 lbs.**
- **Dimensions: 5" wide x 9" deep x 1.5" tall**
- **Cost: About $98 U.S.**

Keyboard

Aside from the color and extra keys to help type some Kanji characters, this keyboard looks much like the XBand keyboard in the United States. It'll make writing e-mail and 'net surfing much easier.
- **Weight: 1.4 lbs.**
- **Dimensions: 14.5" wide x 6" deep x .4" tall**
- **Cost: About $78 U.S.**

Modem

This device plugs into the Saturn's cart slot. A slot on the right holds credit cards for phone time.
- **Weight: .46 lbs.**
- **Dimensions: 5.4" wide x 1.2" deep x 3.5" tall**
- **Cost: About $148 U.S.**

TIDBITS

For all those holding their breath for a **Sony** PlayStation Internet surfer, here's something to mull over: The company this fall will put out an Internet surfer box that hooks up to your TV, a la the **Bandai** Pippin @World. **Sony** is licensing technology from **WebTV Networks**, which ostensibly will navigate the problems of fitting a Web page on a low-resolution television screen. What does this mean for gamers? Well, the announcement indicates **Sony** will not go **Sega**'s route of providing Web access through a video game console because it would be cheaper for the company to build a separate machine better suited for the task of 'net surfing. On the other hand, it's not out of the question for **Sony** to apply the Web TV technology and create a PlayStation peripheral add-on that would work with the console—and perhaps offer networked gaming—although that assertion is pure speculation at this point.

SNK has found a quick way to boost the **SEGA** Saturn's brainpower, by making a 1 MB RAM memory expansion cartridge that plugs into the back of the console. This should help reduce load time between the CD and system—but only with games designed to be compatible with the 1 MB add-on. **SNK**, as you may recall in an earlier issue of *EGM*, was first to create a CD+cartridge game with King of Fighters '95 for the Saturn.

(Pictures on this page were reprinted courtesy of the July 12 issue of *Weekly Famitsu* Magazine)

PC/MACINTOSH

MIRAGE

http://www.gtinteractive.com

GT Interactive Software

RATING PENDING

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TIDBITS

Who says video games and movies don't mix? **Cineplex Odeon**, the movie theater juggernaut, has opened the first of what it hopes will be a chain of multimedia entertainment centers. Based in Canada, the first centers will feature theaters combined with arcade games, Internet surf stations (so visitors can go online) and a healthy mix of bars and restaurants. **Sega GameWorks** has gotten into the act to shore up the video game end of the center, providing multiplayer units of racing games such as Manx TT, and arcade hits such as Virtual Cop II and Sega Rally Championship.

Are you ready to rumble? **T*HQ** apparently is, now that it has bought a 25 percent stake into **Inland Productions**. The Chicago-based developer plans to make a World Championship Wrestling-licensed brawler for the **Sony** PlayStation and **Nintendo** 64.

Editor's Note

We've got good news and bad news. The bad news is that *EGM*'s 1996 Super Tour has been canceled. But don't fret: The good news is that *EGM*'s video game road show is being revamped and made part of a bigger, better tour with **MTV**. That city-to-city tour should kick off in the spring of 1997; keep an eye on *EGM* for further updates.

STICK TO IT

The Review Crew Test Flies Sony's Big-Time Controller

Just when you thought you've seen it all when it comes to controllers, Sony has rolled out the dual arcade joystick for the PlayStation: two massive analog joysticks with more than enough buttons to spare.

Recently, members of *EGM*'s Review Crew had their first hands-on experience with the controller--which sells for roughly $80 in Japan--with Sony's new flight sim Bogey: Dead 6--the first title fully compatible with the controller (which can also be used with any PS game with analog compatibility, such as Wipeout or Warhawk.) Here are the Crew's first impressions…

■ **Crispin Boyer:** Not only is this dual-stick analog contraption cool to look at, it's also sturdy and feels like it wouldn't be out of place in a fighter plane. It has a lot of potential: Its two-stick configuration is perfect for tank, mech and helicopter sims. This stick's only good for analog games, though. Although you can switch it to Digital Mode for standard games, you have to lean the sticks pretty far for their movements to register.

■ **Shawn Smith:** At first, I was scared of Sony's big analog stick. It was so darn huge and had many buttons to use. I then played Bogey with it, and my fears were put aside. I liked Bogey to begin with, but with the analog stick it was even better. Here are the two problems: It's just for flight sims, and it could go unsupported. Does that justify spending the $80?

■ **Dan Hsu:** The controller is a great addition for anyone who likes flight sims, (but) I wouldn't recommend paying the high price asked for this gargantuan piece of equipment. Its usefulness is too limited. The button configuration on the sticks themselves are great for Bogey, but not much else. My recommendation? Wait for Sony to (hopefully) build a hand-sized analog controller like Nintendo and Sega. ■

A close-up look of the right joystick reveals the cone-shaped thumb pad, which is the equivalent of the D-pad.

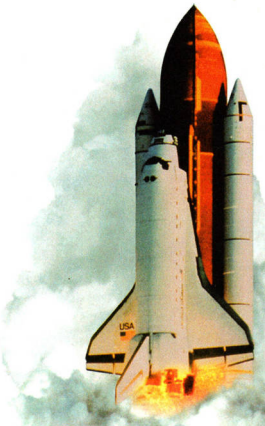
Get A Grip

Behind both sticks are two buttons: The top is pretty standard, but the one below requires the use of your pinky, which takes getting used to.

PLAY PS ON YOUR PC???

Not exactly, but a new peripheral from Waka Manufacturing in Japan will allow gamers to play PlayStation games on a PC monitor. The device (shown at right), a small gray box, converts the normal video signal from the PlayStation console so it can fit on a high-resolution PC monitor screen: 8-Bit, 256-step, 16.7 million colors. The result is a sharper, brighter screen image than possible on regular TVs. The audio end is handled by a stereo output jack with a volume knob. The setup works well with a pair of stereo headphones.

In addition to the video out serial port is another port to connect a PC to the same monitor. The $198 U.S. price tag gears this peripheral toward die-hard video-quality fanatics, but there's no word yet if it will come to the United States. ■



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Get ready for a **smorgasbord of Kirby** action. Kirby Super Star.™* Eight tasty games in one! And this time the softie has an edge: Now he not only eats his enemies, he can take their powers (23 to be exact). In this world, **you are who you eat.** Chow down on a ninja and Kirby goes kung-fu fighting! He can even **hock up** the bad guys and use them as helpers. So prepare yourself. 'Cause this time, the marshmallow's doing the roasting.

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REVIEW CREW

THE REVIEW CREW

SHAWN
SMITH

CURRENT FAVORITES:
Super Mario 64
Die Hard Trilogy
Kirby's Super Star

Shawn's been having this weird fantasy about being a plumber that has to rid a skyscraper of terrorists, but instead of shooting them, he ingests them.

DAN
HSU

CURRENT FAVORITES:
Tetris Attack
Super Mario 64
NiGHTS

Hsu's just about playing games 24 hours a day now. He's in heaven. Lately, he's been spending quality time with his wife playing Tetris Attack.

CRISPIN
BOYER

CURRENT FAVORITES:
PilotWings 64
Gunship
Tomb Raider

Cris has had a tough time getting any work done lately. He has been too busy playing PilotWings 64, Mario and this month's collection of other great games.

SUSHI X

CURRENT FAVORITES:
Spot Goes To Hollywood
SF A2
Legacy of Kain

After seeing the possibilities of the Nintendo 64, he has started a quest seeking upcoming N64 fighting games. We haven't seen him since.

The Review Crew rates each game in several categories: visuals, sound, ingenuity and replay value. The averages of the four members' scores are listed at the bottom of the reviews. These averages are independent of the overall scores, which are displayed behind each review and based on how the games compare to other titles on the same system.

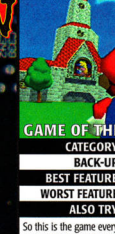
THE RATING SCALE:

10-Perfection	5-Average
9-Virtually flawless	4-Rent first
8-Splendid	3-Time-waster
7-Worthy	2-Don't even rent
6-Good, not great	1-Flush it

NINTENDO 64

SUPER MARIO 64

NINTENDO



GAME OF THE MONTH

CATEGORY: ACTION/ADVENTURE
BACK-UP: BATTERY
BEST FEATURE: EVERYTHING
WORST FEATURE: CAMERA ANGLES
ALSO TRY: NOTHIN' LIKE IT YET

So this is the game everyone has been drooling about? Hmmm...I can see why! Mario 64 is just incredible. I tried and succeeded in not letting the hype get to me. Now I've been able to play it first hand, and I am happy to report that it is everything Nintendo has said it would be and more. The beautiful thing is that it's as fun to play as the originals on the NES and Super NES, but now it's in the 3-D world with mind-boggling graphics. My only gripes are the minor polygon break-up problems and the switching views in the middle of the action, but these are minor problems that are eventually overlooked.

Shawn

How fun can a game get? I couldn't put the controller down, nor did I want to. Everyday, I long to play this game after a day's worth of work. That's how you tell it's a great game. The graphics were, can you say, "WOW?" When I went back to other 32-Bit games, I realized how impressive anti-aliasing could be. Do you want replay value? You got it. It will take you forever to find all the secrets here. So what kept this game from a perfect 10? Occasional polygon breakup and some goofy camera angles that made it hard to tell where you were exactly. Otherwise, Mario 64 is perfect and completely addictive. It will impress you.

Dan

The world of video games is seeing a revolution, and SM64 is leading it. This is a totally new kind of game—the first true 3-D game—and it packs a ton of jaw-dropping innovations. Mario may not be able to shoot fireballs anymore, but now he can pull off nearly 30 distinct moves. The game's huge levels (there are more than 25) are beautiful, difficult and dynamic; they offer new challenges when Mario revisits them. SM64 does suffer from a few minor but frustrating flaws. You can't always aim the camera where you need to, and control becomes awkward when the camera angle shifts rapidly. Still, it's an instant classic.

Crispin

Finally a playable version of one of the most hyped games to hit the shelves this last year. Seeing that there are very few other titles to compare this one against for the same system, this title's merits are 80 percent earned by the game and 20 percent inspired by the outstanding technology in the Nintendo 64. With better than arcade quality graphics and sound along with near perfection in control and free roaming views, players can expect only the best from SM64. If the rest of the N64 titles are half as good as this release, the control of the video game market may once again return to the folks at Nintendo.

Sushi X

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
9	8	9	9

NINTENDO 64

PILOTWINGS 64

NINTENDO

CATEGORY: FLIGHT SIM
BACK-UP: BATTERY
BEST FEATURE: VARIETY
WORST FEATURE: NOT ORIGINAL
ALSO TRY: NOTHIN' LIKE IT YET

The second game to be seen on the N64. I'm wondering if before long all of the games coming out for the N64 will have spectacular graphics. Then games like Mario 64 will have set a standard of sorts. If this is the case, PilotWings 64 is another graphically impressive title for the new 64-Bit wonder. The game's a lot of fun to play with the different vehicles to control and the bonus rounds. The problems that bugged me were the slight choppiness when viewing large chunks of land and the weird camera views when using the jet pack. It's a great pick if you liked the original, besides being incredible for a first-gen. cart.

Shawn

Honestly, hasn't everyone wanted to feel the sensation of flight at one time or another? PW64 does a good job, but for me, it didn't have the same magic that the original had. Don't get me wrong, the graphics were tremendous, and the smoothness of flight was unparalleled. All I see here, however, is a visually updated version of the old Pilotwings. That's great, but I've already played it a while ago on the Super NES. A couple of new vehicles and missions kept my interest, though. The levels were large and impressive, but a few more bright colors could've liven up the scene. All around, it's a solid title that'll be worth your ca$h.

Dan

I loved PW64 95 percent of the time, but for the other 5 percent, I swore at it and tossed my controller down in frustration. This game gets difficult in the later stages. Fortunately, you don't have to earn a perfect score in every flight lesson to fly all the aircraft. PW64 is every bit as fun as the Super NES original, only with graphics that are above and beyond anything the other next-gen consoles can pump out. PW64's four islands are huge and full of caves, cities and other nooks and crannies to explore, and it's easy to guide your aircraft through these areas with the analog stick. I only wish there were more combat missions.

Crispin

The fun factor and the intensity of the original return to play an important part in the revised version. Players will find plenty of fast action as they rocket, float, hover and power their way through the various 3-D settings. The control is really good and works well with the ergonomic N64 controller, allowing you a gentle touch where inches count. The graphics are really complete and the sound is fantastic even though it is on the quiet side. The main features that lift this title into the higher ranges for me is the interactivity between the player and such objects as caverns as well as flaming smoke stacks.

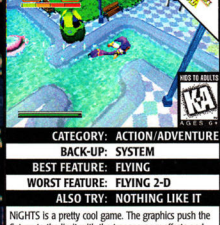
Sushi X

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
8	7	6	8

SATURN

NiGHTS

SEGA OF AMERICA



CATEGORY: ACTION/ADVENTURE
BACK-UP: SYSTEM
BEST FEATURE: FLYING
WORST FEATURE: FLYING 2-D
ALSO TRY: NOTHING LIKE IT

NiGHTS is a pretty cool game. The graphics push the Saturn to the limit with the transparency effects and sharp texture-mapped graphics. They really are amazing—fitting the style of the game well. The controller was absolutely perfect for the game and the music was surreal. The levels are big even though I wish I could really go anywhere instead of being on a "track" that simply rotates around in the 3-D world. I found that having to retrieve five crystals in the same world got to be annoying. I can't say that NiGHTS puts "Mario's N64 to bed," as Sega said in a release, but it is a great game with a cast of interesting characters.

Just keep saying to yourself, "It's not supposed to be a 3-D game, it's not supposed to be a 3-D game," and you will enjoy NiGHTS. This game has the Sonic feel, with fewer enemies. The sensation of flight and speed is great. The levels are creatively drawn and are rich in detail and color. Those of you who like playing a game as quickly as possible just to get to the end will be disappointed with NiGHTS, being that only eight levels are available to play. Those of you who must find every secret and play for high scores will love NiGHTS. I would have liked to have seen more levels and a greater variety of them.

Sega has hyped the heck out of this game, and some have gone as far as to label it a "Mario killer," but I was a bit disappointed when I finally played it. Sure, NiGHTS' graphics are nice, and the levels are richly detailed (or detailed, in fact, that the Saturn is unable to extend them very far into the background). But what NiGHTS boils down to is a side-scrolling platform game—without the platforms. Instead, players fly along a track most of the time, collecting gems and avoiding a surprisingly small number of enemies. Still, players have a lot of room to maneuver along their flight paths, and the levels are fun to explore.

NiGHTS has been building some hefty hype over its use of the new Sega controller and its fast-moving gameplay. After playing, I felt that the game seemed only half-developed and had a great difficulty holding my attention for long. The ability to select different paths all the way through the game does add something to this title, but I was expecting more. With other games out there like Clockwork Knight 2 and Panzer Dragoon II, Knights just falls short in the playability and graphical ends, not utilizing Sega's total capabilities. It's not a bad game, but it's just not my style of fun.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
8	8	9	7

SATURN

LOADED

INTERPLAY

CATEGORY: ACTION
BACK-UP: MEMORY CARD
BEST FEATURE: GRAPHICS
WORST FEATURE: REDUNDANCY
ALSO TRY: STEEL HARBINGER

Not too shabby. It's very similar to the version available for the PlayStation but since not everyone has both a PS and a Saturn, let me start anew. The graphics are gritty and dark which fits the game perfectly. I like the way the camera zooms in and out depending on the enemies' proximity. There is a large—and I mean LARGE—quantity of blood and carnage here. If you're not in the mood for violence, don't play Loaded. If you want some flying body parts, Loaded is the perfect game for you. There are some pixelization problems at times but nothing major. I did find myself getting a little bored after the third or fourth level.

Interplay did an excellent job promoting a game that really does not have a lot of substance to it, except for the shock value. It's like *a Friday the 13th* movie. You may watch it for a little bit, but probably won't want to see it through to the end. Why? Loaded is all the same. Same action, same guns—total redundancy. The bloody novelty of it all wears off by the second stage. I'll be surprised if anybody even bothers to play far enough to see the end. On the plus side, the graphics and sounds are sharp. The mood is perfectly set for this type of game. So, try it out, then sit back and wait patiently for the follow-up, Reloaded.

Loaded is both pretty and twisted with colorful 3-D graphics and generous helpings of blood and guts, but it's not really fun to play. The game gets very repetitive—and boring—after a while. Since all you do is wander around a maze-like fortress and blow away countless enemies. Loaded does have good music and sound effects, and the various "heroes" (actually, they're raving psychotics) you control are well animated. Their powered-up weapons and special attacks can do some spectacular-looking damage, but this game's levels are all too similar to each other to hold my interest for long. I'd rather play Gauntlet.

Loaded will always remain a great run around and shoot'-em-up title no matter what system it's on. The action is intense throughout the third-person perspective-based levels. Play is fast and exhilarating as your character attempts to clear out the levels infested with the sometimes plotting foes. These features make Loaded fun to play, but the most important feature of this title lies in the amazing lighting effects in each and every room. Even though the stages all have a dark and forbidden feel, the lighting effects bring more of an eerie feel that just plain darkness couldn't do. Great for gore freaks who love lots of blood.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
7	7	5	4

SATURN

TRUE PINBALL

OCEAN

CATEGORY: PINBALL
BACK-UP: NONE
BEST FEATURE: GRAPHICS
WORST FEATURE: IT'S NOT REAL
ALSO TRY: VIRTUAL PRO PB

True Pinball is aptly named. Playing the game feels like playing on a real table. The only thing that isn't realistic is when the ball doesn't respond well coming off of the flippers. Talk about some sharp graphics. This is what hi-res graphics are all about. The variety of tables is pretty cool but I can't say the Babe Watch table is necessary. I'm also not saying I didn't like it. Where exactly does that one fit in with the others though? I mean, I can see Vikings and Extreme Sports but Babe Watch? Anyway, there are some cool bonuses to get and neat LED animations. Overall, it's pretty good but I'd like to see more tables.

I love pinball. Getting to play it at home for free just makes it that much tastier. Sometimes I find it difficult to know what I should be doing or what I should be shooting for in a pinball game. With True Pinball, you can just go at your own pace and learn the tables inside and out. okay, so what's wrong? No matter what you do, and no matter how great the graphics are, you cannot duplicate the authentic pinball feel in a video game. That, however, cannot be helped, and True Pinball is about as close to true pinball as can be. It's nice to have four tables, but just two or three more could've made this a perfect package for a pinball fan.

Forget feeding quarters into arcade pinball machines; True Pinball offers an accurate simulation of the real deal. The balls in this game bounce against bumpers and roll up ramps like real pinballs should. Each of the game's four tables are rendered in hi-res graphics and look spectacular—when they're played in the head-on perspective. The top-down view can be confusing, since it shows little of the ball's surroundings. Each table is loaded with Bonus Modes, including bouts of intense multiball action (as many as 10 balls can crowd the tables at once). The crude digital screens that sit above each table also look authentic.

Pinball games sure found a niche in the marketplace. Although pinball machines in the arcade can never be topped, there are a few that have good appeal. True Pinball is one of these titles. It has all the sights and sounds a pinball game on a video game system should have, as well as classic play-livening features such as multiball to keep players glued to the screen. The only feature that doesn't help push this title into the joyously accepted category for me is that there are only four tables. Not bad, but a few more could have helped. Overall, this is a very good title, but you have to be in the pinball mood.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
8	6	4	7

SATURN

LEGEND OF OASIS

SEGA OF AMERICA

CATEGORY: RPG

BACK-UP: SYSTEM

BEST FEATURE: LARGE CHARACTERS

WORST FEATURE: DIFFICULTY

ALSO TRY: SHINING WISDOM

Shawn

Legend of Oasis has to be one of the better RPGs to date. Like the first one for the Genesis, the 32-Bit sequel really takes the Oasis world to the next level. The graphics are very sharp and detailed. They're not rendered but it's refreshing to see graphics like this for a change. The sounds are perfect: Sword slashes and clangs are right on. The scaling effects are cool-looking, though they get a little pixelized when the characters grow (i.e., "Giant Leon"). The fact that every item seems to have a power meter when struck is neat, too. The one drawback is that it's hard to judge just how high or low the ground is at certain points.

Dan

Legend of Oasis is an important title, as is every role-playing game for a next-generation system. RPGs are so few and far between that enthusiasts do not want to see a mediocre one. LoO is not bad. The graphics are bold. The music is moving. My biggest gripe is that the game is too darn hard! Picture this: You are stuck in one room, moving around and around, trying to figure out how to escape. Eventually you do, but at what cost? Perhaps 15 minutes of your life that you will never have again. Some of the puzzles are just too obscure. Challenge is nice, but a game has to move along smoothly. LoO is a good try, though.

Crispin

This 32-Bit sequel to the Genesis game Beyond Oasis is a great RPG available for the Saturn. The graphics—while not phenomenal—are colorful and sharp, and the music suits each of the game's many locations. Oasis plays much like a Zelda game: The hero's world is viewed from a top-down perspective, and he hacks at bad guys in realtime battles. The main character can pull off Street Fighter-type moves, too. While the game's environment is detailed, it can sometimes be confusing. Some areas are higher than others, and telling which platforms are highest isn't always easy. The hero could use more frames of animation, as well.

Sushi X

Legend of Oasis bears a strong visual resemblance to a Prince of Persia for the '90s. All the graphics are sharp and the characters are large. I found the special moves and the multiple-level stages to be really fun and liven up play. The most prominent problem I found was how difficult it was to see what was above or below your character on the game screen. Players need not worry about control. The interface gives use-able and precise control allowing you to manipulate objects and characters around you. A fun RPG with attention-grabbing detail. Be sure to try this one out. It looks like great fun.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
8	8	7	4

PLAYSTATION

JUMPING FLASH! 2

SONY

CATEGORY: ACTION

BACK-UP: MEMORY CARD

BEST FEATURE: LEVEL DESIGN

WORST FEATURE: NOT A LOT NEW

ALSO TRY: BUBSY 3D

Shawn

The first play-through is a lot of fun. In fact, the second and third time aren't so bad either. After awhile though, the game gets to be too easy. Don't get me wrong, it's so fun to play and explore that it's worth the price. Be aware that it can be easy. The graphics look to be a step up from the first, but the play and control are along the same lines. There are a lot more neat background elements to interact with and the levels are huge—in the X, Y *and* Z-axis. The cinema and voice-overs are hilarious, though sometimes confusing because of the weird Captain Kabuki. What is that guy supposed to be anyway? This one is super fun.

Dan

When I first popped this disc in, I thought I was playing the original Jumping Flash!. Disappointed, I pressed on. It wasn't until some of the later levels that I got to experience something different and new. These levels are a lot of fun to explore, but in general, I felt I was playing extra bonus stages off the of the old Jumping Flash!. Nothing really new was offered to poor ol' me. I wished the enemies were a bit more challenging, though the Bosses were impressive—especially the final Robotech wanna-be. So what's my review? Pretty obvious: only buy this if you couldn't play enough of the original.

Crispin

Jumping Flash! was one of the PlayStation's best first-generation titles, and JF12 is even better. While its graphics (and cinemas) are a step ahead of the original's visuals, the game's huge levels are what really make it shine. Each level has more animated terrain features and is larger than any of the first game's stages. JF12's only flaw is that, like the prequel, it's over too early. The game's enemies are a bit easy, and it doesn't take too long to zip through JF12's 12 levels and six Boss stages. Still, the levels do repeat—with a new story line and at a higher difficulty—once players beat the game, so JF12 should keep players busy.

Sushi X

Great graphics and control worthy of legend, Jumping Flash! 2 brings players a perfect continuation of the original. Gamers who have fallen in love with the mechanical rodent with aerial rocketry capabilities will be quick to identify with the original controls and play style. Little has changed in any aspect of the game except for the new Bosses and levels for the player hungry for more to least his teeth on. Most players will find JF12 nothing more than a continuation disc with the same difficulty and taking the same amount of time to complete as the first one. Good fun for players of many ages in true Japanese gaming style.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
9	8	5	5

PLAYSTATION

DIE HARD TRILOGY

FOX INTERACTIVE

CATEGORY: ACTION

BACK-UP: MEMORY CARD

BEST FEATURE: 3 IN 1

WORST FEATURE: THERE'S NO GUN

ALSO TRY: TAKE YOUR PICK

Shawn

Three, three, three games in one. The thing that amazes me about Die Hard Trilogy is that each of the games could really be a separate title. Since you get all three in one nifty $60-70 package, Die Hard Trilogy is a beautiful thing. All of the games have great graphics to start, plus they're all super fun. The third-person walk-through is violence incarnate. The shooting gallery theme based on *Die Harder* features more carnage and excellent play but it'd be better with a light gun. The driving portion of the Trilogy is very intense—you against the clock and plenty of explosives in between. What an awesome deal!

Dan

Three games (each great in its own right) in one? How can you beat that? It's a good packaged deal, but only because any one of them really couldn't stand on its own. Think of it as your three complete meals in a day. If you take one out, you may get a little hungry. The selling point is that each of the games is significantly different from the others. My favorite is Die Hard with a Vengeance. Reminiscent of Twisted Metal, this chapter is fast and furious. Being able to run over pedestrians always scores high in my book. Some of the effects are well-done, making it a fun game to watch as well as play.

Crispin

Any one of the games included in DHT would be great on its own, but the three together make a fantastic package. This collection has something for everybody, but the third game, a driving title based on the third film, is my favorite. It has you driving through New York City searching for bombs, and the city is richly detailed (it blows away the cityscapes of Twisted Metal). The three games are very bloody—much more so than the films ever were—but the amount of on-screen gore can be set on the Option Screen. My only complaint is the sometimes frustrating control; aiming the gunsight in the 3-D shooting game isn't easy.

Sushi X

Any gamer with a passion for death and destruction will fall instantly in love with the Die Hard Trilogy: three games for the price of one with engines as diverse as they possibly can be while still keeping the integrity of the title intact. Title one has great graphics and the control of our hero offers little resistance to make play fail. The second title is also unique as far as shooting games go by allowing players to damage or destroy everything in the level. The third disc allows you to smash mindless pedestrians as you race to clear out the bombs in a cityscape. The worst part about DHT is choosing the game you like best.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
9	8	7	7

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PLAYSTATION

TEKKEN 2

NAMCO

CATEGORY: 3-D FIGHTER

BACK-UP: MEMORY CARD

BEST FEATURE: HOLDS & COMBOS

WORST FEATURE: CAMERA ANGLES

ALSO TRY: SOUL EDGE

I love this game. It's been said idly before but this time it's for real. Seriously though, Tekken 2 is probably the best fighter of the year for me. It's much different than the Street Fighter Alpha-type but that's why it's so refreshing, and it's 100 percent better than the first Tekken. The combos are incredible—you can almost feel the hurt. There's a good variety between the characters and plenty of hidden characters to choose from. I like that anyone can play this one and have fun. You don't have to memorize the controls to play T2, although it could help your longevity. The graphics are flawless and the opening is awesome.

If I'm playing a fighting game, I usually prefer something flashier, like games with fireballs and crazy combos. Tekken 2 does not have the former, but definitely has the latter. This game is deep—so many combos to learn with so little time. That's what gives this title its value: the long term play. You might get bored playing it in the beginning, but if you stick with it long enough (and have friends who are willing to play that long with you), you might just get hooked. Having so many characters to play helps as well. My favorite parts of the game are the holds and throws. Seeing them makes you want to go "ouch."

It's about darn time this game was released in the U.S. Tekken 2 is the best 3-D fighting game you can find for any system, and the PlayStation version is even better than the arcade game. You can choose from 23 characters (11 initial fighters, their Bosses and one final Boss), and each combatant can pull off dozens of moves, combos and arm- and neck-snapping throws. Unlike in the arcade game, each fighter has his or her own beautifully rendered ending. The polygon drop-out problems of the original are virtually non-existent in Tekken 2, and the fighters now swivel their heads to follow opponents.

Undoubtedly one of the top three fighters of the year, Tekken 2 is what a sequel should be. Although not a lot has changed on the surface besides a few more fighters, there are many new features that are hidden beneath the surface that include one of the best features any fighting game can have: a Practice Mode. You can work on your combos privately without being bashed by the computer or another opponent. The characters have dropped a little in polygon smoothness, but this is made up for in game speed and playability. This title really has personality: the personality to kick the snot out of you.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
9	8	7	9

NEO•GEO

RAGNAGARD

SNK

CATEGORY: 2-D FIGHTER

BACK-UP: NONE

BEST FEATURE: NOTHING

WORST FEATURE: OLD GAMEPLAY

ALSO TRY: FATAL FURY SERIES

The graphics were very cool—a rendered fighting game on the Neo! After playing this one for a while though, I just got bored. There was a decent amount of moves to perform for each character but that wasn't enough to keep me interested. The control was sluggish and moves seemed to have a lag time when initiated. Other fighting games on the Neo, like Samurai Shodown and the Art of Fighting, are quick and easy to play and enjoy. I found that Ragnagard was hard to play, sluggish and easy to *not* enjoy. It's a good thing that Neo•Geo is doing well at the arcade. Shell out $150 for a game like this? I don't think so.

Come on! Why, oh why must I be forced to play all these lame 2-D fighters that are totally indistinguishable from one other? Ragnagard is an especially devious example. Before each round starts, the sprites look fantastic. I was expecting a Silicon graphics rendered fighting machine. But wait, the game starts, and...aaarghh! It looks like 2 million other SNK fighters! Sure the combos are different, and the special moves are new, but how much of this can gamers take? I'm getting all these look-alikes mixed up. My opinion? Pass up Ninja Masters, I mean Fatal Fury, I mean...shoot...what game am I reviewing?

Ragnagard is a bit different from the tons of other 2-D fighting games out for the Neo•Geo. Like the combatants in Killer Instinct, Ragnagard's fighters are rendered, but they're a little too colorful to look realistic. Ragnagard packs some of the features of modern fighting titles, such as counter attacks and a meter that you can power up for special magic strikes, but the game doesn't have much of a combo system. Most of the fighters' moves are easy to pull off—except for the supernatural attacks. Players must hold down the Attack buttons for a few seconds to use these attacks, a technique that leaves them vulnerable.

The first few frames of character animation in Ragnagard look really sharp. The characters move with arcade fluidness and they bounce and ready themselves before the match. This good omen was put to rest after a few seconds of playing. The characters moved choppy, and the animation just wasn't happening well. I liked the characters and their variety, but the style of this one made me long for the game just to move forward instead of pausing after a character completed a special attack. Great for inexperienced players, but seasoned veterans will get mighty sick of this one in a hurry.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
6	5	4	4

SUPER NES

TETRIS ATTACK

NINTENDO

CATEGORY: PUZZLE

BACK-UP: NONE

BEST FEATURE: EASE OF PLAY

WORST FEATURE: TIME-CONSUMING

ALSO TRY: KIRBY'S AVALANCHE

From the title someone might think Tetris is fed up with being played all of the time and now it's payback time. That's not the case at all. Instead, we're given yet another addictive puzzle game. The graphics are bright, colorful and cartoony—perfect for this game. The "air combos" are pretty cool if you have a fast hand and a quick mind. I'm glad they replaced the fairies in the Japanese version with Super Mario characters for the U.S. release. This adds more appeal to the game—who doesn't love Mario? The Two-player Mode is the best thing about the game but the one-player is just as fun. A great buy for a puzzle fan.

I love well-made puzzle games and Tetris Attack does not disappoint me one bit. Have you ever played one of those Columns-type games so much, that you start visualizing the pieces in your mind when you're not playing? That's me. As I'm typing this, I want the words to fall to the bottom of the page and fill their way upward. It's affecting my sleep as well. As I drift off to sleep land, I first match Tetris Attack pieces in my mind. I can't help it. It's that addictive. It's so simple, anyone can pick it up after a minute. The combos are easy, but won't overwhelm your opponent, making this game a well-balanced two-player experience.

TA has very little in common with Tetris, but it is every bit as fun and addictive as that classic puzzle game. This title has more in common with games like Kirby's Avalanche and Baku Baku Animal than Bust-A-Move 2 or Dr. Mario, in that you have to think way ahead before positioning your blocks. You'll need big-time combos to defeat your opponent. The One-player Mode is fun, but two-player contests are too addicting. One warning, though: Play TA too long and you'll be seeing falling shapes everywhere, especially when you close your eyes. The Mario characters are a nice touch (the Japanese version featured fairies instead).

As I've stated before, puzzle games are the best titles for gamers of all ages. There is no exception with Nintendo's latest release Tetris Attack. TA gives the player a solid foundation to build a fun one-player game and an outstanding two-player head-to-head title. I found the block-switching style of play really imaginative. It allows players to set up the best combos ever seen on the screen to smash their opponent. The play speed is also exciting, giving players the feeling that they are never moving fast enough. I'm sure this title has caused many players' heart rates to soar from the excitement.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
6	6	7	9

Shawn Dan Crispin Sushi-X

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SUPER NES

KIRBY'S SUPER STAR

NINTENDO

CATEGORY: POTPOURRI

BACK-UP: INTERNAL

BEST FEATURE: DIFFERENT GAMES

WORST FEATURE: PLAYING ALONE

ALSO TRY: OTHER KIRBYS

Shawn

It's great to see games like this still coming out. Kirby's Super Star is a great example of what companies should strive for: good graphics, but excellent gameplay. That's what counts. A game could look incredible but if it isn't fun to play, who cares about it? Kirby's Super Star has a load of different levels to choose from. Besides the main levels, it has bonus games and Boss rounds. Man, what else could a fan of Kirby ask for? I like the way you can have the power of the different enemies or they can become a second computer player. I also like the way a friend can join in at any time. What a cool game—I love it.

Dash

I don't understand why I like this game. I'm almost ashamed of it. It's just that this cart is a piñata packed full of little goodies. Some of the side games are so simple in concept but are, well, fun. For example, one stage just has two players facing off. When the game tells you to draw, the first player to hit his/her button wins. It's so stupid! Maybe it's an ego thing, because I find myself wanting to play this against the other folks in the office. The side-scroller is awesome: full of action, full of power-ups, full of excitement. You'll just have to experience it to understand what I mean. Once you play it with a friend, you'll be hooked.

Crispin

KSS proves that side-scrolling games can still be packed with fresh, imaginative gameplay. The novelty of this title lies in Kirby's ability to absorb the powers of any enemy he eats. Kirby can, therefore, shower bad guys with fireballs one minute and hack at them with a sword the next. KSS is also one of the few side-scrolling Mario-type games that allow two gamers to play simultaneously. The game is a bargain, too: It offers six side-scrolling games and two short bonus games—all will keep players occupied for a while. KSS' graphics are top-notch, and the music is as good as that found in any other Kirby game.

Sushi-X

When players purchase Kirby Super Star they get more than one title, they get four. Each of the titles is distinctly different from the last making play thrilling no matter what game you choose. I found the Two-player Cooperative Play Option really imaginative allowing another player to take control of an enemy after Kirby sucks him in and uses him against his old allies. Other great features are the two bonus games that give players a total of six games to battle with. Good graphics and sound just reinforce the class this title's in. For die-hard Super NES users out there only purchasing one game this year, Kirby should be it!

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
7	6	8	8

GENESIS

LOBO

OCEAN

CATEGORY: 2-D FIGHTER

BACK-UP: NONE

BEST FEATURE: LOBO

WORST FEATURE: GRAPHICS

ALSO TRY: ANYTHING ELSE

Shawn

The comic might be cool, but let's face it, it's pretty fraggin' hard to do a good digitized fighter on the Genesis. You start the game and see the Title and Options Screen and you get a little excited. The graphics aren't too shabby at first. You go to the Character Selection Screen and see the nicely animated, rendered characters here and still have hope. The game starts, the characters do their wacky pre-battle actions and the pain begins. Pain not in the form of fighting but in the form of playing this game—even for a little while. Two-player isn't real bad but the On-player Mode is sluggish and graphically unimpressive.

Dash

When I first sampled this game six months ago, I secretly crossed my fingers and thought, "I hope they don't bring this game out." Well, the fates weren't smiling upon me, they were laughing at me. Now I love Lobo—the old Lobo—but this game deserves to be fragged. You can only play Lobo in a one-player game, and you can only select one of six in the Vs. Mode. The characters are tiny and hard to see. The number of moves available are few, but it's nice that each character gets a healing power. Forget about playing this on a three-button controller—it's six or nothing. Well, even with six buttons, it's not that fun.

Crispin

Keep your distance from this bottom-of-the-barrel fighting game. Its graphics are horrid, its music and sound effects are repetitive and its fighters are difficult to control. Especially avoid this game if you lack a six-button controller, or you'll be hammering on the Start button to switch between punches and kicks. The game's only good points are its unique collection of combatants (you can fight as Santa Claus) and its simple combo system. I was expecting much more from a fighting game that stars one of the most violent comic book heroes ever (where's the MK-style gore?). To say I was disappointed is a big-league understatement.

Sushi-X

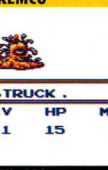
Lobo is such a cool comic book hero I feel it is just a shame he appeared on a half-developed fighting game like this. The title has only a handful of fighters and suffers from some crippling design problems also. The biggest of these flaws is the fact that you can only play as Lobo in One-player Mode. Sure it fits the Story Mode, but talk about no replay value. The characters do have a few good moves, but players will not be able to enjoy them due to the horrid control and pixelated graphics. This title is what nightmares are made of. One of the only games out there not even worth a rental.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
7	7	5	4

GAME BOY

SWORD OF HOPE 2

KEMCO



CATEGORY: RPG

BACK-UP: BATTERY

BEST FEATURE: IT'S AN RPG

WORST FEATURE: BATTLE

ALSO TRY: FF ADVENTURE

Shawn

This one is a pleasant surprise, even though the battle sequences seemed to drag on. The story line seems standard but good enough for an RPG adventure. The graphics were good for the Game Boy but the music was annoying. Companies can only do so much with the little Game Boy sound chip. I liked the fact that it had the Auto Option for battles. This way you can sit back and relax while your character battles beasts without straining your eyes, trying to understand what's popping up on the screen. Just a note: This game—like many new titles for the Game Boy—plays much better on a TV with a Super Game Boy.

Dash

I think this was too ambitious a project for the little Game Boy to handle. I love RPGs that let you keep an inventory, let you build experience, and let you fight in turn-based combat (just a personal preference). Well, for this baby cart to handle all of that, it must sacrifice other things, like graphics and fun. You can do a lot of things in this title; it's almost like an old text-based adventure game. The combat is the worst part—too slow and tedious. I know something's wrong if I'm trying to avoid combat in an RPG just because it bores me. This game would be a decent travel companion if it weren't for that one big flaw.

Crispin

If you're a fan of the first game, you'll enjoy this sequel. SoH2 plays much the same as the original, with you wandering from location to location while exploring the large world. Unfortunately, getting anywhere in the game is a chore. Your party is constantly beset by monsters and combat—which is handled via the traditional you-attack-then-the-monsters-attack routine—is time-consuming. Also, it takes new locations a second or two to appear in the game's first-person-perspective window. Still, SoH2 offers a lengthy and intriguing quest, and its static graphics and large text won't strain eyes during a long car trip.

Sushi-X

Sword of hope is the perfect title for players who love RPGs and are on the go. For a title on the Game Boy, SoH is really not a bad game. It has action and an easily followed story. The play speed is another item that needs mention. This is possibly the slowest title ever seen on any system. Combat crawls throughout the game with each battle seeming to take 10 times longer than needed to get the job done. All the amenities were well thought-out and properly implemented in SoH. If only the speed would keep players from falling asleep at the controls, this one would really score high.

VISUALS	SOUND	INGENUITY	REPLAY VALUE
5	4	6	4

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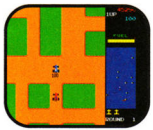

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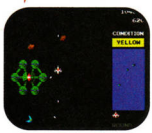

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GAMING GOSSIP

- **Sony Big-Wig Jumps to Sega**
- **Nintendo, Square Make Up?**
- **More N64 Bulky Drive Details**
- **Crash Bandicoot Sequel**
- **SF3 Test Run Slated for Nov.**
- **M2 Chipset = Power PC x2?**

...It's time for the Q to take you to the promised land, my fellow gurus of gaming gossip, with another episode of the most intense rumors and info you'll find in any gaming mag. In the biggest act of treason since Hulk Hogan defected from the World Wrestling Federation, Sony's senior VP for third-party development, Bernie Stolar, left the friendly, happy and successful confines of Sony to move over to Sega. Bernie's job will be to handle the launch of Sega's new 64-Bit machine, code-named Saturn. Bernie Stolar is a master at launching new systems, which is why Sega laid out the red carpet and a bundle of cash to reel him in (and a relationship with Sega's head honchos certainly doesn't hurt). Some insiders suggest that the Saturn 64 will have a quality lineup of software that will rival anything Sony or Nintendo can produce...In other hardware launches, look for Matsushita's M2 technology to make its entrance next year boasting not one, but two PPC- 602 processors. The power reportedly will give the mega machine the ability to exceed the 1 million polygon threshold. The system will also sport two expansion ports, including one for memory and another that will be used for modem play. Rumored price point off the shelf? Around 300 bucks...

...Have Nintendo and Square kissed and made up? After several months of chilly relations between the big 'N' and one of their leading software suppliers, rumors abound that the two companies have reached a resolution to their differences. After making a highly public announcement that they would support the Sony PlayStation with a number of RPG titles (Square's obvious specialty), the friction between the two companies became publicly apparent... Look for the next Mortal Kombat to boast Sony and Nintendo machine code...Rumors of a new MK game that pits head character Sub-Zero on an action/fighting/strategy adventure have been reported recently to the gaming trades...On the Mortal Kombat IV front, the game will have a number of 3-D-rendered characters and will push through close to 2 million polygons according to our sources. The game is still scheduled to be released in late '97...Speaking of MK-mania, don't hold your breath for Ultimate MK3 for your 3DO system. Seems the development, being handled by New Level, has been delayed and the project cancelled as a result. The Q hears that Panasonic wasn't eager to be peddling an MK3 title well into 1997, although the lack of recent MK presence on the machine does hurt...

...Could GT Interactive be the next Acclaim? The Q has obtained inside info that the company is planning to continue their strategy of buying their way into a leadership role, evidenced by their recent acquisition of game companies like Humongous Entertainment as well as the acquisition of leading names in the business (coming primarily from its geographic neighbor Acclaim). With solid performance out of the Doom titles, GT is well positioned to become the next Acclaim...On the first day of the Nintendo 64 launch, the company quickly sold out of the initial 500,000 units when Sid doors opened at stores in Japan. Estimates for another 1 million units out the door within the next few months are now looking feasible. Forecasters suggest that Nintendo could sell as many as 3 million machines in Japan alone before Christmas...In other Nintendo 64 news, the Q is collecting details leaking out about the firm's 64DD (disk drive) attachment. Sources suggest that the unit will hold close to 20 times the data contained in PilotWings 64 for the N64 and 15 times the data contained in the N64 version of Killer Instinct. The price of the unit will be anywhere from $129.99 to $149.99 and could come packed with a version of Dragon Quest in Japan and quite possibly Actraiser 64 or Zelda 64. The jury is still out on whether Shigeru Miyamoto will be able to get Zelda done on time. He is working on a variety of projects–and Zelda could slip a couple of months, according to my Q-Sources. As yours truly has mentioned before, the drive will attach to the bottom of the N64 and will feature 3.75" magneto optical disks that load into the front of the unit. The access time will be much faster than that of a CD-based system. The fastest loading time for a PlayStation game right now is six seconds, although that benchmark is decreasing all the time. The average seek time for the N64 disk drive will be between 140 to 150 ms. It will also, according to my Q-Sources, have a 2MB RAM pack that plugs into the front of the N64 that will add more memory...

...Some other games rumored to be in the works for the N64 are Clayfighter 64, Ultra Descent from Interplay plus F-Zero 2 and Metroid 64 from Nintendo. Rare's Killer Instinct 2 is also in the works, and will clock in at close to 100 Megabits. Nintendo also has plans to revamp Wave Race 64 and add a new graphics engine with other modifications. Incidentally, the Wave Race graphics engine is the same one they intend on using to develop F-Zero 2...Are we close to Toobin', as Microsoft and Nintendo Research collaborate on a new satellite service that is rumored to beam content directly into PCs from above. Although Nintendo presently will own 40% of the firm, the Q believes that gaming applications of such technology couldn't be far behind...In other Nintendo news, word out of their offices confirms there is a Virtual Boy link cable in development. You know you must have seen those systems on sale for $50 at Blockbuster by now. Originally, the VB design could link up four to eight people and have a head-mounted display, but a lack of real interest in the system seems to be finally taking its toll...

...Crash Bandicoot will have a sequel, and this time around, he will have a sidekick: You guessed it, a female bandicoot. Sony also has plans to bring over Arc the Lad and Arc the Lad 2–quite possibly together on one disk–but that hasn't been confirmed. Working Designs has a first fighting game, will come packed with a Final Fantasy VII preview disk and mini-adventure...Kemco has been talking with Sony about bringing the Top Gear series to the PlayStation; the first game should be out before Christmas. In other racing news, Papyrus, recently purchased by Sierra, will be releasing NASCAR Racing this month for the PlayStation. Word on the street also sees a version of Leisure Suit Larry being considered for the PlayStation, but no word on when or if it will have to be toned down...

...Word out of the Capcom camp this month puts Street Fighter 3 on test in arcades coming out late October or early November, boasting five times the volume of animation seen in Street Fighter II, and three times the frames in Street Fighter Alpha 2. DarkStalkers 3 will be in Japanese arcades in the next couple of months. One super-secret game my Quarter-Spies are hating as the next revolution in gaming is called WarZards or Wizards (the name was hard to read on the napkin). We'll clarify the name for you when my Q-informant checks in again. The game is said to have groundbreaking new features and visual effects–things we've come to expect from Capcom. On the PlayStation front, Capcom and Sony are still discussing plans to bring Mega Man to the PlayStation. The first title, codenamed Mega Man', was turned away at first, but Capcom and Sony are getting along and an agreement is said to be not too far off...That just about sums up this month's installment of the fastest 30 minutes money can buy. Check out this column next month for more inside info on the next MK series, a secret about the N64 launch and something that yours truly picked up while at the *Independence Day* premiere in New York. I can hardly wait...

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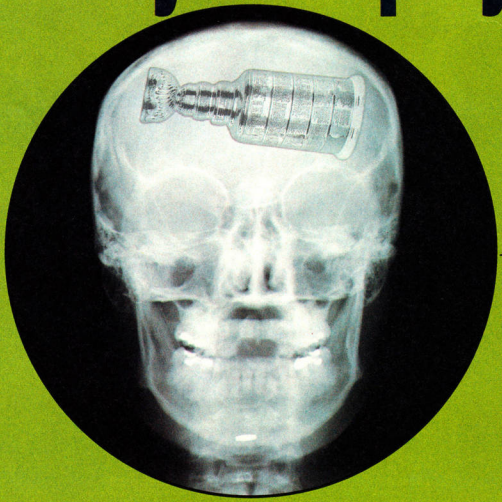

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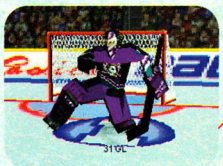

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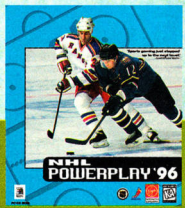

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TRICKS OF THE TRADE

TRICKMAN TERRY'S CAR HAS SUNK ONCE AND FOR ALL!

Trickman Terry's infamous car, the "White Boat," is no more. Though the 20-year-old car brought Terry and his wife countless hours of joyous transportation, it was decided by Terry himself that it was time to move on (to a car that was made in the 1990s). Too many mechanical problems forced the Trickman's decision to trade in the old boat. Its replacement is in sufficient working order and by a strange coincidence, is also white. But alas, the Trickmeister will always have a place in his heart for the original Trickmobile. It will be sadly missed. Help the Trickman in his hour of need by mailing your condolences along with your killer tricks, codes, cheats and FAQs and whatever else to:

Tricks of the Trade
1920 Highland Avenue, #222
Lombard, IL 60148
or send e-mail to:
egmtriks@mcs.com

You can help keep Terry's mind off his tragic loss, and perk him up with an awesome trick for a hot game! Send in your newest, most incredible tricks! If your trick is chosen, you'll get your name printed in a future issue of this awesome magazine and we'll also send you a FREE game for the system* of your choice! Gaze at the tiny text below for details on the free stuff. *Make sure if you send e-mail that you include your real name, address, city, state and zip code.*

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TRICK OF THE MONTH

GEX

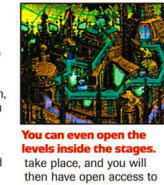
SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Crystal Dynamics

At the Dome, bring down the Item Menu and do the trick.

A Stage Selection Menu will appear. Choose stages or Bosses.

There's an explosion when you put the Open Levels code in.

Begin your game and at the Dome, press Select to bring down the Item Menu. Now press and hold the top R1 button. While holding it, press X, Square, X, Right, Up, Left, Circle, Circle, Down, Down. A Stage Select Menu will appear where you can choose levels as well as Bosses! The next trick is just as good. Press and hold R1. At the Dome or on any stage, press Circle, Start, Right, Up, Square, Left, Left, Up, Start. An explosion will



You can even open the levels inside the stages. take place, and you will then have open access to all of the levels!

Ian Hung
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

CHEAT SHEET:

STAGE SELECT AND OPEN ALL LEVELS

POWER TRIP

Hold R1. Enter X, Square, X, Right, Up, Left, Circle, Circle, Down, Down for Stage Select. Enter Circle, Start, Right, Up, Square, Left, Left, Up, Start to open all levels.

NOT

NOT

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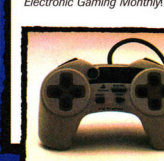

OFFICIAL RULES AND CONDITIONS: 1. No Purchase Necessary. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. To enter the contest, print your name and address (including your city, state, and zip code) on a letter containing your best codes and mail it to: Tricks of the Trade, 1920 Highland Avenue, Suite 222, Lombard, Illinois, 60148. One entry per household. All entries must be handwritten. Mechanically reproduced entries will not be accepted. Entries must be received by September 15, 1996. Sponsors are not responsible for lost, late, illegible, incomplete, or misdirected entries. 2. Contest is open to all U.S. residents except employees of Sponsors. Void where prohibited by law. Sponsors reserve the right to cancel this contest at any time with appropriate notice. 3. Winners: Winners will be judged based on their code's uniqueness, novelty, accuracy, and the fact that said code is not already known by the Judges. The Judges will be from the ZH-Davis Publishing Company and their decision is final. Nonconformance with any entry procedure may result in disqualification. All entries and copyrights therein become the property of ZH-Davis Publishing Company and will not be acknowledged or returned. By entering winners agree to be bound by the rules of this contest and judges' final decisions. 2. Prizes: Each Winner shall be awarded one of the following prizes: (1) SGPROPAD, (2) SGPROPAD-6, (3) SNPROGRIPPAD or (4) SGPROGRIPPAD-6. All prizes not claimed by a PrizeWinner within thirty (30) days following notification by Sponsors shall be deemed forfeited and shall not be awarded. PrizeWinners will be notified by mail. Prizes are non-transferable. No substitutions or prizes is allowed, except at the option of Sponsors should the featured prize(s) become unavailable. 4. Eligibility: Sweepstakes open to residents worldwide. PrizeWinners shall be notified by mail and must agree to the use of their name and likeness for publicity purposes by Sponsors and sign a release. Employees of Sponsors and their affiliates are not eligible. Neither ZH-Davis Publishing Company, Interact Accessories (USA), Inc. nor their employees shall be responsible for any liability, loss or injury, including attorneys' fees, or other expenses that consumers might incur as a result of this contest or receipt of prize. All local, state, and federal taxes are the sole responsibility of the PrizeWinners. If PrizeWinners are under 18 years of age, the prizes will be awarded to the parent or guardian and the release shall be signed by the parent or guardian (if applicable). 5. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state, and local regulations apply. 6. Sponsors: Contest sponsored by ZH-Davis Publishing Company and Interact Accessories (USA), Inc. Copyright © 1995 ZH-Davis Publishing Company. SNPROPAD, SGPROPAD-6, SNPROGRIPPAD, and SGPROGRIPPAD-2 are all trademarks of Interact Accessories (USA), Inc.

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TRICKS OF THE TRADE

KILLER CODES

GAME SHARK CODES

—by Interact Accessories

PlayStation Codes

These passwords are for use with the Game Shark peripheral for the PlayStation only. They will not work on their own with just the game. Note: Do not try to modify the codes because they are supposed to be entered as shown here:

Big Hurt Baseball–
Team 1 Always Wins:
80173bd8000f

DarkStalkers–
Infinite Health P1:
800cd1a00090
Infinite Health P2:
800cd5140090

PO'ed–
Have Jetpack
8009aba80032
8009ac700100

Skeleton Warriors–
Infinite Health:
801db7600064
Infinite Starsword:
801db7740064
Infinite Lives:
801db7680064

Top Gun–
Infinite AGM Missiles:
801cfecc0064

(continued on p. 42)

ULTIMATE MK3

SYSTEM: Saturn PUBLISHER: Williams Entertainment

CHEAT SHEET:

ULTIMATE KOMBAT KODES AND FREEPLAY

POWER TRIP NOT NOT

Follow the tricks below to find all of the hidden characters in the game, including Classic Sub-Zero. Plus, gain a Freeplay Option for infinite continues!

To do any of these codes, you must first play a one-player game and lose to the computer opponent. Next, at the Game Over Screen, you will see the words, "Enter an Ultimate Kombat Kode" and three bars with symbols in them. (Note: All the bars will change with the symbols. Just concentrate on one of them.) Take controller one and enter in the first three symbols of the code with X, Y and Z buttons. Enter the next three symbols with A, B and C. Press the buttons the number of times shown for each character:

Classic Sub-Zero: 760-520
Mileena: 700-723
Ermac: 964-240

At the Title Screen, take controller two and press Up, Up, Right, Right, Left, Left, Down Down. You will hear, "Excellent!" The game will now be on Freeplay Mode for both players!

Stevie Schraudner; Fishers, IN

At this screen, enter the Kombat Kode for Sub-Zero.

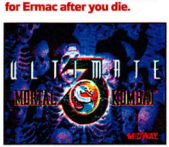
A screen will tell you that you're in control of Sub-Zero.

At the Game Over Screen, enter the kode for Mileena.

A secret screen will appear. Mileena is yours to control.

Enter the last Kombat Kode for Ermac after you die.

The special screen will come up saying Ermac is playable.



At the Title Screen, quickly enter the Freeplay code.

Now you can continue infinitely with this trick!

CYBERSPEED

SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Mindscape

CHEAT SHEET:

DAISY THE COW

POWER TRIP NOT NOT

From the Load Screen, enter LLL-LLLLLLLLLL for your password. You'll get to play as Daisy the cow!

At the Main Menu, go down to Options. In Options, choose Load and press the X button. Now at the Password Screen, enter the code: LLLLLLLLLLLLL, then press Start. Now start a new race and you will be playing as Daisy the cow!

Chris Louck
Jacksonville, FL

Daisy the cow is now your ship. She functions the same.

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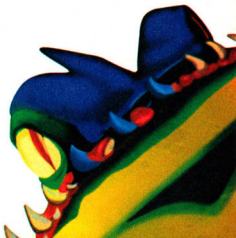


TRICKS OF THE TRADE

KILLER CODES

GAME SHARK CODES (CONTINUED)

—by Interact Accessories

(PlayStation Codes Continued)

Top Gun-
Infinite MIRV Missiles:
801cfec00064
Infinite Sure-fires:
801cfebc0064

Saturn Codes

These passwords are for use with the Game Shark peripheral for the Saturn only. They will not work on their own with just the game. Note: Do not try to modify the codes because they are supposed to be entered as shown here:

Big Hurt Baseball-
Master Code:
F6000914C305
B60028000000

Player One Always Wins:
160adba80500
Player Two Always Wins:
160adba80005

Golden Axe: The Duel-
Master Code:
F6000914C305
B60028000000

Infinite Health P1:
16078a5c0080
Infinite Health P2:
16078b500080

Road Rash-
Master Code:
F6000914C305
B60028000000

Infinite Cash:
1607407efffff
Have Stiletto Bike:
160740740709

TRIPLE PLAY '97

SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

CHEAT SHEET:
SECRET PLAYERS

POWER TRIP — Some of the programmers in the back of the manual are great secret players with super attributes. Just follow the pictures for instructions.

NOT

Enter in these new players:

Bruce McMillan
Bill McCormick
John Burk
Kevin Loh
Louise Read
Dennis Hirsch
Erick Kiss
Jon Spencer
Chris Johnson
Eric Pauker
Kevin Pickell
Mark Gipson
Mike Swanson
Geoff Coates
Edwin Gomes
Tony Lee
David DeMorest

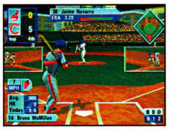
At the Game Setup Screen, access the Manager Option.

From this screen, go into the Custom Players Option.

Enter one of the names from the team listed below.

The player will be a veteran with pumped-up attributes.

Craig Hui
Mike Sokyrka
Frank Faugno
Gary Lam
Brent Nielsen
Josh Holmes
John Rix
Jim Hughson
Duncan Magee
Keith Dundas
Lemuel Casiano; Philadelphia, PA



The announcer will even say the secret players' names.

BUST-A-MOVE 2

SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Acclaim

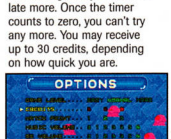
From the Title Menu, choose Options. In the options menu, press Left, Right, R1, R2, L2, L1, Up, Down. A timer counting down from 30 seconds will appear. Highlight the Credits option and press the X button quickly and repeatedly. Your credits will build up quickly at first, but then they'll be harder to get as you accumulate more. Once the timer counts to zero, you can't try any more. You may receive up to 30 credits, depending on how quick you are.

CHEAT SHEET:
MORE CREDITS

POWER TRIP — On the Options Menu, put in Left, Right, R1, R2, L2, L1, Up, Down. A 30-second timer will appear in the upper right-hand corner. Try to get many credits!

NOT

At the Options Screen, do the trick to get the 30-second timer.



You may receive up to 30 credits. If not, try it again.

No more restricting the credits to a limit of nine this time!

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

DKC2: DIDDY'S KONG QUEST

SYSTEM: Super NES PUBLISHER: Nintendo

In DKC2, there is a way to get 75 Kremcoins in the first level of the game! Enter the Pirate Panic! Stage and go into Kaptain K. Rool's cabin. Don't touch anything at this point. Leave the cabin and jump over the first two bananas you come across. Keep going right and get the banana bunch over the large barrels. Now go back to the cabin. Take the 1-Up balloon. Now leave the cabin and jump over the two bananas again. Keep going right and get the banana bunch over the large barrels, and go back to the cabin. There will be a floating Kremcoin in the middle of the cabin. Grab it and it will give you 75 Kremcoins!

Turner Hayes; Lake Oswego, OR

CHEAT SHEET: 75 KREMCOINS

POWER TRIP

NOT

Follow the method shown to the left in the stage, Pirate Panic! to get a Kremcoin worth 75 Kremcoins! This should give you a worthwhile advantage in the game.

Do this method to get a coin worth 75 Kremcoins!

ULTIMATE MK3

SYSTEM: Saturn PUBLISHER: Williams

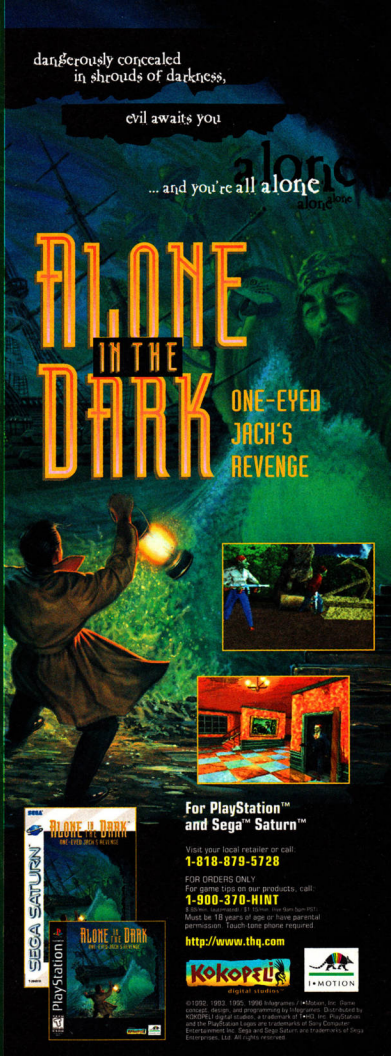
You've seen it done in the arcade. So now it's time for the Saturn version! To play as Human Smoke, just follow these instructions. At the Player Select Screen, choose Smoke. Then, hold Left, HP, Block, HK and Run buttons, until the match begins. At the start of the match, Human Smoke will appear in place of Robo-Smoke, if the cheat was entered correctly. Human Smoke carries most of the same moves as Scorpion, such as the teleport and the spear! (Note: The second player can also play as Human Smoke by entering Right instead of Left).

CHEAT SHEET: HUMAN SMOKE

POWER TRIP

NOT

Human Smoke can be accessed by choosing the Robotic Smoke first at the Player Select Screen, and then hold Left, HP, Block, HK and Run.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TRICKS OF THE TRADE

KILLER CODES

BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2

—by Playmates Interactive for PlayStation

Well, you've waited long enough! The Boss codes on the U.S. version of Toshinden 2 have finally been found. Just enter the following to access them all. To access Master/Uranus: As the Options fly in together at the Main Title Screen, quickly enter: R1, L2, X, L1, R2, Circle on the first controller. A chime should then sound and the yellow box should turn to blue, if done correctly. Choose the Bosses at the Player Select Screen by highlighting the Random Select Box. Press and hold the Select button to slow things down. Uranus and Master should now be selectable! After this code is entered, you can enter the second Boss code. Press Start and go to Reset. Choose "Yes." To access Sho/Vermillion: As the Options fly in together at the Main Title Screen, quickly enter: Circle, R2, L1, X, L2, R1 on the second controller. A chime should then sound and the blue box should turn red, if done correctly. Choose these Bosses at the Player Select Screen by highlighting the Random Select Box. Press and hold the Select button to slow things down. Sho and Vermillion should now be selectable! Sho, the final boss from the first Battle Arena Toshinden game returns in full force. A dark newcomer to the group, Vermillion, wields a pistol and a shotgun. He may be slow, but he's very powerful.

NEED FOR SPEED

SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

POWER TRIP

CHEAT SHEET:

DIFFERENT MODES

Enter: XRMQHX at the Tournament Password Screen then go back and choose another race type.

Do what's on the Cheat Sheet (to the left) then to get No Mercy Mode (no cars or cops), press and hold L1 and R1 while choosing Head-to-Head under the Single Player Menu. To access the Arcade Mode (more like an arcade game), hold L1 and R1 at the Number of Laps Option.

Jeremiah Welty; Littlestown, PA

You can do No Mercy and Arcade Mode simultaneously.

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '96

SYSTEM: Saturn PUBLISHER: Acclaim

CHEAT SHEET:

HIDDEN TEAMS

POWER TRIP

At the Legal Screen, quickly put in the code: Down+B, Down+B, Down+B, Down+C. In the Preseason Mode, you can play as the hidden teams.

This code will give you access to two hidden teams that aren't normally in the game. When the Copyright Screen with all the legal information appears, quickly press Down+B, Down+B, Down+B, Down+C. When the Main Menu appears, choose the Play Option. At the Play Menu, choose Preseason and press button B. Now at the Team Select Screen, look for the Iguana and Acclaim teams. The two teams can only be used in the Preseason Mode.

Edward Rafii
San Ysidro, CA

The two hidden teams are now at your disposal!

BUST-A-MOVE 2

SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Acclaim

CHEAT SHEET:

CHARACTER SELECT

POWER TRIP

In the Map Screen, press Left, Left, Up, Down then L1+L2+R1+R2 simultaneously. A new Character Selection Menu will appear. Choose a new character.

You can choose between some different characters to play as (instead of the dinos) in the Puzzle Mode. Just choose the Puzzle Game from the Selection Menu and when you're on the Map Screen, press Left, Left, Up, Down then L1+L2+ R1+R2 simultaneously. A special Character Select Menu will come up. Cycle through characters with the pad and choose a character with a button. You'll play the next round with the character you've chosen.

On the Map Screen, put in the code for different characters.

Cycle through until you get the one you want to use in the game.

On the next round, you will be using your chosen character!

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

JUMPING FLASH!

SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Sony Computer Entertainment

First, you must enter the Stage Select code (Up, Up, Down, Down, X, X, Left Right, Left, Right, X, Triangle, X, Triangle). The box will turn red if the code was done correctly. Now, go to Game Start and begin a new game. Use the Level Select to go to the first Boss. Defeat Boss 1 then go to World 2, Stage 1. Pause the game and choose to retire. When asked to continue, choose "No." Now, at the Title Screen, you'll see the words, "World 2" by the Game Start Option. Access Game Start and now go to World 6, Stage 3. Pause the game and retire. Next to Game Start on the Title Screen will be the words, "World 6." Take the controller, move left and you will see the word, "HYPER." Now when you access Game Start, you can play the Extra Stages. Some items have been moved around and you can jump three times higher!

Andrew Cole; B.C., Canada

CHEAT SHEET: NEW MODE

POWER TRIP — HOT / NOT

Follow the instructions shown to access the Extra Levels in the game. These levels are generally the same, but things are moved around and you jump higher.

After doing the proper steps, you'll access the HYPER Mode.

V-TENNIS

SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Acclaim

Well here are the codes to play as Mattox and Adversa. To play as Mattox: At the Mode Select Screen, choose "Match." Then at the Player Select Screen enter: L2(2X), R1(3X), Down, Triangle(4X) then press X. You should hear a ball bounce, if done correctly. To play as Adversa: At the Player Select Screen hold buttons: Down , L1, R2, Up, Square then press X. You should again hear a ball bounce, if done correctly, then begin the game.

CHEAT SHEET: NEW PLAYERS

POWER TRIP — HOT / NOT

These little tricks will give you Mattox and Adversa! Follow the instructions shown to be able to use the best players in the game!

NICE PUNCH.

Unfortunately, he has an iron jaw (and a rocket launcher).

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TRICKS OF THE TRADE

KILLER CODES

SHELLSHOCK

–by U.S. Gold
for PlayStation

Now you can have access to invincibility in the game! To get this great cheat to work, begin playing a game then quit out of it by pressing Start and Select. Then at the Main Title Screen enter: Up, Up, Up, Down, Down, Down, Right, Right, Triangle. A piano chime will sound if done correctly. Then begin a game and watch your energy bar go down then up!

First Invincibility and now this, another great cheat to play around with during your next game. Just go to the Main Title Screen and quickly enter the code: Up, Down, Left, Right, Down, Down, Right, Right then Square. You should hear a piano chime, if entered correctly. You will then be taken to the hidden Debug Menu Screen where you can choose from these options: Level Select, CD Test, FMVs, Credits and a Sound Test! Plus, you should start each level fully loaded with all the weapons.

IRON STORM

–by Working Designs
for Saturn

The only way you could play a multiplayer game before was within Standard Mode. Well, here is a great trick to take control of the opposing forces or play a multiplayer game within Campaign Mode! To do this, just go into Campaign Mode and begin a game. Then, open the system file and enter the Sound Screen. Here, set the BMG to 5 and play every sound effect (that's 1 to 116, in case you didn't know) using the D-pad and button C. Note: You don't have to listen to the whole sound. Just a second

COLLEGE SLAM

SYSTEM: Super NES PUBLISHER: Acclaim

POWER TRIP HOT NOT

CHEAT SHEET:

POWER-UP CODES

At the Today's Match-up Screen, you may do either of these codes for the results shown to the right.

You must do both of these codes at the Today's Match-up Screen. Take controller one and enter A, Down, A, Right to get Maximum Power for your team. Press Y, Y, Y, A, A, A to power up your three-point shooting skills.

Peter Tang
Bronx, NY

The power-up codes will appear on the bottom-left.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA

SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Capcom

POWER TRIP HOT NOT

CHEAT SHEET:

SELECT THE WINNING TEXT

To dish out the witty comment of your choice, press and hold the appropriate buttons after you have won the entire match against your opponent.

After you beat your opponent in the second round of the match, press and hold the following buttons for different winning statements: Text #1-Down+Circle+X. Text #2-Down+Triangle+Circle. Text #3-Down+Square+X. Hold them until you see the text.

John Nguyen; Marion, SC

After beating your opponent, hold the appropriate buttons.

You can choose from three different sayings for your character.

SLAM 'N JAM '96

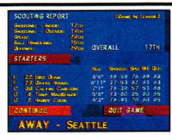
SYSTEM: PlayStation PUBLISHER: Crystal Dynamics

POWER TRIP HOT NOT

CHEAT SHEET:

COMBINATION CODES

After the Scouting Report Screen, quickly enter one of these combination codes before the tipoff. After the tipoff, pause then unpause to see the result.



Immediately after you leave the Scouting Report, do the trick.

After the Scouting Report Screen and right before the tipoff, rapidly and alternately press L1 and L2. End the code with L1. After the tipoff pause then unpause the game. The players will have big heads and the shot percentage will appear. After the Scouting Report Screen and right before the tipoff, rapidly and alternately press L1 and R1. End the code with L1. After the tipoff pause then unpause the game. The players will be small with big heads!

Michael Southworth; Park City, MT

Pause then unpause to get the results of the codes.

The small players with big heads code is hilarious to see!

* This trick was done on a Japanese version of the game and is subject to change.

KILLER CODES

IRON STORM

(CONTINUED)

or two of each one. When finished, exit the Sound Screen and go into the Options Menu. You should now get into what you weren't able to before.

In Campaign Mode, you can now play a multiplayer game!

GEX

SYSTEM: PlayStation **PUBLISHER:** Crystal Dynamics

POWER TRIP HOT LINE

CHEAT SHEET:

ACCESS ALL BONUS ROOMS FROM THE FIRST LEVEL

Use the pictures and descriptions below to help you find all of the bonus rooms in the game.

Get into the crawlspace and enter the special warp.

Go past the three breakable blocks and the teleporter.

First, you must go to the Frankie & Heli Stage. Find the small crawlspace a little ways into the level. Use the teleport then immediately go right, past three large, breakable blocks. Jump over the teleporter on the ground and onto the ledge with the 1-Up. Get a running start and jump left as high as you can. In the middle of your jump, hold Up on the pad. You should stick to a hidden block. Move up the block and you'll be warped to a room with all of the bonus room portals! Collect all of the remote pieces in these levels by picking up all of the icons, and you'll have access to Planet X!

Ryan Rogers; Pahrump, NV

On this ledge, get a running start and jump. Press Up-Left.

You'll be warped to a section with the bonus room portals!

* This trick was done on a Japanese version of the game and is subject to change.

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You'd never want to be on the bad side of your new pal Mallow. His thunderbolt Special Attack brings a blast of lightning down on any enemies in sight.

You want a new kind of Mario action? Try the Yoshi races. But here's a tip. If you don't hit the buttons to the beat, you'll get beat.

Finding Frogfucious is a wise move if you want to know more about your future quest.

Whether you call it more action or more RPG, the fact is you'll have to use every trick in both books to beat these bad guys.

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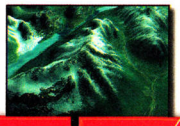
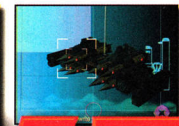




STRIKE

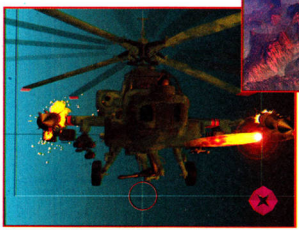
SOVIET

The long-awaited sequel to Electronic Arts' "Strike" series made its formal debut at the E³ trade show last May. When the *EGM* editors first saw this game, it was love at first sight. Officially titled Soviet Strike, EA has been working very quietly and secretly for the last year on creating the ultimate 32-Bit flying/battle simulation game. The game producers and directors, some of whose work dates back to the original 16-Bit Desert Strike, knew that this version had to create an experience for the player that never had been done before. Otherwise, the game would be just another "fun" game, lost in the crowd of other flying games this Christmas. And with the previous Strike games being the largest non-sports products that EA had, the staff set their sights high and started with a clean slate.

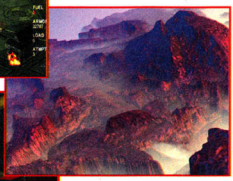
Led by the team of John Manley—game director, Rod Swanson—director, The Edge, Michael Becker—creative director The Edge, and backed by some of the most creative people in the industry, the group set out to mold the game idea. It had to be similar in concept to the previous games—the premise had to be plausible and something the player could relate to and get into. It also had to relate to something currently going on in the world. After kicking around some ideas, the focus shifted to Russia and the turmoil that was going on in the different parts of that country.

With the location decided upon, the staff went back into the other Strike games and did surveys as to what types of levels were the most popular with the players. They found that people loved to blow things up (but not mindlessly), there had to be people to rescue, clues to find and items to get to complete the missions. These objectives had to be balanced but not to the point where the player became frustrated and quit. The replay value had to be there to keep the person engrossed in the game—a game, it turned out, quite similar to the first one in the series: Desert Strike.

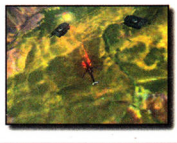
With the concept and goal established, the next problem was to decide how to fill the massive amount of memory available on a CD game. This extra memory allowed the group to open up the horizons and do things that were unthinkable in the days of the 16-Meg carts. Things like really being able to kick up the emotional level in the game by including better sound, voices and video clips—lots of them, over 1,200 in total...so far. But this isn't another



You get to pilot one of the most-advanced, deadliest attack helicopters in Soviet Strike.



A detailed map showing the terrain, roads and structures for one mission.



mindless motion-video game. These are all small clips which inform and tantalize the player. Audio and video which include actual battlefield reports, payoff cinemas, radio war drama—many of which are under user control. The video is windowed and presented in a CNN news style. It is interspersed throughout the game and there to keep the player totally immersed in

laid out the game features, the look and feel of the game, the art processes, the missions and campaigns. From there, they started doing the detailed script. To assure that it was done properly, they hired a professional writer to make sure that everything was well written.

That was a year ago. Since then the game has evolved into five highly detailed missions—any one of them could be a real war. It gives the player a reason to get through each of the missions and to the madman at the end of the game.

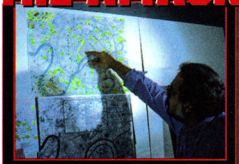
The large amount of detail in the terrain and buildings is easily visible in these pictures. Add in informative video and audio clips and the game springs to life.

Story aside, there had to be more eye candy. This is the 32-Bit generation and the days of barren sprite terrain or unrealistic-looking polygon pyramid-type cities don't sell anymore. The goal became to create a complete, rendered, rich landscape accurate to the smallest detail. As you can see from the above screen shots, they have accomplished this goal admirably.

Visual concepts worked out, the story had to be created. The first design script game in itself. Overall, the producers guarantee that this game will be more than a challenge to the best Strike experts in the nation. In total, they have estimated that there will be more than 100 hours of gameplay in Soviet Strike.

The game is nearing completion now and having played through just the first mission, our editors walked away totally amazed. Not since the release of the first Strike cart has there been a game that has caused such excitement and anticipation. Soviet Strike is easily, hands-down, the best flight/adventure game ever to be made—for any system. ■

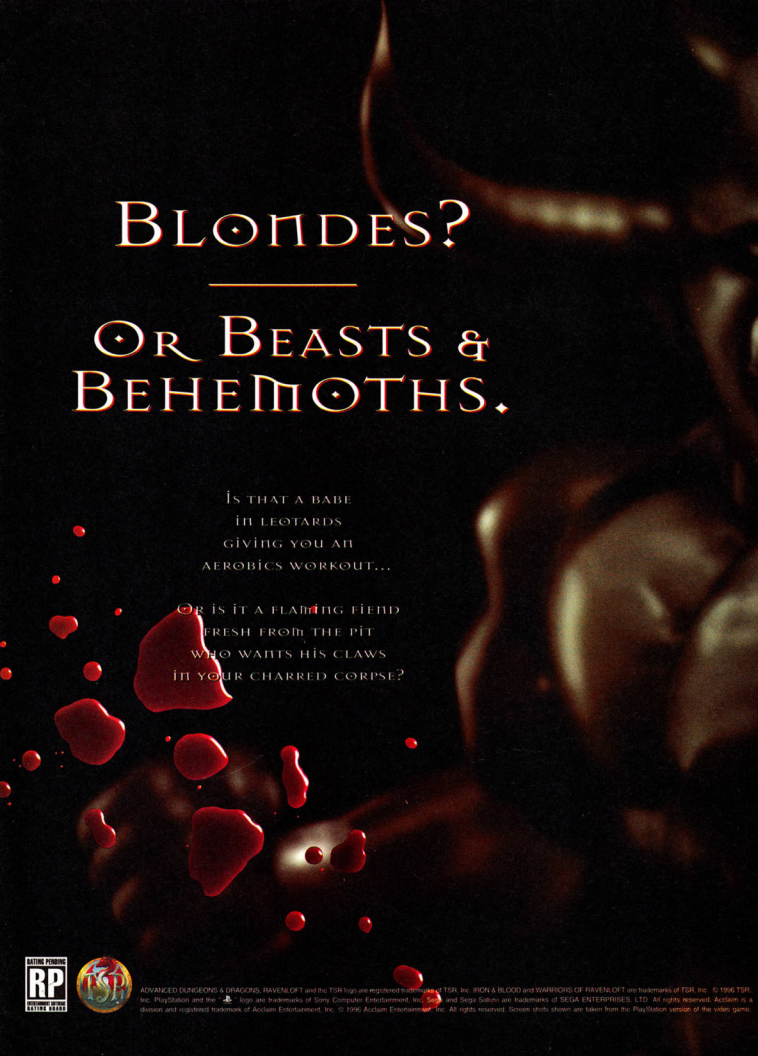
PLANNING THE ATTACK



No detail was overlooked in the creation of Soviet Strike. Each level has been painstakingly mapped out on huge topographic maps. In addition—for proper spatial location and placement of armies, weapons, buildings and fortresses—the missions were also built in full 360-degree relief on sheets of plywood. *EGM* was able to view these maps in EAs secret "War Room" and the detail and amount of thinking that went into each mission was very impressive.

Behind the scenes, every possible consultant was brought in to make sure that each detail was perfect. For example, an assassin (the staff laughed when he was brought up) was hired to make sure the war research (hostages, logistics, etc.) was properly done. A helicopter pilot was hired to assure that your copter's simulation was correct. Others included a Gulf War expert, a director from NBC for the news reporting and even an armor

expert to make sure that the tanks and other field equipment were done properly. Too many details? No, the producers state that the great attention to detail just adds to the richness and realism of the whole game concept. After seeing the video clips, hearing the audio and dialogue and also playing the game we have to agree. This game has to be experienced!


BLONDES?
OR BEASTS &
BEHEMOTHS.
IS THAT A BABE
IN LEOTARDS
GIVING YOU AN
AEROBICS WORKOUT...
OR IS IT A FLAMING FIEND
FRESH FROM THE PIT
WHO WANTS HIS CLAWS
IN YOUR CHARRED CORPSE?
RATING PENDING
RP
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NINTENDO'S NEW TOY

The Vapor Is Now Clearing—EGM Tells All On the N64

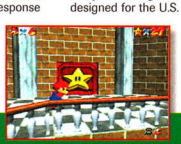
Welcome to *EGM*'s Nintendo 64 round-up—a one-stop players' guide to the N64. In it, you'll find never-before-seen screen shots and sketches of upcoming Nintendo 64 titles, info on some future N64 games, in-depth previews of games right around the corner and some of the most comprehensive coverage of the world's newest 64-Bit game console. So sit back, relax and enjoy the ride as we take you through a 64-Bit journey—Nintendo style!

After much hype, anticipation, excitement and a few well-publicized delays, the Nintendo 64 has finally arrived. Sept. 30 is the magic date of the N64's North American debut, and you can be sure that tons of Nintendo 64 glitz and fanfare is coming our way. (Nintendo will spend roughly $54 million to advertise the N64 this holiday season.) While thousands of hungry U.S. game players are still waiting to purchase Nintendo's new console, the Japanese gaming scene has already been exposed to this awesome system.

On June 23, the N64 was released in Japan along with three games: Super Mario 64, PilotWings 64 and Yoshiharu Habu's Japanese Chess, a Japanese chess simulation. Surprisingly, public response to the N64 in Japan has been lukewarm. One reason for this may be the lack of new N64 titles. Although SM 64 and PW 64 have been lighting up the sales charts in Japan, no more N64 games are due until late September. Adding insult to injury, no strategy games or RPGs (two of the most popular game genres in Japan) are due until the spring of 1997, at the earliest. This has forced many Japanese gamers to take a wait-and-see attitude toward the N64.

In the North American market, the Nintendo 64's prelaunch prognosis is much more optimistic. First of all, anywhere from six to eight titles will be available at launch, with an additional 10-12 games available by Christmas. Not only will the N64 have more games available in its U.S. launch, many of those games were specifically designed for the U.S. market. By Christmas, Nintendo of America expects to have games represented in most of the key gaming genres. With this in mind, it's no wonder N64 fever is much hotter in the U.S. than it is in Japan.

Truth be told, the real excitement of the N64 lies in the future potential of the machine, rather than its current gaming status. More than 80 N64 games are now being developed in Japan alone, with an additional 50+ titles in the works in Europe and North America. (Do the math, and you'll find that more than 130 N64 games are in development worldwide, more than any other Nintendo game platform had before its launch.) Combine that with the impressive visuals seen in Super Mario 64 and PilotWings 64 (two first-generation games) and it's easy to see why Nintendo of America feels the future of this new game console is very bright. In fact, some



of the brightest names in the gaming industry are making games as we speak, including: Williams Entertainment, Electronic Arts, Acclaim, Interplay, Virgin Interactive Entertainment, Rare, Ocean, Software Creations, Capcom, Konami, Hudson, Enix, Seta, Kemco and many more.

For those of you unfamiliar with the N64, here's a quick recap: On April 23, 1993, Nintendo and Silicon Graphics Incorporated announced that they would jointly develop a 64-Bit video game system, code named: Project Reality. Using "Reality Immersion Technology," the game system was to be based on SGI's "Onyx" line of graphic workstation computers. The name "Project Reality" was temporarily changed to "Ultra 64" then changed again to Nintendo 64—as it is now known today.

The Nintendo 64's computer architecture is cartridge-based and is run by just two microprocessors; the CPU (central processing unit) and the RCP (reality co-processor). The main CPU controls all the AI logic and in-game behaviors (artificial life, real-world physics, etc.) of the N64. Based on the MIPS R4300 series of RISC (reduced instruction set computing) CPUs, the N64's main processor runs at around 94 MHz. Unlike the R4300 (which only processes 32-Bits of information internally) the N64's CPU is fully 64-Bit. The heart of the N64 is the RCP, a custom DSP (digital signal processor) controls the graphics and sound of the N64 and operates in two halves. The half that processes the N64's sound and assigns all the polygons is called RSP (reality signal processor). The RDP (reality display processor) draws all the pixels on screen and controls all of the N64's whiz-bang effects (line anti-aliasing, mip-mapping, opacity effects, etc.). The RCP is a true 64 processor that runs at approximately 62 MHz. Combined, both chips can calculate more math than 10 Pentium processors combined! Indeed, when the N64 is hooked up to TVs across the nation, it should be the most powerful chipset in the home! ■

NINTENDO 64

EGM Breaks through the Buzz and Looks Inside the N64

Gamers half a decade ago watched backgrounds and flat terrains spin and scale in and out on their television screens. They heard it was called the Super NES' "Mode 7" feature, and they liked it.

Gamers soon afterward saw a familiar blue hedgehog bolt across the TV faster than a squirrel dodging traffic. They heard it was called "Blast Processing"—a feature unique to the Sega Genesis—and they liked it.

Soon they were looking for more advanced features in their video game systems—features with names like sprite "rotation" and "scaling." The industry was abuzz with these and other buzz words, which were labeled in bold text across the boxes of new systems (the Sega CD among them).

Now with the looming U.S. release of the Nintendo 64, gamers are about to be bombarded with new buzz words—exotic-sounding compound nouns like "mip-mapping" and "anti-aliasing." But before these words get hyped all to heck, we at *EGM* figured someone ought to explain

Environment Mapping

Technical: A rendering technique used to create realistic-looking reflections on a surface. The N64 hardware has this built in and will process this mapping in realtime.

Gamer's definition: This makes the game look real. There are reflections all around us, all the time, but since it takes a lot of processing power, most systems can't do it.

Alpha Channel

Technical: In reference to bit-mapped images and the transparency of pixels therein.

Gamer's definition: The cool effects in water, smoke and glass. Alpha means you can see through the graphics to a certain extent. A good example is the waterfall and the light shining through the windows in Super Mario 64.

Specular Reflection

Technical: A rendering technique which creates a reflection of the light source on a shiny surface. This feature is built in to the N64 hardware.

Gamer's definition: This one is simple enough. Effects like the Chrome Mario in Super Mario 64 will be complete with shininess. Talk about realistic effects easily available.

Anti-Aliasing

Technical: A technique used to smooth the jagged edges of graphics by illuminating the pixels along the edges with colors that are a blend of adjacent colors. This feature is in the N64 hardware.

Gamer's definition: This makes graphics look less pixelized along the edges (the block on the left). It's in the N64 and it's used a lot.

High Resolution

Technical: One of the N64 Video Modes, providing 640 pixels horizontally by 480 pixels vertically.

Gamer's definition: Instead of graphics looking fuzzy, they look sharp. This is what "hi-res" really means. This takes a lot of processing power, so many systems can't handle the data all at once.

Normal Resolution

Technical: A Video Mode of the N64 providing 320 pixels horizontally and 240 pixels vertically.

Gamer's definition: This is close to what's known as "low-res." A good example of this would be the original Doom on the PC. The graphics look blockier. It's kind of like being zoomed in. Hope this isn't used too much on the N64.

RCP Reality Co-Processor

Technical: The heart of the N64. This custom chip performs all graphics and audio processing.

Gamer's definition: If this little guy had hands, you would definitely shake one of them. This chip is what lets Mario walk in a real 3-D environment with the startling graphics and fun music and sound effects. Thank you, Mr. RCP.

ROM
Read Only Memory

Technical: The type of memory used in N64 game cartridges. Presently, N64 games use 4, 8 or 12 Megabytes of ROM.

Gamer's definition: Let's put this into perspective—some of the best games on the 32-Bit systems use well over 100 Megabytes on a CD. Mario uses how many? Only 8. You gotta love technology!

Clipping

Technical: The process of excluding the portions of polygons which are outside the current view. This cuts down on the amount of data being processed during rendering.

Gamer's definition: When the turtle is partially shown coming into view, the part that's not seen won't be rendered. This way there's not as much strain on the N64.

Culling

Technical: The process of excluding polygons which are completely outside of the current view, and it can take away those which are not facing the viewer.

Gamer's definition: Kind of like Clipping but it's for the turtle before he ever comes onto the screen and the side of him we can't see while playing.

Bilinear Interpolation

Technical: Used to improve the appearance of textured surface when viewed at a given distance by blending the colors of adjacent texels. It's in the N64 hardware.

Gamer's definition: Basically this makes graphics look better so they're not so pixelized. This helps up close since it blends colors in the whole graphic. Note the circle on the left.

Trilinear Interpolation

Technical: Used to improve the appearance of textured surfaces when viewed at a given distance by blending the colors of adjacent texels from two separate texture maps. It's in the N64 hardware

Gamer's definition: It's like the bilinear one mentioned before. This time it's with two texture maps—very real.

Wavetable Synthesis

Technical: A type of music synthesis which uses recorded samples of actual instruments and dynamically modifies the pitch and other attributes for enhanced realism. This is built in the N64 hardware.

Gamer's definition: Like the old Super NES' music but a whole lot better with more instruments.

them to the gamer.

What follows then is a look—in both technical and laymen's terms—at which features of the N64 set it apart from the other next-gen consoles. The technical definitions were provided by Nintendo, while the *EGM* editors boiled the techy terms down to what they really mean to game players.

The N64 is loaded with advanced features, and only the most important ones—those that will most likely become buzz words—are explained here. ■

Mip-Mapping

Technical: A technique used for improving the appearance of a textured surface by computing new textures to be displayed based on the distance of the object from the viewer. No annoying noise or patterns on textures.

Gamer's definition: Texture-mapped graphics won't look weird or pixelized up close or far away.

Perspective-Corrected Texture Mapping

Technical: This is used to produce more realistic textures by taking into account the concept of perspective. This feature is built in the N64 hardware.

Gamers definition: Sometimes on various 32-Bit systems, textures will warp out of perspective. Besides being lame-looking, it's confusing to play through. The N64 does it.

TLMMI
Trilinear, Mip-Map Interpolation

Technical: A rendering method combining trilinear interpolation with mip-mapping. This is considered the highest-quality form of texture mapping. It's built into the N64.

Gamer's definition: Now that's a mouth full. Actually, this is why N64 games look so incredible in everything we've seen. It's built-in, so we should be seeing it used a lot.

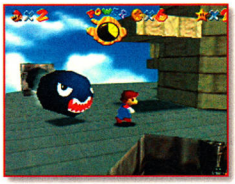
There was a time when a little plumber named Mario was flat but plump. He had a brother named Luigi and lived a fairly good and adventurous life. After all, someone had to protect the Princess from the evil Bowser and his band of minions.

Time has passed and technology has changed–for the better. Mario has been around and is able to say, "Been there, done that." There is one area Mario hasn't been, though. He might have dreamed about it in the olden days of the Super NES. He could've even thought about it back when the NES was in its prime. Thoughts and dreams have now come true. The Nintendo 64 thrusts Mario into a totally 3-D world in Super Mario 64.

The Tower Level will keep going up, up and away. Keep an eye out for stars.

The word that comes to mind in the first five minutes of play is HUGE. This game is gigantic–gigantic in height, width and depth, huge in Boss size and number of levels and secrets. The second word that pops into the brain is BEAUTIFUL. The graphics are simply phenomenal. It seems as if everything graphical is being thrown at the N64 processor, and it chews it up and churns it through with no problem. The last word that settles down in the gray matter is GAMEPLAY. Super Mario 64 is everything the originals were and so much more. Gamers should have even more fun than they did with the originals, but with all the cool special effects made possible by the 64-Bit system.

The object is to retrieve stars and eventually save the Princess from Bowser–sounds familiar, but there's a catch. Gamers need a minimum of 70 stars to complete the game. Rumor has it that there are 120 stars to be found for a perfect game. With this is mind, players should understand why many of the stars are not easily found. Stars give Mario access to new worlds as well. By collecting more stars, more doors will open. Thus, more stars will be available and so on. After defeating Bosses, keys are given.



Holy giant bullet, Mario. Run away from enemies of this size or feel the pain.

He might be smiling but he ain't Mario's friend. Avoid big blocks at all costs.

This way locked doors will no longer bar Mario's way. Bowser hides behind big star doors, so make sure you're ready to face him before entering.

Each level has a theme, such as fire, snow or desert—like the old Super Mario games. The object in each level is to retrieve the standard six stars, but there are more to be found depending on your skills and exploration tactics.

There are different ways to go about getting stars. A star is given for collecting all the red stars on a level. By collecting 100 regular gold coins in a level, a star is given. Of course, there are stars given for defeating Bosses and completing tasks like retrieving a baby penguin in the Snow Level for its mother. Gamers will come back to a level at least six times—one time for each star.

Sometimes the order of the stars is mixed up if the gamer finds the sixth star on the first time through. This means players have to find the first five after that. Overall, there are many paths to take in Super Mario 64.

Mario starts in front of the Princess' castle. As he nears the drawbridge, a friendly flying turtle approaches to offer his assistance. Throughout Mario's adventures, this turtle holds the camera and acts as the eyes of the player. Players can rotate the camera around Mario (as long as no walls are in the camera's way), and zoom the view in and out. From that point, the Gigantor-like adventure starts. Take a look at the sidebar titled "Camera Views" on the next page.

The interior of the castle features a "Great Room." It is populated with nine doors, two of which go to the same area. Because of this room and the worlds that can be accessed from it, gamers will be very busy.

The lower-left door leads to the first world. The first level of the game—which is found behind the picture with the B-bombs on it—is broken down like this: The first run-through of the level yields a star. The second time in the level a gamer is confronted by a friendly but competitive turtle. A children's fable—*The Tortoise and the Hare*—is brought to Super Mario 64. If Mario wins, the turtle gives you a star. What a good loser he is. The remaining four stars (minimum) give gamers a good opportunity to learn Mario's attacks and jumps. Practice these thoroughly and check the sidebar to the right for more info. Note: In order to retrieve one of these stars in the first level, Mario will have to find the big, red button to activate the red blocks. Check the sidebar about "Camera Views" on the next page.

After a few stars are obtained, gamers

If Mario plays with fire, chances are he'll get burned. Try for the 1-Up to the left.

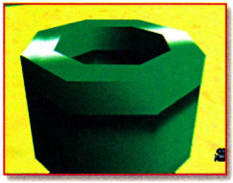
Mario's Attacks

Mario has never been a true warrior but he can take care of the enemies. Back in the original games, a simple jump and stomp was enough to take care of a baddie. Later, good ol' Mario used items from the background like boxes and turtle shells. Now we're dealing with a Mario of the future, and he has some new tricks up his plunger.

Taking full advantage of the Nintendo 64's analog controller, Super Mario 64 utilizes almost every button. There's the standard punch. There's the three-hit combo: punch, punch, kick. All this from hitting the same button three times. This is effective against enemies like the horned bombs in the Lava Level. Mario still has his butt stomp move. Jump and hit the Z-button—Mario crashes down squashing anything that lies below. Good thing he's a hearty eater! By hitting the Z-button with the Punch soon after, Mario does a Slide Kick. This Power Slide is effective against almost all enemies. Look out when using the Power Slide near a deadly edge or especially in the Snow Level. The Power Jump is the Z-button with the Jump button soon after. This is great when there's a star across from a ledge or a red coin on an island above water. By holding down the Z-button (and Mario squats) then kicking, Mario will do a Break-dancing Kick. This is good to use once in a while—it's more fun to watch. The point is to use all of the controller's buttons to make your way through SM64. Keep in mind that there are more than just simple punch and kick moves. Mario is practically an SF character now.

Camera Views

The four yellow buttons on the control pad control the friendly camera angle. Depending on where Mario is standing, the camera can be adjusted a full 360 degrees. Does this serve a purpose? Is it more than just eye candy? You betcha. In certain areas it is imperative to use the different camera angles in order to see where Mario is at a given time. When you're in the heat of battle, avoiding a Mario-seeking flame and you're turning a corner at top analog speed, the camera needs to be changed fast or off the edge you go. By hitting the top yellow button several times, a Viewing Mode can be selected. This is just for looking around and not much else. There is one exception found so far. By looking up at the bright sun/cloud on the ceiling in the "Great Room," Mario is warped into a bonus area. This is where you get the winged hat so you can fly. The only way to get there is by looking around with the View Mode. There are other instances but we'll leave the rest up to you. Besides looking around for secrets, the maneuverable camera views can make for some cool-looking sites. If Mario is standing close to the edge of a cliff and the camera angle is changed, a different perspective is created, staring down about 100 feet to the snowy ground below—or to an untimely death. Practice using the views to your advantage.



A green pipe? I remember these from from the old days of Mario.

have the choice of staying in the first world and finishing it or trying a new realm. There's the Snow Level, the Tower Level and the Water Level. There's also a bonus round to access behind the door on the right on the top level of the "Great Room."

The Snow Level is slippery. Super Mario 64 fans will have to watch their step while slipping and sliding in this one. There is a ton of exploring to do in this level, and some of the stars seem impossible to get. Fret not—with more practice they'll be as easy as ever. The Tower Level is a lot of fun to play through. The concrete slabs are especially fun to beat. Keep an eye out for the Boss on the first run through—he's a biggie. Also, remember to talk to the pink bombs; they'll open up the cannons for Mario. This is necessary for all of the stars to be obtained. The Water Level has a misty motif—too bad Mario can't get a peg-leg power-up. Suit up for some deep-sea exploring, as Mario encounters a giant

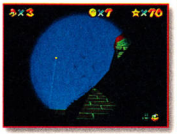
eel, a sunken ship and an underwater hydro fan that keeps regular Mario from obtaining a star. Perhaps a Chrome Mario is suitable for the task. Give it a try!

By this time gamers should have enough stars to encounter Bowser for the first time. The upper level of the "Great Room" has a door to the left, with a big

Another chance to compete for the gold. What's next for Mario? The Olympics?

star on it. As mentioned before, doors like these hide the level to the Boss. Open this door and walk down the hall. A picture of the Princess awaits. Will this be Mario's chance to win the Princess back? Unlikely. Keep walking and watch what happens.

As gamers play through the Boss level, they'll hear a familiar tune and feel their palms sweat. They might ask, "Am I really scared of falling off the edge?" The answer is: yes. Because of the graphic effects in Super Mario 64, many of the levels give a feeling of incredible depth. Players make their way to the top and into the good old green pipe. Bowser is



Special Blocks

Remember the power-up blocks in old Super Mario games? Sure, we all do. Super Mario 64 isn't much different in that aspect. There are four types of blocks to bust: a yellow block which houses regular gold coins, a turtle shell(for swimming or land-surfing) or a free Mario. There are also red blocks, green blocks and blue blocks—which have nothing to do with the sunglasses. The red blocks give Mario wings for flight. Do a triple jump or jump from a high area and you're a Wright brother instead of a Mario brother. The green blocks give Mario invincibility in the form of Chrome.

Besides looking very cool, Chrome Mario is invincible. Being made of a metal, he is very heavy and doesn't float in water. This is effective when needing to obtain a star in the middle of a strong underwater current. Since Chrome Mario is so heavy the water fan doesn't budge the chromed one at all. On top of all this, Chrome Mario shoots out of cannons much easier—like a bullet. Finally there is the blue block. This gives Mario a double power: invincibility and invisibility. This way Mario can walk through screened-off areas.

Each block has its own pros and cons. Some are necessary to retrieve a star in a level. Without flight in one level Mario would never reach a star far above ground. In another level Mario would never make it through the strong current if he wasn't chromed. The special powers have a time limit. Be sure to be out of harm's way when they're ending or else Mario could get hurt or killed.

As mentioned before, the common yellow blocks give turtle shells. The shells aren't very common but they're not necessarily a special power. They are great for getting around in water fast or sliding around the ground in a quick way. Use these with other special powers for an "untouchable" Mario. This is important in the water with Chrome Mario. This way he can swim even though he's chromed. Search for power-up blocks where other things usually wouldn't be. When something seems impossible, look for a power-up block hidden somewhere near by.

The "Great Room"...so many doors, so little time. Where should Mario begin?

Don't let Mario's power get too low, especially in the Haunted House.

waiting on the other side. He's big, bad and is waiting to show Mario what charbroiling is all about. Run up behind the Spiked One and press the Punch button. Grab his tail and rotate the analog stick. What to do? Throw him off the edge or into one of the bombs on the edge of the platform? You decide.

This is just a taste of everything Super Mario 64 has to offer. Remember to explore all areas, but also remember that certain stars cannot be obtained until the previous stars are retrieved. Play through each level six times and then some for plenty of stars. 120 stars seems impossible but it can be done—it has been done. Remember to use the environment to its fullest potential and look all over, in every nook and cranny. Where to go next?

Perhaps to find Yoshi? That's the fun part—go anywhere and everywhere, looking for anything and everything. Check the sidebars for more info on the various levels, techniques and secrets therein.

Now that Mario has been launched into a 64-Bit realm, things are a lot different from the old days. But there's no reason to be afraid that Mario has changed for the worse. Remember that the graphics only make the game better if the game is fun to begin with. Mario has been dreaming of the 3-D thing for a long time. Finally his dream has come true with the N64. Join this little plumber who has been around for years in 8- and 16-Bit worlds. Prepare for Super Mario 64 and get ready to control Mario in a truly 3-D environment. ■

PILOTWINGS 64

The Super NES classic Pilotwings had a lot going for it when it was launched alongside the 16-Bit system five years ago. The game gave console players their first chance to soar above realistic–albeit completely flat–terrain. And the goal of Pilotwings, to pass a series of flight tests using varied aircraft (or in the case of the skydiving lessons, no aircraft), was a unique concept amidst the hundreds of side-scrolling games that clogged store shelves at the time.

PilotWings 64 isn't so fortunate. Gamers who own next-gen consoles have by now grown accustomed to playing in highly detailed game environments, and most Nintendo fans have already beaten Pilotwings. The game just ain't all that novel anymore.

PilotWings 64 will have to pull off some spectacular visual stunts and offer brand-new gameplay challenges if it's to top its 16-Bit predecessor.

Fortunately, the game has enough flash (thanks to the power of the Nintendo 64) and style (note the new combat and photography missions) to come across as a worthy update to the original.

Although PilotWings 64's graphics aren't light-years ahead of what the other consoles can dish out, they are a phenomenal step forward. The game's texture-mapped terrains look lush and realistic, and they slip smoothly beneath the player's aircraft (although minute slowdown does occur during flight through polygon-heavy environments, such as cities.) Only graphics generated by high-end PCs and multimillion-dollar flight simulators surpass the visuals found in PilotWings 64, which is appropriate, considering that the game's developers also designed flight simulators for the military (see sidebar).

Flight in PilotWings 64 takes players above four islands: two tropical, one arctic and the fourth as large as a nation. Depending on which flight lesson they choose, players will swoop over cities, waterfalls, mountain peaks and other sights and structures. Much of the terrain is animated, too: smoke pours from chimneys atop farm houses, the Space Shuttle lifts from its launch pad and many other animations–complete with sound effects–liven up the islands. The game's world extends

nearly to the horizon, and pop-up of terrain features is rarely noticeable—but it does exist. When flying at high altitudes, players will see distant buildings and land features pop into view at the fringes of the fog-enshrouded horizon.

While its graphics are new-and-improved, PilotWings 64's goal is no different from that of the Super NES version: Players must earn their wings in a series of increasingly more difficult flying tests. Points are given based on how well players do in each lesson, and high scores grant access to the game's later levels and bonus missions.

Hidden away in each level is a star that will grant pilots the birdman wings.

Unlike the original, however, PilotWings 64 doesn't end with with a helicopter gunship mission. Instead, players who pass every lesson get to don the birdman wings and go on a sight-seeing tour of the islands. Stars hidden throughout the game also grant the wings.

Another feature unique to PilotWings 64 is the option to pick from six different pilots, each with his or her own body proportions that affect the flight characteristics of the aircraft. For instance, vehicles flown by skinny characters—such as the lanky American named Goose—lift into the sky easily, but their turning capabilities aren't as tight as aircraft flown by heavier pilots.

Buildings have a new look during night flights. Their windows glow with lights.

The hang glider won't glide forever. Fortunately, thermal currents give it a lift.

When players start the game, they can head skyward in three aircraft: the gyrocopter, the hang glider and the jetpack. The gyrocopter—sort of a smoke-belching combination between a helicopter and an airplane—is a new vehicle and takes the place of the first game's biplane. (No, PilotWings 64's developers haven't forsaken would-be skydivers; the parachute—among other things—becomes available in the game's bonus challenges.)

Early gyrocopter missions send pilots careening through rings that float at various heights (some under bridges), but later lessons have pilots doing more things than just flying through rings. The gyrocopter is now armed with missiles, which pilots must use to destroy mission targets. In most lessons, the targets are either hovering balloons or bull's eye-adorned ground-based signs. In two missions the pilot must blow away a marauding robot, which dashes madly across the gyrocopter's flight path while the pilot tries to nail it with five missile hits. This task is made all the more difficult by the robot's tendency to hurl boulders at the gyrocopter.

Mount Rushmore has a new look. Note the face of a certain famous plumber.

A Word From The Flight Crew

Although Shigeru Miyamoto, the gaming mastermind who created the original Pilotwings (as well as the Mario and Zelda games and nearly every other Nintendo classic), oversaw the development of PilotWings in Japan, the game was actually programmed in Texas, by Dallas-based Paradigm Simulation Inc. Founded in 1990, Paradigm originally created training simulators for pilots and ship captains. It has gradually shifted its focus toward the entertainment industry and is now part of Nintendo's cadre of "Dream Team" developers.

Nintendo picked Paradigm for the PilotWings project because of the U.S. company's extensive experience with SGI workstations. Paradigm and Nintendo's partnership deepened recently, when it was announced that Paradigm would design development tools for the 64-Bit system.

EGM spoke with Dave Gatchel, Paradigm's vice president of Entertainment Applications, about PilotWings 64, the company's first console game.

EGM: Did Paradigm's staff play the first Pilotwings much before developing PilotWings 64?

DG: Yes, we all played the original and studied it pretty closely, and we all thought it was a good game.

EGM: PilotWings 64 is much more difficult than the original. Did you set out to make it more challenging?

DG: We definitely wanted there to be an adequate challenge for the player, but we didn't set out intentionally to make it more difficult than the original or any simpler. We just wanted to make sure there was an adequate amount of playtime there.

EGM: Who decided what aircraft would be included in PilotWings 64?

DG: Nintendo told us what they wanted in the game, while we worked on its development.

EGM: How accurate are the flight models?

DG: We tried to start out with a physics-based approach, then we deviated from that where we had to so the game would strike a balance between accuracy and fun.

EGM: What do you think Nintendo's analog controller brings to this type of game?

DG: The joystick's biggest impact, obviously, is that you're able to get really smooth control in an interactive 3-D environment like the one we're providing here. This ability to move smoothly and get into tight areas and have the control resolution to do that is key.

EGM: Paradigm is used to working with extremely expensive SGI workstations. How does Nintendo's new system compare to this high-end hardware?

DG: It compares quite favorably. Mip-mapping, anti-aliasing—all those types of features that you normally associate with a very high-end system have been packed into a $250 device. It's quite amazing.

EGM: Now that you're part of Nintendo's Dream Team, will gamers be seeing more Nintendo 64 titles from you in the future?

DG: We're definitely planning on doing some more content for Nintendo. We can't really comment on that at this point, though.

Variable viewpoints

Just as they do during Mario's 64-Bit adventure, the analog controller's four yellow C buttons adjust the player's viewpoint in PilotWings 64. These buttons pan the view up, down, left and right, while the right shoulder button switches the pilot's perspective.

The hang-glider lessons are more for the pacifist; instead of guns, the glider is equipped with a camera. Photo missions begin by showing pilots a list of objects they must find and photograph, such as a ship or fountain. Players will have to maneuver close enough to the objects so they can take pictures from the same distance and angle as the photos shown at the beginning of the mission. Points are awarded based on how closely the pilot's photos resemble the mission ones.

The missions bring up a novel feature of PilotWings 64—the game's photo album. After pilots have finished snapping pictures, they can stick the photos in an album that's saved along with the player's progress. The album holds six pictures, which players can view later to relive their sight-seeing adventures.

Other hang glider lessons are akin to those in the first Pilotwings; players will have to guide the glider through rings or reach a certain altitude by using the thermal currents, the aircraft's only source of lift.

Jetpack missions also send pilots chasing after rings, but these targets are a bit trickier than in other lessons. Some rings are tucked away under rock overhangs, while others have to be passed through in a certain sequence and in a certain amount of time. Other jetpack missions have players seeking out and dropping onto stationary targets that refuel the gas-hogging vehicle, a task made easier by the jetpack's stabilizing feature (a tap on the Z button brings the jetpack to a dead hover). The stabilizer sucks fuel, however, and pilots who take too long touching down will quickly run out of gas and crash. Still other jetpack lessons send

Miles of caves snake through the islands, and they're best explored with the jetpack.

The view can be rotated around the jetpack, making tricky landings easier.

Island Hopping: A Guide to the Game's Locales

Tiny Paradise

Although this small resort island is the site of the game's first and easiest flight lessons, it's still packed with plenty of sights to see. A stone fortress dominates the island's skyline and sits atop its highest hill, from which waterfalls splash down into a fountain-laden lake (look for a small cave near the waterfalls). Players can also soar above a colorful carnival—complete with rides. The star is easy to find here (this is the only island where it isn't hidden).

Ice Land

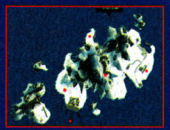
Frozen, mountainous and bitten by fierce winds, this chain of arctic islands is home to the game's most unique terrain. Matterhorn-like peaks jut into the sky, while oil rigs and refineries dot the island's few flat parcels of frozen tundra. Skilled jetpack drivers can go spelunking here, too; a narrow cave cuts into one of the mountains and follows a fast-moving river deep into the frozen core of the island. Whale watchers will want to scan the icy sea.

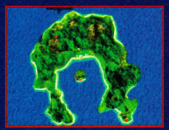
Resort Atoll

Resorts and farmland line the beaches of this tropical paradise, which is much larger than the first island. It is also much more mountainous. Numerous hang glider launch points are perched atop the island's peaks, although the rugged, sloping terrain makes for few landing zones. Jetpack pilots will again get to put their cave-navigating skills to the test, once they find the twisting rock tunnel that bores through the island's mountains.

Shrunken Nation

By far the largest island, this mammoth chunk of land is actually a mini version of the United States. All the country's major cities and landmarks—such as New York City and the Grand Canyon—have been duplicated in scaled-down form. Pilots can circle the Statue of Liberty and buzz a Nintendo-modified Mount Rushmore. The island's not too big, though—players can cruise from New York to San Francisco via jetpack in under two minutes.





FLIGHTS OF FANCY: The Bonus Missions

BIRDMAN WINGS

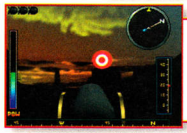
Donning these birdman wings is the overall goal of PilotWings 64. The feathery contraptions become available early in the game (after pilots beat the missions of the first difficulty level or find a hidden star), but the wings can't be used to visit all four islands until players succeed in every mission. Wing-wearing pilots don't have to worry about fuel restrictions or accomplishing mission objectives—they can just soar above the islands for the fun of it and snap pictures for the photo album. The wings—which flap each time players press the A button—allow for easy maneuvering through the sky, and pilots can even takeoff and land vertically to perch atop buildings, mountaintops and other structures.

JUMBLE HOPPER

While not exactly an aircraft, this pair of springy shoes does keep the player airborne most of the time. Jumble Hopper-wearing pilots are continuously launched into the air and can only control the direction and power of their jumps. Players must guide their pilot to a distant target zone.

SKYDIVING

Coming to a safe, soft landing in the bull's eye is only half the challenge of the skydiving missions. Players must first guide their free-falling flyers into five different formations with other skydivers. The formations must be completed before players drop below the cloud level.



CANNON BALL

The most painful of PilotWings 64's flight activities, this mission blasts pilots from a cannon toward a distant target. Players must take into account wind and target distance when aiming the big gun's sight. Some targets are hidden behind hills, so the cannon has to be angled just right.

pilots out to round up a bouncing ball and guide it to a target zone.

Since the jetpack is a vertical-takeoff aircraft, it grants more freedom to explore than the game's other vehicles. Pilots will need this freedom, too, since one mission requires them to navigate through a narrow and twisting cave. Each bump against the cave wall is punished by a two-point deduction from the pilot's mission score.

The criteria used to determine successful missions varies with each vehicle. For instance, during gyrocopter missions, pilots earn points for flying through all the rings and blowing up every target, but they're also graded on how quickly they flew the mission and how accurate they were with the missiles. Since no successful mission ends with a crash landing, pilots earn points for how well they bring their aircraft back to Earth.

PilotWings 64's missions progress through four levels of difficulty, and players can move on to the next level only by earning bronze wings or better in each of the current level's lessons. If they're good enough to garner silver or gold wings in each lesson, pilots earn access to the game's bonus missions. These missions have players being shot out of a cannon, skydiving, bouncing about on a springy pair of shoes called Jumble Hoppers and gliding with the bird wings.

Like in the original Pilotwings, the hang glider is the most difficult aircraft to land.

It's not easy to score high enough to reach all of the bonus missions; PilotWings 64 is much more challenging than its Super NES predecessor. Not only do later missions dole out more difficult challenges, they also demand precise flying and perfect landings. To make matters even more difficult, pilots have to contend with variable weather, fierce winds, turbulence and missions that take place during all hours of the day and night.

Yet these pilot-unfriendly conditions don't sap any fun from the game. They only increase PilotWings 64's already high level of realism and make for a game that will absorb more of the player's time than the 16-Bit original ever did. ■

FREAK BOY

The characters in Freak Boy, while appearing quite crudely drawn with big polygons and empty spaces, are in actuality done so he can absorb different items from his environment.

EGM recently had a chance to take a sneak peek at Freak Boy, Burst's (a division of Virgin Interactive Entertainment) first title for the N64. Due out the first quarter of 1997, Freak Boy is currently around 50 percent complete. The game can best be described as a third-person, 3-D action/adventure/shooter.

The game's story starts out with the hero, Freak Boy, as a member of a peaceful civilization called the Hedrons. The Hedrons are invaded by an evil race of creatures—known as the Zos—from an alternate dimension. The Zos make a hole in the middle of the Hedrons' sun, come into their solar system and kidnap all of the Hedrons.

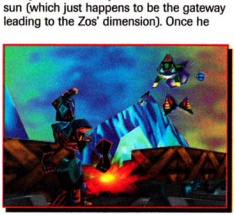
During the invasion, one Hedron manages to evade capture and becomes mutated into the form we now know as Freak Boy. He then goes on a personal mission to destroy all of the Zos and return the captive Hedrons to their rightful dimension.

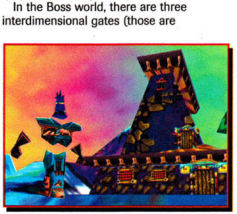
Freak Boy begins his journey at the outermost planet in his solar system and slowly makes his way toward the Hedron sun (which just happens to be the gateway leading to the Zos' dimension). Once he gains access to the alien dimension, Freak Boy can confront the Zos' leader and attempt to rescue his people.

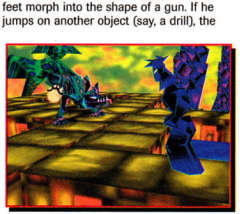
Freak Boy is divided into five different levels, with four worlds per level for a total of 20 different main worlds. (There are also bonus areas and stages hidden throughout the game.) Each world has a gate key hidden somewhere in the world. In order to proceed to the next world, players must acquire the gate key and "pop" it into the gate key hole.

In the Boss world, there are three interdimensional gates (those are the gates the alien Zos are entering). The only way to get past the Boss world and enter a new level is to lock all the gates in the preceding three worlds...got it?

Freak Boy has a unique play mechanic—his body forms tools and weapons which he carries. He is made up of three distinct pieces (or slots): a lower slot, a chest slot and a head slot. Freak Boy can absorb objects from his environment and morph them into his body by jumping on them. For example, if he jumps on a gun, his feet morph into the shape of a gun. If he jumps on another object (say, a drill), the







Plan on lots of action-packed 3-D gameplay in Freak Boy.

gun then morphs to his chest area and his feet become a drill. Wherever the objects are placed in Freak Boy's body directly influences how the objects function and where they function.

For instance, a drill in Freak Boy's feet will dig straight down, and a drill in his chest can cut through walls and doors. A drill in his head can cut through ceilings. This feature was specifically designed to add a strategy element to the game; the order in which a player chooses to "stack up" objects (bombs, guns, drills, etc.) in Freak Boy's body may depend on where the player is in the level.

Knowing this, the developers at Burst took the opportunity to design hidden bonus areas and alternative pathways for the skilled (or lucky) players to discover.

Set for release next spring, Freak Boy is one N64 title that fans of 3-D action games will want to keep an eye out for. It will totally wow gamers! Look for even hotter coverage of Freak Boy in an upcoming issue of *EGM*. ■

THE RULES OF STACKING

Objects that move up into Freak Boy's body, "stack up" until his body is filled (hence the early working title of the game, Stacker). Once full (three objects in total), Freak Boy can't acquire any more objects until a slot empties out.

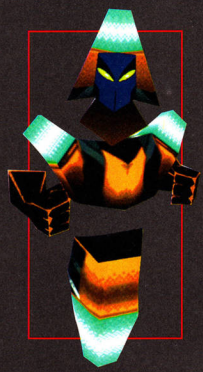
There are two ways slots can become empty: A player can "pop out" an object from Freak Boy's head slot or the object gets destroyed (at which point, it disappears completely). Once all three slots are empty, Freak Boy is completely defenseless and will die if hit. The only thing the player can do is run away and attempt to acquire more objects.

EYE CANDY

Freak Boy was designed as a sophisticated game on many levels. All of the N64's much ballyhooed graphical effects are being fully utilized (mip-mapping, anti-aliasing, translucency, etc.). Even in its currently early state, Freak Boy demonstrates ultra-smooth 3-D movement (the game will run at 30 fps when completed), clean textures and almost none of the annoying "polygon pop-up" that plagues many polygon games.

Although the game will only clock in at 64 Megabits, some worlds can stretch out to the equivalent of one square mile or more. The worlds in Freak Boy are slightly similar to the levels in Super Mario 64, because the polygon environments are vast and you can see extremely far into the distance.

Freak Boy also incorporates sweeping "cinematic-style" camera angles and infinitely configurable viewpoints. The music in the game is described as Industrial-Rock. Although the music had yet to be implemented in the demo we saw, Freak Boy's producer assured us the tunes would reflect the cutting-edge image of the main character.

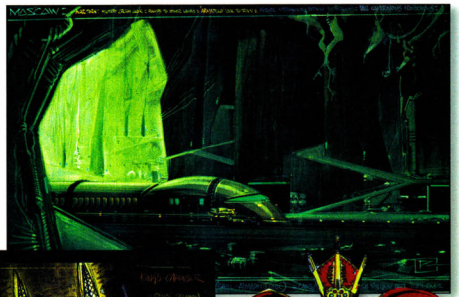


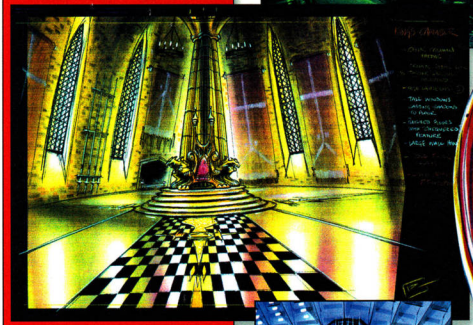
DEAD AHEAD

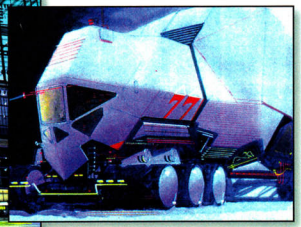
Here is a world exclusive first look at Optical Entertainment's revolutionary new Nintendo 64 title: Dead Ahead. Due out in Christmas of 1997, Dead Ahead is the first true fighting/quest game ever.

Optical Entertainment is touting that Dead Ahead combines the fluidity and technique of 3-D fighting games like Tekken 2 and Virtua Fighter 2 with the exploration elements of Zelda and Final Fantasy. Players will no longer be limited to specific locations and fighting arenas.

In Dead Ahead, combatants can roam around in a vast, nonlinear, 3-D polygon world. Similar to a traditional RPG/quest game, the fights in Dead Ahead can happen almost anywhere. Like an RPG, the battles happen at random times, but unlike the norm, the camera stays in a floating third-person view (a la Super Mario 64). The similarities to RPGs don't just end there—players can upgrade their combatants and even fight against three enemies at once. Imagine being able to walk anywhere you wanted in VF2, and you'll get the idea of what Dead Ahead is all about.







The Dead Ahead project is an amalgamation of many creative talents. Steve Park, a world-renowned automobile designer and the head design manager of Ford Australia, is creating all the conceptual illustrations for Dead Ahead. Programming work is being handled by Software Creation, one of the original members of Nintendo 64's "Dream Team." The musical score is being composed by David Newman, a leading motion-picture composer, whose credits include: *The Flintstones*, *The Phantom* and *Hoffa*.

From what we have seen, Dead Ahead has the potential to be the most genre-defining fighting game since Street Fighter II. Look for more updates on this radical N64 game in upcoming issues of *EGM*. ■

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Top Gear Rally

The PlayStation and the Saturn have seen a steady supply of racing games, which have been given a turbo boost of realism by the polygon-pushing power of the two consoles' RISC processors. But the Nintendo 64 certainly isn't going to be left at the starting line without any racing titles. One of the first such games for the 64-Bit system (besides the much-anticipated Super Mario Kart R) is Top Gear Rally, due out the first quarter of 1997.

Top Gear Rally is an on- and off-road racing game that is reminiscent of Sega Rally and Namco's Dirt Dash. Players race around the tracks in at least three vehicles (more will be added): a Porsche, a Supra and a Toyota 4x4. The cars zip around the tracks in different weather conditions, and these conditions highlight some of the game's realism-enhancing features. For instance, mud from wet roads cakes on the car's windshield and is cleared away by quick swipes of the windshield wipers. Also, rain and snow whip against the car's windshield and nearly ruin the driver's visibility.

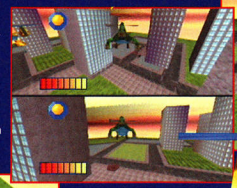
Two players can race against each other in Top Gear Rally. The Two-player Mode is handled in split-screen fashion. Thanks to the N64's powerful processor, the game doesn't slow down or lose detail when two players compete.

Besides the standard one- and two-player races, a Battle Mode is also planned for the game. This mode will no doubt remind players of Super Mario Kart's combat-ridden stages.

Top Gear Rally is still far from complete, and Kemco, the game's developer, is working on hidden tracks and cars. Look for more info on this next-gen racer in future issues of *EGM*.

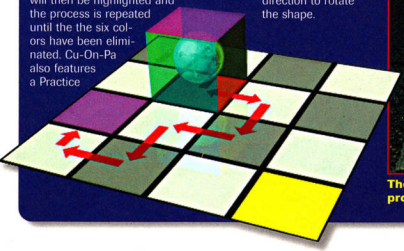
Ultra Combat

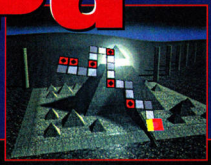
Staged in the 25th century, an alien race has retaliated against the Earth for contaminating their planets, and therefore, caused the Earth to fight back in response. Inspired by VCS Combat from Atari, Software Creations' 64-Meg virion—titled Ultra Combat—features a similar theme as the original. Many of the same vehicles of destruction have been included in this new N64 virion including tanks and helicopters for the players to control. Up to four players can battle at once in the arenas, and each gamer can select a custom special weapon to use against his/her opponents. The game is also designed to allow players to select different vehicles for a single round of combat. While playing, combatants get the feeling of a network game on the N64, making play fun and exciting as they hunt down each other in a so-called friendly get-together.

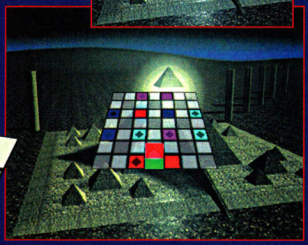


Cu-On-Pa

Cu-On-Pa is a new style of puzzle game. Its gameplay challenges players to erase the six colored surfaces on the outside of the shape by matching them with the correct color underneath. For instance, a red panel would light up on the shape, and the player would have to respond by rotating the block in the proper direction to match it on the red square located on the ground. Another colored surface will then be highlighted and the process is repeated until the the six colors have been eliminated. Cu-On-Pa also features a Practice Mode that allows players to work on their playing ability as well as their speed. Currently there are over 100 stages in the Normal Mode and an additional 100 in the Puzzle Mode. Clearly Cu-On-Pa is more than just a run-of-the-mill puzzle game. It involves a lot of thinking as well as planned strategy to figure out the proper direction to rotate the shape.







The beginning puzzles are simple, but they progress quickly to being more difficult.

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ONE HEAVY-DUTY CRISIS
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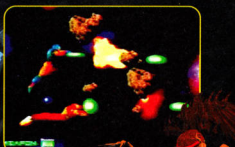

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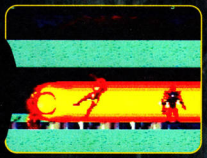

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MARVEL COMICS

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In August, Sega will be releasing a game that it hopes will provide the Saturn with the same magic (sales magic, that is) that Sonic the Hedgehog provided for the Genesis: NiGHTS. Created by the same development team that brought us Sonic, NiGHTS is their newest "3-D" flight/action title that will draw the attention of many.

The Saturn is facing tough competition on all sides from the Sony PlayStation and Nintendo 64. Sega needed a game that will be their killer app of killer apps—a game that will cause such excitement and such a following that Saturns will be rolling off the store shelves and into consumers' waiting hands.

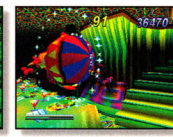
So they looked to Yuji Naka and the rest of the Japan-based Sonic Team, the

original designers of Sonic 1-3 and Sonic and Knuckles. All were great hits for the 16-Bit Genesis, and all can arguably be called (along with some EA Sports titles) the games that put the Genesis on the map of success.

Now that the game is finished, Sega will wait with nervous anticipation to see how well the public will receive it. Why nervousness? Well, it will be one of the top two games (the other being Sonic Extreme) in 1996 in which Sega will be investing very heavily. Marketing, PR, print ads, television commercials...you will see it all. They are really counting on this game's success.

You couldn't tell this by Sega's outward appearance, however. They are showing complete confidence in the product. A press release by Sega stated that when NiGHTS was first unveiled, it was a "nightmare on Sony Street and bedtime for Mario's N64." Of course, it is not uncharacteristic for Sega to attack its competitors (as the other guys do to Sega), but an outright challenge to the new 3-D 64-Bit Mario? Well...Nintendo and all the other game players who played both games might tell Sega something different.

Tom Kalinske, president and CEO of Sega of America, isn't worried one bit. He once said, "NiGHTS is like nothing anyone has ever seen before on the Sega Saturn or any other next-generation platform. We



are completely convinced that this title will do for the Sega Saturn what Sonic the Hedgehog did for the Genesis." That should bring joy to their Japanese stockholders' lives, but will the game live up to expectations?

The graphics and music are definitely not in question. NiGHTS showcases gorgeous and detailed scenery. The backgrounds are a bundle of bright colors. The levels are as imaginative as they are fascinating. Throughout the game, your sense of reality will be suspended as you fly around the dream-like environment backed by gentle and soothing tunes.

The flight aspect is NiGHTS' biggest seller. Like Sonic's (albeit a bit hokey) "blast processing," speed is key. Claris and Elliot, the two children you play as, will fly loops and spins at dizzying velocities. You won't find any slowdown or break-up here.

Although the worlds are vast and look three-dimensional, you'll find that you can only fly in two dimensions. Most of the time, you'll be flying on a track in a flat plane of some sort. It may be a top-down view, or more commonly, a side view. Sometimes, the levels will switch to a forward-scrolling motion, but you'll never find yourself flying in total freedom.

This was done on purpose, as the creators wanted the emphasis placed on gameplay and speed, not flashy 3-D open space. The general thought was that creating a high-speed platform-style game in an open space would be disorienting to the player and detract from gameplay. The designers, therefore, concentrated their efforts in making sure the flight was as smooth and realistic as possible. To aid with this task, a special 3-D analog controller (see sidebar) will be bundled with NiGHTS for a precision feel. The only time you'll find real 3-D play, however, is when you lose the power of flight and find yourself hoofing around by foot. Only then will you find total freedom to move around the large worlds.

So how exactly is it that children are flying around in a dream world? The story starts out when Elliot and Claris return to their own homes to retire for the evening. A creature called a Nightopian escapes from the world of Nightopia, the realm where dreams are dreamt. This Nightopian explains to the two

children that an evil being named Wizeman the Wicked is in the process of stealing precious dream energy from sleeping humans to gain the power needed to leave the subconscious and enter the world of the waking. He's obviously up to no good and must be stopped. Enter the two kids.

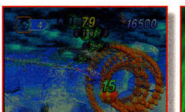
Both Elliot and Claris have separate levels (four each) to play. When you pick one character, you will enter his or her first respective dream world as that person. Upon arrival, enemies will immediately swoop down and steal four out of five of your dream energies. The fifth is the dream energy of Bravery, which is represented by a red ball called an Ideya. This Ideya will give you the power of NiGHTS, an aerial acrobat. Your job is to use this ability to retake your other four Ideyas (Purity, Wisdom, Hope and Intelligence).

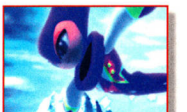
The stolen Ideyas are placed in the Wizeman's contraptions called the Ideya Captures. You can call upon NiGHTS to fly around and capture blue chips, which are the keys to unlocking these Captures. These chips, and all other items, can be gathered by running into or looping around them (called paralooping). If you gather 20 chips, you can bring them to the Capture to get your Ideya back. Bring the Ideya back to the beginning of the stage, and you can start on the next track to retrieve the next stolen Ideya. Once you are back in possession of all five, you have finished the stage and will face a Boss monster.

These Bosses are all products of some pretty twisted imaginations. They all have to be defeated in a different and unique way. For example, one Boss is a fat opera singer named Puffy. You must bounce her around a tunnel, smashing her through weakened walls. If you can send her all the way to the end, you have sent her to her demise. After defeating the Bosses,

Sega's new Pad

A special 3-D analog control pad will be available with the launch of NiGHTS. It will come bundled with the game, but can also be purchased separately. Although it has not been finalized, expect to see prices at $69 for the packaged deal, $49 for a stand-alone NiGHTS and $39 for a stand-alone controller. Sega says future games will be designed with the analog controller in mind. The control pad will also be backward compatible with certain games that can take advantage of it, like Sega Rally.





DREAM INTERPRETERS

Although NiGHTS was originally developed in the Land of the Rising Sun, much work must be put into bringing the title overseas. That's why we spoke to Steve Hutchins, Sega's producer of NiGHTS on the U.S. side and Terry Tang, Sega of America's PR spokesperson. They answered some of our questions about NiGHTS and gave us their thoughts on Nintendo and Sony.

EGM: What is your role as a producer on the U.S. side of things?

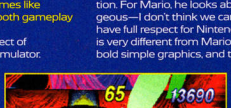
Mr. Hutchins: My responsibilities were to work with the design team in Japan to ensure that the game's design was internationalized properly for the U.S. market. That involves a lot of small details like text translation and small changes in the interface that were not only text and graphically based, but culturally based. I created the U.S. master [of NiGHTS].

EGM: Why was it decided to make NiGHTS mainly a two-dimensional game and not a three-dimensional game?

Mr. Hutchins: Giving a full 3-D freedom in a completely wide open world can be counter-productive. We wanted to focus players' attention on the gameplay features rather than just the openness of flight.

EGM: But then you have games like PilotWings 64 that feature both gameplay and openness of flight.

Mr. Hutchins: The whole object of PilotWings is to be a flight simulator. The NiGHTS feeling is not totally based on flight but on the exploration and interaction with the unusual environments. It's not a flight sim, it just has this flight element that is extremely important to the game.



EGM: Is the Saturn capable of making NiGHTS a completely 3-D game?

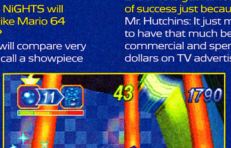
Mr. Hutchins: Totally, especially with its multiple processors. Certainly we all know that the Saturn cannot do some of the effects that were assigned to the Nintendo 64, but a high-end flight simulator could be done on the Saturn.

EGM: Is NiGHTS considered to be one of your killer apps this year?

Mr. Hutchins: Definitely. The importance of this product to us cannot be over-emphasized. It's been designed by our chief game design group in Mr. Iizuka and Mr. Naka. Specifically, the original idea in creating this product was to really take the capabilities of the Saturn to the next level.

EGM: How do you feel NiGHTS will compete with games like Mario 64 and Crash Bandicoot?

Mr. Hutchins: I think it will compare very favorably. It's what we call a showpiece product. It shows off some technology and effects that have never been seen on the Saturn.



Ms. Tang: I don't think there's a real comparison there. Crash Bandicoot is a regular action/platform title. The only reason Crash Bandicoot is getting the recognition it's getting is because Sony is trying to make it into a mascot. Obviously you know, that it didn't really fly at E³. Hopefully you'll agree, NiGHTS is stars above Crash Bandicoot in terms of innovation. For Mario, he looks absolutely gorgeous—I don't think we can deny that. We have full respect for Nintendo, but NiGHTS is very different from Mario. Mario has big, bold simple graphics, and there was not a lot of it on screen. In NiGHTS, you've got a lot of action going on.

Mr. Hutchins: Mario64 was great, but it's exactly what I thought a Mario game would look like in 3-D. It's a rehash of the old 2-D Mario, whereas NiGHTS is completely original.

EGM: What are your marketing strategies for NiGHTS?

Ms. Tang: First, it's PR. We'll have print and television ads that will run in August. There will be promotions and a lot more. Let's just say that there are two main titles this year for us which we are sinking a lot of dollars in...millions of dollars...multimillions. That's NiGHTS and Sonic [Extreme].

EGM: How will a lack of name recognition affect NiGHTS? For example, Sonic Extreme is guaranteed at least a small level of success just because it's Sonic.

Mr. Hutchins: It just means we'll have to have that much better of a Sega commercial and spend that much more dollars on TV advertising. We are willing to do it, because once people see this, they'll be lining up [to buy NiGHTS].

EGM: Is the game too short with only eight levels?

Mr. Hutchins: The object is not to complete the game quickly. You are not going to see some of the interesting things if you do not go for a high score.

EGM: But what about the people out there who just want to get straight through to the finish?

Mr. Hutchins: There are two schools of thought for game design. There's the person who designs the game really hard so that it's a big challenge just to get through it. On the other hand, you can design a game where you concentrate on the interaction and the fun, not so much the completion. We want you to enjoy NiGHTS. Again, you won't even see the end levels unless you get a high enough grade.

EGM: Was the analog controller made for NiGHTS, or was NiGHTS created to fill a need to make a game for that controller? Basically, what came first: the game or its controller?

Mr. Hutchins: A while ago, before NiGHTS, there was thought that there would be a need for an analog controller. However, the game came first. It was through NiGHTS' early prototype stages that it was realized that using a digital pad was not the way to go. So the hardware department was kicked into high gear. The control pad was definitely designed with NiGHTS' needs in mind, but we don't look at it as only a NiGHTS controller.

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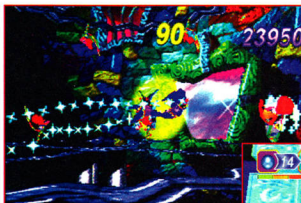
you then travel to new dream worlds.

Besides the one-player game, an interesting Two-player Mode is included. Dogfighting takes on new meaning as the two players (one plays the role of NiGHTS, the other Reala, a dark counterpart of NiGHTS) duke it out in dreamworld. To "kill" the opponent, you must either run into him at

top speed or successfully paraloop (again, perform an aerial loop around) him.

The Sonic Team wanted players to take a different approach to beating the game. It had an appeal for those who aren't heavy gamers and want to zip through to the end. Anyone can do this, though you'll find yourself playing a



very short game. Everyone else who wants to see everything NiGHTS has to offer has to shoot for a high score (see sidebar Making the Grade). At the end of each stage, you'll be given a letter grade of A-F that indicates how well and how fast you finished each level. It's rather difficult to get all A's, but the game was designed like that intentionally. The creators were hoping to add more replay value by forcing players to keep aiming for higher and higher grades to see some of the secrets in the game. Will this formula work? For Sega's sake, it had better. Otherwise NiGHTS will be a short ride.

Some of those secrets that can be found in the game include a hidden track on each level. For example, on one particular stage, there is a water fountain. By sitting on it, you'll be launched onto a brand-new secret track. Also, each character's fourth level can only be accessed by getting C's or better in his/her first three levels. If you can manage straight A's, you can be witness to a bonus ending. Perhaps school teachers can learn something from NiGHTS on how to motivate students to get better grades.

It will be interesting to see how Sega will be making the public aware of the game. It's a new formula with new characters that lacks the name recognition other 32- and 64-Bit mascots enjoy. Marketing NiGHTS will be as important as it will be challenging for Sega.

For a detailed strategy session on this enchanting game, you can look to a future issue of *EGM²* for help and cool tips. As well, you can get the Review Crew's comments on NiGHTS in this issue of *EGM*. ■

MAKING THE GRADE

The point of NiGHTS is not to rush to the end of the stage as quickly as possible. It's to score as high as possible. For both Elliot and Claris, each of his/her fourth levels are only accessible by receiving straight C's (they're obviously not high achievers) through their first three levels. You can even see a bonus ending if you get all As (good luck—it's probably easier to get those at Yale than it is in NiGHTS). So here's Professor *EGM²*'s quick glance at what gets you the points for the grades you want.

Gold Chips: Blue chips turn into gold chips after you first get your Ideya back. Collect these for extra points.

Star Chips: simple, 10 points apiece.

Rings: 10 points each for flying through them.

Power Loop: Pass through an orange-and-blue ring, and you'll get a yellow streamer. It's a pretty sight, and doing a variety of loops with it will earn you bonus points.

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SEGA SATURN™

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Try to think of things that are twisted in this world: tornadoes, trash bag ties and the creative mind of Stephen King may come to mind. But what else is twisted? If a car was going 80 miles per hour and smacked into another car going that fast head-on, the metal of the cars just might twist a little. A bit of an understatement? We think so.

Twisted Metal 2 is nearing completion, and we have played an early version of what very well could be even more fun and impressive than the first. That's to be expected, considering all of the carnage that has already been added to the sequel and all of the other goodies that'll be in the finished product.

EGM recently had an opportunity to see first-hand what Twisted Metal 2 is all about. We saw preliminary sketches, renders and other delicious unspeakables that made us drool in the worst way. Can anything else be expected of Single Trac Entertainment Technologies Inc.? Gamers have already played their wildly popular titles before—namely the first Twisted Metal and Warhawk. *EGM* gave Twisted Metal game of the year! What more needs to be said?

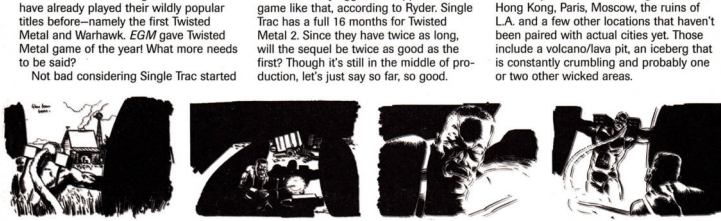
Preliminary sketches give a great glimpse into the original level design. Comparing these to the finished game is an interesting concept.

Not bad considering Single Trac started out in the dining room of Todd Kelly, now CFO at Single Trac. "We've had a great time doing this—starting small and growing," said Michael Ryder, president of Single Trac, talking about the development and roots of the company.

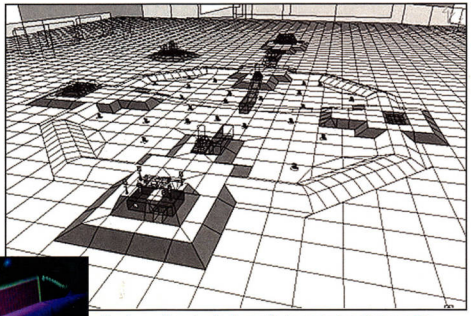
Since Twisted Metal was so popular, there was a demand for a sequel, and now that Single Trac is bigger, the schedule isn't as cramped as before. Twisted Metal was completed in nine months which is a very aggressive approach for a game like that, according to Ryder. Single Trac has a full 16 months for Twisted Metal 2. Since they have twice as long, will the sequel be twice as good as the first? Though it's still in the middle of production, let's just say so far, so good.

Remember, since the game is still in development, any info can change, but at press time all of the information in this feature is correct.

What makes the sequel different from the first? Geez, where should we start? Scott Cambell, executive producer, says, "It's like the first Twisted Metal on steroids." First, there are 12 characters to choose from instead of 10. Plus, there has been rumors of possible hidden characters in the game. Second, the game is on a worldwide scale instead of one city and its nearby areas. We're talking New York, Hong Kong, Paris, Moscow, the ruins of L.A. and a few other locations that haven't been paired with actual cities yet. Those include a volcano/lava pit, an iceberg that is constantly crumbling and probably one or two other wicked areas.



The 12 characters are as follows: there's Roadkill from the first TM. He's in the same type of junkyard car but with some modifications. Mr. Grimm is back in his cycle of death, complete with rockets and the whole sha-BANG! (His special attack is probably the most powerful.) There's Bruise, the new driver for the low-ridin' car known as Thumper from before. Mike and Stew, two teenagers, drive the monster truck. A woman, whose name has yet to be determined, drives an Indy car. Crista Sparks drives the souped-up dune buggy. A stereotypical "Hollywood guy" drives the sports car. Simon drives the ever-deadly bulldozer that picks up cars with its lift and either slams or throws them. (What fun!) Axel, the man



Here's another step in the preliminary design of a level. The wireframe layout gives the artists and designers the dimensions.

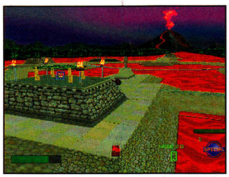
fused to two wheels, has added guns and rockets to make things more fun. There's also Mortimor, who's aptly named considering he drives a hearse. (His car is pictured above.) Others include an outlaw and an army commander.

Each of the characters has his/her own unique special weapon—some are more powerful than others, while others are easier to use. There are weapon power-ups to give gamers a better edge. Bombs, rockets and napalm always make things a little easier when all else fails. There are over six weapon power-ups that can be found. Besides the regular weapons, players can perform controller "combos" to activate other special moves like freeze attacks and energy shields. These are done by Up, Up, Down, Down moves or other Street Fighter-type moves. By figuring these out, gamers will last longer in a level or prolong the agony of their opponents as they freeze them then wait for them to thaw before they load a few missiles up their exhaust. Another special move enables a gamer to jump from a stationary or moving position. This way, hidden areas are no longer unreachable. Keep an eye open for backgrounds that are destructible. By blowing up a wall here or a monument there, power-ups become reachable. For instance, in Paris, by planting a bomb under the Eiffel Tower—when it blows up the Tower falls over—and creates a road leading to a power-up or two.

There are also teleporters in areas that lead to power-ups. Keep an eye out for these scattered throughout the levels.

This time the characters have more personality and more of a background. The evil Calypso is behind the sadistic Twisted Metal tournament. The 12 characters have been chosen to compete in a worldwide destruction derby. Whoever wins is granted a wish—whether it turns out to be what they really want or not. Each character's ending is done in an animated cinema, but unlike the average rendered cinema, Twisted Metal 2 takes the idea of a cinema to a different level. Employing the services and talent of Unlikely Films, the character endings are sure to be a shock, like the sequence below.

So many times sequels pop up but they're nothing special. Some are just like the first game, with just a few additions and a "2" slapped after the title. For $65, this can get annoying quickly. However, Single Trac has made a game that's not just another sequel. This time it's everything the first one was and much more. ■



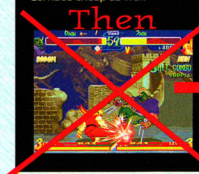
Finally...the finished product: The lava level as seen by the gamer.

Players can pick and choose what car works best in what level.

SATURN

Behind The Screens

Chain Combos were eliminated in favor of Custom Combos. Why? Players considered Chain Combos too cheap. Well, many new players are calling the new Custom Combos cheap as well.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

The Best 2-D Fighter On The Market?

You can't argue with the success of the Street Fighter dynasty. Although many people may complain that Capcom has trouble with counting (namely, to three), all of their Street Fighter games enjoyed small fortunes in the arcade and in home console systems.

Street Fighter II popularized the one-on-one fighting scene. (It is not the original; many similar games like Karate Champ existed long before SF2, but never caught on in the same wildfire-like fashion.) Countless rip-offs spawned out of that popularity, including some from Capcom themselves. Everyone wanted a piece of the pie; some companies (i.e., Data East) were even sued for copying the Street Fighter formula too closely.

Many Street Fighter II games came out, each improving on the old (with possibly the exception of SF: the Movie). The Street Fighter Alpha series (SF Zero in Japan) is another improvement yet in the gameplay department, but is supposed to take place, story time-wise, before SF2 and after SF1.

The new features in SFA2's gameplay take almost everything found in the previous titles and slap them together in what can be considered the best single Street Fighter yet.

So what did the Alpha series introduce? New characters. Some were alluded to in previous installments, like Guile's friend Charlie (or Nash, as he's known in Japan). Others are completely new fighters invented for the game, like Rose.

Also new in a way are the Super Combos. They were seen in Super SF2 Turbo, but this time, each character has two to four Supers that can be charged up to three different levels. Each increasing level can do more hits and damage, of course.

Alpha Counters are the one set of features that added the most technique to the game. This simple move will allow you to get in free attacks if you successfully block an

All of the characters that were in the original Street Fighter Alpha will retain all of their multihitting Super Combos in this sequel.

Dan gets to wear the...ahem... least masculine colors of all.

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
October	Adjustable
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Capcom	50%
THEME	**PLAYERS**	**SIZE**
Fighting	1 or 2	CD-ROM

It's too bad Indian culture gets represented by this freak show.

The Dragon Punch remains one of the most recognizable moves.

opponent's attack. Timing with Alpha Counters is critical and can turn the tide of a battle many a time.

Street Fighter Alpha 2 includes all of that and offers the addition of even more unique players. In total, SFA2 will have 19 characters. This is six more than SFA's original 10 (plus three hidden) characters. The new six characters are Gen, an old man who can switch fighting styles between crane and mantis martial arts; Rolento, a combo-crazy soldier armed with a staff and grenades; Sakura, a young schoolgirl with nothing new to offer; the Indian Dhalsim and the Russian Zangief, both of whom were "original" Street Fighter II veterans and a secret character named Evil Ryu. Players will also be able to access Street Fighter II: Champion Edition versions of Zangief and Dhalsim.

Besides the new lineup, the primary new feature that Street Fighter Alpha 2 offers that no predecessor has before is the new Custom Combo feature. This cheap system replaces the even cheaper Chain Combo system in SFA. Basically, when your fighter's combo meter fills up, you can press a combination of three buttons (either two Punches and a Kick, or two Kicks and a Punch) that will start a timer. This timer indicates how long you can perform your Custom Combo; the higher the level on your meter, the longer the timer will go. During this time, your character will have shadows trailing. All moves will be automatically linked together and hit sequentially, if not blocked. So you can shoot 10 fireballs in a row, or just Roundhouse Kick as often as time allows. Flashy? Definitely. Cheap? You can say that, but it's still fun.

Street Fighter Alpha 2 may be the last of the great 2-D fighters by Capcom. The gaming industry is moving toward the rendered 3-D world of polygons for realism in fighting games, and Capcom is already headed in that direction with Star Gladiator. Will this be their last 2-D hurrah? We'll have to wait for Street Fighter III to see. ■

Behind The Screens

These preliminary demos of Street Fighter Alpha 2 show that the PlayStation version seems almost identical to the Saturn version. Minor variations could be found between the two systems' original SFA, which led to vocal arguments by the respective system owners as to who had the better version. It looks like this time around, the only difference will be whose controller you'll be playing the game with.

Saturn PlayStation

"...Capcom has trouble counting (namely, to three)..."

Missing In Action

So far, we have not seen any of these Street Fighters in the Alpha series. So where do they fit in the prologue Alpha series? All of them were last seen in Super Street Fighter II Turbo, except Sawada. His one and only appearance was in the not-so-popular Street Fighter: The Movie arcade game.

DRAGON'S LAIR 2

The Daring Dirk Returns

It was a game that featured nothing but sequence after sequence of barely interactive full-motion video, and—surprisingly by today's standards—everybody lined up to play it. But then, it was Dragon's Lair, the richly animated grandaddy of all FMV games and a revolutionary play experience for its time.

The game's success in the early '80s was followed by a deluge of often nicely animated but nearly always dull clones. It's not surprising, then, that many arcade-goers missed Dragon's Lair 2 when it hit the arcades nearly a decade after the original, when interest in FMV arcade games was quickly on the wane. Now Saturn owners will have a second chance to play the sequel to Dragon's Lair, courtesy of ReadySoft, which is developing Dragon's Lair 2 for Sega's 32-Bit system.

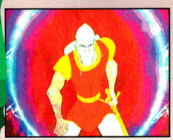
The game's story continues right where the original's left off. Players still play the role of Dirk the Daring, Dragon's Lair's clumsy heroic star. Dirk seems to have settled into domestic bliss after he rescued Princess Daphne from the scaly clutches of Singe the Dragon in the first game. But he doesn't' get to sit around, spending quality time with his kids for long.

Daphne has been captured again, this time by an evil wizard named Mordroc, who's keen on marrying the princess. Dirk has no choice but to dust off his sword and re-rescue Daphne. If he doesn't, he'll be flattened by his rather large mother-in-law, who's none too happy to have her daughter kidnapped a second time.

Dirk's quest isn't limited to the dank insides of the first game's dingy castle. During the game, he'll stumble upon a time machine that will transport him to eight distinct play environments. He'll meet an overweight, love-starved Eve in the Garden of Even, take to the skies on pterodactyl wings in prehistoric times, confront Mordroc in his fortress and scamper through other lost-in-time locales during his pursuit for Daphne. As in the first game, success depends on whether gamers can guide Dirk in the right direction at the right time.

Dragon's Lair 2 features the

The time machine is found early in the game—in Singe the Dragon's treasure room. The machine is possessed and talks to Dirk.



ReadySoft assures the finished game won't be so grainy.

Fans of the first game will find familiar locales in the sequel.

The time machine will land Dirk in some bad neighborhoods.

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
August	Hard
PUBLISHER	% DONE
ReadySoft	60%
THEME	PLAYERS	SIZE
Adventure	1	CD-ROM

Dragon's Lair 2 demands near-perfect timing, so players will probably see most of the game's often gruesome death sequences.

same excellent animation that lured so many gamers to the first game. That's because all of its scenes were drawn by the same artist—ex-Disney animator Don Bluth—who created the original's visuals. Dragon's Lair 2's artists spent three years working on the game prior to its arcade release in 1991.

While Dragon's Lair 2's animation looks as good as the first game's, its gameplay is a different story. The first Dragon's Lair featured simple play mechanics—even for a FMV game. Dirk would wander into a room, deal with whatever monsters or traps dwelled within then move on to the next room. Each of these adventures was unrelated to the one before it, turning the game into a rapid-fire collection of unrelated action sequences.

Dragon's Lair 2, on the other hand, has Dirk hauling butt through a mostly continuous environment. Each close call leads to another dangerous situation, and all the action sequences feed into each other. For example, the game's first few minutes follow Dirk from his forest home through the woods to the gates of Singe's castle, while he dodges the near hits from his rolling-pin-wielding mother-in-law. She chases him into the castle, where Dirk eventually makes his way to the treasure room and the time machine.

This natural progression through the game's story line doesn't make the game any more interactive than the original. It just goes to show that Dragon's Lair 2's developers put more thought into the game's plot than they did when they created the classic original. ■

Gamer's Edge

In Dragon's Lair 2, Dirk the Daring still wields the same sword that saved his butt so many times in the first game, but now he can also nab extra items for use later in his adventure. Each area and time period has a different item—or collection of items—that Dirk can grab. For instance, when Dirk wanders through Singe's castle early in the game, the bow and arrow flash above him. If players react fast enough with the joypad, they can grab these items. They'll also come across an egg in the prehistoric level, a playing card in Looking Glass Land and other bizarre items in later locales. Players don't need to collect all these items to beat Dragon's Lair 2, but they'll get the best ending if they grab everything.

Behind The SCREEN

ReadySoft is a 9-year-old company that has made a name for itself by converting the arcade's Dragon's Lair and Space Ace games to the PC and console formats. *EGM* talked to David Foster, ReadySoft's president, about Dragon's Lair and FMV games in general.

EGM: How close is the Saturn version's story and animation to those of the arcade original?

DF: I would say we're verging on 100 percent authenticity to the arcade. Certainly all the content of the game that was in the arcade will be in the release version. We actually have an arcade machine in house, so we can see all the moves and the objects and game flow in terms of where you restart and what it takes to complete the game.

EGM: Dragon's Lair may have started the whole FMV-game craze, but don't you think gamers are getting tired of that type of game?

DF: I think Dragon's Lair is a timeless classic, but I think by virtue of being Dragon's Lair, it steps up from the crowd. I think people moving forward with FMV games certainly need to craft them differently from what has been done in the past. When we're dealing with Dragon's Lair or Space Ace, though, we're dealing with classics, so there's as much a nostalgia component to it as there is the actual gameplay itself.

EGM: What other Saturn releases is ReadySoft readying?

DF: We are planning, although I'm not sure of the time frame, on bringing the other Dragon's Lair products to the Saturn. That includes the original Dragon's Lair and Space Ace.

The top-down view is close to the action—and often confusing.

Multiball bonuses get wild, filling the table with up to 10 balls.

Behind The SCREENS

Each of True Pinball's four tables is loaded with Bonus Modes, and firing up one of these modes isn't too difficult (it usually involves shooting the ball onto a ramp a certain amount of times). Perhaps the easiest bonus game to get into is Country Mode, which can

be accessed on the table titled Vikings: The Tales.

To start this mode, hit the ball trap located in the top center of the table. Once you sink the ball, the digital screen displays which country the vikings will pillage. If it shows Italy, you'll have to bounce your ball off the bumpers to make the Viking on the digital screen fend off an attacker. If the screen shows England, you'll have to shoot the ball up the ramps to knock knights off their horses as they appear on the digital screen.

But if the screen shows that you're going sailing rather than attacking a country, action on the table

halts. The Sailing Mode is played entirely on the digital screen, with you using the flipper controls to guide your ship between rocks to pick up bonus items. If you pick up all the items, you'll earn an extra ball.

True PINBALL

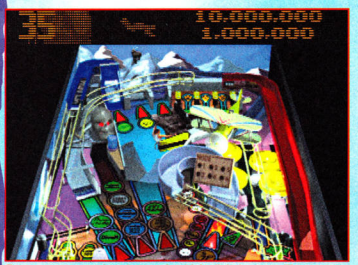
So Real You'll Feel Every Tilt Of The Table

Creating a video game version of pinball can be every bit as difficult as designing an accurate racing or flight simulator. After all, the game's developers have to worry about gravity, deflection and every other law of physics needed to get a little silver ball to roll and bounce around an obstacle-ridden environment.

The developers of Ocean's True Pinball claim they have created the most accurate simulation of pinball available. This authentic pinball action takes place on four tables: Law and Justice, which features an urban motif; Vikings: The Tales, which has you pillaging countries pinball style; Extreme Sports, sort of a table-top version of ESPN2's most dangerous games and Babewatch, which—not surprisingly—features a table adorned with bikini-clad women.

"The game is authentic enough to make a pinball wizard out of anyone."

The tables are rendered and can be viewed from two different angles—a top-down view and the more traditional straight-on view, which lets you see more of the playing field. Each table is loaded with all the ramps, bumpers, chutes, lights and bonus features found in modern pinball machines. The tables can be nudged, too—although they won't take much abuse before they tilt. Each game supports multiball play, allowing as many as 10 balls to be bounced around at once. True Pinball lets up to eight players compete against each other in pinball tournaments. The game also offers a great way for pinball newbies to practice at home. It is authentic enough to make a pinball wizard out of anyone. ■



Bonus games are played on each table's digital screen. The screens sport the same crude graphics as those on real pinball machines.

Knock the table around too much and you'll regret it.

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
July	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Ocean	100%
THEME	**PLAYERS**	**SIZE**
Pinball	1-8	CD-ROM

COORS FIELD.®

THE WIND IS BLOWING

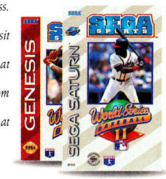
OUT TO LEFT,

AND YOUR BUDDY'S

HANGING CURVE LOOKS

ABOUT THIS BIG.

Grapefruit. Just hanging there for you to swat like a big round piñata. You might not get this chance again. After all, it's Coors Field,® where the air is your friend. And who knows, your next game will probably be at Tiger Stadium,® where the outfield is so deep you have to change area codes to call back to the bullpen. In fact, World Series Baseball™ II has all 28 Major League™ ballparks, replicated in 3-D detail so accurate you can practically see the peanut shells in general admission. Not to mention all the teams, players, rosters, stats, ratings – heck, even their photos as they're announced at the plate. It's all here. Along with five different ballpark perspectives, off-the-bat camera angles, CD stereo sound. You know, icing on the cake stuff that makes World Series Baseball™ II so real, you expect to see commercials between innings. But you won't. Thank goodness. For more info, visit Sega's web site at http://www.sega.com or on Compuserve at GO SEGA.



World Series Baseball™ II. Also available on Genesis as World Series Baseball™ '96.

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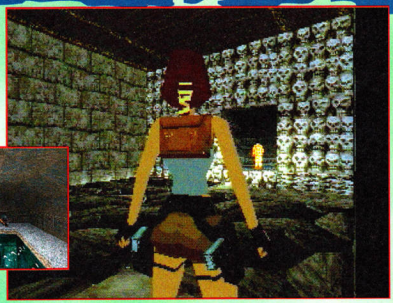
SEGA SATURN

PLAYSTATION



Tomb RAIDERS

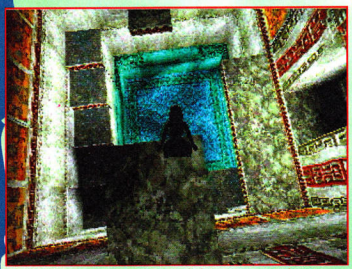
Lara Croft And The Temples Of Doom

There's something familiar about Eidos Interactive's 3-D adventure game Tomb Raiders—and it isn't just the game's obvious use of themes from the *Indiana Jones* films. After all, those flicks influenced scores of games (just look at the rolling-boulder stages of Crash Bandicoot).

It's Tomb Raiders' gameplay and play environment that strike a familiar chord. The game takes place in a 3-D world, through which your character runs, jumps and swims while a third-person, behind-the-hero perspective follows the action. Sounds a bit like a certain next-generation game starring a popular plumber mascot, heh? Whether Tomb Raiders' developers planned it or not (and they say they didn't), their game has much in common with Super Mario 64.

Lara must watch her step—Tomb Raiders is packed with traps.

Sure, Tomb Raiders' star—Lara Croft, a lithe and lean Linda Hamilton-esque hero—may bear little resemblance to Nintendo's pudgy protagonist, but she goes through the game doing many of the same things that keep Mario busy in his 64-Bit adventure. Like Mario, Lara can leap in all directions and grab onto ledges in mid-air. She goes on submerged excursions through underwater tunnels (Mario takes a dip or two himself in his game, too). Above all, Tomb Raiders, like Super Mario 64, is a game of exploration...a game in which examining each level's nooks and

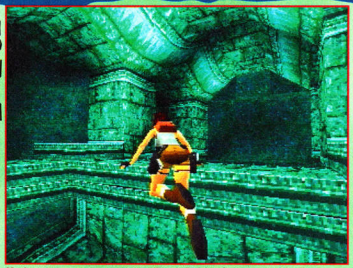


Tomb Raiders' swiveling camera angle lets you peer at whatever Lara is seeing. This feature makes for some dizzying perspectives.

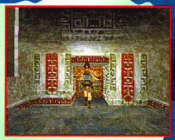
Gamer's Edge

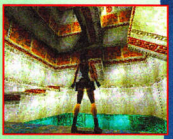
Lara's fancy footwork will only help her through the game if she looks before she leaps and aims her jumps. Fortunately, the camera angle can be rotated to look all around Lara, so players can pick a likely landing place for her more difficult leaps. Lara can also take tiny steps to adjust her takeoff point. These features come in handy early in the game, when Lara finds herself in a high-ceiling room filled with consecutively higher platforms that jut from the walls. To reach the top-most platform, players will have to use several different types of jumps, such as running leaps and sideways flips. For example, only a sideways flip will launch Lara to the first platform, while a regular forward leap will send her across the chasm-like gap between the room's two highest platforms.

Gamer's EDGE



Underwater caves are among Tomb Raiders' most graphically impressive locations. Gawk too long, though, and you'll suffocate.





Few video game characters are as nimble as Lara Craft, Tomb Raiders' buff and acrobatic hero. Not only can she jump forward and straight up in the air, she can also flip backward and to either side—stunts that make Olympic gymnasts look like stumbling drunks.

It's a good thing Lara's so quick on her feet. Since most of the beasts in Tomb Raiders stalk Lara on foot, she can use her leaping abilities to outmaneuver and escape them. For instance, when the pack of wolves attacks Lara in the first level, she can avoid their nashing teeth simply by leaping and staying airborne as much as possible until she's clear of the horde.

Yet just because Lara is in the air doesn't mean she's defenseless; she can draw her twin pistols in mid-flip and blow away a few of the hungry critters even before her feet hit the ground. This shoot-while-you-leap will dispatch many of the game's weaker enemies.

crannies can be as much fun as slaying monsters or beating a Boss.

Of course, Tomb Raiders is by no means identical to Super Mario 64. For starters, Lara doesn't do away with enemies by pouncing on their heads. Rather, she carries two pistols that she wields *Reservoir Dogs*-style, one in each hand. She starts the game with meager .22 semi-automatic handguns, but as she explores the game's huge environment, she'll come across an arsenal of additional weapons.

She'll need the extra armament. Tomb Raiders' various environments are infested with wolf packs, grizzly bears, bio-mechanical robots, woman-eating sharks and other beasts that would never set a clawed foot in a Mario game.

"Lara's adventure spans the globe and takes her through four huge levels."

Leaping won't get Lara everywhere. Luckily, she can climb.

Lara Croft could beat the crap out of most game characters.

But Lara will have to use brains as well as big guns to get through her adventure. Since Tomb Raiders' plot borrows heavily from the celluloid exploits of Indy Jones, the game is laden with numerous traps and puzzles that Lara will have to overcome as she searches for the three pieces of the Atlantean Scion. Lara's main goal in the game is to find this ancient artifact, which lies at the center of the mystery surrounding what happened to the lost city of Atlantis.

As Lara progresses through her quest, she'll discover the secret of Atlantis' fate, the true power of the Scion and the reason she was hired to seek the artifact by a mysterious and sultry businesswoman named Jaqueline Natla. The game's story is told through both the levels themselves and lengthy rendered cinemas that play before and after Lara delves into each area.

Lara's adventure spans the globe and takes her through four huge levels. She starts the game in Peru, deep underground in the ruins of an Incan civilization. Here she'll battle wolves, clamber up sheer cliffsides and explore an ancient, trap-laden temple. Lara will also leap and battle her way through Roman and Egyptian ruins, eventually ending up in Atlantis itself. Players can get a better look at these environments by swiveling the camera's perspective, which usually follows about 10 feet behind Lara and peers over her muscular shoulders.

Tomb Raiders is still fairly early in development, but it looks like it will pack more than enough action and adventure to keep gamers exploring its ancient ruins for a long time. *EGM* will have expanded coverage of this promising title in the near future, so stay tuned! ■

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
November	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Eidos Interactive	60%
THEME	**PLAYERS**	**SIZE**
Adventure	1	CD-ROM

Gamer's EDGE

Boss strategy

The Bosses in JF! 2 are much like the first installment, but if some gamers out there have never played through the first, here's a quick run-through on a general way to approach and fight a Boss. Although the Bosses look different, they are similar in the way they attack. They move around a bit, sit still, shoot something at Robbit, move around some more, shoot at Robbit in a different way and the cycle continues. As simple as it sounds, things can get a little tricky when your power meter is run-down from a tough level. The main thing is to use all resources and avoid a Boss' fire. Robbit can shoot his regular guns and special weapons. Robbit can also jump on a Boss to dish out some damaging blows that way. Look out for Bosses who fire bombs or rockets above them when doing the Pounce attack. Good luck!

JUMPING FLASH! 2

Do The Hop And Help Robbit Destroy Kabuki

Picture a cute, little bunny hopping in the grass on a summer day. Now picture a two-ton mech blasting its way through dozens upon dozens of enemies. Combine them and gamers have what is known as Robbit in Jumping Flash! 2.

Many fans of Robbit should remember him from Jumping Flash! In the first game, his task was to seek out and retrieve a number of Jetpods from a number of levels. As cute and cartoony as it was, the mission was clear: Destroy what got in Robbit's way, get the Jetpods and rid the world of Baron Aloha.

In Jumping Flash! 2, Robbit returns, but this time there's a twist. Instead of Baron Aloha wreaking havoc on the universe, the Baron needs Robbit's help to destroy Captain Kabuki, an evil and mysterious giant who likes to collect pieces of worlds for his personal collection. Gamers won't have to find any Jetpods in the sequel to Jumping Flash! but they will have to find adorable Muu Muus throughout each level in order to advance to the next.

No pot of gold here—just evil enemies and little Muu Muus.

Each level has its own varied theme like this Japanese level.

Swords or not, these Bosses are no match for Robbit!

The graphics in the second installment are in the same style of the first with some flat and shaded polygons, a variety of different enemies and big Bosses, each with a huge chip on its shoulder. The sequel features sharper graphics than the first and interesting effects like rain, snow and water.

Robbit can now go underwater to find his Muu Muus. The first level even has a water slide which Robbit can ride then dive into the pool. The screen gets wavy and bubbly as Robbit falls into the water. The music, like the first one, is fun and playful, fitting this type of game perfectly.

The Bosses, as mentioned, are gigantic. Some include a giant shark, a killer plant and a giant robotic Muu Muu (remember them from the first JF!?). There are three others as well. Captain Kabuki is the final Boss, and as fruity as he can be—he's one mean planet-collectin' giant!

Gamer's Edge

Go higher

Veteran Jumping Flash! players know this already, but if you're new to the JF! world, here's a simple tip to help you out: Go up! There it is in a nutshell. Since Jumping Flash! 2 is a 3-D environment, it's vital to explore all over in every dimension. Since you can hold down the top-right button on the control pad to look around, seeing a floating platform way up in the sky shouldn't be a problem. The Medieval level is a good example of going high. In the middle of this particular level is a giant tower with a Muu Muu at the top. By simply walking around, a gamer may not know that he/she can actually jump his/her way to the top of the tower. That's why exploring in all directions is so important. Keep that Robbit hopping.

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
August	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Sony Comp Ent	100%
THEME	**PLAYERS**	**SIZE**
Action	1	CD-ROM

Behind The SCREENS

Bonus rounds give gamers a great opportunity to replenish their wasted special weapons. Besides, a high score doesn't hurt.

I'm having some Little Shop of Horrors nightmares over here!

EGM recently had the opportunity to talk with Peter Clark, producer of Jumping Flash! 2.

EGM: Why a sequel?

PC: The first Jumping Flash! is a great game. It received various awards and accolades. Plus, it has all of the classic elements of an action game.

EGM: What changes have been made in Jumping Flash! 2?

PC: The graphics are a step up from the original. The jump meter has an added level so now Robbit can go higher than before. There are 12 bonus levels and special medals for completing a level without shooting at all or not killing any enemies. There are 12 levels to play through with the extra worlds and bonus levels. It's much different than the first one, with the underwater and the new enemies. It has all of the cinemas from the Japanese version with dubbed voices. This one adds to the original but it really is its own game.

Gamer's EDGE

HERE'S A QUICK WALKTHROUGH OF THE FIRST LEVEL OF JUMPING FLASH! 2.

When you start, walk forward to the steps. Jump up into the pool and check out the water effects. Jump out and continue forward. You'll see the Muu Muu in the distance. Turn left and follow the curving walkway. You'll see another Muu Muu up on a floating island.

A hefty three jump isn't enough to get you up there, so you'll have to use the blower fan to make it to the island above. Right next to the second Muu Muu is a bonus ring. Jump over there for a chance to get some power-ups and extra points.

After this, jump down and go straight all the way to the other side of the level near the water slide. A road leads to a tower where the next Muu Muu is hanging out. Only one more to go.

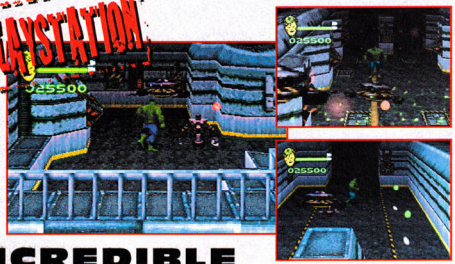
The last is located directly across from the third one over the water slide up on a floating island. Turn around, go to the ground and walk straight to the exit.

"...the Baron needs Robbit's help to destroy Captain Kabuki..."

There are six worlds to play through. When gamers finish the first six worlds—12 levels and six Bosses—they must face the same six worlds again. This time Baron Aloha and Captain Kabuki are together to stop Robbit—that's gratitude for you! Baron Aloha is controlling Captain Kabuki to make him destroy Robbit once and for all. The second time around the levels are generally the same with only small changes such as weather or season. Players may find hidden 1-Ups that weren't there the first time through.

There are various bonus rounds in Jumping Flash! 2, so players can get extra power-ups, higher scores and maybe even extra Robbits. In one, gamers have to pop all the balloons before the timer runs out. Sounds simple, but with a clock breathing down your neck, things can get pretty tricky.

With everything to explore, everything to destroy and all of the power-ups to find, Jumping Flash! 2 will keep gamers' attentions even if a cute, mechanized bunny might not be the ideal warrior in PlayStation land. ■

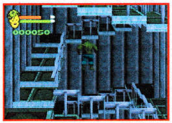


INCREDIBLE HULK™

Green Is Beautiful

Sometimes all you need to get a job done is to ask politely. Other times you need brute force to get your will across. The Hulk isn't really good in the conversation area, but he does have the physique to scare the hell out of anyone who stands in his way.

Sometime this fall, gamers will have the chance to play as their favorite green metamorph in the first video game adventure bearing his name. As the Hulk, your mission is to infiltrate the enemy's lair and deal with the countless robots, laser traps, lava pods and hovering enemies as well as miscellaneous switches and activator buttons that will allow for safe passage through the stage. To deal with these problems, the Hulk is equipped with the ability to punch and kick his way through the obstacles standing in his way. You can use any of his 20 offensive and defensive moves to keep his power bar fully charged and to protect him from attacks.



"...play as their (your) favorite green metamorph."

The title features levels that seem to have been plucked right from the classic comic-book pages, which gives it a classic feel to a new style of action incorporated into the title.

Play is based in the third-person side-scrolling manor that allows your character full movement over any area of the level. There are over 14 action-filled levels in the title, which incorporate a multilevel range of platforms and staircases in each for a feeling of vertical exploration unseen in any pervious title on the market.

Wherever your passion lies, Incredible Hulk has what you want in an action game. No matter if you are looking for an in-depth title to challenge you to the end or just a few levels of action, you can't go wrong with the Hulk. ■

Avoid a frontal assault on these mobile ground robots.

Search everywhere in the level for hidden items.

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
November	Adjustable
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Eidos Interactive	60%
THEME	**PLAYERS** / **SIZE**
Action	1 / CD-ROM

Gamer's EDGE

In every action game—whether it is a side-scrolling or a 3-D title—there are always hidden power-ups well concealed in the various stages. In Incredible Hulk, there are power-ups within sight from your starting point, and all you need to do is know where they are and how to get to them.

The first group of bonuses can be found on top of the pillars to the left of where your character begins. The only problem is to find a way to get up to their level so your green hero can acquire their powers. After locating the posts where the items are

placed on top of, you'll see the three piles of wooden boxes that are in the same proximity as the destination posts.

To get to them, break a few boxes in the first column and one box in the second. This will allow you to climb vertically using your Jump button and the homemade stair-like protrusions. Once on top, you can easily jump to the tops of its neighboring ports to get the power-ups.

This is an example of what is encountered throughout the level—keep thinking and stay on your toes. If you see unclaimed items, there must be a way to get to them.

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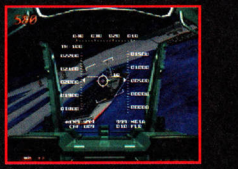
NO PAIN, NO GAIN

AND IF YOU DON'T WATCH YOUR TAIL

NO PLANE!



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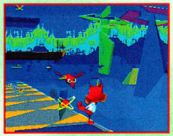
Ahhh...the tranquil water level. Here, Bubsy dons some strange head gear.



BUBSY 3D

The Cat Goes For Three

Bubsy. One of the more recognizable characters in the gaming biz will be jumping on the bandwagon of bringing two-dimensional platform games into a third dimension.

Bubsy 3D has been a long time in the waiting. It was one of the first mascot games that was announced for the 32-Bit systems. At that time, the industry was abuzz with excitement over three-dimensional play. Now that the project is nearing completion, Bubsy 3D is preparing to be released into a sea of hot competition, like Mario 64, Sonic Extreme and Crash Bandicoot. Luckily, Bubsy has a bit of name recognition (thanks to its original 16-Bit little brother) that can help it stand out in the masses.

So what is the bobcat up to? It seems that the evil aliens, Woolies, want to take over Earth. Bubsy is the only thing standing in their way. So the Woolies fly to Earth and capture Bubsy as part of their grand plan to invade an obstacle-free planet.

On the way back home, the Woolies crash land on their planet Rayon, freeing Bubsy in the process. The game starts here, as he tries to find a way home. Bubsy's goal is to find enough pieces of a rocket ship and enough fuel (represented by atom symbols) so that he may build his interstellar ride home.

The levels are as varied as they are colorful, though texture mapping was sacrificed in favor of larger 3-D worlds. You can even find a couple of underwater levels, something that seems almost required for a game of this genre, but looks nice anyway.

The game's animation and sounds are reminiscent of a Warner Bros. cartoon. In fact, a news release by Accolade flat-out compares the two.

"Bubsy 3D is preparing to be released into a sea of hot competition..."

Accolade also boasts that, "...Bubsy 3D's creative design and high level of technical innovation will lead the industry." That's a pretty big call to make considering the stiff competition. Will Bubsy 3D retain its popularity and pleasant disposition while facing cute plumbers and hedgehogs? We'll see this fall. ■

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
October	Easy
PUBLISHER	% DONE
Accolade	60%
THEME / PLAYERS / SIZE	
Action 1 or 2 CD-ROM	

You will have to jump on the treetops to access certain places.

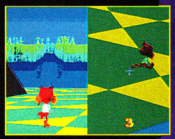
Bubsy's wait animation demonstrates his impatience.

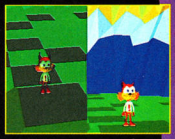
Gamer's EDGE

The Two-player Mode will be Bubsy 3D's sleeper feature hit.

At first, player one plays the game as he/she normally would, collecting power-ups, bopping aliens on the head, etc. When player two decides to get in the game (usually after the initial invulnerable period wears off for player one), he/she presses and holds a designated button. The screen will then split in half. Player two will see crosshairs pointed at Bubsy (player one) and will try to shoot him by letting go of the button at the right time. Player one will try to avoid this shot. If the shot hits, then the two players will switch places. Now player two will get his/her chance to run around and collect points while player one sits back and attempts to bean the new Bubsy. Needless to say, highest score wins.

It's a 3-D game of tag. Players will want to stay as Bubsy for as long as possible to score high. A hint of strategy sets in, however, because when the shooter's gun sight is turned on, all the power-ups disappear for the Bubsy player. So, if you see your enemy about to rack up hundreds of points in a big pool of atoms, you can turn on your gun just to prevent him from collecting them. How's that for screwing the opposition?





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PLAYSTATION

Gamer's Edge

No doubt about it: Legacy of Kain is loaded with carnage. However, gamers should restrain themselves from killing every man and beast in the game just to drink the poor victim's blood. The developers have programmed the game so that every violent action can potentially have a negative repercussion. For instance, if you kill everyone in a village just to gorge on their blood, these villagers won't be around later when you need to feed. You should, therefore, only feed on villagers when your blood meter is low. When you get really hungry, you'll want to avoid using overly powerful spells and weapons to dispatch enemies. Weapons such as the Shuriken and magic attacks such as the Putresce spell may yield spectacular deaths to monsters, but they also leave no remains on which you can feed. Obliterating too many bad guys can quickly lead to starvation.

Blood Omen: LEGACY OF KAIN

Let The Bloodletting Begin

Haven't gamers saved enough princesses? Ever since Link rescued Zelda, the save-the-princess plot formula has been beaten into the ground by console role-playing games, while PC RPGs have become famous for delivering much more immersive story lines.

It seems fitting then that Silicon Knights, a company that previously developed PC RPGs only, is creating one of the most epic console RPGs ever—Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain. This PlayStation title, published by Crystal Dynamics, is expected to offer at least 120 hours of gameplay, and the game's plot is complex—and gory—enough to satisfy even the most die-hard RPG player.

Legacy of Kain is set in the not-so-scenic land of Nosgoth, where peasants huddle in villages for protection from vampires, zombies and other horrors roaming the world. The player controls Kain, an arrogant noble who walks the land in search of glory.

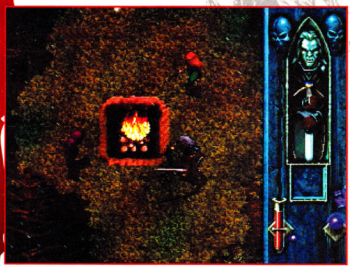
"This title is expected to offer at least 120 hours of gameplay."

A band of sword-wielding thugs murders Kain at the beginning of the game, but the hero's adventures are far from over. He winds up in hell, where a powerful necromancer grants Kain the chance to return to the world of the living and seek vengeance against the murderous mob. Ignoring the consequences of his decision, Kain quickly accepts the offer.

He awakens in a crypt and quickly learns the price of his resurrection: He has become a vampire. Kain spends the rest of the game trying to rid himself of his curse. In the meantime, however, he has to survive just like any other vampire: feeding on the living.

Kain's bloodthirsty quest, therefore, makes for a very gory game. After he slices open victims with his sword, Kain can chug the blood from their bodies. This blood fills Kain's life meter, which diminishes when the hero is attacked or goes too long between feedings. Kain's blood-draining power is very visible in the game: A stream of the red stuff can be seen flowing from the victim's neck to Kain's mouth every time he tanks up on blood.

But Kain can't go around

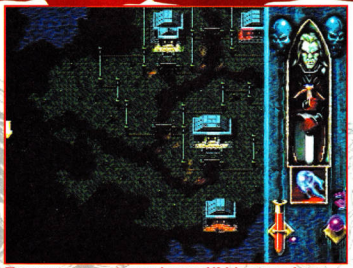


Don't feel bad about drinking the blood of these guys. They're the same band of bandits that murdered Kain in the first place.

You can save your game when Kain stumbles upon a crypt.

Blue blood builds up magic, but avoid green blood—it's poison!

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
October	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Crystal Dynamics	65%
THEME	**PLAYERS** / **SIZE**
RPG	1 / CD-ROM



Throw away your graph paper; Legacy of Kain's automap feature shows your surroundings. It won't reveal secret areas, however.

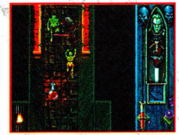
sucking the life from every human or monster he sees, since not all blood is healthy for vampires. Undead monsters have black, rancid blood coursing through their rotting veins. This foul fluid will drain Kain's health if he drinks it. Some monsters are full of green blood, a potent poison into which Kain should never dip his fangs. Still other creatures gush blue blood, and this mix replenishes Kain's magic power.

Like in nearly all RPGs, magic is a crucial part of Legacy of Kain. As Kain gains power, he'll be able to conjure up some spectacular—and explosively gory spells. (For instance, one particular spell, the Implode spell, will turn enemies inside out and blow them to bits!) Kain will also discover how to morph into mist and several different animals, such as a bat and a wolf. Once he's

Kain's bat flights over Nosgoth are shown as rendered cinemas.

a bat, Kain can soar above Nosgoth and take shortcuts over the land's mountains and forests.

While these flights are portrayed through cinemas, and more than 20 minutes' worth of other FMV sequences are scattered throughout the game, most of Legacy of Kain is played in a top-down perspective. As Kain wanders through Nosgoth, he stumbles over special floor panels that trigger audio sequences. These sequences feature dialogue that's spoken while Kain continues his

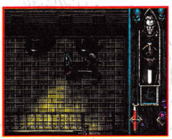


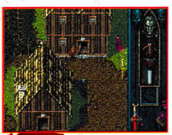
adventure, so the action is rarely interrupted.

Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain is loaded with sword-swinging action. However, it is the game's non-linear plot, which is loaded with everything from demonic hordes to time travel, that will make this PlayStation RPG really stand out. ■

Behind The SCREENS

Players won't have to read a word of text to follow Legacy of Kain's story; conversations and narrations in the game are conveyed through digitized speech that's spooled off the CD. This heavy reliance on voice actors may scare gamers who've come to expect bad acting from console games (look no further than the laughably lousy voice-overs in Resident Evil). Fortunately, Legacy of Kain's developers didn't get cheap when they sought actors to give voice to the game's large cast. They listened to audition tapes sent in by scores of Hollywood voice actors. They then flew to Los Angeles and hired the best of the bunch, including an actor whose voice can be heard in Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. The result of this talent search can be heard in the game, which features hours' worth of well-acted dialogue, all of it delivered in a thick, mood-setting English accent.





Behind The SCREENS

Legacy of Kain is a huge game. It spans an entire world, stars more than 100 characters and features a plot as complex as—and much darker than—any RPG from Square.

"This game has a big, epic feel to it and we don't think that's ever been done before on the consoles," said Denis Dyack, president of the game's developer, Silicon Knights.

Dyack co-wrote the game's story line, a project that began more than two years ago. He drew on many sources for inspiration, but Legacy of Kain's vampire theme was based mainly on the works of novelist Brian Lumley, who wrote the

Necroscope series of vampire books, and Robert Jordan, a fantasy writer.

For the character of Kain himself, however, Dyack turned to an unlikely hero—one from the Old West.

"We wanted to build Kain up a lot like the character from the film *The Unforgiven*, where it's really difficult to tell whether this character's good or bad," Dyack said. "Kain might be doing bad things on the surface, but in the end he's really trying to save the world."

He added that the game's plot doesn't become completely clear until the end of Kain's adventure. Even then players can play through the game again to find new meaning to its cinemas.

PLAYSTATION

"Gunship drops you behind the controls of a hangarful of helicopters."

GUNSHIP

The Most Realistic Console Sim Ever!

Flight lessons have never been necessary to play console air-combat games. The dogfights and flight mechanics in these Afterburner-inspired "simulators" have always been more arcade-like than true-to-life.

Gunship, on the other hand, is a different kind of console flight game. From takeoff to landing, the helicopters you control in this port of the PC top-seller act and fight like the real deal—and are nearly as difficult to fly. This high level of realism means that first-time pilots will face a steep learning curve. It also means Gunship is a landmark title for the consoles, since no other game has offered such an accurate simulation of flight combat.

Gunship drops you behind the controls of a hangarful of military helicopters: the Apache and Super Cobra gunships, the Defender Scout, the Kiowa Warrior, the Blackhawk transport and the state-of-the-art Comanche gunship.

Once you create a pilot, you can fly a single helicopter in more than 100 training and regular missions. Your flights take you to two of the world's more recent hot spots: the Persian Gulf and Central Europe. You'll skim the terrain of these target-rich regions in varying weather and during both day and night missions.

Early sorties are simple search-and-destroy missions or surgical strikes, and success is rewarded with medals and advances in rank.

You don't have to go into combat solo. The other choppers in your unit fight alongside you, or you can send them after distant enemies.

GAMER'S EDGE

Sure, you can fly six different helicopters in Gunship and load them with lots of different weapons, but you'll only need one helicopter type—the Apache—to accomplish most missions. The Apache is most capable when it's loaded with eight Hellfire and four Stinger missiles. Stingers knock down airborne targets, while Hellfires destroy everything else—and Hellfires will take out targets as far away as six miles. The only downside to Hellfires is that they're laser-guided, so you'll have to keep your Apache—and its laser beam—pointed in the direction of the enemy while the missiles ride the beams to their targets. If you drop below a hillside to avoid a barrage of return fire, the laser beam will be broken and any airborne Hellfires will miss. Because of their reliance on the laser guidance, therefore, Hellfires will keep you exposed to the enemy longer than less-accurate fire-and-forget weapons, such as rockets.

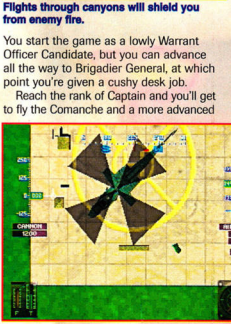
RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
Now	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Microprose	100%
THEME	**PLAYERS** / **SIZE**
Simulation	1 / CD-ROM

Flights through canyons will shield you from enemy fire.

Lens flare is only one of many visual effects in Gunship.

You start the game as a lowly Warrant Officer Candidate, but you can advance all the way to Brigadier General, at which point you're given a cushy desk job.

Reach the rank of Captain and you'll get to fly the Comanche and a more advanced Apache. These copters carry smarter "smart" weapons and lend more brute force to your battles.



Gunship has a strategic side, also. Once you become a second lieutenant, you can lead as many as five helicopters into battle. While you fly only one copter, you can order the other pilots in your flight to go separate ways and complete their own objectives.

Multihelicopter missions also give you more interesting things to do, such as going on rescue operations or scanning regions with a sensor-equipped Defender Scout.

Your officer ranking also grants access to the game's Campaign Mode, in which you'll lead your team of pilots through a full-blown war. The outcome of this war depends on how successful you are in each mission, so don't screw up and make Saddam Hussein a happy dictator.

True to real life, your helicopters aren't all that easy to fly (although you can choose an option that allows for simple—albeit unrealistic—flight control). Unlike fighter planes, helicopters have separate joysticks for controlling flight direction and altitude, and the PlayStation joypad emulates this complex dual-control system. (Unfortunately, the game isn't compatible with Sony's new dual-control analog flight stick.) The D-pad turns your chopper and guides it forward and backward, while the R1 and R2 buttons are used to change altitude. Using these controls in unison takes some getting used to, but with practice you'll soon be zipping over trees and through valleys like a pro pilot.

Of course, not every gamer wants to deal with all the details of real-life helicopter flight. Fortunately, Gunship offers a Quick Fire game that drops a heavily armed, easy-to-control Apache into the thick of battle. This mode makes for plenty of arcade-style destruction, but it's not what sets the game apart from past flight games.

That fact that you can walk away from Gunship nearly ready to fly a real helicopter is what makes this game stand out. Gamers should check it out! ■

Behind The SCREENS

Each helicopter in Gunship comes complete with its own unique cockpit, and each cockpit is loaded with displays, gauges and controls that look like they were ripped from real-life whirlybirds. But how did Microprose come up with such realistic control set-ups? Simple. They copied the real thing.

"The cockpits in Gunship are based on publicly released pictures of real Army helicopters," said Tom Nichols, product marketing manager with Spectrum HoloByte. "You find a lot of that kind of technical information in magazines like *Aviation Week* and *Space Technology* and in technical journals put out by Jane's publications."

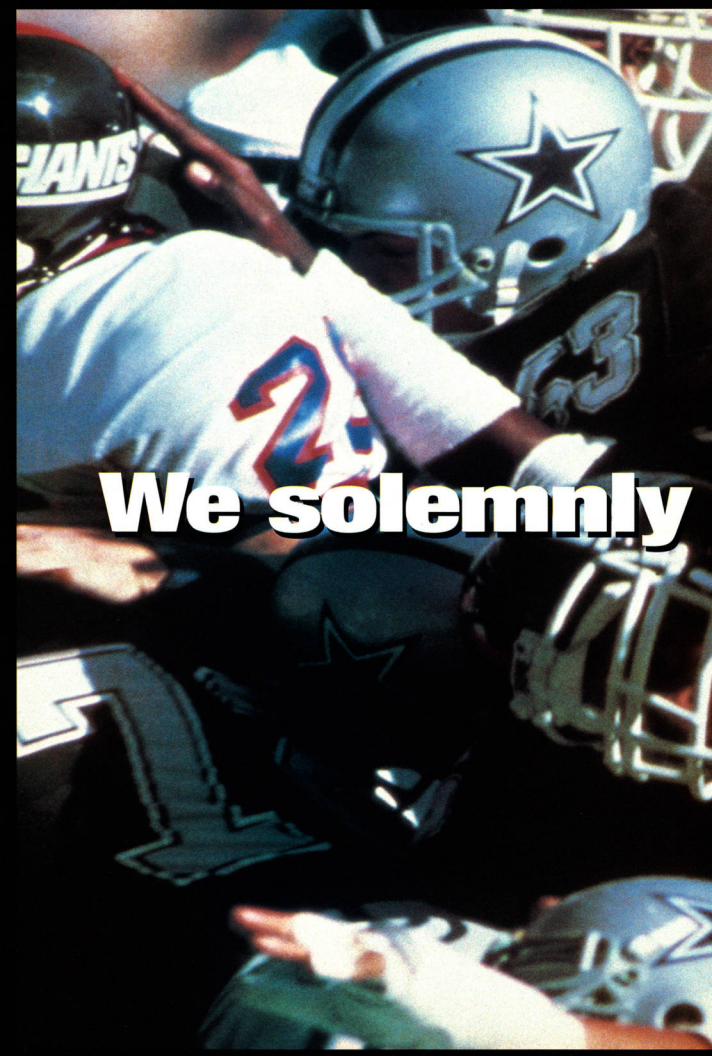
Nichols explained that the goal of this research was to push the game's level of realism to the max. But he admitted that Gunship's cockpits still lack many of the switches and buttons of the real Army machines, since so many controls would clutter up the television screen.

"It's kind of an artistic balance," Nichols said. "We emphasized realism to give the cockpits that authentic look, but there was an element of functionality in there as well, and if there were parts of the cockpit that were absolutely of no use—such as power and radio switches—then they weren't included in the game."

Okay, so you can't tune your chopper's radio. But Gunship's cockpits are still full of more than enough controls to make you feel like an authentic Army flyboy.

GAMER'S EDGE

You don't want to spend too much time flying high through Gunship's unfriendly skies. The helicopters under your control are slow and noisy, giving the enemy forces plenty of time to shoot you down well before your weapons can touch them. You'll need to keep your chopper low to the ground and follow the terrain. This type of flying—termed nap-of-the-earth flight by the military—lets you use ambush tactics and stealth to pulverize the enemy. When you approach a target, slow to a hover behind an adjacent hill, then pop up from behind the hill and rain rockets down on the opposition. Don't hang in the air too long, though, or you'll end up eating missiles from retaliating enemies. Drop back into hiding again and wait until the smoke clears. Repeat this pop-up tactic until all the enemy forces in range are destroyed.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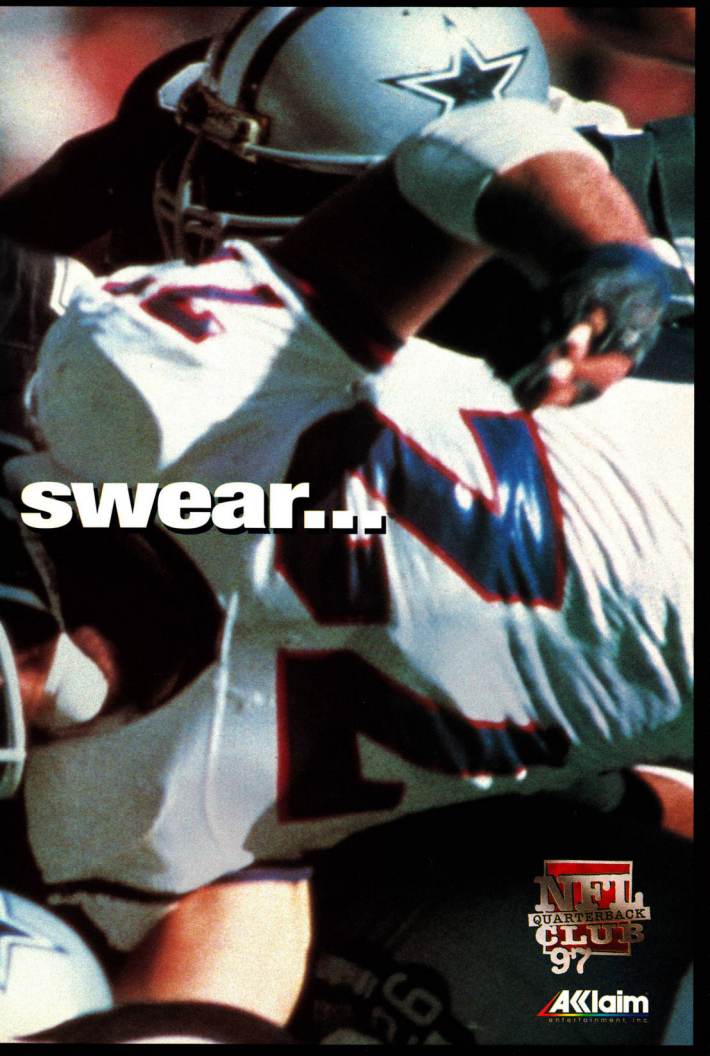
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The NFL,

KIDS TO ADULTS
AGES 6+

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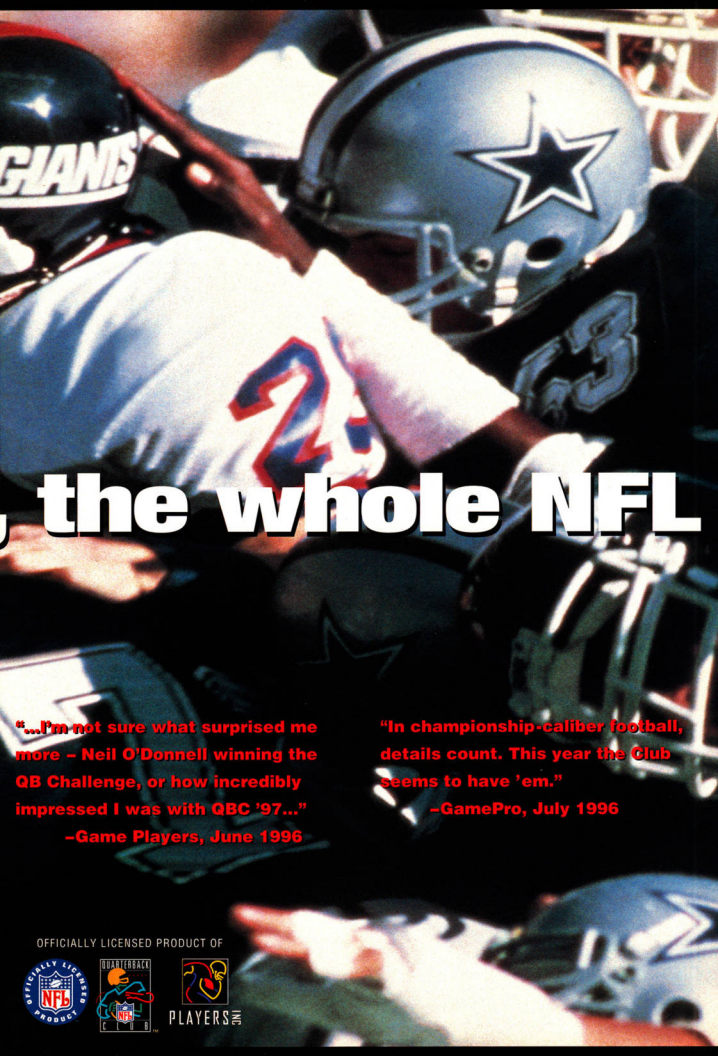
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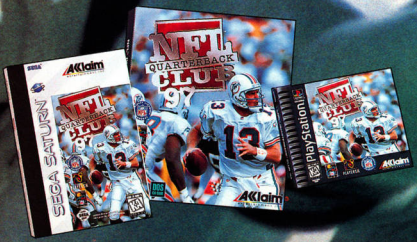

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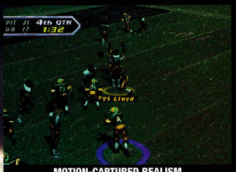
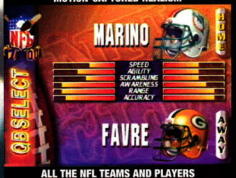


MOTION-CAPTURED REALISM



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OVER 500 NEW PLAYS

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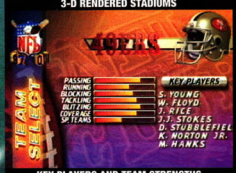

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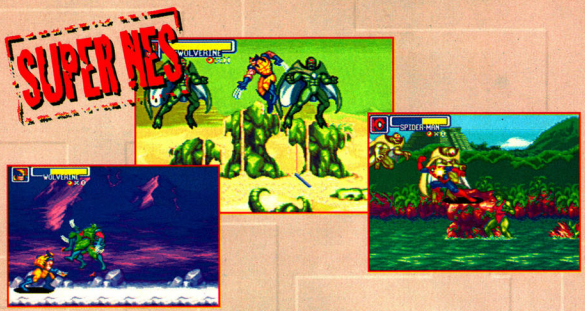

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™

WAR OF THE GEMS

The Battle For Precious Stones Begins Now!

Gamers who have always wanted to play as an X-Men character in a Final Fight-type game will have their wish come true with this new X-Men side-scrolling action/adventure.

The six mysterious gems of the universe are being sought after by some strange new dude threatening the serenity of the world. If the X-Men do not find these gems before they fall into the wrong hands, the fate of the world will be grim to say the least.

Although the X-Men are feared by the public, Spider-Man, Hulk, Captain America, Iron Man and Wolverine have sworn to uphold the integrity of the gems and keep the world from a future of darkness.

During their quest, these heroes will face many popular Marvel characters like Dr. Doom, Blackheart, She-Hulk, Thanos and the Brood. Furthermore, their fighting style consists of the standard Final Fight-type of attack—simply hit the buttons and the character performs a plethora of combos on the enemies. Also, each character brings his/her own unique moves from Capcom's fighting game Marvel Super Heroes. For instance, Wolverine's Tornado Claw can be activated by doing a Dragon Punch motion then pressing any Punch button.

However, while the addition of these moves does indeed add to the gameplay of side-scrolling fighting/action-type games, they serve little purpose here because the enemies can be beaten by pushing

"...will have their wish come true with this new X-Men..."

The X-Men must search the world to find the hidden gems.

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Did Mom tell you it's never ok to play with your food? She's wrong.

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-K. Lee, Gamefan Magazine

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Can you handle the challenge?
* Tons of hidden treasures and power-ups.
* 17 action-packed levels to explore.
* Stunning sights, sounds, and music.

"Ardy Lightfoot out-foxes the competition!"

-Nintendo Power Magazine

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Remember the iceberg the *Titanic* hit? Just an icecube.

Grab your life preserver, bub--it's time to Sink or Swim!
* Wacky, challenging puzzles around every corner.
* Eye-popping graphics and animation.
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"A puzzle game that will have you hooked!"

-Electronic Gaming Monthly

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Throughout the game many of the X-Men's adversaries from the comics will try to keep these superheroes away from the game.

Choose one of the five different superheroes to battle with.

only one button.

Luckily, the game is only 50 percent complete. If Capcom tweaks the gameplay quite a bit, then this game will be one for the true gamers (those players who like a challenging game that actually requires them to master the movements and attacks of their character, versus simply pushing buttons at random).

Luckily, there is still a lot of work to be done on this cart, so look in future issues of *EGM* for a complete review of the final product. Hopefully, Capcom uses this game's potential to make one of the last few good games for the Super NES.

On another note, what can a player expect? Well, at the beginning of each level the player chooses which one of

the five superheroes he/she wants to confront evil with. After a character dies, he/she is no longer selectable.

Also, before each level the player can select between four different power-ups—ranging from extra lives to the use of special powers (look inside the gamer's edge for more information on these moves).

After making these decisions, the player will find that each level has many paths and hidden areas which lead to the Boss. They'll also find that certain characters are better suited for each level. For instance, on the first stage, use Spider-Man to go over the top of the buildings, or use the Hulk's strength to break the pillars which prevents Spider-Man from going through the buildings. The Hulk's path may be a bit longer and more difficult; however, one may find more power-ups. Then again, one may not find any. Trial and error will soon solve this dilemma.

There is not much more. The graphics and sound capabilities of the Super NES have been maxed out for some time now, so one cannot expect to see anything unbelievably unique in these areas.The graphics and sound are to be expected because of the limitations of the Super NES.

This game has the opportunity to help lay the Super NES to rest with dignity. Hopefully, Capcom will take advantage of this opportunity by making the gameplay challenging and skillful enough to place this game in a different category than most games on the market which sell not because they're fun to play, but simply because the game looks good.

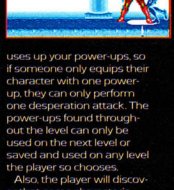
Hopefully, Marvel Super Heroes will be a game we'll want to play again in five years or so. Only time will tell... ■

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
October	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Capcom	50%
THEME	**PLAYERS** / **SIZE**
Action	1 / 16-Meg

"...player(s) will find that each level has many paths..."

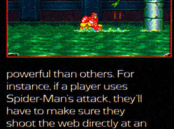
Gamer's EDGE

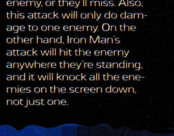
At the beginning of each level, the player can equip his/her superhero with power-ups that are found throughout the various levels. One of these power-ups equips our heroes with their own unique move which can be used as a desperation attack. This attack



uses up your power-ups, so if someone only equips their character with one power-up, they can only perform one desperation attack. The power-ups found throughout the level can only be used on the next level or saved and used on any level the player so chooses.

Also, the player will discover that some character's desperation attack is more





powerful than others. For instance, if a player uses Spider-Man's attack, they'll have to make sure they shoot the web directly at an enemy, or they'll miss. Also, this attack will only do damage to one enemy. On the other hand, Iron Man's attack will hit the enemy anywhere they're standing, and it will knock all the enemies on the screen down, not just one.

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SUPER NES

POWER RANGERS ZEO™ BATTLE RACERS

A Not So Fair Battle To The Finish

Bandai's latest release, Power Rangers Zeo Battle Racers, allows players to compete against the computer or a human opponent in a fight-to-the-finish race to prove who is the best. Battle Racers gives players the opportunity to play as one of their favorite rubbersuit heroes and blast the opposition in classic Mario Kart-style play.

The game controls are sluggish and nonresponsive, meaning it's designed for a younger audience who aren't hard to impress as long as they enjoy the characters in the title. As unappealing as the control is, one would assume that the graphics would be better to make up for an interface that is obviously lacking something. Besides Character Select and Pre-race Screens, the rest of the graphics have little to lift the quality level as they're pixelated and unrefined.

One interesting feature is the tracks which seem to copy the tracks of the much better Mario Kart. They start out being fair and at least fun to race on (even though the corners could have been more refined in all the stages). But in the later levels, players will become annoyed at the cheap design of the track, which instead of challenging the player more, tends to make play frustrating.

This is another classic title for kids that was rushed to make a quick sale. It's time developers stop looking down on younger gamers by supplying them with inferior releases. A little forethought and dedication to the younger player goes a long way in the video game market. ■

You can select your character and vehicle here from the lists.

Use your rearview mirror to watch who's gaining on you.

"Get across the finish line first by any means possible."

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
August	Adjustable
PUBLISHER	**% DONE**
Bandai	90%
THEME	**PLAYERS**	**SIZE**
Racing	1 or 2	8-Meg

Gamer's EDGE

As stated earlier, many of the levels are similar to those in the Nintendo classic, Mario Kart. This level (pic below), for instance, has the same hovering wooden plank feel to it, but instead of being fair, it tends to irritate gamers with cheap difficulty.

The entire course is outlined with a glowing red line on both sides of the track while you race. This line is the no-cross line. It will be the worst enemy of the player who likes to cut the corners tight as they try to pass the slower racer in front of them. If any of the racer's wheels so much as cross an inch over the line, the player will plummet off the track into the seemingly bottomless pit.

Just as in Mario Kart, however, you are rescued by the universal hovercraft that places you to a spot close to the proximity of where you went over the edge. The entire track is lethal in this manor—not giving the player much room for error in driving through the 90-degree turns that seem to dominate the courses.

Practice and well-placed projectile shots are the best way to move past the competition in a safe, risk-free manor. Many players will find little more than irritation in any of the later stages, but for the player with ungodly amounts of patience there is some good challenge hidden within the title. It takes a special and forgiving player to look past the cheap difficulty settings and into the deeper aspects of the game.

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PROTOS SOUL EDGE

PUBLISHER	SYSTEM	THEME
Namco	PlayStation	Fighting
RELEASE DATE	**PLAYERS**	**SIZE** / **% COMPLETE**
December	1 or 2	CD-ROM / N/A

As version two of Soul Edge is tearing up the coin-op charts, along comes the original version back once again. However, this time you can leave those quarters at home. In December, Namco is scheduled to release the popular arena fighter for PlayStation users to enjoy in the comforts of their own home.

The renown fighting title of arena combat that can be best compared to Tekken will seem to jump to life in the hands of gamers. As of this writing, it appears all the weapon-wielding characters have been included in the home version as well as all those vicious attacks whose effectiveness was as potent as they were impressive to watch. The graphics in this version—as in the arcade—have the same clean look as do the stages where the environments change rapidly. Whether you enjoy a sword-wielding pirate, a battle axe-wielding caveman or a valiant knight, the choice is yours. Each of these characters vary greatly in speed as well as power. But none is supplied without his/her share of finishing combos capable of rocking the opposition. This one is power-packed all the way, through. Now all gamers have to do is wait for its unveiling.

PROTOS

TECMO'S DECEPTION

Best put by *EGM* Associate Editor Crispin Boyer, this game is like the dark side of Home Alone. Enter Tecmo's Deception: Invitation to Darkness, a game where you get to play the nasty villain who kills wonderful adventure seekers that enter your domain. The story starts with you as a prince. Your father, the king, is killed in a mysterious way. You are blamed for his death and burned alive. Before the final moment of truth, however, you make the acquaintance of a demon who brings you back from the dead to construct the massive castle of the damned and protect it from anyone who might enter.

The game does look quite similar to that of King's Field 2, but instead of slashing your enemies with what weapons are available, you have to set vile traps within the corridors. Among these traps are such things as simple electrified cages and bear traps, to nasty things like giant stone feet, wall spikes, pits and anvils! In total, there are over 40 kinds of traps you can set. Force out screams, monster howls, antagonizing laughter and creepy cries to change the morale of each hero anywhere from angry to total cowardice! In addition to the 3-D wandering and trap springing, there is a resource management side to this game as well. As stated above, you must construct the palace by placing rooms, corridors and such in any location you want–along with the traps too.

There are also tons of secrets to be found. While doing your construction bit, certain rooms might suddenly have secret items found within them. You will also gain new styles of rooms and traps for each level gained by your character. To add to the fun, the game is extremely heavy in plot. Depending on which characters you kill, items you find, prisoners you release and so on, you will change the course of events in the game, thus leading to new characters to battle and perhaps a secret new item or three–all eventually leading up to one of the six endings the game contains! If you ever wanted to design your own slaughter house–this one's the game you'll want to get!

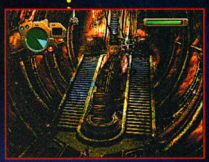
PUBLISHER	SYSTEM	THEME
Tecmo	PlayStation	RPG
RELEASE DATE	**PLAYERS**	**SIZE** / **% COMPLETE**
4th Qtr. '96	1	CD-ROM / 75%

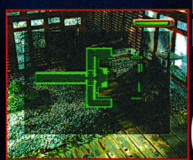
PERFECT WEAPON

PROTOS

American Softworks is scheduled to debut their latest fighting/action game in November. Unlike more common fighting games that feature a one-on-one fight with another opponent, their system uses what they call Behavioral Artificial Intelligence or BAI. This new AI gives Perfect Weapon a true 3-D fighting game that features four relentless alien attackers swarming the character at the same time. The attackers work as a team against the player instead of just lining up individually. Perfect Weapon gives players five hostile worlds filled with over 1,100 3-D locations to explore. There are also 20 different alien life-forms to battle while using any combination of the 100+ martial arts moves included in the combatant's book of tricks. Some of the styles encountered in the title are mantis, drunkin' monkey and kickboxing with over-the-top, multiplayer grapples. All these features accent the action of the title, but there is also plenty of beautifully rendered graphics and tons of FMV to enjoy for the player looking to be entertained between combat rounds.

PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME
American Softworks		PlayStation	Action/Adventure
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE / % COMPLETE
November	1		CD-ROM / 70%





The popular soft drink mascot makes it big in his second adventure for the video game market. Players join Spot, the red star of the adventure, to explore 20 levels set in movie-based worlds. These worlds are filled with puzzles, creative enemies, hidden passages and arcade-style action. The player's job in the adventure is to guide our cylindrical friend through captivating worlds such as a swashbuckling pirate world, a spine-tingling horror world and an adventure world. Three bonus worlds also exist to challenge gamers all the more: a shoot-'em-up Western, prehistoric dinosaur park and science fiction. In order to move from level to level, players collect five hidden gold stars which grow increasingly difficult to find as the game progresses. If players complete all levels, Spot goes home.

During gameplay, Spot encounters many creative enemies and obstacles. Always active, Spot can ride witches' brooms, cannons, rafts, a big wheel and a space ship. Defending himself as he goes, Spot has access to a variety of weapons including fire, a freeze shot and homing missiles. There are also plenty of breakable objects in every level—like as pods—that hold surprises and even open warps to secret areas.

Spot is a visually rich, colorful game featuring an isometric viewpoint and 3-D rendered worlds. There are more than 20 minutes of cinematic sequences preceding each level that tell Spot's story and add to the movie-like feel of the game. For gamers with an extra ambition to finish the title, there is a hidden surprise—a video on the making of Spot Goes To Hollywood, providing insight on the many different facets of the game.

PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME	
Virgin		PlayStation	Action	
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE	% COMPLETE
October	1		CD-ROM	70%

SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

PROTOS

PITBALL

If you think sports competition is tough in the 20th century, you haven't seen Accolade's latest futuristic sports title, Pitball, staged in the 23rd century. The rules are simple: There are no rules. Players can use anything and everything at their disposal to get the small ball of glowing energy into the goal (a small hole high up on the opposing wall). This includes punches, kicks, nuclear warheads and anything else you have at your disposal. Competition takes place in a cozy, walled arena with two teams of two players battling to score more than the opposition. The competitors are among the galaxy's toughest warriors—renegades from the most hostile planets, each with a brutal range of attacks, weapons and amazing scoring techniques. Grab a friend and battle into the next millemium.

PUBLISHER	SYSTEM	THEME
Accolade	PlayStation	Action/Sports
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS	SIZE / % COMPLETE
November	1 or 2	CD-ROM / 70%

Star FIGHTER

Star Fighter is a pseudo shooter/flight sim that first appeared on the 3DO. Pilot a fast and maneuverable fighter with all the armament needed to clear the level of all the opposition that comes in the form of stationary turret-type obstacles and moving enemies. The landscapes give players a great feeling of realism as they watch miles of realistic, rolling countryside scroll by while keeping an eye out for bogies on their six. Star Fighter is more than just a shooter and much more fun than a stale simulation.

SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE
PlayStation	August
	THEME
	Shooter
PUBLISHER	SIZE
Acclaim	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	% DONE
1	N/A

TECMO'S DECEPTION™

Invitation to Darkness

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If you are strong enough and smart enough to accept the Invitation to Darkness and play Tecmo's Deception use the reservation form below.

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PROTOS MACHINEHEAD

The year is 2005 and scientists are hard at work trying to create an innovative DNA. Their project goes bad, and they create some new life-mutating super virus that threatens to destroy the world. No antidote can be created; the only hope being the difficult task of completely destroying everything that has become infected.

To accomplish this, you'll have 10 different weapons to choose from including machine guns, flame throws, missiles and laser beams, just to name a few. Also, there are over 15 missions and over 100 different most gruesome enemies trying to do you in.

Oh yeah, your looney assistant has strapped a smart bomb onto your back, and he is using it to enslave you to do whatever nasty and unusual things he can think of.

PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME
Eidos			First-Person Shooter
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE / % COMPLETE
October	1		CD-ROM / N/A

ALIEN TRILOGY

For all you Saturn owners who have seen and drooled over Alien Trilogy for the PlayStation, wipe your mouth because all Saturn owners will soon have this Doom-style shooter in their homes as well.

For those not familiar with what is going on here, listen up. Contact with the colonists on LV 426 has been lost. You, playing as Ripley, must go to this colony and check out the situation. Is there just some sort of fluke communication problem? Or are the Facehuggers, Chest-Bursters, Xenomorphs, Company Soldiers and Queen Aliens back? Guess what—they're back, and maybe so are the programmers. Hopefully, they'll surprise us with some new levels and secrets in the Saturn version.

SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE
	September
	THEME
	First-Person Shooter
PUBLISHER	SIZE
Acclaim	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	% DONE
1	N/A

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PlayStation

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Daddy's Little Girl is Out to Save the World.

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PlayStation

MATURE AGE 17+

PROTOS Cyber THUG

As you jump into cyber sneakers, you become the enforcer of justice on the Internet. You, along with Cyber Dog, must track down the cash cow and return it to the needy woman and orphans.

The action can be played both in a first- or third-person perspective as you power through this 3-D action platform. The game also changes its gameplay at times, and you'll find yourself behind the wheel of the cybersled.

Your quest will take you through eight different missions; which means there are at least 24 unique levels. Also, you'll run across 50 very strange characters to say the least. For example, there is a self- righteous preacher who throws halos at you or you'll run across Bible bashers who throw Bibles your way.

The producers of this game have hidden messages throughout. Each character and screen has some sort of symbolic meaning which is left up to your interpretation.

SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE
PlayStation	December
	THEME
	Action
PUBLISHER	SIZE
MGM Interactive	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	% DONE
1	N/A

BUST-A-MOVE 2

Tired of playing the same levels of Bust-A-Move over and over again? Can you do them with your eyes closed and half your fingers cut off? Indeed, you probably can. Well sew your fingers back on and don't fret, because all-new levels and intense puzzle action are here with Bust-A-Move 2.

This version of the game is relatively similar to the first one, but it has been tweaked somewhat. First off, the graphics have been improved, and you'll notice that one of your little buddies who launched the balls has been removed. Also, there has been an addition of wide-screen puzzles. Now, instead of the playing surface being only about eight balls across, some puzzles can fit up to 16 balls, doubling the playing surface and the technique involved. Also, a level editor has been included.

The most addicting part of this game, the Two-play Mode, is still as intense as ever, and the computer itself is much more intelligent. This definitely makes it more challenging.

PUBLISHER	SYSTEM	THEME
Acclaim		Puzzle
RELEASE DATE / PLAYERS		SIZE / % COMPLETE
September / 1 or 2		CD-ROM / N/A

PROTOS

Mr. BONES

Later this year, before the Christmas rush, Sega will be unveiling their newest star. This latest action hero is unlike all others in the respect that he continues his mission from beyond the grave. Mr. Bones closely knits the title's background with the action. Being nothing more than an animated skeleton, he can disassemble himself and reform to get through tough areas of any level. Even though it is still early, the gameplay appears to be very smooth, and a variety of levels look substantially different from stage to stage. This title has some serious gameplay but is not dry. It still has a touch of humor (as it should) to keep players interested for extended periods of time. Gamers will just have to wait another month or so to get a better look at the enemies and the levels.

PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME	
Sega			Action	
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE	% COMPLETE
October	1		CD-ROM	N/A

QUAKE

Well the rumors about this game have been running rampart. Ever since first word of Quake's existence came about, gamers have been anticipating its release.

It is similar in style to Doom, but it should be in a completely different league. The action will be fast-paced, and takes place in a 3-D environment with textured-mapped polygon characters.

The story places you, a space-age Marine, in unfriendly areas. It is your job to make sure the floors are covered with the aliens' guts.

The computer versions will be multiplayer, but the implementation of this feature on the Saturn and PlayStation is still questionable. Whether or not this game will confirm all the rumors remains undetermined. Hopefully it will, because there is nothing better than gruesome weapons throwing alien blood on your face.

PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME	
GT Interactive		PlayStation	First-Person Shooter	
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE	% COMPLETE
1st Qtr. '97	1		CD-ROM	N/A

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PROTOS

CHEESY

Oh no! Cheesy the mouse has been captured by some crazed scientist who locked the rodent up in some strange castle. It is your job to help Cheesy search through this 3-D environment in order to find the ingredients of the Teleportation spell, so Cheesy can get himself out of there.

The game itself consists of 30 levels, and the gameplay will take you through bungee-jumping spider levels, thrilling "banana skin surfacing" sequences and a sweat-inducing UFO flying section.

If you get Cheesy out of the castle and his little brain makes him fall for the old cheese-on-the-trap trick, what's the point of rescuing this little rodent? Maybe we free him only to be able to dispose of him later on in the game?

PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME	
Ocean		PlayStation	Action	
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE	% COMPLETE
4th Qtr. '96	1 or 2		CD-ROM	N/A

BUBBLE BOBBLE

The dinosaur stars of Bust-A-Move 2 return in an updated version of their first game, Bubble Bobble. This game debuted in the arcade years ago, then popped up on the NES and PC formats. Bubble Bobble is a mix of puzzle and action elements. Players control the dinosaurs Bubbie and Bobbie, who can blow bubbles at the enemies that populate each level (players will recognize these enemies from the Bust-A-Move games). The bubbles surround each bad guy and leave him helpless. The dinosaurs can then rush up and pop the bubble-encased enemies, turning them into fruit. Each level is cleared once all the fruit has been nabbed. The dinos will have to be careful, though. If they run into an enemy that's not in a bubble, they'll become extinct.

SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE
PlayStation	September
	THEME
	Puzzle
PUBLISHER	SIZE
Acclaim	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	% DONE
1 or 2	N/A

Psychopad K.O.

ad·dic·tive *(ad' dik' tiv) adj.* **1.** Any substance that causes or tends to cause addiction. **2.** A habit causing dependence or obsession. **3.** Psychopad K.O. the new HYPER Programmable 10 in 1 joystick for Sega, Nintendo and Playstation featuring Slow Motion, Flip switch, 4 speed Autofire and programmability that will let you devastate the most awesome opponent with the push of a single button. Buy it or run home to Momma!

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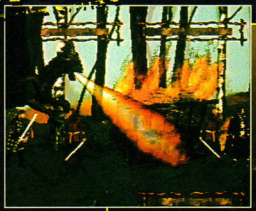
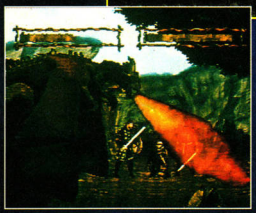
PROTOS

DRAGON HEART



The fantasy world of Draco comes off the big screen and into your home with a few surprises. First, the best surprise is that Acclaim is going to include seven original 3-D rendered and animated dragons that were not included in the film. Also, there are more than 120 different special fighting moves and 48 different characters dressed in the props and costumes from the film. Many of the creatures from the film, including Draco the Dragon, are featured in this game. Finally, we can expect to see the game offer both a third- and first-person perspective to battle in.

Your quest is that of the movie's: You must venture the land, trying to find some way to oust the evil king from his reign.



PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME	
Acclaim		PlayStation	Fighting/Adventure	
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE	% COMPLETE
September	1		CD-ROM	N/A

DUKE NUKEM

Go to see a peep show and blow away some strippers or open your fly to take a leak—it is all up to you. Duke Nukem should give you the opportunity to accomplish such obscurities.

This new Doom-type game has aliens invading Los Angles and will be geared toward an older crowd. If the rumors turn out to be correct, you should see some very strange things such as those discussed above. However, just how far the video game industry will let the game go remains questionable.

What *EGM* does know is that the graphics are intense, and not only do you have awesome weapons to mutilate alien flesh with, but also traps can be set. For instance, you can place a holographic replicate of yourself out in the open then hide while picking off aliens as they come to investigate. On a final note, the game will have six degrees of freedom which will allow for looking up and down, crawling, jumping and flying.

PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME	
GT Interactive		PlayStation	First-Person Shooter	
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE	% COMPLETE
November	1		CD-ROM	N/A

- Amazing photo-quality digitized graphics
- 16-bit stereo symphonic sound tracks
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- 16 levels of game play, with increasing difficulty
- Easy icon-driven menu system

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PROTOS

BEDLAM

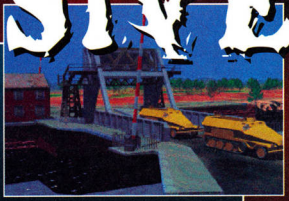
Well, once again yet another band of aliens has invaded Earth, and it is your job to rid our planet of these terrible extraterrestrials. In this 3-D, top-down action arcade game, you take control of three biobots, and you must accomplish the objectives of a preplanned strategic strike against the aliens.

The gameplay is a combination of Smash TV-type play and that of Cannon Fodder. However, in Bedlam you can destroy every item, building, enemy, road, everything... There are huge flames of fire shooting out of every building, and there are numerous enemies flooding in upon you. Your movements must be fast or death is certain.

On a final note, this game should allow for up 16-player simulation action, leading to a barrage of destruction. You may kill the aliens, but the Earth won't be left standing.

SYSTEM	RELEASE DATE
PlayStation	September
	THEME
	Action
PUBLISHER	SIZE
GT Interactive	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	% DONE
1	N/A

OFFENSIVE



Welcome to the 1930s—the era of WWII. You are now commander in chief of one the most powerful armies on the planet: powerful, that is, if you are skilled enough to train your army as such.

This game will allow you to choose from many different scenarios in WWII: from the Normandy landings to the Battle of the Bulge. While you're battling, you will get to watch scenes from authentic newspaper and newsreel footage of that era.

The A.I. is highly intelligent. Not only must you tell your soldiers where to go and how to wage battle, but you also must worry about keeping your supply lines free, know where and when re-enforcements are attacking and also the morale of your troops must be monitored and kept high. Unhappy troops will lead to nothing but fields upon fields of your soldiers laying in their own entrails.

PUBLISHER		SYSTEM	THEME	
Ocean			Simulation	
RELEASE DATE	PLAYERS		SIZE	% COMPLETE
4th Qtr. '96	1		CD-ROM	N/A

PLAYSTATION

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34569 Die Hard Trilogy $51
31254 Doom $44
32715 Fade To Black $53
29936 Hardball 5 $51
33214 Hyper 3-D Pinball $45
10816 Kileak $36
30572 King's Field $51
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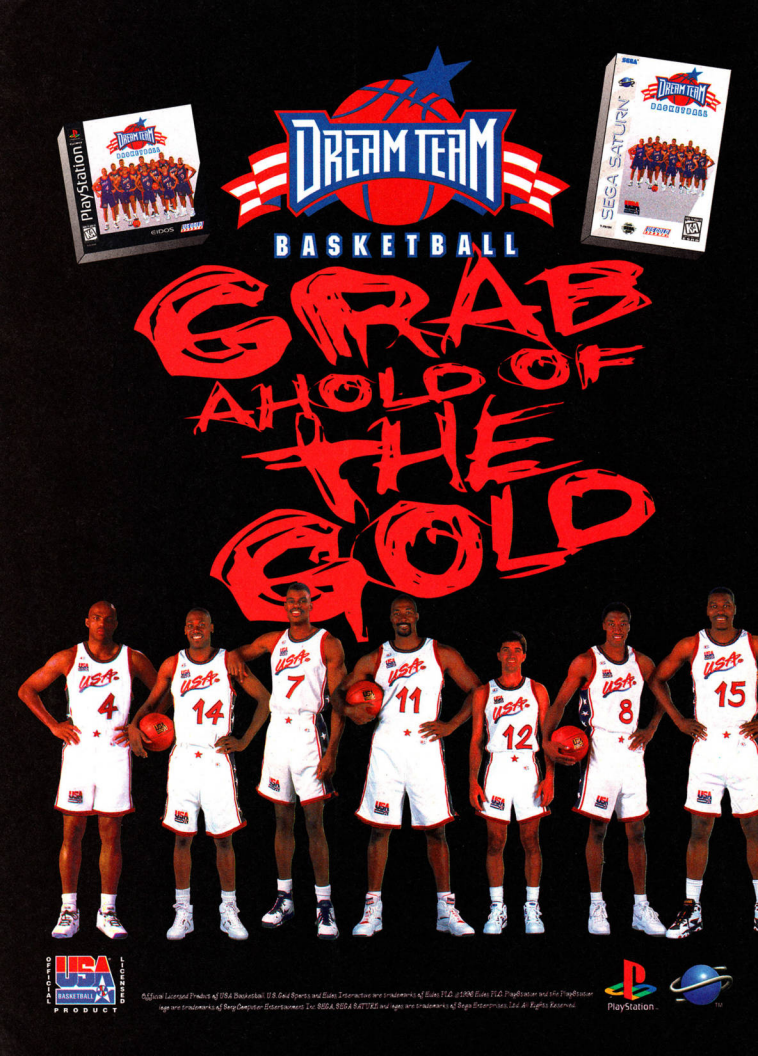

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TEAM EGM

THE LINEUP

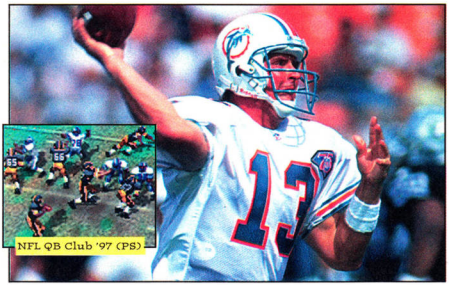
• PREVIEWS

JIMMY JOHNSON FOOTBALL (PLAYSTATION)
COLLEGE FOOTBALL '97 (GENESIS)
NFL QB CLUB '97 (PLAYSTATION)
HARDCORE 4X4 (PLAYSTATION)
NASCAR RACING (PLAYSTATION)

• BOX SCORE

DECATHLETE (SATURN)
OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES (PLAYSTATION)
TRIPLE PLAY GOLD EDITION (GENESIS)
COLLEGE FOOTBALL USA '97 (GENESIS)

TEAM EGM GOES INSIDE THE HUDDLE WITH ONE OF THE NFL'S BEST QBS



Football season is just about to get started and we're ready to run down some of this year's most anticipated gridiron titles. Plus the first look ever at Jimmy Johnson football.

We've had a pretty busy off-season, scouring the sidelines of gaming and making sure we were up to speed on the many football games coming your way this year.

In our travels, we managed to speak to some of the greatest football players of the modern era. We're kicking off our football coverage in style with an interview with Dan Marino, the head signal caller and future NFL Hall of Fame quarterback for the Miami Dolphins. The Dolphins have a good chance to go all the way this year with Marino and their new head coach Jimmy Johnson.

In a world exclusive, we feature Jimmy Johnson Football from Gametek. The developers are currently working on a deal that will help them acquire NFL and NFL Players Association licenses. As of press time, we aren't sure what the status of the deal is, but we know the game will be vying for this year's football game of the year along with Madden '97, NFL GameDay '97 and NFL QB Club '97. Football isn't the only game in town in this month's installment of Team EGM. We also take a look at Hardcore 4X4 from ASC and go up through the gears with Papyrus' NASCAR Racing for the PlayStation. The game is due out later this month.

We take a look at Sega's ride on the Olympics bandwagon—a great game called Decathlete for the Saturn. There are also plenty of Genesis titles on the dock-et this month, including Triple Play '97 and two solid college football titles.

If this isn't enough for you, check out *CYBER SPORTS*, brought to you by the editors of Team EGM, for even more in-depth sports coverage. It's on sale now.

QUICK SHOTS

Ten Pin Alley from ASC for the PS will bowl over bowling fans.

Impact Racing is also coming to the PlayStation from Acclaim.

Street Racer is coming to the PlayStation from Ubi Soft.

Namco's Ridge Racer Revolution is speeding onto the gaming scene, and racing fans will want to get their hands on it.

JIMMY JOHNSON FOOTBALL

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
4th Qtr. '96	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**SIZE**
Gametek	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	**THEME**	**% DONE**
1-8	Football	N/A

Now for the latest news on the football gaming front: Jimmy Johnson '97. This title, presently in development at Gametek and possibly Konami (the two companies are in negotiations to release this title jointly), looks to be a significant contender in the upcoming season.

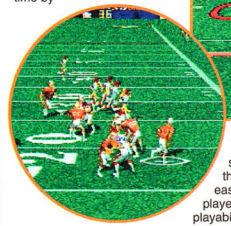
Pick your favorite team and play an exhibition game or an entire season—if you're into postseason action, you can even choose to just play in the playoffs. All the authentic plays are there, including the jumping catches and diving tackles that you'd expect from any 32-Bit football title. This game goes one step further, however, with a play editor which will let you design your own plays based on the strategies of your favorite teams. Now you're not restricted to the same old plays that you see every Sunday. Want to gain some time by sending your receivers out along the sidelines? Feel free. Want to storm the offense with an all-out blitz? Go for it. Finally, the choice will be yours.

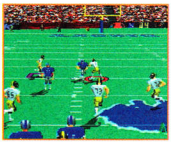
During kicks and passes, the game will feature a unique display which shows the path and trajectory of the ball, so that you can maneuver your receiver into exactly the correct position. This should make judging the passing game easier for the first-time player, without sacrificing playability for the football veteran. Realistic playing conditions such as snow and mud add additional challenge.

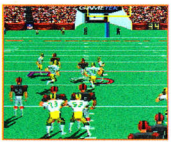
Jimmy Johnson will be on hand to lend his advice on your strategies and playing tactics. You'll be able to profit from his years of NFL experience, which will give you a sort of onboard hint resource to help you master the game.

In addition to all this, it's our understanding that the developers are pursuing an NFL license to use the actual teams and players, although it's still tentative. Even if it doesn't go through, Jimmy Johnson might still be one of the most complete titles to be released in the near future.

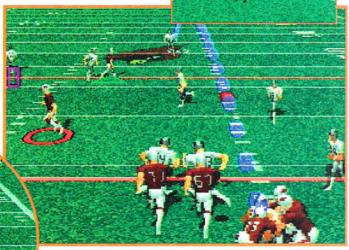
Although we've only seen an unfinished copy, it looks like Jimmy Johnson '97 may be a powerful addition to the 32-Bit football league. ■







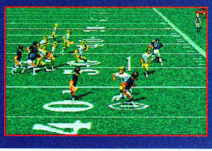
Choose the best receiver and send him all the way for a TD.



A passing display takes out some of the guesswork. Just put your receiver in the right spot, and you're good to go.

Jimmy's on *your* team now!

Design your own plays



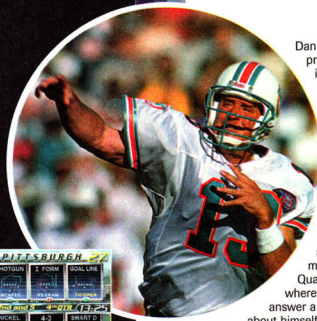
The play editor gives almost infinite diversity to the game. You choose whether you want the play to be offense or defense, the formation, and the type of play (i.e., running, passing, special teams). Then you can pick the direction of the motion of each of the receivers or running backs and the direction of the blocking for the line. This allows you to mix and match the most effective elements of the best plays in the standard playbooks. After all that, you'll be able to name the play. Jimmy Johnson's play editor is going to let you make the teams truly your own.

Set up the plays any way you want them; at last, absolute power is now in your hands.

eXclusive INTERVIEW

FACE to FACE

with DAN MARINO



Dan Marino began his pro football career in 1983 with 2210 yards passing and 20 touchdowns. Now 45,598 yards and 326 touchdowns later, he is one of the best-liked and most respected quarterbacks ever. *EGM* caught up with Dan at the shooting of a commercial for Acclaim's Quarterback Club '97, where he kindly agreed to answer a few questions about himself, his career and football in general.

NFL QB Club '97

Team EGM: What's the most memorable pass that you've thrown in your college or pro career, and who caught it?

In college, probably, the one I threw in the Sugar Bowl to beat Georgia with about 30 seconds left. I threw it to John "Downtown" Brown. That was in '82. It's hard to pick one, as far as my professional career is concerned right now. I threw a touchdown in a Super Bowl. Although we didn't win the game, I'd have to say that's something that's pretty memorable.

If you could pick some of the greatest receivers of all time to throw to, who would they be and why?

Well, there are two guys that I've thrown to for 10 years, [Mark] Duper and [Mark] Clayton, and I wouldn't change that. But if there was any other receiver, it would probably be Jerry Rice or John Stallworth. I really liked John Stallworth when he was with the Steelers.

Aside from Miami, what's your favorite football stadium and why?

The Orange Bowl. The Orange Bowl was a great place to play because of the tradition the Dolphins had years ago there. I've played in it, and played some big games. We set some records there, with Dupe or Clay and myself, early in my career. The Orange Bowl is a place I'll always remember.

At this year's NFL Quarterback Club Challenge, how would you rate your performance?

Well, let's see, I was in the middle somewhere...[in one event] I only hit two out of four targets. If I could have hit a deep one early, then I probably would have had a chance to win it. In those things you can stay close, and then if you can win the last event, you're going to win the whole thing, because that's where all the points come in.

How competitive is the Challenge? Is it your intent to win or just have fun with your fellow quarterbacks?

There's no doubt, if you go and don't intend to win, you shouldn't even go. *(laughs)* You might as well stay home.

What other sports do you enjoy playing or watching?

Since I came to Florida I've picked up the hobby of playing golf. I always loved baseball; when I was a kid, I played a lot of baseball. Now, I play a lot of golf, and just normal recreational things you do in Florida. I really caught on to following the Panthers this year, the hockey team here. I went to a lot of their games this year. My kids are really into it.

If you could give one piece of advice to aspiring high school or college quarterbacks, what would it be?

I think that it's okay to have dreams about being a professional. But the one thing you have to be is realistic about life, and you have to work hard at whatever you're doing. You have to set goals. You have to do well in school, because you never know in athletics; your world can change on any given day. If you get hurt, things change.

As a professional athlete, especially in the NFL, how important is it to laugh at yourself?

Well, you should enjoy yourself, enjoy what you're doing, because you never know when it's going to end. So I don't know if you're going to laugh at yourself, but...have a good time, and enjoy the times that you have in the league—maybe not only on Sundays, but the whole week—and everything that's involved in it. ■

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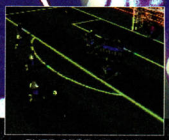

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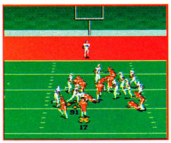
COLLEGE FOOTBALL USA 97



Building on their experience with Bill Walsh College Football, EA Sports is setting up to bring you College Football USA '97 for the Sega Genesis. Now some owners of 32-Bit machines may smirk at the mere mention of the "G" word, but don't let the fact that it's being released as a 16-Bit title fool you; this game doesn't mess around. A realistic play engine and a good artificial intelligence, combined with a host of options and in-depth statistics, should produce a real impact on the world of video football.

College Football offers tons of features on both offense and defense. Want to fake out your opponent? Try a fake snap and see if you can draw him offsides. Want to crush the offense into the ground? An extra burst lets you power off the line at the snap. (You may not want to push things too hard, though; your players can suffer over 70 different injuries, ranging from trivial to life-threatening.) Spin, hurdle, even lateral as you head downfield with the ball. If you're playing defense, use the power tackle to stuff 'em hard.

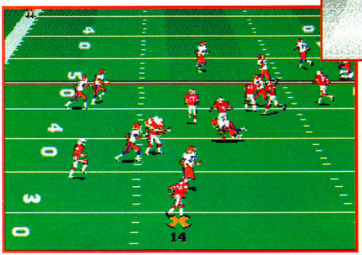
The finest teams compete for No. 1

But the folks at EA Sports realize that the play isn't everything, so for you armchair coaches and stat-watchers out there, College Football USA is equipped with a number of features that go beyond the hardcore gridiron action. A Save Feature allows you to keep user records—letting you track your stats throughout the entire season. Check on passing, rushing, receiving, defensive play, kicking and punting. Keep track of your team as a whole by examining team attributes like energy level, speed, quickness, awareness and weight, as well as the offensive-specific attributes of range, power and accuracy; and the defensive attributes of hands, block and tackle.

You can set up a tournament, or you can choose to play an entire season, using either bowl games or playoffs. In addition, you can control up to 16 different teams throughout the season, playing as many as four games a week. Don't like the schedule? Just make your own. This game will feature fully customizable schedules.

With features to satisfy all kinds of football fans, College Football USA '97 looks like it will be a powerhouse among all of the best football games. Who knows? It might even put some 32-Bit titles to shame. ■

Snow and other weather conditions will affect gameplay.



Something for everyone

College Football USA '97 offers features to satisfy all sorts of football fans. For aspiring gridiron heroes, the developers have included features like fake snaps, power tackles, injuries and bad weather. For would-be sideline commanders, College Football gives you the opportunity to take a look at the big picture: the season, the bowl games, tournaments and team and individual statistics. Pick the best team and take it all the way, keeping track of your team's attributes and the stats of your best players. You can even play as many as 16 different teams throughout the season.

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
August	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**SIZE**
EA Sports	16-Meg
PLAYERS	**THEME** / **% DONE**
1-4	Football / N/A

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TECMO SUPER BOWL should be available in September of 1996.

Watch this magazine for late breaking updates regarding game features and when Tecmo Super Bowl will be in stores near you.

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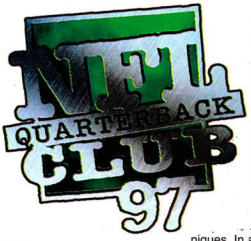

It's almost like being there...

Realistic weather conditions will significantly influence gameplay, with accurate surface representations depending on the type of turf and the weather. Play in the rain, and you'll get muddy. Adjustable camera angles and selectable player perspectives should please picky players by providing a customizable point-of-view. In addition, an improved artificial intelligence engine should make the opposition just as true to life.

Joining the blitz of new football titles is NFL Quarterback Club '97. The third title in the successful football series from the sports veterans at Acclaim, Quarterback Club boasts an impressive lineup of improvements on its predecessors.

The developers have souped up the artificial intelligence, giving computer-controlled players the ability to learn and adapt to opponents' techniques. In addition, Acclaim reports that the players will act more like their pro counterparts, with more accurate pass coverage and better blocking. The game will include over 1,000 offensive and defensive plays, including some of the "signature" plays of well-known quarterbacks. You'll be able to trade and substitute players and get detailed game statistics. Of course, they'll also be including secret teams and cheat codes. With motion-captured player graphics and full-motion video, Quarterback Club may look as good as it plays. Of course, motion-capture and full-motion video are the standard these days, and with the swarm of upcoming football releases, every title stands a chance of fading into the background. But Quarterback Club '97 promises to be one of the few that will stand out from the crowd. ■

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
October	N/A
PUBLISHER	**SIZE**
Acclaim	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	**THEME**	**% DONE**
1-8	Football	N/A

Tired of the same old football game? Join the Club

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
November	Moderate
PUBLISHER	**SIZE**
ASC	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	**THEME**	**% DONE**
1	Racing	70%

There's nothing quite like off-road racing to get the adrenaline going. TNN Motor Sports Hardcore 4X4 promises to capture that adrenaline, marking out new terrain for future racing titles.

The developers wanted this to be an accurate simulation of off-road racing, so they're putting in realistic driving conditions like ice, mud and sand. They're giving you life-like weather conditions including fog, rain and snow. They're even letting you drive at night. Each of the six different trucks will perform differently depending on the terrain on each of the six tracks. Hit one of your fellow drivers and your truck will sustain damage that will affect its performance. You'll see fenders crunching, wheels busting and doors flying off.

With such realism, Hardcore 4x4 is sure to make an impact in the motor sports world. ■

Racing that'll rock your world

Four-wheel independent suspension makes this one of the most realistic racing titles yet: Hit a bump and your truck will rock in a way that imitates real off-road racing almost perfectly; hit a bank too hard and you'll find yourself upside-down in the mud. The developers tell us that they divided the trucks into four completely independent sections so that it would handle like a real 4x4. This game reacts to real-world physics, and the results can look pretty painful.

Hardcore thrills & life-like spills

ENTER TO WIN THE DIE HARD TRILOGY CONTEST

FIRST PRIZE

Two First Prize Winners will receive:

(1) each of *Die Hard, Die Harder* and *Die Hard: With a Vengeance* on Laserdisc

(1)Die Hard Trilogy Sony PlayStation Game

GRAND PRIZE

One Grand Prize WInner will receive:

(1) faux gold brick used in Die Hard: With a Vengeance signed by Jeremy Irons who played Simon Grüber.

(1) Die Hard Trilogy Sony PlayStation Game.

(1) each of *Die Hard, Die Harder* and *Die Hard: With a Vengeance* on Laserdisc

SECOND PRIZE

Ten Second Prize Winners will receive:

(1) Letterboxed *Die Hard Trilogy* Video Cassette Sets

To Enter: Mail a standard size postcard containing name, address, and phone number to "Die Hard Trilogy Sweepstakes," Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1920 Highland Avenue, 2nd Floor, Lombard, Illinois 60148.

***sorry, it's not real!**

FOX INTERACTIVE

DIE HARD TRILOGY SWEEPSTAKES

June 27, 1996
Contest Rules:

1. No Purchase Necessary: To enter, mail a standard size postcard containing name, address, and phone number to "Die Hard Trilogy Sweepstakes," Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1920 Highland Avenue, 2nd Floor, Lombard, Illinois 60148. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. One entry per household. All entries must be hand-written. Mechanically reproduced entries will not be accepted. Entries must be received by October 1, 1996. All entries become exclusive property of Ziff-Davis Publishing Company ("Ziff-Davis") and will not be acknowledged or returned. Ziff-Davis assumes no responsibility for lost, mutilated, late, illegible, incomplete, postage-due or misdirected entries. Only one prize per family, organization or household.

2. Prizes: 1 Grand Prize: Grand Prize winner will receive one (1) faux gold brick used in *Die Hard: With a Vengeance* autographed by Jeremy Irons, one (1) Die Hard Trilogy Sony PlayStation video game, one (1) copy each of *Die Hard, Die Harder, Die Hard: With a Vengeance* on laser disc, and one (1) Fox Interactive baseball cap. Grand Prize has an approximate retail value of $2,717.00. 2 First Prizes: First Prize winners will receive one (1) Die Hard Trilogy Sony PlayStation video game, one (1) copy each of *Die Hard, Die Harder, Die Hard: With a Vengeance* on laser disc, and one (1) Fox Interactive baseball cap. First Prize has an approximate retail value of $217.00. 10 Second Prizes: Second Prize winners will receive one (1) Letterboxed Die Hard Trilogy video cassette set and one (1) Fox Interactive baseball cap. Second Prize has an approximate retail value of $52.00. Winners will be determined by a random drawing from all valid entries by Ziff-Davis whose decisions are final. Drawing to be held on or about October 15, 1996. All prize(s) will be awarded. Prize winners will be notified by mail. Prize(s) are non-transferable. No substitutions of prize(s) are allowed, except at the option of Sponsor should the featured prize(s) become unavailable.

3. Odds of Winning: The odds of winning will be determined by number of valid entries received.

4. Eligibility: Sweepstakes open to residents of United States and Canada only. Void in Rhode Island, Quebec or wherever prohibited by law. Non-compliance with the time parameters contained herein or return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Winners or their legal guardians shall sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within 30 days of receipt or forfeit prize. By acceptance of prize, winner(s) agrees to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of Ziff-Davis, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc. and their respective affiliates are not eligible. Neither Ziff-Davis, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc. nor their affiliates, subsidiaries, divisions or related companies are responsible for any damages, taxes or expenses that consumers might incur as a result of this sweepstakes or receipt of prize. Winner accepting prize(s) agree that all prize(s) are awarded on the condition that Ziff-Davis, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc. and their agents, representatives, affiliates and employees will have no liability whatsoever for any injuries, losses or damages of any kind resulting from acceptance, possession or use of the prize(s). Winner further acknowledges that neither Ziff-Davis and Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc. has neither made nor is in any manner responsible or liable for any warranty, representation, or guarantee express or implied, in fact or in law, relative to any prize (except as may be expressly warranted by Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc. and the Die Hard Trilogy video game), including but not limited to its quality, mechanical condition or fitness.

5. Winners List: For a list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Die Hard Trilogy Sweepstakes Winners, 1920 Highland Ave. 2nd Floor, Lombard, IL 60148. Requests for winners lists must be received by November 1, 1996. Allow 4 weeks for delivery of winners list.

6. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.

7. Sponsors: This contest is solely sponsored by Twentieth Century Fox Entertainment, Inc. (1996 Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc. *DIE HARD* (1988 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, *DIE HARD 2: DIE HARDER* (1990 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, *DIE HARD: WITH A VENGEANCE* Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation, Cinergi Pictures Entertainment, Inc. and Cinergi Pictures NV Inc. All Rights Reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

NASCAR Racing

Experience the thrill of NASCAR racing from the driver's seat.

It isn't often that game developers pay as much attention to detail as the developers of NASCAR Racing having. A respected title for the PC, this game is now making the jump to the PlayStation. With updated tracks and drivers, NASCAR is expected to enjoy the same success it experienced on the PC.

Presently in the finishing stretch at Sierra On-Line's award-winning development division, Papyrus Design Group, NASCAR Racing will employ actual drivers and teams from the 1996 circuit, as well as 16 true-to-life tracks. Now some racing games claim to be realistic, but when Sierra says "true-to-life," they mean just that—16 tracks, modeled from real video footage, which feature such excruciating details as the actual sponsors' billboards and trackside scenery. The banks are all precise, the braking spots in the proper location, everything is as close to real life as any simulation could hope to be.

But the tracks aren't all the designers focused on. Each car is fully optimizable, with the opportunity to change every element that might make a difference to your racing performance. Everything can be monitored during the race, so that you'll know what you need to change at the next pit stop.

This level of detail might make the first-time player a bit squeamish, especially if he doesn't know all that much about the finer details of NASCAR racing. It is for just such a player that Sierra is incorporating an Arcade Mode which will automate those features that players uneducated in the ins and outs of NASCAR might find confusing or tedious. This should make the game more accessible for a wider audience, although the racing will still be more challenging than the average racer. The developers are also including two "fantasy tracks," challenging courses with high banks and sharp turns, guaranteed to rattle even the most seasoned drivers. In addition, three of the 16 NASCAR tracks can be run at night, bringing the total number of different racing experiences up to 21.

Fans of the PC version will attest to the fact that this is one serious simulation. The level of detail that the developers have incorporated into this title is not intended for the passive observer or one-time player. But with its fully comprehensive approach, this game is certain to be an instant favorite among fans of the NASCAR racing circuit everywhere. ■

RELEASE DATE	DIFFICULTY
September	Easy
PUBLISHER	**SIZE**
Sierra	CD-ROM
PLAYERS	**THEME**	**% DONE**
1	Racing	85%

Stock racing from the inside out

A quick NASCAR F.Y.I.

For those of you unfamiliar with NASCAR racing, here are some interesting tidbits about what's being called the fastest-growing sport in the country. The National Association for Stock Car Automobile Racing consists of 12 different racing divisions that hold over 2,000 racing events each year. Stock car racing, like most competitive sports, has strict rules regarding the type of equipment used and the level and type of vehicle enhancements allowed, so NASCAR also has a "competition department" that is constantly reviewing and perfecting both the rules of the sport and the technology and equipment that makes it all happen.

F1 Challenge™

FOR YOU, THE HELMET IS OPTIONAL.

The most realistic racing experience yet for the Sega Saturn. Amazing 3-D graphics and tight control for gameplay so intense you can almost feel your head rattle.

Six action-packed tracks including Monte Carlo, Suzuka and Hockenheim and five top authentic Formula-1 racing teams featuring Ferrari, Benetton, and Williams.

Customizable player settings for greater control of your car's performance including mid-race pit row changes.

"This new racing sim sets the pace for the rest of the field... The game's 3-D graphics match or surpass Sega's previous racing titles..." – *CYBER SPORTS*

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BOx ScoRe

DECATHLETE • SATURN • SEGA SPORTS

Sega's going for the gold, and they have made a great game. You actually feel as though you are taking part in the Olympics. It's not a game where you tap as fast as you can and the fastest person on the trigger finger wins. The game needs more participants, but it is fun to play and it is very addictive. Track and field fans will have a blast with Decathlete.

Todd Mowatt 8.0

This is the best-looking Olympic game I've ever seen. The animations are true-to-life, and different angles of the characters give you realism and dramatic feel of the game. Despite being one of those "tapping games," this actually requires some strategy, especially in the running events. Considering this is a world-wide event, more characters are needed to begin with.

Dindo Perez 8.5

OLYMPIC SUMMER GAMES • PLAYSTATION • EIDOS

The frame rate on some of the events is a little too slow. The button combinations are tough to figure out even with the instruction booklet. The events are a little too hard to execute, and once I got a decent score, I didn't feel like playing it over and over again. If you're a track and field fan, rent this game first. It has an Olympic license, but no medal ceremonies.

Todd Mowatt 6.0

Despite having realistic mechanics on how the characters move in the various events, the frame rate and character appearance do require some attention. A positive side of the game is that you have a lot of competitors to go up against. The game does get difficult in some events, but in the end, it's another one of those "tap the buttons as fast as you can" games.

Dindo Perez 6.5

TRIPLE PLAY GOLD EDITION • GENESIS • EA SPORTS

There's not too much of a difference between this year's version of Triple Play for the Genesis and last year's, except for the title and a few cosmetic changes. If you own a Genesis and don't own last year's version of Triple Play, then step up to the plate and rent it first to see if you like it—then go from there. Other than that, it is still a lot of fun to play.

Todd Mowatt 6.5

You won't see a dramatic change in the look of this game, but when you begin playing, you'll start seeing the new features that this has to offer. You may have noticed the AI has improved. As a stand-alone game, this is a very good baseball game with all of the fixins, but in this 32-Bit age this game falls a bit short. Nonetheless, a great addition for the Genesis.

Dindo Perez 7.5

COLLEGE FOOTBALL USA '97 • GENESIS • EA SPORTS

Avid college football fans who are still into their Sega Genesis should enjoy this game. It's not that much different than last year's version except that the graphics have been updated and a few new plays have been added on both sides of the ball. The gameplay is solid, but I still get the feeling that I played this game more than once before.

Todd Mowatt 7.0

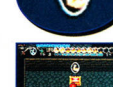
Once again another football game from EA Sports that will continue to fuel the Genesis. If you've been playing the prequel you'll have noticed the not-so-dramatic changes. Looks and sounds are intact as well as other features from before. Of course, AI has been improved to give seasoned players more challenge. It's still a great game to play.

Dindo Perez 7.0

The Third Installment to the Shining Wisdom Contest

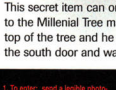
THE CAR AND ITS DINKY ORB

In order to get the car, you need to equip the Blast Orb and almost any other weapon/item. North of the bridge that leads into Odegan there is a bush that needs to be blown. Simply slide, blow or blast into the bush and these stairs will appear. Go down the stairs and the Toydona Car awaits you.

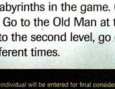


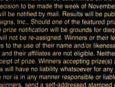
In order to get the Dinky Orb, you must first get the car. Then, go to Grandpa Ebineezer's house with the car equipped and talk to Ebineezer while he's resting. He will take you to the old racetrack out back and make you prove your driving skills. If you complete the three laps in less than 1:30:00 you will receive the Dinky Orb.

ORBS, ORBS AND MORE ORBS



The Gale Orb is one of the most well-hidden items in the game. It can be found only when you are battling Pazort because the Gale Orb is buried in his lair. On the northern edge of his platform, just south of the Dark Titan's large hand, you will find this item by digging repeatedly with the mole law.





To find the Power Orb, you need to go into the wine cellar of Odegan Castle. This room is just east of the room in which you received the Hercules Glove. From this room, equip the slide shoes and the spark orb. Slide into the lightning bolt on the wall and you will be transported to the secret area underneath Odegan Castle. Search around and you will find the chest with the Orb.

The Long Vine of Love

This secret item can only be obtained after you've visited all of the labyrinths in the game. Go to the Millenial Tree making sure you have at least one silver bottle. Go to the Old Man at the top of the tree and he fills your bottle(s) with sap. After this, return to the second level, go out the south door and water the baby vine. You must water it three different times.

1. To enter: send a legible photograph or a video tape showing the final status summary screen (as depicted below) from the Sega Saturn/RPG Shining Wisdom to: Shining Wisdom Contest c/o Working Designs, 18135 Clear Creek Road, Redding, CA 96001. Enter as often as you wish, but only the single fastest time submitted by any one individual will be entered for final consideration. Limit one submission per game save. Duplicate game screens derived from the same save data source submitted by different individuals will be disqualified. Times and finish percentages gained by using software modification codes and/or hardware will be disqualified. Winner may be required to demonstrate skill used to gain winning time in order to claim grand prize. Entries must be received by November 1, 1996. All entries become property of Working Designs, Inc., And will not be acknowledged or returned. Working Designs, Inc. Assumes no responsibility for lost, mutilated, late, ineligible, incomplete, postage due, or misdirected entries. Unclaimed prizes will not be awarded. Limit one prize per family, organization or household. 2. Prizes: One (1) Grand Prize $10,000; Twenty five (25) First Prizes: One year subscription to Electronic Gaming Monthly (Approximate retail value $60). One Hundred (100) Runner-up prizes: Shining Wisdom Poster (Approximate retail value $7). Winners will be determined on the bases of the lastest completion time amongst those entries with the highest completion ratio (as reported on the status screen) as an entry requirement. Judges' decision to be made the week of November 4th, and winner will be notified by November 15th. All judges' decisions are final. Grand prize winner will be notified by Federal Express. Runner-up prize winners will be notified by mail. Results will be published in Electronic Gaming Monthly, as well as on Electronics Boutique's Internet Web page. No substitution of prizes is allowed, except at the discretion of Working Designs, Inc.. Should one of the featured prizes become unavailable. 3. Eligibility: Contest open to residents of United States and Canada only. Non-compliance with the rules of the contest and/or the return of the prize notification will be grounds for disqualification. In the event of a disqualification, the Grand Prize will be awarded to the next available entry. In the event of a disqualification, First and Runner-up prizes will not be re-assigned. Winners or their legal guardians shall sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within 30 days of receipt or forfeit of prize. By acceptance of prize winner(s) agrees to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of Working Designs, Sendai Publishing Group, Inc., SEGA Enterprises, Electronics Boutique and their affiliates are not eligible. Neither Working Designs, Sendai Publishing Group, Inc., SEGA Enterprises, Electronics Boutique are responsible for any damages, taxes, or expenses that consumers might incur as a result of this contest or receipt of prize. Winners accepting prize(s) agree that all prize(s) are awarded on the condition that Working Designs, Inc., Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, SEGA Enterprises, Inc., Electronics Boutique and their agents, representatives, and employees will have no liability whatsoever for any injuries, losses or damages of any kind resulting from acceptance, possession, or use of the prize(s). Winner further acknowledges that Working Designs, Inc., nor any of the contest sponsors has neither made nor is in any manner responsible or liable for any warranty, representation or guarantee expressed or implied, in fact or in law, relative to any prize, including but not limited to its quality, mechanical condition, or fitness. 4. List of Winners: For a list of winners, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Shining Wisdom Winners c/o Working Designs, 18135 Clear Creek Road, Redding, CA 96001. Requests for winners must be received by Dec. 15, 1996. Allow four weeks for delivery of winners list. 5. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state, and local regulations apply. 6. Sponsors: This contest is sponsored by Working Designs, Inc., Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, and Electronics Boutique. SEGA Enterprises, Ltd., is not a sponsor. Shining Wisdom is a trademark of SEGA Enterprises, Ltd., licensed by Working Designs. SEGA Saturn are trademarks of SEGA Enterprises, Ltd. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Electronic Gaming Monthly is a trademark of Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. Electronics Boutique is a registered trademark of Electronics Boutique, Inc.

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Interface gives you the chance to praise, gripe, ask, speculate or simply reflect. *EGM*'s editors will discuss some of today's top issues in the video game industry. In addition, a prize will be awarded to the writer of the best letter submitted for the month. (Note: Please enclose your mailing address in case you win.)

You can reach the editors of *EGM* by writing to:

Interface, Letters to the Editor
1920 Highland Avenue, #222
Lombard, IL 60148

You can also e-mail the editors at 75052.1667@compuserve.com. *EGM* reserves the right to edit all correspondence for space.

Don't forget to check out *EGM*'s articles, exclusive reviews and more on the World Wide Web via the NUKE home page at www.nuke.com.

Letter of the MONTH

WHY CAN'T WE JUST KEEP THE PEACE?

Dear *EGM*,

I am writing to ask a simple question: Why can't we all just get along? Must there always be dissension in the ranks of the video gaming industry? Wouldn't it be great if Nintendo and Sega users were happy with their respective systems without bashing the other great systems? I'm sure that I'm not the only guy who has more than one game system. I have a NES, a Super NES, a Sega Saturn and a Sony PlayStation, and I will get the Nintendo 64 when it arrives in the U.S. There are many good and bad qualities to all of them. It's not likely that one system is superior to the rest in every area. The majority of the mail I read in *EGM* and *EGM²* is concerning whether one system is better than the other. They are all great gaming systems. I say, enjoy what *you* have and don't worry about what the other person has (unless you are planning to buy what the other person has, then learn all you can before making the plunge). Thanks, and keep the reviews coming.

David W. Rigdon
joker@scott.net

Bravo, Mr. Rigdon. We actually stopped printing all of the letters that contained nothing more than mindless chatter about who has the better system. If some of the letters had something new to say, then that's a different story, but we usually get countless letters that say "So and so sucks, this is better, that's all." Some people even had the gall to claim that the Nintendo 64 is the best system ever... before it even came out. It's funny to see company loyalty reach the extent to where people are hallucinating playing games on a system that they have not yet touched. We think it stems back to childhood inner fears. What fears you may ask? Fear of having a lost console. A lot of people do have multiple systems, but many only have one. If they've invested money in one game system and a bunch of games for it, then they'd want to see the system do well and survive the test of longevity. The last thing they would want to see is the system fail, then they'd be out of new games to play. So what do they do? Defend their systems with all of their heart and mouths then put down other systems that pose a competing threat. Some are legitimate complaints, while others are intangible nonsense. A lot of it is also fueled by mudslinging propaganda and advertising.

Much of the rivalry among game players derives from the companies' advertising campaigns that bash each other.

It's too bad people do not realize that competition is healthy and can only benefit us. Imagine the crap we would get for games (not to mention the high prices) if only one system was available and no other company was willing to battle for our dollars. Now we get to sample the best games in the world as each game company tries to outdo the other.

Congratulations Mr. Rigdon. You win an Acclaim Dual Turbo Joystick, but we do need your mailing address. Write us back (ATTN: Dan Hsu) if you want your joysticks.

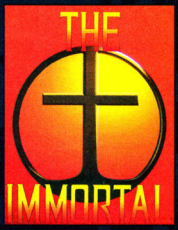
ERFACE

IMMORTAL KOMBAT

Dear *EGM*,

I found this weird flyer in the Sunday (3-31-96) edition of the *Denver Post*. I don't know about you, but it seemed a little too familiar, don't you think?

Jeremy Hinz
Westminster, CO



Top: part of a flyer from the Heritage Christian Center advertising an Easter show that has, "...music, live animals, dancing, flying angels and much more."

Above: the original Mortal Kombat logo. See the similarities in the fonts, color fading and lighting? It seems a little suspicious.

Thanks for the flyer Mr. Hinz. We talked to the Heritage Christian Center to see why the Mortal Kombat logo was used. Richard Davis, their graphic arts director, said that it was an intentional copy of the MK logo. They wanted to make a flyer that would have an aesthetic appeal to worldly people (mainly, mainstream folks who've yet to attend their church). At the time, in 1995, MK was a hot ticket, so the church wanted to capture a bit of its popularity. They made the flyer on their own, without the permission of Williams Entertainment, the original producers of Mortal Kombat. Davis said that their Immortal logo wouldn't be any real threat to Williams since it was for non-profit purposes. He also said that they changed the logo, "enough not to infringe upon any copyrights." Has it been changed enough? The similarities are almost exact. After viewing the flyer, Williams' official word is "no comment." However, their PR department hinted that the subject will probably be dropped with no legal action involved. Perhaps that is in Williams' best interest. Would you want to provoke a church of God? Hell, we wouldn't.

READDRESSING THE SONY PROBLEM

Dear *EGM*,

As a retailer, I must first say that I am pleased with the introduction of Sony as a new player in the video game market. However, a major problem we have seen with the PS is the number of defective units being returned. We see an average defective return rate of close to 20 percent. Our analysis shows that there is a problem but Sony will not acknowledge it. Have you found problems or are we just getting a higher rate of problems? We have spoken with several other retailers—both national and local—and they report the same problems. The bottom line is this: Although PS sales outstrip the Saturn's, a greater percentage of defectives exist. Sony should acknowledge the problem and fix it. It would, after all, be good customer service.

John Butler
Microplay-Douglasville, GA
jcb2006@avana.net

Last month, we printed a letter regarding similar problems. Since that letter, we've received many more like Mr. Butler's. Further investigation showed that a problem does indeed exist with some (usually older) PlayStations. We contacted Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) to see what they had to say about this issue. They claim that only less than 0.1 percent of their consumer calls are in regard to troubleshooting or repair issues. They also say that those troubles are usually caused on the consumers' end, like playing the system 12 hours straight or placing the console on a carpet which affects its ventilation. Mr. Butler tells us that some problems with sound may be caused by a weak spring holding the laser eye. His solution is to insert the disc and turn the machine upside down. So what's Sony's solution? Basically read the manual again and follow the instructions. What we're wondering is, if it's just a matter of consumer carelessness, wouldn't we see this rate of problems for other systems? The Microplay store that's run by Mr. Butler has only seen one defective Sega Saturn in over a year, vs. 20 percent of all PSes. Maybe Saturn owners read their manuals more carefully? Either way, Sony doesn't see this as being as big of an issue as some consumers are making it to be. Small comfort to the consumers, but they can always call 1-800-345-SONY for toll free customer service.

ONE WORLD, ONE PLATFORM

Dear *EGM*,

Wouldn't it be something if Sony and Sega joined forces to develop a common hardware platform like Apple and IBM did for computers? It'd be up to developers to make the best games. I know these companies don't really make money on the hardware anyway. It'd benefit the company and the consumer. They'd be in a better position to take a bigger piece of Nintendo's pie.

Marc Garland McCoy
no e-mail address given

That's what Matsushita is trying to do with Digital Video Disc. Not only do they want DVD to be a uniform format for video games, but they want to see DVD players replace VCRs, laser discs players, audio CD players and CD-ROM drives. It'll be a few years away, if it happens. Besides, both Sony and Sega are doing well right now. No plans are in the works for any kind of merger between Sony and Sega.

PRETTY PICTURES

Dear *EGM*,

Do you think it's fair to the game makers that some of your previews have pictures of the actual game and some have pics of the cinemas, which aren't really part of the game?

Mike Jones
Sanford, Maine

Our Protos section's previews are based on very preliminary work. Therefore, when game companies give us screen shots, it may only be of a couple of scenes, perhaps of the

LETTERS

cinemas, which many times is made before the game is complete. To make matters even more difficult, some new games are looking so good nowadays, that it sometimes becomes difficult to tell what's a cinema shot or what's a game shot.

Games (like Sega's Panzer Dragoon II) are reaching a point of cinema-quality graphics.

NINTENDO 64 NEWS

Dear *EGM*,

Will there be complete compatibility between the Japanese and U.S. versions of the N64?

Erich Moraga
no e-mail address given

The official word of Nintendo: "As of now, that issue has not been decided on yet." The interesting thing is, Nintendo designed the N64 with universal standards in mind, meaning each unit should be identical in architecture. It will be interesting to see how they will handle foreign cartridge lockouts, if any. *EGM* thinks that the N64 will be locked out by either a special chip or tabs and grooves similar to the ones that the Super Famicom and Super NES systems used to prevent one's cartridges to be played on the other's. (If that's the case, then it's nothing that a sharp knife and a pair of pliers won't take care of.) We will get the word out to you as soon as we find out.

Dear *EGM*,

I heard a rumor that Nintendo was only going to release 100,000 N64 units on the official release date of Sept.30. The Babbages employee who told me this said that in order to own an N64 before Christmas, it was necessary to prepurchase a unit. Is this true?

Eric Talley
no e-mail address given

Just as in Japan's original launch, initially only 500,000 N64 units will be released in the United States. That may sound like plenty, but demand is feverish for this 64-Bit machine. Will you have to preorder it to get your hands on one? Probably. In Japan, the first shipment of 300,000 of the 500,000 units sold out *in four hours*.

VOID IN QUEBEC

Dear *EGM*,

I'm starting to have a problem with your so-called contests. They're good, I'll agree, but they would be better if I'm actually able to enter them. I live in Quebec, and I'm void in the majority of your contests. Is this some kind of political deal? I'm starting to think that you don't like Quebecers. If that is so, I think that I will no longer read your magazine.

Eric Boucher
Doom666@gnn.com

Paranoia is a terrible thing Monsieur Boucher. All of our contests are subject to your local laws. Quebec has very strict laws when it comes to contests. It has nothing to do with *EGM*. Maybe you should consider moving, since contests are obviously a big deal to you. Besides, isn't there more to our magazine than just contests, like our great Letters section? By the way, we love Quebec. We even have Quebecers working in our offices, but no way would we let them come to any of the office parties...

YOU WANT SEQUELS?

Dear *EGM*,

Here's a list of some great games that I feel need a sequel before they become completely forgotten: Metal Gear, Ninja Gaiden, ActRaiser, Dragon Warrior, Myst, Aliens vs. Predator... These are some of the forgotten favorites of times past.

John Norman
no e-mail address given

It's a great list, and we agree with most of them. Sorry we couldn't list all of your games, Mr. Norman, but if you do some research, you'll find many of the games you've listed already have sequels out, some even have more than one, like Ninja Gaiden. Other games have sequels that are in the works, like Myst 2 (for the PC first). We all have old faves that we'd like to see follow-ups for (Hey Bullfrog, how's about a new-and-improved Theme Park 2?). You should contact the developers and publishers of these games and tell them you'd like to see more. If enough noise is made, they just might listen. Some companies are even hip enough to listen to your suggestions for improvement.

Often, an old series may be repackaged together, like Ninja Gaiden Trilogy (Super NES).

YOUR NEW PC: THE SEGA SATURN

Dear *EGM*,

I have noticed accessories such as floppy disk drives, keyboards, modems, RAM cartridges and mice coming out for my Saturn. I have heard similar rumors surrounding the PlayStation and N64. Is it true that my systems are doomed to turn into low-cost computers? If so, will this cause them to become involved in the constant upgrade wars computers are known for?

Richard Conlan
Attleboro, MA

If you are the same Richard Conlan that previously complained about not getting your letters printed, then this is your lucky day. (Note: This letter is being printed because it's on a good topic, not because you whined!) Now, most of the computer-type add-ons being made for console systems are not that upgradable. Your mouse, keyboard, disk drives are all set. The Sega Saturn will get a 28.8 bps modem, which is just about as fast a modem as you'll ever need, unless you get yourself an expensive ISDN line. RAM is the only real concern. As games become more advanced, you may see a need for buying RAM expansion cartridges.

EGM LETTER ART

Where Creativity, Your Favorite Video Game and A Stamp Can Make You Immortal!*

Put your creative skills to the test by decking out a plain #10 envelope (the long business type) with your own unique touch. Send your letter art to: *EGM* Letter art, 1920 Highland Ave., Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148.

*Or at least get your name and work in the magazine and win yourself a great controller! (FIRST PRIZE ONLY!)

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Uhduh Nauni
Cache, OK

ASCII Specialized Control Pad

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WINNER!

This month's winner was brought to us by Manu Rendina from Chicago, IL. Great job, Manu. Your prize is on its way—an ASCII Specialized Control Pad for the PlayStation. It features rapid-fire controls for all buttons and slow motion for those intense moments.

DUKE MAY ROCK
BUT RAMSES RULES.

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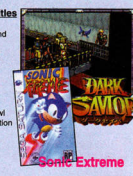

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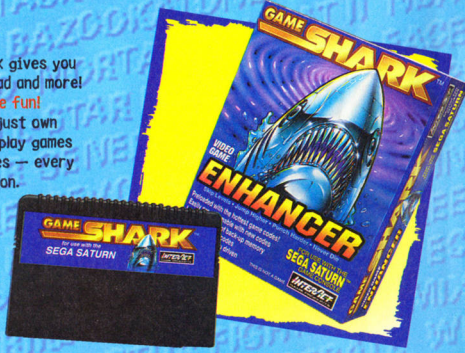

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