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PC ZONE

Dennis

19 Bolsover St
London W1P 7HJ
Tel: 0171-917 7717
Fax: 0171-436 1321
Compuserve: 100142, 2152
CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

Editor John Davison; **Art Editor** Jason Simmons; **Deputy Editor** Jeremy Wells; **Production Editor** Thea Marcuard; **Features Editor** Chris Anderson; **Disk Editors** Pete Hawley, Daniel Emery; **Reader Services** Miles Tudor; **Contributors** David McCormack (Design); Charlie Brooker; Marcus Bullen; Richard Cleves; David McCandless; Duncan MacDonald; David Mathieson; Patrick McCarthy; Andrew Mitchell; Paul Presley; Gareth Ramsay; Paul Rigby; Duncan Swain; Andrew Wright; **Publisher** Tim Ponting; **Subscriptions Hotline** 01454 620070; **Assistant Advertising Manager** Mike Shepherd 0171-917 3873; **Advertising Sales Executive** Andrew Caddy 0171-917 3931; **Group Advertising Manager** Alan Gonsalves; **Advertising Production** Monir Khan; **Group Production Manager** Simon Maggs; **Origination** Colour-Tech 0171-729 3934; **Printed in England** by ET Heron; **Newstrade Manager** James Burnay; **Distribution** SM Magazine Distribution 0181-677 8111; **Mail Order Manager** Julia French; **Marketing Director** Alison Townsend; **Publishing Director** Bruce Sawford; **Circulation Director** Sean Farmer; **Creative Director** Jimmy Egerton; **Non-Executive Director** Dick Pountain; **Financial Director** Ian Leggett; **Managing Director** Alistair Ramsay; **Chairman** Felix Dennis

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PPA

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CONTENTS

CIVILIZATION 2

Civilization **is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest strategy games of all time. Can the sequel possibly be better? Check out the review on page 50.**

Page 50

BLUEPRINTS

Citizens 30
The ancient c64 classic *Little Computer People* gets kicked about, updated and then dragged kicking and screaming into the '90s.

Time Commando 32
The bods that produced *Little Big Adventure* return with a 3D, polygon-infested yomp through time and space.

Indestructibles 35
The second part in our Bullfrog superhero game diary.

Descent 2 36
One of the biggest games of 1995 that didn't have anything to do with *Doom* now has a sequel. It's bigger, faster, and harder than ever. Fnar.

Page 36

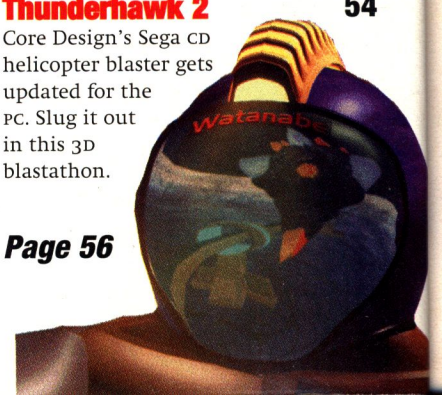
Virtual Snooker 42
Take *Virtual Pool*, change nothing but the balls and some of the rules, add a dash of Steve Davis and what have you got? *Virtual Snooker*.

Jane's: Longbow/ATF 45
The famous reference publishers team up with Origin to produce a new range of ultra-realistic flight sims.

REVIEWS

Civilization 2 50
MicroProse unveils the sequel to Sid Meier's classic strategy game. Can it really be better than the first one?

Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2 54
Core Design's Sega CD helicopter blaster gets updated for the PC. Slug it out in this 3D blastathon.

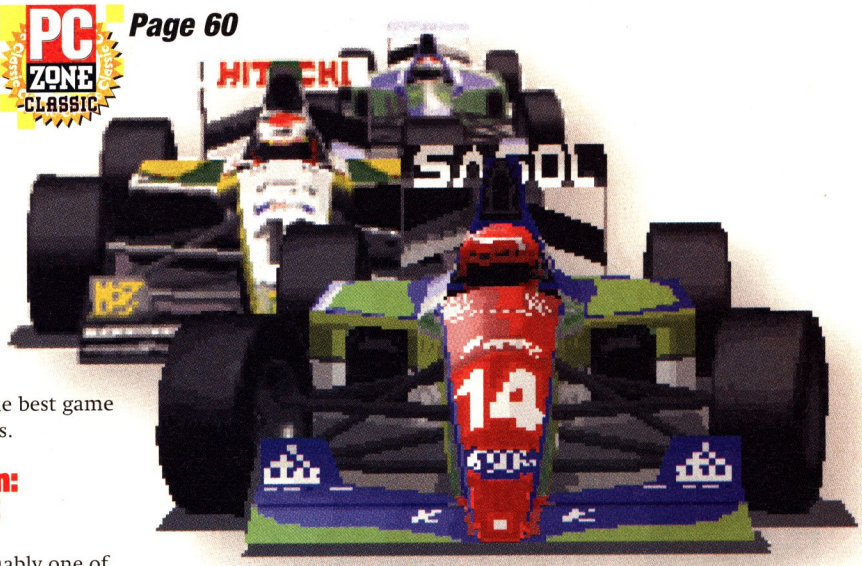


Page 56

Games Dir.ectory

Absolute Zero	56
Cadillacs & Dinosaurs	74
Civilization 2	50
Conqueror AD 1086	74
Descent 2	36
Dust	74
Emergency Room	74
Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2	54
Formula One Grand Prix 2	60
Indestructibles	35
Jane's: Longbow/ATF	45
Citizens – Backwater Affairs	30
NFL Pro League Football	75
Police Quest: SWAT	66
Rayman	58
Red Ghost	75
The Beast Within: Gabriel Knight 2	68
Time Commando	32
Time Gate	70
Torin's Passage	75
Virtual Snooker	42
Warcraft II	64
Wing Nuts	75

Page 60



Police Quest: SWAT 66

Daryl Gates makes a welcome return with what has to be the best game in the *Police Quest* series.

The Beast Within: Gabriel Knight 2 68

Gabriel Knight was arguably one of the best adventure games that Sierra ever produced, now we get a sequel with loads of FMV. Has the magic been spoilt?

Time Gate 70

From the team that brought you *Alone In The Dark* comes... something that looks remarkably like *Alone In The Dark*.

HARDWARE

NEC MultiSpin 4x4c 90

RA300 PC RadioReveal Card 91

Microsoft SideWinder 3D Pro 92

FEATURES

Lights, Camera... Action? 85

As more and more PC games feature 'real' actors and FMV we take a look at the impact on both the videogame and movie industries. Can this trend really continue? How long will it be before we see an interactive movie that can genuinely be described as good?

COMPETITIONS

Win! A Pentium PC with GT Interactive 28

REGULARS

Bulletin	10
Through the Keyhole	24
Pick n Mix	74
Budget Reviews	76
Subscriptions	78
PC Zone On-Line	80
Cybertwats	84
Troubleshooter	94
Back Issues	100
Buyers' Guide	102
WordProcessor	110
Culky Says	113
Mr Cursor	114

Absolute Zero 56

It's been what seems like an incredibly long time coming, but Domark's 3D polygon-fest is finally with us.

Rayman 58

The PlayStation platform game is ported to the PC, and it's actually faster. Ooh.

F1GP2 60

It's here. It's arrived. And it's totally brilliant. End of story.

Warcraft II 64

The follow-up to the classic strategy game blends orcs and elves with *Command & Conquer*. Cool.

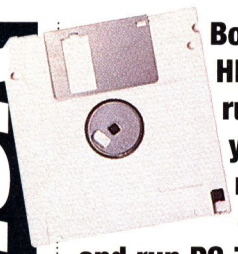
Page 68

Page 70

Page 58

C:\>Cover Disk

HD DISK



Both the demos on this month's HD disks run from DOS. If you're running Windows 95 shut down your machine and re-start in DOS mode. For *Advanced Civilisation* change over to your floppy drive and run PC ZONE.BAT. Once the game has unzipped to the chosen directory, run SETSOUND.EXE to set up your sound card and run ACIV.EXE to play the game.

The *C&C Editor* unzips to your chosen directory. Before you launch any of the .EXE files please read the README.1ST text file for detailed instructions and tutorials.

Advanced Civilisation (US Gold)

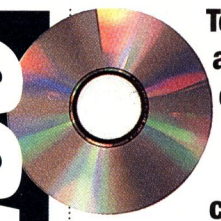
Following in the vein of the classic *Civilization*/god game genre, you must guide your populace and armies across the world to eventual domination and conquest. The mouse is all you need to control the icon-driven menu system at the bottom of the screen; you can also zoom in and out of the map to get a much better view of the proceedings and at the same time issue orders and objectives to your people.

This is a huge playable demo from Avalon Hill and US Gold that runs in glorious hi-res from DOS.

Command & Conquer Editor (Shareware)

This isn't for the faint-hearted PC user and looks very similar to the original *Doom* editors that appeared a couple of years ago. Whatever you do, please read the README.1ST text file before venturing into your *Command & Conquer* directory (after all, we don't want you to bugger up your game files and maps). Each of the executable .EXE files requires a command line parameter from the DOS prompt and each one has a different effect on the original files, so please be patient.

CD-ROM DISC



To access the amazing plethora of orgasmic playable demos on this *PC Zone* cover CD change to your CD-ROM drive and type <PCZONE>. The menu is easy to use and simply clicking on the icon of the demo you want to run with the left mouse button will launch the installer for it automatically. Just follow the on-screen instructions.

PLAYABLE DEMOS

Time Gate (Infogrames)

Using a somewhat enhanced *Alone In The Dark* game engine the guys and gals at Infogrames have collaborated on this new 3D epic time-travelling adventure. If you are already familiar with the *AITD* titles the control system and menus to control the lead character will feel like second nature – if not, read on.

The return key brings up the actions menu which allows you to flick between the different characters' various moods and action stances. They basically fall into two main categories: Explore and Action. Use the spacebar to operate and use objects you find lying around, and during fight mode hold down the <CTRL> and <ALT> keys; you'll find that tapping the arrow keys (that are used

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclosing your HD as proof of purchase and a cheque for a whole £1, and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (PCZ36), Electronic Publishing Unit, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London. W1P 7HJ

Your Details *(Please print clearly):*

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Post Code: .....

Please make cheques payable to:

DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd.

CDs from previous issues are also available.

Phone Miles between 10.30am and 5.30pm on: 0171-917 7693

for movement) will trigger a number of kicks, blocks and punches. Remember, if it moves, kick it in the nads!

Controls: Keyboard
Specifications: 8Mb

Conquest Of The New World (Interplay)

One of the biggest surprises in the US over Christmas was this little god game gem from Interplay. Not overly hyped, it must be said, but five minutes with this enormous playable demo and you will be hooked. Incredibly easy to get into, the basic point-and-click interface and simplistic menu system means you can concentrate on the gameplay and leave the logistics to the PC.

On the first screen you'll see a ship; guide it safely to the coast by clicking and dragging the left mouse button, or double-click on it to bring up the vessels option screen and select 'explore'. Once near the coast disembark your troops and send the explorers off to go and, er... explore. Use the settler to found the city and then the rest is up to you. Very similar to *Colonization* in concept but aided by incredible 3D hi-res maps and animation – a future hit among the god game squad.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 8Mb

Return Fire (Time Warner Interactive)

3DO owners simply screamed about this simplistic but addictive shoot 'em up from Time Warner Interactive, and it's not hard to see why. Make sure that you install the *Direct X* runtime application off the *PC Zone* cover disc before you attempt to launch the game, because that's what you need to get it running. Read the help file for details of the control keys and then start off with an easy one-player game before progressing onto the more difficult two-player version – team up with a mate and it's excellent! There's no need to set up your sound or any of that joystick business – it's all taken care of. Windows 95, eh? Isn't it great.

Controls: Keyboard
Specifications: 8Mb, Windows 95

Normality Inc. (Gremlin Interactive)

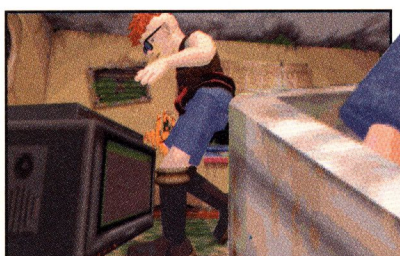
A huge demo from Tony Crowther and Gremlin and what has to be one of the most impressive 3D engines we've seen. *Normality Inc.* is a comedy point-and-click adventure, although not in the same vein as the LucasArts stuff – this approaches the genre from a completely new angle. In a first-person perspective you guide the hero around the various locations, and by using the right mouse button you can bring up the interactive menu. Click on the 3D objects to use or examine them and talk to the other characters you meet along the way – and check out the cut-scenes during the non-interactive sections of the demo.

Controls: Keyboard, mouse
Specifications: 8Mb

(Above left) *Time Gate:* Time-travelling in 3D.

(Above) *Absolute Zero:* Having a blast in space...

(Below) *Normality Inc.:* A comedy point-and-click adventure with a difference... (and no, we're not going to make any comments as to what he's holding!)



Absolute Zero (Domark)

You can't buy it in the shops just yet but give this demo a blast and check out Domark's impressive 3D engine in this latest Space-based blaster. Skim along the planet surface and target the incoming enemy; if the going gets a bit tough flick to the outside view. A splendid shooter, check out our review on page 56.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: 8Mb

Xenophage (US Gold, Apogee)

Apogee have been banging out some pretty impressive stuff recently and this is no exception. An excellent 3D beat 'em up, *Xenophage* is the latest in Apogee's impressive line-up for '96. Choose your character from the three available – but bear in mind that this is a public Beta version, which means that it's not quite finished.

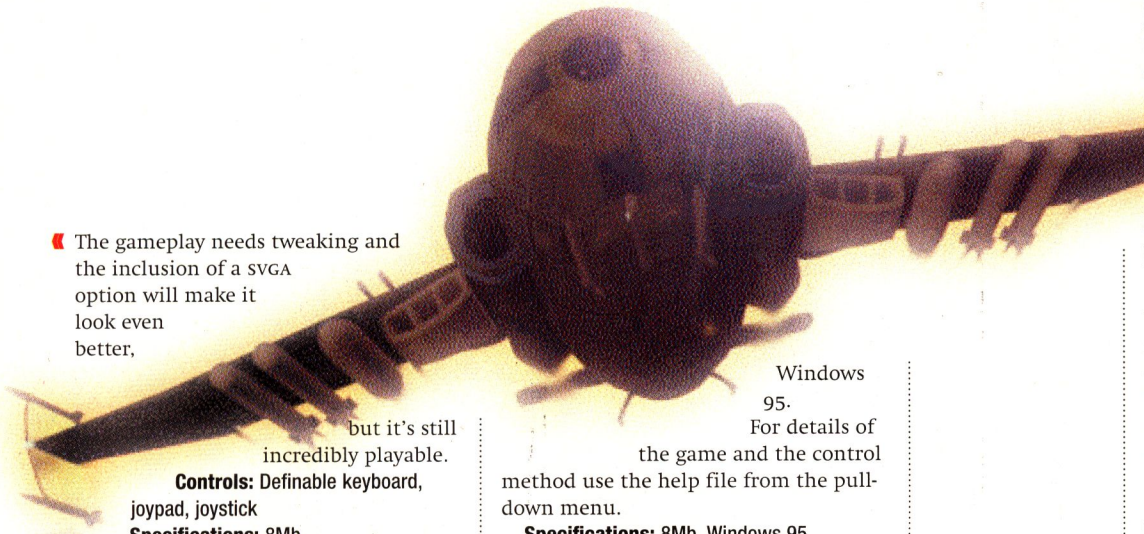
Help!

Is the CD playing up? Is the HD stuck in the drive? Is your PC driving you nuts? Well panic no longer, because help is at hand in the form of Miles Tudor. Just pick up the phone and call one of these two numbers:

0171-917 7693
or
0171-917 7692
Lines are open between 10.30am and 5.30 pm Monday - Friday

If you are calling either help line, please take note of the following points:

- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down any relevant info.
- Have as much relevant information to hand as possible, ie system spec, amount of ram and base memory in your machine etc. Also remember the nature of the fault and which month's issue the CD or disk came from.
- Ideally you should have your PC running and at hand when you call.



The gameplay needs tweaking and the inclusion of a SVGA option will make it look even better, but it's still incredibly playable.

Controls: Definable keyboard, joypad, joystick
Specifications: 8Mb

Advanced Civilisation (US Gold)

Please see the HD descriptions for instructions on running the game.

Command & Conquer Editor (Shareware)

See the HD Disk descriptions for instructions on running the game.

Rayman (UbiSoft)

This is without doubt one of the best PC platformers for a long time. Out first on the Sony PlayStation, this is further proof that the PC can pretty much do whatever the Sony dream machine can do – and more. Guide the little cutie hero around the Disney-esque landscape avoiding strange beasties and hazards. But do try not to spend too much time admiring the glorious scenery.

Controls: Joystick, gamepad, definable keys
Specifications: 8Mb

Pinball 95 (Maxis)

Well, what do you know? Amazingly, it's yet another flaming pinball game! But the difference here is the impressive sounds and ball physics running under Windows 95.

For details of the game and the control method use the help file from the pull-down menu.

Specifications: 8Mb, Windows 95

Battle Isle 3 (Blue Byte)

The biggest demo we've had for a bloody long time. This Windows-based strategy blast is one of the best examples of what you can do in a Windows environment if you know what you're doing. Use the mouse to position your units on the hex map and if you get stuck read the extensive help file on the disc.

Controls: Mouse
Specifications: Windows 3.*, 95

Direct X – Run-time (Microsoft)

The run-time version of the Windows 95 drivers you need to get the optimum performance from all the current software being written exclusively for the Windows 95 desktop.

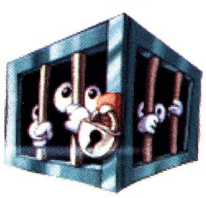
Specifications: Windows 95

Blender (Dennis Publishing)

A demo of the latest issue of the fully interactive disc-based magazine from the publishers of *PC Zone*, so it must be brilliant, right? Use the mouse to click your way through the features, videos, sounds and interviews that make up the best interactive magazine available. So you can't read it on the bog, who cares!

(Above) *Battle Isle 3:* Don't worry if you get stuck, there's a help file on the disc...

(Left) *Rayman:* Proof that you don't need arms to be cute.



Tech specs

Unless otherwise indicated the standard systems requirements for this month's software are as follows:

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2/66
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

This latest version came in at the last moment so you won't actually find it on the browser menu. Change to the \WINDOWS\BLENDER directory on your CD drive and double-click on the BLENDME.EXE file to run the demo.

Controls: Mouse

UTILITIES

Essentials

As always we've gathered together the essential utilities to make life that little bit easier.

Graphic Workshop for Windows: Image viewing and file conversion.
Winzip 6.0: Essential Windows front end for archiving files.
Winzip 95 6.0: As above for Windows 95 users.
Paint Shop Pro 3.11: Image editing and retouching.
QuickTime for Windows 2.03: View movies on your PC.
Video for Windows 1.1: View .AVI files with ease.
McAfee Anti-Virus: Shareware virus protection.
McAfee Anti-Virus 95: Virus protection for Windows 95 users.
Win32: 32-bit extensions for Windows 3.1 users.
WinG: Microsoft's graphic engine for Windows 3.1 users.
Direct X: The runtime version of the Windows 95 drivers you need to get the optimum performance from all the current software being written exclusively for the Windows 95 desktop.
Paint Shop Pro 3.12 '95: The ultimate shareware graphics package. This is the new 32-bit version for Windows 95.

Internet applications

VossNet: At least a week's free access to the Internet. This is the software you need to get on-line.
Ameol: Get on line to CIX with the best off-line reader around.
Ameol 95: As above, but for Windows 95 users.
WebEdit: HTML editor for anybody wanting to set a home page.
HotMetal: And another one!
Microsoft Internet Access: And another one too! (for *Word 6*)
Internet Decoding Application: UU, MIME, SHIP and BTOA Encoding/decoding. Essential for sending or receiving files over the Internet. Z

THE BIG MATCH

FIRST LEG - PC CD-ROM

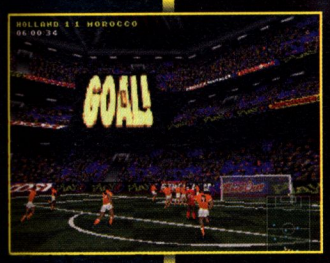
ACTUA VS FIFA

"Without doubt the best footie game on the PC... A real FIFA beater." **PC ZONE**

ACTUA 92% **FIFA 84%**

"Yes. Actua Soccer is better than FIFA 96." **PC ANSWERS**

ACTUA 91% **FIFA 88%**



"A slick, fluid footer sim which rides the challenge of FIFA, slotting it calmly in the corner." **PC GAMER**

ACTUA 83% **FIFA 79%**

"FIFA 96...is overshadowed by Actua Soccer. EA must by now be throwing darts at pictures of the Gremlin development team. Better luck next year!" **UFG**

ACTUA 89% **FIFA 82%**

"Beats FIFA 96 to the top of the league." **C&VG**

ACTUA 93% **FIFA 91%**

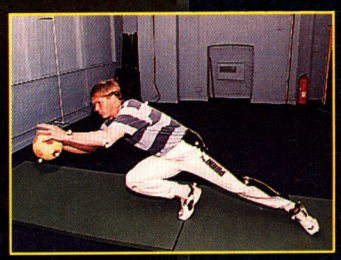
"Actua Soccer is better than FIFA 96 – FACT!" **GAMEPRO**

ACTUA 92% **FIFA 92%**

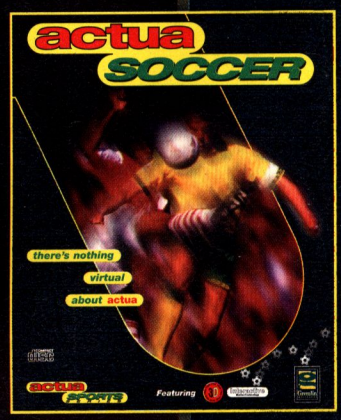
FINAL SCORE

ACTUA 6 FIFA 0

Featuring commentary by Barry Davies - the U.K.'s No1 sports commentator.



Real captured motion from top international footballers using Interactive Motion Technology.



SECOND LEG - PLAYSTATION

PC ZONE Classic

"Actua soccer is the most playable and realistic footy release on the PlayStation – and therefore the best... makes it's 32-bit footy peers look amateurish and shoddy"

GAME OF THE MONTH – 9/10 - SONYPRO

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BULLETIN

Quake lives!

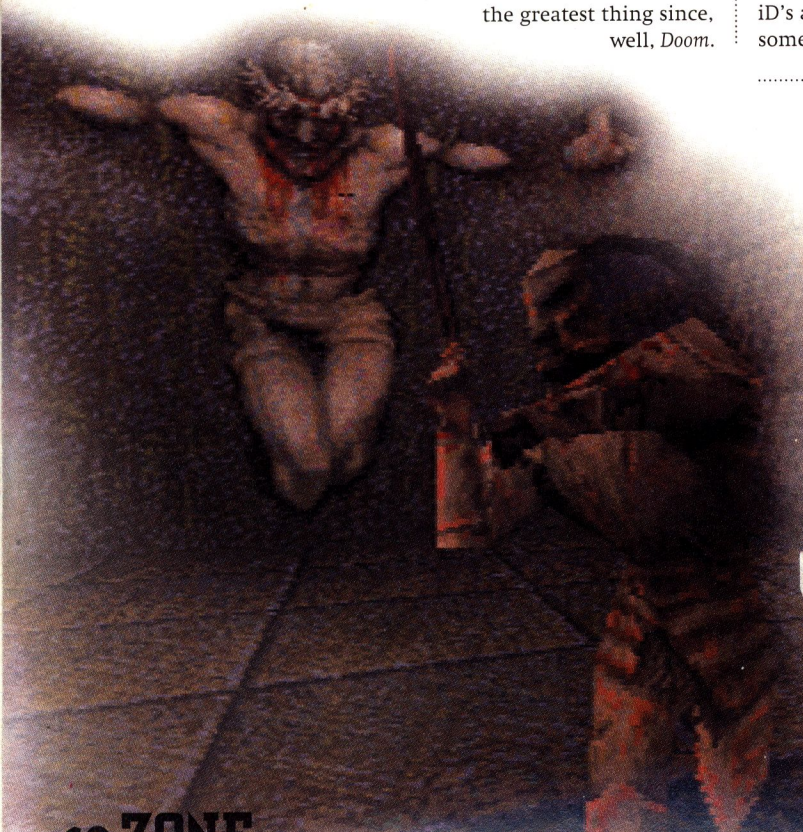
DESPITE RUMOURS TO THE CONTRARY *Quake* will be released later this year around June and will indeed be called *Quake*.

As reported in the February issue of *PC Zone*, after iD employee American McGhee went on-line to quash some of the rumours and answer some probing questions, the buzz on the Net was that the game had hit serious development problems and there was a copyright problem in Germany.

Apparently it's all sorted and everything's hunky-dory back at iD HQ. The copyright problem has been rectified and *Quake*, after undergoing a severe re-think, is back on schedule and will be the greatest thing since, well, *Doom*.

There's still no more information as to whether the game will feature rocket launchers and shotguns or hammers and maces and iD are remaining tight-lipped as far as the plot and characters are concerned. There is some good news however, in the shape of a fully-playable demo, which will be made available as shareware in the United States, and will be on just about every magazine cover CD come the Spring – approximately a month before the full version is released (allegedly).

As for the game featuring on the new BT Wireplay facility, we have to say it looks unlikely, as iD want to set up their own dial-in system in the UK and Europe or license it to a company who has the technology and facilities to do it for them. The main thrust of iD's argument is something along the lines of "Why should we let someone else (ie BT) make pots of money out of *Quake* when we did all the work?", which is fair enough. But there is hope, as the official launch of Wireplay is still some months away (coincidentally, around the same time that *Quake* is expected to hit the streets) and maybe (just maybe) BT will see the error of their ways and cut some sort of deal with iD so even more people can play *DeathMatch 2* – let's hope so!



COMPO ALERT!

Win! A super sexy high-speed modem so you can play DeathMatch 2!

Just to keep the bandwagon rolling and rumour-mongering fresh, we've decided to turn inventing stories about *Quake* into an art form by setting up a rumour competition in conjunction with the publishers of *Quake*, GT Interactive.

To win this rather super 28.8 baud modem in time to play *Quake* on-line, all you have to do is send in the wackiest, wildest, most ridiculously stupid rumour about *Quake* (no more than 100 words) along with your name and address to *PC Zone, Quake Compo, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.*

All entries must reach us by Friday 23 February, or alternatively you can fax us your rumour on 0171-436 1321 (but only before 10am and after 6pm please).

The jury will then argue a lot, strip down to the waist and have a fist fight over who the winner is; the person left standing will pick out the lucky person, which we'll print (of course!).

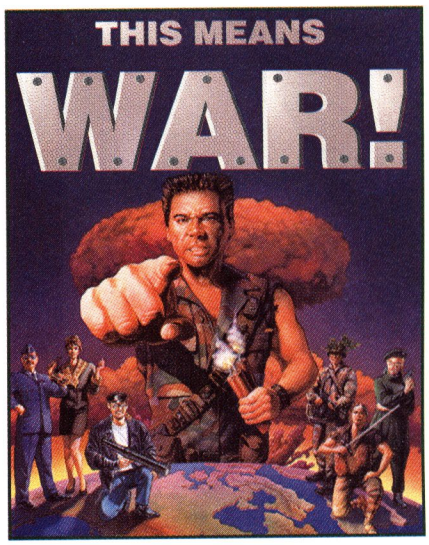
All usual restrictions apply, which means no one from Dennis Publishing, GT Interactive or iD (as if!) or their relatives are allowed to enter. So there! The Editor's decision – as always – is final.

No cash prize alternative will be offered.

WAR IS HELL!

IT'S YOU VERSUS THE WORLD - OR WHAT'S LEFT OF IT!

A hideously addictive computer game has infested the world's computers with a virus that has destroyed all power output and made all active nuclear reactors meltdown and explode. This is the Apocalypse that's the starting point for THIS MEANS WAR! MicroProse's latest all-action battle strategy game.

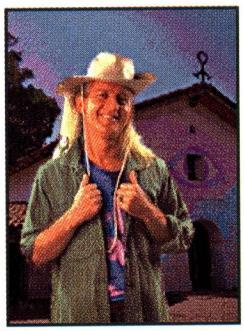


Played in easy-to-use Windows interface THIS MEANS WAR! has high quality 3-D isometric view graphics including the largest selection of objects to build and deploy ever seen in a game of this type. THIS MEANS WAR! is easy to control - which is just as well considering the amount of real-time action that takes place.

Get the logistics right and you can reduce the opposing Command Centre to rubble. Get the logistics wrong and you'll watch on helplessly as marines, heavy infantry, biker gangs, jet fighters, and hovercraft tanks tear into your HQ. We all know that 'War Is Hell' but THIS MEANS WAR! is one hell of a game.

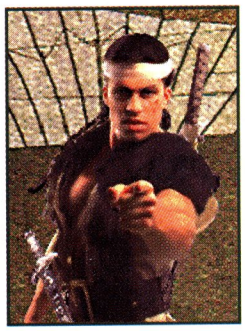
It's toy soldiers gone ballistic (yes, you even get ICBMs to deploy!)

At first, the game area is small with limited objectives. Orders come from Commander Clarke (at first quite severe but later on literally letting her hair down) - who keeps you informed of what's going on in the war; who's attacking or allying with who. She also gives you pointers on what to build next. But, watch out - her signal may be jammed by some of your opponents!



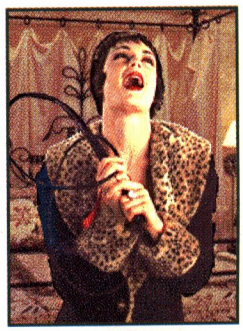
CROCODILE GHANDI

An absolute dictator of ancient biblical proportions and founder of the Church of Universal Siblinghood



MONDO KHAN

Styles himself on Genghis Khan. His army is strictly a mobile force with no central base



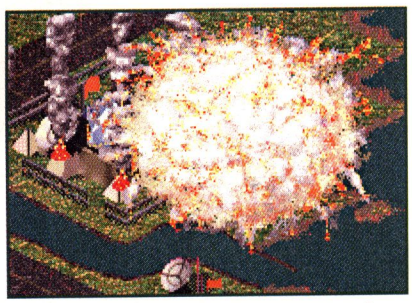
COUNTESS ANASTASIA ROMANOV

Possesses the tactical brilliance of Rommel and the personal habits of an alley cat

AVAILABLE IN WINDOWS™ FOR IBM PC COMPATIBLES WITH CD-ROM

You play the commander of the Free World Alliance who must battle against the likes of Crocodile Ghandi, Napolienne, Mondo Khan and many others.

Give orders to rows of soldiers, tanks, planes and helicopters; order engineers to build you bridges, barracks, bunkers and gun turrets.

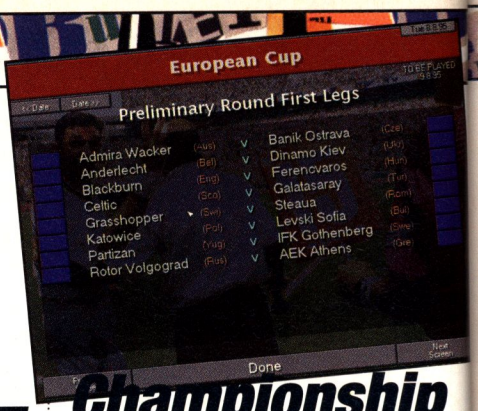


Create your own military industrial complex. Then take up arms to smash the strongholds of all who stand in your way to the musical background of original music or your own audio CD.

THIS MEANS WAR! IS ONE HELL OF A GAME

MICROPROSE

Spectrum HoloByte - MicroProse World Wide Web Site: http://www.microprose.com



(Right) *Championship Manager 2* – it gets better and better...

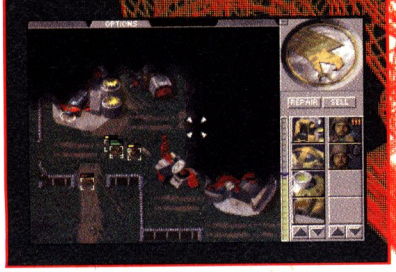
(Below) The full version of *Heretic* is here at long last!

« Dispatches

+++ Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!
Yawnula! *Z* from Time Warner has been delayed again and won't see the light of day until sometime in June. What the hell are we supposed to do now? We've all finished *Command & Conquer* and are desperate for another fix of high quality strategy action. Tell you what, instead of phoning up Time Warner and asking for 'more information' on the product, why not phone and tell them to bloody well hurry up. On your marks, get set... 0171-391 4300.

+++ Intel announce even faster chips
Just when you thought it was safe to upgrade to a 133MHz processor, Intel – the world's largest chip manufacturer – has announced the availability of 150-166MHz Pentium processors. Meaning that 100-120MHz speeds are now considered entry-level specs for new machines, the P166 is being targeted at people who predominantly use Windows 95 (not us, then) and is likely to be priced between £500-£750 when it hits these shores, any day now.

+++ Conkers all over the world
Proving that no publicity is bad publicity, Virgin have released the current sales figures for the stonkingly excellent wargame, *Command & Conquer*. Half a million units have been sold throughout Europe, despite the initial ban on advertising that followed posters depicting various historical luminaries (including Hitler, Jacques Chirac, General Ratko Mladic and Bosnian funster Radovan Karadzic) beneath a headline reading "Previous High Scores". Virgin VP Simon Jeffery commented: "We plan to repeat this performance many times in the coming years." However, whether he was referring to the sales figures or the advertising style was unclear...

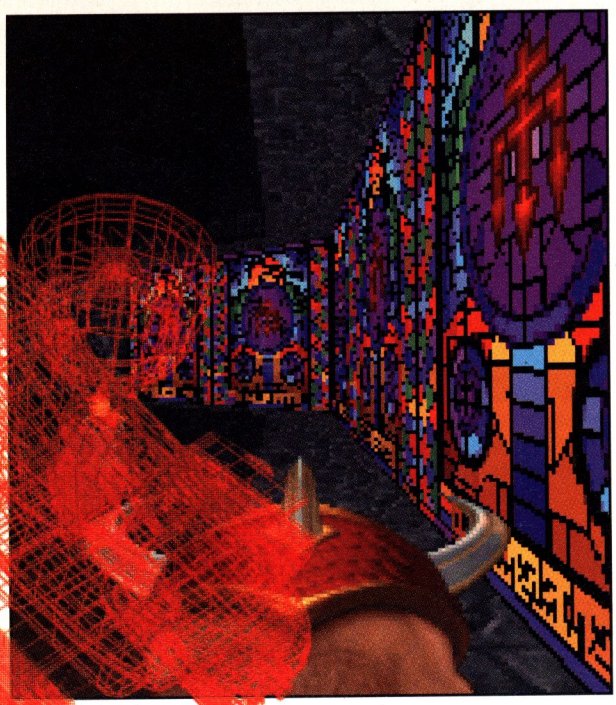


Heretic: Shadow of the Serpent Rider

FANS OF HERETIC WILL BE EXCEEDINGLY WELL-CHUFFED TO HEAR that the full version of iD and Ravensoft's *Heretic* is now available from retail outlets.

Heretic: Shadow Of The Serpent Rider features two brand new episodes (that's 18 massive new levels! Blimey!) – *The Ossuary* and *Stagnant Demense* – as well as the original episode found on the massively popular shareware version.

The new episodes are allegedly a lot tougher than those originally on shareware and there are also some tremendous multi-player levels to explore. Give GT Interactive a call on 0171-258 3856 should you want further details.



Championship Manager goes continental

Footie fans who are totally addicted to the tre-bloody-well-mendous *Championship Manager 2* can wave a big goodbye to their social life once more now that *Championship Manager German Leagues*, *Italian Leagues* and *French Leagues* are ready for release.

All the European variants are standalone products (and at just under twenty quid they are also a bit of a bargain), and feature all the league sides as well as key European teams. This means that you can indulge in some very cheeky transfer activity – in other words, keep Ince away from the English game forever and ever and force Dennis Wise to play for some second-rate German team.

And Domark also promise us that they are currently working hard on a patch disk for the original *Championship Manager 2* which will be out very soon; the floppy version of the game is also imminent. Contact Domark on 0181-780 2222 for more information.

Win! Win!

'Cos the chaps at Domark are so damn generous they've given *PC Zone* five sets of all the European *Championship Managers* to give away to five lucky, lucky readers. It's easy – all you have to do is answer the three questions below and send them in to us at *PC Zone, CM2 Compo, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ* to reach us by Friday 23 February. Your entry will be entered into our prize draw; the first five correct entries out of the hat will receive a copy of *CM2: German Leagues, CM2: Italian Leagues* and *CM2: French Leagues*.

1 Paul Ince plays for which Italian side?
A) Inter Milan B) AC Milan
C) Icecream Milan

2 David Platt left Italy to join which (tremendous) English club?
A) Arsenal B) Chelsea (pah!)
C) Man Utd (pah!)

3 Who missed the crucial penalty that saw Italy knocked out of the last World Cup?
A) Roberto Baggio B) Dino Baggio
C) Hand Baggio

All usual restrictions apply.

(Below) Save the world on your lean, mean, er, Vexoid machine.

(Bottom left) More fun with little people in B*attleground Gettysburg.*

(Bottom right) Okay, so *Return Fire* doesn't have the most amazing graphics you'll ever see, but it's great fun to play.

Dispatches

+++ Britain's top pirate arrested

Over £25 million of illegal software has been seized in a successful joint venture by police forces from Yorkshire and Cambridge, working in conjunction with FAST and ELSPA. The haul of pirated software was a result of 14 raids conducted across the UK; five arrests were made, including that of an unnamed individual who is said to have been the most sought-after software criminal for the past three years. Among the haul were over 600 gold (ie Beta) CD-ROMs, over 100 pirate compilations, thousands of HD disks, a large quantity of stolen PCs and two CD writers. Geoff Webster, CE of FAST, said of the raids: "Hopefully this will now open the doors to the centre of the illegal CD market, where money earned directly funds drug related and violent crimes."

+++ The Internet is catching up

December 15 saw the launch of the UK's first and (currently) only Internet radio station, Cyberville Radio, and from Easter onwards it will see the availability of at least four hours of new programming each day. Internet radio is a device whereby visitors simply click on a button at Cyberville's Website to hear an instantaneous broadcast which can then be put into the background while the surfer visits other sites (an activity described by Station Manager Robin Nixon as "Surf and Play" – thanks, another useless buzzword). Already having covered features such as *Penthouse* magazine's new Website, how McLaren design their fabulous racing cars, and interviews with Microsoft, Cyberville plan to continue with broadcasts covering the whole of the Internet and computing themes. Visit the site at: http://www.compulink.co.uk/~cyberville/welcome.html. We at *PC Zone* just have one thing to say: "Ever heard of the radio? It broadcasts twenty-four hours at a time."

+++ Arcade America

7th Level have just announced details of a new platform game for the PC which looks just a bit special in the graphics department.

Arcade America features over 10,000 cells of hand-drawn digitally inked and painted animation, ten different environments, 60 levels of difficulty and just about every other feature you'd expect from a platform game. We haven't seen the thing moving yet, but as the screenshot illustrates, it certainly seems to look the part.

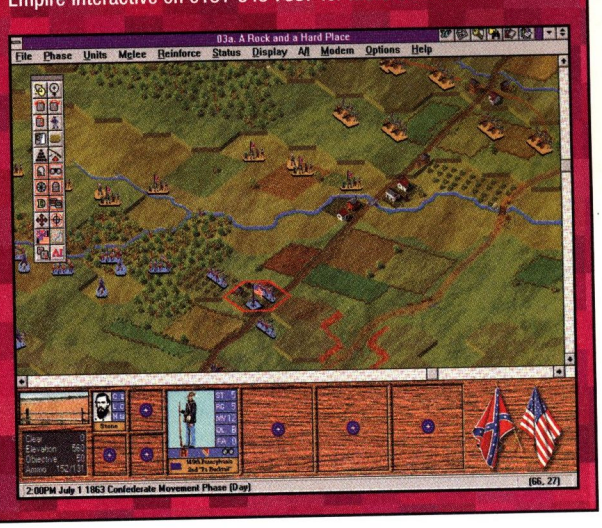
Arcade America is due for release at the end of February. Contact 7th Level on 01932 355666 for further details.

Scorching!

SCORCHER IS A FANTABULOUS NEW RACING GAME IN development at GT Interactive at the moment. Plot-wise it's the same old story: the world's in a bloody mess again and you've got to do something about it by, er, racing round and round lots of tracks. Apparently a race of warriors have cybernetically enhanced their bodies by welding their flesh to their vehicles. It sounds grim, but if you are to save the universe you must take the lead of the aforementioned warriors and "become one with your Vexoid machine". We saw the game running in the office and it looks absolutely amazing. *Scorcher* is being developed to run specifically under Windows 95 and it certainly shows: the gorgeous SVGA graphics belt along at a frightening rate and the whole thing runs smoother than a baby's rear bits. As if all this wasn't enough, it's even fun to play too. (Well, at least it kept John quiet for an hour or so.) We'll be bringing you more news on this PlayStation-beating wonder-product as soon as we get it, but in the meantime you can contact GT Interactive on 0171-258 3791.

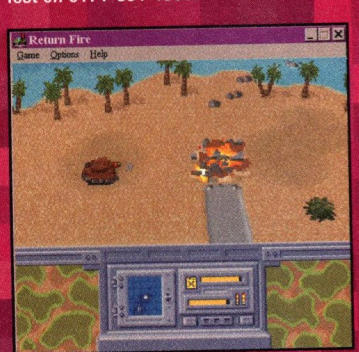
Battle moves to Gettysburg

Empire are about to release *Battleground Gettysburg*, the follow-up to their critically acclaimed *Battleground Ardennes* (which we raved about in our February issue). The game gives you the opportunity to lead either the Feds or the Rebs of Northern Virginia into battle and covers the three historical days between 1-3 July 1863. As was the case with the first title, *Gettysburg* has crystal clear hi-res graphics and all the features you could possibly want from a 'pretend soldiers' simulation. You can zoom in and out of the action as you progress, or if you're terminally sad you can use the traditional 2D; there's also a modem-to-modem feature so you can play against your mates. *Battleground Gettysburg* looks set to capitalise on the success of *Battleground Ardennes* and if you're really lucky we'll bring you a full review in our next issue. Call Empire Interactive on 0181-343 7337 for more details.



Return Fire update

The game that wowed 3DO owners is finally coming to the PC. *Return Fire* is a sort of *Capture The Flag* clone in which you jump into a tank, chase your opponent around the playing field, blow him up and then nick his flag. It's simple stuff but great fun to play – be warned because it really is very, very addictive. (But you don't have to just take our word for it – you can see for yourself by trying the fabbo demo on this months cover disc.) Yeah, we know we told you about this last month, so why are we repeating ourselves in this issue? Well, we've got a picture of it this time and er, we just felt like it, okay? Call those friendly bods at Time Warner to find out how you can get your hands on this rather lovely little fun-fest on 0171-391 4300.



Lance is back

REMEMBER MEGARACE? IT FEATURED LANCE Boyle, the cheesy game show host, and starred you sitting in lots of cars that drove themselves around various futuristic racing tracks. Well, *Megarace 2* is in development and fans of the first offering will be pleased to know that Lance is making a reappearance. Mindscape assure us that this time round you, the player, will be able to drive the cars – but you'll have to become adept at handling the different vehicles if you are to succeed. The theme hasn't changed: you still play a competitor on a futuristic game show in which you compete against other drivers for prizes (and money to beef your car up with). The game now has 3D-rendered vehicles and objects for more realism and more complex multi-laned multi-path tracks. The original looked like it could have been quite a laugh if there had been a bit more for the player to do, but as Mindscape appear to have sorted this out, the sequel should be well worth looking forward to when it's released in April.

Also in the great Mindscape melting pot is *Atripolis*, a moody adventure game set in the far and distant future. It all takes place in the city of Atripolis (funny that) which has had the misfortune to have been hit by a bloody great meteor and is quarantined off from the rest of the world as a result. A hundred years go by and still nobody know what's going on in Atripolis, though rumours are rife that the meteor brought some kind of alien life form with it. The stories are of course true, as you the player are about to discover.

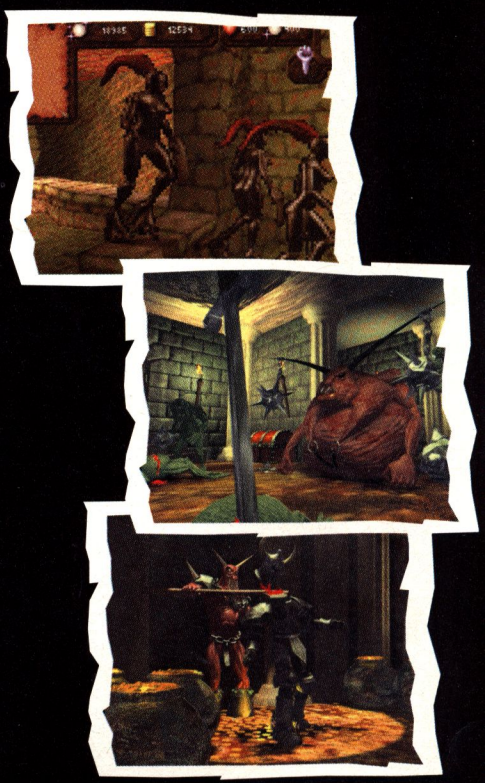
The Corp control everything in the city and decide you're too crap at everything to do any useful work, so they give you a big gun and tell you to run around shooting lots of aliens – cue you in a 3D isometric environment blasting the shit out of everything in sight. The game has over 600 locations covering three city districts for you to traverse and lots of people to meet and talk to. Call Mindscape for more details on 01444 246333.

(Above) *Megarace 2* has improved graphics and you even get to drive the cars yourself.

(Left) *Atripolis*. We have a sneaky suspicion this bit's from the intro.

3 malicious multiplayer modes:

Keeper *vs.* Heroes, Keeper *vs.* Keeper *and* Deathmatch.



DUNGEON KEEPER

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BULLFROG

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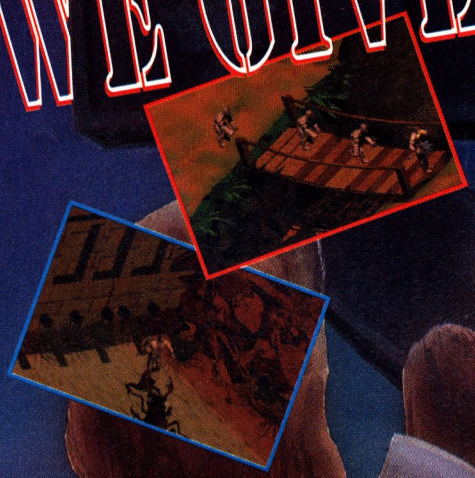

YOU DETERMINE THE STORY.

DEVELOPED BY

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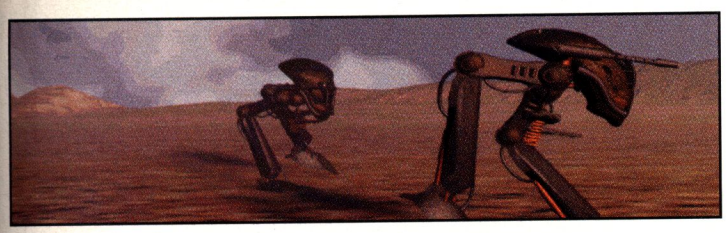


(Left) More world-saving malarkey in *Shattered Nations.*

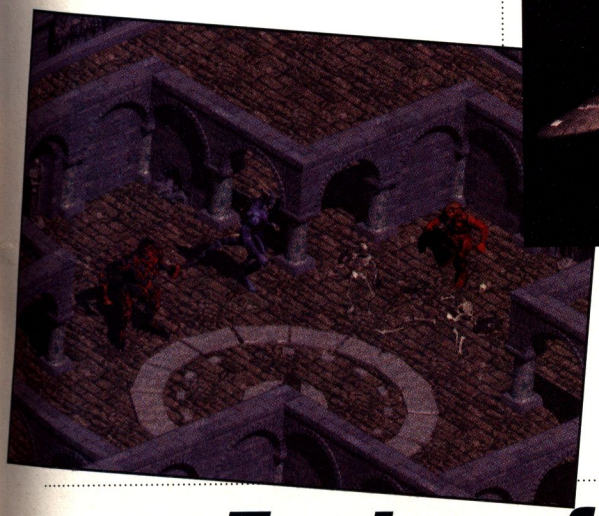
Three from Blizzard

BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT, THE COMPANY behind the impressive *Warcraft* games, are gearing up for the release of three new PC titles. First up is *Pax Imperia 2*, a space strategy simulation. (The first game in the series never made it on to the PC, but was a huge hit with Apple Mac owners.) From what we've seen of *Imperia 2*, it looks like Blizzard are attempting to create another *Civilization*-in-space game – it certainly looks very similar in terms of graphical style to other titles such as *Outpost* and *Ascendancy*. The main task for players will be the need to control research, diplomacy, exploration and economics as they attempt to build up their empire and become the envy of the galaxy (or something like that). *Pax Imperia 2* is set for a March release.

Also on the way from Blizzard is *Shattered Nations*, a futuristic strategy game in which the player must save the whole of humanity from extinction in a post-holocaust world. The focus is firmly on the multi-player aspect, with network, modem and direct-link options all supported.

Also in the works from Blizzard is *Diablo*, a rather cool-looking RPG set in a medieval village which is over-run by nasty types. In typical RPG fashion, the game involves beating up lots of people (hooray!) in order to increase your characters' experience. *Diablo's* graphics look very nice indeed – let's just hope that the gameplay's as impressive, eh?

Shattered Nations and *Diablo* will both be out sometime in the second quarter of this year, and naturally we'll be bringing you more info as we get it. For further details on any of these titles, call Zablac on 01626 332233.



(Above) *Pax Imperia 2* could be set to take over from where *Ascendancy* left off.

(Left) *Diablo:* 'RPG does not look shite' scandal.

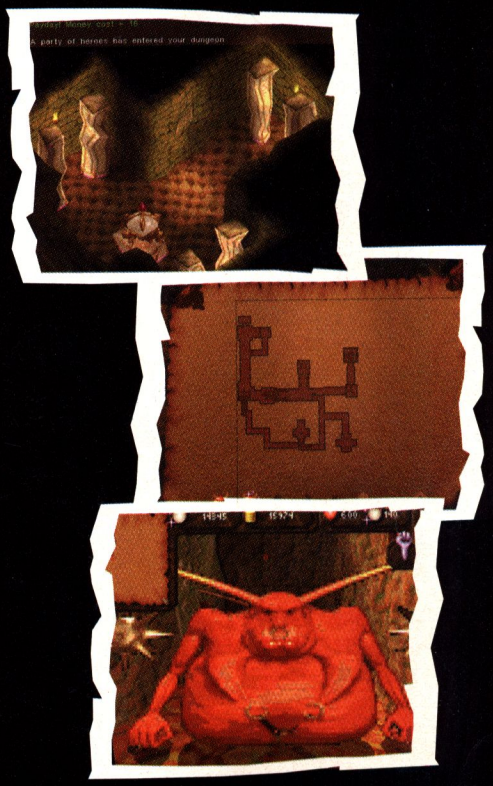
Fantasy frolics

Shannara, Legend Entertainment's latest adventure game will be based on Terry Brooks' fantasy novels. It has an original story set in the time period between the first two *Shannara* novels. Fans of the series will no doubt be delighted to know that many of the characters from the books will appear in the game. Legend say the game features "spectacular 3D animated sequences", an action-packed combat interface and over 30 speaking characters. An adventurer's journal will automatically record important events , and players will be able to add their own notes to this too. To get you perfectly in the mood for this spectacular fantasy-fest, Legend are giving away a copy of *The Sword Of Shannara* with every copy of the game. Give Virgin a call on 0171-368 2255 for the full gen.

(Above) Fantasy fun with *Shannara.* »

Build your own dungeon.

Control the action from 3 different views.



DUNGEON KEEPER

EVIL IS GOOD

BULLFROG

(Right) Yes! The '80s revival continues with style.

(Below right) There can be only one, so push off mate.

(Below left) Bizarreness reigns in the icy wastes.

Atari tries again

SOME PEOPLE SAY DEFENDER, SOME PEOPLE SAY *Galaxian*, but those with any taste say that the greatest game of the mid-'80s just had to be *Tempest*. *Tempest* was slick, stylish and, er, just plain addictive. Pioneering the use of 'webs' long, long before the Internet was even a small sparkle in the milkman of technology's eye, *Tempest* was without doubt responsible for most of today's twentysomething's appalling social inadequacies, as it continually proved to be the leading cause of disappearing lunch money, next to Biffa Briggs.

But why am I engaging in all this misty-eyed nostalgic waffle, you ask? It's quite simply that Atari have taken the original game, jiggered with it, pokered with it and generally brought-it-slap-bang-into-the-'90s and re-released it as *Tempest 2000* – the phenomenon returns. Intense speed (but then it would be on today's powerful machines) combined with psychedelic colour schemes and a thumping rave soundtrack have reinvested the original with all of the frills and frippery required to make it in today's gaming arena, while retaining all of the gameplay that made it so addictive in the first place.

Already receiving critical acclaim from all corners of the gaming press's globe, *Tempest 2000* contains hundreds of webs, all manner of power-ups and alien bad guys and is likely to be a major force in relaunching Atari's presence in the world of quality game design – a force that's being bolstered by a couple of other good-looking releases that's got eager journos clamouring for exclusives.

The first of these titles is the conversion of the Jaguar hit, *Highlander*. Rather than basing it on the cult film series with Sean 'Spaniard from Scotland' Connery or the even 'cultier' television episodes starring Adrian Paul, the game is licensed from the *animated* series (oddly enough it would seem that there are more incarnations of the *Highlander* concept across the various media than there are actual immortals in the storyline).

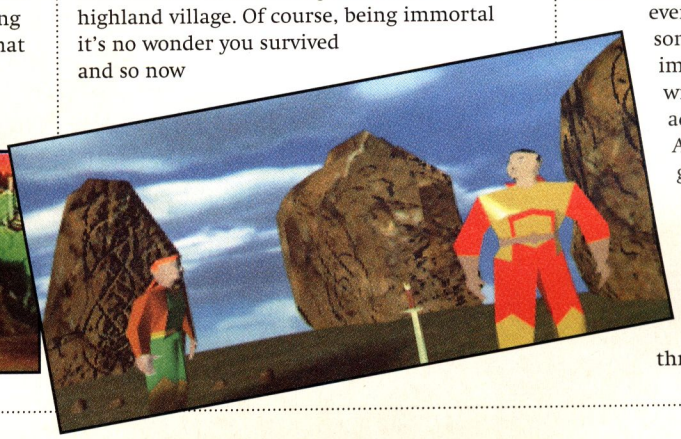
You are Quentin Macleod (brother of Connor and Duncan – it must be a hell of a family tree), lone survivor of a hunting raid on your highland village. Of course, being immortal it's no wonder you survived and so now you feel honour bound to get revenge and free your people from the bad guys.

Highlander appears to be a cross between *Alone In The Dark* (with good-looking polygon characters wandering around) and the *Dragon Lore*-style games (cast your mind back to the stunning rendered background and animated cut-scenes). It even contains clips from the cartoon series and looks certain to be one of the better titles in the next few months.

Also looking rather good is the conversion of another Jaguar game, *Attack Of The Mutant Penguins*. As bizarre as the title sounds, the plot is about an alien invasion force intent on capturing Earth via the Antarctic disguised as penguins. The real penguins have hired Rodney and Bernard, two intergalactic private eyes, to help them in their fight, although for some reason they've chosen to arm them with just a baseball bat and a frying pan.

AOTMP boasts over 120 levels of colourful cartoon-style levels, some of the cutest creatures ever to grace your screen (including some truly bizarre penguin Elvis impersonators), and gameplay that will make you tear your hair out in addicted frustration.

Atari's attack on the world of PC games certainly looks to be off to a strong start, and considering the company's track record for this type of design, things look encouraging for the future. Personally I'd just be happy with *Tempest 2000* and a large mug of coffee to see me through the night with it.



Silly Arthur King

(Below) Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries.

It's happened. It's finally happened. No more do we have to put up with mildly diverting screensavers, system sound effects and watching the video until the tape snaps. Now, at last, someone (namely 7th Level) has turned *Monty Python And The Holy Grail* into a game! Featuring all of the best moments from the film (as well as the worst), you'll find yourself playing things like *Spank The Virgin* and *Black Knight Pac Man*, as well as dealing with silly characters such as Tim the Enchanter and God.

The game contains plenty of Terry Gilliam's original filmed animation, loads of great video footage from the movie (as well as some never-before-seen out-takes), a moose and a whole new ending to the story as the player takes over the quest. Ensuring the authenticity of the game's content is talented ex-Python (now full-time voice-over artiste) Eric Idle, who is co-producing the whole affair.

Scheduled for a release in early autumn, you can obtain more information on *Monty Python And The Holy Grail* by plugging into the Internet and pointing your Web browsers towards: http://www.7thlevel.com. Or you can call 7th Level on 01932 355666.

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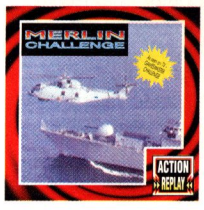

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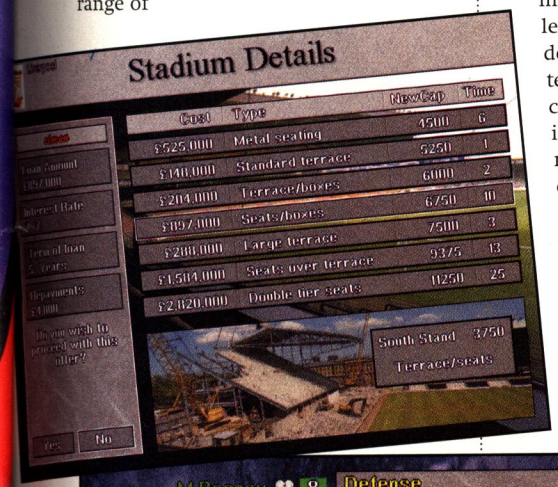
(Right) Tony Yeboah! The best thing to hit Leeds since the Luftwaffe.

The floodgates have opened

AND I HAVE TO SAY, WITH THE ARRIVAL of yet another football management sim comes the chance to really open the market to some new ideas and fresh play. (*Enough with the Motty impression – Ed.*) Sorry. *Football Masters* is the latest management sim to appear on the scene and from what we've seen so far, it looks like being one of the better ones. Having had time (six years in fact) to build up a reputation on the Atari ST and Amiga platforms, ESP Software have ensured that this is no mere port over of a once great game. Full SVGA graphics accompany actual player photographs as you try to form a winning side.

It's not just fancy looks though – *Football Masters* boasts an impressive range of options and features, including things like individual player performance bars during actual matches so that you can easily identify exactly who is and who isn't performing well mid-game, rather than having to judge it solely on a defence/midfield/attack attribute. More attention has been paid to providing the player with a comprehensive, yet friendly, interface for controlling the team's play during matches than in any other game we've seen to date.

Other nice features include a useful club scout (who can be ordered to seek out players that meet your personal needs rather than just having an overall skill rating. Need a defender who's handy with throw-ins? Send your man on the hunt), a full ten-year league and cup history so you can determine the merits of opposing teams right from the start, and a comprehensive list of tactics that include feeding your wingers, making space and playing the offside trap (take note, all you Arsenal fans out there). You can even send your players on a holiday at the expense of your choice, should you so desire. For more information you can give ESP Software a call on 01702 434600.



Higher and higher

Make way for *The Antagonizer!* Nope, it's not a brand new thigh muscle exercise machine advertised on the telly at 2.00am by some badly-dubbed German chick, but a new add-on disk for Virgin's incredibly good *Ascendancy*. So-called because instead of filling the game with new aliens, new planets, new missions, new inventions etc, etc, it increases the level of the pre-existing aliens so that now they're harder, quicker, smarter and more likely to declare war on you and your kind as soon as look at you.

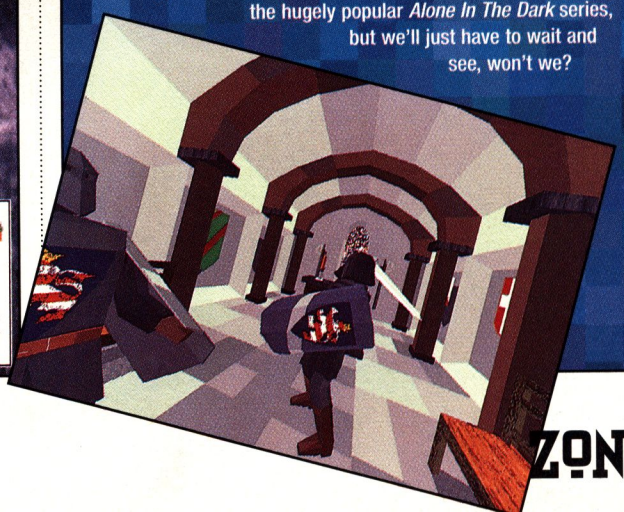
It works by altering the artificial intelligence so that neutral opponents get a slight edge in their technology levels, enabling them to build faster and be more cunning opponents in the diplomacy stakes; it also means that hostile opponents are made better in their industrial and research abilities. They just can't wait for you to put one foot wrong during negotiations to give them the excuse to steam in on a brutal invasion.

So what's this little package going to cost you then? Twenty smackers? Nope. £14.99? Guess again. Surely not a tenner? Surely not. Nope, *The Antagonizer* is yours for the princely sum of absolutely nothing. That's right, nada. All you have to do is download it from The Logic Factory's Website at: http://www.logicfactory.com and *The Antagonizer* challenge could soon be yours.

InCyberia in yer face!

PC Giants Escom have teamed up with VR Technologies GmBH to work on a new interactive virtual reality adventure game. *InCyberia* has been developed using the Superscape VRT virtual Reality authoring software and features totally superb 'in yer face' graphics for total submersion. The game is due for release at the end of the year, with new versions being released over the course of the next three years as new, high end technology becomes more readily available to the home user.

Unfortunately very little is known about the game as yet, though initial reports indicate that it will be a typical "let's walk around this medieval castle looking for clues and bashing other blokes" type affair. In other words, it sounds to us an awful lot like the hugely popular *Alone In The Dark* series, but we'll just have to wait and see, won't we?



Roger Zelazny
CHRONO
"It's a highly polished game that offers endless hours of brain teasing play. I loved it".
PC Review.
"Awesome graphics and sound effects create an atmospheric setting for a very unusual storyline".
Computer Life.
"Slick, smooth and engrossing. Adventure with attitude... how refreshing".
PC Review.
"Superb 3D rendered graphics create an atmospheric setting for this twisted tale of deceit and intrigue".
PC Review.
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Vand Jane Lindskold PRESENT

MASTER

Find yourself on a mission to re-start time itself

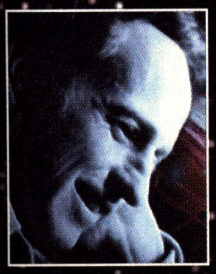
On a futuristic suburban street the night sky is backlit with explosions, the rumble of munitions is audible at a distance.

This is the final wipeout of Pasqua. An entire world raided and stripped of its wealth, its citizens killed or sold into slavery.

The perpetrators seek immunity from justice through the purchase of new identities and the creation of fabulous new universes.

Korda, the Chronomaster, has a mission to find them.

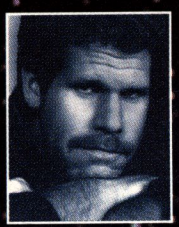
In this groundbreaking graphic adventure, find yourself on a quest in worlds where time has stopped and science and magic co-exist.



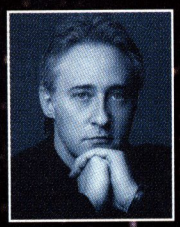
Roger Zelazny

Is one of the premier science fiction writers of his generation. During his career he has won six Hugos and three Nebulas as well as an array of other major awards in the field. His Novella "The Last Defender of Camelot" was adapted by George R.R. Martin as an episode of the new Twilight Zone.

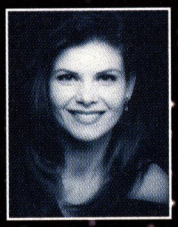
Featuring the voices of:



Ron Perlman ("Beauty & The Beast") as "KORDA, the CHRONOMASTER"



Brent Spiner ("Star Trek: The Next Generation") as "MILO"



Lolita Davidovich ("Intersection") as "JESTER"

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Mr Cursor

He's afraid of... rules

OKAY. NO BEATING ABOUT THE BUSH this month. Read what it says above, as that's what I'm going to talk about for the whole page. I'm afraid of rules. And that's that.

Let's look at some 'big' rules first – the Ten Commandments seem like a good place to start. How about this one: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ox.' Hmmm. Well, my neighbour hasn't *got* an ox, as it happens. Obvious joke, I know – and besides, a Christian will scream at this point: "Don't be stupid, ox means fridge, ox means wallpaper, ox means car!" And so it may, so it may. But seeing as how I've never spoken to my neighbours, well... sod knows what their fridge is like. Or their wallpaper. And the only reason to covet their car – an S-reg Datsun Sunny – is that, er, well, there isn't a reason. But I digress. Back to one more commandment, though: 'Thou shalt not kill.' Good in theory, but when you actually think about it, what about Noel Edmonds? Nick Berry? David Copperfield? Vanessa Phelps? Michael Portillo? Enya? Gary Bushell? Naomi Campbell?

Rules. Rules, rules, rules.

And take a game I recently liberated from the *PC Zone* cupboard. *(You what? – Ed.)* I was after a simple poker sim so that I could get some practice in for a forthcoming mega-session against some serious gambling chums (we all agree that the rules for poker are okay, by the way). However, the only computer card game I could find was *Cribbage*. You've probably heard of it – but do you know what the rules are? I do, or at least I do now, and frankly I'm totally appalled at their stupidity. I couldn't possibly even begin to explain them, given the room, but I can tell you this much: the damn things were invented by some tosspot English 'nobleman' in the 17th century. He was obviously so rich and influential that people took note. They grovelled and accepted, blinkers firmly in place, that his idea was a good one. And you know how it is with these things, eh? As long as the first bunch of people follow along, so will everyone else. It just kind of spreads out, through the generations, a bit like a slow motion atomic 'obedience' explosion.

Therefore Cribbage is still played. Rules. God exists, is white, and has a beard. Rules. Road tax, rather than petrol tax. Rules. Full motion video, instead of games. Rules. Rules, bloody rules, bloody rules.

I think it's time to make up some rules myself. Here goes...

Rule One: Hens should be reclassified as vegetables, meaning everybody can be a vegetarian.

Rule Two: All beat 'em up games should contain at least one character who is able to talk things through logically and amicably with his opponent.

Rule Three: The fire brigade should be made to merge with the ambulance service: fire engines would tow special 'hospital' caravans.

Rule Four: Ceefax and Teletext should be allotted more airwave data space so they turn into 'proper' TV channels... meaning nobody would have to fork out for cable or satellite.

Rule Five: The Triathalon (truly ridiculous rules: running, swimming, then cycling) should be taken further, culminating in The Octathalon, a sport that everyone could play. All the participants of an Octathalon (ie the entire population of the country) would have to (1) wake up in the morning, (2) telephone their workplace in a strained voice, outlining a fictional malaise, (3) go back to sleep again until ten-thirtyish, (4) watch loads of TV: *Richard and Judy, Home and Away,* a *Columbo* rerun, *ChuckleVision* and finally *Oprah Winfrey* or *Rikki Lake,* (5) go to the pub for a few hours, (6) go to an Indian restaurant and enjoy a delicious slap-up vegetarian meal such as chicken korma with nan bread and seven lagers, (7) return home virtually unconscious, and (8) actually become unconscious. (Just in case you hadn't realised, the Octathalon is a three day event.)

Rule Six: It should be compulsory for all the members of the public in the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* to announce exactly how much *they* reckon their offerings are worth, before the expert gives his or her valuation.

Rule Seven: People over the age of 50 should be legally obliged to fill in a Driving Licence Extension form every three years. Questions asked would be as follows: 'Do you wear a hat?' and 'Do you stop at amber traffic lights?'. That sort of stuff.

Rule Eight: Pedestrians, like drivers, should be licenced. The test, taken every five years, would have to include an extensive 'street crossing' section. It would be like the Green Cross Code, but with the added commands of 'run if necessary' and 'the centre of the road is a safe area, so use it'. No more need for pelican crossings. Naturally the disabled and the elderly would be exempt from all this, having their very own special crossing points at five mile intervals. Actually no, make that eight mile intervals. Er, twelve perhaps.

Rule Nine: Every dodgy computer game should carry a warning similar to the health ones you find on cigarette packs. Something like *'Warning: Of Dubious Quality'* should do it.

Rule Ten: Spook! Rule ten already. As I started with the ten commandments, maybe this would be a good place to wrap things up. Rule Ten, then.

Er, hang on... I've just glanced back through all the rules and spotted something wrong with Rule Six, so here's an addendum: the problem with Rule Six is that the *Antiques Roadshow* punters would be likely to massively undervalue their belongings in an attempt to avoid this potentially embarrassing scenario...

Punter: "I paid £950 for it, but I reckon it's worth three grand!"

Expert: "You're optimistic! It's actually worth nothing, you loser."

So cue an additional *The Price Is Right* style rule: if the punter guesses the estimated price to within a 10 per cent margin, he or she wins a generous cash prize, which – and here's the clincher – is directly proportional to the actual value of the piece. Good, eh? Tempting them to guess up rather than down? Like pitching pride against profit?

Mind you, I've just spotted a small flaw in that rule as well, but maybe you haven't, so I'll shut up. **Z**

(Above) Ever fancied a stint on a homicide squad? Well, here's your big chance.

Product details

Developer: 3 Prong Plug/Friendly Software Corp
Publisher: Grolier Electronic Publishing
Telephone: 0181-600 6023
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: March

Terror T.R.A.X. (Trace Research Analyze and Exterminate) is a fast-moving FMV adventure in *The X-Files* mould on its way from developers Ground Zero. It may not feature the sexually frustrated Scully and Mulder, but players do get to interact with a digital ghost known as Ether who will help guide you through the city in your hunt for vampires and the undead. It's an interactive movie, filled with 'classic' performances from out-of-work actors and some excruciating special effects.

What more can be said, except that it's probably the ideal game if you're under house arrest, your telly's blown up and you've already washed your hair – or you're of American parentage.

Coming soon...

But that's not it, not by a long shot. Also due out in the second half of the year is *Battleships Of Stone*. This is a first-person 3D strategy sim that requires you to build and manage a mediaeval castle and then defend it from attack. Once you've built it, you can wander around and manage your force as the battle progresses – it's best described as a sort of *Dungeon Keeper*.

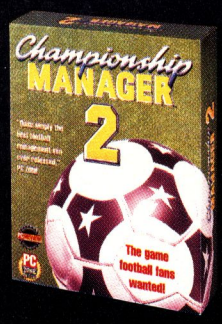
Also pretty promising is *Battle Of The Ironclads*, a historically accurate strategy simulation based on the American Civil War. And finally there's *Banzai Bugs!* – more fly sim than flight sim – which has you buzzing over hill and dale looking for food, while avoiding insecticide sprays and other bugs. The game features a very fast 3D engine that allows for complete 360 degree freedom and can be played over a network or as a single-player game. It's an original idea to say the least – but then from what we've seen so far, 'Original' could well be Grolier's middle name. Z

Take the Championship MANAGER 2 Challenge

Turn to page 39

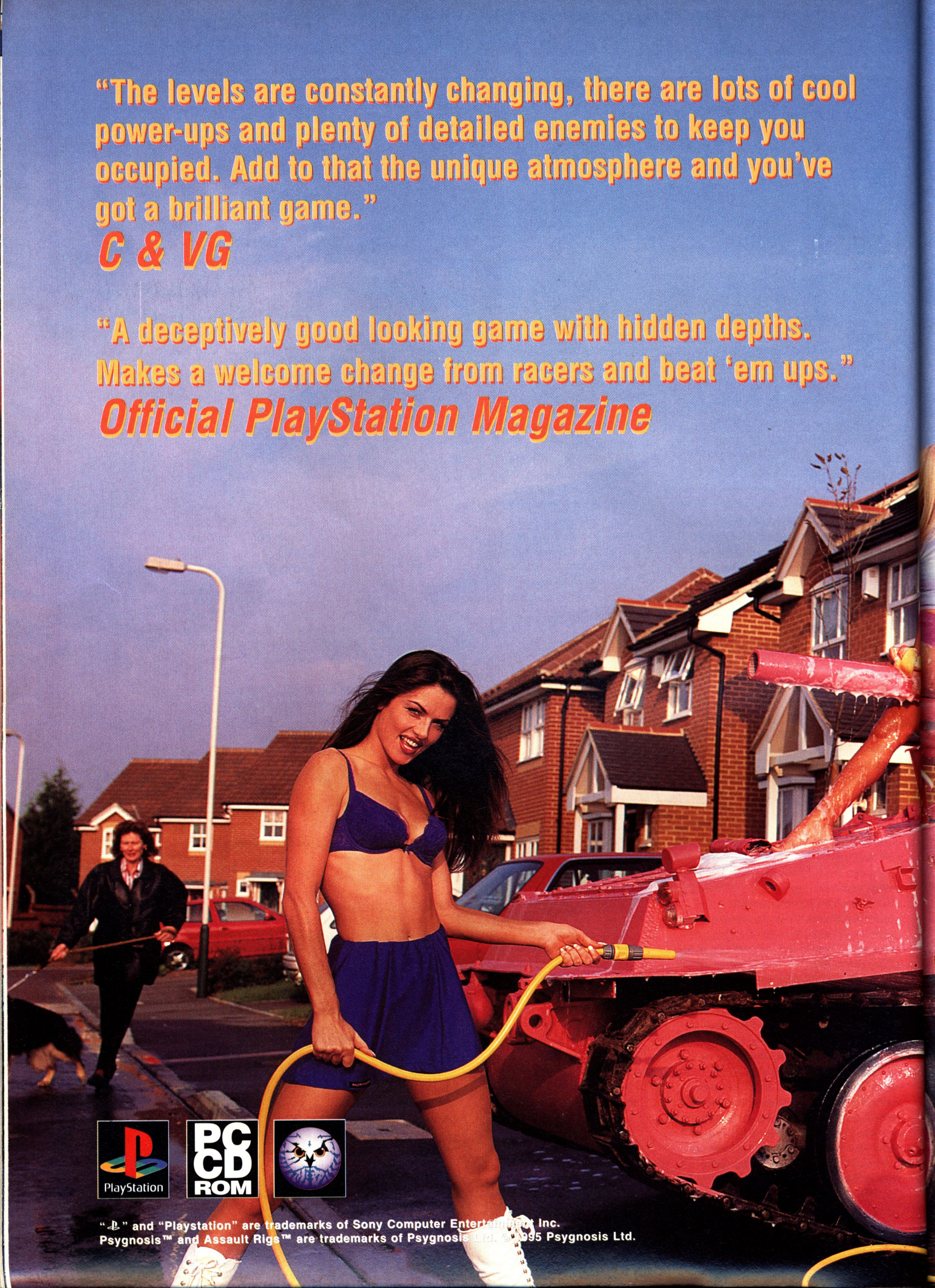
It couldn't be simpler.
Just turn to page 39, name all 16 managers on a postcard, then send it in to the address below.
Mark your envelope/postcard 'CHAMP MAN CHALLENGE'.

First correct entry pulled from the hat on March 8th, wins a copy of Championship Manager 2 PLUS all foreign league disks (as shown on page 39).



'CHAMP MAN CHALLENGE'
Domark Software Limited,
Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road,
Putney, London SW15 1PR.

DOMARK


"The levels are constantly changing, there are lots of cool power-ups and plenty of detailed enemies to keep you occupied. Add to that the unique atmosphere and you've got a brilliant game."
C & VG
"A deceptively good looking game with hidden depths. Makes a welcome change from racers and beat 'em ups."
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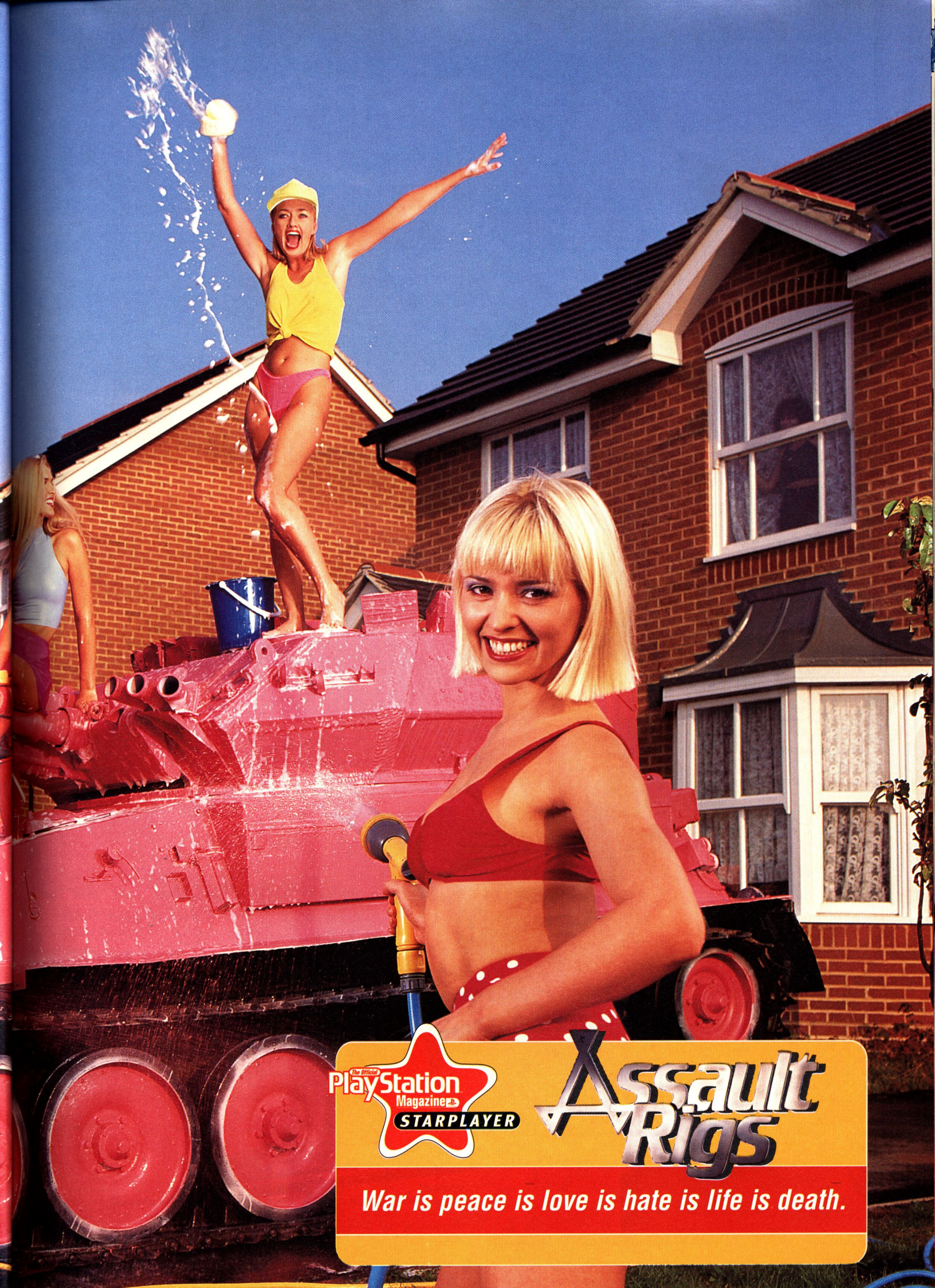

The Official PlayStation Magazine
STARPLAYER
Assault Rigs
War is peace is love is hate is life is death.

WIN! WIN! WIN!

YOUR VERY OWN SUPER-DOOPER FABBY DELL P75 COMPUTER WITH GT INTERACTIVE

Get your hands on a splendid new PC with all the trimmings. Having trouble running the latest games? Well, this could be the answer to your dreams thanks to GT Interactive.

Because of the imminent launch of Millennium's *DefCon 5*, GT Interactive are getting really rather excited. So excited in fact that we have somehow managed to get them to agree to give away (yes, give away) a brand spanking new PC to the lucky winner of our competition. It's not just any old PC either though – for those of you that may be interested, the machine in question is a Dell P75 Dimension with 16MB of RAM, an 850MB hard drive, 16-bit sound card and 15-inch monitor. It's a veritable monster of computing power and no doubt throbs with power when you turn it on. Small villages in the outer Hebrides will almost certainly lose power for a while the moment you hit the beast's 'on' button.

So what do you have to do to win this behemoth of computing power? Just answer the questions below and send your completed entry coupon to:

DefCon 5 Compo
PC Zone
19 Bolsover Street
London
W1P 7HJ

to reach us by Friday 23 February 1996.

FIRST PRIZE:
A monster P75 Dell Dimension PC
A copy of Windows 95
A copy of DefCon 5

TEN RUNNERS-UP PRIZES:
A copy of DefCon 5

DEFCON 5

1 What does DefCon actually stand for?
☐ Defence Condition ☐ Defence Contact ☐ Deferred Contact

2 Who have developed DefCon 5?
☐ Bullfrog ☐ iD Software ☐ Millennium Interactive

3 If you add all of the numbers together that are relevant to our First Prize, what total do you get?
☐ 222 ☐ 1072 ☐ 796

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

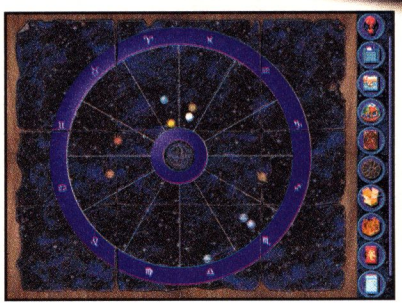
..... Postcode: .....

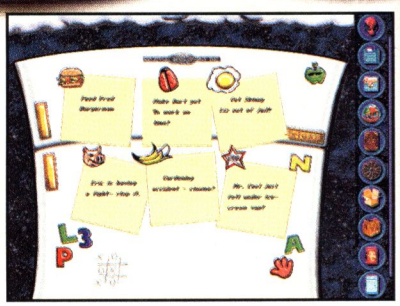
All usual restrictions apply. No cash for prizes option. Nothing for a pair either – not in this game! So there!

Citizens – Backwater Affairs

IN PRODUCTION

Having narrowly missed the hosting gig on TV's *Blind Date* (apparently his voice wasn't shrill enough), Paul Presley tries his hand at being a virtual cupid.





LOVE. AHHHH. INNIT GRAND? WAKING up next to that special someone who means more to you than life itself. Knowing that you'll never be starved for company for as long as you live. Buying bouquets of flowers in the middle of the day for no apparent reason. Having tattoos in private places just to show how much you care. Ain't being in love wonderful?

Well, no it ain't. Love is just a huge marketing ploy, invented by chocolate manufacturers to boost sales. Sorry folks, love's no more than a biological imbalance of chemicals that at best leaves you feeling nauseous and at worst leaves you feeling totally gutted, an empty hollow shell of a man with less self esteem than a spider with only five legs and a penchant for spinning polyester. *(Have you been dumped recently Paul, by any chance? – Ed.)* This love stuff's not easy; I don't wish to talk about it.

(Above far right) The Celestial Fridge Door – because even gods fancy the occasional nibble.

(Below, left) You've got just one year to sort all the problems out and make everyone into model citizens.

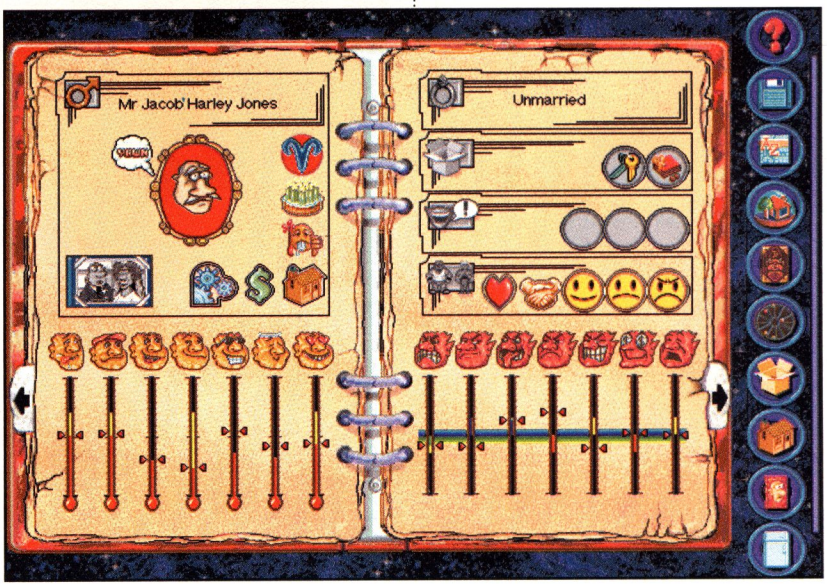
(Below, centre) Mr. Jacob Harley-Jones. A loner. Voted 'Most Likely to Butcher a Small Village'. Looks like you need to cheer him up...

But then emotions have never been easy to deal with, in any of their forms. So here to help out is the latest god sim from MicroProse, *Citizens – Backwater Affairs* (the project formerly known as *Little People*), a game that sees you trying to interfere with the day to day running of the inhabitants of the town of Backwater by messing with people's feelings.

A love-ly concept

The story has it that a godly society known as the Celestial Development Inc. ("Bespoke realities for the material age") developed Backwater purely as an experiment into how 'goodness' and 'free will' affect a modern society – but proving just how hard it is to 'play god', something went wrong somewhere along the line and 'nastiness' and other such negative emotions were introduced, with the result that things have gone more than a little bit pear-shaped. With the day of judgement fast approaching, the governing board decided to bring in a freelance operative to take charge of the whole project and go down with the sinking ship. And where do you fit in to all this? Say hello, Captain.

Time's not on your side though – you have just one year to take the problems, crisis and emotional entanglements of Backwater and turn it into the very model of a harmonious paradise. Think you're up to the challenge? Does Cilla shit in the woods?



(Left) Sounds like a decent kind of bloke. Maybe I should transfer to the other side?

Love in the afternoon

Originally designed by Jim Bambra, a man more accustomed to the freedom of tabletop role-playing games than the confining spaces of computer titles, and developed by Mark James (responsible for the ground-breaking but emotion-free *Gunship 2000*), *Citizens – Backwater Affairs* is presented mainly in the form of a cartoon *Syndicate*-style isometric perspective, following the little people around their artificially-created world. It's like one of those ant farm projects science teachers give you in American schools – observe, influence in slight ways, sit back and watch everything slowly go wrong and die. Maybe I ought to cheer up. (*It'd be an idea – Ed.*)

The governing angels of CDI will issue commands via the Celestial Fridge Door: orders such as influencing a certain individual's emotional state, arranging a fight between two people or shooting your little Eros arrows into a couples' posteriors in order to introduce that mischievous spirit known as love into their lives. All of which gives the game a kind of *Sim Soap Opera* feel to it, as you watch the everyday troubles of others with a sort of voyeuristic pleasure.

Naturally this interference isn't as easy as simply manifesting yourself in the physical world, pointing your finger at a couple of citizens and saying, "You two! Love! Fall in Naaaawwwww!". You can only influence people by clicking on various individuals and adjusting their emotional state, sending them little presents and changing their environmental habitats.

Love and war

But wouldn't you know it, things can't go smoothly... instead things go horribly wrong. Strolling around Backwater are creatures known as imps – there are seven different types representing the seven deadly sins, and where they roam, naughtiness tends to follow. Imps cause the citizens to behave in certain ways, so it's essential that you make sure they don't interfere with your own plans or gain too much influence making the folks unalterable. To help you combat them you have angels, who are sort of reverse imps that can directly ambush the malevolent creatures.

Don't go in thinking that you can predict when and where the imps will strike, what commands you'll be told to perform and how your little people will behave based on previous games, though. Everything is totally random each time you start, all the plot lines are randomly assigned and all the citizens are randomly generated. The key word, folks, is random.

Citizens – Backwater Projects looks like being the next in the current breed of 'fun' god sims (following on from the likes of *Theme Park* and *Sim Town*) and with the inclusion of such soap opera-style antics, it looks like being just as addictive as the semi-real things. Z

(Bottom left) Despite being nothing but mere bunkum and mumbo-jumbo in real life (it's official), horoscopes play an important part in determining the life-plans for your citizens.

(Bottom) Playing matchmaker is fun (for you, anyway) and here you get the chance to send anonymous presents to some of your little people in the hope of brightening their day. Alternatively you could just make the sun shine with your environment controls.

Product details

Developer: MicroProse
Publisher: MicroProse
Telephone: 01454 326532
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: June/July

Sim soap suggestions

NEIGHBOURS
Enjoy all the high drama of life in everyone's favourite Ramsey Street from a unique perspective. Taking control of a virtual Analise (steady, boys!), your task is to methodically seduce every male in Erinsborough while ensuring that your clothing at no time reveals any actual skin. Bonus points are awarded for wearing skin-tight bodysuits, white cotton halter tops and kimonos. The game ends if you find yourself getting married to the priestly Mark instead of riding around on Sam's Harley-Davidson. (Special bonus sub-game! Control Anne Haddy in the bath!)

EASTENDERS
Enjoy all the high drama of life in everyone's favourite inner city hell. Games include *Arthur's Allotment Aggro* (control the tedious old geezer as he fights the other denizens of the allotments in a *Virtua Fighter*-style beat 'em up. See if you can perform Arthur's secret 'Break down in tears at the end' death-move!). Then there's *Sim Queen Vic*, a fully-working pub management simulator. Keep the beer stock high, the violence low, have as many affairs as possible with Sharon the busty barmaid and try to ensure that none of your staff release any more Christmas pop hits.

BROOKSIDE
Enjoy all the high drama of life in everyone's favourite scouse suburb as you take control of a crazed Anna Friel in this *Doom*-style game. Go on a berserk maniacal rampage with your chainsaw and kitchen knives, killing as many men as you can manage while staying one step ahead of the law. Safety can only be found at the Patio Of Protection, where you'll need to stock up on as many innocent pleas as possible to beat the final guardians – the cacolesbian of death and the evil cyber-Sinbad!

EMMERDALE
Enjoy all the high drama of life on everyone's favourite rural farm. Put your hands up a cow's bottom... (*That's enough sim soaps – Ed.*)

(Above) The viewpoint changes all the time for maximum dramatic effect – and it works beautifully.

Time Commando

Ladies and gentlemen, a big hand for Adeline Software. First they brought us the magical *Little Big Adventure.* And now, for their next trick... well, just ask Charlie Brooker.

Product details

Developer: Adeline

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: June

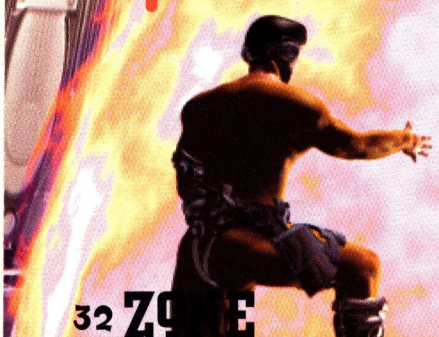
TIME TRAVEL. IT'S A WONDERFUL idea. The ultimate freedom of movement – the ability to visit whichever particular time zone takes your fancy. To whisk yourself away to the Jurassic era and watch gigantic, snarling reptiles playing 'Tag'. To plunge headfirst into an authentic Roman orgy, rolling about amid oily tufts of hair, vast slicks of stale wine, and the odd gladiator's helmet. To pirouette frantically backward to the eve of the previous week's lottery draw, safe in the knowledge that your 'lucky numbers' are set to make you one of the nation's richest, small-minded, buck-loving low-lifes.

Or, in the case of *Time Commando,* to ricochet maniacally through a dizzying carnival of generations, getting into fight after fight. You play the part of an impressively chesty hero, provisionally named 'Stan' (see panel), who's hurtling forwards through time. Don't ask me why: it's something to do with a sort of 'Time Tunnel' contraption that he's gone and fallen in or something. Anyhow, for whatever reason, Stan is forced to complete a perilous journey through the history of mankind, from the prehistoric age up to the present day (and possibly beyond), starting out with only his fists and his steel-jawed determination for company. And if there's a single lesson that Stan will learn from all of this, it's that no matter which particular age you visit, you're inevitably going to run into *someone* who's looking for a scrap.

The game itself, while still quite a long way from completion, is already looking very smart indeed. Anyone who's played Adeline's excellent *Little Big Adventure* will instantly recognise the style of some of the characters and animation, although here they're both larger and more detailed. Furthermore, you're not limited to a fixed point isometric view – in *Time Commando* the viewpoint is continually shifting: zooming in and out, framing the action from the most dramatic angle... and not in a jump-cut, *Alone In The Dark* fashion, but in a silky smooth big-budget movie kind of way. Yet despite all these wonderful visual shenanigans, the animation remains delightfully fluid throughout. This has been achieved through a genuinely original marriage of pre-rendered video animation (spooled from the CD), and polygon-tastic stuff done on the fly by your humble PC. The FMV supplies the terrain, your processor delivers the characters that strut through it.

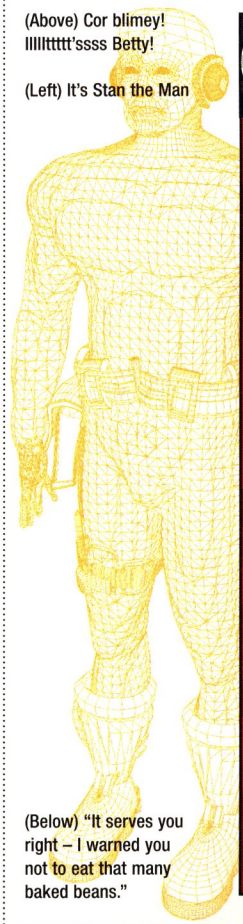
Hold on, that doesn't sound very original...

Pish-posh. Listen, will you? You may be haunted by memories of other FMV/real-time-sprite get-togethers (such as



(Above) Cor blimey! Illlllttttt'ssss Betty!

(Left) It's Stan the Man



(Below) "It serves you right – I warned you not to eat that many baked beans."

Stan Dabby Dozy

As I mentioned earlier, *Time Commando* is still quite a way from completion, but it's already obvious that this is one to look out for. We were only able to play one working level (itself still in the process of being tweaked): the opening Prehistoric vaunt. And lo, there was much peril. Grizzly cavemen (and women) beating Stan with their furry fists. A wonderfully designed and animated sabre-toothed tiger springing out of a cave and going gnash-crazy. Rocks for throwing at people, clubs for bludgeoning people... it's all here. And when you bear in mind that this is just level one, and that each level has a distinctly different theme (depending on the time zone), you can see that it's unlikely to become tedious very quickly. If at all.

It's rapidly becoming a cliché to point out that the French have got an impressive track record when it comes to producing original, quality PC games. But on this evidence, it's going to be a cliché you'll hear even more in the future. *Time Commando* is due out in early summer. Try not to drool. **Z**

Other famous Stans

Since our friends at Electronic Arts haven't released many details regarding *Time Commando's* storyline, and since nothing fills up a bit of spare space like a glib, throwaway panel type thing such as this, here's a list of all the other famous people called Stan that I can think of right now:

* Stan Laurel (the perpetually blubbing sidekick to testy old Oliver Hardy)
* Stan Boardman (a monumentally dreadful waste of a teaspoon of semen)
* Stan(ley) Baxter (another comedian)
* Stan(ley) Kubrick (goddamn – I'm running out of Stans already)
* Stan, stan, stan, stan, stan, stan, stan, stan, sausage, beans, and stan
* Stan Dan Deliver

Oh bollocks to this, it's an abysmal idea. Let's just fill this whole box with a load of empty space, eh? *(No. You got yourself into this mess, you can get yourself out of it – Ed.)*

Oh Christ... all right then... um...

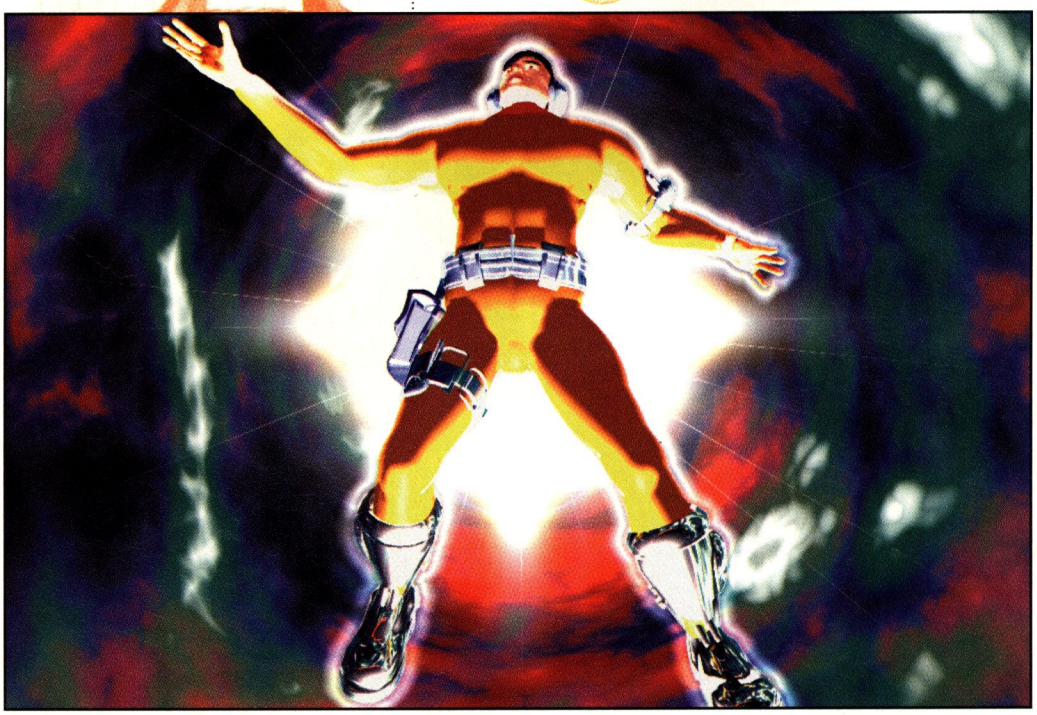
* Harry Dean STANton

(That doesn't count, and he's not famous enough anyway. You're an arse, and a fired arse at that – Ed.)

the execrable *Novastorm* et al), but *Time Commando* really *is* different. The background may well be pre-rendered, but by 'eck you'll know it's really there. You can stand on ledges, your path becomes blocked by fallen trees, enemies leap out from behind things (and then come and attack you, of course)... it all behaves as it should. Don't worry about it. All you have to know is this: it looks incredible – bloody incredible – for reasons that are an absolute bastard to describe.

The gameplay is an absolute bastard to describe too: it mixes elements of not only the aforementioned *LBA* and *AITD*, but also *Prince Of Persia* (or any other platform game you care to mention) and... erm... *Final Fight*. Yes, that's right; *Time Commando* is a three-dimensional scrolling platform beat 'em up arcade adventure game – a veritable genre soup, in fact. Stan can walk, jump, skip from side to side, punch, kick, and use whatever weapons he chances upon (sounds rather like an excerpt from my CV) in order to reach the end of each level.

Since our mate Stan comes under attack every couple of seconds, this is somewhat handy. And as if the endless, maniacal assaults from complete strangers aren't quite enough to make Stan's quest seem particularly daring, there's always the good ol' traditional platform game 'obstacles of peril' to fall back on – things that swing from side to side, things that fall on you, things you have to jump over, etc, etc. There's enough going on here to keep any arcade game fan happy. Or indeed, just about anyone else.



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Would you kill for your country?

PC ZONE

***Apache Longbow** from Digital Integration is widely regarded as the most realistic helicopter combat simulation on the market. Having said this though, it's bloody complicated, so here's a keyboard template to help you out!*

[	LEFT MFD FUNCTION	]	RIGHT MFD FUNCTION
SHIFT + [	PREVIOUS LEFT MFD FCTN	SHIFT +]	PREVIOUS RIGHT MFD FCTN
TAB	TIME COMPRESSION	CTRL + TAB	CANCEL TIME COMPRESSION

	PILOT FRONT VIEW	GUNNER FRONT VIEW	LOOK LEFT

LOOK RIGHT	APACHE EXTERNAL VIEW	WEAPON VIEW	WEAPON TARGET VIEW

TARGET LOCK VIEW	REMOTE VIEW	SPECTATOR VIEW	

+ CTRL END MISSION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	-	+	DEL
COLLECTIVE 10%	COLLECTIVE 20%	COLLECTIVE 30%	COLLECTIVE 40%	COLLECTIVE 50%	COLLECTIVE 60%	COLLECTIVE 70%	COLLECTIVE 80%	COLLECTIVE 90%	COLLECTIVE 100%		PREVIOUS TARGET	NEXT TARGET

APACHE LONGBOW

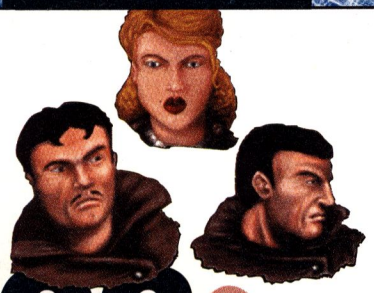
This keyboard template has been created by *PC Zone* for purchasers of the game *Apache Longbow*, published by Digital Integration. It is not approved or endorsed in any way by Digital Integration.
All rights recognised.

A	S	D	F	G	H	J	K	L	;	'	Q	W	E	ENTER
COLLECTIVE DOWN	HYDRA PODS DOWN	TRANS RECON DATA	RELEASE FLARE	RADAR RANGE	HELMET TRACKING		TACTICAL DISPLAY RANGE	LOCK/UNLOCK TARGET			COLLECTIVE UP	HYDRA PODS UP	ECM ON/OFF	ARM WEAPON

Z	X	C	V	B	N	M	SPACEBAR	,	.	R	U	T	O
TAIL ROTOR LEFT	TAIL ROTOR LEFT	RELEASE CHAFF	PNVS ON/OFF	BRAKES	NEXT WAYPOINT	RADAR TARGET PRIORITY	FIRE	MAP ZOOM IN	MAP ZOOM OUT	RADAR MODE	RADAR UPDATE	TADS MODE ON/OFF	AUTO HOVER

DIARY

In the latest of our reports from the front line of the games industry, Sean Cooper updates his diary on the production of *Indestructibles*.

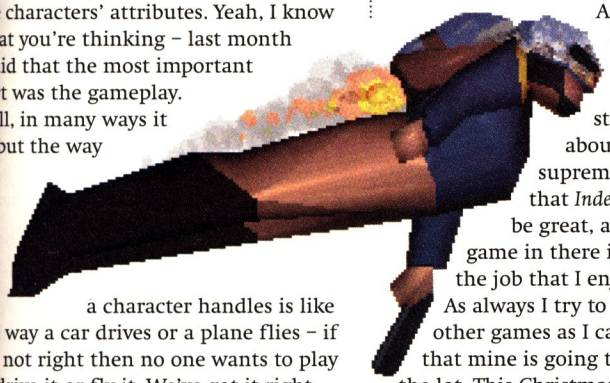


Part Two

Indestructibles

THE PAST MONTH HAS BEEN WEIRD. When you're starting out on the development of a game it's important sometimes just to get your head down and work – and that's exactly what I've been doing since I wrote last month's *Indestructibles* diary. The strange part is that it was only when I started writing to you all again that I realised we've done a helluva lot on the game over this past month.

The most significant thing we've done is to sort out the characters' movement. In my opinion this has to be the most important aspect of it all, along with the characters' attributes. Yeah, I know what you're thinking – last month I said that the most important part was the gameplay. Well, in many ways it is, but the way a character handles is like the way a car drives or a plane flies – if it's not right then no one wants to play it, drive it or fly it. We've got it right now, though, which means that we can move on to other tasks.



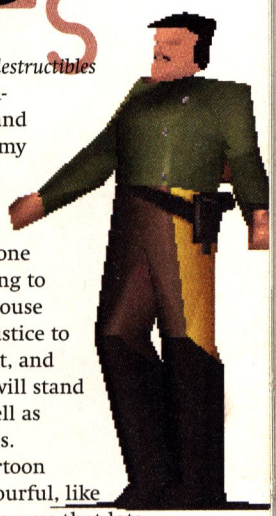
The other problem area that we've tackled is linking all of the modules together, getting the graphics up and running, and making sure that the sound functions. Neither the graphics nor the sound are final at the moment, of course, but at least when we have something new we can put it in and see how it works. This will happen loads of times before we're happy with what we've got, but at least we have the means to try stuff out now. To use a slightly outdated seasonal analogy we've got the Christmas tree, now we have to start to decorate it.

Game in!

Our next task is to put the game in. After last month's diary I am sure that everyone realises how strongly I feel about this – I am supremely confident that *Indestructibles* will be great, and getting the game in there is the part of the job that I enjoy most.

As always I try to play as many other games as I can, to make sure that mine is going to be the best of the lot. This Christmas was different to normal, dominated by a football title – *FIFA '96*. The movement of the players and overall polish are outstanding, but I know that *Indestructibles* can definitely top it in these areas.

(Top right) Sean wants *Indestructibles* to be just as colourful as the *Spiderman* comics... we reckon it looks promising so far.



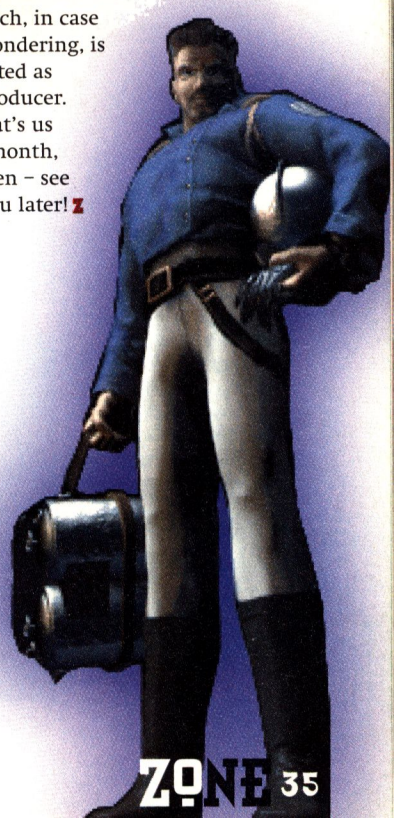
A unique aspect of *Indestructibles* will be its use of cartoon-animated introduction and link sequences. I've had my fill of rendered bits, and the only other option would normally be FMV – and that's being overdone too. We're currently trying to find a good animation house who will be able to do justice to the *Indestructibles* concept, and produce a cartoon that will stand up in its own right as well as making up the cut-scenes.

In style, I want the cartoon sequences to be very colourful, like the *Spiderman* comics. It seems that lots of games at the moment are very dark – but I want the open, bright feel of *Magic Carpet*. As well as the cartoon intro and link sequences, the player will be able to produce their own comic book using scenes from the game, which they can then print out via their PC... a tall order? Yeah, but I think we can do it.

Obviously this means a great deal of work for us, and so we have an new addition to our team to take care of the comic book side. His name is Andy Nuttall – he's enthusiastic and keen, and as an ex-journalist he has the writing skills needed for the job, which, in case you were wondering, is officially listed as Assistant Producer.

Right, that's us until next month, then – see you later! Z

(Below left and right) As you can see, the graphics have really started coming together since Part One of the diary last month.



IN PRODUCTION

1996 could well turn out to be the year of the sequel. John Davison takes a look at the follow-up to Interplay's big hit of 1995.

Descent 2

Product details

Developer: Parallax

Publisher: Interplay

Telephone: 01628 423666

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: March

DESCENT WAS GOING TO TAKE OVER the world when it was released a year ago. I have a surprisingly vivid memory of one of those ever-so-sad, drunken conversations in a pub (that we very rarely have – okay, you might not be all that inclined to believe it, but with the price of beer being what it is, *PC Zone* is actually a very puritanical institution) with a bloke from another magazine that basically went along the lines of: "Ya shee that *Descent* (hic) thingy from Interwotnots (hic), well (long pause)... it's bloody well better than *Doom* it is. Honest. It's gonna (hic) take over the world it is. Besht game ever, really is."

This lengthy, slurred and increasingly intellectual conversation then went on to a heated discussion about the relative merits of virtual reality sex and eight-player multi-something-or-others before moving on to the more admirable subject of how incredibly gorgeous the girl behind the bar was. "She fancies you, she does... go on, ask her (hic) for her phone number or sumfink. I'll give y'tenner if you ask her out."

Doom beater?

Anyway... While it didn't exactly take over the world, *Descent* was certainly one of the most popular games of 1995. It obviously didn't quite have the oomph possessed in abundance by *Doom* and its many minions, but it was one of the few products that managed to stay 'current' for longer than a month or so. People continued to play it mainly due to the fact that a) you could produce brand new levels for it with the aid of the most complicated designer ever devised and b) it had a killer multi-player mode. In fact, so popular was the multi-player element that for six months it managed to be one of the most played games on the Internet.

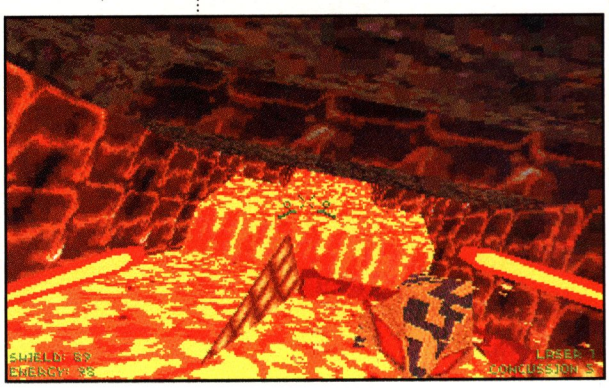
With all of this in mind, it's hardly surprising that a sequel has been on the cards for some time. The rumours originally began to circulate soon after the first game was released, but Parallax (the developers) have been beavering away in relative silence until now. After seeing a few screenshots just a couple of months ago we are now in a position where the whole thing is virtually finished and it's on its way at last.

So what's all the fuss about?

Put simply, the idea behind *Descent 2* is to do basically the same thing all over again, only this time to make it better. The marketing campaign for the game appears to be centred around the fact that *Descent 2* is (and I quote): "Deeper, Smarter, Faster!" (The exclamation mark is important.) Fair enough. If you're going to do a sequel, that's pretty much as good an excuse as you could want. So similar is the idea that the team haven't really bothered to dream up a new storyline either.

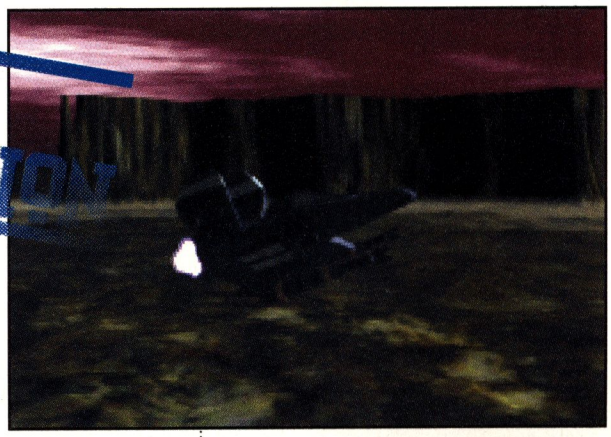
When you start the game you are greeted with a message that effectively says, "Okay, now you've got to do what you did last time all over again, only this time we've spruced your ship up a bit and given you some new guns." Oh well. It worked with *Doom*, didn't it?

What has been significantly tweaked though is the overall presentation of the thing. The in-game graphics are very similar in style to those of the first, but you now have a choice of graphics modes that range from 320x200 up to 800x600 (for which you need a TurboNutterNinjaBastard™ PC), all of which are supposed to run much more efficiently due to the implementation of a vastly enhanced 3D engine. Though superficially the game looks extremely



(Right) Superficially at least, the game looks pretty similar to *Descent*... you're still flying around tunnels, and the colours are still pretty garish.

IN PRODUCTION

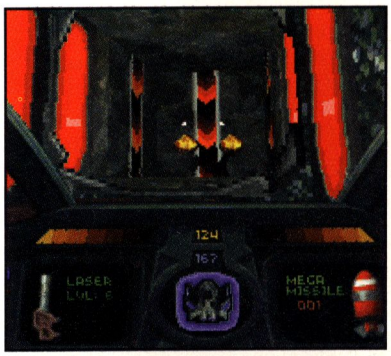


similar to *Descent* (as you'd expect) it does run markedly faster on lower spec machines. On top of this, *Descent 2* now features reams and reams of cut-scenes that all look really fab and groovesome. Obviously these don't do anything for the gameplay, but they do fill the CD up rather nicely.

Speaking of filling up the CD nicely, the soundtrack has been given a serious kick in the goolies as well. Gone are the drab, dreary, boring SoundBlaster tunes, and in their place there's now proper music which is spooled in from the CD. But not only is it 'proper', it's been produced by a couple of metal bands that, ooh, maybe two or three of you might have heard of. First up we have Skinny Puppy... no? Never heard of 'em? And then there's Type O Negative, who are infamous for both their rather raucous music and their frontman, Pete Steele, who recently appeared in an issue of *PlayGirl* only to complain that he wasn't allowed to be photographed with an erection. Quite what relevance this last bit has to you I don't know, but hey... it gives you an idea of the sort of person we're dealing with. A man who wants his knob photographed. Bet you can't wait now, can you?

(Above left) The new tunnels are far more twisty and turny than those in the first game.

(Above) The rendered stuff is all very lovely and goes some way to filling up the CD!



"Descent 2 *runs markedly faster on lower spec machines, features groovesome cut scenes and replaces those dreary old SoundBlaster tunes with proper music.*"

And now for something completely different...

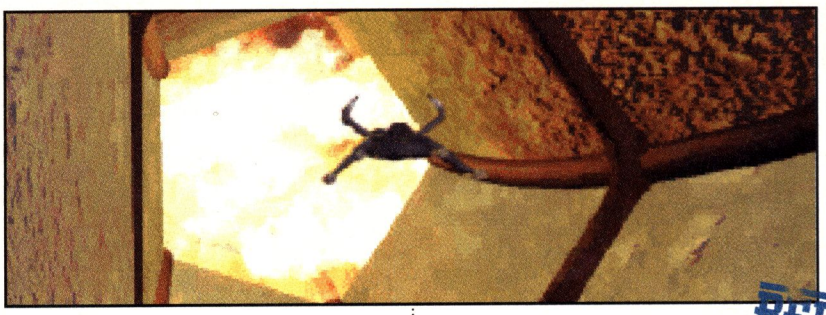
Obviously the gameplay isn't exactly the same this time around, and while it all looks very similar, much of the content has been tweaked, fondled and altered. Virtually all of the old robots have been given the heave-ho, and in their place there are now 18 brand spanking new

(Below) From some of the screenshots we have here you'd be hard pushed to tell whether this was the sequel or not. When you see the thing moving, however, the differences are much more apparent.

Virtual chunder

One thing that nearly everyone said about *Descent* was that at times it had the ability to make you feel really sick. This was mainly due to the nature of the 3D engine and the way that you really did have a full 360 degrees of freedom in which to move. What made this much worse was that you could link it up to a VR headset and have the whole thing in glorious stereoscopic 3D as well! Bleuk!

Descent 2 is no different and supports all of the major VR systems available on the PC at the moment, as well as the higher resolution modes that are featured in the recently enhanced Virtual I/O system.



(Above) Much like its predecessor, *Descent 2* features a lot of tunnels... and look! Here's another one.

(Above right) The cut-scenes are all extremely well produced and give the whole thing a far more 'finished' feel than *Descent* ever had.

alien marauders. One of the few real complaints that people had of the first game was that the enemies were a bit, well, thick – you could go into a room, let rip with virtually any weapon, bugger off, and hardly any of the bad guys would bother to come and look for you. But this time everything's different.

Parallax and Interplay have assured us that all of the bad guys have an enhanced artificial intelligence system implemented that means they react far more realistically and don't just float around bumping into things. They're also allegedly much faster than their predecessors, and from what we've seen from the early playable versions of the game, they're also much tougher to kill.

But it's not just the enemy robots that have been enhanced. *Descent 2* features 13 completely new weapons for you to pick up, ranging from the incredible Super Vulcan Canon (which is far more destructive than it was before) to huge lasers, plasma guns and rockets. Gone are the relatively mundane weapons of yore... these new babies are well 'ard and the cream of the crop has to be the new guided missiles which are so smart they even give you a missile camera view that pops up in a little window so you can be certain that it hits exactly what you want. Cool.

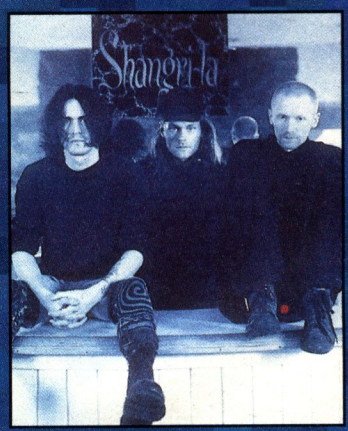
To make sure that you get the most out of all the new features, everything is now much bigger than before. The levels (which are still mostly in mine shafts, by the way) are huge sprawling labyrinths that are divided up into 30 different maps that are spread across five different planets. Upon destroying the reactor at the end of each planet you are then warped to the next planet, having been treated to one of the aforementioned rendered cut-scene bits.

The final enhancement is something that so far we've only heard about, and unfortunately we won't be able to look at in any depth until we review the game next month. The developers assure us that the multi-player aspect of *Descent 2* is seriously improved. Now, bearing in mind that this is already one of the best multi-player systems around, it really does make us wonder what they've dreamed up this time. One thing that we do know for sure though is that *Descent 2* is one of the products most likely to be up and running when BT launches the Wireplay system later this year. No doubt our On-Line pages will soon be filled with snippets of info on *Descent* as well as our usual deluge of *Doom*isms. **Z**

(Below) The structure of the levels is now far more irregular than the very 'squared-off' look of *Descent*. Tunnels now have more dramatic features and the main chambers have sloped walls and uneven ceilings.

Men with long hair

Playgirl wouldn't take photos of this man's erect dick. And, frankly, nor would we.



Keeping their clothes well and truly in place are rising rockers Skinny Puppy.

Take a look for yourself

Play the demo on our cover CD!

If you want to see what *Descent 2* is like for yourself, we have a demo of the game on this month's cover CD. This gives you an idea of what both the in-game and cut-scene graphics are like, as well as giving you a quick blast of the music taken from the extensive soundtrack.

If you want to find out anything else about *Descent 2*, download the fully-playable three level demo; to find out about other projects that Interplay are working on, you can check out their Website at this address:

http://www.interplay.com

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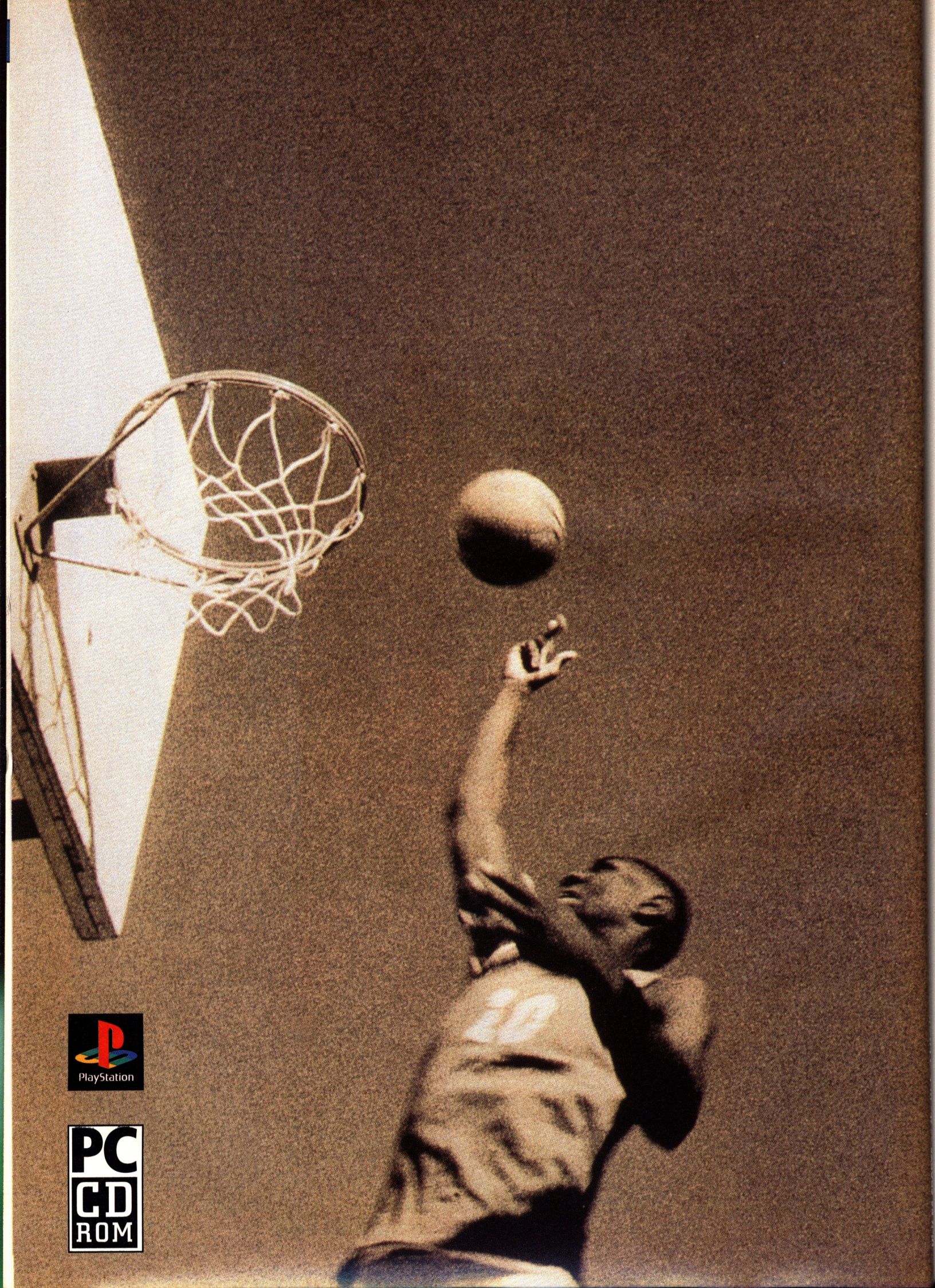
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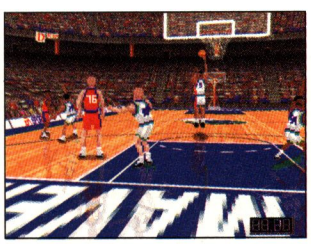
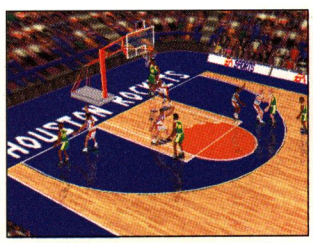
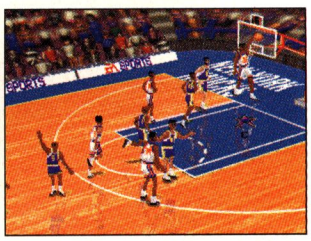
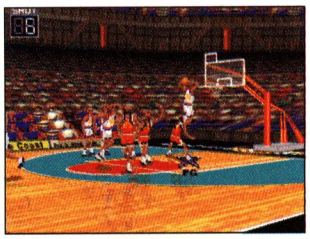





VIRTUAL STADIUM VS

EA SPORTS™

if it's in the GAME, it's in the GAME™

Virtual Snooker

Officially known as 'Captain Fluke' at pool halls up and down the country, Paul Presley takes a look at a more mature kind of game.

SNOOKER DOESN'T DO ANYTHING for me, I'm afraid. Whereas pool is fast, dynamic, action-packed and exciting, snooker always seems to be slower than a snail stuck in mud (and it's made even *more* uninteresting to watch by the fact that all the players have to wear poxy dinner jackets). Of course this may have something to do with the emotional scarring I suffered when I was but a wee nipper, taken by my Dad to his local club every Saturday and forced to do my much-loved *I'm a Little Teapot* dance on top of the snooker table – and then to add to my embarrassment I had to stay put for ages and ages while patrons tried to see just how many reds they could balance on my head. But I digress...

Interplay had quite a success last year with their 3D simulation of the American cue 'n' balls game, finally giving both Archer Maclean and Jimmy White a run for their money. Okay, so they made the error of associating themselves with Steve Davis, but at least the game was good. Well, this time round things are much the same. The table is still set in a 'virtual pub' (according to the decor anyway), it's still just as easy to control and fun to play, and Steve Davis is still around (even if he's mainly to be seen wandering around the back of the room, twitching slightly and mumbling something about "Bloody Hendry" under his breath... well okay, perhaps not those words exactly. He's actually on hand in a couple of tutorial video sequences, showing off his 147 break and offering advice. It's a nice image though, isn't it?). The only thing that's changed is that there are now more than three colours of ball.

Product details

Developer: Interplay
Publisher: Interplay
Telephone: 01628 423666
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: February

Presley is a cheat

Everything else is still just as snazzy as it was with *Virtual Pool*, and the simple-to-use control system is a very welcome feature, retaining, as it does, the unique "mouse-based cueing action" that allows you to adjust the strength of your shot by the speed you move your mouse.

VR Snooker also comes in a variety of SVGA modes as well as with something described as 'ultra fast high resolution rendering' (which should make some sort of sense to the techheads out there); there's also the option to play over a network or modem.

So does *VR Snooker* fit snugly into the 'everything you could possibly want from a snooker game' category? Well, not quite. Despite my desperate pleas to Interplay they still haven't included either the option to cough loudly just as your opponent takes his shot, or a 'nudge' feature, just to accidentally move the balls out of position. After all, given my crap cueing, how else am I supposed to actually win a game? Z

(Above) "Quiet. Quiet. I can get this... Hang on, who's nicked my pint?"

(Right) Tramlines help the novice sharpen his aim and determine a shot's outcome. Five to one odds that you never turn it off.

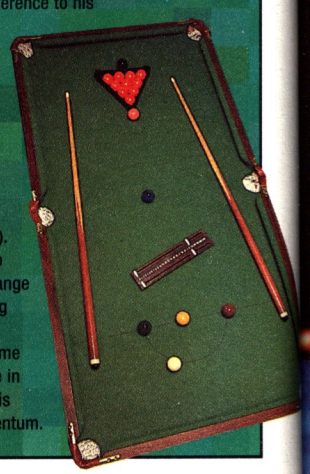
IN PRODUCTION

Snooker – a quick guide

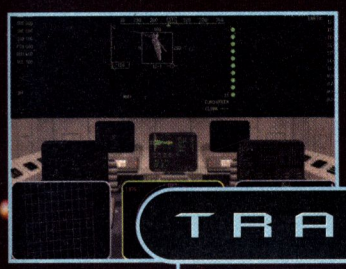
A sport rivalled only by tennis for the youthful age of its world champions, snooker's only discernible function is to neatly fill the gap between lunchtime *Neighbours* on BBC1 and *Ready, Steady, Cook* on BBC2. Its greatest crime (of many) is its ability to keep Jim Davidson* employed in the tedious game show *Big Break*. Why the BBC ever thought that Davidson's sad figure of a man would be any kind of worthwhile alternative to watching the likes of Pamela Silicon and David 'I'm very big in Germany' Hasslehoff running around in skimpy bathing costumes is anyone's guess.

A snooker match is also the only time you're likely to hear the phrase "kissing the pink" spoken on the television in this country. Unless you own a satellite dish and a special smartcard, that is.

* Jim Davidson, a cockney comedian with the infamous catchphrase "Nick, nick" (thought to be either a reference to his method of acquiring new material, or what the public considers to be the ideal location for his future performances). A campaign to get him to change it to something like, "Hey everybody, come and punch me in the kidneys," is gaining momentum.



BATTLECRUISER 3000AD

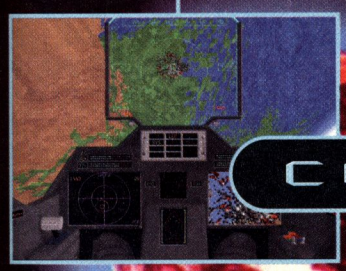


TRADING

'Battlecruiser 3000AD is here and it's fair to say it's better than Elite in every department.'

94%

PC ATTACK



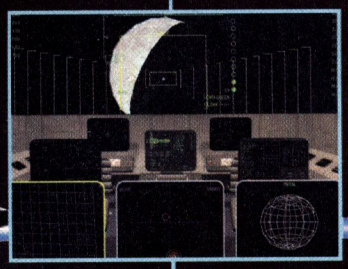
COMBAT

'It's far more simple to get into than say Frontier Elite II and to be honest it's more rewarding at the end of the day.'

9/10

PC REVIEW

STRATEGY



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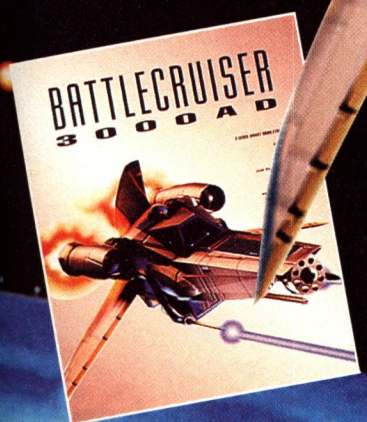

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Jane's Combat Simulations: AH64-D Longbow & ATF

Jeremy Wells was the only one in the office who'd heard of Jane's, but then he did used to work on a shooting magazine and have a penchant for Airfix kits. He says that's all in the past now, so why does he always smell of glue and have an unusually shaped bulge in his trouser pocket?

IF YOU WANTED TO KNOW JUST WHAT that rather sexy-looking piece of hardware was that's bolted onto the front of the AH64-D Longbow, where do you reckon you would look? In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* perhaps? *Delia Smith's Almanac of Killer Pastries*? Or *Jane's All The World's Aircraft*? Sorry, I'm gonna have to hurry you here. Yes, that's right – you'd look in *Jane's*.

So who, or what, exactly is *Jane's*? Well, to cut a long story short, *Jane's* is the world authority on just about everything military, from hand guns to personnel carriers, bazookas to battleships. It all began way back at the end of the last century (1898 to be exact) when a certain Fred T Jane of Portsmouth published *All The World's Fighting Ships* – a rather comprehensive tome packed with the technical low down on just about every naval vessel in the world, accompanied by Fred's own hand-drawn illustrations. Come the turn of the century, Mr Jane had already expanded his range to include airships and aircraft as well as military vehicles, and the whole thing has grown ever since.

Nowadays, *Jane's* is regarded as *the* military hardware bible, and publishes over 40 titles, including the esteemed *Jane's Defence Weekly* and *International Defence Review*, which are read the world over by Generals, Defence Ministers, squaddies and Israeli Fundamentalists alike. In fact, because it's so detailed and researched *Jane's* even have an office in the Pentagon, and regularly advise governments on military tactics and hardware development.

If somehow you got a transfer from real life to a Bond movie and ended up back at Q's pad (a fiendish blackmail plot, perhaps), you would surely find that he has every issue of *Jane's* either piled under the bed or stacked up in the loo, and he'd read them every day. And thus, because he'd looked it all up in *Jane's All The World's Aircraft*, Q would tell you that the AH64-D was armed with a McDonnell Douglas M230A-1 chain-driven 30mm cannon.

Product details

Developer: Origin
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Telephone: 01753 549442
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: April

The perfect partnership?

But then so are the chaps at Origin. They've already proved themselves masters of the flight combat sim (there's the fabulous *Wings Of Glory* and *Pacific Strike* just for starters, and the spectacular *Wing Commander* series for which they developed the super fast 'RealSpace' engine) and now they want to take the whole thing to the next level by incorporating even more authentic and accurate data, realistic scenarios and true to life tactics – which means teaming up with *Jane's*. Oh, and it also means poaching some chap called Andy Hollis from MicroProse to work on the first in the *Jane's Combat Simulations* series. This is based on the AH64-D Longbow attack helicopter and, not surprisingly, called *AH64-D Longbow*.

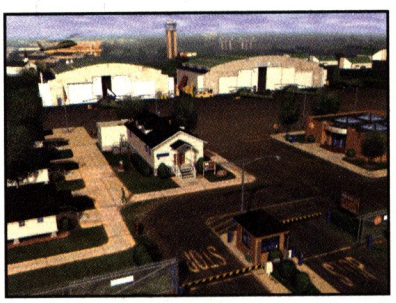
But it's not the first time that the Apache range of helicopters has been the subject of a game; there's the recent *Apache Longbow* from Digital Integration, the not-so-recent *Comanche: Maximum Overkill* from Novalogic (which featured an experimental helicopter based on the Apache), and of course MicroProse's very own *Gunship*, which started the ball rolling a few years back.

So do we really need another Apache helicopter combat sim? Andy Hollis, game producer, certainly thinks so: "The thing that really made *Gunship* so exciting was all the new technology it used. The Apache was cool because it had great new things like TADS (Target Acquisition and Designation Sight) and PNVS (Pilot Night Vision Sensor) which allowed it to track and scan targets and enabled the pilot to see in the dark. The Longbow is a new variant that uses even more sophisticated technology, so it's still all very exciting."

Just in case you don't have a copy of *Jane's* handy, I'd better explain that the new Apache Longbow has a mast-mounted radar dome that sits above the rotor blades so the helicopter can stay low, popping up briefly (and thereby exposing itself) to scan for targets. It then dives back down into cover again, the data is analysed, the pilot accesses »

(Left) Every tent, tank and gun has been carefully modelled on a Silicon Graphics Workstation, while the terrain is made up of squillions of texture-mapped polygons.

(Right) The thing that makes helicopter combat sims so great is the way you can interact with the terrain. Pop up over a ridge and let off a couple of missiles or strafe round a hillock and let 'em eat lead – that's what it's all about, and hopefully that's what *AH64-D* is all about.



IN PRODUCTION

the threat and then pops up and takes out the targets. A bit sneaky, you might think, but very effective – and all's fair in love and war.

Over hill and dale

Of course, none of all this fancy stuff would be of much use if the terrain was essentially flat (as it was in *Gunship*), so Origin have developed a unique mesh-like terrain generating thingamy that can throw texture-mapped polygons around and look very realistic at the same time. Take a peek at the grabs to see what all the fuss is about.

At the moment, of course, it's the Chuggerama hillocks out there, but remember sports fans, "it hasn't been optimised yet" and already looks a lot nicer than the bristle-like Voxel Space Technology utilised by Novalogic in *Comanche* and at the same time it's more accurate than the 'tiling' system used by DI in *Apache Longbow*. Every texture map is completely different and based on actual data from the US Government Geological Survey, and the developers are confident that their system will look better and play smoother than anyone else's.

Origin are also confident that the gaming structure of *AH64-D* will leave their competitors gagging. There are four different ways to play: a tutorial system, featuring on-board speech from your friendly co-pilot, which should help you play the game without wading through a weighty manual; a campaign of missions (set in the Balkans a few years from now); historical one-off missions (Operation 'Desert Storm', the Panama/Noriaga scenario, 'Just Cause'), or a completely random selection from the mission builder. Your progress is monitored by TV news stations, and when you return to base you watch news bulletins to see what's happening with the conflict(s) and what the next course of action will be likely to be.

To make it all seem as real as possible, Origin have included 'real-life' video footage from the Gulf War, as well as other suitably macho war bits from other conflicts, and if previous efforts from Origin have anything to go by, the overall standard of presentation should be nothing short of gobsmacking.

The other one...

While Origin are busy with *AH64-D*, Electronic Arts are beavering away on *ATF* (*Advanced Tactical Fighters*), yet another flight combat sim that will combine the gaming expertise of the people who brought you *LHX, Chuck Yeager, US Navy Fighters* and *Marine Fighters* with the knowledge and expertise of the boffs from Jane's.

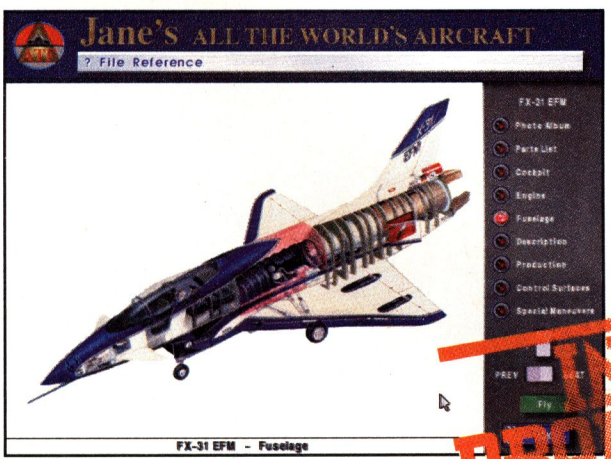
ATF features six experimental planes, next-generation fighters that are currently being tested and won't see active service until well into the next century. Although it's still at a very early stage of development, the team have managed to produce an advanced version of the game engine used in *US Navy Fighters* that doubles the resolution of the terrain without any real loss of speed, and adds new effects such as planes that break up as well as explode. It's not as structured as *AH64-D*, concentrating instead on the simulation elements of flying six never-seen-before combat aircraft: finding out which plane is best for the job while assessing their strengths and weaknesses – a sort of experimental 'suck it and see' type experience.

That said, there are three campaigns, each with over 30 different missions, ranging from bombing, escort, air-to-air combat, patrol and scramble scenarios, as well as the 'must have' mission builder which will allow you to plan out some pretty serious conflict storylines.

There's also a database that includes information on every aircraft featured in the game (this is where *Jane's* comes in again) and an eight-way network that should run quite happily on a 9600 baud modem, a feature that was lacking in both *US Navy Fighters* and *Marine Fighters*. Let's hope it's as good. Z

(Bottom) *ATF* includes a rather polished database that features info on all the aircraft featured in the game – including FMV footage, photographs, diagrams and other 'very hard to get hold of' bits of info.

(Bottom right) Fancy flying the fighters of the future? Better get hold of a copy of *ATF* when it's released in the Spring.



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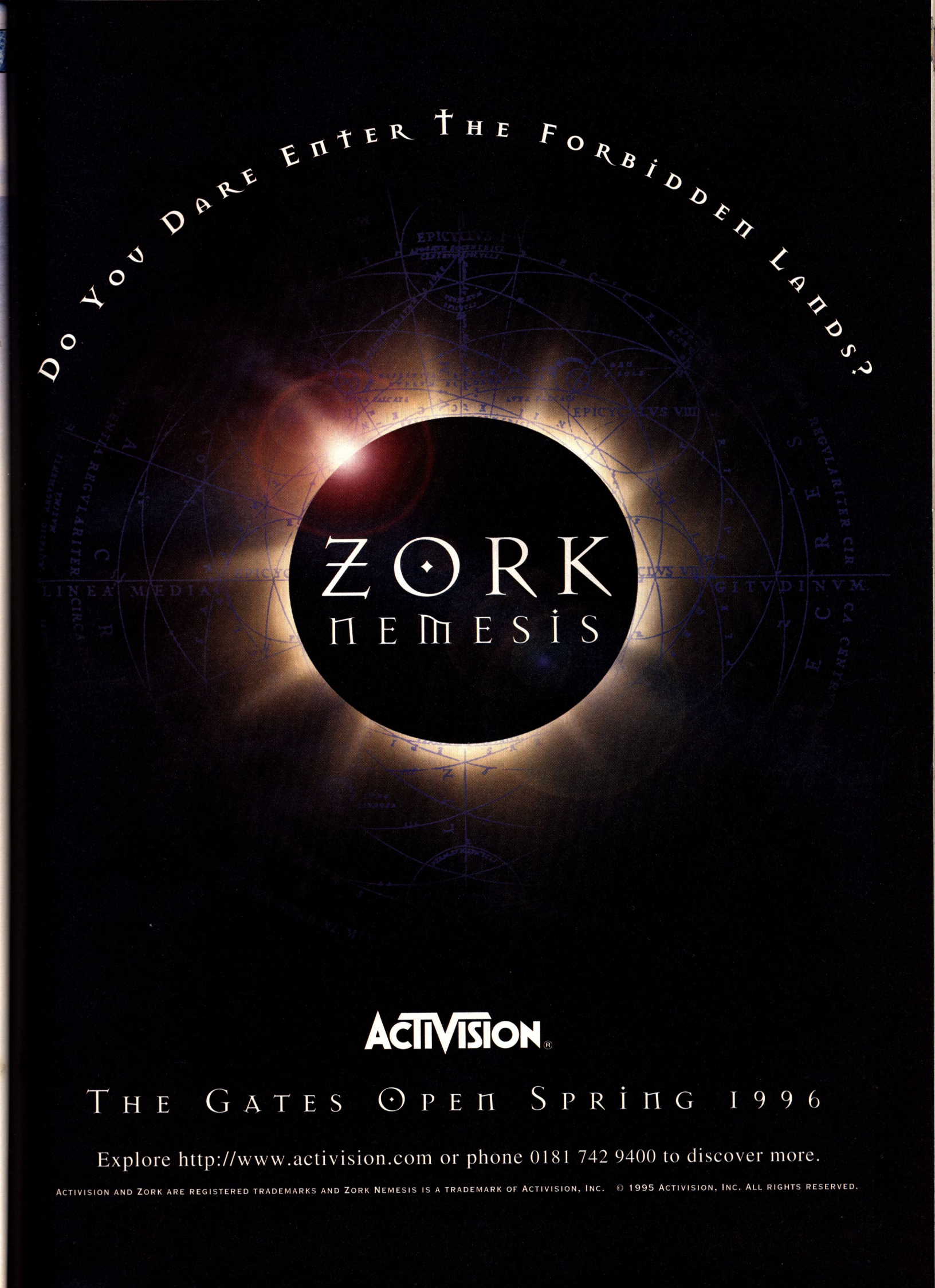
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Looking Back

Some games are fab for a month or so, but after a while the novelty tends to wear off. Once again we take a second look at things a while after the initial review.

STONEKEEP

Publisher: Interplay
Reviewed Issue 34

After four years in production it has to be said that *Stonekeep* met with something of a lukewarm reception when it finally arrived a couple of months ago. However, despite the almost soap opera-like series of previews that appeared across the years in *PC Zone* and the very high level of anticipation for the product, it has to be said that the whole thing was ultimately disappointing.

Now that the game has been out and on the shelves for a number of months, all kinds of bugs and spooky anomalies have come to light that we didn't find at the time of actually reviewing the thing. Although there are far too many to go into in any great detail here, we feel that there are a few that we really ought to let you know about simply because they're so completely ridiculous!

The first, and probably most amusing of these is a rather strange bug we found in the combat system. While desperately trying to fend off the attacks of two orc-type things our valiant reviewer (the ever-diligent Chris) discovered that you could confuse the enemy incredibly easily – all you have to do is hold down a direction key and spin around on the spot. By doing this, you can attack the orcs, but they can't get at you.

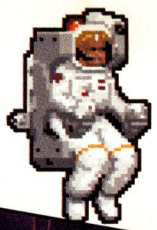
Elsewhere we found bugs that wouldn't allow you to complete certain quests in the manner described by the game, as well as all kinds of weird graphical quirks. Umm. Lovely. Don't you just love it when you wait years for something – and when it turns up it's full of all sorts of unforgivable stuff.

THE DIG

Publisher: LucasArts
Reviewed Issue 34

Bit of a weird one this. This isn't our usual "give it a bit of a kicking after we've finished it" routine, it's more of a "hmm… I don't think that some of its finer qualities came across immediately". Yes, we thought that some of the graphics were a bit dated and yes, we probably did expect a bit more, bearing in mind a) its pedigree and b) the time it took to produce the bloody thing. What we really didn't dwell on enough was the atmosphere – and that's because you need to live with it for a whole month before it all sinks in.

When we reviewed it, we did mention that the story and the characterisation were both rather special, but now that we've played it to death we have to say that it does possess the same qualities as both *Full Throttle* and *Indy* in the way that it sucks you in. Okay, it doesn't grab you by the scrote straightaway, but once you've absorbed some of the finer elements you do get to genuinely like (or hate, which – let's face it – is just as important) the characters involved. On top of this the script is absolutely fantastic, despite all of the fuss. I think we can pretty much safely say that *The Dig* is proof that scripting is just as important in games as it is in movies. If you love adventure games, this is yet another fine example of just how much better than everyone else LucasArts actually is.



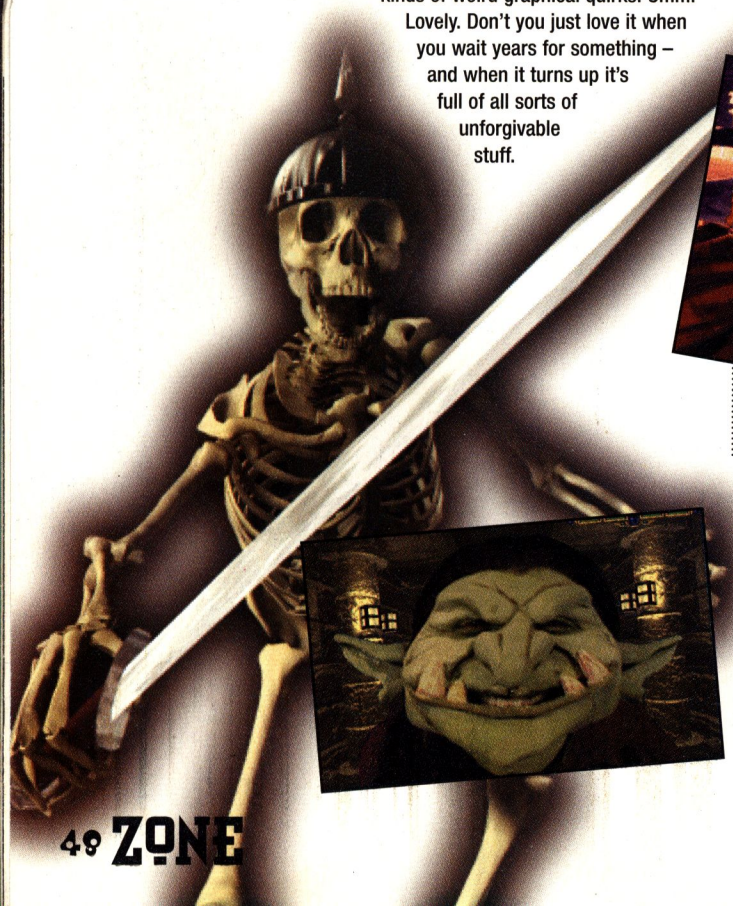
WORMS

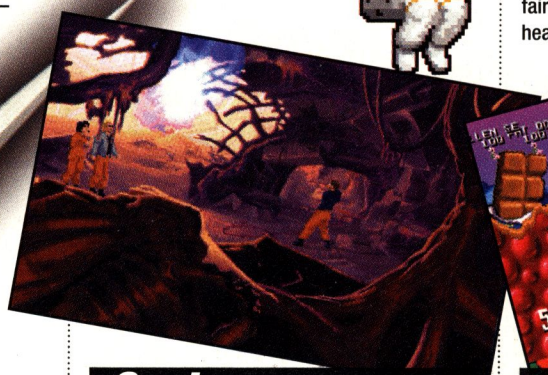
Publisher: Ocean
Reviewed Issue 33

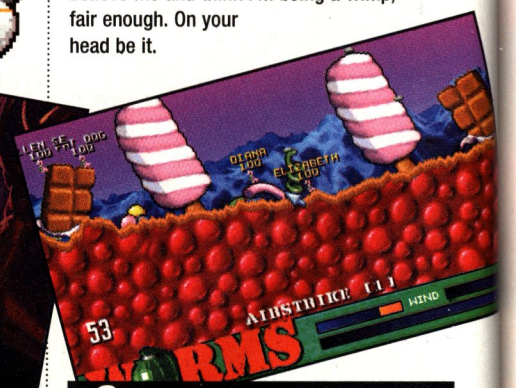
The jury *still* seems to be out on *Worms* – it's rare for something to come along and split opinions so dramatically. The quality of the product seems to count for virtually nothing as fundamentally *Worms* is a very fine game, although a bit primitive-looking. Having said this though, people's reaction to it is based purely on whether they enjoy the destructive gameplay: some do and some don't. But the thing is, those that think it's good absolutely *love* it – to them it's one of the finest games ever created. But then there are also a lot of people who completely and totally *hate* it and feel that it's one of the most ridiculous wastes of space ever produced.

Part of this has to be down to the fact that as a one-player game it's completely and utterly hopeless. If you want to play it solo – don't. On the other hand, if you have a large crowd of like-minded mates you can have a brilliant time. Somehow it manages to draw on the killer instinct in everyone and make you experience the exaltation of revenge in a way that only *Doom's* Deathmatch can.

WARNING TO THE LADS: Don't play your girlfriend/wife/mum at this as a) it's one of those games that all girls seem to be able to get very good at without really trying and b) once she's beaten you for the 27th time in succession you'll find yourself being humiliated at every available opportunity. There – you've been warned. If you don't believe me and think I'm being a wimp, fair enough. On your head be it.







Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff…

Actua Soccer
Formula One Grand Prix 2
Civilization 2
The Beast Within: Gabriel Knight 2
Beavis and Butthead

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying 'please steal me' and you still can't get rid of the bloody things…

Wing Nuts
Torin's Passage
Cadillacs and Dinosaurs
Red Ghost
Cyberbykes

Reviews Section

THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM

90+ *CLASSIC*
Drop-dead brilliant, fab, skill, top, cool, excellent, almost as good as sex... etc, etc. Virtually flawless in all departments and oozing, yes *oozing* playability.

80–89 *RECOMMENDED*
Rather jolly super, but just not quite up to it in the sexual conquest stakes. More like a good snog really. One of those experiences that's more than adequate all round.

70–79
A good idea that's been reasonably well-implemented, but not awfully original. A bit like someone coming up to you and saying, "Do you come here often?" The sort of game you'd go for if you were pissed... or a bit desperate.

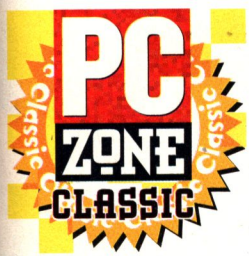
60–69
Just above average, but absolutely nothing to write home and tell mum about. Adequate presentation, mediocre gameplay and failing to make the grade in the originality stakes.

50–59
Averagely average, Mr McAverage. Any game getting a score around this mark has absolutely nothing special about it whatsoever and will probably be forgotten almost immediately.

40–49
A just about bearable game which notches up a number of crippling flaws. The presentation ain't hot and the gameplay's worse.

20–39
Naff, and definitely worth avoiding at all costs.

20 and below *PANTS*
Absolute, complete and utter crap. It doesn't get much worse than this and therefore deserves the ultimate accolade... the *PC Zone* big, blue pants award for extreme naffness.



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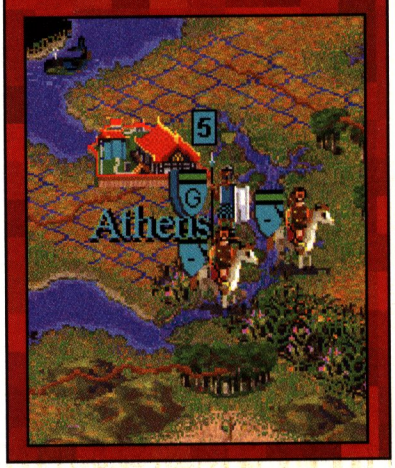
Thanks to
Jason Dutton (Belly Button)

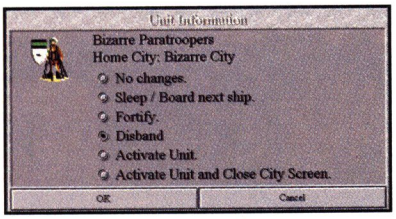
Reviews index

Civilization 2	50
Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2	54
Absolute Zero	56
Rayman	58
Formula One Grand Prix 2	60
Warcraft 2	64
Police Quest: SWAT	66
The Beast Within: Gabriel Knight 2	68
Time Gate	70
Cadillacs and Dinosaurs	74
Conqueror AD 1086	74
Dust	74
Emergency Room	74
NFL Pro League Football	75
Red Ghost	75
Torin's Passage	75
Wing Nuts	75



Civilization 2

The end of civilisation as we know it? The start of an exciting new era in the ascent of man? After he'd been up all night wrestling with all of these weighty questions and trying to rewrite history at the same time, we finally dragged Andrew Wright away from *Civilization 2* and made him rewrite his review instead.



(Above) Units in cities can be given orders from the special dialogue.

(Right) Two or more windows can be handy – or not...

(Below left) The city screen is bright and colourful but basically the same as before.

CIVILIZATION MUST RANK AS ONE OF the best games of all time – the strategy game to end all strategy games, I think someone called it when it first appeared. Luckily it wasn't, otherwise we would have missed out on playing all of those other top games – the entire *Sim* series, for instance, and all those lovely hexy wargames like *Panzer General*. But that's another story.

Until yesterday just three games in my sad, wizened little life had managed to keep me up past 4am: *Dungeon Master* on the Atari ST (back when PC games were still a huge joke), *Civilization* and *Doom*. But now the total has gone up to four – *Civilization 2* has just joined the others with a cracking up-till-five debut.

Die-hard *Civ* fans will be pleased to hear that *Civilization 2* is basically an enhanced version of the first game. There's the same detailed gameplay and still endless opportunities for trying out different strategies. Combat has been tightened up and new units, advances and wonders introduced, so that players of the original will have plenty to learn. But the most obvious change is one of perspective – everything in the *Civ* world is now completely three-dimensional.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment is that network play won't be included; this is because MicroProse are about to launch *Civnet*, a network-play version of the original. However, whether a network-ready *Civ 2* will appear is unclear at the moment.

Anyway, on to the 3D perspective. After many hours of play I'm not totally convinced that it works, especially when you're in a complex situation with units all over the place. It is surprisingly easy to mislay units, particularly if the terrain they're on is varied or forested and one or two of your units have previously been fortified.

Towards the end of a hard game, I found myself wishing that I could switch back to the old 2D mode just to check that I'd done everything I could to prepare an attack. There's a neat (but rather slow) zoom option should you get bogged down, but it can be a nuisance when things start to get tense. And naturally enough, if you zoom in too close you won't see the full picture; zoom out too far and you get a green and blue blur.

"The diplomatic niceties that make the world go round have been turned into hard and fast rules, so if you double-cross someone, it's remembered."

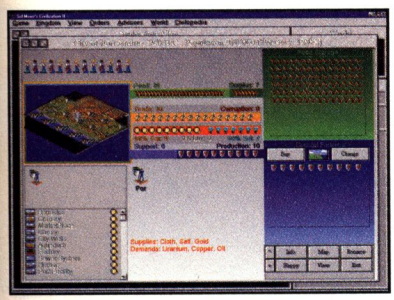
The other improvement to the interface is the ability to open more than one window at a time. Although multiple windows can get in the way they're also handy, especially if you're fighting or developing things on two fronts.

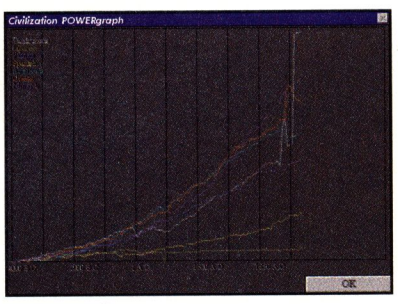
Combat

Now whatever all of those peace-loving pacifists say, the world was undeniably built on blood and guts. I'm glad that so far it hasn't been my blood and guts, but you know what I mean. Sooner or later everything comes down to combat and somebody has to get blown away (or skewered or atomised, depending on the efficiency of the era). This is the basis of the world as we know it, Jim, and it's the only really tasty strategy in *Civilization* anyway. Everyone knows that there's no fun to be had learning your alphabet, so why pretend otherwise?

But I digress. *Civilization 2* has a good number of enhanced combat rules, not least of which is the concept of hit points. Every unit has a certain number of hit points that represent the damage it can sustain before it's totally wiped out. For example, a unit with one hit point can take ten blasts before it becomes, well, an ex-unit, while the unit's firepower represents the amount of damage it causes each time it strikes the target.

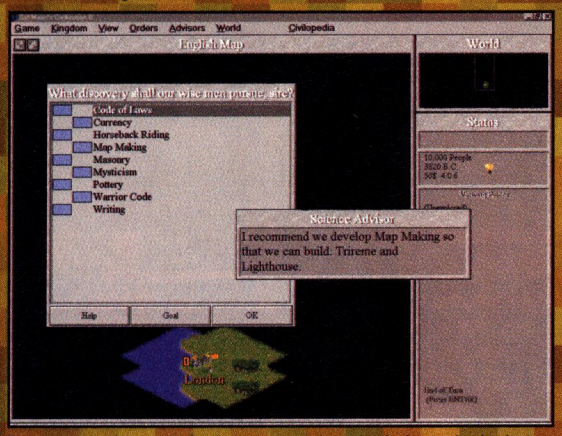
The individual units have a shield next to them, representing the tribe (by colour) and relative strength (the strength bar along the top). When two units meet in combat, they slug it out until one or the other is finished off. The point to note is here is that this means you can win Pyrrhic victories – a win that leaves your triumphant unit as badly damaged as your vanquished opponents and generally means that your crew can be picked off by anything »



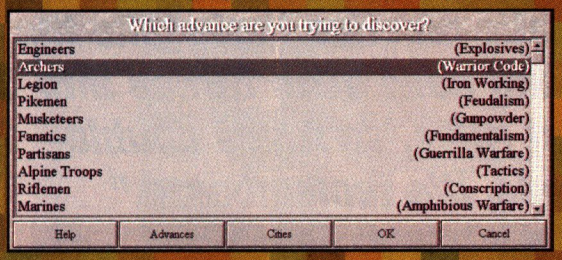


The five year plan

The main thrust of *Civilization* has been subtly tweaked, although this is unlikely to make a real difference to how the game plays. Some of the prerequisites for advancing your civilization up a level have been changed, while the ones that are redundant have been eliminated. Perhaps the most useful new feature in this respect is the 'goal' button, which allows you to select the advance that you're aiming for and see which direction you need to take without having to consult all those hairy charts.

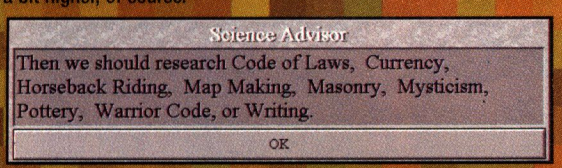


For example, it's early in the game and you're being asked what you want to pursue next from the list of available options. Your science advisor recommends map making so you can build a trireme (or boat to you, mate) and a lighthouse. But you've just had a visit from someone who's bound to start trouble and poncing about with ships isn't going to help. You click on the 'goal' button.



You can ask for advice on how to advance your level of civilization, a particular unit or a city improvement. Note for readers from Yorkshire: all cities automatically come with running water, so you needn't hunt round for that one. Another note, this time for French players: contrary to popular belief, developing the Eiffel Tower doesn't mean that you can stop other countries trading with you by blockading ports, and it certainly doesn't automatically provide you with an island in the South Pacific to test weapons on (just in case you though it did...). And one last note, this time for Spanish players... *(I think we'll move on now – Ed.)*

As you want some decent offensive and defensive units as soon as you can get your mitts on them, click on the Units button. You could, of course, investigate city walls or even coastal fortresses. Anyway, you can see at a glance that getting some archers (a new 3/2/1 unit for the benefit of existing *Civilization* buffs out there) will require the warrior code. You might want to set your sights a bit higher, of course.



Click on marines (a new 8/5/1 unit type) and you get a list of all the advances you'll need to make before you can get them. Obviously the warrior code is going to be handy because not only do you get some archers in the short term but you'll be on the way to getting those coveted marines.

that happens to pass along. On the other hand, the new rules also have the effect of emphasising the difference between units at different technological levels by smoothing out the extremes of the probability table – no longer can a band of musketeers get lucky and destroy an armoured division, for example.

You can repair any damaged units by skipping one or more turns. It all takes less time if you're in a city, and should it happen to have special facilities such as say, ports, barracks or airports, the units can be 'healed' in one go.

And other combat factors have been updated, too. Chariots are weaker while legions are stronger, and musketeers and riflemen have improved defence values. Some units also have boosted firepower or defence in given circumstances, such as when partisans attack non-combat units or fighters attack helicopters. Shore bombardments have substantially reduced effectiveness.

More units

To go with the enhanced combat rules there are dozens of extra unit types. On land these include elephants, archers, pikemen, crusaders and fanatics; as you then go forward in time the list extends to dragoons and cavalry, to partisans, alpine troops (who have high movement capabilities), marines, paras and artillery. Incidentally, the previous artillery have now become howitzers.

In the air you can take your pick from stealth fighters and bombers, cruise missiles and helicopters; in the water there are galleons, destroyers and Aegis (anti-air) cruisers. And all of these are in addition to the units in the original game, so you have plenty of choice. If you've found your settlers a bit lazy, try out the engineers – they work twice as fast and can even transform terrain.

Oodles of city improvements have been added, from airports and anti-aircraft missiles to sewers, supermarkets and superhighways. A dozen or more wonders of the world appear too – Sun Tzu's War Academy, Da Vinci's Workshop, King Richard's Crusade, Marco Polo's Embassy and the Statue of Liberty. The latter can be used to change government quickly, without the need for normal prerequisites. This becomes absolutely vital when you're a democracy with a heavy-handed senate breathing down your neck. I wonder if President Clinton was in on the development of this?

Some far-reaching changes have been made to the governments, and to the monarchy in particular. You can now

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb

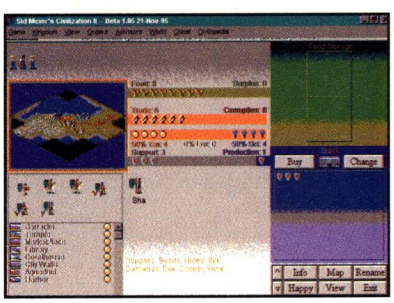
Processor: 486

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: Any Windows compatible sound cards

Controls: Mouse

Note: Needs Win 95 or Win 3.1 with WinG



support the first three units in each city without wasting shields, making monarchy much more desirable. And there's one new form of government: Fundamentalism. I'm afraid I don't know what it's like in real life, but in *Civ 2* gameplay terms it eliminates all happiness problems (if you take it in tablet form) and boosts revenue at the expense of scientific research.

You'll also find that a lot of minor rule changes and enhancements have been made. Many of these don't seem to matter that much on the face of it but turn out to be rather useful. Two settler or engineer units can halve the time that it takes to do something, and if you disband a unit in a city you get half the build cost back in city funds (shields). This makes it more sensible to 'cash in' older units for modern ones, as well as discouraging players from making up armies from, say, a combination of medieval archers, Napoleonic riflemen and modern day tanks. On the other hand though, you pay a significant penalty for switching production of something half way through.

City walls are now a lot more useful in that they are cheaper and no longer require maintenance. And to reflect the importance of river transport to early civilizations, you can move your ground units along rivers just as if they were on roads. Another important rule change is one that allows units to remain within three spaces of a friendly city without causing unrest under democracy or the Republic government types.

Diplomatic core

One of the weakest areas in the first *Civilization* game was diplomacy, which was pretty well non-existent. Apparently the computer opponents were supposed to act intelligently, but you'd have been hard pushed to find an example of it. MicroProse make the same claims this time round, but happily there's some evidence to back it up.

For a start, all the diplomatic niceties that make the world go round have been turned into hard and fast rules. In the main this means that when you double-cross someone, it's remembered. You can be as aggressive as you like and still have a spotless diplomatic record, but do the dirty and nobody will talk to you – and if they do, they're likely to give you the same lousy treatment that you've been guilty of dishing out. But if you have a good excuse for breaking a treaty – other powers spying on you or stealing your technology, for example – this diplomatic 'penalty' is lowered.

If civilization rather than conquest is your aim, then this all adds up to a much better game. It means you have more chance to make it all the way into space without invading your neighbour because you can forge very strong peace agreements and alliances. But there's still all those lovely military units to play with... and it seems such a shame not to make use of them.

Incidentally, it's unsurprising that moving into a neighbouring city area can be interpreted as a hostile act, but doing so can land you in a very strange situation. Sometimes you can't actually see the city in question if you haven't been out and discovered it yet, but you will still receive warnings about getting too close to it. Hmmm...

(Above) *Civilization 2* – the world conquest control centre.

(Above left) You can see how cluttered the game gets at certain times – and it's all down to the new 3D view, I'm afraid.

(Below left) You can even watch your units in close-up mode by zooming right in to where the action is.

Come on then, what's the verdict?

I'm going to say it again: I'm not at all convinced about the 3D interface. At times the perspective is just too damn cluttered – an option to switch back to the old overhead view is badly needed. On the other hand though, there's nothing much else I've seen that I don't agree with. The drop-down menus and the look and feel of *Civilization 2* are much the same and all the changes to the units and rules are well worthwhile.

Overall then, *Civilization 2* is a bloody good game and I'm happy to say that MicroProse have struck exactly the right balance. The changes implemented aren't just there purely for the sake of things, and underneath its sparkly new 3D exterior, it's still *Civilization*. The only surprising thing about the game is that it took so long to get here. **Z**

Score

90

***Civilization* just as we know it. Well, almost.**

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** March
Publisher: MicroProse **Tel:** 01454 326532

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Firestorm

Thunderhawk 2

High-level helicopter simulations with ultra-realistic flight models go to someone who knows what they're talking about. But stuff like *Firestorm* goes to the nearest moron. Take it away, Patrick McCarthy...

THE YEAR IS 1999, AND STILL NOBODY is wearing those excellent outfits that looked so popular in the Space-based television series of the same name. Because of this mass refusal to accede to uniformity of dress, potential flashpoint situations in every part of the world have increased to such an extent that NATO has been forced to establish a rapid response helicopter task force. You're the leader of one such force, equipped with enormous supplies of destructive missiles, crates chock-full of white nylon outfits with gorgeous detailing around the collar and cuffs, and of course a full back-up team of para-seamstresses to perform clothing alterations in the field, under fire if necessary. The code name for this little operation is *Firestorm*. (It was going to be *Cross-Stitch*, but some of the older generals complained.)

As we all know only too well by now, 'potential flashpoint situation' is the convoluted term the army use for 'all-out, blood-soaked war', so what we're talking about here are mission scenarios set in most of the traditional computer game 'trouble spots' (Central America, the Middle East, etc), all of which are already well past the stage of exchanging insults, having decided that heat-seeking missiles are more effective.

The flight model

Actually, there isn't what you'd call a flight model as such. Instead, there are strictly arcade-style controls – you accelerate, brake and reverse with movements on the controller of your choice (keypad, mouse or joystick); select the (carefully restricted) height at which you 'fly' by using a couple of keyboard keys; and bank, rotate and slide from side to side using the control method in combination with other keys. There has been a gesture toward making the helicopter 'handle' – the nose dips when you fly forward and raises when you slam into reverse in a blind panic, but generally there's even less realism than most arcade-style helicopter stuff – this game seems more like a shoot 'em up with a selectable height function than a flight sim, and could just as easily be compared to something like *Terminal Velocity* as *Comanche*.

The Magic Mountain

The trouble is that *Firestorm* doesn't come out of comparisons with either game very well. Most of the problems are to do with the graphics, and how the game handles them. We'll overlook the fact that the land around a small town in Panama looks uncannily like that surrounding a small town in Serbia, or that while the texture-mapping is detailed on some of the moving objects, the game looks bitmappy even at the highest setting.

The thing that spoils it all is the fact that you can't see anything if it's more than 200 yards ahead of you, whether it's the size of an ocean liner or a whole bloody mountain – at 200 yards there's just empty sea, but then at 199 yards a whacking great ship materialises. The upper parts of a mountain disappear and reappear as your view changes, even if you maintain the same distance from it; targets that you lock onto can vanish from sight as you fire. Apart from looking dreadful, it means that you end up shooting from a stationary position, making you more vulnerable to attack and, basically, ruining the game. Yes, the tall targets fall over in sections and everything explodes nicely, so there's some satisfaction when you kill stuff. But it would be nice to be able to see where it is in advance. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Graphics: VGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Joystick, keyboard

Score

60

They probably should have cheated and put fog in.

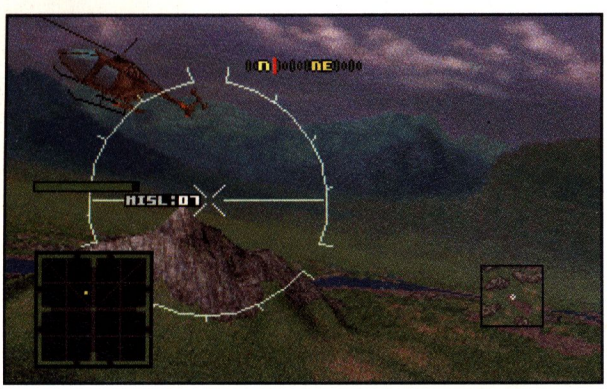
Price: £TBC **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Core Design
Tel: 01332 297797

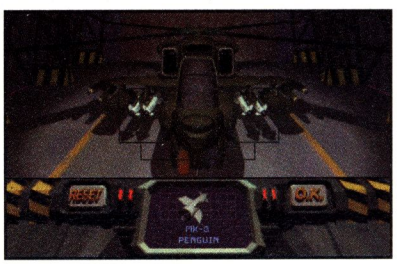
GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

(Above right) An outside view of your helicopter.

(Below) An outside view of someone else's helicopter.

(Below right) An outside view of your helicopter, inside.





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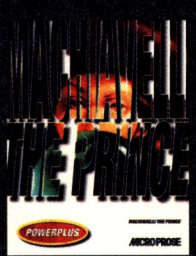

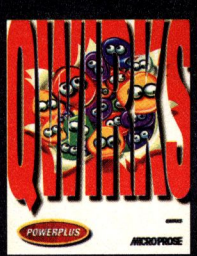

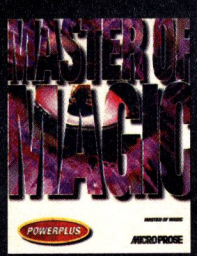

POWERPLUS

MICROPROSE

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When a new space-shooty thing arrived at *PC Zone* and begged us to take a good look at its 'delightful' space-shooty bits, one name kept coming to mind – the review just had to go to our ace space-shooty thing correspondent, Mr Charles Brooker. Take it away, Charlie...

Absolute Zero

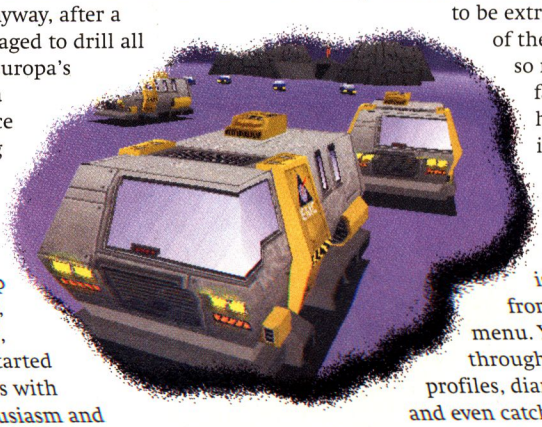
(Above) *Absolute Zero's* cast of thousands. Oh, all right then. Seven.

JUST IN CASE ANY READERS OUT THERE haven't been paying attention I'll introduce the facts: *Absolute Zero* is a new space-shooty thing from Domark. And as with all space-shooty things, it's got a convoluted storyline involving all sorts of hi-tech hoo-hah, alien races, age-old mysteries, and a band of unlikely heroes with foreign names.

Now perhaps you couldn't really give a fiddler's pluck what the storyline's about... but hell, I'm going to tell you anyway. You see, what I want you to do is this: I want you to carefully cut out the following plot summary with a pair of scissors, and stash it away safely in a handy desk drawer. Then I want you to buy every issue of *PC Zone* for the next three years (and go through the back issues too, while you're about it), clipping out any similar 'sci-fi game plot summaries' that you come across. And when you've got a decent pile of these summaries together, I want you to flush the lot of them straight down the toilet. Because that's where they belong.

Sci-fi game plot summary: apply scissors here

It's 2734, and we, the people of Earth, have been mining the very innards out of Europa (an ice moon that orbits the planet Jupiter) for quite some number of years. We're not mining for gold, or diamonds, or anything like that, oh no. We're on the lookout for ice, because we need it for the fusion drives on our spaceships. Anyway, after a while we managed to drill all the way into Europa's core, waking a mysterious race of hibernating aliens in the process. And then – just because we woke them up (accidentally, might I add), the aliens started attacking us with great enthusiasm and before we knew it there was a full-scale all-out war going down. Cue the game.



Actually, there's a bit more to it than that (after all, those aliens were hiding for a good reason), but I'm not going to stretch your attention span any further at this point. It's just that Domark seem to be extremely proud of the storyline – so much so, in fact, that they have bunged in loads and bloody loads of superflous background detail, which is accessible from the main menu. You can read through character profiles, diaries and e-mail, and even catch up with the latest news reports from the surrounding area. In fact, you can read until you're

Tech specs

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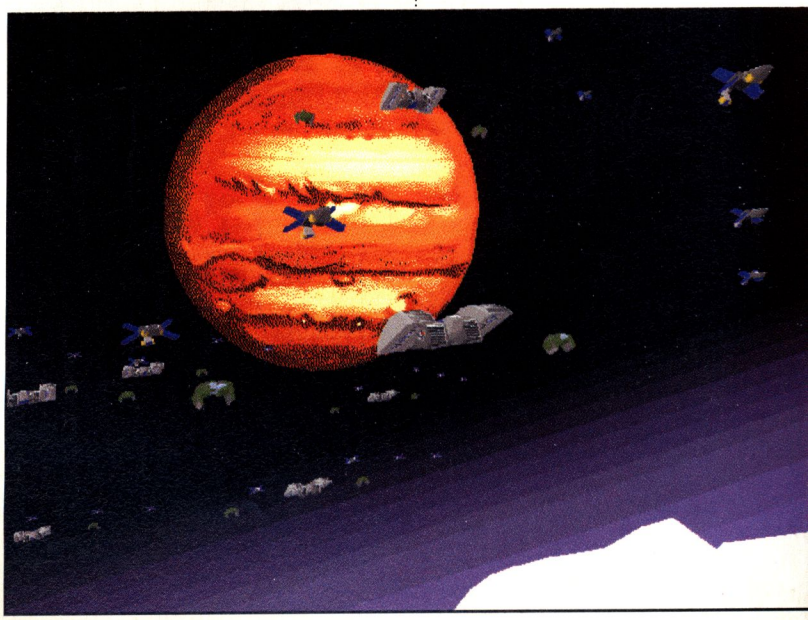
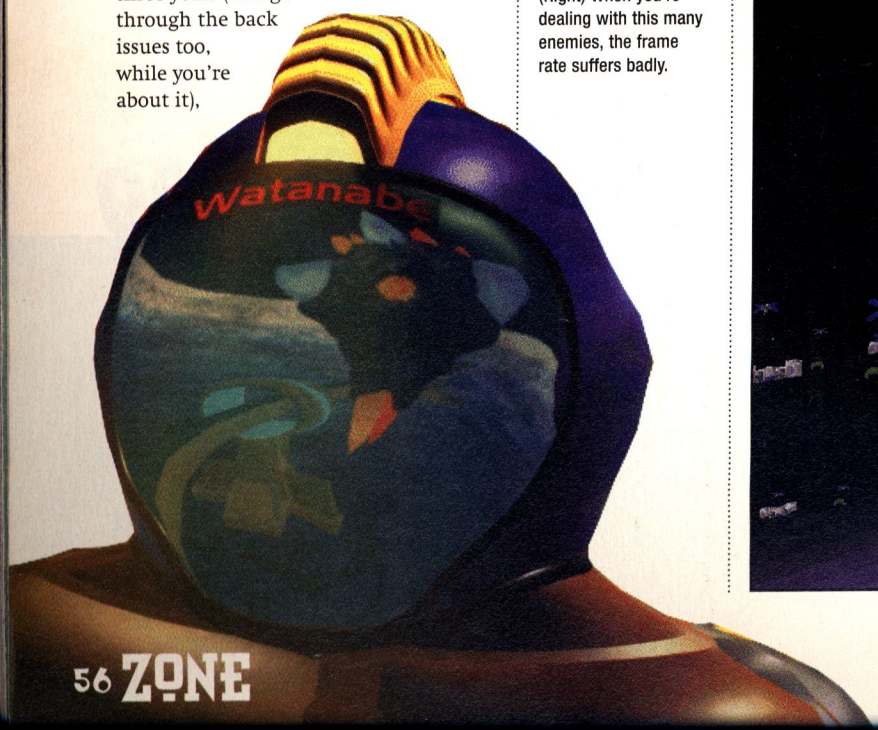
Processor: 486
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick
Minimum installation: 2Mb
Maximum installation: Wait for it – 350Mb



(Right) When you're dealing with this many enemies, the frame rate suffers badly.



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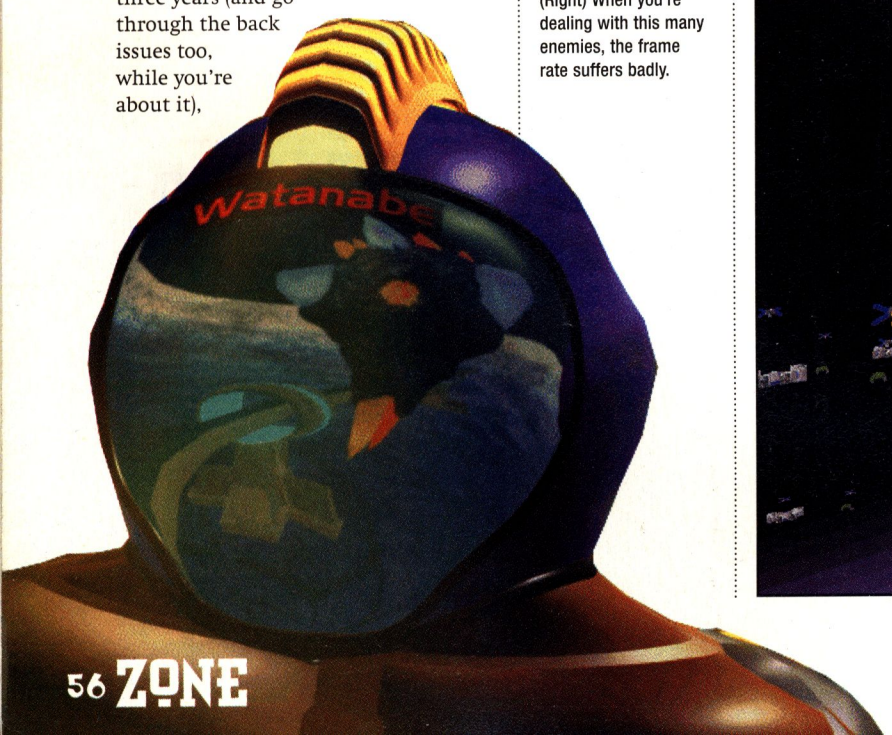

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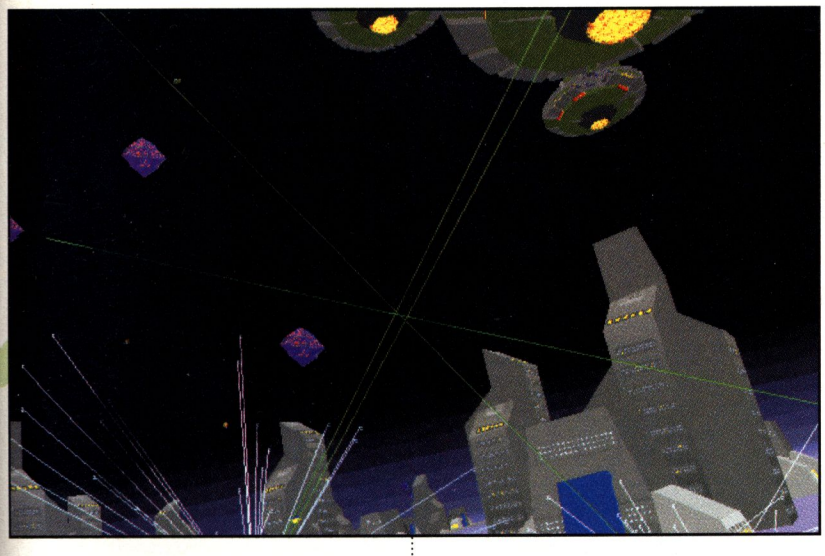
Maximum installation: Wait for it – 350Mb

Actually, there's a bit more to it than that (after all, those aliens were hiding for a good reason), but I'm not going to stretch your attention span any further at this point. It's just that Domark seem to be extremely proud of the storyline – so much so, in fact, that they have bunged in loads and bloody loads of superflous background detail, which is accessible from the main menu. You can read through character profiles, diaries and e-mail, and even catch up with the latest news reports from the surrounding area. In fact, you can read until you're



(Left) Utter mayhem. Cuh, I dunno, war really IS hell, isn't it?

(Above) Close up, in SVGA, *Absolute Zero* looks pretty smart...

blue in the face – they've gone really anal on this one – but it doesn't really make the game any more exciting. It's there for the anoraks, basically.

The game itself

Absolute Zero contains about thirty levels, split roughly fifty-fifty between cockpit missions (where you pilot a spacecraft and shoot things), and "turret" missions (where someone else, ie the computer, does the driving while you concentrate on the shooting and perhaps necking a few beers to keep you going). As you might expect, the turret missions tend to be slightly easier, though overall the game itself is a bit on the difficult side.

Somewhat unusually for a game of this type, instead of choosing a heroic name for yourself at the start and then fighting through to the bitter end like some kind of indestructible deity, you will find yourself taking charge of seven different characters: the person you 'are' depending on which particular mission you're playing. Again, this is something Domark are very proud of (though, once again, it's something that makes minimum impact on the gameplay).

As you can see from the screenshots, it all looks pretty sparse. (Well, it is an ice moon after all, not exactly the most exciting location in the universe.) There are bland, Gouraud-shaded mountains and valleys all over the place. The sheer number of spacecraft and vehicles zipping about livens things up a bit, but also makes the action extremely hard to follow – and since the entire thing is designed to run in SVGA it chugs rather badly on anything other than a P90. In low-res bargain-bucket VGA mode it looks pretty unintelligible. At full speed, on a fancy machine, it's certainly playable but also ever so faintly dull.

So you didn't like it then?

Not so fast. While I can appreciate the time and effort that's gone into *Absolute Zero*, I can't shake the suspicion that rather too much of it has been applied to the wrong aspects. Apart from the aforementioned storyline detail, there's the game's main menu, or as Domark would have it, the 'Virtual Tunnel'. The Virtual Tunnel is a horribly garish SGI-rendered spinny-round animated nightmare. For "maximum Virtual Tunnel performance" the installation routine recommends that you provide an extra 20MB of disk space... Yes, I kid you not – that's 20MB of hard drive space just so the bloody *menu* will run at optimum performance. Christ on a bike! Run it on a 486 and the Virtual Tunnel grinds along like a mangy diseased dog with two legs missing.

It's a shame: *Absolute Zero* could have been an entertaining twist on the *Wing Commander/Elite* genre: there are loads of ground-based missions, plenty of different characters, fairly complex mission objectives, SVGA spaceships, alien monsties, a big plot twist... but it's also got bland scenery, pointless tinsel, and a disappointing frame rate. If you hang on in there, you may well get into it – but why bother when there's other, more accessible stuff around? Z

Score

70

***Absolute Zero* is *Wing Commander* on the rocks.**

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Domark
Tel: 0181-780 2222

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

(Below left) ...but it's not quite as much fun as it looks.

Rayman

Rayman is short, almost cute and stars in the new PlayStation platform conversion from UbiSoft. Richard Crook, on the other hand, is just very short. We decided to let him review the game anyway and after strapping him to a heap of cushions we handed him a Phantom 2 gamepad – but only after checking that it didn't have any sharp edges.

Tech specs

Memory: 4Mb
Processor: 486
Graphics: VGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Keyboard/gamepad (recommended)

PC OWNERS HAVE HARDLY BEEN very spoilt for choice as far as platform games are concerned, and unless you're a big Disney fan, you're still better off playing the wondrous *Zool* if you fancy some fast action platform fun. *Zool* offers gameplay by the bucketload from the ant with attitude – what's more, it's now on budget for just a few hundred pence.

So has UbiSoft's cutesy character with no arms (although fortunately for him he does have sort of 'floating hands') got that extra little something that will take the genre to dizzy new heights? Well, er – no, not really. But make no mistake, *Rayman* looks quite gorgeous. In many ways it is comparable to the excellent *Donkey Kong Country* on the SNES – but that was made remarkable by the fact that it was actually written for a 16-bit console, rather than a power-packed PC.

Cutesy, Disney-esque sprites, silky smooth parallax scrolling and colourful glamorama backgrounds are all very nice, but after just a few levels, it all starts to look a little familiar. You leap from leaf to branch to mound of earth, punching nasties with your telescopic fist, collecting power-ups and curious blue jewel-like things as you go. At the end of each section you get the welcome opportunity to duff up an end-of-level baddie and if you deliver the goods you get to progress to the next fork in the map. If you haven't got a vital bit of kit, sorry but you'll have to go back and get it. Similarly, some parts of the earlier levels won't be accessible until you've reached a particular point in the game, and you will need to go back in order to complete certain sections. In the eyes of UbiSoft this makes the game non-linear; other people might say that this is just a ridiculous way of making you play the same section twice.

(Above right) You'll have to punch the nasties 'cos you can't jump on their heads like in just about every other platform game – doooh!

(Below) Overall presentation is very high – and the game is massive, containing almost 70 levels, plus all the hidden bits.

(Below right) Don't play this on a P133 – it's just too damn fast (not that this will be a problem to 99.999% of the gamesplaying public). It does, however, compare favourably with the PlayStation version when running on a more modest Pentium.

Rayman Schmayman?

Control is good (with a gamepad) and the levels (all 68 of 'em) are varied and challenging, but there's never anything completely unexpected or original that makes you scream "Wow! I haven't seen that in a platform game before!".

You get to fly on a wasp-like beastie that wants to be your chum and haggle with this wizard-like bloke (who just happens to look like Tom Petty). This wizard demands jewels in exchange for access to the odd bonus level. Standard platform stuff that's all rather flat and two dimensional, in every respect. No whacky 3D bits, no really clever puzzles or particularly taxing levels, just nice graphics and a steady learning curve that veers from easy-peasy to just plain bloody annoying.

Overall the standard of presentation is high, and UbiSoft have created a very likeable two-dimensional platformer. Ultimately though, *Rayman* is all pretty limited, and – despite UbiSoft's best efforts – pretty linear. Z

Score

76

Nice, but nothing new.

Price: £TBC **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: UbiSoft
Tel: 0181-941 4004

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During a recent visit to the International AutoSport show Pete Hawley entered the Press-Kart challenge. Despite being lapped by Formula One Driver Jos Verstappen, we thought we'd better let him review *F1GP2* to stop him crying and stomping his feet.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Formula One Grand Prix 2

NO LONGER DO OUR LIVES SEEM SO vacuous and dull, dull, dull. And the reason? Well, it's all thanks to Geoff – he's finally pulled his finger out and put an end to all of our misery by finishing *Formula One Grand Prix 2*, the follow-up to one of the finest and best-selling pieces of software in the history of the PC. You won't have to rely on driving high octane American imitations around oval circuits for your racing relief any more, this is without doubt motor sport at its very finest – twisting chicanes, blinding straights, high speed corners, pit stops and all the excitement of a full race weekend.

A Grand Prix two-day event must rate as one of the most enjoyable ways to spend a lazy summer's day. It's a truly grand occasion: 90,000-plus crowds, the deafening roar of the F1 engines and of course the constant buzz of helicopters continuously dropping off celebs in the centre paddock. And let's not forget the culinary burger delights of Mrs Miggins Stale Buns Ltd, or the mad butcher from Yorkshire with a bit of a preference for stray dogs who stuffs in all the dodgy fillings (chubby, sweaty hands are a prerequisite of employment, by the way).

The first thing that hits you straight between the eyes is the presentation of the menu screens and sub-menus that lead to the multitude of pre-race options and set-up screens. This is a glorious front end; every screen is beautifully laid out over some of the best F1 action shots from the last couple of seasons.

Tech specs

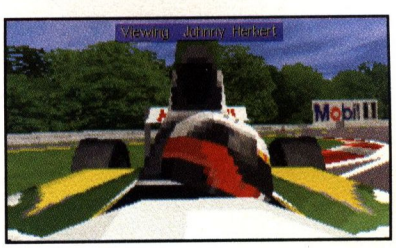
Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Keyboard, joystick, wheel, pedals
Note: 35Mb hard drive recommended

"Looking ahead I can see my social life disappearing and my conversations in the pub leaning towards brum-brums and various pit stop strategies."

Anyway, I digress. Yes, it's finally here, probably the most long-awaited game in living memory (well, apart from that one beginning with 'Q'... you know the one I mean, the follow-up to *Doom*. The name escapes me for the moment). This is it as far as I'm concerned, the PC was made for titles like this. You can keep all your FMV crap, despite the fact that there seems to be such a bloody endless stream of it. Geoff and his small team of co-workers have proved once again that knowing exactly how a game should play as well as the roll call of essential gaming ingredients are all you need to create a modern day masterpiece.

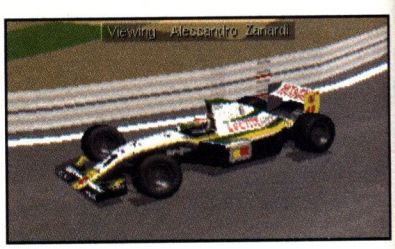
After spending only a couple of minutes looking at all the pre-game options, it becomes obvious just how damn easy it would be to spend ages and ages happily playing around with the set-up screens and moulding the feel of the game to suit your own personal style.

Setting up the car is obviously one of the most important aspects and there are a number of sub-screens that you can enter, depending on your technical knowledge and patience. Of course you can always just have everything on automatic so the front and rear down force is predefined, as well as the brake balancing and camber adjustments; this



(Left) Johnny Herbert does a remarkable impression of what it looks like when your head falls off.

(Right) The texture-mapping is really gobsmacking.



allows you to just get on with the racing while leaving the techie stuff to Geoff's pre-programmed groundwork. If you've made changes to the chassis and wing adjustments, you can test them during practice sessions; any faults or problems with the car you might come across can be changed in the pit lane garage.

As well as all of the car and engine tinkering, there's the in-cockpit features to adjust the gameplay (which players of the original game will find familiar). You can amend these options during the actual racing periods easily enough by tapping the function keys to toggle the driver aids on or off. The full range includes: auto brakes, steering, gear changes, as well as the facility to switch the racing line for girlie no-nobs and everything off for blokes – yes folks, the choice is all yours.

Let's get physical

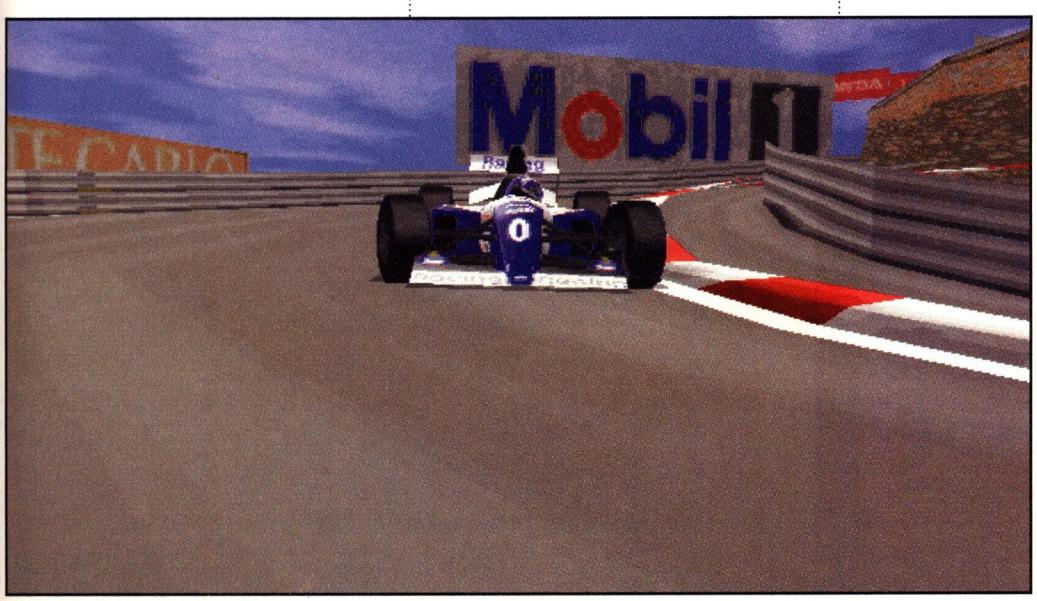
Whether you're on the circuit or setting up the cars in the pit lane garages, the one thing that stands out above all the other features is the pure attention to detail – it really is more than evident that Geoff has gone to painstaking lengths to make sure that every aspect of the game is 100 per cent perfect.

Way back in the very early days of the game's development, *PC Zone* were kept up to date with Geoff's numerous trips abroad visiting race meets world-wide, where he'd walk around all the circuits recording reams of film with his trusty little camcorder – with such thorough preparation and knowing his thirst to capture 'the whole picture' we knew that we'd be in for a real treat.

Indeed, he recorded every possible aspect of the various world circuits, »

(Above) The texture-mapped vehicles are all up to the quality of the rendered intros that we got a couple of years ago.

(Below) Check it out! Is that an in-game shot or part of a cut-scene?

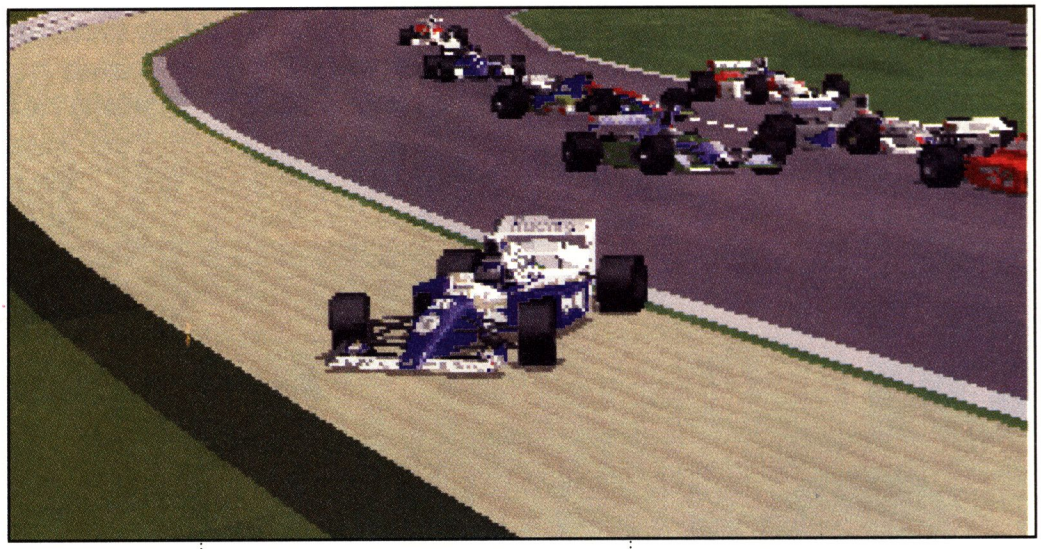


The author

There can be no doubt about it – Geoff Crammond's original *Formula One Grand Prix* was an absolute landmark in PC game technology: great scenery, accurate circuit design and excellent car models. On the realism front it was far and away the best racing title of the time and during the long winter months since, while we've been waiting impatiently for the successor, everyone's still been playing it. The amount of fanatical interest it's generated is still in evidence now and can only increase with the release of this vastly superior sequel. Just after the launch of the original in 1990, I remember that it wasn't long before readers started to send in pictures of the cockpits and chassis that they had built in their bedrooms – call 'em saddoes, but what better way to illustrate the impact the game had on PC owners across the UK?

User groups and newsgroups sprang up on the Internet, people wrote *FIGP* editors for Windows to allow players to change every aspect of the cars and teams, and up until last year there were regular race meets across the country where users could get together and hold their very own FIA World Championship, complete with champagne and trophies. There was even a documentary on BBC2 around the time of the game's launch that charted the progress of hopefuls who used Geoff's simulator to learn the circuits of the world before embarking on a test programme with the big teams in F1. Say no more!

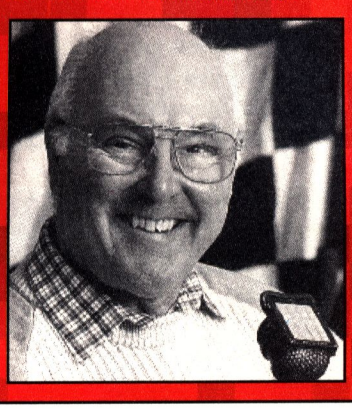
(Right) Guess who's spun off just as he was winning (snigger)?

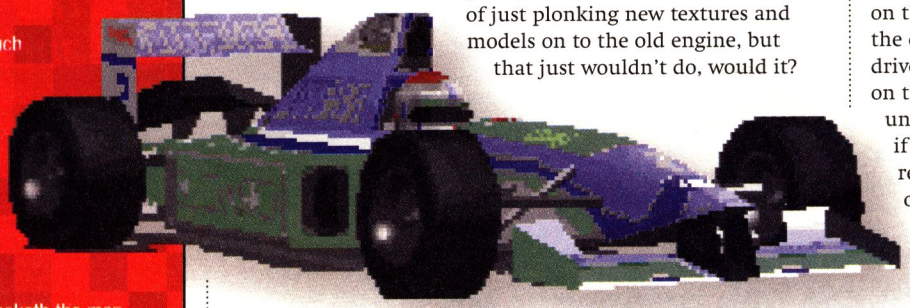


Murray Walker

It will be a sad day indeed when ITV take over the coverage of the Grand Prix season in 1997. Murray Walker, the BBC's loveable and cuddly motor sports commentator for the last 50 years, will probably call it a day and hang up his microphone, leaving the way clear for some clueless overpaid moron to whittle on about pit stop strategies for two and a half hours. (This will obviously be inbetween advert breaks for Renault people carriers and Benetton woolly jumpers.) So here's a look at some of Murray's finer moments for you to shout at the top of your voice in a totally uncontrollable manner throughout the game.

- "Unless I'm very much mistaken... I AM very much mistaken!"
- "He is shedding buckets of adrenaline in that car."
- "It's raining and the track is wet."
- "They say clothes maketh the man the clothes are Niki Lauda's, but the contents are me..." as Murray prepares to take a drive in a F1 car.
- "...and there's no damage to the car... except to the car itself."
- "The beak of Ayrton Senna's chicken is pulling ahead."
- "Only a few more laps to go and then the action will begin, unless this is the action, which it is."
- "And the first five places are filled by five different cars."
- "Schumacher crosses the line to start another lap, and there's nothing there!"
- "That's not four tenths of a second. Look at it. It's Michael Schumacher."





« including the differing colours of the tarmac – that may sound just a little bit excessive, but Geoff felt it necessary to note the wall and floor textures and the exact physical representations of every corner and bump in the road surface.

The physics of the *F1GP2* game engine are just outstanding. Geoff could have plumped for the much easier option of just plonking new textures and models on to the old engine, but that just wouldn't do, would it?

But not only is *F1GP2* as close as you're likely to get to the real thing (without being battered about the head and neck by incredible forces of the 'G' variety), the addition of the official FIA license just further enhances the realism. Every detail is correct down to the smallest of pixels, the physical models, the sounds and the structures of every circuit based on the 1994 season, the outside views of the cars and drivers, the heads of the drivers bobbing and shaking violently on the tight corners, the car's bloody uncontrollable rear end after a shunt if you end up in the gravel traps. The real-time light sourcing of all the objects is incredibly subtle, yet very effective. It certainly gets your adrenaline rushing – the light gleams off the car monocoques

Look Mum, I'm on telly

Racing games have always had the added attraction of watching countless replays from many different angles. *Formula One Grand Prix 2* even surpasses past efforts from the likes of Papyrus, whose infamous camera angles showed off the crashes resulting from a 200mph dash around the circuit going the wrong way in all their glory. The shots and sweeps of the cameras in *FIGP2* are so amazing that you stop and think "For God's sake Geoff, didn't you have enough on your plate without going into the finer details of how to direct your own GP coverage?". This single aspect makes you take a step back and realise just how much detail and effort has gone into the finished product. Obviously the official FOCA license counts for something.

Making the F1GP2 experience even better!

Here's a few handy hints for all budding F1 drivers and how to improve the overall FIGP2 experience:

1 Buy yourself a ThrustMaster steering wheel and pedals.
2 Borrow a helmet, boiler suit and pair of thick gloves.
3 Build an F1 cockpit in your bedroom and stack loads of enormous Good Year tyres in neat piles on the landing.
4 Invite 16 friends round (if you have any left by this point) and ask them to bring a large petrol pump, two wheel jacks and a couple of Black & Decker hammer drills.
5 Invite some of the local kids along to the event and ask them to bring their mum's hairdryers to blow in your face during a race, and two small buckets full of flies to hurl at your visor on the straights.
6 Get in touch with the local council and ask for the loan of an arrogant German exchange student for the afternoon so that when the race is over he can wave his fists and tell you just how shit you were.
7 And, in case you have a bad shunt during a race, ask your mates in the pit crews to bring a couple of ample sledge hammers so they can pummel the sides of your helmet when you hit the tyre wall. Excellent!

and the drivers' helmets, and you can't help but feel that you really *are* going to lose your momentum by trimming those kerbs a little too much.

Naturally the shunts and accidents are accurately represented throughout the race season and there's an option to have the drivers perform in a similar way to their actual performances in the 1994 season, or they can be random. Yet more options, I think I'm going to start screaming! If you're feeling excitable, indulge yourself in the pit stop strategies and tyre selection throughout the race 'weekend' – but regardless of the amount of techie stuff you decide to get stuck into, the atmosphere generated by all these features is simply unbeatable.

Oh no, it's all over!

It has to be said that nearing the end of this review I was incredibly hard-pushed to fault this game in any way, shape or form. It's clear that if you're not a fan of racing titles then you're simply not going to be interested, but for the rest of us this is *the* driving game, bar none, and I can safely say that it will remain so for some time. But be warned, it isn't easy: one mistake on the corners, even with the driver aids switched on, and the car will become uncontrollable – don't forget that you're dealing with a simulated version of a highly tuned multi-million pound piece of racing engineering, not a go-kart.

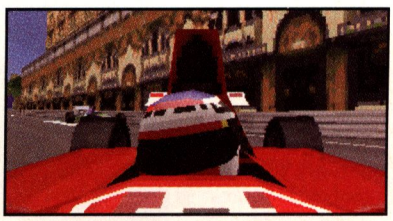
However, to have all the options and textures in their full glory it's a case of Pentium-only I'm afraid, but if you chop some of the backgrounds down you'll have a decent running speed. Having said that, *F1GP2* is nonetheless one of the best-looking games I've ever seen, even in low-res. It looks outstanding and from a distance using the outside camera views it's like watching BBC2 on a Sunday. The hi-res mode is pure eye candy, but requires something of a ninja PC to get a decent frame rate.

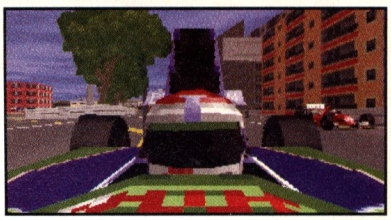
Looking ahead I can see my social life disappearing and my conversations in the pub leaning towards brum-brums and pit stop strategies. But I don't really feel as though I've finished this review; I've had to leave so much out, simply because there's so much involved and so many options and sub-options and sub-sub options to fiddle with. *F1GP2* is already a main contender for Game of the Year and one of the finest pieces of software I've ever had the pleasure to review. *F1GP3* anyone? **Z**

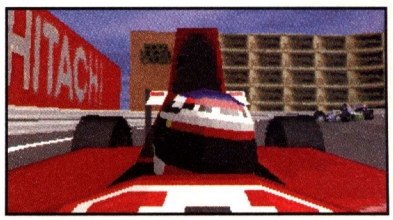
(Above) Ooh it's just like the telly innit? All of the external views have the cameras exactly where you'd expect them to be.

(Right column) SVGA-tastic head wobbling about action. Cool.

(Below left) Despite all of the other changes in the sequel, the cockpit still looks the same.







Score

95

An absolute masterpiece – this is the finest game I've had the pleasure to play in a long, long time.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** February
Publisher: Microprose **Tel:** 01454 326532

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Orcs, elves, wizards and other RPG bods star in the sequel to *Warcraft.* Er, hang on... methinks they were all in the first one too, says Chris Anderson.

Warcraft 2: Tides

(Right) Mean nasty evil orc-types.

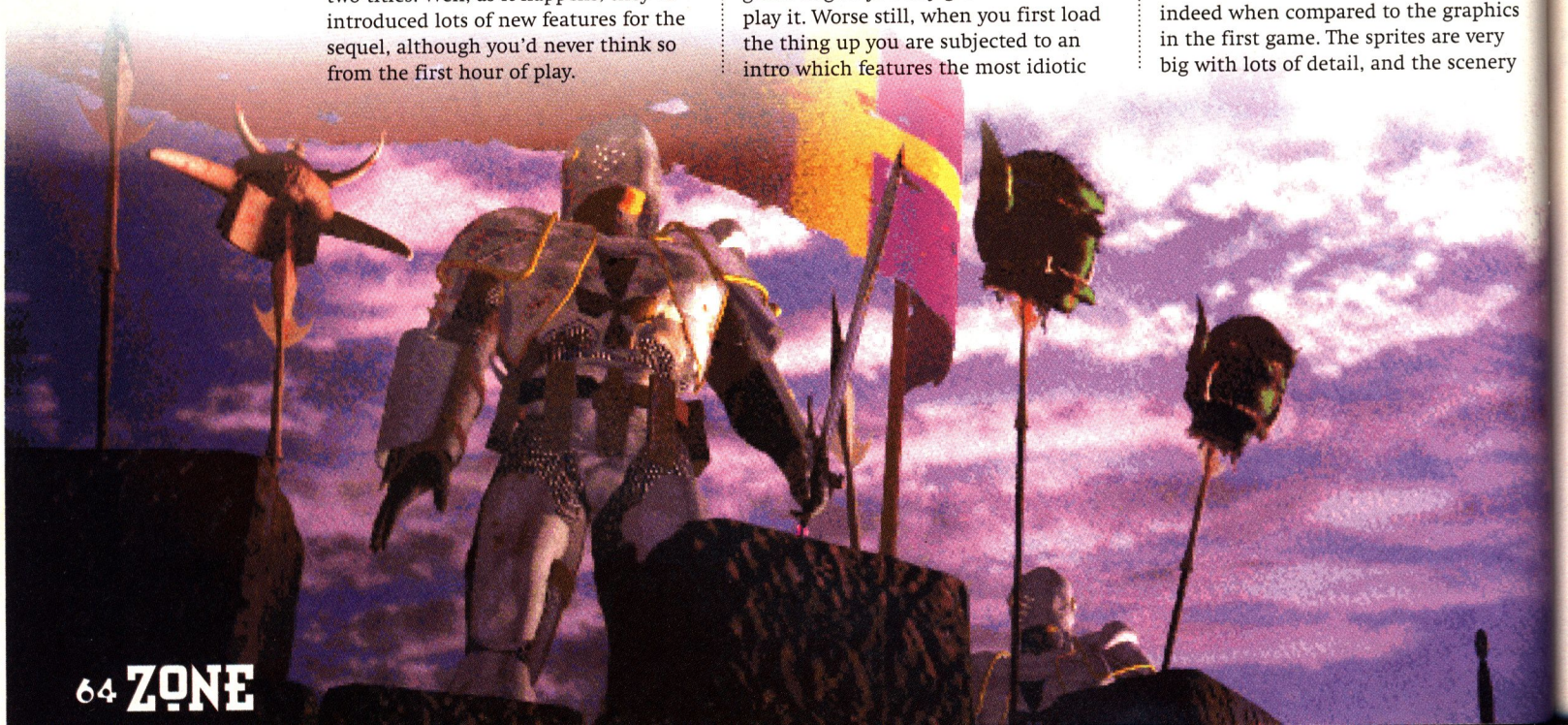
Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse
Note: 20Mb hard disk space required

ALMOST TWO YEARS AFTER THE release of *Warcraft*, the sequel arrives with a continuation of the original plot (ie "let's all save Azeroth from nasty orcs", for those who don't know) and all the characters from the first game have been kept too, so you just might be wondering exactly what the designers have been up to during the lengthy gap between the two titles. Well, as it happens, they've introduced lots of new features for the sequel, although you'd never think so from the first hour of play.

To be honest, my first impressions of *Warcraft 2* were less than favourable. I had a good look at the manual and was confronted with a lengthy section explaining the history of Azeroth and all its heroes and legends. It goes on and on about people with names that nobody can pronounce (except whoever made them up in the first place), and does nothing to set the scene for the game or give you any great desire to play it. Worse still, when you first load the thing up you are subjected to an intro which features the most idiotic voice-over I've ever heard in a computer game. Let's face it, if you're interviewing candidates to perform a voice-over for a highly polished CD-ROM title, it's hardly likely that you're going to pick someone with a highly embarrassing speech impediment. Imagine David Bellamy in a state of feverish excitement trying desperately hard to pronounce lots of words featuring the dreaded letter 'R' and failing miserably, and you've got the *Warcraft* intro in a nutshell. Even bloody simple stuff like 'brave warriors' suddenly becomes 'bwave wawwiors' and while we all found this highly amusing in the office, it's hardly the sort of thing that atmospheric intros are made of. Still, as always it's the actual game that matters, and when I finally got to the opening level I was greeted with...

(Below) Well, this guy certainly *looks* hard enough to take on the orcish hordes.



Glowious SVGA

Warcraft 2 has hi-res graphics which, it has to be said, look very impressive indeed when compared to the graphics in the first game. The sprites are very big with lots of detail, and the scenery

sof Darkness

graphics are rich and colourful. Suitably impressed with all this graphical loveliness, I innocently began to click on a few sprites when... disaster struck! The voice-over from hell was back! Click on a peasant and they respond with 'wot iz it?' in the dumbest accent you've ever heard. Click on a footman and he says 'your owders?' and so on. This was just too much. I went straight to the options screen, turned unit acknowledgments off, and when I went back to the game there was sweet, sweet silence. Finally I could get round to playing the damned thing without having to listen to the most irritating twerp in the universe. *(Thank God for that! – Ed.)*

I suppose that the obvious question to raise at this point for anyone who's played the first game is: "Has it got any better?" Well, yes it has, although apart from the obvious improvements in the graphics you won't notice any major leaps in the gameplay itself until you've played four or five levels of the game. This is because Blizzard (the designers) have kept the learning curve for the sequel pretty much the same as it was in the original, in as much as each new level introduces a new aspect of gameplay. This will probably suit newcomers to the game, but it's bound to piss off *Warcraft* veterans. The game's designers seem to think that the average PC gamer can only cope with getting used to one or two new elements of gameplay per level – come on guys, we're not stupid you know. If they'd made the first level bigger they could have taught the player all the basics in the game (which aren't exactly difficult: you cut trees for wood, mine for gold, train peasants to do your work etc), but as it stands you have to plod through loadsa levels before you get into the real meat.

When you finally get there, you'll discover lots of new things to play with. You now get fighter ships, transport ships for taking your units across the sea, scout planes, new ground vehicles, cannon and scout towers to keep the enemy at bay, lots of new mage spells and a much higher level of resource management than was offered in the first game. This all adds up to make the whole thing challenging and rewarding.

Whereas the original *Warcraft* was a tad too easy and the gameplay repetitive after continuous play, the sequel really is genuinely difficult when you get to the later levels, and the missions are varied enough to keep you interested right up until the end. Apart from the speech, the only thing that really pissed me off about the game was the artificial intelligence (or the lack of it, as it were). Take this as an example: send a peasant off to cut some wood and he'll go off and cut down trees miles away from where you sent him, stupidly ignoring a big bunch of trees right beside the lumber mill he's meant to come back to. And the fighters are a bit thick, too; if you don't tell them to attack specific targets they'll often just stand around admiring the scenery instead of taking the initiative and kicking the shit out of the nearest baddie. None of this sort of stuff would ever happen in a game like *Command & Conquer,* and that's why I've scored the game in the low eighties rather than closer to ninety.

Apart from the dodgy AI...

Okay, so it has to be said that the dodgy AI is slightly annoying – but it doesn't change the fact that overall *Warcraft 2* is a very addictive and enjoyable game. It's even better still if you are able to take advantage of the multi-player option and take on a human opponent over a network. It's a definite 'must buy' for anyone who liked the original. **Z**

(Right) You can create your own scenarios with this handy editor.

(Left) Build shipyards, foundries and oil refineries in your bid to rule the ocean waves.

Score

82

Addictive strategy game let down slightly by dodgy artificial intelligence.

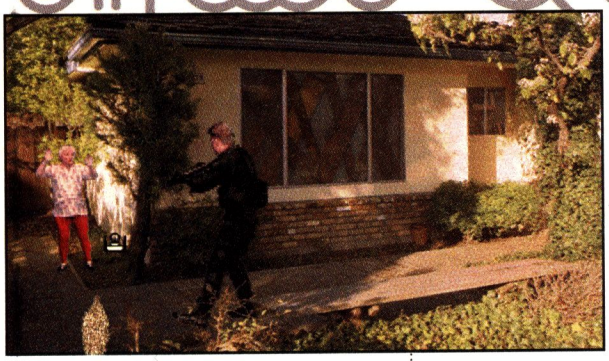
Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Zablac
Tel: 01626 332233

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

"Foxtrot Uniform Charlie Kilo Oscar Foxtrot Foxtrot," Paul Presley in an intro that's likely to cause a fuss... he just couldn't resist it, could he?

Police Quest: SWAT



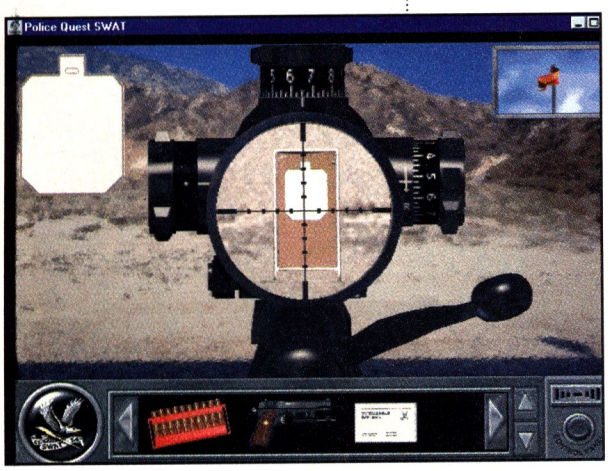
I USED TO HAVE THIS AWFUL RECURRING nightmare. It's one that you may well be familiar with, but I'll tell you about it anyway. I'm running down a corridor at my old secondary school in a soft-focus slow-motion sort of way. I'm carrying a grapefruit and a protractor. The school bell is ringing and every door has a sign on it saying "Exam In Progress". I reach the end of the corridor, where the double doors swing open, ejecting a stream of teenage kids waving papers excitedly. As the corridor clears I'm left facing my old teacher, Mr Skyle, who is glaring at me. I offer him my grapefruit but he just shouts, "You missed the exam, Presley. You'll pay for this. I'll see to it that you never amount to anything!". The grapefruit falls to the floor and splits open; it's at this point that I normally wake up in the traditional Hollywood manner of suddenly sitting bolt upright in a dripping sweat.

So why am I telling you this? Because after playing *Police Quest: SWAT* for some time, the dream changed. The game involves studying for police procedure tests and exams and, as a result, other elements of the game have worked their way into my dream. Instead of the grapefruit falling to the floor when Mr Skyle screams at me, I'm pleased to see that the protractor has turned into a .308 bolt action assault rifle and I end up shooting him clean through the head. Dead. I'm a lot happier, my life is much more relaxed and Sierra have saved me a fortune in therapist fees. The moral here is that games are good for you... oh, and that *Police Quest: SWAT* is a lot like being back at school.

(Above) Gertrude "Fingers" McNee, head bag lady for the mob. Be careful men, she's armed with a sharp tongue!

(Above far right) *Doom* for propellor heads.

(Below) Officer Chuck Upton saves the world from the Invasion Of The Mutant Cardboard Thingies.



Ah, back on topic

You're one of LA's finest (meaning that you spend a lot of time framing people and beating up black suspects). You've decided that life in the regular old Vice and Homicide divisions just wasn't your cup of decaf; no, you want the weight of some real weaponry in your hands, so you've joined the Special Weapons And Tactics division as a rookie so that you can learn to look hard abseiling down buildings and risk your neck at least once per hour.

Your time in *SWAT* is divided between studying, learning and researching the correct ways to perform all sorts of police procedures; training with live ammo on different shooting ranges; answering calls to real-life emergency situations; and taking exams to allow you into the division you call home.

And the surprising thing is, it works. It really does. It may sound somewhat boring, and indeed certain sections are (video lectures, all that studying), but for the most part it's just so absorbing you'd think it was wrapped around a cute cuddly little puppy. For once heavy reliance on FMV actually adds to the game – the real-life situations are all the more believable when real actors and scenery are used. The situations are a combination of knowing the correct procedure (and when to use it) and point-and-click adventure. Events like assaulting a barricaded house or trying to rescue a terrified hostage from an armed maniac are just as tense as they should be; and when you get chewed out by a hard-nosed superior for accidentally shooting your team leader through the back of the head, you really feel ashamed. It's bloody marvellous!

Sonny Bonds we miss you

All in all, this is a return to the old days of the *Police Quest* series, when the puzzles revolved around actual police work and not some lame *Lethal Weapon* rip-off story. As well as a sense of uniqueness, it's a different twist on the traditional adventure game. It's a shame it's not compatible with some kind of light-gun device, as that would send the score into the high nineties. As it is, *Police Quest: SWAT* is something different that you might just enjoy. Give it a whirl, or you'll never know. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse

Score

83

A refreshing change from the masters of twee.

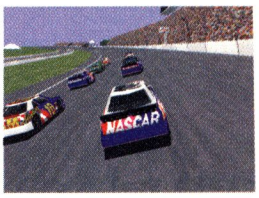
Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Sierra
Tel: 01734 303171

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

EDGE Want in your face, Mach-speed, pulse-pounding realism, that'll leave you shaking in your space boots? Then brace yourself, as Diamond takes gaming to the edge with a new 3D multimedia accelerator designed for Windows® 95. The Diamond EDGE 3D makes game play fully immersive and totally interactive. With real-time, jaw-dropping 3D and 2D photo-realistic graphics, a thundering wavetable audio engine, vicious full-motion digital video, and an advanced digital game port, that will leave you running for cover. Plus, a Sega game port and support for multiplayer action with Control Pad. The Diamond EDGE 3D comes bundled with killer games and software including Virtua Fighter Remix, NASCAR® Racing, and more. And it allows you to play your existing DOS games without sacrificing speed or quality. The Diamond EDGE 3D gives you perspective highest frame rates around.

PUSH THE EDGE

Plus a multitude of special effects for a gaming experience so real you'll smell the detonation. With true Plug-and-Play, a 5-year warranty, and online support services, you'll have a few less things to fear. So, if you're ready for the ultimate challenge call your nearest Diamond retailer today. We'll take you as far as you're willing to go.



- Designed for Windows® 95
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- Fast 2D graphics and Windows acceleration
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- Full-motion digital video, with video texturing
- Hardware Wavetable audio, 50 voices
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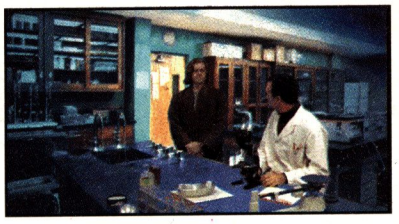


PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Chris "I hate games with lots of FMV in them" Anderson reviews, er, a game with lots of FMV in it.

Gabriel Knight 2

The Beast

FOR EVERY HALF-DECENT GAME that's ever made, you can be sure that there will be a sequel to follow it. This particular one is the follow-up to *Gabriel Knight*, a rather excellent adventure that featured the considerable talents of Tim Curry, who provided a very convincing voice-over for the main character. If you liked the first one, you may well be looking at the screenshots here and thinking, "Oh no, they've only gone and totally ruined it with lots of crap FMV." And who could really blame you? Well relax everyone, there are plenty of reasons to get excited about *Gabriel Knight 2* (Sierra don't use his name in the title anymore, they just describe it as a Gabriel Knight mystery, but here at *Zone* we call it what is, so there). The first thing to go under the microscope is the all-important plot, which is what made *Gabriel Knight* so engrossing in the first place...

The man who cried wolf

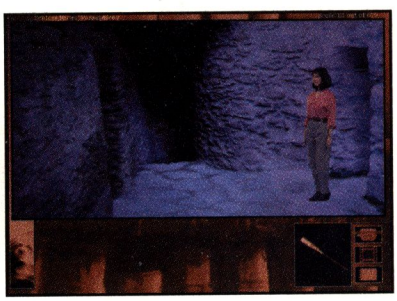
Let's start with a brief recap of what happened in episode one, shall we? Gabriel Knight, an unsuccessful horror writer, starts to investigate a series of killings in New Orleans which seem to be related to a local voodoo cult. To cut a long story short, he gets to the bottom of the murders, takes on (and defeats) the voodoo cult, and along the way discovers he has German relatives who inform him that there is a long line of Schattenjagers (shadow/witch hunters) in the family. After successfully passing several tests, Gabriel ends up being a Schattenjager himself.

At the start of the second game, a long FMV-tastic intro shows Gabriel being approached by the parents of a young girl who has been murdered. The police stupidly come up with the wrong culprits, believing that two wolves who have just escaped from the local zoo are responsible; the villagers know better and say, "Bollocks to that, it's a bloody werewolf mate." Naturally Gabriel, in his new role of Schattenjager, is asked to investigate the murder. As he's such an accommodating chap he agrees to spend some time on the parents' farm (the scene of the crime) to see if he can find out what's going on. Upon visiting the place where the girl was killed, he finds some wolf hair and a bloody great footprint in the grass. Hmm, suspicious or what? As he ponders the meaning of all this, so your adventure begins.

A game of two halves

The game is played over six chapters (it comes on six CDs). You mostly control Gabriel's movements; the rest of the time you control Grace, his voluptuous (and tempestuous) assistant at his book shop in New Orleans. For each character you have a map showing the places you can go to; the number of locations open to you at any one time varies depending on what you've done in the game.

At the beginning of chapter 1 you are in control of Gabriel. Most of this chapter is spent trying to get into the wolves enclosure at the local zoo, but none of the geezers at the zoo will let you anywhere near them. The only way around this situation is to solve a rather



(Right) Gerde and Grace play happy families.

(Above right) Gabriel arrives at the scene of another horrific murder.

Within

clever puzzle involving several cassette tapes, a lot of splicing and two walkie talkies – it was at this point that I began to think that I had a rather smart game on my hands. The plot was developing nicely, the acting was pretty good, and the FMV scenes were contributing enormously to the atmosphere, rather than just getting in the way like they usually do. So there I was at the beginning of chapter 2, mentally kicking myself for allowing what was fundamentally an 'interactive movie' get such a hold on me, when suddenly... it got even better.

Girls will be girls

The highlight of chapter 2 is the ongoing battle between Gabriel's sidekick, Grace, and Gerde, the housemaid at his castle in Germany (he inherited the castle when his great uncle snuffed it in the first game). Grace pretends to have no time for Gabriel, but secretly she has the hots for him – big-time.

She suspects that while she's been working for Gabriel in New Orleans, he's been up to a bit of hanky panky with Gerde at the castle. She makes no secret of her suspicions with Gerde and constantly talks to her like she's a piece of shit. Women, eh? Predictably, Gerde gets pissed off with all this and refuses to help Grace in any way whatsoever. If you were to listen in on one of their conversations, it would probably go something like this:

Grace: Can I borrow Gabriel's car keys?

Gerde: No.

Grace: Well let me help with the werewolf case then.

Gerde: Gabriel asked me to do his research for him, not you.

Grace: Look, just let me have the key to the library.

Gerde: No, piss off.

Get the idea? Anyway, the upshot of all this is that you have to find your way around all of Grace's problems for the duration of the second chapter.

"I was mentally kicking myself for allowing what was fundamentally an 'interactive movie' get a hold on me, when suddenly... it got even better."

Chapter 3 sees the return of Gabriel and this is when you start to get an idea of where the whole thing's taking you. Gabriel gets into a hunting club and discovers that the club members have a rather unusual interest: all they ever want to talk about is wolves, wolves, and more bloody wolves. I don't want to give too much of the plot away here, suffice to say that one of the blokes at the club turns out to be a werewolf and it's up to you and Gabe to sort him out.

(Above right) You even get to go on telly. Well, Gabriel does.

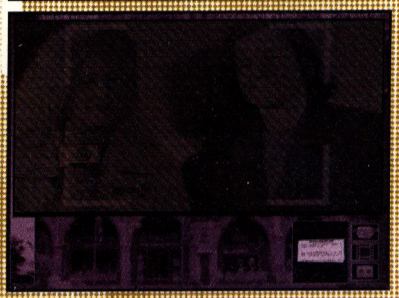
(Left) The tape puzzle is quite clever, if not terribly difficult.

Memory matters

The box for *The Beast Within* claims that you need a minimum of 8 megs of RAM. Bollocks! I played it on a P75 with 8Mb of RAM and the disk accessing was so bad that I eventually took to popping down my local for a few pints while I was waiting for it to go from one scene to the next. On a 16Mb machine it was fine though – so make sure that you've got the necessary RAM first of all or you'll be mightily pissed off!

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/33
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse



It's fair to say that as an adventure game *The Beast Within* is not the most difficult thing you'll ever play, though there are a few places where I suspect that most of you will be stumped for a while. But as an interactive movie it's absolutely brilliant. Dean Erickson puts in a superbly understated performance as hero Gabriel Knight and the plot gets more complex and engrossing as it goes on. I suspect that fans of the first game will enjoy it more than newcomers, if only because they'll be able to identify with all of the characters. The good news though, is that the first one will be out on budget at the end of this month, so if you haven't got it already you can buy both of them and then you'll have two brilliant games to play instead of one. Smart, eh? Z

Score

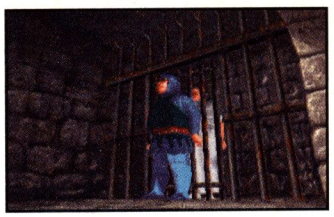
88

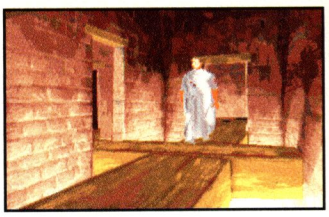
An interactive movie that's nowhere near as crap as all the other ones.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Sierra **Tel:** 01734 303322

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

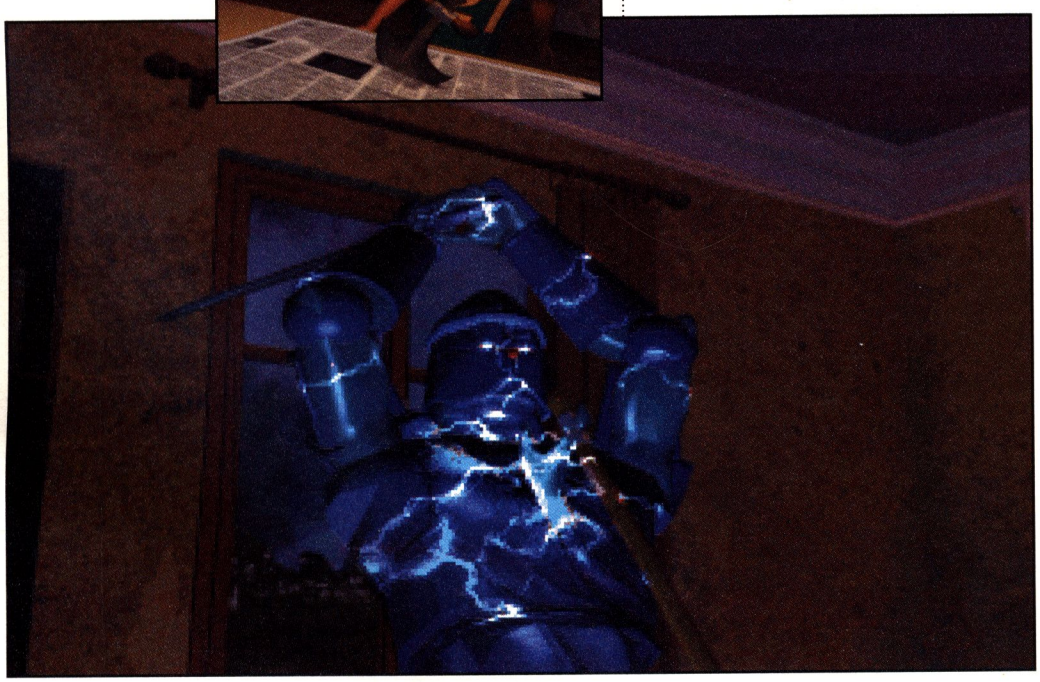
Patrick McCarthy grabs the opportunity to skip about in the back garden of the fourth dimension like an elfin prince. Ahh!





Time Gate

(Right and below) Selected highlights from the almost film-like intro sequence. (Just to spoil the end).

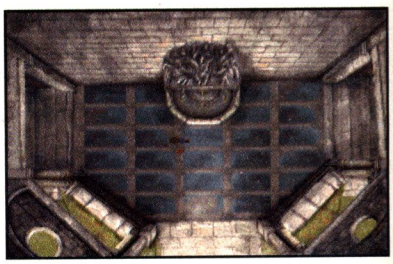


YOU ARE WILLIAM TIBBS, AN American student with some seriously un-American sideburns who has come to Paris to speak in a booming voice in restaurants, order Coke with all your meals despite there being an ample supply of alternative beverages available, and ridicule the titchy French automobiles with their pathetic lack of chrome and their seats made of straw. In your spare time you set about studying international law, in the hope that one day you will be able to make some serious money from an environmental disaster. Within minutes of landing at the airport, you have acquired a beautiful French chick by the name of Juliette Gascogne as your girlfriend, largely thanks to the supply of genuine nylon stockings and American cigarettes that you have dangling on the inside of your coat on little pieces of string. What's more, as soon as she realises that you wash every day and change your underwear on a regular basis, she proposes marriage – and you readily accept,

"Your beautiful French girlfriend has armpits so hairy that she looks like a poodle smuggler, but you've always been a sucker for hairy women."

mainly because she doesn't chew gum while having sex and has armpits so hairy that she looks like a poodle smuggler. You've always been a sucker for hairy women. (Literally.)

One evening, however, your idyllic new lifestyle is shattered, right in the middle of learning the French term for nuclear-free zone: a large man wearing medieval armour and brandishing a sword crashes through the window of your bedroom, seemingly determined to turn you into a chump chop. Fortunately, for some reason known only to himself, the man-in-armour announced his entrance by throwing a battle axe through the window first, and you, showing the resourcefulness that has made America the greatest country the universe has ever known,



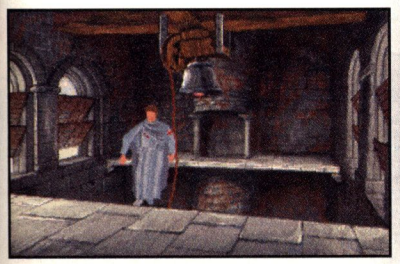
pick up the axe and hurl it into the intruder's chest. Much to your surprise, he disappears with a spark and a puff of smoke. You're just about to congratulate yourself on your Starsky and Hutch-style handiness in a scrap, when you hear a disembodied, slightly scary voice with a French accent telling you that your beloved Juliette has been kidnapped. Before you can say, "A kidnapped girlie – what an unusual way to start an adventure game," the voice goes on to explain that she was nabbed on the way to the snappily-named Museum of the History and Tradition of The Middle Ages, where she was training to be an archaeologist, and that she's been secreted in that very same Museum.

They call me Mister Tibbs

Next morning, after a good sleep and a nice breakfast, off you hurry to the Museum to save your love. And off you go into another *Alone In The Dark* style adventure, during the course of which you'll be plunged back in time to the 1300s, the days of the Knights Templar – for you are the reincarnation of one of the original nine Templars. The disembodied voice is that of the evil Wolfram, an old enemy who you've fought down the ages in your various incarnations, and who, since this is the first of a three-part series, you will probably be fighting again in Parts Two and Three. Well, what are you waiting for? Get out there and rescue that chick...

Sudden, violent death

As you can probably see from the screenshots, *Time Gate* really doesn't look much different to the three *Alone In The Dark* games. That's because it isn't. Claims of great advances in the graphics department have been made – light sourcing on all the sets and guru shading on the characters – but the effects don't exactly transform the thing. You can see the differences; the characters look a bit more rounded, but it's hardly a quantum leap from *AITD*. So let's move onto the gameplay.



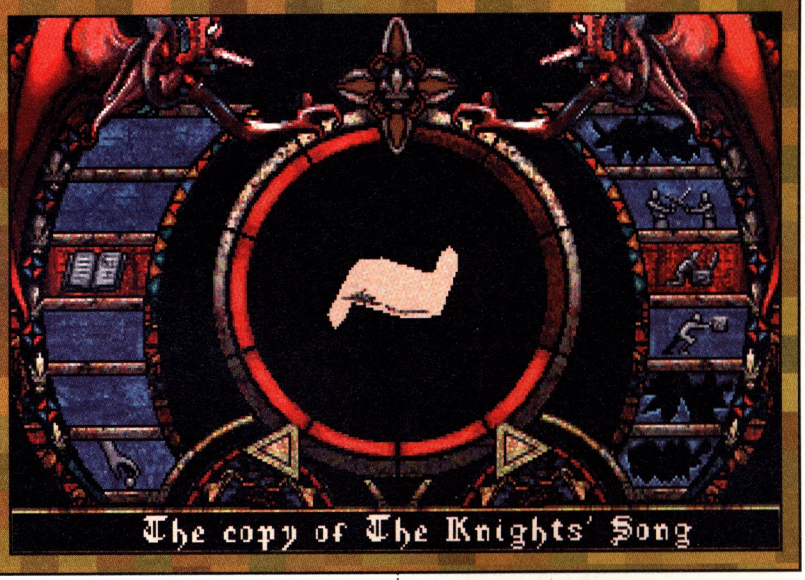
The controls

The basic game controls are just as idiosyncratic as ever.

Fight: Use this, then press spacebar in the game in conjunction with direction arrows to hit in different ways, or to slash your sword in different directions.
Open/search: Select this, then press spacebar in the game to open doors and cupboards and things, and search the room generally; also to look for specific objects and pick them up.
Push: Activated as above, but use it to push things out of the way (the direction depends on which cursor key you use) and activate certain switches.

Icons on the left work with objects in your inventory. Combining objects with other objects has to be played by ear: sometimes if you try to use one on its own, the game guesses what you have in mind and you don't have to do things step by step; at other times you have to click on the separate objects. The number of icons available varies according to the object itself.

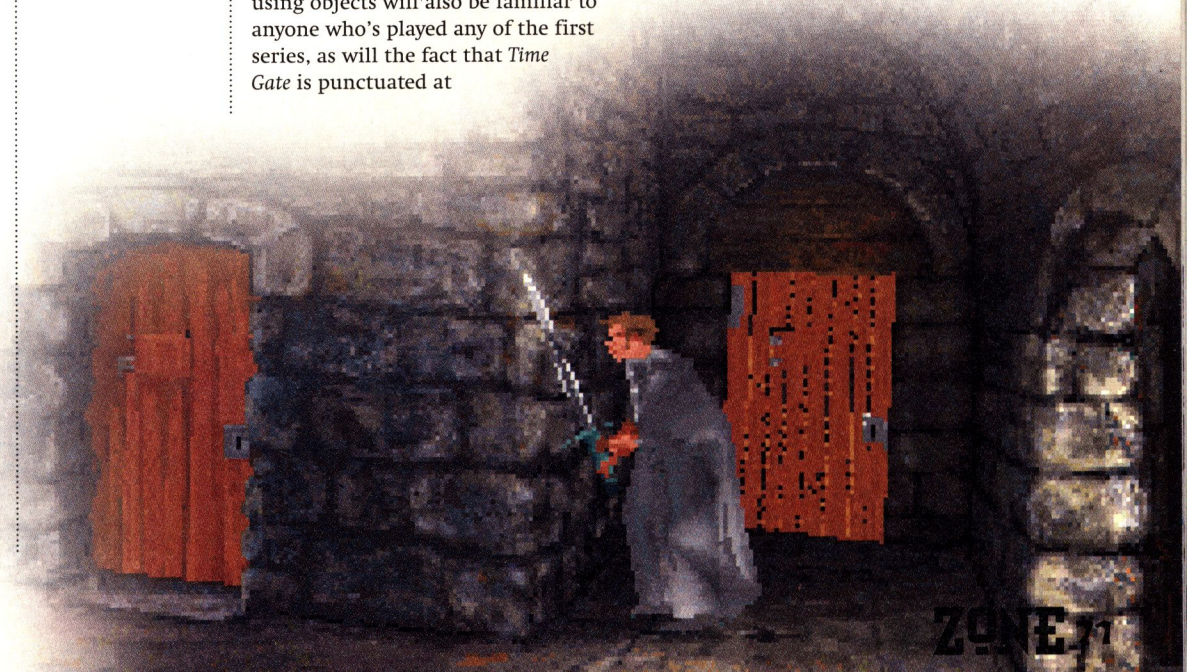
Use: Click on this, then exit and press spacebar to use an object.
Throw: Use as above to hurl the object into the wide blue Empyrean (or somewhere else, if you like).
Drop: Er, this one drops stuff that you don't want.

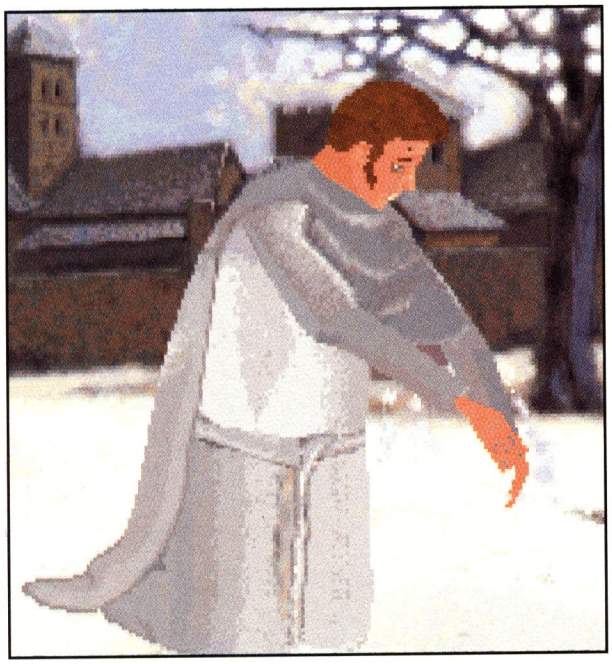


(Below) Have you seen the size of my sword? You need two hands to hold it.

(Below left) You can ring my bell (x24).

Here, too, nothing very much has changed. There are still rooms to be explored, objects to find, obscure and sometimes baffling puzzles to solve, enemies to fight and multiple camera angles that frame all the action. Given the number of people who loved *AITD*, this will be good news for them. The controls for fighting, picking up and using objects will also be familiar to anyone who's played any of the first series, as will the fact that *Time Gate* is punctuated at frequent intervals by a sudden, violent death: yours. Your adventures, no matter whether they are in the past or the present day, have a nasty habit of coming to an abrupt halt. This leads to a peculiar style of playing, encouraging a morbid obsession with saving the





(Left) Look! My right arm's definitely getting longer...

(Bottom) Ten pence for a cuppa tea, guv?

The Knights Templar: a clarification

Some of you will be a bit confused by all this talk of Knights and Templars, and we have to admit that it's a murky area, so here's a handy guide that you can cut out and carry with you at all times, in case you ever get grilled on the subject at a party.

The Knights Templar

Started out as nine blokes who kindly offered to protect pilgrims in Jerusalem, only to end up 200 years later as the richest and most powerful organisation in Europe, who then mysteriously put up no resistance when arrested en masse, tortured and killed. "Confessed" that their initiation ceremony involved denying Christ three times, spitting or urinating on the Crucifix, stripping and being kissed on the anus, navel and mouth. Then shagging each other. Cool...

Simon Templar

A rich young lad-about-town from the '70s, with a Volvo P1800, one mobile eyebrow and a small circular tube of neon, which he was fond of switching on and off above his head to impress the chicks. (Chicks were more easily impressed in the '70s). Nothing to do with the Knight's Templar. Sometimes known as The Saint.

The Saint

Short, aggressive Scotsman (if you'll excuse the tautology) who used to fight for Liverpool FC before retiring to become a professional chuckling idiot. Nothing to do with Saint Bernard.

Saint Bernard

Took charge of the Knight's Templar and was made a Saint thanks to being friends with all the right people. Machiavellian, bum-licking creep. Not to be confused with:

Saint Bernard

A large, hairy, alcoholic dog, often used to suffocate mountain climbers.

Saint Bernard Bresslaw

Comic genius and occasional member of the *Carry On* team (all together: "Awww, *Siiiii*-iii-iiid").

Knight's Castille

A popular soap.

Take The High Road

An unpopular soap.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486/33 (DX2/66 recommended)

Graphics: VGA

Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

« game every time you achieve anything (like walking round a corner without getting a crossbow bolt in the kidneys).

But just as these very characteristics can appeal to aficionados, so they can also frustrate. Fighting has always been a pain – it's sometimes difficult to line your victim up (although it's easier to sword-fight than it used to be to shoot) and it can be unnecessarily difficult to pick things up. Even if you know just where you should be standing (you've done it before, just before you were shot in the head) you sometimes have to adjust position to grab things. While there are times when you just walk up to something and pick it up, at others (when it's part of the 'gameplay' to find it) you have to search for the bugger. Occasionally you find something that isn't even visible, which makes you start worrying that you've missed things elsewhere. And you have to hold the spacebar down long enough to ensure you've actually started searching.

There are also inconsistencies that will infuriate you: on the roof beams, for example, quite near the start of the game, sudden death is very common if you take a wrong turn. You either get crossbowed, or fall to your death if you go too near the edge – unless, that is, you're at the one place where it's been decided that you can jump down.

There are times when only mind-bending trial and error will get you out of a spot, and others when the puzzles will weigh on your mind until you find yourself spitting at babies in the street. There are also many times when you'll do the right thing to solve a puzzle but not stand in the right place, and so it doesn't work. None of this is news, of course – the *AITD* series had all of this, and people still love them. What we're saying is basically that if you liked the *Alone In The Dark* games, you'll like this, because it's almost exactly the same.

This lack of progression is one reason why *Time Gate* gets a lower mark than its predecessors. The other is that if you haven't seen any of the others and fancy a go, you can buy the original three-game trilogy for the same price as this, without really missing out on much. **Z**

Score

84

Same old stuff, but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** TBC
Publisher: Infogrames
Tel: 0181-738 8199

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PICK N MIX

We tried, but we couldn't stop them. We locked all the doors, boarded up all the windows... we even installed an electric fence around the perimeter. All to no avail. We're totally outnumbered and surrounded. The hordes of games-that-don't-merit-a-full-on-review are here once again. Let's try and make a break for it. Don't, repeat DON'T get bitten, and remember: only a direct shot to the brain will destroy them. We recommend that you maintain a firm grip on Charlie Brooker's scabby outstretched hand and let him yank you to safety past this month's undead, flesh-eating army of minor releases...

CADILLACS & DINOSAURS: THE SECOND CATACLYSM

Publisher: Rocket Science/BMG Interactive
Tel: 0171-384 7500
Price: £39.99
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 49

Ingredients: One Cadillac, two heroes (one male, one female), a shotgun, some dinosaurs, ten large buckets of FMV, a mouse, and a minuscule sprig of well-past-its-sell-by-date gameplay.
Method: Place the two heroes in the Cadillac. Allow the player to steer the car through pre-determined routes with the mouse. Sprinkle a couple of dinosaurs here and there. Add dull death sequences. Grate a teeny weeny measure of gameplay into the mix – but not too much, mind. Pour copious amounts of FMV over the top, and place on a medium heat until not quite half-baked. Remove from the oven, dress with glossy packaging, and serve to unsuspecting lunks everywhere.

(Left) *Cadillacs & Dinosaurs*: A terrible waste of three CDs' worth of aluminium and polycarbonate.

(Below) *Conqueror AD 1086*: They may look 'ard, but their names are Binky, Cupcake and Sophie.

(Right) *Dust*: Fine-tune that aim at the practice range. But do try not to blow your own head off, please.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

CONQUEROR AD 1086

Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Tel: 01734 303322
Price: £34.99

SCORE: 80

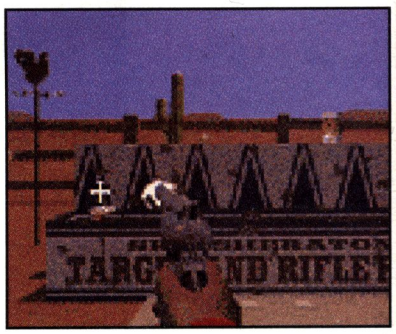
Remember *Defender Of The Crown*? Well, this is a bit like that, only it's infinitely more sophisticated. Ever felt the need to 'master an incredible array of medieval skills – and claim the throne'? Here's your chance. *Conqueror* is an unusual blend of role-playing, wargaming, and first-person perspective sword-wielding, set in merrie olde Medieval Englande. You start out as a fresh-faced 18 year-old knight; your goal is to become King by the age of 30 (ahh... the good old pre-Generation X days – no dead-end McJobs for you). How you achieve this is up to you: you can indulge in bloodthirsty orgies of pillage across the land with an aim to eventually storming into London and killing the King (you psychopath, you), or you can come over all noble, and seek out and slay a pesky Dragon that's been putting the wind up all and sundry. There's loads to see and do, bags of detail (you have to choose a wife and everything), and you'll find quite a big challenge before you. It's not without faults – some of the 3D combat sections are laughable – but on the whole, it's an absorbing, unusual game.

DUST: A TALE OF THE WIRED WEST

Publisher: Cyberflix/BMG Interactive
Tel: 0171-384 7500
Price: £39.99
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 77

Hi ho silver: it's a 3D point-and-click quest thang with a Wild West theme, going back to a time when shouting "Yee-haw!" in the street didn't necessarily make you a total wanker. *Dust* has been written using Zombie's 'DreamFactory' authoring software, a clever tool that allegedly enables non-programmers to create sumptuous multimedia adventures. Some people are hailing this as the best CD adventure since *Myst*, but I'm not convinced. The graphics are easy on the eye but uninspiring, and the 3D characters that wander about the place look ridiculous. It's even worse when they get close up – they suddenly change into 'real' people, animated in an utterly unsuitable Terry Gilliam style. Once you get past these initial hurdles, however, it's a fairly pleasing adventure, with a couple of nice touches: the characters remember who you are and what you've done to them, and best of all, it's non-linear. Not to be considered a must-buy by any means, but well worth a look if you're into cowboys (oo-er!) and fancy a quick, quality quest.

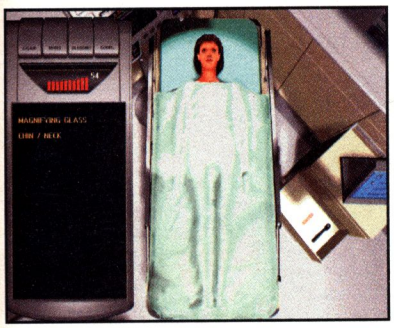


EMERGENCY ROOM

Publisher: IBM
Tel: 01753 790700
Price: £44.99
Note: DOS 6.0 or higher and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 78

Or *Casualty: The Video Game*. *Emergency Room* is a 'Doctor Simulator' in which you take on the demanding role of a medical student working in a casualty ward. It ain't simple: after choosing which patients need to be treated first,



you have to examine them, diagnose their condition, and then cure it. It's all based on real-life medical practice (US style, so there's no option to leave the patient to die on a bed in the main corridor), and will probably bore the pants off anyone who isn't interested in this kind of thing in the first place. Would-be Kildares, however, will thrill at the jargon (all helpfully explained), the intrigue (should you *really* have stuck that syringe in the patient's face?), and the realism (oops! No, you shouldn't – the patient has *died*). I'd have liked to see a few dodgy patients trying to explain how they came to get a roll-on deodorant bottle wedged up their arse, etc, but on the whole this is thoughtful, educational fun.

NFL PRO LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Publisher: IBM
Tel: 01753 790700
Price: £44.99
Note: DOS 5.0 or above and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 67

Right, I'm *really* in deep trouble now... I know next to nothing about American Football – even the Mega Drive version of *John Madden* leaves me glassy-eyed with confusion, which means that I'm probably not really fully equipped to pass sentence on the technical sporting merits of this particular title. This is primarily an exercise in strategy rather than anything else – there's no live hands-on player control. As you can see, it's spectacularly gaudy (that's 16-colour graphics for you) and old-fashioned in its appearance. Stat-mad touchdown aficionados may love it – there's even an option to download real, up-to-date team statistics direct from the Internet. Personally speaking, however, I cared for it not a jot.

RED GHOST

Publisher: Empire Interactive
Tel: 0181-343 7337
Price: £TBC
Note: Double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 62

Oh crikey. It's a wargame. Um... as the blurb has it, *Red Ghost* is the "Ultimate Action Combat Game", in which you must "devise a complete strategy to neutralise enemy power supplies, road systems, communication networks and radar installations... capture equipment... manage your weaponry... blah blah... sabotage... blah blah... infiltrate... blah... mobilise forces... blah blah blah... intense action". The screenshots make it look a little like *Command & Conquer*, but it ain't. We're talking teeny little icons, endless maps, stop-start gameplay, and acres of train-spotting tedium. Strategy enthusiasts may consider it detailed, realistic and intense, but I'm in charge here, and I say it's dull, dull, dull and... dreary. The day I get into games like this is the day I grow hair on my palms.

TORIN'S PASSAGE

Publisher: Sierra On-Line
Tel: 01734 303322
Price: £34.99
Note: Double-speed CD drive required; CD contains DOS, Windows 3.1, and Windows 95 versions

SCORE: 70

First, let's have a bit of a snigger at the 'unfortunate' title – it sounds like it's referring to somebody's sphincter, yes? A-ho-ho-de-bloody-ho. Mind you, since this latest point-and-clicker from Sierra has been penned by Al Lowe (yes, that's he of *Leisure Suit Larry* fame), perhaps it's actually deliberate. What we have here is a professionally executed piece of Disney-esque fantasy, complete with hand-drawn cell animation – Torin, the hero, even has one of those trademark 'Disney Hero' haircuts (the ones that bob up and down whenever he speaks). The puzzles aren't bad, either, although the game is clearly aimed at a 'family' audience (ie a small child might like it).

According to the box blurb, Al Lowe is a "comedic genius". Well, if the jokes on offer are anything to go by, the term could apply equally to Bobby Davro, the Chuckle Brothers, Shane Ritchie, and Les Dennis. This is about as funny as a mouthful of cat shit.

(Far left) *Emergency Room*: Time to examine the patient – and you can stop sniggering at the back there.

(Left) *Red Ghost*: Who says wargames are boring? We do.

(Right) *Wing Nuts*: Two zany, madcap characters larking about hilariously in Rocket Science's zany, madcap, off-beat, kooky, chucklesome WW1 shoot 'em up.

WING NUTS

Publisher: Rocket Science/BMG Interactive
Tel: 0171-384 7500
Price: £39.99
Note: DOS 5.0 or above and double-speed CD drive required

SCORE: 53

It's another Rocket Science game, folks. Another pointless, mindless exercise in mouse-clickery and teletext-resolution video. The Rocket Scientists' best release so far (which really *is* faint praise), *Wing Nuts* is an off-beat foray into the zany and madcap world of the first World War, complete with a 'hilarious' dastardly foreigner (the *Wing Nuts* designers, in a breathtaking display of originality, have named him 'The Red Baron'), a square-jawed hero, and loads and loads of point-and-click shooting action.

You aim the crosshair at a plane, then click the mouse to shoot it down. Again and again and again and again. It's all about as exciting as the average bowel movement. Full marks to the genius who wrote the blurb for the box – "experience the realism of flight without the distractions of cockpit simulation" (which means nothing more than that you have very, very little control over the movement of your plane) – thereby proving that PR and advertising people do sometimes let their imaginations go into overdrive.

Okay, I think we've made it. We can hole up here for a while. You keep watch out of that window. If you see anything suspicious, pop it in the head. I'll try raising a signal on this here radio. Our supplies should last about a month, maybe more. If we're lucky. Z

(Below left) *NFL Pro League Football*: It's got a face like a bag of spanners.

(Below) *Torin's Passage*: Hey! Dig that Disney hairdo!

More fun for cheapos as Paul Presley joins the parsimonious penny-pincher in the world of budget and compilation software.

Tony Split

He's a tightfisted git.

Soccer Stars '96

Four footballing games for the price of one? At first glance it might look like good value, but there's a problem. You know how when someone releases a football game (whether management or action-based), someone else always goes and releases a better one a few months later? Well, these four games are taken from the 'before' camp. *FIFA International Soccer* (the original, not the update), *Kick Off 3 – European Challenge* (since surpassed by *Actua Soccer*), *Premier Manager 3* and *On The Ball!* (both barely out of the Beazer Homes League when compared to *Championship Manager 2*).

I mean, it's okay value for what it is: ie four average-to-slightly-good football games, and there are still some people out there who swear blind by *Kick Off*, but football is a fickle mistress and you have to ask yourself what's the point of buying four local lads from the youth team to make up the numbers, when for the same price you could buy one Dennis Bergkamp who'll do everything you need far better – and score a few goals at the same time, too.

SCORE: ●●●
PRICE: £34.99
Empire 0181-343 7337

SOCCER STARS '96 ●●●

Alone In The Dark: The Trilogy

When *AITD* first appeared we were all totally and utterly stunned. It was truly like nothing we (as in the gaming press) had seen before. It had a brand new use for some impressive polygon graphics, cleverly worked camera angles that lent a captivating movie-like quality, and a well-written story that implemented some wonderfully challenging puzzles. It took all the very best elements of the traditional adventure game and married it to modern presentation techniques. And it worked. Beautifully.

Some people chose to compare it to the demonic works of H P Lovecraft, others to the tales of master horror writer Edgar Allen Poe. Most computer mags just used tired phrases like 'mega' and 'horrortastic'. Nonetheless, all the praise was well deserved and naturally, sequels were forthcoming, each just as good (if not better) than the first.

Now, with CD-ROM versions of all three being repackaged in attractive 'glow in the dark' boxes, we can go all starry-eyed over them again. No PC owner can consider their software collection complete if it doesn't contain at least one of the three titles; when the history of computer games is written, the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy will be seen to have been as ground-breaking and influential a series as the *Doom* family. Serious gaming for serious players. There simply isn't a recommendation high enough.

SCORE: ●●●●●
PRICE: £39.99
Infogrames 0171-738 8199

SIM CLASSICS 2 ●●●●

Sim Classics 2

When *Sim City* first entered the world, people went "Wow!". When *Sim Earth* came along, people went "Blimey!". And then *Sim Farm* trotted into view and people went "Do what?". Okay, so the rural delights of sheep breeding and crop growing may not be as far-reaching as creating cities, planets and life as we know it, but it was still a pretty playable simulation, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. *Sim Classics 2* combines it with the aforementioned *Sim Earth* (*Sim City* on a far larger scale) and *A-Train*, the Japanese rival to *Railroad Tycoon*.

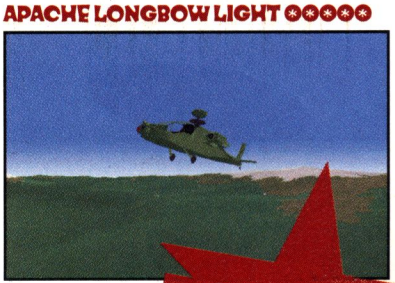
All three titles are big on the 'engage your brain and don't let it get distracted by anything whatsoever' factor, as well as being lucky enough to be in the 'very few rivals' camp. Unlike beat 'em ups (which seem to have new combatants promising better and faster ways to hit people every two weeks), the *Sim* family are so unique that even now they're still at the very top of their particular tree. *Sim Old MacDonald* still doesn't have a rival, *Sim Earth's* closest competitor would seem to be *Sim City*, and *A-Train* has only *Transport Tycoon* and *A IV Network$* snapping at its heels.

SCORE: ●●●●
PRICE: £24.95
Maxis 0171-490 2333

Apache Longbow Light

I kid you not! Not four months after being released at a full, dent-yer-wallet price, the greatest helicopter sim since, uh, the last one, is now available on budget. For a mere fiver. But as with

APACHE LONGBOW LIGHT ●●●●●



BARGAIN

BARGAIN

ALONE IN THE DARK: THE TRILOGY ★★★★★

the very best episode of *The X-Files*, all is not quite as it seems. No, *Longbow Light* isn't just a fancy name for a new kind of fizzy alcoholic beverage, it's all of the quick-start missions from the full game packaged into a handy little starter kit. There can be no question about it – the prize for Cleverest Blokes (and Blokesses, of course) Of The Month just has to go to the chaps (and chapesses) at Digital Integration for this one. It's nothing short of sheer bloody genius. Naturally there are some people out there who might wave flags bearing the words 'cover discs', but not me. Honest.

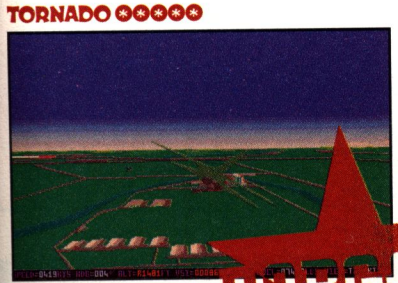
SCORE: ★★★★★
PRICE: £4.99
Action Replay 01276 684959

Merlin Challenge

Just before *Apache Longbow* 'thwokka'ed' its way into our lives, Digital Integration tested the helicopter simulation waters, so to speak, with *Merlin Challenge*. The whole idea is to take charge of a Royal Navy chopper and try to land it on the deck of a moving ship. That's it. That's the whole game. Fly, then land. Okay, so maybe 'game' is a bit generous, it's more like a puzzle. Still, it's a very well-programmed puzzle and, barring *Apache*, it's one of the most realistic helicopter sims around. It's just very, very short. Caveat Empor.

SCORE: ★★★
PRICE: £4.99
Action Replay 01276 684959

TORNADO ★★★★★



MERLIN ★★★

BARGAIN

Tornado

Also at the 'five quid and I'm robbing meself' price-point is the seminal flight sim, *Tornado*. The full game this time. Relive those thrill-packed hours in front of the Mission Planning screen and all those fun-packed minutes in the actual cockpit. No, I jest. *Tornado* is a corker, a real corker. A cork-diddly-ork-torker! In Latin it would be 'Corkerus Supremecus' (*We get the idea – Ed.*). Even if you didn't relish it first time round, to pass it up now that it's only five nicker would, in our opinion, be as gargantuan a mistake as saying, "Sorry, I'm a bit tired," to an invite from Pamela Anderson.

SCORE: ★★★★★
PRICE: £4.99
Action Replay 01276 684959

North & South

Classic Underrated Game Alert! Classic Underrated Game Alert! *North & South* is *superb*, don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Before *Ascendancy, Civilization* and all the other top-name world building strategy games, *North & South* was doing it and doing it with style, imagination and humour. Bags of humour. For once, the American Civil War actually became interesting, especially for two players, as you'd march, invade, bomb, steal and lie your way through the colonies. And now it's back and ready to find a new home in the world of gamers today. Buy it. Buy. It. Buy, buy, buy, it, it, it. Get the message?

SCORE: ★★★★★
PRICE: £4.99
Action Replay 01276 684959 Z

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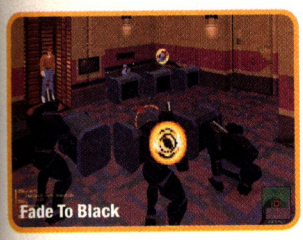

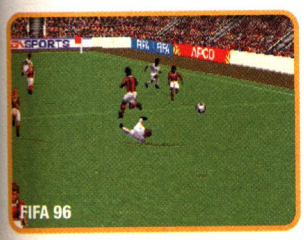

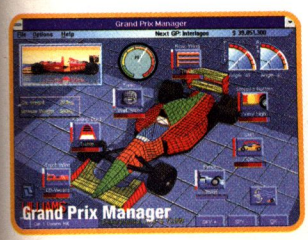

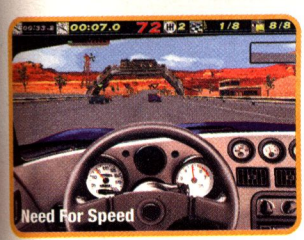

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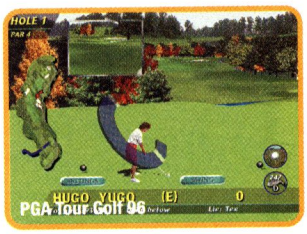

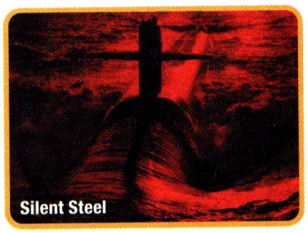

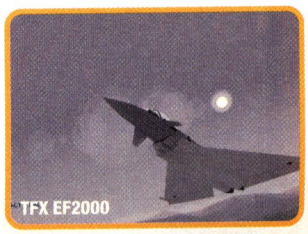

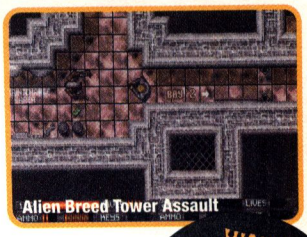

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In this month's unpretentious un-Dayglo un-Wired look at the holes you can stick your modem into... scratch-and sniff Cool Files with The Ponce, suck and see DoomWatch, and, of course, spit or swallow Internet Interschmet (a new bit).

DOOMWATCH

ZONE ON-LINE

FOUR MONTHS IS A LONG TIME IN THE DOOM WORLD. WELL, it's not actually – 35 seconds is a long time in the *Doom* world, easily enough to be killed 35 times by a well-placed BFG. Time enough to lose your title as Hemel Hempstead Doom Champion 1995. And plenty time enough for British Telecom to whip six hundred thousand million pounds from your sorry little behind.

A NEW BBS

Another month, as the tired old saying goes, another Games Connection BBS. The London-based Multiplay BBS opened with a crackly 9600 baud fanfare last November and has been gaining plaudits the world over for its three main attributes:

1) Doom
2) Cheap play
3) Speedy play

A franchisement of the popular Forest BBS, Multiplay offers the usual concoctions of garish ANSI art, people who think they're the best at *Doom*, and the Games Connection front end, neatly bonkable by your own copy of SIRDOOM. As per usual, you can play four-player *Doom*, *Doom 2*, *Heretic*, *Hexen* and *Descent* on-line, or, alternatively you can meet people playing *IndyCar*, *Screamer*, and *Command & Conquer* and argue about who's going to pay the phone bill. The owner of the BBS, Bandit, have a cheery philosophy: "I try to make it cheap for players." And cheap it is – a mere 25p an hour or £8 for a whole month's unlimited access. That's cool. As well as that, the server is optimised to speed, and you'll find most two and three-player games as fast as an IPX network (providing all the players have correctly set up their modems).

Two on-going ladders are on hand for competitive souls – one for *Doom* (natch) and the other for *Command & Conquer*. And by the time you log on, you'll find a monthly knockout *Doom* tourney in operation with a £50 first prize (to go towards your telephone bill, obviously, and not girls, drink, or your social life).

THE CIX DOOM LEAGUE

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Yes, champion, winner, victor – nay emperor of the last season's CIX *Doom* League Cup was yes, the UberFragMeister himself. After a frantic gut-clenching, ankle-spazzing nipple-getting-really-cold-and-rubbing-against-the-fabric-of-your-shirt-ing final against long-term *Doom*er Noel Baker, played in a WAD based on the referee's house (who needs to change his wallpaper), the UberFrag came out on top. For your delectation, the demos of the final can be found on this month's cover CD in ONLINE\DOOM, and for the Uber, a small metal cup with his name scratched into the side now proudly adorns his mantelpiece.

Nepotism aside, the CIX *Doom* League is actually an on-going competition, seasonally-based and twinned with the daily join-as-you-wish *Doom* Ladder. All you have to be is a member of that cuddly on-line service CIX, and of course have the usual *Doom* player peripherals (a PC, modem, copy of the game, and no life whatsoever). If you missed our giveaway deal on CIX membership last year, tough – you'll have to pay the full whack. But it's cheap and it's nice and you get full Internet access and loads of other stuff.

THE BRITISH DOOM LEAGUE

Not to be outdone by CIX, the BDL has expanded somewhat in terms of both players and rules. The league is now divided into four divisions and costs £5 per season – which is pretty reasonable considering it goes to the upkeep of the BDL BBS (badly spelt insults on garish ANSI walls) and the time of the league's patron, Steve MadDog. It's well-run, good-humoured, and different, offering custom WADS for each season, and an exciting all-against-all Milk Cup in tandem with the fixtures. If you want more information or damn well want to join, send an e-mail to: Steve@maddog1.demon.co.uk

FESTS

The excitement and addictiveness of modem *Doom*ing has one slight drawback (bar the cost, of course, and the effect on your social life. Oh, and not forgetting the headaches as well). Anyway, it's the fact that one never gets to meet one's opponent in the flesh – you know, face to face, tête à tête. This desire to meet, shake hands and maybe – I dunno – make love to one's on-line 'chums' have resulted in the appearance of a couple of self-styled '*Doom* Fests' – organised jamborees where *Doom* players drag their computers half way around the world just to engage each other in real-life combat. Two such fests occurred recently. One – the North West *Doom* Fest, rhyming fans – was organised by Danny Lancashire of, er, Lancashire, and was held in the er, North West of England. T'other was the Bristol *Doom* Fest, put together by Chris Hewitt (or Flare as he's known on the 'circuit'). Anyway, the whole point of this paragraph is that many of the games were recorded, so if you want to see demos of the best UK *Doom*ers in action, check out this month's cover CD in ONLINE\DOOMDEMO.

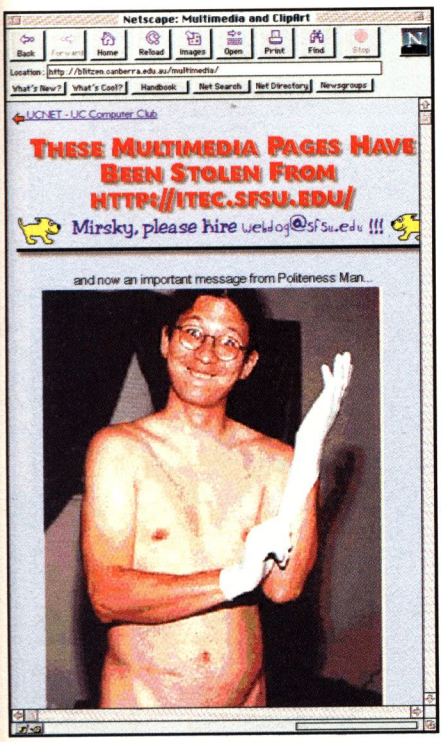
Internet Interschmet

We've started a new section this month where you – dabblers and pornography downloaders – get your chance to suggest why the entire editorial staff at *Wired* should be wiped out. Or, alternatively, why Americans are the most stupid race on this planet. Or, even more alternatively, something you found of interest involving your modem. Recommend a Web site (but if it takes longer than three seconds to download and has no fleshy GIFS on it we're not really interested). Suggest a good FTP site. Give us the number of a really cool BBS. Or write 200-600 words on something interesting. There's even a prize up for grabs.*

Our first contribution this month is from our beloved J J Cunningham. He has something to say on the Web. Take it away, Monsieur Cunning.

THE WORLD WIDE WEB

About two years ago I went to Lübeck, a fairly small town in northern Germany, famous for its marzipan and Bic pens or something. Being a normal sort of tourist with a healthy appetite for panoramic views of my alien (German) surroundings, I found the nearest church, handed over the statutory entrance fee and clambered all the way to the top of the spire. What I saw at the top were the same things I had seen at the bottom, only much smaller. Not only that, but I now had to contend with that curious lemming-like desire one has on the top of tall buildings.

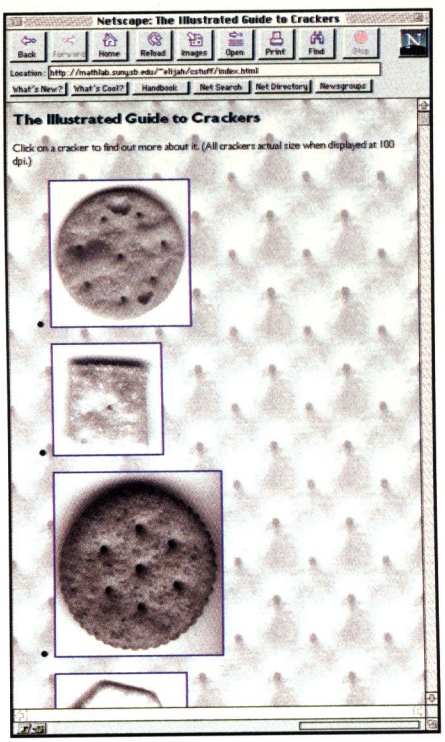


(Right) Interesting, even if you're not. http://mathlab.sunysb.edu/~elijah/cstuff/

(Left) Get me bucket. http://blitzen.canberra.edu.au/multimedia/

* Note the cunning non-specificness of that sentence. It saves us having to organise a luxury prize every month and means we could give you say, a pair of second-hand pants (brown) and still keep within the Trades Description Act. Pretty damn cool, eh?

After dragging myself away from reluctant suicide, I fed Deutsche Marks into a clockwork telescope and all the small things on the ground went big again. Fascinating – I could even look at parked cars that I'd passed on my way in. Just as I was trying to focus on the girl with the other telescope, it made a loud 'fwhrrrzzt' noise and everything went black.



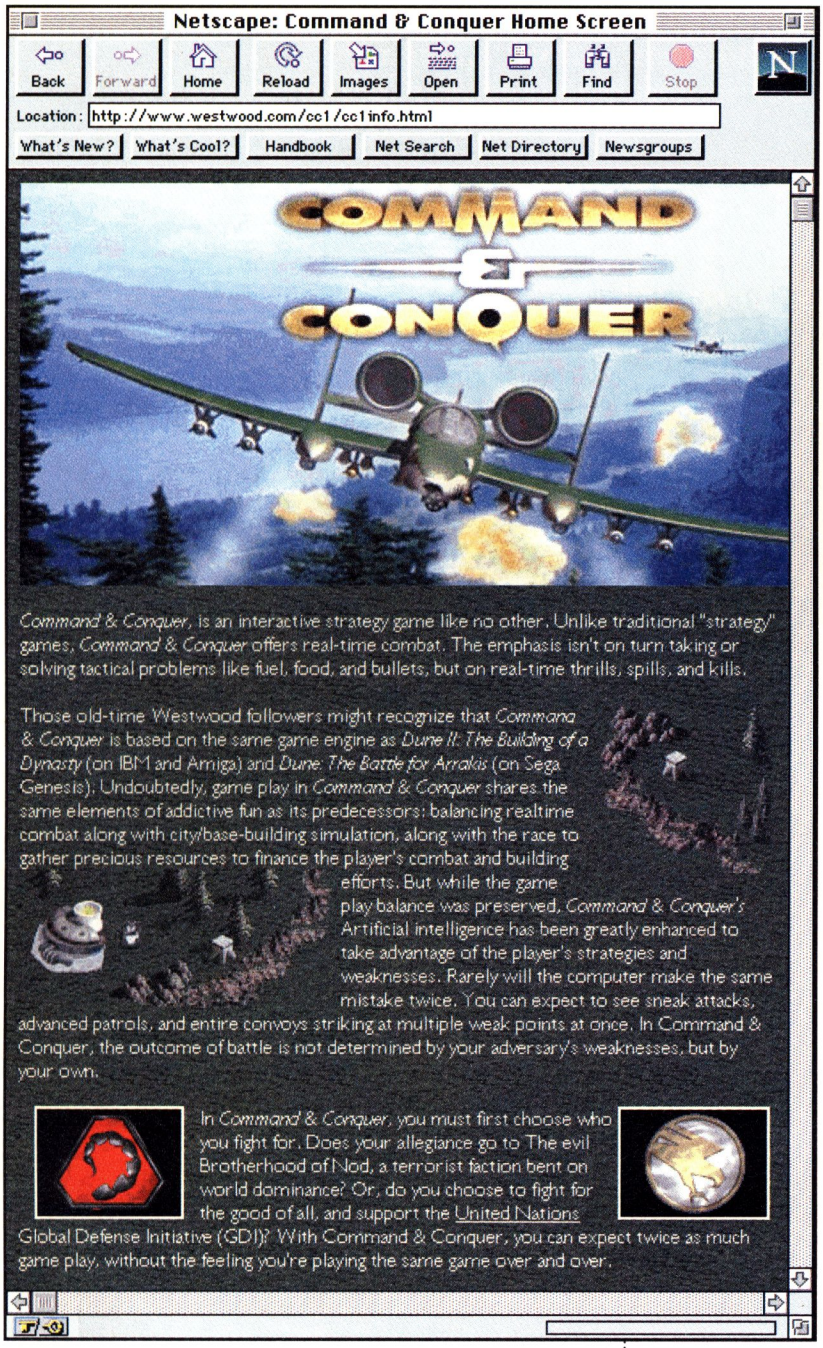
While this Teutonic experience has absolutely nothing to do with the Web, it does illustrate the fact that even Germans have clockwork telescopes: a fact I find strangely reassuring.

DOWNLOAD TIMES

(approximately in mins)

File size	9.6K	14.4K	28.8K
10K	00:10	00:07	00:03
50K	00:53	00:35	00:17
100K	01:46	01:11	00:35
250K	04:26	03:00	01:28
500K	08:33	05:58	02:53
1MB	18:05	12:05	06:12
2MB	36:00	24:00	15:05

Note: download times vary massively depending on the quality of your phone line, the speed of your UART/Serial port, and the compressability of the file.



(Above) As well as making a stonkingly good game, Westwood know how to make a damn fine Web page, too. Respect is due at the *Command & Conquer* site. http://www.westwood.com/cc1/cc1info.html

(Right) Proof that you can look at cool stuff on the Web without having to download 100K of JPEG files first. This one totals under 9K – and that includes the smart piccie. Gosh and golly, I hear you cry. http://www.county.net/lightman/projects/300/

Anyway... to the World Wide Web, by its own definition a tangled mess. For starters, the majority of pages are designed by talentless baboons stuck halfway through the Photoshop tutorial: yup, Americans. Now, while we've all been told on many occasions that these crass and crazy people across the pond have absolutely no concept of the word 'taste', there hasn't yet been any real substantiation. You know, the sort of cast iron proof you could plug in and press denim shirts with. Until now, that is – now you can't move for pictures of their mothers, their fathers, their household pets and high school buddies called Randy mooning at the camera. There's no reason for it and there's certainly no demand for it... and what better place to put it than up on the Web?

Another problem is the cost. Coupled with the unhurried pace of the Internet, the sheer size of many Web sites means that phone calls and charges of mere mortals can get out of hand. The passion people have for 93K image files is down to the fact that most Web authors are spoilt with free local calls – most of them live in the States. So if they want to look at the latest 'Cool Site', our colonial cousins can leave their modems struggling with monster JPEGS while they slope off to the pizza parlour or gun shop – all without a dime on their phone bill.

Recommended FTP sites

ftp:cdrom.com
Everything games-related here. Very busy.

ftp://src.doc.ic.ac.uk/pub/packages
Everything you ever wanted for your PC.

ftp://ftp.cac.psu.edu/pub/dos/info/
FAQ on PC TCP/IP.

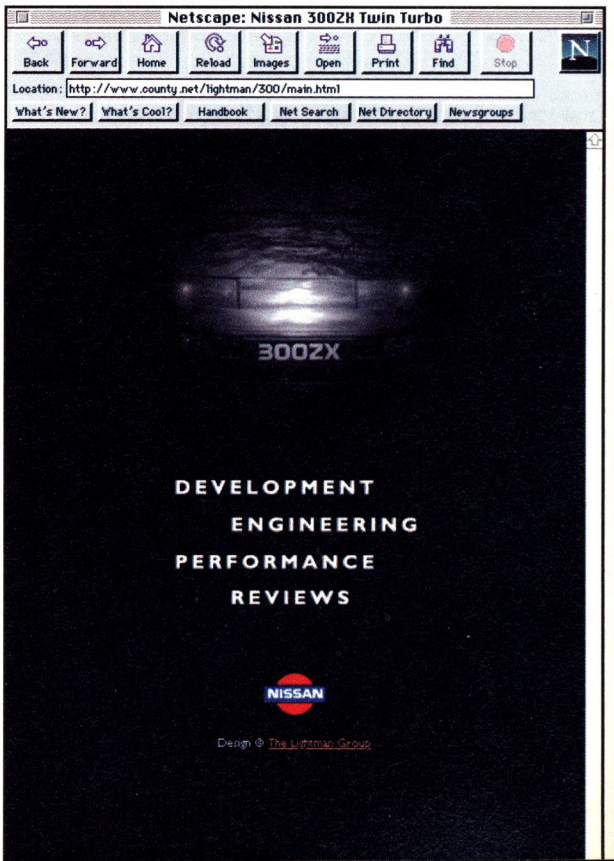
ftp://mirrors.aol.com/pub/cica/pc
Everything you ever wanted for your PC, and more besides.

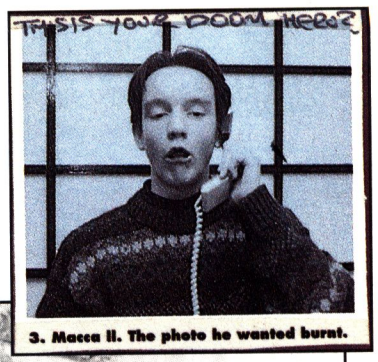
ftp://winftp.cica.indiana.edu/pub/pc/win95
Windows 95 shareware archive.

THE WORLD WIDE WASTEBASKET

Such is the volume of trash arriving daily on the Web, there are a number of pages that categorise it. One of the better known and better organised is Mirsky's Worst of the Web (http://turnpike.net/metro/mirsky/Worst.html) where you can go for a daily smirk at just how sad some people are. It's not that the things they get up to are particularly sad, just the fact that they've publicised it. I mean, pictures of some twit doing 146mph in his Honda NSX? You can even read a blow-by-blow commentary. Another guy's Disney World holiday snaps? An illustrated guide to cheese crackers? Someone's crusty booger collection? Ironically enough, some of these more useless sites are the most popular. They tweak human instincts: in the same way that drivers get all morbid when they slow down to have a good look at accidents on the opposite carriageway of the M25, so surfers stop and tut at tragic sites.

However, the Web isn't entirely chock-full of crap, and there aren't as many 'Teach Yourself Semtex' type pages as people like to think there are (actually, I could never see what all the fuss was about. People who choose to blow bits off themselves with their own home-made bombs are innately stupid and probably wouldn't live long anyway). In actual fact, a growing proportion is displaying distinctly functional properties. You can now, for example, register a wide variety of shareware





3. Macca II. The photo he wanted burnt.

(Right and above right) Sorry Macca – you should've realised how seriously we take our "How to Blackmail Journos" guidebook – we reckon you'll pay up next time!

(Left) Ouch – over seven minutes just to download this smegger. http://www.thespot.com/thespot/else/menu.html

programs over the Web; the unlock process is so simple and so instant that even I succumbed and did the dirty deed with my credit card. Given a suitable card limit, I could have gone on to buy a car, a speedboat, a splendid villa in Burgundy – who knows, perhaps even an Apple Macintosh. (Well, perhaps that's taking it all just a bit too far...)

With the right directions, you could also go and take a swift peek at all manner of topics – check out property particulars, download game demos, download trial applications, get some technical support, check satellite weather forecasts, find out about the latest bug fixes, press releases... and a billion other things. While avoiding the nonsense and the advertisements is an increasingly difficult task, it's worth persevering because there are many places which are well worth discovering. Be warned, though, that popular sights often get swamped with traffic and end up 'engaged' for much of the day, as Web servers can only handle a finite number of requests...

Right. For a complete change I'm going to finish on, of all things, a religious note. For those of you who wish to become ordained ministers in the Universal Life Church, you can now do so today by pointing your favourite browser at: http://ybi.com/ulc/ordain.html. Have faith in The Lord, for in His omnipotence (per-raise that omnipotence!) He now has a home page (per-raise that HTML authoring package!). Amen. Z

Recommended Web sites

The Abuse-A-Tron
http://www.xe.com/loyalty/abuse.html
Random and often lengthy insults delivered direct to your screen.

The Internet Games Domain
http://wcl-rs.bham.ac.uk/GamesDomain/
A must for all gamesplayers. Regularly updated, too.

Genius T-Shirts
http://www.planet-texas.com/~t-shirts/
A vast collection of spiffy T-shirts. International orders accepted.

Dan's Gallery of the Grotesque
http://www.zynet.com/~grotesk/html/gotg_entrance.html
Explicit depictions of suicide, homicide, accidents and war. Yeah!

MicrosOft
http://www.microsOft.com/
Careful now, that's MicrosOft with a zero... get there before the lawyers do.

George Goble
http://ghg.ecn.purdue.edu/
George Goble is a nutter with a smart party trick. You'll want to meet him.

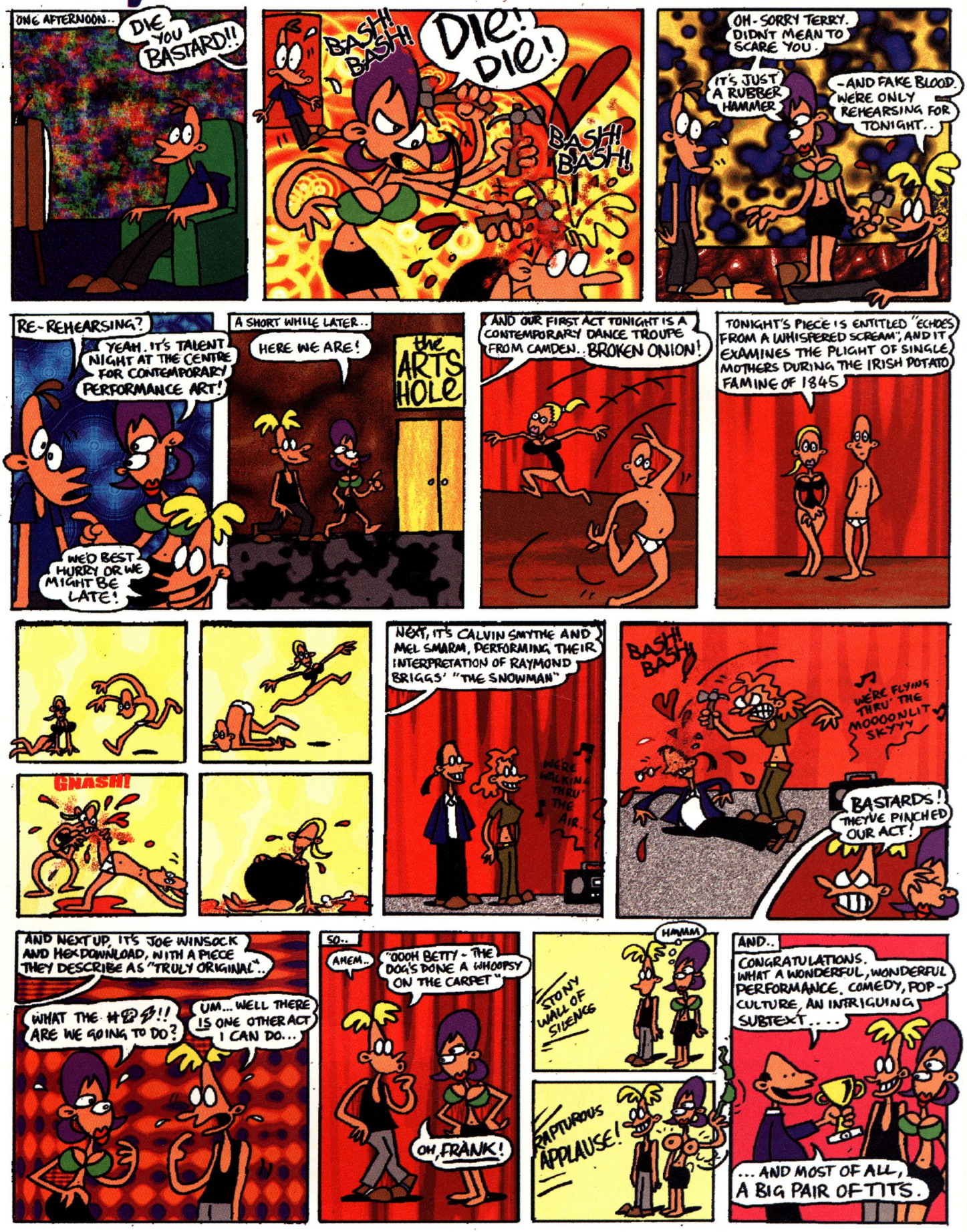
Games Servers

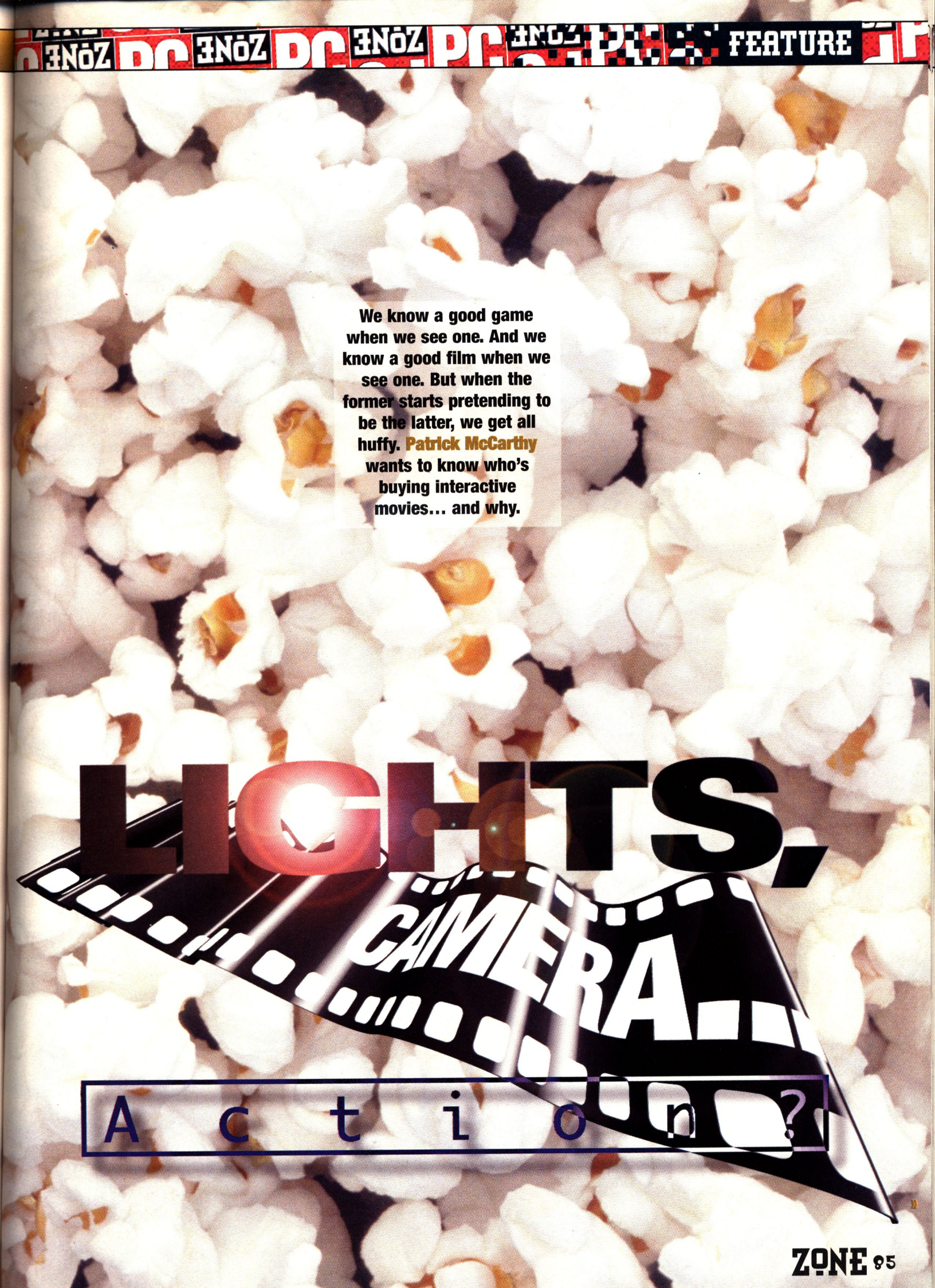
Gamesnet	Gamesnet	Gates of the Underworld	Multiplay	The Games BBS	The Forest
01222 362361	0171 460 0515	0181 561 3242	0181 900 1266	0181 561 3242	01425 629629
Cardiff	London	London	London	London	Hampshire

Although you can connect with normal comms software (8-N-1) you'll need a program called SIRDOOM.ZIP to play *Doom* multi-player, which is available for downloading.

the Cybertwats

furnished by Charliebrooker

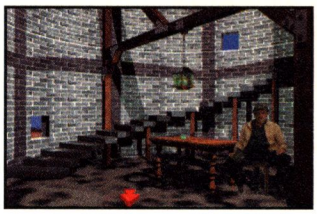




We know a good game when we see one. And we know a good film when we see one. But when the former starts pretending to be the latter, we get all huffy. **Patrick McCarthy** wants to know who's buying interactive movies... and why.

LIGHTS, CAMERA...

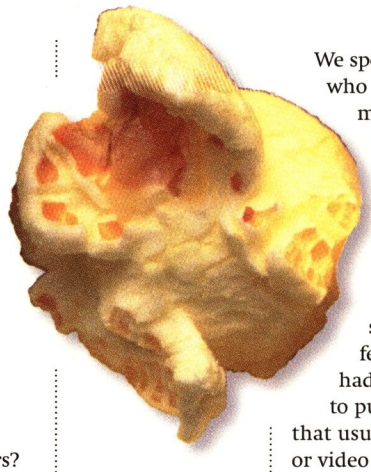
Action?



(Right) *Return To Zork:* the acting's not that great, but it's a good game nonetheless.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN A GAME was a game and a movie was a movie, and everyone knew where they stood. (If you want to look it up, it was round about the time when men were men and women were bored shitless.) Nowadays though, we have the interactive movie: or more simply, something purporting to be a game that has movie bits in it. Sometimes these are comprised of video clips of real people pretending to be actors. Sometimes there are three-dimensional, computer-generated real-time animated figures – also known as 'tube people' – who look rather like pipe cleaners with breasts, and they have no fingers. And then sometimes an interactive movie is just a succession of 'lovely' pictures.

The problem with most of them is that the movie side of things often leaves plenty to be desired, and the gameplay side of things is, not to put too fine a point on it, shite. We've seen 'games' involving basic reaction tests, memory tests, trial-and-error, or even just basic two-dimensional puzzle solving. And sometimes, as with *Phantasmagoria,* there's no game whatsoever. Every month, more of these monsters are released, almost always to mediocre or poor reviews in the games mags, but they keep coming. How did we reach this nightmarish state of affairs? Where did it all start? And where do those tubular people with their fingers welded together actually come from?



We spoke to Bullfrog's Peter Molyneux, who said, "I think that interactive movies can be traced back to the introduction of CD-ROM as a new storage medium. Here was something that could contain about 600MB of data, and the games that were being released on it only took up a small proportion of that space. It's almost as if developers felt guilty about the space they had left over, so they felt they had to put something in to fill it – and that usually took the form of cut-scenes or video clips. The trouble is, we've gone from having a game with a few bits of video in it, to having a video clip with a few bits of game in it."

Mummy, I want to be an ac-torrr

Here are just some of the many interactive movies around, with our comments on their scripts, acting and general ambience, along with the vital gameplay factor. Remember though – a fairly reasonable script in an interactive movie can often be something that would have you laughing out loud if you heard it in the cinema.

Wing Commander III and IV

WCIV has proper sets, therefore none of that weird bluescreen stuff that looks like people are floating in mid-air, and the acting, script, plot and dialogue are all officially 'pretty good'. Perhaps it really does pay to get the stars in. Actors featured have included Mark Hamill, interactive tart and the voice of Mister Full Throttle ("Brilliant! You can't tell it's him!" – er, so why bother?); John Rhys Davies; porn star Ginger Lynn Allen; Malcolm MacDowell and Tom Wilson (Biff from *Back To The Future*). The gameplay is okay, especially if you like flat 'space'.

The Daedalus Encounter

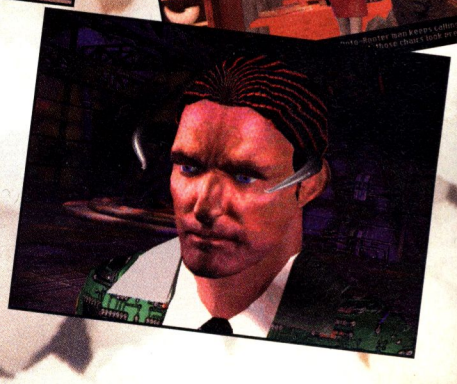
Tia Carrera, the 'babe interest' from *Wayne's World,* clambering about on blue-painted boxes, pretending to shoot at things that aren't there. Reasonable script and above average acting, spoilt by boring logic puzzles.

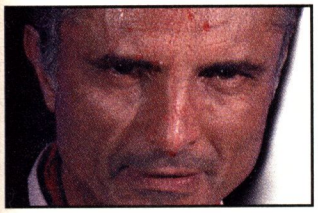
Under A Killing Moon

Comes on four CDs, features Margot Kidder and James Earl Jones and a lot of digitised backgrounds, and is actually pretty well-acted. And surprisingly enough it even has a game in there, too.

Hell

Featuring the digitised faces of Dennis Hopper and Grace Jones stuck on some tube people's bodies, incredibly tedious gameplay and some of the lengthiest, most mind-numbing conversations you'll hear outside of a chat with Ann Diamond.





(Left) The interactive bits in *Phantasmagoria* do nothing whatsoever for the game – they just make it tedious to plod through.

Movies, games and videos

You could, of course, lay all the blame on *The 7th Guest,* a collection of pretty puzzles set inside a fancy-looking old house that masqueraded as a game and sold by the shitload, despite being derided by right-thinking gamesplayers everywhere. And *Myst,* another series of pretty pictures interspersed here and there with puzzles, which Mac owners think is 'beautiful' and 'stunning'. Mac magazine editors still describe *Myst* as a "cwassic game; weawwy gweat". (Mac owners all speak like that).

One industry figure told us that as far as he was concerned, he reckoned that *Wing Commander IV* had more to do with people aspiring to be movie directors than game developers, and

Money, money, money

People are now spending serious amounts of money on interactive movies, recruiting big name stars to act in them, proper directors and scriptwriters, and even going to the extent of having real sets made. Chris Roberts' *Wing Commander IV,* as you probably know already, cost around £10 million to make; his brother Erin's *The Darkening* is going to cost something in the region of £8 million. It won't be long before this huge expenditure starts to be reflected in the prices of the games; in short, Joe Punter will suffer. Won't he?

"No," says Erin, "it will pay for itself. Origin games have always been around the £45-£50 mark, and we'll recoup the expenditure from sales of the game." Er, how much revenue can you expect from something like *The Darkening,* then? "The company expects a 2:1 ratio in profit, over and above the initial expenditure – so, having spent around £8 million, they'd hope to make around £24 million." Ack. With these kind of profit margins, it can't be long before more and more people decide that the way to make serious dosh is with an interactive movie – and bugger the gameplay.

This kind of expenditure is all very well if you're going to get a good game out of it in the end, of course. But you can't help wondering how much cheaper everything would be if they didn't use big stars for the film. We couldn't find out how much Mark Hamill was paid for his role in *WCIV,* but you can virtually guarantee that his fee was more than the entire cost of developing the game itself. Especially since the gameplay was virtually identical to *Wing Commander III.*

Gabriel Knight

Included the talents of Tim Curry, who's scarcely a stranger to interactive movies, as the voice of Gabriel Knight, and was a good game.

Gabriel Knight 2

Entirely made up of bluescreened FMV footage, features no one especially famous, and has been made quite cheaply, but still has good gameplay and is much loved by our Chris. (You can see our review on page 68.)

Return To Zork

Has Sam Jones as the blacksmith (he was in the *Flash Gordon* film with the Queen song) and Jason Hurvey, who's the wanky elder brother from *The Wonder Years,* apparently. It's a good game, but the acting's nothing to write home about.

Phantasmagoria-boria-snoria

Spread over no less than seven CDs, has a disturbing rape scene and lots of gory violence, and stars some blonde bird who's since gone on to make a proper film. (Ooooo! Circles within circles, etc.) Unfortunately it has little in the way of gameplay.

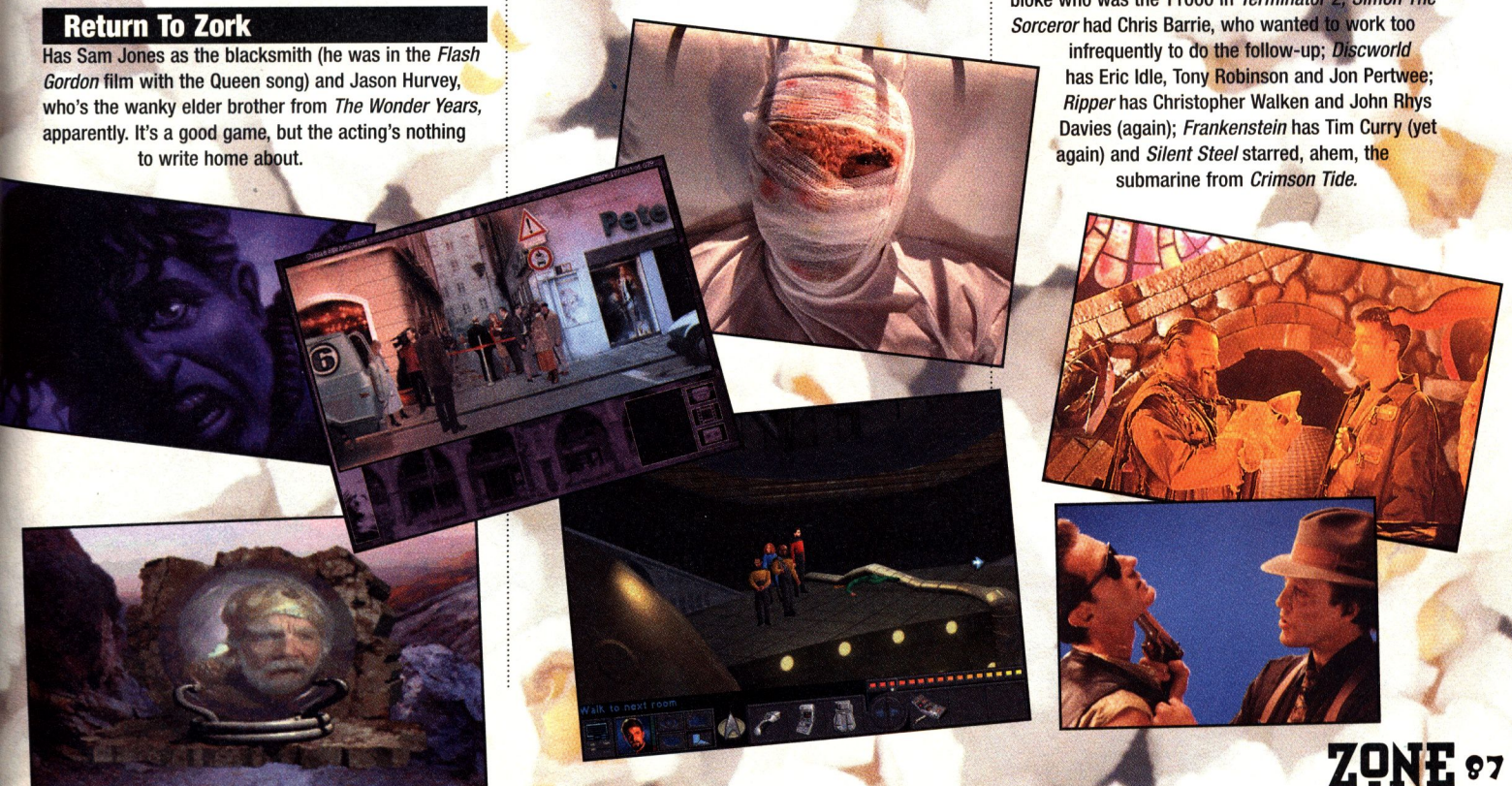
Star Trek: The Next Generation

This starred everyone from the series – and it's a good game to boot.

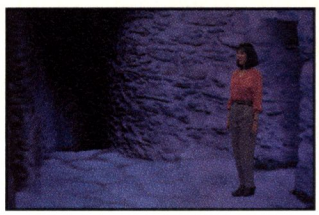
Coming soon

The Darkening: Directed by Erin Roberts and featuring Clive Owen (remember Corporal Jones from *Dad's Army?* Well, it's not him); Brian Blessed (which means there must be a burly, bearded shouter in it); David 'Ilya Kuryakin' McCallum; and Christopher 'Ubiquitous" Walken. This has proper sets, was shot on digital Beta and 16mm film, and should look good. Can't speak for the gameplay yet, though.

It gets pretty sad from here on in. *The Dig* had the bloke who was the T1000 in *Terminator 2; Simon The Sorceror* had Chris Barrie, who wanted to work too infrequently to do the follow-up; *Discworld* has Eric Idle, Tony Robinson and Jon Pertwee; *Ripper* has Christopher Walken and John Rhys Davies (again); *Frankenstein* has Tim Curry (yet again) and *Silent Steel* starred, ahem, the submarine from *Crimson Tide.*



(Right) With a budget of around £8 million *The Darkening* should be spectacular!



(Far right) *Gabriel Knight 2:* An enjoyable adventure – it's also our Chris's favourite!

« that the game was tacked on at the end. Certainly, there's going to be a *Wing Commander* movie, directed by Chris Roberts himself. "Ooh, hold me back!" you're probably shouting. When we reviewed the game in our last issue we concluded that yes, it look.ed superb, but the fact that the gameplay wasn't very different from *WCIII* was a disappointment.

But these are reasonably good examples in a field that, rather like our local park, is littered with crap. We're talking about actors who can't get work in films making a highly remunerative career out of jumping about on blue cardboard boxes. And the obsession with FMV has to be seen to be believed, especially in the PR area.

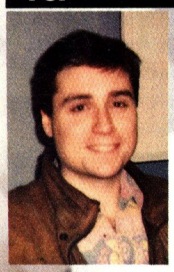
First Impressions

We've actually had some PR people from games companies tell us to wait until we've seen an intro sequence before we make our minds up over a game. What planet do these people come from, eh? Clearly one that doesn't have computer games, as none of them seem to have bought or played a game in their lives. I mean, who do they think goes out and buys games because of an intro sequence? Let's face it, 95 per cent of gamesplayers don't even bother with the sodding things. If someone watches an entire game's introduction it's for one of two reasons. The first is if the game is something they've really been looking forward to, it's eventually arrived, they've got it all installed and working, and they want to postpone the delicious moment of starting it for just a little longer, in a kind of perverse suspension of pleasure that will make the moment when they finally start playing it so much more sweet.

The second is when they sort of half watch it while they're sorting out the lighting and seating arrangements and taking care of leisure essentials such as making sure there are enough supplies of drink, food, fags and drugs, ready for a mega session – and if that's the case, they hit whatever button stops the intro as soon as everything else is ready.

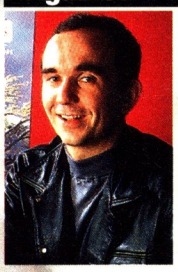
Interactive movies: for and against

For



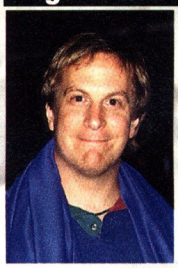
Erin Roberts, Origin:
"I don't think that all games will become interactive movies: good old-fashioned games are here to stay. It has to be a game, first and foremost, but an interactive movie gives you an extra dimension to immerse yourself in. You're in a storyline where there are real people, in film settings, to interact with. It's all very well having incredible FMV footage in there, but if it's not a fun game to play, then personally I'm not going to pay £50 for it. There's got to be something to keep my attention. If you're just going to create a film on CD, then forget it – after all, you might just as well go along to your local cinema. The film footage is there in our games to increase the enjoyment and immersion – but people buy a game and they want hours of enjoyment, so it has to be a game first and a movie second."

Against

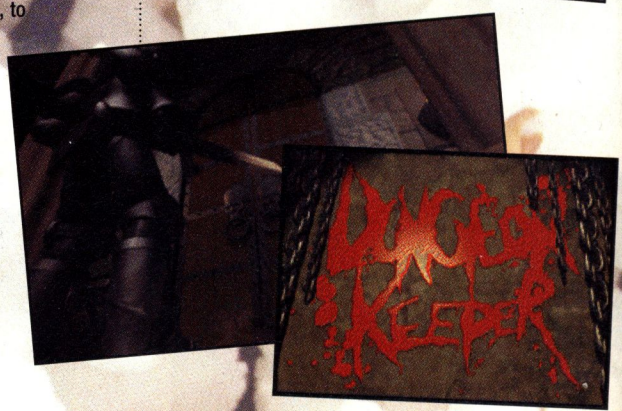


Peter Molyneux, Bullfrog:
"Any true 'interactive movie' is a waste of time. An interactive movie is like reading a book and riding a bicycle at the same time. The two things don't really go together: one minute you have to perform lots of violent movements and react quickly to arcade situations, the next you have to sit completely passively and watch. The other thing is that frankly we're not movie producers – many games developers simply aren't good enough at writing scripts and making movies. You get third rate performances and crap movies. Besides, if I'm watching a movie, I want to escape and be entertained – I don't want to have to make decisions all the time. Take any remotely decent film and interactivity would ruin it – try making *Pulp Fiction* interactive and I'm sure that most people would just want to shag the bird in the first five minutes. The best interactive games, to my mind, were some of the old text adventures. There was a lot more happening – you had wildly improbable situations which would be extremely difficult to depict visually, and you were given the scope to try really bizarre things."

Against

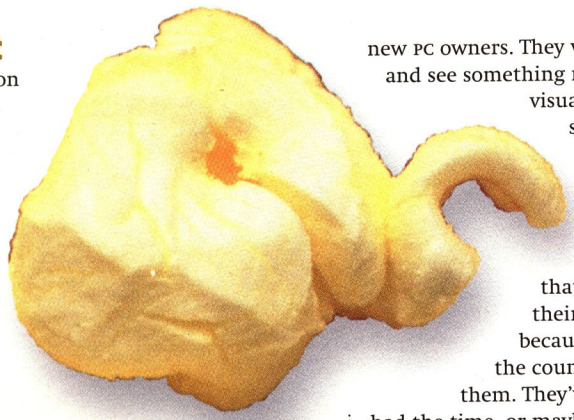


Jay Wilbur, id Software:
"We don't do interactive movies – lots of cut-scenes and film footage. We're not going to get into that stuff. I've got a VCR for that. I don't want to be annoyed when I'm playing my game. You see this stuff the first time, but what do you do when it comes up a second time?"



New PC owners alert

But for all the scorn poured on these things, somebody out there does like the stuff. Otherwise, how do you account for the fact that *Phantasmagoria*, a game that provides you with even fewer things to do than a Virtual Afterlife Simulator, is one of the best-selling games in the United States ever? Peter Molyneux thinks he knows: "Nobody understands why people buy games. This is only a personal theory, and it's never been researched, but I'm sure a lot of the people who buy this sort of thing are new PC owners. They walk into a shop and see something running that looks visually impressive, like say, *Phantasmagoria*, or *The 11th Hour*, and they buy it – it's either because they want something that will show off their new machine, or because the guy behind the counter pushes it to them. They've probably never had the time, or maybe the inclination, to read computer mags; the problem is that once they get it home and realise how little there is to it, it could put them off computer games entirely."



But most gamers aren't that bothered about all of the stuff they see between missions on a flight or space combat sim. If a game's genuinely good, most people wouldn't care if the mission details were on the back of a matchbox. And if the gameplay is good, they'll make all kinds of allowances for the graphics and presentation. But still the interactive movie proliferates, and because of the potential sales and profits involved, more people are going to start churning them out, which means more crap for us to wade through. The good ones maintain a decent standard of gameplay, but at the moment they're few and far between. Your only defence is to not buy the bad ones. If they stop selling, people will stop making them. **Z**

Interactive movies the cheap and easy way

Want to sit back and watch a top level interactive movie but don't have the necessary cash? Or maybe you want to watch one but don't even have a computer. It's no problem – just make your own, for only a few pounds, with this easy-to-follow method:

1 Go to any video rental shop and buy one of their ex-rental tapes for fifty pence. Make sure that it's really terrible, ideally a straight-to-video release, and that it's been rented a lot. (This is important, to get as much dropout on the picture as possible.) Obviously, there's a dangerous amount of freedom of choice here as to what type of interactive movie you want to watch. Resist the temptation to get anything you might be even vaguely interested in, or that features any actors you like. Otherwise, you'll lose the authentic feel of an interactive movie.

2 Go to your local newsagent's and buy one of those shitty puzzle mags with a picture of a chick in a bikini on the front.

3 Go home and put the video you just bought into the VCR and press <Play>.

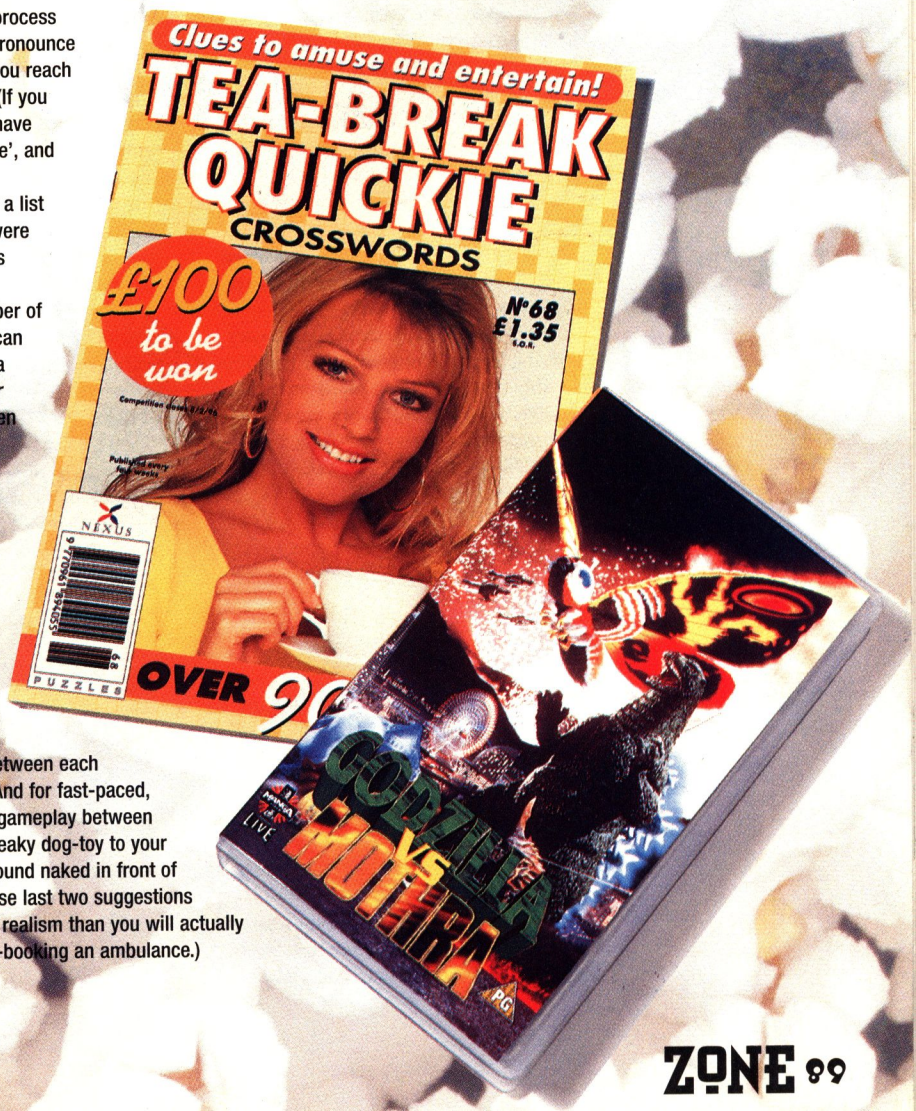
4 Let it run for two minutes. Make sure you remember to turn the sound level up and down every now and then. (And if you want to pretend that you're watching an interactive movie on anything other than a Pentium 133, slow the tracking right down.)

5 Pause the video. You've got to the interactive bit. Complete one of the puzzles in the magazine.

6 Now watch the video for another two minutes. Then do another puzzle.

7 Continue this process until doctors pronounce you brain-dead, or you reach the end of the film. (If you reach the end, you have 'completed the game', and can watch the 'end sequence' – usually a list of the people who were involved in the film's making.)

There are a number of variations that you can introduce. If you're a *7th Guest/11th Hour* fan, for example, then instead of using a video, look at pictures from a travel brochure in between doing the puzzles. If you like your interactive movies a little more violent, try landing two clean punches on the nose of next door's Rottweiler between each completed puzzle. And for fast-paced, adrenaline-packed gameplay between puzzles, tape a squeaky dog-toy to your genitals and run around naked in front of the Rottweiler. (These last two suggestions might involve more realism than you will actually enjoy. Consider pre-booking an ambulance.)



NEC MultiSpin 4x4c

The MultiSpin may look like a normal CD-ROM drive but, as Duncan Swain found out, it's got Tardis-like capabilities...

(Right) A quad-speed drive that takes four CDs... that's amazing! Whatever next? (Er... a six-speeder that takes six discs, perhaps?)

ONLY TWO years ago anyone owning a PC with a CD-ROM drive was deemed to have good reason to sit back smugly and smirk at their less fortunate mates. Technology has moved on apace since then and if you haven't kept up you're no doubt still using the tired old double-speed drive you bought last year when prices came down enough to make them affordable.

But just as CD-ROM drives have more or less become a standard component of most set-ups, quad-speed units have now become the current standard, with six-speeds poised to take over in the next six months; if you hunt around a bit you can even find the odd eight-speed drive courtesy of a couple of forward-thinking manufacturers.

But with the inevitable speed wars looking likely to continue for the foreseeable future it's not really surprising that there are some companies who are adopting 'gimmicks' to ensure that your cash is drawn into their pockets and not those of the competition. Some believe that the irksome chore of swapping CDs between games, or even applications, is too much for your average punter, hence the recent appearance of a multitude of 'jukebox' drives which are capable of holding more than one disc at a time.

NEC's MultiSpin 4x4c IDE CD-ROM drive tackles this particular 'problem' in a unique way. Although the same size as a standard unit, crafty engineering allows four CDs to be stored and used separately. The discs are held towards the back of the drive, with the one in use at the front – but bear in mind that you can only use one CD at a time.

The drive is physically straightforward to install and operate: four buttons on the front allow access to each tray, and have corresponding LEDs which light up if a disc has been loaded and then flash to show which of the four CDs is actually in use. However, the software proved slightly tricky to set up, and may well pose a few problems for non-techies. There are two ways to set up the driver software: although it's possible to assign each tray a different drive letter, NEC recommend using just a single one. Their suggestion makes sense, especially if you've got DOS CD games installed, with bits on your hard drive; these bits need to know the drive letter of the CD, and of course cock-ups are inevitable if it varies. Fortunately though there's no need to resort to such a potentially problematic method as the driver installs a nifty utility under Windows that tells you which CD-ROM is in each tray and allows you to select which one to access; a similar utility is also available under DOS.

The bottom line

But when it comes down to choosing a CD-ROM drive the bottom line has to be performance. Without wanting to state the obvious, it's reasonable to expect a quad-speed drive to transfer data at four times the speed of the good old single-speeds of yesteryear. So just how did the MultiSpin fare in the speed stakes? Well, unfortunately as well as a disappointing result in terms of file access and transfer times, it also had a slightly lower overall performance when compared to the majority of quad-speeds currently available. It also proved to use up more PC resources than other similar drives.

Whether you'll want the MultiSpin added to your wish-list will depend on your personal point of view: if you don't think you can put up with swapping CDs manually anymore, the MultiSpin 4x4c could well be the drive you've been yearning for – but it's worth bearing in mind that you can get a six-speed drive (admittedly only capable of holding a mere single CD at a time) that's not only £40 less but almost certainly guaranteed to give you better performance. Z

Score

70

Useful for lazy gits.

Price: £222 inc VAT **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: NEC
Tel: 0181-993 8111

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

Duncan Swaine opts to tune in and er... well, try out a nifty little card which brings the delights of radio to your PC...

RA 300 PC RadioReveal Card

IT SEEMS THAT MOST MULTIMEDIA PCS nowadays come supplied with everything: CD-ROM drives that play audio CDs, speakers, sound cards, even TV tuners. In fact the only item that gets ignored is the humble radio. Okay, so as a means of entertainment the wireless may appear a little outdated, but sports fans will know that to keep up with the score in the Test match, or indeed the majority of football matches, a tranny is indispensable.

We've looked at a few radio cards in the past but Reveal's is easily the best so far. The installation procedure for this FM radio is simple – you shouldn't really need the comprehensive manual. All you need is a spare 8-bit expansion slot (though if necessary you can use a 16-bit one), and a pair of speakers. If you want to control the sound from the radio via your sound card software the two can be connected via a cable with a mini stereo jack on both ends, but this isn't supplied with the card. For those of you without a sound card the radio card can be used by plugging the speakers directly into it.

Stay tuned...

The software provides a digital interface for tuning and scanning channels, as well as setting up the display panel with volume controls, a timer for turning the radio on or off at a predetermined time, buttons for fine-tuning and a mute function; in addition to all that there's also a display to indicate the station you are tuned into and the present time. Reveal have made tuning into your favourite programmes easy by including that all important function: presets. After you've decided which ten channels you can't live without, you can store them in the relevant numbered selectors.

So after all the setting up, what's the RadioReveal actually like? Well, when I tried the card out at home there was no apparent interference with the reception, but when I then installed it using an office PC the quality was noticeably poorer; unfortunately I was unable to confirm whether this was due to the incredible mass of PC equipment surrounding the set-up or another piece of hardware within the PC itself.

Before I come to a final conclusion, I would first like to point out that I'm probably just a little biased because obviously there's no sport on Capital Gold, and you can't get Radio 5 on FM... but all in all the RadioReveal works very well and does everything it claims to. However, thirty five quid seems a lot of cash to splash out on a radio capable of receiving FM signals alone, when you think that you can pick up a couple of portable radios for the same price. Z

Score

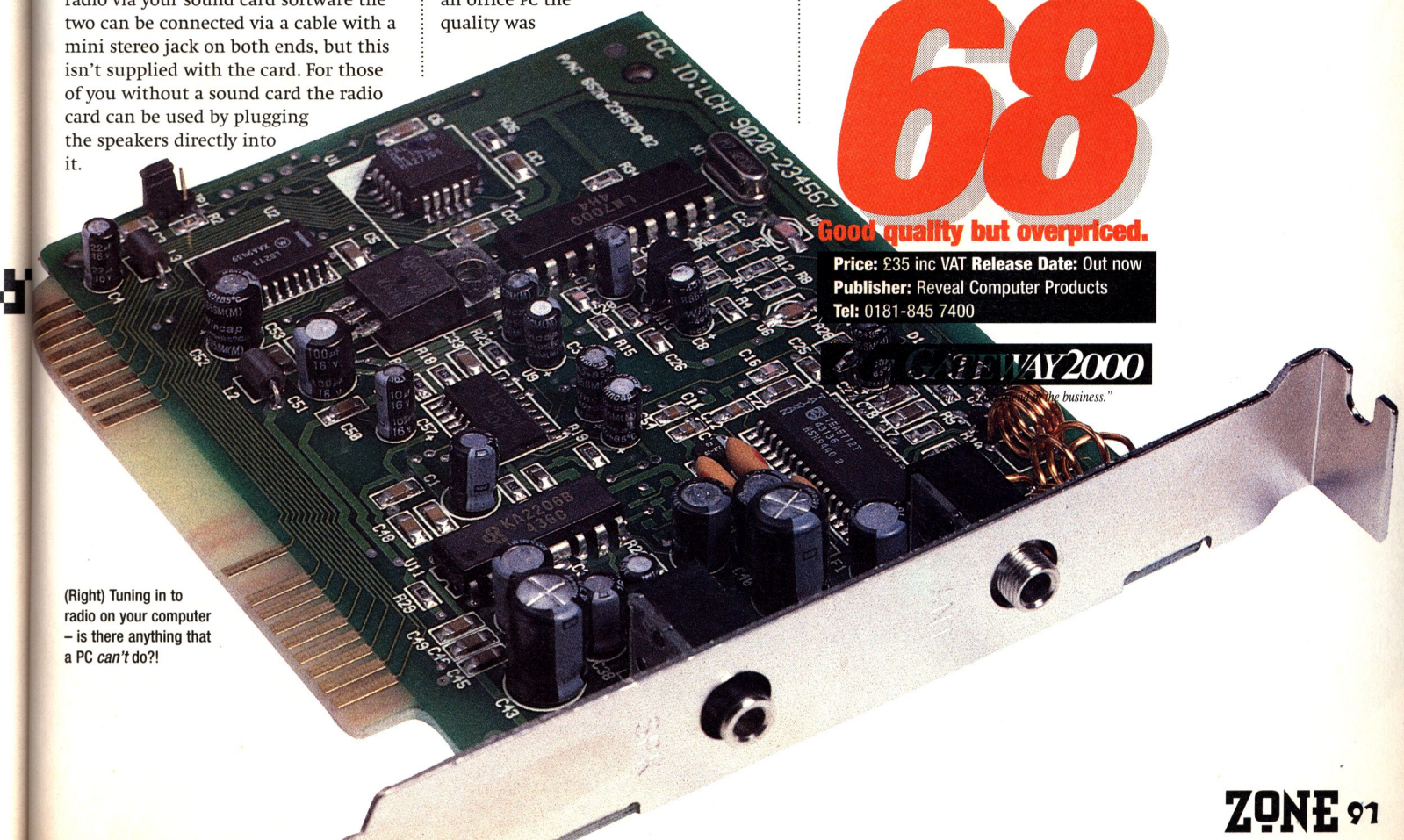
68

Good quality but overpriced.

Price: £35 inc VAT **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Reveal Computer Products
Tel: 0181-845 7400

GATEWAY2000

"...the business."



(Right) Tuning in to radio on your computer – is there anything that a PC *can't* do?!

Microsoft SideW 3D Pro Joystick

It's no secret that Dave Mathieson loves poor quality innuendoes, so naturally he leapt at the chance to get his hands round Bill Gates' big stick.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Joysticks tend to come in two varieties: the cheapo ones which come supplied with your PC and are just about good enough for a few hours of *Actua Soccer* before they start to go all drifty and crap, and big posh chunky jobs smothered in buttons designed to make flight sim buffs think that they really *are* flying their F16 against the MiGs of Colonel Mad-bastard.

Obviously a bit bored with making operating systems and word processors, Microsoft have joined the fray with their SideWinder joysticks. The two models on offer are the SideWinder and the SideWinder 3D Pro, the former being a standard two-button model. But the version we're looking at here is a bit more groovy, with eight buttons, a throttle control, a hat switch and a twisty control on the joystick itself.

What's more, it's also made from shiny black plastic, and it has a large base shaped just like a pair of pants.

A lot of cheaper joysticks gauge the stick's actual position by way of a metal contact, which tends to get gunged up pretty quickly and can cause tracking problems. The 3D Pro, however, uses optical tracking which avoids moving parts, with the result that it helps keep things a lot smoother.

Looking ahead

The most revolutionary aspect of the 3D Pro is its digital mode. What this means is that the joystick itself 'transmits' data about its position to Windows 95. More conventionally, the game itself has to constantly check the joystick's status, which uses up valuable processor power, but the digital mode takes some of this work away from the CPU. The problem here, of course, is that at present there aren't really enough Windows 95 games around to take advantage of this, but the situation is set to change pretty soon. Until DOS becomes a thing of the past, however, you're unlikely to spend this kind of money on a new joystick unless it can hold its own with your existing games. Microsoft think so too, and they've built ThrustMaster and CH Flightstick Pro compatibility into the 3D Pro. The upshot of this is that you can use most of its buttons and sliders in games that support these sticks.

See me, feel me...

While the 3D Pro is not quite as chunky as some other joysticks, the build quality is very good, and the stick itself has a lovely smooth feel (add the 'joystick resembling men's parts' innuendo of your choice here). The buttons are also very responsive, my only gripe being that my large, gorilla-like hands occasionally had a few problems finding them. The fire button in particular seems a bit over-sensitive, with totally disastrous results for the inhabitants of a small Korean village during an *Apache Longbow* session. In addition to the standard joystick functions, the 3D Pro gets the '3D' in its name by virtue of its twisty mode. This means that you can twist the joystick itself, and although I didn't get the chance to test this feature, I'd imagine that it would come in very handy for activating left and right cockpit views, or activating a rudder.

While the 3D Pro might not usurp the likes of ThrustMaster in the hearts of die-hard propeller heads, it's a pretty impressive joystick debut from the lad Gates nevertheless. As long as games manufacturers can be persuaded to support its innovative features, there's really no reason I can think of why the 3D Pro shouldn't set a new standard. In the meantime, though, it still has plenty enough going for it to make it well worth upgrading to if you're bored with your two-button model. **Z**

Score

83

A joystick that's nicely put together, with some innovative new features.

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READ THIS!

Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mortal, we need you to prove that you have actually bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... *"Rubber Chicken"*.

HEX	DECIMAL
09H	09
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255

The Boggit's Mailbag

Day Of The Tentacle

I've been trying my best to get past the bit where the three main characters are all separated. I know that it's only at the beginning, but I'm completely stuck and don't know where to start.

Richard Cave, Amersham

Well, I hope you know what you're talking about, because I'm damned if I do. Would I be right in thinking that you're trying to get Laverne free from the branches of a tree? Let's assume that's what you want, because at least that way I can give you an answer.

Get Hoagie to use the red paint on the kumquat tree. Now go to the main hall and talk to George Washington about cherry trees and tell him that he's an old has-been; just to prove that he can still cut the mustard he'll rush outside and chop the tree down, which frees Laverne in the future.

Beneath A Steel Sky

Can you give me a tip on how to get a copy of Colston's fingerprints from his drink glass?

Chris Houston, Taunton

Enter the club and select the song You Search, But Find Nothing *on the jukebox. Before long the needle will stick. When Colston gets up out of his seat to kick the machine you can take the glass and go to Burke's Bio Surgery. Hand over the glass to get a set of prints.*

Gabriel Knight

I am on day three and totally stuck! What do I do when Mrs Cazaunoux gives me the snake bracelet? I've been trying to solve this problem for ages, but just can't fathom out what to do next.

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

The Boggit
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield, Aylesford
KENT ME20 6NR

If you can help I will be your friend for life and recommend your magazine to all my mates.

H T Elmore, Anglesey

Gosh, I've got a new friend! Hold on – the friends I've already got just annoy me by writing lots of letters, then ringing up and trying to borrow money. I've got a better idea: just take out a subscription and we'll call it quits.

Gabriel Knight *is rather a tricky game, and to be honest I think you've done very well to get this far. On day one you were supposed to grab a handful of clay from the riverbank when you visited the crime scene. Now you have the ideal thing to take an impression of the snake bracelet. We can only hope that the little old lady doesn't notice the fact that her bracelet is dripping with mud when you hand it back to her.*

The Secret Of Monkey Island

I am now in part three of this game. I am locked up in the cannibal's jail and I have the banana picker. I know I have to get the banana picker out of the hut, but *how?* I am desperately stuck and would give anything (except money) for some help.

Mark Anderson, Bridlington

Do you know how natives catch monkeys? They attach a coconut to a tree, then drill a hole in the shell which is just big enough for a monkey to slip its hand inside, but too small for it to take its hand out again if it's holding something. The monkey will find the coconut, stick its hand inside to grab a piece of fruit which has been placed there, and then find that it can't get its hand out. The greedy ape will sit there and allow itself to be captured rather than let go of its prize.

So how does it feel to be a greedy monkey

Well, here we are again at the section where we make it easier for wimps and wallies to get through their favourite games in one piece. Yup – honest gamesplayers avert your eyes because yes, it means resorting to the hideous crime of cheating...

who misses out on escaping the jail by picking up the skull and leaving through the hole in the floor, just because it would mean leaving the banana picker behind? – if you leave now you can come back later, stupid. Once you are out you should go for a boat ride to the first beach and 'click' on the monkey which you'll find wandering about. Give him all of your bananas (yes, I know you can't bear to give things away, but grit your teeth and do it). Go to the clearing south of the pond and then to the monkey's head. Pull the nose on the far totem pole to open the gate. Things will now start happening.

Little Big Adventure

I have come a long way, a long, long way, but now I'm stuck – not just stuck, but very stuck. I've reached FunFrock's Fortress, fought my way inside, been captured, escaped and found the stone of sepentrion; I'm stuck in the small enclosed room where the stone lies. How on earth do I get out? It's been driving me mad for about nine months and I have been searching desperately for help, and I only hope that you can provide it. Please, before the eminent sequel appears?

Nik Vale, Salisbury

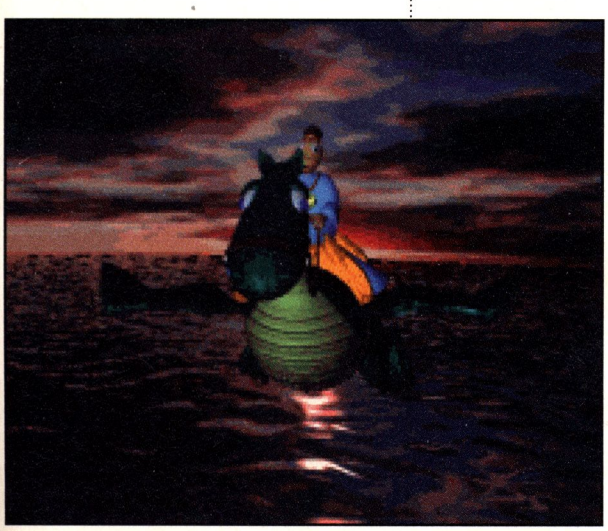
I can't say that I've played this game too much myself as that little wobbly man gets on my nerves, but I can tell you what is written about it in my scrolls and hope that it helps.

It says here: 'Find the Zoe clone and kill her for a key, which you use to get all your stuff back. Go through the upper-left door, but don't touch the clones or they will all attack at once. Go to the back wall and when the seal appears blow the horn. Pour the clear water over the runic stone, and then you'll see the fortress nuke itself!'

That sounds like the business to me.

(Above right) Real men don't mind taking on *Witchaven's* dragon with just a silly sword, but if you are a wimp...

(Below) If playing with the little wobbly men in *Little Big Adventure* is your thing (don't knock it 'til you've tried it!), then Boggit's got some good advice for you.



THE HACKMASTERS™

Hexen

Like its predecessor *Heretic, Hexen* has a built-in code that can deliver instant power-ups to those of you who can't stand the heat of the dungeon. Simply type the command <NRA> to fill your breeches with all manner of weaponry.

Witchaven

Here's a little hack for the demo version:

Start new game; save game in slot 1, then exit the game.

Using a hex editor, open the file SVGNO.DAT. Find and edit the following addresses:

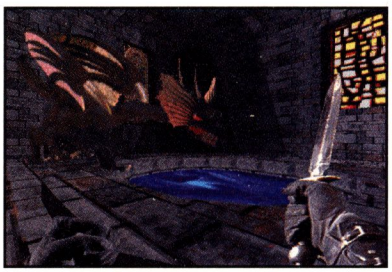
0051=01	Gives a sword
006D=FF	Gives 255 arrows
0071=FF	Sword life
0081=FF	Together these give 255 bolts of
0085=FF	all spells
0089=FF	
008D=FF	
0091=FF	
0129=63	Together these give 99 doses of
012D=63	all potions
0131=63	
0135=63	
0139=63	
013D=09	Experience level
0141=FFFF	Experience points
0145=FFFF	Loads-a-life
014D=FFFF	Loads-a-strength

(Submitted by Mick Smith of Tadcaster – thanks Mick!)

Robocod

If you possess the demo version of *Robocod* you'll find that you can only access certain sections (ie sports and toys). However, if you collect objects contained in the demo in a special order then you should be able to access the entire game.

When you start there are five different items that you can collect above the first sign: a tap, a cupcake, a globe, an apple and a hammer. The order in which they must be collected is: **cupcake, hammer, globe, apple, tap.**



Not only can you now play the whole game, but your enemies will find that you're invincible. But, and it's a big 'but', you can die if you fall off the edge of the screen!

MechWarrior 2

Although we gave you a few cheat codes for this game a couple of months ago, we've uncovered even more secrets to make your life inside a metal warrior a little easier.

Note: <SHIFT>, <CTRL> and <ALT> must be held down while typing the cheat commands:

ENOLAGAY

Whatever object you've targeted will be given an atomic blast.

LAIRDO

This cheat lets you command any other mech, assault vehicle or dropship which may be nearby – useful when the going gets tough.

MICHELIN

Try it and see!

MEEPMEEP, UNMEEPMEEP

Switches time compression on/off.

HANGAROUND

Allows you to stay on the battlefield at the end of the mission. Now you can wander freely to survey your triumph.

ICANTHACKIT

Enter this code to exit the mission.

DORCSCO

You'll temporarily exit the mission while a list of the various designers appears. Selecting an individual will reveal some words of wisdom.

Secret Mechs

First enter the trials of grievance and click on star config. Click on your current call sign, delete it and type in <Hobbes> – make sure you get the cases right. Choose Mech Lab after changing your call sign to Hobbes, scroll through the mechs and you'll be able to select the elemental. There's also the spider-like tarantula mech to have a go at. »

THE TRUEPLAYERS™

Frightening! Mindnumbing! Horrifying! Nothing can prepare you for this game's unwieldy user interface and torturous gameplay – and if that's not bad enough, there are puzzles to solve as well. Don't despair if you've ended up in a terrifying mess, 'cos our team of hard-assed space marines are here to get you out.

Aliens

Landing the ship

Go down the stairs, speak with Williams and ask him if he needs anything. Go back upstairs, then go down to the computer room. Go inside and 'look' at the Video CD. Find and 'use' the red button at the bottom-left of the screen. Go back upstairs and open the large exit door. Once inside, turn right and enter the crew's quarters on the right. Take the raw CD, the yellow security pass and the keyboard from the cabins.

Talk to Lora using the fifth option, then reply with the first option. Lora will now give you the green security pass. Select the raw CD then return to the computer room. Select the planet information option. Select landing co-ordinates. When prompted use the Video CD player. Go and 'talk' to the Captain to land on the planet.

The base

Use the green pass to the elevator near Lora's cabin. In the lower level move to the control console in the middle of the room and operate the switch to lift a weapons crate. Follow the crate and use the controls to extract a laser gun. Go to the canteen and use the food dispenser to feed the crew.

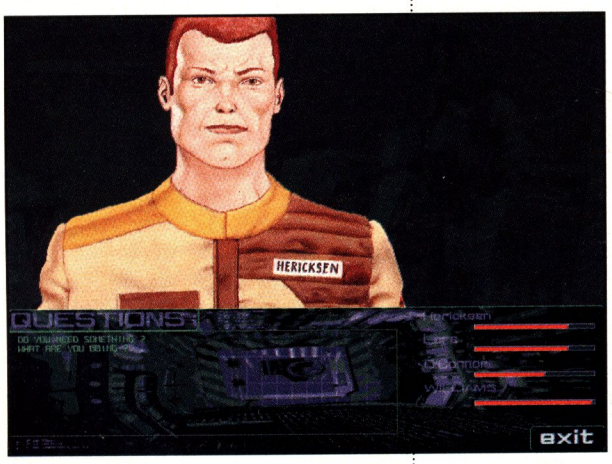
Return to the loading bay, move to the central console, then select the 'change view' option at the top of the screen to see the exit door. At this point all members of the team will join you and begin to suit up. Make sure that you have your laser gun selected.

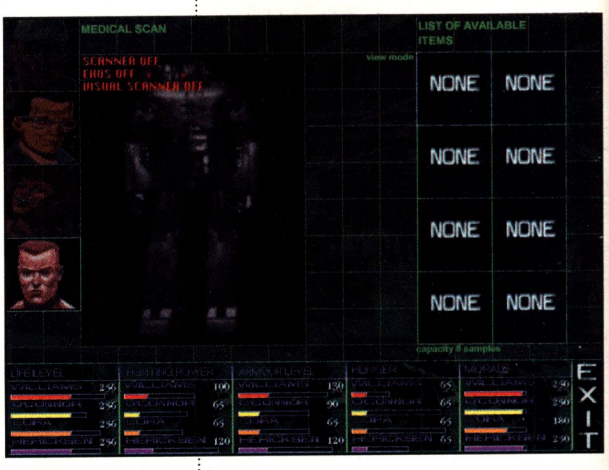
Once in the tunnel beyond you'll have a small piece of action followed by a short word from a dying member of the base (the short word being "Aaaaaaargh!").

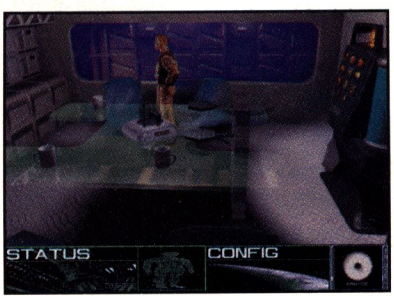
Once inside the base go to the far right and open the large door. Move to the right of the room to find a elevator door with a red switch. 'Use' the switch and go upstairs. Climb the stairs to find a locker with a spin handle on the front which you will not be able to open. Go back down the stairs and you will come across a glass-sided cubicle in the middle of the room. Open the cubicle and inside you will find Robby the robot. Pick up the robot. On a chair in this room lies a red security pass, so pick it up before leaving. Return to the

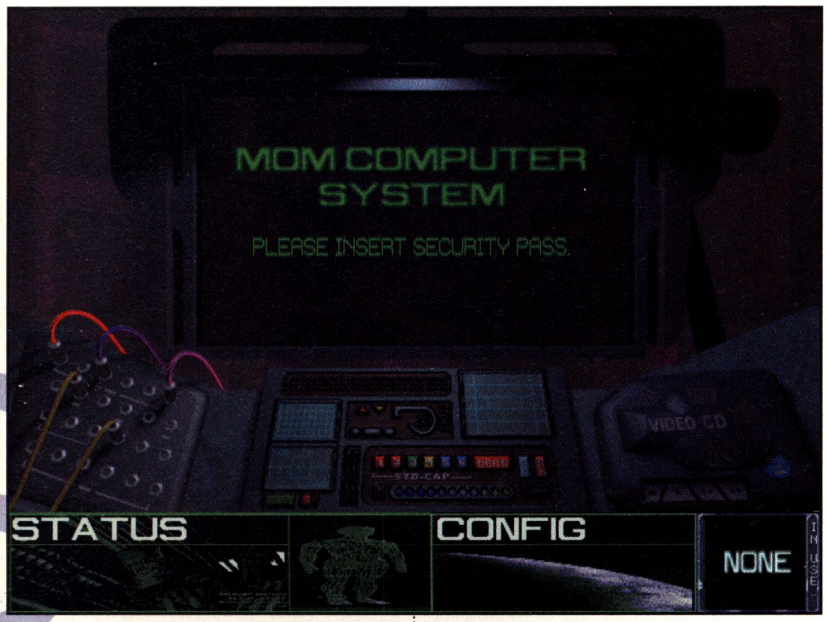
(Right) "Okay babe, I've got a few questions I want answering, and I don't want to be jerked about."

(Far right) The inventory screen is also used for passing handy items between members of your team, as well as enabling you to check up on the health and food status.









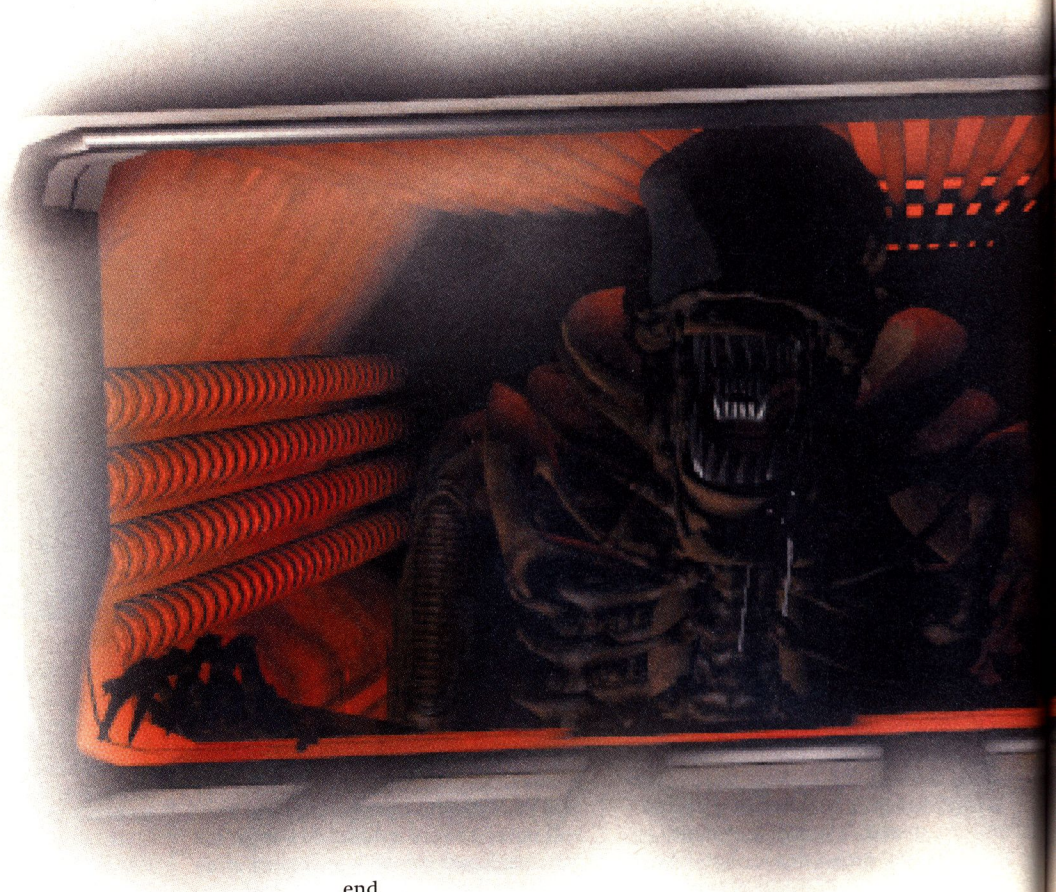
large entry room of the base. Opposite the brightly lit staircase in the middle of the room is a dark staircase. Go up the stairs, turn right and you will see lots of chains hanging from the ceiling. Behind the chains is a computer panel with a network connection above it. With Robby selected in your hand, 'use' the network connection; Robby will now be plugged into the central computer, and a bit of the mystery will be revealed.

Return to the area where Robby was found and again try to open the closet that you failed to open before. Robby will now step forward and do the job for you. Inside you can pick up a piece of an x scanner, plus a map. Drag the map onto a face to see its contents; note the code number 154324321. Turn around and face the boarding room. Search the centre of the room with the mouse and you will find a 'use' hot spot. Click on this spot to illuminate a red switch.

Use the elevator to go downstairs to the vehicle bay and look at the vehicle on the left to find a second piece of the x scanner lying on the bodywork. Operate the red switch on the back wall of the bay to lower a

(Above left) The ship's computer system will only allow you access to its secrets if you have found the yellow security pass hidden in the crew's cabins.

(Above right) To find the platform which leads into the alien-infested tunnels, take a ride in the elevator from the vehicle bay.



vehicle on the ramp. Find a third piece of the x scanner inside.

Leave the vehicle bay and go immediately to the darkened area on the left of the large entrance room. First ensure that Herickson has the gun selected, then switch to Williams. You will now be able to pick up a metal bar at the bottom of the screen. As soon as you do, three robots will appear and battle commences.

Climb the brightly lit stairway opposite and move right. Use Williams (with the metal bar selected) to turn the wheel on the fuel tanks. Use the keypad on the computer at the top of the stairs, then turn around and go to the door that has now opened at the far side of the room. Get the hand from the body.

Return to the vehicle bay and use the handle on the far wall to start the fuel pump. Use the fuel cap on the right hand vehicle to fuel it.

Go to the left wall of the bay to find a second 'open' elevator. Take this to a platform above and then, with the red pass selected, you can open the door at the far end. At the end of the passage is the door to SAS 6 (map room). Look underneath the console containing the spinning globe to find the fourth and final piece of the x scanner. On the floor beside the door are a number of mines that you can use when you encounter our scaly chums.

Leave and follow the corridors to door SAS 11. In the corridor beyond are four rooms. In the room containing a bed there is a code panel on the wall. Using the switches enter the code found on the map (ie A=1, B=2 etc). The wall compartment will open and allow you to take a microchip and a grey pass. Select the microchip then use the computer panel on the opposite wall to view Chipster's diary. Continue to the end of this corridor and leave via door SAS 13. Go through the next hatch and then, if you have the x scanner selected, you will be able to find and open the secret floor elevator that will take you down to the room containing the eggs and facehuggers. Assuming you manage to defend yourself from these over enthusiastic French kissers, you'll be able to arm yourself with additional weaponry.

(Below) Examine the floor between the 'sleeper coffins' and you'll find the music CD that the Eurovision Song Contest refused to accept.

(Right) If you can take your eyes off Lora's 'attributes' for just a moment you'll see she's got the green security pass in her pocket. *That's* what you really want from her.

Through the force field

Return to door SAS 7. Use the hand to switch off the force field. At the far side of the field turn right. In the room beyond use the grey pass in the wall slot. 'Click' on the picture on the right to switch on the lights. Look around at the egg chamber and you'll be able to pick up egg slime – but do this immediately or you'll be killed.

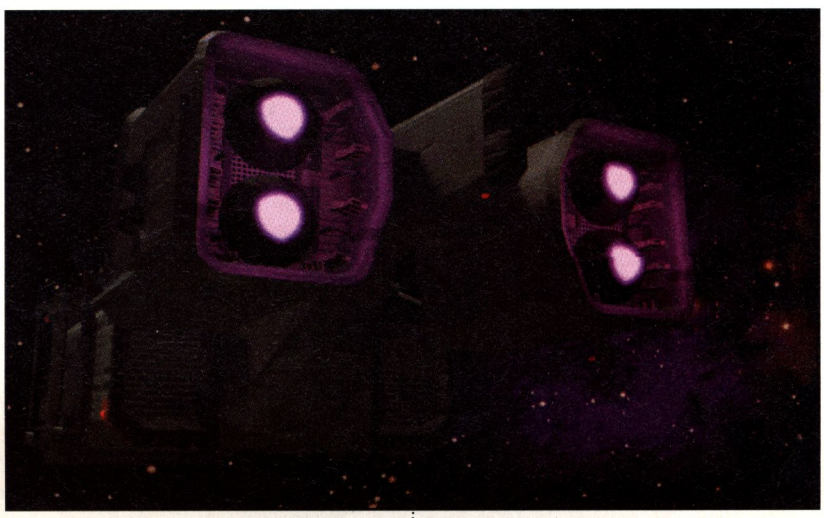
Use the grey pass again to switch off the lights and get a computer printout. Go to the stairwell to the left of the forcefield, and halfway down the stairs enter the giant egg room. Now find the mapper device and a piece of the protector. The mapper will show you the layout of the maze inside the giant egg. Leave and go to the bottom of the stairs

to pick up the hook on a rope. Return to the ground level and go forward of the force field, then turn right to the egg lab. Find more pieces of the protector and learn the formulae for Benoxidil (which destroys acid) and Benfortine (a food substitute). Exit right to Church's office. The wall panel opens the door to the alien lab. Open the tanks to access the facehuggers. Use the keypad on the object located in the middle of the room and insert <MYYRMIDON>, the code from the printout. You'll now be given a synthetic alien. Get the facehugger. The door from the office leads direct to the corridor with the dead alien which can be passed with the Benoxidil. (This gives a quicker route back to the other side of the force field.) The keycard for the door is on the floor inside.

Return to the giant egg room and use the alien on the top of the egg. Use the hook on the egg to gain entrance. Use the facehugger. Once inside the maze you'll have to find and destroy the alien queen. In the centre of the maze you will find Church who will take you to the alien bay, where there are lots of scaly beasts for you to dispose of.

Here is one route through the maze: ***F F L F F F R R F L F F L F R F L R F R F.***

At this point Church will be just a bit unkind by running off and stealing your ship, leaving you in deep alien guano. There is a security pass here which opens the cadaver room back upstairs. In this room are more bodies and yet another hand (Vaskal's) which must be severed. It is Vaskal's hand that will power-up the vehicle back in the vehicle bay and allow you to drive outside the base. Using the vehicle you may now travel to where the hospital ship is waiting, but just when things are looking good you'll have one last fight on your hands. This time your enemy is the military under the command of Fredricks. Defeat them and you will save mankind, claim the hand of lovely Lora, and win a poster of Sigourney Weaver in that tight T-shirt.



(Below) What do you think of these hilarious 'Acme pop-up teeth' that I got for Christmas?

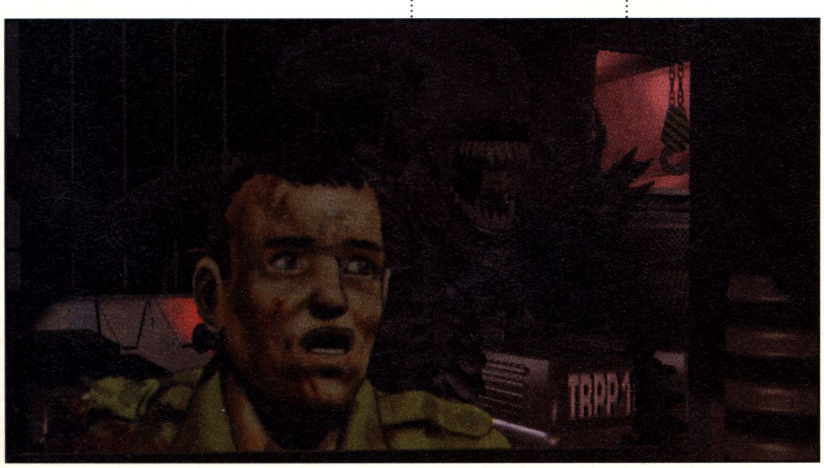
(Below right) If you want to avoid the need to return to the ship every ten minutes to feed your team, make sure you top up everyone's inventory from the junk food dispenser in the dining hall before you leave.

And finally...

It's not imperative that you build the protector device, but if you do you'll find that combat becomes a whole lot easier. There are six pieces to be found: one in the freezer, four in and around the research lab (one is in the vent), while the last is on the lower level of the giant egg room.

You can also 'use' the reversi console on the network connection where you connected the robot. Connecting the console will destroy the virus which is in the machine. Now when you play the game, and then immediately end it, you'll find that you're able to read data from the space network which helps explain the political mess that caused all the problems. It's all non-essential but hell, you might as well see it all.

Game over man! **Z**



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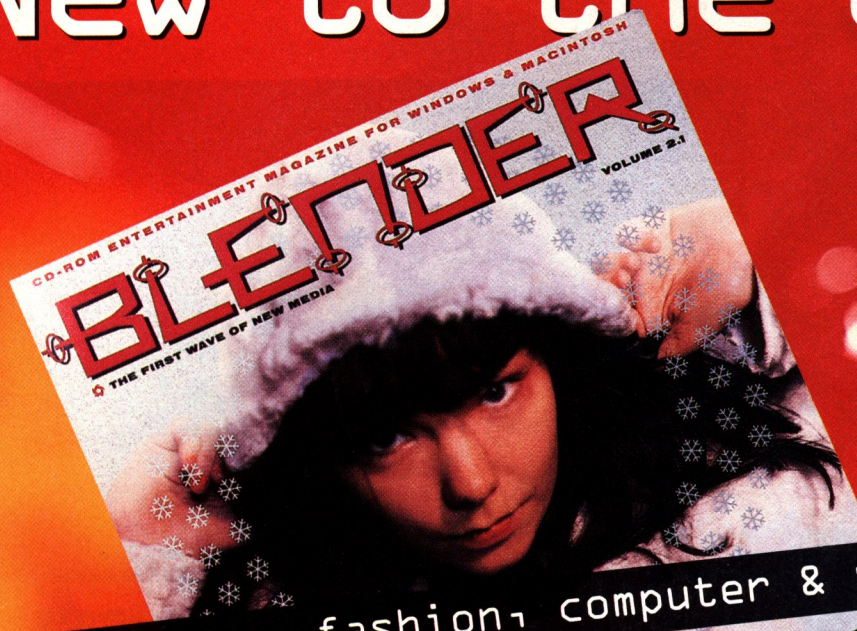

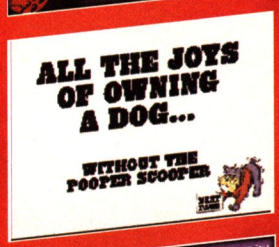

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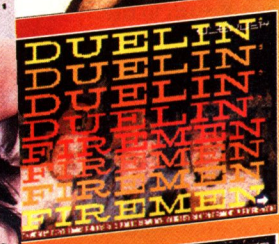

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BUYERS' GUIDE

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing *PC Zone* Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here – painstakingly compiled by our very own engine driver.

Issue 9 – December 1993

Blue Angels
(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99
Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football
(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99
Too much violence, not enough game.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

Clix
(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle Game £14.99
Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

Cogito
(57) Mindscape – Puzzle Game £29.99
A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands
(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99
The next best thing to *Ultima*.

Dino Dini's Goal
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99, *Kick Off* with sideways options (but it works).
Not as good as *Sensible Soccer*.

Dracula
(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99
A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

Frontier: Elite II
(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99
Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

Front Page Sports Football Pro
(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99
The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

Goblins
(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle £39.99
An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

Hook
(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99
At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.

Jack The Ripper
(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99
Ugly, unpleasant and boring. We know, give it a job with *PC Zone*.

Jutland
(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99
Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.

Kasparov's Gambit
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess Game £44.99
Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.

Magic Candle II
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.

NFL Coaches Club Football
(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99
Certainly a good attempt but it's a shame that it's badly let down by the rather poor passing system.

Privateer
(75) Origin – Flight Sim £49.99
Wing Commander fans will love this. *X-Wing* fans won't. It's as simple as that.

Sim Farm
(79) Maxis – Strategy £34.99
Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as *Sim City*.

Steel Thunder
(60) Hit Squad – Arcade £12.99
It's reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

Street Fighter II
(81: Recommended) US Gold – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Addictive and violent but the cross over to the PC IS hindered unless you have a gamepad.

Strike Commander: Tactical Operations
(80: Recommended) Origin – Flight Simulator £19.99
Essential if you're determined to get the most out of *Strike Commander*.

V for Victory 4: Gold–Juno–Sword
(78) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99
It's still the best computer wargame system but it needs a shot in the arm... or leg... or both even.

When Two Worlds War
(63) Impressions – Wargame £34.99
An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new – including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

Issue 10 – January 1994

8 Ball Deluxe
(75) Supervision – Pinball Game £34.99
Technically, the best pinball game there is, but there's not enough of it for the price.

20th Century Almanac
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £74.99
Outrageous price for a poor substitute for a hardback encyclopaedia.

Aces Over Europe
(78) Dynamix – Flight Sim £44.99
It's better than *Aces Of The Pacific*, but so it should be. Dated, but still very playable.

Air Combat Classics
(60) US Gold – Flight Sim £45.99
Shows just how far things have progressed in five years.

Alien Breed
(75) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
Enjoyable, undemanding shoot 'em up that comes into its own in two-player mode.

Dracula Unleashed
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £39.99
Classy adventure that you can really get your teeth into.

Dreamlands
(72) Daze Marketing – Compendium £29.99
The ideas and graphics are interesting; the gameplay, however, isn't.

Goblins 2
(67) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £44.99
Zany puzzle game, frustrating at times but mostly good fun.

IndyCar Racing
(93: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £44.99
The new definitive driving game. And it comes with a free moustache.

Innocent Until Caught
(84: Recommended) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
Well worth nicking. Ho ho.

Jurassic Park
(73) Ocean – Adventure £34.99
Despite some irritating flaws, this is an atmospheric and addictive game.

Knights Of The Sky
(79) Kixx – Strategy £16.99
A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.

Links Championship Course: Innisbrook
(75) US Gold – Sport £24.99
If you really want another *Links* course, then this is one.

Links
(80: Recommended) Kixx – Sport £16.99,
An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja PC.

Lords Of Power
(85: Recommended) Ubisoft – Strategy £39.99
A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.

Network Q RAC Rally 2
(80: Recommended) Europress Software – Driving Game £34.99
A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.

Newsweek Interactive
(30) The Software Business – General Interest £39.99
Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.

Night Shift
(70) Kixx – Puzzle Game £12.99
A suitably frantic and frustrating puzzler.

Oceans Below
(70) The Software Business – Edutainment £39.99
Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.

Protostar (CD)
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Space Sim £39.99
Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.

Return To Zork (CD)
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £49.99
Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that *Zork* was sacred. Ha!

Return To Zork
(90: Classic) Activision – Adventure £45.99
A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.

Shadowcaster
(66) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Neither *Wolfenstein* nor *Underworld*. And not much in-between.

Speed Racer
(49) Accolade – Racing £39.99
Nice intro, shame about the game.

Star Trek: Judgement Rites
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is 'fascinating' but it isn't the best flight sim or adventure game.

Strike Squad
(25) Empire – Strategy £39.99
One look at the poor score should be enough to tell you what we think of the game. Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

The Blue And The Gray
(78) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all-round wargame with hidden depths and longterm playability.

The Even More Incredible Machine
(89: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
If you've never played *The Incredible Machine* now's the time to start. So come on then, what are you waiting for?!

World Class Rugby
(60) Audiogenic – Sport £14.99
Not really worth the waggle.

World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific
(62) Mirage – Strategy/Action £44.99
An innovative mix of naval strategy and action, though unfortunately the gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations.

Issue 11 – February 1994

Advantage Tennis
(55) Infogrames – Sport £35.99
Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

Alone In The Dark 2
(97: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £39.99
Absolutely brilliant! What the PC was made for.

Alone in the Dark (CD)
(92: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.

B-Wing
(72) US Gold – Space Sim £19.99
Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy *B-Wing* or, er, something else.

Capitol Hill (CD)
(75) Software Toolworks – Edutainment £39.99
Comprehensive introduction to American politics.

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo
(90: Classic) Mindscape – Chess £34.99
Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

Critical Path (CD)
(72) Media Vision – Adventure £49.99
Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

Dungeon Hack
(62) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. For very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

Fire And Ice
(75) Renegade – Platform Game £29.99
A fun but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.

Flight Sim Toolkit
(80: Recommended) Domark – Simulation £49.99
Recommended, but only if you find *Stunt Island* limiting. It can be very heavy going.

Global Dominaton
(65) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.

Goblins 3
(75) Coktel Vision – Puzzle Game £39.99
Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.

Kingmaker
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Board Game £37.99
Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.

Magic Boy
(60) Empire – Platform Game £25.99
Not very 'magic' at all.

Master of Orion
(72) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
A good one for all the accountants out there.

Rebel Assault
(93: Classic) LucasArts – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
It's *Star Wars*. It's also the most important game to date.

Striker
(55) Elite – Sport £29.99
Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.

Subwar 2050
(88: Recommended) MicroProse – Simulation £44.99
Easily the best 'fun' simulation that MicroProse has produced.

The Labyrinth Of Time
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Adventure £39.99
Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.

The Terminator Rampage
(75) Bethesda Softworks – Arcade £39.99
Okay, but once you've seen *Doom*, you'll laugh in *Rampage*'s face and spill its pint.

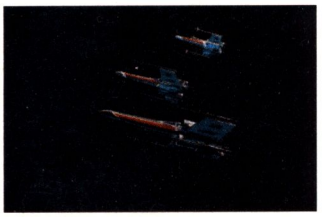
VGA Planets
(70) PAW PBM – Role-Playing Game £24.99
A rather interesting type of RPG that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

Issue 12 – March 1994

Campaign
(52) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action – too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

Championship Manager '94
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's still the best (just).

Championship Manager Italia
(80: Recommended) Domark – Sport £29.99
It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.



(Left) *X-Wing:* groove on down to the old 'destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess' tune.

Combat Classics 2
(50) Empire – Flight Sim Compendium £34.99
Sadly, this compilation contains one classic and two rather second-rate duds.
Companions Of Xanth
(73) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Awful puns. Questionable humour. Very *Monkey Island*-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?
Cyber Race
(64) Cyberdreams – Racing £44.99
Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.
Fury Of The Furries
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Puzzle/Platform Game £39.99
A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.
Gabriel Knight
(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.
Genesia
(83: Recommended) Mindscape – Strategy £34.99
A little bit of *Populous*, a little bit of *Civilization*.
Hand Of Fate
(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.
Heirs To The Throne
(43) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd blinking well complain.
Indianapolis 500
(65) Hit Squad – Driving £14.99
A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.
Leisure Suit Larry 6
(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £35.99
The best *Larry* yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.
Litil Divil
(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics – Puzzle Game £39.99
An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.
Police Quest 4: Open Season
(78) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.
Premier Challenge
(78) T'ai Chi – Sport £24.99
Design your own game. Boost this score.
Premier Manager 2
(65) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £34.99
It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.
Shadow Of Darkness
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A compelling storyline, but the battle scenes are dull.
The Incredible Toons
(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle Game £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 – April 1994

Archon Ultra
(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.
Beneath A Steel Sky
(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99
Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.
Conspiracy
(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.
D-Day
(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.
Daemonsgate
(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.
Doom
(96: Classic) iD Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and also the best multi-player game ever. *Doom* is the best. Need we say more?
Hired Guns
(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.
Hot Sound And Vision
(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.
Interplay's 10 Year Anthology
(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.
Micro Machines
(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC, that is).
Mortal Kombat
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.
Nomad
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.
Pinball Fantasies
(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95
The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.
Reunion
(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.
Sim City 2000
(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.
Star Trek: 25th Anniversary
(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure Game £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.
Strike Commander (CD)
(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.
The Complete UMS
(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two *UMS* games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.
The Lawnmower Man
(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellently presented. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.
Winter Olympics
(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.
Wizard
(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)
(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Well, it's not really our idea of fun, but it's a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.
Airlines
(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.
Arena: The Elder Scrolls
(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99
Disappointing really.
Award Winner Gold Edition
(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!
Battle Isle 2
(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, this is *the* strategy game of the year.
Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)
(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
A stunning improvement on an already classic game.
Cannon Fodder
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.
CD-ROM Challenge Pack
(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonably good compilation, but there are better ones around.
Championship Manager For Windows
(79) Domark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.
D/Generation
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99
Probably the best game that *Windows* users have ever played.
Excellent Games
(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2, Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker, Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.
Fantastic Dizzy
(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
What can we say? Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.
Gabriel Knight (CD)
(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Brooding, atmospheric thriller.
In Extremis
(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!
Johnny Quest
(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word – dreadful.
Megarace
(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.
Merchant Prince
(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance, we reckon you'll be hooked.
Microcosm
(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.
NFL Pro League Football
(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.
Privateer: Righteous Fire
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.
Seawolf
(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.
Starlord
(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!
The Patrician (CD)
(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.
The Red Crystal
(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.
Unnecessary Roughness
(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as 'all right'. It's as good as most American footy sims.

Issue 15 – June 1994

Bloodnet
(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.
Carriers At War II
(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.
Darkseed
(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.
Diggers
(40) Millennium – Puzzle Game £34.99
Mind-numbingly tedious.
Disney Animation Studio
(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!
Dragonsphere
(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.
Evasive Action
(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
Oh, so very close, but it's got more bugs than Watergate.
F1
(40) Domark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.
Fleet Defender
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Simulation £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.
Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop
(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.
Hornet Naval Strike Fighter
(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Simulation
As that well known saying goes: 'If you like *Falcon 3*, you'll just love *Hornet*.'
Myst
(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.
Pacific Strike
(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art ninja PC.
Pagan: Ultima VII
(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for *Ultima* purists.
Ravenloft
(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
SSI has finally got 'real' and produced a playable and accessible RPG.
Red Hell
(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.
RedShift
(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd – General Interest £89.00
Stunning program which will be hard to beat.
Sabre Team
(60) Krisalis – Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.
Shadowcaster
(70) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.
Spaceship Warlock
(70) Reactor/Ubisoft – Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.
TFX
(80: Recommended) Ocean – Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.
UFO Enemy Unknown
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.
Washington DC Scenery
(85: Recommended) Supervision – Flight Sim Add-On £39.99
One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

Issue 16 – July 1994

Castles II
(65) Interplay – Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games – this isn't one of them.
Comanche (CD)
(90: Classic) Optima – Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.

(Left) *Simon The Sorcerer:* at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Companions Of Xanth (CD)
(84: Recommended) Accolade – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Great game on disk. Even better on CD.
Corridor 7
(55) Gametek – Arcade £19.99
Nothing new or exciting.
Detroit
(85: Recommended) Impressions – Strategy £39.99
An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.
Dragon's Lair
(67) Elite Systems – Adventure £39.99
An interactive cartoon that's more 'cartoon' than 'interactive'.
Eye Of The Storm
(40) Rebellion – Space/Strategy £39.99
Very futuristic, very *Elite* and very, very crap.
Great Naval Battles 2
(86: Recommended) US Gold – Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.
Hand Of Fate (CD)
(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £49.99
Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.
Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition
(85: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
A good golf game at an amazing price.
Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Sport £14.99
Dangerously addictive snooker sim.
Lucky's Casino Adventure
(60) Mirage – Card Game £44.99
Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.
Lure Of The Temptress
(55) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Old and fading.
Power Game 2 (CD)
(70) Activision – Simulation £29.99
Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.
Robinson's Requiem
(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing – Role-Playing Game £39.99
This is a highly original and addictive 'survival sim' which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.
Sam And Max Hit The Road
(93: Classic) US Gold – Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.
Sim City Classic
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £16.99
Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.
Sim City Enhanced
(82: Recommended) Interplay – Strategy £49.99
Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.
Sleepwalker
(45) Hit Squad – Platform Game £9.99
Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.
Space Hulk
(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.
Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge
(80: Recommended) Accolade – Sport £19.99
Good compilation, great value.
The Horde
(87: Recommended) US Gold – Strategy/Arcade £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.
The Rock 'n' Roll Years – The '50s
(70) Supervision – General Interest £24.99
Handy for 50's music lovers or as a reference – but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.
The Settlers
(89: Recommended) Blue Byte – Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.
Theatre Of War
(70) Hit Squad – Strategy £12.99
Excellent strategy game and it looks cool, too.
UFO
(93: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Our Chris's favourite, this is an incredibly addictive strategy game.
Wembley Rugby League
(66) Audiogenic – Sport £29.99
This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.
Wolfpack
(60) Optima – Strategy £29.99
Disappointingly average.
World Cup Challenge
(48) Winsport – Sport £29.95
Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

Issue 17 – August 1994

1942: Pacific Air War
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Two great games – *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* – in one package. It's a winner!
Al Quadim: The Genie's Curse
(40) US Gold/SSI – Role-Playing Game £35.99
The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.
Burntime
(43) Max Design – Strategy £39.99
Hey, it's just like being there.
Cool Spot
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Platform Game £29.99
Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!
Delta V
(64) Bethesda Softworks – Shoot 'Em Up £45.99
Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.
Dinosaur Detective Agency
(42) Alternative Software – Platform Game £16.99
Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.
Empire Soccer
(57) Empire – Sport £29.99
Let down by small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.
Good To Firm
(50) New Era Software – Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.
International Tennis Open
(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media – Sport £44.99
Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.
Jack Nicklaus (CD)
(78) Accolade – Sport £16.99
A perfectly seviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...
Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)
(0) Mindscape – General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.
Overlord
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.
Pinball Dreams 2
(70) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.
Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye
(88: Recommended) Activision – Puzzle Game £29.99
Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.
Sherlock Holmes – The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel
(48) Electronic Arts – Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.
Simon The Sorcerer (CD)
(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £44.99
A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.
Syndicate (CD)
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a barg.
Tactical Manager
(75) Black Legend – Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.
Theme Park
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive 'business' sim that's fun, fun, fun. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog!
Walls Of Rome
(74) Digital Integration – Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.
World Cup USA '94
(78) US Gold – Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.
Zool 2
(82: Recommended) Millennium – Platform Game £34.99
As they say, if you liked *Zool*, you'll love this.

Issue 18 – September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)
(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.
D-Day
(40) Impressions – Wargame £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a wargame without many redeeming features.
FIFA International Soccer
(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.
Harpoon II
(70) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always slooooow.
Inherit The Earth – Quest For The Orb
(72) US Gold – Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a 'sensible' game.
International Sensible Soccer
(78) Renegade – Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.
Litil Divil (CD)
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Adventure £34.99
Excellent, original and addictive.
Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes
(35) Megatech – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.
On The Ball
(68) Ascon – Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.
Outpost
(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.
Shadow Of The Comet (CD)
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure Game £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.
Soccer Kid
(30) Krisalis – Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.
Theatre Of Death
(35) Psygnosis – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.
TIE Fighter
(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Go out and treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 – October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.
Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix – Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).
Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.
Heimdall 2
(45) Core – Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.
Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner – Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.
IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).
Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simarils – Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.
KGB
(65) Hit Squad – Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.
Kick Off 3
(55) Anco – Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay isn't up to much.
Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis – Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.
Planet Football
(68) Infogrames – Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.
Police Quest IV – Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.
Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?
Under A Killing Moon (CD)
US Gold – Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.
Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but somehow it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 – November 1994

Alien Legacy
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Strategy Game £39.99
Space strategy thing which is a bit like *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.
Chaos Engine
(80: Recommended) Renegade – Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.
Colonization
(90: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine *Civilization* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.
Cyclemania (CD)
(83: Recommended) Accolade – Arcade Game £39.99
Extremely competent *Road Rash* 3DO rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.
Desert Strike
(78) Gremlin – Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.
Doom II
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive – Arcade Game £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and brand new monsty-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.
Inferno (CD)
(88: Recommended) Ocean – Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.
KA-50 Hokum
(85: Recommended) Virgin – Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter sim money can buy. Something for the propeller heads (yes, we know you're out there)...

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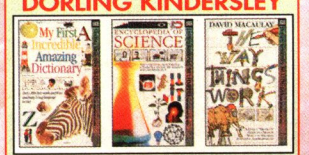

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(Right) *IndyCar Racing:* great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max:* The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)
(91: Classic) EA – Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.
PGA 486 (CD)
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.
Pinball Dreams CD
(70) 21st Century – Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why's it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.
System Shock
(95: Classic) EA/Origin – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Pant-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter (at least until *System Shock II* comes out, that is).

Issue 21 – December 1994

Alone in the Dark II CD
(93: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.
Dawn Patrol
(80: Recommended) Empire – Flight Sim £44.99
A gorgeous looking SVGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book, apparently.
Dreamweb
(74) Empire – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.
Ecstatica
(93: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure £44.99
An utterly brilliant *Alone in the Dark*-alike with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.
FIFA CD
(76) Electronic Arts – Sports £39.99
A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.
Little Big Adventure
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobsmacking.
Magic Carpet
(96: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Bloody excellent shoot 'em up – looks brilliant, totally addictive. A must-have.
Project X
(76) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £19.99
A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.
Rise Of The Robots
(88: Recommended) Mirage – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.
Space Simulator
(75) Microsoft – Simulator £39.99
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is a little too ambitious for its own good.
Star Crusader
(60) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Basically this is a poor man's *Wing Commander* with some nice CD bits.
Transport Tycoon
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to *Railroad Tycoon*.
Total Carnage
(74) ICE – Shoot 'Em Up £27.99
Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 – January 1995

Aces Of The Deep
(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra – Naval Sim £39.99
Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.
All New World Of Lemmings
(78) Digital Integration – Puzzle Game £39.99
If you like all the other *Lemmings* games, you'll like this one, too.
Armored Fist (CD)
(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novalogic – Simulation £44.99
Commanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.
Creature Shock
(78) Virgin – Adventure Game £49.99
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.
Cyberwar
(55) SCI – Arcade Adventure £49.99
It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.
Dark Sun II
(80: Recommended) Mindscape – RPG £44.99
Love it for its brains, not for its looks.
Discworld
(96: Classic) Psygnosis – Adventure Game £49.99
Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.
Front Page Sports Baseball
(85: Recommended) Sierra – Sport £44.99
It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.
Klik 'n' Play
(88: Recommended) Europress – Game Designer for Windows £39.99
Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.
Novastorm
(40) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Repeat ad nauseam: 'Pretty graphics doth not a game make.'
Power Drive
(50) US Gold – Racing Game £39.99
Knock off 30 whole points for no two-player mode. Sod off *Power Drive*.
Quarantine
(80: Recommended) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
An excellent blast and it looks good, too.
Retribution
(45) Gremlin Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.
US Navy Fighters
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £44.99
If it had a multi-player facility, we would've given it 100. But it hasn't, so we won't.
Warcraft
(75) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 – February 1995

Alone In The Dark 3
(95: Classic) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the *Alone In The Dark* trilogy.
Cannon Fodder 2
(74) Virgin Interactive – Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Just more of the same, or is *Cannon Fodder 2* a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more 'fun with a gun'.
Commander Blood
(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure Game £44.99
It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.
Cyberia
(80: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure/Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
A contender for the 'Best-looking game of 1994' award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than *Rebel Assault*.
Dragon Lore
(81: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure Game £44.99
Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?
Hammer Of The Gods
(77) US Gold – Strategy £TBA
Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.
Kyrandia 3
(87: Recommended) Virgin – Adventure £44.99
Westwood's *Fables and Fiends* series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!
Lion King
(71) Virgin – Platform Game £29.99
The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable-ish platform game. *PC Zone* good tip number one (in a series of...) – just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.
NASCAR Racing
(84: Recommended) Virgin – Racing Sim £44.99
Papyrus follows up *IndyCar* with the popular American sport of driving round and round in circles.
Noctropolis
(79) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
For a change EA goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.
Ultimate Body Blows
(78) Team 17 – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
An Amiga conversion from Team 17. But don't be put off by that – it's actually quite good.
Voyeur
(40) Interplay – Adventure £39.99
Not as pervy as you might think. Yes, there are suspenders and bras in it, but no nudity and no naughtiness (well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on *PC Zone*).
Wing Commander 3
(62) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £59.99
Four million dollars, Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress – a potentially interesting situation, if ever there was one.

Issue 24 – March 1995

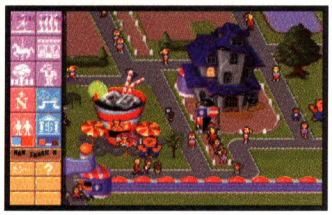
Aladdin
(70) Virgin – Arcade £29.99
He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin – who else.
Dark Forces
(95: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Action Adventure £54.99
The empire is finally *Doom*-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.
Doom Clones: Head To Head
(55) Merit – Action Adventure £39.99
We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against *Virtuoso* from Elite and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).
Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller
(25) Gametek – Adventure £39.99
It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.
Kick Off 3: European Challenge
(70) Anco – Sport £29.99
The last *Kick Off* was an absolute nightmare. Has Anco finally got it together in Europe?
King's Quest VII
(93: Classic) Sierra – Adventure £44.99
The latest point-and-click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mush-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.
Knights Of Xentar
(10) Megatech – Adventure £49.99
A plentiful lack of beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!
Menzoberanzan
(68) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £TBA
Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary role-playing game.
Metaltech: Earthsiege
(87: Recommended) Sierra – Simulation £39.99
Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERC-fest from Sierra. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCS that walk when the terrain is perfectly flat?
Realms Of Arkania: Star Trail
(85: Recommended) US Gold – RPG £44.99
The sequel to the keenly received *Blade Of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...
SuperKarts
(82: Recommended) Virgin – Action £TBA
The most fun you can have with your bum an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.
TIE Fighter: Defender Of The Empire
(73) LucasArts – Space/Action £19.99
Two new missions and a new ship. What ever will they think of next?
Wings Of Glory
(78) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £TBA
Chocks away as Origin reaches for the skies to do battle with the Hun, dastardly chaps with 'taches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 – April 1995

BC Racers
(62) Core Design – Racing Sim £34.99
Chuck Rock meets *Super Mario Kart*. Unfortunately, the clash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.
Big Red Adventure
(70) Core Design – Adventure £39.99
This is the follow up to *Nippon Safes*... arrgh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though, *Big Red Adventure* looks like it could actually be quite good.
BioForge
(95: Classic) Electronic Arts – Action Adventure £44.99
The first 'real' interactive movie? Or is it just another game that looks like *Alone In The Dark*?
Descent
(94: Classic) Interplay – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.
Heretic
(78) iD/Raven – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
'*Doom*-in-tights.' Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.
Iron Assault
(57) Virgin – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
A distinctly average 'big robot' game joins the ranks of other distinctly average 'big robot' games on the PC.
Legions
(65) Mindscape – Strategy Wargame £34.99
This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's intense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under *Windows*. Eek!
Lost Eden
(76) Virgin – Adventure £34.99
Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. It's a bit like *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

Issue 26 – May 1995

Atari Action Pack
(50) Activision – VCS Atari Compilation £24.99
This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for *Windows* and all on one CD. So what's it like? Well, it's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!
Cyclones
(78) Mindscape – Adventure £44.99
Yet another *Doom* clone – but not a bad one by any means – from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.
Football Glory
(60) Kompart – Sports £TBA
Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?
A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.
Guilty
(58) Psygnosis – Adventure £39.99
Sequel-ola. *Guilty* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.
Jungle Strike
(79) Gremlin – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original. Not bad at all.
NBA Live
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game – the best of its type around.
Renegade
(75) SSI – Space Sim £44.99
SSI's *TIE Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious SVGA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.



(Left) *Theme Park: Sim City* eat your heart out.

Rise of the Triad
(82: Classic) US Gold and PD Selections – Adventure £39.95
Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-alikes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog
(40) Team 17 – Platform £19.99
A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander
(60) Domark – Simulation £39.99
A budget-style tank game at full price. If you've got more money than sense, you'll really love it!

Woodruff and the Schnibble of Azimuth
(75) Sierra – Adventure £39.99
A weird adventure game from Sierra. A wonderfully deceptive adventure with comic-book feel!

X-COM
(94 Classic) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
The first *X-COM* was absolutely brilliant. This sequel is even better still.

Issue 27 – June 1995

Blind Date
(25) Domark – Adventure £39.99
Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's 'interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator'. What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle
(92: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin – Adventure £49.99
Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy biker stuff this time. Splendid.

Flight Of The Amazon Queen
(50) Warner Interactive – Adventure £39.99
Well, this tries desperately to be a LucasArts adventure but fails quite miserably. Sorry Warner Interactive, but it's naff.

Hardball 4
(83: Recommended) Accolade/Warner – Arcade/Sports £39.99
Returning May's theme of 'sequels', Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball*. Surely Warner have to call it quits now?

High Seas Trader
(62) Impressions – Strategy/Simulation £39.99
Affectionately referred to as 'High Street Trader' in the *PC Zone* office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds
(80: Recommended) Bullfrog – Arcade/Strategy £19.99
A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.

PyroTechnica
(69) Psygnosis – 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
A very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.

Psycho Pinball
(78) Codemasters – Arcade £44.99
Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Int. – Arcade/Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Slipstream is a three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG – "A Final Unity"
(94: Classic) MicroProse – Adventure £49.99
Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.

Super Streetfighter II Turbo
(90: Classic) Gametek – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
It would seem that last month's theme was 'games with very long names'. Gametek's *SSF/II Turbo II* is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.

Ticonderoga
(78) Mindscape – Naval/Strategy £44.99
Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid CD bits.

Virtua Chess
(85: Recommended) Titus – Strategy £44.99
Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus, France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors
(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 – July 1995

1830
(68) US Gold – Board Game £39.99
Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. Strictly for those of trainspotter persuasion.

Alex Dampier Pro Hockey
(66) Merit Software – Sports Sim £39.95
Ice hockey sim with *FIFA*-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.

Alien Breed: Tower Assault
(81) Team 17 – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.

Brett Hull Hockey '95
(73) Accolade/Warner – Sports Simulation £39.99
Top-down ice hockey gams, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampier Pro Hockey '95*.

Chaos Control
(40) Philips/Infogrames – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Unbelievably terrible futuristic FMV shoot 'em up that was passable on CD-i, but should never have seen the light of day on PC.

Command & Conquer
(95: Classic) Virgin – Strategy Adventure £44.99
Dune 2 meets *Cannon Fodder* in this brilliant game of soldiers.

Daedalus Encounter
(58) Virgin – Adventure £44.95
Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade – and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World*.

Dominus
(42) US Gold – Strategy Game £39.99
Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient – gameplay.

Frontier: First Encounters
(78) Gametek – Space Strategy Simulation £39.99
Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also bugged to jiggery.

Jagged Alliance
(72) Mindscape – Strategy Game £39.99
Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. Not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.

Loadstar
(35) BMG Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on.

Machiavelli The Prince
(89) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.

Man Utd: The Double
(71) Krisalis – Sports Sim £29.99
The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccer*s of this world.

Sim Tower
(70) Maxis – Strategy Game £39.99
Basically *Sim City* viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive – and the presentation is dire.

Virtual Pool
(91: Classic) Interplay – Sports Sim £44.99
Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with a multi-player network option. This is about as close to a real game of pool as you can possibly get.

Issue 29 – August 1995

Civil War
(83: Recommended) Empire – Strategy Game £44.99
The sequel to *Fields Of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.

FX Fighters
(93: Classic) Philips/GTE – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy. We love it!

Hi-Octane
(83: Recommended) Bullfrog/Electronic Arts – Racing Game £39.99
Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.

Micro Machines 2
(92: Classic) Codemasters – Racing Game £44.99
A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.

Orion Conspiracy
(36) Domark – Adventure Game £39.99
Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.

Perfect General 2
(82: Recommended) Mirage Software – Strategy Wargame £44.99
Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your wargames intense.

Picture Perfect Golf
(30) Empire – Sports Sim £44.99
Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.

Prisoner Of Ice
(88: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
The second game in Infogrames' *Cthulhu* range, and what a stonker of a point-and-click adventure it is too.

Scottish Open Golf
(60) Core Design – Sports Sim £39.99
Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately, it's the nob bits that win through.

Silverload
(7) Millennium/Psygnosis – Adventure Game £39.99
Millennium and Psygnosis team up together and produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.

Striker 95
(62) Time Warner – Sports Sim £34.99
A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.

Ultimate Doom
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?

Vortex
(80: Recommended) Warner Interactive – Interactive Movie £39.99
It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game, It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrrghhh!!!

Issue 30 – September 1995

Across the Rhine
(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy Game £44.99
Well, if you're a propellor head you'll think it's the dog's gonads. If you're a bit of a thicky, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.

Action Soccer
(50) Ubisoft – Football Sim £34.99
It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of 'another crap footie game'.

Air Power
(84: Recommended) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Rowan teams up with Mindscape and chucks in all the best bits from its other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.

AIV Networks
(80: Recommended) Infogrames – Business Sim £44.99
A business sim for people who love trains. (Yee gods! What next?)

Dungeon Master 2
(59) Interplay – Role Playing Game £44.99
It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.

Last Dynasty
(45) Sierra – Space Combat Sim £44.99
A good *Windows*-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.

Lords Of Midnight
(60) Domark – Adventure £44.99
Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment – our reviewer said it was the biggest let-down since that leak in his inflatable Claire Rayner.

Sim Town
(81: Recommended) Maxis – Simulation £29.99
Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.

Simon The Sorcerer 2
(84: Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) – Adventure Game £44.99
Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Space Quest 6
(70) Sierra – Adventure Game £44.99
Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!

Terminal Velocity
(80: Recommended) US Gold – Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
A very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal and unaddictive 'game-play trousers'.

US Marine Fighters
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £19.99
Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

Issue 31 – October 1995

EF2000
(97: Classic) Ocean/DID – Flight Sim £49.99
Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.

Fade To Black
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Arcade Adventure £44.99
A corking follow up to *Flashback*, with lots of spinny-aroundy polygon bits, morphing monsties and big guns.

The Need For Speed
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Racing £44.99
There's no need to buy a 3DO now this has made it to the PC! This sits somewhere between *Screamer* and the forthcoming *F1GP2*. We love the splendid crashes!

Apache Longbow
(96: Classic) Digital Integration – Sim £39.99
The best helicopter sim around; although *Comanche* looks better, nothing comes close to matching the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking and atmosphere.

Buried In Time
(77) US Gold – Interactive Movie £44.99
The sequel to *The Journeyman Project* is a tad too lengthy; technically it's great but it's lacking the elements of truly enjoyable gameplay.

MechWarrior 2
(88: Recommended) Activision – Board Game £49.99
Mayhem! Go on a stomping frenzy encased in a massive armour-plated robot body. Good, hard-hitting fun with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve.

Blown Away
(19) Instant Access – Interactive Movie £39.99
A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film.

Cyberbykes
(10) Gametek – Shoot 'Em Up £24.99
It came, it saw, it sucked. Ideal as a present for someone you don't like.

Lemmings 3D
(71) Psygnosis – Puzzle Game £39.99
We've seen it all before; all that's new is that it's now from a different angle. Yawn.

Player Manager 2
(45) Anco – Sport £34.99
Visually stunted, it's difficult to control the ball. What else? Oh, it's one to avoid.

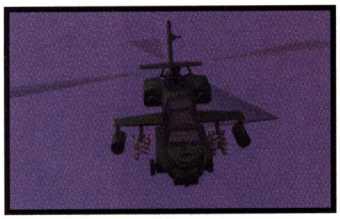
Championship Manager 2
(92: Classic) Domark – Sport £44.99 (TBC)
Every other football management game is just that – a game – but this one actually becomes 'real life'.

Issue 32 – November 1995

Al Unser Jr Racing
(60) Mindscape – Racing Game £29.99
It has all the features you'd expect from a

(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3:* More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.

(Far right) *Command & Conquer.* A case of *Cannon Fodder* meets *Dune 2.*



racing game but ultimately it's fun for only a limited time.

Ascendancy
(93: Classic) Virgin – Strategy £39.99
More than just another space-based strategy game, this has got all the best bits of every god/strategy/warfare game available. A word of warning though, get stuck into this and you can say goodbye to your social life.

Battle Beast
(68) 7th Level – Beat 'Em Up £29.99
A cartoon beat 'em up with excellent animation, cut scenes and special effects – but that's it. Shame, 'cos it looks great, but as for gameplay – forget it.

Burn:Cycle
(85: Recommended) Philips – Interactive Adventure £44.99
One of the best interactive adventures we've seen; good pacing, sharp plot and plenty of variety combine to make it outstanding.

Crime Patrol & Gamegun
(70) American Laser Games/Mirage – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
It won't take you long to exhaust the fun factor of *Crime Patrol*, but the gun is compatible with some other games and as a bundled package it's really not bad value.

Darker
(62) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Mediocre 3D blast 'em up with nice smooth polygons and lots to shoot at, but apart from that not much more.

Fatal Racing
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive – Racing £TBC
Ridge Racer meets *Stunt Car Racer*... as long as you've got a Pentium, of course.

Magic Carpet 2
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up Game £44.99
It sent our reviewer into a frenzy! The classic game is now even better, with new monsters and a new graphical style which includes scary night-time bits – totally addictive.

NHL Hockey 96
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
This uses Electronic Art's new 'Virtual Stadium' technology (used to great effect in *FIFA Soccer* to make it look so flash). Definitely one of the nicest-looking sports games we've reviewed for ages.

PGA Tour 96
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
New and improved! Now includes two new Championsip courses, you can play *as* or *against* 14 actual photo-realsitic pros, there's a new picture-in-picture view... need we go on? The best golf game just got better.

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure
(70) Activision – Platform £44.99
Conversion of the ancient Atari VCS platform game; nothing particularly special but still fairly addictive.

Primal Rage
(82: Recommended) Time Warner Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Jurassic Park for psychopaths – yep, dinosaurs a-plenty, good gameplay and graphics. Should appeal to *Mortal Kombat* or *Street Fighter* fans.

Issue 33 – December 1995

Alien Odyssey
(77) Philips – Space Adventure Game £44.99
A sort of cross between *BioForge* and *Cyberia*, with the odd *Star Wars* reference thrown in; overall a pretty adventure which plods a bit.

Battle Isle 3: Shadow Of The Emperor
(93: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £45.99
The third and possibly final instalment of one of the most highly respected strategy games of all time. Certainly worth checking out if you like your strategy futuristic.

Comanche Vs Werewolf
(88: Recommended) Novalogic/ US Gold – Helicopter Flight Sim £39.99
The sequel takes the original game and chucks in a completely new one as well for good measure. Maybe not the best helicopter flight sim around, but it still has plenty to recommend it.

Crusader
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Blast 'Em Up £49.99
Action, adventure, people getting their heads blown off – bloody excellent.

Destruction Derby
(90: Classic) Sony Interactive – Racing Game £44.99
The PlayStation game where you can smash yourself and others to pieces comes to the PC... Plenty of network options, five different ways to play, superb graphics – need we say more?

FIFA '96
(84: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
If you already own last year's *FIFA* and you quite like it, it's worth buying this one. But if you want a simple and easy to control system look elsewhere.

Mortal Kombat 3
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Beat 'Em Up £44.99
This is the best two-dimensional beat 'em up you'll find anywhere right now. Make damn sure you enjoy it while it lasts.

Navy Strike
(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Naval Simulation £44.99
Actually two games in one: a flight sim and a military command sim. In it you pilot a jet fighter in the future – you'll find that once the atmosphere kicks in you're hooked.

Phantasmagoria
(50) Sierra – Adventure £49.99
Brave effort but the interactive part is a bit ambitious. It looks good but that's about it.

Road Warrior
(61) Gametek – Driving Game £39.99
The sequel to *Quarantine* is unfortunately nothing to write home about, despite the good graphics.

Screamer
(89: Recommended) VIE – Driving Game £29.99
Stunning looking super speedy arcade racer with six different tracks, six different cars (manual or auto) and three different skill levels. Very arcadey indeed.

Worms
(84: Recommended) Ocean – Strategy £34.99
Worms is what you get if you cross *Lemmings* with *Cannon Fodder.* Four people can play at once, there's lots of weapons and features, and the levels are generated afresh each time you play – good fun.

Witchaven
(88: Recommended) US Gold – Arcade/Role-Playing Game £29.99
Packed with lots of spells and potions to play with, the usual network/modem options, triggers and traps, impressive graphical effects – and if you're looking for gore you've found it. Sick, twisted and violent – we like it.

Issue 34 – January 1996

Actua Soccer
(92: Classic) Gremlin Interactive – Sport £TBC
Ranking alongside *Command & Conquer* as *the* office favourite at the moment, this is currently the best footie game on the PC thanks to excellent gameplay and a fantastic 3D polygonised pitch arrangement – sorry *FIFA* and *Sensi*, but you'll have to step aside.

Entomorph
(78) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £44.99
If you've already got *Ultima VII* and fancy something similar in style, *Entomorph* is worth a look. It's got a fairly engrossing storyline, although the presentation is somewhat lacklustre.

Fighter Duel
(65) Philips Media – Flight Sim £39.99
There's very little to say about this game as there's actually very little to it – don't expect it to keep you riveted to the screen; even what little scenery there is is dull.

F1 Grand Prix Manager
(85: Recommended) MicroProse – Racing £44.99
One of the most imaginative management simulations around – certainly the best Grand Prix one available, but then it's the only one.

Frankenstein: Through The Eyes Of The Monster
(79) Interplay – Adventure £44.99
Starring Tim Curry, this is an excellent gothic adventure. The puzzles are challenging, the storyline is cleverly structured, the visuals are sumptuous, but sadly it's hampered by a dodgy interface which makes it difficult to navigate your way through the locations.

IndyCar 2
(90: Classic) Papyrus/Virgin – Racing £34.99
Polygontastic with absolutely glorious SVGA graphics. If you already own *IndyCar 1*, hold out for *F1GP2* instead. But if you don't, buy this one. Oh, but if we're really honest here, you ought to try to afford *F1GP2* as well.

Mortal Coil
(50) Vic Tokai/Virgin – Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Is this yet another *Doom* clone? It basically involves loads of shooting everything you see from a 3D perspective. A great idea on paper, but it's let down by poor graphics and voiceovers (even with the dubious talents of Dani Behr) – you may well prefer *Hexen.*

Pinball World
(77) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball £44.99
For some reason there seems to be more pinball and footie games coming out than you could possibly want, and although you've got a choice of table layouts (which you don't really need anyway) it doesn't really offer anything markedly different.

Pro Pinball: The Web
(90: Classic) Empire Interactive – Pinball £34.99
Don't discount this game simply because it only features one table – it's positively packed with features, you can see the table in its entirety or from six different viewpoints, it's realistic (you can nudge the table from either side as well as the bottom), and it's got a totally stonking soundtrack.

Rebel Assault II
(90: Classic) LucasArts/VIE – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
If you can't see what all the fuss about *Star Wars* is about or you didn't like the original *Rebel Assault*, chances are you won't like this one. On the other hand, if you're a die-hard Empire/Rebel fan and spend your nights re-enacting scenes between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, you'll love it. Of course solid action, 'real' live action bits, bloody gorgeous graphics and a corking storyline go some way to recommend it as well.

Sensible World Of Soccer
(60) Warner Interactive – Sport £39.99
We waited a long time for this one. It's got some management bits, some nice rendered cut-scenes and commentary, but it's still not a patch on *Actua Soccer.*

Stonekeep
(76) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99
It looks a bit dated (mainly because it's flick-screen), but in its favour it has a nice, easy to handle control method, a wide variety of levels to keep you interested and a very thoughtful experience system which allows your character(s) to become more skilled with their weapons the more they use them.

Su27 Flanker
(95: Classic) Mindscape – Flight Sim £44.99
Developed by Russian pilots, this is all about one of the scariest aircraft ever built. It's no lightweight 'hop in and pole around the sky' type product, but unfortunately it's let down by a lack of network or serial link multi-play facility. If you want a comparison it's better than *EF2000, MiG29* and *Tornado.*

The Dig
(87: Recommended) LucasArts/VIE – Adventure £44.99
Another offering touched by the hand of Spielberg. It's a proper adventure with a proper story, a cut above your usual sci-fi adventure stuff. And it's got great music.

Tilt
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive – Pinball £TBC
You get six tables to choose from (including Monster, Funfair, Gangster, Sci-Fi, Myst and Majik). It doesn't have the depth of the single table in *The Web*, but it's good all the same.

Williams Arcade Classics
(90: Classic) GT Interactive – Various £29.99
Worth buying for an arcade-perfect version of *Defender* alone, this '80s compilation also includes *Robotron 2084, Stargate Defender 2, Joust, Bubbles* and *Sinistar.* The graphics obviously aren't too hot given the age of the titles, but don't hold that against it.

WipeOut
(78) Sony Interactive – Racing £44.99
Winging its way directly from the PlayStation, this game of anti-gravity racing with floating cars seems to have lost something in the conversion; play it on anything other than a Pentium and you can kiss the PC version's smoothness and graphical details goodbye. Top marks for the brilliant soundtrack though.

Issue 35 – February 1996

Battleground Ardennes
(84: Recommended) Empire Interactive – Wargame £40 (TBC)
One for the serious strategy heads among you – hex-wargaming finally gets updated for the '90s. (NB: You'll need Windows 95 to play it.)

Beavis and Butt-head
(87: Recommended) Viacom New Media – Point-and-click Adventure £39.99
Fans of the gruesome twosome will love this game (but avoid it if you're not as it's unlikely to appeal). Plenty of puzzle solving and a hilarious script – it's like being in control of your very own *Beavis and Butt-head* episode.

Extreme Pinball
(65) Electronic Arts – Pinball Game £39.99
So what did our reviewer make of the 'proper' version of *Epic Pinball*? He had one word for it: "Aaaarrrggghh!" If you're after a top quality pinball game, buy *Pro Pinball: The Web* instead.

Quest For Fame
(80: Recommended) IBM – Music RPG £49.95
Air guitar rules! Pick up the plastic plectrum and join Aerosmith for a riff extravaganza as you try to make it from unknown musician to mega rock 'n' roll star – if you succeed you get to play with the band themselves!

Terminator: Future Shock
(85: Recommended) VIE– Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
The third title in the *Terminator* series, this has plenty of action and atmosphere, as well as one of the best 3D engines around.

The 11th Hour
(67) Trilobyte/VIE – Adventure/Puzzle Game £TBC
The sequel to *The 7th Guest* has been a long time coming – unfortunately it wasn't really worth the wait. It's not much different either, apart from the addition of a 'treasure hunt' challenge. But then if you *really, really* like puzzles you may find it pretty playable.

The Hive
(78) Funsoft UK – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
A pre-rendered blastathon which is a bit like *Rebel Assault*, only without the good bits.

This Means War!
(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Strategy Wargame £44.99
Strategy, action and lots of futuristic stuff, a sort of *Command & Conquer* meets *Transport Tycoon.* It's slower than *C&C*, but addictive once you've got to grips with all the options.

Virtua Fighter Remix
(89: Recommended) Sega/Datrontech – Beat 'Em Up £varies, bundled with Diamond Edge graphics card
Bloody stunning visuals with excellent detail on the players – but in the gameplay stakes it doesn't quite match up to *Mortal Kombat 3* or *StreetFighter II Turbo.*

Virtual Karts
(71) MicroProse – Arcade Racing Game £TBC
MicroProse have cleverly applied the word 'virtual' to the title – but don't ask why, 'cos the karts don't handle like karts and the hi-res graphics are jerk-tastic.

William Shatner's TekWar
(58) Capstone/US Gold – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
A *Doom* clone we reckon you could probably quite happily live without... (Sorry Will!)

Wing Commander IV
(85: Recommended) Origin/Electronic Arts – Space Combat Sim £TBC
The filmed sequences apparently cost over eight million dollars – and it shows, they really are impressive. Unfortunately though, despite a genuinely interesting plot, a strong storyline and the fact that *WCIV* is the most cinematic gaming experience you'll find, the gameplay's seriously lacking. You'll also need a mighty meaty PC to play it on.

WORDPROCESSOR

Yet again we get a whole bunch of mail about *Quake*. Doesn't anyone ever think about anything else?

QUAKE QUESTIONS AGAIN...

So what the hell is going on with *Quake* then? I've read the e-mail on the *Doom* site, I've read your thing in the February issue and I'm still none the wiser. Is it going to be called *Quake*? Is it still going to happen? Is it still going to be based on Norse mythology and will it be all melee combat or will it have range weapons? I've even heard that there may be shotguns and rocket launchers in it – what's going on?

Chris Wu, London

...AND AGAIN

So what's going on with *Quake*, eh? Is it really going to be called *Quake*, or are we going to get something dead naff? We've been waiting months for this mythical game and now you're telling us that it may be something completely different. Uh? What? Does the whole thing really exist or are the guys at iD telling us a load of porkies?

James Bentley, Cambs

...AND AGAIN

Quake is going to be a bit different then, is it? So all of the stuff that the mags have been telling us is just plain wrong. Ooh, what a surprise. So what happened exactly, did everyone just get a bunch of screenshots and then make everything up? From the article you ran last month it seems to me that this is probably the case. Maybe now we'll get the truth. Does *Quake* really exist?

Pete Christensen, Norfolk

...AND AGAIN

Is it just me, or does anyone else get the impression that *Quake* may end up just being the next episode in the *Doom* saga? The fact that we may get rocket launchers and shotguns and that the name may change suggests to me that what we're actually going to get is nothing more than *Doom III*.

Karen Lawley, Birmingham

It seems that Quake *is going to be going through quite a number of changes before we finally see it. True, the gameplay will be different and the game did go through a phase where it had to have a new name (there was a rumour at one point that it was going to be called* Tsunami, *which I'm sure you'll agree is a bit shitty), but iD remain confident not only that the game will be released but that it will be a significant improvement over* Doom.

As we've said before (a number of times as I recall, but don't mind me... I'm not getting bored of this or anything), we've played a very early build of the game and the graphics engine is vastly superior to any other first-person perspective title. At the moment, a lot of emphasis is being placed on the multi-player aspects, but as for the bulk of the single-player game structure, we really don't know what the thing will involve. Yes, there'll be dark imagery throughout, but from what we've seen so far there's not much evidence of any Norse mythology. All this could change though... and knowing iD it'll no doubt go through all manner of mutations before they're entirely happy with it. To be honest, we've shown and shared with you everything that we know about the game; we certainly did not make it up, Mr Christensen – everything reported in PC Zone *came straight from the horse's mouth.*

As for the idea that the game may end up being called Doom III... *well, if you read our feature last month you will have noticed the bit right at the end of the interview where our friend at iD intimated that the* Quake *engine would be licensed out so that someone could feasibly produce* Doom III. *ID themselves would not be undertaking the project, but given the incredible job that Williams performed on the* Doom *conversion for the PlayStation, it would seem likely that they would produce any new products in the series.*

Write to PC Zone

There are numerous ways to transmit your delightful scrawlings to *PC Zone*. You can either opt for the traditional method, often described as 'snail-mail' by the pretentious technocrats of this world...

WordProcessor
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover Street
London
W1P 7HJ

Or you can be really hip, trendy and cyber and do a whacky e-mail thing...

CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152
CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

DOOM NOVELS?

Novels based on *Doom!* Um, excuse me? Correct me if I'm mistaken, but I was under the impression that *Doom* was a game with no plot whatsoever. Surely this wouldn't be the best thing to base books on? What could they possibly be about, eh? And then what about the film that's supposed to be coming out? What's it going to involve... a bloke just running around shooting things?

Mina Krishnan, Surrey

Er, hi Mina... again. Hmm... yes, Doom *books. Atrocious, isn't it? And as for the movie, well, there have never been any films with plots like that, have there? I mean, Arnie certainly hasn't starred in anything that seems even remotely like that.*

(Left) Oh-oh, the Stormtroopers don't look too happy with what's being said about *Rebel Assault 2*...

REBEL 2 IS CRAP?

I must write to thank you. After reading your shining review of *Rebel Assault 2* in issue 34 I had to rush straight out and buy it – after all, the only problem with the first game was the abysmal control system, but apparently all that's been rectified, leaving me to enjoy hours of *Star Wars*-esque entertainment. Balls. I've tried the mouse, the keyboard and a Gravis joystick and still find myself fighting the control system rather than the game. I guide my jalopy TIE Fighter down into the canyon and into another cliff face after watching the mystery lip-synch movie where a P100 with a 2MB graphics card can't cope.

The reason I buy my magazines is for the recommendations that they give... leaving me without yours from now on. And as for LucasArts, well, they say that you can't polish shit, but in my opinion they've had a damn good go.

Richard Johnson, Plymouth

There is absolutely no reason for you to be experiencing problems with the system that you claim to be playing the game on. We reviewed Rebel 2 *on the Gateway P75s that we use for all of our other game reviews, and they handled it with absolutely no trouble at all. Could you be experiencing some problems with the way your machine is set up? If you are running your machine under Windows 95 it would be worth checking that everything is set up correctly as this can cause all manner of lock-ups and slow-downs. We've actually seen* Rebel 2 *running on a DX2/66 with 8Mb (under DOS 6.2) and it didn't appear to suffer at all.*

EF2000 COMPLAINT

After purchasing *EF2000* and playing it for only half an hour I have come to the conclusion that both John and Simon are total buffoons. Ninety seven per cent?!? A pants award more like.

I own what I would consider to be a fairly ninja PC – a P100, 16MB, 2MB VRAM Diamond Stealth graphics card – but the game still chugs along with all of the grace of a hot air balloon simulator. I've never travelled at 1000mph but I'd imagine that it feels significantly faster than this. Please explain to me if I'm wrong, but why does it feel like I'm only moving at 20mph when the air speed indicator says mach 1.4?

Do you need a machine containing a hundred P6 processors for the game to move realistically, or do the initials EF stand for either 'Excitement Free' or 'Extremely Fatigued'?

Lee Jones, Bedworth

Bloody hell... another one! EF2000 *runs absolutely fine on our P75s, and when the game was reviewed it was looked at on all manner of machines ranging from a DX2 to a P90. Obviously the DX2 required a degree of sympathy and we had to turn down the detail, but the P90 positively flew (pardon the pun). The P90 used wasn't particularly ninja-tastic... it simply had a 2Mb graphics card in it. As I've just said to Richard Johnson: is your machine set up correctly? If a P100 can't cope with* EF2000*, it strikes me that one of two things is going on – either your machine is just plain crap, or your set-up is full of glitches. Check your disk cache, and memory manager... there must be something seriously odd going on in there. The only other thing that would cause this would be if the motherboard was a bit naff, but if you're running a P100 there's a very high chance that it's sitting on either a Triton or a Plato board, both of which are pretty spoogemungous.*

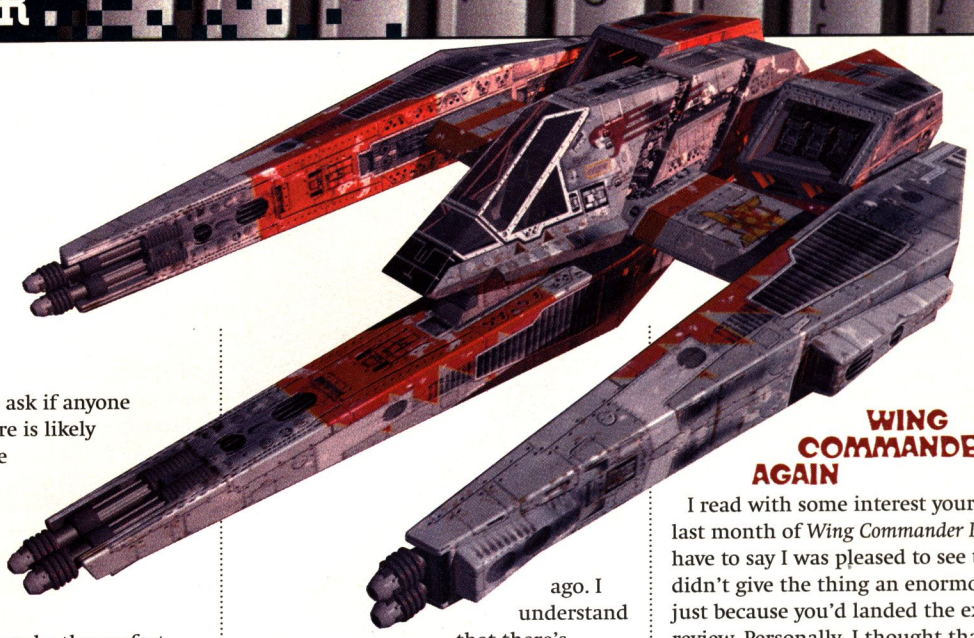
3D DILEMMA

It's all very nice of you telling us that *Virtua Fighter* is one of the best beat 'em ups on the PC, but from what I can work out, if any of us want to play it, it costs roughly £400! I do like my games, but I don't think that anything is worth this much! Sure, you get a brand spanking new graphics card to play around with, but how many other software houses are going to support the Diamond Edge? I've heard of all kinds of 3D graphics cards, but it seems highly unlikely that they'll all be given full support by the various software houses. What happens if I go ahead and buy the Diamond only to discover that there aren't that many developers producing for it? And then on the other hand, what if it turns out to be no good as a standalone graphics card for 'normal' DOS games? Surely that would simply be £400 of my hard-earned cash down the drain?

R Townsend, Luton

This 3D graphics lark is causing a lot of grief on all fronts at the moment. It seems that the software houses are unsure which cards they should support, and everyone else is unsure which one they should buy. Until one side makes its mind up, nothing is going to happen. At present, there are only really two cards that you can think about buying – the Diamond Edge or the Creative Labs 3D Blaster. Both are very good cards, and both come with some impressive software; however, it's an unfortunate situation that right now that seems to be where it all ends. Until some kind of standard has been set, it seems very unlikely that the majority of developers will really get behind any one particular format, and until then we have the rather unusual situation of a format war going on within the PC market.

But as we mentioned in our feature last month, one thing that will hopefully unite everyone is the new 3D patch for Windows 95, Direct3D. Hopefully, if we understand correctly, this will work in very much the same way as the software that detects what sound card you have. The games software will load into Windows 95, and during installation it will sit there and say "Okay, what graphics card have we got here then?"; Windows 95 will probably sit there for a while and have a bit of a think (as it does) before Direct3D kicks in and goes "Come here then...chuck us your graphics code and I'll turn it into something that works properly under what we've got in here." In the ideal world, everything will then work fine and dandy regardless of your system, because Windows 95 and all of its little add-ons are very clever and full of 32-bit loveliness. What will inevitably happen initially though (and this is something that anyone who's been using Windows 95 will no doubt feel at home with) is that you'll get so far and all of a sudden your system will say "Ooh, hang on... I've forgotten what I was supposed to be doing! Er, what shall I do? Ooh, I know, I'll crash and then just to totally piss you off I'll make you reboot and then only load up in Safe Mode. I'll keep on like this for a day or so and then miraculously, without you doing anything, I'll mysteriously start to work properly next Wednesday." »



« X-FILES ON THE WAY?

I am just writing to ask if anyone knows whether there is likely to be an *X-Files* game released in the coming months. I've been an avid fan of the TV programme for some time and think that it would make the perfect scenario for a game – an adventure or role-playing game along the lines of *Alone In The Dark* would be absolutely perfect. Players could take on the role of either Mulder or Scully, or better still you could control both of them and swap between the two. Wouldn't that be excellent? Surely some industrious software house has already secured the licence (maybe MicroProse)? Given the success of *X-Com* and *UFO* they would seem the obvious company.

T Bradley, Herts

The X-Files *license is one of the closely-guarded secrets of the games industry at the moment, and while everyone thinks that it would be a totally brilliant idea with enormous potential, absolutely no one will even say whether they have gone for the deal or not. We've already tried to investigate but all we've come up with is guess work. MicroProse would be a likely candidate as you say, but our money is on Virgin... but that's just a hunch, so don't for one minute think that we have any inside information. We don't. Sorry. Liked the* Alone In The Dark *idea though.*

DOOM 95... WHAT GIVES?

Given that *PC Zone* seems to be the authority on all things related to *Doom*, I was wondering if you could shed any light on the forthcoming version of *Doom* that you mentioned a few months ago. I understand that there's supposed to be one coming out that's optimised for Windows 95 – is it simply a version that works properly, or will it be any different? Is it *Doom, Doom II*, or something else? Also, will the graphics have been changed or are they just going to be the same?

Jason Taylor, Lancs

The demos of Doom 95 *are circulating, and the main changes basically concern the graphics modes (the game will now run in 640x480 in 256 colours) and the real biggie is the multi-player network option. Instead of the old Deathmatch there's a new and improved Windows-based network system that lets players hop in and out of the action whenever they want. Sounds cool. On top of this there's now support for 16-player games rather than just four. Spooge-tastic.*

TOILETRIES

I've just had a great idea on how you can stop charging us that extra quid for the mag (you bastards) – why not make *PC Zone* toiletries? I can see it now: Patrick McCarthy hair remover, Simon Bradley deodorant, Paul Presley anti-wrinkle cream... the list goes on.

I think that this would be a great money spinner, in fact I'm surprised that Mr Cursor and his super-computer hadn't already come up with it.

Daniel Smith, Kent

Thanks. Next.

WING COMMANDER AGAIN

I read with some interest your review last month of *Wing Commander IV*, and I have to say I was pleased to see that you didn't give the thing an enormous score just because you'd landed the exclusive review. Personally, I thought that the first three *Wing Commander* games were absolutely appalling and fail to see why people go so crackers about them. Am I the only person that thinks that *X-Wing* was far superior? As Charlie correctly mentioned in his review, the sense of 'depth' and '3D' you get in the LucasArts games is far greater than in the *Wing Commanders*. So what if they cost millions of dollars to produce – it really doesn't make the game any better, and all it means for us is that we have to shell out sixty quid for it rather than thirty.

Anthony Davies, Portsmouth

It's a sad fact that although the Wing Commander *series is one of the biggest sellers on the PC, the sales figures are not necessarily an indication of quality. While it's true that all of the games are very slick and professionally produced, they do tend to lack the all-important element that makes you want to go back for more – gameplay.*

No one can argue that both Wing III *and* IV *aren't leading the way in terms of production values, but although the movie sequences and overall presentation of the games is virtually faultless, there are some fundamental problems. Like you, I have always felt that* X-Wing *was considerably better than* Wing Commander, *and even now that we have fully texture-mapped SVGA ships in* WC *they still don't have the same class as the guru-shaded craft that appear in either* X-Wing *or* TIE Fighter Collectors. Z

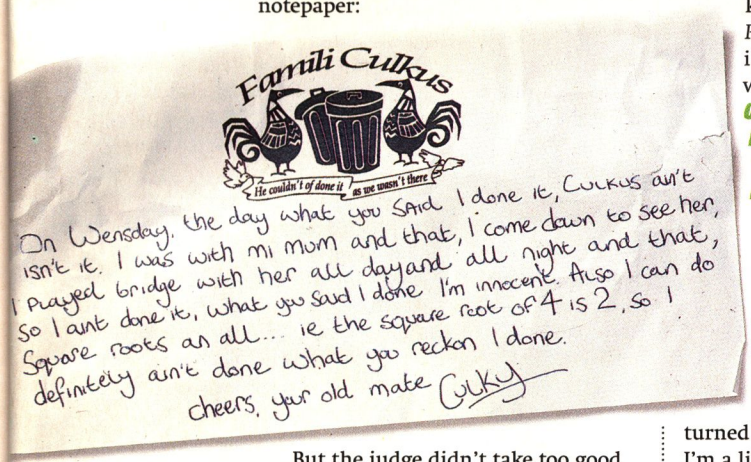
(Right and far right) While the LucasArts games can't boast the high level of texture-mapped detail of the *Wing Commander* series from Origin, *TIE Fighter* does give you a far greater sense of depth.

Culky Says...

DEAR ENGLAND,

Alright? Culky here isn't it, from London, England. Well, I'm not living with mi mum any more – No, I'm at mi aunt Nora's house now, in Mexico and that, that's the reason why I'm sending a letter to Culky's mates in England, as old Culkus likes a bit of correspondence isn't it.

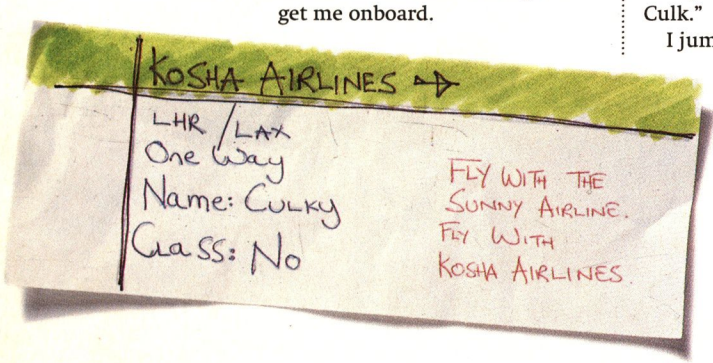
I better tell you a little bit about what old Culk's been up to, and why I'm out here at mi aunt's place. Well, see, I done some videos for *PC Zone*, you know for their CD-ROM cover discs, but one of the companies what I videoed tried to haul old Culkus in front of Her Majesty's doesn't them. So I sent a letter to the judge and that, on our family-headed notepaper:



But the judge didn't take too good to the plea and that, so I had to go to court, and mi mum come down there with me, but on the way in she goes to me, "I reckon you should scarper Colin, decamp son! Leg it, Culkus! Don't never trust what a judge tells ya!"

So I legged it off with her quick sharp in her Ford Anglia (lowered, with wide wheels and grill missing) to the airport and that. When we got to the airport she goes to me, "Culky! Culky! Look what your sweet old dear's got in her hands – your ticket to freedom! I made it last week! Look! Look!"

She got out this ticket what she done and reckoned it was kosha enough to get me onboard.



She goes to me, "This is your ticket to see ya aunty Nora in Mexico... ol' Nora's quite a drinker Colin luvvy, but you'll get on alright."

So I thanked mum and told her "I'll be catching her later!"

So old Culkus flew to Mexico isn't it!

But don't worry, Culky never grasses on his mum about the ticket and that, and he don't never grass on his mates, and he don't never leg it away from his mates nither. So I'll be writing replies to your letters and that, what you can send to me at mi aunt's house. I'll be back over in London soon, looking for a 'cash-in-hand' job so I'm sending you a copy of my cv next month, so if you reckon you've a job for Colin let me know... cheers!

PC Zone are the only people what is got my address, so you can write to me care of:

Culky's Lovely Aunty Nora
PC Zone
19 Bolsover Street
London W1P 7HJ

Anyway Nora picked me up from LA airport after giving the customs a bit of 'Nora rumble', and drove us to her house in Nongales, Mexico, near the boarder and that.

When we got home mi aunty turned towards me and goes, "Culky... I'm a little chugged over isn't it, go down the road and get me some mouth-petrol!" *(Er, she means drink – Ed.)*

So I went, "Sure Nora... right now?"

She goes, "Yeah right now, Culkus!"

I never ever argue with my aunty, so I goes, "Consider it my pleasure Nora babes, anything else while I'm down there, aunty baby face?"

She didn't reply... as I was talking she had been sick and then fallen asleep, she must of been really chugged over with all that Tequila and that.

I legged it off down the road to the restaurant and that, and some waiter geezer comes up to old Colin and goes...

"Aperitif? Monsieur, mon amigo, le Culk."

I jumped up and brought two shiny 'chin-pistons' in his suntan and goes to him... "I'll give you 'a pair of teeth' in your food engine in a minute! Now go and get me and mi aunt Nora from up the road some nice comestibles – she'll have hers to go, but I'll have mine right here, so they better be just like what old Culkus cooks in my *Culky's Kwik Snax* videos. *(See next month's CD-ROM! – Ed.)*

He gave me a menu, then stared at me waiting and that... so I goes... "Oy! No one watches Culky choose food from a menu, stand over there by that cactus or you'll get some 'London rumble'!"

He stood back some 50 yards from my table, and said he was very sorry. I shouted my order to him and he legged it to the kitchen and that. Ten minutes later he came back with some weird looking forage... I tried it and told him it was shite. I told the staff to put one of Culky's 'London Favourites' on their menu... They started to laugh when I told them the recipe, but I got the old 'pistonnes-de-chin' out, and after some rumble they agreed to put 'Chocolate and Ketchup Bake' on the diner menu!

Chocolate and Ketchup Bake

Ingredients

Chocolate digestive biscuits	x2
Kidney Beans	Handful
Tomato Ketchup	Half bottle

Method

Place ingredients in silver foil and bake for two hours.
Serve hot.

I gave my farewells after explaining to them how's I'll be expecting to see it on the menu when I come down with mi aunt Nora tomorrow. I'll let you know how it went! Old Culky likes a bit of London scoff isn't it.

PS

If anyone says to you "Alright?... Did you see old Culky's letters page in *PC Zone?*" tell them: "I ain't seen no letters page with Culk's aunt's address in it... and I ain't seen the mag it was in nither, and I ain't seen any shops that sell mags, and I ain't never seen no streets with any shops in them nither, and I ain't seen no 'Colin Culky', or whatever his bloody name is!"

Cheers!... Culky! Z

Mr Cursor

He's afraid of... rules

OKAY. NO BEATING ABOUT THE BUSH this month. Read what it says above, as that's what I'm going to talk about for the whole page. I'm afraid of rules. And that's that.

Let's look at some 'big' rules first – the Ten Commandments seem like a good place to start. How about this one: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's ox.' Hmmm. Well, my neighbour hasn't *got* an ox, as it happens. Obvious joke, I know – and besides, a Christian will scream at this point: "Don't be stupid, ox means fridge, ox means wallpaper, ox means car!" And so it may, so it may. But seeing as how I've never spoken to my neighbours, well... sod knows what their fridge is like. Or their wallpaper. And the only reason to covet their car – an S-reg Datsun Sunny – is that, er, well, there isn't a reason. But I digress. Back to one more commandment, though: 'Thou shalt not kill.' Good in theory, but when you actually think about it, what about Noel Edmonds? Nick Berry? David Copperfield? Vanessa Phelps? Michael Portillo? Enya? Gary Bushell? Naomi Campbell?

Rules. Rules, rules, rules.

And take a game I recently liberated from the *PC Zone* cupboard. *(You what? – Ed.)* I was after a simple poker sim so that I could get some practice in for a forthcoming mega-session against some serious gambling chums (we all agree that the rules for poker are okay, by the way). However, the only computer card game I could find was *Cribbage*. You've probably heard of it – but do you know what the rules are? I do, or at least I do now, and frankly I'm totally appalled at their stupidity. I couldn't possibly even begin to explain them, given the room, but I can tell you this much: the damn things were invented by some tosspot English 'nobleman' in the 17th century. He was obviously so rich and influential that people took note. They grovelled and accepted, blinkers firmly in place, that his idea was a good one. And you know how it is with these things, eh? As long as the first bunch of people follow along, so will everyone else. It just kind of spreads out, through the generations, a bit like a slow motion atomic 'obedience' explosion.

Therefore Cribbage is still played. Rules. God exists, is white, and has a beard. Rules. Road tax, rather than petrol tax. Rules. Full motion video, instead of games. Rules. Rules, bloody rules, bloody rules.

I think it's time to make up some rules myself. Here goes...

Rule One: Hens should be reclassified as vegetables, meaning everybody can be a vegetarian.

Rule Two: All beat 'em up games should contain at least one character who is able to talk things through logically and amicably with his opponent.

Rule Three: The fire brigade should be made to merge with the ambulance service: fire engines would tow special 'hospital' caravans.

Rule Four: Ceefax and Teletext should be allotted more airwave data space so they turn into 'proper' TV channels... meaning nobody would have to fork out for cable or satellite.

Rule Five: The Triathalon (truly ridiculous rules: running, swimming, then cycling) should be taken further, culminating in The Octathalon, a sport that everyone could play. All the participants of an Octathalon (ie the entire population of the country) would have to (1) wake up in the morning, (2) telephone their workplace in a strained voice, outlining a fictional malaise, (3) go back to sleep again until ten-thirtyish, (4) watch loads of TV: *Richard and Judy, Home and Away,* a *Columbo* rerun, *ChuckleVision* and finally *Oprah Winfrey* or *Rikki Lake,* (5) go to the pub for a few hours, (6) go to an Indian restaurant and enjoy a delicious slap-up vegetarian meal such as chicken korma with nan bread and seven lagers, (7) return home virtually unconscious, and (8) actually become unconscious. (Just in case you hadn't realised, the Octathalon is a three day event.)

Rule Six: It should be compulsory for all the members of the public in the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* to announce exactly how much *they* reckon their offerings are worth, before the expert gives his or her valuation.

Rule Seven: People over the age of 50 should be legally obliged to fill in a Driving Licence Extension form every three years. Questions asked would be as follows: 'Do you wear a hat?' and 'Do you stop at amber traffic lights?'. That sort of stuff.

Rule Eight: Pedestrians, like drivers, should be licenced. The test, taken every five years, would have to include an extensive 'street crossing' section. It would be like the Green Cross Code, but with the added commands of 'run if necessary' and 'the centre of the road is a safe area, so use it'. No more need for pelican crossings. Naturally the disabled and the elderly would be exempt from all this, having their very own special crossing points at five mile intervals. Actually no, make that eight mile intervals. Er, twelve perhaps.

Rule Nine: Every dodgy computer game should carry a warning similar to the health ones you find on cigarette packs. Something like *'Warning: Of Dubious Quality'* should do it.

Rule Ten: Spook! Rule ten already. As I started with the ten commandments, maybe this would be a good place to wrap things up. Rule Ten, then.

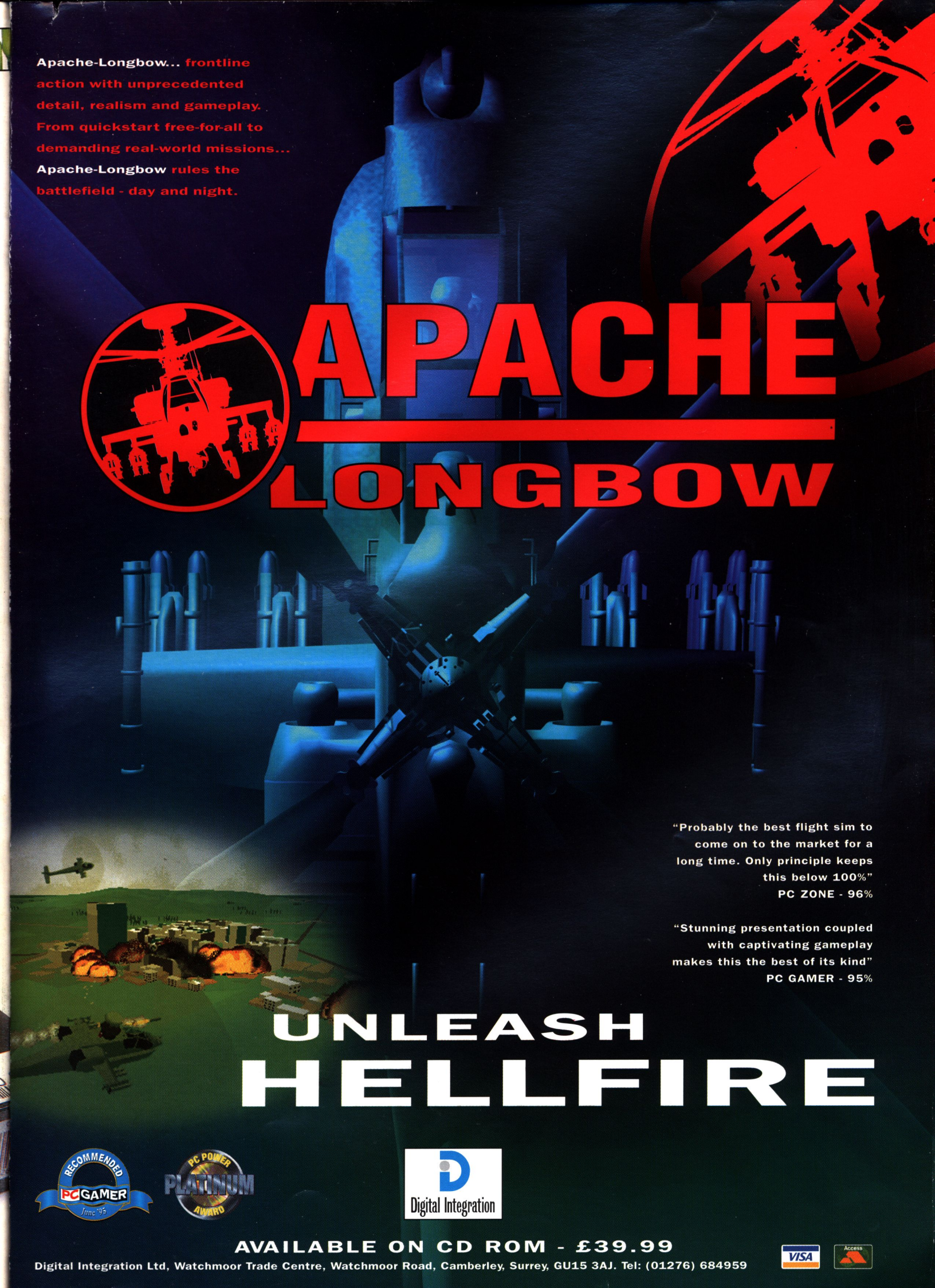
Er, hang on... I've just glanced back through all the rules and spotted something wrong with Rule Six, so here's an addendum: the problem with Rule Six is that the *Antiques Roadshow* punters would be likely to massively undervalue their belongings in an attempt to avoid this potentially embarrassing scenario...

Punter: "I paid £950 for it, but I reckon it's worth three grand!"

Expert: "You're optimistic! It's actually worth nothing, you loser."

So cue an additional *The Price Is Right* style rule: if the punter guesses the estimated price to within a 10 per cent margin, he or she wins a generous cash prize, which – and here's the clincher – is directly proportional to the actual value of the piece. Good, eh? Tempting them to guess up rather than down? Like pitching pride against profit?

Mind you, I've just spotted a small flaw in that rule as well, but maybe you haven't, so I'll shut up. **Z**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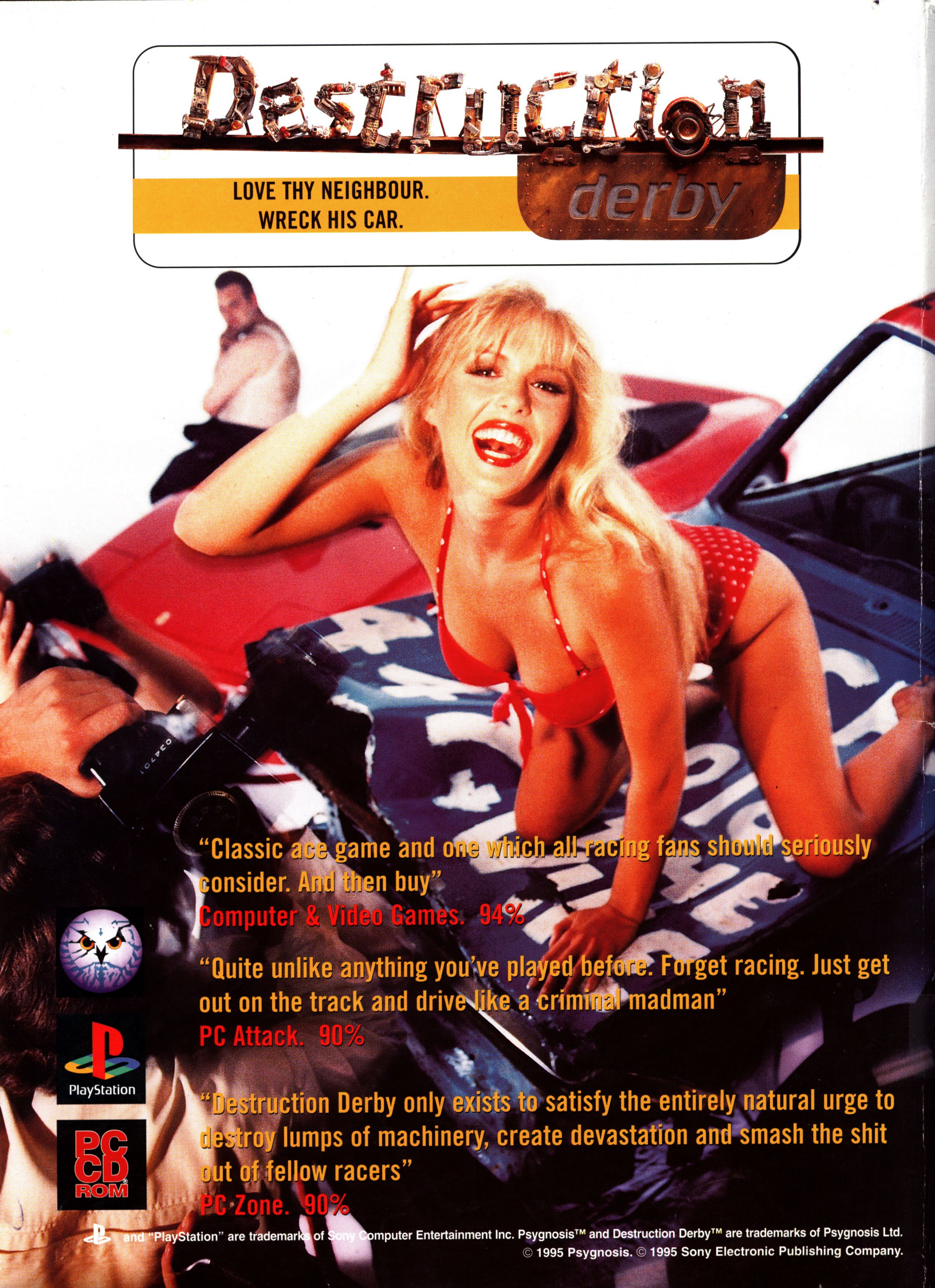

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