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PCZONE

#90 JUN 2000

PC GAMES GALA

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HEAD-TO-HEAD

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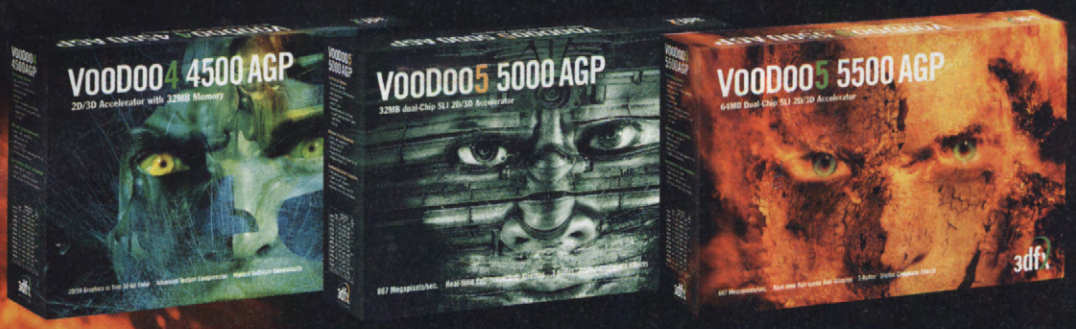

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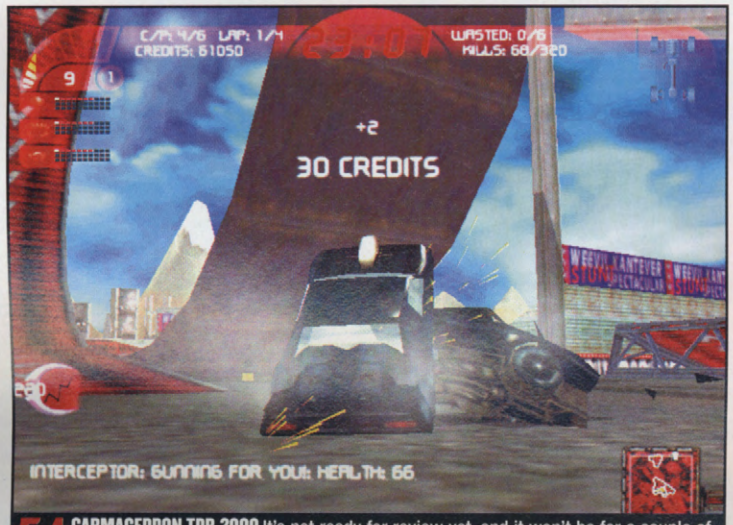
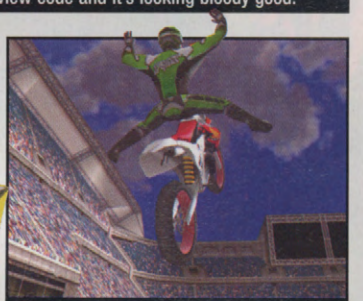


54 **CARMAGEDDON TDR 2000** It's not ready for review yet, and it won't be for a couple of months, but we've played the latest preview code and it's looking bloody good.

52 **FLYING HEROES** Grab a ship or a lizard and blast your mates out of the sky.

68 **F1 HEAD-TO-HEAD** *F1 2000* and *F1 World Grand Prix* reviewed.



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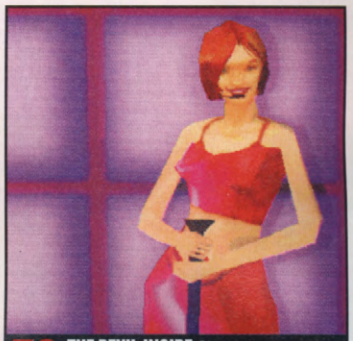

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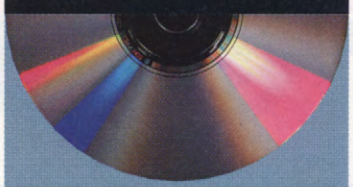

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WE'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME, BUT IT'S FINALLY HERE:

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EARTH 2150
SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
AND...
ALL THE BEST NEW MAPS AND THE LATEST BETA OF COUNTER-STRIKE

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WIN!

THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (90), *PC ZONE*, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ**. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date: Thursday 1 June 2000. The winner of our April (#88) cover compo was Mr C J Dale from Dorset, who wins something from the *ZONE* prizes cupboard for sending in the correct answer (Christopher Plumbe909) to our last little teaser.

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REALITY BITES

With brand new Voodoo technology just around the corner, you can be sure other manufacturers will quickly follow suit with their own new chipsets, and once again the 3D card market place will be a confusing and daunting place. But what will this technology really bring to PC games apart from higher frame rates and higher graphic resolutions?

This is a difficult question to answer. On one hand it seems as if 3D games have moved on in leaps and bounds since the first wave of 3D cards arrived with higher resolutions and smoother textures providing reasonably realistic backgrounds for the games you play today.

But on the other, it's almost as though time has stood still and we are light years away from the next leap forward for graphics in PC games – photo-realistic backgrounds and true-to-life in-game characters. Is this a bad thing? Well, it depends how you look at it. Games are about escaping from the banality of the real world into a place of fantasy where you can forget life's mundanities.

In this respect, photo-realism would be more of a curse than a blessing. Nobody wants to massacre innocent bystanders in an environment that may as well be down the road from where they live (with the possible exception of Charlie Brooker and Steve Hill, who would probably like nothing better).

Then again, the opportunity to create such realistic environments may encourage developers to go completely abstract in order to distinguish their game from the rest of the bunch. Either way, the old adage 'be careful what you wish for, you might just get it' would seem to be appropriate.

We at *ZONE* would rather see devèlopers creating worlds unlike anything we've ever seen and using their imagination to create immersive environments, rather than simply duplicating places in the real world. Charlie and Steve will no doubt disagree, but hey, they're both weird.

Enjoy the issue, see you all next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

MEET THE ZONE TEAM

All *PC ZONE*'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to writers who are fans of the genre

CHRIS ANDERSON

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Ultima Online. It's the best online RPG .

What was your Game of the Year?

System Shock 2. It's the most atmospheric and engrossing game I've ever played.

DAVE WOODS

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Quake III Arena. If you could play it properly over the Internet, it would've won one.

What was your Game of the Year?

Half-Life. 'Nuff said.

RICHIE SHOEMAKER

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Hidden & Dangerous, *Homeworld* and *Quake III Arena*.

What was your Game of the Year?

Half-Life.

MARK HILL

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Hidden & Dangerous. If only it hadn't been so bugged.

What was your Game of the Year?

A tie between *Half-Life* and *CM 99/00*.

MARTIN KORDA

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Homeworld. It should have received some commendation for being so innovative.

What was your Game of the Year?

Unreal Tournament. A game with no equal.

PAUL MALLINSON

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Half-Life should have won more than just Developer of the Year.

What was your Game of the Year?

It's a toss up between *Half-Life* and *System Shock 2*. I'll go for *Half-Life* because I can still play and enjoy it now.

CHARLIE BROOKER

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Swing Ball, because it *is* entertainment.

What was your Game of the Year?

I wouldn't like to pick one, so I'll pick all of them.

STEVE HILL

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Half-Life. I know Valve won Developer of the Year but that doesn't count.

What was your Game of the Year?

Championship Manager: Season 99/00. Obvious really.

KEITH PULLIN

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Half-Life, although it has won every other games award anyway.

What was your Game of the Year?

Championship manager 99/00. It has no equal.

PHIL WAND

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

The Runaway Train mod for *Half-Life*.

What was your Game of the Year?

Half-Life. The basic game is a corker – the *Counter-Strike* mod alone is more popular than *Quake*.

PAUL PRESLEY

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Homeworld – originality needs to be rewarded.

What was your Game of the Year?

Homeworld. It takes RTS to a new level, and it looks absolutely stunning.

ADAM PHILLIPS

Which game should have won a prize at the Reader Awards, but didn't?

Homeworld. It takes RTS to a new level, and it looks absolutely stunning.

What was your Game of the Year?

Hidden & Dangerous. The suspense and atmosphere were fantastic, and you get to shoot Nazis.

PCZONE

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD
19 BOLSOVER STREET
LONDON W1P 7HJ
TEL: 020 7631 1433
FAX: 020 7436 1321
EMAIL: letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk
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RACING TOWARDS DEADLINE

Editor Chris Anderson 020 7917 3901
Deputy Editor Dave Woods 020 7917 3830
News Editor Richie Shoemaker 020 7917 5675
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Art Editor Phil Clark 020 7917 3911
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Origination Elements 020 7323 0022
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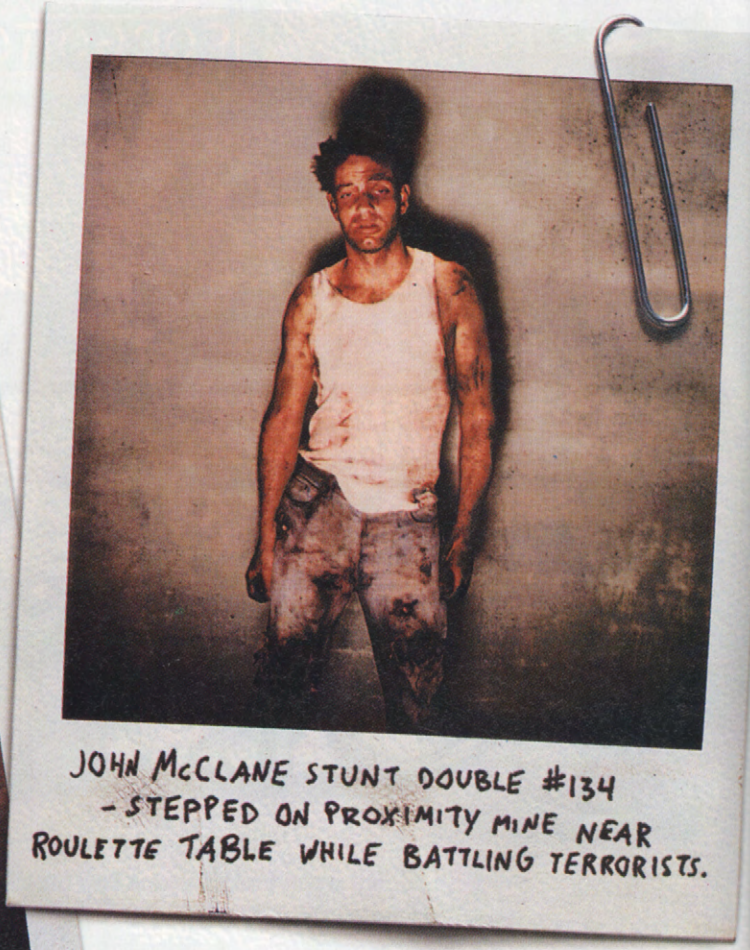

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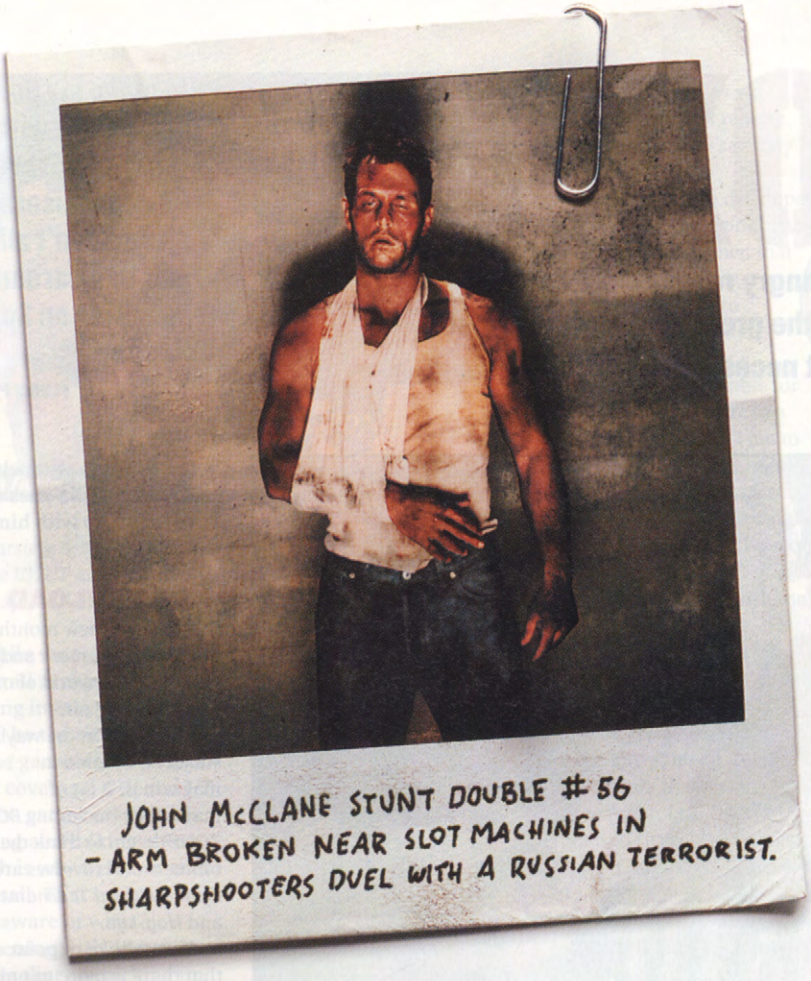

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MAILBOX

Steve Hill comes under attack from angry readers, *QIII* comes under attack for nothing in particular, and the great mod revival is well underway, although scooters are not necessarily involved

ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

"To make my point briefly, get with the times Steve Hill, you miserable git. We can't all just hang around bouncing on Space Hoppers"

PLINKY PLONKY

CONTACT INFO

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BACKLASH

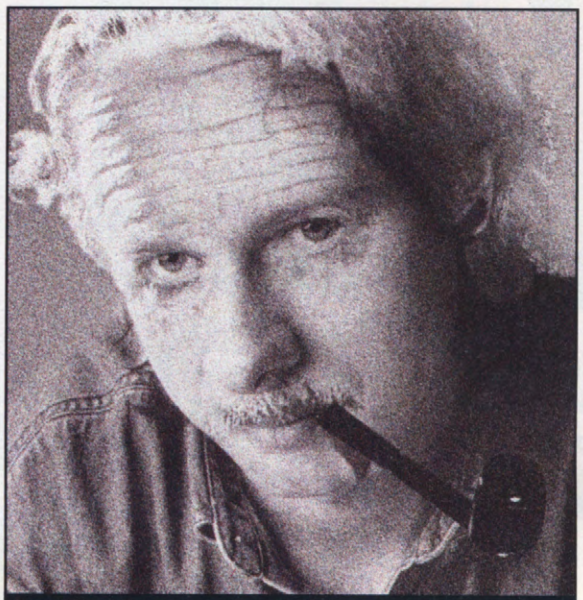
As much as I respect Steve Hill for his writing abilities, I feel his article in the Comment section of your May edition was a bit hypocritical. He complains that the young people of today are spoilt and that we complain about how unrealistic games are and how features such as "the lack of muzzle flash from a pretend gun" make for poor gaming.

He also talks about the war (which I very much doubt he fought in) and about how thankful we should be for today's games as during the war people actually ended up dying. Most of us do appreciate the gaming quality we get, it is the minority who complain and are spoilt.

I would also like to point out that Steve Hill is a games reviewer (just in case he'd forgotten) and picks out games' faults for a living. Out of all of us it is probably he who has the most to complain about. Secondly, when he was young he complained about the loading time of his ZX Spectrum and the fact that his Scalextric didn't work all the time. It is the same as us complaining about modern day games. At that time he was also probably oblivious to the fact that his parents and other people of their generation had a war to fight, rationing, the blitz and had to play with pieces of shot down Messerschmitt because they had nothing else. At that time people probably said that *he* was the one who had "never had it so good".

I believe he now realises that he has had his time and yearns for days gone by when he could come home early, play with his friends and never have to worry about money or work and so takes it out on people like us. Anyway, complaining finished, I would like to congratulate you on a well put together magazine and CD.

Chris Valentine



Steve Hill, public enemy number one. Nothing new there then.

AND AGAIN.....

What drugs has that Steve Hill bloke been taking? What a load of rubbish he was talking in the May Comment section. Most complaints about games are honest criticisms. If we didn't give these how would developers know what to improve next time round? Developers have to listen to these complaints as they are from their customers and satisfying their customers should be part of a developers goal.

We will all want to buy better games. And Mr Hill should also know you can always improve a game, no matter how good. He said in the old days kids would be happy with something like a Space Hopper, but that's not true. I bet they still wanted improvements, like a bouncier or a more colourful one.

This is what we're like with games, looking for areas where there is room for improvement. To make my point briefly, get with the times Steve Hill, you miserable git! We have to take a step forward sometime. We can't all just hang around in the Stone Age bouncing on Space Hoppers can we? Technology moves on, you dipstick!

Plinky Plonky

Steve's Comment provoked many letters like these two. Rather than ask him to respond to all of these letters, we thought it would be better to simply point out that he is indeed a miserable git, and there is nothing that can be done about it. Think yourselves lucky, *we* are the ones who have to put up with him in the office.

QIII OVERLOAD

Over the past few months I have ventured more and more into the world of online gaming. And I am disappointed in the way this subject is covered in magazines. A lot of magazines (including *PC ZONE*) seem to think the online world revolves around *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* and *Half-Life*.

I would like to point out that there is more to online gaming than first-person shooters, even if it is highly amusing shooting someone in the face over and over again, without even chatting to them... I suggest that all involved attempt to include a broader slice of online gaming and rather than going on about the newest 30 variants of the same damn *QIII* map, that you include info on what's happening in the online world of *FreeSpace*, *Starsiege* and other titles. I would list more, but there are so many (ie if it ain't *QIII*, *Half-Life* or *UT* it's in the list).

Please, please, please include more varied online gaming news as I'm being driven mad by hearing about bloody *Quake III*!

***Quake III*: is the world and its mother playing this game?**

Virtua Fighter, the game that did not spark a beat 'em up revival on PC.

Starsiege is better than *Quake III*, *UT* and *Half-Life* anyway...

Duncan Wardlaw

While we endeavour to cover all aspects of online gaming in *ZONE*, inevitably it will be the most popular online games that warrant most coverage. *QIII* and *UT* are the games everyone is playing and talking about, which is why we cover them in detail. That said, we are very aware of what's happening with other genres that are picking up online (big robot games, RTS, RPG), and any 'startling' developments in these areas will be reported to you all forthwith.

Generally speaking, you can expect to see a lot more coverage of online games in *ZONE*, which will include all genres, not just first-person shoot 'em ups.

FIGHTING TALK

I'll get straight to the point. Why doesn't the modern day PC (capable of polygon levels beyond any console) have one 3D arena beat em 'up? The last game of any note to be released in this genre was *Virtua Fighter* in 1997, before 3D acceleration. Why hasn't any publisher noticed the lack of a *Tekken 3*, *Soul Calibur* or *Powerstone* on our beloved PCs?

Sega states it will never make PC games again after poor sales with its last bunch of software. Yet, what do they expect giving us such delights as *Ecco The Dolphin*? Other console developers have also abandoned the PC as a gaming platform. Only really Capcom and Squaresoft have any notable games in production. Most Japanese developers (who make some of the best games in the world) seem sceptical that the PC is a viable games machine. Surely big publishers such as Eidos or Microsoft can strike up a distribution deal with these developers?

With PC developers seeming obsessed with making massive true to life RPG's, consoles are stealing the show with their fun one hour beat 'em ups. And this is killing the PC as a games machine.

Dave Tayler

The best beat 'em ups on consoles (*Soul Calibur*, *Tekken* etc) are produced to drive sales of the console in question, which is why it is highly unlikely you will see these games on PC. But, generally speaking, PC game players are more interested in first person shoot 'em ups and RTS games than straight fighting games, which is why you don't see many developed.

> **"Can you name any game in the last three years that hasn't had a patch released that contained bug fixes"**
>
> **ANDY REYNOLDS**

A TIMELY COMPLAINT

I have to take issue with Chris Anderson's editorial in the April 2000 issue, where he says that having consumers being used as "unpaid beta testers for unfinished products" is a situation we need to avoid.

He further implies that this state of affairs is the consumer's fault as we, "insist developers release games when they say they are going to".

Excuse me? If a developer promises a certain product at a certain time, then that is their lookout, not ours. If developers wish to avoid consumer wrath, then they should set a more realistic timetable for their products. You're in a better position than I am to answer this, but how many games have been released ahead of schedule? I would bet you could count them on your fingers.

I also take issue with the point that, by forcing developers to release games on the timetable they've set, we as consumers will suffer with bugged games. Can you name any game in the last three years that hasn't, at some point, had a patch released that contained bug-fixes? The point is, games are bugged on release, slippage or not.

The editorial seemed to want to decry the consumer for simply asking for what they were promised. I dispute that this is a valid stance. We pay for the games we want to play, and we want those games to be playable. If developers stated a release schedule for games they knew they could meet, the problem would not even exist. The fault lies at their door, not ours.

Andy Reynolds

Developers and publishers give release dates that seem realistic to them when they set them, but they can not possibly foresee what will happen with a game throughout its development. You surely can not expect developers to release a game when they say they are going to no matter what state it is in or how far it has strayed from their original vision.

The development cycle of any game is fraught with problems, and the time it takes to iron out these problems varies wildly from game to game, depending on the complexity of the title in question. If publishers were to take your advice and ship their titles on their original release dates regardless of what condition it was in I am sure you would be the very first customer to write in and complain about unfinished games that were riddled with bugs.

Your point that all games are bugged on release is fair up to a point, but they are not all bugged to the extent of *Ultima Ascension* for example, and that is the situation we are trying to avoid. I stand by my point that developers should be left to their own devices till their games are complete and not forced to rush-release products, either by their publishers or the consumers who will be the first to complain if the games aren't up to scratch.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

MOD MAGIC

GOODIES WINNER!

As someone who grew up with video games (ZX 81, Vic 20, Cmr 64, Amiga, Mega drive, PSX and finally PC) I was becoming increasingly dismayed by the trend of improving graphics simply by upping the requirements of the hardware. This struck me as lazy, and more importantly the onus is on us, the players, to expand our systems in order to keep pace with the developers.

At the beginning of computer gaming we played games using less memory than a mouse driver (although I accept they looked bad and were simplistic). But who can remember Andy Braybrook's 'Holy Grail' of getting more than six sprites on a screen at once? More recently we've had Hammerhead's amazing PlayStation version of *Quake II* showing that hardware can be pushed a lot more than we think. This has led me to lose faith with PC games – will there be any innovation in programming, or will it be hardware led?

Fortunately, something has changed my opinion – I recently played some of the mods and new maps for *Half-Life* and *Unreal Tournament*.

These tiny masterpieces have given me a glimmer of hope. The bedroom developer is obviously not dead! The game players out there are lending new life to old titles in a way I suspect the original developers could not have dreamt of. And what's more, it doesn't mean we have to buy graphics cards that are more powerful than entire PC systems that were made three years ago.

I don't expect the industry to listen, but to the thousands of map designers and the talented few producing mods, I thank you. Long may your work continue!

Steve Murray

The creators of new maps and mods for big titles are indeed the unsung heroes of the online gaming revolution. In some cases (most notably *Quake*) these people are responsible for prolonging the life of a title that would otherwise have been forgotten if its single-player game was the only thing it had going for it. Good on them, say us (huge round of applause rings in background).

Unreal Tournament: games like this are creating new heroes.

TOP STORY

Could it be another winner from the makers of *Half-Life: Counter-Strike?*

RESURRECTING A RELIC

HOMEWORLD: CATACLYSM

The most original RTS for years makes a return, but this time with a different team at the helm

KUSHAN-ING THE BLOW Paul Presley

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

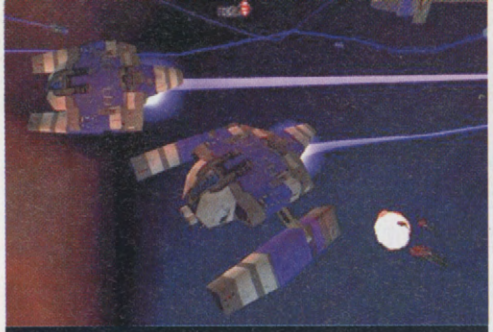
DEVELOPER Barking Dog Studios
PUBLISHER Sierra
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Spring
WEBSITE http://sierrastudios.com/games/hwcataclysm

IN SUMMARY

Set 15 years after the first game, *Cataclysm* boasts a new story, new ships, new technologies and a new enemy to fight. Everything you'd expect from an expansion pack really (even though Barking Dog prefers to call it a spin-off).

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Homeworld was pretty close to perfect (in our eyes at any rate) so making a follow-up won't be easy. Aside from graphical enhancements, Barking Dog will hopefully add enough small touches throughout to justify the project.


Elite Acolyte Fighters. Groovy.

Mimic ships can imitate enemy craft. As you might expect.

The Beast – infectious.

Some ships can join together, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* style.

Looks good so far.

There will be a new waypoint feature.

Now motherships have weapons.

It's no secret that we were completely blown away by Relic Entertainment's refreshingly original take on the real-time strategy genre last year. So when the announcement was made that a semi-sequel was to be developed by a different programming team, you would have forgiven us for being slightly apprehensive. Would these new boys be able to remain true to Relic's original vision? Would this be another case of Sierra's corporate franchise winning over Relic's dedication to innovative gameplay? Or might it just be able to pull it off?

It helps that Barking Dog has, for the most part, been in the same office as Relic and has been able to maintain direct contact with the original team since the outset. Also the company has roped in Marcus Skyler, the chap behind most of the original's storyline, to construct the single-player campaign tale, ensuring a degree of continuity.

Cataclysm takes place some 15 years after *Homeworld* ended. The Kushans are now firmly ensconced in their new home, lording it up like they owned the place (*They did – Ed*) and pushing trouble-making factions about. Your particular group of undesirables, the Somtaaw (the names are no better this time round), have been banished to the outer reaches of space to serve as miners and traders, salvaging whatever equipment they can find along the way. Hence the modular nature of your new mothership. Do you assign space to research units, or keep hold of the ore canisters in order to build and trade?

These decisions are forced upon you pretty quickly as you encounter a new enemy called the Beast. Basically a techno-organic viral entity, the Beast infects other races' ships and assimilate... er, reverse-engineers the technology for its own purposes. Unless you can stop it, the Bor... er, Beast will make its way to the Kushan homeworld and wipe out life as you know it. Resistance is futi... er, you get the idea.

"It seems as though Barking Dog has had a field day with the *Homeworld* engine, diving in feet first and tinkering with everything that needed improving"

It seems as though Barking Dog has had a field day with the *Homeworld* engine, diving in feet first and tinkering with everything that needed improving, while adding plenty of the team's own ideas along the way. Minor enhancements, such as waypoint navigation, refinements to the control interface and different types of resources to collect are complemented by major new features. These include the modular mothership, multi-functioning, upgradeable units, and a host of new weapons and technologies, such as EMP bursts, afterburners and siege cannons. Another nice touch is the way some units can combine with each other to enhance their attacks.

It remains to be seen whether Barking Dog will do enough to the game to warrant both its stand-alone nature and Relic's decision to allow a third-party to run with the project rather than doing it itself.

When *Homeworld* first appeared it brought with it a freshness, energy and spirit that was intrinsic to Relic. Will Cataclysm be able to recapture these elements or will it feel like a shameless cash-in? Certainly there are some nice ideas being touted, but we'll just have to wait and see whether they're enough. PCZ

TOP STORY

"At its heart, *Flashpoint* is a tactical first-person shooter, developed in the Czech Republic, just streets away from the boys responsible for *Hidden & Dangerous*"

In multiplayer games you'll be able to direct and control Soviet forces.

YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW

FLASHPOINT 1985: STATUS QUO

Three years in development and two publishers in its wake, is this the game to beat *Hidden & Dangerous* as the world's finest tactical shoot 'em up?

EIGHTIES BOY Richie Shoemaker

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Bohemia Interactive
PUBLISHER TBA
WEBSITE www.bistudio.com
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Autumn 2000

IN SUMMARY

The best bits of *Hidden & Dangerous*, *Battlezone II*, *Team Fortress 2*, *Wargasm* and *Delta Force 2* – all rolled into one big, heavy, metal gaming ball and set to rock all over our world.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Take *Hidden & Dangerous*, expand your squad of four to include a cast of hundreds, give them more vehicles to drive, a non-linear mission structure and throw it all into the middle of an alternate '80s reality with, hopefully, *no* bugs.

Twelve men in a truck, whistling a happy tune.

Bohemia is proud of its animation system. We've yet to see it working.

Don't worry, this isn't a flight simulation.

A Soviet general with nukes, and he's not afraid to use them.

Drive tanks, fly planes, run around on foot – whatever you want.

It was well over a year ago now that a playable version of *FlashPoint* found itself installed on one of our office PCs. "It looks amazing," said the then publisher's PR chap. "It's got real-time day/night cycles and even seasons. Look, I'll speed it up." Sure enough, as his fingers danced over the grubby keyboard, typing in some arcane cheat code, the sun accelerated across the sky, shadows lengthened and night inched across the land. We were impressed and we hadn't even seen him drive a tank.

One real month later said PR bloke was out of a job. He worked for Interactive Magic. Ironically, had Interactive Magic not bowed out from games publishing, *FlashPoint* would surely have been its biggest ever game. Which quite frankly, doesn't do it justice. Since then, *FlashPoint* kind of disappeared until a couple of months ago, when French publisher Ubi Soft told us it would soon be showing us the latest version. They never turned up with it and *FlashPoint* is now publisher-less once more.

"We've made real progress over the last six months," says Marek Spanel, project leader on Bohemia Interactive's first PC game. "We've installed the best motion system in-house and we have improved the game in almost every angle. Best of all, we finally have back all the rights to the title and we can negotiate with some of the best worldwide publishers. We opened our official website after months of 'status quo' and we have received incredible feedback from gamers over the last few weeks." Through all the ups and downs in *FlashPoint*'s history, it's good to see a developer remaining upbeat. But enough of the history lesson. What exactly is *FlashPoint* all about?

As hinted at in the worrying title, *FlashPoint* is set during what could have been: a mid-'80s confrontation between Soviet and NATO forces, forced by Russia's hard-line communist generals, upset at the progress of President Gorbachev's vision of perestroika and the Quo's assault on the nation's pop charts. One such general, Vasilii Guba, has control of the island of Kolgujev, one of a chain of three. Of the other islands, Malden is home to NATO and as part of that force it is your job to stop World War III erupting.

At its heart, *FlashPoint* is a tactical first-person shooter, developed in the Czech Republic, just streets away from the boys responsible for *Hidden & Dangerous*. It has the potential to be the best so far – unless Ubi Soft knows something we don't, of course.

Like the recent *Delta Force 2*, *FlashPoint* attempts to simulate a variety of weapons realistically and, like *Hidden & Dangerous*, you can expect a whole range of vehicles to drive about in. However, much more than either game, there will be tanks, APCs, boats and even helicopters to get through the non-linear missions. And with so much hardware moving about the maps, it's surprising to hear that Bohemia Interactive will also allow you to control up to 11 units at a time, be they groups of soldiers or single tanks, depending of course on your progression through the ranks. As a soldier you'll be able to disembark from Blackhawk helicopters, enter buildings, hide among the trees and snipe away at Russians or fire AA guns at overhead MiGs. Nearly 25 vehicles will make it into the final game, from the M1 Abrams tank to the A-10 Thunderbolt, with jeeps, trucks and a couple of fast-attack boats thrown in for good measure. 'Scuse the pun, but *FlashPoint* will include 'whatever you want'.

"I know about the connotation with the band," smiles Marek. "*1985: Status Quo* was only our codename, and it remains as a name of one of the single-player, built-in campaigns and we're using it as a subtitle. The game's title remains *FlashPoint*." Hopefully that was the only problem Ubi Soft had with the game. PCZ

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PlayStation

PC CD ROM

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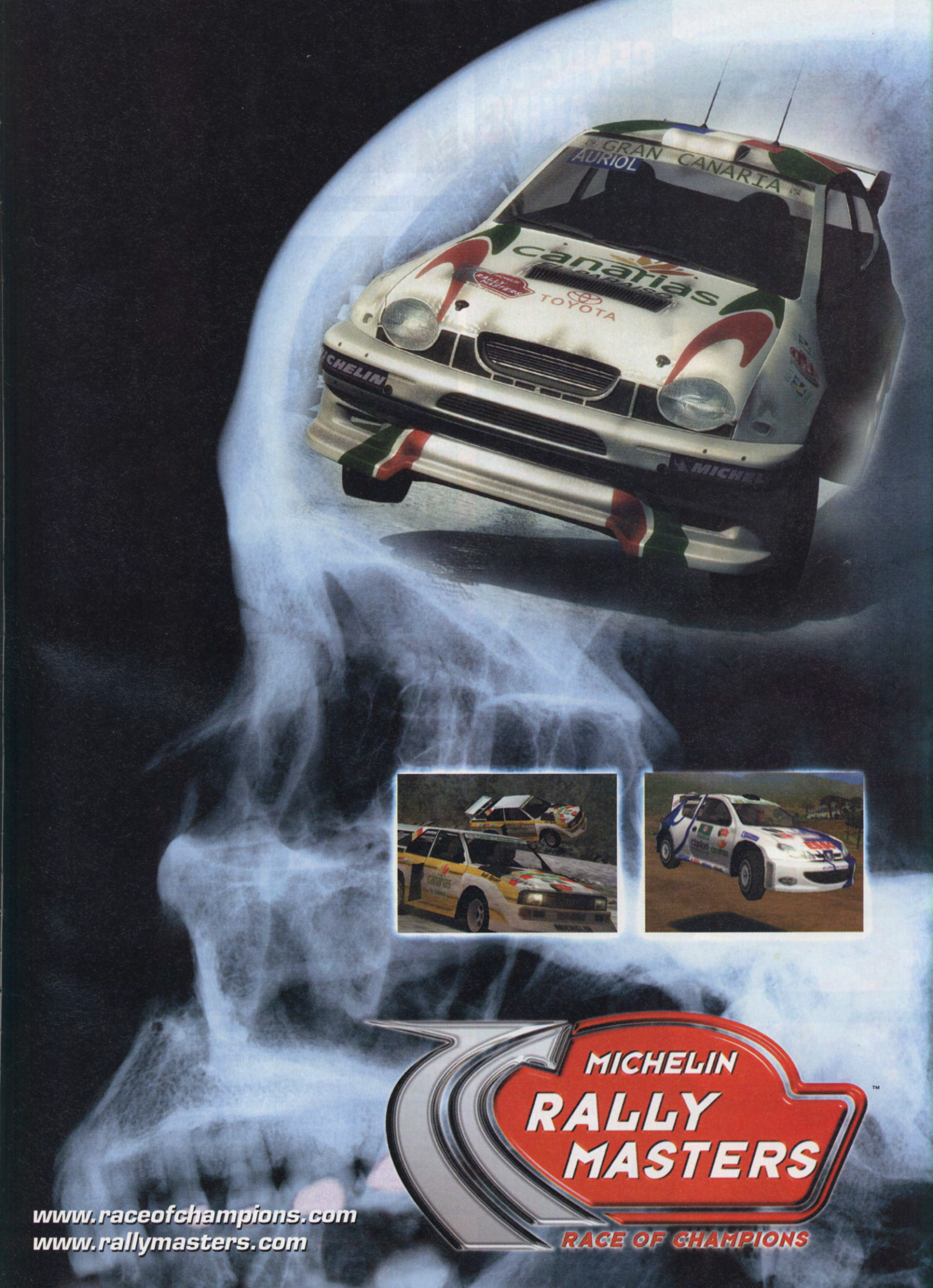
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GENRE-LY SPEAKING

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker

In its insatiable quest for world domination, the computer role-playing game is becoming unstoppable. Online or off, the genre (after years of decline) has, in the space of a year, risen to be a favourite with gamers the world over. And traditional RPGs based on any number of pen-and-paper equivalents, from *AD&D* to White Wolf's *Vampire*, are only part of the story. From real-time strategy to first-person action, developers are scrambling to include RPG elements to their games: Blizzard with *WarCraft III* and Ion Storm's *Deus Ex* are just two examples.

This new-found popularity for RPGs is down to what games now allow us to do while playing them. Role-playing is all about characters; creating, developing and interacting with them. With games such as *Quake III* we interact only down the barrel of a gun. In *Deus Ex* we'll be able to hold a conversation with whomever we like before we decide if it's in our best interests to blast them into tiny bits. Games are no longer about finding red keys for red doors, but about finding the right way to open any number of doors, be it by brute force, coercion or negotiation.

Of course, role-playing elements in non-goblin games are nothing new, but it is only really since *Final Fantasy VII* that people have realised true RPGs don't have to feature green-hued monsters with Klingon voices. Perhaps it is the reliance on generic fantasy themes that has kept role-playing behind for so long.

Don't get me wrong, although I'm loathe to admit it, I do enjoy a few hobgobs here and there (*Pool Of Radiance II* and *Elder Scrolls III* are looking particularly impressive), but role-playing is so much more than +1 swords and magic armour. As far as I'm concerned, whether it's behind the wheel of a car, through the sight of a rail gun or in the war room, role-playing is going to become the dominant force of computer gaming. It's what gaming is all about after all.

THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

ChartTrack

P.27

ONLINE DIARY

The latest online announcements and the best mods on the Net

P.31

***Ultima Online 2* goes ahead without Lord British.**

ORIGIN TIGHTENS ITS BELTS AS RICHARD GARRIOT MOVES ON

After 17 years, Richard Garriot has bid farewell to Origin and *Ultima*.

The company's maxim may be 'we create worlds' but it seems Origin Systems is doing as much to destroy them, with the news that *Privateer Online* is unlikely to ever see the light of day.

Following on from the bugged chaos that occurred when *Ultima IX: Ascension* was released in the US at Christmas, Origin has had a rocky time, with 20 staff positions being axed and Origin's founder Richard Garriot moving on to newer pastures. In a leaked internal memo, Origin's president, Jack Heistand, said: "We simply cannot fall into the trap of trying to do too much with too few resources."

Established in 1983 by Garriot, Origin is one of the few developers to predate mass-market PC gaming. Origin has been the guiding force in role-playing, space-combat and online gaming with more than 60 games to its credit, most of them classics, including *Crusader*, *Wing Commander* and the venerable *Ultima* series.

Origin will focus solely on the *Ultima Online* series for now, with the aim of securing 200,000 users as EA pumps US$16million into hardware and software to support the series with development on *Ultima Online 2* continuing. Heistand also talked about *Ultima Online 3* in his memo, saying the small team "is charged with redefining and expanding the *Ultima* franchise to appeal to a much larger market than the hardcore followers it has today". Sounds a bit unimpressive then.

In regards to Richard Garriot, it seems his involvement with *Ultima* is all but over, with one website reporting: "Garriot's departure was the result of discussions with Origin's CEO that his goals were inconsistent with those of the company and its owner Electronic Arts". Apparently there are no hard feelings on either side. According to Heistand: "Richard's contribution to Origin has been great and his legacy as the creator of *Ultima* is a tremendous responsibility for us to inherit. As Richard and I discussed, his vision of what he wanted to do – create new large properties – is something Origin simply could not pursue."

As another website commented: "That's kinda like firing John Carmack from id Software." Hmmm, quite.

TECH-HEAD
The low-down on the soon to be released SideWinder controllers from Microsoft
P.34

MAN WHO KNOWS
The very latest industry gossip
P.38

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?
Three more games that should've been here by now
P.39

HOTSHOTS
Big games and even bigger pictures
P.40

AND THEY'RE OFF!

An all Eidos final for this summer's *second* main event

Our older readers, brought up on a healthy bedroom diet of keyboard thrashing on games like *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* and *Sex Olympics*, may like to think about bringing their index fingers out of retirement for one last event, the upcoming Olympic Games.

Eidos Interactive, who for so long has been playing second fiddle to EA Sports when it comes to official sports licences, managed to secure a six-year deal with the Olympic 'powers that be', which

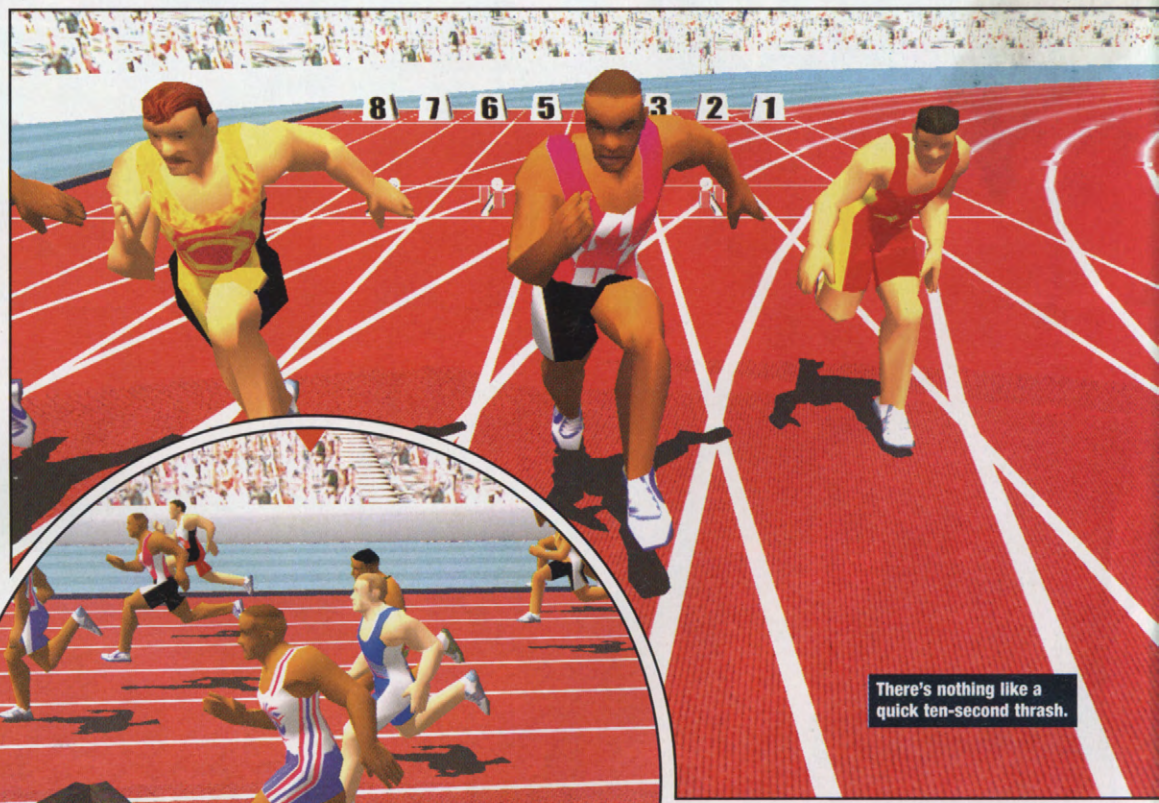
"We might hear David Coleman making a few gaffs, which should add to the comedy in eight-player multiplayer sessions"

could well mean mean a whole string of yearly updates and events.

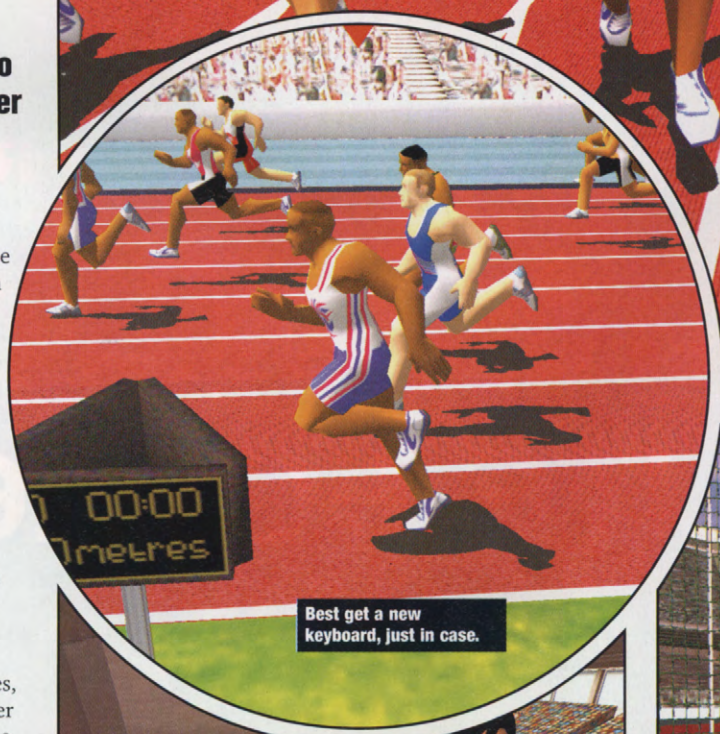
Sydney 2000 will be the first of these games and is being coded by Attention To Detail (*Rollcage*, *UEFA Champions League 99/00*). At least ten Olympic events will be featured, including old favourites such as the 100m button crusher, 110m hurdles, triple jump, javelin and swimming, as well as newer sports such as platform diving. Unique athletes will be modelled for over 32 countries and TV commentary will be specific for each region, meaning we might hear David Coleman making a few gaffs, which should add to the comedy in eight-player multiplayer sessions.

As well as single event arcade modes, *Sydney 2000* will feature a single-player Olympic mode whereby virtual coaches will have to build up a pool of athletes to qualify and compete in the various heats and finals for each event. For each physical and mental attribute, coaches can train in the Virtual Gym, which, we're told, will affect the appearance of each contestant.

Performance-related drugs will, of course, be banned, but that aside it looks like an interesting game lies ahead on the small screen.

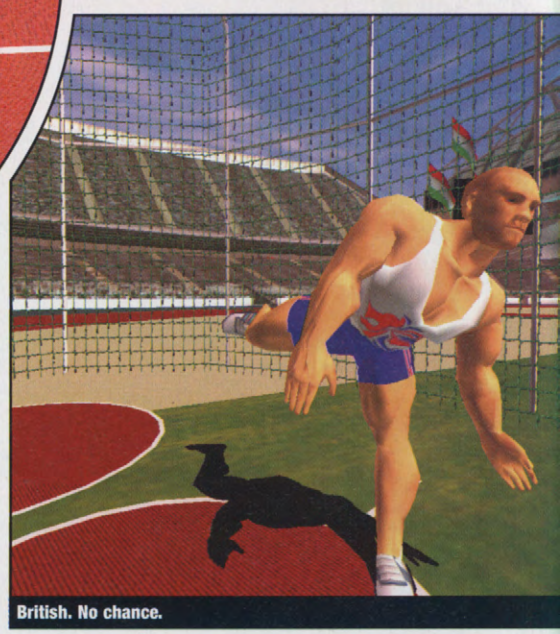


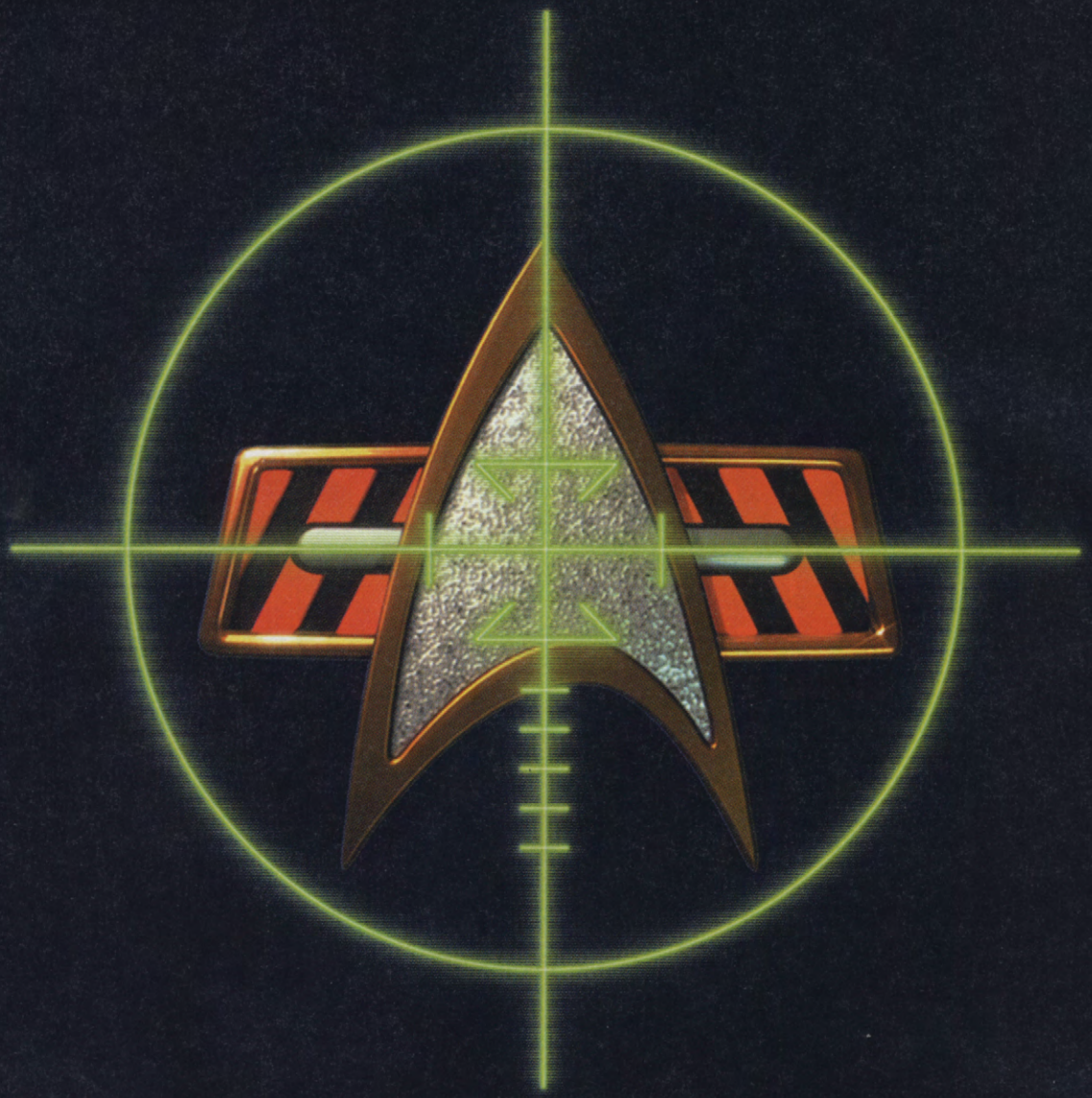
There's nothing like a quick ten-second thrash.



Best get a new keyboard, just in case.

Each event will have TV-style replays in slow motion.


British. No chance.



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SIM SPACE STATION

Get ready to deal, trade and research your way through some alien environments

Mucky Foot, the creator of *Urban Chaos*, has announced *Startopia*, a *Theme Park*-style management game set in the zero-gravity vacuum of space.

Mucky Foot hails from the Bullfrog school of games development, so *Startopia* promises to be a humourous offering of diplomacy, resource management, trading and research.

"Mucky Foot hails from the Bullfrog school of games development, so *Startopia* promises to be a humorous offering"

You'll play the owner of a burgeoning chain of space way drop-off points who has to deal with all manner of aliens – some with very bizarre needs and customs. Threats from competitors, pirates and microscopic life forms threaten to put you out of business, which along with internal problems from staff and visitors, should ensure there'll be plenty to do. A new 3D engine has also been thrown in, so it should look the business too. A firm release date has yet to be announced, but year-end seems likely.

"There ain't no party like an S Club party."

A queue for the ladies is already forming.

Security droids will police your Station.

"50p for a cuppa tea, guv?"

And you thought the Cantina Band was cool.

It's like *Theme Park* in space.

This is Angel Sanchez. Anne McCaffrey's a bit older.

McCAFFREY JOINS RED STORM

Author and president of Red Storm Entertainment, Tom Clancy, has announced that fellow writer Anne McCaffrey's work is to get the Red Storm treatment, the first game – *Freedom: First Resistance* – will be based on McCaffrey's Freedom novels.

Using a modified version of the *Rogue Spear* engine, *First Resistance* will offer a mix of third-person action and role-playing adventure, with the ageing code being enhanced by a new motion-capture system to show off more than 700 new character movements.

Although, apart from Mark Hill's girlfriend, none of us have read any of Anne McCaffrey's work, the storyline for the game may well lead us to do just that – or at least to watch re-runs of the '80s TV series *V*. It goes a little something like this: overun by Aliens called the Catteni, Earth is ruled by a puppet government, while the remaining humans live as refugees and nomads. As one of the members of an underground resistance group, players will take the role of Angel Sanchez as she tries to find a way to rid the beleaguered planet of the loathsome creatures.

Due out before the end of the year, much of the gameplay still has to be worked out, but we have been promised a mix of *Thief* and *Outcast*, with a healthy dose of character grooming, puzzle-based adventure and gunfighting thrown in as well. We haven't seen any screenshots yet, as it seems Red Storm wants to hold off any further information until this year's E3 conference. But as you read this, we'll be there checking out all the latest juicy details. So you can expect more info next issue.

ENLIST NOW AT
www.gc-crayven.com

GROUND CONTROL

COMING SOON

PURE ACTION • PURE TACTICS • PURE AND SIMPLE

SIERRA

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Up to eight players will be able to race together online.

Suspension, exhaust and tyres are all there to be upgraded.

Monster Truck Madness 3, in all but name.

TERMINAL RACING

US Developer Terminal Reality (*Fly!*, *Nocturne*) is returning to racing with the off-road driving game *4x4 Evolution*, which apart from anything else, looks set to be one of the most graphically polished driving games of recent times. Terminal Reality developed Microsoft's *Monster Truck Madness* games before they teamed up with The Gathering Of Developers – which bodes well.

True to its name *Evolution* will include a race mode whereby players can fund the upkeep of their vehicles from cash prizes they've won in various races. There will be 16 tracks available to race across, all in a wide variety of vehicles. Visible car damage, dirt and weather effects will also add to the graphical splendour, as will obstacles such as oncoming traffic. No release date has yet been set, but an Autumn appearance seems likely at this point.

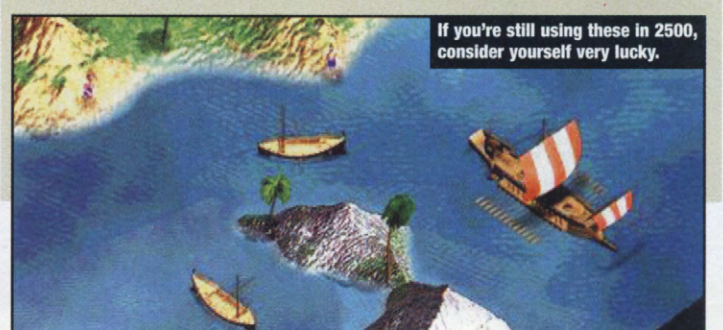
EMPIRE OF AGES

Stainless Steel Studios, not to be confused with *Carmageddon* creator Stainless Software, has announced that its first game will be *Empire Earth*, due for release mid-way through next year, care of Sierra.

Headed up by the lead designer of the original *Age Of Empires*, *Empire Earth* is an ambitious game that aims to take in the scope of *Civilization II: The Test Of Time* with the real-time gameplay of the *Age Of Empires* series.

Starting off in 500,000BC the game will cover Earth's entire history; past, present and future, as it takes players from the discovery of fire right up to 2500AD. Research, trade, diplomacy, espionage and war will play equal parts in the game, with more than 300 technologies to research from the Palaeolithic Age to the Nano Age. In terms of the civilisations on offer, we can expect loads, with some dying out or springing to life as the years roll by.

Empire Earth is set to cover Earth's entire history; past, present and future.



If you're still using these in 2500, consider yourself very lucky.

In-game cut-scenes will drive the story forward.

The painters are in.

Later on you'll get your hands on a lethal arsenal of weapons.

You'd think she was safe wouldn't you?

CRISIS FOR PC

PlayStation adventure *DinoCrisis*, from the creator of the survival horror classic *Resident Evil*, is making its way to the PC via Virgin Interactive.

Like *Resident Evil*, the game is primarily a mix of third-person action and pre-rendered cinematic adventure, featuring, as you would expect, a red-haired minx in a functional, but attractive, black ensemble. The story follows her and her team of operatives as she explores a remote island where a series of government experiments involving dinosaurs has gone horribly wrong (*Jurassic Park* anyone?). With a range of weapons at your disposal, you can expect just as many frights as in previous *Resident Evil* games, but rather than shambling zombies, your nerves will have to contend with lightning fast velociraptors.

DinoCrisis should come crashing to your screens this summer and we've heard rumblings that *Resident Evil 3* may creep onto the PC this autumn.

VIRGIN OFFLOAD TO FREELOADER

To add to the impressive line up of games Freeloader.com will be offering over the coming months, Virgin Interactive has signed a deal with the North London-based company to allow the free download of Mythos' *Magic & Mayhem*, *Jimmy White's 2: Cueball* (both *PC ZONE* Top 100 games) and the rather average football game *Viva Football*.

Available now at **www.freeloader.com** are *Hidden & Dangerous*, *Rat Attack* and *Grand Theft Auto*. And before you ask, no, we can't put them on our coverdisk.

Relax and sink a few holes thanks to Freeloader.com.

ENLIST NOW AT
www.gc-newdawn.com

GROUND CONTROL

COMING SOON

PURE ACTION • PURE TACTICS • PURE AND SIMPLE

SIERRA

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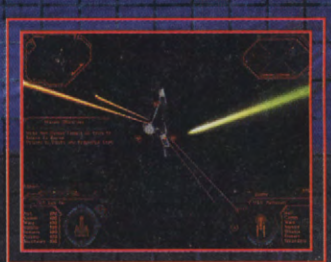
"THE WEAK MUST FALL TO GIVE PLACE TO THE STRONG"
GENERAL CHANG

STAR TREK®
KLINGON ACADEMY™

COMING SOON



PC CD ROM

www.interplay.com/klingon

Paramount

Interplay

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CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what *you* think

Force Commander is at No 1. What a surprise.

THE Virgin megastores TOP 10

APR	MAY	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
-	1	**FORCE COMMANDER**	LUCASARTS/RONIN	ACTIVISION	81%
-	2	SOLDIER OF FORTUNE	RAVEN SOFTWARE	ACTIVISION	80%
-	3	C&C: TIBERIAN SUN – FIRESTORM	WESTWOOD	EA	58%
1	4	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
-	5	THIEF II: THE METAL AGE	LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS	EIDOS	82%
-	6	F1 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	75%
2	7	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER – SEASON 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
-	8	ULTIMA IX: ASCENSION	ORIGIN	EA	52%
-	9	STAR TREK: ARMADA	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	74%
9	10	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC/DIGITAL EXTREMES	INFOGRAMES	90%

THE ChartTrack TOP10 ELSPA

APR	MAY	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
-	1	STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER	LUCASARTS/RONIN	ACTIVISION	81%
-	2	SOLDIER OF FORTUNE	RAVEN SOFTWARE	ACTIVISION	80%
1	3	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	86%
-	4	F1 2000	EA SPORTS	EA	75%
-	5	STAR TREK: ARMADA	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	74%
2	6	CHAMP MAN – SEASON 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
5	7	DELTA FORCE 2	NOVALOGIC	NOVALOGIC	63%
-	8	THIEF 2: THE METAL AGE	LOOKING GLASS	EIDOS	82%
3	9	AOE II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	90%
4	10	HALF-LIFE: GENERATIONS	VALVE/GEARBOX	SIERRA	95%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)

COMPETITION

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE **and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:**

Question: In what town on Tatooine does Luke Skywalker first meet Han Solo?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with with *all* the information requested, to the address below:

- *Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18*
- *Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies*
- *Are you a current subscriber to* PC ZONE*?*

Answers on a postcard to: *PC ZONE* Chart Compo (CPCZ001A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: Thursday 1 June

Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. Capisce?

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Why is *Star Trek: Armada* only at number five? You people are crazy! You must make sure you buy *Armada* now! *Force Commander* is crap – I've seen scores as low as 2/10 on the web and the demo is terrible. *Soldier Of Fortune* looks the same as any other FPS, but I'm glad to see *The Sims* still up there. Oh, and whoever bought *F1 2000* needs shooting. Don't you realise that if a game is released and you have not seen any reviews of it, it means it's trash?"

Gareth Brierley, Manchester

"After the dire *Phantom Menace* games, it looks like with *Force Commander* it's a case of the hype strikes back. A disappointing game in an unsurprising chart position."

Mike Rovardi, Middlesbrough

"You can always tell there's been a slow couple of months because the charts are populated by uninspiring games which have beaten *PC ZONE*'s reviews to the shelves. Roll on summer when *Black & White* and *Vampire* appear. I'll be saving my cash for something big, not this tiresome lot."

Nevada, Nottingham

"I've bought every *Star Wars* film and game on the day of release and it's only with the last three games that I've been disappointed. Of the three (*Racer*, *Phantom Menace* and *Force Commander*), *Force Commander* has to be the worst. As a real-time strategy game it's not bad, but as a *Star Wars* game it makes *Yoda Stories* look good."

Wedgie, Bedford

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

After the video release of *The Phantom Menace*, it was no surprise to see *Force Commander* at top spot this month. Activision is no doubt rubbing its collective palms, content to see *FC* as well as *SoF* and *Armada* in the higher reaches of the nations interactive chart.

But where the hell are this month's new releases? For the record, the neat *Need For Speed Porsche 2000* debuted a disappointing 38 and Empire's spiffing helicopter simulation *Comanche Hokum* only managed 30. Other recent releases seem to also have plummeted: *Ultima: Ascension* has dropped to 13, *Final Fantasy VIII* is at 16 and *Risk II* has vanished from the top 40 altogether. You're a strange lot.

Richie Shoemaker

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

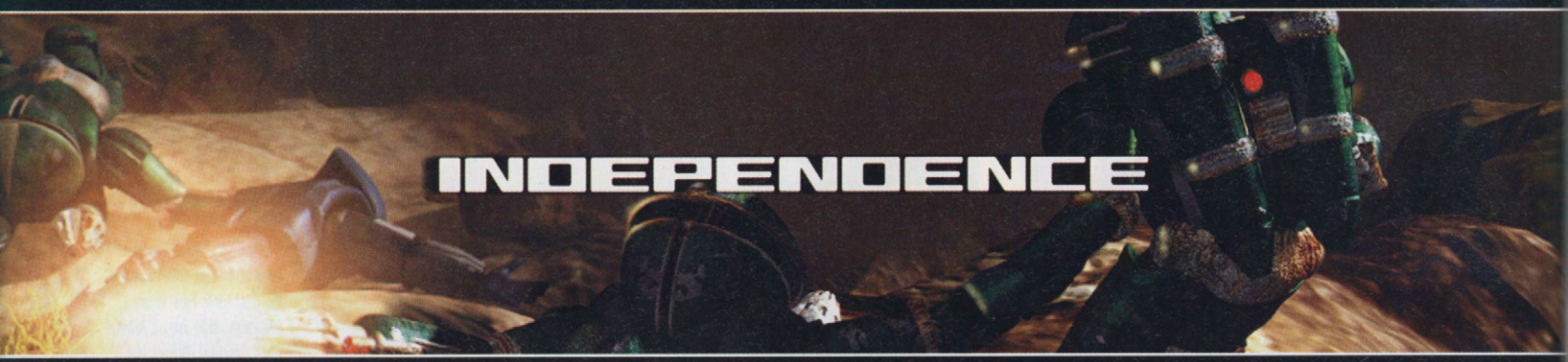
1 Championship Manager 3 *(Eidos)*
2 Civilization: Call To Power *(Activision)*
3 TOCA 2: Touring Cars *(Codemasters)*
4 Star Wars: X-Wing Alliance *(Activision)*
5 RollerCoaster Tycoon *(Hasbro)*

2 YEARS AGO...

1 Star Wars: Supremacy *(Virgin)*
2 Tomb Raider II *(Eidos)*
3 Championship Manager 97/98 *(Eidos)*
4 BattleZone *(Activision)*
5 Grand Theft Auto *(BMG)*

5 YEARS AGO...

1 Discworld *(Psygnosis)*
2 Star Wars: Dark Forces *(Virgin)*
3 TFX *(Ocean)*
4 Desert Strike *(Gremlin)*
5 Dragon Lore *(Mindscape)*



DOGS OF WAR

DEFINING A NEW GENRE IN TACTICAL GAMING

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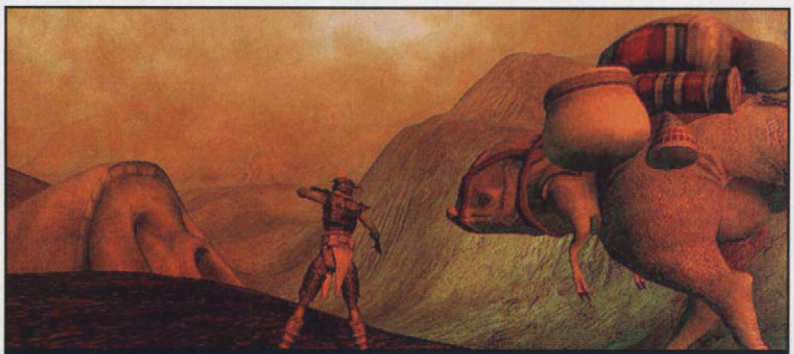
www.take2games.com www.sdreams.co.uk

ELDER SCROLLS III LOCKED ON

A PIII 500 will be the minimum spec for this game.


Expect more bizarre creatures than your common, garden variety goblin.

Although a long way off, the third in Bethesda's *Elder Scrolls* trilogy is already shaping up to be a top class role-playing game. Entitled *Morrowind*, the game is essentially a single-player outing, offering about as non-linear a challenge as you are likely to find.

The first *Elder Scrolls* game, *Arena*, though now looking its age, was something of a watershed when it was released, offering perhaps the largest 3D environment to explore at the time and a wealth of spectacular effects. Character interaction was limited however, and unlike the all-too-linear sequel, *Daggerfall*, it still holds a place in many goblin-lovers hearts. *Morrowind*, which is unlikely to appear before the end of 2001, heralds a return to *Arena*'s ideals.

The sprawling lands of previous adventures will be reduced to cover just *Morrowind*, meaning tons of extra detail can be crammed into a smaller area. Interaction and character development are high on the list of priorities, with non-player characters and organisations reacting to your actions throughout the game – stealing, for example, will very likely put a bounty on your head.

As you can see from the screenshots, *Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind* is looking as good as anything available today, with skeletal animation, lip-synching and full-screen character interaction, all with a style of its own. We can't wait.

What are you staring at?

"A packet of Rizlas and *The Sun*, please."

The world of *Morrowind* will be populated by hundreds of NPCs.

URBAN RENEWAL FOR SIM CITY

Maxis is currently piping out more icing for its new cake – *SimCity 3000*. Scheduled for an end of May release, EA will be publishing *SimCity 3000 World Edition*, an enhanced and expanded version of everyone's favourite city management game.

New features will include two new building sets based on Asian and European buildings, offering literally hundreds of new styles for existing buildings, an editor to create your own concrete masterpieces, a dozen new scenarios and the means to design your own, cutomisable terrain and four new disasters. Of course, all this comes with the original game.

Can you find a solution for pollution?

New buildings for *SimCity* fans.

SHORTS

DARK CRYSTAL ADVENTURE, MAYBE

Dreamcast coders Tremor (currently working on – yes – a 3D version of *Railroad Tycoon II* for Sega's console) is trying to scoop the rights to develop a 3D adventure based on Jim Henson's '80s puppet flick, *The Dark Crystal*. Details on the game are practically non-existent, but with any PC appearance due to coincide with PlayStation 2, we expect it to be a beauty when, or if, it arrives late next year.

DREAMING OF QUAKE

Quake III Arena is being ported over to Sega's Dreamcast console. No big deal, you might think. Wrong. It looks as if Dreamcast Quakers and PC deathmatchers will be able to get it on together. Soon the superiority of the mouse/keyboard combo will be assured, unless Sega releases a Dreamcast mouse, that is.

MAC ATTACK

With Linux being a continual thorn in Microsoft's backside, it seems Apple is poised to spike the other cheek with news that it's developing a new operating system that can be used to run both on Apple computers and PCs. Dubbed Darwin, the new OS has yet to be officially announced, although with rumours that Apple has been approaching PC manufacturers for it to be packaged with new PCs, there's a very good chance that Darwin may soon be the industry's worst kept secret.

ROGUE WARS

A first-person turn-based strategy game is on the way going by the name of *Rogue Wars*. Likened to the ageing Chess 'em up *Archon*, *Rogue Wars* is essentially a turn-based *MechWarrior*, with players able to take turns in destroying enemy Rogues using a first-person view. No publisher has been announced, but the game should be finished in the autumn.

ONLINE DIARY

***Quake III Fortress*, *Counter-Strike*, *Neocron* and *Star Wars Online*. Heaven awaits...**

BILLY NO-LIFE Phil Wand

TOP TWO BLASTERS

A closer look at *Counter-Strike* and the beta release of *Quake III Fortress*

QUAKE III FORTRESS

It was bound to happen sooner or later: *Team Fortress* for *Quake III Arena*. A free download from **www.q3f.com** the popular team-based mod gives players all their favourite classes and gameplay, together with play variations including Capture The Flag, Command Point and Capture And Hold. Many of the familiar *TF* maps are being remade, and the development team plans to include both male and female skins and bot play.

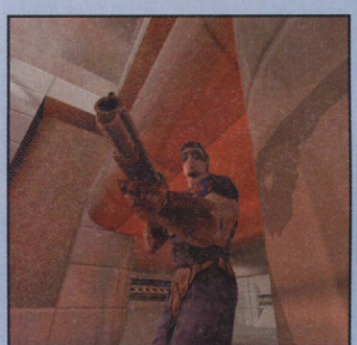
There are a few issues yet to be addressed, such as the protracted reload times and weak sound effects, but hey, it is only a beta. The programming team is a dedicated bunch and is keen to capture the feel of 'old skool' physics (ie *QuakeWorld*) married to the spectacular *Quake III Arena* environment.

If you have any suggestions to put forward, visit the Forum section on the *QIIIF* website (as above) and make yourself heard. *QIIIF* is also now playing at **www.wireplay.com.**

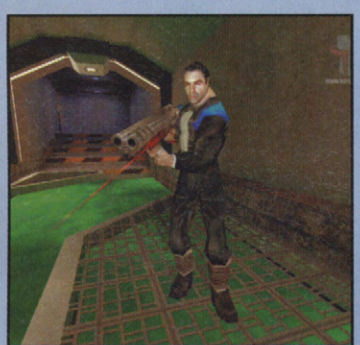
Slow, but very deadly.

QIIIF offers a more frenetic kind of action than *TFC*.

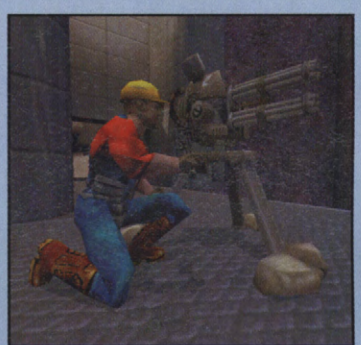
QIIIF CLASSES



Scout: lightly armoured, fast flag carrier.



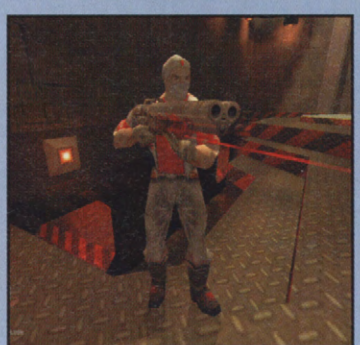
Spy: he dresses up in the enemy's clothes.



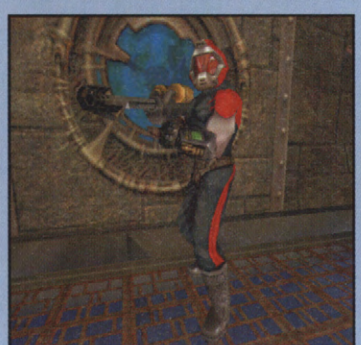
Engineer: keeper of your team's sentry guns.

Demolitions Man: bombs and grenades.

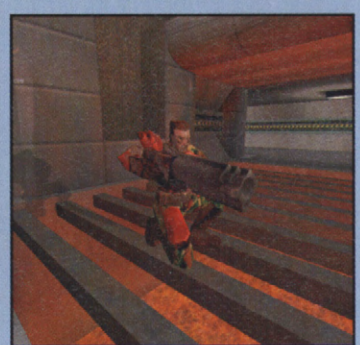
Heavy Weapons guy: has a big weapon.



Medic: heals the sick and injects viruses.



Pyro: flame on!



Soldier: good, solid, all-round player class.

COUNTER-STRIKE

We've been getting a number of emails complaining that we hardly ever mention *Counter-Strike*, the terrorist vs counter-terrorist mod for *Half-Life*. We should give it some space, you say, because it's more popular than *Team Fortress Classic* (which is something we go on about quite a bit) and comes close to outnumbering *Quake III*. Well, in recognition of the fact that *Counter-Strike* now has nearly twice the number of active servers as *TFC*, not only have we added it to the list of games running on the *PC ZONE* Games Server, but we've also decided to write about it, and give it an award (see page 42).

For those of you who have been living under a rock for the past nine months, *Counter-Strike* is a free, team-based *Half-Life* mod that puts you on the side of one of two factions: the terrorists, whose job it is to take hostages, blow up bridges and be generally obnoxious and try to cause as much damage as they can, and the counter-terrorists, who stalk around the map trying their hardest to snuff all the evil terrorists out. It's not a racy game by any means, with none of the rocket-jumping, gauss-jumping, grenade spamming antics of regular *Half-Life* and *TFC*, but it can still be hugely rewarding when your team manages to pull through.

Each mission generally involves stalking stealthily close to walls, hiding in shadows, creeping about and taking sniper shots at enemies from across the entire map. The tension that can build up is almost unbearable, and the fact that when you die you have to sit back and spectate until that game is over add the all-important realism factor.

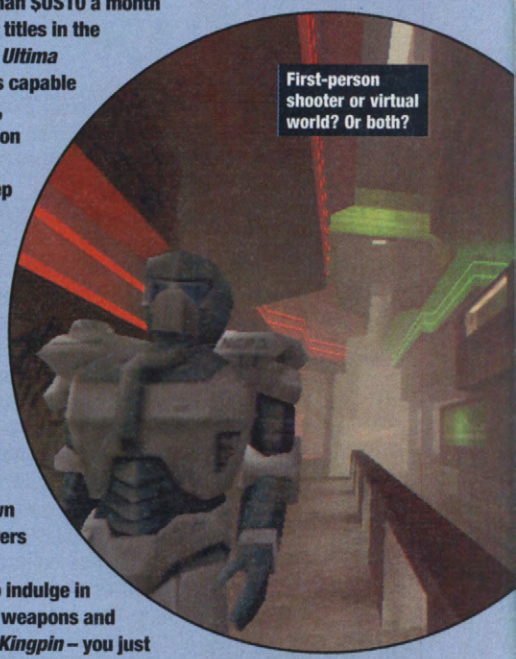
If you take a look in your *PingTool* (**www.pingtool.com**) or *GameSpy* (**www.gamespy3d.com**) server lists, you'll notice that *Counter-Strike* accounts for more than half the total server count, with *TFC*, Vanilla *Half-Life* and *Action Half-Life* bringing up the rear. Quite clearly, there are a lot of people playing *Counter-Strike*, and if you want to join in all you need do is get hold of the relevant software and visit any one of the 1,500 machines that are hosting the mod. Visit **www.counter-strike.net** for the latest download and **193.133.49.229** for information on how to play with us. You will also find a copy of the latest beta, Version 6.1, on this month's *PC ZONE* cover CD.

One long distance lobotomy coming right up...

LATEST ONLINE RPGS

NEOCRON

Described by its developers as a 'graphical MUD', *Neocron* represents the latest breed of massively multiplayer online role-playing games set in a persistent state world and rendered in three 32-bit texture-mapped dimensions, and it's yours to explore for less than $US10 a month (about £6). Unlike many other titles in the genre, such as *EverQuest* and *Ultima Online*, the graphical engine is capable of rendering dynamic lighting, dynamic shadows, high polygon terrain and curved surfaces.



First-person shooter or virtual world? Or both?

In short, it's the closest step to reality yet. As you wander around the 3D world, you can approach town buildings, walk all around them, peer through windows, and then go inside if you spot someone you know. Much of the place has been designed to be viewed from a first-person perspective, but other camera angles are provided including a *C&C*-style top-down that should be familiar to players of existing online RPGs.

For those of you wishing to indulge in violent activities, you can buy weapons and play the game like you would *Kingpin* – you just have to remember that in this game you'll have the police after you. Some players have already set up clans and spend their entire time evading the law, but most people are peaceful and avoid the districts renowned for gang warfare and deathmatching.

One thing the people behind *Neocron* are keen to stress is that they've gone out of their way to make their game a fun and enjoyable thing. Creating a realistic online world was not their number one priority, nor was making some 'virtual experiment' – most people will get their kicks from exploration, adventure, and character advancement. Want to know more? Check out www.reakktor.com/neocron

STAR WARS ONLINE

If there was ever an RPG likely to have everyone between the ages of 24 and 35 ditching girlfriends, going without food and throwing sickies on a Monday morning after a weekend-long online binge, this is it. Verant Interactive, the company behind *EverQuest*, has recently teamed up with LucasArts and Sony Interactive to create *Star Wars Online*, due out some time next year. Exact details are sketchy, but you can guess almost all of them. What we do know is that it will be based on the 'old' trilogy – so absolutely no Battle Droids or Gungans will make an appearance. At the moment it seems players will be under the thumb of the Empire, with Stormtroopers acting as police. It is without doubt the best universe in which to set a game, and we want in – we want in *now*. For more info, visit www.verant.com

YOU

THEM

WESTERN ALLIANCE FORCES ARE WEAK.
THE EASTERN COALITION ARE TAKING NO PRISONERS.

www.starlancer.co.uk

SHORTS

DRACULA SUCKS AGAIN

It seems Activision's blood-sucking RPG *Vampire: The Masquerade* has some competition on its hands with news that Bram Stoker's original is finding its way to PC via Dreamcatcher games. *Dracula: The Resurrection*, a traditional flick-screen adventure, is expected to hit shelves in the US in June. Set seven years after the book, our hero finds himself again in Transylvania, fighting the eponymous vampire once again.

ZOG'S GRIM ADVENTURE

Unlike most adventure games where the death of your characters is never a problem, *It Came For Zog* charges you with saving a Neanderthal against the aliens who have abducted him, with the possibility of a messy death at every turn. As with LucasArts' *Grim Fandango*, *Zog* will use a mix of 2D cinematic and third-person views, with character interaction limited in favour of expression through gestures and body language. An intriguing prospect, *It Came For Zog* will be out early next year.

SCREAMING OVER THE PARK

The developer of Activision's *Screaming Demons Over Europe*, Inertia Games, has started work on a new WWII flight sim that is rumoured to be based in the Pacific. Before then, however, the developer will be finishing off its simulation of radio-controlled planes simply called *RC Simulator*. The game will offer training modes and events, with special features, including target drops and balloon bursts. Ten planes and ten 'fields' will make it into the final version which, if successful, will be expanded to include helicopters and other vehicles.

UNREAL FORTRESS

A classic mod on the way for *Unreal Tournament*

First we had *Team Fortress* for *Quake*, then *Team Fortress Classic* for *Half-Life*, now, thanks to two groups of dedicated coders, we have *Team Fortress*-style gameplay for the latest round of 3D shooters; *Quake III Arena* and *Unreal Tournament*. You'll find more on the recent beta doing the rounds for *Quake III Fortress* on page 30. But for *Unreal Fortress*, read on.

"*Unreal Fortress* is not a direct port of the original *Team Fortress*," says Scott Osborne of the UK-based *Unreal Fortress* team. "We have no desire to copy others' work and we want to create a fresh gaming experience that incorporates the best elements of both *TF* and *UT* along with our original ideas."

Unlike the initial version of *Quake III Fortress*, *Unreal Fortress* will be released with AI bots allowing for plenty of off-line carnage. In terms of character classes, we're told to expect the usual range of scouts, spies and medics, although their names will be changed, as well as their attributes, to fit with the different style of play that *Unreal* offers.

"Character classes are loosely based on those of the original *TF* in terms of their functions, but they'll have new abilities and weaponry," confirms Scott. "Currently, all our maps are originals, but we may include versions of classics such as 2forts and Well. Weapons will all be original, in part to take advantage of the dual-fire capabilities people have come to love and expect from *UT*."

No release date has been set, but don't be surprised if a beta is available by the time you read this. Check out **www.unrealfortress.com** for details and downloads.

One of *Unreal Tournament*'s new maps takes shape.

Expect a brand new interface for *Unreal Fortress*.

We can expect 20 weapons in *Unreal Fortress*, all with dual-fire mode.

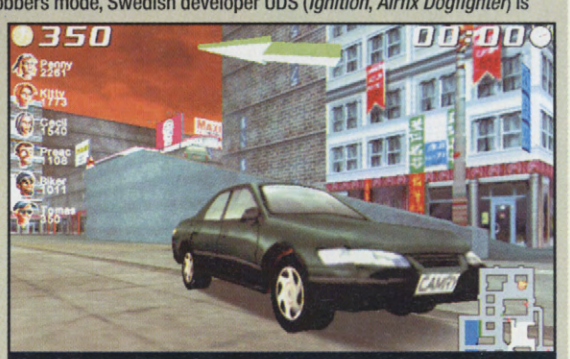
PARCEL EXPRESS

Drive through leafy suburbs, high-rise estates or seedy docks.

In what seems to be a cross between the excellent *Crazy Taxi*, recently released for Sega's Dreamcast and *Midtown Madness*' multiplayer Cops and Robbers mode, Swedish developer UDS (*Ignition*, *Airfix Dogfighter*) is developing a driving game where, as the owner of a courier firm, the aim is to speed through a series of towns delivering packages to various companies.

Competition is stiff in the made-up world of *PickUp Express*, with other courier firms out to nab your clients as you race against the clock to deliver on time. A range of vehicles will be on hand to ferry your cargo, with considerations such as size of the package and fuel to worry about, as well as time of day. Traffic jams and the law will be on hand to put you out of business and, with four cities to race around, getting used to the lay of the land will be a priority.

Apart from the aforementioned Express Contest, *PickUp Express* will feature two further game modes; a predictable Speed Racing mode and Bomb Race – a kind of tag event. The game should be finished next month.



Hopefully there'll be a few pedestrians to scare along the way.

Certainly the most attractive RPG we've seen so far.

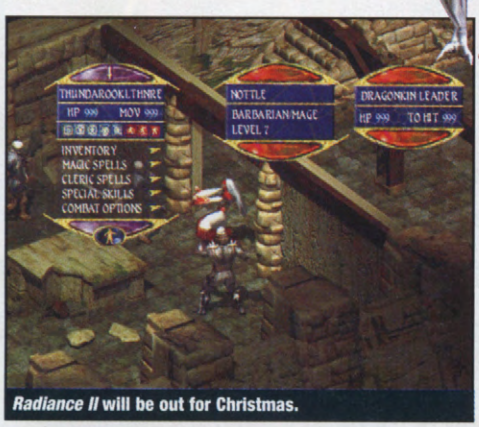
POOL OF RADIANCE WARMS UP

With *Baldur's Gate* and *Planescape: Torment* out, and *Icewind Dale* and *Baldur's Gate II* on the way, it comes as no surprise to hear that another role-playing game to be based on TSR's AD&D ruleset is coming our way. If you've a been a fan of RPGs since the early days of *Ultima*, you may have heard of it's predecessor: 1988's *Pool Of Radiance*?

One of the first games to be based on the new Third Edition AD&D rules, *Pool Of Radiance II: The Ruins Of Myth Drannor* follows the current trend of giving the player plenty to do in a smaller area. Like Black Isle's *Icewind Dale*, the need to explore huge tracts of land is removed and, similarly with *Icewind*, we can expect a mix of beautiful 2D maps and 3D-accelerated characters.

As with most RPGs, the ruins of Myth Drannor will be a hazardous place, populated by adventure seeking NPCs and ruthless monsters hungry for a slice of flesh. You are the leader of a party of wizards and warriors – you can control up to eight – and each character has its distinctive motives, looks and abilities.

With an involving plot, dozens of sub-quests and random dungeons, *Pool Of Radiance II* may well give Black Isle's impressive role-playing line-up a run for its gold coin.



Radiance II will be out for Christmas.

We'll take a closer look at this game next month.

"Did you call my buff?'

BUFFY THE GAMES PLAYER

The latest horror action/adventure to be announced, after *Evil Dead* and *The Blair Witch Project* games, is *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. Developed by The Collective, the same team behind *Deep Space Nine: The Fallen*, the game will feature all the characters and locations from the TV series (Sunnydale High School, The Bronze nightclub…) and will have you controlling the vampire-hunting beauty from a third-person perspective.

Despite the obvious arcade action that has you using acrobatic martial arts to fight the evil forces, and the fact that it's also being made for the Dreamcast and PlayStation, the game promises plenty of depth. Puzzle-solving plays a big part in the proceedings and there will also be multiple storylines and sub-plots meshing in with a larger narrative.

The game looks amazing – which is just as well, as most Buffy addicts only tune in to enjoy the real-time curves of Sarah Michelle Gellar. But, Buffy looks set to kick Lara Croft in the teeth in the battle for the ultimate cyber-babe (although that could change when Angelina Jolie appears in the celluloid version of *Tomb Raider*).

In the spirit of the TV series, we can expect plenty of ironic humour (but always cheesy enough to avoid any accusations of postmodernism) and naff dialogue when it appears in the autumn courtesy of Fox Interactive.

A beat 'em up game with a difference.

ENEMY
YOU
TERROR FROM ABOVE, BELOW AND ALL SIDES.
IS THERE ANY WAY OUT FOR THE MAVERICK 45TH SQUADRON?
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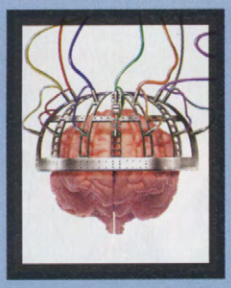


TECHHEAD

It's (almost) all Microsoft this month

WORDS Carlos Ruiz

SIDEWINDER SALVO

The king of the controller is back with three new releases

May the force be with you.

As if to prove an ongoing commitment to the PC gaming community in the light of its forthcoming X-Box console, Microsoft has announced some additions to its excellent SideWinder controller range. Forthcoming attractions include Game Voice, the Force Feedback 2 and the Strategic Commander.

By far the most exciting prospect of them all is the Game Voice. It consists of a headset (comprising stereo headphones and a microphone) and a handheld control unit, and it just might signal the start of a trend that changes the way we play multiplayer games forever.

The Game Voice will be released alongside Microsoft's own DirectX 8 API software, with the two hoping to bring real-time voice communication to the gaming masses. But it is the DirectX 8 API that deserves all the honours, as it allows voice communication to be processed over Internet/LAN-based multiplayer games with little or no speed loss.

RTS heaven?

The headset is still a quality piece of kit, though. The control unit features eight buttons, which can be used to channel your voice to either the whole team or individual team members. Other functions include headset volume, mute and so on. Game Voice will see the light of day in October, with a price of around £50. With a little bit of luck, we could be seeing games supporting voice chat released in time for the festive season.

"Game Voice might signal the start of a trend that changes the way we play multiplayer games forever"

The Force Feedback 2 is essentially an overhaul of the original Force Feedback Pro, with a key improvement being that the power supply is integrated into the joystick base. It also has a slightly smaller footprint, a sleeker look and a realistic push throttle design.

Connection and installation is painless, thanks to a handy USB plug. The onboard 16-bit processor runs at 25MHz (zoom!) and gives improved tactile feedback, catering for more than 100 different effects. Surprisingly, there are now more than 200 games that support force feedback. Expect the Force Feedback 2 to be released in October, with a price around £80.

Look, no hands.

Lastly, Strategic Commander is a left-handed device designed to complement the tried and tested keyboard and mouse combo in strategy games. It has six programmable buttons, three shift buttons and a 'three-position profile switch' that allows up to 72 key combinations, all of which should make navigation, unit control and resource management a lot simpler. The Strategic Commander will also surface in October, with a price of around £40.

FACTCANNON

Microsoft **www.microsoft.com** is preparing DirectX 8 for general release late this summer. The best additions are DirectPlay Voice, which enables real-time voice communication in multiplayer games, and an updated DirectPlay, which allows multiplayer games to take place on a much larger scale. Other improvements include the integration of DirectSound and DirectMusic for better audio performance, and support for dynamic music that changes in accordance to your in-game actions.

If you own a graphics card based on one of nVIDIA's TNT or GeForce chipsets, we recommend you update your system with the latest 5.08 Windows 95/98 drivers immediately. There's a good chance you'll see a noticeable performance increase, and there's support for full-screen anti-aliasing and S3TC (texture compression) to boot. You can get the 2.3Mb file from the download section at **www.reactorcritical.com**.

There are some sketchy details doing the rounds concerning the forthcoming NV15 chipset from nVIDIA **www.nvidia.com**. Reports suggest it will be called GeForce 2, and apparently Creative has a retail card in the works, aptly named the 3D Blaster GeForce 2. And while we're on the subject, nVIDIA is being paid a whopping £100 million by Microsoft to develop the NV25 for the X-Box console. Time to stock up on nVIDIA shares, we think.

Seagate **www.seagate.com** has been making new technological leaps in the field of data storage, and can now fit 45 billion bits of data in one square inch of disk. This world record means that, theoretically, they could manufacture a 3.5in disk with a capacity of around 60Gb (six times larger than the average hard drive). However, don't expect to see any of these for a few years yet.

WIN2K: A BUG'S LIFE?

Microsoft maintains that Windows 2000 is its most stable OS yet

Relax, everyone. Windows 2000 is as safe as houses.

A leaked memo from deep within Microsoft HQ regarding Windows 2000 proved to be interesting reading for rival companies and potential customers last month. It stated that the new operating system has more than 63,000 problems, roughly one-third of which are potential bugs.

Now, this wouldn't tie in too well with the claims that Windows 2000 provides the most reliable platform for intensive applications. Rest assured though, Microsoft has been quick to clear up any misconceptions that people may have about using it.

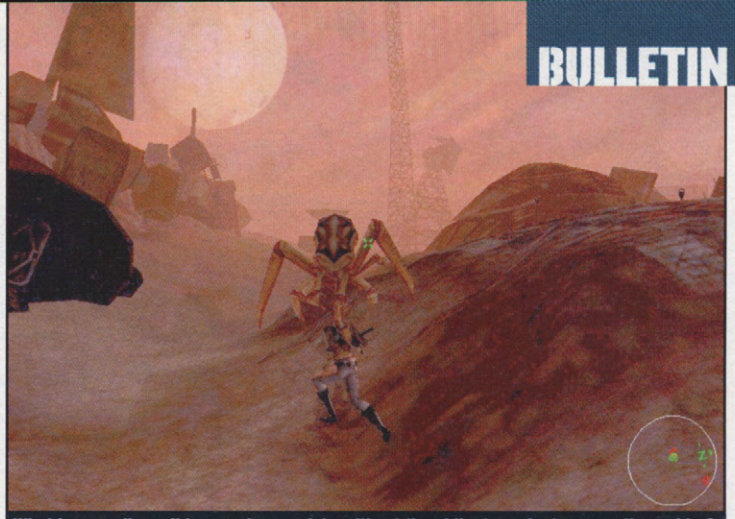
John Gray, a Windows 2000 developer, insisted that none of the 20,000 potential bugs will cause system crashes or blue-screen blunders.

"I'm absolutely positive about this," he said. "That report does not represent a bug list."

Another employee, who wished to remain anonymous, said that while there are some issues with the code, users won't suffer as a result. Apparently Microsoft's Prefix tool, which identified the problems, frequently spots unimportant glitches and inaccuracies such as misspellings.

So, it would seem that Microsoft has let itselves off the hook. Let's hope they don't pull any stunts with Windows ME (Millennium Edition) – the operating system that will be of primary interest to home users later on in the year. Unlike Windows 2000 (which is mainly business-oriented), Windows ME will be the fastest and most fully featured platform for gaming, multimedia and the Internet. See **www.windows.com** for more details.

The army will come looking for you, with the intention of wiping you out.



What barren alien wilderness is complete without the obligatory giant, man eating spider?

Parking meters? You just can't get away from the bloody things.

I think now would be a pretty good time to run.

SOLDIERING ON

Kurt Russell muscles in on the game of the film no one saw

Soldier, the Kurt Russell film that depicted a future of elite warrior armies, is to be made into a 3D third-person action shooter. You'll be able to choose from two characters, Todd (Russell), a powerful first-generation super soldier, or Sandra, a nimble rebel settler. The story revolves around the abandonment of Todd by the army, who believe that he has become obsolete, due to the development of superior second-generation soldiers. When these soldiers return to the waste planet he's been deserted on, he must fend them off and find a way home, helping a rebel settlement along the way.

As usual, there will be a multitude of weaponry to aid you in your struggle for survival, including assault rifles, rocket launchers and flamethrowers. You'll also be able to pick up various power-ups, which can increase your weapons' power and range or provide your character with extra health, armour and even invisibility.

Soldier will be set over 15 levels, and each one will have its own objective. These will include hostage rescues, the defence of settlements and reconnaissance missions. Throughout the levels, Todd or Sandra will have to defend themselves against attacks from alien creatures, vicious and scary dogs and first and second-generation soldiers.

The celluloid version of this title was hardly a resounding success at the box office, in fact, it went straight to video, so it will take some clever marketing and excellent gameplay for *Soldier* to attract a large following. With a release scheduled for August, there's still a little time for developer Sinister Games to make sure *Soldier* is a top notch third-person action game, one which can succeed on its own merits, rather than relying on its cinematic predecessor as a selling point.

DOGFIGHT

DOGMEAT

YOUR EQUIPMENT IS OBSOLETE AND THE BLACK GUARD ARE ON YOUR TAIL.
ATTACK IS YOUR ONLY DEFENCE.

www.starlancer.co.uk

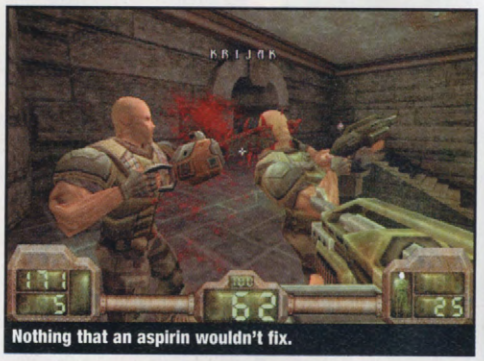
This scene will probably be even gorier when it's finished.

"Can't we just talk about this?"

It looks like *Quake* brown is in again this season.

A multiplayer demo should be available soon.

Fear, pain, psychotic glee, who says games aren't emotional?


Nothing that an aspirin wouldn't fix.

MARTIAN GORE

Games? Violent? Nah!

Offering three different episodes taking you from medieval Earth to an alien homeworld, together with intelligent NPCs, the first game from US developer 4D Rulers sounds more like Ion Storm's *Daikatana* than *Daikatana*. With a 3D engine all of its own however, it looks and sounds a whole lot better, offering a wealth of new graphical features that could well make it one of this year's surprise hits.

With a title that doesn't mess about, *Gore* already lives up to its name. If you care to look at the accompanying screenshots, you'll see chainsaws cutting through craniums and pained expressions across victim's faces. The intention, apart from getting itself banned before it even appears, is to give each character a look depending on the weapon currently in use. Select the scary-looking Meatsaw for instance and your character will sport the face of a madman. Potential allies will run for cover, enemies will try to keep you out of swiping range and if you manage to plunge your oversized hedge-trimmer into their heads, you'll catch a glimpse of pure terror before the whole lot flies off in a bloody mess of brain and bone.

In terms of the single-player game we are promised the option of interacting with all of the game's characters, be it with words or weapons. Enemies will work together and will be able to climb ladders, flick switches and roam the unfamiliar maps much the same as the player will.

Unsurprisingly, especially after the recent furore over *Soldier Of Fortune*, no publisher has yet been announced. When we do hear of one we'll let you know.

What game would be complete without an ED-209 lookalike?

IMMORTAL COMBAT

In development from Frog City Software (creator of *Imperialism I* and *II*) and sounding like an isometric clone of Lionhead's *Black & White*, is *Pantheon*.

It's a real-time strategy role-playing game, where as one of 12 Greek gods, you must develop your character and nurture your followers in order to expand your power base. Allowing you to direct powerful spells, command scores of mortals and more than 40 mythical beasts, such as centaurs, harpies and hydra, as well as build settlements. *Pantheon* should prove a more traditional game than *Black & White*, offering plenty of point-and-click pitched battles that can be paused to allow for more strategic play.

Details are thin on the ground at the moment but, by the look of its detailed graphics and interface, *Pantheon* should appeal as much to fans of *Caesar III* and *Pharaoh* as it will to *Populous* aficionados. We're going to have to wait almost a year until the game is finished, but you can expect more screenshots and details until Mattel Interactive releases the title.

As well as traditional Greek armies, you can direct some scary-looking creatures from Greek mythology.

We've no idea, best to ask us in a year's time.

Someone's been raising hell.

WHOEVER SAID 22ND CENTURY SPACE COMBAT WAS FAIR?

OUT OF DESPERATION, COURAGE IS BORN

AVAILABLE APRIL 28, 2000

www.starlancer.co.uk

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FROM ERIN AND CHRIS ROBERTS, CREATORS OF THE WING COMMANDER AND PRIVATEER SERIES

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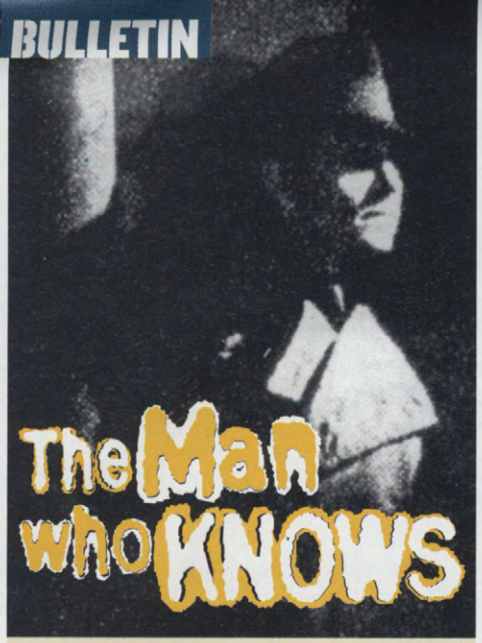


MURDER AND MONKEYS

In what is being hailed as a victory for common sense, the **Paducah Game Lawsuit** has been roundly dismissed. As regular readers of this column may remember, the case was taken up against the entertainment industry by the parents of children murdered by 14-year-old **Michael Carneal**, who claimed that media violence inspired the boy to fire shots at his fellow Kentucky high school students. The shooting was also recently highlighted on the appallingly one-sided **Channel Four** documentary, **Dispatches**, in which professional redneck, **Colonel David Grossman**, was yet again wheeled out to offer his blinkered views. In the wonderful and frightening world of Col Grossman, games such as ***Doom*** and ***Quake*** teach youngsters to kill, giving them, as he puts it, "the will and the skill." The judge clearly didn't agree, throwing the claim out of court, much to the relief of the games industry. On hearing the verdict, **Todd Hollenshead**, CEO of Texas-based developer **id**, announced: "I just received outstanding news for not only id, but for the videogame industry as well. In a decision that has just been made available, id has prevailed in the Paducah Lawsuit on all points. Judge Johnstone has dismissed the case on all grounds, validating what we said all along – the case lacked a shred of merit."

On a lighter note, the **Sea-Monkey** phenomenon of the '60s and '70s is to be revisited in the form of a PC simulation. **Creature Labs**, specialists in artificial life forms, has announced a deal with the **Transcience Corporation** that will see the development of ***The Sea-Monkey Marina***. Using technology from the ***Creatures*** series, the game will mark the 40th anniversary of the dehydrated packets of brine shrimp which garnered a cult following. I, for one, bought a packet and spent an entire '70s summer checking the progress of a jar of water as absolutely nothing happened, the alleged monkeys singularly failing to appear. To this day it still rankles, and to be honest no half-arsed PC simulation is ever going to make up for those lost boy-hours spent tending a pickled egg jar. That said, Creature Labs publishing director, **Howard Newmark,** seems quite excited about it, beaming: "We have always felt that a Sea-Monkey title based on our CyberLife technology would be a great success." Further self-congratulatory fawning came from **Harold von Braunhut**, CEO of Transcience Corp, who confidently predicted: "The combination of computer-based artificial life technology and the Sea-Monkey brand is certain to create a fantastic experience for young and old alike."

That's all very well, but it's going to get no help from these quarters until I see my money back, and a full jar of living, breathing, cart-wheeling monkeys.

And a free copy of the game.

Destroy planets, moons and wormholes, as well as your enemies.

SPACE EMPIRES STRIKES BACK

The fourth installment of the *Space Empires* series is nearly upon us

As far as shareware games go, the *Space Empires* series has been one of the best, with a loyal following stretching as far back as the beginning of the shareware days of *Wolfenstein 3D* and *Doom*.

Now that *Space Empires IV* is almost here, there's a good chance it could take over from where *Master Of Orion II* left off and maybe even make it into the limelight of your local games emporium.

Against *Space Empires IV* we'll soon have SSG's *Reach For The Stars* and Empire's *Stars! Supernova*, but as fans of the empire-building genre will know, you can never have enough of a good thing, especially with publishers running scared when it comes to games with niche appeal.

Like its predecessors, *Space Empires IV* is a turn-based strategy game of galactic domination, where players, human or otherwise, take it in turns to colonise, build, trade and spy their way across the galaxy. In terms of depth, there will be more than 500 technologies to research, with 300 facilities to build, from ships to Death Star-like space stations. Players will also be able to customise their vehicles and, rather than choose from one of X number of races, budding space emperors can choose from a number of traits; from how well your citizens function in certain environments to how well disposed they are to other races.

"Players, human or otherwise, take it in turns to colonise, build, trade and spy their way across the galaxy"

There are 500 technologies to research – that's quite a lot.

No release date has been announced as yet (the developers are hoping for the backing of a major publisher), but if you need any encouragement, you can download the full free version of *Space Empires III* from **www.crl.com/~malfador**.

OUR MOST PLAYED

Not much change in Our Most Wanted list this month so just to spice things up a bit, we thought we'd give you a run-down on the most played games in the *PC ZONE* office over the last few weeks. These aren't the games we're playing at home, just the ones we fire up for those daily lunch time sessions and late afternoon blasts when all we want to do is go home and play happy families – which is probably why *Quake III Arena* is top of the list.

1	**Quake III Arena**	Fragmeister: Dave Woods
2	**Counter-Strike for Half-Life**	Top Terrorist: Richie Shoemaker
3	**Unreal Tournament**	He's Unreal: Dave Woods
4	**Shogun: Total War**	Clan Leader: Richie Shoemaker
5	**Player Manager Online (beta)**	Manager Of The Month: Richie Shoemaker
6	**Age Of Empires II: The Age Of Kings**	Queen: Helen Cribb
7	**Sudden Strike (demo)**	General: Mark Hill
8	**Quake III Fortress**	Captain: Martin Korda
9	**Need For Speed: Porsche Challenge**	Top Gear: Steve Hill
10	**FIFA 2000**	Goals For: Steve Hill

This is Cain. He's mad.

MONOLITH GO MAD

It's been a long time – almost a year – since we've seen anything on Monolith's *Sanity*, so we thought we'd check out how things were coming along.

Not to be confused with Codemasters' driving game *Insane*, *Sanity* is an isometric action game that uses Monolith's own old-but-good LithTech engine – last seen in *Blood II*. Signed up by Fox Interactive, *Sanity* could be likened to a futuristic version of *Gauntlet*, with players taking on the persona of a psionic citizen called Cain, whose job it is to find out the source of a telepathic craze that is spreading through humanity. The paradox is that the psionics are persecuted by the 'powers that be' because of their tendency to go bonkers and kill everyone with their own powers. The problem here is that gamers playing Cain, who has a tenuous grasp of his own powers at the best of times, could well go doo-lally before they find out the truth.

With eight psionic 'totems' to learn from, each with a range of spells to cast, *Sanity* promises some, literally, mad fast-paced action all wrapped up in a decent storyline, which should at least provide a mild diversion when the game is released in the summer.

"The voices in my head made me do it."

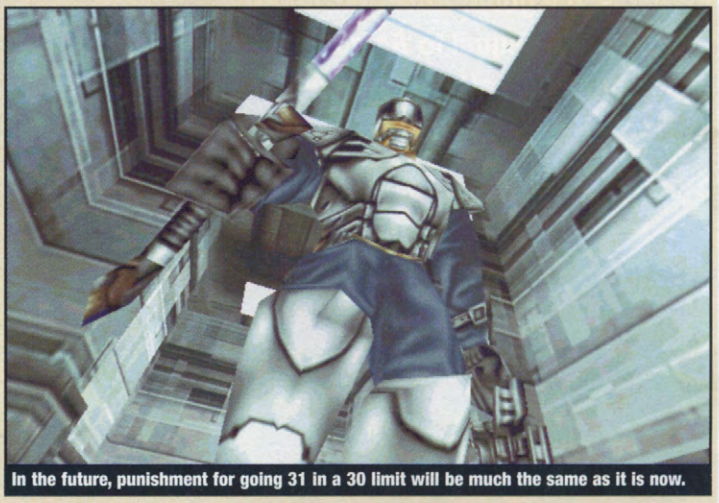
See what we mean about *Gauntlet*?

TICKERTAPE

STARTS++ Raven, developer of the recent *Soldier Of Fortune*, is hoping enough of you will buy the game to allow development to start on a sequel. If it happens, it will almost certainly use the *Quake III Arena* engine. **++STOP++** Cryo Interactive is hoping to double its output of decent games by starting work on *Devil Inside 2*. At the moment the game is just in the planning stage. You can read our review of the first *Devil Inside* on page 76. **++STOP++** If you cast your minds back to issue 88, you'll remember we mentioned that the impressive-looking third-person action *Blade* had been canned. Well we've been told to inform you that it's 'on hold', which is much the same thing really. **++STOP++** Out in the autumn from Eidos is *Three Kingdoms: Fate Of The Dragon*, a non-linear isometric strategy game that promises the same historical attention to detail as *Shogun: Total War*, only based in China. We'll have screenshots for you next issue. **++STOP++** *Babylon 5* fans should keep their fingers crossed, as we hear suited types are in discussion to resurrect the twice-canned space sim once more. More news as soon as we hear it. **++ENDS**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

A round-up of the games that appear to have missed their scheduled release dates



In the future, punishment for going 31 in a 30 limit will be much the same as it is now.

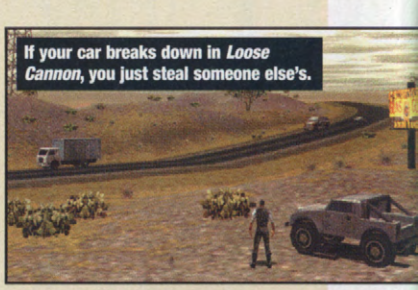
ANACHRONOX (Ion Storm)

LAST SEEN *PC ZONE* #86
ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE October 1999

Perhaps there's just something about Ion Storm and late releases. With the delay of *Daikatana* continuing, it looks as if we're in for another protracted wait, this time for the much-vaunted action RPG *Anachronox*. Still in its development stages, its new release date is September, but the hold-up could well be worth it. After speaking with the people at Eidos, we learned the game is going to get some major exposure at E3, and will look even more impressive than what we've seen so far. We were also informed that the publisher is concentrating on releasing both *Daikatana* and *Deus Ex* before unveiling the finished version of *Anachronox*. Just like those proverbial London buses, you wait years for one and then three come along at once. Typical...

LOOSE CANNON (Digital Anvil)

LAST SEEN *PC ZONE* #86
ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Spring 2000



If your car breaks down in *Loose Cannon*, you just steal someone else's.

Christmas 2000 is now the new expected release date for Digital Anvil's futuristic action adventure game. Just like *Anachronox*, *Loose Cannon* is still in the development stage, but is set to have plenty of exposure at E3. Going by the screenshots we've seen, this mission-based game is shaping up to be pretty impressive, melding tactical elements with fast-paced action. Great things are expected from Chris Roberts' new production company, and it's more than possible that any delays are just examples of Roberts' notorious perfectionism. If *Loose Cannon* is anything to go by, don't be surprised if you see a few other DA games in this section over the coming months.

PRIVATE WARS (TS Group Entertainment)

LAST SEEN *PC ZONE* #86
ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE Jan/Feb 2000

Army in human cloning shocker!

Currently without a publisher, *Private Wars* is aiming for a summer release. A demo containing one, perhaps two missions is being planned for general distribution sometime in early May, so you'll soon be able to experience this first-person, squad-based combat shooter first hand. The game is set to feature Matrox's Environment Mapped Bump Mapping technology, which will make the in-game graphics look ultra realistic. Let's just hope a publisher is found soon, because *Private Wars* looks like it's going to be a great deal of fun.

HOTSHOTS

Here it is, the goblin-infested, beardy-weirdy, semi-sequel to *Baldur's Gate*, and it's looking rather gorgeous...

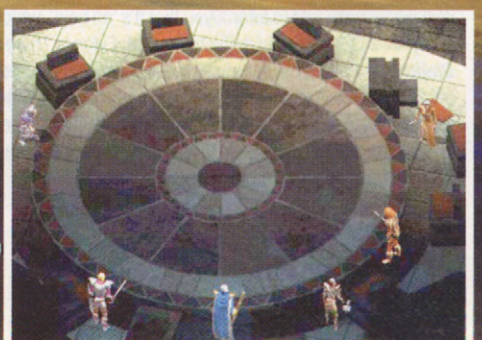
ICEWIND DALE

Interplay • Out summer 2000

As the days lengthen and the temperature rises, we can look forward to the eventual release of *Icewind Dale*, Black Isle's follow-up, of sorts, to last year's *Baldur's Gate*. And the good news is that development of the game is right on track.

Darren Monahan, associate producer at Black Isle, says: "The development team is literally pouring in content on a nightly basis. We have also received our first batches of new sound effects and are anxiously anticipating the music. Programming-wise, we have finished up all the implementation of our spells and are fixing bugs as they come up. We are also working hard on the scripts for all the monsters and people, and have put in a bunch of new features, big and small."

Set in the same AD&D *Forgotten Realms* universe as *Baldur's Gate*, *Icewind Dale* is more of a dungeon-based adventure than its expansive older cousin, with plenty of new monsters and objects to use. Black Isle promises "a boatload of extra spells" and, more importantly, 3D hardware-accelerated creatures and spell effects on a scale that will (excuse the pun) dwarf your party of adventurers. Hopefully, we'll get back in contact with Black Isle soon and bring you a full preview.



Fred the Paladin- Damage Taken (15)
PAUSED

Icewind Bob- Bless
Palana- Bless

PC ZONE READER AWARDS 2000

It was the Industry event of the year with developers, publishers and all manner of freeloaders, gearing themselves up with the hope of picking up one of the coveted silver Zs. Who won? Read on to find out...

Once again we give you, the people who keep the industry alive, the chance to have your say on the games that really matter. The *PC ZONE* Reader Awards are the most important because it's you, who decides the winners. No old-boy network stuff in this magazine. After we'd collected and counted the hundreds of sackloads of entries we scurried off to new super-club Fabric, where a certain Mark Lamarr joined us for the celebrations. You've probably already taken a peek at the victors, the flops, the dark horses and the also-rans, but read ahead to find out just how close it was.

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BEST SPORTS GAME

FIFA 2000

It's hardly surprising that the winner of the Best Sports Game category is a football game, what with it being the country's national sport and its constant presence on our TV screens. However, what was interesting was that *FIFA 2000*, and not the latest title of the record selling *Championship Manager* series, *Season 99/00*, took the honours.

↑ Top: EA's Nick Grange picks up his paperweight for *FIFA 2000* (EA Sports/EA).

Best Sports Game was the third most closely contested category of this year's awards, after the Game Of The Year and Best Strategy Game divisions. *FIFA 2000* shaded it by a mere 33 votes.

Currently sitting proudly at the summit of the Sports Game category in our Top 100, *FIFA 2000* is a truly exceptional football sim. Following on from the near perfect *FIFA 99*, it offers all the great options, features and action of its predecessor and much, much more. The life-like graphics, TV style presentation and, of course, the accurate representation of the sport itself, make it a benchmark, not only for other football games, but for sport simulations in general. New features include the ability to shield the ball and arrows beneath the players to show the effectiveness of your next pass. There's also a short cut during set pieces, because three buttons on your gamepad now coincide with passes to certain players, making the execution of spectacular training ground tricks more of a possibility in a competitive game. A host of real life competitions are available, including the World Cup, Champions League and the UEFA Cup. In short, *FIFA 2000* has everything a football fan could ever want and is well deserving of its accolade of Best Sports Game.

Championship Manager – Season 99/00 **(Sports Interactive/Eidos)**

NBA Live 2000 **(EA Sports/EA)**

NHL 2000 **(EA Sports/EA)**

BEST ACTION/ADVENTURE GAME

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

It's a sad year as far as we're concerned when we have to dispose of the award for traditional adventures, but you can't vote for something that isn't there. The action/adventure genre, on the other hand, has grown massively in recent years and looks set to take over from the traditional point-and-click yarns of old. While *Tomb Raider* is undoubtedly the best-known game, and the one that got the whole thing going, you voted Lara into obscurity, behind both *Resident Evil 2* and *The Nomad Soul*, which came second and third respectively. The winner, though, is the fantastic *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine*, a game that bears more than a passing resemblance to *Tomb Raider*. Because of this, it's nice to see you've been able to see beyond the similarities and into *Indy's* superiority. All the feedback we have received over the last few months has put *The Infernal Machine* in front of every other puzzle/platformer, so it comes as no surprise it has walked away with the main prize. Having such a recognisable lead character and familiar stirring music has clearly done nothing to harm its popularity, but we mustn't forget that there's also one hell of a good game behind it all. Easy on the platform elements and strong on plot, puzzles, massively open locations and brilliantly designed levels, *Indy* is the best effort from LucasArts for a long time. If you've been put off playing it by those who have dismissed it as a *TR*-clone you should definitely give it a try. And, if you're a fan of the adventure genre of old you might find this is the closest thing you're going to find in the shops until *Simon The Sorcerer 3D* arrives.

Top: Activision's Guy Cunis gets busy after receiving the award for *Indy* (LucasArts).

Resident Evil 2 (Capcom/Virgin).

The Nomad Soul (Quantic Dream/Eidos).

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation (Core/Eidos).

BEST SPACE/MILITARY SIMULATION

FREESPACE 2

Winner of our recent Supertest on space combat sims, *FreeSpace 2* is the runaway victor in the best Space\Military Simulation category. It received almost double the votes of second placed *Flight Simulator 2000*, and took almost 50 per cent of all the votes cast in this group. And rightly so, we say, because it's a fantastic futuristic space sim that has it all. Bearing in mind what a niche market space flight sims inhabit, it's all the more commendable that it fended off the likes of *FS2000*, *MiG Alley* and *Flight Unlimited III* with such ease. *FreeSpace 2* has a complex, intriguing and immersive story line, high-octane combat, massive capital ships and large-scale battles, all of which are unmatched by any other game in the genre. That's not forgetting the great graphics and sound, all of which add up to one superb and exciting gaming experience.

FreeSpace 2 combines realism and complexity with enjoyable action and playability. This is what you believe makes the game stand out from the crowd of accurate if sometimes uninspiring titles on the market. It's not a game which can be immediately mastered, but is rather one which compels you to learn its intricacies, in order to progress to the later missions. Your ship's HUD is well set out, the weapons plentiful and impressive. Manoeuvring your craft effectively takes time to master, while trying to get a missile lock is an adrenaline rush in itself. *FreeSpace 2* richly deserves this award, and with a third instalment in the pipeline, there's plenty to look forward to in the field of Space\Military Simulations.

Top: Nana Penemo of Interplay receives the award for *FreeSpace 2* (Volition/Interplay).

Flight Simulator 2000 (Microsoft Games/Microsoft).

MiG Alley (Rowan/Empire).

Flight Unlimited III (Looking Glass/EA).

BEST DRIVING GAME

MIDTOWN MADNESS

In one of the most clear-cut victories of the evening, *Midtown Madness* cruised into pole position in the Best Driving Game category. It received more than double the votes of the second placed *Driver*, while *Mobil 1 Rally Championship* and *TOCA 2*'s challenges proved about as staunch as two Reliant Robins competing in an F1 race. In our opinion, you guys and gals got it spot on with your votes, because *Midtown Madness* is unrivalled in terms of pure driving mayhem. Although *Driver* is a solid game, it fails to provide the adrenaline rush produced by Microsoft's racer, while *Rally Championship* and *TOCA 2*, undoubtedly more accurate than *Midtown Madness*, also come off second best when it comes to pure racing entertainment.

Top: Brian Massey of Microsoft with the *Midtown Madness* award (Angel Studios/Microsoft).

Midtown Madness was one of last year's finest games. It boasts an excellent single-player mode and some incredible multiplayer options, which blow the opposition away, in particular the Cops and Robbers races. You must join one of two sides (cops or robbers), and compete against the other in a race to pick up gold and return it to your base. It's a bit like Capture the Flag in FPSs, only this time you're in a car and you ram your opponents instead of shooting them. The excitement is increased further still by huge pile-ups, and barrel rolls, which are all depicted with stunning high-res graphics. You can also totally trash your car, which makes good driving ability just as important as being able to knock your opponents out of the way. In all, *Midtown Madness* is the best game if you want fun behind the wheel, and although it's not the most realistic game in the category, it's beaten the rest.

Driver (Reflections/GT Interactive)

TOCA 2 (Codemasters)

Mobil 1 Rally Championship (Magnetic Fields/EA).

BEST ROLE-PLAYING GAME

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

After the surprise success of *Baldur's Gate* early last year, RPGs have enjoyed a new lease of life, with exciting new titles constantly being announced. The winner by an overwhelming margin, however, isn't a traditional role-playing game but the fantastic first-person sci-horror *System Shock 2*. *Baldur's Gate* came a distant second, probably because most of you have very short memories, but there's no denying that *SS2* is an absolute masterpiece. In fact, it is probably the best single-player game to have come out on the PC since *Half-Life*. We've voted it the scariest game of recent years in this month's Supertest (see page 90), but that is just one of the many facets *SS2* excels at. Featuring a brilliant character development system that allows you to specialise in different areas such as weapons, psionic powers, hacking and engineering, it creates an intense nightmarish atmosphere aboard a deserted spacecraft which bears the signs of a terrible bloodbath. It's a chilling experience, wandering around empty corridors, listening to strange sounds, being hunted by zombies and searching for the answers to what happened before you got there. Naturally, a major factor in its monopoly of votes is that it has a much wider appeal than the more traditional RPGs, getting votes from people who would only normally play FPSs.

Top: Simi Belo of EA revels in the success of *System Shock 2* (Looking Glass/EA).

Way behind in the voting were the two online games *EverQuest* and *Ultima Online*, hinting that UK gamers are not quite ready to spend all their time living alternative lives on the Net, not to mention spending all their money on the monthly bills.

Baldur's Gate (Black Isle/Interplay).

Ultima Online: The Second Age (Origin/EA).

EverQuest (Verant/Sony).

GAMEPLAY AWARD FOR BEST MULTIPLAYER GAME

COUNTER-STRIKE

gameplay
THE GATEWAY TO GAMES

Old favourites *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* have been battling away in a bid for supremacy. But guess what? A free mod for *Half-Life* is now officially the biggest online game in the world. It's brilliant and it deservedly walked away with the gameplay award for best multiplayer game. The latest version is on our CD, and if you haven't checked it out yet we'd seriously suggest putting the mag down and giving it a go.

Gameplay were kind enough to sponsor our awards bash and we reckon that the fact that it has recognised *Counter-Strike* is testament to its commitment to the best online gaming experience you can get.

Acording to its adverts, gameplay is Europe's gateway to everything to do with games. Whatever your gaming preference, gameplay has something for everyone; from hardcore *Quake*sters to your noncy backgammon players. Everyone is loved in equal measure.

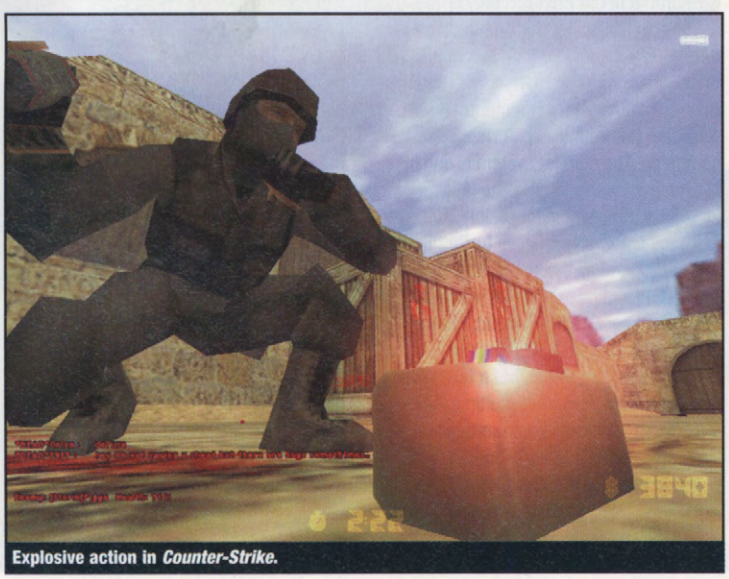
You can pass through gameplay's jewel-encrusted gateway to games in a variety of fun-flavoured ways. If you flick through the similarly bejewelled pages of *PC ZONE* you'll find a lovely eight-page catalogue with all the latest PC games displayed for your purchasing pleasure. You'll also find the gameplay website at **www.gameplay.com**. If you use your PC to check it out you'll find there's a whole lot more it does than just sell games: it offers games for those new-fangled WAP-compatible mobile phone, hosts an interactive TV channel called Open and, as well as news and reviews on its website, you can play all the latest games online with a minimum of fuss.

Wireplay is the fastest online games service in the world and supports more games than you could possibly count (well, over 100 anyway). By downloading the Wireplay software – it only takes five minutes – you can play all your multiplayer favourites including *Quake III Arena*, *Half-Life*, *Age Of Empires II* and *Unreal Tournament*. Don't worry if you're new to the whole concept of killing virtual friends by remote control either, because there's a massive community of players to talk to, so it's easy to find someone that's as experienced, or not, as you.

By far the most popular game though is this year's winner. At the last count more than a thousand people from around Europe play *Counter-Strike* every night on Wireplay, which must count as popular in anybody's book.

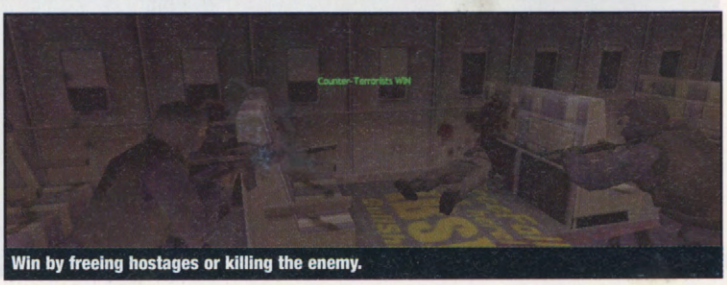
The developer of *Counter-Strike*, Barking Dog Studios, as testament to its dedication, has been striving to update the game on a monthly basis and has recently been elevated to the status of a full-blown game developer, currently also working on *Homeworld: Cataclysm*. Rightly so, we say, as it's people like the Barking Dog boys that are keeping the games scene alive.

Top: The developers of *Counter-Strike* were too busy finishing exams to get their award, so we got Lisa Humphries from Sierra instead.



Explosive action in *Counter-Strike*.

Wholesale hostage slaughter.



Win by freeing hostages or killing the enemy.

BEST FIRST-PERSON ACTION GAME

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

A watershed year for the ever-popular first-person action genre, 1999 saw the release of a number of games that in equal ways will be looked back at as redefining what was in danger of becoming a stale and tired breed of games. One group of games, dubbed as tactical shooters (*Rainbow Six* and *Hidden & Dangerous*) unfortunately failed to gain any significant votes, but alongside the games that did, their future is all but secured, and we wouldn't be surprised if next year, games such as *Team Fortress 2* and *Star Trek Voyager*, with their team-based play, dominate the category.

The award this year was very much a two-horse race, with *Half-Life* and *Team Fortress Classic* losing out in the end to the eventual winner, *Unreal Tournament*. For much of the year however, *Half-Life* was very much the most popular game, especially online, and with the *Opposing Force* expansion disk released at the end of the year, it still wins out in terms of its immersive qualities and deep, frequently unsettling, balance of play.

However, it was *UT* that quickly became your favourite multiplayer-orientated shooter and by the number of votes cast for *Quake III Arena*, the gulf between the two is perhaps greater than we first thought. Although inferior graphically, *UT* is the daddy, offering more built-in gameplay variations, both for the multiplayer fan and the stranded single-player fanatic than any previous games.

If you haven't bought it yet, then make sure you do. You won't find a better out-of-the-box deathmatch experience anywhere else.

Top: Does Mark fancy Infrogrames' Matt Broughton? *Unreal Tournament* (Epic/GT Interactive).

Half-Life: GOTYE (Valve/Havas).

Quake III Arena (id Software/Activision).

Aliens Vs Predator (Rebellion/Fox Interactive).

BEST STRATEGY GAME

AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS

It couldn't have been much closer in the Best Strategy Game category. Pulling off a narrow victory, by a mere 26 votes, *Age Of Empires II* clinched first place from *Homeworld*. *C&C: Tiberian Sun* and *Dungeon Keeper II* were well beaten and never looked to be in the running. Although pioneering, with its fully 3D space-based engine, *Homeworld* seems to have missed out in terms of accessibility and pure gameplay to *AoEII*. It's clear to see from your votes that the *C&C* series has had its day, and even though *DKII* offers something slightly different from the other three, war based RTS games are still the most popular in the genre.

Age Of Empires II is a title which needs very little introduction. Sitting at the summit of our Best Strategy Game section in the Top 100 for months on end (until *Shogun* knocked it off last month), it offers great real-time battles with solid resource management elements. *AoEII* grows on you with every skirmish and campaign. The combat system is one of the most involving to date, the interface is incredibly simple and accessible, while the resource management goes further than any other game in the genre. Rather than harvesting just one resource, you must take charge of gathering wood, mining precious metals, hunting deer and catching fish, to mention but a few. With five campaigns, a superb multiplayer option and a large range of units and buildings available, there's enough here to occupy you for months on end. It's features such as these which raise *AoEII* above the competition, and warrant it its place as the Best Strategy Game.

Top: Microsoft's Brian Massey. *Age Of Empires II: The Age Of Kings* (Ensemble/Microsoft).

Homeworld (Relic/Havas).

C&C: Tiberian Sun (Westwood/EA).

Dungeon Keeper II (Bullfrog/EA).

PC ZONE SPECIAL AWARD

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

The *PC ZONE* Special Award is voted for by us, to reflect a game that we think has been overlooked, and although it may have just missed out on the Sports category award, we think that after two versions in one year *Championship Manager* deserves to be in a category all of its own. People keep voting for it in the shops, making it one of the best selling PC games in the UK ever, but its detractors (the blind fools) can't understand why a game made up of stats and background photographs can produce such passions. They accuse each version of being just slightly different from the last, without seeing that the series is an evolutionary chain rather than a collection of games. More importantly, what they fail to grasp is that *CM* is, in its own strange way, a role-playing game above everything else.

It's hard to pinpoint why it excels beyond all the other football management sims, dwarfing them into insignificance. The most obvious reference is the accuracy and comprehensive array of stats, a guide to every player in the world that could be used by any real manager or scout. But its magic is in constructing a living, breathing world out of the names and numbers, a world you can lose yourself in, almost in the same way that you do in online games such as *Ultima Online* and *EverQuest*, but without the need of other human players, or even graphics.

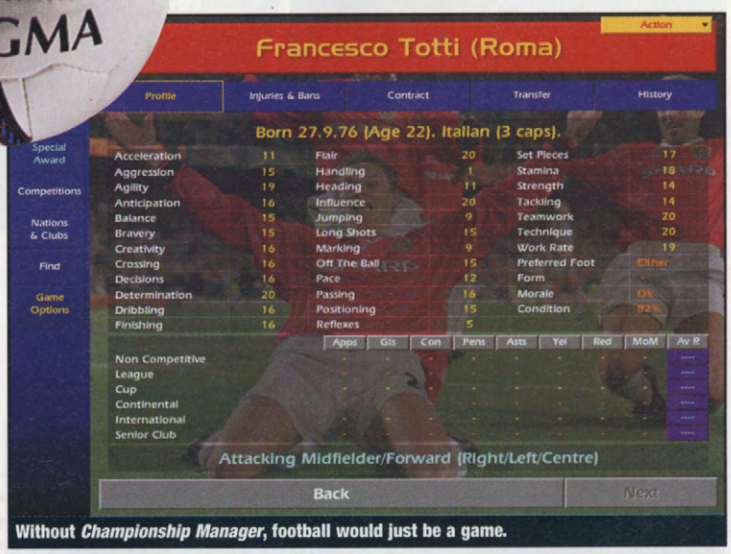
Other games may be more intense, they may rush the adrenalin with waves of action, they may involve you with a well-told story, they may absorb you with a thought-provoking puzzle, but none captures the imagination of those who *get* it quite like *CM* does. It's an unhealthy addiction that has been known to destroy relationships and harm careers. It makes believers out of footballing atheists and keeps life-long fans awake until unnatural hours. It is, no matter what numbers may be tagged on to its title, a perpetual classic.

Of course, there are other games that might have merited a special award, *Half-Life* being the prime example. Some might consider it a travesty of justice that it has never won a *PC ZONE* award, but it is purely a victim of circumstance and bad timing. Had *HL* been released just before our last awards, it would surely have walked off with all the trophies. As it happened, it came out just after the voting had closed, bursting onto the gaming scene like a breathtaking whirlwind. The only reason it hasn't won this time round is because it is so firmly established, so widely recognised as the best overall game ever produced, that you have looked to reward more recent titles, fresher in everyone's memories. Valve *has* won the Developer of the Year award, however, which confirms the respect we all have for their work and dedication to gaming.

WINNER

Top: Eva Whitlow from Eidos is pleased about the *CM 99/00* win.

If only all spreadsheets looked this good.



Without *Championship Manager*, football would just be a game.

Homeworld proves that 3D strategy can be both original and playable.

On a speedy LAN, there's no better lunchtime blast than *Quake III Arena*.

Hidden & Dangerous just missed out to the addictive *Championship Manager*.

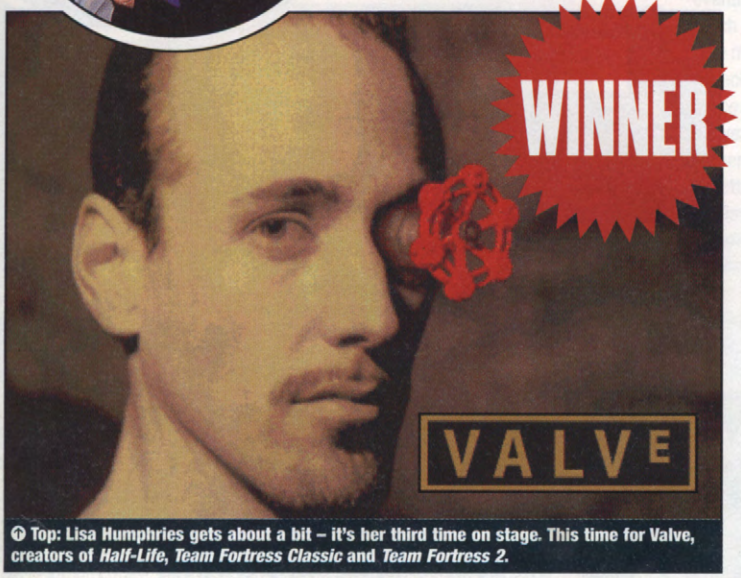
DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR

VALVE

Although we've seen a number of new development teams release some corking games over the last year, it has been the old guard that has been in the forefront of people's minds. LucasArts and Westwood, both below par compared to previous years, managed to pick up a fair few votes, with id Software earning a well deserved runner-up place with what will no doubt grow into one of the most supported games on the Net, *Quake III Arena*.

But it was US developer Valve Software who picked up the most votes, with more than three times as many votes as id and more than six times the number cast for both LucasArts and Westwood. Strictly speaking though, Valve only released one game in 1999, that being the multiplayer add-on for their own *Half-Life: Team Fortress Classic*. Released free-of-charge last summer, *TFC* grew to become one of the Net's most played games, offering unrivalled team-based play with eight different characters to play, each with varying weapons and abilities. If nothing else, it just goes to show how well revered *Half-Life* actually is.

Currently Valve is working on *Team Fortress 2*, which, all being well, should appear by the end of the year, just in time for the Seattle-based team to scoop next year's award. Mods and total conversions are still appearing, almost daily and with the latest, *Counter-Strike* overtaking *TFC* as the world's most-played mod, the future of *Half-Life* is looking as promising as it was a year ago. Hopefully one day soon *Half-Life 2* will be announced and Valve's confirmation as The World's Best Developer will be complete.



Top: Lisa Humphries gets about a bit – it's her third time on stage. This time for Valve, creators of *Half-Life*, *Team Fortress Classic* and *Team Fortress 2*.

Old boys id Software, with the finest 3D engine in existence.

If it's *Star Wars*, it must be LucasArts.

Westwood – Godfather of RTS

PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR

HAVAS INTERACTIVE

In a year that has seen much consolidation on the business side of the gaming industry, the nominations for Publisher of the Year have been pretty thin on the ground. In recent years we've seen MicroProse swallowed by Hasbro Interactive and Gremlin fall to Infogrames. In 1999 the trend continued with Virgin, Interplay and Titus all forming a bizarre love triangle that even we find hard to fathom.

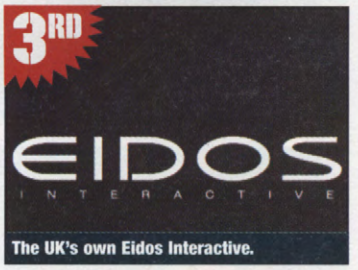
In comparison the mighty Electronic Arts has remained rock solid. Football management games aside, its sports titles are second to none and with studios such as Jane's Combat Simulations, Bullfrog and Westwood kipping under its corporate roof, it came as quite a surprise that it didn't secure a few more votes. The same is true of star-studded past winners Eidos; with Lara Croft, David Bowie and Michael Owen all contributing to the UK publishers' impressive line-up.

Not quite so sturdy in the boardroom however were GT Interactive. Having been bought earlier this year by Infogrames, GT still managed to get *Unreal Tournament* out and without a doubt the impressive 3D shooter did more to make this year's runner-up than any other.

But it was Sierra (now Havas) who swept the board, securing four times as many votes as EA or Eidos and double that of GT. Would it have something to do with *Half-Life* we wonder? Voted Game of the Year the world over and seemingly unable to fall from the charts even after 18 months of release, *Half-Life* is still regarded as the PC's best game ever and a title Sierra bosses must bow down to every night.

Top: Mark begs for Lisa Humphries from Havas Interactive – owners of Sierra.

Goodbye GT Interactive, hello Infogrames.



The UK's own Eidos Interactive.

Electronic Arts, the biggest games company in the world.

GAME OF THE YEAR

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

The competition for Game of the Year couldn't have been much closer if it had tried, with a measly 13 votes separating first from second. An unlucky amount to lose by, 13 was the number of votes which scuppered *Half-Life: GOTYE*'s chances of gaining the ultimate prize in the *PC ZONE* Reader Awards 2000.

The contest was always going to be close, and we lost count of the amount of times the top two swapped places while the votes were being added up. Finally, however, the victor emerged as the stunning FPS *Unreal Tournament*. The two other leviathans which made it to the short list, were RPG of the year *System Shock 2* and the winner of our Special *PC ZONE* Award, *Championship Manager: Season 99/00*. All four deserve their place in this elite group, and any one of them would have made a worthy champion.

Unreal Tournament is a game which makes you sit up and take notice. It's rare to find a title of such quality, one which takes its genre to new heights and pushes back its boundaries to offer a gaming experience unlike any other. In an attempt to move away from the tired alien orientated themes of most RTS games, *UT* provides huge deathmatches against both human and immensely intelligent bots instead. The result is the finest FPS gameplay ever to grace the PC. The fact that its nearest rival *Quake III* didn't even get a look in, just goes to show how fresh *Unreal Tournament* is. Add to this Capture the Flag, Domination, Assault and Last Man Standing modes of play, and you have the most compelling and addictive game around. The option to play in teams and issue orders to your computer controlled comrades, makes it feel as though you're always playing with other people, rather than with AI controlled characters. *Unreal Tournament* is an awesome game, deserving all of the praise that it's received. One thing is for sure, it's going to take something really special to top it, or any of the other three games in this category for that matter, but with some real corkers on the way this year, the future of PC gaming looks brighter than ever. PCZ

WINNER

↑ Top: Matt Broughton walks off with Game of the Year for the daddy of shooters, *Unreal Tournament*.

You might be a woman, but you're going down anyway.

Rock hard and very dangerous.

Unreal Tournament is the champion.

Game of the Year. We agree with you.

Makes the others green with envy.

RUNNER-UP

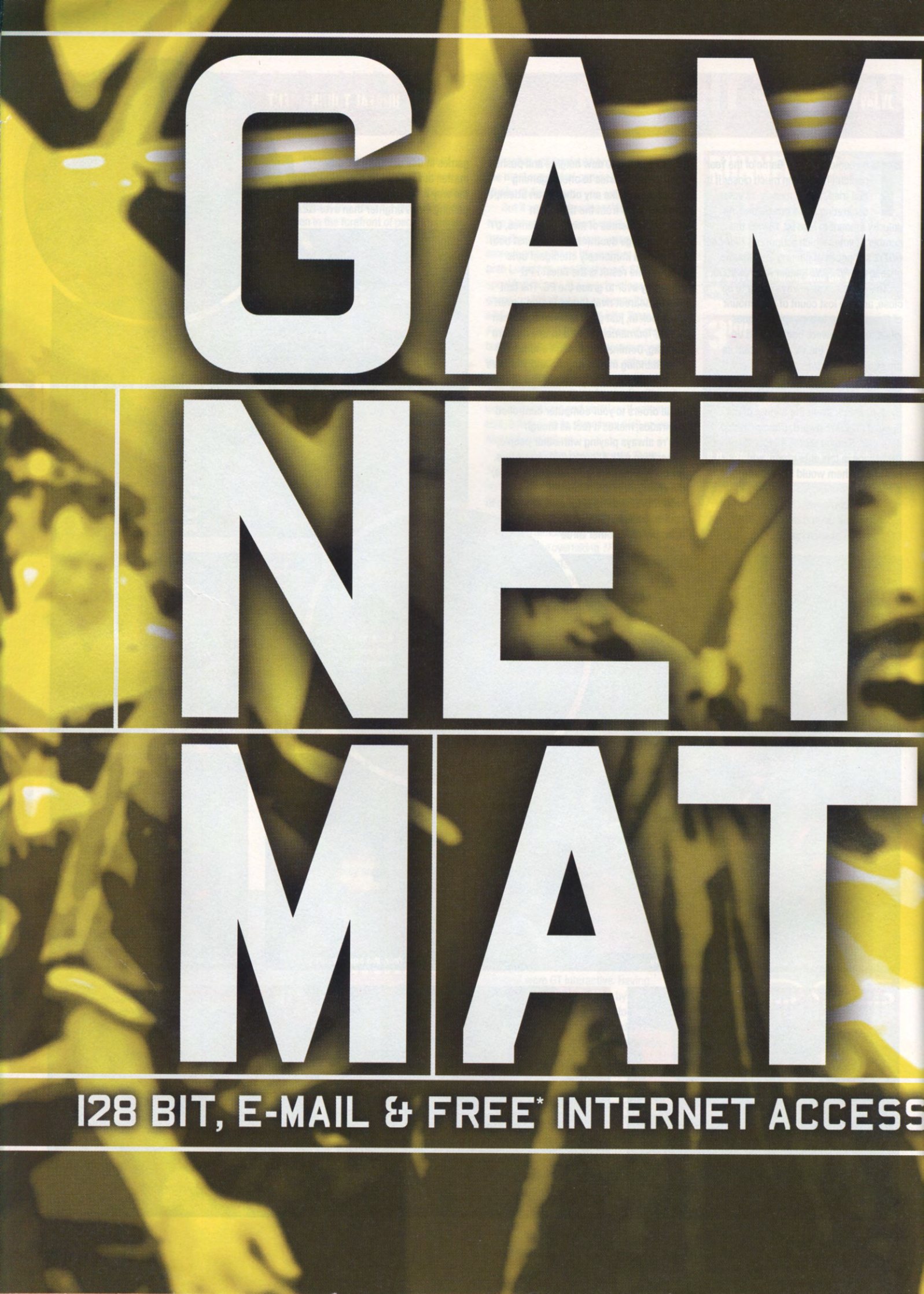
Half-Life: (Second-Best) *Game Of The Year Edition* (Valve/Havas).

3RD

System Shock 2 (Looking Glass/EA).

4TH

Championship Manager – Season 99/00 (Sports Intercative/Eidos)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FLYING HEROES

Part *Quake*, part Dragon 'em up, and very, very surreal. *Dave Woods* investigates

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Illusion Softworks
PUBLISHER Take 2
WEBSITE www.illusionsoftworks.com
OUT June 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Single and multiplayer aerial shooter
- Four clans each have different tactics
- 24 crafts and 24 weapons
- Hugely surreal and atmospheric ambience

CV

ILLUSION SOFTWORKS

Only one game from this talented bunch of Czechoslovakians, although it's a good 'un. You might have heard of it. In fact you might have played it. If not you can get it free from the Freeloader.com website from May onwards. Check it out.

1998 *Hidden & Dangerous.* A classic, despite the bugs that plagued it. Another 3D shooter, but way different to *Flying Heroes.* Set in the real world for a start, using real weapons and killing real people.

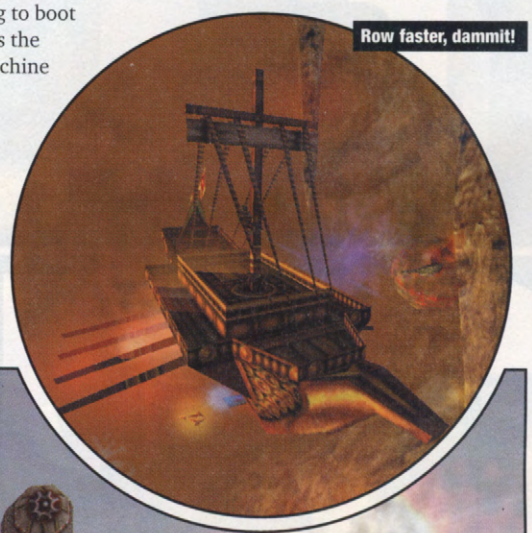
High-speed Internet accounts might not have hit these shores yet, but they are imminent. And when they do you can expect a new-found enthusiasm for multiplayer shooters such as *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III* as well as a whole raft of new games that turn the basic 'arena and guns' formula into something completely different. Rather like *Flying Heroes* where you can forget about rocket jumping and concentrate on blasting other magnificent people and their flying machines out of the sky.

High on plot, it's not, but *Flying Heroes* is decidedly different. For a start you can choose between four separate clans, each complete with their own craft. The Sky Knights – like the late, lamented Rod Hull – put their faith in gigantic birds, whereas the Lizard Raiders... well you can have a wild guess what they ride on. On the other hand, the Magion clan use the powers of magic to keep strange washing-machine-with-wings-type contraptions afloat and the Hammercraft construct huge airships, balloons and contraptions that look like they'd be more at home in the ocean than the air with legions of slaves pulling away in the basement.

The battles take place in huge arenas based in different settings, from the magical floating islands of Ulanor to the sand temple in the desert of Jatar or the pyramids of Deborea. Don't let these nonsensical names put you off, though. There is a fantasy bent to the game and there are magic spells, but the emphasis is on reactions, speed and cunning and plenty of blasting to boot with weapons such as the axe-thrower, dart machine and crossbow.

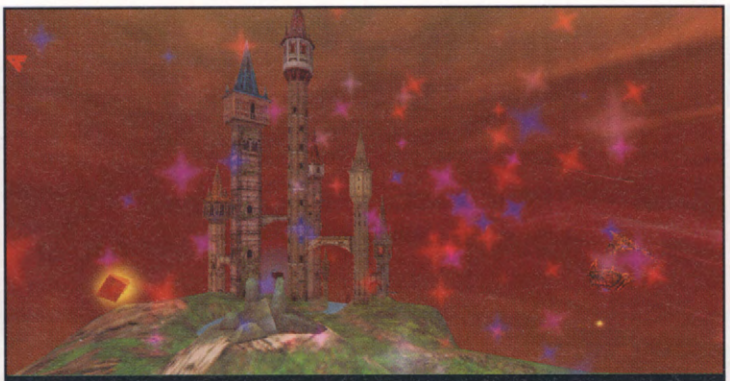
If it's all starting to sound like the sort of game that you'd dream up after getting back from a club on Sunday morning, you're not far off. And if you think it's all a bit too surreal then you want to check out the ambient soundtrack and the stunning 3D graphics courtesy of the proprietary PETRO engine. It's as if you've taken a couple of weird pills, stayed up for three nights without sleep and then switched the PC on. But don't go thinking that's a bad thing.

And don't go thinking *Flying Heroes* is going to be too complex either. Although you're flying around huge arenas, the controls are as far removed from your average flight simulator as you could imagine. Basically you can strafe left to right, as you would in *Quake*, as well as up and down, to enable



Row faster, dammit!

And we think Heathrow is bad.


And if you think this is weird, wait till you hear the music.

you to dodge anything that's incoming. You can also point yourself in the desired direction and use your normal thrust to take you where you want to go. Primary and secondary attacks, zoom buttons and targeting are the only other things you need to get your head around, and after a few minutes with the tutorial you'll be whizzing about like a seasoned pro, collecting bounties and upgrading your craft in a bid to get to the coveted number one spot.

It's not just multiplayer action either. Illusion Softworks knows that the whole world hasn't bought into the Internet community yet and if you're not planning on getting hooked up to ISDN, ADSL, or any of the other costly online acronyms, you can play alone in Career mode. This sports a plot (of sorts – don't expect too much), league progression and even a smattering of resource management and sub-quests.

Flying Heroes is already looking impressive, and, although the gameplay is still being tweaked, the code we've played is addictive enough to suggest Illusion Softworks has found another niche to exploit. If it can get half as much originality coded in as *Hidden & Dangerous* (still one of our favourite games today) and avoid the bugs that plagued its first release, then it could well be onto a winner.

The fantasy settings, totally surreal craft and ambient music all help to play their part and, if you're a fan of Michael Moorcock and have always dreamt of taking to the skies in your own blimp and raining destruction down on your enemies, there's no other game that comes close. We'll be keeping a very close eye on this in the near future and we'd suggest you do the same. PCZ

"If you've always dreamt of taking to the skies in your own blimp and raining destruction down on your enemies, there's no other game that comes close"

Q&A

JANEK KOLAR

Janek is designer and leader of production on Flying Heroes *and, although his English isn't the best, he took time out from the game to answer our questions.*

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?
JANEK *Nu pagadi!* – a Russian handheld game from the '80s.
PCZ And the best?
JANEK *Monkey Island.* I don't have time to play games now.
PCZ What was the last game you bought?
JANEK *Quest for Glory 4.*
PCZ Who is your favourite superhero?
JANEK Maybe Gaybrush Treepwood (sic) from *Monkey Island.*
PCZ How would he fare in *Flying Heroes*?
JANEK Gaybrushed (sic) would almost certainly use the flying jug of grog or the small levitating pirate ship.
PCZ Have you ever had a fight?
JANEK Yep. Eight years ago. This village guy didn't like my 0.1mm hair. He thought I was a skinhead.
PCZ Who won?
PERSON I won the fight. But I also took the first hit and broke my jaw.

THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN...

The four clans and their craft aren't just there for show. Each one has a different set of tactics, strengths and weaknesses.

LIZARD RAIDERS

Perfect for the beginner, the lizards are extremely easy to control and are partially resistant to fire. The scaled skin is buffeted with some serious armour and you can also use their flammable breath to bring down your opponents.

HAMMERCRAFT

Balloons and ships constructed of iron and wood. They look beautiful, but they're slow to control, although they can hover up and down to aid evasive manoeuvres. They're also pretty tough.

MAGION

The Sky Magicians, who live in the flying islands to the south-east of Hesperia, exist to remind the ignorant of the beauty of magic, and fly around on carpets and teapots. Their agile craft also boast a wide array of offensive and defensive magic.

SKY KNIGHTS

The Sky Knights have the fasted steeds, but they're unable to halt in mid-air or fly backwards. You can also use the birds themselves as an extra weapon to dive and attack opponents. A decent spread of weapons and light armour make up the spread.

Fly in third or first-person views.

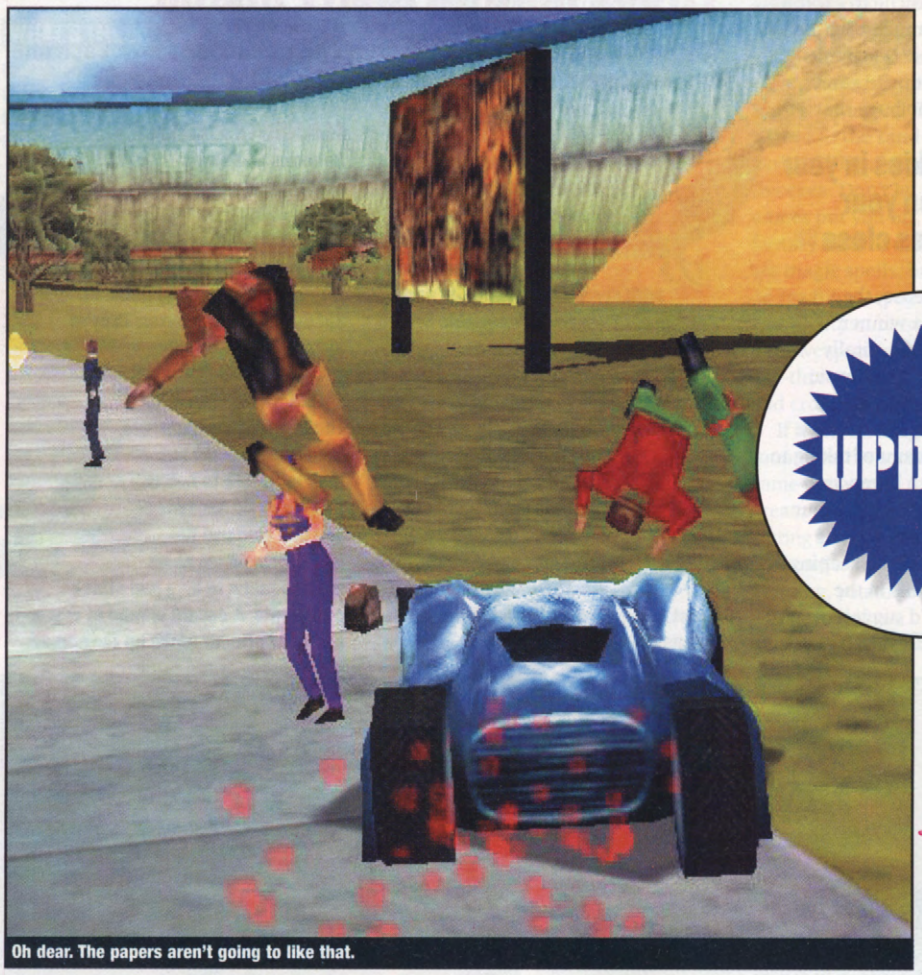
You've got to admit, it looks gorgeous.

Indoor arenas exist as well as the huge outdoors.

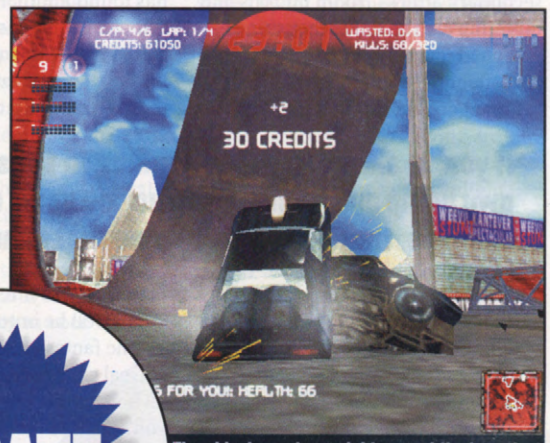
Look left. Look right. Now run, it's...

CARMAGEDDON TDR 2000

Sickened by the thought of running people over? Horrified by the impact of bumper on animal? *Dave Woods* is just out of therapy after spending a day with SCi's latest road-kill roll-out



Oh dear. The papers aren't going to like that.



The object was to go right around the loop-da-loop. Hope you've got some repair money.

One of the stunning levels the new engine can handle without a hiccup.

UPDATE

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Torus Games
PUBLISHER SCi
WEBSITE www.carmageddon.com
OUT July

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- More than 50 vehicles and 36 new challenges
- Sophisticated mission structure
- New animals and enhanced pedestrian AI
- A new graphics engine
- Full Internet support

Britain is a country of animal lovers. But we don't seem to be that keen on people, judging by the string 'em up mentality exhibited by the tabloid press. Second shoplifting offence? Life imprisonment mate. Privacy? No such thing. Public interest you see. It's typical stuff. But it seems a bit odd, in the face of all this, that the tabloids were so concerned about an innocuous game such as *Carmageddon*. What was the big problem? The fact that you had to run over innocents and claim points?

Take a look at the big-screen antics of Stallone and company in the film *Death Race 2000*. The fact that this has been shown on national TV makes the hounding of *Carmageddon* look pathetic. Especially as it was alright to hack and blow people to pieces with huge guns in other games available at the time.

Anyway, enough of the soapbox stuff, because the next version of the game is only a couple of months away, and curiously enough it's entitled *Carmageddon TDR 2000*. It was going to be called *The Death Race 2000,* but after legal pressure from Paramount (who is set to make a big budget sequel to the cult film, allegedly starring one Tom Cruise), it decided to stick to the letters.

MAXIMUM OVERKILL

That's the only concession made, though. As far as new features go, *TDR 2000* is positively overflowing, with a brand new story, mission structure, rendering engine and pedestrian AI. The latter means that peds will now

You don't have to ram pedestrians if you don't want to.

Free the King Kong and he might kick a hole in the level allowing you to escape.

There are choppers and planes to watch out for towards the end of the game.

It's all just a bit of harmless fun.

CV TORUS GAMES

TORUS GAMES

We don't know much about the bods at Torus games apart from that they live in Australia (the lucky gits) and have been busy churning out Gameboy titles.

1999 *Squatter*. Believe it or not, this is a resource management game that requires you to build a sustainable sheep farming empire. Allegedly based on the best-selling board game of the same name, *Squatter* is not due for a UK release (we wonder why).

form orderly queues outside banks and run off in groups rather than scattering, enabling you to maximise your kill ratio. Which is rather considerate of them really. There are also more animals to slay senselessly, including kangaroos, although there is a *Planet Of The Apes* power-up which enables the animals to exact their revenge. You have been warned.

The storyline is pretty basic (lawless areas have been fenced off, and you're trapped in the middle), but the missions have been thoroughly overhauled and we're promised they're going to be far more sophisticated than the pitiful excuses in *Carmageddon 2*. You can expect to interact with items in each, and follow a logical path in order to 'escape' from the level before moving to the next environment.

We've saw a level based around a movie studio where you have to build a bomb that releases a creature which startles a King Kong who's more than happy to kick a hole in the outside wall leaving you free to make a getaway. You get the idea.

You can also expect more than 50 vehicles (old and new), all of which are visually different, as well ashaving their own attributes in terms of speed, handling and defensive and offensive capabilities. Some are just there for novelty value. Haven't you always wanted to mow someone down in an ice cream van? The one in *TDR 2000* is large, strong and durable, but more importantly it plays a jingle as it drives along.

As you'd expect, all the vehicles are completely trashable. We failed to heed a missile strike warning and our car's roof was blown clean off. You can also lose individual wheels (which obviously makes the vehicle a bitch to steer), doors and even leave bumpers scraping along the road in your wake.

All of this is handled by the game's new D3D-native rendering engine. It's promising double the frame rates as *Carmageddon 2* on the same hardware and it won't shut up about the impressive array of new features, including hard shadows, reflection mapped cars and a brand new particle system for sparks, rain and smoke.

"As you'd expect, all the vehicles are completely trashable. We failed to heed a missile strike warning and our car's roof was blown clean off"

ON THE NET

The big news is that the developers have finally managed to code in support for the Internet. Multiplayer *Carmageddon* is what it's all about and solid online play is promised. This isn't in place yet, and there are no servers running *TDR 2000,* so we can't vouch for the stability or speed, but we'll keep you informed. We're expecting finished code (see boxout, right) soon, so you should expect to see a review in the very near future.

But before we sign off, we've got a bit of a confession. We got a bit carried away with *Carmageddon 2*. We were so wrapped up in the mindless violence and road-kill debauchery, we neglected to see that the single-player game wasn't all that hot. But forget about all of that. *TDR 2000* looks as if it's going to be a blast, as long as you don't mind the occasional gush of crimson, and you don't get upset by the spasmodic twitching of a poor defenceless cow that's been stupid enough to have a fight with your undercarriage.

Which brings us rather neatly back to the start. You see publisher SCi is going for a 15 certificate this time around, and it doesn't foresee any of the legal wrangling previous versions faced. Media hysteria whipped up Government interest last time and the Government lost. Even if the game is forced to ship with green blood in place, every kid on the block is going to be turning it red with the patch that will inevitably follow. And the main point is that *Carmageddon TDR 2000*, like its predecessors is just a bit of a laugh. A bit of harmless fun.

If anyone seriously thinks that the game is going to make us jump in a bath on wheels and go hunting kangaroos, then they really shouldn't be anywhere near the reigns of power. They should be put in a padded cell and given crayons to scribble with. PM

BUT WHEN'S IT GOING TO BE FINISHED?

***TDR 2000* is not reviewable yet, but it is looking good...**

It's always a tricky one, but we saw early code mid-April and we're pretty sure the game should be ready to review in a couple of months, but not before. Most of the game's missions are in place, and the engine is chugging away pretty smoothly, but there are a lot of bugs to iron out and gameplay to balance. The preview code we were slaughtering our way through crashed a lot and it was hard to get a coherent sense of how the finished version is going to play. One thing is certain though, it looks a *lot* better than *Carmageddon 2*, and we're not just talking about the graphics. The missions seem to have been more thought out this time and, if its promise is realised, we could have another smash-and-grab hit on our hands.

INFOGRAMES

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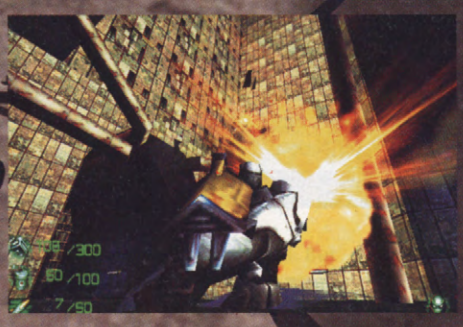
...THE GRAPHICS ARE SUPERB..."
DREAMCAST MONTHLY 8/10

"...A TOP ARCADE TITLE,
WITH STORMING ACTION..."
PC GAMER 82%

SOMETHING BIG IS ABOUT TO HIT THE STREETS



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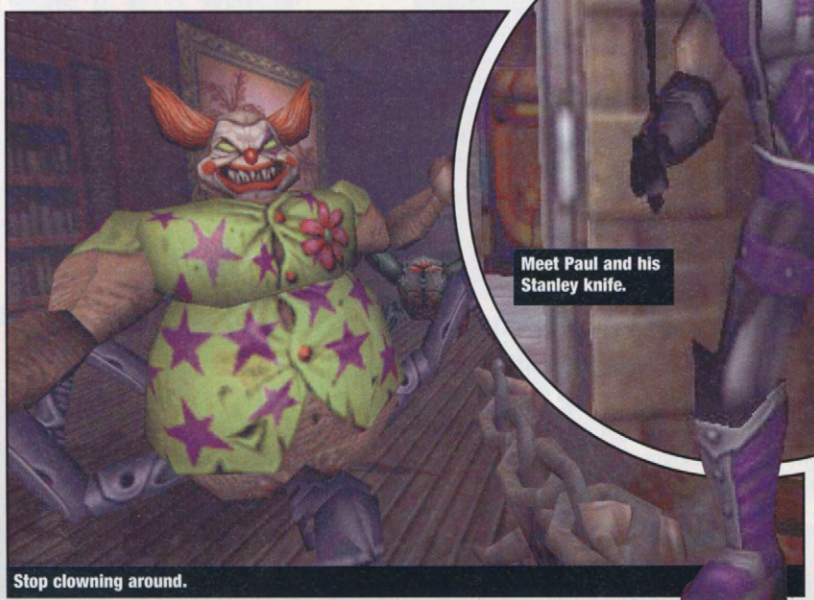
Arachnaphobic? Don't buy this game.

Come on, roll up, roll up.

Ouch! That hurts.


Stop clowning around.

Meet Paul and his Stanley knife.

Expect to see some stunning architecture.

KISS PSYCHO CIRCUS: THE NIGHTMARE CHILD

Not everything in black and white makes sense. *Dave Woods* points to *Kiss* by way of example

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Gathering of Developers
PUBLISHER Take 2
WEBSITE www.kisspsychocircus.com
OUT Late this year

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- The modified LithTech engine
- Loads of creatures on screen
- They're back in make-up
- Gene's tongue – feel it to believe it

"Hello. Here I am, Here we are, We are one. I've been waiting for this night to come, Get up. Now it's time for me to take my place, The make-up running down my face, We're exiles from the human race." These might sound like the lyrics from the latest Spice Girls' track, but they're not. In actual fact these are the profundities from the title track of the brand new Kiss album, *Psycho Circus*. Why should you care? Because later on this year the Gathering of Developers is rolling out a game inspired by the Kiss vision.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Unless you're a fan, this simple fact is going to leave you distinctly cold. Games based on film or pop star tie-ins are renowned as being absolutely shockingly terrible, but we reckon that *Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child* may just have the capacity to surprise. And that's why we're here – to fill you in on the juicy gossip and explain why we think the game is actually going to be pretty good.

For a start it's a first-person shooter that's going to use a heavily modified version of the LithTech 1.5 engine, as seen in *Blood II* and *Shogo*. And if you're a bit of an anorak about your 3D engines, you'll know that this means it's going to look absolutely top notch. Take a glance at these early screenshots if you need a bit more gentle persuasion. If you want more technical details, the modifications are going to include saturation blending, gourard-shaded models and all-new player movement physics. The other *big* feature to watch out for is the fact that the developers have tweaked the code so that you can expect to see loads and loads of drug-induced Kiss-inspired demons coming at you at once, something that the FPS genre hasn't really seen since the good old days of *Doom*.

"Despite the fascinating possibilities, Gene Simmons' tongue (reach of around 46cm according to a fan) isn't going to feature in the game as one of the weapons"

What else? 25 twisted freaks (the developers words, not ours), 12 weapons, 16 artefacts (like, wow, man) and a slew of boss and mini-boss encounters. You get to play one of four playable characters (based, funnily enough, on the current Kiss line-up) and as you progress through the game you can unlock and master unique abilities.

Despite this, we're not expecting much else apart from a good, old-fashioned first-person shoot 'em up, although with the power of the LithTech engine and the promise of monsters galore we're getting strangely excited about this one. And no, before you ask, we're not Kiss fans, although Mark Hill's first ever album purchase was *Dynasty*, a fact he's keen to keep quiet. Shame that. Unfortunately, despite the fascinating possibilities, Gene Simmons' tongue (reach of around 46cm according to one particularly excitable fan) isn't going to feature in the game as one of the weapons. This is a fact that's bound to distress the legions of female 'Kissers' around the country. PCZ

THRONE OF DARKNESS

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Click Entertainment
PUBLISHER Sierra Studios
WEBSITE www.sierrastudios.com
OUT June/July 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Co-operative online gameplay
- Seven different samurai characters to choose from
- Tactical combat options
- Rich vein of culture, history and mythology

Martin Korda **retires to his own throne of darkness with the newspaper every Saturday morning. Oops, but that's a totally different story...**

Japanese mythology and history are experiencing a resurgence on the PC. Not since the days of *Shinobi* and *Sword Of The Samurai* (remember those?) have PC game developers taken such a vested interest in the subject. With recent titles such as *Shogun: Total War* and the *Final Fantasy* series setting the trend, we could soon be seeing a curiosity in Eastern culture not seen since Mr Miyagi inspired a generation of youngsters to wax their fathers' cars free of charge.

Sierra Studios' *Throne Of Darkness*, due out in the summer, will be set during Japan's feudal period. Although its name sounds more like the title of a Megadeth B-side than an action RPG, it looks as if it's going to be one to watch. We're being so presumptuous because several members of the *ToD* development team were involved in producing *Diablo*, one of the best a ction RPGs of its time, and one that still boasts a massive online gaming community.

But back to *Throne Of Darkness*. The aim of the game is to take control of a group of samurai, leading them in a quest to overthrow an evil warlord and seizing power from him in the process. Once in the hot seat, you'll be given new powers to help you defend yourself against any would-be assassins.

With a game-world full of corrupt warriors and evil creatures, you're going to have to battle your way to the top, completing sub-quests as you go. This can either be done alone, or as the leader of a party. There'll be seven different warriors for you to choose from, who will each have individual personalities, attributes and weapons. Every one of the seven samurai will have their own personal quests, and as these are completed you'll find out about each character's past. With a strong emphasis on Japanese history and mythology, the atmosphere, plot and gameplay should be highly authentic and immersive. Even if we do say so ourselves.

"Although its name sounds more like the title of a Megadeth B-side than an action RPG, it looks as if it's going to be one to watch"

One of the most exciting features is the combat, which enables you to execute simultaneous attacks with your samurai, with formations and special manoeuvres all being possible. These options should help it gain an edge over the rather linear turn-based fighting systems of many other action RPGs, such as *Final Fantasy VIII*.

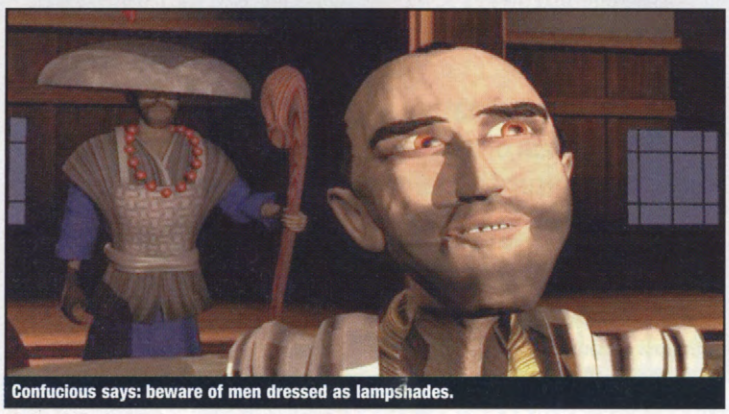
Developer Click Entertainment is putting a good deal of work into the online side of the game, claiming its ultimate goal is to combine multiplayer and single-player action into one gaming experience. You'll be able to group together with your mates over the Net and form your own party. Your goal will be to overthrow the existing warlord, assume power and give any pretenders to the throne (also human controlled) a right royal beating.

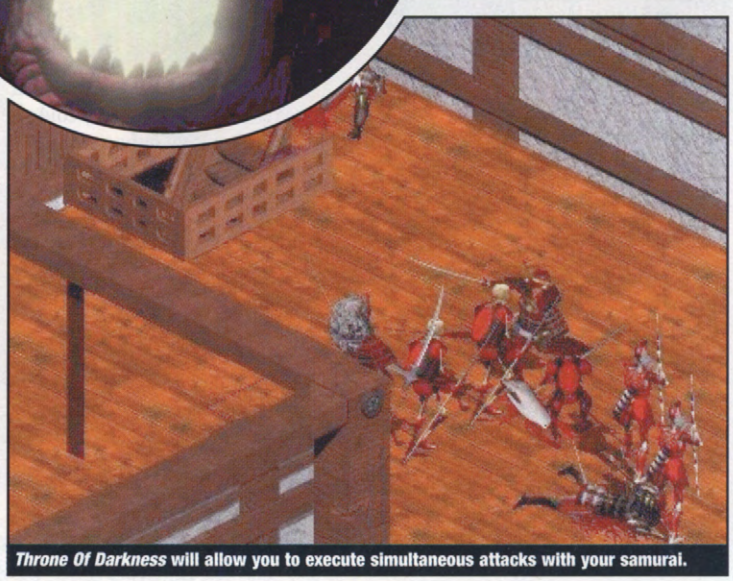
We haven't seen it running yet, but we're already applauding the fact that it's both single-player and online play. The multiplayer team work and the struggle for power with other human controlled characters, will surely be its greatest selling point, and if executed well it might just make *Throne of Darkness* one of the best online/single-player action RPGs to date. PCZ

The samurai warriors weren't too happy with the way *Changing Rooms* redecorated their pad.

I did warn you not to have that Vindaloo.

Join your friends over the Net, fighting the forces of evil, so you can become the new Warlord.


Confucious says: beware of men dressed as lampshades.


Throne Of Darkness will allow you to execute simultaneous attacks with your samurai.

How do you put the magic back in her life?

Show her your wand!

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HASBRO Interactive

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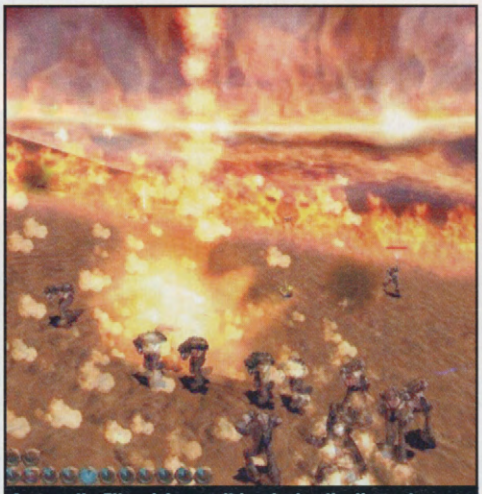
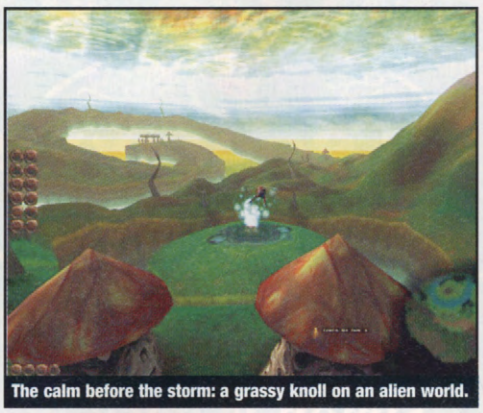
As with many other RTSs coming out this year, the emphasis is on the battles and the tactics rather than base building and resource management.


Apparently, Elton John won't be singing the theme tune. Thank God for small mercies.

The day the ozone layer really got wiped out.

The amazing visuals remind us of *Evolva*. Only better.


The calm before the storm: a grassy knoll on an alien world.

Strange flora and fauna populate the world of *Sacrifice*.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

SACRIFICE

We thought it was high time to force *Mark Hill* to perform the ultimate sacrifice. So we made him get out of bed and do some work for a change

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Shiny Entertainment
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.sacrifice.net
OUT October

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's a 3D real-time strategy from the makers of *MDK* and *Messiah*.
- Draws the best bits from the brilliant *Magic & Mayhem* and *Populous: The Beginning*.
- Engine can cope with hectic battles without ever slowing down.
- Control armies in the *C&C* way as well as casting powerful spells.

Human history is splashed, practically drenched, with blood. Not only that spilled by egomaniacs playing *Risk* with real-world maps, but mostly that sprayed straight into the sky in a beautiful arc of claret in the name of god(s). The Shiny brain of Dave Perry has come up with a game which allows you to play a religious fanatic wizard, feeding gory offerings to the divine forces and gaining the power to strike down your enemies in return. What the hell are we talking about? *Sacrifice*, of course.

A fully 3D real-time strategy, with a passing resemblance to the highly anticipated *WarCraft III*, *Sacrifice* promises to melt your eyes into a Dali-esque landscape of warped weirdness.

The sacrifices from the title are performed on a special altar that links directly to your god. Each wizard in the game (yes, that's right, wizard) has his own altar which he must protect at all costs. But it's not as simple as all that, since you can also perform sacrifices on your enemies' altars (in fact, this is one of your main objectives), turning their gods to your side in the process.

Being a wizard, you can imagine that spells will be playing a big part in the whole thing. The more sacrifices you perform, the more powerful your spells become, and when other gods are converted to your cause you'll get a whole new set. The game will also use the mana fountain system that worked so well in *Magic & Mayhem*, strengthening your powers the closer you are to them and allowing you to create creatures out of thin air. When enemies are killed in battle, their souls float around waiting for you to cull them for your own purposes. The engine is looking incredible, with no detail spared despite the high frame rate, and uses some of the flashiest technology from *Messiah*, making sure the game runs at optimum speed no matter how hectic the on-screen action gets.

One of the other features Shiny is bragging about, and it looks like the team has good reason to do so, is the control interface. Although you are a wizard on the map, you can also control all the other units on your side in normal RTS fashion via a set of icons that appear when you select them.

The developers are also making a big deal about the multiplayer mode and the fact that the game is shipping with a level editor, ensuring a long life with online fans. Many of them will no doubt sacrifice themselves on Dave Perry's altar, and make Shiny an even more powerful name on the gaming firmament. We'll have to wait until at least October to see whether it still deserves to be there. PZ

"A 3D real-time strategy, with a passing resemblance to *Warcraft III*, *Sacrifice* promises to melt your eyes into a Dali-esque landscape of warped weirdness"

FIRST ENCOUNTER

MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Rainbow Studios
PUBLISHER Microsoft Games
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com/games
OUT June

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

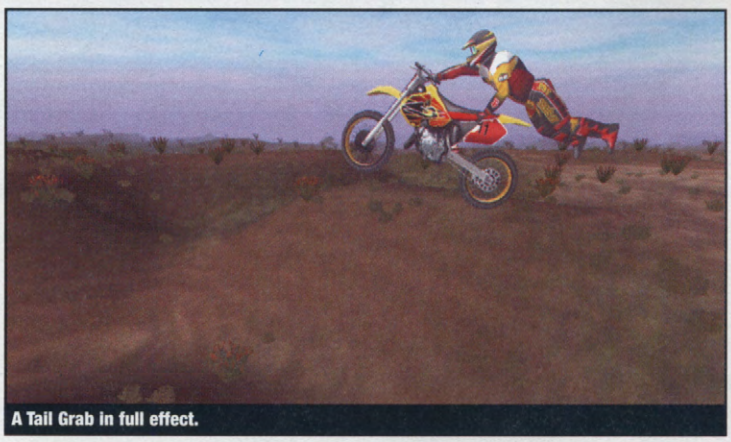
- Revamped graphics engine
- All-new stunts and combos
- Brand new Enduro and Career modes
- Full terrain editor
- It's perfectly safe

***Dave Woods* just enjoyed a massive Heart Attack. And then fell off attempting a second**

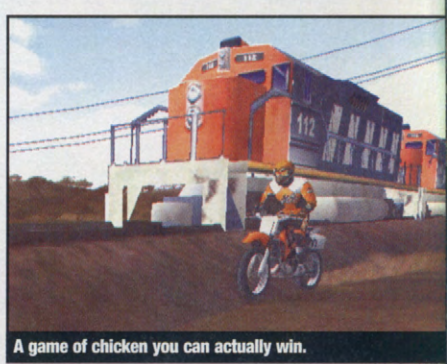
Look for improved multiplayer support and a new Top 100 Ranking System.

That's going to hurt.

Now you're just showing off.



A Tail Grab in full effect.



A game of chicken you can actually win.

Motorbikes are scary machines. While we are quite happy to pootle along on a 50cc hairdryer, the thought of slamming a big beastie off a slope, and performing a handstand in mid-air is sheer bloody madness. *Motocross Madness* actually – a superb game that's just about be superseded by an all new enhanced version, with extra stunts, better graphics, and new race events and environments. Woohoo!

All the original events are still in place, alongside a couple of brand new modes, including Enduro. So what can you expect with this new game? "Great big worlds – nine times the amount of data we had in *Motocross Madness* – filled with interactive moving environments you can jump over, on, through, and interact with in every way imaginable," according to lead designer Rob Reiner.

"We suffered several fractures and nasty knee grazes. Although Richie claims to have landed a Double Cheeseburger with extra Tail Grab"

MM2 sports five different Enduro terrains, from the depths of a South American jungle to an Arizona white-trash trailer park. The second brand-new addition is the Pro-Circuit, a career game which kicks you off as a rookie rider who's got to work through the grind of local weekend races. You start off with a boneshaking, crusty old bike and a set of amateur togs and have to try to make it through to the ultimate end for any pro – the Supercross.

But it's the stunts that make *Motocross Madness*, and with new modifications and multiple stunt bonuses, the sequel's going to be more over-the-top than ever. The roll call sounds like an average night in A&E with the Heart Attack, followed closely by the Split X, the Heel Clicker and the Cliff Hanger. Then there's the Nac-Nac, the Big Kahuna and the Lazy Boy. We tried out most of these in early code and suffered several fractures, concussions, and nasty knee grazes, although Richie claims to have landed a Double Cheeseburger with extra Tail Grab.

The other two new features are ones which have appeared across Microsoft's entire new range. First-off is the full terrain editor, which means you can design tracks in any of the six featured modes. Then there's improved multiplayer support, with a Top 100 Ranking System in place by the time the game ships. Go online in any of the five racing environments and your results will be posted back to the server and sorted. Make the Top 100 and you get a personalised numberplate, which proves how hot (or not) you are.

But you're not bothered about any of this are you? You just want to know what happens when you get to the end of the game world. We're not going to tell you. If you really want to find out, you're going to have to wait until the game's released later this summer. All we will say is it looks horrendously painful. PCZ

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PC ZONE REVI

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the *ZONE* reviews first –

THE PC ZONE GAMES SYSTEM

This is the machine we use to review new titles on. Our reviewers also use older machines to get an impression of gaming in the 'real' world, but this is what we currently consider the best value-for-money set up. As games become more demanding, the specs will change to reflect that

At the heart of the machine is a 600MHz AMD Athlon processor. These babies are seriously scorching, optimised for 3D applications, so first-person shooters fly like you wouldn't believe. Faster Athlons are now available, but at the present prices, this is probably the best value for money of the family. The system bus runs at a godlike speed, so basically the whole thing is like a supercar with no brake pedal.

Supporting the processor is a MaxiGamer Xentor 32 from Guillemot, purveyors of all things graphicy. Based on the TNT2 chipset, these RAM-packed beasties are designed to cope with the polygons, textures and special effects that those game developers insist on chucking at the screen. Guillemot has a new GeForce 256-based card in the offing, which we're hoping to upgrade to soon.

Pionex has supplied the cases and 128Mb of PC100 memory for the motherboard. For gaming, especially with RAM prices as they are at the time of writing, 128Mb is the optimum amount. The cases have plenty of room for expansion without taking up excessive space. Nifty floppy slot as well…

Hard drive services are provided by the stunning 7,200rpm, 20Gb Maxtor DiamondMax Plus (from the 5120 family of drives). It's large and fast with plenty of room for full installs and quick to load games when you want to play them.

Sound services are supplied by VideoLogic. The SonicVortex 2 card is a PCI device featuring Aureal A3D 2.0, ideal for gamers. The latest drivers are stunning, using the card's own chip to reduce the processing overhead on the CPU when calculating 3D audio. Aureal's API now handles not only sounds themselves, but also their reflections: as you approach a doorway, you can hear sounds from the room reflected into the corridor. Immersive stuff.

VideoLogic also supply speakers from the superb Sirocco range. We use primarily Crossfires for gaming – they may seem expensive, but you get twice the quality you pay for. Four satellite speakers and a humungous subwoofer give pinpoint accuracy for 3D audio and bass meaty enough for the rumbliest explosions. We also use other speakers from the range (the original Sirocco and new Sirocco Pro) for sound card testing.

Guillemot's DVD Theater setup provides not only the ability to load games quickly, but also to watch DVD movies (essential for reviewing games – not) with its bundled MPEG decoder card.

Peripherals are supplied by Microsoft, from USB mice (top-notch for first-person shooters) through to the full force-feedback monty – joysticks and driving wheels – and the ubiquitous SideWinder gamepads.

Last, but certainly not least, are headphones from Philips (when the others in the office are suffering from Sirocco overkill) and fabulous 17inch Brilliance monitors (107Bs). If you're used to the cheaper monitors typically bundled with new PCs, the crispness and stability of the image displayed on these comes as quite a shock.

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at *ZONE* pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre, and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we have our Feedback section on page 101. This is where you get the opportunity to put your point of view into *PC ZONE*. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.

CHECK THE SPECS!

The standard spec machine these days is a P233 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the We Say bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • **Activision** 01895 456700 • **Anco** 01322 292513 • **Blue Byte** 01604 232200 • **Codemasters** 01926 814132 • **Cryo** 01926 315550 • **Eidos Interactive** 020 8636 3000 • **Electronic Arts** 01753 549442 • **Empire Interactive** 020 8343 7337 • **Europress** 01625 855000 • **Gremlin Interactive** 0114 263 9900 • **GT Interactive** 020 8222 9700 • **Hasbro Interactive** 020 8569 1234 • **Infogrames** 0161 827 8000 • **Interplay** 020 7551 4222 • **Microids** (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01 • **Microsoft** 0345 002 000 • **Mindscape** 01444 246333 • **NovaLogic** 020 7405 1777 • **Rage Software** 0151 237 2200 • **Take 2 Interactive** 01753 854 444 • **THQ** 01483 767656 • **Ubi Soft** 020 8944 9300 **Zablac** 01626 332233

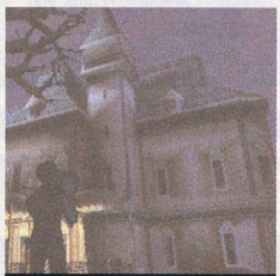
REVIEWS

we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

REVIEWS

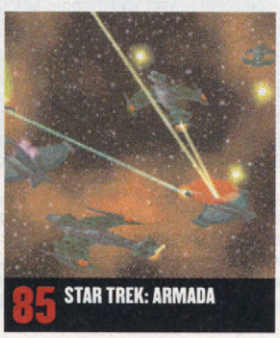
66 EARTH 2150

68 F1200 VS F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX



76 THE DEVIL INSIDE

80 PLAYER MANAGER 2000 VS UEFA MANAGER 2000



85 STAR TREK: ARMADA

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

90-100% Here at *ZONE* we score every game out of 100. If a game receives the impressive score of 90 or above, it is awarded the *PC ZONE* 'Classic' award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not really a fan of the genre.

80-89% Games that score 80-89 get the *PC ZONE* 'Award For Excellence'. These are excellent examples of their type of game and if you're a fan of the genre you should definitely consider buying the title.

70-79% Any games scoring between 70-79 have just missed an 'Award For Excellence', but don't ignore them. The score is well above average and that means you're getting a great title that's worth the investment if you're a fan of the genre.

50-69% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-49% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or you happen to see them at a reduced price.

0-19% Games that score less than 20 should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.

PCZONE HALL OF FAME

These are the games that currently score 90% or above and so are deemed to be *PC ZONE* classics

HALF-LIFE

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

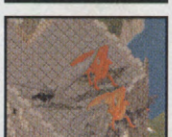
GRIM FANDANGO

COLIN MCRAE

FALCON 4

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 99/00



ULTIMA ONLINE

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

EARTH 2150

£29.99 • Mattel Interactive • Out summer

The Earth is on collision course with the Sun. *Phil Wand* finds out how a tabloid newspaper can destroy an entire planet

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P200 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D Card
WE SAY Don't even bother with anything less than a PIII 500 and 64Mb RAM

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Hell's bells, are good games hard to review. It's just *so* much easier to be presented with a despicable piece of crap and then spend a page or two bellyaching about why it's nothing more than a pallid facsimile of existing titles and how the interface needs to be taken outside for a good kicking. Why spending £29.99 on a yard broom and then ramming the handle up your old brown windsor would be a more worthwhile use of your time. In the end you actually want every game to be abominable, just so you can look cool pulling them apart in the most witty and clever way possible.

But every now and then, a sparkling jewel crowns the pile of second rate awful games and cold mugs of tea on your desk. A game that is so obviously streets ahead of everything underneath, you cuss and spit at the inevitability of having to be nice.

Yes, you guessed right: *Earth 2150* is one such game. Almost every aspect of it, from gollywhopper cut scenes through to influential new features and sweeping 3D landscapes, is brilliant, which means this review has been a bitch to write. Don't you dare skip bits.

THE PLOT

You join the game in a pre-apocalyptic scenario with the Earth hurtling towards the Sun after a series of nuclear explosions knocked the planet out of orbit – the same sort of disaster that befell moon-base Alpha in *Space: 1999*. That the explosion was part of an assault made by Eurasians on enemy positions at the North Pole should tell you it was no accident – it was warfare on a truly global scale. To add to the problems, one other group based on the moon has been drawn into the conflict, riled that their home is being pulled to a fiery doom thanks to the activities of their next door neighbours.

So what we have are three distinct factions with different technologies raping the Earth of all its resources in order to construct a massive fleet of ships to flee to Mars. Typically for a species that enjoys games such as *Soldier Of Fortune*, nobody thought about doing this in an orderly or peaceful manner, and it's your job to join in the fracas as either the Eurasian Dynasty, United Civilized States or Lunar Corporation and kick some bottom.

The UCS use metal tents to cover structures during construction.

THE GAME

The movie that plays when you fire up the game is like the opening scene from *Terminator* set in the angular world of *Total Annihilation*, with a few *Battletech* style Mechs shown thudding their way across the scenery for good measure. Of course you'll stab the ESC key along with the rest of us next time it gets in your way, but it's still rather stunning and worthy of praise.

Interface wise, *Earth 2150* is a mix of *Battlezone* and *Warzone 2100*. The various base elements and vehicles are accessed through a hierarchical range of panels that are constantly updated to provide information on the currently selected unit – it'll even show you a list of units held within a group. Like *Battlezone* you can select and view information on anything you control, allowing you to keep track of your chaps without the need for constantly sweeping back and forth. Like *Warzone 2010* you can 'mix and match' chassis and weaponry, allowing you to construct a massive range of homebrew units.

One thing that does strike you – perhaps more so than any other RTS game to date – is the detail of the landscape and the hydraulic effortlessness with which it glides into view.

Normally, the word 'terrain' when applied to a polygonal 3D world means swathes of stretch-to-fit textures, with units and structures looking as though they're sitting on a vast patio of blurry paving slabs. Here, though, the ground no longer looks like a carpet of prefabricated tiles, and instead is dappled by tones and grains that sweep up to cliffs and plunge deep into vales. It also has a very rugged complexion wherever you pan, rotate or zoom the camera, making it a pleasure to build on. It kind of invites you to make it your home.

THERE'S MORE

You can also deform whole areas, flatten roads, build trenches to hinder enemy attacks, and even tunnel down to build underground bases and launch ambushes from beneath the Earth's surface. We'll say that again: *underground bases*, complete with interconnecting passageways and caverns. It's a major new dimension. Additionally, water has been used as a genuine feature rather than as eye candy and, like tunnelling, it can add to your strategy if you know how to use it.

But that's not all. *Earth 2150* also implements day, night and weather effects that have a profound effect on how you play. Much of your base, as well as its supply vehicles and military hardware, is equipped with lights which cast an eerie glow over the landscape after dark – the taller structures looking like Manhattan office blocks at twilight. When you realise you can turn the lights off on individual units, shrouding your base in shadow and hiding friendly troops from enemy scouts, you find yourself getting sucked deeper and deeper into the game.

"You can flatten roads, build trenches to hinder enemy attacks, and even tunnel down to build underground bases to launch ambushes from beneath the surface"

The consortium of German and Polish developers have also redesigned many aspects of real-time strategy that, in the past, has been the cause of needless aggravation. For example, when building defensive walls, you now simply specify the start point and the end point – the raggedy bits in between are laid out and constructed for you. Simple, yes, but a massive time-saver.

Also, when new units become available, rather than overlaying a panel displaying what they are, the play area is actually resized to accommodate it. This means opening up menu boards or scrolling your way through build options won't blot out half your view area. You can even record macro commands – essentially a sequence of stacked build orders – that can be played and replayed any time you specify. Class.

FINALLY

A game like *Earth 2150*, which has a long list of Internet play options and a built-in editor, deserves to do well both on and offline. One of the positive aspects of writing about a great game is that it's possible to influence its success: if all goes well, other developers will be forced into rethinking their code and will have to start using innovation and forward thinking instead of churning out ancient gameplay elements that are there for historical reasons only. For example, why does every unit have infinite ammunition? Why can't you have multiple windows?

Earth 2150 answers these and many other questions, and in ways that don't affect the game's accessibility one iota. If publishers like Westwood follow suit, real-time strategy fans are in for an exhilarating ride, one that starts right here. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

In space, *Homeworld* is king, but on the planet below the fight is between *Force Commander* and *Earth 2150*. *Warzone 2100* was the first decent 3D RTS and *Earth 2150* picks up where that left of. The *Star Wars* name aside, *Force Commander* doesn't stand a chance.

Earth 2150

Homeworld

Force Commander

Warzone 2100

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Premium graphics • Dynamic and customisable interface • Loads of game variations and multiplayer options

DOWNERS Easy to confuse similar units • Core gameplay a little familiar

86 The real-time strategy cracker you've never heard of

Smoke is the most realistic we've seen. You want your bases to smell bad.

The skirmish settings screen, inspired by *Red Alert*.

The 3D engine conjures some magnificent light shows.

Terrain is hugely influential on game strategy.

View distance is impressive, as is texture quality and render speed.

The main view area can be split into multiple panes.

WALKTHROUGH END

LUNAR CORPORATION BASE CONSTRUCTION IN FOUR EASY STEPS

1 There's no construction vehicle here, as LC structures are dropshipped in from the stratosphere. Simply click on the Build tab, designate areas for some power plants, a main base and a research centre, then wait while things are assembled and brought to the planet surface on tractor beams.

2 When your base is up and running, click F1 to visit the construction centre. This is where you get to mix and match vehicle chassis, equipment and weaponry. Design yourself a few metallic mongrels and then click on them to add them to the list of available units.

3 With a suitably beefy machine, you can now keep a close eye on up to three separate areas of the battlefield. Here we've sent a scout ship off to explore the local shoreline – the main base remains in view in the bottom right panel. Useful or what?

4 Now we're getting somewhere. It's 11:50 at night and the shadows have merged with the blackness of the landscape. Flick on the lights and everything jumps into view – the laser wall, distant units and buildings. Note we've changed to one of the other interface 'skins'.

Yellow is no colour for a racing car.

A man driving a car, yesterday.

The cockpit view is probably the most manageable.

"Get out of the way, I'm a German in a Ferrari."

"I wouldn't stand there, mate. It could be a tad painful."

PlayStation? What's that?

F1 2000

£34.99 • EA Sports • Out now

Steve 'don't call me Damon' Hill buffs his helmet for another gruelling season

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P233 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** Nowhere near it, you'll need at least a P450, 128Mb of RAM and an 8Mb 3D accelerator

EA's relentless assimilation of world sport continues with its utilisation of the freely available Formula One licence adding to its already impressive roster. Only tiddlywinks and crazy golf now remain unconquered, and it seems that if they can put a 2000 on the end, they'll have it.

The ubiquitous millennial addendum is particularly relevant in this case, as *F1 2000* is a faithful reproduction of the 2000 season which has just started and will be filling your television screens for much of the foreseeable future. No more than anyone would expect, you might think, although the big deal here is that Geoff Crammond's long-awaited *Grand Prix 3* will not be afforded this luxury, instead focusing on the long-forgotten 1998 season.

It has been mooted in *PC ZONE* before that the developers simply drop in the relevant data at the last minute, and that is what seems to have happened with *F1 2000*, luckily with little detriment to the game. Formula One anoraks will lap it up, revelling in the authentic teams, including the new Jaguar outfit and the BMW/Williams, as well as the freshly installed US Grand Prix at Indianapolis, and the improbably-named new boy, Jenson Button.

PLASTIC WHEELBARROW

Of course, this will all have been a complete waste of time and effort if the cars perform like Reliant Robins. Thankfully, this is not the case, although for some reason when you use the external view the handling is particularly poor, with the car seemingly rotating about its centre in a wholly unconvincing fashion. If this is the view you prefer to use when playing driving games then you might be advised to steer clear. However, in the time-honoured cockpit view, it's *Chequered Flag* (*A Spectrum classic – Ed*) all over again, with the sensation of speed and motion enough to have your sphincter contracting on a regular basis.

Far more of a simulation than an arcade experience, the game is packed with some excruciatingly dull vehicle set-up stuff, much of which can thankfully be bypassed in favour of some default set-ups. As per usual, all manner of driving aids can be taken advantage of, catering for everyone from Michael Schumacher to Richie Shoemaker, and once you've found your level it's an extremely absorbing experience.

While Crammond is tweaking, EA has stolen a march and delivered a perfectly playable Formula One game, as long as you've got a fast PC. Unless you've got a P450 at the very least we wouldn't touch this game. First-corner slow-down makes the game almost unplayable. PCZ

"F1 anoraks will lap it up, revelling in the authentic teams, including the new Jaguar outfit and the BMW/Williams, as well as the freshly installed US Grand Prix"

Races are action-packed affairs, and the illusion of being part of an ongoing Grand Prix is maintained throughout, with some frantic battles taking place, no matter how far down the field you are.

IN PERSPECTIVE

F1 2000 is the only game currently available to feature this season's drivers and teams, which gives it an edge, but the Eidos offering pips it at the chequered flag.

F1 2000

Grand Prix Legends

Monaco Racing Simulation

F1 World Grand Prix

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS This season's data • No Murray Walker • In-built grabber • Melinda Messenger's in it

DOWNERS External view not great • Graphics could be better • Need a ninja system to play it

75 It's right here, right now

F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX

£34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

Steve Hill is still going round in circles

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb of RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb D3D accelerator card **WE SAY** They're living in a dream world, and it just about gets by with a P400, 64Mb of RAM and a decent 12Mb card

With the Grand Prix season now a constant blight on ITV's schedules, Eidos have thrown their helmet into the ring with this advanced simulation of... last year's action. This is an anomaly that seems to only affect Grand Prix games and, as has been mentioned before, the long-awaited *GP3* is a further year behind, being based around the 1998 season. With *F1 2000* bang up to date, what this means is that the devout Grand Prix fan (with more money than sense) will soon be able to play the last three seasons in chronological order.

Obviously, you'd have to be sick in the head to do this, but if you're not arsed about the latest teams and tracks, *F1 World Grand Prix* is a perfectly good simulation. In fact the game incorporates data from last year's season to determine how competitiveness the respective teams are, although this can be randomised if desired.

> **"There's no information from the pit crew as to who is ahead or behind you – you're pretty much left to your own devices"**

Graphically, *F1WGP* may lack the almost perverse authenticity of Geoff Crammond's GP titles, but at 200mph you're hardly going to notice if a piece of brickwork is the wrong shade. F1 is more about handling, and the *F1WGP* cars move in a particularly satisfying manner. Taking a very televisual stance, there are a host of camera angles to choose from, including the third-person view preferred non-drivers. Unlike *F1 2000*, this works perfectly well, although for more in-your-face action, a variety of cockpit modes are included, probably the most manageable being above the helmet, thus enabling you to see your driver's head bucking about violently. Although for absolute authenticity, there is also a visor view with a blue filter, which is frankly terrifying.

BOREDOM, BOREDOM

In a man's life, it is said, he will only play six proper games of Monopoly. The same can be said about Grand Prix races on the PC. There is so much tweaking to be done before you find a level that suits you, it can often be easier to switch the PC off and go and do something less boring instead.

Also, if the race is too long, you'll give up; if it's too easy you'll get bored; if the damage mode is too sensitive you'll get sick of constant pit stops, and so on. However, when it all comes together, it's a beautiful thing, and *F1 World Grand Prix* is more than capable of capturing the drama of what is allegedly the world's most glamorous sport.

It's not perfect by any means. There's no information from the pit crew as to who is ahead or behind you – you're pretty much left to your own devices, with the radio only crackling into life when you've broken a lap record.

In *F1WGP*'s favour, there are some superior elements to *F1 2000*, although an argument for the opposite could also be upheld. Both are perfectly playable F1 games, although we suspect that the best is yet to come. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

Another decent F1 game, well worth considering if you're not hung up on this season's competition.

F1 2000

Grand Prix Legends

Monaco Racing Simulation

F1 World Grand Prix

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Detailed graphics • Authentic engine sounds

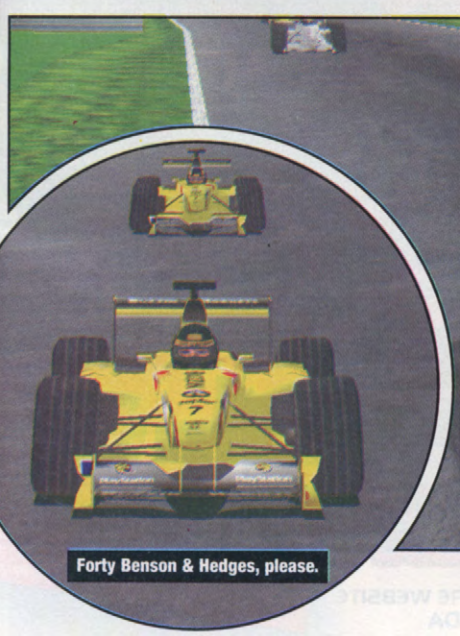
DOWNERS Last season's data • Limited pit crew interaction

78 Formula Won

The television style banner gives the game an official look.

The visor view – arse-clenchingly scary.

The classic *Chequered Flag* view in full effect.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Move over Ferrari, and make room for the Bensons.

The diagonal lens flare makes its debut.

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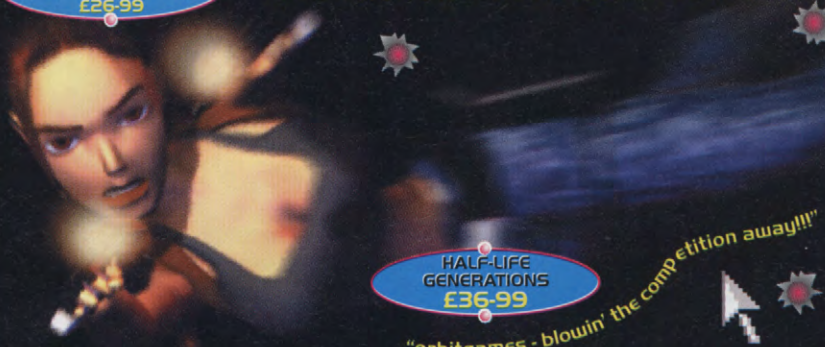

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UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEASON 1999/2000

£34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

We hand you over to *Steve Hill* for a full commentary on tonight's game

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P233 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb 3D video card (DirectX 7.0a compatible) **WE SAY** Still fairly sluggish with a P400 and 64Mb of RAM

With the Champions League simmering nicely towards its climax, Eidos knocks out the now annual version of its 'other' football game with typically skillful timing.

As regular readers will know, it began its relatively short life as *World League Soccer*, survived an unsuccessful Michael Owen endorsement, and emerged as a passable representation of arguably club football's most prestigious tournament, undergoing some incremental changes along the way. Although this is a despicable way to 'develop' a game, it's one the foundations of the games industry is built upon, and one that has seen the *FIFA* series emerge as the front-runner of the football genre.

So what has Eidos done this time round? Obviously, this season's data has been included, so in come Chelsea with further English interest again provided by Manchester United and the hapless Arsenal, whose ill-fated decision to play home games at Wembley is reflected here.

As for cosmetic changes, the player models have been marginally improved, as have the stadiums, although having said that, Frank LeBoeuf sports a full head of hair and the tunnel at Wembley has been mysteriously relocated to the halfway line.

WIZARD'S SLEEVE

This provincial sloppiness could possibly be overlooked if the action on the pitch was spot-on, but unfortunately it's far from it.

The developers have allegedly listened to some reviewers who apparently claimed that last year's incarnation was too difficult and lacking in fun. Big mistake. There's no such thing as too difficult – you're just not trying hard enough – and fun is hardly a quantifiable constant.

> **"In this game, goals are so plentiful it's more like playing basketball"**

In making the game easier, Eidos has destroyed one of the fundamental elements of football. The reason football supporters take leave of their senses when their team score is that it is such a rare phenomenon, representing one second of delirium in an otherwise nerve-racking 90 minutes. *In UEFA 99/00*, goals are so plentiful it's more like playing basketball. With marking about as tight as a wizard's sleeve and goalkeepers with proverbial chocolate wrists, every game becomes a goal-fest.

Even in simulation mode on the hardest setting, we managed regularly to score at least seven goals in one five minute game, often conceding a similar amount. There's no point getting upset at letting a goal in when you can simply score straight from the kick off, and any tension and excitement is lost as the goals stack up.

Which is a shame. There are some nice touches in the game, although the reality is you'll never use them when it's this easy to score. Somewhere in there there's a decent game trying to get out, but this isn't it. PM

IN PERSPECTIVE

Apart from the Champions League licence, there is very little to recommend this game over the current crop of football titles, and Eidos would have been better off releasing a data disc for last year's game.

FIFA 2000

Actua Soccer 3

International Football 2000

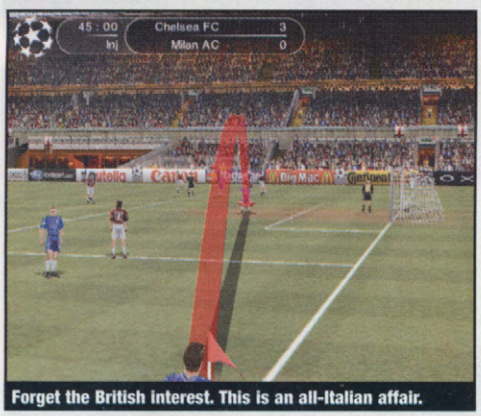
UEFA Champions League 99/00

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Top theme tune • Reasonably authentic • Passable graphics • Clive Tyldesley

DOWNERS Far too many goals • Irksome team management • Bizarre refereeing • Ropey video footage • Poor set pieces • Kevin Keegan • Bob Wilson

58 It's football, Jimmy, but not as we know it



Forget the British interest. This is an all-Italian affair.

Unless the referee is set to 'blind' there are a freaky amount of penalties.

Here we go again, straight from the kick off.

A familiar sight as the ball strums the back of the onion bag yet again.

Is that a gun in your shorts or are you just pleased to score?

Is it red? It surely is, the fact annoyingly announced before the ref reaches for his pocket.

GUNSHIP!

£34.99 • Hasbro Interactive • Out now

After what seems like an eternity, *Paul Presley* ducks under virtual rotor blades to review one of MicroProse's final attempts to rule the flight sim genre

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P266 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** As always a 3D card is a plus, as is a PII and about 128Mb RAM

Dear oh dear oh dear. MicroProse, what the hell happened? The world and his wife have been waiting for *Gunship!* to hit the streets (*skies – Ed*) and you give us *this*! It barely qualifies as alpha code, let alone a finished game worthy of release.

Before we continue, a spot of background info: *Gunship!* is the third instalment of what is perhaps the most respected helicopter sim series the industry has ever known. The first *Gunship* appeared during the 8-bit Spectrum and C64 days. *Gunship 2000* gave 16-bit owners a taste of the same and was one of the first titles to make effective use of wingmen and squadron-based tactics.

Gunship! is supposed to take us to the next level, simulating three different helicopters (including the brand new Eurocopter) and is going to be compatible with the forthcoming *Tank Platoon!*. One slight problem – MicroProse appears to have forgotten to finish it.

SO VERY BAD

Let us give you some examples of how inexplicably bad *Gunship!* is. At the start of every mission, you'll not only already be in mid-flight (despite numerous indications in both the manual and the in-game training voice-overs that you'll start on the ground at your base), but for some reason your helicopter will be spinning madly. You practically have to start flying the thing before it's even loaded just to get it under control.

Then there's the flight model. Throughout development we were led to believe *Gunship!* would be a hardcore sim. Since when can helicopters travelling at 100knots spin on a dime? Why can we hit the ground at speed and just bounce back up into the air – even on the most realistic damage settings?

Now we've seen how unrealistic it can be, MicroProse has started claiming it was making a *fun* sim instead. One aimed at the casual crowd. Which begs the question why so many sections of the game are so unintuitive you'd need a Master's degree in logic to understand them? Why do we have to press more than six keys just to select a waypoint (and why does it delete them along the way)? Why are we told a campaign mission is over before we've even got to the first target, only to be told we've failed and have to play it over again just to progress (there are no dynamic campaigns here, just a linked series of single missions)? And why is there practically no control over your wingmen?

"Try telling the computer-controlled pilot to turn while you're controlling the navigator. It won't happen"

Also several of the commands and key controls don't work – at all. Try telling the computer-controlled pilot to turn while you're controlling the navigator. It won't happen. He'll say he's doing it, but it won't happen. Half the communication menu options have no effect either (several even differ from the options listed in the excuse for a manual). Not only that, but the frame rate drops as soon as you bring a menu up.

Also, whenever you change views or bring up the navigational map, the computer AI takes control of your helicopter and starts flying you off in seemingly random directions, even when you've turned auto-hover on – annoying when you're trying to stay undetected from the enemy.

IN PERSPECTIVE

The waiting is over and the verdict is in. If it's helicopters you want, get *Comanche Hokum* (and the compatible *Apache Havoc* if possible – Empire really needs to release a double pack with these two, hint, hint). *Gunship!* is just too flawed to make sense.

Comanche Hokum

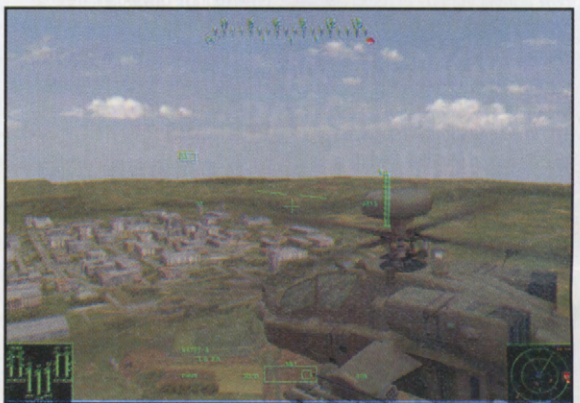
Team Alligator

Apache Havoc

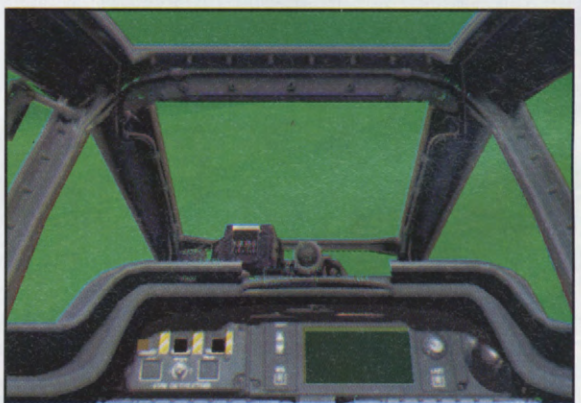
Gunship!

The Eurocopter is sadly limited to German troops.

The Hokum is the third heli on offer, although they handle the same.



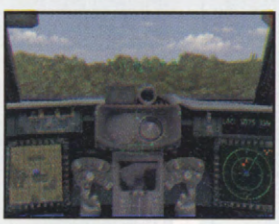
The terrain is very nicely handled, especially city areas.



The night vision mode is handy for, er, night flying.

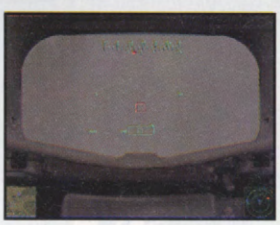
LET'S GO TANK TIPPING

How to kill the enemy in four easy steps...



Sitting in the co-pilot's seat, your radar suddenly becomes alive with enemy activity...

...you zoom in and find a Russian tank going about its business.



Lock on target, fire a missile, wipe the smoke from your tear-streaked eyes...

...and BOOM! One less commie pinko subversive oppressing the world.

The tree-top experience is the best we've encountered. Pity really.

If only it played as nicely as it looks.

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

What makes it all so annoying is that you can tell, buried deep down under all this, there's a nice game screaming to break free. Graphically it's nothing short of astonishing with a much grittier and more realistic style than most sims. Even better, someone has finally managed to create a decent 'tree-top' experience in a helicopter sim. OK, the trees are a bit two-dimensional, but there are lots of them and skimming across their tops, watching tanks driving through the forest below you is an experience second to none.

The co-pilot/gunner's role is well handled too (providing you can get the pilot to respond to your orders), making great use of the targeting systems and infra-red modes. The enemy units all behave in realistic manners, responding to your attacks by darting in and out of cover, dropping smoke grenades to cover their tracks and manoeuvring for position. The battle editor is also very nice, allowing for the creation of truly complex ground wars.

It's just so damn annoying that all of these really nice aspects are hindered by such shoddy execution of the actual simulation. There is no way the game's myriad of problems should have got past the play-testing team and the whole thing smacks of a rush job by the publisher. Why this has happened is somewhat of a mystery. Hoping to catch that important end-of-Lent audience? Of course the more cynical amongst us would probably suggest it was an attempt to pre-empt the imminent US release of the superior *Comanche Havoc*.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

Of course, even MicroProse's flight sims are rarely one-shot deals anymore. Take *Falcon 4.0*. Initially it was a game full of promise and energy, but one that was fundamentally flawed in execution. Half a year on, and, thanks to excessive patching, it's finally reached a state that lives up to its earlier ambition and is one of the best out there.

Will the same happen to *Gunship!*? While we can't recommend buying it in its present state, there's certainly enough readily identifiable promise underneath all the problems to suggest keeping your eye on **www.ibeta.com** (the same unofficial team that made *Falcon 4.0* live once more) to see what develops. There's unlikely to be much support from Hasbro who's made it clear that once *Tank Platoon!* and *B-17 2* are out of the way, that's it for simulations from the MicroProse label.

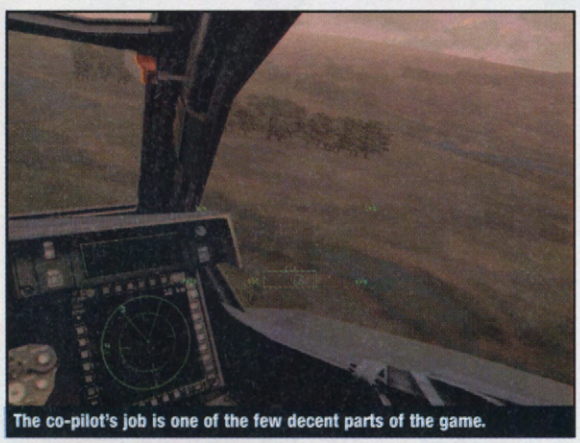
Last month we suggested waiting to see what *Gunship!* offered before buying *Comanche Hokum*. Now we have no hesitation in recommending Empire's superb offering. It's easily the best out there and, if anything, *Gunship!* has made it look even better. Anyone with an interest in either helicopters or dynamic campaign engines should rush out and get a copy. We can only hope that *B-17 2* sees MicroProse's simulation era go out on a high. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Has a realistic visual style
• Co-pilot duty can be fun

DOWNERS How long have you got?

49 A terrible end to the series


The co-pilot's job is one of the few decent parts of the game.

The campaign overview, replete with NATO icons that no one understands.

The 3D models are very nice, almost photo-realistic.

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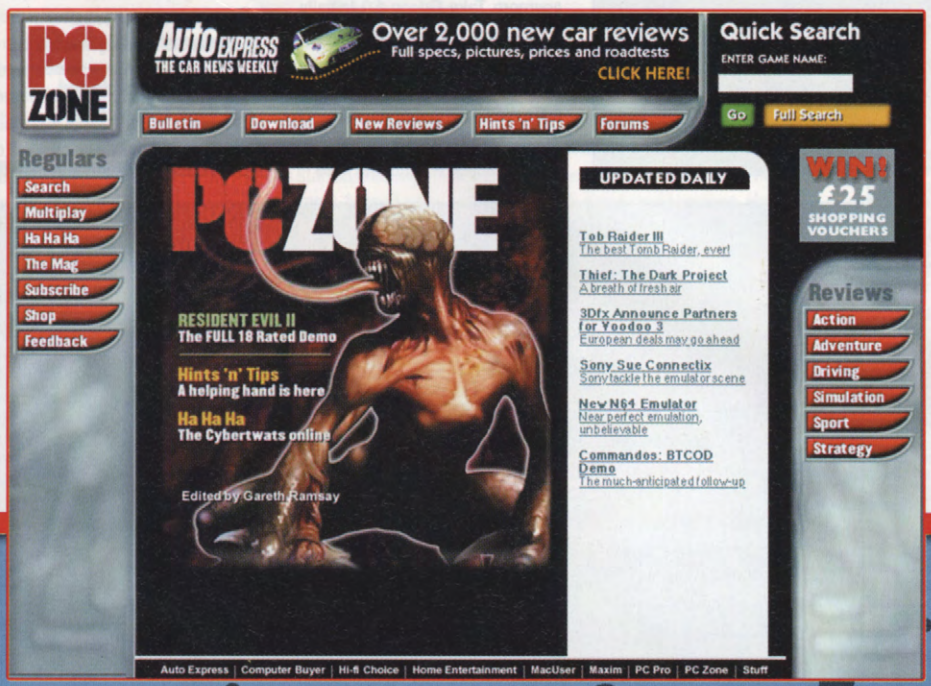

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NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000

£34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out Now

There's nothing like driving a Porsche to make people think you're a tosser. *Steve Hill* doesn't need any help

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb 3D accelerator **WE SAY** P400, 64Mb RAM, 8Mb 3D accelerator

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

IN PERSPECTIVE

Top-notch racing allied to a bit of good old fashioned police baiting puts this in good company. *Midtown Madness* is still our favourite but it's a close call.

Midtown Madness

Driver

NFS Porsche 2000

Breakneck

In the rarefied world of unnecessarily expensive vehicles, few cars simultaneously announce their owner's wealth and insecurity louder than a Porsche. It's the ultimate tosser's car, you might as well just drive around with a sticker proclaiming: "Look at me, I'm extremely rich, yet desperately unsatisfied." Porsche certainly has a rich heritage though, dating back some 50 years and the majority of it is covered here.

As the name might suggest, the game is fully Porsched up, featuring over 80 models, dating from a time when hair products were flammable, right up to the modern day, and even into the future. So far, so Porsche. However, car fetishists notwithstanding, there has to be action if anyone's going to hand over money for the game. So, in the absence of any sporting event to hang the game on, they've gone for a pseudo-RPG affair, albeit thankfully without trolls or wizards.

The range of cars is ably demonstrated in the game's so-called Evolution mode, where you start off in the '50s with a pocketful of cash, and an array of new and used cars for you to spend it on. Tournaments can be entered, prize money can be won, and cars can be replaced in a chronological fashion as you become more successful.

As the screen shots below suggest, it's a splendid looking game and the handling is also spot on, with noticeable differences between the various Porsches. In Porsche's favour, it hasn't been prissy about its cars being wrecked, unlike some manufacturers who insist there's no visible damage to their precious vehicles. The Porsches can be mangled freely and the damage does affect how well the cars handle, without it being too annoying.

> **"The Factory Driver mode manages to find a near perfect balance between being challenging and infuriating"**

911 IS A JOKE

If we're honest, *NFSP*'s a bit dull to start with as the early models are only capable of about 60mph, making it more of a cruise in the country than a nail-biting race. There is still a modicum of skill involved as, with the cars' woeful acceleration, one spin can effectively put you out of the running. It gets a bit more interesting in the '60s though, with the cars carrying a little more purchase, and the thrills increase through the eras with more modern cars becoming available on a performance-related basis. However, if you don't have the patience to progress through the ranks, one-off races are available, with the majority of cars on offer.

DRIVE SHE SAID

That said, it's only another racing game, but the factor that elevates *NFSP* above the other straightforward drives, is the excellent Factory Driver mode, where you join the Porsche racing team as a fresh-faced test driver. Progressing from weaving through cones and performing handbrake turns, you are soon needed to tear across town to deliver a Porsche in a given time, while avoiding traffic and the police (who also drive Porsches). This mode manages to find a near perfect balance between challenging and infuriating, and will have you endlessly slapping the keyboard for another go.

Overall, *NFSP* is a belter of a game, with a couple of nice touches to make it stand out from the crowd. Not bad, them Porsches. PCZ

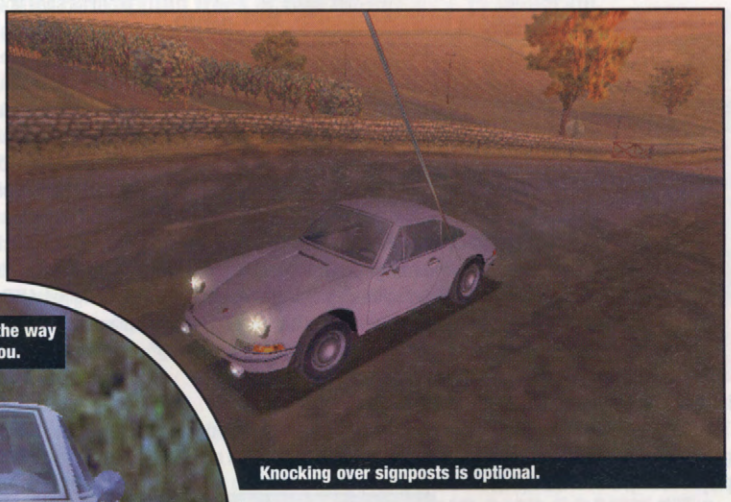
PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Top factory mode • Great handling • Detailed graphics • Loads of cars • Built-in grabber

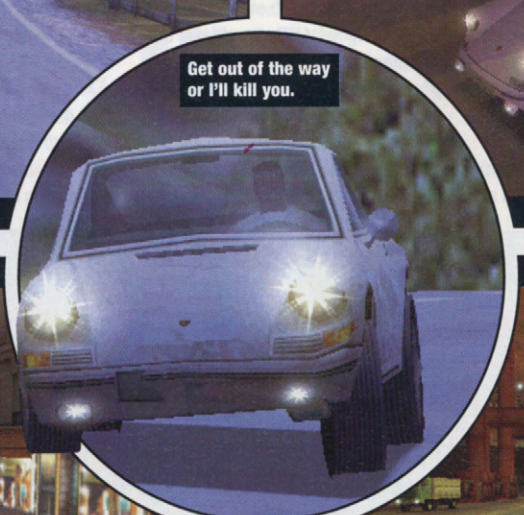
DOWNERS Not that many tracks • Races can get spread out

80 Cheaper than a Porsche

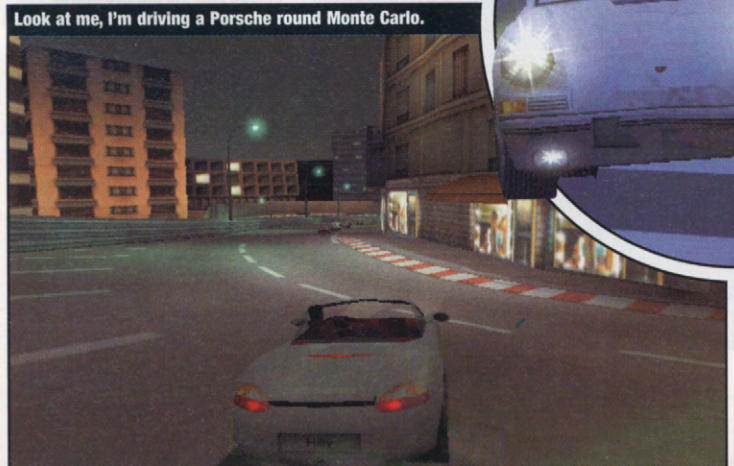
An old car, from when hair products were flammable.



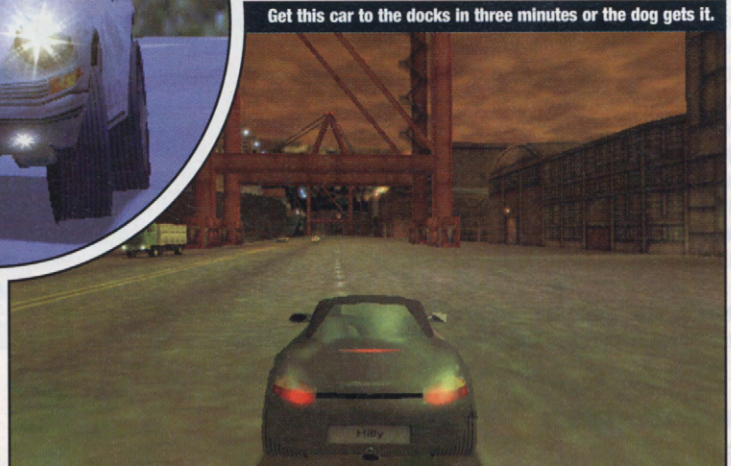
Knocking over signposts is optional.



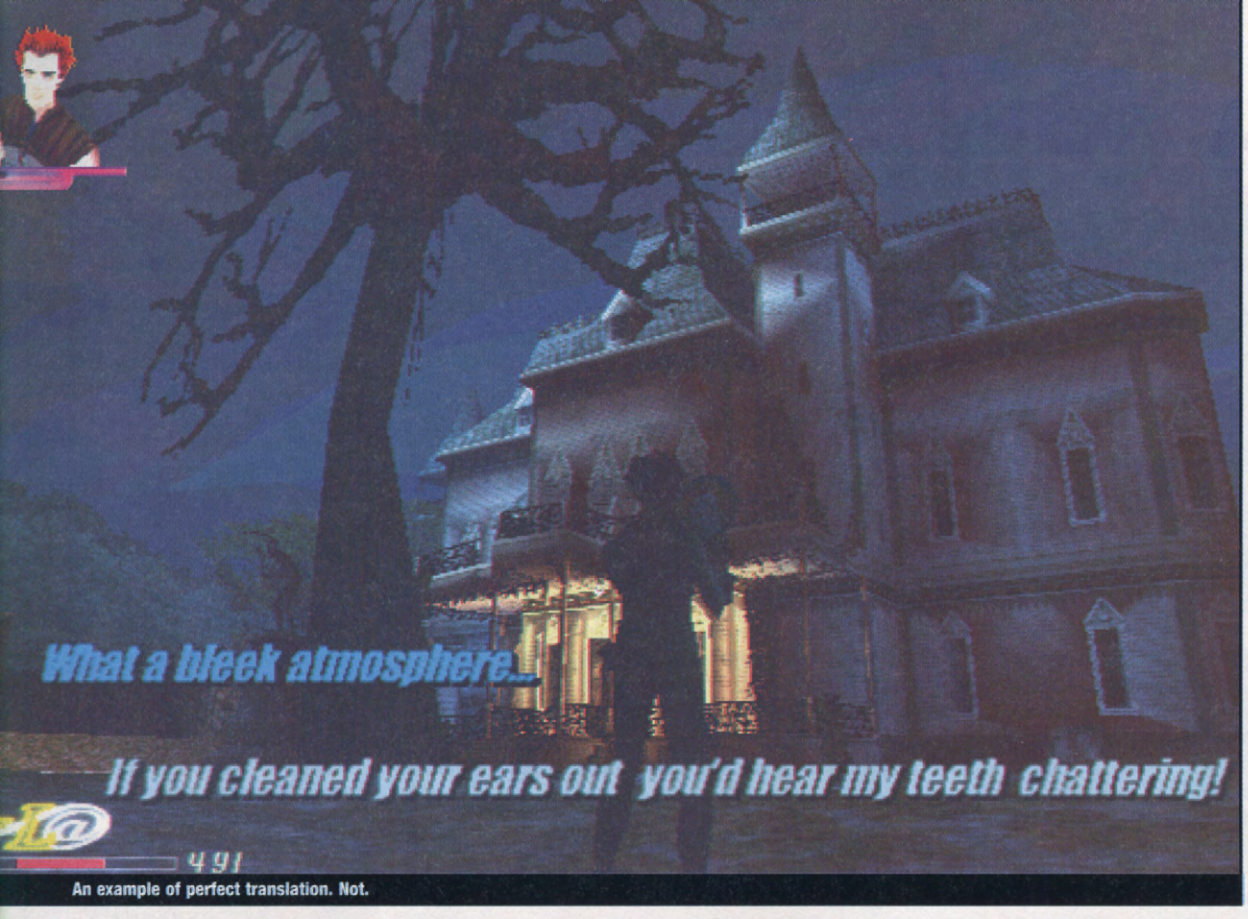
Get out of the way or I'll kill you.



Look at me, I'm driving a Porsche round Monte Carlo.



Get this car to the docks in three minutes or the dog gets it.



An example of perfect translation. Not.

Like *Thriller* except Michael Jackson isn't in it. Thankfully.

You won't catch me marching down there.

THE DEVIL INSIDE

£34.99 • Cryo • Out now

Nothing to do with *The Devil In Miss Jones*, this is a weird French horror game. We gave it to *Charlie Brooker* and he wrote this...

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P200 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D accelerator card **SUPPORTS** Windows 98/2000, DirectX 7 **WE SAY** We experienced problems running the game with a Riva TNT – check you have the latest drivers

Now here's an odd one. *The Devil Inside* plopped out of the mind of Hubert Chabrot, creator of the infamous horror 'em up *Alone In The Dark*, one of the creepiest games this reviewer has ever played. Sadly, the *AITD* sequels suffered from an increased reliance on vaguely sinister whimsy as opposed to the raw, there-goes-my-underwear unpleasantness of the original, which went straight for the jugular by keeping the premise simple (you wander into a haunted house and very, very bad things start to happen almost immediately).

Apart from causing grown men to relieve themselves in front of their monitors, *AITD* also 'inspired' the original *Resident Evil*, in much the same way *Star Wars* inspired *Battlestar Galactica*.

Anyway, *The Devil Inside* revisits some of Chabrot's favourite territory – the increasingly sinister haunted mansion – and does it in a most intriguing way. The unlikely premise sees you controlling a future-world cable TV reporter called Dave, whose haircut makes him faintly reminiscent of whatsername out of the Swedish band Aqua. He is also blessed with the ability to transform himself into an occult dominatrix named Deva, for reasons beyond the realm of normal human understanding. Lest we forget, the original *AITD* allowed you to play as a man or a woman; this time round you're *both*.

Anyhow, Dave's the star turn on a show called *Devil Inside*, a kind of televisual cross between *The Cook Report* and *The Blair Witch Project*. The idea is that Dave leaps headfirst into ultra-violent paranormal crime scenes, with the resultant frights and fights introduced and MCed live on air by a cheesy host (named, unhilariously, Jack T Ripper).

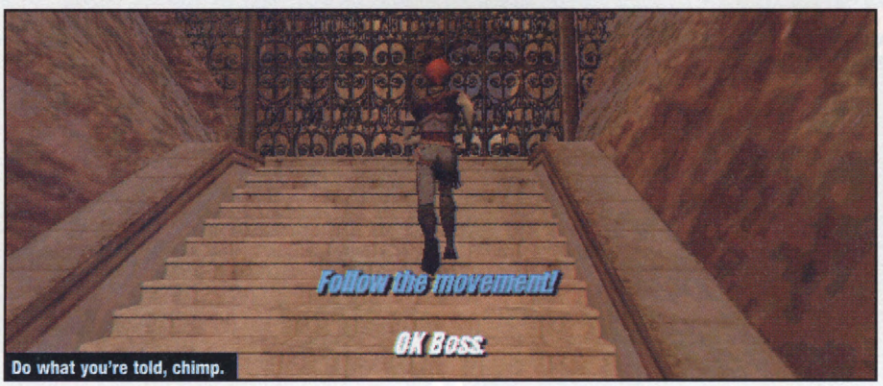
"You control a future-world cable TV reporter called Dave, who can transform into an occult dominatrix named Deva"

EAT STATIC

The game itself is a bizarre blend of *Tomb Raider*, *MDK*, and *Resident Evil* with one very peculiar addition – the team of cameramen that constantly shadow your every move. The programmers have cleverly included little touches that make it all 'feel' just like a real live TV show – bursts of static, clumsy zooms, moments where the character breaks out of the frame.

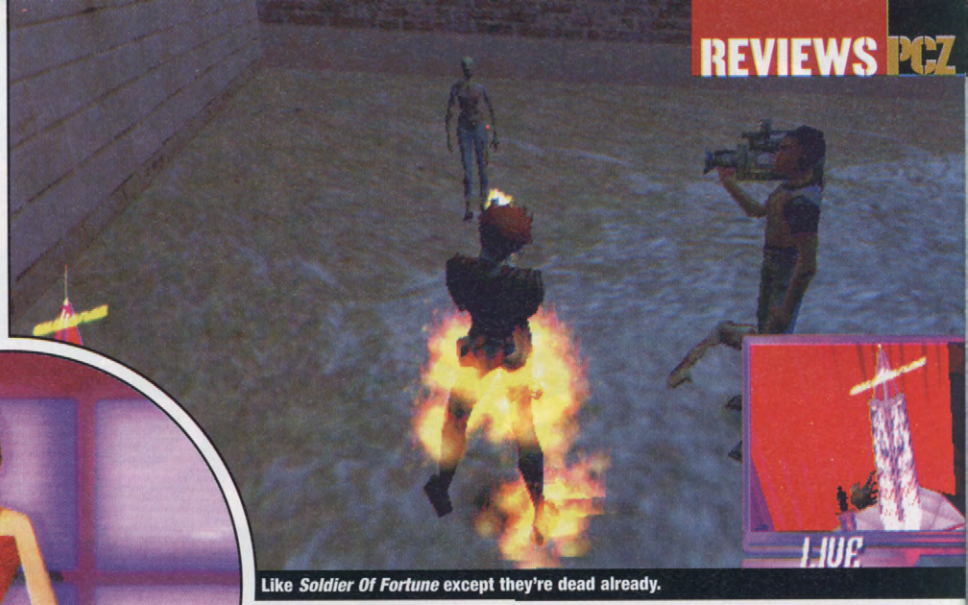
It's hard to convey why in words, but it adds to the chill-factor considerably (particularly when, say, you're creeping up a narrow staircase with a gun in your hand hearing the sound of a groaning zombie coming ever closer, and the picture starts breaking up). We've already mentioned *The Blair Witch Project*, but it's worth mentioning again, because it shares something of the same kind of spookiness. Which is a very good thing.

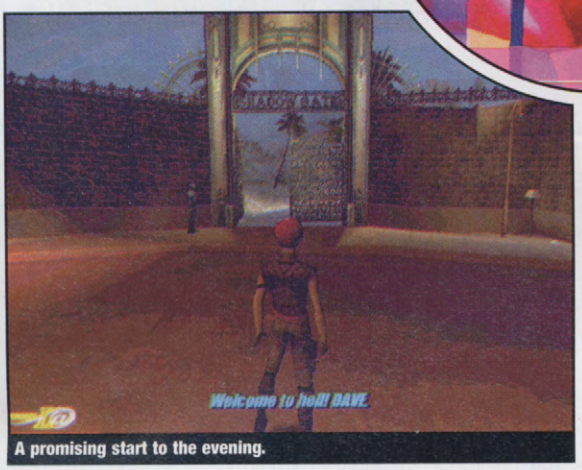
Still, there are glaring problems. For starters, beneath the postmodern glitz, it's essentially a simple arcade-style game, albeit one with puzzles and inventories to worry about.



Do what you're told, chimp.

It's mincemeat time.


Like *Soldier Of Fortune* except they're dead already.



A promising start to the evening.

It's the Dale Winton from Hell.

Worse still, it takes quite a while to become scary; the opening level, set outside the mansion itself, is quite weak and unfocused.

But the biggest problem are the controls: they're a bit more rubbish than is necessary. A combination of mouse and keyboard, à la *MDK*, is the order of the day, and it leads to a strangely detached feel (Dave/Deva's curious reluctance to strafe from side-to-side while moving forward doesn't help either). Aiming weapons can prove infuriatingly problematic, despite the default laser-sighting: killing even close-up, is often stupidly hard.

OHH, THAT'S NOT FAIR

It's a shame really, because these errors (which could have been ironed out) seriously detract from what is otherwise a bizarre and compelling blend of horror, tongue-in-cheek comedy, and arcade gameplay.

If you can get hold of a copy cheaply, then for God's sake give it a spin, because it *is* worth a look, merely as a rare example of raw originality in action. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

You want horror? You want gnawing unease and terrifying shocks to the system? Then plug in your PC and try one of the following pant-wetting, nerve-fraying titles, rated here in terms of scariness alone. Just don't turn off the lights…

Alone In The Dark

The Devil Inside

Realms Of The Haunting

System Shock 2

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Really rather scary in places • Original • Spooky camera effects • Great graphics

DOWNERS Rubbish controls • Takes a while to get going • It is a bit simple

70 *The Blair Witch Project* meets *Tomb Raider*

WE ARE GOING TO EAT YOU

The Devil Inside **features hundreds – yes *hundreds* – of undead flesh-eating zombies. And they're *proper zombies*, ones that shuffle about groaning, not silly ones that hide behind trees or ride motorbikes. To celebrate, we're printing the hallowed Four Laws Of Proper Zombies**

1) ZOMBIES ARE STUPID

Proper zombies are basically motorised eating machines, incapable of making rational decisions. They never hide or duck when you start shooting at them, and will continue to shuffle towards you even if you've just shot their leg off. Still, what do you expect? Their brains are decomposing. If they had the intelligence to, say, do sums, they'd go and get a job in a bank instead of shambling around wearing tatty clothes, going "gnnnnuuuuhhh" and getting shot at all the time.

2) ZOMBIES AREN'T VERY AGILE.

Proper zombies can't break into a run or manipulate complex objects. Blame rigor mortis. In case you think this doesn't make them very scary, think again: the whole point of zombies is that, what they lack in physical aptitude they make up for in sheer numbers.

3) ZOMBIES CAN ONLY BE KILLED BY A HEAD-SHOT

The Devil Inside **zombies occasionally break this rule, which is a pity, but more often than not they adhere to the basic principle: the brain is the engine that drives the zombie bus. Since the zombie's body is already dead, hacking it in two with a chainsaw won't dampen its bloodlust – it can still drag itself along with its arms. Only by destroying the grey matter can you destroy the monster itself. For a vivid demonstration of this rule, see George A Romero's *Day Of The Dead*, in which a zombie has the top half of its head sliced off by a man wielding a spade. As our hero makes his escape, the zombie's eyes continue darting around in what's left of the skull – brain's still intact, y'see.**

Think this counts as a head-shot?

4) ZOMBIES ARE PATHETIC, AMUSING AND SCARY AT THE SAME TIME

We're glad to report that the *Devil Inside* zombies follow this, the strictest of all zombie laws. Zombies look pitiful with their grubby clothes and clumsy mannerisms. Then, when you blow half their limbs off, they look hilarious as they dutifully keep on moving. But no matter how hard you laugh, there's always an uneasy tension – deep down, you know, sooner or later, your going to run out of ammo, or you'll find yourself surrounded, and bingo – funny Mister Groany-guts is suddenly noshing the contents of your forehead. Now that's frightening.

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TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2000

£34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out Now

Can you believe *Keith Pullin* actually plays golf for real? He'll be wearing slippers and smoking a pipe next, the old git

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P233 **Memory** 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** 64Mb RAM

Poor Mr Woods. As we speak he's putting backwards and forwards across what can only be described as the side of a mountain. He is 12 shots over par after 15 holes on the final day of the tournament, and he looks miffed. He needn't be, because he's still bloody winning.

Now, when we say this game is *difficult* – you'd better believe it. Tee-shots and fairway shots are fine, but putting? That's another story entirely. Everything has to be taken into account from the speed of the greens to the lateral and vertical slope, and even wind. In short, it's the cruellest, most unforgiving experience ever. On the plus side, it's just like real life.

"If you ignore the putting, the customisable options on *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000* make it the perfect game for armchair golf fanactics of any standard"

HELP ME!

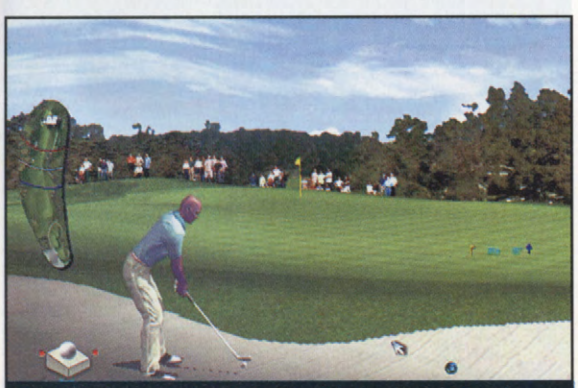
If you ignore the putting for a moment, there's no denying that the customisable options on *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000* make it the perfect game for armchair golf fanatics of any standard.

Play on amateur setting and you'll get a fairly respectable score after just two or three rounds. Not that you're doing it alone though; a variety of playing aids (including direction arrows and power help) ease you into the groove, plus a decent in-game commentary gives you some surprisingly useful tips – 'straight from the experts'.

Making the leap from amateur to professional level is not so easy. Only when you finish in the top half of the qualifying event do you gain a place on the PGA Tour, so be prepared to put in some serious hours, especially on the putting green…

On top of the usual single-player tournaments and handy practice modes, there are different types of games, including matchplay, fourballs, foursomes and even pro-celebrity matches with Michael Jordan of all people. All these choices can be enjoyed over a LAN or the Internet – extraordinary effort has been put into creating an excellent online championship featuring regular events and prizes.

The number of courses is pretty respectable too; there are eight of the buggers in total including Pebble Beach, Sawgrass and Heron Bay. If that's not enough, you can always use the architect to design your own course from hell – although it's not quite as easy to use as the one in *PGA CG*.



Michael Jordan on his day off. He doesn't look quite right though…

IN PERSPECTIVE

Tiger Woods 2000 is doubtlessly better than its predecessor and has made improvements in all the right places. That said, there's still work to be done and *PGA Championship Golf* is still the best simulation currently on the market – but the *Tiger Woods* series is getting closer.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2000

LINKS LS2000

CLICKING HELL

There are problems with *Tiger Woods 2000* and they tend to centre on the 'tri-click' control method. This wouldn't be so much of a problem if the alternative 'pro' swing worked better, but the sweeping left to right mouse movement simply doesn't cut it.

Ultimately, it leaves you with no choice but to attempt to master the lightning-quick tri-click. If you can suss it out, you'll have yourself a near faultless golfing game.

Other areas need work too. Ambient sound is a little on the sparse side (there is hardly any crowd noise) and in the graphics department some of the backgrounds are a bit blocky.

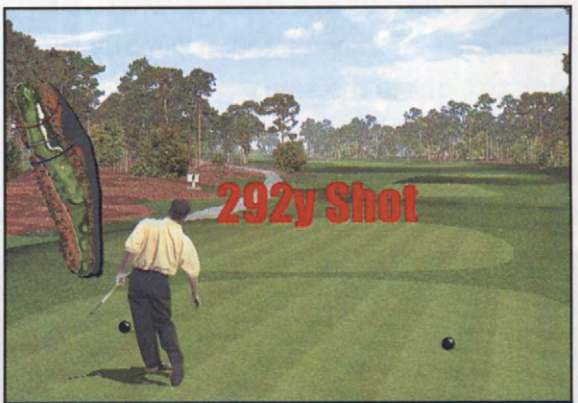
Still, when it comes to the crunch these are minor points and generally don't detract from what is, on the whole, a great golf simulation. It's Electronic Arts' best golf game yet, but hopefully *Tiger Woods 2001* will be even better. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

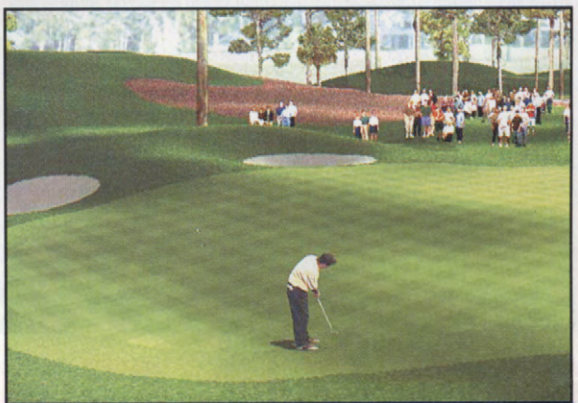
UPPERS Extremely customisable
- Suitable for all gamers
- Good multiplayer choices
- Course architect

DOWNERS Average graphics • Poor ambient sound • Putting is ludicrously difficult

77 **Second on the leaderboard**

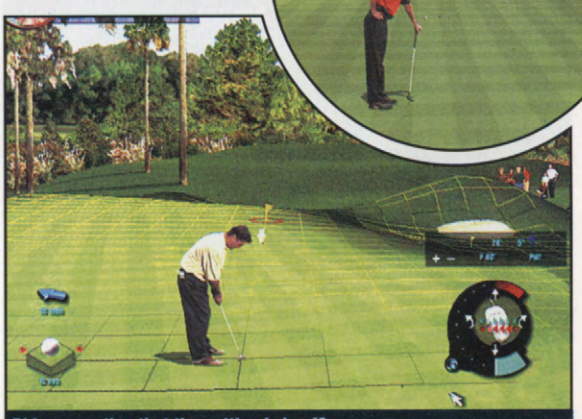


It's fairly easy to smack the ball 300 yards or so from the tee.



The greens are far from being flat.

The ridiculous pro-swing – try it at your peril.



Did we mention that the putting is hard?

PLAYER MANAGER 2000

£34.99 • Anco • Out now

***Steve Hill* suffers yet another penalty kick straight to the soul**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P300, 64Mb RAM, 3D accelerator for match action

The football management genre is littered with the corpses of pretenders to the crown, and last year's *Player Manager Season 98-99* was one of the more fetid. So badly bugged as to be unplayable, it's a disgrace the game was ever released in the state it was – regularly crashing when in Live Action mode.

When this was pointed out, a spokesperson for the developer Anco said they didn't think anyone would use it, a frankly staggering lapse of logic. It's the bonus of being able to speed up the dull parts with the press of a key.

FANTASY FOOTBALL

As any right-thinking football fan will confirm, the major value of this type of game is taking the helm of the team you support and attempting to replicate or better their success.

In this reviewer's case, saddled with the sometimes unbearable weight of supporting the mighty Chester, it's not hard. That said, the Chester City of *Player Manager 2000* is a very

"While the Live Action mode is not exactly *FIFA 2000*, the Lowry-esque graphics are reasonably watchable"

equivalent of having live football on the television and expecting people to watch it on Ceefax with the sound turned off.

The match action mode is again available in *Player Manager 2000*, and we are pleased to report we experienced no problems with it. For those who prefer things a little more lo-fi, there is a text commentary option, as well as a bewildering scanner mode.

But if you're going to include a live action mode, you have to expect people to use it. And while it's not exactly *FIFA 2000*, the Lowry-esque graphics are reasonably watchable, with the different team from the one that turns out at Fortress Deva of a Saturday afternoon, and is not so much riddled with inaccuracies, as blessed with the occasional accuracy. The odd ratings quibble can be forgiven, but this is a farce. Examples? In real life, Luke Beckett is one of the third division's top scorers. In *PM2000*, I Beckett is a versatile defender. Likewise, the mercurial Manuel 'Wake Me Up Before You' Agogo, in real life a free-scoring, long-departed loan signing. In *PM2000* he's a cut price defender. And there's more… Michael Blackwood was a moderately talented midfielder we had on loan earlier in the season. In the confused world of *PM2000*, A Blackwood is first choice goalkeeper. There is actually an option in the game to retrain players for different positions, and Anco seems to have prematurely taken advantage of it

These inaccuracies are not just confined to Chester. Our resident Brighton & Hove Albion expert was brought in for consultation, and rapidly dismissed the squad as grossly inaccurate. Further up the league, things do improve, although having said that, a brief perusal of the Liverpool squad reveals the erratic Vladimir Smicer bizarrely valued higher than Michael Owen.

Nit-picking? Not really, as this is the very basis of the genre. It frankly beggars belief that a game can be so bizarrely inaccurate and show such a lack of respect and ambition. For Christ's sake, they could have simply got an office junior to copy the data from a vastly superior game. And we were trying not to mention *Championship Manager*… PM

IN PERSPECTIVE

We've said it before, and we'll say it again. If you want a near perfect simulation of football management, buy *Championship Manager*. If you want to piss about for an hour, buy any of the others.

Championship Manager

The FA Premier League Football Manager 2000

UEFA Manager 2000

Player Manager 2000

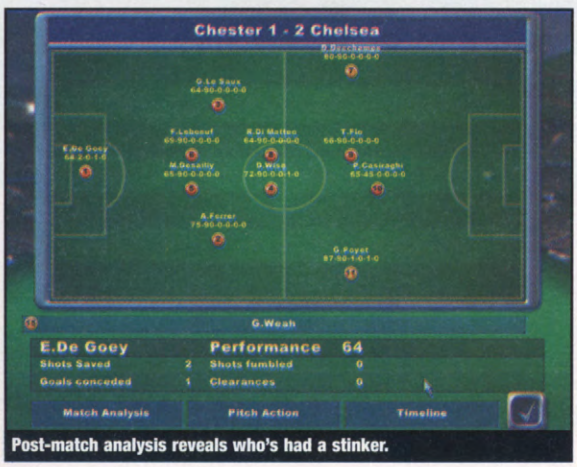
Football World Manager 2000

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Watchable match action • Doesn't crash

DOWNERS Grossly inaccurate data • Rudimentary graphics

54 **Repeat: must try harder**



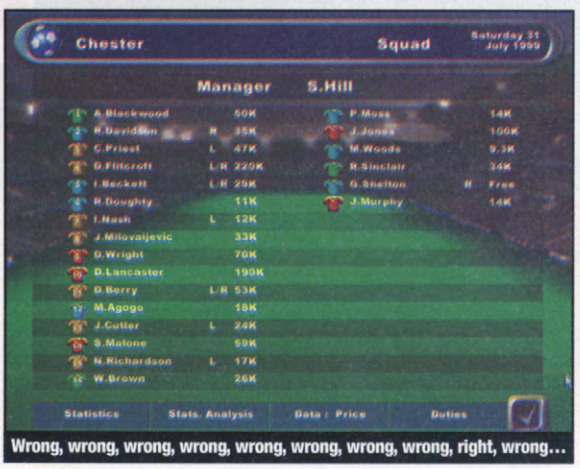
Post-match analysis reveals who's had a stinker.

The commentary mode, which is a bit cluttered.

According to experts, this is the best way to view tactics.

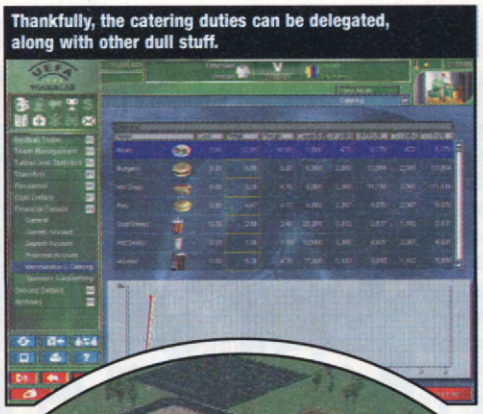
Good old Upton Park has had a bit of a facelift.

Chelsea surprise everyone by turning up in a red kit.



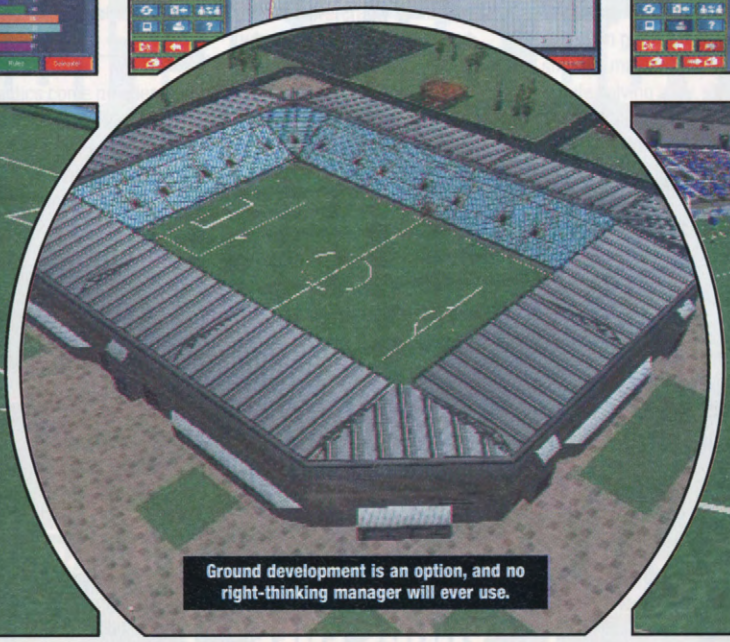
Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, right, wrong…

The tactics screen is fairly flexible, and is ideal for budding Andy Grays.


Thankfully, the catering duties can be delegated, along with other dull stuff.

All manner of training comedy can be brought into play, or not, as the case might be.

Coventry Vs Watford, only slightly more interesting than polyester slacks.


Ground development is an option, and no right-thinking manager will ever use.

Stockport County, home of Neanderthal man.

UEFA MANAGER 2000

£34.99 • Infogrames • Out May

More grist to the mill for *Steve Hill*

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** For 3D match action, you'll need a P333, 64Mb RAM and an 8Mb graphics card

IN PERSPECTIVE

Look, if you haven't worked it out by now, you're clearly some kind of simpleton. For the 100th time, if you want the best buy *Championship Manager*. If you can't be bothered to wade through the statistics then buy this or stick to watching Ceefax from your armchair.

Championship Manager

The FA Premier League Football Manager 2000

UEFA Manager 2000

Player Manager 2000

Football World Manager 2000

In a genre where one title is so dominant, it's a brave developer that attempts to take it on head-to-head. It's even braver when it's your first game, as is the case with *UEFA Manager 2000*, the debut title from developers Bubbal Systems Ltd. So, bar giving up immediately, what do you do?

For starters Bubbal has secured a UEFA licence, which in real terms is neither here nor there, although the game does enable you to select a club from nine different European countries, comprising some 20,000 players. There's a Career mode, you can simply pick your club, or take on one of eight scenarios, such as rescuing a team seemingly domed to relegation. The data is only mildly inaccurate, and for those with the time and the inclination there is an editor that enables you to update your squad yourself.

As some of the surrounding pictures suggest, they have gone for the 3D action style, something in common with every single management game apart from *CM*, something that has set us thinking. Perhaps this is why almost every other management game, by trying to do too much, falls on its arse. A bunch of animated gimps running around a pretend field is never going to match the power of the imagination, which is where *CM* wins out (as well as being superior in every aspect.)

SQUARE WINDOW

That said, it has a fairly powerful match engine, viewable either in a window or full screen, with a near infinite number of camera angles adjustable on the fly, enabling you to effectively chase the action around. The Highlights mode works fairly well, and lets you set what specific action you want to see, whether it's corners, shots on target, bookings, substitutions and so on. Or for the completist, you can view the match in its entirety. It's certainly not football, but it's vaguely watchable, providing you've got the telly on or something to read.

"It has a powerful match engine, viewable either in a window or full screen, with camera angles adjustable on the fly"

The interface is fairly cluttered, although hotkeys enable you to leap to relevant screens, and a comprehensive help section is available for the hard of thinking. And while you're mulling over tactics, some warbling orchestral music plays in the background, something that can be rectified by adding your own MP3 file. A nice touch, but no deal-breaker.

It's hard to review a management game without constantly harking back to *CM*, largely because it's hard to play one without thinking about it.

UEFA Manager 2000 does nothing drastically wrong, but simply fails to engage on anything like the same level. It's by no means a terrible game, but the fact remains that nobody at *PCZ* will ever play it again. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Eight varying scenarios • Four-player mode • Powerful editor • Delegate dull tasks • Add your own music

DOWNERS Disjointed • Average match action • Pie shop • It's not *CM*

60 Nice try. Next please

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THE LONGEST JOURNEY

£29.99 • Empire Interactive • Out now

This journey goes on and on and on and on – much like *Keith Pullin* does

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A PII 266 with 64Mb RAM to smooth the journey

The Longest Journey is aimed at the 'adult adventurer', which is slightly surprising considering its complete lack of horrific violence and sexually explicit material. We do get a glimpse of our heroine's ample arse occasionally, but let's face it, you'd have to be pretty sad to get turned on by a bit of digital rump. Anyway, she's wearing knickers.

The 'adult' tag is largely due to some interesting quirks you wouldn't generally associate with PC games – like your lesbian landlady and local gay policeman for a start. The liberal use of words like "s**t", "b******s", "w****r" and "f**k" is also a major factor. Apart from that, things are very subdued. Strangely, these blatant shock tactics come nowhere near the offensiveness of the actual plot itself, which is a shameless rip-off of *The NeverEnding Story*, albeit an extremely dull and laborious one.

> **"Switching between the inventory and main game area is very smooth, making trial and error puzzle solving a joy"**

JUMP AROUND

At the start of the game most of April's time is spent jumping between two staggeringly different worlds in a vain attempt to discover why she's having weird dreams. There's the planet Stark (April's homeworld), which has a kind of cosmopolitan *Bladerunner* feel to it, and Arcadia, which is much more... well, you know... magical and mysterious. All this world-hopping does get a bit tedious though, and you end up wishing the developers had stuck to just one planet – preferably Stark as that's where most of the action and 'adult' material lies.

The over-indulgent and pretentious script doesn't help things. There are long, droning speeches about something called The Balance and The Guardian, and magic discs and dragons and two worlds merging... It just goes on and on and on. Thankfully, you can hit the magic 'Esc' key to skip these immense monologues, which is a bloody good job considering there are four CDs of this gibberish. Worst of all, *The Longest Journey* tries really hard to be funny, but sadly the sarcasm is forced out in a stream of pointless puns.

TLJ has its good points. The interface is intuitive and fast, but, unlike *Grim Fandango*, characters won't turn their heads to look at something of interest. Switching between the inventory and main game area is also very smooth, making trial and error puzzle solving a joy, although some of the puzzles are a mite contrived. Talking to other characters is done through the usual multiple-choice options, though sometimes you have to ask questions about stuff you haven't even heard of.

BEAUTIFUL, BUT SHALLOW

TLJ boasts some absolutely amazing locations and expertly blends photo-realistic images to create a unique atmosphere. Unfortunately, this is tempered by the animation of April, which is extremely dull. All she really does is walk, go to bed and get up again. Charismatic? Not a chance.

If you're a fan of adventure games you might want to consider this, if only for its gorgeous backgrounds. On the other hand, if you've never played an adventure game, this is certainly not the place to start. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

Grim Fandango and *The Monkey Island* games are still the best adventures around. *Discworld Noir* is probably the best example of the kind of atmosphere they were looking to emulate in *The Longest Journey* but sadly failed to achieve. *TLJ* is by no means a disaster, but it has a hell of a lot of room for improvement.

Discworld Noir

Grim Fandango

Monkey Island Trilogy

The Longest Journey

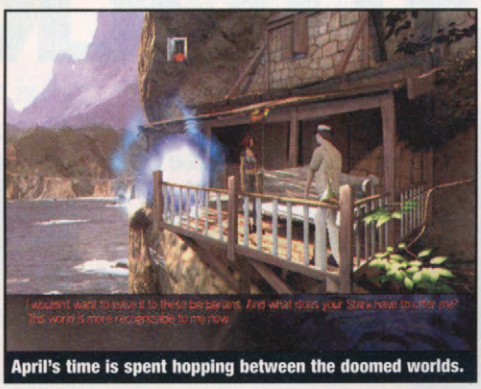
PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Excellent graphics • Fairly decent interface • 'Adult' quirks

DOWNERS Poor characterisation • Massive boring monologues • Terribly unfunny

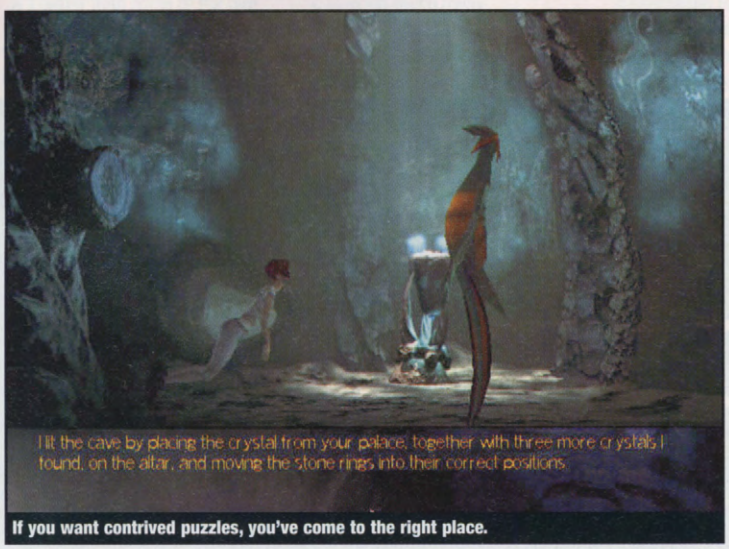
59 Not a great game, but not a grim one either

April's charm fails her again.

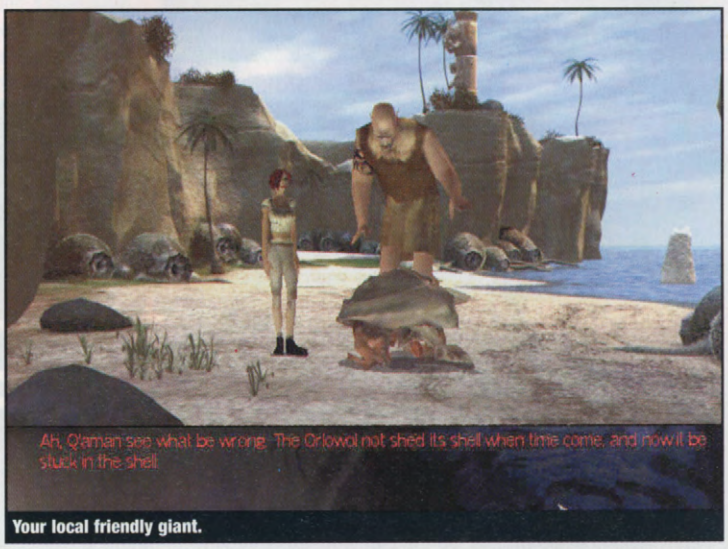


April's time is spent hopping between the doomed worlds.

Another stunning landscape to behold...



If you want contrived puzzles, you've come to the right place.



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STAR TREK: ARMADA

£34.99 • Activision • Out now

Another *Star Trek* game? *ZONE*'s resident nerd *Mark Hill* discovers that this one is actually quite good

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P266 or a P200 with 3D card **Memory** 32Mb RAM
WE SAY 64Mb RAM and an 8Mb 3D card

Following last month's *Force Commander* disappointment (at least in terms of what it could have been), it was always going to be interesting to see if a *Star Trek* RTS could fare any better. The answer is both yes and no, although to be fair both games are quite different. *FC* is a land-based 3D RTS, while *Armada* is more like *Command & Conquer* in space. And this is where we encounter the first problem, because there is something just wrong about space vessels moving around a 2D plane. *Homeworld* might have hurt a lot of people's brains with its fully 3D galactic beauty, but it was a massive achievement that makes *Armada* look very limited and simple by comparison. But when you're a simple and limited person like me, this is not necessarily a bad thing.

STORY GLORY

Armada is very much a story driven game, with the strategic and resource management side of things kept as light as possible. This could have been a big problem, except for the fact that the story is so damn good. In fact, it's better than some of the film efforts from recent years, and works like a string of exceptionally good episodes.

The main plot revolves, as so many of the best Trekkie ones do, around the Borg. A ship comes back in time to warn the Enterprise of an imminent Borg invasion, which in another timeline has been successful and reduced the Alpha Quadrant to an assimilated Borg outpost. The Klingons become involved, complicating things with an internal struggle for power, as do the Romulans (led by Tasha Yar's daughter) with their deceitful self-interested tactics.

What is so good is the way the narrative unfolds through the missions, and how these are structured around scripted moments. There are four campaigns (Federation, Klingon, Romulan and Borg) which you can play in any order, although you'd be stupid to spoil the plot by doing so (if you want to try out all the races straight away, go for the excellent skirmish mode). It's tempting to reveal too much, but we will say this; towards the end of the game you can lead a Borg invasion of Earth.

And this isn't the only highly interesting mission – you can look forward to beaming a Romulan spy onto a Klingon prison facility from a cloaked ship, assimilating a Dominion cloning centre, so you can clone Locutus, using the Enterprise to… but we're already giving too much away.

> **"While the presentation is good, it does have a certain unfinished quality and a few crashing bugs that are very hard to forgive"**

AN *ARMADA* LEG

With all this variety of missions you might think there'd be no base-building but, while the game does go easy on the resource management side of things, it is still an essential part of the game.

No matter which race you're controlling you have three resources: Dilithium, crew and officers. While the strategy is quite simple, there are a couple of things that add more depth to the gameplay. You need to use the space terrain (nebulas, ion storms, black holes and worm holes) to your advantage and research special weapons and features for your ships (anti-matter mines, commando teams, shield disruptors and tractor beams). You can also take over enemy vessels by destroying their shields and beaming soldiers aboard.

In spite of this, things can get repetitive and boring and it's hard to forget that a 2D space map just doesn't work. The engine-rendered 3D cut-scenes give an idea of what could have been if it had gone the *Homeworld* way rather than stupidly blocking off bits of the map with asteroids and covering unscanned areas of space with an ugly grey mass.

You can zoom right into the action (there's even a cinematic camera mode), but, as usual, this is useless in the heat of battle. It's also not the most stable of games. And, while the presentation is good, it does have a certain unfinished quality and a few crashing bugs that are very hard to forgive. This is yet another missed opportunity to make something truly great out of a guaranteed-hit licence. PCZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

If you can cope with *Homeworld*'s full 3D environment go for that, otherwise *IGII* is a good strategic choice. *Armada*'s story and graphics are better than *Force Commander*'s, but the units fail to excite in the same way. It is still a must for any Trekkie though.

Force Commander

Star Trek: Armada

Homeworld

Imperium Galactica II

Star Trek: Starfleet Command

PCZ VERDICT

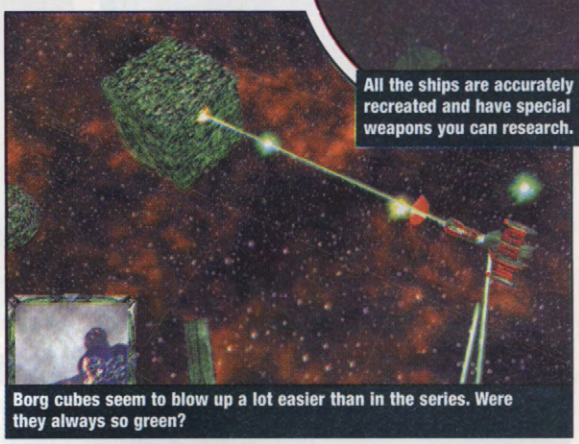
UPPERS Great story • Interesting missions • You can play as the Borg

DOWNERS 2D space doesn't seem right • Strategy has too much *C&C* simplicity • It's a bit buggy

74 **Great fun for non-hardcore strategists**

The space terrain looks great, even if its 2D limitations are obvious.

All the ships are accurately recreated and have special weapons you can research.



Borg cubes seem to blow up a lot easier than in the series. Were they always so green?

Apparently this is Species 9341. Someone should tell them not to bother – resistance is futile.

Play as the Borg as you battle to assimilate Earth. One of the game's finest moments.

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN – FIRESTORM

£19.99 • EA • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P200 MMX **Memory** 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Full version of *C&C: Tiberian Sun* **WE SAY** PII 300, 64Mb RAM

The original *Command & Conquer* had one and *Red Alert* had two, so it was no surprise to hear Westwood has developed a mission pack for the disappointing third *C&C* game, *Tiberian Sun*. If a game sells well, a mission pack is never far away.

Tiberian Sun really was a bit knobby. For non-strategy fans or those new to the wonderful world of PC games it was fine, but for the legions of Westwood fans brought up on an addictive diet of *Dune 2*, *Tiberian Sun* wasn't quite the fix we were hoping for.

It will come as no surprise to you then that, if like us, you fell asleep at the keyboard playing the game, there isn't really much in *Firestorm* to keep your eyelids from clamping shut while playing it some more. As is standard with add-ons, you'll find a clutch of new units, new campaigns for each side and a few enhancements to gameplay, most of which do more to expand the game's appeal than you might expect.

True to form, Westwood has managed to create a quality expansion – not in terms of gameplay, but in presentation. Rather than bundle together a loose collection of missions and link them with text messages or poorly delivered speech, Westwood has at least divided them up with its usual big-bucks high production video sequences, which for mission packs is pretty much unheard of. That aside, the missions themselves are, for the most part, plodding affairs, with the usual mix of en masse attacking and base building from scratch. The new units, seven in total, do add flavour to the bland proceedings and, though small in number, do require a rethink in overall strategy – in multiplayer games especially.

Some might find the balance of units off-kilter, but overall Westwood has create a fairly good mission pack for an average game. Those that loved *Tiberian Sun* really should acquire *Firestorm* – at half the content it almost doubles the fun. Those of you who loved the first *C&C* games should probably wait for *Renegade*.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZ VERDICT **58%**

The GDI now has some awesome firepower, dude. And some relevant units, man.

Graphically it's still below par, but *Firestorm* at least has some impressive animations.

For multiplayer *C&C* buffs, *Firestorm* is essential. Everyone else should approach it with caution.

URBAN OPERATIONS

Take that... oops

Another tango down...

£19.99 • Take 2 • Out Now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P266MMX **Memory** 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** DirectX 6.1 **WE SAY** 3D accelerator, 64Mb RAM

Rogue Spear has already proved to be one of the most popular multiplayer games around and the *Urban Operations* mission pack looks set to boost its life span with bags of new single and multiplayer features.

Urban Operations includes two new mini-campaigns, more weapons and eight new multiplayer maps, as well as a custom mission builder, which provides virtually limitless options for single players. You can adjust the number of terrorists and choose from six game types, including a new one, Defend, where the object is to play a single soldier guarding a switch from the terrorists (an important switch, mind).

The main campaign begins in a Turkish bazaar with lots of innocents, who you have to avoid killing. Then the action moves on to the London Underground where you have to advance along the rail tracks to find and rescue hostages from a tube station. Next stop is a library in Venice where you have to defuse a bomb, then you head for the slums of Mexico City and, finally, there's a showdown in a hotel in Hong Kong.

A second campaign contains five missions from the original *Rainbow Six*, which you can now play using the better *Rogue Spear* engine. Locations include the infamous Hacienda, which has had a few subtle changes, and the Amazonian research facility.

Need more weapons? No problem – *Urban Operations* brings with it a new light machine-gun, the M249 SAW, plus a silenced sniper rifle and one or two others. Need more gun fodder? Try on the increased number of innocent civilians for size – they always get in the way and make the missions that much harder. The AI has improved too, and terrorists now throw grenades at the *Rogue Spear* operatives. The design team has even added an in-game management module that allows you to modify third-party weapons and skins.

The pack also provides ten new multiplayer maps taken from the campaigns and another eight specially designed for multiplayer games, including a Siberian base and a small but demanding graveyard map, where you can dodge behind individual headstones. There's even a submarine base full of pipes which release clouds of steam when hit by stray – or deliberate – shots. A big bonus for *Rogue Spear* addicts.

PCZ VERDICT **75%**

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF THE TIME MACHINE

£29.99 • Cryo • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P233 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P300, 64Mb RAM, 8Mb graphics card

PCZONE PANTS

The New Adventures Of The Time Machine is a fitting name that's every inch as inspired, sophisticated and exciting as the game itself. Based on HG Wells' classic novel, the game sends you 800,000 years into the future where temporal storms rage, distorting time and destroying memories. Your mission is to battle your way through the storms in order to find Chronos, the only being that can restore the balance of time.

Sadly though, there is little battling and a whole load of wandering about, talking to consistently dull characters. *Time Machine*'s vast world of static scenes is caked in graphical polish, but is as much fun to walk in as a virtual art gallery full of ugly, irritating people. Camera angles are awful and the game is about as entertaining as randomly pointing and clicking with your mouse.

John Leaver

PCZVERDICT **15%**

800,000 years in the future and the greatest spectacle is an egg timer.

Wasn't this the music video for *Flight Of The Valkyries?*

CROC 2

£29.99 • Fox Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** PII 266 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** DirectX compatible graphics card with 4Mb of RAM **WE SAY** DirectX compatible sound card, 32Mb HD space

If you've played the first one, you'll be sad to hear that Baron Dante didn't learn his lesson the first time he was trounced. Now he's gone and kidnapped the Gobbo kings, and somehow or another Croc's parents are involved. So, no plot then, but it's a good excuse to dive into more than 40 levels of 3D platform action.

The *Croc 2* world is composed of huge areas devoted to four tribes of Gobbos, where the aim of the game is to nab powerups, whack enemies and overcome reflex-intensive challenges to save the day.

Movements are your bog standard run, jump, climb, swim and swing on monkey bars. You can also push objects, pick them up and toss them about. Venture far enough and you'll get to make use of mine carts, hot air balloons, speedboats, and hang gliders

Unfortunately, despite a lovely visual makeover, *Croc 2* suffers from horrendous camera positioning and simple jumps are made unbearably difficult. Even so, this isn't a bad game by any stretch of the imagination, just one that's overly challenging due to execution, not intentional design.

Scott Steinberg

Another classic last place finish.

PCZVERDICT **56%**

SUPER 1 KARTING

£29.99 • Midas Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** PII 200 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb graphics card. **WE SAY** PII 266 and an 8Mb graphics card.

All the F1 licenses are thundering out of the pit lane at the moment (see our head-to-head on two of the newest on page 68), and that does nothing to help this poor game.

As licenses go, *Karting* is hardly the most exciting, but the developers could have done a better job than this. You know you're in for a rough ride when you're plunged straight into the options screen without any sort of introduction. You get to choose between arcade and simulation, and when you've done this there's no way to go back, so the only way to change is to quit and start again.

There is a choice of three different cart classes, although they're all pretty much the same if we're to be honest. The tracks aren't much better either, with drab graphics resulting in very little variation. After a while the game degenerates into one boring droning ordeal – even the spectators look bored.

Driving the slow and overly skiddy karts quickly becomes frustrating and your first few races will involve getting round corners at around 15mph just to stay on the track. Even when you get the hang of the handling, it still feels unrealistic.

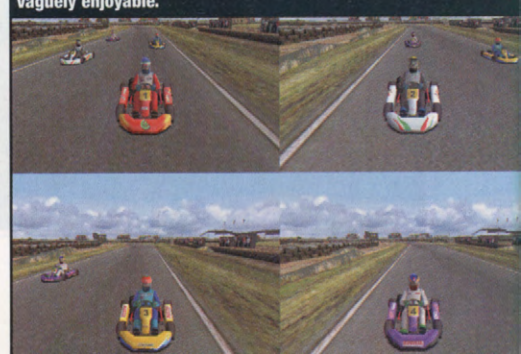
In its defence, *S1K* has a few nice features. Damage is real time and karts do degenerate accordingly, while racing in the wet is actually quite fun. Arcade mode also offers up to four-player split-screen action, which is vaguely entertaining, although you're going to need a pretty powerful machine (PII-450) to get the best results. It also features LAN play, but no Internet support. There's no way we can recommend this game to anyone apart from easily pleased karting die-hards.

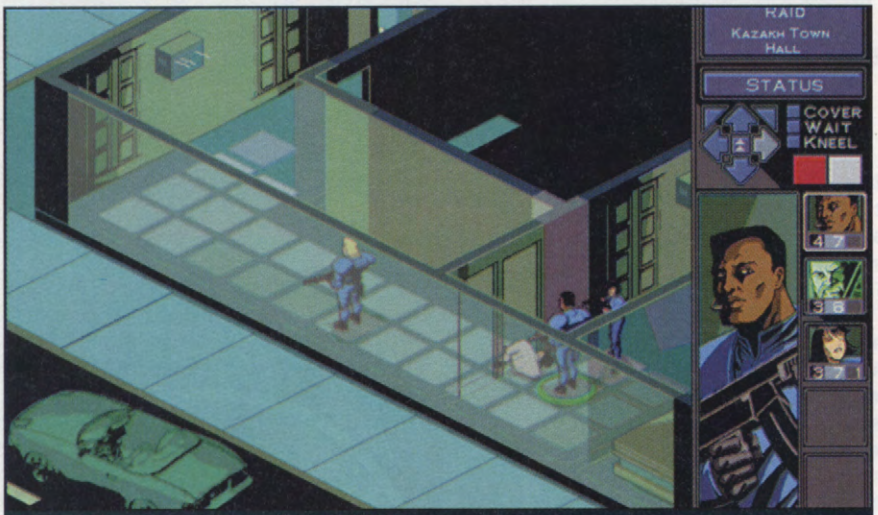
Martin Korda

PCZVERDICT **34%**

Dodgems would be more fun.

Split-screen play for up to four players is vaguely enjoyable.





Check out the groovy graphics (we're just kidding).

SHADOW WATCH

£24.99 • Take 2 • Out now

Choose from six operatives and, well, get on with it. Yawn.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** It supports 3D acceleration, but still looks like an Amiga game

Rainbow Six and *Rogue Spear* might have been big hits, but Tom Clancy's entertainment outfit, Redstorm, certainly has a major problem on its hands. Its latest release, *Shadow Watch*, is a pile of unadulterated crap.

OK, it's got something going for it. It's an intelligent small-unit tactical game with a barely adequate role-playing element (the characters improve from mission to mission) and entertaining ideas about gameplay. Not only can you shoot people, you can question them too.

But is that enough? In these days of 3D-accelerated graphics, thousands of polygons per character and hyper-realistic backdrops, a game that deliberately takes on a two-dimensional comic-book appearance doesn't quite cut the mustard. In fact it makes you wonder why you bothered upgrading from a Spectrum...

The game, if it can be called that, involves a squad of six operatives in a typically Tom Clancy-style plot. In other words, save the world in the name of justice and the American way. Naturally, some big evil corporation has evil designs on the good guys and intends to sabotage a space station. Your mission, if you're stupid enough to fork out £24.99 and accept it, is to stop them with the odd bit of baddy wasting along the way.

Campaigns are randomly arranged from a total of 16 mission types and 162 variations and take place in three cities, from Baikonur in Russia to Rio de Janeiro. The idea is to interrogate witnesses and then plan your missions. Unfortunately you can't have more than one weapon and you can't pick up things off dead enemies. In other words, you can't do anything, well... exciting.

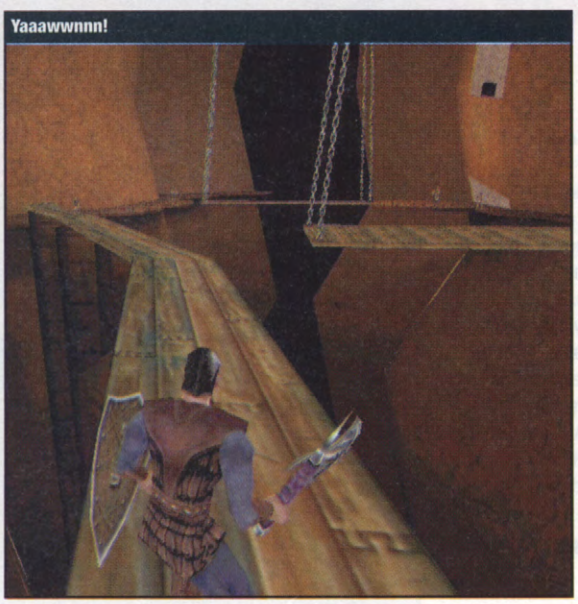
Shadow Watch is vaguely reminiscent of games such as *Wages Of War* or the early *X-Com*s in terms of look and feel, but the 'retro' graphics are a big turn-off. The missions are all different, but even to a die-hard strategy gamer, there's really no excuse for such pathetic graphics. Unless, of course, you want to cut down on development costs and screw a few quid out of an unsuspecting customer.

Andrew Wright

PCZ VERDICT **35%**

CRUSADERS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

£35.00 • 3DO • Out now


Yaaawwnnn!

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A PII and 64Mb RAM, as per usual.

Tomb Raider fever has hit the games industry big-time. In the wake of Origin's desecration of the hallowed *Ultima* series with *Ascension*, 3DO brings *Crusaders Of Might And Magic* to the Lara-lookalike party, and while *Crusaders* does not suffer from the apparent lack of 'quality control' in Origin's title, it is equally bland and directionless.

A free-roaming RPG with massive environments may sound exciting to you (it sounded very exciting to us), but unfortunately *Crusaders* fails to fully explore the possibilities. Laborious and unnecessary travel is the order of the day in a game that lacks structure. The movement interface is clumsy with awkward camera angles disorienting the player at every turn, and the plot does not help matters (evil armies are misbehaving, it's up to you to blah, blah, blah). Even the spell system, which is normally a saving grace, is a bit lacklustre with higher spell levels bringing new versions of existing spells as opposed to brand new ones.

The end result is a game that fails to significantly impress on any level, while proving mildly playable for those who are desperately in need of an RPG fix. This is a shame, as some of the environments are nice, prompting Mark Hill to comment on the 'pleasant architecture' of the buildings, and the gameworld is very big with ample opportunity for exploration. It's just a shame that what there is to explore is not particularly exciting, and non-player characters are a laugh-a-minute for all the wrong reasons (conversational prowess is not their strong point). There will be those who will want to play the game regardless of all its flaws. The only advice I can give you is to play *Planescape* instead, which may not be 3D but blows this thing out of the RPG arena in no uncertain terms.

David Stark

PCZ VERDICT **46%**

You'd be better off down the pub.

SLAM TILT RESURRECTION

£19.99 • Brightstar Entertainment • Out Now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Multiball is going to jerk unless you up to a P266

Developer 21st Century has made a decent living from its endless run of pinball tables, and the two on offer here are perfectly adequate. Decent ball physics and the usual array of options, including multiball and several ridiculous sub-games (like the 'splat the bug' game which takes a whole minute to play through) lift the game out of the mire, but only just.

You can choose from three different table views, but none of them can actually disguise the fact that the tables are fairly uninspiring. After about ten minutes on each we were seriously pining for a pint, a pocketful of ten pence pieces and a solid table like the classic White Waters.

Still, at only £19.99 for both tables you're getting reasonable value for money here. If you're looking for a game that can relieve office boredom for ten to twenty minutes then you're reading the right review. We'll stick to *Quake III*, though.

Dave Woods

PCZVERDICT 55%

SPACE ARCADE COLLECTION

£19.99 • eGames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P60 **Memory** 16MB RAM **WE SAY** If you've got an old PC you're sorted

This latest release from eGames is a collection of 11 arcade games from by-gone days, mostly recreating the gameplay of such classics as *Gorf*, *Invaders* and *Lander*. Of course none of the games are amazing, but one or two are perfect throwaway fun: *DemonStar*, *Rise From Atlantis*, *Drone* and *Moonshot* being the candy amongst the floss. (*DemonStar* you may remember being reviewed a couple of years back – *PCZ* #62, 61%)

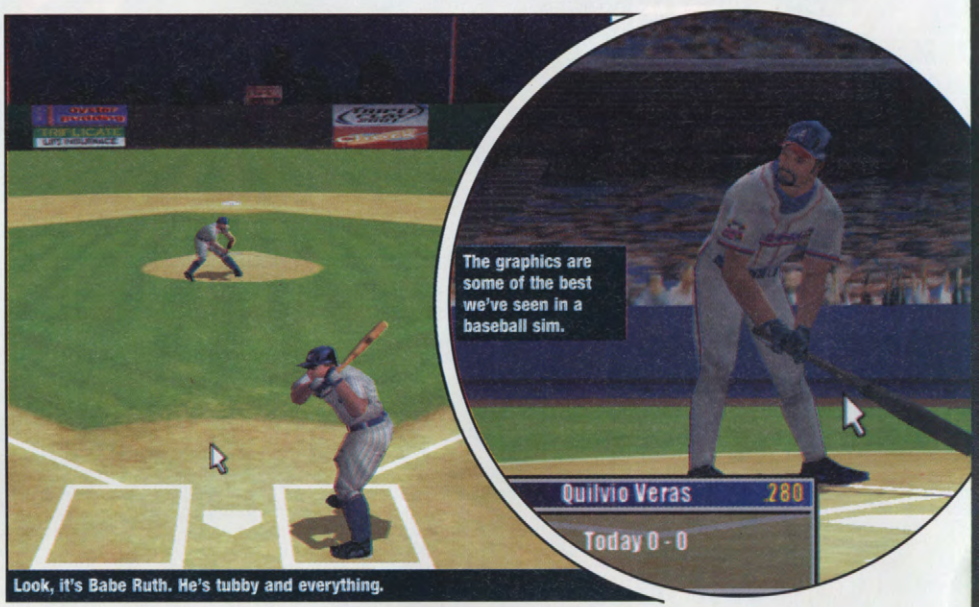
Those in the know would be better off tracking down an arcade emulator and playing the 'originals', but for people who use their PC more for processing words than *Tiberium*, the 11 games on offer are more than a worthwhile alternative to a coffee break bout of *Minesweeper*.

You could just download most of these games from the Internet, most of it is shareware, but that would put eGames out of business and we wouldn't want that, would we?

Eddy Francis

PCZVERDICT 45%

DemonStar, one of the best of the 11.



Look, it's Babe Ruth. He's tubby and everything.

TRIPLE PLAY 2001

£34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out Now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32 Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P266 with 64Mb RAM and a 3D card

It's a baseball game. That's probably got rid of most of you, suddenly remembering you had something important to do in another room, or not even pretending to care about our feelings and simply scowling as you turn the page. The ones of you who are left, the ones who don't dismiss it as a glorified version of rounders, may want to know what makes this a baseball game worth playing above the literally dozens of titles available.

Well, for one thing it features all the legends that the game has had over the years, much in the way that *NBA Live 2000* did, some of which you will have heard of (Babe Ruth, Willie Mays), most of which you won't have (Lou Gehrig, Cy Young). Further elements you won't care about are the exclusive rights to the names of even more players you've never heard of, this time living ones.

In the recent EA tradition, you can also graft your face on to your very own player and adjust the stats to make yourself a sporting marvel. What you *will* care about are the improved graphics, the immaculate presentation and, more importantly, the new brilliant mouse control. If you've been frustrated in the past by the game of chance that is hitting the ball being hurled at you, or by only being able to vaguely pitch the ball where you want it to go, your prayers have been answered. With just a couple of clicks you can select what you want to happen, turning a hit and miss affair that doesn't resemble a sport at all into a strategic battle against your opponents. But, at the end of the day, it's a baseball game.

Mark Hill

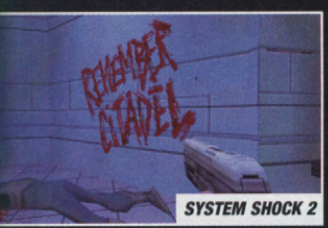
PCZVERDICT 70%

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

HALF-LIFE

NOCTURNE

RESIDENT EVIL 2



SYSTEM SHOCK 2

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

↑ L to R: Paul Mallinson was scared witless when he reviewed *System Shock 2*. ✪ Paul Presley came close to a heart attack when reviewing *Thief II*. ✪ Martin Korda has been cowering in a corner hiding from the world since playing *System Shock 2*. ✪ Richie Shoemaker was seen leaping out of his chair on numerous occasions while reviewing *Aliens Vs Predator*. ✪ Dave Woods had to change his pants when he first played *Resident Evil 2*. ✪ Chris Anderson has been scarred for life by *System Shock 2*. ✪ Mark Hill almost died of shock while reviewing *Nocturne*.

PCZ SUPERTEST

SCARY

✪ **PHOTOGRAPHY** Hugh Threlfall **NASTINESS** Paul Mallinson

GAMES

Games that go bump in the night... the subject of this month's Supertest. The *PC ZONE* team sit by the campfire and recount hair-raising moments from some of the scariest games ever made. And laughing insanely as he writes – *Paul Mallinson*

We all harbour thoughts, fears and phobias that guide us through our lives and affect how we react to different situations. Whether it's creepy-crawly bugs, sharks, death or darkness, we all carry with us deep-rooted fears that are capable of sending us into states of sheer panic and terror.

Film directors and writers have played on these fears for centuries and the gaming industry is finally starting to play catch up. Now, with 3D technology being capable of portraying reality in a believable enough manner, we're beginning to see games that tap into fears such as death and isolation.

The immersive qualities of the best of these so-called 'horror' games can prove pretty disconcerting when all the lights are switched off and you're alone in the house. Such is the power of their suggestion.

But of all the games available, which is the scariest? Read on and all will be revealed...

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

Chris: *AvP* cheats!
Everyone: Cheats?!
Chris: Yes – it cheats, because they've turned out all the lights to make you scared. It's not *really* scary at all. The aliens don't look scary, they look stupid!
Dave: They look like aliens though…
Chris: But that's not scary!
Richie: Sound, that's what makes a game scary.
Mallo: The sound, yes…
Richie: In *AvP* you've got hissing and the noise of the motion tracker.
Dave: The radar bleeping every time they get closer…
Richie: *AvP* is tense all the way through – even when there are no aliens around.
Mallo: Richie scared himself witless in the office – I've seen him leap out of his chair enough times…
Prezzer: We could smell when he'd been playing.
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Chris: It's definitely tense, but we're not talking about tense games here – we're talking about *scary* games…
Richie: When the aliens get you it's so sudden and so final. Brilliant.
Prezzer: I get just as scared playing the aliens pursued by the marines.
Martin: The only thing I found truly scary was when you play as marines against aliens – you're borrowing from the fear of the film and know what to expect. The game expects you to be scared by the same things you saw in the films.
Mark: I don't think so.
Chris: I don't think so either.
Richie: That is why *Resident Evil* is scary: because it's zombies, and you know what sort of things to expect from zombies.
Dave: *AvP* jumps and it scares – as well as being really tense.

Chris: How are we defining scary anyway? My definition of scary is *The Exorcist* – something that continues to scare and stays with you once it's over.
Dave: Yeah, if you turn a game off and you're not still scared by it, then it's tense – not scary. If you watch a scary film and afterwards have to turn on all the lights in the house and ring someone up and say, "Can you come round and look after me?!"…
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Dave: …then that's scary.
Mallo: It depends on what scares you. Fears tend to come through experience or lack of experience – fear of the unknown – and differ from person to person. I'm afraid of heights and deep pools of water, and when I played *Jedi Knight* I scared myself loads with the bottomless pits and massive vats of water. I was freaked-out when I played one level in *Mysteries Of The Sith* because there's a bit where you cut a vent in the bottom of a dead-end room and are sucked out into a huge dark pool full of killer shark-like monsters… Now that was scary!
Prezzer: If there's water in a game, I won't go in it. There are always things with fangs in there waiting to eat you!
Mallo: It's all down to what scares us as individuals, so you can't really define 'scary' as such.
Richie: But a game can be tense without being scary – like when you know you're going into a fire-fight. But a proper scary game has to be both tense and scary.
Mark: There's a difference as well between psychological fear and being scared at the moment…
Mallo: Go on then, explain yourself…
Mark: Unlike in *AvP*, where you turn a corner and something comes at you, in *System Shock 2*, even though nothing might be going on, you're still terrified. It's the atmosphere that makes it scary rather than the current situation.
Mallo: Yeah, sort of toying with your mind almost.
Prezzer: Most first-person shoot 'em ups do that to me.
Chris: But we should have defined 'scary' before we started.
Mark: You define 'scary'!
Mallo: Chris, stop trying to pigeon-hole everything!
Chris: All I'm saying is that we're supposed to be talking about *AvP*!
Everyone: (*Uproar*)
Dave: Everyone's scared of their own little things, but there are also universal fears – like walking alone in woods in the dark.
Mark: Everyone's scared of the dark – I am.
Mallo: I'm not that phased by the dark.
Dave: Really? What, even when there's a mad axe-man about?
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Mark: But if you were suspended from a great height over water you'd be scared?
Mallo: Probably.
Prezzer: *AvP* does make me jump every five minutes.
Mallo: I think *AvP* is a good 'jumper', but for me it's the least scary out of all the games here.
Chris: But you get the same kind of thing in all first-person shoot 'em ups.
Prezzer: *AvP* is the gaming equivalent of a 'slasher' horror movie.
Dave: As opposed to *Blair Witch*?
Prezzer: Yeah.
Dave: You know the aliens are coming, and when they do arrive

> **"In *AvP* you've gotta survive. That's what keeps you on the edge of your seat."**
>
> FEAR OF DEATH KEEPS RICHIE GOING

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

Those big green monsters are back in this PC shoot 'em up from UK coder Rebellion, and they're joined by the frankly lesser *Predator* for good measure. Dark and intensely involving, *AvP* is a seat-of-the-pants ride through hostile action gaming territory. Just make sure you don't get caught with your flamethrower down.

SCORE	91% *PCZ* #76
DEVELOPER	Rebellion
PUBLISHER	Fox Interactive
PRICE	£34.99

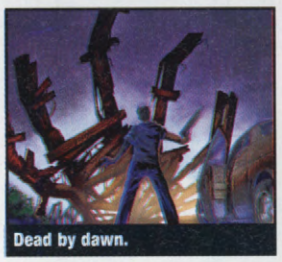
Some dark alien action.

Oh go away, you're not scaring anyone.

FUTURE FRIGHTENERS

A rundown of other potential horror classics

Don't go into the woods today.



Dead by dawn.

We tend to feel that there's still room for a 'definitive' scary game on the PC. There are a number of big-budget frighteners, sequels and film licenses on the way, all of which are being designed to tangle our nerves and rid us of our bodily fluids.

High-profile scares to look forward to include: *System Shock 3* (Looking Glass), *Alone In The Dark IV* (Infogrames), *Resident Evil: Nemesis* (Capcom), *The Blair Witch Trilogy* (Part 1 developed by TRI, set in 1941; Part 2 developed by Human Head, set in 1866; Part 3 developed by Ritual, set in 1786), *Call Of Cthulhu: Dark Corners Of The Earth* (Headfirst), and last, but not least, *Evil Dead: Hail To The King* (previously known as *Evil Dead: Ashes 2 Ashes*, from THQ). We've definitely got a scary year ahead of us…

Someone you really wouldn't want to meet in a dark alley.

it's 'bang-bang-bang!' – over quickly.
Chris: When I played *AvP* I just felt I was going from one area to the next – there's nothing scary about it. Richie was saying about the atmosphere – I didn't think it was atmospheric. I just thought: it's a game and I'm shooting things.
Richie: In *System Shock 2* you've got to think and solve puzzles – in *AvP* you have to survive. That's what keeps you on the edge of your seat. You know you're playing a game, but you have to get through it…
Mark: In *AvP* you have to try to kill things from a distance, otherwise you burn yourself with the acid and your character runs around screaming like a madman – have you heard it?
Richie: For high-adrenaline scares, to use a technical term, *AvP* wipes the floor with the rest of them.

HALF-LIFE

"And the award for the game with the most awards goes to…" Is there anything *Half-Life* hasn't won so far? The king of shoot 'em ups also happens to be a momentously hair-raising, underwear-soiling experience for anyone the first time round, and is chock full of scary surprises.

SCORE	95% *PCZ* #71
DEVELOPER	Valve
PUBLISHER	Sierra
PRICE	£34.99

Or great scary big monsters?

Scared of heights?

This game doesn't do things by half.

HALF-LIFE

Mallo: I found *Half-Life* very scary. I leapt out of my chair on more than one occasion.
Dave: It's scary through involvement because the game just draws you in and keeps you there.
Prezzer: I find *Half-Life* very tense. I can't play it for more than 15 minutes at a time.
Mallo: The scares start for me when you crawl through that hole and that cabinet falls over on top of you. After that you've got face-huggers leaping out of pipes…
Prezzer: I hate crawling through air vents, through the darkness, knowing something's going to jump out at me.
Mallo: And then there's the guy sat in front of that flashing monitor with a face-hugger on his head… You think, 'Oh my God, what's going on here?' – and that's constant, throughout the game.
Mark: I didn't find it scary at all – it's just a straight forward action game.
Martin: Again, it's tense – not scary.
Mallo: It's not *just* an action game! Look at the storyline: it's very similar to *Resident Evil* and *System Shock 2*. *Half-Life*'s got quiet bits as well!
Dave: It has a unique atmosphere.
Mallo: I was totally sucked in. I played the whole game through in two or three days and was completely gripped until I got to Xen. Then it all sort of went a bit samey and less scary for some reason.
Mark (to Mallo): Did you think *Opposing Force* was scary?
Mallo: Erm… not really.
Dave: I completed it in two days and didn't find it that scary. It's more about shooting…
Mallo: And weapons and team combat… no, but hold on, there are some levels in *Opposing Force* that are quite scary – there's one bit when you're in the sewers and those big slug monsters are chasing you around. That scared the life out of me.
Mark: The scariest bits in *Half-Life* were those underwater sequences – remember that shark-like monster?
Mallo: Aw, yeah!
Prezzer: When you're on that cage. You go inside it…
Mallo: Yeah, and it drops into the water!
Prezzer: And we all knew it was going to happen! I was like, 'I'm not doing it!'
Mark: A personal fear of mine is sharks… I found that bit really scary.
Mallo: Talking of personal fears – that bit in *Half-Life* where you have to leap from those boxes suspended over that bottomless pit… again, I wet myself doing that.
Prezzer: I once played through the game with God mode on, but I was still scared out of my wits.
Mallo: Valve managed to create a lot of cool looking monsters. That spider monster toward the end – that thing with the big testicle hanging down – have you seen it?!
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Mallo: You start off and the bastard runs towards you menacingly, like a bull. You hurt it a bit and it runs into its cave lair. You then have to follow it into the caves and repeat the manoeuvre five or six times. It charges at you like nobody's business!
Richie: Those face-hugging creatures – like in all of these games – they borrow from *Alien*. That's what all of these games have had to do: borrow from the original and the best.
Dave: Yeah, but if *AvP* had the atmosphere and story of *Half-Life*, it might be pretty scary, but it's not as it stands now.
Chris: Remember *Realms Of The Haunting*? You had to go into a dark room and while you were looking for the light switch, which you knew was there, something would come up through the ground and you'd go: 'Jesus Christ almighty!', fumbling for a light switch!
Richie: But that's you every Friday night Chris.
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Mallo: *Realms Of The Haunting* brought up-to-date would definitely be worth playing because it was very scary. It had sort of semi-realistic satanic undertones didn't it?
Dave: So you want to play *AvP* room-by-room and have to find the light switch?
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Mallo: What else?
Mark: What about those giant claws in *Half Life*? You have to throw a grenade to lure them away. The manic clicking they make…
Mallo: That banging and clanging really does drive you round the bend. The use of sound in that

"I once played through the game with God mode on, but I was still scared out of my wits."

PREZZER ILLUSTRATES THE SCARING POWER OF *HALF-LIFE*

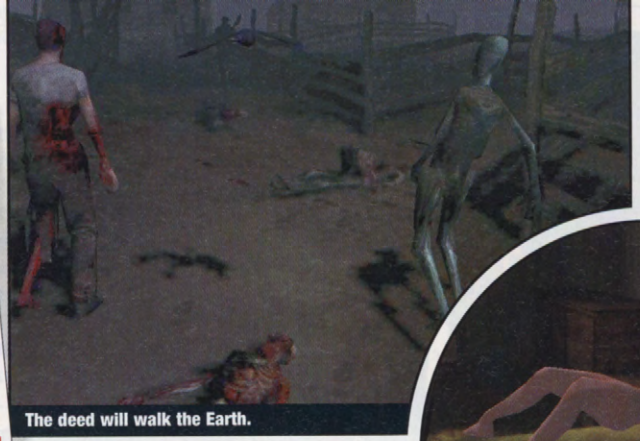
SECONDARY SCARES

Some may find this little lot a bit scary still

A thousand other games could be listed here – as also-ran candidates for this Supertest. We all have our own fears, and our own ideas about what actually constitutes a scary computer game. Most of us drew mud when we first came face-to-face with a Shambler in the original *Quake*, but no one in their right mind would describe it as a particularly scary game today. The same goes for id's *Doom* and Gremlin's *Realms Of The Haunting*, both of which contain classic scares dampened by aging technology.

The calm before the storm.

Enter at your own risk.



The deed will walk the Earth.

Nocturne: that's spooky.

Fantasy or very scary reality?

NOCTURNE

The slightly tongue-in cheek *Nocturne* is an action adventure set in the 1920s. As the mysterious Stranger your task is to unearth a world full of zombies and werewolves... and annihilate the lot of them with an array of guns and heavy weaponry. Just watch out for those running 'type two' zombies.

SCORE	86% *PCZ* #84
DEVELOPER	Terminal Reality
PUBLISHER	Take 2
PRICE	£34.99

part of the level reminded me of *The Exorcist* – quiet to loud in a maddening manner. Very clever and very unnerving.

Mark: The way to die in *Half-Life* is scary too – you splatter into pieces. It's sick.

Chris: But that's just gore!

Mark: Well, I'm scared of gore.

Mallo: Who isn't?

Dave: *Half-Life* is brilliant. Tense, but not truly scary.

Mallo: *Half-Life* isn't the scariest game ever made. It's a fantastic game – everyone should play it.

Richie: It works on so many levels, but it's not the scariest.

NOCTURNE

Mallo: I expected *Nocturne* to be pretty crappy, but I was surprised to find a very scary game in places.

Chris: Again, I thought it was scare-free.

Martin: The scariest thing about *Nocturne* is the amount of RAM you need to run it –128 megs!

Mallo: Before you even start the game, when you're calibrating your monitor the game asks you to turn all the lights off in the room. That was clever.

I did, and it made a real difference.

The level where you're fighting zombies in a deserted town is outstanding – a brilliant atmosphere.

Chris: For me, any tension they could have created went with the most cumbersome control system I've ever come across.

Mark: You should use a mouse and keyboard! It's really simple, but it works. If anything the only problem with *Nocturne* was the camera angles. Some seem really stupid.

Mallo: I know what you mean – you reach the edge of the screen and walk right into three zombies.

Mark: You get the same thing in *Resident Evil 2*.

Dave: It's not as bad though.

Mallo: In *Nocturne*, there are some bits where you have to shoot downwards, and I found it really easy to panic and end up running around being chased by zombies with my guns pointing at the floor!

Dave: There's a better range of aiming in *Nocturne*. In *Resident Evil 2* it's just up, down and straight ahead.

Mallo: The simplicity of *Resident Evil 2* makes it easier to play than *Nocturne*.

Dave: But it does lead to frustrations when you can't shoot a monster because it's not close enough.

Mallo: The auto-aiming in *Nocturne* is generally excellent though.

Chris: None of this contributes to *Nocturne*'s scariness, or lack of it. How scary is a game gonna be with camera angles all over the shop?!

Mark: With *Nocturne* there are

different levels with different monsters, and some work really, really well, whereas others aren't quite as good. The zombie level in *Nocturne* is easily the best in the game.

Richie: The zombies in *Resident Evil 2* are superb.

Mark: But those in *Nocturne* are better.

Mallo: It's a close call. They're on a par. The zombies in *Nocturne*, though, are more varied. Some run, which you don't get in *Resident Evil 2*.

Dave: That's not proper is it?!

Prezzer: Zombies don't run – they shuffle!

Dave: They shuffle, you can run away and push them away because they're slow. But if they get too close they start to chow down on your intestines...

"There are different levels with different monsters. Some work really, really well. Others aren't quite as good."

EVEN MARK KNOWS *NOCTURNE* ISN'T PERFECT

Mallo: Ah, but in *Nocturne* they're 'type two' zombies...

Everyone: (*Cries of derision*)

Mallo: That's what it says in the game! Apparently they're not voodoo zombies and you can't use magic to destroy them – you've got to use brute force. *Nocturne* wasn't as scary as it could have been for two good reasons...

1) the story was cheesy, and

2) the acting was terrible.

Chris: The game comes across as being amateurish and badly put together.

Mallo: The presentation and the atmosphere are amazing! What they should have done with *Nocturne* is dumped the story and got *Resident Evil* in. The graphics are fantastic. Like the guy's coat when he moves.

Mark: The flashlight on your gun too...

Mallo: The effect is almost photo-realistic. And the shadows! The shadows from your torch get longer as you move backwards. It's a feat of programming. They should license out the engine.

Richie: The *Blair Witch* game is going to use the *Nocturne* engine.

Mallo: What's that gonna be – 200 screens of empty forest to run around with the monster always off-screen?

Everyone: (*Laughs*)

Mallo: The music in *Nocturne* is brilliant too – the dramatic menu music and the quiet stuff during the game.

Mark: The sounds as well. You walk into a house, you can't see anything, but you know there's something in there because you can hear a floorboard creaking and some serious heavy breathing. You just don't want to walk in!

Mallo: For me, if the acting and story were better *Nocturne* would come up trumps. There's a bit where this guy is explaining to you how the dead have been rising from their graves and eating the living, and it sounds like butter wouldn't melt in his mouth! He just sounds so unafraid and disinterested that it completely destroys the atmosphere.

Dave: The story is pathetic. What are you called again?

Everyone: The Stranger.

Dave (*in mocking theatrical voice*): *The Stranger!*

Mallo: Yeah, but you get zombie cows! You don't get that in any of the other games.

Mark: And zombie dogs.

Martin: Are they 'type two' zombie cows?

Everyone: (*Laughs*)

Mallo: I dunno. I'll have to check later.

Chris: So *Nocturne* – scary yes or no? I say no!

Mark: Yes, it is!

Martin: Atmospheric – yes. Super scary – no.

Mark: The zombie town, which we've already mentioned, and another level where you walk through a forest full of werewolves – those two levels – are the scariest moments out of any of the games here.

Dave: No, because the control system ruins it. I didn't have that

SCARED STUPID

Give up and go home.

These games were supposed to scare us, but failed miserably

Anyone unlucky enough to fall for the hype surrounding Sierra's *Phantasmagoria* – a self-confessed horror game series that failed on every imaginable level – will no doubt still be kicking themselves, even after all these years. How bad was it? Do the words "interactive movie" mean anything to you? No? Then you've been spared... And those who were wondering where Psygnosis' long-awaited *Zombieville* had gotten to may be upset to hear it was canned years ago, which – when we discovered it was being made into a 'horror comedy' game – was probably for the best.

problem with *Resident Evil 2*.
Mark: Then play it with a mouse and keyboard!

RESIDENT EVIL 2

Prezzer: I don't like zombies. Never have, never will.
Martin: I thought *Resident Evil 2* was dreadful. Blocky graphics, totally un-scary, and the zombies sound like sheep bleating!
Everyone: (*Uproar*)
Dave: Behave!
Mallo: The zombies *don't* sound like sheep! They go [gives best impression of a zombie]…
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Richie: Martin, I think you should leave the room now…
Martin: I didn't think it was scary. It shocked you occasionally.
Mallo: *Resident Evil 2* is one of the best games I've ever played.
Martin: But not the scariest game you've ever played?
Mallo: It *is* scary!
Dave: *Resident Evil 2* kicks straight in – all of a sudden you're surrounded by zombies…
Mark: I had to restart about ten times because I died straight away.
Mallo: Run past them all! It doesn't take long to work that out.
Mark: You can't see where you're going because of the camera angles and then one of them grabs your leg… it's piss scary!
Mallo: The first time you get grabbed by a corpse…
Mark: And you have to stamp them on the head.
Martin: But it's shocks, not scares.
Dave: You don't know whether a dead body's going to come alive or not – that's scary, not shocking.
Mallo: What about the bit at the beginning when you walk past the basketball court and the zombies are being held back by a gate. If you're low on ammo it's a scary situation because you know at some point you're going to have to face them.
Dave: The zombie sounds in *Resident Evil 2* are the best I've heard. Obviously influenced by George A Romero's zombie films.
Mallo: They are excellent. Apart from the footsteps, which get on my wick, the sound effects in *RE2* are superb. And the music is dramatic too.
Chris: The only thing I found scary about this game is that you are overwhelmed – you don't know which way to turn.
Mallo: That's the thing about zombies isn't it? Overwhelming numbers. It's easy to push your way past one or two of them, but against 15 it's a different matter.
Martin: Adrenaline over terror.
Dave: No, it's quite a slow-paced game.
Mallo: It starts off as being overwhelming, but when you get to the police station it slows down and the horror becomes more psychological. Everything goes quiet and you're walking down a corridor with the windows boarded-up when, all of a sudden, loads of arms crash through and grab you! They don't kill or injure you, just mess you up and ensure you're on your guard. It only happens once or twice but it's bloody effective.
Dave: If it happened more, then the scares would be diminished.
Mallo: Have you played *Resident Evil 3* yet?

In *Resident Evil 2* there's one bit where you're walking past these windows when the glass smashes and these crows fly out. Now it only happens once in the game and is bloody frightening. But in *Resident Evil 3* it happens three or four times in the first few hours, and it just isn't as scary.
Dave: The best bit in *Resident Evil 2* is when you're in the police station and you walk past a window and something flashes past it…

"You walk past a window and something flashes past it..."
DAVE THINKS HE'S SEEING THINGS IN *RESIDENT EVIL 2*

Mallo: Yeah, yeah…
Dave: You think, 'Did I see that, or what?'
Mallo: They really know how to play around with your mind.
Richie: I love the way the save games work. I know it's a bit crappy having all those chests and typewriters lying around, but after a few battles you're terrified because you're limping around trying to find one.
Dave: The zombies are excellent.
Richie: I played the PlayStation version yesterday and at the bit with the basketball court I shot the zombies through the gate with the shotgun, and they all keeled over, then I noticed a pair of legs walking along on their own!
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Richie: Then I noticed that the torso had crawled up behind me and was chewing my legs off!
Everyone: (*More laughs*)
Mallo: There are more than zombies as well – the spiders are frightening. That dull, thudding noise they make… and the alligator in the sewers.
Dave: I'm not too keen on that bit myself.
Richie: But none are as scary as the zombies. That's the same for *System Shock 2*. Once the zombies have gone it's like: oh, droids, here we are again in familiar territory.
Mark: *Resident Evil* is very limited though.
Mallo: It *is* very linear, but… if you play through the game as the bloke, save it, then go through the second disc as the girl – or vice versa – then you get to play a different game. Whole sections change. It's a brilliant bonus and not enough people have tried it.

The second time around, when you fight the monster on the lift heading down into the underground base, it stops half way down and runs away through a wall. Then you follow it and it opens up a whole new section of the game. And there's this other guy too, this robot who's dropped in by a helicopter and chases you relentlessly.

There's this excellent scene, I'll never forget it, where this guy stomps up to a camera when you're eavesdropping on him – he raises his arms and smashes the camera, then stomps up to the door of the room you're hiding in and starts bashing it down. It's absolutely terrifying!
Dave: Sounds like The Shape from the *Halloween* films. Relentlessly chasing you… if he gets you you're dead. Now *that* is scary.

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

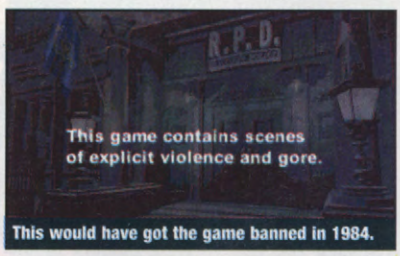
Martin: This was the only game here that really *did* make me mess my pants.
Richie: We hope you washed them before you came in!
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Martin: I spent an entire weekend washing them.
Chris: Have you only got one pair?
Everyone: (*More laughs*)
Martin: No, *System Shock 2* is fantastic. The graphics are superb, the atmosphere is amazing and the sounds are brilliant. Hearing things in the distance…
Mallo: "We remain!"
Martin: Things crashing down around your head…
Mallo: "There is another!"
Martin: Because of the role-playing elements you care about your character more. It becomes of great importance to preserve the time invested in your character.
Mallo: Out of all the games here, you invest the most time in building your character in *System Shock 2*, so to lose him is a frightening prospect.
Everyone: Yeah.
Richie: You feel as though you *are* that character.
Prezzer: But in something like this you should be able to use a gun from the beginning. That let it down a bit.
Chris: In *System Shock 2* you

RESIDENT EVIL 2

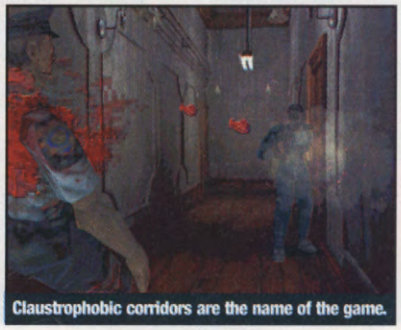
Unlike the first *Resident Evil*, which was unbelievably cheesy, *Resident Evil 2* is seriously scary. Playing as either boy or girl you have to fight your way through a never-ending flow of hideous zombies and rid the world of an evil mutant menace. A horror classic fit to scare anyone out of their little grey cells.

SCORE	90% *PCZ* #75
DEVELOPER	Capcom
PUBLISHER	Capcom
PRICE	£34.99

***Resident Evil 2*: a genuinely scary game.**



This would have got the game banned in 1984.



Claustrophobic corridors are the name of the game.

have to *really* think before you go into a new location. You don't just wander around with a gun going bang, bang, bang, bang, bang.

Mallo: The monsters can open doors as well.

Chris: Exactly! There's nowhere to hide.

Mallo: Actually there *are* places where monsters don't come.

Chris: I remember places I've been through and thought, 'Shit, I don't want to go through that again!' It's *really* scary.

Mallo: I thought the cargo bay area was an intense, dark and scary part of *System Shock 2*. You could hear robots talking in the distance and monkeys screaming for your blood.

Prezzer: The monkey encounter got me quite frankly.

Martin: You hear screams in the distance…

Mallo: The recording of the autopsy, when the corpse gets up and kills the pathologist – that was really well done.

Mark: The fact you're on your own all the time and you find the remains of all these people with their limbs torn apart. Bodies scattered everywhere. Ghosts…

Mallo: Residual Psychic Emanations…

Mark: …that show their last movements as humans.

Richie: The first time I saw one of those I thought, 'What's happening here!' and wasted most of my ammo on it.

Everyone: *(Laughs)*

Mallo: The ghosts aren't scary though.

Chris: With *System Shock 2* Looking Glass went to a lot of trouble to play with our minds. It just sets the scene so well. A lot of it is done through suggestion rather than pure shocks.

Mallo: That's where most good horror films are successful as well – the power of suggestion over visceral gore.

Chris: It's the only game here that does that, and does it really well.

Richie: And even though it's a mission-based game they get around it by sectioning off large areas of the ship.

Mallo: It fits together extremely well – you get a real feel for the layout of the Von Braun.

Martin: There's the added fear that your gun can jam. Something's running towards you and your gun jams! It's always in the back of your mind.

Dave: Aah, the incredibly annoying weapon degradation?

Everyone: Yeah.

Prezzer: There's a patch to get rid of it.

Mallo: Is there?!

Mark: I prefer it with the patch.

Prezzer: It's one of those ideas that sounds good on paper, but in reality is really boring.

Mallo: The monsters are great too. Those Cyborg Midwives are horrible. You kill them and they make a horrible whining noise.

Mark: Yeah, that's nerve-wrecking, like nails on the blackboard. And they're really hard to kill, so if you hear one you're on edge straight away.

"This was the only game here that really *did* make me mess my pants"

MARTIN NEEDS A CHANGE OF UNDERWEAR THANKS TO *SYSTEM SHOCK 2*

Mallo: Those Cyborg Assassins – You can hear them talking their own little language in the distance.

Mark: They're a lot like the ninjas in *Half-Life* aren't they?

Mallo: They are very similar. They've got comparable AI – they both run away as soon as they see you, and try to lure you into a trap.

Chris: And one of the things that makes *System Shock 2* so scary is it's quite a hard game as well. The monsters take some killing.

Mallo: You spend most of the game low on ammo, which also adds to the tension.

Martin: A couple of hits from the creatures at the beginning of the game is enough to kill you, so you have to be really careful.

Mallo: No one's even mentioned the alarms yet.

Chris: That completely freaks me out: setting the alarms off.

Richie: You back into a corner and cover all your angles, then wait for them to come at you…

Mallo: Hearing spiders in the distance is disconcerting. When you're re-programming the sim units halfway through the game there's this one room in Operations with no lights and is swarming with spiders.

Richie: I don't think any of the creatures in *System Shock 2* are that scary, apart from the zombies.

Mallo: I still say it's the most suspenseful game ever made.

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

Mallo: I surprised myself with this one because, having played it loads recently, I found myself really liking it.

Chris: I was really surprised too – I fell asleep.

Mallo: The engine is just so easy to use. If you've played a lot of *Thief*, or even a lot of *System Shock 2*, then you're laughing.

Dave: The engine has got its limitations. It works with *System Shock 2* and *Thief II*, but overall I've got a problem with it.

Chris *(Laughing)*: He's fallen out with it.

Mallo: The engine feels great to use. You know, the right click to use and…

Mark (to Mallo): When I first saw you playing *System Shock 2* it looked over-complicated, but when I played it I was sucked in immediately because the interface was so easy to use.

Martin: I agree.

Mallo: And the setting in *Thief II* is superbly atmospheric. It's spot-on. The way the city goes about its business around you. There's even one bit where a bunch of non-player characters get into a fight and you have to hide to avoid detection. That was incredibly tense, but rewarding to have been involved in.

Chris: The voice acting is crap though. It doesn't work at all.

Mallo: There's a mix of American and bad cockney in there.

Chris: For a game that thrives on atmosphere that was *such* a big mistake.

Mallo: But when you're leaping around from roof to roof you don't let that bother you. The mere fact you can hear voices is enough to instil terror because one wrong move and you're history.

Mark: I didn't think it worked that well.

Prezzer: *Thief II* is excellent, but it hasn't really evolved from the first game.

Mallo: If it ain't broke…

Prezzer: …don't fix it.

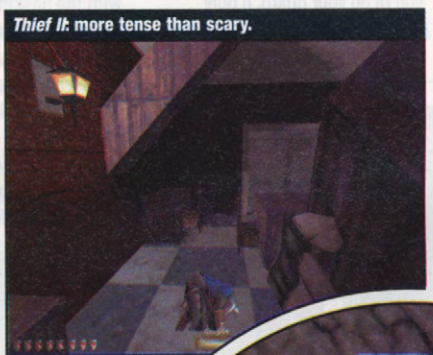
Mallo: The light/dark detector thing still works well. That contributes heavily to *Thief*'s unique gameplay. And there are zombies in it still…

Prezzer: There are?!

Mallo: Yep, there's one bit where you leap through an open window in a large white tower. Inside there's a cauldron and a book on a pentagram. If you pick up the book zombies appear and attack you. That made me jump.

Prezzer: So it was sort of like a

Oi! Who goes there?



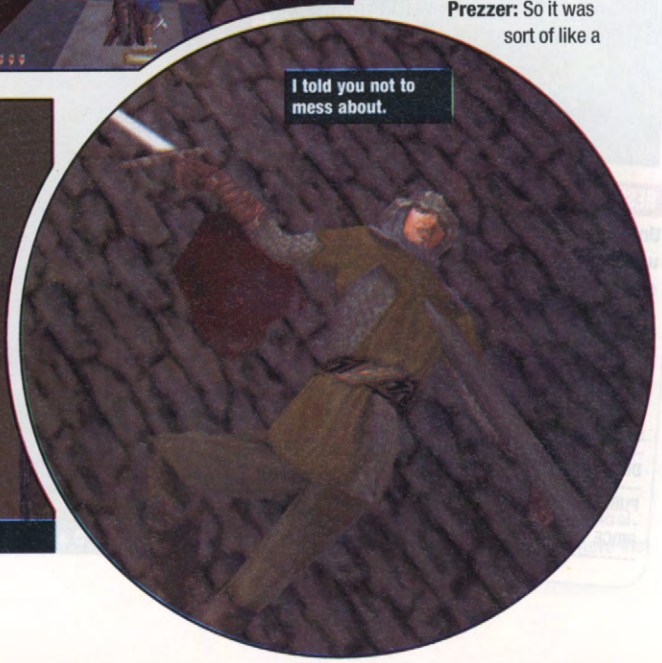
Thief II: more tense than scary.

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

The ubiquitous Looking Glass again rehashes its successful *Thief* engine to bring us another classic suspense game. The gameplay in *Thief II* relies far more on sneaking around and avoiding detection than shooting, so tension levels run high especially as the nosy locals are more than eager to grass you up.

SCORE	82% *PCZ* #88
DEVELOPER	Looking Glass Studios
PUBLISHER	Eidos Interactive
PRICE	£34.99

Now that looks promising.



I told you not to mess about.

A rare moment of tranquility.

Not nice, but big and very clever.

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

When *System Shock 2* first came out there was an immediate worldwide shortage of Andrex toilet roll. This high-end sci-fi horror adventure sees you in the role of a future soldier battling his way out of a huge, stranded space cruiser that has been taken over by outside forces. Not one for the faint hearted.

SCORE	95% *PCZ* #80
DEVELOPER	Looking Glass Studios
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
PRICE	£34.99

wizard's burglar alarm?
Mallo: I dunno. You'd know…
Everyone: *(Laughs)*
Mark: For me the scariest part of the first *Thief* was when that dead body rises up in front of you.
Prezzer: The first game was scarier than the second one, because of the zombies.
Mallo: I like the way they've mixed fantasy with reality.
Prezzer: It's almost like a sort of Jules Verne steam age scenario. There are these ED-209 things…
Chris: What?!
Prezzer: There are people inside controlling them.
Richie: I wouldn't say *Thief II* was that scary.
Mallo: It's teeth-clenchingly tense.
Dave: It's a similar kind of buzz you get playing this to the one you get from thieving in real life.
Everyone: (*Laughs*)
Dave: But it's not scary.
Prezzer: Says Dave Woods – master criminal.
Mallo: Thieving in real life is much scarier because the consequences are real.
Mark: You can climb into bedrooms and rob people while they're asleep. But you have to be quick otherwise they wake up.
Mallo: Yeah, and they say, "Who's that there?!" in a really girly manner.
Everyone: *(Laughs)*
Mark: They should turn *Thief II* into a serial killer game. Where you climb into houses and murder people.
Everyone: (*More laughs*)
Dave: And no multiplayer!
Prezzer: What's the point in that? You'd spend most of your time hiding.
Mark: Or playing cards on guard duty.
Mallo: There's no reason why they can't do some sort of castle assault level.
Prezzer: But then you're getting away from what *Thief* is all about, aren't you?
Mallo: The game has loads of little touches that make it really involving.
Prezzer: There's a really good level with ghosts. You're walking through a forest and

come across these pagan people that have all been killed. When you go near one you see a ghostly image of their torture and death. It's more unnerving than scary.
Mark: Because the sword fighting isn't much cop you always have to be extremely careful to avoid fights. *Thief II* makes you really paranoid when you play.
Prezzer: I've played a lot of these games – *Die By The Sword*, *Deathtrap Dungeon* etc– and I thought the sword fighting was alright in *Thief II*.
Mallo: Use 'block' Mark. It's not that hard.
Mark: I like the way you can distract people by using sound. Fire an arrow one way and the guards look towards where the sound was made.

> **"The mere fact that you can hear voices is enough to instil terror because one wrong move and you're stuffed."**
>
> **MALLO, SCARED OF HIS OWN SHADOW, IN *THIEF II***

Martin: That works extremely well.
Mallo: Non-player characters – if they spot you – will also grass you up and start shouting for guards. There's a scene in *Thief II* where you come to an open window and loads of women spot you and raise the alarm. When they start screaming you shit a brick. And you come across other thieves robbing houses too. It's like two cats standing off.
Chris: It's the same as all the other games in this Supertest, except *System Shock 2*: it's tense, not scary. That's my opinion.
Richie: And we know how wrong your opinions are.
Mallo: I think all the games in this Supertest are scary, but then again, I'm easily scared.
Prezzer: You chicken.
Mallo: That's me all over. PCZ

AND THE WINNER IS...

Desperate for new pants? Read on to find the scariest game… ever

It is widely accepted that all six games in this 'scary games' Supertest have the power to make your blood curdle – *if* you are in the right frame of mind. Not all of you are, however, so in terms of getting scares from these games it's generally down to the individual.

Richie's love of *Aliens Vs Predator* is well documented here ("it's the only game that has had me screaming out like a girl," he admits), and both Dave and Mallo rate *Resident Evil 2*'s scares very highly, but neither could really be considered the scariest PC game of all time. *Half-Life* everyone loves and confesses to having been scared by at one time or another, but that too failed to make it to the top of our list. With *Thief II* and *Nocturne* going the same way (which was no surprise considering their detractors among our gathering of gaming experts), that left just one game as the overall winner – *System Shock 2*.

***System Shock 2* is quite simply the darkest, scariest and most terrifying PC game ever made. So if you've yet to experience the sheer tension and drama that unfolds during the course of this game you're either a) a complete chicken or b) already on your way down to the computer shop to buy yourself a copy. If you're neither of those and you *still* haven't played *System Shock 2* then you're just downright stubborn!**

System Shock 2: don't forget your underpants.

BUDGET ZONE

Games are like cheap wine, no matter how much you enjoy them when they're fresh, if you leave them for a few years they turn to vinegar. This month we present a selection of excellent condiments...

HAVING A GOOD WHINE Mark Hill

BLADE RUNNER

£12.99 • EA Classics • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P133 should do the trick

The idea of Westwood doing a point-and-click adventure game seems laughable now, but there was a time not so long ago when these games weren't seen as the gaming equivalent of wearing flares and having sideburns down to your knees. And what could've been cooler than turning Ridley Scott's classic sci-fi noir into a dark and atmospheric adventure?

To its credit, Westwood tried to do something different with the genre and, while it's more of a disappointment than a success, *Blade Runner* has enough substance to warrant a second look. Set in the same world as Philip K Dick's novel, you play a rookie blade runner investigating animal-murdering replicants. The game's innovation is that events happen whether you're there to witness them or not, often resulting in dead ends because you didn't find the right clues at the right time. The guilty characters are randomised to ensure you never know which of the suspects is a replicant and there are 13 endings, which sounds great until you realise most of the thinking is done for you – you can't use objects on one another and there are very few dialogue options. It doesn't murder the film, but it still doesn't do it the justice it deserves.

PCZVERDICT 71%

The animations are very similar to those in the abomination that is *Broken Sword* and the pixelation is almost unbearable.

THEME PARK/THEME HOSPITAL PACK

£19.99 • EA Classics • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** 486 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P133 for high-res *Theme Hospital*

"You can't milk a cash cow enough" seems to be one of the maxims framed on the walls of every big corporate publisher. "When the cows have been squeezed dry, put two of them in a box and milk them again" is the one written directly below it. If this had been priced eight quid cheaper we wouldn't be grumbling, but paying a tenner for each of the games here, after they've both been on budget so long, is an insult.

Still, if you haven't played either of them before and own an older PC (*Theme Park* even comes with a warning that it won't work on anything faster than a P200), this is a chance to own two of Bullfrog's best games. In fact, some of the most enjoyable moments I've had playing computer games (Lula not withstanding) have been with these two titles. *Theme Park* looks as old as it is, but is more fun than the recent *Theme Park World* (if not as good as *Rollercoaster Tycoon*) and *Theme Hospital* is full of ideas and is extremely funny, although you can only play it for so long without getting bored. You have been warned.

PCZVERDICT 70%

Theme Hospital: you'll split your sides.

Exploration and diplomacy still count.

Civilization the sci-fi way

ALPHA CENTAURI

£12.99 • EA Classics • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P166 with 32Mb RAM

It's hard to look at Sid Meier's follow-up to his *Civilization II* masterpiece without comparing it to the officially licensed *Civ* titles that appeared around the same time, *Test Of Time* and *Call To Power*.

Although *Alpha Centauri* still exudes class, it seems to be missing the vital ingredient that makes the *Civ* titles such a delightful and intensely addictive experience. Set in a fictional future and starting where *Civ II* left off, it involves the colonisation of a planet by seven factions who fight, strike deals, join in alliances, backstab and research their way to being the major power. The interface has changed considerably (not necessarily for the better), but the game is still recognisably *Civ*. A great deal of detail has gone into making the factions come alive, but it is hard to care about what really happens to them. We still recommend *Civ II* above all imitations, it's a near-perfect strategy title that makes *Alpha Centauri* little more than an interesting addendum to the series.

PCZVERDICT 79%

ADDICTION PINBALL

£4.99 • Crucial Entertainment • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** That should be plenty

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Team 17's excellent pinball game was only released two years ago, unlike most other games for a fiver, and its shiny newness shows. There are two tables, Rally Fever and Worms (yes, that Worms), and both of them are very good, if not completely groundbreaking. If you have a powerful PC you can make the most of high resolutions and detail levels, making this one of the best bargains available in the budget arena.

PCZVERDICT **80%**

The Worms table comes complete with loads of subgames and all those cute voices.

SETTLERS 3: empire building the German way.

SETTLERS 3 GOLD EDITION

£34.99 • Blue Byte • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P100 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P166 for higher resolutions

Don't go into *Settlers 3* expecting another *Caesar III*, this is a German oddity. From the strange and badly drawn cartoon that acts as an intro to the loud colours and chubby little people that waddle around the screen, you know this is something different.

There seems to be hundreds of things you can do, but the actions soon become boring and repetitive, no matter what civilisation you're 'settling'. This Gold Edition includes more than 70 maps created by fans and the official add-on pack, *Quest Of The Amazons* (which features chubby single-breasted women), so at least it's value for money. The question is, do you really want to spend more than five minutes playing it?

PCZVERDICT **60%**

Lara's three big ones in one box. Too many operations, obviously.

TOMB RAIDER TRILOGY

£34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3D card for the second and third installments

Another cow with some very manhandled udders, Lara Croft shows her wear and tear across her first three games. As you would imagine, there is precious little variety from one game to another, apart from small changes in scenery and graphical improvements.

As far as we're concerned the first one is still the best, if only because we actually enjoyed playing it when it first came out and we weren't sick to death of Lara's antics. Unless you can't get enough of the girl, we'd recommend first-time *Raiders* to wait until the original comes out for a fiver in a couple of months or head straight for the *Last Revelation* if you want Lara at her flashiest.

PCZVERDICT **75%**

NBA LIVE '99

£12.99 • EA Classics • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3D card is absolutely essential if you want good looks

PCZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Much of what we say in the NHL '99 review, to the right on this page, applies here too, except that basketball sims generally work better than hockey ones. The newer *NBA Live 2000* has nice touches, such as being able to graft your face onto a player and having the opportunity to play teams from different decades, but the essential put-the-ball-in-the-hoop gameplay is here already, and very good it is too. Even if you don't consider yourself a basketball fan, you should give it a try – you might be surprised at just how addictive and fun it is.

PCZVERDICT **80%**

You can create your own players in *NBA*.

"Spam, spam, spam, spam, spam." "Wonderful spam."

INCA II

£4.99 • Crucial Entertainment • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P90 **Memory** 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** You can't polish a turd

PCZONE PANTS

We spent hours fighting over the score for *Inca II*, since it could either have earned itself the title of funniest game ever or worst game ever. Take a guess at which it got. Set in a strange version of the Inca culture, with space ships, the game blends simple one-screen puzzles with an appalling space sim section. The acting and dialogue is so incredibly bad it reaches Monty Python proportions to become momentarily good. You might want to check it out just for that.

PCZVERDICT **10%**

NHL pushes all other hockey games out of the rink.

NHL '99

£12.99 • EA Classics • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** More RAM and a 3D card

You know exactly what to expect from the *NHL* series: slick and polished graphics and fast, furious action. If you're into ice hockey and don't want to shell out more than 30 quid on *NHL 2000*, you won't find that many improvements over this version. The problem that faces all hockey simulations is, it's such a limited sport it's very hard to distinguish it from a souped up pinball game. If faffing around on ice chasing a puck is your thing, though, you won't find a better budget buy anywhere else.

PCZVERDICT **78%**

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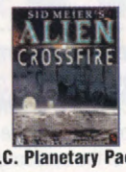
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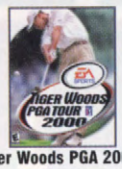
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FEEDBACK

Everyone and his dog has an opinion on *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament*. Mark Hill discovers there are other games out there

They'll never see you in that skin, mate.

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in *PC ZONE* over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO **Feedback, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ**

EMAIL Alternatively, email them to us at **letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk** with **'Feedback'** in the subject line.

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QUAKE III VS UNREAL TOURNAMENT

Unreal Tournament

Reviewed Issue 81, October
Score 90%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC

"*UT* is a milestone. It proves that a bot-packed multiplayer-only game works."

Quake III

REVIEWED Issue 86, February
SCORE 89%

What we thought

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

"A vital purchase and the fastest game that money can buy."

What you think

"I bought both of these games expecting *Quake III* to be the better game. I was wrong. *Quake* does have the better graphics and better player models, but when it comes to level design and sheer playability *UT* wins hands down. The space levels in *UT* are inspired genius and the balance is perfect. The assault levels are God-like and the weapons, apart from the flak cannon and air pistol, are brilliant."

Mark 'Moby'

"I think that *UT*'s variations on normal deathmatch/team/ctf have been totally overrated. Sure they're fun, but there's nothing that strays far from the tried and tested, and just about every mod imaginable is either out or in development for *QIII* anyway, if you're so inclined. Which leaves us with the quality of the engine, mods and levels, and here *QIII* wins hands down!"

Alex Lohfink

"Everyone is entitled to their own opinion in this argument, but if you actually read around you will find other more respectable magazines and e-zines marking *Quake III* as 90-98 per cent. I understand that you have a stricter marking scheme, but all of these people cannot be wrong. In fact, you are the ones who are wrong. You are stupid. You can't use jump pads. You can't change the path of a shortcut to launch a mod (of which there are a lot more original ones being designed for *QIII*). You are just so wrong... "

Mr ONi

"Look, it's very easy. If you don't have a computer, go out and buy one. If you've got one, then you'll probably need a better one. 550MHz+ with at least 128Mb RAM. Done that? Right, now go back out. See that game? Yep, *Unreal Tournament*. Now buy it. Hey, where are you going? No, you're not done yet. You see that other one? Yep, *Quake III*. Buy that one too. Don't worry, your mother's had lots of birthdays – you can buy her two presents next year. Now then, go home and play the games. Keep playing. Where are you going? No, no ,no, no. You don't need a job any more. You have no need for money. Playing *UT* and *QIII* is your life's only purpose. Now then, is anyone else living with you? Good! They can hand-feed you and you never have to stop playing. That's it, keep playing. And don't stop until *Half-Life 2* comes out."

Ben Walters, Derby

"*QIII* is a small, brown, muddy puddle compared to the delights of *UT*. It plays a better deathmatch, and CTF and the weapons kick ass. While playing *QIII*, the railgun doesn't fire until a second after you've clicked, while the rest of your arsenal are all tired offerings that will always leave you second best to someone with a bigger gun. In *UT*, you can take anyone out with any weapon!"

The Bear

"It happened with *Doom II* and *Dark Forces*, then with *Quake* and *Duke Nukem 3D*, so it is only fair we have a new war. I am speaking of this tedious argument over *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament*. However, I must defend a recent attack on *Quake III* and answer the point about its lack of quality. Its graphics are the best I've seen in any game. Its weapons are well balanced and every single one can kill you (and if the rail gun is not a sniper rifle I don't know what is). It has the fastest pure deathmatch ever seen, so enjoy *Quake III* for that and enjoy *UT* if you want all the other modes."

Paul Baker

"I have to commend you for giving *Quake III* a sub-90 per cent mark. *UT* is far better than *QIII*; it has a far better range of weapons from the weak, but deadly, impact hammer to the massively powerful redeemer. The bots are also more realistic and have a much fairer learning curve than *QIII*'s bots (on 'easy' it's like a walk in the park and on 'hard' it's like WWIII). *UT* isn't perfect, the biorifle is useless and some levels are less than desirable, but it's way more fun than *QIII*."

Donal Rafferty

Comment

We're getting a bit tired of the never-ending *QIII* vs *UT* argument, and you must be getting tired of reading it. And anyone who calls himself Mr ONi is obviously so much more intelligent than we are that we don't dare to tell him where he can stick his more respectable magazines.

GABRIEL KNIGHT 3

REVIEWED Issue 85, January
SCORE 60%

What we thought

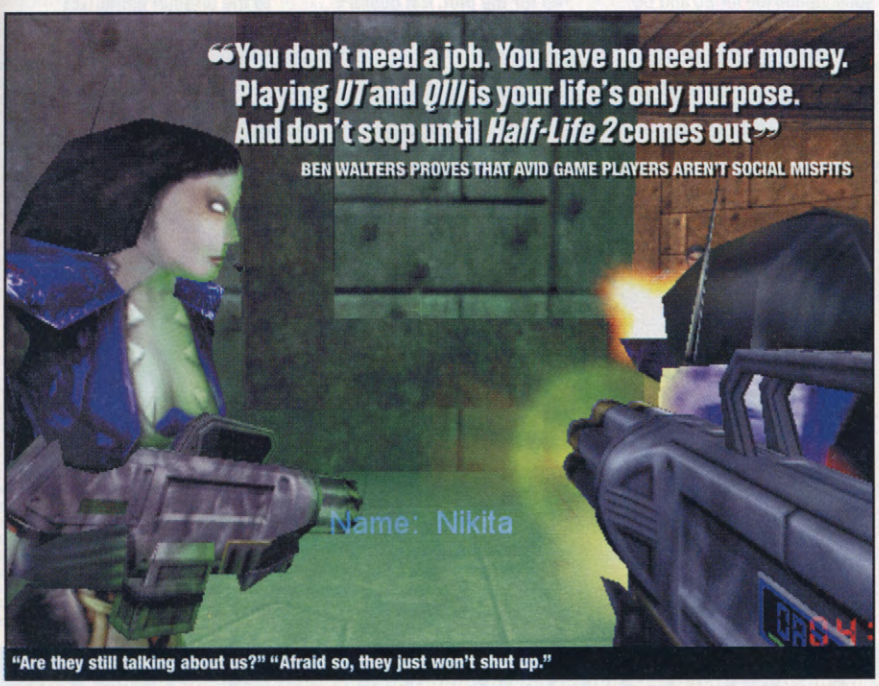
"Surely the last nail in the coffin for adventure games as we know them."

What you think

"You were very wrong to only reward *Gabriel Knight 3* with 60 per cent. It's an amazing game. The graphics were described as being laughable, but they are some of the best I've seen in years. This game needs more recognition of how good it is and I advise any action game fan to buy it now."

Chris Reynolds

"I've always been a fan of the point-and-click adventure genre, and after reading your review of *Gabriel Knight 3* I was upset. Alright, its not a fantastic game,



"Are they still talking about us?" "Afraid so, they just won't shut up."

"Seen Lara about?" "Who's she? Never heard of her."

but it is certainly better than some others I've read reviews on and I feel that 60 per cent is a bit harsh. The graphics are decent enough, the story is excellent and the gameplay is enjoyable. Even with a few poor points (namely Gabriel's voice) it's still worthy of 80 per cent in my books. I feel the review failed to consider the dedicated fans when the final percentage was issued."

Jon McFadyen

Comment

We've always been big fans of the *Gabriel Knight* games, but that didn't stop us from finding this one very lame. And maybe Chris could explain to us why an "action game fan" would want to play an adventure game. Is that some clever puzzle?

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

REVIEWED Issue 84, Xmas
SCORE 88%

What we thought

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE **"It has the same sense of spectacular adventure that makes the films such good fun."**

What you think

"Manthorp (Feedback *PCZ* #87), you are clearly mad and in love with Lara. You cannot bear that *Indy* got a better score than *The Last Revelation*. Well, *Indy* is far superior, and is far more fun to play than traditional adventures. After playing this game, I played it again, and not once did I think it was a Lara rip-off. I thought "great music", "great story" and "great fun". If this game is just a Lara Rip-Off, then explain why I didn't like *Tomb Raider* yet I love *Indy 3D*. It's a truly epic game!"

Chris Capel

"All of my friends bought *Tomb Raider 4*, but as I was sick of Lara Croft I bought *Indy*. After playing this game for a while I realised how absolutely incredible it was compared to all the *Tomb Raider* games. The graphics are superb, the lighting is excellent and it just goes to show that you can get a good game of this genre that doesn't have a seriously deformed woman with boulders on her chest."

Comment

No doubt about it, Indy rules over Lara.

SUPERBIKE 2000

REVIEWED Issue 88, April
SCORE 78%

What we thought

"We feel that a message needs to be sent to the developer community. Please, folks, *please* stop making motorcycle games. They just don't cut it."

What you think

"I am disgusted at Phil Wand's review. I do not wish to doubt his ability to review and write about PC games but tell him please not to write about bikes. Having mentioned that he has a motorcycle either must be a complete lie or the so-called machine in his garage is a Honda Melody. If you own a motorcycle, then the decent thing to do is promote this leisure or sport because, let's face it, motorcycling is too exciting to be merely a mode of transport and is not promoted enough due to people like Mr Wand being as off-putting as he was. And no, I don't have a beard and I do not smell of oil."

Barry Winter, Nottingham

Comment

We don't doubt that riding the real thing is exciting but, as Mr Wand points out, it ain't necessarily so in games.

ASHERON'S CALL

REVIEWED Issue 88, April
SCORE 78%

What we thought

"Not the best online RPG, but still a good romp."

What you think

"I noticed you ranked *Ultima Online* and *EverQuest* higher than *Asheron's Call*. I failed to see why though. One of your main arguments was that you have to pay $9.99 (that's dollars not pounds). But you have to pay a subscription fee for *EQ* and *UO*. You said that targeting is "hit or miss". That is completely based on your skill and the skill of the monster you're attacking. This game is heavily dependent on what skills you pick and how high you put them. What you didn't mention (understandably since it was only recent) is that Turbine has recently introduced several new monsters, some medium, some hard, some god-like. It has also introduced guild halls, wedding halls, new graphics engine and claims it will soon introduce houses and banks. Monthly patches are the norm now, which shows Turbine didn't sell the game and then give up on it. You completely skipped the social system, which is better than *EQ* due to the ranking system. In my opinion, this is a very good game that had a 'rushed' review. It takes time to level up and figure out the ins and outs. (I've been playing for a good two months and still don't know it all yet.)

Ypnos of Frostfell

Chris' Comment

If anything, I thought we were very generous with our score. *Ultima Online* has more depth than *Asheron's Call* will ever have, and *EverQuest* is a much better-looking and more accessible game. By comparison, *AC* looks like a compromise between the two 'big boys' and as a result fails to significantly impress on any major level.

BROKEN SWORD 2

REVIEWED Issue 88, April
SCORE 34%

What we thought

"As for the plot, if it doesn't involve the slow and painful ritual sacrifice of George, we're not interested."

What you think

"Your review of *Broken Sword 2* on budget couldn't be more wrong. Just look around and see what other magazines are giving the *Broken Sword* games. Some mags gave them above 90 per cent. Face it, you are wrong... for once."

Natalie McClain

Comment

We don't really care what other mags think, we hate it. By the way, your name on the email address is naked_natalie. You don't happen to have a website, do you?

SWAT 3

REVIEWED Issue 85, January
SCORE 89%

What we thought

PC ZONE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE **"The whole thing has been put together with incredible professionalism."**

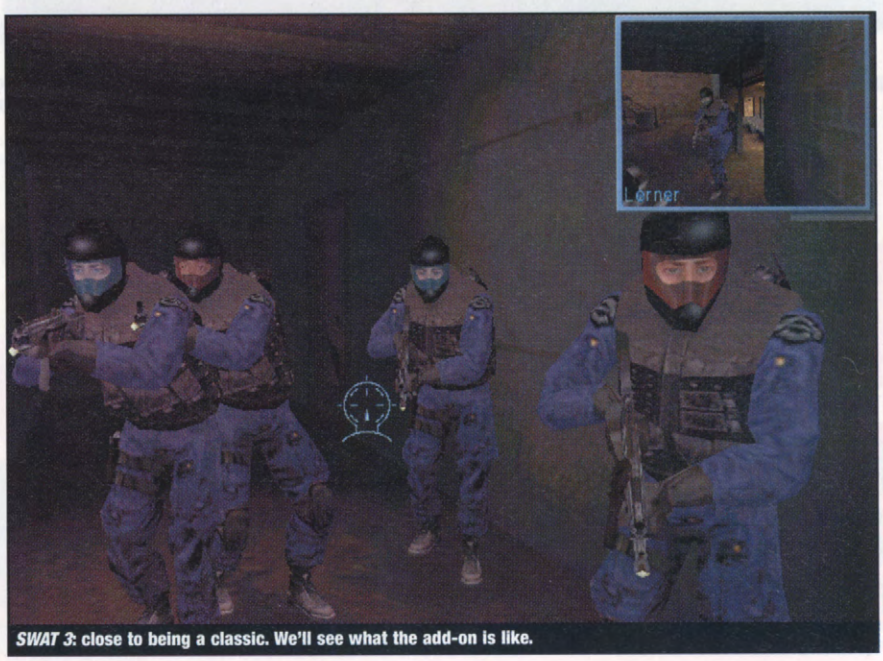
What you think

"If you hadn't changed your scoring system (which I'm glad you did), we would certainly be looking at another classic here. No bugs, the computer AI is the best I've ever seen, and it's the hardest game I've played since *Commandos*. It's a shame that there is no multiplayer option and whether people will gladly part with an extra 15 quid for this option in the forthcoming add-on pack is debatable."

Freddie Forder

Comment

We can't wait for the add-on pack, but if you're short of cash there'll be a patch in August that gives multiplayer support to the original game. PCZ



***SWAT 3*: close to being a classic. We'll see what the add-on is like.**

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THE HISTORY OF GAMES

PART ONE

PROGRAMMING

From bedroom to boardroom and back again, *Keith Pullin* looks at the changing world of the peculiar breed known as the 'programmer'

These days, huge teams of automated programmers create the majority of PC games in flash, futuristic buildings, amidst perfectly manicured business parks across the land. With budgets the size of a small country's, access to the latest technology and a coke machine in every corner of every room, they've got it made. It's geek paradise. But it wasn't always like this. In fact, it was the exact opposite.

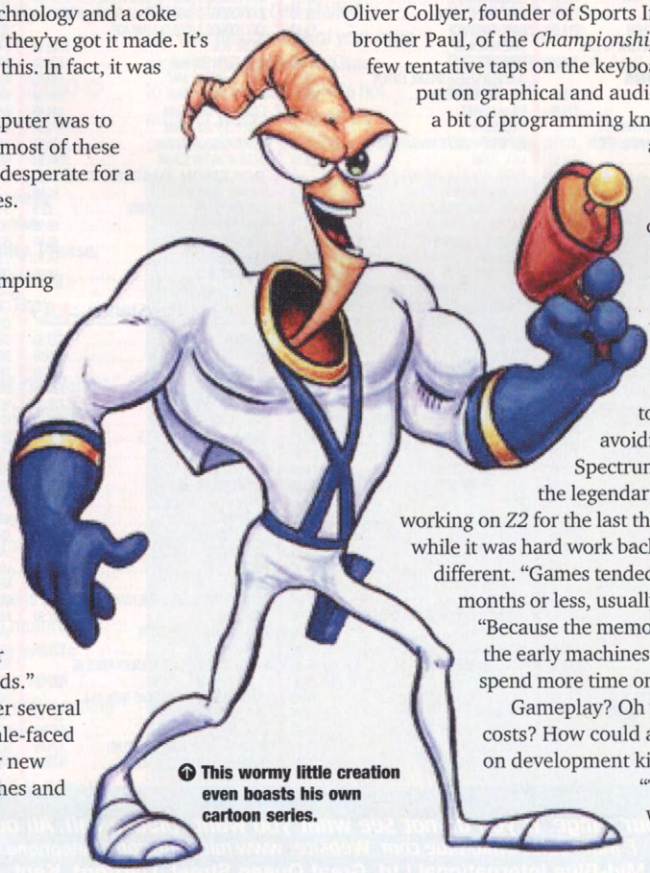
In 1980 the only way to get a game on your computer was to type it in yourself from a magazine. Unfortunately most of these 'games' wouldn't work anyway, so those who were desperate for a fix decided the only solution was to do it themselves.

A NEW AGE IS BORN

And so a new industry was born. It became the stomping ground of spotty adolescents with overactive imaginations and too much time on their hands. Spurred on by their own misanthropy and love of something known only as the 'home computer', they huddled down in their bedroom lairs to converse with their computers in a strange language called machine code. It was a golden era, a time of unwavering love and mothering instincts that would rear a game from conception through to birth.

Dave Perry – one time 'bedroom programmer' in Northern Ireland and now president of Shiny Entertainment, who is responsible for hits such as *MDK*, *Earthworm Jim* and *Messiah* – puts it another way: "We were nerds and couldn't get any girlfriends."

Still, it must have helped them concentrate. After several months (or even years) the nerds would emerge pale-faced and clearly lacking in vitamins, yet convinced their new animated blobs would be their ticket to a life of riches and real female flesh – at last.



This wormy little creation even boasts his own cartoon series.

For 34-year-old Perry, the industry has proven to be a stepping-stone to a beautiful house in Laguna Beach, and a rockstar lifestyle punctuated with flying helicopters around California, skydiving and scuba diving.

Oliver Collyer, founder of Sports Interactive and co-creator, with his brother Paul, of the *Championship Manager* series remembers his first few tentative taps on the keyboard. "In those days less emphasis was put on graphical and audio paraphernalia, so all you needed was a bit of programming knowledge and a cunning idea for a game and you were sorted," he says. "Oh, and having no life probably helped too – living in the middle of the Shropshire countryside did the trick for me."

Most of today's current programming stalwarts started this way. John M Phillips has been a professional programmer since 1984. He wrote the award-winning *Nebulus* (an ingenious arcade/puzzle game, in which you had to climb to the top of a tower while avoiding traps) as well as numerous other Spectrum and Commodore 64 classics. He joined the legendary Bitmap Brothers in 1992 and has been working on *Z2* for the last three years. John, now 36, recalls that while it was hard work back in 'the old days', priorities were slightly different. "Games tended to be written in about three to nine months or less, usually with a very small team," he says. "Because the memory capacity and graphical capabilities of the early machines were limited, programmers tended to spend more time on gameplay."

Gameplay? Oh yes, we remember it. So what about costs? How could a teenager afford to spend all that money on development kits to create a game?

"The cost of development equipment was very small compared with today.

I MADE THIS!

A quick profile of some of the programmers featured in this article

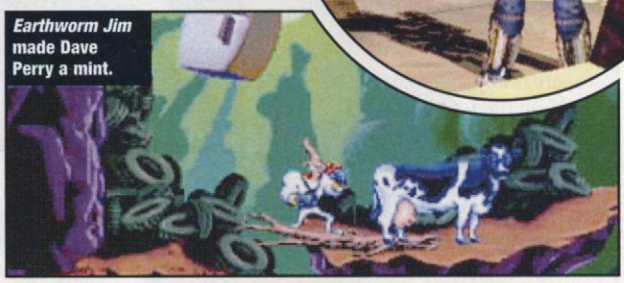
NAME: Dave Perry

Position: President
Company: Shiny Entertainment
Memorable games: *Pyjamarama* (Spectrum, 1984), *Trantor: The Last Stormtrooper* (Spectrum, 1986), *Smash TV* (Amiga, 1988), *Savage* (Amiga, 1989), *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Amiga, 1990), *Supremacy* (Amiga, 1991), *Cool Spot* (Megadrive, 1992), *Aladdin* (Megadrive, 1993), *Global Gladiators* (Megadrive, 1994), *Earthworm Jim* (Megadrive/Super NES, 1994), *MDK* (PC, 1998), *Messiah* (PC, 2000)
Details: Originally hailing from Northern Ireland, David Perry worked for Mikrogen, Probe Software, then Virgin America before setting up Shiny Entertainment. His first game for Shiny, *Earthworm Jim*, was so successful it was made into a cartoon series and now there are rumours circulating that it may just be made into a feature film.
He currently lives in Laguna Beach, California, where he continues to make far too much money while enjoying a playboy lifestyle.

Supremecy, surely you remember?

Pyjamarama: Dave's first major game.

Shiny's far from angelic *Messiah*.



Earthworm Jim made Dave Perry a mint.

NAME: Oliver Collyer

Position: Joint MD
Company: Sports Interactive
Memorable games: *Championship Manager*, *Championship Manager 2*
Details: In the mid-'80s the Collyer boys got a spanking new Spectrum computer. From that moment onwards they played nothing but football management games because there was not much else to do in the arse-end of Shropshire. After a while they reckoned they could do better themselves – so they gave it a whirl. Older brother Paul even left his band, called Elevate, despite signing a deal with Sony. In 1991, five years after they first started writing it, the gamble paid off and *Championship Manager* was born. Since then you could say they've done OK for themselves – apart from the fact that they support Everton. Oh well.

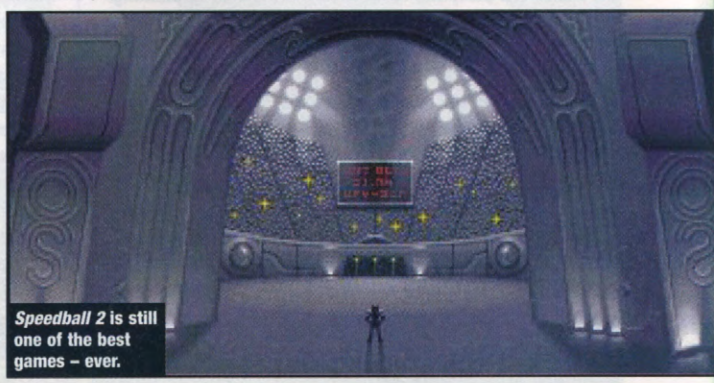
Championship Manager – the legend continues.

NAME: John M Phillips

Position: Senior 3D programmer
Company: Bitmap Brothers
Memorable games: *Nutcracka* (BBC/C64, 1984), *Impossaball* (Spectrum/Amstrad, 1985), *Nebulus* (Spectrum, 1986), *Sunburst* (C64, 1986), *Speedball II* (Megadrive, 1993), *Z* (PC, 1995)
Details: John started programming in 1984 on the BBC Microcomputer. Although hardly prolific, every game he's ever programmed has been a massive hit. Like they say, it's quality not quantity that counts. He's currently working on the 3D engine for *Z2* and hopes one day to get a real hobby like stamp collecting or something.

Impossaball.

Nebulus.



Speedball 2 is still one of the best games – ever.

NAME: Phil Daniels

Position: Founder
Company: Maverick Developments
Memorable games: Add-on levels for *Doom*, *Doom II*, *Duke Nukem*, *Quake* and *Quake II*.
Details: Phil is 38 years old, married, with one child and he lives in Norfolk, England. His 'real' job is as a manager for an international company operating in the oil industry. He has previously worked as a lead level designer on *Future Vs Fantasy* and producer/co-coordinator for a virtual reality product for Bolt Action Software, USA. He is currently working on two add-on packs for *Half-Life* in his spare time.

id Software's seminal *Doom*.

Browning about with *Quake*.

Anyone could start writing games on a Spectrum or a C64 for only a few hundred pounds."

In this new age of graphical miracles, costs are somewhat more extravagant. "Nowadays you're looking at many thousands of pounds of equipment and software for each member of a team," says John. "The potential market has grown enormously over the last 10-15 years, so a hit game can sell a million units or more. However, the corresponding increase in production costs means a lot of teams are not making much more money than they were in the '80s."

Oliver Collyer explains the rising costs of *Championship Manager*: "*CM1* cost bugger all 'cos we did it in our spare time just for a laugh. *CM2* cost tens of thousands of pounds, *CM3* cost hundreds of thousands and our next deal will rock big-time."

And this from what most people still deem to be a relatively small developer. "We're about as small as you can get away with these days," says Oliver. "We have nine full-time employees, which is kind of cool and something we're proud of because we write some of the most successful games, sales-wise."

Of course it helps if your publisher happens to be the mighty Eidos. But is this the double-edged sword that most developers hate? On one hand you're given a sack load of money to make the game of your dreams, yet on the other hand publishers demand their product to be finished before it's barely begun.

The excitement is mounting, *Championship Manager 3* is heading our way.

"We have a good relationship with Eidos in this respect," says Oliver. "I think we each realise that you could quite easily harm a brand even as strong as *CM* by releasing a bad version. People aren't stupid – if they buy a game and think it's crap they won't buy the next one."

That said, Oliver realises other developers aren't so fortunate. "It might be completely different if we were a new developer who had just arrived on the scene; it might be hard to convince a publisher to give us either the time or creative freedom to do as we wish if we didn't have a successful track record."

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY

John Cook (left) worked for Mirrorsoft during the '80s as head of development. He now works as an agent for many of the industry's top coders. He accepts that programmers and publishers rarely see eye to eye.

"With some notable exceptions, publishers are not good at working with developers. Many senior management, sales and marketing people still see development as a necessary evil," he says. "Having said that, most programming groups aren't very good at business and are paranoid about dealing with publishers, often failing to see the bigger commercial picture.

"There's a dynamic there that still needs to change – a lot of my time is spent making sure there is a happy relationship between the client and the publisher. Communication is the key."

Part of the problem is that programmers face new pressures that have been created because of the sums of money involved. "Today, with such huge installed bases and a global market, spectacular returns are there for both publishers and programming groups – more than ever before," says John Cook.

"Games production is a pressure business – most projects (even big ones) have only a few really key people working on them. These are the guys that make the big money – but the pressure towards the end of a project is incredible. Writing a game is just about the most difficult thing I can imagine."

So it seems that the power-base has changed. It's the publishers who dictate the play and hold the key to commercial success and only a select few inner-circle fat cats make all the money. Gone are the days of lounging around in your bedroom living off the royalties. But is this really true? Indeed, there's a strong case that suggests bedroom programming is making a resurgence.

Which is exactly what Phil Daniels is doing. The 36-year-old founder of home-based Maverick Developments in Norfolk is currently

"*CM1* cost bugger all 'cos we did it in our spare time just for a laugh. *CM3* cost hundreds of thousands, and our next deal will rock big-time"

OLIVER COLLYER, SPORTS INTERACTIVE

SOME THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW...

What is programming?

This is when a nerd sits in front of a computer and taps away at the keyboard to communicate with it in a low-level language called *machine code*. The nerd tells the computer to do things such as move a square across the screen and make a 'beeping' sound. Eventually a game is conceived. The nerd is the father. The computer is the mother. This is *programming*.

Who invented the first computer game?

Martin Graetz, Stephen Russell,and Wayne Wiitanen programmed the first ever video game at the Montana Institute of Technology in 1961. Made for the PDP-1, *Spacewar!* was a two-player only game, where two vector spaceships slogged it out across a small arena. You could turn, thrust and shoot, and you even had to watch out for the gravitational pull of the sun in the middle of the screen. *Spacewar!* was multiplayer gaming at it's finest. Makes you wonder what we've really achieved over the last 40 years...

Checking out Spacewar!

Go to: http://lcs.www.media.mit.edu/groups/el/projects/spacewar/

Where can I find out more?

If you fancy knowing more about game programming there are a plethora of websites to peruse. Check these out:

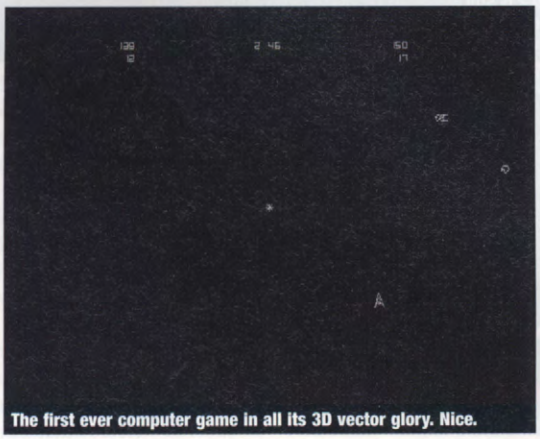
www.gameprogrammer.com **– hints and tips on game programming in general.**

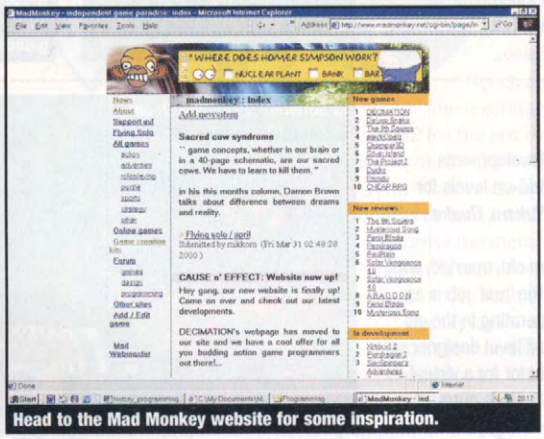
www.makegames.com **– tells you everything you need to know about developing games.**

www.madmonkey.net **– full of excellent games made by independent developers with no publishing deals. Also contains game development kits.**

www.siia.com **– the Software and Information Industry Association is the principal trade association for the software and digital content industry.**

www.gama.org **– the Game Manufacturers' Association offers stacks of information on the gaming industry.**


The first ever computer game in all its 3D vector glory. Nice.



Head to the Mad Monkey website for some inspiration.

finishing off the *Wanted!* and *Redemption* add-on packs for *Half-Life*.

He believes working on mods and distributing them over the Internet is the way ahead for the housebound programmer of the future. "Shelf-life of gaming products is becoming longer," he says. "Take *Half-Life* for example. Not only was the original product a storming seller, its life after sale has been phenomenal. With a multitude of online gaming, official add-on products for the single-player game and re-packaged re-sales, it has really kept on selling itself.

"Much of that continued success can be put firmly on the shoulders of people making mods and total conversions for the original. A fact Valve and Sierra have recognised and strongly supported."

Dave Perry echoes those sentiments, "I do believe that new developers can totally kick ass. That's where I find most of my guys. They are very passionate. Some of the best programmers are the ones that have not learned convention."

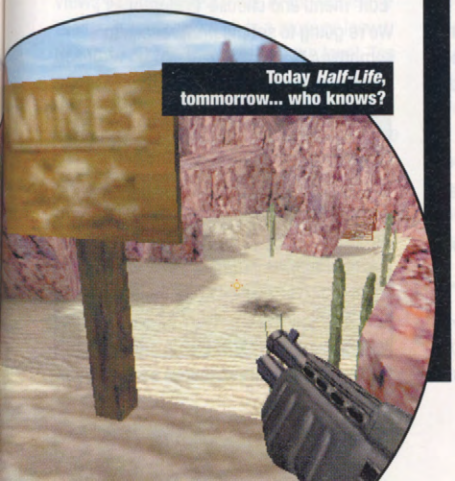
John Cook also believes there is plenty of new talent around the bedrooms of the world, yet says it's harder than ever to succeed. "The big development group system works against originality, but someone working on their own can still make a conceptual breakthrough which will provide a great basis for a hit game," he says. "Taking that fragment and bringing it to fruition is a much more complex task than it used to be though, and it takes more effort and persistence than ever before. Still, a great idea is a great idea – same as it always was."

THE FUTURE?

So, where do we go from here? David Kronenberg would have us believe that games programmers are going to be the next megastars.

Oliver Collyer, on the other hand, believes in something quite different. "I think the industry's biggest chance of fame is when Paul and I take up our inevitable careers as television football pundits."

Maybe not though, eh? Maybe programmers should be consigned to their bedrooms after all. Bloody nerds. PCZ



Today *Half-Life*, tommorrow... who knows?

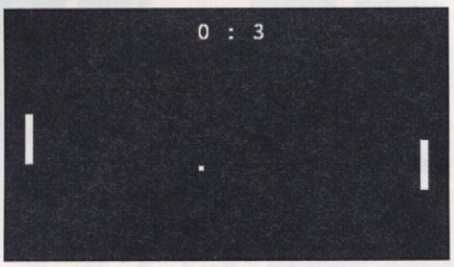
TIMELINE

Memorable moments in programming history...

1961 *Spacewars!* is made at MIT. It's the first ever computer game.

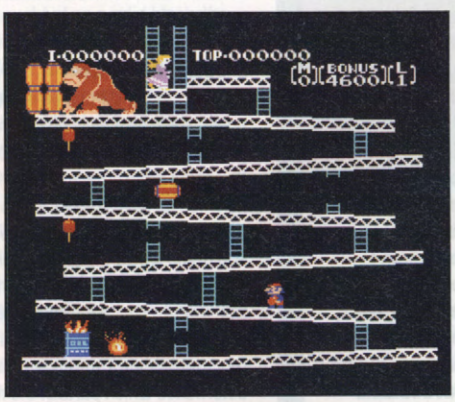
1971 Nolan Bushell releases first commercial arcade game called *Computer Space*, he then renames his company to Atari.

1972 Atari release *Pong*. It's a huge hit.



1978 Japanese company Taito release *Space Invaders*. The video game is truly born.

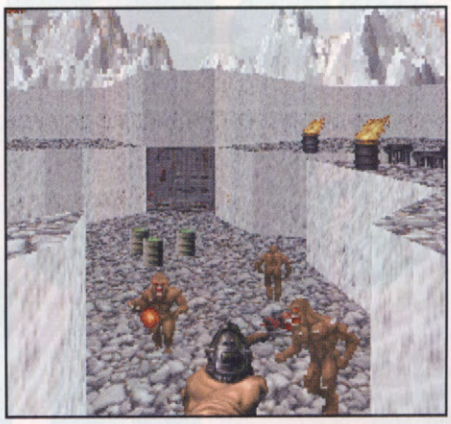
1981 Nintendo release *Donkey Kong*. Game industry sales hit US$6 billion.



1983 Video game industry crashes. Home computers emerge and gamers start typing in games from magazines such as *Sinclair User* – they never work.

1992 PC gaming explodes. Nintendo notches up US$7 billion in worldwide sales, which is more than all the US movie and television studios combined.

1994 *Doom* is released by id Software and bedroom programming takes off again, with new maps and mods being released. *Myst* released and becomes biggest selling PC game of all time.



1995 Microsoft releases Windows 95 and the Internet begins to make a huge impact. Sony's PlayStation starts to take over the world.

1996 *Wing Commander IV* costs US$10 million to develop and *Quake* rocks the world.

1998 *Half-Life* is released, followed by hundreds of homemade levels and TCs.

1999 Online gaming kicks off and homemade conversions become as popular as the games they are based on.

HOW TO...

CREATE A QUAKE III ARENA LEVEL IN 10 EASY STEPS

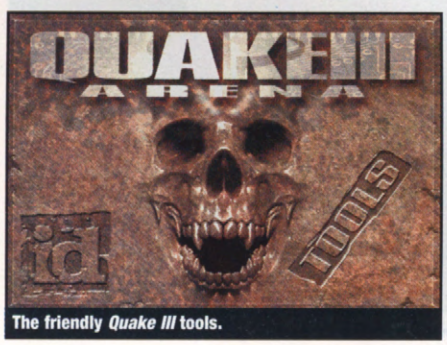
Want to become the ultimate fragmeister? Just design your own *Quake III* levels and practise, practise, practise

CHECKING OUT THE LOVELY CURVES ALAN BOURKE

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Make sure you have the right tools for the job

We'll be using *Q3Radiant*, the official editor for *Quake III Arena* . You'll find it on next month's cover CD, or if you can't wait until then, download it from the *PC ZONE* website (www.pczone.co.uk). This editor is written in C++ and is therefore much less of a resource hog than, say, the Visual Basic-developed *Unreal Tournament* editor *UnrealEd*. To that end, you would probably be fine with 64Mb of RAM, especially with a 32Mb graphics card. As always, you can never have enough memory. Note that *QIIIA* requires an OpenGL compliant card, and you'll have to make sure that the game itself is running correctly before continuing with the tutorial. A desktop resolution of 800x600 is the absolute minimum, and you'll find that 1024x768 or higher is really required for any serious work. The final thing to consider is your CPU speed. This ultimately determines the size and complexity of the maps that you can realistically build, and a PII/266MHz is the bottom end. The system I used has one of those overclocked to 275MHz, and working on one of the original game maps is just about bearable with 128Mb RAM. So, as with memory, the more CPU you throw at it the better. And if you're running a multiple-processor system, *Q3Radiant* will even take advantage of that.



The friendly *Quake III* tools.

Slicker, darker and much more technically accomplished, *Quake III Arena* is the satanic alter-ego of *Unreal Tournament*. It appeals to the hardened deathmatcher. Time then to get to grips with the thing of beauty that is the *Quake III Arena* engine and create your first deathmatch level. It's a lot easier than you may think. Yes, it is.

PROGRAMS

As we've seen, *Q3Radiant* is the actual editor. You'll also have discovered, when you read the README file that came with it, that there are a couple of other executables installed as well. *Q3MAP.EXE* is one of them, and in actual fact is the business end of the whole thing. It processes your map in three stages. First off, there's the BSP (Binary Space Partition) stage, which organises the map's raw data into the required format. The second 'vis' stage determines which parts of the map are actually visible and reduces the data to an optimised form. Third is the light stage, determining the brightness, shadows and so on that fall on each surface. A fourth and final stage is handled via another program that creates navigation data for the bots, so that the poor dears don't wander around in circles.

FIRING IT UP

Start *Q3Radiant* and you'll be presented with the default *Q3Radiant* screen as displayed in Figure 1.

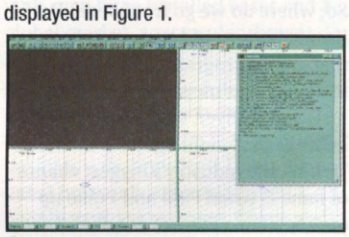


Figure 1 – The default *Q3Radiant* screen.

To change the terrible colour scheme, go over to the 'Misc' menu and into 'Colors\Themes', choosing the 'Black and Green' option. Then go back to the 'Edit' menu and choose 'Preferences'. We're going to set the preferences to something like Figure 2.

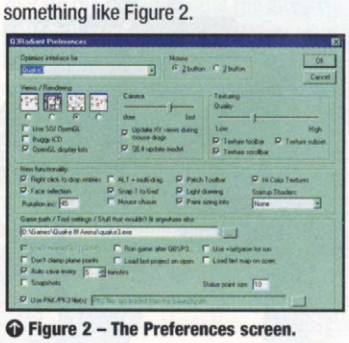


Figure 2 – The Preferences screen.

Get your new walls covered in gore straight away.

Most of the options you can set as you like, however, it may be a good idea to set just a couple the way I suggest to make following this easier. First up is the 'Optimize Interface' dropdown. Select 'Quake III' from this. In the 'Mouse' section, select the number of buttons as appropriate. In the 'Views/Rendering' section, select the third one from the left. Make sure 'Mouse Chaser' and 'Paint Sizing Info' are selected from the 'New Functionality' section. Finally, set the 'Auto Save' to 'Every 5 minutes'.

VIEWS TO A NUMBER OF KILLS

Looking again at Figure 1, we have four views into the empty level. At the top left is the Camera view, which is a more or less accurate 3D representation of the level. Top right is the XY Top view, looking down from overhead. Bottom left is the YZ Side view, and bottom right is the XZ Front view. These can be resized by dragging their borders – you might find that making the 3D view a bit smaller helps. You can pan the 2D views around by right-clicking and moving the mouse. Zooming in and out is achieved with the Delete and Insert keys respectively. The 3D view is more involved, but fairly intuitive. Use up and down cursor keys to move forward and backward, left and right cursors to rotate left and right, and Comma, Full Stop to strafe left and right. The A and Z keys will look up and down, and finally D and C will strafe up and down.

SOME NEW WORDS AND CONCEPTS

It's important to remember that an empty level is not a huge expanse of void, but should be thought of as a solid block. You subtract solidity from this to create empty rooms, corridors, and so on. This solid geometry system is why most first-person shooters are based indoors, as rendering large outdoor areas hoovers up CPU cycles. Once you've created a room, you might want to add some material back to make a lamp. This is done by employing a Builder Brush, and creating solid brushes from it. A Brush in the context of level design is any solid or semi-solid object that is part of the level, such as rooms, walls and water.

We'll also be referring to 'entities', which can be thought of as anything in the level that's not part of the architecture. This would include weapons, ammo, player start positions, triggers, and so on.

STEP 1 - THE ROOM

All levels start with an empty room and creating one is as simple as just drawing it. First of all, we'll set the grid size to something manageable. Press the '6' key on the top row of the keyboard to set the grid to 6 units. Then simply click and drag a box in the XY Top view. We'll call this a Builder Brush. Leave the blue camera icon fairly central within it (see Figure 3).

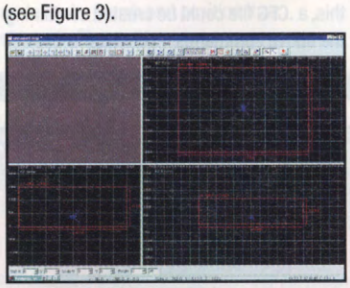


Figure 3 – The First Room.

Its size, which you can see as you drag out the selection area, should be around y=480 and x=512. It doesn't have to be exact, just a ballpark figure. Looking at the YZ Side and XZ Front views, you may notice that the ceiling is fairly low, using the blue camera icon as a guide. You can change the height in these views by left-clicking for a second on or just above the relevant brush edge, and dragging. You'll find that a Z size of about 224 units should give a nice comfortable ceiling. Once you're happy with it, you can hollow it out of the world by using the 'Hollow' toolbar button (see Figure 4).

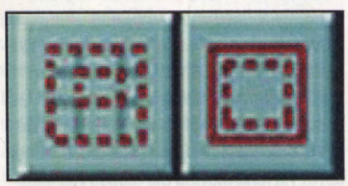


Figure 4 – The CSG Subtract and Hollow toolbar buttons.

This subtracts your room from the solid level geometry. Once you've done that, press 'Esc' to delete the Builder Brush. Note that hollowing will actually create walls of one grid unit width back into the selection area. You have to take this into account if you need areas of exact size, but at the moment it's not important.

STEP 2 - INTERIOR DECORATION

As you can see from the Camera view, everything has been constructed in a foul beige default texture. Press the 'T' key to make the Console window change to display the current texture group. Then from the 'Textures' menu at the top of the screen select 'gothic_wall'. Scroll down the texture list until you find the 'goldbrick' texture. In the 'Camera' view, ctrl-shift-click on one of the walls to select the surface, then click on the 'texture' to apply it. Repeat for all the walls (see Figure 5).

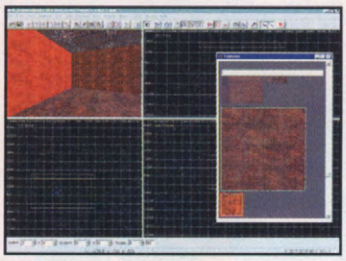


Figure 5 – Textures Applied.

You can press 'Esc' in the Camera view to deselect surfaces at any time. It can be difficult to find a texture by name in the Console Texture list, so now is an ideal time to introduce the ominous-sounding Surface Inspector (see Figure 6).

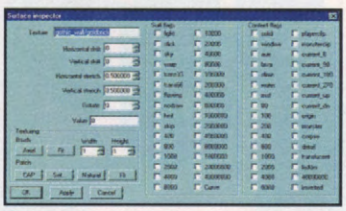


Figure 6 – The Surface Inspector.

No need to start frantically clearing tab ends off your desk – this is simply a useful tool for manually manipulating surfaces. We know that the texture we want is 'goldbrick', and we know it's in the 'gothic_wall' group, and this allows us to specify it directly in the 'Texture' field in the Surface Inspector as 'gothic_wall\goldbrick'. Clicking 'Apply' will paint it on the surface. As practice then, using the Surface Inspector, apply the 'largerblock3b4' texture from the 'gothic_floor' group to the floor, and the 'ceilingtech02_a' texture from the 'gothic_ceiling' group to the ceiling. When you apply the ceiling texture, you'll notice that its cruciform style means it may be unevenly aligned with the ceiling. There are a number of ways to align it, the 'Horizontal Shift' and 'Vertical Shift' values in the Surface Inspector being one. Easier, and less accurate, is to Ctrl-Shift-Click on the surface in the Camera view. Once selected, holding down 'Alt' and moving the mouse will slide the texture around and position it.

STEP THREE – FIRING IT UP

At this point you're no doubt champing at the bit to see what it looks like. Before we do that we need to add a couple of Entities. First, although you can see everything perfectly in the Camera view, there is no actual light source in this room, and so it would be pitch black within *Q3A*. So select the 'XY Top' view, then right-click to display the Easy Entity menu. From there select 'Light'. A red Light Entity will appear in all the views. Use the 2D views and drag with the mouse to position it inside the room. If you deselect it accidentally, press 'Esc' to clear all selections, then 'Shift-click' on it to pick it up again. The other thing we need to do is define a point for players to spawn into the level. Into the top view once more, and using the Easy Entity menu select 'info\info_player_deathmatch'. Position this larger entity so that it's resting on the floor. You'll notice in the Camera view that the player start position is shown as a large purple block, and the light as a white diamond. The last step is to allow *Q3Map* to compile, vis, and light your level. Save your level – it will go into the *QIIIA* 'maps' subdirectory by default. Head for the 'Bsp' menu at the top of the screen and choose 'bsp_fastvis'. The editor will shell out to DOS and run *Q3MAP.EXE*, dumping a finished .BSP file into your maps folder. If it crashes here, refer to the Free Tech Support boxout.

To actually run your map, you obviously need to be in *QIIIA* itself. If you have enough memory, I would recommend starting the game, and setting it to run in a window, so you can leave it open in the background. Those of you with less memory may find that you have to hop in and out of the game. Either way, to run your map you first need to ensure you're not in 'Pure Server' mode. To set this in *QIIIA*, pull down the console and type '/sv_pure 0' – you only need to do that once. To load and play the map, you would enter '/devmap test1', assuming you had saved it as 'test1.map'. To automate this, a .CFG file could be created containing the above commands – consult the *QIIIA* documentation for help. If you keep the game open while editing, all you have to do is press Escape and choose 'Leave Arena' once you've finished testing, re-edit, and when you're ready to test again pull the console down and re-enter your 'devmap' command.

Once it's loaded, you can play the most boring deathmatch level ever. Don't worry, it'll get better quickly. The level will probably be in fullbright mode – to see it with actual lighting just tap the console key twice. See Figure 7 for an example of all this.

Figure 7 – Editor and game running, with an example of the Console Commands.

STEP FOUR – LIGHTING AT A FAIR OLD CLIP

We've added a light source, and there's no reason why you can't just add lights as needed. Our gothic-themed level would look nicer with some flaming torches. We'll create a simple one by essentially chopping a cone in half. The first step is to create the cone-shaped Builder Brush. Zoom in nice and tight in the 'XZ Front' view with the Insert and Delete keys. Draw out a square Builder Brush of one grid square (ie 64 units). Make sure it's square in the other 2D views. Then from the 'Brush' menu at the top of the screen, select 'Primitives\Cone' and enter '8' as the number of sides. This should leave you with something like Fig 8a.

Figure 8a – Initial cone brush in XZ Front view.

If yours is upside down, select 'Flip\Flip Z' from the 'Selection' menu to correct it. Then move it so it's half embedded in the wall, as in Figure 8b.

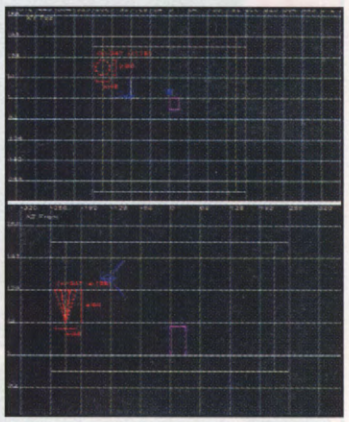


Figure 8b – Cone brush on wall.

Check the XY Top view also to make sure it looks aligned with the room from above. Then press 'Esc' to add the brush to the world. If you do it wrong, don't worry. To reselect the brush, just shift-click on it in the 'Camera' view. If you want to destroy it and start again, select the 'Camera' view, press 'Esc' to clear selections, then shift-click on it to select it and press the 'Delete' key.

So, we now have a cone brush half embedded in the wall brush. This will probably look OK in the level, but having overlapping brushes is a very bad practice indeed. The right thing to do is slice off the part of the cone that we don't need, and to do this we use the Clipper tool as in Figure 9.

Figure 9 – *Q3Radiant* Toolbar buttons. The buttons of interest include (from left to right: Open File, Save File, X-Axis Flip, X-Axis Rotate, Y-Axis Flip, Y-Axis Rotate, Z-Axis Flip, Z-Axis Rotate, CSG Subtract, Hollow, Change View, Change Texture View Mode [in Camera window], Cubic Clipping, Clipper, Free Rotate.)

The best way to understand the tool is by using it. Select the 'cone brush' in

The medieval torches do the job in the middle of the action.

the 'Camera' view with 'Shift-click'. Then toggle the 'Clipper' on the toolbar. Click one point on the top of the cone where it meets the wall, this will produce a blue '1'. Then do the same where the apex of the cone meets the wall, producing a blue '2'. These points don't have to be exactly positioned. Half the cone brush will turn yellow – this is the part which will be kept (see Figure 8c).

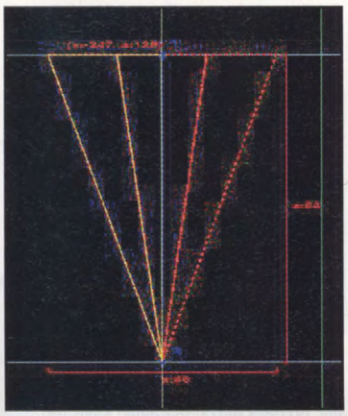


Figure 8c – Using the clipper tool.

Unfortunately, at the moment it's also the half that's inside the existing wall brush. We can flip the clip by pressing 'Ctrl-Enter'. Then press 'Enter' to remove the unwanted portion. With the half-cone still selected, apply a suitable texture from one of the Gothic sets. If the whole brush is selected, the texture will be applied to all faces.

Now for the actual flames. We need to add two flat, thin, rectangular brushes. Draw one in the 'XY Top' view similar to that in Figure 8d.

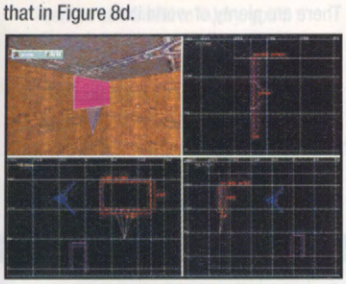


Fig 8d – The first stage of creating flames.

You might need to lower the grid size to line it up. Apply the 'common\nodraw' texture to the whole brush. This texture is one of a number of special ones within the game. It appears pink and nasty in the Camera view, but is actually transparent and totally ignored within the game. Think of it as a sheet of non-solid glass onto which we're going to project a flame. Then create another brush exactly the same at a right angle to the first as in Figure 8e.

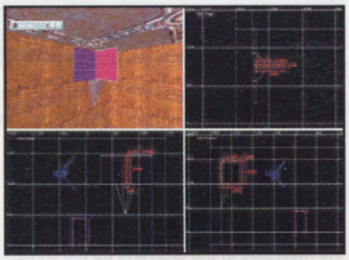


Fig 8e – Second stage of creating flames.

In the Camera view, deselect everything then 'Ctrl-Shift-click' on the outward facing surface of the first brush to select that surface only. Then using the 'Surface Inspector' apply the 'sfx\flame1' texture, and centre it. Within the Surface Inspector you may need to specify the 'Vertical Stretch' as 0.5 to shrink the texture vertically. Do the same to both faces of the second right angled brush until you get something resembling Figure 8f.

Figure 8f – Flame textures applied.

Then save, BSP, and test your level. You should have something like in Figure 8f. Don't forget to tap the console key within the game a couple of times to get the proper lighting effect. You'll notice that the right-angle structure of the flames is fairly obvious up close. This is why torches like this are much smaller in professional levels, and usually way up near the ceiling so that you're always looking up at them. The flame textures actually radiate light, so you don't need a separate Light Entity when you use them.

STEP 5 - CLONES

Rather than redo all of Step 4 to create other torches, we can simply clone what we have. In the Camera view, get up close to your torch. Then 'Shift-click' on each individual element – the cone, and the two flame brushes. Choose 'Selection\Clone' from the menu and a selected copy of the torch will appear slightly offset from the original. Simply drag this into position as normal. You can also use the Flip and Rotate tools on the Toolbar (Figure 9) to align it to other walls. For example, to align it for the directly opposite wall you would use 'Flip X'. But don't put a torch there because we're going to knock a hole through that wall into a second room.

STEP 6 - A SECOND ROOM

Let's create another room, a hallway in fact. Create it in just the same way as the first one, but make it longer and higher. Hollow it out as in Figure 10.

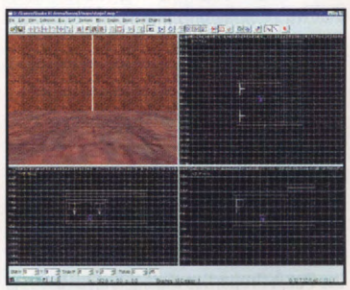


Figure 10 – The second room added.

The next step is to create a small rectangular brush and position it as shown in Figure 11.

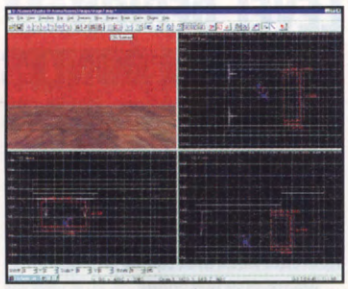


Fig 11 – Knocking a hole through the wall.

Make the actual brush almost as big as the wall itself, to give us a large gap. When positioned, use the 'CSG Subtract' tool on the Toolbar to create the brush. Then, and this is very important, use the 'Backspace' key (not Escape) to delete the brush and leave an empty space in its place. You'll need to make sure the floor and wall textures of the doorway match between both rooms, otherwise you'll get texture clashing. Apply textures to the hallway, clone one of the torches and put it at the end of the new corridor to cast some light, do a 'BSP/Fastvis', and have a look in the game itself. Nice.

STEP 7 - DANGEROUS CURVES

You'll have noticed that every article about *QIII* mentions the fact that it's the first engine to be able to draw true curved surfaces. You might think that you've seen curved surfaces in first-person games before, but you haven't. What you've seen are archways, wheels, etc made from varying numbers of straight lines, with clever texturing used to create the illusion of a curve. Let's make the real thing by putting a nice archway in the gap between our two rooms. We're going to create a patch, which in *QIII*-speak is any map component built using a Bezier curve system. Make sure the 'goldbrick' texture that we used for the walls is the currently selected texture. Then start by drawing another builder brush in the gap, about half the size of the existing gap, as shown in Figure 12a.

"I can't stress enough how important it is to sketch out the flow of the map on paper beforehand. I was amazed that I finished the first draft of my *QIII* work so quickly from working from a sketch. It really gives you a clear picture and direction in which to work from"

A GOOD IDEA FROM ID SOFTWARE'S CHRISTIAN 'DISRUPTOR' ANTKOW

INTERNET RESOURCES

http://www.quake3arena.com is the official website.

http://www.planetquake.com/quake3 is a good all-round site. More importantly, its files section has a link to the official *Q3Radiant* manual by id Software's Paul Jacquays. This is absolutely essential reference material.

http://quake3.qeradiant.com/tutorials.shtml has the excellent 'Ricebug' set of tutorials. It also has a link to a list of *Q3Radiant* keyboard and mouse commands, which is essential reading.

http://www.gamedesign.net/quake3 is a good general site with some tutorials.

Many more tutorials exist discussing *Quake II* level design and Q3Radiant's predecessor, QERadiant. A lot of the techniques discussed in these are still relevant.

There's also the **alt.games.quake3** Usenet newsgroup.

LEVEL DESIGN DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

- Play as many user maps as you can, noting what makes each one succeed or fail
- Choose weapons that suit your map
- Create natural areas in your level where play will focus
- Playtest your maps as much as possible, preferably over a LAN
- Publish your map on the Internet and invite comments
- Take note of the constructive comments and act on them
- Sweat the polygon count

DON'T

- Create mazes or dead ends
- Cover the whole thing in fog and sky areas
- Put too many power-ups, health and armour in
- Use ladders or even working doors. It's all teleports and jump pads these days
- Ever give up on it. Take a break, go back to your previous step, and try it again

FREE TECH SUPPORT

You may find that *Q3Radiant* throws a Windows Exception Error and dies once the *Q3Map* DOS window closes. The way around this is to manually delete the JUNK.TXT file contained in your temporary files folder. A bit of a drag, eh? Fortunately, this is a very rare occurrence.

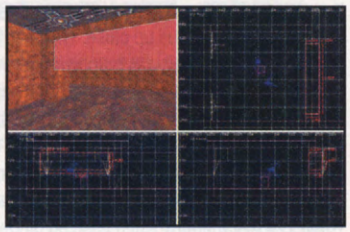


Fig 12a – Creating a curved arch, stage 1.

Make sure it fits exactly into the top and sides of the gap, drop the grid size if you have to. Then select 'Curve/End Cap' from the menu. This produces an archway mesh, but unfortunately it's incorrectly aligned as you can see from the XY Top view. Address that by first using the 'Z-Axis Rotate' tool, then the 'Y-Axis Rotate' tool. This will align it correctly, but the size and position will now be way out. Reposition the mesh in the gap, and resize in the normal way. Again, exact sizing and positioning are very important. You should end up with something like Figure 12b.

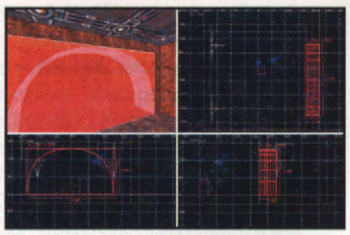


Fig 12b – Creating a curved arch, stage 2.

Looking at the Camera view, you'll see that we've so far only produced the curve for the arch, the space between the curve and the original gap needs to be filled in. To achieve this, go to the 'Curve' menu, and select 'Cap/Inverted Endcap/Inverted Endcap'. The only thing remaining is to fix the texture alignment. We need to do this for the front and back of the archway. If the archway isn't still selected, do so in the 'Camera' view. Use 'Shift-S' to display the Patch Properties dialog, and hit the 'Natural' button. This will attempt to fit the 'goldbrick' texture in a natural fashion around the underside of the arch. Then press the 'Tab' key until the left side of the archway is highlighted, as in Figure 12c.

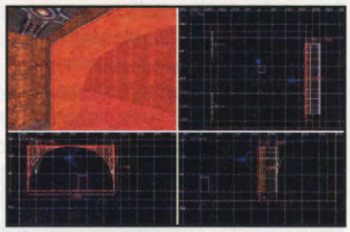


Fig 12c – Creating a curved arch, stage 3.

The texture is probably 'bent' around the curve, so we normalise it by pressing 'Ctrl-Shift-N' a few times. You'll know it's normalised when the texture matches the adjoining walls again. Use 'Tab' to select the right side of the arch and do the same thing. Then 'Save', run 'BSP/Fullvis' and admire your handiwork as in Figure 12d.

Figure 12d – The finished arch.

STEP 8 – NONE OF THEM KNEW THEY WERE ROBOTS

Things are fairly lonely in there, so we'd better add some opposition. First, add another 'info\info_player_deathmatch' entity as we did earlier. Using the 'Easy Entity' menu once again, put some weapons and ammo around the place.

For bots to be able to navigate a map, another program called BSPC.EXE in the Tools directory is used to create an '.AAS' navigation file. Unless you've downloaded a front end to ease this process, we're going to have to do some typing – so off you go to the DOS Prompt. The best way to explain this is by example. You'll have to replace the path to your *Q3* directory as required. First off, change to the *Q3* directory:

D: <enter>
Cd "\games\quake III arena\tools"
<enter>

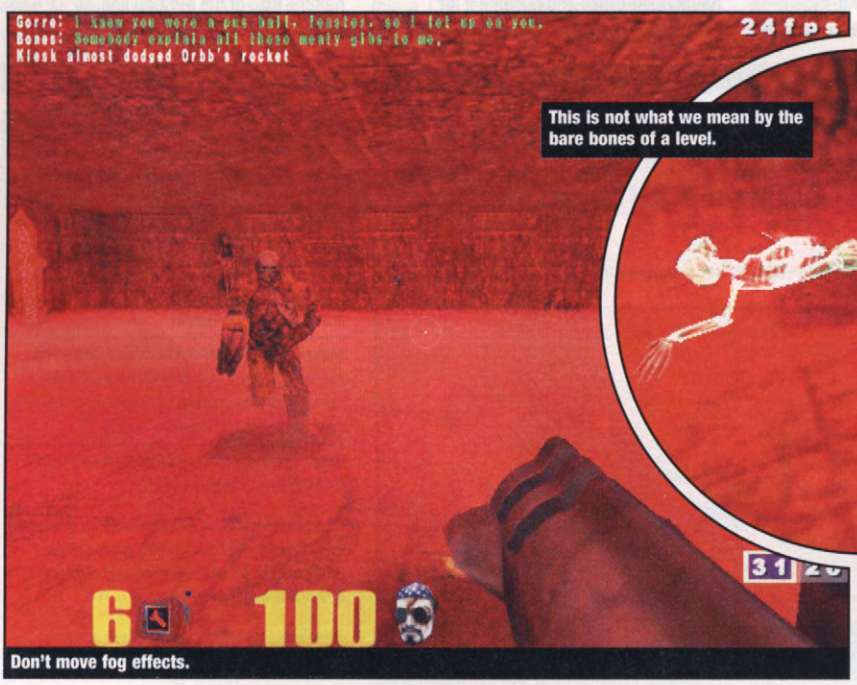
Note that the quotes around the path name are required if it's a long file name. So assuming that your map is in the default *Q3* 'maps' subdirectory, and is called 'test1', then the command to create the file would be:

Bspc –bsp2aas ..\baseq3\maps\test1.bsp
<enter>

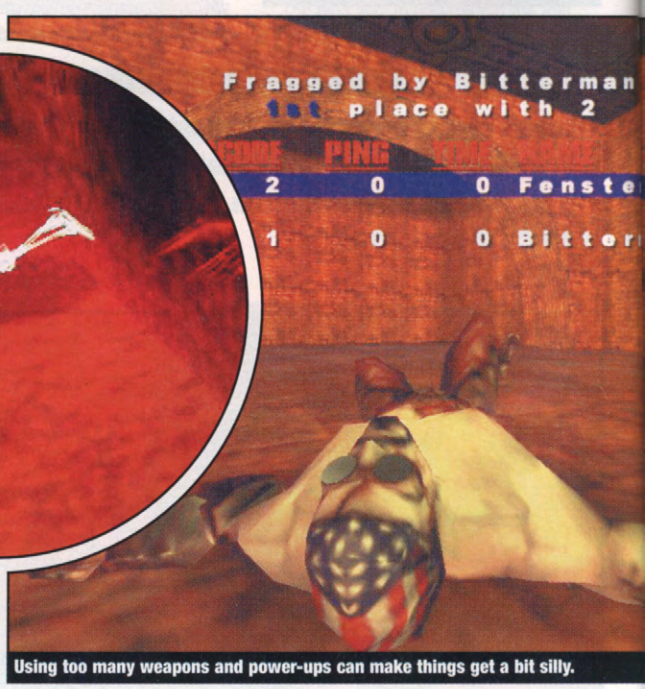
The program will churn away at your map and produce the relevant 'TEST1.AAS' file. Go back into *Q3Radiant*, 'Save, run 'BSP/Fullvis', and go into the game. Load the level as normal, then either use the console or the 'Escape' menu to add a bot. Happy hunting! There are a number of special entities that can be added to influence bot behaviour. For example, you can add an 'info\info_camp' entity with the Easy Entity menu. This creates an area where bots will lie in wait for other players.

STEP 9 – USING PREFABS

There are plenty of world items and decorations available as prefabricated models, either supplied with the game itself or from third-party sources. Let's add a statue model. Go to the 'View' menu, then select 'Entities as\skinned and boxed'. Then, using the Easy Entity menu in one of the 2D views, select 'misc\misc_model'



Don't move fog effects.



Using too many weapons and power-ups can make things get a bit silly.

and choose the 'visor_posed' model. This will appear as a small red box, which you should position somewhere between the two torches in the first room you created. It's here that we come across one of the more persistent and annoying bugs in *Q3Radiant*. We should be able to see that model as it appears in the game, but we can't. Make sure it's selected in the Camera view, then press 'N' to display the Entity dialog. The problem is that *Q3Radiant* fills in the complete path to the model in the 'Value' field, as in Figure 13a.

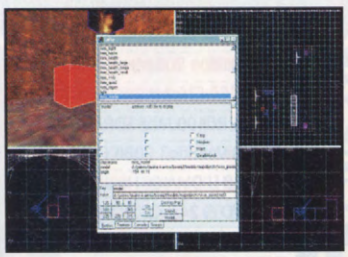


Figure 13a – Incorrect Entity Dialog.

We need to remove everything in that path up to the beginning of the word 'model', as in Figure 13b.

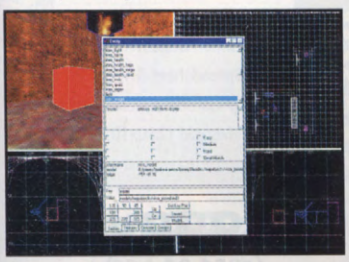


Figure 13b – Correct Entity Dialog.

Then, to add insult to injury, you'll have to save your level, exit and restart *Q3Radiant*, then reload your level, for the model to display correctly. Once you've got the model in there, we'll rotate it so that it faces right. 'Shift-click' on it in the 'Camera' view to select it, then bring up the 'Entity' dialog by pressing 'N'. Use the '90' degrees rotation button at the bottom to rotate. However, be warned – never, ever use the Toolbar flip and rotate controls with models, those are for brushes only. Then do the usual and have a look in the game itself. You may have noticed that as it stands you can run through the model while in the game. To prevent this, draw a Builder Brush surrounding the model as in Figure 14.

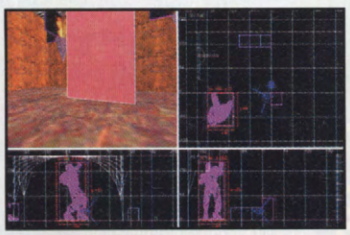


Fig 14 – Creating a clipping region for a model.

Then use the Surface Inspector to apply the 'common/cushion' texture to the Builder Brush. This appears as a transparent purple texture with 'cushion' on it in *Q3Radiant*. Within the game, it creates an invisible force field around the model through which nothing can pass.

STAGE 10 – FOG, FOR FOG'S SAKE

The last thing we'll look at is adding special effects to the level. Add a new corridor and room in exactly the same way as before, something similar Figure 15a.

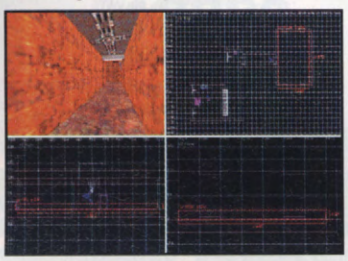


Fig 15a – Adding fog, stage 1.

Then create a Builder Brush in the room, as shown, making it extend from the floor to about a quarter of the height of the room, and touching all four walls. This is the important thing about fog brushes – only one side can be visible, in this case the top. Press 'S' for the Surface Inspector, then specify 'sfx/q3dm9fog' as the texture. Look at the Camera view and you should see the top of the brush as a transparent surface with 'fog' helpfully written on it, as in Figure 15b.

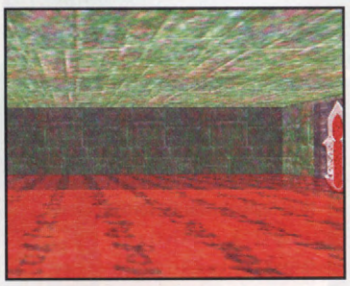


Figure 15b – Adding fog, stage 2.

Add a player start position in that room, as well as some health, weapons and ammo, rebuild the bot navigation file, and then try it out for real.

CONCLUSION – WHEN YOUR MAP 'OWNS'

Congratulations – you've managed to make it this far. Everything from here on in is merely an extension of what you've learned already. Acquiring advanced techniques such as moving objects, water and so on should just be a matter of reading the relevant tutorials on the Internet. These days you can easily make a career out of all this, and as engine capabilities and complexity increase, the need for good mapmakers becomes all the more acute. So keep at it, and you never know your luck – some day it might just be your name on the credits page. PCZ

MAP PERFORMANCE

You'll have seen how some maps can slow down and become jerky at certain points – *Q3DM12* is a good example. This is directly related to the number of polygons the game has to render at any point. The rule-of-thumb for this is of course the frame rate, which can be displayed in-game by issuing the '/cg_drawfps 1' command at the console. Although it will be a while before your maps become complex enough for performance to become an issue, it's a good idea to adopt the best practice early on. This includes not overlapping brushes, simplifying brushes where possible, reducing the amount of fog and sky used and so on.

USER REQUIREMENTS

***Q3Radiant*, while very solid, has not been designed for the retail market and, as such, has not been extensively stress tested outside of being used to build the game itself. In other words, it's going to crash very occasionally. To save time and hair, get into the habit of saving often, especially before you try to do something that feels like it might put a strain on resources. You can set up an auto-save feature, is definitely worth doing. Another good idea is to save each stage separately, so you can easily step back if that huge submarine you decided to build becomes a bit too much.**

Yes, that is half a maimed body flying away to the great bot heaven.

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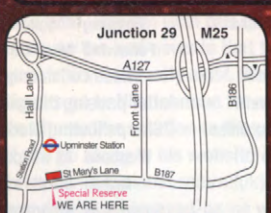

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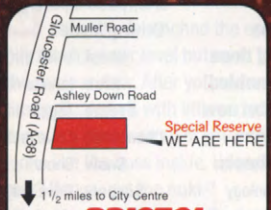

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TROUBLESHOOTER

Feeling frustrated? Can't quite get past a certain level? Want to be the best player in the gaming universe? Then you've come to the right place – Cheat Master provides the cure for all your gaming ills, and if you're after a more personal service, look no further than *ZONE*'s man with a mission, Mr Keith Pullin...

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

116 CHEAT MASTER
If at first you don't succeed... cheat. Allow Keith Pullin to show you how it's done.

117 DEAR KEITH
Not quite sure how you'll make it through another day without getting to the next level? Can't sleep due to a Lara Croft-induced nightmare? Then turn to Uncle Keith for some handy hints.

118 FINAL FANTASY VIII
Tune into the second and final part of our special walkthrough for this cutesy Japanese epic, packed to the hilt with tips and tricks.

122 THE SIMS
Want to keep the little people happy? Then look no further than this month's strategy guide offering advice on relationships, marriage and more.

128 DEAR WANDY
Need a hand with a problem or query that's been driving you mad? Our resident techie Wandy is here to help.

130 WATCHDOG
If you're having troubles dealing with a pesky PC company and can't get any answers, then let the consumers' champion Adam Phillips guide you through your legal rights...

YOUR HOSTS

Phil Wand

Keith Pullin

Adam Phillips

Mark Hill

Martin Korda

CHEAT MASTER

Here's another game-busting bag of tips and tricks from the cheekiest cheat around. Enjoy...

CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD

More cheats, tips and solutions on the cover CD this month. Find out what's in store by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/Cheat Master, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with **Dear Keith** or **Cheat Master** in the subject line.

NOX
Westwood Studios

Press 'F1' during the game to activate the console, then type 'Racoiaws' to enable the cheat mode. You can now dabble with this lot:

set god	God mode and infinite mana
cheat health	Replenish health
cheat mana	Replenish mana
help cheat	List cheats
cheat level #	Skip to level #
cheat spells #	Spells to level #
cheat ability	Reset user abilities
cheat gold #	Give gold to character
cheat goto waypoint [x,y]	Go to waypoint

SEVEN KINGDOMS 2
Ubisoft

During the game, type the following: '!!##%%&&'. If done correctly, 'cheat mode enabled' appears on screen. You can now press the key combinations below for some useful cheats:

Ctrl, T	Give all technology
Ctrl and M	Full map
Ctrl and Z	Hyper build
Ctrl and ;	Increases selected town's population by 10
Ctrl, Alt and C	Subtract 1000 food
**Ctrl and **	Add 1000 food
Ctrl, Alt and X	Subtract 1000 treasure
Ctrl and C	Add 1000 treasure
Ctrl, Alt and E	Subtract 10 reputation
Ctrl, Alt and R	Add 10 reputation
Ctrl, Alt and K	Decreases selected building's damage by 20
Ctrl, Alt and J	Increases selected building's damage by 20
Ctrl and J	Set economic score to 0
Ctrl and U	Toggle invincible king on/off
Ctrl and A	Toggle debug messages on/off
Ctrl and D	Toggle AI information on/off
Ctrl and +	Full seat of power

DIE HARD TRILOGY 2: VIVA LAS VEGAS
Fox Interactive

Press 'Esc' in any mode to pause the game and enter these codes:

Painless	God mode
Fogging	Toggle Fog on/off
Followme	Move camera

These codes only work after pausing the game in 'Sharpshooting Mode':

Weapons	All weapons
Ammo	Infinite ammo
Autoreload	Autoreload on/off
Autofire	Autofire on/off
Slowmo	Slow enemies
Slowrocket	Slow rockets

These codes only work after pausing the game in 'Driving Mode':

Ghost	Drive through walls
Nitro	Infinite nitros
Freeze	Toggle timer on/off
Chantastic	Drive faster
Snow	Snow
Susonly	Drive only with tyres

These codes will only work after you have paused the game in 'Action/Adventure Mode':

Weapons	All weapons
Ammo	Infinite ammo
Freeze	Freeze enemies
Ghost	Walk through walls
Targeting	Toggle auto targeting
Laser	Toggle laser targeting
Followterrain	High humps
Mrbones	Become a skeleton
Shocked	Become electric
Fps	First-person perspective
Fragyuck	Extra blood mode
Pillowmode	Small heads
Bighead	Big heads

NERF ARENABLAST!
Hasbro Interactive

For some help on this '*Quake* for kids' shooter, bring up the console during the game and type these little beauties:

god	God mode
allammo	999 shots on all weapons
fly	Fly mode
ghost	No clipping mode
walk	Return to normal mode
behindview 1	Third-person view

SUPREME SNOWBOARDING
Infogrames

Hop on your board and type any of these codes during the game:

Siipiveikkoliitelee	Enable hard tracks
Ope	Enable new rider
Seivaavideograbbi	Take a photo
Exterminaattori	Unknown
Imhotepmaailmojentuhoaja	Debug mode (Press E During Game)

To access all the levels, go to the main 'Supreme' folder on your hard drive and open up the '/Saved_Data' directory. Now edit the 'Available_Levels.txt' file to:

{
"Easy",1,
"Medium",1,

"Hard",1
}

Save the file and open up 'Defaults.txt'. Change 'available_tracks=3;' to 'available_tracks=7;'. Save that file too. Run the game as usual and you can sample each course.

You can also check out every board in the game... Go into the '\saved_data' directory again and change the 'Available_Boards.txt' file to:

{
"Board_1",1,
"Board_2",1,
"Board_3",1,
"Board_4",1,
"Board_5",1,
"Board_6",1,
"Board_7",1,
"Board_8",1,
"Board_9",1,
"Board_10",1,
"Board_11",1,
"Board_12",1,
"Board_13",1
}

AGE OF WONDERS

Take 2 Interactive

Load the game with the command line parameter of 'beatrix'. The easy way is to rename the shortcut icon as follows: C:\Games\Age of Wonders\aow.exe beatrix

Once loaded, press 'Ctrl, Shift and C' during the game and enter the following codes:

ah teer	Begin level with all spells and extra gold
Research	Research all spells
Gold	Gives 1000 gold pieces
Mana	Gives 1000 mana crystals
Win	Win the level
Lose	Lose the level
Towns	Own all independent towns
Fog	Toggle fog on/off
Explore	Toggle exploration
Freemove	Free movement

LEGO LOCO

Mindscape

Lego loopy? Try these tips:

Place two radars next to each other and wait until they go into the space shuttle.

Set the system date to October 31 and a ghost train will appear.

Plant flowers around a lake to make Nessy appear.

Place a radar next to a building with 'IG' on it to make a giant robot appear.

Put four roads in a circle to create an island.

Set the system dates to December 25 for festive Lego blocks, July 4 for desert blocks, or October 31 for Halloween blocks.

Hit '[Caps Lock]' before you start playing the game for wintery scenery.

Place four fountains in a square to create a large one.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2

Segasoft

Open the VCOP2.INI file in the *VF2* directory and find the [Game Setting] line. Type 'Extra=2' beneath it, now close and save the file. Load up the game, start playing and press F6 to find a new cheat option.

You can access hidden characters on the fighter select screen:

Dural	Highlight Akira and press down, up, right, left and A.
Silver Dural	Press down, up, right, guard/kick, left.
Gold Dural	Press down, up, left, guard/kick, right.

PHONE FOR HELP

Having trouble with a game and can't wait to see a reply in these pages? Then you need to check out...

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DEAR KEITH

Keith Pullin answers more of your tearful requests for gaming salvation

BLOWN AWAY

Q Help! I've been playing *Hidden & Dangerous* and cannot seem to get past the mission where you drive the stolen half-track across the beach. No matter which route I take, I invariably get blown to bits about ten seconds after I emerge from the trees onto the sand. Is there a knack to this part of the game or is it just a case of going hell for leather and hoping for the best?

David Scott, Johnstone

A **Good question, David. Unfortunately, you've hit the nail on the head with your second suggestion – it is a case of going hell for leather. Try and weave as much as you can though, apart from that it's just practise, practise, practise.**

A BRIGHT SPARK?

Q I've got myself stuck on chapter three of *Indiana Jones And The Infernal Machine*. I have come to a strange thing with some weird writing on it and some candleholders. I have tried putting all four candles in the holders but nothing has happened. Can you tell me what I have missed?

AntSh0Oter, via email

A **Oh dear. You are in a pickle, aren't you? Well, I'm pleased to say that your candle problem is not that serious. In fact, you're going to kick yourself, because all you've got to do is light them. Doh!**

OOPS!

Q In the March issue of Cheat Master you said you could get two Einsteins for *Rollercoaster Tycoon*. I got straight on it, but found it impossible to find guests 001 and 002. Even when you start a park from scratch guests tend to start from about guest 007 at the lowest. Please help me find these elusive two guests.

Lisa Noonan, via email

A **Massive apologies to everyone who wrote in with this query because the bad news is that these guests don't actually exist. Particular thanks go to Nik Johnson for offering an alternative solution to the problem. If you go along to his website (www.strategyplanet.com/rctuk) you can download a saved-game with full research. Hopefully that should help you out.**

GOLDEN OLDIE

Q I am having a bit of trouble with *MDK*. I have reached the end of the city sandcrawler level but can't get past the nuclear door. After you come out of the vertical shaft with little red platforms, there is a door in front of you with what looks like the boss inside. How do you kill him? Do you get the nuke?

Goober II, London

A **Yes, what you need to do is pick up the world's smallest nuclear bomb. Chuck that towards the boss and he snuffs it. Easy.**

FLIPPING 'ECK

Q I've noticed other players doing back flips while playing *Quake III*, but I can't do them. Can you tell me how it's done?

Peter Cook, Aversham

A **You can do back flips, it's just that you can't see yourself doing them. Basically, it just happens automatically when you run backwards and jump. That's all there is to it.**

QUEEN'S HEAD

Q I really need help on *Aliens Vs Predator*. I am on the last marine level, but no matter what I do I cannot kill the alien queen. I always end up running out of ammo and being chased around until I finally get my head bitten off. Can you please tell me how to defeat her?

Jonathan Walker, Middlesbrough

A **The only thing to do really is keep moving and keep firing in short bursts at her head. Obviously you need to run backwards too. Also, try using the smartgun, at least then the bullets home in. That's it – good luck.**

CLOSE SHAVE

Q I'm really stuck on *Monkey Island 3* – I just can't beat the barber at the duel. If you don't know what I can do I'll cry and stamp on the disc.

KillLara, via email

A **Looks like you're in luck. When you get to the field, close the lid on the centre box. Now use the hand on the banjo case behind Edward to choose the banjo as your weapon. You have to strum the top string four times, the next string down five times and the string below that six times. When he goes a bit mad at the end, take the pistol and use it on the duelling banjo.**

BOOM BOOM BOOM

Q I know you get lots of mail, but I hope you can reply to this one from a very lost soul. I'm stuck on *Discworld 2*, Act 3, I'm looking for the loud booming voice and I think it has something to do with the glue in the kitchen, but I have tried everything and nothing works. I've been stuck on this for quite a while now, so I hope you can help me out of my misery.

A Grayston, via email

A **Hmm, tricky. Go upstairs into the hourglass room and collect the ink and ring the bell. Go back downstairs into the kitchen. Get the sugar cubes and the oily rag, and then open the stove. Enter the hall, take the curtains and take the scythe from the umbrella stand. Now go into Susan's room upstairs. Get the rabbit from the bed and double-click on it to get some pyjamas. Get the string too. Now go back downstairs and go right into the mini library. Pick up the middle book (Rincewind's book), then go into the kitchen and talk to Albert. That should be that.**

FINAL FANTASY VIII

WALKTHROUGH – PART TWO

Last month we showed you the way through the first half of this epic game, now *Martin Korda* steels himself to lead you through to the game's conclusion

REVIEWED *PCZ* #87 **SCORE** 83%

Laguna and friends must fight the Ruby Dragon.

In the second and final part of our *Final Fantasy VIII* walkthrough, get ready to cast spells and experience some great adventures as you find out the best way to successfully make your way through to the end of this truly epic game.

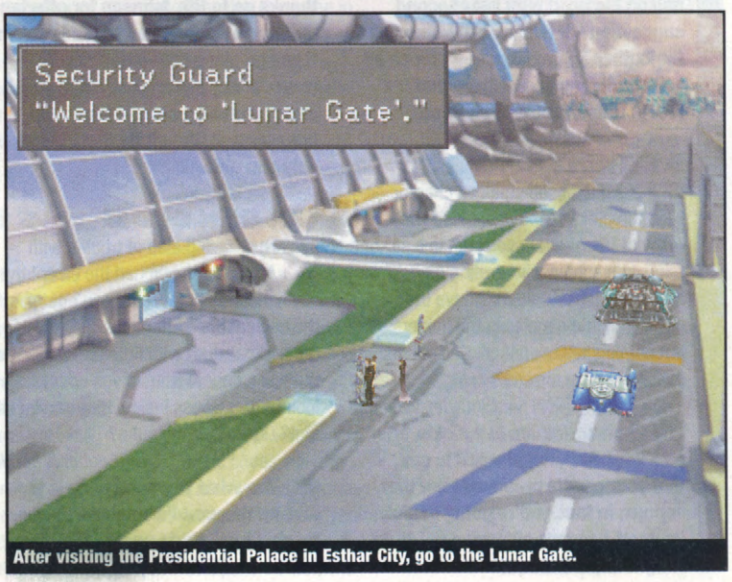
BALAMB GARDEN

Go to Edea's house and follow Cid. Talk with the people there. Now go back to the ship and the Infirmary where you'll find Rinoa. Talk to her.

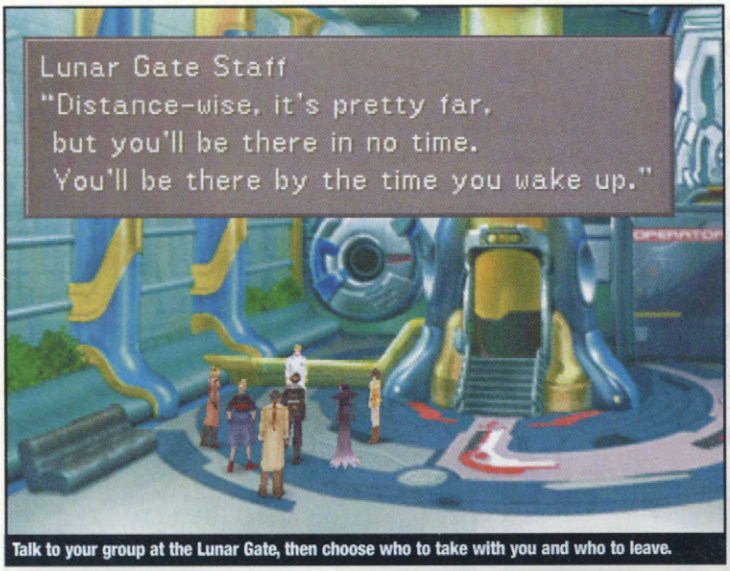
You are Laguna. Talk with the group and then defeat the Ruby Dragon.

You are Squall. Go to the bridge and go to Edea's house. Speak to her about the White Seed Ship. Go north and find the White Seed Ship. Go in and talk to Watts and Zone. After talking to Watts a second time, head downstairs. After this, go to Fisherman's Horizon. Once you get there, go to the train station with Rinoa. You and the others that you meet must now go to Esthar. Go to the lake. Head north up the snowy path until

Go left at the top of the snowy path, where you will have to fight Abadon.



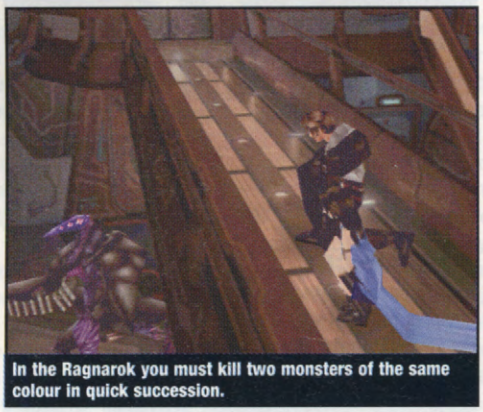
After visiting the Presidential Palace in Esthar City, go to the Lunar Gate.



Talk to your group at the Lunar Gate, then choose who to take with you and who to leave.

At the Lunar Base follow the doctor.

Now we're flying to the moon and back...


In the Ragnarok you must kill two monsters of the same colour in quick succession.

Come face to face with Rajin and Fujin again, at the Lunatic Pandora.

you reach a cliff, where you must head left. Fight Abadon. Now find the electric wall and go up the ladder. Walk up the tunnel until you get to a door. Go through it and then go left and through the door to the north.

LUNATIC PANDORA LABORATORY

Work on the tank and then go to the door. Talk to Moomba a couple of times and then fight the guards. Go up the lift, listen and then head outside. After meeting the doctor's assistant, return to the laboratory and go back down the lift. Follow the doctor. Now return to the lab, where you will find a lift. Take it to the second floor. Tamper with the control panel on the right-hand side of the room, and then take the lift back down again. Go through the open door.

THE LUNAR GATE

You are Squall in Esthar city. Follow the man to the Presidential Palace. Speak with the doctor and then go to the Lunar Gate. Go inside and follow the girl. You will run into your group. After talking with them and choosing the groups (trust Zell), go into the capsule. Leave the Lunar Gate as Zell. Go to Esthar City.

ESTHAR CITY

Now you must go to Odine's laboratory. Go up and find Odine, then speak to him. Leave the laboratory and go right twice and then up the screen and climb the stairs. Go up the stairs and lift and follow the path, until it splits, then head left. Now follow the path again until you reach a lift with 03 on it, use it, then go into lift 01. Walk along the tunnel, making sure that you're heading up the screen. Watch the FMV sequence to get to the next part.

LUNAR BASE

You now find yourself in space. Talk with and then follow the doctor. Go up the stairs and talk to the people there. Find Ellone, who will follow you. Head for the control room, which is downstairs, and inspect the monitor. Now go to the air lock. After putting on the space suit, follow Rinoa. Go back to the control room and speak with the doctor. Speak with Ellone and get into the lift. Keep speaking to and following Ellone. You should now be in the pod. To save Rinoa, all you have to do is keep her central.

RAGNAROK

Go left and use the buttons you find there. Go through the door and then through another one after speaking with Rinoa. Kill two monsters of the same colour in quick succession in order to eliminate your attackers. Now go to the place where you encountered the second of the two green aliens and go up in the lift. Go to the Ragnarok's cockpit, launch the vessel and fly to the Sorceress' Memorial. Once there,

go up the stairs and in, where you must try to save Rinoa. Talk with the group before going to Edea's house. After following the dog, speak to Rinoa. Find Edea and speak with her, before going to Esthar.

ESTHAR CITY

Go into the Presidential Palace. Speak with Laguna and when you're happy, let him know that you're ready. Fly to Lunatic Pandora and then leave the ship. Head down the stairs where you'll come across Rajin and Fujin. You must fight them. Speak with Biggs and Wedge and then follow them. Follow the icy path until you find Rajin and Fujin again. Keep going and you will come across Seifer, who you must fight. Seifer will run off with Rinoa. This is the end of the third disc.

LUNATIC PANDORA

Go southwest and find the platform. Head right, then up the ladder. Go to the mechanism resembling a crane and head right, through the gap. Fight Adel. Ellone and Laguna appear.

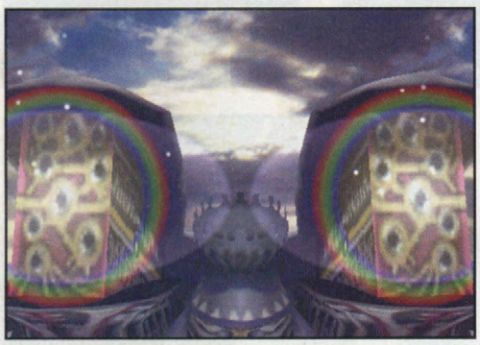
You're in the Commencement Room, which will look very familiar. Four different sorceresses will now attack you. After this you are teleported to Edea's house. Go into it, then go into the Playroom and leave through the door in the middle. Go past the Seeds and to the third chain from the left. If you want to go to any of the portals, you will have to jump over to them.

ULTIMECIA CASTLE

To get to Ultimecia Castle, you must follow the chain at the Cape of Good Hope. Go into the castle. Now divide your party into two, which we'll call Party 1 and Party 2. Make Party 1 the more

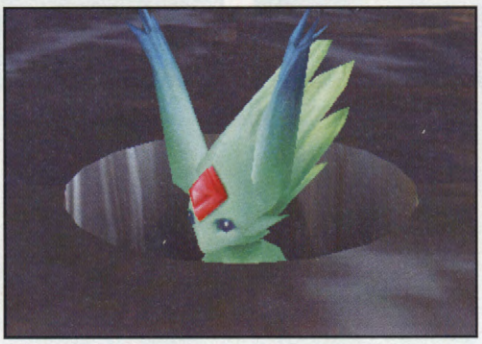
A HELPING HAND

Here's your guide to another nine GFs to aid you in your quest for ultimate victory



ALEXANDER

This impressive looking GF casts down rays of light from the sky onto your enemies. Very few monsters have a resistance to Alexander, and later on in the game he becomes an invaluable asset.



CARBUNCLE

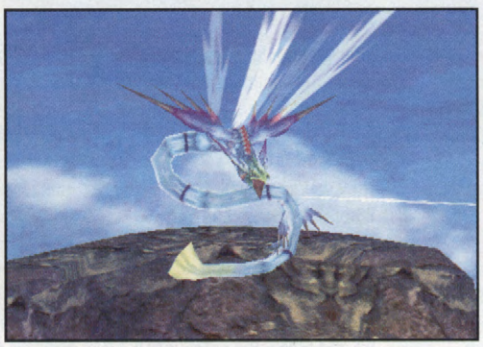
A hole appears on the floor through which this little GF appears. What sets Carbuncle apart from most of the others is that he is not an offensive GF. Instead he casts a protective spell over your party.

CERBERUS

A three-headed beast from the gates of hell, Cerberus is another GF who directly aids your party, casting double or triple spells on your characters. These are very useful if you use magic extensively during combat.

PANDEMONA

Old windbag here quite literally sucks in your enemies, before blowing them out again. On their way out, they are tossed around and messed about by the powerful gust. Use Pandemona against air-born opponents.



LEVIATHAN

Summoning this sea serpent causes an enormous flood of water to hurtle down and sweep away anything in its path. The torrent should be particularly useful against anything that has a resistance to the GF Quezacotl.

TONBERRY

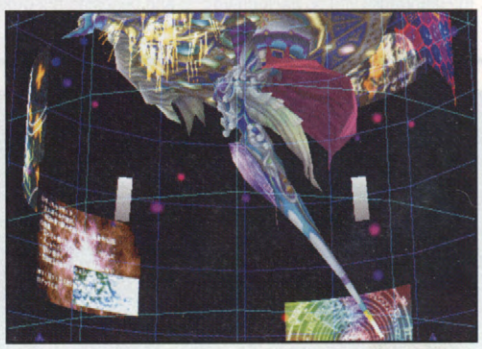
Now here's a strange one. Tonberry's a mole-like creature that burrows up from the ground and shuffles slowly towards its target. He then cuts at their ankles (because that's as far as he can reach) with a knife.

CACTUAR

This cactus man flies up into the air and hurls down a volley of needles at your opponent. If a character has a defence against GFs, then it's a good one to remember. Use it against the Red Giant in Ultimecia Castle.

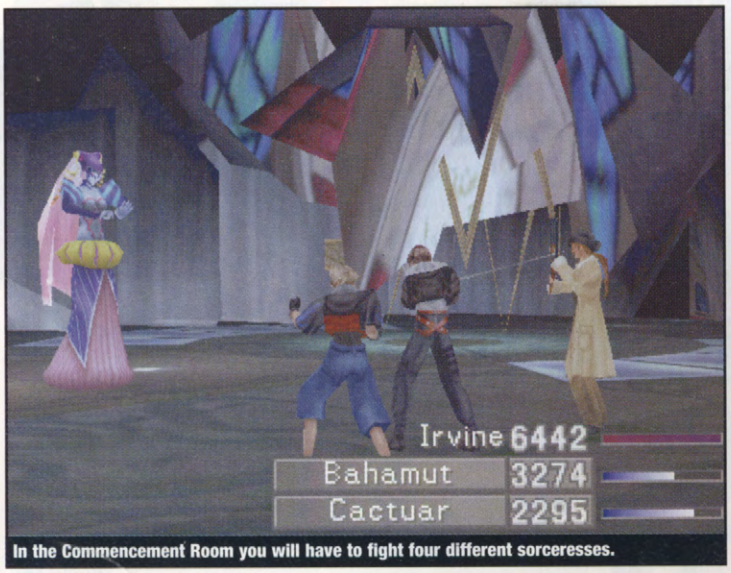
BAHAMUT

Another good GF to use against enemies with a strong GF resistance. Flying through the air, Bahamut fires plumes of blue fire at the selected target, causing massive amounts of damage at higher levels.

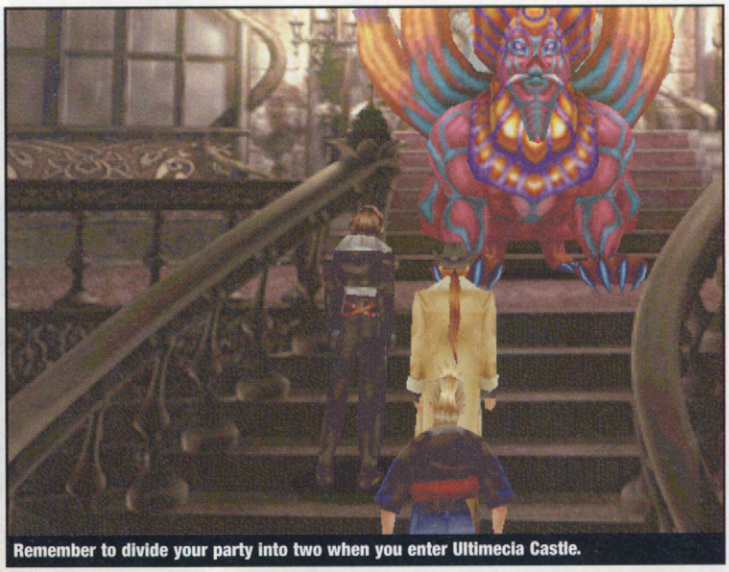


EDEN

The GF with the longest sequence, is also one of the most powerful. Transporting your enemies into another galaxy, they are kept there as the place explodes. The damage caused by Eden can only be rivalled by Diablos.



In the Commencement Room you will have to fight four different sorceresses.


Remember to divide your party into two when you enter Ultimecia Castle.

powerful, as they are going to do the bulk of the fighting. Once you've done this, go upstairs and fight Sphinxaur.

Go up and right and then head through the door. Then go down the stairs and up the screen to get to the art gallery. Look at all the paintings. After looking at the large one, type in 'vividarium, intervigilium' and finally 'viator'. Keep heading north and go through the door in the gallery and down the stairs. You should now be in the armory. Go through the left hand door and pick up the key, before fighting The Red Giant. You will find that many GFs and physical attacks are not effective against him. Try using Cactuar, Diablos and Bahamut, who seem to inflict the most damage.

Go back to the main hall and head north. If you go across the chandelier it will fall, but it shouldn't harm any of your party members. Go down to the basement, via the hatch. Now go north again. Keep going until you pass a fountain and come to some stairs. Go up the stairs. Now cross the bridge. Go back the way you came and find the main hall. Go through the art gallery and back to the armory you were in earlier. In the river you will find a key to unlock the door in the basement. You will now fight another boss.

Take Party 2 upstairs (using the stairs in the main hall), and then through the door on the left. Change to Party 1 at the exchange point.

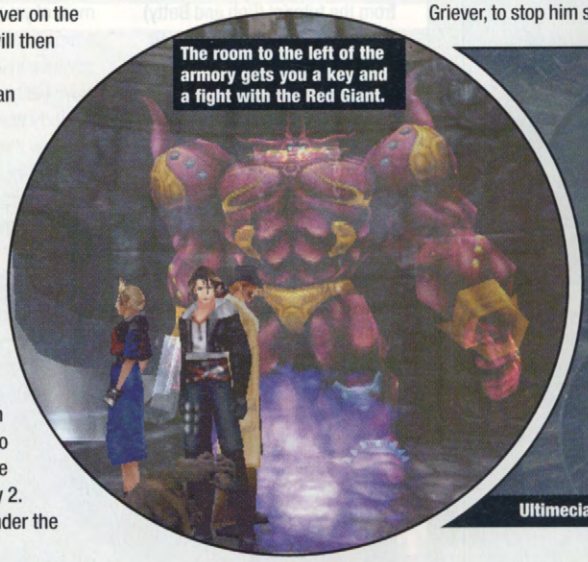
Take Party 1 up the second staircase and find the second lift. Change to Party 2 again. Go west and find the key. Now go back to the armory where you were earlier. Inspect the leaver on the right-hand side. You will then need to go back to the fountain, where you can pick up another key. Change to Party 1.

Go south. Be careful not to miss the door on the left in the dimly lit corridor, which you must go through. Open all the coffins and fight the Catoblepas. After defeating them, return to the Main Hall and go through the door to the north. Change to Party 2. Activate the switch under the chandelier. Change to Party 1, cross over the chandelier, and fight yet another boss.

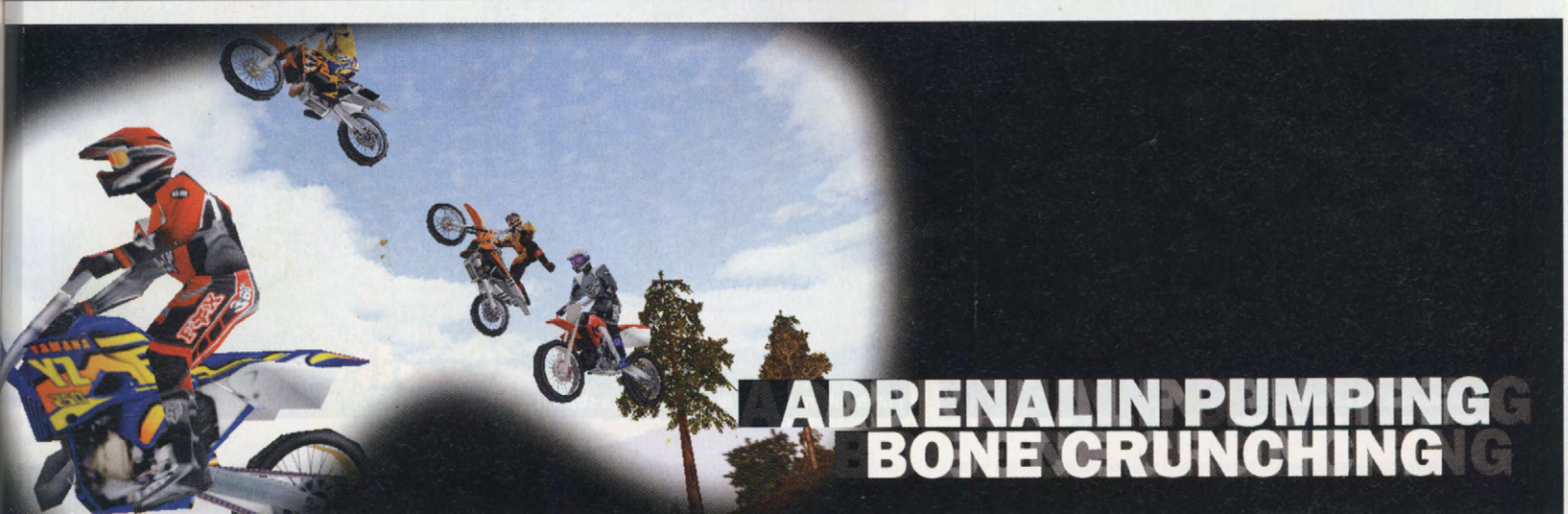
Go back to where the organ is and head upstairs, using the staircase on the right. Walk across the bridge and into the room on the left. Go up, jump on the pendulum to get across to the other side. Fight the boss. Now follow the winding path and go down the ladders. Get your parties together, and prepare for the final assault.

The final battle comes in four stages. The first is quite simple, yet you should still make sure you cast protective spells on your party and use defensive items. The second stage sees you up against the GF Griever. Extract his magic and use it against him, especially the Tornado. Keep casting protective spells though, as there's still a long way to go.

The third stage pits you against both Ultimecia and Griever. It is important to focus your attacks on Griever, to stop him stealing your spells, which he is particularly good at. Again, using his magic against him is a very effective tactic. Finally, you battle Ultimecia again, but this time be prepared for a far sterner test than when you first fought her. Her magic is at times devastating, so be quick with those healing spells and items. Remember, once you've beaten her, you've beaten the game, and you get to watch the fantastic end sequence. Now, if that's not an incentive to defeat her, then I don't know what is. PCZ


The room to the left of the armory gets you a key and a fight with the Red Giant.

Ultimecia Castle will have you in a spin.

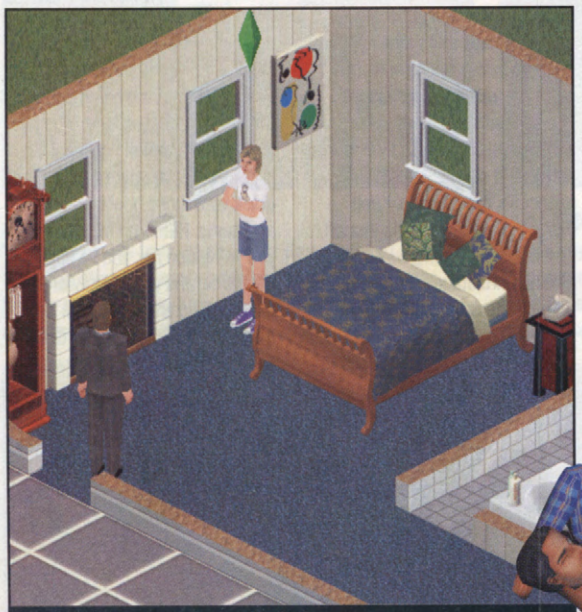


THE SIMS

STRATEGY GUIDE

Killing them may be easy, but you might experience some trouble getting your Sims to succeed in life. Fortunately, Sim meister *Mark Hill* is on hand to give you some life-enhancing pointers...

REVIEWED *PCZ* #87 **SCORE** 86%



Save time by buying an expensive bed.

You've probably worked out a lot of this stuff on your own, but there are things you won't know about unless you've been playing for three solid months or happen to be one of the developers. Now, if only we could come up with a successful guide for real life...

For some reason the car and bus will hang around for an hour.

Sticking with the characters from the tutorial (Bob and Betty) makes life much easier as their needs are muted for beginners. They won't die if you don't feed them and they won't need to sleep as long as you pump them full of espressos.

For people without any moral scruples whatsoever (ie most of you) a good way to have happy, healthy Sims who will advance in life is to keep a few slaves at home. They can do all the dirty work and it won't matter how low their mood sinks.

If you're creating a house with more than a couple of Sims, try to choose personalities that will complement each other. You need an outgoing one for socialising, a clean one to keep the house tidy, and so on.

Are you a filthy, perverted voyeur? Do you get annoyed every time you put Sims in a bathtub expecting them to be naked and find that they're wearing a costume? Then make sure the first one to go in has an Outgoing rating of seven or higher, and they'll be more than happy to

"Look, darling. No simsuit."

Put the alarm outside to catch burglars straight away.

A big room full of people is always ripe for dancing.

Back rubs provoke jealous wraths.

strip right down – and so will anyone else who follows.

✪ If you have active Sims, make sure you have plenty of toys around to keep them occupied. If you sit them down to watch telly, choose the action channel.

✪ Grumpy Sims like to watch horror movies, outgoing ones prefer a good romance, while the playful ones could watch *Tom And Jerry* all day long.

✪ Just like in real life, their most basic need is food. Only once a Sim's belly is full can he or she start thinking about hygiene and love. So get a fridge and make sure they learn how to cook as soon as possible. Food processors double the hunger satisfaction, so that should be next on your list.

✪ Pizzas are a quick and easy solution to hunger, but if you've built up a top chef Sim and splashed out on all the equipment you won't be getting as much out of your crust as you would from a home-made meal. However, it is a good idea to order a couple of boxes if you have a lot of hungry visitors.

✪ Have you ever really thought about how much of your life you actually spend sleeping? This is a precious and finite existence, and we spend more than a third of it unconscious (or at least half of it, if you regularly drink German wheat beer). To avoid this happening to your Sims, get the most expensive bed you can afford straight away and they'll be able to stay awake a lot longer.

✪ Starving your Sim may provide plenty of sadistic satisfaction, but the quickest, most effective way to get rid of one is to take away the ladder from a small swimming pool when they're inside. Glug, glug, glug, glugggghhhhhhhh…

✪ You may be a loner who spends every waking hour in front of your PC, but there is no reason for your Sim to be one. The social level is a lot higher if you have at least two people living in the house,

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that way you don't have to rely on neighbours for a quick social fix.

✪ Remember, if you want to progress up the career ladder you have to collect friends. A neighbourhood with only two houses doesn't provide much of a social circle, so start off a few more families, even if you don't intend to play them. However, you must make sure that you place a phone in each of their houses, otherwise you won't be able to ring up and invite them over, considerably limiting your choices.

✪ When you're talking to other Sims your social score may be on the way up, but you may find that your hunger or fun level is low. To compensate, involve your Sims in activities that don't exclude talking: watching TV, eating at the same table, playing chess or pool, etc…

✪ The actions that provoke jealousy are kissing, flirting, giving a back rub and hugging. So, unless you like to play with emotional fire, avoid doing any of them in front of someone in love with your Sim.

✪ Relationships drop by two points a day unless you keep up contact, so you need to keep an eye on the relationship score. This is very important in friendships, since having 'X' amount of friends is a pre-requisite for advanced jobs, and your boss won't be impressed if he finds out nobody likes you anymore.

✪ Marrying into money can be an excellent solution to your cash-flow problems. If one of your neighbours is a fat and ugly woman who also happens to be exceedingly rich, close your eyes and keep hitting the kiss and back rub button until she says yes. And remember that Sims aren't picky about the sex of their dearest ones, so if it happens to be a fat bald bloke, show no scruples. As soon as they move in they'll bring their money with them. Then you could kill them off and do it all over again…

✪ When a baby arrives in the house, you need one of the parents to stay by its side all day, leaving you in great danger of losing your job. Since you're allowed to take as many days off as you like, as long as they aren't consecutive, get the parents to take turns staying at home.

✪ Neighbours pop around quite regularly, but you could also watch out for the random strollers that the game schedules to appear at 10, 2, 4 and 8.

✪ When you decide to kill off one of your Sims (or you've simply not taken proper care of them), you'll find they'll come back to haunt you. An urn that you keep in the house and a tombstone in the garden are constant reminders to the surviving Sims of how cruel you can be. Not only does this get them down, they'll also get woken up by the wailing of the ghost. Getting rid of them couldn't be easier – just sell the tombstone and urn. Although why anybody would want a used urn is anybody's guess.

✪ Think hard before going into a career that requires high body skills (see box out). Lifting weights may get you a strong Sim, but it will also be a very tired one, leaving little time to do anything else but rest. On the other hand, a military career has the advantage of not requiring

Get friendly with the Sims you live with.

The Newbies never get hungry.

Sims always walk the straight and narrow path.

THE SIMOSCOPE

It's not only stupid and ugly people who read their stars to find out what the future holds – although most of them do – Sims' fickle emotions are also ruled by the stars in the sky. There's no point trying to seduce the beautiful girl next door if she's going to hate your aura now, is there?

	Likes	Dislikes
Virgo	Aquarius and Sagittarius	Leo and Taurus
Libra	Virgo and Cancer	Pisces and Scorpio
Scorpio	Pisces and Leo	Libra and Aquarius
Sagittarius	Pisces and Capricorn	Libra and Scorpio
Leo	Sagittarius and Cancer	Capricorn and Gemini
Capricorn	Aquarius and Taurus	Leo and Gemini
Aquarius	Sagittarius and Capricorn	Scorpio and Virgo
Pisces	Scorpio and Gemini	Leo and Aries
Aries	Gemini and Taurus	Cancer and Libra
Taurus	Aries and Libra	Virgo and Cancer
Gemini	Pisces and Virgo	Capricorn and Aries
Cancer	Taurus and Scorpio	Gemini and Aries

any friends to climb up the ranks until level 6.

✪ The car pool arrives to pick your working Sims up at 8am, but they won't miss it as long as they get in before 9am. Use this time to satisfy all their pressing needs, it's much better than sending them off to work starving, smelly and bursting for the toilet. That's a sure path to demotion.

✪ Kids don't have the leeway adults do in taking odd days off. All Sim children start with a school grade of B, and for every day they miss their grade will drop by one. When it drops to F, they get sent to military school, which will cost you 1,000 smackers.

✪ We all hate bills, we all hate taxes, but if you don't pay them before the tenth day after you've received the dreaded envelope the Repo man will come and take away your most valued possessions. Yes, even that widescreen telly you saved up for. Similarly, if you don't have enough funds to pay any of the regular services (like cleaning and gardening), the unpaid staff will get something of equal value from your house. The cheek of it.

CHEAT CITY

Life is like a box of assorted chocolates. Well, at least it is if you cheat

Press 'Ctrl-Shift-C' to enter cheat mode, then type in the following:

klapaucius You'll get 1,000 simoleons every time you type this in, so there's really no easier way of building up your bank account. Get enough to be able to live the easy life and never need a job. You could become the neighbourhood's playboy, living in a mansion with all the latest accessories and seducing the local women while their husbands are at work.

interests This will display the personality and interests of each of the characters, making it easier to see who has the same ones as your Sim.

map_edit on This allows you to edit the map to your heart's content.

map_edit off This turns it off. Of course.

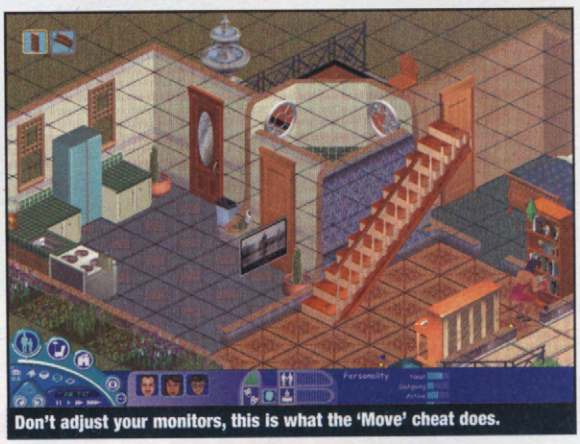
move_objects on/off This allows you to move any of the objects in the game, including all the ones you can't normally move. You can also use it to get rid of rubbish and any messes on the floor, just be careful not to delete essential items such as the mailbox.

draw_routes on If you want to see the paths your Sims are taking (and maybe have time to correct them to go the way you want them to), type this one in.

draw_routes off And this is to take them off, strangely enough.

set-hour [1-24] Type in the time you want the game to move forward to. Relationship scores go down by two points at 4:02 pm, but if you cheat by jumping from 4pm to 5pm this won't affect you.

The 'Interests' cheat can be quite handy.



Don't adjust your monitors, this is what the 'Move' cheat does.

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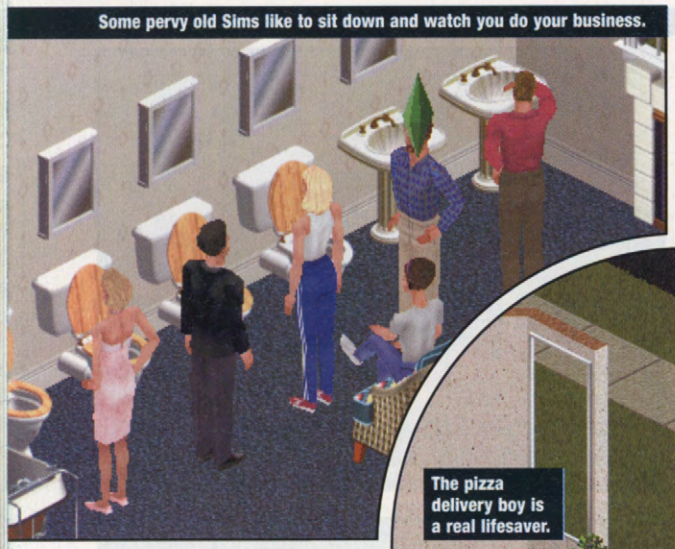
Some pervy old Sims like to sit down and watch you do your business.



Keep active Sims occupied with loads of toys.

Cleaning up after yourself is an absolute bore, so it's more than worth splashing out on a maid. In fact, when you're creating a new Sim family, you could leave out neatness altogether and spend the points on other personality traits, as long as you get that cleaner in every day.

Put a smoke alarm over your stove, that way you don't need to waste time calling the fire brigade when a fire breaks out due to low cooking skills. This is especially important at the start of the game, when you've yet to build the skill up and still need to cook.

Burglar alarms are more important later in the game, when you've got enough valuable stuff worth stealing. The best way to catch the thieves in time (or at least get the cops to do it) is by placing the alarms outside. You could build a single panel of wall in the garden just to attach an alarm to it and so catch the thief before he's even set foot in the house.

Try to keep noisy objects such as TVs, radios and computers out of the bedroom. That way your Sims won't get ratty having to turn them off when they've slid into the silky sheets of dreamland. Let's face it, remembering to turn everything off after you've used it is a right royal pain in the arse.

We don't know much about art, but we know what we like, and we like making money. Paintings work differently in that you don't sell them at a cut-price. In fact, pictures go up in value and you could make a mint by buying and selling them at the right times.

If you're getting pissed off at the way Sims seem to take the long way around the house when they're outside, build them a pathway. PCZ

It's important you choose the right channel for your Sims' personality type.

Building up your body can leave your Sim exhausted.

THE BOOK OF JOBS

Whatever career you choose, you'll need a special set of skills to work your way up the ladder. Here's a list of what you need to cultivate for each particular job:

Job	Skills
Law Enforcement	Logic and Charisma
Entertainment	Charisma and Creativity
Science	Logic and Creativity
Military	Repair and Body
Business	Logic and Charisma
Medicine	Logic and Body
Life of Crime	Creativity and Charisma
Pro Athlete	Body and Charisma
Xtreme	Creativity, Body and Charisma
Politics	Logic and Charisma

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MOST EFFICACIOUS Philip Wand

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Send us a query or a top tip and you could pocket £50.

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WRITE TO **Dear Wandy, *PC ZONE*, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ**

EMAIL Address your letters to us at **letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk** with the subject heading **Dear Wandy**.

Please note: while we can assure you that we read *every* techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Q I am considering buying a new sound card for my PC. I will be making music, so I'm also considering buying a Sound Blaster Live! card. As you may or may not know, the Platinum card comes with a Live Drive, which allows you to plug all your audio devices into the front, and has optical digital interfaces. Do you know if it's possible to buy the Live Drive without buying all the software, or indeed on its own, as I am not too keen on shelling out £180 for the card?

Tim Silman

A **The Platinum is basically a Sound Blaster Live! 1024 with a nice set of expansion ports taking up a drive bay in the front of your machine. If you really want digital in/outs, but at a slightly cheaper price, you could do worse than look for one of the earlier Sound Blaster Live! 256 cards (the number denotes the number of simultaneous midi notes the card can play; the Liveware 2.0 update for the 256 card updates the firmware, so even the earlier card can play 1024 notes). Creative Labs has recently announced some new accessories, which include optical digital I/O expansion cards for the lower spec Live! cards. See store.europe.creative.com for details.**

SCRATCH REMIX

Q I have just had to go out and purchase new copies of my two favourite games because the old CD-ROMs had small scratches on them, which rendered them useless. This is not only expensive, it's annoying, especially if it had been an older game and I could no longer replace it. Could you please tell me if there is anything available to prevent this? I have heard a rumour of some sort of plastic cover, like a clear label, to go on the readable side, but do not know for certain if there is such a thing.

Chris Taylor

A **Some of us recall seeing adhesive labels for protecting CDs a little while back, but we can't remember the manufacturer – nor do we recommend such drastic action. To be honest, we're a little amazed you had to replace the discs. Did you try contacting the manufacturers and asking for a replacement? You can't be the only person with this problem, and we'd be surprised if any of the larger publishers didn't send you another CD-ROM pronto once you'd supplied proof of purchase. If you have this problem again, try polishing the scratch out with a fine metal polish, toothpaste, or even a mild T-Cut. Only rub in and out from the centre of the disc, not round and round.**

Sound Blaster Live!, tops for gamers and audio geeks alike.

STRIIIKE!

Q While using my laptop computer with a PCMCIA card modem the other day, it was short-circuited due to a thunderstorm. Is there any way I can salvage it, ie get it fixed? My other query is, can I connect an external modem to a laptop without a USB connector? My laptop is a pretty old model, and besides the external monitor and printer port, I have one additional 'male' nine-pin connector. Can this be used?

Daniel

A **We're assuming that the laptop still works and that you only have a fried modem – if it really was a thunderstorm that caused the short, count yourself lucky that you still have a functioning laptop and not just an interesting shaped door stop with flip up lid. First of all check if your laptop and modem are covered by your household contents insurance. If they are, as they may well be, go and get yourself a nice shiny new one. If it's not covered, however, repair is nigh on impossible – you'd need an act of God more impressive than the original lightning strike. Fortunately though, you're in luck. That nine-pin male plug on the back is a good old fashioned serial port, which is what external modems always used to plug into before the lazy days of USB. Assuming the serial port still works after its near death experience, you should be able to purchase an external modem and plug it right in (with the aid of a 9/25 serial converter). Good luck, and stop standing under trees in thunderstorms.**

MISSED THE BUS

Q I am very interested in buying a 3dfx card, but even though your guides to these cards are informing, they miss out an area that I, and many other people, are interested in – the PCI bus!

I know they are old and it's slow technology, but my computer doesn't have an AGP slot and I simply can't afford to upgrade. So I'm hoping you could suggest a few things to look for in a graphics card so I can prolong the life of my PC.

Ian Evans

A **We do realise there's a large market for 'older' style cards, and we are thinking of doing a feature on how to get maximum thrust from an older machine. Mostly we focus on AGP cards as they do, as you say, have a significant speed advantage. Having said that, the PCI video card refuses to die, and quite a few of the latest models have a PCI bus option. The Voodoo3 2000 has been available in PCI flavour for quite some time, and more recently a Voodoo3 3000 has joined the line-up. See www.3dfx.com for details.**

DIPPY ZIPPY

Q My Computer is messed-up. When I try to download a ZIP file, be it a patch for a game or a mod, when the download is complete my computer opens it

£50 WINNER!

EASY LIFE

Q In reply to Steve Leese's problem with *Half-Life* (*PCZ* #88, The Trouble With Tridents) I had this exact same problem. I discovered it was due to *Half-Life* opening the default Dial-Up Networking (DUN) connection whenever I started a game. What happened was that it initialised the Voodoo graphics card and, back at the Windows desktop, prompted you for your DUN password. Seeing as the Voodoo was currently 'clicked in', I never got to see what was happening. To fix it, you can either set up your DUN so you don't have a default connection, or try to 'Alt-Tab' back to the desktop, close the offending window, and then return to *Half-Life*. That said, I believe one of the later *Half-Life* updates fixed this particular problem.

Rob Medlock

A **Thanks for being so helpful Rob. Here, have 50 quid.**

"I am very interested in buying a 3dfx card, but even though your guides to these cards are informing, they miss out on an area that I and many other people are interested in – the PCI bus"

IAN EVANS, ON HIS GRAPHICS CARD SEARCH

up as a Paint file – so the download was a complete waste of time. Why does my computer do this, and how can I change it? Can you please reply with a solution, because I think I'll have to re-install Windows 98. Is there an easier way?

Cad

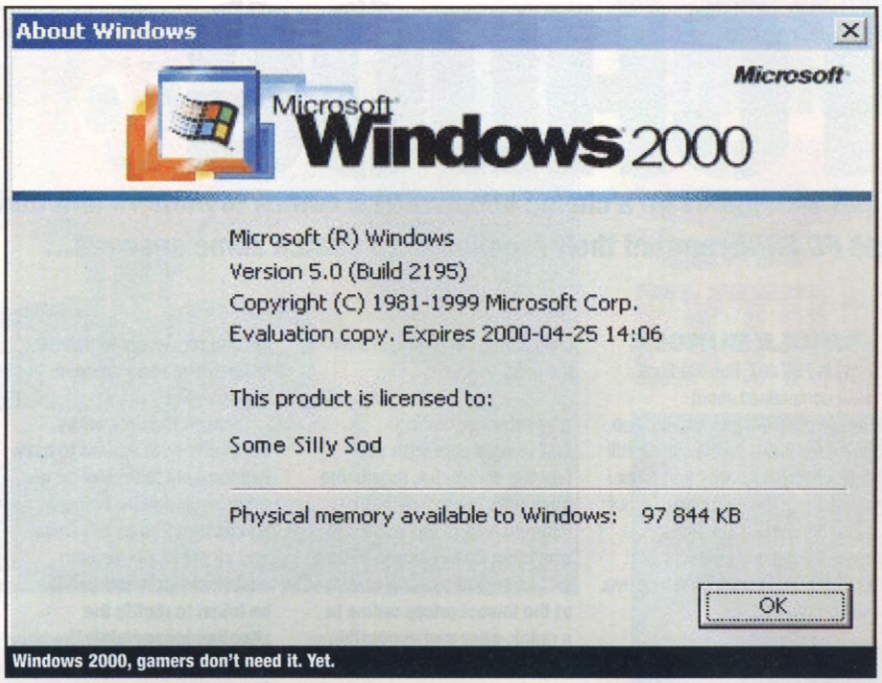
A There is an easy way around this one. It seems your computer is a little confused as to what extension ties up with what application – although how it got round to thinking that a ZIP archive should be opened with Microsoft Paint is anyone's guess. First, double-click on your 'My Computer' icon in the top left of the screen. With your drives showing in the window, browse down to a folder where you have a ZIP file stored – if necessary, create one (you can do this by creating any new document and simply adding the .zip extension on the end). Note down the description shown in the Type column. It'll say something like 'Microsoft Paint image'. Now click the 'View' menu and select 'Folder Options' right at the bottom, then select the third tab along at the top called 'File Types'. This is where Windows keeps information on how files are associated with particular extensions. Scroll down the list until you come to the entry with the same description as the ZIP file noted earlier. Highlight that entry and press the 'Remove' button. Next time you download an archive, make sure you select the 'Save this file to disk' radio button. Once complete, double-click on the file and select the 'archive' program (eg TurboZip) you want to use to extract the contents.

THREE'S A CROWD

Q I was just wondering if you could tell me if I would need a hub to network two machines – there will only ever be two machines on my network. Can I simply connect a normal piece of network cable between the telephone style connectors on the back of my network cards? Any help would be great.

Sam Bartle

Netgear's FE104 hub, yours for less than £50.



Windows 2000, gamers don't need it. Yet.

***Birth Of The Federation*: where Windows 2000 hasn't been before**

A You *can* connect two machines together using the telephone style connectors (aka twisted pair) as long as you have a reversed twisted pair or 'crossover' cable. These are generally used to chain two hubs together, but can be used for two PCs without any trouble. Our advice, though, is to stick with a hub: they're a lot cheaper than you might think, they give you the capacity to add more computers, and they come with traffic monitoring lights, which allow you to see where there's a fault. Alternatively, if your network cards have BNC ports (the round silver ones with the bayonet style connectors that poke out), you can make yourself a coax lead – but additionally you'll need two 'T' piece connectors and two terminators or it won't work. If you're interested, get your hands on *PC ZONE* #84 where we went into home networking in some depth.

TOO MUCH TOO SOON

Q I recently purchased Windows 2000, Viper v770, AMD-K6 2 400, 128Mb of RAM and a new Jetway motherboard. I wanted to play *Birth Of The Federation*, but my Viper will not work with 2000 – my dad thinks we need a BIOS flash upgrade. I put an ATI card in my computer and now I can play *BOTF*, but I get a mouse trail. This problem also occurs on my father's PC, which has an identical ATI card. On my brother's PC with a Voodoo3 3000 it all works fine. What can I do?

Darren Thomas

A Although you have all the latest toys, the sad fact is many hardware manufacturers are very slow at providing drivers for them. Creative Labs, for example, didn't even list Windows 2000 as an available operating system for their products until a week *after* it was released. Even now they don't have a scheduled date for Banshee drivers (3dfx, on the other hand, are to be commended for having a fully certified suite of drivers ready within 24 hours). It will certainly do you no harm to make sure you have all the latest Windows 2000 updates from windowsupdate.microsoft.com. Even then our advice would be to steer well clear of 2000 for at least another three months while the more serious bugs are addressed. As for your system, keep checking the manufacturers' websites for new drivers, and bookmark ntgamepalace.3dfiles.com for useful hints and tips.

Creative Labs Annihilator Pro GeForce 256 DDR. Yummy!

MAY GEFORCE BE WITH YOU

Q I'm about to upgrade my PC to a 128Mb 600 MHz Athlon, and I'm unsure which 3D card to go for. Initially I thought a TNT2 Ultra would be a good bet, but I've seen recently that prices for GeForce cards have come down, including the DDR equipped ones.

The question is, will I notice a big difference between these cards on games such as *Quake III?* Also, if the GeForce is the better one to go for, are there any speed differences between card manufacturers?

Andy MacDonald

A The DDR equipped GeForce 256 is indeed the 'card of the moment', and you won't regret buying one. It's true the Voodoo3 3500 can match it in some areas, and that the Glide version of *Quake III* is quite breathtaking. That said, go for something fancy like the Creative Annihilator Pro DDR or Guillemot Prophet and you'll be able to flick on high detail at 1024x768x32 and still hold down a monster frame rate. For example, Transform & Lighting enabled *Quake III* on a GeForce 256 DDR can give a staggering 50 per cent speed advantage over a Diamond Viper V770U.

As for each manufacturer, as long as the cards have DDR memory, there's really only the price to separate them. We've seen a variety of Guillemot and Creative cards and there's only minor benchmark variations between them.

WATCHDOG

The software industry can sometimes be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. So why don't you just let *PC ZONE* ramraid their premises and snatch some answers...

ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

LIVING IN A WORLD OF HURT?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing, then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you have a techie problem, write to Dear Wandy (page 128).

WRITE TO Watchdog, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading **Watchdog.**

JUNGLE BUNGLE

Q In *PCZ* #87, Rob Medlock complained about Jungle.com. Despite his situation being resolved, Jungle.com is still ridiculously slack. The first order I placed with them arrived late, but I put this down to the Christmas rush. The second order I placed (a DVD drive) was quoted to arrive on February 14.

I am still waiting for the product, but it is now quoted as arriving on March 9, almost a month overdue. It's not the fact that the product is late that gets me, it's the excuses Jungle.com give when I ask why (and complain at the same time).

I placed an order with a delivery date on it and now I'm basically being told that it will arrive when it arrives – I can't think of any other store that would get away with this. I did not read all the small print, but as far as I'm concerned it shouldn't be there and I would just like to make everyone aware that before they order from Jungle.com, it doesn't guarantee its delivery dates.

I was hoping Watchdog could actually get a straight answer out of them. Surely a straight answer is not too much to ask considering I'm paying £75 for the drive.

Shevantha Rosa

A **After contacting Jungle.com with your lengthy complaint, they came back with the following: "Jungle.com is committed to providing its customers with a wide range of leading brands at the lowest prices online in a quick, easy and accessible way," explained Chris Venvell, a spokesman for the online service. "Every effort is made to ensure that we never knowingly break this promise."**

The PR speak continues: "To this end, significant resources have been invested in the development and testing of key areas such as procurement, customer interaction via the Internet and product delivery. We are also dedicated to identifying and establishing relationships with leading fulfilment partners to enhance our product range and availability."

As for its screw-up, it says that neither the sheer volume of traffic through the site, nor the rapid increase in the number of customers since its launch in August last year, is an excuse for delays in delivery such as the one you have experienced.

Venvell finishes off by saying: "As we appear to have been unable to deliver on our promise in this instance, I can assure Shevantha Rosa and all other Jungle.com customers that action will be taken to rectify the situation immediately."

Let us know if they do, Shevantha...

DAMNED DVD

Q I bought my new PC on December 5 1999, from the Oxford branch of PC World. Not knowing much about computers, I asked the sales advisor which PC would suit my needs the most for office work and, obviously, gaming. If it also had DVD, I would use it, but would not buy the machine specifically for the DVD option. He then pointed out an Advent 3031, which I purchased along with a copy of *Theme Hospital*.

Upon getting the machine home, I tried to play the game, which unfortunately kept crashing. I thought this was an error in the game, so I took it back to the store where they tried it out on their machine, and surprisingly it worked fine. They gave me a credit note, so off I went and used that for *Theme Park World*.

When I tried the game out, the same thing happened – it crashed after roughly five minutes playing time. I phoned the PC World warranty hotline (PC Plan, I think) several times over the next few weeks and eventually got an engineer out to look at my machine. He brought along 64Mb of RAM as he thought it would be this and proceeded to put it in. The machine still did the same thing so I demonstrated the problem to him. His answer was: "The graphics card is faulty," and he told me to take it back to the store where they would sort out my problem.

At the store, I gave the technician my machine and a copy of the engineer's report. He took my computer away, tested it, and subsequently couldn't find a problem until I gave him one of my games to show him what was wrong. After much discussion and trying to fix my problem, the technician and his work colleague said my graphics card could not do office work, games and DVD – it could only do office work and games or office work and DVD.

NO LOGIC?

Q After finding I had a free afternoon last week, I wandered into my local PC World and saw that *Delta Force 2* had been released and was sitting proudly at number one in the sales charts.

I bought it and installed it. Hands up how many of you out there have a TNT-based card. Thought so. Imagine my growing horror then, when I realised that this particular piece of software did not seem to be compatible with my two Voodoo2 cards and would only run in software mode, ie a complete waste of my hard earned cash.

It must be my mistake, I thought. After a couple of emails and a conversation with a NovaLogic techie, I finally came to the conclusion that the impossible had happened – yes, a developer was truly stupid enough to release a graphically intensive first-person shooter without 3dfx support.

After checking the box, I found that nowhere did it say that it was not compatible with Voodoo-based cards and as probably 70 per cent of PC owners with a graphics card have a Voodoo-based chipset, this, in my opinion, is downright misleading. I'm sure that I can't be the only one who has bought this game only to find it wasn't compatible with their graphics card.

NovaLogic do not seem the slightest bit interested in giving me my money back or even some sort of voucher. Instead, I was told it's tough, and go and buy a TNT card was the message I got. Yeah right...

I won't be buying anything NovaLogic again – that's for sure.

S McIntee

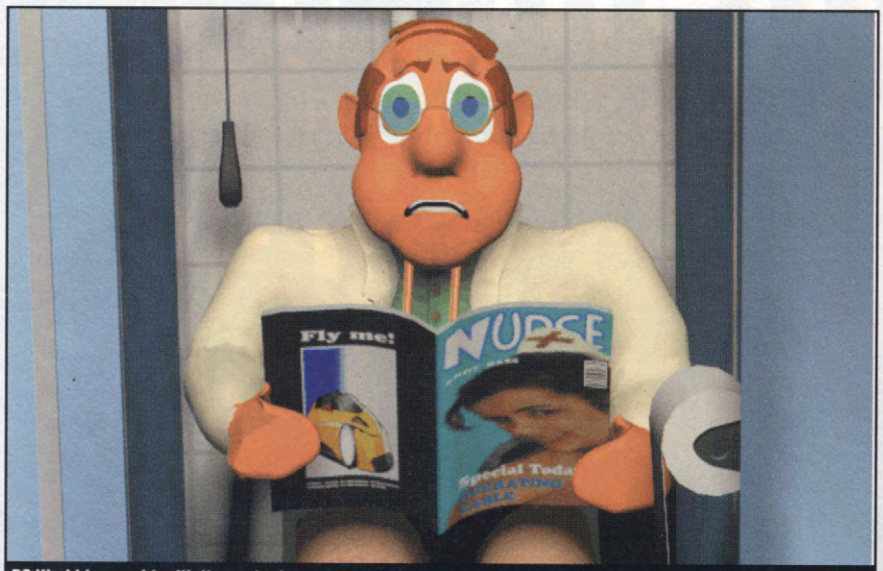
A **OK, first off, the response from NovaLogic: "On the bottom of the *Delta Force 2* box, it states that a full list of tested graphics cards is available from the NovaLogic website (www.novalogic.com). This list can also be requested from NovaLogic should the customer not have Web access. We can only show a list of compatible graphics cards and *not* a list of incompatible cards (just like any other software manufacturer)."**

NovaLogic says it's unfortunate you have a complaint with the game and it has passed on its apologies. While Watchdog thinks it's a shame that the game isn't compatible with your graphics card, we can't really take NovaLogic to task for not listing incompatible cards.

It has stated clearly which ones are compatible and at the end of the day, the consumer has to take some kind of responsibility when purchasing a game. Next time, we recommend you take a few moments to read the box fully before buying...

"I placed an order with a delivery date on it and now I'm basically being told that it will arrive when it arrives – I can't think of any other store that would get away with it"

SHEVANTHA ROSA TALKS ABOUT THE ONLINE JUNGLE



PC World is caught with its pants down.

My options were to wait for my new graphics card to arrive (which they had ordered already) in ten days time or to have a different graphics card fitted. I opted for the different card and they started to install the Voodoo2 2000. I now had games, but no DVD, as the new card had no software.

I now had two options! Wait for the new graphics card or *buy* a different card that would do all the things that I bought the machine for in the first place. After speaking to the manager, I opted for the different graphics card and he gave it to me at a reduced price.

I know that PC World did do something to remedy my problem, but I feel I was cheated and misled when buying my new machine. I shouldn't have had to pay for the upgrade to get my machine to the standard I believed I was buying it at. I was just wondering if you could do anything for me as I have had no luck trying myself.

Matthew Regan.

A There's light at the end of the tunnel, Matthew. PC World says it has investigated the situation thoroughly and liaised with the manager at the store: "The manager is unable to check with the sales assistant who is away for a week," offered a spokesperson for the company. "However, as a gesture of goodwill, if the customer contacts the store, they will replace the graphics card with one that is capable of doing all of three things, at no extra cost to the customer."

After Watchdog pointed out that you had already coughed up for the card that did all three things, PC World said: "The card was supplied to the customer at a reduced price. As a goodwill gesture, the store has agreed to refund that amount back to the customer if he returns to the store with his receipt and speaks to either Trevor Bailey or Paul Young."

The nightmare is seemingly over. Let us know how you go.

MODEM RIP?

Q As one of the letters in last month's magazine stated: "*GTA2* does not work over a modem". It seems that in the struggle to get Internet play into a game, the good old MOdulator-DEModulator, which most of us use to access the Internet anyway, has been forgotten. It's not only that less games support it, but that it's not even tested any more.

Another example? Has anyone tried *C&C: Tiberian Sun* over a modem? The original release worked, but did they test the patched versions? The ones with the changes to level multiplayer games? Both myself and a friend have the latest patch (the one you get from the Internet auto-update) on fresh installs of the game – and we both ran the update thing twice, as there seemed to be two steps which needed to be installed. Now, whenever we try to connect via modem, we get an error that says we are using incompatible versions of the game.

The annoying thing is that *TS* is the only game we both own that does the modem thing (or doesn't as the case may be). Going over the Internet is slow and we're not keen to cart our whole systems about, so any idea when the modem probs will be solved for *TS*?

Colin Pickup

A Well, according to the bods at Westwood, there isn't a problem: "They do not have the same versions," offered a spokesperson for the company. "One of them missed an update somewhere or one of them has a cheat/hack/editor downloaded. The very message they get indicates they have two different versions of the game. The best fix for these guys is to completely uninstall the game, delete the folder, then reinstall."

Hopefully, this should fix the problem, Colin. If not, let us know and Watchdog will be more than happy to do some further investigation into Westwood's claims. PCZ

YOUR DETAILS PLEASE...

If you are writing in to complain about a product, whether it be a ropey piece of software or a shoddy PC, please furbish us with your full name, address and contact number. With PCs especially, make sure that you also include all purchasing details, such as reference and invoice numbers. It means that we can try and resolve your problems much faster.

PC ZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE

SPACE EXTRAVAGANZA

Space. You want it, we've got it, with massive reviews of *Starlancer*, *Allegiance*, and *Tachyon: The Fringe*. Beta versions have already taken the *PC ZONE* office by storm and we can't wait to get our hands on the finished games. We're also going to treat you to a massive history of the space genre and a preview of all the upcoming classics.

HONEST REVIEWS

You can always trust us to give you the low down on every new game, no matter how much trouble it gets us into. Next month we'll be reviewing the latest FIFA game, *Euro 2000*, as well as featuring a massive football Supertest. With any luck we'll also have reviews of *B17 2*, the only flight sim to ever get the whole team excited, *Simon The Sorcerer 3D*, the first true adventure game we've seen for ages and *MDK2*. We should also have the divine looking RTS *Metal Fatigue*, *Test Drive 6* and the *EverQuest* expansion pack *Ruins Of Kunark*. We'll stop promising reviews of the games we really want to see: *Vampire*, *Deus Ex* and *Daikatana*. At some point in the future they'll shock us with their appearance. It could be next month, or the one after that. Just rememeber, you can't rush a work of art.

TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS

Our ultimate guide to nicking and stealing in the metal ages should see you through the great *Thief II*. We'll try to cram in a step by step walkthrough for every level, including all the best tips to stop you being spotted by guards and deatails on how to stuff a TV down your trousers. The fantastic *Shogun* has blown us away with its massive bloody battles and we'll be giving you a guide to winning every one of them. We'll also be featuring a guide to solving the most common problems that ail your PC.

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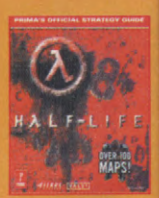

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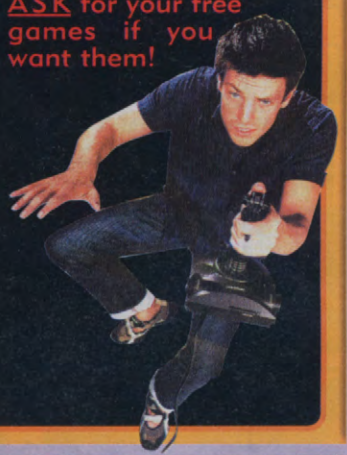

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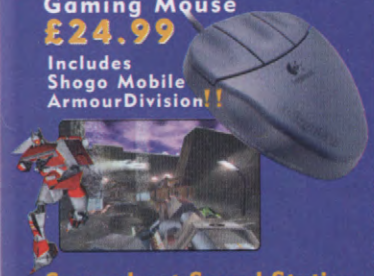

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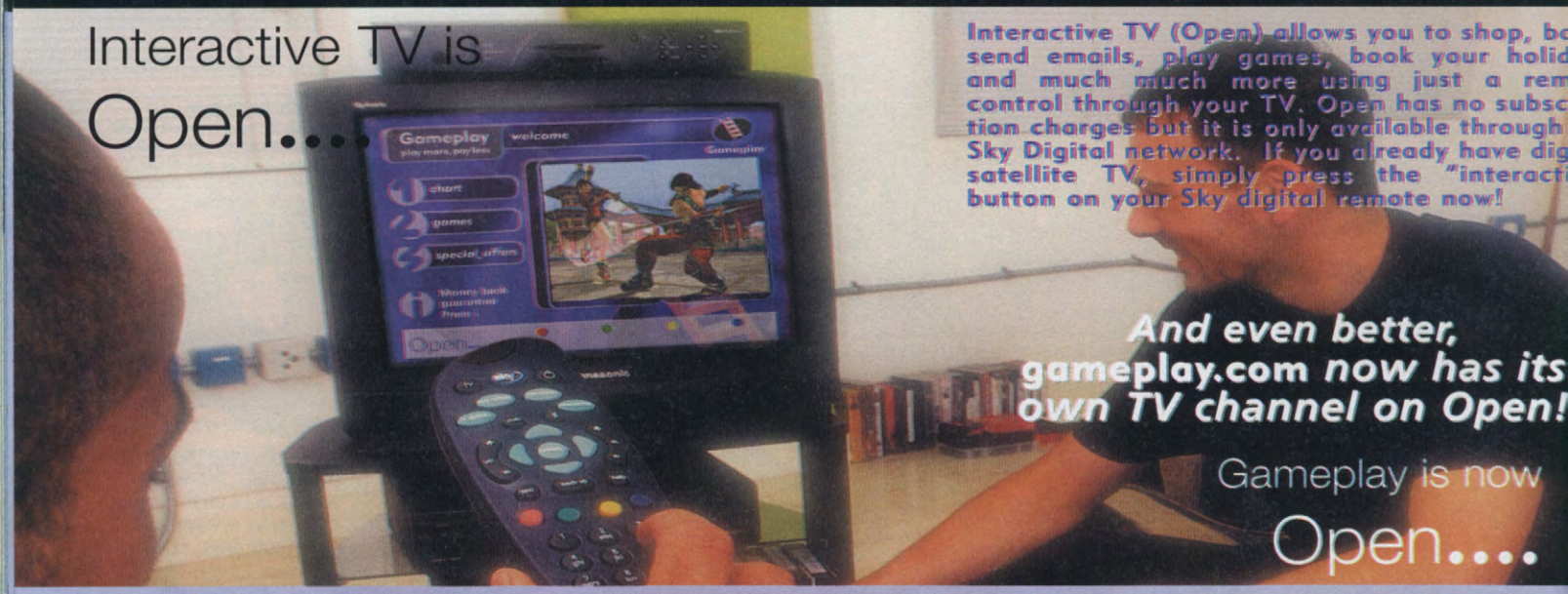

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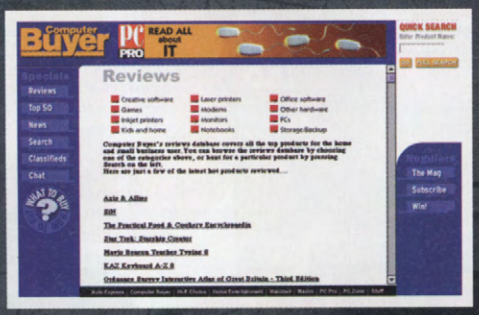

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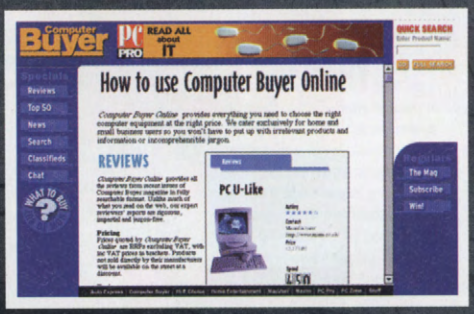

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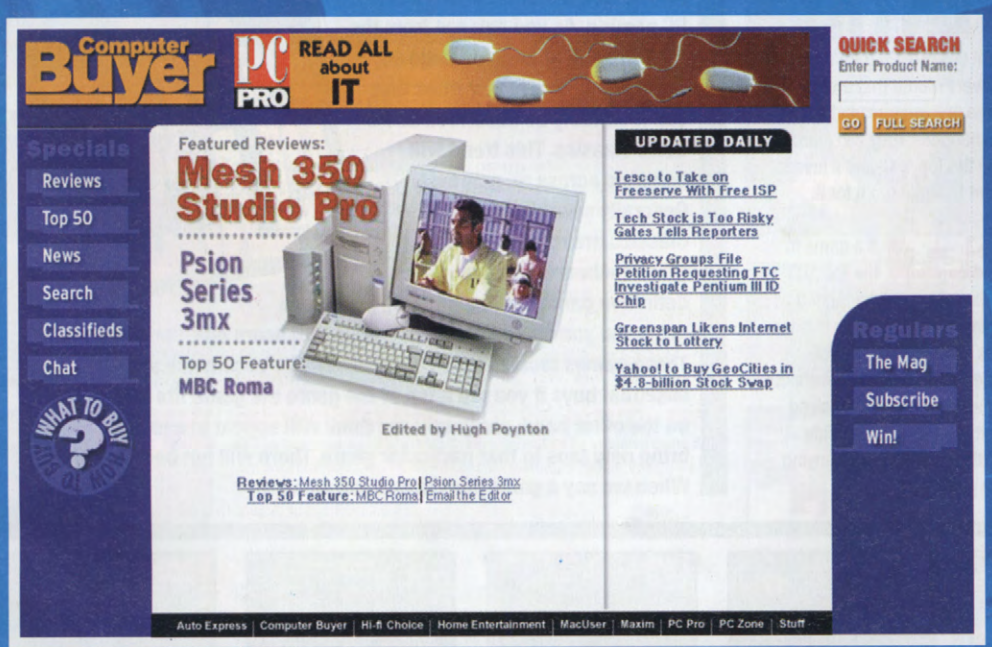

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PCZONE TOP100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent; check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

NEW ENTRY

In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month that are often better than some of the games in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100, and a lesser title will drop out to make room for it.

BUDGET

If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply; it is up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

Under the new *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. As you can see from the *PC ZONE* hall of fame on page 65, there are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* award for excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them. When we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!

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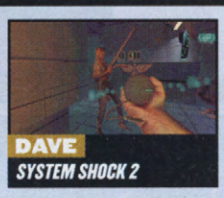

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FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

HALF-LIFE

PCZ #71 • 95%

Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing: Force* add-on in the 'Generations' pack.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209 100

UNREAL TOURNAMENT — PCZ #81 • 90%

Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III*'s multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

QUAKE III ARENA — PCZ #87 • 89%

The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* makes it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

ALIENS VS PREDATOR — PCZ #77 • 87%

It might not be the best, but it's definitely the scariest FPS you can buy. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast, this provides excellent value for money.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

QUAKE II: QUAD DAMAGE — PCZ #59 • 86%

The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Single-player mode might be a let-down, but if you have access to a network or a fast Internet connection you'll be in heaven. Now available as a pack with all the official mission packs.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE — PCZ #88 • 82%

The original *Thief* set new standards in FPS titles with its move away from mindless action towards stealth, and its excellent use of light and sound. This sequel delivers more of the same quality gameplay, minus the out-of-place zombie levels.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION — PCZ #71 • 81%

Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. Boasting great graphics and storyline, its only faults are an iffy AI and the fact that it's a bit too easy for hardcore *Quake* fans.

PUBLISHER Microids • 00 33 1 4601 5401

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE — PCZ #89 • 80%

NEW ENTRY More like an arcade explosion of unmitigated violence than a FPS in the *Half-Life* mould, *SoF* is a great deal of fun. It's also very sick. If you can stomach amputations and decapitations, then we can guarantee you pure, mindless entertainment.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME — PCZ #77 • 80%

This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. Because, quite frankly, that side of the game was crap. We still stand by the game though – it's 'classic adult entertainment'.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

SIN — PCZ #70 • 80%

Releasing *Sin* at the same time as the vastly superior *Half-Life* was commercial suicide. But you can now bag this title for less than a tenner, which gives you the perfect excuse to find out just how good it actually is. No Classic, but an excellent game in its own right.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

STRATEGY

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

PCZ #89 • 93%

NEW ENTRY *Shogun* is the first strategy game to blow us away in a long time. Command enormous armies in epic and bloody battles, send ninjas to assassinate enemy generals and conquer your way through the map of feudal Japan. The 3D engine works beautifully and the in-game options never get in the way of instant playability.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

AGE OF EMPIRES II — PCZ #84 • 89%

It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *AoE II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units, and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. Forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and opt for this classic RTS.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME — PCZ #68 • 88%

A title that lives up to its name, *Civilization II* is probably the oldest game in the Top 100 and it will probably still be around in years to come. Turn-based and in 2D, it offers unlimited replayability and depth. One of the few games that everyone should own.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

HOMEWORLD — PCZ #82 • 85%

Homeworld delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over: a fully three-dimensional, strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon, and the only limits are your imagination.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

THEOCRACY — PCZ #88 • 84%

Blending the best of *Age Of Empires* and *Civilization*, *Theocracy*'s mix of real-time and turn-based gameplay lets you guide the Aztecs through history and attempt to right the wrongs of the Hispanic conquerors. In short, an unexpected gem.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

IMPERIUM GALACTICA II — PCZ #85 • 83%

Space expansion and empire building has never looked so good. This title boasts the depth of a turn-based strategy game with the immediate action of real-time, plus a great interface and tutorial, so you'll know your way around in no time.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN — PCZ #81 • 82%

Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

TOTAL ANNIHILATION — PCZ #56 • 82%

With a ridiculous number of units and unrivalled pace, the original *TA* still stands head and shoulders above more recent efforts. No story to speak of and weak single-player action, but still, for a tenner, no one should be without a copy.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER — PCZ #89 • 81%

NEW ENTRY Not the stunning classic everyone was hoping for, but the first *Star Wars* RTS is still a fun game. Based on the original trilogy, *FC* recreates scenes from the films along with all your favourite characters. Play it against other people for maximum enjoyment.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

STARCRAFT — PCZ #64 • 78%

Still one of the most popular games online, *StarCraft* offered three distinct races and one of the most involving stories yet seen in real-time strategy. It may look a bit old hat nowadays, but it runs like a dream if you're still doggedly hanging on to your P90.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

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ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

PCZ #80 • 93%

✪ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully roll the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are. In short, it's a title that's absolutely indispensable.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT — PCZ #87 • 87%

✪ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult, scorcher of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind – and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

BALDUR'S GATE — PCZ #73 • 85%

✪ With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. In a nutshell, *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VII — PCZ #66 • 84%

✪ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

FALLOUT 2 — PCZ #71 • 83%

✪ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

FINAL FANTASY VIII — PCZ #87 • 83%

✪ *FFVIII* features westernised graphics and the most incredible cut-scenes we've ever seen on a PC. Like its predecessor, this outing suffers from console linearity and repetitive battles, but it still retains enough charm to entrance most gamers.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

DIABLO — PCZ #48 • 78%

✪ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game. The much anticipated sequel is out this summer.

PUBLISHER Zablac/Blizzard • 01626 332233

ODIUM — PCZ #87 • 74%

✪ Imagine an RPG in the style of *Final Fantasy*, with battle sequences à la *X-COM* and you'll get a good idea of what *Odium* is like. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and an amazing variety of monsters. In short, it's curiously compelling.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

NOX — PCZ #87 • 72%

✪ This *Diablo*-style RPG is immensely addictive. The levels may be a little repetitive, but you'll find that persistence pays off in the form of great spells and weapons. Watch out for a massive multiplayer community spawning around this one.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

LANDS OF LORE III — PCZ #74 • 80%

✪ Westwood knows how to tell a good story, and this latest title in the series is certainly the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LOLIII* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.

PUBLISHER Westwood/EA • 01753 549442

ACTION/ADVENTURES

GRIM FANDANGO

PCZ #71 • 90%

✪ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and if your mind doesn't work laterally you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUBLISHER LucasArts • 020 7368 2255

DISCWORLD NOIR — PCZ #79 • 89%

✪ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games, and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Pratchett's off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE — PCZ #84 • 88%

✪ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for the latest Indy outing. Thankfully the adventure elements are still in place in this whip-cracking romp.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

THE NOMAD SOUL — PCZ #83 • 87%

✪ Distinctly odd, but also refreshingly original, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and (gulp) David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost pulls it off.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

NOCTURNE — PCZ #84 • 86%

✪ Why would you pay good money to be scared? Because it's damn good fun that's why, and if you find the average PC game laughable, we dare you to sit through *Nocturne* with your curtains drawn. It's a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear.

PUBLISHER Take 2 • 01753 722900

MESSIAH — PCZ #85 • 85%

✪ Shiny's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also a bunch of whores and some gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good Christian, kill absolutely everything that gets in your way.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION — PCZ #83 • 85%

✪ Lara's back in her fourth (and best) adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. It's not going to win over the cynics, but it's still a damn fine game.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

RESIDENT EVIL II — PCZ #75 • 82%

✪ Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore, make for top entertainment.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 020 7368 2255

MONKEY ISLAND BOUNTY PACK — PCZ #74 • 80%

✪ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

SAM & MAX AND DAY OF THE TENTACLE — NOT REVIEWED • 78%

✪ Two of the finest adventure games in the world ever are now available in a single pack for a bargain price. They still match most titles that are released today, so go and buy them. Now.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 456 7000

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RACING GAMES

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

PCZ #68 • 91%

✪ Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* is still the benchmark in rally simulations. It boasts realistic handling, car customisation and stacks of multiplayer options, which all contribute to keeping it well ahead of the competition. The fact that it's now available as a budget title makes it an absolute steal.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MIDTOWN MADNESS — PCZ #79 • 89%

✪ Jump in your car and drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this is definitely the best all-out arcade racer you can currently buy on PC.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

MOTOCROSS MADNESS — PCZ #67 • 85%

✪ This is an astoundingly addictive game. It boasts loads of game and race options and is tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. If you want to have fun on two wheels, this is an absolute must-buy.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

LE MANS 24 HOURS — PCZ #87 • 83%

✪ Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skillful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode culminating in the famous race itself.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP — PCZ #84 • 82%

✪ Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.

PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015

TOCA 2 — PCZ #76 • 82%

✪ Predictably, Codemasters has gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MONACO GRAND PRIX — PCZ #69 • 81%

✪ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. The game looks beautiful, plays even better, and the Artificial Intelligence is second to none. However, bear in mind that you need a hefty machine to have it looking its best.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

DRIVER — PCZ #82 • 80%

✪ Criticised for lacking the depth of *Midtown Madness* (it is a PlayStation conversion after all), this is still a good game. A pumping '70s soundtrack helps to recreate that 'Starsky And Hutch' feeling. A wheel, an afro haircut and a false moustache are, of course, essential.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

SUPERBIKE 2000 — PCZ #88 • 78%

✪ The best motorcycling sim on PC, this game sports incredible visuals, slick handling and astonishing detail. But it's too easy to fall off unless you use computer-assisted help. For pure two-wheeled action, *Motocross Madness* is still the best option.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SEGA RALLY 2 — PCZ #84 • 79%

✪ Not as good as hooking up with five of your mates down the local arcade, but this is a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car round the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this much fun?

PUBLISHER Sega • 020 8995 3399

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

FALCON 4

PCZ #72 • 92%

✪ We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that for once we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* sports beautiful 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition well and truly standing. If you're going to buy one flight sim, make it this one – it's the best example of its kind and we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR — PCZ #68 • 89%

✪ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece seems perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633

F/A-18E SUPER HORNET — PCZ #83 • 88%

✪ If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great, big, capital 'R', then look no further. In fact, this game is so lifelike that the US Navy has adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.

PUBLISHER Titus Software • 01926 335 5400

MIG ALLEY — PCZ #80 • 87%

✪ *MiG Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337

ENEMY ENGAGED: COMANCHE HOKUM — PCZ #89 • 85%

NEW ENTRY The latest helicopter sim to hit the shelves, this is also the best one to date. In no other game do you feel the excitement of being involved in a real war, largely due to an excellent dynamic campaign mode. Helicopter sims don't come any better than this classy title.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337

FLIGHT UNLIMITED III — PCZ #82 • 86%

✪ For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this is (along with the *Flight Sim* series) an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

FLANKER 2.0 — PCZ #85 • 86%

✪ Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yank blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you go off shooting stuff.

PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300

JANE'S USAF — PCZ #88 • 85%

✪ *USAF* offers the playability to let non-hardcore flyers have a successful spin. While this means that the standards of realism are nowhere near other titles, it fills the gap for those of us who don't care about such things. This is a great flight sim that anybody can enjoy.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

JANE'S F/A-18 — PCZ #89 • 84%

NEW ENTRY Another game based on the US Navy's Super Hornet, this is an incredibly detailed jet sim that suffers slightly from being too hard for beginners. Graphically, it's up there with the best and the interface makes you feel as close to the real thing as is possible on a desk top.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

TEAM ALLIGATOR — PCZ #85 • 84%

✪ Helicopter sims are rare but, when they appear on the scene, they are usually superb. Although *Team Alligator* doesn't quite surpass the cheaper *Apache/Havoc*, it has truly beautiful graphics and feels great to fly. Without doubt, the best Russian chopper sim around.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

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SPORTS

FIFA 2000

PCZ #84 • 88%

The *FIFA* franchise has been rolling on for years and it certainly gets better each time. Although it missed a classic rating by a whisker, *FIFA 2000* is still the best conversion of the finest sport known to man. If you're into your football, then what are you waiting for? You should own a copy of *FIFA 2000*. It's as simple as that.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SUPREME SNOWBOARDING — PCZ #85 • 86%

Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives as exhilarating an experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is here, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 8738 8199

NBA LIVE 2000 — PCZ #85 • 83%

As slick as always, but what makes the 2K edition special is the inclusion of teams from the 1950s onwards, comedy haircuts *et al*. Although not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

NBA: INSIDE DRIVE — PCZ #82 • 82%

While not exactly the most popular sport in this country, *Inside Drive* manages to suck you in with its supreme playability. Its presentation is not quite up to EA standards (but then, what is?), but when the gameplay is this good, who cares?

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF — PCZ #80 • 82%

Knocking *Links* off the office golfing perch is no mean feat, but *PGA*'s gameplay is so addictive that all other contenders can tee off. Our very own Keith Pullin took the entire summer off to design his own courses for it. But he has got a hole in one in the head.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

VIRTUAL POOL 2 — PCZ #58 • 82%

OK, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2 — PCZ #68 • 81%

The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates, and when you're tired of the baize you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7368 2255

ACTUA SOCCER 3 — PCZ #72 • 80%

If you can't get on with *FIFA*, then *Actua* is the second port of call for footie fans. It plays a faster game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which helps to maintain its shelf life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

BRIAN LARA CRICKET — PCZ #75 • 78%

Cricket isn't the easiest game to convert to the PC, but Codemasters has done the best job, despite the fact that *Brian Lara Cricket* has obviously been ported straight over from the PlayStation. For aspiring country-dwellers everywhere.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

NHL 2000 — PCZ #83 • 77%

EA's hockey series has improved graphics and Artificial Intelligence, fast-paced addictive gameplay and you can now graft your digitised face onto a player, then watch it get beaten with a stick to a bloody pulp. Now that's family entertainment.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

SPACE COMBAT

X – BEYOND THE FRONTIER

PCZ #82 • 89%

The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656

FREESPACE 2 — PCZ #84 • 85%

Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4222

X WING: ALLIANCE — PCZ #77 • 83%

At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode in the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

PRIVATEER 2 — PCZ #44 • 80%

Not as open-ended as *Elite*, but far more rewarding as an overall experience. The graphics look great even today, and hey it's on budget – so it's better value for money than ever.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

WING COMMANDER PROPHECY GOLD — PCZ #59 • 77%

The graphics look a bit dated now, but this is still a great game by anyone's standards. *Wing* neophytes start here.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MANAGEMENT

CM 99/2000

PCZ #84 • 92%

More than a game… it's a way of life. So say fans of the best football management game in existence. If you dare to play it you can kiss goodbye to your social life, and expect to spend hours each and every day poring over unknown players in a bid to discover the next Ronaldo. The word 'benchmark' doesn't really describe how much better than the competition this game is.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

THE SIMS — PCZ #87 • 86%

This game offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life – it's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

CAESAR III — PCZ #70 • 85%

Starting from scratch you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

SIMCITY 3000 — PCZ #74 • 84%

Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442

ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON — PCZ #75 • 83%

Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden dippers, to *Nemesis*-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

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ULTIMA ONLINE

PCZ #80 • 92%

In many ways an old-school RPG, but with amazing freedom, depth and open-endedness. So addictive that *ZONE* editor Chris has sold his car, his house and his soul to finance a permanent Web connection. The best thing about *Ultima Online* is that your world is constantly changing and evolving, and it's populated by real people, just like you.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

EVERQUEST — PCZ #80 • 85%

If you find *Ultima Online* too vast, *EverQuest* may be the online RPG for you. It's far more combat-orientated than *Ultima*, and more linear as a result. Repetitive at higher levels but worth checking out all the same.

PUBLISHER Sony (sold at Electronic Boutique only) • 020 7428 5961

ASHERON'S CALL — PCZ #88 • 76%

The graphics and freedom to do almost anything make this title a commendable addition to the genre. However, it's a crying shame you can't kill other humans – most of the ones you meet deserve a good kicking.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

NETSTORM — PCZ #59 • 73%

A curious blend of chess, *Red Alert* and *Baron Munchausen*, *NetStorm* is also an elegant and addictive multiplayer game that works beautifully across a standard modem.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

WARBIRDS — PCZ #70 • 72%

The original WWII online dogfighting sim and still one of the best. With more than 48 different aircraft to chose from, this should keep anyone with a passing interest in air combat very happy indeed.

PUBLISHER Interactive Magic • 01344 409399

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

PCZ #79 • 91%

You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that's come closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the very first mission, it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

SWAT 3 — PCZ #85 • 89%

Artificial Intelligence doesn't get any better than this game's. Add some spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

BATTLEZONE 2 — PCZ #84 • 87%

Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

ROGUE SPEAR — PCZ #84 • 86%

We loved *Rainbow Six* and although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

SPEC OPS 2 — PCZ #84 • 84%

Challenging *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot, *Spec Ops 2* puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. Incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

PCZONE ALL-TIME CLASSICS

DOOM

This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or (gulp) *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.

ULTIMA VII

Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

We reviewed this game back in the very first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.

DUNE II

If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.

SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers fast frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.

UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles, and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever on its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.

MAGIC CARPET

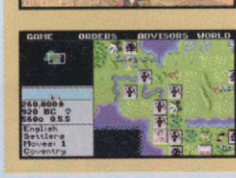
Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.

WING COMMANDER

The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably, this was absolute rubbish and people stayed away in their millions. Will these people never learn?

TOMB RAIDER

She might be getting a bit rusty round the gills, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?



CIVILIZATION

The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.

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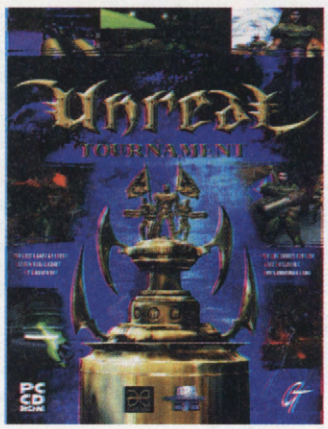

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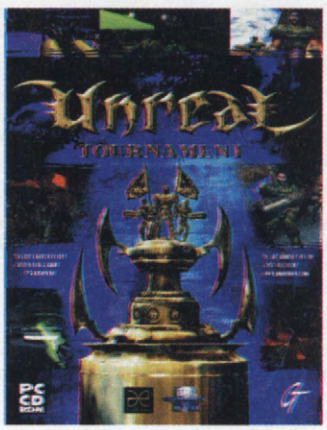

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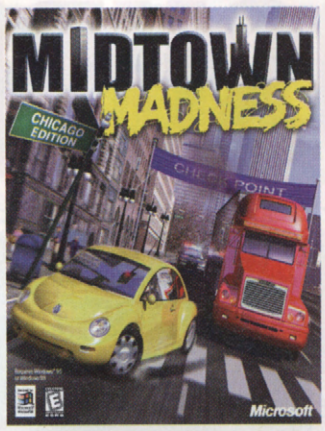

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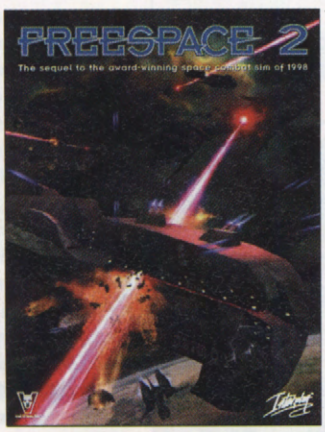

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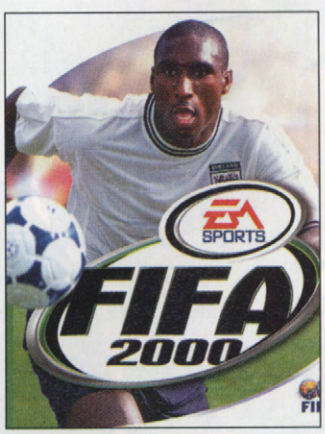

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ON THE CD

With plenty of variety on this month's CD, there should be something here for everyone

COMPOSER OF WORDS Martin Korda **COMPILER OF DEMOS** Dan Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, **or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk**. Please do NOT phone the *PC ZONE* office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- You need at least a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95/98 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 233 with 64Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D accelerator only.

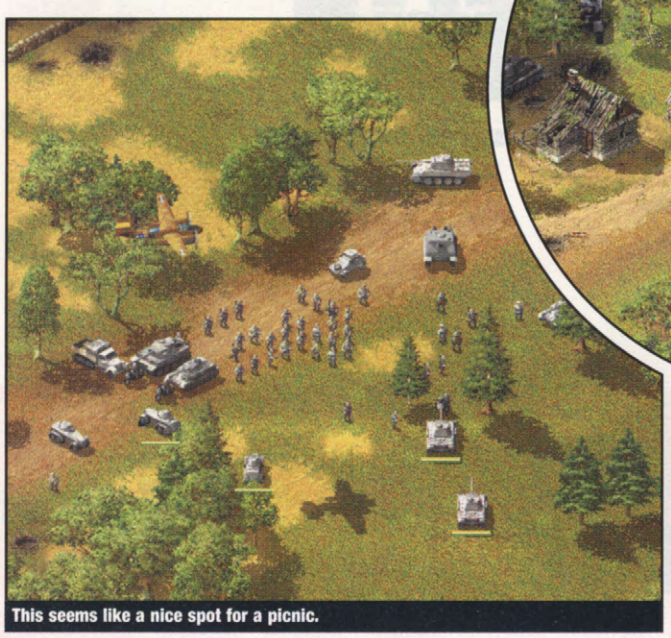
ON THE CD

DEMOS + SHAREWARE

SUDDEN STRIKE

CDV

After taking out the enemy tanks, lightly armoured long-ranged weaponry will be sent to help you out.



This seems like a nice spot for a picnic.

By using the forests as cover, you can remain undetected and take the enemy by surprise.

Artillery shells explode around your troops right from the start of the mission.

Our cover demo this month is the keenly anticipated World War II RTS, *Sudden Strike*. Take control of a group of German forces, occupy a house deep behind enemy lines and eliminate their artillery. Along the way you will have to cope with numerous obstacles, including mine fields, devastating long-range artillery fire and enemy ambushes. Utilising the terrain around you is imperative, and the most obvious route to confront the enemy is not always the soundest one. Using the forests on this map may well slow you down, but will provide excellent cover from the enemy and reduce their awareness of your presence. There's a great deal to take on board when considering your troop movements.

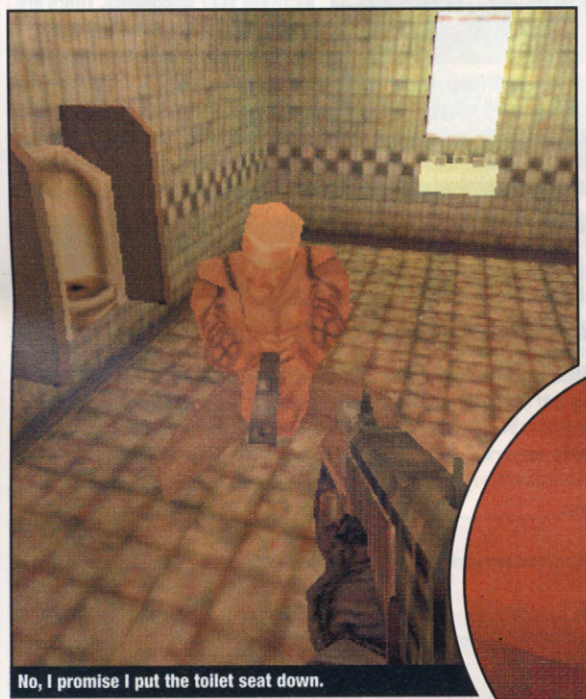
In the beginning, the mission you're provided with has plenty of heavy weaponry and a group of soldiers. You must lead them south in a seek-and-destroy mission to eliminate the enemy tanks, before occupying the designated building. Once this is done, long-ranged artillery reinforcements will be sent to aid you in the final push to victory.

***Sudden Strike* has a rich vein of realism and accurately portrays the horrors, mayhem and fear of a WWII battlefield. Shells explode around your army, planes circle overhead and enemy machine guns are well dug in, ripping your troops to shreds if you don't take them out quickly enough. The full version of the game will feature three campaigns, either as the German, Allied or Russian armies. This demo offers just a taster of what's to come, but even from this snippet, it's clear to see that *Sudden Strike* is going to be something special, and could well be the game to finally fill the WWII gap in the RTS market.**

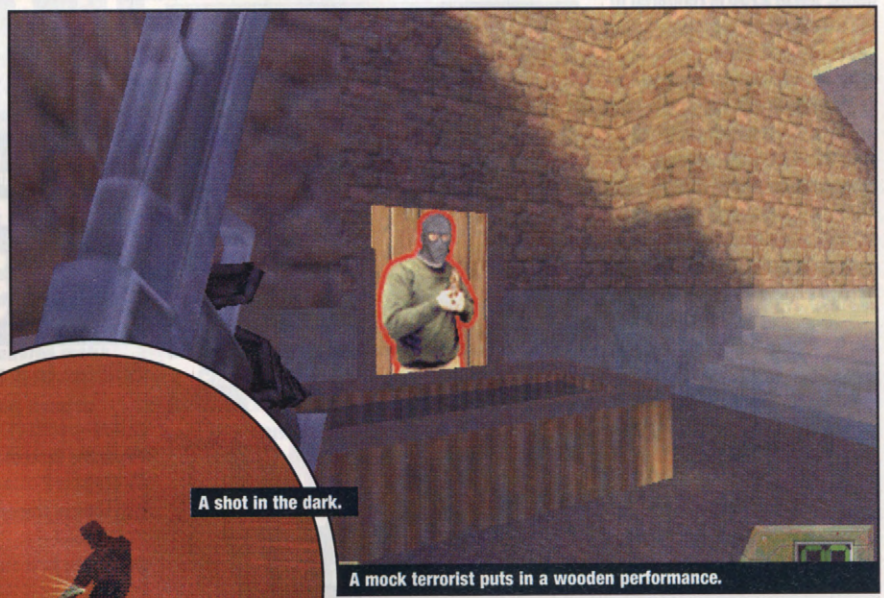
Controls: Mouse

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

Activision



No, I promise I put the toilet seat down.



A mock terrorist puts in a wooden performance.

A shot in the dark.

George, is that you? I loved your last single...

Soldier Of Fortune **(*PCZ* #89, 80%), the game that is sure to have the moral brigades up in arms over the coming months, makes a sanitised appearance on this month's cover disc. For any worried parents, let us quickly reassure you that shooting off limbs and pools of blood aren't even hinted at here. Instead, you can play this superb FPS without any gore, but with all the gameplay of the full game still intact.**

There are three parts to this demo. The first is an easy-to-follow tutorial, which leads you through the game's basic elements, such as moving, crouching, jumping and sniping. There's even a mock mission, where you must shoot the pop-up bad guys and spare the civilians. The main part of the game provides you with the first mission from the main game, in which you must locate and kill a gang leader called Sabre, seeing off his henchmen on the way. If you get bored of this, there's a great multiplayer option for deathmatch and co-operative play, with up to 32 player games possible. Some superb in-game features include audio detection and zonal injuries, so if you shoot someone in the leg, they'll react accordingly. All in all, it's great FPS action without the gratuitous gore.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard.

EARTH 2150

SSI

Earth 2150 features both days and nights.

Set ten years after the original title *Earth 2140*, this sequel sees three nations racing to evacuate their people from Earth, in an RTS battle for supremacy and resources. A truly fantastic demo, it offers massive amounts of gameplay from several elements of the full version. First, you must choose to command one of three different factions, the Eurasian Dynasty, the Lunar Co-operation and the United Civilised States. The first two of these offer missions where you must establish a base and collect resources, while eliminating any enemy presence from the area. There are three difficulty levels for you to test yourself against.

All three nations provide a tutorial, which teaches you how to establish bases, mine resources, construct war vehicles to your own specifications and try your hand at commanding your troops in battle. There's more than enough here to prepare you for the challenge of the full game. *Earth 2150* is rendered in full 3D and features days and nights as well as varying weather conditions. Once you've completed the missions, there are four skirmish levels to try your hand at, with up to six computer-controlled armies battling against you for control of the map. With an abundance of options, there's hours of RTS fun here to be had by all.

Construct vehicles to your own specifications.

Controls: Mouse

MISSILE COMMAND

Hasbro

A remake of the old classic, *Missile Command* has two different modes of play. The Classic version is a 2D shooter in the mould of *Space Invaders*, where you must fire your missiles to intercept comets heading towards earth. The other part of the game, called Ultimate Missile Command, is a 3D version of the same idea. It looks nicer and offers more of a challenge once you've mastered the 2D game. You must destroy alien attackers and fight your way into space to destroy the enemy's mothership. Don't be fooled by *Missile Command*'s basic concept, because this demo is fiendishly addictive and great fun to play.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

You'll certainly feel nostalgic when playing the Classic version of *Missile Command*.

BUST-A-MOVE 4

Interplay

How not to do it. Make sure your pulleys are well balanced.

Group three or more bubbles of the same colour together to make them burst.

Bearing more than a passing resemblance to *Tetris*, *Bust-A-Move 4* is a cute-looking puzzle game, which requires speed of thought and plenty of forward planning. It includes two tutorials, which take you through the basics of playing both the single and multiplayer games. The former consists of shooting coloured bubbles onto a pulley and grouping three or more of the same kind together in order to burst them. You must also make sure that the two sections of the pulley are well balanced or you will soon be crushed. The two-player option allows you to play against the computer, in a race to keep your bubble count down, while trying to increase your opponents. There are four difficulty levels on the demo, so there should be plenty of fun here to tease you.

Controls: Keyboard
Aim: Arrow keys
Fire: Z

ON THE CD ONLINE

Utilities to make the Net that little bit more accessible

Gamespy 3D v2.19 (New Version)
Finds the fastest game servers.

Neotrace 2.12a (New Version)
A graphical traceroute.

PingTool 2.6a
Helps you find online game servers.

FreeUK
Sign-up files for this free ISP.

DUN Manager 2.0a (New Version)
Simplify and enhance Dial-Up Networking and Remote Access Services.

FTP Explorer 1.0010
Explorer-style FTP service.

GetRight 4.1.2
Salvage broken downloads and more.

MIRC 5.7 (New version)
Internet Relay Chat software.

Mplayer
Excellent free online gaming software.

Kali95 1.68
Client software for games on the Net.

ICQ ver99b v3.19 beta Build #2569
World's best online chat package.

Roger Wilco Mk1.1a
A virtual walkie-talkie app that runs with your favourite multiplayer games.

ON THE CD UTILITIES

Make your life easier with these excellent utilities

WinZip 7.0 SR-1
Windows 95 and NT version of WinZip.

EzDesk 1.8
Saves the position of your Desktop.

PowerToys
Useful add-ons for your Desktop.

TreeSize Professional v2.2
A powerful and flexible hard disk space manager.

Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.05
Reader for documents distributed in *Adobe Acrobat* format.

Hypersnap-DX Pro 3.55.00 (New Version!)
Screen-capture even in DirectX/Direct3D or 3dfx Glide modes.

SciTech Display Doctor v6.53
The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

Windows Media Player
Play the Web's coolest audio and video with Windows Media Player.

What's wrong, too yellow to overtake me?

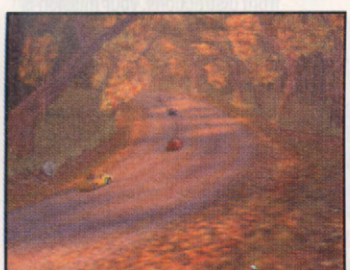
NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000

EA

Buckle up and rev those engines in EA's latest *Need For Speed* title, *Porsche 2000*. This is the US version of the game, which is called *Need For Speed Porsche Unleashed*. However, although the name is different, the content of this demo is exactly the same as the UK release, so rest assured, you won't be missing out on anything.

Take control of a Porsche 911 Carrera Coupe 993 and race around the Normandy track, a relatively simple circuit, which will help you get the hang of handling your car. You can race between one and seven opponents, on three different difficulty levels. After choosing between manual and automatic gears, and one of four racing viewpoints, it's time to race. The handling of the car feels realistic and the sense of speed created by the game engine is top notch. Power slides, handbrake turns and daring overtaking manoeuvres make *Need For Speed Porsche 2000* a racer full of action and excitement, one which should be played by every racing fan. For a full insight into the game, head to page 75 and read our review.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad/steering wheel



Contrary to what this screenshot suggests, races never end up being processions.

Oooh, the fun that can be had with a welder and a couple of Porsches.

ON THE CD EXTENDED PLAY

A whole host of *Pharaoh* maps for you to master (see Page 154 for details), the *Unreal Tournament Bonus Pack* and the latest Beta version of *Counter-Strike*

Unreal Tournament Bonus Pack
This pack, produced by Epic, provides you with some new skins, power ups and 11 new levels.

Counter-Strike Beta 6.1
A counter terrorism *Half-Life* mod.

Go get 'em sista. Now that's girl power.

ON THE CD PATCHES

More patches for some of your favourite games. See the CD browser for explanations on what each one does

Age Of Wonders v1.36
AMA Superbike v1.5
Battlezone II v1.1
Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun v2.02
Carnivores 2 v2.07
Delta Force 2 v1.06.14
Dirt Track Racing v1.03
Falcon 4 v1.08
Fly! V1.01
Force Commander v1.1
Triple Play 2001 v1.0
Unreal Tournament 413
Gruntz v1.01
Heroes of Might & Magic III v1.3
Heroes of Might & Magic III: The Shadow Of Death v3.1
Majesty Update #1
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit
Need For Speed: High Stakes v4.43
Nerf Arena Blast v1.2
Pandora's Box v1.0a
Quake III Arena v1.16n
Revenant v1.2e
Septerra Core v1.02
Starfleet Command v1.03
The Settlers III v1.38 or less to v1.58
The Settlers III v1.5 or above to v1.58

ON THE CD EDITORIAL

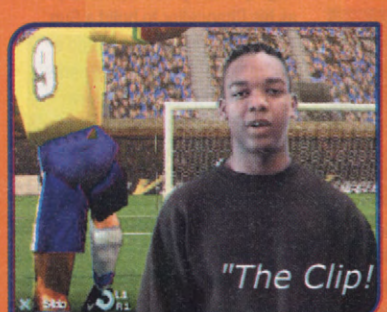
A rolling *Evil Dead* demo, lots of tips for lots of games and a *Championship Manager 99/00* Season Update

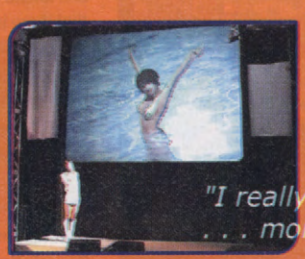
Hot Shots: Evil Dead
It was far scarier when you were ten. (Requires Quick Time)

Tips And Solutions
Handy hints and top tips on all your fave games. Well, most of them.

Championship Manager 99/00 Season Update
Latest transfers, updates and all the rest.

Clip!
gameswire.com





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EXTENDED PLAY

Just as the Pharaohs to used throw jewels at poor people, we generous peeps at *PC ZONE* like nothing more than to throw software at our readers. Well, sort of...

WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF

On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 150.

PHARAOH

The Pharaohs were around for some 3,000 years, or about the average length of time it takes Westwood to come up with a duff *Command & Conquer* sequel.

The three great pyramids at Giza were built over 4,000 years ago, and are home to the mummified remains of Khufu, Khafre and Khazi. Or so we're told. But Egypt wasn't all about building stone polyhedrons, persecuting slaves and pulling people's brains out on hooks – they did sensible things too, like rubbing themselves in ointments made from dead cats.

Interestingly, society back then didn't have money, and instead used nuggets of copper on scales to balance traded goods. So if the local medicine man wanted to push little Tibbles into his Ancient Egyptian blender and turn its innards into a tub of pile cream, he'd have to give you something of equal weight – a tub of pile cream, for example. Confusing, eh?

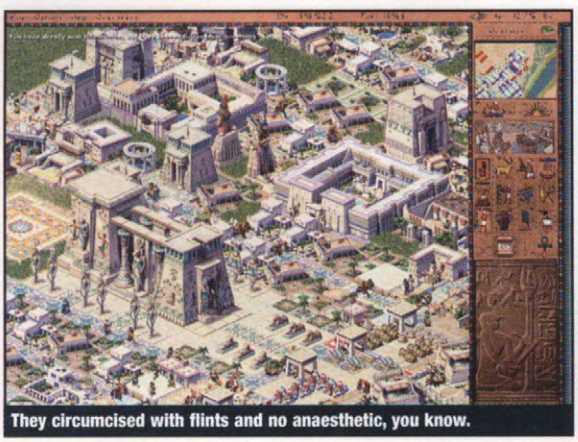
Pharaoh the computer game doesn't go into quite as much detail about the history and culture of Egypt, nor does it mention haemorrhoid ointment, but it does conjure the right kind of atmosphere from the outset, with the title's opening credits deeply reminiscent of last year's underrated swashbuckler, *The Mummy*. If you liked the look and feel of the movie, you're sure to like *Pharaoh*, and you'll like it even more with the following bazaar of maps, scenarios, and other assorted goodies.

BRIDGES

(impressions-bridges.exe)
Description: Things are tight on time with the Pharaoh sending in troops unless you build an obelisk – sharpish. Plenty of resources, but you need to be careful with your road building in order to make sure your housing strategy works.
Rating:

EMPIRE

(impressions-empire.exe)
Description: Here you're in charge of a number of thriving cities, which provide you with the raw materials to construct an attractive Pyramid Complex. Help the city dwellers out when things go wrong, build the giant stone monuments and generally make your capital city the envy of all your rivals.
Rating:



They circumcised with flints and no anaesthetic, you know.

HENEN-NESW

(impressions-henen-nesw.exe)
Description: Knock up a city full to the brim with 10,000 inhabitants. Chalk up a prosperity rating of 70, a culture rating of 60, and a kingdom rating of 100. Build a fine palace, two pyramids, three monuments and a mausoleum. Tough stuff.
Rating:

SHAAT

(impressions-shaat.exe)
Description: A small outpost at Shaat faces attack by bandits. You've been selected by the Pharaoh to strengthen the post and defeat the invaders. Only then can Shaat thrive as it should. This assignment drags on a bit, but offers a serious challenge nonetheless.
Rating:

SMALL OASIS

(impressions-smalloasis.exe)
Description: Build a prosperous city around the Farafra Oasis. You'll need to please the Pharaoh with a kingdom rating of 70, a culture rating of 25 and a prosperity rating of 60 before the game is won. You'll also need close to 5,000 residents, together with an obelisk and large and small Mastabas.
Rating:

ISLAND VILLAGE

(hall-islandvillage.zip)
Description: Eight thousand Db in your pocket, a fertile landscape and ample fishing hide the fact that there is no granite and no local traders. The only way to succeed is by harvesting pretty much all the surrounding wildlife. A tough assignment.
Rating:

QADESH

(heitmann-qadesh.zip)
Description: Establish a rich and cultured city with 2,800 inhabitants at a small Oasis in the Sinai Desert. You will need to raise a large army to defeat the Kushite Empire and to defend neighbouring Egyptian cities. You must build obelisks, both large and small, plus a small pyramid and a large stock of burial goods. Being hemmed in at the Oasis is a serious crimp on rapid expansion, but it does make for good tactical play.
Rating:

GRAND KNOSSOS

(linden-grandknossos.zip)
Description: Exactly as the accompanying text file says, Grand Knossos is the ideal mission for people who like massive play areas, big populations, lots of military action, trading and requests, all mixed up with a little monument construction. Simplistic stuff that works a treat.
Rating:

PYRAMID OASIS

(mccloud-pyramid-oasis.zip)
Description: Khufu, he of the mighty Giza Pyramids, wants you as his Chancellor to build a Sun Temple, a Grand Pyramid and a Grand Pyramid complex. Seems the old fellow has come down with a spot of the plague and won't be hanging around too much longer, and so needs a burial chamber pronto.
Rating:

FESTIVAL CHALLENGE

(moquel-festive.zip)
Description: Throughout this scenario you're badgered with requests for festivals – hence the name. If you're asked to host a Festival for Seth, and you screw up, you end up being invaded. If it's a Festival for Osiris, and you make a boo-boo, you end up under 60ft of floodwater. And if it's Ra and Ptah you displease, things are pretty much over. Aside from distractions, your mission is to build 12 stately manors, two obelisks, *and* have 10,000 people in the city.
Rating:

CRETE HARBOR

(octavian2-crete-harbor.zip)
Description: Egypt is under threat from a powerful navy. It's your duty to establish a stronghold and then defeat the sea people's navy on the island of Crete. You'll need a sky-high culture rating before any of the locals decide to join you. You must help neighbouring cities defend their borders, collect food, *and* you must erect a mausoleum. A real challenge.
Rating:

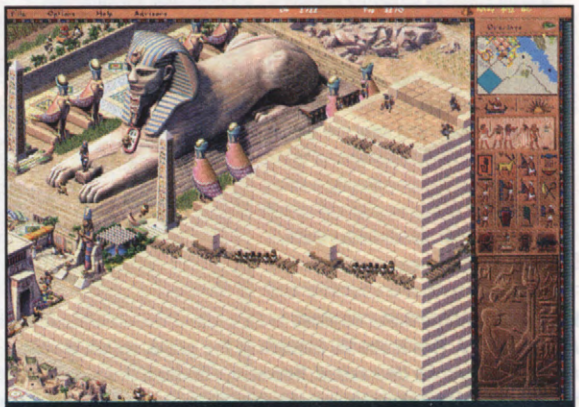
FORT KHMUN

(octavian2-fortkhmun.zip)
Description: The Hyksos are invading, with all manner of new-fangled weaponry. It's up to you to build a city with 10,000 people, two large obelisks and a Mastaba. The idea is to put up a big show of strength and hopefully stall the

NET ADDRESSES

BOOKMARKS

Pharaoh Home Page www.pharaoh1.com
Sidgames www.sidgames.com/pharaoh
Heaven Games pharaoh.heavengames.com
Counter Strike Home Page www.counter-strike.net



Is a sphincter a man who makes sphinxes?

enemy while your Pharaoh builds an army to match them.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ A BLANK CHEQUE
(reck-blankcheque.zip)
If you ever wanted to start with a clean slate and bags of money, this is the map for you: 50,000 in the bank, plus a backup load of nearly 100,000. There's also a whole bunch of gold seams available for mining. You can build every Pharaoh structure, including all military-related toys. Fun, in a silly sort of way.
Rating: ★★★☆☆

★ STONE
(tut-stone.zip)
Description: Taking 12 years to complete, you need three large obelisks within your prospering city to win the game, and must pay heed to the requests for stone. Plenty of birds strutting around the landscape provide food for the population.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ EXPANSION PACK
(PharaohEnhancementPack.exe)
Description: The *Pharaoh Expansion Pack* updates your game to version 1.1, adds a bundle of new maps (some of them listed above), bolts on a few new features, and fixes a number of silly bugs. Those of you running Windows 2000 will be able to hear sound, and the annoying glitch where the game used to lock solid when units were boarding a landing craft has been ironed out. The accompanying documentation mentions that "some of the missions have been tweaked to make them more playable", but it fails to mention which ones. Bah.

COUNTER-STRIKE
This free and wonderful *Half-Life* multiplayer add-on has taken the online gaming community by storm (see Online Diary, page 30). It's also won the Gameplay award for Best Online Multiplayer Game (*PC ZONE* Awards, page 42).

THE LEVELS

★ 747
BSP Name: cs_747.bsp
Terrorists: Stop the Counter-Terrorist team from freeing the hostages.
Counter-Terrorists: Infiltrate the plane and free the remaining hostages from the Terrorists who are holding them.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

★ SUPPLY STATION ASSAULT
BSP Name: cs_assault
Terrorists: Stop the Counter-Terrorist team from freeing the hostages.
Counter-Terrorists: Free all four hostages from the Terrorists who are holding them. Avoid the cameras.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ BACKALLEY
BSP Name: cs_backalley
Terrorists: Eliminate the Counter-Terrorist force before they free any hostages.
Counter-Terrorists: Infiltrate the Terrorist stronghold and escort the hostages to the rescue zone. Take out the Terrorists without jeopardising the hostages.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ DOCKS
BSP Name: cs_docks
Terrorists: Stop the Counter-Terrorist force from freeing the hostages.
Counter-Terrorists: Free the hostages. Take out the Terrorists without jeopardising the hostages.
Rating: ★★★★☆

★ DUST
BSP Name: de_dust
Terrorists: The Terrorist carrying the C4 must destroy one of the chemical weapon stashes.
Counter-Terrorists: Prevent Terrorists from bombing chemical weapon crates. Defuse any bombs that you find.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ THE COBRA'S FANG
BSP Name: de_fang
Terrorists: The Terrorist carrying the C4 must destroy the warheads or the carrier substance stored in sealed crates.
Counter-Terrorists: Prevent Terrorists from bombing the biological weapons. Defuse any bombs that you find.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ FRANTIC
BSP Name: es_frantic
Terrorists: Get topside immediately and get the hell out of the subway tunnels.
Counter-Terrorists: Enter the subway tunnels and eliminate the Terrorist group. Do not let them get to the streets.
Rating: ★★★☆☆

★ JAIL
BSP Name: es_jail
Terrorists: Escape from the jail.
Counter-Terrorists: Prevent the Terrorists from escaping.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

★ MILITIA
TOP MAP
BSP Name: cs_militia
Terrorists: Prevent Counter-Terrorist force from freeing the hostages.
Counter-Terrorists: Enter the Weaver Compound to free the hostages. Take out the Terrorists without jeopardising the hostages.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ NUKE
BSP Name: de_nuke
Terrorists: The Terrorist who is carrying the C4 must destroy the nuclear missile.
Counter-Terrorists: Prevent Terrorists from bombing the nuclear missile. Team members must defuse any bombs that threaten targeted areas.
Rating: ★★★★☆

★ OIL RIG
BSP Name: as_oilrig
Terrorists: Eliminate the VIP.
Counter-Terrorists: Protect the VIP at all costs. Escort him topside to the apache.
Rating: ★★★★☆

★ PRODIGY
BSP Name: de_prodigy
Terrorists: The Terrorist carrying the C4 must destroy one of the targets.
Counter-Terrorists: Prevent Terrorists from bombing the computer lab or the fuel pipeline control room. Team members must defuse any bombs that threaten targeted areas.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ RAILROAD
BSP Name: de_railroad
Terrorists: The Terrorist carrying the C4 must destroy the train or the bridge.
Counter-Terrorists: Prevent Terrorists from bombing the train or the bridge. Team members must defuse any bombs that threaten targeted areas.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

★ RIVERSIDE
BSP Name: as_riverside
Terrorists: Eliminate the VIP and prevent him from reaching the safety zones.
Counter-Terrorists: Escort the VIP to one of two safety zones where jeeps are waiting. Team members must always protect the VIP.
Rating: ★★★★☆

★ CANYON SIEGE
BSP Name: cs_siege
Terrorists: Stop the Counter-Terrorist force freeing the hostages from the POW stronghold.
Counter-Terrorists: Enter the stronghold and free the hostages. Take out the Terrorists without jeopardising the hostages.
Rating: ★★★★★

★ TRAIN
BSP Name: de_train
Terrorists: The Terrorist who is carrying the C4 must destroy one of the payloads.
Counter-Terrorists: Prevent Terrorists from bombing the nuclear payloads on two trains. Team members must defuse any bombs that threaten the payloads.
Rating: ★★★★☆

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

We find some more unsuspecting victims to tell us what they're playing at the moment

VENUE HMV – Oxford Circus, London **YOUR HOST** Martin Korda

NEIL MILLER
Works at Comet

What's on your hard drive?
"*SWAT 3*, Sierra games and *Leisure Suit Larry*."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"Any of the *Leisure Suit Larry* games."
Ha ha ha ha ha, good one, but *really*, what are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"As I said, any of the *Leisure Suit Larry* games."
OK then, right... moving on swiftly.

TOM LOKOCINSKI
Student

What's on your hard drive?
"*Quake II*."
What games are you really looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"*Unreal Tournament*. I'm not going to bother with *Quake III* though, I think *UT* is definitely a better game."
Are PC games becoming too violent?
"Not at all. I think they're just really good for helping to release some of that built-up aggression."

AASMUNB KALBESTAV
Student

What's on your hard drive?
"*Hidden & Dangerous*, *Falcon 4*, *Flight Unlimited* and *Populous: The Beginning*."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"Any good new flight sims, and first/third-person shooters."
What's your reaction to professional gaming?
"Chess is a game and a sport, so why not. Games are getting very clever, so why shouldn't you have competitions with them?"

GEVIN STADU
Trainee Analyst Programmer

What's on your hard drive?
"*Caesar 3*, *Baldur's Gate* and *Wing Commander* games."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"*Shogun*. It's got everything. Battle and strategy elements, and also a good historical aspect."
Is a good story line important in a game. What does it add?
"Yeah, story line's important, but depth is even more important. Otherwise games can become a little childish."

QUANG PHAN
Student

What's on your hard drive?
"I'm replaying *Ripper* and *Phantasmagoria* – a bit embarrassing I know."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"I'm actually here to buy *Curse Of Monkey Island*, I've been waiting to play it for a year now."
Adventure games, dead or Alive?
"I think they're knackered. *Monkey Island* is the only really good adventure game I've ever played. Its humour makes it refreshing to play."

ASHLEY JONES
Consultant

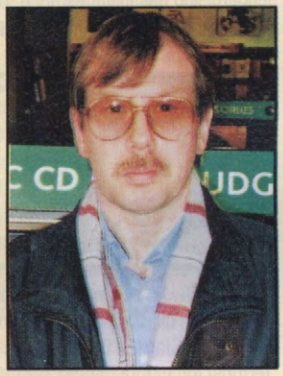
What's on your hard drive?
"*Half Life: Opposing Force*. It's as good as the original, but I think it's unfortunate that it's so short."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"*Quake III*. I still want to play *Aliens Vs Predator* too."
What's the scariest game you've ever played, and why?
"*Quake*. It was dark and relied on shocks to make it scary. These days games tend to concentrate on speed and action and lose the plot when it comes to shocking you."

ROB MACDONALD
Civil Servant

What's on your hard drive?
"*Close Combat 3*, *Call To Power*, *SimCity 3000*, *Planescape: Torment*."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"*Imperium Galactica 2* and *Majesty*."
Can you think of a sequel to a computer game which was inferior to the original?
"Nothing specific, but in regards to games built on similar themes, there have been some atrocious ones, like those *WarCraft* clones."

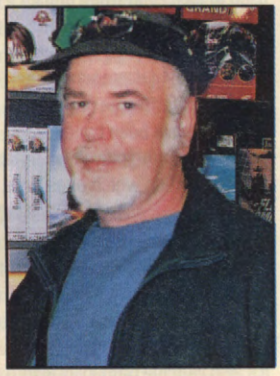
ANDREW FIELDHOUSE
Dispatch Supervisor

What's on your hard drive?
"*Jedi Knight* and *Aliens Vs Predator*."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"*Tiberian Sun*. I have the others, and I want to complete the series."
***Shogun* will have thousands of units on screen. Is this the way forward, or will it be confusing?**
"Confusing at first, but people will get used to it after a while. I'd definitely be interested in playing it in the future."



PETE GORMAN
Royal Mail Worker

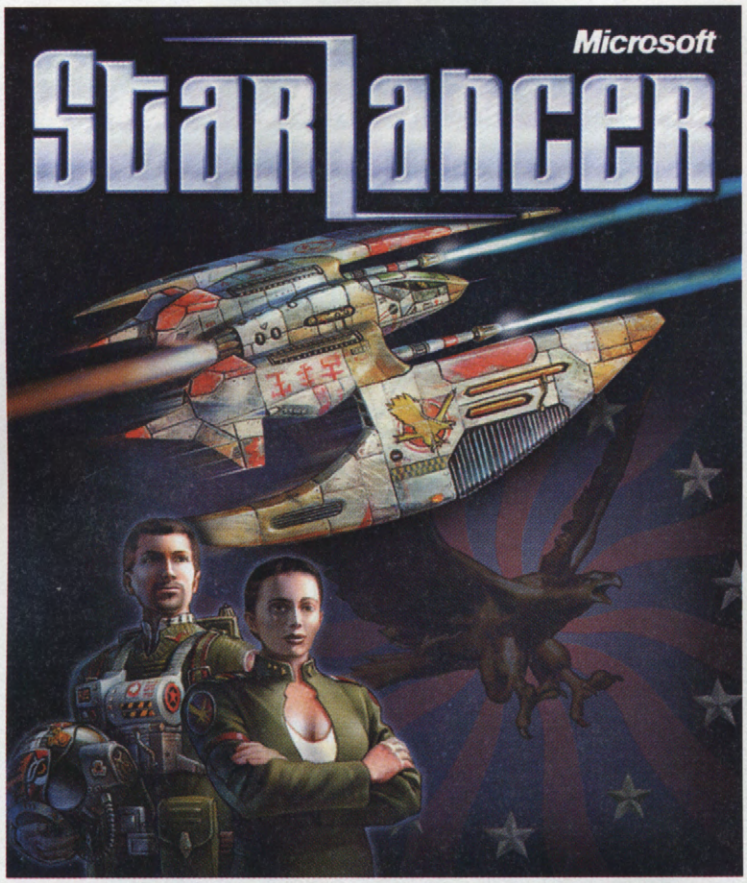
What's on your hard drive?
"*Tomb Raider 4*."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"*Unreal Tournament*. I'm quite looking forward to *Quake III* as well. *UT* will be better. From what I've seen of *Quake III*, it looks like being more of the same."
Pamela Anderson is set to feature in her own *Tomb Raider*-style game. Who's sexier, her or Lara Croft?
"I would have to say Pamela Anderson."



JOHN HARTE
Garage and Diving shop owner

What's on your hard drive?
"*Tomb Raider* and a couple of older games."
What are you looking forward to having on your hard drive?
"My wife wants to play *Civilization*. I'd like to find an underwater version of *Tomb Raider*."
An underwater platform game, the man's a genius. On that bombshell, I'm going to get out of here before it all goes horribly wrong.

god speed to you all



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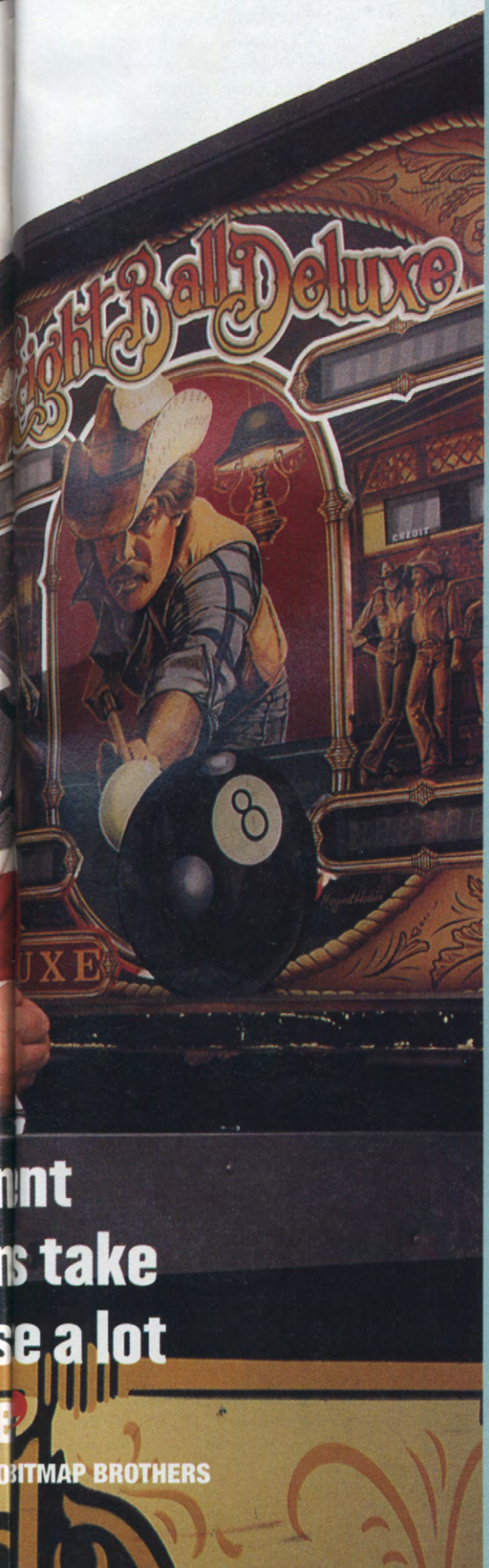
THE WORLD ACCORDING TO...

"It's very hard to be indepe
these days, financially. Ga
a lot longer now, the team
bigger, the risks are great

MIKE MONTGOMERY, MANAGING DIRECTOR

THE BITMAP BROTHERS



They're 16-bit heroes and the founders of the Britsoft movement. *Paul Presley* journeys to Wapping to meet the last of the 'pop star' programmers

Oh yeah, The Bitmap Brothers. Whatever happened to them? My flatmate still has a boxed copy of *Speedball*, the seminal Amiga sporting title, on his shelf somewhere. The Amiga itself has long since gone, but everyone (and I mean *everyone*) still has fond memories of that title. In those good old 16-bit days, when gaming was still the bedroom hobby of nerds and geeks, The Bitmap Brothers were the closest thing we had to cool. Magazine interviews always featured 'moody' black and white head shots of the team, the games usually featured music by pop stars of the day (Betty Boo, for instance) and some of us even thought they were real brothers. Not me, of course. Ahem.

Since the death of the Amiga they've had a lower profile than even they would probably have liked. Their PC library has pretty much consisted of the RTS title *Z* and, er, the *Z* Expansion Pack. Now with *Z2* and an impressive-looking PlayStation update of *Speedball* on the way, we caught up with managing director Mike Montgomery and three of the *Z2* team to chat about the old days...

What are your fondest memories of those good old 16-bit days?

Steve Kelly (lead programmer): Damn good games that took nine months to write instead of two years. And a lot of them. A lot of variation, as opposed to recently. There's not as much originality any more. They didn't cost as much back then either, which gave us a lot more freedom to establish new ideas. It's not as easy any more.

Mike Montgomery (managing director): We concentrated on gameplay more than we concentrated on the rest of the stuff. In some respects that's probably what's missing from certain games nowadays.

Jamie Barber (lead level designer): There are exceptions with things like *Half-Life*, obviously.

John Kershaw (head of art): I just think there were more ideas around then, more innovative gameplay. These days it's about mass market appeal, what will sell for the publishers.

Mike: It's perceived value. We saw something similar when we went from the Sinclair Spectrum to the Amiga. There were a few games by Psygnosis that were just showing off the machine. Like *Shadow Of The Beast*, or what was that Cinemaware one?

Jamie: *Defender Of The Crown*.

Mike: Yeah. In some circumstances we're seeing that now. There's a lot of 'Cinemaware' type games around today.

What sort of titles spring to mind?

Steve: (*Laughs*) Difficult one to say because we don't really play them.

Jamie: I suppose the contentious one would be *Homeworld*. As much as I admire it as a game – I really enjoyed playing it all the way through – it's pretty shallow, pretty simplistic for what it was. It worked though. It was successful by its simplicity. It's an audio/visual masterpiece, almost cinematic.

How has the industry changed over the years?

Mike: (*Laughs*) It's come out of bedrooms and into offices.

Steve: And from offices to corporations.

Mike: Yeah, there are a lot of suits around now. A lot of companies are being run by accountants instead of creative people.

Has this been a good thing?

John: They tend not to understand the creative side of things and what people are trying to achieve with their games. They just see it as a money-making exercise and what they can do for their shareholders.

Steve: That's the crux of it, isn't it? Big companies have to report to their shareholders every quarter. That's all they care about.

Do you feel you've gained by staying independent?

Mike: I don't know if we've necessarily gained by it, but we certainly haven't lost anything. It's very hard to be independent these days, financially. Games take a lot longer now, the teams are a lot bigger, the risks are greater.

OLDER AND WISER

Back in the 16-bit days, you guys were perhaps best known for having the 'pop star' image. Whatever became of that?

Steve: (*Laughs*) We grew up and had kids.

Mike: That's the thing. Everyone sort of perceived us as pop stars, but I don't think we perceived ourselves that way. We enjoyed ourselves, certainly, and I think we did a lot for the industry as developers. We were one of the main contributors in getting the attention focused on the developers rather than the publishers. It's similar to the old argument that you don't buy an EMI record, you buy a Michael Jackson record. That's what we tried to promote in the early stages. And still do.

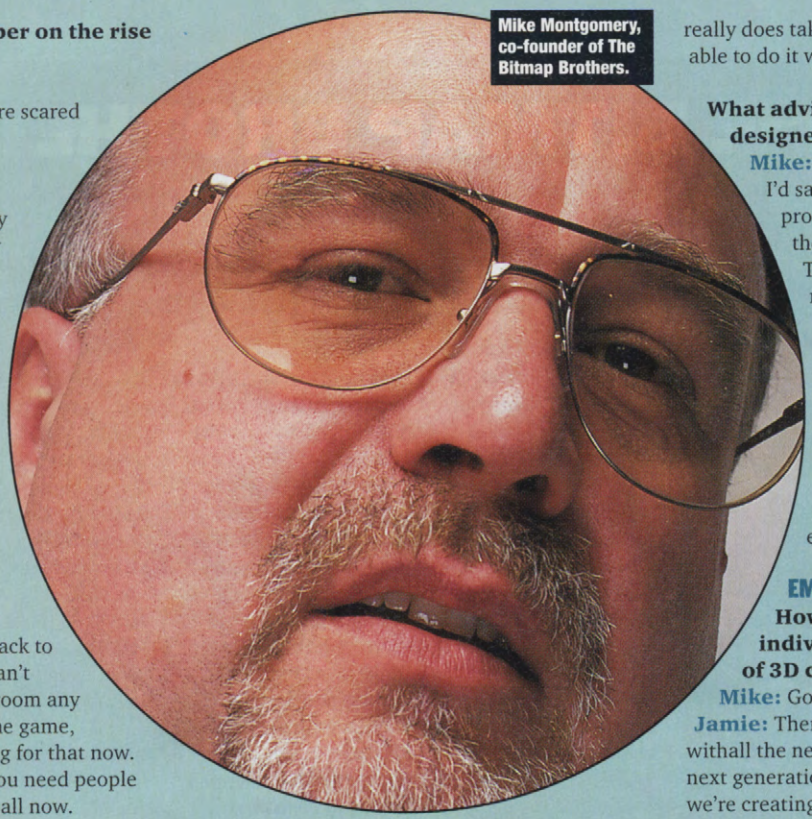
Steve: From day one it was written in the contract that our name, The Bitmap Brothers, went on the box, that we had to be involved in all the press, that we'd do our own publicity photographs. We were very strong on that, just because we wanted to be identified with the games we were writing. Because we were proud of them. We didn't see ourselves as being stars, we just wanted to be recognised for our work.

Jamie: We have problems nowadays getting our logo on the boxes. There are people sitting in publishers' offices saying: "Well why should *they* have their name on it?"

Isn't the image of the developer on the rise again though?
John: Only in very recent times.
Mike: I think a lot of publishers are scared of developers getting too big.
Jamie: Yeah, it undermines their authority.
John: Take EA. They own so many franchises. If a name gets big, they buy it. That's all they do.

How do you stop things becoming too business-like here?
Mike: I don't know really. We just try to be a bit more professional, but keep it fun in a way. We're still quite relaxed. At times anyway.

Do you still feel like The Bitmap Brothers of old?
Mike: No. We have become more professional. It'd be wrong to go back to the old way of doing things. You can't have one person sitting in his bedroom any more, doing the graphics, doing the game, doing the sound. Things are too big for that now. Technology has grown so much. You need people and you need tools to cope with it all now.

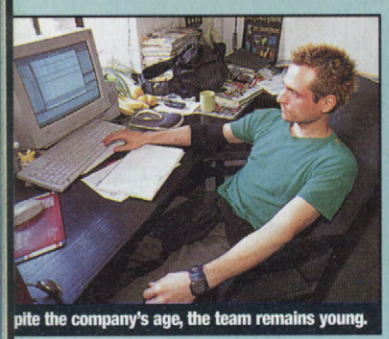

Mike Montgomery, co-founder of The Bitmap Brothers.

really does take a certain kind of person to be able to do it well.

What advice would you give a budding designer?
Mike: (*Laughs*) Hmm... for programmers I'd say that if you haven't got into programming by the time you're 14, then forget it. Maybe that's a bit harsh. There are always exceptions to the rule. The majority of programmers in here are naturals, although they started very young. I didn't of course. I was young in the industry, but not as a person. Learning at a young age is important though.
Jamie: Another thing that's important is actually playing the games. Not just one type of game either, but all of them.

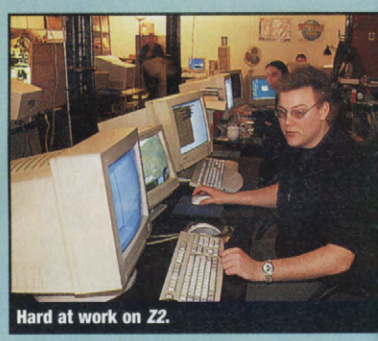
EMOTIONALLY CHARGED

How do you maintain your individual identity in these days of 3D cards?
Mike: Go back to cartoons.
Jamie: There's a problem at the moment, withall the new consoles coming out and the next generation of 3D cards on the PC, in that we're creating graphics that are almost lifelike, very realistic. Once we reach that, all games


pite the company's age, the team remains young.

The offices may look spartan...

... but it's still a creative environment.


Hard at work on *Z2*.

The Mod community has kind of replaced that bedroom programmer role now...
Jamie: With *Z2* specifically we're hoping to release the editor with it. It's the same tool we used to design and create the levels and hopefully they'll be able to come up with stuff as well.
Steve: It's one really encouraging area of the industry, the mod scene. Five years ago you just couldn't do this in your bedroom anymore and there was no way for a 14-year-old to get started. Now, because of games such as *Quake* and *Half-Life*, where you can just pick up the editor and get going on writing a level and putting it on the Internet, it's encouraging to them and gets them noticed.

They almost serve as interactive CVs for them...
Steve: It's great knowing that there's a new breed of game designer out there, and that out of the thousands doing it four or five superb people will get picked up.
Will you be actively encouraging them with Z2's editor or do you think you'll just be leaving them to it?
Jamie: We'll be doing what we can. Just releasing it is one thing, but we'll be supporting it all the way through. Giving walkthroughs and so on. Doing whatever we can. We'll be encouraging the online community that way as well. It works both ways. We'll encourage them and hopefully that will in turn encourage other people to play it.
Mike: I think that what's important is to get longevity out of a product. There are sales for us, obviously. But as a gamer, if you're paying 30-odd quid or however much for a game, you should expect to get a decent number of hours out of it. So anything you can do to get more hours out of a game is good and if that means helping people to sit down and design their own levels, then that's fine.
Do you relish closer contact with the gamers themselves?
Steve: (*Laughs*) I dunno, there are some strange people out there.
Mike: I'm sorry to say this, but I think almost every one of them wants to be a game designer and actually it's a very hard thing to do. It really does take a certain kind of person to be able to do it well.

"As a gamer, if you're paying 30-odd quid or however much for a game, you should expect to get a decent number of hours out of it"
MIKE MONTGOMERY, BITMAP BROTHERS

What do you put this down to?
Mike: Lack of experience, probably. They don't have enough to be able to step back and say, "Hang on a minute, is there another way of doing this?" Yes, it's 3D, but couldn't they do something that looks nice instead of stupid and out of place? Games are about escapism, they don't have to look real. That's where some games go wrong, in trying to look to faithful to the real world. Something can are going to look the same.
John: The thing that'll make a difference is direction, as in cinema. Different directors may use the same actors, but they'll get very different results.
Mike: One thing about these 3D games, certainly with regard to landscapes, is that the designers get reference material that's out there and scan it in. That's a big mistake, as it often looks awful, and there are a lot of games out there like that.

be made to feel real and make the player believe he's in this game world without having to be a highly realistic scanned image. Sadly, many games are relying on scanned-in textures, which is why you get half a dozen games that all look very similar.

The counter argument is that the more realistic you can make a world, the more a player is going to be able to completely lose himself in it...

way is to try and make a place that doesn't exist and captivate them in that.

Another aspect to your games is the humour. Why is it so hard to get good comedy in games?

Steve: Because so many of them come from America.

Everyone: (*Laughs*)

Mike: I was about to say programmers don't have a sense of humour, but he's just proved me wrong.

Jamie: That's not fair though. LucasArts does it well. Its games have been thoroughly entertaining.

Steve: Those old Sierra games were superb as well. They were really funny. It goes back to taking risks though. You have to take a chance that a section of the audience just won't find it funny at all.

What's stopping us reaching that level? Natural British reserve?

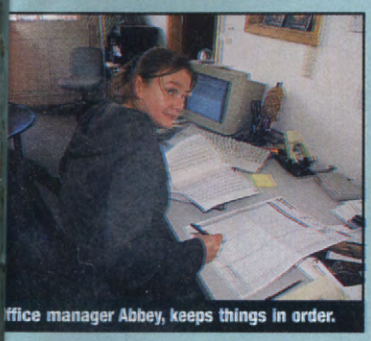
Jamie: Maybe we just don't try. We've probably reached a point now where people have sat there and thought about it and realised that we can actually portray a bit more emotional content.

Jamie Barber, lead level designer on *Z2*.

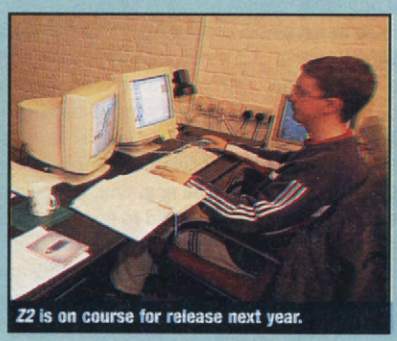
> **"Bigger corporations are just interested in getting the boxes out there and making as much money as possible"**
>
> **JOHN KERSHAW, HEAD OF ART**

Steve: Thing is, you can make games ultra-realistic, but if you make, say, a Formula One racing game that's ultra-realistic it'll be as dull as dishwater. Or if you do a war game it could take you two weeks to get your troops up to the front line. Real life is intrinsically boring.

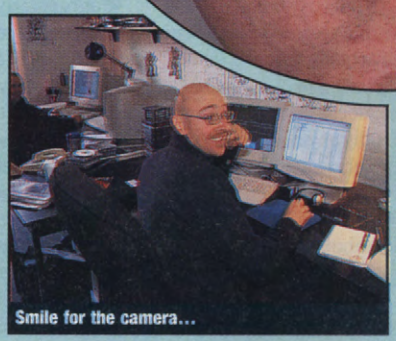
Mike: If you say you're trying to create the real world, the player will buy the game and expect to get the real world. He'll expect everything to look exactly as it does in real life. You can't always achieve that because of technological limitations. So straight away you have to try and steer clear of that kind of claim and that's where so many mistakes are being made. It's either going to look awful or it's going to chug horribly. The best



ffice manager Abbey, keeps things in order.



Z2 is on course for release next year.



Smile for the camera...

Speedball 2100 may or may not make it to PC

John Kershaw, *Z2*'s chief artist.

How about other emotional involvement?

Mike: We can get fear into games right now. The range of things you can do with sound and the screen at the moment can create a really tense atmosphere.

Steve: Like *Hidden & Dangerous*. That created an amazing atmosphere with just rain and the silence.

Mike: The Japanese are good at putting emotion into games. Take the *Final Fantasy* games for instance.

Jamie: I think that's why they look down on the rest of the world game-wise. As far as they're concerned we just don't understand what makes a good game as they've always tried to put a range of emotions into them. And they've done this by not necessarily making it a cinematic experience. They don't always aim to make you feel tense or fearful, but they do try to make you feel elation.

John: Bigger corporations are just interested in getting the boxes out there and making as much money as possible, whereas Japanese firms tend to have two or three smaller teams working on the same title and everything is then channelled back into the one game and they go with whatever works. They also have far greater levels of creativity and it's treated more like an art than a product. It's treated like a film, like something beautiful.

Steve: It must be possible to get more emotion in games. People do it with movies, you can watch a film and cry your bloody eyes out. There's no reason on Earth why you shouldn't do that with a game.

As I leave I can't help but have a quick go on the latest build of *Speedball 2100*. The decision to convert it to the PC has not yet been made. The Bitmaps are in two minds about it, even though the public pressure for them to do it is overwhelming. What I saw of the PlayStation version was enough to make me say they should go for it. I barely had the gamepad in my hands for ten seconds yet it felt as natural and as playable as the original, all those years ago. Various websites are holding straw polls and forming petitions to get them to say yes, so if you're interested get out there and make your voice heard. PCZ

TEAMTALK

What goes on in the dark and putrid dungeon that is the *PC ZONE* office? Who is the king of network fragging? We reveal all this and much more

CIVILISED GAMER Mark Hill

Unreal Tournament's single player game and co-operative modes are undoubtedly brilliant, and *Counter-Strike* may be more brain-challenging, but when it comes to sheer office carnage nothing beats *Quake III Arena*.

If you were to walk into the basement where we live any time between 12 and 2pm, chances are you'll see one of us raising our arms and proclaiming: "It's lunch time." This is usually followed by the thunderous double pounding that announces *Quake III* to the world. As soon as a *QIII* deathmatch begins, everyone drops what they're doing. Documents are hastily saved, Webpages bookmarked and other games closed down in one swift action.

In the meantime, everyone can already hear whoever has started the game up (usually Dave or myself) running around the map picking up all the weapons, armour and power-ups while saying: "I'm not moving, I'm not moving. Still not moving." Said person is then branded a cheat – especially when he's got six frags within the first minute.

I AM THE MASTER

So who is *ZONE*'s frag-meister? Well, it's usually Mr Woods (aka kid_unknown), who loves nothing more than to chuckle quietly as he picks off his opponents from a distance. But his status isn't quite as godly as it was in December, when we all starting playing on a regular basis. Richie (aka 'anything he can think of') and me (aka Leatherface) are locked into a battle for second place, although we get more than our fair share of wins.

Martin (aka Nameless One) is growing in confidence and sneaks a victory now and again. And Chris (aka Unholy), who until recently refused to play, claiming he was too good and didn't want to embarrass anyone, has now come clean and shown his true colours (ie he's not very good).

However, he has now progressed from the stationary 'looking at the ceiling' posture that had him mowed down to a pulp of splattered flesh within seconds of respawning, to actually shooting while moving and dodging rockets. He doesn't even swear very loudly anymore whenever he accidentally picks up the railgun. He's even been known to kill someone with it, although as a rule he favours a shotgun.

Martin usually runs out of ammo straight away and chases everyone in a mad attempt to humiliate them. The general agreement is that he succeeds far too often. He's also been accused of moving "illogically", thus making him very hard to hit. The cheek.

Hired hand David McCandless (aka Macca, aka The Master) is often seen walking into the office, demanding a match so he can show us just how unworthy we are. Our favourite map for these occasions is DM17, which is the only one we can beat him at regularly, if only because we've played it so much we know it backwards.

But, as you can imagine, *Quake* isn't the only game we play in the office. There's nothing better than a big *UT* CTF with people from offices all over the building joining in, proving you don't need to be in the same room as someone else to hurl streams of abuse at them.

Dave at the bottom? It must be rigged.

IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

Is it any wonder that when we get home we need to get away from all this senseless violence and play something peaceful and serene like, er..., *Soldier Of Fortune*?

Well, at least that's what Charlie and Mallo do. Despite all his protestations about the game being sick and wrong, Charlie's twisted mind can't tear itself away from the constant mutilations and general unpleasantness of *SoF*. His only defence is that "it's very, very funny".

Mallo shares the amusement, but takes a more down-to-earth view, comparing *SoF* with the bloody massacre of *Saving Private Ryan*'s first half hour, as a lesson in just how horrid real violence can be. He also sees it mainly as a therapeutic activity.

Kid_unknown favours a traditional skin.

As for me, I was dithering between its entertainment value and its unnecessary cruelty until I reached the end of a level that, for some reason, wouldn't take me to the next one. I discovered I needed to go back and kill all the soldiers who I'd left wounded, cowering and defenceless, begging for their lives. Call me civilised, if you like, but that is just wrong.

Leatherface wishes his shaved head suited his chubby face.

Instead, my social-life killer has been *Planescape: Torment*, which, after two months of solid playing, I've finally completed. God knows how Chris managed to do it over the Christmas holidays. We haven't been able to stop telling anyone who'll listen how it's the best RPG ever.

Now I only have time for *Championship Manager*, like Steve 'Games Prostitute' Hill, who claims: "It's the only game I'll play for free."

Richie, however, would play *Shogun: Total War* until the end of time without ever charging a penny. And, when we get our own copies of the first *PC ZONE* Classic under our scoring system, it's likely we'll follow suit. At least until the games we've been dying to play for the last few months finally arrive – *Vampire* and *Deus Ex*. They've been as slippery as a bar of soap in a prison shower, but we've seen them both running recently and they look stunning.

More Classics on the way? Maybe, maybe. We'll just have to wait until they're finally ready. And you'll have to wait even longer, poor sods... PZ

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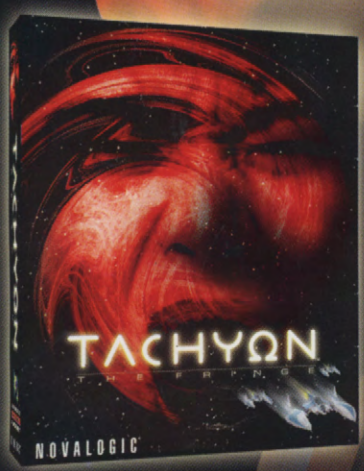

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