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SEGA MAGAZINE

BRITAIN'S ONLY OFFICIAL SEGA MAGAZINE

#18
JUNE'95
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REVIEWED!

ALIEN SOLDIER
BOSS BLASTING BLITZ!

FIRST SATURN SHOTS INSIDE!

Virtua Fighter 2

KILLER MOVES REVEALED!

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

REVIEWED!

STELLAR ASSAULT
SHIP SHOOTING SHENANIGANS

PLUS!

- CHAOTIX
- BRIAN LARA CRICKET
- JUDGE DREDD

- GRAND CHASER
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Virtua Fighter 2

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 62

The original Virtua Fighter has been out in the arcades for over a year now, and to be honest, it's starting to look a little ragged around the edges. Which is why we've put together this guide to its sequel: Virtua Fighter 2! You can be guaranteed that whichever character you play, there's plenty of moves in here that will have you beating the pants off everyone else. And don't forget to turn to our news section NOW for the latest on the forthcoming Saturn version!

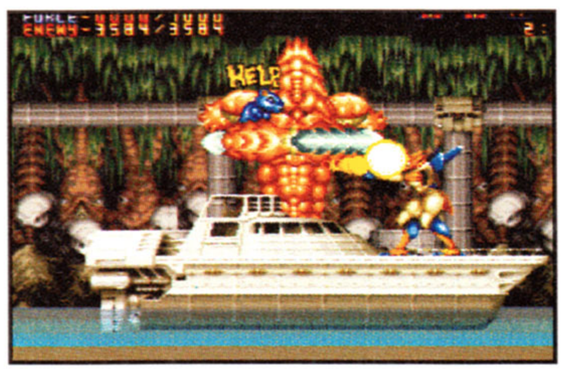
SHOWCASES

MORTAL KOMBAT 3 36

Coming soon to an arcade near you is this superb third installment in the Mortal Kombat series. Naturally, we've already test-played the machine and bring you this spectacular four page report with all the new moves, characters and of course, tons of gore!

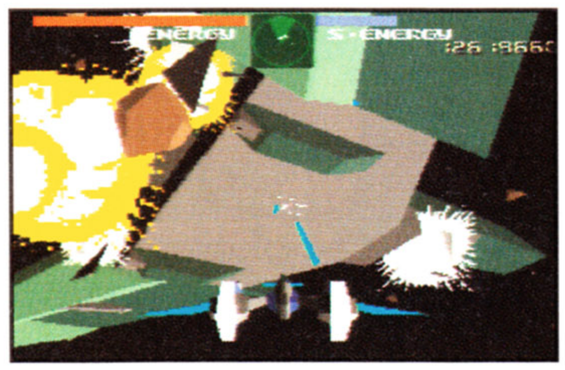
ALIEN SOLDIER 40

If you hadn't already guessed, we think programming house Treasure are great. In fact, they can't seem to do a thing wrong around these parts. But is their latest game up to scratch? We take it apart and give you our verdict.



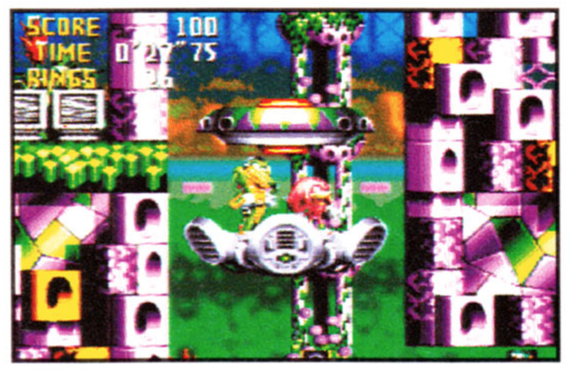
STELLAR ASSAULT 44

Are you one of the thousands of people who are a little disappointed with the arrival of the 32X? Waiting with bated breath for the day someone develops a good game for it? Well, wait no more, because Stellar Assault is set to raise the standard of games on the 32X. It's better than Star Wars Arcade too!



KNUCKLES CHAOTIX 50

Coo, two 32X titles in one month! Anyone would think it was Christmas or something. This is the first Sonic-related malarkey to arrive on the 32X, and comes complete with plenty of sprite scaling, millions of colours, and of course, the usual platform action.

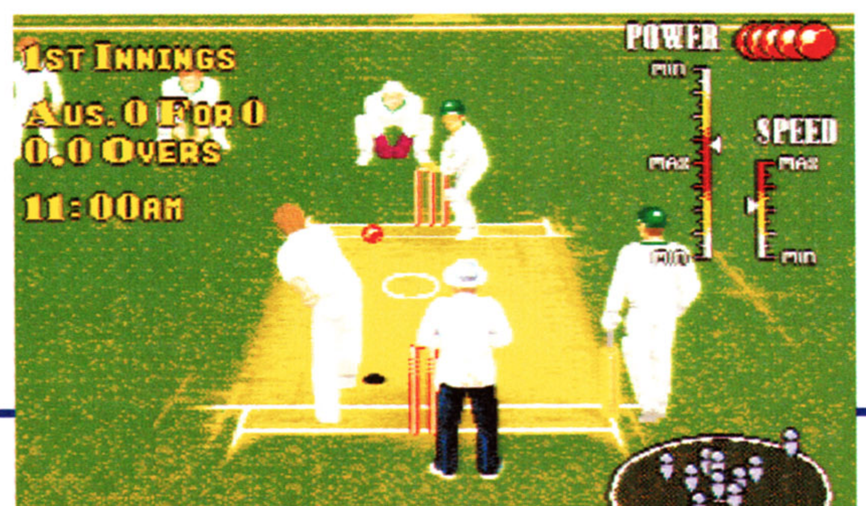


ASTAL 54

After scooping everyone else to the Saturn version of Daytona last month, we continue our exclusive Saturn coverage with a first look at Astal – Sega's latest journey into platforming. Don't expect graphics a la 16bit though, this is completely different from anything you'll have seen before.

GRAND CHASER 58

There's no doubt that the racer is one of the most popular types of game on any machine, so it's obvious that Sega would release more than one for the Saturn. Grand Chaser is still in the early throes of development at the moment, but that hasn't stopped us from bringing you a special report on the game.



SEGA MAGAZINE
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ISSUE 18

EDITOR

SEGA MAGAZINE
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DANGER TO HUMANITY
RICHARD LEADBETTER
DR BRUNDLE LOOKALIKE '95
TOM COX
AEROBICS SUPER-WARRIOR
SAM HICKMAN
A BIT SLACK IN THE AEROBIC SUPER-WARRIOR STAKES
CLAIRE COULTHARD
SHORT HAIR
TOM GUISE

TOKEN SMELLY RAG-TRAMP
RAD AUTOMATIC
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Sega Research and Development department AM2.

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OUR MUM'S, GALAXY CHOCOLATE, DAVID SEAMAN
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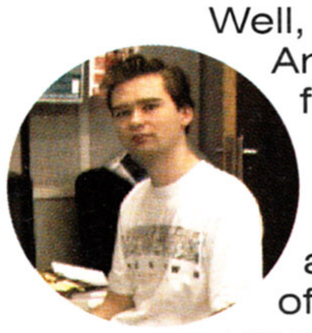
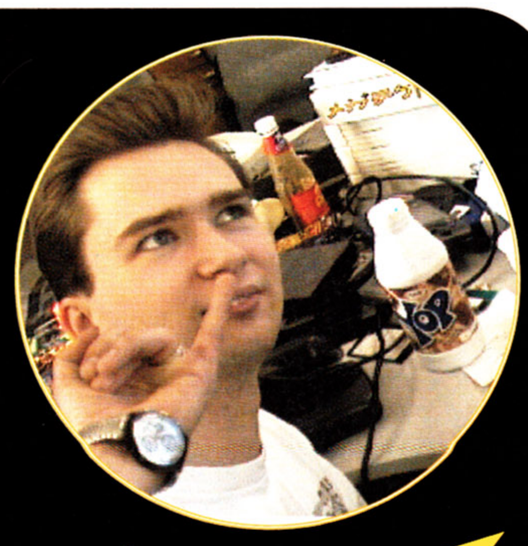
E3 EXCITEMENT



Well, by the time you read this I'm going to be living it up in Los Angeles, where the entire videogames industry is gathering for the first Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) - a vast event which promises to be more exciting than the last two CES shows put together (which, come to think of it, wouldn't be too difficult). Sega and Sony are going head-to-head in the next generation arena, where both the Saturn and the Playstation are getting their official US launches. Nintendo are also taking this opportunity to unveil their Ultra 64 system, with officials saying that this is the show "where the vapourware becomes reality". Interesting...
Well, whoever's system is the best technically really doesn't matter - it's down to the games and E3 promises to be excellent in this regard with tons of new Saturn goodies being revealed (some you'll see in this issue of the magazine). Hopefully we'll get to see preliminary work on 32X Virtua Fighter and Wing War as well - two quality titles that could make or break the new system. The big Sega Christmas game, X-Perts, should also be the cause of much excitement. A full report follows next month.
RICH LEADBETTER

Yet another fun-packed day in the SEGA MAG offices



BEAVER AND BUMHEAD

Heh heh heh. What's up Bett-head?
Huh huh. You said "up". That's you. It's your mum.
Heh heh. No, I think you, like, said that last month. But no, I think it was you.
Huh huh. Huh huh.
Shut up, dill-weed! How come you don't, like, make some new jokes or something?
Okay, fartbreath. Ah...ur...um... okay, here's one. Um... you're, like, Spender or something.
Heh heh. That's pretty funny Bett-head. Heh heh.
Huh huh. No, I think it was you. Huh huh.
[Going hometime bell rings. Beavis commits suicide]

FAT KID GARRY'S WORLD OF GAMES

Top of the morning, fat fans, and welcome to my amazing new column! It's the biggest thing to hit games since me! Although, unlike me, it hasn't got a problem with its glands. And I have right. Anyhow, pie-pokes, this month I'm going to be taking a look at the new platform game Jelly Boy. I must say I'm very disappointed. I expected a proper lardy hero taking the escalator up to all the platforms and mopping his red sweaty head with a hanky, but it's just some pink bouncy thing. What's more there were no pies, cream cakes, sticky buns, bars of chocolate or buckets of chicken fat as power-ups. Obese is best!
Anyway, after that my heart rate's reaching about 210 as my fat-saturated arteries try desperately to pump blood around my contorting bloated body, so I'm going to go and take my diet pills.
Catch you in the pie shop,
Gar.

IAL

MAIL ORDER FURORE

Peter Morton's letter in last month's SEGA MAGAZINE stirred up a veritable hornet's nest of mail order-related comment. After we'd put together this month's letters pages, we recieved this sage advice from one of our advertisers. If you're interested in mail order, read on...

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
In reply to Peter Morton's letter regarding the problems he had with his 32X and Special Reserve mail order club, I would like to clear up a few points for him and anybody else with similar problems.
Firstly, a lot of Megadrive I units are incompatible with the 32X unit and they will not work together without some adjustment, Very few 32X units have been found to be faulty so far. The easiest way to get round this problem is to send the Megadrive (not the 32X) straight back to Sega who adjust it free of charge. To obtain the address, simply ring Sega on 0171 373 3000.
Secondly, I am sorry to hear of the trouble Peter had. However, I feel it is important to stress that not all mail order companies take such an appalling attitude to customer service. At Gameplay, for example, we operate a freepost address for faulty goods so that returning things to us does not cost a penny. We have had almost a hundred cases of incompatible Megadrives and have been advising our customers to return their Megadrives to Sega since December. I cannot understand why Special Reserve have not been doing the same thing.
Mail order can be very useful way of buying games for most people due to the huge savings on normal high street prices, but it is always important to check on the company's customer service policy before buying anything. Here are a few pointers to help:

1 Always check that the item you want is in stock and that the price has not changed. Do not order anything until the company can give you a definite date for delivery.
2 Check the company returns policy. Sending faulty items back can become expensive and can take a long time. Make sure that the postage will be paid by the company and that any problems willl be dealt with quickly. You should not have to wait longer than a week for replacement goods.
3 Wherever possible, pay by credit card. Anything bought with a credit card is insured against fraud by your bank or card issuer. Do not send money to companies that do not offer a credit card facility as this is sometimes a sign that they are not legitimate. If you cannot pay by card, send a cheque or postal orders. Try to avoid using cash, but if this is the only way you can pay, make sure you send the money in a registered envelope which you can get from the post office.

I will emphasise again that buying mail order should have many advantages. It's true that some mail order companies are not very helpful, but following the guidelines above should help you to avoid the problems that Peter Morton had. Other companies work very hard at providing the best possible choice, quality and service, and can save you a lot of money at the same time. Buying from a good mail order company is as good as buying from the high street – even easier because you don't even need to get out of your chair to do it
If anyone has any more queries about mail order, our staff would be happy to help you on (01924) 473157. Happy gaming!
Dylan Wilk,
Managing Director, Gameplay.

RICH

I am Leadbetter. Hear me roar. Ha ha, for too long have you impudent mortals mocked my plans! They dared call me mad when I said I could run a nuclear missile base with only Spicy Mega Monster Munch as a power source! Well, you'll all learn soon enough you dogs. When the Jolly Richard flies on all the world's flagpoles, you'll be sorry. Grarrrh!

SAM.

Sam, in her capacity as Dep Ed, has to assume a number of responsibilities in Rich's place. She's also the one charged by top EMAP agents to organise the assassination of her editor should he prove "difficult". Naturally this is a job Sam revels in, and, given the recent spiral of madness Ricky seems to be descending into, her idea about the ritual live embalming may yet see the light of day.

RAD

Someone somewhere knows something they shouldn't. Imagine Rad's surprise to check his mail one day, only to discover a small potato in his post box. Is this a hint? Are extortionate letters to follow? Is this the first wave of an Earth colonisation project? Or is it just a Little Rad puppet thoughtfully left by Tom Guise? Perhaps that's what happened to his hair.

TOMMY G

Our Tommy had a big adventure this month when he travelled all the way to Paris – without his mummy. She did insist, though, that he take a guardian with him to help him wih his buttons. So Tom took Little Tommy, his puppet. "Little Tommy's my best friend," stated Tom, correctly for once. "We went everywhere together and he taught me French and we went up in a balloon and met the professor and he gave me horsey rides." gushed G-boy further. "Jem appeal Ton Goose!".

CLAIRE

Easter. A time of hell for waistline-obssessed designer Claire. Our plucky crayon-pusher fought a constant battle with the bulge as a string of admirers bombarded her with chocolate eggs. Still, the one Monster Munch flavoured egg she did get was gratefully recieved. You should have seen the way she ate it. It was like a python swallowing unborn ostriches.

FOXY COXY

Or Poxy Coxy as he's been known around the SEGA MAG offices since his unfortunate embarassing facial skin dysfunction. We promised we wouldn't tell anyone about it, but we were lying. It was hideous. He looked like some kind of half-digested kebab wrenched from the acid stomach of a Bile Shark. We kept having to send him home because we couldn't bear to look at him any longer. Luckily we've doctored his picture using computer technology, so he just looks like an ugly moron. Ha ha.

VIRTUA FIGHTER REVEALED!

Dateline: March 24, 1995. Sega of Japan hosted a press conference to reveal their plans for Sega Saturn software for the remainder of the year. And to ram home the point that Saturn is the premiere 32-bit home system, head of AM2 Research, Yu Suzuki, unveiled the first preliminary work on the Saturn conversion of Virtua Fighter 2. And it looks stunning...

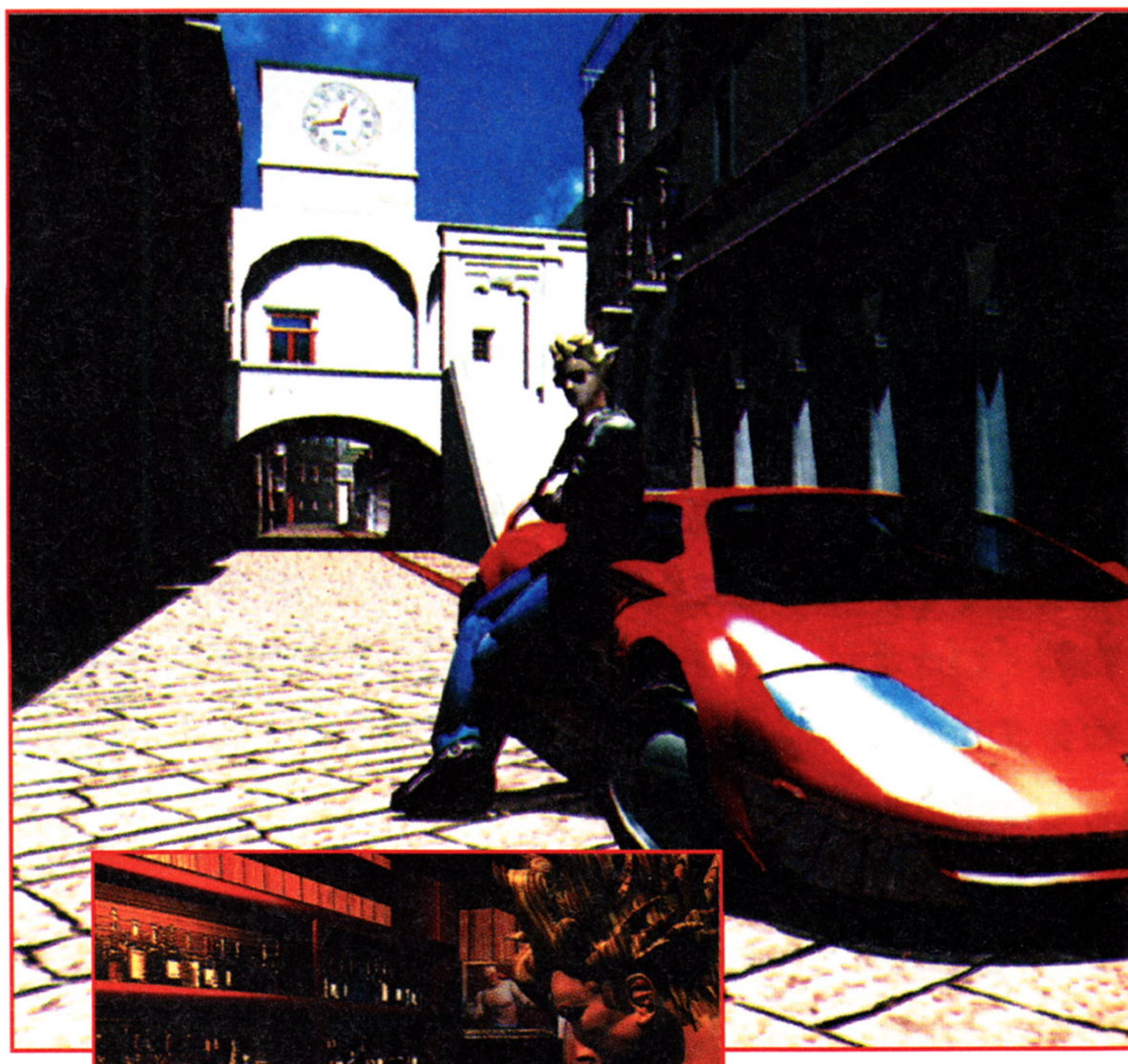
First of all, let's just stress that this is really early development work, designed to showcase a new operating system designed by AM2 Research. During development of Virtua Fighter, the programmers experienced a great deal of hardship coding for the technically complex machine. Therefore, AM2 initiated a project to develop a set of routines that would push the Saturn to its limits - and at the same time, make the machine easier to program.

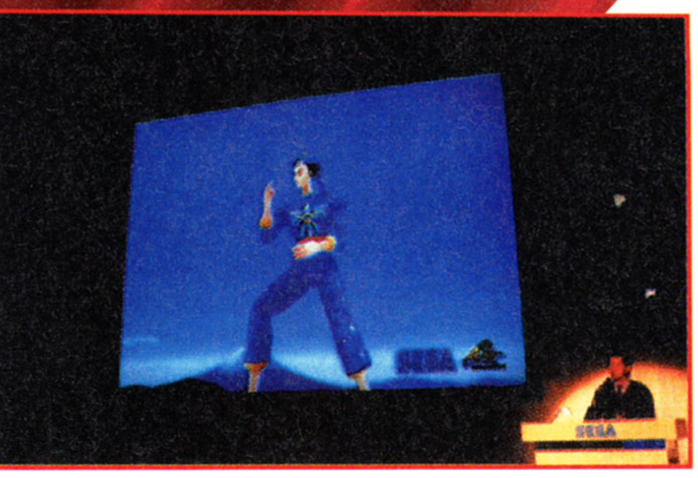
The big news at the press conference was definitely about the sheer smoothness of the Virtua Fighter 2 demo. It moves twice as fast as the original Virtua Fighter, clocking in at an incredibly impressive 60 frames a second - that's just as smooth as Tekken on the Playstation and indeed the original Model Two Virtua Fighter 2 coin-op.

Chief programmer at AM2, Keiji Okayasu outlined his initial ideas about the game several weeks before work begun, "We are thinking of changing the method which was used on Virtua Fighter 1 and if we can do this, I think we will be able to operate the characters at one interrupt [sixty frames a second] and also display polygons perfectly. Moreover, if we change everything from square one, this version will feature full texturing - and that's one point in favour of doing this. The point is, if we can show a level of design identical to the characters in the arcade version, even if there are very few polygons, it will be justified and we are continuing to develop in that direction. First we are going to achieve one interrupt movement."

From the look of the demo unveiled by Yu Suzuki, AM2 have succeeded in making the graphics move as smoothly as the coin-op and the result astounded the assembled delegates at the press conference - "There was no doubt that this Pai was moved by Saturn." wrote Famitsu Express - the foremost videogames journal in Japan, "Although only one character was on-screen at a time, the movements were really smooth. As the pictures were projected onto the giant screen in the venue, everyone held their breath and stared."

▲ **This is it: the first shot of Virtua Fighter 2 running under the new AM2 3D operating system.**





▲ **Yu Suzuki presents Saturn Virtua Fighter 2 at a recent conference.**

▲ **The Saturn's 3D library produced this CinePak demo.**

2

AM2 OS: MORE DETAILS

At the press conference, Yu Suzuki himself was on hand to field questions from the Japanese press. "The demo with Pai was done to check the functions of the new operating system," reveals Mr Suzuki. "To put it more concretely, it was done to use the 3D library within the new operating system and to see what it could do. We tested whether it was possible to move Virtua Fighter 2 at a speed of 60 frames a second and through the demo we could prove it was possible to achieve using the new operating system."

Mr Suzuki continued, "When Saturn was used previously, it was necessary to perform various troublesome operations, but with the new system we can forget about these. Such programs are already in use and if we pull them out of the library completely, it's simple to present it in 3D as well."

Another aspect of the conference concerned the Saturn's untapped potential. Unlike the Playstation, the Saturn is loaded down with extra processors which coders (even AM2) haven't exploited up until now. The new operating system changes all that. "Saturn differs from Playstation in that it uses distributed processing," explains Mr Suzuki. "For example, even using three as yet unused DSPs wouldn't interfere with the functioning of the other parts. The capacity of the machine is simply enhanced... So, we still do not know to what extent Saturn can perform if it were using all DSPs."

The Virtua Fighter 2 demo was only a taster of the capacity of the operating system and was adapted to make as big an impact as possible at the press conference's gargantuan wall. "At the moment, the characters themselves use a high resolution mode and that's higher than for normal home use. With the demo, we only dropped the background to normal and we were able to use a method to separate the two on the same screen. Of course, this is what can be achieved by using the existing twin CPU and VDP1, but if we were to use VDP2 which we haven't use as yet, and a different DSP, we could speed up the program and increase performance even more."

Basically, what this means is that even though the Virtua Fighter 2 demo ran at 60 frames a second, it's still well within the Saturn's capabilities and there's plenty of processing power left using the video VDP chips to handle yet more detail.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 STRATEGY

The new AM2 operating system helps out Keiji Okayasu's team immensely, as it means that they already have the hard graphics programming out of the way and they can concentrate more on the gameplay.

"In any case, the final problem will be the amount of data. Compared to Virtua Fighter 1, there is a huge increase in the number of available techniques. Therefore, first of all we have to solve that problem, and then begin to move ahead in earnest."

Since the press conference, work on VF2 has continued and AM2 now have two fully textured characters on-screen at once. "We still have many things left to do," says Yu Suzuki, "such as how to compress and input around 2,000 fighting techniques and how to incorporate hit recognition... We may have to change the processing of the background a little, but I am confident that this time we will be more satisfied with the results of our conversion than on our first attempt [Virtua Fighter 1]. To see what we are aiming at, you should look at the Pai demo."

FULL-ON FULL-MOTION VIDEO

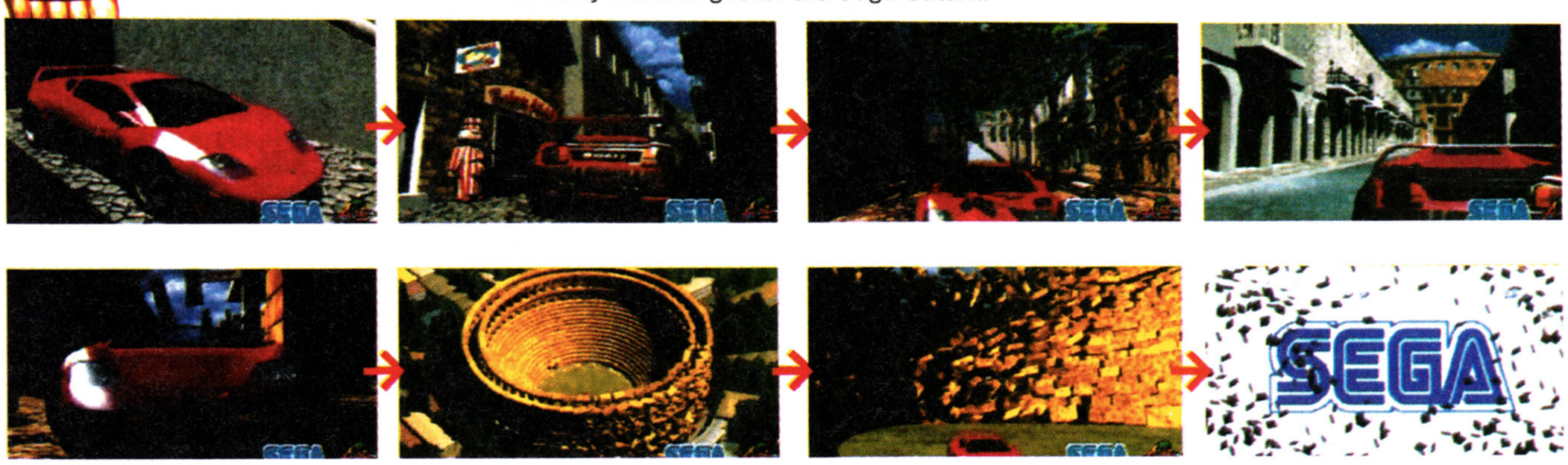
The new operating system developed by AM2 includes many tools that aren't 3D in nature, including an all-new CinePak technique that produces stunning-looking FMV running at 30 frames a second. These images are thought to be similar to the quality of the forthcoming Model Three coin-op, Virtua Fighter 3. "The red car computer graphics demo in the Saturn CinePak is something you should take note of as it too was originally done on the Saturn 3D graphics library," reveals Mr Suzuki. "At first it looks like a composite of real images and just shows what we can do using these tools."

▲ **Jacky's Saturn-rendered sports vehicle.**

THE BOTTOM LINE: WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?

There are bound to be some differences between the Sega Saturn version and coin-op, but it should move and play exactly the same.

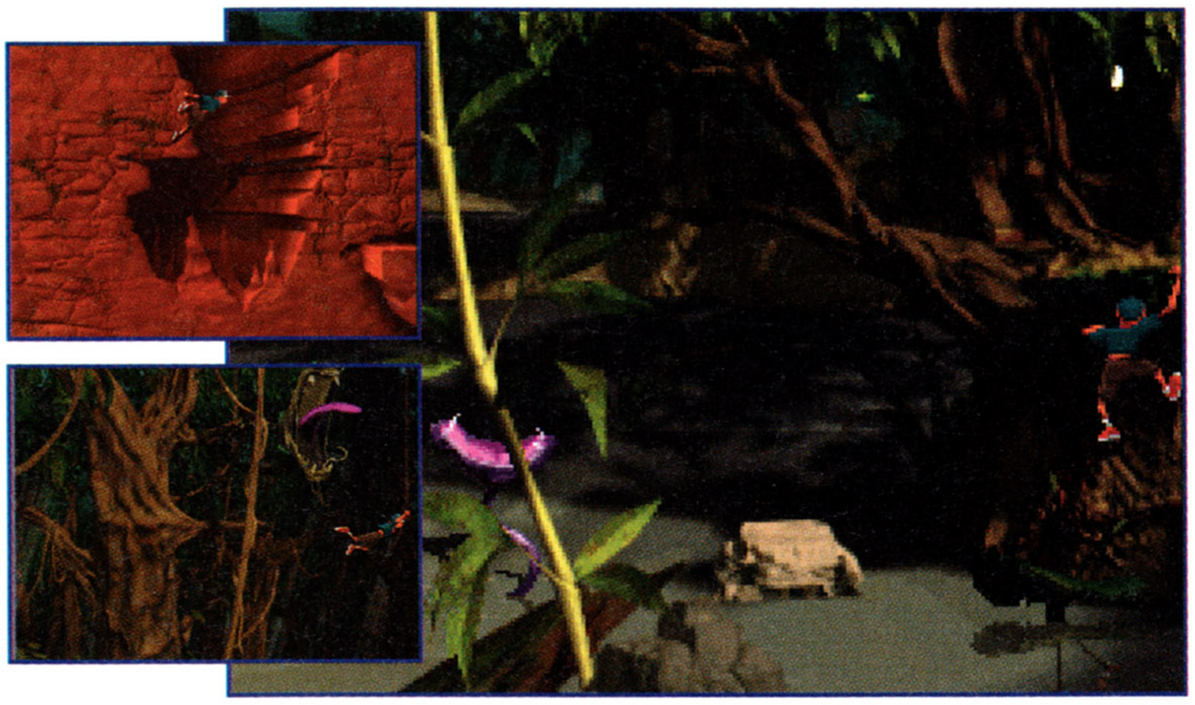
AM2 Research are rightly proud of the new operating system they've developed for Sega Saturn. By utilising something near the full potential of the Saturn's assorted processors combined with new software, Sega of Japan have proved that they now have the technical know-how to beat Playstation software. Couple that with AM2's unparalleled gameplay experience and it must be said that the future certainly looks bright for the Sega Saturn.



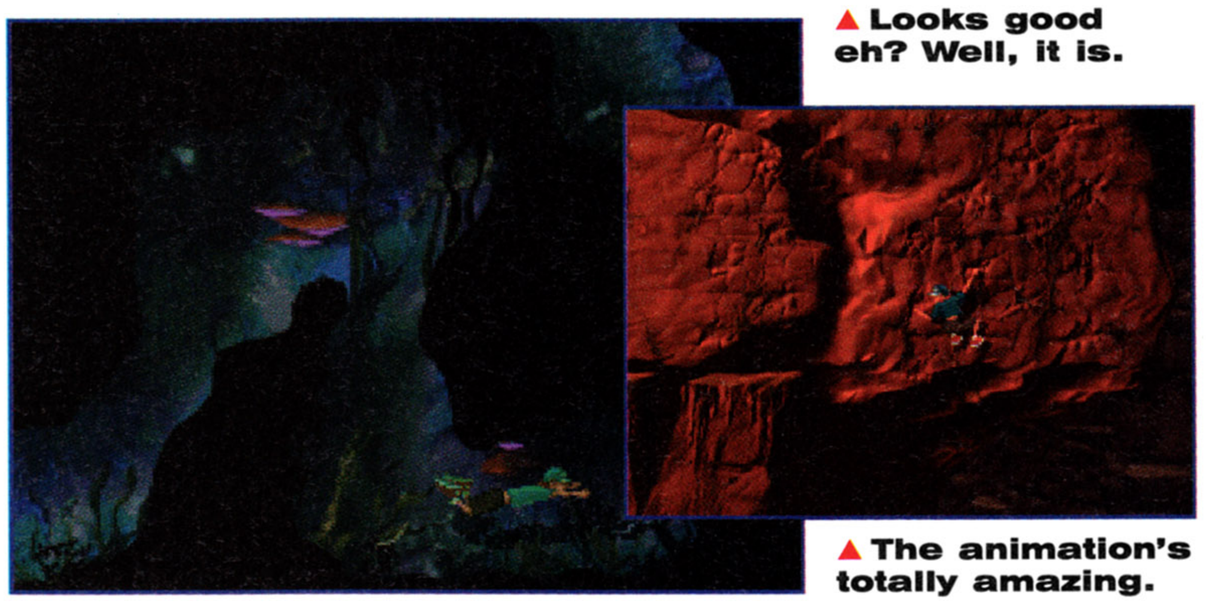
▲ **A sequence of action from a graphics demo created by AM2 Research's Mister Obatu. After supping some ale, Jacky takes to the streets in his incredible sports car. As he drives past the Virtua coliseum, it dissolves in a mass of polygons to reveal the Sega logo.**

OPEN YOUR HEART

Heard of the term "interactive movie"?
Ever since movie images have become semi-possible on games machines, people have been trying to create the ultimate fusion between games and film, with most failing miserably. But Amazing Studios are currently working on changing the face of interactive movies with their new title Heart of Darkness – due for release on Saturn at the end of this year. In fact, they've even changed the genre's name to "interactive action" to show that they're more oriented to creating games with action rather than purely pressing buttons at relevant moments.
The game is initially due for release on the PC, and screenshots shown so far have caused a wave of amazement among PC hacks. In fact, demos of the game are more akin with an animated film than anything seen on a console before. Plus there's music from the creators of the stunning Big Blue soundtrack.
The basic story sees a young boy heartbroken after witnessing his pet dog disappear into a dark void. he follows the dog into the void and from thereon the young lad is completely alone, left to face up to his fear of the dark. An exciting adventure ensues...
The screenshots shown on this page are early development shots of the PC version, but a pixel-perfect conversion will be created for the Saturn. Expect to see loads more coverage on this one just as soon as we can get hold of it.



▲ Looks good eh? Well, it is.

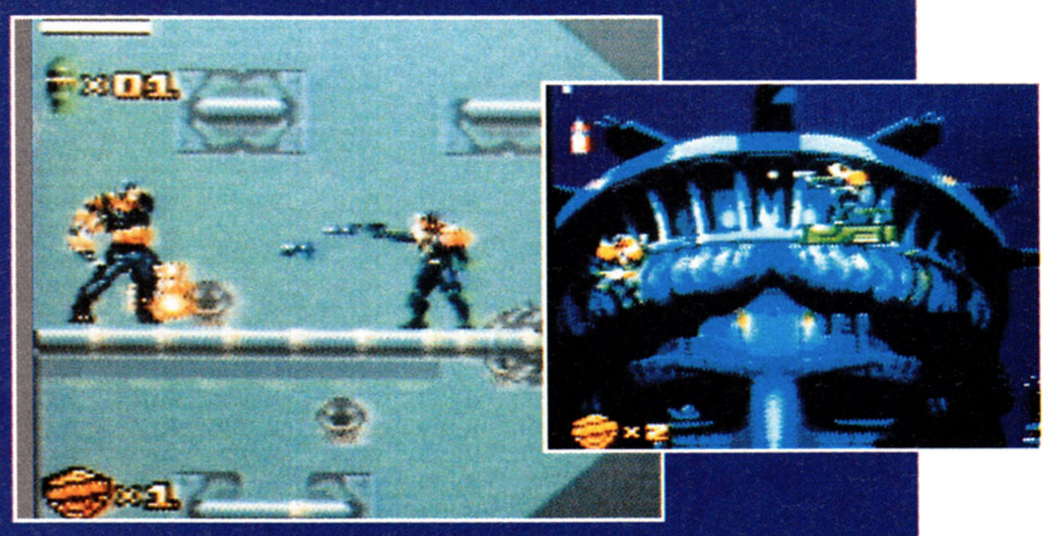


▲ The animation's totally amazing.

JUDGE

GAME GEAR: YOU HAVE BEEN JUDGED...

The Megadrive and 32X aren't the only machines to be privileged with an appearance from Judge Dredd this summer.
Doom-bringer Joe Dredd is also set to be converted to the Game Gear too, and is currently scheduled for a July release. The game takes much of its inspiration from the game already seen on the Megadrive, which, if you can't guess, means that platform antics abound. But don't worry, there haven't been many titles like this on the Game Gear. Well, not for a while anyway. In the meantime, here's some early screenshots for you to have a gander at.



▲ Dredd. In colour, this time.

COMPO

Now, we all know that Knuckles is a bit of a feisty chap at the best of times, but there is one thing that's guaranteed to drive him completely loopy.
No, it's not the thought of having to spend Sunday afternoon drinking tea with Dr Robotnik, it's smoking. Yep, that's right, 'orrible, filthy, smelly disgusting cigarettes. In fact, in a recent interview, Knuckles even went as far to say " I would never kiss an Echidna who had been smoking. It tastes like the bottom of dustbins". And he should know.
But all this banter about how bad cigarettes are isn't much good if Knuckles is just going to sit on his bum all day waiting for badniks to strike one up. So instead, he's spearheading a campaign to discourage teenagers from smoking. He'll be appearing on 50,000 carts over the summer and has made several personal appearances across the country too (he may even be lurking in your school common room this very minute actually, so be warned, smoking fools). Plus to celebrate being healthy and NOT smoking, he's giving away three 32Xs and three copies of Doom. All you have to do is answer his very simple question:

Q Smoking is:

a) Big
b) Clever
c) Very bad and can cause lung cancer plus loads of other nasty diseases in later life.

Pop your answer on a postcard and send it to Smoking? Pah! You make me sick, SEGA MAGAZINE, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by June 20th. Naturally, this competition is not open to anyone who smokes. Unless they happen to star in The Mask.

You can get to level 26. But can you get to San Francisco?

Fancy a trip to the final of the **WORLD GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS** in San Francisco? For the second year running, you frenetic finger-freaks can register at any **BLOCKBUSTER** Video Store from June 1 to take part in the in-store knockout rounds. You'll tackle Sega NBA Jam Tournament Edition and Nintendo Donkey Kong Country. So if you think your digits can do the do, register now, and you could jiggle your joystick all the way to San Francisco.

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BLOCKBUSTER WORLD VIDEO GAME CHAMPIONSHIP II

VIRTUA COP: COMING TO SATURN

At the same time as Yu Suzuki showed off preliminary work on Virtua Fighter 2, he also announced that a conversion of Virtua Cop was now being prepared for the Saturn, due in the last quarter of this year in Japan.

In a recent interview, chief programmer Keiji Okayasu revealed more details. "We started the basic research after we had finished Saturn Virtua Fighter, and during that time we worked with the sub-chief of the arcade version of Virtua Cop, so it should turn out to be a good piece of work."

Just like Virtua Fighter 2, early demos exist at the moment, but no-one outside of AM2's offices has seen anything.

However, because of the use of the new AM2 operating system (see the lead news story), Mister Okayasu reckons that the Saturn version should be as fast as the arcade game.

"Since the arcade version of Virtua Cop moves at 2 interrupts (one frame every 30th of a second - as smooth as Virtua Fighter), I think it will be easier to convert than Virtua Fighter 2."

A lot of confusion is also evident at Sega regarding the near-essential light guns that are going to have to be produced for VC. At the moment, the specs and shape of the peripheral are still unknown, even by AM2.

As soon as Sega of Japan release any more details, rest assured, we'll be printing them.

MEGA CD 32X

FAHRENHEIT: FIRST 32X CD SHOTS

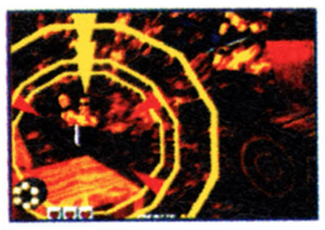
Well, it's been exactly a year since Sega first announced Fahrenheit for the Megadrive 32X CD, but absolutely nothing has come to light yet... apart from these fine screenshots. We were promised VHS quality FMV, but it looks as though that might have been asking a bit too much. Still, there's no doubting that the visuals are far superior to the Mega-CD version. See for yourself by checking out these shots of the fire-fighting "TruVideo" title...

▲ **A trio of super-exciting Fahrenheit shots, as seen on the Sega Internet site.**

THE REAL THING

Judging by amount of phone calls we've been receiving in the last couple of weeks, it seems as if people are trembling with excitement at the thought of playing Theme Park.

We've been informed by Bullfrog that the game will be out in the shops on May 21st, and will cost £44.99. Plus, they have an extra special treat in store for everyone who buys the game. In association with Alton Towers, Bullfrog are inserting one free child's ticket to Alton Towers inside every game. Pretty good, eh? The offer runs until 27th October (Alton Towers probably closes for winter after that date) and was devised in the hope that everyone who buys the game will be inspired by a real, successful theme park.



▲ Virtua Cop: rather smart.

▲ Some arcade Virtua Cop.

▲ The Saturn game should boast extra levels.

ELITE UPDATE

In last month's Q+A, we said that development on the Megadrive version of Elite had come to a stand-still.

This isn't strictly true, as over the last month, the developers of the game have been on the 'phone to tell us the real story. Basically, Sony were due to publish the product, but dropped out at the last moment. Despite this horrendous set-back, the developers are continuing with the game and are even programming a Megadrive 32X version. Indeed, at the moment, the plan is to release a dual-format cartridge which would be compatible with both the 16-bit system and the 32X. Much of the code would be identical, but extra data and programming would come into play with the upgrade attached.

The 16-bit version is impressive enough, with some super-swift polygons and light-sourcing. The 32X version is better still, with a far busier display featuring many more objects and, of course, lashings of lovely texture mapping..

Elite certainly sounds as though it has huge amounts of potential, but at the moment, the project still lacks a publisher. Surely some big company out there is after some quality 16/32-bit software?

BRAINDEAD 13

Just as this issue of SEGA MAGAZINE closed, we received news of a new Saturn title being developed by those fellows over at Readysoft.

The name of the game is extremely strange indeed: Braindead 13. The title's described as "a bizarre combination of comedy, horror, action and adventure". It's also a "classically animated, fully interactive game unlike anything you'll ever play".

Well, it certainly looked amazing in the demo we saw, although it did bear some resemblance to other Readysoft products Dragon's Lair and Space Ace.

However, distributors Empire are promising far more interactivity in this product, and they reckon that the gameplay in this title will more than match up to the excellent visuals.

We'll have more news and some rather fine screenshots in a coming issue of this fine magazine.

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PREVIEW

MEGA DRIVE

16 MEG

BY
US GOLD

RELEASE;
JUNE

PREVIEW

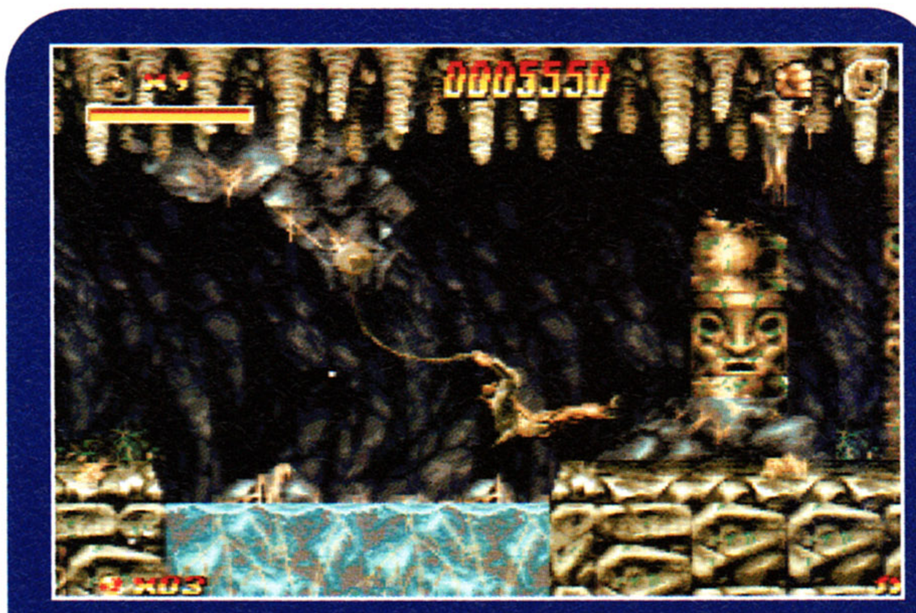
PREVIEW

INDIANA

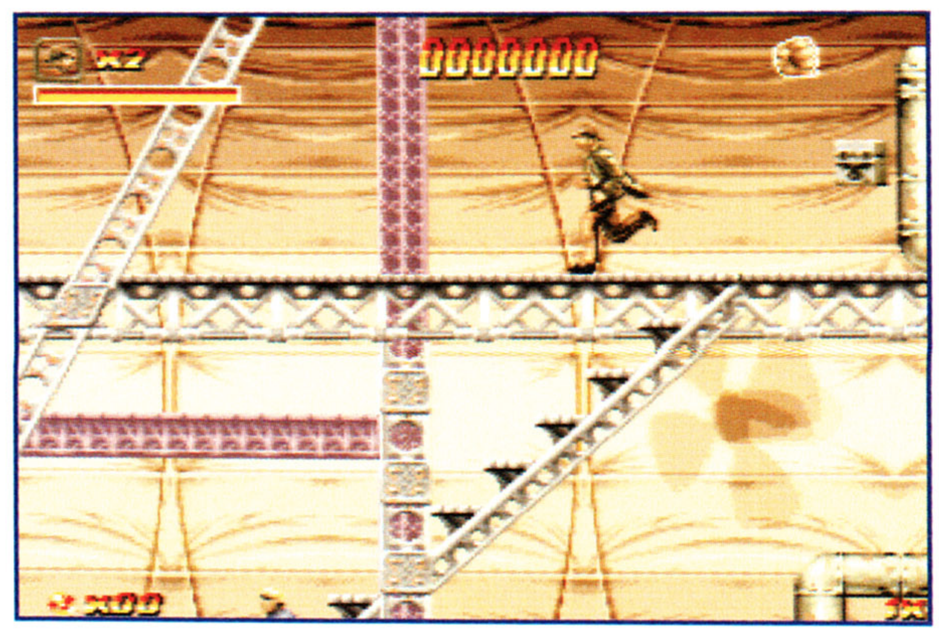
You can't beat a bit of Indy, as Jim Bowen might say. But hasn't. Well, not since he saw Temple Of Doom at the cinema anyway. Never fear though, because soon he'll have more than enough reason to loose off his popular catchphrase thanks to Indiana Jones' Greatest Adventures, a Megadrive game based around the smash-hit Indy movies.

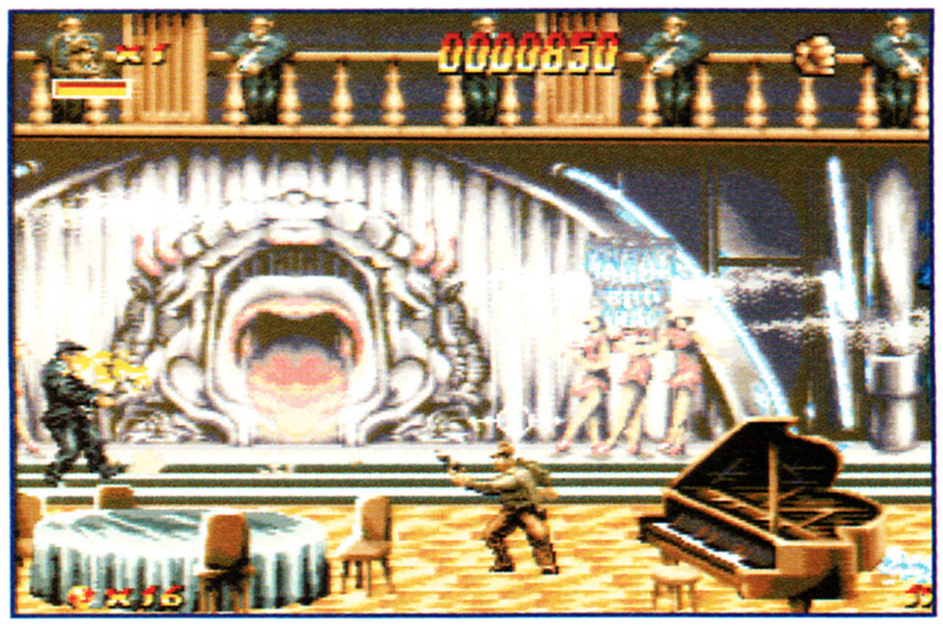
Only the smash-hit movies, mind. Don't go expecting to see any escapades from the Young Indy TV series, the Indiana Jones choose-your-own-adventure books, or the read-along Indiana Jones tape-and-book series. Only the greatest adventures go into Indiana Jones' Greatest Adventures. Still that's just fine by us, because, being the action packed blockbusters that they are, the movies have more than enough material in them to provide a superb platformer. And indeed, it seems all the scenes you'd expect from an Indiana Jones game are here. Rolling boulder chase? Check! Snake-filled Well of Souls? Check! Battle on rickety rope-bridge? Check! Fight inside Zeppelin? Check! There are even some 3D stages, such as the dinghy ride down the snowy slopes of Tibet, the biplane dog-fight from the Last Crusade and, of course, the legendary minecart chase from the Temple Of Doom. Well, all those movie scenes are in there, but is it a superb platformer? Find out in next month's full SEGA MAGAZINE review.

SEGA



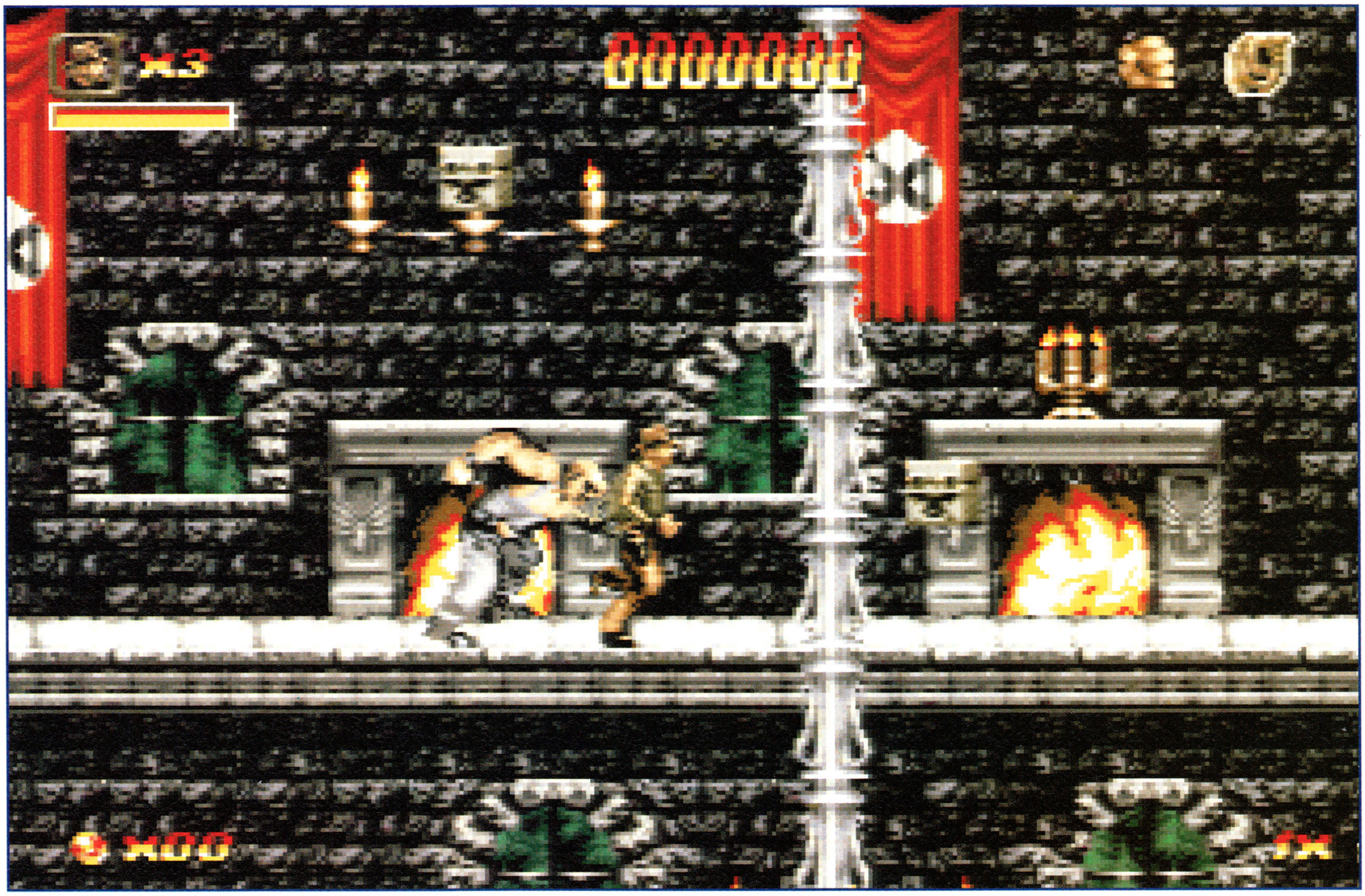
▲ Why, it could be a clip from the movies.



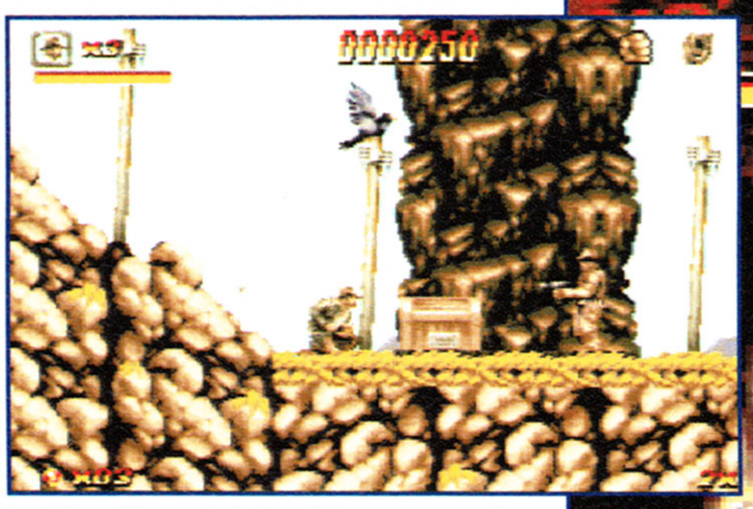


JONES

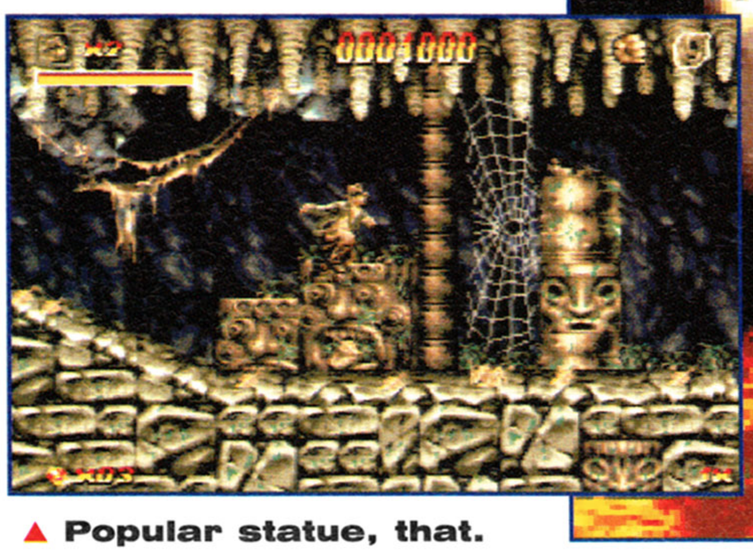
GREATEST ADVENTURES



▲ My favourite scene from the movies, this.



▲ That's right, it's a crate.



▲ Popular statue, that.

PREVIEW

MEGA DRIVE

8 MEG

BY SEGA

RELEASE: SEPTEMBER

PREVIEW

THE OOZE

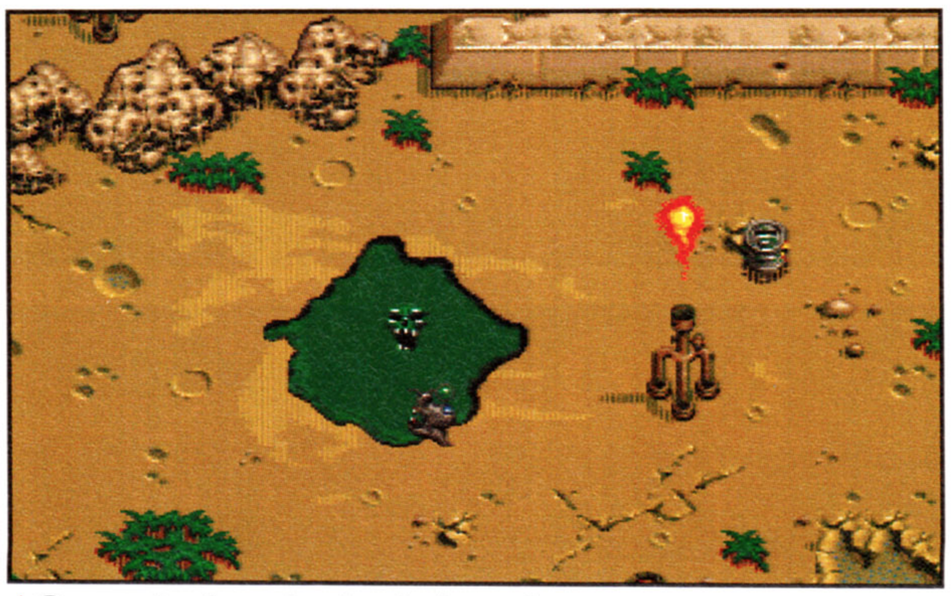
Ever owned a pod of excellent worm slime? Then you'll know how much fun you can have with it – placing it on top of the strawberries in the fridge, under your sister's pillow and in Granny's furry boots. But, like most childhood toys, it didn't last very long. It would either dry up into a congealed ball, or get mixed up with dog hair and refuse to stick to anything. But Sega have something lined up to beat the pants off all those cruddy toys. And it will probably scare your sister senseless too.

The Ooze is being developed by Sega of America. It's sticky, it's slimy, it's green and it absorbs anything that falls into its path. And every time it absorbs something, it gains power and surface area. Kind of like the blob. But why does it do it? Well, unfortunately, that hasn't been revealed to us yet, but it's probably got something to do with radioactive rays and revenge. And who are we to complain anyway, because at least this isn't another tired baggy-pants-platformer. In fact, it's probably one of the most original ideas Sega have come up with in ages.

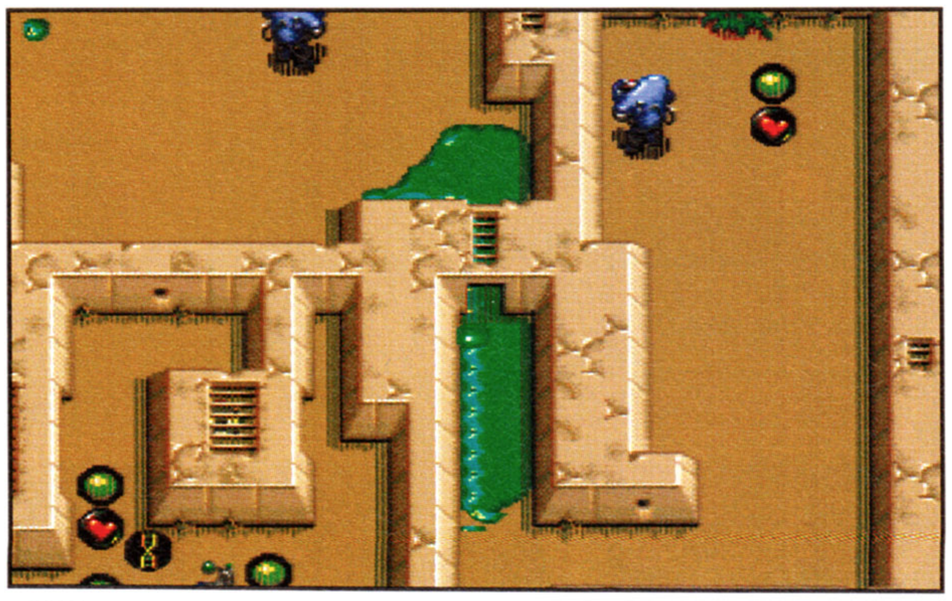
Taking an overhead view, the ooze must blob his way around various levels, absorbing enemies and generally growing into gigantic proportions. But, just to stop him from getting out of hand, enemies can shoot chunks out of him. And unless he picks up all the bits pretty sharpish, his powers will decrease rapidly. Until he's a mere speck of snot.

Anyway, contrary to previous information, the Ooze won't be released until September. Which means we can't say "look out for the review next month". So, here's a load of screenshots instead.

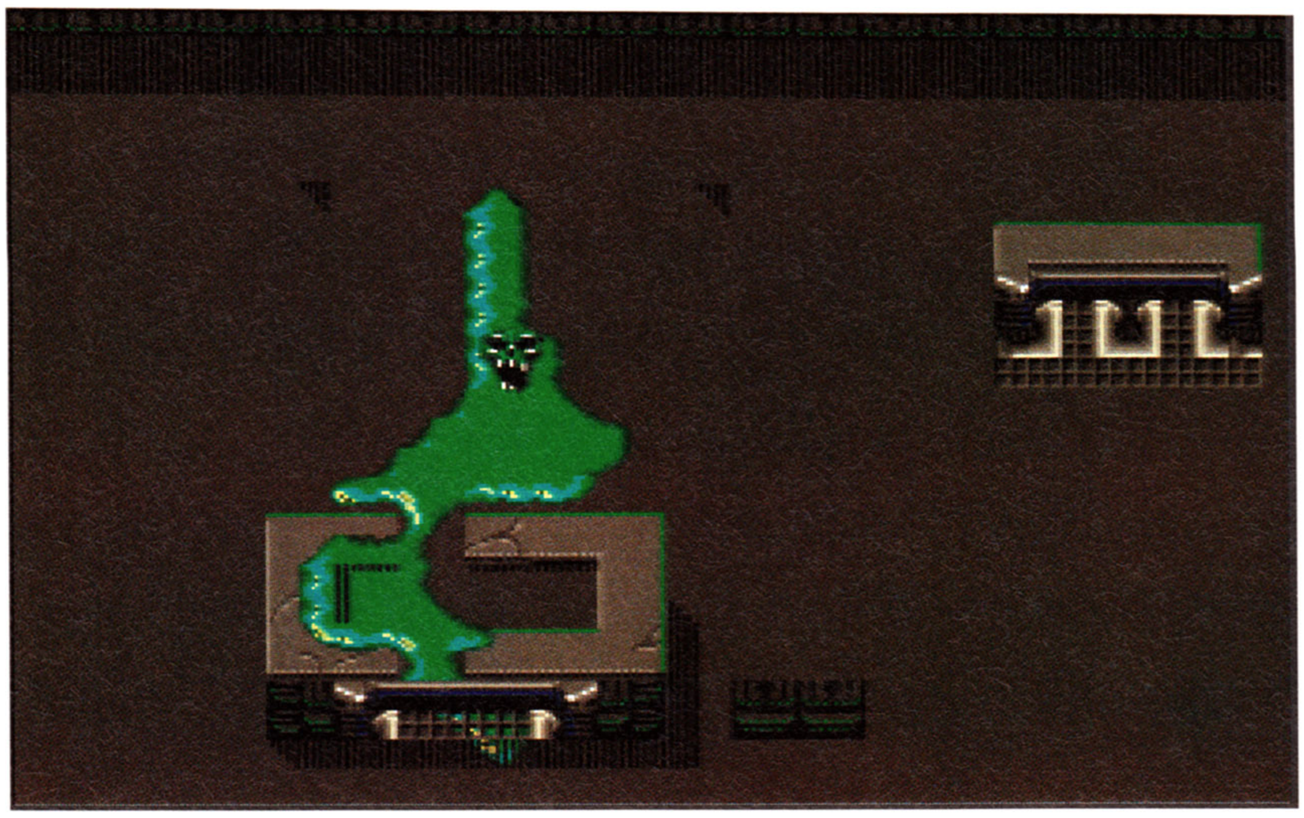
SEGA

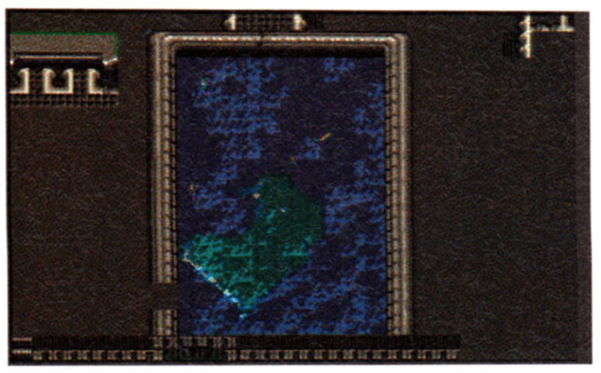


▲Ooze trying to look hard.

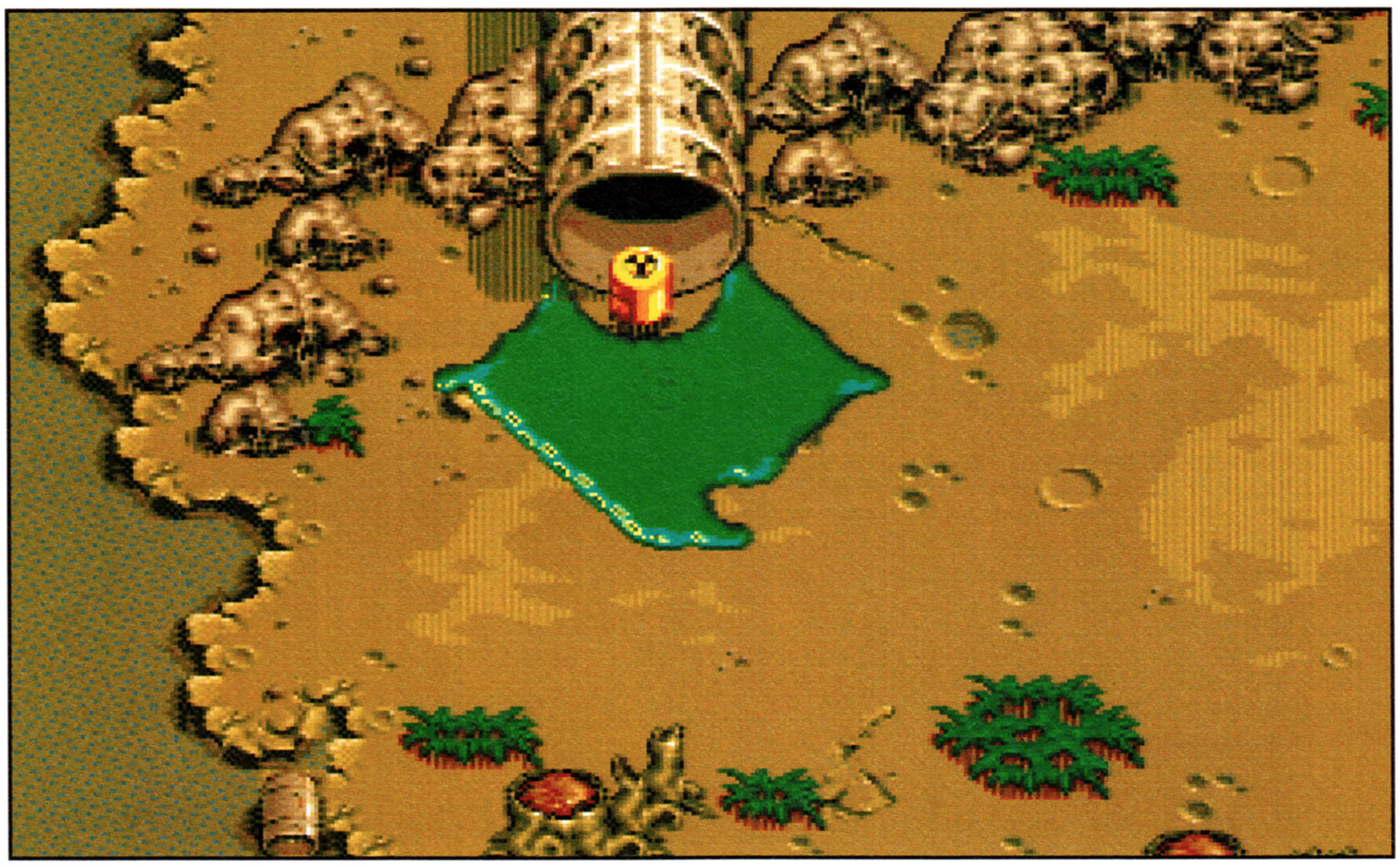


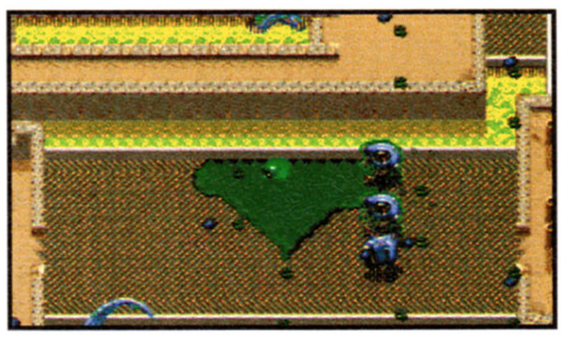
▲Those green pods are power ups.



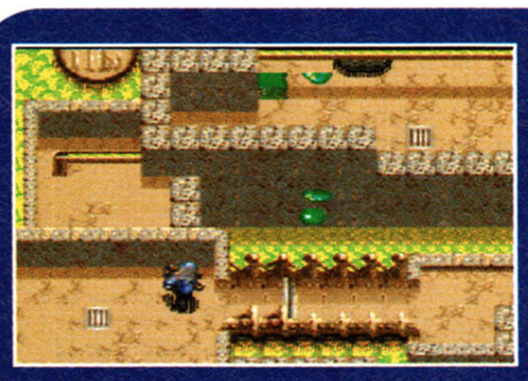


OOZE



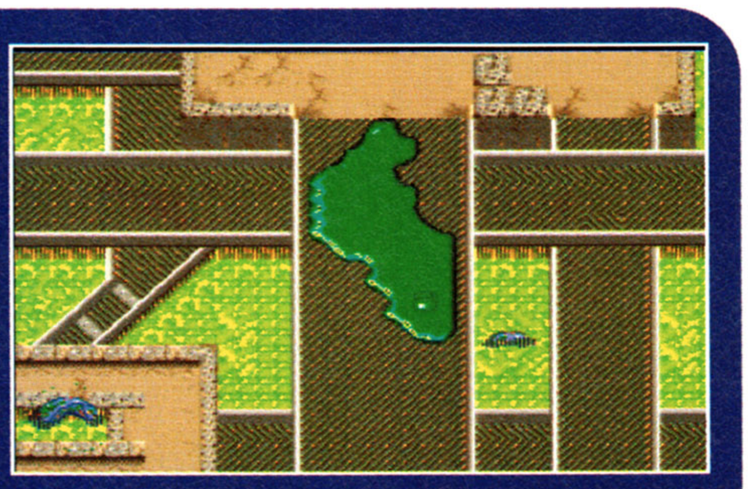


▲REMEMBER KIDS: Don't dump toxic waste on the beaches.

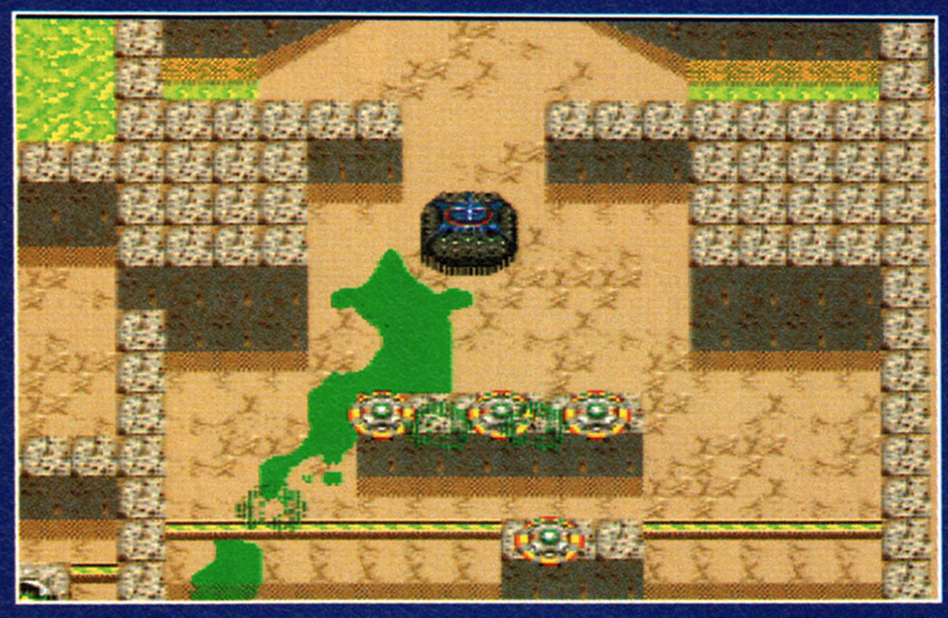


▲More fun to play than these shots show.

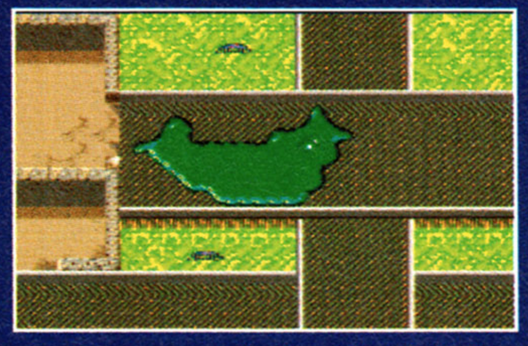
▲Yuk! He stepped in wee.



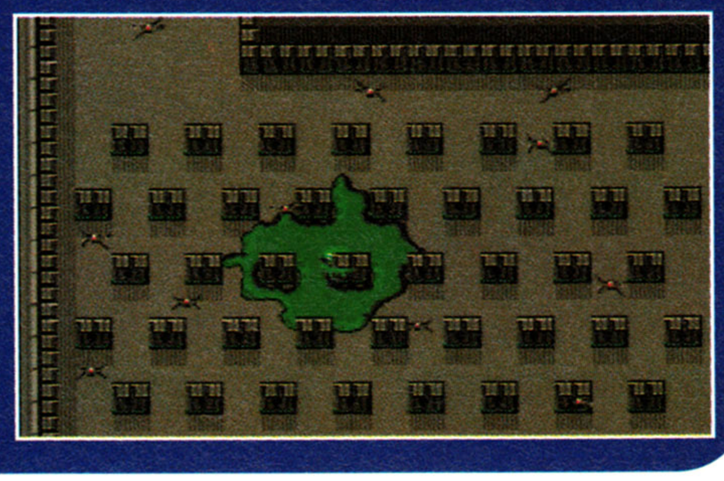
▲Oh dear. He's nearly dead.



▲That blue box looks important.



▲ Can you tell what it is yet?



PREVIEW

MEGA DRIVE

16 MEG

BY
CODEMASTERS

RELEASE;
JULY

PREVIEW

PRO

PETE SAMPRAS '96

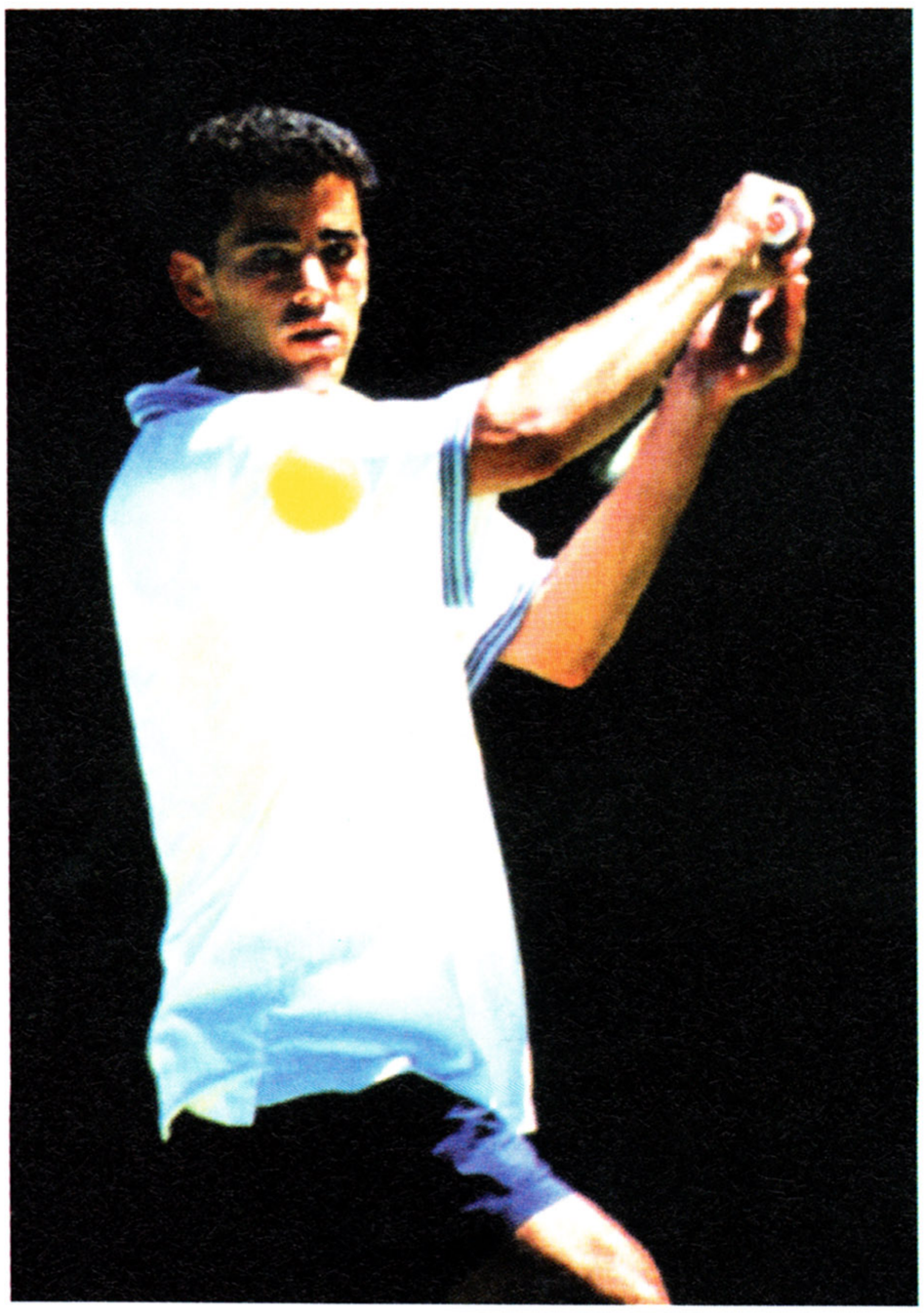
With the summer season well and truly on its way, it's time to put away your thermal undies and turn your thoughts to more pleasant activities. Like love, lust and, um, tennis. Yes, *tennis*.

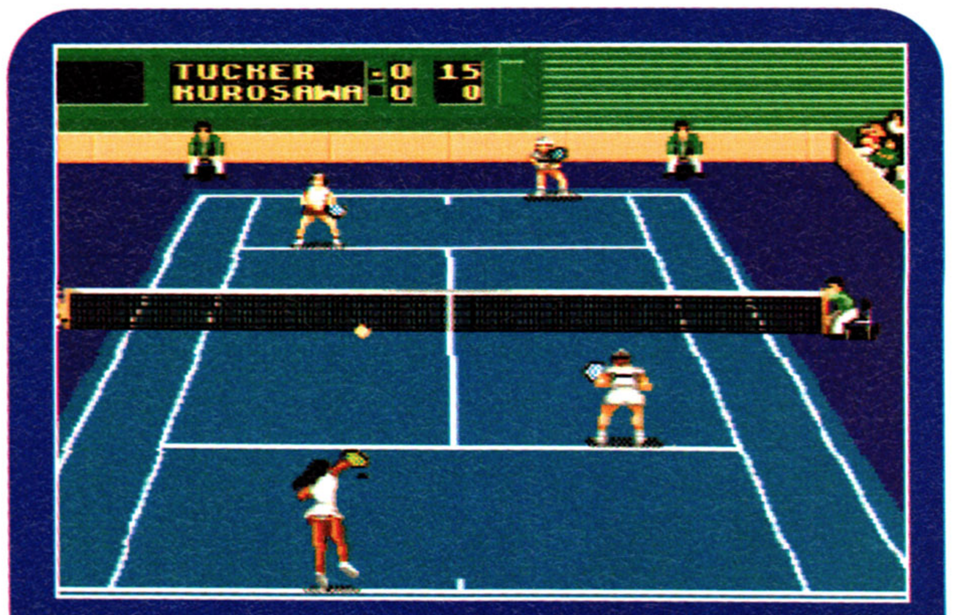
And why would you want to that? Because Codemasters are updating their smash-hit title Pete Sampras Tennis for the 1995 tennis season, that's why. If, by some strange chance you've never heard of Petey boy, then here's some facts. He is, undoubtedly, the most successful tennis star of the moment, and won no less than ten major tennis titles in 1994. Anyway, Pete Sampras (the game) was also a huge hit, mainly due to its smooth gameplay and the inclusion of Codemasters' infamous J-Cart.

The '96 update sees an overhaul in graphics, sound and gameplay, with the addition of grass, clay and indoor courts. There's new players to choose, plus a few more hidden deep within the game. And just so you can try out the new jump shots, top spins, super serves and power shots, a coaching option has been included. Plus, you can switch the viewing angle of the game around to suit your particular technique. Everything really.

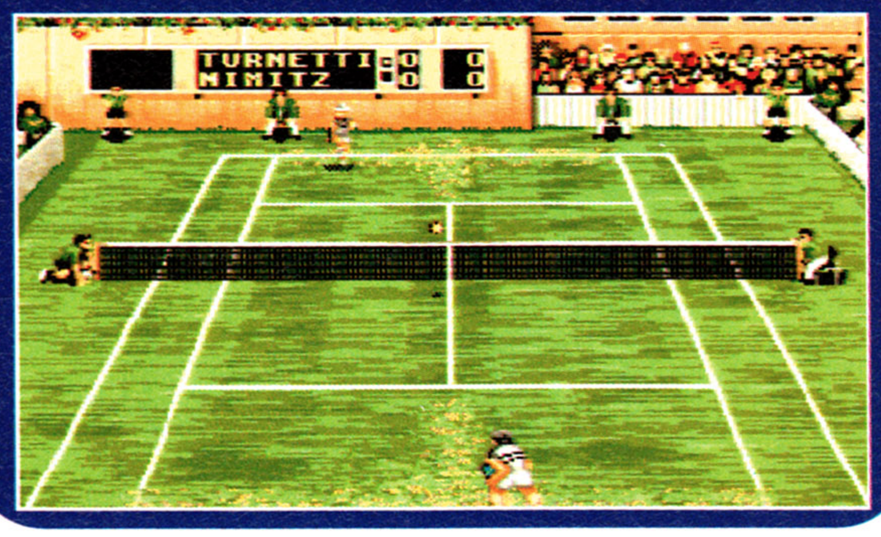
Pete Sampras is 75% complete at the moment, with work still left to do on the sound and presentation. It's already looking pretty good though, so look out for it when it's released in July.

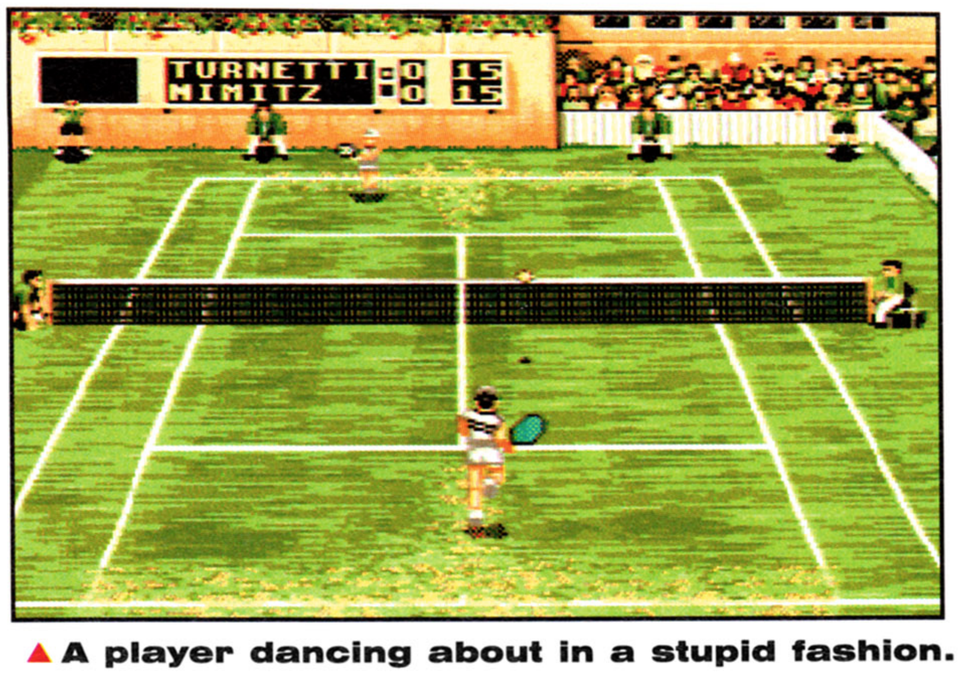
SEGA



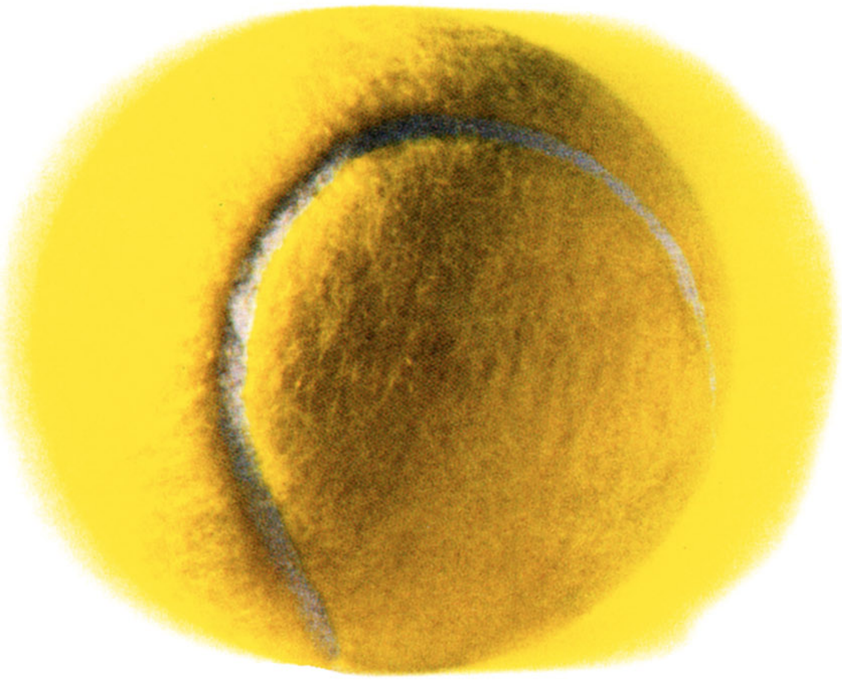


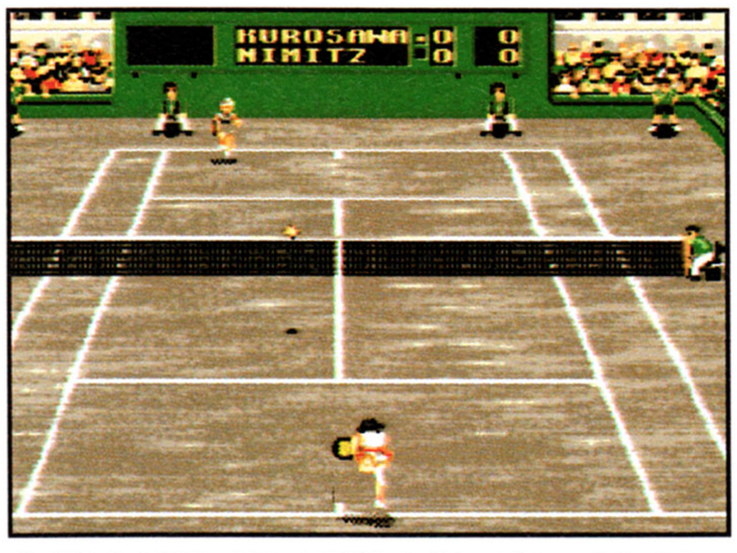
▲ Cue "You can see her pants" letters.



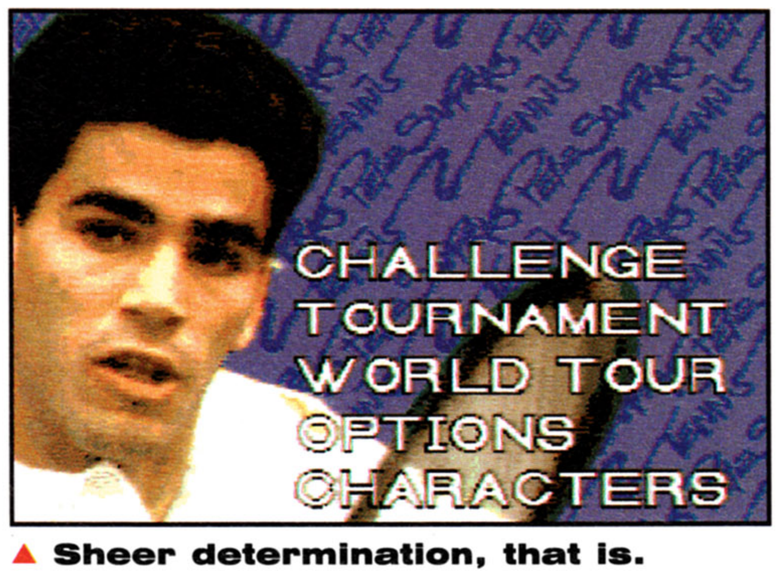


▲ A player dancing about in a stupid fashion.



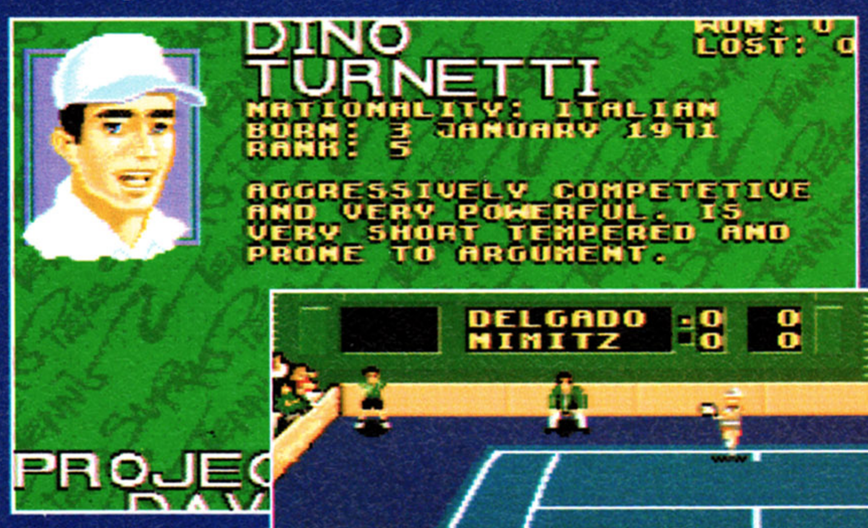


▲ There's an option to play as an amputee too.

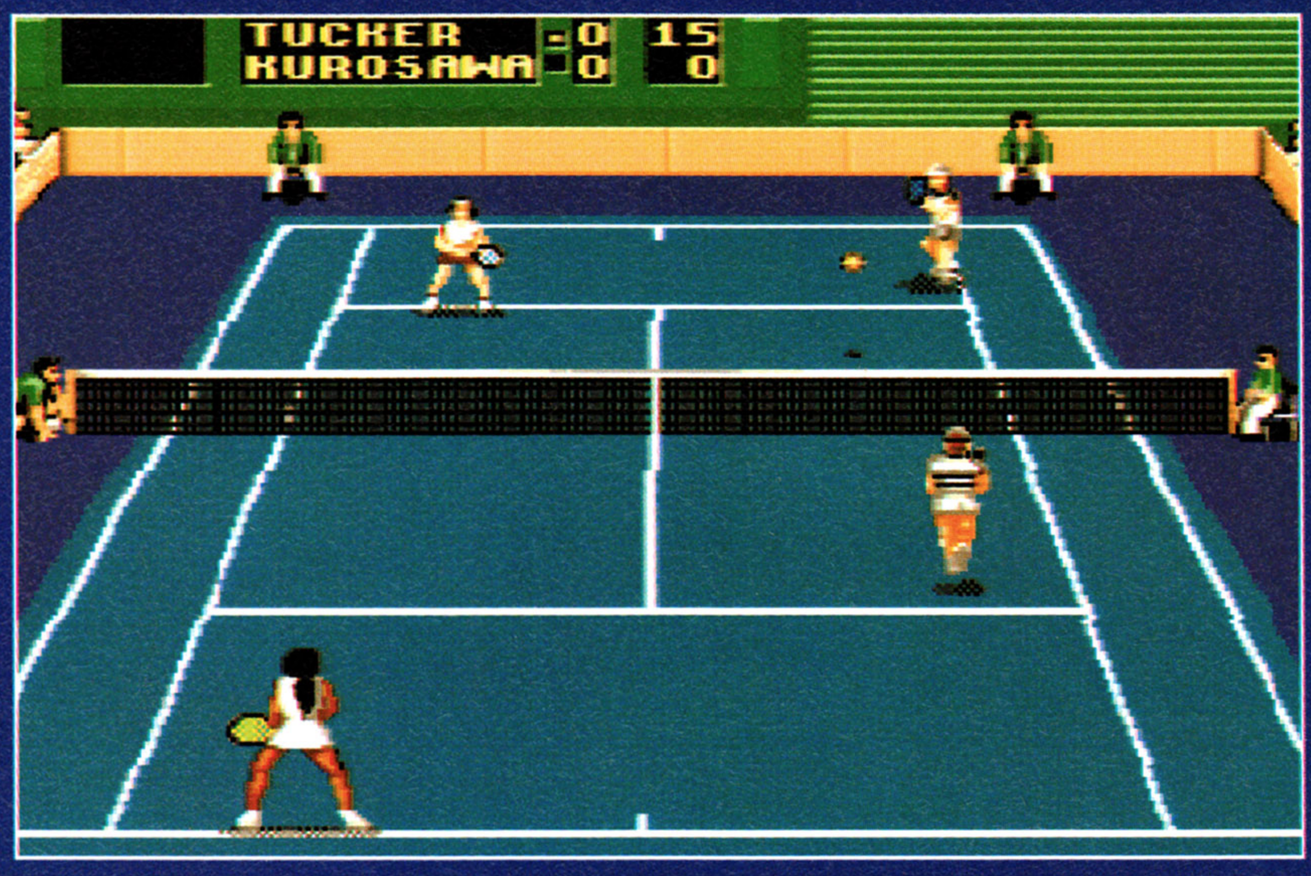


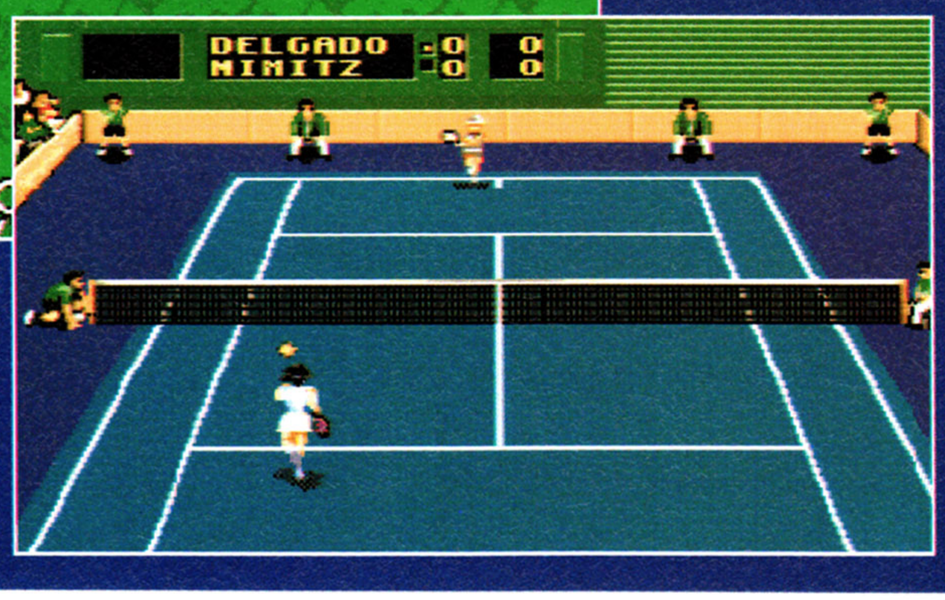
▲ Sheer determination, that is.

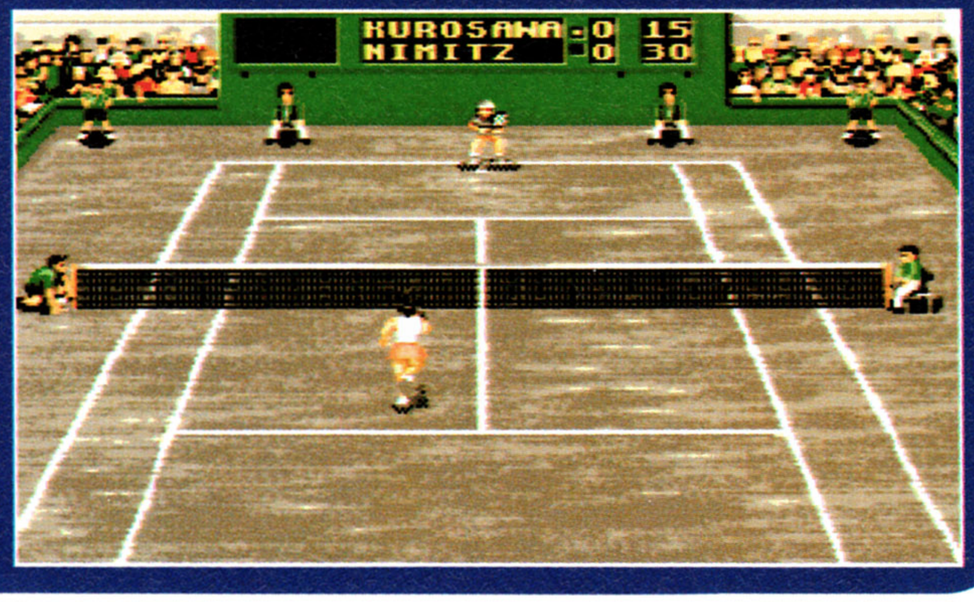
▲ They look a bit cheesey, don't they?



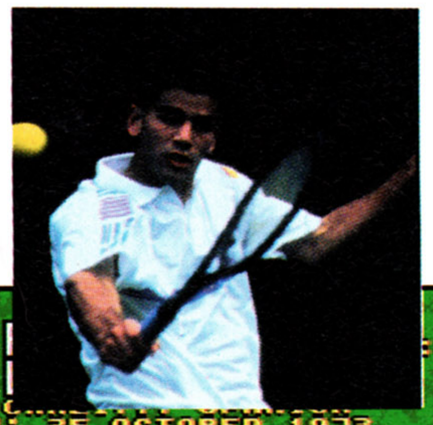
▲ I knew someone called Dino once. he had funny hair.







▼ Oh my god. Is that a wig or what? I hope so, for her sake.



PREVIEW

MEGA DRIVE

24 MEG

BY ACCLAIM

RELEASE: JUNE

Acclaim have added another developer to their huge arsenal as Sunsoft join the Dredd clan. Bringing with them an almighty 32MEG scrap. Blimey.

JUSTICE LEAGUE

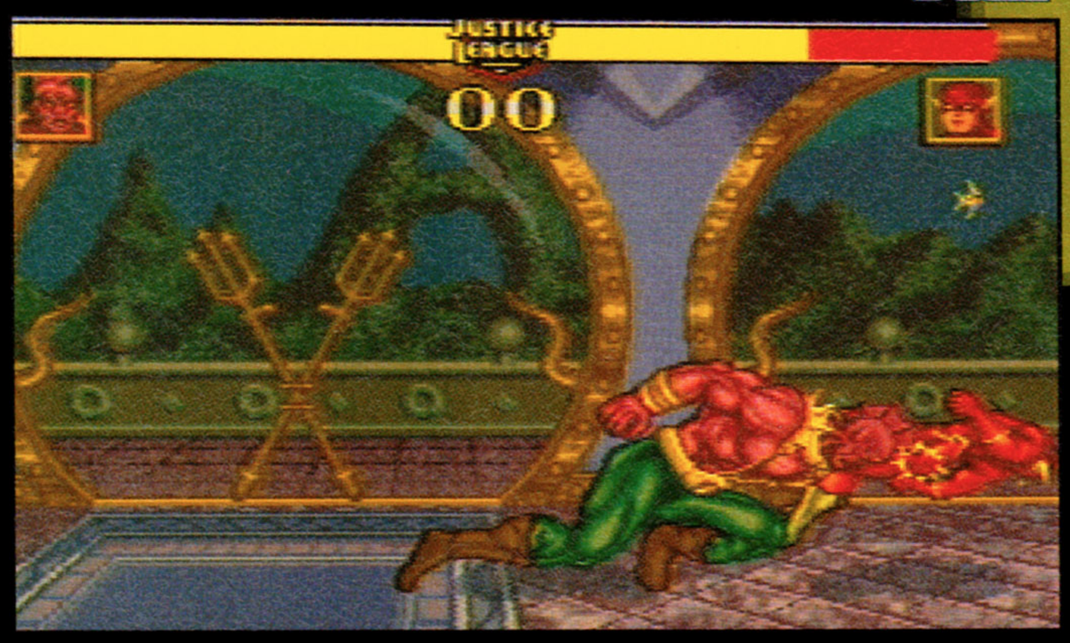
PREVIEW

The unimaginable has happened: all the great DC superheroes have turned against each other, with Superman giving The Flash Chinese burns using his super-strength, and Wonder Woman kneeling behind Hawk so Batman can send him flying with a Bat-Shove. Needless to say, an evil-doer is behind these odd acts, and the recent spate of arm-pinching between heroes is down to the eternally-bad Darkseid. Fed up with having his metallic face mocked as the super chaps defeat him again, Darkseid has created an army of duplicates who are besmirching the heroes' good names, by shrieking boo into the ears of old ladies and putting dog poo in brown bags, and lighting them on peoples' doorsteps so they stamp on them to put the blaze out.

All this superhero sleaze thus gives Acclaim's latest acquisition, Sunsoft, the chance to set the DC heroes against each other in a one-on-one beat 'em up. Choosing the DC hero (or baddy, as three are on offer) of your choice from the eight available, the player's basic aim is to beat the supercrap out of the robotic dupes until they reach Darkseid for a chance to punch holes in his plated puss. Street Fighter fans who remember how to pull off Ryu and Ken's fireballs can also make their task easier by using one of a number of special moves at their disposal.

Acclaim are aiming to have Justice League in the shops in June, so stay tuned for a full review, as they say. Well we do.

SEGA



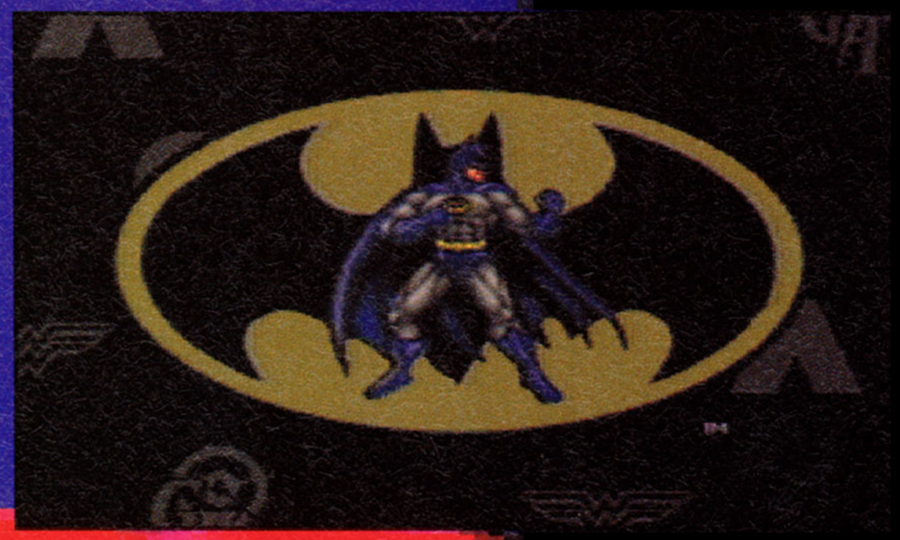
▲ On me 'ead son.

▲ THAT'S FANTASTIC!

▲ Batman: Large bloke in blue costume.

▲ Excuse me I'm just going to the toilet.

▲ Hawk: Hawk.

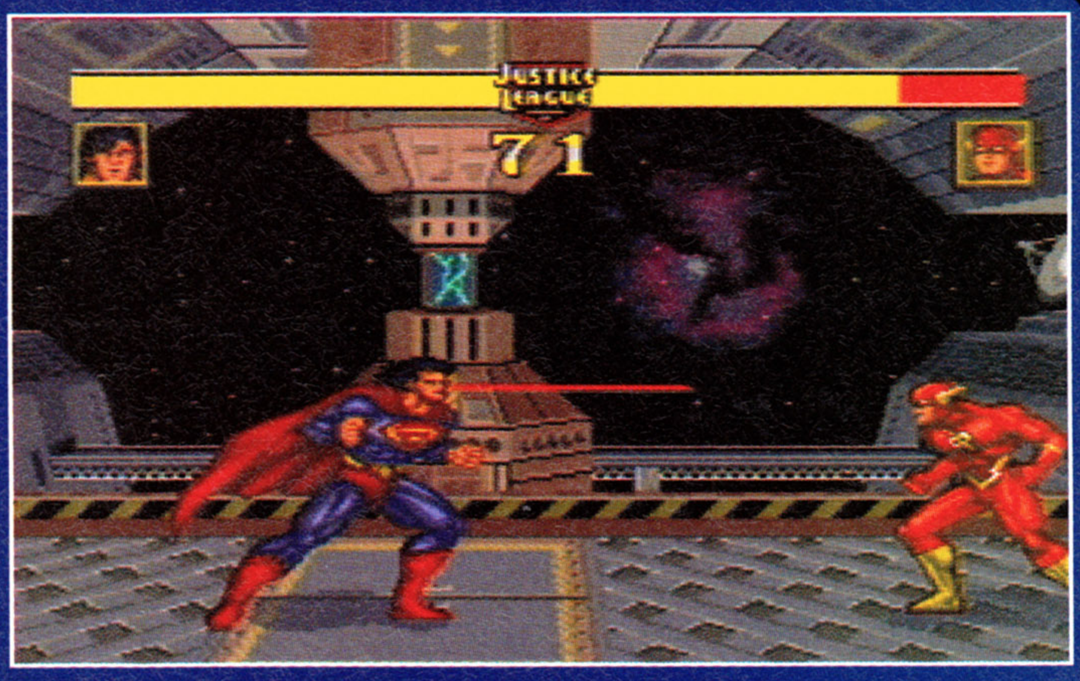


▲ Git your hair cut.

LEAGUE

HOLY SPECIAL MOVE

Just as TV's Wonder Woman had fancy arm bangles which could deflect bullets and be thrown at fleeing criminals, so does her pixillated counterpart. Yep, it's special move time. All the DC faves have a number at their disposal, with Wonder Woman flinging jewellry about like a Ratner's sale, Batman tossing Batarangs in a similar manner, and Superman using bolts of red liquorice which shoot from his eyes. Actually, they might be laser beams. Similarly, Darkseid and his robotic cronies and feline friends are equally equipped, making them formidable foes for the later levels.



▲ Superman giving The Flash a bit of eye. Ah ha, ah ha, ha, ha, ha.

▲ Nice costume, could do with white sleeves though.

▲ Look at that bird.

PREVIEW

MEGA DRIVE

16 MEG

BY
ACCLAIM

RELEASE;
JULY

PREVIEW

JUDGE

Remember a couple of months back we brought you a special report on Judge Dredd? Well, we're glad to say that as the film version prepares to be unleashed on a hyped-'till-they-drop legion of Dredd fans, Probe are just as busy putting the final touches to their Megadrive version of events.

Yup, they've come a long way since we brought you the very first shots of the game in March. The game is now fully playable, and fans of the comic will be happy to hear that there's loads of familiar faces to be found amongst the levels, and that contrary to the film, Judge Dredd DOES NOT take his helmet off in the game.

There are 13 levels in all, and although the action is mostly of the platform variety, Dredd manages to stop off at most of the movie haunts, including the Cursed Earth. Of course, he doesn't go anywhere without his old pal the Lawgiver, and as you'd expect, you get to try it out on more than the odd few delinquent citizens. Plus there's a few extra weapons to pick up along the way too.

The basic game story is fairly similar to that of the film too: Dredd must roam around the crime-ridden streets arresting perps and, well, shooting them more often than not. To get to the next part of each level, he must get rid of all the law-breaking scum and locate all stashes of hidden ammunition. There's a computer terminal on each level which keeps your progress monitored and there's plenty of shooting action to keep you going. It's a shame it's all of the platform variety though.

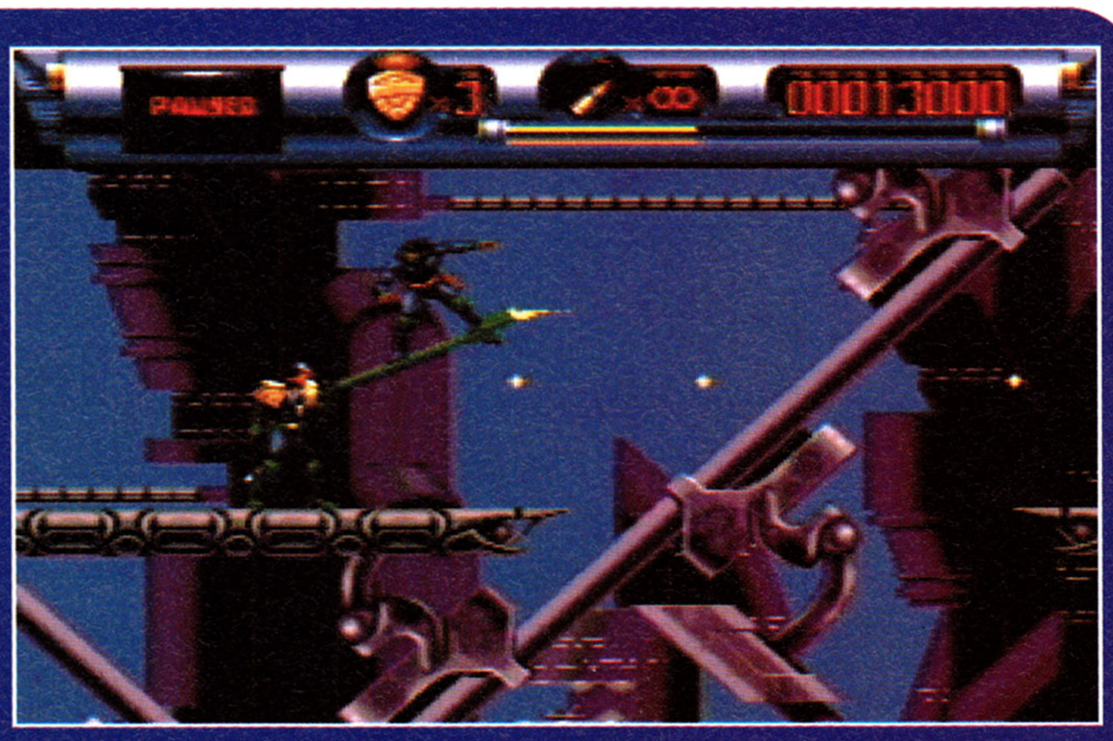
Even though this is only a preview version of Judge Dredd, the game is already looking pretty finished, so you can bet your M&M's that we'll have a review good and ready for you next month.

Judge Dredd is © Fleetway Editions as seen in 2000 AD

SEGA

DREDD

▲That's funny, I could have sworn this game was in black and white...

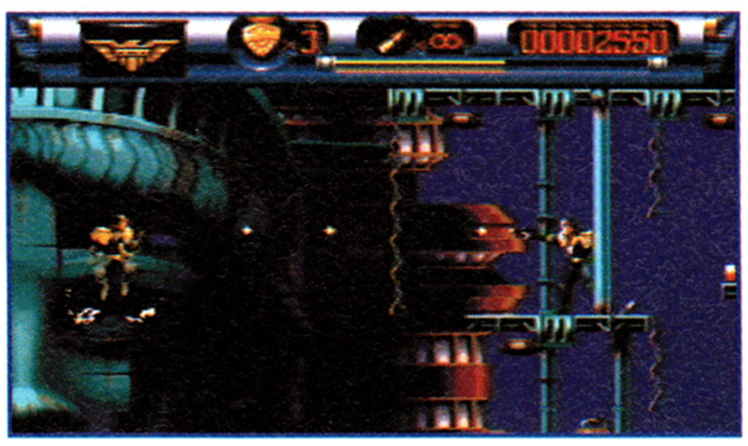


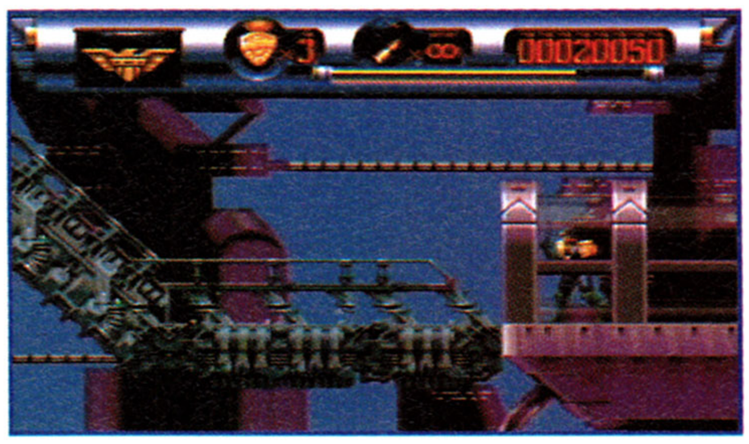
▲Too late perp, now you die! Aaiieeeeeeaaaaa!

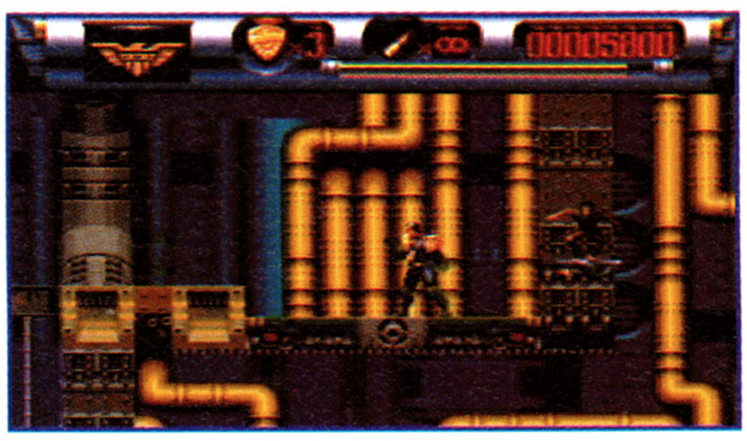
▲in fact I distinctly remember...

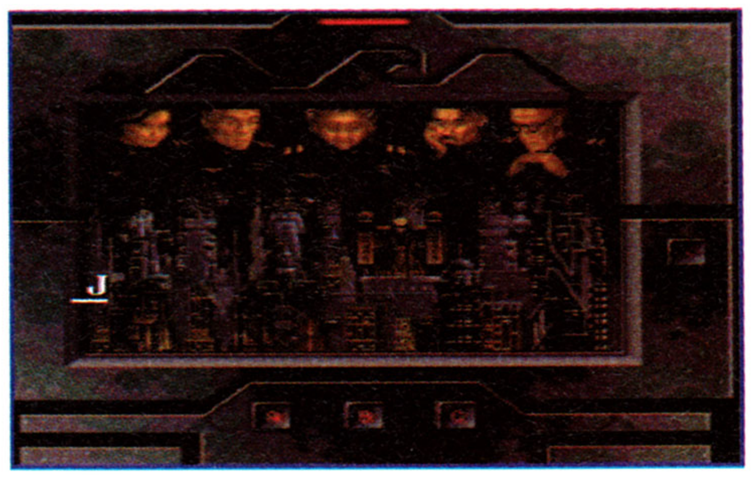
▲no, I must be mistaken...

▲...no-one could be that stupid.









PREVIEW

MEGA-CD

24 MEG

BY
JVC

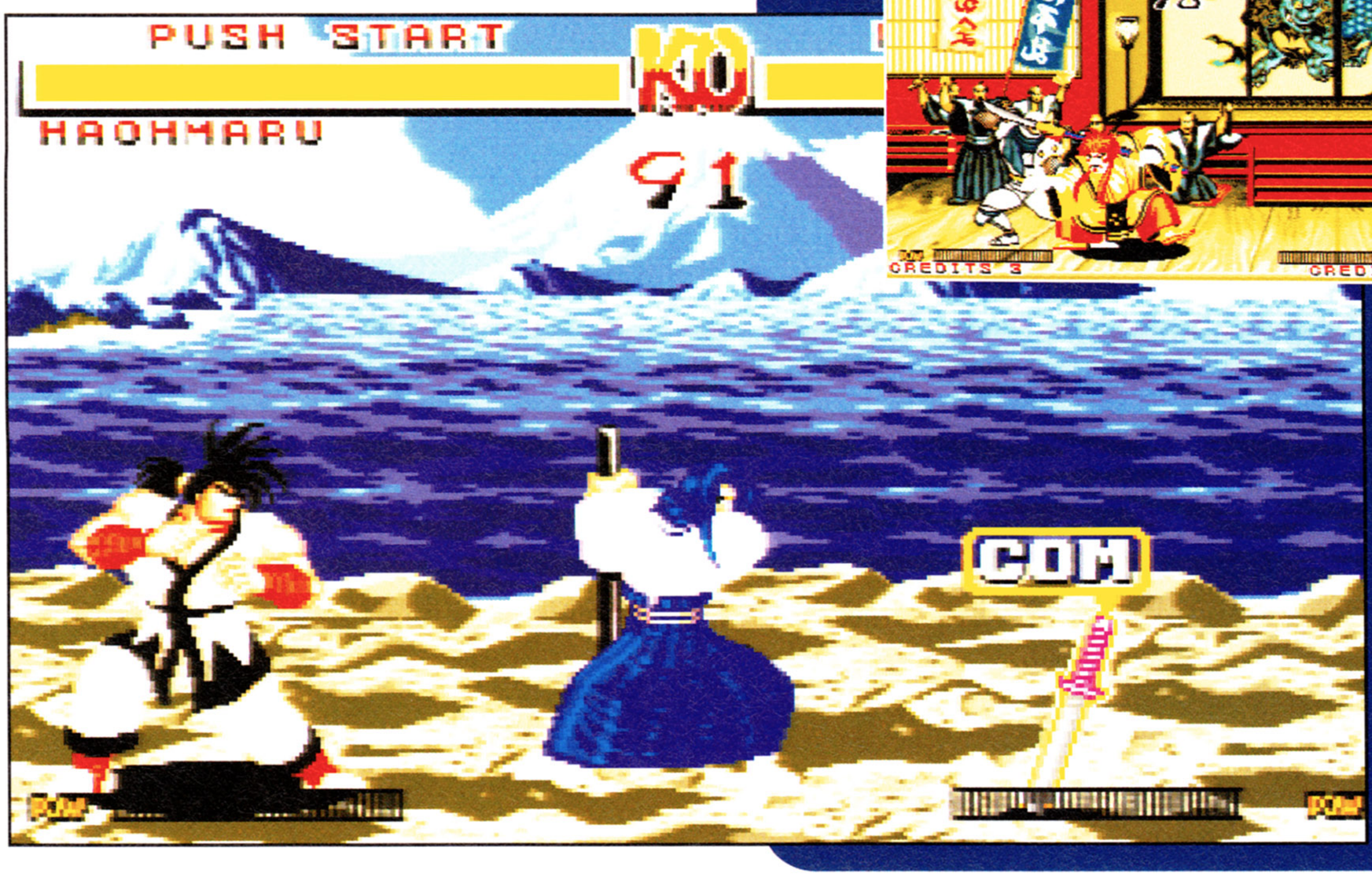
RELEASE;
JULY

PREVIEW

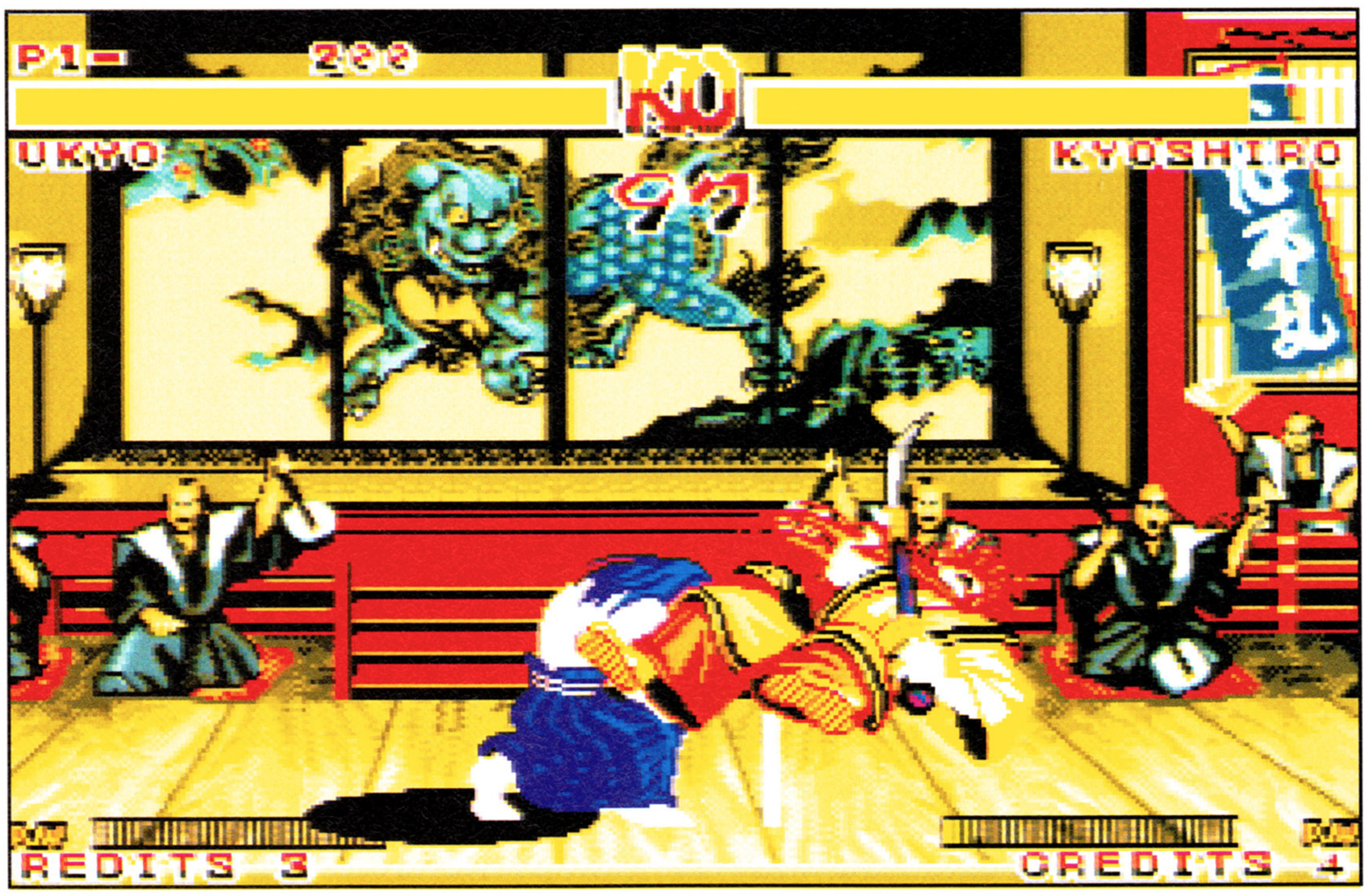
SAMU
SHOD

I dunno, you wait years for a decent beat 'em up to turn up on the Mega-CD, then what happens? Three come along at once. Last month we had Eternal Champions, and this month Fatal Fury Special and Samurai Shodown are hotting up for release.

As our more faithful, regular readers will know, we've already reviewed Smaurai Shodown on the Megadrive a couple of months ago. And actually, it was a bit disappointing, because it was nothing like the coin-op and nothing like the recent 3DO version either. But with any luck, this Mega-CD verison should restore faith in all Samurai Shodown fans, because it's much closer to the original than anything seen on the Megadrive. In fact, JVC are claiming that it's a direct port of the original SNK beat 'em up. Which means there's twelve different characters to choose from, all with their own special moves and customised weaponry. It's faster than the Megadrive version too, with better music and loads more effects, so hopefully fans will be receiving an almost perfect conversion when it's released in July.



JRAI DWN

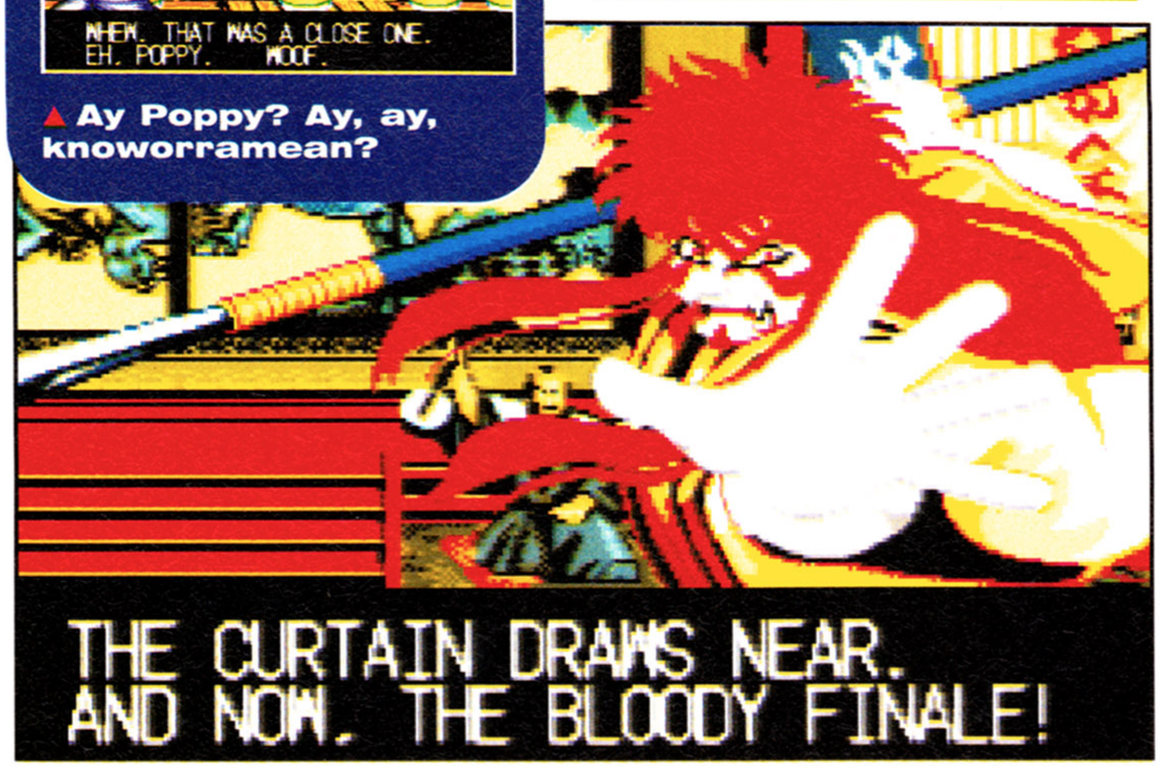


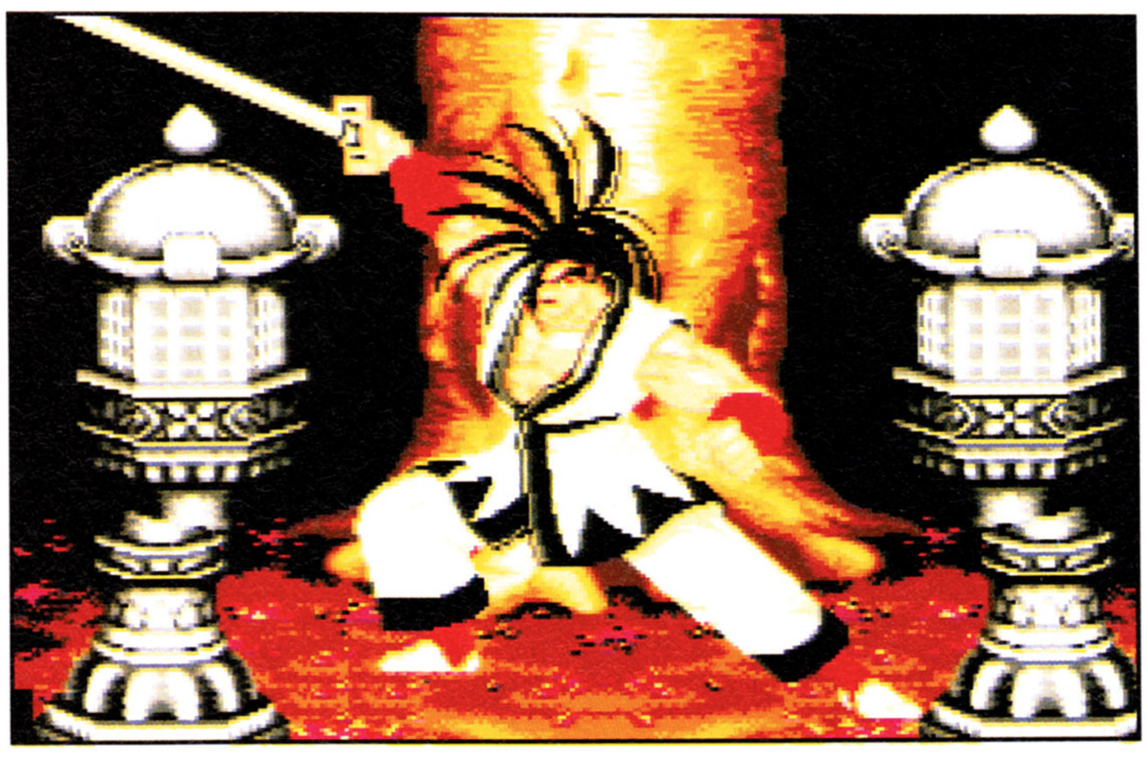
▲ What's that dog doing there?

▲ Straight out of Karate Kid 3.

▲ Nooo! Not the beer barrel!

▲ Ay Poppy? Ay, ay, knoworramean?





PREVIEW

MEGA-CD

CD-ROM

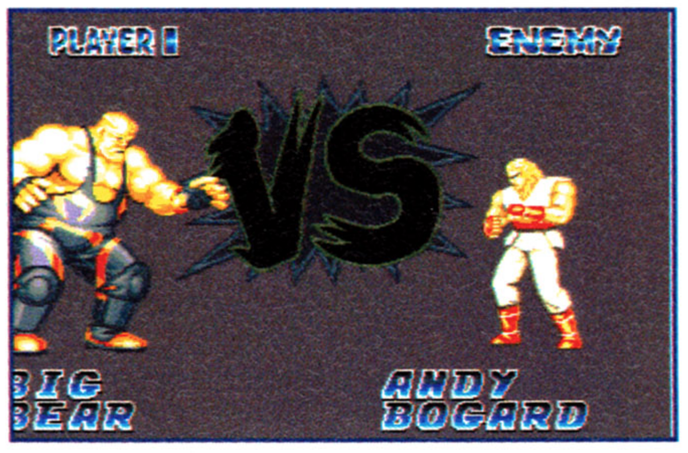
BY
JVC

RELEASE;
JULY

PREVIEW

FATAL

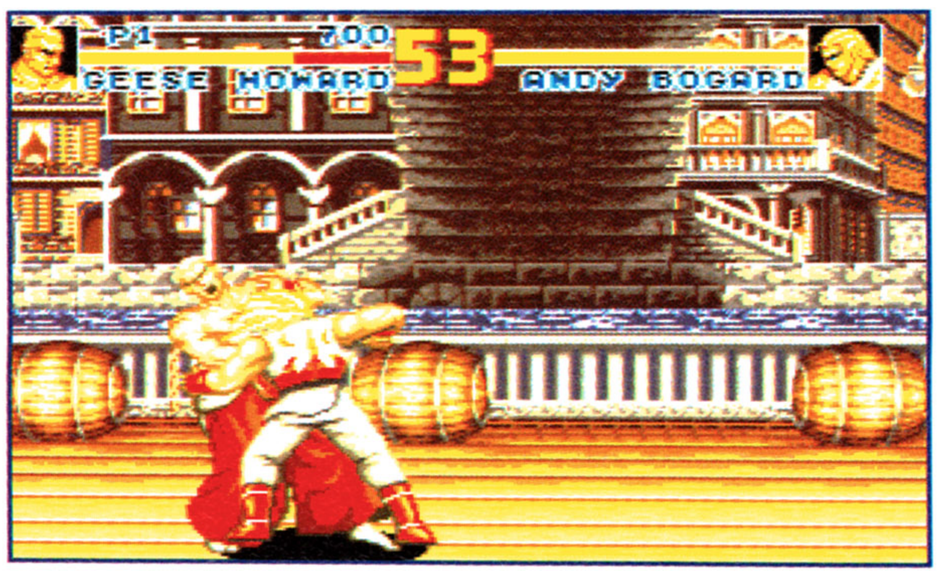
Yup, it's another coin-op conversion for the Mega-CD this month, and guess what? it's another beat 'em up too. Blimey, Mega-CD owners have never had it so good, have they?



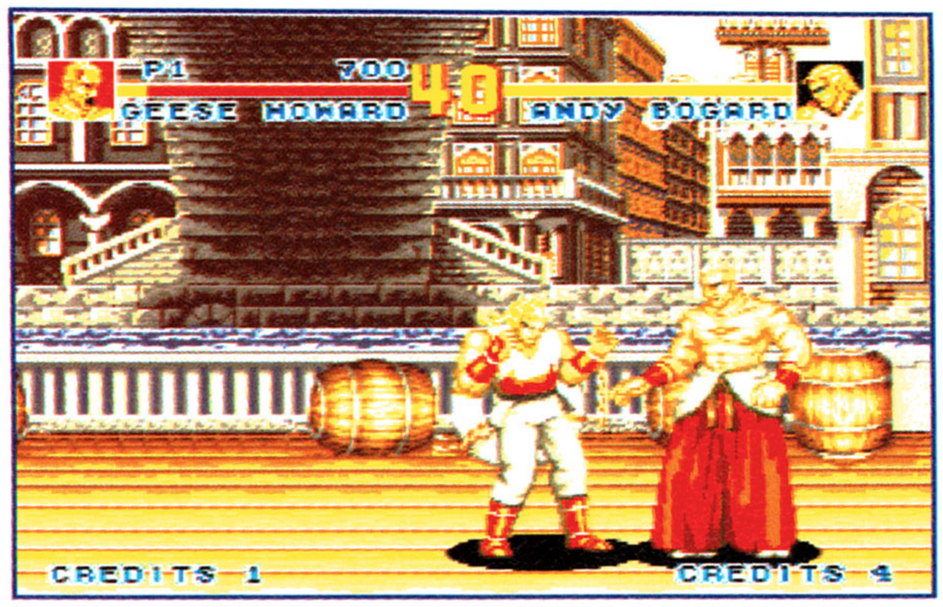
▲ No doubt it'll be a thrilling fight.

Like Samurai Shodown, Fatal Fury also has its roots firmly embedded in the arcades. In fact, it's been kicking around for years now, and has enjoyed various incarnations on the Megadrive and Super Nintendo. This Mega-CD version has been in the off-ing for absolutely ages, and after almost two years of development time, it's still only 80% complete. Most of the gameplay mechanics have been completed though and JVC are already claiming that this version is much better than any of the Megadrive versions. There's more colour for a start, and the sprites are bigger too. Plus you get the added bonus of CD sound. All the fifteen characters from the coin op have been included and each character has up to six different special moves. Anyway, although Fatal Fury has been scheduled for release at various points in the last two years, JVC have confirmed that it's due for a July release, Which means you'll be able to read our verdict in the very next issue of SEGA MAGAZINE.

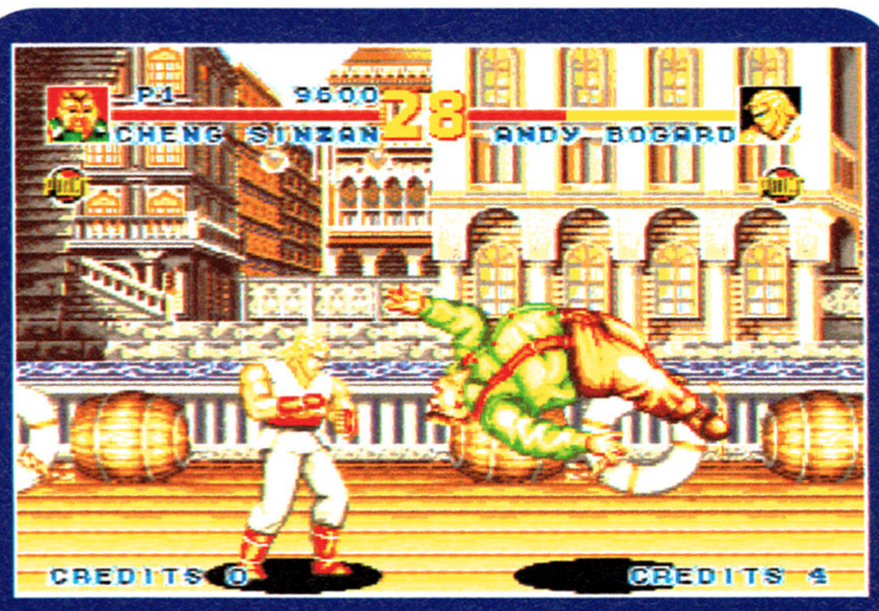
SEGA



▲ I haven't a clue what's going on here.



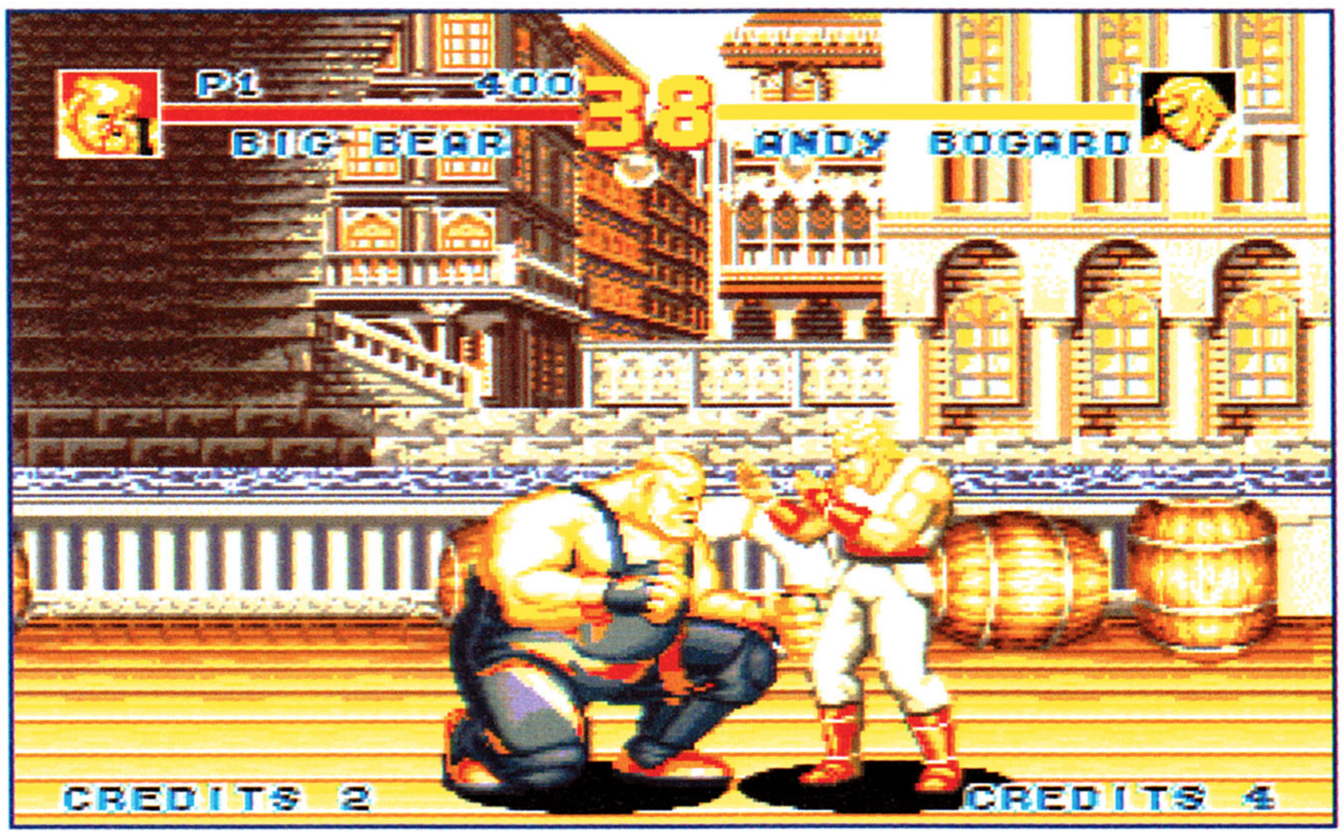
▲ Ha, ha, look at the size of your tackle.

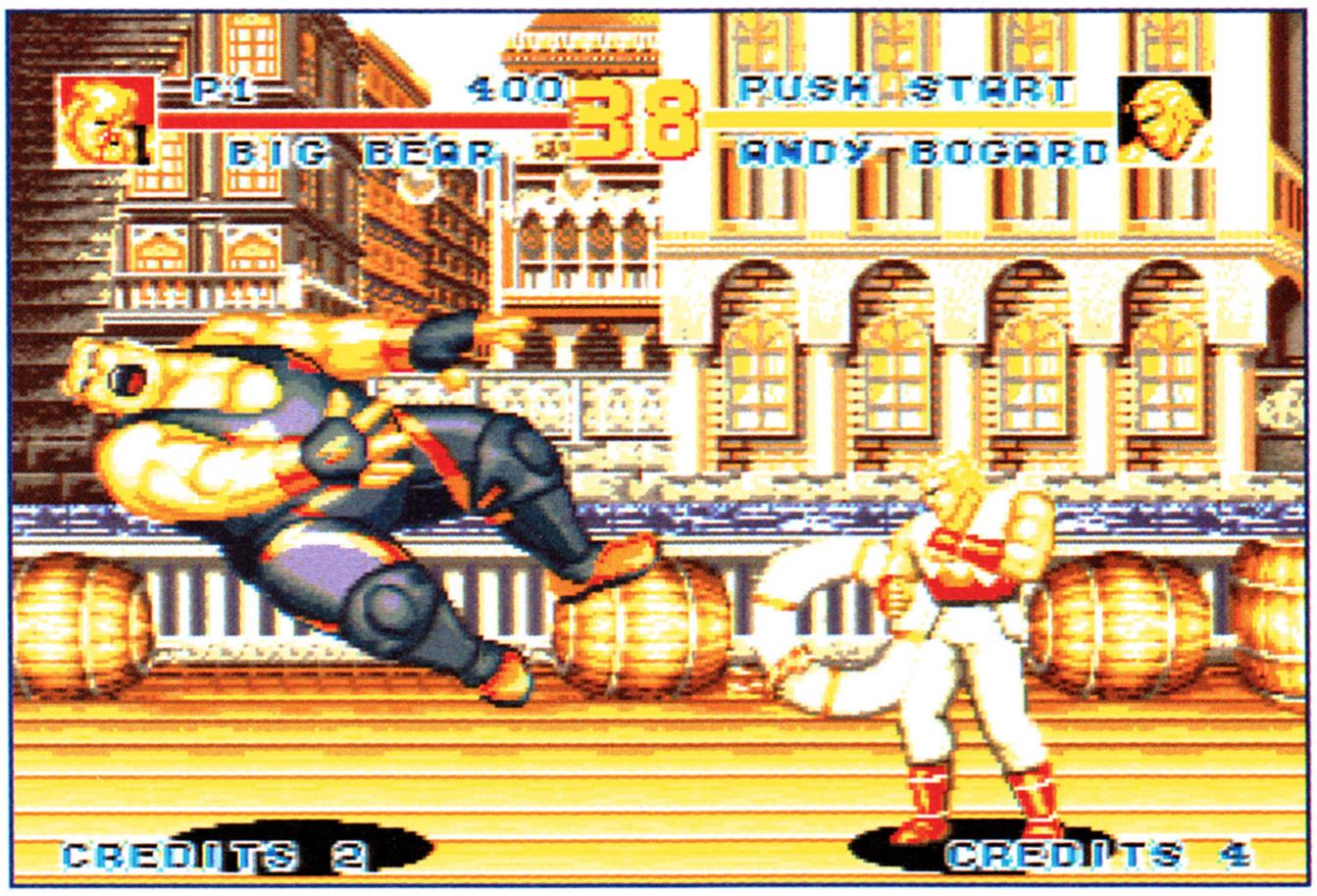


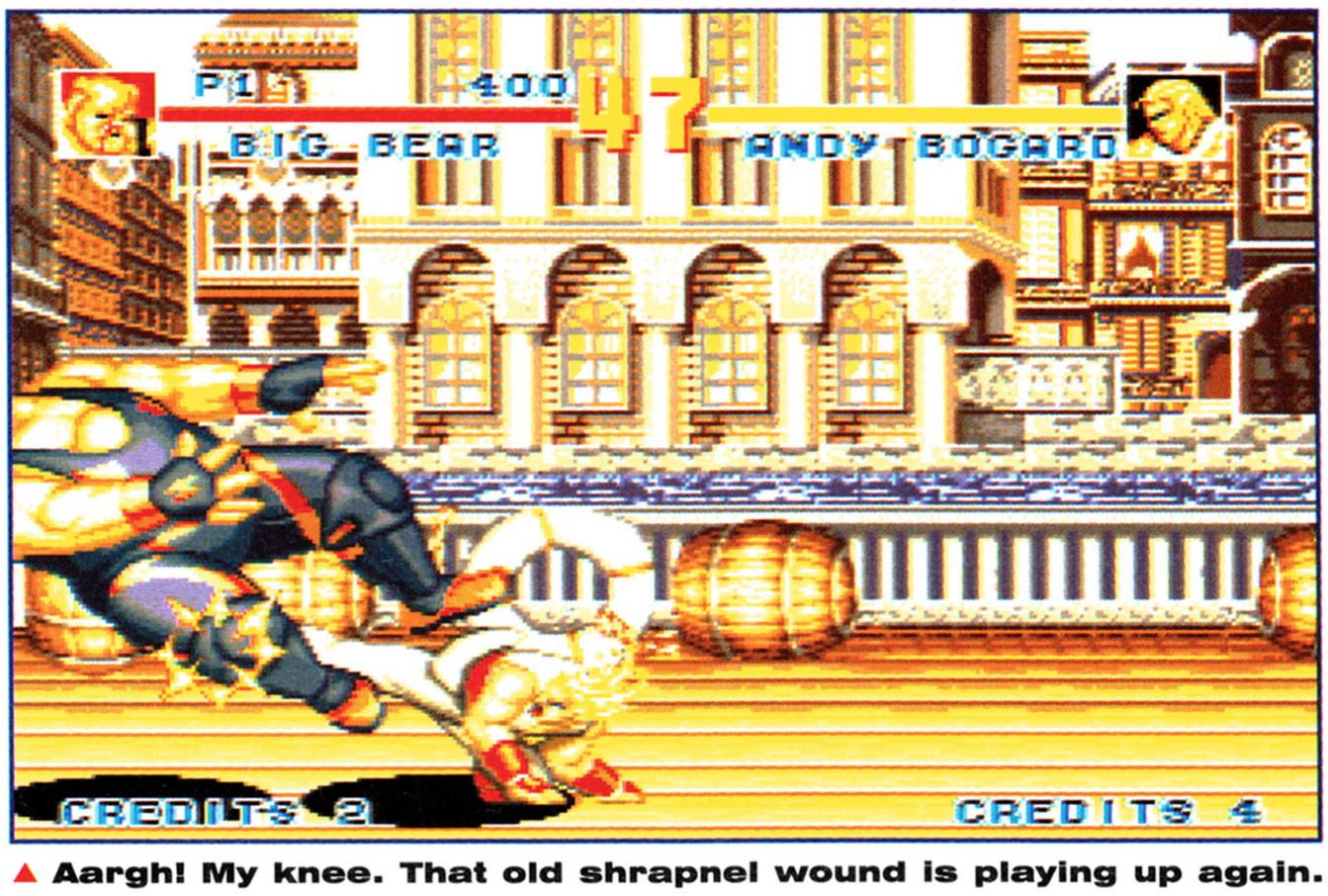
▲ An excellent triple-salko.

▲ And that little ballet move has earned him 2000 points.

FURY SPECIAL



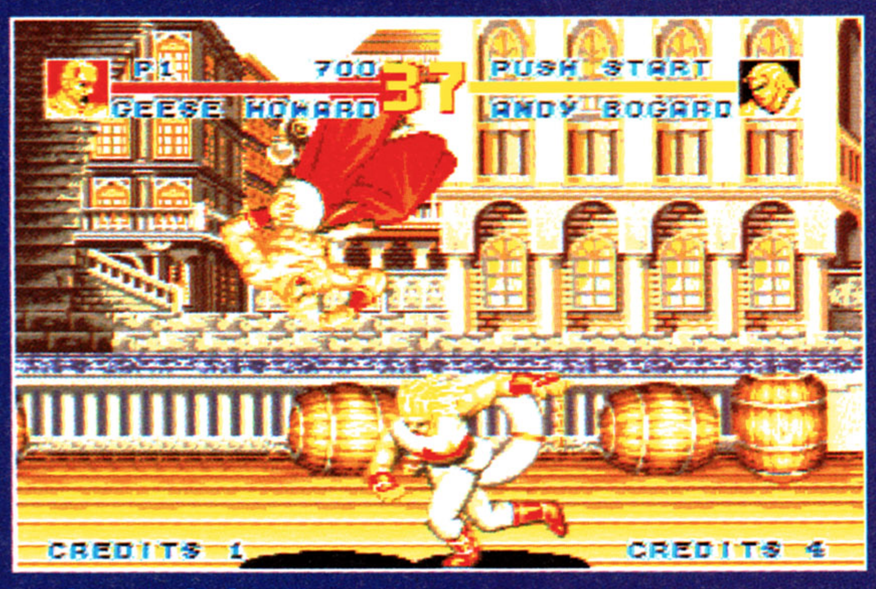




▲ Aargh! My knee. That old shrapnel wound is playing up again.

▲ Looks like a tough game of slaps.

▲ Boy, it's just like Saturday Night Fever.



▲ Okay, it isn't anything like Saturday Night Fever.

PREVIEW

MEGA-CD

24 MEG

BY
JVC

RELEASE:
TBA

TIME

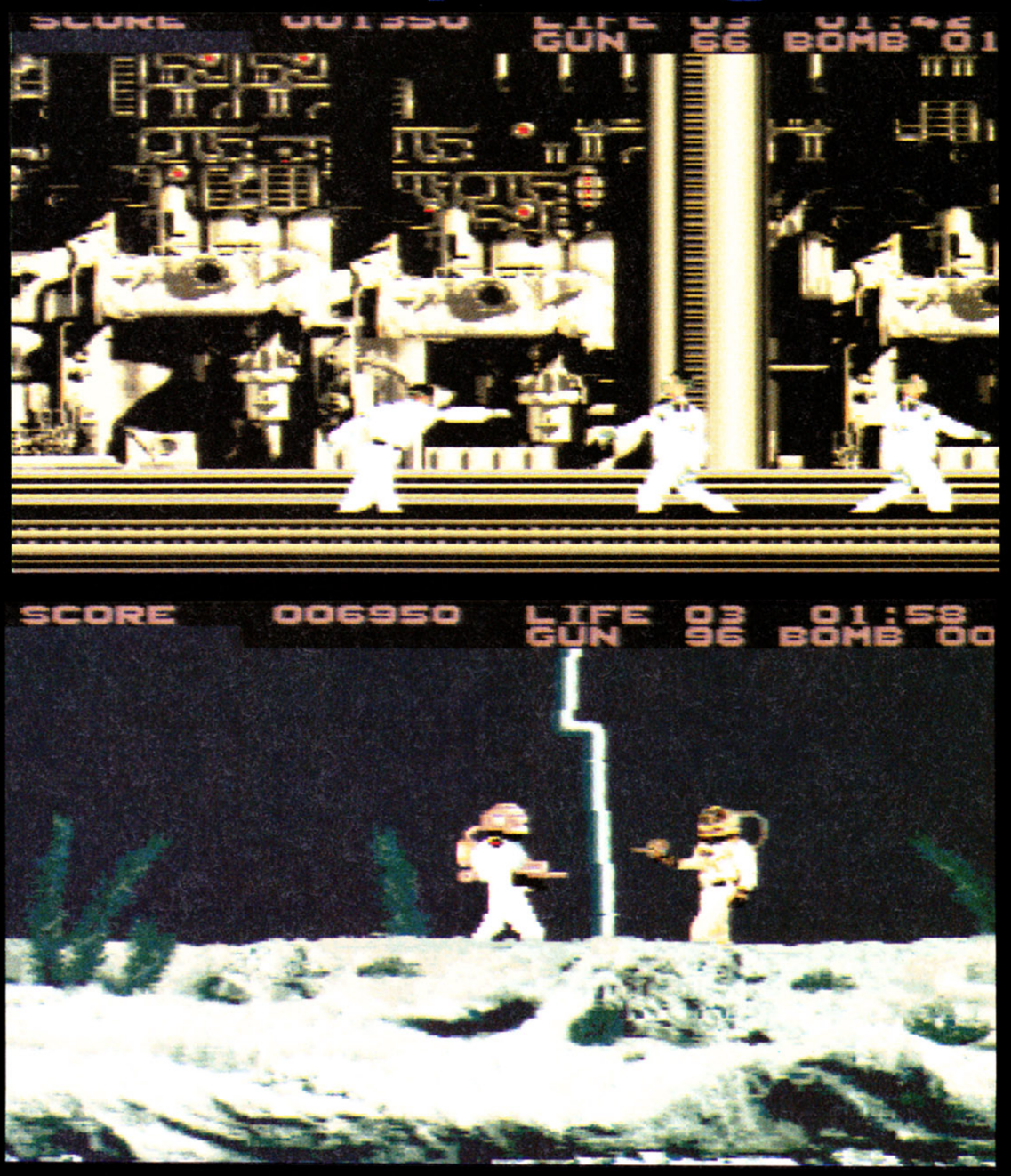
What's all this then? A blockbuster movie of the recent past, about to be turned into a Mega-CD game in the near future? Why, these pathetic references to various stages in time must surely mean this is a preview of TimeCop on the Mega-CD. That and the massive TimeCop heading at the top of the page.

Just like the film, the game follows the antics of one policeman (played by Jean Claude Van Damme) whose job it is, to make sure that people turn up for the appointments when they say they will. Anyone late for school or work, those people that turn up at the cinema after a film has started, or council members who fail to make a town planning meeting on time, are sent into the Phantom Zone by the Time Cop. Of course, if you believe that load of old rubbish you obviously haven't seen the movie. Not that it matters, since programmers Cryo seem to have only loosely based the game around the happenings of the film.

Taking on the role of Jean Claude's TimeCop, you have to travel through a series of levels which range from such time zones as the 1940s and the 1980's through to the present day. Of course, there are the customary villains of each time to face. Tommy gun-toting gangsters in the '40s and ginger-haired punks in the eighties, through to soldiers in the present day. Still, they all respond to the same treatment – punches, kicks and bullets. You know the sort of thing.

At present TimeCop is around eighty per-cent complete and its, well, its shaping up. Still, we'll reserve our full judgement for when it's released. Which should be soon.

SEGA

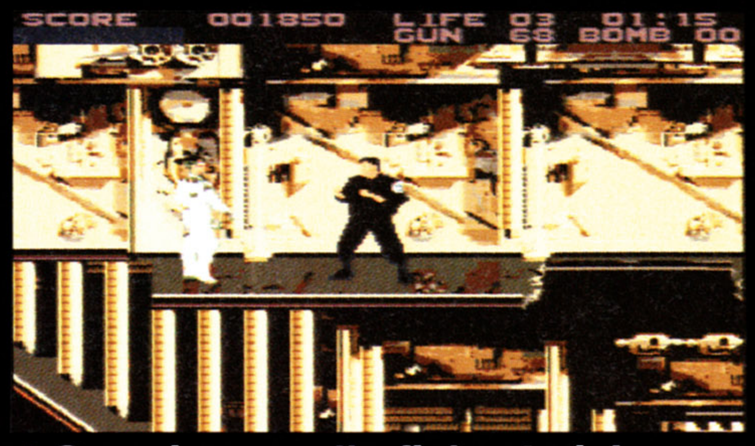


▲ Haltenzie!

▲ Bonjour Mr Le Punk, comen zen now outzide, eef you sink you are 'ard enuf. I will pelt you wiz zeeze special Belgian chocolates zat I 'ave stored down my pantaloons! A ho he ho he hoor!

COP

▲ Oh ah.

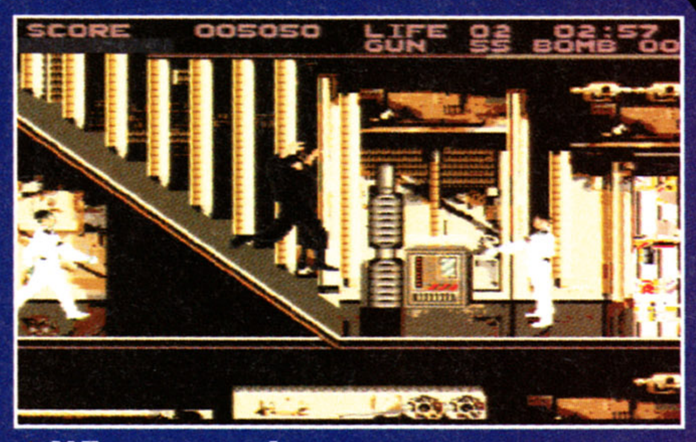


▲ Somsing smells fishy, I sink.

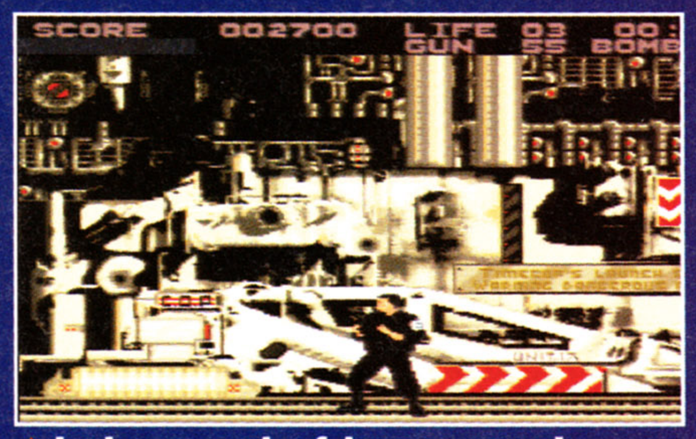
▲ Where 'as my crap moped gone?

▲ Look at the state of that wallpaper. Shocking.

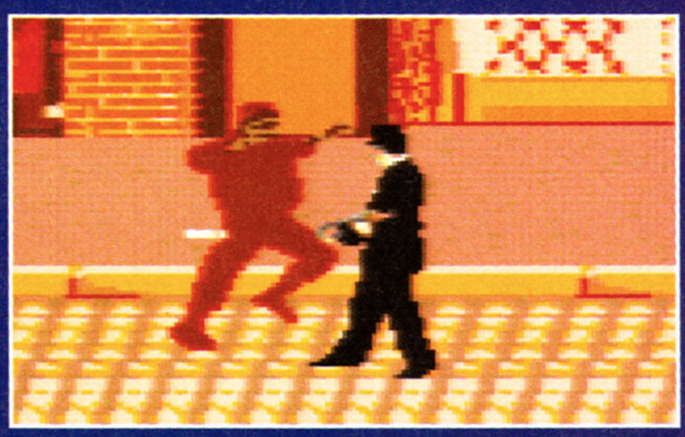
▲ Zut alores! Tant pis!



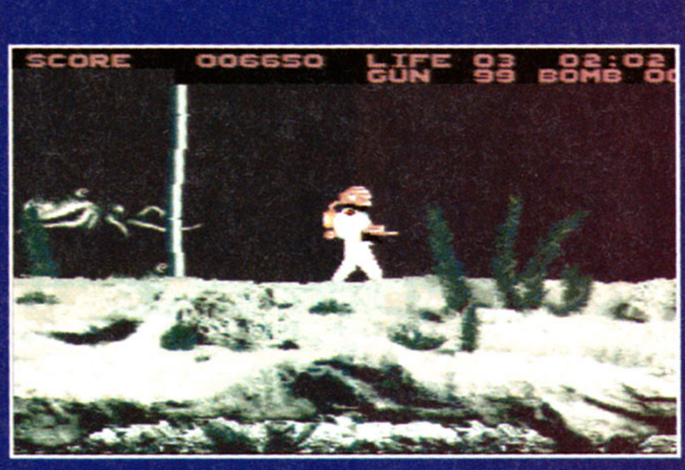
▲ Wheeeeee!



▲ Let me out of here, now!



▲ Boo!



▲ Watch out for that octopus.

▲ Nice Alloys.

▲ 'elp me, I am 'ow you say melting like a small portion of Brie on a 'ot summers day.

LETTERS

You probably think we've got it easy here at SEGA MAG, sitting on our lazy behinds all day long playing all the latest Sega releases and slapping Tom about the back of the head with planks of wood. Well, perhaps you might have a point. But you don't know what hell it is to sit in these stuffy offices on a nice sunny day, with the laughter of children and the whoops of students on extended "study vacations" echoing through the cavernous halls of our building. It's times like this that we wished we worked on Frolic Monthly or Your Park, I can tell you. Still, at least we're not all owls, otherwise we'd be sleeping right through all Mr Sol's finest. Anyway, you can cheer us up by writing to us at this ray-drenched address – 21st CENTURY DIGITAL MAILBAG, SEGA MAGAZINE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. There are occasionally replies to letters we print.

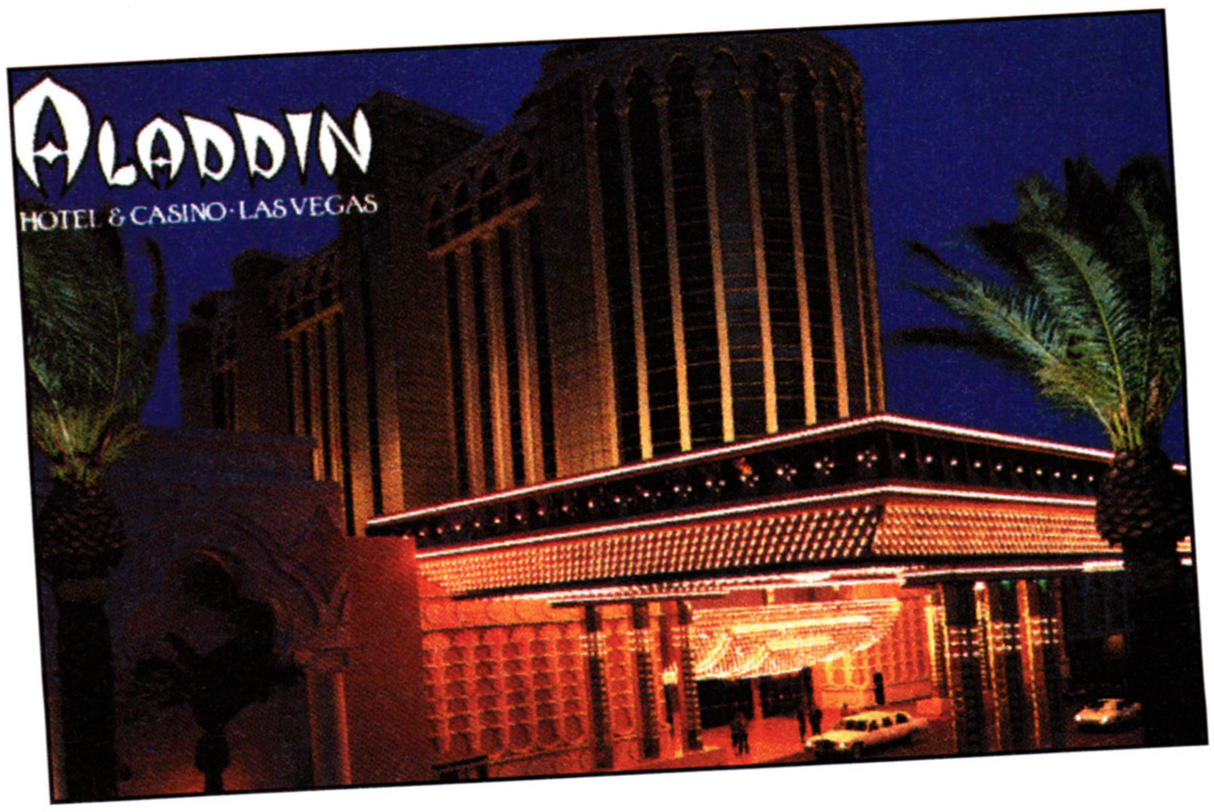
A FEW MONTHS OF NON-STOP PLAYING

Dear Sega Magazine,
At Christmas I bought a 32X with Virtua Racing. After a few months of non-stop playing I was getting a little tired of just playing normal Virtua Racing, so I was delighted to see that you had printed a Daytona cheat in issue 16. As soon as I saw the cheat I tried it out. I tried for around half an hour but I just could not get it to work. Please could you print a diagram of how and where I do the letters for the cheat.
Robert Jacob, Eastleigh, Hants.

SM: Perhaps this next gamut of letters might help explain it for you.

EVIL DAD!

DEAR SM
Hohohohohohahaho! Ha! What an amusing prank! Lead programmer of 32X VR Deluxe? Mr Li Poo Farl my ears. You cannot fool me, for I am indeed SMAR GANA FOG NIK. But thanx for the idea – I convinced our kid it was true and he just spent all weekend trying to spell DAYTONA.
Would you please inform the programmers of Stellar Assault how "sensor" is spelt, as I don't believe they would have programmed cosmic censorship into a game.
Keep up the good work etc etc.
Mr T, Mirfield, W Yorks.



SEGA'S PLANS REVEALED!

Dear Brill Piece Of Literature,
I know what those sneaky devils at Sega are up to, you know, with that cartridge port on the Saturn. I reckon they're gonna sell loads of Saturns before Nintendo can release their 64-BITter and when they do it'll probably outperform the Saturn, but then Sega will bring out a top spesh cartridge with loads of jiggery pokery such as extra processors and memory which will kick the ass off the Ultra 64 and PlayStation for that matter! Well, I hope that's the plan.
Simon K, Manchester.

Wow, I just can't wait for the 64X version of Space Harrier.

A LONG WINDED, IF I'M NOT QUITE MISTAKEN, LETTER

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
The main theme running through this letter is one of praise.
Firstly I would like to congratulate you on your "tip" for the Daytona Racing secreted within Virtua Racing Deluxe for the 32X featured in issue 16 for the month of April.
I must admit that you did have me going for a while, as I almost contemplated plugging the cart in and trying it. It was only on a

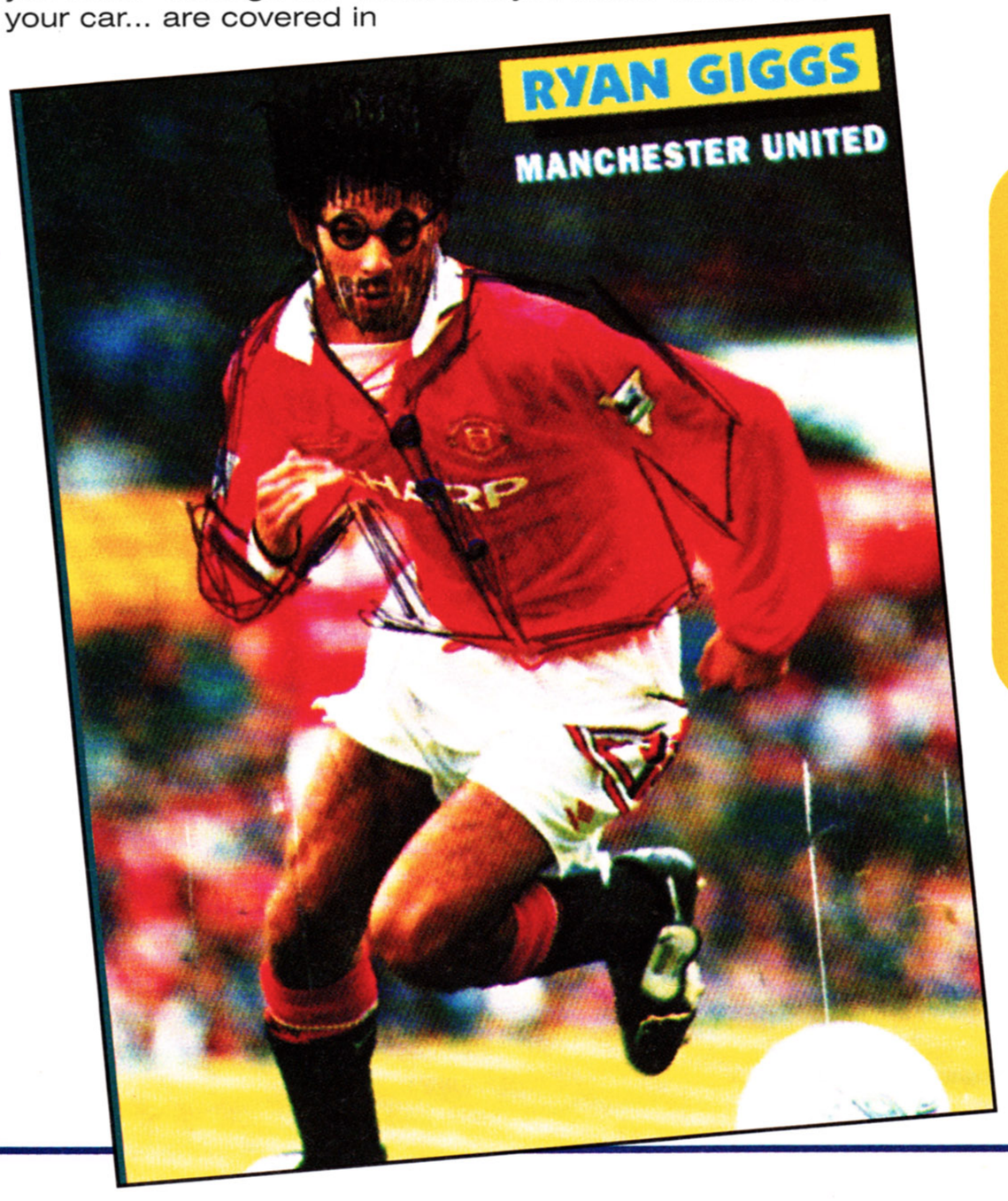
second read and the fact that this was the April issue that those nagging doubts started to appear. It was on a third read that I noticed that the man responsible for this tip was none other than a Mr Li Poo Farl, which if I am not mistaken is an anagram for April Fool. Very good, I wonder how many impolite letters you will receive from disgruntled anoraks claiming that this cheat does not work.
Secondly, I would like to congratulate you on what is an excellent magazine. I have been reading SEGA MAGAZINE since issue one, and being a more mature gamer (28) find that a lot of the magazines on the market, namely Sega Power, seem to cater for a more juvenile audience, apparently by the continuing use of toilet humour, reviews which make no sense whatsoever and now the inclusion of swearing. Maybe I am showing my age, but it would appear to me that the only reason for the use of swearing is to try and obtain a greater distribution. I am surprised that magazines still aim themselves at the younger market and that there aren't more "adult" (ooer!) magazines, as the older gamer is maybe in a better position to buy games and machines as they come out as we do not have to save our pocket money!
Anyway, I digress. I find your magazine an entertaining read, the reviews are honest and forthright, and the cutting responses to the "my mate sez Sega is better than Nintendo" letter highly amusing. I always rely on your magazine for advice on what games to buy and although on a few occasions I feel you have been a bit unfair, your recommendations have been excellent. So well done for a brilliant April Fool, keep up the excellent work and above all please do not slip into becoming another "comic".
Michael Pearse, Chatham, Kent.

SM: Me happy. Me you good letter yes, kapish? Me greater distribution whole point sales cash exactly why we cover games in the first place me you no yes? Arse. And on the subject on disgruntled anoraks...

Rich fiddles with his change in this pic from Adam Cadwell of Rossendale.

THE AMAZING MR SCREENSHOT!

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
I'm writing in to complain about the huge porky claiming that the first level of the divine Daytona USA being hidden in Virtua Racing Deluxe.
Who are you trying to fool with that lame attempt of a screen shot. Is that really supposed to look like Daytona. All you've done is cut out the two cars from a screen shot of Daytona, which happens to be in the top left-hand corner of p49 in issue 5, then stuck them onto a screenshot of VR Deluxe, which happens to be on p41 in issue 12. Also, if the shot in issue 16 is supposed to be the first level of Daytona, why is the shot of Big Forest on VR Deluxe. Also in the midst of this gargantuan tale you state "Change the views and you'll now notice how your car... are covered in



advertisements, just like the coin-op cars" (oh I wonder why?). So if the screenshot is of you in the cockpit of a Daytona car, then why is the stock car from VR Deluxe in front of you.
Now going onto the cheat itself, which is absolutely impossible to do. You'll find that it is completely impossible to spell out capital letters with your car without the writing being joined up and scribbly or without the car being able to reverse. I can just see all the gullible little kids still sitting up all day and night trying to get this farce to work while all you mean souls are sitting in the office having a good chuckle to yourselves. I can also see that kid who enjoys making up stories about Rankles going to town on this one.
I must admit that your mag is the best going but please don't spoil it by becoming like CVG and printing lies like being able to get gore on Mortal Kombat on the SNES, or if you go ten rounds with M Bison without hitting each other then Ryu and Ken's old master will drop down and chop Bison's head off. If the cheat is for real, which I hope it is, then give some clearer instructions of how to get it to work or show us some authentic screen shots. Oh, one more thing, would the 32X or the Saturn be able to replicate Killer Instinct exactly or even closely?I know this game will never appear on a Sega machine but I need to get a good idea of the capabilities of the two consoles.
Stuart Lutes, Bamber Bridge, Preston.

SM: Alright, alright, keep your wig on. As you've obviously deduced by now, that was indeed an April Fool, intended, like most practical jokes, as a bit of a laugh for ourselves and our loving readers. We didn't count on some nutter with an anal-retentive screenshot memory giving us the third degree about it. As for your closing question, both the 32X and Saturn could easily replicate Killer Instinct, and the coin-op (licensed by a third party) is actually scheduled to appear on Saturn by Christmas.
Ha ha – MAY FOOL!

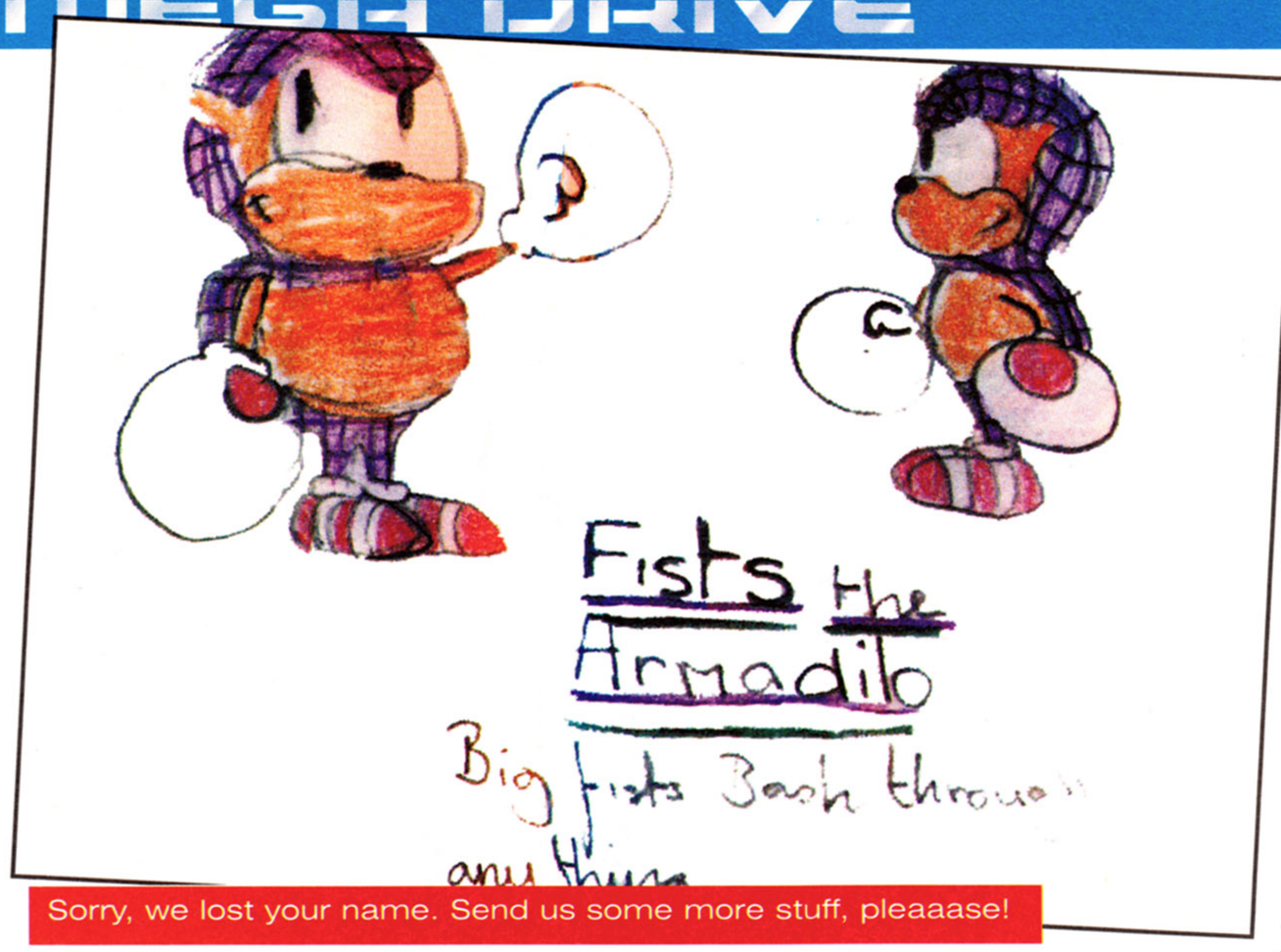
HEY, WHO ARE YOU CALLING SCUM?

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
I didn't actually get issue 16 until Saturday April 1st, and immediately took it home to read from cover to cover. When glancing through it again a second time I noticed the amazing Daytona cheat for Virtua Racing, which I soon recognised as an April Fools joke. However, by the time I read it it was after 12 o'clock on April Fool's day – so tradition states the joke's on you. I bet that makes you feel sick doesn't it, you scum?
B Hairline, University of Life

SM: Ooh, we're gutted.

I CAN'T FIND WOLVERINE ANYWHERE!

DEAR SEGA MAG,
I know you already know this, but a few months ago you showed us the Wolverine game in your showcase section, and near the bottom of the page you showed some comics and a book that could be bought if you found the Wolverine character a bit smart



Sorry, we lost your name. Send us some more stuff, pleaaase!

and wanted to read more about him. Since then I have been all over the place, but haven't found any of them. I am probably looking in the wrong places (and I don't mean butcher's shops or dry cleaners), or where I live is just crap for that kind of thing. So could you please print an address or a 'phone number of somewhere I can get these comics.
One more thing, that git Paul Johnson from Skegness is a bit of a wangau, isn't he? He seems to think he's some sort of columnist in your mag, and that your mag was developed just for him to talk crap in. Could you please print his address as well, and I could just go up to Skegness and beat him around the head with a rolled up copy of your mag? Well, thanks very much if you can help. Bye.
PS. Sam and Claire are pretty damn pretty aren't they? Bye.
John Watson, Corby, Northant.

SM: Well, we don't really know anywhere in Corby at all, let alone a decent comics shop. Hell, I don't even know where Northants is, to be honest. But you could try calling Forbidden Planet in London if you want. As for the lasses, well it took hours of computing retouching to make them look even barely human. But we're glad all our hard work is appreciated.

LET'S TALK MONEY

DEAR SEGA MAG,
Your mag is ace, cool, whatever. I don't want to suck though. Anyway, back to my letter, let's talk money. Why are Sega selling an out-of-date machine (the Mega-CD) at £180, but also selling a new, state of the art machine (the 32X) at £150? I mean, if you've got spare cash and you own a Megadrive you're going to want a new 32X, not a £30 more expensive old Mega-CD. So why don't Sega drop the price of the Mega-CD to about £100 and more people might buy it (can't see why though, it's rubbish).
Thomas Skinner, Woodthorpe, Notts.

I READ ALL OF YOUR MAG, I DO

DEAR SEGA MAG,
I have been reading your magazine since issue one and am probably the only person in the world that actually reads it all (yes, even Q&A) so I won't go on about how crap Digitiser are or how completely amazing, ahead of the "competition", interesting, up to date, biggest thing to hit this planet since the dinosaurs died out etc you are, because these are all well established issues.
I do actually have a reason for writing this (in case you wondered). What I want to say is about the Megadrive 32X. I have a message to all the people slagging it off, saying they will wait and see how it does before considering buying it, because it will probably turn out to be a flop like the Mega-CD was. I just want to point out that in your own sad way you are absolutely right! But you're also talking crap. Of course the 32X will be a flop if you take that attitude.
A machine will never get started unless people buy it because if it doesn't sell well nobody will want to make games for it. If people made up their mind now and bought a 32X the companies would realise that it was popular and make several games for it. While all you mentally retarded gophers sit around waiting for "someone else" to buy it first, I'm off to buy a 32X. I'll see you when you're 80 and still waiting for companies to release software for a machine which nobody has bought.
Sasha Cooper, Ashtead, Surrey.

SM: Right on! Remember, disciples, every journey starts with a single step, so if you want to make the 32X a success, vote with your wallets! And don't blame us if no-one else buys it!

NO TOSSING ALL ROUND THEN.

DEAR SM,
My friend is convinced that Nintendo is a whole lot better than Sega. He must be a bit brain dead. He has a SNES, and I have a Megadrive. Every day at school he is going on about how brilliant Nintendo is, and how crap Sega is. I personally can see it the other way around. Can you explain to him he is thick. And he says that Nintendo have a 64-BIT machine and Sega don't. I don't give a toss.
David Bird, Wanstead, London.

SM: We don't give a toss either, sorry.

Well, that's your lot for another month. Aww, don't be sad. It's nothing to cry about. Think of all the lovely showcases you can read now you've got this out of the way. Catch you in 28. Or thereabouts.

AN UNBEATABLE OFFER.

SEGA MAGAZINE SPECIAL READER OFFER!

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– Get the Official Mortal Kombat 2 Players Guide and never be beaten again!

For a meagre £4.00 (inc P&P), you can gain possession of this hand-crafted tome, carved from solid paper, colourised by the purest mountain ink, revealing to YOU the ancient fighting secrets of Mortal Kombat II!

The definitive Official Mortal Kombat 2 Player's Guide: 156 pages covering Mega Drive, SNES, Game Gear, and Game Boy formats.

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Q+A

Blimey. One minute it's snowing, the next we're all suffering from tropical fever. Well that's what Tom Cox/Pox reckons anyway (snigger). You just can't trust this British weather one little bit can you? Anyway, apart from anything else, thinking about summer has made everyone book loads of time off from work. Why, Claire is in Paris at this very moment, sipping Cabernet Sauvignon and rolling her r's at the local talent. And she's probably trying her hardest to avoid Tom Guise, because he's over there too. But of course, someone's got to stay here and do all the work. It's not hols, hols hols you know. So if you feel sorry for me, why not drop me a line, it's pretty quiet in the office these days. Write to: OH STOP WHINING AND GET ON WITH IT WILL YOU, Q&A, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

SORRY, I'M A BIT DIM

DEAR LORDS OF THE SEGA MAGAZINE DOMAIN,
If you can spare any time from your godly activities (of sitting around drinking cups of coffee), please answer these humble questions. otherwise I'll pop round and stick your 32X where the sun don't shine.
1 Are Codemasters planning to release a Micro Machines on the 32X?
2 Is it likely that Electronic Arts will release any 32X games, or are they just concentrating on the Saturn?
3 Will the Neptune be completely compatible with both the Megadrive and 32X software?
4 I have an idea for a game. Please give me the address of Sega and Virgin so I can send it to them.
5 When you showcased Mortal Kombat II on the 32X, you mentioned plug-thru a couple of times, but never elaborated. Please explain what you are talking about as I want to buy one when I get the Neptune.
6 How long will Doom stay on the shop shelves?
7 What is this about CD 32X games? Will you need a Mega-CD to run them?
RICHARD HESKETH, CHAMPION SCHLAPPER

SM:1 Not at the moment, more's the pity. 2 EA will release loads of games on the Saturn, but again, they're not too committed to the 32X although FIFA is hotly rumoured to be heading for the machine. 3 Yes. 4 Sega's address is 247 Cromwell Road, London SW5. Virgin's address is 338A Ladbroke Grove, London. 5 The plug thru IS the 32X dimwit. If you buy a Neptune you won't need to buy a 32X as well, because it already has one built in. 6 Should be around for a while yet. 7 No, they run on fresh air. OF COURSE you need a Mega-CD to run them. I'd like to see you try to stick a CD in the 32X slot.

CLUELESS

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
I am having a little trouble on classic. If you have any ideas about this level can you send a letter to me?
TIM SULLY, WEST SUSSEX

SM: Eh? Does anyone know what young Timmy is on about? Write in if you think you can help this poor demented chap.

GET IT TOGETHER

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
I have written in to you before, but have never had my letter printed. I would be very grateful if you could answer my letter this time.
1 What is the difference between NBA Jam and NBA Jam Tournament Edition? Which is the best buy?
2 Do you know where I can get hold of Snatcher on the Mega-CD? I can't find it in any of the shops that I've visited.

▲ Coming to a Game Gear near you.

probably be a better deal than TE.
2 Try Virgin Megastore or Future Zone. 3 Double Switch – the others are a bit duff. 4 Nope. 5 Theme Park on the Megadrive and Snatcher on the Mega-CD.

I LIKE WORDS

DEAR SEGA MAG,
1 How much will a Neptune cost and when will it be released?
2 Is it worth selling my Megadrive to buy a Neptune?
3 Who is Steve Stevely?
4 Will there be another Striker game?
5 Up to Issue ten, the spine of your magazine had letters on it. Then suddenly, it changed to pictures. Why was this?
6 Why don't Sega make a 64-bit machine called a Jupiter?
TOM BELL, HERTFORDSHIRE

SM: 1 It will cost under £200, but there's no confirmed release date yet. 2 Up to you really – a 32X will cost you around £170, and a whole new machine (Megadrive + 32X) will cost a few pounds more. 3 You know, Steve Priestly (from Movies, Games and Videos)? Well, it's kind of like him except...4 Hopefully not. 5 Blame the art gorillas, they're not very good at letters. 6 Perhaps they will.

BUY OUR NAG

DEAR SEGA MAG,
Please answer my questions.
1 Is there a cheat for Cannon Fodder?
2 Do you think I should buy a 32X or wait for the Saturn?
3 Is there going to be an Earthworm Jim 2?
4 Is Manchester United worth buying if you already have Sensible Soccer and Fifa '95?
Your mag is brill and I will never buy anything else.
TIPPY FROM SEDGEFIELD

SM: 1 No. 2 Wait for the Saturn – it's loads more impressive. 3 Yes, it should be by the end of the year. 4 No.

NO CHEATS HERE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO SEGA MAGAZINE,
1 Which games will be released for the 32X: Virtua Fighter 1&2, Daytona, Mortal Kombat III, Primal Rage, SSFII Turbo X.
2 If I buy a 32X, would it be better to buy Street Racer on the 32X or the Megadrive?
3 Name the best games for the Saturn that will be out at the time of its release.
4 Give us a cheat for SSFII. Not the group battle or colour change cheat.
TAIYIB ASHRAF, BRADFORD

SM: 1 Virtua Fighter and Primal Rage. 2

▲ Also out on the Master System very, very soon.

32X. 3 Virtua Fighter, Daytona, Panzer Dragoon. 4 Sorry, there aren't any more.

OOH YES, PERFECTLY LEGAL

DEAR Q&A,
In my town there's a shop that swaps all sorts of computer games for a pound. Are these legal? Do you think they are a good idea?
2 Will Dynamite Headdy be released for the Master System?
3 Just after Christmas I was going to buy Mortal Kombat II for the Master System, but my mum talked me out of it. Was this a good thing?
4 Will there be a new Sonic game for the Master System?
5 Do you like my pictures for some new Sonic characters? (See letters page)
Keep up the good work,
MICHAEL RUSHEN, ESSEX

SM: They're probably legal (just), and as long as you get a good swap, they're an excellent idea. 2 No. 3 Yes. 4 Nope, the Master System is on its last legs.

LOADSA MONEY

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
I've just sold my SNES (thank god) and I have £350 to spend on a console and some software. What should I do with my money? Should I:
1 Buy a 32X and a Mega-CD (I already own a Megadrive)?
2 Buy a heap of Megadrive games?
3 Buy a Saturn?
Here are some better questions:
Will Daytona be released at the same time as the Saturn?
2 Will Dark Forces be released on the Saturn and the 32X?
3 Will a Sonic game be released on the Saturn?
4 When Virtua Fighter 2 is released, will it be packaged with the Saturn too? I think this would be a really good idea.
JEDI KNIGHT MEHUL DESAI, LEICESTER

SM: Wait until the official release of the Saturn, and buy one then. 1 Yes. 2 Maybe. 3 Probably. 4 I doubt it.

I HOLD THE SECRET OF ETERNAL LIFE

DEAR Q&A,
Right then. Richard Sturdy wrote in to you in issue 15 and was interested in the mouse for the Megadrive . Well,I've seen an advertisement in the latest issue of Mean Machines. The mouse costs £19.99 and comes with a free mouse mat. Now could you please answer these questions for me.
1 Theme Park will be released on both the Megadrive and the Mega-CD. Which is the best, because I have a choice of both versions.
2 On the Mega-CD version of Theme Park, can you actually go on the rides like you can in the 3DO version?
This is the first time I've written to you, so I'd really appreciate it if you would print and answer my letter.
A LOYAL SEGA MAGAZINE READER, MANSFIELD

SM: 1 They're both pretty similar, although the Mega-CD has better music. 2 No.

LOOK, JUST BUY A PC, ALRIGHT?

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
Can you please answer my questions.
1 Will Sim City 2000, Railroad Tycoon, Transport Tycoon or Elite ever appear on the Megadrive, CD or 32X?
2 Will Doom 2 be released on 32X?
3 Will Sensible World of Soccer or Civilisation ever appear on the Megadrive?
4 I can't find Dune II in any shops. Do you know of anywhere I could get hold of it?
ANDREW MURRAY, TRANMERE

SM: Sim City 2000 was scheduled for Mega-CD although nothing ever came of it. 2 Maybe, although there's no word of a conversion yet. 3 No. 4 Virgin Megastore or Future Zone are likely to stock the game.

AW. BLESS.

DEAR SEGA MAGAZINE,
I Like reading your magazine, but I want to actually write a magazine. I am only 12 years of age, but have good grades in English (no I'm not a boffin, I mainly mess about in class (You're so hard aren't you - SM)). Your magazine would be a good one to work at. Could you tell me how to get started. My brother thinks Home Alone on the Megadrive is ace and that I should buy it instead of Story of Thor. What do you think?

▲ Not a good game.

SM: Well, you're a bit too young to be working on a magazine just yet, but you could do your own version at school. Then if you still want to work on magazines when you're older, you'll already have a bit of experience. Take as many english-related subjects as you can, and the more courses you take, the more chance you stand of getting a job. Oh and by the way, Home Alone is completely awful – Story of Thor is a much better choice.

RELEASE SCHEDULE

MAY
MEGADRIVE
ALIEN SOLDIER
GAME GEAR
SUPER COLUMNS
STRIKER
MEGA-CD
ETERNAL CHAMPIONS

JUNE
MEGADRIVE
BATMAN AND ROBIN
MEGADRIVE 32X
STELLAR ASSAULT
MOTHER BASE
CHAOTIX
MEGA-CD
SHINING FORCE 2
GAME GEAR
BATMAN AND ROBIN
STRIKER

JULY
MEGA-CD
STRIKER

It's that time again, fellow game freaks. I bet you can hardly contain yourself at the thought of next month's Q&A extravaganza. Keep those problems rolling in amigos!

THERE

THAT IS

That's the message rammed home when you study Mortal Kombat 3's attract mode - which we have, since we tracked down and descended upon the first UK arcade to take delivery of the red hot Midway coin-op. What's it like? Here's where you find out in this showcase packed with forth-right opinion. Oh, and all the moves and fatalities found to date...

Well, it's finally arrived in England - the most hyped coin-op of all-time, Mortal Kombat 3. And it's good. It's very good. Midway have created a beat 'em up that is a super-effective sequel, giving players more characters, more secret bits to discover, more fatalities - more everything, in actual fact. It's fair to say that the boat has been well and truly pushed out with this title and it shows.

Previous Mortal Kombat offerings have lacked quite a bit of background animation, but the team have certainly improved things in this sequel with lashings of parallax scrolling and some superlative effects. For example, in the subway level, it's possible to uppercut your opponent through the ceiling. Okay, so Capcom have done this already in the X-Men coin-op, but it still looks superb. The sound remains as ghoulish as ever, but this time there are even more sampled effects, and far superior music, which gives the game a great atmosphere of death, doom and destruction. The gameplay has also been substantially upgraded. For example, whilst combos in other videogames are simply the normal moves strung together, in MK3, they're given new, different, more impressive frames of animation. The gameplay has also been designed to give you more of a audio/visual hit whenever you perform a particularly impressive set of moves.

Stryker: very hard.

Smack! Arghh! Pain!

Bosh! Owwww!

IS IT REALLY THAT GOOD?

Well, sort of. I think it's fair to say that there's nothing here that's really going to convert people who don't like Mortal Kombat. The gameplay remains very similar in execution to the older games, and I think it's still fair to say that the collision recognition and overall "realism" still falls far short of the likes of X-Men and Virtua Fighter.

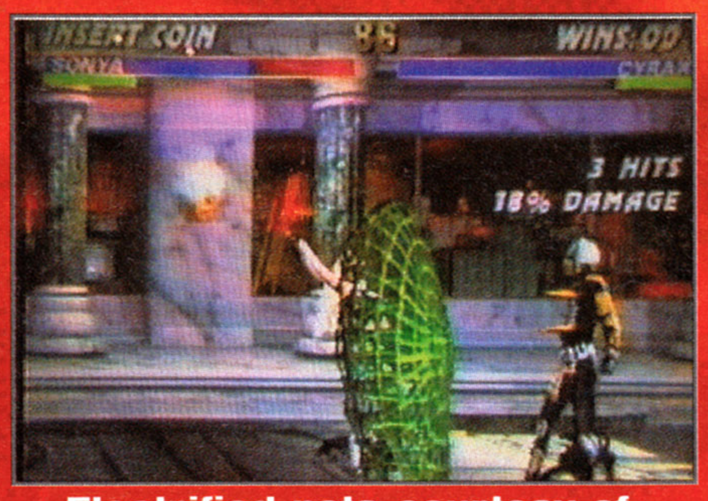
We're not going to take anything away from Mortal Kombat 3 though, because if you are keen on the older games, the

HAVE MERCY!

There's nothing like conclusively defeating an opponent in a humiliating fashion, is there? Well, MK3 goes one better. On the third round, you can give your opponent back some energy before you pound the living daylights out of them again. Hurrah! For mercy, simply push D, D, D, D, Run.

E is no KNOWLEDGE not POWER!

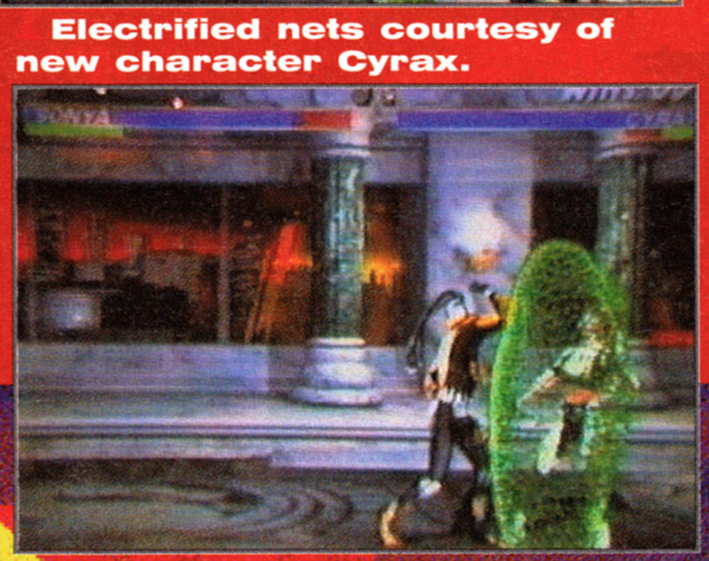
Sheeva: prize missile dodger.



Electrified nets courtesy of new character Cyrax.

THE PITS

Yup, that thar pit fatality returns in MK3 and this time it's more grizzly than ever before. Any character can perform this particular move and it's a simple case of pressing F, F, F, Run. Watch all those entrails go flying. Yummy. Oddly enough, you can use exactly the same fatality move on the subway AND the bell tower as well to exact different forms of death upon your dismal opponent.



A NEW BUTTON

The button configuration for the older MK games was always slightly bizarre, using a total of five buttons. Midway have added a sixth for MK3 (meaning that the game can fit nicely into all those Street Fighter 2 cabinets). This button is for running attacks. It's a new feature and the MK3-playing brethren haven't quite figured out any cunning techniques using this button yet, but it sure is great for surprising your opponent. Before removing his head, or something.

▲ Check out Jax's fine new cyborg arms. Nasty...

▲ Some of the new special moves are accompanied by top-notch special effects. Smart.

THERE is no KNOWLEDGE THAT is not POWER!

CHARACTERS & COMBOS

Well, forget all that guff I've just spent hours researching and writing. Let's face facts, you want to know about all the characters, their special moves and fatalities. Well, after a quick trawl on the Internet, here is every move known at the time of writing (April 26, 1995). Now, there's no doubt at all that all the combos and special moves work fine, but apparently, Midway have been quite cunning and may well have changed all the fatalities and animalities for the UK version. On the other hand, that seems a bit unlikely, and there's little reason why these version 1.00 codes shouldn't work.

Cyrax triumphs over Sonya, but where's the gory fatality eh? Check out our moves guide for ultimate knowledge! And presumably, power too.

SINDEL

Sindel has something of a lethal haircut, being able to chuck people about with your mutated follicles. Smart eh? Well, suffice to say, she's one of these "new character" types that everyone's going to want to master. Well, here are some of her moves, along with a devastating five hit combo attack.

- Float: B, B, F, HK
- Air Fireball: B, DB, D, DF, F, LK
- Ground Fireball: F, F, LP
- Yell: F, F, F, HP
- COMBO: HK, HP, HP, LP, HK
- ANIMALITY: F, F, HP

SHEEVA

She looks like Goro's little sister - owing to her four arms, but actually she's the queen of Shao Kahn and instrumental in his quest to conquer the earth. She's also super-rock hard and laden with combos (two four hit ones are shown below).

- Ground Stomp: B, D, B, HK
- Teleport Stomp: D, U
- Fireball: D, DF, F, HP
- COMBO: HP, HP, LP, (F + HP)
- COMBO: LK, HK, HK, (B + LK)
- FATALITY 1: F, F, F, LP (close)
- FATALITY 2: Hold HK, F, F, F, Release HK

CYRAX

This guy is kind of like MK3's rendition of Scorpion (who doesn't appear in this game), but armed with tons of smart attacks, including electrified green nets and bombs. We've got tons of his moves below, along with a four-hit and three-hit combo.

- Exploding Teleport: F, D, Block
- Throw Net: B, B, B, LK
- Throw Bombs Close: Hold LK, B, B, HK
- Throw Bombs Far: Hold LK, F, F, HK
- Air Throw: B, DB, D, DF, F, Block
- COMBO: HP, HP, LK, LP
- COMBO: HP, HP, HK
- FATALITY 1: U, U, U, D, HP (near)
- FATALITY 2: 2 360's, Run

KABAL

What? Another new character? When will it all stop? Well actually, the MK3 fans haven't really found out much about this character yet. Just a few special moves and a super-complicated combo. Kabal could turn out to be the deadliest-character-but-difficult-to-master-type in this new edition of the game.

- Gear Slice: B, B, B, Run
- Purple Fireball: B, B, HP
- Tornado Spin: B, F, LK
- COMBO: Jump-Kick, Spin, LK, LK, HP, HP, (D + HP) , Jump-Kick, B, B, HP
- FATALITY 1: B, B, F, D, Block (near)
- ANIMALITY: Charge HP (2 seconds), Release HP (close)

LIU KANG

Well, he's back, and he's got much the same moves as he had in the last Mortal Kombat game. And he's got long hair now, as well. Otherwise, it's business as usual, really. What he has got though, is a super five and seven-hit combo - and we've got both of 'em!

- High Fireball: F, F, HP
- Low Fireball: F, F, LP
- Flying Kick: F, F, HK
- Bicycle Kick: Charge LK
- COMBO: HP, LK, LK, HP, LK
- COMBO: HP, HP, Block, LK, LK, HK, LK
- FATALITY 1: F, F, F, B, F, LK

SHANG TSUNG

In basic terms, Shang Tsung remains much the same as he is in Mortal Kombat 2, although his aesthetic qualities have been changed significantly. He's still quite powerful, more so this time because he can morph into all those luvverly new characters as well. And he's got a smart five-hit combination attack!

- One Skull: B, B, HP
- Two Skulls: B, B, F, HP
- Three Skulls: B, B, F, F, HP
- Fire Eruption: F, F, B, B, LK
- Sub-Zero Morph: F, D, F, HK
- Cyrax Morph: Block, Block, Block
- Liu Kang Morph: Circle Joystick
- Sindel Morph: B, D, B, LP
- Jax Morph: F, F, D, LP
- Stryker Morph: F, F, F, HK
- Sektor Morph: D, F, B, Run
- Nightwolf Morph: U, U, U
- Sheeva Morph: F, D, F, LK
- Kano Morph: F, B, F, Block
- COMBO: LK, HP, HP, LP, (B + HK)

JAX

The strongman-type from MK2 returns, and this time he's decked himself out with robotic arms, which makes him far more powerful than he was in the last game. He's also got a new range of spectacular special moves and a fab five-hit combination attack.

- Double Missile: F, F, B, B, HP
- Single Missile: B, F, HP
- Running Shoulder Slam: F, F, HK
- Ground Slam: Charge LK
- Grab & Punch: F, F, LP
- COMBO: HP, HP, Block, LP, (B + HP)

SUB ZERO

Sub Zero has deserted the way of the ninja, so in this game you actually get to see his face. He's still got the usual assortment of ice-related special moves (see below), but this time they're more diverse. For example, he can even produce an ice-clone of himself. Well, enough of this banter, on with the moves.

- Freeze: D, DF, F, LP
- Ice Shower: D, DF, F, HP
- Ice Clone: D, DB, B, LP
- Slide: B, (LP + Block + LK)
- COMBO: HP, HP, LP, (B + LK), (B + HK), (B + HK)
- COMBO: HK, HK
- FATALITY 1: D, F, D, F, LP (close)
- FATALITY 2: D, F, B, HK (near)
- ANIMALITY: Hold Block, U, U (close)

SONYA

One of the first computer characters who really gives you a bit of hassle is Sonya, who didn't die at the end of Mortal Kombat I after all. Those long months in the Outworld have enabled Sonya to hone her skills to new levels.

- Rings: D, DF, F, LP
- Bicycle Kick: B, B, D, HK
- Leg Grab: D + LP + Block
- Air Punch: F, B, HP
- COMBO: HP, HP, LP, (B + HP)
- FATALITY 1: D, D, D, F, LK (anywhere)
- ANIMALITY: Hold LP, F, F, B, B, Release LP

(near-far)

KANO

Jax was the heroic type who rescued Sonya from the Outworld, but at the same time he released the evil cyborg Kano, who is now far more powerful than he was in the first MK game. Even when he's controlled by the computer, he's still extremely deadly.

- Flying Roll: Charge LK
- Knife Throw: D, DB, B, HP
- Knife Uppercut: D, DF, F, HP
- Grab & Bite: B, DB, D, DF, F, LP
- Air Throw: Block in air
- COMBO: HP, HP, HK, LK, (B + HK)
- COMBO: HP, HP, (D + LP), Jump Kick, Air Throw
- FATALITY 1: F, F, F, LP (near)
- FATALITY 2: F, F, F, HK (close)
- ANIMALITY: Charge HP, F, F, F, Release HP

STRYKER

When Shao Kahn came along and stole everyone's soul, Stryker was the only guy for miles around who survived the demonic onslaught. A riot police type, Stryker is equipped with a gun, baton and a clutch of grenades, which makes up for his lack of super-powers.

- Baton Throw: F, F, HK
- High Grenade: F, DF, D, DB, B, HP
- Low Grenade: F, DF, D, DB, B, LP
- Baton Trip: F, B, LP
- COMBO: HP, HP, LP
- COMBO: LK, HP, HP, LP, +air
- FATALITY 1: D, F, D, F, Block (close)
- FATALITY 2: F, F, F, F, LK (far)

SEKTOR

This guy isn't actually human at all. He's a robot ninja type who's out to kill off Sub Zero. Equipped with a number of spectacular-looking special moves, he's one of those cool show-off type characters.

- Heat Seeker Missile: F, DF, D, DB, B, HP
- Straight Missile: F, F, LP
- Teleport: F, F, LK
- COMBO: HP, HP, LK, LP
- COMBO: HP, HP, HK
- COMBO: Jump-Kick, Tele-Uppercut, HP, Jump-Kick
- FATALITY 1: B, B, B, HK (near)

NIGHTWOLF

A native American type, whose shamanic skills have detected the arrival of Shao Kahn and the Outworld menace. Luckily enough, he's also a top martial artist type, which is just as well or he wouldn't last very long in this game otherwise, shaman or not.

- Shoot Arrow: F, DF, D, DB, B, LP
- Hatchet Uppercut: B, DB, D, DF, F, HP
- Green Shield: B, B, B, HK
- Shadow Shoulder Smash: F, F, F, LK
- COMBO: HP, HP, LP, Hatchet, Hatchet, HP, Arrow
- COMBO: HP, HP, Hatchet Uppercut, Standing HP, Shadow Charge
- COMBO: HK, HP, HP, LP, Hatchet, Jump-Kick
- FATALITY 1: B, B, B, HP (near)
- FATALITY 2: D, F, F, HK (close)
- ANIMALITY: Hold Block, D, D (close)

KUNG LAO

Despite being a character that everyone played before in MK2, very little is known about his techniques in MK3. He looks much the same, and some of the moves remain very similar, but at the time of writing, several moves (including his animality and fatality) remain a mystery...

- Hat Throw: B, F, LP
- Teleport: D, U
- Energy Spin: F, D, F, Run
- Diagonal Kick: D, HK
- COMBO: HP, LP, HP, LP, LK, LK, (B + HK)

ANIMALITIES!

Well, these finishing moves have been rumours for longer than I can remember, but they've finally surfaced in MK3. Performing an animality is hard - really HARD. For starters, a fight really has to go the distance. You need it to last three rounds and you have to give your opponent mercy (see the mercy box) before you administer the coup de grace. The downside of these moves is that they appear to have been included at the expense of babalities and friendship moves.

Sindel: "lethal follicles".

Damage: "29%"

Flying kick: more pain!

Not much going on here.

ENTER THE ULTIMATE CODE

Midway have incorporated a unique codes system into MK3, designed to boost lastability significantly. For single players, it lets you skip rounds and such-like, but when both players are at the console, a whole range of incredible options can be enabled.... if you know the right code. We would print all the lovely codes we've got hold of, but apparently they've been changed for the final version. The results, though, remain the same, so look out for such wacky additions as disabling the block button and randomly changing character during the course of the game. Other tomfoolery to look out for includes "dark-fighting" and disabling throws. Ooh.

Kano presents a serious CPU challenge in MK3.

sheer wealth of secret bits, combined with some of the super-clever lastability boosters are going to make this your favourite game yet.

What's more, Midway have got a very clever campaign for the game lined-up, culminating in a new arcade version to be released in September. This upgrade will feature new characters, new moves and new fatalities and whilst it won't be a sequel in its own right, it will offer MK3 fans tons of new stuff to master.

IT'S COMING OUT ON SATURN

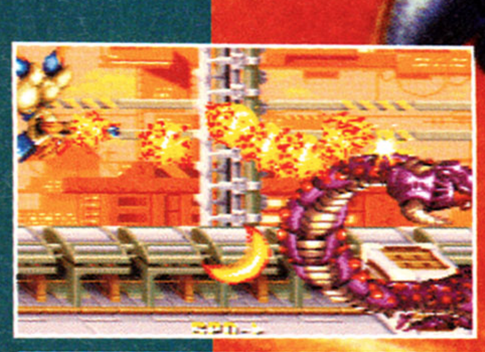
As we write, GT Interactive have just announced that they're going to be releasing conversions of Mortal Kombat 3 for the Saturn and Ultra 64. Both conversions are due for release in April next year. This is six months after the Playstation version, but this gives the coders extra time to get the Saturn version looking even more superb, and could also include everything from the upgraded MK3 coin-op that's being released later this year. Look, if you like the coin-op, it's going to be an essential buy, you hear us?

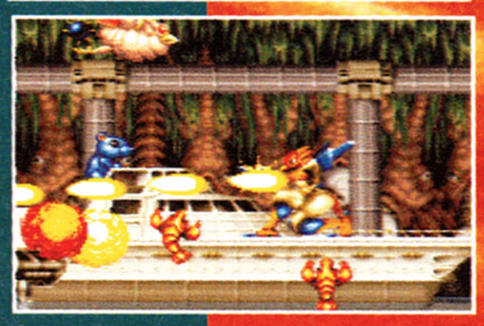
MANY THANKS TO DERRICK LYNCH AT FAMILY LEISURE, WHO HELPED US OUT IMMENSELY WITH THIS FEATURE. BY THE WAY, 'PLAY TO WIN' ARCADE ON OXFORD STREET GOT THE GAME FIRST.

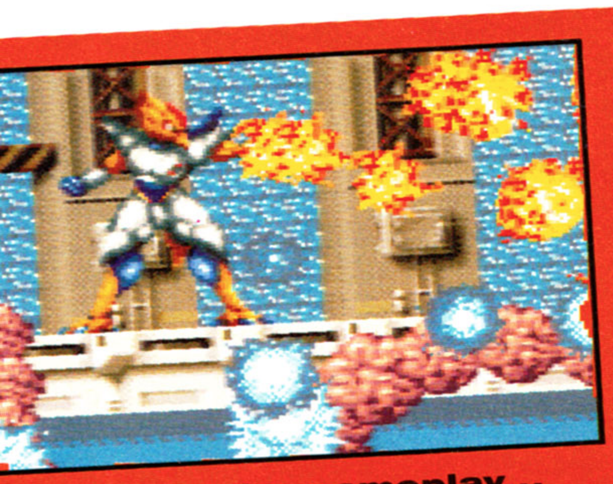
TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

Ever since Gunstar Heroes blasted onto the Megadrive two years ago, we've waited with bated breath for a sequel. However, it seems the programmers, Treasure, have no intention of releasing one on the Megadrive. Instead, they've used the same game engine to create an all-new shoot 'em up. 'All-new 'being the operative word, as TOM GUISE has discovered...

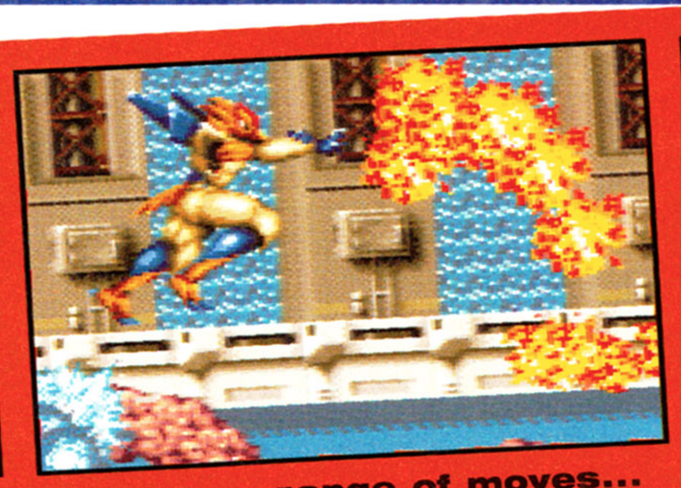
Ah, good evening everyone. I suppose you are wondering why I have gathered you all here today. Perhaps you think it's to read another of these game 'showcases'. Well, you couldn't be more wrong. Admittedly, it does say Showcase at the top of the page and at a quick glance it may even look like one, but that is all just a simple ruse to hide the true purpose of this feature from lesser-minded individuals. You see, each one of you has been specially chosen to witness a startling discovery. And to that effect, secret SEGA MAGAZINE agents across the country – who knows who they could be? Your mother, the postman, those men in blue suits who drove past your house in an unmarked van with a radar dish on top – have implanted a hypnotic command in your brain, allowing you to see this coded document in place of the usual witty showcase banter. Such are the measures employed to conceal the truth about... the next stage in the evolution of the video game! We're not talking about 32-bit games here. For all their flashy graphics, they still possess 'ordinary' gameplay. Nope, we're talking about a game created for the advanced gaming being. We're talking about Project Alien Soldier.







▲ Adding to the gameplay...



▲ there's a range of moves...

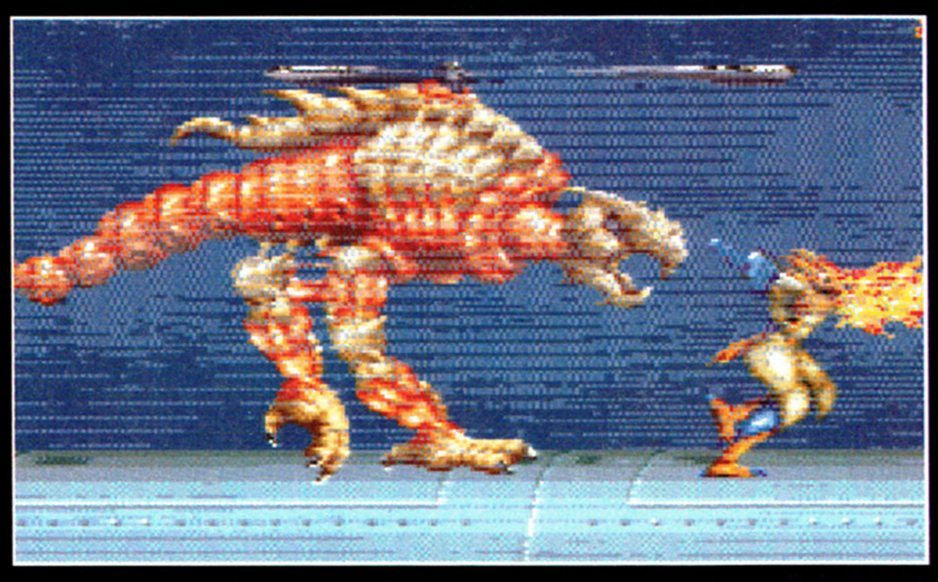
▲ from hovering in midair...

▲ ...to running on the ceiling.

TOO MANY BOSSES SPOIL THE BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

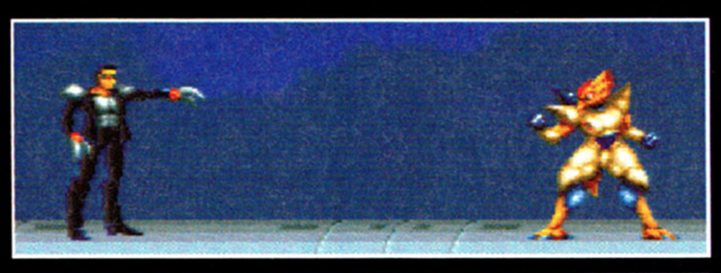
So, it's a boss game eh? Full of increasingly more terrifying bosses, eh? Find it hard to believe? Well, perhaps this 'photographic evidence' will convince you otherwise. That's right my friends, this game exists here on Earth, as surely as you or I!

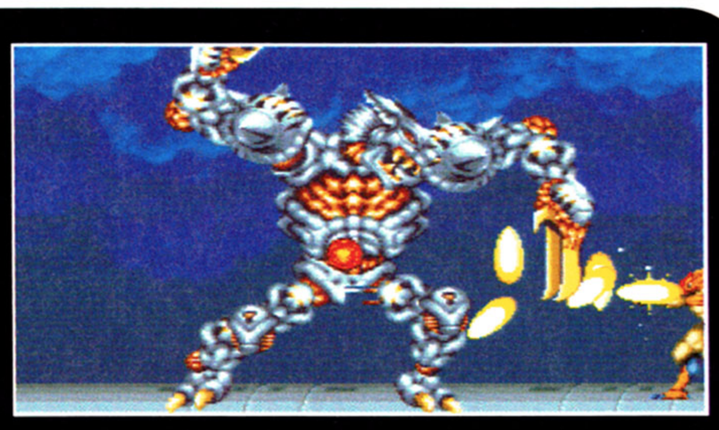
FLYING-NEO

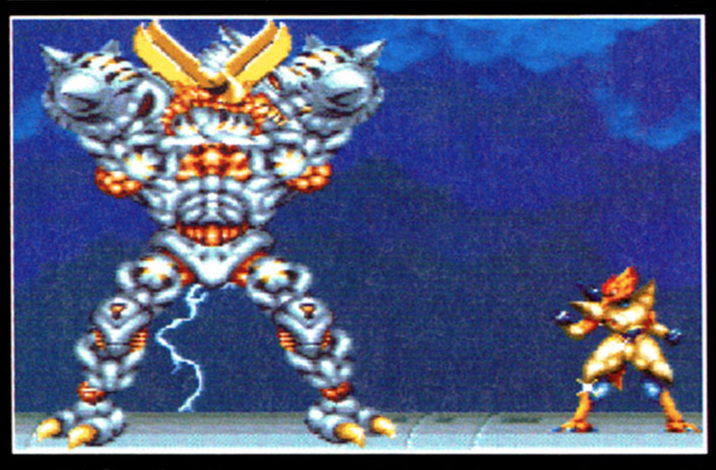


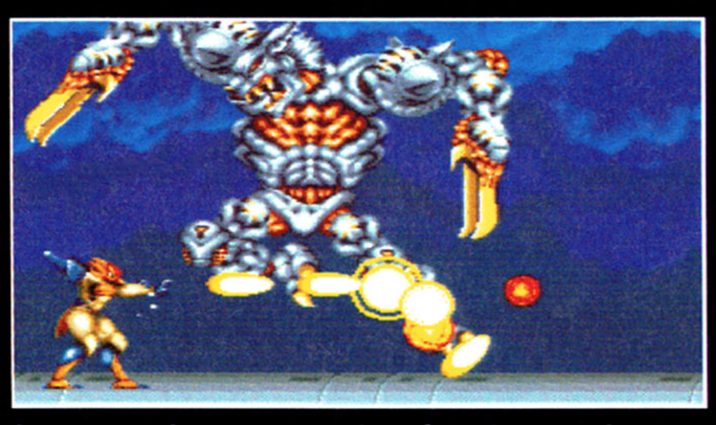
▲ See, see, I told you. Now that's a terrifying boss.

XI-TIGER

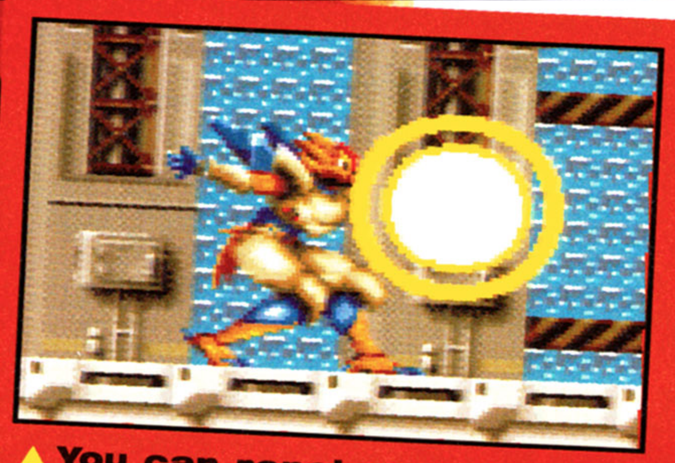








▲ This fella's your arch-enemy. And, monstrous as he is, he only appears halfway through the game. Far worse awaits!



▲ You can repel enemy fire.

▲ Switch between six weapons.

▲ Or turn into a fiery phoenix.

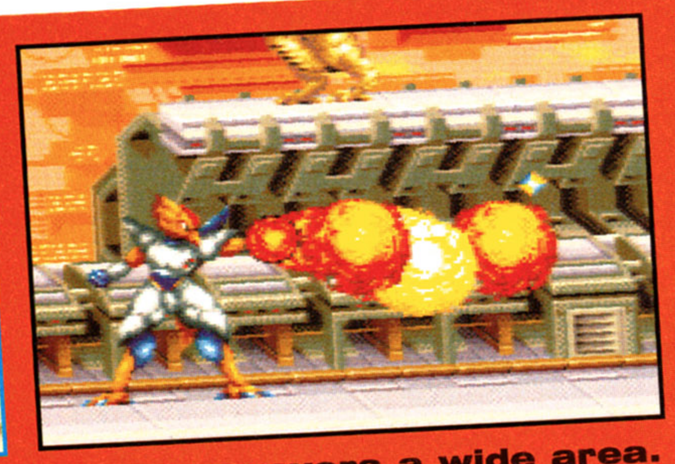
YOU WILL KILL BLAKE CARRINGTON!

But perhaps I'm jumping the gun a bit. To truly understand what makes Alien Soldier so special, we first have to go back in time, two years to be precise, to look at another game – Gunstar Heroes. Even by today's standards, Gunstar Heroes is, quite simply, fantastic. What makes it such a brilliant game? Well, if that's the question going through your mind, you obviously haven't played it. And boy, are you missing out. Super-stylish graphics, obscenely good sound-effects, hyper-explosive shoot 'em up action and a massive array of death-dealing weaponry. That's what makes the game so brilliant. That and the bosses. And Gunstar Heroes is packed full of bosses. Big ones, small ones, some as big as your head. Some as big as a three-storey tower block, some as small as a mouse, some that change shape seven times, some that have stupid names. Yep, if there's one thing that makes Gunstar Heroes such an awesome blaster, it is, without a doubt, the bosses.

FIRST YOU WILL STEAL THE STEPHENS SAPPHIRE!

Bosses. The cornerstone of every nutritious action game! And Gunstar Heroes' programming team Treasure know it, because that's the secret ingredient behind their long-awaited second shoot 'em up, Alien Soldier. Obviously, they looked at what everyone enjoys most in a blasting game and came to the conclusion it was the bosses. Sure, running through levels gunning down swarms of little baddies is fun, but it's only when you get to 'The Boss' that the palpitations of fear begin. It's only when the scenery starts trembling and a huge robot bursts through the backdrop that you scream. That being the case, why bother with the normal bit of the game? Why not just have a game that consists of one awesome boss after another? Well, that's exactly what Treasure must have thought, because that's exactly what Alien Soldier is. It's the world's first boss game!

▲ Each weapon is different.



▲ Flamer covers a wide area.

▲ Homing targets the enemy.

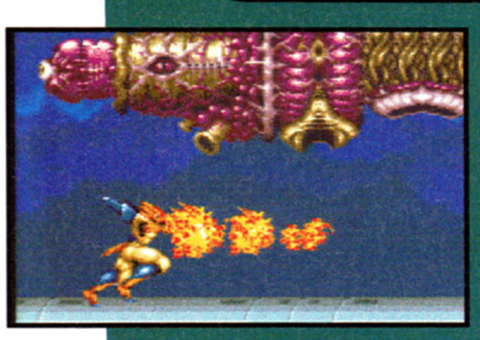
▲ Buster is the most

YOU WILL THEN DISPOSE OF YOURSELF!

Twenty-five bosses in all. Each one more gargantuan and terrifying than the last. One after another after another after another. And that's pretty much all there is to it. Of course, just like Gunstar Heroes before it, Alien Soldier features super-stylish graphics, obscenely good sound-effects, hyper-explosive shoot 'em up action and a massive array of death-dealing weaponry. But, if it's scrolling levels filled with average baddies that you're after, you'll be disappointed. There are short sections of 'level' between each monster, and even a few average baddies therein, but this is really a boss-only game. And to emphasise the boss-battling nature of the game, there's an amazing amount of options and statistics available to satisfy the connoisseur boss-hunter, even down to how you want the life gauges displayed. Do you want them as coloured energy bars? Or numbered ratios? Or perhaps not there at all? Each time you lose a game, you not only get a password to continue from that point, you also get a mass of facts and figures informing you of the names of the bosses you've beaten, the time it took you to beat each one, how many continues each one took, how much damage you took and a lot more besides. Alien Soldier turns the once mindless pleasure of the shoot 'em up into a precise fine art, complete with technical data!

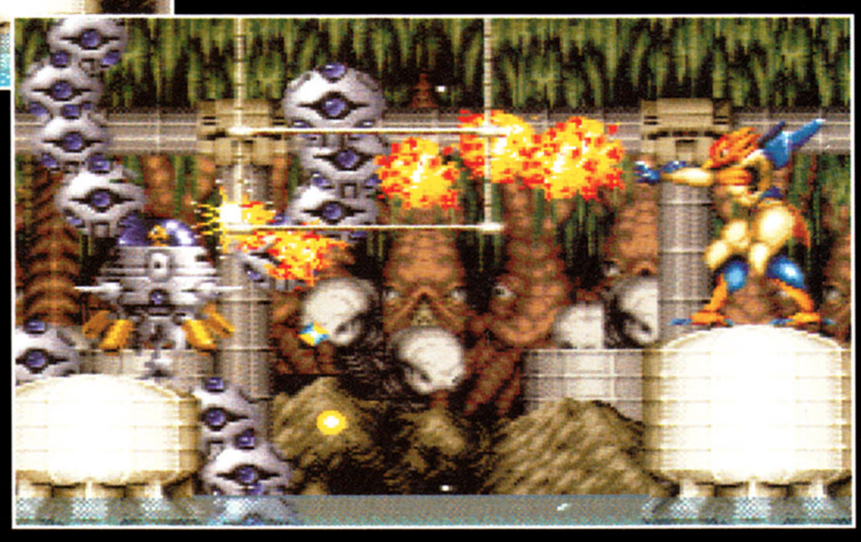
WHEN YOU WAKE YOU WILL REMEMBER... NOTHING!

Thus we have it – the next stage in the evolution of the video game. A game grown from just a single section of 'the old games'. Who knows what lies next? Perhaps, in an effort to capture the simplistic pleasure of joypad movement we'll return to playing Pong, or maybe in the future we'll just play those reflex testers found in pubs. As you can imagine, the revelation of this 'higher gaming' could cause major panic among the old-age population who've only just become accustomed to Sonic the Hedgehog and Tetris. As such, we've decided to maintain complete secrecy over this sensitive information until mankind is ready to face it! And when it is, it will be down to you chosen ones to carve out a bright new future here on Earthopolis! Thus ends this coded message.



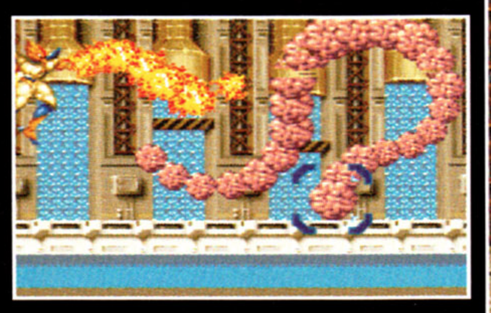
SEGA

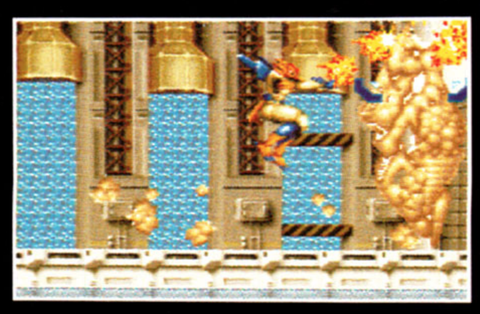
GUSTHEAD



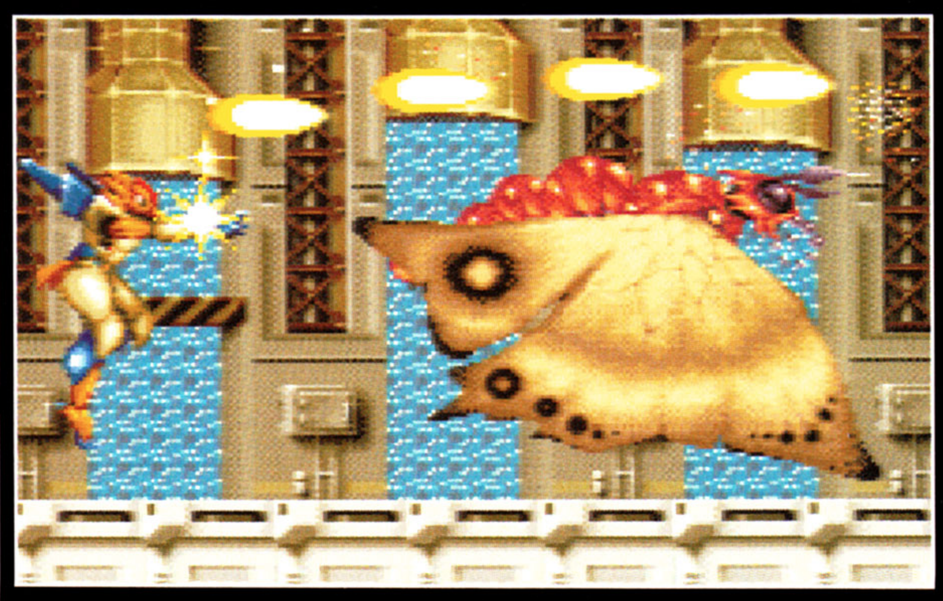
▲ The bosses in the first half of the game are as nothing compared to those in the second. This strange-looking creature, swirls around like a fan. First blowing the Alien Soldier away, then sucking him towards its lethally sharp sides.

BUGMAX

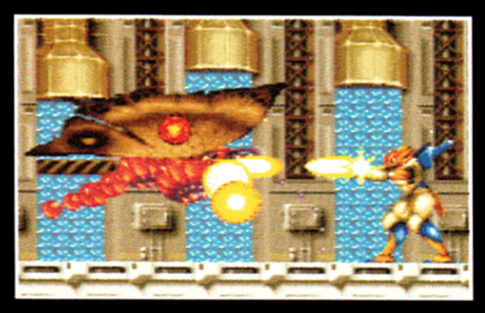


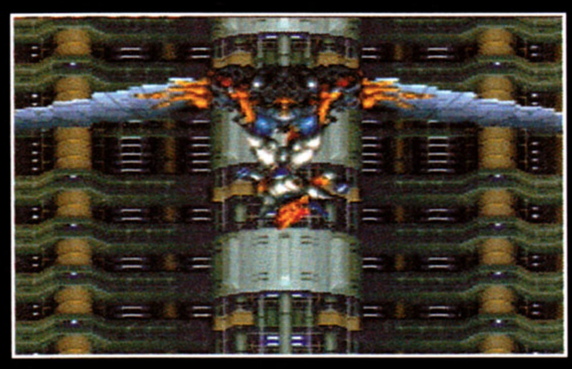


▲ This strange cocoon boss seems strangely dormant when you first confront it.

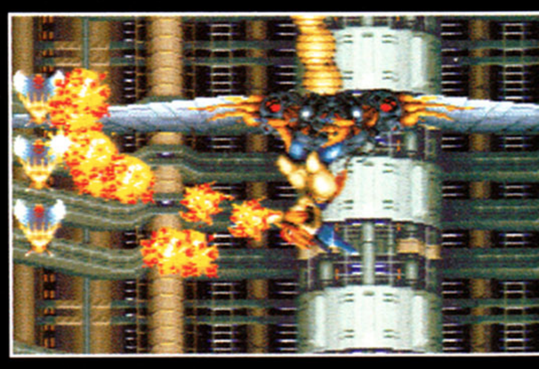


▲ However, after a certain amount of hits it splits open, releasing this massive moth. The textured wings are some of the most impressive graphics you'll ever see.





▲ This fly boss grabs you!



▲ Spewing out bugs...

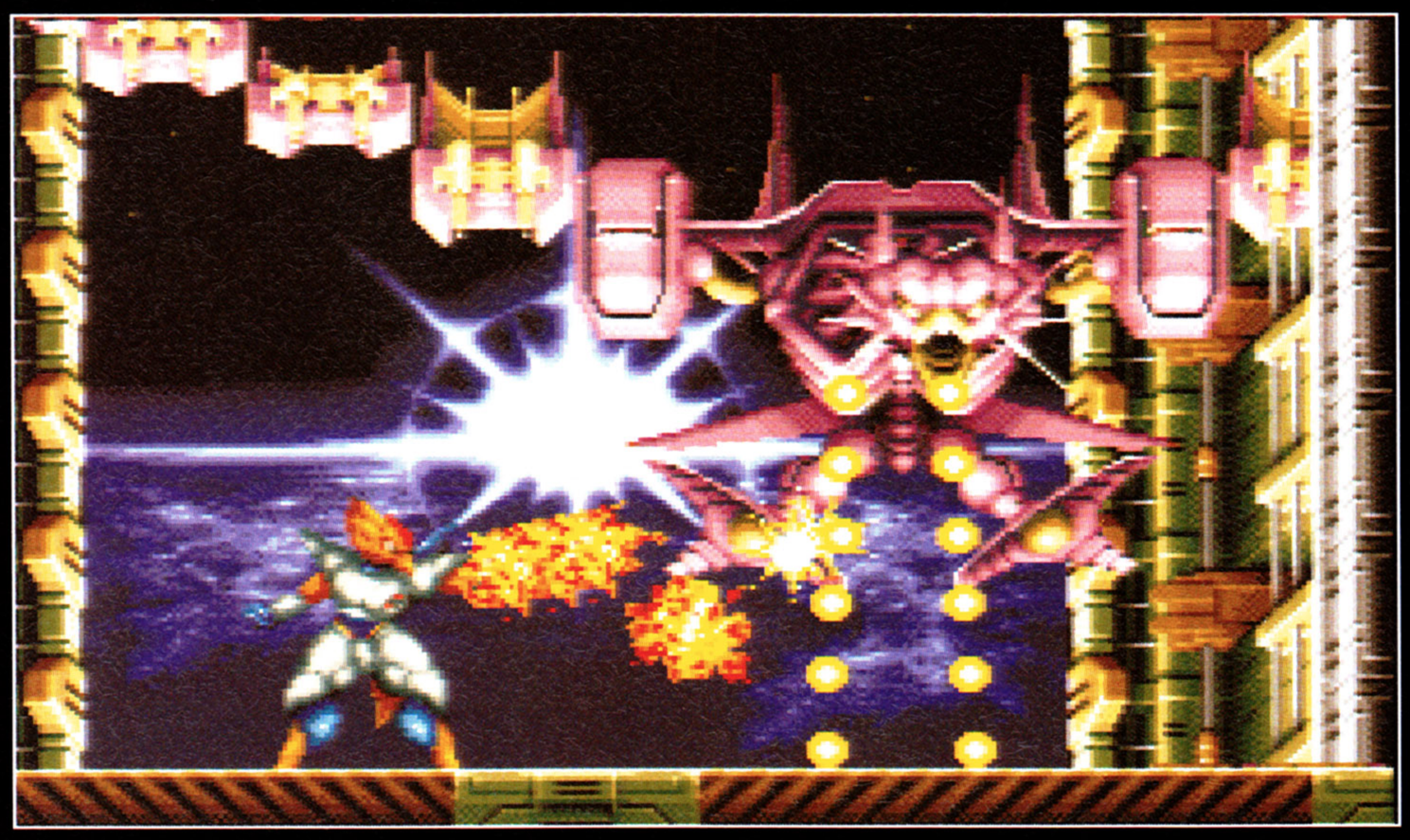
...werful.

▲ Ranger provides spray fire.

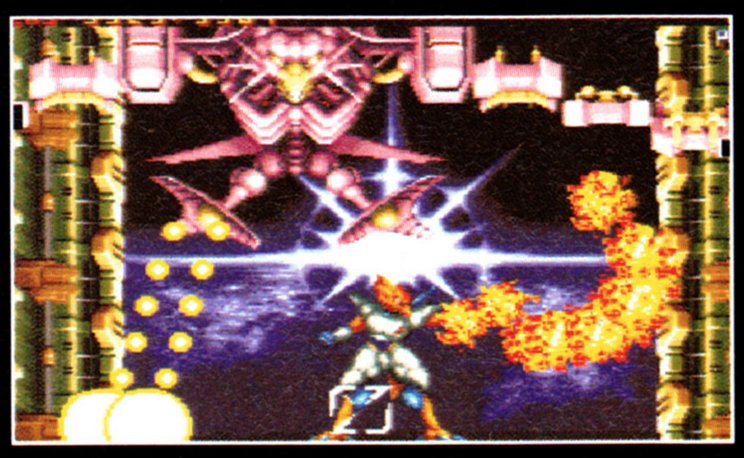
VIBLACK/ BACKSTRINGER

EPSILON-1

If it's scream-inducing bosses you're after, they don't come much more terrifying than this monster. After taking potshots at you from somewhere off-screen, this massive dragon swoops down, releasing swarms of deadly fire. And still it's not the last boss.



▲ Opening its mouth, Epsilon-1 vomits balls of lethal spew.



▲ If you think that's bad though...

▲ ...wait until its wings fire at you.

DEEP STRIDER

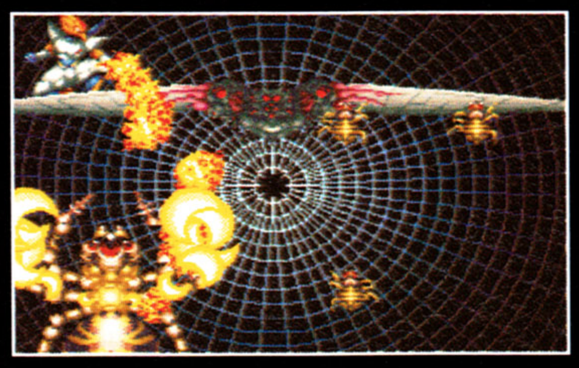
▲ This boss is a huge fish!

JOKER

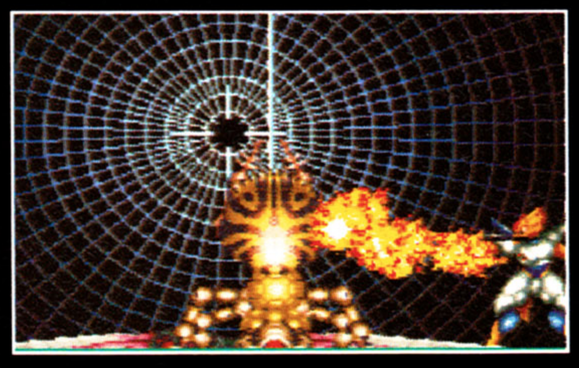
▲ And this one is Rad!

▲ ...it flies up the screen.

▲ Where a spider eats it.



▲ The spider then attacks...



▲ ...pulling you towards it!

ALIEN SOLDIER IS REVIEWED ON PAGE 74, BRETHREN.

MEGADRIVE 32X

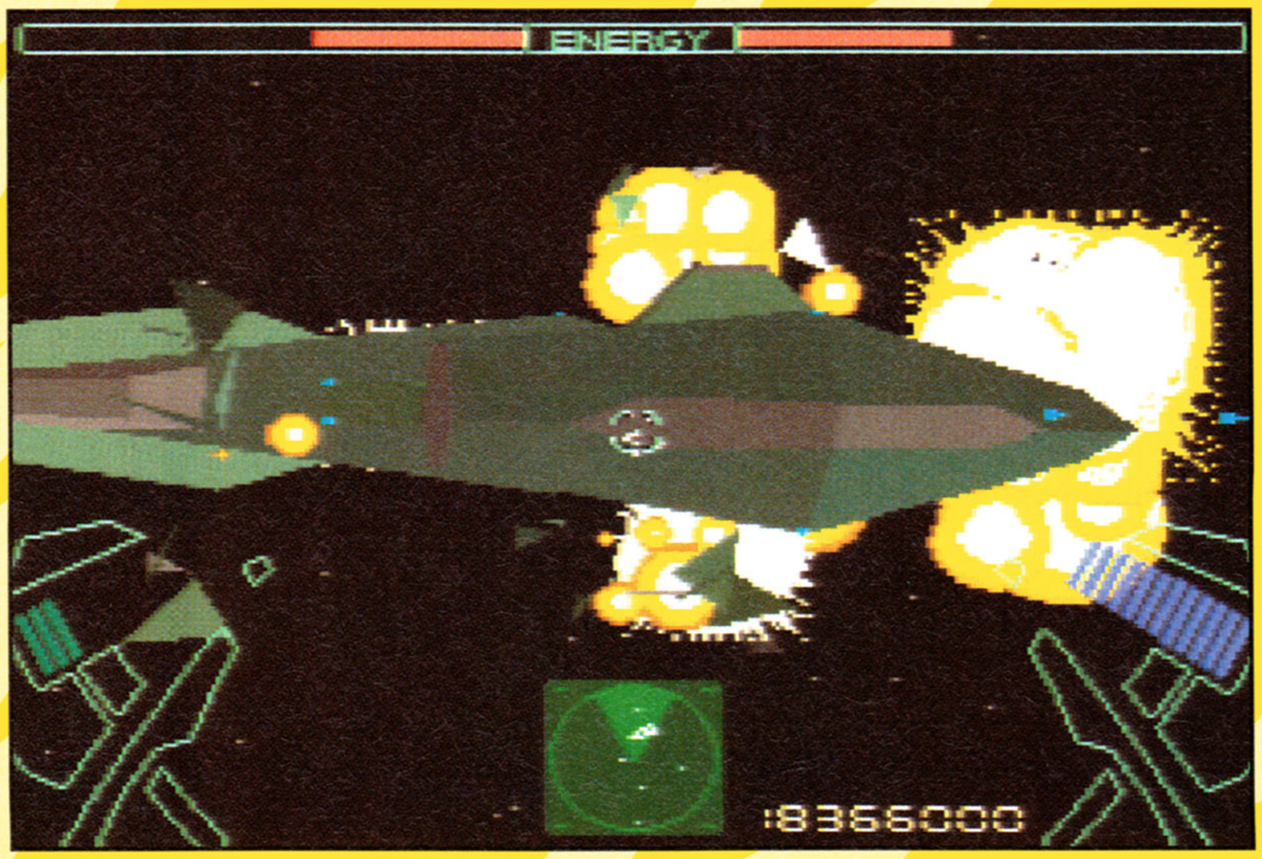
ASSAULT AND BATTERY

SHOWCASE

Just imagine taking part in your own private little space war - just you against a galactic empire of frighteningly powerful proportions. Cor... no-one's thought of that before have they? Oh all right, so they did when they came up with Star Wars, but now there's something better available for game-starved Megadrive 32X owners. Richard Leadbetter explains all in this Stellar Assault showcase...

As far as I'm concerned the programmers of Stellar Assault have got the right idea about 32-bit software. Whilst other 32X programmers are coming up with software that's decidedly 16-bit in concept (BC Racers, Knuckles Chaotix and Motherbase), these guys have decided to put the 32X's polygon rendering capabilities to good use, creating a very realistic 3D spatial arena where you destroy loads of impressive looking space ships. Sounds fair enough to me. This is the sort of new gameplay experience that this so-called "Next Level" of gaming is all about. Still, that can all go to hell if the gameplay isn't very good, but luckily Stellar Assault is good - definitely the best of the new bunch of 32X games released this month.

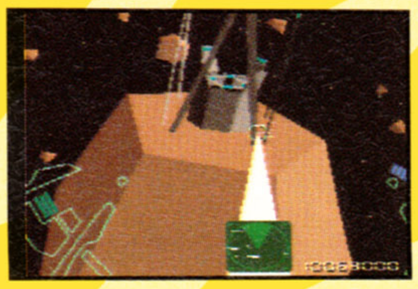
There isn't really a discernable plot as such. Suffice to say that the game casts you as a lone star pilot out to destroy a space armada of very large, very powerful space craft. And anything that gets in the way, including other space fighters, alien-owned asteroid mining facilities. Anything



▲ Boom! There go the dreadnought's mounted cannons.

▲ Attacking the exposed underside here.

▲ The AccelGate is an easy target.



▲ The launch tunnel.

▲ The centre exposed!

▲ Dogfighting action.

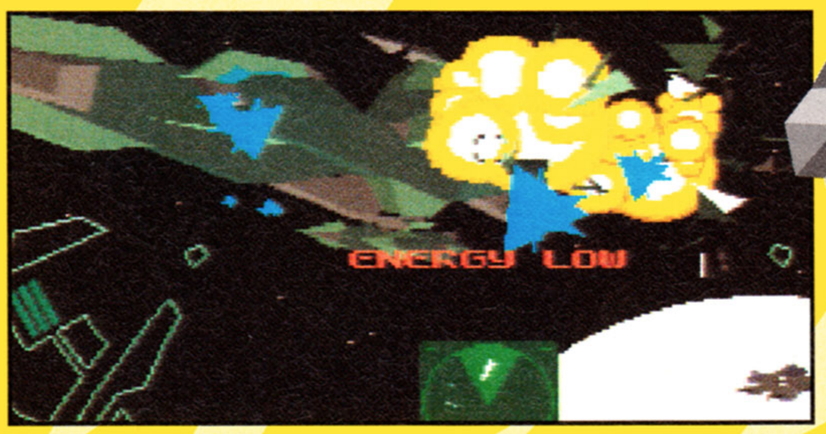
LIGHT AS A FEATHER

STELLAR ASSAULT

There are two different assault craft on offer in the game, both have their own strengths and weaknesses that you need to exploit in order to get the best out of your chosen vessel. It must be said that generally life is a bit easier with Feather Two, owing to the fact that you can shoot enemy bullets. Its superior firepower also comes in handy. But the question must be, why call the latest in Stellar Assault attack vessel technology a "Feather One" or "Feather Two"? It's a bit poncey isn't it? Still, I digress. Now then, about those ships...

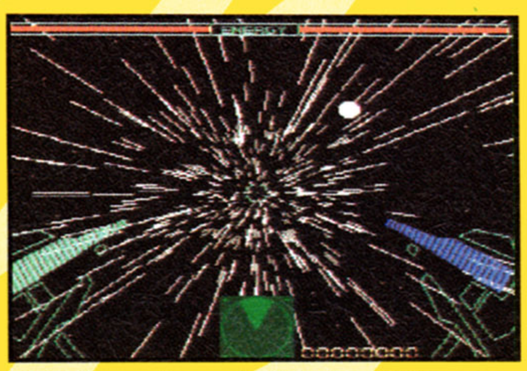
FEATHER ONE

This ship is the basic one-seater mutha that's brilliant at surgical strikes. This means you can fly towards your targets at top speed, do some very destructive strafing and then get the hell out of there, dodging enemy fire as you go. This ship may be more manoeuvrable than Feather Two, but that speed comes at a price. For a start, its energy reserves are depleted quicker (guided missiles are taken from the main energy store) and also, you can't shoot down the enemy fire, which means plenty of dodging is required (which usually diverts you from your target). Sorry, but in our humble opinion, Feather Two is the better ship. And we'll deck anyone who says it isn't, all right?



▲ **Yet another cruiser bites the dust in spectacular fashion.**

▲ **The asteroid field of the third mission.**

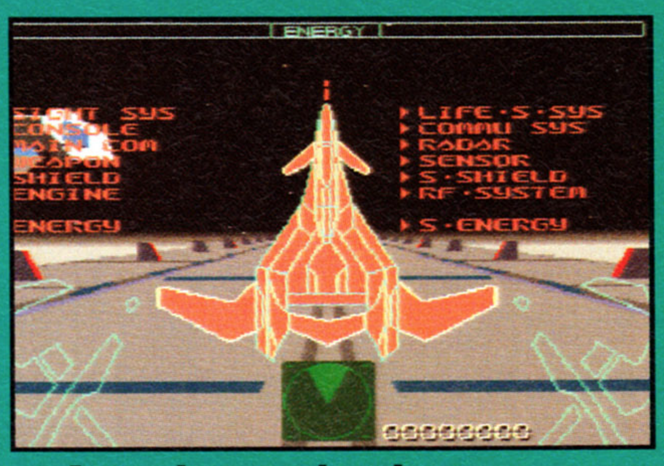


▲ **Warping into battle on level one.**

FEATHER TWO

This ship is a two-seater craft. It's got an excellent top speed and higher energy levels than Feather One. The problem is that it's very slow to respond, which is a big problem. Also, the ship's dimensions are huge compared to the other ship, making it an easier target in dogfights. Solo players might like to set the machine on auto-pilot, which basically means that the computer has to get you out of trouble while you blast away at the enemy fleets. There's no doubting the firepower of Feather Two. Its bullets are approximately twice as damaging as Feather One's and its missiles (which, dangerously, are drawn from shield energy) are astoundingly deadly.

▲ **You can even change the ship's colours.**



▲ **A systems check on the powerful Feather Two attack craft.**

at all in fact since you're alone against the entire universe.

SHIP-SHAPE

The programmers of Stellar Assault have pinched quite a lot of ideas from that other 32X deep space shoot 'em up, Star Wars Arcade. Just like the AM3-originated conversion, one player can fly the ship and blast the opposition or another player can come along and do all the gunning whilst the first player flies the ship about. Two ships are on offer. Feather One is for solo players, whilst Feather Two is just the ticket for two-player action.
Stellar Assault goes one better than Star Wars in that a single player can choose the two-player ship and get the computer to fly the ship around instead (if you want it to). Good eh?

VIRTUA VIEWS

One of the most impressive things about using polygons and 3D graphics in videogames is that the action can be viewed from any angle whatsoever, hence the inclusion of multiple viewpoints in games like VR Deluxe, Star Wars Arcade and Metal Head. Stellar Assault jumps on the bandwagon as well, having two views (just like Star Wars Arcade) - internal and external perspectives. Both views have their uses, but it must be said that the outside "chase" view makes dodging the cruisers' laser cannons just a tad easier. Well, quite a lot actually.

PRESENTATIONAL OVERLOAD

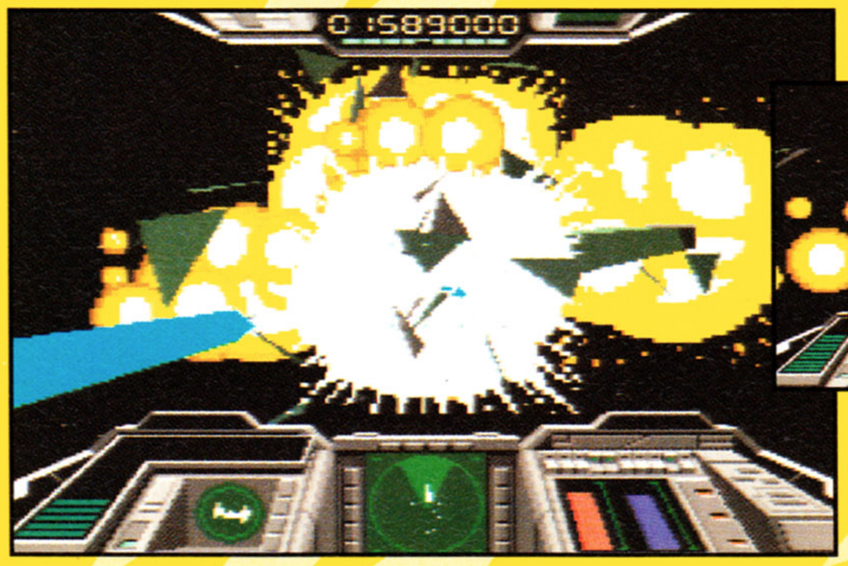
If there's one thing that can't be faulted about Stellar Assault, it's the level of presentation. Right from the beginning you know you're in for something special when you check out the initial

THE COCKPIT

Your ship is pretty simple in design actually as these cockpit shots show. But still eh? What do all of those little metres and indicators mean? Here's a very brief lowdown on what does what. And why.

SHIP PICTURE

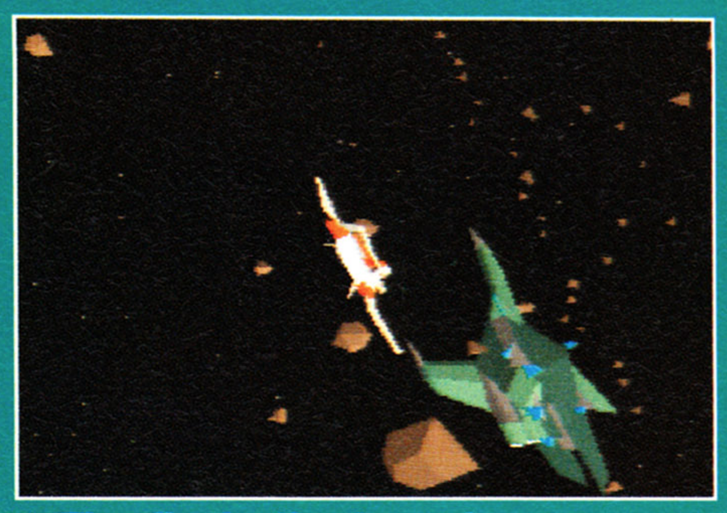
Just ever-so-slightly superfluous. This vector graphic representation of your ship just shows you at what angle you're currently flying at. Hardly information of earth-shattering importance.



▲ **An easy target for Feather One here. Die!!!**

THE TRACE IS ON

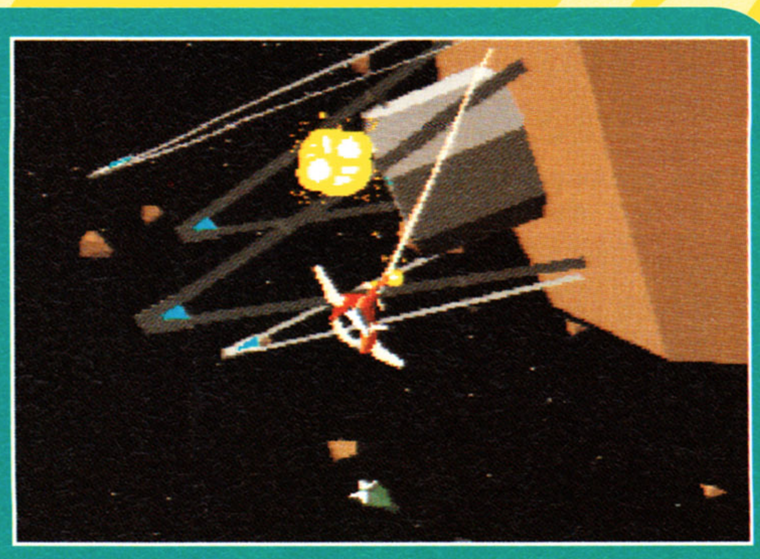
One of the most intriguing features of Stellar Assault is the Trace Mode. Basically, everything you and the aliens do is recorded in the 32X's memory. Once you've bought the farm, you're able to review your performance from a third person perspective as the game relives your epic struggles from a multitude of different camera angles. Unfortunately, you don't have control over the camera angles in question, but Trace Mode does provide a rather odd form of entertainment. Here's a sequence of Trace Mode action from level three - the asteroid field.

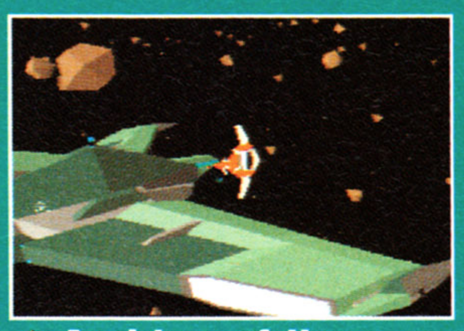


▲ **The first attack cruiser on your agenda. As you can see, it's already blasting at you.**

▲ **Luckily, Feather Two blasts enemy fire to bits!**

▲ **Negotiating the perils of the asteroid field...**





▲ **An idea of the size of the dreadnoughts compared to the main ship.**

▲ **The enemy have set up a vast mining operation on the asteroids. Time for you to blast 'em all to smithereens. And why not?**

STELLAR ASSAULT

SCORE
Believe it or not, all eight of those digits are required to convey your current standing in the game such is the largeness of the scoring system in Stellar Assault.

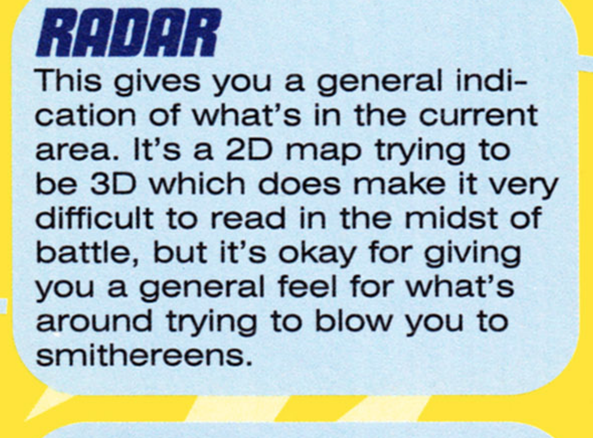
MAIN ENERGY
This red bar shows your current energy levels. Your engines, lasers and missiles drain your batteries so don't waste your resources. If you do use up your main energy banks, shield energy is diverted. Which is not good as it leaves you open to destruction with just one enemy hit.

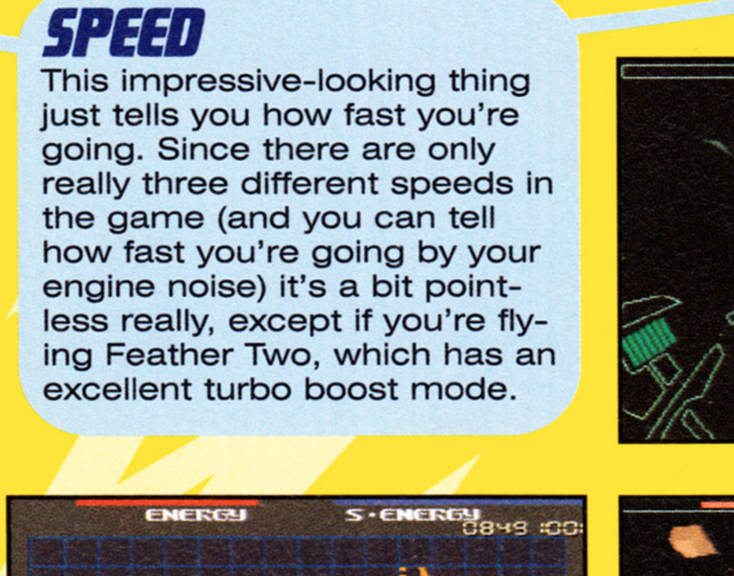
SHIELD ENERGY
You're bound to get shot up quite substantially during the course of the game. This gauge shows how much energy you've got left.

RADAR
This gives you a general indication of what's in the current area. It's a 2D map trying to be 3D which does make it very difficult to read in the midst of battle, but it's okay for giving you a general feel for what's around trying to blow you to smithereens.

SPEED
This impressive-looking thing just tells you how fast you're going. Since there are only really three different speeds in the game (and you can tell how fast you're going by your engine noise) it's a bit pointless really, except if you're flying Feather Two, which has an excellent turbo boost mode.

▲ Owww! Bet that hurts.





▲ Well, that spells the beginning of the end for that enormous battleship. Once the centre section's gone, the whole ship soon follows...

▲ ... And there it goes! Crikey, that's a big bang, isn't it?

▲ Mission accomplished! Now it's time to warp to the next level.

FIRST CLASS

There are five different large battle cruisers in the game, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. Your principle aim in each mission is to blow these large "muthas" up, preferably using up as little energy as possible. What sets Stellar Assault apart from other games like this is that it's possible to centre your firepower on different parts of each ship, blowing away certain sections. Invariably, your aim should be to destroy the centre section of each behemoth as this is where they are at their most vulnerable. However, the defences of each craft may put a slight dampener on your intentions. Here's a look at the four most common cruisers. There is a fifth which is so huge that in fact, it's quite frightening, but we'll leave that one for you to discover yourself...

DELMMER CLASS

The smallest and most common battle cruiser in the alien fleet. The Delmmer class vessel is armed with multiple laser cannons that thoroughly protect the flanks and bottom of the ship. The two "prongs" on the front of the ship are easily destroyed, exposing the vulnerable centre section of the craft. These ships are found mostly on the early levels and should pose no problem.

BALSARK CLASS

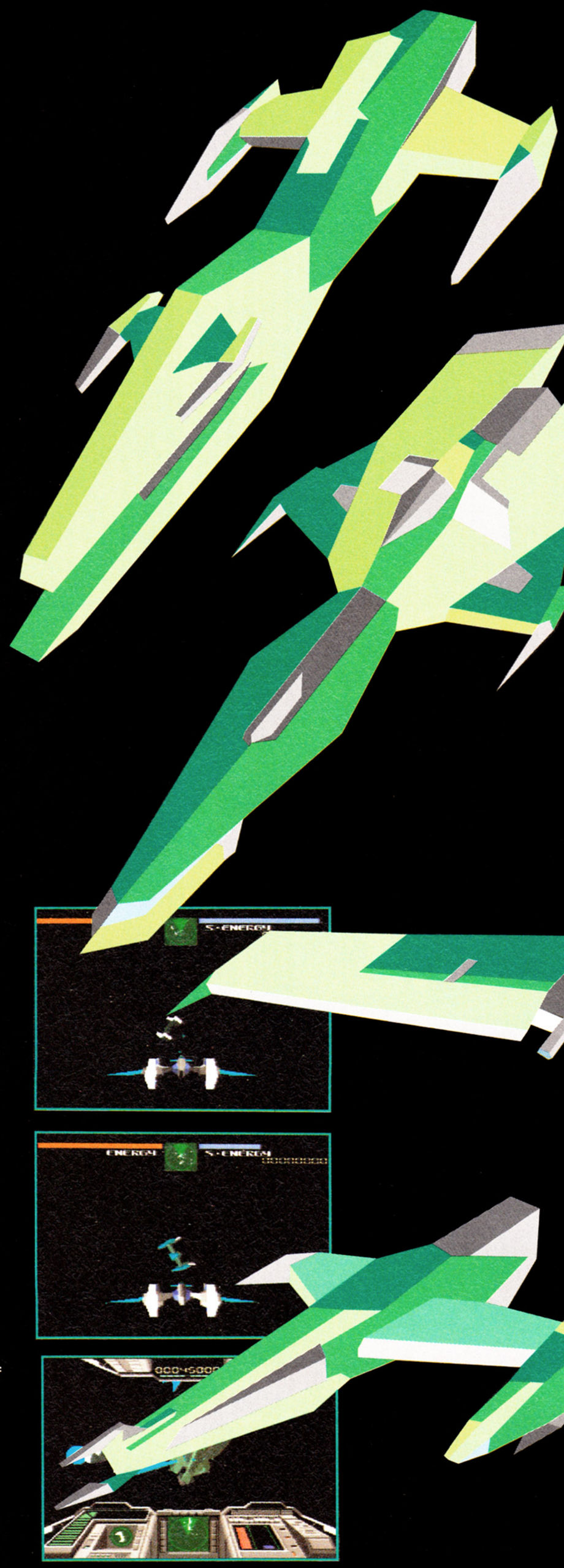
A fairly common ship inhabiting just about every sector of space you need to cleanse of alien activity. The structure of the ship protects the vulnerable centre section well, as most people would probably blast off the four mounted cannons or burn through the front sections. The easiest way to destroy this craft involves its rear, which is protected only by the ship's engines. Cannon cover on this craft is quite impressive, defending the vessel well from just about every angle.

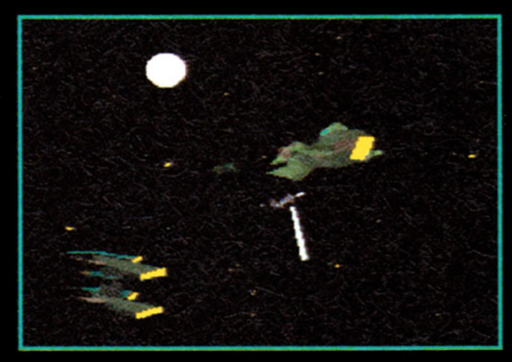
MEDELUS CLASS

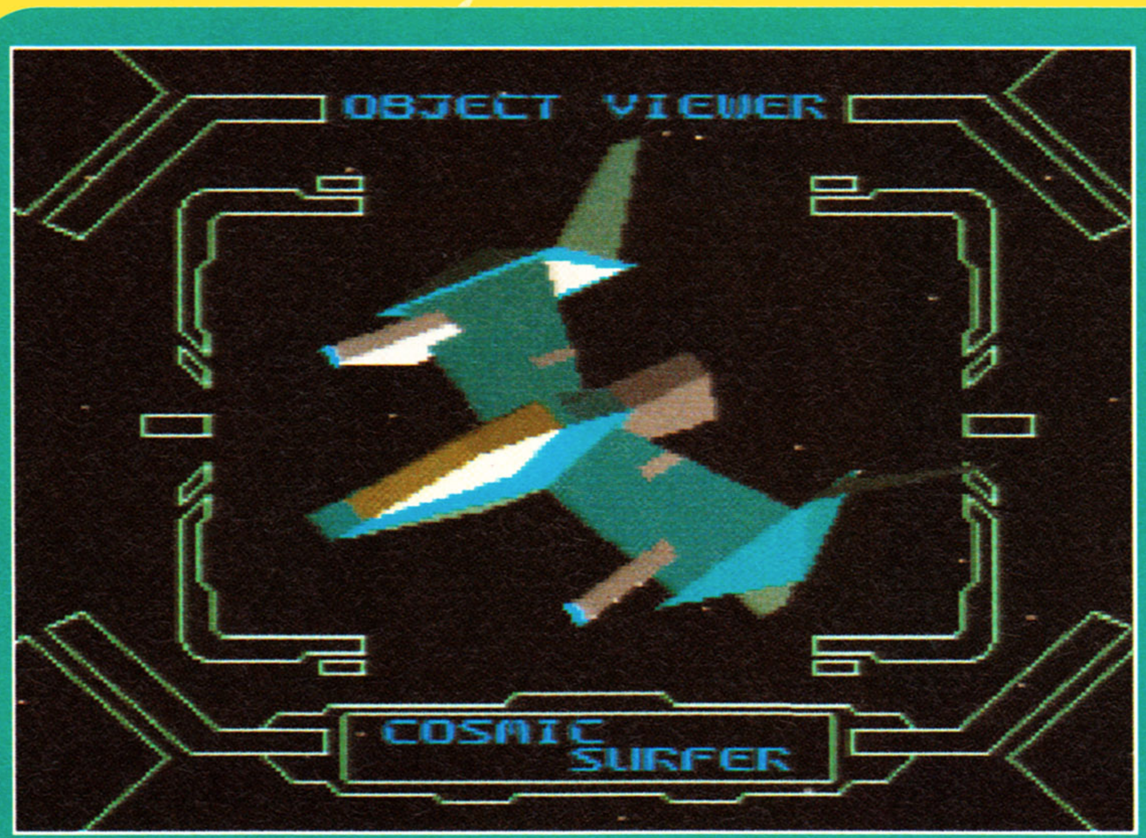
This fearsome class of intergalactic ship is probably the first class of vessel you're going to have problems destroying. The ship's on-board laser cannons protect every square inch of the craft well, particularly the centre section. This means that an easy kill is not an option especially as the ship's middle is so well armoured. In this case, the only way to succeed is to blow off the wings (taking the majority of the cannons with them) and then centring on the mid-section. A deadly opponent.

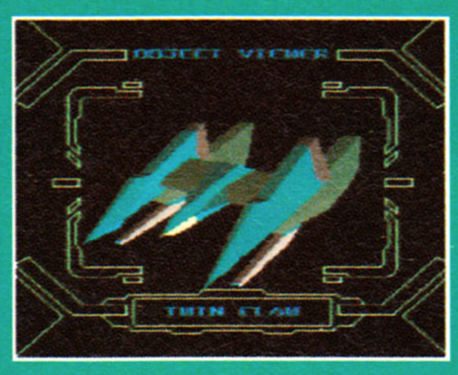
CARVELUS CLASS

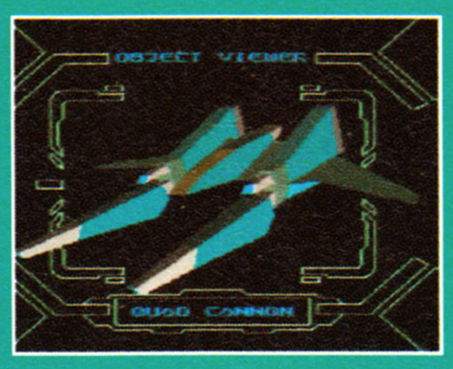
These babies don't crop up until several levels into the game and it's not difficult to figure out why. This class of ship is exceptionally dangerous, having no discernible weak section in its defences. Yes, blasting the centre section would destroy the whole craft, but the heaviness of that area's armour coupled with the worrying amount of cannons makes that a virtual impossibility. Your best strategy for success would be to fly in really close in order to dodge the cannons and inflict as much surface damage over as big an area as possible.

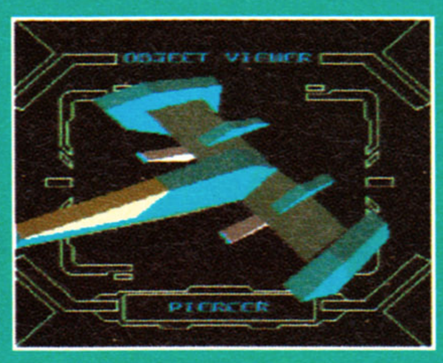


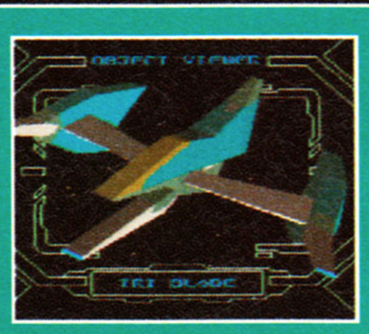


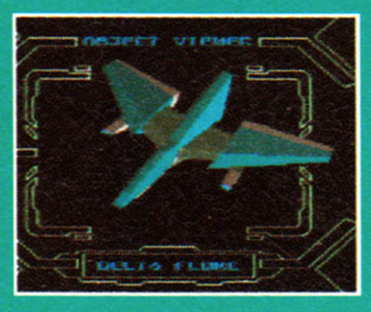












DOGFIGHT!

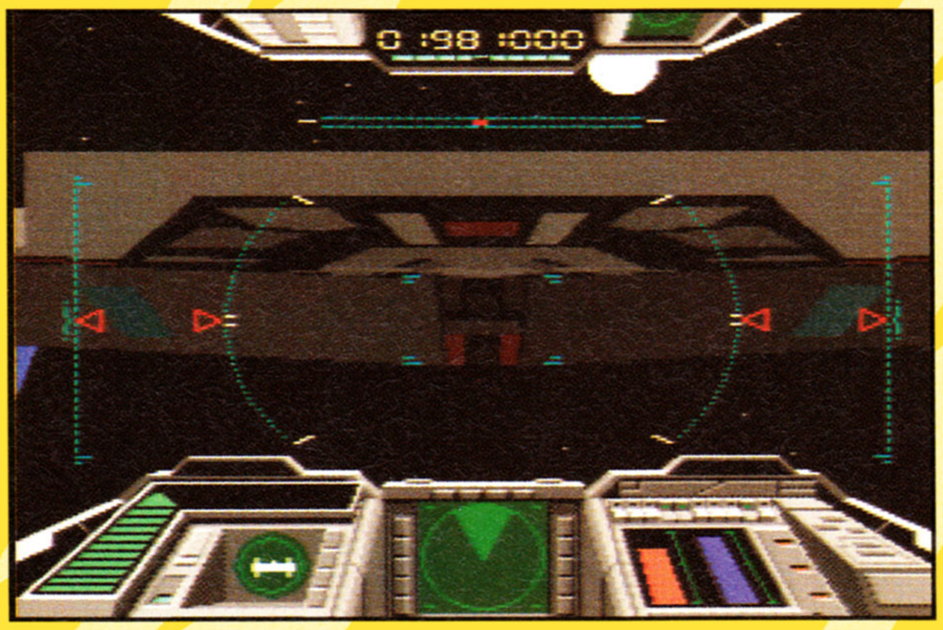
Accompanying the main ships you'll find plenty of little one-man fighters about the same size as your craft. This begs for a bit of dogfighting action. One hit is usually enough to see off an opponent, but these dudes can still inflict plenty of damage - particularly more developed ships like the Quad Cannon and the super-swift Death Hugger. Here's a sneak preview of the opposition in question, revealed thanks to the game's object viewing system.

STELLAR ASSAULT™

space fight that comes up when you turn the game on.
This level of presentation continues on the option screen, which has plenty of brilliant touches such the object viewer which enables you to view any of the space ships in the game from any angle you desire. This is actually quite useful as it enables you to discern the location of the gun turrets on the dreadnoughts. Once you're armed with that information you can find out where the ship's weak points are and exploit them in the game itself. Not bad eh?
In fact, you could describe Stellar Assault as having a presentation overload. I mean, what's the point in being able to change the colour of both your ship and the enemy fleet? Bizarre.

LOOK IT'S NOT BAD ALL RIGHT?

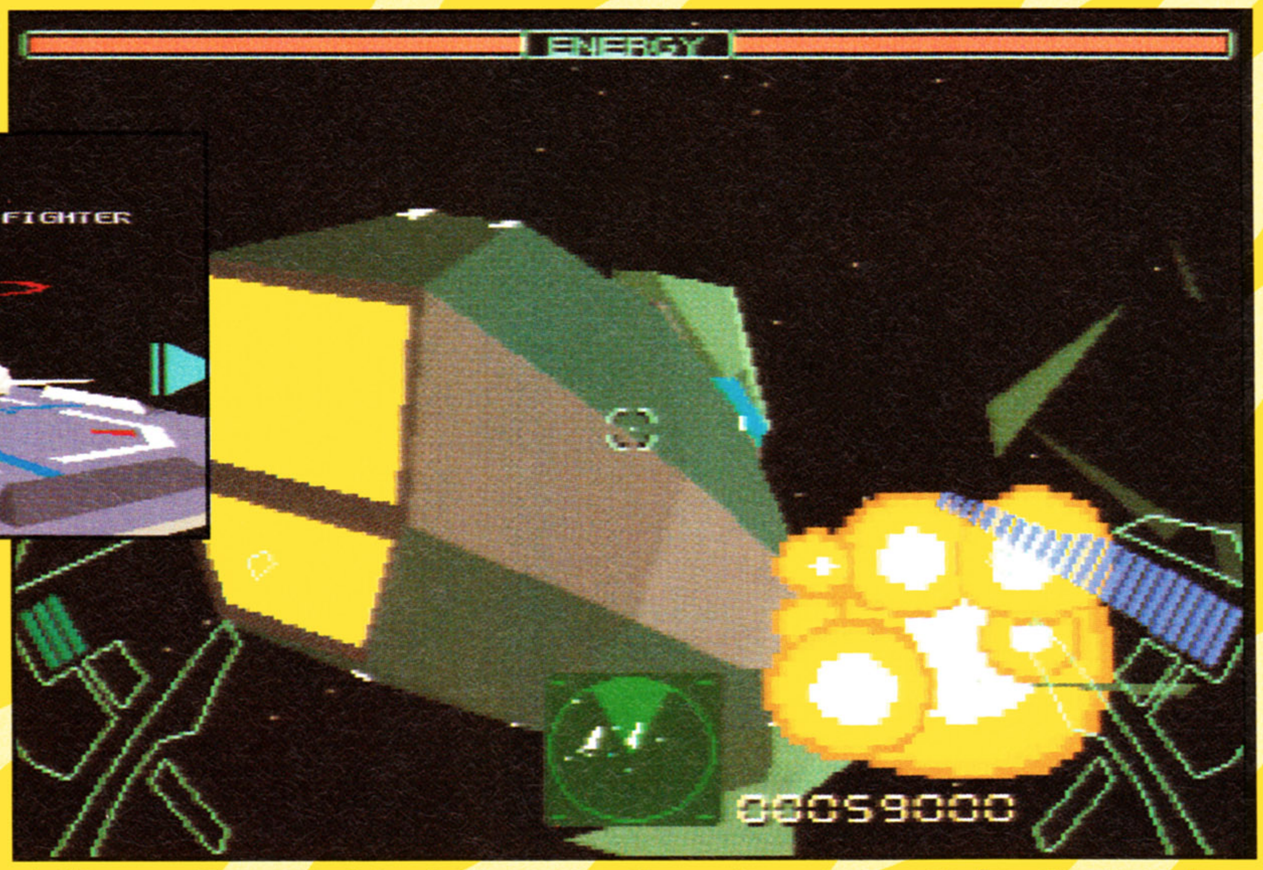
Stellar Assault isn't a bad little product at all. In fact, as we said earlier it's the best 32X release this month. So why don't you check out page 82 where the full criticism for this fine product can be found. What's so good about it? What flaws does it have? Examine those pages and the answers to your questions shall be found, all right?



▲ Coming into dock with the support vessel.

▲ Feather Two warps into the asteroid field. Cor, it's just like The Empire Strikes Back...

▲ This is the first screen in the game itself. Choose between either Feather One or Feather Two - both ships are capable of blowing apart an entire fleet!

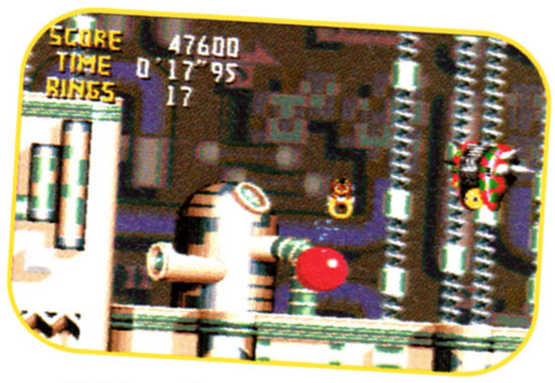


▲ Here, the pilot is following the classic path in destroying an alien dreadnought - blowing off the wings and exposing the centre section. Blast! Kill! Destroy! Ahahahahaha!

ULTIMATE CHAOTIX

▲ Marina Madness is one of the easiest zones to conquer in Knuckles Chaotix.

In early 1994 a new videogames character was born - his name: Knuckles - a sort of pink/red echidna. Originally intended as an arch-villain for Sonic the Hedgehog, Sega soon realised that the plucky fellow had plenty of potential as a hero in his own right. Read on...



S H O W C A S E

That evil Robotnik character has got a lot to answer for. If it's not enslaving Sonic's pals or creating enormous Death Egg war machines, you can be guaranteed that he's behind some evil scheme to deprive the world of Mobius of its Chaos Emeralds or something like that. Is there no end to his evil? Well apparently not - hence his return in this new 32X adventure.

However, this time he's not up against Sonic the Hedgehog. Oh no. You see it's that time of the year when all the hedgehogs (blue and supersonic or otherwise) disappear into the undergrowth in order to hibernate. So who's going to stop the evil inventor this time? Step forward Knuckles the red echidna. Sonic fans may recall that Knuckles has a score to settle with Robotnik, who duped him into ganging up on Sonic and pinched his Chaos Emeralds while Knuckles wasn't looking. Oh, and he blew up all his mates in Sonic and Knuckles. Knuckles isn't quite into fair play the way that Sonic is, so he's decided to get together an avenging posse of woodland creatures in order to hunt down Robotnik and put an end to his evil once and for all. That sounds fair enough by us.

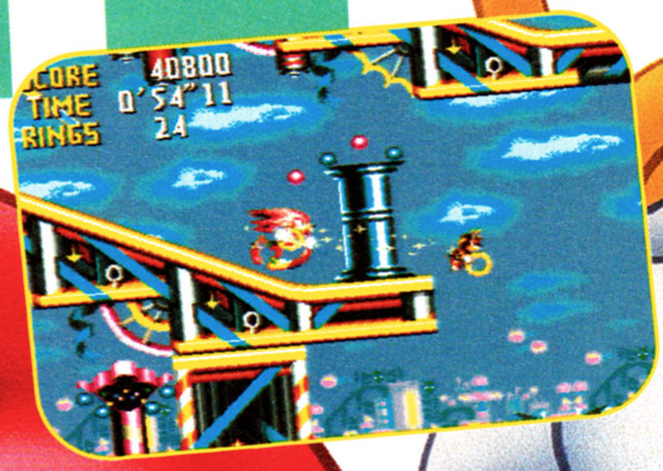
▲ Charmy Bee can fly anywhere he wants to and has the strength to carry his pal about too.

▲ If you're teamed up with a Badnik, they'll do their best to stop you. Boo!

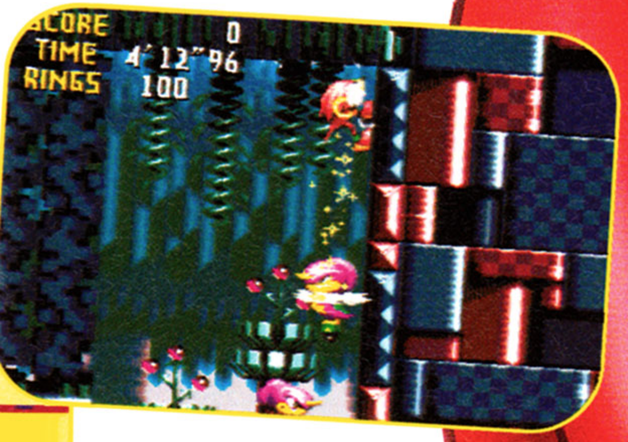
SO WHAT'S DIFFERENT THEN EH? EH?

Take a peek at the screenshots on these pages. Done that? Good. Well, from that cursory examination, you might have thought that Chaotix is virtually identical to all the other Sonic games - but with nicer graphics.

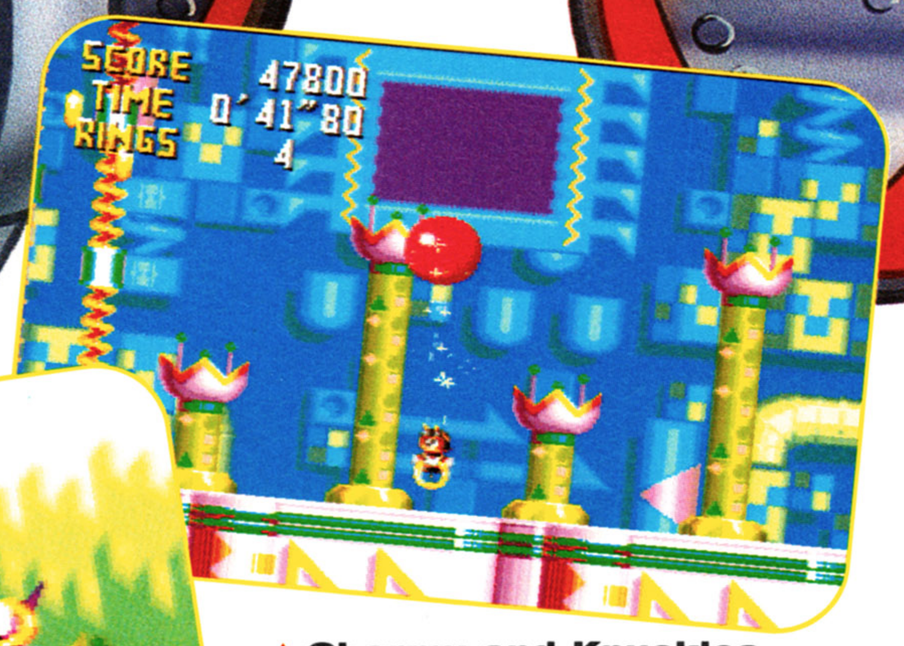
CHAOTIX



▲ **Go Mighty, go! And you Knuckles too.**



▲ **Crikey, look at the size of that chameleon thing.**



▲ **Espio demonstrates his uncanny chameleon spinning capabilities.**

▲ **Charmy and Knuckles in the Amazing Arena.**

WHO'S WHO IN CHAOTIX?

Knuckles is a wily old fellow and he knows that he's going to need all the help he can get in defeating Robotnik and Metal Sonic. Luckily, he's managed to get together a band of fellow adventurers for this escapade, all with their own special capabilities and techniques.

KNUCKLES

Red echidna of some note, having started out life as a "baddie" in Sonic 3 and Sonic in Triple Trouble. He turned into a good guy in Sonic and Knuckles and drove a kart in Sonic Drift Racing. He can climb walls and glide through the air, making him the best character. Well, it is his game after all.

MIGHTY THE ARMADILLO

Another videogames veteran, having helped out the almighty Sonic himself in the little-known-but-quite-ace-actually Sonic coin-op. His attributes are much the same as Knuckles', except that he can't fly and instead of wall-climbing, he sticks to surfaces and performs enormous leaps. Just like armadillos do in real life. Yes...

ESPIO THE CHAMELEON

Just like a real chameleon, this feisty fellow has a bizarre tendency to change colour whenever it suits him - not that it really changes much about the gameplay though. No, what you'll be interested in is his speed and his strange ability to stick to any surface - and that includes running upside-down. What a geezer.

CHARMY BEE

Being an insect with wings, Charmy is able to fly as much as he wants, and being a bit hard as well he can lift up his pal while flying. This makes him a highly versatile character. He's also super-quick and has a charge attack that destroys Badniks with very little effort whatsoever. Top notch.

VECTOR THE CROCODILE

This rather large crocodile type is pretty fierce by all accounts, being capable of turning himself into a amphibious missile which destroys anything near (and is also helpful to gain a little extra height as you can fire this missile in any direction). He also possesses limited wall-climbing abilities. However, speed isn't exactly one of his greatest assets.

▲ A special practice zone is included.

STRETCH 'N' GO

Although there are two characters on-screen, you still only control the primary personage, although you can send simple commands to your woodland pal - mainly along the lines of "stop!" and, er, that's it. This enables you to stretch the mystical elastic energy between you. Let go of the button and you zoom along at mighty speeds. It's possible to swing the characters around and around to gain more speed and you can also combine this with jumping in order to gain some height. It's difficult to master, but once you've got the hang of it, it's possible to pull off some excellent moves.

POWER-UP!

Just about every Sonic game has featured little monitors which contain power-ups or bonuses. Once again, Chaotix continues this tradition by including several different forms of power-up. Extra lives and bonus rings are of course included, but the other bonuses are quite difficult.

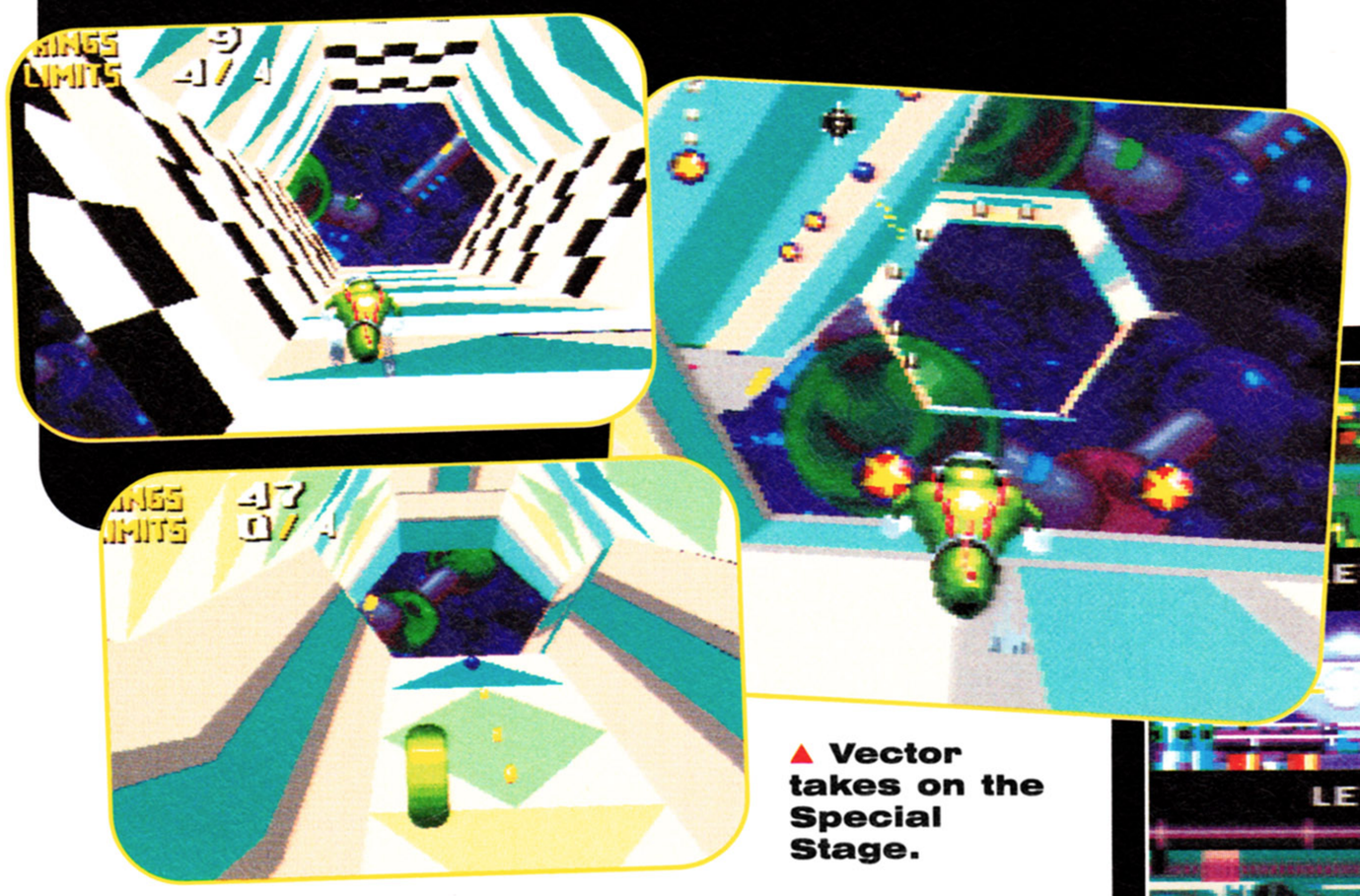
For starters, there are the monitors that expand or shrink your main character. Larger characters means larger jumps, which means it's far easier to complete a stage (particularly if Knuckles is your main character). The shrinking icon is just a pain in the ass basically, as it severely limits your jumping powers. The most bizarre icon of all is the switch bonus. Collect this and your two characters switch positions, enabling you temporary use of your pal's special techniques.

CHAOS THEORY

Knuckles used to be custodian of the Chaos Emeralds, but in this new title, he's after the special Chaos Rings needed to bring down Robotnik. In keeping with previous Sonic outings, you need to complete Special Zones in order to get your hands (or paws) on these highly desirable items.

In Knuckles Chaotix, you zoom down polygon tunnels, collecting rings and blue balls. You need to pass certain checkpoints carrying enough balls in order to progress. If you get through two checkpoints, the Chaos Ring is yours. It's as simple as that.

The problem is that there are huge holes in the course and if you fall down, it's curtains for Knuckles' ring-collecting endeavours. A similar circumstance occurs if you fail to collect enough blue balls...



▲ **Vector takes on the Special Stage.**

CHAOTIX

Well, you wouldn't be that far wrong. Yes, the basic platform premise of Knuckles Chaotix remains quite similar to the other Sonic titles, but the big innovation is in the gameplay. This time you control two heroes, each carrying a mystical ring. These rings are connected by a stream of energy which is almost elastic in nature. Stretch the rings apart and then let go and both your heroes are sent flying along at quite a frightening speed. It's quite uncanny really, but more about the use of these rings later...

MEGADRIVE 32X POWER!

Although in terms of basic looks Knuckles Chaotix looks like any other Sonic game, the programmers have used the dual 32-bit RISC processing power of the Megadrive 32X to pretty good effect.

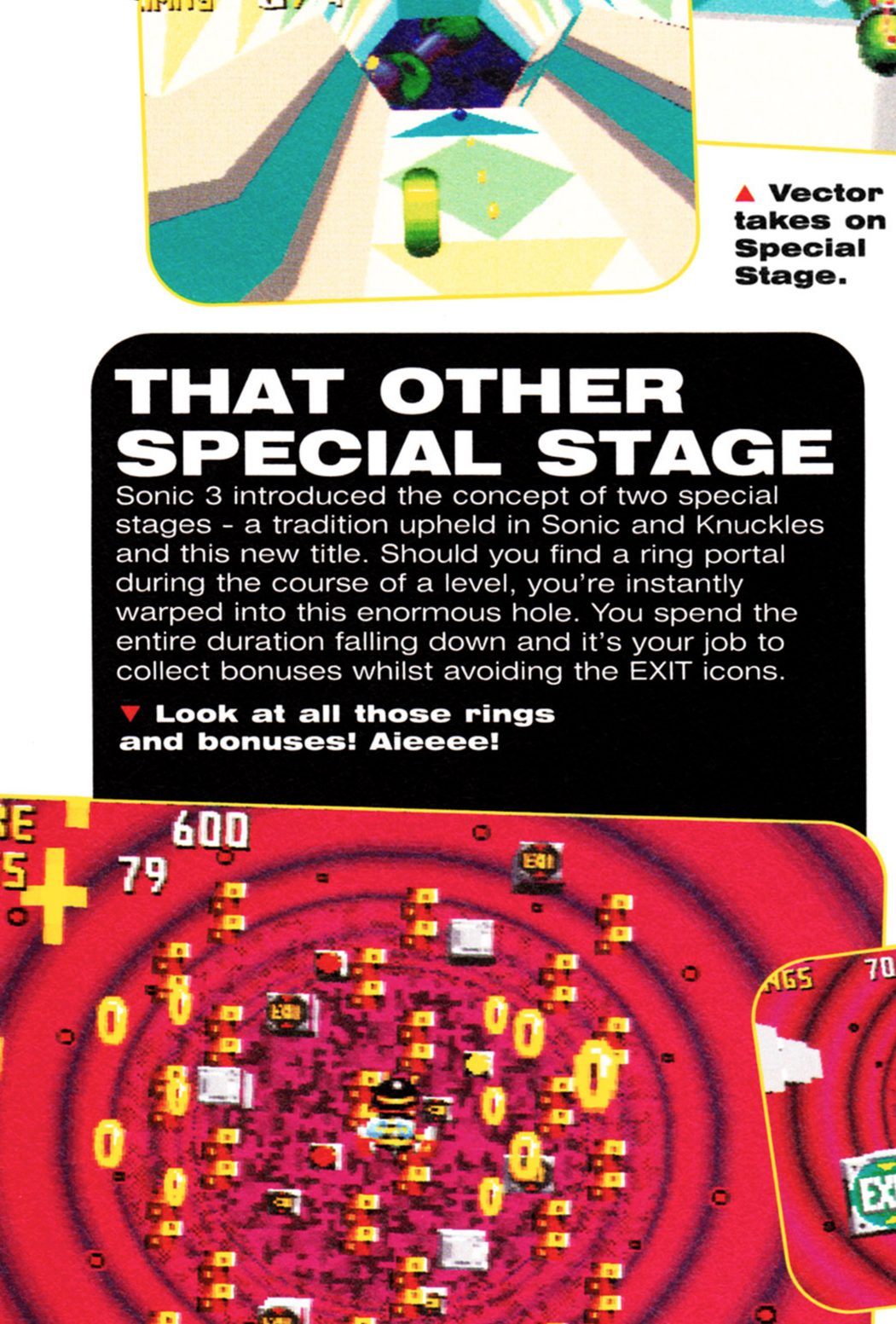
This manifests itself most prominently in the special stages, but the 32X is also used to produce some excellent sprite scaling and rotation which does get a fair bit of use in the game itself. Of course, the basic facilities of the upgrade such as the extra definition and colour are also well used, making this the best-looking Sonic game yet. But still, with the power of the 32X at the programmers' disposal, you wouldn't really expect anything else would you?

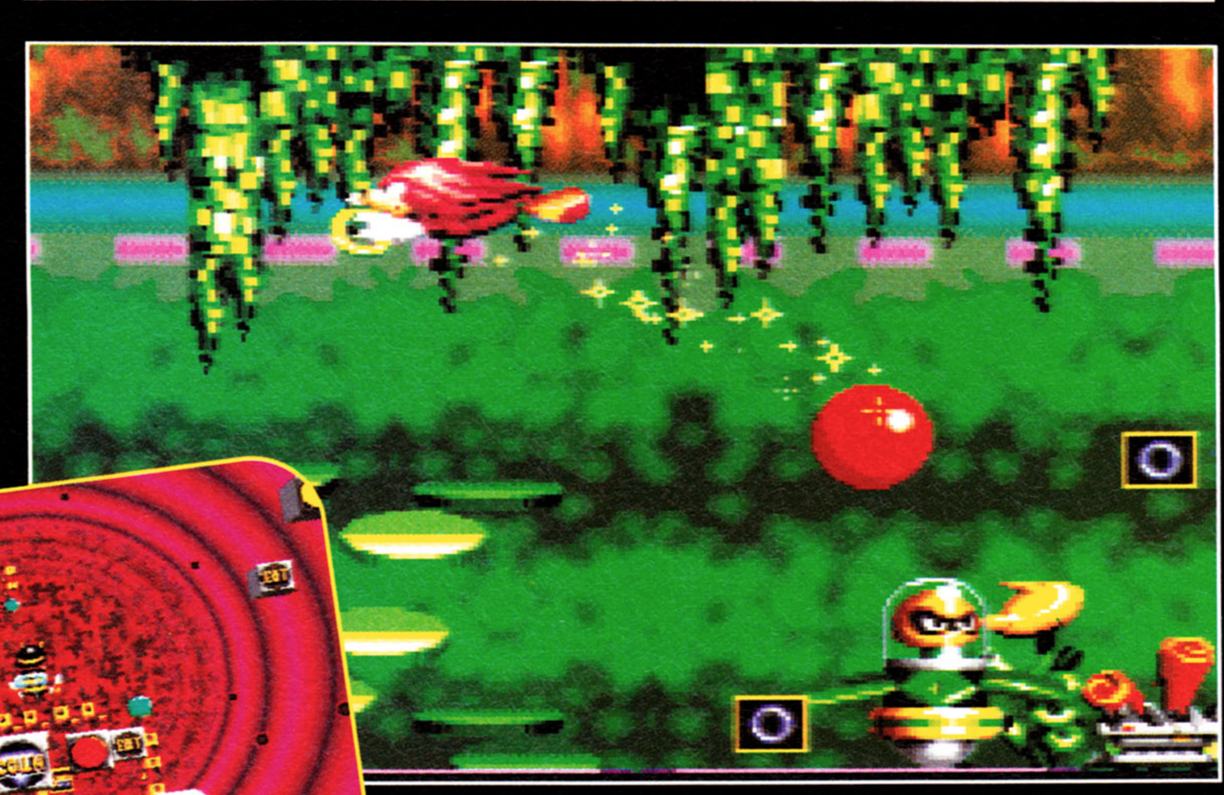
KNUCKLES CHAOTIX IS REVIEWED ON PAGE 84.

THAT OTHER SPECIAL STAGE

Sonic 3 introduced the concept of two special stages - a tradition upheld in Sonic and Knuckles and this new title. Should you find a ring portal during the course of a level, you're instantly warped into this enormous hole. You spend the entire duration falling down and it's your job to collect bonuses whilst avoiding the EXIT icons.

▼ **Look at all those rings and bonuses! Aieeee!**



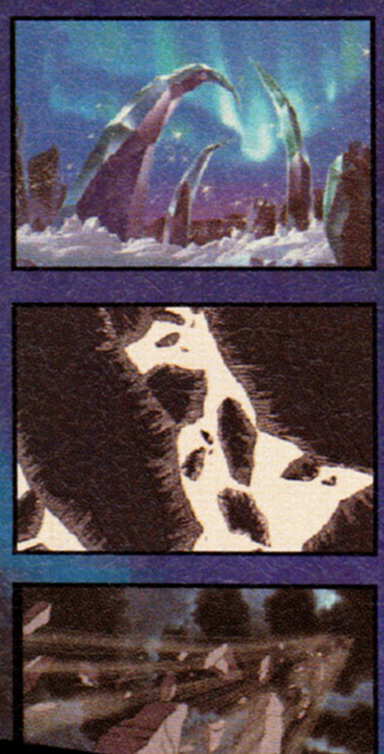


▲ **Knuckles demonstrates his fine gliding capabilities.**

ASTAL PROJECTIONS

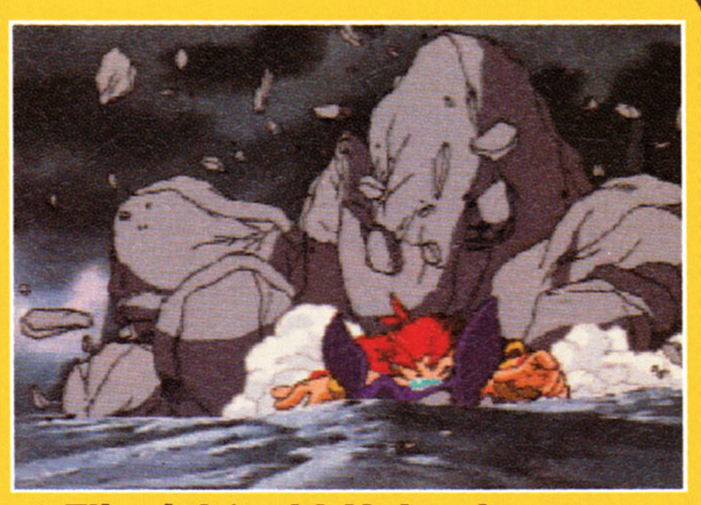
SHOWCASE

Platform games. The meat and potatoes of every software library, except the Saturn has only got one – Clockwork Knight. And to be frank, it's not that great. Well never fear, because Sega of Japan have just released Astal, a new Saturn platformer. Another attempt to take platform games to the next level? Well actually no, in fact this one is surprisingly traditional.



▲ A bit of the stunning cartoon intro.

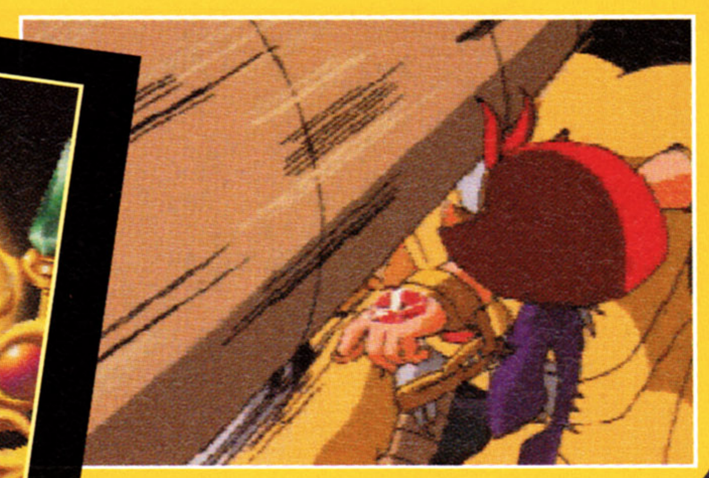
▲ Here we see Astal trapped in a crystal. God knows why.



▲ Flippin' 'eck! He's strong enough to shatter rock!

▲ There's your little sidekick, inside that cage.

▲ Notice the life-scales at the bottom, when you fight a boss.



▲ Don't stand under a tree, Astal!

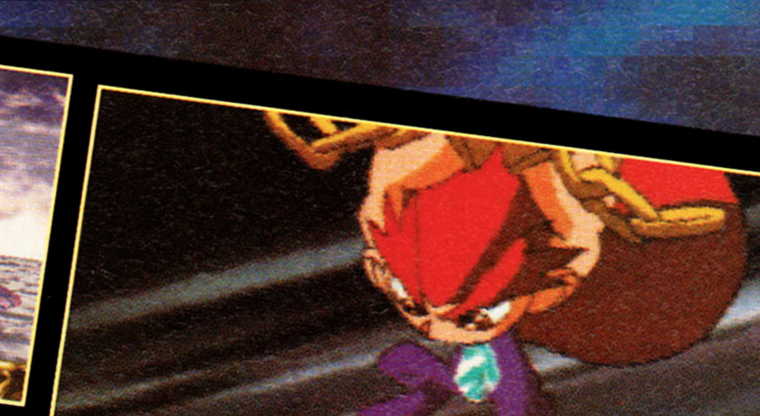
▲ Aw, the little fella's bushed.

The funny thing about Clockwork Knight is that, for all the next generation ideas that went into it, the game was totally unsurprising on its release. Superb silicon-graphics generated sprites, amazing interactive 3D polygon backdrops, fantastic full-screen scaling – the problem is, it's exactly what you'd expect from a next generation video game. Well, now the Saturn's second platform game has arrived and this one IS a surprise. Why? Because it's good old-fashioned platformer. Fancy that!

HELLO, LITTLE FELLOW!

Meet Astal. The latest cute character to join the swelling ranks of cute Sega platform characters. Yup that's right, this game has a cute main character, just like you'd expect in any 'ordinary' Megadrive platformer. Exactly what kind of cute character he is though, is a bit of a mystery. Vaguely resembling Mighty the Armadillo from the Sonic coin-op, he could be a mouse, a chipmunk, or an otter maybe. But not a lizard. Richard Leadbetter's poor attempt at a description is that he's an 'olde worlde creature', which is probably correct, dressed as he is in a cape and boots. And this description is backed up by the look of the rest of the game. Strange gnomes, little flower-shaped soldiers and swarms of cyclopic bats. These are the kinds of baddies Astal has to face as he wanders amongst the giant grass blades, massive trees and ocean-sized rivers of his strange faerie kingdom.

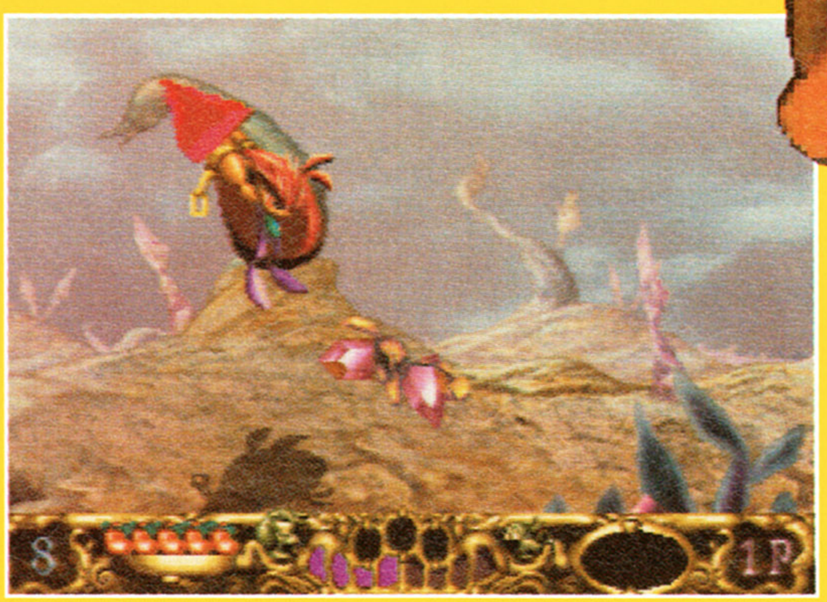
▲ Hmm, that cloud looks just like a big face.



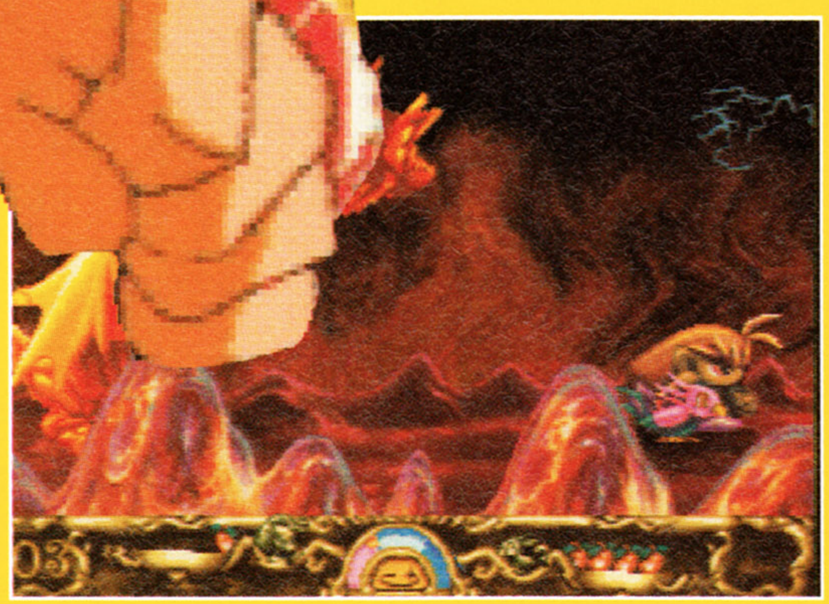
▲ Sitting down on the job again. Well, he is new to all this stuff.

▲ Once Astal frees the little bird...

▲ ...it helps him on him quest.

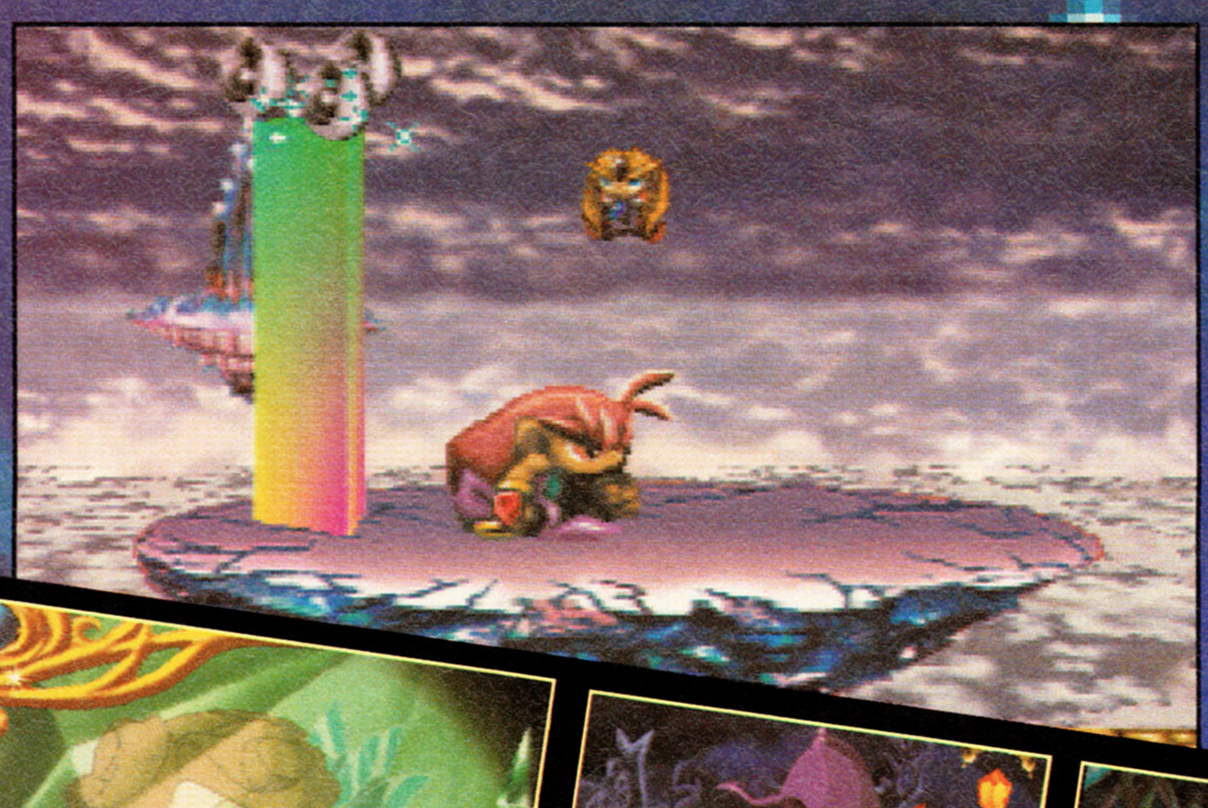


▲ A downward attack in the offing.



▲ Astal flees from his own huge fist.

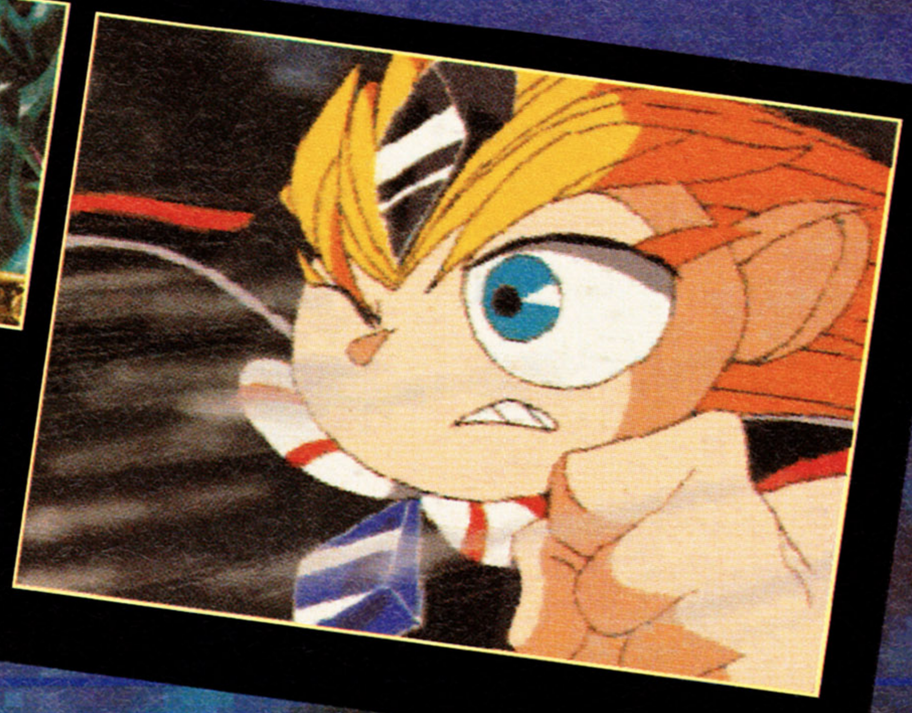
▲ The river level, in which Astal rides atop a huge lizard. The steed occasionally stops swimming and Astal has to jump on its back to get it moving.



▲ You know, I'd swear I'd seen a cloud that looked just like that!

▲ The huge bat-boss from the spooky caves. Ooky!

▲ The huge skull-boss from the spooky woods. Kooky!



PLOT! PLOT!

So, what's the plot behind the game? Well, if this game is sticking by its traditional platform roots, it should no doubt involve Astal's girlfriend being kidnapped by his arch-nemesis - another cute 'olde worlde creature' with an evil face. And indeed it does. As we've come to expect from Saturn games, there's a lengthy and highly impressive cartoon intro showing Astal involved in an epic sword-and-sorcery battle with his arch-foe. Then, mere seconds before the evil one is trounced, he grabs the girl and makes a break for it. So off Astal must go, travelling across wind-swept deserts, crumbling rock bridges and foggy swamps in an attempt to rescue his loved one from a big scary looking castle. The usual stuff, really.

GAME! GAME!

Well actually, that last bit of the plot is the game. There are five huge horizontally-scrolling levels, each split into three sub-stages with a boss at the end. Starting in the oversized garden that is Astal's home, he then travels onward through swamp-lands, bat-filled caves, rides down a river atop a massive serpent's back, then crosses a huge desert before arriving at the kingdom of his enemy.

Aiding him in his quest, Astal has a variety of combat moves at his disposal, from the usual sword-slashing attacks and super shoulder-charge, to a somewhat strange blowing power. Plus, by collecting strange beans he can unleash a magical smart bomb that wipes out every baddy in sight. Of course, in this post Sonic 2 age, a side-kick is a necessity and Astal has one of those too. In fact, the first stage of the game is actually nothing more than a quest to free your friend, who turns out to be a green bird imprisoned in a cage. Once freed, he follows Astal everywhere and, just like Tails, he can even be controlled by a second player, possessing as he does, a complete range of combat moves that match Astal's own.

THAT SECRET SATURN INGREDIENT!

Now this is all fine and dandy, but let's be honest, it all sounds just a tad like any other platformer. So is this the case? Well, yes and no. Yes, it does have all those elements that we've come to expect from a decent platformer. But no it certainly isn't a platform game you'd expect to see on the Megadrive. This is the Saturn remember? Graphically, it's gorgeous. Sure, there aren't any texture-mapped polygons, instead what you have are incredible, almost oil-painted backdrops filled with fantastic luminous colours. There's a subtle amount of graphical trickery too, with the screen scaling in and out to encompass some of the larger bosses. Add to this, some superb CD music and the overall effect is definitely one of quality.

Admittedly, Astal isn't anything ground-breaking in technical terms, but it does prove that more traditional games do have a place on the Saturn amongst the Daytonas and Panzers, provided they're still fun to play. Currently, Sega Europe haven't got Astal chalked in for a release over here, but it's possible they'll change

▲ That strange ball of flame is actually the head of the dragon-boss.

▲ I think he's got a bit of gas.

▲ Obviously a one-armed bandit.

ASTAL™ 輝水晶伝説アスタル

Last month we took a look at what is quite simply the greatest driving game ever – Daytona USA. But that was last month and the wheels of progress stop for no man. Or driving game. In fact, the wheels have gone completely for Sega's next foray into the world of Saturn driving games. You see, Grand Chaser is a racing game set in the future. And the future, at least for Saturn racing games, is looking very rosy indeed.

RACE 'CHASE

Even though the Saturn has only been around in Japan for six months, it already has a bizarre back catalogue of driving games. First there was Gale Racer, the much-awaited, but ultimately atrocious conversion of the Rad Mobile coin-op. Even though it only used simple sprite-scaling routines, poor programming resulted in a jerky, unplayable shadow of the aging arcade hit.

Then came Daytona USA. Utilising the Saturn's state-of-the-art polygon and texture-mapping abilities, it proved to be a near-enough arcade-perfect conversion of arguably the greatest racing game ever made.

So what's next? Well, Sega are about to take Saturn driving games a step further. Employing their tried-and-trusted 3D texture-mapped polygon graphics once more, they've combined this next generation technology with a game to match. A game with futuristic cars and space-age landscapes. Grand Chaser's the name and we've played the game!

▼ **A highly impressive intro precedes the game. And here it is for you to see.**

CARS OF THE FUTURE!

Forget Formula One racers and high-powered stock cars. Given the chance, anyone would prefer to drive a car from the future! At least that must have been what Sega thought when they designed the cars in Grand Chaser. That's if you can really call them cars. You see, these vehicles actually hover above the ground. Super-streamlined and indestructible, these alien-shaped mobiles steer more like bobsleighs than cars, twisting and spinning as they glide along the

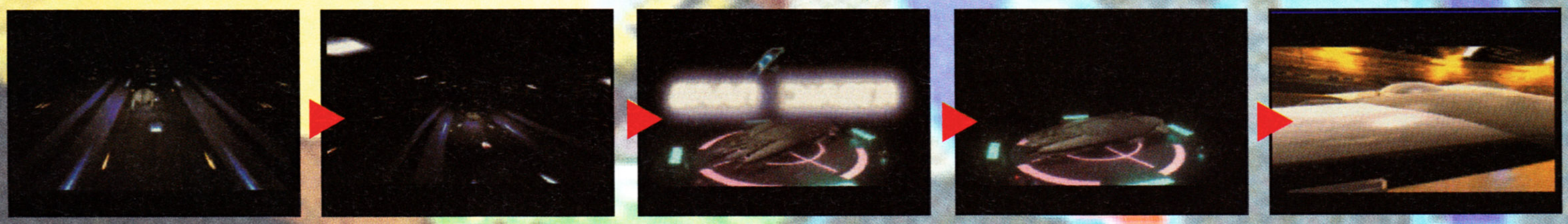
▲ **Grand Chaser. A racing game set across fantastical alien landscapes. This though, is a underground tunnel.**

SE

▲ **Cockpit-view hilarity.**

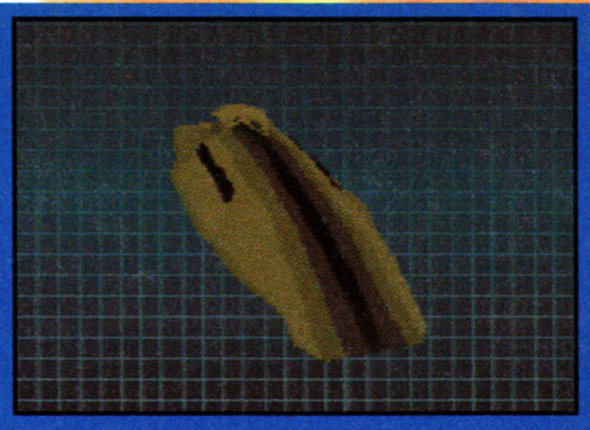
▲ **Two-player japes.**

▲ **Outside-view high-jinks.**



FRANK BUTCHER'S CAR LOT 2000

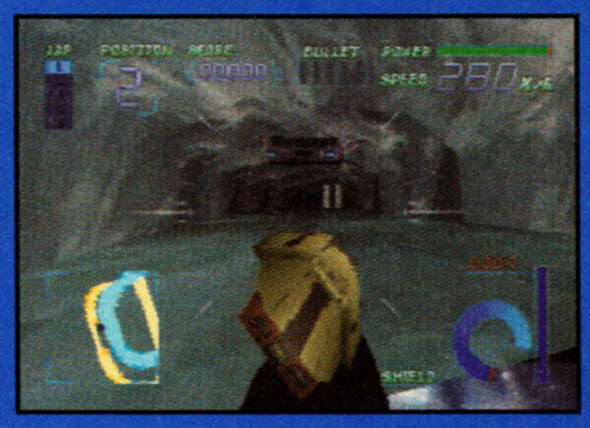
There are five futuristic hot-rods to choose from in Grand Chaser, each one varying in speed, handling and acceleration. So which one is best? Well, your guess is as good as ours, because the pre-production version of Grand Chaser we saw didn't have any statistics for each car. Hopefully, they'll be included in the end product. Until then, you'll just have to look at these pictures and guess how each one handles.
A game for all the family!



GET YOUR A*SE TO MARS!

Taking your wasp-shaped hovercar for a spin wouldn't be half so impressive if you were just driving it around the local town centre or some quaint country roads. Just as well then, that Grand Chaser has some of the most fantastic raceways you'll see in a videogame. Set across a range of weird alien landscapes, complete with huge planets hanging in the sky, each one has its own unique terrain to handle. Just take a look.

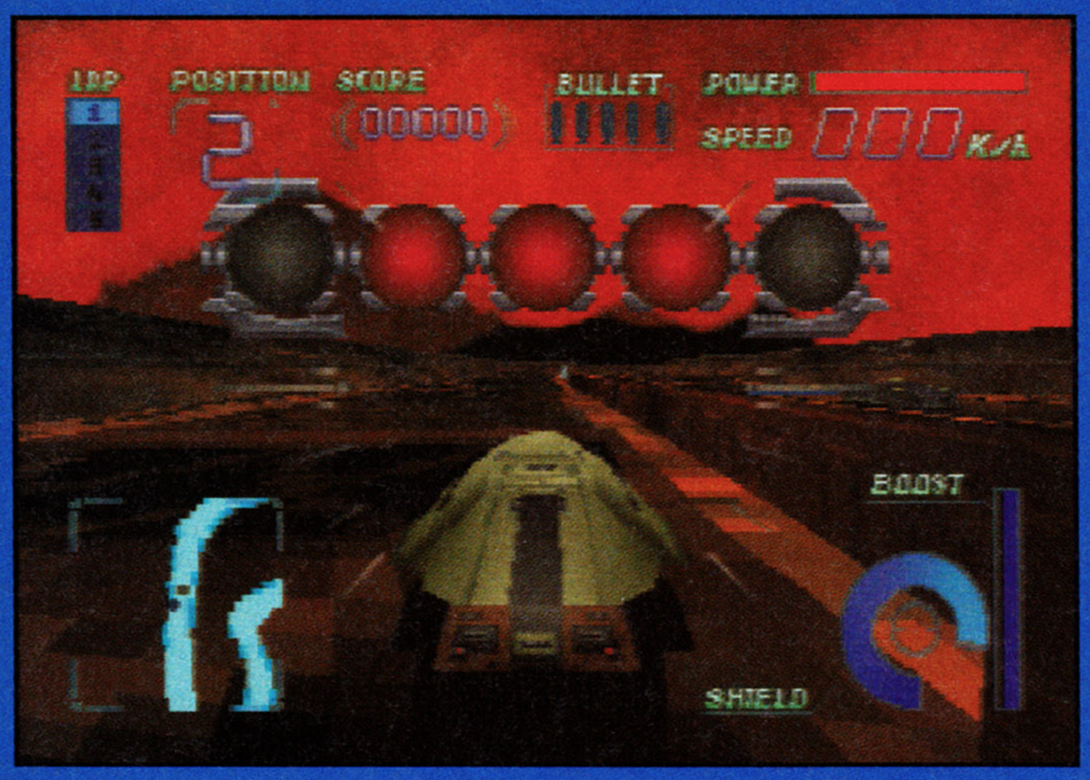
TERRAN



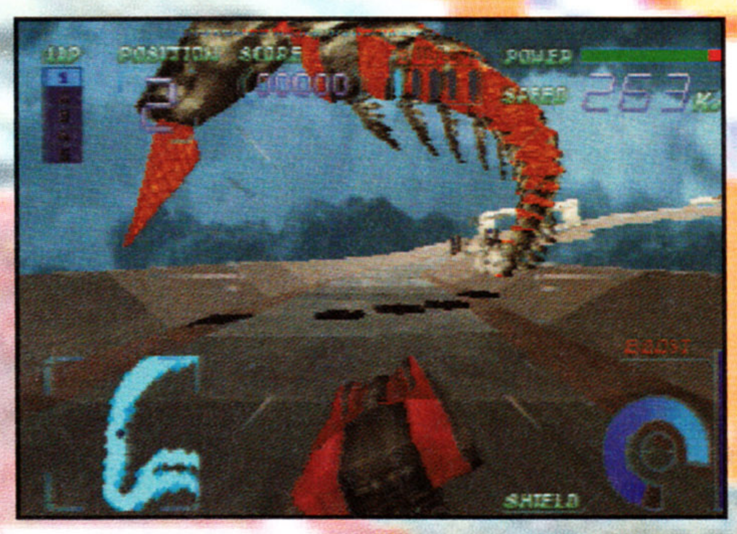
GLACIES

GET YOUR GRAN TO MARS!

If you think the name Grand Chaser sounds a bit nonsensical, wait until you see the actual name for the game in Japan. Over there, it's called Gran Chaser. Obviously, the Japanese don't realise what a Gran is, and this backed up by the fact that there aren't any OAPs running around in the game. Naturally, Sega are going to change the name for UK consumption. It's going to be called Aunt Hunter.

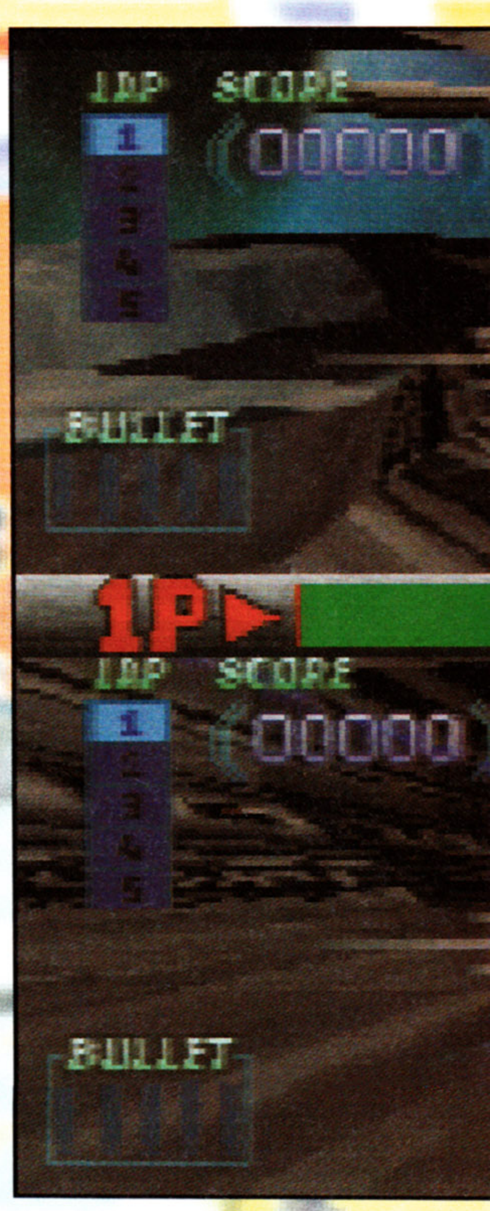


▲ **Ok Granny, you've got a three minute head start. Now hustle!**



▲ **This big worm leaps over the course on planet Nubes.**

▲ **Fly off the track on planet Terran and you're in for a dip in the pond.**



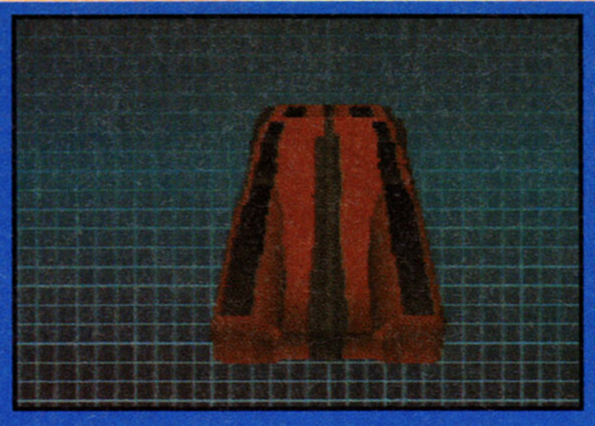
IT TAKES TWO TO CHASE!

Grand Chaser manages to score points over Daytona in at least one category – the multiplayer option. Yep, Grand Chaser has a split-screen two-player option, and mighty impressive it is too. There's no noticeable slow down or loss of detail to the graphics and the actual view remains remarkably clear too. Of course, this means players can chase after each other and leave that poor granny alone.

▼ **Split-screen two-player action. See, it's just like we told you.**

▲ **And here it is again. Player two is driving the wrong way though. It must be Rich. He's obviously spotted his gran.**

RACE 'N' CHASE



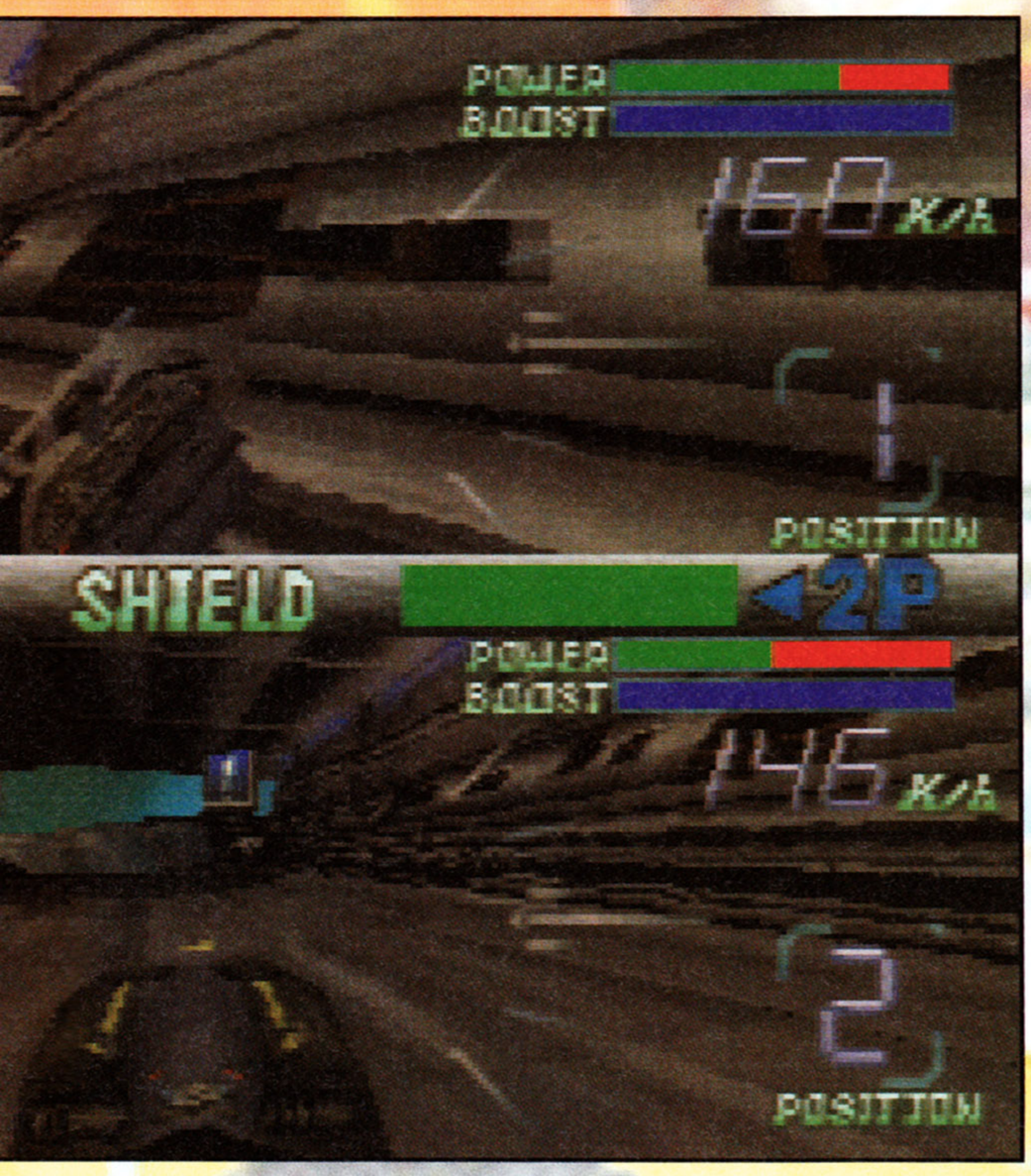
GRAND CHASER™

VASTITAS

NUBES

EVOFLAMMAS

ARMASATELLES



▲ That explosion is from an enemy missile. Yes, you can actually shoot at other cars.

racetracks. What's more, they're impossible to crash. Hit a wall and the car is just buffeted back on the track. It's almost like racing with bumper cars. Mind you, that's probably a good thing when you see the courses you have to contend with. Certainly no ordinary racing car could handle them. From the customary futuristic roadways and subterranean tunnels, to the more unexpected ice passages and volcanic regions, these tracks are easily some of the weirdest seen in a videogame. Even when compared to the likes of Daytona's Short Oval 777 or the Dinosaur Canyon.

THE CHASE IS ON!

Of course, the most important factor to any racing game is speed. Well, Grand Chaser certainly has no worries in that respect. This game is incredibly fast, with the 3D scenery whizzing past at an incredible rate. In fact, it's fair to say that Grand Chaser may even move faster than Daytona. But then, that's the least you'd expect from a game filled with futuristic flying cars. Admittedly though, the actual graphics are less detailed than Daytona's, with much of roadside scenery being generated by clever texture-mapping. The end result though, is an extremely realistic and smooth-scrolling racing environment. Currently, Grand Chaser is in the Beta-minus stage of development, which basically means it's a month away from completion. From what we've seen, there are still a number of minor problems that still need ironing out, mainly with regard to the graphics distorting at the edge of the screen, and the steering controls are a touch too sensitive at present. Nonetheless though, Grand Chaser is shaping up to be a highly impressive Saturn title and we'll take a look at the final version next month.

SHOWCASE

Virtua Fighter 2

THE ULTIMATE ARCADE GUIDE

Virtua Fighter 2 has been widely regaled as one of the most playable, graphically spectacular combat games ever, winning over a huge set of dedicated fans the world over. It's also on the cover of this month's SEGA MAGAZINE, which gives us an excuse to bring you this: the most detailed guide to the game ever seen in a games magazine.

There should be something in this guide for everyone. For starters, it contains a huge amount of the different attack moves, combinations, counterattacks and throws seen in the actual arcade game. Our move guide tells you how to do a move how much damage it inflicts on your hapless opponent.
There's also an in-depth guide to using each of the ten selectable characters - revealing the most powerful techniques to master, as well as telling you which of the fighters are the most powerful. Also, there are special sections on some of the secret little bits added in by AM2, which should prove your mastery to anyone who dares take you on. Can't say fairer than that really, can you?
If you think this guide is great, you might like to get hold of the Virtua Fighter 2 FAQ. This is a file on the Internet which contains just about every scrap of VF2 information you're ever likely to need (FAQ is an acronym of Frequently Asked Questions). It's also where a sizeable amount of the data printed here originates from. If you have access to the Internet and you're serious about Virtua Fighter 2, we seriously recommend you get your hands on this brilliant document. "Cybernauts" can FTP to ftp.netcom.com in the /pub/vi/vidgames/faqs directory to get hold of this invaluable aid. Other sources from which this showcase was derived include our own skills as well as the Japanese publication Virtua Fighter 2: Act One - which is the last word in Virtua Fighter combat.

A BIT OF HISTORY

In Japan, AM2 are revered and accorded almost god-like status amongst gamers - not for games like Virtua Racing and Daytona, but oddly enough because of Virtua Fighter (which didn't do amazingly well over here and in the States). The phenomenon that is Virtua Fighter is far and away more popular than Street Fighter II ever was, and that popularity has increased even more with the release of Virtua Fighter 2.
Sega even incorporated real life into VF2. For example, the game's scenario states that Lau Chan won the Virtua Fighter 1 competition. This is because a Lau player won the first Japanese Virtua Fighter tournament staged at the Game Spot 21 in Japan. The placings of the real life tournament also helped decide the new running order for the computer-controlled fighters in the sequel.

CONVERSION TO SATURN

The original Virtua Fighter was converted almost identically to the Sega Saturn and will be available at the launch of the official machine in September. Conversion work on the sequel has begun and you can check out the exclusive FIRST look in our news section this month.

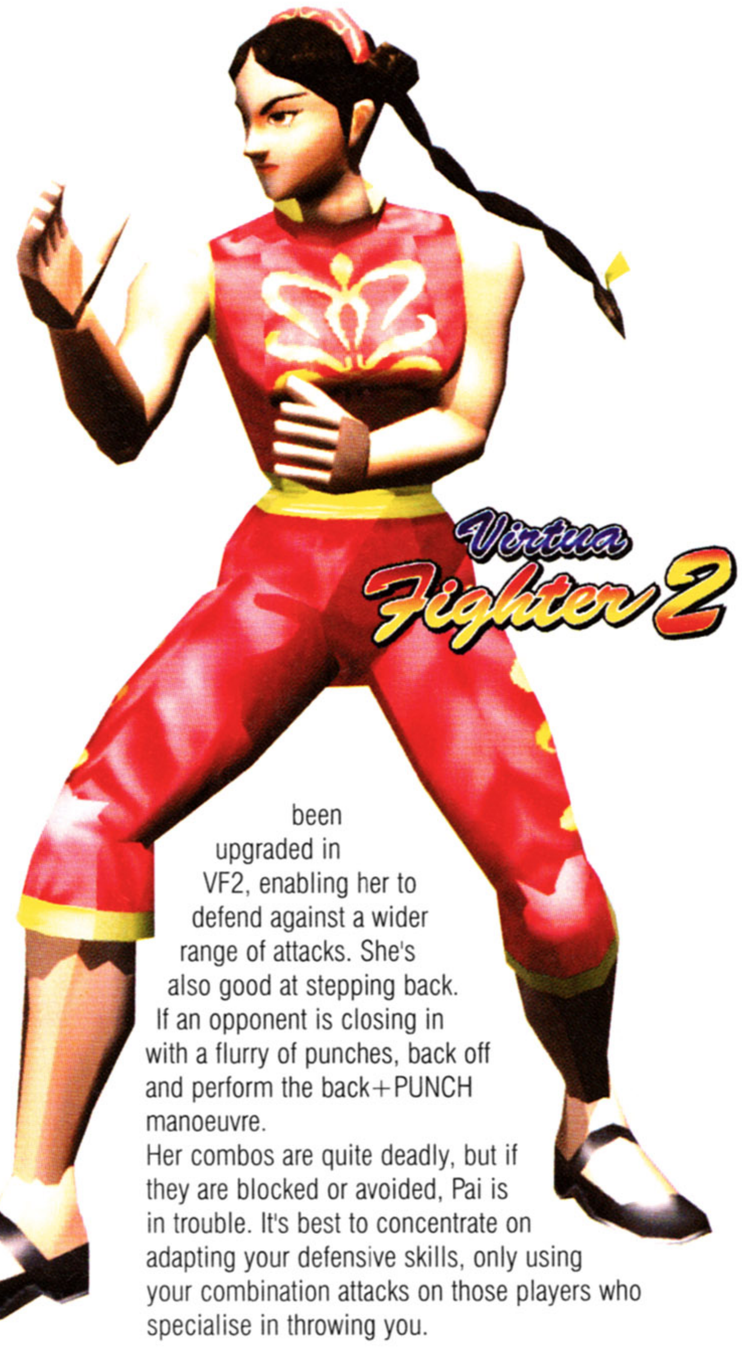
THE CHARACTERS

Virtua Fighter 2 has characters that have been vastly altered from their debut appearances in the first coin-op. Although just about every move and combination attack from the original game can be used, each fighter has been upgraded with hundreds of new techniques, throws and even counterattacks against certain moves.

THE KEY

The character guide contains a number of bizarre terms, which we'll explain here. First of all, let's check out how to do all the moves and how each combination is represented on-page. First of all, when you look at he moves, you'll see that most are in lower case, with some moves in upper case (block capitals). Lower case commands should be tapped quickly. Uppercase letters (eg FOR) mean that you should hold the command for a short while. Commands in [brackets] are optional.

For: Move the joystick towards your foe.
Back: Pull the joystick away from your opponent.
Down: Pretty obvious really.
Up: Again, supremely obvious.
D: Defend, or guard button.
P: Short for pressing the punch button.
K: Press the kick button.
+: For example, for+K means hold forward and press kick simultaneously.
SCR: Semi-circle roll. The joystick is rolled half a circle. For example, back, SCR would mean hold the stick back and roll it round to the front.
QCR: Quarter-circle roll. Like doing a fireball in Street Fighter, basically.



been upgraded in VF2, enabling her to defend against a wider range of attacks. She's also good at stepping back. If an opponent is closing in with a flurry of punches, back off and perform the back+PUNCH manoeuvre.
Her combos are quite deadly, but if they are blocked or avoided, Pai is in trouble. It's best to concentrate on adapting your defensive skills, only using your combination attacks on those players who specialise in throwing you.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, P, [P]: Running punches (10+10+12)
P, K: Punch and heel kick (10+30)
P, K+D: Punch and crescent (10+(20-40))
P, DOWN+K+D: Punch and sweep (10+(20-40))
P, P, K: 2 punches and heel kick (10+10+30)
P, P, P, K: 3 punches and crescent (10+10+12+50)
P, P, P, back+K: 3 punches and backward kickflip (10+10+12+20)
P, P, P, DOWN+K: 3 punches and sweep (10+10+12+40)
back/down+P, [P, P]: Dodging punch, [running punches] (14+10+12)
back/down+P, K: Dodging punch-kick combo (14+30)
back/down+P, K+D: Dodging punch and crescent (14+(20-40))
back/down+P, DOWN+K+D: Dodging punch and sweep (14+(20-40))
back/down+P, P, K: Dodging punch, punch and straight kick (14+10+30)
back/down+P, P, P, K: Dodging punch, 2 punches and crescent (14+10+12+50)
back/down+P, P, P, back+K: Dodging punch, 2 punches and backward kickflip (14+10+12+20)
backdown+P, P, P, DOWN+K: Dodge and

AKIRA YUKI

This guy was supposed to be the top character in the first Virtua Fighter game, but players found his moves to be too difficult to pull off. Also, because a Lau player won the Virtua Fighter competition in Japan, AM2 decided to upgrade their star combatant.
The result is a fighter who is arguably the best in the game. Akira's strength rests in his special moves. Combos aren't really his forte, but because of the diversity and the speed of his special moves, he can send an opponent reeling. He thrives in close quarters combat, although he doesn't tend to floor foes in close combat. Instead he continues giving them punishment.
Some of his special moves do tend to leave him open, which is why his counter-attacks are so powerful. This makes him strong in both offense and defense.
His "palm"-related attacks are super-powerful. Make sure you learn them and his counterattacks.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, P: Punch and body blow (10+12)
P, K: Punch-kick combo (10+30)
for, for+K, [K]: Jumping kick[s] (30+30)
for, for+P: Dashing elbow strike (20-40)
DOWN, for+P: Dashing palm strike (20-65)
DOWN, back, for+P: Double palm strike (30-70)
for+P: Elbow strike (19)
back, for, for+P+K: Dashing body check (20-28)
down/for, down/for+P: Power uppercut (50)
down/for+P: Punch fallen opponent on the ground (12)
K+D, D while holding K: Knee (30)

COUNTERATTACKS

D, back+P: Counters high-level attacks (50)
D, back/down+P: Counters mid-level attacks (50)
D, down+P: Counters low-level attacks (50)

THROWS

P+D: Trip and 2 punches (20+10+10)
All: Stun Palm (15)
All, back, down/for+P+K, back+P: Stun palm of Doom (15+40+50)
back/down+P+D: Surprise exchange
for+P+D: Break stance
back+P+D: Shake `em up
down+P+D: Shake 'em up harder
for, back, for+P+K: Close-in ram (20+15+25)
back/down, for+P: Pull in-push out (60)
back/down, for+P+K: Backwards uppercut (35)
back, down+P+D: Stumbling throw (10)

PAI CHAN

Playing Pai is definitely a different experience to using the fighters in the game. Whilst characters like Jacky, Sarah and Akira thrive on an aggressive attacking strategy, Pai is best at defense, turning an opponent's attack against them. This surfaced in the first Virtua Fighter game where she was able to turn a foe's high punch or kick into a throw which left them wide open to a ground attack. This move has

ESCAPING THROWS!

Throws have the potential to cock up a really good combat game. Look at Street Fighter II players. Do a throw on them and they get all upset accusing you of cheap tactics (which is true). Virtua Fighter 2 would have been just as susceptible were it not for the fact that you can escape all throws that are executed by pressing PUNCH and DEFEND together. When you are thrown, press PUNCH and DEFEND together yourself and you should escape the throw, hopefully leaving you in a position to unleash a terrifying combo.
Jeffry's body press is also escapable. Just pull back and press PUNCH and DEFEND together.

punch, 2 punches and sweep (14+10+12+40)
DOWN release+K: Rising heel kick (35-40)
D+K: Crescent kick (25-45)
back+D+K: Reverse crescent kick (20-40)
back/up+K: Backward kickflip (40)
for, for+K: High lunging leg thrust (30)
down/for+P: Downward chop (14)
for+K: Snap kick (19)
up/for+K, [K]: Jumping scissors kick[s] (16+10)
back, back+P: Jabbing footwork (12)
down/for+P: Punch fallen opponent on the ground (10)

COUNTERATTACKS

back+P: Grab and throw (30, Grabs high-level punches and kicks)
back/down+P: Grab and throw (30, Grab mid-level elbows and side kicks)

THROWS

P+D: Wrist twist (50)
for, down+P: Falling DDT (60)
back, down+P+D: Stomach throw (30)
for, for+P+K: Reaping throw and punch (40+10)
back, for+P: Pushover (60)
for+All: Cartwheel over low opponent (0)

LAU CHAN

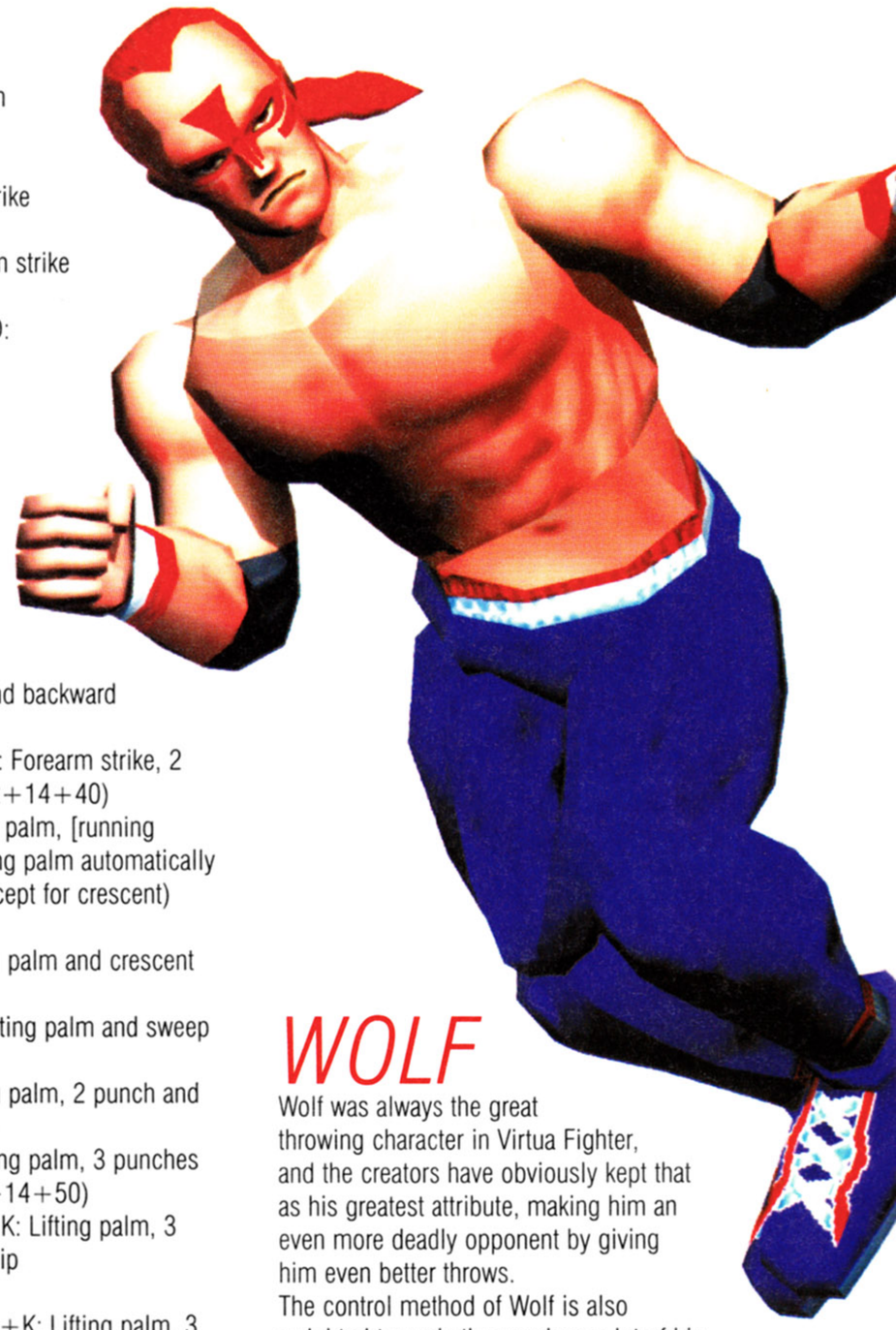
In the original Virtua Fighter, Lau was the player most likely to score a ring-out thanks to his ability to "float" an opponent. This basically means that he can hit an opponent and then continue to hit home whilst they're in the air! His knife hand and lifting palm attacks are the best way to float an opponent. In the air they're helpless, leaving you plenty of time to perform a triple punch/backflip combo.
Lau's strength is in his floating punches, which means you're in trouble if you're up against a character like Pai who has a brilliant counterattack for punching opponents. People playing Lau tend to defend against his punches, which leaves them wide open for a throw.
The basic strategy with Lau is to trap people with your basic moves. Whilst they're helpless, let them have it with a complicated combination attack.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, P, [P]: Running punches (12+12+14)
P, K: Punch and heel kick (12+30)
P, K+D: Punch and crescent (12+(20-40))
P, DOWN+K+D: Punch and sweep (12+(20-40))
P, P, K: 2 punches and straight kick (12+12+30)
P, P, P, K: 3 punches and crescent (12+12+14+50)
P, P, P, back+K: 3 punches and backward kickflip (12+12+14+20)
P, P, P, DOWN+K: 3 punches and sweep (12+12+14+40)
back/down+P, [P, P]: Forearm strike, [running punches] (14+12+14)
back/down+P, K: Forearm strike and heel kick (14+30)
back/down+P, K+D: Forearm strike and crescent (14+(20-40))
back/down+P, DOWN+K+D: Forearm strike and sweep (14+(20-40))
back/down+P, P, K: Forearm strike, punch and straight kick (14+12+30)
back/down+P, P, P, K: Forearm strike, 2 punches and crescent (14+12+14+50)
back/down+P, P, P, back+K: Forearm strike, 2 punches and backward kickflip (14+12+14+20)
backdown+P, P, P, DOWN+K: Forearm strike, 2 punches and sweep (14+12+14+40)
DOWN/FOR+P, [P, P]: Lifting palm, [running punches] (20+12+14, lifting palm automatically comes out after any kick (except for crescent) when you tap P)
DOWN/FOR+P, K+D: Lifting palm and crescent (20+(20-40))
DOWN/FOR+P, b+K+D: Lifting palm and sweep (20+(20-40))
DOWN/FOR+P, P, P, K: Lifting palm, 2 punch and heel kick (20+12+12+30)
DOWN/FOR+P, P, P, P, K: Lifting palm, 3 punches and crescent (20+12+12+14+50)
DOWN/FOR+P, P, P, P, back+K: Lifting palm, 3 punches and backward kickflip (20+12+12+14+20)
DOWN/FOR+P, P, P, P, DOWN+K: Lifting palm, 3 punches and sweep (20+12+12+14+40)
down/for+P, [P], [P]: Knife hand, [running punches] (15+12+14)
down/for+P, P, K: Knife hand, punch and straight kick (15+12+30)
down/for+P, P, P, K: Knife hand, 2 punches and crescent (15+12+14+50)
down/for+P, P, P, back+K: Knife hand, 2 punches and backward kickflip (15+12+14+50)
down/for+P, P, P, DOWN+K: Knife hand, 2 punches and sweep (15+12+14+40)
DOWN release+K: Rising heel kick (40)
D+K: Crescent kick (30-50)
DOWN+K+D: Sweep (20-35)
down/for, down/for+P: Dashing knife hand (20)
up/for+K: Forward cartwheel kick (30)
up/for+K+D: Short jump kick (32)
back/up+K: Backward kickflip (40)
for+P: Elbow strike (19)
for+K: Snap kick (19)
for, down+K: Sliding attack (30)
down/for+K: Stamp foot on fallen opponent (15)

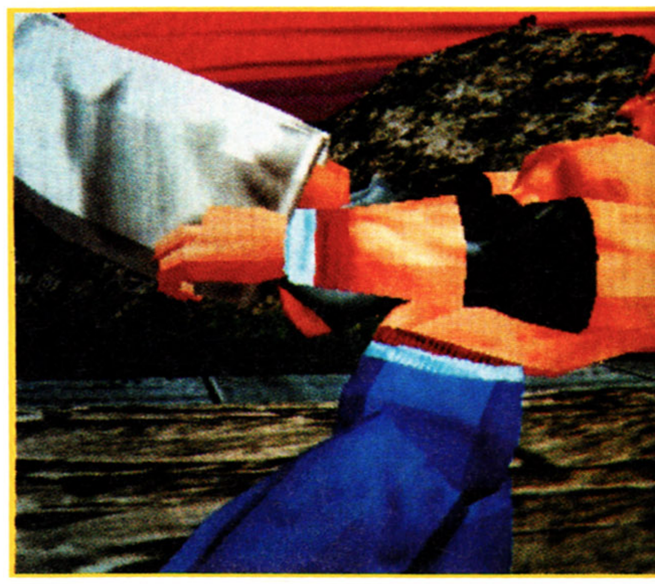
THROWS

P+D: Waterwheel drop (40)
back+P: Piggyback drop (50)
back, for+P: Head slam (60)
back, down+P+D: Sideways throw (15)



WOLF

Wolf was always the great throwing character in Virtua Fighter, and the creators have obviously kept that as his greatest attribute, making him an even more deadly opponent by giving him even better throws.
The control method of Wolf is also weighted towards throws since a lot of his special moves involve you performing similar motions to ones you'd perform if you were going for a throw.
You really have to be ruthless in getting those throws in. For example, if a character gets up with an attack (which misses), they're left wide open for a deadly suplex.
Some of Wolf's moves, such as his elbow drop have been incorporated in order to help Wolf perform better against more aggressive characters. His counterattacks are excellent as well.



SPECIAL MOVES

P, P, [P]: Running punches, [uppercut] (14+14+28)
P, P, for+P: Running punches with high elbow strike (14+14+20)
P, K: Punch-kick combo (14+30)
for+K: Knee (30)
down/for+P: Uppercut (22)
DOWN/FOR+P: Uppercut from low position (22)
for, for+P: Running clothesline (40)
back, for+P: Dashing shoulder ram (20-70)
back+P: Backhand slap (20)
K+D: Scissors kick (30)
back, for+K+D: Somersault heel smash (30)
for+K+D: Roundhouse kick (36)
for, for+K+D: Flying knee attack (30)

RANKING MODE

This was included in the Saturn conversion of Virtua Fighter which gauged players on their skill, studied their techniques and offered suggestions on improving their game. You can turn on the ranking mode by pressing all three buttons together along with the START button. According to the Virtua Fighter 2 Internet FAQ, the computer judge is especially impressed by:

1. Floating your opponent (hitting them and getting in more hits before they hit the ground).
2. Throws from behind your foe.

EXPERT MODE

If you reckon you're a Virtua Fighter 2 master and think you can take the best the computer opponents can throw at you, why not turn on the expert gamer mode? On the character select screen, push down twice, up twice, left twice and right twice. You'll hear Sarah's "Yahoo!" cry and then the game begins proper. The computer characters are a lot harder to throw and pull off a few throws of their own. More variety is also put into computer attacks and combos. If the word USE appears below the computer's life bar, this means that the character is using a move or combination that a previous player has used against it. Yes, that's right, the computer learns, taking the best techniques from the people who challenge it!

down/for, down/for+P+K: Ghostbuster (80)
up/for+K+D: Frankensteiner (60)
back/down+All: Double arm suplex (70)
down/for+All: Tombstone (70)
down+P+D: Torso takedown (60)
All: Variation german suplex (85)

up/for+K: Drop kick (30)
for+P: Body blow (20)
back+P+K: Drop elbow (30)
for, down+K: Sliding attack (20)
DOWN, for+P: Two hand upward slap (30)
down/for+P: Elbow drop on fallen opponent (20)
back/up+K: Back body splash (20)

COUNTERATTACKS

back/down+P: Grab side kicks (60)

THROWS

P+D: Backfall suplex (60)
P+D: German suplex (80)
for+P: Body slam (50)
back, SCR, for+P: Twirl and hurl (100)

JEFFRY

A lot of the tactics you'd use when controlling Wolf apply for Jeffry, who is equally as huge but even deadlier in the right hands. This is down to the fact that he's quite a bit faster than Wolf, although he's just as slow in recovering.

Jeffry has a fair amount of lower attacks which are designed to keep your opponent defending in a standing up position. This leaves them wide open for your deadlier throws. However, if your foe is leaning a bit too heavily on the old low-defending, you'll be pleased to hear that Jeffry's throws for these people are very easy to master.

Jeffry's powerful moves tend to deck opponents quickly, but his pounce (up+PUNCH) attacks are quite poor. Master the foot stomp move in order to get in more damage.

Alternatively, use your up+PUNCH moves, but limit them to opponents who are on the floor near you.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, P, [P]: Running punches, [uppercut] (14+14+28)
P, K: Punch-kick combo (14+30)
down+P+K: Dodging side jab (30)
down/for+P, [P]: Uppercut[s] (22+19)
DOWN/FOR+P: Uppercut from low position (22)
down+K, [P]: Toe kick, [hammer] (24+19)
down+K, DOWN, QCR, for+All: Toe kick of doom (24+100)
for+P: Elbow strike (19)
for+P, back+P: Elbow-hammer combo (19+30)
for, for+P, [P]: Dashing low elbow, [uppercut] (19+19)
for, for+K: Frontal foot thrust (40)
for, down+K: Heel axe (36)
for+K: Knee (35)

Virtua Fighter 2

mid-kick (10+10+12+30)
P, P, P, back+K: 3 punches and backward kickflip (10+10+12+20)
back/down+P, [P, P]: Dodging punch, [running punches] (14+10+12)
back/down+P, K: Dodging punch and kick (14+30)
back/down+P, P, K: Dodging punch, punch and straight kick (14+10+30)
back/down+P, P, P, K: Dodging punch, 2 punches and spinning mid-kick (14+10+12+30)
back/down+P, P, P, back+K: Dodging punch, 2 punches and backward kickflip (14+10+12+20)
for+P: Elbow strike (19)
down+K+D: Heel kick (35)
DOWN, for+K: Rising knee (38)
back/up+K: Backward kickflip (40)
back/up+K+D: Kickflip (50)
for, for+K: Back heel sweep (20-30)
for, for+All: Rolling flying kick (40)
for, for+K+D: Flying corkscrew kick (30)
back, SCR, for+K: Roll forwards and sweep (20-35)
back+K+D: Back thrust (30)
back, QCR, down+K: Sliding attack (19)
back, for+P+K, [P+K]: Slashing shuto, [back shuto] (16+16)
down+P+K, [P+K]: Slashing shikan-ken, [back shikan-ken] (16+16)
DOWN, for+P+K, [P+K]: Chopping shuto, [slicing shuto] (16+16)
back, back+K: Turning high back thrust (30)
back, back+P: Turning downward chop (14)
back, back+K+D: Turning toe slide (12)
back, back+P+D: Turning upward chop (14)
down/for+K: Heel smash on fallen opponent (15)

back, for+P: Drop elbow (30)
back, down/for+P: Lunging drop elbow (30)
for+P+K: Head butt (40)
back/down, for+P+K: Thrusting head butt (40)
All: Flying butt attack (30)
down/for+K: Foot stomp (20)

THROWS

P+D: Fireman's carry (60)
P+D: Backbreaker (100)
for+P: Power slam (50)
back+P+D: Body press (60)
down/for, down/for+P+K: Crucifix piledriver (80)
back, for+P+K, for+P+K, for+P+K H: Triple head butts (20+15+32)
back, for, for+All: Backbreaker (70)
down+P: Face grab AKA Iron claw (50)
DOWN, for+K: Triple knee bash (10+10+10+30)
for/down+All: Powerbomb (70)

COUNTERATTACKS

down+P: Grab incoming single fist/palm attacks (50)

THROWS

P+D: Hip throw AKA shoulder throw (50)
P+D: Torso takedown (50)
back+P: Ten foot toss (40)
back, for+P: Reaping throw (50)
All: Toka throw (50)

KAGE-MARU

Kage was a spectacular, yet ultimately lacking character in the first Virtua Fighter game. Luckily, he's been upgraded extensively in Virtua Fighter 2, making him one of the best fighters in the game.

Don't rely too much on Kage's combos as they're just about all very weak indeed. Instead, concentrate on the unpredictable, using Kage's range of special moves to disorientate the opponent.

The back+PUNCH ten foot toss is even more useful in Virtua Fighter 2, as you're able to get in a free undefendable combo on your opponent when he's on the way down. If a throw lands an opponent near to you, always use Kage's heel smash move. This is sound advice as well if you wish to use Kage's counterattack move.

If you're after a character that's pretty easy to master completely, Kage is your man as mastering the ten foot toss/combo on the way down manoeuvre is just about the most complex thing he can do.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, P, [P]: Running punches (10+10+12)
P, K: Punch-kick combo (10+30)
P, P, K: 2 punches and straight kick (10+10+13)
P, P, P, K: 3 punches and spinning

SARAH BRYANT

The old triple punch/backflip combo was one of the simplest and most deadly combination attacks in the first Virtua Fighter, making Sarah top dog amongst many experienced fighters.

Sarah retains her sheer speed and attacking prowess in Virtua Fighter 2. In fact, her speed has been substantially increased allowing her to perform many moves after her elbow-knee two-hit combo (backflip or triple kick spring instantly to mind). This new speed also makes her great for floating opponents just as Lau did in Virtua Fighter 1.

Sarah has been given a plethora of new kicks in Virtua Fighter 2 which increases her versatility as a fighter still further. Also, her clothesline throw has even greater range than in the first game, making her even more powerful.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, P, [P]: Running punches, [hook] (10+10+10)
P, K: Punch-kick combo (10+30)
P, P, K: 2 punches and straight kick (10+10+30)
P, P, P, K: 3 punches and rising knee (10+10+10+40)
P, P, P, up+K: 3 punches and hopping toe kick (10+10+10+30)
P, P, P, back+K: 3 punches and kickflip (10+10+10+30)
P, down+K: Punch and side kick (10+30)
back/down+P, [P, P]: Dodging punch, [punch and hook] (14+10+10)
back/down+P, K: Dodging punch-kick combo (14+30)
back/down+P, P, K: Dodging punch, punch and straight kick (14+10+30)
back/down+P, P, P, K: Dodging punch, 2 punches and rising knee (14+10+10+40)
back/down+P, P, P, up+K: Dodging punch, 2 punches and hopping toe kick (14+10+10+30)
back/down+P, P, P, back+K: Dodging punch, 2 punches and kickflip (14+10+10+30)
back/down+P, down+K: Dodging punch and side kick (14+30)
K, P: Kick and punch (30+08)
for+P: Elbow strike (15)
for+P, K: Elbow-knee combo (15+25)
for+K, [down/for+K]: Knee, [rising knee] (30+40)
DOWN, for+K: Rising knee (40)
for, for+K: Lunging knee (30)
down+K: High snap kick AKA Big punt (30)
down+K, [K]: Toe kick, side kick (30+20)
DOWN/FOR+K, K, [K]: 2, [3] Shadow kicks (19+20+21)
down+K+D: Crouching side kick (20)
back/up+K: Kickflip (50)
up+K: Roundhouse kick (25)
for/up+K: Forward jumping roundhouse kick (25)
for/up+K+D: Tornado kick (20-50)
back+K: Double kick (10+30)
K+D: Downward crescent kick (20-30)
back/down+K+D: Side hook kick (20)
back, back+P: Turning punch (14)
back, back+K: Turning jump kick (30)
DOWN, back+K, [K]: Spinning heel kick[s] (20+20)
down/for+P: Downward backfist (12)
down/for+K: Kick fallen opponent (15)

THROWS

P+D: Belly suplex (50)
P+D: Torso takedown (60)
for, for+P: Jumping clothesline AKA bulldog (40)

JACKY BRYANT

Jacky was a great favourite for players of Virtua Fighter 1 and he still has plenty of support, despite the fact that his moves haven't really been upgraded in the same way as his opponents' have.

Playing Jacky in VF2 is similar in style to using Sarah in VF1 - that is, develop a series of techniques that work for you and stick by them whatever happens. It may annoy the hell out of the people you're fighting, but it's the only way to succeed.

His beat knuckle is an excellent move, and Jacky's spinning backfist is super-swift now, making it invaluable. Jacky also possessed a combo that can drain just about *the entire energy bar* of an opponent. Come in with a single spinning backfist, elbow, knee then backflip. Jacky's backflip is the most powerful in the game, capable of draining about 80% of an enemy's energy in one go. This is what makes Jacky so powerful in the right hands.

By all means attempt to master some of Jacky's flashier moves, but you really need to know exactly what you're doing or you're mincemeat.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, P, [P]: Running punches, [hook] (12+12+14)
P, K: Punch-kick combo (12+19)
for, P, K: Normal punch-kick combo (12+30)
P, down+K: Punch and sweep (12+(20-40))
P, P, K: 2 punches and straight kick (12+12+30)
P, P, for+P: 2 punches, elbow (12+12+10)
P, P, for+P, heel kick: 2 punches, elbow, heel kick (12+12+19+30)
P, P, for+P, back/up+K+D: 2 punches, elbow, kickflip (12+12+19+6)
P, P, back+P, [K]: 2 punches, spinning backfist, [sweep] (12+12+22+30)
D, P, P, [P]: Dodging punch, running punches (14+12+14)
D, P, K: Dodging punch-kick combo (14+19)
D, P, down+K: Dodging punch and sweep (14+(20-40))
D, P, P, K: Dodging punch, punch, straight kick (14+12+30)
D, P, P, for+P: Dodging punch, punch, elbow (14+12+10)
D, P, P, for+P, K: Dodging punch, punch, elbow, heel kick (14+12+19+30)
D, P, P, for+P, back/up+K+D: Dodging punch, punch, elbow, kickflip (14+12+19+60)
D, P, P, back+P, [K]: Dodging punch, punch, spinning backfist, [crescent] (14+12+22+30)
back+P, [P]: Spinning backfist[s] (22+30)
back+P, K: Spinning backfist and crescent (22+(30-50))
back+P, down+K: Spinning backfist and sweep (22+(20-35))
back+P, back/down+P: Spinning backfist and low spinning backfist (22+22)
for+P: Elbow strike (19)
for+P, K: Elbow-heel kick combo (19+30)
back/down+P: Low spinning backfist (22)

back/down+P, K: Low spinning backfist and sweep (22+(20-35))
for+K: Knee (30)
back/up+K: Kickflip (60)
down+K: Toe kick (24)
for, for+K: Punt kick (30)
down+K+D: Crouching side kick (20)
K, K: Kick, heel kick (30+30)
down/for+P: Hook (14)
back+K: Side hook kick (20)
P+K: Beat knuckle (30)
down+P+K, [K, K, K, K]: Lightning kicks (08+08+08+10+30)
back, for+K+D: Spinning mid-kick (36)
back, back+P: Turning hook (14)
back, back+K: Spin around half crescent (30)
down/for+K: Kick fallen opponent (15)

THROWS

P+D: Brainbuster (50)
P+D: Backside clothesline AKA faceplant (60)
for, for+P: Jumping clothesline AKA bulldog (40)
down,down/for, K, K: Toe kick, side kick (24+25)
for, back+P+K: Trip and hammer (60)

SHUN DI

For a totally drunk 83-year-old, Shun is particularly deadly - and also one of the most entertaining fighters in the tournament, simply owing to the comedy associated with his moves.

His fighting style is totally alien to players used to Virtua Fighter 1 and features moves that connect in odd places, such as the back-push

SECRET BONUSES

Being an AM2 title, there are plenty of secret additions in Virtua Fighter 2 which provide small amounts of gratuitous, yet oddly amusing entertainment. There are other secrets to discover, but we'll leave those for the time being.

1. Victory Taunts

Your character has four different taunts or victory cries that you can access. During the replay, hold down any of the three major buttons. Each button is a different taunt. Also, you get a super-special taunt if you defeat a character in under ten seconds.

2. Slow-motion Replay

The replays are excellent for reliving your moment of supreme glory and really humiliating your defeated opponent. As you knock-out, ring-out or time-out, hold down all three buttons for a slow-motion replay. You can only do this once and once ONLY each game.

3. Old Music Returns

There is a small amount of silence before each new fight begins. During this short time, hold down the player one start button for a remix of Jacky's music from Virtua Fighter 1. Holding down the player two start button gives you a version of Sarah's music from the first game. Not bad eh?

move, which connects so low that it tends to duck Shun past many of his opponents' attacking moves. Oddly enough, Shun is also the fastest character at rising from the deck, and his rotorblade kick is brilliant for opponents stupid enough to think that they can pounce on him.

Shun isn't very good at recovering from special moves. After each move it takes him some while before he's able to attack again. This makes him mincemeat to the likes of Sarah, Lau and Pai. Good reflexes are really the key to using Shun as he has moves to counter just about any attack - providing you can get them out in time.

Also, GET HIM DRUNK! The move list below shows that some attacks can only be performed if Shun has had a drink or two. You can have up to 14 drinks, each giving every move extra power. After 14 drinks, Shun's moves are 1.4 times as powerful! You might not believe it, but it's true. Also, Shun's face gets redder with every drink.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, [P], [P]: Punch, [high elbow], [uppercut] (10+12+14)
P, K: Punch-kick combo (10+30)
down/for+P: Uppercut (14)

DOWN/FOR+P: Dashing uppercut (30)
DOWN, for+P: Lunging punch (30)
for+P: Running punches (10+14+8)
back/down+P: Backpush (22)
down+K+D: Scorpion kick (35)
back+P: Twisting back hook fist (24)
for, for+K: Cartwheel kick (35)
up+P: Jumping back hammer (30)
back/up+P: Backward jumping back hammer (30)
up+K: Mule kick (35)
up/for+K: Spinning scissors kick (35)
up/for+P: Spinning twist punch (30)
K+D, [P]: Jumping spin kick, [sideways push] (35+19)
P+K: Two hand push (30, Shun drinks if this move hits)
back/down+K+D: Breakdance sweep (30)
DOWN+K+D: Breakdance sweep (30)
down+P+K, [K], [K]: Breakdance sweeps (10+10+10, works only after Shun drinks)
back+K+D: Backward hopping kicks (35)
for, SCR, back, [K]: Handstand [kick] (30)
back+K: Kick and fall face up (24)
back/down+K, [D]: Low back kick, [fall face down] (10)
back/down+K, K: Low back kick and heel kick (10+30)

back/down+K, K+D: Twist kick and jumping spin kick (10+35)
back/down, back/down+K: Falling twist kicks (30+15)
down, down, [K]: Sit down, [low kick or slide] (24)
back/down+D: Side step backwards
back/down+D, P: Side steps backwards with backfist (20)
back/down+D, P+K: Side steps backwards with two-hand push (30)
down+D: Side steps forwards
back+D: Steps backwards tucking in his tummy
back+D, P: Steps backwards and uppercut (15)

THROWS
P+D: Dances with punches (10+10+10+20 (Shun drinks after this move))
All: Grab and fall (30+20, grabs arm and falls back elbowing opponent as he falls)

LION RAFALE

Lion is very fast indeed, but as you can see from the move chart, his attacks are quite weak compared to the other fighters. However, his different fighting style makes him a bit of a handful for people only used to the original Virtua Fighters.

Although using his speed to perform hit-and-run attacks pays some dividends to Lion players, it's in his throws that he inflicts the most damage. He isn't very large or very strong, so he doesn't have much of a reach and his pouncing attacks are only really good at close range.

His long-range spinning sweeps are useful: one hits standing opponents whilst the other blasts low-defenders. They look similar so mix them up a bit and you're bound to catch the opponent off-guard.

Also, using Lion's low attacks inflicts damage against opponents who aren't very imaginative and attempt to floor you with high kicks or punch combos. He just sails in underneath and splats them.

Lion's style is his biggest asset. He doesn't look like the other characters and his moves are quite unpredictable. Combine this with his speed in order to succeed.

SPECIAL MOVES

P, [P], [P]: Punch, [elbow thrust], [backfist] (12+14+15)
P, K: Punch-kick combo (12+30)
for+P: Elbow strike (19)
for+K: Knee (30)
down/for+P, [P]: Uppercut, [downward swipe] (10+20)
DOWN/FOR+P, [P]: Low forward creeping peck[s] (12+12)
back/down+P, [P]: Low thrusting peck[s] (12+08)
for, for+P: Long range fist thrust (40)
for, for+K+D: Spin forward and kick high (24)
down/for+K+D: Spin forward and kick low (24)
back+P: Poke head from above (30)
for+P+D: Poke head directly (30)
P+D: Short range low wind-up attack (15)
down/for+P+D: Long range low wind-up attack (20)
DOWN+K+D: Sweep (24)
up+K, [K]: Dancing kick[s] (25+30)
down, down+K: One-handstand kicks (24+24)
up/for+K: Cartwheel spin kick (20)
up/for+P: Jumping downward swipe (30)
back/up+P: Backward jumping downward swipe (30)
up+P: Swinging arms (30)
down+K, [K]: Low swipe kick[s] (12+12)
down+K, K+D: Low swipe kick, high spin kick (12+30)
back, back+K: Turn kick (30)
back, back+P: Turn punch (14)
back, back+K+D: Turn with side kick (24)
D, for+P: High spinning side attack (20)
D, down/for+P: Spin to the side with low trip (20)
back/down+D: Ducks and steps away sideways
for/down+D: Ducks and closes in

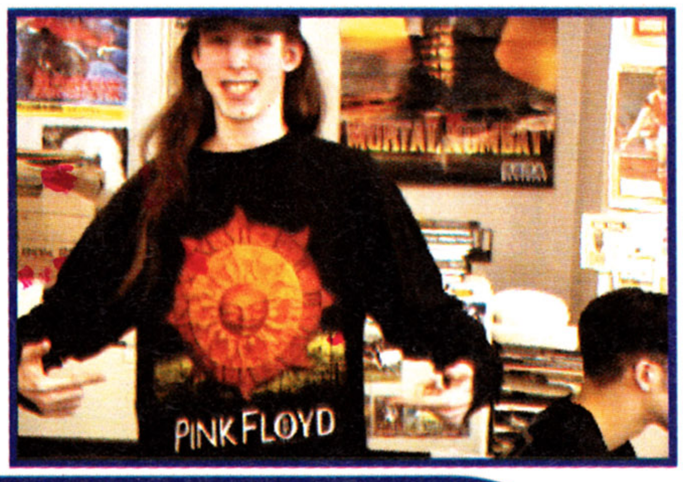
THROWS

P+D: Trip (10+15+25)
P+D: Piggyback attack (10+20)
back+P+K: Reaping throw (30+20)
for, for+P+D: Grab and fling (30+20)
for, SCR, back+P+D: Frontal piggyback attack (10+15+15+30)

Virtua Fighter 2

MEGA DR

I've seen the dark side of the moon, I've eaten more Skittles than any mortal being on this planet, my thumbs bend up the wrong way from joypad abuse as a young boy, games are my religion, every waking hour I battle the dark lord of crap platform games.

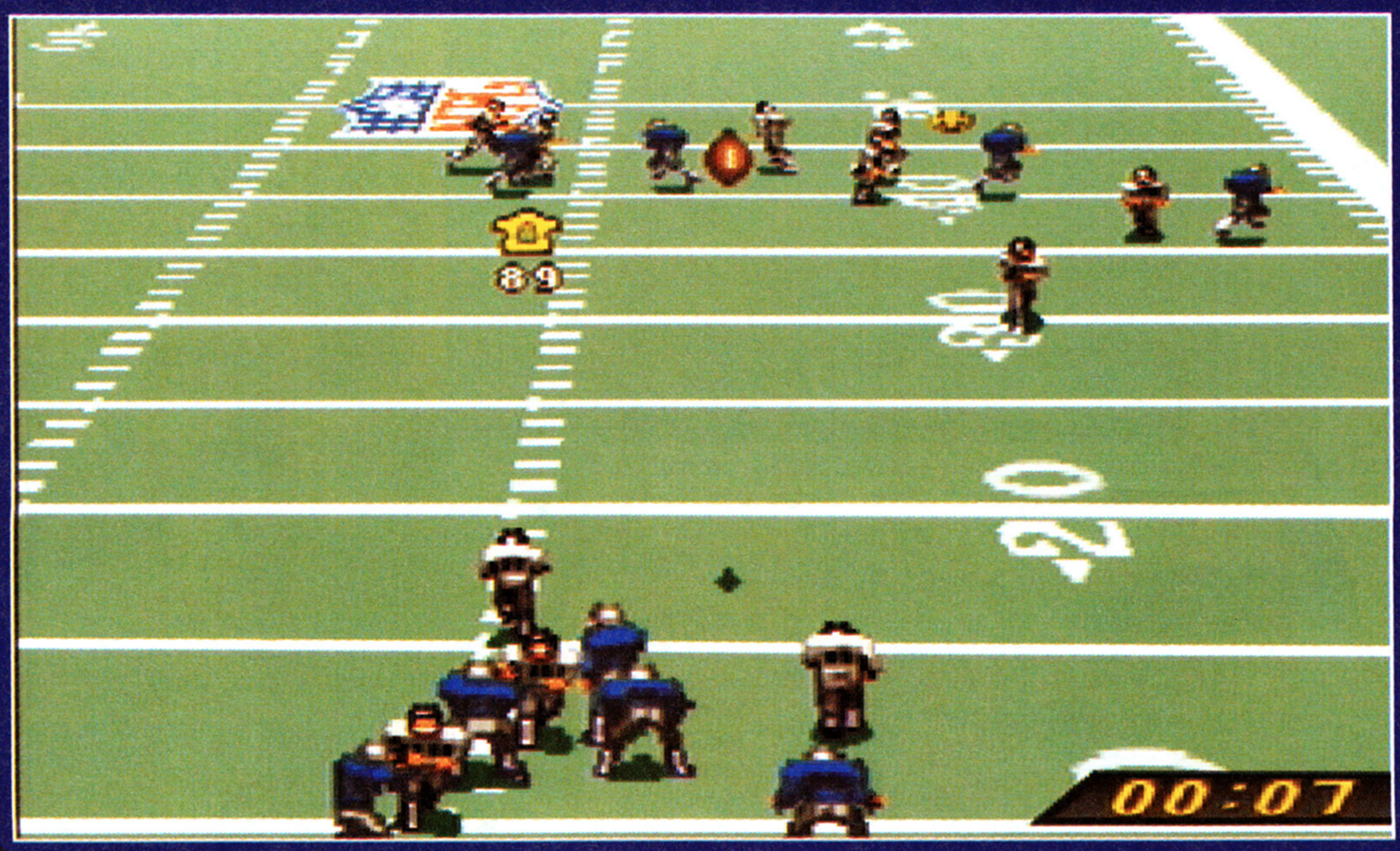


But, I still find enough time to produce the countrys top tips section, so cheers for all your help fellow games warriors, If you got 'em you know where to send 'em. Ed's Tips, Sega Mag, Priory Ct, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Peace.

MADDEN NFL '95

To get a special version of the game with one minute quarters, go to the "Game Set Up" screen and highlight "Play Mode". Now press A, C, C, B, B on controller 1. You will hear a shout and a message will appear at the bottom of the screen to tell you that it has worked. Choose "Game Length - 1 minute" and start.

Do the same as above but this time press B, A, C, A, C to be able to select two new teams - the Panthers and the Jaguars.



RADICAL REX

For a level select on the Megadrive and Mega-CD versions of the game, go to the title screen and press A, C, Down, Right, Up, B on controller 2. The cheat screen will appear allowing you to choose any level.

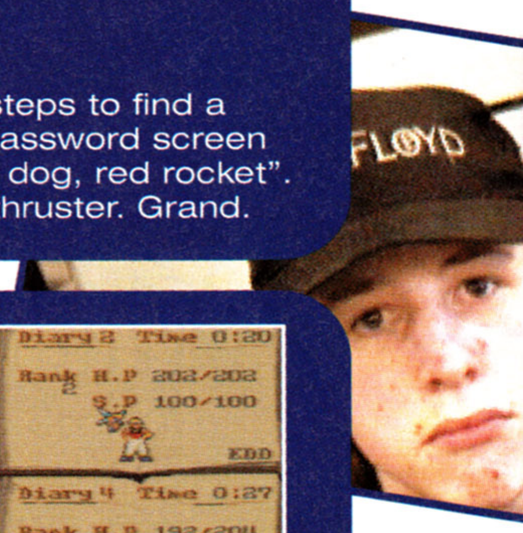
NHL HOCKEY '95

To play an extra-short game (30 second periods) start a game as usual and go to the "Controller Setup" screen. Now hold A, C and Start and let go to make the "Scouting Report" screen appear. Press and hold A, C and Start again to make the "Game Options" appear. Select "Abort Game" to go back to the start and you can now select periods of the 30 second kind.

iVE

JAMES POND 3: OPERATION STARFISH

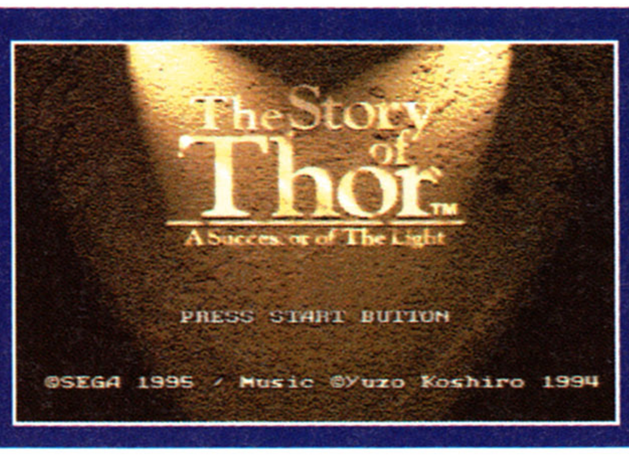
Daniel Cadman from Sheffield has followed in my footsteps to find a cheat password to add to those in issue 9. Go to the password screen and enter "Red cheese, yellow mouse, green cat, blue dog, red rocket". You will now have infinite fuel whenever you pick up a thruster. Grand.

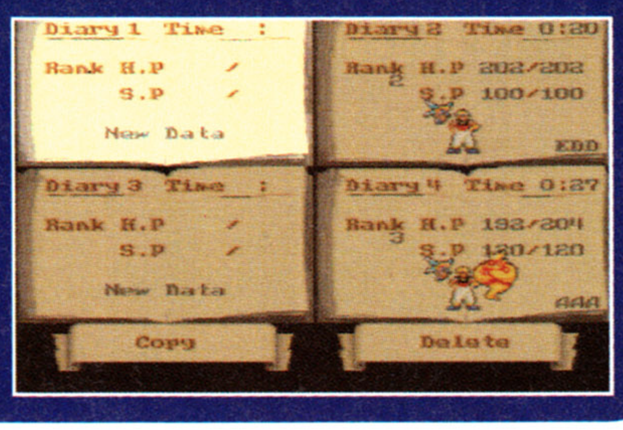


THE STORY OF THOR

Good old Vince Lambert from Spalding, Lincs. has sent us these two intriguing cheats. To get a list of the best five players, go to the title screen (the one with "Press Start") and hold B then press Start.

To get a sound test, go to the diary screen on a blank page with no saved game and press B and Start.

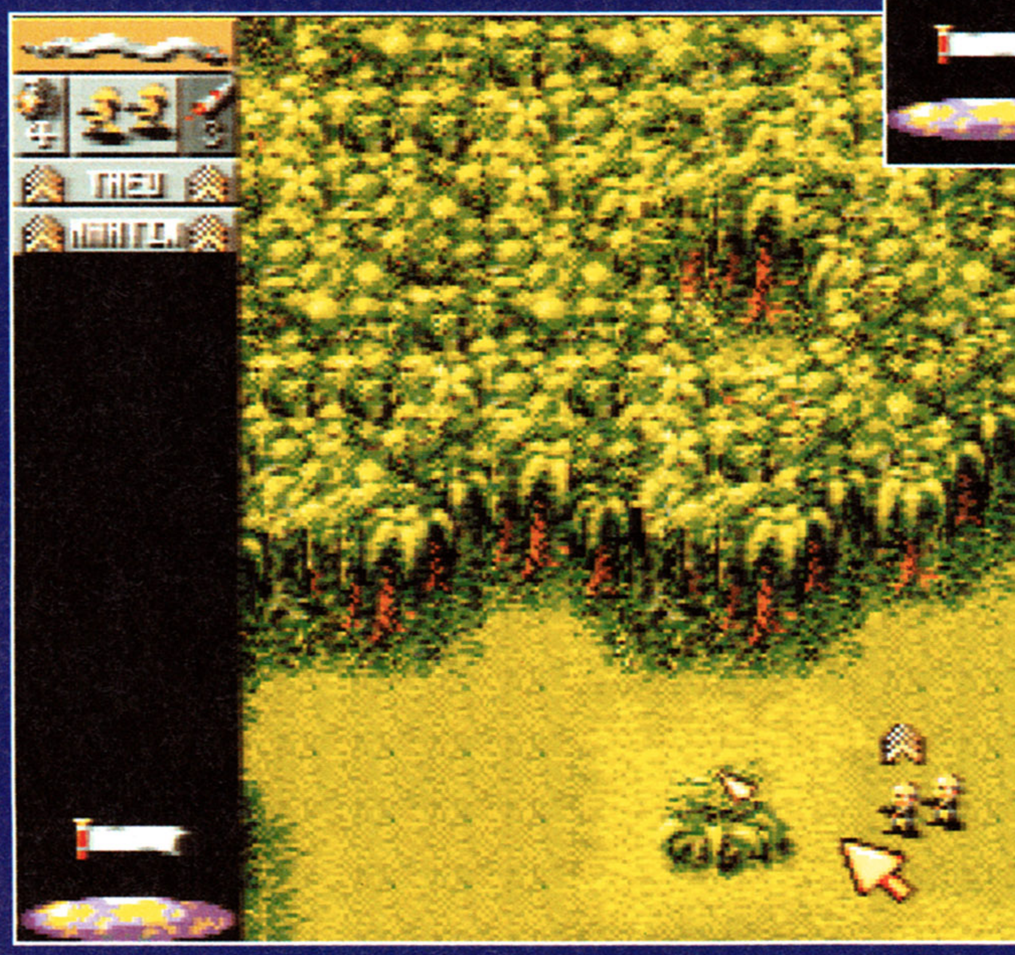


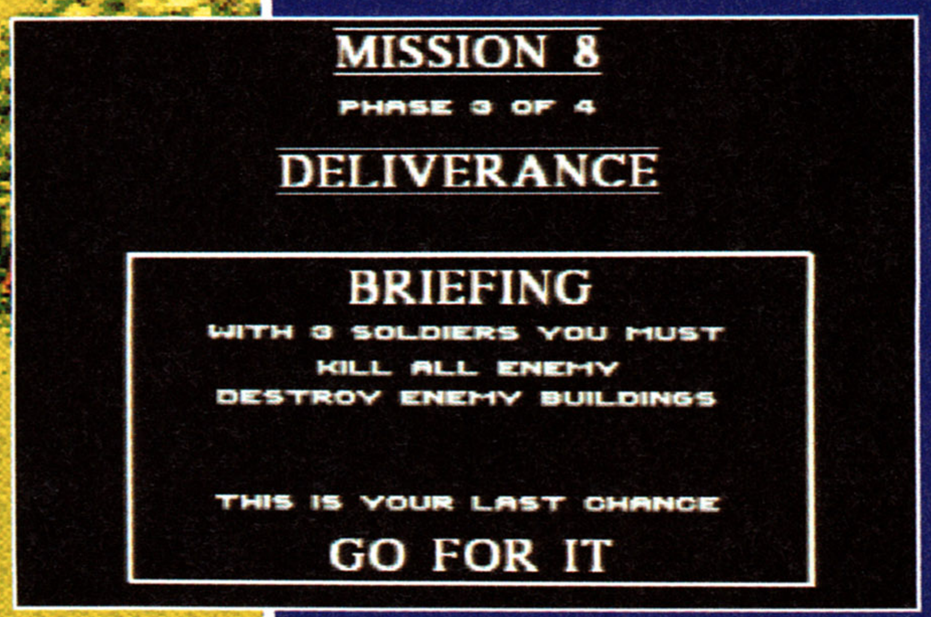


CANNON FODDER

Paul David from Fife in Scotland has found the locations of a few goodies in Cannon Fodder. On Mission 8 Phase 3 go to the bottom right of the level and you will find a bush. Blow it up to receive a gold warhead containing fifty (yes that's 50 folks) heat-seeking missiles. Still on the same phase, behind the buildings you will see a small gap in the bushes. Walk through here along the path (minding the spike) and you will reach a palm tree. Blow it up to get four stars which will promote you instantly to a General.

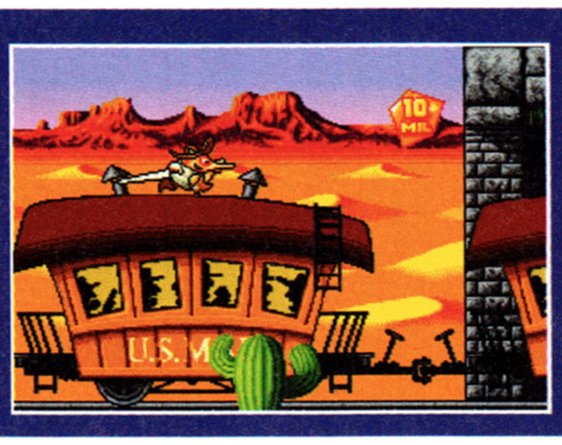
Jon Lesniewski from Dudley, West Midlands has sent this tip also for Cannon Fodder. If you're short of troopers, press C on the "Mission Briefing" screen to return to Boot Hill. Go to the "Mission Briefing" screen again and you'll have the same number of men as when you started the mission.

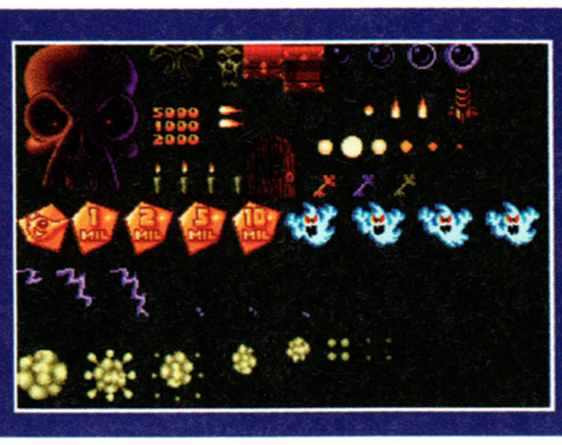


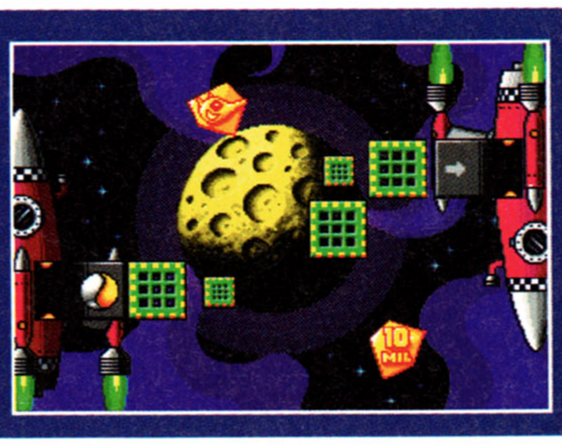


PSYCHO PINBALL

This simple cheat will give you an extra ball at any time. Pause the game and press Down, B, C, B, Right, Right.







MEGA TIPS

SYNDICATE

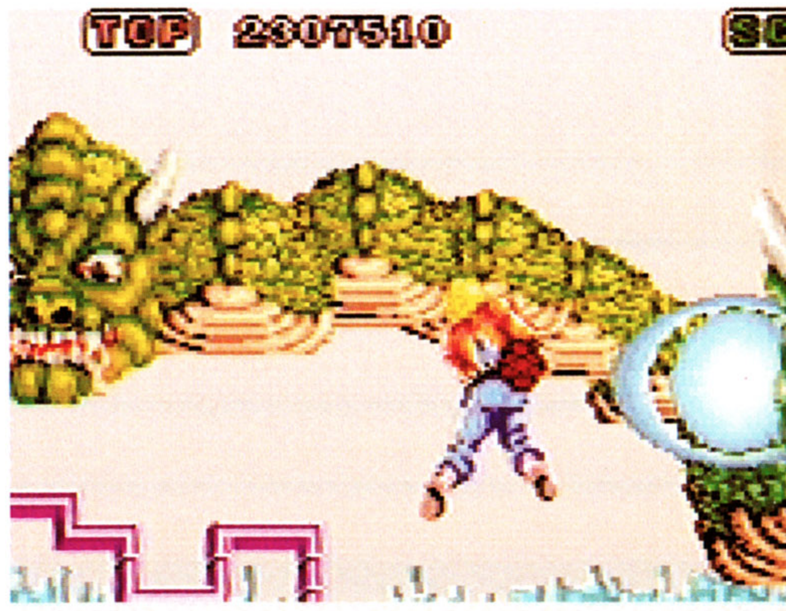
Glen Ford from London sent these codes in but he forgot to say exactly what they do.
Scandinavia - 7KKJBTJO4
Central Europe - 4VQG-GHOJ2
Eastern Europe - 475CM9OJO
Urals - 4CEAKD4283
Siberia, Kazakhstan, Kamchatka, Far East - W280ZKQLOO3OP

TINY TOONS: ACME ALL STARS

Here are the level codes from Justin Cooper in Essex.
Match 1 - Buster, Buster, Buster, Buster
Match 2 - Plucky, Montana Max, Elmyra, Buster
Match 3 - Elmyra, Babs, Hamton, Plucky
Match 4 - Babs, Buster, Montana Max, Elmyra
Match 5 - Buster, Hamton, Plucky, Montana Max
Match 6 - Elmyra, Plucky, Babs, Hamton
Match 7 - Plucky, Elmyra, Hamton, Babs
Match 8 - Montana Max, Plucky, Elmyra, Buster
Match 9 - Hamton, Babs, Buster, Montana Max
By the way, the reason we didn't print your name with the Prizefighter cheat was that I found it about a month before you wrote in. Sorry.

MORTAL KOMBAT 2

Great, another MK2 bug. I found this interesting thingy myself. Play as Shang Tsung (you don't need the cheat for this) and win the second round without using the punch buttons. When the "Finish Him / Her" message appears, morph into Rayden (D, B, F, LK) and perform his Friendship (D, B, F, HK). The little Rayden will turn brown when you become Shang Tsung again. Yuk.



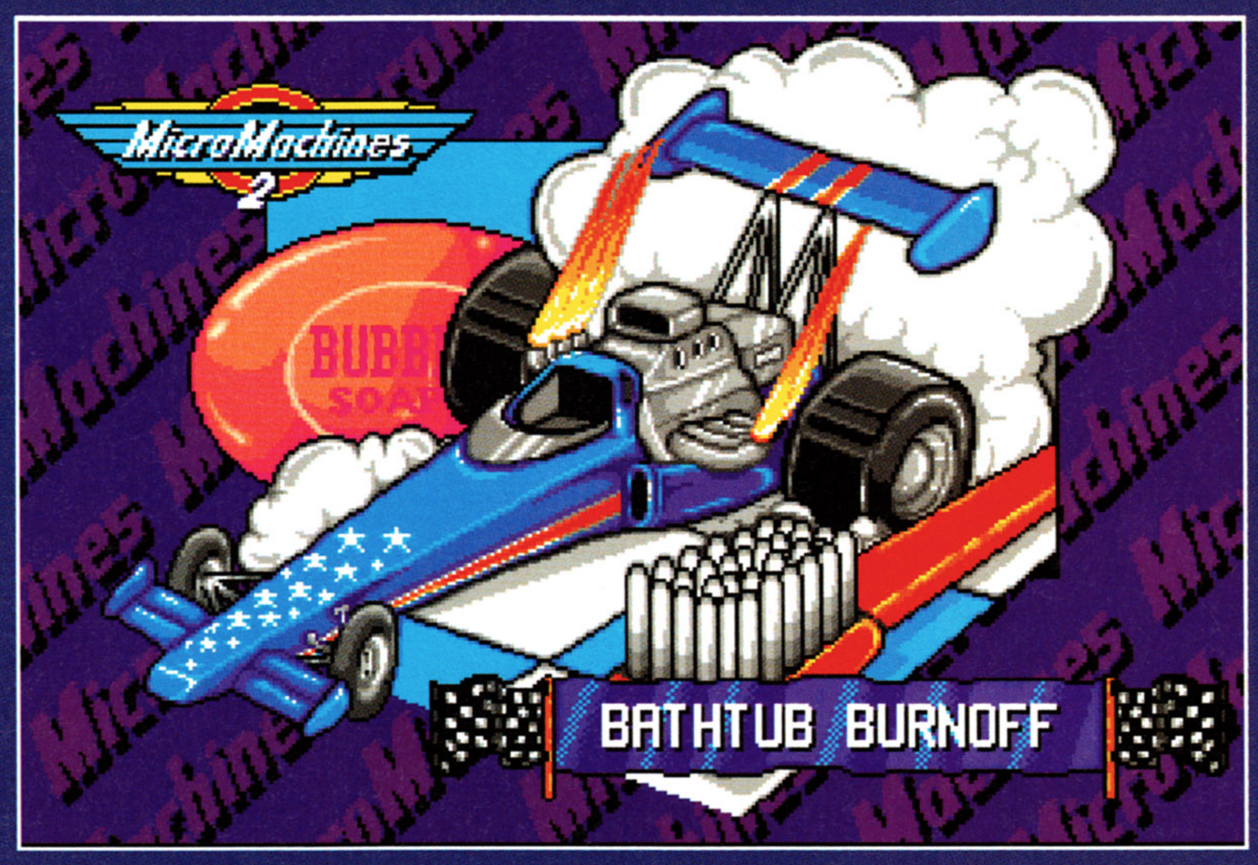
iVE

BALLZ

Try this. On the title screen, highlight any option and press A nine times to hear a belch sound. It may well be a cheat but I haven't worked out what it does yet.

MICRO MACHINES 2

Kris McKee from County Down has written to explain where you can find a bonus lap power-up on race 24 - Brick 'n' Tree. Complete a lap of the course and then drive into the middle of the track to get the goody. Simple!



MEGA DRIVE 32X

STAR WARS ARCADE

Start the game as usual and when playing, pause the game and press Down, B, B, Up, Right, Left on controller 1. You will hear R2D2 scream and you will get infinite time.

SPACE HARRIER

When the Sega logo appears at the start of the game, press and hold A and C on controller 2 then press Start, also on controller 2. Now when you play the game and die you will continue from where you died instead of going back.

REBEL ASSAULT

For a level select from Lynda Laws in Kent, wait for the Lucasarts logo to appear at the start and press Up+A, Down+A, Up+A, Up+A, Left+A, Right+A. You will hear a noise and a voice to tell you that it has worked. Start as usual and press Start to get cheat options or C to skip to the next level.

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REVIEW INDEX

Reviews. That's what it's all about eh? Let's face it, how many times have you bought a game in the past without reading a review, only to find it's, well, crap? Ah, if only you'd read SEGA MAGAZINE first you fools. Then everything would be peachy perfect and you'd have an excellent collection of games in your cupboard too. Oh well.

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ALIEN SOLDIER™

INFO

MEGA DRIVE

BY:
SEGA

PRICE:
TBA

RELEASE:
MAY/JUNE

STYLE:
SHOOT 'EM UP

PLAYERS:
1

CONTROLS:
JOYPAD

CONTINUES:
INFINITE

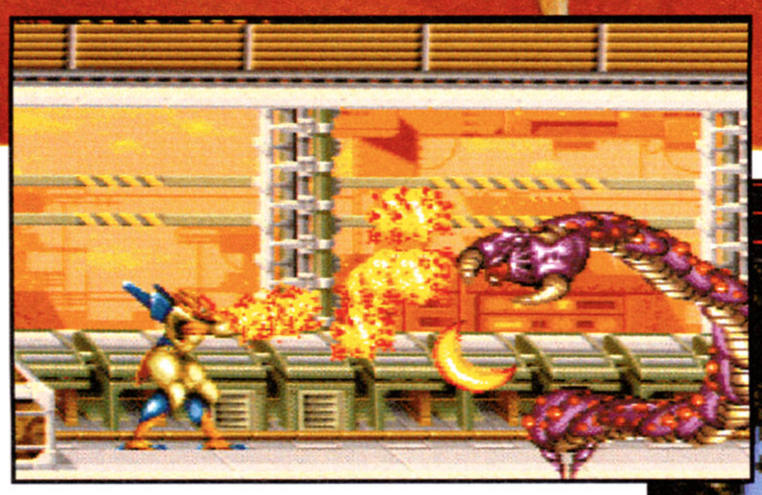
Treasure is one of the greatest Sega developers in the world having created Gunstar Heroes and Dynamite Headdy - perhaps the greatest shoot 'em up and platform game available for the Megadrive. Alien Soldier, their latest release, almost never came to be, having been shelved over a year ago before Treasure resurrected the project.

Now it's here and we were anxiously awaiting the results of their labours. Our reaction is a bit mixed to say the least. For starters, let's say that Treasure have continued their reputation for technical excellence with Alien Soldier, producing an excellent array of sprites, backdrops, special effects and bosses. It's just that the gameplay is a bit weird - weird even by Treasure's super-bizarre standards.

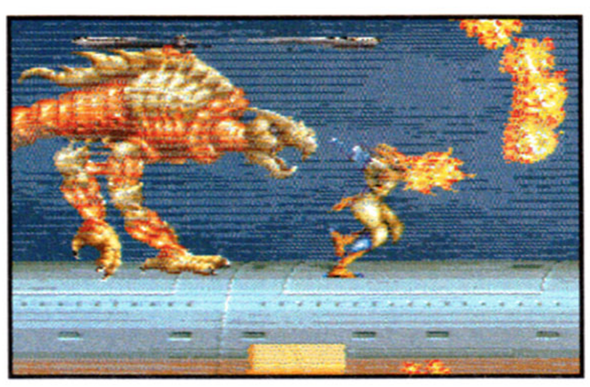
At its most basic level, Alien Soldier is just a series of epic confrontations against large bosses. There are levels of action in-between, but they're super-short, merely involving the destruction of a small number of pretty weedy sprites. No, all of the real action takes place in the boss arenas, where you need to figure out special tactics in order to dispose of the large baddie as quickly as possible before moving on.

With its excellent control method (which effectively allows quick selection of four weapons, two weapons-firing modes and two special moves), along with super-smooth action, Alien Soldier is a very appealing title, but in terms of variety, excitement and as an overall package, it falls way short of the standards established by the epoch-making Gunstar Heroes.

SEGA



▲ Yup, it's another boss all right. And it's great, y'hear?

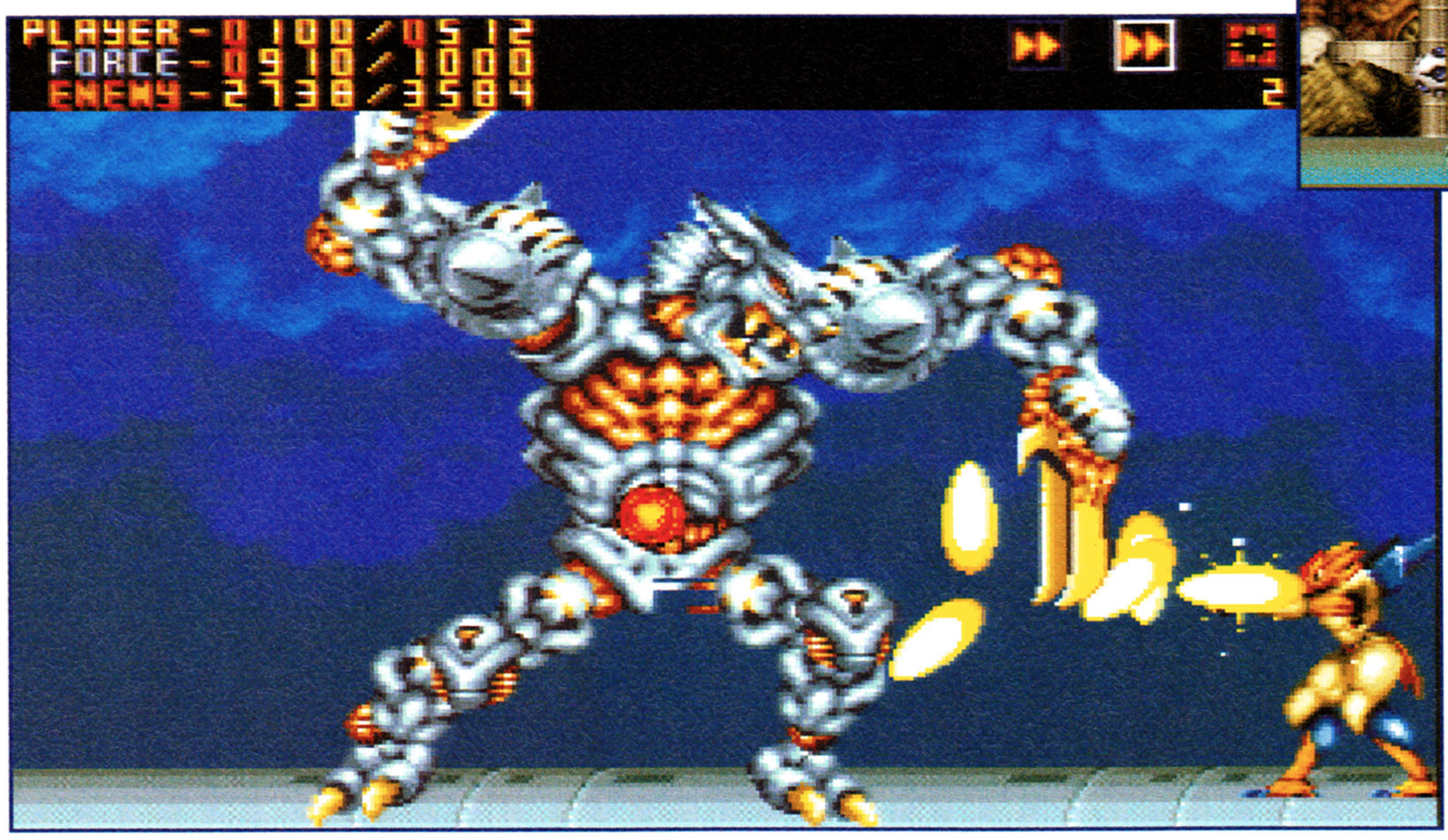


▲ Battle a giant worm on top of a big train. Skreips!

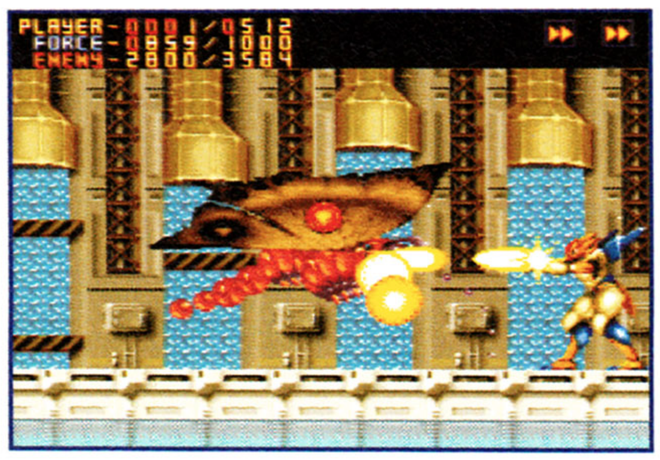
COMMENT TOM GUISE

The first time I saw Alien Soldier it was presented to me as a game that was never going to be released, which seemed a shame because it was certainly better than a lot of games around. Now that it is being released, that puts it up against other Treasure games such as Gunstar Heroes and Dynamite Headdy and to be honest it just isn't up to their standard. Certainly it's an impressive title with all the hallmarks of a Treasure game – great graphics, stunning special effects, awesome sound and loads of action – but somehow it doesn't quite gel together. Just piling on the bosses one after another breaks up the momentum of the game. It sort of feels like a one-on-one beat 'em up, where you shoot your opponent instead of fighting them. What's more, few of the actual bosses are very impressive. Perhaps if the enemies had gradually got more awesome, finishing with an incredible end-boss, it would have upped the pace, but no. It is still jaw-droppingly thrilling and I do like it, but at the end of the day it just isn't Gunstar Heroes.

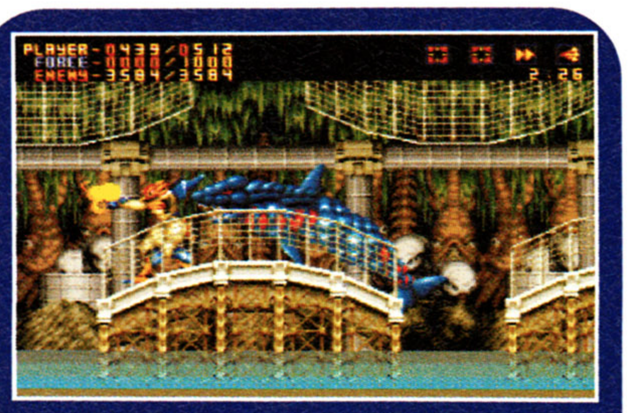
▲ **Bridge-top battle!**



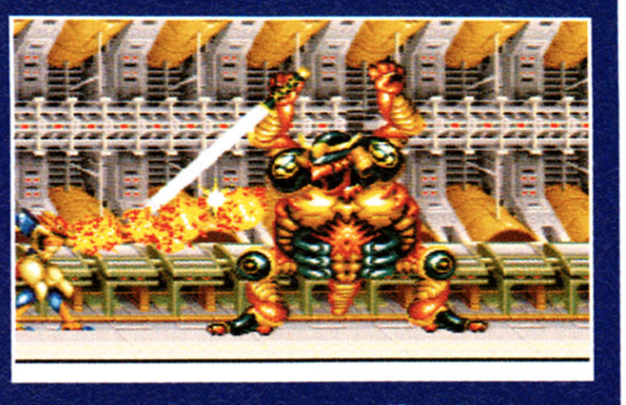
▲ **Spheres. Lots of 'em.**



▲ **Treasure games also feature great bosses and Alien Soldier isn't an exception. So there you go then. Er, hurrah!**



▲ **More bridge-top battles. It's all rather exciting.**



▲ **One of the very first bosses you come up against is this large creature. Blast it in the right place and it's dead. Sounds simple? Well, listen right, it isn't.**

RATINGS

90 Presentation:
Plenty of different options to wade through and a super-polished feel to the overall product. Superb.

88 Graphics:
The amount of on-screen action is sometimes breathtaking and the bosses are super (although not up to the standards of Gunstar Heroes).

87 Sound:
The usual array of noisy sound effects and bizarre music that Treasure are almost famous for. It certainly suits the frenetic nature of the game well.

86 Playability:
Easy to get into and the versatile control method puts a lot of options at your disposal. The blasting action is certainly very gratifying indeed.

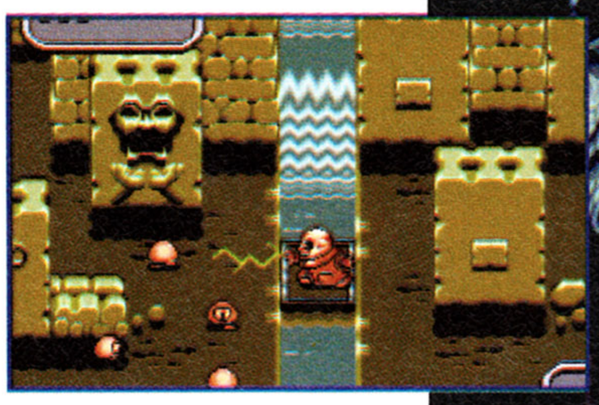
86 Challenge:
The only challenge is in beating the bosses that turn up in each level as the other sprites are super-weedy. However, the bosses aren't that easy to defeat.

85 Lastability:
Passwords for each and every level do bring the lastability down and the only real gameplay variety in the game is (again) with the bosses.

85 Overall:
An enjoyable, action-packed shoot 'em up that isn't quite up to the standards of Gunstar Heroes and Probotector.

COMMENT RICHARD LEADBETTER

There's no doubt in my mind that Alien Soldier is one of the best shoot 'em ups I've played on the Megadrive in quite some time, but it must be said that it does fall short of Gunstar Heroes' greatness by quite a large margin. The graphics (in particular the bosses), although excellent, aren't anyhere near as good as Gunstar's and the gameplay is very bizarre indeed. The levels themselves are super-short (in fact, they're almost insignificant) with all the attention being on the fights with the bosses. True, there are tons of levels and loads of bosses, but this does decrease the overall variety of the game. Alien Soldier is still a cut above most other blasters, but in my mind Gunstar Heroes still rules supreme.



Addams Family Values

INFO

MEGA DRIVE

BY:
OCEAN

PRICE:
TBA

RELEASE:
MAY

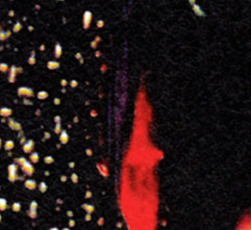
STYLE:
RPG

PLAYERS:
1

CONTROLS:
JOYPAD

CONTINUES:
PASSWORD

COMMENT — TOM GUISE



Turning the game license of the Addams Family Values movie into an RPG doesn't sound like a particularly good idea, and I must confess I wasn't expecting much from this game, but the result is surprisingly brilliant. A superbly spooky atmosphere, humorous dialogue and a massive game area to explore all put this game into the same league of some of the best Megadrive RPGs. Admitedly, it isn't quite on par with the Shining Force games, Landstalker and Soleil, lacking as it does, that truly epic feel, but this is nonetheless a highly engrossing and long-lasting game. Good stuff.

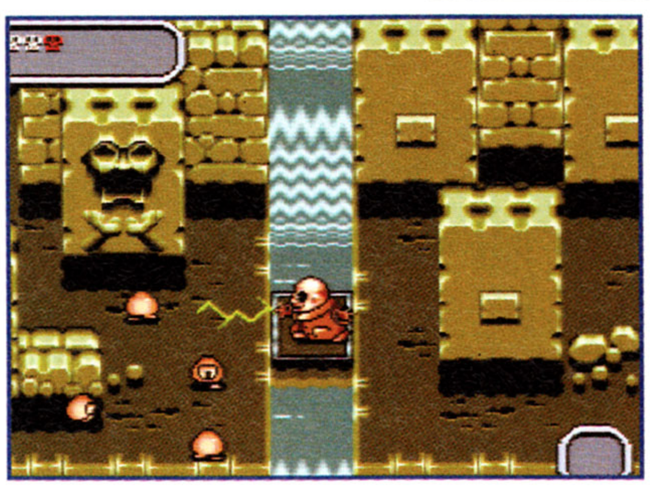
Forgotten which set of cutlery you're supposed to use at those important dinner engagements? Fed up with the constant embarrassment of Dad insisting on showing your mates his collection of 'rare' Beatles records? Well, worry no more o'reader, because here's the Addams Family with their unique set of moral values to set you on the right track.

Sort of, that is. Well, you have to admit that they're certainly a tight-knit bunch don't you? Not that they have much choice of course, being mostly grotesque and freakish. However, they haven't bothered to make the conversion from film to Megadrive just to teach you the moral lessons of everyday family life. Nope, they're here to enlist your help in the recovery of the missing baby Pubert. You see, just like in the film, money-grabbing nanny Debbie Jelinsky is once again after the Addams Family fortune, although instead of marrying into their collective riches, she's gone and kidnapped wee Puby in an attempt to gain instant cashola. Is she mad? Would you mess with the Addams Family?

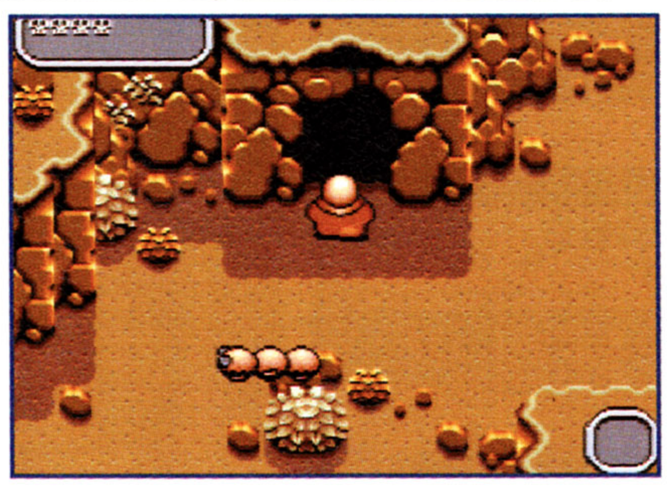
Anyway, unlike the last Addams Family Megadrive outing, this isn't a lumbering platform game. Quite the contrary, as it happens. The adventure spans hundreds and hundreds of levels and is based around RPG gameplay. But it's not one of those "go forth and find the crystal of light" type of affairs. Nope, it's almost like Zelda (or Story of Thor on the Megadrive if you can't bring yourself to a SNES comparison), because the story really is of epic proportions, but unlike Zelda (or Thor) this has humour and you can really lose yourself in it for a couple of hours. In fact, it's better than Thor because everything in the game has such character and has more story elements.

Of course, you're not going to like Addams Family Values much if you don't like RPGs anyway, but if you do, they don't come much better than this. And to cap it all, this is one of the very few games that bothers to make any use at all of its expensive movie licence.

▲ That's a big bee, readers.

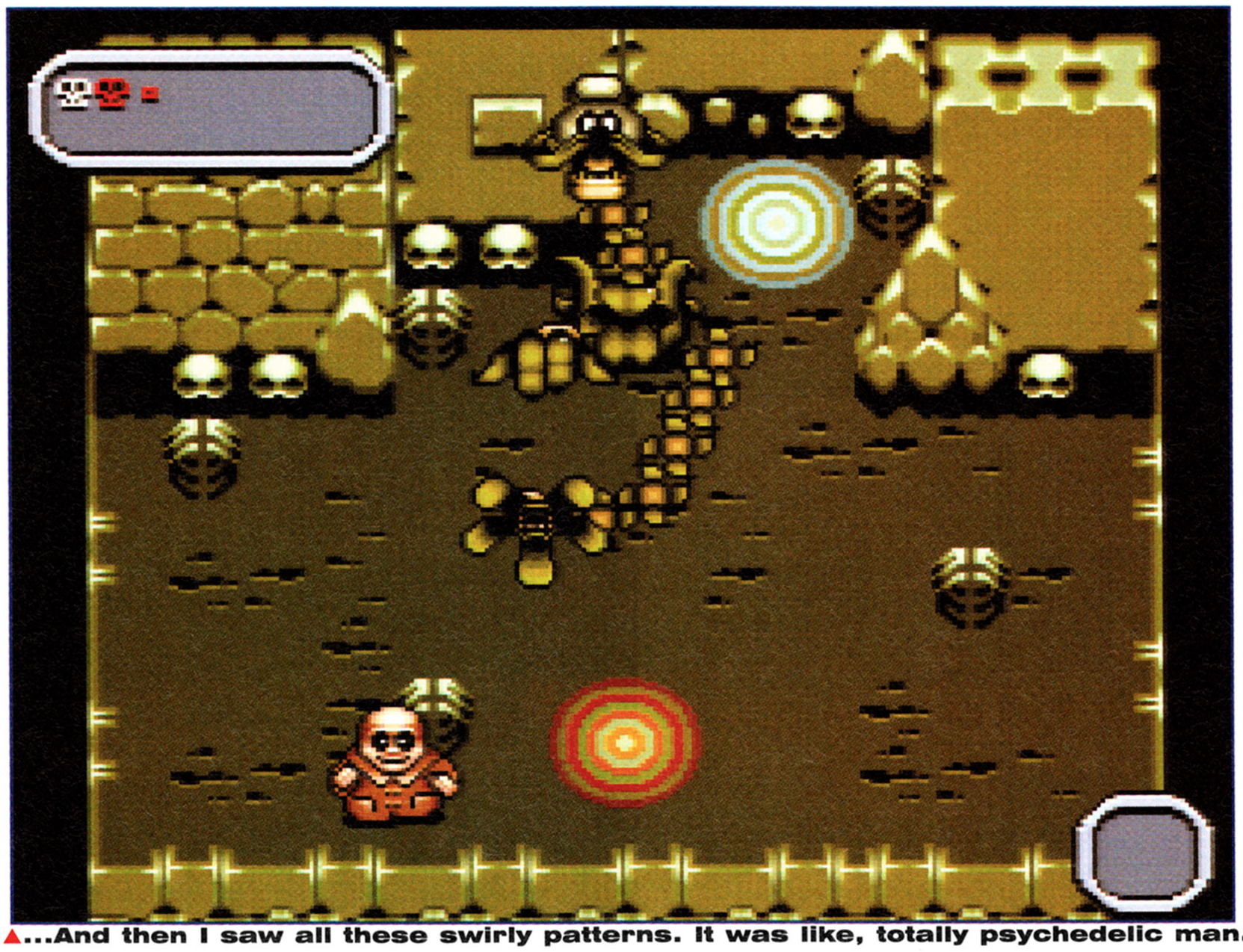


▲ Just like out of Trap Door.



▲ Star Wars bits too!

▲ No, be-hiiind youuuuu...



▲...And then I saw all these swirly patterns. It was like, totally psychedelic man.

COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN

I've always loved playing RPGs, even though they often get a bad name because they can be tedious and rather drawn out. But Addams Family Values shows just how good they can be when people bother to make the effort. It's got everything a good RPG needs – a story that's interesting AND funny, a massive play area and the total absence of all those boring battle scenes. And to add to it all, Addams Family Values must be unique because it's probably the only valid movie licence I've come across since Batman Returns on the Mega-CD.

RATINGS

89 Presentation:
Loads of story screens and the way everything is set out is comprehensive and fun.

84 Graphics:
Okay so it's not quite as nice as the SNES version, but as RPGs go, this has some of the best graphics seen on the Megadrive.

80 Sound:
Surprisingly, not bad at all, although it may be a bit twee for some.

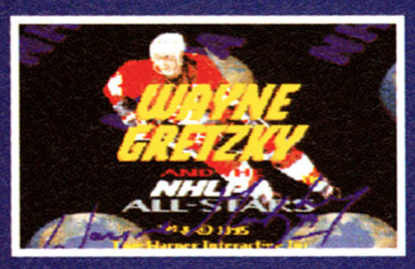
83 Challenge:
Plenty of puzzles throughout the game, and loads of challenging arcadey-type stuff too.

89 Playability:
Thanks to the incorporation of the Addams' Family humour, and some great level layouts, this is totally playable and very, very addictive.

85 Lastability:
Most RPGs last a while because they rely so much on puzzle solving, and this is no exception, although it has the added bonus of a low boredom factor too.

87 Overall:
One of the most playable RPGs available for the Megadrive and easily the best movie conversion to date.

INFO



MEGA DRIVE

BY: TIME WARNER

PRICE: £TBA

RELEASE: MAY

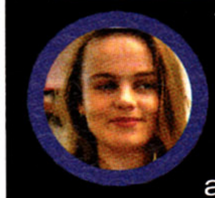
STYLE: HOCKEY SIM

PLAYERS: 2

CONTROL: JOYPAD

CONTINUES: N/A

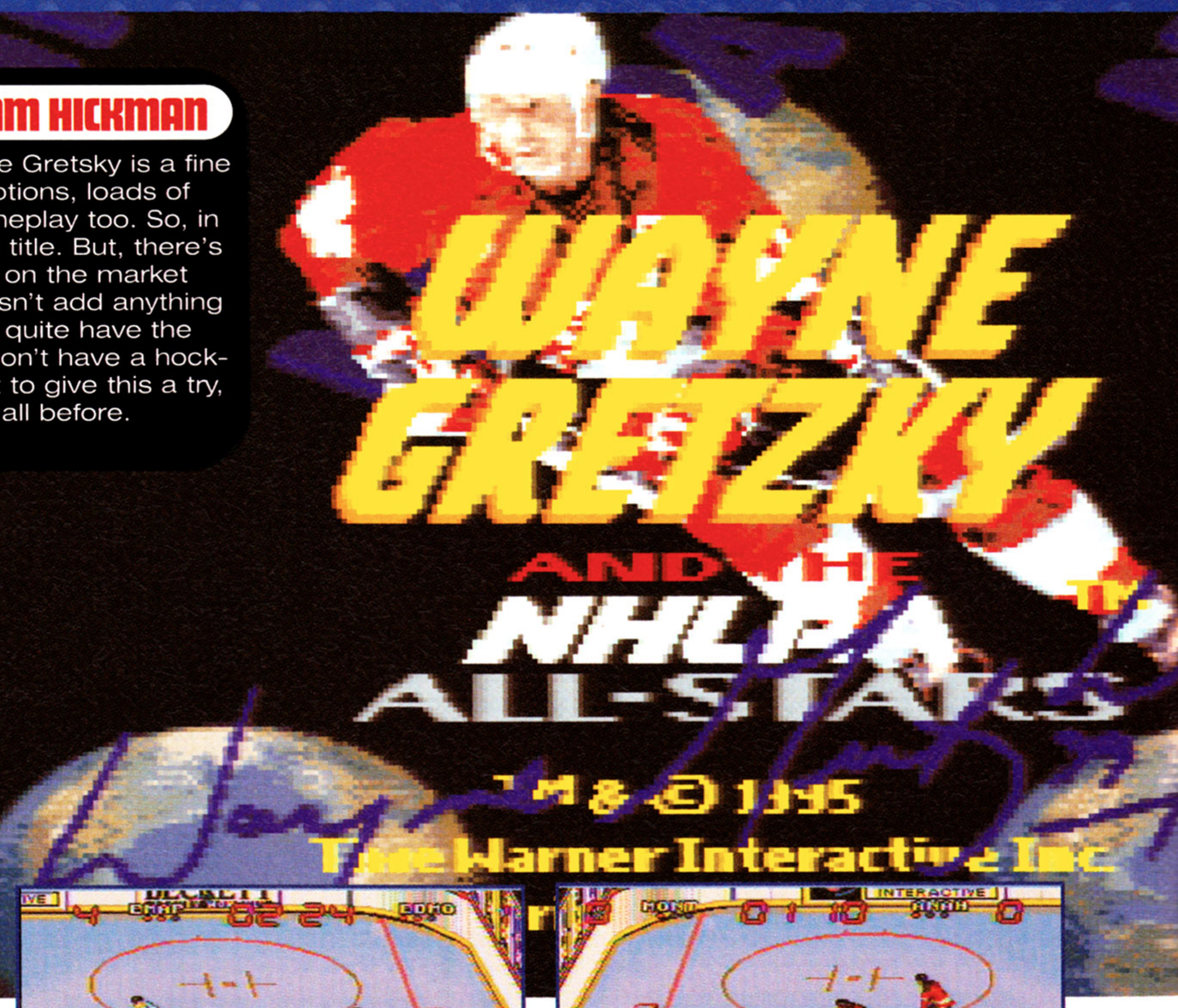
COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN



There's no doubting that Wayne Gretsky is a fine hockey sim. There's tons of options, loads of fancy FMV bits and great gameplay too. So, in its own right, it's a really good title. But, there's so many other games like this on the market already and Gretsky simply doesn't add anything to existing sims, and it also doesn't quite have the speed of NHLPA Hockey. Obviously if you don't have a hockey game in your collection, you might want to give this a try, but for everyone else, it's a case of seen it all before.

COMMENT — TOM GUISE

I was quite into the first EA Hockey game on the Megadrive all those years back, but the sequels didn't really grab me so much. I think perhaps it was the lack of fighting that took the edge off the follow ups, so its good to see the fisticuffs back in action for Wayne Gretsky Hockey. Actually, Wayne Gretsky is a pretty impressive hockey game all round. The action is fast and fluid, the controls are instinctive and the graphics, although not technically stunning, are clear and practical. Whether it's actually better than EA's NHLPA series is another matter. I'm inclined to prefer EA's games, because I'm just used to playing them and this doesn't have enough to hook me all over again. If, however, you haven't got a hockey game, I think Gretsky is probably a better first choice.



▲ Looks like blueberry flavoured ice.

▲ Or raspberry.

INFO

GAME GEAR

BY: US GOLD

PRICE: £29.99

RELEASE: JUNE

STYLE: HOCKEY SIM

PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTROL: JOYPAD

CONTINUES: NONE

NHL HOCKEY

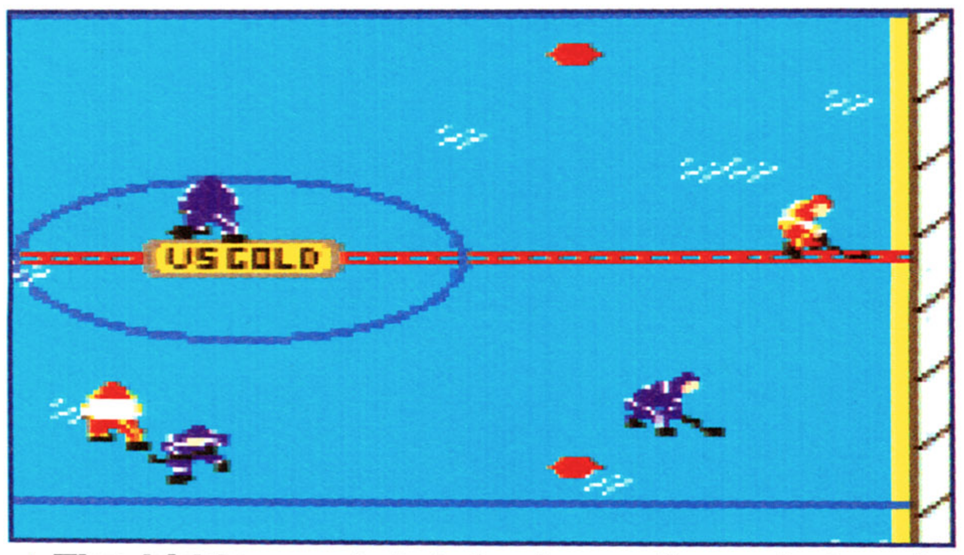
EA's classic hockey game has been around the block more times than Elizabeth Taylor and Pammy Anderson combined, resurfacing every year, as it does, with a facelift and a host of new options on its shoulder. But no-one's bothered to stray away from the safe confines of the Megadrive and convert the title on to a different platform. Step in one US Gold with their own, handheld version of events.

It makes perfect sense really. In fact, I can't think why it hasn't been done before – after all, we've had football on the Game Gear and that worked quite well. And hockey is'nt that different really is it? Well, we are talking Game Gear here.

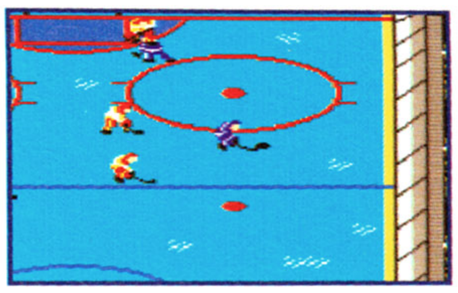
Actually, comedy Game Gear jibes aside, this is initially really impressive. Obviously it's not really anything like the Megadrive version looks-wise, but everything that you'd expect to see options-wise in a 16-bit version of the game has been included. Yup, you get to choose your players, swap people around and play tournaments or exhibition games – everything really. It's all really easy to play too, even though the players do resemble ant-type beings.

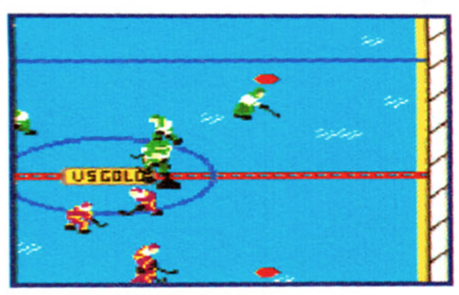
The odd thing about this game though is that it seems really disjointed. When you score a goal, nothing much happens apart from a strange splurging noise. After that, the game simply begins again. Half time is a bit better, but you still feel as if the game is lacking slightly. I guess that the programmers had to leave out all the extra bits and pieces just to fit the game into the cart, but it still feels a tad slap dash. Still, the gameplay is of a pretty high standard, and although the contents of the title are quite simple, there's no denying that this is addictive stuff. And, it has the added bonus of being the only game of its type on the Game Gear, which considering the success of the Megadrive version, should see it shoot straight to the top of the handheld charts when it's released in June.

SEGA



▲ The hidden metal detector option, obviously.





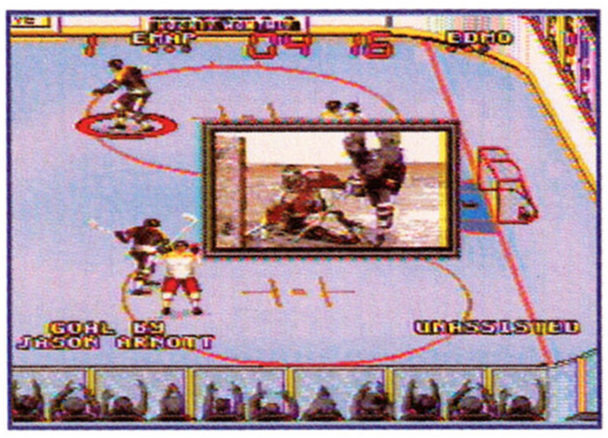
What can you say about a hockey game that hasn't been said a million times before? For a start, there's been herds of 'em on the Megadrive in the past couple of years, and as any faithful Megadrive owner will know, no-one has yet been able to take the crown from EA's series of NHLPA titles. But every year, a handful of young hopefuls display their wares in the chance that they too might get a stab at the title.

This year, one Wayne Gretsky steps into the hot seat. He has a bit of a headstart already actually, as he's one of the top hockey players in the US at the moment. And although he's a bit of a shy fellow, we reckon he's quietly confident at the prospect of wriggling his feet into the king's (EA Hockey no less) shoes.

Graphically, this is much the same as any ice hockey game. It takes a 3D isometric view of the pitch and as there's never very much detail in an ice rink, there's not much to look at apart from the players. There are some nice FMV bits of the ref and goal sequences though, and apparently the sprites are 20% bigger than in EA's version of events. Which is all very nice, but doesn't make that much difference to the game.

Fortunately, it's pretty good as far as gameplay goes too. There's all the usual team editing options and play styles that are usually found in hockey sims, a two player option and even a fight option. Which is always good for a laugh, even if it isn't that useful. The player's movements are really fluid and the game speed is fairly fast too. So what's the the problem?

Well, there isn't one really. It's just that this doesn't really add anything to an already full-to-the-brim-thanks genre, and good though it is, it's just not going to stand out against the truckload of ice hockey sims that are already out there.



▲ **Or maybe somebody who ate beetroot wee'd on it.**

▲ **Before the weeing incident.**

SEGA

RATINGS

Presentation: 85
Everything you could wish for. The FMV bits are impressive too.

Graphics: 83
Doesn't break into any new areas as far as ice hockey games go, but it still looks really slick.

Sound: 80
Fairly standard all round. Not bad, but nothing great either.

Playability: 80
Really easy to get into, but not quite as fast as NHLPA Hockey.

Challenge: 82
The tournament option will take time to beat and as for the multi-player option – it just depends on who you're playing really.

Lastability: 84
Goes without saying really – has a two player option and loads of different play modes.

Overall: 82
Competes with the best, but doesn't quite take the crown.

GAME GEAR REVIEW

▲ **This strange Earth metal detectors game puzzles me. So, you slide around on ice trying to find old Viking coins with your detecting devices? We do not have such competitve spirit on Jupiter.**

COMMENT SAM HICKMAN

EA's series of hockey titles was hugely successful on the Megadrive, so it comes as little surprise to hear that a handheld version has been created. As you'd expect, it's nothing like a 16 bit version of the game, but it's still really playable and it's quite fast-paced too. It does feel a little ragged around the edges, but fortunately, it's the gameplay that counts in this title. Perhaps not quite as playable as FIFA, but still a worthy purchase for sports fans.

COMMENT TOM GUISE

Although NHL Hockey on the Game Gear is a fairly impressive handheld conversion of the Megadrive game, it hardly catches the true feel of Hockey at such a diminutive size. Still, it does make for an entertaining and challenging two-player game team game. I must admit though, FIFA is a better game of this sort. Still if it's a hockey game you're hankering after, this is certainly a more than decent handheld adaption of the sport. And being the only one, I suppose you'll have to get it.

RATINGS

Presentation: 74
A bit ropey in places and a bit non-existent in other places, but there's loads of options included.

Graphics: 78
It doesn't resemble real hockey very much, but it's quite an achievement to convert the game on to the hand held.

Sound: 20
Appalling in every way. Especially when you score a goal.

Playability: 70
Not as instantly gratifying as FIFA, but easy to get the hang of.

Challenge: 75
It sometimes seems a bit too easy to score goals, although the in-game action is very challenging indeed.

Lastability: 75
Loads of teams to conquer, with a tournament option for good measure.

Overall: 79
Perhaps not quite as challenging as FIFA, but a playable and enjoyable hockey title nonetheless.

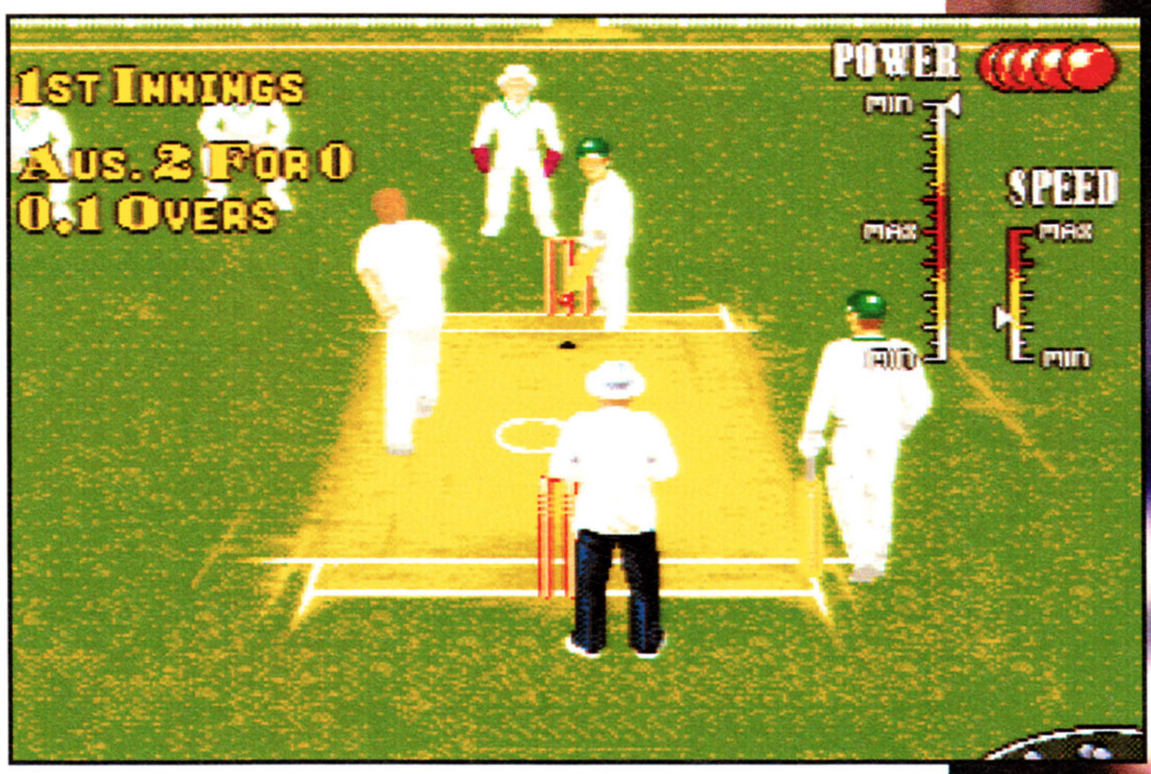
Brian Lara CRICKET

Cricket? On the Megadrive? It's not a sport-to-game conversion that has our hearts pumping with adrenalin, true, but it is something that Sega gamers have been demanding for the past three years. And it's been done on the Amiga before, so why not?

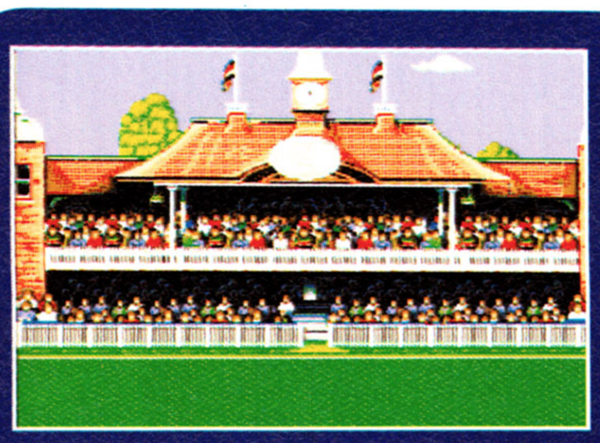
But of course, if you've going to develop a sports game, you'll want someone decent to sponsor it. which is why Codemasters have enlisted the help of one Brian Lara – top cricket type bloke who scored an incredible 501-not-out runs for Warwickshire last year. He appears with various other cricket stars, from all over the world, who will even play in national colours if you want them to. Yup, every conceivable team has been included in the game, along with various play options and the now-traditional simultaneous four player game (yes, WITHOUT the use of a four player adaptor).

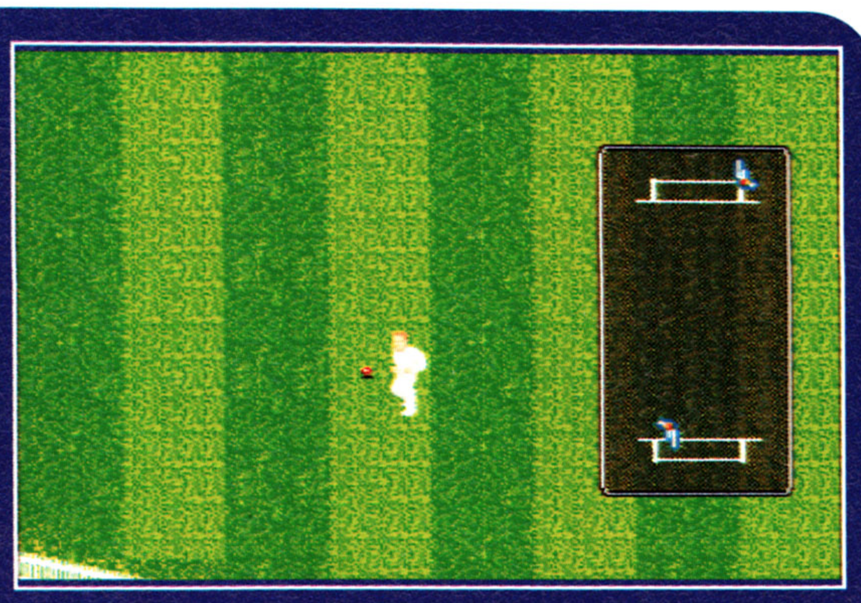
However, all these extra bells and whistles aren't much use if the actual gameplay isn't much cop. But thankfully, it is. You don't have to be a huge cricket fan to enjoy the action either, because this is fun to play whoever you are. And for the true fans, every possible cricket move has been included in the game, as well as the option to view the action from different angles – similar to Virtua Racing. And to cap it all, you get a battery back up thrown in too. Which is pretty damned good value for money.

At the end of the day, even though cricket probably has a bit of a limited appeal to most gamers, this simulation is extremely playable, good fun and an all-round polished product. And it's all so terribly English, which makes a brilliant change as far as we're concerned.



▲ That's Ian Botham, that is.





▲ Hmmm. Any suggestions for an exciting caption here, readers?

INFO

MEGA DRIVE

BY:
CODEMASTERS

PRICE:
£49.99

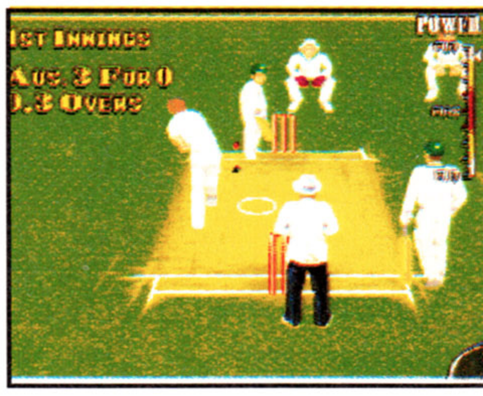
RELEASE:
JUNE

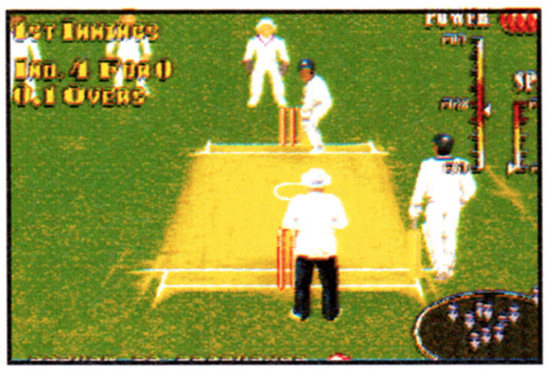
STYLE:
CRICKET SIM

PLAYERS:
1-4

CONTROLS:
JOYPAD

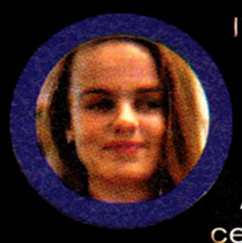
CONTINUES:
BATTERY BACK UP





▲ Balls! Tee hee hee.

COMMENT SAM HICKMAN



I've never bothered to watch proper cricket on TV and I've never played it either, which makes it a bit difficult for me to comment on this simulation. But as a game in its own right, this is brilliant. Alright, so it's not the most exciting concept in the world, but it's never been done before on the Megadrive, and overall, it's a really polished product. There's loads of game options to fiddle with, hundreds of teams and believe it or not, plenty of high speed action too. Obviously, this is something that all cricket fans will be clambering over themselves to get hold of, but it's still worth checking it out even if you're not a huge fan of the real-life game.

COMMENT RICHARD LEADBETTER

Megadrive owning cricket fans are going to lap up this simulation as it manages to incorporate just about everything from the original game - but without all the irritating time-wasting and suchlike. The level of options in the game is commendable, although the view-changer option is a bit bizarre and wasn't quite as versatile as I would have liked. Also, the animation could've been a bit smoother. But these are very small niggles, to be honest. The J-Cart makes Brian Lara Cricket a decent enough multi-player experience and I can imagine this selling really well over here. Brian Lara Cricket is one of a kind - something that doesn't apply to 99.9% of other Megadrive software.

RATINGS

90 Presentation:
Everything you'd expect to see in a normal cricket game. And more. Like the battery back-up and four-player action.

89 Graphics:
Ooh. It's got a view-changer and everything. The in-game graphics are rather decent too.

81 Originality:
It's been done on other formats before, but this is the first time that anyone's attempted cricket on the Megadrive.

89 Playability:
Really, really easy to get into, even if you're not a fan of the real game.

88 Challenge:
As challenging as you want it to be. Especially with the four player option.

90 Lastability:
Even if you finish all the games in season mode, playing it with other people will bump its lastability by at least 100%.

87 Overall:
A top-notch conversion of cricket that should appeal to all types of gamers.

MEGA DRIVE 32X

STELLAR ASSAULT

Stellar Assault is unique amongst the Megadrive 32X releases reviewed this month in that it's the only title that couldn't be successfully replicated on the standalone Megadrive - and that's just the sort of thing we want to see here at SEGA MAGAZINE.

Whilst Knuckles Chaotix and Motherbase may have their roots firmly in the realms of 16-bit gaming, Stellar Assault is different. The programmers' aim was definitely to create a space battle field that enables players to fly around at their leisure, indulging in dogfights with enemy fighters and taking one extremely large battle cruisers in what is basically a suicide mission.

The overall game is definitely a success in that area. The game is divided into missions where the objective is basically to destroy every last enemy craft in the area before moving on to the next. This is fairly straightforward when it comes down to one-on-one dogfighting, but when you take on the laser cannon toting battle cruisers a bit of strategy is required. You are capable of blowing off portions of these craft, but the destruction of certain sections results in a far easier demise. There are several different classes of ship and analysing them for weaknesses is essential if you're serious about beating the game.

Although there is some strategy in Stellar Assault, it must be said that it is an out-and-out blaster, kind of like X-Wing or TIE Fighter on the PC, but without much of the thought element. And that's its only problem, to be honest. Yes, the blasting is great but you occasionally wonder if more could have been done with the superb graphics engine.

Still, enjoy Stellar Assault for what it is - the sort of game you probably had in mind when you bought the 32-bit upgrade.

SEGA

INFO

MEGA DRIVE 32X

BY: SEGA

PRICE: £TBA

RELEASE: JUNE

STYLE: SHOOT 'EM UP

PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTROLS: JOYPAD

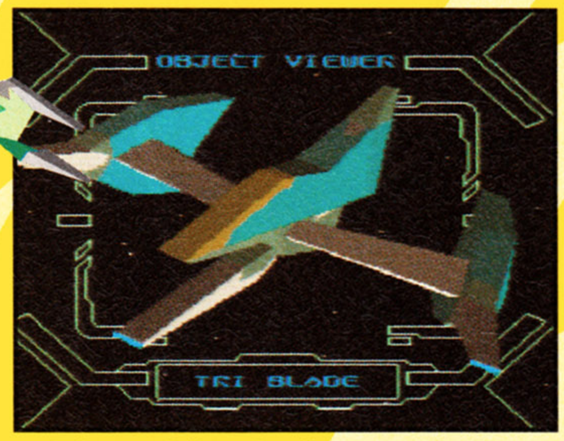
CONTINUES: 3

COMMENT — RICH LEADBETTER

I really like Stellar Assault and reckon it's easily the best of the 32X titles released this month. The programmers haven't opted for anything overtly flashy or technically outstanding, but the overall effect is excellent. The graphics won't win awards for their detail, but they're certainly fast and fluid, creating a brilliant space environment to fly around. Also, the explosions are fabulous, really rewarding the player for all the hard work involved in destroying an enormous space cruiser. I only have one problem with Stellar Assault, and that involves variety. Every level is a simple blast fest - all you have to do is destroy the big cruisers and get out whilst avoiding or shooting the little craft. I would've liked to see some more variety, but otherwise there's very little to complain about with this game - you certainly can't complain about the difficulty level as even on the EASY mode getting past the fifth mission presents plenty of challenge. Even if you own Star Wars Arcade (which is quite similar), I'd recommend adding Stellar Assault to your collection.

COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN

Well, it's certainly true that Stellar Assault doesn't offer much apart from simple blasting, but as far as I'm concerned, that's what makes it such a great game. Having clever, groundbreaking games all the time is all very well, but sometimes just blasting your way through a game, killing everything in sight is just what's needed. And in addition to all the blasting, there's some really brilliant graphics (especially the explosions) although the sound, is unfortunately, a bit duff – the music isn't much better than some Master System releases and the sound effects are very dull. Thankfully, you can turn them off. Plus, there's no way this could be done on the Megadrive, so that in itself is reason for any budding 32X owner to go out and buy it.

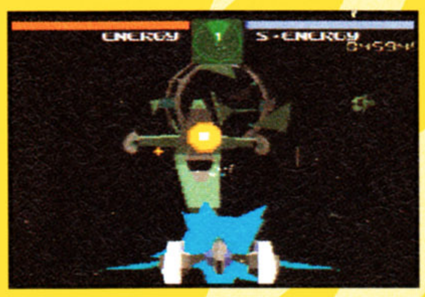


▲ The object viewer lets you survey everything.

▲ The Trace Mode follows everything you do in each game. Thrilling.

▲ Kill! Destroy! Maim!

▲ Each battle cruiser is assigned a number of escort fighters.



The challenge element in this game certainly isn't understated. Whilst initial rounds are simply a case of blowing up a cruiser and then moving on to the next, later levels are far more taxing with vast craft with loads more laser cannons mounted. Sometimes the action takes place in an asteroid field, which adds further to the difficulty level. We defy anyone to complete mission five in the first day of play...

Stellar Assault has two player variations in the style of Star Wars Arcade. Solo pilots get to fly the ship and do the gunning duties, whilst in dual-player mode, one player flies and the other shoots. What is quite curious is that if you're a single player and you choose the two-player ship, the computer does the flying and you just have to shoot. Bizarre...

RATINGS

92 Presentation:
A range of options ranging from very useful (difficulty level, music and effects on/off) to the bizarre (change the colour of your craft and the enemy cruisers!).

90 Graphics:
Not incredibly flashy in still screenshots, but they certainly move well and the explosions are great.

58 Sound:
Thank the lord you can turn the incredibly inappropriate Master System-sounding music off. It's just a shame the effects aren't much better.

90 Challenge:
Very easy up until the fourth mission onwards, where the odds are really stacked against you.

92 Playability:
Very fast and extremely smooth with a well thought out control method along with extremely gratifying blasting action.

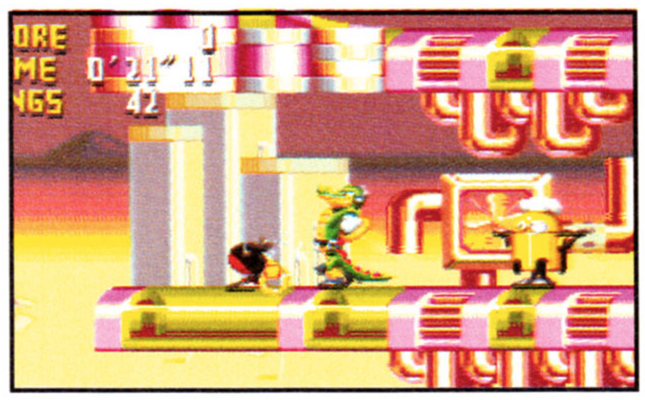
85 Lastability:
Plenty of missions, but the lack of variety in the basic gameplay limits this title's life span a fair bit.

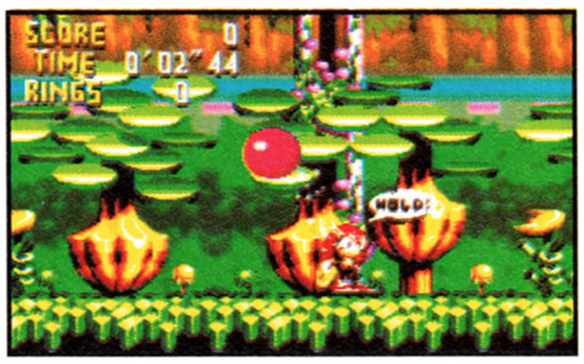
88 Overall:
The best 32X release this month - Stellar Assault is a great blasting game that makes good use of the 32-bit technology.

CHAOTIX

After guesting as a hero/villain in umpteen Megadrive and Game Gear Sonic games, the red echidna has finally been given a game of his own on the fledgling Megadrive 32X system. Yup, Knuckles has arrived and he's brought along several of his chums including Mighty the Armadillo (first seen in the Sonic coin-op) and Vector the Crocodile to name but two.

First impressions of Knuckles Chaotix aren't that favourable. There is no doubt that the graphics have more colour and seem a lot sharper than Megadrive platformers, but the actual game concept initially seems little different from the older Sonic games. The game mechanics remain remarkably similar - at least to begin with.





By the time the game begins proper, you find yourself hooked up with a partner via a length of magic elastic that enables you to pull off a number of "special moves". For super-speed, stretch the elastic and let go. Send your partner flying through the air by stretching the elastic, jumping and then letting go. Do you see a pattern forming? A lot of the game's platform puzzles are solved by having two characters on-screen and basically being in two places at once.

Knuckles Chaotix is packed with some very nice ideas - each level is genuinely different from the last, and even the sub-stages in each level have their own particular features. Plus, the presentation is quite superb, making some imaginative use of the 32X's sprite scaling and rotational capabilities.

But at the end of the day there is no doubt that there are quite annoying flaws that stop this attaining the same success as the other Sonic games. For a start, actually losing a life in this game is probably the biggest challenge. Just about the only opposition worth talking about is found at the end of each world - those bosses are reasonably tough. Also, strip away the special stages and sprite scaling and you have a game that could easily have been released on the bog standard Megadrive. Surely the point of releasing the 32X was to bring new gameplay experiences to the mass market - experiences like Star Wars, Doom and Stellar Assault? In the final analysis, Chaotix looks great and plays well, but isn't that far removed from the 16-bit Sonic games of old.

SEGA

INFO

MEGADRIVE 32X

BY: SEGA

PRICE: £49.99

SIZE: 24 MEG + BATTERY

RELEASE: JUNE

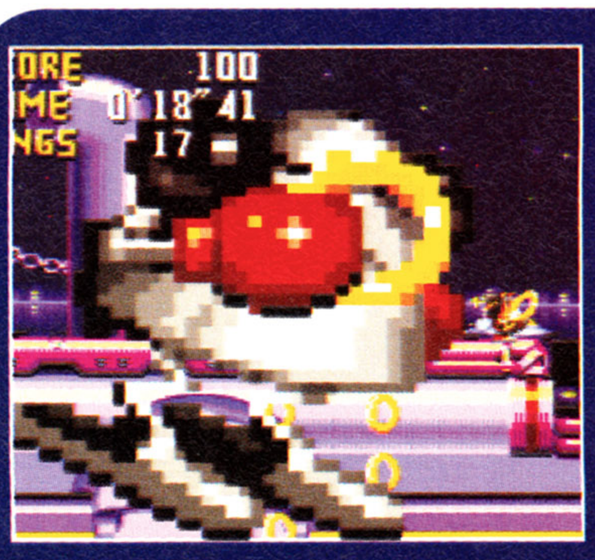
STYLE: PLATFORM

PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTINUES: NONE

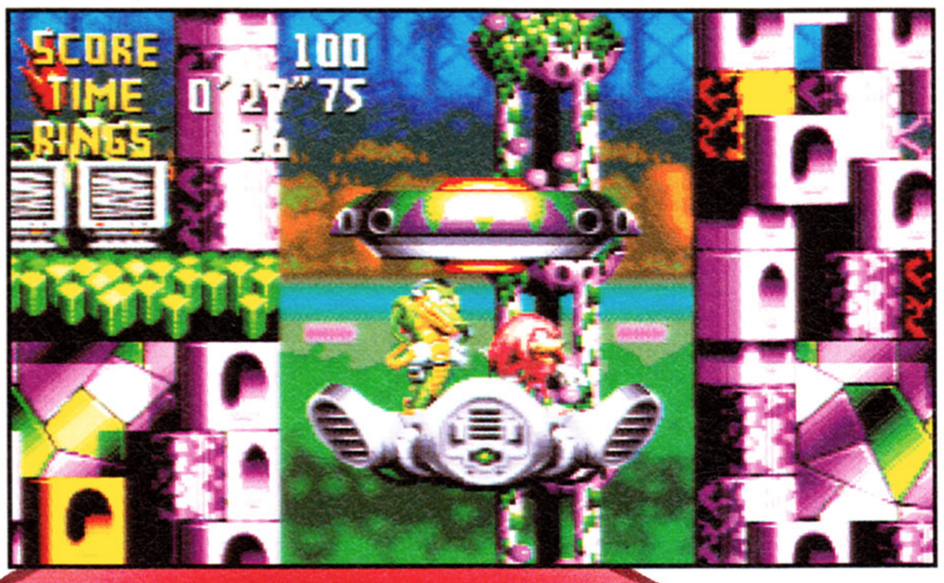
COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN

In the past, Sonic games could always be relied upon to provide excellent graphics and brilliant fast-paced action. But since Sega have decided to stray away from Sonic and concentrate on Knuckles instead, I think the quality of the titles has dropped quite considerably. Sonic and Knuckles (on the Megadrive) just about held things together, but Chaotix seems to be a bit of a weak effort all round. The sprite scaling and extra colours do add a bit of polish to the proceedings, but underneath it all, this is simply Sonic in a pink jumpsuit. Which doesn't necessarily mean it's a dire game – it's just not very original or ground-breaking in any way.



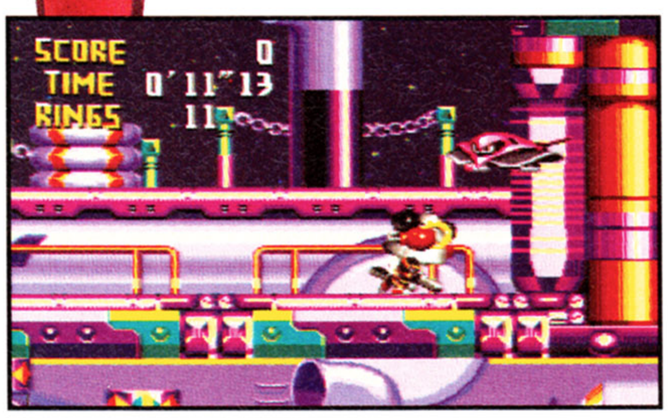
Sprite scaling is used throughout the game, perhaps most noticeably when your characters grow or shrink after accessing the appropriate icon. Although it looks great, it is a bit superfluous - particularly when you use the summon button to bring your pal to your position. When this happens, the entire screen is taken up by your partner as he zooms into your location. Bizarre.

Later Sonic games contained two types of Special Stage - and this is also the case with Knuckles Chaotix. The first sees you collecting blue spheres in a polygon domain. This level is a really good laugh actually, being extremely original indeed. The second bonus round involves falling down a big hole collecting sprite-scaling bonuses. These stages are just about the only concepts in Chaotix that seem to stretch the 32X's capabilities - just about everything else could've been included in an older 16-bit Sonic game.



COMMENT RICH LEADBETTER

Knuckles Chaotix is quite similar in design to all the other Sonic games but endowed with a control mode that is a lot more original (and difficult to master). Being a 32X game, you can expect to see some pretty decent presentation and nice polish from beginning to end, along with some great graphics. However, the programmers have removed the bizarre obstacles that made previous Sonic games so enjoyable - stuff like ropes, zip-lines, cannons and suchlike are no longer present, meaning that a lot of the variety and enjoyment of the other Sonic games is missing. And to be honest, the new control method is a bit of a pain actually - if there was one thing you can count on the Sonic games for it was intuitive controls. There's also a severe lack of enemy sprites in some of the levels (although a few are pretty well populated). Despite these gripes, this is still a Sonic game (er, even if Sonic isn't actually in it) and the range of levels coupled with the excellent special stages does make this quite enjoyable. Just excuse me if I expected more from the Megadrive 32X.



▲ Mighty and Espio speed around the Amazing Arena stage - something of a super-colourful level.

▲ An example of the luvverly graphics that Knuckles has in abundance.

RATINGS

93 Presentation:
Chaotix continues the tradition of fine presentation and polish in Sonic games - the 32X has really been put to work creating a user-friendly, appealing product.

86 Graphics:
Nothing ground-breaking, but very imaginative and good-looking overall, although it's not *that* much better than the 16-bit Sonic games in terms of looks.

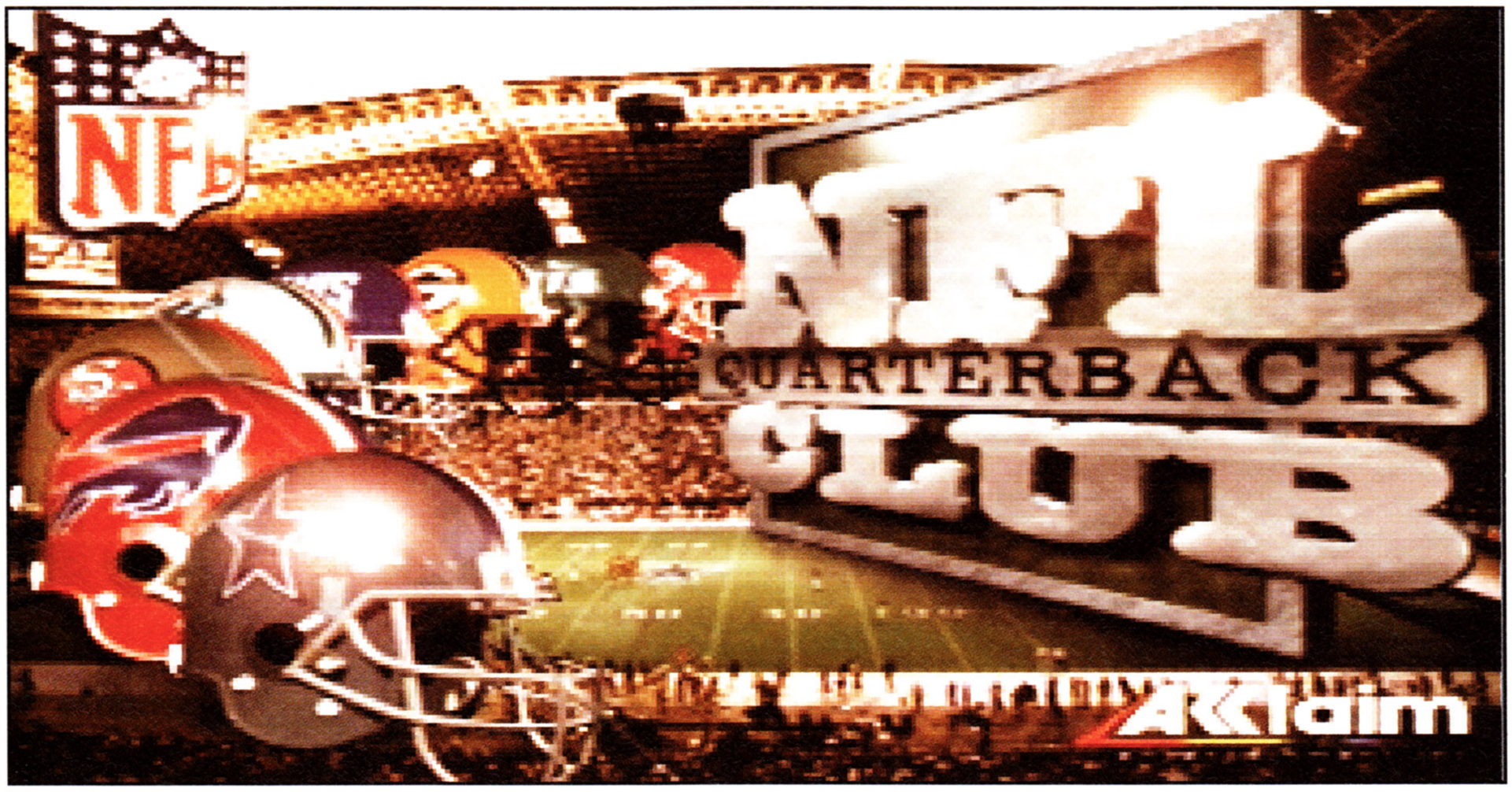
83 Sound:
The usual array of cutesy Sonic-esque music jazzed up a bit with plenty of digital samples and other such new sound chip trickery. Quite good overall.

79 Challenge:
Completing each sub-level isn't that difficult to be honest, although the end-stage bosses put up a fair fight.

82 Playability:
Knuckles Chaotix is an agreeable enough game in terms of playability, although the control method is sometimes quite confusing. But overall, quite enjoyable.

78 Lastability:
Five stages on five different worlds, but there is more after that. Maybe it is a bit too easy though.

81 Overall:
An enjoyable platform game that'll go down well with Sonic fans but it's certainly not the type of ground-breaking 32-bit experience that people bought the Megadrive 32X for.



There's nothing like giving a game a good old self-explanatory name to help sell it to Johnny Punter. And here's a fine example of just that. Quarterback Club. Says it all really, doesn't it? It seems quite obvious to us that this is a game about a nice juicy quarterpound of leanback grill-steak, packed between three slices of soft white ciabatta bread, all topped off with bacon, mushrooms and melted cheese. Yummy.

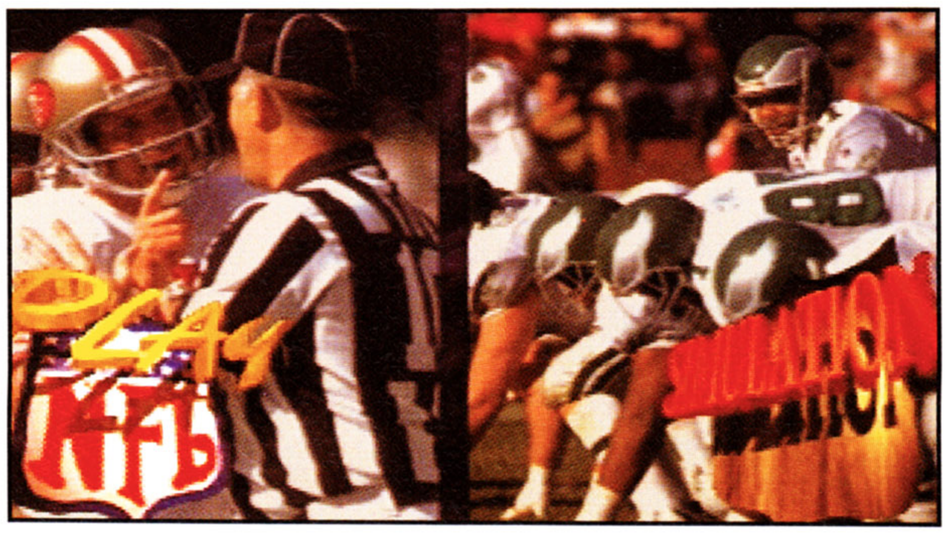
That is, of course, a lie. It is in fact a game about American Football. A game which we've reviewed in this magazine before. This time however, it's got the 32X treatment, so we're giving it the 32X review treatment.

Now, if you read our review of the Megadrive version of Quarterback Club (back in issue 16), you'll recall that we rather liked the game and, in fact, gave it 87%. The reason for this being (as those self-same regular readers will again recall) because it so closely replicated the now legendary John Madden-style of gameplay. Well as it happens, the 32X version features nigh-on identical gameplay to its Megadrive counterpart and, as such, is a top game for all the same reasons.

So, if it's exactly the same why have they gone and brought it out on the 32X then? Well, here's the clever part. You see, although it plays the same as the Megadrive version, it actually benefits from a 32X facelift. In other words, it looks better. There's better presentation at the beginning, the pitch has more realistic texturing, the player sprites are more clearly defined with improved animation. It's better, see? What's more, the sound has been improved too. More realistic sound effects and speech without the throaty gargle is what you get in 32X Quarterback Club. Plus, there's a variety of view-points to play the game from, all of which make a nice addition to the game.

So, there you have it. The already proven gameplay of the Megadrive version with all-new enhanced 32-bit graphics and sound. The only real downside, is that the Quarterback Challenge (a sort of multi-player training game, as regular readers will recall) has, for some inexplicable reason, been removed. Plus, for all the graphical improvements it still isn't the kind of game that shows off the 32X. As such, it isn't the kind of thing you'd buy a 32X for. Nor is it something you'd buy if you already owned the Megadrive version. If however, you HAVE got a Megadrive 32X, HAVEN'T got the Megadrive version of Quarterback Club, but DO want an American Football game, well, this is just what you've been looking for.

SEGA



INFO

MEGADRIVE 32X

BY: ACCLAIM

PRICE: £TBA

RELEASE: MAY

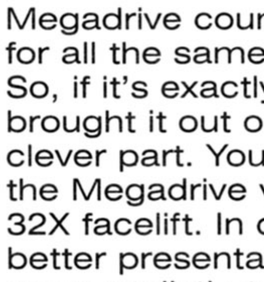
STYLE: AMERICAN FOOTBALL

PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTROLS: JOYPAD

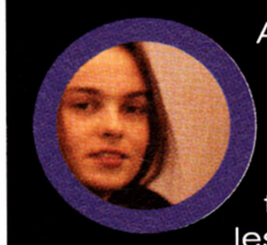
CONTINUES: NONE

COMMENT — TOM GUISE



I was beginning to feel that the 32X was following the path of the Mega-CD, with games companies putting out near identical versions of Megadrive games on the 32X albeit with the addition of limited graphical improvements. To be honest, I thought 32X Quarterback Club would fall into this bracket, but the actual enhancements are pretty impressive. Graphically, it looks far better than the somewhat dated looking Megadrive version, the sound is certainly more impressive and the extra views add to the overall polish of the game. It's a shame that the Quarterback Challenge is missing, because it did make an entertaining sub-game, but overall it's still a great game. It's nothing ground-breaking, admittedly, but the improvements make this a superior purchase over the Megadrive version for 32X owners.

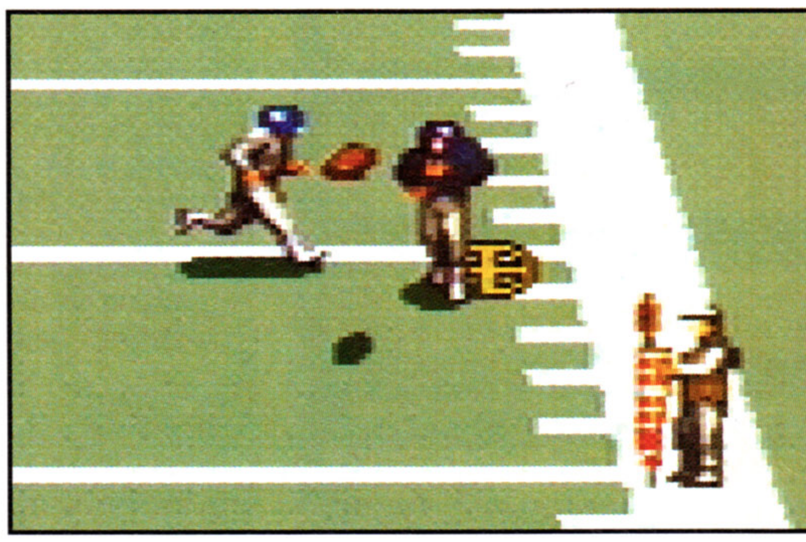
COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN



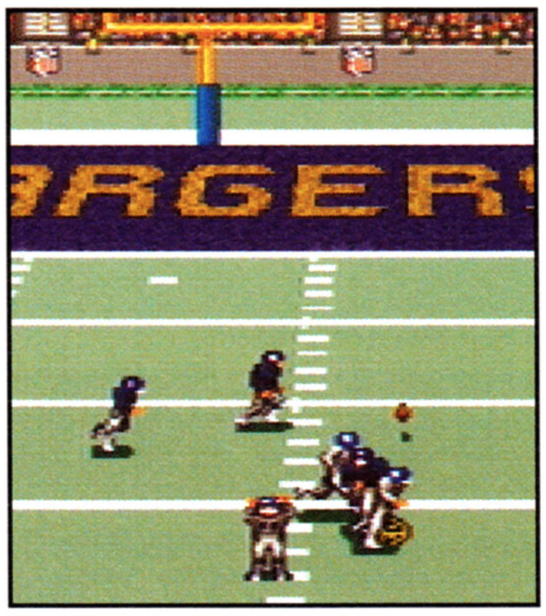
Although this is hardly an achievement in terms of gaming technology, it's easily better than the recently released Megadrive version. The graphics have much more depth to them than before and the sound is less clinky too. And if you're looking to buy an American football game anyway, it's certainly worth buying this over the Megadrive version. In my opinion, it's still not quite as good as the John Madden series of football games, but since they're not coming out on the 32X (at least not in the immediate future), this is probably about as good as it's going to get.

▲ Oy! We'll have none of that on the football pitch if you don't mind.

▲ They look just like playpeople, don't they?



▲ Handball! Er...



▲ To be this good takes argers.

▲ It's got better graphics than the Megadrive version, you know. Even if you can't really tell by looking at these screenshots.

RATINGS

Presentation: 90
Great looking front-end screens and heaps of options. Extremely polished.

Graphics: 87
Much improved over the Megadrive version in all areas. Although not ground-breaking 32X stuff.

Sound: 84
Pretty ordinary music, but smart spot-effects and good speech add to the atmosphere greatly.

Challenge: 84
Enter the pro tournaments and you're in for a challenge. That's what you're looking for, right?

Playability: 88
Much the same as the Megadrive version. In other words, a winner.

Lastability: 90
It hasn't got the Quarterback Challenge, so it loses a bit of lastability over the Megadrive version, but aside from that there's loads to keep you hooked.

Overall: 89
A superb American Football game which only loses marks for failing to provide that Next Generation feel.

INFO

GAME GEAR

BY:
US GOLD

PRICE:
£TBA

RELEASE:
JUNE

STYLE:
PLATFORM

PLAYERS:
ONE

CONTROLS:
YES

CONTINUES:
PASSWORD

The last time we heard from James Pond he was investigating some fishy business on the Megadrive. And that was about two years back. In fact, we thought he was gone for good until this Game Gear version turned up a couple of days ago.

Yep, we thought that old Jimmy boy had been packed off to Sunnyvale's home for the retired platform hero. But, none of it. Although this Game Gear title has been seen before on the Megadrive, it's been ages and ages since he's appeared on the handheld. And by all accounts, he's a pretty popular guy. Okay, so he's never been up there with the real greats like Sonic, but a few years back he did enjoy his own fair share of success, mainly because his games were fast and completely playable. Luckily, nothing much has changed for the Game Gear version. You still get millions of levels, the graphics are pretty much the same (bar a fair amount of detail of course) and it's all as playable as it ever was. Plus you still get all the hidden levels that were in the Megadrive version, which makes this an all-round top buy really. Admittedly, it doesn't quite have the excitement that surrounds some of the newer titles, but if you're looking for a top quality title that will last you a fair old while, then this is as good a choice as any.

SEGA

MEGA-CD

INFO

MEGA DRIVE

BY:
SEGA

PRICE:
£TBA

RELEASE:
OUT NOW

STYLE:
FIND-THE-GAME

PLAYERS:
1

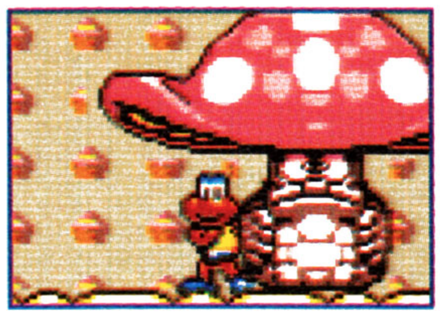
CONTROLS:
DAVROS' HAND

CONTINUES:
UNLIMITED

If you read the showcase on the Power Rangers a few months ago, you should have been more than forewarned about their hypnotic influence on our nation's youth and hopefully protected yourself from their brain-washing rays. If you didn't, well, you probably own the 12" Zordan remix of their Christmas single - concrete evidence of your overall sadness. For those of you that did make it unmolested, don't take those protective goggles off just yet, and stay inside your Anderson shelters, because the horror hasn't quite passed. Here comes the Mega-CD game.

Unlike the Megadrive and Game Gear versions, Mega-CD Power Rangers isn't a beat 'em up. Nope, using the massive storage space available on CD combined with Cinepak full-motion video, Sega have crammed in live action footage from the TV series to give all you lobotomised Ranger fanatics the chance to join in the action. Sounds pretty exciting eh? Well don't soil your Blue Ranger underclackers just yet, because it isn't as morphtastic as it sounds. Take those lovely clips from the TV show, for example. Even though the FMV is better than most on the Mega-CD, it's still a case of the Power Graingers. Mind you, to be fair, apart from the grainy FMV the game is exactly like the TV series. And we mean exactly. The whole thing is just a string of episodes from the first series. It's just a case of watching old re-runs and then interacting at chosen moments. And by interacting, we mean it in the loosest sense. If you still haven't got the message yet (and some of you more loyal fans will admittedly have less functioning brain matter to work with), let's set the record straight – this game is rubbish.

SEGA



COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN

James Pond has been around for years now, but the good thing is that although the games never change very much from year to year, they're always really playable, and it takes longer than a couple of hours to finish them too. This third outing on the Game Gear adds very little to the existing titles, but saying that, it's just as playable as previous versions and it's good fun too. In a way, it's even better than the Sonic titles, because it will probably last longer, although in the short term it doesn't seem quite as impressive. A worthy purchase for any Game Gear owner.

COMMENT — RICH LEADBETTER

This is actually a pretty remarkable conversion of the original Megadrive game, cramming in just about every feature from the original Operation Starfish game. The graphics are pretty decent actually, with some great sprites and super-colourful backdrops, which really set it apart from the vast majority of 8-bit titles that we see on the Game Gear. Also, since it's so close a conversion, you get a pretty massive game, with tons of levels packed with all manner of puzzles and suchlike. Yup, no doubt about it, this is one of the best Game Gear titles I've played for quite a while.

RATINGS

83 **Presentation:**
Standard stuff really. Intro screens, option screens, password screens and the likes.

81 **Graphics:**
Another achievement for the hand held. The backgrounds may be fairly bare, but there's loads of colours and plenty of stuff going on.

70 **Sound:**
Plink plonk, quack. Yuk.

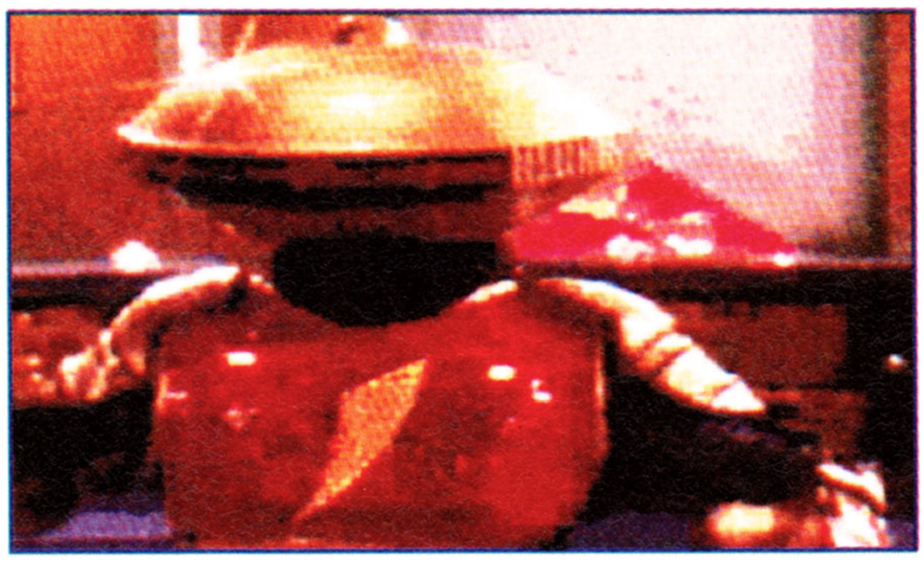
85 **Playability:**
Yes, very playable and fun too.

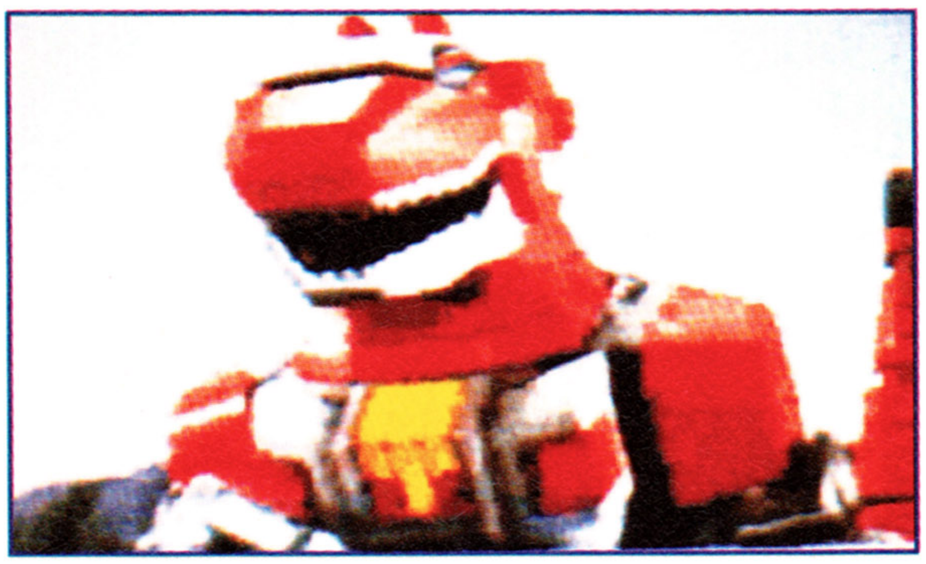
80 **Challenge:**
Superb. Brilliant intros and fabulous test-your-skills areas before you enter the real game. Which is brilliantly presented as well.

86 **Lastability:**
Not much reason to play it again once completed, but it will take you a while to get there.

88 **Overall:**
One of the best Game Gear titles for ages.

MEGA-CD





COMMENT — TOM GUISE

Now, I realise that the Power Rangers is one of the most tragic TV shows around, but at the same it also has a strangely humorous appeal to me. As such, I kind of expected the Mega-CD game to be quite a laugh, but the whole thing is just a total disappointment. If the game had used previously unseen or specially filmed scenes, it might have provided some kind of appeal, but as it stands Power Rangers CD has nothing going for it. Take my word for it, if you're that desperate for a Power Rangers fix you'd be better off getting one of the videos. Or even a colouring book. Anything but this.

COMMENT — RICH LEADBETTER

This has to be one of the most pointless games I think I've ever played. For starters, there's nothing new about the video. It's just badly cut sections from some of the first Power Rangers episodes, which is unlikely to impress anyone - least of all fans of Power Rangers, who let's face it, are the only people likely to go anywhere near this game. The Dragon's Lair-style gameplay (ie press a certain button at the right time) is insipid, dull and almost pointless. At least Dragon's Lair didn't tell you what buttons to press, which Power Rangers does, making it even simpler. Also, you don't die if you get the wrong button - you lose a bit of energy. It must be said that you'd need to be some kind of gaming gibbon with no hands to be defeated by the challenges of this game. What's more, because you're looking to see what button to press, you don't really watch the video itself. You'd get more value and entertainment from Power Rangers vids, if you like that sort of thing.

RATINGS

32 **Presentation:**
Considering the opening titles are those of the TV show, it all looks pretty good. But this game doesn't feel like any effort went into it.

63 **Graphics:**
Just grainy footage from the show. Oh, and some little flashing commands made up of lightning bolts.Unimpressive-tastic!

35 **Sound:**
Exactly like listening to the TV series or, with your eyes closed, like an audio cassette.

08 **Playability:**
Oh come on!

19 **Challenge:**
It could prove tricky if you tried pressing the buttons with your toes. Harder still if you threw Maltesers at it from a distance.

25 **Lastability:**
Actually, it'd probably last forever if you did use the Maltesers technique. Mentally-sound people will bore of this farce in minutes.

16 **Overall:**
A total waste of money. Quite possibly the worst game ever made. Can we say 'game'?

FEVER PITCH

▲ Another goal shot, folks.

▲ Anyone seen my contact lens?

Hurrah! Roll out the red carpet! Put your glad rags on and party on down in the street, because we have something really special this month! Yes, it's a football game. And guess what? It's on the Megadrive too!

Reviewing football games is a bit tricky. Why, we must have seen at least ten of 'em on the Megadrive alone in the last couple of years. And try as they might, none of them can quite touch the king of soccer sims, FIFA soccer. Of course, they all try to copy it, but there's always one essential element missing. Or a few if you want to take Sega's recent effort Striker as an example.

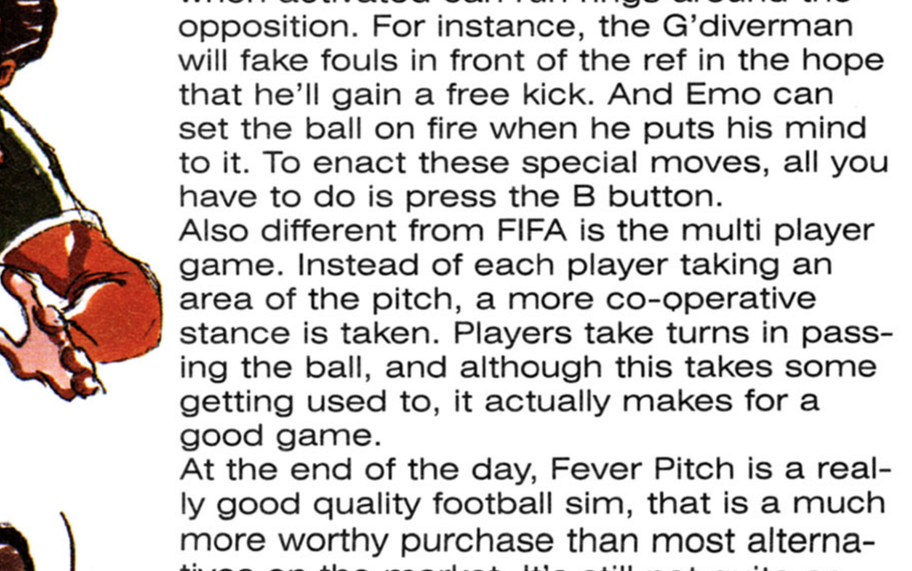
But Fever Pitch is different. It hasn't been rushed through the development process in the hope of a quick cash in. In fact it's been in development for ages, because the programmers were determined not to create a poor version of FIFA. Initially, it seems pretty impressive too. It takes the same 3D isometric view as FIFA, the sprites look kind of similar, and the options are familiar too. Plus, the play tactics are really easy to follow, and you can have up to eight players at any one time.

So what's different about Fever Pitch? Well, although most of the players in each team play bog standard football, certain members have special moves, which when activated can run rings around the opposition. For instance, the G'diverman will fake fouls in front of the ref in the hope that he'll gain a free kick. And Emo can set the ball on fire when he puts his mind to it. To enact these special moves, all you have to do is press the B button.

Also different from FIFA is the multi player game. Instead of each player taking an area of the pitch, a more co-operative stance is taken. Players take turns in passing the ball, and although this takes some getting used to, it actually makes for a good game.

At the end of the day, Fever Pitch is a really good quality football sim, that is a much more worthy purchase than most alternatives on the market. It's still not quite as slick as FIFA, purely because the special moves give the game a bit of a novelty feel. But if you're after another football sim to complement your copy of FIFA, then this is easily your best bet.

SEGA



▲ Look! Green rain!

INFO

MEGA DRIVE

BY: US GOLD

PRICE: £TBA

RELEASE: JUNE

STYLE: FOOTBALL

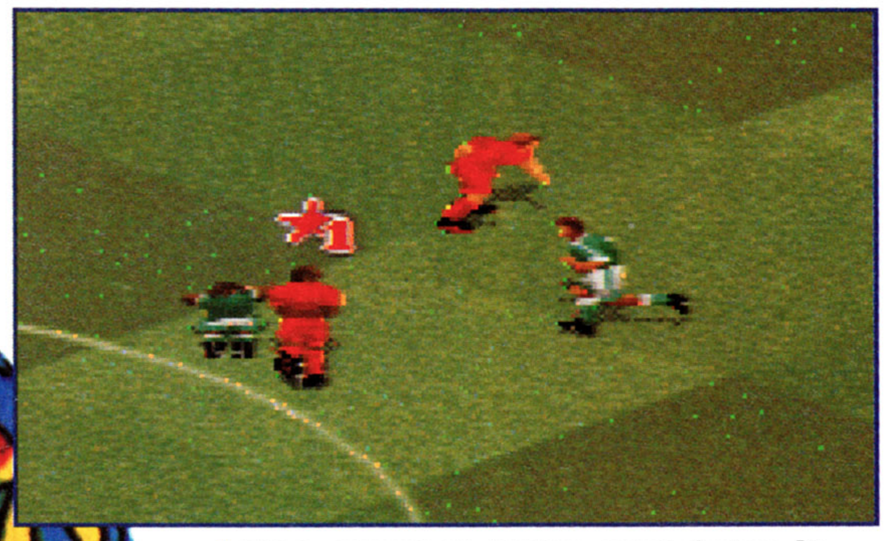
PLAYERS: UP TO EIGHT

CONTROLS: JOYPAD

CONTINUES: N/A

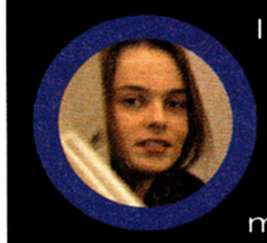
COMMENT — RICH LEADBETTER

In the last issue of this fine tome of Sega-related knowledge, we reviewed Striker - an attempt at a more arcadey-style of football game. Which didn't really work. Fever Pitch attempts to achieve the same thing, but it's far, far superior to the Sega offering. The gameplay is genuinely fun, exciting and easy to get the hang of. Technically speaking, it's excellent as well, being far smoother to watch and play than FIFA '95. I do think that the EA game has the better of this in terms of depth and general overall feel, but I think that they're pretty close in terms of quality. I know that just about everyone already owns either FIFA or its sequel, but if you're in the market for a soccer sim, you'd have to be stupid to instantly dismiss this and go for the licensed games. It's the best thing from US Gold in ages.



▲ The annual 'who can fake it the most' championships.

COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN



I have to admit that I don't play football games very much,although I still think that FIFA stands out a mile from all the other offerings. Fever Pitch is pretty good too – the gameplay is really fluid and you can play it without worrying too much what the controls are. The novelty players are quite good fun for a time too, although in the end, I think this is what lets the gameplay down, because ultimately, it makes the game more oriented towards fun rather than real football. I'm sure loads of people will love this for the very same reasons though, and I suppose it does make a nice change from all that 'serious' gameplay.

▲ Aww. Are you tired?

RATINGS

89 — Presentation: Hoards of options , loads of teams, everything really. Plus it's all really polished.

88 — Graphics: Fine graphics, very much in the style of FIFA soccer. Which is fine by us.

80 — Sound: A bit poor when compared to the quality of the rest of the game. A bit non-existent in places too.

86 — Challenge: Challenging both in tournament and multi-player mode. It will take ages to get through unless you're a complete soccer freak.

87 — Playability: Really easy to get to grips with, and with all the special moves, there's loads to discover too.

90 — Lastability: As with all multi player games, it could almost last forever.

88 — Overall: A worthy alternative to FIFA Soccer, although the novelty features won't please everyone.

SPEEDY GONZALES

INFO

MEGA DRIVE

BY: SEGA

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE: MAY

STYLE: PLATFORM

PLAYERS: 1

CONTROL: JOYPAD

CONTINUES: NONE

Why is it that all cartoon characters seem to end up in dull platform games, where their principal aim is to jump on various forms of wildlife and collect nondescript bonuses? Do the characters in question ever perform these deeds in the cartoons? No, they don't, but the conceptually identical games just keep coming and coming.

Speedy Gonzales is the latest addition to this unwelcome genre. The aim is to rescue your girlfriend and all your Mexican rodent pals from the clutches of the twisted Sylvester. Oh, and jump on various forms of wildlife and collect nondescript bonuses.

What does make this game different from the others is the curious way the gameplay seems to change speed, going from super-smooth and fast right down to sssslllooowwww and j-ER-k-y. For no apparent reason whatsover.

Nope, sorry. This won't do - especially when the Megadrive is host to some of the greatest platform games money can buy.

SEGA

▲ Speedy caught in a gormless pose.

▲ Great eh?

▲ Underwater bits too!

▲ Erm, what's going on here?

INFO

MEGA DRIVE

BY: SEGA

PRICE: £TBA

RELEASE: OUT NOW

STYLE: BASKETBALL SIM

PLAYERS: 1-2

CONTROL:: JOYPAD

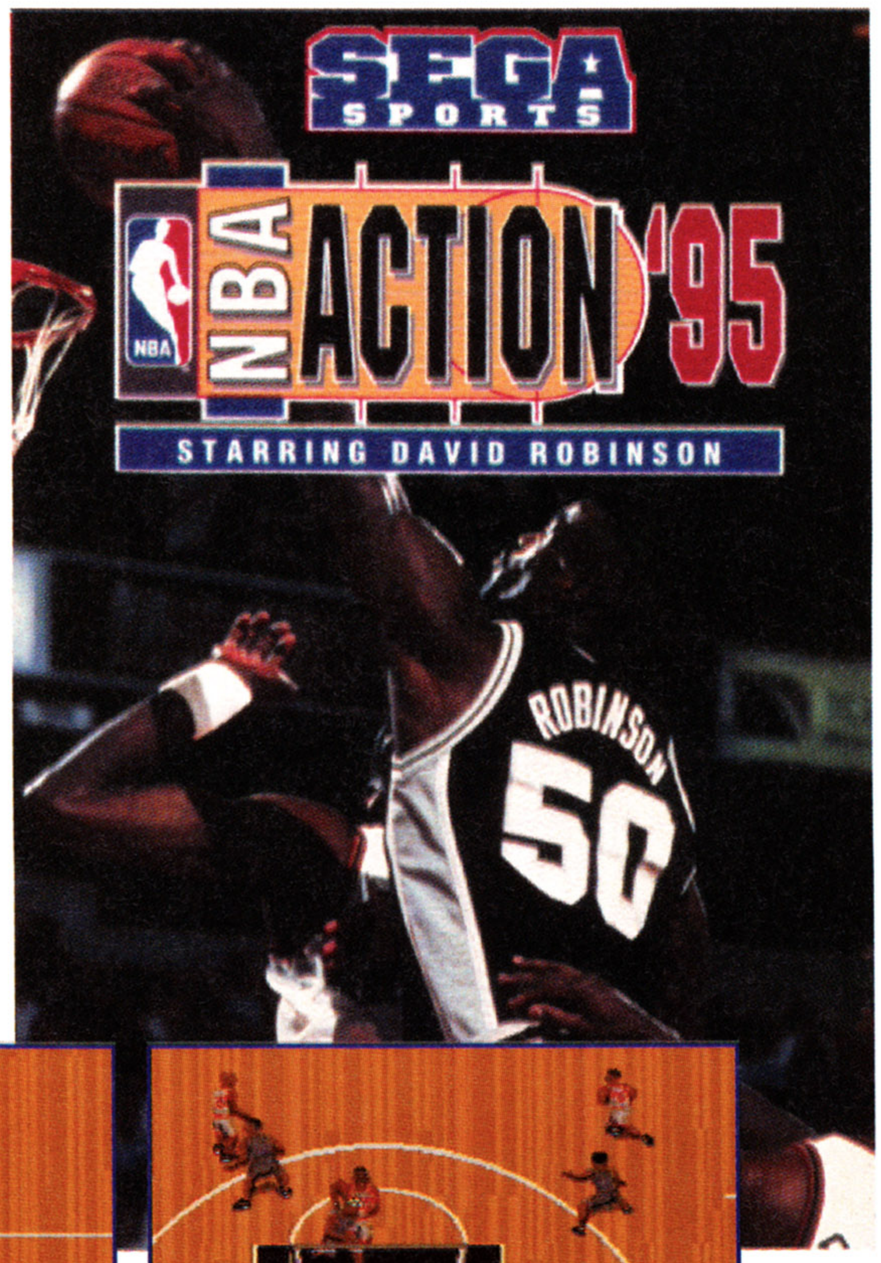
CONTINUES: N/A

NBA Action, starring David Robinson! Al-right! But who is David Robinson? Where did he come from and why is he here? Us Brits don't have much understanding of the finer points of basketball, so when one of the players actually endorses a game it doesn't mean very much.

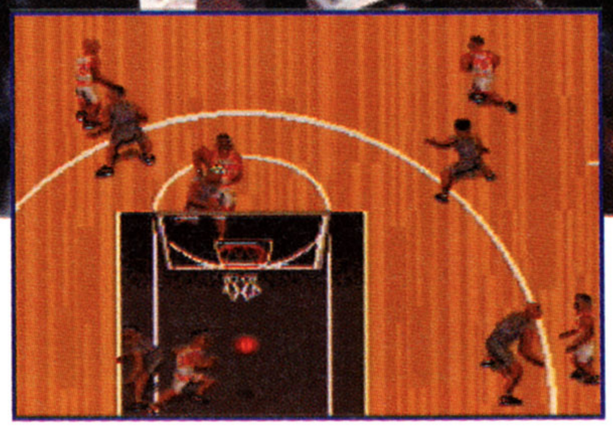
However, even though we don't know a lot about basketball culture, we can definitely tell the difference between a good and bad basketball sim. And if I was David Robinson, I wouldn't be too happy at the moment. You see, he's just gone and lent his name to one of the most awful basketball sims we've ever seen.

The problem is that there's been loads and loads of basketball sims on the Megadrive in the past, and most of them have been okay. Some of them have been absolutely brilliant – like NBA Jam. But none of them have ever been as bad as this. For a start, it looks like all the players have arthritis, because they move in such a pathetic manner. Then the graphics aren't much cop either – there's none of your NBA Jam take-it-to-the-hole slickness, so you're left with the bare minimum – bare backgrounds, bare courts and bare gameplay. Of course, real basketball enthusiasts could argue that NBA Jam can't really be compared to this as it was more of an arcade romp than a true sim. But even taking that into consideration, this is still a potty-poor conversion of the game, that may please recent converts from the Master System, although it won't fool anyone else.

SEGA



▲ More on-court action.



COMMENT — RICHARD LEADBETTER

I can conceive some situation where a younger player who really likes Looney Tunes might glean some kind of enjoyment from this, but it's pretty far-fetched to be honest - particularly since the same financial outlay can get you any one of the Sonic outings, or Dynamite Headdy - all of which are light years ahead of this lacklustre title. I could go on about the jerky scrolling, monotonous and dull gameplay, but this would just be putting off the final conclusion, which is: whatever you do, don't buy this horrible game. Please.

COMMENT — TOM GUISE

This game and its ilk seem to constantly return in some shape or form to haunt me. If it's not Daffy Duck or Mighty Max, it's yet another unappealing cartoon character being translated into a poor platform game. This title is devoid of new ideas or any excitement. I really must stress how much I dislike this title - if you changed a couple of the sprites, it could be any old platformer - so much for using the comics licence. In fact, I hate this game, almost as much the picture of me the designers have chosen for this particular comment box.

▲ **Run! Run you fool!**

RATINGS

70 **Presentation:**
Quite a nice intro sequence and some nice presentation screens, but the options are severely lacking.

59 **Graphics:**
The main sprite is quite nice, as are some of the backdrops, but the overall look is very dated indeed.

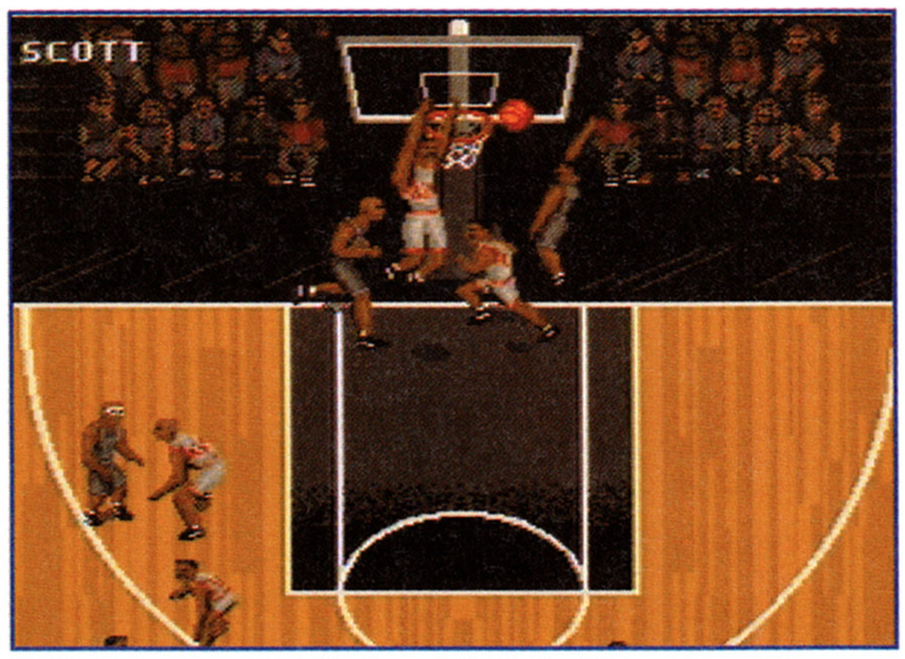
38 **Sound:**
A gross array of Master System-sounding "tunes" and twee effects.

41 **Playability:**
The gameplay seems to change speed with the tides and the basic action as it is, is supremely dull.

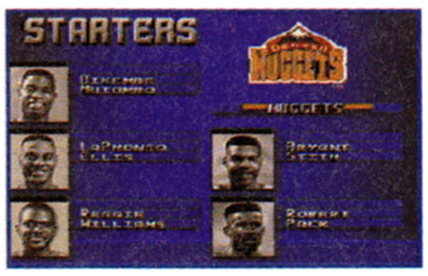
40 **Challenge:**
Keeping your hand away from the OFF button is honestly the biggest challenge when playing this game.

38 **Lastability:**
When gameplay's this boring, lastability is reduced horrendously.

40 **Overall:**
With so many excellent platformers about, this just isn't even worth considering.



▲ **Some more titular NBA Action.**

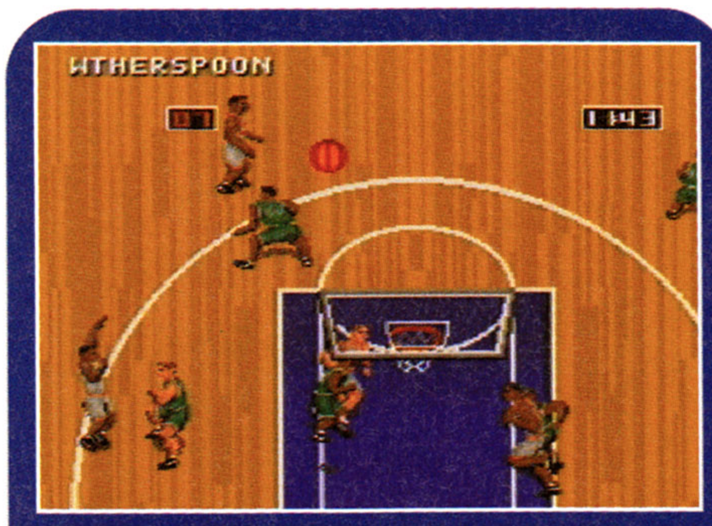


COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN

This game amazes me. After all the experience Sega have had with signing up and developing games I can't believe that they're going to release this one. Especially at a time when anything that isn't near-perfect will be left standing on the shelves for months. Apart from the poor play mechanics, the whole package just feels too ragged and unfinished. It's not fun to play either, so I think I'm justified in wholeheartedly unrecommending this title.

COMMENT — TOM GUISE

Oh dear, it's that strange picture of me again. Oddly enough, the look of surprise and near-horror you can see to the left is quite similar to the expression on my countenance when I played this lacking game. Although the range of options and statistics is marginally impressive, it's gameplay that counts and it must be said that NBA Jam: TE is miles ahead of this, so if you're after a basketball title, please go for that.



▲ **A selection of top NBA Action related screen shots. Impressive eh? Well, er, no, not really.**

RATINGS

80 **Presentation:**
There's all the usual options you'd expect to see in any sports sim, plus a whole host of stats too.

54 **Graphics:**
The programmers haven't exactly gone to town over the graphics. More of a like-it-or-lump-it scenario than anything else.

55 **Sound:**
A fair range of ball noises and crowd-type applause and suchlike, but nothing really cosmic. Overall, functional.

54 **Lastability:**
If you do have the misfortune of playing this game, you'll find that after a short while it's tedious. Extremely.

68 **Playability:**
Yes you can play it. No, it isn't much fun. Will that do?

70 **Challenge:**
There's loads of modes to conquer and a two player mode, which always adds considerable challenge to a game.

51 **Overall:**
We don't like this. It's pretty obvious why.

SPIDER-MAN

INFO

MEGA DRIVE

BY:
ACCLAIM

PRICE:
£44.99

RELEASE:
OUT NOW

STYLE:
BEAT 'EM UP

PLAYERS:
1

CONTROLS:
JOYPAD

CONTINUES:
INFINITE

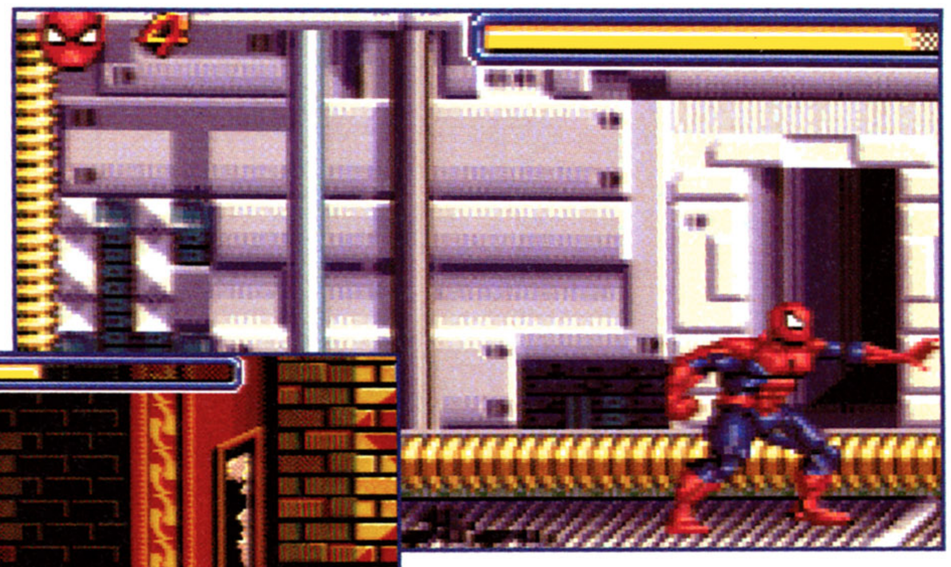
Another Marvel Comics license, another Acclaim platform game. Yes, it most certainly appears that the videogames industry is suffering from a severe lack of ideas when it comes to bringing cartoon and comics characters to life on the consoles. Unfortunately, Acclaim have continued this sorry trend with this adaptation of the new Spider-Man animated series.

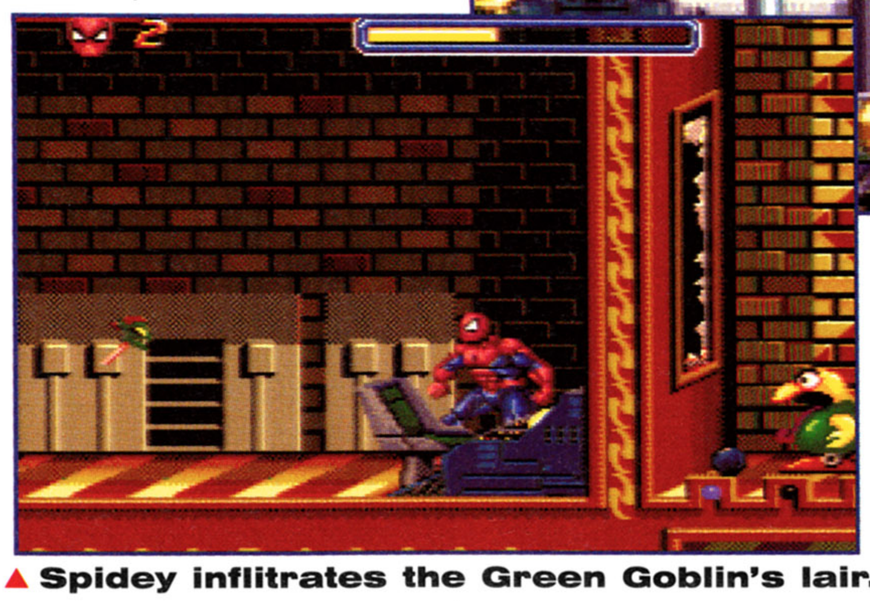
It's not as if the cartoon series isn't packed with inspiration for the programmers. Any one who's seen Sky One on a Saturday morning knows that the Spider-Man animated series is pretty damn good actually, sporting as it does some of the best cartoon super-powered fight scenes ever seen. What's more, computers are used to excellent effect in the cartoon series - hence some incredible 3D Silicon Graphics generated web-slinging scenes as Spidey swings around New York. All this top notch source material and the best Acclaim can come up with is another platform game.

That would be all right if, like Wolverine, the programmers concentrated on the characters and their capabilities, as well as the actual playability of the title. Well, this hasn't occurred with Spider-Man. For starters, the incredible fights with the super-powered villains have been reduced to

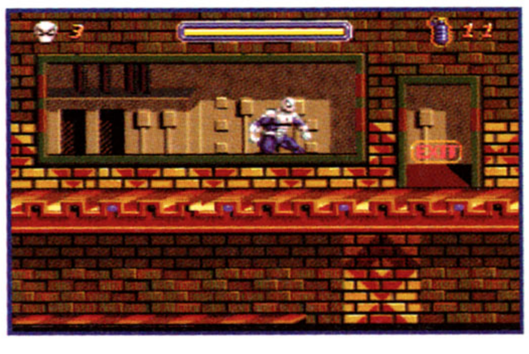
COMMENT RICHARD LEADBETTER

The new animated series does a brilliant job of bringing Spider-Man to life and it's just a huge shame that this new game doesn't. Whilst the audio-visuals are okay and the gameplay acceptable, I just wish that the programmers had tried to capture the action, humour and excitement of the TV series in the Megadrive game. In that respect, the game is a total failure, having more in common with just about every other platform game already available than it does with the TV show from which it's licensed - which is a great shame. Maybe the programmers should try to make a game to fit the character they're licensing rather than doing the total opposite. As it is, I'd sooner recommend X-Men 2 if you're after some comics-based videogaming action. It might be as totally unoriginal as this game, but at least it's more playable and does a much better job of translating the characters. Failing that, wait for The Adventures of Batman and Robin, which promises to be very excellent indeed.

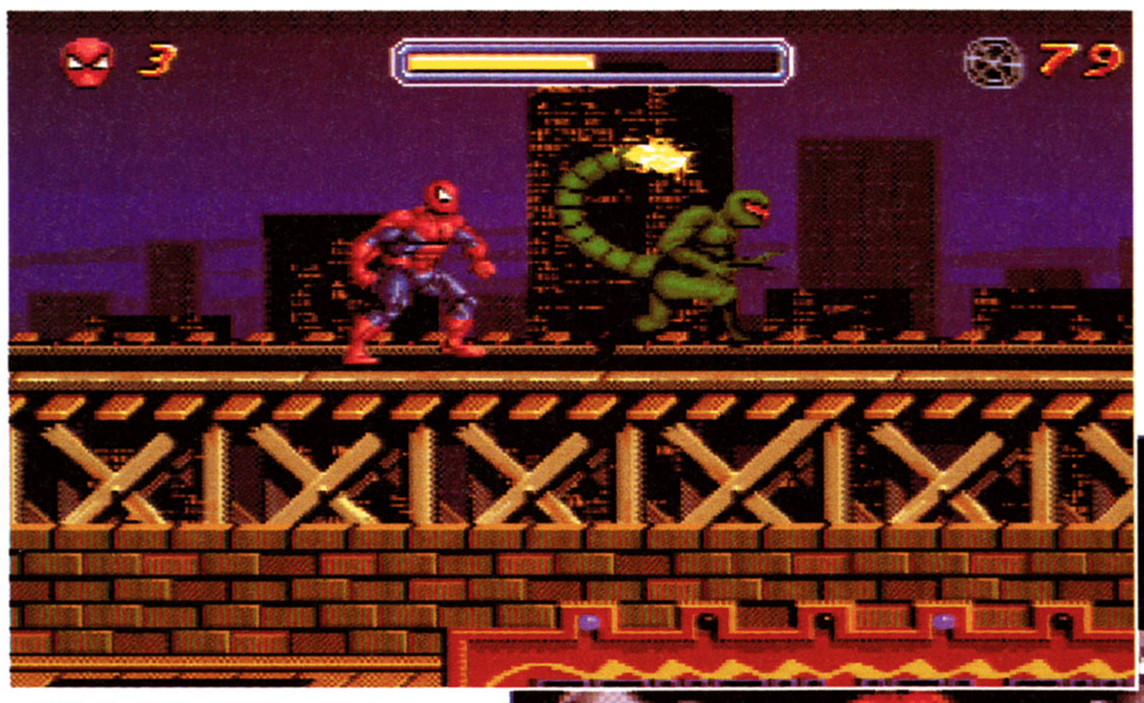




▲ Spidey inflitrates the Green Goblin's lair.



simple one-on-one combat Shinobi-style (but not quite as exciting because the super-villains have little or no super-powers - they just look like Spidey's foes). And, horror of horrors, Acclaim have meddled with the web-slinger's capabilities. Look out for Spidey swinging from webs about two inches long, or check out the web-slingers formidable array of webs and... hand grenades! Sorry Acclaim, but Spidey has never used any grenades. Not in the comics. Not in the TV series. What are they doing here? Making up for the lack of decent attack moves perhaps?
Okay, maybe we've been a bit harsh here in this review, because although the coders have translated Spider-Man and his foes

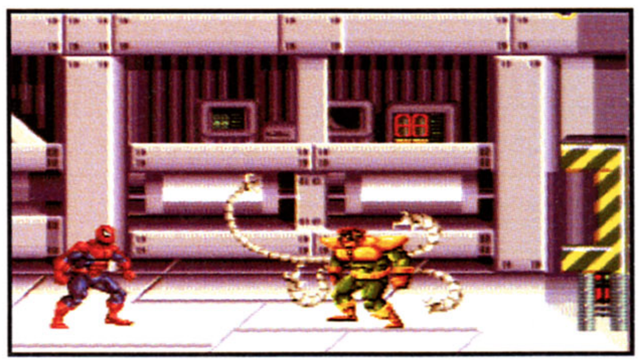


▲ **Web his tail and hit him. Scorpion is super-easy to beat.**

exceptionally badly, the game still proves to be pretty playable and very challenging indeed. In the game's favour, there are tons of levels to wade through and huge amounts of super-villains to fight (although the actual fighting isn't so exciting). It's just a bit sad to see what is in many ways a ground-breaking animated TV series converted onto the Megadrive in the form of a super-formulaic platform game. As we said before, it's not that bad when you actually sit down and play it. But, as we've said many times before, the people who are actually going to want to buy this are going to be fans of the comics or the new TV show, and those people are liable to be immensely disappointed with this game.

SEGA

▲ **Lots of super-villains. Great eh?**



▲ **The Rhino is super-tough in the comics. Here you just need to lob some of your grenades at him and he's history. It's rather sad really isn't it?**

COMMENT — TOM GUISE

I haven't seen the new animated series yet, but I do have some strangely fond memories of Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends, which didn't do a bad job of representing ol' Spidey. It's just a shame that the programmers Acclaim drafted in to convert the new series seem to have no idea what Spider-Man is capable of. Take away the wall-crawling and the web-bing and you have yet another formulaic platform game that everyone must surely be tired of by now. Well, I know I am, any way. The super-villains are rubbish as well. Doc Ock is frankly pathetic, just standing there letting you beat the stuffing out of him - a trait shared by just about all the others (with the exception of the Green Goblin). I've read some of the comics and I know that there's some potential for some awesome videogaming action. Just imagine - a super-athletic somersaulting, super-powered hero up against tons of mega-strength baddies each with their own strange powers. It would be brilliant. It's just a shame that the programmers have no idea how to turn an action-packed comics series into an exciting videogame. To be frank, I expect more from a company like Acclaim.

RATINGS

57 — Presentation:
A modicum of useful options and a couple of nice-looking screens, but that's yer lot, mate.

66 — Graphics:
The Spider-Man sprite isn't that bad, but the rest lack decent animation and definition. The backdrops are a tad blocky too.

48 — Sound:
An awful representation of the TV theme tune kicks off the proceedings, with poor music and sound effects in-game.

70 — Playability:
Not that bad actually. The control method isn't bad at all and the action proves mildly diverting... for a short while.

72 — Challenge:
On the default difficulty setting, there's no doubt that the game is pretty testing...

49 — Lastability:
... But the sheer lack of excitement and originality severely curtails the game's lifespan.

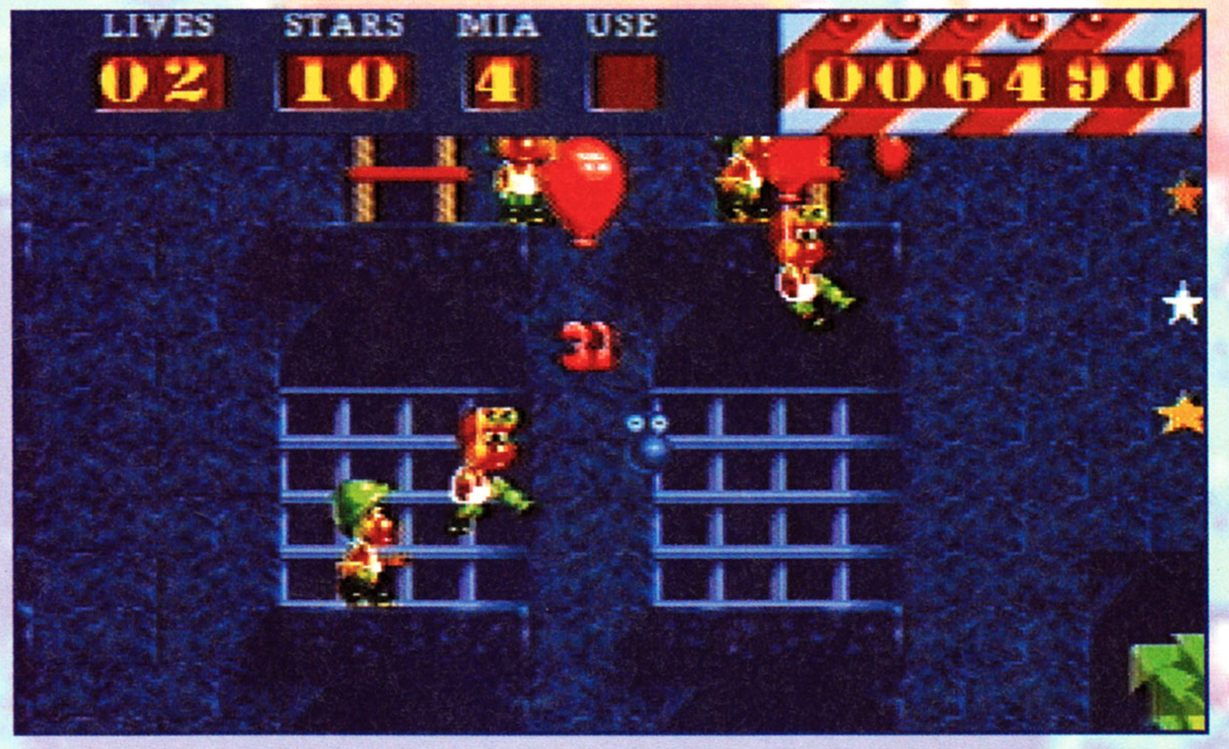
55 — Overall:
Yet another Spider-Man game that fails to live up to the potential of the character, the comics, or indeed the new Animated Series.

PUTTY SQUAD

If you were one of those annoying kids who found it funny to stick chewing gum in unpopular kids' hair, then you're gonna love this. You see, Putty squad is full of all sorts of sticky things. And they're all just like chewing gum except that they can turn into hi-explosive napalm bombs if they want to. Lovely lovely lovely.

Although you may not have heard of it before, Putty Squad has been kicking about for ages on the Super Nintendo. In fact there's been two games on the old grey monster before. And quite good they were too. But it's taken the Ocean boys about eighteen months to get around to converting it to the Megadrive, even though nothing much has been added in the transition. As in the Super Nintendo version, the main action revolves around a basic platformer, although there are puzzle elements included to spice up the action somewhat. Putty's main aim is to discover where all his little putty friends are located in each level, then set about rescuing them. Kind of like Lemmings really, except that the puzzles aren't so infuriatingly difficult, and there's more things going on too. Like evil cats who throw bombs from time to time. And puppies that fire laser rifles from the air.

As you'd expect there's plenty of levels to get through, all of them based around the same idea, although the puzzles do become much more difficult after a time. All round, the graphics look fairly good, although they looked a lot better when the game was originally released almost two years ago. We were impressed by things like that then you see. Now, the graphics are nice, but just kind of standard. In fact, this goes for the whole title really. It's fun, it's good quality and it has universal appeal, but it's not very original and by today's standards, it's pretty average stuff.



▲ Oh dear, that blue wall sure clashes with the putty blob.

INFO

PUTTY SQUAD

MEGA DRIVE

BY: OCEAN

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE: MAY

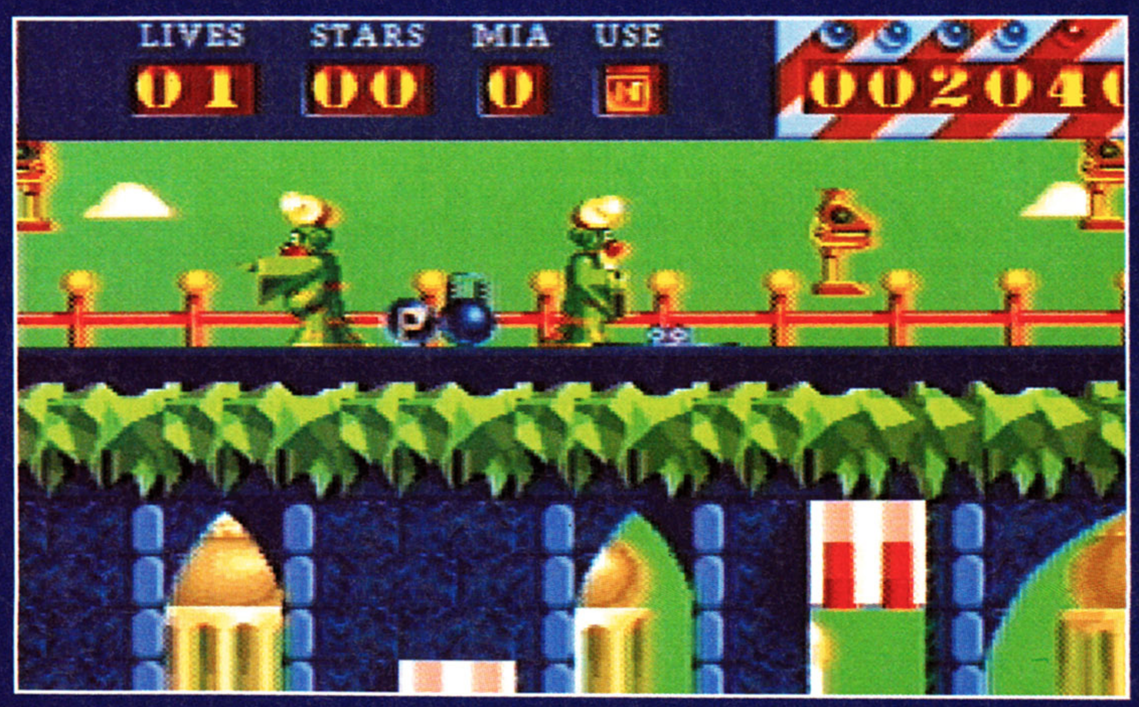
STYLE: PLATFORM PUZZLER

PLAYERS: 1

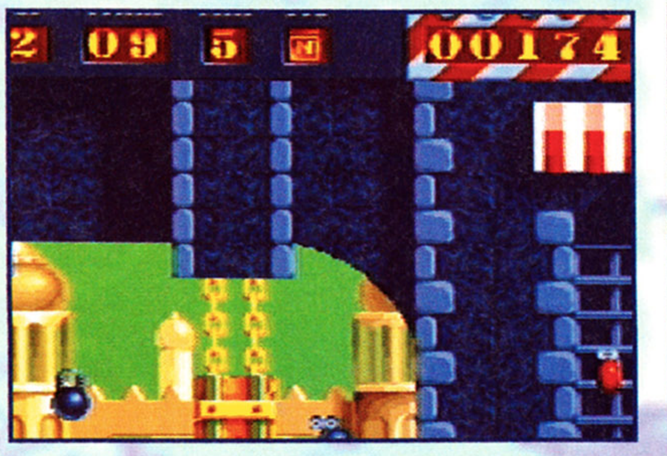
CONTROL: JOYPAD

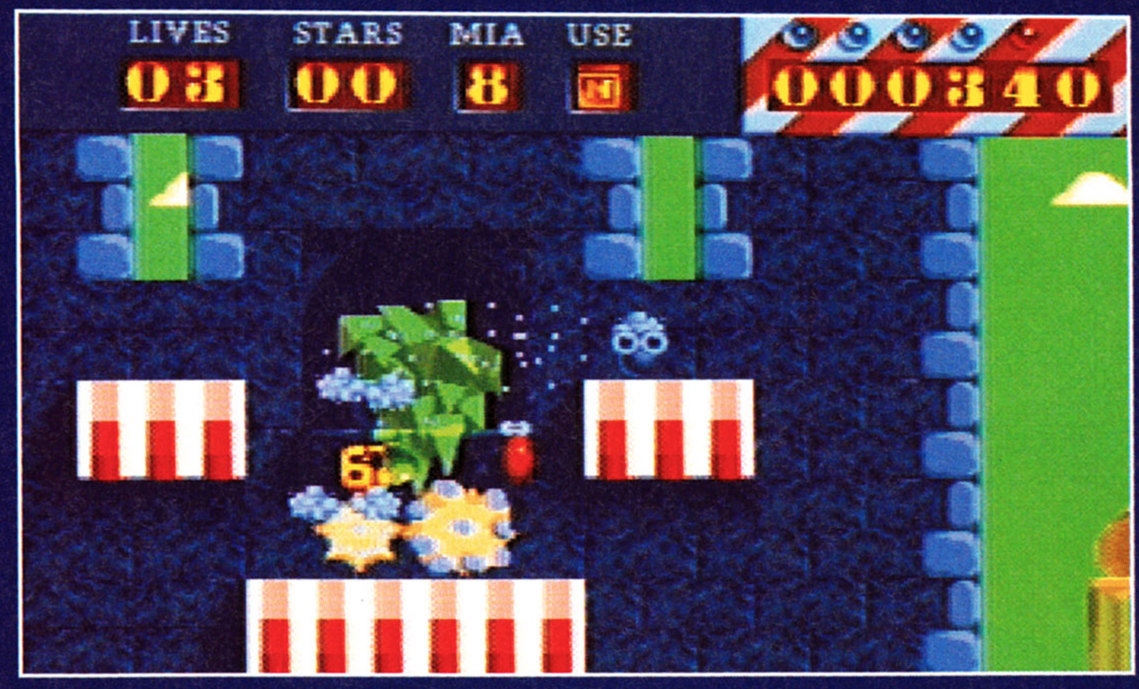
CONTINUES: N/A

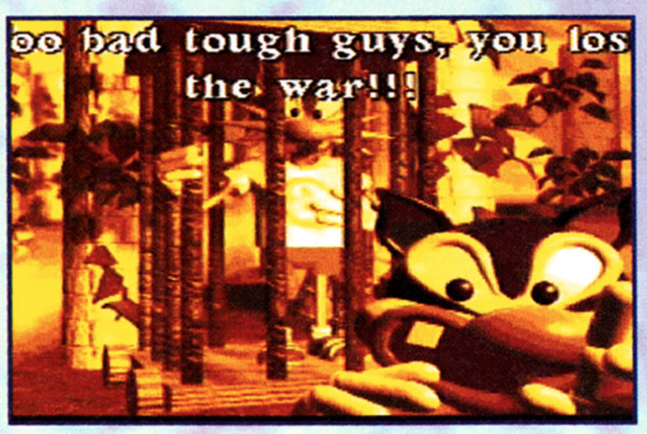
SEGA



▲ Spot the blob of putty in this picture. Alright, don't.

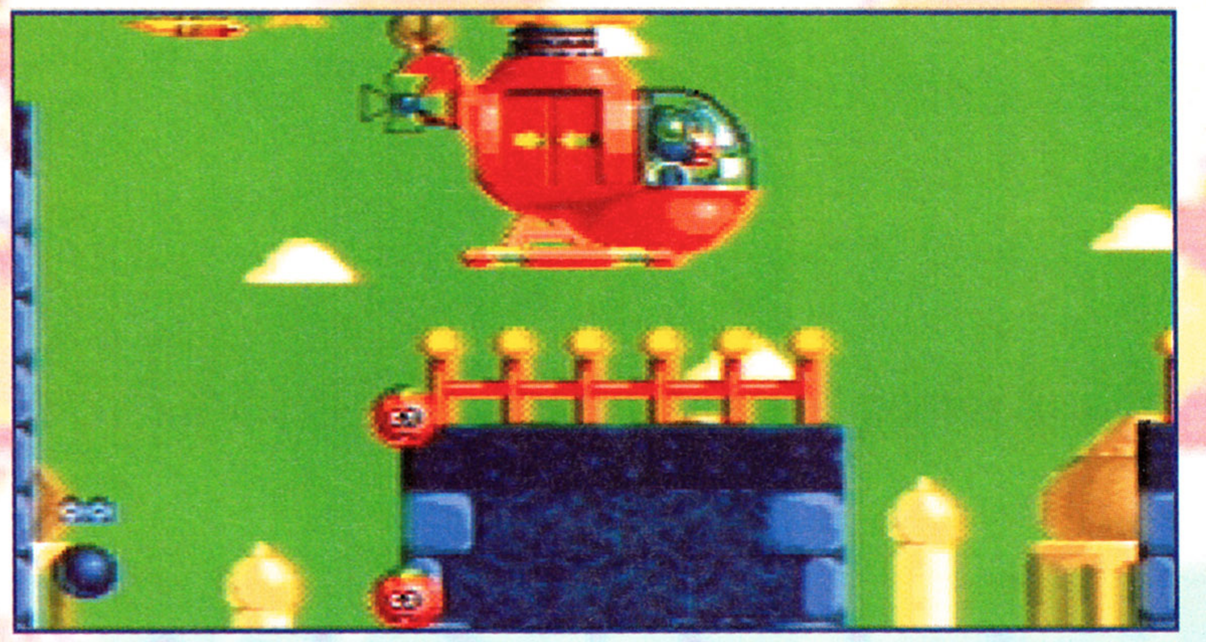


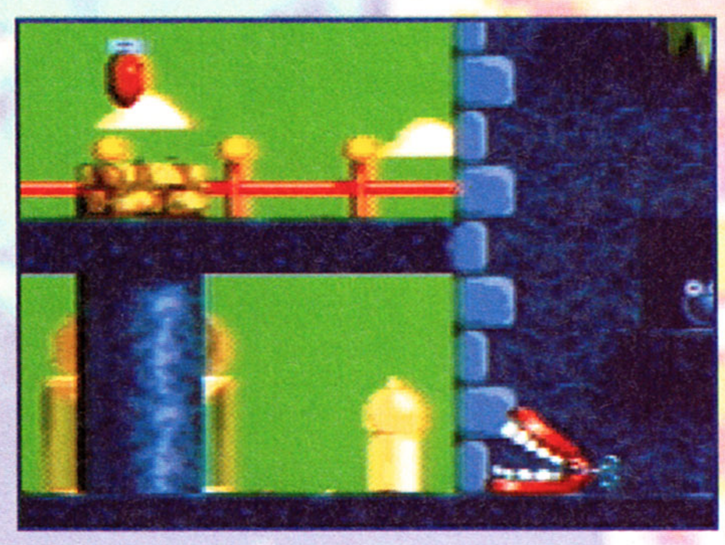


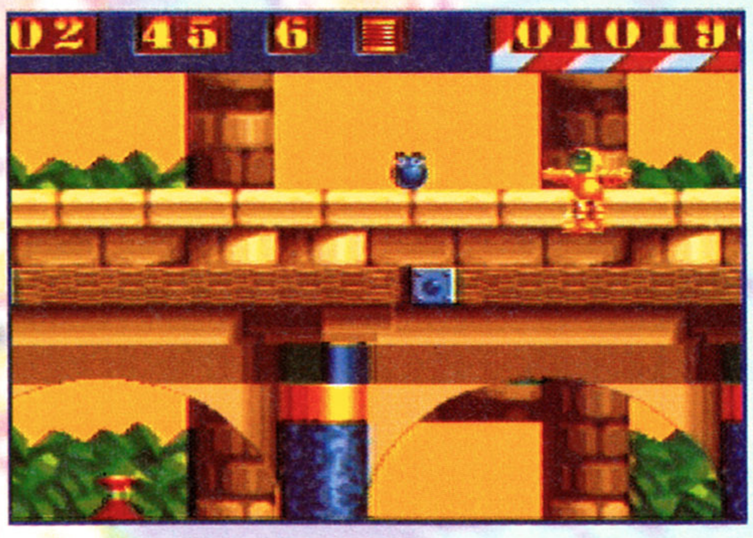


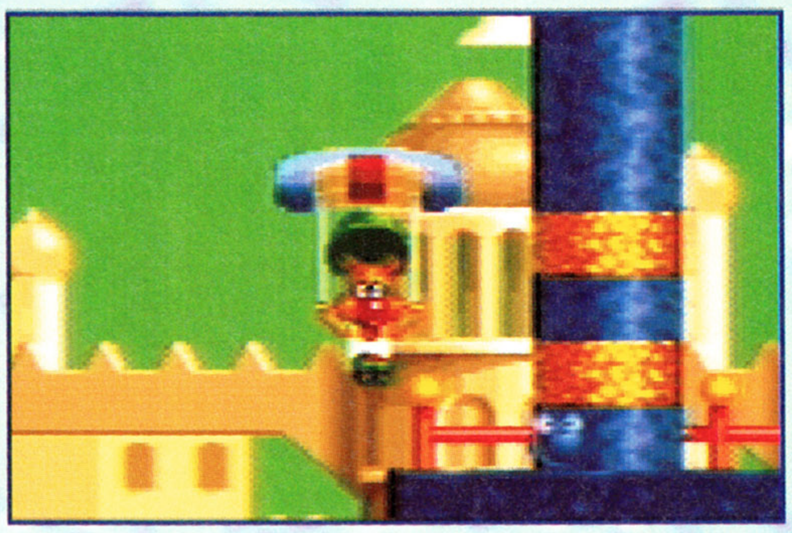
COMMENT — TOM GUISE

The concept of a game in which you control a lump of putty, coupled with the numerous bad gags, such as Terminator carrots, gave me the distinct impression that this game was going to be total rubbish. It is, however, suprisingly good. The graphics are bright and cheerful, and the animation of the putty is actually highly impressive. In fact, that same animation coupled with the extremely responsive controls, is what makes the game so playable. It's sort of soothing, guiding the little blob of putty around by rolling, squishing and stretching it. Much like playing with real putty, I suppose. The actual levels themselves are also very well thought out, with a tough puzzle element to them. Although in some cases it annoyed me beyond me belief. At the end of the day though, this kind of quaint-looking, mentally-stimulating game isn't really my cup of tea.









▲ More thrilling putty action.

▲ You just can't ignore that statue can you? Nice toes, mind.

COMMENT — SAM HICKMAN

I played Putty Squad a couple of years ago when it was released in the Super Nintendo and it was pretty good, even though a previous version of the game had been released a year before. In fact, at the time, the graphics looked absolutely top-notch. But a hell of a lot of games have been released since then, and to be honest, Putty Squad isn't of the same quality that it used to be. It's still a fun enough game, but there's nothing that's particularly clever or original about it.

RATINGS

78 — Presentation:
Well, nothing special springs to mind, although you do get a fair amount of story screens.

80 — Graphics:
The main sprite looks really polished, and although the rest of the graphics are pretty detailed, there's nothing spectacular to speak of.

74 — Sound:
Well, it's alright. You know, if you like that sort of thing.

79 — Lastability:
Should last a while considering the puzzle nature of the game, although your patience may run out before the levels do.

80 — Playability:
The puzzle element certainly gives the platform formula a bit of a lift, and the action is fairly fast and furious as well.

81 — Challenge:
Easy at first, but soon becomes very tough indeed. It's hair-tearing stuff too.

80 — Overall:
An entertaining platformer that's fun to play, but lacks any outstanding features.

NEXT MONTH

What are we going to have in next month's mag? Stuff. What stuff/ Um, we don't know yet. There's probably going to be one of those software drought things next month you see. But that won't stop us from bringing you loads of coverage on up and coming releases. But we don;t want to mention anything about Batman, because it always goes horribly wrong. Not our fault though, it's something to do with the programmers. Anyway, instead of Batman, could we tentatively suggest SHINOBI X on the Saturn, plus THE OOZE on the Megadrive and a hot feature on crack coders AM2? Not enough? Well, how about reviews of JUDGE DREDD, INDIANA JONES and NBA JAM on the 32X. Better Now?

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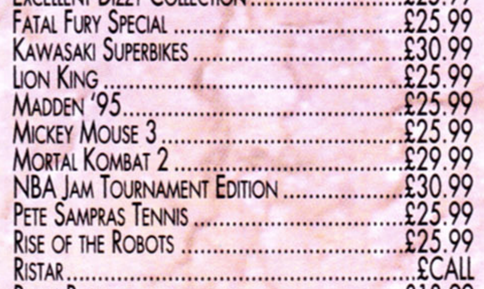

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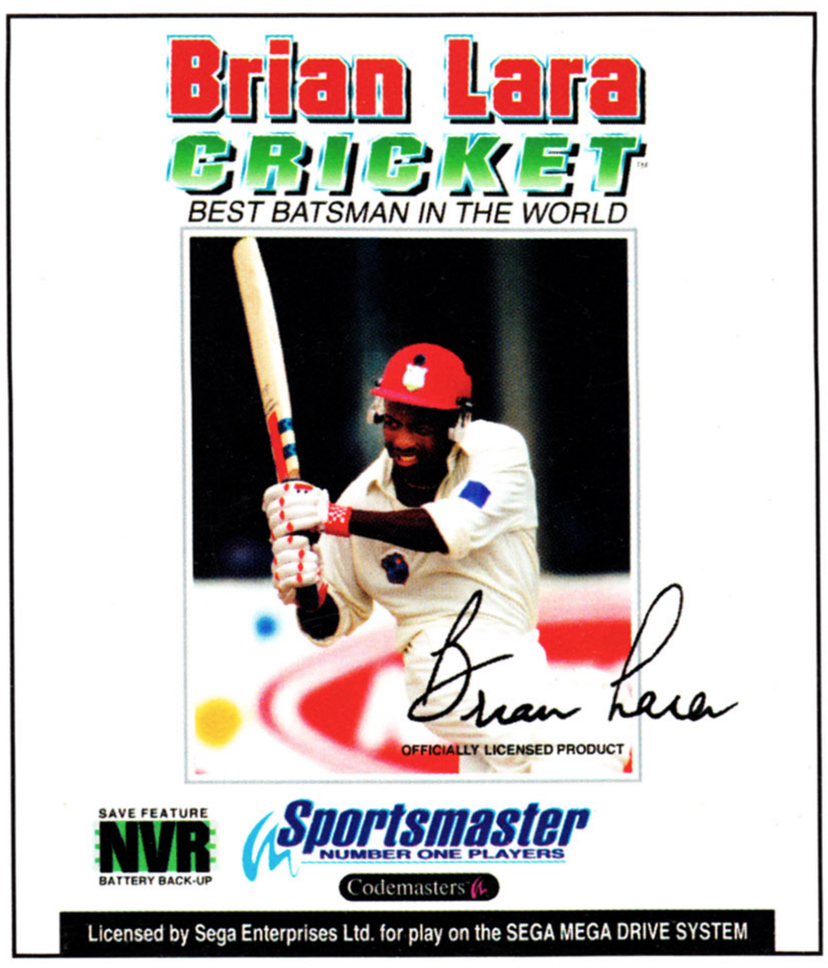

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